



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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30 April 2026

Dear Rev. Fathers,

Warm fraternal greetings to each of you from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

The Church has lovingly dedicated the month of May to Our Lady, and this annual invitation once again draws us nearer to the Mother of God and our own Mother. As priests, our vocation places us at the very centre of the Church's Eucharistic life, and it is altogether fitting that we look to Our Lady herself as the perfect exemplar of what it means to live a truly Eucharistic life. She, above all others, received the Word made flesh, carried him in her womb, stood at the foot of the Cross, and was present in the Upper Room at the very birth of the Church. Mary is not on the sidelines of the Eucharist. She is at its very centre, and she calls us, her priestly sons, to stand there with her.

As priests, we are men of the altar and men of the people. The month of May, therefore, is not merely a season of external Marian piety but an invitation to deepen our interior Eucharistic disposition, rooted in the spirit and intercession of the Mother of God. Let us reflect together on Mary as the model of every Eucharistic soul and invite each of you to renew your personal predilection for the Mother of God, a devotion that lies at the heart of priestly identity and has been the Church's living strength in this land for generations.

The First Tabernacle of the Living God

Long before there was a tabernacle of gold and marble, there was one of flesh and love. The Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and from that moment her womb became the first dwelling of the Son of God. She carried within her the One whom heaven and earth cannot contain. In this mystery, we see the very foundation of Eucharistic theology: the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us.

Each time we celebrate Holy Mass or approach the Blessed Sacrament, we follow Mary's example — welcoming Jesus, holding him close, and making space for him in our hearts and upon our altars. She exemplifies every soul that approaches the Eucharist with faith and love. What was uniquely hers and physical during the Incarnation is now extended to each of us sacramentally at Holy Communion, and to us priests in a singular manner at every Mass we celebrate. To become a Eucharistic soul is to be Marian in spirit — a living vessel of the Lord. As priests, we are called to be, more than any others, such living vessels.

At the Last Supper and at Calvary

Although the Gospels do not explicitly record Mary's presence at the Last Supper, tradition and theology agree that she, the Mother of the Lord, was not absent from the crucial moments of his Passover. What the Scriptures depict with unmistakable clarity is her presence at the Cross. She stood beneath the Cross as her Son — the Lamb of God — offered the ultimate sacrifice that the Eucharist makes present at every Mass.

She did not flee; she remained. This steadfast presence of the Mother at the altar of Calvary is a word addressed to every priest.

There, at Calvary, Mary became the perfect Eucharistic soul. While the Apostles — with the sole exception of the beloved disciple — had fled, she remained steadfast. She entered into her Son's sacrifice as no other creature ever has or ever shall. The Mass is the real presence of Calvary across time and space. When we celebrate Mass with faith and devotion, we are called to stand where Mary stood — beneath the Cross — uniting the sufferings and joys of our people with Jesus' eternal offering. A Eucharistic soul is one who, like Mary, remains at the foot of the altar, unwavering in love. We priests, above all, are configured to Christ the Priest, who offered himself; and Mary, standing at Calvary, teaches us the meaning of that configuration.

Mary in the Upper Room

After the Ascension, the Acts of the Apostles tells us that the Apostles “all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:14). She was present in the Upper Room, gathered with the young Church, persevering in prayer as they awaited the gift of the Holy Spirit. She had already experienced the coming of the Spirit at her Annunciation; now she accompanied the nascent Church into the same mystery.

This image of Mary praying in the Upper Room serves as a model for every Eucharistic soul and, in particular, for every priest. We too are called to “persevere in prayer,” to gather as a priestly fraternity, and to await the Spirit's coming in every Eucharist we celebrate. The Eucharist is not merely an act of personal devotion; it is the prayer of the whole Church, offered through, with, and in Christ. Mary personifies the communal, ecclesial, prayerful aspect of Eucharistic life. She unites; she intercedes; she promotes communion among those who follow her Son. We, priests, are called to be men of communion, following her example.

Mary's Fiat

At the heart of Mary's Eucharistic soul lies her constant “yes.” When the Angel spoke to her, she replied: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). This Fiat was not a single event; it was her lifelong stance — at Bethlehem, at the Presentation, at Cana, on Calvary, and in the Upper Room. She lived in continual self-offering, a disposition that never wavered from birth to the glorious Assumption.

The Eucharist is fundamentally an act of self-offering. Jesus says: “This is my body, given for you.” Every Mass invites us, as priests, to make these words our own — to offer our bodies, lives, and wills upon the altar of love on behalf of the people entrusted to us. The Eucharistic soul is one that, like Mary, says “yes” to God repeatedly, in both ordinary and extraordinary moments of pastoral life. We are called to be genuinely and deeply — not merely outwardly — Eucharistic souls. Mary shows that, through a faith-filled, selfless, obedient, and loving Fiat, renewed each day at the altar and in the pastoral field, a priest can become ever more conformed to Christ, the Eternal High Priest.

The Priests' Predilection for Mother Mary

We priests carry within our hearts a filial love for Our Lady that is not incidental to our vocation but constitutive of it. This love finds its deepest warrant not in any particular school of spirituality but in the very heart of the Gospel. Christ Himself, in the hour of His ultimate sacrifice, entrusted His Mother to the beloved disciple and, through him, to every priest who would stand at the altar: “Behold, your mother” (Jn 19:27). This entrustment was not merely a gesture of filial tenderness; it was a priestly commission. We are called to receive Mary into our homes — that is, into the interior sanctuary of our priestly hearts, our pastoral programmes, and our parishes.

Our Eparchy was born of the blood and prayer of those who came before us. The Catholic communities of this region, shaped by the ancient Syro-Malabar tradition and centuries of faithful witness, have always held Mary at the centre of their spiritual life. The sacred liturgy of our Syro-Malabar heritage — rich in Marian antiphons, feasts, and intercessions woven into the very fabric of the Qurbana — bears witness to a people who, long before they could articulate it theologically, understood that the way to Jesus runs through his Mother. Our predecessors in the priesthood — the clergy who first built up this Eparchy and the priests who subsequently shepherded these communities — drew their courage and perseverance from the altar, precisely through their devotion to Our Lady.

I therefore invite each of you, my dear priests, to reflect on your personal relationship with Our Lady this month of May. Is she truly Mother in your priestly life — not merely a title invoked at the beginning of homilies, but a living presence to whom you turn each morning, before each celebration of the Eucharist, and in moments of temptation, fatigue, and desolation? Do you entrust your parishes, your people, your personal struggles, and your priestly fidelity to her maternal intercession? Do your faithful see in you a man who genuinely loves the Mother of God — not with sentimental effusion, but with the robust, confident, daily filial love that characterises a true son? These are not rhetorical questions; they are pastoral examinations of conscience worthy of our reflection in this blessed month.

The Rosary: A Priestly School of Contemplation

The month of May calls us to pray the Rosary in a special way. St John Paul II, who prayed several Rosaries each day, described this prayer as “a school of Mary” and “a compendium of the Gospel” (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 1). For a priest, the Rosary is not a private devotion to be squeezed into the margins of a busy pastoral schedule; it is a contemplative school in which Mary teaches us to gaze upon the face of Christ, to enter into His mysteries, and to carry those mysteries to the altar and to the people.

I encourage each of you to make the daily Rosary a firm and non-negotiable element of your priestly prayer life during May, and indeed throughout the year. Pray it not in haste but with deliberate meditation. Let each mystery become a window through which you contemplate the Paschal mystery that you celebrate at the altar. The Joyful Mysteries will deepen your wonder at the Incarnation; the Luminous Mysteries will illuminate your understanding of the Lord’s public ministry and the Eucharist He instituted; the Sorrowful Mysteries will draw you ever more deeply into the sacrificial heart of the Mass; and the Glorious Mysteries will remind you that every Eucharist is already a participation in the heavenly liturgy.

Where possible, I also encourage you to lead your communities in the public recitation of the Rosary during May, especially on Saturdays, and to preach on the mysteries of the Rosary in a manner that connects them to the Eucharist. Help your faithful to see that devotion to Our Lady is not an addition to their Catholic faith but an expression of its very depths. A parish that loves the Rosary is a parish that will love the Mass, for in both, we fix our gaze upon Christ under Mary’s maternal guidance.

A Son’s Trust in a Mother’s Care

Dear priests, priestly life is not easy. The demands of pastoral ministry, the weight of human suffering that we encounter daily in our confessionals and at our bedsides, the challenges of maintaining fervour amidst fatigue, and the spiritual combats peculiar to a life lived in *persona Christi* — all of these call for a support that is at once maternal and supernatural. Our Lady is that support. She does not ask of us anything she has not first experienced herself. She is not a distant ideal but a present Mother, a living example, and a powerful intercessor.

Let us approach her this May not with elaborate words but with the simplicity of sons — sharing our joys, failures, apostolic desires, fears, and hopes. Let us ask her to shape us into truly Eucharistic souls: priests who celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with deep faith and love, carry Christ to others with pastoral ardour, and offer themselves with Him in every act of service to our people.

The Catholic heritage of our Eparchy and the wider treasury of the Church's spiritual tradition leave us in no doubt: the priest who loves Our Lady with a genuine, childlike predilection will persevere in fidelity, celebrate the Eucharist with growing reverence and joy, and draw his people ever more deeply into the mystery of Christ. Our devotion to Mother Mary is not a sign of weakness or religious sentiment; it is a sign of priestly wisdom and apostolic strength, confirmed by the witness of the saints and the lived faith of God's people in this land.

Let us embrace this devotion with renewed conviction and carry it forward as one of the most treasured expressions of our priestly identity. The faithful of our Eparchy deserve priests who, at the deepest level of their interior lives, are sons of Mary — men whose love for the Mother shapes how they celebrate, preach, forgive, console, and serve. May this month be for each of us a time of genuine Marian renewal, offered humbly to Our Lady so that she may present it to her Son!

May Our Lady of the Eucharist bless each of you, your parishes, and all those you serve with tireless pastoral charity! May she, the Mother of Priests, intercede for each of you before the throne of her Son, and may the month of May renew in each of our hearts that filial love for her which is the hallmark of the priest after God's own heart!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Priests and Religious Recollection at Kalluvilai: On 01 April 2026, just a day before Pesaha 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. Amrtha Raj from the diocese of Kottar. His insightful message helped set the tone for deep contemplation and renewal. The culmination of the day was the celebration of the Holy Qurbana presided by me and concelebrated by all the Fathers present. 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. Vinu D Joseph, Director of the Retreat Centre, for his leadership and dedication.

Pesaha Thursday celebration at Kunnuvilai: On Pesaha Thursday, we commemorate the institution of the Lord's Supper and the Priesthood, which are most important events in the Christian faith. Through the solemn commemoration of these moments, we are reminded of the selfless sacrifice that Jesus made for us, and we are called upon to emulate his love and compassion towards others. During every Holy Qurbana, we have the privilege of re-enacting the profound words of Jesus, "This is my Body. This is my Blood. Do this in remembrance of me". These words serve as a powerful reminder of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us and inspire us to follow in his footsteps. This time of reflection and contemplation helps us to deepen our understanding of the immense love that Jesus had for us, and to draw strength from that love as we face our own challenges in life. This year, I celebrated the Pesaha Thursday liturgy at St. Joseph's Church, Kunnuvilai on 02 April 2026. The Holy Qurbana celebration began at 06.45 pm. The foot washing ceremony was a poignant reminder of Jesus' humble service to others, and the traditional Pesaha Appam shared among those present was a symbol of our unity as a community of believers. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Antony Madapurackal for organizing the celebration well.

Passion Friday at Muzhucode Parish: On the solemn occasion of Passion Friday, we come together to remember and commemorate the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross, a profound demonstration of love for all humanity. This year, on 03 April 2026, every parish commemorated this holy day through participation in liturgical ceremonies, including the Way of the Cross, and deep reflection on the mystery of the Cross. At St. Thomas Church, Muzhucode, I joined in the Passion Friday liturgical ceremonies. The

Holy hour began at 10.30 am followed by the liturgical celebration. I thank Fr. Santhosh CMI for deepening the liturgical roots in the hearts of the people through organizing well the entire liturgical celebrations. It was a day of solemn reflection and deep spiritual contemplation for all who gathered in the Church. Afternoon I joined in the way of Cross organized by Karode Parish to the Kurissumala in Karode.

Easter Holy Qurbana at Mathapuram Parish and Blessing of renovated Madbaha and Presbytery:

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 April 4, 2026, or in the early morning of April 5, 2026. At 11:00 PM on April 4, I celebrated the Easter Vigil Holy Qurbana at St. Thomas Church, Mathapuram. Before beginning the Easter liturgy, I blessed the renovated Madbaha of the parish in the presence of the Forane Vicar, Rev. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil. Immediately following the Holy Qurbana, I blessed a renovated presbytery, which had been transformed from an existing unused house. Witnessing the faithful participate in all the celebrations with such enthusiasm was a truly humbling experience. I extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Jose Paul Purayidathikunnel for his efforts in renovating the Madbaha and presbytery, and for preparing the people to observe Easter with such deep devotion.

Vocation Month Celebration: For promoting vocations to priesthood and religious life, and in view of world vocation Sunday on 26 April 2026, the vocation commission of the eparchy organized a vocation month from 05 April 2026 to 26 April 2026. Inaugural and concluding celebrations were done in each parish. On the 05th of April, On Easter Sunday, the vocation month observation was inaugurated in each parish with the lighting of the lamp during the Holy Qurbana. To ensure a wider reach and greater impact, a special circular was drafted by me and read out in all parishes. From the inaugural day until the conclusion, the prayer of vocation was recited every day in our parishes, uniting us in our mission to promote vocations. In all parishes, the parish priests delivered sermons on vocation, highlighting its significance in our eparchy and encouraging young people to consider this noble calling. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the Fathers who took personal initiatives to promote vocations and effectively utilized the tools provided by the vocation commission. In particular, I extend my special thanks to Fr. George Kandathil, whose prompt actions in organizing the vocation month was instrumental in making this initiative a success.

Priestly Ordinations: 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 three new priests.

On April 7, 2026, at St. George Church, Venchembu, in the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, Deacon Joseph (Bibin) Vettakonam was ordained to the priesthood. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam served as the Archdeacon, and Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil was a concelebrant for the ordination. A profound homily was delivered by Rev. Fr. Cyril Thomas Thayyil, Secretary of the Synodal Commission for Ecumenism. Following the ordination, the Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by the newly ordained Fr. Bibin Vettakonam, along with Fr. Linto Thakidiyel and Fr. Josin Kochuparampil.

The following day, April 8, 2026, Deacon Varghese (Bibin) Koyickakudiyil was ordained at St. Mathew’s Church, Thinkalkadu, in the Diocese of Idukki. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam served as the Archdeacon, and Rev. Fr. George Kuzhuppallil, Professor at Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kunnoth, was a concelebrant. Fr. George Kuzhuppallil also delivered an inspiring homily. The first Holy Qurbana of the new priest, Fr. Bibin Koyickakudiyil, was concelebrated by Fr. Robins Kuzhikodil, Fr. Amanto Edakkoottathil, Fr. Ouseph Nedumpuram, and Fr. Joseph Thottoyil.

On April 14, 2026, at Infant Jesus Church, Sisumala, in the Diocese of Mananthavady, Deacon Mathew (Tony) Kallamparambil was ordained to the priesthood. Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam served as the Archdeacon, and Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal was a concelebrant. An insightful homily was delivered by

Rev. Fr. Jofin Kuruvummakkal CST. Along with the new priest, Fr. Tony Kallamparambil, the Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Fr. Sanil Panthichirackal, Fr. Amanto Edakkoottathil, Fr. George Mampillil, and Fr. Sijo Nadackan.

As an Eparchy, we extend a warm welcome to our new priests, praying that they may receive God's choicest blessings throughout their pastoral ministry.

Tenkasi Mission Meet: A meeting for priests and religious of the Tenkasi Mission was held on April 11, 2026, at the CMC Convent, Puliয়ারai. The gathering commenced with an hour of Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, setting a spiritual tone for the gathering. Presided over by the Mission Coordinator, Rev. Fr. Sumesh Valliyamthadathil, the second session of the meeting focused on the administrative and pastoral functions of various departments and pious associations in the mission. A primary decision was taken to prioritize the effective implementation of Faith Formation programmes such as VPV and the organized conduct of parish festivals across the mission. Then the missionaries shared the various programmes and initiatives to be conducted in their respective centres and mission stations. The meeting concluded with a final blessing by the Mission Coordinator, followed by an Agape meal, strengthening the spirit of fellowship and collaboration among the mission members. I thank Fr. Sumesh for organizing effectively the mission meet.

Meeting with Major Seminarians: On 17 April 2026, a meeting of major seminary brothers was convened at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal, with the participation of curia members. All major seminarians, with the exception of those from Ujjain, were present for the gathering. Brothers shared their academic and pastoral experiences over the past year, gained from various seminaries and parishes. During the meeting, curia members outlined the expectations of the Diocese regarding the adherence of brothers to formative values throughout their seminary life and vacation periods. Additionally, new leaders were elected to assume roles among them. I extend my gratitude to Rev. Fr. Bobby MST, the director of Major Seminarians, for his efforts in organizing the vacation programme for our major seminarians.

Come and See Camp at Mukkoottukal: The 'Come and See' programme was successfully conducted at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal on 17 April 2026. The programme was organized with the intention of helping young boys to understand and discern their vocation to the priesthood through prayer, interaction, and exposure to seminary life. A total of fifteen boys participated in the programme. The day began with a welcome, followed by an introductory session explaining the purpose and significance of the 'Come and See' experience. The participants were given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the seminary environment, its routine, and the formation process. The programme included moments of prayer, spiritual talks, and personal guidance. The participants also interacted with the seminary authorities and brothers, which helped them to gain a deeper insight into the life and commitment required for priestly formation. Opportunities were provided for clarifying doubts and sharing personal reflections. The participants actively engaged in all the sessions and showed keen interest throughout the programme. The atmosphere of prayer and openness contributed positively to their vocational awareness. The program concluded with a note of encouragement, inviting the participants to continue discerning God's call in their lives with sincerity and commitment. I thank Fr. George Kandathil and forane level vocation promoters for organizing it effectively.

Major Seminarians' work camp: This year's work camp for major seminarians took place at Kamarajnagar, near Padanthalumoodu from April 18th to April 24th, 2026. The camp started with an official inauguration by Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan in the presence of Fr. George Kandathil and Fr. Antony Jose. Numerous priests visited the site at different intervals, providing words of encouragement that boosted the morale of the brothers involved. The primary focus of the camp was the renovation and cleaning of the building in Kamaraj Nagar. The schedule and workflow were meticulously drafted by Rev.

Fr. Boby MST. Under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Sathianesan, the 10 brothers engaged in intensive cleaning and maintenance work. The work camp concluded successfully on the 24th. Beyond the physical improvements made to the facility, the camp served as a meaningful and enriching experience. It provided a profound sense of accomplishment and strengthened the bond of fellowship among the brothers. I thank all the coordinators behind the organization of work camp.

Vestition and First Profession at Thuckalay: On April 18, 2026, at the CMC Chavara Provincial House, Thuckalay, Sr. Viji Therese CMC and Sr. Jeffy Clare CMC joyfully received their religious habits and made their First Profession in the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel. The liturgical celebration, which I presided over, began at 10:00 AM. The Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekkalam CMI, and Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal. Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal delivered a profound homily, reflecting on the significance of the religious calling. Following the liturgy, a brief felicitation gathering was held where representatives from the parish and various congregations extended their warm greetings to the newly professed Sisters. The ceremony concluded with the Sisters expressing their heartfelt gratitude to all who attended. I extend my warmest congratulations to Sr. Viji Therese and Sr. Jeffy Clare on this blessed occasion. I offer my best wishes as they begin their journey in religious life, praying that they continue to inspire others by radiating the values of their vocation. I also express my sincere gratitude to the Provincial, Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese CMC, and her team for their commendable efforts in organizing such a meaningful celebration.

Inauguration of Franciscan Year and Declaration of Pilgrim Centre at Mezhacode: In alignment with the 800th anniversary of the Heavenly Birth of St. Francis of Assisi, and following the declaration of a Special Jubilee Year by the Holy Father, our diocese has formally designated the St. Francis Assisi Church, Mezhacode, as a Pilgrimage Centre. The declaration ceremony and inauguration of the Franciscan Year was held on 19 April 2026 at St. Francis Assisi Church, Mezhacode. The event started at 3:30 PM with the Adoration of Blessed Sacrament. Following the adoration, a solemn liturgical procession took place from the Presbytery to the church and at the entrance along with the Curia members and Forane Vicars the lamp was lighted at the Stone Cross. Then the liturgical ceremonies were held as follows:

- **Welcome:** A warm welcome was given to all present by Rev. Fr. Jobin Vettukallel, the Forane Vicar of Arukani.
- **Blessing of the Jubilee Door (Holy Door):** A symbolic entry point for pilgrims to seek grace during this Jubilee year.
- **Installation of the Sacred Relic:** The permanent placement of the Saint's relic brought in procession by Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, the Provincial Superior of FCC Province, Thuckalay.
- **Novena of St. Francis of Assisi:** Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil led the Novena prayer to St. Francis of Assisi.
- **Declaration of the Pilgrimage Centre:** Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the chancellor, read the decree declaring St. Francis Assisi Church, Mezhacode as Pilgrim Centre of the Diocese till 10 January 2027 and granting the plenary indulgence to the pilgrims.

At the end, a concelebrated Holy Qurbana was offered for the intentions of the universal Church and our Eparchy thanking God for granting another Jubilee Year of grace. Followed by the Holy Qurbana, two speeches were delivered by the catechetical students of Mezhacode pointing out the life and message of St. Francis. Fr. Bibin Kcheethra, the Parish Priest thanked everyone at the end. The entire programme concluded with the agape meal. From now until January 10, 2027, the faithful are invited to visit Mezhacode to obtain a Plenary Indulgence, under the usual conditions prescribed by the Church. I express my sincere appreciation to Fr. Bibin Kocheethra, the Parish Priest, the FCC Sisters, and the parishioners of Mezhacode for their meticulous arrangements—from the organized parking at the school grounds to the fellowship meal served to all attendees. I encourage all our priests, religious, and laity to organize pilgrimages to this

center. Let us walk through the Jubilee Door with 'clean hands and a pure heart' (Psalm 24:3-4), finding in the 'Poverello' of Assisi a true guide to discovering the Creator within all His creations.

Extended Territory Mission Meet: The Extended Territory Mission Meet was held on 20 April 2026, at St. Joseph's Church, Virudhunagar. The programme commenced at 10:00 a.m. with a hour of Eucharistic Adoration, led by Fr. Thomas Jebanesh and Fr. Ajin C. Joseph. Following the prayer, the formal meeting was presided over by Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, with eighteen members in attendance. Fr. Thomas Jebanesh welcomed the gathering and presented the minutes and report from the previous meeting. Fr. Tobin introduced the new religious missionaries appointed to Virudhunagar: Sr. Lisset SH, Sr. Angel SH, and Sr. Linta SH. They were formally felicitated by Fr. Subin and shared their initial mission experiences with the group. The missionaries shared the various programs and initiatives to be conducted in their respective centers and mission stations. Fr. Subin commended the missionaries for their dedicated service and provided an outline of upcoming diocesan programmes and administrative goals. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Sr. Lisset SH, followed by a fellowship lunch. Sincere appreciation is extended to Fr. Tobin Alapurackal, the Mission Coordinator, for his effective organization of the meet within the extended territory.

Priests' Conference: The Priests' Conference for the month of April along with the celebration of the Feast of St. George was held at Sangamam on 25 April 2026. The gathering began with one hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, led by Fr. Jogesh Polachira. The conference officially commenced at 10:45 AM, coordinated by Vicar General, Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, and presided over by me. The meeting started with a prayer song, led by Fr. Amanto Edakkootathil. Fr. Vicar General extended a warm welcome to all. Fr. Justin Cheruvilil, the Presbyterium Secretary presented the minutes of the previous Priests' Conference, which were then approved by the assembly. Then, the Birthdays and Feast days of the month was greeted to the respective fathers. Subsequently, time was allotted for the Directors of various departments to share updates and important information related to their respective ministries. Then Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal delivered felicitation and welcome to the new priests present for the meeting: Fr. Bibin Koyickakudiyil and Fr. Tony Kallamparambil. Bishop officially welcomed them to the Presbyterium by putting shall. Both of them thanked the presbyterium in their reply speech.

As a gesture of gratitude to the priests who have completed their ministry in the diocese and are returning to their respective dioceses or congregations, a video presentation was shared by Pulari Communications. We remain deeply grateful to the following priests who complete their service and return by 24 May 2026:

Rev. Fr. Jose Kanachikuzhiyil: Fr. Jose Kanachikuzhiyil joined our presbyterium on 8 October 2021. During his time with us, he served with great dedication as Assistant Parish Priest at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu, from October 2021 to May 2022 and as Parish Priest of Lourdes Matha Church, Chenamcode, and St. John Paul II Mission Church, Kulasekharam, since 24 May 2022. Fr. Jose is a simple and hardworking priest who integrated into our presbyterium with remarkable ease. His humble nature and missionary zeal earned him the love and respect of the clergy and the faithful alike. Furthermore, his dynamic involvement in CML particularly as the Forane Director, has greatly inspired and energized our children. As he returns to his home diocese of Thamarasserry, we express our profound gratitude for his invaluable service to the Diocese.

Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochuparampil MST: Fr. Bobby served the Diocese from 2025 to 2026, as Rector of St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal, Eparchial Judicial Vicar and then from October 2026 onwards as Director of Major Seminarians. Even during your short tenure at our minor seminary, his love for the Church and dedication to the formation of future priests were evident. As the Director of Major Seminarians, he meticulously planned their entire programme. As he returned to the Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle (MST), we express our profound gratitude for his invaluable service to the Diocese.

Rev. Fr. Jiji Puthenpurackal: Fr. Jiji served the Diocese from 2025 to 2026, and over this one year, his ministry has been a true blessing. He has served faithfully in Annikkarai Parish and his dedication toward the spiritual growth of our faithful have been a great blessing. His dynamic involvement in SMYM and Uraviyam particularly as their Forane Director, has greatly inspired and energized our youth and family. Now he goes back to take up further responsibilities in his home diocese and we remain deeply grateful for his invaluable service to the Diocese.

The session continued with reply speeches from Fr. Jose and Fr. Jiji. In my presidential address, I informed that the Minor Seminary will remain closed for one year due to a lack of candidates for formation. I also provided practical guidance to be followed during the upcoming transfer of priests. The meeting concluded with a blessing at 1:00 PM. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the Fathers for their active participation, valuable insights, and the meaningful contributions that ensured the success of the conference.

Following the conference, everyone gathered in the refectory for festal celebrations, honouring my patron, St. George, as well as the second patron of the diocese. Fr. Ajin Jose, representing the priests, and Sr. Jessy Therese, representing the sisters, offered words of felicitation. The diocesan choir director then led a beautiful felicitation song. We were also pleased to have representatives from various sisters' congregations and neighbouring religious communities in attendance. I express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone for your kind wishes and prayers. My thanks also go to the Vicar General and all those who collaborated with him to make this event truly memorable. Once again, I thank you all and humbly request your continued prayers for my ministry.

VPV Training at Padanthalumoodu: On 25 April 2026 a VPV training course for catechism teachers was held at Parish Auditorium, Padanthalumoodu. Following the inaugural prayer, the teachers were divided into groups, and classes were conducted to provide effective tips for conducting VPV sessions. Mr. Edwinson and Mr. Shonic Reegan facilitated these sessions. Our major seminarians animated the teachers by teaching action songs and games. Over 159 teachers participated in the programme, which concluded by 4:00 pm. A significant highlight of the day was the official distribution of the VPV 2026 books. This year marks a prestigious milestone in the history of Narcheithi Nilayam, as it is the first time the organization has entirely prepared and produced the VPV textbooks in-house. I express my gratitude to the director, Fr. Abilash Xavier, and the catechetical team for conducting the course efficiently.

Edufair 2026 at Kalluvilai: With the aim of empowering the next generation of professionals, Edufair 2026 was successfully conducted on April 25, 2026, at the Asir Auditorium, Kalluvilai. This comprehensive career guidance programme was specifically designed to support students in their +1 and +2 years as they navigate critical academic transitions. The event was presided over by Fr. Mahesh Antony, Director of the Kanyakumari Social Service Society (KKSSS). The keynote session was delivered by Mr. Anto Xavier, whose insightful and motivating discourse provided students with a clear perspective on emerging career opportunities and the importance of goal-oriented planning. A total of 189 students from various schools attended the programme, demonstrating a keen interest in shaping their professional futures. 12 prominent colleges set up dedicated stalls, offering one-on-one counselling and detailed information regarding courses, admission procedures, and campus facilities. My heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Mahesh and team who made Edufair 2026 a resounding success.

New branch of Nidhi Limited at Utharamcode: Thuckalay Nidhi Limited celebrated a significant milestone in its organizational growth with the successful inauguration of its newest branch at Utharamcode, Muzhucode, on April 27, 2026. The event was marked by a formal ceremony attended by distinguished guests, local leaders, and the administrative team. The function was presided over by me and I offered my blessings and guidance for the new venture. The branch was officially opened by CA Amirtha Rajan, who addressed the gathering on the importance of financial inclusion. Rev. Fr. Saji Elambaseril

delivered the felicitation speech, commending the institution for its commitment to serving the regional community. I thank Fr. Mahesh Antony, Director of KKSSS and his dedicated Nidhi team for the meticulous planning and logistical arrangements for the opening.

Blessing of Kurissadi at Karode: On 28 April 2025, the renovated Kurissadi dedicated to St. Mary, located in front of St. Joseph's Church, Karode, was solemnly blessed. I presided over the ceremony, which commenced at 05:30 PM. The event began with a warm welcome from the Parish Priest, Fr. Justin Sutheesh. Following the blessing, I presided over a Solemn Holy Qurbana, during which two children were graced to receive their First Holy Communion. We were also joined by several priests from neighbouring parishes who came to share in the celebration. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Fr. Justin Sutheesh for his excellent organization and dedication in making this spiritual event a success.

INFORMATION

- **Mrs. Thankamma Thomas (74)**, beloved mother of Fr. Josy Puthenpurayil, was called to the eternal rest on 10 April 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Fr. Josy and his family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Sr. Ambrosia SH (90)** was called to the eternal rest on 13 April 2026. She was a member in Arukani convent during the years 1998 – 2001. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to the SH Sisters and pray for the departed soul.
- **Mrs. Aleyamma Mathew (80)**, beloved mother of Sr. Maria Mathew CMC, was called to the eternal rest on 19 April 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Maria and her family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Mr. Thomas Cheruvelil (87)**, the elder brother of the father of Fr. Justin Cheruvelil, was called to the eternal rest on 21 April 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Fr. Justin and his family members and pray for the departed soul.
- **Picnic of Fathers** was conducted to Palakkad on 21-22 April 2026. Sincere thanks to the coordinators Fr. Ajeesh Attiyil, Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil and Fr. George Kandathil.
- **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 2026:** 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 2026 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.
- The following priests are appointed as internal auditors for the Diocesan parishes and institutions, effective from 01 May 2026: Very Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, Very Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, Very Rev. Fr. Toji Parambilparambil and Rev. Fr. Prince Cherippanatt. We wish them God's abundant blessings in their new ministry.
- **Bro. Jerfin** who have completed successfully his minor seminary formation will be sent to St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor for philosophical studies.
- **Bro. Aswin**, who is currently entered into fourth year formation will be sent to Mission Orientation Centre, Kotra, Ujjain for the fourth year programme.

- **Bro. Albin** who has completed the regency ministry will be sent to St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalappuzha for theological studies. His vestition will be on 06 May 2026 at Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal.

FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

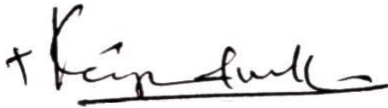
01 May	-	Pastoral Council
03 May	-	New Priests' Day at Soosaipuram
05 - 07 May	-	Vocation Camp at Minor Seminary
26 May	-	Priests Conference

Priests' Conference
26 May 2026, Tuesday
@ Sangamam
Time: 09.30 AM

CONCLUSION

We are in the Easter season. Easter is the most joyful celebration of the church year. Celebrated against the backdrop of the shadows and darkness of Lent and Holy Week, this season becomes a living expression of the hope that God has brought into the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Since this hope of renewal and new life, both present and future, is at the heart of the Good News that the Church is commissioned to proclaim and live in the world, every possible avenue for proclaiming that Good News should be utilised. Let us make use of the various aspects of worship this season offers, especially the Marian month we begin tomorrow, to become vehicles for God's grace and transformative work in the world and among our people.

May our Blessed Mother intercede for each one of us!
Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

