CIRCULAR
Prot. No. 32628/2026 Circular No. 6/2026

Dear Reverend Fathers, Consecrated Persons, Brothers and Sisters, Dear Children,

In the catastrophic landslide that occurred at 1:15 a.m. on 30 July 2024 in the Punchirimattom, Mundakkai, and Chooralmala areas near Meppadi, shocking our beloved homeland, hundreds of local residents and others lost their lives. In many families, only one or two members survived. An entire village vanished. Numerous others who survived lost everything, including their homes. Members of the Chooralmala parish of our Diocese were also among them. I witnessed with my own eyes that the situation in that area during those days was horrific and heartbreaking.

At the very same time, a catastrophic landslide also occurred in the Vilangad area of the Thamarassery Diocese. However, it was a great relief that not many lives were lost there. Yet, many people lost their houses and property.

The State Government, local governments, and numerous volunteers—both affiliated with and independent of various religious organisations and political parties—engaged in relief operations day and night. The Mananthavady Diocese and its parishes, together with various religious congregations, organisations, institutions, and individuals of the Diocese, were actively on the ground. Through this collective effort, we were able to deliver relief materials pouring in from various places to those affected by the landslide disaster in an appropriate manner. Likewise, fifty consecrated sisters holding official degrees and experience in counselling visited the families of the disaster victims for months, providing counselling and helping them heal their emotional wounds and return to normal life. The Wayanad Social Service Society (WSSS), the social apostolate wing of our Diocese, coordinated all these matters.

For a considerable period, our parish church in Chooralmala became a temporary residence for soldiers, police personnel, and volunteers who arrived for relief operations, as well as a distribution centre for essential items such as food, clothing, and medicine. The parish vicar, Reverend Father Jibin Vattukulathil, along with the *kaikkarans* (parish trustees) and the remaining parishioners, spent days and nights right there, leading every effort. We may bow our heads before their courage and willingness to sacrifice. Likewise, let us gratefully remember all those who took part in the relief operations in a commendable manner.
On the very days the landslides occurred, the office-bearers of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) and the Bishops of the Dioceses of Thalassery, Kozhikode, Mananthavady, Bathery, Thamarassery, Kannur, and Kottayam met at Dwaraka and

deliberated upon the rehabilitation of those affected by the disaster. A decision was taken to construct and hand over one hundred houses in Wayanad district and the Vilangad region under the leadership of the Church in Kerala. It was also decided that fifty of them would be constructed under the leadership of the Mananthavady Diocese.

It was further decided that the execution of the housing construction project should be carried out under the leadership of the respective dioceses impacted by the landslides. We entrusted the Wayanad Social Service Society, the social apostolate wing of the Mananthavady Diocese, with the mission of constructing the houses we had promised.

Many people within India and abroad approached us offering assistance for housing construction. Among them were dioceses, religious congregations, parishes, institutions, organisations, and hundreds of benevolent individuals. In particular, I wish to make special mention of the contributions made by the parishes, religious congregations, institutions, and organisations of our Diocese. Everyone cooperated to a very great extent according to their capacity. I express special thanks to the Reverend Fathers who led this, and subsequently to everyone. All contributions received have been credited to the account of the Wayanad Social Service Society, and receipts have also been issued.

The Kerala Social Service Forum, the social apostolate wing of the KCBC, had also received contributions for housing construction. From the funds received there, four crore sixty lakh rupees (₹4,60,00,000) was transferred to the account of the Wayanad Social Service Society at the rate of ten lakh rupees (₹10,00,000) per house for 46 houses.

However, calculating the amounts spent for each of the 37 houses already completed—purchasing land for each house, demarcating/measuring it, executing the title deed (*aadharam*) in the name of each family, preparing plans and estimates for the houses, constructing the houses, and providing all common amenities such as roads, drains, wells, and water tanks—each house has cost approximately thirty-five lakh rupees (₹35,00,000). That is to say, in addition to what was received from the KCBC, we had to find a further twenty-five lakh rupees (₹25,00,000) for each house. By the grace of God, all of that was received as contributions.

Although fifty houses had been decided upon initially, when more people extended a helping hand, funds became available to construct two more houses. Thus, a total of 52 houses are being constructed under the leadership of the Mananthavady Diocese. In addition to the 34 houses now completed, 15 more remain to be built. Land for them has been purchased, and construction works such as roads, compound walls, and wells are

being carried out. It is expected that their construction will also be completed without delay and handed over to the beneficiaries. The foundation stones of those houses will be blessed at the time of the handover of the first phase of houses.

At the very outset of project implementation, there were numerous challenges. Finding suitable land was itself a very difficult task. Only after inspecting more than fifty sites was it possible to purchase four acres and ninety-four cents of land in two locations (Pakkam and Athichal) within the parish boundaries of Vazhavatta. It is a fact that the construction committee members exerted immense effort in fixing prices, demarcating/measuring the land, drafting and registering the title deeds (*aadharam*) in the name of each eligible beneficiary, bringing all owners of the land to the registrar's office at the same time to sign the deeds, and handing over payment to the owners at the time of registration. Determining those eligible to receive a house, and measuring out and allocating each person's share by drawing lots, was also a major hurdle. Through the selfless and tireless efforts of the construction committee, all those hurdles were overcome successfully. For that purpose, they had to visit the homes of the eligible beneficiaries several times and hold discussions.
Purchasing land and building houses at locations preferred by each individual was wholly impracticable. For, if purchased that way, the price of land would be higher. Transporting construction materials to many places at the same time was likewise impossible. So too was bringing workers to such sites. Had that been done, construction costs would have increased several-fold. It is indisputable that in such a case, the contributions we received would have fallen short.

Even after construction commenced, many unforeseen challenges arose. Delays in obtaining statutory/legal permissions, price increases and shortages of construction materials due to the conflict in West Asia, labour shortages caused by migrant workers returning to their respective states to update electoral rolls and cast their votes, and continuous rain—many such obstacles had to be overcome.

To families who lost everything and families with more members, we are providing more land and larger houses. To those who partially lost their homes and to smaller families, slightly less land and medium-sized houses have been provided. For those who preferred to remain on their own land in the disaster-affected area during the summer, monsoon shelters (*mazhakkala vasathikal*) on five cents of land have been arranged so that they do not have to go to relief camps during the monsoon. Each house has been constructed according to a different plan. Such plans were prepared so that the houses would not appear like a mere colony. All houses have indeed been built using materials of the highest quality. Many of those receiving houses also visit the site during construction, see them in person, and express their satisfaction.

On Friday, 27 November of this year, at 3:30 p.m., the 34 houses of the first phase whose construction is complete will be handed over to the beneficiaries at Pakkam within the parish boundaries of Vazhavatta. When handing over the houses in this manner, furniture, utensils, and similar items required for each house also need to be purchased and provided. It would not be proper to draw money for such expenses from the funds currently available. Because that was not the intention of the donors. Moreover, only if the remaining funds are not diverted for any reason whatsoever can the construction of the remaining houses be completed.

In these circumstances, relying once more upon your goodwill is the only course of action. Taking into account this occasion of the completion of 34 houses and the construction of 15 houses taking place in the near future, if you sponsor the amount required to purchase household articles for a total of 49 houses, we can readily provide the necessary items. It is estimated that approximately ninety-seven thousand rupees (₹97,000) will be required per house for items needed such as cots, beds, dining table, chairs, living room settee, teapoy, gas stove, etc. Let us participate in this great endeavour by contributing fully or partially towards purchasing the articles required for a house.

Remittances are to be made in the manner set out below.

Bank Transfer Account Name: Director Wayanad Social Service Society Account No: 0605053000001714 Bank: SIB IFSC code: SIBL0000605 Branch: Mananthavady
Cheques: Cheques should be drawn in the name of *Director Wayanad Social Service Society*, crossed so as to be payable only into the aforesaid account, and sent by Speed Post to: Director Wayanad Social Service Society, Mananthavady 670 645.
UPI Payment (such as Google Pay): Upon contacting the WhatsApp number +917907105276, a QR Code will be sent to that WhatsApp number.

Those making a Wire transfer / Bank transfer from abroad are to remit to the following account: Account Name: Wayanad Social Service Society Bank Name: State Bank of India Account No: 40126887659 Branch Name: New Delhi Main Branch IFSC code: SBIN0000691 SWIFT Code: SBININBB104

Contributions in cash or in kind (goods/materials) will not be accepted.

Immediately upon remitting funds, those sending money are requested to send the sender's full name, address, and details of the amount remitted to the WhatsApp number +917907105276 (donors are kindly requested to ensure that copies of their

Aadhaar Card and PAN Card are also sent to the aforesaid number; these particulars are required in order to record the amount accurately in the accounts, issue receipts, and satisfy Income Tax authorities).

Office-bearers of the KCBC, the Most Reverend Bishops of the dioceses that have undertaken the housing construction project, the Honourable Chief Minister of Kerala, local political leaders, representatives of donors, beneficiaries of the houses, and others will participate in the function taking place on the afternoon of Friday, 27 November.

Although we wish to invite all of you to this function, owing to space constraints only representatives are being invited at present. Nevertheless, all are invited to visit the area where the houses have been constructed on any occasion.

For the function on the 27th, all priests of the Mananthavady Diocese, two *kaikkarans* (parish trustees) from each parish as parish representatives, the Major Superiors of religious congregations, two representatives of Major Superiors who are not located within the Mananthavady Diocese, directors of organisations, presidents or vice-presidents, directors of institutions, and the principal or vice-principal or headmaster / headmistress of schools and colleges are cordially invited. Your presence will be a great encouragement to those receiving the houses, those who have made contributions, and those who have undertaken and carried out the construction.

Beloved, this monumental project carried out by us together is a manifest example of Christian charity. What we have done, we have done unto Jesus Himself. I wholeheartedly commend all who cooperated in this matter and pray that God may reward you a hundredfold. May the grace of the Lord be with you all.

Given from the Curia / Chancery Office of the Mananthavady Diocese on the twentieth day of October in the year two thousand and twenty-six.

(Signed) **Bishop Jose Porunmedom** Bishop of Mananthavady

Special Note: This circular is to be read out during Holy Mass on Sunday, 8 November 2026, in all parish churches and other places where Holy Mass is celebrated for the faithful, and shared to the WhatsApp groups of parishes and institutions.