



# Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

**Bishop George Rajendran sdb**

**Diocese of Thuckalay**

Bishop's House, P B No: 12, Thuckalay PO,  
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31 May 2026

Dear Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

June offers us two of the most luminous solemnities in the Church's calendar: the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Together, these feasts reveal the inner life of our faith and summon us — as pastors, presbyters, and servants of God's people — to a deeper conversion of heart. June is therefore not merely a liturgical month; it is a school of love, an invitation to renewed pastoral fervour, and a call to shepherd our people with the very tenderness of the Heart of Christ.

## **The Sacred Heart: The Foundation of Priestly Life**

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is not a pious addition to the Gospel — it is the very centre of the Good News. When the soldier pierced the side of Jesus on the Cross and blood and water flowed forth (Jn 19:34), the Fathers of the Church saw in this the birth of the Church and the outpouring of all grace. From this open Heart, the sacraments flow, love is born anew, and mission finds its source. For us who are ordained ministers of those sacraments, this mystery is not remote theology but the daily ground of our lives. Each morning, the priest stands at the altar, precisely at this wound in the side of Christ, drawing forth for the people what Christ poured out on Calvary.

Pope Pius XI, in *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928), described this devotion as “the foundation of Christian perfection and the summary of all religion.” Pope Francis, in *Dilxit Nos* (2024), has renewed its urgency, reminding us that the Heart of Christ is a living reality — the Heart of the Son of God who loved us and gave himself up for us (Gal 2:20). Notably, Pope Francis addresses this encyclical with particular force to priests, warning against the danger of a ministry that has become “mere function, activism, or performance.” The remedy he proposes is a return to the Heart: “Only if the Lord's love becomes the animating centre of our activity can we be pastors and not functionaries, shepherds and not managers of the sacred.” This is the irreplaceable vocation of June for every priest of the Eparchy of Thuckalay.

St John Eudes, the great apostle of the Sacred Heart, taught that ordination configures the priest to the Heart of Christ in a unique and permanent way. To receive Holy Orders is to receive the mission to make the love of Christ's Heart present and active in the world. Every absolution pronounced in the confessional, every anointing administered at a deathbed, every homily preached from a pulpit, every blessing given over a troubled soul — each of these acts is the Heart of Jesus continuing to love through human hands and human lips. The awareness of this dignity, when sustained and deepened in prayer, preserves the priest from the great dangers of his state: cynicism, routine, spiritual emptiness, and self-centredness.

St Margaret Mary Alacoque, to whom Christ revealed the devotion at Paray-le-Monial, heard the Lord say: “I need hearts that are generous and on fire to make reparation for the coldness and ingratitude of men.” These words are addressed with special urgency to priests. Reparation is not merely an act of piety; it is a

prophetic rejection of spiritual mediocrity and a proclamation that love is stronger than sin. In an age when the priestly heart is assailed by distraction, activism, and discouragement — when pastoral demands multiply, and the inner life quietly contracts — the Sacred Heart is both our diagnosis and our cure. It diagnoses the problem: the heart has grown cold and has lost its first love (Rev 2:4). And it provides the cure: return to the Heart, dwell there, and let its warmth rekindle what the years have cooled.

The Sacred Heart is also, pre-eminently, the heart of the Good Shepherd who goes out in search of the one who is lost (Lk 15:4). This image of the priesthood has been most consistently proposed by the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent magisterium. The Council's Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* places pastoral charity at the centre of priestly identity: "Pastoral charity ... flows especially from the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is therefore the centre and root of the whole priestly life." The Eucharist is itself the sacrament of the open Heart: it is Christ giving himself entirely, holding nothing back, pouring out every drop. The priest who celebrates the Eucharist each day with recollection and faith is replenished at the very source of pastoral love. He goes forth from the altar not depleted but filled; not diminished but renewed; not performing a role but living his identity.

As priests of the Syro-Malabar tradition, we inherit a rich patrimony of devotion to the Sacred Heart, which has shaped the liturgical and spiritual life of our forebears. Since the great missionary renewal of the nineteenth century, our Church has embraced this devotion as a cornerstone of priestly piety and parish renewal. The numerous Sacred Heart parishes, shrines, and institutions that dot our landscape are not mere historical artefacts; they are calls to fidelity. May this June be an occasion for each of us to rediscover, personally and pastorally, the centrality of the Sacred Heart in our priestly vocation!

### **The Immaculate Heart of Mary: Model and Mother of the Priest**

The day after the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, the Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary — a proximity rich in meaning, for the Mother's Heart is always close to the Son's Heart. The theological relationship between these two Hearts is not incidental but constitutive. Mary's Heart is Immaculate precisely because it is wholly ordered to Christ: conceived without sin, it was prepared from the first moment of her existence to be the vessel and school of God's love. Her Immaculate Heart is the human response most perfectly conformed to the Sacred Heart of her Son.

For the priest, Mary's Immaculate Heart is first and foremost a model of interior life. She pondered God's action in her heart (Lk 2:19, 51), allowing the Word to take flesh in her life before proclaiming it to others. This is the indispensable sequence of priestly ministry: first contemplation, then proclamation. The priest who does not ponder — who rushes from task to task without the interior pause in which God's word is received, digested, and owned — will eventually find his preaching hollow, his counsel shallow, and his Masses mechanical. Mary's heart teaches the priest the primacy of listening, the fruitfulness of silence, and the necessity of dwelling with the mystery before attempting to transmit it.

She stood at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:25) as the sword foretold by Simeon pierced her soul (Lk 2:35). Her Immaculate Heart is not one spared from suffering but entirely surrendered to God, and therefore capable of bearing all suffering with love. This is a word the priest needs to hear and re-hear. Priestly life is not immune to pain: the pain of misunderstanding, pastoral failure, loneliness, the weight of others' sins carried in the confessional, and the pain of watching the flock scatter and not knowing how to gather them. Mary does not offer the priest an escape from this suffering; she offers him a way to live it. Her way is surrender: "Let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). The priest who has learnt to surrender his pastoral defeats, his personal wounds, and his unanswered prayers to the Immaculate Heart will find that, in God's mysterious economy, they become the most fruitful hours of his ministry.

The Immaculate Heart is also the heart of the intercessor. Throughout salvation history, Mary prays for us and with us. At Cana, she noticed what others had not yet perceived — that the wine had run out (Jn 2:3) — and brought it to Christ without fuss or drama, with the quiet confidence of one who knows her Son’s Heart. This is her perpetual ministry: she sees the hidden poverty of her children and presents it to the Sacred Heart. For the priest, who carries the spiritual poverty of his entire parish before the Lord, this maternal intercession is not a pious sentiment but a practical necessity. He is never alone at the altar; the Mother of the Church stands with him, presenting to Christ the needs he himself cannot fully articulate.

Our Syro-Malabar Church has always honoured Mary with singular devotion. The ancient Taksa prayer, the solemn celebration of Marian feasts in our parishes, and the deep Marian piety of the Kerala Catholic tradition testify to a faith that is inseparable from Christ and from Mary. This heritage is not merely cultural; it is theological. For the priest of the Syro-Malabar Church, Marian devotion is a constitutive element of his spiritual identity, not an optional supplement. To honour the Immaculate Heart is to stand in the tradition of the saints and doctors who have consistently affirmed that the path to the Sacred Heart passes most surely through the Mother’s Heart.

The great saints of priestly spirituality — St John Vianney, St Philip Neri, St Peter Julian Eymard — were, without exception, men of deep Marian devotion. St John Vianney, whose feast we celebrate on 4 August and who is the patron of parish priests, attributed the fruitfulness of his ministry entirely to Our Lady. His famous saying captures the priestly logic of the two Hearts perfectly: “To Jesus through Mary” is not merely a formula of personal piety; it is a description of the structure of redemption itself. Christ came to us through Mary; grace returns to Christ through Mary. The priest who lives in this mystery — who brings his people to Christ through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart — is one who has understood the deepest grammar of his vocation.

Let us, this June, entrust our Eparchy — our parishes, priests and deacons in active ministry, our seminarians, our religious communities, the sick and the elderly, the young people in our care, and the families we serve — to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. May her intercession secure for us renewed fidelity, apostolic courage, and joyful charity in our service to the people of God in the Eparchy of Thuckalay!

Dear Brother Priests, devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart is not a nostalgic spirituality but a fiery one. It is a call to love as Jesus loved — without measure or reserve. Above all, it is a call addressed to us who stand each day at the altar, who speak in the name of Christ, who absolve sinners in his name, and who are entrusted with souls redeemed by his Blood. A priest who is a man of the Sacred Heart and a son of the Immaculate Heart will not need to manufacture zeal or simulate compassion: it will flow from him as naturally as blood and water flowed from the pierced side on Calvary. Let us ask, this June, for the grace to be such priests — not efficient managers of the sacred but living witnesses to the love that will not let us go.

## **NEWS AND EVENTS**

**Pastoral Council at Sangamam:** The fifth meeting of the Seventh Pastoral Council was held at Sangamam on 01 May 2026. The inaugural session began at 9:45 AM with a prayer led by Fr. Mijo Puthenpurackal. Mrs. Baby Juliet Saroja, one of the council members, welcomed everyone, and Mr. Shonic Regan, the Joint Secretary, presented the minutes of the previous meeting. I presided over the meeting. During the introductory session, Fr. Justin Cheruvilil introduced a book titled *Indeevaram*, and its author, Mr. John Kumari Thozhan, was formally honoured with a traditional shawl. In my presidential and introductory address, I emphasized that true evangelization is rooted in sharing Christ’s love through action, seeking out

the marginalized as taught by Pope Francis, and relying on the Holy Spirit. This was followed by a keynote address from Rev. Fr. Darbello Christudas, the resource person of the day, on the title ‘Life of Faith and Sharing’, where he utilized Vatican II documents and scripture to outline the three-fold purpose of the pastoral council: to investigate, reflect, and propose practical solutions for the good of the diocese.

Focusing on strengthening faith in the parishes, the council members engaged in a productive group discussion and recommended prioritizing daily family prayer, encouraging parents to live as exemplary role models, nurturing the faith of catechism students, and actively motivating youth to participate in pious associations. The meeting then transitioned into a general Q&A session for open community discussion, followed by my concluding remarks. Official announcements and future directions were presented by the Director, Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathyanesan, and the session officially concluded with vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Augustine. I express my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, the former Director, and his team for their excellent coordination in organizing this fifth meeting of the Seventh Pastoral Council.

**Vocation Camp at Mukkoottukal:** The Vocation Department organized a three-day vocation camp on 5 – 7 May 2026 at St. Mary’s Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal. Six candidates participated in this camp, which gave them a closer experience of seminary life through prayer, sharing, and guidance. I met the candidates personally. Vicar General Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochupampil MST and Fr. George Kandathil addressed them. Major seminarians also actively participated in the camp and assisted in the animation and guidance of the sessions. I thank Fr. George Kandathil, the former Director of vocations for organizing the camps very well.

**Advanced Media Training for Religious:** From April 26 to May 9, 2026, the Department of Media and Communication conducted an Advanced Media Training program for Religious Sisters from various congregations. In preparation for this advanced course, a three-day Basic Media Training session was also conducted from April 23 to 25, 2026. Eighteen sisters participated in the basic course, and twenty-three sisters attended the advanced course. The programme was inaugurated by the Vicar General, Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam. Training in various media skills—such as camera operation, editing, graphic design, and content creation—was provided to all participants, who engaged actively and benefited greatly. The programme was highly successful, and I presented the certificates to the participants during the concluding session. I extend my sincere thanks to Fr. Robins Kuzhikodil, Director of Pulari Communications, who organized the event exceptionally well and served as the primary resource person.

**VPV in Parishes:** Every year, we organize the *Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha* (VPV) in the month of May. This year was no exception, as the VPV was successfully conducted in various parishes from April 26, 2026, to May 10, 2026. Recognizing the profound impact of VPV on the faith formation of our children, all the Fathers collaborated wholeheartedly to ensure its seamless execution. Even in our extended mission territories the VPV was conducted with great enthusiasm and dedication. I express my heartfelt appreciation to *Narcheythinilayam* for their timely intervention in providing textbooks and facilitating training programme for the VPV. The dedication and commitment demonstrated by all the Fathers in organizing the VPV is commendable. It is through collaborative efforts like these that we can effectively contribute to the spiritual growth of our children.

**Skill Development Programme for Major Seminarians:** From May 11 to 15, 2026, an intensive one-week Skill Development Programme was conducted at Sangamam for thirteen major seminarians of our diocese. Organized under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochupampil, the then Director of Major Seminarians, this programme aimed to equip our future priests with critical practical competencies and pastoral skills essential for contemporary ministry. The comprehensive curriculum spanned diverse linguistic, ministerial, and technological disciplines. Daily sessions led by Mr. John Kumari Thozhan advanced the participants’ Tamil language proficiency in reading, writing, and public speaking. Liturgical

and spiritual formation were nourished each evening through sacred music animation and the "Vin Pathayil" prayers led by Rev. Fr. Ajin Jose. Sr. Margarita SCB initiated the programme with dynamic sessions on youth ministry and group leadership dynamics. Highlighting the Church's core mission to the marginalized, Rev. Fr. Mahesh Antony delivered a profound lecture titled "Caring for the Uncared: Acts of Mercy."

Furthermore, Sr. Jeslet CMC facilitated an invaluable three-part workshop focusing on Psycho-Spiritual Integration, guiding the seminarians to anchor their vocational growth in psychological maturity. Finally, embracing the digital frontier, a major highlight of the week was a detailed six-session course on AI-based classes, video editing, animation, and media evangelization conducted by Rev. Fr. Robins Kuzhikodil. This transformative programme has significantly enriched the personal and pastoral formation of our seminarians. I extend my profound gratitude to all the resource persons for generously imparting their expertise, and I commend Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochuparampil for his leadership and coordination in realizing this fruitful initiative for the growth of our diocese.

**SPARK 2026 at Kalluvilai:** KKSSS successfully hosted the annual Educare Residential Camp (Spark) from May 10-16, 2026, benefiting 50 students. Under the leadership of Fr. Antony Mahesh, Director of KKSSS, the camp aimed to enhance language fluency for students from Tamil Medium schools. Additionally, Educare seeks to foster skills and talents through public speaking, theatre performances, and other activities. This year's programme was expertly animated by Prof. Amal Raj and Prof. Jerome. Championing youth empowerment, the transformative event concluded with a powerful address by Fr. Antony Jose, the chancellor, inspiring the next generation of changemakers. All participants received gifts and prizes, commemorating their achievements and progress. I thank Fr. Mahesh for coordinating the entire event very well.

**Mathru Jyothis Annual Day Celebration at Thettiyode:** The Annual Day celebrations of Mathru Jyothis were held at the Asir Vidyalaya Hall in Thettiyode, on 16 May 2026 at 2:00 PM. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam presided over the function. Many priests and religious sisters were also present for the event. Around 400 mothers participated in the celebration, and over 100 mothers from 12 parishes vibrantly showcased their talents in the cultural programmes. More than 1,500 prizes for various competitions were distributed to the winners. For the past seven years, Fr. Jimmy has been the driving force behind Mathru Jyothis, bestowing a profound sense of identity upon the mothers of the Diocese. His dedicated service has united them in selfless love, unity, and an unwavering focus on eternal life. I extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Rev. Fr. Jimmy for his dedicated coordination of Family Apostolate activities, especially for organizing this memorable Annual Day celebration.

**Result of Classes X and XII Students:** The results of the Class XII and X examinations, conducted by the Tamil Nadu Education Board, were announced on May 8 and 20, 2026, respectively. I am happy to share that all our schools have achieved remarkable performance in these examinations. These excellent results are a testament to the unwavering commitment of the diocese towards providing quality education to our children. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our dedicated Fathers and Sisters who have played an integral role in nurturing and guiding our students towards academic success.

**Catechetical Seminar & Inauguration of Academic Year:** The catechetical seminar for teachers, along with the inauguration of the academic year of the Catechetical Department and Kuzhanthai Isso Iyakkam (KII), was held at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai on 23 May 2026. The seminar started at 10 am with the prayer and welcome address by Fr. Abilash Xavier. 320 teachers participated in it. The teachers were divided into four categories. The first, second, third and fourth categories were animated by Sr. Soona CMC, Mr. Antony Pradeep, Fr. Antony Jose, Fr. Christudas respectively upon the theme the role of catechists in the salvation of the soul. The seminar concluded with lunch. The inauguration of the academic year started at 02.00 pm. Rev. I presided over the meeting, During the meeting, the New Tamil text book for class XI was

published and the gathering expressed the gratitude to Fr. Anil Raj who translated the book. The newly appointed coordinator of the departments, Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, New Catechetical Director, Rev. Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil and New Director for Kulanthai Isso Iyakkam Rev. Fr. Jose Paul Purayidathilkunnel were officially announced and welcomed in the meeting. I awarded prizes those who attended Holy Qurbana regularly.

For the parish-level inauguration, the Catechetical Department provided guidelines to ensure uniformity across all parishes. The solemn ceremony includes an inaugural address by the unit director, the lighting of the lamp, the teachers' oath with lighted candles, and the blessing by the parish priest. I extend my appreciation to all the parish priests and everyone involved in diligently providing fruitful catechetical formation to our children. Their hard work and dedication play a vital role in nurturing the faith of our young ones. I wish to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude for the committed service of Fr. Abilash as the Director of the Catechetical Department over the last four years. His dedication has contributed significantly to the spiritual well-being of our children. Furthermore, through his various initiatives, the Catechetical Department has become one of the most vibrant departments in our Diocese. Likewise, I thank Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil for his dedicated ministry as the Eparchial Director of Kuzhanthai Iso Iyakkam (KII) over the last three years, specifically for animating the children and organizing new faith-formative programs for them. I wish God's abundant blessings upon the newly appointed directors of these departments.

**Transfers 2026:** I have made some transfers this year, which came into effect on May 24, 2026, unless otherwise indicated. I would like to express my gratitude to the Fathers who have served our people with commitment throughout the years and have now transferred to their new ministry places. May they continue to be blessed abundantly by God in their new ministry.

**Priests' Conference:** The Priests' Conference for the month of May was held at Sangamam on 26 May 2026. The gathering began with one hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, led by Fr. Lijo Thekkel. The conference officially commenced at 11:15 AM, coordinated by the Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, and presided over by me. Following the prayer, led by Fr. Anoop Thathappally, Rev. Fr. Antony Jose extended a warm welcome to all. The newly appointed Presbyterium Secretary Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil presented the minutes of the previous Priests' Conference, which were then approved by the assembly. Then the presbyterium warmly welcomed the newcomers to the diocese: Fr. Kurian Karuthedam OSB, Fr. Joseph Muthuplackal MST, Fr. Antony Elamtottam CMI, Fr. Bino Pattarkkalam CMI, Fr. Jose Konatt CMI, Fr. Renny Kalathil CMI and Fr. Relin Joseph MCBS. I extended a heartfelt welcome to each of them.

Following the first session, time was allotted for the directors of various departments to share updates and important information related to their respective ministries. During the zero hour, two topics were discussed: first, the health insurance coverage for priests, and second, the construction of a new Priest Home. The Executive Body of the TPWA was entrusted with studying various insurance policies to choose the best one. Regarding the Priest Home, it was decided that it will be constructed at Kozhipporvilai, and a team was formed to conduct a further feasibility study. In my presidential address, I focused mainly on the role of the newly appointed coordinator of departments, as well as the roles of the presbyterium and different canonical bodies within the diocese, emphasizing their competence in handling and resolving pastoral issues. The meeting concluded at 1:45 PM with a vote of thanks delivered by Fr. Prince Cherippanattu, followed by my final blessing. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the Fathers for their active participation, valuable insights, and meaningful contributions, which ensured the success of the conference.

**Called to Eternal Rest: Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil:** With profound sadness, we received the unfortunate news of the passing of our former Vicar General and great missionary, Rev. Fr. Thomas

Powathuparmpil has been called to his eternal reward. He passed away peacefully on Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 5:00 AM at St. Thomas Hospital in Chethipuzha, Kerala, at the age of 65. Fr. Thomas was a pillar of our Diocese—a dedicated pastor, a visionary educator, and a compassionate administrator. For decades, his life was completely poured out in service to God and His people. As we mourn his absence, we simultaneously celebrate a beautifully lived life of priesthood that transformed communities, built institutions, and touched thousands of hearts.

Fr. Thomas was born on March 15, 1961, in Kooropada, Kottayam, Kerala. Answering the divine call to the priesthood, he underwent his seminary formation and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Changanacherry on December 31, 1988. He began his priestly ministry as the Assistant Parish Priest at Nedumkunnam Forane (1989–1990). Recognizing his pastoral zeal, he was sent to serve in Kanyakumari Mission as Assistant at Nithravilai, Vayalinkarai, and Christurajapuram and Kattathurai, laying a strong spiritual foundation in these communities. Fr. Thomas’s most enduring pastoral legacy was forged during his twenty-six years (1993–2019) serving as Parish Priest in St. Alphonsa Shrine Church, Nagercoil. Concurrently, he served as the Correspondent of St. Alphonsa Matric Higher Secondary School in Nagercoil, where he shaped the futures of generations of students with his wise guidance and fatherly care. Alphonsa School and Shrine became synonym of Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil. As the Diocese grew, so did the administrative responsibilities entrusted to him. He served as the Vicar General of our diocese from 2019 to 2025 and along with it served in numerous key administrative roles: Education Commission Director, Manager of English Medium Schools and St. Alphonsa College, Spiritual Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and President of the Kanyakumari Social Service Society. After a lifetime of exhausting administrative and pastoral work, he spent his final year in medical treatment staying at different places: Kooroppada, Nagercoil, Chethipuzha before being called home by the Heavenly Father. Below is given my pastoral observation and tribute in Grateful Remembrance of Our Beloved Missionary, Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil!

### **In Loving Memory: Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil**

*“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.” (Matthew 25:21)*

It is with profound sadness, yet with the firm hope of the Resurrection, that the Diocese of Thuckalay announces the passing of our beloved Fr. Thomas Pawathuparampil—a priest of profound holiness, deep piety, and unwavering dedication.

#### **Formed in Faith**

Fr. Thomas’s life was rooted in the traditions of a devout Catholic family, where his vocation was nurtured by daily participation in the Holy Qurbana and parish life. He did not merely offer gifts to God; he offered his entire self as a living sacrifice. As St. Paul wrote, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20). This total surrender defined his entire ministry.

#### **A Missionary Heart**

Shortly after his ordination, though he served his home state of Kerala for a year, he felt the divine call to the missions. He volunteered for foreign lands, embracing unknown cultures

and languages. He eventually made the Tamil people his own, loving them with the heart of a true shepherd. His growth in the Lord was steadfast, as he served faithfully as an assistant parish priest in Nithravilai and Christurajapuram, and later as the director of Karunai Illam—a haven he built to serve underprivileged children.

### **A Builder and Shepherd**

Fr. Thomas was an educationalist who possessed the vision to build schools and colleges from the grassroots, transforming them into premier institutions in the diocese and state. He led not by command, but by example. His physical presence and active accompaniment inspired his co-workers to perform better, as he believed in forming strong, united teams for the mission. He approached every task, no matter how small, with 100% commitment, always seeking the glory of God rather than his own.

### **A Man of Prayer and Devotion**

The secret to his success was his profound life of prayer. He spent hours before the Blessed Sacrament, not in silence, but in active, passionate conversation with God—often raising his hands in praise. His favorite prayers, Psalms 23 and 27, were the anchors of his soul. His devotion to the Rosary and our Blessed Mother gave him the vision and hope that sustained him through every challenge.

As a true son of the Syro-Malabar Church, he celebrated the Holy Qurbana with unmatched devotion, believing deeply that his love for Jesus was inseparable from his love for the Church. He was a priest who listened to the cry of the poor, animating the people of God with a generous and people-oriented heart.

### **A Final Farewell**

Fr. Thomas was a "praying priest" until the end. As he returns to the Father, we celebrate a life that reflected the love of Jesus so beautifully. *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"* (Psalm 23:1). We entrust his soul to the Almighty, confident that the one who served the people of God so faithfully has now received the crown of righteousness.

*May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*

## **INFORMATION**

- **Sr. Alice Kattakkayam SABS (78)** was called to eternal rest on 03 May 2026. As a religious sister, she served in our diocese for almost 21 years. The funeral service took place on 05 May 2026 at 02:30 pm at St. Shanthal SABS Provincial House, Soosaipuram. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to the SABS Sisters. Let us thank God for her selfless service in our diocese and pray that the Merciful Lord may grant her eternal joy.
- **Bro. Albin Vettukattil** who has completed the regency ministry received cassock on 06 May 2026 at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal.

- **Sr. Lizbeth FCC**, who served as Principal at St. Alphonsa Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Nagercoil, has been transferred on 01 May 2026. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to her for her selfless contributions to our diocese. In her place Sr. Maria Arul Paulia is appointed as principal. We wish her God's grace and blessings in the new ministry.
- **My Europe Visit:** As planned and already informed to you, I have been visiting Europe from 08 - 21 May 2026. The main purpose of my visit was to attend the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of L'Œuvre d'Orient, one of the major funding agencies for the eastern churches with its central office at Paris. It was a meaningful occasion to meet and spend time with our priests who are working or studying in Europe. I could spend time with Fr. Josy Puthenpurackal, Fr. Alex Puthettu, Fr. Jinu Thekkethala, Fr. John Paul, and Bro. Jubin. I also visited the sisters from our diocese who are serving in different parts of Europe. Above all, I had the special blessing of meeting the Holy Father — a truly grace-filled moment for me and for our diocese. I sincerely thank you for your prayers during these days of travel. A special word of gratitude goes to our Vicar General for overseeing the general administration of the diocese in my absence.
- **Last respects to Mr. Joseph Kuruvila (60):** It is with profound sorrow that we received the sad news of the sudden passing of Mr. Joseph Kuruvila, the beloved father of Fr. Sanjo Thenepackal, on 08 May 2026. This has been a deeply painful and challenging time for Fr. Sanjo 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. Sanjo, and assured him of our prayers and fraternal support. The funeral service of Mr. Kuruvila was held on 09 May 2026 at 01:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Church, Kallupalam. In my absence, Fr. Vicar General presided over the liturgy, and Fr. Aby Poovathummoottil delivered the funeral homily. 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. Kuruvila's soul and to offer their presence and support to Fr. Sanjo. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the Fathers and Sisters who visited Fr. Sanjo's family during those days. May the Lord, in His infinite mercy, grant eternal rest to Mr. Joseph Kuruvila and comfort to the grieving family.
- **Sr. Lizy Sebastian Vettukallel SDS (65)** was called to eternal rest on 18 May 2026. Sr. Lizy was a native of St. Mary's Church, Kanjiyar in the diocese of Kanjirappally. As a religious sister, she served in our diocese at Manjalumoodu (1994) and Karode (2025-2026). The funeral service took place on 19 May 2026 at 02:00 pm at the SDS Convent Chapel, Manjalumoodu. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to the SDS Sisters. Let us thank God for her selfless service in our diocese and pray that the Merciful Lord may grant her eternal joy.
- **Sr. Luis Mary Kodakkallil SDS (83)** was called to eternal rest on 18 May 2026. Sr. Luis was a native of Kavakad Parish in the diocese of Kothamangalam. As a religious sister, she served in our diocese almost 12 years at: Manjalumoodu (1981 - 1991; 2026) and Karode (1994-1995). The funeral service took place on 19 May 2026 at 02:00 pm at the SDS Convent Chapel, Manjalumoodu. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to the SDS Sisters. Let us thank God for her selfless service in our diocese and pray that the Merciful Lord may grant her eternal joy.
- **The appointments** made after publishing the transfer list 2026 on 05 May 2026:  
**Rev. Fr. Tony Kallamparambil** is appointed as Assistant Parish Priest at St. Mary's Basilica, Chabakkulam, Changanacherry Archdiocese with effect from 26 May 2026.  
**Rev. Fr. Bibin Vettakonam** is appointed as Assistant Parish Priest at St. Francis Assisi Church, Poonthoppu, Changanacherry Archdiocese with effect from 26 May 2026.
- **Regents:** This year we have three brothers for regency: Bro. Bibin Xavier will begin his regency ministry at Bishop's House, Thuckalay; Bro. Vincilin Xavier at Sangamam and Bro. Tebin at Padanthalumoodu. I wish them all the best and pray that the good Lord may strengthen them in their pastoral ministries!
- **Bro. Josbin Mathew** as a degree student will be residing at Holy Cross Church, Malaicode for his studies.

- **Bro. Alan Mathew** will continue his come and see programme with mission experience at Virudhunagar Mission.
- **Sr. Rosmy FDSHJ**, who served in Snehavilla, Moolamattam has been transferred on 19 May 2026. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to her for her selfless contributions to our diocese. In her place Sr. Mary FDSHJ is joined to the Snehavilla Community for service on 30 May 2026. We wish them God’s grace and blessings in their new ministry.
- **Final Profession Celebration** of Sr. Sam Priya FCC, Sr. Anuja FCC, Sr. Sophia Jose FCC and Sr. Shiny Alphonsa FCC were held on 22 May 2026 along with Holy Qurbana at FCC San Jose Province, Azhakiyamandapam.
- **A committee** was formed with following members in the Priests’ Conference held on 26 May 2026 to study and propose suggestions for the construction of the new Priest Home at Kozhipporvilai: Fr. Justin Cheruvelil (convener), Fr. Anil Raj, Fr. Vinu D Joseph, Fr. Antony Jose, Fr. Christudas, Fr. Printo Kurias and Fr. Tobin Alappurackal.
- **Funeral Ceremony of Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil**: The mortal remains of Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil will be brought to Thuckalay, his longtime mission base to allow the faithful to bid farewell, arriving at St. Alphonsa Shrine Church, Nagercoil, on Monday, June 1, 2026, around 7:00 AM. The public homage will be open from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM, with the Solemn Holy Qurbana scheduled for 10:30 AM. Fr. Thomas will then be laid to rest in his native soil during the Solemn Funeral Services on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 1:00 PM at Holy Cross Church, Kooropada, Kottayam, in the Archdiocese of Changanacherry. Fathers and Sisters who require collective transportation facilities to travel from the diocese to the funeral venue in Kerala are kindly requested to contact Fr. Subin Puthenpuraikal to confirm your arrangements. I especially urge the parishioners of Nagercoil and all the mission parishes where Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil faithfully served to attend the funeral services in large numbers, that we may gather to pray for the repose of his noble soul and to honour his cherished memory. May the Lord grant His faithful servant eternal rest, and may perpetual light shine upon him.

### **FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS**

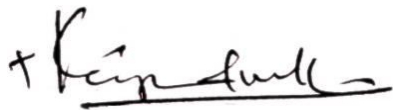
01 June	-	Funeral Holy Qurbana at Nagercoil
02 June	-	Funeral Service of Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil at Kooroppada
15 June	-	Interdepartmental Meeting
28 June	-	Animation Programme for Kaikars and Accountants
30 June	-	Meeting of Forane Vicars

### **CONCLUSION**

As missionary work across our Eparchy takes shape, with the help of missionaries from other Eparchies and Congregations, let us recognise the central role of evangelisation in the Church. It is not an optional add-on. It is at the heart of what it means to be Church. Yet, despite this clear mandate, we may still be tempted to respond to this call to evangelisation by saying that “Catholics evangelise with how they live their lives, not by our words.” We may even quote the words attributed to St Francis of Assisi: “Preach the gospel at all times; use words if necessary.” But this does not mean we can choose between proclaiming and living the Gospel as if they accomplish the same thing. Paul VI went on to explain in *Evangelii nuntiandi* the important interplay between word and witness: “The Good News proclaimed by the witness

of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed.” Let us be inspired by these words of the saintly Pope and re-commit ourselves to the task of spreading the message of Christ in season and out of season!

With my prayers and blessings,  
Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**  
Bishop of Thuckalay

