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Thuck'alay Tidings

DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



**Through his faith
and bravery,
we learn to conquer
our own dragons.**



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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

April 2026 | Vol. 6 | Issue 4

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY
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Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Easter is the living heartbeat of our faith, the foundation of our Christian vocation. I invite each of you to reflect on what Easter truly meant for **three witnesses who stood at the very threshold of the Resurrection: St Mary Magdalene, the Disciples, and our Blessed Mother Mary.** In their experience, may we discover the deeper meaning of our own Easter faith and the joy of our calling.

From Grief to Encounter

St Mary Magdalene holds a unique place in the Easter story. While many had fled and fear had silenced voices, she remained weeping at the tomb - not for lack of courage, but because she loved deeply. From her, seven demons had been cast out (Lk 8:2); she had been restored from fragmentation to wholeness. And now, the One who had given her life back seemed to have been taken away forever.

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” (Jn 20:15). These words, initially mistaken for those of a gardener, are the most tender question the Risen Lord could ask. Easter began for Mary not in triumph but in tears. She

sought the dead Christ; she had not yet imagined the living One. This is a profoundly human condition: we often seek God in the familiar, in what we can see and verify. Yet the Risen Lord shatters every such expectation.

When Jesus called her name - “Mary” - everything changed in a single word. He did not first appear to the powerful or the learned, but to one who had known both brokenness and healing, whose love kept her faithful when logic said there was nothing left to hope for.

From Fear to Mission

On that first Easter Sunday, the disciples were behind locked doors “for fear of the Jews” (Jn 20:19). These were men who had walked with Jesus for three years, witnessed his miracles, and shared his table. Yet fear had paralysed them. The crucifixion had shattered their dream of a messianic kingdom. Peter had denied him, and most had fled.

Into this locked room entered the Risen Christ. His first word was not a rebuke but a gift: “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19). He showed them his hands and his side — not to prove a point but to reassure them that it was truly he, the One who had loved them to the end. “The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord” (Jn 20:20). It was not argument or evidence that changed them. It was his presence. This is why the Eucharist is not merely ritual but a genuine encounter. At every Mass, we receive the Risen Christ and are sent: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21).

Jesus breathed on them: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). The imagery recalls the original breath of life in Genesis 2:7. Easter signifies a new

creation. The community of frightened followers becomes the Church — missionary, Spirit-filled, forgiving, and witnessing.

From Compassion to Maternal Intercession

The Scriptures do not mention a Resurrection appearance to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. However, the entire tradition of the Church maintains that the Risen Christ appeared first to his Mother. This belief is shared by saints such as Ignatius of Loyola and Alphonsus Liguori, and it aligns with the logic of love. Would the Son, who loved his own to the very end, have failed to visit the one who bore him, who remained faithfully by the foot of the cross? If Good Friday was the sword that pierced her soul (Lk 2:35), then Easter was its reversal — the vindication of every act of faith Mary had ever made, from her Fiat to the silent vigil of Holy Saturday.

Easter transformed Mary's role. From Mother of the Lord, she became Mother of the Church (Jn 19:27), present at Pentecost (Acts 1:14) and gathered with the disciples in prayer. Her maternal intercession continues. We, as priests of the Eparchy of Thuckalay, serve under her maternal care, and we draw from this Easter grace as we shepherd our people.

I extend my prayerful wishes for a blessed and grace-filled Easter to each of you and to your families. May the Risen Lord walk beside you and fill you with His peace!

With my prayers and blessings,

Yours in Christ



+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay

Hope and Healing for West Asia:

A Day of Prayer



The ongoing conflict and escalating violence in various Middle Eastern nations have brought profound concern and deep sorrow to all. In response to this crisis, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and the President of the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council called for a dedicated day of intercession on 06 March 2026. Following this direction, the Diocese observed Friday, March 6, 2026, as a Special Day of Prayer for Peace to plead for an immediate end to the war and the establishment of lasting peace through dialogue and compromise. To ensure a unified

spiritual front, the following services were conducted in all parish churches, convents, and diocesan institutions on that day: Eucharistic Adoration dedicated to peace in the Middle East, the Way of the Cross offered for the intentions of those suffering due to the war, and the Holy Qurbana. All families were also requested to recite a special Rosary at home for this specific intention, and the Diocese expressed its gratitude to all the Parish Priests for observing the day with maximum participation of the parishioners.



Together We Celebrate Women's Strength

International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8, 2026, by the Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) across various parts of the diocese. A total of 30 women's clusters actively participated in the celebrations, which included cultural performances, competitions, and charitable initiatives. These activities fostered meaningful social outreach within the parishes and strengthened community participation. Appreciation is extended to Rev. Fr. Antony Mahesh and the entire KKSSS team for their dedicated efforts in organizing these programmes and for their ongoing commitment to the empowerment and upliftment of women.



Shepherds in Dialogue: *Forane Priests' Conference for Pastoral Growth*

The Forane-level Priests' Conferences were held across the diocese from March 9 to March 11, 2026. On March 9, the conference for the Padanthalumoodu and Nithiravilai Foranes took place at St. Matthew's Church, Annikkarai; on March 10, the meeting for the Arukani, Kaliyal, and Manjalumoodu Foranes was held at St. Thomas Church, Marappady; and on March 11, the conference for the Soosaipuram, Thuckalay, and Pilankalai Foranes was conducted at St. Joseph's Forane Church, Soosaipuram. Very. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Vicar General, attended all the sessions as the Curia representative. Most of the meetings commenced at 10:00 am with prayer and adoration and concluded with an agape meal, while the Arukani –

Manjalumoodu – Kaliyal meeting began at 6:00 pm with the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The discussions centered on pastoral coordination and departmental activities, with particular focus on the diocesan agenda, including catechetical formative programs, Cathedral construction, the promotion of the Sinai Retreat Centre, the Syro-Malabar Community Empowerment Year Forane-level rally, and Lenten activities. The intimate setting fostered lively dialogue and generated numerous constructive suggestions for pastoral improvement, which will be presented at the upcoming general Priests' Conference. Sincere gratitude was extended to the Forane Vicars for their effective coordination.



Grounded in Faith, Rising in Grace

Cathedral Work Begins

On the occasion of the Feast of St. Joseph on 19 March 2026, the official inauguration of the Cathedral construction took place at Soosaipuram in a spirit of faith and joyful anticipation. The celebration began with the Solemn Holy Qurbana presided over by him, and at its conclusion, he formally inaugurated the construction work, invoking God's blessings upon the site and all the workers. With this solemn blessing, the physical labour of building the Cathedral officially commenced, marking a historic and hopeful moment for the community. A special highlight of this year's feast was the

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL
KARUNGAL, SOOSAIPURAM



introduction of a new tradition in Soosaipuram—Oottunercha, the practice of providing a “Nercha” (offering) lunch to everyone present. By initiating this meaningful custom on the Feast of St. Joseph, the parish beautifully expressed the values of hospitality, unity, and the caring fatherly spirit associated with St. Joseph. He also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil for his tireless dedication and careful coordination in organizing both the inauguration and the entire programme so successfully, making the celebration truly memorable for all.

You can support the missionary activities by sponsoring a Seminarian in his formation:

Please write / mail to us for any enquiry / details. We shall contact you with all further details soliciting your generous support:

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Contact Mission Procure:
Fr. Sunil Antony
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Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

Last Respects to a Loving Shepherd and Guiding Light



With deep sorrow, it was reported that Most Rev. Jerome Dhas Varuvel, SDB (74), former Bishop of the Diocese of Kuzhithurai, passed away on 24 March 2026. Bishop Jerome Dhas was the first Bishop of the Diocese of Kuzhithurai, established in 2014, and he shepherded the diocese from 2015 until his resignation on 6 June 2020 due to ill health. Bishop Jerome was a shepherd of profound faith and a pioneer for his people; his dedicated service and spiritual leadership left an indelible mark on the Church. On 25 March 2026, at 11:30 am, the faithful of the Diocese of Thuckalay gathered at the Kuzhithurai

Bishop's House to offer prayers for the departed soul and to express condolences to the Bishop, priests, religious, and laity of the Diocese of Kuzhithurai. A good number of priests and religious participated in the Liturgy of the Office for the Dead, which was presided over by Bishop Mar George Rajendran, SDB. The funeral was held on Wednesday, 25 March 2026, at 3:00 pm at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kuzhithurai. Gratitude was expressed to everyone who joined in the prayer service as a sign of solidarity and shared faith, and prayers continue that the merciful Lord may grant him eternal bliss.





Before the Blessed Sacrament, SEEKING HEALING, RETREAT AT KILLIYOOR

A 52-Day Eucharistic Spiritual Healing Retreat officially began at SABS Convent, Killiyoor on 27 March 2026. The retreat commenced solemnly with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, presided over by the Parish Priest, Fr. Jose Purayidathilkunnel, laying a strong spiritual foundation for the weeks ahead. At

present, 33 participants have committed themselves to this intensive period of prayer, reflection, and healing. The entire diocesan family is invited to support them through prayer. Gratitude is extended to the SABS Provincial and the team for organizing such a retreat for spiritual renewal.





MOMENTS OF MERCY AND RENEWAL

Special Lenten Retreat

A Special Lenten Retreat was organized by the Uraviyam on 28 March 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai, specifically for the Uraviyam Animators, Coordinators, and Office Bearers. The programme commenced with the Way of the Cross, followed by praise and worship. The spiritual sessions were led by Fr. Vinu D. Joseph and Fr. Mijo Puthenpurackal, who guided the participants through profound reflections on the Lenten journey, focusing on the central themes of the season—prayer, penance, and the Word of God. Participants were encouraged to bring their personal copies of

the Holy Bible to enable active engagement during the sessions. Following Eucharistic Adoration, the Holy Qurbana was celebrated, presided over by Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, and approximately 260 participants took part in the retreat. The gathering concluded with an encouragement for all leaders to carry the spiritual insights gained into their respective administrative and ministry roles, thereby strengthening the Uraviyam across all parishes. Gratitude was expressed to Fr. Mijo Puthenpurayil, Director of Uraviyam, for organizing the retreat in a fruitful and meaningful manner.



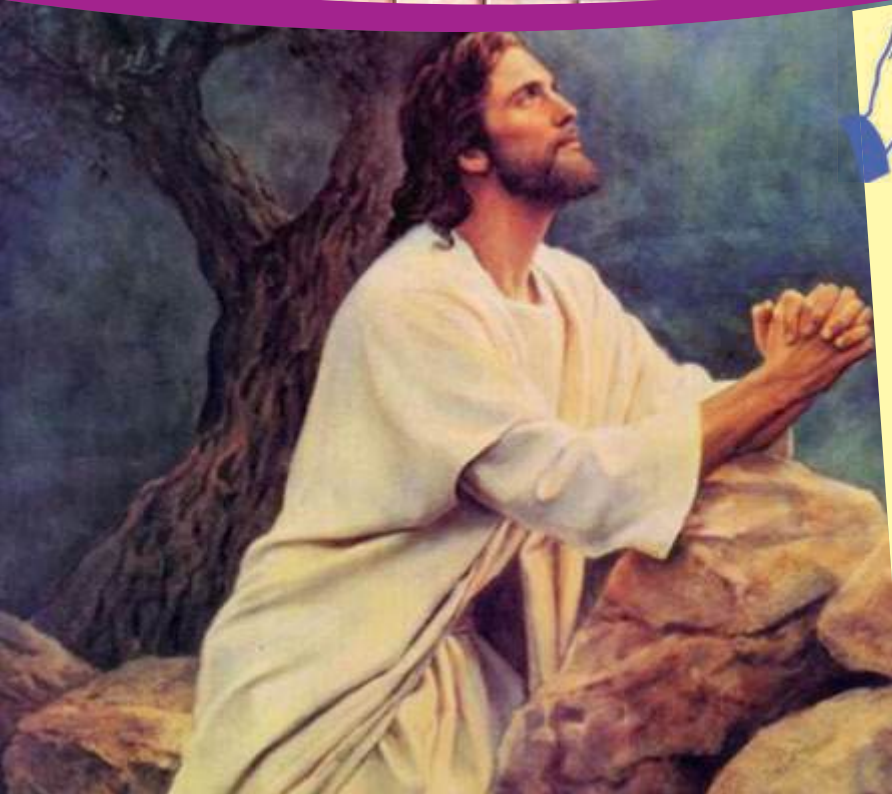
Mothers Take the Stage

with Grace and Talent

On March 28, 2026, a drama competition titled “Susanna” was organized for mothers by the Mathru Jyothis at the Asir Vidyalaya Auditorium, Thettiyode, for the Mathru Jyothis members of the Padanthalumoodu Forane, with around five teams of mothers from various parishes within the forane actively participating in the event. The prizes were awarded as follows: First Prize to St. Maria Goretti Church, Athancode; Second Prize to Sacred Heart Church, Padanthalumoodu; and Third Prize to St. Paul’s Church, Thettiyode. The participating mothers expressed their joy,




noting that the event was a memorable experience and a wonderful opportunity to showcase their hidden talents. Gratitude was extended to Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil for organizing the event successfully.



NEED PRAYER SUPPORT!

The Diocese has prayer groups.

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Name:

Place:

Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,

 : bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

With Palms in Hand,

Sing Hosanna to the King of Kings

Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, where He was joyfully welcomed by people waving palm branches, and it reminds us to open our hearts to Christ and faithfully follow His teachings. In this spirit, on 29 March 2026, Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB presided over the



Hosanna Sunday liturgical celebrations at Fatima Matha Church, Fathimapuram (Kudukkachivilai), with the procession beginning at 10:00 a.m. The celebration was marked by deep devotion and enthusiastic participation from the faithful. Bishop expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, the Parish Priest, Fr. Lijo Thekkel, and all the parishioners for their sincere spiritual preparation and active involvement, which made the celebration truly meaningful and prayerful.

Serving the Altar, Embracing the Call

Minor Orders and Vestition

On 30 March 2026, the Minor Orders were administered at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal, at 7:00 a.m. by Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB. Bro. Joseph JS (Abishwin) received the Cassock; Bro. Antony Raj, Bro. Sebastian (Sibin C.K.), and Bro. Sebastian (Melvin) received the Minor Order of Karoyusa; and Bro. Solomon (Godwin Christudhas) received the Minor Order of Heupadiyaknusa. The parents and family

members of Bro. Joseph JS (Abishwin), who received the Cassock, along with Curia members, priests, and religious, were present for the celebration. On behalf of all the brothers, Bro. Abishwin expressed heartfelt words of thanks, while Bro. Divin Raj offered felicitations, and Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB extended sincere appreciation and gratitude to everyone for their warm greetings and prayers.



A Blessed Milestone of Service:

Diaconate Ordination



The Major Order of Diaconate was conferred by Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB upon Bro. Denis (Divin Raj) at Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu, on 31 April 2026. The solemn liturgical celebration commenced at 5:30 p.m., with Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam serving as the Archdeacon and Rev. Fr. Shijo Aikkarakunnel as the concelebrant of the Holy Qurbana. Following the Holy Qurbana, a brief felicitation meeting was held inside the church, during which Deacon Divin expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to organizing the event. The celebration concluded with a joyful dinner, fostering an atmosphere of warmth and fellowship among all present. The arrangements for the function were well organized by Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil, the Parish Priest, along with the parishioners of Little Flower Forane Church.



SACFIESTA 2K25

& 9th Graduation Ceremony

A Celebration of Achievement and Excellence

St. Alphonso College of Arts and Science, Karungal celebrated its 12th Annual Day, 'Sacfiesta 2K25,' with great enthusiasm and vibrant participation on 12 March 2026. The programme was graced by Most Rev. Bishop Mar George Rajendran, Very. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Vicar General, the Controller of Examinations of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, and the renowned Vijay Super Singer artist, whose esteemed presence added grace and joy to the celebration. The Annual Day featured a variety of cultural programmes, artistic performances, and the distribution of awards recognizing academic excellence and achievements in co-curricular activities, reflecting the talents and dedication of the students. Continuing the celebrations, the College conducted its 9th Graduation Ceremony on 13 March 2026, marking an important milestone in the academic journey of the graduating students. The ceremony served as a proud and memorable occasion, celebrating the successful completion of their studies and



encouraging the graduates to move forward with confidence, knowledge, and a strong sense of responsibility.



Social Service at a Glance

Empowering Women, Strengthening Communities: SHG Annual Day Celebrations 2026

The Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS) vibrantly celebrated the SHG Annual Day from February 22 to March 30, 2026, across 32 centres under the inspiring theme "Rights, Justice, and Equality for All Women and Girls." The events at Thuckalay and Pilankarai were presided over by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, while Rev. Fr. Mahesh Antony led the celebrations in other centres. With the presence of dignitaries, the programs came alive through cultural performances, awareness activities, and talent showcases by women. Financial assistance was extended to needy SHG members, and the well-coordinated events highlighted empowerment, unity, and the strength of women in building resilient communities.

Caring Hands, Healthier Lives: Medical Camp 2026

The Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS), in collaboration with St. Xavier's Multi-Speciality Hospital, organized a medical camp on March 8, 2026, at Annai Teresa Bedridden Patients Care Centre, Vayalinkarai. Led by Rev. Fr. Mahesh Antony, a dedicated team of doctors and medical staff provided general health check-ups and eye screenings to 80 beneficiaries. Free medicines and medical guidance were also given. The camp not only addressed immediate health needs but also promoted awareness and reflected the compassionate service of voluntary organizations.



Bridging Care and Compassion: Health Commission Initiative

The Health Commission of Thuckalay Diocese, in collaboration with Malaicode Parish, organized a meaningful Patients' Day program along with a medical camp on March 15, 2026, at the Malaicode Church premises. Presided over by Rev. Fr. Robin, the event began with a prayer and special blessings, offering spiritual comfort to many elderly and ailing participants. A free medical camp followed, providing general check-ups, blood pressure and sugar tests, and medicines to 50 beneficiaries. The well-coordinated initiative promoted health awareness while beautifully integrating spiritual care with physical well-being.



Bishop's Fraternal Visit to Major Seminaries

Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB made a pastoral visit to the Major Seminarians studying in various Major Seminaries during the month of March 2026. As part of these visits, he celebrated the Holy Qurbana with the seminarians, shared moments of encouragement, and personally met the Rectors to discuss the formation and well-being of the students. He visited St. Thomas

Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor on 05 March, St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalappuzha on 07 March, Mary Matha Seminary, Thrissur on 09 March, and Ruhailaya Major Seminary, Ujjain on 22 March 2026. These visits strengthened the bond between the Bishop and the seminarians, while also reaffirming his pastoral care and commitment to their spiritual and academic formation.

Celebrating Abilities, Spreading Smiles



Shanthi Nilayam Special School, Paruthivilai celebrated its 32nd Annual Day on 12 March 2026, bringing together students, staff, and well-wishers in a spirit of unity and appreciation. Jyothi Nilayam Special School, Palappallam celebrated its Annual Day with great joy and enthusiasm on 17 March 2026. Nambikkai Alayam School for the Intellectually Disabled, Kazhuvanhattai marked its 28th Annual Day on 18 March 2026 with meaningful programmes that highlighted the talents and achievements of the students. Karunai Illam School and Home for Mentally Challenged Children, Nithiravilai



celebrated its 33rd Annual Day on 24 March 2026 with various cultural and educational activities that showcased the abilities and progress of the children. These celebrations served as significant occasions to recognize the dedication of the management, teachers, and caregivers, while encouraging the students to express their talents and build confidence. The Annual Day programmes at these special schools reflected their continued commitment to nurturing the dignity, growth, and holistic development of children with special needs.



In Memory of a Life Well-Lived



Mrs. Cathri Varghese (81)

the beloved mother of Sr. Lisieux CMC



Mrs. Thankamma (77)

the beloved mother of Sr. Tessy Illampally SABS



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MISSION
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

**Birthday Wishes
and
Festal Greetings
to
Mar George Rajendran SDB**



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