



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

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Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

In this circular, dear Fathers, I want to reflect with you on the theme of leadership that every priest is called upon to exercise in his pastoral ministry. Priests are called to be the shepherds of the people entrusted to their pastoral care. They are to be leaders of the Christian community. Hence in his ministry, a priest has to combine the roles of a pastor and a leader. His leadership is not power; it does not dominate or control the people. Jesus has very clearly defined the nature of the pastoral leadership when he said: "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ... For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mk 10: 42-45).

We need to understand what leadership is and who a leader is before we can speak of pastoral leadership. Leadership is often defined as the capacity and the will to rally people to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence. Hence, a leader is someone who touches another's future. Kurt Lewin, a specialist in management psychology, describes leadership as developing a vision, an effective team and the potentialities of each person in the group. This description of leadership seems to be very much relevant in pastoral ministry. When a priest is entrusted with a work, he should have a clear vision about what he is going to do. At the beginning of his ministry, he should clearly define his vision, goals and priorities. For example, think about a priest who is appointed to a small rural parish where most of the people are uneducated and the unemployment is very high. Here his vision is to develop a community of people who are not educated and not employed. To fulfil this vision, he should have some specific goals, for example starting schools and small business opportunities. But the vision of a priest appointed to a city parish will be completely different.

After setting the goals, the priest should define priorities. He should not try to do everything at once. Decide what the most important thing is and then start with it. When we take up so many things together, we will not be able to concentrate on anything. Though a clear vision about ministry is important priests should not impose this on others. A common vision has to be evolved through dialogue with the members of the parish or organization. A leader with a proper vision looks to the future of his organization. He thinks ahead of time. He is not merely an administrator, who is concerned about the day-to-day management of his organization. Often priests are concerned about the administration of the parish. To be effective in the ministry, priests should have a proper vision about what they plan to do.

Good leadership consists in developing an effective team. According to Kurt Lewin, an effective leader is one who finds out the most competent people to work with him and uses their talents for achieving the goals. Some leaders have an 'Ego' problem. They do not want to admit that they cannot handle a situation or they want others to see how capable they really are. So, they try to do everything by themselves. Very often priests in their ministry become wrapped up in details that other people should handle. This diminishes the effectiveness of their own lives and responsibilities.

In the Old Testament, we see Moses trying to do so many things by himself. Since he was getting involved in many things, he could not pay attention to important things. Finally, Jethro, his father-in-law, told him that he was wearing himself out by trying to handle everything by himself. The people were also weary of the style of Moses. Whenever a priest tries to do everything by himself in his ministry, his co-workers and parishioners will feel frustrated.

Pastoral leaders must always share their work, even if others do it less well than they do or in a different way. It is always easier to do things ourselves than to teach others to do them. Priests who fall into the trap of wanting to do everything themselves are in danger of becoming isolated.

Pastoral leader is a shepherd whose primary duty is to care his flock. Often a leader or an administrator is by nature more goal-oriented than most people. The leader seeks to accomplish things and achieve as much as possible. Frequently, this causes the leader to appear and may become, insensitive to people. Often the leader feels pressured by the multitude of his responsibilities and simply does not have time to spend with people with whom he works. It often becomes a matter of priorities. To a secular leader, the task to be achieved becomes more important than any one individual's needs or problems. But it is dangerous for a pastoral leader when people are ignored or neglected.

Jesus had time for people, the individual as well as the crowd. Pastors must arrange their priorities so that time spent with people is not looked upon as time wasted or time that is not important. They should develop a caring attitude by showing that people are more important to them than the tasks or the projects that need to be done. Love and loyalty are very much closely related. The more the love demonstrated between the leader and the people he leads, the stronger the ties and loyalties.

Learning to love people is essential to pastoral leadership. Pastors should learn to show love to everyone and at all times. A loving leader can be counted on in all times of difficulty and trial. A leader can destroy his effectiveness if he cannot be trusted. He must never betray confidences. Things that are shared with him should always remain confidential.

Remember that a priest is not an autocrat. On the contrary he should be a man of dialogue. Pastors, who lack the capacity to listen, end up as dictators. We have to admit that our traditional form of leadership in the Church has always been based on a monarchical style. However, it is the responsibility of the contemporary pastoral leaders to outgrow this kind of leadership because it is definitely unchristian.

Let us remember how Jesus took time to listen to Nicodemus, to Zacchaeus, to the woman of Samaria and the woman caught in adultery. Though a pastor may not be able to solve all the problems of his people, he can show his compassion through listening. Sensitive listening means the ability to empathize with the person with the conscious desire to understand the message and implement it in an appropriate manner. In counselling to empathize is to "put oneself in the other's shoes". The sensitive pastoral leader is able to accept new ideas and opposing opinions without being threatened.

Pastors cannot lead effectively without communicating with people. You cannot isolate yourselves from the people you are to lead. For an effective ministry priests should develop a sense of belonging among the people. Each person should feel that he is important. Allow your people freedom to express ideas and opinions. You cannot really do this if you rebuke them or reflect attitudes of superiority over them. Learn to admit your mistakes and apologize sincerely when things go wrong or do not turn out the way you expected. Never blame the people for your failure. Be careful about manifesting a critical spirit of one individual's ideas or opinion without first hearing his side. It seems that there are three sides to every issue: your view, the other person's view and the real truth. A critical spirit can cut off communication.

In pastoral leadership, motivation is vital. Often people criticize priests because they suspect wrong motivation behind the decision taken by them. Certain wrong motivations can make the pastoral leadership of a priest ineffective.

A priest motivated by position is inclined more to emphasize his authority than his service to others. Here, the decisions are made without understanding and compassion. Authority is viewed as a personal title rather than a vocation and responsibility given by God. Jesus was angry with the Scribes and Pharisees because they were too much concerned about honour and position. Very often the desire for power and domination arises out of a poor and insecure self-image. If a person is insecure in himself or in his job, he will tend to dominate others.

There are some leaders who want to impress people with their achievements. They want fame because they desire people to know how great they are. Pastoral leader whose life is controlled by wanting to be famous needs self-denial. Often boasting about one's own achievements is a manifestation of his inferiority complex.

There are leaders who are really task-masters. Goals are the chief motivating force in their life. Goals are good, but they become improper when controlled by the more syndrome. We want more than last year. If they do not do better, they become depressed and unhappy. The desire to achieve can be good and productive but it can also detract and hinder us in accomplishing the will of God. Some priests get involved in unhealthy comparison with the work of other priests. We all are working for the kingdom of God and there is no need for unhealthy competition among priests. Rivalry for power between priests and jealousy of others' achievements is a terrible force for destruction.

Hence, a united presbyterate is like a rock. Even the apostles around Jesus, sometimes behind his back, argued about who was the greatest among them. They were talking about it even during the last supper. Maybe, it is because of their rivalry that Jesus got up from the table and washed their feet. Rivalry between members of the presbyterate often becomes more apparent during the time of new appointments and transfer to various positions. There can also be rivalry over who is more spiritual or intellectual. These struggles for power and influence are deeply rooted in our human nature. We are afraid we will no longer exist if we do not get a good position. We are so quick to equate function and person, popularity and quality of being.

Dear Fathers, in our pastoral ministry, let us become shepherds after the heart of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, whose only concern was to carry out the will of his Father.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Mission League Platinum Jubilee Inauguration: Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) is an indigenous pious organization for Catholic children, founded in 1947 at Bharanaganamin Kerala. CML has St

Theresa of Lisieux as its heavenly patroness and St Thomas, St Francis Xavier and St Alphonsa as its co-patrons. Pope Leo XIII prophesied that salvation of India is in the hands of her children. Taking the words of Holy Father as the motto, this organization is meant for the lay apostolate in the various dioceses of India and in many foreign countries. This organization was founded in 1947 in Bharananganam by Rev. Fr Joseph Maliparambil and Mr PC Abraham Pallattukunnel (Kunjettan) under the saintly leadership of Mar James Kalassery, the then Bishop of Changanassery. CML was officially inaugurated by Mar Thomas Tharayil, Bishop of Kottayam on 3 October 1947 at Bharananganam.

This year the CML completes 75 years of its mission. The Diamond Jubilee is celebrated globally in all the Eparchies in the Syro-Malabar Church. In our Eparchy, the Diamond Jubilee was inaugurated on 2 January 2022. CML representatives, both students and animators, from all the Foranes were present for the programme which was held at Padanthalumoodu. Rev. Fr Printo Kurias, Director of CML, presented the action-plan prepared for our Eparchy and invited everyone to involve whole-heartedly in the celebrations. Students performed some cultural items to mark the occasion.

Synod on Synodality: The Synod on Synodality is a two-year process of listening and dialoguing, which began with a solemn Eucharist in Rome on 10 October 2021. Each individual diocese was expected to begin the preparations on 17 October 2021. The synodal process will conclude in October 2023.

Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: “It is precisely this path of synodality, which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church’s renewal proposed by Vatican II, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through her experience which processes can help her to live communion, to achieve participation and to open herself to mission.

The Eparchial process for discerning the synodality was initiated by sending a circular to all the priests, the religious and the people of God. As a first step, it was decided to have a seminar-cum-workshop for all the priests and religious of our Eparchy. It was held in three sittings on 4, 8 and 19 January 2022 for Thuckalay and Thenkasi regions. The Eparchial synodal committee headed by Rev. Fr Sathianesan organised the seminar. Rev. Fr Maria Rajendran from Kuzhithurai diocese was invited to give the first talk on Synodality and Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal presented the 10 nucleus themes on Synodality. After the two input sessions, the participants were divided into various groups and discussed the given questions. It was a very good exercise for all to go through the various aspects of the mission in our Eparchy.

Little Flower Skill Training Institute: Rev. Fr Augustin Thalodil with collaboration with the ministry of Skill Development, Government of India set up a skill training centre for women at Little Flower Forane, Manjalumoodu. The official inauguration of the centre was held on 5 January 2022. Nearly 80 women, young and old, joined the centre to be trained in Tailoring, Embroidery and Nursing. Mr Wilson from Mukkoottukal is appointed the director of the Centre. We appreciate the initiative taken by Fr Augustin to give training and employment to the women of the locality.

Feast of Denha: Denha is the feast of the great revelation of Jesus as the light of the world. Jesus is the real *Sun* that dawned in the world through Incarnation. During the hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth, the public did not recognize him as the real *Sun* who illuminates the whole of humanity. He was manifested to the public by God the Father at his *baptism* as we have seen above.

In Northern regions of Kerala like Thrissur, the feast of Denha is celebrated as *Pindiperunnal*. On the previous night of Denha, a decorated plantain trunk is erected in front of houses with many lighted candles. The family members go around it singing the Syriac hymn *El Paiya*, which means *God is light*. Special dishes are also prepared during this time. Special prayers conducted in the churches. In southern areas like Pala, this feast is known as *Rakkuliperunnal* – feast with night-bath in river. In imitation of Jesus' Baptism, people used to perform a ritual bath in nearby ponds or rivers singing psalms and other religious hymns on the previous night (ravu) of the feast of Denha.

In our Eparchy, the great feast of Denha was celebrated on 6 January in all our parishes. Taking inspiration from the Northern Kerala, the parishes observed as *Pindiperunnal* by decorating the plantain trunk with lighted lamps. The special Holy Qurbana was celebrated to remember the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. It was encouraging to see that it was celebrated even in the Mission Stations with great enthusiasm.

Soosaipuram Parish Celebrated Diamond Jubilee (1960-2020): The two-year Diamond Jubilee celebrations of St Joseph parish, Soosaipuram came to an end in the evening of 6 January 2022. The day also marked the celebration of the Denha Feast and the conclusion of the year of St Joseph in the Parish. *Agal Vizhakku* were lit in the entire campus. I was the main celebrant at the Holy Qurbana and the Chief Guest for the cultural programme that followed. Rev Fr Jebanesh, a parishioner, participated in the day's programme. After the solemn Holy Qurbana, I distributed rosaries and the images of sleeping Joseph to all male heads of the families.

The Holy Qurbana was followed by a cultural programme. Its highlights were a song sung by 60 participants and a dance with 60 dancers. The report of Diamond Jubilee activities and celebrations was presented. The people who are married and settled in other parishes were invited for the programme and images of St Joseph were gifted to them. I congratulated the faithful, teachers, leaders, religious and priests for a befitting celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the establishment of the Parish. I also distributed the prizes for the Mega Bible Quiz conducted for the various categories of people and for the Special Quiz on Our Blessed Mother Mary. *Kaikarar* delivered the vote of thanks. The celebrations ended with a sumptuous meal.

It may be recalled that St Joseph's Parish Soosaipuram was established on 4 December 1960 as the third Parish in the Kanyakumari Mission. It was first Parish Priest that Rev Fr Zacharias Kayathara established. Celebration of the Diamond Jubilee began on 19 March 2020 on the Feast of St Joseph. On that occasion, I presided over the Holy Qurbana and released an action plan namely, *Nambikaiyal Puthuvazhvu Peruvom* (Renewed Life with Hope). The 12 Uraviyum and other pious associations began the celebrations with great enthusiasm. But due to the pandemic, some of the activities went online.

Online Priests' conference: Due to the spread of Covid-19 during the third wave, the Government of Tamil Nadu imposed lock down in the State with effect from 7 January 2022 and ordered to close all the religious places on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. In order to assess and to make alternative plans for the pastoral activities in the Eparchy, a special priests' conference was called online on 6 January 2022. The meeting began with prayer led by Rev. Fr Robin Jose. Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General, welcomed the gathering. I spoke about the pastoral challenges that we have to encounter during the period of lockdown. We need to take care of the health and spiritual life of the people. After a brainstorming session, we arrived at a solution that each parish/institution would take into consideration the spread of this epidemic in their area and organise the spiritual activities in their institutions accordingly. However, the parishes were asked to offer Sunday Holy Qurbana on one of the weekdays. Knowing the

danger involved in coming together in large numbers, we cancelled the forthcoming Diocese level Bible Fest and asked all Fathers to regularly conduct the Catechism classes on weekdays.

Forane Priests' Conference: The Forane level Priests' conferences were held at three different places, namely, **Muzhucode** for Manjalumoodu-Kaliyal-Arukani, **Nithravilai** for Nithravilai-Padanthlumoodu and **Plankarai** for Soosaipuram-Plankalaion 10, 11 and 18 January 2022 respectively. Nearly 32 priests attended the meetings. The main agenda was *Ad Gentes* Mission of the Eparchy. As the number of participants were small and much time was allotted, the sharing was very vibrant and many suggestions came up for improving the evangelizing mission of the Eparchy in the extended territories. All the meetings were organised by Forane Vicars and our Vicar General Chaired all the meetings.

Mission Quest 2022: Keeping to the motto Know the Mission and to become a *Missionary*, the Syro-Malabar Mission office and Catechetical department of our Church organised a global level online Quiz competition under the title Mission Quest 2022 on 9 January 2022. This Quiz programme was organised in order to deepen our knowledge about the mission of the church in the context of the Synod in Rome on Synodality. Sample questions were prepared and sent to all the Eparchies. In our Eparchy, everyone was asked take part in it. The Catechism department of the Eparchy translated all the questions into Tamil. I could see the concerted effort from the part all the priests in motivating the faithful. The final result was announced on 14 January 2022 during the Synod. It was a joyful and proud moment for our Eparchy, as Thuckalay secured first position in the adult category. The winner is Mrs Geetha from Sacred Heart Forane, Padanthalumoodu. She received Rs ten thousand as cash award. In the Student category, our Eparchy received the 3rd position. The winner is Anna S Raj from St Francis parish, Mezhacode and she received Rs three thousand as cash award. I received the certificates and the cash prizes from the Major Archbishop. The Bishops congratulated and appreciated our Eparchy for active participation and for winning the prizes at the global level.

In the Eparchial level Student Category:

Anna S Raj of St Francis Church, Mezhacode – 1st Prize
Anu K of Christ King Church, Christurajapuram – 2nd prize
Steji J of St James Church, Mankarai – 3rd Prize

In the Eparchial level Adult Category:

Mr Geetha R of Sacred Heart Church, Padanthalumoodu – 1st prize
Mr Vinu M R of Sacred Heart Church, Padanthalumoodu – 2nd Prize
Anisha S R of Sacred Heart Church, Padanthalumoodu – 3rd Prize

While congratulating the winners, I place of record the hard work and planning of the Catechism department of our Eparchy. Thank you, dear Fathers, for motivating the people.

Syro-Malabar Synod: The 30th Major Archiepiscopal Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church began at St Thomas, Kakkanad, on 6 January 2022. Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, head of the Church, led the Synod in which 57 Bishops, including those retired, took part. The synod began on 6 January evening with recollection preached by Bishop Mar Thomas Thurithimattam. The Synodal sessions were held from 6 – 15 January 2022. The main theme was the evaluation of the implementation of unified Holy Qurbana. It is heartening to know that all the Eparchies except Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese implemented the synodal form of Holy Qurbana. Though it was not an easy process, the Bishops expressed the hope that by and by with the help of God and support of every one the synodal decision will be realised everywhere. With due care and concern, the Synod reflected and reviewed the prevailing

situation of Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese and reiterated its stand on accepting the unified Holy Qurbana in the entire Syro-Malabar Church.

Thalassery Archeparchy and Palakkad Eparchy get new Bishops: The Syro-Malabar synod promoted, with the papal approval, Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Pamplany as the Archbishop of Thalassery. He replaces Archbishop George Njaralakatt, who retired upon reaching the age of 75. Similarly, the Synod has appointed the Auxiliary Bishop Peter Kochupurackal as the Bishop of Palakkad. He replaces Bishop Jacob Mananathodath, who too retired.

Archbishop-elect Pamplany was born on 11 December 1969, at Charal in the Archeparchy of Thalassery. After school studies, he joined St Joseph's Minor Seminary, Thalassery in 1986. He was ordained a priest on 30 December 1997. He served as assistant parish priest at Peravoor (1998-1999) and was parish priest at Deepagiri (1999-2001). He then went to Belgium for studies and obtained doctorate in Sacred Scripture from Leuven University. On his return, he was appointed Director of Bible Apostolate in the Archdiocese in 2006. He founded the Alpha Institute of Theology and served as its first Director during 2007-2017. He was elected Auxiliary Bishop of Thalassery on 1 September 2017 and ordained Bishop on 28 November 2017.

Bishop Peter Kochupurackal was born on 29 May 1964, at Marangoly in the Eparchy of Pala. He joined St Mary's Minor Seminary, Kallepully, Palakkad in 1981. He had his studies in Philosophy and Theology at St Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Aluva. He was ordained a priest on 19 December 1990. He studied at St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore. He completed his licentiate and doctoral studies at Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome (2000-2007). He was elected Auxiliary Bishop of Palakkad on 15 January 2020 and ordained Bishop 18 June 2020.

MCBS Mission Completes 25 years: The Missionary Congregation of Blessed Sacrament (MCBS) Fathers began their educational mission at Sengottai in 1996 when Rev. Bishop Thomas Elavanal was the Superior General. The first missionary was Rev. Fr Thomas Poovathumngal. They bought a plot of land and a house near the Railway gate, Sengottai. With some Syro-Malabar families, a quasi-parish was erected in the Eparchy of Thuckalay. In 1999 Rev. Fr Roy Akathemattathil was appointed mission Superior and started Anbu Illam, a home for the mentally challenged destitute, near Thenpothai. It was in 2007 that the MCBS Fathers procured land at Vadakarai and Anbu Illam was shifted to vadakarai. In 2004, MCBS Fathers started St Joseph matriculation school in Meenakshipuram. In 2013, the Congregation began St Joseph CBSE school in Thenpothai. In the year 2017 the Fathers began a tailoring unit called NILA, for the empowerment of women. In 2018 a new school was opened at Surandai. The MCBS Fathers time and again at the request of the Eparchy served at St George parish, Mekkarai.

The Silver Jubilee celebration was organised on 18 January 2022 at St Joseph Higher Secondary School. The celebration began with the Eucharistic celebration. I presided over it. Rev Fr Dominic Mundatt, provincial superior of MCBS, was present. The newly renovated chapel was then blessed. A brief public gathering was held in which all the speakers recalled the blessings of God with gratitude. Gifts and mementos were presented. The celebration came to an end with a meal.

One-Day Seminar at Thenkasi Mission: As part of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Thenkasi Mission, a one-day seminar was organized for the Catechism teachers, youth, members of Mission League and Kuzhanthai Iesu Iyakkam on 26 January 2022. It was held in Vanchinagar and at Pastoral Centre, Boarder. Fr Mijo Sebastian, Fr Robin Jose, Fr Jomon Mangalamadam, Fr Abilash Xavier, Fr Robins Kuzhikodil, Sr Jency, Br Jubin Jose and Mrs Hema from Thuckalay visited Thenkasi and took

various classes for the members. Fr Mijo Sebastian and Fr Robins Kuzhikodil led the retreat for the Catechism teachers and youth at Boarder. Fr Jomon, Fr Abilash and Fr Robin took classes for the members of Mission League and Kuzhanthai Iesu Iyakkam. About 71 members participated in the seminar and benefitted for the training programmes and retreat. We gratefully remember all those worked hard for the successful conduct of the seminar.

St Alphonsa Convent Blessed: The FCC Sisters of Idukki Province started a community at Chinnamanur in Theni district on 12 August 2019 to begin missionary work. In the presence of Mar Jose Pulickal, Auxiliary Bishop of Kanjirapally, I had blessed the rented house. Now that the Sisters have bought a plot of land nearby and built a convent which was blessed on 22 January 2022. Rev. Sr Suhuna FCC, Provincial Superior of Idukki, cut the ribbon and inaugurated the convent. I blessed the chapel and the house during the concelebrated Holy Qurbana which was solemnised by the Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal, Bishop of Knajirapally. The Eparchy is glad that finally the Sisters have their own home for the *Ad Gentes* mission and Evangelisation.

Theni Mission Foundation Stone Blessed: As you are aware, the Theni district is given to the Eparchy of Kanjirapally for developing the mission work. The Eparchy appointed Rev. Fr Benny Thattamparambil as the mission in-charge. The Eparchy bought a piece of land near the FCC Convent at Chinnamanur. Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal blessed and laid the foundation stone for the presbytery on 22 January 2022 prior to the blessing of the FCC convent. Until now the priest was coming from Kumily for the Holy Qurbana. This new house will be an added advantage for continuing the *Ad Gentes* Mission in Chinnamannur area.

Meeting of Heads of Departments and Pious Associations: An online meeting of Directors and Assistant Directors of all the departments and pious associations was held on 24 January 2022. All the members were present for the meeting. Rev Fr Thomas Powathuparampil welcomed the gathering. Time was given to all the directors to share the departmental activities and concerns. The departments were instructed to organise some possible activities online as the churches are closed on Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday. It was also decided that all the departments and Pious associations will present their annual report to the presbyterium on 23 February 2022. This will help the departments and pious associations to evaluate their activities and to develop further.

Feast of Don Bosco: St John Bosco, father and teacher of youth, when he was only nine years old, learned through a dream that he was called to dedicate his life for the education of the young. Through his style of education based on reason, religion and loving kindness (which he called Preventive System), Don Bosco helped the young people to think seriously about their lives, to encounter Christ, to learn about their faith, to receive the sacraments, to accept their companions, and to involve themselves in apostolic and professional activities. Among the finest fruits of his pedagogy was the 15-year-old St Dominic Savio.

The feast of Don Bosco was celebrated in the Bishop's House on 31 January 2022. Due to the pandemic, only the inmates from Sangamam and CMC provincial House were invited. The faithful of St Mary's Church joined for the concelebrated Holy Qurbana at 6.00 pm. During the short gathering the CMC Sisters presented a meaningful song on Don Bosco and a Candidate, Ariya gave short talk on Don Bosco. Rev. Sr Vinnayamma CMC, Provincial Superior, felicitated the gathering. The programme concluded with a community meal.

INFORMATION

- We welcomed the Year 2022 in a prayerful way by celebrating midnight/early morning Holy Qubana in all the parishes
- The meeting of Diocesan Secretaries of TNBC Health Care Commission was held on 4 January 2022 at Sangamam. The Secretaries belonging to 20 dioceses participated in the meeting.
- Rev. Sr Asha CHF, Provincial, and the team of Holy Family Congregation made a friendly visit to the Bishop's House on 5 January 2022.
- I made a brief visit to all the missions in the extended Territories, namely, Thirunelveli, Kayathar, Virudunagar and Madurai on 21 January 2022.
- The consecration of the new Church at Kunnuvilai will be on 20 February 2022. All the Fathers are invited for the celebration.
- Rev. Fr Justin Cheruveli will be defending his Doctoral Thesis on 25 February, 2022. The topic of the thesis is *Dukhrana d'Qaddise: The Concept of the Communion of Saints in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana*. Let us wish him God's blessings and pray for the success of the defence.
- The SABS, Thuckalay Region will be elevated to a Province on 6 February 2022. As we congratulate the new provincial team. We thank God for this great gift and blessing

The Ongoing formation program for all the fathers will be on 23 and 24 February 2022. Kindly note these dates and positively be available. The venue will be at Sangamam. Since its a two days program, please come prepared to say overnight at Sangamam. Bishop Mar Raphael Thattil will be animating the programme.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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| 09 February 2022 | - Death Anniversary of Rev. Fr Philip Kodianthara |
| 23 February 2022 | - On-going formation programme for presbyterium |
| 24 February 2022 | - On-going formation programme and annual presentation of report of Departments |

CONCLUSION

As I conclude my circular, I want to thank you, dear Fathers, for the dedicated ministry that you are undertaking in the Eparchy on behalf of our people despite the restrictions imposed by the lockdown. I am sure the good Lord will bless you abundantly. Continue to pray for the intentions of the Eparchy. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to serve our people with greater enthusiasm and commitment. May the Lord continue to bless you and your ministries!

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

