



Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

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Diocese of Thuckalay

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Dear and Reverend Fathers,

Fraternal Greetings from Rome! The Synod of Bishops on young people with the theme “The Young People, the Faith and Vocation Discernment” has just concluded on 27 October 2018. In this letter, I want to highlight some of the salient features of the document that was issued after the Synod. The document enjoins that the young Catholics are co-responsible in the mission to bring the Gospel to emerging generations.

The 60-page document holds that synodality must be a constitutive part of the Church, seeking to lock it into every aspect of ecclesial life from the parish level upwards. It urges Bishops’ Conferences across the world to take up the Synodal path, by listening, welcoming and engaging in a “common discernment” which transforms the lives of everyone involved in it. This missionary synodality should be focused on the most vulnerable, the poor and those who have no contact with parish communities.

Every paragraph in the synod document was voted by 249 synod fathers and needed a two-thirds majority – 166 – for each section of the text to pass. All of the 167 paragraphs of the document were adopted by the assembly, and it is now up to the Pope to decide what he does with the final document. The text of the document has three parts. They are:

Part One: “He walked with them”

The first part of the document considers the concrete aspects of young people’s lives. It emphasizes the important roles that schools and parishes play. It acknowledges the need for laity to be trained to accompany young people especially since so many priests and bishops are already overburdened. The document notes the irreplaceable role of Catholic educational institutions. The challenge the document addresses is the need to rethink the role of the parish in terms of its vocational mission because it is often ineffective and not very dynamic, especially, in the realm of catechesis.

The reality of young people regarding migration, abuse, the ‘throwaway culture’ are also dwelt on in part one. Regarding abuse, the Synod document calls for a ‘firm commitment for the adoption of rigorous preventive measures that will keep such abuse from being repeated, beginning with the selection and formation of those to whom leadership and educational roles are entrusted.’ The world of art, music and sports is also discussed in terms of using them as ‘pastoral resources.’

Part Two: “Their eyes were opened”

The Synod document calls young people one of the ‘theological places’ in which the Lord makes himself present. Thanks to them, it says, the Church can renew herself, shaking off its ‘heaviness and

slowness.’ Mission, it says, is a ‘sure compass’ for youth since it is the gift of self that brings an authentic and lasting happiness. Closely connected with the concept of mission is vocation. Every baptismal vocation is a call to holiness.

Two other aspects covered in part two that aid in the development of the mission and vocation of young people are that of accompaniment and discernment.

Part Three: “They left without delay”

The icon that the Synod Fathers presented of the young Church is Mary Magdalene, the first witness of the Resurrection. All young people, the Synod Fathers affirm, including those with different visions of life, are in God’s heart.

‘Walking together’ is the Synodal dynamic which the Fathers also bring to light in part three. They invite the Conferences of Bishops around the world to continue the process of discernment with the aim of developing specific pastoral solutions. The definition of ‘synodality’ provided is a style for mission that encourages us to move from ‘I’ to ‘we’ and to consider the multiplicity of faces, sensitivities, origins and cultures.

One request repeatedly made in the hall, was that of establishing a Directory of youth ministry in a vocational key on the national level, that can help diocesan and parish leaders qualify their training and action with and for young people, helping to overcome a certain fragmentation of the pastoral care of the Church.

The Synod document reminds families and Christian communities of the importance of accompanying young people to discover the gift of their sexuality. The bishops recognize the Church’s difficulty in transmitting ‘the beauty of the Christian vision of sexuality’ in the current cultural context. It is urgent, the document says, to seek ‘more appropriate ways which are translated concretely into the development of renewed formative paths.’

In the end, the document brings the various topics covered in the Synod into one vocational thrust, that is, the call to holiness. ‘Vocational differences are gathered in the unique and universal call to holiness.’ Through the holiness of so many young people willing to renounce life in the midst of persecution in order to remain faithful to the Gospel, the Church can renew its spiritual ardour and its apostolic vigour.

While in the past it is the tradition for Popes to write their own document based on the final text, Pope Francis has made changes to the synod process which says the document of the gathering can become part of the ordinary magisterium of the Church.

We thank God for the gift of young people to our Church. When the final document is published in English all of us can have copy each for our perusal so that our ministry among young people may yield abundance of fruits.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Annual Retreat for Priests: This year the priest’s annual retreat was held from 30 September to 5 October 2018. 44 priests participated in the retreat. The retreat ended with the half day priests’ conference on 5 October 2018. Rev. Fr Anil Dev IMS from Varanasi animated the retreat. He concentrated on the Holy Bible for his talks and he explained the various themes of the retreat from a biblical perspective. All of us can learn from him the way we need to preach the Word of God in our

parishes. He gave much time for meditation and Eucharistic Adoration. I sincerely thank Rev. Fr Anil Dev IMS for having led us spiritually. I also thank all the Fathers for your sincere participation.

Mission League Rally: The Mission League of Syro-Malabar Church is celebrating its 77th anniversary this year. We joined the national level celebration with a Mission League Rally. The Rally was held from Holy Trinity Church Thiruthuvapuram of Latin Church, to Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu on 7 October 2018. More than 1500 children participated in the Rally wearing colourful dresses. A number of well-decorated floats were also used for the Rally. Through this Rally we were able to bear witness to our Faith. At the end of Rally, the National level anniversary programme was held at Padanthalumoodu. A number of national level leaders of Mission League were present. I sincerely thank all the fathers, sisters, catechism teachers, youth and Mission League children for taking part in it even though the day was announced as Red Alert due to heavy rains. The whole Eparchy prayed very earnestly for the success of this Rally and God blessed us with good weather. A special word of thanks goes to Rev. Fr John Joseph, Director of Mission League, Rev. Fr Jose Vayalil, Assistant Director, Rev. Sr Ann Grace FCC and committee members for organising the programme well.

CHRISMA and PULARI ENTERPRISES: The existing shop that sells religious articles called Charisma at Padanthalumoodu and the shops of Pulari Enterprises of the Eparchy were given a face-lift with the construction of a showroom at Padanthalumoodu. The showroom was blessed on 7 October 2018 at 6.00pm after the Mission League Rally. Both these initiatives function from the same showroom. Charisma is meant for the sale of religious articles in our Eparchy. The Pulari Enterprises sell the school materials to our schools and as well to the schools of other dioceses. I request all of you to visit the showroom and benefit from it. I place on record my gratitude and congratulation to Rev. Fr Robins Kuzhikodil, Director, for working hard to put together the two initiatives under one roof. I thank the education commission of the Eparchy for this new venture. I request all the fathers to support this new venture and to introduce this showroom to your friends.

Madurai and Shenkottai Mission: On 18 October 2018, Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadam, Protosyncellus, and Rev. Fr Thomas Sathianesan, Chancellor, visited Madurai and Shenkottai missions. I hear that the mission work in Madurai is going on well. Rev. Fr Aneesh CMI, Rev. Sr Roselin SABS and Mrs Missy SJSM are regularly visiting people. It is heartening to hear that the Sisters are also visiting non-Christian families in various villages in and around Madurai. The people expressed their desire to hear the Word of God and the visits of these Christian missionaries are helping to satiate their thirst. Let us keep this mission in our prayers.

Later in the day, the two Fathers took part in the meeting of the priests and religious of Shenkottai mission. The mission is growing and it is expanding its mission work. In the month of September, we bought 7.75 cents of land in Sundarapandiyapuram. Rev. Fr John Paul took special initiative and conducted a prayer meeting for the people at Sundarapandiyapuram on 14 October 2018. More than 40 people along with our Fathers and religious took part in the prayer service. I extend my special thanks and congratulations to all the missionaries of Shenkottai especially to Fr John Paul for the missionary spirit and zeal.

Pastoral Council Meeting: The Pastoral Council was held on 19 October 2018 at Sangamam. The theme discussed in the council was on lay participation in the Eparchy and the role of Association of Laity Council. During the meeting, Rev. Fr Vinu D. Joseph was appointed as the Director of Association of Laity Council.

Vestition and First Religious Profession: The FCC province of Thuckalay had the first religious profession and vestition of three Sisters on 20 October 2018 at 9.30 am at Little Flower Forane Church, Pilankalai. They are Rev. Sr Sam Priya from Palukal, Rev. Sr Abisha from Chenamcode and Rev. Sr Anuja from Ramanathapuram Eparchy. We feel happy and proud that we have two Sisters from our own Eparchy who have committed their lives to God. I congratulate all the three newly professed sisters and wish them God's blessings.

Chain Rosary and Rosary Rally: Chain Rosary in the families was held on 21 October according to the *Uraviams*. I thank all the parishioners for praying for the Eparchy and for the special intentions that we had placed. Likewise, the Rosary Rally was held from St James Church, Mankarai to Devamatha Church, Killiyoor, on 28 October 2018 at 2.00 pm. More than one thousand faithful participated. Though I was absent, I came to know that Rosary Rally was well organized. All the people along with the Fathers, Sisters and lay people prayerfully recited the holy rosary. I congratulate and express my gratitude to the Mariain Senai members and especially to its President Mr Thomas Pannerselvam and Rev. Jose Muttathupadam for having organised it well.

Mission Sunday Cover Collection: We have celebrated the Mission Sunday on 21 October 2018 in all our parishes. The collection on that day is to be sent to Rome for the mission work around the globe. Hence, I request you, dear fathers, kindly submit the Mission Sunday collections immediately to the Eparchial Procurator.

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

- ❖ **Diocesan Day:** As we all know, the foundation day of our Diocese is on 11 November. This year we celebrate 22nd year of our diocese. Though we had decided to observe this day on 10 November 2018, Saturday, since this day was announced as working day and inconvenient to many of our faithful to participate, we have shifted to 11 November, Sunday at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu. The celebration starts at 3.30pm with a concelebrated Holy Qurbana. An open stage cultural program, represented by maximum parishes, will follow it. I kindly request all the Fathers to encourage more people to participate. This year there is no limit for the number of people for participation. Dear Fathers, I request you to bring the Mass Vestments with you and concelebrate with me in thanking God for the gift of our Eparchy.
- ❖ **Bible Convention:** This year we planned to conduct the Annual Bible Convention from 30 November to 2 December 2018. These are days of blessing and renewal for our faithful as well as for the Eparchy. Dear Fathers, please organize vehicles for people to come over to Kalluvilai and to encourage them to participate in large numbers. Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr Mijo Puthenpurayil and their team will coordinate the programme.

INFORMATION

- ❖ **Rev. Fr Sagan Nettaponghu** returned to the Eparchy on 9 October 2018 after completing more than two years of pastoral ministry in the UK. He is now having his vacation to be with his parents and dear ones. He will be given the appointment very soon in the Eparchy. We welcome him whole heartedly to the Eparchy.
- ❖ **Holy Land Visit:** Mr Maria Robin Edathua of Tirunelveli mission sponsored the expenses of three Fathers and three Sisters of our Eparchy for a pilgrimage to Holy Land. Rev. Fr Ginoy, Rev. Fr Toji, Rev. Fr Alex Puthettu, Rev. Sr Mercita SH, Rev. Sr Lissy Jose FCC and Rev. Sr Flowerlet

ASMI were selected for the pilgrimage. They came back from the Holy Land on 27 October 2018. The Eparchy is grateful to Mr Maria Robin and his family for giving this opportunity to our Fathers and Sisters.

- ❖ **Visit to Europe:** I am away from the Eparchy since 22 October 22 and I shall return to the Eparchy on 8 November 2018. I had a two week-end mission appeals in Germany. I am now visiting our Fathers in Rome. I request your prayers for the success of my mission.
- ❖ **Prayers are requested** for our Fathers who are undergoing medical treatment these days for various illnesses. Let us keep them in our prayers especially Fr Jose Muttathupadam.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

11 November 2018	- Diocesan Foundation Day and 22 nd Diocesan Day Celebration
20 November 2018	- Priests' Conference
30 November– 2 December 2018	- Bible Convention at Kalluvilai

CONCLUSION

As we conclude the month of October, a month during which we honoured our Blessed Mother through the recitation of the Holy Rosary, let us ask her to intercede for all the intentions of our Eparchy. With the celebration of the 22nd Diocesan Day coming near, let us now redouble our efforts at building up the kingdom of God with greater commitment and fervour.

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

