

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH
MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA
CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

Special Synod
(14-15 December 2021)

REPORT

1. PRELIMINARY PART:

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the Father and Head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, convoked the Special Session of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at St. John Paul II Synod Hall at the Catholicate Centre, Pattom, Trivandrum. The Synod Fathers gathered in the Synod Hall on 14 at 9.00 pm to 15 December 2021 at 1.00 pm.

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 Covid situation. The Holy Episcopal Synod accepted his absence as 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 because God’s immense providence that we could gather together in this Special Session of the Synod, amidst of various disappointing factors especially the variants Covid pandemic. Recently, there are several discouraging events took place in the Catholic Church and outside the Church which permeated negative energy all around. Let us be united with Our Lord more fervently and pray for the

Church and the entire society. This Session of the Synod is organized in order to impart deeper insights in our liturgical practices and on the theme ‘Synodality’.”

“Eparchy of Marthandom is celebrating its Silver Jubilee during this year and on behalf of the Fathers of the Synod, I take this occasion to wish all the best to Most Vincent Mar Paulos, priests, religious and faithful. Indeed, the Eparchy of Marthandom is the “missionary face of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church”.

“The historical visit of His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews III Catholicos of the Malankara Orthodox Church at the Major Archbishop’s House, Trivandrum on 26 November 2021, can be considered as a new opening in our relationship with the Malankara Orthodox Church”.

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. Orientation on Liturgy and its Praxis : Fr. Baby Varghese – Prof. M.D. Seminary, Kottayam.
3. Practical information regarding Thookasa ; Msgr. Isaac Parappally
4. Discussion on Synodality
5. *Subsecreto* Items
6. St. Mary’s Major Seminary
7. Other relevant topics with the approval of the President
8. Concluding Address of His Beatitude.

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

Rev. Fr. Baby Varghese a renowned theologian of the Orthodox Church took class on “Liturgy, the centre and zenith of Ecclesial life; Bishop is the guardian of this apostolic patrimony”. HB welcomed him and HG Mar Koorilos introduced him. After the class there was an evaluation on the topic.

Afterwards Msgr. Isaac Parappallil, the Secretary of the Liturgical Commission conducted a discussion on the topic “Thookasa- Common deviations in the liturgical practices. At the end of the session there was a fruitful discussion on the concerned topic.

The topic of Synodality further discussed and it is decided that each diocese has to submit a brief report to HB by the end of June 2022. The modality of collecting the report on the said theme can be decided by each Bishop basing on the documents issued by the Apostolic See.

Considering the urgent request of Mar Stephanos regarding the urgency of Liturgical Text in administering the Disparity of Cult Marriage in SMCC, after a short discussion, His Beatitude asked HG Mar Koorilos to prepare a draft for the same.

The following proposals of Fr. Antony Kakkanatt, the Secretary of *Suvishesha Sangam* took for discussion:

1. In continuation of the topic “Grace-filling Families” of the previous Ecclesial Assembly of SMCC, it would be better to start a program to accompany and assist our newly wedded couple.
2. In view of imparting a spiritual renewal among our youth, it would be better start a new movement among the members of MCYM.

After a serious discussion on the aforementioned topics it is decided as follows:

1. It is the right time to start a ministry for the Young Couples in SMCC. The purpose of this ministry is to accompany them in prayer, guidance, and counseling. Young couples means that those who are married within the period of 10 years. The Association needs a Chairman Bishop and a Priest Secretary. Mar Eusebius was unanimously elected as Chairman and Fr. Thomas Madukummoottil was nominated as Secretary. It is the duty of the Chairman to work on this new project and to prepare a long term program for the same. Mar Eusebius is asked to present findings in the forthcoming HES.
2. Regarding the Spiritual Animation of Youth, it is decided as follows: At first, HE Vincent Mar Paulos the Chairman of Youth Commission has to study the matter seriously. In consultation with pertinent persons, and bodies

in the Church, he is asked to present practical suggestions regarding the same during the forthcoming Synod.

3. MAJOR SEMINARY:

HE Vincent Mar Paulos, the Chairman of Seminary Commission informed the Synod that the term Fr. Louis Charuvial Puthenveedu as Procurator of the Major Seminary is going to finish by the end of this academic year and thus we have to find out a proper person in his absence. Several names are proposed by the Fathers of the Synod and it is decided that a final decision will be taken later.

Afresh, the urgency of the maintenance work of the Seminary was brought again for discussion by the Chairman. The estimate of the proposed maintenance work is rupees 35 lakhs. Considering its urgency, it is decided to give permission to take the needed amount from the Fixed Deposit of the Seminary. But the said amount has to be replaced in the FD by the authorities of the Seminary without much delay. The Fathers of the Synod proposed that they can collect funds from individuals, parishes, benefactors, old students etc. It is also proposed by the Synod to use the resources of the Seminary properly and profitably, for instance land properties, agriculture, farming etc.

The term of Fr. Kannankulam is going to finish by the end of this academic year and it is suggested to talk with him about this before taking a final decision.

The Fathers of the Synod unanimously consented to the proposal of the Chairman to buy more computers for the students of the Seminary.

Considering today's vulnerable social situation, it is proposed that Bishops and Presbys should be more vigilant in administering the sacraments especially the initial sacraments (e.g. Baptism).

4. *SUBSECRETO* SESSION

5. GENERAL SESSION

HB informed the Synod that HE Thomas Mar Eusebius is the new nominated member of the Permanent Synod.

As per the request of HB Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos, Rev. Fr. Benedict Perumuttathu, from the Eparchy of Mavelikkara is appointed as the Pastoral Coordinator of SMCC in Rome and the Holy See has given him the title “Procurator of the SMCC at the Holy See”. He will be residing at Collegio Damasceno in Rome for three years.

Fr. Jins Meppurathu is appointed as new Ecclesial Director of MCYM.

It is decided to consecrate Myron for the entire Church during the year 2023.

Next Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod will be held at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, during the second week of Great Lent; ie. March 7-11, 2022.

HE Vincent Mar Paulos informed the Synod that by God’s grace, the Eparchy of Marthandom has a small property at Peruvilai, Nagercoil which is very much connected with the life of Blessed Devasahayam Pillai.

4. MEETING WITH THE ADMINISTRATOR AND PROCURATOR OF GURGAON

HB welcomed Very Rev. Fr. Vianayand OIC, the Administrator of the Eparchy of Gurgaon and Rev. Fr. Toju Philip, the Procurator.

Very Rev. Fr. Vianayand OIC, the Administrator of the Eparchy of Gurgaon presented a brief report regarding the present situation of the Eparchy and Rev. Fr. Toju Philip presented the financial statement.

At first, Fr. Vinayand thanked HB and all the Fathers of the Synod for their prayers and constant support to the Eparchy. He added that although the fathers of the Eparchy are doing well, the missionary work is seriously affected due to the sad demise of Aboon Mar Barnabas. Lack of personnel and financial liabilities are major blockades.

In his financial report Fr. Toju remarked there are three financial structures in the Eparchy: Society, Trust, and Outside Kerala Trust. There are assets and the same time huge liabilities.

There were serious discussions regarding the present situation of Gurgaon. HB concluded the session with following suggestions and decisions:

1. For the time being each Diocese and Religious Communities have to pay the allowance of their respective priests working in Gurgaon.
2. The Administrator has to keep the status quo of the Eparchy. He is not allowed to enter in to any further financial commitment.
3. The Administrator and priests have to continue the mission work with a new spirit.
4. It is the duty of the Administrator, Procurator, Priests, Religious and Faithful to take all measures to keep the safety of all assets/land property of the Eparchy.
5. Let us prayerfully wait for the decision of the Holy See regarding future prospectus of the Eparchy.

Conclusion

In his concluding address, His Beatitude, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos, reminded the HES of the possible visit of Pope Francis to India. It would be a great blessing for our nation. There is no further information regarding the visit and let us wait for the same.

HB thanked all the members of the HES for their dedication, support and collaboration in the building of the SMCC. Considering the Covid pandemic situation and other discouraging events in the society, HB reminded the Fathers of the Synod to be united with our Lord more fervently and pray incessantly for the Church and for the entire mankind.

His Beatitude declared this Special Session of the Synod closed. With a short prayer HB imparted the Apostolic blessing.

✠ Thomas Mar Koorilos
HES Secretary.

✠ Yoohanon Mar Theodosius
Chancellor.

