

THUCKALAY TIDINGS

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



ST THOMAS
A PARADIGM FOR FAITH



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A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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Message

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Greetings in the name of the Great Apostle, St. Thomas.

We have celebrated the feast of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India on 3 July. This year marks the 1950th year of his martyrdom at Mylapore, Chennai. It is a joyous occasion for us to celebrate this special event solemnly, without losing the real spirit to find the true love of Jesus in our daily lives. We find St. Thomas on very few occasions in the Bible while other disciples appear at different moments in the life of Jesus. But these few occasions mark the particularities of his missionary spirit, which has ignited later our land with the love of God. One of the main episodes through which the Holy Bible recognizes the missionary spirit of St. Thomas is the 'famous doubt and the proclamation of his Faith with tears'.

Despite the repeated assurances of the Eleven he was adamant: "Unless I see... I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). It is not difficult to think of the feelings that passed through the heart and mind of Thomas: indifference, skepticism and envy for not having been as lucky as his friends. Certainly, he too would have absolutely desired to meet Jesus; but he had declared himself an agnostic, and he had to keep the point. For Thomas, it was not enough to listen to the story of the other Apostles who had seen the Risen One. And he was precise in indicating the conditions for believing: he would need to touch, to see, to verify. Thomas was not vague: he spoke of the nails that pierced the hands and the feet; he spoke of the gash on the side which would be the verification of the death of Jesus.

Eight days later Jesus appeared again; and He repeated: "... Peace be with you!" (Jn 20:25). This time the great absentee of the previous Sunday was also present. And the decision of Thomas not to believe the testimony of the Eleven if he had not first seen and touched the mark of the nails, corresponded to the initiative of Jesus who personally addressed his disciple: "... Put your finger here; ... reach out your hand ..." (Jn 20:27). Just as Thomas had claimed, allowing him to have that disconcerting experience of putting his

finger in the nail mark and touching the wound in his side. The Risen Jesus went to meet the apostle Thomas and led him to proclaim the highest profession of faith present in the Holy Scriptures: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28). He had come for Thomas, to meet him, to make him share in his joy. Jesus asked Thomas to abandon himself to the faith with an act of freedom. Thomas trusted and became a believer; he no longer needed material proofs to believe; he entered into dialogue with Jesus and pronounced the greatest and the most beautiful confession that has been made by a disciple in the whole Gospel.

Thomas had initially adopted a scientific attitude: he had asked for rigorous proofs and efficient verification. This is not the path of faith. When he met Christ he changed position. The difficulties and obscurities of believing are well described in this encounter of the Risen Jesus with the disciple Thomas. All of us are present in him, our slowness in the journey of faith, our cries and our fears. Faith is not easy to conquer, nor is it easy to keep. Faith needs times of maturation and deepening. Thomas expresses the drama of those who are disappointed and do not believe. But Jesus looks for every man, every person. And He looks for him not because He needs him. He is in glory. Jesus seeks an encounter with the human person to make him a sharer in His joy and in His glory.

Dear friends in Jesus Christ, let this Dukrana, the feast of St. Thomas, be a moment in our life to have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Let me wish you a very happy feast to you all especially those who bear the name 'Thomas'.



+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay



St Thomas Month

The Eastern Church celebrated the 1950th anniversary of the Martyrdom of St Thomas, the Apostle of India on 3 July 2022. The Diocese of Thuckalay wished to earmark this event for renewal of the missionary spirit by commemorating the entire month of June as St. Thomas Month. The inauguration was held in all the parishes of our Diocese on 5 June 2022 during

the Holy Mass. A meaningful procedure for instilling in us missionary spirit like a short procession at the beginning of Holy Mass carrying the statue or photo of St Thomas, lighting of the lamp placed in front of the photo, recitation of a special prayer to St Thomas and homily by the parish priest highlighting the importance of the missionary spirit that we ought to learn from St Thomas, whose confession My Lord and My God continues to be a witness to the mission of Christ. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb celebrated the Holy Mass at Holy Family Church, Thakkalivilai.



A one-day seminar on the life and spirituality of St Thomas, the Apostle was organized for the priests and religious of the Diocese at Kalluvilai on 18 June 2022. Rev. Fr James Kurikilamkatt MST stressed on the need to keep the spirit of evangelisation alive by inducing reflections on St. Thomas, person and his mission journeys, Rampanpattu and Vanchipattu (poetry and singing on St. Thomas), the martyrdom of St Thomas, Thomasian Spirituality and challenges in the future. It was a very enriching seminar to recall and follow the footsteps of our Father in faith and to discover our true identity.

Celebration of the Sainthood of St Devasahayam at Kattadimalai



The Catholic Church in India celebrated the Sainthood of St. Devasahayam, the first lay Saint, at the place of his martyrdom at Kattadimalai (Aralvaimozhi) on 5 June 2022. The celebration was spearheaded by the Dioceses of Kottar and Kuzhithurai by organising a thanksgiving celebration. Most Rev. Leopoldo Girelli, Apostolic Nuncio of India, His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, Most Rev. Filipe Neri Ferrao, President of CCBI, Archbishops and Bishops across India were present for the event. His Excellency Mar George Rajendransdb, priests, religious and faithful of the Diocese participated in this historical event. The Holy Mass was officiated by Most Rev. George Antonysam, President of Tamilnadu Bishops Council (TNBC) with hundreds of priests. The students of our St. Alphonsa College of Arts and Science participated in the cultural event that followed the Holy Mass.


Earlier on we were privileged to receive and host our Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alencherry to the Diocese on 4 June 2022.

Popular Mission at Thettiyodu and Pallikonam

The popular mission retreats, which we began in our Diocese on 24 January 2021, were later suspended due to covid pandemic and related restrictions. We are very happy that the popular mission retreats have resumed from the month of June this year. The popular mission retreats were conducted at Thettiyodu Parish during 12-17 June 2022 and at Pallikonam Parish during 19-24 June 2022. The retreats, animated by Rev. Fr. Edward Raj V.C and Rev. Fr Lijo, created a spiritual renewal and helped to deepen the faith of the people.




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



Educare Camp

Spark is a ten-day yearly residential camp conducted for Educare students by the Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS). The programme took place from 28 May 2022 to 7 June 2022. The inaugural session was animated by Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil, Director of KKSSS and his team. The main focus of the camp was conducting several activities, events and programs for the all-around growth of Educare students. The training animated by Dr. Amalraj and Prof. Jerome and 55 student's were participants. His Excellency Mar. George Rajendran sdb presided over the valedictory function and Rev. Fr. John Kumar, Director of Marthandam Integral Development Society (MIDS) was the chief guest.

You can come forward to partner the Educare Sponsorship Program of the Diocese of Thuckalay.

You can help a Child for Education at different levels.

School Education : 5 - 7 Years

College Education : 3 Years

For details contact

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Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha in Parishes

The Diocese conducts every year the *Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha* (VPV), Faith Formation Fest, in the first two weeks of May. But this year because of the Tamil Nadu Board examinations, the VPV was postponed to the last week of May and the first week of June, concluding it on 12 June 2022. Taking into account the importance of VPV in the faith formation of our children, all the priests and religious involved and collaborated well in organizing this important event. Our extended mission territories of Virudhunagar, Theni, Kayathar and Madurai could witness active participation. The Diocese witnessed the enthusiasm of the young children in participating in VPV.





Priests' Conference with Major Archbishop

The Diocese availed the opportunity of the visit of our Major Archbishop Mar. George Cardinal Alencherry to the Diocese and organised the Priests Conference on 6 June 2022 at Sangamam. Our Major Archbishop spent sufficient time with the priests in interaction and dialogue. He was very happy to know the priests and the missionary activities of each and every priest present in the Conference. He also recalled his

missionary life as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Thuckalay. He shared some of the difficulties that he and the priests then had experienced and how they had converted them into opportunities for the Church through meticulous planning and action. It was an opportunity to express gratitude, love, support and prayers of the entire presbyterium to our beloved Major Archbishop.



The Diocese accords a warm welcome to
Rev. Fr. Jogesh Polachira
belonging to Buxar Diocese
for pastoral ministry in our Diocese.

He has been relieved
from his parent Diocese
for three years of time.



Vocational Training in Tailoring at Ariyoor

Two-month special training course in tailoring ended at St Alphonsa Vocational Training and Community Centre, Ariyoor, Madurai Mission on 15 June 2022. We are happy that our missionaries under the supervision of Rev. Sr. Roselin SABS have been making constant efforts to empower the underprivileged and the poor through vocational training programmes for finding some employment. The women are paid special attention to enhance the family income. Two full time tailoring teachers are employed to conduct the training. There are 20 beneficiaries in the first phase of training in tailoring. It is heartening to see the confidence and achievement in the eyes of the trainees when they completed the course.



New Mission at Meenachil, Padanthalumoodu

The Diocese of Thuckalay is graced with the establishment of a new Mission Centre, named after the Saint of the month, St. Thomas. The new community is formed by the members of one of the *Uraviams* (Basic Christian Community) consisting of 13 families of Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. St Thomas Mission Centre was inaugurated on Pentecost Sunday, 5 June 2022. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by Rev. Fr. Dency Mundunadackal,

who is in-charge of the Mission. We are very grateful to Mr. Sugumaran member of the new Mission, who has generously provided us his home for the prayer services. We are also grateful to Mr. Mariadhas and Mr. Edwinson who were present during the inauguration and interacted with the families. We pray that that St. Thomas Mission Centre will grow from strength to strength through the evangelical activities of the faithful, the priests and religious.



Animators Meet of *Kuzhanthai Issu Iyakkam*

The inauguration of all the activities of *Kuzhanthai Issu Iyakkam* (KII) for the year 2022-23 and the first animators meeting was held at Kalluvilai on 4 June 2022. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb urged upon all the animators to keep their focus on faith formation among the little children. He stressed that foundation of faith is laid in the family and it is our

responsibility to nurture it in them. The 50 participants who attended the meet were provided guidance on promoting faith formation and spiritual growth of all the children in our parishes. Rev. Fr. Anil Raj, Director thanked the former secretary of the department, Rev. Sr. Jeny CMC and welcomed the new Secretary, Rev. Sr. Blessy CMC.





Inauguration of the **Silver Jubilee of St Mary's Church, Thuckalay**

We are very happy that the Churches and Mission Centres, one after another, celebrate their Silver Jubilees after the Diocese celebrated its own. St Mary's Church, Thuckalay inaugurated its Silver Jubilee on 5 June 2022 with the lighting of the

Jubilee candle. A solemn Holy Eucharistic was concelebrated by our Major Archbishop Cardinal Mar George Alencherry in the presence of our dear Bishop after which an inaugural meeting was held at Bishop's House after the Holy Mass.





Health Commission Meeting

The Diocesan Health Commission held its review meeting on 7 June 2022 at Family Apostolate Centre, Kalluvilai. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb presided over the meeting and called upon all members to assess the need, plan and implement programs for the welfare of the poor and needy that we primarily serve. The members also observed the World

Environmental Day by planting trees in the campus at Kalluvilai. The members expressed heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil, the outgoing Director and welcomed the new director, Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil. Rev. Sr. Diana SDS, President of the Commission, presented the annual report and shared activities for the last year.



New Academic Year at St. Mary's Minor Seminary

"The Seminary is the family of Nazareth where Jesus was welcomed, cared for and formed in view of the mission entrusted to him by the Father."- Pope Francis

This academic year 2022-23 was officially started with the Holy Mass concelebrated by His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb on 25 June 2022. The inaugural ceremony, colored with many cultural activities of the seminarians, was also attended by Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General, and Rev. Fr. Augustin Thalodil, Forane Vicar of Manjalumoodu with their felicitations.

This year eleven brothers are under formation, in which two brothers are doing the final year formation of the Minor Seminary and in the second year, we have one brother, who is doing his higher secondary studies at Holy Family Higher Secondary School, Mukkoottukal. The Seminarians got admitted newly in the Seminary for the first year formation is eight.

We are also happy to note here that, a three-day vocation camp was conducted at St Mary's Minor Seminary from 31 May 2022 to 2 June 2022. 35 candidates from different parishes of our Diocese participated in the camp and one from the Diocese of Mananthavady. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb paid a visit on 2 June 2022. He celebrated the Holy Mass at the Seminary praying especially to the Holy Spirit to inspire and direct their lives. He also interacted personally with all the candidates. It is important to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send abundant laborers for His service.



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

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

Postal Address:

Bishop's House, P.B. 12, Thuckalay,
Kanyakumari District,
Tamilnadu – 629 175, INDIA

Contact Mission Procure:

Rev. Fr Robin Jose
+91 4651 250633; +91 94871 65903;
Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



Thenkasi Mission Meet

The Thenkasi missionaries gathered at Sacred Heart Convent, Panpoli for prayer and reflection and review meeting on 22 June 2022. The Eucharistic Adoration was animated by Rev. Fr. Seby Manimalakandathil. The girls residing at the convent hostel also received a chance to witness the prayer service with the priests and religious. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb met these young girls and talked to them about the Gospel values and the life of righteousness.

The Fathers and Sisters thanked Rev. Sr. Collette CMC who was leaving the Thenkasi mission after many years of service. The Bishop presented her a memento as a sign of our gratitude. He also congratulated the school correspondents of Thenkasi Mission for their success in the Board examinations. He reiterated that their success is very special as we are able to witness the growth and development of the children of families that live in utter poverty. All missionaries in Thenkasi Mission were asked to find new villages to reach out and keep a record of their visits and present the report during the Mission meetings.





Parents and Strengthening of FAMILY VALUES

The Global Day of Parents which falls on the first day of June was commemorated in an extensive way by Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social arm of the Diocese. The KKSSS took every step to organise programs and events for strengthening family values.

The KKSSS, in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Social Service Society (TASOSS) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to organise programs at various places to empower and strengthen family bonds.

At KKSSS, a program was organised for the Educare students to convey the importance of family to children. On the occasion, a pencil drawing competition on 'Family' was organised for the Educare students and it was decided to distribute gifts to the children on Educare Day.

Family Strengthening Camp at SHG Level and for Educare parents was organised by KKSSS at Palugal, Mankarai, Chitharal, Malavilai and Manjalumoodu. It was heartening to see that about 300 parents participated in the different places. Most of the women who participated were daily wage earners and they gave up their earnings for the day and attended the program. The women were very happy for the awareness created and for the tips they received for making the family a happy one.

The KKSSS also invited parents of schools children at Kalluvilai, Palugal, Annikarai and Marapady and organised a program under the topic 'Values of Family'. It was stressed that young children imbibe and learn family values from watching the ways parents and other family members treat them and that family values include sharing, communicating, and respect, then those values will be observable in child's environment. We are happy that around 350 parents participated in this campaign for values in family.

A campaign on the role of parents was also organised at levels of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) at Pallikonam and Munchirai on 2 June 2022 and 10 June 2022 respectively. It was emphasised that the role of parents is to provide encouragement, support and access to activities that enable the child to master key developmental tasks. A parent is child's first and best teacher and role model throughout the life. The 80 SHG members who





participants in the program provided a very positive feedback on the campaign and urged upon the organisers to support them with similar programs from time to time.

Village level campaigns were held at Muthalar and Mankarai on 2 June 2022 and 3 June 2022 respectively. Family Relationship was the main topic for this campaign. The program, which reiterated the importance of family relationships

and the ways and means to tackle critical situations in the families, was participated by 60 persons. Rev. Sr. Merin Rose, Coordinator of Changing The Way We Care (CTWWC) Project helped to organise the programs in the two villages. The participants appreciated the way the Diocese and the KKSSS is concerned about the welfare of the people.





Inauguration of Catechism 2022-23

The Catechism Department of the Diocese has always taken keen interest in the faith formation of young children. In view of beginning the new academic year of 2022-23 for the young Catholics in the Diocese, the Department organized the catechism Headmasters Meet on 4 June 2022 at Kalluviali. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb officially welcomed Rev. Fr. S. Abilash as the new Director and Rev. Fr. Jacob Ayyamathra as the new Joint Director. The Bishop inaugurated the catechetical year 2022-23 with the hope of young generation getting formed. There were 52 participants, and they were reminded of their duties and responsibilities in the catechetical formation of our young children.



The catechetical year 2022-23 was officially inaugurated in all the parishes of our Diocese on 5 June 2022. Directions were given from the catechetical department to all the parishes to have uniformity in the inaugural session. The solemn inaugural ceremony included an inaugural address by the unit director, lighting of the lamp, teachers' oath by holding the lighted candles and blessing by the parish priest.



Meeting of Missionaries of the Extended Territories at O Kovilpatti



The missionaries working in the extended territories received an opportunity to come together at St Joseph's Church campus, O Kovilpatti, Virudhunagar on 16 June 2022. The Bishop and Vicar General were very happy to meet and interact with the Fathers and Sisters who are serving the extended territories, most of them holding on to the command of Christ in difficult circumstances through constant prayer and reflection. The meeting began with the

adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Rev. Fr. Peter Kizhakkeyil animated the Eucharistic adoration. All the Fathers and Sisters shared their mission experiences and the challenges that they faced. They pointed out, the help and assistance the Church needs to render to the poor and downtrodden. They suggested to establish a separate social service society for coordinating all the charitable activities in the extended territories.

VOCATION AND MISSION

Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadath

A Missionary with a Firm Smile



Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadath is another precious gift from the Archdiocese of Changanacherry to the Thuckalay Mission. He was born on 2 February 1965 at Kudamaloor, Kerala as the second child to Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Thresiamma couples and the family was beautiful with two sisters and a brother and one of his sisters died at the age of 35 of brain hemorrhage. He was born and brought up in a big joined family where all lived under one shelter specifically members of three generations.

Tidings team expresses the joy to present you a report of the few moments spent with Fr. Jose, former Vicar General of the Diocese.

Tidings: Thank you very much, dear Rev. Fr Jose, for your kind acceptance of our request for this interaction to be published in the next issue of Thuckalay Tidings. We have heard from many that your family is the same of our first Indian Saint Alphonsa. Can you share some family experiences with us?

Fr Jose: It is great joy and privilege to me to share a few experiences of my life with the readers of Tidings. Family, as everyone affirms, is the basic powerhouse of what I am. I

cannot simply limit this family formation which helped me to mould me to become a priest, rather it is in family where I found my own human identity. I believe that a good human being is the basic principle of becoming a good and saintly priest. Prayerful atmosphere and interpersonal relationships in the family helped me a lot to go beyond all the limitations to find 'the other' and God in all things.

Tidings: About the prayer life in family?

Fr Jose: Prayer life in a family is a must for its stability and fidelity. I remember the strictness of my parents to gather the whole family at 7 PM in the evening for family prayer. That was like an unwritten law in the family. Nobody had ever missed this moment unless occupied with some unavoidable duties. Another important lesson which I learnt is the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Daily celebration of the Holy Mass and participation in the parish pious activities inspired a lot to my vocation to priesthood. Besides, one of my uncles and two aunts are also religious and doing their ministry in different parts of India.

Tidings: What are the other values you received?

Fr Jose: Ours is a simple average agricultural family. I can't claim anything extraordinary from anyone. As it was a joined family, a



selfless cooperation of every member was inevitable for the smooth running of the family. Traditionally we were practicing also natural eye treatment and my ancestors were called *Vaidyars* (practioners of traditional medicine) by the local people. Now nobody is interested to take forward this practice in our family. The patience of my parents and grandparents in dealing with the clients imparted me lessons of patience, which has helped me a lot during the ministry.

Tidings: Father, Thank you very much. Something about your schooling and vocation, please?

Fr Jose: I started my basic official education at 'Kalari' commonly called as 'Asan Kalari'. Then I was sent to Thonnankuzhy Lower Primary School and then to St. Ephrem's Boys School, Mannanam. It was not a school near to the house. But my parents were so concerned about my Christian formation. I enjoyed a lot my schooling, earning precious amity with many friends. I was not an intelligent student but I was always available for helping others. I don't remember anything extraordinary during my school. Outside the circle of my friendships, I have few things to remember regarding the extra-curricular and curricular activities. When I was in the 10th standard, fathers from different congregations and dioceses paid visit to us inviting us to seminaries. I was least interested in the beginning but we in our friendship circle decided to participate in a vocation camp for



the Archdiocese of Changanacherry and finally we took the decision to join in the seminary. We were four of us who joined the seminary for formation and two left and we two of us entered into our priestly ministry.

Tidings: Minor seminary and initial formation?

Fr Jose: I was accompanied by my grandfather on the first day to the seminary. Rev. Fr Tomas Srampickal was the Rector. Thinking of my first day in the minor seminary, I can't stop laughing even today. When he heard that I belonged to Muttathupadam family, he might have thought that I was very intelligent in studies and asked me to spell the word 'farmer' and he asked me to find out the word in the dictionary. But to be very frank, it was the first time I touched a dictionary with my hands. Then I could have seen a compassionate heart in him and helped me a lot to learn many things. I remember the solemn preparation which I had for joining officially in the seminary in the year 1980. Totally we were 32 seminarians. Initially I was so reserved in nature and I was finding difficulty to mingle with others. After the first-year formation, we were sent to S B College, Changanacherry for the pre-degree studies. During these years I found another vocation inside my vocation to priesthood, i.e., as a basketball player. One of the best qualities that I earned during my minor seminary studies is to say 'yes' to everyone. I was available to all





for their needs and it helped me a lot to change my reserved character.

Tidings: About your philosophy studies, theology and regency?

Fr Jose: I did my philosophical studies at Carmelgiri Seminary Aluva, Kerala. It had contributed a rich experience to me especially having companions from different dioceses of all the three rites, Latin, Syro Malabar and Syro Malankara. One of the first incidents by which I became a noted personality was the friendly basketball match between the first year and third year batches. Different from the traditional championship, we, the first-year students defeated our seniors and the seminary sports committee selected me as the new captain. We were 83 of us in our batch and our rector was Rev. Fr Thomas Paul Urumbackal, a pioneer in Thuckalay Diocese. After 3 years of philosophy studies, I did my regency together with another brother Mathew Chethipuzhaat at Perunthadi estate, Kasargode under the guidance of Rev. Fr Joseph Chirackadavil. After vestition, I started my theology studies at Mangalapuzha Seminary in the year 1988. During the theology studies I was very much open to everyone. I tried my level best to prepare myself for the pastoral services especially

mingling with people during the Sunday ministry in parishes. Theology courses gave me more conviction about my vocation and helped me a lot to profound my little knowledge about God.

Tidings: Your Ordination and initial Ministries?

Fr Jose: I was ordained on 26 December 1991 at St. Mary's Church, Kudamaloor by the imposition of hands by His Excellency Mar Joseph Powathil. Being in religious in nature and having number of priests and sisters, my family supported me for the solemn celebration of my ordination and first Holy Qurbana. First, I was appointed as the assistant parish priest at St. Mary's Church Veroor, Changanacherry and my vicar was Rev. FrCyriacKottayil (sr). His boldness in taking decisions at crucial situations and prayerful life helped me to mould myself to exercise better priestly ministry in different levels. He had entrusted me and helped me to guide various pious activities and associations in the parish. After one year, I was asked by the Archbishop to go to mission.

Tidings: In Kanyakumari Mission – Your joys and sorrows?



Fr Jose: I came to Kanyakumari Mission at Palappallam and started learning the Tamil language. In the beginning, I was feeling very lonely as there was no one during the week days to share my joys and sorrows. Then I started enjoying my life as a missionary in this territory. After the Holy Qurbana, people were so enthusiastic also to correct my language errors. They were correcting with care and love. The young and energetic service spirit helped me to travel kilometers and kilometers every day to meet people and to celebrate Holy Qurbana for them. Those days we had only motor cycles. Many times, I met with accidents caused by crossing of street dogs. But nothing hindered me from doing my missionary activities. I had stayed at Palappallam for seven years and during these years I constructed a parish church for the faithful with the help of a few foreign friends. Besides the service at Palappallam as parish priest, I was taking care of Pilankarai Church

and partial ministry at Kattathurai and Paruthivilai.

Tidings: We know about your long service at Padanthalumoodu. Can you share your experiences?

Fr Jose: I was transferred to Padanthalumoodu Church in the year 2002. I was appointed there after the blessed service rendered by Rev. Fr Mancherikalam. He had a very good name among the parishioners and in the society. This appointment was a surprise for me as I did not have any prior experiences in the education field. But God helped me a lot to adapt myself to the new venture. During my 12 years of services at Padanthalumoodu, I constructed new buildings for the Church and School. Kunnuvilai, Kulasekharam, Marthandam are some of other missions, which God started through my hands. Now I am so grateful to my God for these ineffable gifts which He had poured in my life. While during my ministry at

Padanthalumoodu I served also Thettiyode and Athencode parishes. It is during my time, our present bishop was ordained priest and then as bishop. I stand as the testimony for both these events as his parish priest. Last moments of my ministry were so painful after the sudden death of Rev. Fr Kodiyanthara, our former Vicar General and deaths of our dear priests.

Tidings: Your service as the Vicar General of the Diocese?

Fr Jose: That I can't understand ... (laughing) ... I think that it is purely a plan of God. I am sure that I am not worthy to be the Vicar General but I was received cordially by all priests and faithful. Besides, I was given charge of the Sangamam, our pastoral centre and then parish priest at Vayalinkarai. What adds joy to my missionary life is the beginning of different missions at different places. I was not an extra ordinary Vicar General. But I tried my best to help our fellow priests especially those who were in difficulty. Another important venture that I started in Vayalinkarai is the beginning of a tailoring centre under V-Star group to give job opportunities to the poor people.

Tidings: After your service as Vicar General, you are appointed as the Forane Vicar of Nithiravilai. Did you feel any degrading sensitivity?

Fr Jose: Ohh! Never. I had never desired to become the Vicar General and what is important to me is my priesthood. I am ready to go wherever I am sent by my superiors.



Nithiravilai was my next mission and it was one of the oldest missions began in Kanyakumari Mission by the missionaries from Changanacherry. I was so proud and happy to take up this charge as this mission was blessed by the ministry of many saintly priests. I was given also additional charge as the parish priest of Christurajapuram and some other institutions. Today I continue this service with immense joy and satisfaction obviously amidst different problems. I consider my service not as my own but we are just instruments of God as Mother Teresa teaches, "I am a pencil in the hands of God". I am not worried about anything because nothing happens without the knowledge of Christ.

Tidings: Thank you very much, Father, for your precious time spent with us. We wish you all the blessings for your ministry. What is your message to the readers?

Fr Jose: I am so grateful to you for the opportunity to share my life with the readers of Tidings. As a message, I have only one thing to remind you all to be faithful to God of our vocation and trust in God wholeheartedly.



Thuckalay
MISSION
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

**We wish all the Grandparents
a Very Happy Feast of
Saints Joachim and Anne.**

**May you all keep very good
health in mind and body
through the intercession of
Saints Joachim and Anne.**



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