



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/142/2023

31 January 2023

Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings and prayerful wishes Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

In this circular, I want to bring to your attention the important role that Faith formation plays in our parishes and how the parish priests, who are entrusted with this bounden duty by the Church, need to play a crucial role in making Faith formation an all-embracing reality in our Diocese. St John Paul II gave the Church an indispensable document called *Catechesi Tradendae* in order to understand the significance of Faith formation, or catechesis. The document opens by describing Christ as the one true teacher. To catechize or form in the Faith means to lead another person to Jesus Christ and all that he taught. Christocentricity in Faith formation also means the intention to transmit not one's own teaching or that of some other master but the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Truth that he communicates or, to put it more precisely, the Truth that he is. We must, therefore, say that in catechesis it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught; everything else is taught with reference to him, and it is Christ alone who teaches; anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips. Whatever be the level of his responsibility in the Church, every catechist must constantly endeavour to transmit the teaching and life of Jesus through his teaching and behaviour.

Faith formation follows the three-fold structure of knowing the Faith, loving the Faith by living it out, and praying the Faith through prayer and the sacraments. Because the parish is where the church lives, faith formation should become an essential activity within a parish setting. Parishes are communities of faith, action, and hope. They are where the Gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the earth. Parishes are the homes of the Christian community; they are the heart of our Church.

Faith formation is imparted using Catechism books. They are manuals of religious instruction using simple language and a question-and-answer format. Its object is to convey in summary and in practical form the documents of revelation and of Christian tradition, as well as the main elements that must be of service for catechetical activity, that is, for personal education in the faith.

The Universal Church has brought out the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which is given to all the faithful and to those who wish to know what the Catholic Church believes. It is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms that take into account various situations and cultures while carefully preserving the unity of faith and Catholic doctrine.

Local catechisms prepared or approved by diocesan bishops or by Episcopal Conferences, are invaluable instruments for catechesis. They are called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very hearts of

cultures. For this reason, Pope John Paul II has offered a warm encouragement to the Episcopal Conferences of the whole world to undertake, patiently but resolutely, the considerable work to be accomplished, in agreement with the Apostolic See, in order to prepare genuine catechisms that will be faithful to the essential content of Revelation and up-to-date in method and that will be capable of educating the Christian generations of the future to a sturdy faith.

By means of local catechisms, the Church actualizes the divine pedagogy used by God himself in Revelation, adapting his language to our nature with thoughtful concern. In local catechisms, the Church communicates the Gospel in a manner accessible to the human person so that it may really be perceived as the Good News of salvation. Local catechisms are palpable expressions of the wonderful condescension of God and of his ineffable love for the world.

From Vatican II up until 1999, the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference (KCBC) was in charge of preparing catechism books for the Kerala Church. However, in the meeting held in January 1999, having taken into account the mind of the Universal Church and following the provisions of the Oriental code of canon law, it was decided to entrust the responsibility of catechesis to the individual churches. From then on, the catechetical commission of the Syro-Malabar Church became responsible for preparing the catechism books of the members of its Church.

True to its mandate, the Syro-Malabar Church prepared its own catechism books, which have been used very profitably in all our parishes for the past number of years. The way that our Church organizes the Sunday catechism classes for our young generation has won much praise from everywhere. Hence, it becomes imperative for us, in our Diocese, to carry out this important mission that our Church has assigned to us.

While engaging in Faith formation, we should keep in mind that we need to promote the following aspects of faith:

- Promote knowledge of the faith.
- Promote knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments.
- Promote moral formation in Jesus Christ.
- Teach the Christian how to pray with Christ.
- Prepare the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.
- Promote a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to live as authentic Christians in society.

These aspects are well taken care of in our catechism books that the Catechism Department of our Syro-Malabar Church has brought out. Further, we need to be aware of the fact that while carrying out Faith formation, we can encounter certain challenges that include:

- An obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ.
- An indistinct treatment of the ecclesial context of Catholic beliefs and magisterial teachings
- Insufficient emphasis on God's initiative in the world, with a corresponding overemphasis on human action.
- Inadequate presentation of eschatology.
- The influence of relativism is apparent.
- Continuing need for a balanced Christianity
- Does not differentiate between the ordained ministry and the ministry of the baptized.

Keeping in mind all these aspects of Faith formation, the catechism department of our Diocese has prepared a vision statement for our engagement in Faith formation. It reads as follows: “We envisage motivating our young ones to learn, love, live, and proclaim Jesus, the Lord, and God in and through the Church as Syro-Malabar Catholics.” In tune with this vision statement, the department has come out with the following mission statements:

- To prepare people to live authentic Catholic lives in a culture that is increasingly diverse, complex, and challenging.
- To teach and carry on the Treasury of Faith and Tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church
- Developing spiritually, morally, emotionally, socially, and emotionally mature disciples of the Lord
- To help people live a counter-cultural life of witnessing.

Along with the above statements, the catechism department also aims at fulfilling the following tasks of catechesis:

- Knowledge of Faith
- Liturgical Education
- Teaching how to pray
- Education of Family/Community life
- Missionary initiation
- Vocation promotion/discernment

Through our sustained engagement in Faith formation, we must become an accompanying Church in our region so that our faithful can lead an authentic Christian life. In fact, we must become the sacrament of Christ in this region. There are a number of things that we can do in order to better integrate the faith and culture of our people. I want to suggest some of them, which I thought we could follow during this year to strengthen our commitment to Faith formation.

Build up Positive Peer Pressure in Faith Formation: At present, the Syro-Malabar Christians in our Diocese have been organized as parish or mission communities to keep up their liturgical tradition. Unless the faith and the liturgical celebrations become the focal points in our parishes and missions, our gatherings can end up as cultural or social gatherings. Our people can come into communion and community with one another, just as the disciples of Emmaus did after their encounter with the resurrected Christ. They will remain in that communion only through the exertion of positive pressure on the part of the Church. Liturgical gatherings would give the faithful a sense of unity, allowing them to create positive peer pressure to keep others in the faith. This community spirit will have an effect on the children, and they will be encouraged to be part of the community and to think and act in harmony with it.

Empower the Youth: The two disciples of Emmaus were not aware of their call and mission. This was demonstrated by their speedy departure for Emmaus. They feared the Jews who killed Jesus. However, they were empowered to go back to Jerusalem once Jesus accompanied them, explained the word of God, and broke the bread. *Koinonia* is a response to the risen Christ. We need to empower our youth. Our youth ministry in our parishes needs to work hand-in-hand with the catechism units to instil in them a sense of belonging to the Church and to impress upon them the need for Faith formation.

Make Use of the Media: During his ministry, Jesus gave the people what they ‘wanted.’ Giving bread to the hungry, he presented himself as the bread of life. By providing healing, he touched the lives of the sick. When the Emmaus disciples needed him the most, he opened the treasures of the Scriptures and the Eucharist to them. These examples show that the Church should be aware of the best possible means to

reach out to her children. In today's world, where young people are immersed in social media, we can make a concerted effort to use the various platforms that the media provides to carry out our faith formation effectively.

Eucharist-centred Faith Formation and the Importance of Liturgical Language: Pope John Paul II begins his dogmatic exposition, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, with the apparent paradox that while “the Church makes the Eucharist,” it is the Eucharist which “builds up the Church.” The Eucharist is called the “sacrament of sacraments” or the “centre and summit” of the sacraments (AG 9). It was during the breaking of the bread that the disciples of Emmaus recognized Jesus. We have a duty to bring this sacrament into the lives of our children. They must understand the language and actions that we use in our Eucharist. Further, the kernel of Christian life is to fulfil the Eucharistic command: “Do this in remembrance of me.” It is a call to become the Eucharist after the model of Jesus. This central mystery of Catholic life must be firmly imprinted on the children. The liturgical language has a significant role in accomplishing this.

I encourage you, dear Fathers, to take the Faith formation of our children very seriously. Kindly monitor the Sunday catechism classes in your respective parishes by liaising with headmasters/headmistresses and teachers. You also need to cooperate with the various initiatives of our Eparchial Faith Formation Department so that all our children can benefit from them. Let us put our hearts and souls into bringing up our children in the Faith that St Thomas bequeathed to us.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Erection of Kuttaicode St. Chavara Mission Station as Mission Parish: From 2014 onwards a small community was formed at Kuttaicode by the members of one of the Uraviam's of Holy Cross Church, Malaicode. As a result of constant mission works, the number of faithful had increased and on 02 February 2019 a mission station was blessed at Kuttaicode. Since 20 June 2019 onwards the Holy Qurbana has been celebrating every Sunday. As it comes under the territory of Malaicode Parish, the Parish Priest of Malaicode is the priest in charge of Kuttaicode Mission. On 24 May 2019, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal was appointed to help the Parish Priest of Malaicode for the pastoral ministry at Kuttaicode Mission. At present, there are more than 20 families who belong to the Mission. Considering the spiritual good and better allocation of the faithful residing at Kuttaicode, for the better pastoral care and development of the Mission, on 03 January 2023, on the feast of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, Kuttaicode mission station was elevated to the status of Mission Parish during the Solemn Holy Qurbana celebrated by me at 06.30 pm. During the Holy Qurbana, Fr. Chancellor read the decree of the erection of the Parish and Fr. Augustine Thalodil, the Forane Vicar of Manjalumoodu Forane read the decree of the appointment of the first Parish Priest of Kuttaicode Parish. Including Curia members and Fathers and Sisters from the Manjalumoodu Forane were present for the event. A good number of faithful from Malaicode Parish were also present. My hearty congratulation to the first Parish Priest of Kuttaicode, Fr. Joshy and the parishioners.

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 our Diocese, 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.

Basic Training for Catechesis Teachers Inauguration: Centre for Catechesis is conducting various programmes for the students as well as teachers for deepening their faith. In this academic year from January 2023 onwards the centre for catechesis started a Basic Course for all teachers namely Basic Training for Catechesis Teachers (BTCT). The teachers must attend 6 days on Sundays to complete this course. The course started on 08 January 2023 and Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil inaugurated the course by explaining the aim of BTCT. In the first batch 56 teachers attend regularly. The course begins at 10.30 am and ends at 4.15 pm on every Sunday. I thank Fr. Abilash and Fr. Jacob Ayyamathra for coordinating this course and all the participants for their readiness to join in this course.

Syro-Malabar Synod: The Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church was held from January 09 to 14 2023 after three days of prayer and retreat at the Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad. The Fathers of the Synod tried to study the contemporary issues that affect the Church and to seek the will of God, in a prayerful atmosphere. The Synod assessed realistically the pastoral difficulties faced by the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly in implementing the uniform mode of celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*. Since the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly is currently under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Administrator, the Synod cannot take any decision on the issues concerning the Archdiocese. It is a notable achievement that the Synod could bring out a renewed text of the Liturgy of the Hours of the Church. I express my gratitude to all of you who have prayed sincerely for the success of the Synod.

New Shepherd for the Diocese of Melbourne: The Holy Father Pope Francis has appointed Fr. John Panamthottathil CMI the new Bishop of the Diocese of St. Thomas the Apostle of Melbourne in Australia. We offer our congratulations, best wishes and prayers to the bishop-elect as well as to the Diocese of Melbourne. The Syro-Malabar Church is deeply indebted to Bishop Bosco Puthur who guided the Diocese gracefully as the first Bishop of the Diocese of St. Thomas the Apostle of Melbourne.

Priests' Meet at Padanthalumoodu: A meeting of all Fathers except from Soosaipuram and Thuckalay-Pilankalai Foranes were held at Sacred Heart Forane Church Padanthalumoodu on 10 January 2023 at 06.30 pm. The main focus of the meeting was an interactive seminar animated by Mr. John Majel, a research scholar from Pondicherry University. He took the class on the subject: 'The Power of Leadership: Priests and the Educational System – Learn How to Lead'. He handled the session with utmost sincerity and openness in bringing about the much-desired awareness on the need for the involvement of the Church and its functionaries in preparing the poor and the needy for government service at different levels. On the basis of the seminar, a team of Fathers are elected to accelerate our service to the students of our Diocese. I thank Fr. Sathianesan for organizing the gathering well and providing a tasty meal.

Blessing of Grotto and renovated Kurissadi at Vayalinkarai: On 11 January 2023 at 06 pm, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil blessed the newly constructed grotto and renovated Kurissadi at St. Antony's Church, Vayalinkarai. The blessing ceremony took place soon after the Holy Qurbana celebrated by the Vicar General. I thank Fr. Robins and the parishioners for the initiatives taken to complete the work as soon as possible.

Bible Fest Diocesan level competition for Students: The Bible Fest Diocesan level competition was conducted on 14 January 2023 at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. Registration began at 8.30 am. The Bible Fest Diocese level competition was inaugurated by Rev Fr. Jose Muttathupadam and

Sr. Bindhu Chacko MMM, Principal of the Sacred Heart Matriculation School, Padanthalumoodu felicitated the event. Almost 452 students participated in various items. The concluding meeting was presided over by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparambil and winners were awarded by him and Mr. Mariadhas. Congratulation for the winners, participants and organizers.

Rank List	Forane level	Parish level
I	Soosaipuram	Soosaipuram
II	Nithiravilai	Vayalinkarai
III	Manjalumoodu	Palappallam

KKSSS Day and Pongal Celebration: The KKSSS family celebrated Patron's Day (St. Devasayam day - January 14th) and Pongal Celebration on the 16 January 2023. The performances included prayer songs, dances and other cultural activities by the staff and Educare students and the highlight was the distribution of scholarships for the Educare students. During the event, from various Self Help Groups, seven people who had low-income levels were chosen to implement a project on goat rearing to enhance their livelihoods. In this KKSSS project, a female goat for each person was distributed.

SMYM Leaders' Training and Pongal celebration: Leaders' Training and Pongal celebration were conducted on 16 January 2023 at SMYM Kalluvilai office. The morning session was animated by Rev. Fr. Arul Antony sdb, the director of Trichy Vazhikatti. During his input session the resource person spoke of the importance of life together with Jesus. He also motivated the youth to share their spiritual experiences. At 2.00 pm, Pongal, the Tamil Cultural Festival was celebrated with *Kolam*, sweet and other team building competitions. In the programme 60 youth took part. I thank Fr. Joseph Santhosh for animating the youth of the Diocese to witness the love of Jesus.

Priests' Recollection at Kalluvilai: A half-day spiritual recollection for all the Priests of the Diocese was held on 17 January 2023 at St. Mother Theresa Church, Kalluvilai. The recollection began at 10 am with the welcome and introductory talk by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil. Bro. X. Varghese, the President of St. Michael's Retreat Team, Kumali was the preacher. The preacher shared his own personal experiences and invited all of us to look deeply into the special calling as the Priests of God. During the Holy Hour, time was given to everyone to make their confessions. It was a special time for everyone to experience the powerful presence of God and to feel the brotherly communion of Priests in the Diocese. A simple family meal was served after the prayer at KKSSS. I am grateful to the Director of Sinai Retreat Centre for organising the recollection. I also thank all the Fathers for taking part in it.

Silver Jubilee Concluding Celebration of Tenkasi Mission: The Diocese of Thuckalay began the missionary work in the territory of Shenkottai, a single Taluk in the District of Thirunelveli which is 160 kilometers away from Thuckalay soon after the erection of the Diocese. It was also the part of the extended territory of the Syro Malabar Church in 1955, but the archdiocese of Changanacherry could not concentrate on mission work here, because the Kanyakumari district had also remained as its mission territory. Just one year before the erection of the Diocese, Rev. Fathers from MCBS congregation started a house there for the mission works. After the erection of the Diocese, two courageous missionaries, Rev. Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil and Rev. Fr. Peter Kizhakkal, were sent to Shenkottai to initiate the mission work. As the fruit of evangelization the first baptism was given in 1999 and at present there are four established parishes and twelve mission stations/centers. When the Tirunelveli district is divided, the Shenkottai taluk came under Tenkasi district. The conclusion of the Silver Jubilee of Tenkasi Mission was celebrated solemnly on 22 January 2023 at St. Mary's Church, Vanchinagar. The day's programme started at Border pastoral centre with the gathering of the pioneer missionaries (Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil,

Fr. Peter Kizhakkal and Fr. Thomas Pottampampil MCBS). They shared their happy and proud moments in the starting of the mission during the gathering. At 04.00 pm solemn reception was given to the pioneers along with me at Vanchinagar Parish for the Thanksgiving Holy Qurbana. The Holy Qurbana celebrated by me, was concelebrated by Fathers from mission territories along with the delegates from Thuckalay. A good number of faithful from Tenkasi mission and Religious Sisters were also present for the event. Thanksgiving Holy Qurbana was followed by a public meeting in which the missionaries shared their experiences, well-wishers of the mission felicitated the event and representatives from parishes and institutions staged performance of arts. With the fellowship meal, the programme came to an end by 09.30 pm. I appreciate and thank wholeheartedly the coordinator of Tenkasi mission, Fr. Thomas Koippuram and the entire team behind, for organizing the event very well.

Health Commission Seminars for students: The Diocesan health commission organized a half day seminar on the theme 'Save Your Heart' for the students in different schools: St. James High School, Valiyavilai (09-01-2023), Mar Mathew Kavukattu Memorial High School, Varuthattu (10-01-2023), Holy Family Higher Secondary School, Mukkoottukal (11-01-2023), Holy Family High School, Arukany (12-01-2023). Along with the health awareness class, the event was enriched with cultural programme, rally and choreography of theme song. Rev. Sr. Josephine, Secretary of the TNBC Health Commission was the main resource person of the seminar. Along with her, Srs. Dayana, Libiya, Sajitha animated the students of different classes. Fr. John Paul, the Cooperate Correspondent inaugurated the seminars. Almost 3000 students benefited from these seminars. I appreciate Fr. Antony Mahesh for coordinating well the seminar in different schools.

Cemetery chapel Blessing at Mukkoottukal: On 23 January 2023 at 08.00 pm soon after the feast day Holy Qurbana, I blessed the newly constructed cemetery chapel of Holy Family Church, Mukkoottukal. It is the common chapel for the cemetery of both the parishioners and priests of our Diocese. Special place is set apart to construct the tombs for priests in the cemetery. Rev. Fathers from nearby parishes were present for the ceremony. I thank Fr. Subin for having taken initiatives to complete the work soon.

Minor Seminary Home Day: The saying 'happiness held is the seed; happiness shared is the flower' is the perfect description of St. Mary's minor seminary's home day celebration. The 24th Home day was celebrated, in a solemn manner, on the auspicious morning of 26 January 2023. Along with me, the day was blessed with the presence of Professors, Parents and relatives of seminarians, and parish priests of their Home Parish. The celebration started with a prayer service at the chapel of the seminary. Thereafter, various cultural events were held at the auditorium. Rector, Very Rev. Fr. Jogy Marangattu CMI, welcomed the gathering and in my address I appreciated the seminarians and encouraged and thanked the parents for their great faith and witness by sending their sons for the mission of God and His kingdom. At the end, I released the magazine '*Luminare*' and honoured the seminarians who won the various competitions held in the year 2022 – 23. My sincere appreciation to Fr. Rector and the entire community for conducting the Home day in a colourful manner.

Bible Fest Forane level competition for Teachers: The bible Fest Forane level competition for teachers was conducted on 26 January 2023 at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. Registration began at 8.30am. An Inaugural ceremony took place at 9.15 am. After a short prayer session the competition started at 10.00 am. In the morning session the competition took place for Manjalumoodu, Nithiravilai, and Padanthalumoodu Foranes and in the afternoon, the competition took place for Kaliyal, Arukany, Thuckalay-pilankalai and Soosaipuram Foranes. 318 teachers participated in this competition. The Bible Quiz was also conducted on the same day. 76 teachers participated in the Bible Quiz competition. My sincere appreciation to the catechesis department for organizing it systematically.

CML Platinum Jubilee Celebration: Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) is an indigenous pious organization for Catholic children, founded in 1947 at Bharananganam 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 completed 75 years of its mission.

The Diamond Jubilee was celebrated globally in all the Eparchies in the Syro-Malabar Church. The concluding celebration at Syro Malabar Church level was held in our Diocese, at Kalluviali on 29 January 2023. The day's programme began with the meeting of delegates held at Sangamam at 09.00 am. 98 delegates from different dioceses participated in the meeting. Mr. Binoj Palliparampil, the National President of CML hoisted the CML flag and Mar Thomas Tharayil, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry inaugurated the meeting and presented the paper on the theme: 'CML to the next 25 years'. The meeting was followed by the Solemn Holy Qurbana presided over by me and concelebrated by Mar Lawrence Mukkuzhy, Bishop of Belthangady, Mar Paul Alappatt, Bishop of Ramanathapuram and Mar Sebastian Pozholiparampil, Bishop of Hossur. The concluding public meeting began at 02.00 pm at Kalluvilai Sinai Retreat Centre. I welcomed the chief guests, Mar Lawrence Mukkuzhy inaugurated the Meeting and the National President gave the Presidential address. Mar Joseph Perumthottam, Archbishop of Changanacherry delivered the key note address. Mar Sebastian Pozholiparampil, Mar Paul Alappatt and CML Representatives from various states and national coordinators felicitated the event. Soon after the meeting, the mission league rally of our children started from Kalluvilai to Kattathurai. Rev. Fr. Vicar General flagged off the Rally and almost 3500 people including the guests, delegates, priests, religious, laity and children participated in the event. The concluding meeting was held at the end of the rally at Kattathurai school campus. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the Mission League rally.

Prize	Rally	Flot
I	Soosaipuram	Soosaipuram
II	Thuckalay-Pilankalai	Nithiravilai
III	Arukany	Manjalumoodu

I appreciate and place on record your whole hearted cooperation and support to the conclusion of CML Jubilee. You have really gone an extra mile to give your best performance at Parish and Forane levels. The guests and delegates were very glad to see the human resource in our Diocese and commented very positively to me the interest with which the Fathers, Sisters and Laity involved in the programme. A special word of thanks to Fr. Printo Kurias, the director of CML and to the program committee coordinators and members.

Staff Seminar at Padanthalumoodu: A one day seminar was conducted for the teaching and non-teaching staff of Aided schools of our Diocese on 31 January 2023 at Sacred Heart Matric. School, Padanthalumoodu. The seminar started at 10 am on the topic 'Education in the present scenario'. Rev. Fr. Sebastian Francis, a priest from the Diocese of Kuzhithurai and Founder and Director of *Sigaram Academy of Excellence*, Mulagumoodu was the resource person of the seminar. The seminar helped our staff to be equipped to face the present day challenges in schooling. Around 110 staff took part in the

seminar. I met the group in the afternoon session and appreciated their service to the good of our Diocese by their valuable service. I thank Fr. John Paul, the Cooperate Correspondent for organizing the programme very well.

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 at Sangamam on 31 January 2022. Forane Vicars, Fathers from Thuckalay-Pilankalai Forane, Provincial Superiors and Representatives from neighbouring Religious communities of Bishop's House were invited. The programme began with a prayer session conducted by Fr. Michael sdb. During the short gathering, Fr. Joshy welcomed the invitees, the CMC and SABS Sisters presented a meaningful song on Don Bosco and FCC Provincial and Fr. Toji Parambilparambil felicitated the event. The programme concluded with a community meal.

INFORMATION

- **Rev. Sr. Sheena Joseph SMSM**, the Superior General of SMSM congregation visited our Diocese and had a short meeting at Bishop's House on 02 January 2023.
- **Mrs. Mercy Jose**, the donor of Snehavilla along with the girls of children's home, Moolamattam visited our diocese on 02-03 January 2023.
- **One day chain adoration** was conducted by CRI members at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai on 04 January 2023 as reparation against the desecration of Holy Qurbana that took place in Ernakulum Basilica on 22-23 December 2022.
- **For the deceased Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI**, Holy Qurbana was offered and the office for the dead was recited on 05 January 2023 in all the Parishes and Institutions of our diocese.
- **Syro Malabar Mission Week** was celebrated in our diocese under the directions of CML from 06 to 12 January 2023.
- **In connection with the unity octave**, a meeting was held at Thanjavur on 19 January 2023 and 5 representatives participated from our Diocese.
- **Intensive Pastoral course for deacons** was conducted at Sangamam from 16 to 25 January 2023.
- **Fr. Anto Thunduparampil CMI** has gone to Namibia, Africa for a one month visit on 24 January 2023.
- **New tuition centre was inaugurated at Cumbum – Angoorpalaym** village on 24 January 2023 and Rev. Sisters began the village ministry.
- **Four deacons from Ramanathapuram Diocese** reached in our Diocese for pastoral ministry on 31 January 2023. After basic language course, they will be sent to Manjalumoodu, Nithiravilai, Thettiyodu and Vayalinkarai Parishes. They will be doing their ministry in our diocese for one month.
- **Appointments and Transfers:**
 - ❖ **Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal** is appointed as the Parish Priest of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Church, Kuttaicode with effect from 03 January 2023.
 - ❖ **Fr. Mijo Puthenpurayil** is relieved from the offices as Parish Priest of St. Michael's Church, Kattathurai and Director of Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai with effect from 31 January 2023 for treatment.

- ❖ **Fr. Abilash Xavier** is appointed as Priest In-charge of St. Michael's Church, Kattathurai with effect from 31 January 2023.
- ❖ **Fr. Anil Raj** is appointed as the Director of Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai with effect from 31 January 2023.

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The On-going formation programme for all the Fathers will be on 06 and 07 February 2023. Kindly note these dates and positively be available. The venue will be at Sangamam. Since it's a two days programme, please come prepared to stay overnight at Sangamam.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

06 February	-	Orientation Programme for Priests at Sangamam
07 February	-	Orientation programme for priests with Inter - Departmental Report Presentation at Sangamam
09 February	-	10 th Death Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiantara
13 February	-	Presbyterium Picnic
14 February	-	Presbyterium Picnic
20 February	-	Ash Monday
25 February	-	Presbyteral Council

Presentation of Annual Report by Departments & Pious Associations

Place: Sangamam

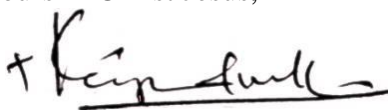
Dates: 07 February 2023, Tuesday

Time: 09.30 am – 03.30 pm

CONCLUSION

On 20 February 2023, we begin the holy season of Lent. It is the period of Great Fast (*Sauma Ramba*). The seven weeks before the solemnity of Easter are set apart for prayer, fasting, abstinence and reparation. The name 'Great Fast' (*Sauma Ramba*) signifies the great fast of Jesus for forty days in the wilderness before the beginning of his public life (Mt 4:2). Still we call this period as fifty days of fasting. This is because the St Thomas Christians fasted and abstained from *Pethurtha* Sunday to Easter Sunday. Lent is a season to suspend all the worldly pleasures and to return to God. This period motivates the faithful to enter into the process of being one with Jesus through his paschal mysteries of suffering, death, and burial as the bridal price of purification. I exhort you, dear Fathers, to prepare our people and to help them to enter into this holy season in the right spirit.

With my prayers and blessings,
Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

