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Dear and Reverend Fathers,

Loving greetings from Chicago, USA! My mission appeal on behalf of our Eparchy is going on well and I am able to meet some of the Syro-Malabar communities in the US. I request your continued prayers for the success of my mission.

We are entering the month of June, a month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In this Circular Letter, I want to share with you some thoughts on the need to inculcate filial devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, we read: “[Jesus] has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings’ without exception” (#478).

To appreciate the rich symbolism of the heart, we must remember that in Judaism the word *heart* represented the core of the person. While recognized as the principle life organ, the heart was also considered the centre of all spiritual activity. Here was the seat of all emotion, especially love. As the psalms express, God speaks to a person in his heart and there probes him. This notion of the heart is clear when we read Deuteronomy 6:5-6: “Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today.”

The heart has even greater depth when contemplated in the light of incarnation. We believe that Jesus Christ, second person of the Holy Trinity and consubstantial with the Father, entered this world taking on our human flesh - true God became also true man. While Jesus’ heart obviously served a physiological function, spiritually his Sacred Heart also represents love: the divine love Our Lord shares with the Father and Holy Spirit in the Trinity; the perfect, divine love which God has for us; and the genuine human love Christ felt in his human nature. One of the most consoling passages of the Gospels is the invitation of Jesus: “Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light” (Matthew 11:28-30). Therefore, while meditating on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we are called upon to share in the love of Jesus and strive to express our own genuine love for God, for ourselves and for our neighbours.

Throughout the Gospels, we see the outpouring of Jesus’ love from his heart, whether in the miracle stories or in the incidents of reconciliation of sinners or in his compassion for the grieving. Even on the cross, Jesus poured out his love for us. When the soldier’s lance pierced his side, blood and water flowed out (John 19:34). According to St Bonaventure, the Church was born from the wounded side of the Lord with the blood and water representing the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Baptism.

The early Church Fathers clearly cherished this meaning of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. St Justin the Martyr, in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, said: “We Christians are the true Israel which springs from Christ, for we are carved out of his heart as from a rock.” Likewise, St Irenaeus of Lyons said: “The Church is the fountain of the living water that flows to us from the Heart of Christ.” St Paulinus of Nola in his *Letters* wrote: “John, who rested blissfully on the breast of our Lord, was inebriated with the Holy Spirit, from the Heart of all creating Wisdom he quaffed an understanding which transcends that of any creature.” Although these are just a few brief examples from the times of the early Church, we find a profound respect for the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a font of his love, which gave birth to the Church and continues to nourish its members.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus continued to grow during the Middle Ages. In 1353, Pope Innocent VI instituted a Mass honouring the mystery of the Sacred Heart. During the age of the Protestant movement, devotion to the Sacred Heart was practised in the hope of restoring peace to a world shattered by political and religious persecution.

Shortly thereafter, the devotion escalated due to the fervour surrounding the apparitions of our Lord to St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-90). On 27 December 1673, Jesus revealed to her: “My Divine Heart is so passionately inflamed with love... that, not being able any longer to contain within Itself the flames of Its ardent charity, It must let them spread abroad through your means, and manifest Itself to man, that they may be enriched with Its precious treasures which I unfold to you, and which contain the sanctifying and salutary graces that are necessary to hold them back from the abyss of ruin.” The four apparitions provided the catalyst for the promotion of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. A feast day in honour of the Sacred Heart was instituted. The practice of attending mass and receiving Holy Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month became popular.

In 1899, Pope Leo XIII consecrated the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Since then, his successors have exhorted the faithful to turn to the Sacred Heart and make acts of personal consecration. They have also requested the faithful to offer prayers and penances to the Sacred Heart in reparation for the many sins of the world. Considering our present day and age, the temptations and sins of this world, the growing apathy and secularism, we too should turn again in loving devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and ask him to pour forth his grace. We must strive to make our hearts like his own, for he said, “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

During this month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us make every effort to promote various popular devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus among our people. Let us also pray earnestly to the Heart of Jesus for more vocations to priestly and religious life in our Eparchy.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Pastoral Council: The Pastoral Council that was held on 1 May 2018 discussed about the life of young people and their role in the Church. The theme of the meeting was *ennaya uhathil ilanjarkal*. Rev. Fr Joseph Santhosh presented the theme very lucidly. Thereafter the assembly had chances for the discussions. Although the participation was not cent per cent, the entire discussions were helpful for the development of the Eparchy.

ACRCI National Meeting: Association of Catholic Rehabilitation Centres of India (ACRCI) conducted its 6th annual gathering in our Eparchy at Sangamam Thuckalay from 8-10 May 2018. This is an association of 330 registered Differently Abled Schools of all over India. This association gathers every year in different States of India. This year they chose the State Tamilnadu and decided to

organise it in our Eparchy. Out of 11 Catholic Special Schools in the district of Kanyakumari, our Eparchy has 7 schools. The Eparchy runs these schools with the help of different congregations of Sisters. In this meeting, about 80 heads of schools participated. Rev. Fr. Biju CMI, General President and Rev. Fr. Thomas Felix, Director along with our AIDACT Director Rev. Fr Sanil Panthichirackal and our General Treasurer and Executive member Rev. Sr. Roseline SABS organised the meeting. Together with Bishop Joshua Mar Ignatius, Vice President of CBCI, Bishop Jerome Dhas Varuvel, Bishop of Kuzhithurai, Bishop Vincent Mar Paulos, Bishop of Marthandam and many guests, I participated in the inaugural ceremony, which was held at 3.00pm on 8 May 2018 at Sangamam. I whole heartedly thank and congratulate all the participants and the organizers.

Blessing of *Kurisadi* at Manjalumoodu and Marappady: The newly built *Kurisadi* at Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu was blessed on 1 May 2018 and the *Kurisadi* at St. Thomas Church Marappady was blessed on 6 May 2018.

Blessing of Renovated Altar at Chenamcode: With the help of the parishioners, Rev. Fr. Sumesh Valliyamthadathil renovated the Altar of Lourdu Matha Church, Chenamcode and constructed the Sacristy. The renovated Altar was consecrated on 10 May 2018 at 5.30pm. The Sacristy was also blessed on the same day. I congratulate and thank Rev. Fr. Sumesh, parishioners and well wishers.

SINAI Theological Institute: The official inauguration of Sinai Theological Institute was held on 12 May 2018 at Sangamam at 11.45am. I presided over the meeting and Bishop Vincent Mar Paulos, Bishop of Marthandam was a chief guest. Bishop Vincent Mar Paulos delivered a talk on uniqueness of Jesus. Rev. Fr Analin from Kuzhithurai Diocese felicitated during the meeting. The students under the direction of Rev. Fr Christudas conducted the programme. A special word of thanks goes to Rev. Fr Christudas and the students of the Institute for arranging the inaugural ceremony very efficiently.

Recollection for Teachers: The Education Commission of the Eparchy conducted a two-day recollection for the teachers of all our schools on 15 and 16 of May 2018 at Kalluvilai. Most of the teachers participated in the recollection.

Priests' Transfer 2018: I made some transfers this year. Most of the priests who were transferred have taken charge of the new assignments on 24 May 2018. I was happy to meet those Fathers in person and to hand over the appointment letters. I have also given to some Fathers additional responsibilities. I thank you, dear Fathers, especially those who were relieved from some assignments for your self-sacrificing ministry in your previous postings.

EDUCARE Programme: KKSSS conducted fifteen days of Education Programme for children at Sangamam from 13-26 May 2018. More than 150 children participated in it and learned English. I congratulate and thank all those who arranged the programme. A word of thanks goes to the parents who sent their children for the programme.

INFORMATION

- **New Convent at Madurai:** Rev. Sr Roseline SABS and Rev. Sr Missy Maria SJSM will leave for Madurai Mission on 1 June 2018. We have rented a house near the Syro-Malabar Parish in Madurai for beginning their apostolate. Rev. Fr Aneesh CMI helped to find out the house. The house will be blessed in a simple way by Fr. Thomas Sathianesan on the same day and the solemn blessing will be held on 3 June 2018 by parish priest along with the parishioners. The Syro-Malabar community at Madurai will help them to find a suitable place for their ministry.

- **Major Seminarians:** Our Brothers from various Seminaries were in the Eparchy since April 2018. They have left at home for their vacation on 16 May 2018. They helped in the parishes during the Holy week and VBS programme of the catechism students. They left to their respective Seminaries on 31 May 2018. This year we are sending two students for theology and three students for philosophy. I congratulate them and wish them God's blessing as they begin their ecclesiastical studies. May they learn to become good pastors of souls!
- Br Abilash will be returning to the Eparchy from Rome after completing his theological studies on 30 June 2018. He will be ordained deacon on 3 July 2018 at Christurajapuram at 5.00pm. He will, then, join the Vadavathoor Seminary for the Diaconate Course. We welcome Br Abilash.
- As you know two weeks ago, Rev. Fr Justin Cheruvilil's father had a fall at home and his hip was fractured. Since then, he was operated. Fr Justin will be coming home for some days to be with his father. He will be reaching India on 3 June 2018 and will return to Rome on 25 June 2018. We welcome Fr Justin and wish his dad speedy recovery.
- **Blessing of Muzhucode Church:** The blessing of the renovated church at Muzhucode will be held on 15 July 2018. On that day, we shall celebrate the golden Jubilee of the establishment of the church. Our dear Major Archbishop will grace the occasion. We have kept the programme in the afternoon so that you can attend it. We shall also have a brief meeting with our dear Cardinal. Please take note of the date and time.
- **Tamil Nadu Board Examination Results:** The results of the Class X and Class XII Board examinations were declared and all our Catholic Schools have performed well. Hearty congratulations to all our Fathers and Sisters. The good results are an indication of the commitment that the Eparchy has towards educational ministry and for the upliftment of under-privileged sections of our society. A special word of congratulation goes to St Alphonsa Higher Secondary School for securing highest marks in Class X and Class XII. I congratulate Pulari Matriculation School, Shenkottai for producing good results at its maiden appearance in the SSLC examinations. Given below are the results of our schools.

Class X Results 2018

Name	Total Appeared	Passed	Highest	Remarks
John Paul II Kulasekaram - SABS	36	36	482	
St. Alphonsa, Nagercoil	208	208	496	
St. Michael's, Kattathurai - FCC	60	60	486	
Jaya Matha, Christurajapuram	28	28	475	
Sacred Heart, Padanthalumoodu	129	129	488	
APJM HSS, Soosaipuram	72	72	487	
St. Joseph's School, Panpoli - MCBS	119	119	490	
Carmel Matha, Kanyakumari-CMC	109	104	483	
Carmel Jyothi, Colechal - CMC	51	51	485	
Mount Carmel, Muzhucode - CMC	62	62	483	
Mar M. Kavukatt Meml. High School, Varuthattu	49	49	462	
St. James High School, Mankarai	66	66	477	
Holy Family, Mukkootukal	62	62	454	
Pulari Matric School, Puthur	06	06	454	
St Joseph's Pilankalai -CMI	60	59	433	
St. Mary's, Kaliyal - CMI	129	127	470	
St Thomas, Netta - CMI	16	16	464	
Holy Family HS Arukany	27	27	445	

Class XII Results 2018

Name	Total Appeared	Passed	Highest	Remarks
St. Alphonsa, Nagercoil	314	313	1174	
Sacred Heart, Padanthalumoodu	125	123	1145	
St. Joseph's Matric, Panpoli MCBS	80	80	1140	
APJM HSS, Soosaipuram	96	96	1134	
St. Mary's, Kaliyal CMI	198	191	1129	
Carmel Matha, Kanyakumari CMC	58	58	1040	
Carmel Jyothi, Colechal - CMC	26	26	1069	
Holy Family, Mukkootukal	69	69	1043	

- **Publication of *Indian Currents Weekly*:** Rev. Fr Suresh OFM Cap, Editor of *Indian Currents Weekly* has sent a mail requesting for subscriptions from our Eparchy. I am forwarding the excerpts from his mail. "*Indian Currents weekly* was originally started under the aegis of the CBCI in 1988 and the CBCI handed over the weekly to the Capuchins of Krist Jyoti Province, North India in 1998. Since then, we have been publishing the weekly without fail. Today, the weekly faces huge financial crunch. We cannot go on without your support...WE DO NOT SEEK DONATIONS! But we request you to sponsor the weekly for all your priests. Left to them, many priests may not take interest in subscribing the weekly. Indian Currents is the only Catholic weekly that gives an in-depth analysis of current social and political issues. The annual subscription for the WEEKLY is Rs 780/- for the normal post and Rs 1000/- for the registered post. I request you to send me the postal address of your priests and I shall revert to you with the details of payment. (For Example: 10 priests x Rs 780 = Rs 7800.00 per year). Kindly appeal to all the institutions and the religious in the diocese to subscribe the weekly." I request you, dear Fathers, to subscribe the weekly by yourselves and develop a taste for reading matters concerning our country.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

01 June 2018	- Minor Seminary Reopens
12 June 2018	- Priests Conference, Sangamam

CONCLUSION

Today we celebrate the feast of the Visitation of our Blessed Mother to St Elizabeth. Narrating this incident, St Luke tells us that Mary "went with haste" (Lk 1:39) to meet St Elizabeth. This anxiety to visit her cousin indicates her wish to be of assistance to her during her pregnancy, but above all her desire to rejoice with her at a time when salvation has come to her. In Mary's visitation, we find fulfilment of the hopes and expectations of the humble, God-fearing people who were awaiting the fulfilment of the prophetic promises. Like Mary, we too are called upon, as pastors of souls, to make frequent visits to our people in order to bring them the salvation that Our Lord has wrought for us. Let us ask our heavenly mother to come to our aid in moments of problems and anxieties.

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

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Bishop of Thuckalay

