



MALANKARA SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Circular issued by Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios,
Chairman, Synodal Commission for Laity
on the occasion of the Laity Day 2025**

Laity Day

Most Rev. Bishops, Rt. Rev. Corepiscopoi, Rambans, Reverend Fathers,
Religious and dear Brothers and sisters in the Lord!

The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church is celebrating the Laity Day this year on Sunday, 4th May 2025. I extend my prayerful wishes of this Day, as we specially commemorate the call and mission of the Laity.

The Holy Church, in which we live out the Christian faith, is organized and guided in a wonderfully diverse way as it is divinely instituted. “For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Romans 12: 4-5).

Therefore, there is only one chosen people of God. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph 4.5). Its members who are newly born in Christ have the same glory, for, “there is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28). Thus, although everyone in the Church is not travelling in the same way, everyone is called to holiness.

Lay participation and the sharing of responsibilities make the ministry of the Church especially meaningful. The apostolate of the Laity is their participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself.

The laity are particularly called to present the Church and make it a realization in diverse areas and situations. Thus, all the Laity, in accordance

with the gifts they have received, each according to the measure of these gifts they have received (Eph 4.7), serve as witnesses and active instruments of the Church's mission.

While the laity are engaged in their worldly affairs, they are equally capable and obligated to provide valuable service in the evangelization of the world. They are called to cooperate actively in the expansion and growth of the Kingdom of God. For this mission, every lay person must be a witness to the resurrection and a sign pointing to the living God.

All are obliged to enrich the world with spiritual fruits, both individually and collectively, according to their capacity (Galatians 5:22). Lay brothers and sisters have the duty to spread throughout the world the spirit that animates the poor, the meek, and the peacemakers (Mt.5:3-9) those whom the Lord declares blessed in the Gospel.

The laity receives their right and duty to be apostles from their unity with the Head, Christ the Messiah. Incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are commissioned by the Lord Himself. They are anointed into the royal priesthood and made part of the holy nation (1 Peter 2:4–10).

Since the Messiah, sent by the Father, is the source and fountain of all apostolicity in the Church, it is evident that the fruitfulness of the lay apostolate depends on their union with Christ.

The familial responsibilities or other worldly engagements of the laity need not hinder their spiritual life. As St. Paul teaches: “And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Col 3:17).

This kind of life requires constant practice of faith, hope, and love. Only in the light of faith and through meditation on the Word of God—in whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28)—can we encounter God and seek His will in all events.

The Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is the perfect model for the spiritual and apostolic life of lay persons. While living in the world, Mary led an

ordinary life, faithfully carrying out the domestic duties of family life. Strongly united with her Son, Jesus, she cooperated in the work of the Savior in a unique and profound way. Now, assumed into Heaven, Mary continues to protect her children with her motherly love. Let us entrust our lives and our fields of work to the powerful protection of the Most Holy Mother of God.

The laity carry out their mission while actively engaging in various fields such as family life, education, employment, industry, organizational leadership, politics, and community service. They give tangible witness to Christ in all areas of society where Christians interact.

The parish, the universally recognized unit of the Church, is where the first and most vital experiences of the ecclesial community are typically manifested. It is in the parish that the life and activities of the Church become visible and dynamic. The parish is neither a pattern nor a testimony, but it is a community which blazes forth Divinity. It is the home and family that welcomes us.

The family is the basic unit that binds people together. As the "domestic Church," it is the strength and soul of the universal Church. The laity, who are the faithful living within these families—the kings and queens of their domestic realms—are called to instill human and moral values, nurturing the next generation in ethical and spiritual consciousness.

The primary organizational units at parish level such as prayer groups, *suvisesha sangam*, and various other committees and ministry units open up a great potential for empowerment and leadership of the laity.

When the Malankars Syriac Catholic Church observes the Laity Day, the lay brothers and sisters need to grow in the kind of spiritual maturity that Jesus Christ desires. Let Jesus Christ be the source of our thoughts, attitudes and actions. May the members of the laity look upon the poor and the marginalized with compassion, become the voice of the voiceless, stand firmly on the side of righteousness with integrity, and remain unwavering in their commitment to justice. You have a special duty to be the guardian of justice in all realms that are dynamic and active. It is in You that the mission of delivering justice be kindled.

May the members of the laity be able to view with concern the poor and the marginalized be the voice of the voiceless, stand on the side of righteousness with honesty and maintain stability in their stance.

You have a special duty to be the guardian of justice in all realms that are dynamic and active. It is in You that the mission of delivering justice be kindled.

I commend each and every one of you who boldly bears witness to the Gospel in the various spheres of public life. May the light and splendor of Christ's vision reach many through your dedicated presence and service in your respective fields. In context of the Year of the Word, may you be inspired to study the Scriptures more deeply and to live faithfully in the spirit of the Word.

We live in a time marked by frequent denials of minority rights. May you come to understand the rights guaranteed to minorities by the Constitution and advocate for their just and faithful implementation. Let us remain steadfast in our commitment to justice, rooted in truth, by standing firmly with the Church. May the secular movements of the Malankara Laity be able to stand by the right and give peace to the way of life of the common man in case of denial of justice and encroachment on the basic rights of the citizen.

Laity Day is a public celebration of the laity in the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church. Hope that this day will be celebrated appropriately by all the lay organizations of our Church, including the MCA, MCMF, Vincent De Paul Society, and the Legion of Mary. I am deeply grateful for the leadership and cooperation of these various lay movements, which have contributed to the growth of the Church and the well-being of the Society.

The life testimony given by the lay brothers and sisters who are part of the Suvisesha Sangam serves as an inspiration to many. In the context of the Church's growth, the commitment shown by the laity in mission work, especially within the home and family, is a powerful witness to the faith. The Laity who live abroad, stick to the Church with commitment despite the limitations of their exile life are bright witness of the Holy Church. I

wholeheartedly commend the lay brothers and sisters who, despite the difficulties of their life in exile, generously dedicate a portion of their labor to the charitable works of the Holy Church.

The collection received at the Holy Mass on Laity Day is dedicated to supporting the laity services in our Church. I urge everyone to be blessed with generous contributions on that day. In accordance with Special Canon 601, the contributions are to be sent to the procurator of the Archdiocese/Diocese by the respective vicars. The procurators should allocate half of the amount received for the laity services of their Archdiocese/Diocese. The other half should be sent to the finance office of the Catholicate Center for laity services at the Church level. May St. Joseph, the patron saint of the lay organization, be our help and intercessor.

May the Risen Lord bless all ministries of the Laity.

sd/-

✠ Dr. Joshua Mar Ignathios

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Laity & Bishop of the Eparchy Mavelikara

Catholicate Centre
Pattom, Trivandrum
Laity Day 2025

NB. This circular should be read during the Holy Mass in all our Churches and mission centres on Sunday 4th may 2025.
