

27 January 2015

Ref. No. Priests/GR/37/2015

Dear Fathers,

Greetings from the Bishop's House!

We had stepped into this New Year 2015 with the blessings of our Saviour. One twelfth of the year is already over. Looking at the past we continue to rejoice at what God has achieved through us. Now we have begun in earnest having planned for the coming year; and well, as the hymn 'Amazing Grace,' goes, "His grace has brought me safe thus far.

May I share with you news about some events that took place in our diocese in the past months.

FAMILY SANGAMAM

On 28th December 2014 on the feast of Holy family, families in every parish of our diocese gathered and celebrated Family Sangamam. I was glad to hear that everyone participated with 'one heart and soul' as one single family. Processions to the parish were held Uraviam-wise. All took part as one family in the Holy Qurbana and received communion. Special prayers and remembrances were held. There were also various games and competitions which were conducted. It was heartening to know that all took part enthusiastically and were happy about the Family Sangamam. Congrats to you dear fathers for having animated our families so well!

SYNOD

The Synod of Bishops was held from 5th to 9th January. There were 41 bishops who participated in this Synod. It was a coming together of the Syro-Malabar Church and we all felt how much we are blessed with unity and strength. It was an occasion to feel proud of our patrimony and thank God for blessing our Syro-Malabar Church in various ways. The Synod took up to discussing various concerns of our Syro-Malabar Church. Our Apostolic Nuncio His Ex. Salvatore Pennacchio visited the Synod on 9th and addressed the assembly. He gifted the Synod with a statue of St. John Paul II. The statue of the Saint was blessed and was installed by him on the same day.

REV. FR. ANTONY CHUNDELIKAT'S BROTHER'S FAMILY

We are very sad that Rev. Fr. Antony Chundlikatt lost his elder brother Jose Chacko (62) and sister-in-law Mariamma (60) in a car accident in Muscat on 23rd January. Their son was driving the car. His sister-in-law died on the spot and his brother was taken to the hospital; but a few hours later he passed away. Their son is out of danger. The mortal remains of the deceased will be brought to Arukanion 29th January for the funeral and burial. We continue to pray for the grieving family of Rev. Fr. Chundelikkat, and for the repose of the souls of his brother and sister-in-law.

Rev. Sr. Lissy FCC lost her mother on 7th January. The funeral was held on 8th. We console the death of Sr. Lissy's mother and we assure our prayers for her and for her family.

PASTORAL COUNCIL

The first session of the Pastoral Council for the current year was held on 15th January. All the committees submitted their reports and the same were discussed and passed in the meeting.

Rev. Fr. Felix presented the schedule of events for the forthcoming religious year. Rev. Fr. Joseph Nedumpuram gave news about the Conclusion of Family Year.

The main theme of the day was: "My Parish, My diocese, My duties and commitment". Rev. Fr. Tom Kunnumpuram gave an introductory talk regarding the topic and invited the members to share more ideas on how to make our faithful more people-oriented and church-oriented.

The members, both priests and lay people, brought up various issues for discussion. They highlighted the difficulties and the existence of strained inter-personal relationships which keep many away from active participation.

At the end of the meeting the Bishop expressed his deep sense of gratitude to all those who work hard for the growth of the People of God. He invited everyone to feel for the other and build up good relationships at parish level.

CONSECRATION OF CHURCH AT ST. GEORGE MISSION, ANAYADI

The Anayadi mission is already 8 years old. But Holy Qurbana was being celebrated only on Sundays and on one or two weekdays. Currently the existing Church has been given a facelift with a new facade, renovated Madhbaha, new flooring and so on. A presbytery is also built adjacent to the Church. A residing-priest will be able to give more attention to the Parish community there.

The renovated Church was consecrated on 15th January at 5.30pm in the presence of Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, VG, other curia members, and sisters, especially those of SABS, CMC and FCC, who had served at Anayadi mission before.

I congratulate and thank in a special way Rev. Fr. Seby Manimalakandathil who oversaw the completion of the work with the guidance of Fr. VG. I also thank Rev. Fr. Jimmy and all the former priests-in-charge for developing the mission at Anayadi. Rev. Fr. Mathew Kuzhinjalil has been appointed the new Parish Priest of Anayadi mission, and Rev. Fr. Felix Arulnathan will help him as his Assistant.

BLESSING OF SJSM CONVENT

I once again welcome and thank the SJSM sisters for having taken up residence at Anayadi to serve the mission there. Their new convent was blessed on 19th January and the sisters were formally welcomed on that day.

PONGAL CELEBRATIONS WITH THUCKALAY FRIENDS

On the 15th of January, *AnbinSangamam* of Thuckalay friends was held. *AnbinSangamam* was founded by the then Bishop George Cardinal Alencherry, to promote inter-religious dialogue, unity and peace among peoples of different faiths. Those who attended participated well in the discussions. The invited guests emphatically spoke on love and understanding that needs to lubricate our daily life in a multi-religious setting like ours.

WELCOME TO FCC SISTERS AT SENGOTTAI MISSION

I along with Rev Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, VG, visited all the communities of Sengottai mission on 17th January. In the evening all the priests and religious with some faithful of Puliarai gathered at Pulari school and gave a formal welcome to the FCC sisters of Kanjirapally province. A short gathering was organised to felicitate the sisters. We thank Rev. Sr. Julia FCC, the Mother Provincial of the St. Thomas Province, Kanjirapally, for having sent them to participate in our mission. Sr. Julia herself personally had accompanied them to our mission centre. The sisters for the present have rented a house at KattalaiKudiyiruppu. Initially the sisters will help out at the Pulari School and in the Social Service Society. We wish the sisters blessings of the Lord and a fruitful ministry.

CONCLUSION OF THE FAMILY YEAR

The Conclusion of Family Year took place on 18th January at Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai. In fact it was a twin celebration: the Annual Day of the Mather Jyotis coupled with the Conclusion of the Family Year. The meeting asserted the importance of the family unit in the Church and in the Diocese. The emphasis given by the Synod of Bishops on the challenges in the Christian family life was again highlighted. The meeting was chaired by the Bishop, Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, VG, and Rev. Fr. Joseph Nedumpuram. Some fathers and some sisters too participated in the meeting.

The family year had begun on 23rd February 2014 with the recitation of rosary in all the families. In order to give more attention and encouragement to the families, several programmes were conducted at the diocese-level and at the parish-level, the last being the Family Sangamam on 28th December 2014. I am grateful to Rev. Fr. Joseph Nedumpuram, and the Family Year Working Committee as well as all the fathers in the parish who executed the animation programmes. In this concluding programme, all the new families who joined the church last year were honoured and felicitated. The names of all the new office bearers of Mather Jyotis were also announced.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

8th February 2015 is proposed to be celebrated as the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking. It was proposed by our Holy father Pope Francis and was communicated to us through the Nuncio and the president of CBCI. Let us respond wholeheartedly to the invitation of our Holy Father and join the celebration on 8th February. Let us sensitize and bring awareness about this tragic phenomenon of Human Trafficking to our ecclesial community, to our faithful and to the society.

SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF REV. FR. PHILIP KODIANTHARA

The Second Death anniversary of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodianthara occurs on 9th February. We shall have the **remembrance day** on 10th February during our Priest conference at our Minor seminary, Mukoottukal. We shall have a special Holy Qurbana on that day at 9.00 am followed by priest conference. Kindly inform all the sisters and the faithful in your parish and invite them for the Holy Qurbana.

Do kindly remember him in your Holy Qurbana in the parish on 9th Feb. On 7th February the family members of Fr. Philip Kodianthara will organise Holy mass in his home parish at Kayalpuram. Fr. Philip's family would be happy to have some of us for the mass. I invite those of us who are able to be present to participate in the memorial mass organized by the family.

MARRIAGE FUND

The family apostolate department has begun a small project to give financial support to poor girls for their marriage. This fund would be generated from a special collection made from all the parishes when marriages are conducted. This year a poor girl from Marapaddy parish is chosen to be helped. I am also aware of some of our fathers who personally contribute towards helping poor girls for their marriage. I too strongly recommend every one to make this special collection during the weddings in your parishes and forward the money to Family Apostolate department.

PRIEST CONFERENCE AND MINOR SEMINARY HOME DAY

The cradle of the diocese is the minor seminary and we all need to show our love and appreciation to the staff and brothers. On 10th February the minor seminary celebrates its Home day. All the fathers, Kaikars and benefactor who are associated with the formation of the brothers in the minor seminary are invited to join the Home Day Celebrations. With this purpose in mind, the Priest conference of 10th February will be held in the Minor Seminary, Mukoottukal. We shall begin with Holy Qurbana in remembrance of Rev. Fr. Philip Kodianthara.

KUZHITHURAI DIOCESE

As we know that the Pope Francis created a new Latin rite Diocese of Kuzhithurai, carved out of the Diocese of Kottar, in Kanniyakumari District. The triple events, namely, the establishment of the new Diocese of Kuzhithurai bifurcated from the Diocese of Kottar, the Episcopal Ordination of Msgr.P. Jerome Dhas Varuvel sdb and his installation as its first Bishop, which are to be held **on 24 February 2015, at 4.00pm in Chithirancode**. It is indeed a rare privilege that the Civil District of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu can boast of four Catholic Dioceses belonging to the three different ritual Churches – Kottar and Kuzhithurai for the Latin Church, Marthadam for the Syro-Malankara Church and Thuckalay for the Syro-Malabar Church. Despite the differences in liturgy, there is a sense of communion and fellowship among all the faithful in the District. Hence, it is a moment of great rejoicing as well as a time for thanksgiving for all of us. We bow our heads in humble submission to the Almighty who has made all these possible.

Together with the Priests, Religious and the Laity, I congratulate the Bishop-Designate and wish him God's choicest blessings as he begins his Episcopal ministry. Needless to say, the Diocese of Thuckalay assures prayers for the new Diocese and its Shepherd. By working together and cooperating in the various activities of the Dioceses of the District, we can renew the Church in this part of our country and bear witness to Jesus Christ. Kindly announce this great news in our parishes and invite the faithful to take part in this event at Chithirancode. I would like to invite every one of you dear fathers to be present for the consecration and installation program.

NEW ASSIGNMENTS.

1. Fr. Sebastian Manimalakandathil - Parish priest, Katathurai
2. Fr. Mathew Kuzhijalil - Parish priest, Anayadi
3. Fr. Joseph Thekkekadumathil - Study: Marriage and family counselling, CANA
4. Fr. Jomon Mangalamadam - Director, KII

INFORMATION

1. Fr. Sajan Nettarepponghu is doing his B.Ed studies along with his given assignment as the parish priest of Annikarai
2. Fr. Dency received results of his Second trimester result and he acquired 9.39 points out of 10. A hearty congratulations to Fr. Dency!
3. Fr. Toji too received his Third semester results and he secured more than 70% marks. Congratulations Fr. Toji!
4. All the deacons are in having their regular programs and activities at Sangamam and also in their respective parishes
5. The major seminary brothers have gone back to their colleges to continue their Theological studies
6. We need to support our Pulari press with more printing orders. Please cooperate with Fr. Ginoy Thottiyil.
7. Copies of the Pastoral Calendar (with the schedule of events of our diocese) have been given to all the departments and pious associations in your parishes. If you need more number of Pastoral Calendars kindly collect them from Rev. Fr. K.J Antony, the Diocese Secretary.

8. DVDs on 'Margam' are also available with Fr. K.J Antony. Those who would like to have a copy can collect it from him. It would be nice to show this movie to our faithful in our parishes and educate them about our patrimony.
9. In the month of January our departments and pious associations organised various programs and competitions. We congratulate and thank the directors and all the members associated with them. We congratulate and thank, the Catechism department for organising the Bible Fest 2015; TCYM for organising youth programs like Youth retreat, Career Guidance etc; KKSSS for Edufair 2015; Desamsa Club meetings; VP retreats; CML for Essay competition and Rally; Vocation department for conducting one day retreat for Alter servers; and SSVP for conducting the Youth Camp.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS

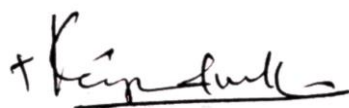
1. Inauguration of the Year of Consecrated life on 1 Feb. 2015 at 2.00 pm in Padanthalumoodu. Kindly be present for the mass and meeting thereafter personally along with some representatives from the parishes.
2. 7 February: Bible Fest for Shenkottai Mission
3. 8 February: Animation at Netta for Parish council members of the ArukaniForane from 2.00 to 5.00 pm. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam, VG will animate the memebbers. Kindly inform all the parish council members to take part in this meeting without fail.
4. 9 February: Death anniversary of Fr. Philip Kodianthara
5. 12 February: Commemoration of the Dead
6. Thanksgiving celebrations of Sts. Chavara and Euphrasia on 22 February 2015 at 1.30 pm in Plankalai
7. TNBC at Ooty 25-28 February

IN CONCLUSION

Dear Fathers, we will officially inaugurate the Year of Consecrated Life on 1st February. Forms of Consecrated life cannot be called as human inventions but are fruits of Divine interventions through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, "in every age shows forth the richness of the practice of the evangelical counsels through a multiplicity of charisms. In this way too he makes ever present in the Church and in the world, in time and space, the mystery of Christ" (*VC 5; Consecrated Life in today's Church: Gospel, Prophecy, Hope. Presentation of the Logo for the 'Year of Consecrated Life'*). We as privileged instruments of the Holy Spirit have the responsibility to promote the various charisms He inspires for the benefit of the life of the Church and of the whole world whom God desires to save. With this in mind may I invite you all to encourage and promote vocations to religious life.

May God who inspires change and renewal through different charisms in the Church bless our diocese too with many more religious vocations, and many willing souls to be imitators of Christ.

Yours in Jesus Christ who lived for our sake poor, obedient, and chaste,



+ George Rajendran SDB
Bishop of Thuckalay