

PROCLAIM

A Magazine for Missionary Animation

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Church & Nation Building



"A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head." [Revelation 12:1]



RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION

PROVERBS 14:34

*In church we pray and nations grow,
With love and faith, our hearts we show.
Together strong, in Christ we stand,
To build a future hand in hand.*



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CONTENTS

♦ From the Director's Desk	02
♦ Nation-building is Kingdom-building	03
♦ Church's engagement in political sphere	06
♦ A reunited Church: primacy and synodality	09
♦ Our Lady of Assumption	13
♦ <i>Spes non confundit</i> - Hope does not disappoint	16
♦ The boy who gave loaves to Jesus	18
♦ SAINT OF THE MONTH	
♦ St Henry II	20
♦ St Margaret Ward	21
♦ STORY CORNER	
♦ A bowl of noodles from a stranger	23
♦ News Round-up	24

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OUR MISSION TODAY

The Church and the Indian Nation-building



In the vast canvas of India, drawn with the brushes of diverse cultures, languages and religions, the Church has played a significant role in shaping the nation's ethos and progress. Today, as we stand at the crossroads of unprecedented challenges and opportunities, it is imperative for the Church to re-envision and reinvigorate its mission in the context of nation-building.

A legacy of service

The Church's contribution to India is deeply rooted in the principles of service, compassion and education. From the early missionaries who brought literacy and healthcare to remote areas, to the modern institutions that continue to uphold these values, the Church has been a lighthouse of hope and progress. Educational institutions run by the Church have empowered countless individuals, especially the marginalized, to break free from the shackles of poverty and ignorance.

Embracing diversity

India's strength lies in its diversity. The Church, by embodying the teachings of Christ, can foster unity and harmony among the varied communities. Promoting interfaith dialogue and mutual respect, the Church can be a mediator of peace, addressing communal tensions and fostering a spirit of brotherhood. Our mission is, our Holy Father Pope Francis insists, to build bridges, not walls, and to be instruments of God's love in a fractured world.

Social justice and advocacy

The pursuit of social justice is integral to the Church's mission. In a nation where economic disparity and social inequalities persist, the Church must amplify its voice for the voiceless. Advocating for the rights of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, especially the Dalits, tribals and migrants, the Church can influence policies and initiatives that promote inclusive development. By collaborating with civil society and government

agencies, we can work towards a more equitable and just society.

Youth empowerment

The future of India rests in the hands of its youth. The Church has a vital role in nurturing and guiding the younger generation. Through education, vocational training and spiritual formation, we can equip the youth with the skills and values necessary to become responsible citizens and leaders. Encouraging them to engage in social and environmental causes can harness their potential for the greater good of the nation.

Environmental stewardship

In the face of climate change and environmental degradation, the Church's mission must encompass the stewardship of God's creation. Promoting sustainable practices, raising awareness about environmental issues, and supporting grassroots movements can help safeguard our natural heritage. The Church can lead by example, demonstrating that care for the environment is a moral and spiritual imperative.

The Church in India stands as a witness to the enduring power of faith, love, and service. As we walk through the complexities of the modern world, our mission today is clear: to be catalysts of positive change, champions of justice, and heralds of peace. By remaining steadfast in our commitment to the Gospel values, we can contribute significantly to the noble task of nation-building, ensuring that India not only prospers but also flourishes as a land of harmony, dignity, and hope for all its people.

In unity and purpose, let us continue this sacred journey, hand in hand with the people of India, joining the celebrations of the Independence Day, towards a brighter, more compassionate future.

May Our Lady Blessed Virgin Mother, Our Lady of Assumption, inspire us to set our hearts on the things that are above, and to have our feet firmly grounded on our motherland.

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

National Director (PMO-India)

Nation-building is Kingdom-building

By Fr Dr Merlin Rengith Ambrose*

On August 15, 2024, we will be celebrating our 78th Independence Day, that is completion of 77 years of Independence. The day with all its celebrations reminds us to reiterate our resolve to make India a great nation. A great nation does not happen by itself; it has to be built. That happens only when all of us citizens work for it with unqualified integrity, put in our best efforts into it. Nation-building is possible if all of us think great thoughts, implement great thoughts, and keep always in mind the welfare of all.

The concept of Nation, as depicted in the Old Testament, referred to the 'people of God' with a distinct divine purpose. They were tasked with showcasing God's essence and values and illuminating the path for his salvation to reach other nations. The laws they received were not confined to temple rituals and purity, but also encompassed the shaping of their collective societal, economic, political, and religious life. Moving into the New Testament, although we do not see a society equivalent to ancient Israel, the Church, as the 'people of God,' was commissioned to proclaim and embody the Gospel by serving as a Kingdom community in every aspect of life. Examining the history of the early Church makes it evident that their ministry was focused on transforming the entire community. Their goal was to emulate the life and mission of Jesus Christ, whose ministry had no division between individuals and society; rather, he was establishing the complete Kingdom of God. This is the process of Nation-Building leading to Kingdom-Building!

Salt and light

“As Christians seeking to contribute to nation-building, we must first acknowledge that Jesus Christ is not simply a religious figure, but rather the one in whom all of creation is held together (Col. 1:17). He is the source through which all of creation came into being and will



ultimately be redeemed (Col. 1:18). This acknowledgement asserts that Christ holds ultimate authority over every aspect of life and understanding. Every facet of existence becomes sacred, as Christ reigns over every sphere of life, enabling us to interact with the entirety of reality.

The analogies of being the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world,” as taught by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5:13-16), clearly outline our role in nation-building. Particularly in diverse societies, such as ours, the role of being “salt” becomes especially significant. While the presence of salt may go unnoticed, its absence is readily apparent. Similarly, as “salt,” our presence in our workplaces adds value and prevents decay. By embracing this responsibility, we can help correct flawed systems, bringing about flavour and healing. Additionally, we are to promote what is good, beautiful, and true, and work towards reconciliation and peace in broken relationships. When we fall short in fulfilling this role, the entire system becomes corrupt, fragmented, and manipulative. Should not we hold ourselves accountable for this failure? After all, we have neglected our duty as the “salt of the earth.”

The significance of Light is unmistakable; it is bold and unyielding. Our voices cannot be suppressed or silenced as they carry a prophetic message, calling for the exposure of the flaws in our systems. Prophets did not cower in the face



of power and influence; instead, they fearlessly spoke the truth, demanding justice. As nation-builders, we are called to be whistle-blowers, a risky yet rewarding responsibility in the Kingdom of God. In the words of a Hindu scholar speaking to Lesslie Newbigin, “Christians must understand that we are 'responsible actors in history.'” What are some examples of such engagement? It could involve political activism, social advocacy, education, or the promotion of equality across all races, genders, and classes (Gal 3:16). Additionally, as individuals who acknowledge that economic policies often favour the wealthy and the powerful, we must be the voice of reason, advocating for justice, especially for the poor and marginalized.

Nation – kingdom – building

It is important to recognise that an individual encompasses more than just the physical body. Each person is composed of intellect and soul. Therefore, the nation-building process in India should not solely prioritise infrastructure and economic advancement but also focus on the comprehensive development of its citizens. It is our responsibility to establish a society that embraces the fundamental values of love, truth, and justice, which are universally significant. This necessitates cooperation with the government and our fellow citizens to uphold our moral and spiritual principles. For Christians, nation-building is synonymous with Kingdom-Building; it involves facilitating others to be part of God's realm of truth, life, and love. Our efforts in Kingdom-Building should not be insular and should extend beyond India. As a nation, we have a duty to the global community, particularly those suffering and marginalised.

As citizens of India, it is imperative that we prioritise the promotion of our nation's reputation by extending hospitality and regard to others. Genuine patriotism can only be ascribed to citizens of a country that fosters respect and compassion towards all. It is through relinquishing the inclination to prioritise national interests over the well-being of our fellow citizens that India can truly evolve into a benevolent society, a nation distinguished by its benevolence, solidarity, and impartiality.

Nationalism and globalisation are intricately interlinked, and the espousal of global harmony and collaboration across political, social, economic, cultural, and religious spheres is contingent upon embodying these virtues within our societal framework. It is within our own domestic milieu, therefore, that the practice of benevolence should genuinely initiate.

Family

The key to a gracious society and global/national harmony lies within the family unit. As Saint Pope John Paul II emphasised in his encyclical *Familiaris Consortio*, the family is the foundational cell of society. It is within the family that citizens are born and where they learn the fundamental social virtues that shape



society. Therefore, it is essential to protect the family unit by upholding the institution of marriage and providing support through various communities and organisations at both the local and national levels.

Christian families play a crucial role in nation-building by actively contributing to establishing God's kingdom and advancing the Church's mission. Through the everyday experiences and challenges unique to family life, they actively contribute to establishing the Kingdom of God in history. The love shared between spouses and among family members embodies profound values and responsibilities such as totality, unity, faithfulness, and fruitfulness. Through these fundamental principles, the Christian family participates in fulfilling the prophetic, priestly, and kingly

mission of Jesus Christ and His Church. Therefore, the love and life within a Christian family form the core of their mission to serve and support the Church.

Education

Educators and mentors play a crucial role in shaping the nation-building process by influencing the development of future leaders



and citizens. It is our duty to instil in our youth the values and principles outlined in the Gospel. As St Paul urged, we should strive to nurture them so they embody “sincere compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” Catholic schools, in particular, should prioritize more than just academic excellence.

The Dicastery for Culture and Education, in its *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School and Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal* (7 April 1988), states that the complexity of the modern world makes it all the more necessary to increase awareness of the ecclesial identity of the Catholic school. From its Catholic identity, the school derives its original characteristics and “structure” as a genuine instrument of the Church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry. The Catholic school participates in the Church's evangelising mission and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. In this way, “Catholic schools are at once places of evangelisation, complete formation, inculturation, apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds”.

As Christian institutions, especially in the public sector, we need to reaffirm the mandate received at its inception. Our institutions were recognised as 'open doors' for empowerment and healing. While these sectors have become competitive in nature, we need to continue our calling to uplift the poor and marginalised. In our struggle for existence and sustenance, there are possibilities that the focus has shifted elsewhere. As beacons of light, may we speak the truth in love even when it calls for us to become unpopular and disregarded. This is the response to the prayer, 'thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth!'

Conclusion

As we prepare ourselves to celebrate our nation's Independence Day, let us offer our prayers for those in positions of influence and authority, including parents, educators, and our political leaders. May they be granted the wisdom and courage to not only pursue economic progress but also to uphold and impart moral and spiritual values essential for the well-being of our society. The future of India is not solely dependent on the government. As citizens, each of us holds a stake in our country. India is our home, and it is incumbent upon us to strive to make it a better place for ourselves and our loved ones. We can achieve this by embodying our faith in society and by being law-abiding and faith-driven citizens who contribute to the economic and moral fabric of our nation. As members of the royal priesthood, our duty is to contribute to building a country where the message of Christ, encompassing its richness and universal appeal, resonates within us. This message encapsulates the universal message of the Kingdom of God. Indeed, as Jesus reminds us, the key to all else in our country is to set our hearts on His kingdom, and all other things will fall into place as well.



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Church's engagement in political sphere

By Fr Dr A Lawrence*

1. Introduction: Why should the Church engage in the political sphere?

1.1. Rising fundamentalism

Our daily experience bears witness to the fact that India is undergoing a stressful phase with the ever increasing fundamentalism,



communalism and interreligious strife. This is perhaps the most worrying phenomenon for India, and understandably for the Church in India as well. Negation of diversity is indeed a crucial issue humanity is facing today. It affects the coexistence and harmony among the people. Dialogue is made more and more difficult in the context of religions being politicised and turning violent. Indian culture is threatened by consumerism. Globalization which appears to create unity is, in fact, causing disunity. T.N. Seshan, the former election commissioner of India, was prophetic in telling us where this would lead India to in the future: "It is a crisis of civilization. India will survive – of that I have no doubt. But what kind of India will it be? Will it be an India enfeebled by wars within?" This causes serious concern to the Church in India, as her evangelizing mission in the subcontinent heavily depends upon how well she handles this issue.

1.2. Appalling poverty

Millions continue to live in abysmal poverty in India. It is staring at us everywhere! The low reduction of poverty continues to be the reality of life in India. The reasons for it are varied. Arguably, the context of liberal globalization is enlarging the divide between the rich and the

poor. The wealth produced by the economic growth is distributed unequally. This economic inequality tends to create social distance in the society leading to an attitude of exclusion and to undermine social solidarity and civic cooperation. Bringing democratic action to bear on the concerns of the common public for fast reduction of the poverty remains a hard task for the Indian Church. If the Church wants to sincerely establish God's reign on this earth, - and this was certainly the mission of Jesus - it should have no second thought to involve herself in the political sphere.

1.3. Continuing hold of different forms of discriminations

All of us know pretty well that India has got a 'unique cocktail of lethal divisions and disparities.' The continuation of caste inequalities depends also on the economic inequalities, one reinforcing the other. The situation of the Dalits and Christian Dalits is much the same even in the twenty first century. In many ways, gender inequality remains strong in India. There are many patriarchal norms still pervasive in larger parts of India. These inequalities lead to other challenges like migration. The prevalence of persistent social disparities and untouchability makes Christian participation in the political process all the more a crucial necessity.

1.4. Pursuit of the common good

The Christian engagement in the politics in India becomes indispensable for another important reason. The pursuit of common good





does not rest solely with the state but also with the religions. We all know that the government has the role of creating public order. But public order is only a part of the common good. The civil societies do have a very significant role to play in it.

In our everyday life, we come across still many countless instances that testify to the paramount importance of Christianity's public role. Here is one such event which, I believe, is worth citing here. Ellie Wiesel, a Jewish survivor of holocaust at the Auschwitz concentration camp, narrates in his autobiography (in his small book, called *Night*), a heart-breaking incidence of three people hanged in the concentration camp. The two had died instantly, while the third person, young in age, continued to struggle alive on the noose for quite some time. Deeply shocked by this horrendous sight of brutality, Wiesel asks himself: "Where is God?" "What is he doing?" With a heavy heart, he could only say to himself that "God is hanging there on the gallows."

As Felix Wilfred, moved by the cruelty of the instance, writes, "Concentration camp, according to him (Wiesel), was a place where everything came to an end - human dignity, rights, life, literature, religion, and even God. It is a terrible night." One comes across numerous such cases in the world of today, cases where human beings are stripped of their dignity and where God seems to be on the gallows! There are many such hidden concentration camps where the innocent people are hanged to death with no one to defend them. Does our preaching that Jesus is the unique Saviour of the world have anything to say about these instances? Can the Church in India, if and when she hears or witnesses such events, be bold enough to

denounce the authorities, as did Peter on the day of Pentecost? (Cf. Acts 2:22-23)

Honestly, Church does not want to dirty her hands by occupying public space. But it is high time now that she realised that she can no longer remain content with celebration of liturgy, and sacraments and other ceremonial practices. She cannot just stop with offering a spiritual message through her encyclicals. Neither can she stop with proclaiming loudly a message of justice and peace from the pulpit! She has to bear concrete witness to her faith through her active involvement in the political processes. The Church does not exist for herself. She is at the service of the human lives and of building a transformed human community.

2. Theological foundations for the Church's political engagement

Christian Scriptures and traditions provide us with rich resources for the Church's involvement in the right ordering of the society. Old Testament testifies to the fact that the governance by the kings of Israel was under constant check by the prophets, who confronted the political powers in case of failures of the kings of Israel. Gospels record, on numerous occasions, Jesus' own attitude against the misrule, absolute power and domination of the kings of his time (Mt 21: 10-17; 22: 17-21; Lk 22: 25-27; Jn 2: 13-22). Catholic conception of governance, as found in the Catholic teachings and documents, too advocates strongly



participation of each individual, religious and cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations etc in the day-to-day functioning of the governance and in the decision-making process. How true are, then, the words of Pope John Paul II: "I am not the evangelizer of



democracy: I am the evangelizer of the Gospel. To the Gospel message, of course, belong all the problems of human rights; and if democracy means human rights, it also belongs to the message of the Church.”

The Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World makes it clear that there can be no separation between the religious and the secular. "Let there be no pernicious opposition between professional and social activity on the one hand and religious life on the other. The Christian who shirks his duties towards his neighbour, neglects God himself, and endangers his eternal salvation" (*Gaudium et spes*, 43). Pope Francis affirms it: "The Kerygma has a social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others." (*Evangelii gaudium*, 177).

Pope Benedict's encyclical *Caritas in veritate* affirms clearly that Church's commitment to build a more just world is grounded in the *love* that God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Jn 13: 1; Rom 5: 5). The encyclical says that love is grace and it is creative, liberative and redemptive. (CV. 5 & 34) Our awareness of being loved by God gratuitously pushes us forward to reach out to others in love. The underpinning principle of the encyclical is that our commitment to justice is rooted in love and both love and justice are complementary. The Pope insists that love must permeate all our efforts to create a more just world. He strongly believes in the inseparable link between justice, love and grace. This he has underlined even in his previous encyclical: "A world which has to create its own justice is a world without hope" (*Spe salvi*, 42)."

Despite such rich magisterial teachings, a sincere introspection would tell us that not much has been Church's involvement in politics in the past, as rightly pointed out by Ambedkar: "Missionaries feel they have done their duty when they convert an untouchable to Christianity. They do not look after their political rights. I find this is a big fault in Christians, because they have not entered into politics up till now. It is difficult for any institution to survive without political support."

I think we need to move from a spirituality that alienates us from the secular world to the one that makes us intimate with it, from the spirituality that speaks of verbal revelation of the divine to the one that believes in the revelation of the divine in the visible world around us. It is truly a new grace of God for the renewal of the Church's commitment to the Gospel.

3. Lessons for the Indian ecclesial leadership

Though the Church, particularly in India and at the global level too, needs to go a long way in translating her verbal message into concrete actions. Consolably, there have been a few exceptions in the history of the Church in other parts of the world which are excellent examples for Indian Church and her leadership to emulate!

The political role the Church played in El Salvador of Latin America, more specifically the daring prophetic political activism of the martyred saint Archbishop Oscar Romero, the role played by the Church of South Africa, especially the leading role played by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as the general secretary of the SACC, both in the liberation of South Africa from the white domination as well as in helping his country come to terms with apartheid's bitter legacy through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); the political role of the Christian groups, particularly the Catholic Episcopal Conference, in the Philippines in creating a revolutionary situations in the country and the leadership of Cardinal Sin who played a decisive role in marshalling the "People Power" in the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship and in sending

...Continued on Page 12

A reunited Church: primacy and synodality

By Courtney Mares*



The Vatican published a 130-page study on papal primacy on June 13, containing suggestions from Orthodox and Protestant Christian communities for how the role of the bishop of Rome might look in a future “reunited Church.”

The study document, titled “The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and Synodality in Ecumenical Dialogue and Responses to the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*,” is the first Vatican text since the Second Vatican Council to outline the entire ecumenical debate on papal primacy.

In addition to identifying the theological questions surrounding papal primacy in ecumenical dialogue, the document goes a step further to provide suggestions “for a ministry of unity in a reunited Church,” including “a differentiated exercise of the primacy of the bishop of Rome.”

The end of the text published on June 13 includes a section of proposals from the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity on “the exercise of primacy in the 21st century,” including recommendations for “a synodal exercise” of papal primacy.

Synodality

The dicastery concludes that “growing synodality is required within the Catholic Church” and that “many synodal institutions and practices of the Eastern Catholic Churches could inspire the Latin Church.”

It adds that “a synodality *ad extra*” could include regular meetings among Christian representatives at the worldwide level in a “conciliar fellowship” to deepen communion.

This builds off of dialogue with some Orthodox representatives who have asserted that “any restoration of full communion between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches will require, on both sides, a strengthening of synodal structures and a renewed understanding of a universal primacy — both serving communion among the churches.”

At a Vatican press conference on June 13, Cardinal Mario Grech, the secretary-general of the General Secretariat of the Synod, said that this study document is being released at a very “convenient time” as the Church prepares for the second session of the Synod on Synodality in the fall.

A representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, who joined the press conference via video link, underlined that “the synodality of the Catholic Church is an important criterion for the Oriental Orthodox churches on our way to full communion.”



Defining responsibilities of the pope

The Catholic Church holds that Jesus made Peter the “rock” of his Church, giving him the keys to the kingdom and instituting him as the shepherd of the whole flock. The pope as Peter's successor is the “perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the

bishops and of the whole company of the faithful,” as described in one of the principal documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*.



The new study document proposes “a clearer distinction be made between the different responsibilities of the pope, especially between his ministry as head of the Catholic Church and his ministry of unity among all Christians, or more specifically between his patriarchal ministry in the Latin Church and his primatial ministry in the communion of Churches.”

It notes the possibility of “extending this idea to consider how other Western Churches might relate to the bishop of Rome as primate while having a certain autonomy themselves.”

The text notes that Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches emphasized the importance of regional leadership in the Church and advocated “a balance between primacy and primacies.” It adds that some ecumenical dialogues with Western Christian communities also applied this to the Catholic Church by calling for “a strengthening of Catholic episcopal conferences, including at the continental level, and for a continuing 'decentralization' inspired by the model of the ancient patriarchal Churches.”

Invoking the principle of subsidiarity, which means that no matter that can properly be dealt with at a lower level should be taken to a higher one, the text describes how some ecumenical dialogues argued that “the power of the bishop of Rome should not exceed that required for the exercise of his ministry of unity at the universal level and suggest a voluntary limitation in the exercise of his power.”

“In a reconciled Christianity, such communion presupposes that the bishop of Rome's relationship to the Eastern Churches and their bishops ... would have to be substantially different from the relationship now accepted in the Latin Church,” it says.

'Rewording' of teachings of Vatican I

Another concrete proposal put forward by the dicastery is “a Catholic 're-reception,' 're-interpretation,' 'official interpretation,' 'updated commentary,' or even 'rewording' of the teachings of Vatican I,” particularly with regard to definitions on primacy of jurisdiction and papal infallibility.

The First Vatican Council, which took place between 1869 and 1870 under Pope Pius IX, dogmatically defined papal infallibility in the constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, which said that when the Roman pontiff speaks “ex cathedra,” that is, when he officially teaches in his capacity of the universal shepherd of the Church on a doctrine on a matter of faith or morals and addresses it to the entire world, the defined doctrine is irreformable.

An Anglican representative who spoke at the Vatican press conference highlighted how certain aspects of Vatican I have been a particular “stumbling block” for Anglicans.

The study document released by the Vatican pointed to how arguments have been made in ecumenical dialogue that some of the teachings of Vatican I “were deeply conditioned by their historical context” and suggested that “the Catholic Church should look for new expressions and vocabulary faithful to the original intention but integrated into a 'communio' ecclesiology and adapted to the current cultural and ecumenical context.”



It describes how some ecumenical dialogues “were able to clarify the wording of the dogma of infallibility and even to agree on certain aspects of its purpose, recognizing the need, in some circumstances, for a personal exercise of the teaching ministry, given that Christian unity is a unity in truth and love.”

“In spite of these clarifications, the dialogues still express concerns regarding the relation of infallibility to the primacy of the Gospel, the indefectibility of the whole Church, the exercise of episcopal collegiality and the necessity of reception,” it adds.

'That they all may be one'

The document summarizes responses by different Christian communities to Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical on Christian unity, *Ut Unum Sint* (“That They All May Be One”). In particular to the Polish pope's invitation in the encyclical for Christian leaders and theologians to engage in a patient and fraternal dialogue on papal primacy.

“It is out of a desire to obey the will of Christ truly that I recognize that as bishop of Rome I am called to exercise that ministry. I insistently pray the Holy Spirit to shine his light upon us, enlightening all the pastors and theologians of our Churches, that we may seek — together, of course — the forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned,” John Paul II wrote.

Ut Unum Sint says that the bishop of Rome as the successor of the Apostle Peter has a “specific duty” to work for the cause of Christian unity.

The study document published by the Vatican is the result of more than three years of work summarizing some 30 responses to *Ut Unum Sint* and 50 ecumenical dialogue documents on the subject.

Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic experts were consulted in collaboration with the

Institute for Ecumenical Studies at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Cardinal Kurt Koch, the prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, noted at the press conference that one of the fruits of the ecumenical theological dialogue in the past three decades has been “a renewed reading of the 'Petrine texts,’” in which dialogue partners were invited to “consider afresh the role of Peter among the apostles.”

The Vatican notes that the “the concerns, emphases, and conclusions of the different dialogues varied according to the confessional traditions involved.”

As a study document, its goal is only to offer “an objective synthesis of the ecumenical discussions” on papal primacy and “does not claim to exhaust the subject nor summarize the entire Catholic magisterium on the subject.”

Koch explained that Pope Francis gave his approval for the dicastery to publish the document, but this does not mean that the pope approved every sentence.

Ian Ernest, the director of the Anglican Center in Rome, thanked Catholic leaders for publishing the new document, which he said

“opens up new perspectives for ecumenical relations on the much-debated question of the relationship between primacy and synodality.” “As the personal representative of the archbishop of Canterbury, I am delighted that one of the most comprehensive and detailed responses to St. John Paul II's invitation in *Ut Unum Sint* was given by

the house of bishops of the Church of England in 1997,” he said.

Ernest described the Anglican Lambeth Conference and Primates' Meeting as examples of “synodality at work,” which enable the Anglican communion “to prayerfully understand the ecumenical dialogues and new perspectives which touch on ... important doctrinal aspects.”



In response to questions from journalists, Grech acknowledged that different Christian churches have different ways of conceiving synodality.

Grech noted that the synthesis report from the 2023 assembly of the Synod on Synodality asked theologians to examine “the way in which a renewed understanding of the

episcopate within a synodal Church affects the ministry of the bishop of Rome and the role of the Roman Curia.”

He added that “the debate is still open” as the Church continues the synodal process with the second assembly in the fall.

----- *Catholic News Agency, 13 June 2024* ♦

Continued from Page 8: Church's engagement in political sphere

Marcos into exile and re-establishing democracy in the Philippines, and finally, Pope Francis' political activism which is something very unique because of his pragmatic moral teachings and social concerns are stupendous examples worth emulating by the Indian ecclesial leadership.

4. Conclusion

An oft-cited reason for the Church's non-involvement in politics could be its 'minority complex'. This need not deter the Church from actively participating in the political process; on the contrary, it has to be a motivating factor for it to forge an alliance with other religious groups in her political contribution towards common good. But before that could happen, 'a culture of participation' in the political process needs to be



inculcated among Christians for which is required most urgently appropriate political education and formation right from the beginning. We need to motivate our youth and the laity for active involvement in politics, which Pope Francis calls "lofty vocation."

* *The writer, a priest of the Diocese of Kumbakonam, is the President of St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore, and teaches Missiology and Systematic Theology at the Institute.* ♦

Expand legal migration to combat human trafficking, Holy See urges

Deploping indifference to slavery and human trafficking, the Holy See delegation to a UN Human Rights Council meeting urged governments to expand legal migration.

“The Holy See urges States to strive to make the roads and seas safer for migrants, refugees, and victims of trafficking,” the delegation stated, “through criminalization of trafficking networks, indicating safer routes, expanding regular migration channels and promoting a common and co-responsible approach to governance of migration flows.” ♦

Jerusalem Patriarchate denounces Israeli strikes in Gaza

The Latin Catholic Patriarchate of Jerusalem has issued a statement denouncing a July 7 Israeli air strike on a Catholic school in Gaza City that killed four people.

The raid demolished several classrooms in Holy Family School, where Palestinian families were taking shelter. Israeli officials said that the building was being used as by Hamas terrorists, and a senior Hamas official, Ilhab al Ghusain, was among those killed.

The Jerusalem patriarchate, pointing to civilian casualties, decried “any belligerent actions that fall short of ensuring that civilians remain outside the combat scene.” The raid came just one day after another strike on a school administered by the UN, in which 16 people were killed, including UN workers. ♦

Our Lady of Assumption

A testimony to the transformative power of God's grace

By Sr Anjala Lincy Clark*



The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a cornerstone of Catholic faith, symbolizing the elevation of Mary, body and soul, into heavenly glory. This belief, deeply rooted in tradition and scripture, was solemnly defined as dogma by Pope Pius XII in the apostolic

constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* on November 1, 1950.

Theological foundations of the Assumption

The Assumption is a belief that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was taken up into heaven at the end of her earthly life. This dogma is not explicitly detailed in the Bible but is supported by various scriptural passages and the longstanding tradition of the Church.

In *Munificentissimus Deus*, Pope Pius XII draws on scripture to support the Assumption. One key reference is the Song of Solomon 8:5 "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" This poetic image has been interpreted by the Church Fathers as a metaphor for Mary's heavenly ascent, leaning on Christ. Additionally, Revelation 12:1 describes a woman "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars," which has been seen as a symbolic representation of Mary.

***Munificentissimus Deus:* A declaration of Faith**

The declaration of the Assumption as dogma in *Munificentissimus Deus* was a significant moment in the history of the Church. Pope Pius XII emphasized that the Assumption was a truth revealed by God and thus an essential part of Catholic faith. The document states, "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever

Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

Pope Pius XII highlighted the continuity of belief in the Assumption throughout Christian history, noting the writings of Church Fathers, the liturgical practices, and the consistent teaching of the Magisterium. The Pope also pointed to the unanimous belief among the faithful as a testament to the divine revelation of this truth.

Biblical examples

The Assumption of Mary finds resonance in several biblical events and figures. The Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-9) serves as a parallel, where Jesus' divine glory is revealed to Peter, James, and John. Just as Jesus' divine nature was manifested on the mountain, Mary's Assumption manifests her unique participation in Christ's resurrection and glory.

Another example is the Assumption of Elijah, taken up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). This event prefigures Mary's Assumption, highlighting God's power to bring His faithful servants into heavenly glory. Elijah's ascension is a precursor to the greater mystery of Mary's Assumption, underscoring her special





role in salvation history.

Saints and the Assumption

Saints throughout history have held deep devotion to the Assumption of Mary, seeing it as a source of hope and inspiration.

Saint John Damascene, in the 8th century, eloquently expressed the belief in Mary's Assumption, saying, "It was fitting that she, who had kept her virginity intact in childbirth, should keep her own body free from all corruption even after death."

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, a 12th-century Doctor of the Church, celebrated the Assumption as a feast of unparalleled joy, calling Mary "the Queen of Heaven." His sermons and writings emphasize the Assumption as a sign of Mary's closeness to her Son and her powerful intercession for the faithful.

In more recent times, Saint Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) saw the Assumption as a source of strength in her mission to serve the poorest of the poor. She often spoke of Mary's Assumption as a reminder of the ultimate goal of union with God, encouraging her sisters and those she served to look to Mary as a model of faith and perseverance.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941) had a profound devotion to Mary and her Assumption. He saw it as a powerful example of the ultimate victory of good over evil and as a promise of the divine love that awaits all believers. His martyrdom in Auschwitz, where

he sacrificed his life for another, echoes the self-giving love that Mary exemplified.

Blessed Carlo Acutis, born in 1991, is a remarkable example of how devotion to Mary and belief in the Assumption can elevate one's faith. From a young age, Carlo had a special relationship with Mary. He often prayed the Rosary, viewing it as a powerful tool for growing closer to Jesus. He once said, "The Virgin Mary is the only woman in my life." This devotion was not just a personal piety but a driving force in his spiritual journey, guiding him towards a life of holiness and service to others.

Ordinary people and the Assumption

The belief in the Assumption is not limited to theologians and saints; it resonates deeply with ordinary Catholics around the world. For many, the Assumption is a source of comfort and hope, providing assurance of Mary's intercession and the promise of eternal life.

Mothers and caregivers

Like Mary, mothers and caregivers who selflessly nurture and care for others can find solace and strength in her Assumption. Their daily sacrifices mirror the love and devotion of Mary, who gave herself entirely to God's will.

The poor and the marginalized

Mary's Assumption reminds us that God's



grace is not limited to the powerful and wealthy but is available to all. The poor and marginalized, who often carry heavy burdens, can find hope in Mary's exaltation, knowing that God's justice will ultimately prevail.

Young people

For the youth, Mary's Assumption serves as a call to purity, faith, and dedication to God. Her life encourages them to seek holiness and to trust in God's plans for their lives, regardless of the challenges they may face.

In rural communities, farmers often invoke Mary on the Feast of the Assumption to bless their harvests. This practice underscores the connection between the Assumption and the sanctification of everyday life, where Mary is seen as a protector and advocate in both spiritual and temporal matters.

The Assumption and Modern Faith

In today's world, the Assumption of Mary continues to inspire and elevate the faith of believers. It calls for a deeper reflection on the meaning of life, death, and resurrection. The Assumption invites the faithful to live with the hope of eternal life, recognizing that just as Mary was assumed into heaven, so too are we called to share in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

Pope Francis has frequently spoken about the significance of the Assumption. In his homily on the Feast of the Assumption in 2013, he said, "Mary helps us to understand that our whole life, seen with the eyes of faith, is not an aimless wandering but a pilgrimage which leads to the house of the Father." This perspective encourages Catholics to view their earthly journey as a path towards heavenly fulfilment, guided by Mary's example and intercession.



Conclusion

The Assumption of Our Lady is a profound expression of the Catholic faith, rooted in scripture and tradition. Through biblical examples, the teachings of saints, and the lived experiences of ordinary people, the Assumption emerges as a beacon of hope and a testimony to the transformative power of God's grace. It calls the faithful to elevate their lives, striving for holiness and looking forward to the ultimate union with God in heaven, following the example of Mary, the Mother of God. As we honor Our Lady of Assumption, let us ask for her intercession that we may follow her example of faithfulness and be drawn closer to the heart of her Son, Jesus Christ. May her Assumption inspire us to strive for heavenly glory in our daily lives, keeping our eyes fixed on the eternal promise of God's love.

** Franciscan Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, Coimbatore ♦*

Program announced for papal journey to Southeast Asia

The Holy See Press Office has announced the program for the Pope's apostolic journey to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Singapore.

Pope Francis will depart from Rome on September 2, arrive in Indonesia the following day, and remain in Indonesia until September 6.

The Pope will visit Papua New Guinea from September 6-9, Timor-Leste from September 9-11, and Singapore from September 11-13.

In addition to his public engagements, the Pontiff will hold separate private meetings with Jesuits in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Singapore and a private meeting with a group of missionaries in Papua New Guinea. ♦

Spes non confundit - Hope does not disappoint

By Christopher Wells

At a ceremony in St Peter's Basilica on Ascension Thursday, 05 May, Pope Francis solemnly proclaimed the upcoming Jubilee Year 2025 at a ceremony in St Peter's Basilica, consigning the Bull of Indiction – “*Spes non confundit - Hope does not disappoint*” – to the Archpriests of the Papal Basilicas and representatives of the world's bishops.

“Hope” is the overarching theme of the upcoming Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, a theme reflected in the opening words of the Bull of Indiction, entitled “*Spes non confundit - Hope does not disappoint*.”

Long passages of the Bull were read out ahead of Vespers on Ascension Thursday, during a ceremony in which the document was solemnly consigned to the Archpriests of the four Papal Basilicas, the Pro-Prefects of the Dicastery for Evangelization, and representatives of the world's Bishops.

Solemn opening of the Holy Doors

In *Spes non confundit*, Pope Francis announces that the Jubilee Year will begin with the opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, 2024.

Later, on 29 December, the Pope will open the Holy Door of the Archbasilica of St John Lateran, the Cathedral of Rome. On the same day, every Cathedral and co-Cathedral throughout the world will have Mass celebrated by the local Bishop to mark the opening of the Jubilee.

On the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, 1 January 2025, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door for the Basilica of St Mary Major, with the Holy Door for the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls being opened on Sunday, 5 January, the Vigil of Epiphany.

“In the course of the year,” Pope Francis writes, “every effort should be made to enable the People of God to participate fully in its proclamation of hope in God's grace and in the signs that attest to their efficacy.”

The Jubilee will end in the particular Churches throughout the world on 28 December 2025, with the Holy Doors of St John Lateran, St Mary Major, and St Paul's Outside the Walls being closed on that same date.

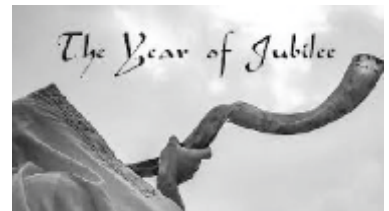
And finally, the Jubilee Year will draw to a close in Rome on the Solemnity of Epiphany, 6 January 2025.

An opportunity to be renewed in hope

“Everyone knows what it is to hope,” the Pope wrote in the introduction to the Bull. “In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring.”

Expressing his desire that the Jubilee might be “an opportunity for us to be renewed in hope, Pope Francis recalled that pilgrimage is “a fundamental event of every Jubilee event,” traditionally associated with the human quest for the meaning of life. The artistic masterpieces and the beauty of creation we see on our journey inspire us to praise and thank God for His wondrous works.

In particular, he invited all the particular churches throughout the world to prepare priests and the faithful for Sacramental Confession, which should be readily available throughout the year.



In a special way, Pope Francis invited the the faithful of the Eastern Churches, especially those already in union with the Successor of Peter, to take part in the Jubilee, and to feel welcome in the city of Rome, noting how many are already “enduring their own way of the Cross,” forced to leave their lands by violence and instability.



everyone to come to the assistance of the poor. In particular, he called on richer nations to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them.

Recalling that 2025 is the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council, Pope

Francis urged expressions of synodality, and renewed efforts to further Christian unity. He appealed especially for progress to be made toward a common celebration of Easter, noting that in 2025, providentially, all Christians will celebrate the Paschal mystery on the same date.

The light of Christian hope

The Holy Father prayed, too, that during the Holy Year, “the light of Christian hope might illumine every man and woman, as a message of God’s love addressed to all,” and that “the Church might bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world.”

Reading the “signs of the times,” Pope Francis noted the desire for peace in a world increasingly marked by violence and conflict, and the loss of a desire to have children, with many countries facing a “demographic winter.” He called for a social covenant to support and foster hope.

The Pope appealed especially for prisoners, recalling the tradition of offering amnesty or pardons during Jubilees, and said he hopes to



personally open a Holy Door in a prison, “as a sign inviting prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence.” And he called for prisoners to be treated in accord with their rights and dignity, while once again pleading for the abolition of the death penalty.

The Bull continues with Pope Francis urging that hope be offered to the sick, to the young and to the elderly – especially grandparents, to migrants and to the poor.

The Holy Father recalled that the fruits of the earth are intended for all, and encouraged

A Holy Year marked by hope

Pope Francis insisted that Christian hope, rooted in Christ’s death and resurrection for each human person, points to our final destiny, eternal happiness with God in heaven. We are saved by God’s mercy, seen especially in the gift of indulgences: While Confession washes away our sins, indulgences – including the Jubilee Indulgence – remove the effects of sins forgiven in the Sacrament. In the Bull of Indiction, the Pope notes that the specific conditions for receiving the indulgence will be published soon.

The Holy Father concludes the Bull with a final note of hope, praying that “the coming Jubilee will be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God”; and that it might help us recover “the confident trust we require in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God’s gift of creation.”

Spes non confundit ends with Pope Francis exclaiming, “Let us even now be drawn to this hope!” He calls on Christians to live a life in keeping with their faith, as a witness and an invitation to all to “hope in the Lord.”

“May the power of hope fill our days,” the Pope says, “as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever.”

----- <https://www.vaticannews.va/> 09.05.2024 ♦

The boy who gave loaves to Jesus

A tale of faith and generosity

By Fr Dr Yesu Karunanidhi*



'Material cooperation: sharing our time, energy, and resources' is the theme for the celebration of the Missionary Childhood Association for 2025. The children can share their resources for the mission of the Church in the world. In the Gospel of John, there is an interesting story about a young boy who played a crucial role in one of Jesus' most famous miracles - the feeding of the five thousand. This account, found in John 6:1-14, offers profound lessons in faith, generosity, and the transformative power of Jesus' love.

The setting

The story unfolds on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where a large crowd had gathered to hear Jesus speak. As the day wore on, the disciples grew concerned about feeding the multitude. They approached Jesus, pointing out that there was no food to sustain the crowd. Jesus, ever the teacher, used this opportunity to demonstrate God's providence.

The boy and his offering

Among the crowd was a young boy carrying five barley loaves and two small fish – a simple fare that his mother likely packed for him. When Jesus asked his disciples to find food, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, brought the boy to Jesus, mentioning his small offering. "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Andrew asked (cf. John 6:9).

The miracle

Jesus took the loaves and fish, gave thanks, and distributed them to the crowd. Miraculously, the food multiplied, and everyone ate until they were satisfied. When the meal was over, the disciples collected twelve baskets of leftovers - more than what they had started with.

Historical and cultural context

1. Geographical setting: The event took place near the Sea of Galilee, a significant location in Jesus' ministry. This area was a hub of activity and commerce, with a diverse population including Jews, Greeks, and Romans. The Sea of Galilee was known for its fishing industry, which is pertinent to the story's mention of fish.



2. Socio-economic conditions: During this period, the region was under Roman occupation, and many people lived in poverty. Food scarcity was a common issue, and daily sustenance was often uncertain for the average person. Barley loaves, considered food for the poor, were common among the lower socio-economic classes. The boy's offering of barley loaves and fish underscores the modesty of his means.

3. Religious climate: The Jewish community was eagerly anticipating the Messiah, who they believed would deliver them from Roman rule and restore Israel's kingdom. Jesus' miracles, including the feeding of the five thousand, were seen as signs of His divine authority and messianic identity. The multiplication of loaves and fish would resonate with the Jewish audience, recalling God's provision of manna in the wilderness during the Exodus.

4. Role of children: In ancient Jewish society, children were valued, yet they held a low



social status compared to adults. The boy's role in this miracle is significant because it highlights how Jesus valued and utilized even those who were considered insignificant by societal standards.

Theological context

1. Messianic expectations: Jesus' feeding of the five thousand aligns with Jewish expectations of the Messiah performing miracles reminiscent of Moses, who provided manna from heaven. This miracle not only fed physical hunger but also symbolized Jesus as the spiritual sustainer.

2. Eucharistic foreshadowing: Early Christians saw in this miracle a foreshadowing of the Eucharist, where Jesus offers Himself as the Bread of Life. The act of Jesus giving thanks and breaking the bread parallels the Last Supper, reinforcing the theological theme of Jesus as the source of spiritual nourishment.

3. Divine providence: The miracle underscores the theme of God's providence, illustrating that God cares for the physical and spiritual needs of His people. It emphasizes that faith and generosity are avenues through which God's provision is manifested.

Practical application for today

1. Modern-day generosity: In today's world, where disparities in wealth and resources are stark, the boy's act of sharing his food teaches the importance of generosity. It encourages individuals and communities to share what they have, trusting that God can

multiply their efforts to address larger needs.

2. Faith in action: The boy's faith in offering his small provision serves as an inspiration for believers to act in faith, regardless of the size of their contribution. This principle is relevant for personal, community, and church initiatives, where every contribution, no matter how small, is valuable.

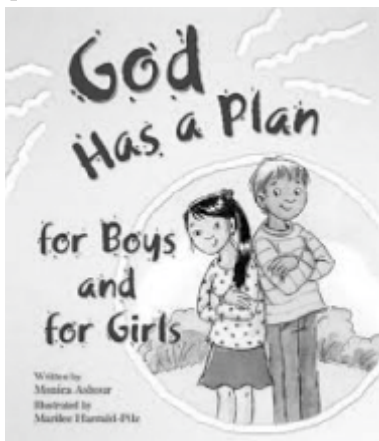
3. Inclusivity and value of all ages: The story highlights that everyone, including children, has a role in God's plan. It encourages the inclusion of young people in various aspects of church life and ministry, recognizing their potential to contribute meaningfully.

4. Trust in divine multiplication: In a world often driven by scarcity mindset, this story reassures believers to trust in God's ability to multiply their resources. It promotes a perspective of abundance, grounded in faith that God will provide.

5. God uses ordinary people: The boy was not a prominent figure, yet God used him to accomplish a great miracle. This illustrates that God often works through ordinary people to achieve His extraordinary purposes. It reassures us that we do not need to be famous or powerful to be part of God's plan.



6. Stewardship of resources: The boy's offering reminds us to be good stewards of our resources, no matter how small. Everything we have is a gift from God, and we are called to use these gifts wisely and generously.



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* Rev Prof Dr Yesu Karunanidhi, a priest of the Archdiocese of Madurai, currently serves as the Executive Secretary to the Commission for Bible, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India. He can be contacted at www.yesukarunanidhi.in ♦

St Henry II

972 -1024

Feast Day - July 13

St Henry II, son of Henry I, Duke of Bavaria, and of Gisella, daughter of Conrad, King of Burgundy, was born in 972. Henry's paternal grandfather was the King of Germany. His maternal grandfather was the King of Burgundy. His father's conflict with Holy Roman Emperor Otto II led to the duke's exile and loss of title. Consequently, Henry was sent to study under the canons of the Cathedral of Hildesheim. Later, he received an exemplary Christian education from Bishop Wolfgang of Regensburg, who was later canonized a saint.

When Henry was ten, Otto II died, and Otto III's regent restored his father as duke. Twelve years later, after his father's death, Henry succeeded him as Duke of Bavaria. Shortly afterwards, he married Cunigunde of Luxembourg, who would also be canonized.

In 1002, Holy Roman Emperor Otto III died suddenly at the age of twenty-one without an heir, leaving the throne vacant. Otto's cousin, Henry made a claim to the throne but failed to gain the full support of the nobility. Regardless, he had himself crowned King of Germany, and then spent the next several years seeking support for his coronation as Holy Roman Emperor. Finally, in 1014, King Henry II was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Benedict VIII in Rome.

Henry was known as a man of great faith who maintained a close relationship with the Church. He collaborated with the Church to appoint devout and loyal bishops, reform German bishops, create new dioceses, and endow bishops with temporal power alongside their spiritual power. Henry was also a man of

great charity. His generosity with his wealth was such that many of his relatives complained he was being irresponsible. Undeterred, Henry felt his primary duty as emperor was to strengthen the Church, spread faith, and exemplify charity. His generosity extended not only to the poor and the Church but also to his enemies. He successfully ended wars and uprisings, pardoning those who rebelled against him, and restoring peace to the kingdom.

On a personal level, Henry was fond of prayer, often visiting churches in each city for extended periods of time. He harboured a deep devotion to the Mother of God, regularly received the sacraments, and prayed the Divine Office.

One of Henry's greatest contributions to the Church was his dedication to monastic life. He constructed monasteries and supported monastic reform. Since the time of Saint Benedict, five centuries earlier, the Rule of Saint Benedict had become the

norm guiding most monasteries

Of all the Holy Roman Emperors throughout the ages, only King Henry II is recognized as a saint. While many Holy Roman Emperors might have had strong faith and advanced it, Saint Henry stands out. One could argue that when someone is given great power, it often brings with it great temptation. It's challenging to exercise such power without it going to one's head. Saint Henry wasn't like that. Despite his engagement in political battles, warring, his entourage of politically ambitious people, royal treatment, and luxurious lifestyle, Saint Henry loved God and sought to use his power and wealth to further the mission of the Church. For this reason, Saint Henry is an ideal

...Continued on Page 22



St Margaret Ward

1550 – 1588

Feast Day - August 30

Margaret Ward, called “the pearl of Tyburn”, held the Catholic faith as her most precious treasure. She suffered martyrdom during the persecutions of Elizabeth I Tudor, daughter of the schismatic Henry VIII

Margaret was born in Cheshire (1550) but ended up living most her life in London. Her father was a farmer working on his own land. Margaret went to London to be a servant, but more of a lady's companion to Mrs Whittle of high nobility.

The story behind this saint needs a little history lesson first. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in England, 1558-1603, it was illegal to practice the Catholic faith. If a Catholic priest was caught by the government, he was brutally tortured and then executed. Also, if you were caught hiding or helping a priest, you would suffer a similar fate. Priests still came to England to serve the needs of the faithful, and many people helped them. This is the story about one of those who helped Catholic priests, Saint Margaret Ward.

She lived during the reign of Elizabeth I, a time when Catholic persecution was at one of its highest points. As Margaret worked for a high-ranking female, she learned of the severe maltreatment of Fr Richard Watson, a priest confined at Bridewell Prison. He was imprisoned in Bridewell prison, near the Thames. Exhausted by torture, the priest had at a certain point yielded and accepted to participate in a Protestant function to obtain his release. But then he regretted it, once again professing the Catholic faith and was sent back to prison.

Margaret Ward began by gaining permission to visit him and started doing so on a

regular basis. She was thoroughly searched before and after early visits, but gradually the authorities became less cautious, and she managed to smuggle a rope into the prison.

On the day of his rescue, Fr Richard used the rope to escape through the window; however, in doing so, he was injured and was unable to retrieve the rope once he was out.



Next, Margaret and Fr Richard faced another challenge when the boatman, who had pre-arranged to take the priest to safety, refused to carry out his side of the bargain. Ward, in her distress, confided in another boatman, John Roche, who undertook to assist her.

John Roche provided a boat, and exchanged clothes with the priest. Fr Richard escaped, but John was captured in his place. Margaret, having been Fr Richard's only visitor, was also arrested. She was interrogated under torture. She was chained, suspended in the air with her wrists tied, and scourged, but she never revealed Father Watson's refuge. Eight days later the trial was held, during which she said she could not repent for “having freed that innocent lamb from the hands of those bloodthirsty wolves”. She was offered the chance to save herself on the condition that she agreed to take part in an Anglican function and ask the Queen for mercy. She replied that her conscience did not allow her to act against her faith and added that if it were possible she would give not one, but many lives, rather than deny God and the holy Catholic creed.

On 30th August 1588, Margaret was led to the Tyburn gallows, near what is now Marble Arch, and hanged. On the same day the English



Richard Leigh (a priest), Edward Shelley and Richard Martin, the Welshman Richard Lloyd, and the already mentioned John Roche, the first condemned because of his priestly ministry and all the others for helping priests, suffered martyrdom.

Margaret and her five companions of martyrdom belong to different groups of martyrs, but the words pronounced by Paul VI in his homily for the already mentioned canonization of 25 October 1970 can be applied to all of them: "Faced with the choice to remain firm in their faith and therefore to die for it, that is to say to have saved their lives by denying the

former, they, without a moment's hesitation and with a truly supernatural force, sided with God and joyfully faced martyrdom. But so great was their spirit, so noble were their feelings, so Christian was the inspiration of their existence, that many of them died praying for their beloved homeland, for the King or the Queen, and even for those who had been directly responsible for their capture, for their torments..... The Church and the world today have great need of such men and women, of every condition and state of life, priests, religious and lay people, because only people of such stature and holiness will be able to change our

tormented world and to give it, together with peace, that spiritual and truly Christian orientation which every man intimately yearns for".

Source:

<https://newdailycompass.com/en/saint-margaret-ward/>;
<https://stmargaretward.co.uk/catholic-life/our-saints/>;
<https://youth.rcdow.org.uk/discover/margaret-ward/>;
<https://americanedsfatima.org/articles/saint-margaret-ward> ♦

Continued from Page 20: St Henry II

model for all those who govern or are entrusted with wealth or power.

The humility and spirit of Justice of the Saint were equal to his zeal for religion. He cast himself at the feet of Herbert, Bishop of Cologne, and begged his pardon for having treated him with coldness, on account of a misunderstanding. He wished to abdicate and retire into a monastery, but yielded to the advice of the Abbot of Verdun, and retained his dignity. Both he and his wife, St Cunegunde, lived



in perpetual chastity, to which they had bound themselves by vow. The Saint made numerous pious foundations, gave liberally to pious institutions and built the Cathedral of Bamberg. His holy death occurred at the castle of Grone, near Halberstadt, in 1024. He was canonized by Pope Eugene III in 1146

Source:

<https://mycatholic.life/saints/>;
www.catholic.org/saints/;
www.catholicnewsagency.com/saint ♦

That night, Sue quarrelled with her mother, then stormed out of the house. While enroute, she remembered that she did not have any money in her pocket, she did not even have enough coins to make a phone call home.



At the same time, she went through a noodle shop, picking up sweet fragrance, she suddenly felt very hungry. She wished for a bowl of noodles, but she had no money!

The seller saw her standing faltered before the counter and asked:

– Hey little girl, you want to eat a bowl?

– But ... but I do not carry money ... she shyly replied.

– Okay, I'll treat you – the seller said – come in, I will cook you a bowl.

A few minutes later the owner brought her a steaming bowl of noodles. Ate some pieces, Sue cried.

– What is it? – He asked.

– Nothing. I am just touched by your kindness! – Sue said as she wiped her tears.

– Even a stranger on the street gives me a bowl of noodles, and my mother, after a quarrel, chased me out of the house. She is cruel!!



The seller sighed:

– Girl, why did you think so? Think again. I only gave you a bowl of noodles and you felt that way. Your

mother had raised you since you were little, why were you not grateful and disobeyed your mom?

Sue was really surprised after hearing that.

“Why did I not think of that? A bowl of noodles from a stranger made me feel indebted, and my mother has raised me since I was little and I

have never felt so, even a little.”

On the way home, Sue thought in her head what she would say to her mother when she arrives home: “Mom, I'm sorry. I know it is my fault, please forgive me ...”

Once up the steps, Sue saw her mother worried and tired of looking for her everywhere. Upon seeing Sue, her mother gently said: “Sue, come inside honey. You are probably very hungry? I cooked rice and prepared the meal already, come eat while it is still hot ...”

Not able to control any longer, Sue cried in her mom's hands.

REFLECTION:

In life, we sometimes easy to appreciate the small actions of some people around us, but for



the relatives, especially parents, we see their sacrifices as a matter of natural ...

Parental love and concern are the most precious gifts we have been given since birth.

Parents do not expect us to pay back for nurturing us but have we ever appreciated or treasured the unconditional sacrifice of our parents?

(Translated from a Vietnamese story by Tina (Inspirational Stories)

Source:

<https://academictips.org> ♦

News Round-up

Archbishop Viganò found guilty of schism, declared automatically excommunicated

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith has found Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò guilty of the canonical crime of schism and has declared him automatically excommunicated.

“His public statements manifesting his refusal to recognize and submit to the Supreme Pontiff, his rejection of communion with the members of the Church subject to him, and of the legitimacy and magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council are well known,” the Dicastery said in a statement. “The lifting of the censure in these cases is reserved to the Apostolic See.”

Archbishop Viganò, now 83, was Secretary General of the Governorate of Vatican City State from 2009 to 2011 and apostolic nuncio to the United States from 2011 to 2016. He had earlier served as the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe and apostolic pro-nuncio to Nigeria. ♦

Cardinal Ruini, 93, in intensive care after heart attack

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the retired vicar of the Rome diocese, was rushed to Gemelli Hospital in Rome on July 6 after suffering a heart attack, and was reported as in intensive care.

Cardinal Ruini, who is 93 years old, had been president of the Italian bishops' conference from 1991 to 2007, and one of the most influential prelates in the Church. Registration may be required for access. ♦

Vatican approval for 'Mystical Rose' devotion

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) has given approval to the “Mary Mystical Rose” devotion, based on messages that an Italian woman, Pierina Gilli, says she received from the Virgin Mary in messages between 1947 and 1966.

The DDF statement—issued in accordance with new Vatican rules for the handling of reported apparitions—notes that the writings of Pierina Gilli show deep faith, humility, and trust in the Virgin's power of intercession. The statement confirms that nothing in those writings contradicts Catholic teaching, although some passages may require clarification. ♦

Pope visits Trieste, says democracy 'not in good health'

Pope Francis made a pastoral visit to Trieste on July 7 for the 50th Social Week of Italian Catholics.

During the visit to the north-eastern Italian city, which lasted less than five hours, the Pope delivered an address and presided at an outdoor Mass, at the conclusion of which he delivered his Sunday Angelus address.

Stating that democracy is “not in good health,” the Pope said that “there is indifference, and indifference is a cancer of democracy, a non-participation.”

“Certain forms of welfare that do not recognize the dignity of people are social hypocrisy,” he said, as lamented disregard for human dignity as “the enemy of democracy” and “the enemy of love of neighbor.” ♦

(See also Pages 12,15)

Pope's Prayer Intentions – 2024

July : *For The Pastoral Care of The Sick*

Let us pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, bestows the Lord's strength to those who receive it and to their loved ones, and that it may become for everyone an ever more visible sign of compassion and hope.

August: *For Political Leaders*

Let us pray that political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and the common good, taking care of those who have lost their jobs and giving priority to the poor.

PMO INDIA FOR JUBILEE 2025

TRAINING OF DIOCESAN DIRECTORS

A training program will equip the Diocesan Directors with the knowledge and resources necessary to effectively lead Jubilee preparations in their respective dioceses.

South Zone

16-17 August 2024, NBCLC, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

North and West Zone

19-20 August 2024. Pastoral Centre, Jalandhar, Punjab.

East and North East

22-23 August 2024. Seva Kendra, Kolkata, West Bengal.

The training will cover the following key topics and will be conducted in English:

- The Significance of Jubilee 2025:
Understanding the historical and spiritual importance of the Jubilee.
- The Four Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council: Deepening our knowledge of these foundational documents.
- The Year of Prayer: Strategies to foster a spirit of prayer throughout the Jubilee year.
- Diocesan Programs for the Jubilee Year:
Planning and executing impactful local programs.

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JOINING HANDS WITH THE CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF INDIA JUBILEE 2025 DESK



TOWARDS WORLD MISSION DAY 2024

*“Go and invite everyone to the banquet.”
(Mt 22:9)*

**“JESUS CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND MESSENGER OF
THE FATHER, WENT OUT IN SEARCH OF THE LOST SHEEP OF
THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AND DESIRED TO GO EVEN FURTHER,
IN ORDER TO REACH EVEN THE MOST DISTANT SHEEP.”**

(JN 10:16)

POPE FRANCIS

