

THUCKALAY TIDINGS

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

Assumption of
The Blessed Virgin Mary
Adorable Heavenly Grace





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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

August 2021 | Vol. 1 | Issue 6

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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Message

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

In the torrid heat of season the sweet coolness of the Assumption gives us relief to the body and the spirit, to soothe the wounds of those who are alone, to open glimpses of the future to those who risk being entangled and imprisoned in the offal of time and of space especially during the corona pandemic. For Indians, August 15 has a special significance to rejoice spiritually as well as socially to celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Mother Mary and the Independence of our country. Both feasts bring us the message of hope and look out on to our future and that of the world to be fragrant, fresh and blessed, having forgiven the painful past and leaving it behind.

The mystery we celebrate concerns Mary, the Mother of the Lord, who, at the end of her days, finds herself catapulted upwards and sees her face blossom again. The Mother does not know the corruption of the sepulcher and is as if swallowed up in the whirlpool of light that was the Passover of the Son, united with His Feast, associated with His Glory, sharing in His Victory.

What our Lord Jesus Christ has operated with his incarnation, death and resurrection, in Maria, his mother has already had his full effect; participant of the glory of the Risen Son, Maria constitutes a sign of confident hope for us (cf. Constitution "Lumen Gentium", 68). Really this Marian solemnity makes us look towards the sky. Not an atmospheric sky more or less clear, not an abstract, metaphysical sky, populated with ideas, nor a sky created by art and poetry, but the sky of "real reality" which is God Himself with all His angels and the immense terraced saints in the midst of whom Maria shines brighter than light. Contemplating it we can see, therefore, our eternal dwelling, our wonderful destiny as children of God.

The Divine mystery is beyond human perception and only simple and strong faith, reflections and silent adorations will help us to transcend ourselves. Human life ought to flow like a river towards the divine ocean,

towards its fullness. Therefore, we believe that our death is a birth in the eternal bliss. One's entire self, beginning with the mind and ending with the body, needs to aspire to strengthen the soul for achieving this everlasting life that has no decay whatsoever.

Accompanying us in the fatigue of our daily existence, Maria always keeps us oriented to the true homeland of bliss. However, it is necessary to walk by humbly following the footsteps of Christ her son, as she did: "Christ was humble to a humble virgin," says the abbot Radberto Pascasio. We are all walking on the same path, accepting to pass through the sphere of pain and death and we have been strengthened in our endeavour as we are sanctified by the Cross of Jesus. A righteous living can assist us now to pre-taste the joy of paradise, namely, the communion of love with God together with the Virgin Mary and all saints.

The invitation of Blessed Virgin Mary to be hopeful in life is very much important as we celebrate the Independence Day as well. We can recall the many sacrifices to bring us this experience of independence. Their unconditional love for the country and for the people was not egoistic or stranded in private interests. Instead they have had a long vision of hope for the nation.

All of us in the Diocese of Thuckalay wish you all the blessings of both the festivals and assure our prayers for you to be hopeful in our lives especially amidst the corona pandemic. May God bless you all.

Yours affectionately,

+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay





Priests Conference and Day of Recollection

The presbyterium of the Diocese was pleased to come together on July 6, 2021 after a gap of three months for our monthly recollection prayer and meeting. Rev. Fr Lijo Thekkel facilitated the recollection and prayer. He guided the priests on the topic of God's Love. Indeed these are special moments for all priests of the Diocese kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament praying for the Universal Church and the faithful of the Diocese. The Priests' Conference followed the recollection. All the Heads of Departments and Pious Associations shared the activities that they carried out during the lockdown period. It was decided that since strict lockdown is lifted and faithful are allowed to come to Church on Sundays, we could gradually stop the online catechism classes and resume physical classes in the parishes.



We happily welcomed Rev. Fr Jomy Kamukumattathil from the Diocese of Idukki for volunteering to undertake missionary services in our Diocese. Our Bishop had requested the Bishop of the Diocese of Idukki for a missionary for pastoral work in our Diocese.

Junior Priests' Meet



The Diocese took the opportunity of the slightly relaxed norms of covid lockdown to organize a special enrichment program on July 5, 2021 at Sangamam, the pastoral centre of the Diocese for the Junior Priests of the Diocese who have been ordained in the last 5 years. Seven priests participated in the program and spent a day in listening to and understanding the Word of God. Rev. Fr Thaddeus from the Diocese of Kuzhithurai was the resource person and the main theme of his presentation was related to the life and the mission of a young priest. Some of the areas covered in the special talk given to the junior priests were specific Biblical passages, namely, 'Who do people say about me' (Mt 16:13), 'you will be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8), 'Stay with us Lord' (Lk 24:29), 'I have completed well' (2 Tim 4:7) and 'Behold, your Mother' (John 19:27). The young priests expressed their gratitude to the resource person and the Bishop of the Diocese for organizing the program.



Remembering Rev. Fr Stan Swamy SJ

The Diocese of Thuckalay was represented by His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb in the special meeting organized on July 15, 2021 at Udhayadharahai, Thuckalay by the Kanyakumari Minority Federation (KKMF) to remember the life, services and supreme sacrifice of Rev. Fr. Stan Swamy SJ. Pastor Ganadas, President of KKMF, presided over the meeting. The KKMF consists of all Christian denominations and the Muslim brethren in Kanyakumari District. The speakers highlighted the services and empowering mission of humanity by late Rev Fr Stan Swamy SJ and condemned the injustice meted out to him. Our Bishop invoked God's blessings on the congregation and prayed that the missionary activities left by late Stan Swamy continue for the empowerment of the neglected Adivasis in North India.

Meeting of Health Commission

Health Commission Members meeting was conducted on July 27, 2021 at Kalluvilai being presided over by Very Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General of the Diocese. The members shared their experiences and challenges faced during the period of second lockdown. The Health Commission appreciated all the members of the Diocese for their active involvement in Covid -19 relief works and for providing psychological counselling, and medical advises to the needy. The Commission also discussed at length to resume the palliative care activities which had been halted due to corona restrictions.



Visits to the Tenkasi Missions

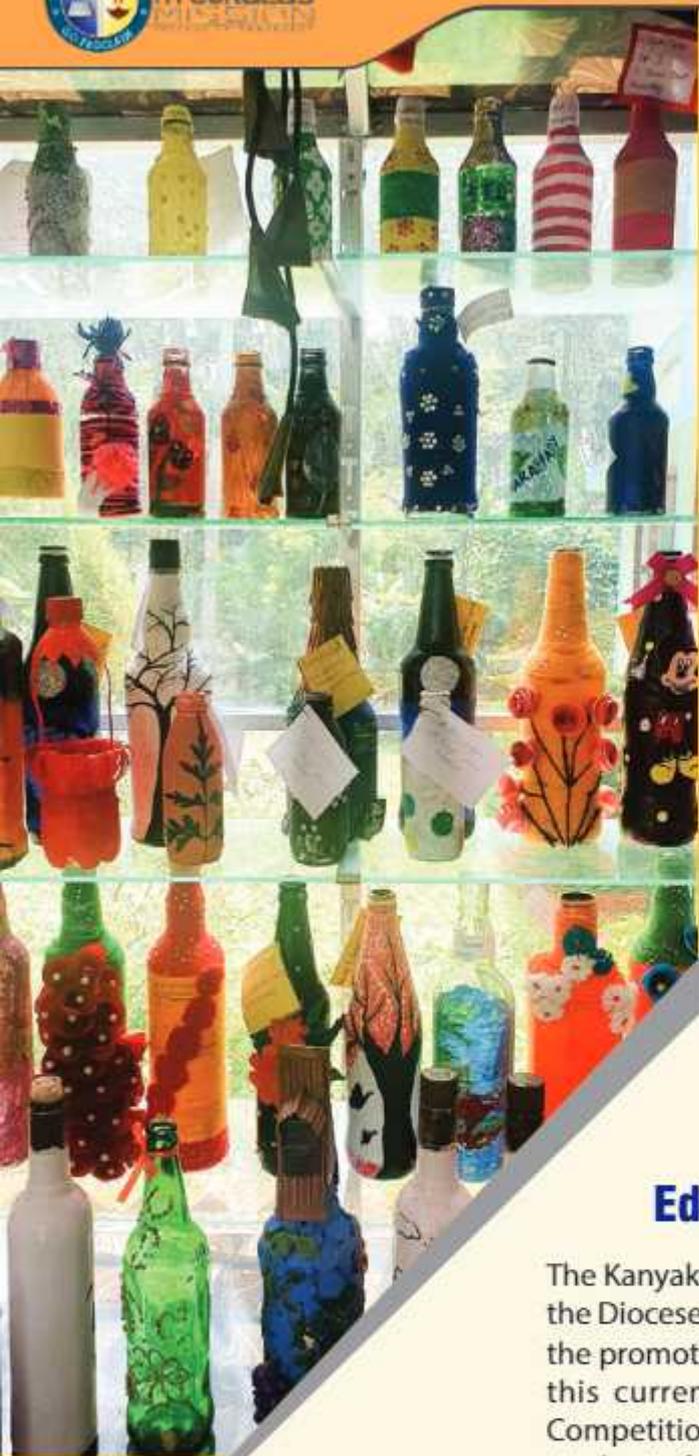


His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb and Very Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General of the Diocese visited the Tenkasi Missions on July 24, 2021 and organized a meeting of all the Fathers and Sisters at CMC Convent, Vanchinagar. The recollection of the priests and religious was also organized during this visit, which was followed by a meeting on the missionary activities in the Tenkasi Missions. The priests and religious, particularly those who head the departments and pious associations presented the report of activities during the meeting and shared with the Bishop and the Vicar General the challenges being faced in the mission land and making lands available in different mission areas for the establishment of new missions. Rev. Fr Thomas Thuckalay, Tenkasi Mission Coordinator expressed happiness with the commencement of two mission stations by the MCBS Fathers. He thanked all the missionaries for the service being rendered in trying conditions and thanked the Diocesan authorities for showing adequate interest in the mission lands and motivating all the missionaries.

Mission Visit **Madurai and Theni**

The Bishop and the Vicar General visited the Madurai and Theni missions on July 25, 2021. The visit to Deepakam, Madurai, cared for by the CMI Fathers caters to the Syro Malabar migrant community of about 50 families. The CMI Fathers have been rendering yeomen service to the migrant community here for the last 12 years through their spiritual and pastoral care. The visit commenced with the Holy Qurbana and followed by a meeting with the community. On the same day evening, the two leaders of the Diocese visited Theni mission and had a fruitful discussion with CMI Fathers at Theni. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb proposed to coordinate the migrant families into a mission community. The opportunity was also used to visit the FCC Sisters at Chinnamanoor who are in the process of building a convent.





Educare's Bottle Art Competition

The Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social arm of the Diocese of Thuckalay has been engaged in lots of activities for the promotion of children, their talents and engage them during this current pandemic. The KKSSS conducted a Bottle Art Competition for EDUCARE students, an effort to relieve the students from the mental and psychological stress that the students have been undergoing in the past two years or so. It has been very encouraging to notice the participation and the creative skills of the young students who participated in the competition.



A Day of Prayer for Major Seminarians

The Director of the Major Seminarians, Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal brought together the Major Seminarians who are in Regency undergoing secular studies for a day of prayer on July 10, 2021 at Sangamam. Rev. Fr Lijo Thekkel was the resource person who led the seminarians into prayer and reflection. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb had come at the end of the recollection to give spiritual conference to the brothers. He interacted with them on cultivating the habit of frequent visit to the Blessed Sacrament for receiving abundant blessings on self, family and the missions we are engaged. All the brothers could renew themselves during this full-day recollection and were happy to interact with the Bishop and the Director.

You can support the missionary activities by sponsoring a Seminarian in his formation:

Please write / mail to us for any enquiry / details. We shall contact you with all further details soliciting your generous support:

Postal Address:
Bishop's House, P.B. 12, Thuckalay,
Kanyakumari District,
Tamilnadu – 629 175, INDIA

Contact Mission Procure:
Rev. Fr Robin Jose
+91 4651 250633; +91 94871 65903;
Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



Celebration of Grandparents' Day

The novel direction of our Holy Father, Pope Francis asking the Universal Church to observe the feast of saints Joachim and Ann on July 25, 2021 as Grandparents' Day to celebrate the elderly was enthusiastically observed in the Diocese. The Diocesan Health Commission took the initiative and organized several events to celebrate the same by offering special Holy Mass for the grandparents and elderly at the parish level, organizing cultural programs, distribution of gifts and sharing meals in the homes where the elderly are cared for. The Diocesan Health Commission visited Anbu Illam, a Home for the Elderly and Neglected at Munchirai and celebrated the Grandparents' Day with the inmates. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb paid a special visit to Karunalayam, a Home for the Elderly Women at Vadipatti, Madurai, an institution run by the Samaritan Sisters and participated in the events to commemorate the World Grandparents' Day.



Blessing of Foundation Stone for Church



The Diocese of Thuckalay has been making continuous efforts to cater to the faithful in the extended territories and we have been successful in establishing a community at Ariyur in the outskirts of Madurai. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb blessed and laid the foundation stone for St. Alphonsa Church on July 25, 2021. The event was witnessed by Very Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General of the Diocese, Rev. Fr Anil Raj, Mission Coordinator of Madurai Rev. Fr Babu Thattil CMI, Parish Priest of Chavarai Mission Church, Madurai and the Sisters belonging to SABS and SJSJ who are serving in Madurai Mission, along with few lay faithful of the Madurai Mission. We intend to have a multipurpose hall in the ground floor and the Church on the first floor.

St. Alphonsa Church Ariyur, Madurai District



St. Joseph's Church Kunnuvilai, Kanyakumari District

St. Joseph's Church, Valan Nager, Kunnuvilai Mission was established in 2005, while the Holy Qurbana has been celebrated on the basement of the school building where the nursery classes are being held during the day. The Kunnuvilai Mission has 25 families faithfully living their Catholic Faith and the financial constraints have been huge. With great trust in God's providence and support of some benefactors, we decided to build a new church. The Diocese has handed over the responsibility of overseeing the construction to Rev. Fr Augustine Thalodil, who has been appointed as the parish priest of the Kunnuvilai Mission. The foundation stone for the St. Joseph's Church was blessed on July 28, 2021 in the presence of priests and faithful. The Diocese is grateful to the friends and benefactors for the financial support. The faithful of Kunnuvilai have been extremely happy on the day of laying the foundation for a new Church.

Child Care Institution (CCI) Workshop



The Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) collaborated with the Diocesan Social Service Societies of Kottar, Kuzhithurai and Marthandam Dioceses in Kanyakumari District to organise a workshop on "Change the Way We Care" for Child Care Institution (CCI) Coordinators, Animators and Volunteers on July 22, 2021 at KKSSS premises, Kalluvilai. Change the Way We Care is a pilot program of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Kanyakumari District with the help of TASOSS. It's about moving children out of orphanages and back into a family environment where they can thrive. It is about parents succeeding and being able to care their children, helping them to achieve a healthy, productive life. Changing the Way We Care begins by educating and advocating family-based care. The workshop was facilitated by Rev. Fr Albert Thambidurai, Director, TASOSS, Rev. Fr Celestine, Advisor-CRS, and Rev. Fr Arockiasamy, Asst Director, TASOSS.



NEED PRAYER SUPPORT!

The Diocese has prayer groups.

Please write the following and send SMS

 +91 94871 65903:

Name:

Place:

Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,

 : bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



Covid-19 Relief Activities

The Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) continues to spearhead the corona relief works on behalf of the Diocese. KKSSS has been distributing dry ration and food materials to two hundred families who have been adversely affected by the impact of Covid-19. The Diocese is very grateful to CNEWA, Ernakulam, Kerala for funding this effort.

We are grateful to all the friends and benefactors, both institutional and individual who have been enquiring about the welfare of our people throughout these difficult times and coming forward in financially supporting our efforts for our relief activities. We are especially grateful to the institutions such as Aid to the Church in Need, Diocese of Rotten burg-Stuttgart and Diocese of Freiburg for voluntarily coming forward with emergency funds to assist our relief activities.

The KKSSS organized training cum awareness programme on "Covid - 19, health seeking behaviour," for SHG field animators at KKSSS auditorium on July 30, 2021. We aim to encourage and motivate the SHG members to get vaccinated, observe physical distance during SHG meetings and in their daily activities outside their homes, wear face mask and scrupulously follow other covid appropriate behaviour.





Training Program on Value added products from Milk

A training program on Value added products from Milk was organised by the KKSSS in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Parakkai, Nagercoil to provide training to the Women Self Help Group members for the Munchirai Region. The training program was attended by more than 50 women and benefitted out of the program. It was heartening to observe the interest and interaction from the part of the SHG members.

Educare Supports with Study Materials



The Educare activities have been an ongoing one even during the corona pandemic. A number of activities are being conducted to ensure that the spirit is positive among the children who are being supported by Educare Program of KKSSS. We have been able to support 250 students who are children of the beneficiaries in the Self Help Groups (SHG), Save A Family Programme (SAFP) and Educare Program with study materials and stationary items. We are very grateful to all the individual benefactors who have been sponsors of the Educare Sponsorship Program within and outside the country.

You can come forward to partner the Educare Sponsorship Program of the Diocese of Thuckalay.

You can help a Child for Education at different levels.

School Education : 5 - 7 Years

College Education : 3 Years

For details contact

Rev. Fr Abin Poovathumoottil

Director, Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS)

Kalluvilai, Mulagumoodu P.O

Kanyakumari District

Phone: +91 77087 26043; 98845 61965

Email: abypoovathummoottil@gmail.com

Inauguration of activities of Kuzhandai Isso Iyakkam

The Diocese inaugurated the activities of the Kuzhandai Isso Iyakkam (KII) on July 31, 2021 at St Michael's Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Kattathurai. The inaugural function was attended by His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb, Rev. Fr Joemon Mangalamadam, Director of KII, religious sisters, office bearers and animators of KII. The annual report highlighted the activities for children in different parishes including online events during the pandemic. The Bishop felicitated the members and appreciated their efforts for the spiritual formation of the children in the Diocese. The members present also chalked out future plans and activities for the future. It was resolved and directed that the KII meetings at the parishes could be conducted in person in the premises of the parish.



Meeting with Minister Mano Thankaraj

Mr. Mano Thankaraj, an MLA from the District and Minister for Information and Technology, Government of Tamilnadu, called for a meeting of all the Christian leaders of Kanyakumari District on July 31, 2021 at Kottar Bishop's House. All the Bishops and representatives from the denomination Churches were present. This meeting was called to get the opinion and minds of the church leaders on the development of the district and area. The minister expressed his concern on various issues that are affecting the development and life of the people of the district, including the need for protecting the ecosystem especially the natural resources; problems faced by fishermen at the sea coast, minority rights and so on. The leaders offered full cooperation in the efforts of the Government for the development of the people and urged upon the minister to prioritise the needs and undertake works accordingly by taking all citizens on board.



Career Guidance Programme

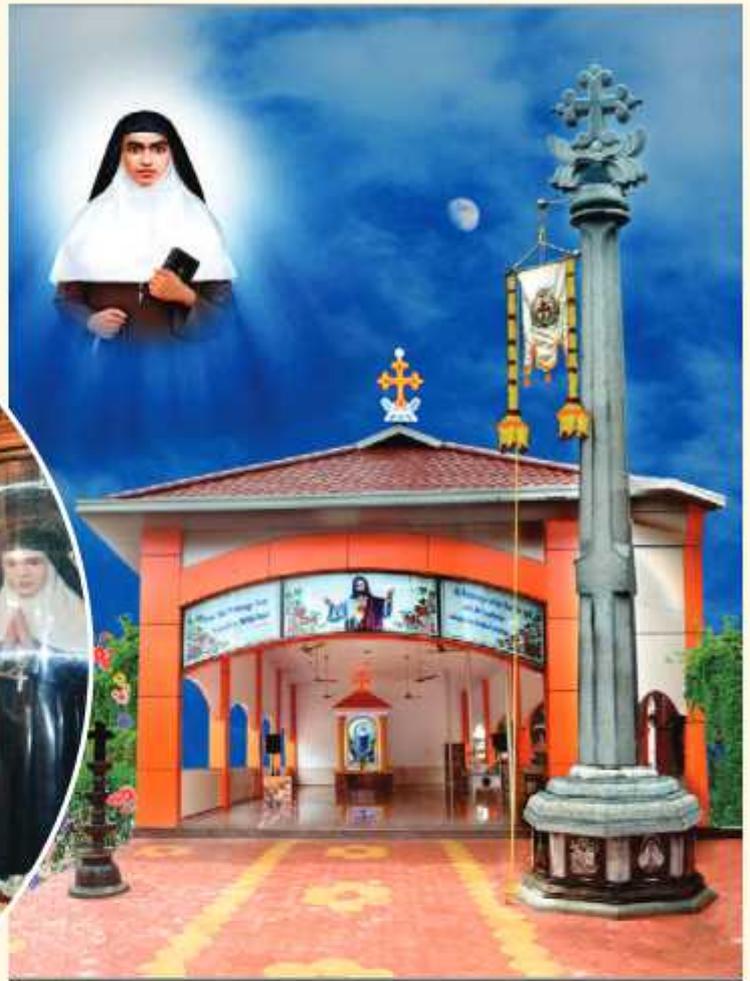
The Diocese of Thuckalay in collaboration with Don Bosco Vazhikatti, Trichy, organized a Career Guidance Programme for the students who completed HSSLC. APJM Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Soosaiapuram hosted the programme. The students were enriched with the knowledge of the ample opportunities available today for higher education and the avenues for future employment related to the courses that they would study. The students also had a short tour conducted by St. Alphonsa College of Arts and Science of the Diocese. There were more than hundred students who benefitted from the career guidance programme.



Diocesan Silver Jubilee Housing Project



The charitable trust of the Diocese of Thuckalay has laid targets as we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the erection of the Diocese by the Holy See this year. Though many of the activities of the Diocesan Silver Jubilee Celebration, particularly the spiritual activities have been converted into the digital and online mode, the social activities have received a new impetus on the background of current pandemic emergency. One of the planned social activity has been to build 25 homes for the poor and downtrodden in the Diocese. Some have already been completed, some ongoing, continuous efforts are on to complete the target within this year. The construction of four houses has begun in Tenkasi Mission. The foundation stone for first house at Mekkarai parish in Tenkasi District was laid by Rev. Fr Aby Poovathummoottil, Director, KKSSS in the presence of Rev. Fr Thomas Thuckalay, Director, Pulari Social Service Society on July 15, 2021. The Diocese is very grateful to Mr Mathew George, Mr Augustine Ponezham, Mr Varghese Malliakkal, all from the USA and the Save Family Foundation, Canada for coming to support this noble intention of the Diocese.



Feast of St. Alphonsa at the Holy Shrine

The Diocese of Thuckalay gives a lot of importance in celebrating the feast of St. Alphonsa in the Diocese, centering it on the Holy Shrine of St. Alphonsa at Nagercoil. There is 10-days solemn celebration every year with a pilgrimage being organized to the Holy Shrine of St. Alphonsa. However, due to the pandemic restrictions, the novena and feast day celebrations were held only with the faithful of the Shrine. Novena to St. Alphonsa was organized in majority of the parishes in the Diocese. The main celebrations in the Holy Shrine were held for four days from July 25, 2021 with solemn flag hoisting and Holy Qurbana presided over by Very Rev Fr Jose Muttathupadam, former Vicar General of the Diocese. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb offered the Pontifical Mass on the day of the Feast on July 28, 2021. All the events were live telecast for the faithful and devotees.

KNOWING A MISSION THIS MONTH

Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu The Hub of Syro Malabar Kanyakumari Mission

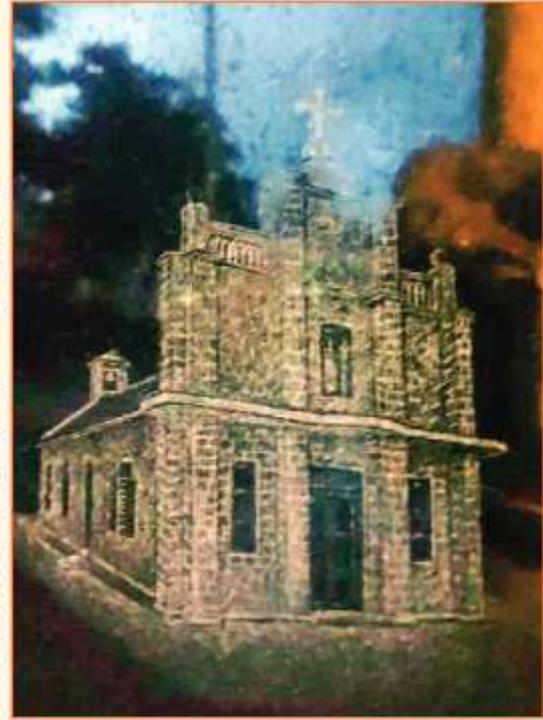
Sacred Heart Forane Church at Padanthalumoodu is one of the seven Forance Churches in the Diocese of Thuckalay. The Church is located on the National Highway 47 running from Kanyakumari to Thiruvananthapuram. The present Church stands very majestic on the roadside, attracting every Catholic traveler to bow in adoration for God.

The chronicles records how Rev. Fr Zacharias Kaithara, with passion for God and His Mission, came to Panchivilai near Kaliyakkavilai to continue the same mission here. He was ably supported by Mr. Uttariya Muthu and Mr. Michael Nayak in identifying families for the Lord. Kochumani Nadar, who was a panchayat leader at that time, leased 25 cents of land at Panchivilai to set up their hut for worship. A hut was promptly set up there with the help of the people and faithful gathered there for Holy Qurbana and were taught catechism. Rev. Fr Zacharias Kaithara visited all the families around the place and asked them to come to the hut of prayer and receive blessings for their growth from the Lord.

It is recorded that 21 people were baptized on October 23, 1960 by Rev. Fr Anthony Kaithara. Later in 1962, the mission was moved to the site of the current Jyothi Center, Paramanvilai. The hut was shifted to this place and Holy Qurbana and other activities began at Jyothi Cente. Though the Church was flourishing in number at Paramanvilai, the Syro Malabar Church from Changacherry insisted that a central place close the highway would be suitable for establishment of a mission centre, which would help in monitoring all the missionary and social initiatives of the Kanyakumari Mission under the Archdiocese of Changacherry.

In 1966, 40 cents of land was purchased on the site of the present Church at Padanthalumoodu and a church was built and a presbytery too was built for the priests to stay. The Church was consecrated in the same year by the then Archbishop Mar Mathew Kavukattu. As the time passed by and the intent of the Syro Malabar Church with its increased social activities needed consolidation of efforts at a Centre and therefore the adjacent places were gradually purchased and the Kanyakumari Mission activities had set up its headquarters at Padanthalumoodu. The parishes and mission centres under the Kanyakumari Mission kept growing and Sacred Heart Church continued to be the nucleus. The Syro Malabar Church established schools and different need-based social interventions for the growth of the people under the aegis of Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) headquartered at Padanthalumoodu. The supervision of social work of the KKSSS from Padanthalumoodu has made the faithful charitable in nature that the parishners have their own *Tanak Thanthai Antony Ninaivu Arakkattali* which continues to assist the poor and the needy in renovation of homes and assistance for medical treatment and making them involved in many other charitable activities.

The Sacred Heart Church remained the animation centre for the pastoral, spiritual and social activities for the priests and religious, leaders and animators and the converted Christians. The fathers of the Archdiocese of Changacherry would visit Padanthalumoodu to provide animations and guidance to the missionaries, lay leaders and social workers of the Kanyakumari Mission.



The current Sacred Heart Matriculation Higher Secondary School in the Parish campus, which stands as an institution for quality education, had a humble beginning with the establishment of an English Medium School in 1978 by Rev. Fr Anthony Elachamkalam. The teachers of the school went from door-to-door convincing the families to admit their children to the school for quality education. The people did not have the adequate awareness on education at that point of time. The people believed in the administration of the priests and religious and admitted their children in the school. The Sacred Heart Church also established a Tamilvazhi Primary School in 1978 in Kamaraj Nagar to provide opportunities for education and literacy to the poorest of the poor.

The Oblates Missionaries of Mary Immaculate (OMMI) Secular Institute played an important role in the missionary activities of Sacred Heart Church Padanthalumoodu when they set up social, educational and pastoral services at Jyothi Center, Paramanvilai. They had contributed immensely for the initial formation of Christian families through regular house visits and for consolidating their faith, provided opportunities for education of children belonging to poor families, and created opportunities for vocational training and therefore self employment of women in the families. The Sisters of the Divine Saviour (SDS) joined the missionary activities of Sacred Heart Church in 1995 associating themselves closely in the pastoral and spiritual needs of the people, participating in the educational mission and establishing a women's hostel in the Convent. The Sisters of the Missionaries of Mary Mediatrix (MMM) have their presence since 2011 serving the parish and other institutions of the Diocese housing themselves in a rented accommodation until the year 2021, when they have their own Convent at Padanthalumoodu.

The number of faithful began to increase over time. The Sunday Holy Qurbana was being celebrated in the hall due to lack of sufficient space in the Church. In 1987, on the visit of His Eminence Cardinal Lourdhusamy, a foundation stone for a new Church was blessed. A lot of efforts were made to construct the spacious Church, however, due to financial resources there had been a lot of delay in the construction of the Church. The foundation stone for the present majestic Church was laid on March 19, 2006 by the first Bishop of the Diocese and present Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church Mar George Cardinal Alencherry in the presence of Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadam, Parish Priest, who carried out the construction of the new Church and on April 24, 2011 the Church was consecrated by Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam, Archbishop of Changanassery.

The Sacred Heart Forane Church has always had the joy of organising many spiritual and other events for the Kanyakumari Mission and later for the Diocese of Thuckalay. Some of them are the Episcopal Ordination of the first Bishop of the Diocese of Thuckalay, Mar George Alencherry on February 2, 1997; the Episcopal Ordination of the second Bishop of the Diocese and son of the soil, Mar George Rajendran sdb on September 16, 2012 and his priestly ordination on December 29, 2003, the Golden Jubilee of the Kanyakumari Mission of the Syro Malabar Church in 2011 and the Inauguration of the Silver Jubilee of the Diocese of Thuckalay on November 10, 2019.

The Sacred Heart Forane Church is presently administered by Rev. Fr Dency Mundunadakal assisted by Rev. Fr Abilash Xavier.



VOCATION AND MISSION

Rev. Sr. Sofi Rose SH

A Life of Love, Service and Sacrifice

The life of the Syro Malabar Kanyakumari Mission has a close association with the efforts of the religious sisters who actively collaborated with the priests and missionaries from the Archdiocese of Changanessery and later the Diocese of Thuckalay in preaching the Word of God, consolidating the faith, participation in educational, health care, social activities of the Church. The Sacred Heart (SH) Sisters were the first to heed and respond to the call of God in coming to Kanyakumari Mission. One of the pioneering missionaries among them is Rev. Sr Sofi Rose Nirappel SH, fondly addressed as Sofiamma.

The name Sofiamma echoes in the hearts and minds of all who have experienced her missionary zeal in the Diocese of Thuckalay for its growth at different missions for 50 years or so. We would like to portray the person of Sr. Sofi Rose SH, one of the pioneers of Thuckalay Mission.

Sofiamma was born in Chengalam, Kanjirappally, and Kerala on October 13, 1947 as the seventh child to Nirappel Mathai - Rosa couple. Chengalam is famous for its enriched vocations with many priests and sisters who are working in different parts of the world. Kuttiyamma was the affectionate name with which she was called by all her family and friends. Her maturity in spiritual as well as social life was noticed very early and recognized by everyone even from her early childhood. She completed her primary and high school studies at St. Antony's School, Chengalam. It was her passionate dream to become a religious sister and serve God by serving humanity. In order to fulfill her dream, she expressed her ardent desire to her parents and they allowed her to join the Sacred Heart Congregation at Parel, Changanacheery as an aspirant May 20, 1964. She completed her initial formation of aspirancy, postulancy and noviciate and made her first religious profession on April 18, 1966. She was a joyous young religious sister fulfilling her tasks as required for by her superiors. She made her final vows as total commitment to the will of God on April 18, 1972.

Sofiamma pursued her Teachers Training Course from St. Theresa's TTI Vazhappally. At her first profession and during her teachers training course, she had heard about the activities of the missionaries in Kanyakumari Mission of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry. She was initially attracted to join the

missionary activities. However, she prayed and reflected. She then named it *A Call within the Call*, she experienced the strongest of desire to move beyond the home boundaries adhering to the Words of Jesus to preach the Good News. With fervent will to serve God through His people, she arrived at Mukkoottukal in 1969.

Sofiamma was filled with joy as she found her mission land that which was commissioned to by the will of God. Her flame for serving the poor



Gift of Earthly Life : 13-10-1947

Gift of Religious Life : 18-04-1966

Gift of Heavenly Life : 26-06-2019



was ignited in her heart. She decided to live in the huts of the poor people. She would sit with them and listen to their painful stories and struggles of everyday living, especially providing for their living. She would always assure them that God would help to improve their living conditions. She never hesitated to beg people and friends who had enough to contribute to the poor. In her missionary life in convents in Mukkuttukal, Malaicode, Palukal, Arukani and Amboori, Sr. Sofiamma would find the hungry, the sick, the people neglected because of some serious illnesses and provided comfort to them and arranged for financial assistance. She would protect them in their needs and urge upon her relatives to provide an honourable living to such people. She tried hard to cultivate the qualities of love and mercy as special qualities given by God to every human being in order to show concern for fellow human beings. As a missionary, she was always happy to be with the people especially with those who are suffering. Even at difficult times of her own ill health, she engaged in one way or other to serve the people. She was convinced that those who were materially poor could become spiritually rich with God's Grace.

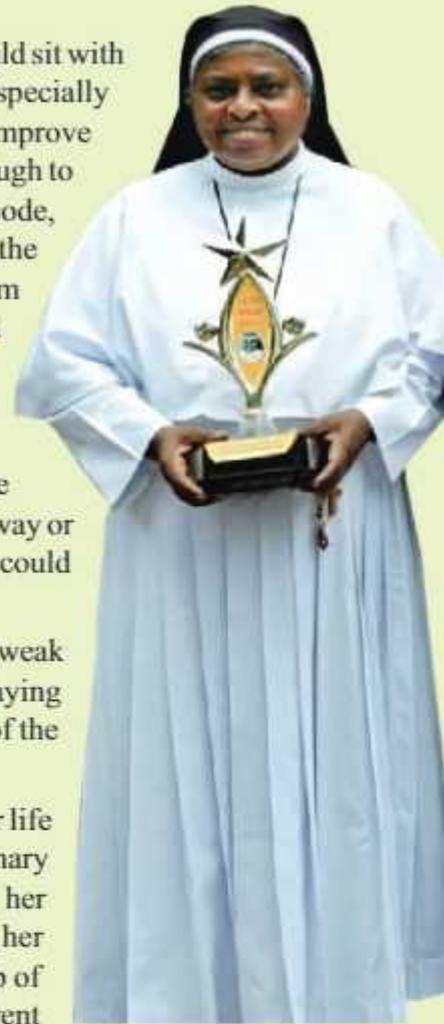
Sofiamma, having the qualities of the head and heart as a teacher, helped many weak children to complete their schooling by rendering special tuition classes and paying personal visits to their families. She prepared children for receiving sacraments of the Church.

Sofiamma always considered the Church as the Mother and she fully dedicated her life in service of the Church. She loved the Diocese of Thuckalay and its missionary activities that she was often heard saying that the Diocese of Thuckalay is her Spiritual Mother and that her joy is complete in service of the Diocese. During her service, she encouraged and helped many to find out their vocation. With the help of her family members, she would sponsor many seminarians of the Diocese in different seminaries.

In her religious life, Sofiamma exhibited utmost simplicity, which was of great motivation to other sisters. Her fellow sisters always compared her to a burning candle, who would burn herself in order to shed light upon many. The secret of her strength had been her personal relationship with God. Even though she was not able to move herself, she had never left her personal as well as community prayers. Long hours before the Blessed Sacrament were really the power factor amidst her long diabetic ailment life. Sofiamma would never miss the community prayer and visiting families to lead them to prayer for consolidation of faith.

Even at the last moments of her earthly life, she was concerned about the Thuckalay mission where she had offered her whole life. 'I will praise the Lord and sing for Him', some of the last words of Sofiamma is a great inspiration for all religious especially in trials. It was her desire to complete her gift of life in Thuckalay. But it was not easy at the last moments to be in Thuckalay, as she was shifted to Prathyasa Bhavan, Kottayam for better medical treatment. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran, sdb, Bishop of Thuckalay visited her moments before her last breath on earth. She claimed her heavenly gift on June 26, 2019. Sofiamma was buried in Parel Provincial House cemetery, the funeral Holy Qurbana was presided over by Mar George Rajendran, sdb and the funeral rite was conducted by her brother, Rev. Dr. Anthony Nirappell.

Love, Service and Sacrifice are the three words that would concise Sofiamma's life on earth.





THUCKALAY
MISSION
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

75th India Independence Day



August

Wish you all

A Very Happy Independence Day

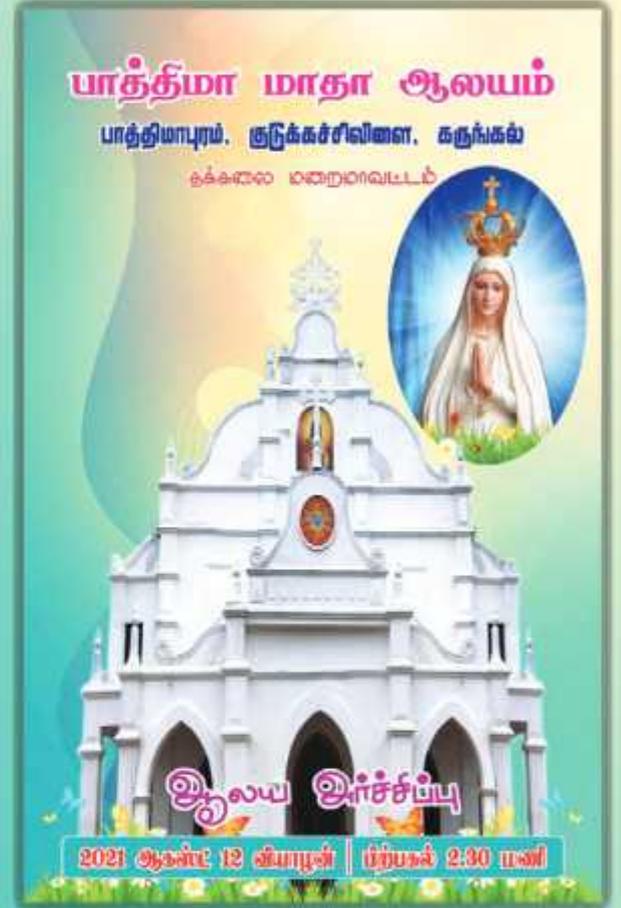
A Day to recommit ourselves -

To stand strong for the Ideals of India

To be fervent in our Integrity while recognizing
the Diversity

To ensure Inclusive Growth for all

To strive for One Humanity – ONE WORLD



CONSECRATION OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH

Fatimapuram, Kudukkachivilai, Karungai

August 12, 2021 @ 02:30 PM

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