

THUCKALAY TIDINGS

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



QUEEN OF MAY
OUR BLESSED MOTHER



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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

June 2021 | Vol. 1 | Issue 4

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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INSIDE STORY

- Message from the Bishop 3
- Together with Our Blessed Mother in the Month of May 4
- COVID-19 and our Initiatives 6
- Kanyakumari Social Service Society 7
- Forane Vicar 8
- Parish Level Volunteers 8
- Religious Sisters in the Parish 9
- Good Samaritan Team 9
- Counselling Team 10
- Doctors 10
- Priests' Conference 11
- United Christian Council Bishops' Meeting with Tamilnadu Minister 11
- Webinar on Evangelization 12
- Summer Time Bible Class 13
- Knowing a Mission this Month 14
- The Inner Strength 16
- Vocation and Mission 19
- Participate in the Mission of the Church 21
- Committing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus 22



DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY
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Message

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

The outbreak of corona virus has changed and upset our lives. It has brought in pain, death and fear into the world. It has conditioned the lives of individuals and has affected our social relationships creating incalculable damages from psychological, social and economic points of view. The effects of all these, together with the loss of work, closure of many companies and various business establishments, have augmented poverty among the people. Humanity is going through a time of passion and pain as Christ went through. But we know that after the Good Friday there is the Sunday of the Resurrection. The new issue of Thuckalay Tidings, amidst tears and sorrows of the people, puts forward this great hope in God, who can bring light into our darkened world.

The month of May, dedicated to Mother Mary, has helped us to take solace in our Heavenly Mother, who always understands our pains and sorrows. Mary's greatness is that she points and leads us to Jesus through her own word and example. She is not asking us to do anything she has not already done herself. She does not seek or ask for any attention for herself. At the family wedding in Cana in which Mary and Jesus were invited guests, Mary is concerned about the young couple not herself. She knows that soon there would be no wine; and at a Jewish wedding this was a cause of great shame and embarrassment. How did she see and notice that there was no wine? She quietly and without fuss or drama approaches Jesus. She explained the situation to him and he seemed to dismiss her; but she was not giving up that easy! She then went to the servants and confidently told them, 'Do whatever he tells you.' This small but amazingly powerful statement echoes down the centuries to us today. Mary caught the attention of the servants at the wedding and she is trying to catch our attention today. I can see her standing beside me today and gently pointing to Jesus and whispering to me, 'Just do whatever he tells and asks you.'

Similarly, the month of June that we are in, is dedicated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus which helps us to reflect upon the immense love that Jesus has for each one of us. It's not just ideas, but concretely felt and experienced in particular moments of our lives. It is an experience where God seeks us and we see his concern, his tenderness, his closeness and we have been able to taste his forgiveness. Pope Francis describes the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart as the "Feast of Love": "Jesus wanted to show us His Heart as the Heart that loved so deeply. God loved us; He loved us with such great love. He pointed out two criteria on love. The first: love is expressed more clearly in actions than in words. The second: there is greater love in giving than in receiving".

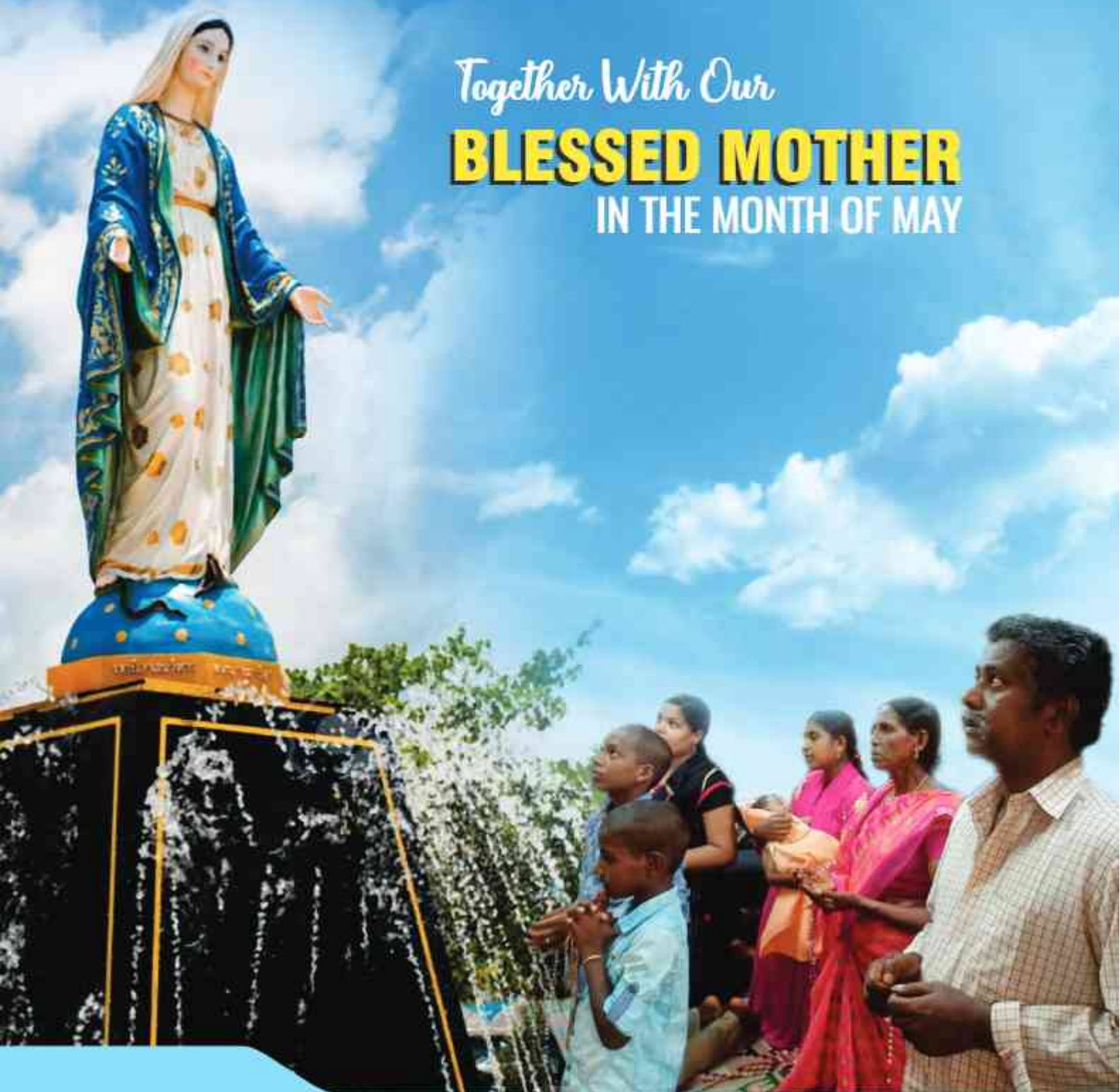
What is Jesus asking us to do? He is inviting us to follow him. He is asking us to love one another as he loves us and he is asking us to forgive one another. He is asking us to live like him in our ordinary daily lives; He is asking to reach out and to care for those who are poor, homeless, alone and hungry. He is asking us to be his followers and disciples. How do we do this? By following the example of Mary who did what God asked her to do! Today, may we listen to Mary, and do what Jesus asks each of us to do. I am sure, in doing so, we shall find meaning to our lives emaciated by the corona virus.

Yours affectionately,

+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay



Together With Our
BLESSED MOTHER
IN THE MONTH OF MAY



Mary, Our Blessed Mother has a special place in the lives of all Catholics. The miraculous intercession of Our Blessed Mother Mary has been recognized throughout centuries; Mother Mary is a special gift of Jesus Christ to every one of us. We are called to rededicate ourselves to Jesus through Blessed Mother by contemplating the mysteries of the Rosary. Many of the faithful of our Diocese are witnesses to the miraculous power of the recitation of the Rosary.

The month of May as a Marian Month is commemorated in a special manner in all the parishes families in the Diocese.

The difficult times faced by the people as they remained in the confinement of their homes, the Diocese encouraged the faithful to recite rosary as family every day after which the family read the Bible, particularly the passages related to miracles and to Mother Mary. Wherever the parish-wise family rosaries were organized on the digital platform the Parish Priest gave the final blessing. The Church arranged for special preachers on Sundays to give message on Mother Mary. Chain Rosaries were arranged in the families at the Uraviyam level (Family Units), parish level and the Diocese level. We had offered special intercessions for the sound health and safety of the people all over the world. A video clip on Mother Mary was shared every day to the faithful of the parishes. The Bishop joined every parish online on a particular day in the parish level recitation of the Rosary and delivered his message on Mother Mary and gives the apostolic blessing. The Diocese had requested the faithful to recite the Rosary with our Holy Father Francis on the designated day. On the final day of the month of Rosary, two great events were held on the digital mode – one, Marian quiz was conducted at the parish levels and two, Eucharistic Adoration was held in every parish and the all the families got special blessing.

May Our Blessed Mother continue to intercede for every member of the Universal Church and bring down blessings and conversion on the Universe.



COVID-19 AND OUR INITIATIVES

The Corona virus has spread rapidly in our state and in Kanya Kumari District and other districts where our Diocese has our parishes and mission centers. The people affected have been running from pillar to post to get accommodation in hospitals for COVID-19 treatment. The situation has put a lot of pressure on the health infrastructure and supportive facilities in different districts.

Those who are symptoms but are unwilling to come forward for timely treatment, either out of fear of confinement or having no confidence in the system and facilities, which in turn can cause very severe damage to health and most often fatal in nature. Further, fear has become a threat to the mental health of the people. It is important to eradicate fear and anxiety among people for better health. It is necessary that we should hold on to a positive mindset with the hope in the Divine Grace and at the same time strengthening ourselves with two-fold activities – one, to support the community to take all preventive steps and two, to support the community / families / individuals who are affected by the virus.

The Diocese has been taking proactive steps to create online / digital / social media awareness on the pandemic on the importance to get tested and taking preventive and protective steps to take for breaking the chain of the spreading of the virus.

There is another aspect to the mental agony due to the loss of means of livelihood. Poor daily wage earners do not have the opportunity for work. The little savings have dread out and they are struggling to meet their daily basic needs especially of food.

As a Diocese, we have come forward to act to ease the burden on the physical and mental health of the members of the Diocese and also the general public during this period of emergency. We feel the need to complement and supplement the government and various agencies and organizations in ensuring safety and health of all people.

After several meetings and consultations we have implemented several steps under the flagship of Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social action wing of the Diocese of Thuckalay. Some of the steps may worth their mention here.



Diocesan Health Commission in an Emergent Meeting

KANYAKUMARI SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY (KKSSS)

- Finding the Resources for providing maximum support at all levels of volunteerism.
- Procuring materials (PPE Kit, Pulse Oximeter, Inhaler, Thermometer etc.) for distribution.
- Arranging timely Distribution and Delivery of Medical Kit to Parishes
- Coordinating with the Forane Vicars for implementation of the action plan
- Arranging and providing training to Diocesan Health Volunteers (Good Samaritan Team, Health Workers, etc.)
- Arranging and ensuring vaccination for Good Samaritan Team
- Conducting Awareness Programs through social media
- Making available the Ambulance Service to the people in need.



Food Kits for distribution to the poor in the parishes



KKSSS Palliative Care Ambulance ready at the Service of Covid infected



Relief materials distributed at Virudhunager mission station

FORANE VICAR

- Identifying the most affected parishes in the Forane
- Collecting the data regarding Covid affected families
- Coordinating with the parish priests and volunteers within the Forane
- Making arrangements as much as possible for medical assistance to the Covid affected and other patients (heart patients, diabetics, dialysis patients etc.)

PARISH LEVEL VOLUNTEERS

- Visiting the Covid affected families with all the precautions and distribute provisions, food materials and medicines in case of emergency situation
- Collecting data and update to the parish priest.



Food Items being distributed at Killiyoor



Medical Kit being made ready for distribution

RELIGIOUS SISTERS IN THE PARISH

- Providing Medical and Socio-Psycho support to volunteers and families
- Orienting the volunteers and monitoring their activities
- Monitoring the Covid Positive families
- Collecting daily health status from families
- Connecting families with severe symptoms with Nurses and Doctors for care

GOOD SAMARITAN TEAM

- Arranging for and assist in the funeral of the Covid fatality cases
- Assisting the parish priest for the funeral



Food Items being bought fresh from the field for distribution



The Covid Burial Volunteers at Work

Relief Materials distributed in the Sri Lankan Refugee Colony at Kaliyakkavilai





Mathru Jyothis getting ready food packets for distribution in the Medical College at Asaripallam



People waiting to receive food packets in Asaripallam

COUNSELLING TEAM

- Providing Tele-Counselling for Covid patients, elderly, youth, children and to the needy.
- Providing Psycho - Social support to the needy.

DOCTORS

- Directing the patients with severe medical conditions to avail expert medical advice and hospitalisation.
- Providing medical consultation and advice.



Food distributed at the Medical College Asaripallam

The diocese through KKSSS carries out charitable works on a daily basis:

- Distributes 400 packets of food to the patients and their attendants at the Government hospitals
- Distributes 100 food material kits to the poor and isolated families in different poor areas / villages
- Distributes Corona early detection kits and medicine to the persons who show symptoms as required by the Parishes / Foranes
- Provides free ambulance services to the poor and the needy.

You can help us to consolidate the above activities with your sponsorship in cash or kind.

For details contact


Rev. Fr Abin Poovathumootil
 Director, Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS)
 Kalluvilai, Mulagumoodu P.O
 Kanyakumari District
 Phone: +91 77087 26043; 98845 61965
 Email: abypoovathummootil@gmail.com



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

PRIESTS' CONFERENCE

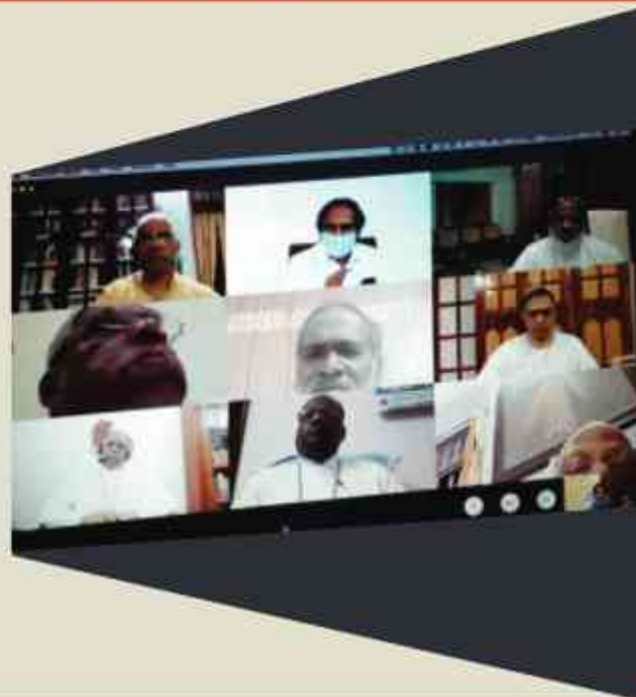


Two Priests' Conferences were held in the month of May on 14th and 21st respectively in which various issues were discussed with the Departments and Pious Associations. In the first meeting Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam was the special guest. He gave a key note address on how to utilize the lockdown time effectively. Rev. Fr Tomy Padinjareveetil and Rev. Fr Sony Mundunadackal also joined the meeting and they talked about Lourdes Matha Education Society and its admission processes. The heads of various Departments and Pious Associations shared their action plans to take forward the various activities connected with the preparations for the Silver Jubilee during this lockdown period.

The second meeting was held as the pandemic situation emerged to be more serious in nature and detailed strategy for relief works was discussed. Several decisions were made, strategies were undertaken and accordingly various relief teams had been formed.

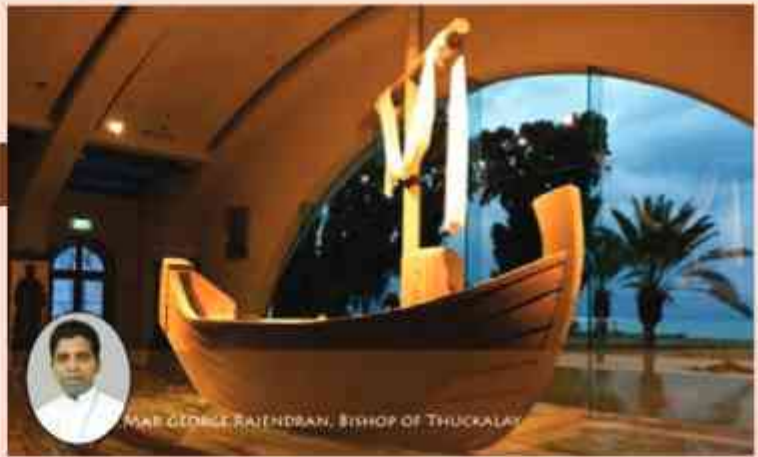
UNITED CHRISTIAN COUNCIL BISHOPS' MEETING WITH TAMILNADU MINISTER

All the Bishops belonging to the various Churches of Kanyakumari District of Tamilnadu were invited for a meeting on 25 May 2021 with the newly elected MLA and Minister from the district, Mr Mano Thankaraj. The meeting was meant to find out ways and means to reduce the spread of the disease and to help the COVID-19 victims. All the Bishops were concerned about the dangerous situation prevailing in Kanyakumari district and came forward to help the Government. The minister appreciated the generosity of the Bishops and requested the Bishops to form volunteer groups to distribute food to the homeless and the needy and to help Government Hospitals, to start Quarantine Centers, etc. The Bishops took up these requests very seriously and promised maximum support to the Government. The Diocese of Thuckalay on our part assured all support including throwing open our infrastructure of the educational institutions and the social service centre for COVID relief activities.



WEBINAR ON EVANGELIZATION

The Eparchy of Thuckalay during the year of its Silver Jubilee organized a two-day webinar on evangelization on 28-29 May 2021 from 5.00 PM to 6.30 PM, in collaboration with the Syro Malabar Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Syro Malabar Mission. There was a very positive response to the webinar. A number of participants registered from the various parts of the world. On the first day, 28 May 2021, His Beatitude George Cardinal Alencherry, Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church, inaugurated the webinar. During his talk, he emphasized on the missionary nature of the Church. We are called to be witnesses of the amazing love of God. Rev. Fr (Dr) Biju Kalezhathu from the Eparchy of Jagadapur made a detailed presentation on the topic 'Ad Gentes Mission of the Syro Malabar Church'. Mar Prince Antony Panangadan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Adilabad, shared his experiences on the various missionary methods that we can use in order to preach the Gospel.



On the second day, 29 May 2021, Mar Raphael Thattil, Chairman for the Syro Malabar Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care for the Migrants, delivered the felicitation address. In his talk, he pointed out the importance of prayer and the need for spiritual preparation for mission works. Rev. Fr (Dr) Joshy Kulathumkal gave a detailed presentation on the topic 'Ad Gentes Mission of the Eparchy of Thuckalay in the Context of the Extended Territories'. Rev. Sr Mareena SH, President of CRI, shared about the missionary works in Ujjain and Mr Ceetly George, Founder of Fiat Mission, shared about the types of mission work that lay people carry out in the Church.

The Eparchy of Thuckalay is grateful to all the participants and organizers in making the webinar informative and inspirational.



His Eminence
George Cardinal Alencherry
Inaugural Address



Rev. Dr. Joshy Kulathumkal
*Presentation on AD GENTES
Mission of the Eparchy of
Thuckalay in the Context of
Extended Territories*



His Excellency
Mar Raphael Thattil
Felicitation



Sr. Mareena Mathilakathu SH
*Sharing on Proclaiming the
Gospel through Various
Apostolates*



His Excellency
Mar Prince Panangadan
*Sharing on the Integral
Evangelization the First Concern*



Mr. Ceetly George
*Sharing on Carrying Out the 'Go'
Command of Jesus in the
Remotest Villages*



Rev. Dr. Biju Kalezhath
*Presentation on AD GENTES
Mission of the Syro Malabar
Church*



His Excellency
Mar George Rajendran sdb
Welcome Address



விசுவாசப்பயிற்சிவிழா

SUMMER TIME BIBLE CLASS

This year too, due to the lock down, the diocese had to switch over the Summer Time Bible Classes Programme to online mode. The Catechism Department headed by Rev. Fr Prince Maliyil with his team prepared the classes online within a short notice for the four categories of students: Sub-Juniors, Juniors, Seniors and Super-Seniors. The classes were activity-based and pre-recorded with the help of talented teachers and they were uploaded in the YouTube channel of Narcheithi Nilayam. These online classes were held from 17-24 May. The teachers were encouraged to monitor the children to attend the classes and to send the activities by 6.00 PM every day to the concerned teachers. We observed very encouraging involvement with a large number of students participating in these classes.



KNOWING A MISSION THIS MONTH

KAYATHAR MISSION

Seeing God in the Smiles of People

Kayathar Mission is another milestone in the history of the Diocese of Thuckalay especially when the territories were extended by Pope Francis on 9th October 2017. Immediately after the announcement, missionaries were sent to different parts of the mission in Tamilnadu especially in the districts of Madurai, Thirunelveli,

Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai and Theni. Thuckalay as such had not much resource to cover up the whole areas and the dioceses belonging to the Changanacherry Province and religious congregations came forward helping the missions with their resources. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and He will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3, 5-7). The Franciscan Clarist Congregation Thuckalay Sanjoe Province has also joined the missionary team to propagate the Good News of Christ to the extended territory in the district of Thoothukudi. The first missionaries were Rev. Sr Lysa FCC and Sr Lincy FCC began to stay at a rented house in the village at TN Kulam which is about 6 kms away from the town. The house is quite small with limited facilities of two rooms and kitchen. The house was blessed by Bishop Mar George Rajendran sdb on 12th June 2019 and today it remains as a centre of meeting for the villagers. Fr. Jinoy Thottiyil goes to Kayathar from Thirunelveli travelling around 45 kms thrice in a week to celebrate the Holy Qurbana. On other days the sisters go for mass in the house of Holy Family Fathers around 2.5 kms away from the house.

The T.N. Kulam village at Kayathar is rather big, it has around 1000 families out of which 970 families are Hindus. Most of them belong to the scheduled caste community. The people lack development in the field of education. The village has a CSI church and 15 common temples and almost all families have their own little temples. Main occupation of the people here is farming and rearing of livestock. Even though there is a primary school, the percentage of students is comparatively very less. 180 students are being trained under 3 teachers in this school. Children are engaged in helping their parents instead of being sent to schools. A few senior students are staying in hostels in towns are pursuing education.

Transport facilities are also very scarce in this village and usually the sisters go by bicycles or on foot to reach the town for purchase of essential goods and for all important tasks. On 1st July 2019, the sisters began a tuition centre for the children in a rented house and around 60 students were attending the programme. Unfortunately, the sisters were forced to stop this mission as the rented house was given to some other person. Later, the Province helped came forward to repair a room, which was already in ruins and on 16th November 2020, a new centre was inaugurated with the name Carlo Tuition Centre. Classes are held on weekdays from 5.30 to 8.30 PM. Most of the students in the village ranging from beginners to XII are the beneficiaries of Carlo Tuition Centre. The Diocese of Thuckalay has appointed two teachers and helped with study materials for the classes. It is important to recognize their achievements in the tests that are conducted regularly special prizes are distributed. It is wonderful to see the children waiting outside the door of the sisters in the





morning and as soon as the sisters come out, the children express all their love and affection with the longing for the attention of the sisters. Besides during the weekends, the sisters conduct special training for the children and elders in music, dance, painting, Bible stories, Bible verses memory, etc. It was an opening for the sisters to begin home visits. We invite them for Holy Qurbana, adorations, and prayer and some of them have started coming for the prayer services together with other family members. Their intentions are put for special prayers. A few important and unforgettable experiences are the rosary procession which was conducted in the month of May, Christmas Crib making, Rosary prayer at the centre, cultural programs, etc. The crib was historical as they had never seen it in their village. The sisters have distributed few Holy Bibles, lot of Rosaries and pictures of Jesus, Mary and Saints among the villagers and they keep them as valuable treasures at home.

Another important problem which they face in the village is the absence of a hospital or a dispensary. The sisters have noticed many times the people were purchasing medicines from shops without any kind of medical consultation. Keeping in mind the interest of the people, in August 2019, we conducted a medical camp together with Annai Veilankanni Hospital, Thirunelveli. This medical camp was a great relief for the villagers to get free consultation with the doctors. To continue the medical care mission, the sisters visit houses of patients and in case of emergency, the patients are assisted to visit the hospitals. Thirunelveli palliative care unit of the Diocese also provides support to carry out this mission. The Diocese and the province through the benefactors have been providing assistance in different ways like - food, cloths, house construction, education, palliative care, etc.

We have visited around 350 houses in the village and a few other villages around Kayathar. When we come to their houses, we can't explain the joy which they experience. All the people are out to work during the day and therefore, around 4 PM the sisters set out to the houses and sit and talk with the people. The sisters take special care to visit the sick and elderly to give solace to them in their pain. Their respect towards the sisters is very satisfying for the sisters to keep going from home to home putting up a big smile and being reciprocated with great smile and love.

By the kind generosity of the province, recently the sisters have bought a piece of land near the highway with the intention to begin a dispensary to help the poor people to receive a proper health care.

The sisters express their joy in the new mission and find themselves blessed as they see the smiling and welcoming faces of the people, young and old in TN Kulam, Kayathar.

THE INNER STRENGTH

EMBRACING THE GIFT OF GOD

Finding Graceful Blessings and Courage through Karunai Illam

The society we live in is a very materialistic one. It easily judges a person on his/ her physical appearance and makes a superficial impression about that person. Little does this society help needy people; it refuses to accept a person who looks, walks, or even talks differently and consider themselves to be far superior to the people with disabilities. But throughout history, various people have shown that their physical disability is never a reason to break their will power. We present here a conversation with one such person, Mr. Pushparaj, presently doing fairly well in life, who had overcome all such difficulties to achieve in life.

Tidings: *It is a great privilege to have your life as an inspiring one for many of us. In the name of all the readers we express our deep sentiments of gratitude to you for agreeing to share about yourself. Please begin with an introducing yourself?*

Yes, of course. I thank God above all, for the blessings which He has showered on me and on my family. My name is Celister and people commonly call me Pushparaj. With my family I am residing at Kanjirakkottuvilai in Soosaipuram Parish near to Karungal. I was born on 20th May 1985 as the Benjamin in my family and I was privileged to have all the special rights given to the last child. I have two elder brothers and five elder sisters.

Tidings: *May I ask you about your infancy as you were mentioning something bad had happened?*

A few days after my birth, I got fever. All thought that it was a normal fever and I was administered with normal medicines but only later we came to know that it was Poliomyelitis. Lack of medical facilities and knowledge in those days put me down as a handicapped child. My legs were grossly abnormal in their structure and totally useless in their function.

Tidings: *What was your feeling those days?*

Those days, especially during my childhood, I had wept for days, weeks and months. There were so many nights that I had not slept. Looking at other children playing, I had been morally down. However, I am happy today and I thank the medical advancements today to give proper awareness to the public and administering medications timely to fight successfully this disease.

Tidings: *Today your smile and enthusiasm show that you were transformed a lot. People say that they get a positive energy after talking to you. How did this change come to your life?*

Yeah, thank you very much for the compliments. But God spoke to me through the Bible, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.", these words of St. Paul have a great impact on our life. Nothing is impossible to God and He can transform even our weaknesses. 'Karunai Illam', was the grace which God kept for me to transform myself especially my attitude towards my weaknesses. Karunai Illam at Nithiravilai is a home for the children with disabilities run by the Diocese of Thuckalay. ASMI sisters are managing this institution and around 100 children are staying in that house. The loving care and motherly support of these sisters remain unforgettable in the life of each one of us. I started my stay at Karunai Illam when I was studying in 3rd standard. For 10 long years at Karunai Illam, I had experienced this priceless love of Jesus through the sisters and the fathers. It is my





privilege to announce you that we were the first batch in Karunai Illam together with other hundreds of children. It was our world; a world of people with different abilities. I studied there till my 10th standard. I would like to thank all sisters, who moulded and shaped me completely to step into this world. Today I shall say firmly that I am satisfied 100% in my spirit.

Tidings: *What a beautiful life story! Can you talk more about your personal experiences there at Karunai Illam?*

With pleasure. Karunai Illam is not a hostel for us, instead we gained all our power from here. Sisters were so attentive to find out our abilities and talents in different areas. Those days, I myself was trained in singing, drawing, painting, sports, athletics etc. Today these talents help me to earn daily food for my family. Being at Karunai Illam, I have participated many times representing Soosaipuram Forane in singing, drawing and drama competitions. Always I got the first prize in Forane as well as Diocesan level competitions. 'A warrior doesn't remain at the back, but comes forward to fight', our loving sisters taught us always to be warriors in our life and as a result of that we always come forward to fight against the weaknesses in life. Karunai Illam, means House of Mercy. Yes, I am sure that we all received and experienced the love and mercy of God in this house.

Tidings: *How was your life at home those days, your parents, brothers and sisters?*

When I come home for holidays as a child, usually my brothers and sisters would carry me on their back. For them I was quite light and they were happy to take me anywhere. I was also enjoying this free service of my brothers and sisters. My parents were always supportive for my initiatives in life.

Tidings: *After your 10th standard what was your plan and how did you execute?*

After the SSLC examination we all returned home. Afterwards I started seriously thinking of what to do next. I don't hide the fact that I was a little bit stressed those days thinking of my future. But the words of sisters, "never give up" echoed in my ears and we started visiting Karunai Illam during the summer vacation. When the world corners the people with disabilities, we were sure that Karunai Illam infuses a special spirit of life into us. With this spirit of strong determination, I continued my 11th and 12th standard studies at St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School, Kollankonam. After completing my +2 studies, I wanted to continue with a life-oriented skill training. All encouraged me to look for a multimedia course and I joined at Image Centre, Nagercoil for the multimedia course. Later I worked for two years in Sri Sastha Colour Lab at Nagercoil.



Tidings: *You are a talented singer. How did you bring forth music along with your life?*

Music is my passion and usually I listen to it. But during the childhood I have never got a chance to have a professional training for singing. However, I was invited many times by local orchestration groups for singing in festivals, ganamelas, Kacherry, etc. In spite of my physical difficulties, I am so much happy to see that people like to hear my voice. During those days I got a golden opportunity to join for BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) and I got graduated in South Indian Classical music from Bharathidasan University, Trichy.

Tidings: *Today how do you bring forward your life, with music, paintings, art works and others?*

Today I am not alone, my wife and children are with me. Still, I find time to dedicate for music and drawing. I usually play keyboard and sing in our Church Choir and during the competitions, I am invited to give training to the students in music, drawing and painting. I am so happy to share my talents with others and I learnt this good lesson when I was in Karunai Illam. But these works were not sufficient enough to lead a family life so I worked around four years in Zion Digiprints as flex graphics designer and later together with my friends, I started flex printing works. It was not so easy for a poor man to bring ahead such an endeavour especially as we were blocked by Corona situations. There were days, in which we had undergone for unimaginable sufferings especially with two small children. Today again I started in small range the works of cup printing, flex works, board printing, etc. Along with these works, I am also pursuing part time MA course in music from Thanjavoor Tamil University.

Tidings: *Dear Pushparaj, Thank you very much for your wonderful sharing. Do you want to convey something to our readers?*

Thank you very much for your patience to listen to me and I thank all readers of Tidings and best wishes. 'Karunai Illam' is a reality in everybody's life. When one thinks that he is finished in his life or when we face some unbearable situations or difficulties in life, we should look at Jesus and He will bring us to His House of Mercy, Karunai Illam. There only we will find out the incomparable value of our individual life. In my personal life, I experienced this love and care of God at Karunai Illam and today I shall sing the famous song, "Words are not enough to portrait the love of God showered on me". I get a strong support from my wife Roselin Mary and my children Aanto Jeffrin and Aalfin Lorenzo of 11 and 3 years old. My mother is also with me. I call our family a paradise which God has kept for me.

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

KARUNAI ILLAM

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VOCATION AND MISSION

MY LIFE IN KANYAKUMARI MISSION

A few Reflections from Sr. Anila FCC (V.C Annamma) Kokkoth

Date of birth	: 27 December 1947
First Profession	: 01 May 1969
Final Profession	: 02 May 1975
Arrival in Kanyakumari Mission	: 18 October 1972



"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits." (Psalm 103,2)
 With this beautiful verse from the Psalms I would like to share with you my missionary life here in the Diocese of Thuckalay, which was then called Kanyakumari Mission. One of the many blessings and opportunities as a missionary is to share the Joy of the Gospel. 1972 October 18 is the unforgettable day in my religious life to fulfil the life dream to become a missionary of Jesus Christ. It was not so far away from Kerala, but in the district of Kanyakumari, God had chosen me to proclaim the good news of love. Even though the climate was similar, I found an immediate difficulty with the language. But nothing was impossible to a missionary when ignited by the missionary spirit. Along with Sr Francelet, I reached at SH Convent, Mukkuttukal to begin Tamil classes and from the next day onwards we started learning Tamil under the guidance of Damodharan Sir. As Tamil

language resembles Malayalam, we picked up sooner and started talking with villagers even though some mistakes were unforgivable. There were so many challenges I faced during those days as my health condition was not so good.

Recollection of the initial days in the mission brings lots of laughter, yes I laugh alone. On one of the first classes, we thought that the Tamil teacher was drawing something on the blackboard and only later we realized that those were Tamil alphabets. We felt that we were primary school students, however, the missionary spirit in us kept us going on with gradually increasing interest in Tamil language and in six months time, we both passed the Tamil entrance exam to start a career as a primary teachers; indeed, a quick and surprising transformation from primary students to primary teachers.

Very soon, I could freely mingle with the people here and they too were generous in showering their unconditional love and affection on me. However, I understood the fact that the effective evangelization is possible only through learning the Tamil language perfectly. The encouraging support from the people around with whom we lived and the encouragement from parents of the students served as an impetus to speed up my learning process. I would like to mention the name of Fr. James Joseph CMI, who brought us to Kanyakumari from Changanacherry to continue the educational mission service at Pilankalai. On 1st June 1973, I started teaching at Little Flower School, Pilankalai.

Along with the teaching profession, we were also engaged in daily house visits, prayers, catechism classes, etc. It is very clear that God helps us at each moment when we dedicate ourselves for His mission. People were very welcoming at homes and sometimes we remained with them to share supper too. My experiences while visiting local families continued to attract me and kept me very strong. I kept learning more and more lessons in life – to be happy with whatever I have, to be openhearted, loving others as God loves us. Their simple way of life taught me a life of simplicity and humility. At the end of our visit to the families, we gave them an invitation to come to Church on Sunday



for the Holy Qurbana. Even though they initially showed some discomfort with the invitation, we saw them in the Church for the Holy Qurbana.

An important mission that we undertook was family catechism and awareness creation. Since there were many superstitious beliefs existing among the people, it was our duty to convince them on the providence of God in everything. We could witness the gradual transformation among the people and families we visited. When someone suffered from an illness, they would come to us immediately for prayer and help. They believed illness as a curse from god and hesitated to take people to hospitals for treatment. Even death was considered as a result of the wrongdoing of their ancestors. Here what helped us a lot was the catechism on Holy Qurbana. Gradually the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist became the central point of their lives and they started coming for visiting the Blessed Sacrament in the churches.

Another big challenge was the schooling of children. When I started teaching at Pilankalai, I had realized the fact that there were many children who did not go to school. There was not much encouragement or support from the families to send their children to schools. We started visiting houses to convince parents the importance of schooling and gradually they started sending their children to schools. Today these people proudly acknowledge the missionary impact of fathers and sisters on their lives especially when they see their educated children. During these years we were residing in a rented house at Azhagiyamandapamand. In May 1974, God fulfilled our dream to build a convent and more sisters started coming from Changanacherry to this mission.

My fulfilling missionary life stretched its arms to parishes and mission centres such as Pilankalai, Kattathurai, Thettiyode, Mezhacode and Bengiri.

I strongly believe that the virtue of generosity allows us to become fully human. By the very nature of our creation, we are made to love, loving our neighbours whose culture and language and way of life may be different from ours. Not only are we to be generous with our financial resources, but we are invited to be generous in everything that we do.

Today I am at Thettiyodu Convent and I continue visiting houses, conducting prayers. As I am retired, I find more time for personal prayer and intercessory prayers for the intentions of all missionaries throughout the world. I shall continue to spend my days in gratitude to God for the opportunities that he has given me, for the life learning lessons from the people I have interacted with and for the fulfilment I have received in the Diocese of Thuckalay.

PARTICIPATE in the Mission of the Church

- Join us in promoting vocation to priesthood.
- Come forward, sponsor the education and maintenance of a seminarian.
- Let us join hands and send disciples to the end of the world; we need to make Jesus known through the length and breadth of the world.
- Future of the Church depends on the availability of selfless, committed and pastoral priests.
- Pope Francis said, "No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people. Did not Jesus say: 'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (Jn 13:35)?"
- You can join God's Mission by helping in the preparation for priesthood.
- With a generous heart, please support the formation of Seminarians.
- We assure our prayers for your well-being.
- It takes about Rs. 40,000/- approximately per year for the education and maintenance of a seminarian.
- The Seminarian you sponsor will remain a spiritual child to you and to your family throughout his years of formation and later as a priest and he shall constantly pray for all your intentions.



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

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THUCKALAY
MISSION
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

COMMITTING TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

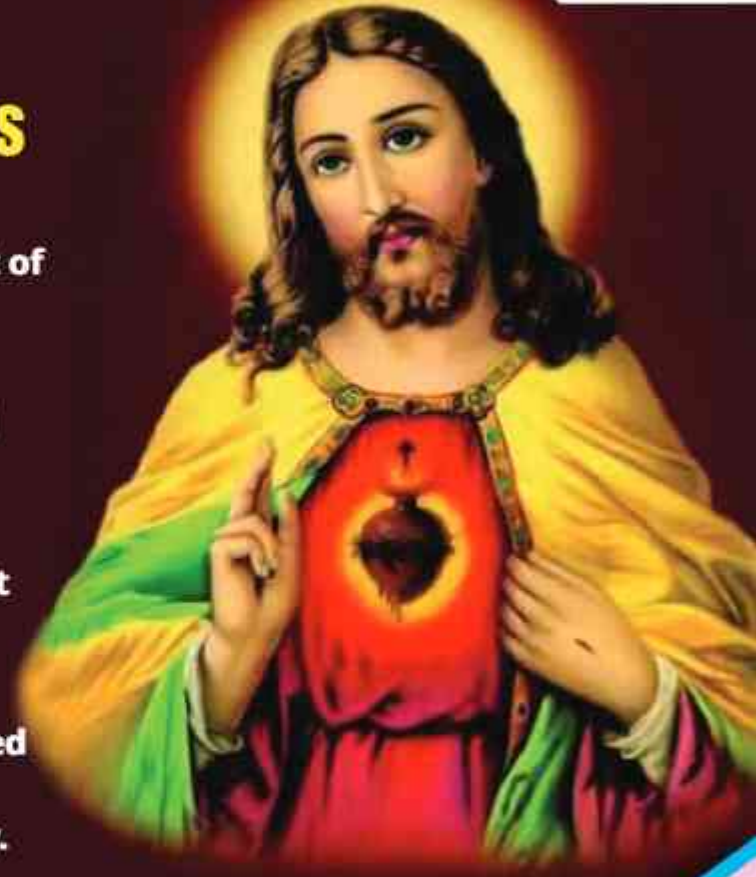
The Catholics around the world have special dedication to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the month of June.

Sacred Heart of Jesus symbolizes the boundless and passionate love of God for mankind.

Raise our hearts and minds in our devotion and love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus praying to bring healing to humanity.

Surrendering our burdens to the Sacred Heart of Jesus will bring about the shower of blessings and boundless joy.

Pledge our love for fellow human beings and every creation of God in this beautiful Universe and thus please the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Redeemer.



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