

The Shepherd Speaks

Feast of All Saints: Every year on 1st November we celebrate the solemnity of all the Saints. There are three states of the Church -- -- the church triumphant, the church militant and the church suffering. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "When the Lord comes in glory, and all his angels with him, death will be no more and all things will be subject to him. But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating 'in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is" (No. 954).

The celebration of the solemnity of all the saints is a reminder to us that we are called for a life of holiness. The people of Israel were called to be holy. "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (*Lev. 19: 2*). Our Lord teaches us: "you must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Mt. 5: 48*). St. Peter urges the Christians to be holy. "As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct." (*I Pet. 1:13*). God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless in his sight (*cf. Ep.1:4*). God wants us to be holy. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (*I Th. 4:3*). We become holy by doing God's will as perfectly as possible.

Karnataka Rajyotsva: The 1st November has special significance for Karnataka as we celebrate the Rajyotsava of Karnataka State. Let us wish all the citizens of the State a Happy Rajyotsava and pray that God may bless the leaders of the State with wisdom and prudence to establish peace and prosperity in the State and help the people to live in harmony and mutual respect. Let us strive for spiritual growth of all our faithful who live in our State. It is our Christian responsibility and commitment to work and rededicate ourselves for the welfare of our less-fortunate brothers and sisters. If we work as a community, we are sure to eradicate poverty and illiteracy in Karnataka. Let us, therefore, pray for our beloved State, especially for those who are in authority that they may work selflessly for the welfare of the people.

May I earnestly request the Parish Priests and Heads of the Institutions to inform the parishioners/members to offer special prayers for our Karnataka State, either on November 1 or any other convenient day, and to pray for our leaders and the people. On this joyful occasion, I wish all the people of Karnataka a Happy Rajyotsava.

All Souls Day: All Souls Day is a holy day set aside for praying for the dead. According to Catholic belief, the soul of a person who dies can go to - *Heaven*, where a person who dies in a state of perfect grace and communion with God goes; *Hell*, where those who die in a state of total alienation are naturally condemned by their choice; and *Purgatory*. St. Paul declares, "The fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (*I Cor. 3: 13-15*). "Purgatory, often imagined as a place, is actually a condition. Some who dies in God's grace (and therefore at peace with God and men) but who still needs purification before he can see God face to face is in Purgatory". (CCC 1030-1031)

Let us pray for all the souls of the faithful departed. Let us also pray in a special way for the repose of the souls of: - The Bishops, Archbishops and Priests who by their prayers and pastoral ministries built up our Archdiocese. - The Religious, who by their prayers, exemplary lives and services, contributed to the growth of our Archdiocese. - The Faithful, who by their prayers, contributions and collaborations, worked for the marvellous development of our Archdiocese.

Children's Day: On 14th November we will be celebrating the Children's Day. Though the schools hold the celebrations, I wish that the Parish Priests encourage them to attend the Holy Mass in the morning celebrated at a convenient time for them and offer special prayers for the children. The children need special attention in the parish as they are the hope of the parish as well as the nation. Please organise some special programmes for them on that day or on the following Sunday. As children and youth are the future leaders of the Church and nation, special attention has to be given to their spiritual, intellectual and social formation. Jesus welcomed the children saying - 'Let the children come to me, for such is the Kingdom of heaven. Do not forbid them from me' (Mt.19:14). Hence let us also keep the children close to Jesus and the church that He may bless them.

First World Day of the Poor: As we are nearing November 19, 2017, I am informed that various plans are being made to celebrate the first International Year of the Poor proclaimed by the Holy Father Pope Francis. Also special programmes are planned by the various units of St. Vincent de Paul wherever they are active.

The World Day of Poor celebrations suggested by the Pope in the Apostolic Letter: *Misericordia et misera*. His Holiness said; "...It would be a day to help communities and each of the baptized to reflect on how poverty is at the very heart of the Gospel and that, as long as Lazarus lies at the door of our homes (cf. Lk. 16:19-21), there can be no justice or social peace. This Day will also represent a genuine form of new evangelization (cf. Mt 11:5) which can renew the face of the Church as She perseveres in her perennial activity of pastoral conversion and witness to mercy." Let this statement of Pope Francis serve as a motivating factor for us to reach out God's love to the poor.

At the Priest' Council (Senate) Meeting held on 16th August, 2017, the members were informed of the proposals made by the Standing Committee Meeting of the CBCI to celebrate this day meaningfully. The members also proposed a few suggestions. The same topic was also discussed at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Meeting held on 17th August, 2017.

The suggestions made by the Members at these meetings are as follows:

- Establishing St. Vincent De Paul Society in all the parishes of the Archdiocese.
- Identifying poor children and supporting them in their education and wellbeing.
- Helping the abandoned, especially those dying on the road. No poor should be allowed to die on the road side. To take this proposal forward, the members suggested to co-ordinate with the St. Vincent De Paul societies (SVPs) and Ladies of Charity, and with Rev.Fr. Edward Thomas SDB, CRI President.
- At least one/two Shelters for the Homeless must be built.
- Starting Soup-Kitchens in different places in the Archdiocese, wherever possible.
- Establishing a De- addiction Center with the cooperation of the Religious.
- Supporting the sick patients (especially the terminally ill)
- Introducing Mobile Clinics
- Starting outreach programs in nearby villages
- Cutting down the cost on festivities, decorations, Crackers, Car Processions etc. to use the money for the poor
- One Sunday Collection can be made for the poor in all the parishes

- Rich people adopting poor families, (supporting them for the basic necessities of their livelihood)
- Render help for funeral services of the poor

I request all the priests, religious and the lay faithful in the Archdiocese to patronise these commendable proposals initiated by the Archdiocese and to be actively involved in materializing these projects in whatever way possible. ***Let us not forget that our salvation solely depends on our reaching out God's love to the poor.***

Reflection: During a research experiment a marine biologist placed a shark into a large holding tank and then released several small bait fish into the tank. As you would expect, the shark quickly swam around the tank, attacked and ate the smaller fish.

The marine biologist then inserted a strong piece of clear fiberglass into the tank, creating two separate partitions. She then put the shark on one side of the fiberglass and a new set of bait fish on the other. Again, the shark quickly attacked. This time, however, the shark slammed into the fiberglass divider and bounced off. Undeterred, the shark kept repeating this behavior every few minutes to no avail. Meanwhile, the bait fish swam around unharmed in the second partition. Eventually, about an hour into the experiment, the shark gave up.

This experiment was repeated several dozen times over the next few weeks. Each time, the shark got less aggressive and made fewer attempts to attack the bait fish, until eventually the shark got tired of hitting the fiberglass divider and simply stopped attacking altogether.

The marine biologist then removed the fiberglass divider, but the shark didn't attack. The shark was trained to believe a barrier existed between it and the bait fish, so the bait fish swam wherever they wished, free from harm.

This experiment of the marine biologist conveys the message that many of us, after experiencing setbacks and failures, emotionally give up and stop trying. Like the shark in the story, we believe that because we were unsuccessful in the past, we will always be unsuccessful. In other words, we continue to see a barrier in our heads, even when no 'real' barrier exists between where we are and where we want to go. The Bible clearly tells us: "*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you*" (1 Peter 5:7).

With best wishes and God blessings

+ Bernard Moras
Archbishop of Bangalore