CHAPTER-II

ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE
DIOCESE

Origin of the Diocese

In the biblical background the Church (ekklesia) is always regarded as the
people of God. St. Paul calls the people of God as the Body of Christ in which
diverse members are joined together and have their own functions for the common
good. The most important designation is found in the Acts of Apostles in which the
Church is described as the ‘assembly of God’ where each Christian lives in
communion with one another.¹ For nurturing and constant growth of the people of
God, the church has been given a special structure. It is called a hierarchical
structure. The hierarchy of the Church is the orderly disposition of the ranks and
orders of the clergy to provide for the spiritual care of all the faithful and for the
administration of the Church which has spread all over the world.

The Church is constituted basically as the people of God through baptism and
only then it deals with the hierarchy and the laity. Its order can be presented in a
pyramidal or a ladder structure in which the clergy and laity are layered, the Pope
standing at the top, the bishops and the priests in the descending order and the laity
(who are labeled as the people of God) at the bottom.

In the circular model, the entire Church is circular where Christ is at the centre
as the unique head of the people of God and the clergy who are constituted

¹ Bible-I Corinthians 27 : 31.
hierarchically among themselves by the power of orders and offices, are chosen from among the people of God in order to be their leaders and servants.

The hierarchy of jurisdiction has for its purpose the governing of the faithful for spiritual ends. Its head is Supreme Pontiff (Pope) who exercises supreme jurisdiction over the Universal church. The diocese as a particular church is a portion of the universal church is entrusted with the bishop. With the collaboration of the parish priests to be governed, nourished by teaching and sanctified a sacred power over others and even in the distribution of this power, there are various orders or grades. The parishes in the diocese and living cells within it and then individual members feel that they are members of the diocese (Particular Church) and of the universal Church. The dioceses are therefore integral parts of the Universal Church which is rather a communion of different particular Church in which subsists its fullness.²

According to the statistics of 2010, the population of the world is about 6.78 billion of whom 1.13 billion, that is about 16.7 percent are Catholics. Looking at the Indian scene, the country has a population of 1.2 billion of which only about 18 million, that is 1.55 percent are Catholics.³

The Catholic Church in India alone has 164 dioceses, and 9750 parishes at present 2,795 dioceses.⁴ The term “Catholic” is derived from the Greek word

³ Arulkalil, The Indian Catholic Directory, p.897.
⁴ Ibid., p.3.
Katholikos meaning Universal and was first used to describe the Church in the early 2nd century.

It is used to distinguish it from other groups that also call themselves the Church. The Catechism of Pope Pius X, published in 1908, also used the term Roman to distinguish the Catholic Church from other communities who are not in free communion with the Church of Rome. Following the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, the Church continued to use the term Catholic to distinguish itself from the various denominations that split off.

The Pope is the leader of the worldwide Catholic Church composed of the Latin Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with the Universal Church of Rome. The current Pope is Francis, elected on 13, March 2013 by Papal Conclave. The Catholic Church is made up of 23 autonomous particular Churches each of which accepts the paramount of Pope on the matters of doctrine. These Churches reflect different historical and cultural influences rather than differences in doctrine.

The largest of the particular churches in the Latin Church, which comprises over one billion members. It developed in southern Europe and North Africa.

Then it spread throughout Europe before expanding to the rest of the world. The Latin Church is considered itself to be the oldest and largest branch of western Christianity. The membership of 22 self governing Eastern Catholic Churches is of 17.3 million as of 2010.\footnote{Catholic Church.org. The Eastern Christian Churches; A Brief Survey. [6th Edition], 2010.} They follow the tradition and spirituality of Eastern

\footnote{Catholic Church.org. The Eastern Christian Churches; A Brief Survey. [6th Edition], 2010.}
Christianity. The Roman Curia has a specific department called the Congregation for the Oriental Church to maintain relations with them.⁶

Although Christianity originated in Asia, its historic development and influence have been mostly in the west.⁷ The Catholics in India fall into two main categories; those who follow the Latin rite and the Syrian rite Catholics. They have in India prefectures, Dioceses and Arch dioceses all over the country, with a Cathedral in each. Individual countries, regions, or major cities are served by particular Churches known as dioceses or eparchies; each looked after by a Catholic bishop. Each diocese is united with one of the worldwide particular Churches such as the Latin Church or one of the Eastern Churches.⁸

According to Everyman’s Encyclopedia the term ‘Diocese’ means a district under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and care of a bishop. The word in its present ecclesiastical signification was not in common use till about the 9th century. Paroikia [parish] being the more usual term up to the time.

For a longtime, the term was primarily used in the civil administration of the Roman Empire. Constantine [306 – 337 A.D], the great Roman Emperor divided his empire into 13 ecclesiastical and political divisions. The ecclesiastical district was brought under a patriarch, while the political district under a praetorian prefect. Later district dwindled to mean single metropolitanate or province and finally merely the

⁶ D.S.Lourdusamy, *Vatican Digest II*, p.3.
⁸ Ibid., p.531.
sphere of jurisdiction of any one bishop. In the Catholic Church, Dioceses are erected by the Pope in Consortium of Bishops.⁹

During the later part of the 19th century the expansion of the church activities in India invited the attention of the Pope in Rome to organize the administration of the churches. Pope Leo XIII established the Indian Hierarchy in 1886. Since then the church in India has grown into a number of ecclesiastical provinces, each under an Archbishop who has one or more suffragan bishops within his jurisdiction.¹⁰ In 1899, Pope Leo XIII created the diocese of Kumbakonam by the dismemberment from the Archdiocese of Pondicherry.¹¹ Thus the parishes in Salem region with about 45,000 Catholics were divided among the Diocese of Kumbakonam and Mysore for thirty years from 1899 to 1930.¹²

On 26th May 1930, the Diocese of Salem comprising the civil districts of Salem and Dharmapuri was erected by Pope Pius XI canonically.¹³ It was created by merging 6 parishes from the jurisdiction of Pondicherry, three parishes from Kumbakonam and one parish from Mysore diocese in 1943. Two parishes in Mettur Taluk which were originally under the jurisdiction of Mysore Diocese were also added to the Diocese of Salem.¹⁴

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¹¹ F.A.Platner, Catholic India, Yesterday and Today, p.51.
¹² Ibid., p. 52.
¹⁴ Ibid., p.760.
Development of Diocese Under the Various Bishops

Rev. Dr. Henry Prunier [1930-1949]

He was the first Bishop of Salem and was appointed on September 14, 1930. He was entrusted with 12 parishes and twenty-six priests. Under his able guidance, the diocese witnessed a remarkable progress. The two taluks of Namakkal and Trichengodu in the south which had never heard of the gospel were evangelized. By 1949, when Bishop Prunier handed over the administration to the Indian Clergy, Christianity had spread over as many as fifty villages in Salem Diocese. To continue the mission of diocese, he increased the number of Indian clergy enormously. As the diocese did not have enough priests and postulants, he invited some priests from Kerala to do their ministry in Salem diocese. In order to train the priests, he started St. Xavier’s Minor Seminary at Srirangapalayam.

He appointed Fr. Florance as the Rector of the seminary. He started many schools and hostels to cater to the needs of Salemites. He established St. Theresa’s Technical Institute for the young students to get training in technical education. In 1947, due to his severe illness, he resigned his post. However, he continued his service as an Apostolic Administrator for a couple of years. On 1st May, 1949, Rev.Dr.V.S. Selvanathar who was appointed by Pope Pius XII succeeded him as the second Bishop of Salem.

15 The newly created diocese had 17, 600 Christians, 26 schools, 26 priests and 45 sisters; Golden Jubilee Souvenir of Salem Diocese, 1980.
**Bishop V.S. Selvanthar [1949-1974]**

He was the first Indian Bishop of Salem diocese. His contribution to the development of education in Salem district is praiseworthy. He started many schools and hostels. Since the diocese did not have sufficient number of priests, he sought the help of sisters to administer the newly started educational institutions.\(^{17}\) A Leprosy Relief Rural Centre was started as a unit of Salem diocese at Settipatti in a small rented house in 1955. In the same year the Christian Seva Sangam was established. He also setup a centre for social work to take care of socially backward people in the diocese in 1968.\(^{18}\) Bishop Selvanather was elevated as the Archbishop of Pondicherry and Cuddalore.

**Bishop Dr. Michael Bosco Duraisamy [1974 – 1999]**

On 10\(^{th}\) June, 1974 Rev.Dr. Michael Bosco Duraisamy was consecrated as the third Bishop of Salem Diocese by Cardinal Krol.\(^ {19}\) He took keen interest in developing the Salem diocese. Many priests went around the villages to spread the Gospel. For the sake of efficient administration, parishes were grouped together to form seven vicariates.

They are

1. Salem
2. Namakkal
3. Mettur

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\(^{17}\) When he took over the post of Bishop, there were 38,480 Christians, 50 Priests, 50 Churches, 28 Parishes, 110 sisters and 58 schools in Salem Diocese, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir of Salem Diocese; 2005.


\(^{19}\) Interview with Fr. Savari, Maravaneri, Salem.20 August, 2011.
In order to conduct pastoral programmes of the diocese, he built Epiphany Centre in 1977 A.D. He took an active part in fostering inter-religion understanding among the people of Salem. Due to his farsighted planning and strenuous efforts, the diocese of Salem witnessed a double increase in the number of parishes and priests and educational institutions. He made the diocese grow economically strong and self-reliant in several fields.

He also started three hospitals, eleven dispensaries, two leprosy centres, three asylums for the mentally retarded, one home for the aged, and thirteen homes for the children and three centres for tailoring. Thus the Salem diocese witnessed tremendous growth in various fields till it was bifurcated in 1997. Since the diocese grew in strength, Bishop Michael Bosco Duraisamy initiated the move for the creation of Dharmapuri Diocese detaching the civil district of Dharmapuri from the Diocese of Salem. In order to fulfil the pastoral needs of the growing catholic population, the Dharmapuri Diocese was erected by the Holy See (i.e. of Rome) Pope John Paul II on Friday, April 25th 1997. His Eminence Simon Cardinal Lourdusamy installed the new

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20 Bishop Michael Duraisamy started a Dialogue and Ecumenism Ministry for promoting religious harmony in Salem District.

21 He built 30 churches, 43 chapels, one of his most valuable contributions to the faithful of Salem Diocese is the Infant Jesus cathedral which was blessed on 27 November, 1991: Platinum Jubilee Souvenir of Diocese of Salem, 2010.

22 Newsletter, Diocese of Salem, No.294, June 1999.

23 Ibid., No. 267 June, 1999.
Bishop of Dharmapuri in the Sacred Heart Cathedral at Dharmapuri at 5:00 p.m. in the presence of the clergy, religious and the laity. The creation of new Diocese of Dharmapuri, which was carved out of Salem Diocese, was a monumental sign of the rapid development of Salem Diocese.

Bishop. Rev. Dr. Singaroyan (2000 to till date)

Bishop. Rev. Dr. Singaroyan was consecrated as the fourth bishop of Salem on 18th October, 2000 as a gift of Jubilee 2000. During this short span of time the Diocese has developed by leaps and bounds in many spheres especially in the spiritual aspect of the life of the people. He is a multifaceted personality. To his credit, he has got many degrees in the fields of Literature, Public Administration, Social Communication, Humanistic Christian Counseling besides being Doctorate in theology. Throughout his religious life he has been noted for his humility, his concern for the poor, and his commitment to pastoral services and dialogue as a way to build bridges between people of all backgrounds, beliefs and faiths in Salem region. He is known for having a simpler and less formal approach to the episcopacy.

Many new schools, churches, chapels, orphanages and homes for aged have been started during his tenure in order to cater to the various needs and aspirations of the people of Salem diocese. He inspires the faithful of the diocese through his simple but exemplary consecrated life dedicated for the glory and spread of God’s kingdom. The number of parishes has increased from 38 to 58. He is an able administrator as well. As a benevolent shepherd of the flock of Salem Diocese, he has

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taken consistent efforts to fulfill the pastoral needs of the people by conducting retreats, seminars, mission preaching and many other awareness programmes. He is called the People’s Bishop due to his intimate rapport with the faithful by making frequent visits to all the parishes of the diocese.

**Structure and Administration of the Diocese of Salem**

Canon law 369 states that a diocese is a portion of the people of God entrusted to a Bishop to be guided by him with the assistance of his clergy so that, loyal to its pastor and formed by him in to one community in the Holy spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes one particular church [diocese] in which the one holy catholic and apostolic church of the Christ is truly present and active. Universal Church is a communion of different particular churches. The Pope who is the head of the college of Bishops maintains the unity of the Church Communion.

**The Office of the Pope**

For the nurturing and constant growth of the people of God, the Church has been given a special structure. It is called a hierarchical structure. First in the hierarchy of the Church comes the Pope. What most obviously distinguished the Catholic Church from other Christian bodies is the line between its members and the Pope. The catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting the second Vatican council’s document ‘Lumen Centrism”, states: “The Pope is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful.

The Pope is the head of the Universal Catholic Church. He is the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the successor of St. Peter, Prince of the apostles and
the Supreme Pontiff who has the primacy of jurisdiction over the universal church and the particular church.\textsuperscript{26}

The Catholic Church is the largest organization in the world. Its hierarchy is the orderly disposition of the ranks and orders of the clergy to provide spiritual care for all the members of the Universal Church.\textsuperscript{27}

Lord Macaulay in his famous essay on the Popes, said 175 years ago that there was no instrument of human policy so worthy of study as the church of Rome. The churches are controlled throughout the entire world through the hierarchy.

Its head is the Supreme Pontiff [Pope] who by divine law exercises supreme jurisdiction over the churches from the moment of his acceptance of the Papacy. The Bishops under him belong to this hierarchy by divine law whereas the various other officials belong to it by ecclesiastical institution.\textsuperscript{28}

He is the successor of St. Peter. The famous dictum “Where Peter is, there the church is” is not utopia, but the truth is inspired by divine light. He is often referred to as the Apostle to the Gentiles. No other man played so large a role in the propagation of Christianity as that of Peter.\textsuperscript{29} The Pope resides in Vatican city and independent state within the city of Rome, setup by the 1929 Lateran Accord between the Holy See and Italy. Ambassadors are accredited to the Pope. According to Lateran Accord signed on Feb-11, 1929, the government of Italy agreed to the creation of a separate

\textsuperscript{26}Peter Mc Conville and Peter Brady S.M.A., \textit{The Church of the Christ}, Vol. IV, p.132.

\textsuperscript{27}Vatican 11, Documatic Constitution on the Church, No.28, 1968.

\textsuperscript{28}Theological Publications in India \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church}, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, p.62.
State to be called the Vatican city, which was to be under the complete ownership and sovereign jurisdiction of the Pope. The body of officials that assist the Pope in governance of the Church as a whole is known as the Roman Curia. The term Holy See is generally used only of Pope and Curia. The title of Pope derived from a word, known in Greek as far back as Homer’s odyssey 6:57, for “Father is the most common title.

The Pope is the sovereign head of Vatican city, which stretches over an area of 4,40,000 square metres. As an absolute sovereign, he holds in his hands the legislative, Judicial and administrative powers. Apart from these powers, as a spiritual head, he controls the entire catholic churches in the world. Thus the Salem diocese and the churches under its jurisdiction are functioning as per his directions given through his representatives.

For the practical governing of the church and the administration of its routine affairs, the Pope has a number of congregations, tribunals and offices in Vatican city and in Rome. Most of them have a Cardinal in charge. The highest ranking congregation is the Holy office. It is charged with matters of faith and morals. The Consistory prepares the appointment of Bishops and the establishment of diocese. Cardinals are princes of the Church appointed by the Pope. He generally chooses bishops who head departments for the Roman Curia. Cardinals advise the Pope and those Cardinals under the age of 80 at the death of a Pope elect his successor.

30 Carrado Pallenberg, Inside the Vatican, p.110.
The Cardinals form a group of corporation which is called a college. This is the senate of the church. Various nations of the catholic world have representation in this senate.\(^{32}\)

**Bishops and Archbishops**

As the diocese forms a greater part of hierarchy of Catholic Church, it is worthwhile to study further about its administration with special reference to the Universal Church. Bishop is the term that in the early apostolic church was closely allied with the word elder.\(^{33}\) In apostolic succession a diocese is presided over by a Bishop who is its visible principle and foundation of unity, having proper, ordinary and immediate power.\(^{34}\)

The Archbishops are metropolitan Prelates in charge of an ecclesiastical province consisting of several dioceses called suffragans. In his own arch- diocese he has the full powers of a Bishop, his jurisdiction over his suffragans is limited and defined by canon law.\(^{35}\) Since 1886, the Church in India has grown into a number of ecclesiastical provinces, each under an Archbishop who has one or more suffrangan Bishops within his Jurisdiction. At present there are three Archdioceses and sixteen dioceses in Tamilnadu. Salem is one among the dioceses of Tamilnadu.

**Qualification of Bishop**

Canon law 378 enumerates the qualifications necessary for a candidate to become a Bishop of the diocese. It is required that he must be outstanding for his solid

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\(^{33}\) The word ‘Bishop’ is derived from the Greek term episcopes which means over seer or over looker.

\(^{34}\) S. Sebastian, *Structure of Decision Making in Local Church*, p.6

faith, good morals, zeal for souls, wisdom, prudence and human virtues endowed with the other talents which make him fit to fulfill the office. He should possess a good deal of experience as the ordained priest for atleast five years. He should possess a doctorate in sacred scriptures.\textsuperscript{36} A Bishop promoted to a diocese cannot exercise the office entrusted to him unless he has first taken canonical possession of the diocese.

**Insignia of the Bishop**

The insignia of the Bishop are the ring, the pectoral cross, the pastoral staff, the vestments, the mitre and the throne.\textsuperscript{37} These are necessary for the bishop while he celebrates mass and administers various sacraments in cathedral and other churches that are under his jurisdiction.

**Functions of Bishop in the Diocese**

The degree on the pastrol office of the Bishops in the church is one of the important decrees which restores the true image of the Bishop in his diocese. The diocese is the basic cell in the church and centres on the Bishop surrounded by his priests and his people.\textsuperscript{38} The Bishop is the guardian of the word of God.\textsuperscript{39} Following are the functions performed by the Bishop of Salem Diocese.

\textsuperscript{36} The Code of Cannon Law, p.323
\textsuperscript{37} The term Insignia means symbols of rank or authority
\textsuperscript{38} The number of cardinals throughout world were 149, no. of Bishops 4010, no. of Particulars Sees 13, no. of Metropolitan Sees 454, no. of Arch Episcopals 69 and Episcopal Sees 1942; Catholic Directory of India, 1997.
\textsuperscript{39} D.S.Lourdsamy, Decree on the Pastoral office of Bishops in the Church, p.13
**Bishop as Pastor**

The canon laws 383 to 394 explain the important functions to be performed by the Bishop in a diocese. He is concerned with all the Christian faithful who are committed to his care regardless of age, condition or nationality. He attends to Presbyters with special concerns and listens to them as their assistants and advisers. He protects their rights and sees to it that they correctly fulfil the obligations proper to their state.\(^{40}\)

**Fostering of vocations**

As much as possible the diocesan bishop is fostering vocations to the different ministries and to the consecrated life.

**Bishop as Sanctifier**

The bishop’s duty of sanctifier is carried out in the day-today life of the diocese by the opportunities provided by the eucharist sacrifice and the reception of the sacraments. He presides frequently over the celebration of the eucharist in the cathedral church or in another church of his diocese especially on Holy days of obligation and other solemnities.\(^{41}\) He represents his diocese in all its jurisdictional affairs.

**Pastoral Visitation**

It is an efficient means and canonically proved a way of relating himself to the religious apostolic activities carried out in the diocese of Salem. As far as the diocese of Salem is concerned, the bishop visits parishes under his jurisdiction at least once a

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\(^{40}\) The Diocesan Bishop rules the particular Church entrusted to him with Legislative, Executive and Judicial Powers in accord with norms of law.

\(^{41}\) Vidyajyoti, *Journal of Theological Reflection*, Vol.58, No.4, p.44.
year. He comes into contact with the priests, religious and faithful entrusted to him during his visit. The bishop has the obligation to make the pastoral visitation of his entire diocese every five-years. He has the authority to visit churches, schools and other religious and charitable works carried out in his diocese by the religious belonging to various congregations. His pastoral visitation gives him an opportunity to praise, inspire and comfort those who labour for the gospel and social change. He also promotes common discipline of the whole church.\(^{42}\)

**Bishop Presides over Diocesan Synod**

There are two legislators in the church. The Pope is the legislator for the universal church. The Bishops as the leaders of particular churches, have legislative powers in their respective dioceses. The Diocese of Salem got its Diocesan Synod, which consists of selected priests and other Christian faithful of the diocese. The members of the Synod offer assistance to the Diocesan Bishop for the good of the entire diocesan community according to the norms of the Canons.\(^{43}\)

Following are called the Diocesan Synod as its members\(^ {44}\) and are obliged to participate in it:

1. The co-adjutor Bishop and the auxiliary bishops.
2. The Vicar General, the Episcopal Vicars and the Judicial Vicar.
3. The Canons of the Cathedral Church.
4. The members of the presbyteral.

\(^{43}\) The Code of Canon law, p.381.
\(^{44}\) The Directory of the Bishops suggests that the decision to hold Synod may be arrived at the end of an extensive pastoral visit of the entire diocese. After his visit he can plan out pastoral programme with the policies of legislative nature.
5. Lay members of the Christian faithful and members of institutes of consecrated life.
6. The Rector of Diocesan Major Seminary.
7. Vicars Forane, and,

The method of conducting the Synod is left completely in the hands of the Bishop and the synodal members. The decisions arrived at the Synod are called “acts” or “Constitutions” or “Statutes.” They are to be signed by the Bishop and can be published only with his authority. Thus Diocesan Synod resembles Legislative body of a welfare state which enacts acts for well being of its people.

**The Diocesan Curia**

Curia is the administrative body of the diocese. The Bishop is the head of the Curia. Canon laws 469-494 define the diocesan curia, the mode of appointment coordinator of diocesan administration and the formalities for jurisdiction documents. The Diocesan Curia consists of those institutions and persons who assist the bishop in the governance of the entire diocese. All those who participate in the over-all administration of the diocese curia are considered its members. The administrative members look after various departments such as liturgy, charity, social concerns, and temporalities and the other facts of ecclesiastical life promoted at the diocesan level.

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45 S.Sabastian *op.cit.*, p.87.
46 The Diocesan Bishop is the sole Legislator at a Diocesan Synod while the remaining members of the synod possess only a consultative vote.
The decisions taken in the Curia will come into effect after getting the signature of the Bishop and Chancellor or the notary of Curia.\textsuperscript{47}

**Vicar General**

The Vicar General is the most important office of the diocesan curia. His office is executive in nature. A priest is appointed by the Bishop as vicar general to assist him in the governance of the entire diocese. He possesses executive authority in all aspects of diocesan administration. He exercises it on behalf of the Bishop. The Bishop has complete discretion in removing the priest from the post of vicar general according to his judgment.

**i) Chancellor**

In every Diocesan Curia, a chancellor is appointed in order to gather, arrange and safeguard Curial acts in the archives of Curia. The Chancellor also acts as principal notary of the Bishop. As the Ecclesiastical Notary, he has to certify the legitimate documents. The Ecclesiastical Notary often functions as a public notary so that certain church documents may be easily certified in a manner acceptable in civil law.

**Diocesan Administrative Tribunal**

Any person or a group of persons in the diocese who come into conflict with a parish priest or diocesan administration or administrative body other than the bishop may submit petitions to the Administrative Tribunal to resolve the disputes. The tribunal of the diocese of Salem has its sittings regularly to hear and try the cases of

\textsuperscript{47} Code of Canon Law, p. 390.
nullity. The Judicial Vicar is available in the Tribunal office, Bishop’s House, Maravaneri, Salem-7. The Notary is available in the Tribunal office, Bishop’s House to guide the people to write petitions and to solve their problems.

Archives

The word ‘Archives is derived from the Greek word Archeion’ which has been defined in Oxford English Dictionary as a place in which public records or other historical documents are kept and preserved. The record keeping practice, developed by the Sumerians, Hititis and Egyptians were inherited and improved upon by the Greeks and particularly by the Romans. Until the collapse of Roman authority, the Catholic Church kept this practice alive.

Diocesan Archives is the store house of information about its past administrative system. It provides the prime source of information pertaining to origin, development multifarious service of the diocese since its inception. The archives seem to have been developed even during the early stage of the church history. During the first three centuries, Bishop’s preserved baptismal records called disptychs in their residences. Diocesan Archives seem to have been formally instituted by Charles Borromeo in 1565.

The diocesan archives are generally classified into (i) General archives (ii) Historical archives. These archives are attached with the Bishop’s house.

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49 Nullity means Legal Action that asks for a marriage to be declared null and void.
50 Interview with Fr.Alagu Selvan, Judicial Vicar, Maravaneri, Salem dt. 8th September, 2013.
51 M.Soundaraj, Manual of Archival Systems and The world of Archives, p.5
General Archives

An organizational chart of the diocese and its various departments and agencies are brought under the category of General Archives. All diocesan and parochial documents are protected with the utmost care. There is an inventory or catalogue for the documents contained in the archives with a brief synopsis of the content of each one. The Bishop and Chancellor have the keys. The permission is restricted to the general archives. Permission to use the archives can be obtained either from the Bishop or both from the Moderator of Curia and the Chancellor. There are also secret archives in the Bishop’s house in which secret documents are protected most securely. The synodal acts and documents of the archives and of the cathedral and other churches in the diocese are diligently preserved in the section of secret archives.

Historical Archives

There are also historical archives in the diocese in which the documents having historical values are preserved. The records and the diaries of the missionaries preserved here are consulted for research purpose. The diocese of Salem has well maintained general and secret historical archives. Historical archives has not yet been setup in the diocese.

Presbyterian Council

The Presbyterian council plays a vital role in the administration of the diocese. The priests of 58 parishes of the diocese of Salem constitute one priesthood with their Bishop and strive to lend their consistent effort, support and co-operation to the pastoral work of the whole diocese. They constitute the Bishop’s senate or council
such as cathedral chapter, the board of consulters or other committees established according to the circumstances or nature of various localities.

**Diocesan Financial Council**

The canon Laws 492 to 494 deal with the structure of the financial administration. In each diocese a financial council is established by the Bishop over which he himself or his delegates preside. Its members are appointed by the Bishop. Their term of office is five years. Each year the financial council prepares a budget of income and expenditure foreseen for the governance of the entire diocese. The financial council includes the vicar general, the chancellor, and expert in canon law, three lay people who are expert in accounts and civil law and the representatives of the diocesan pastoral council and priests senate.\(^{52}\)

The constitution of a finance council in every diocese is now obligatory. Apart from drafting the annual budget, the finance council undertakes internal audits. It includes evaluating the already audited annual statements of accounts of the diocese and all the diocesan institutions such as parishes, schools, home for children, health and social service centres etc., and submit the observation to the diocesan Bishop. This internal auditing done by the finance council promotes better economy efficiency and above all accountability. In order to look after financial administration of the diocese, a financial administrator can be appointed by the Bishop after consulting the college of consulters and the diocesan financial council. The diocesan financial council provides a model for parish financial council operating in different parishes in Salem Diocese.

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\(^{52}\) S. Sebastian, *op.cit.*, p.187.
Diocesan Pastoral Council

It consists of Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church, clerics and the members of institutes of consecrated life. It is meant to be representative of the whole people of God of the particular Church.\(^53\)

The Pastoral Council is convened at least once a year. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council make representation to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.\(^54\) The Pastoral Council is a body of consultation designed to enlighten the Bishop, so that his decisions on the diocesan Pastoral activity may always be made in the light of opinions and points of view given by the Pastoral Council enable the Bishop to make effective plans for his pastoral works in the Diocese. It is the great concern of the pastoral council to advise the bishop in the areas of his governance especially teaching, sanctifying and general administration.\(^55\)

Following are the areas in which the Diocesan Pastoral Council takes an active part:

a. Meaningful celebration of novenas, feasts etc., in the parishes,

b. Sunday catechism in the parish centres and substations,

c. Spreading the Bible and evangelization programmes,

d. Family and youth apostolate,

e. Dialogue and partnership with Hindus, Muslims rationalists etc.,

f. Participation of the laity in the mission of the church,

\(^53\) Upon receiving the appointment, the members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council take the oath of honesty and confidentiality.

\(^54\) Interview with K.V. Paulos, Secretary, Salem Diocese Pastoral Council, dt. 4 May 2011.

g. Addressing national problems like fundamentalism and religious fanaticism,

h. Pastoral care to the demarginalised groups like the drug addicts, drunkards, lapsed in faith and socially displaced persons, and

i. Programmes for the widows, orphans and mentally handicapped. The church is facing many challenges in the modern times. Hence, it needs healthy dialogue and proper pastoral planning to meet the present day challenges. Contributions of diocesan pastoral council in this regard cannot be underestimated.

**Commissions and Committees**

In the exercise of his responsibilities for the diocese of Salem, the Bishop is assisted by the various commissions and committees. The most important of them are

1. Diocesan Pastoral Council
2. Priests’ Senate
3. Bible Commission
4. Catechism
5. Education advisers
6. Evangelization
7. Lay apostolate
8. Justice and peace
9. Liturgy
10. Press
11. Publication
12. Seminary
13. Social Communication
14. Social Service
15. Vocation
16. Workers
17. Youth, and
18. S.C and S.T Commission.\(^{56}\)

A priest is appointed as the director of each commission. The commission’s day-to-day work is discharged under the guidance of the directors. They meet periodically and carry out their routine programmes in consultation with the bishop. The reports on the programmes and accomplishments of these commissions and committees are published in the diocesan newsletters periodically. These commissions and committees render yeoman service under the supervision of the Bishop with regard to the spread of good news to the faithful and perform welfare activities to various social groups.

**Parishes and Vicariates**

The Salem diocese is divided into ecclesiastical parts known as parishes. Parish is the basic unit of the church administration. At present there are 58 parishes in Salem diocese. In order to foster pastoral care, several neighboring parishes are joined together into special groups called vicariates. Vicariate forane is in charge of vicariate. There are five vicariates in Salem Diocese.\(^{57}\)

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They are as follows:

1. Attur Vicariate
2. Nammakal Vicariate
3. Thiruchengode Vicariate
4. Mettur Vicariate, and,
5. Salem Vicariate

The number of parishes belonging to each vicariate is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vicariates</th>
<th>No. of parishes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Salem</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attur vicariate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nammakal vicariate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thiruchengodu vicariate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mettur vicariate</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total no. of Parishes**  **58**

The parish priests are appointed by the bishop to look after the parishes in the diocese. Very often a parish priest has one or more assistant younger priests to assist him in his routine duties of the parish. His pastoral duties, apart from administration of sacraments and preaching include catechizing the children, supervising the parochial school, taking up the censes of the parish etc.
Following is the list of parishes of Salem diocese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>NAME OF THE CHURCH</th>
<th>ESTABLISHED</th>
<th>PRIESTS</th>
<th>CATHOLICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shevapet</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Co- Cathedral</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idappadi</td>
<td>St. Selvanayagi Church</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agraharam</td>
<td>Holy Spirit Church</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakkaveri</td>
<td>Our Lady Mt. Carmel Church</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settipatti</td>
<td>Sts. Peter and Paul Church</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koneripatti</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Church</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mettur Dam</td>
<td>Our Lady of Assumption Church</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnsonpet</td>
<td>St. Antony’s Church</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suramangalam</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Church</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathiyampatti</td>
<td>St. Mary Magdalene Church</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namakkal</td>
<td>Christ the King Church</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosavampatti</td>
<td>St. Francis Xavier’s Church</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yercaud</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Church</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangavalli</td>
<td>Christ the King Church</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunnalamalai</td>
<td>Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruchengode</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Church</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attur</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Church</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elanagar</td>
<td>St. Paul’s Church</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perunkurrichi</td>
<td>Our Lady of Lourdes Church</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Parish Code</td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem Camp</td>
<td>St. Joseph Church</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valapaddy</td>
<td>St. Pius X Church</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vellapalayam</td>
<td>St. Mary Magdalene Church</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadayampalayam</td>
<td>St. Sebastian Church</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudupalayam</td>
<td>Assumption Church</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pettaipalayam</td>
<td>Pettaipalayam</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sankari</td>
<td>St. Antony’s Church</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumbal</td>
<td>St. Mary’s Church</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savariyarpalayam</td>
<td>St. Francis Xavier Church</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tharamangalam</td>
<td>St. Charles Boromeo Church</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.P.B Colony</td>
<td>Holy Trinity Church</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasipuram</td>
<td>Our Lady of Lourdes Church</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanyasigundu</td>
<td>St. Joseph Church</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sendarapatti</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Church</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arisipalayam</td>
<td>Infant Jesus Cathedral</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Plant</td>
<td>St. Jude’s Church</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alagapuram</td>
<td>St. Michael’s Church</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kongrapatti</td>
<td>St. Sebastian Church</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udayapatti</td>
<td>Our Lady of Good Health Church</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramathi</td>
<td>Amala Annai Church</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pungavadi</td>
<td>Our Lady of Headlth Church</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Parish Name</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semmedu</td>
<td>Infact Jesus Church</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sendamangalam</td>
<td>Arockia Matha Church</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thalaivasal</td>
<td>St. Joseph's Church</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>460</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solasiramani</td>
<td>Our Lady of Good Health Church</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siluvaigiri</td>
<td>R.C. Church</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayarakkini Nagar</td>
<td>Annai Jayarakkini Church</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinnagollapatti</td>
<td>Our Lady of Perpetual</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karumandurai</td>
<td>St. Francis of Assisi Church</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pallipalayam</td>
<td>St. Antony's Church</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootatturpatti</td>
<td>St. Sebastian Church</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilapalayam</td>
<td>St. Sebastian Church</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagalur</td>
<td>Sagayamatha Church</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirumanur</td>
<td>John the Baptist Church</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namagiripettai</td>
<td>St. Joseph's Church</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumarapalayam</td>
<td>Our Lady Of Rosary Church</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manjakuttai</td>
<td>St. Joseph's Church</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parish Fund**

Each family in the parish has to contribute annually some amount of money known as ‘Talai Kattuvari’ towards the maintenance of the Diocese. In the case of a widow less amount of money is collected from her. Collection of money is also made in connection with special occasions such as Parish Church Feast, Good Friday, Sunday, one Sunday of lent and collection for hunger and disease. The amount
collected by the respective parishes should be sent to the procurator by the end of April every year.

**Parish Administration**

Parish Priest is responsible for the administration of the parish. He shares his responsibility with the assistant Parish Priest. Apart from this, there is the parish council with 25 members, representatives of various sections of the parish. Every month in the second week, the parish council meets to plan and discuss the matters that pertain to the parish.

**Cathedral Parish**

The Cathedral is the principal Church of a diocese. The Cathedral of Salem diocese is located in Arisipalayam parish. The parish of Arisipalayam was bifurcated from Shevapet in 1953 and was erected as St. Francis Xavier’s parish. The chapel of St. Francis Xavier’s Minor Seminary served as the parish church till 1991.

The New Cathedral was consecrated on 27th November 1991, and dedicated to Infant Jesus. This magnificent Cathedral was meticulously planned and carefully constructed with strenuous efforts by late Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Michael B. Duraisamy, as his last monumental gift to the diocese of Salem. Rev. Fr. S. Amalraj was the first Parish Priest of the Infant Jesus Cathedral parish. Father Gregory Rajan is the present Parish Priest.

The cathedral Parish can be divided into two main areas: Arisipalayam and Peramanur. Omalur main Road is dividing these two areas. There are five sectors in Arisipalayam area: Arisipalayam, Mullakkadu, Saminathapuram, Angammal Colony
and Pallapatti-Meiyanur. In Peramanur area also there are five sectors Peramanur, Chinnapudur, Sankar Nagar, Fairlands and Alagapuram.

Mostly teachers, government employees, business people, a few doctors, lawyers and engineers live in Peramanur area. carpenters, masons, daily coolies, merchants, teachers with few doctors and engineers reside at Arisipalayam area.

**Social Life in Parish and Its Civic Functions**

Though church-going is essentially a religious obligation, it has social side too. Everyone takes care to attend church service in his or her best clothes. There is a certain amount of social prestige attached to membership in church councils, meant for general management of the affairs of the church. Among Syrians, membership in the Church Council was a coveted honour which generally was by heredity.

Every parish church has a resident priest and a sexton, and the bigger parishes have clerks and assistant priests in addition. One of the most important duties of the church staff is the maintenance of the parish register in which dates of baptism, marriage and death or every parishioner are kept. The most important civic function has been in promoting the cause of education. Children are taught the fundamentals of their religion and daily prayer in regular Sunday classes usually held after the service, for better attendance. For the efficient instruction of children it is necessary that they should know the art of reading and writing, and some parish churches run primary schools for this purpose.

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58 Aruna Deshpande, *op.cit.*, p.519.
Religious order

The priests are trained in the seminaries. The Bishop can entrust a parish to a clerical religious institute or to a clerical society of apostolic life with the consent of the superior for instance, the Udayapatti Parish is entrusted to M.S.F congregation. The M.S.F Fathers carry out the pastoral work in Udayapatti parish under the guidance of the Bishop of Salem Diocese. The majority of the Bishops and pastors come from the ranks of secular clergy. They are called so because they live in the ‘world’ rather than in monasteries. The secular clergy are assisted by the men and women of various religious orders to perform specialized works of education charity and spiritual activities in the diocese. Thus in addition to zealous work of the diocesan priests, the religious priests also share the responsibility of apostolic work and various services under the guidance of the bishop.

Catholic Bishop Conference of India

The Catholic Bishop conference of India plays an important role in the development of Dioceses. It was constituted in Madras in 1944. Every Catholic Bishop is a member of the conference. The C.B.C.I acts through a standing committee, which is its executive, and a smaller working committee dealing with day to day administration.  

The C.B.C.I has brought about a sense of close unity among the heads of the numerous dioceses and has enabled them to adopt common policies in their administration. Michael Duraisamy [1974 –1999] former bishop of Salem was the

The Catholic Church is the world’s largest Christian Church with more than one billion member’s worldwide. It is among the oldest institutions in the world and has played a prominent role in the history of western civilization. The Catholic hierarchy consists chiefly of the college of bishops, with the Pope of Rome. It comprised as of 31 December 2011, 2,834 dioceses each looked after by a bishop. Salem Diocese which was created in 1930 is one among them. The mission of the Church is to be light, self and leaven. This mission has its depths in God’s own being and action in the world. This vision sees worked for the liberation of the poor, dialogue with cultures and religions as integral dimensions. Pope John Paul II, in the mission of the Redeemer, calls them ways of Church mission.

Thus the Diocese is the union of members of the church and hierarchical authority as a means to serve the men and women of the Diocese of Salem. The Diocese of Salem functions under a well-organized administrative system. Though the Bishop enjoys all the powers, he exercises them through the different officials like the Vicar General, Judicial Vicar, Priests’ Senate and Episcopal Vicar. They are his collaborators in the administration of the diocese. Vatican Council II states, “Priests and laymen who are attached to the diocesan administration should be mindful that they are collaborating in the pastoral work of the bishop.” In the church organisation, the parish forms the basic administrative unit and the faithful are the main collaborators in carrying out the pastoral work of the bishop and the mission of the Diocese.
NEWLY CREATED DIOCESE OF DHARMAPURI (1997)
Magnificent View of The Cathedral of Diocese of Salem