

Pastoral Letter on the Feast of Dukhrana

My dear People of God,

On July 3, the church will be celebrating the feast of Dukhrana, it is the day of commemoration of Mar Thoma Sleeha. We are celebrating once again the memory of our reception of the gift of Christian faith through St. Thomas, the Apostle. Faith is a reality that has to be renewed constantly. The Catholic Church is celebrating the Year of Faith reminding us of this truth. It is in this context that we celebrate the feast of Dukhrana this year. Therefore, the celebration of this feast should help us to deepen our faith and to effect a renewal of life according to its demands.

This is a time when God has blessed the Church and the world with the gift of Pope Francis. Pope Francis is continuously exhorting us to transform our life in the Church into a communion of the People of God that manifests simplicity and mercy, putting always Christ in the forefront. We shall remember now the blessings God has given to the Church in India in general and to the Syro-Malabar Church in particular. We should pay special attention to make our responsibilities of faith and public life more attuned to the needs of the times.

The feast of Dukharana demands us to find new vistas of activities, evaluating the individual, familial and societal dimensions of faith in the context of the modern world. We should also endeavour to achieve the proclamation of the Gospel and the formation of ecclesial communities as St. Thomas did in the first century. On this feast of Dukhrana, let us dedicate ourselves to the rebuilding of the Church and development of the society in this manner.

It is through the intervention of St. Thomas that we got the fundamental revelation of Christ, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). It is St. Thomas himself who for the first time taught the Indians the way to God through Jesus Christ. Precisely because of that the life style of Christian faith taught by him is qualified as the way of Thomas. As far as Christians are concerned, life of faith is life in Christ. It is to the person of Christ that every Christian is to unite himself. Lord Jesus Christ prayed on the cross for those who crucified him: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). The sins we commit today, even those without our knowledge, do affect adversely others in the society. St. Thomas Christians have to endeavour prayerfully so that the different Churches come to greater unity, having removed such possibilities to the extent possible. All of us should be willing to cooperate generously with every effort made for the unity of the Churches. We should also work with greater watchfulness to establish perfect unity and communion in our own individual Church, having re-examined the many stand points that are opposed to unity. The prophecy of

Jeremiah, “I will give them one heart and one way” (Jer 32:39), should be realized in the Church.

We are also celebrating the feast of Dukhrana as Sabhadinam. Therefore all the sons and daughters of Syro-Malabar Church should organize discussions and activities that promote the growth and communion of our Church. All should pay special attention to extend their cooperation for the common endeavors of our Church, especially for our works of evangelization.

My dear people of God, I am grateful to all the fathers, sisters and you all for working very hard for the development of the diocese and work of evangelization. Following the life of St. Thomas, it is our individual responsibility to proclaim the good news.

With the transfer in May 2013 many of the parishes in the diocese have new pastors, they are God given gift to the church and for all of us. They have left their home, father and mother, dear ones and their own homeland to follow Jesus. They made Thuckalay diocese their homeland, your parish their homes, you are their dear ones. Therefore, it your bounden duty to pray for your pastor, to support and encourage him in his ministry as priest above all he is offering the sacrifice to God for us. In other words he brings down blessing to us and to our family. I exalt every one to love the church and live in peace and harmony with one another forming a happy and united parish community.

Rev. Fr. Thomas Thekkeyil, the former Procurator of the diocese is diagnosed with Cancer. I request every one to pray for his speedy recovery. We pray for all our children who are studying in various schools and colleges. May God bless them.

Praying that the Lord may bless each one of you abundantly to grow rooted firmly in faith and morals as an individual Church in the communion of the Universal Church, I bless you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

+ George Rajendran sdb
Bishop of Thuckalay

Note: This pastoral letter is to be read in all the parishes on 30th June 2013