

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH
MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA

CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

TWENTY-SIXTH HOLY EPISCOPAL SYNOD OF SYNOD

07th -11th March 2022

REPORT

1. PRELIMINARY PART:

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the President of the HES convoked the 26th Ordinary Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at St. John Paul II Synod Hall at the Catholicate Centre, Pattom, Trivandrum from 07th March at 03.00 pm to 11th March 2022.

The Synod began with a prayer. The members present at the Synod were: HB Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos (President of the Synod), Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos (Secretary of the Synod), Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebius, Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Makarios, Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom (Emeritus), and Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios (Emeritus).

Most Rev. Philipos Mar Stephanos, the Bishop of USA and Canada was absent due to visa issues. The Holy Episcopal Synod accepted his absence legitimate.

Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, the Curia Bishop and the Chancellor recorded the minutes.

His Beatitude cordially welcomed the Fathers of the Synod. He said, “It is during the time of Great Lent we are gathered here to make an objective evaluation on our ecclesial life. As directed by Holy Father Pope Francis, we have been initiating various levels of discussions on the topic “Synodal Church” in our Eparchies and at the end we are asked to submit a report of the evaluation to the Holy See. He hoped that diocesan level meetings on Synodality was going on well and which would strengthen our communion, participation and mission endeavors.

HB also noted that besides the Covid pandemic, there were several discouraging and unfortunate events happening in our society and in the Church which harmfully affect the faith-life of our Church, the image of our ecclesiastical leaderships, sanctity of religious life and particularly the mission of the Church. The Church in Kerala is no exception. Vocation to religious life is decreasing sadly. Indeed, we have to face this situation with deep faith in the Risen Lord and his saving mission.

He also referred the Ukraine war unfortunate. With the Holy Father Pope Francis, he said, let us pray for the brethren who are suffering from the threat of war.

On behalf of the SMCC he conveyed our prayerful support to HB **Sviatoslav Shevchuk**, the Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halych.

By invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit and confiding the HES-in-session to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Beatitude declared the Synod open.

2. THE PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA

1. Inaugural Address & Welcome: His Beatitude
2. Evaluation on the Report
3. Submission of Catholicos Day Offerings
4. Presenting the Financial Reports – Procurators
5. *Subsecreto Items*
6. Meeting with Religious Superior Generals
7. Liturgical Matters
8. Ministry for the Young Couples in SMCC- Prospectus
9. Revision of CPCSMCC (Particular Law)
10. Precautions in dealing with Civil Matters (Land, Civil Cases etc.)
11. Evaluation of the Major Seminary Academic year
12. Meeting with the Seminarians
13. Meeting with the Seminary Staff
14. The administration of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia (Accounts).
15. New Secretaries to Synodal Commissions
16. Appointment of new Regents
17. Planning of common celebrations
15 July - Mar Ivanios Day,
Reunion- 20 September
18. Any other subjects with the approval of the President
19. Concluding Address of His Beatitude

The HES presented the agenda and it was unanimously agreed by the Fathers of the Synod.

The report of the Special Synod of the special session of the HES held from 14 to 15 December 2021 was elaborated further and passed unanimously.

Submission of the Catholicos Day Offerings

The Catholicos Day offerings from the Eparchies were submitted to His Beatitude, the Major Archbishop Catholicos as follows:

Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum	1,000,000.00
Archieparchy of Tiruvalla	500,000.00
Eparchy of Marthandom	300,000.00
Eparchy of Bathery	500,000.00
Eparchy of Muvattupuzha	200,000.00
Eparchy of Mavelikara	350,000.00
Eparchy of Pathanamthitta	400,000.00
Eparchy of Puttur	155,000.00
Exarchate of Khadki-Pune	100,000.00

Eparchy of Parassala	100,000.00
Eparchy of USA & Canada	\$12,000- / (8,71,524- /)

Apostolate of Accompanying New Families:

A paper on the apostolate that would assist new/young families to live the sacrament of marriage in its fullness was presented by HE Thomas Mar Eusebius. Its objectives, nature, activities, structure, coordination, role of local pastors, training of personals etc., were elaborated in the presentation. After a serious discussion on the matter it was decided that this new ministry would be added in the Synodal Commission as a new form of spiritual apostolate. Though it might help the Family apostolate in general, it was felt that this apostolate could remain part of the family but would have a separate Bishop and Secretary. The Synod advised HE Thomas Mar Eusebius to start functioning this ministry at the earliest.

Revision of the Code of Particular Canons of SMCC (CPCSMCC)

HB informed the Fathers of the Synod that now it was time to have a revision for the CPCSMCC since the Particular Code has completed 10 years and many new situations have come up during these years. Considering the present situation in Church and the society as a whole the norms needed a revisiting and if needed, we have to modify, amend and/or rearticulate existing norms in accordance with the new canonical and ecclesial developments. The Fathers of the Synod approved the suggestion and decided to form a committee to start the preliminary work. The following names are proposed for the revision of CPCSMCC:

1. HG Thomas Mar Koorilos – President
2. HE Yoohanon Mar Theodosius – Vice-president
3. Rev. Dr. John Kuttiyil – Secretary

Members:

1. Rev. Fr. Varghese Kuthineth (Pathanamthitta)
2. Rev. Fr. Varghese Valikodath (Pune)
3. Rev. Fr. Varghese Naduthala (Parassala)
4. Msgr. Yeldo Puthenkandathil (Puthur)
5. Rev. Fr. Jose Bright (Marthandam)
6. Msgr. Sebastain Keeppallil (Bathery)
7. Rev. Fr. Soju Paickattethu (Mavelikara)
8. Msgr. Isaac Parappallil (Tiruvalla)
9. Eparchy of Gurgaon
10. Eparchy of USA & Canada

Superiors General:

1. Very Rev. Fr. Mathai Kadavil
2. Rev. Sr. Dr. Ardra SIC
3. Rev. Sr. Dr. Lydiya DM

Advocates:

1. Adv. Jojo K. Abraham (Tvm)
2. Adv. Wilson Venad (Tvla)
3. Adv. T. P Elias (Bathery)
4. Adv. Paul Raj (Mart.)

5. Adv. Valsa John (Tvm.)

Others:

1. Mr. Jacob Punnoose IPS
2. Mrs. Suja Kaleeckal (Pta)
3. Mis. Angel (MCYM)
4. Mr. Sunny Powath (Puna)
5. Mrs. Teena Pullad

HB informed the Fathers of the Synod that he would inform the entire SMCC regarding the revision of CPCSMCC through a circular. The Committee was asked to prepare a draft of the revision and submit it during the September-2022 session of the Synod.

Liturgical Matters

HG Thomas Mar Koorilos distributed the drafts of following liturgical texts:

1. A Shorter Form of Hosana Text:

The Fathers of the Synod opined that the draft of the text could be used by the bishops as a trial for the forthcoming feast of Hosana in 2022. Information regarding this shorter version should go before finalization of the text and adding this to the Perunnal Text Book.

2. Draft of the text of the Second Marriage Ceremony
3. Draft of text of Disparity of Cult
4. Draft of text of Kallideel Kramam
5. Draft of Penkisso
6. Draft of the Myron Blessing (Church)

It was decided to print the psalms prepared by HE Abraham Mar Julios to be used during the Evening and Morning prayers.

It was felt that the Proto-Syncelli, Syncelli, Chancellors and Procurators of SMCC may be convened at the earliest to enlighten them about their specific rights and obligations related to their respective offices. HE Yoohanon Mar Theodosius was asked to prepare a draft for this purpose.

Subsecreto Session

New Appointments in Synodal Commissions

HE Thomas Mar Anthonios was appointed Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Social Apostolate, Dalits and Other Backward Classes. It was also decided to grant one more term to Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Parappallil as the Secretary of the Synodal Commission for Liturgy, and Fr. Samuel Pazhavorpadickal, the Assistant Secretary of Synodal Commission for Faith Formation.

Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt was appointed new secretary to the Synodal commission for Communication Media.

It was decided to have a new secretary for the Synodal Commission for Vocation, preferably from another Congregation, while Rev. Sr. Ardra SIC was

elected Superior General of Bethany Sisters. Rev. Sr. Anjali DM was appointed the new Secretary for Synodal Commission.

Sr. Therese SIC is appointed the secretary of the Synodal Commission for Health.

It was decided to consider *Suvisheshasangam* as another Apostolate in the Synodal Commission for Evangelization and its head is to be called President.

New Regents in Catholicate:

HB, Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop Catholicos of Trivandrum and HG Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Archbishop of Tiruvalla have consented to give the assistance of Regency Brothers to the Catholicate Centre during forthcoming year.

3. MAJOR SEMINARY:

Financial report of the Major Seminary from 1st April to 28th February 2022 was presented before the Synod by Very Rev. Fr. Sunny Kavuvila (Rector), with Rev. Fr. Raju Parukoor (Finance Officer). H B thanked Rev. Fr. Rector and welcomed Fr. Raju, the Finance Officer of the Seminary. After a serious evaluation on the report it was proposed by the Fathers of the Synod that there should be some income generating projects for the future running of the Seminary. Further, it was suggested that the existing resources of the Seminary should be managed properly and profitably, for instance land properties, agriculture, farming, diary, etc. The maintenance of the Philosophy Block was a necessity and the Rector and Procurator were asked to call for a new quotation.

The Fathers of the Synod visited Malankara Major Seminary and met with the staff and students together in the Chapel. After a short prayer by HB, Very Rev. Fr. Sunny Mathew Kavuvilayil, the Rector of the Seminary proposed the word of welcome.

HB started his exhortation by asking the following questions to the Seminarians: “Are you happy? What exactly makes you happy to be in the Seminary?” HB continued by stating that everyone should reflect upon these questions. If your happiness is based on peripheral aspects of this world it will not last. Indeed, we are undergoing the twelve years of formation in order to continue the evangelizing mission of our Lord Jesus Christ in this world. Like Jesus Christ, our Master, we have to inspire the people of God in words and deeds. If you cannot inspire this world, then who else will do this task. If you are happy, then only you can make others happy. The world now is under the threat of war. Ukraine is unjustly attacked by Russia and the Church in Ukraine is now in a pathetic situation. Together with Pope Francis let us pray for the people in Ukraine. My dear brothers, you are bright future of SMCC. I know, you will all be priests by 2030, while the SMCC celebrates its centenary of reunion event. On behalf of the Fathers of the Synod I wish you all fruitful and joyful life and I also take this occasion to thank wholeheartedly the Rector, staff, sisters and other members of the seminary community for their selfless service to the Church.

The meeting with the Staff began with a prayer by HB. His Beatitude welcomed the Rector and other members of the Staff to the meeting. Thereafter, the Rector shared a brief report of the activities of the Seminary during the academic year.

Proposals and decisions:

1. The final examination and eligibility for the Bachelor's degree in Theology: it was decided that Seminary would recommend to the Pontifical Urban University, Rome, only those students who secure at least 60% of marks both in comprehensive oral and written examinations in the first attempt.
2. It was decided to have a two day orientation program for the resident staff on 24-25 May 2022 in the Seminary.
3. After much reflection, it was decided that the first year Theology Students would arrive on 26th May 2022. The Orientation program and training in English for the new comers would be conducted at Catholicate Centre on 30th May 2022. The new academic year would start on 1st June 2022.
4. Though there is financial crisis, the maintenance of the Theology Block would be done in due time.
5. The meeting left the following points for the further deliberation of the HES:
 1. Name to be proposed for the Institute of Theology
 2. New Staff for Registrar's Office
 3. Appointment of a new Spiritual Father.
 4. Appointment of professors for Homiletics, Biblical Courses, Ecclesiology, Baptism and Confirmation, Syriac Patrology, Ecumenism, Pastoral Theology and Parish Administration.

Considering the financial necessity of the Major Seminary, the last Sunday of June of this year was fixed for making a special collection from all parishes of SMCC. On this day, the Staff and students of the Seminary would visit selected parishes in each eparchy and facilitate the project.

At the end of the session HB expressed his overall satisfaction in the general atmosphere of the Seminary.

Meeting with Religious Superiors:

Very Rev. Fr. Mathai Kadavil OIC, the Superior General of Bethany Ashram; Rev. Sr. Ardra SIC, Mother General-Bethany Convent; and Rev. Sr. Lydia DM, Mother General of Daughters of Mary were invited to meet the Fathers of the Synod on 8th March 2022. HB wholeheartedly welcomed all the three newly elected Superiors General and thanked them for their kind presence. In his opening words HB said that what we expect from the Religious Congregations in SMCC is communion, and communication. Pontifical status and its juridical impacts should be interpreted and practiced in accordance with mind and prerogatives of SMCC. Mutual support and collaboration are essential for continuing the mission of our Lord Jesus in this world. By the grace of God, the present leadership is praiseworthy in their ecclesial understanding, in their attachment towards SMCC and concern for everyone. May God bless you and increase religious vocations in our Church so that we can work together for the building up of the Church.

The Superiors General thanked HB and the Fathers of the Synod for inviting them in one of the sessions of the HES. Deliberations, observations and proposals:

1. Ready to participate and cooperate with the evangelizing mission of SMCC.
2. Communion and Communications have to be improved among religious, and also with ecclesiastical leaderships.
3. Missions outside Kerala are to be strengthened.
4. Centenary of Reunion should have an ecclesial dimension in all its thoughts and practice.
5. Support is needed in the promotion of religious vocation.
6. Healthy support is warranted against the unjust attack of media against religious life.
7. Educational institutions run by both the eparchies and the religious are to be renewed both internally and externally.
8. Synodality is to be established in mission and vision.
9. Safe environment activities are to be improved and modified.
10. A Cell for religious shall be established in each eparchy in order strengthens mutual relationship between the Eparchy and Religious Congregations.
11. Mobile Mission work has to be reinstated.
12. In order to use in common formation houses, English version of the prayers of the hours are to be published.
13. A diocesan level vocation office will be good for vocation promotion.
14. Responding to the request of the Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Congregation, the HES suggested that a prayer could be initiated during his 40th memorial (2023).
15. The feeling of the Mother Rite has to be strengthened among Religious and be careful mal-adaptation with other extreme types of organizations.

Presentation of Finance Officers

HB stated that this is the first time that we have invited the respective Procurators of each Eparchy to present the current financial status. Except Eparchies USA-Canada and Gurgaon all other 10 Eparchies are informed about this earlier. Finance Officers are asked to present a financial status of the Eparchy with income and expenditure during the period 1st April 2021 to 28th February 2022 in the given format. Each one was allotted 30 minutes. This will help us to know the exact financial position of Eparchies, its liabilities, pledges etc. An objective evaluation would help us to be more careful and transparent in your financial transactions.

The following Finance Officers presented the financial report of their respective Eparchies: Fr. Thomas Kayyalackal (Trivandrum), Fr. Philip PayyampalliL (Tiruvalla), Fr. James Mulackavilayil (Bathery), Fr. Satheesh Kumar (Marthandam), Fr. Michel Vadakkeveeetil (Muvattupuzha), Fr. Robert Palavila (Mavelikara), Fr. Jins Meppurathu (Pathanamthitta), Fr. John Kunnathethu (Puthur), Fr. Bernard Valiyavila (Parassala) and Fr. John Achuthaparambil (Pune).

There was a fruitful evaluation and discussion on each presentation.

A suggestion from the Finance Officers: It would be better that during the bifurcations, the assets shall be settled in accordance with civil norms of the country too.

Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

As per the agenda, the financial status of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia during the period 1st April 2021 to 28th February 2022 was presented by Fr. Thomas Madukammoottil. The report was passed unanimously.

Decisions:

1. The vehicle (car) belonging to the Curia is 15 years old and under repair. The HES allowed replacing it in consultation with his HB.
2. The Chapel of the Curia is in dire need of repair and maintenance and the permission was granted.
3. A meditation cum Prayer Room can be established in one of the rooms of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios at the Catholicate Centre. It is meant for the common people to meditate.

Decisions on Alienation

a. Alienation of Properties of an Eparchy or Parish

For a just cause, with the consent of the Eparchial Finance Council and after necessary consultation in the Eparchial Council, an Eparchial Bishop can alienate a property or aggregate of properties worth Rupees **five crores (50 Million) only within a period of two years**. Any alienation that exceeds this amount needs the consent of the Holy Episcopal Synod.

For a just cause, with the consent of the Eparchial Finance Council, and after necessary consultation in the Eparchial Council, an Eparchial Bishop can avail an aggregate loan of Rupees ten crores only within a period of two years. If the aggregate amount of loan of an Eparchy or Parish exceeds ten crores rupees (100 Million) the Eparchial Bishop needs the approval of the Holy Episcopal Synod.

b. Alienation of Property of Institution of the Eparchy:

For a just cause, at the request of the General Body of a Trust or Society and with the consent of the Finance Council of the Eparchy, necessary consultation in the Eparchial Council, an Eparchial Bishop can permit to alienate a property or aggregate of properties of an Institution worth Rupees Ten Crores (10 Million) only within period of two years. Any alienation that exceeds this amount needs the approval of the Holy Episcopal Synod.

For a just cause, with the consent of the Eparchial Finance Council, and after necessary consultation in the Eparchial Council, an Eparchial Bishop can permit an Institution of a Trust or Society of the Eparchy, to avail an aggregate loan of Rupees ten crores (10 Million) only within a period of two years. If the aggregate amount of the loan of the Institution of the Trust or Society exceeds Rupees ten crores (10 Million) the Eparchial Bishop needs the approval of the Holy Episcopal Synod.

Canonization of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios:

HB informed the Fathers of the Synod that now the Historical Verification of the Documents related to the cause of Mar Ivanios is successfully over. The verification of Theological documents is now going on. Let us pray fervently seek the mediation of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios for entire canonization process.

Civil Issues Connected with the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta:

An Episcopal committee was constituted to enquire the entire issues connected with the land property at Ambasamudram and the following are its members:

HE Joshua Mar Ignathios (Convener)

HE Vincent Mar Paulose (Member)

HE Yoohanon Mar Theodosius (Member)

Year of Prayer -2022

The present atmosphere both in the Church and Society is very sensitive, upsetting, and deteriorating in several aspects. Faith, morals and justice are very much affected during these days. Hence HES decided to have an intense year of prayer and renewal in the SMCC commencing from April 2022 to April 2023. Mode of practice of the aforesaid year will be communicated to the faithful by HB through a circular.

5. GENERAL SESSION

Proposals and Decision

1. After a discussion on increasing the allowance of the priests, the HES has taken the following decision: An increase of Rs. 1000/- shall be given to all priests who are in active parish pastoral ministry. Those priests who are attached to certain institutions but engaging in parish ministry are not included in this group.
2. The Reunion Day Celebration of the year 2022 will be in the Archdiocese of Tiruvalla on September 21. It should be a very simple and moderate one day celebration consisting Holy Qurbano; MCA, MCYM and Suviseshasangam gatherings.
3. The next extraordinary session of the Holy Episcopal Synod will be on 20th September 2022 at Tiruvalla.
4. Depending on the pandemic and other social situation we will decide the mode of Mar Ivanios Day. Anyhow usual programs will be there on July 15 at Trivandrum.
5. It is proposed to give proper training to our Altar Boys.
6. This year Malankara Bible Orientation Course (MBOC) will be conducted offline. The Text is under preparation.

Conclusion

His Beatitude, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos mentioned in his concluding address as follows: “Recently there happened lot of unfortunate incidents in our ecclesial and personal life. We can face all these situations only by deepening in the redeeming love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our blessed Mother is our consolation and

the tomb of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios and the Fathers of the Church is a place of everyday relief. Let us thank God for this Session of the Synod and its success.”

“My dear brother Bishops, I really appreciate your love, concern and collaboration with me and it gives me strength to move forward and work for His kingdom without fear. Let us pray and bless each other and thus build up our unity as a witness to the entire Church. I wish every success in your pastoral ministry. May God bless us all!”

His Beatitude declared this 26th HES closed. With a short prayer HB imparted the Apostolic blessing.

✠ Thomas Mar Koorilos
HES Secretary.

✠ Yoohanon Mar Theodosius
Chancellor.