



Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

Bishop George Rajendran sdb
Diocese of Thuckalay

Bishop's House, P B No: 12, Thuckalay PO,
Kanya kumari Dt- 629 175, Tamil Nadu, India

Ref. No. Priests/GR/90/2019

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Dear and Reverend Fathers,

Greetings from Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

The World Youth Day was celebrated from 22 January 2019 to 27 January 2019 in Panama. Pope Francis with his charismatic presence was able to enthral the thousands of young people who were gathered for the event from all over the world. During the final mass held on 27 January 2019, Pope Francis told the young people: "You, dear young people, are not the future but the now of God. He invites you and calls you in your communities and cities to go out and find your grandparents, your elders; to stand up and with them to speak out and realize the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you. Not tomorrow but now, for wherever your treasure is, there will your heart also be (cf. Mt 6:21). Whatever you fall in love with, it will win over not only your imagination, it will affect everything. It will be what makes you get up in the morning, what keeps you going at times of fatigue, what will break open your hearts and fill you with wonder, joy and gratitude. Realize that you have a mission and fall in love; that will decide everything. We may possess everything, but if we lack the passion of love, we will have nothing. Let us allow the Lord to make us fall in love! For Jesus, there is no "meantime", but only a merciful love that wants to enter into and win over our hearts. He wants to be our treasure, because he is not a "meantime", an interval in life or a passing fad; he is generous love that invites us to entrust ourselves." The young people in their thousands welcomed his message with great faith.

As the young people are leaving the venue of the event these days, it is important that as pastors we reflect upon the important role that this world event plays in the life of the universal Church. We know that the World Youth Day (WYD) was an initiative of St John Paul II. In 1984 at the close of the Holy Year of Redemption, over 300,000 young people from around the world responded to the invitation of St John Paul II for an International Jubilee of youth on Palm Sunday in St Peter's square. Looking out to the crowds who answered his invitation he said: "What a fantastic spectacle is presented on this stage by your gathering here today! Who claimed that today's youth has lost their sense of values? Is it really true that they cannot be counted on?" It was at this gathering that the Holy Father entrusted to the youth what is now known as the World Youth Day Cross, to be carried throughout the world as a symbol of the love of Christ for humanity.

The following Palm Sunday, coinciding with the United Nation's International Year of the Youth, St John Paul II took the opportunity to welcome the youth of the world to Rome again.

In 1987, the first International WYD took place outside Rome in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Every Palm Sunday has since been designated as a World Youth Day, alternately celebrated at the diocesan and international levels. There have been 16 International World Youth Day celebrations so far. During these celebrations, the youth continue to answer the invitation of the successive Popes in staggering numbers and carry home the message received there to be Christ's light to the world. While these events are organized by the clergy and laity of the Catholic Church, youth of all faiths are invited to attend and encounter Christ, making this gathering truly universal.

In Toronto, the last International WYD in which St John Paul II was present he told the 800,000 gathered with him at the vigil, "When, back in 1985, I wanted to start the World Youth Days... I imagined *a powerful moment* in which the young people of the world could meet Christ, who is eternally young, and could learn from him how to be *bearers of the Gospel to other young people*. This evening, together with you, I praise God and give thanks to him for the gift bestowed on the Church through the World Youth Days. Millions of young people have taken part, and as a result have become better and more committed Christian witnesses."

St John Paul II left a legacy for the youth in his institution of World Youth Day, which Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have faithfully continued, carrying on the hope of their predecessor for the youth of the world, inviting them and commissioning them as Christ's disciples to be faithful living witnesses.

The statistics regarding the participation of young people during this world event is amazing. 1984, **Italy**: 300,000; 1985, **Italy**: 300,000; 1987, **Argentina**: 1,000,000; 1989, **Spain**: 500,000; 1991, **Poland**: 1,600,000; 1993, **USA**: 700,000; 1995, **Philippines**: 5,000,000; 1997, **France**: 1,200,000; 2000, **Italy**: 2,200,000; 2002, **Canada**: 800,000; 2005, **Germany**: 1,100,000; 2008, **Australia**: 500,000; 2011, **Spain**: 2,000,000; 2013, **Brazil**: 3,700,000; 2016, **Poland**: 3,500,000; and, 2019, **Panama**: 700,000.

While appreciating the World Youth Day, it is important to recognise that Youth Ministry is an essential segment of our priestly ministries. Youth Ministry should empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. It should teach the adolescents what a life of discipleship looks like. As baptized members of the Church, youth are called to serve others and to serve Christ, bringing about the Kingdom of God in unique ways. It is the youth minister, pastor, or parent's job to empower adolescents to live Christian lives of discipleship. Youth are empowered when they are welcomed into a Church that speaks to their hearts with the joy of the Gospel and the strength of the Eucharist. When youth frequently engage the Gospel, challenge their spiritual lives, and are shown the adventure of discipleship through the Church they can begin to commit themselves totally to Jesus Christ in concrete ways.

Youth Ministry should help to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community. There are four notable communities that help the youth to grow in faith. They are the Family Community, the Parish Community, the Catholic School Community, and the Youth-Serving Organizational Community. When youth are drawn to these communities, they better understand what it means to live in a faith community.

The **family** is the first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world. The family is responsible for the spiritual, moral, and overall development of adolescents by faith sharing in the home. This requires parents to love and support their children, but it also challenges adolescents to enhance family life with their love and faith and to bring new understandings and skills into the home that will enrich family life. Every family member plays a role in building a community where love can dwell.

It is important for youth to engage the **Parish community** because parishes are the place where God's people meet Jesus in word and sacrament in a concrete way. Youth-friendly parishes do three things to foster adolescent spiritual growth. First, parishes should allow youth to serve the parish along with adults. When adolescents feel welcomed into the parish community as full-fledged members, they are more likely to identify as a community member. Second, parishes must allow youthful energy and vision in parish activities. Young people have a great deal to offer to the parish ministry, and when they can express their faith through meaningful roles, they develop a spirit of commitment to the parish community. Finally, if parishes truly desire to become youth-friendly, it is crucial to value adolescents. This means listening to them and responding to their needs, as well as providing them with facilities and money to enable their growth as disciples. If the parish wants youth to commit to parish life, the parish must commit to the development of the youth.

The **Catholic School** is a living faith community where adolescents can deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith both inside and outside of the classroom. Campus ministry should demonstrate effective ministerial strategies to youth including effective religious education, service projects, retreats, and other activities. Catholic education and campus ministry must strengthen and empower youth to use their gifts and talents in the wider Church community.

It is important for youth to go beyond their family, parish, and school communities to serve the Church through **youth-serving organisational community**. Catholic service leaders have a duty to reach out to young people in order to form them as young disciples who can bear witness to the gospel message. Service organizations are communities where youth can learn about joyful giving while being spiritually challenged to love others as Christ does.

Finally, the Youth Ministry also should foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. The Church is concerned for the whole person, addressing the young people's spiritual needs in the context of his or her whole life. Youth ministry in the Church should promote holistic growth and development; that is, growth and development of the entire person. Ministers and leaders must listen to the specific developmental, social, and religious needs and nurture them accordingly.

As we enter into the second month of 2019, let us rededicate ourselves to the young people as our Holy Father wants us to. I am sure we shall have occasions in the future to understand more about the World Youth Day. Let us give greater stress to the young people in our various ministries.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Eparchial Level Bible Fest 2018: The Forane level Bible Fest competitions for Catechism students was conducted on 15 January 2019. Children after much preparation and rigorous practice took part in the competitions. I am grateful to Rev. Fr Sanil Panthichirackal, Director and Rev. Fr Shoji Puthenpurackal, Assistant Director, of Catechism Department for organising the programme in a professional manner. I thank all the parish priests and sisters who trained and prepared the children. My

special thanks goes to priests and curia members for encouraging the children with their presence during the competitions. I give below the winners of the competitions which were held Forane wise:

Eparchial Level Bible Fest 2018:

- 1st Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu
- 2nd Holy Family Forane Church, Arukani
- 3rd Holy Cross Church, Malaicode
- 4th St Joseph's Forane Church, Soosaipuram

Forane Level Priests' Conference: In the month of January, the priests' conference was held on 7, 8 and 12 January 2019 in the Foranes. On 7 January 2019, the conference was held for the priests of Arukani and Manjalumoodu Foranes at Arukani. On 8 January 2019, the priests belonging to Thuckalay-Pilankalai and Soosaipuram Foranes gathered at Kattathurai; while on 12 January 2019, the priests belonging to Padanthalumoodu and Nithravilai Foranes gathered at Thettiyode for the conference. The priests discussed various pastoral themes. I sincerely thank all the Fathers for their active participation.

Ad Limina Report: Pope Francis has invited all the Syro-Malabar bishops in September 2019 for the *Ad Limina* visit. During this visit, the bishops will meet the Pope and pay homage at the tomb of Sts Peter and Paul in Rome. We are asked to prepare a *Quinquennial* Report (2013-2018) of the Eparchy, which is to be submitted to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. I am happy to inform you that the Eparchial Chancery Office along with me and with the help of Rev. Fr Joseph Santhosh and Rev. Fr Josy Kulathumkal has prepared the report. I sincerely thank all the Fathers, who helped in collecting the required data.

Syro-Malabar Bishops' Synod: All the bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church gathered at St Thomas Mount, Kakkanad from 7-18 January 2019. The Synod discussed matters concerning the liturgical, pastoral, disciplinary and other matters pertaining to the Syro-Malabar Church. The official circular of the Major Archbishop concerning the matter of Ernakulam-Angamali Archdiocese is already released and other official information will be announced soon. I am grateful to you dear fathers, sisters and faithful for the prayerful support.

TNBC Meeting: Tamilnadu bishops gathered in Madurai on 22 January for their annual meeting. Various issues concerning the Tamilnadu church were discussed especially regarding the forthcoming general election. In the evening of the same day, there was a concelebrated Holy Eucharist in order to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the establishment of Madha TV.

Blessing of the Altar and Priest's residence at Thadikkarakonam: Thadikkarakonam mission parish had only a small chapel without basic requirements and facilities. With the help of God and generosity of people we were able to renovate the whole church and give a new face look to Madubaha and Altar. Adjacent to the church we built a small presbytery for the priest to reside. On 27 January 2019, I consecrated the altar and blessed the presbytery. I sincerely thank Rev. Fr Vinu D. Joseph for his initiative and hard work together with the help of the parishioners. The FCC sisters have contributed a lot for the construction of the church and also plays an important role in the pastoral well being of the people. I thank the provincial and the local community for their generosity. Thanks to all the fathers, sisters and faithful for attending the consecration ceremony.

INFORMATION

- ❖ **Demise of Mr T. George:** Mr T. George, father of Rev. Fr Justin Cheruvelil, passed away on 7 January 2019 at the age of 74. The funeral was held on 10 January 2019 in St Joseph's Church, Karuvatta at 11.00 am. Fr Justin reached on 9th morning from Rome for the funeral. I extend my heartfelt condolences and prayers to Fr Justin and members of the bereaved family. It was heartening to see number of fathers, sisters and lay faithful attending the funeral service. We shall continue to pray for Fr Justin who has already returned to Rome to continue his doctoral studies.
- ❖ **Meeting of Priests of the Eparchy:** These days I am personally meeting the fathers and completed Arukani Forane. Thank you fathers for your availability and open sharing.
- ❖ **Visit to Madurai Mission:** I visited the Madurai Mission on 20 January 2019. Along with Sr Rosilin SABS and Sr Missy Maria SJSM visited two remote villages where our sisters are doing mission work. The mission is very challenging but with help and protection of God we are able to enter into the life of the people in those villages. May God bless our mission.
- ❖ **Silver Jubilee of Carmel Matha Matric School, Kanyakumari:** The Carmel Matha Matric School run by the CMC sisters of the St Chavara Vice Province Thuckalay celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its foundation on 24 January 2019. I congratulate and wish all the sisters especially the Mother Superior Rev. Sr Viji CMC for the dedicated service in the School and in the Eparchy.
- ❖ **Silver Jubilee of Santhi Nilayam Paruthivilai:** Santhi Nilayam, institution for the mentally challenged children at Paruthivilai run by the SABS Sisters of the St Chanthal Tamilnadu Region, celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its establishment on 26 January 2019. It is one of the excellent schools in Kanyakumari District for the mentally challenged children. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and prayerful wishes to the sisters and to the newly elected Regional Superior Rev. Sr Ancit SABS for carrying out a wonderful service to the disabled children and to the Eparchy.
- ❖ **Home Day at Minor Seminary:** The 21st Home Day at St Mary's Minor Seminary was celebrated on 26 January 2019. The parents of the brothers, religious and priests were invited for the program. The brothers put up a 2 hours entrainment programme and made everyone happy. It was a memorable day for the community to showcase the talents of the brothers. I congratulate the Rector, Staff and brothers for the wonderful program.
- ❖ **Fathers' Picnic:** All the Fathers of the Eparchy went to Kollam, Kerala for a one-day picnic on 28 January 2019. 46 priests took part. It was an enjoyable and relaxing moments for all of us. I am grateful to the picnic team headed by Fr. Tobin, Fr. Joshy and Fr. Justin Sutheesh.
- ❖ **Rev. Fr Maria Arokkiyam Kanaga SDB,** Salesian Regional Councillor for South East Asia, visited our Eparchy on 29 January 2019.
- ❖ **Golden Jubilee of Prakash Bhavan, Kaliyal:** We would like to congratulate the CMC sisters of Thuckalay province as they are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of *Prakash Bhavan*, Kaliyal. This is the first CMC convent, began in 1969 with six sisters. The official Jubilee celebration will be held on February 2, 2019.
- ❖ This year the inter Eparchial province meeting will be held in our diocese. The bishops and departments heads of Rev. Fathers of Changanacherry, Palai and Kanjirapally dioceses will be coming to our diocese on February 19, 2019. The meeting will be held at Padanthalumoodu School. I am reminding all our department and pious association directors at attend this important meeting.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

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| 2 February 2019 | - Blessing of Kuttaicode, Malaicode Mission Chapel |
| 4 February 2019 | - Jubilee Organizers' Meeting at Bishop's House |
| 9 February 2019 | - Death Anniversary of Msgr. Philip Kodyanthara |

11-12 February 2019
19 February 2019
21 February 2019

- Priests' Orientation Programme at Sangamam
- Inter-diocese meeting at Padanthalumoodu
- Interdepartmental Meeting at Bishop's House


Priests' Orientation Programme will be held on 11 and 12 February 2019. The programme begins at 9.30 am on 11 February 2019. Kindly reach by 9 am. The resource person is Mar Thomas Mar Eusebius, Bishop of Parasala. We shall have the priest conference at 6.pm on the same day. On 12 February, we shall have a workshop on the Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment". Rev. Fr Amos SDB, Trichy, will animate the workshop. Dear Fathers, It's important that every priest go through the updating program of the church, therefore, please come on time and be prepared to spend the night at Sangamam am reminding the religious priests who are working in the parish to attend at least the second day (February 12) program without fail.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude my circular, I want to thank you for the dedicated ministry that you are undertaking in the Eparchy on behalf of our people. I am sure the good Lord will bless you abundantly. Continue to pray for the intentions of the Eparchy. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to serve our people with greater enthusiasm and commitment. May the Lord continue to bless you and your ministries!

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

