



With Gratitude and Trust

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I am very happy to be with and address you at the Papal Seminary, fondly called “Home of Love.” I am glad to hear that you have celebrated 125 years of fruitful and grace-filled existence. I join you in thanking God for His wondrous blessings.

Let me share with you some of my reflections, inspired by the motto of your Jubilee Celebration, “Looking Back with Gratitude, Looking Forward with Trust.”

1. Looking Back with Gratitude

This part of the motto reminds me of what St. Ignatius wanted us to beg for ‘to be stirred to profound gratitude so that we may love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things.’

You all have celebrated the 125th Jubilee Year recently. Your memories are thus fresh with the chronological history of the Papal Seminary and so I shall not repeat this. But I would like to take up for reflection, the words of Pope Leo XIII inscribed on his sacerdotal Jubilee medal: “Filii tui India, administri tibi salutis!” meaning, “Your own sons, O India, will be the heralds of your salvation!” Pope Leo XIII certainly had foresight and vision in making this statement. The mission of forming heralds of salvation for India was,

through the initiative of Archbishop Msgr Ladislaus Michael Zaleski, entrusted to the Jesuits. The late Archbishop Msgr Ladislaus Michael Zaleski left no stone unturned and toiled tirelessly and with determination to get the Papal Seminary started in Kandy in 1893.

In 1955, with the help of the then Jesuit Mission Superior of Pune, Rev. Fr Pius Geisel, SJ, the Papal Seminary was shifted to Pune. Pune is known for its educational and cultural heritage. Pune has also given birth to many social movements and many social activists born in Pune were moved and influenced by Christian missionaries.

When we glance through the annals of the birth and history of the Papal Seminary, we cannot resist thanking and praising God for His continual blessings and graces. Our praises, as said in the Common Preface IV, add nothing to His greatness, but our desire to praise and thank God is itself a grace from God. We thank God for the number of eminent priests and missionaries who have passed out from the portals of the Papal Seminary. Among them are four Cardinals and 75 Bishops and Archbishops serving the Church across India. We are grateful to God for them.

The Present Situation of Papal Seminary:

I hear that your community comprises of 193 members – staff and students from three different Rites, from 62 dioceses and four religious congregations. It is a mini-Church by itself. Yours is culturally a very rich community, blessed with multitalented and gifted Fathers and Brothers. I thank God for each one of you. It is really edifying to know that you, together with De Nobili College and JDV, reached out to the flood-affected victims in Kerala with seven truck-loads of food materials. Thirty-three of your Seminarians volunteered

to do rehabilitation work after the floods. Financially, you have also helped the people who were affected by the Cyclone 'GAJA' in Tamil Nadu. Your community also supports financially the education of students from your neighbourhood. Supporting education is a wonderful thing; it empowers them. I appreciate your involvement in pastoral and social ministries, especially your involvement in St. Anthony's parish, which is situated in the heart of Dharavi (Mumbai) one of the largest slums of Asia.

I am glad to hear that you are fostering a new form of governance – that of collaboration and networking. Formation in the Papal Seminary is a collaborative venture of Formators, Students and Support Staff. Your Formators are very student friendly and approachable, helping all of you to grow in the wisdom of the Lord and to strengthen your companionship for the mission. I appreciate your Living-Group approach. Your different academies, big or small in numbers appreciate, share and celebrate their culture with each other. These formation activities foster hands-on experiences of collaboration and networking will be very useful for you for your future ministries.

A good collaboration exists in the Papal Seminary between the Jesuits, the Diocesan staff and the CBCI. I am grateful to the Bishops for giving the Papal Seminary their best Priests as Formators. I am grateful especially to the Local Ordinary, His Lordship Bishop Thomas Dabre, for his continued support to the Seminary.

2. Looking Forward with Trust

The Church is facing challenges all over the world. These challenges are hampering the Mission of Christ. To meet or encounter these external challenges, we need to form ourselves well, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. We need to be prudent but at the same time, stand up for the truth. For meeting the internal challenges that we encounter at the personal or congregational or diocesan levels, I urge you to keep strengthening your spiritual and emotional lives. We cannot really encounter the external challenges unless and until we deeply encounter the internal challenges, which are within our jurisdiction.

To draw insights and inspiration for your Formation and Mission, please keep reflecting on the Church's documents, namely, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, *Laudato Si* and *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

I invite you, as Seminarians and Priests to have your lives characterized by Margins, Magis and Discernment.

- **Margins:** Heeding the advice of Pope Francis, we are invited “go to the peripheries,” or to the margins, to take up ministries that are challenging, where no one else will dare to go. We are called to stand for the underprivileged, migrants and women who are exploited by the powerful. The Dalits and tribals need to have a special place in your hearts.
- **Magis:** You can accomplish this if you have the spirit of Magis, which always seeks the Greater Glory of God in everything you do. The spirit of the magis invites us to do “more” and to do it “better”. Mediocrity has no place in the spirituality of the magis. Magis

does not lead you to compete with others. With others, we are in collaboration and cooperation. What God wants to foster among us and with people are collaboration and networking.

- **Discernment:** We need to foster discernment, individually and in common because we are doing the Mission of God and it cannot be done without the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Our God is always at work. We need to work with and for Him and for His people who are most in need. To work together in a spirit of collaboration and networking, we need to inculcate a spirit of discernment, individually and in common.

Conclusion

The universal Church needs you, dear Brothers. You have St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit to come to India and the patron of the Missions as the Patron of this Seminary. We are invited to be, after our formation in Papal Seminary, dedicated and committed priests and missionaries like St. Francis Xavier, who gave up family, wealth and his personal desires to give his life for Jesus and embark on mission journey to India, in obedience to his Superior, St. Ignatius. He was humble and obedient though he came from a noble family and was well educated.

I take this opportunity to thank the Church and all the Ecclesiastical Authorities for their trust in and support for the Jesuits. I thank the Provincial of South Asia, Fr. George Pattery, for guiding and accompanying you in this Formation for Mission. I thank and appreciate Fr. Rector and every Staff Member for making sincere efforts to accompany and form you to be the kind of priests that the Church in India

requires today. I am also grateful to the support staff of the Papal Seminary for their commitment, dedication and collaboration in this important mission.

Dear Brothers, I wish each of you God's blessings and assure you of my prayers and support. My sincere desire is to see you as Priests and Missionaries imbued with the spirit of the magis, with a deep love for the people of your dioceses and respect for your Local Ordinaries. Collaboration in the diocese and with other dioceses and with all people of good will is, perhaps, the only way to proceed in the face of the challenges we encounter today. We, the Jesuits, will always stand by you: we are partners in the Mission of God.

As I end my message, I would like to thank and pray for the repose of the souls of the Seminary staff who have gone to their heavenly abode in recent years: Fr. Lorenzo Fernando, Fr. Francis Pereira, Fr. Noel Seth and Fr. Kurien. I also thank and pray for the repose of the souls of our departed support staff: Mr Juel Baa and Mr Solomon Dungdung.

Do pray for me and the Society of Jesus. May you be blessings for India, the Church and the world! Thank you!

(Talk of Rev Fr Superior General to the Papal Seminary Community, Pune on March 6, 2019. Staff -Jesuits and diocesan-, students of Philosophy and Theology from 62 dioceses and four religious congregations – totally 193.)

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