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January 31, 2016

Dear Fathers

Prayerful greetings from the Bishop's House!

Through this circular I would like to share with you some news and events that took place in our diocese in the past month.

News and Events

1. Blessing and Inauguration of the College Building

The Blessing and Inauguration of the College Building of our St. Alphonsa Arts and Science College on 17th January marked the beginning of a new era for our diocese. It is the first institution of higher learning in our diocese. We are grateful to God that a new college in our diocese is up and running and the inauguration day of the new building assured us that we are traveling on a stable path and the venture is a sure sign of God's guiding hand with us. We had eminent guests of honour for the inaugural day, beginning with the august presence of our Major Archbishop his Eminence George Cardinal Alencherry, Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam, Bishop Peter Remigius, Bishop Jerome Dhas Varuvel SDB, Bishop Devakadasham, His Lordship C.T. Selvam of Madras High Court, and Prof. H. Devaraj, the Vice-Chairman of UGC, Dr. A. John De Britto, Registrar of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University.

I wish to mention again my hearty congratulations to all those who toiled day and night for the success of the day. Thanks to our dear benefactors who provided for the magnificent and functional edifice, and thanks to the organization team following up things down to the last detail, and to all the construction team, the teachers, support staff, the parents of the students, and our dear students. I was happy to see a huge turn out of people from our parishes and institutions; this is because of your hard work and persuasion. I thank you for promoting our college to our own people, and let us continue to do so in the coming years for admissions.

2. Feast of Don Bosco

On 30th evening of this month we celebrated the Feast of St. John Bosco at Sangamam.

I am grateful to all the fathers and sisters who have respected my personal invitation and joined the celebration. A man of unrelenting trust in the divine providence, St. John Bosco makes for me and for every priest a model par excellence.

3. Conclusion of the Year of Consecrated Life

On the 31st Sunday we as a diocese gathered at Padanthalumoodu to officially conclude the Year of Consecrated Life. I wish to thank at this moment Rev. Fr. Felix SDB who undertook much pains and effort to organize this year for the religious for our diocese. I thank superiors and heads of various religious congregations for responding and cooperating with the diocese for organizing this mega event in the diocese which brought about much awareness about the call to religious life. Let every religious in our diocese continue to “wake up the world.” We shall continue to pray for more religious vocations from our diocese and continue to support all our religious priests, brothers, and sisters with our prayers. And I would like to place on record once again the yeomen service all the religious render to our diocese.

4. Manjalumoodu Forane begins monthly Bible convention

For the continuous spiritual nourishment of our faithful we are trying to do our best, especially in the field of retreats and Bible convention. Saturday conventions are being organized in this regard already in three Foranes and many of our faithful benefit from *Vanthu Parungal* prayer group.

Manjalumoodu Forane has begun the Bible convention program on 23rd January 2016 held at Manjalumoodu Parish. This is to give spiritual care for the Forane. Thus now we have Bible convention in the following places:

- ❖ FCC Plankalai - 1st Saturday of the month
- ❖ Palugal - 2nd Saturday of the month
- ❖ Palapallam - 3rd Saturday of the month
- ❖ Manjalumoodu - 4th Saturday of the month

I would like to thank the parish priests of these parishes and in a special way Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil for taking initiatives to organize the convention at Manjalumoodu. I request all the fathers to give maximum support to these prayer centers and recommend our faithful to make use of the opportunity. I also invite the Forane directors to get involved more in the Bible convention within their Foranes.

5. Family apostolate

As we know the sisters of the Holy Family are already in our diocese doing Home Mission at Palugal and in the family apostolate department we have a new sister Rev. Sr. Mary CHF, a senior and experienced sister in the field of family and counseling. With her help and with the support of the family apostolate department we are in the process of strengthening the activities of the department. I will let all of you know about the activities once everything is set.

At the same time we thank Rev. Sr. Jossia SDS for her dedicated service in the Family apostolate department for more than ten years. She has been a constant help and support for all the directors, was in charge of Marriage courses, Mathru Jyothis and other activities. As she takes leave of the department we place on record her dedicated service to our diocese. We are also grateful the SDS provincial and the congregation for giving her to us.

6. All Souls Day Mass

We pray for the dead and cherish their memory in our liturgy too. On 5th February we will be celebrating the special Qurbana for the departed souls of all the faithful in our parishes. Let me recommend you to give a little more attention to this liturgy and make the people feel that we truly love them, remember them and pray for them. I suggest below some possible ways we can celebrate this day:

1. Instruct the families to clean the graves or graveyard.
2. Collect the names of the departed persons from the family members.
3. Read out their names and family to which they belong at the beginning of the mass.
4. After praying the office of the dead, keep ready and distribute either a lighted candle or a rose flower to the family member to be placed at the grave of his/her dear ones at home.
5. Bless the graves at your own convenience.

You may make use of these suggestions or similar ones according to your convenience.

7. Special Mass for Students

Our students are going to begin their public exams soon: Class 12 on 5th March and Class 10 on 15th March. Kindly call them personally and wish them and pray with them. It would be nice to remember and pray for them by offering a special mass for this special intention.

8. Seminar on Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'*

All the dioceses and religious congregations are asked to study and put into practice the practical points of the document *Laudato Si'* in their own dioceses. So far in our diocese we were not able to do so and we were engaged with important engagements. One of the activities of the Year of Mercy is to conduct a seminar on the document *Laudato Si'*. I had requested Mar Raphael Thattil to help us and he has recommended three people including a religious who is an authority on environmental issues and involved in various animation programs both in Kerala and other states. I have requested KKSSS to organize this seminar. Therefore on 13th February we will have a Seminar on *Laudato Si'* for all priests and religious. I have requested the KKSSS director to extend the invitations to the priests and religious of our neighboring dioceses too. I exhort every priest of our diocese to participate without fail. In this seminar we need to draw out an action plan for the parish/schools and diocese at large.

9. Jubilee Year of Mercy

The Jubilee Year of Mercy is a year of special blessing Mother the Church has given us. We especially in our diocese shall make use of this opportunity, proclaim about it and instruct all the members of diocese. Let us constantly be reminded of the mercy of God and communicate this mercy to our people. Let me encourage you to organize and animate the Year of Mercy activities in your parishes and at the pious associations level.

10. Welcome and New Assignments

We wholeheartedly welcome back to our diocese our fathers who had gone to Kerala for pastoral experience. All of them will return to the diocese by 8th February except Rev. Fr. Jose Vayalil, who will continue his ministry until the month of May.

I have effected the following new assignments to the fathers from the month of February 2016.

1.	Rev. Fr. James (Vinod) Kanakalil	Parish priest, St. Joseph Church, Karode and Director of DNN
2.	Rev. Fr. Kurias (Printo) Joseph	Asst. Parish priest St. Joseph Church Soosaipuram and Asst. HM, APJM
3.	Rev. Fr. George (Sumesh) Valliyamthadathil	In-charge: Chenamcode and Kulasekaram Missions
4.	Rev. Fr. Thomas (Ajeesh) Attiyil	Asst. Parish priest, St. George Church, Munchirai and Asst. Director Family Apostolate
5.	Rev. Fr. Thomas (Abin) Poovathummoottil	Personal Secretary to Bishop
6.	Rev. Fr. Abraham (Shoji) Puthenpurackal	Dean of Studies and teacher, Minor Seminary
7.	Rev. Fr. Kurian Koipuram	Asst. Parish priest of Vayalinkarai and Cheenivilai
8.	Rev. Fr. Thomas Koipuram (Jiji Thomas Thuckalai)	Parish priest, St. Mathew Church, Annikarai; In-charge: Evangelization and Mission
9.	Rev. Fr. Ritto Thomas Thoompunkal	Asst. Parish priest, Manjalumoodu and Mezhakode

We wish all the best and God's blessing to all the fathers who will be taking up their new ministries in the diocese.

Forthcoming Events

1. **Season of Lent:** 7th February is the First Sunday of Lent. The 50 Days Great Fast begins on 7th night. 8th is Ash Monday and is a Day of Fast. This year the Lenten *Hundial* Collection will be towards your own parish's charity fund. This we have initiated for the Year of Mercy and not for the charitable institution of the diocese. Therefore, kindly arrange the *Hundial* by yourself.
2. **Death Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodiyanthara:** On 9th February we as a presbyterium shall gather together and offer mass for the soul of Rev. Fr. Philip

Kodiyanthara who worked hard for our diocese. On that day after the mass we shall have the priests' conference.

We remember the gentle yet firm ways of Rev. Fr. Kodiyanthara who was guiding the diocese during his tenure as Administrator of the diocese and as its VG. On 10th February there will be special mass at his home town Kayalpuram, Kerala.

3. **Diocesan Charity Fund:** On the 21st, Sunday, kindly make a Cover collection for the Diocesan Charity Fund.
4. **Inter-departmental meeting** will be held on 11th February 2016.
5. **Shenkottai Bible Fest** will be on 13th February.
6. **Tamil Medium Teachers'** farewell meeting is on 20th February.
7. **Inter-diocesan meeting** at Changanassery is on 25th February.

Other Pieces of Information:


1. Church construction: Manjalumoodu church construction is in progress. Let us continue to support Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil and the parishioners with our prayers.
2. The Parish of Plankalai is preparing to construct a new church. We wish Fr. Luka Kollamparampil and every one God's blessings for this venture.
3. The Mekkarai church at Shenkottai is being renovated and given a facelift. We thank Fr. Peter Kizhakeyil and team taking up to do the task.
4. Pulari School has a children's park now. Thanks to Fr. John Paul for getting things done
5. You can begin to pray the Year of Mercy prayer after mass everyday in the church. We have already supplied the prayer cards to the parish and also to each family.
6. During the priest conference, we will be finalizing the Uraviam prayer book. Kindly come prepared to share your experience.

Conclusion

We have stepped into the Year of Mercy with meaningful celebration of the opening of the Year as well as the opening of the Door of Mercy. Mercy belongs to God; we share in it. God opens for us the door of mercy. He awaits us to reenter; He awaits our home coming. That means a change of our heart, a change in our ways. This is *metanoia*. This theme will be emphasized and lived out in the fast approaching season of Lent.

As we enter this beautiful season of Lent, I recommend you all to contemplate the unconditional love and mercy of God more intensely, spending more time and frequently on the meditation of God's mercy. Let us fix some specific moments of celebration of the Sacrament of Confession and make God's mercy concretely available to our people. May we too participate meaningfully in the sacraments of mercy, especially Confession and the Holy Eucharist.

Yours in the Merciful Christ,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay



Post-script: Thank you dear fathers for earnestly collecting back the Christmas covers and giving them to me. Those who still have them can pass them on to me. The Syro-Malabar mission collections are also being given back. The account details of these will be published in Irai Arul. Thank you.

BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS

February 2016

DATE	DAY	TIME	EVENTS
1	Mon	3.00 pm	Bishop's House Meeting in the College
2	Tue	5.00 pm	Trivandrum: Lourd Parish
3	Wed		Bishop's House
4	Thu	2.00 pm	Kanjirapally: Episcopal Ordination of Mgr Jose Pulikal
5	Fri	10.00 am	Wedding mass at Pattukottai>>Dindugal
6	Sat	4.00 pm	Padanthalumoodu: Annual Day
7	Sun	10.00 am	Kainagiri, Kerala: Holy Qurbana>>Kottayam
8	Mon	10.00 am	Bishop's House
9	Tue	9.30 am 11.00 am	Requiem Mass for Rev. Fr. Philip Kodianthara Priests Conference
10	Wed	8.30 am 11.00 am	Bishop's House: Curia Meeting Nagercoil: Wedding
11	Thu	2.30 pm	Bishop's House: Inter-department meeting
12	Fri		Bishop's House
13	Sat	9.00 am 5.00 pm	KKSSS: Laudato Si Seminar Vizhinjam: Church Jubilee Mass
14	Sun	10.00 am	Mekkarai: Blessing of Church
15-19			Bishop's House
20	Sat	11.30 am 3.00 pm	Palapallam: Bible convention programme Padanthalumoodu: Teachers' Fare-well meeting
21	Sun	8.00 am	Kumarakovil: Recollection
22	Mon		Bishop's House
23	Tue		Bishop's House
24	Wed	9.30 am	Bishop's House: Curia Meeting
25	Thu	8.00 am	Changanassery: Inter-diocesan Meeting
26	Fri		Bishop's House
27	Sat		KKSSS: Uraviam leaders meet
28	Sun	9.00 am	Soosaipuram: Holy Qurbana
29	Mon		Bishop's House

Fr. K. J. Antony SDB
Diocese Secretary