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31 August 2016

Dear and Reverend Fathers,
Greetings from the Bishop's House!

We have a New Indian Saint!

Mother the Church is gearing up to elevate Mother Theresa of Kolkata to Sainthood on 4th September 2016. Our beloved Holy Father Pope Francis will proclaim Blessed Mother Teresa a Saint.

This is a moment to rejoice that a saint of our times, who bore witness to Christ and his teachings in her life, now shares the glory divine and has become for us a great model to imitate, to follow, and pray to.

Mother Theresa said, "By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus." Today we look up to this true disciple of Jesus: she was in the world yet was not of the world. She served Jesus in the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, and the destitute. And she always and entirely belonged to the heart of Jesus.

A brief life sketch of Mother Teresa of Kolkata

Mother Teresa as she is popularly known was born to Nikola and Drane Bojaxhiu on 26 August 1910 in Skopje, Macedonia. She was baptized Gonxha Agnes, and received her First Communion at the age of five and a half and was confirmed in November 1916. She lost her father at the age of eight. Her mother played an important role in molding her character and vocation. She was much involved in the vibrant parish community run by the Jesuits and this helped her to listen to the call of Jesus her master. She dreamed to be a missionary and at eighteen she joined the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland. She took the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Sr. Teresa came to India in 1929 and made her First Profession in 1931. She made her Final Profession on 24 May 1937. For her, her profession meant that she would be the loving spouse of Jesus for all eternity. She began to be called Mother Teresa after her final profession. She worked at the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta and taught at St. Mary's School for girls. She became the principal of the school in 1944. Her faithful commitment to Jesus and to her religious calling, was filled with joy, and replete with love for her sisters and protégés, and was marked by dedicated, organized, and focused hard work.

It was during a train ride from Calcutta to Darjeeling in 1946 Mother Teresa received her 'call within a call.' She was enraptured by the love of Jesus and took his thirst for souls as her own which propelled her towards quenching the thirst of Jesus. Jesus wanted her to radiate his love for souls. His plea to her was "Come, be my light." He asked her to form the community of the Missionaries of Charity for the service of the poorest of the poor. In 1948

Mother Teresa left her Loreto convent to commit herself completely to cause of the poor and the destitute.

Impelled by the love of Jesus, she visited the families dwelling in the slums of Kolkata. She began cleaning up children with sores, and caring for persons with leprosy and TB. It was Jesus in the Eucharist who accompanied her to find and serve Him in “the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for.” Gradually her former students joined her works of mercy and love.

The new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta on 7 October 1950. There are today about 4500 missionaries of Charity in 123 countries. These valiant missionaries serve “the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, and all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people who have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone.”

After having spent 45 years serving the poor, the sick, the orphaned, and the dying on the streets of Kolkata, Mother Teresa died at the age of 87 in Kolkata in 1997.

Even during her lifetime she was recognized for her works of charity and was given several awards (about 124 major ones) including the Nobel Peace Prize (1979), The Nehru Prize – “for promotion of international peace and understanding” (1972), the first Pope John XXIII Peace Prize (1971), Indian Padmashri Award (1962), and Bharat Ratna (Jewel of India) (1980).

Today Mother the Church recognizes her virtuous life and presents her heroic model to be imitated, and her person worthy of veneration at the altar as Saint.

A Sainly Life that Speaks Volumes

St. John Paul II during her beatification ceremony said that he felt a personal spiritual relationship with her. He called her a ‘courageous woman,’ and succinctly termed her an ‘icon of the Good Samaritan’ who, “went everywhere to serve Christ in the poorest of the poor. Not even conflict and war could stand in her way.”

When we reflect on the words of St. John Paul II spoken during her beatification we get a brief but clear idea of different dimensions of being a saint that Mother Teresa was.

Mother Teresa may very often be misunderstood and her life reduced to a philanthropic venture of serving some class of relatively poor people. Her life was not based merely on some human values. She built her life on Gospel values that included and went beyond human values and philanthropy. She could see in a child-to-be-aborted the sign of God’s love and so would ask that the child be brought to her and that she would love that child.

The Church’s mission is an evangelizing mission and Mother Teresa is a paragon of the practice of evangelizing mission. Evangelizing Mission has been frequently and effectively carried out in the Church through works of charity. Her life was a “total gift to the poor” but “at the same time steeped in prayer.” Contemplation and action, evangelization and human promotion went hand in hand.

Her model of total unreserved giving was Jesus himself, who from the cross pleaded, “I Thirst,” expressing the depth of God’s longing for human souls. Mother Teresa joined the company of mother Mary and the few disciples at the foot of the cross of Jesus. It is there she learnt the depth of self-giving and the urgency of her mission for the “the salvation and the sanctification of the poorest of the poor.”

Her faith-filled conviction was that in touching the broken bodies of the poor she was touching the body of Christ. Her servant-discipleship brought out depth of the meaning of what Jesus said: "As you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25: 40).

Mother Teresa was a sign of "God's love, God's presence and God's compassion."She could see with God's eyes the value and dignity of each and every human being.

It is not that she always felt the snug and comfort of the embrace of Jesus. God willed that she went through an experience of the 'dark night of the soul,'and long years of 'inner darkness.' It was a challenging test of faith, of suffering and pain. This fact of her life was not made known until her death. She accepted the agonizing test of being separated from God, and even rejected by Him. But her spousal love expressed in her unyielding prayer before the Blessed Sacrament made her victorious. The experience of spiritual rejection helped her understand and feel close to those whom she served, of their pain, suffering, and feelings of rejection. Thus we come to learn of her oft repeated statement: 'the greatest poverty is to be unwanted.'

Today and forever the heroic life of Mother Teresa of Kolkata will remain for all of us a beacon of hope. She is a model for us and she teaches us how to blend the beauty of being a humble messenger of the Gospel while being an indefatigable lover of humanity.

Celebrating the Saint in our Diocese

In this Year of Mercy it is apt that we celebrate Mother Teresa who lived and witnessed to God's compassion and love. This great saint acknowledged not only by the Catholic Church but also by the so called secular world is because she was mercy-incarnate.

Let us as a diocese acknowledge this great gift of God to our Church and let us celebrate her Sainthood. We are blessed to have our Parish at Kalluvilai named after this great saint. Let us all gather on October 30th at Kalluvilai for a Thanksgiving Holy Qurbana in the afternoon. The Qurbana is scheduled for the afternoon to enable the participation of all the priests of our diocese. The detailed programme will be announced to you later.

NEWS AND EVENTS

1. Vianney Day Celebrations

Vianney Day Celebrations were held at our St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkootukalon August 4th. It was heartwarming to see practically all of our fathers who came and actively participated in the celebrations. I thank Rev. Fr. Justin Cheruvilil, and other fathers and brothers at the seminary, who took pains to organize the day and make it very enjoyable. Congrats once again to the brothers who took the championship not just in volley ball, but also by creatively organizing the day for the fathers.

2. Priests and religious meeting at Karode

The Religious Sangamam was held on 15th August 2016 at Karode. Most of our priests and religious of our diocese participated in the Holy Qurbana, Felicitation for the Jubilarians, and the Family Meal organized at DevasagayamNalvazhvuNilayam. The Jubilee mass was presided over by Very Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam our VG who celebrates his Silver Jubilee of Ordination. Rev. Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil delivered a very inspiring homily. During the

Felicitation both fathers and sisters who celebrated their Silver Jubilee and Golden Jubilee were honoured.

I thank Rev. Fr. James Kanakalil the Parish Priest and the parishioners of Karode, and the Sisters at DNN for having organized the day well. They made the day very memorable.

3. Forane-wise priests meeting

In the past months I have been making personal visit to parishes and institutions and spent the evening time with our fathers. It has been grace-filled and divine moment for me. At the end of the visit I was able to convene two Forane meetings. The Arukani and Manjalumoodu Foranes meeting was held at Manjalumoodu on 1st August; the Nithravilai and Padanthalumoodu Foranes meeting was held at Padanthalumoodu on 20th August. Everyone actively participated and the discussions were oriented towards our pastoral work in the diocese. I would like to thank the Forane directors of Padanthalumoodu and Manjalumoodu for arranging the meeting. My next visit will be in Thuckalay-Plankalai and Soosaipuram Forane which will be held after the Synodal meeting.

4. The Syro-Malabar Assembly

The Syro-Malabar Assembly on the themes, The Response of the Church to the Challenges of Today, Simplicity in Life, Witness in Family and Mission of the Migrants, was held from 25th-28th August 2016 at Sahrdaya College of Engineering and Technology, Kodakara. There were 515 delegates in all representing the Syro Malabar diocese in India and abroad. The representatives included 50 bishops, 175 priests, 70 sisters and 220 persons representing the laity.

It was very enriching to see the active participation of several lay people who shared much and openly on the respective themes, especially on Simplicity of Life and Family Witnessing to Gospel way of life. The observations and suggestions put forward by various dioceses during discussions held prior to the synod were also taken up and discussed. A preliminary draft, of the discussions held and of the action plans, has been prepared and it awaits the Synodal approval.

As an Episcopal member and as the member of the organizing committee I would like to place on record the hard work of the office-bearers of the Assembly, and all those who arranged and worked for the success of the Assembly. A special thanks to the management and staff of the Sahrdaya College of Engineering and Technology who went out of their way to make the stay of the participants comfortable and for all the arrangements made towards a fruitful Assembly. We are grateful to Bishop Mar Pauly Kannukkadan of Irinjalakuda diocese and to the diocese itself for hosting the event.

I also personally thank the members of our diocese who represented us at the Assembly. I thank Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam our Vicar General who coordinated the representatives and their participatory moments. I thank the participants Rev. Fr. Alex Puthettu, Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, Mr. Y. John, Vayalinkarai, Mr. Sounder Raj, Muzhucode, and Mrs. Sneha Latha, Munchirai.

5. The Syro-Malabar Synod of Bishops

The Synod of Bishops is being held at Kakkanad. The Synod began on 22nd August and it will conclude on 3rd of September 2016. Let us support our Bishops with special prayers for the success of the Synod.

INFORMATION

1. Rev. Fr. Kurian Koipuram has gone to Saudi Arabia for a month to do pastoral work for Syro-Malabar community there.
2. Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil left for Rome on 30th August. He will be doing his doctorate study on Family and Marriage at the Pontifical Institute of John Paul II for Study on Matrimony and Family.
3. Rev. Fr. Saji Elembasseril SDB has already reached Europe to meet with the benefactors and friends, and agencies that support Thuckalay Mission. He will return on 7th October. Until then Fr. Abin will be the Acting director of KKSSS. Fr. Fr. Felix sdb will take care of the Kalluvilai mission.
4. Rev. Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram left for Rome on 30th August to participate in the Canonization of the Mother Teresa. He will be representing our diocese at the Canonization ceremony.
5. Athencode Church construction is in progress.
6. Casting of roof of Manjalumoodu church is over.
7. Karode Church has a new sacristy. Congratulations to Rev. Fr. James Kanakalil and the parishioners.
8. Maintenance and painting works of Palapallam Church is going on.
9. New ramp has been constructed at the Alphonsa School, Nagarcoilas per need and keeping to the rules of civil procedure.
10. At Thiruvarambu we have constructed a shed for nursery. We are grateful to Rev. Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam for following up the project.
11. Pilankarai parish has a renovated hall with additional facilities. We thank Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil for his hard work.
12. Plankalai parish church construction is going on
13. In order to make more space and facilities for Angel garments in the present building at Palukal, the parish is constructing a new hall in its premises.
14. The additional school floor construction is nearing completion at the Christurajapuram School.
15. The theater hall at Padanthalumoodu School is nearing completion.
16. An additional structure at APJM School at Soosaipuram will be completed soon.
17. There is a proposal at the Kaliyal parish both to extend and to renovate the church on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee next year.
18. Casting of roof and maintenance work is going on at Penu mission.
19. Pudur mission at Shenkottai has a new chapel and grotto which was blessed on 9th August. We thank Rev. Fr. John Paul and we congratulate him.
20. I will be making a short visit to Europe from 3-8 September and also attend the Canonization ceremony of Mother Theresa too.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. Annual retreat

People look up to us priests as ‘men of God.’ They look up at us as channels of grace. These are in fact true based on our faith and belief. But very often we can be mere ‘men’ than be ‘men of God;’ we may also remain just channels, where grace gone through and drained out. St. Bernard says, “If you are wise, you will be reservoirs and not channels....The channels let the water flow away, and do not retain a drop. But the reservoir is first filled, and then, without emptying itself, pours out its overflow, which is ever renewed over the fields which it waters.” We cannot give what we do not have. We dear fathers then need renewal and

strengthening. We can never overemphasize our need for Retreats. Pope Francis in the Prayer for the Year of Mercy has thoughtfully included the status of priests: “You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness...” We are weak; we are frail. We need renewal.

We set aside time for our Annual Retreat from 3rd-7th October. The Retreat will begin on the first day at 5.30pm. Kindly reach by 4.00pm so that you can settle down and prepare well for the Retreat. Inform well in advance that those days there will be no Holy Qurbana in the parish or convent. This is our Annual Spiritual retreat. All need to take part without any exception. We are blessed to have Mar Raphael Thattilas our Retreat Preacher.

We will also remember and pray for Fr. Mathew Plathottam on 6th October as it is his third death anniversary.

The retreat will get over on 7th October by 12.30pm and after lunch we will have the Priests Conference.

2. Junior Priests Meeting and Priest Conference

This year we will be having the Junior Priests meeting on 15th and 16th September at Sangamam. I have sent a personal letter to all the Junior Priests inviting them to participate in the program. The fathers who are working in Kerala too will take part in the meeting. The Junior Priests meeting will begin on 15th September at 9.30am and will end on 16th September by 10.30am after which we shall be having recollection for all the fathers. Rev. Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram will animate the Junior Priests. All the other fathers are requested reach Sangamam on 16th Sept. by 10.00am. The program will be as follows:

15 th September	09.30am	-	Junior Priests meeting begins
16 th September	10.30am	-	Junior Priests meeting ends
	10.45 am	-	Recollection talk by Fr. Geo Choozhikunnel
	11.00 am	-	Reflection, confessions and adoration
	12.00 pm	-	Felicitation to Fr. Jose Muttathupadam (A short gathering)
	01.00 pm	-	Onam Lunch
	02.00 pm	-	Departure

3. Palliative care mobile service

Our Syro Malabar Synod had encouraged all the dioceses to begin a Palliative Care Service and Environmental Protection Program in all our parishes during this Year of Mercy. Keeping this in mind we in our diocese level plan for the Year of Mercy had decided to start a Mobile Palliative Care unit and had entrusted this task to KKSSS to realize the plan. Rev. Fr. Saji Elembasseril SDB along with the staff of KKSSS had made some collection drive and also distributed *hundial* to all the SHG members to collect fund for the same. We hope to inaugurate this Palliative Care Service on 30th October on the occasion of celebration of the canonization of Mother Theresa at our diocese level.

As part of this Service we need to buy an ambulance. For this I appeal to you dear fathers to collect some fund from your parishes. We also need two volunteer nurses. If you have any one in your parish willing to support this project kindly inform Fr. Saji.

4. Silver Jubilee of Fr. Jose Muttathupadam

We rejoice with our brother priests very Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, VG and Rev. Fr. Antony Chundelikkat and we congratulate them as they celebrate their Silver Jubilee of Ordination.

I would like to make a special mention of our Vicar General and thank him for his generous accompaniment in leading our diocese to her progress, development and for the leadership and coordination Rev. Fr. Muttathupadamoffers.

Fr. Jose Muttathupadam hails from Kudamaloor and belongs to St. Mary's Forane Church, Kudamaloor. His house name is very much connected with St. AlphonsaMuttathupadam. Fr. Jose Muttathupadamwas born to Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Thressiama on 9th September 1965. He was ordained priest on 26th December 1991.

It will be a great opportunity for us to gather around Fr. Muttathupadam on 16thSeptember during the Priest Conference to thank and Praise God for the 25 years of his priesthood, out of which he spent his 24 years in Thuckalay diocese. His selfless service to the church and to the people of God will be ever remembered. It is a very kind gesture from the part of the Jubilarian to construct a home for a poor family in his Jubilee year.

5. Bible Convention in Tamil at Muringoor

The 11th Bible Convention in Tamil will be held from 25th to 30thSeptember at Divine Retreat Centre, Muringoor as part of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Centre. Separate retreats are scheduled for Fathers and Sisters, Families, Youth and Children. You are exhorted to encourage as many as possible from your parishes to attend the convention. The convention begins at 8.30am on 25th and ends at 2.30pm on 30th. Please do announce this early in your parishes so that they can plan their participation. For details please contact Rev. Fr. Arun Louis VC, Director-Tamil Retreat, on mobile (9539516055; 8281237807) or by email (drcmindia@gmail.com).

6. DB Tech- Skill training program

Don Bosco Tech, also known as DB Tech addresses the endemic problem of the Indian economy, viz., a widening divide between those who have access to opportunities and those who are increasingly being marginalized from the 'new economy' jobs, which results in perpetuation of poverty and unemployment.

With a market-based approach DB Tech caters to the marginalized youth in the 18-35 years age group. Don Bosco Tech has set up a network of 300+ skill trainingcentres across India, with focus on youth acquiring the required livelihood and soft skills and an overall integrated development.Don Bosco Tech with a team of 800+ employees is presently working in 29 states with a target to impart skill based training to 20 lakh youngsters by 2022.

In our Diocese after a long wait and hard work, finally the project by DB Tech for the benefit our youngsters is going to be implemented in two of our centres, viz.,atManjalumoodu and Ozanam Higher Education Centre, at Utharamcode. Rev. Fr.AjeeshAttiyil and Mr. Sounder Raj will be in charge of this project. Kindly encourage our young boys and girls to learn a skill. Let us make sure that no one in our parishes or institutions is without any job. It is also our responsibility and duty to encourage the youth to participate in such useful programs. Please approach Fr. AjeeshAttiyilfor details with regard to admission requirements and the schedule of the courses.

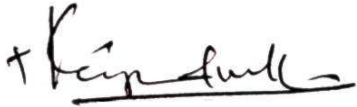
7. Other Engagements

- i. 11thOctober: New Pastoral Council will be constituted.
- ii. 13thOctober: Inter-departmental meet at 2.30pm in the Bishop's House.
- iii. 16thOctober: Mission Sunday; Cover Collection
- iv. 16thOctober: Chain Rosary in Families
- v. 23thOctober: Rosary Rally

CONCLUSION

On 8th September we will be celebrating the Birthday of our Blessed Mother, the mother of our Saviour. She was God's choice even before her birth that she was immaculately conceived. Today she is not only our model of faith, she continues to intercede for us and protect us. An eightdaysfast precedes the celebration of the birth of our Blessed Mother in our Eastern tradition. A story from a later tradition says, with an eight days fast and prayer to our blessed mother by Christian women and seeking her intercession, they were able to ward off an attack on Indian Christians by Tipu Sultan. Today more than ever persecution on believers of Christ has been unleashed. Let us make use of this opportunity to fast and pray for all the persecuted Christians. Let us seek the protection and intercession of our blessed mother to keep us from both spiritual and physical harm.

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+George Rajendran SDB
Bishop of Thuckalay



BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS

September 2016

DATE	DAY	TIME	EVENTS
22 nd August – 3 rd September			Kakkanad: SYNOD and SM Assembly
3	Sat	04.30 pm	Pulinkunnu: Feast day Holy Qurbana
4	Sun	04.30pm	Ittithanam: Feast day Holy Qurbana
5	Mon	10.30 am 06.00 pm	Varuthattu: Marriage ceremony Pathukani: Meeting with Home mission sisters
6	Tue	06.15 pm	Thuckalay: Feast day Holy Qurbana
7	Wed	06.00 pm	Anakkarai: Vespers
8	Thu	05.30 pm	Killiyoor: Feast day Holy Qurbana
9	Fri	05.00 pm	Dalmugam: Holy Qurbana
10	Sat	08.30 am 12.00 noon	Bishop's House: Education commission meeting Sangamam: Holy Qurbana, Sisters' Recollection
11	Sun	10.00 am 05.00 pm	Vayalinkarai: Silver Jubilee Holy Qurbana Kaliyal: Holy Qurbana
12	Mon	11.00 am	Veroor: Marriage Holy Qurbana
13	Tue		Padanthalumoodu: SH School Pastoral visit
14	Wed	09.30 am 05.30 pm	Curia Meeting Mankarai: Parish visit
15	Thu	09.30 am	Sangamam: Junior Priests Meeting
16	Fri	09.30 am 10.45 am 12.00 noon	Anniversary: Episcopal Ordination of Mar George Rajendran SDB Sangamam: Junior Priests Meeting, Sangamam: Priests Recollection Priests Conference, Felicitating V. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam
17	Sat	05.30 pm	Bishop's House Palapallam: Parish visit
18	Sun	08.00 am	Plankalai: Holy Qurbana>> Warangal
19	Mon		Warangal: Seminary visit
20	Tue		Warangal >> Ujjain
21	Wed		Ujjain: Seminary visit
22	Thu		Ujjain: Seminary visit >> Satna
23	Fri		Satna: Seminary visit >> Kottayam
24	Sat	10.00 am	Kudamaloor: Holy Qurbana>> Thuckalay
25	Sun	07.30 am	Paraicode: Pastoral visit
26	Mon	10.00 am 05.30 pm	Munchirai: DB Tech Inauguration Killiyoor: Parish visit
27	Tue	05.30 pm	Kattathurai: parish visit
28	Wed	09.30 am 03.30 pm 06.00 pm	Curia Meeting Thuckalay: Parish visit Vellambi: parish visit
29	Thu	09.00 am	Soosaipuram: APJM school pastoral visit
30	Fri	06.00 pm	Thettivilai: Holy Qurbana

Fr. K. J. Antony SDB
Diocese Secretary