

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH
MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA

CATHOLICATE CENTRE, TRIVANDRUM - 695004, KERALA, INDIA

Twenty-third Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod

(11 - 15 March 2019)

REPORT

1. PRELIMINARY PART:

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the Father and Head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, convoked the Twenty-third 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, and Trivandrum. After the Holy Qurbano in the Curia Chapel the Synod Fathers gathered in the Synod Hall.

The Synod started with the formal prayer. The members present at 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. 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. Philipos Mar Stephanos, 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. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, the Curia Bishop and the Chancellor recorded the minutes.

His Beatitude cordially welcomed His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Giambattista Diquattro, the Apostolic Nuncio to India, to the HE Synod. The Apostolic Nuncio was addressing the Synod for the first time.

In his address HB mentioned that the Nuncio is a man of personal encounter. He being the representative of the Holy Father in India, HB requested his prayers for the SMCC and the nation of India, so that all may be united in love as one Church and preserve intact the secular and democratic values of our beloved nation. HB informed that His Grace would participate in the first session of the HES and afterwards he would like to meet the bishops personally. The Holy Mass on the second day would be presided over by HG.

HB further shared his experiences at the meeting in Rome organized by the Holy Father Pope Francis in connection with abuses against children and the vulnerable. The Pope called for a purification of the situation especially in the Church and the society and a recommitment from the part of the clergy to be protectors and promoters of children and life.

HB further stated that after prayerful reflection the SMCC has chosen the theme "Grace-filling Families" as topic for the second ecclesial assembly. The special situation in which the families are today is causing great concern and how the Church wants to attend and

accompany the families. The *Lineamenta* for study, discussion and evaluation was made available.

HB stated that after ten years the SMCC is going to celebrate the centenary of the Reunion Movement. A full day would be set part during the HES for discussion and deliberations on this matter. Vicar Generals, Superior Generals, Pastoral Council Secretaries, PRO's, Social Service Directors, Presidents of *Mathrusamajam*, Presidents *Sabhathala* MCA, MCYM, Director of MCCL and Special Invitees etc., were invited to be present in this planning session.

By invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit and confiding the HES to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Beatitude declared the Synod open.

The Apostolic Nuncio then addressed the HES. He said that this invitation gave him the chance to be in communion with HES characterized through prayer, meeting and dialogue. He said the Nunciature started receiving the Quinquennial Reports. He said he was grateful to HES for the opportunity. He expressed the hope that the meeting with the Holy Father would be an enriching experience as sons of St. Thomas, the one who touched the heart of Christ".

Then there were some moments of clarifications and sharing in which the bishops brought forward the following points:

1. Apparent casual treatment of the recent sex related scandals by the higher bodies in the Church,
2. the gravity of the *delictum contra minoris*,
3. legal proceedings in the cases of abuse against minors,
4. whether zero tolerance of the Church exists only in sexual abuse of minors or in other areas
5. the lack of funds and disinterest of funding agencies for the cause of evangelization.

The Nuncio replied that the legal procedures of the Apostolic Nunciature regarding the recent sex scandal were transparent and pastoral, which in turn demanded much time and patience. Secrecy was another concern which blocked the authorities to open their mind in public. Moreover, the case being already in the civil forum, Nunciature, waited for the judgment of the Civil Court. The details and developments in the case were intimated to the Holy See. The Nuncio expressed his great concern towards the present situation of the Church in India.

HES Secretary thanked the Apostolic Nuncio wholeheartedly for his personal presence and concern towards the SMCC.

2. THE PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA

The first item was to finalize the agenda. A few items were added at the request of the concerned bishops. Accordingly the Agenda was the following:

1. Inaugural Address by His Beatitude
2. Submission of the Catholicos Day Contribution
3. Report and Decisions of the Extraordinary Holy Episcopal Synod
4. Evaluation on the Report
5. *Quinquennial* Report

6. *Ad limina* Visit
7. Subsecreto Session
8. Eparchial & Church Assemblies
9. Centenary Year Celebration of Re-union (Action plan for 10 Years)
10. Evaluation on the Clergy Fellowship Gathering of SMCC
11. Evaluation on Major Seminary Formation
12. Current Socio-Political situation in Kerala
13. Synodal Commission and Reformulation
14. Briefing from the Eparchies and Exarchate
15. Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia
16. Regents for the forthcoming year
17. Media Commission & Live Transmission
18. Planning of the Common Celebrations
19. 15 July - Mar Ivanios' Day
20. September – *Sabhasangamom*
21. Other Matters if any, with the consent of the President.

The agenda was approved by the HES.

3. SUBMISSION OF THE CATHOLICOS DAY OFFERINGS

The following was the contributions from each Eparchy:

1. Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum - Rs. 1, 000,000/-
2. Archieparchy of Tiruvalla -700,000/-
3. Eparchy of Bathery - 500,000/-
4. Eparchy of Marthandom - 300,000/-
5. Eparchy of Mavelikara - 355,000/-
6. Eparchy of Muvattupuzha- 200,000/-
7. Eparchy of Pathanamthitta- 400,000/-
8. Eparchy of Puttur - 155,000/-
9. Eparchy of Gurgaon - 200,000/-
10. Eparchy of USA & Canada - \$12,000/-
11. Eparchy of Parassala - 100,000/-
12. Exarchate of Khadki-Pune -200,000/-

4. REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY HOLY EPISCOPAL SYNOD

The report of the Extraordinary HES held at Muvattupuzha, on 6-7 December 2018 was read out. A few corrections, omissions and additions were pointed out on the report. Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios proposed the report to be passed and Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas seconded. The Report was passed unanimously.

5. THE PROPOSALS AND DELIBERATIONS OF THE 23rd HES

The significant matters discussed and decided in the 23rd Ordinary HES of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church were:

1. Presentation of the report and accounts of the Clergy Fellowship Gathering:

The Clergy Fellowship gathering was conducted on 18&19 February 2019 at *Girideepam* Convention Centre, Trivandrum. The report of the meeting was presented by HE Geevarghese Mar Makarios, the Chairman of the Clergy Commission. HE highlighted in his report that the two days coming together in prayer and reflection was a manifestation of our priestly *Koinonia*. It was well appreciated by all the participants. The input sessions were relevant and fruitful. The major parts of the expenses of the gathering were met by various eparchies and sponsors. It was decided in the HES that the balance amount of liability would be shared by other eparchies who have not contributed. It was noted that some of the young priests were not serious in gathering but on the other hand the middle aged made use of it much more fruitfully. HB thanked the Chairman and Rev. Fr. Sunny Kavunkal, the Secretary of the Commission, and all others who made this gathering a big success.

2. Quinquennial Report

HB has informed the Fathers of the Synod that he had submitted all the Quinquennial Reports to the Apostolic Nunciature, New Delhi. Those who have not submitted were asked to submit it in time and send a copy of the same to him. The report of the Major Archiepiscopal Church was handed over to the Apostolic Nuncio.

3. *Ad Limina* Visit

HB informed the HES that 23. Sept. 2019 was allotted for us to meet the Holy Father Pope Francis as Synod. Accordingly all the bishops have to be in Rome by 22 Sep. The Nuncio agreed to do the needful in regard to the visa. HE Jacob Mar Barnabas was asked to be in touch with the Apostolic Nuncio and the bishops in this matter. HB informed that the Congregation for the Oriental Churches has taken the responsibility of arranging stay and boarding of our Bishops in Rome. The following Congregations and Dicasteries in Rome were enlisted in the visit: Congregations for the Oriental Churches, Secretary of State, Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Propagation of Faith, Congregation for the Cause of Saints, Pont. Council of Church Unity, and Interreligious Dialogue.

4. Reunion Day and *Sabhasangamam* of 2019

Following the discussion on the Centenary of the Bethany Ashram, HES deemed it apt to conduct the Reunion Day and *Sabhasangamam* of 2019 at Bethany *Girideepam* School Campus at Kottayam. Since the venue is in the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla, the leadership and involvement of the Archieparchy and the neighbouring eparchies such as Mavelikkara, Muvattupuzha and Pathanamthitta were crucial. The dates would be 19 and 20 September 2019. As usual, there would be MCYM and MCA Conventions and *Suvisheshasandhya* on 19th and on 20th Holy Qurbono followed by Public Meeting. The Public meeting would highlight the centenary of Bethany Congregation as well as *religious life* in the present context. It was proposed to invite HE Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches as Chief Guest or in his absence Archbishop Cyril Vasil, the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. As usual all the Eparchies and Exarchate were advised to give their financial contribution for the Reunion Day celebrations. The maximum participation of our faithful and clergy are to be ensured. There would be a preliminary meeting on 29 of March 2019 at *Girideepam*, Kottayam in order to formulate the modalities of the celebrations. Bishops, Vicar Generals, Procurators, Superior General of Bethany, Provincials of Bethany provinces, Priests from the neighbouring

Parishes of Kottayam and Pastoral Council Secretaries of Tiruvalla, Pathanamthitta, Mavelikkara and Muvattupuzha would be invited to this meeting. The Major Archbishop-Catholicos would preside over.

5. Ecclesial Assembly

It was decided to conduct the Ecclesial Assembly from 8-10 October 2019 at the Catholicate Centre, Trivandrum. Participants were expected to arrive on 7th evening itself. On 10th there would be the 25th memorial Holy Qurbano of Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios.

Further, it was decided to conduct the Eparchial/Exarchate levels of Assembly in between March and August 2019 and the reports of these Assemblies should reach the Curia before 15 August 2019. Either a member of the Commission who prepared the *Lineamenta* or any other Bishops from the SMCC should be invited for the brainstorming session of the Eparchial/Exarchate Assembly. This was also to ensure the seriousness of this great event. Basing on the reports from these Assemblies, an *Instrumentum Laboris* (working text book) would be prepared by the aforesaid Commission.

HB would send a circular to this effect to prepare the faithful towards the assembly. Considering the significance of the theme “grace filling families”, the HES held that 60% among the participants should be lay faithful which is against the norm of CCEO. Hence an exemption would be sought from the competent authority by HB. It was also left to the due discretion of the Eparchial Bishops to take a proper decision in this matter considering special situation of each Eparchy. Among the total members of the Ecclesial Assembly 30% should be reserved for women, 40% for Priests and Religious.

The expert committee of Most. Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebius (Chairman), Mar Irenios and Mar Anthoniois would be extending their service to prepare the final draft of the *Instrumentum Laboris*.

The Central Committee of the Ecclesial Assembly:

President: HB Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos

Chairman: HE Yoohanon Mar Theodosius

Vice-Chairman: HE Joseph Mar Thomas & HE Vincent Mar Paulos

General Secretary: Rev. Dr. George Thomas Kochuvilayil.

Pastoral Council Secretaries from various eparchies would be included in this Central Committee as its members.

The translation of the *Lineamenta* to English language was entrusted to HE Thomas Mar Eusebius. Major Archiepiscopal Curia would assist HE in this work. HB, HE Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, HE Joseph Mar Thomas & HE Vincent Mar Paulos would extend their assistance as and when required. It was proposed that Rev. Fr. Joseph Valliatt would do this work of translation while he was familiar with the text.

6. Request for a College/House for SMCC in Rome

HB has informed the Synod that he has been constantly raising to the Holy See the need of having a College for the Malankara Catholics in Rome so that we could practice our liturgical traditions, admit more students and pay special attention to their studies and

discipline and to coordinate the various missions in Europe. HB asked the Fathers of the Synod to keep this intention in their prayers. HES supported the move and encouraged HB to go forward.

7. Matters of *Subsecreto*

HES discussed the proposed matter of *subsecreto*.

8. St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary

The Fathers of the Synod visited Malankara Major Seminary and met the staff and students together in the Chapel. After the prayer Very Rev. Dr. Kuriakose Thadathil, the Rector of the Seminary proposed the word of welcome.

In his address HB stated: Major Seminary is an important establishment in the SMCC and that is the reason why the Fathers of Synod make an official visit to this institution as part of the Synod. Family and Seminary are the most important spaces of formation. We receive vocations from the family. He mentioned also about the second Assembly on the theme "Grace-filling Families". Our families should become a place of witnessing faith and evangelical values. After the family, seminary is the second home of formation and where we intensify this training systematically and scientifically. The Golden Jubilee of the Reunion in 1980 under the spiritual leadership of Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios was a great event and it had given the SMCC a vitality that is felt real even today. In 2020 the SMCC would enter into the 90th Anniversary of her communion with the Catholic Church. And after ten years, i.e., in 2030, the SMCC is going to celebrate the centenary of Reunion Movement. We need to prepare ourselves to be effective catalysts for mission and evangelization. He also mentioned the general election to the Parliament and the need to pray for the nation so that her fundamental, democratic, secular and religious fabric might be protected and safeguarded. He also told the seminarians that they were going to do priestly ministry in a most challenging world and atmosphere. Martyrdom was not something of a remote possibility, but something real. However there is no need to get frightened since the Lord is with us. Your maturity would be assessed on the basis of your answer to the question: "do you love me more than these?" – your answer should be through your words and deeds, walk and talk. The Church is eagerly waiting for your ministry and witness. We thank you for choosing this life. We want to see you as the beloved one of our Lord. Pray for us too because we need it.

He 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 special meeting with the Staff began with a prayer by HB. The Rector read out report of the activities of the Seminary during the academic year and made certain proposals before the HES. Major challenges proposed in the report were:

- need for more community cohesion
- some students find it difficult to cope with the total atmosphere, not happy with the liturgical ethos, discipline, and academic matters.
- use of mobile phones and modern gadgets of communication.
- need for a more unified formative program for the minor seminaries, ensuring better continuity between minor Seminary and Major Seminary programs, and a common 4th year minor seminary if possible
- initiating the regents into theological training towards the end of the regency

- shortage of qualified personnel in biblical languages and other subjects were also raised by them as crucial issues.
- affiliation with the Urbanian University in Rome needs to be renewed.
- staff proposed to raise the Seminary to the status of an independent Faculty at the earliest.
- need of capable spiritual fathers to accompany the young seminarians of today

Besides the B.Th, the Seminary offers a two year diploma course in theology for the lay people and religious. Current year 40 lay people are attending the Diploma Certificate Course in the Seminary. Many of them expressed their desire to join the B.Th program.

It was decided to organize a one month course for the regents in common, specifically devoted to learn languages especially Syriac, learning liturgy and discipline, etc. The Seminary Commission was asked to organize this training in another place with the help of the staff from the Major Seminary. This year due to shortage of time the programme would be reduced to one week common orientation program after the first year theologians joined the seminary.

The HES entrusted Rev. Fr. Mathai Kadavil OIC to study the possibility of extending the course for laity up to graduation level. In such a situation, the opportunity of an affiliation with a University or Faculty would be more beneficial. The affiliation of the Seminary with Urbanian University in Rome will be renewed immediately and Rev. Fr. Joseph Valliatt was asked to do the needful in this regard.

The Procurator of the Seminary explained the financial scenario. The HES proposed that as part of the Seminary Day Collection, the staff and students of the Seminary would visit at least 100 selected parishes in the SMCC, on the last Sunday of June 2019 and they would try to conscientise the faithful towards vocation and support to the seminary. The Seminary Commission and the Rector were asked to do the needful in this matter at the earliest.

In an in camera session with the Rector and the HES it was felt that Rev. Fr. Louis Charuvila Puthenveed could continue as the Procurator. Thus his service was extended for one more term.

The service of Rev. Fr. George Pazhayapurayil adn Corepiscopo George Jacob Kizhakkethil could be wound up.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Kannamkulam from the Eparchy of Bathery and Rev. Mannoor from the Diocese of Palai are expected to be the new spiritual directors of the Seminary.

Rev. Dr. Philip Chembakassery has completed 70 years of age. HES decided to grant him the title of Professor Emeritus. He could continue to teach in the Seminary.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Valliatt was relieved from the office of Registrar and Rev. Dr. Jolly Karimpil was appointed as the new Registrar.

Rev. Dr. Sijo Charivuparambil from the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta would join the staff from next academic year.

The services of Rev. Dr. Prabheesh George Mekkarikathu and Rev. Dr. Bernard from the Eparchy of Parassala could be made use of as visiting Professors.

The services of academically qualified Religious Sisters from our own community and who are found good in formation, may be made use of properly in the Seminary.

9. Centenary of Reunion Movement (2030)

HES kept aside a day for the preliminary evaluation and planning of the Centenary of the historic Reunion Movement. The meeting was presided over by HB. Including Fathers of the Synod, Proto-syncelli, Syncelli, Major Seminary Rector, Pastoral Council Secretaries, Presidents of the MCCL, MCYM and MCA, Directors of Social Service, Public Relation Officers, Presidents of Mathrusamajam and Special Invitees there were 87 participants in this session. After the inaugural session by the Major Archbishop the brainstorming sessions were conducted by Rev. Fr. Varghese Vallikatt (Director, POC), Very Rev. Msgr. Cheriyan Thazhamon (Proto-Syncellus, Tiruvalla), Very Rev. Fr. Mariadas OIC (Provincial, Bethany Navajyothi), Rev. Mother Giles DM (Provincial, DM), Very Rev. Fr. Geevarghese Nediayth (Proto-presbyter, Adoor), Mr. Jacob Punnoose IPS, and Smt. Sheeja Abraham (Mathrusamajam President, Pathanamthitta). Then participants were divided into five groups and had a fruitful workshop. It was followed by the presentation of the reports by the respective secretaries. An open forum was also provided for further evaluation and clarification regarding the Centenary.

The Prayer, Logo and the *Lineamenta* of the Second Ecclesial Assembly were released during this session. The special session of the Synod ended with a prayer at the tomb of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios.

Back in the Synod session, HB expressed his heartfelt thanks to all those who made the preliminary meeting of the Centenary Celebration of Reunion fruitful and successful. Pertinent themes for each of the 10 years would be selected and this would begin by the Bethany Centenary (basing on religious life in the Church). The following were the themes proposed by the Fathers of the Synod: Family, Priesthood, Mission, Eco-spirituality, Faith Formation, Women Empowerment, Reunion and Ecumenism, Social Apostolate, Laity, Media, Children, Word of God, Holy Qurbano and Sacraments, Pro-life, Liturgical Renewal, St. Mary and Saints, Departed Souls, Seminary Formation and Education.

10. Synodal Commissions and its Reformulations

Chairman of Synodal Commission for Bible informed that the participation of SMCC in the Bible Correspondence Course, Literary Competitions and Logos Quiz organized by KCBC was comparatively very poor. Eparchies should encourage the participants of Logos Quiz by awarding them with prizes and certificates. We have to encourage our new generation to produce short films basing on Bible themes. It would be better to have a program of Bible Parayanam in the Parish level. It would be relevant if we could include the major figures of Bible like Abraham, Isaac, John the Baptist etc. in OT and NT in our catechetical texts so that our children may have knowledge about them. At present we lack such kind of pictorial depictions in our catechetical texts. It was also cautioned that before making changes in the catechetical texts, efforts must be made to understand the thinking and structure behind the present catechetical texts.

With regard to the Theology Commission of the SMCC, the Chairman, informed that the Commission has already enlisted the names of theologians in the SMCC. At present there are 166 theologians including bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful.

The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation chairman shared a common concern of the age limit for membership in MCCL and MCYM. The HES knew that there exists this overlapping but wanted this to continue. However it was clarified that those from 15 to 17 shall not hold any office in the parish or in higher bodies.

The need for updating the Catechetical texts has become a necessity. A committee was constituted with HE Thomas Mar Eusebius (Chairman), HG Thomas Mar Koorilos (member), HE Joseph Mar Thomas (member) and Rev. Fr. Antony Kakkanat (Consultor).

The Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Communication and Media highlighted the need for live streaming transmission. It would be better to transmit the common programs of SMCC through Internet, Face book accounts, WhatsApp, etc. The mechanisms of such a transmission would cost about 3.5 lakhs rupees. The MCYM has consented to provide a trained person for this purpose and the Curia will have to pay a monthly allowance to him. The program will be managed and controlled by the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. The Fathers of the Synod unanimously agreed upon this project and asked the Chairman to proceed with it.

As part of the reconstitution of the Synodal Commissions, the Chairman of the Commissions for Laity, proposed the name of Mr. Jacob Punnoose IPS, (Rtd) as the Secretary of the Commission and it was approved by the HES. The following names are proposed as its Members/Consultors: Mr. T.P. Shaji (Tiruvalla), Mr. P.K Joseph (Pathanamthitta), Mr. Paul Raj (Marthandam), Mrs. Sara Mani Kuriakose (Pune), Adv. Valsa John (Trivandrum and Adv. Jojo Abraham (Trivandrum).

The Chairman of the Liturgical Commission, distributed drafts of Omologio, Prayer for the departed priests, Prayer for the departed Religious and Gospel Passages of Sundays- Feast Days- Special Occasions among the Fathers of the Synod. After a brief discussion on these drafts it was decided that the members may give the corrections in writing, if any, within one week to the Chairman.

The Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Migrants, enquired about the nature and functioning of the Commission while it is a newly constituted one. The HES proposed that the existence of such a commission in the present ecclesial-social context was relevant. Names of its members may be proposed by the Chairman. The Curia Bishop will be the Vice-chairman of this Commission.

HB informed the members of the Synod that other Synodal Commissions are requested to propose the names of its new members or consultors, if needed, to him at the earliest.

11. Retirement and Installation of Bishops

After a brief sharing, the HES decided to fix the dates for the Installation of Most Rev. Dr. Samuel Mar Irenios as Eparch of Pathanamthitta and Most Rev. Dr. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius as the Eparch of Muvattupuzha on 8 June 2019 at 8.00 a.m and on 12 June 2019 at 9.30 am respectively. The retiring bishops Most Rev. Dr. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom and Most Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Julios would offer a thanksgiving Qurbano on the occasion. The whole ceremony should be as simple as possible.

12. Farewell Sharing of Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom

H.B. requested the retiring Bishops their sharing. Thus a special session was set apart for this on 14 March 2019 from 9 pm to 10.30 pm.

HE Mar Chrysostom expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Major Archbishop-Catholicos and the members of the HE Synod for their love and concern towards him. He narrated his services in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum and then in the US. He thanked HB Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of happy memory for nominating him as the second bishop of the Eparchy of Marthandam in 1998 after due approval from the Council of Hierarchs. He mentioned about the several hardships and tough times including protests in Marthandom. But he concentrated on building up the eparchy spiritually, structurally and materially. He was also happy that he was appointed as the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta. He felt happy that he tried to build up Pathanamthitta in the best way possible. The Almighty has protected him and made use of his person to cater to His People. He expressed his sincere homage to the Servant of God Mar Ivanios, Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios and Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos and all the prelates. As a testament he stated that whatever money or belongings that he has that would belong to the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta. He expressed his gratitude and allegiance to Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis. He wished well Mar Irenios, his successor. HB asked HE Joseph Mar Thomas to pray for Mar Chrysostom.

13. Farewell Sharing of HE Abraham Mar Julios

In his farewell address to the HES, Mar Julios opened his mind and gave short description of his seminary formation and priestly ministry and study in Rome before ordination and then after a few years of pastoral ministry for pursuing doctoral studies. He was in charge of several offices in the archdiocese of Tiruvalla. As the Rector of St. Mary's Major Seminary, he tried to contribute for its formation, construction, and fund raising. His appointment as the Director of Pushpagiri Hospital was also very significant. His life and service as the Bishop of Muvattupuzha for 11 years was again a turning point in personnel life and mission. The constructions of the Cathedral and the Diocesan Curia Centre are moments of joy. He cited with excitement the mission stations at Coimbatore and Potta and ministry among the people of Thoziyoor Church. He said that there was economic crisis in the Eparchy but it could be solved in due time. He thanked HB and other bishops. Bishop Ignathios prayed for Mar Julios.

14. Briefing of the Eparchies and Exarchate

HE Philipos Mar Stephanos submitted a brief report of the Eparchy of USA and Canada with a note of its gradual growth in pastoral and structural levels. HE specifically pointed out the following pressing challenges of the Eparchy: (i) Lack of qualified priests suitable to serve in USA, (ii) Lack of incardinated priests (iii) the time, service and commitments of our priests are divided as associate pastors in Latin Churches (iv) Latin Church is now reluctant to accommodate our priests, (v) Lack of qualified priests in the Eparchial Tribunal, (vi) Problem of geographical distance between headquarters and parishes, (vii) Financial strains of families, and huge liabilities of the parishes, (viii) lack of infrastructures, (ix) lack of catechetical and other liturgical books fitting to the context of USA, (x) the feeling of discrimination among girls and their parents for not permitting them to serve at the Altar as Eucharistic Ministers, and (xi) challenge of bringing back the estranged youngsters to the mainstream, etc. Regarding the reference to girls as altar servers,

the HES held that Mar Stephanos could judiciously decide in this matter without causing any confusion in the minds of the faithful. It must be done after consulting HB in each instance.

HE Thomas Mar Anthonois while presenting the report of the Exarchate of St. Ephrem Khadki- Pune stated that there was an explicit growth in spiritual and pastoral life of the people in the Exarchate. Number of missions and vocations were increasing. Major challenges faced are: lack of committed Priests, Sisters, and Lay Missionaries; lack of basic infrastructures; and lack of economic resources. The full participation of the Exarchate in the common and representative levels of meetings was not feasible at this stage while it consumes more time and huge money for travel. HE proposed that common pastoral letters, communications, etc., are to be sent to the Exarchate and other such places at least in English.

HE Jacob Mar Barnabas presented brief report of the Eparchy of Gurgaon by stating that currently there were missions in 12 States of India. In two other States the mission work was progressing. The dream of the Eparchy was that of starting at least 10 communities in each State so that we may have 100 Chapels during the 2030, the Centenary of the Reunion. The major challenges: lack of committed priests, religious and lay people; lack of proficiency in the local languages; lack of funds, absence of catechetical teachers, and proper liturgical-catechetical texts etc. It was proposed whether some developed and established parishes in SMCC could adopt mission chapels. HE suggested that it would be relevant and meaningful if we could devote a special session in the HES solely for mission. He also inquired the possibility of giving the status of deacon or sub- deacon to some of the fulltime Catechists in mission areas.

HB said that SMCC would take necessary measures to support her missions and missionaries as far as possible spiritually and materially.

HE Geevarghese Mar Makarios presented a brief report of the Eparchy of Puttur. He said that there were encouraging factors and many severe challenges. Limitations were more. On 28 January 2019, a long cherished dream of the Eparchy became true with the blessing and inauguration of the new Bishop's House, Curia and Minor Seminary. By the grace of God a new church at Kodimbala was blessed on the same day itself. He expressed his gratitude towards HB and all the Hierarchs of SMCC. A new mission station would be inaugurated on 17 March 2019 at Manipal. He said shortage of priests remained a serious challenge. Also there was difficulty to cope up with the various meetings of representational nature conducted simultaneously by SMCC and the Karnataka Regional Catholic's Bishop's Council. That there is no major income generation source in the diocese is a concern.

A brief note on the present situation of the Eparchy of Marthandam was presented by HE Vincent Mar Paulos. In the last two years, the Eparchy started six new missions outside the proper territory (Trichy, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Kallikulam, Andipatty, and Edayankulam). Another six missions were established within the proper territory. Lot of scope was there but lack of finance impedes the Eparchy reaching out to many other villages. Ever since the inception of the eparchy, it has been the dream of the People of God to have a proper cathedral. The plan was approved. The estimated cost is 12 crores. Tombs of Bishop Lawrence Mar Ephraem, Msgr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil and two other priests and their mortal remains would be temporarily transferred on April 8, 2019 to another place. In the year 2021, the eparchy celebrates the silver jubilee of its inception. For the coming three years, to make a revival in the Eparchy in terms of family three aspects of family, as the source of life, school of prayer and seat of love are given prominence. A new pastoral centre was constructed with five offices at Kuzhithurai. St. Paul's theological institute started in the year

2017 teaches introduction to theology, Bible, liturgy and other related disciplines. IAS Academy has helped many students to prepare for Group I and Group II exams.

HE Thomas Mar Eusebius, while submitting a short report on the Eparchy of Parassala, stated that it is a mission diocese in its fullest sense. General atmosphere in the Eparchy is very positive. The ministry of priest is an essential aspect of its growth. Vocation promotion is one of the priorities of the Eparchy and currently there are enough vocations to priesthood. Construction of the minor seminary was started. The aided college at Edanji started functioning but the teaching and other posts are yet to be approved by the government. Advance amount has already paid to buy a school at Vengannoor in order to open some more educational and employment opportunities for the faithful of the Eparchy. One of the major challenges of the Eparchy is disparity in the Reservation based on cast by the Government.

HE Joseph Mar Thomas presented the report of the Eparchy of Bathery which is in its Ruby Jubilee year. Jubilee year is dedicated to renew the spiritual, pastoral, and ecclesial commitments of the entire sections of the Eparchy. At the moment mission works, various apostolates, educational ministry and social activities in the Eparchy are going well. Construction of a new clergy home was progressing. A housing project to provide shelter to the homeless in the Eparchy was started. The presence of Naxalites in various parts create fear and anxieties among the people. There is a financial liability of 15 crores in the Eparchy but taking into account of the investments and income generation projects it can be remitted in due course of time.

HE Abraham Mar Julios while submitting the report of the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha mentioned that the mission work in the Eparchy was progressing and number of faithful have increased. The new Diocesan Centre was blessed and inaugurated on 7 December 2018. Special thanks to the Major Archbishop-Catholicos and all the Prelates of SMCC for their presence and support in accomplishing this dream. Major challenges identified as follows; lack of religious and priestly vocation, financial liabilities, misappropriation of funds by priests, and group formulation among priests. The Eparchy needs a clergy home. There is a liability of 15 cores.

HE Joshua Mar Ignathios presented report of the Eparchy of Mavelikara. MCYM Golden Jubilee celebration was hosted by the Eparchy and it was a great success. Several churches and presbyteries were constructed and some were under constructions. Lay people in the Eparchy hold high positions in supra-ritual forums like AICU, KCF and KCSL. Proposal for starting an international school at Puliyoor was progressing. At present the Eparchy has sufficient number of priestly vocations. Widening of the National Highway 4, will badly affect the Church and School at Cheppad; but the eparchy would cooperate for the good of the public.

HE Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom presented a brief evaluation on the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta. At the moment the Eparchy is blessed with sufficient priests and vocations. Several new churches were constructed. Several constructions and renovations of churches and schools are still progressing. The activities in the charitable institutions like Ashwasa Bhavan, Karunya Bhavan and Prathyasa Bhavan are praiseworthy. The eparchy was much affected by the drastic flood and relief works are still going on. The eparchy has a liability of around 6 crores.

HG Thomas Mar Koorilos gave a brief report on the status of the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla. All the apostolates and institutions were functioning rather effectively. There exists

a healthy relationship between the Archieparchy and the Religious, especially with Bethany. A new religious congregation has come to be part of the Archieparchy. They are called Opera della S. Maria Luce. They are now taking care of the new mission at Thodupuzha. Taking into account of the special situation of Tiruvalla, the Archieparchy maintains very good ecumenical bond. SEERI faces serious issues due to the new educational policies of the Government. Priestly vocations are getting smaller and smaller. The recent flood affected the Archieparchy drastically and it will take many years to recover from this chaos. He also mentioned about the number of priests working in the missions and in the various dioceses and in the common ministries of the Church.

HB stated that a new Presbyteral District was established in Anchal. Recently 3 more missions were opened. All the new priests were sent to various mission dioceses of SMCC. The *Suvishesha Sangham* helps the families and parishes in faith and witnessing of the Word of God. Within a short span of time the Mount Carmel Retreat Centre, Vettinad became place of spiritual attraction. The Educational institution in the Major Archdiocese has a bank loan of 15 crores and the Major Archdiocese has 12 crores.

HE Yoohanon Mar Theodosius has submitted a brief report regarding Europe and Oceania. Recently a new mission centre at Singapore was started and Rev. Fr. Sam John Thadathil was appointed by HB as its coordinator. 87 faithful belonging to SMCC at Singapore were identified. In Europe especially in UK our mission work is progressing well. Two more centres were started in UK. Efforts were being made to start a centre in Italy. Centres in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland are progressing. Australia and New Zealand need our special attention due to its geographical width and length. In general the presence of our priests in the aforementioned countries have been well appreciated by our people and the Latin Hierarchs of the respective countries. Catechism, MCYM, MCA and Mathrusamajam are active in several centres. Major challenges are: (i) lack of priests; (ii) lack of a center to coordinate our works; (iii) lack of personnel parishes; (iv) lack of fund to maintain a priest and other structures; (v) and lack of network to identify our people especially youth.

15. Common Celebrations:

The Mar Ivanios Day on 15 July will be commemorated with *Padayatra*, Candle Procession and Memorial Holy Qurbano. The Chief Guest of the day will be HB, the Patriarch of the Coptic Catholic Church. Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak. He will be accompanied by a Bishop.

16. Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia

The accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia was presented by Rev. Fr. Varghese Angadiyil and report was passed with some corrections. It was proposed that the remaining days in the current financial year which have not come in the presentation should be separately done before the next year's account presentation. HE Samuel Mar Irenios proposed the report to be passed and HE Jacob Mar Barnabas supported the proposal.

17. Service of the Rev. Sisters in the Major Archiepiscopal Curia

After completing their allotted term of service, Srs. Mercy Francis DM from Punjab Province and Caroline DM from Bathery Province would return to their respective provinces soon. Rev. Srs. Maria Dominic DM from Marthandam Province and Vinaya Therese DM from Venniyoor Province would take over charge.

18. Regency Brothers for the service of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia

For the coming year, the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla and the Eparchy of Bathery agreed to send one regent each from their respective eparchies for the service of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

19. Special Information

HB informed the Fathers of the Synod HE Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, the President of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches proposed the idea of auditing the accounts of the Eparchies with the help of an independent authority. The account has to be sent to the Holy See (Congregation for the Oriental Churches) on a yearly basis. The Holy See wants each Eparchies to have an auditor at the time of the Installation of a new Bishop. It is also appropriate to have an audited statement at the time of the retirement of the Local Ordinary. The HES found the proposal welcoming and acceptable. The Synod observed that we have an objective internal auditing system according to the civil norms of the Land. The Major Archbishop-Catholicos agreed to inform the mind of the Synod to the HE Cardinal Sandri.

20. Central Office for Social Apostolate and Registration of a new Society in the Capital City of India

Regarding the proposal of 22nd HES of having a registered office for the Social Apostolate SMCC in Delhi, HE Jacob Mar Barnabas presented the draft of the Rules and Regulations. As per the present draft all bishops of SMCC will be ex-officio members of this organization by their office except the bishops emeriti. The governing body shall be further elected. A Hindi name proposed was “Malankara Vikas Sanjal” and some of the members said a more appealing name could be found out. Hence a week’s time for such corrections and addenda was given. The office would be in Delhi. Only the SMCC enjoys its benefits. All the Social Directors of SMCC shall be its members. The Society would be registered shortly.

21. Proposals for new Core-episcopoi

HE Philipos Mar Stephanos from USA and Canada proposed two names to the status Core-episcopoi, HE Joshua Mar Ignathios from the Eparchy of Mavelikara proposed one name to the status of Ramban, and HB proposed some names to the status of Core-episcopoi.

HB mentioned the objection of some of the Latin Bishops for the insignia worn by our Corepiscopi. Hence HES decided to amend CPCSMCC canon 304 § 1 regarding the insignia as follows: “white cassock, a read sash without extension downwards, a silver cross on a silver chain”. They are not be permitted to wear the ring.

It was decided in the HES not to use the title of Monsignor for the Proto- Syncellus and Syncellus unless they are conferred by the Holy See. Instead of the usage Rt. Rev. for Vicars General it was decided to use ‘Very Reverend’.

Conclusion

His Beatitude thanked all for the wonderful experience of synod and mutual strengthening. He noted that the first ecclesial Assembly provided a strong witnessing

experience and now we were at the start of the second one of renewing and sanctifying the families. HB thanked HE Mar Chrysostom and HE Mar Julios for their outstanding shepherding. Their personal sharing in the Synod was a blessing and it moved all of us.

Special mention over the wonderful and courageous mission activities undertaken by Mar Barnabas and Mar Anthonios. Under the pastoral leadership of Mar Stephanos our Eparchy of US & Canada progressing. It is our dream to spread the fragrance SMCC among the Spanish speaking communities as well. HB wished all the best to Mar Irenios and Mar Theodosius for their installation ceremony and future Episcopal ministry. On 8 June 2019 Mar Chrysostom and on 12 June Mar Julios will retire.

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 apostolic blessing.

✠Thomas Mar Koorilos
HES Secretary

✠Yoohanon Mar Theodosius
Chancellor.