

The Shepherd Speaks

1. Day of the Clergy: St. John Mary Vianney Day is at our door (4th August). It is the day of the Priests. St. John Mary Vianney is supposed to have said *“Oh, how great is the Priest! ... If he realized what he is, he would die”!* The Holy Father, Francis, embodies in himself in a very special way the spirit of the St. John Mary Vianney - simple and humble, down-to-earth, with mercy and compassion in boundless proportions. In one of his homilies, the Pope said, *“I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. The Church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you.”*

Since some years, St. John Mary Vianney is proposed as the Patron of not only the Diocesan Clergy but of all the Priests. As we celebrate this feast on the 1st of August with the participation of our lay faithful, may we re-live his closeness and proximity to our people, through our family visits, the meaningful celebration of the sacraments, especially confession with mercy and compassion in our approach.

his feast also reminds the people to acknowledge the services of their Pastors, and at the same time it sounds an alarm to us Pastors to evaluate our life as Priests, whether we need to change our life-style and pattern of service to be closer to the people in the name of Jesus. Let us remember the words of St. John Marie Vianney: *“Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”*

2. Archbishop Emeritus Bernard Moras’ 77th Birthday: It falls on 10th August. Though he himself is not too keen on celebrating it, I have invited him to join us in blessing and thanking God for his life, presence and long and fruitful service in the Archdiocese. I invite all the Priests and Religious in the Archdiocese to be present for the Eucharistic Celebration on 10th August 2018 at 5.30 p.m. in St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, followed by a short felicitation and supper. I thank and appreciate the Archbishop Emeritus for his continued service in the

Archdiocese, especially at the liturgical services and programmes, which I am not able to attend due to my other prior commitments. From this month onwards, we will also be publishing the engagements of Archbishop Emeritus Bernard Moras in our circular.

3. New Bishop for the Diocese of Mangalore: On 3rd July 2018, the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, we received the good news of the appointment of Rev. Msgr. Peter Paul Saldanha as the new Bishop of Mangalore. At the time of the announcement, Msgr. Peter Paul was the Professor at Urbaniana University, Rome. Earlier he served as Priest of the Diocese of Mangalore in the Parishes as also as Professor of St. Joseph's Seminary, Jeppu, Mangalore.

Msgr. Peter Paul Saldanha was born in Kirem Parish, Mangalore, in 1964 and was ordained a Priest on 6th May 1991. Known for his suave manners and pleasing personality, Msgr. Peter has distinguished himself as a Pastor, Community leader and Academician knowing number of Indian as well as European languages. Msgr. Peter Paul's Episcopal Ordination will be held in Mangalore on 15th Sept.2018 at 9.30 a.m. We congratulate the Bishop-Elect and assure him of our prayers for his future episcopal ministry.

At this time, we also place on record our gratitude and appreciation to Most Rev. Aloysius Paul D'Souza, Bishop Emeritus of Mangalore, who served the diocese untiringly for 22 long years. Being an eminent Pastor he has left indelible marks of his stewardship in the Diocese of Mangalore and also in the Region of Karnataka.

4. Investiture of the Pallium Ceremony: The **Pallium** (derived from the Roman **pallium** or palla, a woolen cloak) is an ecclesiastical vestment in the Roman Catholic Church, for many centuries bestowed by the Pope on metropolitans and primates as a symbol of the jurisdiction delegated to them by the Holy See. Though in the past, the Holy Father conferred the Pallium at the Vatican on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, from 2015, however, Pope Francis changed the ceremony to conferring the Pallium by the Apostolic Nuncios in the places of the Metropolitans, in order to better demonstrate to the faithful the unity between the local churches and the Pope in Rome. I am happy

to let you know that the Apostolic Nuncio in India, Most Rev. Giambattista Diquattro, has consented to come to Bangalore to confer the Pallium on me on 12th September 2018 at the Eucharist in St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral at 6.00 p.m. The Bishops of the Region will also be present. I invite the Priests and Religious and lay faithful of the Archdiocese to grace this occasion with their presence, and also to pray for my pastoral ministry in the Archdiocese.

5. Prison Ministry Sunday: The Prison Ministry is one of the recent apostolates that the Church is associating itself with and is certainly a most endearing one. To be imprisoned is a very tragic and traumatic part of one's life. The shame and guilt, pain and suffering, isolation and stigma of those condemned justifiably or falsely can leave a person emotionally crippled for life. That is why the Church wishes to be close to the prisoners in this sad part of their life and condemnation. The Prison Ministry Day falls on 2nd Sunday of August, close to the celebration of the Feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Saint, who died in the Nazi concentration camp, offering his life in exchange for the prisoner who was destined to die. We reflect over these realities on the Prison Ministry Day (Sunday, 12th August 2018) and put ourselves for a moment in their place.

6. The Assumption of Our Lady and the Independence Day

Celebration: We, the Christians in our country, have a pleasant spiritual coincidence in the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of our Lady on the same day as the independence of our country. Mary is the ultimate sign and symbol of our freedom. Her assumption into heaven, which is a dogma of faith in the Church, is the celebration of her immaculate condition of freedom from all sin and slavery that characterised the humankind.

On 15th August, we Indians celebrate the independence of our country. We are free; so we say! While the level of freedom in our country is debateable, we have to bless and thank God for small mercies. *“Into the heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake”* – this verse by our

national poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore, keeps reminding us that we have still a long way to go.

In an era when even innocent and well-meaning appeals for prayer for the country are construed as dangerous statements, we have to examine how free and liberated we are! And that leads us to pray fervently for our country and our leaders. Mary is our model and epitome of freedom, because it is only the Spirit that can make us completely free. As for us individuals striving to attain freedom in our personal lives, let us not forget the words of St. John Paul II, “*Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.*”

7. The New Archdiocesan Directory: The Archdiocesan Directory is in the process of being published. Please furnish the details of changes, if any, or new entries to be made to the Chancellor, Rev. Fr. A.S. Anthony Swamy, at the Archbishop’s House. E-mail: chancellor@bangalorearchdiocese.com, at the earliest.

Reflection: There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn to not judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted.

The second son said no – it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed, he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfilment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but one season in the tree’s life.

He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are – and the pleasure, joy, and

love that come from that life – can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, fulfilment of your fall.

Let us not judge a life by one difficult season, and let not the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. The Bible Says: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand

(Is. 41:10). In the Book of Joshua, we read: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Every day there are opportunities in life to get upset and lose our joy and peace. There are many things that can steal our joy - people, traffic, disappointments, and failures. But if we are going to live in victory we have to choose the right approach to life. It's good to have plans, but let us submit our plans to God and take a decision in advance to stay in peace no matter what happens.

Let us change our approach and believe that God is directing our steps, and believe that we are exactly where we're supposed to be. As we do, we'll keep our joy and we will experience God's blessing, and favour, and live the life of victory He has in store for all of us!

With best wishes and God's blessings,

+ Peter Machado
Archbishop of Bangalore