PASTORAL LETTER

Issued by: Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt, Bishop of Pala

Addressed to: The clergy, religious, and all the faithful of the Eparchy of Pala

Grace and peace be with you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Through this pastoral letter, we bring two matters to your attention:

1. *Jeevamanna* (The Living Manna)
2. The Feast of Blessed Kunjachan

1. *Jeevamanna*

We are entering the second season of *Jeevamanna*—a scriptural study series initiated by our Eparchy's Family Apostolate, in cooperation with the Bible Apostolate and the Media Commission, during this Year of Community Empowerment, with the objective of encouraging individuals to memorise the Word of God.

The Holy Scriptures hold a unique place at the heart of our Christian faith. The Holy Bible is a magnificent testimony of God's Word speaking to humanity. It is the duty of every Christian to hear, read, study, and put the Word of God into practice in their daily lives.

The Holy Scriptures are not merely an ancient text; they are the living Word of God. The Bible is the voice through which God speaks to His people. Therefore, the study of the Bible must be an integral component of our spiritual lives. In the words of Saint Jerome, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." These words underscore the importance of biblical study. The Holy Scriptures are one of the primary avenues for coming to know Christ. As Saint Gregory the Great states: "As we grow in the Holy Scriptures, the depth of the Word grows within us."

Consequently, the study of the Bible must be a journey of discovering Christ. Every page of the Sacred Scriptures guides us toward the history of salvation. God's plan, which commences with creation, reaches its culmination in Christ. Human sin and divine mercy constitute the core themes of the Bible.

The love and fidelity of God are revealed throughout the Holy Scriptures. The Bible teaches us that God never abandons His people. Even when humanity strays from God, God seeks out humanity. The Church Fathers did not dissociate the Holy Scriptures from the life of the Church. In their era, the study of the Bible formed an integral part of liturgy and prayer. Their primary exhortation was to listen to the Word of God and live in accordance with it. Every member of the faithful possesses both the right and the responsibility to know the Word of God.

Families must transform into domestic churches that read the Bible. Parents must lead their children toward the Word of God and cultivate within children's hearts a profound love for the divine Word. The Gospel of John presents Christ as the Eternal Word. In Christ, the Word

of God assumed human form. Thus, through the written Word, we attain Christ, the incarnate Word. The study of the Bible deepens our relationship with Christ. If we study the Bible yet fail to love Christ, our study remains incomplete.

Knowledge must lead to faith, faith to love, and love to a life of testimony. We must possess the disposition to understand and study the Word. One such avenue is *Jeevamanna*—the scriptural study series conducted as part of the Pala Eparchy's evangelisation efforts, under the auspices of the Family Apostolate and in collaboration with the Bible Apostolate and the Media Commission.

Bible reading and study must not degenerate into a temporary spiritual fervor; it must develop into a permanent spiritual habit. Let us set aside a little time each day for the Word of God. Let us begin the day by reading the Word of God in the morning, and conclude the day by reflecting upon the Word of God at night. Let us incorporate the Holy Scriptures into family prayer.

This year, our subjects of study are the Epistles of Saint Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Furthermore, cash prizes and mementos will be awarded to those who memorise the Epistle of Saint James. This year's publication has been prepared based on the themes of faith, love, hope, and prayer. When studying the Word, one must ascertain the specific book containing the verse, learn its author, understand its intended recipient, examine the historical context in which it was written, and comprehend its literary genre. Moreover, as this year's curriculum also examines the significance of salvation history, we shall gain a deeper appreciation of the majesty of the Holy Scriptures.

The Word of God must serve as the mirror of our conscience. We must permit it to correct us and guide us toward holiness. In the tradition of the Church Fathers, *Lectio Divina*—the prayerful reading of the Word of God—holds profound significance. Reading is the initial step; meditation is the second; prayer is the third. The subsequent stage involves abiding silently in the presence of God within the Word, concluding with putting that Word into practice in everyday life. As a continuation of *Jeevamanna*, an initiative entitled the 'Good Samaritan' is currently being formulated to encourage individuals to put the studied Word of God into practice; details regarding this will be announced in due course.

The Sacred Word must be placed into the hands and hearts of children. This must not be restricted merely to teaching them biblical stories; they must grasp the fundamental message of the Word of God. They must know that God loves them, and they must experience the fact that Christ loves them. They must cultivate forgiveness, truth, and love in their practical lives. Youth must be shown that the Bible is a book that illuminates life's fundamental questions. Their doubts must not be dismissed; their inquiries must be addressed with love and knowledge. In this digital age, they must be introduced to credible sources of biblical study.

The ultimate objective of scriptural study is a holy life. We must more deeply comprehend the correlation between the Word and the liturgy. We must transition from the Word to the liturgy, and from the liturgy to mission. Those who have heard the Word of God must share it with the world. Every Christian must bear witness to the Gospel. First, our lives must serve as a testament to the Gospel, after which our words must proclaim the Gospel. Therefore, through this pastoral letter, we cordially invite all the faithful to participate in the

Jeevamanna scriptural study series, and we earnestly request that *Jeevamanna* be enlivened within every parish.

Everyone must embrace *Jeevamanna* Season 2 in their hearts. All must come forward to purchase the *Jeevamanna* text and study the Word. This book is available at the Eparchial Evangelisation Office, St. Thomas Press, at parish stalls in Bharananganam, Aruvithura, Ramapuram, Muttuchira, Koothattukulam, and at the churches in Kuttickal and Mulamattom. Comprehensive instructions regarding the administration of the *Jeevamanna* competitions are provided in the concluding section of the *Jeevamanna* book.

Leadership figures within our parishes, members of family units, reverend sisters, Sunday school teachers, children, members of various organisations, and all the faithful must become promoters of *Jeevamanna*. Let us understand the history of salvation through the Holy Scriptures and study the Word with the zeal of Saint Paul.

2. The Shepherd's Heart of Christ Embodied by Blessed Kunjachan

As you are aware, our Major Archbishop, Mar Raphael Thattil, has decreed that, effective this year, the month of October is to be observed as Mission Month. This provides an optimal backdrop for launching the second season of the scriptural study series, *Jeevamanna*. It is a matter of profound pride for the Eparchy of Pala that we celebrate the feast of Blessed Kunjachan—the greatest missionary hailing from the Syro-Malabar Church—right in the midst of this Mission Month.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me" (John 10:14). This scriptural verse encapsulates the entire heart of Christ, the Good Shepherd. To know one's sheep signifies far more than merely knowing their names; it entails understanding their hunger, pain, fears, and joys, supporting them when they stumble, and seeking them out when they stray. In this exact sense, Blessed Kunjachan was a shepherd who intimately knew the people entrusted to his care.

Because of his modest physical stature, the people affectionately called him "Kunjachan" (meaning "Little Achan/Priest"). He addressed his flock as "Children". A shepherd's provision and a father's affection were contained within that single word. He established the closest bonds with those whom others hesitated to acknowledge: the lowly, those marginalized by society, children lacking educational opportunities, and families that went entirely unnoticed.

This year, we have a special reason to commemorate this holy soul. Kunjachan, who passed away on 16 October 1973, was beatified by the Church in Ramapuram in 2006; we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of that proclamation. The countenance of Christ the Good Shepherd is most clearly reflected in a heart that loves the lowly. Consequently, the feast of Blessed Kunjachan offers an invaluable opportunity to understand the pastoral heart of Christ more intimately. Kunjachan endeavored to impart to the world the shepherd's word, the shepherd's sacrificial life, and the shepherd's mercy.

In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* ("God is Love", 2005), Pope Benedict XVI teaches that the nature of the Church is manifested through three fundamental missions: proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments and divine worship, and exercising the ministry of charity.

These are not three distinct missions of the Church; rather, they are three dimensions of a single Christian life. One demands the other, and none can be separated from the others.

We observe all three missions converging within Christ the Good Shepherd. "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27)—here we find the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15)—this is the sacrifice fulfilled upon the Cross. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10)—here we encounter Christ's ministry of providence and mercy.

It is through the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, the Paschal sacrifice, and compassionate deeds that Christ the Shepherd knows His sheep. The life of Kunjachan served as a faithful reflection of this pastoral archetype.

Blessed Kunjachan's spiritual nourishment was the Sacred Word, which is the living manna. Having partaken of the Sacred Word, Kunjachan's very life transformed into a proclamation of the Word. Let us derive from Blessed Kunjachan the inspiration to read, study, and live the Word. Those participating in *Jeevamanna* Season 2 must specifically pray, seeking the intercession of Kunjachan. We trust that you will make every effort to visit and pray at the tomb of that holy soul in Ramapuram on the feast day of Blessed Kunjachan, the sixteenth of October.

Eparchial Chancery

Pala, 06.10.2026

With affectionate love in Christ,

(Signed)

Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt

Bishop of Eparchy of Pala

N.B.: This pastoral letter was mandated to be read during Holy Mass on Sunday, 11 October 2026, in all churches and institutions where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated.