

**THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA**

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CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

**Eleventh Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod**  
**(2 – 3 March 2011)**

**REPORT**

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos convoked the Eleventh Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at Marygiri Archbishop's House, Tiruvalla on 2 and 3 March, 2011.

All the members of the Synod - His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos (President of the Synod), Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos (Secretary of the Synod), Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom, Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios, Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebius, Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC, Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios and Most Rev. Philipos Mar Stephanos - were present. Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, the Curia Bishop and the Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, recorded the minutes. The Holy Episcopal Synod (HES) began after the conclusion of the Malankara Katholikka Vaidika Sangamam -2011 (Malankara Catholic Priests' Meet – 2011) which was held on 1 and 2 March 2011.

The First Session of the Synod began at 6 p.m. on 2 March 2011. His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos delivered the opening message of the Holy Episcopal Synod. His Beatitude welcomed all the Bishops to the Eleventh Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod. His Beatitude delved on the main ideas that transpired among the priests at the Vaidika Sangamam and urged the Synod Fathers to imbibe the spirit of priestly koinonia. His Beatitude expressed his satisfaction at the cordial atmosphere that prevailed at the Priests' Meet. His Beatitude specially congratulated Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, the Chairman of the Synodal Commission for the Clergy, Rev. Fr. John Thundiyath, the Secretary of the Commission, and Rev. Fr. Sajeev Thekkecharuvil OIC, the Secretary of the Synodal Commission for the Religious, who had taken the leadership in organizing this Vaidika Sangamam. His Beatitude also applauded His Grace Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Archbishop of Tiruvalla, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Antony Kakkanattu, the Syncellus, Rev. Fr. Shaji Vazhayil, the Vicar of St. John's Cathedral and all others of the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla for hosting the meet and its systematic arrangements.

Inviting the members of the HES to a renewed commitment in the ministry of our Church, His Beatitude declared open the Eleventh Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

## **THE PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA**

His Beatitude, the President of the HES, presented the agenda of the Synod:

1. Prayer
2. Inaugural Address by His Beatitude
3. Report of the Tenth Holy Episcopal Synod
4. Decisions of the Tenth Holy Episcopal Synod
5. The Planning and Preparation for the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly (SMCCA)
6. Evaluation of the Vaidika Sangamam
7. Ad Limina Visit
8. Blessing of the Holy Myron
9. Matters concerning the bifurcation of the Eparchy of Bathery
10. Catholicate Centre: Construction and service of Rev. Sisters
11. Other relevant matters, if any, with the consent of the President

To the proposed agenda were added the following topics:

1. Seminary formation
2. A letter from Archbishop Mar Koorilos
3. The Present Problems of the self-financing colleges in Kerala
4. Matters of the ETRI.

## **Presentation of Reports**

The Report and the Decisions of the Tenth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod held from 29 November to 2 December 2010 and its decisions were read out. Observations of the members and corrections proposed by them were recorded. The report was passed.

## **THE DELIBERATIONS**

### **1. Evaluation of the Vaidika Sangamam (Priests' Meet)**

The HES evaluated that the Priests' Meet of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church held on 1 & 2 March 2011 was an occasion for the recommitment of the priests of our Church in their priestly life and ministry. The HES expressed its contentment on the success of the Meet in which all the Bishops and 415 priests of our Church participated. It was a blessed moment in the history of our Church. The talks on the "Call and Mission of the Malankara Catholic Priests" by His Excellency Most Rev. Raphael Thattil, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archieparchy of Trichur and on "The New Challenges of Priesthood and the Expectation of the Laity" by Dr. Alexander Jacob IPS, were enlightening. The presentation by Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios on the theme "The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church: the Evangeliser" prepared our priests for the First Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly. The discussion and sharing that followed helped the

members of the Meet to deepen the spirit of the Eparchial Assembly and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly that were to be convoked soon. The HES gave its consent to the general opinion that the Vaidika Sangamam of the SMCC may be organised at least once in five years under the leadership of the Synodal Commission for the Clergy. The HES decided that the expenses of the Meet shall be shared by the Eparchies. The Archieparchy of Tiruvalla expressed its willingness to share all the expenses of the accommodation and the rent for the venue of the Meet of this year.

## **2. The Planning and Preparation for the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly (SMCCA)**

The HES evaluated the preparation till date by the Core-committee of the SMCCA. It was proposed that the lineamenta published in English be translated and published in Malayalam, Tamil and Kannada. It was proposed that Rev. Fr. Joseph Venmanathu from the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum, Rev. Fr. Darbello Christus from the Eparchy of Marthandom and Rev. Sr. Anila Christy from the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, if her service is available, along with Rev. Fr. John Vaipil, the General Secretary of the Core-committee, to function as the Central Secretariat of the Assembly. The Secretariat will function at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

The preparation and the conduct of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly shall be coordinated from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia by the Curia Bishop under the guidance of His Beatitude, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos. The Core-committee headed by Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios will give leadership for the theological presentation of the theme of the Assembly and its follow-up and executions throughout the preparation and conduct of the Assembly. It was proposed that various committees shall be formed to work for the arrangements of accommodation, food, exhibition, etc. Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios was given the responsibility of conducting an exhibition for enabling common participation of all and for conveying the message of the Assembly to the People of God. The following persons, proposed by the respective Eparchial Bishops were to form a committee for organising the exhibition:

Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum	– Rev. Fr. Johnson Puthuparambil
Archieparchy of Tiruvalla	– Rt. Rev. Msgr. Antony Kackanattu
Eparchy of Bathery	– Rev. Fr. George Vettikkattu
Eparchy of Marthandom	– Rev. Fr. Satheesh
Eparchy of Muvattupuzha	– Rev. Fr. Varghese Panthiyirayidathil
Eparchy of Mavelikkara	– Rev. Fr. Geevarghese Nediyaamala
Eparchy of Pathanamthitta	– Rev. Fr. Daniel Narakathinal
Eparchy of Puttur	– Rt. Rev. Msgr. George Kalayil
Exarchate of USA	– Rev. Fr. Saji Mukkoottumannil
ETRI	– Rev. Fr. Varghese Vinayanand OIC

As per the proposals by the Superiors General, the persons from religious congregations shall be co-opted.

Planning shall be done to achieve the practical goal of making the main message of the Assembly to reach out to the people of God. The respective Eparchial Bishop/Exarch/Apostolic Visitor informed the date of the assembly to be convoked in his Eparchy/Exarchate/Region.

- 18-19 May – Eparchy of Bathery
- 26-28 May – Eparchy of Mavelikkara
- 17-18 June – Eparchy of Pathanamthitta
- 22-23 June – Exarchate of USA
- 1-2 July – Eparchy of Marthandom
- 4-6 July – Eparchy of Muvattupuzha
- 7-9 July – Archieparchy of Tiruvalla
- 22-23 July – Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum
- 27-28 July – ETRI
- July – Eparchy of Puttur

His Beatitude volunteered to take up the responsibility of collecting the fund for the common expenses of the Assembly. The expenses for exhibition, etc. shall be borne by respective eparchies and religious congregations.

His Excellency Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos took up the initiative to compose the theme song that conveys the message of the Assembly.

The HES proposed that all our ecclesiastical publications shall have a special column to inform the People of God about the thrust and areas of evangelisation and their progress in the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

It was decided that the Twelfth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod shall be convoked from 23 to 25 September 2011 to deliberate on the proposals of the First Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly and to approve the same for their promulgation.

### **3. Ad Limina Visit**

The Members of the Synod were informed of the time schedule of the ad limina visit of the Bishops of our Church along with the Major Archbishop- Catholicos to venerate the tombs of the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul and to present themselves to the Holy Father. This visit is scheduled from 21 to 28 March 2011. It was also informed that a concelebrated Holy Qurbano is planned with the Rev. Priests, Religious and Laity at noon on Sunday 20 March.

It was decided that the common needs of our Church shall be submitted in writing to the Holy Father during the common audience with the Holy Father. It was also decided to communicate

with the Congregation for the Eastern Churches on the need of a procura of the SMCC in Rome to co-ordinate relational and canonical matters of our Church with the Holy See and to hold consultations with the various decasteries of the Roman Curia

#### **4. The Blessing of the Holy Myron**

Considering the need of Holy Myron for the administration of the sacraments, the HES decided to bless the Myron. It is a very important liturgical celebration in our ecclesial life and it is the first such instance after our Church was elevated to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church with the rights and obligations of a Major Archbishop-Catholicos. Considering the present situation, it was decided that the blessing shall be held at St. Mary's Cathedral, Pattom on 9 and 10 December 2011. The blessing liturgy will begin at 3 p.m. on 9 December. The services of the second day will begin at 7 am. Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the President of the Synodal Commission for Liturgy, was asked to do all the preparations for the blessing of the Holy Myron.

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

The HES evaluated the progress of the construction of the Catholicate Centre. It was decided that the Centre can be blessed on 21 September 2011 together with the 81st Reunion Day celebrations and on the day of the commencement of the First Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. It was also agreed upon that the Eparchies shall hand over the balance of the amount to be contributed to the construction fund before 30 April 2011. The Eparchies that were erected after 2007 also agreed to contribute Rupees 3 lakhs each to this fund.

#### **6. The Service of Rev. Sisters in the Catholicate Centre**

The HES evaluated and appreciated the service of the Rev. Sisters appointed in the Major Archiepiscopal Curia and the Catholicate Centre and decided to continue it. The HES decided that the term of service of the sisters appointed at the Centre shall be five years and that they shall all be from the same congregation. The Rev. Sisters from Bethany and Daughters of Mary shall be appointed for service for a term of five years. This decision shall be applied forthwith and shall begin with the turn of the Bethany Sisters if the Superior General so agrees.

#### **7. Malankara Major Seminary**

The HES evaluated the priestly formation in the Malankara Major Seminary. It entrusted His Excellency Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios, the Chairman of the Seminary Commission, to find out the professors and spiritual fathers for the next academic year.

#### **8. The Contribution to the Ranchi Medical College**

The HES deliberated on the request of the CBCI to contribute financially to the proposed Medical College at Ranchi. It was decided that each Eparchy may send its contribution to the Ranchi Medical College according to each one's financial situation.

## **9. Extraterritorial Regions in India**

His Excellency Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas informed the HES the need of taking a loan from bank to manage the financial transactions of the Extraterritorial Regions in India. The HES gave consent to this proposal.

Most Rev. Mar Barnabas also evaluated the service of the priests working in ETRI. Since some are recalled to their respective Eparchies, he requested the service of Priests from Eparchies to various centres of the ETRI. The Eparchial Bishops assured Mar Barnabas their co-operation in this regard.

The HES discussed the practical implications of the Synodal decision of authorising Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, the Bishop of Marthandom to provide pastoral care to the Tamil-speaking Malankarites residing outside the territory of the Eparchy of Marthandom, in collaboration with Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas, the Apostolic Visitor to the ETRI. Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos was entrusted with the responsibility, according to decision of the Tenth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod, to form a personal parish for the Tamil-speaking Malankarites in Chennai in accord with our Church's present canonical status there. Accordingly, the foundation stone for the parish for the Tamil-speaking Malankarites was blessed on the occasion of laying the foundation stone for the construction of the new church for the Chennai-Pady parish on 27 February 2011. In the present canonical status this parish will be part of the ETRI. Gradually when a new canonical provision is made for this region, this parish will be incorporated into the new provision.

### **CONCLUSION**

The concluding session of the Holy Episcopal Synod began at 11 a.m. on 3 March 2011. In his concluding message, His Beatitude conveyed gratitude to all Bishops who participated in this HES. In the context of the convocation of the HES at Marygiri Archbishop's House, Tiruvalla, His Beatitude thanked all the officials and assistants of the Archbishop's House. His Beatitude exhorted the members of the Synod to make dynamic, with the greater co-operation of the people of God, the evangelisation activities of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. With the wish that the forthcoming Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly will be an occasion to make progress in the evangelisation ministry of our Church, His Beatitude declared the Eleventh Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod closed.

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos led the noon prayers and imparted the apostolic blessing.

**✠ Archbishop Thomas Mar Koorilos**

Secretary

**✠ Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC**

Chancellor