

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

CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

Twenty-second Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod

(19 - 23 February 2018)

REPORT

His Beatitude Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos convoked the Twenty-Second Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at St. John Paul II Synod Hall of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at the Catholicate Centre, Pattom, Trivandrum. The Members of the Synod were gathered together after the Holy Qurbono at the Chapel of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. The Holy Qurbono was specially offered in memory of HE Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, the Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Puttur who passed away on 16th January 2018.

The HES started with a prayer invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The members present at the Synod were: Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos (President of the Synod), Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos (Secretary of the Synod), Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom, Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC, Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios, Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, Most Rev. Thomas mar Eusebius, Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Makarios, Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, and Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios.

Most Rev. Philipos Mar Stephanos, the Eparch of USA, could not attend the Synod due to his visa in the US. His absence was accepted legitimate.

Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos, the Bishop Emeritus of Tiruvalla was granted permanent leave of absence due to his old age and health conditions.

Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, the Curia Bishop and the Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, recorded the minutes.

His Beatitude Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos, gave the opening address and welcomed the members to the HES. He expressed his happiness to have the memorial Qurbono for HE Geevarghese Mar Divannasios celebrated with all the members of the Synod. Being the first HES after the demise of Aboon Mar Divannasios, the zealous apostolic leadership and services in the Eparchies of Puttur and Bathery, the Major Seminary and SMCC as a whole was recognized with gratitude. HB made special mention of the funeral ceremony of Mar Divannasios at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla which was truly a witnessing of Christian unity. The presence of Bishops from various Churches, Social leaders, Priests, Religious and Lay Faithful at the funeral service corroborate this fact.

His Beatitude lauded his Brother Bishops for their untiring commitment and exceptional commitment in the evangelizing mission of the Church. It is the time we have to say “Big” thanks to God Almighty for all the blessings that He bestows on our Church. HB also stated that by the 33rd Plenary Assembly of the CBCI he would complete two terms of his tenure as the President of the Conference. He also mentioned that all the Bishops in the CBCI have shown a special love and appreciation towards the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The unanimous elections of HE Joshua Mar Ignathios as the first Vice-president of the Conference, and HG Thomas Mar Koorilos, as the Chairman of the Commission for Doctrine were corroborating this fact. HB congratulated both the Bishops and also applauded HE Jacob Mar Barnabas, the Chairman of the Women Commission of CBCI, and HE Vincent Mar Paulos, the Member of the Youth Commission for their elections in the CBCI.

HB further stated that the Holy Father Pope Francis is witnessing the glowing figure of Youthful Jesus Christ in his words and deeds. And the theme of the forthcoming Synod in Rome is about Youth. KCBC has already announced 2018-2019 as a “Year of the Youth”. Hence, as one Church, the SMCC also would do the needful in this matter.

HB informed the members that SMCC is now at the stage to convoke the next Ecclesial Assembly, especially in view of the preparation for the Centenary of the Reunion Movement on 2030. The Centenary of the Reunion will also be a time of the Silver Jubilee of the elevation of the SMCC to the status of Major Archiepiscopal Church. Hence, for the next 12 years we need a master plan. There shall be a special motto for each year. Likewise, each year can be dedicated to one of the Apostles. The HES has to do proper initiation in this matter.

His Beatitude concluded the inaugural address invoking the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the HES. Confiding the HES-in-session to the protection and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Beatitude declared the Synod open.

Submission of the Catholicos Day Offerings

His Beatitude the Catholicos said that the Bishops could now submit the Catholicos Day offerings from the respective Eparchies.

The following was the contributions from each Eparchy:

Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum	1,000,000.00
Archieparchy of Tiruvalla	600,000.00
Eparchy of Marthandom	300,000.00
Eparchy of Bathery	500,000.00
Eparchy of Muvattupuzha	200,000.00
Eparchy of Mavelikara	355,000.00
Eparchy of Pathanamthitta	355,000.00
Eparchy of Puttur	150,000.00
Eparchy of Gurgaon, Delhi	200,000.00
Eparchy of USA & Canada	\$ 12000
Exarchate of Khadki-Pune	200,000.00
Eparchy of Parassala	100,000.00

THE PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA

His Beatitude the Catholicos, the President of the HES, presented the following proposed agenda of the Synod:

1. Inaugural Address by His Beatitude
2. Submission of the Catholicos Day Offerings
3. Report and Decisions of the 21st Holy Episcopal Synod
4. Evaluation of the Report of the 21st Holy Episcopal Synod
5. Presentation of the Decisions taken at Bangalore Session
6. Canonical Provision for the Knanaya Syro-Malankara Catholic Community
- 7.. Meeting with the Major Superiors
8. Evaluation of the Major Seminary Academic Year
9. Meeting with the Secretaries of the Synodal Commissions
10. Meeting with the Eparchial School Correspondents & Principals of Unaided High Schools and Colleges
11. Briefing from the Eparchies and Exarchate
12. Publication of the Directory of the Church
13. Matters *Subsecreto*
14. Planning: The Second Malankara Catholic Assembly
15. Planning of the Common Celebrations
 - 15 July - Mar Ivanios' Day
 - 20 Sept. – *Sabhasangamom*
16. The Administration of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia
 - Accounts & Regents for the coming year
17. Other items proposed by the Synod Fathers with the consent of the President
 - (i) Centenary Year Celebration of the Re-union
 - (ii) Eparchial & Church Assemblies (Planning)
 - (iii) Protocol of Bishops in our Church (Printing Calendars)
 - (iv) Effective Functioning of Synodal Commissions
18. For Information
 - a. Rev. Fr. Antony Kallil OIC and Sr. Anjali Therese DM (New Staff in the Catholicate)
 - b. Blessing of the New Block of Synodal Commissions.
19. Other Matters if any, with the consent of the President.

The agenda was approved by the HES.

Report of the Twenty-second Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod

The report of the Twenty-second Holy Episcopal Synod was read out. After this the report of the special session of SMCC Bishops' meeting held at Bangalore on Sunday 4 February 2018 from 9.00 am to 5.30 pm was read out. A few corrections in both reports were pointed out and corrected. Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios proposed the report to be passed and Most Rev. Geeverghese Mar Makarios supported the proposal. The Report was passed unanimously.

THE PROPOSALS AND DELIBERATIONS OF THE 22ND HES

After the completion of the initial procedures, deliberations on the agenda began. The salient matters discussed and decided in the 22nd HES of the Syro - Malankara Catholic Church are given below:

1. Catholicos Day Offering

The Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church after hearing each Eparchy, has fixed the following amount from each Eparchy/Exarchate towards the expense of the Catholicate Centre. This will take its effect from 1st January 2019. The following is the share:

1. Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum -	Rs.10,00,000/-
2. Archieparchy of Tiruvalla -	Rs.7,00,000/-
3. Eparchy of Bathery -	Rs.5,00,000/-
4. Eparchy of Marthandom -	Rs.3,00,000/-
5. Eparchy of Mavelikara -	Rs.3,55,000/-
6. Eparchy of Muvattupuzha -	Rs.2,00,000/-
7. Eparchy of Pathanamthitta -	Rs.4,00,000/-
8. Eparchy of Puttur -	Rs.1,55,000/-
9. Eparchy of Gurgaon -	Rs.2,00,000/-
10. Eparchy of USA & Canada -	\$ 12000/-
11. Eparchy of Parassala -	Rs.1,00,000/-
12. Exarchate of Khadki-Pune -	Rs.2,00,000/-

An appropriate participation from the Religious Congregations was also solicited which the Major Archbishop Catholicos would personally deal with.

2. Canonical Provision for the Knanaya Syro-Malankara Catholic Community

Considering the repeated requests from the Knanaya Syro-Malankara Catholic Community presently belonging to the Archieparchy of Kottayam for a canonical provision to keep their liturgical and traditional identity, His Beatitude proposed the topic once again for the final deliberation of the members of the SMCC Hierarchy.

The Synod put forward two options. His Beatitude would officially convey the decision of the Synod to Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakatt.

3. Matters *Subsecreto*

4. Directory of the SMCC

It was proposed to publish the Directory of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at the earliest. Since there would be transfer of priests periodically it was proposed to publish only the full name of the priests with their contact telephone numbers and E-mail ID in the Directory. The Eparchies were asked to furnish the data by 15 April 2018 and the directory would be published by the first week of May 2018. The Chancellors were advised to furnish the details before 15 April.

5. Eparchial Assembly/ies in view of the 12 year preparation for the Centenary of the Reunion Movement and the Silver Jubilee of the SMCC to the Status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church

The HES felt it necessary to convoke the next SMCC Assembly, especially in view of the preparation for the Centenary of the Reunion Movement. It is also the Silver Jubilee of the SMCC as the Major Archiepiscopal Church. Each year will have a special theme. It was felt that the theme for the next Church Assembly shall be FAMILIES and it should be in continuation with the theme of the previous assembly on Evangelization and Mission. Before the Assembly on the ecclesial level, discussions and sharing must be held at the Parish – Presbyteral/District – Eparchial levels. A Preparatory Commission was appointed to prepare the *Lineamenta*:

1. HE Thomas Mar Eusebius – Convenor
2. HE Thomas Mar Anthonios – Member
3. HE Samuel Mar Irenios – Member

The Commission shall submit the draft of the *Lineamenta* before 27th of June 2018 and the draft will be discussed by the HES on 27th June 2018, after the commemoration day H.E. Jacob Mar Theophilos, at Tiruvalla.

After sufficient discussion and study on the *Lineamenta* at various levels, a working paper “*Instrumentum Laboris*” for the Church Assembly would be prepared by the Commission. In order to assist the preparatory commission, each Eparch shall propose 2 names (one Priest, one layman).

The Church level Assembly shall be celebrated from 8-10 October 2019 at the Catholicate Centre. It is to be noted that 10th October 2019 is the Silver Jubilee of the Commemoration of Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios.

6. Reunion Celebration

As it was decided in the last Synod, the forthcoming (ie. 2018) Reunion Celebration will be hosted by the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha. HE Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios informed the Synod regarding the update of the preparation. Patriarch Ignace Youssif III Younan, Patriarch of Antiochia- Lebanon and the Bishop of Beirut will be the Chief Guest and a team of delegates follow him. The blessing of the new bishop’s house at Muvattupuzha will be on 19th September 2018.

In the forth coming years the following pattern will be followed:

2019- Being the Assembly Year, the Reunion Celebrations will be held under the auspices of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. The SMCC will honour specifically the Centenary of the Foundation of the Bethany Ashram (Order of the Imitation of Christ)

2020- Host of the Reunion Celebration- Eparchy of Mavelikkara

2021- Host of the Reunion Celebration- Eparchy Marthandom.

2022-Host of the Reunion Celebration- Eparchy of Gurgaon

2023 -Host of the Reunion Celebration- Eparchy of Pathanamthitta.

2024- Host of the Reunion Celebration- Khadki-Pune Exarchate.

7. Mar Ivanios Day-2018

Since July 15 falls on Sunday, it was decided to begin the *Padayatra* on 9th July 2018 from Ranni-Perunad and other places. The Candle Procession will be on 13th July 2018. 15th July 2018 being a Sunday, the Commemoration of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios could be held at each parish. The Chief Guest on the occasion of this year's Mar Ivanios Day will be His Eminence Rainer Cardinal Maria Woelki, Kölon.

8. Religious Superiors

There was an evaluation of the meeting with the Major Superiors by the HES. All together 19 Major Superiors including Superior Generals and Provincials were present at this session and each one presented a brief report on their respective mission endeavors during the previous year. At the time of the general evaluation HB and all the Fathers of the Synod expressed their deep appreciation to the Religious Communities for their special interest and sincere efforts in the field of the mission of evangelization. Further, the Women Religious Congregations expressed their deep concern regarding the lack of religious vocations due to various reasons. Likewise, they informed that currently the Syro-Malabar Church is not encouraging girls to join the Congregations belonging to the SMCC.

It is proposed that as a remote preparation, it would be meaningful to connect the 2018 Reunion Celebration at Muvattupuzha with the Centenary Celebration of Bethany. The final celebration of the Centenary will be on 2019. HB informed the Bethanians to chalk out the program of centenary celebration in consultation with HES so that it would be a program of the entire SMCC.

9. St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary

The Fathers of the Synod visited Malankara Major Seminary and met with the staff and students together in the Chapel. Very Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Thadathil, the Rector of the Seminary proposed the word of welcome. In his exhortation HB informed that all our coming together should help us to grow in ecclesial communion and commitment to spread the Gospel values. The "Youthful Jesus" is challenging us to be formed in his true model. Being called by Him we have to imitate Jesus' ways and attitudes in our concrete life situations. Just after 12 years SMCC is going to celebrate the centenary of the Reunion movement. Hence, we have to schedule the next twelve years with proper planning and orientation. HB thanked the Seminary Commission, Rector, the Staff, the Students, and the Auxiliary Staff for their great support for the betterment of the formation in the Seminary.

The meeting with the Staff began with a prayer by HB. His Beatitude welcomed the Rector and other members of the Staff to the meeting. Thereafter, the Rector shared a brief report of the activities of the Seminary during the academic year and made certain proposals before the HES.

The HES felt satisfaction in the general atmosphere of the Seminary. The collaboration and fellowship among the Staff was also commented positive. The Commission was asked to study the present salary scale of the auxiliary staff and take proper action in this regard while taking into account of the present financial situation of the Seminary. Presently, the Major Seminary is facing very difficult financial crunch. In order to overcome the situation the Synod proposed the following:

Rector and Staff shall make use of their influence to find out benefactors for the Seminary. In the previous years the Rectors used to go out in order to strengthen the financial situation of the seminary. Hence, the Rector of the Seminary has to find out a way and tap various sources in order to overcome the present financial crisis. It was felt that he could go to some parishes to present our needs to the faithful both in India and abroad. Currently, each diocese remits to the Seminary Rs.2000/- per candidate as fees. Considering the present financial crisis in the Major Seminary it was decided to raise that amount into Rs. 5000/ per head, for 10 months, for the academic year 2017-18. No further enhancement is possible in the near future. Seminary Commission has to study the profitable/optimum utilization of the landed property at Vattapara-Vettinad belonging to the Seminary.

It was also stated that there is lack of resident professors for Scripture and Moral Theology. The Commission was asked to look into the matter and resolve the issue in the best possible way.

10. Meeting with the Secretaries of Synodal Commissions

On 21 February 2018 the HES spent two long sessions to assess and share the activities of the Synodal Commissions. HB welcomed all the Secretaries of Synodal Commissions. HG Thomas Mar Korilos, the Chairman of the Liturgy Commission informed HES regarding the preparation of the Lectionary and other texts for the liturgical use both by the priests and the prelates. There was a marvelous performance titled after “*Beth Gaso*”, a prayerful presentation of the liturgical music by a Choir of 100 members conducted at St. John’s Cathedral, Tiruvalla.

HE Abraham Mar Julios, the Chairman of the Bible and Theology Commission made the proposal of collecting all the available literature related to the SMCC. HE Jacob Mar Barnabas, the Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Evangelization reported the progress in *Suvisheshsangam* and further proposed the need of initiating *Suvisheshsangam* for the Children. HE Geevarghese Mar Makarios, the Chairman of the Synodal Commission for the Clergy suggested organizing a retreat for the entire clergy of SMCC. HE Vincent Mar Paulos, the Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Seminary Formation stated that it is obligation of the entire SMCC to promote eligible candidates to priesthood and religious life.

It is proposed that in order to uplift the Dalits, and other Backward Communities the Synodal Commission for Social Apostolate shall find out all possible resources of the Government and make use of them properly. HB further suggested that for the effective functioning of our apostolates all the Synodal Commissions need proper networking and planning.

HE Joshua Mar Ignathios, the Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Laity, proposed certain amendments and corrections in the statutes of MCA regarding age barrier, percentage of women in the Governing Body, linguistic anomalies, MCA Day etc.,.

11. Evaluation on the Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia

During the twelfth session of the Synod, the accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia was presented by Rev. Fr. Varghese Angadiyil and report was passed with certain minor corrections. Further, it is proposed by the HES that the maintenance of the auxiliary staff in the Curia shall be in accordance with the present ecclesial and civil norms.

12. Meeting with the School Correspondents and College Principals

On 22nd February 2018 during the 13th Session, the HES had a special meeting with the Eparchial School Correspondents and Principals of Unaided High Schools and Colleges of the SMCC and 78 members participated in it. Rev. Fr. Joseph Manipadan SDB, the Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Education conducted a brain-storming session on the “Implementation of the CBCI Education Policy”. It was appreciated well by all.

13. Briefing from the Eparchies and Exarchate

During the 14th Session, the HES had a briefing from the Eparchies and Exarchate. HE Thomas Mar Eusebius expressed his anxieties regarding lack of priests and the issue of Nadar Reservation. HE Jacob Mar Barnabas mentioned about the missionary works initiated in Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura etc. in the Eparchy of Gurgaon. HE Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom presented a report regarding the steady growth of the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta during the last eight years. HE Geevarghese Mar Makarios, the Bishop of Puttur, stated about the scarcity of priests, and economic crisis which affect the future growth of the Eparchy. HE informed further that he wishes to send a brochure related to these issues to all parishes in the SMCC. HE Vincent Mar Paulos informed the members of the Synod about the new missionary enterprises at Madurai and Tirunaveli and the idea of forming the Family as Missionaries in the Eparchy of Marthandam. HE Joseph Mar Thomas, the Bishop of Bathery, mentioned about the growth of the missionary and the educational apostolates in the Eparchy. The foundation of “Mar Gregorios Knowledge Centre”, is a milestone in this regard. The formation of Tamil Speaking Community in the diocese is on the process. HE Abraham Mar Julios, the Bishop of Muvattupuzha informed about inauguration of the new parishes at Kakkanad and Chalissery.

14. SMCC’s Philosophy Students at Makkiad Seminary

HES delegated H.E. Joseph Mar Thomas to visit Makkiad Major Seminary and to speak with the Superiors about the performance of the Malankara students and present to the HES his evaluation.

15. Regency Brothers for Major Archiepiscopal Curia

For the coming year, the Eparchies of Marthandom and Puttur agreed to send one regent each from their respective eparchies for the service of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

16. Territorial Extension of the Eparchies of Marthandom and Puttur

Considering the possibility of effective evangelization it was proposed to extent the present territorial boundaries of the Eparchy of Marthandom to the nearby Tamil speaking districts where the Exarchate of Khadki does not have missions or parishes. Chennai shall remain part of Khadki. HE Vincent Mar Paulos was asked to study the matter carefully and submit a report of the same to the next Synod.

The HES felt that enjoining Bangalore to the Eparchy of Puttur will definitely strengthen the eparchy; however, it was decided to take little more time to study and pray over the matter.

17. Reconstitution of Certain Synodal Commissions

For the effective functioning and better collaboration of the Commission for Faith formation and MCCL, the HES was proposed to appoint the Director of MCCL as the Assistant Director of Faith Formation.

New office Bears of the Commissions:

- (1) Commission for Faith Formation
Chairman: HE Thomas Mar Eusebius
- (2) Commission for Clergy
Chairman: HE Geeverghese Mar Makarios
- (3) Commission for Theology, History and Publication
Secretary: Rev. Dr. Mathai Kadavil OIC
- (4) Commission for Bible
Secretary: Rev. Fr. Joseph Poovathumtharayail
- (5) Commission for Evangelization
Chairman: HE Thomas Mar Anthonios
Member: HE Jacob Mar Barnabas
- (6) Commission for Social Apostolate, Dalit, and Other Backward Classes
Chairman: HE Jacob Mar Barnabas
- (7) Commission for Migrants
Chairman: HE Philipose Mar Stephanos

HE Thomas Mar Eusebius was asked to examine the text (CREDO) prepared for the MBOC for the year 2018 and do the needful.

For the dialogue between Orthodox and Catholic Church it was decided to propose the name of HE Thomas Mar Anthonios, as a second member of SMCC to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

It is decided to revive Malankara Academy under the auspices of the Theological Commission.

The Resource Books on the SMCC will be collected under the leadership of St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary. Such a collection will be beneficial for further research and inspiration for the new generation.

It was proposed to announce 2019 as the Year for the Religious in the SMCC while Bethany Congregations celebrates its Centenary.

It was proposed to register SMCC Social Forum in the Capital City of our Country, Delhi. HE Jacob Mar Barnabas was asked to do the needful in this regard.

The Website of SMCC needs to be updated. However, it was proposed that the Eparchies and the Synodal Commissions will communicate the major happenings in their respective Eparchies and Commissions to the Curia in time. The Chairman of each Synodal Commission and PROs of the eparchies shall take interest in accomplishing this task.

18. Malankara Catholic Youth Movement

Being the Golden Jubilee Year of MCYM, it was decided in the HES to declare 25th March 2018 to 25th March 2019 “Year of the Youth” in the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The intention is to follow more closely the “Youthful Jesus” and help the youth to imitate Jesus’ ways and attitudes in concrete life situations.

It was decided to send Mr. Tinu Kuriakose, the President of the MCYM, belonging to the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha to participate in the Pre-Synodal Meeting at Rome as the representative of our Church.

19. Other Proposals

It was proposed to keep one set of liturgical vestments (*Kappa Set, Black over-Coat, Mudithoppi, Sleebea*) of our Bishops under the safe custody of the Catholicate Centre at the earliest.

His Beatitude, after consulting the Nuncio informed the members that the Peter’s pence is an annual contribution given to the Roman Pontiff by everyone in the Catholic Church. Hence, it is obligatory to send an amount (collection) to the Holy Father through the Nunciature from this year onwards.

With regard to the alienation of properties and taking Bank Loans, HG Thomas Mar Koorilos was entrusted to study the civil and other areas of it and present the matter in the next HES.

20. Special Events

On 20th February 2018 Bishop Thomas K Oommen, the newly elected Moderator of the Church South India (CSI), was given a warm welcome by the HES. HE Joshua Rt. Rev. Dr. Mar Ignathios introduced the guest of honour and HB Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis felicitated him.

HES had given a warm reception to Most Rev. Philippose Mar Chrysostom, the Valiametropolitan of the Marthoma Church on 22nd February 2018. HB Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis felicitated him.

Conclusion

His Beatitude concluded the HES by stating that considering the dynamic and extensive growth of SMCC both in India and abroad, now onwards we have to highlight its global nature. Though we are numerically small, we are slowly becoming an influential Church. As a Church we have contributed more than one and a half crores for the OCKHI affected people in Kerala.

The current political scenario in India is a threat to the secular-democratic fabric of our great nation and we have to pray for our country. Indeed, prayer is the best weapon to overcome all our difficulties.

Holy Father Pope Francis is guiding this modern era in accordance with the Gospel values. Let us follow his model so that we could be a true witness to Jesus Christ in this world. Similarly, let us keep our *presbyterium* united while they are our strength in our sanctifying, teaching, and pastoral ministries.

His Beatitude said that the Synod-in-session was very special and fruitful. The sharing on the life and activities of the Eparchies and Synodal Commissions have highlighted that there is a growing sense of evangelization in our Church in the recent times. His Beatitude thanked all the Bishops for their love for the Church and solidarity with him in the exercise of his ministry in the Church as its Father and Head. He also thanked the officials of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia for the arrangements of the Synod. Invoking God's blessing through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, on all and the Church, His Beatitude declared the HES closed.

With a short prayer His Beatitude the Catholicos imparted the final blessing.

✠ Thomas Mar Koorilos
HES Secretary

✠ Yoohanon Mar Theodosius
Chancellor.