



# 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/167/2025**

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Dear and Rev. Fathers,

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

As we journey through this season of grace, I wish to address a matter of profound importance to the future of our Church and society - the pastoral and spiritual care of our young people. Today's youth are not merely the Church of tomorrow; they are an essential part of our Church today, bringing vitality, creativity, and fresh perspectives to our faith community.

In recent months, I have observed the state of youth ministry in our Eparchy with hope and concern. Through its director and his team, our Syro-Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM) has worked diligently to coordinate youth activities throughout our parishes. Through their dedicated efforts, we have witnessed moments of great promise and spiritual growth among our young members. However, I am also aware of the challenges we face. While many of our young people admirably balance their studies with active participation in parish life, many remain on the periphery of our Church community. The SMYM leadership - the director and the executive team - expend considerable energy organising motivation programmes, skill training initiatives, retreats, and spiritual exercises, yet attendance and engagement remain lower than desired. Many youth in our parishes have not formally joined SMYM, creating a disconnect between our organised youth ministry and the broader youth population we are called to serve. These observations prompt us to reflect deeply on our youth ministry approach and discern how we might better accompany our young people on their faith journey.

## **Understanding the Youth of Today**

To effectively minister to young people, we must first seek to understand the unique context in which they live and the particular challenges they face. Today's youth have grown up in a digital environment that has fundamentally shaped their worldview, modes of communication, and expectations of institutions, including the Church. They process information differently, favour visual and experiential learning, and expect greater interactivity and participation. Young adulthood is a critical period of identity formation. Our youth are asking profound questions about their place in the world, the meaning of their lives, and the communities to which they belong. They seek authentic relationships where they are valued for what they can contribute and who they are.

Young people today are deeply concerned about social justice, environmental sustainability, and making a tangible difference in the world. They question institutional structures and traditional approaches, not necessarily out of disrespect but from a genuine desire to ensure that their faith and actions align with their values and make a meaningful impact. Despite increasing secularisation, young people exhibit a profound spiritual hunger. They seek not just doctrinal knowledge but transformative spiritual experiences. However,

they face significant pressures from a society that often promotes values contrary to the Gospel, challenging the cultivation of a robust faith life.

## **A Renewed Vision for Our Youth Ministry**

In light of these realities, I propose a renewed vision for youth ministry in our Eparchy that places young people at the centre rather than at the periphery of our pastoral concern. While structured programmes remain important, effective youth ministry begins with building genuine relationships. Young people are more likely to engage with the Church when they experience authentic connections with clergy, religious, and lay leaders who know them by name, take an interest in their lives, and walk alongside them through their joys and struggles. Our approach must shift from merely instructing young people to accompanying them on their faith journey. This means creating spaces where they can ask questions, express doubts, and explore their faith without fear of judgment. It means recognising that faith formation is not linear but involves periods of questioning and growth.

We must acknowledge the diversity among our youth - in their spirituality, interests, talents, and needs. A one-size-fits-all approach to youth ministry will inevitably leave many feeling excluded. Instead, we should offer multiple pathways for youth engagement, recognising that different young people will connect with their faith in various ways. Young people should not be viewed merely as recipients of ministry but as active protagonists in the mission of the Church. They bring unique gifts, perspectives, and energy that can revitalise our parishes. We must create opportunities for them to exercise leadership, contribute meaningfully to parish life, and shape the future of our Church.

## **Practical Suggestions**

Through this circular, I offer some practical suggestions to all parish priests in our Eparchy. Each parish must prioritise youth ministry, not merely in words but in allocating time, resources, and pastoral attention. Parish priests should regularly meet with youth coordinators, attend youth events when possible, and ensure that youth ministry receives adequate financial support. Ensure that your parish is where young people feel welcomed, valued, and heard. This may involve designating specific spaces within the parish for youth activities, including youth representatives in parish councils and decision-making bodies, acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of young people during liturgies and parish events, and making specific efforts to greet and engage with young people before and after Mass.

Offer opportunities for deep spiritual formation tailored to the needs and interests of young people. Organise youth-specific prayer services, adoration, and retreat experiences. Provide formation in contemplative prayer and discernment. Create small faith-sharing groups where young people can explore their faith in a supportive community. Ensure that homilies connect the Gospel to the lived experiences of young people. Help young people see the relevance of their faith to contemporary issues and challenges by addressing topics such as social justice, environmental stewardship, technology, relationships, and vocation. Create forums for open discussion of difficult questions. Connect Catholic social teaching to local and global concerns. Support youth-led initiatives for community service and advocacy.

While respecting that not all youth will be formally involved with SMYM, work to strengthen the connection between parish youth and diocesan youth structures. Regularly communicate SMYM activities to all parish youth. Identify potential leaders and encourage their participation in SMYM. Invite SMYM representatives to share their activities on an appropriate occasion. Support parish youth who wish to attend diocesan events. Develop a mentorship approach to youth ministry by setting aside specific times to be available to young people, taking an interest in their studies, career aspirations, and personal growth, offering spiritual direction and counselling, and sharing your faith journey, including moments of struggle

and growth. Identify, train, and empower young leaders within your parish by providing leadership formation opportunities, entrusting meaningful responsibilities to youth, supporting their initiatives and ideas, and creating shadowing opportunities where youth can learn from experienced parish leaders.

The Director of SMYM and his team are happy to support these parish-level efforts. They can help in organising a comprehensive formation programme for priests, religious, and lay leaders involved in youth ministry, focusing on understanding youth culture, effective communication, and contemporary approaches to evangelisation. The SMYM at the Eparchial level, comprising representatives from each parish, can ensure that the voices and perspectives of young people inform our pastoral planning and decision-making. The SMYM organises an annual diocesan youth pilgrimage to significant spiritual sites, providing opportunities for young people to deepen their faith while building connections across parish boundaries. Recognising the importance of vocational discernment during young adulthood, we can develop a structured programme to help young people discern their vocation - whether to married life, priesthood, religious life, or dedicated single life. We will establish a resource centre offering materials, training, and consultation services to support parish-level youth ministry efforts.

Dear Fathers, as shepherds entrusted with the care of souls, I urge you to approach youth ministry not as a peripheral concern but as central to the mission of the Church. Our young people are not merely the future of our Eparchy of Thuckalay; they are its present - vibrant, gifted members of the Body of Christ whose participation is essential to our vitality and relevance. May we approach them not with criticism or dismissal but with the loving gaze of Christ, who sees in each young person infinite worth and potential. May we listen to them attentively, accompany them compassionately, and empower them boldly to become the disciples and apostles they are called to be!

As priests, we must cultivate a different mindset and approach toward young people. We must recognise that their questions and concerns, even when challenging, reflect a genuine search for truth and meaning. Rather than being dismissive of their doubts or critical of their perceived lack of commitment, we should create safe spaces for dialogue and exploration. We should approach them humbly, recognising that we have as much to learn from them as they do from us. Their familiarity with contemporary culture and technology, passion for authenticity and justice, and fresh perspectives on faith can enrich our understanding and practice of ministry.

We must cultivate these qualities in ourselves first to encourage young people to be more spiritual and responsible. Young people are drawn not primarily to programmes or activities but to authentic witnesses - to individuals whose lives radiate the joy and peace of a deep relationship with Christ. We must be transparent in our faith journey, sharing our certainties, questions, and struggles. We must practically demonstrate how faith informs every aspect of life - from personal decisions to social engagement. We should invite young people into meaningful service opportunities that allow them to exercise responsibility and experience the fulfilment that comes from contributing to the welfare of others. We should help them develop a consistent prayer life, introducing them to the rich variety of Catholic spiritual practices while respecting their need to express their spirituality in ways that resonate with their experience and sensibilities.

I entrust our youth and all who minister to them to the maternal care of Mary, who, in her youth, responded with courageous faith to God's call, and to the intercession of St John Bosco, whose life was dedicated to the spiritual welfare of young people. May God bless our efforts and bring them to fruition so that He can build up His Kingdom in our Eparchy and beyond!

## NEWS AND EVENTS

**Christ Jubilee of Minor Seminarians at Mukkoottukal:** As part of the Christ Jubilee Year 2025, the Jubilee of Minor Seminarians, along with the Home Day of the Seminary, was celebrated on 01 February 2025 at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal. The event commenced with a prayer service at 5:00 pm, focusing on vocations, the jubilee year, and the seminary community. Following the prayer service, a public meeting was held under my presidency. Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil, the Rector, warmly welcomed all those present. Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil reminisced about his cherished memories as a minor seminarian. Representing the parents, Mrs. Jain Celin shared their hopes for the future priests and assured the wholehearted support of the parents in the formation of the candidates. The seminarians presented a vibrant cultural programme, adding colour and joy to the jubilee celebrations. During the event, I released the seminary magazine for the academic year 2024-2025, handing over the first copy to Rev. Fr. Chacko Puthiyapampil, the Spiritual Father. The magazine showcased the academic talents and creative abilities of the seminarians, featuring their writings, drawings, riddles, insightful reflections, and newly acquired knowledge through reading and learning. The celebration concluded at 8:30 pm with a common agape. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Rector and the entire seminary community for their dedicated efforts in organizing and coordinating the Christ Jubilee celebrations and Home Day.

**Church Blessing at Kulasekharam:** The Kulasekharam Mission was initiated by the late Rev. Fr. Philip Kodyathara on 27 March 2009 to cater to the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar faithful residing in the area and to facilitate future mission development. The mission began with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana in a school classroom and was named John Paul II Mission. Since there was no designated place for Sunday celebrations, the community has been using the chapel of the SABS Convent for liturgical gatherings. To expand the mission activities, we purchased a plot of land nearby for the construction of a church. The foundation stone for the church (community hall) was laid by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathupampil on 27 March 2023. Under the meticulous efforts of Rev. Fr. Jose Kanachikuzhiyil, the present parish priest, the construction progressed steadily, culminating in the blessing of the newly built church by me on 2 February 2025 at 3:30 PM. The solemn blessing ceremony was concelebrated by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathupampil and Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekalam CMI. The event was graced by the presence of Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, Provincial Superior of the SABS, along with priests from Kaliyal and Manjalumoodu Foranes, religious sisters from various congregations, and the faithful from Chenamcode and neighboring parishes. Following the blessing, a public meeting was held under my presidency. The celebrations concluded with a festive meal, fostering a spirit of unity and joy among all participants. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Jose Kanachikuzhiyil, the SABS Sisters, and the parishioners for their dedicated efforts in organizing the event so beautifully.

**12<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodyanthara:** On 8 February 2025, the 12th death anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodyanthara was commemorated at St. Joseph's Church, Kayalpuram. The *Requiem* Holy Qurbana began at 11:00 AM, with Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathupampil, the Vicar General, as the main celebrant. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil, and Rev. Fr. Amanto Edakkoottathil concelebrated the Holy Qurbana. The memorial service was attended by religious sisters, teachers, and parishioners from Manjalumoodu Forane Parish, all gathered in prayerful remembrance of Fr. Philip Kodyanthara. Following the Holy Qurbana, the Office for the Dead was recited at his tomb. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the priests who personally took the initiative to participate in this solemn occasion. Let us continue to pray for the repose of the soul of our former Eparchial Administrator.

**Church Blessing at Marthandam:** St. Vincent de Paul Mission, Marthandam was established on 8 September 2007 with a solemn prayer gathering held at the residence of Mr. Mariadas Sir, initiated by the late Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiyanthara and later continued with the support of Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam. After six months, the community began celebrating Holy Qurbana on Sundays at Stephen Complex, Marthandam, with the participation of 13 families. In its initial three years, the mission activities were supported by the OMMI Sisters, after which the SABS Sisters took over the pastoral assistance. In 2017, the community was relocated to the Serene Retreat Centre of ‘Yesuve Kanpom’. Later, with the establishment of St. Joseph Convent by the SABS Congregation on 28 May 2019, the Sunday liturgies were shifted to the convent chapel, with the first Christmas celebration taking place there in 2019. After acquiring land near the convent, the foundation stone for the new church (community hall) and presbytery was laid by me on 15 March 2023. On 3 June 2024, the community began celebrating Sunday liturgies in the newly constructed church with a simple blessing. At present, the mission consists of 14 families.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan (since 2018), and the Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Fr. Jose Paul Purayidathikunnel (since 2024), the construction of the new church was successfully completed. The altar was consecrated, and the church was blessed by me on 9 February 2025 at 5:00 PM. The Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam and Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan. The ceremony was attended by almost all the priests and religious of Padanthalumoodu Forane. The event concluded with a fraternal agape meal. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Parish Priest, Priest-in-Charge, SABS Sisters, and all the parishioners for their dedicated efforts in organizing the entire event beautifully.

**Christ Jubilee of the Sick at Pilankalai:** As part of the Christ Jubilee Year 2025, the Diocesan Health Commission organized the Jubilee of the Sick on 10 February 2025 at Little Flower Forane Church, Pilankalai. The celebration began with the solemn Holy Qurbana, presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, and concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, Director of the Health Commission, and Rev. Fr. Amanto Edakkootathil. Following the Holy Qurbana, a short gathering was held with the sick. Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal welcomed everyone, while Fr. Vicar General delivered the presidential address, emphasizing Jesus’ healing mission and His mercy towards the sick. The participants, despite their sufferings, expressed their gratitude and inner joy through various cultural programs, including speeches and songs. As part of the initiative, Rs. 5000/- was distributed to each wheelchair user to assist in constructing a wheelchair ramp in their homes. A total of 76 patients and benefactors participated in the celebration. Sr. Missi Maria SJSM expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone present for their support and participation. The event concluded with a fraternal agape meal shared by all. I extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal and the entire Health Commission team for their dedicated efforts in organizing the Jubilee of the Sick so meaningfully.

**Kurissadi Blessing at Paraicode:** The newly constructed Kurissadi of Christ the King Church, Paraicode, was blessed by me on 11 February 2025, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, at 6:00 PM. The priests and religious sisters of Thuckalay–Pilankalai Forane were present for the blessing ceremony. Following the blessing, I celebrated the Holy Qurbana, with Rev. Fr. Geo Choozhikunnel and Rev. Fr. Justin Cheruvellil as concelebrants. The event concluded with a fraternal agape meal. The entire Kurissadi was generously sponsored by the Pipes N Tiles – Rosary Group. I extend my sincere gratitude to the sponsors and to the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, for their dedicated efforts in constructing this beautiful Kurissadi along the highway.

**Forane level Bible Fest for Teachers:** Forane level Bible Fest for Teachers was held at Padanthalumoodu on 11 February 2025 from morning till evening. In the morning section Padanthalumoodu, Nithiravilai and Manjalumoodu forane competitions were held. Afternoon Thuckalay-Pilankalai, Soosaipuram, Kaliyal and

Arukany forane competitions were held. From the whole diocese above 400 teachers participated in the competitions. I congratulate the Catechesis department for the effective coordination of the competitions.

**Diocese level Bible Quiz for Sunday School Teachers:** Diocese level Bible Quiz for teachers were held on 11 February 2025 at Padanthalumoodu at 1.00 pm. Around 50 teachers participated in the Bible Quiz.

**Chain Adoration by CRI:** On 11 February 2025, the CRI of Thuckalay organized a chain adoration at St. Mother Teresa Church, Kalluvilai, from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Sisters from various congregations participated actively, adhering to their designated time slots. Rev. Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil, the Vicar of Kalluvilai Parish, made all the necessary arrangements for the event. The adoration concluded with a spiritual talk and benediction led by Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekalam, the Vice President of CRI. I extend my sincere gratitude to Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese, President of CRI, for her dedicated efforts in organizing this meaningful spiritual event for the CRI members.

**On-going formation Programme for Priests:** ‘The on-going formation of priests is the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of building priestly personality which began and developed in the seminary with the training programme which aimed at ordination’ (PDV no.71). The Presbyterium of our Diocese convened for a two-day gathering at Sangamam on the 13th and 14th of February 2025. The programme began at 10.00 am with the welcome note by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil. I inaugurated the programme and introduced the resource person of the day: Rev. Fr. Joji Kallingal, Secretary of the Commission for Clergy of the Syro Malabar Church. He animated the formation programme in three sessions, two sessions in the morning and one session in the afternoon. Three sessions were made in three topics: priestly spirituality, relationship with Bishop and brother priests and priestly ministry. All sessions proved to be highly informative and pastorally enriching for the priestly ministry in the diocese.

The following day, 14th February, was dedicated to the evaluation and presentation of the reports of activities from various departments and pious associations of the Eparchy. This marked the fourth time that the diocese allocated almost a full day for this exercise. Directors of departments came well-prepared with PowerPoint presentations, beautifully outlining the year’s activities. The Presbyterium engaged in discussions and provided valuable suggestions. The comprehensive overview left everyone feeling happy and proud to be informed of the enormous work being carried out in the various departments. Special thanks are extended to Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General and Rev. Fr. Jimmy who assisted him. Gratitude is expressed to all the Fathers for their attendance and active participation, benefiting from this two-day formative programme.

**Priests’ Conference:** The Priests’ Conference for the month was held at Sangamam on 13 February 2025, as part of the ongoing formation programme spanning two days. The meeting officially commenced at 6:45 PM, coordinated by Fr. Vicar General, and was presided over by me. At the outset, the Presbyterium extended a warm welcome to the newly ordained priest, Rev. Fr. Amanto Edakkootathil, and expressed heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Joseph Koovalloor, who will be returning to his home diocese of Palai after his dedicated mission service at Rameswaram Mission. Rev. Fr. Procurator provided a detailed explanation of financial matters, emphasizing the importance of timely payment of building tax. The picnic committee also presented a comprehensive overview of the upcoming programme. During my presidential address, I shared key communications and insights from the recent Synod of Bishops. The conference concluded with a fraternal agape meal. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the Fathers who actively participated, contributing to the success of the conference through their meaningful discussions and engagement.

**KII Kalai Vizha 2025:** The Department of Kulanthai Isho Iyakkam (KII) organized a competition named KALAI VIZHA 2025 for children over two separate days. On 9 February 2025 (Sunday), the event was conducted for the Arukani and Kaliyal Foranes at St. Mary’s Forane Church, Kaliyal. The Forane Parish

Priest, Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekalam, inaugurated the competitions. On 15 February 2025, the event was held at Kattathurai School for the Nithiravilai, Padanthalumoodu, Manjalumoodu, Soosaipuram, and Thuckalay-Pilankalai Foranes. Rev. Fr. Abilash Xavier inaugurated the competitions, and Rev. Fr. Linto Thakadiyel delivered the felicitation address. Competitions were conducted in various categories, including Bible sentence recitation, speech, dance, and action song. The children actively participated with great enthusiasm, showcasing their talents. I extend my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil for efficiently coordinating the competitions at different venues.

**World Sick Day Celebrations:** The World Day of the Sick is observed annually on February 11, calling upon people to offer prayers and support for those suffering from illness and for their caregivers. This day was instituted by Pope St. John Paul II and coincides with the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes. In our Diocese, for a more meaningful observance, the World Day of the Sick was celebrated on Sunday, 16 February 2025, in all parishes. The Diocesan Health Commission, in collaboration with the Liturgical Commission, provided special prayers and guidelines for the Sunday liturgy. The liturgy began with an introduction, explaining the significance of the day. Special prayers were incorporated into the Karosoosa prayer, and after the Holy Qurbana, all the faithful were anointed with blessed oil. On behalf of various departments and pious associations, many visited bedridden patients at home, offering prayers and Rev. Fathers in administering Holy Communion. Some parishes extended their charitable outreach by providing food for the abandoned and homeless. In every family, special prayers were recited for the sick, fostering a spirit of compassion and solidarity. I extend my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal for his dedicated efforts in providing instructions and guidance, ensuring the fruitful celebration of the World Day of the Sick at the parish level.

**Christ Jubilee of the Youth (SMYM) at Munchirai:** The Christ Jubilee Celebration of SMYM and the inauguration of the Jubilee programme were held at St. George Pilgrim Church, Munchirai, on Sunday, 16 February 2025. The programme commenced at 9:30 AM with a session on indulgence led by Rev. Fr. Anil Raj. This was followed by the solemn celebration of the Holy Qurbana, which I presided over. During the symbolic offertory procession, the youth from various parishes presented seven symbolic offerings, representing the seven programmes planned for the Jubilee Year. After the Holy Qurbana, the inauguration ceremony was conducted, during which the seven Jubilee programmes were formally introduced. In the afternoon, an input session was conducted by Rev. Fr. Sahayadas from the Diocese of Kuzhithurai. He spoke about the Jubilee Year and how youth can spiritually prepare for its celebration. Approximately 70 young people actively participated in the entire programme. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, the Director, and his team for efficiently coordinating the Jubilee of Youth at the diocesan level.

**New College of Eparchial Consultors:** The mandate of the current College of Eparchial Consultors ceased on 31 December 2024. Considering the importance and delicacy of the functions entrusted by common law to the College of Eparchial Consultors, and in accordance with the eparchial statutes governing the same, I constituted the new College of Eparchial Consultors for the second time in the Eparchy with effect from 16 February 2025. Following priests are appointed as members of the College of Eparchial Consultors for a five-year term, covering the period 2025–2029: Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr Joseph Santhosh, Rev. Fr Antony Jose, Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal, Rev. Fr Dency Mundunadackal and Rev. Fr Aby Poovathummoottil. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the members of the outgoing College of Eparchial Consultors for their active and dedicated service over the past five years, which has greatly contributed to the pastoral and administrative well-being of the Eparchy. To the newly appointed members, I invoke God's abundant blessings as they take on the important responsibility of assisting me with their advice or consent in carrying out acts of greater significance, including the administration of ecclesiastical goods, for the good of the Eparchy.

**Heartfelt Gratitude to Rev. Fr. Joseph Koovallor:** To support Rev. Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil, the Mission Coordinator for the Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai districts, Rev. Fr. Joseph Koovallor was appointed as the Missionary for Evangelization and Pastoral Care at St. Joseph Mission, Rameswaram, on 14 February 2024. During his tenure, Fr. Joseph Koovallor provided immense support to Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil in all mission activities at Rameswaram and played a key role in establishing a small Christian community there. After a year of dedicated service, he was relieved from his office on 22 February 2025. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Joseph Koovallor for his committed service over the past year and wish him God's abundant blessings in his future ministries.

**Christ Jubilee of the Differently Abled at Kalluvilai:** Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) through its wing, the Association of Institutions for Differently Abled Children in Thuckalay (AIDACT), celebrated the Christ Jubilee 2025 by honouring differently abled children on 22 February 2025 at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. The event, titled "Talent Fest" brought together children and teachers from various schools, showcasing their exceptional talents. The celebration was made unforgettable by the impressive cultural performances presented by the differently abled children. I presided over the meeting. Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General and President of KKSSS, Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, Provincial Superior of FCC Sanjoe Province, and Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, Provincial Superior of SABS Thuckalay Province, felicitated the event. I thank Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil, Director of KKSSS and the entire team for organizing it very well.

**Cemetery Chapel Blessing at Palappallam:** On 23 February 2025, I celebrated Holy Qurbana at Christ the King Church, Palappallam at 4:30 PM. Following the Mass, they faithful went in procession to the cemetery and the newly built cemetery chapel was blessed by me. The new chapel is generously sponsored in loving memory of Mr. C. Anbian (Retired Teacher) and Mrs. Y. Lourdu Mary (Retired Teacher) by their family. During the blessing ceremony, I emphasizing the importance of prayer for the departed souls and the sacredness of the resting place of the faithful. After the blessing, the parishioners offered candles before the chapel in memory of their beloved ones. The blessing ceremony was graced by the active participation of all parishioners, making it a memorable and spiritually uplifting event for the entire community. I thank Fr. Ajin Jose for the efforts taken to build the beautiful chapel and organizing the blessing ceremony in a fruitful manner.

**Bible Quiz for Sunday School Students:** Diocesan level Bible Quiz for Sunday School Students was held on 23 February 2025 at Padanthalumoodu at 2.00 pm. Above 400 students from classes Fifth to Class twelfth participated in the Bible Quiz. The students were classified into class wise.

**'Chaithanya' for Mathru Jyothis:** A special seminar titled 'Chaitanya' was conducted in two different foranes for the Mathru Jyothis members. The programme focused on psychological well-being, including stress relief techniques and various interactive activities. It aimed to help mothers understand their mental state and respond positively to life's challenges, drawing insights from the Theology of the Body. The seminar was held at St. Alphonsa College, Soosaipuram, on 16 February 2025, and at Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu, on 23 February 2025. The sessions were animated by Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil, the Director of Mathru Jyothis. More than 100 members actively participated in the programme. I sincerely thank Fr. Jimmy for his new initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being of our mothers.

**Last respects to Rev. Sr. Maria Goretti Azhakanparampil SH (81):** It is with profound sorrow that we received the sad news of the passing of Sr. Maria Goretti SH on 25 February 2025. Her dedicated service spanned an impressive 38 years in our diocese. Sr. Maria Goretti was a pioneering missionary who devoted herself to the kingdom of God, particularly in the Kanyakumari mission and the diocese of Thuckalay. During her service, she contributed significantly to various ministries including teaching, directress of

orphanage in the following places: Arukani, Mukkoottukal, Anamugham and Palugal. The mortal remains was kept at St. Mathew's SH Provincial House, Changanacherry starting from 07.00 am on Wednesday, 26 February 2025 and the funeral service began at 3:00 pm. The first part of the funeral liturgy was presided over by Mar Joseph Perumthottam, archbishop emeritus of Changanacherry. I presided over the funeral Holy Qurbana and the rest of the liturgical services. Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal the chancellor concelebrated the Holy Qurbana. SH Sisters in the diocese, along with some faithful from the parishes where she served, visited, prayed for the departed soul, and participated in the final funeral rites. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Rev. Sisters of SH Province. Let us thank God for her service in our diocese and pray that the Merciful Lord may grant her eternal joy.

## **INFORMATION**

- **Mr. Mathew Joseph (88)**, the beloved father of Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese CMC, was called to the eternal abode on 12 February 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Jessy Therese and her family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Fr. Robin Koorumullil** is relieved from the offices of the Parish Priest of St. Thomas Church, Marappady, Parish Priest of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Mission Church, Kuttaicode, Eparchial Director of Uraviyam and Vocation Promoter of Kaliyal Forane on 13 February 2025.
- **Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal** is appointed as Priest in Charge of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Mission Church, Kuttaicode with effect from 13 February 2025.
- **Fr. Mijo Puthenpurayil** is appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Thomas Church, Marappady, Eparchial Director of Uraviyam and Vocation Promoter of Kaliyal Forane on 13 February 2025.
- **Fr. Robin Koorumullil** is appointed for rendering the pastoral ministry among the Syro Malabar Migrant community in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia with effect from 16 February 2025. We wish him God's blessing in the new ministry.
- **Picnic of Fathers** was conducted to Suryanelli, Kolukkumalai and Marayoor on 17-20 February 2025. Sincere thanks to the coordinators Fr. Jomy and Fr. Shinto.
- **Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal** came back from Saudi Arabia on 20 February 2025.
- **Fr. Joseph Koovalloor** is relieved from the office of the Missionary for Evangelization and pastoral care in St. Joseph Mission, Rameswaram as well as in the entire districts of Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai in the state of Tamil Nadu with effect from 22 February 2025.
- **Fr. Isaac Kurichiyel** is appointed as the Missionary for Evangelization and pastoral care in St. Joseph Mission, Rameswaram as well as in the entire districts of Ramanathapuram and Sivagangai in the state of Tamil Nadu with effect from 22 February 2025. We welcome him to the prebyterium.
- **Seven Deacons** from the diocese of Ramanathapuram came to our diocese for mission and pastoral experience on 25 February 2025. They will be in different parishes and mission places until 13 March 2025.
- **Fr. Jinu Thekkethala** went back to Rome after one-month vacation on 26 February 2025. We wish him a fruitful ministry in Rome.
- **SMYM Thuckalay-Pilankalai forane annual day celebration** was conducted at Pilankalai church on 26 February 2025. The programme started with competitions and afternoon there was annual day meeting.
- **Karunai Illam, Home for mentally challenged children, Nithiravilai** celebrated its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual day on 27 February 2025.
- **Holy Family Primary School, Arukani** celebrated its annual day on 28 February 2025 and farewell was given to the Headmaster Mr. Joy James.

## FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

04 March	-	Forane Priests Conference (Arukani-Kaliyal-Manjalumoodu)
05 March	-	Forane Priests Conference (Padanthalumoodu - Nithiravilai)
06 March	-	Forane Priests Conference (Soosaipuram – Thuckalay Pilankalai)
08 March	-	Jubilee of Women at Kalluvilai
15 March	-	Tenkasi Mission Meet
18 March	-	Presbyteral Council

## CONCLUSION

On 3 March 2025, we shall begin the holy season of Lent, a time of intense preparation to celebrate the paschal mysteries of Jesus Christ. In our tradition, the period of Lent is also called *50 Nombu*. This is because all the days beginning from the Ash Monday of the Lent, including Sundays, are counted as days of abstinence. This “Great Fast” (*Sauma Rabba*) is a period that commemorates Jesus’ 40-day fast and his passion and death. Consequently, this period is understood as a time of fasting and penance to be partakers in the sufferings of Christ. Though the prominent theme of the last week of the period, called ‘Passion Week,’ is the passion of Christ, the rest of the weeks have a variety of themes that point to upright Christian living.

I invite you to make this Lent a time of renewal of life through penance and prayer. It should be a time for personal reflection on where we stand as Christians and priests accepting the Gospel challenges in thought, word and deed. It is also a time to assess our relationships with our family, friends, working colleagues and the other people we contact, especially in our institutions. Let us convert Lent into a time for spiritual growth by being more attentive to celebrating the liturgies. Let us use Lent to fight daily against the evil within and around us by practising self-control and relying on the power of prayer and Scripture. As shepherds, we are also called to lead and prepare our faithful spiritually, helping them enter into this holy season with open hearts and deep reflection. Let us guide them to fully embrace the journey of Lent, so together we may celebrate the joy and glory of Easter with renewed faith and hearts transformed by God’s mercy.

Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**  
Bishop of Thuckalay

