

Circular

No. 06/2026

From Bishop James Patteril, C.M.I.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we prepare to celebrate the Feast of St. Thomas, our father in faith, I warmly greet all of you in the Lord.

The Feast of St. Thomas is not merely a remembrance of the Apostle who brought the Christian faith to India. It is also an opportunity for each of us to renew our own faith. The life of St. Thomas teaches us that faith grows through a personal encounter with the risen Lord. Although he initially struggled with doubt, his encounter with Jesus transformed him into a courageous witness who proclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Today, our families and society face many challenges. Materialism, individualism and indifference toward faith are increasing. In such circumstances, Christian families must become places where faith is lived and nurtured. Parents have the primary responsibility of handing on the faith to their children. Family prayer, reading and reflecting on the Word of God, and participation in the sacraments should become regular practices in every home.

Jesus tells us, "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13–16). These words remind us that Christians are called not only to preserve their own faith but also to bear witness to Christ through their lives. Our words, actions, honesty, love and service should reflect the presence of Christ in society.

As we celebrate the Feast of St. Thomas this year, let each of us renew our commitment to the Gospel. Let our families become domestic churches, our parishes centers of vibrant faith, and our lives authentic witnesses to Christ.

"...My peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you' (John 20:25). This is the great gift of the Risen Lord. In this way, the peace that springs from the Resurrection becomes a source of strength for our personal lives, our families and society. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Risen Christ grants us his peace, enabling us to become witnesses to the Gospel and builders of peace in the world.

Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Dilexit Nos* ('He Loved Us'), reminds us that devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not merely a private act of piety but a way of life rooted in love, mercy and compassion. The devotion invites us to contemplate the inexhaustible love flowing from the Heart of Christ and to shape our lives according to that love. As we meditate on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our own hearts are transformed, becoming more loving, forgiving and compassionate. Through this devotion, our witness to Christ also becomes more authentic (cf. John 5:5–6).

The month of June is especially dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Therefore, every family should make a special effort to deepen this devotion during the month. Parents should encourage their children to participate actively in these devotions. Family prayer, acts of

charity and regular participation in the sacraments should become part of this spiritual journey. In this way, our homes will become places where Christ's love is experienced and shared. At the same time, we should strive to make our hearts resemble the Heart of Jesus, becoming instruments of love and peace for others."

May our homes become places where the peace of Christ reigns, where every member of the family experiences God's love, and where all grow together in faith. Let us strive to make our homes reflections of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by cultivating prayer, mutual love, forgiveness, sacrifice, humility, obedience, and works of charity. In today's world, marked by division and conflict, Christian families are called to become witnesses of reconciliation and peace.

As we celebrate the Feast of St. Thomas, let us resolve to renew our faith in the Risen Lord and courageously bear witness to him in our daily lives. Through the intercession of St. Thomas, may our families become stronger in faith and may each of us become true disciples of Christ. Let us pray that our homes may increasingly reflect the values of the Gospel and be filled with **faith + hope + love + peace**, becoming living signs of God's kingdom in the world.

With prayers and blessings,

+ Mar James Patteril, CMI
Bishop of Belthangady

Belthangady
May 28, 2026

Note: This circular is to be read in all churches on **June 28, 2026**.