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Thuckalay Tidings

DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



Pope Leo XIV:
A Missionary Pastor with a Global Heart



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A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors in Christ,

The white smoke that rose from the Sistine Chapel on 8 May 2025 announced to the world that the College of Cardinals had chosen a new Supreme Pontiff. When Cardinal Prevost stepped onto the central loggia of Saint Peter's Basilica and was presented to the faithful as Pope Leo XIV, the universal Church received not merely a new administrator but a pastor whose life had been marked by deep spirituality, pastoral sensitivity, and unwavering commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On 29 May 2025, I had the singular privilege of interacting with our Holy Father at the Vatican, presenting our Eparchy to him for his paternal blessing. Pope Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost on 14 September 1955 in Chicago, Illinois, was elected pope on 8 May 2025, following the death of Pope Francis. He is the first American-born pope, the first to hold Peruvian citizenship, and the first pope from the Order of Saint Augustine. His election marks a historic moment of continuity and renewal within the Catholic Church. Raised in Dolton, a suburb of Chicago, Robert was the youngest of three sons in a deeply religious family with African, French, Italian, and Spanish roots. His early formation was shaped by vibrant Catholic parish life and a strong family foundation. He entered the Order of Saint Augustine in 1977 and was ordained a priest in 1982. He studied canon law in Rome and earned a doctorate from the Pontifical College of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Pope Leo XIV's ministry has been notably missionary and pastoral. He served over a decade in Trujillo, Peru, later becoming Bishop of Chiclayo in 2014. His deep connection with the Peruvian Church led him to become a Peruvian citizen in 2015. Known for his humble service, he was affectionately called the "Latin Yankee", a nod to his American origin and Peruvian mission. He served as Prior General of the Augustinian Order (2001–2013) and held several key roles under Pope Francis. In January 2023, he was appointed Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, giving him a central role in the global appointment of bishops. He became a Cardinal in September 2023, assigned to the church of Saint Monica in Rome.

Elected pope on the fourth ballot of the conclave, Cardinal Prevost took the name Leo XIV, referencing Pope Leo XIII, known for his teaching on labor and social justice. Pope Leo XIV sees a similar challenge today with the rise of artificial intelligence and global inequality, and he urges the Church to protect human dignity in the face of these changes. His style blends tradition with pastoral sensitivity. He promotes a liturgy that is beautiful and reverent, and insists that worship must uplift and inspire the faithful. In Peru, he celebrated Mass in full vestments even in the tropical heat, believing liturgy should reflect the majesty of God. Pope Leo XIV's election brings renewed hope, especially to communities like the Syro-Malabar Church, which value both tradition and missionary outreach. His global experience, cross-cultural understanding, and spiritual depth reflect the universality of the Church today.

As he begins his pontificate, Pope Leo XIV calls the Church to be missionary, dialogical, and close to the poor. His leadership continues the pastoral vision of Pope Francis, while bringing his own voice as a bridge-builder and shepherd for our times.

Let us pray for Pope Leo XIV, that he may lead the Church with wisdom, courage, and love.



+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay



Seeds of Faith: Sown, Nurtured, and Blossoming in VPV

Every year, the Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha (VPV) is organized during the first two weeks of May. The year 2025 was no exception, as the VPV was successfully conducted in various parishes from April 27 to May 11. Recognizing the profound impact of VPV on the faith formation of children, all the Fathers collaborated wholeheartedly to ensure its seamless execution. Even in the extended mission territories, the VPV was conducted with great enthusiasm and dedication.





A NEW CHAPTER IN RELIGIOUS LIFE: Chenamcode Convent Blessed

For the past 25 years, the Assisi FCC Convent at Chenamcode had been functioning on the first floor of Assisi Vidyalaya. To ensure the smooth functioning of the school and to provide a more suitable residence for the Sisters, a separate convent building was constructed. The blessing of the newly built convent took place on 05 May 2025 at 5:00 PM. The ceremony was presided over by the Bishop, The celebration was followed by a short public gathering during which Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, the Provincial Superior, expressed her heartfelt thanks to all those present.



Sharpening the Tools of Ministry: Skill Lab for Seminarians

A one-week Skill Development Programme was conducted for all the major seminarians of the diocese from 12 to 16 May 2025 at Sangamam. Sixteen seminarians participated in the programme. This integral initiative aimed to provide practical knowledge on various subjects useful for their future ministry. Each day, Mr. John Kumari Thozhan conducted a special Tamil class for one and a half hours. Additionally, the following sessions were organized throughout

the week: *Indian Constitution* by Rev. Fr. Printo Kurias, *Counselling and Therapy* by Rev. Fr. Jimmy, *Communication* by Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, *Discernment* by Rev. Fr. Mathanraj, *Liturgical Decorum* by Rev. Fr. Justin Cheruvellil, *Caring for the Uncared* by Rev. Fr. Roy Kannanchirayil CMI, and *Artificial Intelligence* by Rev. Fr. Liju Marattukalam. At the conclusion of the programme, the seminarians made a pilgrimage to various designated pilgrim Churches to obtain.



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

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Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



Little Apostles in Action A Residential Camp Experience

The Catechetical Department organized a three-day residential camp titled 'HOPE' for students—both girls and boys—who had completed Classes XI and XII. The camp took place on 20, 21, and 22 May 2025 at the St. Alphonsa College campus, Soosaipuram. Each day featured two input sessions covering various topics, including the Christian vision of life, the Divine call, career guidance, the Word of God in daily life, salvation of souls, and the importance of prayer. The resource persons for the camp were Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Mr. Russel Raj, Rev. Fr. Anil Raj, and Dr. Jackson. Bro. Godwin animated the students during the other sessions, while the Sisters took special care of the girls. A total of 39 students from nine parishes participated in the camp. The concluding meeting was presided over by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil.



Inspiring Generations:

Educators' Jubilee and Convention in Kalluvilai

The Christ Jubilee celebration for the school teachers of the diocese, along with the annual convention, was held at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai, on 30 May 2025. The morning session featured a convention talk delivered by Rev. Fr. Antony Nelson, Novice Master at the Pambanvilai OFM Formation House. He reflected on the values of a good teacher, drawing inspiration from the life and teachings of the Master, Jesus Christ. In the afternoon, the Christ Jubilee celebration took place with a public gathering. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the meeting, and the three Provincial Superiors—Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese CMC, Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, and Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS—along with the CMI Regional Superior, Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekkalam CMI, were present as special guests of honour. The teachers enriched the event by presenting songs and cultural programmes centred on the Jubilee theme. The event concluded at 4:00 PM.





Teaching Hearts, Guiding Souls: A Year Begins with Faithful Zeal

The Christ Jubilee celebration of the Catechists, along with the inauguration of the academic year of the Catechetical Department and Kuzhanthai Isso Iyakkam (KII), was held at Kalluvilai on 31 May 2025.

In the morning, a competition of PowerPoint/video presentations on the Seven Sacraments was conducted for the Forane Churches. Three Foranes - Soosaipuram, Thuckalay Pilankalai, and Kaliyal - participated, with Thuckalay Pilankalai securing the first prize. The presentations were followed by a talk by Rev. Fr. Wysilin Xavier, Forane Vicar of Thrithvapuram, who spoke on the importance of the Jubilee Year in the life of catechists. The afternoon session began with a Jubilee

procession from Sinai Retreat Centre to Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai, followed by a public meeting. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the gathering, and Rev. Fr. Antony Tharakunnel, Parish Priest of Rajagiri, was the chief guest. The Vicar General officially inaugurated the catechetical year and the activities of KII. During the inauguration, the Vicar General, directors of the two departments, representatives of headmasters, teachers, and students took part in the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolizing the sharing of knowledge. The light was then passed to all the teachers, who proceeded to take an oath to fulfil their responsibilities with dedication.



With the Heart of a Pastor: Bishop's European Outreach

As previously communicated, Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB undertook a pastoral and pilgrimage visit to Europe from 13 May to 3 June 2025 as part of the Christ Jubilee Year celebrations. During this visit, he had the opportunity to go on pilgrimage to Ars in France and Assisi in Italy, spiritually representing the diocese at these significant sites. He also visited benefactors and friends of the diocese in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and Rome, expressing gratitude for their continued support. The visit was especially meaningful as he could meet and spend time with priests from the diocese who are currently serving or pursuing studies in Europe. These included Fr. Robert Matheus, Fr. Josy Puthenpurackal, Fr. Alex Puthettu, Fr. Jinu Thekkethala, Fr. John Paul, and Bro. Jubin and expressed his joy at seeing their commitment to ministry in the European context. He also visited religious sisters from the diocese who are engaged in various forms of service across Europe and appreciated their silent and dedicated witness. One of the most profound moments of his journey was the encounter with the newly elected Holy Father, which was as a grace-filled and uplifting experience for himself and for the entire diocese.



**With Fr. Fabio Attard sdb Rector Major
of salesian congregation**



With Mongr Rolf Linse and Fr Jurgen Cleve of Boltrof



With Thuckalay priest and sisters



Stefan wills and family



With Mr Dominique and family



Strength in Unity: **Christian Council Convenes for Shared Witness**

On June 9, 2025, a felicitation ceremony was convened at the Kottar Bishop's House to mark the culmination of the Archbishop's tenure as the head of the Church of South India, a position he held for six years (2019-2025). Organized under the auspices of the Kanyakumari Christian United Council, the event featured Bishop George Rajendran, SDB,

of the Thuckalay Diocese, presenting a rosary to the Archbishop in recognition of his exemplary service. It is noteworthy that the Archbishop had contributed significantly to the Council, serving as a member of its Management Committee and leading its Women's Team as President.





Missionary Flame Rekindled

Palai Missionaries Unite in Faith

A remarkable missionary gathering was held at St. Joseph's Church, Piravithanam, in the Diocese of Palai. The event brought together around 15 Bishops, several Missionary Priests, Religious Sisters, and lay representatives from various mission centers across India and abroad. The objective of the meet was to rekindle the missionary spirit, share field experiences, and strengthen collaboration among missionaries, especially those originating from the Palai region.

The spiritual highlight of the day was the Holy Eucharist, presided over by Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, with all Bishops and priests concelebrating. The liturgy was deeply moving, offered for the intentions of all missionaries, both living and departed. The homily reminded everyone of the Church's essential missionary nature and called for renewed courage and trust in Divine Providence. A heartfelt felicitation

ceremony honored veteran missionaries from Palai who served in distant Dioceses for many decades. Their lives of dedication and sacrifice were acknowledged through mementos and words of appreciation. Their legacy serves as an inspiration for younger missionaries. The youth of Diocese of Palai presented a vibrant cultural program portraying the theme of mission through traditional music, drama, and dance. It reflected the enthusiastic participation of the local faithful and their appreciation for missionary service. The meet concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by a representative of the organizing committee. Gratitude was expressed to all Bishops, priests, religious, and lay collaborators who made the event a success. A commitment was made to continue holding such missionary gatherings regularly to foster communion and collective mission planning.



With Mary as Model: Faithful Mothers Gather in Gratitude

The Annual Day Celebrations of Mathru Jyothis were held at the auditorium of Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu, on 11 May 2025 at 2:00 PM. It was reported that Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the function. The chief guests of the day were said to be Mrs. Beena Joshy, the President of the Syro-Malabar Global Mathru Jyothis, and Adv. Sumithra. Many priests and religious sisters were also present for the celebration. It was shared during the gathering that the Best Forane Director Award had been presented to Rev. Fr. Jose Vayalil from Manjalumoodu Forane. The Best Unit Award had gone to St. Thomas Church, Muzhucode, and among the parishes with fewer than 60 families, the award had been conferred upon Christ the King Church, Paraicode.

A notable highlight of the day was reported to be the exhibition of a handwritten Bible, organized in connection with the celebration. In addition, during the meeting, a book on Mother Mary, edited by Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil, had been released.



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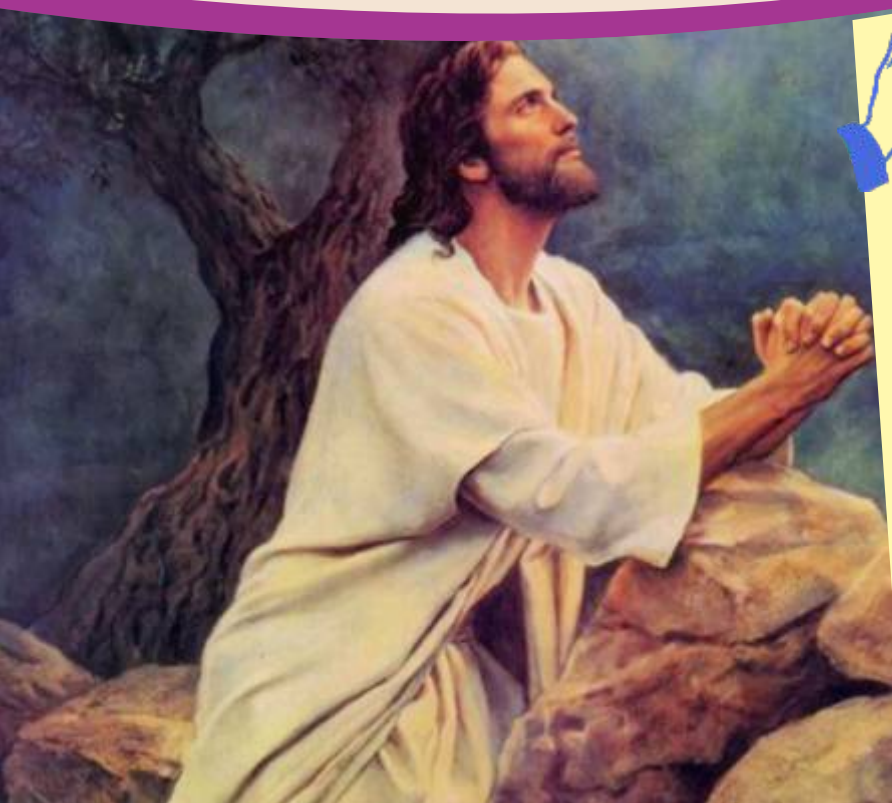
Place:

Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,



: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



Adieu with Gratitude: **Honouring a Faithful Journey**

Rev. Fr. Augustin Thalodil



He faithfully served the Diocese of Thuckalay for over 25 years, dedicating his most fruitful years to the pastoral and spiritual care of the faithful. His enduring legacy includes the construction of six churches at Thettiyode, Annikkarai, Mezhacode, Manjalumoodu, Kunnuvilai, and Thettivilai, each a testament to his perseverance, courage, and faith. He also built numerous Kurissadys and Grottos, enriching the devotional life of the diocese. During his brief tenure at the minor seminary, he made a lasting impact through his commitment to the formation of future priests and by building a beautiful grotto there. As he now returns to his home diocese of Palai, we express our deep gratitude for his invaluable service to the Diocese of Thuckalay.



Rev. Fr. Chacko Puthiyaparampil



Rev. Fr. Martin Kandamparampil MST



Rev. Fr. Michael Arokiasamy SDB

Heaven's Gain



Rev. Fr Sebastian Panachickal

Fr Sebastian, from the Diocese of Kanjirappally was former missionary of Thuckalay Diocese. Fr. Panachickal served in our Diocese from 2003 to 2007 in following Parishes: Parish Priest at Munchirai (01.11.2003 - 08.02.2006); Parish Priest at Killiyoor (01.11.2003 - 05.03.2004); Parish Priest at Mathapuram (08.02.2006 - 02.05.2006) and Parish Priest at Nithiravilai (02.05.2006 - 03.01.2007).



Sr. Helena Kompanathottathil SDS

Sr. Helena was called to eternal rest on 14 May 2025, a native of Vellayamkudy, Kattappana. As a religious sister, she served in our diocese almost 35 years in Karode (20 years) and Manjalumoodu (15 years).



Sr. Nirmaletha Cappil SD,
younger sister of Sr. Vineeth Maria SH



Sr. Merlin Jose CMC,
Former Missionary



Mr. P. J. Joseph Vattothukunnel,
Father of Sr. Sunila MMM

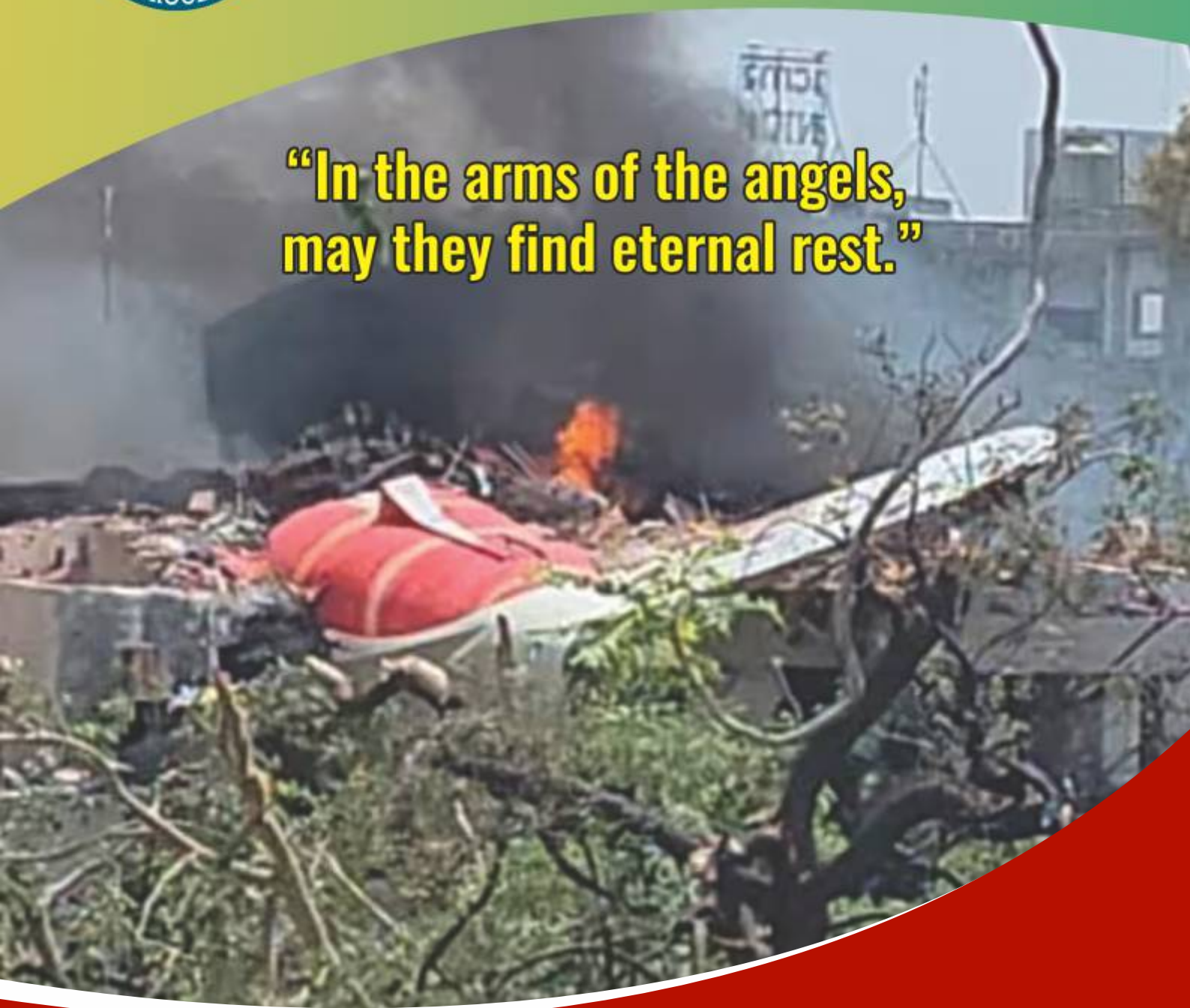


Mrs. Rosamma Joseph,
Mother of Sr. Elseena Parappallil SH



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**“In the arms of the angels,
may they find eternal rest.”**



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