

Ref. No. Priest| 23|2014

28 March 2014

DEAR FATHERS AND BROTHERS,

A warm and fraternal greeting to you all! Though I had met many of you personally during our on-going training programme, I want greet you and wish you God's blessings through this circular letter. I sincerely thank you, dear Fathers, for your active presence surmounting all the challenges that you face in your Parish ministries. I know some of you are having trying experiences caused by the faithful as well as by the anti-social elements in the society. Yet, you carry forward the mission of the Lord without getting discouraged.

Often, I am impressed by the very personality of our Holy Father. He looks so sweet; but at the same time, he stands for Christian values with rock-like determination. His moral strength, speeches and actions bear witness to the gospel values. I do hope that you keep yourselves updated about his programmes and talks. We had lot of opportunities to study and share the life of Pope Francis during our various meetings and discussions. Here I propose some practical points that we can follow in our personal life as well as in our Parish ministries.

Welcome People with Problems: The Holy Father says: "The Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems" (EG 47). Let us welcome people with problems. In fact, we are ordained as ministers in order to listen, empathize and to heal them. It is in doing this, that we encounter Jesus. We know that the quality of a Parish community depends not only on the quality of the faithful but also on the quality of its shepherd. The Parish Priest must be the friend and spiritual guide of every member of the Parish. He must be ever ready to sacrifice his time and resources for the faithful entrusted to his care. In short, he exists only for them. It is in such a Parish that every one feels welcomed and at home. Here problems will become opportunities. This is what our Holy Father expects of us Priests.

Open our Centres to the Neighbourhood: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty" (EG 49). As we courageously acknowledge our woundedness and sinfulness to the Lord, we take others to him as well. We need to desire a change in the way we run our Parishes and Institutions. We need to think of every one in the neighbourhood. Jesus is the Saviour for all. I feel that the facilities that are there in some of the Parishes and Institutions can be better utilized. Besides the regular liturgical celebrations and classes, let us think of doing something more for our neighbourhood children. People belonging to different categories should find our Centres welcoming. This calls for our personal presence and better planning and execution of activities. As our Holy Father tells let us have a "bruised and dirty" Church. Let us not take too much pride in having a trouble free Church that engages mostly in ordinary events.

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2014

At the CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India) meeting held at Pala, Kerala in

February 2014, the Bishops have decided to observe 4 April 2014 (First Friday of the Month) as a National Day of Prayer & Fasting for the success of the forth coming General Elections 2014. Accordingly our Diocese under the guidance of National Service Team has taken up the following intercession:

“That all the people of God may pray for a free, fair & peaceful election and a honest, stable and secular Government in the Centre to uphold the constitutional rights and privileges of the citizens of the country which will ensure the freedom of everyone to practice one’s own faith and religion.”

I request all of you to kindly inform all the people under your care to set aside 4 April 2014 (First Friday of the Month) as a Day of Prayer and Fasting. Some of the suggested methods for promoting the above intercession are: Organizing whole day Eucharistic Adoration in the Parish Churches, holding Eucharistic Celebrations, reciting Chain rosaries, keeping Night vigil, praying Divine Mercy Chaplets, making the Way of the Cross, etc.

I am attaching a POSTER, which can be displayed on the notice board of the Parish Church.

Being directly not involved in the election process we need to prepare and encourage our people to exercise their right. Help them to discover the party, which is free from corruption and communalism, respecting the religions and cultures of India.

APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR FOR JOWAI DIOCESE

Pope Francis has appointed Archbishop Thomas Menampampil as the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Jowai, Meghalaya. The appointment was made public on 3 February 2014 Monday at 4.30 pm. The Diocese of Jowai in Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya is a young and fast growing Diocese. It was erected on 28 January 2006 with Bishop Vincent Kympat as its first Bishop. His premature death left the Diocese without a shepherd for some time. The Diocese has 81,242 Catholics, 28 Priests, 40 Sisters and 19 Religious Brothers.

RECOLLECTION AND MOORON BLESSING

Soon we shall enter the Holy Week where we will reflect more intensely the sufferings, death and resurrection of Our Lord. For us Priests and Religious, Holy Thursday is an important day. It was on this day that Jesus instituted the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders. In order to thank the Lord for gift of our Priesthood and Religious life, we shall keep **15 April 2014** as a day of recollection with prayer and fasting. **Rt Rev. Peter Remegius, Bishop of Kottar**, will preach the recollection. I request all the Priests and Religious Sisters to join this recollection.

Date: 15 April 2014

Venue: Sangamam

Programme

- | | | |
|------------|---|--|
| 09.30a.m. | - | Arrival/ reflection |
| 10.00 a.m. | - | Recollection talk by Bishop Peter Remegius |
| 11.00 a.m. | - | Benediction, Confession |
| 12.00 noon | - | Break/Coffee |

01.00 p.m. - Holy Qurbana, Moron Blessing
03.00 p.m. - Departure

ORDINATION TO DIACONATE

The following Brothers will be ordained Deacons on 16 April 2014 at Vailankari Parish Church at 5.30 p.m.

- Br Jose Vayalil
- Br ThomsAttiyil (Ajeesh)
- Br Joseph Kurias (Printo)
- Br Thomas Poovathummottil (Ebin)
- Br Abraham Puthenpurackal (Shoji)
- Br George Valliamthadathil (Sumesh)
- Br James Kanakalil (Vinod)
- Br JinuThekkethalackal

Since their Priestly Ordinations will not be held in the Diocese, we arranged date of the Diaconate Ordination taking into consideration the convenience of the faithful of Vailankarai Parish. I invite all the Fathers and Sisters to take part in the Mass together with some representatives from your respective Parishes. Kindly inform Fr Sujesh, the Parish Priest of Vailankarai, regarding the number of people who will be taking part in the Programme.

His Beatitude George Cardinal Alencherry will ordain Br Jinu Jacob, who is pursuing his Theology in Rome, a Deacon on 28 April 2014 in Rome itself.

MINOR ORDERS AND VESTITIONS

The following Brothers will receive the Minor Orders on 13 April 2014 at the Minor Seminary.

Karoya:

- Br Vinue Joseph D.
- Br Shijo Jose Aikkarakunnel

Hypethiakna

- Br Anil Raj
- Br Ajin Jose
- Br Samuel

Likewise, the following Brothers will receive Cassocks on 13 April 2014 at the Minor Seminary

1. Br Jabanesh
2. Br Justin Kottakkakam

Kindly remember these Brothers in your prayers

This year we have the following Brothers going for their Theology, Philosophy or Regency:

Theology:

- Br Jabanesh - Mary Matha Major Seminary, Trissur
- Br John Joseph (2nd Year) - Satna
- Br Rito Thoompungal (3rd Year) - Satna

Philosophy:

- Br Aijin D
- Br Sunil, klliyoor
- Br Jobin Thomas

Regency:

1. Br Abilash S - Sangamam
2. Br Subin Puthanpurayil - Bishop's House

ORDINATIONS 2014

Our Diocese is blessed with two new Priests this year. They are Deacons Linslal and Sebi Mathew. Their Ordinations will take place on 28 April 2014. May I request as many of you to take part in the Ordinations. Please give the names to our VG who will arrange the transport. Kindly announce this event and invite some of the faithful in our Parishes to attend the Ordinations.

The new Priests will celebrate their First Holy Qurbana in our Diocese on 23 May 2014 at Nithravilai Parish. Kindly be present with some representative from your respective Parishes

VBS CLASSES 2014

As planned, the VBS training programme for Teachers and Fathers will be held on 2 and 3 May 2014. Kindly make yourselves free and attend the training programme. You need to plan ahead with the Catechism teachers in your respective Parishes how well this programme can be executed. This is a golden opportunity for us to deepen the Faith according to the Syro-Malabar tradition to our young people.

STAR HEALTH INSURANCE

We are going ahead with the registration of Star Health Insurance for all the incardinated Priests of the Diocese. If anyone still has any doubt regarding it, kindly get it cleared by the end of this month. Please approach Rev. Fr Mathew Mulangaserry. I have asked him to go ahead with the registration from 1 April 2014.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Rev. Fr Lijo Thekkel is receiving medical attention and is taking rest at home. Let us pray for his speedy recovery.

CONDOLENCES

Mrs Mariamma Joseph, mother of Rev. Sr Grace ThattaserrySABS, passed away on 28 February 2014. She was 84 years old when the Lord called her. We express our sincere condolence to Sr Grace. She is working in Rome.

THE PIONEER MISSIONARY PASSES AWAY

Rev. Fr James Joseph Kozhimattam CMI, a pioneer missionary who came to Kanyakumari Mission in 1967, passed away on 16 March 2014 at Pushpagiri hospital. He was 81 and was suffering from heart and kidney related diseases. His funeral was held on 18 March 2014 at CMI Ashram, Chethipuzha, Changanacherry. Fr James Joseph began his pioneering work at Kalia. Wherever he worked he not only developed up the Parishes but also built Schools. From Kalia, he went to Netta. In 1971 he moved to Plankalia to start the Parish. He also pioneered in Mekamandabam, Paraicode and Kattathurai. In 1984, he went back to the CMI Ashram at Chethipuzha and founded the ChristuJyoti School and College. Finally, he came back to Anchugramam. He was a Priest with clear vision for the Church and did all that he could. We thank Fr James Joseph and the CMI Congregation, especially the St Joseph Province, Thiruvananthapuram, for all that has been accomplished in the Thuckalay Diocese.

INTER DIOCESAN MEET

The first inter-provincial meeting for the year 2014 was held at Kanjirapally on 25 February 2014. All the four Ordinaries together with the Departmental Heads were present for the meeting. From our Diocese 7 of us took part in the Meet. Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam shared his impressions regarding the recently concluded CBCI meeting. He congratulated Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt and the Diocese of Pala for efficiently conducting the meeting and giving a taste of Syro-Malabar Church to rest of India. Later the members concentrated mainly on issues relating to schools, special schools and liturgy. Every one participated actively in the meeting and it came to an end by 12.30 pm with lunch.

ON-GOING FORMATION FOR FATHERS

The on-going formation for all the Fathers in the Diocese was held from 11 to 12 March 2014. All the Fathers arrived at Sangamam on 10 March by 6.00 pm for a night vigil and on 11th morning the programme began. Rev. Fr Antony Narikulam, Rector of Mangalapuzha Major Seminary, was the resource person. On the first day, there were three sessions. The two morning sessions focused on Holy Father's recent Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. The last session was on liturgy. We concluded the day with Priests' Conference. The programme on 12th March was meant for all the Junior Priests who were below 5 years of their Priestly Ordinations. The sessions were informative and useful. I thank all the Fathers for sparing their valuable time and taking part in the on-going programme organized by the Diocese.

I also want to thank Rev. Fr Jimmy for attending the spiritual direction course at Don Bosco, Manvila, Thiruvananthapuram.

YEAR OF THE FAMILY 2014

We inaugurated the Year of the Family in the Diocese on 23 February 2014 by holding rosary services in all the families. Kindly execute all the activities and programmes suggested by the Committee for the Year of the Family. I exhort the members of

this Committee to meet more often to assess, plan and execute the programmes in the Diocese.

- The family prayer book is available at Padanthalumoodu parish bookstall.
- The family based street play performances will begin soon after Easter

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED

8 March was the International Women's Day. With the help of KKSSS Self Help Groups, programmes were organized in all our Parishes to commemorate this event. I was told that the programmes were a great success. All the Fathers worked very hard and many recourse persons were invited from our various institutions for animation talks. I congratulate the Director and staff of KKSSS. I also thank all the Fathers for organizing the various events.

INFORMATION

I wanted to communicate to you a number of pieces of information during the Priests' Conference. Due to lack of time, I was not able. Hence through this circular I want to give you the following information:

1. The Syro-Malabar Synod observed that in recent years the Parish feasts are celebrated very lavishly. We need to moderate such celebrations. Kindly explain to the people regarding the importance of focusing on the spiritual aspect of feasts when you plan the Parish feasts and other celebrations.
2. We are thinking of starting a printing press at Thuckalay. I have appointed Fr Geo Choozhikunnel as its Director.
3. Fr Santhosh has already begun his studies at Salesian Pontifical University, Rome
4. Every year some Fathers will be asked to go for short-term up-dating courses in different Institutes.
5. I had mentioned to you some time ago regarding mass stipends. Our people do not have a clear idea about mass for the dead and mass stipend. Kindly give them proper instructions. During the Parish feasts we do receive a number of mass intentions. Kindly give the account to the Diocesan Procurator regarding the number of masses and how they were distributed. There should not be any violation with regard to mass intentions. I will personally enquire all the Fathers regarding it as I have received strict guidelines about it from the Synod.
6. Our Church is unique because of our Liturgy. Let us make it lively and meaningful experience to our people.
7. During the on-going formation, Rev. Fr Antony Narikulam shared with us the points to be kept in mind while preparing the homily. During the homily, let us concentrate mainly on the Word of God and do not speak anything that may hurt our people. Today people are becoming more sensitive.
8. We are in the season of Lent. Holy Week is fast approaching. Kindly prepare well by rehearsing in advance all the liturgical rubrics. There should not be any confusion and disorder in the Church while celebrating the Holy Week Liturgy.
9. I have one benefactor who is willing to donate 200 Bibles (Old and New Testaments). Those who wish to have them, please give the names and the number of copies required to Rev. Fr Mathew Mulangaserry.
10. Kindly remind the faithful to make use of the liturgical wall calendars that we have provided. Departments and associations are encouraged to conduct quiz programmes.
11. Home Mission is going on in Varuthuttu Parish.
12. We do not receive large funds from foreign agencies and we have to concentrate on local resources. We need to know how to mobilise local resources for our

Mission. I have invited a resource person to animate us on resource mobilisation. The date of the programme will be intimated to you later.

13. The Brothers from the Major Seminaries will be in the Diocese from 6 April onwards. Fr. Tom Kummumpuram, the Rector of the Minor seminary has arranged various programs for the seminarians till 27 April, after which they will be taking part in the VBS programs and Parish ministries. We welcome them and wish them happy apostolic experiences in our Centres.
14. The Forane level Priest conference scheduled for 8 April 2014 stands cancelled as we are going to come together on 15 April for full day recollection.

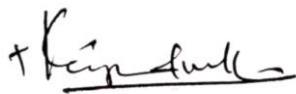
COMING PROGRAMMES

10 April	-	Inter department meeting at 2.30 pm in the Bishop's House
13 April	-	Parish level election/re-election of Kaikars
14 April	-	Minor Orders and Vestition
15 April	-	Full day Recollection and Mass for Fathers and Sisters
16 April	-	Diaconate Ordinations
21 April	-	Vocation day (special prayer and animation at parish level)
28 April	-	Priestly Ordinations

CONCLUSION

We are approaching the holy season of Easter. What better message can I give you than the one that our Holy Father gave us on last Easter! Let me quote him: "Christ died and rose once for all, and for everyone, but the power of the Resurrection, this Passover from slavery to evil to the freedom of goodness, must be accomplished in every age, in our concrete existence, in our everyday lives. How many deserts, even today, do human beings need to cross! Above all, the desert within, when we have no love for God or neighbour, when we fail to realize that we are guardians of all that the Creator has given us and continues to give us. God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones" (cf. Ez 37:1-14). May this inspiring message of Pope Francis ring in our hearts as we set out to lead our people to the celebration of the Paschal mysteries of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Yours faithfully in the Risen Lord,



+George Rajendran sdb
Bishop of Thuckalay