

10 January 2014

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Fraternal Greetings from Bishop's House! We have stepped into another year 2014. I take this opportunity to wish you HAPPY NEW YEAR. May the New Year bring new hope and aspiration! Let's think anew and act boldly during this year. Let us find new opportunities in our respective pastoral ministries. The year 2013 was tainted with some sad events. Three of our Fathers have left us for their eternal reward. It is our firm belief that in those moments of bereavements, we also experience the tangible presence of God in our midst. He is with us even during those moments. With sentiments of joy and thanksgiving let us enter into this New Year.

ANNUAL RETREAT

The Annual Spiritual retreat of the Fathers was held from 10 -13 December 2013. Rev. Fr. Biji Koippally belonging to the Archdiocese of Changanacherry animated the retreat. It was a real God experience for all the Fathers. All the reflections were based on priesthood and priestly ministry. 32 Fathers made their retreat. On the last day, all the participants visited Rev. Fr. Thomas Thekkeyil in the Holy Cross Hospital. It was a God-given opportunity for every one of them to meet Fr. Thekkeyil in the hospital for the very last time and to pray with him. The very next day Fr. Thomas passed away.

HOME MISSION

As you all know the Home Mission in Annikarai Parish has concluded successfully on 5 January 2014. I wish to thank Rev. Fr. John Paul, the Parish Priest and all the Home Mission Sisters for working hard for last three weeks and exercising the spiritual ministry in the Parish through prayer and catechesis. The next Home Mission will be held in Palukal Parish from 20 January 2014 onwards. I wish Rev. Fr. Mathew Thekkekut, the Parish Priest and the Parish Community God's blessings the successful completion of this spiritual exercise.

MEMORIAL MASS FOR FR. MATHEW PLATHOTTAM MST

The Holy Qurbana on the occasion of the Month's Mind of late Fr. Mathew Plathottam MST was held on 21 November 2013 at Chenamcode Parish Church. His family members as well as the Director General of MST Society Rev. Fr. Kurian Ammanathukunnel were present for the occasion. The Faithful from Palukal, Kulasekaram and Chenamcode Parishes also took place in the Mass along with our Fathers. We remembered and recalled the pastoral activities of Fr. Mathew and prayed for him. I wish to thank the Vicar General and Chenamcode FCC community for making the necessary arrangements for the Mass and the refreshments thereafter.

BIBLE EXHIBITIONS

The Bible Exhibition was held in all our Parishes. I was thrilled to witness the creativity of the children and the youth of the Parishes. All of you worked very hard in planning and encouraging the participants. It became a faith experience for the every one who came to witness the event. Hearty congratulations to the winners of the competition. Special thanks for Rev. Fr. Jossy Puthenpurakal, the Director and to all his collaborators for organising this event. It is good to have an evaluation of the event according to Parishes so that exhibitions can be bettered in the coming years.

CHRISTMAS AT SENGOTTAI MISSION

It is long time since we heard from Sengottai Mission. After the death of Rev Fr Thomas Thekkeyil, the PSS and Vanchinagar Parish are being looked after by Frs Tobin and Kochumon. They have been working round the clock in building up the Mission at Sengottai. The first floor of the Pulari School is under construction. Fr Tobin is busy preparing the school documents to get the opening permission for High school. The Mission Centres at Mekarai and Puliarai are regularly looked after. I spent the Christmas this year (2013) with the Faithful of Sengottai Mission. All the Priests including the MCBS Fathers, Sisters and Faithful gathered at Puliarai Mission for the Night Mass. The Liturgical celebration began at 7.00 pm. After the Mass, the children from Mission organised a cultural programme; cakes and refreshments were distributed to everyone. It was a meaningful celebration for all of us. Around 11.00 pm, all the Priests and the Religious gathered together to celebrate Christmas and shared dinner together. I thank Fr Tobin and Kochumon for taking the leadership in organising this event along with all the MCBS Fathers and Sisters in the region.

CHURCH BLESSINGS

The Divine Providence is seen in every aspect of our mission work in the Diocese. It has been the long cherished dreams of Malaicode and Vailankarai Parishes to build new churches and to renovate and make a new *madubha* for Varuthattu Parish. All the three churches are now consecrated. Vailankari Church was consecrated on 26 December 2013, Varuthattu was on 27 December 2013 and Malaicode was on 1 January 2014. The churches look very beautiful and the interiors were given more attention in designing and paintings. I am sure they will help the faithful to pray and spend more time with God. Behind these beautiful structures we can see the toil and hard work of the respective Parish priests, faithful, benefactors and sisters. I wish to thank every one of you for making this dream come true.

MINOR ORDERS

Rev. Brs Jose Vayalil and Printo Kuriakose received the Minor Orders on 27 December 2013. The ceremony took place at Sangamam during the Holy Qurbana. We congratulate the two Brothers for accepting God's call and to take another step in their Priestly Formation.

FORANE LEVEL CATECHISM COMPETITIONS

Forane level cultural competitions were held for catechism children from 27 – 31 December 2013. I was informed that all the children were prepared well for the competition and that their teachers accompanied them. In some Parishes even the Fathers accompanied the children. Our Brothers who were in the Diocese for their holidays were the judges for the competitions. I thank Rev Fr Jossy and his team for organising this event. My special thanks go to the Fathers who hosted the competitions in their Parishes. The venues were well arranged for the occasion.

VANDUPARUNGAL – RETREAT AT KALLUVILLAI

The *Vanduparungal* monthly retreat Centre at Palugal is completing its 75 months of selfless service under the leadership of Rev. Fr Joseph Nedumpuram. In order to commemorate this great occasion the Centre has planned a three-day retreat to be animated by Rev Fr Dominic Valammanal of Anakkarai, Kanjirapalli Eparchy. Fr Dominic is a legendary preacher endowed with gift of healing. It will be held on 17, 18, and 19 January 2014 at Aseer Auditorium, Kaluvilai. I request you to give maximum publicity to this retreat and

encourage people to attend it. We wish FrJoseph Nedumpuam and his team all the best for the retreat.

ORDINATIONS 2014

This year there are two ordinations in the Diocese. The ordinations will be on 28 April 2014. Deacon **Linslal** will be ordained at 9.30 am at Vazhathopu, Iddukiand Deacon **Sebi** at 2.00 pm, Kothamangalam. As I congratulate the two Deacons, I request all the Fathers to attend their ordinations.I am informing you earlier so that you can block this day to attend their ordinations.

VOCATION PROMOTION

Kindly pay attention to all our students studying in various schools. Encourage them to study hard and prepare well for the forthcoming examinations. Special attentionis to be given to students of Classes 10 and 12.Kindly prepare at least one boy and one girl from your respective Parishes to priesthood to our Diocese and to Religious Life. In this regard we have arranged a short meeting of all the Altar Boys. Rev. FrDency will organise the meeting. I request you to send all the Altar Boys on the following dates:

- 12 January 2014 -Padanthalumoodu&NithravilaiForanes
- 18 January 2014 - Thuckalay-Plankaliai&SoosaipuramForanes
- 08 February 2014 - Manchalumoodu&ArukaniForanes

Vocation camp for the boys will be held from 4-8 May 2014.

COMMON AND FORANE LEVEL PRIESTS' CONFERENCE

At the end of the retreat it was unanimously decided to spend a few hours by all the Fathers to pray and invoke the blessings of God for our Diocese as we have been going through trying times. For this,all the common Priests'Conferences will begin on the second Monday of the month at 6.00 pm and end on second Tuesday by lunch at 1.00pm. The ForaneLevel Priests'Conference will be on every second Tuesday of the month as it is given in the Pastoral Calendar. All the ForaneDirectors are incharge of the Forane LevelPriests'Conference. They need to arrange: Recollection, Benediction, Confession, A common sharing on specific topic and Lunch.

HEALTH BULLETIN

- After the knee surgeryRev FrGinoyThottiyilis resting at home.

INFORMATION

- We congratulate the FCC Congregation for completing the 125 years of its foundation. This memorable event was celebrated in the FCC Provincial House, Plankalai on14 December 2013. I could not attend the function due to the sudden passing away of Rev Fr Thomas Thekkeyil.
- We thank God and congratulate the CMC Congregation. The Sisters are celebrating their 75thYear of Unification last year. A special programme was held on 3 December 2013 at their Regional House, Thuckalay.
- The Vincent de Paul Society could not celebrate the golden jubilee on 15December due to the death of Rev Fr Thomas Thekkeyil. The new date will be announced later.
- Rev. Fr John Paul has completed his B.Ed course. We congratulate him for taking up this study along with his pastoral work in the Parish and wish him God's blessings.

- The liturgical Wall Calendar has reached to all the Parishes. Kindly distribute to all the families
- Pastoral Calendar (Diocese programme for the year 2014) is ready and it will be reached to you at the earliest. Kindly take note of all the programmes.
- Since we are gathering twice this month (January), we will not have Priests' Conference in January.
- MMP is organising the Priests' Marian retreat from 10-15 February 2014 at Velankanni. Those who wish to attend this retreat can give your names to the Vicar General.
- FCC Thuckalai province has two newly professed sisters: Sr. Jaseenta from Malabar and Sr. Seraphine from Nagarcoil. Their first profession was on 2nd Nov. 2013. Rev. Sr. Jyothis made her final profession on 4th Dec. 2013. We congratulate all of them.
- The CMC, Thuckalay region has three newly professed sisters: Sr. Alphy and Dona from Kerala and Sr. Jermy from Kanyakumari. Their first profession was in May 2013. We congratulate and welcome them.

COMING EVENTS

- **Month's mind Holy Qurbana for Rev Fr Thomas Thekkeyil** will be on 13 January 2014. It will be a fitting occasion to gather together at KKSS to thank God for the blessings He brought through the intervention of Fr. Thomas Thekkeyil and to pray for his departed soul. The mass will begin at 3.00 pm. I request every one to take part in the liturgy and pray for our brother who worked with us for the last ten years.
- **Pastoral Council.** The next Pastoral Council will be held on 17 January 2014. The date has been booked well in advance. Since it is a local holiday all can take part in the meeting. The theme of the Pastoral Council is 'Family Life'. I invite all the Pastoral Council members to take part in the meeting and give generously your constructive feedback on the relevant theme. This will affect all the families in our Diocese. Therefore your presences and suggestions are very important.
- **Feast day Mass of Bl. Kuriakose Chavara.** As I had mentioned to you earlier, the Feast day Mass of Bl. Kuriakose Chavara at the Diocesan level will be held on 18 January 2014 at Little Flower Church, Plankalai. Your valuable presence is solicited. Kindly bring with you at least 5 members from your Parish. It may be proper to invite senior and prominent members from the Parish for this function. I also request the Directors of various departments to give sufficient representation from your departments. The Holy Qurbana will begin at 4.00 pm. Kindly reach the venue by 3.45 pm.
- **Fathers' Picnic.** This year we are not solemnising our picnic. But it will be nice to gather together to share our love and brotherhood. Keeping this in mind we have arranged a cooking picnic at Vazhakuli, Kumaracoil. It will be held in the farmhouse of Rev. Fr Mathew Kuzhijalil. I request every one to be present at the picnic spot by 9.30 am.
- On 9 February 2014 we shall commemorate **the first Death Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodianthara**. His life and ministry is very much alive in the Diocese. There will be a concelebrated Holy Qurbana in Sacred Heart Parish, Padanthalumoodu at 8.45 am. The main celebrant will be Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, our VG. Being Sunday it may be difficult for you to take part in the Mass. I request the Fathers of Padanthalumoodu Forane to send as many people as possible for the Mass. The family of Rev Fr Philip Kodianthara will commemorate the First Death Anniversary **on 4 February 2014 at 3.00 pm in Kayalpuram Parish**. All those who are able to come for this event, you are most welcome.
- **Marian Senai** annual day celebration will be held on 25th January 2014.

CONCLUSION

As we are commencing the year 2014, let us ask God to continue to bless our Diocese. As the Universal Church is commemorating the Year of the Family, let us as Pastors of our respective Parishes make efforts to promote family life by encouraging daily family prayers. May our Heavenly Mother together with St Joseph and Child Jesus formed the Holy Family of Nazareth, intercede for all our families!

With God's Choicest Blessings,

+ George Rajendran sdb
Bishop of Thuckalay