

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

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**25<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod**

**(22-25 February 2021)**

**REPORT**

**PRELIMINARY PART:**

His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the Father and Head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, convoked the 25th Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the SyroMalankara Catholic Church at St. John Paul II Synod Hall at the Catholicate Centre, Pattom, Trivandrum. The Synod Fathers gathered in the Synod Hall on 22February 2021 at 6.00 pm.

The HES began with a 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. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC, Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios, Most Rev. Philipos Mar Stephanos, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebius, Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Makarios, Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom (Emeritus), and Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios (Emeritus).

Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Theodosius, the Bishop of Muvattupuzha and the Curia Bishop and the Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia was absent due to health issues. The Holy Episcopal Synod accepted his absence as legitimate.

His Beatitude the Catholicos, the president of the Synod designated Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC to record the minutes in the absence of Yoohanon Mar Theodosius.

His Beatitude cordially welcomed the Fathers of the Synod. He said, “We begin this HES in the context of the Covid pandemic. In spite of this situation, as the Lord is merciful to us, we begin this Holy Synod.” He invoked the assistance of Holy Spirit on the entire sessions of the Synod. HB reminded the HES that it is gathered together at a challenging time in the history of the world. The faith is challenged by the pandemic situation. People ask, “Do we need God?” Nothing happens even if they do not go to the Church for one year! HB quoted Ps 32:10 – “Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.” Then HB said, “There is no one faithful as God... We have to have some experience as the Psalmist. Since God is faithful, let us take refuge in Him. We go forward with hope.” By invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit and confiding the HES-in-session to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Beatitude declared the Synod open.

His Beatitude further reminded the Synod Fathers, “Let us not be carriers of the disease. Therefore, let us be cautious and careful. His Beatitude also paid homage to Malpan Geevarghese Chedyath who was called to eternal rest on 21 February 2021 due to Covid-19 pandemic. HB recalled that his contribution to the Church as an expert in patristic theology

was great. He translated 110 books of the fathers. He was a theologian of national and international fame. He was very active on the Pro-Oriente Ecumenical forum. He was a blessing to our Church as a theologian. His call to eternity was sudden. We submit to God's will.

The HES conveyed condolences to the Chediyath family and the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta on the demise of the Malpanachan. Everybody observed silence for a moment in prayer for the departed soul.

## **2. THE PRESENTATION OF THE AGENDA**

1. Inaugural Address & Welcome: His Beatitude
2. Presentation of Reports
3. Evaluation on the Reports
4. Submission of Catholicos Day Offerings
5. Reunion Centenary (10 Year Planning)
6. Ecclesial Assembly Text – Final Draft – Discussion
7. Year of St. Joseph – celebration
8. Covid-19 Pandemic – concerns of the Church
9. Subsecreto Items
10. Membership of H.E. Geevarghese Mar Aprem (Auxiliary Bishop of Kottayam) in the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church.
11. Nadar Reservation (OBC)
12. Meeting with Superior Generals (3) – (10-15 Minutes sharing) “Religious Life : Major concerns and future plans”
13. Meeting with Religious Superior Generals and Provincials (General Discussion and Evaluation on Faith formation – Rev. Dr. Prabheesh George presents the topic (20 minutes)
14. Evaluation of the Major Seminary Academic year
15. Meeting with the Seminarians
16. Meeting with the Seminary Staff
17. Discussion – Seminary formation
18. Christian Minority Commission – formation of Diocesan Committees (SMCC)
19. Briefing of Eparchies including present financial status (10 minutes each) one page presentation.
20. The administration of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia (Accounts).
21. Appointment of Finance Officer of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia
22. Appointment of new team of Sisters in the Catholicate Centre
23. New Secretaries to Synodal Commissions

24. New Regents for the Catholicate Centre.
25. Planning of common celebrations (15 July – Mar Ivanios Day, 20 September – Sabhasangamam at Marthandom)
26. General Evaluation on Synodal Commissions
27. Transfer and Appointment (Ecclesiastical)
28. State Assembly Elections (Kerala and Tamil Nadu)
29. Any other subjects with the approval of the President
30. Concluding Address of His Beatitude.

The HES analyzed the agenda. Due to the pandemic, it was observed that we have to postpone certain meetings on the agenda. It shall only deal with those sessions which need the physical presence of the members. The rest can be discussed on an online platform. Further, it was pointed out that the members of the HES have to join the funeral service of Malpan Geevarghese Chediath. Hence all agreed that the HES shall conclude on Wednesday evening.

### **Catholicos Day Contribution 2020, 2021**

No	Date	Name	Amount in 2020	Amount
1.	02-03-21	Diocese of USA & Canada	\$12,000(Rs.886974/-)	\$12,000(Rs. 856584/-)
2.	05-03-21	Archieparchy of Tiruvalla	700,000/-	400,000/-
3.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Marthandam	300,000	100,000/-
4.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Pune	200,000/-	100,000/-
5.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Puttur	155,000/-	100,000/-
6.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Gurgaon-Delhi	200,000/-	100,000/-
7.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Parassala	100,000/-	50,000/-
8.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Bathery	500,000/-	500,000/-
9.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Mavelikara	355,000/-	355,000/-
10.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Muvattupuzha	200,000/-	75,000/-
11.	05-03-21	Eparchy of Pathanamthitta	400,000/-	400,000
12.	26-03-21	Major Arch Diocese of TVM	10,00,000/-	10,00,000

### **1. SUBMISSION OF THE CATHOLICOS DAY OFFERINGS**

The fathers presented the Offerings to HB:

1. Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum -Rs. 10,00,000/-
2. Archieparchy of Tiruvalla - Rs. 400,000/-

3. Eparchy of Bathery	- Rs. 500,000/-
4. Eparchy of Marthandom	- Rs. 100,000/-
5. Eparchy of Mavelikara	- Rs. 355,000/-
6. Eparchy of Muvattupuzha	- Rs. 75,000/-
7. Eparchy of Pathanamthitta	- Rs. 400,000
8. Eparchy of Puttur	- Rs. 100,000/-
9. Eparchy of Gurgaon	- Rs. 100,000/-
10. Eparchy of USA & Canada	- \$12,000.00
11. Eparchy of Parassala	- Rs. 50,000/-
12. Eparchy of St. Ephrem	- Rs. 100,000/-

#### **4. REPORT OF THE 24th HOLY EPISCOPAL SYNOD**

The print out of the report of the 24th HES held at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Pattom from March 2 to 5, 2020 was available to the Synod Fathers. To save time, the members were asked to read personally the report and the observation could be presented in the Synod the next day.

#### **Year of St. Joseph – celebration**

The following suggestions were aired by the members

1. Each Eparchy can chalk out its own programs to observe the year of St Joseph
2. A few churches which have St Joseph as their Patron in an Eparchy can be declared as pilgrim churches and other parishes can make pilgrimage to those churches
3. The Feast of St Joseph on 19 March can be celebrated solemnly in the parishes
4. Retreats on the life of St Joseph can be arranged
5. *Pithrusangham* can be revived under the patronage of St Joseph without weakening the MCA. 'Fatherhood' is a vocation. This can be highlighted
6. Fr. Daniel Poovannathil can conduct conventions on the life and example of St Joseph
7. This year can be observed in conjunction with the theme, *Kripanirayunnakudumbangal*, the theme of the last Major Archiepiscopal Assembly
8. The life and message of St Joseph shall be highlighted; the observations shall foster the values for which St Joseph lived; the observation of the year shall not be reduced merely to the honoring of 'fathers.'

As a conclusion to the discussion, it was decided that the Eparchies can plan their observations as discussed above. Every trend to 'commercialize' the celebration shall be avoided. Integrate the celebration with the theme, *Kripanirayunnakudumbangal*. A common circular will be given on 19 March, the Feast of St Joseph and the Eparchies can plan their programmes accordingly. A briefing of the Eparchial celebrations / observances shall be made at the end of the year.

In this context, the Synod pondered over, how to revive the *Pithrusangham* without weakening the activities of the MCA and *Mathrusangham*.

## **Membership of H.E. Geevarghese Mar Aprem (Auxiliary Bishop of Kottayam) in the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**

Various observations were brought up for the consideration of the HES.

1. It was pointed out that the decision of the Syro-Malabar Synod was to invite him to that Synod which dealt with the pastoral concerns of the Diocese of Kottayam.
2. The Holy See seems to think that as he is subject to the Archbishop of Kottayam, he belongs to that Hierarchy.
3. He need not participate in the decision making process of our Synod.
4. He needs to be integrated into our Synod only on matters of liturgy.
5. His hierarchical and ecclesiastical communions have to be defined before he is integrated in any Synod.
6. How can we call him a Malankarite without being a member of our Church?
7. Can we implement the decisions of our Synod in the Archdiocese of Kottayam?

After the deliberations, the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church decided: The Bishop Geevarghese Mar Aprem is subject to the Archbishop of Kottayam. We need to invite him to our Synod only on matters pertaining to the liturgy. The Synod has the opinion that he be placed directly under the Holy See.

### **Request from Rev. Fr. Anto Edakalathoor**

Rev. Fr Anto Edakalathoor is now appointed the Director of Mar Ivanios Retreat Centre Nambiarkunnu, formerly Dhyana Ashramam. The request of Fr. Anto was discussed in the context of the claims for the property of Dhyana Ashram by some of the Relatives of late Rev. Fr. Sylvester Kozhimannil.

The Synod came to a consensus that the first death anniversary of Rev. Fr. Sylvester be observed with due participation of all. The issues can be sorted out reaching an understanding with all concerned.

### **Christian Minority Commission – Formation of Eparchial Committees (SMCC)**

Recently the Government of Kerala has constituted a commission to study the status of the Christian Community in Kerala. A survey is to be conducted for the same. The survey by the Government according to their questionnaire and a survey for our own use can be combined and conducted by our teachers. This could enable us to get a comprehensive vision of our community. It has to be an objective study. The suggestion was accepted. Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas shall coordinate the survey in Kerala while Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas would coordinate the survey outside Kerala.

### **Synodal Commissions**

Since the terms of office of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the various Synodal Commissions have been completed, the Synod considered the renewal of the Commission with new appointments where necessary.

Appointment of Secretaries:

Liturgy : Rev. Fr Isaac Parappally (continues)

Theology: Very Rev. Fr. Mathai Kadavil to be replaced by Fr Jolly Karimpil

Evangelization: Rev. Sr. Namita SIC (continues)

Bible: Rev. Fr. Poovathumtharayil (continues)

Ecumenism & Dialogue: Rev. Fr. Cherian Thazhamonto be replaced by Rev. Fr. George Thekkadayil

Clergy: Rev. Fr. Sunny Mathew Kavuvila to be replaced by Fr Thomas Mukalumpurath

Religious: Rev. Fr. Vinayanand OIC (continues)

Faith Formation: Rev. Fr. George Thomas Kochuvilayil to be replaced by Fr. Joseph Valliyatt

Vocation: Rev. Fr. John Kuttiyil (continues)

Seminary Formation: Rev. Fr. Kurikose Thadathil to be replaced by Rev. Fr. Sunny Mathew

Education: Prof. Benedict (continues)

Social Apostolate: Rev. Fr. George Vettikattil (continues)

Health: Rev. Sr. Dr. Ancelet DM (continues)

Communication Media: Rev. Fr Sheen Thankalayam (continues)

Migrants: Finance Officer of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia

### **Chairmen**

Ecumenism: Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios

Religious: Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios

Family: Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos

Seminary Formation: Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom is replaced by Most Rev. Thomas Mar Eusebius

: Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulos (continues as Chairman)

: Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios (continues as Member).

Report of the Last Synod

The Report was proposed to be passed by Joseph Mar Thomas and seconded by Geevarghese Mar Makarios and passed.

Liturgy

#### a. The Liturgy of Denho

The proposal to integrate the liturgy of the Denho with the Holy Qurbano, which was in consideration, was presented by Archbishop Mar Koorilos, the Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Liturgy.

#### b. Proemion Sedero from the Penkiso and the Liturgy of the Blessing of a Church. These texts are prepared. They will be sent to the Bishops. They have to use it for one year and then send the feedback to the Commission.

- c. Marriage according to the Agreement with the Jacobite Church. Often this is transmitted live in the social media and the comments thereafter cause disunity.

### **Presentation of the Annual Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia**

The accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia for the financial year 2020-'21 was presented to the Synod by Rev. Fr Antony Kakkanatt, the interim Financial Officer of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. Clarifications were given where necessary. Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios proposed the accounts to be passed, Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos seconded the proposal and it was passed

After Fr Antony left the Synod Hall, in brief discussion, all consented to appoint Rev. Fr Thomas Madakkammootil, who is presently serving our mission in the UK, the Finance Officer of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia

The HES also took note that service of the DM Sisters in the Major Archiepiscopal Curia ends by 30 April 2021. The Synod thanked them for their exemplary service. Similarly, the HES took note that the two Regents appointed in the Curia have successfully completed their regency formation and are returning to their respective Eparchies.

For the coming academic year, the Bishops of Pathanamthitta and Mavelikkare agreed to avail the service of one Regent each from their Eparchies

### **Common Celebrations**

1. Sabhasanghamam to be hosted by the Eparchy of Marthandam at Marthandam. It was proposed to invite His Eminence Cardinal Ranjit Malcom of Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest.
2. It was proposed that Sabhasanghamam and Reunion Anniversary 2022 be hosted by the Eparchy of St Ephrem Khadki-Pune.
3. Mar Ivanios Day – The 68th Feast of Commemoration of the Servant of God Archbishop of Mary Ivanios, if the pandemic prevails, will be observed in the same order we followed last year.
4. The 25th Feast of Commemoration of Lawrence Mar Aprem will be also celebrated as done last year.

### **Other Announcements**

1. Rev. Fr. Mathai Kandathil, the Ecclesial Coordinator in the Gulf Region is returning to his Eparchy soon.
2. Rev. Fr. Varghese (Reji) Manackaleth is appointed for pastoral service in the Gulf Region and he will be staying in Rasal-Khaima, as UAE Coordinator
3. Rev. Fr. John Thundiyyath to be appointed Gulf Region Coordinator
4. Procura in Rome – Rev. Fr Benedict Perumuttathu from the Eparchy of Mavelikkara is proposed for the post

## **Reservation granted for the Malankara Nadar Community**

HB explained the journey, the challenging journey to this achievement. The movement was under his leadership, aimed at the good of all belonging to the Nadar Community. The Synod Fathers unanimously and enthusiastically congratulated HB for this great achievement and his leadership. It is a great blessing to Nadar community of our Church.

## **Seminary**

Most Rev. Vincent Mar Paulose, the Chairman of the Seminary Commission, explained the life and organization of the academic activities of the Seminary in the pandemic season.

Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas shared with the HES the present status of the Mangalapuzha Seminary and in which way we can cooperate it.

The Procurator and Rector of our Seminary were invited to the HES. Rev Fr. Louis, the Procurator, presented the report of the financial management of the Seminary. Rev. Fr Sunny Mathew, the Rector, presented the general report of the Seminary.

Date of ordination: After Christmas, before 10 January 2021

## **Sharing from the Eparchies**

The bishops were invited to share with the HES, if they find it useful, the pertinent developments in their Eparchies that need the attention of the Church as a whole.

## **Eparchy of St John Chrysostom**

Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas shared with the HES that a Pious Association DSJ (Daughters of St Joseph the Worker) is seeking ascription in the Eparchy of Gurgaon. The Synod opined to approach the Holy See in this matter.

It was reported to the HES that Corepiscopo Daniel Kuzhithadam is not keeping fine; he is on medical leave; he is relieved from his office as Proto-syncellus.

## **Eparchy of Mavelikkara**

Most Rev. Mar Ignathios spoke to the HES about UCPI – United Christian Prayer for India. All the Churches take it as their mission to share the Gospel with 20 people. He urged the members of the HES to foster UCPI in their respective Eparchies.

## **Eparchy of Bathery**

Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas shared with the HES that Rev. Fr Varghese Mattamana has request for voluntary retirement from his priestly service in the Eparchy of Bathery. He said, he is studying how to respond to this situation.



In this context it was opined that all priests have to sign an undertaking giving the terms and conditions of their service in the Eparchy.

HE brought to the attention of the HES a civil government decision to create a buffer zone. This is considered disadvantageous

There is a proposal for a railway line connecting Nilambur, Kalpetta, Bethery and Nanchangodu.

### **Eparchy of Pathanamthitta**

Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios shared with HES how the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta plans to observe the Year of St Joseph.

He also suggested writing a history of the Nadar Samvarana Samaram,

He invited all the bishops for the blessing of the new church at Chandanapally

### **Eparchy of US and Canada**

Most Rev. Philipose Mar Stephanos shared that the Eparchy of St Mary Queen of Peace in US and Canada is planning for an Eparchial Centre in the US. US \$ 3.5 million is needed to buy the adjacent plot. It is proposed to avail a bank loan and to pay it back in 5 years.

He also pointed out that the Malankara Catholic Priests serving the US Dioceses is not maintaining a strong relationship with our Eparchy in the US.

### **Archieparchy of Tiruvalla**

Archbishop Thomas Mar Koorilos spoke about the implementation of the Safe Environment rules and the follow up programmes like conducting a seminar.

We are planning further training programs.

It is also planned to publish a hand book of the application of the safe environment rules.

He also spoke about the Mar Ivanios Good Health Program to promote healthy habits among the people and to promote this for the Malankara Catholics. Rev. Fr. Thoppil Kalathil coordinates this program.

It was decided that to discuss other topics a Synod on Zoom platform can be convoked on 22 March 2021 from 9 to 11:30 am.

### **Conclusion**

In his concluding address, His Beatitude, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos, reminded the HES of the Lenten Message of Pope Francis and His call to observe the Year of St Joseph. The Holy Father always highlights the importance of the renewal of the heart in all things at all occasions. He always speaks to us on the mercy of God. His life is a message for us. He is

completing 8 years of his pontificate. He is very detached, but attached to Jesus of the Gospel. He faces all troubles with equanimity. Let us remember him in our personal prayer.

Our message to the people and the faithful of our Church is to go forth with hope. It is the providence of God that made possible the samvaranam (Reservation) of our Malankara Nadar Community possible. This is a great blessing for our people and our Church. Our people were joining other Churches because of the denial of the samvaranam. I am convinced that the intercession of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios was a stronghold at the time of the samvarana samaram. His intercession is a guiding light. Representatives of the People like Mr. Johny Nellur, PC George etc supported our cause at the beginning of the protest. Our demand for a reservation and support for the Malankara Community was answered in stages: The allotment of the unaided college (Mother Theresa College), the allotment of an aided college (Edanji) and now the granting OBC status to our Malankara Nadar Community. These are a great blessing for this community as well as to our Church. It was the Servant of God Mar Ivanios who received and accepted them into the Church. Now through his intercession God has granted them blessings from above!

Let us go forward with gratitude. God is our refuge!

His Beatitude declared the first part of the Synod closed.

With a short prayer HB imparted the apostolic blessing.

**✠ Thomas Mar Koorilos**  
HES Secretary.

**✠ Yoohanon Mar Theodosius**  
Chancellor.