



Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

Bishop George Rajendran sdb
Diocese of Thuckalay

Bishop's House, P B No: 12, Thuckalay PO,
Kanya kumari Dt- 629 175, Tamil Nadu, India

Ref. No. Priests/GR/164/2024

30 November 2024

Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings and prayerful wishes from Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

We are entering December, a month of festivities in the Church - the season of Annunciation, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, and, finally, the solemnity of the birth of Jesus Christ. We shall begin the new liturgical season of Annunciation on 1 December and also commence the jubilee year 2025 on 29 December.

However, as we confront the challenging reality of several of our Catholics leaving the Church to join other denominations, declining church attendance and the growing secularisation of our society, I want to dedicate this circular to this issue. I write to you with both concern and hope. Our focus must turn decisively toward the celebration of the liturgy in our churches and the upkeep of the family, which is the domestic church, where the seeds of faith are first planted and nurtured. The family remains the primary setting where our Catholic faith is lived, shared, and transmitted to future generations. Strengthening Catholic families is not just one pastoral priority among many - it is fundamental to the future of our Church.

The Challenges

Our families today navigate a complex landscape that our predecessors could hardly have imagined. Many parents struggle to transmit the faith to their children while balancing demanding work schedules, financial pressures, and the omnipresent influence of digital media. In multicultural neighbourhoods, our families often find themselves as minorities, their Catholic identity challenged or diluted by the surrounding cultural diversity. While this diversity can enrich our understanding and practice of faith, it can also lead to confusion or indifference if not properly accompanied by solid Catholic formation.

Moreover, we observe that many of our Catholics possess a basic faith founded on traditional practices and customs. Yet, to navigate contemporary challenges, they need a deeper theological understanding and personal relationship with Christ. Their superficial faith makes them vulnerable to the appeals of secularism or to simply drifting away from the regular practice of their faith. The faith formation that we offer them may not be sufficient, and the celebration of our liturgies may not be meeting their spiritual requirements. Hence, quite a few of our Catholics may be taking spiritual solace in other denominations where they find spiritual fulfilment.

The Parish Priest as Shepherd and Guide

Against these challenges, dear Fathers, I call upon you to embrace the pastoral care model exemplified by St Paul anew to retain our flock. His model of pastoral care offers us a profound template for accompanying families. In his letters, we see how he formed deep, personal bonds with his communities – calling them

his children for whom he endured the pains of childbirth until Christ was formed in them (Gal 4:19). He did not merely preach from a distance but shared his very life with his disciples (1 Thess 2:8). Notice how he adapted his approach to each community's needs: offering gentle encouragement to the anxious Thessalonians, firm correction to the divided Corinthians, and deep theological teaching to the Romans. He remembered people by name, acknowledged their specific contributions, and showed concern for their circumstances. Most importantly, he maintained ongoing relationships through letters, prayers, and personal visits, demonstrating that pastoral care requires consistent, long-term accompaniment. Like a father, both gentle and firm (1 Thess 2:7-8, 11-12), he combined tender care with clear teaching, always pointing his disciples toward deeper conversion to Christ.

Like St Paul, your role must extend beyond the administrative duties of parish management to become a true spiritual father to the families entrusted to your care. This means investing time in personal relationships with families. Make regular home visits a priority in your ministry. Create opportunities for informal interactions beyond sacramental preparations. Learn to know the families in your parish, not just their names but their stories, struggles, and aspirations. Be present at significant family moments - not just the sacramental celebrations but also in times of crisis, illness, or loss.

Understanding and accompanying families requires patience and empathy. The situation in each family is unique, and the journey of faith follows its own pace. Some may be dealing with mixed marriages, others with children who have left the Church, and still others with the challenges of single parenthood. Your role is to meet them where they are, offering guidance and support tailored to their specific circumstances.

Building Deeper Foundations of Faith

To strengthen our families' faith, we must move beyond maintaining traditional practices to fostering a loving, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This requires implementing systematic faith formation programmes that engage entire families, not just children. Consider Strengthening the *Uraviams*, organising regular couples' retreats, and parent formation sessions that address both spiritual and practical aspects of Catholic family life. I remember talking to one of our priests. In the evenings, he would invite a family to the parish, pray with them, have a personal conversation, and then share a meal together. It's truly inspiring and heartwarming.

Encourage families to make their homes truly domestic churches. Help them establish regular family prayer times, create sacred spaces in their homes, and celebrate the liturgical seasons in meaningful ways. Provide resources and guidance for parents to confidently discuss faith with their children and answer their questions about God and the Church. This should be the matter when you visit families.

In our multicultural and religious context, help families see their Catholic identity not as a barrier to social integration but as a gift to be shared. Teach them to engage with other cultures and beliefs from a position of confident faith, able to appreciate what is good in other traditions while remaining firmly rooted in Catholic truth.

Hence, I urge you to consider the following concrete actions in your parishes:

Make the celebration of our liturgy in our parish churches more appealing and satisfy the psychological and spiritual nourishment of our people. This calls for creativity, spiritual depth, and greater commitment to prepare them.

Establish a parish family ministry team focused on supporting and strengthening family life. We need to ensure that this team reflects the cultural diversity of the parish community. It should also include married couples who can share their own experience and relate to the challenges faced by other families.

Develop a systematic family catechesis programme that involves parents in their children's religious education and simultaneously provides adult faith formation. This should include regular workshops on Catholic parenting, marriage enrichment, and family spirituality. For example, you could organise sacramental preparation programmes where parents and children learn together, ensuring parents are equipped to be primary catechists. Some of the above programmes can be taken up by the departments. The Catechetical department may give more support and guidance to this program.

Create opportunities for families to build communion with one another through regular social events, family retreats, and support groups. Please pay special attention to including families from different cultural backgrounds, helping them integrate while preserving their unique traditions.

Institute regular home blessing visits as occasions for pastoral conversations and understanding family needs. Use these visits to identify families that may need additional support or accompaniment.

The Power of Personal Accompaniment

Remember, my dear Fathers, that your witness of joy in your priestly vocation and your evident love for Christ and his Church speak powerfully to families. When they see in you a man of prayer, a dedicated shepherd, and a compassionate friend, they are more likely to trust your guidance and open their hearts to deeper conversion.

Like St Paul, be prepared to “become all things to all people” (1 Cor 9:22) for the sake of the Gospel. This means being available to families beyond office hours, being patient with their growth in faith, and always maintaining an attitude of welcome and understanding, even when families fall short of ideal Catholic living.

Let us entrust this vital mission to the Holy Family of Nazareth, asking their intercession for all our families and you, their shepherds. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, who pondered God's word in her heart, help our families treasure the gift of faith. May St Joseph, a model of fatherly care, inspire you in your pastoral fatherhood! May Jesus, who shared family life at Nazareth, bless your efforts to build up the domestic church in our Eparchy!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Pastoral Council at Sangamam: The second meeting of the seventh Pastoral Council was held at Sangamam on 1 November 2024. The inaugural session began at 9:45 AM with a prayer. Mrs. Juliet, the Joint Secretary, welcomed all the members, and Mr. Shonic Regan, the Joint Secretary, presented the report of the previous council meeting. I presided over the meeting. Following the inaugural session, the resource person of the day, Mr. Eugin, President of the Legion of Mary of the Diocese of Kottar, addressed the members on the topic “The Role of the Laity in Building up the Local Church—the Diocese.” Drawing from Church documents and the Bible, he elaborated on the rights and duties of the laity in the Diocese and highlighted the importance of fostering Christian families rooted in sacramental grace. After the input session, the council members engaged in discussions on the key topics introduced by me during the presidential address. I drew the council's attention to a concerning trend: over the years, many families and individuals from our parishes have either left the Church, joined other faiths, or become indifferent toward the Church and its leadership. Additionally, two other significant topics were introduced: The participation

of the laity in the missionary work of the Diocese. Exploring financial resources for the construction of the cathedral.

The council members were divided into seven groups, focusing on the following areas: Liturgy, Catechism, Youth Apostolate, Evangelization, Education, Public Welfare, and Family Apostolate. In the afternoon session, these groups engaged in discussions based on the questions provided for the three topics. The findings of each group were presented in the common forum, followed by a collective discussion. The meeting concluded at 3:30 PM with a vote of thanks delivered by Mr. John, the Secretary. I express my gratitude to Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, the Director, and his team for their excellent coordination in organizing the second meeting of the seventh Pastoral Council.

‘Varnam’ Competition at Kalluvilai: The 9th edition of VARNAM, an inter-district painting and drawing competition organized by KKSSS, was held on 08 November 2024, celebrating National and International Children’s Day. Students from 35 schools in Kanyakumari district competed in two categories: Drawing (Grades IV-VI) and Painting (Grades VII-X), showcasing their artistic talents. The event featured an inaugural address by Rev. Fr. Michael Arokiyaswamy SDB, emphasizing creativity, and an informative session by Rev. Fr. Nelson on the dangers of addiction. Mrs. Jenusha Ajith, President of Mulagumoodu Panchayat, graced the concluding ceremony, congratulating winners and praising the event’s impact. Prizes and shields were awarded, marking the event as a celebration of creativity and social awareness. I thank Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil for the successful coordination of *Varnam*.

‘Kitchen Garden’ workshop at Pilankarai: On 08 November 2024, KKSSS organized a workshop on “Kitchen Garden” at Pilankarai to promote organic food cultivation among women. Led by Mrs. Hemalet, an Agriculture Consultant from Nagercoil, the session focused on the growing trend of urban kitchen gardening, particularly using pots in apartments. The workshop, attended by 53 participants, provided practical insights into starting and maintaining vegetable gardens in limited spaces.

28th Diocesan Day Celebrations: In commemoration of the Diocesan Foundation Day on 11 November, the Diocese celebrated its 28th Diocesan Day on Sunday, 10 November 2024. For the first time, and in contrast to previous years, the celebration took place at the parish level with the participation of the entire faithful. In preparation for the Diocesan Day, chain adoration was conducted in all parishes and convents, which greatly contributed to the spiritual renewal of the faithful. On Sunday, the Diocesan Day was observed in every parish with the solemn celebration of the Holy Qurbana. Before the Qurbana, a special introduction highlighted the significance of the day, followed by a symbolic offertory procession. Representatives lit a lamp, and additional prayers were recited during the Karosoosa. The Holy Qurbana was followed by a public meeting during which the Diocesan annual report, prepared by the Chancellor, Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, was presented either in video/audio format or read aloud. Complementing this, students performed cultural programmes focusing on the theme “The Role of the Diocese in Fostering Parish Communities and Strengthening the Faith.” At the conclusion of the event, each parish provided meals or refreshments, depending on their convenience.

I celebrated the Diocesan Day on 11 November 2024 at Sacred Heart Church, Pallikonam. The parish community was well-prepared for the occasion, and the Parish Priest, Fr. Luka CMI, had meticulously organized everything in advance. My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to all the parish priests for their dedicated efforts in preparing the faithful and organizing the Diocesan Day celebrations at the parish level with great enthusiasm. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to Fr. Justin Cheruvilil and the Liturgical Commission for preparing the materials for the liturgical celebrations on this special day.

Visit of His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry: Our beloved shepherd, the Major Archbishop Emeritus of the Syro-Malabar Church and our first bishop, Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, visited our

Diocese from 15 to 22 November 2024. He was warmly received by Fr. Chancellor at Trivandrum railway station on 15 November, and on the way to Thuckalay, he was accorded a grand reception at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu, in my presence.

16 November 2024 (Saturday): In the morning, the Cardinal addressed the priests and religious during a general audience at Sangamam. In the afternoon, he presided over the consecration ceremony of Christ the King Church, Paraicode. That evening, he participated in a dinner at the Bishop's House, joined by the bishops of Kanyakumari District and several prominent politicians from his time.

17 November 2024 (Sunday): The Cardinal celebrated the feast-day Holy Qurbana at Christ the King Church, Palappallam, in the morning. In the afternoon, he attended the concluding meeting of the CML Rally, where he addressed the students and the faithful at Padanthalumoodu. In the evening, the priests and religious of Padanthalumoodu Forane gathered at Padanthalumoodu and shared dinner with the Cardinal.

18 November 2024 (Monday): The Cardinal celebrated Holy Qurbana at the LSDP Home, Perumchilampu, and spent time visiting the inmates. The rest of the morning was devoted to personal meetings with priests, sisters, and laity. At 5:00 PM, he addressed the Vincent de Paul members at VAAN, Aasaripallam. For supper, he joined the parishioners of St. Alphonsa Church, Nagercoil.

19 November 2024 (Tuesday): Holy Qurbana was celebrated at the CMC Provincial House, Thuckalay. In the morning, he met with the 'Thuckalay Friends' of various religions. He then visited St. Martin de Porres Church, Kazhuvanthittai, and blessed the faithful. Lunch was hosted at Nambikkai Alayam. In the afternoon, he greeted the pioneering laity of the diocese at Padanthalumoodu. For dinner, he joined the priests of Thuckalay-Pilankalai Forane at KKSSS, Kalluvilai.

20 November 2024 (Wednesday): The Cardinal visited the FCC Provincial House, Azhakiyamandapam, and blessed the newly elected Provincial Team. He then visited St. Thomas Church, Palugal, and blessed the faithful. In the afternoon, he visited Karunai Illam, Nithiravilai, and later celebrated the feast-day Holy Qurbana at Christ the King Church, Christurajapuram.

21 November 2024 (Thursday): Holy Qurbana was celebrated at the SABS Provincial House, Soosaipuram. He visited the parish, school, and college at Soosaipuram. Lunch was hosted at DNN, Karode. In the afternoon, he visited and blessed the faithful at Thettivilai, Manjalumoodu, Mukkoottukal, and Bengiri Parishes and the SH Convent, Mukkoottukal. He concluded the day by greeting the brothers at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal, and had dinner with them.

22 November 2024 (Friday): The Cardinal visited the Sychar Resource Centre, Kozhipporvilai, and after lunch at the Bishop's House, departed for Kerala.

Cardinal Mar George Alencherry expressed his joy and gratitude for the warm reception he received throughout the Diocese. He witnessed the fruits of the seeds he had planted during his tenure as our first bishop. For us, it was a God-given opportunity to spend cherished moments with our beloved shepherd. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Curia members for their meticulous coordination and to all the priests and sisters for their wholehearted cooperation in making this visit a grand success.

Priests and Religious Gathering at Sangamam: To express our gratitude to the Major Archbishop Emeritus of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, and to extend a warm welcome to our Diocese, the priests and religious gathered at Sangamam on 16 November 2024. The programme began at 10:30 AM with a prayer service led by Fr. Sajan Nettareppan and his team, followed by a public meeting at 11:15 AM. Fr. Robins Kuzhikodil presented a heartfelt video to welcome our beloved Cardinal. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, formally welcomed everyone present. Felicitation speeches were delivered by Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil and Sr. Tessa Maria SH, representing the priests and religious, respectively. A beautiful felicitation song was presented by Fr. Martin Kandamparampil. The prayer song and anthem performed by the CMC and SABS sisters added a vibrant touch to the event. In my presidential address, I expressed the collective sentiments of the Diocese regarding the Cardinal's visit, highlighting the joy and honour of having him among us. In his address, the Cardinal fondly recollected old memories and shared his happiness in being with us once again. The event concluded with a festive

lunch. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal for his diligent coordination, which ensured the success of this memorable gathering.

Consecration of Christ the King Church, Paraicode: The Paraicode Church community was established on 17 June 1973 by the CMI Fathers in a small shed with just 26 parishioners. The first church building was constructed on 12 December 1982 under the leadership of Fr. Thomas Kodiyakkarayil CMI, who served as the parish priest. The church was named Christ the King Church, Paraicode. On 28 November 2004, the CMI Congregation handed over the church to the Diocese of Thuckalay. Today, the parish community comprises 73 families with 278 members. The foundation stone for the new church was blessed by the then Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, on 22 July 2018, and I laid the stone on 19 August 2018.

The newly constructed church was consecrated on 16 November 2024 by the Major Archbishop Emeritus of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, in my presence. The ceremony began at 2:30 PM with a solemn liturgical reception for the celebrants. Prior to the consecration ceremony, I blessed the *kodimaram*. For the consecration, the Cardinal and I were joined by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, and Rev. Fr. Antony Elamthottam CMI, the Provincial of the Trivandrum CMI Province, as concelebrants. The Major Archbishop Emeritus delivered the homily in Tamil and, at the conclusion of the ceremony, I felicitated the Parish Priest and parishioners. The event concluded with an agape meal, fostering fellowship among the faithful. I extend my heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, the Parish Priest, for his dedicated efforts in constructing this beautiful church along the highway.

CML Mission Rally: The CML Rally of this year was conducted on 17 November 2024, from Holy Trinity Cathedral Church, Thiruthuvapuram to Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. The rally was flagged off by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparambil, the Vicar General at 02.00 PM. I participated in the rally from start to finish. Behind the banner or flex of the respective foranes, children from each forane lined up in a well-ordered manner. The event concluded with a public meeting at Padanthalumoodu, where Mr. Aju Thomas, the Eparchial CML President, hoisted the flag. Mar George Cardinal Alencherry graced the occasion with his presence and delivered the message. I also addressed the missionaries. CML members from all the parishes, along with priests, sisters, teachers, and parents, participated in the rally. Prizes were awarded for the best plot and for active participation in the rally. I thank Fr. Printo Kurias, the director of CML and all the forane directors for coordinating the rally very well.

Silver Jubilee Inauguration of Bengiri Parish: The inauguration of the Silver Jubilee year of St. Benedict Church, Bengiri, was held on 21 November 2024 with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana. The Major Archbishop Emeritus, Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, officially inaugurated the Jubilee Year by lighting the lamp and delivering an inaugural message. As a symbolic gesture of gratitude and reflection on 24 years of spiritual growth, the Cardinal distributed 24 candles to the Uraiyam leaders and representatives. The pioneering missionary of the parish, Rev. Fr. James Pannamkuzhy, was fondly remembered with gratitude during the event. The occasion was graced by the presence of Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, priests from neighbouring parishes, religious sisters, and parishioners. The Parish Priest, Fr. Peter Kizhakkeyil, welcomed everyone, while Mr. Russelraj delivered the words of gratitude. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Fr. Peter Kizhakkeyil for his dedicated efforts in leading the faithful towards spiritual growth during this special Jubilee Year.

Writing Competition at Padanthalumoodu: In order to discover the God-given talents of the Sunday school students and to train them every year the Catechetical department conducts writing competitions. This year the Diocesan level Bible Fest Writing Competition took place on 24 November 2024 at Padanthalumoodu Forane Church campus. The participants of the competition comprised the first and

second-place winners of the Forane level writing competitions. The competitions included colouring, pencil drawing, essay writing and poetry writing. A total of 168 students took part in this competition. I extend my gratitude to the entire team of the Catechesis Department for their excellent organization of the Eparchial level competitions.

Tenkasi Bible Fest Competition: The Bible Fest cultural competition in Tenkasi mission was organized at Pulari Matriculation School, Pudur on 24 November 2024. Fifty-four students participated in the various competitions. The competition was organised by Fr. Prince Cherippanattu, the Tenkasi mission catechetical director. A team from Narcheithi Nilayam were present at the spot and supported for the success of the programme. My sincere thanks to Fr. Prince and the team behind.

SMYM Forane Executive Meetings: The SMYM Youth Central Team organized three Forane Executives meetings in the month of November, 2024: Manjalumoodu on the 3rd, for the Manjalumoodu, Kaliyal and Arukani Foranes, Pilankalai on the 10th for the and Thuckalay-Pilankalai and Soosaipuram foranes and, Padanthalumoodu on the 24th for the Nithiravilai and Padanthalumoodu foranes. The meetings started at 1:30 PM and concluded at 4.00 pm. The meetings focused on fostering collaboration, networking with parish units and foranes aimed at empowering the youth with the leadership qualities.

Mashup Dance Competition for Mothers: The Mathru Jyothis organized a mashup dance competition for mothers at the diocesan level on 24 November 2024 at the Sacred Heart Forane Church auditorium, Padanthalumoodu, in the afternoon. The event was inaugurated by Fr. Justin Cheruvelil, the Padanthalumoodu Forane Director of the Family Apostolate. Approximately 20 teams from various foranes participated enthusiastically. To encourage greater participation, the competition was held in three categories. At the conclusion of the event, prizes were awarded to the winners. The first prize winners in each category are as follows: Category A: Manjalumoodu, Category B: Pilankalai and Category C: Varuthattu. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil, the director, for this innovative initiative. My sincere appreciation also goes to all the participants, with special congratulations to the winners.

Tenkasi Mission Meet and Blessing of Ambur Presbytery: Tenkasi mission meeting was held at Ambur mission on 25 November 2024. I presided over the gathering. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General was also present to grace the occasion. The event brought together all the priests and religious who are actively involved in the Tenkasi Mission. The meeting began at 5.30 PM with the blessing of a rented house for the priest's residence at Alwarkurichy, near Ambur, marking a significant milestone for the mission. Fr. Thomas Koippuram was staying for more than one year in the residence provided by CMC Sisters at Ambur. Following the blessing ceremony, the missionaries shared updates and experiences about their mission work, fostering a spirit of collaboration and dedication. The meeting concluded with a fellowship meal leaving the attendees inspired and united in their mission endeavours. I thank Fr. Dency Mundunadackal for coordinating the mission meet and Fr. Thomas Koippuram for the arrangements at Ambur.

Diocesan Bible Convention at Padanthalumoodu: The Eparchial Bible Convention was held on November 29, 30, and December 1, 2024, at the Sacred Heart Forane Church campus, Padanthalumoodu. To ensure greater participation and convenience for the faithful, this year's convention was conducted in the evening on the first two days, with a full-day programme on Sunday, the final day. The retreat for both elders and CML students was led by the team from Carmel Retreat Centre, Dharmapuri, with Rev. Fr. Stephen Thachil CMI as the main preacher. Each day began with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, presided over by the newly ordained priests and Forane Vicars on the first two days, while I presided over the concelebrated Holy Qurbana on the final day. On the first day, I warmly welcomed the preacher and all the faithful and inaugurated the retreat with an opening sermon. Throughout the three days, the faithful

were spiritually enriched through various devotional activities, including praise and worship, preaching the Word of God, adoration, confession, and a Eucharistic procession.

A special retreat for CML students was held simultaneously on Saturday and Sunday at the parish premises, led by the same retreat team. In addition, Fr. Toji Sebastian and the CMC Sisters organized a retreat for the children of *Kuzhanthai Isso Iyakkam* in the courtyard of SDS Convent Hostel, Padanthalumoodu. The convention witnessed an excellent turnout, with faithful from all parishes actively participating and benefitting spiritually through the Word of God. The preparatory groundwork, including special adoration and the proclamation of the Good News in every parish, significantly contributed to the retreat's success. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Bible Convention Committee members—Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Fr. Antony Jose, Fr. Sajan Nettareppan, Fr. Printo Kurias, and Fr. Anil Raj—for their dedicated efforts. I also extend my congratulations to the curia members, especially Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, for ensuring the campus was well-prepared for the retreat. Finally, I thank all the parish priests for encouraging maximum participation from your parishes, making the Bible Convention a spiritually fruitful event for the faithful.

INFORMATION

- **KII Fancy Dress task:** In connection with the all-saints day, KII held fancy dress task in Parish wise in the month of November. Children wore the vestments of different saints and attended the Holy Qurbana in saints' dress. Congratulations!
- **Gathering of Bedridden patients:** The Health Commission conducted a gathering for bedridden patients and their caregivers at KKSSS, Kalluvilai on 02 November 2024. The event was attended by 16 bedridden patients and their caregivers. I inaugurated the event.
- **Regency brothers** started the second session of their regency ministry on 04 November 2024 on following places: Bro. Josbin Mathew - Sangamam, Bro. Josbin Joseph - Bishop's House, Bro. Melvin - Minor Seminary, Bro. Sibin - KKSSS, Bro. Monish - Vayalankarai Parish, Bro. Antony - Virudunagar mission. We wish him a fruitful ministry ahead.
- **Mr. K.A. Thomas (74)**, the brother-in-law of Fr. Antony Chundelikkatt, was called to the eternal abode on 06 November 2024. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Fr. Antony and his family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Fr. Seby Manimalakandathil** reached back to the Diocese from Saudi Arabia for the renewal of his visa on 10 November 2024.
- **Sacred Heart Matric. Hr. Sec. School**, Padanthalumoodu celebrated its 46th Annual Day 'Mirabilis' on 15 November 2024.
- **Dn. Sunil Antony** started his diaconate ministry at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu on 17 November 2024.
- **Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal** went to Saudi Arabia to substitute Fr. Sebi on 19 November 2024.
- **New Provincial Team** was elected for the FCC San Joe Province, Thuckalay on 19 November 2024. Rev. Sr. Celia FCC (Provincial Superior), Sr. Alphy FCC (Assistant Provincial) Sr. Ann Grace FCC, Sr. Ancilin FCC and Sr. Jaisy FCC (councillors), Sr. Cicy Maria FCC (Provincial Treasurer) and Sr. Amala FCC (Provincial Secretary). Congratulations and prayerful wishes!
- **Pulari Social Service Society, Tenkasi** conducted an entrepreneurship development programme on 20 November 2024.
- **53 hours perpetual Eucharistic Adoration** was held at St. Mary's Mission Church, Madurai from 22 November 2024 onwards.
- **One day special retreat** was held at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai on 23 November 2024 from 09.30 am to 02.00 pm.
- **Fr. Lijo Thekkel** will begin his pastoral ministry in Nithiravilai Parish and Christurajapuram School in assisting Fr. Jose Muttathupadam from 02 December 2024 onwards.

- **Christmas Greetings:** Dear Fathers, you will receive my personal Christmas Greetings to the faithful, liturgical wall Calendar 2025 and Christmas poster in the first week of December. Kindly distribute it when you go for Christmas carol singing to the families. There is a self-addressed envelope in the pack, kindly encourage all the faithful to contribute generously to the diocese. You are personally asked to collect the envelope from the faithful and later submit the same to the diocesan financial officer.

FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

05 December	-	Priests' Conference
14 December	-	11 th Death Anniversary of Fr. Thomas Thekkel
17 December	-	Priests' Pre Christmas-Celebration @ Sangamam
21 December	-	First Death Anniversary of Fr. John Thekkel
29 December	-	Diocesan level Inauguration of Jubilee Year 2025

Priests' Conference
05 December 2024
09.30 am @ Sangamam

CONCLUSION

On 8 December, we celebrate the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Let us once more familiarise ourselves with the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate conception. Mary was granted the privilege of being immaculate since conception. She was conceived immaculate – no stain of original sin infected her heart, mind and soul. Moreover, she cherished it and set an example for others, especially the disciples of her Son, the liberating force of being immaculate on earth. On 25 December, we celebrate Christmas, the birth of her son in the manger. Let us prepare our people for great solemnity with the 25-day fast we shall begin from tomorrow. Let us make the strengthening of our Catholic families the main agenda for the coming year, the great jubilee year 2025! May our Blessed Mother intercede for each one of us, keep us sinless like her and lead us to her son!

Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

