

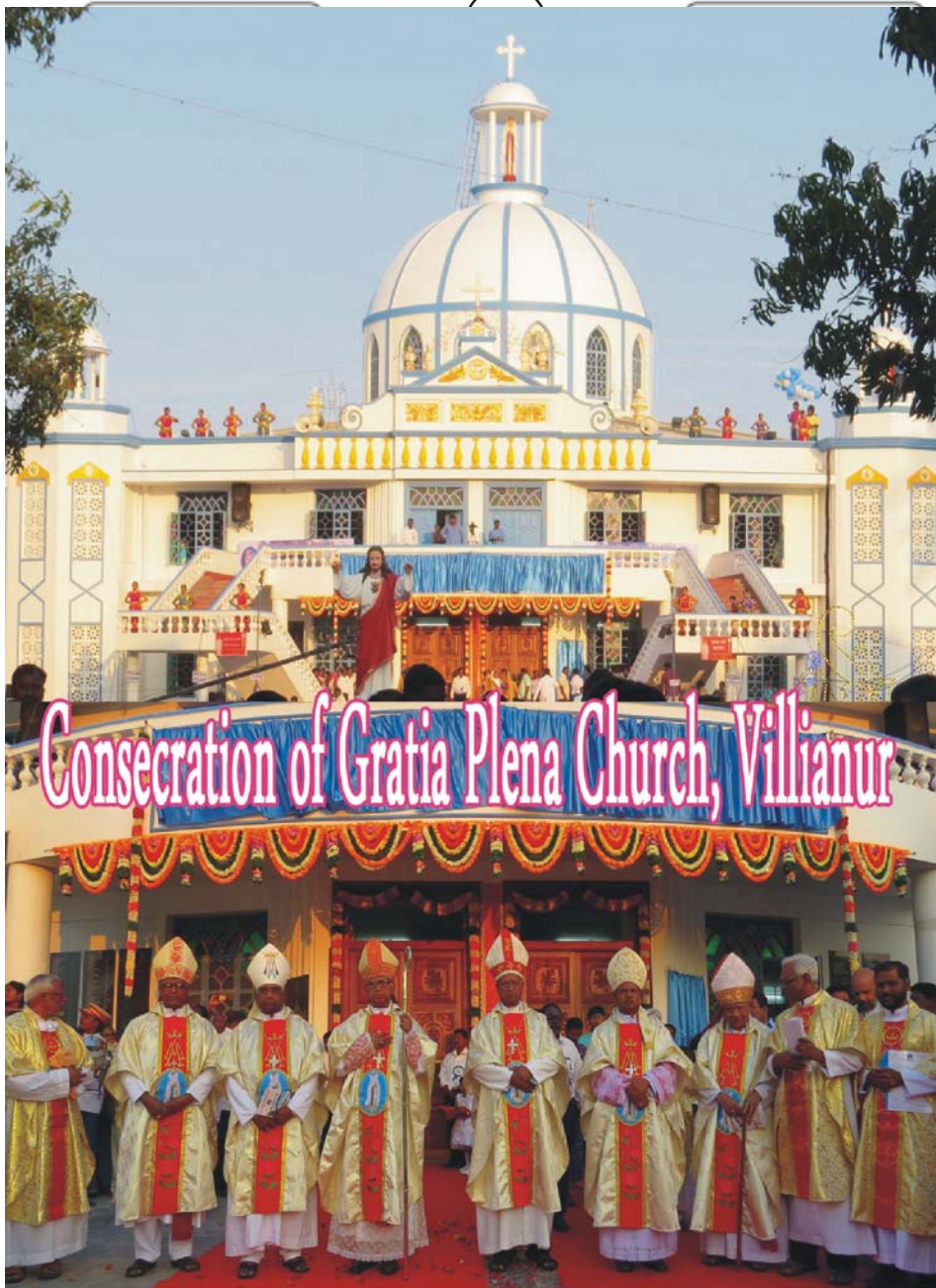


ARCHDIOCESE OF PONDICHERRY & CUDDALORE

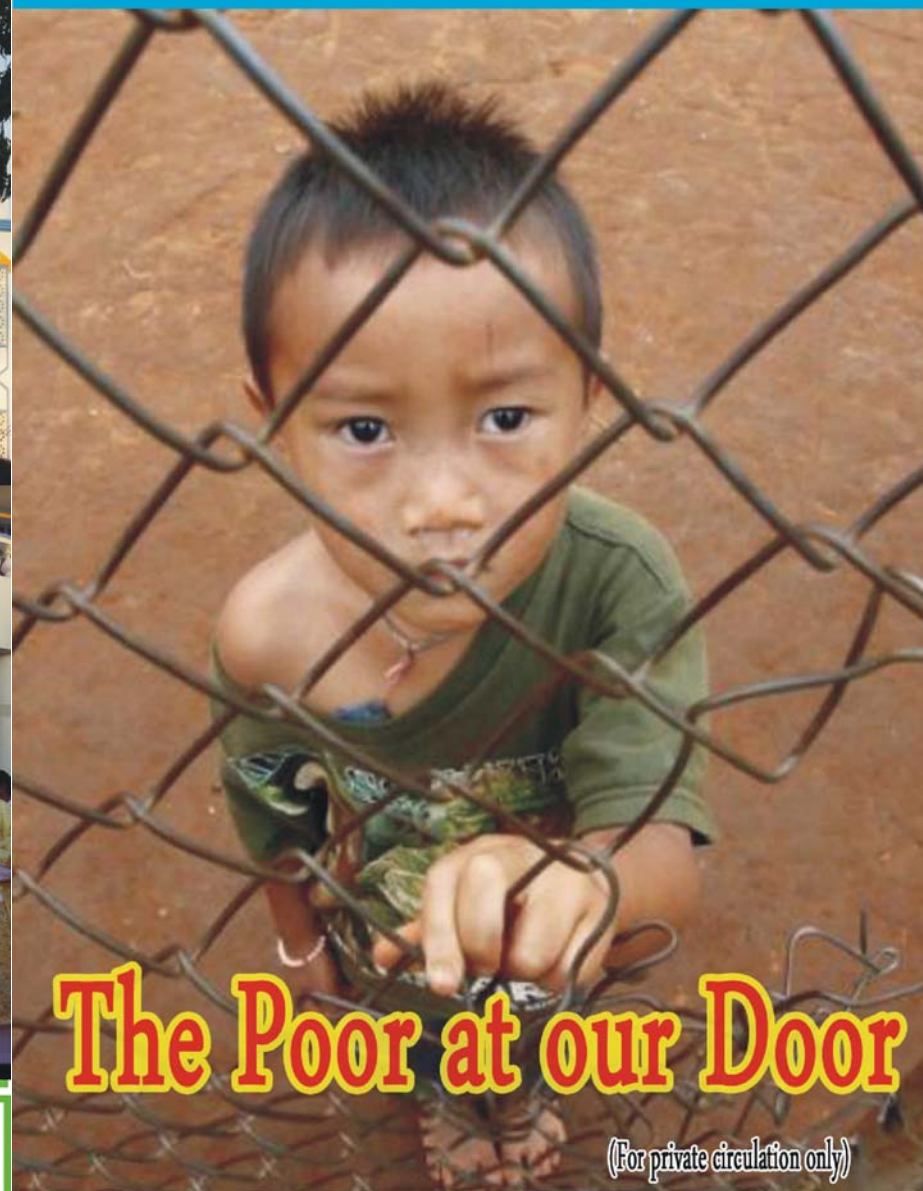
# NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2017

VOL. 34 NO. 3



## Consecration of Gratia Plena Church, Villianur



## The Poor at our Door

(For private circulation only)

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### The Holy Father's Prayer Intention for March 2017

**Support for Persecuted Christians:** That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.



#### ARCHBISHOP'S MESSAGE



### THE POOR AT OUR DOOR

Reverend and dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, prayerful greetings to you in the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### 1. "The Poor are knocking at our Door"

This is the theme chosen by the Holy Father for Lent this year. The Pope draws inspiration from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16: 19-31). "The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift" says the Pope.

The figure of Lazarus invites us to look at all human persons as God's precious gifts. The human persons created in God's image and likeness, are precious and unique. The figure of the rich man is a warning for us about sin and its consequences. The rich man ignored Lazarus; he did not recognize Lazarus as God's precious gift; he was not sensitive to the human needs of Lazarus; he was not merciful to Lazarus. The rich man failed to listen to God's word, calling him to conversion. He was indulging in sinful life. He was condemned to eternal punishment.

Lent is a sacred time to experience God's mercy through the sacrament of Reconciliation. It is a time to sanctify ourselves in

a special way through **fasting, prayer and almsgiving** (Mt. 6:1-18). The word of God is the basis of these practices.

During the Lent, we are exhorted to "**remember the poor**" (Gal. 2:10) in a special way and to take care of all their needs. We are judged more by our **deeds** than by our **words**. People easily note what we do; they hardly listen to what we say. By being merciful towards the poor and by doing works of mercy for the poor, let us create a **culture of mercy**.

#### Pope Francis' Message for Lent 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favourable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: **fasting, prayer and almsgiving**. At the basis of everything is the **word of God**, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider **the parable of the rich man and Lazarus** (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

#### 1. The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich

man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called **Lazarus**: a name full of promise, which literally means **God helps**. This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lazarus teaches us that **other persons are a gift**. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a **summons to conversion** and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbour or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favourable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.

## 2. Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called "a rich man". His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and

was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: "He feasted sumptuously every day" (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 55). Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man's greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. *ibid.*, 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money" (Mt 6:24).

### **3. The Word is a gift**

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that "we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls "father" (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God's people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: "During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony" (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life's evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them" (v. 29). Countering the rich man's objections, he adds: "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead" (v. 31).

The rich man's real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbour. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favour the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

### **2. CCBI – New Office Bearers**

His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias of Bombay, His Grace Most Rev. Dr. George Antonisamy of Madras-Mylapore and His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Anil Couto of Delhi have been elected respectively President, Vice-President and Secretary General of the CCBI. We offer them our hearty congratulations and wish them success in their new office.

### **3. Nolambai – 103<sup>rd</sup> Parish**

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017 the new church of Punitha Sagaya Annai was blessed and Nolambai Mission has been canonically erected into a parish. Rev. Fr. A. Rayappan has been appointed the first parish Priest of this new parish. We offer our hearty felicitations to the parish priest and the faithful of Nolambai Parish and invoke God's special blessings upon them.

### **4. New Rector of Good Shepherd Seminary, Coimbatore**

Rev. Fr. S. Stanislaus of our Archdiocese has been appointed as the new Rector of Good Shepherd Seminary, Coimbatore. We offer him our hearty felicitations and wish him success in his new office.

### **5. Fourth Anniversary**

13.03.2017 marks the Fourth anniversary of the election of His Holiness Pope Francis. He is the **Vicar of Christ** on earth, the **265<sup>th</sup> Successor of St. Peter**, the **Head of the Episcopal College** and the **Supreme Shepherd** of the Universal Church. On this day let us all pray in a special way for our Holy Father.

### **6. 39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Archbishop S. Michael Augustine**

On March 29<sup>th</sup> 2017 our beloved Archbishop Emeritus S. Michael Augustine is having the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Episcopal Consecration. On this happy occasion we offer our hearty felicitations to His Grace and wish him Ad Multos Annos! On that day, we pray for him in a special way.

### **7. Transfers and Appointments**

All the Rev. Fathers who are completing 7 years of their ministries/ services and those Rev. Fathers, who would like to have a change, are kindly requested to write to me, indicating **five to**

**seven options.** Their options will be respected as far as possible, but there is no guarantee.

### **7. Lenten Preaching**

Parish Priests are earnestly requested, with the help of the Pastoral Centre and that of the neighbouring Parish Priests, to arrange for **Lenten preaching and for confessional facilities** for the faithful. Let us be deeply aware that during the sacred season of Lent, God's loving mercy touches the hearts of the faithful in a special way.

### **8. Women's Day**

On Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 we are observing the International Day of Women. On this day, let us pray that all women in the world may enjoy human dignity, equality and equal opportunities in life, and that the women become messengers of peace at home and in the society.

### **9. Summer Ministry - 2017**

The formation of our future priests takes place not only in the seminary but also in the concrete situations of our Archdiocese. The Regency and Summer Ministry are integral part of the formation of the priests. Hence, parish priests and other priests are sincerely requested to inspire, encourage and guide our seminarians during the time of regency and summer ministry. Let us always keep in mind that the prayerful presence, exemplary life and dedicated ministry of our priests influence and instruct our seminarians very much and encourage them on their way to the altar of Christ. Parish priests are kindly requested to see to it that the seminarians get about **3 to 4 weeks holidays** during the summer. The seminarians must spend these 3 to 4 weeks of holidays in their homes with their parents.

**III Year Theology**

Bro. R. Alex	Fathimapalayam	St. Peter's	Vadalur
Bro. D. Arokia Sagayaraj	Viriyur	St. Peter's	Thirukoilur
Bro. S. Jayaseelan	Kommedu	GSS	Konankuppam
Bro. L. Jeeva E.Edison	Alagappasamuthiram	GSS	Mel-sithamur

**II Year Theology**

Bro. S. Alex Oli Kumar	Veerareddikuppam	GSS	Seppakkam
Bro. A. Arul Pushparaj	Sengadu	GSS	Eraiyr
Bro. A. Mariya Susai	Eraiyr	GSS	Nedungampattu

**I year Theology**

Bro. P. Chinnappan	Cathedral	St. Peter's	Chinnasalem
Bro. S. Johnson	Kovilanur	St. Peter's	Eraiyr
Bro. A. Jayabalan	Irundai	GSS	Mel-sithamur

**III Year Philosophy**

Bro P. M. S. Jeeva	Anilady	St. Peter's	Ariyankuppam
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**I year Philosophy**

Bro. Deva Pushparaj	Reddiarpalayam	GSS	Thirukoilur
Bro. C. Auxiliam Selvakumar	Arcadu	St. Peter's	Konankuppam
Bro. A. Geo Francis Xavier	Seedeve	St. Peter's	Seedeve

**Please note:**

i. Deacons will be relieved from their Diaconate Ministry by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2017** and they will stay in their respective parishes helping the parish priests.

ii. Regents will be relieved from their ministry by **30<sup>th</sup> April 2017** and they will stay in their respective parishes helping the parish priests.

iii. Hence, Deacons and Regents are strictly warned not to go to any other place for ministry.

iv. College seminarians and Minor Seminarians are to stay at home helping their parish priests and parents.

**ARCHBISHOP'S ENGAGEMENTS FOR MARCH - 2017**

01	ASH WEDNESDAY	06.00 a.m.	Mass, cathedral
02	THU		Tamil Missal Translation, TNBCLC, Tindivanam
05	SUN	08.00 a.m.	Mass, Sengadu
12	SUN	05.00 p.m.	Feast Mass, Uppalam
17	FRI	06.00 a.m.	Feast Mass, St. Patrick's HSS, Pondicherry
18	SAT	10.00 a.m.	Mass, Lumen Institute, Tindivanam
19	SUN	08.00 a.m.	Feast Mss, Thiruppapuliur
		11.00 a.m.	Feast Mass, St. Joseph's HSS, Manjakuppam
20	MON	05.30 p.m.	Feast Mass, Petit Seminaire HSS, Pondicherry
22	WED	11.00 a.m.	Governing Body Meeting, Pope John Paul II College of Edu. Reddiarpalayam
25	SAT	10.00 a.m.	Canonical Election, Carmel Convent, Muthialpet
26	SUN	08.00 a.m.	Mass, Kizhpathupattu
31	FRI	10.30 a.m.	St. Ann's College Day Celebrations, Tindivanam

**[sd]+Most Rev. Dr. A. Anandarayar**  
Archbishop of Pondicherry and Cuddalore

**ARCHBISHOP'S EDUCATION FUND**

No.	Date	Name	Amount
1	07.02.17	Fr.S.Napoleon	20000
2	"	Immaculate Generalate, Pondicherry	10001
3	"	Tagore Nagar Parish	5000
4	"	Petit Seminaire Hr.S.School, Pondicherry	100000
5	"	Perianolambai Parish	25000
6	"	Legion of Mary, Peria nolambai parish	500
7	16.02.17	Well wisher, Pondicherry	5000
8	"	Parishioners, Irudayampattu	5000
9	"	Fatima Madha Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	3050
10	"	Imma. RC girls primary school, Irudayampattu	2000
11	"	Vedivelli Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	1300
12	"	St.Joseph Primary School(Boys), Irudayampattu	1000
13	"	Xavier Anbiyam, Puduva Nagar, Irudayampattu	1000
14	"	Vinnarasi Sogodharavazhu Sangam, Irudayampattu	1000
15	"	Lourdumadha Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	1000
16	"	Samanthi Women self help group, Irudayampattu	1000
17	"	Periyanayaga Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	900
18	"	Vanathu Chinnappar Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	910
19	"	St.Arulanadhar Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	650
20	"	Parish council, Irudayampattu	600
21	"	Catholic Sangam, Irudayampattu	501
22	"	Adaikalamadha Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	500
23	"	Legin of Mary (men), Irudayampattu	500
24	"	Imma. Heart of Mary Convent, Irudayampattu	500
25	"	St.Motcharakini Presidium, Irudayampattu	500
26	"	Sagayamadha Presidium, Irudayampattu	500
27	"	Paramanantham, Irudayampattu	500
28	"	Arokiasamy, Irudayampattu	500
29	"	Arulappan, Irudayampattu	500
30	"	Choire, Irudayampattu	500
31	"	St.Paul Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	500
32	"	St.John the Babtis Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	500
33	"	Bible class students-I, Irudayampattu	500
34	"	Bible class students-II, Irudayampattu	500
35	"	A.Jackulinemary, Irudayampattu	500
36	"	Immanuel Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	500
37	"	st.Joseph kolping family, Irudayampattu	500

38	"	Emmaus Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	400
39	"	St.Joseph Anbiyam, Irudayampattu	400
40	"	B.Arul Alex, Irudayampattu	300
41	"	Xavier Masilamani, Irudayampattu	200
42	"	Irudayanathan, Irudayampattu	200
43	"	Susai, Irudayampattu	200
44	"	Rayappan, Irudayampattu	200
45	"	Irudayaraj, Irudayampattu	150
46	"	Deviyasagayam, Irudayampattu	100
47	"	Annammal, Irudayampattu	100
48	"	Well wisher, Irudayampattu	400
49	"	Villianur Parish	10000
50	"	Fr.M.J.Bernard Dore, Pondy	5000
51	"	Sri Velayutham Constructions, Pondy	10000
52	"	Parishioners, Narasinganur	10000
53	"	Dr.M.Poomadhu, Villupuram	2000
54	"	Well wisher, Narasinganur	500
55	18.02.17	Fr.S.Napoleon, Pondy	16000
56	23.02.17	St.Joseph of Cluny Convent, Pondicherry	5000
57	"	Kallakurichy Parish	10000
58	"	R.C.Middle School, Kallakurichy	3000
59	"	Holy Communion Children, Kallakurichy	2500
60	"	Confirmation Children, Kallakurichy	2500
61	"	St.Joseph's High School, Ulagankathan	2000
62	"	A.Antron Xavier Arul, Kallakurichy	1000
63	"	St.Joseph's Primary School, Ulagankathan	1000
64	"	St.Louis Convent, Ulagankathan	1000
65	"	K.Antony Muthu, Kallakurichy	500
66	"	St.Louis Convent, Kavanur	500
67	"	St.Xavier Boarding, Kavanur	500
68	"	St.Louis Convent, Kallakurichy	500
69	"	St.Joseph's Illam, Ulagankathan	500
70	"	J.Jaharee, Kallakurichy	100
71	"	J.Vivegaa, Kallakurichy	100
72	"	K.Melikaes, Kallakurichy	100
73	"	C.Prithi Yesu, Kallakurichy	50
74	27.02.17	Sisters of Charity Convent, Kodungal	2000

<b>Total as on 28.02.2017</b>	<b>282412</b>
<b>Received up to 31.01.2017</b>	<b>23914416</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24196828</b>

[sd] + **Most Rev. Dr. A. Anandarayar**  
Archbishop of Pondicherry and Cuddalore

### **BLESSINGS**

#### **1. Blessing of the New Church, Peria Nolambai**

The newly built Punitha Sagaya Annai Church at Peria Nolambai was blessed and opened by His Grace Most Rev. Dr. A. Anandarayar, our Archbishop, on 05<sup>th</sup> February 2017. We offer our hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. A. Rayappam, the Parish Priest and we thank the donors and the parishioners for their generous contribution.

#### **2. Blessing of the New School Building, Irudayampattu**

The newly built School building at Irudayampattu was blessed and opened by His Grace Most Rev. Dr. A. Anandarayar, our Archbishop, on 08<sup>th</sup> February 2017. We offer our hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. M. Arokiasamy, Parish Priest and Correspondent and we thank the donors and the parishioners for their generous contribution.

#### **3. Blessing of the New Church, Villianur**

The newly built Gratia Plena Church at Villianur was blessed and opened by His Grace Most Rev. Dr. A. Anandarayar, our Archbishop, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017. We offer our hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. S. Richard, the Parish Priest and Rev. Fr. A. Satheesh Kumar, the Asst. Parish Priest and we thank the donors and the parishioners for their generous contribution.

#### **4. Blessing of the New Church, Bramadesam, Narasinganur**

The newly built Church of St. Antony at Bramadesam in Narasinganur Mission was blessed and opened by His Grace Most

Rev. Dr. A. Anandarayar, our Archbishop, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2017. We offer our hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. Maria Arokiam OCD, and his community. We thank the donors and the parishioners for their generous contribution.

#### **5. Blessing of the New Church, Odathangal, Velanhangal**

The newly built Infant Jesus Church at Odathangal in Velanhangal parish was blessed and opened by Very Rev. Msgr. A. Arulanandam, Vicar General, on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017. We offer our hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. V. Messiah, the Parish Priest. We thank the donors and the parishioners for their generous contribution.

#### **6. Blessing of the New Church, Odathangal, Velanhangal**

The newly built Church of Our Lady of Fathima at Kalladikuppam in Anilady parish was blessed and opened by Very Rev. Msgr. A. Louis, Episcopal Vicar, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016. We offer our hearty congratulations to Rev. Fr. I. Anthonisamy, the Parish Priest and Rev. Fr. G. Sagayanathan, the Asst. Parish Priest. We thank the donors and the parishioners for their generous contributions.

### **NECROLOGY**

#### **Please pray for the repose of the souls of Rev. Frs.:**

05-03-1966	Noel F., MEP.
06-03-1979	Paul Puthenangady
09-03-2015	Sampath Kumar P.A.
13-03-1989	Thomas C. E.
16-03-2000	Showry E.
21-03-1867	Mgr. BONNAND Clement
21-03-1954	Maylin E., MEP.
23-03-2004	Anthayya S. S.
23-03-2012	Alexis Joseph E
25-03-1909	Mgr. GANDY Joseph Adolphe
27-03-1953	Daniel F., MEP
31-03-1981	Mirande A., MEP



**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Rev. Fr. S. Charles Edison  
 Room No. B 20, Bishop's House  
 12 A, Convent Road  
 Melapudur,  
 Tiruchirappali 620 001

**FROM THE DESK OF FR. PROCURATOR****Mass Intentions received in February - 2017**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of the Parish</b>	<b>No. of Masses</b>
31.01.2017	Vinoba Nagar parish	197 mass intentions
09.02.2017	Konankuppam Parish	11052 mass intentions
15.02.2017	Villianur Parish	350 mass intentions

**Binated / Trinated Mass Intentions received**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of the Priest</b>	<b>No. of Masses</b>
11.01.2017	Fr.Simon Antoniraj	32 mass intentions
31.01.2017	Fr.A.J.Lawrence	4 mass intentions

Dear and Rev. Fathers,  
 Please find here below the appreciation letter from the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples for submitting our Archdiocesan financial report for the year 2015-2016 in time. I thank all the Parish Priests, Heads of the educational institutions for your kind co-operation.

**Rev. Fr. J.M. Gregory Louis Joseph**  
 Procurator



CONGREGATIO  
 PRO GENTIUM EVANGELIZATIONE

PROT. N. 4029/16

28<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Your Excellency,

I would like to acknowledge receipt of the Financial Report of the Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore for the year 2015-2016, which you forwarded to this Missionary Dicastery through the Apostolic Nunciature in India.

The Report shows that the financial status of the Archdiocese is in good position. We are glad to know that educational institutions, parishes, shrines, and many generous people contribute to the welfare and running of the Local Church. We highly commend such initiatives and efforts of the Archdiocese.

In thanking you for sending the Report, I extend assurances of respectful esteem and I remain,

Yours devotedly,

*S. Card. S. S. S.*  
 Pref.  
 + *J. J. J.*  
 Sec.

His Excellency  
 Most Rev. Antony Anandarayar  
 Archbishop of Pondicherry and Cuddalore

India

(via Apostolic Nunciature)

**VOICE FROM METROPOLITAN MATRIMONIAL TRIBUNAL - 77****Indian Civil Law and Code of Canon Law Concerning  
'Divorce' and 'Nullity':**

Declaration of "nullity" is not a "divorce" granted to the parties by the Catholic Church. It is simply a canonical declaration that the so-called "marriage" was not, in fact, a marriage as understood in the Church.

It is often very difficult to understand the actual statements contained in news items appearing in our daily newspapers (The Hindu, p.7; Deccan Chronicle, p.3; Dhinamani, p.7, New Delhi, 20. January, 2017) given the very poor quality of today's journalism. One such problem faced by readers is the recent news about the Supreme Court deciding that a "divorce" granted by an Ecclesiastical Tribunal is not valid in the eyes of the Civil Law, and, therefore, a Catholic who has obtained a declaration of nullity of marriage cannot be married validly in a secular Court, without first getting a divorce in a secular Court.

There appears to be some confusion in this entire situation-whether on the part of the news agencies or on the part of the Supreme Court it is difficult to tell. Hopefully, the following reflection will help to clarify the situation and continue our Catholic practice of Church marriage according to the Divine plan of God.

First of all, it needs to be understood that the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize "divorce." In fact, divorce is strictly forbidden by the Canon Law of the Church. What an Ecclesiastical Tribunal does is, that after carefully examining all the evidence placed before it, and after obtaining the sworn statements of witnesses, the Tribunal decides whether a marriage which was performed in a Church and which is considered to be sacramentally valid, was, in fact, a valid marriage. If there is convincing evidence that the marriage was not, in fact, a valid marriage, the Ecclesiastical Court declares that the marriage did not, in fact, take place. The Tribunal issues a "Declaration of Nullity" to the parties to the marriage, which allows them to enter into another valid marriage. It has to be carefully noted that this declaration of "nullity" is

not (repeat not) a "divorce" granted to the parties by the Catholic Church. It is simply a canonical declaration that the so-called "marriage" was not, in fact, a marriage as understood in the Church.

Secondly, it needs to be underscored that the understanding of "marriage" among Catholics is derived from Scripture and Catholic Theology. According to this understanding, a marriage which is ratified and consummated cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any cause other than death (c.1141). Following this principle, if a Catholic couple obtains a civil "divorce" from a Civil Court, such a "divorce" is not considered to be valid in Canon Law, and the parties are considered to be still legally and validly married, even though they may live separated from each other. If both or either of the parties marry again according to civil law, such parties are considered to be committing adultery, as long as their first marriage has not been declared by the Church to be null and void.

The relationship between Canon Law, which is applicable only to Catholics and Civil Law is a very complex matter, and needs to be treated by a person who is qualified both in Canon Law and in Civil Law.

It must be emphasized, however, that the Canon Law of the Catholic Church is binding upon those baptized Catholics who are considered to be "faithful" Catholics. The obligation, (as all moral obligations are) is only morally binding and not penally imposable. On the contrary, the Civil Law of the land draws its validity from the Legislation of a validly legislated law passed by the Civil Government, which, it must be pointed out, is also legally binding on all the citizens, including Catholics. According to Catholic Teaching, a legitimate civil authority has to be obeyed by all citizens, including Catholics. All authority, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, comes from God. Of course, the spiritual realm is of a higher order and must be preferred over the temporal order. When there is a clash between civil authority and ecclesiastical authority, a faithful Catholic is bound by the commandments of the Church. A classic example of such a rare conflict has been widely discussed in Catholic (and secular) publications over the years. The example of St.

Thomas More, the Chancellor and Chief Advisor of King Henry VIII is cited as an example of how he resolved this conflict between his loyalty to his King and to the Church. In his final declaration before his execution Thomas More declared that he was “the King’s Good Servant, but God’s First.”

### **Need for precise language**

A lot of unnecessary confusion is caused because of the use of imprecise language, both in common parlance, and also, unfortunately, in legal circles. One example of this is the use of the term “personal law”. The journalists use this term constantly, but it appears to have become common currency also in legal circles. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as a “personal” law. Law is concerned with the common good of the community; it does not provide for the individual as such, but only in so far as he is a member of the community. It is objective and takes no account of particular circumstances. To speak of the “personal” law of the Muslims, or of the Parsis, or of the Sikhs or of the Christians, is a contradiction in terms, and actually makes no sense (nonsense) whatsoever. Legislators, journalists and members of the legal fraternity should stop using this term to describe some of the specific rules which are followed by specific communities. (Courtesy: Averthanus L. D’Souza, ‘Civil Law and Canon Law’, Indian Currents, Vol. XXIX issue no.5, 30 Jan- 05 Feb., 2017, pp.34-35).

For your kind information: I am away from the tribunal from 17-26 March, 2017.

**Fr. S. Pascal Raj**  
Judicial Vicar

### **COMMISSIONS AND REPORTS**

### **ST. XAVIER’S PASTORAL CENTRE**

### **Dear Vicars Forane**

I thank you for all your valuable suggestions that you have sent from your vicariates for the Senate which was held on 25<sup>th</sup> February, Saturday. And in your suggestions, individual financial assistance

for churches, schools and presbyteries, they have to be forwarded to finance committee. In the Senate we take up issues concerning the welfare of the whole diocese.

### **Anbiyam**

In Tamil Nadu level, we are having our annual general body meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> of March in Madurai, Beschi Pastoral Centre. Our diocesan central team will attend this meeting and we have to submit a diocesan report regarding the celebration of the Month of Anbiyam. Kindly send me a short report of your parish level celebration. If you are not sending a report, I take for granted that in your parish you have not concentrated on this ministry of the celebration of Anbiyam Month.

### **Christuvar Vazhurimai Iyakkam**

We are having a one-day planning meeting of our Iyakkam on 29<sup>th</sup> of March. All the Secretaries and Presidents of each diocese will attend this meeting and will be planning about the creation of the branches of Christuvar Vazhurimai Iyakkam in all the parishes of Tamil Nadu, diocesan level coordination and Tamil Nadu level political thrusts and plans of Action. So kindly concentrate on the creation of a branch in your parish. Select a person who has some political knowledge of Tamil Nadu who can give some service for the Catholic society.

### **Madha T.V.**

I thank our Parish Priests who have shown some interest to select and appoint an Agent to find out some monthly subscribers who will pay Rs.100/- per month for Madha T.V. (மாதந்தோறும் மாதாவுக்கு ரூ.100/- திட்டம்). I do exhort the other Parish Priests also to encourage our people to contribute by announcing in our churches during Sunday masses. Also some of our good, pious and exemplary families’ life also can be telecasted in the “இல்லந்தோறும் இறையாட்சி” programme. In a parish if you find 2 to 4 families, the

Madha T.V. Team will come and shoot the programme. For more details kindly contact me.

### Monthly Prayer Meeting

Last month on the 18<sup>th</sup> Saturday we conducted one-day prayer meeting in our centre. Around 450 people came and attended the meeting. Fr. G. J. Antony Samy the Secretary of the Commission for Prison Ministry of TNBC conducted the meeting with the Theme on **“The Eucharist”**. It was really fruitful to our Laity.

This month Rev. Fr. John Peter a Priest of the Congregation of the Heralds of Good News who is well known for his healing ministry will conduct a full-day session on 25<sup>th</sup> March Saturday in our centre. in view of the Preparation of the celebration of the Paschal mysteries Kindly encourage your people to attend this meeting.

### CDPI – Conference of the Diocesan Priests of India

We are having our National Council Meeting of CDPI in Kolkatta from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of March. All the Presidents of the Executive Committee of all the Catholic dioceses of India will attend. The theme is **“The Life and Ministry of the Diocesan Priests in the Light of the Life of St. Theresa of Kolkatta”**. Myself as the National President of CDPI and Fr. A. Devadoss, as the Diocesan President of CDPI of our Diocese will attend this meeting.

**Fr. A. J. Philomindoss**  
Director

### பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழு

#### மாநில ஆய்வரங்கம் - திருச்சி

தமிழக ஆயர் பேரவையின் பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழுவானது “திருச்சபையின் சமூகப் போதனை” என்ற தலைப்பில் ஜனவரி 26-27, 2017 ல் திருச்சி பொதுநிலையினர் உருவாக்க மையத்தில் சிறப்பான மாநில ஆய்வரங்கம் ஒன்றை நடத்தியது. செங்கல்பட்டு ஆயரும், தமிழ்நாடு பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழுவின் தலைவருமான மேதகு ஆயர்

நீதிநாதன் அவர்களுடைய தலைமையில் ஆறு அமர்வுகளும், பொதுக் கலந்துரையாடலும் நடைபெற்றது. தமிழ்நாடு பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழு செயலர் அருள்பணி S. தேவராஜ் அவர்கள் ஏற்பாடுகளை சிறப்புடன் செய்திருந்தார். தமிழகத்தின் பல்வேறு மறைமாவட்டங்களிலிருந்து சுமார் 200 பேர் கலந்துகொண்டு பயனடைந்தனர்.

நமது மறைமாவட்டத்திலிருந்து 11 நபர்கள் கலந்துகொண்டு பயனடைந்தனர்.

### மண்டல கருத்தரங்கு - செங்கல்பட்டு

“பங்கு சமூகங்களில் பொதுநிலையினரின் பணியும் பங்கேற்பும் என்ற தலைப்பில் செங்கல்பட்டு ஆயர் மேதகு நீதிநாதன் அவர்களது தலைமையில் மண்டல கருத்தரங்கு செங்கல்பட்டு மேய்ப்புப்பணி மையத்தில் 26-7-2017 (ஞாயிறு) அன்று நடைபெற்றது. ஆயரின் துவக்க உரையினை தொடர்ந்து மூன்று கருத்தமர்வுகளும் தமிழ்நாடு பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழு செயலர் அருள்பணி S. தேவராஜ், திருச்சி தூய பவுல் குருத்துவக் கல்லூரி அதிபர் அருள்பணி ஆரோக்கியராஜ் மற்றும் தமிழ்நாடு பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழு மேனாள் இணைச் செயலர் திரு. ஞா. பீட்டர் ஆகியோரால் வழங்கப்பட்டன. இறுதியாக பொது அமர்வும் கலந்துரையாடலும் நடைபெற்றது. மறைமாவட்டத்தில் பங்கு பேரவை மற்றும் பங்கு நிதிக்குழுக்கள் இல்லாத பங்குகளில் அவற்றை ஏற்படுத்த மறைமாவட்ட பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழு ஆவன செய்ய வேண்டும் என்ற தீர்மானம் நிறைவேற்றப்பட்டது. சென்னை, செங்கல்பட்டு, புதுவை-கடலூர் மற்றும் வேலூர் ஆகிய மறைமாவட்டங்களிலிருந்து 70 நபர்கள் கலந்து கொண்டனர். புதுவை-கடலூர் மறைமாவட்டத்திலிருந்து 13 நபர்கள் கலந்துகொண்டு பயனடைந்தனர்.

அருள்பணி D. ஆரோக்கியதாஸ்

செயலர், பொதுநிலையினர் பணிக்குழு

## **SC/ST COMMISSION REPORT**

### **1. Students Skill Development Programme**

On 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017 we conducted two days of Students skill development programme in SAMSSS, Vikravandi based on the theme “Personality Development & Motivational Leadership”. Totally 34 students from various parishes attended and profited by it. In the inaugural session Rev. Fr. Arputharaj welcomed the students and introduced the Resource persons. Rev. Fr. P.A. Aruldass, Director of SAMSSS addressed the students.

The Resource Persons:

Mr. Arokiadoss, Tr, Panruti about “Personality Development for the students”

Rev. Sr. Nirmala, Principal, St. Mary’s Matric Hr. Sec. School, Vikravandi about “Carrier Guidance and Counselling for students”

Mr. Chinnaparaj, Tr, Villupuram about “Motivational Leadership”

Mr. Agni Bharathi Tr, Vikravandi about “The attitude of the Leader”

In the evening the students were taken to Veedur Dam for the Picnic. We have conducted some games and computations in order to exhibit their talents. Mr.Chinnaparaj, Tr entertained the students with social awareness songs. The programmes end with cultural event. Rev A. Arputharaj distributed gifts to all the students. Mr. Babu, the co-ordinator thanked the resource persons and the participants. The students also shared their feedback about the training. We thank TNBC Commission for SC/ST for their support and sponsor. Special thanks to Fr. P.A. Aruldass, Director, SAMSSS for all the arrangements. Thanks to all the resource persons for valuable sharing.

### **2. National Dalit Christians Women Leadership Meet**

The meeting organized by the CBCI, was held in ISI, Bangalore on 13<sup>th</sup> February and set out to analyse the reality of life for Dalit Christian women in the country, to discuss the way forward and to enhance the capacity of Dalit Christian women leadership. There were 3 women Leaders from our Diocese participated in this event. Fr. Devasagayaraj welcomed the gathering and expressed his joy at this, the first meeting ever held for Dalit Catholic Women Leaders at the National Level. Delegates pledged to give voice on behalf of the

Dalit Community, but especially Dalit women and speak up for their rights.

### **3. Releasing of CBCI Dalit Policy**

The CBCI Dalit Policy was launched in Bengaluru on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017. 8 Bishops, priests, nuns and Dalit Christian Leaders from different parts of India participated. There were 200 people for the program among them 30 people from our diocese. The translation of the policy was released in Hindi, Oriya, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Tamil.

The Policy clearly spells the stand of the Catholic Church in India regarding the Dalits. It declares untouchability as a grave sin and any of its form should be completely eradicated. It also speaks about empowerment of Dalit Christians through educational, employment, economic and entrepreneurship programs. The aim of the policy is to bring about an equitable church in India without any caste discrimination. The policy has the monitoring and reporting mechanism with accountability and transparency.

Fr. Selva the Director of ISI presented the CBCI Dalit Policy. The Delegates of the meeting discussed about the ways and means to disseminate the policy and effective means to implementing it by all the diocese and religious congregations.

### **4. The Releasing of Dalit Policy in Tamil**

The Dalit Policy in Tamil launch was held at Loyola College, Chennai on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017. It was led by Most Rev. Neethinathan, Chairman of the CBCI office for Dalits and Backward classes. 4 Bishops, priests, nuns and Dalit Christian Leaders from different parts of Tamil Nadu participated. There were 1000 people for the program among them 150 people from our diocese. Rev. Fr. Maria Arul Raja S.J, Director of Arutkadal college, Chennai presented the Policy and called upon the Catholic faithful of the Tamil Nadu Church to consider it as a mandate from God to make the Tamil Nadu Church the real Kingdom of God.

**Fr. A. Arputharaj**  
Secretary, SC/ST Commission.

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Blessing of New  
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