

of the apparition. This time, the Virgin appeared to both. The man subsequently erected a thatch chapel for Our Lady at this site which quickly became a holy place of veneration to the Blessed Mother. Henceforth, Our Lady was referred to as Mother of Good Health.

Yet a third time, Our Lady is said to have appeared in Vailankanni region. A group of Portuguese merchant sailors were rescued by her from a violent storm which had wrecked their ship. When the merchants reached the shore of Vailankanni, they were taken by the local fishermen to the thatched chapel. Desiring to offer thanks and pay tribute to Our Lady, the sailors built a small permanent chapel on a return trip. On subsequent visits they improved on it and eventually dedicated the chapel on the feast of her nativity, September 8, which was also the date of their rescue and safe landing at Vailankanni. To this day, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated at the Shrine of Vailankanni in the context of a nine-day festival, drawing more than a million and a half pilgrims. Not only vast numbers of Catholics but many non-Christians as well journey to Vailankanni throughout the year. The original modest chapel was replaced by a modern and spacious church in 1933. The Shrine of Our Lady of Vailankanni was elevated to a Basilica on November 3, 1962, by Pope John XXIII. - **Bernard Kellett**

**Entrance antiphon: To you I call; for you will surely heed me, O God; turn your ear to me; hear my words. Guard me as the apple of your eye; in the shadow of your wings protect me.**

**First Reading: Isaiah 53: 10-11**

**Responsorial Psalm: 32: R/ May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.**

**Second Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-16**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord; no one can come to the Father except through me. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Mark: 10:35-45**

**Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

**Communion Antiphon: Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, who hope in his merciful love, to rescue their souls from death, to them alive in famine.**



## **Twenty Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection:**

**Marian Shrine of Vailankanni in India:** Alongside the leading Marian shrines worldwide comes the Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health at Vailankanni, 200 miles south of Chennai, the capital of southern Tamil Nadu state. The biggest Marian shrine in Asia, thronged to by more than 10 million

pilgrims a year, was described by Pope St. John Paul 11, as the " Lourdes of the East," Its history dates back more than 500 years old, with miraculous appearances of Mother Mary. Devotion to Our Lady of Good Health, popularly called "Our Lady of Vailankanni," first originated sometime during the mid-sixteenth century when, the Virgin Mary appeared with her infant Son to a Hindu boy carrying milk to a customer's home. While he rested under a native banyan tree near a pond, Our Lady appeared to him and requested milk for her Son. The boy readily agreed. On reaching the customer's home, the boy apologized for his lateness and the reduced amount of milk by relating the incident that occurred on his way. However, upon inspection of his order, the man found the milk pot to be full and was convinced that something miraculous had happened. Together the man, a Hindu, and the boy returned to the place where the apparition had occurred. When they reached the pond, Our Lady appeared once again. On learning that it was Our Lady who appeared to the boy, the residents of the local Catholic community became ecstatic and promptly renamed the pond "Matha Kulam" or "Our Lady's Pond."

Some years later, Our Lady is said to have appeared again, however this time to a crippled boy who was selling buttermilk near a public square on the outskirts of the village of Vailankanni. She asked him to share his supply with her infant Son and the boy complied. Our Lady then asked the boy to inform a certain wealthy Catholic man in the nearby town of Nagapattinam of her appearance. Not immediately realizing that his crippled leg was miraculously cured, the boy rose up and began his journey. The man to whom Our Lady referred had had a vision the previous night in which he was requested to build a chapel for her. Together, the man and the boy returned to the site