

**THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH  
MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA**

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CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

**Twentieth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod**

(16 September 2016)

**REPORT**

His Beatitude Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos convoked the Twentieth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at KIDS, the social service centre of the Eparchy of Puttur on 16 September 2016.

The members present at the Synod were: Moran MorBaselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos (President of the Synod), Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos (Secretary of the Synod), Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom, Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios, Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios and Most Rev. Philipos Mar Stephanos.

Most Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebios, Eparchial Bishop of St Mary Queen of Peace (USA and Canada), could not attend the Synod due to his visa problems in the US. He was granted leave of absence.

Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos, the Bishop Emeritus of Tiruvalla is granted permanent leave of absence due to his old age health conditions.

Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, the Curia Bishop and the Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, recorded the minutes.

The HES started with a prayer and reading from the Bible (2Cor 3:1-7).

His Beatitude Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos, gave the opening address. God showers His blessings on the Church. We are now gathered for the 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary HES, away from the ordinary place of its convocation; we are gathered at Puttur. It was so decided in order to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the evangelisation of the region which has now become an Eparchy. Wonderful are God's ways! He works through our families, our parishes and communities! We are thankful to Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, the Bishop of Puttur, who invited us to this place on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Evangelisation of the region, the 86<sup>th</sup> Reunion Day and *Sabhasanghamam*, to celebrate these joyful occasions. The HES appreciates and congratulates His Excellency Mar Divannasios for his untiring efforts to build up the Eparchy.

His Beatitude also pointed out that our joy during the convocation of this Synod is enhanced as we could submit the documents of the Archieparchial Inquiry into the life and virtues of the Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios on 8 September 2016, on the day of the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Congregation for the Causes of

Saints. This is also the first HES after the canonisation of Mother Theresa with whom the Malankara Catholic Church also had a personal relationship.

His Beatitude the Catholicos invoked the presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the HES-in-session and entrusted the Synod to the motherly intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His Beatitude the Catholicos declared the HES open.

### **THE PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA**

His Beatitude the Catholicos, the President of the HES, presented the following proposed agenda of the Synod:

1. Prayer
2. Inaugural Address by His Beatitude
3. Report of the Nineteenth Holy Episcopal Synod – Part I
4. Report of the Nineteenth Holy Episcopal Synod – Part II
5. Matters Arising from the Report
6. Report of the *SuviseshaSangham*
7. Matters *Subsecreto*
8. Any other Topic with the Permission of the President of the HES

To this the Synod Fathers added the following topics:

1. Cause of Canonisation
2. Consecration of the Cathedral of Bathery
3. Blessing of the churches at Ayappakkam and Padi in Chennai
4. Upcoming visit of Cardinal Sandri
5. Malankara Catholic Assembly

The HES discussed the feasibility of completing the discussion on the topics of the agenda in the given time.

### **Report of the Nineteenth Ordinary HES**

The Nineteenth ordinary HES was conducted in two parts and hence the reports were also prepared in two parts. The report of the first part (16-20 February 2016) was read out. Corrections were pointed out, especially that the report needs editing before being published. Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas proposed that the report be passed and Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios supported the proposal. It was passed.

The report of Part II of the nineteenth ordinary HES held on 5 March 2016 on the side-lines of the CBCI Plenary Assembly convoked in Bengaluru from 2 to 9 March 2016, was presented. This report was proposed to be passed by Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios and supported by Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas and it was passed.

### **Matters Arising from the Report**

The inclusion of Psalms in the *S'himoNamaskaram* (Daily Prayers) was discussed. It was opined that they could be printed as an appendix to the *S'himo*. Opinions were also shared on which version of the Bible is to be used: RSV or *P'shita*? Which English version is to be used? RSV? New American Bible? Jerusalem Bible?

### **THE DELIBERATIONS**

After the completion of the initial procedures, deliberations on the agenda began.

### **Cause of Canonisation of Mar Ivanios**

His Beatitude the Catholicos shared with the HES the procedure of submitting the documents on the Canonisation of Mar Ivanios to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. His Beatitude the Catholicos together with Most Rev Thomas Mar Anthonios, the carrier of the documents, met the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation, Cardinal Amato, on 6 September 2017 and handed over to him the letters – the Instrument of the Closing of the Cause. The documents shipped to Rome, on completion of the formalities of customs clearance, was submitted on 8 September 2017, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus the Roman phase of the cause begins.

The next step is to appoint a Postulator in Rome with the approval of the Congregation. The Congregation itself will appoint the Relator of the Cause.

At home, we have to intensify the prayer for the Cause of Canonisation. His Beatitude the Catholicos proposed that he will issue a pastoral letter in this regard.

### **Consecration of the Cathedral of the Eparchy of Bathery**

Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, the Metropolitan of Bathery, invited everyone for the consecration of the Cathedral built for the Eparchy, which was to take place on 19 and 20 September 2016, immediately after the Reunion Day Celebrations and the *Sabhasanghamam* at Puttur. He also explained the arrangements of the travel of all Bishops to Bathery from Puttur.

### **The Visit of Rev. FrRalph Martin**

Rev. FrRalph Martin, the founder of the charismatic movement, was on a visit to India. He would be in Tiruvalla on 14 January 2017. A meeting as an occasion for the Bishops, Clergy, Religious and the Faithful to meet him and to hear him, would be arranged.

### **The Visit of His Eminence Cardinal Sandri**

His Eminence Cardinal Sandri, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, would be visiting India as the guest of the Syro-Malabar Church on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the MST Fathers. Thereafter, he intends to visit us on 10 and 11 January 2017. It was planned that he could be received at Tiruvalla, Pathanamthitta, Mavelikkara and Trivandrum. From there he would be proceeding to Delhi and visiting the Eparchies of Faridabad and Gurgaon.

### **Good Friday Offerings and Financial Report**

The call of the Holy See to allocate the Good Friday Offerings for the maintenance of the Holy Land was brought to the attention of the HES. All agreed that the practice will be followed up.

It was also pointed out that the financial report of our Eparchies shall be sent to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

### **Reunited Priests**

Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios reported that two priests from the Malabar Independent Syrian Church (Thozhiyur Church) reunited with our Church in the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha. Similarly in Bengaluru in the Exarchate of St Ephrem, a Russian Orthodox priest reunited with our Church.

### **Synodal Commissions**

The Chairmen of Synodal Commissions of Bible Apostolate, Vocation and Family Apostolate conveyed to the HES that the Secretaries of the respective commissions would like to resign as they are incapacitated to carry out their responsibilities either because they are transferred from their places to new offices or because they are not able to function properly. It was pointed out that before accepting their request, the matter shall be ascertained with them.

### **Medical Seat in Pushpagiri**

Some Bishops raised their concern of granting admission in the Pushpagiri Medical College under the management of the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla as students from their Eparchies were not getting admission. Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Archbishop of Tiruvalla, explained to them the government regulations in this matter. In this context, it was opined that only those students who faithfully completed their Sunday School shall be admitted in the management quota. It should be made mandatory. The Synod Fathers also suggested that the possibility of increasing the number of seats in the management quota could be discussed with the government.

### **Hosting of Reunion Day Celebration and Sabhasanghamam in the coming years**

It was agreed that the Sabhasanghamam of the coming years could be hosted by the Eparchies in the following order:

2017 – Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum

2018 – Eparchy of Muvattupuzha

2019 – Eparchy of Gurgaon/Delhi

2020 – Eparchy of Mavelikkara

2021 – Exarchate of St EphremKhadki

2022 – Eparchy of Mathandom on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Eparchy

### **Priestly Allowance**

The need of increasing the allowance given to our priests of the Eparchies was discussed. It was agreed that the Eparchies in Kerala shall give an allowance of Rs 10000 to the priests. This is not inclusive of the Holy Qurbano Stipend. In other places it is to be fixed according to the local situation. This is to be effective from January 2017.

### **Sharing from the Eparchies**

Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas and Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios shared with the HES the developments in their respective Eparchy and Exarchate and the Mission work that they undertake. In this context, it was pointed out the cooperation of the Bethany Fathers in this domain has to improve. Their participation in the work of evangelization is essential. However, at present, there is a lot of indifference and non-cooperation in this matter.

It was suggested that Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios and Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, as a team, on behalf of the Hierarchy or the HES, initiate a dialogue with the OIC with regard to their relationship with the Church.

### **Matters *Subsecreto***

His Beatitude informed the HES that inquiry usually done to ascertain the suitability of the proposed Episcopal candidates has to be done.

Since the Holy See has instituted a commission to study the case of Kananites, the matters discussed in our HES with regard to a canonical provision the Malankara Kananites shall be kept in abeyance.

### **Evaluation of the HES**

Some of the members of the HES pointed out that it is 12 years since the constitution of our HES and that it is good to have an evaluation of the same. Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios and Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos were asked to prepare the input session for such an evaluation and present it at the next HES.

### **Blessing of the churches at Ayappakkam and Padi in Chennai**

Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios, the Exarch of St Ephrem, informed the progress of the construction of the Churches at Ayappakkam and Padi in Chennai. He invited all the Bishops to the blessings and informed all, that HB the Catholicos has agreed to bless the Ayappakkam Church on 15 January 2017 and that at Padi on 11 and 12 February 2017.

### **Next HES**

The next HES, as usual shall in the second week of the Great Lent, that is, from Monday 6 to Friday 10 March 2017.

### **Conclusion**

His Beatitude the Catholicos gave the concluding message. HB highlighted the relevance of convoking the HES in the Eparchy of Puttur together with the 86<sup>th</sup> Reunion Anniversary and the *Sabhasanghamam*. This is also made possible through the cooperation of all the bishops of our Church through their prayer and financial support. HB also lauded the dedication of Most Rev. Mar Divannasios for his commitment and for all the preparation for the celebration of the event and for hosting the HES. He thanked all for their cooperation in the smooth conduct of the HES. HB also thanked Fr John the Director of KIDS for the arrangements. HB declared the HES closed.

Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios was asked to make the concluding prayers. HB the Catholicos imparted the apostolic blessing.

✠**Thomas Mar Koorilos**  
Secretary

✠**Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC**  
Chancellor