

The Shepherd Speaks

1. There is a persistent legend, hallowed by ancient tradition, that Thomas, one of the twelve, came to India and evangelized our people. It is good for us to make use of the occasion of his feast to specially thank the Lord for the precious gift of faith to our people which has made such a difference in our life and has brought about so much good to all. Thomas the famous doubter is also the Thomas who heroically tried to galvanize the Twelve by saying: "Let us also go and die with Him". And indeed he did! He laid down his life for Christ and sanctified the soil of our native land with his martyrdom. On 03 July we shall specially pray for those of our fellow Christians who rejoice and celebrate their faith tradition as originating from St. Thomas.

2. Pope Francis, on Tuesday, 27th June, offered the Holy Mass in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, together with the Members of the College of Cardinals present in the city, in order to mark the 25th jubilee of his ordination to the episcopacy.

The Dean of the College of Cardinals offered greetings and best wishes to Pope Francis on the occasion, recalling the words of St. Paul the Apostle in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, "Make room for us in your hearts," Cardinal Sodano said. "Holy Father, you need not tell us to make room for you in our hearts," he continued, pledging him all the love and reverence due the Successor to Peter.

We congratulate our Holy Father on this happy occasion and send him our prayerful wishes and greetings that God may grant him good health and many more anniversaries. *Ad multos annos!*

3. It is our privilege and responsibility to share our Christian faith with others, especially with the non-Christians. The Catholic Enquiry Centre (CEC), located at the Infant Jesus Shrine, Viveknagar, is doing commendable service in sharing the good News of Christ with the devotees at the Shrine and also with those who seek guidance through the correspondence course. As in the past, the Catholic Enquiry Centre Day will be celebrated ***on Sunday, 9th July, 2017. This year, our Archdiocesan Enquiry Centre is Celebrating its Ruby Jubilee and, on this happy occasion, I extend my greetings and best wishes to all those who rendered their selfless services in the past and also to the present team that is doing a commendable service at the Centre. There will be Thanksgiving Holy Mass at 9.45 a.m. and followed by a Public Function at St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral. May I request the Parish Priests to inform their parishioners about this programme at the Sunday Masses on 2nd and 9th July inst.***

This year, The Association of Catholic Enquiry Centres-India (ACECI) plans to organize its 16th Biennial ACECI National General Body Meeting at Bangalore from 6th to 9th July 2017 at Paalanaa Bhavana (Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre). The Theme for the Jubilee Celebration is: ***"Come! Share in the Light of Christ"***.

4. Although time and again conducting of systematic Faith Formation Classes for children and youth on Sundays and in the Schools has been stressed, it is sad to note that some Parishes have taken lightly this important pastoral duty. In some places, the Catechism class on Sundays is cancelled or re-scheduled for flimsy reasons such as baptism and marriage in the Parish, and celebration of minor festivities and events. Except for summer holidays, the catechism should go on uninterrupted for at least 35 Sundays of the year. Rev. Fr. Jude Conrad Santhosh, Secretary of the Bible and Catechetical Commission, will co-ordinate with the Parish Priests regarding syllabi, books, tests etc. pertaining to the Sunday Catechism.

Reflection: Once upon a time, there was a man who was very helpful, kindhearted, and generous. He was a man who will help someone without asking anything to pay him back. He will help someone because he wants to and he loves to. One day while walking into a dusty road, this man saw a purse, so he picked it up and noticed that the purse was empty. Suddenly a woman with a policeman shows up and gets him arrested.

The woman kept on asking where did he hide her money but the man replied, “It was empty when I found it, Mam.” The woman yelled at him, “Please give it back, It’s for my son’s school fees.” The man noticed that the woman really felt sad, so he handed all his money. He could say that the woman was a single mother. The man said, “Take these, sorry for the inconvenience.” The woman left and a policeman held the man for further questioning.

The woman was very happy but when she counted her money, later on, it was doubled, she was shocked. One day while the woman was going to pay her son’s school fees towards the school, she noticed that some skinny man was walking behind her. She thought that he may rob her, so she approached a policeman standing nearby. He was the same policeman, who she took along to inquire about her purse. The woman told him about the man following her, but suddenly they saw that man collapsing. They ran at him and saw that he was the same man whom they arrested a few days back for stealing a purse.

He looked very weak and the woman was confused. The policeman said to the woman, “He didn’t return your money, but he gave you his money that day. He wasn’t the thief but hearing about you son’s school fees, he felt sad and gave you his money.” Later, they helped the man stand up, and the man told the woman, “Please go ahead and pay your son’s school fees, I saw you and followed you to be sure that no one steals your son’s school fees.” The woman was speechless.

Life gives us strange experiences, sometime it shocks us and sometimes it may surprise us. We end up making wrong judgments or mistakes in our anger, desperation and frustration. However, when we get a second chance, we should correct our mistakes and make sure that we won’t do the same mistake again. Let us be kind and generous, and let us learn to appreciate what we are given.

Dear friends, may I request you to pray for me on July 22nd, 2017 which marks the 13th Year of my nomination as the Archbishop of Bangalore. While thanking God for the opportunities he has given me to shepherd the flock entrusted to me in this Archdiocese, I also thank him for the gift of all of you to me. As you are well aware, it is not easy to shoulder this burden without the grace of God and your support. Hence, I earnestly request all of you to assist me with your continued support, cooperation and prayers.

With every good wish and God’s blessings,

✣ **Bernard Moras**
Archbishop of Bangalore