



# Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

**Bishop George Rajendran sdb**

**Diocese of Thuckalay**

Bishop's House, P B No: 12, Thuckalay PO,  
Kanya kumari Dt- 629 175, Tamil Nadu, India

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31 January 2026

Dear Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

As we enter February, we are blessed with significant occasions that call us to deepen our faith and strengthen our commitment to serving the most vulnerable among us. I write to you with joy and hope, inviting you to journey together through this month of grace.

## **The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the World Day of Prayer for the Sick**

On 11 February, the Universal Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, and on that day we also mark the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. This sacred convergence reminds us of Mary's maternal care for the suffering and of our calling to be instruments of Christ's healing love. At Lourdes, Our Lady revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception and made the flowing waters a source of healing for countless pilgrims. Through her intercession, we witness the power of faith and the tender mercy of God towards those who suffer.

The origin of this feast dates back to 11 February 1858, when the Blessed Virgin Mary first appeared to a humble fourteen-year-old girl, Bernadette Soubirous, in a grotto near Lourdes in southern France. Between February and July of that year, Our Lady appeared to Bernadette eighteen times, revealing herself as the Immaculate Conception and instructing the young visionary to drink from and wash in the spring that miraculously emerged from the rock. What began as a trickle became a flowing spring, whose waters have brought physical and spiritual healing to millions of pilgrims from every corner of the world. After a careful investigation, the Church recognised the authenticity of these apparitions, and Pope Pius IX established the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1891.

Since then, Lourdes has become one of the most significant Marian pilgrimage sites, where the sick and suffering find comfort, hope, and often miraculous healing through Mary's intercession. In 1992, St John Paul II, recognising the profound link between Mary's maternal care at Lourdes and Christ's healing ministry, established the World Day of Prayer for the Sick to be celebrated annually on this feast day. This initiative invites the entire Church to reflect on the mystery of human suffering, to pray for the sick, and to support healthcare workers and all who minister to those in need.

## **Our Ministry to the Sick: A Sacred Calling**

The ministry to the sick holds a central place in our Eparchy's mission. As priests, religious, and faithful, we are called to bear Christ's compassion to those who are ill, suffering, or marginalised. The power entrusted to us to minister to the sick through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is a profound privilege. Through this sacrament, Christ himself touches the sick, bringing comfort, healing, and grace. I

urge all of you to be readily available to visit the sick, to bring them the consolation of the sacraments, and to be a visible sign of the Church's loving presence. This witness speaks powerfully of the Gospel in action.

## **The Eparchy's Commitment to Healthcare and Compassionate Service**

I am immensely happy with the extensive network of healthcare and social service institutions that our Eparchy maintains, demonstrating our commitment to Christ's healing ministry:

**Our palliative care initiatives** in KKSSS, Vailankarai, Thirunelveli Mission, and Thenkasi Mission provide dignified end-of-life care and pain management to those facing terminal illnesses. These centres are oases of compassion where patients and their families find professional medical care combined with spiritual support. We operate **six schools for children with disabilities**, where specially trained staff provide education tailored to each child's unique needs, ensuring that no child is left behind in accessing quality education and development opportunities. **Providence Home**, run by our dedicated LSDP Sisters, is a beacon of hope for children with mental and physical disabilities. Here, these precious children receive not only care but also love, dignity, and the opportunity to develop their God-given potential. Additionally, we maintain **two homes for women with mental illness**, offering them a safe haven, medical care, psychiatric support, and rehabilitation services. These institutions embody our belief in the inherent dignity of every human being, regardless of their condition.

The Diocese carries out compassionate service through **Anbu Illam** in Munchirai and **Snehavilla** in Moolamattam and **dispensaries** at Thenkasi Mission. These homes and services serve as sanctuaries for the elderly and the sick, providing a dignified and nurturing environment for those who may otherwise face isolation or neglect. These centers are "houses of love" (Anbu Illam) that reflect the church's commitment to upholding the sanctity of life and the value of our elders.

I express my profound gratitude to all the priests, religious congregations, staff, volunteers, and benefactors who make these ministries possible. Your commitment to the least of our brothers and sisters is a living testimony to the Gospel.

## **A Call to Action**

On the World Day of Prayer for the Sick, I invite all parishes and institutions to:

- Celebrate the Holy Qurbana on 11 February with special intentions for the sick, particularly remembering those in our parishes who are elderly, homebound, or seriously ill.
- Organise visits to hospitals, homes for the elderly, and the residences of sick parishioners, bringing them the comfort of prayer and the presence of the community.
- Encourage families to accompany their sick members with love and patience, recognising that caring for the sick is a privileged way to encounter Christ.
- Promote vocations to healthcare ministry among our young people, inspiring them to consider nursing, medicine, counselling, and other caring professions as ways to serve God and humanity.

## **The Holy Season of Lent**

On **16 February 2026**, we begin Ash Monday, the Holy Season of Lent in the Syro-Malabar tradition. This is a time of grace, a season of spiritual renewal through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Let us embrace this period as an opportunity for personal conversion and communal reconciliation.

I encourage all of you, dear Fathers, to encourage the faithful to participate actively in Lenten devotions, daily prayer, Scripture reading, and the reception of the sacraments. Let us use this time to grow closer to

the Lord and to prepare our hearts for the celebration of His resurrection. Priests should ensure ample opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout Lent, and make themselves available to hear confessions at convenient times.

During this Lenten season, let us be especially mindful of the poor and the suffering. Our fasting should inspire greater generosity towards those in need. I encourage parishes to organise charitable initiatives that benefit the marginalised in our communities. The *undial* collection for this Lenten season is dedicated to the construction of the Cathedral Church.

### **Laying the Foundation Stone for our Cathedral**

I am filled with joy to note that on **17 February 2026**, we will lay the foundation stone of our Diocesan Cathedral at Soosaipuram. This is a historic moment for our Eparchy, and I invite all of you to be part of this momentous occasion. As I wrote to you on 28 January 2026, let us remember the words of the Psalmist: “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

The Cathedral stands as the visible sign and identity of our Eparchy, the Bishop’s seat, and the mother church of all our parishes. It will be a place where the faithful gather to celebrate the sacred liturgy, where the Word of God is proclaimed, and where the sacraments are administered. It will be a house of prayer, a centre of formation, and a beacon of hope for future generations.

I have already written to you about the preparatory steps for this great undertaking. I request that all parishes and institutions read the circular during the Holy Qurbana, recite the Cathedral Prayer after every Sunday Qurbana, and display the Cathedral poster prominently.

On **Sunday, 15 February 2026**, all parishes are requested to collect the “**One Day’s Wage**” offering during the Holy Qurbana. This sacrificial offering symbolises our commitment to building not only with stone but also with faith and unity. I urge you to encourage every family to participate generously, recognising that this is our collective endeavour.

**All priests are earnestly requested to attend the foundation stone-laying ceremony on 17 February 2026.** Please bring the offerings collected on 15 February. When your parish name is announced during the liturgical ceremony, kindly come forward with your Kaikars to present the offering. Your presence and participation will demonstrate the unity of our presbyterate and the strength of our diocesan family.

Dear Fathers, as we journey through February, let us hold the sick and the suffering in our hearts, prepare spiritually for Lent, and unite in building our Cathedral. These three themes are interconnected: our service to the sick manifests Christ’s love, our Lenten observance purifies our hearts, and our Cathedral will stand as a permanent symbol of our faith community.

I invoke the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, Health of the Sick, for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. May she lead them to her Son, the Divine Physician. I also invoke the intercession of St John Bosco, whose feast we celebrated yesterday, and St Joseph, the patron of our Cathedral, to guide and protect this great project. Let us pray for one another and support one another in our various ministries. Together, by God’s grace, we shall build a vibrant faith community that witnesses to Christ’s love and mercy.

## NEWS AND EVENTS

**Syro Malabar Bishops' Synod at Kakkanad:** The First Session of the XXXIV Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church was held at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, from January 6 to 10, 2026. The Synod commenced with the solemn inauguration of the Year of Community Empowerment 2026. During the session, the Synod expressed its profound gratitude to the Apostolic See for appointing Rev. Fr. Jolly Vadakken as the Apostolic Visitor for the Syro-Malabar faithful in the Arabian Peninsula. Regarding the implementation of the uniform mode of Holy Qurbana, the Synod noted with regret that full unity has not yet been realized. It earnestly appealed to all members to cooperate with the synodal decision to implement the uniform mode through a phased, step-by-step process. Additionally, the Synod deliberated on the timely renewal of priestly formation to enhance the effectiveness of the Church's mission. The proceedings concluded with an invitation to all faithful to continue nurturing the "seeds of hope and mercy" sown during the Christ Jubilee Year.

**Thanksgiving Holy Qurbana at St. Devasahayam Church, Nattalam:** The Feast of St. Devasahayam, the patron of the Indian Laity, was celebrated with great fervour and devotion at his birthplace in Nattalam. This year's celebration held historic significance as it marked the first feast following his proclamation as the Patron Saint of the Laity in India. On Tuesday, 13 January 2026 at 10:00 AM, a solemn Holy Qurbana in the Syro-Malabar rite was celebrated at Nattalam, with me as the Main Celebrant. Almost twenty priests from our diocese concelebrated in it. The celebration witnessed a large number of religious sisters, and lay faithful gathering to thank God. The atmosphere was one of deep gratitude to God for gifting us a saint from our own soil as a model for the laity. By celebrating the Holy Qurbana, we prayed together specifically for the emergence of more active lay leaders within the Church who can carry forward the mission of evangelization with the same courage as St. Devasahayam. At the end of the celebration, Mr. Shonic Regan, the joint secretary of the Pastoral Council expressed the words of gratitude especially to the Rector of the Shrine for inviting us to celebrate the thanksgiving Holy Qurbana in our rite. I wish to place on record my deep appreciation for our Forane Vicars and Parish Priests for their leadership and coordination in mobilizing the faithful from various parishes, ensuring the spiritual success of this gathering.

**Bible Fest Diocesan level competition for Students:** The Diocesan-level Bible Fest was successfully held on January 15, 2026, at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. Registration commenced at 8:30 a.m., followed by the ceremonial hoisting of the flag by Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan. The competitions were officially inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil, Forane Director of Manjalumoodu. The festival featured 487 talented students, including participants from the Tenkasi Mission, who competed across seven different stages. The events included: Performance Arts: One-Act Play and Mono-act; Music: Solo and Group Song; Literary & Scriptural: Speech, Bible Reading, and Bible Recitation. The concluding ceremony was presided over by me, in the presence of Fr. Abilash. Heartfelt congratulations to all the winners, participants, and organizers for their dedication and spirited involvement in making this event a success. The list of overall champions is provided below.

Rank List	Forane	Parish (Centre)
I	Nithiravilai	Varuthattu
II	Manjalumoodu	Pilankalai
III	Soosaipuram	Mukkoottukal

**Mathru Jyothis Pongal Celebration:** The Department of Family Apostolate organized a vibrant Pongal Festival for the members of Mathru Jyothis, specifically for the mothers of the Manjalumoodu Forane, on January 17, 2026, at St. Michael's Church, Thettivilai. The festivities were held under the guidance of Fr.

Jimmy Thekkekadumathil (Director of Mathru Jyothis), Fr. Robins Kuzhikodil (Director of the Manjalumoodu Forane), and Fr. Jogesh Polachira (Parish Priest of Thettivilai). Approximately 35 mothers from across the Forane participated in the celebration. To enhance the joy of the occasion, various sports and games were organized, with prizes distributed to the winners. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Fr. Jimmy, the Director, for his initiative in organizing this Pongal celebration for our mothers, fostering a spirit of community and tradition.

**Inauguration of the Syro Malabar Community Empowerment Year 2026:** The Parish level inauguration of the Syro-Malabar Community Empowerment Year 2026 was conducted in all the parishes on Sunday, 18 January 2026. The event was integrated into the Sunday Holy Qurbana. As the liturgical procession reached the Bema, the parish priests lit the Inaugural Candle, symbolizing the light of Christ guiding our community toward progress. A special introduction prepared by the Liturgical Committee was read, setting the spiritual tone for the Empowerment Year before beginning the Holy Qurbana. Insightful homily was delivered urging the faithful to grow in both spiritual depth and social responsibility. A special Karosoosa prayer was recited, seeking divine blessings for the success of the year's initiatives. At the conclusion of the Qurbana, the entire congregation stood in unity to recite the Official Pledge, committing themselves to the goals of the Empowerment Year. The ceremony concluded with the singing of the Empowerment Anthem, fostering a sense of pride and belonging among the faithful. A flag with the emblem and key biblical sentence for the Empowerment Year was also distributed to keep in front of the Madhubaha of every Church. I thank the Diocesan Empowerment Committee for organizing it well and all the parish priests who took initiative make the inauguration a success.

**Consecration of the Altar and Silver Jubilee at Vanchinagar:** The Silver Jubilee of St. Mary's Church, Vanchinagar along with the Consecration of the new Altar was held on 18 January 2026, Sunday at Vanchinagar. The ceremony started at 4:00 p.m. with a warm reception, followed by the Consecration of the New Altar and the Holy Qurbana, presided over by me and co-celebrated by Rev. Fr. Dominic Mundattu MCBS, Rev. Fr. Lijo Thekkel, and Rev. Fr. Sumesh Valliyamthadathil, the Parish Priest and Tenkasi Mission Coordinator. We thanked God for the twenty-five years of blessings bestowed upon this parish community. All the Fathers and Sisters of Tenkasi mission and some representatives from Thuckalay were present for the celebration. Following the Holy Qurbana, a Jubilee Meeting was held at 7:00 PM. Hon. C. Krishnamurali Kuttyappa, MLA (Kadayanallur Assembly Constituency), was the Chief Guest for the programme and I presided over it. Rev. Fr. Antony Paedikattukunnel, Founder and first Parish Priest of Vanchi Nagar; Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese CMC, Provincial Superior, CMC Thuckalay Province and the former Parish Priests: Fr. Tobin, Fr. Lijo, Fr. Dency, and Fr. Mahesh felicitated the event. The evening was brightened by variety entertainments, showcasing the talents and unity of the parishioners. The celebrations concluded with a vote of thanks by the Jubilee Convenor, Mr. Jerome, and with an agape meal. I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Parish Priest, Fr. Sumesh Valliyamthadathil, for his meticulous planning in organizing these events so beautifully.

**Ecumenical Symposium at Nagercoil:** On 19 January 2026, a significant ecumenical symposium was held at Concordia Theological College, Nagercoil, to commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed (325 AD – 2025 AD). Organized by the United Christian Council (UCC), Kanyakumari, the event focused on the theme: "One Faith, One Hope: The Legacy of Nicaea in the Modern World". The programme started at 9:30 AM with a registration and an opening prayer led by the students of Concordia Theological College. As a member of the organizing committee, I delivered the Welcome Address, where I officially welcomed the bishops, clergy, and lay representatives from various denominations who gathered to celebrate our shared heritage of faith. The symposium featured insightful sessions led by Most Rev. Nazarene Soosai and Pastor Israel Selvanayagam moderated by Most Rev. Albert G.A. Anastas and Most Rev. Christopher Vijayan. A dedicated delegation from our Diocese participated actively in this theological discourse. Our participants included: Fr. Justin Cheruvilil (Director, Liturgy), Fr. Anil Raj Dominic (Director,

Ecumenism), Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal (Chancellor), Fr. Abilash Xavier (Director, Catechism), and Fr. Shijo Jose (Director, Theology Institute), Sr. Archana FCC, Sr. Jaicy FCC, Sr. Kripa CMC, and Sr. Rosia SABS, Mr. Jino, Mr. Bernic, Mr. Blessin, Mrs. Sindu (Theology Institute students), and Ms. Suja (Staff, Catechism Department). The symposium concluded at 1:00 PM with a closing prayer by Pastor Vinil Satheesh and an Agape. This event was a profound reminder that the Nicene Creed remains a symbol of unity that transcends denominational boundaries, anchoring us in a singular hope for the modern world. I thank all the participants from our diocese for this historical event.

**Priests' Conference at Sangamam:** The monthly Priests' Conference was held at Sangamam on January 20, 2026, commencing at 9:30 a.m. The gathering began with Adoration led by Rev. Fr. Jose Paul Purayidathilkunnel, followed by the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which established a prayerful atmosphere for the day. The formal meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. Vicar General Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam coordinated the proceedings, and I presided over the conference. Following the Vicar General's welcome address, Rev. Fr. Justin Cheruvilil presented the report from the previous conference and extended fraternal greetings to those celebrating birthdays and feast days this month. A thirty-minute "Zero Hour" was allotted for general discussion and pastoral sharing. During this session, many priests shared insights on parish-level pastoral concerns, including the necessity and function of the Pithruvedi. Clarifications were also provided regarding specific administrative and pastoral matters involving individual clergy.

Following the discussion, the Vicar General presented the finalized plans for the Cathedral and updated the assembly on the progress of various committee activities. Subsequently, Department Directors outlined their major upcoming events. In my address, I emphasized the vital importance of communion within the presbyterium, urging the avoidance of all divisions. To foster this spirit of unity, I have suggested that priests dedicate an hour to Prayer and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the Fathers who participated. Your presence and meaningful engagement are essential as we strengthen our fraternal bonds and serve the diocese with renewed zeal.

**Last Respects to Fr. Albert Jose CMI:** It is with profound sorrow that we received the news of the sudden and unexpected passing of Rev. Fr. Albert Jose CMI on January 21, 2026. Fr. Albert Jose was a dedicated priest whose life stood as a testament to unwavering faith and selfless ministry. Born on July 27, 1975, to Mr. Mariadasan and Mrs. Paul Thankam, he hailed from St. Joseph's Forane Church, Soosaipuram, within the Diocese of Thuckalay. Answering the divine call, he joined the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) congregation, making his First Profession on September 9, 1997. After years of diligent spiritual formation, he was ordained to the priesthood on December 29, 2007, embarking on a pastoral journey that spanned nearly two decades.

Throughout his seven years of dedicated service to our Diocese, Fr. Albert Jose served with remarkable humility and zeal. His assignments included: Priest-in-Charge: St. Paul's Church, Thettiyode (2008–2009); Parish Priest: St. Mary's Forane Church, Kaliyal, and St. Mary's Church, Penu (2011–2012); Education & Community: Teacher at St. Thomas HS, Netta, and member of the CMI Malar Nilayam community, Pilankalai (2014–2016); Final Assignment: Assistant to Parish Priest at Little Flower Forane Church, Pilankalai, from May 2022 until his passing. Fr. Albert Jose leaves behind a legacy of selfless love. A son of our local soil who flourished within the CMI congregation, he now rests in the eternal peace of the Good Shepherd.

The mortal remains of Fr. Albert Jose were kept at Little Flower Forane Church, Pilankalai, on the evening of January 21 for public homage. On January 22, the first part of the funeral rites was conducted at the Pilankalai Presbytery by Vicar General Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, followed by the second part at the church led by the CMI Provincial, Rev. Fr. Antony Elamthottam CMI. The Funeral Holy Qurbana

commenced at 2:00 PM, over which I presided, concelebrated by a large assembly of priests from the Diocese and the CMI congregation. A significant gathering of religious sisters and faithful from various parishes joined to bid him a tearful farewell. We commend his soul to the mercy of the Lord, praying that he may be granted eternal rest and rewarded abundantly for his generous priestly service.

**COR UNUM: Friday Adoration for the Presbyterium:** Following the fruitful discussions at our Priests' Conference held on 20 January 2026, we have officially started a dedicated weekly Hour of Prayer and Adoration, beginning on Friday, 23 January 2026. It will be continued every Friday until further notice for the well-being of our brother priests and the enduring unity of our Presbyterium. To personalize our spiritual support, the names of specific priests for whom we shall offer special prayers will be published in our official WhatsApp group every Thursday. Whether this hour is spent in solitude before the Blessed Sacrament or shared with nearby brothers, it serves as a vital opportunity for the Holy Spirit to heal divisions and knit us closer together.

**National Meeting of the Cherupushpa Mission League (CML):** The Tamil Nadu National Meeting of the CML, held in connection with the anniversary celebrations, took place at the Hosur Pastoral Centre, Ayanavaram, in the Diocese of Hosur, on 25 January 2026 under the leadership of Bishop Bosco Puthur and Bishop Sebastian Ponoliparampil. From our Diocese, Rev. Fr. Printo Kurias, Director; Sr. Ann Grace FCC; Adv. Gnanadas; Mrs. Latha; and Mrs. Snehalatha participated in this significant gathering. During the meeting, the state-level election was conducted, and the new office bearers were elected. From the diocese, Sr. Ann Grace FCC was elected as Vice Director; Mr. Gnanadas as President; Mrs. Snehalatha as Joint Secretary; Mrs. Ajitha Jeevan as Regional Organiser; Mr. Mahesh as Auditor; and Mr. Aju Thomas as a National Committee Member. I appreciate the participants and congratulate the newly elected members as state office bearers of CML.

**Forane level Bible Fest for Teachers:** Forane level Bible Fest for Teachers was held at Padanthalumoodu on 26 January 2026 from morning till evening. In the morning section Thuckalay-Pilankalai, Soosaipuram, Kaliyal and Arukany forane competitions were held. Afternoon Padanthalumoodu, Nithiravilai and Manjalumoodu forane competitions were held. From the whole diocese above 392 teachers participated in the competitions. I congratulate the Catechesis department for the effective coordination of the competitions.

**Workers' Federation Meeting at Thanjavur:** The consultative meeting of the Tamil Nadu Indian Christian Workers Federation (a commission for labour welfare under the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council) was held on 27 January 2026, at the Thanjavur Diocesan Centre. On behalf of the Laity Commission of our Diocese, the following members participated in the meeting: Adv. N. Dhanasingh, President; Mr. A. Jayalal, Secretary; Mr. Abinesh and Mr. Suresh. I thank the participants for the efforts taken to attend the meeting.

**Catechetical Seminar at Sangamam:** On Saturday, January 31, 2026, the Diocesan Department for Catechesis organized a one-day seminar at Sangamam, Thuckalay, centered on the theme 'Renewing Faith Formation.' The seminar commenced at 9:30 a.m. with an inaugural session over which I presided, in the presence of the Vicar General, Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam. The event brought together over 100 participants, including Forane Directors, Promoters, Headmasters, parish catechism teachers, and students from the Sinai Theological Institute. The day featured two pivotal sessions designed to bridge the gap between theological theory and pastoral action: Session I: Fr. Justin Cheruvelil explored the profound theological foundations of catechetical formation. Session II: Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal presented a comprehensive roadmap for the future, detailing guidelines and action plans derived from the Major Archbishop's Assembly, our Eparchial Assembly, and the Jubilee Action Plan. In the afternoon, participants were divided into ten groups to deliberate on specific questions based on the morning's input. Each group later presented their findings and submitted their reports to the Catechetical Department. The

concluding session began at 3:30 p.m. Sr. Sona SH provided a synthesis of the day's reflections, and I concluded by emphasizing the urgent need to implement these action plans within our diocese without delay. During the ceremony, awards were also presented to the winners of the Mission Quest conducted by the Syro-Malabar Church. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Fr. Abilash Xavier Raj, Director of Narcheithi Nilayam, for his exceptional leadership in organizing this seminar. My gratitude also extends to the resource persons and every participant for their commitment to this vital mission of our Church.

**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 St. John Bosco was joyfully celebrated at Sangamam on January 31, 2026. The event brought together a diverse gathering, including Forane Vicars, clergy from the Thuckalay-Pilankalai Forane, Provincial Superiors, and representatives from religious communities neighboring the Bishop's House. Participants of the concurrent Catechetical Seminar also joined the festivities. The program commenced at 12:45 p.m. with a warm welcome address by the Vicar General. This was followed by a short video presentation narrating the life and legacy of St. Don Bosco and the history of the Salesian Congregation. In a touching gesture, the Catechetical Department felicitated the Bishop, as well as the Salesian Fathers and Sisters, through a commemorative speech and a felicitation song. In his concluding remarks, the Bishop thanked the assembly for gathering to share the joy of the feast. The celebration concluded with a community meal, fostering a spirit of fraternal communion. I extend my sincere gratitude to the organizers for their meticulous planning and to all who offered their prayers and kind wishes on this occasion.

**Seminar on Vocation at Mukkoottukal:** On the afternoon of 31 January 2026, a significant seminar titled "Vocation Promotion Through Youth Empowerment" was held at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal. The session focused on the vital link between empowering the youth and nurturing a culture of vocations within the Church. The seminar was animated by Rev. Fr. Darbello Christus, a distinguished professor from St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary, Trivandrum. Drawing from his extensive academic and pastoral experience, Fr. Christus delivered a thought-provoking session on how identifying and fostering the potential of young people can lead to a more profound response to the divine call. It was attended by Deacons, Regency Brothers, College-going Seminarians and Minor Seminarians. I appreciate Fr. Bobby Kochuparampil, the Rector for organizing it.

## **INFORMATION**

- **Mr. Francis (71)**, elder brother of Sr. Julit Maria SABS, was called to the eternal rest on 02 January 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Julit and her family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Mr. K. M. Michael (84)**, brother of Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil, was called to the eternal rest on 02 January 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Fr. Mathew and his family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **The Department of Kuzhanthai Isho Iyakkam (KII)** conducted the Kids Day Celebration (*Masatta Kuzhanthaikal Dhinam*) in all the Parishes on 04 January 2026 along with the solemn Holy Qurbana with special introduction, Karosoosa and prayer of kids. I thank Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil for organizing it very well.

- **S. Jeshwin** from St. Joseph's Forane Church, Soosaipuram secured the second place in the Mission Quest 2025 global level. Hearty Congratulations!
- **The Department of Kuzhanthai Isho Iyakkam (KII)** conducted a unit visit in all parishes on 11 January 2026. The report of the visit will be submitted to the department director with the sign and seal of the respective parish priest.
- **Sr. Merlin FCC (86)** of Deva Matha Province, Changanacherry was called to eternal rest on 12 January 2026. As a religious sister, she served in our diocese for almost 6 years in two different places during 1993 - 1998: Nagercoil and Kattathurai. Let us thank God for her selfless sacrifices for the good of our diocese. May God grant her eternal rest and welcome her into His loving embrace.
- **Mrs. Mariyam (89)**, the beloved mother of Sr. Pouly SJSJ, was called to the eternal rest on 16 January 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Pouly and her family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Fr. Jinu Thekkethala** returned to Rome after his annual vacation on 16 January 2026. We wish him all the best in his continued ministry in Rome.
- **Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam** is relieved from the office of the Parish Priest of Holy Family Church, Mukkoottukal, Local Manager of Holy Family Hr. Sec. School Mukkoottukal and Forane Director of CML in Manjalumoodu Forane with effect from 18 January 2026.
- **Fr. Robin Koorumullil** returned to the Diocese on January 26, 2026, after successfully completing a year of ministry in Saudi Arabia. We welcome him back.
- **Fr. Thomas Sathianesan** left for Germany on January 27, 2026, for a one-month mission appeal program.
- **Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam** departed for Saudi Arabia on January 28, 2026, to succeed Fr. Robin in the overseas mission. We wish him a fruitful ministry.
- **Pulari Matric. School**, Pudur, Puliয়ারai celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Day on 29 January 2026.
- **Fr. Vinod Kanakkalil** at his request, is relieved of all pastoral duties until December 17, 2026, to focus on a spiritual renewal programme. He will reside at Subiaco Ashram, Mylady, under the guidance of Fr. James Pannamkuzhy.
- **Fr. Josy Puthenpurayil** returned from Germany on January 30, 2026, as his mother is unwell. Let us keep his mother in our prayers for a speedy recovery.
- **Fr. Robin Koorumullil** is appointed as the Parish Priest of Holy Family Church, Mukkoottukal, Local Manager of Holy Family Hr. Sec. School Mukkoottukal and Forane Director of CML in Manjalumoodu Forane with effect from 01 February 2026.
- **Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil** is appointed as the Confessor in St. Alphonsa Shrine Church, Nagercoil with effect from 01 February 2026.
- **Fr. Liju Marattukalam** will be relieved from the office of Bishop's Personal Secretary, Editor of Thuckalay Tidings, Coordinator of Sponsorship of Seminarians and Eparchial Friends, Assistant Parish Priest of St. Antony's Church, Vayalinkarai, Assistant Parish Priest of Amala Maria Church, Cheenivilai and Forane Director of SMYM in Nithiravilai Forane with effect from 10 February 2026 and will begin his new ministry in the Archeparchy of Changanacherry.
- **Fr. Amanto Edakkoottathil** will be relieved from the office of the Assistant Parish Priest of Little Flower Church, Puliয়ারai, Assistant Correspondent of Pulari Matriculation School, Pudur, Assistant to Priest In-charge of St. Thomas mission Church, Pudur, Tenkasi mission Director of Catechism and Tenkasi mission Director of SMYM with effect from 11 February 2026 and will begin his new ministry in the Eparchy of Kanjirappally.
- **Fr. Sunil Antony** has successfully completed his one-year pastoral ministry in the Archeparchy of Changanacherry. He will be appointed as Bishop's Personal Secretary, Editor of Thuckalay Tidings, Coordinator of Sponsorship of Seminarians and Eparchial Friends with effect from 16 February 2026.

- **Fr. Anoop Thathappally** has successfully completed his one-year pastoral ministry in the Archeparchy of Changanacherry. He will be appointed as the Assistant Parish Priest of Little Flower Church, Puliyarai, Assistant Correspondent of Pulari Matriculation School, Pudur, Assistant to Priest In-charge of St. Thomas mission Church, Pudur, Tenkasi mission Director of Catechism and Tenkasi mission Director of SMYM with effect from 16 February 2026.

### **FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS**

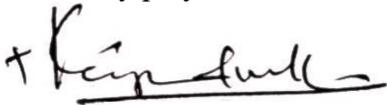
**Ongoing Priestly Formation & Presentation of Annual Report by Departments & Pious Associations**  
Place: Sangamam  
Dates: 10-11 February 2026

**Blessing of foundation stone for Cathedral Church**  
**17 February 2026, Tuesday**  
**@ Soosaipuram**  
Time: 04. 00 PM

### **CONCLUSION**

As already mentioned, we begin the holy season of Lent on 16 February 2026. It is the period of the 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 in the wilderness before the beginning of his public life (Mt 4:2). We still call this period fifty days of fasting because the St Thomas Christians fasted and abstained from *Pethurtha* Sunday to Easter Sunday. Lent is a season to suspend all worldly pleasures and 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 help them enter this holy season in the right spirit.

With my prayers and blessings,



† **George Rajendran SDB**  
Bishop of Thuckalay

