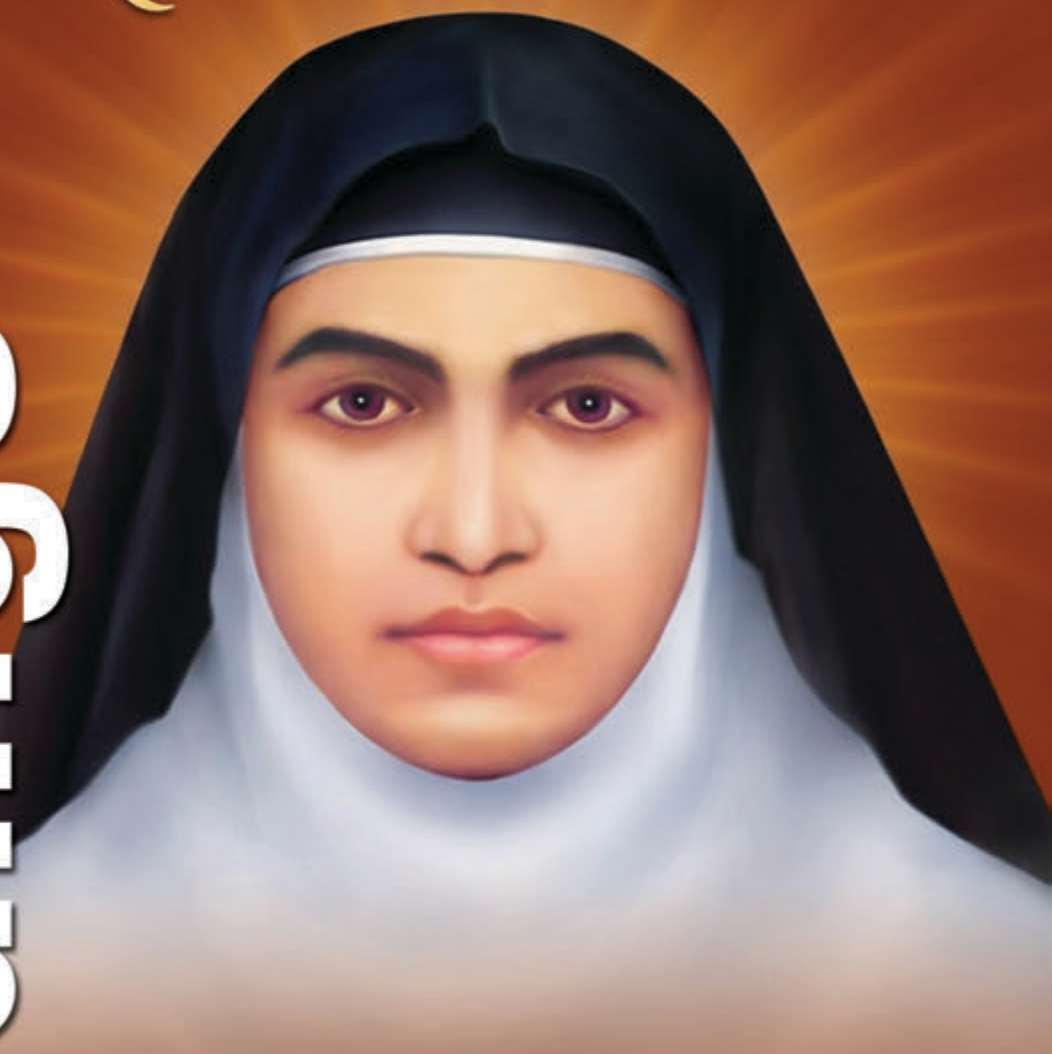


JULY 2026
VOL. 6 | ISSUE 7

Thuckalay Tidings

DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

SAINT ALPHONSA



Whatever God sends me,
whether joy or sorrow,
I accept it with equal
gratitude from His hands.



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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

July 2026 | Vol. 6 | Issue 7

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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BISHOP'S HOUSE

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

BISHOP'S HOUSE

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Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu – 629 175

Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Greetings from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

As we are in the month of July, the Catholic Church, particularly our Syro-Malabar Church, celebrated the Solemnity of St Thomas the Apostle, who brought Faith to our land on 3rd, and the feast of St Alphonsa Muttathupadathu, the first canonized saint born on Indian soil will be celebrated on 28th.

A Daughter of India, A Saint of the Church

On 28 July 1946, a young Franciscan Clarist nun breathed her last in a small room of the convent at Bharananganam in Kerala. She was thirty-five. She had endured with extraordinary patience, offering every pain as a gift to God. The Church, recognizing in her life the authentic mark of Christian holiness, declared her Blessed in 1986. On 12 October 2008, Pope Benedict XVI canonized her in Rome — the first woman born in India to be raised to the altars.

St Alphonsa's life teaches us that holiness is not reserved for the learned or the powerful but is the vocation of every soul that surrenders itself fully to the will of God. She is a companion to our pastoral ministry — a saint who understands suffering from within and intercedes with unfailing tenderness before the throne of God on behalf of all who call upon her.

St Alphonsa's Spirituality

What made Alphonsa's suffering redemptive was not its intensity but its orientation. She did not merely

endure — she offered. There is a world of difference between pain simply borne and pain consciously placed on the altar as an act of love. Alphonsa learned, over years of slow purification, to turn every affliction into prayer and every limitation into a gift. This is the asceticism, she proposes to us — not the dramatic mortifications of an earlier age, but the daily, quiet discipline of receiving what God permits and returning it to Him as an oblation. For a priest, the material for this offering is never far away: the parishioner who tests our patience, the meeting that exhausts without yielding fruit, the prayer that feels arid, the loneliness of the rectory at night. Alphonsa teaches us that none of this need be lost. All of it, surrendered in love, becomes priestly intercession.

Her spirituality, at its root, is one of abandonment — and she stands within a long tradition stretching from Saint Paul through Saint John of the Cross to Blessed Charles de Foucauld. To abandon oneself to God is not passivity; it is the most demanding act of faith. It requires us to relinquish the need to control outcomes, to measure results, and to justify our ministry by visible fruit. Alphonsa lived this abandonment not as a theological concept but as a daily existential choice, made in a body that would not cooperate and in circumstances she had not chosen. She became, precisely through that surrender, a hidden powerhouse of grace for the Church. We too are called to that hiddenness — to a family life with deepest fruitfulness may not be visible to us in this life yet is real and lasting before God.

I am praying for you and for your family's intentions.



+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay

Kuzhanthai Isho Iyakkam

Annual Day Celebration

The fifth meeting of the Seventh Pastoral Council was held at Sangamam on May 1, 2026, under the presidency of the Bishop. The session commenced with a prayer by Rev. Fr. Mijo Puthenpurackal, a welcome address by Mrs. Baby Juliet Saroja, and the minutes presented by Joint Secretary Mr. Shonic Regan, followed by an introductory session where author Mr. John Kumari Thozhan was honored for his book *Indeevaram*. In his presidential address, the Bishop called for authentic evangelization through action and care for the marginalized, which was complemented by Rev. Fr. Darbello Christudas's keynote on "Life of Faith and Sharing," outlining the Council's duty to investigate, reflect, and propose solutions for the Diocese. Through fruitful group discussions, the Council recommended prioritizing daily family prayer, encouraging parents to be faith role models, and actively engaging youth and catechism students. The meeting concluded with an open Q&A session, future directions from Director Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathyanesan, a vote of thanks by Mr. Augustine, and a final expression of gratitude



CML State Level Meeting



On June 10, 2026, the Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) Tamil State Committee held an online meeting to review its core pillars: Love, Sacrifice, Service, and Suffering. The Eparchy of Hosur received special recognition for its initiatives. The committee issued two major directives: organizing a unified annual state celebration in Ramanathapuram starting November 29, 2026, and creating a digital

State-Level Action Plan. Meeting their deadlines, the team completed the plan by June 21 and officially launched it during a follow-up online meeting on June 25, 2026. The CML Patron concluded by thanking the team leaders for their swift cooperation and execution.

Department Heads and Directors' *Meeting*



On June 15, 2026, Department Heads, Directors, Animators, and lay representatives met at Sangamam for the Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year session, led by Rev. Fr. James Kokavayalil.

Fr. James highlighted the challenge of a declining Syro-Malabar population relative to other growing religious groups. He urged the community to protect its identity by remaining deeply rooted in its liturgical, spiritual, and cultural traditions, warning that they must act quickly. In the second session, departments shared their activities, achievements, and future goals to foster collaboration and plan upcoming programs.



Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year

Core Committee Meeting

On the afternoon of June 15, 2026, the Core Committee for the Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year held a meeting at 2:00 p.m. at Sangamam. Committee members participated actively and enthusiastically throughout the session, which opened with the Director presenting the committee report. Following this, the members reviewed the translated documents for the Empowerment Year in detail and decided to simplify them further before distributing them to all departments. Each department will then use these guidelines to prepare and submit concrete action plans. Additionally, the

committee entrusted the Labor and Laity Commission with several key responsibilities, including identifying eligible students to provide them with training and guidance for government examinations, encouraging qualified individuals to enter public and political life, and motivating students to excel in education, leadership, and professional fields. Finally, the Director expressed sincere appreciation to all Core Committee members for their active participation, valuable suggestions, and strong commitment to the goals of the Empowerment Year.



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Contact Mission Procure:

Fr. Sunil Antony
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 Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

Visit to the Extended Territories

During a pastoral visit to the Diocese's extended mission territories on June 17–18, 2026, the Bishop evaluated missionary activities, reviewed infrastructure, and met with priests and religious sisters across several regions, including Nanguneri, where key decisions were made to complete the Nirmala Home project. While witnessing the dedicated local efforts in evangelization, education, and social outreach, the Bishop also noted critical challenges like poor infrastructure, funding shortages, and personnel deficits. To address these issues, a concluding meeting with local priests generated several key initiatives, including financial and spiritual adoption of centers by Foranes, mission allowances, youth programs to counter substance abuse, and the urgent deployment of more religious sisters, particularly to Virudhunagar. The Bishop closed the visit by thanking the missionaries for their dedication and pledging the Diocese's ongoing prayerful, collaborative, and financial support.



CML *Annual* General Body *Meeting*



The Catholic Mission League (CML) held its Annual General Body Meeting on June 21, 2026, at Sacred Heart Matriculation School, Padanthalumoodu, bringing together Vice Directors, Organizers, and Student Representatives to foster diocesan unity and missionary enthusiasm. The event began with a flag-hoisting ceremony, an inspiring address by National Organizer Adv. Gnanadhas, and the CML prayer led by Rev. Sr. Ann Grace, alongside a special welcome for newly appointed leaders. Participants then gathered by Forane to share parish achievements and suggestions, which was followed by the

Diocesan Executive Election. Rev. Fr. Pinto Kurias presented the 2026–2027 Action Plan, and Rev. Fr. Antony Jose officially inaugurated the new activity year, encouraging members to be active witnesses of Christ. The meeting concluded with the Mission Anthem and a vote of thanks, sending participants home with renewed fellowship and commitment.



Gathering of Junior Religious Sisters

Serving in the Diocese



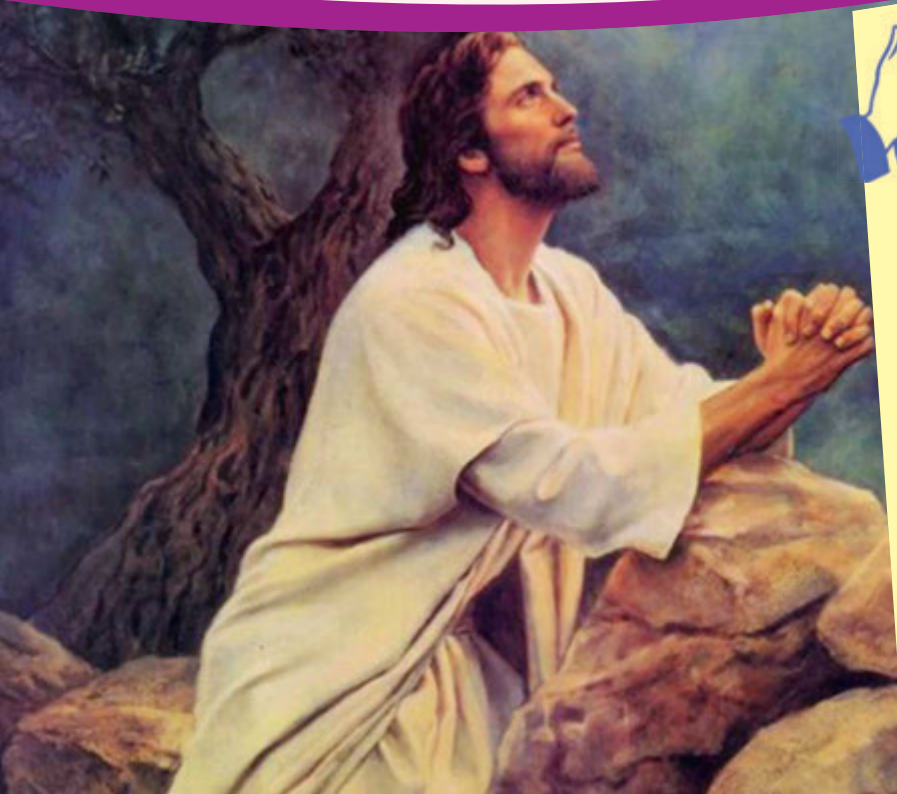
On July 24, 2026, the Bishop hosted a special gathering at the Bishop's House for religious sisters serving in the Diocese who recently made their First and Final Professions. During the meeting, he emphasized the dignity of their vocation, urging them to remain faithful witnesses of Christ and to guide youth through scripture and church teachings. Drawing inspiration from Mother Mary, he encouraged them to embrace God's plan with humility and trust. The event continued in the

chapel with the celebration of *Ramsa* and the Holy Rosary, followed by a joyful reception and dinner where gifts were presented to the sisters. The evening featured words of encouragement from Rev. Fr. Antony Jose and was anchored by Rev. Fr. Sunil Antony, with the Bishop expressing his sincere gratitude to Sr. Mary Rani, the Regent Brothers, and the organizing team for a successful program.



Kaikkars and Accountants' Meeting at Sangamam

On June 28, 2026, the Diocese of Thuckalay hosted its Annual Meeting and Orientation Programme at Sangamam for around 65 Kaikkars and Parish Accountants to enhance their pastoral and administrative skills. The event began with a Holy Qurbana and a welcome by Chancellor Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, followed by the Bishop's keynote address on the vital role of Kaikkars in evangelization. Rev. Fr. Dominic Kadatchadhas led the first session on Christian leadership challenges, while afternoon sessions by Rev. Fr. Antony Jose and Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal provided canonical and practical insights on accounting, parish structures, and administrative accountability. Following an interactive Q&A session, the Bishop concluded the event by thanking the parish priests for their support and praising the organizing team, including the Regent Brothers, for a successful program.



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The Diocese has prayer groups.

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Name:

Place:

Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,



: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

SMYM

Meet Up



The Diocesan Youth Department officially inaugurated its annual activities on Sunday, June 28, 2026, at the Youth Ministry Office in Kalluvilai, bringing together the Diocesan Director, Animator, Forane Directors, and various local parish leaders. A key highlight was a session on Youth Empowerment and Syro-Malabar Community Empowerment, which encouraged young people to build leadership skills, deepen their faith, preserve their heritage, and become agents of positive change through service and Christian witness. The program provided a valuable opportunity for interaction and planning future initiatives for holistic youth development across the Diocese. The Bishop expressed his sincere gratitude to the Diocesan Director, Rev. Fr. Anil Raj, for his dedicated leadership, and thanked all the participating directors, animators, and unit leaders for their commitment to youth empowerment.



Basic Training Programme for Catechism Teachers



A Basic Training Programme for Catechism Teachers was held on June 28, 2026, at Padanthalumoodu to empower them in their faith formation ministry by deepening their knowledge of Scripture, Church teachings, and core Christian values. The training emphasized their vital role in shaping young minds, encouraging them to be authentic witnesses of Christ who teach through personal example, prayer, and conviction. The

sessions equipped participants with the spiritual and pastoral tools needed to effectively guide students into a personal relationship with Jesus, highlighting their collaboration in the Church's evangelization mission. The Bishop expressed his sincere appreciation to Rev. Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil for his excellent organization and dedication to making the program a success.



TPWA

Core Committee Meeting



The **TPWA** Committee Meeting was held on June 25, 2026, at the Bishop's House, with all committee members in attendance. A major agenda item was the proposal to transfer the medical insurance scheme to a new agency to ensure more efficient service and timely benefits for the priests. The members also engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the construction of a new clergy home,

sharing constructive suggestions, positive feedback, and practical plans for the project. The Bishop requested the committee members to communicate these details to all priests and encourage them to share their own opinions and recommendations for the successful realization of the project.



Thenkasi Mission Visit

The Bishop undertook an official visit to the Thenkasi Mission on June 27, 2026, during which he inspected the ongoing second-floor construction at Puthur School. By 4:15 p.m., the diocesan priests serving in the Thenkasi Mission gathered at the border for a brief meeting before proceeding to Ambur for a general assembly with all the missionaries. A recollection began at 6:00 p.m., followed by a session where the mission coordinator, Fr. Sumesh, and other priests outlined the mission's upcoming plans and activities. During the meeting, the assembly congratulated Fr. Thomas Thuckalay on completing 25 years of faithful priestly ministry in the diocese. The gathering concluded with the Bishop's pastoral message and blessing, offering thanks to the Lord for His continued blessings upon the missions and missionaries.



Drug Awareness *Rally and Programme*



The Puthuvazhvu De-addiction Centre organized a Drug Awareness Rally and Awareness Programme on June 29, 2026, at Soosaipuram, Karungal, in collaboration with St. Alphonsa College, APJM Matriculation Higher Secondary School, and the TNBC Health Commission. The Bishop participated in the rally and addressed the assembly on the mental, physical, emotional, and

psychological effects of substance addiction, emphasizing the critical need for prevention, timely intervention, and compassionate support for affected individuals. The event was efficiently organized by Rev. Fr. Aby Thomas, the Correspondent of St. Alphonsa College, and Rev. Fr. Christudas, Director of the Puthuvazhvu De-addiction Centre.

Sinai Theological Centre

Inauguration



The Sinai Theological Centre was formally inaugurated on June 28, 2026, in Padanthalumoodu, with about 20 students attending the event. During the ceremony, parishioners who finished their theology courses received certificates. The program was organized by the center's director, Rev. Fr. Shijo Aikarakunnel.



News From KKSSS

Regional Leadership Training Strengthens SHG Leaders

KKSSS successfully organized two Regional Level Meetings and "Thalaimai Yerka Va" Leadership Training Programmes at Uthirattamcode (06.06.2026) and Saint Alphonsa College Auditorium, Soosaipuram (20.06.2026). More than 330 SHG leaders participated. Rev. Fr. Mahesh Antony and Chief Guest Mrs. Ancy Shobha Rani inspired participants on leadership, women's empowerment, social justice, and community development, encouraging SHG leaders to emerge as confident future community and political leaders.



One House, One Tree

On World Environment Day (June 5), Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) organized the cluster-wise online competition "One House, One Tree." Thirty clusters participated and planted 758 tree saplings. Vayalinkarai won first prize, followed by Pilankarai and Padathalumoodu. The programme promoted environmental awareness, tree planting, and plastic-free surroundings.



Tailoring Class Inauguration

The Tailoring Class was inaugurated on 10 June 2026 at Orunooramvayal under the guidance of KKSSS to promote women's skill development and entrepreneurship. Rev. Fr. Mahesh Antony, Director of KKSSS, emphasized the importance of vocational training for self-employment and women's empowerment. Rev. Fr. Kuriyan and trainer Mrs. Viji encouraged the participants and explained the objectives of the course. A total of 22 women trainees enrolled in the programme to build their tailoring skills and livelihood opportunities. The programme was coordinated by Mrs. Shoba, Animator, and concluded with a vote of thanks.



A Word on Our Dream:

St. Joseph Cathedral

The recent delegation of the Bishop, priests, and laity to prominent faith centers—including the Thrissur Cathedral, Our Lady of Dolours Basilica, and St. Antony's Forane Church—marked a significant milestone for the construction of St. Joseph's Cathedral at Soosaipuram. By celebrating the Holy Qurbana and hosting dedicated promotional stalls, the team directly engaged local communities. The Bishop's inspiring homilies highlighted the project's urgent financial needs, prompting an outpouring of generosity from local parishioners. This unified effort not only raised vital awareness and funds for the regional infrastructure project but also returned a renewed sense of energy and inspiration to fuel the development goals ahead. Significant progress has been made on the cathedral construction site, where excavation is complete and wooden formwork is in place. Concrete pouring has commenced for the primary column footings, and the vertical steel reinforcement frameworks (rebars) for the main pillars have been successfully erected. With material stockpiles staged and regular site inspections underway by church leadership, the project is steadily advancing through the critical foundational stage.



In Memoriam
Fr. Sony Thekkummuriyil



Rev. Dr. Sony Thekkummuriyil was called to eternal rest on 07 June 2026. He was the younger brother of Sr. Lissy Thekkummuriyil, SABs, who served as the Provincial Councillor at Soosaipuram from 2022 to 2025. Sr. Lissy is currently residing at the Mission House, Mudiyoorkara, Kottayam.

In Memoriam

Mr. Sunil Kumar

Mr. Sunil Kumar, a 53-year-old member of St. Mary's Church in Thuckalay, passed away on June 23, 2026, following a cardiac arrest. Originally from St. Antony's Church in Vayalinkarai, he was deeply involved in parish activities and maintained strong relationships with local priests and religious sisters. His missionary zeal and dedication prompted the former parish priest of Vayalinkarai, Rev. Fr. Zacharias Cherunilam, to invite him to assist with diocesan work, leading Mr. Sunil to dedicate his life to diocesan ministries and relocate to Thuckalay, where he regularly helped the community and closely assisted the CMC Sisters. Despite having undergone heart surgery after a cardiac event two years prior and remaining under medical supervision, he continued his service with unwavering commitment. His death represents a notable loss for both his local parish and the wider Diocese, and the diocesan community prays that the Lord rewards his dedicated service and grants him eternal rest.



In Memory of a Life Well-Lived



Mr. Chacko K. C. Kuzhimattathil (72),
father of Sr. Sheena LSDP.



Mrs. Leelamma Mathew (84),
the beloved mother of Sr. Jyothis SABS



THUCKALAY
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"Through James, we
learn that the
privilege of following
Jesus comes at great
personal cost—but
the reward is
priceless."



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