

LAITY SUNDAY

June 25, 2023

Theme: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

Suggestions:

- 1. It would be a good idea to present to the parishioners the many opportunities of service provided by the various Cells and Associations in the parish, for the parish as well as for society. This could be done by posters put up around the precincts of the church as well as flyers sent to all the community WhatsApp groups.*
- 2. A special invitation/registration counter can be set up on that day to help parishioners choose their way of service, where they can leave their contact details with their preference of service, to be contacted later by the concerned cell or association.*
- 3. At all masses, people would have to be encouraged to get involved in the various services in the church.*
- 4. For the Principal Parish Mass all the Heads of the Parish Cells and Associations need to be invited to attend it and receive a blessing.*
 - They will join the entrance procession*
 - Souvenirs will have to be kept ready on a tray (a cross, book mark etc).*
 - Seats in the front rows need to be reserved for the Lay Heads.*
 - Two Lay persons male and female serving in some capacity in the cells or associations can be asked to share for 2 mins each their joyful experience of service after the post communion prayer.*

INTRODUCTION:

Laity Sunday reminds us of our call to grow in Synodality – in **Communion** with one another, by increased **Participation** in the parish Associations and Cells and reaching out to others in **Mission**.

Laity Sunday celebrates the ministry of all Christians to love God and neighbour. As we grow in grace to become disciples in community, we gather with others and connect them to God's love in Jesus Christ. We continue to lift up the vocation of all to follow the way of Jesus and lead others to Him – particularly as we rediscover practices of togetherness that reveal “God's presence for the life of the world”.

We pray for greater synodality and for the Synod's first session in October 2023.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:

Celebrant: Heavenly Father, on this Laity Sunday, we offer up our prayers for the needs of the Church.

Our response is: GOD OUR FATHER, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

1. That our Pope, Bishops, Priests, Religious and Lay faithful may collaborate together in building a Church that lives by the values of Christ's teaching... we pray to the Lord.
2. That the leaders of the world may bravely stand for truth and justice, even in the face of opposition... we pray to the Lord.
3. That every lay member of the Church may recognise their mission of proclaiming the Gospel in words and deeds wherever they are... we pray to the Lord.
4. That families who have suffered due to the coronavirus may be touched by God's healing hand and have their faith strengthened through Jesus Christ the healer... we pray to the Lord.
5. That the Lord may hear the prayers we make in silence, especially for a good monsoon and protection from irregular weather conditions... (pause for 7 seconds)... we pray to the Lord.

Celebrant: Thank you, Heavenly Father, for having called us to work for your Kingdom and for listening to the prayers we have made through your Son Jesus, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Homily hints: Matthew 10:26-33

The Catholic Church in India represents a small minority; there are 22 million Catholic faithful in a country of 1.4 billion inhabitants. That is only 1.6 per cent! Yet, despite the small number, the Church's generous commitment within the fields of education, healthcare, social services, in the fight against poverty, and in the promotion of integral human development for the good of all has made the Church an institution that is recognised and appreciated by many.

But notwithstanding this contribution, the Church in India remains a target for fringe religious extremists, and is not spared abuse, harassment and violence of every kind.

It is largely the laity who, living in the world, fearlessly proclaim the Good News through their words and deeds. The laity must be influencers, bringing the love of God to bear on their workplaces and centres of learning, becoming catalysts of change in situations of injustice and hatred, and making the world truly a better place!

In today's Gospel, Jesus was not speaking of the spontaneous reaction of fear in the face of perceived danger. He was referring to the fear that controls a person's deliberate response in the face of such danger. At times, it can be helpful to avoid danger. At other times, perils need to be faced and endured for the sake of a greater good. Jesus was insisting that discipleship – and the hope of eternal life – would be dangerous, but that this danger was to be faced and borne courageously.

The Jewish mind and language regularly clarified points by means of doublets – emphasising a message by way of confirmation, or by way of contrast. Jesus' apparent warning to fear the one who can destroy soul and body may simply be Matthew's way to emphasise, by way of contrast, that physical death was not an ultimate evil, since risen life continues after death.

All the baptised are called to take part in the Church's life and mission. "Enabling everyone to participate is an essential ecclesial duty!" (Pope Francis at the Official launch of the Synod) It is also a day for all baptised Catholics to understand their purpose of involvement – not for power or glory or one's personal agenda! The purpose must be to build the kingdom of God – a kingdom of justice, peace and love. We must use our talents and time and identify the areas that most need our involvement.

On Laity Sunday, the Church wishes to acknowledge all the laity in the parish for their active role in and outside the Church. The Church exists because of the laity. The number of active laity and the quality of their dedication depends on Christian families. This is also the day to remind the laity - each and every one of the baptised members of the 'body of Christ' to be an active, contributing member, called to fulfill the mission of Jesus.

May the objectives of the Synod on Synodality be concretely expressed at every step of the synodal journey, encouraging real involvement on the part of one and all.