



Faith in Freedom

A service to celebrate our beautiful country's 78th Independence Day

P: *For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. – Galatians 5:13*

Thank you dear Creator God that freedom, much like grace, is a gift from you. Help us honour You with the freedom we draw from being in communion with You. In our every step, help us to combine our faith and our freedom to draw perseverance and hope. May we be inspired by the strength, passion and determination demonstrated by our forebears, and to lead our nation today with the same virtues as we step into the future to experience freedom in newer ways. Turn our hearts toward the vision of family of nations in the world: to understand and respect the ways of others, to offer friendship, and to find safety and common good of all. May our peace as a nation rise from within so that we may make a difference to all those we come across. Amen

Opening Hymn

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father and I, Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart;
O King of glory, my treasure Thou art.

Commented [L1]:

Eleanor Hull, 1912

Kauma

P. †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

C. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

P. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

C. Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

P. Holy art thou, O God.

C. Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

P. Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

C. O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us.

(To be repeated thrice)

P. O Lord, have mercy on us.

C. O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.

P. O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.

C. Glory be to you, O God.

P. Glory be to you, O Creator.

C. Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us sing together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

**All: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Forever. Amen.**

(Cong. to be seated)

1st Lesson: Exodus 23:1-9

2nd Lesson: 1st Corinthians 13:1-13

Meditation – A Story of Independence

*Don't limit a child to your own learning, for she was born in another time. –
Rabindranath Tagore*

A baking hot day in early August in Bombay, not too long ago. An old Irani gentleman and his granddaughter sit in the shade of his café, underneath the least erratic fan. The little girl turns to her grandfather with a quizzical look on her face, and asks him a question....

"Dada, what is an Indian?"

I pause. Blink. Clear my throat. What do I tell her? Which of the many possible answers should I give to that simple, innocent question?

I take a moment to think. "Why do you ask?"

She looks around the café, as if it's obvious. "Well, everyone speaks different languages, people wear different clothes, and we all eat different food... but what makes us all Indian?"

Rather humbly, I realise that I can't give her a quick answer. How do you sum up a nation of 1.4 billion people for a child?

Her curiosity, however, must be nurtured; her sense of wonder and openness preserved. I must think of an answer.

So, I talk. I begin by telling her of the many people that have shaped our landscape, of the rise and fall of emperors and empresses, the religions that have waxed and waned, of the laws that have been passed. I describe the influence of the British and how their control over India made us feel robbed of our freedom and basic rights. I speak of Bapu, the father of the nation, who taught us that strength and violence were not the same thing, and taught us the need to live in harmony with one another. As I delve further and deeper into the influences on being Indian, I find myself sharing my own memories of the events that have shaped our history.

I recall the feelings of oppression and exploitation that many felt under the Britishers, and then the relief at independence. Then it was Prime Minister Pandit Nehru that gave voice to these feelings in his declaration on 14th August 1947:

"At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

I remember feeling overwhelming emotion – we all did. It was a time of complete change. Together, we swept away British rule and ushered in a birth of the Indian nation.

But I shall forever remember this time in history for it lurches between hope and dark despair. As India and Pakistan were pulled asunder by the very movements that sought to create a nation, the forging of our identity became stained with blood.

If she is seeking an answer to the question: "What is an Indian?" then I think my answer should be this: an Indian is Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bihari, Malayalee, Tamil....; One who is Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Zoroastrian, and Buddhist. We are all Indian and together we are India.

If the hope and despair of 1947 taught me something, it is that the Indian identity is all-encompassing, and that when we allow our differences to become prejudices, to become walls that divide us, distrust and violence accumulate and we undermine the very idea of India.

After all this talking-talking, I ask her, gently: "So, now, beti – what do you think Indian is?"

And she answered: "*Dada, it is us and everyone else.*"

<https://www.dishoom.com/journal/a-story-of-independence/>

Hymn

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

The Lord hath promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.
Lyrics: John Newton (1725-1807)

L: Then that is freedom

When the political elite don't fear being questioned
And can defend their actions with truth or reason
Then that is freedom

When the farmer does not have to plead to live
And the hand that reaches out, is not to take but to give
Then that is freedom

When every individual has a right to his God
And religion expresses love, but does not champion god
Then that is freedom

When creed and the colour on skin
Does not bleed the mind to differ in
Then that is freedom

When everyone has a right to school and study
And no child or adult ever cries hungry
Then that is freedom

When the water and air is not poisoned
And laughter is not masked or hidden
Then that is freedom

When livelihood can depend on Government
Not choked in taxes and archaic law enforcement
Then that is freedom

When the elderly can still pursue happiness
Not wait for death in dark silence
Then that is freedom

When science is for healing and the means to joy
And the sword and gun is an outdated toy
Then that is freedom

When the flag is folded and the anthem has been sung
When it still sings true, in hope, with every new day begun
Then that is freedom.

(Cong. to stand)

Prayer of Confession

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

L: Lord of all, we recognize that true freedom comes through you, that our ultimate loyalty belongs to you and that our real identity is bestowed upon us by you. Every day is a gift, every breath a moment to give you praise, every hour one in which to live what you command.

C: Dear Lord, we confess, sometimes we disrespect our country and people by not recognising and acknowledging them. Forgive us.
On this day when we celebrate our country's independence, we give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in this land: the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; the ability to speak what is on our minds, even when what we have to say is contrary to popular opinion or public policy; and the freedom to worship.
As we commemorate this Independence Day, we remember that all people are created equal, because you, our Lord has created us all and called us good. May our actions, laws and hearts reflect the character of our Creator, who is perfectly Good. Amen.

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Intercessory Prayers

L: Dear Lord, we pray for all our leaders – we pray especially for the President, the Prime Minister, the Governor, the Chief Minister and all those in offices of the Governments. Guide them in their duties and help them put all their trust in you as they govern our great nation. Give them purity in their intentions, and godliness in their convictions. We pray that you surround every leader with wise counsel, that they would be humble and kind, patient and loving through their actions and words. Energize their spirits and bodies physically and spiritually, protect and provide for their families. Inspire them to carry out great deeds for the country.

C: *To be Sung*

**Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing,
if our God our Father be.**

L: On this day, we lift up to You all who serve in our Armed Forces, who serve as the centurion did, as ones who are in and under authority—brave men and women who risk their lives for their country. Remind us of those who are far from home and loved ones, who on this day sail or fly or walk in harm's way and keep them always close to you. Where there is combat keep them brave in the face of danger. Hold in your loving hands the families of those who are far away. Grant them comfort in their anxieties. And comfort those who grieve, because their loved one has passed away. Strengthen those who carry the wounds of war, visible and invisible, and be to them a sure presence.

C: *To be Sung*

**Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst make its wonders grow
Healed with love you saved so many
Giving joy to those below.**

L: We pray for the disaster struck regions of Kerala and other parts of India. May your hand be raised to bring calm over the chaos. Thank you for the rescue forces especially the many Divisions of the army that are working tirelessly to save your people. Give them light in darkness, hope in hopelessness.

We ask that you surround this country and cover us with your mighty hand. In a world that is constantly battling, we ask that you give us the insight to respect our past, acknowledge our present and look towards our future. Help us to uphold our rich cultural heritage and deep roots. We ask that your security be our stronghold in times of doubt and may your promises ring loud in every ear. We ask for your help to set aside our differences and look to the greater cause, the cause of Christ. Let freedom be what we move to and faith be what we come from. We ask that you help us to truly live a life of love. We know that this is only possible through the power of your Spirit, so we pray for your Spirit to move across our land.

C: *To be Sung*

**Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.**

Author: James Edmeston (1821)

Gospel Reading

P: †Peace be with you all.

C: May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by **Evangelist Luke**.

C: Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

P: In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

C: So, we believe and affirm.

Luke 6:20-26

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, **†'Peace be with you all'**)

C: And with you also. We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

The Nicene Creed- to be sung

We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father before all world; Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified† also for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; suffered and died and was buried. The third day He rose again, by His Father's holy will, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead and of His kingdom there will be no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and the apostles. We believe in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.

Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Thanksgiving

Joyful, joyful, we adore You,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You,
Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You,
Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,

Stars and angels sing around You,
Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Praising You eternally!

Mortals, join the mighty chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
Joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.
Henry Van Dyke (1907)

Announcements

Offertory

The MEG Pipe Band will play during the Offertory

Speech by **Major General Vinod Tom Mathew**, GOC Karnataka and Kerala Sub Area of Indian Army

Honouring of our soldiers and their families

L: We Salute our brave

Many families have lost their dear sons and daughters who fought, not for themselves, but for us, for our country. We salute these great people who inspire us to take on greater challenges and make us proud to be Indian. Today while we honour their martyrdom, we take this moment to 'celebrate' what they have lived by - their courage, their conviction, their valour, their passion, their unflagging spirit and their supreme selflessness.

A brief about the soldier is read and then a family member comes forward to be honoured. One verse from the hymn 'Abide with me' will be sung as each family member comes forward

5 Families will be honoured

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings:
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour:
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness:
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Lyrics: Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)
Music: William Henry Monk (1823-1889)

Introduction of Maj Gen Vinod Tom Mathew - Rev Jacob P Thomas
Brief Speech by Maj Gen Vinod Tom Mathew, GOC Karnataka and Kerala Sub
Area of Indian Army

(Cong to stand)

Closing Prayer

P: We thank you, Almighty God, for this country—our sweet land of freedom, a haven of hope and above all our home and inheritance.

C: We consecrate this day to the celebration of the sacred ideals of justice and independence, which brought it to birth. Help us to remember that freedom does not automatically perpetuate itself, that we have to work at it, nurture it, protect it, and pray for it.

Defend our liberties and help us stand as one united nation, birthed from many cultures and tongues. In times of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the days of trouble do not allow our trust in you to fail. Amen.

Benediction

May the strength of God sustain us; may the power of God preserve us; may the hands of God protect us; may the way of God direct us; may the love of God go with us this day and forever. In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy spirit. Amen.

Kiss of Peace and Closing Hymn

We are one in the Spirit,
We are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit,
We are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

And they'll know we are Christians
By our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will work with each other,
We will work side by side,
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side,
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride:

Peter Scholte, 1966

The National Anthem

"Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaka Jaya Hay
Bharat Bhagya Vidhata
Punjaba, Sind, Gujarata, Maratha
Dravida Utkala Banga
Vindhya Himachala Yamuna Ganga
Ucchala Jaladhi Taranga
Tava Shubha Name Jage
Tava Shubha Ashisha Mange
Gahe Tava Jaya Gatha
Jana Gana Mangaladayaka Jaya Hay
Bharata Bhagya Vidhata
Jaya Hay ! Jaya Hay! Jaya Hay!
Jaya,Jaya,Jaya,Jaya Hay"

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The MEG Pipe Band will play after the service in the Church Compound

PROGRAM

Sunday, 11th August 2024

9.30 AM Choir and MEG Pipe Band to take their places for sound check.
9.50 AM Congregation to be seated
9.55 AM **Maj Gen Vinod Tom Mathew and family to be ushered into the Church**
10.00AM Service Begins

The families will be honoured after the Announcements and offertory
Brief intro of the Major General will be read by Rev Jacob Thomas
Maj Gen Mathews will address the Congregation after honouring of soldiers

11.30 AM MEG Pipe Band will also play a few songs in the Church Compound after the Service

High tea will be served