

Ref. No. Priest| 32|2014

Dated 1 October, 2014

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Prayerful greetings from the Bishop's House! Wishing you all a very happy feast of St Theresa of Child Jesus.

## **THE MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY**

The month of October is dedicated to the Mother of God and among the many Marian devotions that are in vogue in the Church, the one that we highlight during this month is the praying of the holy Rosary both individually and in communities. The Rosary is a family prayer. Pope John XXII firmly believed that if we recite the family Rosary all united on a regular basis, we could taste peace. Speaking about the Rosary, Pope Paul VI admonished the Christians thus: "There is no doubt that, after the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the high point which family prayer can reach, the Rosary should be considered as one of the best and most efficacious prayers in common that the Christian family is invited to recite."

The Rosary is a form of combined prayer and meditation that has been around for over 1200 years. The origin of the Rosary dates back to the ninth century where Irish monks would recite and chant the 150 Psalms of the Bible as a major part of their worship. People living near the monasteries were drawn towards this beautiful and harmonious devotion, and they became very eager to join in with the monks' prayers. Unfortunately, the people were not able to adapt to this form of prayer because the psalms were very hard to memorize and printed copies of the psalms were not readily available. As a result, it was suggested to the people outside the monastery that they recite a series of 150 Our Fathers in the place of the psalms.

As this form of devotion became increasingly popular, people started to devise methods in order to keep track of their prayers. At first, 150 little pebbles were placed inside small leather pouches to keep count. Since this method was rather troublesome, a thin rope having 50 knots on it was used instead (it was used three times for a total of 150 prayers). Eventually, the instrument of choice became the use of string with small pieces of wood.

In later years, the Irish monks travelled throughout Europe and brought this form of devotion with them. In some areas, both clergy and lay people began to recite the Angelic Salutation (the first part of what we now know as the Hail Mary) as part of this devotion. The popularity of this prayer led to the adoption of 50 Angelic Salutations being said for each piece of wood or knot on the prayer string.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the medieval theologians began to interpret the 150 psalms as veiled mysteries about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They began to write a series of

Psalters or praises in honour of Jesus for each interpretation of the psalms. In addition, 150 Psalters honouring Mary were also composed. In order to fit the existing prayer string, these Psalters were divided into groups of 50 and were referred to as *Rosariums*. Although *Rosarium* refers to roses and rose gardens, it was used to signify a collection of prayers, which could be compared to a bouquet of roses.

The interpretation of the psalms into written Psalters led to the implementation of special thoughts or meditations being attached to each bead. Blessed Alan de la Roche of the Dominican Order spread this innovated version of the Rosary, as it revived the divinely inspired works that St Dominic and his Rosary Confraternity had initiated some hundred years earlier. The prayers of the Rosarium were later broken out into sets of ten and these groupings became known as decades. One Our Father preceded each decade of ten Hail Marys.

Around the year 1700, the thoughts used in the rosary started to become narratives. St Louis de Montfort composed the most common set of narratives that eventually became used as meditations for each decade of the Rosary. These narratives were divided into five Joyful, five Sorrowful, and five Glorious meditations that are referred to as Mysteries. Just recently, in 2002, St John Paul II introduced another set of five meditations referred to as the Luminous Mysteries.

Many of the Popes down through the centuries championed the Rosary as a powerful and multifaceted devotion. The theologian Romano Guardini described praying the Rosary as “participation in the life of Mary, whose focus was Christ.” Pope Leo XIII viewed the Rosary as a vital means to participate in the life of Mary and to find the way to Christ. The Popes encouraged the Christians to pray the Rosary devoutly, as it helps to recall the mysteries of salvation in succession, while the subject of meditation is mingled and interlaced with the Angelic Salutation and prayer to God the Father. For Pope Benedict XVI, the Rosary is a means given by the Virgin for contemplating Jesus and, meditating on his life, for loving and following him always more faithfully.

The Rosary is intended to influence the society as a whole. The holy and powerful life of Jesus Christ is to be a real antidote and a remedy for the errors afflicting the society. The Rosary focuses on the events of Christ’s life, the incarnation, redemption and the promise of eternal life. It also highlights the Virgin Mary’s participation in the mystery of Christ. A person praying must be the agent who actively enters into the mysteries, and not simply one before whom the celebration unfolds. The Rosary is an accessible reminder of the constant prayer of the Church, the incessant prayer of God’s people throughout the ages. Hence, St John Paul II urged the Christians: “Recite the Rosary every day. I earnestly urge Pastors to pray the Rosary and to teach people in their Christian communities how to pray it.”

Taking into account the admonitions of the Successors of St Peter, let us during this month of October, desire to welcome the Virgin’s maternal request by committing ourselves to saying the Rosary with faith for peace in our families, in our State, in our country and in the whole world. Let us inculcate among our Christian families a genuine love for the Rosary and insist with them to recite it daily. Let us devise ways and means to spread this devotion in our Parishes and Institutions. Above all, we who devote ourselves to the pastoral care of the families take to heart the regular recitation of the Rosary.

Following our tradition, we shall set aside at least 10 days in this month for holding special Rosary services which should be followed by Eucharistic celebrations in all our Parishes and Institutions. Besides this, we shall also organize the Chain Rosary and a Rosary Rally in the Diocese.

**The Chain Rosary** is meant to pray the Rosary within a specified hour by the entire Faithful in the Diocese. As I had mentioned to you, on 19 October 2014 from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm is the time fixed for praying the Chain Rosary. Kindly follow the instructions given below:

- Teach the Faithful regarding the date, time and procedure of praying the Chain Rosary.
- Call for the meeting of all the *Uraviam* leaders for instructing them well about the Chain Rosary. Carry out this task through their help.
- The Chain Rosary should be prayed according to *Uraviam* wise. All the member of the *Uraviam* must gather in one family and pray one decade of the Holy Rosary and then move to the next family for the next decade. All the families in the *Uraviam* must be covered with in an hour.
- If the number of families is too many to complete in the stipulated one-hour time, you are free to further divide the *Uraviam* for this occasion.
- Kindly instruct the people to go in procession from house to house carrying the statue/picture of our Blessed Mother and a Holy Bible.
- Kindly request all the Sisters to accompany each *Uraviam* during the Chain Rosary either individually or in twos. The Fathers can also join the *Uraviam* for the Chain Rosary.
- While entering each family, kindly say aloud the intentions for the decade preferably pertaining to the family and make sure that the group prays for every member of the family.

I do hope that this devotion is going to be something unique and through this we can honour our Blessed Mother in a fitting manner in our Diocese on 19 October 2014. May I request all of you to kindly prepare the Faithful for this day!

**Rosary Rally:** The Legion of Mary will organize a Rosary Rally on 26 October 2014. The Rally will begin from Thettivialai by 2.30 pm and will conclude at Manchalumood. Kindly encourage all the Marian Senai members to attend this Rally. I do hope that all the Faithful from Manchalumood Parish will attend the Rally.

## **NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE**

### **SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

The Silver Jubilee of St Alphonsa Church, Nagarcoil was celebrated on 21 September 2014. Our beloved Cardinal Mar George Alencherry was the Chief guest. Along with the Bishop of CSI Diocese, Kanyakumari, there were also present a number of political and religious leaders. The event was well organized showcasing the history of the origin of the Syro-Malabar Parish in Nagarcoil. During the programme, we remembered the pioneering missionaries both the Fathers and Sisters, who worked in that mission. As you know, the Parish community in Nagarcoil is rather small but the presence of many Syro-Malabar Faithful, Fathers and Sisters made the entire celebration meaningful and appealing. It was also an occasion for us to re-affirm the unity and strength of our Diocese. I want to thank personally all the Fathers for encouraging the Faithful

from their respective Parishes to take part in the celebrations in Nagarcoil. I know it was not easy as the distance to Nagarcoil is rather long, but you did it. My special thanks goes to Rev. Fr Thomas Pawathuparambil for making this event a Diocesan level celebration. Along with Rev. Fr Sanal and the Parishioners, Fr Thomas worked very hard for the success of the celebration. I am grateful to them all.

## **DIACONATE MINISTRY**

This year we have eight Deacons studying in the four major Seminaries both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They will be completing their Diaconate Course by October this year and will return to the Diocese to begin their Diaconate ministries in the Parishes starting from the month of November. I welcome them to our Diocese and wish them God's blessings.

## **PRIESTLY ORDINATION OF DN JINU JACOB**

Dn Jinu Jacob was ordained priest on September 13, 2014 at St Alphonsa Church, Nagarcoil. Many fathers, sisters and faithful from the parish were present on the occasion. A large number of relatives and well wishers of Dn. Jinu too were present along with his parents. The ceremony was meaningful and well organised by the parish. Later on 15<sup>th</sup> September, Fr. Jinu celebrated his first Holy Qurbana in his Parish Church at Pacha, Edathua. There were many representatives from the diocese on this great occasion. We congratulate Fr. Jinu Jacob for saying yes to the call of God. He has left for Rome to continue his further licentiate in 'Media and Social Communication'.

## **JUNIOR PRIESTS' MEETING**

The junior priests' meeting was held at Sangamam on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014. All were present for the meeting except Fr. Prince and Fr. Sanal due to some unavoidable circumstances. The day began with the Eucharistic adoration followed by animation program by Mr. Tom Zacharia, HRD Trainer, on Leadership and HRD Management. The Sessions were informative and practical; every one actively took part in the scissions. It was concluded with Bishop's message and some common discussion and sharing regarding the diocese. I thank to all the fathers who have taken part in the meeting.

## **CONDOLENCES**

Mr. P.J.Joseph, Father of Fr. Alex Puthettu was called to eternal life on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2014. He has been ailing for some years. Along with our Vicar General few fathers, sisters and faithful from the diocese took part in the funeral ceremony on 13<sup>th</sup> September at Kailasam, Idukki. We express a heartfelt condolences to Fr. Alex and all his family members. May God give eternal rest to the departed soul. I thank all the fathers, sisters and faithful who have taken trouble to be with the family during this grief-stricken moment for Fr. Alex.

## **HOME MISSION**

- The Home Mission sisters from our diocese will begin the ministry at Karode parish after 25<sup>th</sup> October.

- The S.H sisters from Changanacherry province will do the Home mission at Arukani Parish from 13 to 16 October. We welcome the sisters and wish the parish priests and faithful God's blessing during these grace filled moments.
- The Holy Family sisters (CHF) from Irijalakuda province have agreed to do the Home Mission in the Aurkany Forane from 15 to 31 October. We are happy to welcome the sisters. All the parishes in the Forane will begin the preparation from 5<sup>th</sup> October onwards. Rev. Fr. Siji Puthenpurayil will be coordinating the Home Mission in Arukani Forane.

## COMING EVENTS

- Pastoral council on October 2, 2014
- Annual Spiritual Retreat at Attappady: 5-10 October
- Mission Sunday(special liturgy) and Chain Rosary: 19<sup>th</sup> October
- Rosary Rally: 26<sup>th</sup> October
- Inter-department meeting 24<sup>th</sup> October (bring the events and program for 2015)
- 18<sup>th</sup> Diocesan day celebration 8<sup>th</sup> November
- Annual Bible convention: 5-8 December

## CONCLUSION

As we celebrate the feast of St. Theresa of Child Jesus today, let me conclude this circular letter with a short message from her life. She had a child like simplicity, utter humility, constant self-sacrifice, and a boundless love of God and trust in God; these were the outstanding virtues we see in her life. It was through her 'little Way' of performing perfectly the small duties of everyday life for the love of God that she has become the model and inspiration of countless ordinary folk. Her special task, she felt, was to assist the church's priests and missionaries with prayers and sacrifices. The *Mission League* movement has taken this as a mandate to spread the Gospel in the church. Let us strengthen this movement in all our parishes and help our children to be true missionaries.

Yours in Christ

+ George Rajendran sdb  
Bishop of Thuckalay