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# News Bulletin Diocese of Sultanpet

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## Bishop Speaks...

Dear Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Faithful,



### Assumption: A Gift or Credit?

The Assumption of Our Lady, celebrated by Catholics during this month, is indeed unique in the life of Mary, our divine mother. This is very well expressed by Pope Pius XII when he declared it as a dogma of the Catholic Church in 1950: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heaven."

In this statement the Pope combines many of our faith expressions regarding Our

Lady: Immaculate, Mother of God, ever-virgin, fulfilled her earthly life and finally assumed into heaven, both body and soul. Indeed, the Pope here articulates very vividly the various facts in Mary's life (being immaculate, ever-virgin but being the Mother of God) that led to the final stage of Assumption. However, the question remains whether this Assumption experienced by our divine Mother is a gift of God or a credit achieved in her earthly life?

### Created World is Sinful!

The above title might look odd as we all know that God created everything good and there is nothing evil or even any defection in the created world (Gen 1:31). At the same time, we cannot forget the failure of misusing freedom of choice by our first parents (Gen 3:1-6) and this brought sin not only to the human beings (Rom 5:12) but also to the whole creation: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains" (Rom 8:22). Since "all have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23), St. Paul was struggling because of the conflict between good and evil in his personal life: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom 7:15). This fact of sinfulness was expressed by many great people like St. Augustine and Martin Luther in the past and Pope Francis in the present. Considering this 'evil' state not only of human beings but also of the whole creation, it is very evident that no one can claim any credit for his/her achievements everything good, be it material, or social or spiritual, that we enjoy in life, is a gift of God.

### Immaculate Mary!


The above consideration of our being contaminated by our first parents' sin (Original sin) will not fit in with Mary of Nazareth as she was conceived sinless and born immaculate. The effect of Original sin did not affect her. This is the reason for our faith that she did not taste death like every one of us, but as Pope Pius XII puts it very nicely: "after having completed the course of her earthly life" she was taken up to heaven body and soul. Some people would question how you can prove this. There are two considerations: i. God's revelation is not only based on the written tradition of the Word of God (Bible), but also is based on the living tradition of the faithful people. ii. Our Lady, from the moment of her 'fiat-surrender' to God's call never faltered in her vocation to be the mother of Jesus; she has become the mediator of Jesus' mercy and love to all those who invoke her; and she is the greatest witness to Jesus the

Saviour and thus salvation to the world through her apparitions all over the world. Through these apparitions she not only brings solace to people by miraculous cures, but also motivates everyone to a life of prayer. In any case we recognize that her Immaculate Conception and also her vocation itself are free gifts of God. Moreover, we have to acknowledge that Mary, though not affected by Original sin, because of being created by God, her Assumption is also a gift of God.

### Freedom of Choice!

Everything we have and what we are is a gift of God. No one can claim anything from God. St. Paul would clearly say: "it is only through the grace of God that I am now an apostle" (1 Cor 15: 9). In the same manner, Martin Luther completely ignored meritorious human efforts and relied only on the mercy of God. But God gave to humans freedom of choice (Gen 2:16-17) which underlines the human merits. This is the reason why Jesus comes to praise the "good and faithful servant" (Matt 25:23) and the Bible constantly speaks of the reward for faithful people (Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12; Rom 2:6; 1 Cor 5:10; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 20:12).

The Assumption of Our Lady, a great honour given by God to Mary, is a gift of God; but at the same time it is to the credit of the New Eve because she utilized her choice of freedom in the right path of God's desire, unlike the old Eve. Freedom itself is a gift of God; but it should not be used according to the whims and fancies of one's mind and heart. Our Lady, with free choice, not out of any compulsion, took up all the challenges of being the mother of Jesus and lived splendidly so that she is rewarded by being taken up to heaven, body and soul and also by being the mother of God. We do not have freedom; but are given freedom by the Almighty and we are expected to use our freedom to build up ourselves and the society as per the mind of the Creator. Mary is the greatest model of how to use freedom of choice. By arrogant and selfish use of freedom one destroys not only oneself but also the whole society and creation itself. Thus, Mary's Assumption is both a gift of God and a merit she acquired by her committed life.

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+ *Antony* *Peter Abir*  
Bishop of Sultanpet

### Bishop's Appointments

Date	Time	Programme	Place
01		Out of Station	
03	05.00 pm	Golden Jubilee of the Parish:	
		Special Mass and message	Gnanaolipuram (Madurai)
04-05		Annual Feast Mass	Kallikulam(Tuticorin)
09-12		Executive Committee Meeting of CCBI	Bangalore
14-15		Annual Feast Mass	Panikankuppam (Pondy)
17	02.00 pm	Blessing of the New Chapel	Irumbagacholai
18	11.00 am	Blessing of the New Chapel	Kulukkupara
19	10.00 am	Priests' Monthly Recollection	Bishop's House, Sultanpet
28- Sep 24		Ad Limina Visit	Rome

### From Vicar General Desk

The next **Recollection for priests** will be held at 10.30 am on Monday 19 August 2019 at Bishop's House, Sultanpet.



### Seminar for Priests!

Our Bishop organized a seminar for priests on Sunday 21 July, conducted by Rev. Prof. A. Rayappan, a Canon Law expert from St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore. The first secession was on "The Participatory Structures in the Parish" and the second secession was devoted to the recent Apostolic letter by Pope Francis: "*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*" and on "Safe Environment Measures" in priestly life and ministry. The full day seminar began at 11 am and ended at 4.30 pm. It was very useful for all the priests for an effective pastoral ministry. All priests, both diocesan and religious, participated in it. We sincerely thank Rev. Dr. Rayappan for dealing the subjects and clarifying the questions of the priests very clearly.



### From the Procurator's Desk

#### Reminder of the special collections to be remitted:-

- 1) Hunger and Decease, Good Friday April
- 2) Peter Pence May
- 3) Vocation Sunday June
- 4) Seminary Fund July
- 5) Bible Sunday August

#### Medical Help

We distributed medical help of Rs. 15000/- to parishioners of Menonpara (Rs. 5000), Attapallam (Rs. 5000), and Pazhaniyarpalayam (Rs. 5000) in the month of July 2019.

*Rev. Fr. Lorance L.,  
Financial Administrator*

### Feast Mass at Karuman



The feast of St. Mary Magdalene was celebrated in the forenoon on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July at Karuman, a way-side chapel in the parish of Eruthenpathy. A large number of priests and faithful attended the Mass, presided over by our Bishop. Although it was raining the people attended the Mass with much

devotion and prayer. After the Mass lunch was served to more than 2000 people.

*Rev. Fr. Arularasan,  
Secretary.*

## Diocesan Catechetical Commission (DCC)

There was an **Orientation Programme to Head Masters and Coordinators** on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019. All the 3 vicariates' Sunday Catechism H.Ms. and co-ordinators gathered together at St. Sebastian's Cathedral Campus. Msgr. Madalaimuthu inaugurated the session and Fr. Lorance V.F., was the Chief Guest. Fr. Antony Xavier Pious Director of SMSSS & former Director of Catechetical commission gave the orientation talk. Fr. Amal Charles gave a class on the importance and effective administration of Sunday Catechism. Fr. Prince Robert the Secretary of Catechetical Commission, Vicariate Secretaries Fr.



Arularasan and Fr. Amal Charles and Vicariate co-ordinators Sr. Hilda and Sr. Cruz joined and motivated their members in the vicariate group discussions. There were 96 participants from all the parishes, except 3 parishes. They all effectively participated in the programme. At the end the present Director appreciated and thanked the former director Fr. Antony Xavier Pious for his effective service for the last five Years.

### Teacher Training Programme - Mannarkad and Palakkad Vicariates



The service of the Sunday Catechism teachers are remarkable that the only holiday (Sunday) of the week is being spent for the welfare of the Children. Mr. Bilal from the diocese of Alapuzzha came forward to guide and to motivate the Teachers for their effective service. The session was held in St. Sebastian's Cathedral campus on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2019. Fr. Lorance V.F. inaugurated the session and Fr. Pious, Director, SMSSS was the Chief Guest. Fr. Prince Robert the Secretary of DCC., Fr. Arularasan, the Palakkad Vicariate Secretary and Sr. Hilda, Palakkad Vicariate Coordinator, were present for the programme. 112 Participants from Palakkad and Mannarkad Vicariates were present for the

programme. The feedback given by them is that Mr. Bilal gave a wonderful orientation about the effective way of teaching catechism in the parishes. The programme came to an end at 4.00 pm.

**Rev. Fr. Prince Robert**  
*Director, Catechetical Commission*

### BIRTH DAY

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|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Fr. A. Sundarraj     | 16 Fr. Lazer Arulappan |
| 8 Bro. Domnic BSM      | 20 Fr. Maria Joseph    |
| 15 Fr. Arok Sundar Ofm | 30 Fr. Albert Anandraj |

*S.N.L wish you a Happy Birth Day*

### FEAST DAY

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|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 8 Bro. Domnic BSM      | 21 Fr. Antony Xavier Pious |
| 10 Fr. Lorance L       | 25 Fr. Louis Maria Pappu   |
| 15 Fr. Arok Sundar Ofm |                            |

*S.N.L wish you a Happy Feast Day*

### ORDINATION DAY

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|------------------------|
| 4 Fr. Christopher Psdp |
|------------------------|

*S.N.L wish you a Happy Ordination Day*