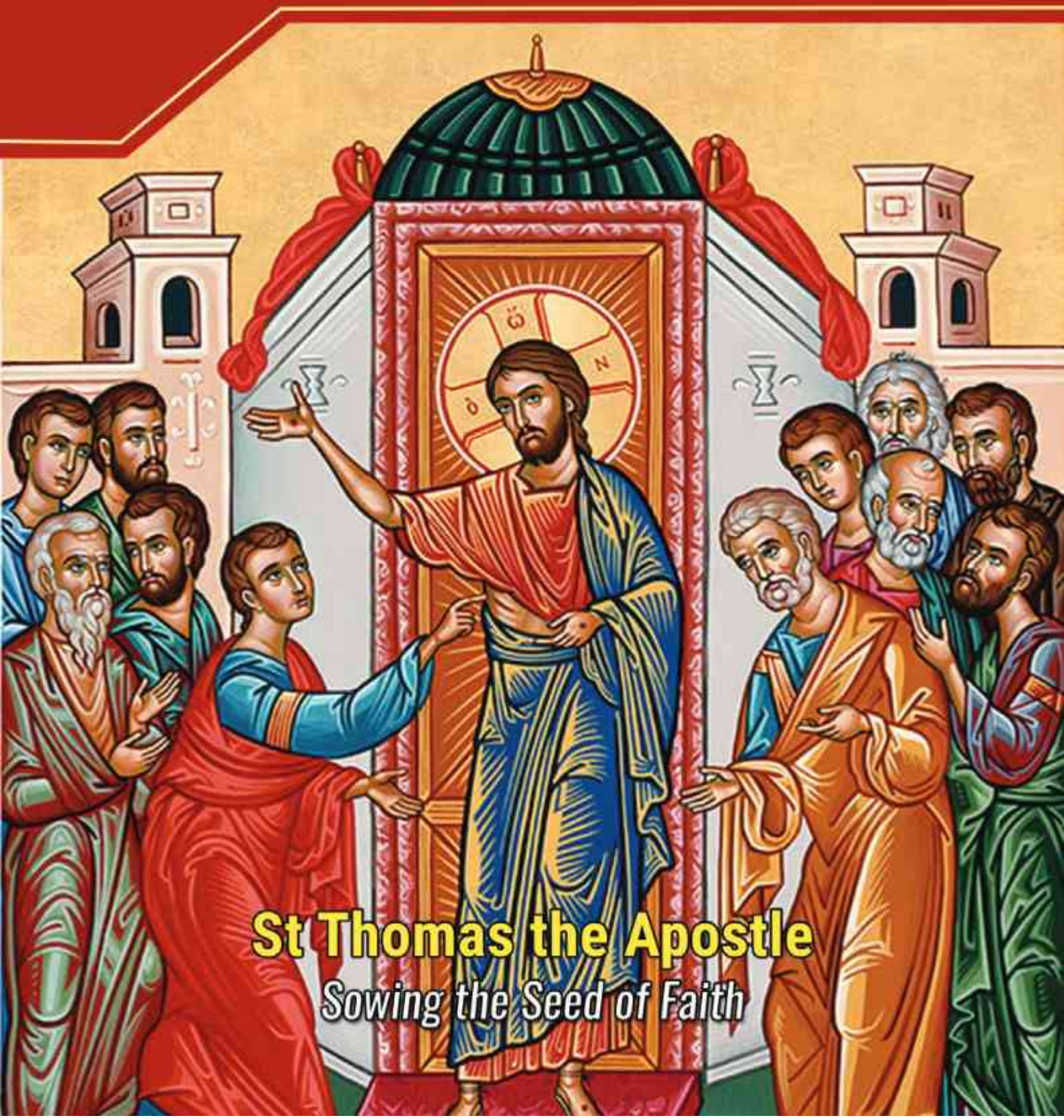


THUCKALAY TIDINGS

JULY 2021 | VOL. 1 | ISSUE 5
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



St Thomas the Apostle
Sowing the Seed of Faith



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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

July 2021 | Vol. 1 | Issue 5

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY
BISHOP'S HOUSE
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Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu – 629 175



Message

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Greetings and prayerful wishes from all of us in the Diocese of Thuckalay.

I would like to inform you that I have been personally remembering each one of you in my prayers and in the Holy Qurbana, most of which have been moments of personal reflection and benedictions aimed at seeking the Lord to protect each one of you from the pandemic and other illnesses and dangers.

Come the month of July and we re-dedicate ourselves on the path of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India and father of our Faith. As we celebrate the feast of St. Thomas, we reflect on the core point of faith of the doubting Thomas "My Lord and My God". Yes, serious queries in all circumstances are important for confirmation of the truth. St. Thomas had become the emblem of the doubtful follower of Christ, who does not hide his perplexities; of the one who, perhaps most of all, had had the courage to show himself humanly weak, in believing the words of a man who spoke of resurrection after death. On that occasion, Jesus satisfied Thomas, as if to emphasize that, despite having lacked faith, it was legitimate for him to ask himself questions and seek a convincing answer, so that his dedication to the Gospel message could be serene, sincere and powerful.

I strongly believe that in Thomas' doubt, each one of us through various generations is blessed by the Words of the Lord, when he stated, "You believe because you see me, don't you? Happy are those who have not seen and believe". (John 20:29)

We are the latter, who, like the Apostles, did not have the opportunity to travel the length and breadth of Galilee alongside the Master; it is we, who were unable to cry with Mary at the foot of the cross where our God hung; it is we who have not seen the empty tomb and

the Angel announcing the resurrection, much less have we been able, like Thomas, to put our hands in the wounds of the Risen One. Today this freedom to believe in God is questioned from different angles. There are certain parameters created to frame the traditional belief system of people like us.

Before religious liberty is a diplomatic or legal issue, it is first and foremost a matter of innate human dignity – for our religious freedom inheres not on the parchments where laws are written; rather, it is indelibly engraved in the human heart. When we encounter the Risen Lord, no matter how incredulous we have been, no matter how resistant to the Gospel, when we encounter the Lord – this beautiful gift of religious freedom comes alive. It is entangled in the DNA of a response of faith and love to the Lord, to the Church, and to the mission which the Lord has mapped out for each and every one of us. Without truth there is no freedom. Without freedom, there is no love.

Dear friends, I am sure that it is the same faith and freedom that keeps us united though there is a space cavity between us even amidst of the pandemic sufferings. May St. Thomas intercede for us to keep our faith alive in this transformed world.

Happy Feast to you all.

Yours affectionately,

+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay



Inauguration of Catechism Classes



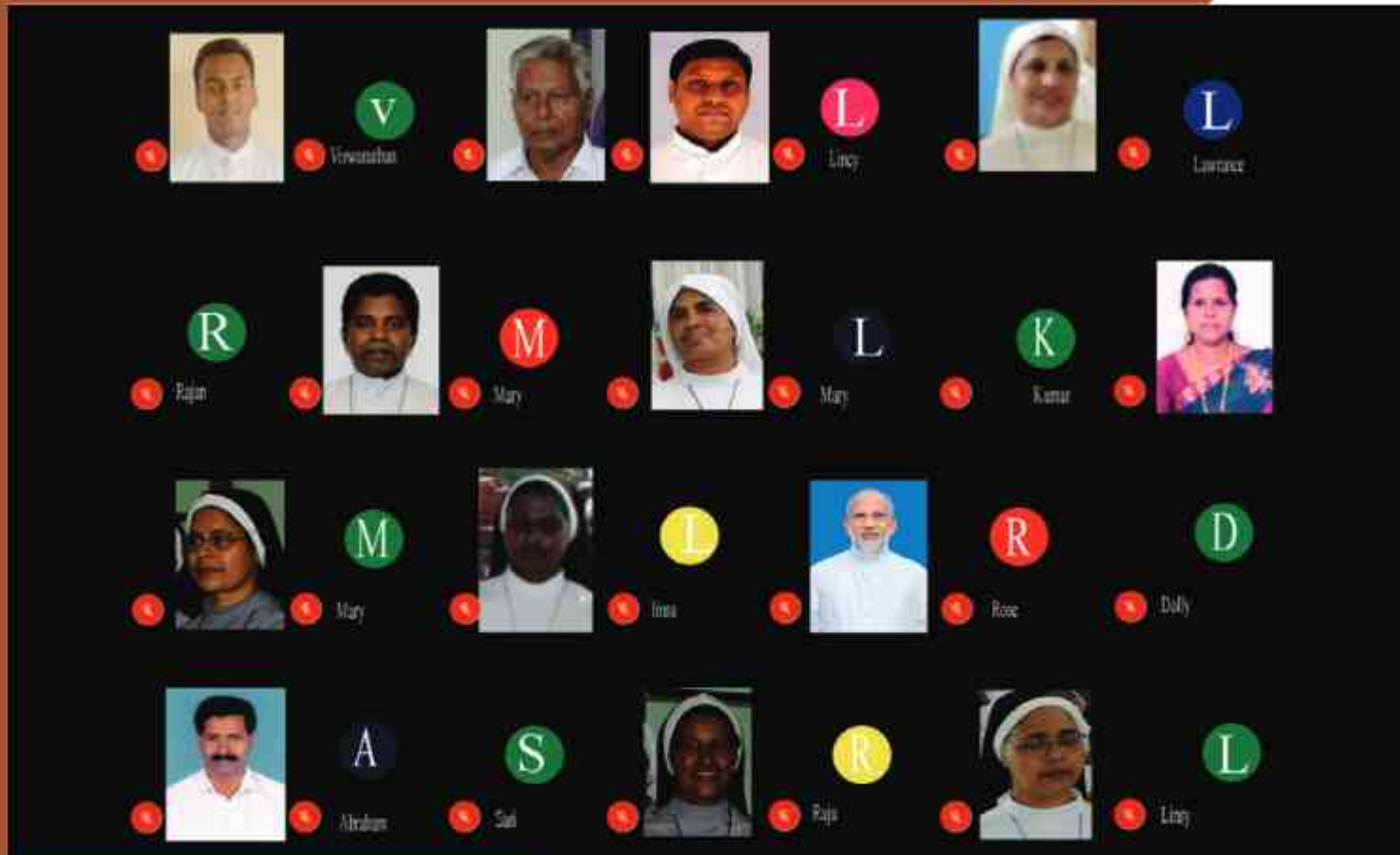
Activities for faith formation of our young children continue during the pandemic and lockdown. The Holy Qurbana was conducted on 6 June 2021 at 10.00 AM, after which a brief inauguration of Catechism classes was held at the Diocese level. The Catechism department under the leadership of Fr Prince Maliyil, Director and Fr Abilash, Assistant Director took the responsibility to provide a pleasant experience to the teachers and students. A pre-recorded video programme was sent to all the teachers and children. The Catechism Director welcomed all the children and teachers. Very Rev Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General of the Diocese, addressed the teachers and the children. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb congratulated the efforts to keep our faith alive among the young even during the pandemic. He invited all the children and teachers to put in more efforts to know and love Jesus more and more.

Catechism Teachers' Seminar



The Diocese gives much priority for forming the young children in Christian faith. We have wonderful and very dedicated group of catechism teachers in every Parish. As the Diocese was preparing to inaugurate the Catechism classes on 6 June 2021, plans and programmes had been planned under the leadership of the Bishop well ahead of time. As the situation demanded a different approach, an online orientation programme for catechism teachers was held on 2 June 2021. Our Bishop addressed the 300 teachers online and called upon the teachers to rededicate and exhibit added commitment in sharing the Faith with our children. Rev. Fr Jinu Jacob who was the resource person for the orientation programme dwelt in detail on the Gospel values that are to be practiced and passed on to the children in our Church through catechism.

Meeting of Catechism Headmasters and Headmistresses



One of the most important foundations of the Catholic Faith in the Diocese is the way we groom the young children and youth in Faith and Faith practices. Utmost importance is given to the catechism of the children with proper direction to the teachers and the teachers who are leading this important activity at the Parish level. A meeting of all the Catechism headmasters and headmistresses was organized on 4 June 2021. It was wonderful to see all of them being present for the online meeting. The Director of Catechism welcomed the gathering. Very Rev. Fr Powathuparampil, Vicar General, addressed the gathering. He spoke of their responsibilities as teachers of Faith and the blessings from God that will be received from God as teachers of Faith. The Bishop thanked everyone for taking up this important task of the Church by taking the mantle on themselves for leading the mission. He stated that the headmasters and headmistresses are great motivators and requested them to continue personally to follow the teaching of every catechism teacher under their supervision. He also urged upon them to conduct regular evaluation of the classes for achieving the objectives of the Church.



Rev Fr Benedict M. D. Anelin

Recollection and Prayer

A Renewed Spirit

The current situation demands a renewed spirit to keep ourselves closer to God and to be positive. This need rises more in the children in different parishes. With this objective, an online recollection and prayer for catechism children was organized on 12 June 2021. A pre-recorded spiritual video talk was sent to all the children dividing them into three categories: Classes 1-4, Classes 5-8 and Classes 9-12 for both Malayalam and Tamil students. The resource persons were Rev Fr Benedict M. D. Anelin, Rev Fr Stephen Mathar and Rev Sr Amal Blessy CMC. We continue to pray for the children in the Church to grow up as good Catholics with best of human qualities.



Rev Sr Amal Blessy CMC



Rev Fr Stephen Mathar

Online Quiz Competition


During the lockdown period, the Mather Jyothis Department organised a number of online programmes for mothers. One of the programmes that received much attention from the mothers was a quiz competition on *Petorgale Ungalukaaga* (Parents! It is for You) covering the basics of Christian faith, pious practices, basic family devotions and prayers. The final round of the quiz was held from 17 June 2021 onwards. Nearly 50 mothers took part in the final round of competition in which every competitor was given five minutes each to answer 20 questions. The competition was held through WhatsApp video calls. Rev Fr Jimmy Thekkekadumathil, Director of Family Apostolate created a lot of interest and curiosity as the quiz master.



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



Our Continued Response during Covid

The second wave of Covid-19 has brought in a lot of sorrow into the people, especially to the poor and the needy. Many lives have been lost and many families have been living in sorrow due to the loss of dear ones, family members being in hospitals for very long and loss of means of livelihood. Our Diocese was able to share some of its human and financial recourses with the poor and the needy families. All these interventions were spearheaded by Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social arm of the Diocese. One of the main focuses of this time was to give dry ration to the families of our people. The parish priests identified the families that are in real need of the support of the Diocese and the Director of KKSSS and the volunteers took up the responsibility to organize the distribution in a systematic manner. Our gratitude goes to the benefactors and friends for exhibiting your love and concern for the poor by rendering financial assistance to the Diocese in this time of emergency concern.





A Harmonious Coordinated Service to the Needy

We are well aware that the poor patients tested positive for Covid-19 admit themselves at the Government Medical College Hospital, Asaripallam. One of the initial interventions of the Church was to provide food packets to the patients and the bystanders at the hospital. The Diocese has been distributing about 400 food packets every day at the hospital under the leadership of Rev Fr. Abin Poovathumoottil, Director, KKSSS. Kindness is witnessed at times of pain and sorrow and our parishes were very generous in sponsoring the food packets for distribution on different days. In some of the parishes, the priests, religious and faithful cooked the food in the parish premises and the volunteers of KKSSS arranged for the distribution in the hospital. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb joined the voluntary teams on 25 June 2021 and was moved with gratitude to all the parishes and to the friends who have been supporting this cause. There has been a harmonious co-ordination among the four Catholic Dioceses in the district in helping the affected victims.



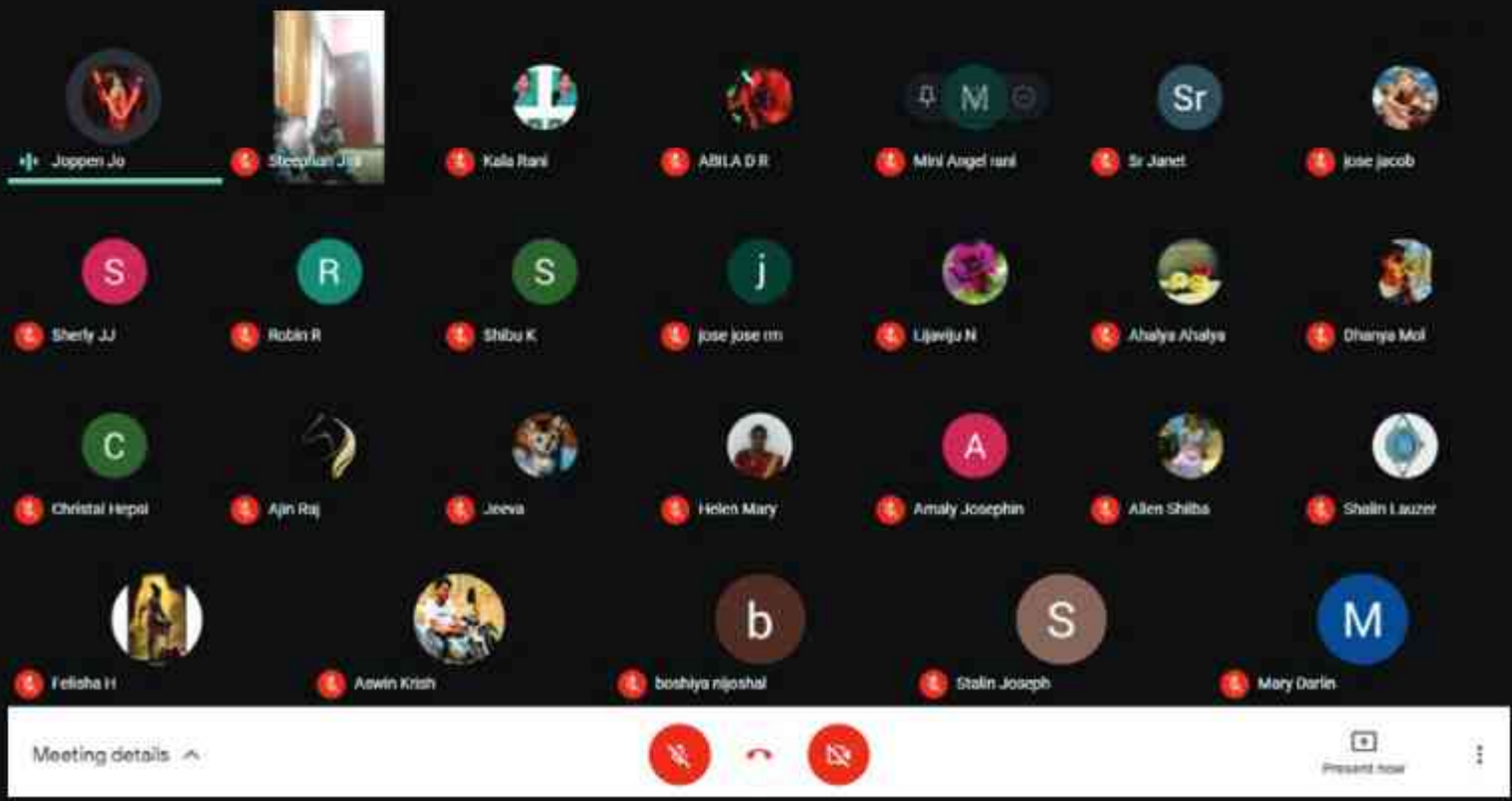
Strengthening of Faith Online Mode

Jose Jacob is presenting

Divina sancti R and 16 more



Challenging situations demand for innovative ideas to keep the Faith alive and the faithful with the strongest of hope that the Lord will continue to protect His creations. A number of online programmes have been organized during the entire month of June as the lockdown and the restrictions continued and we were unable to throw open the doors of the Churches. Some of the online activities that have been conducted in the parishes are Rosary, Bible related studies, devotion and novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, organization of special spiritual talks on Sacred Heart of Jesus, reading of different books of the Bible with quizzes being organized and such pious activities to keep alive the spirit of the faithful.



Joppen Jo	Steephan J	Kala Rani	ABILA D R	Mini Angel rani	Sr Janet	Jose Jacob
Sherly JJ	Robin R	Shibu K	Jose Jose m	Ljwiji N	Ahalya Ahalya	Dhanya Mol
Christal Hepol	Ajin Raj	Jeeva	Helen Mary	Amaly Josephin	Allen Shilba	Shalin Lauzer
Felisha H	Awin Krish	boshiya nijosha	Stalin Joseph	Mary Darin		



Care Beyond Cure:

Mother Teresa Palliative Care



Mother Teresa Palliative Care, Vayalinkarai undertook relief works for the welfare of the beneficiaries around the location in the month of June 2021. The sisters paid visits to about 35 families where there are bedridden or terminally ill patients enquiring about their health and wellbeing, counseling them and distributing dry rations to them. On 7 June 2021, the sisters also went with cooked food and distributed the same to the Covid patients and their bystanders in the Government Medical College Hospital, Asaripallam.



World Yoga Day at Shanti Nilayam Special School



Keeping the tempo among the children in special schools is a difficult proportion during this pandemic emergency. The special schools in the Diocese have been working very hard to keep the spirit of these children alive and active. One of the activities organized at Shanti Nilayam Special School, Paruthivilai was to commemorate the International Yoga Day with yoga performance by the special children in their own homes and sending the photographs to the teachers. The cooperation of these children and their parents has been very encouraging. The school has about 200 special children learning in the school who have lost their learning experience for the last one and a half years. The School has 25 highly motivated and dedicated special teachers who look after the growth of the special children.



Planning and Coping with School Education

The Diocese has been taking several steps to ensure physical and mental health of the people, trying to bring certain relief to the people who have been adversely affected by the pandemic and the lockdown. The young population and the school going children have been living a life of uncertainty with regard to schooling the results and promotions. There have been several meetings, planning and strategies to ensure that the students continue to learn within the safety of their homes. There have been discussions and consultations being carried out with the Correspondents and Heads of Schools for planning for online classes engagement of students and to manage the financial difficulties involved in the payment of salary of the staff and maintaining the infrastructure, putting off the events planned as part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations and so on. There have been a lot of meetings with the teachers of Tamil medium schools to discuss and direct them on online classes, deployment and appointments of staff, preventive and protective steps during the pandemic, ensuring admission to the school and so on. The cooperation of all the stakeholders has been praiseworthy.

Online Recollection for Major Seminarians



The major seminarians of the Diocese are eagerly awaiting for the opening of the seminaries and get back to their formation. The seminarians are enjoying their holidays at home with their parents and other near and dear ones and assisting in the charitable activities undertaken in their home parishes. In order to keep alive their spiritual life as seminarians during the pandemic, Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal, Rector of Minor Seminary arranged an online monthly recollection on 5 June 2021 beginning at 10.00 am. Rev. Fr Mijo Puthenpurayil preached the recollection talk. After the talk, the brothers spent the rest of the day in reflection, prayer and spiritual reading. By 3.30 pm we had a meeting of all the brothers in the presence of Bishop, the Vicar General and the Rector. The brothers were given opportunity to share their holiday experiences. One could observe the joy on the faces of the brothers in their sharing. They expressed their happiness and thanked the Diocese for giving much attention to their spiritual life even during the lockdown. The seminarians urged upon to continue listening to the call of God with care and love.

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

THE INNER STRENGTH

Misericordiae Vultus: The Face of Mercy at Karunalayam A Transforming Journey for John Blessing

Misericordiae Vultus, “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith” writes Pope Francis in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. In every human person there is the imprint of God. This statement reminds us that each of us is created in God's image and likeness however there are differences and diversities between humans. The word Mercy has its root in Greek, Eleemon (ελεημων) which means a human compassion to all creatures. The world today is particular in its selection, especially for its utility and the rest are just discarded. Among this non-selected part includes even those children with disabilities or better we call them differently abled children. Christian Missionaries had right from the beginning tirelessly dedicated their lives for the upliftment of these children and as a result of this endeavour many children could have realized a bright future in their lives. Pope Francis rightly said in one of his audiences when he directly met the sick and the differently abled people: “God has a special place in His Heart for differently abled people.”

It is true when we look at Karunalayam at Kalluvilai, Home for the Differently Abled Children, run by CMC Sisters of Thuckalay Province. There are hundreds of children who have passed through this institution receiving loving care of the Sisters and the teachers. Their enthusiasm and love towards these students while they share their experiences and remember with gratitude the big miracles God had made during these years can be witnessed in a small interaction. Among these children, the Sisters shared the life of John Blessing, an alumnus of Karunalayam.

He was a native of Kannathur village in Kanyakumari district. He was born in an ordinary family as the first child to Mr. John Sobitha Raj and Mrs. Geetha. Immediately after his birth, parents realized the fact that he was lacking some important motoring system in his body. After the thorough check-up carried out in the hospital it was found that the child was having sight as well as hearing disabilities. Besides he was also having retarded mental health. Like every parent, they were also having many expectations of their first child but the fate was different. But they had not cursed the situation rather they accepted the reality of the life of their child.

They started thinking about the future of John, planning different strategies to equip him to look at a hopeful future. Initially they admitted John in a government school together with other children as they did not want to hurt the child to join in a special school. He remained in that school for five years but he could not achieve as his parents expected. Later having been advised by the teachers to admit the child in a Special School, they came to Karunalayam at Kalluvilai. It was difficult for them seeing their child in a special school with other children who were with different physical problems. But soon they accepted the situation and longed for the betterment of their child.




KARUNALAYM SCHOOL

Not more than a month, they had found a lot of changes in the character of John. He started learning numbers and alphabets. There was no boundary for the joy of his parents seeing the development of the child. He himself began writing words, drawing pictures, preparing clay models, etc. When he reached Karunalayam, he could not even recognize different colours. However, in a short time he was able to handle even money for the expenses. Teachers could entrust him with money for purchasing things from shops.

He stopped coming by the school bus and began using government buses and even mingling with other passengers. It was unbelievable while he started learning bicycle and then he used to come to school by bicycle. His development was not only limited to the physical advancements rather his talents were also trained. Through the continuous practices and classes given by the teachers and experts, he started playing musical instruments for the stage performances. He was also a good dancer. He was trained also in different sports activities like cricket and throw ball. For the integral development of John, his parents provide testimony for the major role played by Karunalayam for a complete transformation. Many trophies and prizes were brought to Karunalayam by John Blessing participating in different competitions conducted in district, state and national levels.

Karunalayam always rejoices while seeing the indescribable joy of the parents of the children who are trained at the institution. If they come initially desperate and hopeless to the institution, by the gradual development of their children with different abilities, they feel one with Karunalayam and become thankful to God for their child. John Blessing started working with his father in the farmland and began earning money through working in different sectors like catering service, farming, painting, assistance for stage performances to mention a few. Today he doesn't depend on his parents for his daily expenses rather he himself helps his parents. The self-confidence which he had developed during these years at Karunalayam has enabled him to obtain driving licence for two wheeler and four wheeler.

The tears of his parents today are not of agony or preoccupation for their child but of the success which John Blessing has achieved through the help of Karunalayam. His life is an inspiration to many who fear minor failures of life. As Helen Keller says, "When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us." While John Blessing's parents found the second door at Karunalayam, the heaven opened the door to shower blessings on him.

For more information on the services for the differently abled persons by Karunalayam:

KARUNALAYAM

School for the Differently Abled
 Kalluvilai, Mulagumoodu P.O.
 Kanyakumari District – 629167
 Tamilnadu, INDIA

Phone : +91 4651-249757

In-Charge : Rev Sr Ans Maria CMC

Mobile : +91 96295 92256

Email : karunalayamschool@gmail.com

KNOWING A MISSION THIS MONTH

Jayamatha Church, Nithiravilai The First Mission Seed of Abundance



The fame of Kanyakumari is spread all over the world for its beautiful meeting point of three oceans, called Mukkadai Sangamam in Tamil. This magnificence of the nature is seen even in the Catholic Church here in Kanyakumari; the exceptional meeting of three different rites in Tamilnadu, namely Syro Malabar, Syro Malankara and the Latin Churches. Followed by the establishment of Latin Diocese and Syro Malankara Missions at this territory, in 1960 Syro Malabar Church commenced its mission activities for the first time in this Tamil land under the guidance of Changanacherry Archdiocese.

The extension of the territory of the Syro Malabar Church by Pope Pius XII through the Papal Bull *Multorum Fidelium* on 29 April 1955 from river Pampa in north to the district of Kanyakumari was the beginning of the first mission of the Syro Malabar Church outside the state of Kerala, called Kanyakumari Mission. The proper mission in Kanyakumari district was inaugurated on 18 September 1960 by starting the first mission station at Nithiravilai. The Kanyakumari Mission under the Archdiocese of Changanacherry was set up in order to augment the efforts of the Church in its growth and to spread the Word of God, evangelization being one of the thrust areas of Church.

Mar Mathew Kavukatt, then Archbishop of Changanacherry together with Mons. L.J Chittoor, Vicar General, took the decision to send Fr. Thomas Nangachiveetil, who was then Principal of Mar Ivanios College, Thiruvananthapuram for the evangelization mission in Kanyakumari following the division of this district from Kerala to Tamilnadu during the reorganization of states along linguistic lines. For the establishment of the Mission, it was not easy to carry out all the ground works alone. Mons. Joseph Kuzhinjalil was a great inspiration for Fr. Nangachiveetil to take up risks on the way to begin new ventures. Both, together with Fr. Gregory and Fr. Antony Kayithara went to meet Fr. Zacharias Kayithara, Parish Priest of Ariyankavu Church in the month of June, 1960 in order to request him to begin a mission in the district of Kanyakumari. It was the beginning to know the secret potentialities of the district for evangelization mission. Fr. Zacharias Kayithara and Fr. Thomas Nangachiveetil together with another well-wisher Joshua from Kirathoor, travelled the whole district to find out a place to begin the first mission. They believed in the words of God in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." The strength of their missionary services was always based on this personal relation with Jesus Christ.

On their way to find a place to begin the missionary service, God intervened through a person called Chandran Vazhavilai native of Nithiravilai. He rented 10 cents of his land in Nithiravilai to begin their services. It was the first mission station started by the Syro Malabar Church in the district of Kanyakumari in the year 1960. They began gathering people for catechism as well as faith formation in a small hut made up of coconut leaves. As a result of this constant faith formation, around 68 people received baptism on 18th September 1960 from





Fr. Zacharias Kayithara and this Mission was known as Amalapuri Jayamatha Mission. This Faith has been growing from strength to strength through the years. From a little seed, the faith has grown today into a full-grown tree, holding on to a strong faith and practices of the Syro Malabar Tradition. Recognizing the sudden development of the mission, Mar Mathew Kavukatt, Archbishop of Changanacherry gave permission to build a church and a parochial center for the parish priest. Hindrances were many at the initial stages of the mission. Lack of clarity between Malayalam and Tamil languages, unemployment, ignorance and lack of education, superstitious beliefs, famine, lack of transportation facilities, lack of drinking water facilities, etc. were a few among them. In order to enlighten the life of these people, Fr. Kayithara together with his assistant Fr. Thomas Muttathukunnel worked hard in spiritual as well as material realms. Day by day the number of believers was increasing in an incredible manner. Constant house visits and prayer sessions at different places attracted people to Jesus and in turn they had found a meaning for their lives. This transformation was seen among all age groups.

As people were finding difficulty for food, Changanacherry Archdiocesan Social Service Society, together with CRS volunteers started distributing food materials and began a new scheme called "food for work" (Velaikkana Unavu). It helped hundreds of families to reopen their kitchen and to satisfy each member of the family. Besides missionaries began motivating people for saving a portion of their meager income for future and formed small unofficial self-help groups. As time passed, Nithiravilai mission center developed and elevated to the status of a parish and then to a Forane. The hard work of missionaries and their relation with the people resulted in a big community today with hundreds of families.

The establishment of the Diocese of Thuckalay in 1996 has boosted the efforts of the Church in pastoral, spiritual and holy practices among the faithful, besides educational and other socio-economic developmental activities for people. In 1985 Nithiravilai celebrated its silver Jubilee and in 2010 its golden jubilee. There are six family units (uraviyams) functioning in the parish and weekly prayer meetings are conducted in different families. Rev. ASMI sisters are also rendering their valuable service to the parish in its day today activities, besides they are taking care of children at Karunai Illam, an Institution for the differently abled children. For the faith formation of children and youth, Sunday catechism classes are conducted under the guidance of teachers. Jesus' Kids (Kuzhanthai Iso Iyakkam), Mission League, Vincent de Paul, Youth Movement (TCYM), Mothers Movement (Mathru Jyothis), Fathers Movement (Pithruvedhi), Legion of Mary (Mariyavin Senai) are the pious associations and organizations running in the parish for the spiritual as well as material welfare of faithful as well as the society. Many priests have been responsible for the Seed of Abundance at Nithiravilai and Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam has been serving as its 19th parish priest since 2019.

VOCATION AND MISSION

Life of a Missionary: Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Muttathukunnel

“Amid the cacophony of voices and messages that surround us, we need a human story that can speak of ourselves and of the beauty all around us. A narrative that can regard our world and its happenings with a tender gaze. A narrative that can tell us that we are part of a living and interconnected tapestry. A narrative that can reveal the interweaving of the threads which connect us to one another”. (From message of His Holiness Pope Francis on the 54th World Communications Day). Thuckalay Diocese at the door of the Silver Jubilee celebration presents such an inspiring narrative of one of the pioneers who walked through this land of mission. Very Rev. Fr Thomas Muttathukunnel, who is



affectionately called Thomachan. He is not only tall in anatomical structure, he has always been a person of high thoughts and vision. It is the reason why he abandoned his homeland and all the security and comfort to cross the borders to Tamilnadu, just after his ordination in 1960. Ever smiling face and a simple life of humility are the two noted life characteristics of Fr. Muttathukunnel and they were the key to his mission service for the propagation of the kingdom of God in this land.

There were so many hindrances in the beginning, predominantly with regard to the financial difficulties, superstitious belief systems, hunger, malnutrition, ignorance, etc. To mingle with the people, he utilized different means of playing gramophone music, one act plays, dance, storytelling, etc. It was the igniting spirit of mission infused by the Holy Spirit that pushed him to feel one with the people. Nithiravilai was the first mission station, where Thomachan was sent to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Together with Rev. Fr Zacharias Kayithara, another pioneer of Kanyakumari mission, Thomachan went to different quarters by foot to gather people and to begin small mission stations. Soosaipuram, Palappallam, Manjalumoodu, Marappadi, Thettivilai are the centres started by Fr. Muttathukunnel. Besides he served the Diocese as the Kanyakumari mission coordinator for many years. One of the peculiarities of the mission activities is his special interest to learn and speak fluently the Tamil language to relate and communicate with the people. This relation with the people keeps him ever remembered in their hearts.

After the elevation of the Kanyakumari Mission to the status of Thuckalay Diocese, Fr. Muttathukunnel was appointed as the first Vicar General (Protosyncellus). It was easy for the newly appointed Bishop Mar. George Alencherry to get in touch with all parishes and faithful in all villagers in no time through Fr. Thomas. His personal relation with each one helped him a lot to find out more places for the mission services. As he was very social in his character, even people were allowing him directly to their kitchen and to taste directly from the pot. Sometimes he also realized the real poverty among the people amidst famine situations through this simple gesture.

Daily celebration of the Holy Qurbana was the fountain of his mission strength. “Unless we believe and see Jesus in the appearance of Bread on the Altar, we will not be able to see Him in the distressing disguise of the poor. We cannot separate our lives from the Eucharist; the moment we do, something breaks.” Together with Mother Theresa, Thomachan used to say these words of faith in his life during his meetings with others. Many people from various parishes still remember his exceptional love for the Holy Eucharist and affection for the poor. He had never compromised on his prayer life. During leisure time and travelling time, he used to recite rosaries.



He was also considered a good beggar, not for himself but for others. There were so many people who were helped by him for the purpose of education, marriage, health care and so on. He never had any expectations in return. He always talks about the great joy which he has experienced after sharing something with others.

His loyalty to the ecclesiastical authority is another specific character of Thomachan. He has always kept a spiritual as well as loving relation with Mar Mathew Kavukatt, former Archbishop of Changanacherry. People witness that they have never heard him uttering a word against superiors and others. He has always maintained a positive approach towards everything and he believes it as a fruit of his prayer life. He lived and believed that 'The mystery of the Cross, a mystery of love, can only be understood in prayer' as noted by Pope Francis.

Thomachan has served the Diocese until his health could allow. Due to insufficient space for the senior priests, he was transferred to a priests' home at Ithithanam, Changanacherry. When people from the Diocese visit him, he is very cheerful and talks in Tamil, however, the strong voice preaching the Word of God has grown faint. The strength of the Diocese is still depending on the prayers of these pioneers like Thomachan, who dreamed with Jesus a mission land in Tamilnadu for the Syro Malabar Church. One of his noted charitable acts is the scholarship payment for the poor children in the mission. For this establishment, he added additional Rs. 5,000 rupees to a gift of Rs. 10,000 which he received on behalf of Kerala Mission League for his services in the mission. Diocese of Thuckalay is always grateful to him for the tireless and non-demanding services that he rendered for the development of this mission. He always tells, by birth I am a Malayali but by life I am a Tamil. The echoes of Fr. Thomas Muttathukunnel and other pioneering missionaries of the Syro Malabar Church continue to sing the glory of God in various missions in the Diocese of Thuckalay. Tidings family wish him God's blessings for good health.

A Legitimate Witness



Rev Fr Stanislaus Lourduswamy SJ

(Popularly known as Stan Swamy)

(26 April 1937 – 5 July 2021)

A caged bird can still sing – Stan Swamy

The Diocese of Thuckalay expresses its condolences to the members of the Society of Jesus (SJ) on the passing away of a passionate crusader for social justice.

We stand in solidarity with the cause that Rev Fr Stan Swamy has stood for through decades.

**Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will give you strength,
I will bring you help,
I will uphold you with the right hand of my justice.**

- Isaiah 41:10



THUCKALAY
MISSION

HOLY SHRINE OF ST ALPHONSA

Blessings in Abundance

St Alphonsa Shrine Church, Nagercoil has been a holy place for many devotees through the years. The Church has the distinction of being the first St Alphonsa Pilgrim Centre in Tamilnadu visited by people from all the states of Southern India seeking abundant blessings through the intercession of St. Alphonsa.

Feast Day Celebrations 2021

Simple celebrations have been planned by the Diocese this year adhering to all Covid protocols:

19 - 27 July 2021 : 06:00 PM

- St. Alphonsa Novena

25 July 2021 : 06:00 PM

- Solemn Flag Hoisting and Holy Qurbana
presided over by
Very Fr Thomas Powathuparampil,
Vicar General

28 July 2021 : 06:00 PM

- Pontifical Mass presided over by
Mar George Rajendran sdb

From our respective homes, let us place our intentions and prayers at the feet of God through the intercession of St. Alphonsa.



You can also follow the live telecast on the link  YouTube



https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3jZh_UNjvWOWGLEFBF2K4A

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