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Ref. No. Priests/GR/74/2017

30 September 2017

Dear and Reverend Fathers,

Greetings from the Eparchy of Thuckalay!

Family visit is an important element of the ministry of a priest especially of those priests who work in parishes. In the given context of our Eparchy, it is an essential and a much-needed ministry. Hence, in this circular, I want to reflect with you on the topic of family, which is one of our priorities. I have gathered these reflections from CPI bulletin and I gratefully acknowledge it.

The families make the priests. The priests are what they are because of the families. We would be nothing without them. Our families have given their best to us. Not only members of our own families but also the numerous families that we have come into contact with during the course of our pastoral ministry have in so many ways inspired and supported us. They have shaped our vision and strengthened our vocation. The trust that the families place in us is obvious from their request to participate in almost all their family celebrations. From birth to death, we are affectionately invited to be with them.

“Father, when would be your next visit? When will be visiting us again?” are the final questions asked after every visit to the families. People always wish that their priests visited them frequently. No one resists a visit from a priest. Everyone welcomes us warmly when we visit the family. I am sure this is our personal experience too. The usual complaint against us priests is that we do not visit their families. Any priest who visits the families regularly is considered good. Success in parish ministry depends on the frequency of our family visits.

No one but a priest can walk into any house in the parish at any time of the day or night. Such is the freedom that a priest enjoys. Priesthood alone provides this blessed privilege. Hence, it becomes a sacred duty as well. If family visits are used well, much good can be done and many problems can be solved. These visits can bring back many people back to faith and if neglected, sure enough, our ministry becomes ineffective. Whatever excellent work a priest might engage himself in, if he fails to meet the families in their homes, hardly is his ministry considered priestly! Success of parish ministry is measured in terms of the visits undertaken. Hence, the family provides the much-needed priestly identity.

Family visit is an Art

Often our visits to families are formal. They are done out of compulsion. Take for instance, the Easter blessing or the house blessing to be undertaken before the annual parish feast or Home Mission. They are performed in a hurry. We enter through the front door and get out of the back door, together with the Kaikar/sacristan. This cannot be counted as a family visit. Hardly can the ritual of sprinkling the Holy Water on the walls and rooms even when the members of the family are present be considered a family visit.

Meeting the families means spending quality time with them, which means, the priest fixes a time convenient to them. Getting to know the family is an art. It involves time and patience. As Jesus patiently entered into the inner self of the Samaritan woman (John 4), the priest gradually builds confidence and vibrates with the family. He feels one with his people, strikes an affectionate chord with the rhythm running in their hearts. Consequently, the encounter leaves a lasting impact both on

the persons in the family and in the priest himself. As in the Gospel of St John, when the initial apprehensions were overcome, self-discovery happened.

When the Samaritan Women fearlessly disclosed her real self, quite spontaneously Jesus too revealed himself. While Jesus unfolded the status of the Samaritan woman, she, in turn, recognized Jesus as the Prophet, the long awaited Messiah (Jn 4:29). Much the same disclosure and enlightenment happens during a well-organised family visit.

Rewards here and now

Any priest visiting the homes of his parishioners is not considered an outsider but a member of their own family. No wonder therefore, that people call their priests as “Father!” This, then is the reward the hundredfold, promised to those who follow Jesus (Mt 19:29). It is granted here and now. Precisely because of this emotional bonding some of the priests find it hard to quit their parish ministry even if they are offered higher position, brings monetary benefits and provides material comforts. Genuine love experienced in the family visits is held far more fulfilling than any position in the ecclesiastical ladder.

Any priest who desires to make his ministry meaningful has to set families as the first in the list of his priorities. Being with them and accompanying them is indispensable today. Visiting them is only the first step towards realizing this priority. Much more is to be done to accompany them in a meaningful way. Setting the priority and visiting them systematically would help to draft plans together. A meaningful action plan can be outlined in consultation with them alone. Taking the teachings of Pope Francis on family, we need to have wider consultations with the families in our parishes. Any teaching, however radically new, relevant or useful, cannot be actualised unless decisions are made in common. Personally meeting the families in their own residence would bring to light their day-to-day struggles and hopes, anxieties and aspirations, which are essential to promote an enriched family living.

To make this home visit regular and systematic the Eparchy has prepared home visit diaries and the sisters are already using them. I strongly recommend to you, dear Fathers, to make use of the diary. During my personal chats with you my constant recommendation and suggestion was regarding the family visits, which you are doing with utmost care and responsibility. However, documenting these visits and writing down relevant information is also the prime duty of the priests.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Blessing and Inauguration of Tailoring Centre at Kattuvilai-Kallukatti, Kuzhithurai: The much-awaited dream of utilising the new building to hold Holy Qurbana and to organise other charitable works was fulfilled, when the blessing and inauguration of the Tailoring Centre at Kattuvilai- Kallukatti, Kuzhithurai took place. In the presence of Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr Thomas Koipuram, Rev. Fr Saji Elambasseril, Rev. Fr Thomas Sathianesan, Rev. Fr Robins Kuzhikodiyil, Mr Ravi Sangar, former Panchayathu President of Vilavancode, Mr Soundar Raj and people from the local area, I blessed and inaugurated the Centre on 12 September 2017. I remember with gratitude all the former missionaries, who worked hard for the realisation of this Centre. I thank and congratulate Rev. Fr Thomas Koipuram, Mr Mariyadas and MM Sisters for organising this event in a meaningful manner.

On-going Formation for Junior Priests: This year the on-going formation programme for junior priests (batches 2013-2017) was held on 12-13 September 2017. Rev. Fr Gnanadas from the Diocese of Ootty, Rev. Fr Dency Mundunadackal and Rev. Fr Joseph Santhosh animated the junior priests. Rev. Fr Jose Muttathupadam as the coordinator of the On-Going Programme for the junior priests organized well. I thank all the junior priests for showing interest in participating in this event. Two

junior priests could not attend the programme due to some prior engagements. The open and friendly sharing among the junior priests impressed me.

Eparchial Day and Conclusion of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Major Archiepiscopal Church: We are planning to celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of our Eparchy on 11 November 2017 as Eparchial Day. Bishop Mar Thomas Tharayil, Auxiliary Bishop of Changanassery, will preside over the Jubilee Celebration. He is visiting our Eparchy for the first time for an official meeting after his Episcopal Ordination. Let us welcome Bishop Thomas Tharayil to our Eparchy wholeheartedly. Along with the Eparchial Day Celebration, we are also marking the conclusion of the Silver Jubilee of the establishment of the Syro-Malabar Church as Major Archiepiscopal Church. The celebration begins with Holy Qurbana at 9.30am. During the felicitation ceremony, we shall honour the missionaries of the Eparchy with Sevai Semmal Awards. The programme ends with lunch at 1.00 pm. Dear Fathers, since the Qurbana that we celebrate on that day is a thanksgiving Eucharist for all the blessings that we received as an Eparchy during the past years, I invite you all to concelebrate and unite ourselves as members of the presbyterium.

Major Events in the Month of October in the Eparchy:

- ◆ **Pastoral Council Meeting** will be held at Sangamam on 2 October 2017. I request all the Fathers who are members to attend the council meeting. Kindly make arrangements for the lay members of the pastoral council from your respective parishes to attend it.
- ◆ **Consecration of Newly Built Church at Kaliyal:** The Kaliyal parish has built a beautiful church under the direction of the CMI Fathers working there. The consecration of St Mary's Church, Kaliyal will be held on 8 October 2017. I invite all the priests and religious to take part in this solemn event. I congratulate Rev. Fr Tinu Kottackaparampil CMI, present parish priests, Rev. Fr Augustine Thottananiyil CMI and Fr Devis Karukappally CMI, former parish priests, other priests who worked in the parish, and all the parishioners for their hard work.
- ◆ **Golden Jubilee Celebration of Kaliyal Church:** St Mary's Church, Kaliyal is celebrating the Golden Jubilee on 15 October 2017. The Jubilee celebration is an occasion to express our gratitude to God and to the people who helped and cooperated with us. Let us remember all the CMI Fathers and CMC Sisters who worked hard for the development of parish. I request all the Fathers and Sisters of Manjalumoodu Forane to take part in this historic event of the Kaliyal parish.
- ◆ **Mission League Rally:** On 15 October 2017, Mission League of the Eparchy is organising a Rally from Kalluvilai to Kattathurai to celebrate the feast of St Theresa of the Child. I ask all the Fathers, Sisters, Animators and Coordinators of the Mission Leagues to make the necessary arrangements to bring the Mission League children for the Rally. I acknowledge the hard work of Rev. Fr Shojo Erupathanchilchira, Director, Rev. Fr Jose Vayalil, Assistant Director, Rev. Sr Angrace FCC, Secretary, Forane Directors and Animators in organising this event.
- ◆ **Blessing of Holy Family Church, Thakkalivilai:** The parish of Thakkalivilai has just built a new Church near the roadside. The people of the parish worked day and night under the supervision of Rev Fr Linslal Mangalath, Parish Priest. I thank the parishioners and their pastors for their dedication and hard work in constructing the Church. The consecration of the church will take place on 21 October 2017. I ask all the Fathers and Sisters to take part in the consecration ceremony.
- ◆ **Mission Sunday Cover Collection:** The Church by its very nature is missionary (AG 2). As a true missionary, the Church always concentrates on the Mission work all over the world. Mission Sunday is an occasion for all the believers to show their solidarity with the universal Church in her work of evangelization. The celebration allows the people to express their desire to become missionaries through their prayers and financial support. This year the Church celebrates Mission

Sunday on 22 October 2017. The collection on that day will be sent to Rome for the mission work around the globe. Hence, I request you dear Fathers to create awareness among people about the mission work and to encourage them to be generous towards the missionary work of the Church. Kindly submit the Mission Sunday Collection immediately after the celebration to the Eparchial Procurator.

- ◆ **Chain Rosary and Rosary Rally:** Chain Rosary in the families will be held on 22 October according to the uravians. Likewise, the Rosary Rally will be held from Athencode to Padanthalumoodu on 29 October 2017. The Mariain Senai will organise it.

Priests' Annual Retreat will be held at Sangamam. It begins in the evening of 15 October and ends with mass and Priests' Conference on 20 October 2017. The Bishop-elect Rev. Fr Joseph Pamblani will animate it. You are requested to arrive on 15 October evening at Sangamam. The retreat is mandatory for all the Diocesan and MST priests. The religious priests are welcome to attend. Kindly bring your Mass Account Book.

Transfer and Appointments:

- **Rev. Fr Ritto Thoompunkal** is transferred to the Minor Seminary as Dean of Studies and Procurator. He is also appointed as the Parish Priest of Bengiri. He will take charge on 1 October 2017.
- **Rev. Fr Jinu Joseph Thekkethalackal** has come back to the Eparchy from Rome after his studies and he is appointed as the parish priest of St Paul's Church Thettiyode and Director of Pulari Media and Communication at Kamaraj Nager. He will take charge on 1 October 2017.
- **Rev. Fr Mijo Puthenpurayil** is transferred from St Michael Church, Kattathurai and is appointed as full time preacher and Director of Sinai Retreat Centre. He takes charge on 15 October 2017. His place of residence will be at Kalluvilai.
- **Rev. Fr Anilraj Dominic** is appointed as parish priest of the St Michael Church, Kattathurai with effect from 15 October 2017. He will also hold other previous responsibilities.

INFORMATION

- ❖ Rev. Fr Christudas discontinued his overseas mission in Germany and came back to the Eparchy due to ill health. He stays at Sangamam till the next appointment.
- ❖ Rev. Mathew Kuzhinjalail has built an additional building at *Bedsaida* for those who wish to go for recollection or retreat. It was blessed on 14 September 2017.
- ❖ Mother of Rev. Fr Abey Poovathummoottil passed away on 7 September 2017. The funeral was held on 8 September 2017 in his home parish. On behalf of the Eparchy, I extend my sincere condolences and prayers to Fr Abey and to the bereaved family members. Thanks to the fathers and sisters who visited him and expressed their solidarity on behalf of the diocese.
- ❖ Rev. Fr Tom Uzhunjalil who was held captive for one and half years was released on 12 September 2017. I want to thank you for your continued prayers for the release of Rev. Fr Tom Uzhunjalil. I have attached an addition write-up about Fr Tom.
- ❖ Let us continue to pray for our Major Archiepiscopal Church during the Karosusa prayers as it is marking the Silver Jubilee of its establishment.
- ❖ Deacon Subin Scaria has completed his pastoral course at St Joseph's Major Seminary, Aluva and he will do his Deacon ministry at Pilankarai parish. He will also help the Procurator in the Bishop's House.
- ❖ Rev. Fr Justin Cheruvellil went to Rome on 27 September 2017 for his Doctoral study in Liturgy. He will study at St Anselm University and will stay at St John Damasceno College, Rome.
- ❖ Br. Shijo Jose left for Rome to begin licentiate study in Moral Theology. We are grateful to him for doing the pastoral ministry at Malaicode and wish him god's blessing.
- ❖ Rev. Br Ajin D. from St. Xavier's Church, Varuthattu has discontinued his priestly formation

due to personal reasons. He was doing his regency at Pulari School, Shenkottai.

- ❖ Rev. Fr Vinod will be going for an updating course from Oct. 8 to Nov. 8 in Ernakulam.
- ❖ Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil will be going to Delhi on Oct. 19 to attend the National conference of Minority rights.
- ❖ Vailankarai parish is going to start a V-Star Garments Unit, a branch of Angel Garments, Palukal under KKSSS.
- ❖ A new *Kodimaram* was blessed on Oct. 1, for Annikkarai parish
- ❖ The construction of extension building at DNN is nearing completion.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

02 October 2017	- Pastoral Council Meeting
08 October 2017	- Blessing of St Mary's Church Kaliyal
15 October 2017	- Golden Jubilee Celebration of St. Mary's Church Kaliyal
	- Mission League Rally from Kalluvilai to Kattathurai
15-20 October 2017	- Annual Retreat for Priests
21 October 2017	- Blessing of Holy Family Church, Thakkalivilai
22 October 2017	- Mission Sunday Cover Collection
	- Chain Rosary in the Families
29 October 2017	- Rosary Rally from Athencode to Padanthalumoodu

CONCLUSION

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary. According to an account by fifteenth-century Dominican, Alan de la Roch, Mary appeared to St Dominic in 1206 after he had been praying and doing severe penances because of his lack of success in combating the Albigensian heresy. Mary praised him for his valiant fight against the heretics and then gave him the Rosary as a mighty weapon, explained its uses and efficacy, and told him to preach it to others. Since then, Catholics all over the world have prayed the rosary fervently and received abundance of favours from God. In fact, early tradition attributes the defeat of the Albigensians at the Battle of Muret in 1213 to the Rosary. St Pius V attributed the great defeat of the Turkish fleet on the first Sunday of October 1571 to the fact that at the same time the Rosary confraternities at Rome and elsewhere were holding their processions. Accordingly, he ordered a commemoration of the Rosary to be made on that day. Two years later, Pope Gregory XIII allowed the celebration of a feast of the Rosary in churches having an altar dedicated to the Rosary. In 1671, Clement X extended the feast to all Spain. A second great victory over the Turks, who once, like the Russians, threatened the ruin of Christian civilization, occurred on 5 August 1716, when Prince Eugene defeated them at Peterwardein in Hungary. Thereupon Pope Clement XI extended the feast of the Rosary to the whole Church. Today we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on 7 October. Let us inculcate this pious practice among our people and insist with them to pray the Rosary in their homes daily with great devotion. Besides the practices of the Chain Rosary and Rosary Rally, let us find ways and means to inculcate love for our Blessed Virgin Mary during this month of the Holy Rosary.

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+George Rajendran SDB
Bishop of Thuckalay

