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TIME TO REPENT WITH GREATER LOVE



Just as with God, we must be reconciled with our brothers and sisters. We have to rebuild relationships by forgiving and making forgiveness.

Rev. Dr. James Kiliyananikal

We live today in a world where humanity has become alienated in various ways. The human race, which should live as if in one nest, is now seen to be destroying itself in division. Wars, communal riots, conflicts, disputes, quarrels - the forms of division continue to grow. Nations, religions, families, and individuals have become stages for division. This planet, which should be blossoming with love, is turning into a valley of tears. Human history continues to be stained by the blood of brothers. As memories of the lost paradise cast shadows of sorrow, the "heaven" that should stand as a flood of hope to brighten the future, may remain just a mirage, and this despair haunts humanity.

Where have all the links of love broken? Through sin, man created a rift in

his relationship with God, the Creator. He distanced himself from his fellow human beings. He became alienated even from himself. He became estranged from the entire universe. Sin was a betrayal against God, against brothers and sisters, against oneself, and against the whole universe. Reconciliation is the movement from this division to unity, from enmity to love, from alienation to becoming "one's own" again. Each Lenten season offers us an opportunity for reconciliation. It is a time when the divine voice echoes in our ears: "The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel."

The word 'reconciliation' in English is derived from the Latin 'reconciliatio,' which means renewal or reconstruction. It is also related to the Latin word 'reconciliare,' which means to reunite, to repair, or to restore. In short, reconciliation is the recovery of a lost relationship.

Repentance, conversion, reparation, and renewal are essential components for reconciliation to reach its fullness. The essence of repentance is lamenting that one has hurt God, who is infinite love and supreme goodness, through sin. A conviction about God's infinite mercy, thoughts about the baseness of sin, and grief about the destruction of the soul are necessary for repentance. Through the shepherd who finds the lost sheep and carries it on his shoulders, and through the father who sees his returning son, runs to embrace him, and prepares a feast for him, Jesus shows us God's heart toward sinners. Jesus displayed a heart of compassionate love toward the sinful woman who washed his feet with tears and toward the adulteress who was brought to be stoned. Our God is mercy. He forgives and embraces the repentant sinner. The Church invites us to experience this mercy in a special way

during each Lenten season. Saint Faustina, the messenger of Divine Mercy, says: "Even if the sins of all souls burdened my conscience, I would not doubt God's mercy. With a broken heart, I would leap into that ocean of mercy." Let not our sins discourage or destroy us. We can rely on God's mercy.

It is the Holy Spirit who fills us with the conviction about sin and imparts the spirit of repentance. Repentance should lead us to acknowledge our sins, confess them, and ask for forgiveness. As the Word says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-9) As the Psalmist proclaims, "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Psalm 32:1) Therefore, let us be able to pray wholeheartedly, as David did when he repented and wept: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions." (Psalm 51:1)

Repentance becomes fruitful when it leads one to conversion and a new life. Conversion encompasses the abandonment of sins, the renewal of life, and the reparation of falls. Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house," when Zacchaeus declared his decision to give half of his possessions to the poor and to return fourfold anything he had obtained by fraud. Along with abandoning sin, one must also repay debts and repair failings. Reparation is possible only through supreme love. As Jesus said, "Her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved much." (Luke 7:47)

The Catechism of the Church instructs us thus: "Interior repentance gives a fundamental reorientation to our entire life. It is a return, a conversion to God with our whole heart. It is a turning away from sin, a repulsion toward the evil deeds we have committed, and an aversion to evil. At the same time, it includes hope in God's mercy and reliance on His grace, with a desire and decision to transform one's life. This conversion brings about salvific sorrow and pain." (Catechism 1431)

Only God can forgive sin and properly make reparation for it. That is what we see on Calvary. The Son of God bore the sins of humanity, made reparation for them, and removed them. Forgiveness of sins became a reality. God blessed humanity with heavenly glory, beyond the paradise

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EDITORIAL



RECONCILIATION: THE PATH TO HEALING AND RENEWAL

In our journey of faith, reconciliation stands as a profound testament to God's boundless mercy and love. While repentance is an essential step, it is through reconciliation that true healing and restoration take place - not only between the soul and God but also within us and in our relationships. Reconciliation is the bridge that turns repentance into renewal, making it a vital practice in both our spiritual and daily lives.

In the New Testament, Jesus consistently demonstrated reconciliation in action, reaching out to sinners, tax collectors, and the marginalized, urging them not only to repent but to experience the transforming love of God. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk.15:11-32) illustrates this beautifully: the father does not simply accept the son's remorse but fully restores him to his place in the family. This is the heart of reconciliation - not just forgiveness, but complete restoration.

Reconciliation is also essential in our relationships with others. Human frailty leads to misunderstandings, conflicts, and wounds that can fracture families, communities, and even nations. Yet, Jesus calls us to be peacemakers, urging us to forgive as we have been forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15). Pope Francis often emphasizes that reconciliation is a work of love and courage, requiring us to transcend resentment and embrace healing. When we reach out to reconcile with others, we restore trust, mend divisions, and contribute to a culture of unity and love.

As we enter the Lenten season, a time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we are reminded of the call to reconcile with God and with one another. Lent is a sacred journey toward renewal, mirroring Christ's own path to the Cross, where He offered Himself as the ultimate sign of reconciliation between humanity and God. Through acts of penance and sincere repentance, let us open our hearts to the grace of forgiveness, allowing the love of Christ to heal our wounds and restore our relationships. Let us live the spirit of this season mending the broken ties and embracing a spirit of compassion by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. ■

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

March 2 : First Sunday of Lent

(Today marks the beginning of Lent from midnight)

March 3 : Ash Monday

March 18 : Death Anniversary of Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil, (2023)

Feast of St. Cyril of Jerusalem

March 19 : Feast of St. Joseph

March 23 : Death Anniversary of Cardinal Mar Antony Padiyara

March 25 : Feast of the Annunciation

Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Antony Chirayath (2006)

March 26 : Mid-Lent

March 28 : Death Anniversary of Bishop Mar Januarius Palathuruthy (1995)

FESTAL GREETINGS

March 19



Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam



Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany



Bishop Mar Joseph Pallikarampil



Bishop Mar Joseph Kunnath



Bishop Mar Joseph Kallaragatt



Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedom



Bishop Mar Joseph Pandarasseril



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Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal



Bishop Mar Joseph Srampickal



Bishop Mar Vijayanand Nedumpuram

March 23

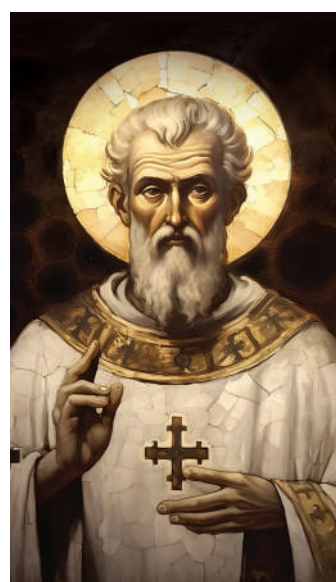


PATHFINDERS

Rev. Dr. Alex Kollamkalam

Clement of Rome, one of the seven Apostolic Fathers, was the fourth bishop of Rome after St. Peter, Linus and Anacletus. Tertullian and Epiphanius of Salamina put forward the tradition that he was consecrated directly by St. Peter but remained auxiliary bishop to Linus and Anacletus. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, his Papacy was from 92AD to 101AD (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 3,15,34). And St. Jerome testifies that he died during the third year of the rule of Emperor Trajan who ruled Rome from 98AD to 117AD (*De Viris Illustribus* 15). Though Origen, Eusebius and Jerome opine that he is the Clement found in Phil 4,3, the modern historians do not hold this position. Although many writings are attributed to his name, the *Letter to Corinthians* is the only authentic work from him.

CLEMENT OF ROME



Without mentioning his name, Clement begins this letter with the opening verse, 'the Church of God sojourning in Rome to the Church of God sojourning in Corinth' presenting it as a letter from one Church to another. The context of the letter is very clear from the very words of Clement himself: "that shameful and detestable sedition, utterly abhorrent to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-confident persons have kindled to such a pitch of frenzy, that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be universally loved,

has suffered grievous injury" (Chapter 1). This letter was an answer to the request made by some Corinthians in the context of an upcoming schism in their Church. Clement realized that the jealousy of a few lay leaders to the Clergy was the real reason behind the schism. He narrates the story of Old Testament (Abel, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and Miriam, Dathan and Abiram, David) and New Testament (Peter and Paul, other Apostles, the saints) figures who suffered due to the jealousy of other people. He also presents the examples of those who were saved by their obedience (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Loth) and faith (Rahab). In this context, he advises the Church of Corinth to leave their jealous way of life and to embrace a life of humility after the model of Christ. He also insists that the authority of the clergy has its foundation in their apostolic succession and so the laity have no right to question them (Chapters 42-44). His attempt to explain the concept of the 'resurrection of the body' with example of Phoenix bird (Chapters 24-25) is also worth mentioning. ■

RECONCILIATION AND FRAGRANT OIL

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



The Holy Scripture is a book that narrates the deeply emotional story of the relationship between God and humankind. The beginning of reconciliation lies in God seeking out humanity. In Genesis chapter 3, we read that the first parents fell into sin due



**From the Heart of
the Father and Head**

to the temptation of the devil and were expelled from paradise. Genesis 3:10 presents the story of a God searching for the sinful human: "Adam, where are you?"

Rather than saying that reconciliation is about humans seeking God, the Bible tells the story of a God who is distressed, saddened, and deeply troubled by the loss of humanity. The most beautiful parables of reconciliation can be found in Luke chapter 15. In this chapter, Jesus teaches three parables, each illustrating different aspects of reconciliation.

One of these parables is the story of the lost coin. A woman with ten silver coins loses one. She becomes greatly distressed because it is a key coin, one that gives value to the other nine. This coin symbolizes the soul's relationship with God. The way she searches for the

Reconciliation is about cleansing ourselves. We must light a lamp, pick up a broom, and diligently sweep. The lesson of reconciliation must begin with our hard work, perseverance, and a good heart.

coin gives us a great perspective—she does not search outside but inside her home. Reconciliation is about cleansing ourselves. We must light a lamp, pick up a broom, and diligently sweep. The lesson of reconciliation must begin with our hard work, perseverance, and a good heart.

The second parable in Luke 15 is the story of the lost sheep. Verses 4 to 7 are particularly meaningful as they highlight the stance of reconciliation. Out of a hundred sheep, only one goes missing. Ninety-nine remain. However, the shepherd knows the lost one is valuable. That is why he leaves the ninety-nine to go the extra mile in search of the missing one.

Some might say, "What is lost is lost. Let's be content with what remains." But the shepherd does not take that stance. He leaves the ninety-nine behind and seeks the one that is missing. When he finds the sheep entangled in thorns, his joy is indescribable. He bandages its wounds, carries it on his shoulders, and returns to the fold. One of the most beautiful images of Jesus is that of a shepherd joyfully carrying a sheep on his shoulders. Some Bible scholars believe this is the most beautiful parable Jesus taught. It shows the shepherd's immense generosity in reconciliation and the boundless joy and kindness he experiences upon the return

of the lost one.

Another remarkable parable in the Gospel is the story of the prodigal son. After the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep, Luke tells this story, which is the very heartbeat of this chapter. The younger son perceives life with his father as a form of bondage. The Bible does not record the father advising the son, but we can assume it might have happened. The son demands his share of the inheritance and departs for a distant land. Bible scholars see a profound separation in the phrase "distant land." Sin is always a separation—a separation from God, from parents, from siblings.

The son squanders all his inheritance. Sin is the destruction of God's grace. Losing the wisdom, beauty, health, and talents given by God is what sin entails. When a severe famine strikes the land, he is affected as well. Even though he lives in extreme hardship, he does not initially think of returning to his father. Only in his lowest moment does he gain true understanding. The phrase "he came to his senses" signifies the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Without the Holy Spirit's intervention, true repentance cannot happen. Reconciliation and repentance are divine gifts

facilitated by the Holy Spirit. As a result of this grace, the son returns to his father's house. The father welcomes him at the door. The son does not sneak in through the back; he approaches from the front. He was afraid, yet the father ran to embrace him and led him back home. Our courage to return to the Father's house is essential for reconciliation.

Reconciliation is complete when we unite with God. However, its growth depends on the bonds of humility we maintain with everyone around us—our parents, siblings, neighbors, priests, religious leaders, and those to whom we are indebted. Luke's Gospel describes how Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with costly nard oil, filling the house with fragrance. She shattered the bottle of pride. When the bottle of pride is broken, it spreads fragrance within the home. Reconciliation is the breaking open of a bottle of perfume.

Just as Mary wept at Jesus' feet in repentance, let us also reflect on our sins, strive to strengthen our relationships with others, and make this Lenten season meaningful. Let us pray for this grace. We have a God who waits for the lost to be found. May this deep realization free us from despair and help us move forward with hope. ■

MESSAGE OF THE CURIA BISHOP

Bishop Sebastian Vaniyapurakal



An incident that took place during my tenure as a parish priest remains vividly etched in my memory even after many years.

One of the earliest services I conducted in the parish was a memorial Mass for the first death anniversary of a middle-aged man. After the Mass, I proceeded to his house for prayers. Once the prayers and meals were over, the deceased man's wife approached me privately, saying she had something to share. As she spoke, she began to weep.

The incident was as follows: On the night before her husband's death, they had gone to bed after a quarrel. Unable to bring themselves to speak to each other, they slept in silence, turning away from one another. At dawn, the wife woke up and went to the kitchen to do her chores. When she didn't see her husband getting up at his usual time to prepare for work,

CONFLICTS THAT SHOULD NOT OUTLIVE THE SUNSET

The Holy Spirit urges us to forgive, whereas the evil spirit tells us not to. When we forgive, pray, and love, we experience true inner joy.

she started speaking to him angrily from the kitchen.

She accused him of being irresponsible, indifferent to her and their children, and lazy. When he did not respond, she decided to confront him directly. It was only when she approached him that she realized he was lying there lifeless.

The post-mortem report confirmed that he had died due to cardiac arrest. Overcome with grief, the woman told me, "Father, I know that death is inevitable for everyone, but the way my husband passed away is something I cannot bear. It has broken me completely. Not only did I not get a chance to reconcile with him before he died, but I also disrespected him even after he had passed away. The pain of that realization is unbearable. My heart has no peace. Father, please pray specially for me."

Listening to her, I experienced a deep moment of reflection. My thoughts went back to the many times I, too, had been harsh with people. I remembered situations where conflicts had lasted for weeks or even months.

But after this incident, my perspective changed. Now, whenever I feel upset with someone, I immediately go to my spiritual father to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It helps me forgive from the heart, and I feel immense relief. It is a deeply spiritual experience.

The Gospel reminds us of this truth. Jesus teaches: "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15).

I have come across people who hold on to hatred, saying they will never forgive,

even after death. This includes husbands and wives, parents and children, siblings, and others. Such resentment is a form of demonic temptation.

The Holy Spirit urges us to forgive, whereas the evil spirit tells us not to. When we forgive, pray, and love, we experience true inner joy. We must follow the example Jesus set in His own life. Even as He was crucified by those who falsely accused Him, He forgave them.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Reconciliation is an essential aspect of a worthy and holy offering of the Eucharist. The opening hymn of the Mass conveys this truth: *Let us be reconciled and prepare a new altar.*

Let us reflect on the words of St. Paul: "Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27). ■

FORGIVENESS: THE PATH TO HEALING

Rev. Dr. Tom Pannalakunnel MSFS

The word “forgiveness” means to let go. What are we letting go of? I must abandon my desire to harm those who have harmed me. It also means to forgive debts and to abandon resentment.

When someone harms another person, it’s natural to think about seeking revenge. This tendency for retribution exists not only among humans but also among animals. If you harm a dog, it’s likely to bark, lunge at you, and even bite you. However, humans are far superior to animals. Therefore, humans have the ability to forgive those who have harmed them, and they should forgive.

Forgiveness is a journey toward wellness. Today, thousands are enslaved by depression, anxiety, and mental stress because they cannot forgive. Some studies have shown that heart disease, stomach ailments, ulcers, and joint pain can all be caused by an inability to forgive. Through forgiveness, one can regain both mental and physical health simultaneously. Forgiveness is a gift of love that one gives to their own heart. When forgiving, the person who benefits most is the one who forgives.

If anyone thinks that the person who forgives loses and the person who harmed wins, they are mistaken. Mahatma Gandhi said that the weak cannot forgive; forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.

Forgiveness does not justify the wrong or those who did wrong. Rather, it marks the beginning of a new start. It’s not merely an emotion but a firm decision—a decision that must be made every day. Norman Cousins’ words, “Life is a daring adventure of forgiveness,” are profoundly true. Forgiveness is essential to move forward with new perspectives toward the future, rather than living in the past filled with hatred, vengeance, and anger.

Many have told me that they wish to forgive and have often tried, but when situations arise, they find it difficult. For

Continuation of page 1

that humans had lost through sin. The Apostle Paul teaches: “In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting us with the message of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:19) The Holy Scripture further testifies: “Through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.” (Colossians 1:20). It is through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross that humanity was reconciled with God. That sacrifice is re-presented in every Holy Mass; we are renewed! Our repentance for sin should be through



Through forgiveness, one can regain both mental and physical health simultaneously. Forgiveness is a gift of love that one gives to their own heart. When forgiving, the person who benefits most is the one who forgives.

such people, I’ll share a model for forgiveness known as the REACH MODEL.

1. Recall the Event:

I remember all the people who have harmed me. Under each person’s name, I note the harms they’ve done to me. First, consider those people and events that are not too difficult to forgive. Save the most difficult people and events for last.

2. Empathize with the Aggressor:

This is the ability to identify with another person’s personality. Each individual has circumstances and experiences in which they grew up. Such circumstances and experiences largely determine their personality. Good and evil exist in all people. When we understand the truth

meditation on Jesus Christ’s sacrifice. His wounds on the cross are signs of God’s love. Those wounds are a guarantee of salvation, they are the source of healing, and they are signs that proclaim the gravity of our sin. If we do not feel repentance, we should look at Jesus’ wounds on the cross; when doubts arise about God’s love, we should turn our gaze to the pierced heart. When we are tormented by suffering, our eyes should be raised there.

Acts of repentance and reparation include almsgiving, fasting, prayer, and other penitential practices. Receiving the Holy Sacraments, practicing devotions, and cultivating virtues all help us grow in grace and make our renewed life fruitful.

that even the best among us have some evil and the worst have some good, we will be filled with empathy.

3. Altruistic Gift of Forgiveness:

This has three levels

(a) Consider a situation where you made a mistake. Remembering the joy you felt when you were forgiven, forgive the person who harmed you. Whether or not that person deserves forgiveness is not the issue. Just as you received undeserved forgiveness, give forgiveness to those who don’t deserve it.

(b) Seek God’s help if you find it difficult to forgive yourself.

(c) Pray for the person who harmed you.

Just as with God, we must be reconciled with our brothers and sisters. We must restore relationships by asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness. This is necessary in family, community, and workplace settings. The renewed life should be lived following the path of justice and truth. The verse “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:24) calls attention to the need for reconciliation with one’s brother. Let us be eager to perform works of mercy. The Word reminds us, “Showing

4. Commit Publicly to Forgive

Share your hurtful experience and your desire to forgive the person who hurt you with someone you trust. This could be a spiritual guide, a friend, or a psychologist. Another thing you can do is write a letter to the person who harmed you (not necessarily to send it, but just as a way to express your feelings). Alternatively, create a certificate stating “I forgive you” for that person.

5. Hold on to Forgiveness:

After forgiving, one experiences great freedom and joy. However, after some time, thoughts of vengeance and anger might return. In such situations, tell yourself, “I have forgiven. I don’t need feelings of anger.” Try your utmost to persist in forgiveness. ■

mercy is like a grain offering; giving alms is like offering a thanksgiving sacrifice. Turning away from evil pleases the Lord; renouncing injustice is an atoning sacrifice.” (Sirach 35:3-5). The Word further reminds us: “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Hebrews 13:16)

Therefore, with a heart full of repentance, meditating on Christ who died for us as Savior and Lord, let us step onto the path of unity. Forgetting divisions, as members of Christ’s body, let us be witnesses of love. Reconciliation is the renewal of everything in love. Only love can bring about unity. May the Lenten season be an opportunity for this. ■

CREDO: THE NARRATIVE OF THE SLAYING OF DEATH



Rev. Dr. Thomas Thadathilputhenveetil

The opening chapters of the Sacred Scripture articulates the invariable destiny of human being. God, the life-giver intervenes in the realm of existence of man with a radical statement. Namely, he is destined to die. It implies that where there is life, there is death too. To live means to die. God the Creator of life has decided that human being should die. However, at the same time, when he was brought to the domain of life, he had the possibility not to die, comments St Augustine (AD 354-430), the bishop of Hippo (*posse non mori* – possible not to die). Unfortunately, when he decided to withdraw his gaze from the Creator and opted to limit his being to his own self, the death became unavoidable. Hereafter, therefore, he cannot but die (*non posse non mori* – not possible not to die). He shifted his being from the existential axis of the possibility of ‘not-to-die’ to that of ‘cannot-but-die’.

God did not terminate His intervention at the verdict of death. He made

a second decisive intervention, in and through the person of Jesus Christ which is narrated in the New Testament. Opting out the epic road/way of kenosis he pitched His tent among us and dwelt among us (*homo factus est*). He decided to enter into the core of the already promulgated judgement of death. By resolving to die, He really died and made possible His entry into the content of the death (*passus et sepultus est*). He transformed the death from within, entering into its content. Thus, the so far prevailed infamous impressions of death were radically revised. Instead, the death received an unprecedented new fame and name.

Consequently, man is given the opportunity to fly from the domain of death, where reigns only the unfathomable darkness, to the Christ-made horizon of life which is called heaven, the house of light (CCC, 1023, 1026, 1027). Heaven is not a place situated in the created universe or out of the cosmos. It is nor a state that awaits the man after his death. Heaven is a person, hereafter (CCC, 1024). That is to say, Jesus Christ is heaven, says St Augustine. Man and his history is journeying towards Christ, the heaven (CCC, 1025). One who resides in Him has no more predications of judgements of mortality on his destiny. For, He has taken up and rewritten all the to-be-issued verdicts forever. Jesus Christ, thanks to the unfathomability of His love and luminance of His mercy, has owned the beginning and end of our being.



To live means to die. God the Creator of life has decided that human being should die. However, at the same time, when he was brought to the domain of life, he had the possibility not to die, Unfortunately, when he decided to withdraw his gaze from the Creator and opted to limit his being to his own self, the death became unavoidable

Jesus Christ invited us to the domain of being and existence in and through His love. He loved us even before our creation. It is after loving us that He created us. His love precedes our being (Wis 11, 24). The same love flows to us and protects also in and after our death. Thanks to this uninterrupted current of His love, He does not allow our journey to decay and non-being (CCC, 1026).

Rev. 1, 7 reads as follows: “Behold, He is coming”. The One who comes is the same one who descended from His

glory and dwelt among us. He is God and man simultaneously, according to the Nicene Creed. He is our brother by His incarnation. We will be seeing Him, our Brother, face to face on the day of the final judgement. He will repeat the same phrase to each one of us: “Behold, I am coming”. The one who comes again is our own Brother. He comes to invite us to the eternal bliss. Thus the judgement of death of man is transformed into the message of hope personified in the person of Jesus Christ. ■

RECONCILIATION THROUGH HOLY QURBANA



LITURGY

Fr. Kuriakose Mooljely MCBS

Holy *Qurbana* is the supreme act of worship offered to God the Father, in spirit and in truth. The fruit of holy *Qurbana* is reconciliation between God and humanity, between people and each other, and between humanity and creation.

The essence of Jesus’ preaching is repentance and reconciliation; Jesus came to transform humanity into a community of worship (Matthew 4:17). The message of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus (Matthew 3), and Peter, who proclaimed the risen Christ (Acts 2:38), is also repentance and reconciliation. Reconciliation with God, other human beings and creation is an ongoing process in the Christian life.

The message of reconciliation, which is at the heart of Sacred Scripture, is also at the heart of Holy *Qurbana*. Holy *Qurbana* begins with the call “Let us be reconciled” and culminates in communion between God and humanity. Jesus exhorts: “If you



The offering of incense in this part symbolizes the remission of sins that results from reconciliation with God. This is a moment of surrender, acknowledging dependence on God’s grace and strength.

are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:24). From the very beginning of the celebration, it is this call to reconciliation that the holy *Qurbana* reminds the worshipping community.

In his Gospel, John declares: “As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered him” (John 13:27). To prevent the community of the faithful from falling into such spiritual decay, the Church empha-

sizes holiness through the proclamation of the priest: “The holy *Qurbana* is for the holy people”. The holy *Qurbana* helps the community to rectify broken relationships with God and others, and to receive the sacred mysteries in a state of grace. The *Qurbana* itself serves as a preparatory process to this end, particularly through the Rite of Fraction (*Vibajana Shushrusha*) and the Rite of Reconciliation (*Anuranjana Shushrusha*), after the Anaphora.

The Reconciliation Service is structured in two parts. The first part is designed to reconcile the worshipping community with God the Father. This part

includes the priestly prayer, penitential psalms, and the offering of incense. Here, the faithful, recognizing the presence of Christ—the source of peace for the heavenly and earthly beings—sing hymns seeking peace, harmony, and the grace to live for the glory of God. The first step in reconciliation is the forgiveness of one’s own sins. The offering of incense in this section symbolizes the remission of sins that results from reconciliation with God. This is a moment of surrender, acknowledging dependence on God’s grace and strength.

The second part of the Reconciliation Service includes the *Karozuza* (proclamation), the rite of reconciliation and the prayer of absolution. To be reconciled with God, it is essential to be reconciled with each other within the worshipping community. This part focuses on prayers and practical instructions that remind us of the need to reconcile with one another before receiving the Holy Eucharist. True unity with God requires both repentance of sins and reconciliation with other human beings.

In the Holy *Qurbana*, placing the Rite of Fraction between the two parts of the Reconciliation Service carries a profound message for the community of the faithful. Only those who are willing to be broken and shared for the sake of God and humanity can truly receive the Holy *Qurbana* without condemnation; for them, the reception of the Holy *Qurbana* becomes the cause of forgiveness and the remission of sins. ■

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF ST. THOMAS IN INDIA



LITURGICAL
RESEARCH
CENTRE STUDY
SERIES

Rev. Dr. James Puliurumbil

The land route connecting the Mediterranean world and the Eastern world (India and China) starts from the Roman capital. From Rome it comes to Antioch (capital of eastern Roman Empire) in Syria, and then passing through Edessa, reaches the twin city of Selucia-Ctesiphon. Selucia is a Greek city and Ctesiphon a Parthian city on the banks of the river Euphrates. Edessa, one of the small states lying in between the warring empires of Rome and Persia was a strategic junction of two highways. It is here the two ancient caravan routes met and crossed. One is the Silk Road running east from Antioch to the Persian border crossing Edessa and reaches India and China. The other caravan road crossed Edessa north and south from the mountains of Armenia down through Arabia to Egypt. This international road, which goes eastwards, crossing Zagros Mountains reaches the region called Media. Passing through Ecbatna, this road reaches Merv not very distant from Oxus

river. From Merv, the route becomes two; one is known as the Silk-route, going to central Asia, while the other branch turns towards India. According to the recent study and research, St Thomas who first reached Broach (Bharuch or Barygaza) in Gujarat, a great trade centre of India, passing through Ujjain and Mathura must have also been to Taxila, the capital of the Parthian kingdom where too he preached Gospel and established Christian communities. He worked there till 48 AD when the Kushan dynasty overran and destroyed the Indo-Parthian Kingdom. Thomas must have preached gospel in many cities of North India. After the destruction of the city of Taxila he went back either to Palestine and made a second voyage to India in 52 AD.

Kerala was visited by travellers and traders from ancient times. Ancient Kerala was famous for her spices and it is her fame as the 'land of spices' that brought peoples and cultures to her shores even from the third millennium BC, if not earlier. Phoenicians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs and Jews had all trade contacts

with Kerala. Spices were taken to the Mediterranean world using different trade routes and were widely used in the different countries of the Mediterranean. That is the reason why pepper is called 'yavanapriya' (dear to the Greeks/Europeans). A number of early foreign writers point to the kingdom of Male or Malabar and its trade relations with foreign countries. Herodotus (484-413 BC) gives good description of trade with India. Megasthenes (306-289 BC), the Greek ambassador of the king Selucius Nicator at the court of Chandragupta writes in his description of ancient India about the rulers of Malabar or of the Cheras.

The author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* is of the opinion that Muziris and Barace (Purakad) were the chief ports of Kerala from where a great quantity of pepper, the chief product of Malabar was sent to Europe. Pepper was in great demand in Rome. Pliny writes about this pepper trade of the first century AD. This vigorous trade in pepper and other spices of India began to drain the Roman empire of its wealth. He writes that both

pepper and ginger grow wild in their respective countries and yet here we buy them by weight like gold and silver. This Indo-Roman contact resulted in the flow of money from Rome into the ports of India. The great number of Roman coins discovered in different parts of India including South attests to this fact. The final chapters of the *Acts of Thomas* close with the apostle's journey overland into other parts of India. He appoints a deacon to preach Jesus and take his place in the land of king Gundaphar (Chapter 7, paragraph 3). Thomas then went to another kingdom (of Mazdai) in India and there preached the gospel. There again the apostle's radical, ascetic teaching against marriage brought trouble. Some of the chief women of the kingdom including the queen are converted. The king becomes angry and accuses Thomas of bewitching them and orders his execution. He is led to a mountain outside the city where he was speared to death while praying. Thus Thomas' mission in India was sealed with the crown of his martyrdom in India in the city of Mylapore/Chennai. ■

TO BE LAY MISSIONARIES IS A VOCATION

Rev. Dr. Francis Eluvathingal

In the decree of II Vatican Council, on the apostolate of the laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Apostolic Activity) by St. Pope Paul VI, on November 18, 1965, the vocation of the laity as missionary has been dealt.

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Jesus Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise shares in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore has their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world. They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, lives in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardour of the spirit of Christ (AA 2).

The laity has received the right and duty to the apostolate through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the



On all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world.

Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated for the royal priesthood and the holy people (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-10) not only that they may offer spiritual sacrifices in everything they do but also that they may witness to Christ throughout the world.

One engages in the apostolate

through the faith, hope, and charity. All the faithful are impelled to promote the glory of God through the coming of His kingdom and to obtain eternal life for all men—that they may know the only true God and Him whom He sent, Jesus Christ (cf. John 17:3). On all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine

message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world.

Imbibing the above said spirit, the Syro-Malabar Church moves forward with the historic step of forming a Missionary Organization for the laity. Migration being an accelerated phenomena happening in the Church drives us to form the migrants as Missionaries for Global Evangelization.

At the same time, the laity has already organized themselves involving in several missionary endeavors. A few of them listed below: Bible printing and distribution; Mission fest; formation and training programme for Catechists, *Kerygmatics* and *Didachists*; Jericho Prayer, Night Vigil and Intercession for the world, India even with the bedridden patients; Ministries among the new Christian communities, Guest workers, the old, youth, children; Collection of Pius Articles and other materials for mission; Sponsors for missionary personnel, Churches and other homes; Home mission and Online tuition; Apologists, Media Ministry, Mobile Applications like Blizz, BibleON; street evangelization; pro-lifers, Christeen, Jesus Youth; and so on. May God bless all various efforts of evangelization done by our lay missionaries. ■

MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN THE MODERN ERA



Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikkattumyali

Health is a state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, not merely the absence of disease, as defined by the World Health Organization. Mental health is an integral part of overall health, which is why mental health care is included in primary healthcare. According to a global study conducted by WHO, approximately 1% of the population in every society suffers from severe mental illness, while 10% experience mild mental disorders. In India, where most people reside in rural areas, mental health facilities are largely concentrated in urban regions, making it difficult for many patients to access timely treatment.

Psychotic Disorders

Schizophrenia, meaning “split mind,” is one of the most severe and complex mental disorders. It affects approximately one in every hundred people, typically manifesting during adolescence. If left undiagnosed and untreated in the early stages, it can severely disrupt a person’s life. Symptoms include delusions, paranoia, auditory hallucinations, the belief that one’s thoughts and actions are controlled



by external forces, withdrawal from social interactions, and a loss of reality perception. Patients may wander aimlessly in a confused state, struggling with delusions (false beliefs) and hallucinations (false sensory experiences). Their thought processes may become disorganized, and their conversations may lack coherence. They may also exhibit tendencies to withdraw into themselves.

Delusional disorder, commonly known as paranoia, is characterized by deeply rooted false beliefs. Individuals suffering from this condition may suspect their partner’s fidelity, believe a neighbor is conspiring against them, or even think they are romantically involved with a celebrity. Some may imagine insects crawling all over their body, further exacerbating their distress.

Depressive Disorders

Depression is a condition marked by persistent sadness lasting more than two weeks, loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities, extreme fatigue, negative thoughts, feelings of guilt, difficulty concentrating, low self-esteem, suicidal tendencies, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and reduced sexual desire. In severe cases, symptoms may include delusions and hallucinations. Studies show that depression affects approximately 30% of the population, with women being twice as likely to suffer from it compared to men.

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a condition in which individuals experience alternating episodes of depression and mania. Some may exhibit only manic symptoms, characterized by excessive energy, impulsiveness, and an inflated sense of self-importance.

Neurotic Disorders

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is characterized by persistent, intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviors. Those affected often lead highly structured and meticulous lives but struggle with uncontrollable, repetitive thoughts. When they attempt to resist these thoughts, they experience extreme anxiety, leading them to perform compulsive behaviors such as repeated hand-

washing, checking, or organizing objects. Other anxiety disorders, including phobias and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), also fall into this category.

Advancements in Treatment and Therapy

Recent scientific advancements have led to the development of **optogenetics**, a field that combines neuropsychology, behavioral genetics, behavioral science, and bioengineering to treat conditions like depression and anxiety effectively. Innovations such as **cranial magnetic stimulation, direct current stimulation, and brain polarization stimulation** offer relief for mild mental disorders. A study conducted at Stanford University found that these non-invasive therapies significantly reduce the severity of mental illness without causing side effects, particularly in patients who do not respond to traditional treatments. Additionally, **gene therapy**, currently in experimental stages, is expected to revolutionize mental health treatment in the future.

The Complexity of Mental Health Care

Mental health care is a multifaceted process that requires the collective effort of individuals and institutions across all levels of society. The Church and its institutions, which uphold the dignity and sanctity of human life, have an invaluable role to play in promoting mental well-being and providing necessary support to those in need. ■



JOURNEY OF FAITH & LEARNING

Rev. Dr. Bilju Vazhappilly

On February 2, 2024, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith published an important document titled *Gestis Verbisque* (Acts and Words), which systematically and clearly explains the divine teachings given by the Church so far regarding the essential elements necessary for the valid administration of sacraments.

Relevance

The growing instances of invalid celebration of sacraments have raised concerns among the bishops in Rome, especially within the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. Significant alterations made by clergy in the matter (Matter) or form (Form) of the sacraments have rendered those sacraments invalid. Such actions have necessitated the re-administration of Baptism or Confirmation for those affected. Furthermore, when a significant number of the faithful realized that the sacraments they received were invalid, they expressed profound sorrow. This crucial document provides examples for reflection: for instance, instead of using the prescribed baptismal formula of the Church, some clergy have

DEEDS AND WORDS

Today, in the Church, it is through the sacraments that the gift of salvation, which the risen Christ desires to share with all, is granted. Ministers must recognize that sacramental celebrations are not private ceremonies but the celebrations of the Church.

used formulas such as “*In the name of the Creator, I baptize you*” or “*In the name of your father and mother, we baptize you.*” Some priests who were baptized with such invalid formulas later discovered, with deep distress, that their ordination and all the sacraments they had administered were invalid. These cases underscore the importance of this document (No. 23).

Key Doctrinal Teachings

The sacraments are instituted by Christ. The living experience of the mystery of salvation is realized through perceptible signs. The sacraments enable our participation in divine life; they are God’s principal works in the New and Eternal Covenant.

The essential components required for the valid administration of sacraments are matter and form (Matter and Form), minister and recipient (Minister and Recipient), and the intention of the Church. The intention of the minister performing the sacrament is linked to matter and form. Indeed, the minister must have the intention “*to do what the Church does.*”

The minister’s intention, together with the disposition of the recipient, represents the intrinsic and spiritually significant aspect of the sacrament. The Church has officially recognized sacramental texts that incorporate all these elements for valid sacramental administration.

Therefore, a substantial alteration of the essential elements casts doubt on the minister’s true intention, thereby invalidating the sacrament being administered. The Church’s intention to perform the sacrament is evident in the use of proper matter and form as established by the Church. Making arbitrary changes to these elements under the pretense of creativity actually invalidates the sacrament itself; thus, such acts can never confer grace. Hence, it is strictly prohibited to add, remove, or modify anything in the sacramental texts officially provided by the Church. Ministers must ensure they administer the sacraments with utmost fidelity.

Since the matter and form of the sacraments are rooted in Scripture and

Tradition, they can never be determined according to the will of individuals or specific communities. It is not the Church’s responsibility to define these elements based on human preference; rather, the Church has the authoritative duty to recognize and uphold them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Bishops and their collaborating priests lead liturgical celebrations. At the same time, the minister presiding over the celebration functions *in persona Christi capitis* and *in nomine Ecclesiae*. Christ is the head of the ecclesial body. It must not be forgotten that Christ alone is the true minister and presider of all sacraments.

As ministers of the sacraments, every priest must administer them with deep love and unwavering faith. Today, in the Church, it is through the sacraments that the gift of salvation, which the risen Christ desires to share with all, is granted. Ministers must recognize that sacramental celebrations are not private ceremonies but the celebrations of the Church. We must approach the matter and form of each sacrament with reverence and respect as established by the Church. This document specifically urges every diocesan bishop to examine whether sacraments are being validly administered within their diocese and to identify and promptly rectify any deviations in this regard. ■

THE HOLINESS (QADOSH) OF GOD: DISTANCE AND NEARNESS

“I am God, and not man; the Holy One who dwells among you” (Hosea 11:9)



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Joy Philip Kakkanattu CMI

Hosea 11:1-11 beautifully captures the unique nature of Israel's God, portraying His relationship with His people through the metaphor of a parent-child relationship. In this passage, God reveals Himself as a loving parent, deeply pained by the disobedience of his child, yet unwilling to give up on them. Despite the child's disobedience—which legally warranted expulsion—God wrestles with His own heart, torn between the need for justice and His overwhelming desire to show mercy. This inner struggle highlights the profound holiness of God, which is not just about His power and otherness but also about His compassionate refusal to abandon His people, even when they deserve punishment. Ultimately, mercy triumphs, offering a



second chance to those who have gone astray.

God's holiness is often understood as His transcendence and separation from humanity, as seen when He tells Moses to remove his sandals because the ground is holy (Exodus 3:5). Yet Hosea

offers a different perspective: God's supreme power is not displayed in harsh punishment but in His willingness to withhold it. Only a sovereign God can choose to delay, reduce, or cancel deserved judgment. Hosea's theology is profound, revealing that God's unique-

ness lies not in His anger but in His preference for mercy. This mercy is not a free pass to continue sinning but an invitation to turn away from wrongdoing and embrace the opportunity for renewal.

This image of a God who suffers internally to save rebellious humanity finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. As John 3:16 declares, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus is the embodiment of God's mercy—the Word made flesh, who lived among us, died for us, and rose again. Through His resurrection, Jesus remains present with humanity as a merciful and divine presence in the Eucharist and through the power of Holy Spirit. Belief in this Holy One, who is both near and full of compassion, forms the heart of Christian faith and testimony. In Him, we see the ultimate victory of mercy over judgment, offering hope and redemption to all who turn to Him. ■



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Mathew Souriamkuzhi

The Church is the people of God, called together as the mystical body of Christ. Although it is a spiritual community, it often needs to intervene in financial matters to provide the spiritual services required by its members. Temporal goods are essential for missionary works, the celebration of sacraments, and various other ministries. Therefore, the Church has the innate right to acquire, possess, administer, and alienate temporal goods (CCEO c. 1007). The bishop of an eparchy has the responsibility to exercise vigilance over the administration of all ecclesiastical goods within the eparchy, except those which are removed from his power of governance. He must also supervise the material wealth of all juridical persons under his jurisdiction (c. 1022 §1). To ensure that the financial affairs of an eparchy are handled with accountability and transparency, Canon Law provides for two complementary structures: (1) the Eparchial Procurator, and (2) the Finance Council.

The Eparchial Bishop appoints the Eparchial Procurator. After consulting the College of Eparchial Consultors and the Finance Council, the bishop may appoint any Christian faithful who is expert

EPARCHIAL FINANCE OFFICER AND FINANCE COUNCIL



and honest in financial matters as the Procurator (c. 262 §1). Here, expertise refers more to practical knowledge and the ability to make timely and appropriate decisions based on circumstances rather than academic qualifications. The term of appointment is three years, but it can be extended. The Procurator cannot be removed before the end of the term unless there are serious reasons, and even then, the bishop must consult the College of Eparchial Consultors and the Finance Council (c. 262 §2, Particular Law Art. 13).

The Eparchial Bishop is responsible for providing clear guidelines regarding the duties and rights of the Procurator and his relationship with the Finance

Council. According to these guidelines, the Procurator is responsible for overseeing all ecclesiastical properties in the Eparchy, provide for their preservation, safety and increase, to supply for the negligence of local administrators and to administer the goods that lack an administrator designated by the law. In addition to presenting annual accounts, the Procurator must also submit reports whenever requested by the bishop (c. 262 §3-4).

The Eparchial Finance Council is formed by the bishop after consulting the College of Eparchial Consultors. While CCEO does not specify particular qualifications for council members, it recommends including persons who are

expert, if possible, also in civil law (c. 263 §1). However, those who are related to the eparchial bishop up to the fourth degree inclusive of consanguinity or affinity are excluded from membership in the Finance Council (c. 263 §3). The bishop is required to consult the Finance Council on important financial matters of the Eparchy (c. 263 §4). In situations where the Finance Council's consent is not explicitly required, it functions merely as a consultative body. The Finance Council is responsible for approving the annual accounts and preparing the budget for the following year. The bishop always serves as the president of the Finance Council, and the Procurator is a member of the council (c. 263). ■



FAMILY CORNER

A SHELTER BUILT ON LOVE

For love to be truly selfless, it must also embody compassion. Only with compassion can one tolerate the shortcomings or limitations of a partner or child. Look upon weaknesses with kindness. Instead of fueling conflicts with anger, compassion allows us to douse the flames with understanding and patience.

The foundation of family life is love. Any imbalance in love leads to unrest within the family—whether between spouses, parents and children, or other members.

There are moments in life when one might doubt whether their partner truly loves them. Children, too, often experience this doubt. When parents scold them, discipline them for their mistakes, or fail to fulfill their desires, they may feel unloved.

Conditional love and selfish love are at the root of such problems. The scriptures say that true love never seeks its own interests. The hallmark of selfless love is the well-being and happiness of the other person.

The purer love is, the more selfless it becomes. The absence of love breeds hatred, and its lack creates emotional distance. Conflicts and arguments within a family often stem from a shortage of love.

Disputes may arise for various reasons, but if there is genuine love, even disagreements can be resolved amicably. However, in the absence of love, even trivial matters can escalate into serious conflicts.

Love between spouses, parents, and children is not bound by time. True love knows no age or expiration date. Love is eternal. When couples stand before the altar exchanging vows, they promise to love each other forever. Yet, for some, such promises fade like watermarks over time.



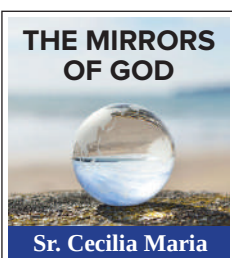
Despite this, many marriages continue to exist outwardly. These relationships resemble fruit-bearing trees that appear healthy on the outside but are decaying within. Loving someone forever requires courage. The promise to love unconditionally, in every circumstance, demands great strength. Love cannot endure without courage. Marriage vows are meant to last ‘from this day forward until death.’ Along the journey, love will be tested in

numerous ways, and it takes courage to uphold the commitment to love despite challenges.

For love to be truly selfless, it must also embody compassion. Only with compassion can one tolerate the shortcomings or limitations of a partner or child. Look upon weaknesses with kindness. Instead of fueling conflicts with anger, compassion allows us to douse the flames with understanding and patience.

We live in a time when discussions on the politics of hatred are widespread. Let us ensure that our families do not follow this path. Instead of hatred, families must cultivate the language of love. This requires a collective effort rather than an individual one. After all, no one can sing a choral song alone. The beauty of a choral performance lies in different voices harmonizing to create a single melody. Nowhere else is this harmony more needed than in family life. ■

SHE WHO SMILED AT CHRIST



If there were ever a photograph that could serve as an answer to the question, “How beautiful can death be?” it would be that of Sister Cecilia Maria, a nun from Argentina. No matter how great a saint someone might be, rarely has anyone been seen smiling at the moment of death as she did. That is precisely what makes her smile so significant and awe-inspiring.

At the age of just 46, Sister Cecilia Maria passed away, composing a new poetry of death with her smile. Her departure



came after many years of suffering from cancer.

Born on December 5, 1973, in San Martín de los Andes, in the Neuquén province of Argentina, Cecilia joined the Discalced Carmelite Order at the age of 24, after completing her nursing studies. It was at this time that she took the name **Sr. Cecilia Maria of the Holy Face.**

Sister Cecilia was always seen with a smile. She was an energetic nun, and music—especially the violin—was dear to her heart. But alongside her love for music, her life was deeply rooted in prayer and meditation. She followed a spiritual path that grew daily in friendship with Christ.

Her cancer began in her tongue and later spread to her lungs. Even as she spent her days between medication and hospital visits, her prayers never wavered. She lived with immense hope, fully convinced that she would soon meet Jesus face to face.

She had even written down her final wish on a piece of paper:

“I was thinking about how my funeral should be. First, everyone should pray well. Then, throw a big party for everyone. Do not forget to pray, but also do not forget to celebrate!”

In every sense, Sister Cecilia made her death a celebration.

On June 23, 2016, Sister Cecilia Maria took her final breath. The images of her smiling at the moment of her passing went viral on social media at that time. The process for her beatification has already begun.

At the moment of her death, she must have seen Christ. She must have smiled at Him. Otherwise, who else could smile like that at the hour of death? ■

A CONGREGATION DEDICATED TO FAMILIES (CHF)

Sr. Dr. Annie Kuriakose CHF Superior General

The Congregation of the Holy Family (CHF) draws inspiration from the Holy Trinity, which embodies love and mutual self-giving. The Holy Family, as the earthly reflection of this divine love, serves not only as a guiding model but also as the Heavenly Patron for the congregation. Founded by St. Mariam Theresia, who was divinely chosen to nurture families in the spirit of the Trinity and the Holy Family, CHF began its humble journey on October 7, 1913. St. Mariam Theresia initiated this sacred mission in a solitary house with three young women, intertwining prayer with family-oriented activities that set the foundation for a vibrant community. On May 14, 1914, the Bishop of Thrissur, Mar John Menacherry, recognized the depth of this endeavour, officially elevating it to the Congregation of the Holy Family. This significant day also marked the moment when St. Mariam Theresia received her religious habit and professed her perpetual vows, with her companions Agnes, Clara, and Veronica received veil entering the path of Postulancy.

Another vital figure in the foundation of CHF is Rev. Fr. Joseph Vithayathil, St. Mariam Theresia's Spiritual Director from 1902 to 1926, who is the Co-Founder of the Congregation. Hailing from the



Foundress: St. Mariam Theresia



Co founder: Ven. Fr. Joseph Vithayathil

CHF: Journeying Hand in Hand with God into its 111th Year of Abundant Grace

Puthenpally parish in Ernakulam, Fr. Vithayathil devoted his life to guiding CHF through its formative years, contributing significantly to its spiritual and material growth until his peaceful entry into heaven at the age of 99 on June 8, 1964. In acknowledgement of his virtuous life, he was declared "Venerable" on December 14, 2015. St. Mariam Theresia launched the Family Apostolate, pioneering a new ministry in the Indian

Church to sanctify families with Christ's compassionate love. Her profound connection with Christ, spiritual bond with the Holy Family and unwavering commitment to the redeeming mission made her a remarkable vessel for this divine calling. To foster the growth of the domestic Church, CHF involved in various ministries that promote the holistic development of families. These ministries include: Family Apostolate, Education-

al Apostolate, Faith Formation, Parish Ministry, Evangelization, Health care Services, Missionary Activities, Social Apostolate, Charitable Works, and upliftment of the Marginalized.

The Family Apostolate Training and Research Institute (FATRI) stands as a unique beacon for the scientific study and practical application of family ministry. Additionally, the "Home Mission" program, designed for family renewal, represents another vital contribution of CHF.

Initiating missionary activities in 1964 at Charkapathar, situated within the Diocese of Bhagalpur, Bihar, CHF's outreach has since expanded across various states in India and internationally to countries including Italy, Germany, the United States, Canada, Ecuador, Ireland, Slovakia, Peru, Ghana, Kenya, and South Sudan. In recognition of its significant contributions, CHF was elevated to a Pontifical Congregation in 1978.

Today, CHF comprises around 3,000 members worldwide, with its presence in 10 provinces, a vice-province, and a region. Rooted deep in prayer and action, the congregation continues its journey forward with God along the path of grace and holiness. May the members of CHF steadfastly walk along the sacred journey laid out by their Founder, St. Mariam Theresia, and Co-Founder, Ven. Joseph Vithayathil

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DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

JANUARY 23 TO FEBRUARY 15

January

- **23 Thursday** : Attended the inter-eparchial meeting of the Curia members from the suffragan eparchies of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly, held at Mount St. Thomas.
Led the Ecumenical Prayer jointly organized by KCBC and KCC in connection with the Church Unity Octave at St. Mary's Forane Church, Kaduthuruthy, in the Eparchy of Palai. Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, along with other bishops from various churches, was also present.
- **25 Saturday** : Arrived at Hosur Eparchy for an official visit and visited Periyamalai, Chinnamalai, and Santhome Cathedral.
- **26 Sunday** : Interacted with the clergy and the consecrated communities of the Hosur Eparchy. Presided over the Holy *Qurbana* at the Cathedral Church in connection with the Eparchial Day and later inaugurated the public gathering.
- **28 Tuesday** : Rededicated the renovated chapel at St. Joseph Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzha, Aluva, and celebrated the Holy *Qurbana*.
- **30 Thursday** : Inaugurated the International Syriac Seminar organized at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary Vadavathoor, Kottayam.

February

- **1 Saturday** : Arrived in Kolkata to visit the Syro-Malabar Mission.
- **2 Sunday** : Visited the Kolkata Mission led by the CMI religious congregation working in the Shamshabad Diocese. Celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* and later presided over a meeting.
- **3 Monday** : Arrived in the Eparchy of Rajkot for an official visit. Visited Generalates, Provincial Houses, Seminaries, and Hospitals near the eparchial headquarters.
- **4 Tuesday** : Visited the former bishop of Eparchy of Rajkot, Mar Gregory Karotemprel. Presided over the Holy *Qurbana* at the Cathedral Church in connection with the Eparchial Day and later chaired the public meeting and delivered a message.
- **5 Wednesday** : Visited various mission stations in the Eparchy of Rajkot and interacted with the lay faithful. Throughout the journey, the eparchial bishop, Mar Jose Chittooparambil, was present.
- **7 Friday** : Held discussions with various groups at the Archbishop's House, Ernakulam.
- **9 Sunday** : Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at Thoppil Parish in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly, as part of pastoral visit, and visited religious houses in the parish.

Participated in the felicitation ceremony at Mount St. Thomas for *Padma Bhushan* awardee and renowned cardiologist Dr. Jose Chacko Periyappuram and extended greetings.

- **10 Monday** : Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered a homily at Chavara Bhavan, Kainakary, in connection with the 220th birth anniversary of St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias.
- **12 Wednesday** : Delivered a message at the Maramon Convention.
Addressed the meeting of lay missionaries organized at Mount St. Thomas, where Bishops Mar Prince Antony Panengaden, Mar Joseph Kollampampil, and Mar John Nellikkunnel were present.
- **13 Wednesday** : Addressed the meeting of Major Superiors of religious congregations of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St. Thomas.
- **15 Saturday** : Declared the *Paurastyia Vidyani-kethan* (MOC) at Manganam, Kottayam, as a Theological Institute and conducted the convocation ceremony that followed.

INAUGURATION OF ST. JOSEPH'S INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY



Aluva: The inauguration of St. Joseph's Institute of Philosophy, the only institution in Kerala authorized to confer an Ecclesiastical Licentiate in Philosophy, was conducted by Cardinal

Baselios Cleemis Catholicos at St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzha. The institute is governed by a committee comprising the KCBC President, Vice President, Secretary General, and other members, with Cardinal Baselios Cleemis as the current chairman. Bishop Mar Pauly Kannookadan and Bishop Rt. Rev. Alex Vadakumthala are also part of the governing body. The institute operates in academic collaboration with the Jnana-Deepa Institute of

Philosophy and Theology, Pune, which has a long-standing legacy in Catholic higher education. The first batch of classes is set to commence in early June 2025. The inauguration ceremony featured addresses by the Director of the Institute, Rev. Dr. Paul Komban, along with Rev. Dr. Nishanth Irudayadasan, Rev. Dr. Luke Thadathil, Very Rev. Dr. Sebastian Palamoottil, Rev. Dr. Francis Marottikarambil, and Rev. Dr. David Nanatt.

MAJOR ARCHBISHOP MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL VISITS WEST BENGAL



Kolkata: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil of the Syro-Malabar Church visited the Kuriakose Elias Chavara Syro-Malabar Mission in West Bengal. This mission area falls under the Diocese of Shamshabad. A grand reception was organized under the leadership of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Behala, where believers from various mission centers—Behala, Ekbalpur, Mukundapur, Durgapur, Barasat,

and Siliguri—gathered. Mission Superior Fr. Sebastian Chamathara CMI extended a warm welcome to the Archbishop. Major Archbishop Raphael Thattil emphasized that migrants are missionaries and congratulated the Syro-Malabar faithful for preserving their faith heritage. He also spoke about the significance of sharing their faith while living as missionaries in West Bengal. Fr. George Pananthottam CMI, Fr. Paul Thamarassery

CMI, Fr. Bipin Panicker OIC, Sr. Gracelin Parekkattil SBS, and Sabu P. Francis conveyed their felicitations. Many representatives from Catholic organizations, as well as members from Latin, Orthodox, Jacobite, and CSI communities, attended the reception to welcome the Major Archbishop. His presence provided new enthusiasm and joy to the Syro-Malabar faithful in West Bengal.

FR. MICHAEL VETTIKATT APPOINTED MANAGING DIRECTOR OF RASHTRA DEEPIKA



Fr. Michael Vettikkatt has been appointed as the Managing Director of Rashtra Deepika Ltd. He has been a member of the Board of Directors since 2016 and has served as the Executive Director since 2019. A native of Neendoor in Kottayam district, Fr. Michael Vettikkatt was ordained as a priest of the Archeparchy of Kottayam in 1993. Since 2015, he has been serving as the Protosyncellus (Vicar General) of the Archeparchy of Kottayam. He holds a postgraduate degree in Social Work from Delhi Central University and an M.Phil. in Psychology from

Mysore Vinayaka University. He was the founding coordinator of Spandan, the social service department of the Syro-Malabar Church, and served as the Joint Secretary of the Justice, Peace & Development Commission of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) for six years. Fr. Vettikkatt also holds various responsibilities, including Chairman of the Kottayam Archeparchy Social Action Commission, Director of the Knanaya Academy for Research and Training, Chaplain of Knanaya Catholic Congress and Knanaya Catholic Women's Association, and member of the KCBC Justice, Peace & Development Commission's Disaster Management Team. Fr. Michael Vettikkatt has been appointed to the position left vacant by Fr. Benny Mundanatt, who completed his term after serving for two years as the Managing Director of Rashtra Deepika.

THE CONSECRATED PERSONS MUST LIVE AND WORK WITH A STRONG MISSIONARY FOCUS: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kakkanad: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil emphasized that the Consecrated persons must live and work with a strong missionary focus. He was speaking at a conference held at Mount St. Thomas, the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church, for the superiors of women religious congregations within the Church.

He expressed satisfaction with the missionary efforts of the consecrated communities and urged them to courageously serve in mission areas according to their unique charisms and visions. While continuing their work with social commitment,

they must also bear witness to the Gospel through their Christian way of life. Instead of prioritizing institutionalization, they should engage in activities that introduce others to a God-centered life and ensure that existing institutions do not become obstacles to such endeavors, he reminded.

The religious members involved in missionary activities in India and abroad presented their mission initiatives and pledged to collaborate with the Syro-Malabar Church's missionary objectives, working together in unity to build the Kingdom of God. The conference also featured discussions from Mother

Generals, Provincial Superiors, and representatives of those serving in mission areas.

The meeting was presided over by the Chairman of the Commission for Evangelization, Mar Prince Antony Panengadan, Commission members Mar Joseph Kollampampil CMI, Mar John Nellikunnel, and commission secretary Fr. Sebastian Mutamthottil MCBS. The programs were organized under the leadership of Fr. Francis Eluvathingal and Sr. Merlin George MSMI.

The Church Stands with Lay Missionary Movements: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil

THE CHURCH STANDS WITH LAY MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kakkanad: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil affirmed that the Church stands in support of lay missionary movements, both individual and organized. He was addressing a consultation meeting of various missionary organizations and individuals involved in evangelization under the Syro-Malabar Church's Evangelization Commission.

He acknowledged the significant role of lay missionaries in the Church's growth across India and commended the missionary initiatives started by individuals that later expanded into large-scale movements.

Discussions were held on structuring and strengthening mission activities at various levels—individual, family, parish, diocese, and Church-wide. The gathering also planned future initiatives, ensuring that the distinct nature of existing mission activities remains intact while organizing the Syro-Malabar Lay Missionary Movement. Guidelines and recommendations were discussed, with a focus on fostering awareness that every Catholic has a missionary calling and encouraging more involvement in missionary efforts.

It was decided that the official inauguration of the Syro-Malabar Lay Missionary Movement

would take place on May 5, 2025, at Mount St. Thomas.

The meeting, chaired by Mar Prince Antony Panengadan, included commission members Mar Joseph Kollampampil CMI, Mar John Nellikunnel, Curia Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal, and lay mission representatives like Sebastian Thomas and Prof. Alicekutty. Missionaries representing various movements actively participated and shared their perspectives. Leadership was provided by commission secretary Fr. Francis Eluvathingal and office secretary Sr. Merlin George MSMI.

FR. JAMES KOKKAVAYALIL APPOINTED SECRETARY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION



Kakkanad: Fr. James Kokkavayalil, a member of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, has been appointed as the Secretary of the Public Affairs Commission of the Syro-Malabar Church. He succeeds Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, who completed five years in the role. The appointment was made by Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, the Chairman of the Commission, with the approval of the Permanent Synod. Since November 2020, Fr. James has been serving as the Assistant Secretary of the Commission.

Ordained in 2010, Fr. James has held various significant positions, including Dean of Studies

at Marthoma Vidyanikethan, Chief Editor of *Satydarshanam* magazine, Director of Public Relations Awareness Forum, Director of Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue, and Director of the Department of Community Awareness and Rights Protection.

The Public Affairs Commission was established following a decision by the Synod in January 2020 to study and analyze matters concerning the Church and society and take necessary measures. In the January 2025 Synod, the tenure of the commission members was extended for another five years through a decree issued by the Major Archbishop. The Commission is chaired by Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, with Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil as Convenor, and includes Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany of Tellicherry, Bishop Remigiose Inchananiyil of Thamarassery, and Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal of Kanjirapally as members.

REVISED LOGO OF CHERUPUSHPA MISSION LEAGUE



tional president of the Mission League Davis Vallooran, general secretary Binoy Palliparambil, and other representatives.

The *Cherupushpa* Mission League was founded on October 3, 1947, under the leadership of Fr. Joseph Maliparambil and P.C. Abraham (Kunjettan) with the aim of encouraging missionary efforts within the Church. Originally launched in Bharananganam, the organization gradually spread across Kerala and various parts of India. Over the years, the Mission League expanded internationally, establishing a presence in countries such as the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Ireland, Italy, Germany, Australia, and Qatar. Two years ago, an official international committee was elected in connection with the League's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Kakkanad: The revised logo of the *Cherupushpa* Mission League, a pious association, was unveiled by Mar Joseph Arumachadath, chairman of the Syro-Malabar Commission for Vocation and co-patron of the Mission League, at Mount St. Thomas. The revision was made in light of the Mission League's expansion into an international lay organization.

Present at the event were commission members Mar Vincent Nelayiparambil, Mar Mathew Nellikunnel, secretary Fr. Thomas Melvettath, interna-

GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PREVENT WILD ANIMAL ATTACKS: MAR JOSEPH PAMPLANY



Iritty: The government must urgently intervene to prevent wild animal attacks, said Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany of Thalassery. He criticized the leftist government for failing to complete the elephant-proof wall project in the Aralam Farm,

which began in 2020, resulting in continued human casualties caused by wild elephants.

Speaking as the chief guest at a day-and-night hunger strike organized by KCYM (Kerala Catholic Youth Movement) of the Thalassery Archeparchy in Edur, the Archbishop emphasized that the issue of wild animal attacks is not linked to any religious or political ideology but is a matter of survival for farmers.

Farmers, denied their right to live safely, must unite and fight. If the government criminalizes farmers for defending their own land from wild animals, the community will organize a stronger resistance, he warned. The primary responsibility of the

forest department is to protect forests, not to harass farmers by inspecting their kitchens. The Archbishop also accused certain corporate interests of using carbon fund policies to force high-land farmers into displacement by encouraging wild animal intrusion into agricultural lands.

The protest raised demands such as the rapid completion of the elephant-proof wall, implementation of temporary fencing solutions, clearing of forested areas within Aralam Farm, and the full disbursement of government compensation. The protest was supported by Archbishop Mar George Njaralakatt and MLA Adv. Sajeev Joseph, among others.

MONSIGNOR PIUS MALEKANDATHIL APPOINTED TO ADVISORY BOARD OF LISBON UNIVERSITY



Muvattupuzha: Monsignor Pius Malekandathil has been appointed as a permanent member of the Scientific Advisory Committee in the Arts and History Department of Libson University, Portugal. Monsignor Pius, who served as a professor in the History Department at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi,

for 15 years, is currently the Vicar General of the Kothamangalam Diocese and the manager of several educational institutions, including Viswajyothi Engineering College, Muvattupuzha Nirmala College, and Thodupuzha Newman College.

With previous teaching experience at Goa University and Sree Sankaracharya University, Kalady, he has authored over 20 books in German and Portuguese and published more than 120 research papers internationally. He is a globally recognized historian in maritime history, Indian Ocean studies, trade history, and medieval urban history.

CONSECRATED LIFE IS THE CROWN JEWEL OF THE CHURCH: MAR PAUL ALAPPATT



Coimbatore: Consecrated life is the crown jewel of the Church, said Mar Paul Alappatt, Bishop of Ramanathapuram Diocese, while inaugurating the Diocesan Meeting of the Consecrated in the Avila Convent School Auditorium.

He emphasized the spiritual beauty of consecrated life as an

adornment to the Church and noted that this sacred calling is deeply attractive to priestly and monastic vocations. He also highlighted the importance of mutual support and encouragement within religious communities for both personal spiritual growth and societal upliftment.

DEBORAH MEET 2K25: CATHOLIC CONGRESS THAMARASSERY WOMEN'S COUNCIL CONFERENCE



Thamarassery: The Catholic Congress Women's Council of Thamarassery Eparchy held its conference at the Mar Manukuzhikkari Memorial Pastoral Center Auditorium. The event was inaugurated by Mar Remigios Inchananiyil, Bishop of Thamarassery Eparchy.

In his address, the bishop

emphasized the importance of women in community empowerment, drawing a parallel with the biblical figure Deborah, who led Israel during times of crisis. He urged women to take an active role in addressing the challenges faced by society today.

Women from various Catholic Congress units of the dio-

cese participated in the event. Sessions were led by experts, including Treasa Liss Sebastian, Melvin Syriac, MP Joseph, and Dr. Chacko Kalamparambil. The conference was coordinated by leaders such as Shaji Kanenthottam, Saji Karott, Alphons Mathew, Shilly Sebastian, Deepa Reji, and Pauline Mathew.

COASTAL SAND MINING IS UNACCEPTABLE: KCBC VIGILANCE COMMISSION

The central government's decision to allow corporate entities to exploit coastal resources for profit, disregarding environmental concerns, is highly condemnable and worthy of protest. Such projects, which disrupt the natural state of the sea, are not even considered by progressive nations. Misinterpreting and misusing the concept of "Blue Economy"—which is meant for international sustainable development—solely for short-term

economic gain is unacceptable.

The increased exploitation of the ocean has already led to severe environmental consequences. While the United Nations' 2012 Rio Summit endorsed the Blue Economy as a model that balances income generation with ocean conservation, the draft policy released by the Indian government on February 17, 2021, contradicts those global commitments. Without allowing sufficient deliberation, the

policy was passed in the August 2023 parliamentary session. As a result, the central government is now preparing to initiate the first phase of sand mining in the sea, with the involvement of private companies.

This move will have far-reaching consequences. Changes in the ocean ecosystem will not only affect coastal communities but also disrupt the overall balance of the planet. There are numerous examples

of how such unscientific actions have negatively impacted the environment. The concept of the Blue Economy was first introduced in 1994 precisely to prevent such harmful exploitation. Three decades later, when the world is taking climate threats seriously, India's decision to revert to outdated policies is a matter of global shame.

The decision will impose a heavy burden on various vulnerable groups, including fish-

ermen already facing existential crises, coastal residents affected by sea erosion, and countless marine species dependent on natural ecosystems. At a time of increasing climate-related challenges, the central government must unconditionally withdraw from this unscientific initiative. Coastal communities, left with no choice but to protest for their survival, deserve full solidarity in their struggle.

A PILGRIMAGE OF THE FAITHFUL OF HIGHRANGES

EPARCHY OF IDUKKI



EPARCHY AT A GLANCE



HEAVENLY PATRON : MAR SLEEVA
BISHOP : MAR JOHN NELLIKUNNEL

PARISH PRIESTS	: 231	ARTS & SCIENCE COLLEGES	: 04
RELIGIOUS / MISSIONARY PRIESTS	: 589	SCHOOLS	: 86
SEMINARIANS	: 93	CARE HOMES	: 07
NUNS	: 1050	HOSPITALS	: 03
LAY FAITHFUL	: 153000	SPECIAL SCHOOLS	: 05
FAMILIES	: 35442	HOME FOR CHILDREN	: 13
FORANES	: 13	BOARDINGS	: 07
PARISHES	: 105	COUNSELLING CENTRES	: 07
STATION CHURCHES	: 54	HOSTELS	: 11
RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION - MEN	: 15	TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTRES	: 03
RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION - WOMEN	: 32	WELFARE CENTRES	: 09
TRAINING CENTRES	: 04		

MAR JOHN NELLIKUNNEL



BIRTH :
1973 MARCH 22

PRIESTLY ORDINATION:
1998 DECEMBER 30

APPOINTED BISHOP :
2018 JANUARY 12

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION:
2018 APRIL 05

Unwavering Faith Amidst Migration: The Blessing of Idukki

In response to the food scarcity caused by World War II, the government sought solutions to alleviate the crisis. One such initiative was to encourage people to cultivate the fertile lands of the High Range. As a result of this encouragement, during the 1950s, families deeply rooted in faith and resilience migrated from rural areas, bringing with them both physical and mental strength.

The churches in this region stand as a testament to the determination of a generation that cleared dense forests and built their lives from the ground up. Every church here symbolizes the unwavering faith of generations. In the High Range, faith is neither a mere ornament nor a passive reflection of circumstances; rather, it is the very foundation upon which lives have been built.

The eparchy of Idukki is a divine testament to the growth of these faith-driven lives. The undivided eparchy of Kothamangalam prioritized the development and well-being of the High Range community. The dedicated and selfless service of the esteemed clergy of the Diocese of Kothamangalam played a significant role in Idukki's growth. In 2002, the establishment of the eparchy of Idukki, incorporating the High Range region of Kothamangalam Diocese, was a beacon of hope.

Throughout its existence, the eparchy has remained steadfastly committed to the people, supporting them in both spiritual and social spheres, standing by them at every step of their journey.

FIRST BISHOP OF THE EPARCHY MAR MATHEW ANIKUZHICKATTIL

BIRTH : 1942 SEPTEMBER 23
PRIESTLY ORDINATION : 1971 MARCH 15
APPOINTED BISHOP : 2003 JANUARY 15

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION : 2003 MARCH 02
RETIREMENT : 2018 APRIL 05
DEATH : 2020 MAY 01



BISHOPS FROM THE EPARCHY



Mar Joseph Arumachadath
Bhadravathi



Mar Mathew Nellikunnel
Gorakhpur

FORANES

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Vazhathope | 2. Parathodu |
| 3. Vellayamkudy | 4. Nedumkandam |
| 5. Adimali | 6. Murickassery |
| 7. Koompanpara | 8. Erattayar |
| 9. Kunchithanny | 10. Rajakad |
| 11. Thankamany | 12. Churuly |
| | 13. Mankulam |

MILESTONES

15-01-2003: Declaration of the Eparchy of Idukki and the announcement of Dr. Mathew Anikuzhikattil as the first Bishop.

02-03-2003: Inauguration of the Eparchy and Episcopal Ordination and Installation of the Bishop.

09-06-2003: Mar Ephrem’s Minor Seminary was started at Karimpan

08-05-2005: The Foundation Stone was laid for the new Cathedral Church at Vazhathope

05-01-2006: The inauguration of Mar Ephrem’s Minor Seminary at Thadiyampadu

01-12-2011: Blessing of the newly built Christhujyothi Pastoral Centre at Karimpan

27-10-2012: Inauguration of Mar Sleeva College

10-11-2024: Consecration of St. George Cathedral Church Vazhathope

12-01-2018 : Nomination of Mar John Nellikunnel as the second Bishop of Idukki

05-04-2018 : Episcopal Ordination and Installation of Mar John Nellikunnel

01-11-2019 : Beginning of Santa Maria Mission in Arunachal Pradesh

05-01-2020 : Death of Mar Mathew Anikuzhikattil

22-10-2020 : Official inauguration of Santa Maria Syro Malabar Catholic Mission

08-12-2022: Blessing of the newly built St. Joseph’s Formation House at Rajakadu

01-01-2023 :The Foundation Stone for the new Bishop’s House was laid at Thadiyampadu

11-02-2023: Blessing and inauguration of Karuna Animation and Divine Mercy Retreat Centre at Nedumkandm

16-05-2023: Celebration of First Diocesan Day at Vellayamkudy

26-11-2023: Inauguration of the First Eparchial Assembly

18-01-2024: Consecration of St. Sebastian Major Archiepiscopal Pilgrim Church at Nedumkandam

27-01-2025: Blessing of the Liturgical Art & Research Centre Monte Maria Santuario at Calvarymount

INSTITUTIONS



Mar Ephrem Minor Seminary



Atmajyothi Pastoral Centre



Karuna Animation Centre



Pavanatma College



Mar Sleeva College



Jyothis ITC



St. Mary’s Central School



Monte Maria Santuario

SANTA MARIA MISSION

The Church is missionary by its very nature. All the baptised faithful are entrusted with missionary work. Inspired by this missionary call, Eparchy of Idukki has taken up the Santa Maria Mission in Arunachal Pradesh in 2019. We have five centres there and 14 priests, 2 Seminarians and 5 sisters are doing service there at present.



IMPORTANT PILGRIM CENTRES



EZHUKUMVAYAL KURISHUMALA

Along with the Bishop, thousands of pilgrims alight this mount by resting Way of the Cross every year on the 40th day of the Lent.



DAIVAMATHA CHURCH, RAJAKUMARY

In connection with the Eight Day fast, thousands of pilgrims march almost 10 kilometres to Deivamatha Church Rajakumari under the leadership of the Bishop.

BETHLEHEM CARITAS

A great humanitarian project taken up by the Eparchy of Idukki 11 years ago, Bethlehem Caritas provides free food in the night to almost 400 patients and their bystanders at Idukki Medical College and District Ayurveda Hospital daily.

POPE FRANCIS AMIDST PRAYERS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD



The world is immersed in prayers for Pope Francis. The Pope was admitted to Rome's Gemelli Hospital on February 14, 2025, due to swelling in his respiratory tract. A thorough medical examination diagnosed him with bilateral pneumonia, prompting the initiation of intensive treatment with strong medications. In response, believers and admirers worldwide began fervently praying for his recovery. The world anxiously awaited updates from the hospital regarding his condition.

Reports indicated that issues related to his kidneys had been resolved, and CT scan and blood test results showed improvement. However, on Friday, February 28, the Pope's

health suddenly deteriorated. Due to vomiting and respiratory distress, he was placed on mechanical ventilation. According to the report released on March 2, the Pope no longer exhibited fever or other signs of infection. He continued to receive alternating non-invasive ventilation and oxygen therapy. Despite his condition, he participated in Holy Mass on Saturday and spent time in prayer.

Two significant events during his hospital stay highlighted the Pope's unwavering commitment to his duties. He granted approval for the canonization of Bartolo Longo, known as the Apostle of the Rosary, and Dr. José Gregorio Hernández, revered as the Doctor of the Poor. Additionally, he

signed a decree for the beatification of five individuals. Another notable event was his phone call to Father Gabriel Romanelli, the Vicar of the Holy Family Parish, the only Catholic parish in Gaza. Since the outbreak of war in Gaza, the Pope had been making daily calls, and he continued this practice even while hospitalized, despite his respiratory struggles.

A special Eucharistic adoration and Holy Mass were conducted at Gemelli Hospital, dedicating prayers for the Pope. Additionally, daily Rosary prayers continue for his health. Doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers from Gemelli Hospital also prayed for the Pope during a Jubilee pilgrimage to St. Peter's Basilica.



PRAY FOR THE HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS

As per the latest information we have, His Holiness Pope Francis has been admitted to Gemelli Hospital in Rome affected by pneumonia, and his health remains a cause for concern. Therefore, I earnestly urge all members of the Syro-Malabar Church to pray for the speedy recovery of the Holy Father. Let us remember Pope Francis during the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* and other prayers in our churches and institutions, and the evening family prayers, until he leaves the hospital. Let us entrust him to God's boundless love and mercy. Let us implore the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary, St. Thomas the Apostle, and all the saints and blessed of our Church, for our Holy Father!

✠ **Mar Raphael Thattil**

Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

NEW RECTORS APPOINTED FOR SYNODAL MAJOR SEMINARIES



Rev. Fr. Dominic Vechoor

Kakkanad: The Syro-Malabar Church has appointed new rectors for its three Synodal Major Seminaries in Kerala.

Rev. Dr. Stanley Pulprayil has been appointed as the Rector of St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzha. Rev. Dr. Dominic Vechoor has been appointed as the Rector of St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, while Rev. Dr. Mathew Pattamana has been appointed as the Rector of Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kunnoth.



Rev. Fr. Stanley Pulprayil

Fr. Stanley Pulprayil, selected by the Synod in August 2024, was officially appointed by the Vatican's Congregation for the Oriental Churches, as St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary falls under its jurisdiction. The appointments of Fr. Dominic and Fr. Mathew, who were selected by the Synod in January 2025, were confirmed by Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. The rectors have been appointed for a five-year term.

Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil, Chairman of the Synodal



Rev. Fr. Mathew Pattamana

Commission for St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, announced the appointment of Fr. Dominic Vechur, Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, Chairman of the Synodal Commission for St. Good Shepherd Major Seminary, announced the appointment of Fr. Mathew Pattamanay, and Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil, Chairman of the Synodal Commission for St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, announced the appointment of Fr. Stanley Pulprayil.

DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Major archbishop
Cardinal Mar Antony Padiyara
(23 March, 2000)

