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Thuckalay Tidings

DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

LENT

preparing our hearts...

Prayer

Fasting

Alms Giving



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Diocese of Thuckalay

THUCKALAY TIDINGS

March 2025 | Vol. 5 | Issue 3

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

On 3 March 2025, we embark on the sacred season of Lent, a time of deep spiritual preparation to celebrate the paschal mysteries of Jesus Christ. In our tradition, this period is also called 50 Nombu, as all the days beginning from Ash Monday, including Sundays, are considered days of abstinence. This Great Fast (Sauma Rabba) commemorates Jesus' 40-day fast, culminating in His passion, death, and resurrection. It is a solemn invitation to reflect, repent, and renew our commitment to Christ. Through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, we seek to partake in His sufferings and draw closer to His grace.

Lent is not merely a period of external observance but a journey of inner transformation. It calls us to examine our lives, assess our faith, and recommit to a life of righteousness. The ultimate goal is to cleanse our hearts and minds so we may fully embrace the joy and glory of Easter. The last week of Lent, Passion Week, focuses intensely on the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. However, the preceding weeks guide us through themes that encourage upright Christian living, urging us to grow in holiness, humility, and love.

The Call to Repentance

Repentance is at the heart of Lent. It is a time to acknowledge our shortcomings, seek forgiveness, and turn away from sin. The Gospel repeatedly calls us to "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). True repentance requires an honest self-examination, a willingness to change, and an openness to God's grace. It

is not enough to merely acknowledge our faults; we must take steps to correct them, making amends where necessary and seeking reconciliation with God and others.

One of the most powerful ways to experience this renewal is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confession allows us to confront our sins, receive absolution, and start anew with a clean heart. It is an opportunity to experience God's boundless mercy, which He offers freely to all who turn to Him with sincerity.

Fasting: A Discipline of the Soul

Fasting is a key Lenten practice that mirrors Jesus' own 40-day fast in the wilderness. It is a way of disciplining the body, controlling desires, and focusing more on spiritual nourishment than physical satisfaction. While traditional fasting involves abstaining from food, it can also take other forms, such as limiting distractions, reducing indulgences, or detaching from material comforts.

The purpose of fasting is not simply deprivation but transformation. By denying ourselves certain pleasures, we create space for God to work in our hearts. We learn self-control, patience, and dependence on God rather than worldly comforts. When we fast, we are reminded of our spiritual hunger and our need for God's sustenance.

Fasting is also deeply connected to charity. The early Church Fathers emphasized that the food we forgo should be given to those in need. This aligns with Isaiah 58:6-7, where the Lord speaks of true fasting:

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice... to share your bread with the hungry?"

Thus, fasting is not an isolated act but a means of growing in love and concern for others.

The Power of Prayer

Prayer is the foundation of our spiritual life, and Lent is a time to deepen our relationship with God through more fervent and intentional prayer. Jesus Himself often withdrew to pray, especially before significant moments in His ministry. He teaches us that prayer is not just about asking for what we need but about aligning ourselves with God's will.

During Lent, we are encouraged to spend more time in prayer—both personal and communal. The liturgical prayers of the Church, such as the Way of the Cross, the Divine Office, and Eucharistic Adoration, help us to meditate on Christ's passion and draw closer to His heart. Personal prayer, such as silent reflection, scriptural meditation, and the Rosary, allows us to cultivate a deeper awareness of God's presence in our lives.

Prayer strengthens us in our Lenten journey, giving us the grace to persevere in our fasting and works of charity. It helps us to remain focused on the true purpose of this season—growing in holiness and preparing for Easter's joy.

Almsgiving: Love in Action

Almsgiving is an essential aspect of Lent because it embodies Christ's call to love and serve others. As we fast and pray, we are also called to extend our hands to those in need. Lent reminds us that our faith must be lived out through acts of compassion, generosity, and justice.

Giving alms is not just about financial contributions but about offering our time, talents, and kindness. It can be as simple as visiting the sick, comforting the lonely, or supporting a charitable cause. Jesus taught that whatever we do for the least of His brothers and sisters, we do for Him (Matthew 25:40).

This season challenges us to shift our focus from ourselves to the needs of others. It is an invitation to embody Christ's love in tangible ways, making sacrifices not only for our own spiritual growth but for the good of those around us.

Spiritual Warfare and Overcoming Temptation

Lent is also a time of spiritual warfare. Just as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, we too face trials and struggles that test our faith. The enemy seeks to distract us, discourage us, and lead us away from God's path. However, Lent equips us with spiritual weapons—fasting, prayer, and Scripture—to combat these attacks.

When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He responded with the Word of God, showing us that Scripture is a powerful defense against temptation. By immersing ourselves in God's Word during Lent, we strengthen

our faith and fortify ourselves against spiritual challenges.

Self-denial and discipline help us break free from sinful habits and destructive patterns. By surrendering our weaknesses to God and relying on His strength, we emerge from Lent spiritually renewed and better equipped to resist future temptations.

Leading Others in Faith

As shepherds of the faithful, we have a responsibility to lead by example. Our role is not just to observe Lent personally but to guide others in embracing its significance. We must encourage our communities to enter into this holy season with open hearts, helping them understand the transformative power of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

Through our preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, we can inspire our faithful to deepen their commitment to Christ. We should provide opportunities for communal prayer, sacramental participation, and charitable initiatives, fostering a spirit of unity and spiritual growth.

The Journey to Easter Joy

The journey of Lent ultimately leads us to the resurrection—the triumph of Christ over sin and death. Our sacrifices, struggles, and reflections prepare us to fully celebrate the joy of Easter. A heart that has been purified through repentance, strengthened through fasting, deepened through prayer, and enriched through charity is ready to receive the abundant grace of the risen Lord.

Let us embrace this Lenten season with sincerity and devotion, making it a time of true renewal. May we walk this path with Christ, allowing Him to transform our hearts, deepen our faith, and lead us to the fullness of His joy. Together, let us prepare for Easter with a spirit of gratitude, hope, and unwavering trust in God's mercy.



+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay



TOUCHED BY GRACE:

Pilankalai's Jubilee for the Sick



As part of the Christ Jubilee Year 2025, the Diocesan Health Commission organized the Jubilee of the Sick on 10 February 2025 at Little Flower Forane Church, Pilankalai. The celebration began with the solemn Holy Qurbana, presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, and concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, Director of the Health Commission, and Rev. Fr. Amanto Edakkootathil. Following the Holy Qurbana, a short gathering was held with the sick. Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal welcomed everyone, while Fr. Vicar General delivered the presidential address, emphasizing Jesus' healing mission and His mercy towards the sick. Despite their sufferings, the participants expressed their gratitude and inner joy through various cultural programs, including speeches and songs. As part of the initiative, Rs. 5000/- was distributed to each wheelchair user to assist in constructing a wheelchair ramp in their homes. A total of 76 patients and benefactors participated in the celebration. Sr. Missi Maria SJSM expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone present for their support and participation.



A HOUSE FOR THE LORD:

Church Blessing Ceremony at Kulasekharam

The Kulasekharam Mission was initiated by the late Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiathara on 27 March 2009 to cater to the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar faithful residing in the area and to facilitate future mission development. The mission began with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana in a school classroom and was named John Paul II Mission. Since there was no designated place for Sunday celebrations, the community had been using the chapel of the SABS Convent for liturgical gatherings. To expand the mission activities, a plot of land was purchased nearby for the construction of a church. The foundation stone for the church (community hall) was laid by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil on 27 March



2023. Under the meticulous efforts of Rev. Fr. Jose Kanachikuzhiyil, the present parish priest, the construction progressed steadily, culminating in the blessing of the newly built church by Rev. Bishop on 2 February 2025 at 3:30 PM. The solemn blessing ceremony was concelebrated by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil and Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekalam CMI. The event was graced by the presence of Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, Provincial Superior of the SABS, along with priests from Kaliyal and Manjalumoodu Foranes, religious sisters from various congregations, and the faithful from Chenamcode and neighboring parishes.





MARTHANDAM'S FAITH SHINES:

The Grand Church Inauguration

St. Vincent de Paul Mission, Marthandam, was established on 8 September 2007 with a solemn prayer gathering held at the residence of Mr. Mariadas Sir. The initiative was led by the late Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiyanthara and later continued with the support of Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam. After six months, the community began celebrating Holy Qurbana on Sundays at Stephen Complex, Marthandam, with the participation of 13 families. In its initial three years, the mission activities were supported by the OMMI Sisters, after which the SABS Sisters took over the pastoral assistance. In 2017, the community was relocated to the Serene Retreat Centre of 'Yesuve Kanpom.' Later, with the establishment of St. Joseph Convent by the SABS Congregation on 28 May 2019, the Sunday liturgies were shifted to the convent chapel, where the first Christmas celebration was held in 2019. After acquiring land

near the convent, the foundation stone for the new church (community hall) and presbytery was laid by Rev. Bishop on 15 March 2023. On 3 June 2024, the community began celebrating Sunday liturgies in the newly constructed church with a simple blessing. At present, the mission consists of 14 families. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan (since 2018), and the Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Fr. Jose Paul Purayidathikunnel (since 2024), the construction of the new church was successfully completed. The altar was consecrated, and the church was blessed by Rev. Bishop on 9 February 2025 at 5:00 PM. The Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam and Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan. The ceremony was attended by almost all the priests and religious of Padanthalumoodu Forane.



A JOURNEY OF GRACE: Minor Seminarians Mark Christ Jubilee

As part of the Christ Jubilee Year 2025, the Jubilee of Minor Seminarians, along with the Home Day of the Seminary, was celebrated on 01 February 2025 at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal. The event commenced with a prayer service at 5:00 pm, focusing on vocations, the jubilee year, and the seminary community. Following the prayer service, a public meeting was held under the presidency of Rev. Bishop.

Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil, the Rector, warmly welcomed all those present. Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil reminisced about his cherished memories as a minor seminarian. Representing the parents, Mrs. Jain Celin shared their hopes for the future priests and assured the wholehearted support of the parents in the formation of the candidates. The seminarians presented a vibrant cultural programme, adding colour and joy to the jubilee celebrations.

During the event, Rev. Bishop released the seminary magazine for the academic year 2024-2025, handing over the first copy to Rev. Fr. Chacko Puthiyaparampil, the Spiritual Father. The magazine showcased the academic talents and creative abilities of the seminarians, featuring their writings, drawings, riddles, insightful reflections, and newly acquired knowledge through reading and learning.



FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS: 12 Years Since Fr. Philip Kodiyanthara's Passing

On 8 February 2025, the 12th death anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiyanthara was commemorated at St. Joseph's Church, Kayalpuram. The Requiem Holy Qurbana began at 11:00 AM, with Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, as the main celebrant. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil, and Rev. Fr. Amanto Edakkoottil concelebrated the Holy Qurbana. The memorial service was attended by religious sisters, teachers, and parishioners from Manjalumoodu Forane Parish, all gathered in prayerful remembrance of Fr. Philip Kodiyanthara. Following the Holy Qurbana, the Office for the Dead was recited at his tomb.



A DAY FOR THE AILING: Prayers, Love, and Support

The World Day of the Sick is observed annually on February 11, calling upon people to offer prayers and support for those suffering from illness and for their caregivers. This day was instituted by Pope St. John Paul II and coincides with the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes. In the Diocese, for a more meaningful observance, the World Day of the Sick was celebrated on Sunday, 16 February 2025, in all parishes. The Diocesan Health Commission, in collaboration with the Liturgical Commission, provided special prayers and guidelines for the Sunday liturgy. The liturgy began with an introduction explaining the significance of the day. Special prayers were incorporated into the Karosoosa prayer, and after the Holy Qurbana, all the faithful were anointed with blessed oil. On behalf of various departments and pious associations, many visited bedridden patients at home, offering prayers and assisting Rev. Fathers in administering Holy Communion. Some parishes extended their charitable outreach by providing food for the abandoned and homeless. In every family, special prayers were recited for the sick, fostering a spirit of compassion and solidarity.



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:

Fr. Liju Marattukalam
+91 4651 250633; +91 94871 65903;
Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

A Beacon of Grace @ Paraicode

The newly constructed Kurissadi of Christ the King Church, Paraicode, was blessed by Rev. Bishop on 11 February 2025, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, at 6:00 PM. The priests and religious sisters of Thuckalay–Pilankalai Forane were present for the blessing ceremony. Following the blessing, Rev. Bishop celebrated the Holy Qurbana, with Rev. Fr. Geo Choozhikunnel and Rev. Fr. Justin Cheruvelil as concelebrants. The event concluded with a fraternal agape meal. The entire Kurissadi was generously sponsored by the Pipes NTiles – Rosary Group.



The Presbyterium of the Diocese convened for a two-day gathering at Sangamam on the 13th and 14th of February 2025. The programme began at 10:00 AM with a welcome note by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil. Rev. Bishop inaugurated the programme and introduced the resource person of the day, Rev. Fr. Joji Kallingal, Secretary of the Commission for Clergy of the Syro Malabar Church. He animated the formation programme in three sessions—two in the morning and one in the afternoon—covering the topics of priestly spirituality, relationship with the Bishop and brother priests, and priestly ministry. All sessions proved to be highly informative and pastorally enriching for the priestly ministry in the diocese. The following day, 14th February, was dedicated to the evaluation and presentation of reports on activities from various departments and pious associations of the Eparchy. This marked the fourth time that the diocese allocated almost a full day for this exercise. Directors of departments came well-prepared with PowerPoint presentations, beautifully outlining the year's activities. The Presbyterium engaged in discussions and provided valuable suggestions. The comprehensive overview left everyone feeling happy and proud to be informed of the enormous work being carried out in the various departments.

FORMING THE FORMATORS: Priests in Ongoing Training



NEED PRAYER SUPPORT!

The Diocese has prayer groups.

Please write the following and send SMS



+91 94871 65903:

Name:

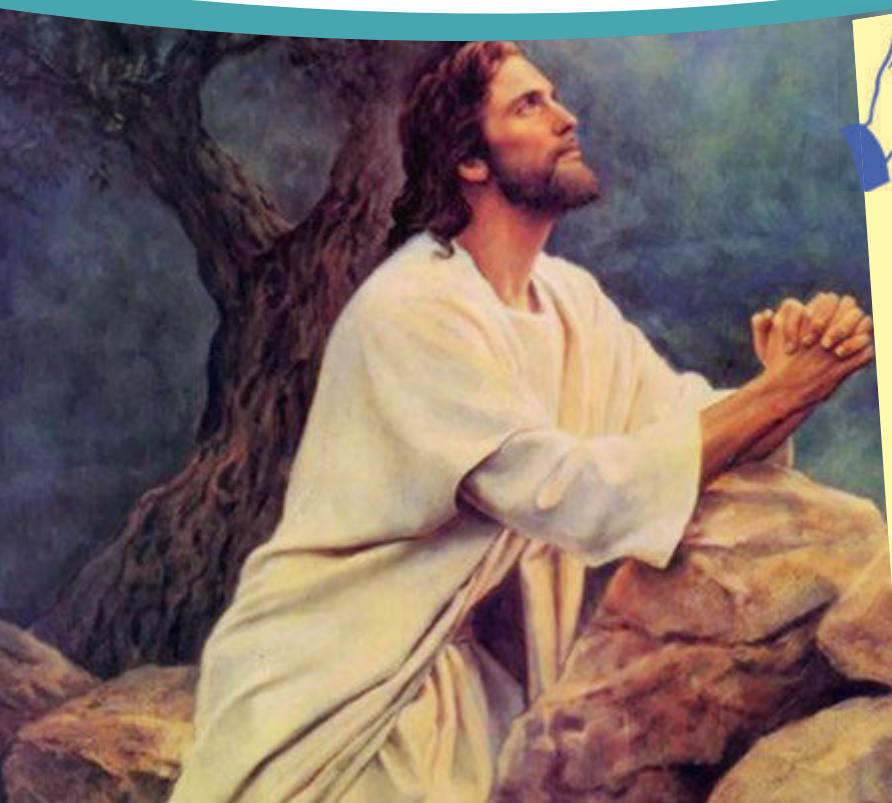
Place:

Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,



: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



ONE FAITH, ONE MISSION: Christ Jubilee with SMYM

The Christ Jubilee Celebration of SMYM and the inauguration of the Jubilee programme were held at St. George Pilgrim Church, Munchirai, on Sunday, 16 February 2025. The programme commenced at 9:30 AM with a session on indulgence led by Rev. Fr. Anil Raj. This was followed by the solemn celebration of the Holy Qurbana, which was presided over by Rev. Bishop. During the symbolic offertory procession, the youth from various parishes presented seven symbolic offerings, representing the seven programmes planned for the Jubilee Year. After the Holy Qurbana, the inauguration ceremony was conducted, during which the seven Jubilee programmes were formally introduced. In the afternoon, an input session was conducted by Rev. Fr. Sahayadas from the Diocese of Kuzhithurai. He spoke about the Jubilee Year and how youth could spiritually prepare for its celebration. Approximately 70 young people actively participated in the entire programme.



DIFFERENTLY ABLED, DIVINELY CALLED:

Christ Jubilee 2025

Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), through its wing, the Association of Institutions for Differently Abled Children in Thuckalay (AIDACT), celebrated the Christ Jubilee 2025 by honouring differently abled children on 22 February 2025 at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. The event, titled "Talent Fest," brought together children and teachers from various schools, showcasing their exceptional talents. The celebration was made unforgettable by the impressive cultural performances presented by the differently abled children. Rev. Bishop presided over the meeting. Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General and President of KKSSS, Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, Provincial Superior of FCC Sanjoe Province, and Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, Provincial Superior of SABS Thuckalay Province, felicitated the event.





A Sacred Haven @ Palappallam

On 23 February 2025, Rev. Bishop celebrated Holy Qurbana at Christ the King Church, Palappallam, at 4:30 PM. Following the Mass, the faithful proceeded in a procession to the cemetery, where the newly built cemetery chapel was blessed by Rev. Bishop. The new chapel was generously sponsored in loving memory of Mr. C. Anbian (Retired Teacher) and Mrs. Y. Lourdh Mary (Retired Teacher) by their family. During the blessing ceremony, Rev. Bishop emphasized the importance of prayer for the departed souls and the sacredness of the resting place of the faithful. After the blessing, the parishioners offered candles before the chapel in memory of their beloved ones. The ceremony was graced by the active participation of all parishioners, making it a memorable and spiritually uplifting event for the entire community.



Biblical Brilliance: Who Will Be the Champion?

The diocesan-level Bible Quiz for Sunday School students was held on 23 February 2025 at Padanthalumoodu at 2:00 PM. More than 400 students from classes five to twelve participated in the quiz. The students were categorized according to their class levels.





SPIRITUAL AWAKENING: Mathru Jyothis' Chaithanya Experience

A special seminar titled 'Chaitanya' was conducted in two different foranes for the Mathru Jyothis members. The programme focused on psychological well-being, including stress relief techniques and various interactive activities. It aimed to help mothers understand their mental state and respond positively to life's challenges, drawing insights from the Theology of the Body. The seminar was held at St. Alphonsa College, Soosaipuram, on 16 February 2025, and at Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu, on 23 February 2025. The sessions were animated by Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil, the Director of Mathru Jyothis. More than 100 members actively participated in the programme.





THREE DECADES AND BEYOND: Honoring Karunai Illam's Mission

Karunai Illam, the home for mentally challenged children in Nithiravilai, joyfully celebrated its 32nd annual day on 27 February 2025. The event was a heartfelt gathering that highlighted the resilience, talents, and achievements of the children under the loving care of the institution.

The celebration commenced with a prayer service, invoking God's blessings upon the children, caregivers, and benefactors of Karunai Illam. A variety of cultural programs followed, showcasing the talents of the children through songs, dances, and skits, which captivated the audience and demonstrated their remarkable abilities. The event was graced by the presence of

Rev. Bishop, who presided over the function and delivered an inspiring message on the importance of inclusivity and compassionate service towards the differently abled. Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Vicar General, along with several priests, religious sisters, and benefactors, attended the event, offering their encouragement and support. During the program, special recognition was given to the dedicated staff and caregivers of Karunai Illam for their selfless service in nurturing and supporting the children. The benefactors and well-wishers who have generously contributed to the growth of the home were also appreciated.



In Loving Memory

of Sr. Maria Goretti Azhakanparampil

With profound sorrow, the Diocese received the sad news of the passing of Rev. Sr. Maria Goretti Azhakanparampil SH on 25 February 2025. Her dedicated service spanned an impressive 38 years in the diocese, where she tirelessly worked for the kingdom of God, particularly in the Kanyakumari mission and the Diocese of Thuckalay.

Sr. Maria Goretti was a pioneering missionary who made significant contributions to various ministries, including teaching and serving as the directress of orphanages in Arukani, Mukkoottukal, Anamugham, and Palugal. Her selfless dedication left a lasting impact on the communities she served. Her mortal remains were kept at St. Mathew's SH Provincial House, Changanacherry, from 7:00 AM on Wednesday, 26 February 2025, allowing the faithful to pay their respects. The funeral service commenced at 3:00 PM, with the first part of the liturgy presided over by Mar Joseph Perumthottam, Archbishop Emeritus of Changanacherry. Rev. Bishop presided over the funeral Holy Qurbana and the remaining liturgical services, with Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the Chancellor, concelebrating. The SH Sisters serving in the diocese, along with faithful from the parishes where Sr. Maria Goretti had ministered, gathered to pray for the repose of her soul and to participate in the final funeral rites.



"WITH CLOSED PALMS OF GRATITUDE..."



Fr. Joseph Koovalloor is transferred from St. Joseph Mission, Rameswaram on 22 February 2025.

WITH OPEN ARMS OF LOVE"



Fr. Isaac Kurichiyel is newly appointed as missionary in St. Joseph Mission, Rameswaram

A Life Well-Lived...



Mr. Mathew Joseph (88)

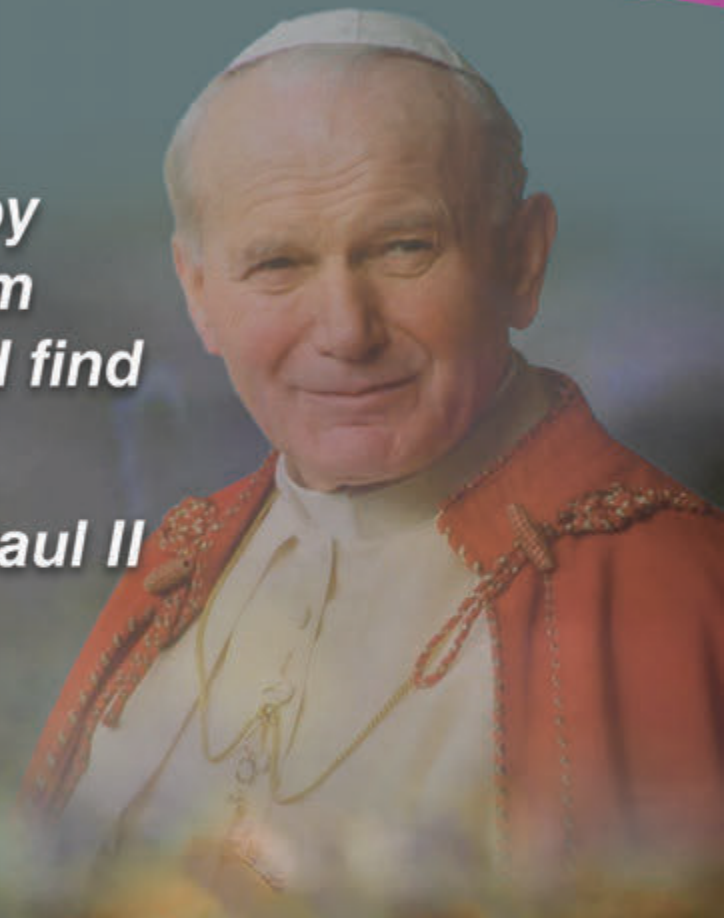
Father of Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese CMC,
(Provincial, CMC Province)



Thuckalay
MISSION
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

***"Do not let drugs destroy
your future! Escape from
the slavery of drugs and find
true freedom in Christ."***

-Pope John Paul II



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