

Graduation 2024-25



Commissioning a New Bunch of Kingdom Servants

The IPC Theological Seminary Kottayam held its 21st baccalaureate and graduation exercises on the 21st and 22nd of February respectively. The baccalaureate service was a time of worship and reflection, preparing the graduates spiritually for their calling, while the graduation ceremony formally conferred degrees and recognised their academic achievements.

The Baccalaureate Service commenced with the invocation, led by Ms. Aby Mathew. Pastor Lijo Mathew James extended a warm welcome to the esteemed guests. Thereafter, the seminary choir led the congregation in an uplifting praise and worship session. Ms. Priscilla Grace and Dr. Thomas Johnson shared moving reflections representing the graduating students. Pastors Ipe C. Kurian and Moni Chennithala delivered briefly shared words of

encouragement for the graduating batch. The esteemed Chief Guest for the occasion was Mr. Finny Jacob, Field Project Manager of The Seed Company, USA. Speaking from 2 Timothy 1:1-14, he highlighted how Paul embraced Christ's model of discipleship—loving deeply, teaching passionately, living the message, investing in people, failing graciously, undergoing radical transformation, and empowering others through the Holy Spirit. Following the example of our Lord, the teachers washed the feet of the graduating students, signifying their role as humble servants. The community then partook of the Holy Communion. Thereafter, the seminary recognised the services of the outgoing staff members of the community. The service concluded with the prayer and benediction by Dr Joseph John.

On graduation day, the ceremony commenced with the solemn procession of the graduands and faculty into the seminary chapel.

Following the invocatory prayer and the welcome address, the community was led in a time of praise and worship. Thereafter, the Principal, Dr Abey Peter, presented the annual report of the seminary. Brother Ravi Shanker Sahu delivered the valedictory address, drawing from 2 Corinthians 4:1–6, exhorting the community to uphold the urgency of the gospel ministry while remaining steadfast in its core values. The Guest of Honour, Dr Bennet Lawrence, Regional Secretary of ATA India, speaking from 2 Timothy 3:10, urged the gathering to perceive true success as measured by the extent of one's influence in fulfilling God's will.

A total of fifty-nine students were conferred with various degrees, including Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Theology, Diploma in Theology, Certificate in Theology, Certificate in Ministry, and Certificate in Counselling. Dr Idicheria Ninan and Dr Abraham Oommen delivered felicitations to the graduates, while Brother Joy Thanavelil introduced the new projects of the IPCEWS.

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Editorial

Mrs. Saly Thomas

A Vital Christian Spiritual Experience: Reflections on the Good Samaritan



On an occasion when Jesus was travelling, a religious Lawyer asked a question intending to test Jesus: “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luk. 10:25). Referring to the two great commandments, Jesus said to him, “Do this, and you will live.” The lawyer wanted to justify himself and asked, “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus responded to this question by narrating a story of the ‘Good Samaritan’ (Luke 10:25-37), which unlocks a deeper understanding of participating in His eternal life, living with proper devotion to God, and being a neighbour.

This religious lawyer was not confused about the first commandment, but regarding the second, he wanted to identify, ‘Who’s his neighbour?’ Jesus brings the context of a wounded person who was robbed and left half-dead on the road. The narrative continues to tell of a priest and later a Levite who came on the way and ignored the wounded person. They were followed by a Samaritan who cared for him with love, empathy, and compassion, using his resources and time.

Out of these three persons who

passed on the road, the Samaritan got the attention of all generations for his love for God and his neighbour. The priest and the Levite were Jews who, being proud of their racial purity and rich religious tradition. Others might highly respect these two in their society as they were separated to serve in the temple. The third person was not a pure Jew but belonged to the Samaritans, a mixed racial group. In the history of Israel, when a great number of Jews were taken into Babylonian and Assyrian captivities, many who were left in Israel and Judea underwent forced marriages with foreigners like Assyrians and Babylonians. Consequently, a new generation of Samaritans evolved. They carried the humiliation, the shame of their painful history, and negligence by the Jews who returned to Palestine after the captivity. In the first-century world, particularly in the Lukan context, they belonged to the marginalized ones in the society.

The Jews had no relation with the Samaritans; their area of residence and worship were separated, and they looked down upon them, but both groups followed the Torah. The Samaritan in this story was from such a background, who inherited eternal life, obeyed God’s commandments, loved God, and by being a neighbour in the society.

Jesus commanded the lawyer, “Go and do likewise,” which positioned the lawyer who tried to justify himself in the same lines as the priest and Levite, who needed a transformed life like a Samaritan. Further, the Samaritan had a richer spiritual experience than the priest and the Levite, reflected through his dedicated and unselfish care and attitude toward the wounded person. It is interesting to note that the injured person’s identity was not specified, except a ‘certain man,’ which could be either a Jew or a Samaritan. However, for the Good Samaritan, this ‘certain man’ was dehumanised by evil doers. Hence, nothing would stop the Samaritan from doing anything to restore him regardless of the background and social category of the wounded person. In this regard, what is the role of the Church today? The Church(es) must not be contented claiming each group’s ancestral heritage, traditions, and rituals, but rather, must be submissive to experience the abundance of life in Jesus, participate in His eternal life, serve Him, and value others regardless of their social categories. The church’s religiosity should reflect Jesus and His love through being a ‘Good Samaritan.’

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Baccalaureate Service



Installation of STCS Principal



In a solemn ceremony held at Christ Church, Bhopal, on 27 February, the new principal of Susamachar Theological College and Seminary (STCS) was officially installed. Mr. Samuel Mathai, President of Susamachar Seva Mandali (SSM), presented an Award of Appreciation to Rev. Dr. Thomas Varghese, the outgoing principal, in recognition of his dedicated leadership and service over the past seven years at STCS. Rev. Dr. Idicherian Ninan delivered an insightful address, placing the leadership transition within the broader context of the institution's vision and mission. The installation of the new principal, Rev. Manuel T. D., was presided over by Rev. Dr. Abey Peter, Principal of IPC Theological Seminary Kottayam, marking the official transfer of leadership. The newly installed principal took the oath of office and reaffirmed SSM's vision, emphasizing the institution's core values and commitment to theological education. The event was graced by esteemed pastors and church leaders from Bhopal, who offered prayers and blessings, making the occasion truly remarkable. In honour of the new Principal, Rev. Dr. Samuel Mathai, Founder of SSM and STCS, presented commemorative gifts as a token of goodwill and institutional support. The service concluded on a joyous and meaningful note, underscoring a shared commitment to advancing the mission and vision of STCS.

STCS Graduation Ceremony



delivered a profound reflection message, acknowledging God's loving kindness and faithfulness throughout their educational journey.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Varghese, the STCS principal, delivered the Principal's address, encouraging the graduates to remain steadfast in the service of the church and God. Together with Academic Dean, the Principal conferred the degrees and bestowed book awards to the graduates. This auspicious event was

graced by SSM Board members, office bearers of IPCEWS, GNN's chairman, STCS's newly designated Principal, faculty, staff, alumni, students, SSM Pastors, pastors from Bhopal, esteemed guests, and near and dear ones of graduates, who came together to celebrate the accomplishment and triumph of the graduates. The ceremony closed with a word of benediction followed by the national anthem, signifying the end of another academic year.

The Susamachar Theological College and Seminary (STCS) Bhopal, conducted its graduation service on the 1st of March 2025. A total of five students graduated this year.

Mr. Samuel Mathai, the President of the parent body Susamachar Seva Mandali, and Dr. Abey Peter, the principal of IPC Theological Seminary Kottayam, spoke on the occasion, encouraging the graduates to remain faithful to their calling. On behalf of the graduating students, Mr. Indresh Singh Markam