

TRANSLATION

CIRCULAR: 03/2026

TOWARDS THE CENTENARY YEAR OF SATYADEEPAM

(Circular issued by Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, Major Archbishop's Vicar for the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly, on the occasion of the Centenary of the *Satyadeepam* Weekly)

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The centenary celebrations of the *Satyadeepam* weekly, the pride of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly, commence this August. To date, this weekly has journeyed with us across our parish churches, monastic centres, seminaries, and the front verandas of our homes, bearing news, analyses, faith formation, and the writings on the wall of time. One hundred years is not merely the anniversary of the printing of a weekly; it is also the story of a people who decided week after week to read, write, believe, and dialogue. *Satyadeepam* is a common heritage handed down by our ancestors—a constituent part of the culture of dialogue that belonged specifically to the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly and generally to the Syro-Malabar Church. As we proudly commemorate this enlightenment, it transforms into a grave responsibility.

It was during the tenure of Archbishop Mar Augustine Kandathil that Father Jacob Naduvathussery and Father Joseph Panjikkaran brought such an enterprise to fruition. The funds required to publish the *Satyadeepam* weekly were raised by selling Father Joseph Panjikkaran's boats, named *Satyam* (Truth) and *Deepam* (Light). The foundational vision of this weekly was forged under the inspiration of the Scriptural verses: "*The truth shall make you free*" (Jn 8:32) and "*I am the light of the world*" (Jn 8:12). Beginning from that point, numerous priests, consecrated persons, and lay faithful dedicated their lives to nurture this publication over the course of a century. It is our solemn duty to preserve its dignity without diminution.

Down through the ages, *Satyadeepam* has taken firm stands in the light of Christ. It has illuminated our consciousness and our times. Perhaps the most silent gift of this weekly is this: for nearly a century, it has inspired us to engage in dialogue with an open mind. Beyond merely reporting ecclesiastical news, *Satyadeepam* has succeeded in fostering a meaningful cultural dialogue with our brethren belonging to other religions in society. Behind this lay the Church's vision that our faith must not be narrow-minded, but rather open to all goodness in society. In our Kerala context, interwoven with diverse religions, philosophies, and cultures, the dialogues enabled through this weekly have served to foster mutual understanding, strengthen love and unity, and advance the common good.

At historical crossroads—such as the Temple Entry Proclamation, the Freedom Struggle, the Formation of Kerala (*Keralapiravi*), and the developmental trajectories of the State of Kerala—the *Satyadeepam* weekly has walked alongside the general public through clear positions and distinct contributions. The articles, short stories, and serialized novels

published in this weekly have enabled many writers to enter mainstream literature and journalism. In the form of letters and articles, this weekly has reflected within the Church and society the thoughts and emotions of countless ordinary readers across the length and breadth of Kerala, irrespective of diocese, rite, or religion. It has afforded space for the creativity of children and youth. It has engaged in fearless self-criticism. It has demonstrated elevated thinking and social consciousness. In an era when daily newspapers and television were luxuries, it facilitated gospel proclamation and faith formation in villages throughout Kerala. All these we recall with immense pride.

The greatest contribution of Christianity is its grand vision of humanity: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28). At a juncture in India when the vision of humanity is significantly tarnished and even the Constitution of India faces severe challenges, it is imperative to intervene constructively in local politics and culture to stand up for human rights. The service rendered by the weekly for over a century—connecting the Word with lived culture and shaping the public conscience—must be actively encouraged. *Satyadeepam* must continue its endeavors to interpret the signs of the times in the context of faith and to engage with the broader public through dialogue as a democratic community. We are members of a vast dialogical community: the Catholic Church, comprising 1.41 billion people. We take pride in *Satyadeepam*'s vigilant efforts to accurately communicate the faith and positions of that Church and to disseminate the history of Christian testimonies of faith.

We live in an age of media revolutions. We inhabit a world of visual images rather than a world of letters. We have become continuous viewers of images without being readers. Our reading habit has depleted to a dangerous degree! This is inducing major shifts in education and thought. Education means learning to write, read, and think. It is life and the world that must be read and understood. Has our reading shifted its character into mere viewing and entertainment? This is not a rejection of new media—the Church has at all times utilized the instruments of the contemporary era to proclaim Christ. However, a people losing the habit of reading are liable to lose the depth of their thought. To prevent the loss of the capacity for sustained dialogue, the language required for it, and cultural vitality, we must steadfastly hold on to reading.

It was the Jewish people who elevated reading into a detailed religious observance. Their Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. As they became displaced, their sacrifice and priestly traditions ceased. Yet, they had synagogues. These were not temple structures or realms of ritual performance, but arenas for reading. They read the Word. The Rabbis interpreted it. For the Jews, this constituted a calling to hear. The hearing of the Word guided Israel. Behind the letters of the text, they discovered the voice of God. What this Jewish community imparted to world culture was a profound moral consciousness. Today, there are approximately 15 million Jews in the world, constituting a mere 0.2% of the global population. Yet, 22% of all Nobel Prize laureates worldwide are Jewish. Behind this lies the story of the nobility of a human community that transformed reading into a sacred observance. Reading continually impels us to dialogue with society. It impels us to make the Word flesh.

The reading of the Word does not have a long history within the Syro-Malabar Church. Christians live as a minority in Kerala and India. Far beyond any other minority community, Christians have exerted a presence and influence in the fields of education and healthcare disproportionate to their population ratio. However, the presence and influence of Christians in spheres such as art, literature, journalism, and politics must be elevated. Have the

Christians of India been able to yield creative fruit in the manner that European Christians did through their integration with Greek culture? Our youth must become capable of producing creative contributions in relation to stories, drama, and novels. Growth solely in educational and economic terms is insufficient. Our youth must grow politically, literarily, and artistically. Man does not live by bread alone! To live, he requires deep stories and value-laden thoughts. These are discovered in the realm of reading and reflection. We must become capable of telling and writing such stories. Our younger generation must immerse itself in journalism and writing that translates our faith, moral principles, and values into stories. God sends those who write under such inspiration. Behind the letters, God and divine values remain present. We believe in Him through whom the Word was made flesh.

Allow me to remind the members of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly specifically of two matters. *Satyadeepam* is our publication. We must purchase it, read it, and promote its circulation. It must find a place in every Catholic home. Parish Priests, family units, and catechists must pay special attention to ensure this. A fortnightly publication titled *Light of Truth* is also published by *Satyadeepam*. Furthermore, the weekly maintains an active presence across YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and website platforms under the name '*Satyadeepam Online*'. We must strongly support it. Our media culture must grow by reading the testimonies and dialogues of ecclesial life, and by articulating and disseminating stories of human dignity. We must teach this to future generations. This constitutes a continuous ongoing faith formation.

As part of the centenary celebrations of *Satyadeepam*, I lovingly remind you that all parishes within this Forane should jointly organize programmes comprising cultural gatherings or symposia in the coming months, and intensify their promotion. This is because this weekly represents a culture of dialogue and a way of thinking. In this era of rising parochialism, this publication must be present in our homes to guide our younger generation towards broad reading and critical thought.

Our Lord delivered the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1–9). Some seeds fell along the path, some on rocky ground, and some among thorns. Yet, the sower did not cease sowing due to the shortcomings of the soil. For a century, our weekly has been such a sower: continuously sowing the Word, truth, and Gospel values in all types of hearts—among believers, non-believers, and even those opposed to faith. Just as the seed that fell on good soil yielded grain thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold, it has produced immense fruit in the faith of our people.

The centenary celebrations of the *Satyadeepam* weekly will be inaugurated on the 8th of this month at the Renewal Centre, Kaloore. I extend my warm prayerful wishes for the management and dissemination of the weekly during this centenary year.

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

+ Archbishop Joseph Pamplany

Major Archbishop's Vicar for the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly

N.B.: This Circular is to be read in all churches and institutions of the Archdiocese during the celebration of Holy Mass on Sunday, 2nd August 2026.