



# SYRO-MALABAR VISION

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## HABEMUS PAPAM !



## THE GOOD WINE PRESERVED BY GOD

Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott

On the 8th of May, 2025, when the name "Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost" was announced from the balcony of the historic St. Peter's Basilica as the 267th Pope of the Universal Church, the world must have paused in astonishment. For here was a man who had not featured in long-standing media analyses or in the meticulous predictions of Vatican

experts. Even though he had held the crucial responsibility of leading the Roman Dicastery for Bishops, his name had remained largely unnoticed. How did the world overlook such a person? It is indeed surprising. Yet, that is often how God works—hiding the most precious treasures in plain sight with a special tenderness. The choices made in the divine ministries are always a manifestation of

God's boundless freedom. As the Bible says, "The wind blows wherever it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going." In his first appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo XIV's simple smile, quiet confidence, and expression of faith in both God and humanity reflected three central principles of Pope Leo XIII's pontificate.

It was Shakespeare who famously asked, "What's in a name?" But indeed, names matter. The Latin name Leo finds its roots in the Greek LEWN- Leon, meaning lion. Thirteen popes in Church history have borne this name, starting with the great Leo I, who heroically persuaded the fierce and destructive Attila the Hun to spare Rome. The name Leo  
**Continued on page 6**

## EDITORIAL


**A NEW DAWN FOR THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL  
THE PONTIFICATE OF HIS HOLINESS LEO XIV**

The bells of St. Peter's Basilica rang out across the world with renewed hope on the historic day of 08 May 2025, as white smoke billowed above the Sistine Chapel. The Church, in her maternal wisdom and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has entrusted the keys of Peter to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV. The name Leo evokes a lineage of courageous reformers and defenders of orthodoxy. Pope St. Leo the Great preserved doctrinal unity during the Christological controversies of the early Church, while Pope Leo XIII looked to reconcile faith with reason in the modern world. In choosing this name, Leo XIV signals both strength and bridge-building-qualities needed now more than ever as the Church navigates complex global and ecclesial currents.

From his first apostolic address to the participants of the Jubilee of the Eastern Churches on 14 May 2025, the New Pontiff revealed a pastoral heart shaped by deep familiarity with Eastern Catholic traditions. Pope Leo XIV's early remarks and gestures have reflected a commitment to respecting liturgical and ecclesiological diversity and allowing the Eastern Catholic Churches to flourish in their own identity. He has expressed particular concern over the Latinization of Eastern traditions and emphasized the urgent need for authentic renewal that respects the dignity and patrimony of each *sui iuris* Church.

Let us be attentive to the exhortation of the Holy Father Pope Leo to the Eastern Churches on 14 May 2025: "Continue to be outstanding for your faith, hope, and charity, and nothing else. May your Churches be exemplary, and may your Pastors promote communion with integrity, especially in the Synods of Bishops, that they may be places of fraternity and authentic co-responsibility. Ensure transparency in the administration of goods and be signs of humble and complete dedication to the holy people of God, without regard for honours, worldly power or appearance... Today, more than ever, the splendour of the Christian East demands freedom from all worldly attachments and from every tendency contrary to communion in order to remain faithful in obedience and in evangelical witness".

To us, the children of St. Thomas, this pontificate is a providential call to deepen our faithfulness to our Eastern traditions while engaging boldly with the universal Church. Pope Leo XIV's affirmation of liturgical authenticity, respect for ecclesial autonomy, and pastoral accompaniment is a source of hope as we continue to navigate our own internal liturgical and ecclesial journeys.

Let us pray fervently for our new Holy Father, that he may be given wisdom, courage, and joy as he leads the Church in unity and holiness. And let us, as the Syro-Malabar faithful, recommit ourselves to our mission: to be a light from the East, a witness of ancient faith in a modern world. May the Lord bless Pope Leo XIV and grant that, under his leadership, the whole Church may more clearly reflect the radiant face of Christ—the light of the nations.

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**A DAY TO REMEMBER****June 1:** Feast day of Mar Gracious Mundadan

Kunnacherry, Metropolitan (2017)

**June 2:** Death Anniversary of Blessed Mar Thomas Kurialacherry (1925)**June 15:** Feast of the Most Holy Trinity**June 8:** Saint Mariam Thresia**June 18:** Death Anniversary of Mar John

Pentecost Feast

Perumattam, Metropolitan (2011)

From today onwards, the Angel of the Lord prayer is recited thrice daily

Episcopal Ordination of Mar Peter Kochupurackal (2020)

**June 9:** Mar Aphrem**June 19:** Feast of the Most Holy Eucharist**June 11:** Death Anniversary of Mar Sebastian Mankuzhikary (1994)**June 22:** Saints John Fisher and Thomas More

Feast of Saint Barnabas the Apostle

**June 24:** Birth of Saint John the Baptist**June 13:** Golden Friday**June 27:** Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Saint Anthony of Padua

**June 28:** Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**June 14:** Death Anniversary of Mar Kuriakose

Saint Irenaeus

**June 29:** Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles**FESTAL GREETINGS**

June 9

Mar Ephrem  
Nariculam

June 13

Mar Antony  
KariyilMar Antony  
ChirayathMar Prince  
Antony  
PanengadanMar Tony  
Neelankavil

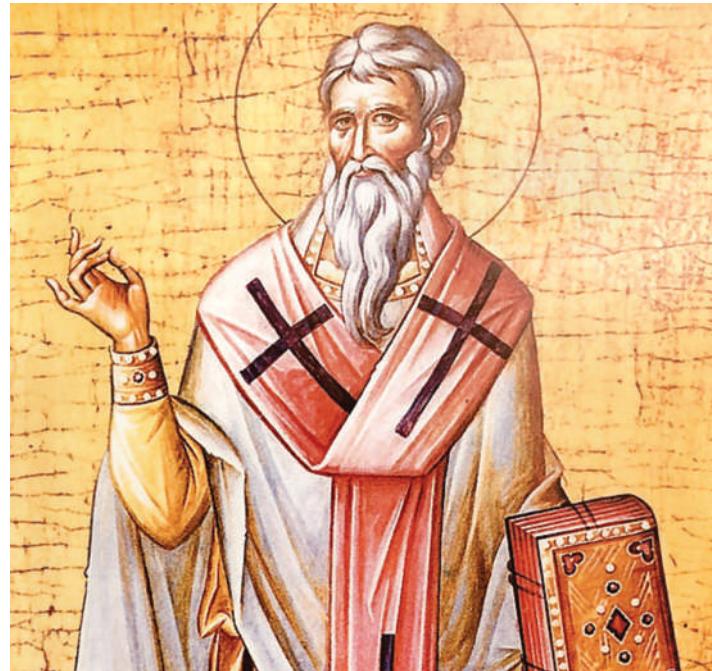
June 29

Mar Pauly  
KannookadanMar Paul  
AlappattMar Peter  
Kochupurackal**ST. IRENAEUS OF LYON****Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam**

Irenaeus, who was born in Asia Minor during the first half of the second century, passed away between AD 200 and 203 while serving as the bishop of Lyon in Gaul. St. Jerome attests that Irenaeus was in Lyon during the reign of Emperor Commodus (177–192) (*De Viris Illustribus* 35). Irenaeus himself testifies that, in his childhood, he had directly heard St. Polycarp of Smyrna, who had been a disciple of St. John the Apostle. He writes:

"The events of that time are more clearly etched in my memory than those of recent years... the place where Polycarp sat and prayed... his way of life, his physical appearance, his sermons, the accounts he gave about his interactions with John the Apostle and others who had seen the Lord—all these I can vividly recall." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V, 20, 6)

When Pothinus, the then bishop of Lyon, became a martyr at the age of ninety, Irenaeus



succeeded him in that position (*Ecclesiastical History* V, 5, 8).

Although several other works are attributed to him, Irenaeus is most renowned for his five-volume work *Against Heresies* (*Adversus Haereses*), written in opposition to the Gnosticism espoused by Valentinus. He also wrote against other heresies that were disturbing the peace of the Roman Church. His letter to the heretic Florinus is an example of this.

True to the meaning of his name—Irenaeus (from *eirēnē*,

meaning "peace")—he was a man of peace. When Victor, the head of the Roman Church, decided to sever ties with the Eastern Churches that did not celebrate Easter on Sunday, Irenaeus, then head of the episcopal council of Gaul, was a leading voice urging that the matter be handled with peace and love (*Ecclesiastical History* V, 24, 1–11).

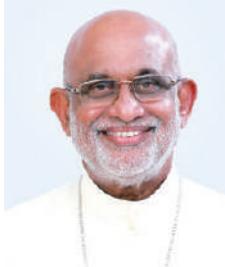
On January 21, 2022, Pope Francis declared Irenaeus a Doctor of the Church, bestowing upon him the title Doctor of Unity in recognition of his life's witness.

# LEO XIV: A POPE WHO RECOGNIZED THE GRANDEUR OF THE EAST



From the Heart of the Father and Head

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



**I**t was with immense joy that I received the news that, on May 8, 2025, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected as Pope Leo XIV, the 267th successor of Saint Peter the Apostle. I consider it a divine blessing that I was in Rome at that time, having come to attend the funeral rites of the late, dearly remembered Pope Francis and to participate in the jubilee celebrations led by the Eastern Churches. I was privileged to attend the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV and to witness and listen to him closely in the early days of his pontificate. It is in the light of my personal conversation with the Holy Father that I would now like to share some reflections on Pope Leo XIV.

It is indeed true that the adoption

“**The world needs you. You are precious before God. Your liturgical language is invaluable. With your ancient spirituality, you can enrich the spiritual life of the universal Church.**” These are the words of a successor of Saint Peter who has recognized the grandeur of the East.

of the name “Leo XIV” by Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was a matter of wonder for the whole world. The natural question that arose was whether he, like Pope Leo XIII, would also demonstrate a deep concern for social realities and issues. But Pope Leo XIV unequivocally affirmed that his approach would indeed be a continuation of the social sensitivity exemplified by Leo XIII. He clearly expressed that he would stand for human dignity and human rights, particularly in the face of modern challenges such as the revolutionary growth of technologies, including artificial intelligence, which threaten to erode the value of humanity.

I perceive Pope Leo as a visionary missionary—one who was born in the First World and who deliberately chose to live among the people of the Third World. From his very first speech, the Holy Father’s emphasis on a renewed missionary orientation for the Church deeply moved me, as someone who has lived and served for many years in mission territories. His declaration that “The

world needs the light of Christ” is a powerful source of inspiration and zeal for missionaries around the globe.

Having spent over two decades living among and witnessing to the Gospel among the poor in the remote outskirts of Trujillo, a city in Peru, Pope Leo XIV’s election gives me firm hope that his pontificate will renew the Church’s missionary outlook in the 21st century. The Syro-Malabar Church is one of the most mission-oriented Churches in the world. Our faithful are serving as missionaries in various parts of the globe. Still, there are numerous areas yet to be reached with the Gospel. I firmly believe that during the time of Pope Leo, our Church’s missionary endeavors will receive new opportunities and pathways.

Just as Pope Leo XIII presented to the world the antiquity, richness, and greatness of Eastern theology, liturgy, and spirituality through *Orientalium Dignitas*, Pope Leo XIV, at the very beginning of his pontificate, has shown an openness to embracing the spiritual treasures of

the Eastern Churches. His words to the Eastern Churches are deeply meaningful: “The world needs you. You are precious before God. Your liturgical language is invaluable. With your ancient spirituality, you can enrich the spiritual life of the universal Church.” These are the words of a successor of Saint Peter who has recognized the grandeur of the East.

There is great hope that during the time of Pope Leo XIV, serious efforts will be made to promote and protect Eastern theology and liturgical traditions. This is especially important now that the Syro-Malabar Church has become a global Church, and since the support of bishops from Latin-rite dioceses across various parts of the world is crucial for our Church’s growth. It is comforting that Pope Leo has asked the Western Church to support and protect the Eastern Churches.

Pope Leo XIV bears a great responsibility, and he will need our prayers to fulfill this mission in accordance with God’s will. Therefore, let us include Pope Leo XIV in our prayers from now on. ■

## MESSAGE OF THE CURIA BISHOP

Bishop Sebastian Vaniyapurakal



**W**hen I was fifteen years old, one day a fortune-teller woman from Tamil Nadu came to our house. I was then preparing for my tenth-grade examinations, and my thirteen-year-old younger brother and I were playing in the courtyard. Both of us watched her conversation and interactions with great curiosity. Since it was exam season, we even tried to have her read our palms to find out whether we would pass. But when our father saw this, he scolded us.

Immediately, the woman requested our father to extend his hand and said she could predict his future. Displeased with this, our father reacted sharply, saying, “You or my hand?” As students, my brother and I could hear in our father’s response the voice of moral conviction. The lesson our father taught us was one of morality—he considered even the thought of a wandering fortune-teller touching his hand as unacceptable.

In the 39th chapter of the Book of Genesis, there’s a powerful theme that

## FILMS ROOTED IN MORAL VALUES ARE THE NEED OF THE DAY

“**The stories presented through films should be such that they lead viewers towards goodness. More importantly, the actors portraying noble roles on screen should also safeguard moral values in their personal lives. People generally admire those who act in films.**

teaches a great moral truth. When our forefather Joseph, who had been sold as a slave, arrived in Egypt, he was bought by Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard. Because Potiphar liked Joseph very much, he entrusted him with the supervision of his house and everything he owned. Joseph, being well-built and handsome, caught the desire of Potiphar’s wife.

Even though she repeatedly asked him to lie with her, Joseph did not yield. Joseph replied thus: “Because of me, my master pays no attention to anything in the house; he has entrusted everything he has to my care. No one in this house is greater than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”

Every day she continued to plead with Joseph to lie with her, but Joseph refused even to be near her. One day, when things did not go her way, she grabbed his cloak. Leaving the cloak in her hands, Joseph quickly fled from the house. Taking advantage of the situation, she complained to her husband that the Hebrew servant he had brought into the house tried to insult her.

Infuriated by this, Potiphar threw Joseph into prison. This incident teaches us a profound truth: even a slave boy possessed moral consciousness that was absent in the palace-dwelling mistress!

Today, in our culture, cinema exerts a powerful influence on all sections of society, especially children and youth. It is a fact that in many scenes crafted to attract viewers, there exists vulgarity and immorality. Beyond that, the rev-

elations made by actors themselves to the public and in complaints to authorities suggest that their personal lives too often do not follow the straight path.

The stories presented through films should be such that they lead viewers towards goodness. More importantly, the actors portraying noble roles on screen should also safeguard moral values in their personal lives. People generally admire those who act in films. That very fact gives actors the ability to exert great influence over their audience.

May all actors live holy lives with the conviction that they have received a special call from God to impart good values to society. May they be able to present sacred themes through cinema. I extend my heartfelt wishes and prayers for the same. ■

# REDEFINING MORALITY THROUGH CINEMA

Rev. Dr. Joseph Parakkal

Cinema is often described as the mirror of society. This metaphor implies that films reflect the structure and essence of the communities in which they are made. Frequently, cinema explores social life, familial bonds, faith, values, and political-economic issues. Just as we observe ourselves in a mirror, cinema allows us to observe society. However, beyond this reflective quality, cinema also shapes beliefs and values, reinterprets morality, and functions as a powerful medium that exchanges new trends and innovations.

Nothing in cinema is accidental. Every shot and scene is crafted according to a predetermined script. Filmmakers possess the ability to transport audiences into a mesmerizing world that transcends time and space, aligning with their own creative interests. While films have the potential to provide direction to society and convey moral values, they sometimes disseminate misinformation and misleading ideas. Under the guise of progressive thought, certain films promote pseudo-morality, superficial philosophies, and exaggerated notions of freedom. Instead of championing truth, justice, dialogue, and social wellbeing, some films create an alternate reality that stands in opposition to the very moral foundations they ought to uphold. The following sections provide examples of this phenomenon.

## When the Dignity of Humanity is Undermined

Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are inherently valuable and worthy of respect. Yet, pornography, advertisements that demean womanhood, and videos that promote character assassination convey messages that directly oppose human dignity. These types of films, driven solely by financial profit, reduce the human body to a commodity. They hinder genuine interpersonal relationships grounded in emotional integrity and fidelity within marriage. Moreover, the issues of sexual exploitation, casting couch culture, and gender discrimination within the film industry itself are violations of the sanctity of the human person.

## When Violence and Murder Are Glorified

Today's new-generation films often celebrate crime, murder, robbery, bloodshed, and bombings. These films justify every act of violence committed by the protagonist, driven by a philosophy that the ends justify the means. Such portrayals desensitize audiences, breeding a generation that is emotionally numb, unresponsive, and indifferent. Between the first 59 days of 2025 alone, 70 murders were recorded in Kerala. This rise in crime and the societal factors contributing to it demand critical examination, particularly in light of cinematic influences.



⌘⌘ A way of life, and above all, as a form of art. The films they created were often beloved, with compelling themes and masterful presentations that won the hearts of audiences.

## When Post-Truth Thinking Prevails

In an era where repeated lies are accepted as truth, cinema is no exception. Films that distort the truth, misrepresent history, or serve as propaganda for specific political parties or religious groups pose a threat to society. Historical events must be presented based on rigorous investigation and objective facts. However, many films and documentaries prioritize emotional manipulation and fictionalized accounts over factual accuracy. Behind such productions often lies a calculated attempt to stir controversy and thereby draw in more viewers.

## When Satanic and Occult Themes Dominate

Films financed by satanic worshippers and anti-church groups are making their way into theaters today. These productions often feature elements such as superstition, atheism, anti-Christian sentiment, demonic symbols, and rituals from obscure sects. Such content suggests that evil forces are dominant in society and that occult practices offer a shortcut to success. These dangerous ideologies have the potential to deeply influence unsuspecting audiences.

## When Role Models Disappear

There was a time when films focused on public good, clean politics, family relationships, selfless love, and lives filled with sacrifice. In contrast, today's films tend to highlight hatred, revenge, narcotics, the underworld, the dark web, smuggling, and mass murders. Superheroes with supernatural powers, artificial intelligence, and even extraterrestrials have become common themes. Meanwhile, the everyday life of the average person—parents, siblings, life partners, and children—rarely finds a place in modern cinematic narratives. The lives of ordinary people, marked by suffering, corruption, and inequality, are often ignored. Children and youth are particularly susceptible to emulating what they see on screen—unfortunately, this often includes criminal acts and violence.

## The Promotion and Marketing of Intoxicants

A recent media report noted that heroines now receive more focus than heroes on film sets. In Kerala, there is a growing concern that the film industry is being influenced, if not overtaken, by drug cartels. Numerous individuals

associated with cinema have been arrested in connection with drug use and trafficking. These films send a message that narcotics are easily available, widely used, and even beneficial to creativity. By glamorizing and normalizing drug use, cinema contributes to its wider social acceptance.

There was once a generation that saw cinema as more than entertainment—as a way of life, and above all, as a form of art. The films they created were often beloved, with compelling themes and masterful presentations that won the hearts of audiences. Some became blockbusters, running in theaters for up to a year. These works emerged when directors, attuned to public sentiment, presented timely topics with the support of advanced technology.

Today, cinema is predominantly a business. Money is the god. Films driven solely by commercial viability often disregard public good and the dignity of humanity. What we need are films grounded in human values—films that affirm truth, encourage dialogue and debate, and stand for social responsibility and justice. ■

## THE ENCHANTING INFLUENCE OF CINEMA



❖❖ People watch films for mental relaxation. But if, after watching, they experience mental distress and discomfort, doesn't that mean the film has failed — even if it was a financial success — both artistically and ethically?

Lisi K. Fernandes

Among the most imitated art forms, cinema occupies the foremost position. Films, irrespective of language, have a profound influence on viewers. Compared to other art forms, the adoration that actors receive from audiences, the vast platforms cinema commands, and the opportunity to employ cutting-edge technology all contribute to cinema's heightened capacity for imita-

tion. Youth are often eager to recite popular dialogues from films or rush to take selfies upon spotting an actor or actress.

While people recognize film stars with ease, they may not even recognize key figures in the government, including ministers — particularly the youth. If an actor, a political leader, and an industrialist walk together, who would people rush toward first? The answer is clear — the film star. This clearly demonstrates the extent of influence movie stars have

on young people. It becomes evident, therefore, that cinema can wield significant influence over society, especially among youth.

Numerous films with powerful messages have been released in various languages. The Passion of the Christ, Gandhi, and others serve as examples. There are even individuals who embraced Christianity after watching The Passion of the Christ. In Kerala, people were inspired to financially support and show love to orphanages after watching the Malayalam film Akashadoothu. However, it must be said that some of today's films, in one way or another, convey misleading or harmful messages to the public.

There is no doubt that films filled with intense violence or those that misrepresent patriotism can have a negative impact on society. Young people who adopt rebellion as a fashion statement are often fans of such violent films. Excited by commercially-driven trailers released in advance, they throng theatres on the day of the film's release, turning them into festive grounds. Then come social media posts and buzz, offering free publicity to the films. The messages these types of films send to society — especially to a youth generation eager to imitate anything — can be extremely damaging!

People watch films for mental relaxation. But if, after watching, they experience mental distress and discomfort, doesn't that mean the film has failed — even if it was a financial success — both

artistically and ethically? That is why filmmakers and their teams must be fully aware of the direct and indirect impact their creations might have on society. Studies show that from a young age, what children see and hear through artistic expressions influences their brains, intellect, and minds — and these influences persist into adulthood.

The individuals whom young people consider their idols mostly come from the film industry. People even try to imitate their clothing and hairstyles. When a new movie is released, shops often display clothes matching those worn by the actor or actress in the film. This trend, which began in the days of actor Jayan, continues to this day.

It has now become a common occurrence for people to commit various crimes imitating certain film characters. Many news stories remind us of this. The most painful reality is that a generation constantly exposed to images of evil becomes desensitized to them. Still, cinema can positively influence the intellect and ideas of youth. When melodious songs are sung, viewers join in, dance, and cheer enthusiastically. In short, since cinema continues to be an integral part of society, there's no doubt that it significantly affects people's lives.

The art that emerges in the coming times should contribute to the preservation of families, faith, and society. Let the film world create numerous movies, songs, and art that do not tarnish religion, society, or the nation. To achieve this, it is essential in this era to identify and utilize individuals in the arts who possess both moral values and artistic talent.

## MISSIONARY SISTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE (MSMI)



❖❖ Home Mission programs of the congregation help many families to grow in faith, to solve the problems by patient listening and dialogue and ensure to keep a spiritual atmosphere through regular daily prayers in the family, active participation in the liturgy, sacrament of penitence and active listening of the Word of God.

Sr. Ely Vadakkemury MSMI  
Mother General

The congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate (MSMI) is belonging to the Syro-Malabar Church sprouted and took root in the rich soil of Kerala. MSMI Congregation was founded on 8th September 1962 at Kulathuvayal, in the then Diocese of Tellichery, Kerala, India, by late Msgr. CJ Varkey who had an unquenchable passion for souls. The specific charism of the congregation is to manifest the Redeeming love of Jesus to all. Jesus who, filled with the Holy Spirit, went about teaching the people, preaching the Gospel, healing every disease and infirmity, saving the people and visiting them in their homes (Matt. 9.35). The congregation is dedicated to missionary work and the dissemination

of the redemptive love of Jesus through family apostolate and the proclamation of the Word of God.

The missionary zeal of Msgr. CJ Varkey for proclaiming the Word of God outreached MSMI congregation to Fatehpur mission station of the Arch Diocese of Bhopal in 1972 and expanded to various mission stations in India and abroad. On 15 October 1988 His Holiness John Paul II raised the congregation to Pontifical status. At present the MSMI comprises around 820 professed sisters in four Provinces assigned in the Church in 151 houses having their services in various apostolates, namely visiting families, proclamation of the Word of God, education, village exposure programs, health care and pro-life activities, care for the sick & orphans, teaching catechism, Christeen program, youth

ministry and prayer & counselling etc. Aiming to the transformation of individuals and the liberation of people from all forms of evil, the congregation has four retreat centres and sisters engage in regular preaching ministry as well as spiritual and psychological counselling which help many to free from various kinds of bondages. This congregation give prime importance to proclaim the Good News to as many people as possible with the intention of helping the people to come out from the obscurity of ignorance of a loving God and enjoy the freedom of the children of God.

According to the vision of the founder, the congregation give priority to family visits to get a clear picture of present family situation. Home Mission programs of the congregation help many families to grow in faith, to solve the

problems by patient listening and dialogue and ensure to keep a spiritual atmosphere through regular daily prayers in the family, active participation in the liturgy, sacrament of penitence and active listening of the Word of God. Besides, the ministries of MSMI focus on the interaction among family members through frequent visits, dialogue with an empathetic listening which help many to come out from the suppressed negative emotions and feelings and guide them to lead an authentic Christian life based on faith, hope and charity.

The spirituality of our congregation is Marian spirituality and the life the life of the MSMI is coloured by the life and spirit of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the supreme model and the mother of the redeemer, who lived her entire life in union with God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The words and deeds of MSMI sisters give the message to the humanity to surrender totally to God and fulfil the will of God in all situations. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" is the motto of our congregation. In order to renew Christian faith, regenerate society and build a community rooted in Christ, sisters dedicate their lives as the handmaids of the Lord and engage in various innovative ministries according to the needs of the time as true missionaries of redeeming love.

Continuation of page 1



### ❖ In his first address from the Basilica of St. Peter, Pope Leo XIV emphasised two key priorities of his pontificate.

XIV, therefore, carries with it a powerful symbolic message. Church historians often assert that the era of modern papacy begins with Leo XIII, who led the Universal Church from 1878 to 1903. He was a reformer who modernized the Church, redirected her attention to the contemporary world, awakened a sense of social responsibility within her, envisioned a society grounded in justice, and opened new doors for theology and biblical studies. By choosing the name Leo XIV, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost signals a continuity with this legacy. Known as "Padre Prevost" during his missionary years in the slum-like outskirts of Trujillo, Peru—a region bloodstained by internal conflicts—Pope Leo XIV

brings the promise of advocacy for justice and a solidarity with the marginalized as central themes of his pontificate.

In his first address from the Basilica of St. Peter, Pope Leo XIV expressed two key priorities of his pontificate. The very first words he uttered were: "Pace a voi" — "Peace be with you." To a world weary and traumatized by war stories, what else can be expected from the Vicar of Christ? The Church must be a messenger of peace, and her children must be peacemakers. Just like the heroic Leo I, may Leo XIV have the courage to stand fearlessly before the powers that be and lead them on the path of peace! In his inaugural message, the Pope called us to be a Church that builds bridges — extending hands of help,

presence, love, and dialogue to those in need. He urged us to become a Church of encounter and conversation. His chosen motto, "In illo uno unum" — "That all may be one in Christ" — reflects a hope that he might guide our conflict-ridden world to peaceful shores and heal the wounds of division.

Another prominent theme in Pope Leo XIV's early messages is a renewed missionary zeal that is expected to characterize his papacy. He declares in his first statement: "The world longs deeply for the light of Christ." In his homily during his first papal Mass, he affirms, "Our vocation is to bear joyful witness to our faith in Christ." Quoting the famous line of St. Ignatius of Antioch, he adds, "It

is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me. I disappear so that Christ may be made visible. I allow myself to be consumed so that Christ may be known and loved by all" It is hoped that Pope Leo XIV will address the missionary inertia that has marked the modern Church. As the saying goes, "The real remedy for a sick Church is to put it on a missionary diet." There is indeed great hope that he will introduce such a transformative missionary vigor to revive the contemporary Church, which often suffers from spiritual lethargy.

Among the 24 particular Churches that make up the Catholic Church, 23 are Eastern Churches. Pope Leo XIV's words reveal a deep openness toward the Eastern Churches and a genuine respect for the spiritual heritage of the East. One of the first public events he attended after becoming Pope was the jubilee celebration of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Addressing them, he said, "The Church needs you. With your ancient spiritual traditions, you can renew the spirituality of the Universal Church." Just as Pope Leo XIII boldly presented the grandeur of Eastern Christianity before the West through his encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas* ("The Dignity of the East"), we can hope that Pope Leo XIV will show even greater openness toward the needs and dignity of Eastern Christians.

"You have kept the good wine until now"—this famous Biblical phrase encapsulates the mystery of divine timing. God always reserves the best for the right moment. In a single phrase, Pope Leo XIV—Robert Francis Prevost—can be described as the "good wine" that God has preserved, unnoticed by the world, for the sake of our times, both for the Church and for the world. What else can we call the divine justice that lifted a man bearing the scent of common humanity, with tears and trials etched into his story, from the slums to the throne of Peter, but a sheer marvel? ■



## DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

### MAY 2 TO MAY 18

#### May

- **2 Friday :** Returned after participating in the funeral services of the Holy Father Pope Francis.
- **3 Saturday :** Addressed the gathering of catechetical directors held at Mount St. Thomas.
- **6 Tuesday:** Participated in and delivered a message at the meeting of benefactors supporting the Syro-Malabar Mission held at Mount St. Thomas.
- **5 Monday:** Delivered an address and spoke at the missionary gathering organized under the leadership of the Commission for Evangelization. Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered the homily at the renovated St. Joseph's Church in

Kuriachira, in the Archeparchy of Thrissur.

- **7 Wednesday :** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and led the perpetual profession ceremonies in connection with the golden jubilee of the ministry of the St. Anne's Sisters at Thannipuzha in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.
- **8 Thursday:** Addressed the children participating in the talent gathering organized by the Catechetical Commission at Mount St. Thomas.
- **9 Friday :** Left for Rome to participate in the Jubilee celebrations of the Eastern Churches and the inauguration ceremony of Pope Leo XIV's pontificate.

• **13 Tuesday:** Concelebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered the homily at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican in connection with the Grand Jubilee, along with other bishops of the Church, during the Holy *Qurbana* presided over by Patriarch Louis Sako, head of the Chaldean Church.

• **14 Wednesday :** Participated in the special audience granted by the Holy Father for the Heads and faithful of the Eastern Churches, and conveyed the greetings and prayers of the Syro-Malabar Church.

• **18 Sunday :** Concelebrated in the Holy Mass on the occasion of the beginning of the pontificate of the Holy Father, Leo XIV.

# GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTING HOLY QURBANA INTENTIONS



**JOURNEY OF FAITH**  
Rev. Dr. Bilju Vazhapilly

Secondum Probatum (According to the tradition of the Church), the new decree issued on April 13 with the approval of Pope Francis by the Roman Dicastery for the Clergy, reminds us what the Holy *Qurbana* intention is and the guidelines for accepting it. This decree is based on the 1991 decree *Mos Iugiter*, which dealt with various matters related to the offering of the Holy *Qurbana*, the monetary contributions given by the faithful for it, and the celebration of Holy *Qurbana* with multiple intentions, as well as current canonical law. The intention of this decree is truly commendable: to safeguard the dignity and spiritual integrity of the sacrament of Holy *Qurbana* according to the Church's tradition, to ensure more transparency and clarity in the Church regarding *Qurbana* offerings, and to assure the faithful of proper handling of their contributions related to *Qurbana* intentions.

As a response to the observations, questions, and requests received from bishops, priests, ordinary faithful, individuals, and religious communities from different parts of the world regarding the Holy *Qurbana* intentions, this Dicastery, after a thorough examination of all aspects of the issue and extensive consultations with other concerned Dicasteries, became convinced of the need for new guidelines and has issued the following:



**❖ This decree reminds that the faithful who contribute an offering for the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* are participating more intimately in the Holy *Qurbana* by making a personal sacrifice, and at the same time, they are cooperating with the needs of the Church and contributing to the sustenance of those who serve in the Church.**

## Holy *Qurbana* Intention

Based on the scriptural verse "Those who serve at the altar share what is offered on the altar" (1 Cor 9:13), the offering given by the people of God for the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* is the *Qurbana* intention. Thus, this decree reminds that the faithful who contribute an offering for the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* are participating more intimately in the Holy *Qurbana* by making a personal sacrifice, and at the same time, they are cooperating with the needs of the Church and contributing to the sustenance of those who serve in the Church.

## *Qurbana* Records Must Be Accurate and Transparent

When receiving offerings for Holy *Qurbana* intentions, bishops and vicars have the responsibility to ensure that it is properly recorded and that the corresponding Holy *Qurbanas* are actually celebrated. In accordance with this, many eparchies already have the practice that during the annual retreat (parish level), priests submit their properly recorded *Qurbana* intention register for the bishop's approval. Only one *Qurbana* intention may be accepted per day.

## One *Qurbana* and Multiple Intentions

A priest celebrating the Holy *Qurbana* is permitted to accept offerings in the form of *Qurbana* intention money with the understanding that the Holy *Qurbana* is offered for the intention entrusted to him. However, from now on, the practice of offering one Holy *Qurbana* for multiple intentions is permitted only under stricter conditions. When accepting money for such *Qurbanas*, the faithful must be clearly informed. Their contribution can only be accepted for a Holy *Qurbana* with multiple intentions if they give their free and informed consent. Through this rule, the Church aims to ensure that the rule of offering one Holy *Qurbana* per individual intention is respected and to reduce the excessive practice of celebrating one *Qurbana* for multiple intentions.

## Other Rules

The money given by the faithful to priests for the intention of Holy *Qurbana* should not take on the nature of a commercial transaction.

In addition to the amount fixed by the eparchial bishop for the administration of sacraments, the minister should not demand anything more.

The denial of sacramental help to the most needy due to poverty must always be avoided. Therefore, priests must be willing to offer Holy *Qurbana* for the intentions of the poor even without accepting any offering.

Eparchies should cultivate the practice of transferring surplus Holy *Qurbana* intentions and the funds received for them to mission areas or other parishes in difficulty.



LITURGICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTRE STUDY  
SERIES

Rev. Dr. James Puliurumbil

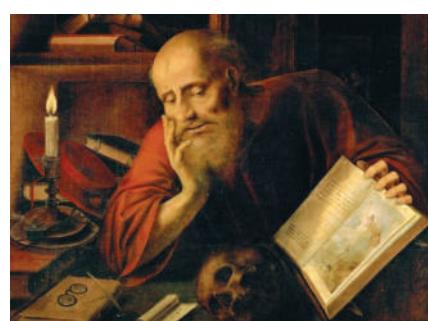
Among the great scholars of the early centuries, St. Jerome stands out as a particularly noteworthy figure. A man of profound learning, Jerome was well-versed in several languages and deeply familiar with Biblical, Classical, and Patristic literature. He also possessed substantial knowledge about the geography and natural features of India. In many of his writings, Jerome refers to the Apostle Thomas. In his work *Epistola ad Marcellum*, he writes that Jesus, after the Resurrection, was present simultaneously with the Apostles and angels, in the Father, and even to the ends of the sea. The risen Christ resided everywhere: in India with Thomas, in Rome with Peter, in Illyricum with Paul, in Crete with Titus, in Achaia with Andrew—He was with the apostles in every nation where they dwelled.

## ST. JEROME ON THE CHURCH IN INDIA

**❖ When writing about the nations evangelized by the apostles, Jerome—like Origen and Ambrose—mentions Thomas first. It is only after this that Peter is listed in connection with Rome and Paul with Illyricum.**

In his work *De viris illustribus*, written in 392, Jerome once again refers to St. Thomas. Writing about the apostolic ministry of Thomas, Jerome asserts that the Apostle preached the Gospel to many people, from the Parthians to the Indians. Upholding tradition, Jerome writes that the Apostle Thomas preached the Gospel of the Lord among the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Carmanians, and Hyrcanians. He further notes that Thomas died in the city of Kalamina in India. In his book *Adversus Jovinum*, Jerome also writes about Buddhists and Brahmins.

While Origen states that Thomas preached the Gospel in Parthia, Jerome writes that Thomas died in Kalamina. When writing about the nations evangelized by the apostles, Jerome—like Origen and Ambrose—mentions Thomas first.



It is only after this that Peter is listed in connection with Rome and Paul with Illyricum. The reason for placing Thomas first in this list is not due to his rank or authority among the apostles but because he is believed to have evangelized the greatest number of nations. Because of this, Thomas is given the first place in the context of Gospel proclamation. The Church Fathers—Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, and Isidore—mention Thomas first

when describing the apostolic mission, due to their clear understanding of his extensive missionary activities.

While writing about the visit of Pantaenus to India, Jerome makes another reference to India. In *Epistola ad Paulinum*, Jerome describes the journey of Apollonius of Tyana to India. Apollonius first arrived in Persia, then crossed mountain ranges and visited several prosperous regions of India, crossed the Ganges, and finally reached the Brahmins. In another work, *Epistola ad Dardanum*, Jerome writes about a traveler who, after visiting Palestine, Phoenicia, Syria, Osrhoene, Mesopotamia, and Persia, eventually reaches India. In *Epistola ad Evangelium*, Jerome also refers to the city of Muziris in India, where Romans at that time had come for the pepper trade.

# A NEW LEONINE ERA!



**❖ In his homily during the Mass, Pope Leo emphasized love, unity, and fraternity, reminding the faithful that in times of hatred, conflict, and wounds, we must advance with the seal of love and unity. After the Mass, the Pope traveled in the Popemobile to bless the gathered faithful.**

Vatican City: On May 18, at 10 a.m. local time (1:30 p.m. IST), the official inauguration of the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV took place, marking

his assumption of office as the 267th Supreme Pontiff of the global Catholic Church. The event was initiated with prayers and incense offering at the tomb of Saint Peter, attended by Patriarchs from Eastern Churches. Following this, Pope Leo XIV, escorted by cardinals, proceeded to the main altar set up in St. Peter's Square.

A central part of the enthronement ceremony included the Pope receiving the Fisherman's Ring, symbolizing his succession of the first Pope—St. Peter, the fisherman from Galilee—and the Pallium, representing the pastoral authority entrusted to him and his universal role as shepherd of the Church. Cardinals from three ranks (bishops, priests, and deacons) led the ceremony of investing the Pope with these symbols.

The Gospel was read in Latin and Greek. Cardinal Dominique Mamberti presented the Pallium, and Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle from Asia invested the Pope with the Fisherman's Ring. Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu from Africa led the prayer for the Pope. After receiving the ring and the Pallium, Pope Leo XIV held up the Bible and blessed the faithful. The overflowing

crowd at St. Peter's Square responded with thunderous applause and chants of "Ad multos annos" (many years).

Following this, twelve individuals from various parts of the world symbolically represented the universal Church and pledged their obedience to the Pope.

In his homily during the Mass, Pope Leo emphasized love, unity, and fraternity, reminding the faithful that in times of hatred, conflict, and wounds, we must advance with the seal of love and unity. After the Mass, the Pope traveled in the Popemobile to bless the gathered faithful.

Over 200,000 people from around the world participated in the enthronement ceremony. World leaders, including U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, were present. From India, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh led the delegation.

After the ceremonies, Pope Leo XIV met with heads of states, leaders of various churches, and spiritual leaders from other religions and expressed his gratitude.

## A MAN WITH THE SCENT OF THE MARGINALIZED ON PETER'S THRONE



**❖ The First Augustinian Pope from North America Pope Leo XIV is the first Pope from the Augustinian Order in North America. He was born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, to Louis Marius Prevost, a French-Italian naval officer, and Mildred Martinez, a Spanish-descent librarian.**

joy: We have a Pope!), was made in Latin by Cardinal Proto-Deacon Dominique Mamberti to Rome and the world.

Cardinal Mamberti also announced that Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost had taken the official papal name Leo XIV. When white smoke rose from the Sistine Chapel that Thursday evening, more than 100,000 people had gathered in and around St. Peter's Square to see the new successor of Peter and receive the Pope's first "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) blessing.

The new Bishop of Rome, Pope Leo XIV, appeared at the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica and greeted everyone with a smile. His first words to the faithful were, "Peace be with you all." He said the peace of the Risen Christ is non-violent, disarming, humble, and steadfast. It comes from God who loves us unconditionally.

Pope Leo added, "The world needs

the light of Christ. Humanity needs Christ like a bridge that brings God and His love to all. Let us join hands and build bridges to live in peace through dialogue and encounters. I am a Christian with you and a bishop for you," said the spiritual son of Saint Augustine. "Let us walk together toward the kingdom God has prepared for us. Let us strive together to be a missionary Church, a Church of dialogue and bridges, welcoming others with open arms like this very square. Let us open our mercy, presence, conversations, and love to those who need it."

At the end of his message, the Pope recited the invocation "O Mary, full of grace" in Italian. After the prayer, Cardinal Mamberti informed that the Pope would give his first "Urbi et Orbi" blessing. He reminded everyone that by receiving it—either in person or through media—they could obtain

plenary indulgence under the conditions prescribed by the Church. Pope Leo XIV then gave his Apostolic Blessing "Urbi et Orbi" to all.

The First Augustinian Pope from North America Pope Leo XIV is the first Pope from the Augustinian Order in North America. He was born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, to Louis Marius Prevost, a French-Italian naval officer, and Mildred Martinez, a Spanish-descent librarian. He is proficient in English, Spanish, Italian, French, and Portuguese, and also has knowledge of Latin and German.

He was ordained a priest in 1982. From 2015 to 2023, he served as the Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru, and was elevated to the cardinalate in 2023. At the time of his election, he was serving as the Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops in the Vatican.

Following the death of Pope Francis, the conclave elected Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost from the U.S. as the 267th Pope of the Universal Church on the second day of the conclave, May 8. The long-awaited proclamation, "Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!" (I announce to you a great

# MAJOR ARCHBISHOP EXTENDS PRAYERFUL GREETINGS TO POPE LEO XIV



Major Archbishop Raphael Thattil of the Syro-Malabar Church conveyed prayerful greetings to Pope Leo XIV, who is both the Bishop of Rome and the successor of Peter. He expressed great joy in the Pope's pontificate and high hopes, especially as one of the heads of Eastern Churches. Archbishop Thattil noted that during his first meeting with the Eastern Church leaders, Pope Leo XIV reiterated the same intention as his predecessor Leo XIII — that the traditions of Eastern Churches must be preserved. This affirmation has brought great hope to the Syro-Malabar Church, which is looking forward to new possibilities in missionary fields.

At this stage when the Syro-Malabar Church has grown into a global church, the universal Pope's open attitude will help in safeguarding its traditions and in structuring its liturgical practices, the Major Archbishop said. He assured prayers from the Syro-Malabar Church that Pope Leo XIV may fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to him as the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church and stand as a moral conscience and symbol of spirituality for the world.

On May 18, 2025, Pope Leo XIV officially began his pontificate as the successor of St. Peter. On May 25, he celebrated Mass at the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, the cathedral and local church of the Bishop of Rome, thereby commencing his pastoral ministry for the Diocese of Rome. The Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, located on the Caelian Hill in Rome, is known as "Omnium Urbis et Orbis Ecclesiarum Mater et Caput" — "The Mother and Head of all churches in the city and the world." It was from here that Popes led the Universal Church until the Avignon Papacy.

The Lateran Basilica was constructed in AD 324 under the oversight of Emperor Constantine and consecrated by Pope Sylvester I. It was the first Christian basilica built in Rome. Though initially dedicated to Christ the Savior, it was later re-dedicated twice: once in the 10th century in the name of St. John the Baptist and again in the 12th century in the name of St. John the Evangelist. Today, its full name is "The Archbasilica of the Most Holy Savior and of Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist."

Popes are enthroned as heads of the Universal Church in their capacity as successors of St. Peter, the first Bishop of Rome. However, the day-to-day pastoral administration of the Diocese of Rome is carried out by the Pope's Vicar, currently Cardinal Baldisseri Reign.

Pope Leo XIV began his message as the head of the Diocese of Rome with the words, "The Roman Church is a continuation of a great history rooted in the witness of Sts. Peter and Paul and countless martyrs." The

## POPE LEO XIV TAKES OFFICE AS THE BISHOP OF ROME



designation of St. John Lateran Basilica as the "Mother Church of all churches in the world" prompts us to reflect on the maternal nature of the Church. Traits of motherhood such as compassion, willingness to sacrifice, and attentiveness should be reflected in churches around the world, the Pope said.

## EVERY RELIGION HAS A DUTY TO SAY 'NO' TO ECONOMIC SYSTEMS THAT IMPOVERISH PEOPLE AND THE EARTH: POPE LEO XIV

Vatican City: Every religion has a duty to say "no" to economic systems that impoverish both people and the planet, said Pope Leo XIV. He was addressing representatives of various religions who had come to Rome to attend his inauguration and express their loving cooperation with the Catholic Church. The Pope emphasized the need to continue interreligious dialogues of peace and harmony initiated by Pope Francis and all previous holy fathers beginning with Pope St. John XXIII.

He expressed joy in the presence of representatives from other religious tra-



ditions who participate in the search for God and His will. This is a time to build bridges and hold discussions rooted in human fraternity, he said. The Pope particularly stressed the importance of theological dialogue between Christians and Jews that fosters mutual understanding and respect. He also spoke about the role of each religious community in contributing to the grandeur of shared spiritual leadership, commitment to humanity, preservation of our common home, and the significance of standing against wars.

# BORN AGAIN OR BORN FROM ABOVE?



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Antony Vadakkekara VC

Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

At the beginning of the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus, this statement from Jesus is difficult to understand. Nicodemus himself does not grasp the meaning correctly, as can be seen from his response: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?" (John 3:4). Jesus then clarifies that this is not the kind of birth He is referring to (John 3:5-8).

One distinctive feature of the Gospel of John is that listeners often misunderstand what Jesus says, and He then corrects them, helping them grasp the correct meaning. There are several examples of this throughout the Gospel (John 3:3-5; 4:7-15; 7:33-36; 8:21-30). When Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born again to enter the kingdom of God, Nicodemus misunderstands. The reason is the Greek word 'anothen,' which Jesus uses in His statement. This



word has two primary meanings: 'Again' and 'From above.' Nicodemus interprets it in the first sense, which is why he asks, "How can this be possible for an old man? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time to be born?" In response, Jesus clarifies that He meant the second meaning: "born from above" (John 3:5). The word 'anothen' appears five times in the Gospel of John (John 3:3, 7, 31; 19:11, 23). In the last three occurrences, it is clearly used in the 'from above' sense.

The first two occurrences (John 3:31; 19:11) indicate something coming

from heaven (from God), while the final instance simply means "from above" in the usual sense. So, when examining John 3:3 and 3:7, it is crucial to determine which meaning applies. Given Nicodemus' response, it is evident that he understood it as 'again' (John 3:4). However, from Jesus' reply, it becomes clear that He meant 'born from above' rather than a second physical birth. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The phrase 'born of water and the Spirit' refers to spiritual rebirth. In John 3:3, Jesus speaks of a 'birth from above,' and John 3:5 clarifies that this happens 'through water and the Spirit.' What does it mean to be 'born of water and the Spirit?' In the Old Testament, 'water and Spirit' are mentioned together in Isaiah 44:3-5 and Ezekiel 36:25-27. Both passages relate these elements to the new covenant, specifically to Israel's new birth (renewal). This renewal happens through divine intervention, as described in John 3:5 'born of water and the Spirit' occurs from above, through God's work.

Jesus' reference to 'birth from above' is fulfilled through the sacrament of

baptism. In this sacrament, the cleansing by water serves as both a symbol and means of spiritual rebirth. Notably, in John 3:6-8, when Jesus further explains 'birth from above,' He makes no mention of water. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:6-8). Here, Jesus emphasizes that this spiritual rebirth is entirely God's work, beyond human control. Within Jewish beliefs and traditions, spiritual renewal at the end of times was understood to occur through the 'work of the Holy Spirit' (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:25-31; Isaiah 44:3; Jeremiah 31:33).

In summary, when Jesus says "You must be born again" (John 3:3), He means 'born from above.' This rebirth happens through the Spirit and is associated with baptism. Those born of the flesh transition to being 'born of the Spirit,' thus receiving the identity of 'children of God' (John 1:12-13; Romans 8:12-17).

## TITLES AND POWERS OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Mathew Souriamkuzhi

In the context of the Holy Father Leo XIV taking office as the new Shepherd of the Catholic Church, it is appropriate to understand the titles and powers of the Roman Pontiff, and what the CCEO says about them. These matters are mainly mentioned specifically in canons 43 to 48.

The Pope is the successor of Peter, the first of the Apostles, who was uniquely given by the Lord a special office (munus), to be handed down to his successors. The Pope is elected by the College of Cardinals. If the person elected as Pope is already a bishop, he assumes the powers of the Pope from the moment he accepts the election. However, if the elected person is not a bishop, he receives the powers with episcopal ordination (c. 44).

The term "Pope" is not used in Canon Law. In the early Church, all bishops

**⌘ The structures that assist the Pope in the exercise of his official duties are the Synod of Bishops, the Cardinals, the Roman Curia, and the pontifical legates. In addition to these, other persons and institutions according to the needs of the times, also assist the Pope.**

were called "Pope," which means "loving father." In the Eastern Canon Law, the term used to refer to the Pope is "Roman Pontiff." Some other titles referring to the Pope, though not found in the Code, include Supreme Pontiff, Primate of Italy, Sovereign of the Vatican City State, and Servant of the Servants of God.

According to Canon 43, the Roman Pontiff is the bishop of the Church of Rome, the head of the College of Bishops, the Vicar of Christ, and the pastor of the entire Church on earth. All bishops are vicars and representatives of Christ in their respective dioceses. However, the Pope exercises his pastoral ministry as the Vicar of Christ not only in the Diocese of Rome but also in the entire universal Church. The Pope is the head of the College of Bishops. Apart from the Pope, the College of Bishops has no authority. Together with the head, the College of Bishops has full

authority over the universal Church. This supreme authority is exercised by the College of Bishops together with the Pope either in an Ecumenical Council or when exercising a united action (c. 50).

Canons 43 and 45 further clarify the nature of the power of Roman Pontiff. It is supreme, full, immediate, universal, ordinary, and freely exercised. By "supreme authority," it is meant that there is no higher authority in the Catholic Church than the Pope. No one can judge the Roman Pontiff, nor can anyone appeal against his decision or judgment. "Full" means that nothing limits his power. His authority is exercised directly, without intermediaries, so any catholic faithful has the right to approach the Roman Pontiff at any time. He has authority over the entire Church and all matters within it, including all eparchies, archeparchies, pastors, and all the faithful, as well as over tempo-

ral goods. All these powers are derived from his office (munus). The Pope can exercise his authority freely; he does not need to depend on or seek the approval of any ecclesiastical or political body.

The structures that assist the Pope in the exercise of his official duties are the Synod of Bishops, the Cardinals, the Roman Curia, and the pontifical legates. In addition to these, other persons and institutions according to the needs of the times, also assist the Pope. In Canon Law, the terms "Apostolic See" and "Holy See" refer not only to the Roman Pontiff, but also to various dicasteries of the Roman Curia. For example, if permission from the Apostolic See is required for a particular matter, permission from the relevant dicastery suffices. For matters not reserved to the Pope, personal permission from the Pope is not necessary. In Eastern Canon Law, the term "Holy See" is used only twice—once in its definition (c. 48) and once in reference to the Church's relations and agreements with other states (c. 4). For all ecclesiastical matters, the term "Apostolic See" is used in the CCEO.

# SCHIZOPHRENIA: THE REALITIES



**Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikkattumyalil**

Among mental illnesses, psychotic disorders (psychosis) are a category of serious conditions. These are illnesses where the patient does not have the insight to recognize that they are unwell. The most significant psychotic disorder is schizophrenia. This illness, which severely disrupts the future of the affected individuals, typically strikes young men and women between the ages of twenty and thirty. Schizophrenia is a mental disorder that affects a person's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and ability to function. It is estimated that about one percent of the population suffers from schizophrenia. Usually, the symptoms begin to appear at the onset of youth. This illness affects both men and women equally.

## Symptoms

Symptoms are categorized into positive symptoms and negative symptoms.



**There is no evidence to suggest that schizophrenia is caused by a single factor. Researchers have identified that the likelihood of developing the disorder increases when two major factors combine: genetic and environmental.**

Positive symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thinking, incoherent speech, and poor attention to personal hygiene. Negative symptoms include lack of attention, loss of interest in activities, emotional flatness, and social withdrawal. If such symptoms persist continuously for more than six months, a diagnosis of schizophrenia should be considered.

## Causes

There is no evidence to suggest that schizophrenia is caused by a single factor. Researchers have identified that the likelihood of developing the disorder increases when two major factors combine: genetic and environmental. A defect in a specific gene alone does not cause this illness. However, dysfunction in a combination of genes can increase the risk of schizophrenia. These genetic irregularities affect the neural circuits in the brain, which in turn severely impacts thinking patterns. They also disrupt the balance of certain brain chemicals like dopamine. Dopamine has been identified as playing a role in delusions and hallucinations. However, these genetic and chem-

ical factors account for only 50% of the cause. The remaining 50% stems from environmental factors. Traumatic events during the early stages of life, especially childhood trauma, significantly increase the risk of schizophrenia—doubling the likelihood in some cases.

## Treatment Approaches

There is no medication or treatment currently available that can completely cure schizophrenia. However, by treating the symptoms, the quality of life of patients can be significantly improved. Today, safe antipsychotic medications are available for treatment. These treatments must be continued long-term under the supervision of a psychiatrist. A healthy family environment plays a crucial role in preventing the condition from worsening. Through scientific understanding of mental illnesses, society must eliminate social stigma and embrace individuals with such conditions compassionately, integrating them into the mainstream of society. This inclusive approach is a vital part of rehabilitation programs for schizophrenia.

ഇന്ത്യ പ്രണയകാലത്തു കണ്ണെടത്തു  
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## NEW APPOINTMENTS AT THE SYRO-MALABAR MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA



Fr. Tom  
Olikkarott



Fr. Jobin  
Kanjirathinkal



Fr. Andrews  
Panamparambil



Fr. Joseph  
Kallarackal

Kakkanad: Fr. Tom Olikkarott, a member of the Archeparchy of Tellicherry, has been appointed as the new PRO of the Syro-Malabar Church and Secretary of the Media and Clergy Commissions. Fr.

Jobin Kanjirathinkal, a member of the Palghat Eparchy, has been appointed Executive Director of the Liturgical Research Centre and Secretary of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly Committee. Fr. An-

drews Panamparambil of the Changanacherry Archeparchy has been appointed Secretary of the Catechetical Commission, and Fr. Joseph Kallarackal of the Kothamangalam Eparchy as Assistant Secretary.

## EUCARISTIC CONGRESS CONCLUDES IN THE EPARCHY OF CHICAGO



Somerset, New Jersey: The Eucharistic Congress organized by the Chicago Syro-Malabar Eparchy concluded at the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church. The Eucharistic Congress was held from May 23 to 25 as part of the Eparchy's Golden Jubilee celebrations. Over 1,200 participants, includ-

ing bishops, priests, religious, and laity, attended. Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil inaugurated the event and celebrated Holy Qurbana, in the presence of Bishop Joy Alappatt, the Bishop of Chicago and Bishop Jacob Angadiath, the bishop *emeritus*.

## RELIGIOUS MUST HAVE APOSTOLIC ZEAL: MAR VADAKEL MST



Kakkanad: Religious members must burn with apostolic zeal, said Mar Sebastian Vadakel, Chairman of the Commission for Religious and Apostolic Congregations of the Syro-Malabar Church. He was speaking at a felicitation ceremony for various religious women marking the silver jubilee of their consecrated lives, held at

Mount St. Thomas, the central headquarters of the Church. Every congregation, regardless of type, should support the Church's evangelizing mission through prayer and witness of life, he said. Mar Sebastian celebrated the Qurbana and presided over the meeting. Around 150 religious women from various congregations attended. Sr.

Dr. Roseline, Superior General of the Mar Thoma Sisters Congregation, delivered the keynote address. The Chancellor of Major Archiepiscopal Curia of Syro-Malabar Church Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, Secretary of the Commission for religious Fr. Dr. Sebastian Muttamthottil M.C.B.S., and Office Secretary Sr. Jisha Job M.S.M.I. also spoke.

## WITH GRATITUDE...



Fr. Thomas  
Melvettath



Fr. Joji  
Kallingal



Fr. Antony  
Vadakkekara V.C

Formation and Vocations Commission. Fr. Joji Kallingal held the positions of Executive Director of LRC (Liturgical Research Centre) and Secretary of the Commission for Clergy under the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. Fr. Antony Vadakkekara V.C. served as the Church's Public Relations Officer and Secretary of the Media Commission.

## BISHOP MAR MATHEW MAKIL RAISED TO THE RANK OF VENERABLE



Vatican City: Servant of God Mar Mathew Makil has been raised to the rank of Venerable. The Holy See recognized his heroic virtues, leading to the beatification. With the approval of Pope Leo XIII, the decree was announced on Thursday, May 22, by Cardinal Marcello Sem-

eraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints. Mar Makil served as Vicar General of the Kottayam Eparchy from 1889, of Changanacherry from 1896, and as the first indigenous Apostolic Vicar of Kottayam for the Knanaya Catholics from 1911. He was born on March 27, 1851, in Manjoor, Kottayam, and passed away on January 26, 1914, in Kottayam. He is buried at St. George Forane Church, Edacat, Kottayam. He also founded the Visitation Congregation of religious sisters in the Kottayam Archeparchy.

## CHRISTIANS STAND UNITED, NOT ALONE: MAR JOSEPH PAMPLANY



Palakkad: The international convention of the Catholic Congress held over two days in Palakkad was a clear warning to the political parties of India, stated Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany of Thalassery, who inaugurated the event. He reminded that Christians in Kerala are not isolated entities but a united community in political, social, and agricultural matters.

Bishop Mar Peter Kochupurackal of the Eparchy of Palakkad delivered the keynote address. He affirmed that the Christian community is composed of wise citizens who have never been slaves to anyone.

The event was presided over by Global President Prof. Rajeev Kochuparambil. Other speakers included Bishop Mar Jacob Manathodath, Global Secretary Dr. Josukutty J. Ozhukayil, Glob-

al Director Fr. Philip Kaviyil, Eparchial President Adv. Bobby Bastian, Eparchial Director Fr. Cherian Anchilimoottil, Fr. Saji Vattukattel, Trees Lees Sebastian, Fr. Michael Vettikkatt, Adv. Biju Parayannilam, V. V. Augustine, Fr. Arun Kalamatathil, Sunny Mathew Nedumparambil, Beena Thakarappallil, and Abhilash Punnamthadathil. Eparchial General Secretary Jijo Araykkal also addressed the gathering.

Adv. Tony Poonchamkunel presented the political resolution, while Thomas Antony introduced the resolution on social justice. Representatives from all states of India as well as from various foreign countries participated in the convention. The next international convention will be held in the Archeparchy of Thalassery.

## THE LARGEST MISSIONARY GATHERING OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH HELD AT PRAVITHANAM



Pravithanam: As part of the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Eparchy of Palai, a grand missionary gathering was held at St. Augustine's Forane Church in Pravithanam. Presiding over the event, CBCI President and Archbishop of Thrissur, Mar Andrews Thazhath, stated that the Eparchy of Palai is the Eparchy that has contributed the most missionaries to the Syro-Malabar Church.

In his inaugural message,

Union Minister George Kurian, a member of the Eparchy of Palai, stated that the Palai Mission Home has given the Church 39 bishops and over ten thousand missionaries. He added that Palai's spiritual foundations are deeply rooted in figures and traditions such as Rakkuliyamma, the Three-Day Fast of the Syriac tradition, Kuravilangad Muthiyamma, and Saint Alphonsa.

Bishop Mar Joseph Kallar-

angatt, head of the Eparchy of Palai, delivered the keynote address, while Rev. Dr. Tom Olikarott, PRO of the Syro-Malabar Church, gave the introductory speech.

Bishops and dignitaries who extended their greetings included Mar Thomas Menamparapil, Mar Joseph Charakunnel, Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil, Mar Peter Kochupurackal, Mar Jacob Angadiath, Mar Sebastian Vadakel, Mar Kurian Valiakan-dathil, Vincent Mar Paulos, Mar George Rajendran, Mar Joseph Kollamparambil, Mar Joseph Srampickal, Mar John Nellikunnel, Mar Mathew Nel-likunnel, Minister Roshy Au-gustine, Varghese George Mali-akkal, Jose K. Mani MP, Francis George MP, Anto Antony MP, Dean Kuriakose MP, and Mani C. Kappan MLA.

Fr. Joseph Cheriyampanath and Sr. Salomi Mookkanthot-tam shared their missionary experiences.

Monsignor Joseph Kaniyo-dickal delivered the welcome address, and Fr. George Velu-parambil expressed the vote of thanks. With nearly 4,000 participants, this missionary gathering marked the largest apostolic assembly in the history of the Eparchy of Palai.

## FR. FEBIN PUTHIYAPARAMPIL CONFERRED THE TITLE OF MONSIGNOR



Fr. Febin Sebastian Puthiyaparampil, a priest of the Eparchy of Thamarassery and currently serving as Secretary at the Apostolic Nunciature in Iran, has been elevated to the title of Monsignor by the Holy Father. He hails from the Puthiyaparampil family at Anakkampoyil, in the Eparchy of Thamarassery, and is the son of Sebastian and Dolly.

He joined the Thamarassery Eparchial Minor Seminary in 2001 and was ordained as a priest in 2014 by Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil. After ordination, he served as Assistant Vicar in the parishes of Pullurampara and Chevayur, and as Assistant Director at the PMOC at Marykunnu. He has also worked as a judge at the Eparchial Tribunal.

In 2016, he was selected for training in the Vatican's diplomatic service. During his training at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome, he secured a doctorate in Canon Law. Having completed his Academy training in 2018, he served as Secretary at the Apostolic Nunciatures in Bolivia and Greece.

## FEAST OF THE DIVINE MERCY CELEBRATED AT DAYASAGAR

Sagar: The Feast of Jesus of Mercy was celebrated at Dayasagar in Khajuriyah of the Eparchy of Sagar. The celebration began with the Divine Mercy Novena that commenced on April 21. In connection with the feast, continuous Bible reading and a retreat led by Fr. Raju Mathew and team were held.



## THE NEW LEADERSHIP OF THE VINCENTIAN CONGREGATION



Fr. Paul Puthuva V C  
Superior General



Fr. Alex Chalangady V C  
Provincial Superior  
Angamaly Mary Matha Province



Fr. Bobby Emprayil V C  
Provincial Superior Kottayam  
St. Joseph Province



Fr. Sebastian Thundathikunnel V C  
Provincial Superior Delhi  
St. Thomas Province

## EUCARISTIC MIRACLE AT VILAKANNUR: OFFICIAL DECLARATION MADE



on May 31, 2025, at 2:30 PM. The announcement was delivered by Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India, at the very site where the miraculous event took place.

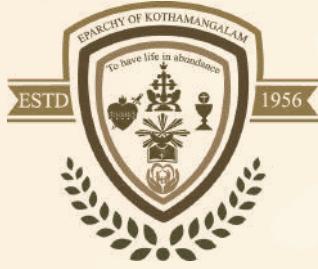
The extraordinary incident took place during a Holy Mass celebrated by Vicar Fr. Thomas Pathickal, when the face of Jesus became visibly manifest on the Holy Eucharist. This phenomenon has now been officially recognized following an in-depth investigation by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican.

In 2018, the Eucharist was taken to Rome for further examination. As per subsequent directives from Rome, the Eucharist was brought back to India for scientific analysis. A

dedicated team comprising scientists—Dr. Jyothis Devassy and Dr. Joby Xavier from Christ University, Bangalore, and Dr. P. T. Varghese from St. John's Medical College—in collaboration with a panel of theologians, conducted a comprehensive study of the miraculous occurrence.

Their investigations confirmed that the image on the Eucharist originated from the host itself, and no external substances or influences were involved in its formation.

After evaluating these findings, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concluded on March 19, 2025, that there are no objections to recognizing the Eucharistic phenomenon at Vilakannur as an extraordinary event.



"Trusting in God's mercy, aiming for the Kingdom of Heaven."

# EPARCHY OF KOTHAMANGALAM

My Eparchy my pride; my Church my Mother



By the divine will of God and during the reign of Pope Pius XII, the Eparchy of Kothamangalam was erected in 1956. Blessed with a mission of faith, the Eparchy of Kothamangalam extends across the districts of Idukki and Ernakulam, with Kothamangalam, Muvattupuzha, and Thodupuzha as its major cities. From the early days of migration, the Eparchy has stood as the spiritual and moral voice of the people—especially the farmers and families of the High Ranges—firmly rooted in faith, service, and unwavering hope.

## Our Bishops

### Eparchy at a Glance

Patroness:-  
**Immaculate Heart of Mary**  
Parishes - **120**  
Priests - **256**  
Families - **49990**  
Foranes - **14**



**Late Mar Mathew Pothanamuzhi**  
First Bishop  
1956 - 1977



**Mar George Punnakkottil**  
Bishop Emeritus  
1977 - 2013



**Mar George Madathikandathil**  
Eparchial Bishop

Families with deep faith and a profound love for the Church are the true spiritual treasures of the Eparchy of Kothamangalam. Since its establishment in 1956, the Eparchy of Kothamangalam has been deeply committed to missionary work. The Eparchy is blessed with nine bishops, 965 priests, and over 2,700 nuns who serve in various parts of the world as faithful witnesses to the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.



**Mgr Pius Malekandathil**  
Proto-Syncellus



**Mgr Vincent Nedungatt**  
Syncellus



**Rev. Fr. Jose Pulparambil**  
Finance Officer



**Rev. Fr. Jose Kulathoor**  
Chancellor

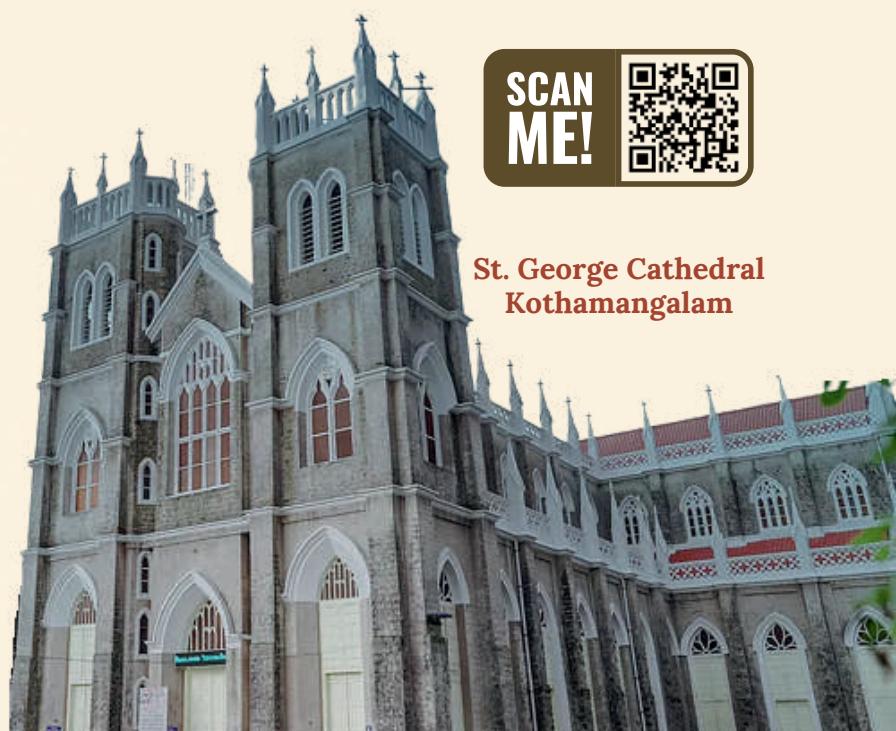
### Bishops from the Eparchy

- **Mar Thomas Thiruthalil**, Bishop Emeritus, Balasore
- **Mar John Kattrukudiyil**, Bishop Emeritus, Itanagar
- **Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakkil**, Bishop Emeritus, Satna
- **Mar Thomas Pulloppillil**, Bongaigaon
- **Mar Chacko Thottumarickal**, Bishop Emeritus, Indore
- **Mar John Vadakel**, Bishop Emeritus, Bijnor
- **Mar Joseph Kodakallil**, Satna
- **Mar Benny Edathattel**, Itanagar
- **Mar Thomas Mathew Kuttimakkal**, Indore

SCAN  
ME!



**St. George Cathedral**  
Kothamangalam



# The Missionary Endeavors of the Eparchy of Kothamangalam

## Charitable Activities

- Guided by the compassion of Christ, the Eparchy of Kothamangalam actively engages in a variety of charitable missions. Notable among them is the Mar Mathew Pothanamuzhy Housing Project, which provides homes for the homeless. The Eparchy also supports large families in need and runs the 'Care A Family' project, offering financial assistance to struggling households. In addition, numerous hospitals, care homes, and service centers managed by dedicated religious Congregations and parishioners continue to reflect the unwavering commitment to mercy and service.

## JEEVA Initiatives



- JEEVA Milk uplifts the lives of dairy farmers by collecting, processing, and distributing over 75,000 liters of milk, ensuring fair value and dignity to their labor. JEEVA Water offers high-quality packaged drinking water, promoting health and hygiene. JEEVA Medicals, JEEVA Medical Lab, JEEVA Books, and JEEVA Nursery stand as living symbols of the Diocese's unwavering commitment to social welfare and community development — nurturing lives through health, knowledge, and care.

## Educational Apostolate: Schools and Colleges



- Education is always a vital mission of the Eparchy of Kothamangalam, the Eparchy directly manages several esteemed institutions including: Newman College, Thodupuzha, Nirmala College, Nirmala B.Pharm College, Nirmala Computer Academy, Nirmala Public School, and Nirmala Higher Secondary School – all situated in Muvattupuzha, Viswajyothi College of Engineering and Technology, Vazhakulam, St. Thomas Teachers' Training College, Mylakom, Kristhujyothi International ICSE School, Kothamangalam, St. Xavier's Public School, Pothanikad. In addition to these, the Corporate Educational Agency of the Eparchy, in collaboration with parishes, oversees around hundreds schools across the region. Numerous other educational institutions are also run by religious congregations and parishioners.



## NESTT Pastoral Centre

- NESTT, a multi-facility pastoral centre serves as a hub for theological education, offering Bible classes, pre-marital courses, and spiritual retreats. It strengthens the spiritual formation of the faithful and fosters communion among laypeople.



## Divine Mercy Shrine of Holy Mary

- The Divine Mercy Shrine of Holy Mary, located in Thodupuzha, is a sacred place of pilgrimage and prayer. Thousands of faithful visit the shrine to seek spiritual solace, divine healing, and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



## JEEVAJYOTHI Mission, Utkala – Odisha

- The Jeevajyothy Mission in Utkala, Odisha, stands as a vibrant missionary endeavor of the Eparchy of Kothamangalam. Currently, three dedicated priests and brothers serve in the mission, spreading the light of Christ among the local communities. Seminarians from the Eparchy also serve here for one year after their regency.

## Major Pilgrim Centres in the Eparchy



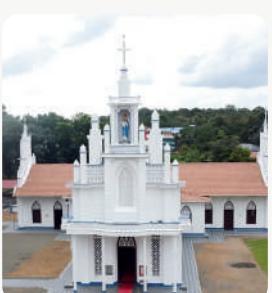
Mylakom



Muthalakodam



Arakuzha



Nakapuzha



Nediyasala

## MAJOR ARCHBISHOP'S MEETING WITH THE PREFECT OF THE DICASTERY FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

Vatican City – The Father and Head of the Syro-Malabar Church, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, who arrived in Rome to participate in the enthronement of Pope Leo XIV, met with Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, as well as Archbishop Filippo Ciampanelli and Monsignor Kim D'Souza, who serve at the dicastery. Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal, the Curia Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and Mar Stephen Chirappanath, the Apostolic Visitor to Europe, were also present with the Major Archbishop.



## JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE EASTERN CHURCHES

Vatican City – As part of the ongoing Jubilee celebrations in Rome, a special liturgical celebration was held for the Eastern Churches. Churches of the Chaldean tradition came together to offer the Holy *Qurbana* at St. Peter's Basilica. The main celebrant was the Chaldean

Patriarch, His beatitude Louis Raphaël Sako, and the celebration was held in the presence of Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches.

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, Father and Head of the Syro-Malabar



Church, delivered the homily during the Holy *Qurbana*. In his address, the Major Archbishop emphasized the need for mutual cooperation among the Eastern Churches, particularly in the exchange and preservation of Eastern liturgical traditions, theology, spirituality, and systems of formation.

Cardinal Mar George Jacob Koovakkad, President of the Dicastery for Inter-

religious Dialogue, Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, President of the CBCI, Bishop Mar Stephen Chirappanath, Apostolic Visitator to Europe, Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal the Curia Bishop, Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt, the Bishop of Chicago and Bishop Mar Thomas Elavanal, the Bishop of Kalyan, concelebrated.

## MEMORIAL HOLY QURBANA FOR POPE FRANCIS IN MARY MAJOR BASILICA

Vatican City – For the deceased holy father Pope Francis, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil celebrated a solemn Holy *Qurbana* in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major Rome. Concelebrating with him were Bishop Mar Stephen Chirappanath, Apostolic Visitator to Europe; Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal, the Curia Bishop; Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt of

Chicago; Fr. Johnkyutty Pulissery, from the Eparchy of Chicago; Fr. Mathew Thuruthippallil Secretary to the Maror archbishop.

The Syro-Malabar faithful and clergy residing in Rome also participated in the celebration. After the Holy *Qurbana*, the Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil also prayed at tomb of Pope Francis in the Basilica.

