

THUCKALAY TIDINGS

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

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A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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Message

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,
Greetings and best wishes from the Diocese of Thuckalay.

It is with much joy that I pen down a few lines for THUCKALAY TIDINGS, expressing my profound gratitude for your constant prayers and monetary support to the Diocese. The three news priests to the Diocese are constantly praying for you all.

In this issue, I would offer some reflections on the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that we cherish from our childhood. We also need to inculcate and promote it among our people. It is also an important devotion in our Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. The best and most concrete symbol of the love of God is the Heart of His Son Jesus, which was pierced for us, from which flowed blood and water. In the Scriptures, we read: “The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (Jn 19:32-34). The Fathers of the Church see in the above passage the birth of the Church.

The use of Jesus' heart that symbolizes his love for humanity is not found in the Bible but in the writings of some medieval mystics. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus had an unofficial and an official beginning. It is unofficial because, as part of God's progressive divine plan to make the devotion to His Sacred Heart known to the world, it was revealed privately and consequently practised by many before the Holy Catholic Church gave it its official recognition.

Based on the heart of Jesus as a symbol of love, the Holy Catholic Church has always had a devotion to the love of God. This proof is found in the biblical writings of St John and St Paul. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). But this in itself is not a devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus because it does not pay homage to the Heart of Jesus as the symbol of His love for us.

Therefore, since God the Father made His indwelling in the Lord Jesus in such a way as the soul of humans do in their own bodies, the mind of the Lord Jesus was not the mind of God the Father. As in bilocation, in God the Father and in Jesus, two Divine minds were present, each manifesting itself individually through the one Soul of God.

Today, seven hundred years later, when many doubt the Divinity of the Lord Jesus, God's love is made known through the mystery of the Sacred Heart that affirms that through Jesus, God incarnated on earth and has manifested Divine love through His human nature. While Jesus had a human nature, begotten by the Father through the womb of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, His mind that proceeded from the Divine Soul of God was Divine in nature. For “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Pt 2:22).

We have entered the month of June fervently and with the resolve to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus with greater commitment and love! The pious Catholic families, as all of us are familiar, celebrate this month with a daily office of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the chaplet of Divine Mercy, together called the *thiruhridaya vanakamasam* after the recitation of the Holy Rosary. There is also a devout practice of dedicating families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during this month. Special devotions on Fridays are still another way of honouring the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

May God bless you all. Let us become ardent apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus!



+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay



Remembering Late Mar Joseph Powathil

The Diocese organised a memorial meeting and requiem Holy Eucharist to express our appreciation and honour to His Excellency Mar Joseph Powathil, the Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry and the crown of Syro-Malabar Church at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu on 04 May 2023. Many priests, religious and representatives of the laity participated in the event.

The remembrance meeting commenced with a documentary film prepared by Pulari Communications, offering a profound glimpse into the life and services of the Archbishop

Emeritus. Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General, extended a warm welcome to the distinguished guests and the attentive audience, setting the tone for the event. The meeting was presided by His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb. His Excellency Most Rev. Dr Vincent Mar Paulos, Bishop of Marthandam, and His Excellency Most Rev. Dr Peter Remegius, Bishop Emeritus of Kottar, delivered a heartfelt remembrance speeches, paying tribute to Mar Joseph Powathil. Rev. Fr. Philip Nelpuraparampil, representing the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, delivered a captivating keynote address, offering profound insights into the life of Mar Joseph Powathil. Additionally, Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, and Mr. John Kumari Thozhan, representing the priests, religious, and laity of the Diocese, shared their personal reminiscences of Mar Joseph Powathil, highlighting the significant impact he had brought in the mission of the Catholic Church. The diocesan choir melodiously performed a song composed by Mr. Mariadhas, paying homage to Mar Joseph Powathil.

At the end of the public meeting, a grace-filled office for the deceased and a Requiem Holy Eucharist was celebrated.





Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha in Parishes

The diocese diligently organized the *Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha* (VPV), the Vacation Bible Classes, during the first two weeks of May, keeping in mind the faith formation of the young children. VPV was successfully conducted in various parishes from 31 April 2023 to 14 May 2023. Recognizing the profound impact of VPV on the faith formation of our children, all the Fathers collaborated wholeheartedly to ensure its seamless execution. Even in our extended mission territories, such as Virudhunagar and Theni, the VPV was conducted with great enthusiasm and involvement. *Narcheythi Nilayam*, the department for catechism organized the event in the Diocese by providing textbooks and facilitating training programs for the VPV. The dedication and commitment demonstrated by all the Fathers in organizing the VPV is commendable.





VOCATION CAMP at Minor Seminary Mukkoottukal

The Vocation Commission of the Diocese successfully organized two vocation camps at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal this year. The first camp took place from 16 May to 18 May 2023 and was specifically tailored for students in classes X, XII, and those who had completed their degree. The camp welcomed 14 boys from the Diocese and one boy from Kerala. The camp was skilfully animated by major seminarians, who facilitated classes on various topics related to vocations. Our Fathers also played an integral role in delivering enlightening sessions. On the final

day, His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb celebrated Holy Eucharist and had individual interviews with each candidate, providing them with guidance and support as they discerned their vocational paths. The second camp, held on 19 May 2023, catered to students in classes VIII, IX, and XI. It served as a life orientation and vocation motivational camp, empowering the young to explore their personal calling and life goals. Ten students enthusiastically attended this camp, gaining valuable insights and inspiration for their future.





Health Awareness Program at Cumbum

The Health Commission of the Diocese took the initiative to organize a four-day Health Awareness Program in the villages of Palliyankudi and Aangoorpalayam, located in the Cumbum mission, which is one of the new mission territories of the Diocese of Thuckalay. This program, conducted from 17 to 20 May 2023, aimed to address the needs of the 60 to 70 families residing in the isolated villages, who lack access to basic facilities such as education, healthcare, and adequate shelter. To animate the entire program, a dedicated team of five members, namely Rev. Fr Ajin C Joseph, Rev. Fr Georgekutty, Rev. Fr Prince Cherippanattu, Rev. Sr Diana SDS, and Rev. Bro Godwin, travelled from Thuckalay. Alongside providing health tips, the team also conducted spiritual enrichment sessions, incorporating uplifting songs and praise. Rev. Sr Diana SDS played a pivotal role in empowering the villagers by sharing valuable insights on personal health, hygiene, and the importance of a balanced diet. The program

successfully reached out to about 200 persons belonging to very poor background, providing them with much-needed guidance and support. Food and refreshment were sponsored by the generous philanthropists. Additionally, Reverend Sacred Heart Sisters from the Province of Kanjirappally joined with the health care team from Thuckalay, contributing to the facilitation of village visits and offering their dedicated support. On the final day, a tailoring unit was inaugurated at Cumbum by the Forane Vicar of Kumali Forane, representing the Diocese of Kanjirappally. This valuable addition aims to provide skill development opportunities and empower the local community. Rev. Sr Elsy SH, Rev. Sr Merin SH, and Rev. Sr Ansitta SH, who are presently serving at Cumbum, enthusiastically organized and coordinated this event. Rev. Fr Benny Thattampampil, the coordinator of the Theni mission, and the new priests were fully present and made necessary arrangements for the entire event.



Family Day Celebration at Mukkoottukal

The Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social arm of the Diocese Thuckalay, organized a one-day program on 14 May 2023 at Holy Family Church auditorium in Mukkoottukal to celebrate the International Family Day. The entire event revolved around the theme 'Role and Importance of Parents in Child Development'. Over 200 persons actively participated in this meaningful gathering. The program primarily focused on hosting special meetings catered to parents, students, and youth, emphasizing the significant role parents play in the holistic development of their children. As a gesture of appreciation, couples who had reached milestones of 25, 40 and 50 years of marriage were presented with gifts, while lucky families were selected to receive special prizes. In addition, a Tamil essay writing competition on the topic of *Enathu Kudumpam Enathu Vinnakam* (My Family, My Heaven) was conducted, encouraging families to reflect on their own unique experiences.



School Correspondents and Principals Meeting at Sangamam



A half-day meeting-cum-workshop was convened at Sangamam, the Pastoral Centre of the Diocese, on 25 May 2023, bringing together all correspondents and principals of our schools. The purpose of the meeting was to address the pressing issues faced by educational institutions and prepare a collective response to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the education ministry in our Diocese. The meeting was coordinated by Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General. The first session, focusing on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, was presented by Rev. Fr Maria Charles sdb, Secretary of Education and Culture of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). Rev. Fr Charles shed light on the implications of NEP 2020 for educational institutions associated with

the Church. The session was insightful, providing valuable information to the attendees about the policy and its potential impact on our work. The participants were engaged in an interactive dialogue, raising questions and concerns regarding the NEP 2020. A committee was formed to study the matter and methods of practical applications in our Diocese. In the second session, Rev. Fr Printo Kurias presented the Safe Environment Policy and highlighted the measures and guidelines to be followed to safeguard students and staff. The topic of school counseling was addressed by Rev. Fr Christudhas. In concluding remarks, His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb encouraged the participants to implement the insights gained from the workshop effectively.

Kuzhanthai Iso Iyakkam Annual Day



The annual day celebration of *Kuzhanthai Iso Iyakkam* took place on 28 May 2023 at Sacred Heart Forane Church Auditorium, Padanthalumoodu. The meeting was chaired by Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General, and Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal, Chancellor was the chief guest of the occasion. They officially welcomed Rev. Fr Toji Kozhuvakandathil, the new director of *Kuzhanthai Iso Iyakkam*. As the meeting concluded, prizes were distributed to the winners of various competitions.





Retreat for School Teachers at Kalluvilai

A one-day retreat was organized for the Tamil and English medium teachers at the Kattathurai school campus on 29 May 2023. The retreat was skilfully animated by Rev. Fr Jerry Rosario. At the end of retreat, a common meeting was convened, presided over by His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb, to express gratitude to the outgoing correspondent, Rev. Fr John Paul, and extend a warm welcome to the newly appointed correspondent, Rev. Fr Justin Sutheesh. During the meeting, His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb officially inaugurated the academic year and presented certificates to the teachers who had attended counselling courses.



SPARK 2023 at Kalluvilai

SPARK 2023 an Educare program was organized at Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) Kalluvilai for 10 days, from 14 to 24 May 2023 in order to enhance the educational, cultural, and personal aspects of life of children who are sponsored under the Educare Program of the Diocese. The program, under the guidance of Rev. Fr Aby Poovathummooottil, Director of KKSSS, catered to a group of 57 students. The program was inaugurated by Rev. Fr Abhilash Xavier, Director of the Diocesan Catechetical Department. Mr. Simon Raj and Mr. Babin Joe conducted English classes to enhance the students' speaking and writing skills. Furthermore, classes were conducted to improve leadership and communication skills, along with engaging activities such as band sets, games,

and group exercises. The inclusion of new initiatives like campfires and sightseeing brought immense joy to the children. On the final day of the program, a valedictory function was held in the presence of His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb. The students showcased their talents, skills, and abilities through various performances.



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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Retreat for Catechism Teachers at Kalluvilai

A two-day retreat for all catechism teachers was organized by the Catechesis Department of the Diocese at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai, from 26 & 27 May 2023. The retreat was conducted separately in Tamil and Malayalam. Rev. Fr Jeyan Joseph sdb led the retreat in Tamil, while Rev. Fr Antony Kachamcode from the Arch diocese of Changanacherry, along with Rev. Fr Printo Kurias, animated the Malayalam session at St. Mother


Theresa Church, Kalluvilai. A total of 254 teachers participated in the retreat, seeking spiritual nourishment and renewal. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb attended the concluding session, where all the teachers were presented with the *Vin Pathayil* as a token of gratitude for their dedicated service in the faith formation of our children.



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



Mathru Jyothis Annual Day at Kalluvilai

The annual day of *Mathru Jyothis* was joyously celebrated at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai on 14 May 2023. The meeting was inaugurated and presided over by Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General. Mrs. Mary Prince Latha, the deputy mayor of Nagercoil, was the chief guest for the program. The event was a delightful showcase of talent and entertainment, as mothers from various parishes presented a variety of captivating performances. As a means of recognition, awards were bestowed upon the best unit and best animator, acknowledging their exceptional contributions and commitment to *Mathru Jyothis*.





First Profession and Silver Jubilee Celebrations at CMC Kaliyal

A momentous occasion unfolded at St. Mary's Forane Church, Kaliyal on 6 May 2023 as two novices of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) Chavara Province, Thuckalay. Rev. Sr Josmi Elizabeth CMC and Rev. Sr Emy Maria CMC joyously received their religious habit through the first profession. The day also witnessed the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of religious profession of Rev. Sr Maria James CMC and Rev. Sr Sherin Maria CMC, who renewed their

vows, marking twenty-five years of dedicated service and commitment to their religious calling. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran SDB presided over the Holy Eucharist. Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Vicar General, Rev. Fr Davis Karukappallil and Rev. Fr Ajin Jose were the concelebrants in the liturgy. During the homily, Rev. Fr Vinu D. Joseph delivered a profound message on religious life.



SMYM training at Padanthalumoodu

A special meeting was convened at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu on 14 May 2023, in preparation for the upcoming youth retreat. The program was expertly led by trained youngsters under the guidance of Rev. Fr Sumesh Valliyamthadathil, ensuring a vibrant and engaging experience. There were 40 enthusiastic youth who actively participated in the meeting, displaying their eagerness and commitment to the retreat.



Marian Prayer Day

A Marian Prayer Day was observed in the Catholic Church on 31 May 2023 as a preparatory event for the upcoming Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. Following the instructions received from our Major Archbishop, we commemorated this day in all the parishes of our Diocese. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission provided a prayer service to be conducted during the Holy Eucharist on that day. The entire Diocese prayed for graces for the success of the Synod of Bishops through intercession of Our Blessed Mother Mary.





Priests Conference at Sangamam

Priests Conference of the month of June was held at Sangamam, the Pastoral Centre of the Diocese on 11 May 2023. Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal, Chancellor coordinated the Conference and His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb presided over the Conference. During the meeting the presbyterium gave a send off to three Priests, who have served in our Diocese.

Rev. Fr Alexander Moolakunnel, former spiritual father in the Minor Seminary and since 2022 as Parish Priest of Mezhaicode Parish. He has offered very valuable services as spiritual father, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, he provided spiritual guidance to the seminarians and helped them overcome all difficult situations in life. As a successful parish priest, he always took care of the spiritual needs of the faithful.

Rev. Fr Jogi Marangattu CMI was the Rector in St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal. Rev. Fr Jogi dedicated himself to accompanying the seminarians and providing them with everything necessary for their spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual formation. The CMI provincial has called him for services to the Congregation in the formation of CMI novices. Although his service to the Diocese has been very short, his contribution has been immense.

Rev. Fr Anto Thunduparampil CMI had been the Parish Priest of Muzhucode Parish. His fraternal love and approachable demeanour have touched all those who have had the occasion of interacting with him. His total dedication in the parish helped many people to come back to the faith and begin a sacramental life.

The Presbyterium wholeheartedly welcomed the newly ordained Priests – Rev. Fr George Kandathil, Rev. Fr Prince Cherippanattu, and Rev. Fr Ajin C. Joseph. We pray that they receive God's choicest blessings in their pastoral ministry. Then the Presbyterium welcomed back Rev. Fr Robin Koorumullil who came back after 6 years of ministry in Ireland and Rev. Fr John Joseph, who came back after his ministry in the Diocese of Ujjain.

After the initial program, a major discussion took place on the activities of catechetical department. The fruitful suggestions from our priests were helpful to plan the future programs of the department. In his presidential address, His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb focused mainly on the importance of *Vin Pathayil* (Prayer cum Hymn Book), Thuckalay Priest Welfare Association (TPWA), Pastoral Council, Vocation. He also stressed on the things to be taken care while on transfer from one parish to another.

Pastoral Council Meeting at Sangamam



The Fifth Meeting of the VI Pastoral Council was held at Sangamam, the Pastoral Centre of the Diocese on 20 May 2023. His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb presided over the meeting. The primary focus of the meeting revolved around the upcoming Diocesan Assembly, scheduled to take place during 28 – 30 September 2023. The meeting commenced with the presentation of the main themes of the Lineamenta, which had been prepared for the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. The resource persons of the day, Rev. Fr Joshy Kulathumkal and Mr. John, Kumari Thozhan, effectively delivered talks on the theme to the members. In the second session, fruitful discussions were held among the

participants, based on the questions provided in relation to the presentation. These discussions took place in three separate groups, each led by a designated group leader. Following these discussions, the group leaders presented their respective suggestions and recommendations to be further deliberated upon during the upcoming Diocesan Assembly. During the meeting, representatives of the Pastoral Council were elected to attend the Assembly, ensuring diverse perspectives and voices would be present to contribute to the discussions. The active participation of 32 members made the Pastoral Council gathering truly enriching and collaborative.



Inauguration of the Academic Year of Catechesis

His Excellency Mar George Rajendran sdb officially inaugurated the catechetical year 2023-24 on 27 May 2023 at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. During the inauguration, the Headmasters participated in lighting the lamp, symbolizing the sharing of knowledge, and they passed the light to all the teachers. The teachers, holding the lighted candles, took an oath to fulfil their responsibilities. The inauguration of the academic year was conducted in all the parishes

of our Diocese on 28 May 2023. The catechetical department provided guidelines to ensure uniformity in the inaugural sessions across all parishes. The solemn ceremony included an inaugural address by the unit director, the lighting of the lamp, the teachers' oath with lighted candles, and the blessing by the parish priest. We desire that we earnestly pass on the baton of Faith to the younger generation.



VOCATION AND MISSION

Mother Teresa Palliative Care Services

"... In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

- Matthew 25:40

The Diocese of Thuckalay has been making sincere efforts to live true to the mission of the Church. We have been rendering so heart touching and humanitarian services in different areas of our missions. Being realistic in our services, we have been touched by one of the emergent services of our present time – Palliative Care. This mission has reached a milestone through our Mother Teresa Palliative care service.

Palliative care is a service that improves the quality of life of the bedridden / terminally ill patients and their family in facing their problem in associating with life threatening illness through prevention and relief. The bedridden patients face the challenges which include the physical pain, depression, explosion of different emotions, lessening the dignity of life and hopelessness towards the end of their life.

The patients in their last phase of life meet with so many sufferings – physical, psychological, emotional and beyond that the economical challenges, which always uproot their lives, and end their lives without any care. Our Mission has supported the dying to some extent to embrace death joyfully and peacefully.



"Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate" (Lk 6:36) is a basic Christian call for all and expressed constantly by all the priests, religious and lay leaders of the Diocese. The desire came into light with Mother Teresa Palliative Care spearheaded by Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), the social arm of Diocese of Thuckalay. We continue to show the same enthusiasm in the care of the terminally ill / bedridden patients today as we had exhibited in the beginning of this difficult mission.

KKSSS staff were initially sent to different parts of the Kanyakumari District to take survey and identify the patients in need of palliative care. More than 600 patients were found during this survey. KKSSS divided the area into five zones and experts divided the patients into three categories – people in need of counseling and guidance, people who can be taken care of by their own kith and kin, and very backward people needing our intervention and support. There were 137 patients in the third category, where our intervention and support was needed.

In order to begin the services and raise funds for it, KKSSS distributed approximately 8500 donation boxes to the SHG members during International Women's Day celebrations in the





year 2016. With the earnest support received from the SHG members, the Mother Theresa Palliative Care services commenced in October 2016. People who observed the door-to-door services came forward to support with financial assistance and with generous contributions, an ambulance was purchased and community based care was given to the needy.

Mother Theresa Palliative Care has teams of doctors, nurses, sisters, social workers and volunteers who meet patients and render different services like medical and personal care and counseling. The Palliative Care unit also took the initiative and organized meetings and campaigns to give awareness on the importance of palliative care. Many families were trained and many young and energetic people offered their voluntary services around their places of residence. They joined for helping the people in the palliative care and fund raising programs.

The bucket collections, Charity box at shops and individual benefactors' donations were the drops which continue to help the services. Resources mobilization and volunteerism are the two pillars of the palliative care services. Through these services the bedridden patients get last breath a peaceful death. There are presently 152 persons who have joined as volunteers in this service. We strongly believe that command of Christ will be carried out through support from unknown quarters.

As the next step, in Tirunelveli District too, the Diocese of Thuckalay started a palliative care unit and it runs successfully and gradually the palliative care services have spread to the Tenkasi Mission as well. In Kanyakumari district, for bedridden patients and terminal ill people a hospice was emergent, since some of the patients were in need of hospitalization and continuous care. Mother Theresa Palliative Care Hospice was started and expanded its services.



Currently, there are 150 patients catered to by KSSS from Kalluvilai, 60 patients are provided with support from Vayalankarai, 90 patients are cared for from Tenkasi and 75 patients are looked after by our services from Tirunelveli. The four units are working hard providing succor to about 375 patients.

We all need to join hands and strengthen our resolve to support the poorest of the poor who are calling out for our support and care in their death-bed. We believe in the words and motto of the great lover of the poor, Saint Vincent de Paul, when he said, "Poor are our Masters, so they demand us".





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**We are very pleased to wish every
one of you
a very Happy Feast of Saints Peter
and Paul.**

**May these two great Saints
continue to inspire all of us
to dedicate to the Mission of the
Church
to spread the Gospel through our
Life and Service.
May God shower His abundant
blessings
through the intercession of Saints
Peter and Paul.**



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