

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH
MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA

CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

Extraordinary Session of the Holy Episcopal Synod

(20th September 2022)

REPORT

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the President of the Synod, convoked an extraordinary session of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at Marygiri Bishop's House, Tiruvalla, on 20th September 2022 from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, the eve of the 92nd Reunion Day celebrations. The Synod began with a prayer invoking the special assistance of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Blessed Virgin Mary.

The members present in 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, Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Makarios, and Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, Most Rev. Antony Mar Silvanos, Most Rev. Mathews Mar Polycarpus and Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios, the Bishop Emeritus.

Most Rev. Philipos Mar Stephanos, the Bishop of USA and Canada, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebius, Bishop of Parassala and Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom the Bishop Emeritus, were absent due to pertinent issues and their absences were reckoned legitimate.

Most Rev. Antony Mar Silvanos, the Curia Bishop of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, recorded the minutes.

His Beatitude cordially welcomed all the Bishops of the Synod. His Beatitude mentioned about the importance of the theme: Synodal Church in the context of the Ordinary Synod of Bishops in 2023. The call of his Holiness Pope Francis for Synodality in the Church marks a new epoch in the history of the Catholic Church. To become truly synodal means to walk together as people of faith. Synodality is nothing but the way of being the Church. Since the Holy Spirit inspires all the faithful, the Church should listen to all the people of God and should accompany them. The whole Church is walking together to the final destination as a pilgrim Church. The first Council of Jerusalem was a model for a Synodal Church. After the Council the apostles said: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials" (Acts 15:28). HB recognized the KCBC renewal program from 2022 to 2025 in this context of Synodality of the Church.

Though the renewal program of the Church was blocked during the covid pandemic we are gradually overcoming these problems. His Beatitude said that the Synod

discuss the particular law of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in the morning session and in the afternoon the Synod deals with other matters till 4.30 pm. All the Bishops decided to visit the Carmelite Cloistered Convent at Tiruvalla after the Synod as they celebrate their platinum jubilee of establishment in Tiruvalla.

His Beatitude congratulated H.G. Thomas Mar Koorilos for his Episcopal Silver Jubilee in the name of HES.

His Beatitude welcomed the new Bishops Antony Mar Silvanos and Mathews Mar Polycarpus to the Episcopal Synod.

His Beatitude informed the HES that he has participated in the 92nd anniversary of Reunion Movement which was celebrated on 17.09.2022 in Sharjah. The Syro-Malankara Catholic community gave a solemn farewell to Most Rev. Paul Hinder the Apostolic Vicar of Gulf Region and they gave a meaningful contribution for his further services. The new Apostolic Vicar Most Rev. Paolo Martinelli was welcomed during the ceremony. His Beatitude expressed his joy about the enthusiasm and the commitment of our people in Gulf Region.

Then the Synod went to the items in the Agenda, especially updation of the Particular Law of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Some of the Major Decisions:

The Secretary of the Synod presented two important items for decision. The questions were regarding the bishops. Thus the first matter was:

1. The last Will of the Bishops. The Bishops felt that all bishops should write their last will in favour of the Eparchy in which they serve or from where they retire. The Eparchy has the obligation to take care of the Bishop during his entire life (especially in retirement life provided he resides in the place agreed by the resident bishop). The matter was proposed by H.Ex. Joshua Mar Ignathios and seconded by H. Ex. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius. All agreed unanimously and it was passed.
2. The next item was the participation of the retired Bishops in the HES to be left to the personal decision. The retired Bishops do not have voting rights. The proposal was made by H.Ex. Joshua Mar Ignathios and seconded by H.Ex. Joseph Mar Thomas and unanimously agreed by all bishops.

After this the Secretary presented the corrections or updation of the canons in the CPCSMCC which needed revision or thorough redrafting or additions or fresh new norms. The drafting committee did the revision and revisiting with the help of experts.

The corrections or updations, prepared by the drafting committee were discussed one by one. It was felt that many canons needed further fine tuning and the HES authorized His Grace Thomas Mar Koorilos to do the necessary and present it in the next Synod.

- During the discussion, the HES suggested the need of a pastoral manual which could clarify many of the liturgical, canonical and pastoral issues.
- The HES suggested to make available the Baptism Register in English.
- His Beatitude shared in the Synod that many priest do not write the bination in their Holy Mass book and their monthly presentation of the Holy Mass chit. His

Beatitude said that each Eparchial Bishop should give proper guidance to the priests regarding this matter.

- The bination or trination of the Holy Mass should be registered properly in the Holy Mass book and in the monthly Holy Mass Chit.

Subsecreto

In the afternoon session Bishop Vincent Mar Paulos, Chairman of the Seminary Commission, informed that the electrical work of the Major Seminary need maintenance and the HES gave the permission to do so. Bishop Vincent Mar Paulos opined that the Procurator in the Major Seminary needs a regency brother as his assistant. The HES did not approve of this proposal.

Rev. Fr. Varghese Vilayil is proposed to the Seminary as Spiritual Director.

Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios, the Bishop of the Eparchy of Gurgaon, Delhi, presented the financial crisis in his Eparchy. The present debt is Rs. 73 Crores. Various proposals were discussed and the final decision was given by the HES are:

1. A Trust could be formed so that the members of the trust can contribute a reasonable amount of the money.
 2. To sell the property and the school building to pay back the debt.
 3. The earlier decision of the Synod to pay the honorarium of those priests from the respective home Dioceses were once again reiterated.
- Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Makarios, Bishop of Puttur, presented the issue of the liturgical text in Kannada which could not be published during the visit of His Beatitude. HES suggested that the eparchial bishop after a thorough study may present the text again.

Appointments:

- Most Rev. Yoochanon Mar Theodosius was appointed Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Family.
- Most Rev. Antony Mar Silvanos was appointed Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Evangelization and *Suviseshasangham*.
- Most Rev. Antony Mar Silvanos was appointed Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Media and Communication.
- Most Rev. Mathews Mar Polycarpus was appointed Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Youth.
- Most Rev. Mathews Mar Polycarpus was appointed Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Health.
- Most Rev. Antony Mar Silvanos suggested the possibility of an ongoing formation of the clergy of the whole Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in Catholicate Centre from the year 2023 to 2025 in relation to the Centenary of the Reunion Movement in 2030. H. Ex. also informed that the marriage bureau of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church which was under the Synodal commission for Family was not functioning for the last three years and the Catholicate is ready to take up the

responsibility. HES accepted both suggestions and entrusted the Curia Bishop to do the needful under the guidance of HB.

HES decided that the next Ordinary Episcopal Synod will be held on 27 February to 4 March 2023.

Conclusion

After thanking the Fathers of the Synod, HB expressed his great satisfaction for the arrangement of the Synod and for the Reunion Celebrations in Tiruvalla. He invited all to join for the Jubilee Dinner at Thirumoolapuram. His Beatitude declared the Extraordinary HES closed at 4.30 pm, with a short prayer, HB imparted the Apostolic Blessing.

✠ Thomas Mar Koorilos
HES Secretary.

✠ Antony Mar Silvanos
Chancellor