



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/154/2024

31 January 2024

Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

As we are commencing the holy season of Lent on 12 February 2024, with Ash Monday, let me reflect with you on its importance in our Syro-Malabar tradition.

Lent, a period of fasting, prayer, and penance, is a significant liturgical season observed as a spiritual journey towards the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Syro-Malabar Church, Lent holds immense significance, and its observance is deeply rooted in East Syrian tradition.

The Lenten season in the Syro-Malabar Church is known as the 'Great Lent' (*Valiya Nombu*) or *Sauma Ramba*. History tells us that the Lent has two fundamental aims: A long preparation for Easter and a proximate preparation for baptism on Holy Saturday. Lent begins on the seventh Monday before Easter. The Lenten practices in this tradition are characterized by a combination of asceticism, liturgy, and spiritual exercises.

The asceticism consists of fasting and abstinence. These practices are rooted in various religious traditions and hold significant spiritual and ethical implications. While interpretations may vary among different faiths, the underlying principles often include self-discipline, spiritual purification, and a heightened awareness of one's relationship with the divine.

It is a matter of tradition and good faith that most Christians of Syro-Malabar tradition eat only vegetarian meals for 50 full days and abstain from meat, fish and alcohol voluntarily. This has been praised as one of the finest spiritual offerings of the local Christians.

The practice of fasting and abstinence has deep roots in the Bible, appearing in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, figures like Moses and Elijah were engaged in fasting as a means of seeking God's guidance and demonstrating repentance. The New Testament highlights the 40-day fast of Jesus in the wilderness (Mt 4:2), serving as a model for Christian fasting. Additionally, the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount emphasize the importance of fasting as a private and sincere act, devoid of ostentation (Mt 6:17).

Fasting and abstinence are considered spiritual weapons aimed at cultivating self-control and discipline. By abstaining from certain foods or activities, individuals create space for reflection, prayer, and a heightened sensitivity to spiritual matters. The intentional denial of physical desires serves as a way to focus on spiritual nourishment and the pursuit of a deeper connection with God.

In Christian theology, fasting and abstinence are often linked to the sacrificial nature of the life and death of Jesus Christ. By willingly giving up comforts and indulgences, believers participate symbolically in the self-sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This identification with Christ's sacrifice fosters a sense of solidarity with the redemptive work of Christ and a commitment to live by his teachings.

Fasting and abstinence are associated with repentance and purification. The intentional renunciation of certain pleasures serves as a tangible expression of sorrow for sin and a commitment to turn away from ungodly behaviour. The period of Lent, in particular, is often characterized by a focus on repentance, and fasting becomes a means of purifying one's heart and soul.

The theology of fasting and abstinence extends beyond personal piety to encompass social justice and solidarity with the less fortunate. By voluntarily experiencing hunger or discomfort, individuals are reminded of the struggles faced by those who lack necessities. This awareness often leads to a commitment to charitable acts, almsgiving, and advocacy for social justice issues.

Fasting is seen not only as a spiritual discipline but also as a means of promoting physical and mental well-being. The intentional abstention from certain foods or practices can have health benefits, and many religious traditions view this as a holistic approach to caring for the body, which is considered a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Fasting and abstinence are viewed as transformative processes that lead to personal renewal. Through the denial of immediate gratification, believers seek to detach from worldly distractions and refocus their priorities on spiritual growth and communion with God. The ultimate goal is a transformed and renewed life that reflects the values of the Kingdom of God.

The practice of fasting emphasizes the freedom from attachments to material pleasures. By voluntarily choosing to abstain from certain foods or activities, individuals assert their mastery over physical desires and dependencies. This freedom allows for a more intentional and liberated pursuit of a life centred on spiritual values.

Thus, fasting and abstinence form a central aspect of Lent in the Syro-Malabar Church. The faithful abstain from certain types of food, especially meat and dairy, during this period. The intensity of fasting and abstinence may vary, with stricter observance among the clergy and monastics. Fasting and abstinence are seen as a way to discipline the body, focus on spiritual growth, and share in the sacrificial journey of Christ.

The Syro-Malabar liturgy during Lent is marked by solemnity and penance. Special prayers, scripture readings, and liturgical hymns characterize the worship services. The Holy Qurbana undergoes modifications during Lent to reflect the penitential nature of the season. The faithful participate in additional liturgical services, such as the Stations of the Cross, which symbolically retraces the steps of Jesus on his way to Calvary.

Lent is a time for intensified personal and communal prayer. Through prayer, individuals can draw closer to God, seek guidance, and cultivate a spirit of humility and dependence on divine grace. Prayer becomes a vehicle for reflecting on the sacrifice of Christ and understanding the profound love that led him to the cross. The faithful engage in practices such as daily scripture readings, the Liturgy of the Hours, and personal reflections on their spiritual journey. This period encourages self-examination, repentance, and a deeper connection with God through prayer.

Charity and almsgiving are integral components of Lent in the Syro-Malabar Church. The faithful are encouraged to engage in acts of kindness, generosity, and service to those in need. This reflects the Christian call to share God's love and mercy with others, mirroring the selfless sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

The Lenten practices in the Syro-Malabar Church are also influenced by the rich cultural heritage of Kerala. The use of traditional music, art, and rituals adds a unique flavour to the observance of Lent. The vibrant traditions of Kerala, including the use of incense, floral decorations, and elaborate processions, enhance the sensory experience of worship during this season.

Throughout its history, the Syro-Malabar Church has faced challenges related to cultural shifts, external influences, and internal divisions. The church has navigated these challenges while seeking to maintain its distinctive identity and traditions, including those associated with Lent. In recent times, efforts have been made to adapt certain aspects of the Lenten observance to better resonate with the contemporary lives of the faithful without compromising the essence of the season.

Lent is a season to stop all worldly pleasures and to return to God. This period motivates the faithful to enter into the process of being one with Jesus through his paschal mysteries of suffering, death, and burial as the bridal price of purification.

The origin, history, and practices of Lent in the Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala, thus, are deeply intertwined with the broader narrative of Christianity in India. The church's unique blend of apostolic foundations, East Syrian traditions (Eastern Christian traditions), and adaptations to local culture has shaped the way Lent is observed in this community. Through fasting, liturgy, prayer, and acts of charity, the Syro-Malabar faithful embark on a spiritual journey during Lent, seeking to draw closer to God and emulate the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. As the Syro-Malabar Church continues to evolve in the modern era, the observance of Lent remains a vital and dynamic expression of the church's rich spiritual heritage.

I invite every one of you to make this Lent a time of renewal of life through prayer and penance. It should be a time for personal reflection on where we stand as Christians and as priests accepting the Gospel challenges in thought, word and deed. It is also a time to assess our relationships with our family, friends, working colleagues and the other people we come in contact with, especially in our institutions. Let us convert Lent into a time for spiritual growth by being more attentive to the celebration of the liturgies. Let us use Lent to fight daily against the evil within us and around us by practising self-control relying on the power of prayer and Scripture.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Priestly Ordination of Dn. Liju Marattukalam: Every priest is a blessing to the Church and we have every reason to rejoice and thank God for the gift of a new Priest – Fr. Joseph (Liju) Marattukalam. On 02 January 2024, at Sacred Heart Church, Chethipuzha, Changanacherry, deacon Liju Marattukalam was ordained priest by me. The solemn ceremony was a testament to the meticulous planning and execution of the devoted parishioners, family members, and Parish Priests. Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekalam CMI, regional superior of CMI Kanyakumari region delivered a profound homily that touched the hearts of all those present. As an eparchy, we extend a warm welcome to Rev. Fr. Liju Marattukalam and pray that he receives God's choicest blessings in his pastoral ministry.

New Year & Denha Celebrations at Cumbum: The pre-Christmas celebration scheduled for December 17, 2023, at Cumbum Mission was cancelled due to heavy rain. The programme was rescheduled as the New Year and Denha celebration and took place on January 5, 2024, at Angurpalayam, Cumbum, in my presence. The celebration commenced at 5 pm, with the Cumbum Mission coordinator, Fr. Benny Thattampampil, extending a warm welcome to everyone. I presided over the meeting, and individuals from numerous villages attended the event. Special prizes were awarded to the children who emerged victorious in the competitions held in honour of Christmas. The meeting concluded with an agape meal served to all attendees. I express my gratitude to the Rev. Fathers and Sisters working at Cumbum Mission for effectively organizing the programme.

Feast of Denha: Denha is the feast of the great revelation of Jesus as the light of the world. Jesus is the real *Sun* that dawned in the world through Incarnation. During the hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth, the public did not recognize him as the real *Sun* who illuminates the whole of humanity. He was manifested to the public by God the Father at his *baptism*. In our Diocese, the great feast of Denha was celebrated on 6 January in all our parishes. Taking inspiration from the Northern Kerala, some of the parishes observed as *Pindiperunnal* by decorating the plantain trunk with lighted lamps. It was encouraging to see that it was celebrated even in the extended Mission territories with great enthusiasm.

Syro Malabar Bishop's Synod at Kakkanad: The First Session of the XXXII Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church took place at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas Kakkanad from January 08 to 13, 2024. Election of the New Major Archbishop was the only agenda of this synodal session. On the second day itself the synod Fathers could complete all the canonical procedures of electing the new Major Archbishop and sent the necessary letters to the Holy Father Pope Francis. Having received the confirmation from the Pope, the Major Archbishop-elect made the profession of faith and act of fidelity before the synodal Fathers. Then the election session of the Synod was concluded and the Synod Fathers proceeded to the announcement of the Major Archbishop. The second session of the XXXII Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church was inaugurated by the new Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil on 12 January 2024 and it was concluded by the next day evening, on 13 January 2024.

Installation of the New Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church: The Synod of Bishops of the Syro Malabar Church elected Bishop Raphael Thattil as the fourth Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church. The election was formally announced simultaneously at Vatican and Major Archiepiscopal curia at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on 10 January 2024 at 04.30 pm Indian time. Bishop Raphael Thattil was consecrated Bishop on 10 April 2010 and appointed Auxiliary bishop of Trichur. In 2014, he was appointed as Apostolic Visitor for the Syro Malabar faithful residing outside the proper territory. Pope Francis named him the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Shamshabad on 10 October 2017. The installation of the new Major Archbishop was held on 11 January 2024 at 02.30 pm at Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas

Kakkanad. The installation ceremony was attended by Synodal Fathers and representatives from the dioceses. From our diocese four Fathers, two Sisters and one lay person took part in the event. on behalf of the entire diocese, we congratulated him and put our diocesan shall at the end of public meeting. I thank all of you for your genuine prayers for the successful election of the new Major Archbishop.

Health awareness programme at Kattathurai: The Diocesan Health commission has conducted a health awareness programme (care of heart) on 12 January 2024 at St. Michael's school Kattathurai. Dr. Ajikumar and Dr. R.P. Ramya Sundaram were the Resource persons. After the class, an awareness Rally and full body checkup were conducted by them. Total 500 students benefited out of it. I thank Fr. Ajin C. Joseph for organizing the event.

New Shepherd to the Diocese of Kuzhithurai: The Holy Father Pope Francis has appointed Fr. Albert George of the clergy of the Diocese of Kottar as the new Bishop of our neighboring Diocese of Kuzhithurai on 13 January 2024. He is serving currently as Professor at St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli. Bishop-Elect Albert George was born on 16 December 1966 in Manavilai, in the Diocese of Kottar. He studied Philosophy at Christ Hall Seminary, Arul Anandar College, Karumathur, Madurai and Theology at St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli. He was ordained a priest on 26 April 1992 for the Diocese of Kottar. His Episcopal Ordination will take place on 22 February 2024 at Nattalam Shrine Church. We offer our congratulations, best wishes and prayers to the bishop-elect as well as to the Diocese of Kuzhithurai.

Bible Fest Diocesan level competition for Students: The Bible Fest Diocesan level competition was conducted on 13 January 2024 at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. Registration began at 9.30 am. The Bible Fest Diocese level competition was inaugurated by Rev Fr. Thomas Sathianesan. Almost 452 students participated in various items. For the first time, students from Tenkasi region participated in the competitions and were awarded two prizes. The concluding meeting was presided over by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil and winners were awarded by him. Congratulation for the winners, participants and organizers.

Rank List	Forane level	Parish level
I	Manjalumoodu	Varuthattu
II	Nithiravilai	Manjalumoodu
III	Soosaipuram	Soosaipuram

SMYM Leaders' Training and Pongal celebration: Leaders' Training and Pongal celebration were conducted on 15 January 2024 at SMYM Kalluvilai office. The morning session was animated by Fr. Justin Sutteesh, the forane director of Kaliyal forane. During his input session he spoke of the importance of life together with Jesus. He also motivated the youth to share their spiritual experiences. At 2.00 pm, Pongal, the Tamil Cultural Festival was celebrated with *Kolam*, sweet and other team building competitions and cultural programme. I thank the organizers for animating the youth of the Diocese to witness the love of Jesus.

Priests' Conference: The Priests' Conference for the month occurred at Sangamam on January 16, 2024, starting at 9:30 am. The conference initiated with adoration and confession, fostering a prayerful atmosphere for the assembly. At 11:00 am, the meeting officially commenced, with Fr. Chancellor coordinating the proceedings, and I presided over it. Initially, the Presbyterium extended a warm welcome to the new Priest, Fr. Liju Marattukalam. During the first session, the conference conducted the election of new members to the presbyteral council under the guidance of Fr. Chancellor. Through secret balloting, 10

priests were elected from various categories based on their ordination year. The Presbyterium congratulated the newly elected members. In the second session, Fr. Sajan Nettareppu presented the report of the first department's core committee meeting, including discussions with the directors of departments. Mission coordinators and directors of departments then presented updates and upcoming programmes. In the last session, the Presbyterium welcomed Mar Ephrem Narikulam, Bishop of Chanda, who shared his mission experience and pastoral activities in his diocese. During my presidential address, I expressed gratitude to Bishop Ephrem and shared updates from the Synod of Bishops and other general information. The conference concluded with an agape meal. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the Fathers who actively participated in the conference, contributing to its success and engaging in fruitful discussions.

Members of the II Presbyteral Council: Ex Officio Members: Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Rev. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampi, Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan. Elected Members: Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr. Geo Choozhikkunnel, Rev. Fr. Robin Koorumullil, Rev. Fr. Dency Mundunadackal, Rev. Fr. Printo Kurias, Rev. Fr. Aby Poovathumoottil, Rev. Fr. Vinu D. Joseph, Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, Rev. Fr. Martin Kandamparampil MST, Rev. Fr. Santhosh Kayyalaparampil CMI. Nominated Members: Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, Rev. Fr. Sajan Nettareppu. Including me, the second presbyteral council is formed of 18 members. Congratulation and best wishes to the new team.

Last respects to Rev. Fr. Sebastian Mancherikalam: With profound sadness, we received the sorrowful news of the passing of one of the pioneering missionaries of our diocese, Fr. Sebastian Mancherikalam, on January 17, 2024. As a diocese deeply indebted to the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, we wish to express our heartfelt condolences and offer our prayers. The funeral ceremony took place at 09:00 am on January 23, 2024, at St. Athanasius Church in Mallappally. Travel arrangements for the people from our diocese were organized by the Parish Priests of the parishes where Fr. Sebastian served, and a large number of Priests, Sisters, and lay faithful attended the funeral. Approximately 150 faithful from our diocese participated. The first part of the funeral ceremony was conducted by our Vicar General Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, and Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam delivered funeral message based on his mission in our diocese. During the Holy Qurbana presided by the Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam, Major Archbishop of the Syro Malankara Church, Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis delivered the homily.

Fr. Sebastian Mancherikalam was a pioneering missionary who dedicated himself tirelessly to the advancement of the Kingdom of God and played a pivotal role in the development of the Kanyakumari mission. Later, of the Diocese of Thuckalay. Following his priestly ordination on March 14, 1966, he arrived in the Kanyakumari mission in 1969. With commitment and missionary zeal, he served for 18 years in the soil of Kanyakumari. During these years, he served in different mission places, including Nithiravilai, Annikkarai, Vayalinkarai, Christurajapuram, Varuthattu, Munchirai, Padanthalumoodu, Thettiyode and Athencode. After the erection of the diocese he served almost five years as Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu and correspondent of Matriculation School, Padanthalumoodu. he is the founder of Annikkarai, Vayalinkarai and Christurajapuram parishes. He only started the school at Annikkarai. He also served for many years as the President and Treasurer of KKSSS, Kalluvilai. The Diocese of Thuckalay is truly grateful to Fr. Sebastian Mancherikalam for his selfless dedication and prays for his eternal rewards.

KKSSS Day at Kalluvilai: On September 20th, 2024, Kanyakumari Social Service Society celebrated the feast of St. Devasahayam and Patron's Day. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the president of KKSSS, and other dignitaries, including Rev. Fr. Barsleebi Rambachan and Rev. Fr. Jesusoss, participated. Fr. Aby Poovathumoottil, the director of KKSSS, welcomed the attendees and presented the previous year's

activities. During the programme, 54 students were awarded scholarships of Rs. 10,000 each. The event featured various entertainments by staff and Educare students. My appreciation to the director and the entire team for organizing well the patron's day celebration.

TNBC at Pondicherry: The TNBC half yearly meeting was held on 23-24 January 2024 at Pondicherry. The meeting was hosted by Pondicherry Archdiocese and a concelebrated holy Qurbana was held on 23rd January in the cathedral of the archdiocese followed by a short gathering to felicitate the bishops. The ministry of TNBC health commission was well appreciated by the bishops as it has been active in every diocese. I shared the updates on the forthcoming special conference for catholic nurses and doctors. The two newly appointed bishops of the dioceses of Kumbakonam and Kuzhithurai were felicitated during the meeting.

One day Photography Workshop: Under the initiative of SMYM one day training on social media was conducted at Jaya Matha Church campus, Nithiravilai on 25 January 2024. Some 40-youth participated. It was conducted by the central team in collaboration with Nithiraivaili forane director Rev. Fr. Jomy. My sincere appreciation to the coordinators.

Bible Fest Forane level competition for Teachers: The bible Fest Forane level competition for teachers was conducted on 26 January 2024 at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. Registration began at 8.30 am. An Inaugural ceremony took place at 9.15 am. After a short prayer session the competition started at 10.00 am. In the morning session the competition took place for Manjalumoodu, Nithiravilai, and Padanthalumoodu Foranes and in the afternoon, the competition took place for Kaliyal, Arukany, Thuckalay-pilankalai and Soosaipuram Foranes. 320 teachers participated in this competition. My sincere appreciation to the catechesis department for organizing it systematically.

Foranes	I Best Centre	II Best Centre	III Best Centre
Arukany	Arukany	Penuthadam	Pathukany
Kaliyal	Kaliyal	Marappady	Pallikkaonam Karode
Manjalumoodu	Mukkottukkal	Muzhucode	Manjalumoodu
Padanthalumoodu	Palugal	Annikkarai	Thettiyode
Nithiravilai	Munchirai	Nithiravilai	Cheenivilai
Soosaipuram	Killiyoor	Soosaipuram	Palappallam
Thuckalay-Pilankalai	Pilankalai	Paraicode	Kattathurai

Diocesan Level Bible Quiz: Diocesan level Bible Quiz for teachers was held on 26 January 2024 at Padanthalumoodu at 1.00 pm. 56 teachers participated in the Bible Quiz. I do congratulate all the winners.

Silver Jubilee Celebrations of St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal: St. Mary's Minor Seminary is the fruit of the vision of His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the first bishop of Thuckalay and the Major Archbishop Emeritus of the Syro Malabar Church. It started on 25 June 1998 with 26 brothers

(I Years and II Years) and was blessed and inaugurated by Mar Joseph Powathil, the then Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry on 14 August 1998. The building for minor seminary was first used as an apostolic school, later it is transformed to the seminary. Since the minor seminary had not yet finished its maintenance, the first batch joined for the diocese in 1997, was sent to three minor seminaries in Kerala (Changanacherry, Pala and Kanjirappally) for the first-year studies. The history reveals that the seminary had 10 rectors, 13 spiritual directors, 15 procurators, 10 dean of studies, 7 sisters and more than 60 professors in the past 25 years. There are 47 priests and 21 major seminarians who are formed by the minor seminary and currently there are 14 candidates in the seminary. As Silver Jubilee memorial, the renovated chapel of the seminary was blessed by me on 24 January 2024. I thank Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, the Parish Priest of Mukkoottukal Parish for his tireless efforts in this regard.

The Silver Jubilee celebrations commenced with a concelebrated Holy Qurbana on January 27, 2024, at 3:30 pm. I was the main celebrant, and Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram, former Rector, delivered the homily. Following the Holy Qurbana, there was a tea break. The Silver Jubilee public meeting commenced at 5:15 pm, with me presiding over the event and Fr. Rector extending a warm welcome to all present. During the meeting, I delivered the presidential address. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Sr. Tessa Maria SH, and Mr. Wilson Sir from Mukkoottukal Parish felicitated the event. On this occasion, I released the silver Jubilee souvenir and a Seminary diary. The cultural programme, performed by the seminarians, added vibrant colours to the jubilee celebration. The programme concluded by 8:00 pm with a common agape. I extend my gratitude to Fr. Rector and the entire seminary community for effectively coordinating the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

Feast of Don Bosco: St. John Bosco, father and teacher of youth, when he was only nine years old, learned through a dream that he was called to dedicate his life for the education of the young. Through his style of education based on reason, religion and loving kindness (which he called Preventive System), Don Bosco helped the young people to think seriously about their lives, to encounter Christ, to learn about their faith, to receive the sacraments, to accept their companions, and to involve themselves in apostolic and professional activities. Among the finest fruits of his pedagogy was the 15-year-old St Dominic Savio. The feast of Don Bosco was celebrated at Bishop's House on 30 January 2024. Forane Vicars, Fathers from Thuckalay-Pilankalai Forane, Provincial Superiors and Representatives from neighbouring Religious communities of Bishop's House were invited. The programme began with a prayer session conducted by Bros. Abishwin and John Sujin during which I delivered a short message on don Bosco. During the gathering, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil welcomed the invitees, the CMC Sisters presented a meaningful song on Don Bosco and FCC Provincial Rev. Sr. Celia FCC felicitated the event. Fr. Michael Arockyasamy SDB thanked all. The programme concluded with a community meal. I thank all those who organized well the gathering and offered your prayers and wishes to me.

Silver Jubilee Celebration of Jothi Nilayam, Palappallam: Jothi Nilayam Special School for Differently Abled Children managed by the Sisters of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacraments (SABS) St. Chantal Province, Thuckalay has successfully completed 25 years in the field of special education. The school started functioning in a small shed with two sisters and nine children on 1 February 1999. The then Vicar General Rev. Fr. Thomas Muttathukkunnel inaugurated the school. Sr. Alphonse Maria SABS was the first correspondent of the school. Ever since the beginning of the school in 1999, the sisters and staff had been doing their best to bring these children to the main stream of the society by empowering them through their integral formation. In the different steps of growth, its infra structure also got developed.

The Silver Jubilee Public Meeting began at 05.30 pm on 30 January 2024 and I presided over it. Mr. P. N. Sridhar, the district collector of Kanyakumari was the guest of honour. Mr. S. Sivasankaran, Kanyakumari

district differently abled welfare officer and Rev. Sr. Ancy Mapilaparampil SABS, the General councillor were the special guests. Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, Fr. Ajin Jose and Mr. Viju mon, ward member, felicitated the occasion. children have shown their talents through variety entertainment programmes. I thank Sr. Amala SABS, the present correspondent and Sr. Lins SABS, Principal of Jothi Nilayam for organizing very well the Jubilee celebration.

INFORMATION

- **Fr. Liju Marattukalam** is appointed as Mission Procure of the Eparchy of Thuckalay and Bishop's personal Secretary with effect from 20 January 2024. He will also assist the Chancellor of the Eparchy in the office of Chancery.
- **Syro Malabar Mission Week** was celebrated in our diocese under the directions given from the Syro Malabar Mission Office and the diocesan department of CML from 06 to 12 January 2024.
- **Mr. Joseph Joseph** (75), brother of Sr. Stella Maria SH, was called to eternal rest on 10 January 2024. We express our sincere condolences and prayers to Sr. Stella Maria and her family and pray for the departed soul.
- **Bible Magic Show** was conducted on 13 January 2024 at St. Mary's School auditorium, Kaliyal for collecting fund for the renovation of Thettivilai Church.
- **Pulari Social Service Society, Tenkasi** organized Pongal celebration on 14 January 2024 along with different competitions for the self-help group women.
- **Mr. Palus** (63), beloved father of Sr. Libiya CMC, was called to eternal rest on 15 January 2024. We express our sincere condolences and prayers to Sr. Libiya and her family and pray for the departed soul.
- **Mr. Thomas Scaria** (74), nephew of Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil, was called to eternal rest on 15 January 2024. We express our sincere condolences and prayers to Fr. Kuzhinjalil and his family and pray for the departed soul.
- **Mr. Enas Varkey** (87), beloved father of Sr. Emily Rose CMC, was called to eternal rest on 15 January 2024. We express our sincere condolences and prayers to Sr. Emily and her family and pray for the departed soul.
- **Mar James Athikkalam MST**, Bishop of the diocese of Sagar visited me at Bishop's House on 18 January 2024.
- **Christian Unity Octave** was celebrated in our diocese on 21 January 2024 Sunday in each parish by reciting special prayers.
- **Mr. Thomas K. J.** (60), the elder brother of Sr. Leema Rose FCC, was called to eternal rest on 22 January 2024. We express our sincere condolences and prayers to Sr. Leema Rose and her family and pray for the departed soul.
- **Fr. Jinu Thekkethala** went back to Rome after his one-month vacation on 23 January 2024. We wish him God's blessings in his new responsibility.
- **Pulari Matriculation School, Pudur**, Tenkasi celebrated its 19th annual day on 23 January 2024.
- **The renovated chapel of St. Mary's Minor Seminary**, Mukkoottukal was blessed on 24 January 2024 at 06.00 PM.
- **St. Mary's Church, Ariyur, Madurai** has conducted a 48 hours adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 26 – 28 January 2024.
- **41st day remembrance Holy Qurbana for Fr. John Thekkel** was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil on 30 January 2024 at St. Francis Assisi Church, Mezhacode.
- **Seven Deacons** will be coming to our diocese from the diocese of Ramanathapuram for mission and pastoral experience. they will be in different parishes and mission places from 6 – 25 February 2024.

- **World Sick Day:** “The sick, the vulnerable and the poor are at the heart of the Church; they must also be at the heart of our human concern and pastoral attention. May we never forget this!” – Pope Francis says in his message for the world sick day 2024. We will be observing World Sick Day on February 11, 2024, Sunday, in our parishes. I kindly request all Fathers to participate by conducting special prayers for the sick and visiting them.

The ongoing formation program for all Fathers is scheduled for February 13 and 14, 2024. Please take note of these dates and make arrangements to be available. The venue for the programme will be Sangamam. As it is a two-day event, kindly come prepared to stay overnight at Sangamam.

FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

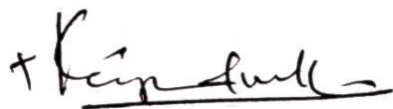
04 February	-	Last date to submit the annual parish statistics form
09 February	-	11 th Death Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiantara
11 February	-	World Day of the Sick
12 February	-	Ash Monday
13 February	-	Orientation Programme for Priests at Sangamam
14 February	-	Report Presentation by Departments & Pious Associations
26 February	-	41 st Day remembrance of Fr. Sebastian Mancherikalam.
27 February	-	Presbyteral Council

Ongoing Priestly Formation & Presentation of Annual Report by Departments & Pious Associations
Place: Sangamam
Dates: 13-14 February 2024
Time: 09.30 am – 04.00 pm

CONCLUSION

As I conclude my circular, I want to thank you, dear Fathers, for the dedicated ministry that you are undertaking in the Eparchy on behalf of our people despite all the constraints and privations that you experience. I am sure that the good Lord will bless you abundantly. Let us make the holy season of Lent grace-filled days for our people by taking the initiative in making the liturgy meaningful to them. I request you to continue praying for the intentions of the Eparchy. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to serving our people with greater enthusiasm and commitment. May the Lord continue to bless you and your ministries!

With my prayers and blessings,
Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

