ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRES - INDIA
Know Lord Jesus
NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

FAITH, SERVICE AND FREEDOM


Fr. Norbert Herman SVD
President, ACEC-I

The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary reminds us of Mary's complete trust in God. Her Assumption is a sign of hope that those who remain faithful to the Lord will share in the promise of eternal life. Mary's life of humility, compassion and unwavering faith continues to inspire us to live as disciples of Christ.

The Church also remembers St. John Mary Vianney, the Patron Saint of Parish Priests, whose life exemplified selfless service through prayer, the sacraments and pastoral care. His patience, holiness and dedication transformed countless lives and remain a model for all who are called to serve others.

For us as Indians, this day also marks the celebration of Independence Day. We gratefully remember the immense sacrifices of our freedom fighters whose courage and perseverance secured our nation's freedom. Independence is not merely a historical achievement; it is a continuing responsibility to uphold justice, protect human dignity and work for the common good.

As citizens, we are called to promote harmony, peace and equality by ensuring access to education, healthcare, employment and equal opportunities for every person. The recent democratic protests by students calling for fairness and transparency in the examination system remind us that peaceful perseverance and respect for democratic institutions can bring about meaningful change and accountability.

May this unique convergence of faith, service and freedom inspire us to renew our commitment to building a just, compassionate and inclusive India. Let us work together so that the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and countless freedom fighters are realized, creating a nation where every citizen lives with dignity, equality, justice and peace.

NEWS AND EVENTS



Rev. Dr. Alex Vadakumthala, Bishop of Kannur, paid a cordial visit to the ACECI National Office, New Delhi, on 31 July 2026, where he interacted with the team and appreciated the Association's mission of evangelization and ecumenical outreach.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Divya Deep**
  Hindi YouTube Channel *'@divyadeep01'* airing "Bible ki Kahaniyaan" with kids of different churches in Delhi.

- **Divine Scroll**
  English YouTube Channel *'@divine-scroll'* airing "Daily Dose of Faith" and "Sunday Reading's Reflections."



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY A SIGN OF HOPE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN

My Dear Brother and Sisters in Christ, every year on '15 August', the Church celebrates the 'Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary'. This feast reminds us of the special place Mary holds in God's plan of salvation and fills our hearts with hope for the promise of eternal life. The Church teaches that at the end of her earthly life, Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory by the power of God. The Assumption is not only about Mary's honour; it is also a reminder of the destiny God desires for all who faithfully follow Christ.

Mary's life was marked by complete trust in God. From the moment she accepted the message of angel Gabriel until she stood at the foot of the Cross, she remained faithful to God's will. Because she was the Mother of Jesus and lived a life of perfect obedience, humility, and holiness, God granted her the unique privilege of being assumed into heaven. In Mary, we see the first and greatest disciple of Christ, whose life points us toward heaven.

The Gospel praises Mary through the words of Elizabeth: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42, NRSV). This greeting reminds us that Mary is truly blessed because she welcomed God's plan with faith and gave the world its Saviour.

According to Catholic doctrine, Mary is not divine. She is the 'Mother of God (Theotokos)', the greatest of all saints, and is honoured with the highest veneration (hyperdulia), but worship (latria) belongs to God alone. We Catholics honour Mary because of her unique role in God's saving plan and because she always leads us to her Son, Jesus Christ. Like a loving mother, she continues to intercede for us, encouraging us to place our trust completely in Jesus and to remain faithful to His Gospel.

The Assumption inspires us to live lives of faith, purity, compassion, and hope. It reminds us that holiness is possible for ordinary people who surrender themselves completely to God. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is also the 'Fourth Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary'. Whenever we pray this mystery, we reflect on Mary's being taken body and soul into heaven and ask for the grace to follow her example of faithful discipleship. As we celebrate this great feast on '15 August', let us thank God for the gift of Mary. May we grow in our love for her through daily prayer, especially the Rosary, imitate her virtues, and allow her gentle guidance to lead us ever closer to Jesus Christ, who is the source of our salvation and our everlasting joy.

– Rohan Anirudh Singh



HEALING THROUGH REMEMBERANCE HONORING THE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Established by the United Nations General Assembly, the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, observed annually on August 21st, calls upon the global community to pause and reflect. This solemn occasion serves as a poignant reminder that behind every statistic of extremist violence lies a shattered family, a traumatized community, and a life irrevocably altered. It is a day

not merely for reflection, but for a renewed, active commitment to the victims and survivors whose voices are too often drowned out in the chaotic aftermath of tragedy.

The scourge of terrorism respects no borders, nationalities, or faiths. Its primary objective is to instill fear, disrupt peace, and divide societies. Yet, in the wake of such senseless destruction, it is the victims who bear the heaviest and most enduring burden. While the immediate shock of an attack eventually fades from global headlines, survivors are left to navigate a lifelong, arduous journey of physical rehabilitation, psychological healing, and often, severe financial hardship. The trauma they endure is profound, and the road to recovery is frequently fraught with systemic challenges, including inadequate support networks and a lack of access to comprehensive legal recourse.

As a society—and particularly within the realms of law, human rights, and global governance—we have a profound obligation to stand in unwavering solidarity with these individuals. From a legal and humanitarian standpoint, true justice extends far beyond the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators; it necessitates the holistic rehabilitation of the survivors. Advocating for robust victim support mechanisms is not just a moral imperative; it is a fundamental human right. We must ensure that their rights are protected, their stories are heard, and their dignity is restored. By providing safe platforms for victims to share their experiences, we not only validate their pain but also actively counter the toxic narratives of hatred and division propagated by terrorist factions.

The International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism is ultimately a call to action. It urges us to build resilient, inclusive communities rooted in tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect. As we honor the memories of those tragically lost, let us also celebrate the extraordinary courage of the survivors. Their resilience is a powerful testament to the indomitable human spirit. Let us pledge to stand by them, today and always, transforming our collective grief into a resolute force for enduring peace and justice.

– Adv. Selvaraj



THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

August 15 serves as a historic milestone for India, marking the end of colonial rule and the dawn of a sovereign democratic republic. For the Christian community in India, this national celebration intersects profoundly with biblical theology. This article explores how the concepts of political emancipation, socio-economic justice, and good governance align with the scriptural view of freedom, human dignity, and civic duty.

Introduction

The National Independence is more than a political milestone; it is a manifestation of the universal human desire for self-determination. When India gained independence in 1947, it shattered the bonds of imperial subjugation. Viewed through a biblical lens, this historical event reflects God's foundational desire for human liberty. The Bible establishes that God values the sovereignty of nations and opposes oppression. Therefore, celebrating Indian Independence Day from a Christian perspective requires a dual commitment: honouring national freedom while pursuing the spiritual and moral righteousness that sustains a country.

Concept of Liberty and Sovereignty- The Biblical way

The narrative of national liberation is central to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Exodus—the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage serves as the ultimate scriptural archetype of God delivering a people from foreign oppression. God did not intend for nations to be permanently subjugated by imperial powers.

Furthermore, the biblical concept of the Jubilee outlined in Leviticus 25:10 commands to "proclaim

liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." Political freedom mirrors this divine decree. The end of colonial rule in India allowed its diverse population to regain their God-given dignity, self-determination, and the right to govern their own destiny.

Righteous Governance and Civic Duty

A nation's greatness is not measured solely by its economic output or military strength, but by its moral foundation. Proverbs 14:34 explicitly states, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." True independence requires a commitment to justice, transparency, and the rule of law.

Scripture also commands believers to actively support national stability. In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Christians are instructed to pray for "kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." On Independence Day, Indian Christians are called to pray for the President, the Prime Minister, and all local leaders. The goal is to ask God to grant them wisdom to lead a nation of 1.48 billion people with integrity, fairness, and secular harmony.

Freedom as a Call to Social Stewardship

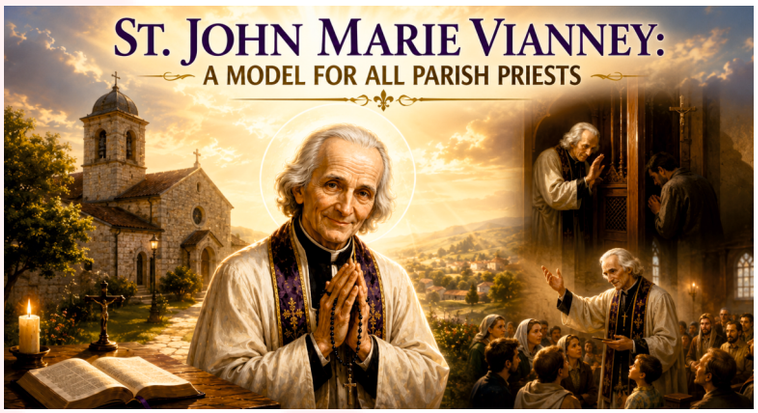
From a biblical perspective, freedom is never a license for lawlessness or self-indulgence. The Apostle Paul warns in Galatians 5:13, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

Applying this to post-independence India means that our freedom must be used to combat systemic societal evils. Poverty, illiteracy, caste discrimination, and corruption are modern forms of bondage. A biblical response to independence compels citizens to act as stewards of peace. It calls for uplifting the marginalized, feeding the hungry, and ensuring justice for the vulnerable, echoing the prophetic call in Amos 5:24 to "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Conclusion

Indian Independence Day is a celebration of a hard-fought political victory by our freedom fighters and a reminder of a profound spiritual responsibility. By viewing August 15 through a biblical lens, citizens are reminded that freedom is a gift from God that must be nurtured with righteousness, prayer, and selfless service. As India continues to grow on the global stage, the Christian community is called to be the "salt and light" of the nation—preserving its moral fabric, promoting unity in diversity, and working tirelessly for the holistic prosperity of the motherland. I wish each and every Citizen of our Great Country i.e. India, a very Happy and Cheerful Independence Day.

– Anthony Joseph



ST. JOHN MARIE VIANNEY
A MODEL FOR ALL PARISH PRIESTS

What is the greatest quality a parish priest should possess? As a Catholic priest, I have often reflected on this question, discussed it with fellow priests, and examined it in the light of my own ministry. Among the many virtues expected of a priest, which one stands above the rest?

Reflecting on the life of St. John Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars and the Patron Saint of Parish Priests, I am convinced that, apart from personal holiness, the most essential quality of a priest is his availability—first to God and then to God's people.

When St. John Marie Vianney arrived in the small village of Ars in 1818, he encountered a parish that was spiritually neglected and deeply affected by religious indifference. The French Revolution had left lasting scars on the faith of the people. Religious practice had declined dramatically, Sunday Mass attendance was poor, and many no longer considered the practice of

their faith a priority. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was largely neglected, and many approached the Eucharist without proper spiritual preparation or abandoned the sacraments altogether. Moral life had also deteriorated, with drunkenness, gambling, and worldly amusements often taking precedence over religious duties.

Faced with such discouraging circumstances, St. John Marie Vianney did not lose heart. Instead, he entrusted himself completely to God and dedicated himself wholeheartedly to his people. Like Jesus, who made Himself continually available to those who sought Him, the Curé of Ars became a shepherd who was always present for his flock.

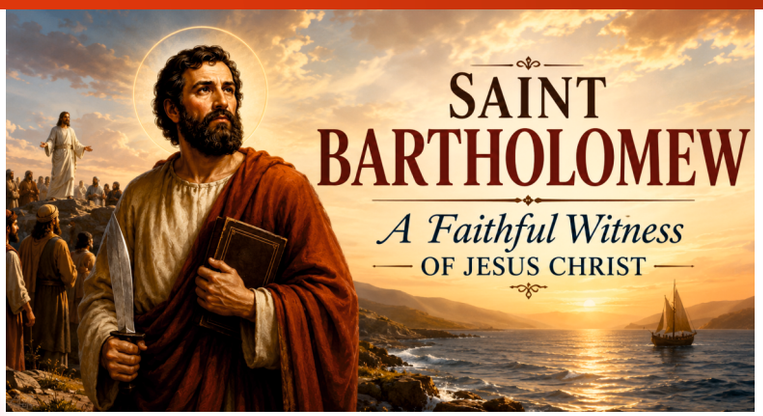
Gradually, a remarkable transformation took place. Hearts were converted, families returned to the practice of the faith, and the parish came alive with renewed spiritual fervour. Soon, pilgrims from every corner of France travelled to Ars, especially to seek his counsel and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The once-obscure village became a beacon of faith, repentance, and hope.

The story of St. John Marie Vianney reminds us that the renewal of a parish does not begin with grand programmes or impressive structures. It begins with a priest who is deeply united with God and generously available to His people. His life stands as a timeless witness that pastoral fruitfulness flows from holiness, prayer, and selfless service.

Today, as the Church celebrates the memory of the Curé of Ars, every parish priest is invited to rediscover this fundamental vocation: to be available to God in prayer and available to God's people in loving service. A priest who lives this calling truly becomes a shepherd after the Heart of Jesus.

– Fr. Antony T. Chacko





SAINT BARTHOLOMEW
A FAITHFUL WITHNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

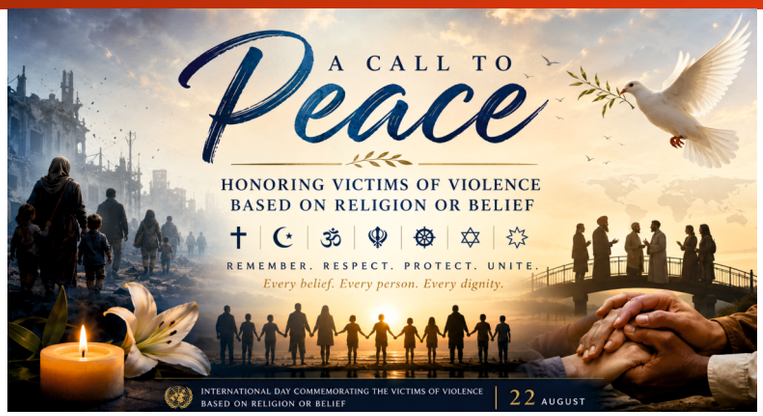
Saint Bartholomew is a witness of Jesus Christ. He was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ spoke highly of Saint Bartholomew. Jesus said, He truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.

When Jesus Christ called Saint Bartholomew, he said yes right away. This shows that Saint Bartholomew was open to the truth and wanted to know God much.

After Jesus Christ came back to life and the Holy Spirit came, Saint Bartholomew told people about Jesus Christ. He went to places like India, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Arabia. He told people about the Gospel, and many people started to believe in Jesus Christ. Saint Bartholomew never stopped proclaiming the Gospel. He kept talking about the Gospel even when it was hard. This is why he was killed for believing in Jesus Christ. Saint Bartholomew is an example of being brave and loyal to Jesus Christ.

We celebrate the feast of Saint Bartholomew on August 24. Saint Bartholomew reminds us that to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, we have to be sincere, have faith and be brave to tell people about Jesus Christ. Saint Bartholomew inspires people who believe in Jesus Christ to tell the truth and be happy when they talk about Jesus Christ. In a world where people often do not agree, Saint Bartholomew helps us to stay strong and faithful to Jesus Christ. The life of Saint Bartholomew encourages us to listen to Jesus Christ and be faithful like he was, and to tell people about the Gospel in our lives in our families, in our communities and in our society. We should be, like Saint Bartholomew, a witness of Jesus Christ.

– Varun Sharma



A CALL TO PEACE
HONORING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF

Every year on 22 August, I find myself pausing in prayer and remembrance. This day is not just a date on the calendar; it is a moment when we, as brothers and sisters in humanity, recall the countless men, women, and children who have suffered violence simply because of their faith or belief. Since the United Nations established this day in 2019, it has become for me a solemn invitation — not only to mourn, but to act.

When I think of the stories behind this day, I cannot help but feel both sorrow and responsibility. I imagine families torn apart, sacred places desecrated, and communities displaced. These are not distant tragedies; they are wounds in the body of humanity. The UN has warned that unchecked violence can escalate into crimes against humanity and even genocide. For me, this is a call to vigilance — a reminder that silence or indifference is never an option.

Commemoration, then, is deeply personal. It is about remembering the victims with compassion, but also about asking myself: What can I do to safeguard dignity and freedom of belief in my own circle, my own community? Governments may enact laws, civil society may organize dialogues, and religious leaders may preach reconciliation — but each of us has a role. I believe that faith must never be used as a weapon; it must always be a source of healing and peace.

This day also reminds me of the beauty of dialogue. In a world so often divided, I see dialogue as a bridge — a way to meet one another not with suspicion, but with trust. Whether through interfaith prayers, community gatherings, or even a simple conversation with a neighbor of another belief, we can dismantle stereotypes and build bonds of respect.

Even technology, which sometimes spreads hate, can be reclaimed for good. I have seen young people use social media to share messages of peace, justice, and inclusivity. Hashtags like #AgainstReligiousViolence are not just digital slogans; they are signs of hope that the next generation is ready to carry forward the struggle for freedom of belief.

Yet I cannot ignore the challenges. Women and girls from minority faiths often suffer doubly — for their religion and for their gender. Refugees lose not only homes but also their cultural identity. These realities weigh heavily on my heart, reminding me that our commitment must be sustained and compassionate.

Ultimately, for me, this day is about dignity. It is about affirming that every person — regardless of faith or belief — deserves to live free from fear. It is about remembering those who have suffered, supporting survivors, and pledging that such tragedies will not be repeated.

On 22 August, I pray: Lord, grant us the courage to reject intolerance, the wisdom to embrace diversity, and the compassion to build a world where every person can live in safety and peace.

– Sr. Lissy





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First Floor, Divya Deepti Sadan, Plot No.9-10, Bhai Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi, India
+91 9870 44 7970 | info@acecihq.com | www.acecihq.com