



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/173/2025

31 August 2025

Dear Rev. Fathers,

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

As shepherds of God's people in this digital age, we must carefully evaluate how emerging technologies can support our pastoral mission while remaining true to the Gospel. Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges for pastoral ministry. As Scripture reminds us, "Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thes 5:21).

The Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes* reminds us that "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (GS 4). AI is one such significant sign requiring careful pastoral discernment. Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti*, discusses technology as potentially enhancing "the quality of human life" while warning it can also "limit and condition freedom" (FT 105).

We encounter AI daily through smartphones, social media, and digital services. As pastors, we must understand these tools not merely as external phenomena but as instruments that can either support or impede genuine human growth central to our mission. The Compendium of Social Doctrine reminds us that "technological development must be guided by respect for human dignity" (CSDC 458).

Understanding Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks usually requiring human intelligence: learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and language understanding. These systems analyse vast amounts of data, generate human-like text, translate languages, and help with communication and decision-making. Modern AI, especially large language models, show impressive abilities in understanding context and producing coherent responses.

However, we must understand AI's fundamental nature and limitations. These systems operate through statistical patterns and mathematical algorithms, not genuine understanding or consciousness. They lack the divine spark of human consciousness, capacity for authentic love, moral reasoning, spiritual experience, and ability to encounter the transcendent. As the Catechism teaches, humans are created "in the image of God" (CCC 1702), possessing dignity no machine can replicate.

AI systems mirror the intentions, biases, and limitations of their creators and training data. They can reinforce inequalities, reflect secular worldviews contradicting Catholic teaching, and operate without considering the supernatural dimension of human existence. Recognising these limitations is vital for responsible pastoral application.

Opportunities in Pastoral Ministry

Enhanced Catechetical Preparation: AI tools can greatly assist in creating catechetical materials, homilies, and educational content. These systems excel at research, aiding in gathering Biblical passages, patristic sources, and theological insights from Catholic tradition. When preparing homilies, AI can compile relevant commentaries from Church Fathers, papal documents, and contemporary theology, providing a comprehensive background for prayerful reflection.

AI can create age-appropriate explanations of complex theological ideas for different audiences, generate discussion questions, suggest practical Gospel applications, and assist in organising catechetical content pedagogically. However, all material must be carefully checked against authentic Catholic teaching and complemented with personal prayer and study of authoritative sources.

Multilingual Ministry and Cultural Sensitivity: In our diverse Eparchy, where Malayalam, Tamil, and English are spoken, AI translation tools can assist with basic communication and help make pastoral resources accessible across linguistic barriers. These tools can translate pastoral letters, prayer resources, catechetical materials, and announcements, ensuring all members of the community have access to important parish information.

AI can assist in understanding cultural nuances when ministering to diverse families, especially in marriage preparation for couples from different backgrounds. It can help develop culturally appropriate liturgical materials that honour diversity while upholding doctrinal integrity—particularly relevant in our Syro-Malabar context, celebrating our tradition whilst remaining in universal communion.

Administrative Efficiency: AI can streamline administrative tasks that take up significant pastoral time, such as scheduling, organising records, managing communications, creating newsletters, and coordinating parish activities. This allows for greater focus on core responsibilities: celebrating sacraments, preaching, and caring for souls.

The technology can analyse parish patterns—attendance trends, sacramental participation, programme engagement—offering insights for pastoral planning. AI assists in managing charity work by monitoring community needs, organising volunteers, and ensuring efficient resource distribution, aligning with the Church’s preferential option for the poor.

Evangelisation and Digital Outreach: Many people, especially young adults, spend considerable time online, and AI-enhanced platforms support evangelisation and re-engagement initiatives. These tools help in creating engaging social media content, analysing spiritual questions posed by individuals, and identifying outreach opportunities.

AI can support online retreats, virtual prayer groups, and remote spiritual guidance—valuable for homebound parishioners or those in distant areas. However, digital ministry should always complement rather than replace sacramental life and communal worship, which are essential to Catholic growth.

Serious Concerns and Limitations

Irreplaceable Human Pastoral Care: The main concern is AI’s inability to substitute for the genuine human encounter at the heart of salvation work. Pastoral ministry’s core is the personal relationship between the pastor and the faithful, modelled on Christ’s ministry. Pope Benedict XVI wrote: “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person” (*Deus Caritas Est* 1).

Sacramental life depends on human priests acting *in persona Christi*. No AI can absolve sins, consecrate the Eucharist, or confer sacramental grace through ordained ministry. Beyond sacraments, consolation, spiritual direction, and pastoral counselling require human empathy, personal faith experience, and the ability to recognise the Holy Spirit's movements in souls.

Moral and Doctrinal Concerns: Many AI systems are trained on data that includes content opposed to Catholic moral teaching. They may generate responses that conflict with Church doctrine on sexuality, bioethics, marriage, social justice, and human nature. These systems often reflect moral relativism and secular humanism, which could lead authentic individuals away from true teachings.

AI cannot differentiate between authoritative Church teaching and theological opinions, potentially presenting speculative or heretical ideas as equally valid alongside definitive doctrinal statements. They cannot recognise the hierarchy of truths within doctrines or comprehend doctrinal development within unchanging principles. Priests must never rely solely on AI for moral questions or spiritual guidance.

Privacy and Confidentiality Concerns: The use of AI raises significant data privacy issues, particularly in pastoral contexts where sensitive information is exchanged. The Church's commitment to pastoral confidentiality, especially the sacred seal of confession, must never be compromised by technological tools that store, analyse, or risk exposing confidential information.

Many AI systems store conversation data and may be accessed by developers or government bodies. Information shared with AI often lacks the legal and moral protections found in traditional pastoral relationships. Priests must be very careful about inputting personal parishioner information into AI systems.

Dependency and Genuine Development: Overreliance on AI risks hindering priests' intellectual and spiritual growth. Scripture study, theology, and Church teaching require personal engagement and prayerful reflection that cannot be delegated. As St Paul reminds us: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

Authentic spiritual leadership demands personal holiness, continual conversion, and lived Gospel experience, growing only through persistent prayer, discipline, and personal encounters with Christ. Priests whose ministry becomes excessively AI-mediated may find themselves detached from the spiritual realities they are called to proclaim.

Practical Guidelines for Implementation

Fundamental Principles: Any AI use must uphold genuine human dignity rather than diminish it, ensuring technology supports rather than replaces authentic human interaction. Be transparent with communities about when and how you employ AI tools. Never use AI for tasks that require sacramental priesthood or intimate pastoral counselling. Always verify AI-generated content against authentic Church teachings before sharing.

Use AI as a research aid and initial resource, but never replace personal study, prayer, and reflection. When preparing homilies, utilise AI to gather information and ideas, but ensure your final message is rooted in prayerful Scripture engagement and genuine personal witness.

Specific Safety Protocols: Clearly define boundaries regarding confidential information. Never input personal parishioner details, pastoral counselling data, or sensitive parish matters into AI systems. For

administrative tasks, anonymise data where possible and remain mindful of privacy implications associated with cloud-based systems.

Ensure consistent reviews of AI usage patterns. Evaluate whether tools genuinely support the desired improvement of the ministry without compromising pastoral authenticity. Be alert to signs of overreliance, such as difficulty preparing content without AI or hesitation to engage in traditional study methods. Consider scheduling regular “digital fasting” periods to promote ongoing development of personal theological skills.

Integration with Traditional Formation: AI should enhance, not supplant, traditional priestly formation methods. Maintain regular Scripture study through *lectio divina*, engage with classical theological texts and contemporary magisterial documents, and pursue ongoing education to deepen Catholic understanding and pastoral practice.

Develop balanced approaches using AI for appropriate tasks while safeguarding time for contemplative priestly activities that cannot be improved by technology: personal prayer, spiritual reading, pastoral reflection, and virtue cultivation, which define authentic leadership. Tools should liberate time for these essential practices rather than diminish them.

Eparchial Training program on AI

As an Eparchy, with the assistance of Fr Robins Kuzhikodil and other experts, we shall organise ongoing training on AI and pastoral ministry through workshops, resources, and updates on technological advances. These sessions will give us an understanding and experience on how to use AI in our daily pastoral ministry. Specifically, we'll learn to use AI for tasks like creating posters, short videos, and creative messages in various languages.

Conclusion

Our core calling remains unchanged: to be faithful shepherds guiding people closer to Christ through word, sacrament, presence, and pastoral charity. While technology, including AI, can support this mission when used wisely, it can never replace genuine human presence, spiritual wisdom, and sacramental ministry, which define our vocation.

The words of our Lord guide us: “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10:16). This wisdom urges us to support valid technological advancements, enhance pastoral effectiveness while maintaining innocence, preserve the authenticity of ministry, and protect spiritual integrity.

The Church has always engaged thoughtfully with the signs of the times while remaining rooted in unchanging Gospel truths. AI represents one such sign—a powerful tool reflecting human creativity while raising fundamental questions about intelligence, wisdom, and authentic relationships.

Our response must embody a typically Catholic approach: neither blind rejection nor full acceptance, but careful discernment guided by faith principles, Church tradition, wisdom, and a genuine concern for our people’s spiritual well-being. Let us utilise these tools to serve human dignity, bolster pastoral ministry, and ultimately bring ourselves and our people closer to Christ.

May the Holy Spirit grant us wisdom and courage to navigate these technological realities while remaining faithful to our mission! May Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, intercede as we seek to proclaim her Son to our

contemporary world! May our Syro-Malabar tradition's patron saints guide us in preserving our heritage while engaging creatively with opportunities of the digital age!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Protest against the arrest of religious sisters at Nagercoil: A protest was held near Anna Stadium, Nagercoil, on 01 August 2025 against the unjust arrest of two religious sisters, Sr. Preethi Mary and Sr. Vandana Francis, in Chhattisgarh. The programme was organized by the United Christian Council, Kanyakumari District, under the leadership of the four Catholic dioceses – Thuckalay, Kottar, Marthandam, and Kuzhithurai. The protest began at 4.00 PM, and I presided over the gathering. Apart from my presidential address, the following prominent leaders raised their voices against this injustice: Bishop Nazarene Soosai (Diocese of Kottar), Bishop Albert G. A. Anasthas (Diocese of Kuzhithurai), Tharahai Cuthbert, MLA, Rev. Fr. M. C. Rajan, Mr. Raj (DMK), Sr. Kuzhanthai, Pastor Gnanthasan, and Rev. Fr. Wiselin Xavier. Along with them, many others also spoke and expressed their concern over this grave issue. From our diocese, a large number of priests, sisters, and faithful actively participated in the protest, showing their deep concern and strongly demanding justice and the immediate release of the sisters. I sincerely thank the parish priests and all those who worked tirelessly to make this protest a success. A special word of gratitude goes to Fr. Sanil Panthichirackal and Fr. Antony Jose for coordinating the programme on behalf of our diocese.

St. Alphonsa Feast Celebrations: The celebration of the feast of St. Alphonsa started at St. Alphonsa's Shrine, Nagercoil, on 25 July 2025, with the flag hoisting by our Vicar General, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil. It was deeply moving to witness thousands of faithful flocking to the shrine during the ten days of festivities to pray and seek blessings from God through the intercession of St. Alphonsa. Almost all the priests and faithful from our diocese actively participated in the various spiritual programmes, especially during the Forane-level Holy Qurbana celebrations. On 28 July 2025, Most Rev. Dr. Lourde Anandam, Bishop of Sivagangai, visited the shrine and presided over the Holy Qurbana, which was attended by over five thousand faithful from different rites. On 03 August 2025, the concluding day of the feast, priests, religious, and faithful from all our parishes gathered at the shrine by 9:30 am. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil led the novena in honour of the saint, which was followed by a solemn concelebrated Holy Qurbana presided over by me. After the Holy Qurbana, a grand procession and an agape meal for all the pilgrims were held. In the evening, another Holy Qurbana was celebrated, after which the flag was lowered, marking the conclusion of the feast. I gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the dedicated service and tireless efforts of Rev. Fr. Sanal Panthichirackal, Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Sanjo Thenepalackal, Assistant Parish Priest, the Rev. Sisters, and the faithful of St. Alphonsa Shrine in making the celebration a prayerful and grace-filled experience.

Vianney Day Celebration: The feast of St. John Maria Vianney, the patron saint of all priests, especially diocesan priests, was meaningfully celebrated in our Diocese. The traditional Vianney Day observance was held on 04 August 2025 at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal, with the participation of all the priests of the Diocese. The programme began at 10:00 AM with the traditional volleyball match between the priests and the seminarians. Both teams played with great spirit and enthusiasm, but the Minor Seminary brothers, with the assistance of a few priests, emerged victorious and lifted the trophy. This was followed by a brief cultural programme that highlighted the talents of the seminarians. The public meeting was presided over by me. Afterwards, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, animated by the minor seminarians, provided a meaningful opportunity to come together in prayer, thanking God for the gift of priesthood and interceding for new vocations. The celebration concluded with a solemn fraternal lunch. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the Rector, Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochuparampil MST, and his team for the excellent

organization of the Vianney Day programme. A special word of appreciation is also due to the SH Sisters and the kitchen staff for preparing the festive meal with such care and dedication.

Last Respects to Fr. Joseph Madathil: It is with profound sorrow that we received the sad news of the passing of Fr. Joseph Madathil on 08 August 2025. His dedicated service to our Diocese spanned an impressive 16 years. Fr. Joseph Madathil, just two years after his priestly ordination, came to the Kanyakumari Mission as a zealous missionary in 1963 and began his service at Manjalumoodu. Moved with deep compassion, he dedicated himself to the integral development of the people in that area. Fr. Madathil began proclaiming the Gospel in and around Manjalumoodu. Through his tireless missionary work, new Christian communities were formed in Mukkoottukal, Thettivilai, Malaicode, Marappady, and Valiyavilai. In 1965, seeking to extend the mission and support the people, Fr. Madathil invited the Sacred Heart Sisters from the Archdiocese of Changanacherry. This marked the arrival of the first religious congregation in the Kanyakumari Mission—made possible through his initiative. Fr. Madathil's pioneering efforts laid the foundation for almost all the parishes in the Manjalumoodu Forane. Recognizing the widespread illiteracy, he started nurseries attached to the churches. In 1969, he founded the Holy Family Primary School at Mukkoottukal, offering free education and free meals to students. After sixteen years of dedicated missionary service, Fr. Madathil returned to his home diocese in 1977. The Diocese of Thuckalay remains deeply indebted to him for his pioneering contribution to the growth of the Kanyakumari Mission, which eventually became the Diocese of Thuckalay.

The mortal remains of Fr. Madathil were kept at his home in Kumaramchira, Muttar, on Monday, 11 August 2025, from 2:45 PM onwards for the public to pay their final respects. The first part of the funeral rites was held at his home on 12 August 2025 at 1:00 PM, followed by the second part at St. Thomas Church, Kumaramchira, at 2:25 PM. The Funeral Holy Qurbana began at 2:45 PM, with Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil as the main celebrant. Mar Joseph Perumthottam delivered the funeral homily. Together with our Vicar General, I offered prayers at his home. Many priests, religious sisters, and representatives of the faithful from the parishes where he had served were also present to bid him farewell. Let us commend him to the mercy of the Lord, praying that God may grant him eternal rest and reward him abundantly for his generous and selfless priestly service.

St. Alphonsa Academy Cultural Competitions at Nagercoil: The 24th St. Alphonsa Academy for Excellence Cultural Competitions, organized by St. Alphonsa Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Nagercoil, were held on 09 August 2025 at the school campus. I inaugurated the event, and Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil was the chief guest. A total of 80 schools and 15 colleges from Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts participated, bringing together over 2,000 students. The participants enthusiastically took part in a variety of competitions, including elocution, quiz, essay writing, solo singing, drawing, dance, and more. The Academy Award Day was celebrated on 23 August 2025. Dr. N. Ayyappan, Principal of S. T. Hindu College, Nagercoil, presided over the function and distributed the prizes to the winners. I place on record my sincere appreciation to the Correspondent, Rev. Fr. Sanil John, and the entire organizing team for their dedicated efforts in successfully conducting this programme.

Catechetical Annual Day Celebrations at Kalluvilai: The Catechetical Annual Day and Christ Jubilee 2025 of Catechesis were celebrated on 10 August 2025 at the Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. Cultural programmes presented by students from various parishes added beauty and vibrancy to the mega event. The meeting was presided over by me, with Rev. Fr. Sathish Kumar Joy of the Diocese of Kottar as the chief guest. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil distributed the Mission Quest prizes. I had the joy of greeting and presenting mementoes to the jubilarians who completed 25, 40, and 50 years of dedicated service as catechists, and also awarding trophies to the best Sunday Schools. I express my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Abilash Xavier for his commendable coordination in organizing this meaningful event.

Inter-diocesan Badminton Tournament: The Priests from the Catholic Dioceses in Tamil Nadu participated in the inter diocesan badminton tournament organised as a part of St. John Mariya Vianney Day Annual celebration on 11 August 2025 at St. Xavier's College indoor stadium, Chunkankadaï. In total nearly 40 priests reported in the indoor stadium. And from our diocese four priests participated in the competition. The competition was flagged off by Rt. Rev Dr Albert Athanasus, the Bishop of Kuzhithurai. He also interacted with the players of four dioceses. Overall, it was great experience for all the priests and encouraging to seeing the priests participating in so much effort. I congratulate the participants from our diocese.

Training Programme at Trichy: The TNBC Health Commission successfully organized a Training of Trainers programme on 12–13 August 2025 at Trichy, bringing together 120 dedicated participants, five each from each diocese, including 7 representatives from our diocese. The participants from our Diocese were: Fr. Antony Mahesh, Sr. Missi Maria SJSM, Sr. Emily CMC, Mrs. Shyni, Mr. Edwinston, Mr. Shonic Regan, and Dr. Beulin. The programme focused on the vital theme “Addiction among Children and Youth Today”, with eminent resource persons leading insightful sessions and discussions. This comprehensive training was designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to serve as effective trainers in their own communities, thereby fostering a culture of wellness and resilience. On the first evening, a meeting of the secretaries was also held, during which ways to promote the activities of the Health Commission in all parishes were discussed. I sincerely congratulate the participants from our Diocese for their enthusiastic involvement and effective cooperation in the Training of Trainers programme.

Eucharistic Convention and Centenary Death Anniversary at Soosaipuram: This year marks the Centenary Death Anniversary of Venerable Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, the first Bishop of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry and the Founder of the SABS Congregation. To commemorate this occasion, the SABS St. Chantal Province, Thuckalay, organized a Eucharistic Convention and a Public Celebration on 16 August 2025. The day's programme began at 9:30 am with Eucharistic Adoration and the administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Adoration was animated by Fr. Mijo Puthenpurackal, with the participation of faithful from many parishes. At 11:30 am, the Solemn Holy Qurbana was celebrated, presided over by Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Chancellor, and concelebrated by Fr. Geo Choozhikunnel and Fr. Lijo Thekkel. During the Holy Qurbana, Fr. Lijo delivered an inspiring homily on the life and spirituality of Mar Kurialacherry. After the lunch break, the public meeting began at 2:00 pm, presided over by me. Rev. Sr. Emily Theketheruvil SABS, Provincial Councillor of St. Thomas Province, Changanacherry, was the chief guest. Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, and Mr. Mariadas offered felicitations. The highlight of the meeting was a drama on the life of Mar Thomas Kurialacherry, along with various cultural performances. The programme concluded at 5:00 pm. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS, the Provincial Superior, the sisters of SABS St. Chantal Province, and the Soosaipuram Parish Community for their dedicated efforts in organizing the day and transforming the centenary commemoration into a spiritually enriching event.

Cricket Tournament at Mankarai: The SMYM of St. James Church, Mankarai, organized a friendly cricket tournament at St. Alphonsa College ground, Soosaipuram, on 16 and 17 August 2025. The event was inaugurated by Fr. Ajin Jose. Sixteen teams from various parishes, including a team of priests, enthusiastically participated in the tournament. I also visited the ground and encouraged the players during the matches. The tournament concluded with a valedictory meeting presided over by the Parish Priest, during which the winners were honoured. Mankarai Parish emerged as the champions and secured the first prize, while Thettivilai Parish won the runners-up trophy. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of Fr. Toji Kozhuvakkandathil in organizing the event and extend my heartfelt congratulations to the deserving winners.

Seminars by KKSSS & Health Commission: A seminar on Organ Donation was held at KKSSS, Kalluvilai, on 16 August 2025. The main objective of the seminar was to create awareness on how volunteering for organ donation can transform and save many lives. The speakers included Fr. Peter, himself a kidney donor, and Mrs. Maruthammal from the Aravind Eye Bank, Tirunelveli. More than 100 individuals participated in the programme. On 17 August 2025, the Diocesan Health Commission organized another seminar on Addiction among Students at the Mathrujyothis office, Kalluvilai. Rev. Dr. Christine delivered an insightful message on the various types of addictions affecting children and their consequences. Over 150 mothers benefitted from this awareness session. I sincerely thank Fr. Antony Mahesh for coordinating these valuable awareness programmes for the upliftment and well-being of society.

Syro Malabar Bishop's Synod at Kakkanad: The Second Session of the XXXIII Synod of the Bishop's of the Syro-Malabar Church took place at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas Kakkanad from August 18 to 29, 2025. The major decisions taken in the Synod were already announced by the Major Archbishop in the public meeting held at Mount St. Thomas Kakkanad on 28 August 2025. It is a moment of great joy to our Church for having two new Bishops and four new ecclesiastical provinces. Rev. Fr. James Patteril CMF was appointed as the Bishop of Belthangady and Rev. Fr. Joseph Thachaparambath CMI, as bishop of Adilabad. The Province of Faridabad will have Bijnor and Gorakhpur as its suffragan eparchies. The Province of Kalyan will include Chanda and Rajkot as suffragan eparchies. The Province of Shamshabad will have Adilabad as its suffragan eparchy, while the Province of Ujjain will comprise Jagdalpur, Sagar, and Satna as suffragan eparchies. Alongside these appointments, the territories of twelve eparchies outside Kerala have been reorganized. This development marks a significant milestone in the growth of the Syro-Malabar Church, enabling more effective pastoral care and ecclesial coordination across India.

Day of Fasting and Prayer for World Peace: In response to the exhortation of Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, along with all the Catholics around the world, we observed in our diocese on 22 August 2025 as a day of fasting and prayer for peace and for all those suffering because of war. In many of our parishes and in religious houses an hour of Eucharistic Adoration was also held with this motive. I personally thank all the priests and religious who observed this day as wished by our Holy Father.

Forane level Retreat for Uraviyam Leaders: Under the direction of the Diocesan Uraviyam Department, a half-day retreat and orientation programme was conducted at the forane level for Uraviyam animators, leaders, and organizers from each parish. For Arukani Forane, the programme was held at Netta Parish on 23 August 2025, with around 40 leaders in attendance. For Thuckalay - Pilankalai and Soosaipuram Foranes, the retreat took place at Soosaipuram Forane Parish on 30 August 2025, with approximately 85 leaders participating. I extend my sincere thanks to Rev. Fr. Mijo Puthenpurackal and the respective Forane Directors for organizing the programmes effectively and with great commitment.

BTCT at Padanthalumoodu: The Basic Training for Catechism Teachers (BTCT) for the 8th batch was held at the Padanthalumoodu Forane Church auditorium and concluded on 31 August 2025 with the distribution of certificates to the participants. Among the 27 participants, 19 achieved the certificate. The course had commenced on 29 June 2025. On the inaugural day, I visited the participants and encouraged them by highlighting the importance of this training. The sessions were held on 6, 13, and 27 July, and on 17, 24, and 31 August. The resource persons for the programme were Rev. Fathers Joshy, Sathianesan, Santhosh, Jimmy, Justin, Anil Raj, Shijo and Abilash. I sincerely thank the Catechetical Department and the resource persons for their dedicated efforts in imparting this valuable formation to our catechists.

Renovated Convent Blessing at Arukani: The present Sacred Heart Convent at Arukani was blessed on 7 July 1969. After more than 55 years, certain parts of the building have become unfit for habitation. Therefore, as per the decision of the province, another building adjacent to the convent—formerly used as

a girls' home and now lying vacant—was renovated and converted into the new convent, while the old convent has been retained as it is. The renovated convent was blessed on 30 August 2025 at 4.30 p.m. by Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Chancellor. Rev. Fr. Jobin Vettukallel, Forane Vicar of Arukani, Rev. Fr. Shinto Sauriamkuzhiyil, Parish Priest of Pathukani, Rev. Sr. Catherine Nedumpuram, Provincial Superior of the SH St. Mathew's Province, the Provincial Council, SH Sisters from our diocese, and the faithful from Arukani parishes were present for the blessing. The ceremony concluded with an agape meal. I congratulate the Provincial Superior and the sisters for taking the initiative to realize the new renovated convent at Arukani.

INFORMATION

- **Mrs. Theyyamma Joseph (73)**, the elder sister of Sr. Elsy Mathew CMC, slept in the Lord on 05 August 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Elsy and her family members. Let us pray that the merciful Lord grant her eternal joy.
- **KII Singing competition**: In connection with the Feast of the Assumption of the Mother Mary, the KII organized a singing competition. Kids were asked to select any song dedicated to Mother Mary and send the recorded video of the singing to the KII Office by the end of this month. Congratulations to the participants and organizers!
- **Fr. Alex Puthettu** reached back from Italy for his annual vacation on 18 August 2025. We wish him a happy stay in the Diocese.
- **Fr. Prince Maliyil** reached back from Ireland for his annual vacation on 22 August 2025. We wish him a happy stay in the Diocese.
- **Mr. C. J. Chacko (87)**, the elder brother of Sr. Zeliguirine CMC, slept in the Lord on 25 August 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Zeliguirine and her family members. Let us pray that the merciful Lord grant him eternal joy.
- **Sr. Barthamma FCC (78)**, the elder sister of Sr. Josmy FCC and Sr. Pavana FCC, slept in the Lord on 29 August 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Josmy and Sr. Pavana and their family members. Let us pray that the merciful Lord grant her eternal joy.
- **From 1 September we begin the 8-day fast**. I request you to observe this traditional practice as much as possible in order to celebrate the Nativity of our Blessed Mother on 08 September.
- **GRATITUDE**: As I complete my 13th year of Episcopal ministry in the Eparchy on 16 September 2025, my heart is lifted in gratitude to God Almighty for His abundant blessings and constant guidance. I am deeply grateful to all the priests, religious, and faithful of the Eparchy for your love, cooperation, and prayers. Dear fathers, it is through your support and collaboration that I have been able to discern and fulfil God's plan in our Eparchy. A heartfelt thank you to each one of you.
- **Updated Holy Qurbana Stipend**: As announced in my circular read out in the parishes on 31 August 2025, the revised rates of the Holy Qurbana stipend will come into effect from 01 September 2025. The updated rates are as follows:
 - ❖ Regular Holy Qurbana – Rs. 150/-
 - ❖ Solemn Holy Qurbana – Rs. 200/-
 - ❖ Raza Qurbana – Rs. 1,000/-
 - ❖ Gregorian Holy Qurbana – Rs. 6,000/-
 - ❖ Oppees in the Church – Rs. 30/-
 - ❖ Oppees at the tomb – Rs. 50/-

FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

01 September	-	Eight days fast begins
08 September	-	The nativity of our Lady
11 September	-	Priests' Conference
16 September	-	Consecration of Bengiri Church

Priests' Conference

Place: Sangamam, Thuckalay

Date: 11 September 2025

Time: 09.30 am – 01.30 pm

01.30 pm – Onam Sadhya

Priests' Annual Retreat 2025

Date: 05 - 10 October 2025

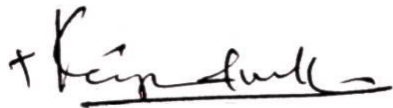
Place: Sangamam

Please prepare spiritually for the retreat and pray for the preacher and its success

CONCLUSION

During August, we gathered as fellow workers of the Eparchy to celebrate the feast of St John Maria Vianney. This occasion allowed us to reflect on our priesthood and to resolve to emulate St John Maria Vianney by administering the sacraments, especially the sacrament of reconciliation, with greater dedication. Let us utilise occasions such as the feast days of our parish patrons to strengthen the faith of our people. Next month, we will celebrate one of the major feasts of Our Blessed Mother, namely, the Nativity of Mother Mary. This feast offers a wonderful opportunity for us to deepen Marian devotion. Let us prepare our people well by encouraging them to observe the 8-day fast with greater earnestness. Let us also aim to make the celebration of this feast meaningful in our churches. Please remember to include the mission of the Church and the needs of our Eparchy in your daily prayers.

With my prayers and blessings,
Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

