

DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY

THUCKALAY TIDINGS

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Nature: The Seeds of Hope



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THUCKALAY TIDINGS

June 2024 | Vol. 4 | Issue 6

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DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY
BISHOP'S HOUSE
P. B. No. 12, Thuckalay P.O.
Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu – 629 175

Message

Dear Friends and Benefactors,
Greetings and prayerful wishes Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

The World Environment Day will be celebrated on 5 June. This year's celebration focuses on land restoration, desertification, and drought resilience under the slogan "Our Land, Our Future. We are Generation Restoration," as the year marks the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Land restoration is an important pillar of the theme of World Environment Day 2024, and organisers want to unite people around the world to restore ecosystems.

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, up to 40% of the planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population and threatening roughly half of global GDP (US\$44 trillion). The number and duration of droughts have increased by 29% since 2000. Without urgent action, droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050. Land restoration is a key pillar of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, which is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we approach the annual World Environment Day on 5 June, I wish to share a passionate call from our Holy Father Pope Francis in his groundbreaking encyclical *Laudato Si'* (LS). It is the second encyclical of Pope Francis published on 18 June 2015. Though we have read this encyclical several times in the past, I want to highlight its key points once more to stimulate ourselves and become aware of our responsibility towards the care of nature. The encyclical, as we are aware, is a plea for all people to embrace an ecological conversion and radically reshape our relationship with God's creation. This urgent summons should penetrate the core of our vocation as Catholics and disciples of Christ the Redeemer, who came to "make all things new" (Rev 21:5).

In this encyclical, which is so rich in spiritual and moral teachings, Pope Francis refers to our Earth as "a sister with whom we share our lives and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us" (LS 1). Yet this maternal embrace grows faint as humanity's insatiable consumption and disregard for the inherent worth of creation reach increasingly unsustainable levels. Our world faces a tragic ecological crisis driven by human activity, evidenced by climate change, water scarcity, loss of biodiversity, and the unabated pollution of our land, air, and oceans (LS 20, 24). "Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years," the Pope laments (LS 53).

At its roots, *Laudato Si'* is a profoundly spiritual call to heed "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor," who suffer most acutely from environmental

degradation (LS 49). Drawing from the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching, Pope Francis reminds us of "the inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace" (LS 10). We cannot remain indifferent to the global environmental crisis precisely because our faith impels us to love and defend the integrity of all creation as a mirror of the Creator's glory. By ravaging the natural world through over-extraction, pollution, and destruction of habitats, we do violence to ourselves, our neighbours, and our covenant relationship with the God who is the "master of the universe and the author of all beauty" (LS 76).

These initiatives in our families and communities should engage people of all ages, but special efforts must be made by all of us to accompany our children and youth, who have been so passionate about environmental advocacy. Like St Francis of Assisi and "the many young people who paradoxically succeeded in rebelling by showing society the way," our young people today "rebel against the reality that generations have destroyed and forgotten" (LS 53, 179). Let their prophetic witness and activism inspire us out of complacency while also holding us accountable for passing on a thriving planet brimming with the Creator's glory. Their energy and moral clarity have already galvanised environmental movements worldwide, reminding us as adults of our solemn duty to future generations.

Dear friends, let us unite all the initiatives that we take to safeguard the environment with prayer, fasting, and spiritual discipline so that we can transform our interior dispositions towards creation. By embracing an "ecological spirituality" grounded in the Gospels and following in the example of saints like St Francis of Assisi, we can reawaken the truth that "the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or nature" (LS 216, 237). In prayer, let us rediscover our deep communion with the Maker of Heaven and Earth, restoring the severed bonds between God, neighbour, and creation.

Yours faithfully in Christ Jesus,



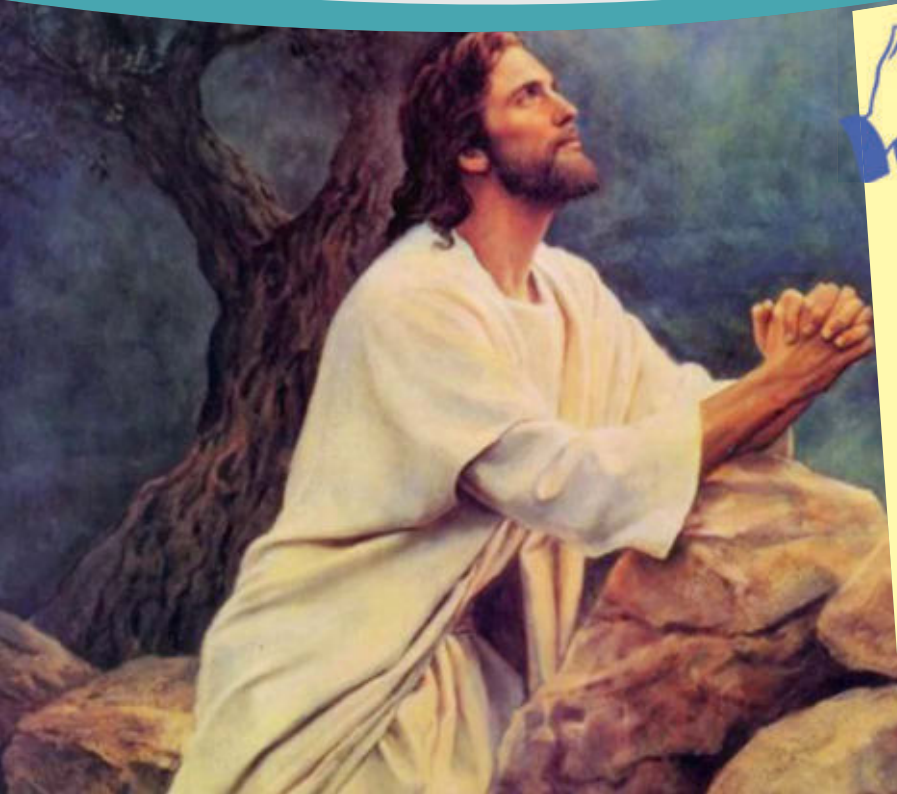
+ **George Rajendran sdb**
Bishop of Thuckalay




CELEBRATING NEW CLERGY

Priests' Day at the Bishop's House


On 8th May 2024, a warm reception was accorded to the newly ordained priests, Fr. Antony Thakidiyel and Fr. Sanjo Theneplackal, at the Bishop's House. The event began with a solemn celebration of the Holy Qurbana by the newly ordained priests, followed by a joyous agape feast. The Holy Qurbana was graced by the presence of the faithful from St. Mary's Church, Thuckalay. Fr. Linto was the main celebrant and extended heartfelt gratitude to everyone present at the end, while Fr. Sanjo delivered an enlightening homily. The reception was attended by Forane Vicars, Fathers from Thuckalay-Pilankalai Forane, Provincial Superiors, and Sisters from nearby convents, adding to the significance of the occasion. During the ceremony, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil felicitated the new priests, acknowledging their dedication and commitment.



NEED PRAYER SUPPORT!

The Diocese has prayer groups.
 Please write the following and send SMS
 +91 94871 65903:

Name:
 Place:
 Intentions:

In detail you wish to express,
 : bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

Honoring the Legacy of

FR. ANTONY ELECHMKALAM:

25th Remembrance Holy Qurbana at Champakulam Basilica

Fr. Antony Elechmkalam, a former missionary of the then Kanyakumari mission, served with unwavering dedication for ten years. He was instrumental in founding the Athencode mission and the Kamaraj School, significantly impacting the local community through these initiatives. Known for his deep faith, piety, and commitment to prayer, Fr. Antony was devoted to the spiritual and educational upliftment of the faithful.

The 25th remembrance Holy Qurbana for Fr. Antony Elechmkalam reflected the deep respect and affection that the Thuckalay community holds for him. A number of faithful represented the diocese for the requiem Mass at Champakulam Basilica and the meeting that followed. Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB, along with Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam, presided over the remembrance meeting. His legacy of selfless service and profound love for his parishioners was celebrated, highlighting the deep respect and affection the Thuckalay community holds for him.



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:

Postal Address:
Bishop's House, P.B. 12, Thuckalay,
Kanyakumari District,
Tamilnadu – 629 175, INDIA

Contact Mission Procure:
Fr. Liju Marattukalam
+91 4651 250633; +91 94871 65903;
Email: bishopofthuckalay@gmail.com

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: the 7th Pastoral Council

The first meeting of the seventh Pastoral Council was held at Sangamam on May 1, 2024. The 7th Pastoral Council is constituted with 102 members who belong to three categories: ex-officio members, elected members, and nominated members. The inaugural session began at 9:45 AM with a prayer, and Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan welcomed all the members. Two great lay missionaries, Mr. Mariadas and Mr. Edwinson, were honored in the Pastoral Council. Mr. Edwinson received the missionary award at the Great Gathering of Missions (GGM) introduced by Fiat Mission, and Mr. Mariadas represented the Syro Malabar Church at the missionary meeting of FABC in Bangkok, Thailand, held on April 19-21, 2024. A short video narrating their missionary achievements was presented to the council, and Fr. JoshyKulathumkal, the chancellor, felicitated them.

In the second session, after the tea break, the resource person, Adv. JojiChirayil, PRO of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, conducted



an enlightening session on the definition, aim, and mode of operation of the Pastoral Council and Forane Council. In the third session after lunch, the resource person was Rev. Fr. Hillarius, the former Vicar General of the Diocese of Kottar, who presented excellently on the theme of the Pastoral Council and the role of the laity in the life of the diocese. At the end, suggestions were solicited from the members for the fruitful journey of the Pastoral Council.



GATHERING IN GRACE:

Catechism Teachers' Retreat @ Kalluvilai

A two-day retreat for all catechism teachers was organized by the Catechesis Department of the Diocese at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai, on May 17-18, 2024. The retreat was conducted separately in Tamil and Malayalam. Fr. George Chinnappan SDB led the retreat in Tamil, while Fr. Robin Koorumullil animated the Malayalam session at St. Mother Theresa Church, Kalluvilai. A total of 250 teachers participated in the retreat, seeking spiritual nourishment and renewal. Rev. Bishop attended the concluding session and expressed the gratitude of the diocese to the teachers for their dedicated service in the faith formation of our children.



A TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS; Inauguration of the Academic Year for Catechesis, CML & Jesus' Kids

Official inauguration the catechetical year 2024-25 and the activities of CML and KII was held on May 18, 2024, at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai. During the inauguration, Fr. Vicar General, Directors of the three departments and the Headmasters (HMs) took part in lighting the lamp, symbolizing the sharing of knowledge, and they passed the light to all the teachers. The teachers, holding the lighted candles, took an oath to fulfil their responsibilities. For the parish level inauguration, the catechetical department provided guidelines to ensure uniformity in the inaugural sessions across all parishes. The solemn ceremony will include an inaugural address by the unit director, the lighting of the lamp, the teachers' oath with lighted candles, and the blessing by the parish priest.



FOSTERING INNOVATION: SPARK 2024 Lights Up...

KKSSS successfully hosted the annual Educare Residential Camp (Spark) from May 12-19, 2024, benefiting 52 students. Under the leadership of Fr. Thomas Poovathummoottil, Director of KKSSS, and Sr. Merin Ros ASMI, Coordinator of the Educare programme, the camp aimed to enhance language fluency for students from Tamil Medium schools. Additionally, Educare seeks to foster skills and talents through public speaking, theatre performances, and other activities. This year's programme was expertly animated by Mr. Jerom and Mr. Joshua, both Ph.D. scholars.

The valedictory ceremony featured a keynote address by Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil, the new Rector of St. Mary's Minor Seminary, who praised the Educare programme as a valuable initiative that helps children develop their abilities and navigate the challenges of life. All participants received gifts and prizes, commemorating their achievements and progress. The students expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Sr. Merin Rose, who has tirelessly served the Educare programme for five years, for her dedication and selflessness. As she departs due to transfer, the KKSSS family honored her with a farewell ceremony, acknowledging her remarkable contributions to the organization and the Educare programme.



UNITING IN PURPOSE: **Priests' Conference**

The Priests' Conference of the month was held at Sangamam on May 22, 2024, at 9:30 AM. As usual, it started with the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, animated by Fr. Vinu D. Joseph, and confessions. The conference, coordinated by the Vicar General and presided over by me, began at 11:00 AM. During the meeting, the following major events took place:

Rev. Sr. Lisieux Maria CMC, director of Ramalloor Retreat Centre, shared her God experience based on the importance of the Word of God in her life. The directors of departments presented their future plans and upcoming programs. The fruitful suggestions from our priests were helpful in planning the future programs of the departments.



ENHANCING PEDAGOGY:

Teachers' Meet @ Kalluvilai



A one-day seminar was organized for the Tamil and English medium teachers at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai on May 30, 2024. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil welcomed the gathering. The resource person, Rev. Fr. Bobby SDB, skillfully animated the sessions on the moral eligibility of teachers and the skills

needed to be a good teacher. Almost 700 teachers participated in the seminar. During the concluding meeting, Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB officially inaugurated the academic year and presented certificates to the teachers who had attended counseling courses.



A DAY OF LOVE AND TOGETHERNESS: Snehavilla's Home Day



Snehavilla, a home for senior citizens of the Diocese of Thuckalay situated at Moolamattam, celebrated its second Home Day on May 1, 2024. The home is named after the late Mr. Jose Tharian, husband of Mrs. Mercy Jose. As per her wish, it has been decided to nominate St. Joseph as the patron saint of Snehavilla and to celebrate Home Day every year on May 1.

Bishop celebrated the Solemn Holy Qurbana in the chapel of Snehavilla at 7:00 PM, followed by a public meeting and a cultural programme

presented by the students of Geetha Village. Fr. Kurian Kalayil, the Forane Vicar of St. George Forane Church, Moolamattam, Sr. Sible Rose, Superior of Geetha Village, along with other Fathers and Sisters of Moolamattam Forane, and around 300 people attended the function. Mrs. Mercy Jose, the donor, appreciated the efforts taken by the diocese to carry forward the project. The meeting concluded with an agape meal. As a diocese, we once again thank Mrs. Mercy Jose for her generosity in continuing to provide financial help to the diocese.



MISSIONARY FOOTPRINTS:

Spreading Hope in Extended Territories Cumbum Chronicles

Cumbum mission was graced with the visit of Rev. Fathers and sisters, and Sunday school children of Marykulam parish. This initiative was a collaborative effort to foster a deeper understanding of mission work and to provide the children with a practical experience of outreach activities and distribute vachanolsavam in the villages.



Madhurai Mission

On June 2, 2024, the inaugural ceremony for the 2024-2025 academic year of the Sunday School, Mission League, and Holy Childhood was held



RENEWED SANCTUARY:

Rameswaram Mission's Altar

The new altar at the Rameswaram mission chapel was blessed in a solemn ceremony led by the Vicar General of the Palai Diocese. Following the blessing, a Mass was celebrated with the faithful, marking a significant moment of spiritual renewal and community gathering.



FAITH AND JOY:

Viswasapayirchi Vizha (VPV) thrives at Kaythar Mission

The Thirunelveli Mission recently hosted the Viswasolsavam, drawing a large number of students from nearby communities. The event proved to be a valuable and enriching experience for all who attended.



HARBINGERS OF HOPE: Mukkoottukal Celebrates SHGs' Contributions

The annual celebration and school kit distribution of the Sahardaya Social Service Centre was inaugurated by Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB of the Thuckalay Diocese. The school kit distribution, implemented with 50% financial support from the NGO Confederation, benefited 120 children. The event was chaired by Rev. Sr. Amala Jose SH (Provincial Superior). Rev. Sr. Christy Maria SH (Director of Sahardaya), Rev. Sr. Elsie Kurian SH, and Rev. Sr. Tess Maria SH also spoke at the event. Various cultural programs were staged, and prizes were awarded to the competition winners. The ceremony, held at the Mukkoottukal Community Hall, was attended by around 200 people.



SOULFUL SOJOURN:

Popular Mission Retreat Leaves Lasting Impression in Nithiravilai

The popular mission retreat in Nithiravilai by the Vincentian Fathers was a resounding success, enriching the lives of all who attended and reinforcing the community's spiritual foundation. The retreat commenced with an inspiring adoration led by the Vincentian Fathers, who are renowned for their dedication to missionary work and spiritual guidance. The sessions were filled with powerful sermons, interactive workshops, and moments of deep prayer and reflection.

The retreat concluded with the message of Bishop Mar George Rajendran SDB, where the Vincentian Fathers imparted their blessings and encouraged everyone to carry the lessons learned into their daily lives.



CONGRATS



**Golden Jubilee of
Sr. Annie Deepa CMC**



**Silver Jubilee of
Sr. Silvy Therese CMC and Sr. Emily Rose CMC**



**Final Profession
Celebration of
Sr. Abisha FCC**

Adieu



Fr. Benny Thattamparambil
(From Theni Mission)



Sr. Flowerlet ASMI
(From Varuthattu School)



Sr. Merin Rose ASMI
(From KKSSS)

Hearty Welcome



Rev. Fr. George Kalangara SDB,
(Bangalore Province)



Rev. Fr. Thomas (Shinto) Sauriyamkuzhi
(Idukki)



Rev. Fr. Thomas Kanjirakatt (Kanjirapally)



Rev. Fr. Joseph (Bibin) Kocheethra
(Changanerry)

**With
Deepest
Sympathy...**



Fr. Cyriac Maliekal
(Former Missionary)



Fr. Joseph Mampuzhackal OSH
(Former Missionary)



Sr. Tresa Collet CMC



Thuckalay
MISSION
DIOCESE OF THUCKALAY



**"We must care for nature,
so that nature may care for us"**
Pope Francis

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