



Ref. No. Priests/GR/46/2015

31 August 2015

Dear and Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

Greetings from the Bishop's House!

This is my first letter to you, dear Fathers, since my return after my Mission Appeal Programmes in the USA, UK and Ireland. I reached back on 12 August 2015. I sincerely thank you for your valuable prayers and support during the days of my sojourn. I had ample opportunities to visit our Syro-Malabar brothers and sisters and to solicit their help and support for our mission Diocese. I am also grateful to all the Fathers, friends and members of the Parishes who meticulously arranged my programmes.

Now, I am just back after participating in the Synod of Bishops held at Kakkanad. It was an enriching experience to be with my brother Bishops. We were forty-one of us Bishops along with other office bearers. It was a two-week long intense meeting that began on 17 August and ended on 29 August 2015.

BLESSEDNESS OF THE SERVANT

It is two weeks, since we celebrated the Solemnity of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother. In a week's time the Shrine at Vailankanni will celebrate the feast of Our Lady under the title of Mother of Good Health. From time to time, we remember our Blessed Mother not just as the Mother of Jesus but as our own mother who accompanies our lives' journeys. The Church offers us numerous moments, places, and opportunities to celebrate the various feasts of our Blessed Mother and to be spiritually enriched from such celebrations. She is our mother whom all generations call 'blessed' (Lk 1:48).

Mary's presence in the lives of Priests is even more significant and important. Her blessedness, her life of "beatitudes" extends to us Priests today.

Every Christian or every believer in Christ is a Child of God (Jn 1:12). We are brothers and sisters of Christ for we are born of God (Jn 1:13) and not of flesh or natural descent nor of human decision. But as Priests there is even more intimate relationship that exists with Christ, because we do not share just the inheritance of Christ as a Child of God but as Ministers of His Table and of the Good News.

The term 'minister' considering our political context of today is a misnomer. We perceive a minister to be a powerful authoritarian political person. But the actual meaning of the term is 'servant' – someone who serves the public. We as ordained ministers are in fact servants, sharing the 'servanthood' of the suffering Servant of Yahweh, Jesus and of the 'humble handmaid' Mary, the mother of Jesus.

This servanthood is best exemplified at Calvary, where the ultimate sacrifice of salvation was enacted. Mary, we are told, stood at the altar of that sacrifice bearing witness to the shedding of blood by her divine son. The body of Christ which hung upon the cross was accompanied by the one who prayed: "I am the handmaid of the Lord." Today what we Priests as ministers of the Eucharist do is not something very different. In fact, it is the same memorial of that salvific event that we celebrate.

Many of us were called but few of us were chosen as Priests to behold and celebrate the beauty of God enshrined at Calvary. Today it is our privilege to stand beside the altar like Mary and to offer the sacrifice. We share in her blessedness.

This Blessedness goes beyond our imagination. St John Paul II of happy memory tells us Priests: "When we celebrate the Eucharist, through our priestly ministry there is made present the mystery of the Incarnate Word, the Son who is of one being with the Father, who as a man 'born of woman' is the Son of the Virgin Mary"(Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 1988, 1).

There is then every reason to celebrate our Blessed Mother who unassumingly accompany us Priests not just during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist but *through our Eucharistic life*. The best way to celebrate her is to imitate her in her life of Blessedness, with the true life of the Beatitudes.

NEW BISHOPS FOR THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

We thank God for the new Pastors whom He provides to shepherd his flock. Our Syro-Malabar Church of late is privileged to have three new Bishops who will shepherd the flock of Christ in various parts of India and in Canada.

a. Rev.Fr (Dr)Antony Kariyil CMI, Bishop-Designate of Mandya

Consequent upon the transfer of Bishop George Njaralakkatt, the first eparchial Bishop of Mandya to the Archeparchy of Tellicherry on 30 October 2014 the See of the Eparchy of Mandya fell vacant and then onwards the Eparchy was being administered by Rev. Fr George Alukka. After the required canonical enquiry and having obtained the prior assent of the Holy Father, the XXIII Synod of the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church in its Second Session, held from 17 to 29 August 2015, elected Rev. Fr Antony Kariyil CMI as the Bishop of Mandya. Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, has appointed Rev. Fr Antony Kariyil CMI, Bishop of the Eparchy of Mandya, the territory of which, and contemporaneously the proper territory of the Syro-Malabar Church, was extended to include the civil districts of Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Chickballapur, Kolar, Ramnagar and Tumkur, as per the decree Prot. N. 188/2014, dated 4 August 2015, of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.

b. Rev. Fr Jose Kalluvilil, the First Exarch of the new Apostolic Exarchate for the Syro-Malabar Church in Canada

The Holy Father Pope Francis erected an Apostolic Exarchate for the Syro-Malabar faithful residing in Canada with its See at Mississauga and Rev. Fr Jose Kalluvilil was appointed as its first Exarch, assigning him the titular see of *Tabalta*.

Fr Jose Kalluvilil was born on 15 November 1955 at Thottuva near Kuravilangad in the Eparchy of Palai. At present, his family is settled in St Peter's Parish, Jellipara, in the Eparchy of Palghat.

According to official statistics, there are 35,000 Syro-Malabar Christians in Canada. The Exarchy of Mississauga in Canada is the first Exarchy for the Syro-Malabar faithful outside India.

c. Rev. Fr Antony Prince Panengadan, the new Shepherd of the Eparchy of Adilabad

Rev. Fr Antony Prince Panengadan is appointed the second Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Adilabad in the State of Telengana. The Newly appointed Bishop was born on 13 May 1976 in St Antony's Parish, Arimpoor in the Archeparchy of Thrissur. He was ordained priest on 25 April 2007.

The Eparchy of Adilabad was erected on 23 July 1999, with the territory of the Eparchy of Chanda that was in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The appointment of the new Bishop was necessitated consequent to the resignation of Bishop Joseph Kunnath as required by Canon Law, at the completion of his seventy fifth year of age.

MISSION APPEAL PROGRAMME

I was on a Mission Appeal programme in the United States of America from 19 June to 15 July. After that, I proceeded to the United Kingdom and I was there till 10 August. I also paid a brief visit to Ireland as well. I was well taken care of in all the places and our friends helped me to organize the programmes at different Parishes. I thank in a special way all our benefactors who responded to my requests and all those who continue to help our mission Diocese generously. I was happy to meet and receive the hospitality of family members of some of our Fathers working in England.

Rev. Fr Felix Arulnathan SDB had also gone to the US for the Salesian Mission Appeal programme. He returned on 22 August. We welcome him back whole-heartedly after his successful programme.

VIANNEY DAY (PRIESTS' DAY)

On 4 August, we as presbyterium celebrated the feast of St John Mary Vianney as Priest's Day at the Minor Seminary. The programme was well planned and executed. I thank Rev. Fr Tom Kunnumpuram, the Rector, the Seminary Staff and Students who had put in lot of work for its success.

GRATITUDE DAY, JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS & RELIGIOUS SANGAMAM

On 15 August, Solemnity of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother, all the Religious and Priests of our Diocese came together to celebrate the different jubilees of the Religious and Priests working in the Diocese. We thanked God during the Eucharist held at the Christurajapuram Parish for all these generous Priests and Religious who had committed themselves unstintingly to his service. Rev. Fr John Thekkel was remembered for his Fifty Golden Years as a Priest. Rev. Sr Canisia SH, and Rev. Sr Celi Anto FCC were felicitated for their Golden years as Religious. The Silver Jubilarians who were congratulated on that day include Rev. Fr Felix SDB, Rev. Fr. Jacob Akkathara, Rev. Sr Eliza FCC, Rev. Sr. Flowerlet ASMI, Rev. Sr Jaine Maria SH, Rev. Sr. Jeena FCC, Rev. Sr. Jessy FCC, Rev. Sr. Mariet CMC, Rev. Sr. Reena Mary SD, Rev. Sr. Roselin SABS, Rev. Sr. Shanti FCC, Rev. Sr. Sophy Rose SH, Rev. Sr. Jessy FDSHJ, and Rev. Sr. Rose FDSHJ.

The programme was organized very well and I thank wholeheartedly Rev. Fr Mijo Puthenpurackal, Parish Priest, members of the Parish Council, Parishioners of Christurajapuram, and, staff and students of the School for organizing the programme and for getting the venue tastefully decorated.

Rev. Fr. Felix, who had been on Mission Preaching assignment in the US, celebrated his Silver Jubilee of his Religious Profession in his home Parish at Dharmapuri on 30 August. Along with Rev. Fr. Seby, I participated in the celebrations there. We will get an opportunity to felicitate him and Fr John Thekkel in our next Priests' Conference.

We pray for these generous Religious and Priests who work in our Mission Diocese so that the good Lord may continue to bless them and they, in turn, may become blessings to the people to whom they minister.

50 YEARS AS PRIEST OF GOD

– CONGRATULATIONS DEAR FR. JOHN THEKKEL

Rev. Fr. John Thekkel is the senior most Priest of our Diocese. He hails from Peringulam Parish in the Diocese of Palai. Fr Thekkel was ordained on 14 March 1966. Initially he worked in the Archdiocese of Changanassery. After serving in different Parishes of Changanassery, he opted to work in the then Kanyakumari Mission which later became the Diocese of Thuckalay.

In the Diocese of Thuckalay, Fr John Thekkel served in the Parishes of Nithravilai, Vaylinkarai, Varuthattu, Munchirai, Malaicode, Mukkoottukal and Mezhcode. The pioneering years were very challenging and difficult. Yet, Fr. Thekkel committed himself to carrying out the missionary activities making it fruitful even as he fought against all odds and gave his full attention to the all round development of the people: physical, social and spiritual. He was twice the Director of KKSSS and during his time the institution experienced a steady growth and progress. At present he lives a retired life from the active ministry and spends his time at Sangamam. All the Priests, Religious and faithful of the Diocese are very proud to have one of the pioneer missionaries of the Diocese with them. He is an inspiration and strength for our mission work in the Diocese. We congratulate him and wish him Golden Jubilee greetings.

BICENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF ST JOHN BOSCO CONCLUDED

As I mentioned in my previous circular No. 45, this year marks the 200th Birth Anniversary of St John Bosco, the Father and Teacher of Youth. The bicentenary celebrations officially concluded on 16 August 2015, although programmes, where the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco will take part, will be held in the month of September both in Kolkatta and New Delhi. The Salesians of Don Bosco (SDBs) and the Salesian Family which consists of 30 different groups of Religious, Co-operators and other Lay groups celebrated this Bicentenary with a three year intense preparation. St. John Melchior Bosco was born on 16 August 1815. Today his dreams for the welfare of the poor youth are being realised through 15,298 Salesians who work in 132 Countries and through other numerous members of the Salesian Family. As a member of the Salesian Society, I feel proud and happy to be part of this celebrations and congratulate all the members of the Salesian Family. I recommend your prayers for the Salesians and other members of the Salesian Family so that they may continue to be "Like Don Bosco, With the Young, For the Young!" (Strenna of the Rector Major to the Salesian Family for 2015).

JUNIOR PRIESTS' MEET

Like in other years, this year too we will have the animation programme and meeting of Junior Priests of our Diocese. It will be held on 15 – 16 September 2015 at Sangamam. Rev. Fr. Bosco SDB will be the resource person of the animation. I extend a hearty welcome to all the Junior Priests for the programme and I hope that they will gain much from it. The following are the participants:

- Fr Jinoy Thottiyil
- Fr John Paul
- Fr Toji Parampiparampil
- Fr Joseph Mangalamadam (Jomon)
- Fr Tobin Alappurackal
- Fr Alex Puthettu
- Fr Antony Madappurackal
- Fr LijoThekkel
- Fr SajanNettaponghu
- Fr Tony Velikkakathu
- Fr Linslal Mangalath
- Fr Sebi Manimalakandathil
- Fr Shoji Puthenpurackal
- FrAjeesh Attiyil
- Fr Jose Vayalil
- Fr PrintoKurias
- Fr Vinod Kanakalil
- Fr Abin Poovathummoottil
- Fr SumeshValliyamthodathil

EDUCARE

The Diocese is going to begin yet another initiative to help the less fortunate children for their education. The project is named EDUCARE and it is aimed at supporting financially weak students to complete their studies up to class 12. Rev. Fr Saji Elambaserry SDB, Director designed the project and KKSSS will carryitout. The formal inauguration of this project will take place on 12 September 2015 at 10 am. Irecommend the presence of all Parish Priests especially of those Parishes from where the students are selected for this project. This will show our concern for the poor and involvement in the project. We thank Fr Saji for this initiative and we are grateful to all the benefactors who have sponsored the education of these children.

ST. ALPHONSA COLLEGE

The dream of opening a College in our Diocese has been realised by the grace of God last year. The College has taken shape. At present the first and second floor of the College building is almost completed. The interior works, laying tiles and the finishing touches are going on. All the classes are being held in the new building.

With great trust in the divine providence, we have gone ahead with this project. I request all the Fathers to promote admissions to our College. We hope that the College will – and are obligated too – impart to our children an integral and holistic formation rather than providing mere formal qualifications to be eligible for certain jobs. I believe that in the years to come

our College will act as a great beacon of light guiding our youth to become honest and God-fearing citizens of our Country. It is to be noted that the College has a predilection for the Catholic students who will be closely monitored in order to strengthen their faith in Christ and their life in the Church.

HOME MISSION

The Sisters engaged in Home Mission have completed the second phase of attending Tamil classes and have resumed their ministry in Thuckalay-Pilankalai Forane from 3 August 2015. They are already in the Parish of Mekkamandabam. We wish them all the best.

CHAIN ROSARY

The Chain Rosary is meant to pray the Rosary within a specified hour by the entire faithful in the Diocese. This year we have fixed 18 October 2015 from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm for praying the Chain Rosary. Rev. Fr Antony Chirakal VC, the Director of *Uraviam* will give you the guide-lines for the smooth conduct of the event. However, I want to provide you with the basic instructions, as I did last year, that need to be followed.

- Teach the faithful regarding the date, time and procedure of praying the Chain Rosary.
- Call the meeting of all the *Uraviam* leaders and instruct them well about the Chain Rosary. Get their assistance in conducting the Chain Rosary.
- The Chain Rosary should be prayed according to *Uraviam* wise. All the members 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 within 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 purpose.
- 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 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.

ROSARY RALLY

The Legion of Mary will organize a Rosary Rally on Sunday, 25 October 2015. The Rally will begin from Mekkamandabam at 2.30 pm and will conclude at Plankalai. Kindly encourage all the faithful and Marian Senai members in particular to attend this Rally. I do hope that all the faithful from Thuckalay-Plankalai Forane will attend the Rally.

UPCOMING EVENTS

5 September 2015	-	Parish Council Agenda Meeting
7 September 2015	-	College Committee Meeting
12 September 2015	-	Educare, Inauguration
12 September 2015	-	KII, Inauguration
13 September 2015	-	Pastoral Visit, Manchalumoodu
15-16 September 2015	-	Junior Priest Meeting
27 September 2015	-	Pastoral Visit, Kaliyal

INFORMATION

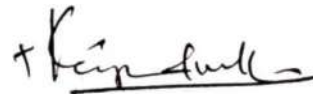
- Kindly note that the internal auditing is going on these days in our Parishes.
- **A reminder: *Our Annual spiritual retreat will be held from 5-10 October 2015. Kindly make yourself free on those days.***
- On 16 August, there was the blessing of foundation stone for the new church at Palukal.
- Reverend Fathers in charge of different departments are requested to submit their departmental programmes and plans for the coming year 2015-2016, possibly within the first two weeks of September 2015.
- The blessing of the renovated Parish Hall and the blessing of foundation stone for Kurusady in Karode Parish will be held on 6 September 2015.

CONCLUSION

As I conclude my circular, let me remind you that as Priests we can be sure of the maternal protection of our Blessed Mother. She is always there in our midst. She is beside us when we celebrate the Holy Qurbana. Let us place ourselves into the motherly care and protection of our Blessed Mother, and be assured of her presence, protection, comfort and prayers. She is the mother of all Priests. May we frequently have recourse to her intercession and seek her help in moments of difficulties and trials so that she may guide us always to be worthy ministers of her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Assuring you my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+ **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay



BISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS

September 2015

DATE	TIME	EVENTS
3, 4		Bishop's House; Evening Parish Visits
3	2.30pm	AIDACT meeting, KKSSS
5	4.00pm	Pastoral Council Agenda Meeting>> Karode
6	5.00pm	Blessing of Parish Hall and Mass at Karode
7	3.00pm 5.00pm	Translation work Meeting with College Principal Meeting with College Committee
8	10.00 am 7.00 pm	Meeting with Rev. Sr Asha CHF, Provincial First Holy Communion Qurbana, Bishop's House
9	9.30pm 3.00pm	Curia Meeting College Staff Meeting
12	10.00am 2.00pm 5.00pm	Educare Inauguration KII Animation Meet Holy Qurbana at Killiyoor
13	8.00am 5.00pm	Pastoral Visit to Manjalumoodu Feast day Mass at Kaliyal
14		Translation Work; Evening Parish Visit
15-16		Junior Priests' Ongoing Formation Programme
17-19		Translation work; Evening Parish Visits
17	10.00am	Marriage at Mukkoottukal
19		KKSSS: Save a Family-Jubilee Celebration
21-25		Bishop's House; Evening Parish Visits
23	9.30am	Curia Meeting
26	8.00am 5.30pm	Kattathurai Feast Day Mass Feast Day Mass at Manjalumoodu
27-28		Bishop's House; visit to Parishes
27	8.00am	Pastoral Visit to Kaliyal
29	6.30pm	Homily at Kozhipporvilai Parish

Fr K. J. Antony SDB
Diocese Secretary