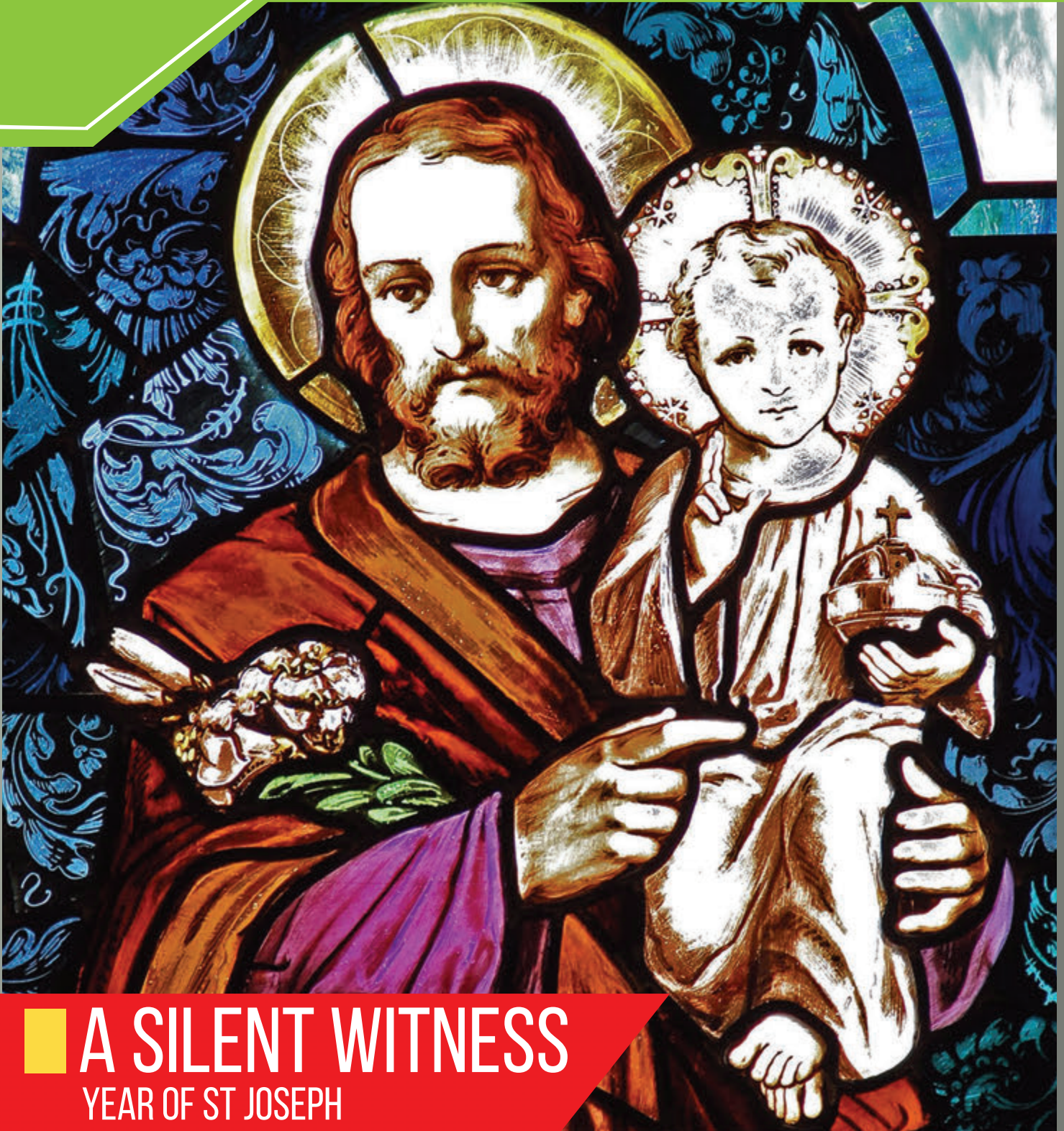


THUCKALAY TIDINGS

MARCH 2021 | VOL. 1 | ISSUE 1
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



A SILENT WITNESS
YEAR OF ST JOSEPH



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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

March 2021 | Vol. 1 | Issue 1

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY
BISHOP'S HOUSE
P. B. No. 12, Thuckalay P.O.
Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu – 629 175



Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors of Thuckalay Mission,

Greetings and prayerful wishes from Bishop's House, Thuckalay.

We are happy to publish the THUCKALAY TIDINGS, a monthly online news letter, aiming at dispatching information and report of our major activities to all the friends and benefactors of the Diocese. Our Mission Diocese is able march forward and proclaim the Gospels in the remote parts of Tamilnadu only with the help of our benefactors and friends. Therefore, we feel it important to inform our friends regularly and keep you all close to the Diocese you love dearly.

The newsletter contains information and activities of the diocese such as: Seminary formation of brothers, Vocation story of our brothers, priests and religious, Mission visits and activities, Know your church: a short history of a mission church, and some important events and activities that are held in the month. I am sure these will give you a panoramic view of the Diocese. We do value your participation and involvement in the Diocese. We in the Diocese assure you that you and your near and dear ones are continuously in our prayers.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis declared the beginning of a Year of St Joseph on 8 December 2020 for the Universal Church. The timing was perfect, coming on the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pius IX declaring St Joseph as the Patron of the Catholic Church and on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Joseph's spouse. Along with the Pope's announcement in his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* - Heart of the Father - came a proclamation from the Apostolic Penitentiary about special plenary indulgences that are now available for this Year of St Joseph.

Pope Francis describes St Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows. The Holy Father wrote *Patris Corde* against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us to see more clearly the importance of ordinary people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble St Joseph, the man who goes unnoticed - a daily, discreet and hidden presence - who nonetheless played an incomparable role in the history of salvation. May St Joseph intercede for all of us.

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay





St. Mary's Minor Seminary

St Mary's Minor Seminary, which is located at Mukkoottukal, was established in the year 1998 by the then Bishop of the Diocese, now our Major Arch Bishop of Syro Malabar Church, Cardinal Mar George Alencherry. Presently, Bishop George Rajendran SDB takes keen interest in the formation of the Seminarians for future leadership for the Church.

The Seminary is committed to providing basic formation in order to kindle the young minds in priestly vocation and at the same time make them complete their Higher Secondary Course. The young seminarians are to acquire a sufficient knowledge of languages, a proper method of study, habit of reading and articulation of one's ideas along with the spiritual formation that they undergo. The young minds spent 4 years of their life in the Seminary – in the first year, the seminarians are oriented towards basic information of the Church, liturgy and practices of the Church, two years are spent on Higher Secondary Education and the final year is spent on discernment through human and spiritual values.

At present the strength of the Seminary is 12 with 8 brothers in the fourth (final) year and from the remaining four, two brothers are third years, are doing their Plus-Two, and two brothers are second years and are doing their Plus-One in the Holy Family Higher Secondary School, Mukkoottukal.

The present seminary staff consist of Rev. Dr. Joshy Kulathumkal, as Rector; Rev. Fr Alex Moolakunnel, being the spiritual father and Rev. Fr. Shijo Aikkarakunnel, the Dean of studies.



Home Day *at*

ST. MARY'S MINOR SEMINARY

Home Day was organised at the Seminary on 27 February 2021. The celebrations began with a short prayer service. It is a great occasion for all the parents of the brothers to come together and witness the progress of their children in their initial formation to priesthood. The young seminarians prepared and practiced for a month and presented a cultural event of entertainment and awareness to their parents. Due to COVID-19, some parents of the seminarians from Kerala could not attend. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to interact with the Bishop of the Diocese and priests.

FOUNDATION for Charity Home of Vincent De Paul Society



The Central Council of the Society of St Vincent De Paul Thuckalay gathered at Asaripallam to bless and to lay the foundation stone of the VAAN (*Vidiyal Arul Avai Naduvam*) project on 14 February, 2021. It was a long cherished dream of the members of the St Vincent De Paul Society. The Bishop blessed the foundation stone. Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil and Rev. Fr Sanil Panthichirackal and representatives from the Society and St. Alphonsa Church, Nagercoil were present. VAAN, a home for the poor and downtrodden is located near the Kanyakumari Medical College at Asaripallam. The home will be used for accommodating the persons and attendants who look after patients in the Medical College.

Annual Day of Family Apostolate

The Eparchial Department for Family Apostolate celebrated its annual day on 28 February 2021. It was a beautiful gathering of mothers (Mathiru Jyothis - pious association). The celebration began with Holy *Qurbana*. After which the members had an open interaction with the Bishop sharing their faith experiences. One could identify and appreciate the honesty with which the mothers interacted with the Bishop, sharing their concerns, clarifying their doubts regarding Christian faith, issues in family life and the situation in the Diocese. There was a cultural programme organised after lunch in which many units from the various parishes participated. The women appreciated the special experience of coming together.





Blessing of **SHRINE** AT CHENAMCODE

Lourdes Matha Mission at Chenamcode constructed a Kurusady (Shrine) within a short period of time and it was blessed on 25 February, 2021. Since the Church is situated a little far from the main road, the shrine, it is hoped, will attract many people. The Shrine, which we believe will enhance the faith practices of the faithful, was completed through the efforts of Fr Sajan Nettaponghu, Parish Priest with the help of benefactors and the parishioners.



Blessing of **ALTAR** AT CHENAMCODE CONVENT

The FCC Sisters at St Assisi Convent, Chenamcode renovated the Altar of their convent chapel and it was blessed on 7 February 2021. We believe that kneeling and surrendering to the Blessed Sacrament will bring the peace and joy we long for.

Priests' Orientation Programme

As in previous years, this year too, a Priests' Orientation Programme was held on 12 & 13 February 2021 at Sangamam, Pastoral Centre of the Diocese. On the first day, we had a study session on the Eparchial Statutes initiated and guided by Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal. The priests were given a Session by Dr Betty from Nagercoil, on maintaining good and holistic health. The two sessions were followed by the Priests' Conference. Representatives of St Vincent De Paul Society, namely, Mr Roby, Mr Soundar Raj and Mr Edwinson Raj spoke about the VAAN (*Vidiyal Arul Avai Naduvam*) project to be executed at Asaripallam and its advantages. He requested the support and co-operation of the priests for the successful completion and running of this project for the benefit of poor people who come for treatment to the Medical College.



On the second day, Rev. Fr Xavier Arulraj, Secretary TNBC Legal Cell and a senior advocate took class on Child Protection Policy and POCSO Act. All the priests of the diocese attended the program and gained knowledge on the subjects.

Retreat for Families

It is for the first time that our Sinai Retreat Centre organised a four-days residential retreat at Sangamam from 25 –28 February 2021. Around 40 people from various parishes attended the retreat and we are happy to note that eight newly baptised Catholics from our Virudunagar Mission also attended the retreat. Rev. Fr Varghese Parekkattil VC was the preacher of the retreat.





WORLD DAY *of the* **SICK**

Health ministry is an important mission of the Church. The Diocese observed the World Day of the Sick on 12 February 2021. A special circular letter from the Chairman, TNBC Health Commission, was read in all our parishes and in some parishes special Holy Qurbana and prayers for the sick were organised. The members of the Eparchial Health Commission organised special awareness programmes for parishioners and school children and conducted free health camps.

Popular Mission Retreat



Preaching Popular Mission is the specific and distinctive charism of the Vincentians. Through this specific form of preaching the Word of God, they try to enkindle faith in the hearts of the people and help them towards their renewal and building up of a true Christian community. St. Vincent De Paul, the Heavenly Patron of the Congregation, started it for the spiritual enhancement and nourishment of the sacramental life of the poor village folk in France in the 17th Century. The Diocese of Thuckalay celebrates its Silver Jubilee this year, the main focus on the celebration is the spiritual renewal of the people with the **Theme: Put out into the deep** (Lk 5:4). To achieve this, the popular Mission Retreats are being held in all the parishes and mission centers of the Diocese by Vincentian Fathers. It is a commendable collaborative work of priests and religious working in the Diocese.





Ash Monday

NEED PRAYER SUPPORT!

The Diocese has prayer groups.

Please write the following and send SMS



94893 18525:

Name:

Place:

Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,



: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

The Diocese began the observation of the Holy Season of Lent on 15 February 2021. It is a time of intense preparation for the celebration of the Paschal Mysteries of Jesus Christ. In our tradition, the period of Lent is also called *50 Nonbum Oruthalum* (50 days of Fasting and Penance). This is because, all the days beginning from the Ash Monday of the Lent, including Sundays, are counted as days of abstention. The issue of whether the season of Lent should extend for 40 days (as is the case in the Latin Church) or 50 days, is a matter of liturgical tradition. The most important aspect is the spiritual essence of Lent. The ultimate purpose of all Lenten observations is the spiritual succour that all Catholics yearn for.

Birth Centenary of Cardinal Antony Padiyara



The Archdiocese of Changanaserry marked the Birth Centenary of Cardinal Antony Padiyara on 11 February 2021. From our Eparchy, the Bishop took part in the programme. The celebration began with a solemn concelebrated holy Qurbana by the bishops of the Province. The Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam was the main celebrant and Mar Mathew Moolakkatt gave an inspiring homily on the life and the mission of the Cardinal Padiyara. In the Public Meeting held thereafter, chaired by our Major Archbishop Mar George Alencherry, the bishop of Thuckalay spoke about the growth of the Kanyakumari Mission under the leadership of Cardinal Antony Padiyara.

JUBILEE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

A special meeting of the Jubilee Central Monitoring Committee and Central Animation Committee along with all the heads of departments and pious associations was held on 19 February 2021 at Sangamam. It was an opportunity to share and to make plans for the Jubilee activities in the Diocese. The Bishop encouraged the members to carry out all the planned activities faithfully in the Diocese.





Bishop's Visit to Priests' Family

As part of the action plan for the Silver Jubilee year of the Diocese, the Bishop is to visit the families of all priests of the Diocese this year beginning from March 2021. The bishop began his visit from 15 March 2021. The main focus of the visit is to spend some time with parents and dear ones of priests, pray with them and have a family meal together. This we strongly believe will bring about blessing of God in the family and missionary spirit in the Diocese, emphasising on the contribution of a family member in the mission of the Church.



BLESSING OF St Alphonsa Community Hall in Madurai



Ever since the extension of the territory of the Diocese to the seven civil districts of Tamilnadu in 2017, the Diocese began its mission work in Madurai in a rented house. Now that the Diocese has constructed a community hall for the purpose of mission work at Madurai, on a land donated by Mr. Jomichen, who belongs to the Syro Malabar migrant community in Madurai. It was blessed on 5 February 2021. Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Fr Thomas Sathianesan, Fr Johnsilal Arackaparampil, Fr Babu Thattil CMI, Fr Sebastian CMI, Fr Anil Raj, Sisters of SABS and SJSM and the family of Mr Jomichen participated in the blessing. The Centre will be known as St Alphonsa Tailoring Centre. We thank the Lord for the new arrangement that we were able to make at Madurai to further the missionary works.

On A Divine Call

Rev. Sr Alice Viji CMC

1985 – 2005 : Lecturer, K E College, Mannanam
 2005 – 2007 : Principal, K E College, Mannanam
 2007 – 2012 : Provincial, Holy Queen Province, Changanassery
 2012 – 2015 : Regional Superior, CMC Chavara Region, Thuckalay
 2015 – 2019 : Vice Provincial, CMC Chavara Vice Province, Thuckalay
 2019 – : Provincial, CMC Chavara Province, Thuckalay



Rev. Sr Alice Viji CMC is the Provincial of Chavara Province of Thuckalay of the Congregation of Mother of Carmel (CMC) since 2018. She was also the Provincial of the Changanassery Province from December 2006 to December 2012. Sr. Viji played the role of a catalyst in raising the CMC Chavara Region, Thuckalay into a Vice Province first and then into a Province.

Sr Alice was born on 8 December 1952 at Champakara, Kottayam, Kerala to Matthew Kalladayil and Mariyamma. They are 5 sisters and one brother in the family. While she was studying in School, she was inspired by two sisters, namely Sr. Theresa Nedunkunnam and Sr. Regis to join religious life. They provided a lot of guidance and care and they gradually become her role models. Sr. Alice was attracted to the Congregation of Mother of Carmel, when she observed the sisters' silent prayer in the school chapel and their life. She observed the sisters sitting for long hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel. The sisters had taught her ejaculatory prayers. To encourage her to make the right choices in life, the sisters shared with her books of the saints and asked her to write the summary after reading.

Sr. Alice takes joy in her religious life in her prayer and meditation. She feels that when she kneels in front of the Blessed Sacrament, she enjoys a special peace within her. This has been her strength throughout her religious life. She wishes to lead a saintly life.

Sr. Alice, besides her duties and pious practices in the Convent, enjoys reading, listening to music and talking with fellow sisters and lay people in order to provide them some insight into the mission of Christ.

First Religious Profession : 05.06.1971
 Final Religious Profession : 30.09.1974



Sr. Alice states that she had faced and continues to face challenges in life – beginning with parting with the parents was very difficult as she was the first child in the family; the parents did not allow her to chose religious life in the initial stage, but then they put a condition saying that she was allowed to go to the convent, however, she was advised to be completely loyal to the religious life for ever.

Sr. Alice further says that being the provincial of one of the biggest provinces, Changnassery in Kerala was a big challenge. Organizing everyone, every institutions and regulating the order was truly a challenge. However, she has always believed in the spirit of God which has guided her throughout her life. She also states that moving to Thuckalay Province was the next challenge, language, culture, inadequacy of sisters, non-availability of financial resources were some of the difficulties that she continues to face.

As a religious, Sr. Alice wishes to be like St. Little Flower, simple, prayerful and to be a small soul loving Jesus. The self motivation that she always undertakes is that she seeks Jesus in her inabilities and weaknesses. She strongly believes and keeps hearing the words in her prayers, “My Grace is sufficient for you”.

Sr. Alice advises the young minds to consider religious life and carry on the missionary works of the Church. She states that it a joyful life that one can get; she gets a lot of sisters around to support, share and to live with. Prayer life is the supportive factor and all sisters stand together in communion with each other in front of the Lord. The spirit of belongingness in a community that serves gives the strength to move ahead in joy. She believes that a religious sister is welcomed everywhere. She urges young girls to join the mission of Christ.

The Diocese of Thuckalay, through Thuckalay Tidings, wishes Rev. Sr. Alice Viji CMC the very best for her missionary leadership in the Province.

Participate in the Mission of the Church

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



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

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 94893 18525;
Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com



Thuckalay
MISSION
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

+ George Rajendran sdb

Bishop of Thuckalay

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BISHOP'S HOUSE

P. B. No. 12, Thuckalay P.O.

Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu – 629 175

The Diocese of Thuckalay wishes each one of you

a Very Happy Easter.

May the Joy of Easter be with you all.

**May the Risen Christ protect us from the current
pandemic and keep us all safe.**

