

Ref. No. Priest| 33|2014

Dated 16 October 2014

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Prayerful greetings from the Bishop's House!

ANNUAL SPIRITUAL RETREAT OF THE PRIESTS

The annual spiritual Retreat of the Priests of the Diocese was held from 5 October 2014 to 10 October 2014 at Sehion Retreat Centre, Attapadi, Palakkad, Kerala. Besides the twenty-seven Priests from our Diocese, there were Priests from other parts of India taking part in the Retreat. Altogether we were 120 Priests and 2 Bishops. The theme of the Retreat was renewal of priestly commitment. Rev. Fr Xavier Khan Vattayil and Rev. Fr Binoy animated the Retreat. All the talks were based on the Sacred Scripture. I was happy to see that all our Priests took the days of renewal with seriousness and in a prayerful atmosphere. I want to sincerely thank you for making yourselves available for this annual time of prayer.

During the Retreat, the animators emphasized the fact that every Priest is an anointed of God and therefore has the power from above to bless others and to exercise the ministry of healing. It is important that we as Priests understand this important power that Christ has given to each one of us and make good use of it for helping our people who are often battered by many misfortunes. As we are Priests for twenty-four hours a day, we need to be at their service whenever they need our assistance. Another point that the animators stressed was on the need for regular prayer. Effectiveness of our ministry depends much on the quality of our communion with the Lord. In this endeavour, we can always take shelter in the heart of our Blessed Mother, who always keeps the Priests in her maternal heart and intercedes with her Son Jesus for their spiritual welfare. I urge you, dear Fathers, to take these two important messages that come from our Spiritual Retreat and resolve to be faithful to them for our effective exercise of ministry. As a follow-up of this Retreat, I encourage you to come together as Forane-wise or as batch-wise at regular intervals and spend some hours together in prayer and shared reflection.

Those who were unable to attend the October Sehion Retreat, kindly join the November 2014 Retreat at Sehion Retreat Centre, Attapadi or make your own arrangements for making the annual Retreat by December 2014. Please inform me about your plan.

SAINT ALPHONSA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE (SACAS)

Saint Alphonsa College, which took off this academic year, is progressing excellently well. Since last May, we have faced a number of legal hurdles in obtaining the permission to begin the College. With the help of a group of committed people who lobbied in Chennai, we were able to surmount some of the problems. However, the Government of Tamil Nadu denied the permission on account of lack of clearance from the Town Planning Department. We took the matter to the Madras High Court and the verdict has come in our favour. The honourable High Court has directed the Government of Tamil Nadu to grant us the necessary opening permission to the College. It is indeed a happy news for all of us. At this moment, I want to place on record my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr Anthony Jose and Advocate Justeener who spearheaded the entire legal proceedings in the High Court. Prior to this, there were others who helped us in lobbying with the Government of Tamil Nadu. I want to thank Mr John Moris, Mr Meenakshi Sundaram, Rev. Sr Archana DM and Mr Paul Raj who worked as a team on our behalf in Chennai.

MINOR SEMINARY

The life in the Minor Seminar is going on well. Rev Fr Joseph Aruviyil CMI has joined the staff of the Seminary as the Spiritual Father. I wish him God's blessings as he begins his ministry in the Seminary. I am sure our Seminarians will make good use of the services of Fr Joseph. Three of our Seminarians are doing their graduation from Saint Alphonsa College while two are studying in Nangil Catholic College. Nine of our Seminarians are preparing themselves to enter the Major Seminary next year.

With the financial assistance from Don Bosco Mission, Bonn, Germany, we have furnished the library building and have equipped with books and modern amenities for the use of our Seminarians. The reference section of the library is air-conditioned and computers are provided. These facilities are not only meant for the Seminarians but also for all the Priests of the Diocese. I urge you, dear Fathers, to make use of these services whenever time permits. As Pastors, it is important that you update yourselves in disciplines concerning Priestly ministry. Hence, I suggest that you spend a day or two in the Seminary updating yourselves in the library. It is enough that you inform the Rector of the Seminary before you decide to visit the library.

CANONIZATION OF BLESSED CHAVARA AND EUPHRESIA

The canonizations of Blessed Chavara Kuriakose and Blessed Euphresia are set to take place in Rome on 23 November 2014 on the occasion of the Solemnity of Christ the King. I once again exhort you to prepare our Faithful through prayer for this important event that has tremendous bearing on our Church. I will be sending the second Pastoral Letter on the lives of these holy personages from our Church. Kindly read the Letter on 26 October 2014 at the end of the Holy Eucharist.

TRANSFERS

Rev. Fr Tom Kunnumpuram is appointed Parish Priest of St Benedict Parish, Bengiri with effect from 12 October 2014. Rev. Fr Lijo Thekkeyil will assist him in the Parish.

Rev. Fr Anthony Joseph Kannanayakkal sdb will take charge as the Secretary of the Diocese on 20 October 2014. Fr Anthony, born and brought in Chennai, belongs to the Syro-Malabar Church. He is a Salesian Priest belonging to the Province of Silchar, Assam. He taught theology both at Poonamalle Seminary, Chennai as well as in Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, Meghalaya for a number of years. He also worked for some years as the Secretary to the Regional Councillor for South Asia at the Salesian Generalate at Rome.

As we welcome him to the Diocese, kindly contact him henceforth for all information concerning the programmes the Bishop. His mobile number is 9442960661 and email address is anykjo@gmail.com

VOCATION PROMOTION

Rev. Fr Felix Arul Nathan sdb is meeting the alter boys Forane-wise these days in order to help them to serve Mass efficiently and also to identify potential candidates to priesthood. I have asked him to share with you the names of candidates from your respective Parishes so that you can follow them up and help them in their vocational journey. I thank you, dear Fathers, for taking the initiative in sending the children for these animation programmes. May I remind you of your responsibility in promoting vocations from your Parishes! Kindly talk about vocations to your youth regularly and send candidates to the come-and-see programmes during weekends or holidays to the Seminary.

COMING EVENTS

- On 8 November, we will be celebrating the 18th Diocesan Day. The venue for the celebration is Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. I expect all the Priests of the Diocese to take part in this programme. Every Parish is expected to send a minimum of 10 Parishioners representing the various pious associations for the programme. Kindly plan ahead for their transport. During the public meeting we shall honour/felicitate individuals who have contributed tangibly to the society/diocese/parish. I am sure you have already selected the member from your parish and submitted the names to Rev. Fr Mijo Puthenpurackal, the Pastoral Council Secretary. The programme will be as follows:
 - 09.30 am - Arrival
 - 10.00 am - Holy Qurbana
 - 11.45 am - Public Meeting
 - 01.15 pm - Lunch
 - 02.15 pm - Departure
- Kindly prepare the faithful through prayer and constant reminders the forthcoming annual Bible convention to be held at Padanthalumoodu from 5-7 December 2014. Rev. Fr Dominic Valamanal from Anakkara, Kanjirapally and Rev. Br Christudas from Marthandam will animate the convention. The *Vanthuparungal* retreat team of our diocese will coordinate the program.

- Mission Sunday(special liturgy) and Chain Rosary: 19th October
- Rosary Rally: 26th October
- Inter-department meeting 24th October (bring the events and program for 2015)

INFORMATION

- On 5 October, the foundation stone was blessed for the construction of a new Church at Mezhakode.
- The construction of the Kurusady at Karode is in progress.
- I will be leaving for Rome on 11 November to take part in the Canonisation ceremony of Bl Chavara and Bl. Euphresia and also to meet our student fathers and brothers in Rome. I will be back to the diocese on 1 December, 2014.
- You have already been given 10 directories of the diocese and we are sending some more copies of the same. The printing cost per copy is Rs. 35/- I would appreciate if you could distribute to the people and collect the money.
- The third sitting of the Pastoral council 2014 was held on 2 October 2014. I am sending the report and also the suggestions. Kindly implement in your parish the applicable and approved suggestions without further delay.
- The First death anniversary of Rev.Fr. Mathew Plathottam occurs on 22nd Nov. There will be a memorial mass on 22nd Nov at Palukal parish by 4 pm. I request all the Fathers and Sisters to attend and pray for this departed Soul.

With God's blessings,

+ George Rajendran sdb
Bishop of Thuckalay