

REPORT ON REUNION – 2025

Venue : Good News Centre, Tuticorin
Date : 22.04.2025, Tuesday
Chaired by : His Excellency The Bishop Dr. A. Stephen, Bishop of Tuticorin
Attended by : 123 members from the Presbyterium of Tuticorin Diocese

The meeting of Reunion of Priests of Tuticorin Diocese commenced at 10.05 am with a prayer service led by Rev. Fr. P. Balan, the APP of Thalamuthunagar.

His Excellency The Bishop Dr. A. Stephen conducted the memorial service for the deceased Pope Francis, paying rich tributes from personal experience as he had the opportunity to meet him thrice. Pope Francis assumed the name of Francis of Assisi as he has adorning values of simplicity and mercy. He was a man of prayer, man of the poor and the advocate of Ecology and Nature.

The Bishop said when he had met the Pope, he was in ecstasy as if meeting a heavenly being.

MOURNING THE GREAT LOSS OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS

- 1. A period of nine days of mourning will be observed.*
- 2. A Requiem Mass is to be celebrated in every Parish and Religious house during this period or on the funeral day. I will be celebrating at the Cathedral Church.*
- 3. Wherever it is possible, the Papal Flag shall be displaced at half-mast.*
- 4. The mentioning of the name of the deceased Pope Francis is omitted from the Eucharistic Prayer. You may include his name in the commemoration of the dead during this period.*
- 5. You may toll the Church Bell once again on the funeral day.*

Then the Chancellor of the diocese, Rev. Fr. Antony Jegathesan L., requested the house to stand in silence for few seconds in great memory of the deceased members of Presbyterium during the year 2024.

Msgr. S. Mariadas - 07.01.2024,
Rev. Fr. Jeyajothi - 21.01.2024
Rev. Fr. Yogaraj J. T. - 04.04.2024
Rev. Fr. S. Gerald - 26.04.2024
and Rev. Fr. M. Johnson - 04.09.2024
and also Mr. Cyril Bosco, the Secretary to PWPN - 11.03.2025.

Then Very Rev. Fr. Martin Manuel, the VF of Vadakkangulam, was in the chair coordinating the session. The last meeting report was presented to the House by the Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Antony Jegathesan L. and it was approved by the House.

Presenting notes on Diocesan Land Policy, Rev. Fr. Benjamin De Souza, the property in-charge of the diocese, made the following important points:

1. The involvement of Parish Priest in maintenance and monitoring the church lands highly recommended.
2. A workshop will be organized for the Priests on Land and Property matters.
3. Those who have uninterrupted possession of TDA lands for the past 30 years will be given ownership with a nominal rate. 3 ½ cents will be given to each household.
4. The money got from the people by this sale will be used to create assets in the particular Parish or the Zone.
5. The Vicariate Monitory Team (VMT) will assess the amount.
6. The VMT will be convened by Vicar Forane and the members are 3 Priests for ext. Finance Committee, one retired Land Surveyor and one Legal Expert.
7. Without the knowledge and permission of the Bishop and DFC, Priests are not permitted to buy, transfer, sell, alienate the land or properties.

Rev. Fr. Benjamin De Souza also integrated his paper with the Code of Canon Law and Civil Law. The draft clearly mentioned the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in Land Administration, especially, The Bishop, the Procurator, the Chancellor, Parish Priests and the VMT.

He classified Lands into 3 categories: 1. Diocesan, 2. Parish, 3. Religious

The members appreciated the great efforts done by Rev. Fr. Benjamin De Souza and also former Property in-charge, Rev. Fr. Stanis Joseph Michael.

The wall clock struck 1.00 pm. We dispersed for lunch.

After lunch break, at 3.00 pm, Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Ravi Balan, the Vicar General, initiated the process of election to the Priests' Senate. It was a smooth affair with the cooperation of the House, especially, Very Rev. Fr. Martin Manuel, Very Rev. Fr. Pratheep and Rev. Fr. Michael Jegathese J. M., the Senate Secretary.

There are 14 groups. Group I comprising the elderly priests and Group XIV comprising Religious Priests, could not take part in the direct election. They will be given Postal Ballots. The votes of 12 groups counted and results announced.

His Excellency The Bishop Dr. A. Stephen appreciated the members and also who conducted election, the Vicar General Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Ravi Balan, Very Rev. Fr. Martin Manuel, Rev. Fr. Pratheep R., Rev. Fr. Michael Jegathese J. M. and Rev. Fr. Antony Jegathesan L.

The 1 day of Reunion came to a close at 3.55 pm.

23.04.2025, Wednesday

The second day of the meeting resumed at 9.45 am with a short prayer by Rev. Fr. Gracis Michael, the Director of Divine Mercy Retreat Centre. Then the Financial Administrator of the Tuticorin Diocese Rev. Fr. Pratheep rose to present the report ending 31 March 2025. After a long discussion, during which our Fathers gave meaningful and useful suggestions for the better administration of the Diocese, the following proposals are worth mentioning:

1. Submission of accounts by the units - diocesan stand with regard to those who fail to comply should be made clear - setting up a software system will smooth the administration.
2. The division of properties 60:40 basis in view of Bifurcation - This needs to be done faster.
3. Agenda for the Reunion meeting could be set with Senate Meeting and Vicariate Meetings.
4. Mass account (Bination, Multi Intentions) could be published in Inter Nos and *Gnanathathoothan, Kalappai...*
5. To strengthen the relationship among the Priests,
 - 5.1. The administration has to make efforts towards it.
 - 5.2. Classmates gathering or group gathering to be convened by elected representatives to the Senate.
6. Sharing of individual Priests concerning their innovations, experience in the pastoral ministry may be allowed during the meetings.
7. The Common Recollection meetings could be organized in four sittings.
 - 7.1. One day meeting concerning Education.
 - 7.2. One day meeting concerning Pastoral activities.
 - 7.3. One day meeting concerning Relationship.
 - 7.4. One day meeting concerning Administration, Finance, Land, Properties etc.
8. His Excellency The Bishop A. Stephen in his Presidential address made the following remarks:
 1. We have to make an examination of conscience regarding unity and relationship among us.
 2. We have to be more sincere in parish accounts especially with the Mass intentions.
 3. For every policy we implement, we face many difficulties and often encounter significant challenges. We shall try our level best.
9. Felicitation to the Jubilarians present in the meeting:
Rev. Fr. T. Victor, the Golden jubilarian and Rev.Frs. Ravindran Fdo., Bright Machado, the Silver jubilarians were felicitated and honoured by His Excellency The Bishop Dr. A. Stephen with a shawl and the Vicar General Very Rev. Fr. R. Joseph Ravi Balan presented them a gift. Thanking the House, Rev. Fr. T. Victor shared insights from his vast experience.

The Priests Reunion came to end at 1.10 pm.

'Deo Gratias'.