



# Pastoral letter from the Moderator



May-June 2025

*Dearly Beloved in Christ,*

Among the many treasured verses in Bengali literature, one that continues to resonate profoundly is Poem No. 20 from Naibedya by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The verse reads:

**‘Bestow Thy flag upon whom Thou wilt—grant him strength to bear it; Grant him the devotion to endure the noble suffering of Thy service.’**

In these immortal lines, Tagore eloquently expresses the essence of his life philosophy. Though a follower of the Brahmo faith—believing in the One Supreme God—he had wholly surrendered his life into the hands of the Divine. He neither wished for an existence devoid of sorrow nor pursued fleeting happiness, but rather sought from the Almighty the strength and courage to embrace pain, endure trials, and remain steadfast in his devotion.

He further prays:

**‘I therefore seek, with heart full to the brim, deliverance from sorrow through sorrow itself; I do not shun the gifts of anguish from Thy hand, nor do I yearn for deliverance. Let grief be the crown upon my head—if only Thou grant me devotion.’**

Here, we see manifest his unwavering faith and surrender to the Supreme Creator. For Tagore, true meaning in life lay not in ease or abundance, but in a life wholly dedicated to the Divine. And through his words, he beckons us toward that same realisation—to live lives of patient endurance, daily practice, and spiritual discipline, rooted in faith, devotion, and awareness of our present reality.

This poem, in particular, holds deep significance for those of us who are consecrated for the service of God and humanity. If we could but recall these lines once each day, we too may taste a measure of immortality. Despite being a man of wealth and stature, a Zamindar by inheritance, Tagore’s own life bore the scars of sorrow—personal losses, trials, and pain that no status could shield him from. And so it is with us, ordinary mortals. Life brings with it suffering, anguish, and unceasing challenges.

In our vocations too, there is no evading hardship. Pain is not a detour but part of the journey. Let us therefore wear these afflictions like a jewel on the forehead—with total surrender, dedicated perseverance, and resolute trust in the Divine. Toward the close of this poem, Tagore offers one more heartfelt plea:

**‘Bind me in whatever cords Thou please, But keep my soul free—ever turned towards Thee.**



**Lay me down in the dust—make me sacred with the dust of Thy feet. Let me forget the world beneath me, But never let me forget Thee.’**

He did not seek monastic detachment from the world. Rather, he longed to live amidst the sufferings and complexities of the household life, finding meaning even there. He desired not escape but fullness—through struggle, he kept the path to the Divine ever open.

The life of our Lord Jesus Christ too bears a profound affinity with this poetic vision. Though He lived not in a household, He embraced every challenge of the human journey. He did not retreat an inch, even unto death. He exhorted His disciples thus:

**“If any wish to come after me, let them take up their cross and follow me” –(Mark 8:34).**

The hymn translated by Mr Nripendra Chandra Biswas echoes this call beautifully:

**‘Keep me near the Cross, Lord Jesus, Where the healing stream of grace ever flows. Awake my soul by the Cross, in faith, in love, in hope— Till I, too, am gathered into heaven’s eternal fold.’**

That is to say, through sorrow, pain, and tribulation, we may—like Christ—press on in faith, love, and hope toward the heavenly kingdom.

Fr. Mahendra Chandra Chakrabarty Another saintly soul, a renunciant of high regard, once composed a humble yet profound prayer:

**‘With folded hands I beg at Thy feet, O Lord, Redeemer of the fallen— I seek not riches, nor wealth, nor kingdoms— Let me ever remain a lowly, undeserving servant. Grant me pain, grant me sorrow, but keep me from being lulled into slumber by false joy.’**

Dear friends in Christ, let us take inspiration from the luminous lives of such sages and saints. May we, too, dedicate our sufferings, our burdens, our trials and present-day challenges to God—with devotion, with faith, and with love. In so doing, may our lives attain meaning, fulfilment, and divine purpose.

**May the Almighty be our strength and companion always.**

**Amen.**

**† The Most Revd. Samuel Sunil Mankhin**