

## Report of the Jeevaram Bethany Ashram, Mavelikkara

The Bethany ascetic congregation has been involved in the comprehensive development and improvement of human lives ever since its inception. The Bethany congregation was conceived and realized by the legendary visionary and servant of God, His Grace Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, inspired by the Holy Spirit to practice the will of God and experience the power of prayer. The Bethany fathers follow the footsteps of Christ, their master through relentless prayer and tireless service of mankind. It was the constant yearning of the Bethanians to put in place an institution which perfectly reflects the vision of their founder, His Grace Geevarghese Mar Ivanios in his birthplace, Mavelikkara, culturally known as Onattukara, rich in cultural and agricultural traditions, which resulted in setting up the monumental Bethany Jeevaram Ashram.

The Ashram was consecrated on 2011 November 7th, by the metropolitan of Mavelikkara diocese His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joshua Mar Ignathios assisted by His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Mar Anthonios (Bishop of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia). The ashram was designed and set up marvelously by the present and former general body members of the congregation. The service of Very Rev. Fr. Jose Mariadas OIC Superior General and Rev. Fr. Jacob Varghese Ettithadathil OIC Procurator General, of the Bethany congregation, who were instrumental in this endeavor, are remembered with extreme gratitude.

Today Jeevaram serves as (a beacon) an abode of peace, tranquility and solace to every visitor. The institution disseminates selfless service in the spiritual, cultural, educational, and social spheres. The Ashram is abuzz with activity round the year with meditations, classes, seminars, career guidance sessions, value based programmes, special programmes targeting youth and children, ecumenical prayers, get together, counseling programmes, meetings of the Bethany congregation, clergy, ordination meetings etc. Today Jeevaram has carved out a niche for itself in the Catholic and other churches. We are really grateful to God (proud) that we could effectively realize the lofty goals for which this institution was visualized by its founders within a short span of time.

The following is a brief description of the various activities conducted at Jeevaram.

### **I        Retreat**

- Five Retreat programmes were organized at this Ashram exclusively for Bethany Fathers
  1. From 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to 12<sup>th</sup> November 2011, attended by 38 Fathers
  2. From 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012 to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012, attended by 16 Fathers.
  3. From 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012 to 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012, attended by 38 Fathers.
  4. From 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013 to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013, attended by 32 Fathers.
  5. From 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014 to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014, attended by 13 Fathers.
- Three Retreat programmes were organized exclusively for Bethany Brothers:
  1. From 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012 to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2012, attended by 25 brothers
  2. From 25<sup>th</sup> May 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013, attended by 52 brothers.
  3. From 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014 to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2014, attended by 72 brothers.

- 58 Bethany Sisters attended a Retreat programme from 25<sup>th</sup> December 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.
- Six Retreat programmes for the Diocesan clergy
  1. From 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012 to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012, attended by 57 members of the clergy from Mavelikkara Diocese.
  2. From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014 to 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014, attended by 60 members of the clergy from Mavelikkara Diocese.
  3. From 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012 to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012, attended by 80 members of the clergy from Thiruvalla Arch Diocese.
  4. From 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013 to 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013, attended by 82 members of the clergy from Thiruvalla Arch Diocese.
  5. 65 priests from Pathanamthitta diocese attended a Retreat programme from 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012
  6. 65 priests from Pathanamthitta diocese attended a Retreat programme from 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013
- A one day meditation was held under the auspices of the Mavelikkara clergy district in November 2013
- 2 deacons from Mavelikkara diocese made their retreat from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012 to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012
- A few families stayed for 3 days at Jeevaram during the Passion week and meditated
- 24 sisters from the LWSH, Kottayam had their annual Retreat from 26<sup>th</sup> December 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
- A Retreat for youth was conducted by the Jesus Youth from 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013 to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013.
- '*Athma 2013*', a special Retreat for youth was conducted by Mavelikkara diocese from 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013 to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2013

## **II Seminars**

- Seminars were held based on the vision of the Servant of God, His Grace Geevarghese Mar Ivanios for the faithful and Rev. Sisters from 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012 to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and for teachers on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- A seminar was held for catechism teachers of Mavelikkara diocese on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012.
- '*YOUCAT*' a seminar for the youth was organised on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2012.
- A seminar was held for the B.Ed students of Vencode Bethany Navajeevan College from 20<sup>th</sup> November 2012 to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012.
- A seminar on social welfare programme under '*CHETHANA*' of the Mavelikkara diocese was held on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2013.

- 'KIRANAM 2013' and 'KIRANAM 2014' were two personality development programmes held for the children of Mavelikkara diocese.
- An international seminar was organized by the Department of Physics of Bishop Moore College, Mavelikkara from 6<sup>th</sup> August 2013 to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2013 in which around 200 scientists participated.
- 'SOUHRIDA' a two-day seminar for students during November 2013 and February 2014.
- Mother's Meet a one day conference, was organized for over 500 mothers from the Mavelikkara diocese.
- A one day seminar for 50 MBA students from the Bethany Navajyothy Girideepam College was held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013.
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- A two-day seminar for the Government employees of survey department was organized during June 2014

### **III Leadership Training Programme**

- A training programme was held for youth on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013.
- A 21 days leadership training camp programme of the Government of Kerala under was organized for 32 graduation students at Jeevaram by the IHRD from the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013 to 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013 .
- A special programme for moulding the next generation was held from the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2013 by the National Service Scheme.
- A special training programme for a selected group of 150 students from Alapuzha district was held at Jeevaram by the National Service Scheme.
- A 2 days training programme attended by more than 100 participants was organized for the land revenue employees.

### **IV Reunion Day Celebrations**

Jeevaram Bethany Ashram hosted the Reunion day celebrations held under the auspices of the Mavelikkara diocese. A mega meet of over 1500 students of MCCL, Mavelikkara diocese was organized at Jeevaram as a part of it.

### **V Counseling**

A special counseling session for women was organized by YMCA on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2014.

### **VI KCYM Senate meeting**

Over 150 delegates participated in the KCYM senate meeting held at Jeevaram from the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014 to 19<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

## **VII Vegetable Cultivation**

- Jeevaram was awarded the Best Mixed (Farming) Cultivation Award of the Mavelikkara Municipality for the year 2013.
- Jeevaram took special efforts to implement a project of the Krishi Bhavan, for intensive vegetable cultivation in a land expanse of one acre. The project was inaugurated by the Honorable MLA in a grand public function at the ashram. Under this project, Jeevaram qualified for a subsidy of Rs.92, 000/- and was adjudged the second best vegetable farm in the Alappuzha district. The Honorable minister handed over a certificate, a trophy and a cash award of Rs.5000/- for this achievement.
- A separate vegetable farm in 30 cents of land was approved by the agriculture department in September 2014
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**Celebrations:** Christmas Carol, New Year programme etc. are held every year.

### **Other Activities**

A variety of counseling and prayer service for couples, children, youth etc are arranged under the pious leadership of Fr.Thomas Pramod Palavilayil OIC, Fr. Antony Kallil OIC and Fr. Varghese Joseph OIC. During the lent season and vacations many people from different walks of life chose to stay at Jeevaram for meditation and renewal. The resident Fathers take care and pay special attention to fulfill their spiritual needs in a congenial environment. Apart from these we actively engage in mission work such as conducting worship, counseling and meditation sessions in various parishes, convents and educational institutions.

### **Conclusion**

Put together Bethany Jeevaram Ashram is an institution which radiates abundant spiritual aura. Perhaps one may not be able to gauge the extent of the same by beholding it. But any person who steps in experiences the deep tranquility and power of spiritual attraction which leaves a longing in their hearts to be back in this institution often. Let us thank the Almighty for granting us such a great treasure. Moreover let us thankfully remember before our Lord, all the Fathers who have lead a life of sacrifice to make this marvelous monument a reality.

Yours Faithfully

**Fr. Antony Kallil OIC**

**Fr. Varghese Joseph OIC**

**Superior**

**Procurator**