



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/183/2026

30 June 2026

Dear Rev. Fathers,

Greetings from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

As we enter July, the Catholic Church, particularly our Syro-Malabar Church, will celebrate two important feasts – the Solemnity of St Thomas the Apostle, who brought Faith to our land, and the feast of St Alphonsa Muttathupadathu, the first canonised saint born on Indian soil. In this circular, I wish to highlight St Alphonsa in light of the sudden demise of Rev. Fr Thomas Powathuparampil, a great promoter of devotion to her.

A Daughter of India, A Saint of the Church

On 28 July 1946, a young Franciscan Clarist nun breathed her last in a small room of the convent at Bharananganam in Kerala. She was thirty-five. She had endured with extraordinary patience, offering every pain as a gift to God. The Church, recognising in her life the authentic mark of Christian holiness, declared her Blessed in 1986. On 12 October 2008, Pope Benedict XVI canonised her in Rome — the first woman born in India to be raised to the altars.

St Alphonsa's life teaches us that holiness is not reserved for the learned or the powerful but is the vocation of every soul that surrenders itself fully to the will of God. She is a companion to our pastoral ministry — a saint who understands suffering from within and intercedes with unfailing tenderness before the throne of God on behalf of all who call upon her.

The Shrine at Nagercoil and the Annual Pilgrimage

Within our Eparchy, the Shrine of St Alphonsa at Nagercoil has become a place of grace, prayer, and pilgrimage for an ever-growing number of the faithful. The witness to answered prayers and renewed faith continues to draw pilgrims to her shrine year after year.

The annual feast pilgrimage to the Alphonsa Shrine in Nagercoil is one of the most cherished events in our Eparchal calendar. Over the years, it has become a joyful convergence of faith and fellowship, bringing together the Latin and Syro-Malabar faithful in a spirit of shared devotion. As you know, the nine-day novena in honour of St Alphonsa, recited in every parish of our Eparchy in the days preceding her feast, prepares the hearts of the faithful to receive the grace she so generously obtains for those who invoke her.

In recent years, the SYM of the Eparchy has organised a pilgrimage on foot to the shrine — a walk of faith undertaken by our young people, accompanied by prayer and song. This walking pilgrimage has become a powerful sign of the youth's living devotion to St Alphonsa, and I am grateful to you for the pastoral support you provide to your young parishioners.

In Grateful Memory: Fr Thomas Powathuparampil

It would be impossible to speak of devotion to St Alphonsa in this Eparchy without recalling with gratitude the man who devoted himself with singular passion to spreading her spirituality among us — the late Fr Thomas Powathuparampil.

Fr Thomas was, above all, an apostle of St Alphonsa. He devoted his best energies, his gifts of mind and heart, and the strength of his years to promoting her life, virtues, and message. He recognised in her the particular grace that India and the Church needed — the witness of joyful suffering embraced in love — and laboured tirelessly to make that witness known among our priests, religious, and people.

Following the historic canonisation of St Alphonsa on 12 October 2008, Fr Thomas took the initiative to organise a grand celebration within the Eparchy to mark the occasion. He brought together the faithful of both the Latin Diocese, Syro-Malankara Diocese and the Syro-Malabar Eparchy, creating a massive and joyful gathering on the school campus at Nagercoil. That celebration left a deep impression on all who participated and sowed the seed from which our present tradition of solemn annual observance has grown. Every year since, the feast of St Alphonsa has been celebrated with increasing solemnity and participation — a living tribute to the vision and zeal of Fr Thomas.

Fr Thomas did not merely organise events. He formed souls. He preached her spirituality from the pulpit and introduced novena prayers in the parishes. He was personally convinced that Saint Alphonsa had a special message for the suffering people of our time, and he communicated that conviction to all he encountered with warmth and persuasion. His entire priestly ministry was, in many ways, a prolonged act of devotion to her.

This year, for the first time, we shall celebrate the feast of St Alphonsa without Fr Thomas Powathuparampil among us. He has gone before us to the One in whose service he laboured so faithfully. As priests, we will feel his absence in a particular way — he was a colleague, a fellow priest who, by example, showed us what it means to be consumed by a single apostolic passion. The tradition he built is now entrusted to us. I ask each of you to carry it forward with the same love and zeal.

Please remember Fr Thomas in your Mass intentions throughout the novena and on the feast day. He generously devoted his life to God and to God's people. May St Alphonsa, whom he loved and proclaimed, intercede for the repose of his soul!

The Spirituality of St Alphonsa for Our Priestly Life

The spirituality of St Alphonsa rests on a profound truth our age is reluctant to hear: suffering, willingly accepted and offered to God, is not wasted. It is participation in the redemptive mystery of the Cross. Alphonsa knew illness, misunderstanding, and deprivation from her early years. She did not deny the weight of these crosses, but received them as the very means by which God was fashioning her soul.

For us priests, this has particular significance. Our ministry is not immune to misunderstanding, fatigue, and interior desolation. There are days when pastoral labour seems unrewarded, our communities appear indifferent, and we feel inadequate. In those moments, the example of Alphonsa speaks to us not as an ideal beyond our reach, but as a companion who has walked that path and emerged radiant. Her intercession is especially powerful for those who bear hidden burdens — and she understands, from her own experience, what it means to wait for God in the darkness.

What made Alphonsa's suffering redemptive was not its intensity but its orientation. She did not merely endure — she offered. There is a world of difference between pain simply borne and pain consciously placed

on the altar as an act of love. Alphonsa learned, over years of slow purification, to turn every affliction into prayer and every limitation into a gift. This is the asceticism she proposes to us — not the dramatic mortifications of an earlier age, but the daily, quiet discipline of receiving what God permits and returning it to Him as an oblation. For a priest, the material for this offering is never far away: the parishioner who tests our patience, the meeting that exhausts without yielding fruit, the prayer that feels arid, the loneliness of the rectory at night. Alphonsa teaches us that none of this need be lost. All of it, surrendered in love, becomes priestly intercession.

Her spirituality, at its root, is one of abandonment — and she stands within a long tradition stretching from Saint Paul through Saint John of the Cross to Blessed Charles de Foucauld. To abandon oneself to God is not passivity; it is the most demanding act of faith. It requires us to relinquish the need to control outcomes, to measure results, and to justify our ministry by visible fruit. Alphonsa lived this abandonment not as a theological concept but as a daily existential choice, made in a body that would not cooperate and in circumstances she had not chosen. She became, precisely through that surrender, a hidden powerhouse of grace for the Church. We too are called to that hiddenness — to a priesthood whose deepest fruitfulness may never be visible to us in this life, yet is real and lasting before God.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Funeral Ceremony of Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil: The mortal remains of Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil were brought to St. Alphonsa Shrine, Nagercoil, on Monday, 1 June 2026, for public homage. The faithful paid their respects until 10:30 a.m. From 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., priests, religious sisters, and lay representatives offered condolence messages, recalling Fr. Thomas's dedicated ministry and service to the Church. At 11:15 a.m., I celebrated the Holy Qurbana together with the priests, sisters, and faithful gathered there, thanking God for the precious gift of Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil and commending his soul to the Lord. Immediately after the Holy Mass, the mortal remains were taken to the Clergy Home of the Archdiocese of Changanassery, where the Office for the Dead was recited. Thereafter, the body was taken to his residence at Kooropada. The funeral services were held on 2 June 2026. The first part of the funeral rites began at 1:00 p.m. at his residence and was led by Bishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam. The second part of the prayers was conducted in the parish church by Bishop Mar Paadiyath. The third part, the Holy Qurbana, was celebrated by me, during which Rev. Fr. Maani Puthiyidam delivered the homily. The final part of the funeral service was led by Cardinal George Alencherry. During the course of the ceremonies, Bishop Mar Kochupurackal also visited the residence and offered prayers for the departed soul. The batchmates of Fr. Powathuparampil were present throughout the funeral ceremonies, offering their prayers and support. I express my sincere gratitude to all the bishops, priests, religious sisters, and faithful who participated in the funeral services and prayed for the eternal repose of Fr. Thomas. I especially thank Bishop Peter Remigius, the bishops, vicars general, priests, sisters, and faithful from various dioceses who joined us in prayer and solidarity. I gratefully acknowledge Rev. Fr. Augustine Thyparampil and Rev. Fr. Tom Ariyankala, who accompanied Fr. Thomas from the hospital until his burial. My special appreciation also goes to Rev. Fr. Sanil and his team for the meticulous and well-organized arrangements made at Nagercoil.

Kuzhanthai ISO Annual Day Celebration: The Kuzhanthai ISO Annual Day was celebrated on Sunday, 7 June 2026, at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. The members of the Kuzhanthai ISO Movement presented a variety of colourful cultural programmes, showcasing their talents with enthusiasm and joy. The programme was presided over by the Department Coordinator, Rev. Fr. Antony Jose. During the function, Rev. Fr. Josemon Puraiyidathukunnel was officially installed as the new Director, and Sr. Neha Anns CMC was installed as the new Animator of the movement. The gathering also expressed its gratitude to Rev. Fr. Toji and Sr. Blessy CMC for their dedicated and committed service over the years. I join in thanking them sincerely for their valuable contributions to the growth and development of the Kuzhanthai ISO Movement. May God bless them abundantly in their future ministries.

CML State level Meeting: The Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) State-Level online meeting was held on 10 June 2026, bringing together representatives from various dioceses to review and strengthen the mission of the organization. The meeting featured official addresses emphasizing the four foundational mottos of CML—Love, Sacrifice, Service, and Suffering—and included presentations on diocesan activities, with special appreciation given to the Eparchy of Hosur for its proactive initiatives. During the seminar, two major directives were issued: the organization of a unified annual state-level celebration beginning on 29 November 2026 in Ramanathapuram, and the preparation of a common State-Level Action Plan in digital format. Important timelines were also established, including the completion of the state-level action plan by 21 June 2026 and its official virtual release on 25 June 2026. The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks and the final blessing by myself. As decided earlier again the state level committee had an online meeting on 25 June 2026 and released the state – level action plan in digital format. As the patron of CML Tamil State committee I whole heartedly thank the team leaders for their dedicated cooperation and immediate release of the action plan.

Department Heads and Directors' Meeting: The meeting of the Department Heads and Directors was held on Monday, 15 June 2026, at Sangamam. Rev. Fr. James Kokavayalil, Secretary of the Syro-Malabar Public Affairs Commission, served as the resource person for the day. The central theme of the meeting was the Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year. Fr. James presented a detailed reflection on the significance of this initiative, emphasizing the challenges faced by the Syro-Malabar community today. He pointed out that while the number of Syro-Malabar faithful is gradually declining, other religious communities continue to grow steadily. He stressed the importance of preserving and strengthening our identity by remaining rooted in our rich liturgical traditions, spiritual heritage, and cultural values. Encouraging all participants to take an active role in this mission, he concluded with a thought-provoking message: *"The bus to our destination is already before us; we should not miss it."* In view of the importance of the topic, all Directors, Department Heads, Animators, and lay representatives were invited to participate in the meeting. During the second session, each department presented its current activities, achievements, and future plans. The presentations provided an opportunity for mutual learning, collaboration, and planning for the effective implementation of departmental programmes.

Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year Core Committee Meeting: The Core Committee Meeting for the Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year was held on the afternoon of 15 June 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at Sangamam. The members participated actively and enthusiastically in the discussions. The meeting began with the presentation of the committee report by the Director. Subsequently, the translated documents related to the Empowerment Year were reviewed and discussed in detail. The committee decided that these documents should be further simplified and distributed to all departments, which would then prepare and submit concrete action plans based on the guidelines provided. The Labour and Laity Commission was entrusted with several important responsibilities. These include identifying eligible students and providing them with guidance and training for government examinations, encouraging capable and interested individuals to participate in public and political life, and motivating students to strive for excellence in various fields of education, leadership, and professional achievement. I express my sincere appreciation to all the members of the Core Committee for their active participation, valuable suggestions, and commitment to the goals of the Syro-Malabar Empowerment Year.

Visit to the Extended territories: I undertook a pastoral visit to the Diocese's extended mission territories on 17–18 June 2026, covering Nanguneri, Kayathar, Virudhunagar, Rameswaram (Vedalai), Theni, Chinnamanoor, Cumbum, and Madurai. The visit focused on reviewing missionary activities, meeting priests and religious sisters, assessing infrastructure projects, and identifying pastoral priorities. At Nanguneri, important decisions were taken regarding the completion of the Nirmala Home project. I also

visited various mission centers where I could see the dedicated efforts of missionary Fathers and Sisters in evangelization, village ministry, tuition centers, family visits, prayer gatherings, and social outreach programs. Particular attention was given to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, transportation difficulties, and the need for additional missionary personnel. The visit concluded with a common meeting of the priests serving in the extended territories, during which several important pastoral initiatives were proposed. These included the adoption of mission centers by Foranes for spiritual and financial support, provision of a mission allowance for missionaries, intensified youth ministry to address substance abuse, collaboration among mission centers for cemetery facilities, and the urgent deployment of more religious sisters, especially in Virudhunagar. I expressed my profound gratitude to the priests and sisters for their tireless missionary commitment despite many challenges and reaffirmed the Diocese's continued support for the growth and strengthening of the missions through prayer, pastoral collaboration, and developmental assistance.

CML Annual General Body Meeting: The Annual General Body Meeting of the Catholic Mission League (CML) was held on Sunday, 21 June 2026, at Sacred Heart Matriculation School, Padanthalumoodu. The gathering brought together Vice Directors, Organizers, and Student Representatives from various parishes of the Diocese, fostering a spirit of unity, collaboration, and missionary enthusiasm. The programme commenced with the flag-hoisting ceremony, marking the beginning of the day's proceedings. Adv. Gnanadhas, National Organizer and Tamil Nadu State President of CML, addressed the assembly and encouraged the participants to deepen their commitment to the missionary vision of the Church. The CML Prayer was led by Rev. Sr. Ann Grace, invoking God's blessings upon the meeting and its deliberations. A special welcome was extended to the newly appointed Directors and Vice Directors. Following the inaugural session, the participants assembled according to their respective Foranes, with the Forane Directors serving as coordinators. During these group discussions, student representatives shared their experiences, parish activities, achievements, and suggestions for strengthening and expanding the mission of CML in the Diocese. One of the significant events of the day was the successful conduct of the Diocesan Executive Election. The Action Plan for the year 2026–2027 was then presented and explained by Rev. Fr. Printo Kurias, outlining the vision, objectives, and programmes for the coming year. Rev. Fr. Antony Jose addressed the gathering and officially inaugurated the CML Activity Year 2026–2027. In his message, he encouraged the members to remain steadfast in their faith and missionary commitment, becoming active witnesses of Christ in their families, schools, parishes, and society. The meeting concluded with the singing of the Mission Anthem, followed by a vote of thanks. The participants departed with renewed enthusiasm and a deeper sense of fellowship, ready to carry forward the mission and ideals of CML in their respective parishes and communities.

Gathering of Junior Religious Sisters Serving in the Diocese: On 24 July 2026, at 6:00 PM, I invited the Sisters who had recently made their First Profession and Final Profession and are presently serving in our Diocese to the Bishop's House for a special gathering. During the meeting, I spoke to them about the dignity, importance, and blessings of being a Religious Sister in the vineyard of the Lord. I encouraged them to cherish their vocation and to remain faithful witnesses of Christ through their prayer, service, and consecrated life. As young Sisters, they have a unique opportunity to guide children and youth through the Word of God and the teachings of the Church, helping to form a strong foundation of faith in the younger generation. I also reflected on the example of Mother Mary, reminding them that a Religious Sister is called to embrace every circumstance of life as part of God's loving plan. Through trust, humility, and obedience, they can become powerful instruments of God's grace in the Church and society. Following the meeting, we gathered in the Chapel for the celebration of Ramsa and the recitation of the Holy Rosary. The prayerful atmosphere strengthened our communion and commitment to the Lord. After the prayers, a reception was held, and all the Sisters shared a delicious meal together in a spirit of joy and fraternity. On this occasion, I

conveyed my best wishes and prayers for their fruitful and dedicated ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a token of appreciation and encouragement, gifts were presented to the Sisters. Rev. Fr. Antony Jose felicitated the Sisters and offered words of encouragement, while Rev. Fr. Sunil Antony skilfully anchored the programme and contributed to its success. I express my sincere gratitude to Sr. Mary Rani, the Regent Brothers, and all those who worked behind the scenes to organize and conduct the programme smoothly.

Kaikkars and Accountants' Meeting at Sangamam: The Diocese of Thuckalay organized its Annual Meeting and Orientation Programme for all Kaikkars and Parish Accountants on Sunday, 28 June 2026, at Sangamam, Thuckalay. The day-long programme brought together around 65 participants and was designed to strengthen the pastoral, administrative, and spiritual formation of lay leaders serving in our parish communities. The programme began with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana at 10:00 a.m., presided over by Rev. Fr. Antony Jose. This was followed by the inaugural session, during which Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, Chancellor, extended a warm welcome to all the participants. In my keynote address, I highlighted the indispensable role of Kaikkars in the Church's mission of evangelization. I encouraged them to work with dedication and commitment in strengthening the faith life of parishioners and ensuring that every member remains actively connected to the parish community. The first session was led by Rev. Fr. Dominic Kadatchadhas, Cooperative Manager of the Diocese of Kuzhithurai. Drawing upon Sacred Scripture and his pastoral experience, he reflected on the qualities of Christian leadership and the various challenges faced by lay leaders in the Church today. His inspiring presentation encouraged the participants to carry out their responsibilities with faith, integrity, and a spirit of service. In the afternoon, two resource sessions were conducted by Rev. Fr. Antony Jose and Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal. They provided practical guidance and canonical insights on the role of the laity in the Church, the rights and responsibilities of Kaikkars, the structure and functioning of the Pothumantram and Panku Peravai, and the accounting systems followed in our parishes. These sessions helped participants gain a deeper understanding of their duties and the importance of transparency and accountability in parish administration. The programme concluded with an interactive discussion session, giving participants an opportunity to seek clarifications, share their experiences, and offer valuable feedback. I sincerely thank all the parish priests for encouraging and facilitating the participation of their Kaikkars and parish accountants. I also express my heartfelt appreciation to the organizing team—Rev. Fr. Antony Jose, Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal, and the Regent Brothers—for their dedicated efforts, excellent coordination, and efficient execution of the programme. Their commitment contributed greatly to the success of this enriching gathering.

SMYM Meet Up: The Diocesan Youth Department inaugurated its activities for the year on Sunday, 28 June 2026, at the Youth Ministry Office, Kalluvilai. The programme was attended by the Diocesan Director, Animator, and all the Forane Directors. In addition, promoters, in-charges, and unit leaders from various parishes and mission centers actively participated in the gathering. A special session on Youth Empowerment, with a particular focus on Syro-Malabar Community Empowerment, was conducted during the meeting. The session highlighted the vital role of young people in the Church and society, encouraging them to develop leadership qualities, strengthen their faith, preserve their rich Syro-Malabar heritage, and become responsible agents of positive change. The participants were inspired to contribute actively to the growth of their communities through service, unity, and Christian witness. The programme provided a valuable opportunity for interaction, learning, and planning future initiatives for the holistic development of youth within the Diocese. It was an enriching and fruitful experience for all those who attended. I express my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Anil Raj, the Diocesan Director, for his dedicated leadership and vision. I also thank all the Forane Directors, Animators, promoters, in-charges, and unit leaders for their active participation and commitment to the mission of youth empowerment.

Basic Training Programme for Catechism Teachers: A Basic Training Programme was organized for Catechism Teachers with the aim of empowering them in their noble mission of faith formation on 28 June 2026 at Padanthalumoodu. The programme focused on deepening their knowledge of Sacred Scripture, strengthening their understanding of the teachings of the Church, and fostering Christian values essential for effective catechetical ministry. Catechism teachers play a vital role in shaping the faith of children and young people. Through this training, participants were encouraged to become authentic witnesses of Christ, capable of imparting Biblical truths and Church teachings with confidence, clarity, and conviction. Special emphasis was given to the importance of living Christian values, nurturing a prayerful life, and guiding students to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The sessions helped the teachers gain a deeper appreciation of their responsibility as collaborators in the Church's mission of evangelization. They were inspired to teach not only through words but also through their example, becoming instruments of faith, hope, and love in the lives of the children entrusted to their care. The programme was enriching and beneficial for all the participants, equipping them with the necessary spiritual and pastoral tools to carry out their ministry more effectively. I express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Rev. Fr. Toji Kozhuvakandathil for his excellent organization and dedicated efforts in making this programme a success.

Information and Updates

Appointment to the Uraviyam Department: Rev. Sr. Liza SH has been appointed as the Animator of the Uraviyam Department with effect from 1 June 2026. She will assist the Director and the departmental team in strengthening the Uraviyam Movement throughout the Diocese, fostering faith communities rooted in the Word of God and promoting spiritual growth among the faithful. We wish her God's abundant blessings in this important ministry.

Memorial of Rev. Sr. Alice SABS: The 41st Memorial Day of Rev. Sr. Alice SABS was observed on 6 June 2026. Rev. Fr. Joss Muttathupadam celebrated the Holy Mass and offered prayers for the eternal repose of her soul. We gratefully remember her dedicated service and commend her to the loving mercy of God.

Demise of Fr. Sony Thekkummuriyil: Rev. Dr. Sony Thekkummuriyil was called to eternal rest on 07 June 2026. He was the younger brother of Sr. Lissy Thekkummuriyil, SABS, who served as the Provincial Councillor at Soosaipuram from 2022 to 2025. Sr. Lissy is currently residing at the Mission House, Mudiyoorkara, Kottayam.

Condolence: Mr. Chacko K. C. Kuzhimattathil, father of Sr. Sheena LSDP, who is serving at the LSDP Convent, Perumchilampu, entered into eternal rest on 11 June 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Sr. Sheena and her family and pray that the Lord may grant him eternal rest and comfort his loved ones.

Cathedral Finance Committee Meeting: The Cathedral Finance Committee Meeting was held on 11 June 2026 at St. Joseph's Church, Soosaipuram. All committee members were present. During the meeting, Rev. Fr. Antony Jose presented the income and expenditure report related to the Cathedral construction project, while Rev. Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal provided the necessary clarifications regarding the accounts. In order to ensure greater transparency and accountability, I suggested that the monthly income and expenditure statements be presented within ten days of the completion of each month.

41st Day Memorial of Mr. Joseph Kuruvila: The 41st Day Memorial of Mr. Joseph Kuruvila, father of Rev. Fr. Sanjo, was observed on Thursday, 18 June 2026, at St. Mary's Church, Kallupalam. The faithful gathered in prayerful remembrance, commending his soul to the mercy of God.

Remembering Mr. Sunil Kumar: Mr. Sunil Kumar (53), a member of St. Mary's Church, Thuckalay, passed away on 23 June 2026 following a cardiac arrest. Originally a member of St. Antony's Church, Vayalinkarai, he was actively involved in various spiritual and parish activities and maintained close

relationship with priests and religious sisters. Recognizing his missionary zeal and spirit of service, Rev. Fr. Zacharias Cherunilam, then Parish Priest of Vayalinkarai, invited him to assist in the activities of the Diocese. Thereafter, Mr. Sunil dedicated himself wholeheartedly to diocesan ministries and eventually settled in Thuckalay, where he generously served many people, especially the CMC Sisters. Although he had undergone heart surgery following a cardiac attack two years ago and was under medical care, he continued his service with commitment and dedication. His passing is a significant loss to both the parish community and the Diocese. We pray that the Lord may reward his faithful service and grant him eternal rest.

Forane Priests' Conferences: The Forane Priests' Conference of Padanthalumoodu and Nithravilai Foranes was held on Monday, 22 June 2026, at Christurajapuram. The Forane Priests' Conference of Soosaipuram and Thuckalay-Pilankalai Foranes was held on Wednesday, 24 June 2026, at KKSSS, Kalluvilai. These meetings provided opportunities for pastoral review, mutual sharing, and coordinated planning for the ongoing mission of the Diocese.

TPWA Core Committee Meeting: The TPWA Committee Meeting was held on 25 June 2026 at the Bishop's House. All committee members were present for the meeting. One of the major agenda items was the proposal to transfer the medical insurance scheme to a new agency in order to ensure more efficient service and timely benefits for the priests. The members also engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the construction of a new clergy home. The priests shared constructive suggestions, positive feedback, and practical plans concerning the project. I requested the committee members to communicate the details of the discussions to all priests and encourage them to share their opinions and recommendations for the successful realization of the project.

Thenkasi Mission Visit: I undertook an official visit to the Thenkasi Mission on 27th June 2026. During the visit, I inspected the ongoing second-floor construction at Puthur School. By 4:15 pm, the diocesan priests serving in the Thenkasi Mission assembled at the border for a brief gathering. Following this, we proceeded to Ambur for a general meeting with all the missionaries. The recollection began at 6:00 pm, which was followed by a meeting where Fr. Sumesh, the mission coordinator, along with other priests, shared the plans and upcoming activities of the mission. During the course of the meeting, we felicitated and congratulated Fr. Thomas Thuckalay on completing 25 years of faithful priestly ministry in the diocese. The gathering concluded with my pastoral message and blessing. I thank the Lord for the abundant blessings He constantly showers upon our missions and missionaries.

Sinai Theological Centre Inauguration: The Sinai Theological Centre was formally inaugurated on 28 June 2026 at Padanthalumoodu. Around 20 students participated in the inaugural programme. On this occasion, certificates were awarded to parishioners who successfully completed their theology courses. The programme was well organised by Rev. Fr. Shijo Aikarakunnel, Director of the Sinai Theological Centre.

Laity and Labour Commission Meeting: The Laity and Labour Commission convened its meeting on 28 June 2026 at Padanthalumoodu. The main focus of the gathering was the empowerment of the laity. Fruitful discussions were held on equipping lay faithful with leadership skills and encouraging students to excel in various fields, with special emphasis on preparing them to succeed in government competitive examinations. The meeting was coordinated by Rev. Fr. Robins Kuzhikodil, Director of the Labour and Laity Department.

Drug Awareness Rally and Programme: The Puthuvazhvu De-addiction Centre organised a Drug Awareness Rally and Awareness Programme on 29 June 2026 at Soosaipuram, Karungal, in collaboration with St. Alphonsa College, APJM Matriculation Higher Secondary School, and the TNBC Health Commission. I had the opportunity to participate in the rally and address the gathering on the mental, physical, emotional, and psychological effects of substance addiction, stressing the importance of prevention, timely intervention, and compassionate support for those affected. The programme was

efficiently organised by Rev Fr Aby Thomas, the Correspondent of St Alphonsa College and Rev. Fr. Christhudas, Director of the Puthuvazhvu De-addiction Centre.

Condolences: Mrs. Leelamma Mathew (84), the beloved mother of Sr. Jyothis SABS, who is presently serving at the SABS Convent, Palapallam, passed away peacefully and entered into eternal rest on the morning of 30 June 2026. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Sr. Jyothis, her bereaved family, and the members of the SABS Congregation. May the merciful Lord grant eternal rest to the departed soul and bestow strength, comfort, and hope upon all who grieve her passing.

Forthcoming Major Events

03 July 2026	-	Dhukrana of St. Thomas the Apostle
05 July 2026	-	41 st Memorial Mass of Rev Fr Thomas Powathuparamil
11 July 2026	-	Seminar on Papal Encyclical and Priests Conference
15 July 2026	-	Forane Vicars Meeting
25 July 2026	-	St Alphonsa Feast Nadaipayanam

Papal Encyclical Seminar & Priests' Conference

11 July 2026, Saturday

@ Sangamam

Time: 09. 30 AM to 3.30 PM

CONCLUSION

On 3 July, we celebrate Dukhrana, the feast of St Thomas the Apostle. This feast holds particular significance for us, as we belong to the Syro-Malabar Church — a Church that traces its origins to the missionary zeal of this Apostle, who brought the Good News to India's shores. In a profound sense, we are the children of his faith and witness.

The doubt of St Thomas after the Resurrection of Jesus was not a failure of faith but the beginning of a deeper journey. When the Risen Lord appeared and invited him to see and touch, Thomas responded with one of the most luminous professions of faith in all of Scripture: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). His encounter with the Risen Christ teaches us that honest doubt, held with humility and an earnest desire to seek, can become the very threshold of transformative belief. Curiosity and searching, when oriented towards the Lord, are not obstacles to faith — they are pathways to it.

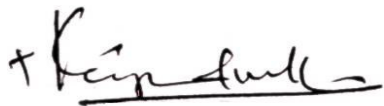
As we celebrate this feast, let us draw renewed strength from our Apostle's example. May our faith in Jesus Christ — crucified, risen, and alive in His Church — deepen and become more personal through every ministry we undertake and every service we render. Like St Thomas, who carried the Gospel to distant lands at great personal cost, may we too be courageous and credible witnesses to the Risen Lord in our homes, communities, and apostolic works.

Let us lead the brothers and sisters entrusted to our care into a living, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. At its heart, our ministry is nothing less than this — to bring others to the moment when, touched by grace, they can say from the depths of their hearts: "My Lord and my God!"

May St Thomas and St Alphonsa pray for our Eparchy, our priestly fraternity, the sick and suffering in our parishes, and all who seek God's mercy! May their example inspire in us a deeper surrender to God's will and greater fidelity to our priestly vocation!

May our Blessed Mother intercede for each one of us!

Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay



DIocese of Thuckalay

Chancery ✉ : diocesethuckalay@gmail.com
Mission Procure ✉ : thuckalaymission@gmail.com
 🌐 : www.thuckalaydiocese.org

Reception ☎ +91 94426 14118
Bishop's Secretary +91 90036 06855