

Ref. No. Priests|GR|8|2013

19 April 20 2013

My Dear Fathers,

Let me offer you my sincere and personal greetings to one and all! I trust that all of you are in good health of mind and body. Let me assure you of my prayer for you and for your ministry.

Priestly Ordinations 2013

As a diocese, we rejoice and thank God for the gift of five new priests. I had the joy of ordaining them: four of the deacons were ordained on 6 April 2013 at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu while one of them was ordained at Kailasam, Idukki on 9 April 2013. We congratulate them and formally welcome them to our diocese as full-fledged members of the diocesan fraternity with all the rights and duties. I thank all the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters who were directly or indirectly involved in the preparations for the ordinations. I also thank all those who came to take part and represent the diocese for the first Masses of the new priests in Kerala. I was present for all the First Masses. All the parents and the members of the parish communities of our newly ordained priests were very appreciative of our presence. Kindly keep in mind that on 14 May 2013, we shall celebrate the New Priest Day in the diocese at Sangamam. Please be present for the programme.

Transfers 2013

I have carried out a series of transfers in the Diocese. I thank all the Fathers for accepting their new places of pastoral ministry in a spirit of faith and obedience. I prepared the list of transfers after much prayer and reflection keeping in mind the good of our Faithful and of our Diocese. It was indeed a grace-filled moment for me to meet you personally and engage with you in fruitful discussions regarding the new assignments. **Together with this letter I have also attached the list of transfers and some guidelines regarding the things to be got ready before handing over the charge to the new person. The hand-over must take place in the presence of one of the curia members. I suggest that the process of handing over and taking charge of the new places can take place between 10 May 2013 and 24 May 2013.** When you are ready to move, kindly inform Fr Mathew Thekkekutt, who will arrange a curia member to be present for the hand-over.

Together with the Religious and Faithful of the parishes or institutions you worked before your transfer, I want to thank you for all that you accomplished in the past years for the growth and development of your respective missions. Let me assure you that your presence and ministry were something unique and everyone appreciated them.

Welcome Back

Rev. Fr Mathew Kuzhijalil and Rev. Fr Peter Kizhakeyil are returning to the Diocese and will be assigned new places of ministry. We welcome them heartily and wish them God's blessings and a fruitful ministry in the Diocese.

Thank You

Rev. Fr James Aikkaramattam, Rector of our Minor Seminary and Rev. Fr Thomas Palakkatt are returning to their respective diocese/province after years of service in the Diocese. In the name of all the Priests, Religious and Faithful, I extend our sincere gratitude to them for their selfless service in the Diocese. I am sure their generous contributions will always be remembered and will go a long way in the development of our mission Diocese. Rev. Fr Joseph Aruviyil is also returning to his province for 6 months to take part in the on-going formation programme. We thank him for his selfless service in the parish of Mukkootukal and wish him all the best his personal growth in the Lord.

R.I.P

Mr Varghese Kuriakose, father of Sr Amala FCC, superior of Bengri convent, passed away on April 15, 2013 at Parel, Changanacherry. We express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and to Sr Amala. May God grant her eternal rest!

Vocation Month

We are keeping 15 April to 15 May 2013 as the Vocation month in our Diocese. Kindly encourage the Faithful to pray for vocations especially on these days. Please display the Vocation Camp - 2013 Posters in your parish/institution in prominent places so that our people can be informed about the importance of promoting vocations to priestly and religious life. These days, at the Forane level overnight 'come and see' programmes are going on.

Coming Programmes in the Diocese

Kindly take note of the following programmes to be organised in the Diocese in the coming days:

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| 20 April 2013 | - | Uraviyam leaders Seminar at Sangamam |
| 21 April 2013 | - | Vocation Day |
| 21 April 2013 | - | Youth Camp at Nithravilai |

- 25, 26, and 26 April - Principals and Correspondents Conference at Sangamam
- 26 and 27 April - VBS Seminar for teachers
- 29 April- 5 May - VBS classes
- 14 May 2013 - New Priest Day & Priest Conference at Sangamam

Conclusion

As many of you are receiving your new appointments these days, let me end this letter with a brief reflection on obedience, which is so important for us priests. At the time of our ordinations, we vowed to obey the local ordinaries. We read in the letter of St Paul to the Christians of Philippi: "He became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross" (2:7). This verse sums up the three years of the public ministry of Jesus. Similarly, the thirty years of hidden life of Jesus are summed in the words of the Gospel of St Luke: "and was obedient to them" (2:51). In other words, the entire earthly life of Jesus was one of obedience - obedience to his heavenly Father and obedience to his earthly parents. Further, we notice in the scene of temptation, the devil asked Jesus to worship him. Worship is usually given by someone who is inferior to another who is superior as in the case of a slave to his master, a peasant to his Lord or a vassal king to his emperor. Jesus by refusing to obey the devil reasserts the supremacy of God over the evil one. It was a clash between the holy one and the evil one. Jesus preferred to obey God his Father. In our obedience too, such clashes can occur - whether to obey God or to obey our own passions and evil inclinations. But when we surrender ourselves to God in obedience, we submit ourselves and our wills to God. God is represented in our superiors. In other words, when we obey our superiors, we are truly obeying God. It is true the superiors can and do make mistakes. After all, they too are human beings. Nevertheless, when we obey them, we are actually obeying God. It is indeed very easy to talk, but when it comes to actual practice, it is something very difficult. It is here that we need faith and humility. I invite everyone to accept the transfers in this light and request you to put your heart and soul in the new places you will be going. After all, we are all partners in the one mission that the Lord entrusted to us. Let His will be done always.

Yours faithfully,

+George Rajendran sdb
Bishop of Thuckalay