



Ref. No. Priests/GR/60/2016

28 September 2016

Dear and Reverend Fathers,
Greetings from the Bishop's House!

Final Statement, Recommendations and Suggestions from the 4th Major Archiepiscopal Assembly of the Syro-Malabar Church

Our Catholic Church is a vibrant community led by the Spirit of the Lord, and ever growing towards her fullness. In her journey of faith she encounters numerous challenges. Our Syro-Malabar Church has responded to some of today's critical challenges through her 4th Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. The Assembly or the *Yogam* as it is traditionally called was held from 25 to 28 August, 2016 at Sahrdaya Engineering College, Kodakara, in the Eparchy of Irinjalakuda. The members of the assembly through intense prayer and reflection had studied the themes of *Simplicity in Life*, *Witness in the Family*, and *Mission of the Migrants* as well as other pertinent issues in the Church and society.

The Secretariat of the Assembly is publishing the Acts of the Assembly that contains the Final Statement, Recommendations and General Suggestions of the Assembly, the outcome of the presentations, group discussions and public interventions in different sessions. Kindly find the Final Statement, Recommendations and General Suggestions attached with this circular.

Dear fathers, the attached document is meant for study, reflection, and action. I request you all to go through the document. Please study it and reflect over it. We will be taking up the document for discussion during our Priests Conference and also during the Pastoral Council. Kindly also archive the copy of the document along with this circular in the Circulares File.

NEWS AND EVENTS

1. Junior Priests meeting

Junior Priests meeting was held on 15th and 16th September at Sangamam. All the junior priests except Fr. Jinu (Rome) and Fr. Alex (sick) attended the meet and benefitted from the animation and sharing. I thank Rev. Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram in a special way for having animated the Junior Priests meeting.

2. Thuckalay Diocese Project Promotion

Rev. Fr. Saji Elembasseril SDB visited Europe in the month of September to meet with the benefactors and friends, and agencies that support our Thuckalay Mission. He will return on 7th October. I thank Fr. Saji for having undertaken the trip to mobilize funds for the various projects of our Diocese. I also thank Rev. Fr. Abin for following up the activities at KKSSS as its Acting director and Fr. Felix SDB for taking care of the Kalluvilai mission in Fr. Saji's absence.

3. Rev. Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram

Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram who has been working in our diocese is returning to his Archdiocese (Changanassery). We thank him wholeheartedly for his valuable services in different capacities. He served the diocese as the Rector of the St. Mary's Minor Seminary at Mukkootukal. He was the parish priest at Bengiri. With his earlier experience of being a principal of the Berchman's college and as a member of the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) he put in a lot of efforts for the growth of the nascent Alphonsa College of Arts and Science, later giving direction to the college as its Correspondent. His yeomen service in this Mission Diocese will forever be remembered and appreciated. Dear Fr. Tom we wish you the best of God's blessings in your future ministry.

I also take this opportunity to thank Fr. Tom for having represented our diocese at the Canonization ceremony of St. Mother Teresa.

4. Celebrating St. Teresa of Kolkata and Inauguration of the Palliative Care Service

The Kalluvilai Parish has St. Teresa of Kolkata as its patron. We are happy that God has given the Saint of Compassion to our church and we will be celebrating her sainthood and thanking God for her during the Holy Qurbana to be held on 30th October afternoon at Kalluvilai. On the same day we will be inaugurating the Palliative Care Service in our diocese at Kalluvilai. The Palliative care unit will be run and managed by the Kanya Kumari Social Service Society at Kalluvilai.

5. Silver Jubilee of Very Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam

On 16th September during the Priest Conference all of us gathered around Very Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam to thank and praise God for the 25 years of his priesthood. I once again thank Rev. Fr. Jose for his active collaboration in the running of the Diocese and for his ever optimistic and joyful presence. May God grant him many more years of loving service as his beloved Priest.

6. Episcopal Ordination Anniversary

On the 16th September was my Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination. I thank you dear fathers for having remembered the day and for having prayed for me.

7. DB Tech Inauguration

Congratulations to Rev. Fr. Ajeesh Attiyil and to Mr. Sounder Raj for having zealously pursued the task of establishing two centres of DB Tech in our diocese, namely, at Munchirai and at Utharamcode. The inauguration of the project was held at DB Tech Centre, Munchirai Parish on 26th September. I thank the DB Tech team for having facilitated the establishment of the centre and for training the trainers. I would like to personally thank Rev. Fr. Ramesh Cherian SDB the Assistant Director of Don Bosco Tech India, who came over all the way from Bangalore for the inauguration and for motivating the staff and the students with his presence and his talk. I thank also Rev. Fr. Robin Koorumullil and the parishioners of Munchirai Parish for helping to organize the event.

8. Annual retreat

Our Annual Retreat for the priests will be held from 3rd -7th October. The Retreat will begin on the first day at 5.30pm. Kindly reach by 4.00pm so that you can settle down and prepare well for the Retreat. I once again remind that all need to take part without any exception. Mar Raphael Thattil will be our Retreat Preacher. The retreat will get over on 7th October by 12.30pm and after lunch we will have the Priests Conference.

9. Rev. Fr. Ritto's father passes away

We condole the untimely death of Mr. Joychan (62) beloved father of Rev. Fr. Ritto Thoompunkal who passed away on 16th September. Many priests, sisters, and parishioners from our diocese and from Trivandrum, and Changanassery Diocese attended the funeral held at Fathimapuram on 20th September. We continue to pray for Fr. Ritto and for his grieving family.

10. *Sirumalar* magazine with new face-life

The mission league under the leadership of Fr. Shojo bringing out a monthly magazine called *Sirumalar* regularly, thus helping thousands of young children in our parishes and institutions. There were many requests to improve the quality of the magazine in its paper and print; therefore, in our last priest conference it was decided that the improved version of the magazine will cost Rs. 8 from the month of November. We wish Rev. Fr. Shojo and Rev. Fr. Jose Vayalil all the best.

INFORMATION

1. **Suspension of priestly ministry of Fr. Tony Velikkakath:** Fr. Tony Velikkakath has defected from the priesthood and has been living away from the Diocese and the duties entrusted to him for a period of one year. Henceforth by the powers endowed in me by my office he has been suspended from practicing his priestly ministry both within the diocese and elsewhere.
2. **Mission Sunday:** Mission Sunday will be celebrated on 16th October. Kindly make the Cover Collection and submit it at the earliest.
3. **Welcome Rev. Fr. Sathianesan:** Rev. Fr. Sathianesan is returning to the Diocese from Italy on 15th October. He has successfully defended his Doctoral Theses in Oriental Canon Law. We welcome back Rev. Fr. Sathianesan wholeheartedly and wish him many more years of fruitful service ahead in the diocese.
4. **Rev. Fr. Geo Choozhikunnel** will go to Holy Land from 4th to 14th October. We wish Fr. Geo a very happy and safe journey and blessed time in the Holy Land.
5. **Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal** will be completing his doctoral studies by October 2016 and will join for one year diploma course in Oriental Canon Law in the Oriental Institute, Rome. We wish him God's blessing.
6. **One million Children praying the Rosary:** Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) an agency that supports our Thuckalay Mission is inviting us to join in their prayer initiative: "A million children praying the Rosary." Poverty, violence, injustice, fear – and in recent times above all the terrible crisis in the Middle East and Syria with its associated phenomenon of mass migration – have brought unspeakable suffering to so many from children to adults, to old people. Especially during this Jubilee Year of Mercy, we are called to spread the message to all our children: in every school, kindergarten, hospital, children's home and parish.
We are called to join this prayer of peace with profound trust. Our children's prayers are powerful. Kindly promote this initiative and organize the praying of the Holy Rosary on 18th October at your convenient time in your parishes and institutions. We are asking the Catechism and Kuzhandai Iesu Iyakkam to give special importance to this initiative and organize special Rosary service.
7. **Rev. Fr. Robin Koorumullil** will be leaving for Ireland on 21st October to work in the Limerick diocese for the Syro-Malabar Community.
8. **Rev. Fr. Santhosh's** beloved dad had gone missing since the end of last month. He is yet to be found. I request you to intensify your prayers for his safe return. Fr. Santhosh has

returned from Rome to be with his family during this time of crisis. He also will not be returning to Rome immediately. He will continue to work on his Doctoral Research being in the Diocese along with carrying out pastoral work. He will return to Rome in December 2017 to defend his thesis.

9. **Rev. Fr. Josy Cheeramkuzhy CMI** (who had earlier worked in our diocese) lost his sister Ms. Sherly (56) on September 16th. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Rev. Fr. Josy and pray for him and for the repose of the soul of his sister.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

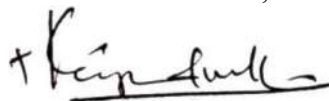
- i. **3rd-7th October**: Annual Retreat for Priests
- ii. **6th October**: Third death anniversary of Fr. Mathew Plathottam
- iii. **11th October**: New Pastoral Council will be constituted.
- iv. **12th October**: Interdepartmental meeting at **10 am** (Changed from 13th October). Departmental heads are requested to bring along with them the Annual Plan for the department.
- v. **16th October**: Mission Sunday; Mission Sunday Cover Collection
- vi. **16th October**: Chain Rosary in Families *Uraviyam* wise
- vii. **18th October**: Praying Rosary for peace in the world in all our Institutions (esp. by CML and KII as part of "A million Children Praying the Rosary" organized by Aid to the Church in Need International).
- viii. **23th October**: Rosary Rally, 2.30 pm From: Nithravilai to Christurajapuram
- ix. **25th October**: Inter-diocesan Meet (10am-1pm), St. Alphonsa College of Arts and Science (members: All the directors of departments and pious associations)
- x. **30th October**: Mass in honour of St. Teresa of Kolkata at 2.30pm at Kalluvilai; Inauguration of the Palliative Care Service.
- xi. **1st November**: Special Pastoral Council to implement the Final statement, recommendation and suggestions of 4th Syro-Malabar Assembly
- xii. **6th November**: CML Rally from Plankalai to Kalluvilai
- xiii. **12th November**: 20th Diocese Foundation Day Celebrations. Kindly propose names of individuals in parish who are worthy of the Sevai Chemmal awards to very Rev. Fr. Jose, our VG before 15th October.

CONCLUSION

Pope Francis speaks of a sort of Third World War going on in the world conducted in piecemeal fashion. Political, sociological, and economic aggression by some have increased and the peace of the world is disturbed. Innocent lives are lost. Armed conflicts are on the rise. We need to pray and pray more. Rosary is a strong weapon that can counter these conflicts. This has been witnessed to in the history of our Catholic Church: praying the Rosary has stood us in good stead. As we celebrate the month of the Holy Rosary let us join millions of others who have taken up to intercede for the suffering world. Let us assure ourselves of the assistance and intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary as we pray the Rosary.

With the assurance of my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ Jesus,



+George Rajendran SDB
Bishop of Thuckalay

