



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/148/2023

31 July 2023

Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from Los Angeles, USA!

As we are celebrating the feast of St John Mary Vianney, patron of all priests, especially the diocesan priests. In the context of our presbyterium, I want to reflect with you on the importance of **priests living and working together as a close-knit group**. Solidarity among priests is crucial in living out the priestly commitment to carry out the pastoral ministries that they are entrusted with.

According to a survey that Eugene Kennedy carried out on Catholic priests, it was found that many priests lack healthy interpersonal relationships. They are uneasy about intimacy. It simply refers to responsible closeness with other people. Among the priests, we can speak of spiritual intimacy. It is one of the most important challenges of adult life. It is something that can only be handled by a person who has worked through the adolescent challenge of securing his own identity.

Many priests have a few people to whom they are close. Only some people have enabled them to express themselves fully. This is a real problem because relationships with people and fellow priests constitute such a substantial part of their ministry. These priests experience difficulty and discomfort in the very area that should be a deep source of personal satisfaction. For a more rewarding sense of pastoral and emotional satisfaction, priests should feel confident and open in their dealings with people and other priests. Some priests feel that, in principle, they should remain at a distance from other people.

Intimacy, friendship, and love are powerful human needs. Somewhere in the deep recesses of our beings, we all hunger for them. Though this hunger is built into us from the beginning, we will experience it more acutely in our priestly lives. Intimacy implies being fully at home with someone. It means letting myself be fully known without fear of rejection. It means responding to another's love by revealing myself completely, trusting that the other will love me as I am. It means being fully known and lovingly appreciated. This kind of intimacy, which we call spiritual intimacy, is very important among priests. An American Jesuit, Fr William Bier, did extensive studies on priests who had left the ministry. He found that the majority of the priests who left ministry were lonely, isolated people who had very few close relationships with other priests. Fr Bier believes that intimate spiritual relationships among priests are a great support for their vocational commitment.

All of us need a support system in our lives. In the past, the joint family system provided this support. Today, families have become smaller and more isolated. Nobody has time for others. When a person is in

trouble, there is nobody to help him. The alarming number of suicides is a painful manifestation of this problem. Hence, each person must have a small group of people with whom he can confide his problems and seek support. It is a kind of intimate support system. This is loving behaviour manifested through self-disclosure and genuine care and concern. This intimate support system does not develop quickly or easily. It grows slowly as thoughts and feelings are shared. It deepens as others are invited to enter the personal and intimate places of our lives.

Priests need priests. A priest cannot function properly without the spiritual and psychological support of his fellow priests. A priest can give emotional support to his fellow priests in many ways. In our diocesan and religious communities, many priests are old, sick, or disabled. They experience extreme loneliness in these situations. The fellow priests can support them and comfort them by visiting them and listening to their problems. Also, there may be priests who are going through a crisis of vocation. In this kind of crisis, fellow priests are the most apt people to guide and support them.

Thomas Merton, a great mystic and spiritual author, went through a very serious vocational crisis at the age of 52. He was deeply involved in a love affair with a 25-year-old nurse. In this crisis period, a young priest provided him with the spiritual and psychological support he needed. Thomas Merton was a great scholar and a saintly person. But he had the courage and humility to share his very intimate problems with another priest who was much younger than himself. In their difficulties, priests should be humble enough to open up their problems to fellow priests and seek their support and guidance. Only a priest can understand another priest's problems clearly.

Hence, all of us must have special friends within the greater bosom of our presbyterate, or whatever group God has placed us in. A large community can effectively love its members with the special love and support they need only through the mediation of these special friends between individuals or among members of smaller groups, such as the seminary batch. Hence, members of the presbyterate should be bound together in deep ties of friendship.

St Gregory the Great indicates that no one should be sent out on apostolic work until he is capable of true love for his fellow priests. He writes: "Dear Brothers, our Lord sends his disciples to preach two by two. In doing so, he silently indicates to us that should anyone not love his companion, he should by no means take upon himself the office of preaching."

Abraham Maslow held that each person should be linked closely with a few others, each of whom is linked with still another few, and thus the whole web of love is closely knit together. The quality and depth of love in the whole fabric of the community are dependent upon the high quality of each friendship. When the friendship is based on the priestly bond, it becomes an apostolic covenant in which priests work together as friends for the salvation of others and thus bring about love among the many.

If we are to advance in our spiritual lives, we need to have intimate friends in the Spirit. Priests need close spiritual friendships in which they can find spiritual nourishment through shared meditations, shared prayers, etc. Many saints had close friendships with other saints. Some examples of spiritual friendship are that of St John of the Cross and St Theresa of Avila, St Francis de Sales and St Jane Frances, St Catherine, and Bl. Raymond.

How can we develop healthy friendships among priests, especially among the priests in our Eparchy?

Since our Eparchy covers vast areas, priests cannot come together often, especially those in the mission territories. However, we have monthly recollection and meetings of priests, regular meetings with the priests working in the mission territories, Forane priests gathering, etc. These meetings and other moments of togetherness should be well utilised to bring people closer to one another. The common meals that we often have should help foster healthy friendships.

Likewise, as priests of the eparchy, we have several common celebrations, such as birthdays and feast days of individual priests, parish and institutional feasts, etc. They can be arranged in such a way that many can take part. This is because celebrations are communal experiences of joy and moments of thanksgiving. We celebrate the fact of being together, and we give thanks for the gifts we have been given. Celebrations nourish us, restore hope, and give us the strength to live with the frustrations and difficulties of daily life. We should not shy away from meaningful and legitimate forms of celebration that can engender fellowship.

Intellectual sharing among priests is also important. Often, priests do not get sufficient time for personal study. Often, they are not in touch with modern trends in theology, psychology, etc. To overcome this problem, priests could gather together occasionally and study and discuss current issues, or they could invite some experts to enlighten them.

Friendly corrections can be another way to strengthen the bonds of friendship among priests. Speaking about friendship, Erich Fromm says that one of the essential elements of friendship is the responsibility for the well-being of the other. Friendship is based on mutual commitment. If friends are committed to one another, they have a responsibility to point it out if one of them goes wrong. Priests are committed to each other through the bond of the common presbyterate. If a priest comes to know that certain behaviours of a fellow priest are contrary to his vocation, he should lovingly point them out to him. Many serious problems could be avoided through timely corrections.

Thus, on 4 August when we celebrate Diocesan Priest Day, let us learn to cultivate intimate spiritual friendships with those who are called to the same vocation by the Lord. The lives and ministries of the priests should overflow with joy at seeing the wonders that the Lord is working on their loved ones.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Consecration & Diamond Jubilee Celebration of St. Thomas Church, Palukal: St. Thomas Church, Palukal was established in 1961 by the grate zealous missionary Rev. Fr. Zacharias Kaithara. The first baptism was administered on 09 June 1962, igniting the flame of faith among the people. The irresistible spirit and enthusiasm of the missionary attracted many others to embrace the Catholic faith. In 2011, the parish celebrated its grand Golden Jubilee, commemorating five decades of spiritual growth. Rev. Fr. Jacob Aiyamathra was appointed as the Parish Priest of Palukal on 24 May 2016. With a vision to construct a new place of worship, on 16 December 2016, the foundation stone was laid for the construction of a new Church. However, unforeseen challenges brought about by the Covid Pandemic prolonged the construction, leading to a six-year journey filled with perseverance. The long-awaited moment finally arrived on 01 July 2023, when the resplendent Church was consecrated. The consecration ceremony commenced at 09.30 am, graced by the presence of bishops, including His Excellency Thomas Mar Eusebius, Bishop of the Eparchy of Parassala, who blessed the new 'Kodimaram'. Additionally, His Excellency Mar Thomas Tharayil, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, blessed the new 'Kalkurisu' and the church bell. I presided over the Solemn Holy Qurbana, and during which Mar Thomas Tharayil delivered a profound

and inspiring homily. The consecration ceremony reached its conclusion at 12.30 pm, followed by a joyous agape meal.

On 09 July 2023, Sunday at 09.00 am, the Parish joyfully celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry was originally expected to be the main celebrant, but due to health issues, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the Eucharist celebration. The inspiring homily was delivered by Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the chancellor. The newly ordained priests, Fr. Ajin C Joseph, Fr. George Kandathil, and Fr. Prince Cherippanatt, concelebrated. It was a heartwarming moment as 23 children received their first Holy Communion, a cherished milestone in their faith journey. Following the Eucharistic celebration, a public meeting was held, graced by His Excellency Antony Mar Silvanos, the Cuiria Bishop of Syro Malankara Major Archiepiscopal Church. The gathering felicitated several significant events, including the Parish's Diamond Jubilee, First Holy Communion, Silver Jubilee of Sr. Vijil Mary SH, and the Golden and Silver Jubilees of blessed couples. The meeting concluded with a delightful agape meal, fostering a spirit of togetherness among all present. A special appreciation goes to Fr. Jacob Aiyamathra, who tirelessly dedicated six years to building a beautiful Church and fostering a vibrant community, deeply rooted in the faith of St. Thomas, the apostle.

Relocating Ceremony of St. Chavara Church at Ariyur, Madurai: Since 1993, the Syro-Malabar migrant community in Madurai has been fortunate to receive steadfast support and guidance from the CMI Preshitha Province, Coimbatore, through the establishment of Deepaham. Even when the diocese expanded to include Madurai, the existing Chavara community was elevated to the status of a Mission Parish under the diocese of Thuckaly, with the Fathers from CMI Coimbatore continuing to provide essential pastoral care to the faithful. However, in light of current circumstances, where plans are underway to sell the Deepaham property, significant discussions have taken place during my pastoral visit regarding the future of the community.

After extensive consultations with the Parish Priest and the parishioners, a momentous decision was reached to relocate the Chavara Mission Parish community from Deepaham to Ariyur. The diocese already possessed a suitable building for liturgical celebrations in Ariyur, making it an ideal choice. The realization of this decision took place on 2 July 2023, when the community was relocated to Ariyur. The existing St. Alphonsa community hall underwent a transformation into a beautiful church structure. The relocation ceremony commenced at 09.30 am with the blessing of the new Church building and Altar, followed by the Solemn Holy Qurbana, which I presided over. A significant event coincided with the relocation ceremony, as we commemorated the Dukrana of St. Thomas alongside it. The Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Fr. Babu Thattil CMI, Fr. Sebastian Chiramel CMI, and Fr. Jogesh Polachira. The day's proceedings continued with a public meeting, presided over by me. During this gathering, the Vicar General announced the decree of appointment of Fr. Jogesh Polachira as the Parish Priest of St. Chavara Church, Ariyur. The presence of almost all the parishioners added immense joy to the function. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Vicar General and Fr. Jogesh Polachira for their outstanding coordination in organizing the entire day's programme.

Special day of Prayer for Manipur: In solidarity with Manipur's people, our Eparchy observed a special day of prayer on 02 July 2023 in all our parishes and institutions. The prayer service included an introduction on the need for the gathering, a rosary procession with candle lights, prayer of the faithful, a pledge for peace, concluding prayer, and final blessing. Thanks to all Parish Priests for organizing this service so well.

Sabhadinam Celebration at Mount St Thomas, Kakkanad: 3rd July is marked as *Sabhadinam* in our Church. This year the celebrations of Dukrana assumed great importance as it was the 100th year of the establishment of the Syro Malabar Hierarchy. As it was the custom, the feast of Dukrana was celebrated at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on 3 July 2023. Representatives from each Eparchy of the Syro Malabar Church participated in the event. From our Eparchy following members participated: Fr. Seby Manimalakandathil, Sr. Ansit Theresa SABS, Sr. Vineetha FCC, Sr. Alphonse Jose CMC, Mr. Jino K, Mr. Gnanadas, Mrs. Jalaja Mary and Mrs. Juliet Baby. After the Solemn Razza Qurbana, our Cardinal inaugurated the public gathering which was followed by an agape meal. I extend my gratitude to all the participants for their representation of our eparchy at the *Sabhadinam* celebration.

New Finance Council of the Eparchy: Having completed its five-year term last year, the former finance council has now been replaced and I have appointed new members and constituted new finance council on 04 July 2023. Following are the members of the new Finance Council of the Eparchy: Rev. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, Rev. Fr. Dency Mundunadackal, Rev. Fr. Geo Choozhikunnel, Rev. Fr. Ajeesh Attiyil and Mr. Augustine Tharappel. The mission of the Finance Council is to advise and/or make recommendations to the Bishop in the more important acts concerning financial matters of the eparchy. The first meeting of the newly formed finance council was held on 04 July 2023 at 02.30 pm at Bishop's House. After taking the oath, Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal explained the statutes of Finance Council and Fr. Johnsilal, the procurator presented the budget and the present financial situation of the Eparchy. Decisions were taken based on the discussions taken place during the meeting. I thank all the members for their active participation for providing concrete solutions for the better management of the present financial situation.

Inauguration of the tailoring and tuition centres at Cumbum: On July 6, 2023, two new tailoring centres were inaugurated in Cumbum. The first centre at Lower Camp was opened at 3:00 pm by Rev. Fr. Joseph Vellamattam, the Vicar General of the Eparchy of Kanjirappally. Also present were Fr. Thomas Poovathanikkunel, the Forane Vicar of Kumali Parish, and Fr. Benny Thattamparampil, the mission coordinator of Theni missions. The second tailoring centre at Kakkan Colony was inaugurated at 5:30 pm on the same day. At present there are three tailoring centres at Cumbum. Later, at 6:00 pm, a free tuition centre was also opened at Kakkan Colony by the same distinguished guests. This is the second tuition centre established in Cumbum. These initiatives were made possible through the tireless efforts of the Rev. Sisters serving at Cumbum mission - Sr. Merin Jose SH and Sr. Elsy SH. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to them for their active engagement in mission works at Cumbum.

Cricket Tournament at Mankarai: The SMYM of St. James Church, Mankarai, organized a friendly cricket tournament at the Mankarai School campus from 08-09 July 2023. The inaugural event was graced by Fr. Sajan Nettapongu, SMYM Soosaipuram Forane Director. Seventeen teams from various parishes participated in the exciting matches. The tournament concluded with a meeting presided over by Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, the Forane Vicar of Soosaipuram Forane, where the winners were honoured. Pilankali Parish emerged victorious and secured the first prize, while Mankarai Parish showcased their talent and clinched the second prize. I appreciate Fr. Toji Sebastian for his efforts in organizing the event, and heartfelt congratulations to the deserving winners!

Blessing of Annex building at St. James High School, Valiyavilai: On July 10, 2023, at 10 am, the new office block of St. James High School, Valiyavilai, was inaugurated and blessed. The inauguration was carried out by Fr. Justin Sutheesh, the correspondent for aided schools, while Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus, blessed the building. The function was graced by the presence of Fr.

Toji Sebastian, the local manager of the school, along with the headmaster, staff, and students. Heartfelt thanks to the entire team for the successful completion of the beautiful annex building.

Forane Priests' Conferences: On July 11, 2023, Forane level Priests' conference for Arukani – Kaliyal - Manjalumoodu Foranes was held at Holy Family Church, Mukkootukal, starting at 06:30 pm with a solemn recitation of Ramsa. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus, graced the occasion as the curia representative. The *Lineamenta* for the upcoming eparchial assembly was published during the meeting. On July 13, 2023, the Forane Priests' Conferences for Padanthalumoodu – Nithiravilai Forane and Soosaipuram – Thucklay Pilankalai Foranes were conducted at St. George Shrine Church, Munchirai, and CMI Santhome House, Kanyakumari, respectively. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the general secretary of the eparchial assembly, and Fr. Sajan Nettareppu, a steering committee member, introduced the *Lineamenta* in the different forane conferences and guided the discussions. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil represented the curia members at the Soosaipuram – Thucklay Pilankalai Foranes conference. The attendees actively engaged in discussions concerning pastoral coordination among the parishes and departmental activities. Thanks to the smaller number of participants and ample time allotted, the atmosphere was lively, resulting in numerous suggestions for the betterment of pastoral activities. Heartfelt gratitude goes to the Forane vicars for their effective coordination of this remarkable meeting.

Holy Qurbana in the newly constructed shed at Rameswaram: In March 17, 2023, Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, the Bishop of Palai, laid the foundation stone for a community hall in Rameswaram. A small shed with coconut leaves roofing was constructed on the same land and blessed on May 28, 2023, by Fr. Jose Malepparampil. On July 15, 2023, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus, celebrated Holy Qurbana in this shed for the first time, with Fr. Jogesh Polachira and Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil concelebrating. The celebration was attended by around 40 faithful. We appreciate Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil's initiative and wish him God's blessings for his successful mission work in Rameswaram.

Ayurveda Medical camp at Kayathar: On July 15, 2023, the FCC Sisters of Germana Anpu Illam conducted a free Ayurvedic Medical Camp in Rajapudukkudi village, Kayathar. The camp's inauguration was led by Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam, the missionary at Kayathar mission. Joining hands with the sisters, three skilled doctors and four dedicated staff members from Kanyakumari district generously assisted the camp, providing valuable care to the villagers. In a heartening outcome, nearly 250 patients received free medicines and check-ups during the camp, enhancing the well-being of the community. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Rev. Sisters for their exceptional organization and compassionate efforts in providing this essential medical camp for the welfare of the village people at Kayathar.

Catechism Annual Day: The annual day celebration of the Catechetical department of the Eparchy took place on 16th July 2023 at 2.00 pm at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. The event was presided over by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus. Rev. Fr. Gerald graced the occasion as the chief guest. The catechism students presented various colorful programmes. During the meeting, winners of the Bible quiz and scholarship exams were awarded. Additionally, the top three best Sunday School trophies were given in three categories. Congratulations to Fr. Abilash Xavier, Director, and Fr. Jacob Ayyamathara, Joint Director, for their excellent organization of the event.

New Central Executive Members for SMYM: SMYM Central executive election was held on Sunday, July 16, 2023 at 2.00 pm at Kalluvilai SMYM office. The event, which started with the evocation of Holy Spirit, was conducted by Eparchial Director Rev. Fr. Joseph Santosh, who gave classes on leadership. The central executives are Manoj - President, Anjana – Deputy President, Jesila Mary – Vice President, Akhil

- Secretary, Abisha – Joint-Secretary and Ajith - Treasurer. Twenty-three forane Executive members participated in programme.

INFARM Meeting: Under the direction of KKSSS, a meeting of selected Fathers was held on 18 July 2023 at 10.00 am at Sangamam, called 'Infarm Meeting'. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the meeting. Infarm is a movement initiated in the year 2000 by Rev. Fr. Jacob Vadaakkemury of the eparchy of Kanjirapally with the purpose of supporting farmers, especially small-scale farmers. The movement has since grown, and Bishop Remegious Inchananiyil serves as its Chairman. The meeting aimed to discuss Infarm's current activities, its future plans, and ways to unite farmers under one umbrella in Tamil Nadu. Rev. Fr. Thomas Mattamundayil, the National Director of Infarm was the resource person of the meeting and he shared insights into Infarm's foundation and objectives. Infarm was established to provide support and assistance to farmers, with a specific focus on small-scale farmers. Its primary goal is to uplift the agricultural sector and improve the livelihoods of farmers. The meeting provided a platform to discuss Infarm's history, its commitment to farmer welfare, and the importance of expanding its activities to Tamil Nadu. The meeting also addressed the unique challenges faced by farmers in Kanyakumari and explored opportunities for collaboration with other initiatives. Overall, the meeting served as a significant step towards furthering infarm's mission of supporting farmers and enhancing agricultural practices. I thank the participants and specially Fr. Aby Poovathummootil for organizing it well.

Medical camp at Marappady & Bengiri: In collaboration with Maria Siddha Medical College, Attoor, KKSSS organized medical camps at Marappady on 21 July 2023 and at Bengiri on 28 July 2023, respectively. The camps provided medical assistance to the local communities, benefitting more than 180 people in total.

St Alphonsa Nadaipayanam: As part of the celebration of the feast of St Alphonsa, every year we organize *Nadai Payanam* to St Alphonsa Shrine, Nagercoil under the guidance of SMYM of the Eparchy. This year it was held on 22 July 2023 at 6:30 am. It started from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay. In the morning everyone was served breakfast at Bishop's House. Rev Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus started the event by offering prayers and blessings. There was another group of youth and faithful who took the Colachal road to Nagercoil. On reaching the Shrine, Fr. Sajan Nettareppu conducted the Navanal, followed by the Holy Qurbana celebrated by Eparchial SMYM Director, Rev. Fr. Joseph Santosh. Then everyone was served lunch. Around 450 youth and faithful took part in this pious journey. I thank the Fathers for taking initiative to bring the faithful for *Nadaipayanam* and special thanks to Fr. Santhosh, the director of SMYM for coordinating the programme.

Grandparents' day Celebration: The Eparchial Health Commission observed Grandparents Day in three phases solemnly on July 23, 2023. In the first phase, Health commission provided financial aid for medical assistance to three elderly people. In the second phase, the commission made a campaign in the hubs of Marthandam, Karungal, and Vattumani to provide meals to 45 golden agers who are fragile. In the third and final phase, the members of health commission, along with the director, visited the thirty-one elderly terminally ill patients of Shalom Home Nadikavvu, gave them valuable prayers, and sponsored a sumptuous meal for them. I appreciate Fr. Ajin C Joseph for the good initiative taken to celebrate the day for the good of the elderly people.

Grandparents' day Celebration at Tenkasi: On July 23, 2023, the World Day Grandparents was joyously celebrated at Pulari Social Service Society in Tenkasi. The event, presided over by the Social Service Director Fr. Antony Mahesh, was a heartwarming gathering that honoured and congratulated the senior citizens with the traditional 'ponnadai'. The students showcased delightful art performances and organized

special games to entertain the elderly participants. Around 60 grandparents from nearby villages like Branur, Border, and Kotakulam participated in this memorable occasion. I congratulate Fr. Mahesh for his wonderful initiative in celebrating this special day at Tenkasi mission, bringing joy and appreciation to our beloved grandparents.

Margamkali Competition at Padanthalumoodu: On the occasion of the Feast of Dukrana, *Margamkali* competition was held for the Mathru Jyothis members of the Eparchy on 29 July 2023 at Sacred Heart Forane Church auditorium, Padanthalumodu. The competition began at 10.00 am and ended by 02.00 pm. The competition was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathiansean, Padanthalumoodu Forane Parish Priest in the presence of Fr. Justin Cheruvilil, Padanthalumoodu Forane director of Family Apostolate. Almost 12 teams of Mothers from different Parishes participated in the competition. All the teams displayed great enthusiasm and sportsman spirit. Following teams were awarded prizes: first prize went to Holy Family Church, Thakkalivilai, second prize went to Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu and third prize to St. Thomas Church, Muzhucode. I congratulate Fr Jimmy, Director of Family Apostolate, for conducting such a traditional dance and for coordinating well the programme and I appreciate the winners for their excellent performance in the competition.

Educare Class and Parents Meet: A special educare class was conducted on 29 July 2023 at KKSSS, Kalluvilai. The class aimed to educate and engage educare students, and 47 students actively participated, gaining valuable knowledge and skills. On the same day, a review meeting was organized for the parents of educare students, allowing them to share their insights and experiences regarding the educare programme. The parents expressed their satisfaction, noting that the programme had positively impacted their children after the ten-day residential camp organised in the month of May. They even suggested that KKSSS should conduct a retreat for the students. In response to this feedback, KKSSS has decided to organize a residential retreat for educare students during the upcoming Pooja holidays. The events were successful in achieving their objectives, and the positive feedback from participants and parents reflects the effectiveness and importance of such initiatives.

St Alphonsa Feast Celebrations: The celebration of the feast of St Alphonsa began at St Alphonsa's Shrine, Nagercoil on 21 July 2023. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil hoisted the flag. It was heartening to see thousands of faithful coming to the shrine during the ten days of celebrations in order to pray and to receive blessings from God through the intercession of St Alphonsa. Almost all the Priests and faithful from our Eparchy were present for the various spiritual events especially during the Forane level Holy Qurbana celebrations. On 28 July 2023, Most Rev. Peter Remigius, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Kottar, visited the shrine and celebrated the Holy Qurbana. Over three thousand faithful from different rites took part in it. On 30 July 2022, the last day of the feast, the faithful, the religious and the priests from all our parishes reached the shrine by 9.30 am. Rev. Fr Thomas Pawathuparampil led the novena in honour of the saint. Solemn concelebrated Holy Qurbana followed. Mar John Nellikunnel, Bishop of the Eparchy of Idukki was the main celebrant for the Holy Qurbana. After the Holy Qurbana there was a procession and Agape meal for all the pilgrims. In the evening another Holy Qurbana was celebrated. Soon the flag was lowered and the celebrations came to a happy conclusion. I gratefully appreciate the involvement and the hard work of Rev. Fr. Sanal Panthichirackal, Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Georgekutty, Assistant Parish Priest, Rev. Sisters and faithful of St. Alphonsa Shrine during the days of celebration.

INFORMATION

- The feast of Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus and Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, the Judicial Vicar were celebrated at Bishop's House on 03 July 2023. I wish God's blessings to them and all Fathers who celebrated their feast on the same day.
- Construction of the Nirmala Home project began on 3 July 2023 at Nanguneri.
- Foundation stone for St. Michael's Church, Thettivilai was blessed by me on 03 July 2023.
- Fr. Robin Jose is relieved from the offices of Assistant Parish Priest of St. Michael's Church Thettivilai, Assistant Parish Priest of Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu, Eparchial Mission Procure, Bishop's Personal Secretary, Chief Editor of Thuckaly Tidings, Vocation Promoter of Manjalumoodu Forane and Director of Youth Apostolate of Manjalumoodu Forane of the Eparchy of Thuckalay with effect from 04 July 2023.
- Fr. Justin Cheruvelil is appointed as the Eparchial Mission Procure with effect from 05 July 2023.
- Dn. Liju Marattukalam is the interim editor in charge of Thuckalay Tidings from 05 July 2023 onwards.
- Fr. Shijo Aikarakunnel is appointed as the Vocation Promoter of Manjalumoodu Forane with effect from 05 July 2023.
- Fr. Subin Scaria is appointed as the Forane Director of SMYM of Manjalumoodu Forane with effect from 05 July 2023.
- Popular Mission Retreat was conducted at St. Michael's Church, Kattathurai for a week from 09 July 2023 onwards.
- Rev. Sr. Lincy CSN, the Provincial Superiors of CSN Province Kothamangalam with her councillors visited the eparchy and extended mission territories on 12 July 2023.
- Rev. Sr. Ann Mary SH (78), was called to eternal abode on 13 July 2023. Her dedicated service spanned 12 remarkable years in different parishes of the eparchy. Notably, she devoted six years to the Minor Seminary from 2004 to 2020. Fathers, Sisters and faithful participated in the funeral ceremony held on 15 July 2023. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the St. Mathew SH Province and pray for the departed soul.
- Rev. Sr. Anni Jameson SH, was called to eternal abode on 14 July 2023. Her dedicated service spanned 13 remarkable years in different parishes of the eparchy from 2009 onwards. Fathers, Sisters and faithful participated in the funeral ceremony held on 15 July 2023. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the St. Mathew SH Province and pray for the departed soul.
- Sinai Theological Institute started the academic year 2023-2024 on 16 July 2023. This year 4 members were joined in the new batch.
- The world grandparents and elderly day was celebrated in all the parishes of our eparchy on 23 July 2023.
- Rev. Fr. Chacko Puthiyaparampil, the new spiritual father at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal reached at Seminary on 24 July 2023. We welcome him wholeheartedly to the eparchy!
- A team of 32 students from Madurai under the guidance of the Parish Priest Fr. Jogesh Polachira and Rev. Sisters visited Bishop's House on 29 July 2023. They visited St. Devasahayam Mount and celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. Alphonsa Shrine Church, Nagercoil.
- Mega Job fair was conducted at St. Alphonsa College of Arts and Science, Soosaiapuram on 29 July 2023 from 09.30 am to 02.00 pm.
- From 1 August we begin the 15-day fast. I request you to observe this traditional practice as much as possible in order to celebrate the feast of our Blessed Mother on 15 August.
- Fr. Shoji Puthenpurackal is coming for his annual vacation on 10 August 2023. He will be here till 10 September 2023. We wish him a happy stay at diocese.

- The Syro-Malabar Synod begins on 21 August 2023. I request you to pray for our Major Archbishop and for the success of the Synod.
- My USA visit is going on well, for the rest of the days, I request your valuable prayers for the success of my mission appeal.
- I request all the Fathers to conduct discussions in Uraviyams, departments and pious associations based on the Lineamenta published by the steering committee in view of upcoming Eparchial assembly and give back the results by the first week of August 2023.
- Mr. Sabu Joseph (52), brother of Sr. Leena Parambakathu SABS (Kulasekharam convent) was called to eternal abode on 31 July 2023. We express our sincere condolences and prayer to Sr. Leena and her family and pray for the departed soul.
- Dear Fathers, as you know, the New Tamil Taksa will be implemented on 15th August 2023 on the feast of the Assumption of our Lady and I wish to inform you about the essential preparations leading up to this significant event. A circular will be sent to you to read in all parishes on 13 August 2023. To ensure a seamless transition and mastery of the changes introduced in the Tamil language, a comprehensive practice session has been arranged on 10th August at Sangamam. I humbly request all Fathers to make it a priority to attend this practice session, as it will empower you to effectively guide our dear Sisters and faithful in your respective parishes during this transformative phase. As we start using the new Taksa, let us refrain from adding personal notes in the common Taksa of the Parish. If any of you wish to include a personal note, let it be in your personal Taksa. To ensure smooth and meaningful participation of the faithful in the Holy Qurbana, it is essential for every parish to have a minimum of two copies of the Taksa and necessary Qurbana books for the faithful. Let us use this opportunity to promote active participation and recitation of the prayers with the new text. I wholeheartedly seek the collaboration of all Fathers in this regard.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

04 August	-	Vianney Day Celebration at Minor Seminary
09 August	-	Mission Meet at Tenkasi
10 August	-	Practice of New Tamil Taksa for Priests at Sangamam
15 August	-	Implementation of New Taksa in the Eparchy
20 August	-	Vincent de Paul Annual day at Mukkoottukal
21-26 August	-	Syro Malabar Synod
28 August	-	Publishing of <i>Instrumentum Laboris</i> for the Eparchial Assembly

Practice of New Tamil Taksa for Priests

Place: Sangamam

Dates: 10 August 2023, Thursday

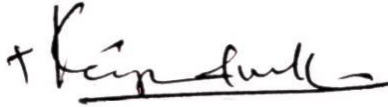
Time: 10.00 am – 01.00 pm

CONCLUSION

We just concluded the celebration of the feast of St Alphona. I want to thank you, dear Fathers, for celebrating the feast with nine days of the novena in your respective parishes and institutions. The

celebrations on 30 July at St Alphonsa Shrine, Nagercoil, went off well. Thank you for sending the faithful and for taking part in all the events in the Shrine. We have now entered the month of August. This month offers us several feasts, not only for celebration but also for our edification. On 4 August we mark John Maria Vianney Day. As per our custom, all the priests of the Eparchy normally gather at the Minor Seminary for the celebration. I request that every one of you participate in the programme. Besides the feast of St John Mary Vianney, on 15 August, we shall celebrate the twin festivals of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother Mary and the Independence of our beloved motherland. The assumption is an expression of our deep faith because we believe in the real, physical elevation of the sinless soul and incorrupt body of our Mother Mary into heaven. 15 August also marks the independence that we obtained from England after years of struggle. On this day, let us pray for the well-being of our country and ask Mother Mary to intercede for us so that we become free from every form of bondage and be with her one day in heaven. Let us pray, in particular, for peace in the northeastern State of Manipur, which is reeling under the communal frenzy that has taken the lives of innocent people and destroyed properties causing untold miseries to the people. We remember our fellow Christian brothers and sisters who are bearing the brunt of the mayhem that was unleashed some months ago.

With my prayers and blessings,
Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

