

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

**Extraordinary Holy Episcopal Synod  
(10 March 2007)**

**REPORT**

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos convoked an Extraordinary Synod at the Synod Hall of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia in the Catholicate Centre, Pattom, Trivandrum on 10 March 2007. It was the day of the Episcopal Ordination of Rt. Rev. Remban Chacko Aerath OIC who was ordained after the name Jacob Mar Barnabas. At 3 p.m., all the Synod Fathers - His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos (President of the Synod), Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos (Secretary of the Synod), Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom, Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos, Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas and Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas – assembled at the Synod Hall.

His Beatitude, Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis welcomed all the Bishops for the Extraordinary Synod. He paid glowing tributes to all his venerable predecessors, especially to His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios of happy memory, the First Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. He welcomed Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas to the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. He thanked the Holy Father, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and other offices of the Holy See and the Apostolic Nuncio in India, for taking this initial step towards the pastoral care of the Malankara Catholics in India, outside the territorium proprium of the Church. He congratulated the new Bishop for his eminent qualities and spirit of dedication to the Church. He reminded the Synod Fathers the historical importance of this first Synod, he convoked. He said that the immediate purpose of the Holy Episcopal Synod was to deal with some of the important canonical requisites of our Ecclesial life that arose due to his enthronement as Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, namely, the need to fill up the vacancy of the Metropolitan See of Tiruvalla, to fill up the vacancy in the Permanent Synod, to effect certain changes in the chairmanship of the Synodal Commissions, etc. He also drew the attention of the Synod Fathers to the canonical arrangements necessary for the pastoral care of the faithful outside the territorium proprium of the Church in the light of the new canonical developments. Requesting the whole hearted and prayerful support of his brother-Bishops, he declared the Synod open.

**The Presentation of the Agenda**

His Beatitude then presented the agenda of the Synod:

1. Inaugural Address
2. Presentation and Approval of the Agenda
3. Reports and Decisions of the Fourth Ordinary Synod, Extraordinary Synod (held on 23 November 2006) and the First Holy Synod of Election.
4. Representatives to the Permanent Synod
5. Construction of the Catholicate Centre.
6. Common Celebrations (July 15, September 20)
7. Canonical Provision for the Vacant See.
8. Synodal Commissions
9. Approval of the Canonical Petition of the Cause of Canonization of Mar Ivanios
10. Matter subsecreto
11. Concluding Message

The agenda was approved with the addition of the following topics: The Patron's Day of the Catholicos, Organisation of Ecclesial Life outside the Territorium Proprium in India and New Appointments in St. Mary's Malankara Seminary.

Reports and Decisions of the Fourth Holy Episcopal Synod, Extraordinary Synod (23 November 2006) and the First Holy Episcopal Synod of Election

The Reports of the Fourth Ordinary Synod, the Extraordinary Synod held on 23 November 2006 and the First Holy Synod of Election were read out by Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Secretary of the Synod and Fr. Antony Valiyavilayil OIC, the Chancellor. After clarifications and corrections, the reports were passed at the proposal of Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, supported by Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas.

### **The Patron's Day of the Catholicos**

The members of the Synod suggested that it would be good to fix a particular day as the feast of the patron of the Catholicos. Which day will the Catholicos celebrate as his Patron's Day - the feast of St. Basil or St. Clement? It was decided that the name "Baselios" being the titular name of the Catholicos, the feast of St. Basil on 1 January shall be celebrated as the Feast of the Patron Saint of the Catholicos of our Church. However, taking into account the social festivity of the New Year Day, it shall be celebrated on 2 January every year.

### **Representatives to the Permanent Synod**

The place of His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, who was a member of the Permanent Synod, became vacant on his enthronement as Major Archbishop-Catholicos. To fill in the place, the Synod elected Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, the Eparchial Bishop of Mavelikara. The Synod also elected the substitute members of the Permanent Synod as per canon 115 §3. Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas and Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar

Timotheos, who according to the order of precedence stated here, shall substitute the absent members of the Permanent Synod when its meeting would be convoked.

### **New Appointments at St. Mary's Malankara Seminary**

The Synod deliberated on the appointment of the new staff members in the Malankara Seminary as most of the office-bearers had completed their stipulated term of office. The Rector Rev. Fr. George Kalayil, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology Rev. Fr. Philip Chemapakassery, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy Rev. Fr. Thomas Naickamparambil and the Procurator Rev. Fr. P.T. George had completed their term of three years or more in office. The present Spiritual Father, Rev. Fr. Jose Kadakampallil had to leave the seminary as he was appointed Rector of the Minor Seminary of the newly erected Eparchy of Mavelikara. The Synod, after elaborate evaluation and discussion, proposed to appoint Rt. Rev. Corepiscopo Thomas Thannickakuzhy as Rector, Rev. Fr. Stephen Thottathil as Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Rev. Fr. Jose Mariadas Padipurackal OIC as Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Rev. Fr. Daniel Kulangara as Procurator and Rev. Fr. Mathew Pallathumuriyil as Spiritual Father.

The Holy Episcopal Synod also was of opinion that Priests from other Churches could be appointed on the teaching staff and as Spiritual Father, if need arises.

### **Organisation of Ecclesial Life outside the Territorium Proprium in India**

How to organise the parishes and communities in the Extra-territorial Regions of the Church in India was a major discussion in the Synod. It was observed that the canonical status of our communities remains the same even though an Apostolic Visitor, with Episcopal character, is appointed by the Holy See. In order to organise our communities outside the territorium proprium, the Apostolic Visitor shall take over the work done by the Ecclesiastical Co-ordinator, Very Rev. Fr. John Berchmans OIC. In all practical purposes, the churches, institutions and other entities outside the territorium proprium, which are now built up by the Eparchies and the churches built up by the Order of the Imitation of Christ (Bethany Ashram), should be combined into a single unit under the authority of the Apostolic Visitor. The Priests, Religious and the Laity with all their apostolic activities for the Malankara Catholics in India outside the territorium proprium form a single unit of ecclesial activities under the guidance of the Apostolic Visitor. The Priests now working in this region and are incardinated in the particular Eparchies maintain their status quo, but they are entrusted to the Apostolic Visitor. They should work under him for the period of time agreed upon by the respective Eparchial Bishop and the Apostolic Visitor. Similarly, the Priests of Bethany Ashram, who work in parishes and mission centres too are entrusted to the Apostolic Visitor. All institutions, which are now managed by the Eparchies, shall be entrusted to the Apostolic Visitor. Their legal ownership shall be transferred to the Apostolic Visitor in due course, after ascertaining their assets and liabilities. To discuss and settle the ownership and management of the churches

established and built up by Bethany Ashram, His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos and Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios will meet the Superior General and the Provincial Superiors of Bethany Ashram on 14 March 2007.

### **The Construction of the Catholicate Centre**

It is expected that the new building of St. Aloysius Minor Seminary, which now functions at the site allotted for the Catholicate Centre, will be completed and blessed in April 2007. The construction of the Catholicate Centre, which is to house the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, could begin after that.

It was proposed that the amount to be realised from the common property of the seminary of the Catholic Churches of Kerala at Kakkanadu, could be used as a reserve fund for the Malankara Major Seminary and the Catholicate Centre. One third of the amount could be used for the construction of the Catholicate Centre.

### **Common Celebrations (15 July, 20 September)**

In the discussion that followed, it was decided that 15 July 2007 being Sunday, the ecclesial-level-commemoration of Mar Ivanios shall be held on Saturday, 14 July 2007. Hence the Padayâtra from Ranni-Perunadu to the tomb of Mar Ivanios at Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram shall commence on 9 July 2007.

Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, the Bishop of Bathery, informed the Synod that the preparations for the celebration of the 77th Reunion Day, the Platinum Jubilee of the reconstitution of the Malankara Hierarchy in the Catholic Communion and the 125 years of the birth of Archbishop Mar Ivanios are progressing. The celebrations will be held at Kodenchery near Thamarassery.

### **Canonical Provision for the Vacant Sees**

The next item on the agenda was the canonical provision for the vacant Archiepiscopal See of Tiruvalla. In the discussion on the modalities of the provision, it was decided:

1. to make immediate provision for the vacant Metropolitan See of Tiruvalla
2. to transfer a senior Bishop to the vacant Metropolitan See of Tiruvalla

In the election by secret ballot, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, Bishop of Muvattupuzha was elected. It was decided that the name shall be intimated to the Apostolic Nuncio, so that he would arrange for its simultaneous announcement in Rome, Trivandrum and Tiruvalla.

An Eparchial Bishop is to be provided to the See of Muvattupuzha when the same becomes vacant due to the transfer of Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos from the See. Hence the Synod, according to the norms of the Holy Canons, prepared a list of candidates for Episcopacy.

According to CCEO c 182 §3, the Catholicos is to transmit the list to the Apostolic See to obtain the assent of the Roman Pontiff.

### **Synodal Commissions**

Because of the changes in the Episcopate, there arose the need for a few changes in the Chairmanship of the Synodal Commissions. His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis was proposed to chair the Synodal Commission for Seminary Formation, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos to chair the Synodal Commission for Liturgy and Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas to chair the Synodal Commission for Evangelisation. The proposals were accepted

### **Approval of the Canonical Petition of the Cause of Canonisation of Mar Ivanios**

The Catholicos informed the Synod Fathers that he will pursue the deliberations of the Fourth Holy Episcopal Synod on the cause of canonization of Archbishop Mar Ivanios and the steps taken by His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios of venerable memory, in the acceptance of the Petition of the Cause. He also said that the announcement of the acceptance of the Petition shall be made on the day of his commemoration. Thereafter, Archbishop Mar Ivanios shall be called "Servant of God". The Synod Fathers endorsed the decision of the Catholicos.

### ***Matter Sub-secreto***

The matters posted under this on the agenda were discussed and finalised.

### **Conclusion**

The other topics on the agenda were deferred to the next Holy Episcopal Synod. It was agreed upon that the next and the fifth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod shall be convoked from 3 p.m. on 9 October to 12 October 2007. His Beatitude, the Catholicos concluded the Synod with a call to a renewed dedication and renewal of life as we approach the end of the great lent. He thanked the Synod Fathers for their participation in the Synod in spite of the heavy schedule of the day. The Synod ended at 8 p.m. with the prayer and apostolic blessing by His Beatitude the Catholicos.

**✠Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos**  
Secretary

**Fr. Antony Valiyavilayil OIC**  
Chancellor