

The Shepherd Speaks

Dear Rev. Fathers/Brothers/Sisters and Lay Faithful,

Peace of Christ!

1. THANK YOU, ARCHDIOCESE OF BANGALORE: I was overwhelmed at the august ceremony and the warm welcome accorded to me at the Solemn Eucharist of my taking charge as the Archbishop of Bangalore, and also at the Reception on 31st May, the Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady to Elizabeth. The liturgy and the proceedings were beautiful and meaningful. It was a rich and deep spiritual experience for me. I thank each and every one of you who participated in these solemn celebrations. I am personally grateful to all those who meticulously planned these programme and executed it through various committees. All of them, by doing their work efficiently, have brought credit to the Archdiocese. I could see that a long period of preparation and strenuous work has gone into organizing these celebrations successfully. May God bless them and all of you for your sense of dedication and regard for the office of the Archbishop. Please continue to pray for me that I may serve you in the Archdiocese with all humility and simplicity.

2. THANK YOU, ARCHBISHOP-EMERITUS, MOST REV. BERNARD MORAS : It was indeed an emotional moment for me of taking over from Most Rev. Bernard Moras, Archbishop-Emeritus, whom I have known as a my superior, mentor and guide for so many years. I have had the good fortune of taking over from him as Bishop in Belgaum and now here in Bangalore. Certainly my feet are too small to adjust to the big shoes that he leaves behind for me to step into. Such being the case, I look forward to his help and guidance in the years to come.

We wish our beloved Archbishop-Emeritus Bernard Moras a well-earned retirement and rest. He has made known to us in his last circular that he will continue to stay in Bangalore at “Sunset Glow”, No.4, Palm Grove Road, Victoria Lay out, Bangalore.

We can proudly say: He is retired but not tired! I have requested him to render a helping hand to me to be available to preside at the Sacramental and the Liturgical Celebrations and other Programmes of the Religious and Institutions, and he has readily agreed to do so. Thanks be to God, as he is hale and hearty, he will be

happy to grace your celebrations. Please do invite him, even without making a reference to me.

3. CEREMONIAL ADDRESSES AND TITLES: I understand, universally, the office of the Archbishop has certain ornamental titles attached to it, such as “Your Grace”, “Your Excellency” etc. Even, The Holy Father Pope Francis himself has done away with a number of the formal titles that were attached to his office! I would be happy if you would kindly address me at least orally as “Father”, which is nice and homely and in a way, supersedes all other titles and addresses. Remember it is also reverential to be addressed as “Father”, much more respectful and cordial in relationships!

4. VISITING OF PARISHES AND INSTITUTIONS: I am aware that my responsibility of being the Bishop of Bangalore precedes (and perhaps supersedes!) my responsibility of being the Archbishop of Bangalore (or Karnataka Region). And so as Bishop of Bangalore, my first priority will be visiting the Parishes and Missions and meet the Priests, Religious and Lay Faithful. Though formal functions are inevitable and okay to a certain extent, I would be happy to meet you in person and spend time with you to learn more about you and the Archdiocese. Try and make the welcome programmes, if any, simple and modest. I have an allergy for heavy flower bouquets and garlands, costly shawls, giant flex cut-outs and banners, not to speak of noise pollution! I could even come to the Parishes on week days and spend a night in the Parishes.

5. FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (CORPUS CHRISTI): The Feast of Corpus Christi, celebrating the reality of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Son of God, in the Eucharist. It is a celebration of Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist. It parallels the celebration on Holy Thursday in commemoration of the institution of this Sacrament. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. It is a sign and cause of the unity of Christ’s Mystical Body, because it stirs up an active ‘ecclesial’ spirit in those who are fervent in their Eucharistic devotion. I exhort all Parish Priests to celebrate this feast in their parishes with the proper liturgy of the day and also catechize the faithful on the importance of the Eucharist in Christian life.

6. SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS:

Compassionate Heart of Jesus On Friday, 8th June 2018, we celebrate the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The celebration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is indeed, the celebration of God's love and mercy, poured on the humanity in and through Jesus. The heart of Jesus is filled with compassion when he sees the people in suffering, in need and in pitiable conditions. He feeds the hungry; he heals every disease and infirmity; he forgives the sinners, he comforts the afflicted. All the four evangelist speaks about the multiplication of the five loaves (Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1- 13). Two evangelists speak about the multiplication of the seven loaves (Mt. 15:32-39; Mk. 8:1-10). Jesus looks at people in their concrete life-situations. He Perceives the concrete need of the people. "They (people) have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat and some of them have come a long way" (Mk. 8:2-3). This perception of Jesus leads him to compassion. "I have compassion on the crowd" (Mk. 8:2). Jesus does not want to send away the people hungry to their homes; they may faint on the way. Jesus has not only sympathy for the people but also empathy for them. Jesus suffers not only with the people but also in the people. The compassion of Jesus leads him to action. Jesus wants to feed the hungry people. He wants to involve his disciples in the service of feeding the hungry. The people are in big numbers; the place in a desert.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on 8th June this year. Devotion to the Sacred Heart, as we know it, began about the year 1672, with repeated appearances of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a Visitation Nun in France. True devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus means devotion of the Divine Heart of Christ in so far as His heart represents and recalls his love for us. The solemnity provides us with an opportunity to reawaken the devotion to the Sacred Heart among our faithful. The Congregation for the Clergy has dedicated this day to be the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests. Let us remember to pray for all priests specially those serving in our Archdiocese that they may experience the unconditional love and mercy of Jesus through his Sacred Heart and impart the same to those entrusted to their pastoral care.

Reflection: Once upon a time, there was a Kingdom. The king there only had one leg and one eye, but he was very intelligent and kind. Everyone in his kingdom

lived a happy and a healthy life because of their king. One day the king was walking through the palace hallway and saw the portraits of his ancestors. He thought that one day his children will walk in the same hallway and remember all the ancestors through these portraits.

But, the king did not have his portrait painted. Due to his physical disabilities, he wasn't sure how his painting would turn out. So he invited many famous painters from his and other kingdoms to the court. The king then announced that he wants a beautiful portrait made of himself to be placed in the palace. Any painter who can carry out this should come forward. He will be rewarded based on how the painting turns up.

All of the painters began to think that the king only has one leg and one eye. How can his picture be made very beautiful? It is not possible and if the picture does not turn out to look beautiful then the king will get angry and punish them. So one by one, all started to make excuses and politely declined to make a painting of the king.

But suddenly one painter raised his hand and said that I will make a very beautiful portrait of you which you will surely like. The king became happy hearing that and other painters got curious. The king gave him the permission and the painter started drawing the portrait. He then filled the drawing with paints. Finally, after taking a long time, he said that the portrait was ready!

All of the courtiers, other painters were curious and nervous thinking, How can the painter make the king's portrait beautiful because the king is physically disabled? What if the king didn't like the painting and gets angry? But when the painter presented the portrait, everyone in the court, including the king, left stunned.

The painter made a portrait in which the king was sitting on the horse, on the one-leg side, holding his bow and aiming the arrow with his one eye closed. The king was very pleased to see that the painter has made a beautiful portrait by cleverly hiding the king's disabilities. The King gave him a great reward.

We should always think positive of others and ignore their deficiencies. We should learn to focus on the good things instead of trying to highlight their weaknesses. If we think and approach positively even in a negative situation, then we will be able

to solve our problems more efficiently. St. Paul tells us: “To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. (*1 Cor. 9:22*). If we trust in the Lord, he will never abandon us, and He will always guide and lead us in the right path.

With best wishes and God’s blessings,

Yours in Christ,

+ Archbishop Peter Machado

Archbishop of Bangalore