



Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

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Diocese of Thuckalay
Bishop's House, P B No: 12, Thuckalay PO,
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Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings and prayerful wishes Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

In this circular, I want to reflect with you on the nobility of our priesthood, which we have received generously from God. The idea of priesthood has its roots in the Old Testament and especially in the book of Exodus. Reading the book of Exodus, one can notice a disclosure that is being developed from a distant deity of an oppressed people in Egypt to an intimate relationship with the people of Israel on their way to the Promised Land. The book begins with God delivering the Israelites from oppression in Egypt. Deliverance leads to responsibility on the part of God's people. Geographically, the first part takes place in Egypt, while the second part begins and ends at Mount Sinai in the wilderness. The themes that the book deals with include deliverance, covenant and presence.

In all these themes, relationship with Yahweh is crucial and it requires obedience on the part of the people. In fact, God's instructions regarding the Decalogue cover both vertical and horizontal dimensions, involving correct attitudes and actions towards God and towards humanity. Every area of life must yield to the relationship of covenant with the Lord. Accordingly, family, social, individual, and corporate rights are presented in the book.

The book of Exodus is rich in theology. Various aspects of theology have their foundation in this book. Some these theological aspects concerning God that stands out in the book are name, power, holiness, faithfulness, salvation and presence.

The name of Yahweh stands out in the book. In his conversation with God, Moses had a feeling that the people are going to ask God's name. What is he to say to them? His question assumes more than a name, for the name would answer what this deity could do for Israel. God answers, "I am who I am" (3:14), a sentence that continues to baffle scholars. In the context, the name signifies that this deity will act on behalf of Israel. The God of Israel liberates from oppression. He redeems elects, establishes a relationship and fulfils his promises (6:6-8). Pharaoh, the Egyptians, Moses, and the people of Israel witness the quality of the name. For this reason, the name is not to be used in an empty way, according to the third commandment (20:7). When God passes by Moses on the mountain, the proclamation begins with a twofold repetition, "Yahweh, Yahweh" (34:6), and is followed by theological terms that explain God's character of glory or goodness, all part of the content of who this deity is. Yahweh is the name of Israel's God with full meaning for them.

The second aspect of theology is power of God. The book of Exodus exudes the power of Yahweh. In the ten plagues, Yahweh pits his power against the power of Pharaoh. Each plague shows God's control of this world. Moses participates as the messenger because he has witnessed some miracles to affirm God's call. Parting the Red Sea stands as a great example of God's power. The event not only saves Israel, but also destroys her enemies, the Egyptian army. In addition, God's providence for Israel shows his power. Water, manna, help in combat, and guidance display his abilities to provide for Israel's needs.

The third aspect of theology is holiness. Exodus 15:11 asks, "Who is like you, majestic in holiness?" At the burning bush, Moses is warned to take off his sandals because the area is "holy ground" (3:5). Moral quality exemplifies this deity. The commandments assume God's holiness. In light of who God is, Israel is to be "a holy nation" (19:6), obeying the commandments and ordinances.

The fourth aspect of theology is faithfulness. Exodus phrases God's faithfulness in terms of 'remembrance.' God remembered his covenant with the 'fathers,' Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To remember his promises means that he acts in the light of his remembrance. In this case, he sends a deliverer (Moses) who will lead Israel to the land promised to the patriarchs.

In return to God's faithfulness, Israel is to be faithful to Yahweh. The first commandment states that they are to have no other gods. No idols or images are to replace God. After all, there are no other gods who can stand with God. Victory over the gods of Egypt confirms this viewpoint.

But unfortunately, Israel failed to be faithful to Yahweh and this led to God's judgment. Israel knows that Yahweh is to be feared, for they witnessed his work in Egypt and experienced his presence on the mountain. However, their memory appears brief. God's anger may be averted by intercession and repentance holds the possibility of aversion of God's wrath, although Pharaoh does not do so in a meaningful way. Failure to obey may lead to a sin offering, an act that satisfies God. Atonement by blood cleanses the priests and the people, satisfying God's wrath.

God holds Israel responsible for obeying his instructions. Psalms 78 and 106 recount what God did in the book of Exodus and how Israel knew the commandments, but failed to obey. Relationship demands that both sides act faithfully.

Then, there is the aspect of salvation. God acts to save Israel from their plight. Salvation has a tangible side, namely, deliverance from Egypt. God initiates his salvation by observing Israel's groanings. He then takes steps to realize change, first by choosing a deliverer and then by bringing out the children of Israel from Egypt.

Redemption leads to a permanent relationship with the deity who worked for Israel. Although the redemption could be limited to political and economic conditions, as liberation theologians argue, the account in Exodus includes and goes beyond these areas. The relationship with their benefactor will impact their whole existence. Covenant that indicates the relationship, demands total commitment from both parties, though God has already worked and will prove faithful in the future. Remembrance of the way God has worked takes place in the festivals, the Passover being the one that rehearses the exodus events. The festivals say to Israel that the God who worked in the past will continue to work in the present and in the future.

Finally there is the aspect of presence. The revelation of God's presence develops from hiddenness to a permanent site of presence, the tabernacle. The narrator indicates that God lurks in the background in the

first two chapters. In chapter 3 the Lord speaks with Moses, revealing himself and his plans. He even dialogues with Moses, showing that he speaks in ways humans understand.

As the book unfolds, God's presence takes tangible directions with specific instructions to Moses in Egypt and at the mountain. Israel witnesses God's presence in the storm at Mount Sinai. As the people draw nearer to the deity who has been working in their behalf, they fear for themselves and ask Moses to continue to intercede for them. It is as though they need distance from God; presence draws near, but the people cannot take it. God continues to speak through Moses, but Israel is held responsible for the words from their leader.

To demonstrate more clearly God's presence, the tabernacle is built. The presence of God rests in the midst of Israel in the tabernacle. It veils God's presence in a way that the people can handle. Yahweh meets with Moses there. The people understand the implications because of the specific symbolism of the sanctuary in the centre of the camp.

With Yahweh at their core, Moses as intermediary, and the people in covenant relationship, Israel may advance beyond the book of Exodus to experience the Lord's will. In order to perpetuate this relationship, as expressed in the various aspects of theology concerning God, we have the institution of the priesthood. The Scriptures understood priesthood as universal and ministerial.

When St Peter called the Christian faithful as "royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9)echoing Exodus 19:6, where the Lord calls his chosen people, Israel, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Peter is alluding to the universality of priesthood in continuity between the Israel of God and the Christian Church.

St Paul identifies Christians as "the Israel of God" in Galatians 6:16. This is not to say that God has abandoned physical Israel but that covenantal relationship with the Father is determined by union with Christ and no longer merely by ethnic relationship with Abraham. This comparison between the Israel of God in the Old Covenant and the Israel of God in the New is the key for showing the reasonableness of the existence of a ministerial priesthood within the New Testament Church.

Even though in the Old Testament all the Israelites were considered priests, there existed a specific ministerial priesthood. For example, just a few verses after the Israelites are called a "kingdom of priests," one discovers a distinct order of men who are considered priests apart from the people: "And also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out upon them" (Ex. 19:22).

In verse 24 we read: "And the Lord said to him: go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord." What priesthood might this be? It is the firstborn priesthood whose priestly office would be given over to the Levites in Exodus 32 after the golden calf incident. The Lord says to Moses, "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn that opens the womb among the people of Israel" (Num. 3:12). Clearly, we can surmise that the old covenant had two priesthoods: the universal and the ministerial.

We can also understand the reasonableness of ministerial priesthood by looking at the New Testament against the backdrop of the threefold structure of the priesthood after Israel became a nation under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Aaron is constituted as the single high priest according to Exodus 30:30 - the top level. His sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar minister with him as priests according to Exodus 28:21 - the middle level. Finally, as mentioned before, all the Israelites were universal priests according to Exodus 19:6 - the bottom level.

When we compare this structure to the New Testament, we can see clearly the top level, which is occupied by a single high priest, Jesus. Hebrews 3:1 reads, “Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.”

Along with the top level, the bottom level is also explicitly revealed in 1 Peter 2:5, 9: “Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood. . . . But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”

When one puts these levels of priesthood in the New Covenant alongside the three levels in the Old, the only level missing is the middle - namely, those priests who minister with the high priest, Jesus. The Catholic Church identifies this level as the hierarchical priesthood, which consists of both the episcopate and the presbyterate.

Jesus established a ministerial priesthood when he gave the apostles priestly duties. In the biblical tradition there are certain actions that are constituted specifically as priestly actions. We know a priest by what a priest does. We find Jesus conferring priestly duties on the apostles, and we conclude that he is constituting them as priests. The most important priestly duties that Jesus enjoined the Apostles are the forgiveness of sins and the offering of sacrifice. In John 20:20-23, Jesus transfers to the apostles his power to forgive sins when he said: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Similarly, Jesus gave the Apostles the priestly duty of offering sacrifice, particularly the sacrifice that he offered at the Last Supper, when he said: “Do this in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19).

Thus, we can notice a divine plan for the building of a new covenant ministerial priesthood. He established the Church as the New Israel paralleling the priestly ranks of old. He invests his apostles with certain duties that, when compared with the Old Testament, prove to be priestly. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he leads them to recognize and exercise their priestly prerogatives. Such prerogatives are even transferred to other men outside the college of the twelve apostles. In light of this divine plan, we can say that Christ willed for his Church to have a ministerial-hierarchical priesthood that is distinct from the common-universal priesthood.

The ministerial priesthood that we have received is a gift that God has generously lavished upon us over and above the universal priesthood which every Christian is entitled to. We have to be grateful to God for this precious gift. We also have a bounden duty to bring to fruition this gift by serving the people who are entrusted to our care. Otherwise, we will find wanting like that servant who hid his master’s talent. May the annual retreat that we are making become an occasion for deeper reflection on the quality of our priesthood!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Home Mission at Padanthalumoodu Parish: From 03 September to 08 September 2022, Rev. Sisters of SABS Congregation from Pala Province conducted a Home Mission Programme at Padanthalumoodu Parish. A group of six Sisters came on 02 September and within a week they visited all the families of the Parish, conducted daily adoration which helped in the spiritual renewal in the Parish. I express our

gratitude to the Sisters for their service to our Eparchy and I thank Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, Parish Priest, for making the necessary arrangements for the Sisters.

Consecration of the new Church and blessing of Kalkurisu at Kalluvilai: The community of St. Mother Teresa was formed in 2004 by Rev. Fr. Joseph Muthuplackal MST with four families. For the last seventeen years the community nourished their spiritual life in a chapel room of Catechetical Centre. The Eparchy allotted the community a plot of land belongs to the Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS). Rev. Fr Saji Ezhampaserril SDB, former Parish Priest, began the construction of the new church in 2018. Due to financial constraints and COVID 19 pandemic, the construction work was rather slow. Rev. Fr. Aby Poovathumootil, present Parish Priest, completed the work. On 04 September 2022 I consecrated the new Church, blessed the Kalkurisu and presided over the concelebrated Holy Qurbana in the presence of Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General, Fathers and Sisters of the diocese and the parishioners. I appreciate and congratulate the Parish Priest and parishioners for this great work.

Class room blessing at Mankarai: A new multi-purpose hall was blessed by me at St. James High School, Mankarai on 07 September 2022 at 11.00 am. For the blessing ceremony, Fr. John Paul, the correspondent of Tamil medium schools of the diocese, teachers and staff of the school were present. It was followed by the staff meeting where the present status and future plan for the good functioning of the school were discussed. I thank Fr. John Paul for organising it well.

Blessing of renovated grotto at Kaliyal: On the occasion of the feast of St. Mary's Church, Kaliyal, I blessed the renovated grotto of the Parish on 07 September 2022 in the presence of Parish Priest, Sisters and parishioners. The blessing ceremony was followed by the solemn celebration of Holy Qurbana and Agape. My appreciation to Rev. Fr. Tinu, the Parish Priest and the parishioners.

Blessing of renovated Church and new Kurishadi at Varuthattu: The St. Xavier's community at Varuthattu was formed in 1963 by Rev. Fr. Zacharias Kaithara, one of the pioneer missionaries of the diocese of Thuckalay. Gradually the mission developed and now it has become an established parish consists of 130 families. The new altar was consecrated on 27 December 2013 in the Golden Jubilee year of the Parish. Now with the new roof, the renovated Church was blessed on 10 September 2022. On the same day the newly built *Kurishadi* was also blessed by me. In the Holy Qurbana presided by me, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, the Finance Officer, Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, the Forane Vicar and Fr. Printo Kurias, the Parish Priest concelebrated. The Holy Qurbana celebration was followed by a brief meeting where the important personalities who helped the construction were thanked. The programme ended with agape. My sincere appreciation and congratulation to the Parish Priest and parishioners for their tireless work.

Priests' Conference: The Eparchial Priests' conference for the month of September was held at Sangamam on 13 September 2022. It started at 09.30 am with adoration and confession. The first part of the meeting was presided by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil in my absence. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal presented the rights and duties of Forane Vicars by explaining the canon law on the matter. Fr. Jinoy Thottiyil presented the new old age home project at Moolamattam. The updated website of the diocese was introduced in this conference. Then various departments presented their programmes during the meeting. The committees were formed to organize the diocesan convention and diocesan day. I sincerely thank all the Fathers for wishing me in advance the 10th anniversary of my episcopal ordination. The meeting ended with Onam meal at 02.00pm.

Home Mission and retreat at Tenkasi mission: The CMC Sisters of Chavara Province, Thuckalay conducted home mission in the mission centres of Tenkasi mission from 13 – 23 September 2022. They have conducted home mission at Mekkarai, Pudur, Tenkasi, Sundarapandyapuram, Ambur and Puliyarai. The FCC Sisters of San Joe Province, Thuckalay had conducted home mission at Vanchinagar on 7 – 8 August 2022. There was a one day retreat at the end of the home mission. The entire community of Tenkasi mission gathered at Puliyarai on 25 September 2022 and spent a day in prayer. The retreat was animated by *Irakkathin Oottu* retreat centre headed by Bro. James. Around 150 people participated in the retreat, Holy Qurbana, Adoration and Confession. The priests and religious of Tenkasi mission participated in the day's programme. I thank Rev. Sisters and the coordinators of home mission and retreat for organizing and conducting it successfully.

SH Convent blessing at Cumbum: The SH Sisters of Kanjrapally Province started a community in a rented house at Cumbum in Theni district on 14 September 2022 to begin their missionary activities. In the presence of Rev. Mary Philip SH, the Provincial Superior of Kanjrapally Province, Very Rev. Fr. Jose Vellamattam, the Vicar General of the diocese of Kanjrapally blessed the convent and Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the chancellor presided the concelebrated Holy Qurbana. Rev. Fr. Johnsilal, Rev. Sisters from Theni mission and curia members of Kanjrapally diocese were present for the ceremony. This was followed by an agape meal. My sincere gratitude to Fr. Benny Thattampampil for taking initiatives to bring the Sisters to the mission and coordinating the event well. We wish God's blessings to the Sisters who are staying there and take part actively in the *Ad Gentes* mission and Evangelization.

Death of my dad: a word of gratitude to God and to all of you: It was with great sadness that I received and communicated to you the news of the sad demise of my beloved dad on 14 September 2022 by evening. From that moment onwards, dear Fathers and Sisters, you showed me and to my grieving family, love affection and solidarity and I would like to express my sentiments of gratitude to God and all of you. I was overwhelmed by your personal messages, consoling words, visits, continuous prayers, especially on the day of funeral rights. What touched me most was your sincere prayers and office of the dead for the departed soul. Many of you came and participated on the 7th day memorial Holy Qurbana and blessing of the tomb on 20 September 2022. Once again, I thank you for organizing the people from the parishes, schools, college and other charitable institutions, even from the extended territories and missions to pay the last respect to my dad.

An attitude of Gratitude on the completion of 10th year of my Episcopal ministry in the diocese: I thank and praise our Lord Almighty for the blessings and graces that I have received in the last 10 years of my episcopacy and ministry in the Diocese of Thuckalay. My motto has been – **With God All Things are Possible** – and God has been very benevolent to me since my calling to catholic faith, the gift of priestly vocation with the Salesians of Don Bosco and choosing me to lead the Diocese of Thuckalay. I gratefully acknowledge that the priests and religious serving in the diocese have been walking with me in the fulfilment of my mission as the second bishop of the diocese. Every encounter with you has taught me lessons to be faithful to the mission. I have learnt a lot from your love for the Church and the people and I continue to learn from your life and works. All of you have effectively shared the mission of the diocese with dedicated service. I implore every one of you to continue your selfless assistance in carrying forward the mission that has been entrusted to us by Our Lord Jesus in our diocese. Your support has been immense and is highly appreciated by me. A big thank you to all.

New Presbytery blessing and Mission Sangamam at Mekkarai: On 17 September 2022 the newly constructed presbytery was blessed at St. George Church, Mekkarai by Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the chancellor. The blessing ceremony started at 05.30 pm in the presence of all the Fathers and Sisters of

Tenkasi Mission and the parishioners of Mekkarai Parish. It was followed by one hour adoration at Holy Cross convent, Mekkarai. In the mission Sangamam held soon after the adoration, all the Fathers and Sisters participated and shared their mission experiences. Rev. Fr. Thomas Thuckalay welcomed in the meeting the newly arrived Fathers and Sisters, especially Fr. James Karimankal, the new mission superior of MCBS congregation was welcomed. The action plan prepared in view of Jubilee celebration of the Tenkasi mission was discussed in the meeting. I congratulate Fr. Thomas Thuckalay for coordinating all the mission activities of the district.

MCBS New Mission Superior and Fathers at Tenkasi mission: We welcome wholeheartedly to our diocese, MCBS new mission Superior at Tenkasi mission, Rev. Fr. James Joseph Karimankal MCBS. He was ordained priest in 2000 and previously worked as Principal of Zion School, Kattappana. Along with the superior, we welcome two other MCBS Fathers who recently came to our diocese: Fr. Vivek Antony Kalarithara MCBS, at present correspondent of St. Joseph's Public School, Surandai and Fr. Jim Jose Punnakalayil MCBS, correspondent of St. Joseph's Public School, Thenpothai. We remember with gratitude the Fathers who served in Tenkasi mission in past years and now returned to other ministry places: Rev. Fr. Rony Peedikakal MCBS, the former mission superior, Fr. Thomas Kollarettu MCBS and Fr. Jipson Chully MCBS.

Blessing of St. Alphonsa Community Hall at Ariyur, Madurai: In the land donated by Mr. Jomichan, one of the Syro Malabar Migrant community members from Madurai for the mission work, a new community hall was constructed attached to the existing tailoring and tuition centre run by our SABS Sisters at Aiyur. The newly constructed hall, namely St. Alphonsa Community Hall was blessed by me on 18 September 2022 at 03.00 pm in the presence of curia members, SABS Provincial Superior of Thuckalay Province, Fathers and Sisters from Thuckaly and extended mission territories and a good number of children and people from the village. The blessing was followed by a meeting and cultural programmes presented by the villagers. In the meeting local political leaders also took part. During my address I emphasised on the need of such hall which can be utilized for the spiritual, social, intellectual and economic development of the society by providing skill developed and value based programmes to the poor and needy. I thank wholeheartedly Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, Fr. Jebaneesh, the present priest in charge of Ariyur mission and SABS sisters who are working there and all the faithful who worked hard to make the event very successful.

Blessing of renovated school building at Arukani: The renovated school building of Arukani Holy Family Primary and High Schools were blessed on 19 September 2022 at 02.00 pm by Fr. John Paul, the correspondent of Tamil Medium Schools of the diocese. The blessing ceremony was followed by the staff meeting. The local Manager Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil, teachers and staff were present for the blessing and the meeting. I thank Fr. John Paul, Fr. Toji, teachers and all well-wishers who worked hard and made their contribution to complete the work and make the building very usable.

Visit by the Curia Members from Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad: From the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Kakkanad, 8 Fathers and one regent brother came to visit our diocese and the pilgrim centres and shrines in Kanyakumari district from 23 – 25 September 2022. The team consisted of Vice chancellor of the Curia, President of the Tribunal, Secretaries of Syro Malabar mission, internet mission, commission for catechesis, liturgy, Media and Clergy. In three days, they visited major institutions and mission stations of our diocese. On 25 September, Sunday they celebrated Holy Qurbana at Anayadi Parish. For them, it was totally a new and enriching experience. I thank them for spending three days with us and I thank Rev. Fr. Joshy for organizing their programme in the diocese and all the Fathers and Sisters those who welcomed them very cordially in your institutions/parishes.

Priests and Religious Sangamam at Padanthalumoodu: The Sangamam of priests and religious of the Eparchy was held on 24 September 2022 at Padanthalumoodu. The Sangamam was organised in order to improve the interaction between priests and religious working in the Eparchy. It was also an occasion to wish all the priests and religious who celebrate their Silver or Golden Jubilee of their ordination or profession this year. This year we didn't have any golden jubilarians. The Silver Jubilarians are Rev. Fr. Mathew Thekkekkuttu, Rev. Fr. Thomas Thekkethalackal CMI, Rev. Fr. Jogi Marangattu CMI, Rev. Sr. Lisa Plathara SH, Rev. Sr. Mareena Thakadiyal SH, Rev. Sr. Sherin Maria CMC, Rev. Sr. Mary Elsitta LSDP, Rev. Sr. Jessin FDSHJ, Rev. Sr. Helency Francis DSHS, Rev. Sr. Mini Thomas DSHS, Rev. Sr. Elseena ASMI. All the Jubilarians were honoured and thanked for their selfless service to the Eparchy. I made use of the occasion to thank all the Fathers, especially Rev. Fr. Joshy, the chancellor and Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, the Parish Priest of Padanthalumoodu parish for having organized the programme. I also sincerely thank and congratulate all the Fathers and Sisters who arranged the programme in a colourful way through their active participation.

Blessing of multipurpose hall and stage at Thettivilai: We were unable to modify or build any structure at Thettivilai due to the constant disturbances of fundamentalist groups or due to court cases. However, through constant prayers and legal assistance, Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil the parish priest, along with Fr. Robin Jose, the assistant parish priest, with full support of the parishioners could achieve new ventures there. On 25 September 2022, Sunday I celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. Michael's Church, Thettivilai at 06.30 am and released a hand written Bible made by all the parishioners. Then, in the presence of Parish Priest, Assist. Parish Priest, Rev. Sisters and parishioners, I blessed the newly constructed stage in front of the presbytery and a multipurpose hall on the terrace of the priest's residence. We are grateful to Fr. Augustine and the parishioners for this great achievement.

Free Medical camp and blood donation camp at Manjalumoodu: On 25 September 2022, the 'World Heart Day' was celebrated in our diocese. As a part of it, an awareness programme on heart diseases, exhibition, blood donation camp and a free medical camp were conducted at Little Flower Forane Church campus, Manjalumoodu on 25 September 2022 from 09 am to 01.00 pm. The programmes were inaugurated by me as the chairman of TNBC Health Commission. The classes were conducted by Dr. Christin and Sr. Josephine (Secretary, TNBC Health Commission) on heart diseases and its remedies. Approximately 600 people got benefited. We had great appreciation. Medical camp was conducted by the united effort of Karakonam Medical College and Holy Cross Hospital Nagercoil. Medical camp lead by Dr. Sabu (Assistant Principal, Karakonam Medical College) with the collaboration of 5 Doctors, 22 nurses, 15 volunteers, and 4 Pharmacists. Around 300 people had taken part of this camp. Free blood tests like Sugar, blood pressure, haemoglobin and ECG were done to the people. Free medicines were distributed. The public who benefited were satisfied by our services offered. I thank in a special way, Fr. Jimmy, the director of Health care of our diocese and all Fathers and Sisters who contributed for the success of this mega programme.

Graduation day at St. Alphonsa College, Soosaipuram: The fifth Graduation Ceremony of St. Alphonsa College of Arts and Science, Soosaipuram, Karungal was held on 26 September 2022 at 10.00 am in the College Multipurpose Hall. I presided over the Graduation Ceremony. The Chief Guest, Dr. G. Annadurai, Registrar, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli presented the UG and PG Degrees to candidates and delivered the graduation day address. In my presidential address, I congratulated all the Graduate and Post Graduate students and urged them to focus on the right things in their lives for their personal and societal development. Rev. Fr Antony Jose, Secretary and Correspondent

of the College, Rev. Dr. Michael Arockiasamy, Director and Co-correspondent and Dr. S. Isias, Principal also attended the event.

Meeting of the members of Palliative care units: Kanyakumari Social Service Society organized a one-day animation programme for the stakeholders of Mother Teresa Palliative Care on 27 September 2022 at Sangamam. A team of experts from *Pallium India*, Trivandrum animated the programme under the topic of 'New ways of caring the needy'. Rev. Fathers and Sisters from various palliative care units such as Tenkasi, Thirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts attended the programme. I addressed the gathering and shared views and expectations of the diocese with regard to the Palliative Care Ministry. I congratulate Fr. Aby, the director of KKSSS and Fr. Mahesh, the assistant director for arranging the meeting.

New Mission Station at Inam Rattiapatti, Virudunagar: The archdiocese of Changanacherry bought six cents of land at Inam Rattiapatti in Virudunagar district on 19 September 2022. The land is situated only one kilometre away from the main highway and five kilometres away from O. Kovilpatti, where the first Church in Virudunagar district was consecrated by Mar Joseph Perunthottam on 03 April 2022. On 28 September 2022, for the first time in this mission, the rosary procession was conducted and Fr. Peter Kizhakeyil celebrated the Holy Qurbana for the first time in a small shed already existing in the newly bought land. More than 50 people, including children and adults participated in the celebration. I congratulate and thank Fr. Peter Kizhakeyil for his ardent mission zeal to begin new ventures in mission areas. I also appreciate Fr. Akash Keeranchira and Rev. Srs. Ruby, Jansalet and Vimal for your committed service in the mission.

Transfer and Appointments: For a better coordination of pastoral ministry in the diocese recently I made following transfers and appointments:

- **Fr. Subin Scaria** is relieved from the office of Procurator of St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal and reappointed as Parish Priest of Holy Family Church, Mukkoottukal with effect from 01 October 2022.
- **Fr. Jogi Marangattu CMI** is appointed as the Procurator of St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal with effect from 01 October 2022.
- **Fr. Jogesh Polachira** is appointed as Parish Priest of St. James Church, Mankarai with effect from 10 October 2022.
- **Fr. Anil Raj** is appointed as Assistant Director of Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai with effect from 21 September 2022.
- **Fr. Prince Maliyil** is relieved from the office of Parish Priest of St. James Church, Mankarai with effect from 10 October 2022 and he is sent to the Overseas Mission as the Chaplain of Syro-Malabar Migrants' community in the Diocese of Limerick, Ireland.

INFORMATION

- For the first time, **Rev. Sr. Grace Therese CMC, the Superior General of CMC** Congregation and Rev. Sr. Deena CMC, Internal General Auditor visited our diocese and had a dinner at Bishop's House on 3 September 2022.
- **Fr. Josy** will arrive from Germany for vacation on 03 October 2022. We wish him happy stay.
- I visited our major seminarians, **Dn. Ajin, Bros. Monish, Josbin Mathew and Akash**, at Mary Matha Major Seminary, Trissur on 05 September 2022.
- **Fr. Jinu Thekkethalackal** arrived on 7 September 2022 from Rome for medical treatments and will go back on 15 October 2022. We wish him a blessed stay!

- **Dn. Georgekutty** completed his pastoral course at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor on 06 September 2022 and now doing his ministry at St. Jerome's Church, Nazareth of the archdiocese of Changanacherry. He will come back to the diocese by 24 October 2022.
- **Fr. Shoji** went back to Ireland on 12 September 2022. We wish him a fruitful ministry ahead.
- **Frs. Tobin, Jomon and Kochumon** participated in the on-going formation programme for the priests conducted by Clergy commission at Mount St. Thomas Kakkanad from 12 to 21 September 2022.
- **Fr. Subin Scaria** joined for MSW course at Malankara Catholic College, Mariagiri. We wish him all the best.
- Two regency brothers from the diocese of Kanjirapally, **Bros. Ajo and Josin** who were doing their ministry at Sangamam and Kalluvilai respectively and **Bro. Sajan** who did his regency ministry at Bishop's House completed their ministry and went back to their own diocese on 20. We thank them for their dedicated service and wish them God's blessings to their further ministry and formation.
- A **new regent** from the archdiocese of Changanacherry will begin the ministry at Sangamam on 3 October 2022.
- **Fr. Prince Malyil** will be flying to Ireland on 28 October 2022 to replace Fr. Robin Koorumullil in the overseas mission. We wish him a fruitful ministry ahead.
- **Mission Sunday Cover Collection:** The Church by its very nature is missionary (AG 2). As a true missionary, the Church always concentrates on the Mission work all over the world. Mission Sunday is an occasion for all the believers to show their solidarity with the universal Church in her work of evangelization. The celebration allows the people to express their desire to become missionaries through their prayers and financial support. This year the Church celebrates Mission Sunday on 23 October 2022. The collection on that day will be sent to Rome for the mission work around the globe. Hence, I request you dear Fathers to create awareness among people about the mission work and to encourage them to be generous towards the missionary work of the Church. Kindly submit the Mission Sunday Collection immediately after the celebration to the Eparchial Procurator.
- **Rosary Procession:** The Rosary Procession will be held from Christ the King Church, Palappallam to St. Joseph's Forane Church, Soosaipuram on 23 October 2022. The Mariain Senai will organise it. It is a public witness to our Christian faith and an expression of our filial devotion to Blessed Mother. Kindly send as many people as possible from your parishes especially from those of Soosaipuram Forane.
- **Prayers are requested** for our Fathers who are suffering by the viral fever these days. Let us keep them all in our prayers.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

01 October	-	Month of Rosary begins
01 October	-	Golden Jubilee of Pilankalai Parish
02-05 October	-	Educare camp at Kalluvilai
03-04 October	-	Vocation camp for boys & girls at Padanthalumoodu
05 October	-	Catechesis teachers' Seminar at Kalluvilai
19-21 October	-	Interdepartmental meetings
23 October	-	Rosary procession from Palappallam to Soosaipuram
27-30 October	-	Sinai Residential Retreat at Sangamam
30 October	-	Online Mega Bible Quiz

Annual Retreat for Priests from 9-14 October 2022 at Sangamam.

Preacher: Rev. Fr Daniel Poovannathil.

It starts on Sunday at 04.00 pm with the Priests' Conference followed by Ramsa.

CONCLUSION

Dear Fathers, we are entering the month of October, which is dear to every Catholic. It is definitely a beautiful month in which we manifest our devotion to Mother Mary, in a special way, by praying the holy rosary. It is also a grace-filled time for receiving the showers of blessings from our heavenly Mother. Just like the blooming roses which beautify our gardens and refresh the air with their sweet fragrance, the presence of our blessed Mother beautifies our parish communities, removes every element of evil and spreads the fragrance of her maternal love, peace, serenity and harmony. Our Blessed Lord wants the heart of every priest to be a home of Mother Mary, where she is the mother, guide and help. Let us give her the rightful place and honour her with profound love and devotion especially on the feast of the Holy Rosary.

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

