



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/169/2025

30 April 2025

Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings and prayerful wishes from Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

We join the universal Church in paying our respects to Pope Francis, the 266th successor of St Peter, who passed away on 21 April 2025, at the age of 88, after serving as the head of the Catholic Church for just over 12 years. His death came after a brief illness that had hospitalised him in the preceding weeks. During his papacy, which began in March 2013 following the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, Francis was known for his emphasis on mercy, environmental stewardship, and outreach to marginalised communities.

As we mourn his death, I wish to share with you some reflections on the life and legacy of Pope Francis, whose pontificate has profoundly shaped our understanding of priesthood and priestly ministry in our time. Pope Francis has been a prophetic voice, challenging us to return to the roots of our vocation and to embrace a renewed vision of priestly service.

The Journey of Jorge Mario Bergoglio

The journey of Pope Francis began in humble circumstances in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he was born on 17 December 1936. The son of Italian immigrants, his early life was marked by simplicity and faith. Before entering the Society of Jesus in 1958, he worked briefly as a chemical technician. This experience of ordinary work gave him insight into the daily struggles of the laity. This perspective would later inform his vision of a priesthood immersed in the realities of people's lives.

As a Jesuit Priest, Provincial Superior, Archbishop, and Pope, Francis consistently demonstrated a commitment to the poor and marginalised. His choice of the name 'Francis' upon his election as Pope in 2013 signalled his desire to emulate the humility, simplicity, and care for creation of St Francis of Assisi.

A Vision of Priesthood for Our Time

The teachings of Pope Francis on the priesthood offer us a challenging yet deeply refreshing perspective. Let me share with you some key elements of his vision that are particularly relevant for our priestly ministry in the Diocese of Thuckalay.

1. Priests as Shepherds with "the Smell of the Sheep"

Perhaps one of the most memorable images of Pope Francis is that of priests who should carry "the smell of the sheep." In his Chrism Mass homily on 28 March 2013, he said: "This is what I am asking you - be shepherds with the smell of sheep, shepherds in the midst of their flock, fishers of men. True enough, the so-called crisis of priestly identity threatens us all and adds to the broader cultural crisis; but if we can resist its onslaught, we will be able to put out in the name of the Lord and cast our nets."

Dear Fathers, this powerful metaphor challenges us to immerse ourselves in the lives of our people, to know their joys and sorrows intimately, and to journey with them in their struggles. Here in our Eparchy, with its unique cultural

context and pastoral challenges, we are called to be truly present to our people, not as distant administrators but as compassionate companions.

2. Mercy as the Core of Priestly Ministry

An emphasis on God's mercy has characterised the pontificate of Francis. His motto, *Miserando atque eligendo* (by having mercy and by choosing), reflects his understanding that we are chosen by God's mercy and called to be instruments of that same mercy. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, he wrote: "The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person."

As priests in Thuckalay, let us examine our ministry: Do our confessionals truly serve as "tribunals of mercy" rather than "chambers of judgment?" Are our homilies proclaiming the liberating mercy of God? Do our pastoral plans prioritise reaching out to those most in need of experiencing God's compassion?

3. A Church that Goes Forth

Pope Francis has consistently called for a "Church that goes forth," a missionary Church that does not wait for people to come but actively seeks out the lost and forgotten. This has profound implications for our understanding of the priesthood. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he challenges us: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."

My dear priests, I invite you to reflect on how we can make this vision concrete in our Eparchy. How can we move beyond our comfort zones and reach those on the peripheries of our parishes? How can we transform our pastoral structures to serve evangelisation rather than self-preservation?

4. Servant Leadership

Pope Francis has modelled a leadership style characterised by humility and service. From washing the feet of prisoners on Holy Thursday to his simple living arrangements, he has embodied the servant leadership that Christ calls all priests to exercise.

In his address to the Roman Curia on 21 December 2014, Pope Francis cautioned against the 'disease' of considering ourselves 'lords of the manor.' He reminded us that authority in the Church is always for service: "Let us remember that the true power is service, and that even the Pope, in order to exercise power, must always enter more deeply into that service which has its luminous summit on the Cross."

Dear Fathers, let us examine our exercise of authority in our parishes and ministries. Do we lead as servants? Are we accessible to our people? Do we listen attentively to their needs and concerns? Do we prioritise the well-being of our flock over our personal comfort or advancement?

5. Formation as Ongoing Conversion

Pope Francis has emphasised that priestly formation is not merely academic or limited to seminary years but is a lifelong journey of conversion. In his address to the Congregation for the Clergy on 3 October 2014, he said: "Formation is not a unilateral act by which someone transmits theological or spiritual notions. Formation is the action of the Father who forms the heart of his Son in our hearts, so that our hearts can have the same feelings as that of the Son."

I encourage each of you to commit to ongoing intellectual, spiritual, human, and pastoral formation. Our Eparchy will continue to provide opportunities for this growth, but I also urge you to take personal responsibility for your formation through prayer, study, and fraternal sharing.

Challenges to Priestly Ministry Today

Pope Francis has been forthright in addressing challenges facing priests today:

1. Clericalism

The Holy Father has repeatedly warned against clericalism, which he describes as a distortion of the priesthood that elevates clergy above the faithful and creates harmful power dynamics. In his Letter to the People of God on 20 August 2018, he wrote: “To say ‘no’ to abuse is to say an emphatic ‘no’ to all forms of clericalism.”

Let us examine our attitudes and practices: Do we foster collaborative ministry with the laity? Do we recognise and support the diverse charisms present in our communities? Do we allow ourselves to be challenged and complemented by the insights of those we serve?

2. Spiritual Worldliness

Pope Francis has cautioned against what he calls ‘spiritual worldliness.’ It is the subtle temptation to seek human glory and comfort rather than God’s glory. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he warns: “Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and personal well-being.”

My dear Fathers, let us be vigilant against this temptation in our own lives. Do we measure success by worldly standards - attendance numbers, financial resources, or personal acclaim - rather than by faithfulness to the Gospel?

3. Burnout and Isolation

The Holy Father has shown particular concern for priests who experience burnout and isolation. He recognises the challenges of priestly life and encourages healthy community and self-care. During a meeting with priests in June 2015, he advised: “Rest is necessary for the health of our minds and bodies, yet it is often difficult to find because once we finish our responsibilities, we feel that there are many other things to do... Rest is also essential for our spiritual health, so that we can hear God’s voice and understand what he asks of us.”

I request each of you to nurture your fraternal bonds with brother priests, maintain healthy friendships, take your scheduled days off, and make your annual retreat a priority. Your physical, mental, and spiritual health are essential for effective ministry.

Our Response as Priests of Thuckalay

As we reflect on the vision of Pope Francis on priesthood, I invite you to join me in renewing our priestly commitment in several concrete ways:

1. **Deepen our prayer life:** Let us root all our ministry in intimate communion with Christ, the High Priest. Francis reminds us that our primary identity is not what we do but who we are in Christ.
2. **Embrace simplicity of life:** Following in the example of Pope Francis, let us examine our lifestyles and possessions, ensuring they reflect Gospel values and the realities of those we serve.
3. **Prioritise the peripheries:** Let each parish in our Eparchy identify those on the margins -economically, socially, or spiritually - and develop pastoral initiatives to reach them.
4. **Foster synodality:** Let us create and strengthen parish councils and other collaborative structures that honour the baptismal dignity and mission of all the faithful.
5. **Practice pastoral conversion:** Let us regularly evaluate our parish structures, schedules, and practices to ensure they serve evangelisation rather than mere maintenance.

Conclusion

Dear Fathers, the life and legacy of Pope Francis offer us both challenge and encouragement as we strive to live our priesthood authentically in today’s world. His witness calls us back to the essential truth of our vocation: we are not

primarily administrators, scholars, or ritual functionaries - we are shepherds called to lay down our lives for our sheep in imitation of Christ, the Good Shepherd.

As we serve the faithful of Thuckalay, may we embody the joyful, merciful, and missionary priesthood that Pope Francis has consistently modelled and taught. May Our Lady, Mother of Priests, intercede for us, and may St Thomas the Apostle, our patron, inspire us with his missionary zeal!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Palm Sunday Celebrations at Mankarai: Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, where He was joyfully welcomed by the people waving palm branches. It serves as a profound reminder for us to open our hearts to Christ and to faithfully follow His teachings. This year, I presided over the Palm Sunday liturgical celebrations at St. James Church, Mankarai, on 13 April 2025. The procession began at 8:00 a.m. from the convent, and the liturgical celebration concluded at 10:30 a.m. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil and all the parishioners for their sincere spiritual preparation and active participation in this meaningful celebration.

Church Blessing at Kayathar: The Kayathar mission began with its official inauguration on 13 June 2019, in the presence of 500 villagers. It was an initiative undertaken by the FCC Sisters of San Joe Province, Thuckalay. The Sisters began their mission by running a tuition centre, conducting house visits, and organizing healthcare programmes. They resided in a rented house until a convent was established on 23 March 2023. Since 2022, Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam has been appointed to oversee and coordinate the mission activities in the Thoothukudi district, with a particular focus on Kayathar. Alongside the Sisters, he dedicated himself to village visits and outreach efforts through various social service programmes, while also residing in a rented house.

Thanks to his committed efforts, the diocese acquired one acre of land in Rajapudhukudi, Kayathar, in January 2023. The foundation stone for the new church and presbytery was laid on 03 October 2025. Due to the tireless work of Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam, the construction of the new church and presbytery was successfully completed. I had the joy of blessing the newly constructed church and presbytery on 13 April 2025 at 5:00 p.m., in the presence of Mrs. Mercy Jose Kappen from Thodupuzha, the generous donor, as well as priests, sisters, lay faithful from Thuckalay, and many villagers from the surrounding area. The church has been dedicated as St. Sebastian's Church, the first in our diocese under the patronage of St. Sebastian, and the presbytery is named Divine Mercy Presbytery. The event concluded with a fraternal agape meal. We remain deeply grateful to Mrs. Mercy Jose and Mr. Stefan Wils from Belgium for their generous contributions that made the realization of this church and presbytery possible. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Jomon and the FCC Sisters for their dedication and for organizing the entire event so beautifully.

Minor Orders and Vestition at Sangamam: On 14 April 2025, the Minor Orders were administered at Sangamam at 7:00 a.m. During the ceremony, Bro. Antony Raj, Bro. Sebastian (Sibin C.K.), and Bro. Sebastian (Melvin) received the Cassock. Bro. Solomon (Godwin Christudhas) received the Minor Order of Karoyusa, and Bro. Denis (Divin Raj) received the Minor Order of Heupadiyaknusa. The parents and family members of the brothers who received the Cassock, along with members of the Curia, were present for the celebration. The Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal and Fr. Mathew Arekalam CMI. During breakfast, we also celebrated the birthdays of Mrs. Mercy Aunty and myself. Fr. Joshy graciously offered his felicitations on the occasion. Bro. Antony Raj expressed words of thanks on behalf of all the brothers. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone for their warm greetings, kind wishes, and prayers—for me and for our brothers. Let us continue to pray that the Lord may fill them with His Spirit and bless their formation journey abundantly.

Meeting with Major Seminarians: On 14 April 2025, following the Minor Orders ceremony, a meeting of the major seminary brothers was held at Sangamam with the participation of the Curia members. All major seminarians—except those from Ujjain—were present for the gathering. During the meeting, the brothers shared their academic and pastoral experiences from the past year, drawn from their respective seminaries and parish assignments. The Curia members took this opportunity to clearly articulate the Diocese’s expectations regarding the consistent observance of formative values throughout both seminary life and vacation periods. As part of the proceedings, new *capos* were elected to take on leadership roles among the brothers: Bro. Divin Raj was chosen as the Common Capo, and Bro. Tebin as the Capo for the Philosophy Section. I extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Director of Major Seminarians, for his dedicated efforts in organizing the vacation programme for our seminarians.

Diaconate Ordination at Paraicode: On 15 April 2025, at Christ the King Church, Paraicode, I conferred the Major Order of Diaconate upon Bro. Varghese (Bibin) Koyickakudiyil, Bro. Joseph (Bibin) Vettakonam, and Bro. Mathew (Tony) Kallamparambil. The liturgical celebration commenced at 5:30 p.m., with Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil serving as the Archdeacon and Rev. Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil concelebrating the Holy Qurbana. Following the Qurbana, a brief felicitation meeting was held inside the church. During the gathering, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal conveyed the heartfelt wishes of the presbyterium to the newly ordained deacons. Deacon Tony offered words of gratitude on behalf of the group, thanking all those who contributed to the organization of the event. The celebration concluded with a joyful dinner, marking the occasion with warmth and fellowship. I extend my sincere appreciation to Rev. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, the Parish Priest, and to the parishioners of Christ the King Church for their meticulous planning and wholehearted involvement in making the day a truly memorable one for everyone present.

Last respects to Mr. Tomy Antony (62): It is with profound sorrow that we received the sad news of the sudden passing of Mr. Tomy Antony, the beloved father of Fr. Linto Thakidiyel, on 15 April 2025. This has been a deeply painful and challenging time for Fr. Linto and his family as they mourn the loss of their dear father. As a presbyterium, we expressed our heartfelt solidarity with our brother priest, Fr. Linto, and assured him of our prayers and fraternal support. The funeral service of Mr. Tomy was held on 17 April 2025, Pesaha Thursday, at 10:30 a.m. at St. Joseph’s Church, Kozhimala. I had the opportunity to be present, preside over the liturgy, and deliver the funeral homily. Despite the demands of Holy Week and the many liturgical responsibilities in our parishes, a significant number of priests made the effort to be there—either on the day of the funeral or the day before—to pray for the repose of Mr. Tomy’s soul and to offer their presence and support to Fr. Linto. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the Fathers and Sisters who visited Fr. Linto’s family during those days and who also participated in the seventh-day Holy Qurbana. May the Lord, in His infinite mercy, grant eternal rest to Mr. Tomy Antony and comfort to the grieving family.

Priests and Religious Recollection & Myron Koodasha at Kalluvilai: On 16 April 2025, just a day before Maundy Thursday, a day of recollection was held for all the Priests and Religious of the diocese at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai. It was a spiritually enriching occasion where priests and sisters gathered for a day dedicated to prayer, adoration, and confession. The day began with the recitation of the Way of the Cross, followed by a profound one-hour reflection led by Fr. Ubald, the Parish Priest of Kanyakumari. His insightful message helped set the tone for deep contemplation and renewal. The highlight of the day was the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, concelebrated by all the Fathers present. During the liturgy, I consecrated the Holy Oil (Myron). I express my heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the organization and smooth execution of this sacred event. In a special way, I thank Fr. Sajan Nettaponghu, Director of the Retreat Centre, for his leadership and dedication.

Blessing of the Church and Maundy Thursday celebration at Sundarapandyapuram : On Maundy Thursday, we commemorate the institution of the Lord’s Supper and the Priesthood, two of the most

profound and foundational events in the Christian faith. This year, I had the joy of celebrating the Maundy Thursday liturgy at Sundarapandyapuram, in the Tenkasi mission. The Sundarapandyapuram mission began in 2015, and until recently, the liturgical celebrations were held in front of the house of a faithful parishioner. By the grace of God, we were able to acquire a plot of land that included an existing church building. The newly established Sahaya Matha Church was blessed by me on 17 April 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Faithful from both Mekkarai Parish and Sundarapandyapuram participated in the celebration. Following the blessing, the Holy Qurbana was celebrated, which included the Washing of the Feet ceremony and the sharing of Pesaha Appam, in keeping with the Maundy Thursday tradition. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. John Joseph, Priest-in-Charge of Sundarapandyapuram, and the FCC Sisters of Pudur Convent for their devoted efforts in organizing the celebration so beautifully.

Good Friday at Mukkoottukal Parish: On Good Friday, we come together to remember and commemorate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, a profound act of love for all humanity. This year, on 18 April 2025, every parish community observed this sacred day through meaningful participation in the liturgical ceremonies, including the Way of the Cross, accompanied by deep reflection on the mystery of the Cross. At Holy Family Church, Mukkoottukal, I joined in the Good Friday liturgical services. Following the liturgy, the Way of the Cross began at 11:00 a.m., proceeding toward Manjalumoodu Junction. In a beautiful sign of unity, three parishes—Manjalumoodu, Malaicode, and Mukkoottukal—came together at Manjalumoodu Junction, where the seventh station was observed in common. I delivered the Good Friday message at the junction. I extend my sincere thanks to Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal and the other Fathers for their dedicated efforts in organizing the entire liturgical celebration with devotion and care. It was truly a day of solemn reflection and deep spiritual contemplation for all who gathered.

Easter Holy Qurbana at Anayadi Parish: The culmination of the Holy Week is marked by the grand Easter Vigil, an occasion that encapsulates the very essence of our faith and testimony: “The Lord is Risen indeed”. Across all parishes, the Easter Holy Qurbana was celebrated on the night of 19 April 2025, or on the early morning of 20 April 2025. On 19 April I celebrated the Easter Vigil Holy Qurbana at St. George Church, Anayadi. The Holy Qurbana began at 10.45 pm during which Solemn Holy Communion was administered to children. Witnessing the faithful take part in the celebration with enthusiasm was a truly humbling experience, and I extend my gratitude to Fr. Vinu D Joseph for preparing the people to attend the Easter with such deep devotion. Along with the Easter celebration, the Parish Feast also began.

Pope Francis is called to his heavenly abode: We received the sad news that His Holiness Pope Francis was called to his heavenly abode at the age of 88 on 21 April 2025. The funeral Mass of our beloved Holy Father Pope Francis was celebrated on 26 April 2025, Saturday on the parvis of St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome. Following the Requiem Mass, his mortal remains were taken to the interred in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, Rome. We all followed the entire ceremony in live telecast through media. In the light of this momentous and sorrowful events and taking into account the directions given by the Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church, in all the parishes of our diocese we celebrated Holy Qurbana and prayer for the faithful departed, invoking the mercy of God upon the soul of our late Supreme Pontiff. All our institutions remained closed on the day of funeral and we observed nine days of mourning avoiding all celebrations until 29 April 2025. As we render thanks to God for the gift of Pope Francis, let us implore the Holy Spirit to guide the forthcoming Conclave called to be held on 7 May 2025, that a worthy successor be chosen to lead the Universal Church in truth and holiness.

Major Seminarians’ work camp at Nankuneri: This year’s work camp for major seminarians was held at Nankuneri in the Tirunelveli mission from 21 to 25 April 2025. Twelve brothers, including three deacons, arrived at Nankuneri on Monday morning and immediately began their work. The entire camp was thoughtfully organized by Fr. Tobin Alapurackal. During the camp, the brothers helped clean Nirmala Home, a residence for destitute women currently under construction, and also planted vegetables on the

surrounding land. Their accommodation was arranged in a rented house located near the Nirmala Home. Considering the high temperatures, work activities were scheduled during the morning and evening hours, while the rest of the time was devoted to preparing songs for the upcoming VPV programme. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the Fathers who visited and encouraged the brothers during the camp. A special word of thanks goes to Fr. Tobin Alapurackal for his excellent coordination and leadership throughout the programme.

VPV Training at Padanthalumoodu: On 26 April 2025 a VPV training course for catechism teachers was held at Parish Auditorium, Padanthalumoodu. Following the inaugural prayer, the teachers were divided into four groups, and classes were conducted to provide effective tips for conducting VPV sessions. Mr. Selvakumar, Mr. Vijayarajan, Mr. Shonic Reegan, and Mr. Vincent Raj facilitated these sessions. Our major seminarians animated the teachers by teaching action songs and games. Over 150 teachers participated in the programme, which concluded by 4:00 pm with a remembrance prayer and office for the dead for Pope Francis presided by Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan. I express my gratitude to the director, Fr. Abilash Xavier, and the catechetical team for conducting the course efficiently.

Vocation Orientation Camp at Soosaipuram: On 26 April 2025, an orientation programme for boys and girls from 8th to 12th standard was held at Soosaipuram Forane Church. The camp started at 9:00 am and ended at 3:30 pm. Classes were led by Fr. Mijo Sebastian, and Fr. George Kandathil had personal interactions with the students. A total of 47 students, both boys and girls, participated in the camp. SABS and FCC sisters shared about their way of life and their service in the diocese, encouraging the girls. The camp also included games and fun activities. I express my gratitude to Fr. George Kandathil, the Vocation Director and Fr. Shijo, the forane vocation promoter for organizing the camp to seed the germs of vocation in the hearts of the children.

Meeting of Bishops at Holy Land: I attended a meeting of Bishops (Convivence) at the Domus Galilaeae on the Mount of Beatitudes from April 21 to 28, 2025 organized by the Neocatechumenal Way, Rome. More than 36 bishops from various nationalities participated in this meeting. During the gathering, we had the opportunity to visit the sacred sites of Our Lord in the Holy Land. This visit remains as my Christ Jubilee pilgrimage on behalf of the priests, religious, and faithful of the diocese. I remembered all your intentions and prayer requests in the Holy City and thank you for your prayers as well.

Priestly Ordination of Dn. Sunil Antony: Every priest is a cherished blessing to the Church, and we have ample reason to rejoice and offer gratitude to God for the gift of a new priest. On 30 April 2025 at Devamatha Church, Deacon Sunil Antony was ordained as a priest. The profound homily delivered by Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, deeply touched the hearts of all those who were present. Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan was the archdeacon for the Ordination ceremony. As an eparchy, we extend a warm welcome to Rev. Fr. Sunil Antony, praying that he may receive God's choicest blessings in his pastoral ministry. I thank Fr. Sajan Nettaponghu, the Parish Priest of Killiyoor for the exceptional organization for the Ordination.

INFORMATION

- **Rev. Fr. George Thevalakkara CMI (88)** was called to eternal abode on 03 April 2025. The funeral service was held on 07 April 2025 at Sacred Heart Monastery Church, Chethipuzha. Fr. George was an acting Superior in Kaliyal Ashram in 6 months during the years 1980-1981. Let us thank God for his service in our diocese and pray that the Risen Lord may grant him eternal joy.
- **Pastoral Visit to St. Maria Goretti Church, Athencode** was conducted on 06 April 2025.
- **A pilgrimage to the Christ Jubilee Year Pilgrim Centres of the Diocese** was organized by the Bishop's House Community on 12 April 2025. The pilgrimage began at Holy Cross Pilgrim Church, Malaicode, where we celebrated the Holy Qurbana. From there, we proceeded to St. George Shrine

Church, Munchirai, where we recited the Way of the Cross, and the pilgrimage concluded at St. Alphonsa Shrine Church, Nagercoil, with an hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. All the staff and members of the Bishop's House Community participated in the pilgrimage. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Fathers of the respective pilgrim centres for their warm and cordial welcome.

- **Rev. Fr. Sebastian Pinel CMI (85)** was called to eternal abode on 21 April 2025. The funeral service was held on 22 April 2025 at St. Joseph's Monastery Church, Mannanam. Fr. Sebastian was the Parish Priest in Kaliyal Parish during the years 1993-1994. During this period he also served in Penu, Netta, Muzhucode and Pallikonam. Let us thank God for his service in our diocese and pray that the Risen Lord may grant him eternal joy.
- **In remembrance of Rev. Sr. Alice Vigi CMC**, the Holy Qurbana was celebrated at Chavara Provincial House, Thuckalay on 28 April 2025 presided by Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil.
- **Good Friday Collection:** Kindly submit the Good Friday collection for the up-keep of the Holy Land to the Eparchial Procurator at the earliest.
- **Undiyal Collections:** Kindly submit the Lenten Undiyal collection in support of the Tirunelveli mission to the Eparchial Procurator at the earliest.
- **Bro. Akshey** who has completed successfully his minor seminary formation, will be sent to Mary Matha Major Seminary, Trissur for philosophical studies.
- **Brothers** who have completed the regency ministry will be sent to the following seminaries for theological studies: Bro. Sibin CK to Ruhailaya Major Seminary, Ujjain, Bro. Antony Raj to St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Aluva and Bro. Melvin to Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee.
- **VPV in Parishes:** As our students are enjoying their summer vacation, with the help of the Catechetical Department of our Diocese, the VPV (*Visuvasa Paiyrchi Vizha*) classes have begun in all our parishes. We need to encourage our children to attend the classes so that they can learn much about our Catholic Faith during these days of intensive catechesis. Let's make use of this golden opportunity and give Jesus to our children. Our young candidates for the priesthood, who are now on holiday from their respective seminaries, are in various parishes our diocese helping the fathers to organise VPV classes. Let's continue to pray and promote priestly and religious vocations.
- **Transfers 2025:** I have made some transfers this year and, in these days, I am communicating with the concerned persons. The transfers will take effect from 24 May 2025 unless otherwise indicated. Kindly follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) already in place in our Diocese when the priests are transferred. I am deeply grateful to the Fathers who have served our people with unwavering commitment in the past years and will now be moving to new places of ministry.
- **Feast of St. George:** St. George is not only my own patron but also the second patron of the Diocese. Although I was absent from the Eparchy on April 24, 2025, I was touched to receive warm greetings and heartfelt prayers through phone calls and WhatsApp. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your kind wishes and prayers. Similarly, on my birthday on April 14th, it was wonderful to receive your kind wishes and prayers, and I am deeply grateful for the love and support shown by everyone. Thank you so much.

FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

01 May	-	Pastoral Council
03 May	-	Priestly Ordination of Dn. Anoop Thathappally
04 May	-	Consecration of St. Michael's Church, Thettivilai
05 May	-	Priests Conference at Sangamam
08 May	-	Vestition & First Profession at Marappady
10 May	-	Christ Jubilee celebration of Nurses at Kalluvilai
11 May	-	Christ Jubilee celebration of Vocations
12 May	-	Vocation camp at Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal

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| 13 May | - | Vestition & First Profession at CMC Thuckalay |
| 30 May | - | Christ Jubilee celebration of Teachers |
| 31 May | - | Christ Jubilee celebration of Catechists |

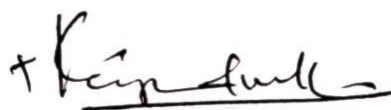
Priests' Conference
Place: Sangamam
Dates: 05 May 2025
Time: 09.30 am – 01.00 pm

CONCLUSION

We have just celebrated the Solemnity of the Resurrection of Jesus, reliving his passion and death. The Easter season focuses on the new life that Christ brings, with liturgical readings centred on Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and the early church's growth. Thus, there is a sustained period of celebration after Lent. The month of May is also a special time for us to pay homage to our Blessed Mother Mary. She has a unique role in salvation history as the Mother of God, conceived without Sin, who by her own free will agreed to bring the "Word made flesh" (John 1:14), our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, into the world. Mary is prefigured as the one who would crush the head of the serpent in Genesis 3:15 through her Divine Son. Still, she in no way overshadows him, nor would she ever wish to! Her life in the Gospel years was one of service and great devotion to Jesus, from the cave in Bethlehem where she gave birth to him, to Calvary in Jerusalem where she stood by his cross in his Crucifixion, from Crib to Cross, as it were.

During this month, in the churches and individual homes, the most affectionate and fervent homage of prayers and devotions from the hearts of Christians are raised to Mary. Let us join the entire Catholic world in offering special presents to Our Blessed Mother during this month of May. Through pilgrimages, visits to churches dedicated to her, offering little sacrifices in her honour, attentive recitation of the rosary, and many other ways, we can spend this month fruitfully in her company. Let us also encourage our people to come closer to our Blessed Mother by inculcating various Marian devotions!

With my prayers and blessings,
 Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**
 Bishop of Thuckalay

