

Report on the Online Retreat Session – St. Thomas Day

Date: 3rd July 2021 (Saturday)

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Mode: Online

Targeted Participants: Students and Faculty Members of St. Francis Institutions

Number of Participants: Around 150

Resource Person: Rev. Thomas George, Priest of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church

1. Introduction

In celebration of St. Thomas Day, an online retreat session was organized on 3rd July 2021 (Saturday), from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM for the students and faculty members of St. Francis Institutions. The retreat was led by Rev. Thomas George, Priest of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, and aimed at deepening students' faith, strengthening their spiritual awareness, and encouraging active participation in church and community service.

Despite the online format, the retreat was highly engaging, incorporating music, dance, interactive discussions, and group activities, making it a memorable spiritual experience for all participants.

2. Objectives of the Retreat

- To spread knowledge of faith among students and help them become better Christians.
- To motivate students to work alongside churches in mission and community service.

3. Key Highlights of the Retreat

- The session commenced with an introduction about St. Thomas, the apostle of India, emphasizing his contributions to Christianity in the country.
- Rev. Thomas George made the retreat lively with songs and dance, performed along with the Hakuna Matata band.
- The theme "Man Go-Fruiti" was explored, highlighting that Man, as God's marvelous creation, must go forth and bear fruit in the Lord.
- Through the song "Miracle - The Christ in Me," the importance of oxygen and breathing, especially during the pandemic, was emphasized, urging students to appreciate life's blessings that are often overlooked.
- Interactive ice-breaking activities were conducted in breakout groups, making the session more engaging despite being held online.

- To explain the Gospel miracle of Jesus feeding 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish, an activity was conducted where students imagined how much water a single coin could hold, reinforcing the idea of faith and divine provision.
- Father provided a thought-provoking explanation on sin, describing it as something one feels ashamed to share with their parents, encouraging students to reflect on their moral choices.

4. Outcome of the Retreat

- Students gained a renewed sense of faith and were encouraged to live a Christ-centered life.
- The session deepened their understanding of the Gospel and the importance of gratitude and service.
- Participants actively engaged in the activities, despite the online format, and found the session inspiring and spiritually uplifting.

5. Conclusion

The online retreat session led by Rev. Thomas George successfully combined spiritual reflection, engaging activities, and faith-based learning. The retreat not only strengthened students' Christian values but also encouraged them to apply these teachings in their daily lives and service to society.

Such faith-centered programs play a crucial role in guiding students towards a life of integrity, compassion, and devotion.

