

DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

# THUCKALAY TIDINGS

AUGUST 2024 | VOL. 4 | ISSUE 8



**Mary...**

is the most sweet bait; chosen,  
prepared and ordained by God,  
to catch the hearts of Men.

- *St Catherine of Sienna*



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### THUCKALAY TIDINGS

August 2024 | Vol. 4 | Issue 8

A Monthly online newsletter of Diocese of Thuckalay

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# Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors,  
Greetings from the Diocese of Thuckalay!

Today we are celebrating the Solemnity of the Assumption of our blessed mother and the Independence day of Our Beloved Country India. The Catholic Church teaches that Mary's body was glorified immediately at the end of her earthly life, unlike other mortal beings who must wait until the end of the world for bodily resurrection. This divine gift is seen as fitting for the mother of Jesus. It's important to note that the Assumption differs from Christ's Ascension - while Jesus ascended to Heaven by His power, Mary was taken up by God's power.

The Magnificat reflects Mary's embrace of God's greatness, which stands in contrast to the fear that God might restrict human freedom - a fear often seen as a core element of original sin and a temptation of the modern age. Mary's example encourages believers to recognise God's greatness as essential for human dignity and as a guide for resolving disputes.

Mary becomes a model of one who lived immersed in God's word, which gave her wisdom, goodness, and strength. By affirming Mary's closeness to humanity despite her heavenly status, she becomes a mother figure to whom people can always turn. This aspect of Marian devotion provides comfort and inspiration to many believers.

The Church sees scriptural support for the Assumption in passages that emphasise Mary's perfect union with Jesus' destiny as the Saviour. This union is evident throughout Scripture, from Jesus' birth to after his death, as seen in Mary's miraculous conception of Jesus, her prompting of Jesus during his first miracle at Cana, her witness to his crucifixion, and her presence at Pentecost after Jesus' death.

The timing of the dogma's formal definition in 1950, coming in the wake of World War II and at the onset of the Cold War, can be seen as a spiritual affirmation of hope and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. It offers a powerful counter-narrative to the materialistic and often hopeless worldviews that gained prominence in the 20th century.

15 August also marks India's Independence Day, commemorating the nation's liberation from British colonial rule in 1947. This event was the culmination of a long and often difficult struggle for freedom, led by figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and countless others who dedicated their lives to the cause of Indian sovereignty.

The path to independence was complex, involving strategies of non-violent resistance, civil disobedience, and negotiations with the British government. While independence brought joy and pride to millions, it was also accompanied by the painful partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, leading to one of the largest mass migrations in human history and tragic communal violence.

Prime Minister Nehru's famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech captured the spirit of the moment: "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." This moment marked a major shift in global politics and inspired anti-colonial movements worldwide.

While celebrating its independence and achievements, modern India also faces numerous challenges. These include threats to its unity in diversity, concerns about media independence, economic pressures on the poor, ongoing border issues, disparities in education access, high unemployment rates, environmental degradation, and social issues such as human trafficking and corruption.

The teachings of saintly educators like St Philip Neri and St John Bosco, who made their students become good Christians and honest citizens, can inspire us in this task. As educators and citizens, we are called to build bridges rather than walls and to contribute significantly to uplifting the poor and marginalised.

While the Assumption of Mary and India's Independence Day may seem unrelated, they both represent significant moments of transformation and hope. They remind us of the diverse ways in which human history unfolds, encompassing both spiritual and political dimensions. Both events speak to the human quest for dignity, freedom, and transcendence.

I wish each and every one of you a very Happy Feast of Assumption and Happy Independence Day. May our blessed mother intercede for each one of you and your family.



+ **George Rajendran sdb**  
**Bishop of Thuckalay**





## Great Shepherd's Journey among His Flocks

As the sun reached its zenith, a momentous occasion unfolded with the arrival of our beloved Shepherd, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, into lands yet untouched by his pastoral presence. As evening descended, a gathering filled with warmth and reverence took place, graced by the presence of our esteemed Archbishop, accompanied by fellow priests and religious. The fatigue of a long journey was soon forgotten as we partook in a

shared meal, a gesture of unity and fraternity with the religious and forane superiors. The evening was imbued with a profound sense of paternal care, as the pastors and religious of our diocese gathered to honor our golden and silver jubilarians, marking their years of dedicated service. The day found its perfect conclusion in a fellowship meal, drawing together all who had come to partake in this blessed occasion.







The second day of the visit saw an immersion into the heart of our diocese's missionary endeavours, beginning with the early dawn. The Major Archbishop visited six mission centers, where each community welcomed him with open hearts. At the Minor Seminary, he shared a meal with the students, imparting his wisdom and blessings. In every parish he touched, the warmth of the parishioners'

reception was met with his Apostolic Blessings. With deep care, His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil engaged with the faithful, listening to their stories and gaining insight into their vibrant faith. He spoke passionately of the mission dimension of the Church, urging the faithful to continue their cherished family traditions within the rich tapestry of our Syrian Catholic heritage.





The visit reached its serene conclusion with a fellowship meal shared among ecclesiastical leaders and esteemed civil dignitaries. It was a sight to behold, our Benevolent Shepherd seated in harmonious communion with shepherds from other Christian denominations, a living testament to the unity of the Church. The gathering was not merely a feast for the body but also for the spirit, as the Major Archbishop engaged with civil leaders, fostering bonds of mutual respect and collaboration.

As the evening drew to a close, there was a palpable sense of fulfillment in the air, a testament to the grace and joy that had marked every moment of this pastoral visit. The Major Archbishop's journey among us left an indelible mark on our hearts, enriching our faith and strengthening our community. In every blessing bestowed and every word spoken, we felt the gentle guidance of our Great Shepherd, leading us ever closer to the heart of Christ.

Thus, as we bid farewell to our Major Archbishop, we carry with us the echoes of his paternal care, his encouraging words, and his abiding love, a love that will continue to inspire and guide us in the days to come.





## St. Alphonsa's Feast: A Journey of Miracles and Faith

The celebration of the feast of St. Alphonsa began at St. Alphonsa's Shrine, Nagercoil, on July 19, 2024. Shrine Vicar, Rev. Fr. Sanal Panthichirackal, hoisted the flag. It was heartening to see thousands of faithful coming to the shrine during the ten days of celebrations to pray and receive blessings from God through the intercession of St. Alphonsa. Almost all the priests and faithful from our diocese were present for the various spiritual events, especially during the Forane-level Holy Qurbana celebrations. On July 26, 2024, Most Rev. Dr. Albert Anasthas, Bishop of the Diocese of Kuzhithurai, visited the shrine and celebrated the Holy Qurbana. Over five thousand faithful from different rites

participated. On July 28, 2024, the last day of the feast, the faithful, the religious, and the priests from all our parishes reached the shrine by 9:30 am. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil led the novena in honor of the saint. This was followed by a solemn concelebrated Holy Qurbana, with Mar Paul Alappattu, Bishop of the Diocese of Ramanathapuram, as the main celebrant. Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB delivered the homily during the Holy Qurbana. After the Holy Qurbana, there was a procession and an agape meal for all the pilgrims. In the evening, another Holy Qurbana was celebrated. Soon after, the flag was lowered, and the celebrations came to a happy conclusion.





## **WALKING WITH FAITH:** *A Pilgrimage on foot to St. Alphonsa's Shrine*



As part of the celebration of the feast of St Alphonsa, every year we organize Pilgrimage on Foot to St Alphonsa Shrine, Nagercoil under the guidance of SMYM of the Diocese. This year it was held on 20 July 2024 at 6:30 am. It started from the Bishop's House, Thuckalay. In the morning everyone was served breakfast at Bishop's House. Rev Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, the Protosyncellus started the event by offering prayers and blessings. There was another group of youth and faithful who took the Colachal road to Nagercoil. On reaching the Shrine, Fr. LintoThakidiyel conducted the Navanal, followed by the Holy Qurbana celebrated by Eparchial SMYM Director, Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh. Then everyone was served lunch. Around 450 youth and faithful took part in this pious journey.





## Mount St. Thomas Radiates: Sabhadinam Festivities Unfold

3rd July is marked as *Sabhadinamin* our Church. As it was the custom, the feast of Dukrana was celebrated at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on 3 July 2024. Representatives from each Diocese of the Syro Malabar Church participated in the event. From our Diocese following members participated: Sr. Ancil SABS, Sr. Vivya CMC, Sr. Cicy Maria FCC, Mr. Dhanasing (Varuthattu), Mr. Sajan (Mukkoottukal), Mrs. Sujitha (Cheenivilai), Mrs. Mary Shyla (Vayalinkarai). After the Solemn Razza Qurbana, our Major Archbishop, Mar Raphael Thattil inaugurated the public gathering which was followed by an agape meal.



**You can support the missionary activities by sponsoring a Seminarian in his formation:**

Please write / mail to us for any enquiry / details. We shall contact you with all further details soliciting your generous support:

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Email: [bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com](mailto:bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com)





## Navigating the Path: SMYM Animators' Leadership Meeting

The Diocesan Animators' meeting was held on July 6, 2024, at the Kalluvilai SMYM office at 2:00 pm. Twenty-five religious and lay animators participated in the meeting. The director, Fr. Joseph Santhosh, spoke about the peculiarities of today's youth and ways to interact with them and gather them into groups. Following the diocesan animators' meeting, forane-level animators' meetings were

held at Manjalumoodu on July 10, 2024, at Soosaipuram on July 21, and at Pilankalai on July 27. The animators received orientation on youth animations and meetings. They were also asked to submit monthly reports from their respective units at the end of each month.

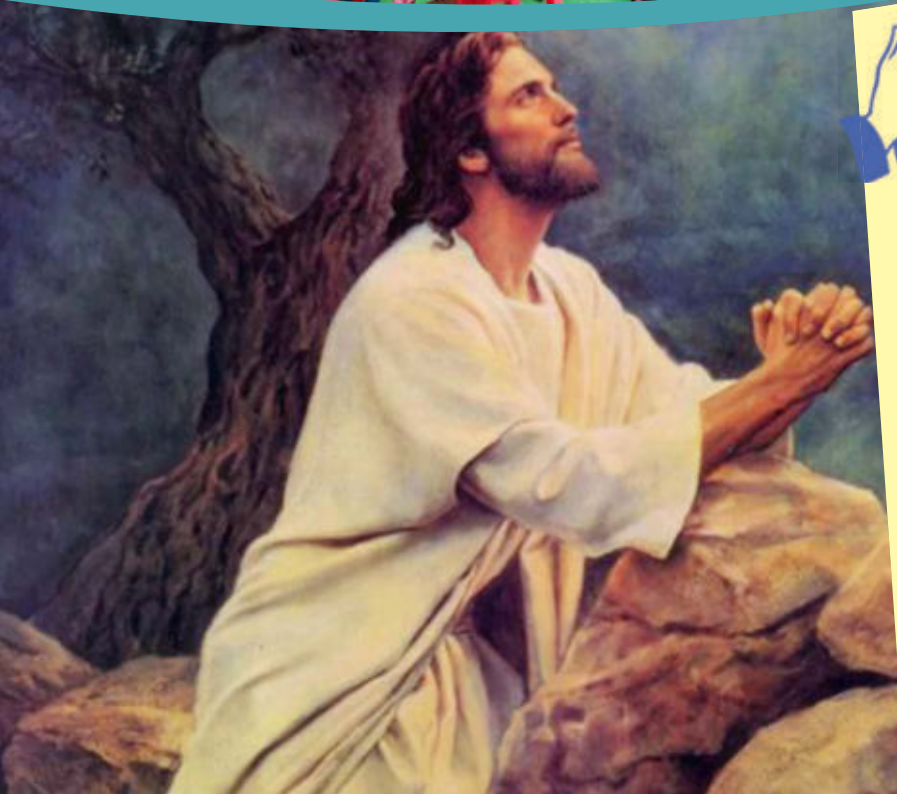




# Changing the Way We Care: A KKSSS Project Evaluation




The Changing the Way We Care Project, funded by CRS, aims to reunite vulnerable children with their families and provide support systems to these families through government and private linkage programs. As part of the annual review, on 23 July 2024 the CRS team visited target areas, including Kattathurai parish, where the project is successfully running. They met with Fr. Abilash, the parish priest, and parish council members to evaluate project progress. The parish council in Kattathurai is actively supporting children in need, providing assistance with studies and daily needs through Vincent De Paul and other pious associations. The review team consisted of Fr. Thomas Poovathummoottil, Fr. Subin Puthenpurackal from KKSSS, Fr. Celestine, the CRS consultant for this project, and CRS representatives. Currently, KKSSS supports over 300 children through this project.



## NEED PRAYER SUPPORT!

The Diocese has prayer groups.

Please write the following and send SMS

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Name: .....

Place: .....

Intentions: .....

In detail you wish to express,

 : [bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com](mailto:bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com)



## **Empowering Families: Uraviyam (Kudumbakoottayma) Directors' Meeting at Padanthalumoodu**



The Uraviyam Forane Directors' meeting was held on July 11, 2024, at Padamthalumoodu. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathiparampil, Vicar General, presided over the meeting. It was the first meeting conducted after appointing the Forane directors of Uraviyams for the first time. A fruitful discussion took place to strengthen the Uraviyams at the parish level. During the meeting, it was suggested that Uraviyams should be functioning in all the parishes and that parish priests ensure the active participation of all families in every Uraviyam and conduct Uraviyam meetings regularly.





## Shaping the Future:

### *Junior Priests' Formation Journey*

A two-day ongoing formation program was held for the Junior Priests at Sangamam on July 29-30, 2024. All Junior Priests – Frs. Abilash, Shijo, Toji, Jose Paul, Mahesh, Georgekutty, Prince, Ajin C., Liju, Linto, and Sanjo – were present for the orientation course. The programme was inaugurated by Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB. On the first day, Rev. Fr. Peter Arockiaraj, SDB, Academic Coordinator of Don Bosco College, Keela Eral, conducted a session on

priestly life and ministry and the challenges faced by new generation priests. In the evening, Curia members, along with Bishop, met with the junior priests, who shared their pastoral experiences and concerns. On the next day, July 30, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal led a session on the clarification of pastoral issues from the canonical aspects, followed by a session led by Rev. Fr. Johnsilal Arackaparampil, who addressed all account-related doubts of the priests.





## **Church Leadership United: *Presbyteral Council at Sangamam***

The II General Body Meeting of the 2nd Presbyteral Council was held on 31 July 2024 at Sangamam, commencing at 10:00 am. Among 18 members, 17 were present for the meeting. The purpose of the gathering was to reflect and deliberate on the following agenda:

- 1) Concerns, challenges and preoccupations of Priests upon their life and ministry in the Diocese of Thuckalay.
- 2) Reevaluating the Minor Seminary Formation.
- 3) Education Policy of the Diocese and Forane Councils.

Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, the Secretary, presented the agenda and invited the members to engage in an open discussion. Actively participating in the discussions, the members offered fruitful suggestions for the benefit of the diocese. From these suggestions, decisions were made, and the outcomes will be communicated in the next priests' conference.







## Bringing **Warmth** and **Joy**: *Cloths Distribution in Cumbum*

A heartfelt initiative took place in Cumbum, where clothes were distributed to orphans living on the streets. Volunteers and local community members gathered to organize and distribute a range of new and gently used clothing, including warm jackets, shirts, pants, and shoes. The recipients expressed profound gratitude for the warmth and care provided. The community's response was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the significant impact of this gesture. The successful distribution not only met immediate needs but also brought joy and comfort to the orphans. This event showcased the power of collective compassion in making a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable children.





## In Times of Grief...



**Rev. Fr. Joseph Aruviyil,**  
Former Missionary



**Rev. Sr. Tresa Martin FCC,**  
Former Missionary



**Mr. Sunder Raj,**  
Brother of Sr. Amala SABS



**Mr. George Francis,**  
Father of Fr. Tinu CMI



**Mr. Varghese Thattil,**  
Father of Fr. BabuThattil CMI







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# SHEPHERD INTO THE UNCHARTERED VALLEY

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