

My dear Fathers

Affectionate greetings from Bishop House! On 3 July, we shall celebrate the feast of *Dukhrana*, the day when we commemorate the martyrdom of Mar Thoma *Sleeha*. It is an occasion to reflect upon the origins of our Church and our reception of the gift of Christian faith through St Thomas, the Apostle. Faith is a reality that has to be renewed constantly. The Year of Faith that we are keeping this year is a remainder of this truth. Let us celebrate the feast of *Dukhrana* this year in this spirit. The celebration of the feast should help us to deepen our faith and to initiate a renewal in ourselves and in the lives of our people according to its demands.

#### ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE

It was through the intervention of St Thomas that we received one of the fundamental revelations of Christ: “I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6). St Thomas, for the first time, taught the Indians the way to God through Jesus Christ. The manner of living out the Christian faith taught by him can be qualified as the way of Thomas. As far as Christians are concerned, the life of faith is a life in Christ. Every Christian needs to unite himself/herself to the person of Christ. The message and life witness of Christ should become the message and witness of those who believe in him. However, very often Christians themselves are seen to adopt their own ways of thinking and life styles, having been influenced by other thought patterns of the world. Lord Jesus Christ prayed on the cross for those who crucified him: “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34). The sins we commit today, even those without our knowledge, do affect adversely others in the society. What are these sins committed without our knowledge? They are the wrongs we do thinking that they are right on the basis of our wrong convictions. Therefore, we should be prepared to continually examine our convictions and to correct them whenever they go wrong.

Unfortunately today the Christians who claim their descent from St Thomas are divided into different Churches. The differences of opinions have emerged in the annals of history. The unwillingness to respect and understand the different viewpoints may cause the differences of opinions to continue. St Thomas Christians have to endeavour prayerfully so that the different Churches may come to greater unity, having removed such possibilities to the extent possible. All of us should be willing to cooperate generously in making efforts for the unity of the Churches. We should also work with greater watchfulness to establish unity and communion in our own individual Church. The prophecy of Jeremiah, “I will give them one heart and one way” (Jer 32:39), should be realized in the Church.

#### CELEBRATION OF MAR THOMA DAY

We celebrate the feast of *Dukhrana* as *Sabhadinam* on 3 July. However, it will be fitting for us to celebrate in our Parishes with our faithful on the Sunday that falls on 7 July. I have requested all the Directors of Pious Associations to organize meetings, programmes and activities that can promote the growth and communion of our Church. They should also help in acquiring a deeper knowledge of St Thomas at the Parish level. I also request you, dear Fathers, to plan the programmes of 7 July so that the people of God, especially the children and the youth benefit immensely from such celebrations. As is the custom, the collection of that day is meant for *Sabhadinam* and will be sent to Kakanad.

## **NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE**

### **SECOND PASTORAL COUNCIL 2013**

The Pastoral Council of the Diocese met on 8 June 2013 at Sangamam. There were 40 participants. Some could not come due to the inclement weather. The theme of the Pastoral Council was PASTORAL PLAN. The first session was dedicated to review the implementation of the action plans of the previous meeting. During this session, the need to set up a corpus fund for the Diocese was discussed. Towards the end of this first session, the Forane Level Animators were appointed. The second session was spent in deepening the theme of the meeting. Rev. Fr Joseph Mundagam, the Vicar General of Changanacherry Archdiocese, animated the members of the Pastoral Council and helped the participants to have a clear vision regarding the need to plan for the Diocese. In order to prepare a six-year Pastoral Plan for the Diocese, the Council was divided into 5 groups and a questionnaire was given to each group to discuss and formulate priorities for the Diocese. The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm with a prayer. I am grateful to all the members of the Pastoral Council for taking active part in this exercise. This clearly shows their commitment to the welfare of the Diocese.

### **MISSION LEAGUE ANIMATORS' MEETING**

After the appointment new Director Rev. Fr Genoy Thomas, the activities of the Mission League at the Diocesan level received a fillip. The first meeting of the animators was held at Kaluvillai on 7 June 2013. Nearly 40 animators from the various Parishes were present for the meeting. The Diocesan and Forane level organizing teams were formed to take care of the animation of the Mission League. The meeting also discussed the Forane level activities of the Mission League. In order to augment the activities and to undertake the study of saints for each month, it was decided to bring out a monthly information leaflet. An editorial team headed by Fr Alex Puthettu, the Assistant Director of the Mission League was formed. It is important to give serious attention to the students who form part of the Mission League as they play a crucial role in the various activities of the Parish. They could be also potential candidates for priestly and religious vocations. Kindly convey my sincere gratitude to all the animators and children of the Mission League.

### **INTER-PROVINCE MEET**

An inter-province meeting was organized in the Changanacherry Archdiocese on 10 June 2013. All the Bishops from the four constituents of the Province, namely, Changanacherry, Palai, Kanjirapally and Thuckalay along with their Vicar Generals and Departmental Heads were present. The meeting began at 10.30 am with a prayer. Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam welcomed all the participants to the meeting. Various issues related to education, retreat, Bible convention and liturgy were discussed and committees were constituted to study the anomalies. It was an enriching meeting for all of us from the Diocese to listen to the various activities that are being carried out in other Dioceses. I am grateful to all the Heads of Departments for sparing their valuable time to attend this meeting at Changanacherry.

### **FORANE LEVEL PRIESTS' CONFERENCES**

The Forane Level Priests' Conferences were held in Palapallam, Karode and Vailankarai. Almost everyone was present for the meeting except some who were absent with prior permission. Sufficient time was given to all the Fathers for personal adoration and confession after which a meeting was held to discuss and reflect on the various points pertaining to the Diocese and the faithful. A recurring point raised during the meeting was that the Forane Vicars should be given more importance and they should be involved in the activities of all the Parishes under their care. The discussion was very fruitful and practical. I want to thank all the Forane Vicars for taking the leadership in many of the activities of the

Diocese. In a special way, I am grateful to the Parish Priests Fr Geo, Fr. Jiji Koipuram and Fr Sujesh Muttathukunnel for organizing the Priests' Conferences in their own Parishes.

### **MR PATHROSE PASSES AWAY**

Mr Pathrose, father for Rev. Fr John Paul passed away on 13 June 2013 in Annammal Hospital, Kuzhithurai at 10.15pm. Fr John Paul who was on his way to Delhi for a study tour had to rush home on the next day morning. Together with some of our Fathers, I was present in the hospital when Mr Pathrose breathed his last. The final rites began at home at 3.00pm on 14 June. The mortal remains were then brought to the Church in procession. Fr Jose Muttathupadam celebrated the requiem Mass with Frs John Paul and Joseph Santhosh as the concelebrants. I conducted the funeral rites at home. All the Priests, some Sisters and many people from various Parishes were present for the funeral service and to pray for the departed soul. As a Diocese, we express our heartfelt condolences to Rev. Fr John Paul and to all the family members. May God grant eternal rest to the departed soul! I would like to thank Rev. Fr Shojo, the Parish Priest of Kazhuvanthittai and all our Fathers and Sisters for being close to the family of Fr John Paul during these days of bereavement and sorrow.

### **SUCCESS 2013**

Kanyakumari Social Service Society organized a special programme titled **SUCCESS 2013** to honour and to award the top scorers of the Class 10 and Class 12 Board Examinations 2013. It was an occasion to introduce them to the existing career opportunities.

The programme was conducted in two separate sessions. The first session was dedicated to career guidance training. Mr D.P. Josebin Dhas, Project Officer conducted the training while Prof. Subramanyan, EEE Department, Jayamatha Engineering College animated the discussions. 623 students with their parents attended the programme. Students actively participated in group discussions. They raised a number of questions and clarified their doubts.

Second session was purely meant for honouring and rewarding the outstanding performers of Class 10 and Class 12. It began with a prayer song. Mr John Jacob MLA, Killiyoor Constituency presided over the function and distributed mementos to the achievers. Mr John Gracelin, President of Mulagumoodu Panchayat, Dr R.Nagalingam, Principal of Arun Engineering College, Rajapuram, Prof. Subramanyan, HOD, EEE Department, Jayamatha Engineering College, Aralvaimozhi and Rev. Fr Saji Elambasseril SDB, Director, Kanyakumari Social Service Society were present for the felicitation programme. After the programme, tea and snacks were served to all the participants. Our heartfelt thanks goes to the Director and the staff of KKSSS for organizing this unique event for the first time.

### **HEALTH BULLETIN OF REV. FR THOMAS THEKKEYIL**

As you all know Fr Thomas Thekkeyil is diagnosed with Cancer of the Eye. On the morning of 21 June 2013, he met Dr Gangatharan in his home clinic. The doctor asked him to conduct another test at the hospital and to meet him on 26 June 2013. Fr Jose Muttathupadam is with him these days. He will be brought to the Bishop's House on 22 June. Let us continue to pray for Fr Thomas!

### **FORANE DIRECTORS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS**

#### **Forane Level Youth Directors:**

Padanthalumoodu	-	Fr Prince Maliyil
Nithravilai	-	Fr Sujesh Muttathukunnel
Arukani	-	Fr Joemon Mangalamadathil
Manchalumoodu	-	Fr Luka CMI

Soosaipuram - Fr John Pudumana  
Plankalai - Fr Jimmy Thekkekadumathil

**Forane Level Catechism Directors:**

Padanthalumoodu - Fr Shojo Erupathanchilchira  
Nithravilai - Fr Robin Kurumullil  
Arukani - Fr Joseph Ottalungal  
Manchalumoodu - Fr Peter Kizhakeil  
Soosaipuram - Fr Antony Jose  
Plankalai - Fr Chacko Akkathara CMI

**Forane Level Mission League Directors**

Padanthalumoodu - FrRobins Kuzhikodil  
Nithravilai - FrJohnslal Arackaparambil  
Arukani - FrJoemon Mangalamadathil  
Manchalumoodu - Fr Peter Kizhakeil  
Soosaipuram - Fr Alex Puthettu  
Plankalai - Fr Jimmy Thekkekadumathil

Note: I request all the above mentioned Fathers to accept the leaderships assigned and to extend a generous support to the better running of the Departments.

**COMING PROGRAMMES IN THE DIOCESE**

07 July - Celebration of *Dukrana* at Parish level  
13 July - Junior Priests' Meet at Sangamam.  
22 July - Forane Level Priests' Conference at Plankalai  
(Soosaipuram & Thuckalay)  
23July - Forane Level Priests' Conference at Thettiyode  
(Padanthalumoodu & Nithravilai)  
25July - Forane Level Priests' Conference at Arukani (Arukani &  
Manjalumoodu)

**CONCLUSION**

As I conclude this letter, let me once again remind you of coming feast of *Dukrana*. May the intercession of St Thomas, the Apostle of India and the Founder of our Church, be always with us. Like him, let us surrender ourselves to the risen Saviour by exclaiming: My Lord and My God.

Thank you,

Yours affectionately,

+ George Rajendran sdb  
Bishop of Thuckalay