



## EDITORIAL

### MARY: MOTHER OF HOPE



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Today, our world faces enormous challenges—war, unrest, division, and broken relationships. These struggles are not limited to nations and societies; they are also visible in our families. The growing gap between children, youth, and elders is a matter of concern. At times, children struggle to listen to their parents and elders, while different generations find it difficult to understand one another.

Modern technology has brought us many blessings. Young people today have access to knowledge and opportunities beyond what previous generations could imagine. Yet, when knowledge and opportunities beyond what previous generations could imagine and, when technology is not used wisely, it can also create distance and weaken relationships. We may be more connected digitally, yet increasingly disconnected personally.

In these challenging times, the Word of God shows us the way—a way of truth, justice, hope, and love. Isaiah reminds us, “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31). Like King Solomon, we too must seek wisdom from God to guide our lives and serve others faithfully.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we look to Mary as a model of humility, faith, obedience, and love. She continually sought God's will and courageously accepted His plan for her life. Through her, God blessed the world with Emmanuel—God with us.

Let us seek Mary's guidance and intercession as we strive to build the Kingdom of God—a kingdom of peace, justice, truth, hope, and love. May the prayer of Jesus, “Our Father,” become a reality in our families, communities, and nation, and may we become instruments of unity, reconciliation, and hope.





# THROUGH SORROW TO HOPE

## MARY'S COMPASSION

### THROUGH SORROW TO HOPE : MARY'S COMPASSION

'Our Lady of Compassion', also known as 'Our Lady of Sorrows', is one of the most cherished titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This devotion invites us to reflect on Mary's unwavering faith, deep love, and immense suffering as she accompanied Jesus throughout His life, especially during His Passion and Death. Her compassion is not merely sympathy but a profound sharing in the suffering of her Son and of all humanity.

The Church traditionally honours the **\*\*Seven Sorrows of Mary\*\***, which reveal the significant moments of sorrow she experienced: the prophecy of Simeon, the flight into Egypt, the loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple, Mary's meeting with Jesus on the way to Calvary, the Crucifixion, the taking down of Jesus' body from the Cross, and His burial. Each sorrow reflects Mary's complete trust in God's plan, even when faced with pain beyond human understanding.

Mary's title as 'Our Lady of Compassion' reminds Christians that suffering, when united with Christ, can become a path to grace and hope. Though her heart was pierced with sorrow, she never lost faith in God's promises. Standing faithfully at the foot of the Cross, she became a model of courage, patience, and unconditional love. Her compassion extends beyond Jesus to every believer, making her a loving mother who understands human struggles and intercedes for us before her Son.

In today's world, where many people experience grief, loneliness, illness, and uncertainty, the example of Our Lady of Compassion offers strength and consolation. She teaches us to remain faithful during difficult times, to trust in God's providence, and to accompany those who suffer with kindness and mercy. Her life encourages us not to run away from pain but to transform it into an opportunity for deeper faith and loving service.

The feast of **\*\*Our Lady of Sorrows\*\*** is celebrated on **\*\*15 September\*\***, immediately following the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This beautiful connection reminds us that Mary's sorrows are inseparable from

Christ's saving sacrifice. As we honour Our Lady of Compassion, we ask her to help us carry our crosses with hope, to comfort those who are suffering, and to grow in compassion toward others. May her example inspire us to stand firm in faith, remain steadfast in love, and always trust in the mercy and saving power of God.

– Sr. Namita



## THE MEAL THAT SPARKED A MOVEMENT

Mother Teresa was not too well known though easily recognizable in the late sixties and early seventies. She quietly went around doing her work with the poor and the unwanted, silent and unnoticed. She did not crave attention or glory, rather she shunned publicity and recognition. This incident which I am penning, was narrated by one Mr. Viji Iyengar, a very successful and well-known entrepreneur and philanthropist from Kolkata, in the presence of Mother Teresa herself.

In the year 1969 or 1970, Mother was once aboard an Indian Airlines flight from Delhi to Kolkata and as usual she was seated in the economy class. A flight attendant came up to Mother and recognizing her as a religious nun, asked her if she would like to sit in the quieter executive class, since there were empty seats. Mother agreed and as luck would have it, was seated next to Mr. Viji Iyengar. Viji was busy reading his newspapers when breakfast was served. Mother promptly took her entire breakfast packet and put it into her bag, while Viji was still engrossed in the newspapers.

After a while, the air hostess came back to remove the leftovers when she asked Viji about his untouched breakfast. He opened a corner of the packet and took out an apple and asked the rest to be removed. Mother interjected and asked him if he was going to waste the rest of the food. Viji nonchalantly responded that he wasn't hungry so he didn't want it. Mother politely asked if she could take it. He shrugged his shoulders and Mother put it in her trademark blue cloth bag.

However, this baffled and intrigued Viji! He just couldn't get back to reading. He glanced at Mother, surmised that she was definitely of European origin, wearing a cheap cotton saree, draped in the traditional Bengali style, sitting in executive class on an airplane....and was yet asking for his leftover meal?!

Finally, his curiosity got the better of him and he respectfully asked Mother what she intended doing with the food packets in her bag. She responded with her trademark smile and said she would give it to her children. Viji innocently enquired as to how many children she had. She indicated a few hundred, leaving Viji aghast! Mother calmly and meticulously explained her work with the abandoned, and the specially-abled, unwanted children.

This touched Viji's heart as a philanthropist, and before the flight could land in Kolkata airport, he thought about the logistics of lending a hand. Once back at work he phoned the Managing Director of Indian Airlines, a good friend and golfing partner, and enquired about what happened to the unused meals on flights. The MD's response stunned Viji. "We dump it!!"

Viji had an unusual request. "If I arrange for my vehicle to pick it up, can I have it?" The MD was befuddled "Why Viji, why?" Viji calmly spoke of his encounter with a strange European Catholic nun and her mission to feed and nurture abandoned and unwanted children. The MD was moved by this revelation and simply asked for the address to where it should be delivered and promised that the airline would make the arrangements for unused food on every flight that terminated in Kolkata to be saved and not discarded.

That was over 56 years ago. That providential encounter that ignited a tiny spark of humanity that day has spread a wildfire of compassion. Today, not only Indian Airlines (now Air India) but many domestic and international airlines pass on their unused meals to Mother Teresa homes, not only in Kolkata but across India and other parts of the world.

-- Sunil Lucas

# ST. MATTHEW: A CALL THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

The story of St. Matthew is a beautiful reminder that God can transform any life. Jesus looked beyond his profession and reputation. He saw Matthew as a person with a heart capable of responding to God's call.

**“Follow me.”**  
Matthew got up and followed Him.  
— Matthew 9:9

Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners.  
— Matthew 9:13



### CALLED AS HE WAS

Jesus did not wait for Matthew to become perfect before calling him. He called him exactly as he was. God's mercy meets us where we are and invites us to grow.



### JESUS EATS WITH SINNERS

Jesus associated with tax collectors and sinners. "When questioned, He said, "Those who are sick need a physician." Jesus came not to exclude people but to bring them back to God through forgiveness, healing, and love.



### TRANSFORMED TO TRANSFORM OTHERS

Matthew, once viewed with suspicion, became one of the Twelve Apostles and the author of the Gospel according to Matthew. He became an Evangelist, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.



### A SIMPLE 'YES' THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Jesus said, "Follow me." Matthew got up and followed Him. It was a simple response, but it changed the course of his life. He left behind his old way of living and began a new journey as a disciple of Jesus.



### YOUR PAST IS NOT THE FINAL WORD

God sees possibilities in us that we may not yet see in ourselves. Our past mistakes, weaknesses, and failures do not define us. In God's eyes, there is always hope and a new beginning.



### JESUS IS CALLING YOU TOO

Perhaps you are sitting at your own "tax booth"—a place of comfort, routine, fear, or attachment. Jesus is quietly inviting you to get up and follow Him. The question is not whether you are perfect. The question is whether you are willing to respond.

**“ May the example of St. Matthew encourage us to recognise Christ's call in our everyday lives, trust in His mercy, and share His love with those around us. ”**

†

**ST. MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST, PRAY FOR US.**  
May we have the courage to leave behind what holds us back and the faith to follow Christ wherever He leads.



## **FEAST OF MOTHER VELANKANNI OUR LADY OF GOOD HEALTH**

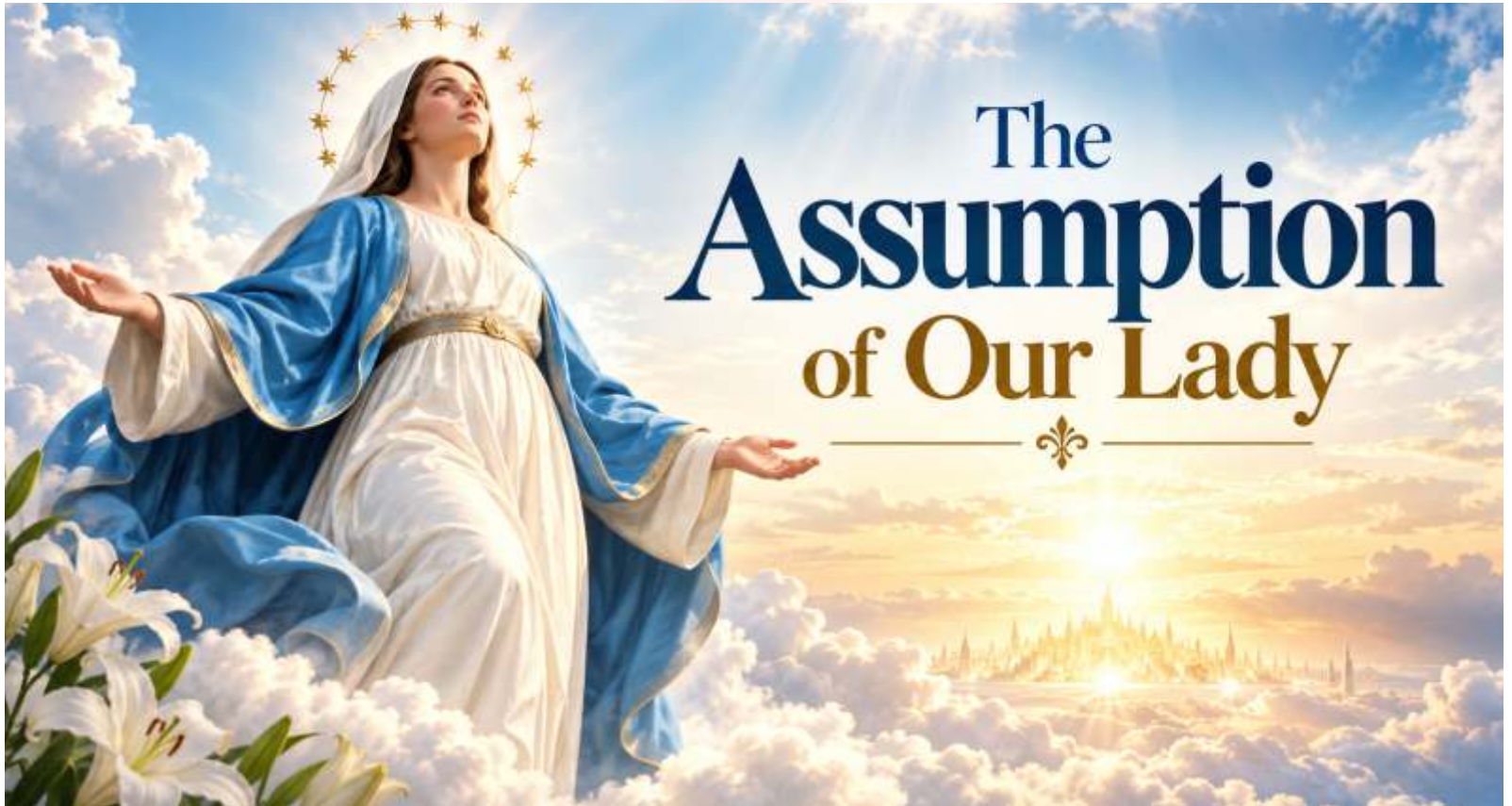
The Feast of Our Lady of Good Health, also known as the Feast of Mother Velankanni, commemorates the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Velankanni, Tamil Nadu, India from 16th to 17th centuries. The Virgin Mary is believed to have appeared to a young boy and performed miracles, leading to the establishment of the shrine dedicated to her. This feast is a significant event for millions of devotees who seek her intercession for health and well-being. The festival features various religious activities, including daily masses, special prayers, and a grand procession. According to tradition, the first apparition is said to have occurred to a young boy delivering buttermilk to a man, who lived far away. During his travels, the boy stopped to rest beside a lake that was shaded by a Banyan tree. A beautiful woman, carrying a child, is said to have appeared, and asked the boy for some milk to feed her child, which he gave. When he reached the home for his milk delivery, he apologised for the delay and said there would be less milk in his pot. But when they opened the lid of the milk pot, the container was brimming with milk. The second apparition is alleged to have occurred a few years later. A lame boy would sell buttermilk to passing travellers, who would pause in the shade of a large Banyan tree to escape the heat of the day. However, he had no customers. According to the account, suddenly, an ethereal woman, holding a child appeared before him, and asked for a cup of buttermilk. He gave her a cup, which she fed to her child. The woman asked the boy to go to Nagapattinam, and find a certain Catholic Christian man in the town and tell him to build a chapel at Velankanni in her honour. Apparently cured, the boy ran to Nagapattinam, where he found the man and told him his story. The Catholic Christian men of Nagapattinam subsequently built a thatched chapel at Valankanni, dedicated to Mary under the title of "Our Lady of Good Health".

In the 17th century, a Portuguese merchant vessel sailing from Macao to Ceylon was caught in a severe storm in the Bay of Bengal. The sailors fervently invoked Virgin Mary through her title Star of the Sea to be saved and promised to build a church in her honour wherever they could land. The sea became calm, and their ship landed near Velankanni on 8 September, on the day of St Mary's Feast. To honour their promise, the Portuguese rebuilt the thatched chapel into a stone church and later renovated twice in the early 20th century.

The devotees throng the Shrine throughout the year belonging to different religions to offer prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings received intercession of Mother Mary.

Also, the Feast of Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary celebrated on 8th September calls Christians to rejoice in the mysterious providence of God. Just as Joachim and Anne rejoiced at the birth of their long-awaited child, so the Church rejoices at the dawn of salvation. In the birth of Mary, we see the divine preparation for the birth of Christ—the victory of grace over sin, the light before the dawn, the hope of all nations.

-- M S Stanislaus



## THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

On August 15th, the Church celebrates that Mary, the Mother of God, was taken up body and soul into heaven. She did not see corruption, because she who gave life to the author of life was to share in His victory over death. Mary's assumption is not a privilege apart from us, but a sign of what God intends for all. She is the "first fruit" of the Resurrection. Her body, which carried Christ and nursed Him, was honoured by God and brought into glory.

St. John Damascene writes: "It was fitting that the body which had given birth to God himself should dwell in Divine mansions." She who bore the Son was not to remain in the grave.

St. Alphonsus Liguori calls her our hope. "Mary is called the gate of Heaven, because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her." In her assumption we see the gate opened wide.

Pope Pius XII, who defined the dogma in 1950, said Mary was taken up "to show that she is the perfect model of the church", already we hope to see one day.

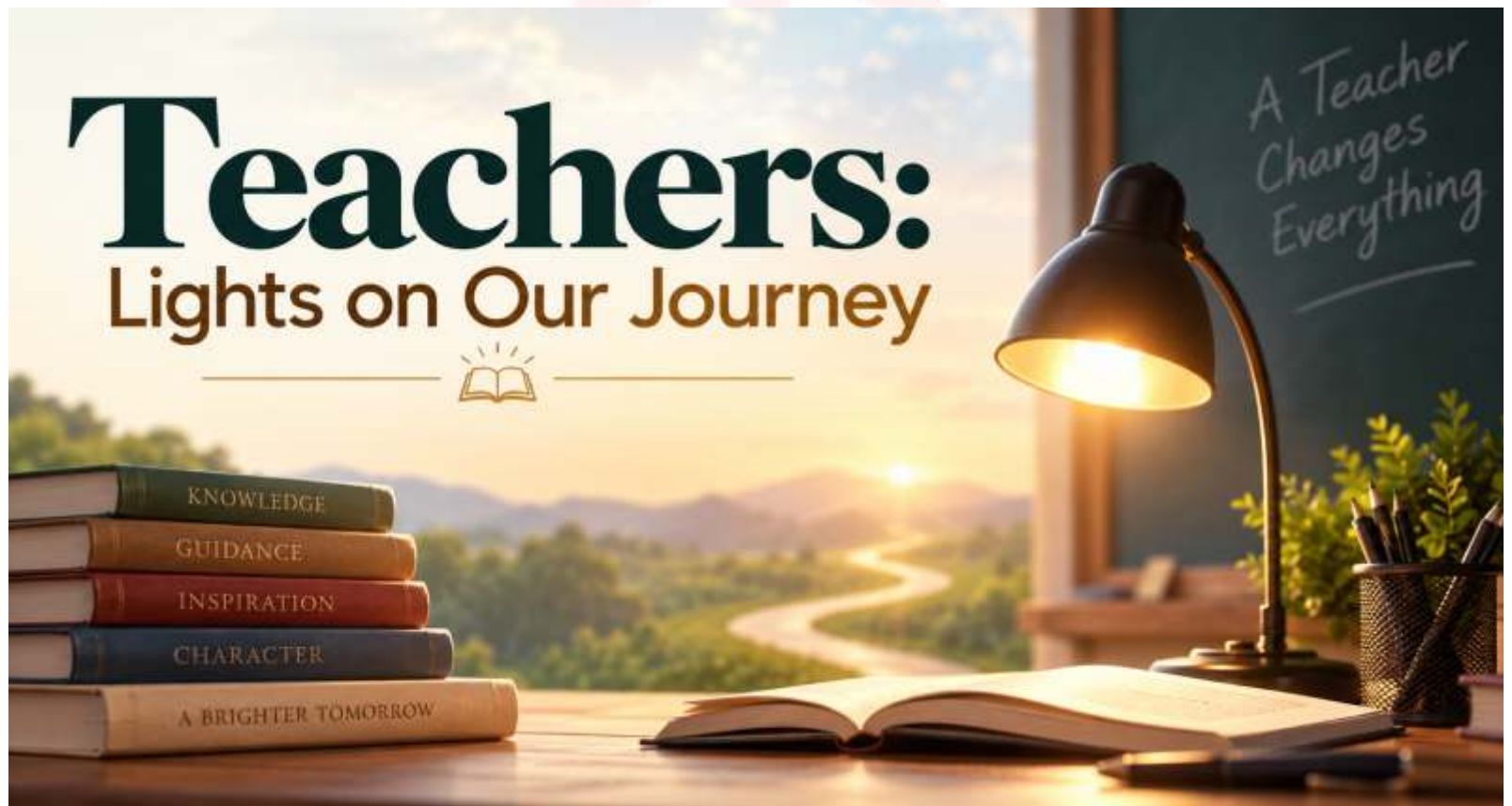
Even great minds outside the church saw her glory. Dante in the Divine Comedy places her above all the saints in Paradise, the one who turns to her Son for us: Thy benignity doth not succour him to asketh but oftentimes forerunneth the asking."

The Assumption of our Blessed Mother reminds us: holiness matters, the body matters and Love wins. Mary went before us to prepare a place. She is not far. From heaven she continues her Motherhood.

St. Francis of Assisi would say, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible." In Mary, the impossible has already been done.

May Our Lady, assumed into Heaven, pray for us.

-- Sr. Sheila CFMS



## TEACHERS: LIGHTS ON OUR JOURNEY

Every year, on 5 September, we celebrate Teachers' Day in India. It is the birth anniversary of Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the 2nd President of India. It is a special occasion to thank our teachers for their patience, guidance and care. Teachers do much more than teach us lessons from books. They help us understand life, discover our talents and make us better human beings.

A teacher is like a lamp that gives light to others. Just as a lamp helps us see the road ahead, a good teacher helps us find the right direction in life. They encourage us when we fail, correct us when we make mistakes and celebrate with us when we succeed. The last thing they do is judge us for what we are and always push us for what we can be.

My personal life has been deeply impacted by my teachers, especially Prof. S.M. Azizuddin Husain and Ms Azar Younesi. In my pursuit of the disciplines of History and Persian, whenever the going became tough, either due to failures or due to encountering difficult concepts, they were always there, showing me how to get the job done. In guiding me, they neither looked at my colour nor my creed. They did not tell me how ambitious my dreams were; they simply backed me.

The Bible also reminds us about the importance of teaching and sharing wisdom. Jesus Himself was called a Teacher. He taught not only through words but also through His actions. He showed His disciples how to love, forgive, serve and care for others. In the same way, teachers have the opportunity to influence young lives through their words, example, kindness and acceptance.

Teaching is not always easy. Teachers have to deal with different personalities, questions, mistakes and challenges every day. Yet, many continue to give their best because they want their students to grow and succeed. Their influence can remain with us long after we leave the classroom.

As students, we can show our gratitude not only by giving cards or gifts but also by listening to our teachers, respecting them and putting their guidance into practice. A teacher lives on through his/her teachings, and as students we can make our teachers immortal by implementing, in our lives, what our teachers taught us.

On this Teachers' Day, let us pray for all our teachers. May God bless them with wisdom, patience, strength and joy. May He reward them for the countless lives they touch. And may we always remember that behind many successful and good-hearted people, there is often a teacher who believed in them and helped them find their way.

-- Rohan Anirudh Singh





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