



# SYRO-MALABAR VISION

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## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-PURIFICATION AND MISSIONARY RENEWAL

### PASTORAL LETTER OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH, MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF DUKRANA AND SYRO-MALABAR SABHADHINAM

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



The clouds of divine grace may shelter all our activities. It is through sacrificial historical paths that the Syro-Malabar Church has grown to the stature of a Major Archiepiscopal Church. The boundaries of our pastoral interventions have been spread from Kerala to the whole of India and from India's borders to various countries. It is a matter of joy that the priests, religious sisters, and the laity belonging to the Syro-Malabar Church are witnessing the faith in all parts of the world, which they received from their mother Church. This reality reminds us both of our pastoral responsibility and the immense possibilities that lie ahead of us. The declaration of St. Paul, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16), holds profound relevance for the Syro-Malabar Church. The priests, religious, and lay missionaries whom God has graciously given to our Church must continue to go forth into the mission territories to proclaim the Gospel and to administer the sacraments, even in places where such possibilities are currently limited or absent. In this way, our Church must always remain a missionary Church. It is the need of the hour that eparchies, religious congregations, and lay missionary organizations prepare themselves for reorganization in this field.

The July 3rd, the day of the martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle, our Father in faith, is celebrated in our Church as the Feast of *Dukrana*. Our Church that began its growth through the proclamation and martyrdom of this courageous Apostle celebrates *Sabhadhinam* on this same day. For us, the members of the Syro-Malabar Church, this commemoration and *Sabhadhinam* are an occasion for expressing gratitude, self-examination, and the renewal of our mission.

Following the example of St. Thomas the Apostle, a Christian way of life that bears witness to the faith holds great significance in the contemporary society. In this age of superficial knowledge and baseless arguments, the Gospel we proclaim will bear fruit only if it springs from a heart, filled with the love of God. It was as an expression of love from his heart that St. Thomas the Apostle gave his personal testimony, distancing from his doubts. The proclamation of faith "My Lord and my God" was a testimony of the Apostle's personal relationship and deep love for Jesus. The *Dukrana* of our Father in faith becomes meaningful when each one of us is able to proclaim the truth of the resurrection of Jesus with a heart full of love, amidst crises of faith and uncertainties. Only by enduring the shame and pain of the Cross can one partake in the glorious experience of the Risen Lord. May the holy wounds that St. Thomas, in deep faith, identified in the glorious body of the Risen Christ, give us inspiration and energy for witnessing faith in our life's journey.

We have been celebrating July 3rd as the Syro-Malabar *Sabhadhinam* for years. Let us make use of this opportunity to thank the Lord for the blessings He has showered on our Church and to pray that

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## EDITORIAL

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN  
AND YET HAVE COME TO BELIEVE!

Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, was blessed to the stature of a Father in Faith of hundreds of thousands of faithful through his declaration of faith. The apostle, distinct from the others, lived in his own unique way. He was a courageous person who dared to ask questions and sought clarity when he did not understand, even during the lifetime of the Master. He stood emotionally with Jesus, inspiring others by his loyalty. He did not want to be merely satisfied with the narration of the resurrection experience of others but insisted on seeing, touching, and personally experiencing the resurrected Lord personally. At his insistence, the Risen One appeared again: a special vision for Thomas!

Thomas did not dare to doubt Jesus who stood before him with the scars of the wounds, and refused to wound Him again. He did not dare to touch the wound. Instead, through his heart-wrenching declaration of faith, Thomas surrendered himself - without doubt, without question, without condition - into the love of the Risen Lord. He cried out in faith: "My Lord and my God." The Master read the heart of His disciple in that cry. In that moment, the Master's mind was filled with the image of countless children, stubborn like Thomas, yearning for an experience of God. Not everyone would always be able to see Him. Therefore, He said: *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*

Jesus removed the requirement of seeing or touching His human or glorified body as a standard for believing in Him. Looking across time, place, and culture, He foresaw a great multitude of people who would believe in Him without seeing or touching Him as Thomas did. He set the standard for their experience of God: there is no need to see or touch Him like Thomas. Just believe; that is enough!

Jesus had a heart capable of recognizing the love of those who loved Him. He understood the longing in the hearts of believers who desire to see and touch Him like Thomas while the gospel of love He imparted has been proclaimed for millennia. In the Gospel of John, chapter 13, verse 1, we read: *Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

The Holy Eucharist is the answer to humanity's longing to see, touch, and remain close to Jesus, who came down to earth as man. The Church's faith rests on the real presence of the Lord in the Holy Host. Jesus grants a special experience of His presence to those who kneel before the consecrated bread and see His presence through the eyes of faith. The signs and wonders associated with Divine Eucharist down the centuries are nothing but the special heartbeats of the One that loves us. The closest glimpse of Jesus' love for us is the sign of Holy Eucharist at Vilakkannoor, in the Archeparchy of Tellicherry. Through the signs and wonders of the Holy Eucharist, Jesus proclaims the truth to us: *Blessed are those who believe without seeing!*

Missionary work and preaching without a deep experience of God are futile exercises. Like Thomas, we too have the opportunity to experience Jesus personally in the Holy Eucharist. When our hearts cry out, "My Lord and my God," in sincere love and devotion, the blessedness of which Jesus spoke becomes ours. May this 'fortunate experience of God,' as with the Apostle Thomas, lead us on the path of evangelization and suffering to bear witness to the Resurrection and spread the joy to the world!

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## JULY 2025

## A DAY TO REMEMBER

**July 1:** Episcopal Ordination of Mar Jacob Angadiath (2001)

**July 3:** Feast of *Dukhrana* of St. Thomas the Apostle  
Episcopal Ordination of Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram (1990)

**July 10:** Death Anniversary of Mar James Pazhayattil (2016)

**July 11:** Death Anniversary of Mar Charles Lavigne (1913)  
St. Benedict of Nursia

**July 15:** St. Kuriakose, St. Julitta

**July 16:** Our Lady of Mount Carmel

**July 22:** St. Mary Magdalene

**July 25:** The Seventy Disciples of the Lord  
St. James the Apostle

**July 26:** Death Anniversary of Mar Thomas Tharayil, former Bishop of Kottayam (1975)  
Sts. Joachim and Anne

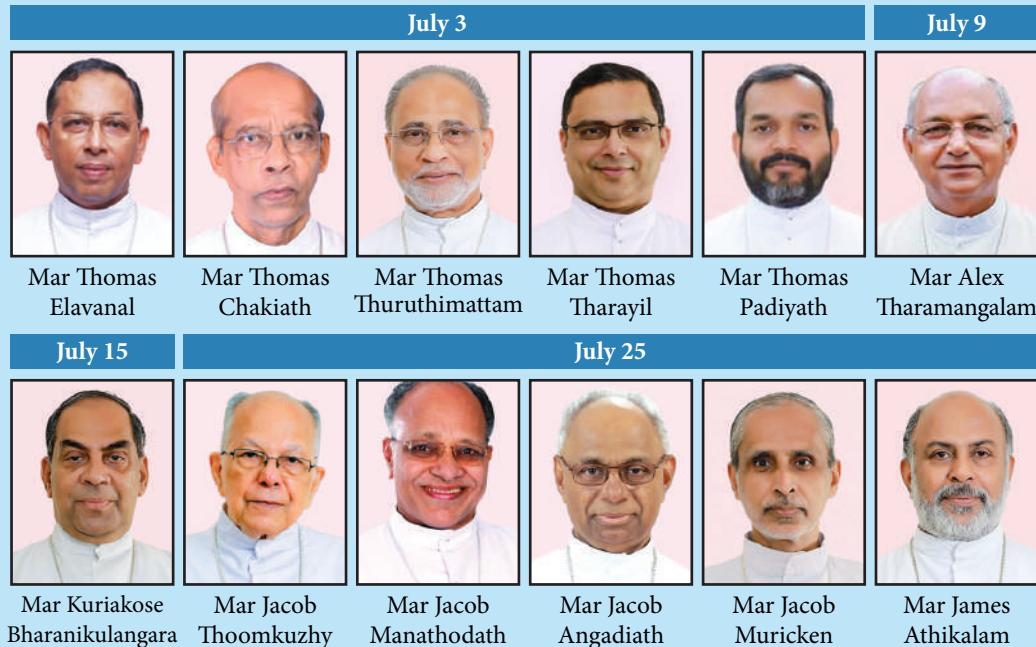
**July 27:** Feast of the Twelve Apostles (*Nusardeil*)

**July 28:** St. Alphonsa

**July 29:** St. Martha

**July 31:** St. Ignatius of Loyola

## ► FESTAL GREETINGS ◀



Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam

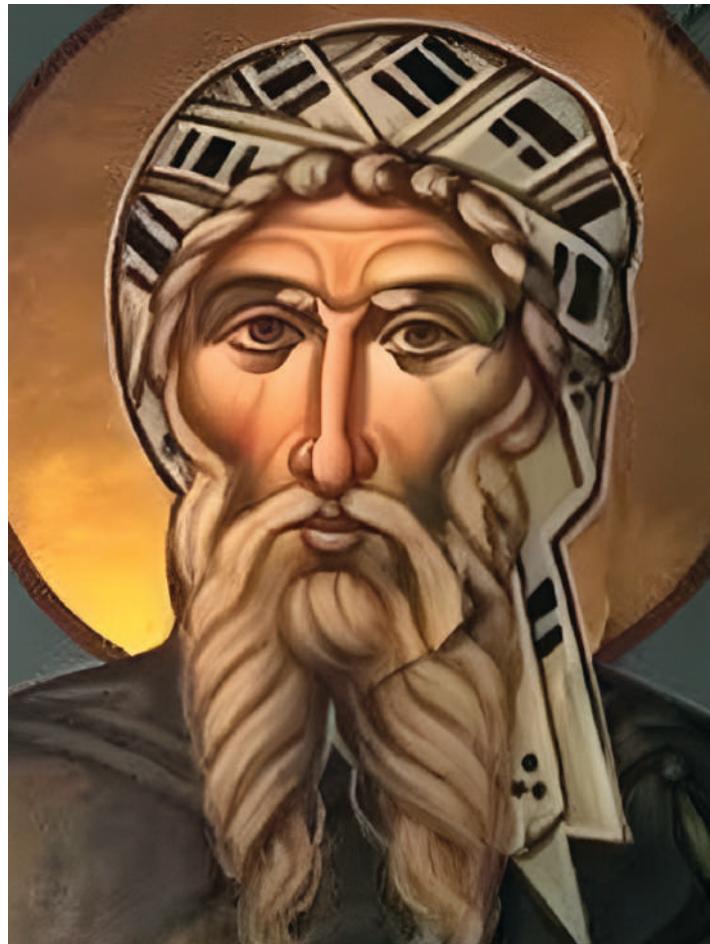
**M**ar Aphrahat, also known by the epithet *Persian Monk*, was born to non-Christian parents during the final decades of the third century. He embraced the Christian faith during the reign of the Persian king Shapur II (A.D. 309–379), a time marked by brutal religious persecutions. Subsequently, he entered into the ascetical life.

His only known work is a collection of **twenty-three exhortations**, titled *Demonstrations*, written between A.D. 337 and 345 for the benefit of his fellow ascetics. These are also the earliest extant writings of the Syriac Church Fathers available to us today.

Though some later historians have speculated that he might have been a bishop or abbot, this has not been universally accepted. A 14th-century manuscript refers to him as the "**Bishop of Mar Mattai**" — Mar Mattai being the name of a monastery that existed in the eastern part of Syria during Aphrahat's time. The name *Aphrahat* is the Syriac form of the Persian name *Farhād*, which means "wise man".

Born within the Persian Empire, he provides clear references

## MAR APHRAHAT



to the socio-cultural setting of his time throughout his 23 Demonstrations. He testifies that he belonged to a monastic community called the "**Sons of the Covenant**" (*Bnay Qyāmā*, Dem. 6:4), and that he came to Christianity by renouncing pagan idols (Dem. 16:7).

In his writings, he adopts an acrostic literary style, using the

22 letters of the Syriac alphabet in order, with each Demonstration beginning with a successive letter. His Demonstrations cover a wide range of topics, including themes central to the spiritual life of the Church - such as faith, fasting, prayer, and humility - as well as issues of disagreement with Judaism, like circumcision, the Sabbath, and Passover.

## Continuation of page 1

and women, and lay missionaries who, in many cases, serve amidst hardships, even facing threats to their very lives. It is my earnest desire that the ecclesial community as a whole may take concerted efforts to identify, encourage, and nurture those who are capable and willing to respond to priestly and religious vocations.

The Universal Church and society were saddened by the passing away of His Holiness Pope Francis on 21 April 2025. Participation in the papal funeral service on 26 April was a profound spiritual experience for me. I also had the opportunity to celebrate, along with a few bishops of our Church, a memorial *Qurbana* for the late Pope Francis at the Mary Major Basilica in Rome, where the late Pope was interred. The deceased Pope loved the Syro-Malabar Church. Let us gratefully remember that it was Pope Francis who granted us pastoral jurisdiction all over India, expedited steps for establishing our own pastoral structures in the Gulf countries, and entrusted to us the Minor Basilica of Santa Anastasia in Rome for the spiritual needs of the faithful of our Church. The paternal interventions made by the Holy Father for nurturing the unity and communion in our Church were indeed expressions of his deep paternal care for us. Following the spirit of synodality, he taught us to walk together by listening to one another and embracing each other. Remembering this venerable Holy Father, who guided us with such wisdom, I offer the love and homage of the Syro-Malabar Church with a heart full of gratitude. Let us continue to pray for the eternal rest of His Holiness Pope Francis.

The newly elected Pope Leo XIV is

**Through this encyclical, the Holy Father teaches us that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the supreme model of unconditional and total love, a love that invites us to live in communion with God and with our fellow human beings, thus leading us into a life that is truly authentic and complete.**

a gift from God to the Church. During the first days of his pontificate itself, Pope Leo could capture global attention through his clear stances on various issues and his dialogue with the world and the Universal Church. One of the most significant interventions concerning the Eastern Churches took place on 14 May 2025. On that day, while addressing the Heads and representatives of the Eastern Churches gathered in Rome for the Jubilee celebrations dedicated to the Eastern Churches, the Holy Father delivered a speech that clearly outlined his pastoral approach toward the Eastern Churches. Pope Leo XIV affirmed that the Eastern Churches are integral to the communion of the Catholic Church. He emphasized the importance of respecting and preserving their unique identity, committing to safeguard their traditions, and honouring the diversity of their liturgy and ecclesiology. His message served both as encouragement and as recognition of the distinctiveness of the Eastern Churches. During the special audience granted to Heads of the Eastern Churches on the same day, I had the opportunity to meet the Holy Father personally and convey the prayerful greetings of the Syro-Malabar Church. We, the children of St. Thomas the Apostle, have received a unique opportunity to move forward as an active presence in the Universal Church while remaining faithful to our Eastern tradi-

tions. As the Holy Father has said, as an Eastern Church, we can collectively strive to be a light from the East in the modern world bearing witness to the ancient faith. Let us earnestly pray that the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, who is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the successor of Peter, may be blessed with the strength and the light of the Spirit to fulfil faithfully the immense responsibilities entrusted to him.

Dear brothers and sisters, as I have already mentioned at the beginning, the profession of faith by our Father, St. Thomas the Apostle, was a proclamation that emerged from the depths of his heart, evolved from a personal bond with Jesus. The importance of such a heartfelt connection, both in our personal spiritual lives and in the life of the Church, is powerfully emphasized in Pope Francis' encyclical "He Loved Us" (*Dilexit Nos*), published in October 2024. Through this encyclical, the Holy Father teaches us that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the supreme model of unconditional and total love, a love that invites us to live in communion with God and with our fellow human beings, thus leading us into a life that is truly authentic and complete. The indifference, neglect, and superficiality we witness in today's world are, in fact, reflections of the emptiness that is growing in the human heart. It is only by uniting the hearts with the heart of Jesus that it becomes possible

to reconcile the differences in the society and to renew the human race. Therefore, the renewal of our communities must begin with the personal renewal of each of our hearts. It is only by starting from the heart that our communities will succeed in uniting and reconciling differing minds and wills, so that the Spirit can guide us in unity as brothers and sisters (No. 28). This renewal of the heart can be possible only if we turn towards the Sacred Heart of Jesus, without relying excessively on our own capabilities. It is in the Sacred Heart that we truly discover ourselves and learn to love (No. 30). Therefore, if we desire change, it must begin with the renewal of our hearts. For a genuine renewal of our families and ecclesial communities to take place, each individual must set aside prejudices and personal preferences, establish a relationship with the Heart of Jesus, and through the spiritual awakening received from it, embrace the spirit of fraternity and unity.

I extend the greetings of the Feast of *Dukrana* and the *Sabhadinam* to all. May the intercession and blessings of our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Thomas the Apostle, and all the saints and blessed be with us and all our endeavours!

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on June 20, 2025.

## MESSAGE OF THE CURIA BISHOP

Bishop Sebastian Vaniyapurakal



It has become common nowadays to hear remarks that the number of God's calls to religious and priestly life is decreasing compared to earlier times.

However, with firm faith in the truth that divine plans never fail, we must strive to move forward courageously, trusting in God through constant prayer. Jesus conducted His public ministry, which lasted three years, with a limited number of twelve disciples. Even when the disciples repeatedly displayed weaknesses, Jesus did not abandon them. Instead, He embraced them and made them capable of fulfilling their ministry.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples, gathered in prayer with the Blessed Mary in the Upper Room, received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They were transformed into persons of great strength and zeal. It was through the apostolic zeal of these Spirit-filled disciples that the message of the Gospel reached different parts of the world and Christianity took root.

It was one single Apostle of Christ, St. Thomas, who brought the flame of the Gospel to India. The Apostle Thomas, who was blessed to see the nail marks on the hands of the Lord, to touch them,

## QUALITY MATTERS, NOT QUANTITY

**In recent years, many lay missionaries from the Church in Kerala, even while fulfilling the responsibilities of family life, have undertaken mission journeys and lived in mission centers, becoming effective evangelizers in remarkable ways. Though they may be few in number, their quality and commitment stand out.**



and to place his hand in the Lord's side, set foot on Indian soil with that same fervor and intensity. This great Apostle, who lived in India for twenty years, traveled vast distances and founded various Christian communities. In the end, he was ready to shed his blood and die for the faith.

The Church today is in need of individuals filled with such apostolic zeal, vitality, sincerity, and holiness. The Church in Kerala, which has already contributed numerous zealous missionaries, still has much to accomplish in this field. Missionaries are not limited to priests and religious alone. In recent

years, many lay missionaries from the Church in Kerala, even while fulfilling the responsibilities of family life, have undertaken mission journeys and lived in mission centers, becoming effective evangelizers in remarkable ways. Though they may be few in number, their quality and commitment stand out.

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"* (Matthew 9:37) – this is a phenomenon that Jesus Himself foresaw during His public ministry. Yet, to address this shortage, did not the Lord Himself prescribe the remedy of prayer? *"Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest"* (Matthew 9:38). We can pray, with trust in the word, *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"* (Luke 12:32).

With the intercessory help of St. Thomas the Apostle, we can firmly believe that the Church in India will continue to grow with apostolic fervor. Prayerfully extending to all the blessings and good wishes of the *Dukhrana*. ■

# EUCARISTIC MIRACLES: THEIR MEANING AND PURPOSE



**Flame icon** The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: “By the consecration, the whole substance of the bread becomes the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord, and the whole substance of the wine becomes the substance of His Blood. This change is fittingly and properly called transubstantiation” (CCC 1376). This mystery can be accepted only through faith rooted in divine authority—not by sensory experience.

Rev. Dr. Siby Pulickal

The Holy *Qurbana*, the source and summit of Christian life, is the fountain from which the Church draws her very life. Faithful to the command of Jesus—Do this in memory of me—the Church has never failed in celebrating this great mystery. She has consistently believed in and taught the real and active presence of Jesus in the Holy *Qurbana*, with unwavering clarity.

Normally, this presence is experienced under the appearances of bread and wine. However, throughout history, extraordinary events have been reported where the consecrated host became visible flesh or

the wine appeared as real blood. In some instances, blood was seen to flow from the host, or the host remained incorrupt for many years. One such case was reported in Vilakannur of the Archeparchy of Thalassery, where the face of Jesus appeared on a host and remained unchanged even after twelve years. These unusual phenomena, known as **Eucharistic miracles**, call for careful discernment by the faithful.

The greatest Eucharistic miracle is *transubstantiation*—the real and living presence of Jesus made present in every celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*. Compared to this, other miraculous phenomena are secondary. At every valid *Qurbana*, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the

bread and wine are transformed into the true Body and Blood of Christ. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains: “By the consecration, the whole substance of the bread becomes the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord, and the whole substance of the wine becomes the substance of His Blood. This change is fittingly and properly called transubstantiation” (CCC 1376). This mystery can be accepted only through faith rooted in divine authority—not by sensory experience.

To understand Eucharistic miracles, one must know how the Church views divine revelation. The Church distinguishes between **public** and **private** revelation.

Public revelation, found in Scripture and Sacred Tradition, includes truths all believers must accept for salvation—such as the real presence of Christ in the *Qurbana*. However, Eucharistic miracles are classified as private revelations and are not binding on the faithful. As the Catechism teaches: “Private revelations... do not belong to the deposit of faith. Their role is not to improve or complete Christ’s definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history” (CCC 67).

If Eucharistic miracles are not essential to belief, what is their purpose? God permits them to deepen the faith of the people. Ignoring them entirely could mean missing out on graces God offers for spiritual growth. When approved by Church authorities, such signs can fruitfully assist in personal devotion. For instance, seeing the host turn into visible flesh may help someone grasp more deeply that the *Qurbana* is the memorial and re-presentation of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross. Seeing Christ’s face on the host may lead a person to stronger faith in His real presence in the sacrament. In essence, Eucharistic miracles are signs that lead us to a deeper experience of the mystery already present in the *Qurbana*.

The Church conducts thorough theological and scientific investigations into such reports. When she grants approval, she does not claim to define the event as supernatural fact, but simply affirms that the event does not contradict faith or morals, and may be used for spiritual growth. While acknowledging the value such events may bring to the faithful, the Church warns against overemphasizing them. Their role is to lead the faithful to love the Divine Sacrifice more deeply and to participate in the Holy *Qurbana* with greater devotion.

The Church has always proclaimed the truth that in the Holy *Qurbana*, the bread and wine become the true Body and Blood of Jesus. This teaching has been affirmed by Ecumenical Councils such as the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council—not based on miracles, but on divine revelation as handed down through Scripture and Tradition. As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you...” (1 Cor 11:23). The mystery of the Holy *Qurbana* is something Christ Himself has taught the Church.

## Conclusion:

It is undeniable that Eucharistic miracles have helped many to better understand the mystery of the Holy *Qurbana* and the real presence of Jesus within it. Yet, Church authorities have a responsibility to remind the faithful not to place more importance on these miracles than on the daily celebration of the *Qurbana* itself. The role of Eucharistic miracles is not to prove Christ’s presence, but to reaffirm the truth that the Church has believed and proclaimed since apostolic times: the living and real presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy *Qurbana*. ■

# THE HOLY SPIRIT ACTIVELY AT WORK IN THE HOLY QURBANA

**The principal mission of the Holy Spirit is sanctification. For this reason, the Syriac tradition refers to the Spirit as *Ruha d-Qudsha*-meaning “Spirit of Holiness” or “Sanctifying Spirit.”**



Rev. Dr. Pauly Maniyattu

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that liturgy is primarily the work of the Most Holy Trinity (CCC 1077–1112). In presenting the Holy *Qurbana* as the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, the Holy Spirit plays a decisive role. It is the Spirit who prepares the Church to encounter the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who makes Christ and His Paschal Mystery present before the assembly of the faithful (CCC 1092). By stirring faith, bringing about conversion, and enabling obedience to the will of the Father, the Holy Spirit becomes actively operative in the Holy *Qurbana* (CCC 1098).

The principal mission of the Holy Spirit is sanctification. For this reason, the Syriac tradition refers to the Spirit as *Ruha d-Qudsha*-meaning “Spirit of Holiness” or “Sanctifying Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is the Author of the act of sanctification (*Qudasha*). The Syriac term *Qudasha* is employed in liturgy in various theological dimensions. In its ascending dimension (*anabatic qudasha*), *Qudasha* means praise and thanksgiving offered to God. In the descending dimension (*katabatic qudasha*), it refers to consecration, transformation, sanctification, or setting apart.

In liturgy, *katabatic qudasha* particularly signifies the sanctification of persons and objects.

Both ascending and descending *Qudasha* constitute the main actions of the Holy Spirit in the Holy *Qurbana*. Most of the prayers in the *Qurbana* are expressions of *anabatic qudasha*—praise, glory, and thanksgiving offered to God—culminating ultimately through the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who inspires the Church to recall the salvific acts of God and offer Him praise and thanksgiving. It is through the Holy Spirit that human beings can offer true and worthy praise to God. St. Paul teaches us that it is the Spirit who enables us to call God “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15).

In the background of the entire creation continuously glorifying God, the *Qurbana*’s *Shuraya* hymn reminds us believers to praise and magnify God through the hymns of the Divine Spirit. It is through the Spirit that we receive the grace to pray before God’s holy presence with contrition and gratitude-filled hearts. Jesus clearly taught how the Holy Spirit helps us stand in sincerity before God: “When He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit, as our Helper, prepares us to call upon and glorify God with genuine hearts. The second *G’hantha* prayer in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore highlights that it is the Holy Spirit who empowers us to offer *anabatic qudasha*: “Father, You have made all creation worthy to offer praise to Your adorable divinity through the good and true Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and sanctifies.”

The *katabatic qudasha* is the unique and direct action of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The prayers of the Holy *Qurbana* emphatically proclaim that it is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the Divine Mysteries. The *Epiclesis* (invocation of the Spirit) in the *Qudasha* of Mar Addai and Mar Mari explicitly asks the Spirit to sanctify the Mysteries for our sanctification.

It is through the operation of the Holy Spirit that the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, as affirmed in the *Epiclesis* prayers of the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius. The *Onitha* (hymn) sung during the profound moment of prostration in the *Raza* liturgy likewise declares the Holy Spirit’s role in sanctifying the Mysteries.

Moreover, the prayers of the *Qurbana* emphasize that the Spirit sanctifies the Divine Mysteries for the sanctification of the community. In the *Epiclesis* of the *Qudasha* of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, more importance is given to the sanctification of the worshiping community than to the Mysteries themselves. The *Epiclesis* prayers in the *Qudasha* of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius clearly affirm that those who partake in the sanctified Mysteries may themselves be sanctified. The prayer in the *Epiclesis* of Mar Theodore intensifies this by petitioning, “May the Holy Spirit come down upon us and upon this *Qurbana*...”

The proclamation following the reception of Holy Communion states that it is through the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit that we are made worthy to approach and partake in the sanctified Divine Mysteries. During the penitential service of

the *Qurbana*, the celebrant calls on the faithful to receive Holy Communion and be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

The sanctification of the Divine Mysteries in the Holy *Qurbana* and the consequent sanctification of the worshiping assembly by the Holy Spirit reveal the deep communion with God and with one another. *Shawttha Susa* expresses this profound unity. The *Epiclesis* prayer in the *Qudasha* of Mar Nestorius reflects this earnest longing: “Since we are called in one hope, may we become one body and one spirit, united in the bond of love and peace.” Similarly, the Eucharistic prayers of thanksgiving in the Latin tradition also fervently beseech that the worshiping community may become one body and one spirit.

Just as the bread and wine are consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ, those who partake in the Divine Mysteries are likewise sanctified by the Holy Spirit to become members of the one Body of Christ. Pope Benedict, in his apostolic exhortation on the Sacrament of Love (*Sacramentum Caritatis*), teaches about the necessity of this sanctification. In the *Epiclesis*, the priest invokes the Holy Spirit not only to transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ but also to transform the entire community more perfectly into the Body of Christ.

In summary, at every level of the celebration of the divine-human relationship in the Holy *Qurbana*, the active work of the Holy Spirit is clearly visible. With this awareness, when we respond genuinely to the gifts of the Spirit, the liturgy will indeed become a mighty force that transforms our entire life.

## EXCESSIVE ANXIETY AND TREATMENT



Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikkattumyalil

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is a condition that more than three percent of people in society are likely to experience at least once in their lifetime. Typically beginning around the age of twenty, this disorder is more commonly observed in women than in men. Research indicates that genetic factors play a crucial role in about thirty percent of cases. Some physical symptoms of this condition are seen, to a lesser extent, even in children. When a person experiences intense, persistent anxiety on most days without any specific reason, and it continues for more than six months along with



associated physical symptoms, a diagnosis of Generalized Anxiety Disorder can be made.

### Symptoms

Symptoms include lack of concentration, restlessness or inability to sit still peacefully, a sensation similar to muscle

tension or tightness, sleep disturbances, irritability, dizziness, feeling mentally blank, shortness of breath, being startled by everything, excessive sweating, occasional nausea, and gastrointestinal discomforts such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

### Causes

Genetic predisposition is a major contributing factor. Variations in brain neurotransmitters, stressful and negative life situations, dysfunction in the body’s autonomic nervous system, and abnormal activity in brain areas that regulate anxiety are all potential causes. Depression, other anxiety disorders, and substance abuse are commonly seen as comorbidities alongside Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

### Treatment Approaches

An integrated approach combining medication and psychotherapy has been found most effective. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps reduce anxiety

by correcting individuals’ faulty thought patterns. Lifestyle changes—such as engaging in daily physical exercise and maintaining proper sleep hygiene—can help control excessive anxiety. Additionally, psychological treatments like Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), counseling, and behavior modification techniques are recommended.

Third-wave psychotherapies such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) are also beneficial for treating GAD. Supportive psychotherapy can provide emotional reinforcement and reduce the severity of the condition.

Depending on the intensity of the disorder, medications prescribed by psychiatrists play a significant role. Since this condition can sometimes lead to depression, it is essential to consult a mental health professional at the earliest for scientific diagnosis and treatment.



Rev. Dr. James Puliurumpil

When the Fathers of the Greek and Latin Churches write that St. Thomas preached the gospel in India, Origen writes that when the apostles divided the world for preaching by casting lots Parthia fell to Thomas. Origen's original work has been lost; but this statement has been preserved by Eusebius. Origen associates the Apostle Thomas with Parthia in his *Commentary on Genesis*. This work is not extant in the Greek original, but is available in fragments of Greek citations and in an early Latin translation. The text is as the following:

The holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were scattered throughout the whole world. Thomas, as tradition relates, obtained by lot Parthia, Andrew Scythia, John Asia, but Peter seems to have preached to the Jews of the Dispersion in Pontus and Galatia and Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia and at the end he came to Rome and was crucified head downwards, for he had demanded to suffer. What need be said of Paul, who fulfilled the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyria and afterwards was martyred in Rome under Nero. This is stated exactly by Origen in the third volume of

**When Eusebius writes that' these facts have been stated exactly by Origen' is a compliment to Origen. In fact, Eusebius had the opportunity to transcribe directly from the original work of Origen after the latter had moved to Caesarea in Palestine, which was to become the see of Eusebius himself. Here his teacher had Pamphilus had set up a library on the basis of the legacy of books left behind by Origen.**



his *Commentary on Genesis* (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III. I.).

This text is taken from the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius who cited Origen textually. When Eusebius writes that' these facts have been stated exactly by Origen' is a compliment to Origen. In fact, Eusebius had the opportunity

to transcribe directly from the original work of Origen after the latter had moved to Caesarea in Palestine, which was to become the see of Eusebius himself. Here his teacher had Pamphilus had set up a library on the basis of the legacy of books left behind by Origen. This is important also because Origen's work is most likely the earliest written record we possess about the mission of Apostle Thomas. Since Origen's *Commentary on Genesis* is dated 224, it is certain that he wrote it before leaving Alexandria for Caesarea in 231 or 233. The tradition (*paradosis*), which he cites regarding the Apostle Thomas (and the other apostles) is therefore Alexandrian.

Here it is very clear that the holy apostles and disciples of Our Lord were dispersed all over the world. Origen writes about the missionary fields of Thomas, Andrew, John, Peter and Paul. According to him Thomas obtained Parthia by lot, Andrew Scythia, John Asia (who died in Ephesus) and Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome under Nero.

Origen's Parthia should mean the same as India in the Acts of Thomas, which is mentioned as the place of the apostle's apostolate and martyrdom in the Acts of Thomas. At the time of the apostles Parthia extended from the Indus river in the east of the Tigris in the West, from the Caspian Sea in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south. But the Indo-Parthian kingdom of Gondophorus corresponds to the North West India of the Mauryan empire. Parthia was an elastic term like Scythia, which is sometimes used for the European Scythia, lying between the Danube and the Tanais, or for the Asiatic Scythia extending eastward from the Ural Mountains. Therefore, Parthia in the patristic text is the same as India. Then the testimony of Origen is not opposed to the Indian apostolate of St. Thomas. It is to give special note to the fact the Origen mentions Thomas in the first place in his book. This is not to give primacy to Thomas but to show the fame of Thomas who evangelized the greatest number of peoples inhabiting the many lands lying east of the Roman empire. ■

## A MISSIONARY MANDATE ROOTED IN FAITH

**In one of the most underdeveloped regions of India, the Utkela Mission is lighting the lamp of hope and transformation.**

Rev. Fr. Mathew Plathottathil

Utkela Mission:

**History of the Mission:** St. Michael's Mission, widely known as Utkela Mission, was established in 2022 by the Eparchy of Kothamangalam as an *ad gentes* mission, within the Eparchy of Shamshabad in the civil state of Odisha. Inspired by the powerful words of His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, "A Church is dead unless it is missionary," Bishop Mar George Madathikandathil commissioned Fr. Joseph Koonanical and Fr. Mathew Plathottathil as the pioneer missionaries. After initial language training and groundwork in Kalahandi and Nuapada districts, the mission was formally inaugurated in Bhawanipatna. Despite linguistic, cultural, and geographical challenges, the missionaries laid a strong foundation through perseverance and deep faith. Today, regular prayer gatherings are held in five villages, and Holy Qurbana is celebrated in one of them, drawing around 200 faithful from 52 families. Through consistent prayer, preaching, and the celebration of feasts, the St. Thomas Christian tradition began to take root in the hearts of the people. A significant milestone in the mission's growth was the introduction of a one-year missionary formation programme for seminarians, which has proved highly effective in shaping committed mis-



sionaries and creating vibrant communities. The blessing of Jeeva Bhavan, the mission's central house, in 2025, marked a new era of growth and permanence.

**Social Works and Achievements:** From the outset, the mission has prioritized education, charity, and community development. The formal registration of the Jeevajyoti Trust Utkela enabled a broader reach in social services. Over 25 tuition centres were set up in remote

villages to support underprivileged children. Scholarships, school supplies, and educational aid continue to uplift many families. The mission also provides medical assistance, distributes clothing, facilitates clean water sources like wells and tube wells, and supports house construction for the needy.

**Vision and Scope:** Looking forward, Utkela Mission envisions becoming a vibrant spiritual and social centre in West-

ern Odisha. Future planning includes constructing village churches, expanding women's empowerment initiatives, and enhancing educational and charitable outreach. The recent arrival and commitment of the MSJ Sisters opens new opportunities, especially in the medical field. Rooted in faith, the mission aspires to be a beacon of hope and transformation in one of India's most underserved regions. ■

# BIRTH BY WATER AND SPIRIT!



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkott

As a condition for entering the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus tells Nicodemus, “*gennēthēnai anōthen*” - you must be born from above. When Nicodemus, unable to understand the deeper meaning of this teaching, becomes confused, the Messiah clarifies the method of rebirth: “Unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” - ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. What does Jesus mean by “Water and the Spirit,” - (ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ Πνεύματος) the mediums of this new birth?

Biblical scholars have interpreted the phrase “born of Water and the Spirit” in three main ways: First, being “born of Water” is understood as a symbol of baptism. Baptism purifies the soul from both original sin and, if present, actual sins. The second action, the birth in the Spirit, takes place after the first birth through baptismal Water. The primitive Church viewed baptism as both a necessity and the initial step toward receiving the Spirit. Thus, this aligns with their perspective.

Second, the symbolic interpretation by St. Origen is noteworthy. According to him, the words of Jesus - “of Water and the Spirit” - refer to the action of the Spirit of



**The Gospel writers refer to John’s baptism as a “baptism of repentance.” In this context, being “born of Water” can be understood as the baptism of repentance, and being “born of the Spirit” as belief in Jesus of Nazareth. In summary, “being born of Water and the Spirit” means the foundational proclamation of the early Church: “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”**

God Himself, who cleanses and anoints. This interpretation resonates closely with Old Testament thought. In many places in the Old Testament, Water and spirit are used as symbols of God’s purifying and life-giving activity (cf. Isaiah 55:2-3; Jeremiah 2:13; Zechariah 14:8).

Third, within the historical context of Jesus and Nicodemus, another interpretation is possible. Their contemporary, John

the Baptist, was preparing people for the baptism in the Spirit by giving them a Water baptism. The Gospel writers refer to John’s baptism as a “baptism of repentance.” In this context, being “born of Water” can be understood as the baptism of repentance, and being “born of the Spirit” as belief in Jesus of Nazareth. In summary, “being born of Water and the Spirit” means the foundational proclamation of

the early Church: “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

According to the Gospel of St. John, Water is a powerful symbol assisting divine revelation. John uses Water symbolically on multiple occasions. First, at the wedding in Cana, the six stone jars of Water play a key role in the revelation of Jesus’ glory. Similarly, in the conversation with the Samaritan woman, the setting is Jacob’s well and its Water. Again, Water is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the expression “streams of living Water” (John 7:39-41). Finally, as a sign of the salvation brought about through the sacrificial death of the Messiah, the beloved disciple testifies that blood and Water flowed from His pierced side.

Considering this richness of symbolism, what could Jesus have meant by “Water” in the phrase “born of Water and the Spirit”? Clearly, the term “Spirit,” as John uses elsewhere, cannot apply to “Water” in this instance. To say “born of the Spirit and the Spirit” would not be linguistically or logically correct. Therefore, the “Water” here must be understood as referring to the Word. In the conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus uses “Water” in this same sense. Thus, “born of Water and the Spirit” should be rightly understood as new birth through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Before life in the Spirit begins, it is the Word that becomes the fertile ground for the new creation.

“You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” - 1 Peter 1:23

# SUI IURIS CHURCH AND RITE



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Joseph Mattathil

Can the distinction between the *sui iuris* Church and the Rite mentioned in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches be made clear?

In the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO), Canons 27 to 41 of Title II refer to *sui iuris* Churches and Rites. These two terms are often used without properly understanding their difference. At present, there are 24 particular Churches in the Catholic Church, including the Latin Church. Among them, the Latin Church is known as the Western Church, and the other 23 Churches are known as the Eastern Churches. The Second Vatican Council referred to the Eastern Churches by different names. In the Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches (OE 4), the term particular Churches was used. However, the same term was used by other Council documents to refer to dioceses (LG 13,

23; CD 11). Additionally, terms such as local Churches (UR 14; LG 23) and Rites were also used to refer to Eastern Churches, which led to a lack of clarity that needed to be addressed.

When the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches was revised after the Second Vatican Council, one of the main instructions given to the commission responsible for the revision was to provide clear definitions for terms that caused confusion in the previous usage. Accordingly, the revision commission of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches clarified the distinction between Rite and particular Church. However, since the term particular Church was already used to refer to dioceses in the Latin Code, the Latin Code revision commission took the position that another term had to be used to refer to Eastern Churches. Following further discussions, the term Ritual Church *sui iuris* was temporarily adopted. But later, after additional deliberations, the term Rite was replaced, and the term *Sui iuris* Church (Ecclesia *sui iuris*) was finalized to refer to Eastern Churches. The term Rite was separately defined. Thus, CCEO c. 27 defines what a *sui iuris* Church is, and c. 28 defines what a Rite is.

The Latin term *sui iuris* means “of its own right.” That is to say, Eastern Churches are Churches that have self-governance rights recognized in matters of governance and discipline. The definition of a *sui iuris* Church given in CCEO c. 27 is as follows: “A community of the Christian faithful, which is joined together by a hierarchy according to the norm of law and which is expressly or tacitly recognized as *sui iuris* by the supreme authority of the Church, is called in this Code a church *sui iuris*.”

According to this definition, for an Eastern Church to be called a *sui iuris* Church, it must fulfill three essential elements: it must be a community of Christian faithful; it must be united in accordance with the law under a hierarchy; and it must be recognized, either explicitly or implicitly, by the supreme authority of the Catholic Church. Based on this definition, there are 24 *sui iuris* Churches in the Catholic Church, including the Latin Church. All these Churches are considered *sui iuris* Churches because they are lawfully established with the recognition of the Church’s hierarchy.

The term that distinguishes each of these Churches from one another is Rite. CCEO c. 28 §1 explains what a Rite is: “A Rite is a liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary heritage, differentiated by the culture and the circumstances of the history of peoples, which is expressed by each Church *sui iuris* in its own manner of living the faith.”

Thus, Rite refers to the heritage of each particular Church. Each *sui iuris* Church expresses and lives out its faith through a unique tradition of liturgy and theology. These traditions differ based on historical and cultural conditions of the respective peoples. In brief, the term Rite refers to the unique manifestation of the received faith as lived in each Church according to its own context. The differentiating components among the Rites are the cultural differences and historical particularities of each people. A Rite is not something that stands alone; rather, it is proper to each *sui iuris* Church. The term Rite is not used to designate a Church itself. In summary, Rite is a heritage or a distinguishing element that differentiates one Church from another. ■

# THE EUCHARISTIC SIGN AT VILAKKANNUR



The Eucharistic sign that occurred on November 13, 2013, at Christ the King Church, Vilakkannur, in the Archeparchy of Thalassery, has received official recognition from the Vatican. On that day, during the early morning Holy *Qurbana* celebrated by then-vicar Fr. Thomas Pathickal, an extraordinary event took place when the Holy Face of Jesus appeared on the Sacred Host. At the moment of the Epiclesis prayer during the Holy *Qurbana*, a sign began to manifest in the center of the Host, and very quickly, the image of the Holy Face of Jesus became visible. The Host was then placed in the monstrance, and the *Qurbana* continued. After the *Qurbana*, the vicar showed the Host to the faithful present, and the miraculous image was placed in the monstrance for public adoration. Thousands of people flocked to see the Sacred Host.

Following the instructions of the then-Archbishop Mar George Valiamattam, the Host was taken to the Archbishop's House in Thalassery on November 17, 2013, and kept in secrecy. Cardinal Mar George Alencherry, who was the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church at the time, was informed of this phenomenon. The Major Archbishop assigned the Doctrinal Commission of the Syro-Malabar Church, comprising Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, Mar George Njaralakatt, and Mar Joseph Arumachadath, to study the matter. A committee of experts—Msgr. Mathew Vellanickal, Rev. Dr. Jose Palackel MST, Rev. Dr. Siby Pulickal, Rev. Dr. Joseph Pamplany, Rev. Dr. Thomas Melvettath, and Rev. Dr. George Kudilil—was formed under the Commission to thoroughly study the phenomenon and submit a report. The

study was completed, and the report was submitted on December 21, 2013. The Sacred Host continued to be kept secretly in the chapel of the Archbishop's House.

Mar George Njaralakatt, instructed then-Auxiliary Bishop and CBCI Doctrinal Commission member Mar Joseph Pamplany, who later became Archbishop, to continue studying the phenomenon. After five years, the Host was returned to Vilakkannur parish church on August 22, 2018. Archbishop Mar George Njaralakatt issued a decree with specific directives and informed the faithful that official recognition of this miraculous phenomenon should come from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

On January 15, 2024, the Sacred Host was returned to the Thalassery Archbishops House from the Apostolic Nunciature in Delhi. The return was based on the fact that India possessed the facilities required for the further scientific studies recommended by Rome.

Three specific scientific tests were proposed by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith:

1. Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy analysis or FTIR analysis.
2. HPLC- Ms or High - Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)
3. Mass Spectrometry.

Since the required equipment was available at Christ University, Bangalore, with permission from the Dicastery, the studies were conducted in its laboratories. A committee of scientists was appointed to conduct the studies, as per the Dicastery's instructions.

On January 23, 2024, the Sacred Host was brought to Christ University, Bangalore, for further examination. The

scientific committee included Dr. Jyothis Devassia, Research Wing, Common Instrumentation Lab, Christ University; Dr. Joby Xavier, Head and Director of the Department of Life Sciences and Chemistry, Christ University; and Dr. P. T. Varghese, Head of the Forensic Department, St. John's Medical College, Bangalore. The theological committee included Rev. Dr. George Karot and Rev. Dr. Sebastian Chalackal. Together, they conducted the required tests and studies and prepared a report.

The tests aimed to identify whether any external material had influenced the formation of the image on the Host. The conclusions reaffirmed the Catholic faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist—not based on any natural phenomenon but rooted in the institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, when Jesus commanded, “*Do this in memory of me*” (1 Cor 11:24–25). The Church believes that the bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Christ by His Word and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The complete report of the confidential study was submitted to Rome via the Apostolic Nunciature on April 2, 2024. After evaluating both the scientific findings and theological reflections, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, through the Nunciature, declared on March 19, 2025, that there was no objection to declaring the Eucharistic phenomenon at Vilakkannur as an extraordinary event.

A Malayalam translation of the decree was prepared and sent to the Dicastery, the Syro-Malabar Major Archbishop, and the President of the CBCI. Upon receiving the translated decree in Rome,



the Dicastery granted Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany permission to inform the faithful about this miraculous phenomenon.

Scientific findings concluded that the same material found in the rest of the Host was also present in the image area and that the image was formed from the material of the Host itself. No external substances were found to have influenced the formation of the image.

On May 9, 2025, during the Holy *Qurbana* at Christ the King Church in Vilakkannur, Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany informed the faithful of the official recognition. On May 31, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., Apostolic Nuncio to India, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, made the official proclamation at Christ the King Church, Vilakkannur, in the presence of bishops, priests, religious, and the faithful of the Archeparchy of Thalassery.

# PROBLEMS THAT HUMANS CANNOT SOLVE

Vinayak Nirmal

For some time, the priest had been deeply troubled by a crisis of faith. Even on that particular day, as he was celebrating the Holy *Qurbana*, the struggle within him remained intense. How could it be true that when an unworthy and sinful priest pronounces the words of consecration over bread and wine, they are transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ? How practical or believable could such a claim be? Filled with these inner doubts, he recited the words of consecration: "Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body... for this is my blood... which will be given up for you." In that very moment, it happened. The priest could not believe his eyes. The Host in his hands had transformed into human flesh, and the wine into actual blood.

This miracle took place at the Monastery of St. Longinus in Lanciano, Italy. It occurred when a Brazilian monk was celebrating the Holy *Qurbana*, and it is considered the first recorded Eucharistic miracle in the history of the Catholic Church. The sacred relics of this miracle are preserved there to this day. The event is dated to the eighth century.

Another Eucharistic miracle, perhaps even more significant, occurred in Santarém, Portugal. This event is regarded as one of the most important in the history of Eucharistic miracles. A woman, seeking to bring her unbelieving and immoral husband back to the right path, approached a sorcerer for help. The man demanded that she bring him a consecrated Host as the means to fulfill her request. Accordingly, she went to St. Stephen's Church and, during Holy *Qurbana*, received the Eucharist on her tongue. She immediately removed it and wrapped it in a cloth she had with her, then left the church. Upon returning home, she unwrapped the cloth to find it soaked in blood—the Host was bleeding.

Terrified, the woman returned to the church, confessed everything, and repented. The Host was then carried in procession back to the church.

Any miracle connected to the Holy Eucharist is referred to as a Eucharistic miracle. The transformation of consecrated bread and wine into real flesh and blood is regarded as a supernatural manifestation of the Divine Presence. Each of these Eucharistic miracles proclaims to



**A Eucharistic miracle is beyond human understanding and explanation. Therefore, the only response from a sinful and imperfect human being should be to bow in reverence and join hands in adoration. Every miracle should help strengthen our faith.**

the world the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. These are events beyond human explanation and scientific reasoning. While numerous such miracles have taken place around the world, only about a hundred have received official recognition from the Church. Among them, the eighth-century miracle in Lanciano, Italy, and the thirteenth-century event in Portugal are considered extremely rare.

It is also important to understand that some Eucharistic miracles occurred in the context of historical crises. The miracle generally accepted as the first,

in Lanciano, took place during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Leo III (717–741), who issued harsh decrees against Christianity. He destroyed holy images and persecuted clergy. Many Brazilian monks fled to Italy seeking refuge. It was in such a context that the first Eucharistic miracle occurred.

The Catholic Church differentiates between changes that occur due to natural causes and actual miracles in a rational manner when defining phenomena related to the Eucharist. For instance, an event in the Diocese of Dallas that

was initially considered a miracle was later explained by biology professors at Dallas University. They concluded that the color change of the Host placed in a glass of water was due to a combination of fungal mycelium and bacterial colonies. However, this was not the case for the 2008 miracle in Sokolka. According to Professor Stanislaw Sulkowski of Bialystok Medical University, tissue fragments from the heart of a person who had suffered trauma were found on the Host believed to have undergone the miracle.

This must be viewed in connection with the Eucharistic miracle that took place on August 18, 1996, in Buenos Aires. As is usually done in such situations, Fr. Alejandro Pezet immediately placed the Sacred Host in water and preserved it in a small tabernacle. When he looked at it days later—on August 26—the Host had transformed into a substance that appeared bloody and fleshy. The investigations related to this incident were carried out under the leadership of Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio, who later became Pope Francis. The pathologist who examined the sample, Dr. Frederic, stated that the piece of flesh was from the myocardium of the left ventricle of the heart of a person who had undergone extreme pain. The blood found on it belonged to the human blood group AB.

Studies conducted on the Holy Shroud of Turin also confirmed that the blood stains on it are of AB group. The same result has been confirmed consistently in all the scientific studies carried out on the Sacred Hosts from various Eucharistic miracles across the world. From the first recorded Eucharistic miracle to the one that happened in Buenos Aires, this research finding has been repeatedly affirmed. In other words, Eucharistic miracles with the same nature have occurred both in the 8th century and in the 20th century.

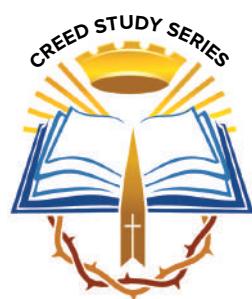
A Eucharistic miracle is beyond human understanding and explanation. Therefore, the only response from a sinful and imperfect human being should be to bow in reverence and join hands in adoration. Every miracle should help strengthen our faith. To understand this mysterious secret revealed not to the wise but to infants, we need a heart as vast as the ocean-like the heart of Jesus who became as small as a grain of wheat. Let us pray for such a heart. And let us continuously proclaim praise, worship, and glory to the Most Holy and Divine Eucharist.

## EXTRAORDINARY EUCHARISTIC SIGNS IN KERALA

At St. Sebastian's Church in Madavana, a girl named Agnes experienced a Eucharistic miracle when the Host turned into flesh as she received the Eucharist. This miracle occurred on three consecutive Sundays. The miraculous Host was later transferred to the diocesan center for detailed study.

Before this, a similar miracle occurred in Kanjikode, Palakkad, to a housewife named Rani John. On October 26, 1997, at the Good Shepherd Church in Kanjikode, during a Holy *Qurbana* offered by Bishop Mar Jacob Manathodath, the Host turned into the Body and Blood of Christ when she received the Eucharist. This miracle also repeated later. Many people witnessed both these miracles.

# FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND ETERNAL LIFE



Fr. Dr. Arun Kalamattathil

One of the most thought-provoking and complex sections of the Creed is the proclamation concerning the resurrection of the body and eternal life.

## 1. The Resurrection of the Body

"I believe in the resurrection of the body!" This is the foundation of our daily profession of faith, and it rests entirely on the resurrection of Jesus. The first and foremost truth regarding Jesus' resurrection is that He rose with His body. However, this body was not subject to the same physical limitations and characteristics as His former earthly body. The risen body of Jesus is glorified-free from the limitations of space and time. It radiates with glory. Yet, it is the very continuation of His former physical body; Jesus did not abandon His old body to assume a new one. As the

**Eternal life begins already here on earth. We have been taught that what we receive in the holy sacrament of Baptism is divine life. This divine life is eternal life. Baptism signifies death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. He who dies with Him will also rise with Him. All who have received the baptism of faith become partakers in His resurrection (cf. Romans 6:1).**

Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "In his risen body he passes from the state of death to another life beyond time and space. At Jesus' resurrection his body is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit: he shares the divine life in his glorious state..." (CCC 645).

### Characteristics of the Risen Body

The risen body is not a material or physical body in the earthly sense. It no longer bears the external appearance or limitations of the body prior to death, but it remains essentially and truly continuous with the former earthly body. The Church teaches five key characteristics of the risen body:

**1. Incorrputibility:** The risen body is imperishable and eternal.

**2. Glory:** It will shine with radiance and splendor.

**3. Subtlety:** The ability to move freely without being hindered by physical barriers-recall how the risen Christ entered a room even though the doors were locked.

**4. Agility:** A body freed from weight or heaviness.

**5. Speed:** It is no longer bound by earthly limitations of movement.

### 2. Faith in Eternal Life

The term *eternal life* is a union of two words: *eternity* and *life*. Eternal life is life that endures in eternity.

Eternity refers to a state that has neither beginning nor end. In the absolute sense, only God exists in eternity. However, there is a distinction when it comes to the eternal life that human beings partake in. Though it is unending, it does have a beginning-from the moment of our resur-

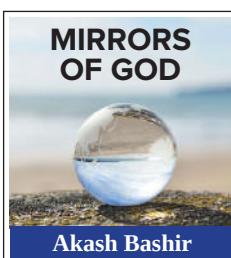
rection, we enter into eternity with God. God, being eternal, has no beginning, but we enter into eternity by being united with Him after the resurrection.

In fact, eternal life begins already here on earth. We have been taught that what we receive in the holy sacrament of Baptism is divine life. This divine life is eternal life. Baptism signifies death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. He who dies with Him will also rise with Him. All who have received the baptism of faith become partakers in His resurrection (cf. Romans 6:1).

### 3. Eternal Life and Earthly Life

Eternal life is not merely a concept or a vague hope about the future. It is the very dignity and foundation of our life here on earth. An individual's awareness of eternal life is what gives structure and direction to their earthly life. Without a consciousness of eternal life, one cannot truly possess a moral compass. To believe that this life has meaning is to understand that human life does not end as a mere blade of grass that withers away. It is the awareness of a life that transcends the temporal, a life destined for eternity.

## HE SANCTIFIED HIS OWN LIFE BY GIVING IT FOR OTHERS...



MIRRORS OF GOD  
Akash Bashir



For Akash, his duty had to be fulfilled at any cost.

"Even if I have to die, I will not let you enter. I would rather die than allow evil to enter," Akash declared courageously. Saying this, he physically restrained the attacker. At that moment, the bomber detonated the explosives; Akash perished with him. Those gathered inside the church turned at the sound of the explosion to see a ball of fire in the courtyard. What reached their ears were cries of anguish.

It is estimated that about 1,700 people were in the church at the time. Akash Bashir was only twenty years old when

he gave his life to save so many. He was born on June 22, 1994. After his education at Don Bosco Technical Institute in Lahore, he joined the security team at St. John's Church in December 2014. His commitment was not driven by the need for a job or salary, but by a deep love for the Church. That same love inspired him to lay down his life to save those in the church. His heroic act is counted as martyrdom by the Church. For did not Christ say, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lays down his life for his friends"?

Besides Akash and the bomber, two others were also killed in the attack that day. On the same day, there was another explosion at Christ Church in Pakistan, killing seventeen people and injuring around seventy. Tehrik-i-Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Akash was born near the Afghanistan border. But due to the immense difficulty of living as a Christian there, his family had moved closer to the Indian border, settling in Lahore. His childhood was marked by poverty and instability. However, these adverse circumstances only strengthened Akash's character, according to general assessments. He was a person who gave utmost importance to the safety of others. He aspired to become a soldier, but he did not get the chance to

join the military. His journey ended too soon.

It was during a time of increasing violent attacks on Christian churches in Pakistan that a group of volunteers formed to serve as security guards, and Akash joined this team. The group also engaged in prayer meetings, rosary prayers, and Bible studies. Akash was the youngest member of the team. He had great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. One could always see him wearing a rosary around his neck. On the day of the attack, he wore a white salwar to church. Though his mother had asked him to wear something else to avoid getting it dirty, he remained firm in his choice. No one knew then that only a few hours later, the white garment of sanctity would be tinged with the red of martyrdom. But that is exactly what happened.

The Archbishop of Lahore, Sebastian Francis, presided over Akash's funeral rites. Pakistani Christians can only remember Akash Bashir - who sacrificed his life for them - with tears and love. The process of his canonization began soon after. In January 2022, Pope Francis declared Akash a Servant of God. He is the second layperson from Pakistan to receive this title after Shahbaz Bhatti, the Minister for Minorities Affairs, who was martyred in 2011.

# SNEHAGIRI MISSIONARY SISTERS

## Sr. Piusha SMS (Mother General)

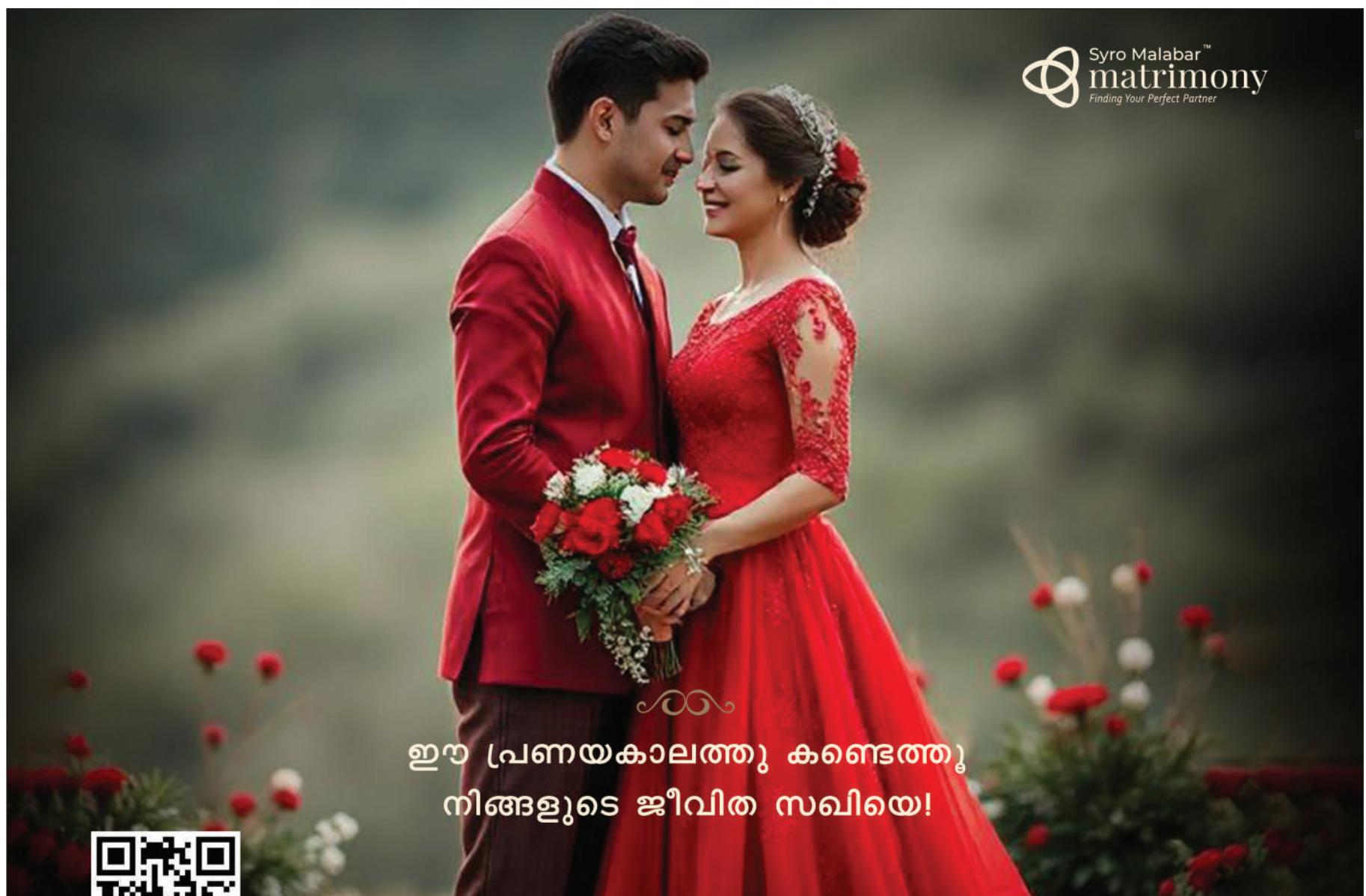
The Snehagiri Missionary Sisters (SMS) is a religious congregation in the Syro-Malabar Church with a Specific Charism of witnessing the compassionate love of Jesus among the poor and abandoned, deriving spiritual power and strength from the Holy Eucharist. Inspired by the words of Jesus Christ "Whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:40), the religious congregation of the Snehagiri Missionary Sisters was founded in the Eparchy of Palai on 24th May 1969 by Rev. Fr. Abraham Kaippalakkal with the blessings and patronage of Bishop of Palai, late Mar Sebastian Vayalil. On 24th November 1994 it was constituted as a Congregation of Eparchial Right by Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil, the then Bishop of the Eparchy of Palai. The growth and development of our Religious congregation during the last 56 years has been praiseworthy. The Mother General of the congregation is Sr. Piusha and it consists of 525 professed sisters and 25 candidates undergoing formation. We have 117 houses and the Sisters are rendering their services in 26 Dioceses in India and abroad. Six thousand inmates live in the shelter of Snehagiri. Our Sisters are engaged in purely humanitarian activities and services. We are rendering service in different charitable institutions such as Bala Bhavans, Old age homes, homes for physically handicapped, mentally challenged people and mentally ill people. We are also running Special Schools. Besides we conduct Training Centers of various kinds



for Cutting and Tailoring, Craft Centre, Embroidery work, Host Making, Baking, Printing, etc. We are also doing the Pastoral activities of parish by teaching Catechism, house visiting, Home mission programme conducting Bible classes and Prayer services for the parishioners. In rural areas, Sisters give primary education to the poor children. Due to the numerous problems of the modern families, our sisters are involved in family apostolate and Counselling. The Silver Jubilee of our Congregation was celebrated in the year 1993- 1994. On 24th November 1994, the Snehagiri Missionary Sisters are raised in to the status of an Eparchial Congregation in the Syro-Malabar Church. Our revised Statutes and Directives were approved by the Major Archiepiscopal curia on 15th August 2006. On

3rd September 2006, the Snehagiri Missionary Sisters are raised in to the Status of Major Archiepiscopal Congregation by His Beatitude Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Church. On 3rd March, 2008, the Congregation is Structurally divided into three Provinces namely, St. Thomas Province, Pala, St. Mary's Province, Kothamangalam and St. Joseph's Province, Malabar. On December 2nd 2014, Snehagiri Missionary Sisters established a region for the congregation which is known as Snehama Region Jagdalpur under Kothamangalam St. Mary's Province. On 4th May 2014 our beloved founder Rev. Fr. Abraham Kaippalakkal was called for eternal rest in peace. The Golden Jubilee of our Congregation was celebrated in the year 2018-2019. The Snehagiri Missionary

Congregation has grown to the peripheries of the world through the divine grace and support of many people. Wherever we are sent, we give witness the compassionate love of Jesus. The teaching of the founder is that, you never forget the poor, God will never forget you. So where a new convent is start, there will be a home for the poor attached. Still the day, we experience day to day the divine providence in every walk of our life. More than 6000 people enjoy the compassionate love of God through these homes. We, the whole members of the Congregation open our hearts to Lord Almighty and thank Him for the abundance of blessings which He gave us. We imbibe inspiration and strength from the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Altar. ■





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## URGENT GOVERNMENT ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF CHELLANAM: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP



Kakkanad: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil of the Syro-Malabar Church has urged the government to urgently

intervene to find permanent solutions for the people of Chellanam, who have lost their homes and livelihoods due to severe

monsoon damage and coastal erosion. He called for the provision of safe housing facilities and the efficient implementation of relief operations. The Major Archbishop emphasized that temporary solutions applied year after year have prolonged the suffering without real resolution. He called on the government to adopt permanent measures based on the views of local residents and elected representatives. It is distressing, he noted, to see people forced to take to the streets just to ensure the safety of their lives and property, and such helplessness should never occur in a civilized society.

## MOST IMPORTANT VIRTUE FOR PRIESTS TODAY IS HUMANITY: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP



Kakkanad: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil stated that among the virtues to be cultivated by priests in the present age, human virtue is the most essential. He added that priestly formation must be a continuous process. He was speaking at the inauguration of a ten-day train-

ing program for young priests from all eparchies, organized by the Clergy Commission of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St. Thomas, the Church's headquarters.

The event was attended by Commission Chairman Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil, Curia

Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal, Chancellor Rev. Dr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, and Commission Secretary Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott. Experts led classes on pastoral theology, psychology, liturgy, canon law, biblical exegesis, communication skills, youth animation, and more. Workshops were also held.

## SYNODAL COMMISSION FOR THE LAITY RELEVANT IN AN AGE OF EXISTENTIAL EXPLOITATION: MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



In an era where academic opportunities are increasing while life education and value-based formation are in decline, the Synodal Commission for the Laity plays a vital role in guiding both the Church and society, said Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. He was inaugurating the Synodal Commission's conference for families and the laity of the Syro-Malabar Church. Chairman Mar George Madathikandathil presided.

Episcopal members Mar John Nellikkunnel and Mar Peter Kochupurackal were present. General Secretary Fr. Dr. Arun Kalamattathil welcomed the attendees.

The Commission planned to coordinate and unify the work of various sub-commissions. Each sub-commission presented the outlines of their intended activities for the coming years, followed by detailed discussions. The Commission resolved to

implement awareness campaigns and concrete actions against social evils that undermine human dignity, life, and family values. Rev. Dr. Philip Kaviyil, Global President of the Catholic Congress, expressed gratitude.

The meeting included representatives from sub-commissions such as the Catholic Congress, Family Apostolate, Mathruvedi, Family Units, Pro-Life, and various lay forums.

## RELEASE OF THE REVISED POC BIBLE TRANSLATION



The revised official Bible translation of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC), the POC Bible, was officially released by KCBC President Cardinal Mar Cleemis, who handed a copy to renowned literary figure

Prof. M.K. Sanu. Although the revision began in 2008 and was completed in 2022, the official release took place on June 3, 2025, in conjunction with the KCBC's annual general assembly.

## FIRST SMYM NORTHERN REGIONAL MEET HELD



Ujjain: The first Northern Regional Meet of the Syro-Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM) was held under the auspices of the Eparchy of Ujjain. Youth delegates from the Eparchies of Sagar, Ujjain, Satna, Shamshabad, Jagdalpur, Gorakhpur, Bijnor, and Chanda participated. Messages were delivered by Ujjain Eparchial Bishop Mar Sebastian Vadakel and Satna Bishop Mar Joseph Kodakkallil. Sagar Youth Direc-

tor Fr. Joshi Eriyatpadayatil and Ujjain Youth Director Fr. Anoop Neendukunnel led the sessions. Other eparchial directors and SMYM Global President Adv. Sam Sunny Odakkal also took part. The event was coordinated with the support of Syro-Malabar Youth Commission Chairman Mar Peter Kochupurackal and Commission Secretary Fr. Jacob Chakkathara.

## BENEFACTORS OF THE SYRO-MALABAR MISSION ACTIVITIES GATHER AT MOUNT ST. THOMAS



Kakkanad: The annual gathering of benefactors who support the mission initiatives of the Syro-Malabar Church was held on May 6 at Mount St. Thomas. Seventy benefactors from various regions participated. Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil expressed gratitude for their continued support and encouraged them to further involve themselves in the Church's mission work with renewed commitment.

Curia Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal, Jagdalpur Bishop Mar Joseph Kollamparambil, Mission Director Mar Prince Antony, Mission Office Secretary Fr. Francis Eluvathingal, and Sr. Merlin George MSMI addressed the gathering. The event included an open dialogue with benefactors, a felicitation ceremony, adoration, and the celebration of the Holy Qurbana.



# DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

## MAY 21 TO JUNE 25

## May

- **21 Wednesday:** Arrived in the Eparchy of Chicago, USA, for an official visit.
- **23–25:** Participated in the Eucharistic Congress held in New Jersey, organized by the Eparchy of Chicago; celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered a message.
- **29 Thursday:** Addressed the Knanaya community in Chicago.
- **30 Friday:** Visited St. Joseph Forane Church in Houston, belonging to the Eparchy of Chicago; celebrated Holy *Qurbana*.

## June

- **1 Sunday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered a message at St. Thomas Cathedral in the Eparchy of Chicago.
- **3–4:** Participated in the KCBC meeting held at POC, Palarivattom.
- **5 Thursday:** Presided over the joint meeting of the Presbyteral Council, Forane Vicars, and College of Consultors of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.

- **8 Sunday:** Welcomed the youth who participated in the leadership camp organized by KCYM at Rajagiri College, to Mount St. Thomas; celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered a message.
- **9 Monday:** Addressed and spoke at the conference organized by Jesus Youth at the Rajagiri campus in Kalamassery. Inaugurated the ongoing formation program for young priests, at Mount St. Thomas Kakkad, organized under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Clergy Commission.
- **13 Friday:** Conducted the second part of the funeral rites at Chovvara Ashram for Rev. Fr. Biju Kunnumparambil, CSSR, who was called to eternal reward.
- **14 Saturday:** Welcomed the Governor of Maharashtra, Shri P. Radhakrishnan, at Mount St. Thomas.
- **18 Wednesday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and delivered a message on the concluding day of the ongoing formation seminar for young priests; participated in the concluding function and distributed certificates.
- **19 Thursday:** Presided over the Presbyterium meeting of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly held at Kaloor Renewal Centre. Welcomed the Bishop-designate of the Eparchy of Jalandhar, Msgr. Sebastian Thekkumcheril, to Mount St. Thomas.
- **20 Friday:** Welcomed the Sisters appointed to serve at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia for the years 2025–2028, along with their Major Superiors.
- **22 Sunday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and held an interaction with the seminarians at the Minor Seminary of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly in Thrikkakkara.
- **23 Monday:** Took part in the farewell function of the MSMI Sisters who had been serving at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia during the 2022–2025.
- **25 Wednesday:** Departed for Germany to visit the Syro-Malabar communities in Europe under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Apostolic Visitation in Europe.

## MISSIONARY GATHERING COMMEMORATES LAY MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS



Kakkanad: The second meeting of representatives from the lay missionary organizations of the Syro-Malabar Church was held on May 5 at Mount St. Thomas. Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, in his message, highlighted the invaluable services rendered by lay missionaries to the Church and

emphasized the need for their continued cooperation and commitment for the Church's growth.

Commission Chairman Mar Prince Antony Panengadan and Episcopal members Mar Joseph Kollamparambil CMI and Mar John Nellikkunnel also spoke. The meeting included discussions on various mission

sectors of the Church. The 120 participating missionaries were divided into 12 groups for focused discussions on specific ministry areas, and each group presented a summary report. Fr. Francis Eluvathingal and C. Merlin George MSMI also addressed the gathering.

## EVANGELIZATION COMMISSION DIRECTORS' MEETING HELD



The joint meeting of the Evangelization Commission Directors and Commission Members was held at Mount St. Thomas on May 7. Directors

and members from various eparchies participated. Commission Chairman Mar Prince Antony Panengadan led the

discussions, which focused on mission activities to be undertaken across the eparchies and concluded with key decisions for future actions.

## RECEPTION GIVEN TO BISHOP-ELECT OF JALANDHAR

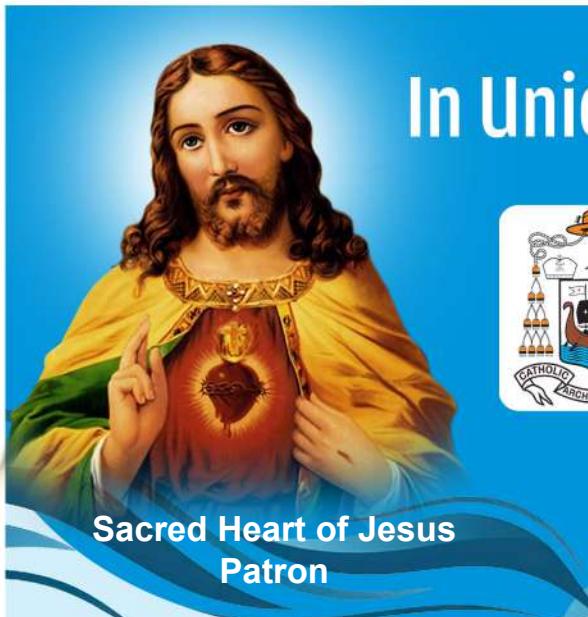


Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Jalandhar, Fr. Jose Sebastian Thekkumcherikunnel, was received at Mount St. Thomas by Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. The Major Archbishop conveyed the Syro-Malabar Church's prayerful best wishes for his new apostolic ministry.

The Bishop-elect was serving as the Financial Administrator of the Diocese of Jalandhar. A native of Chemmalamattom parish in the Eparchy of Pala, he



KCYM leaders from 32 dioceses who participated in the Leadership Training Camp jointly organized by the KCYM State Committee, the KCBC Youth Commission, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, and Rajagiri Business School attended Holy *Qurbana* with Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil at Mount St. Thomas, the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church



**Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Patron**

**In Uniqueness, Unity & Deep Faith**



# Archeeparchy of Kottayam



**St. Pius X  
Second Patron**

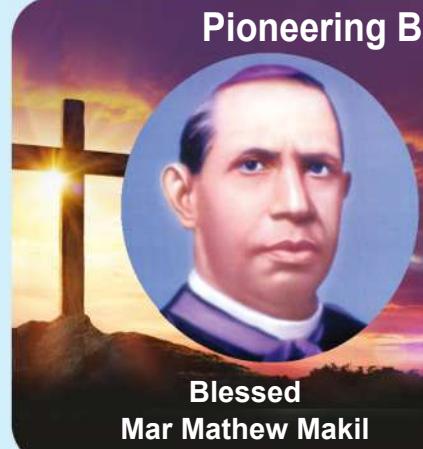
*"...We establish a new vicariate for the people of the South in the town commonly known as Kottayam..."*

*(From the papal bull by Pope St. Pius X Instituting the Apostolic Vicariate of Kottayam for the Southist People)*

**E**parchy of Kottayam was erected exclusively for Southist (Knanaya) Catholics in 1911. Knanaya Community tracks its origin to a group of Jewish-Christian emigrants from Southern Mesopotamia to the Southern Indian port of Cranganore in AD 345, who remains an endogamous community till date. They coexisted with the native St. Thomas Christians in India and embarked on a mission to reinvigorate the Church of St Thomas. The first migrants consisted of about 400 people from 72 families of 7 septs headed by Thomas of Kynai and Bishop Uruha Mar Yuseph, 4 priests and several deacons formed part of the group. Exactly as the Catholicos of East had promised the emigrants, that he would send bishops to India, from time to time, Uraha Mar Yousef always had successors till the end of 16th century. Under the patronage of East Syrian Bishops, Knanaya Community had their own separate parishes and priests.



**Christ the King Knanaya Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral**



**Blessed  
Mar Mathew Makil**



**Servant of God Poothathil  
Thommiyachan**

**Pioneering Beacons of Faith**



**Mar Alexander Chulaparambil**



**Mar Thomas Tharayil**



**Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry**

**Bishops who led the way**



**Mar Mathew Moolakkatt**  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Kottayam



**Mar Joseph Pandarasseril**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Kottayam



**Gheevarghese Mar Aphrem**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Kottayam



**Fr. Thomas Animoottil**  
Pro-Protosyncellus



**Fr. Michael Vettickat Syncellus**



**Fr. Thomas Adopillil**  
Chancellor

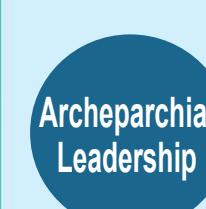


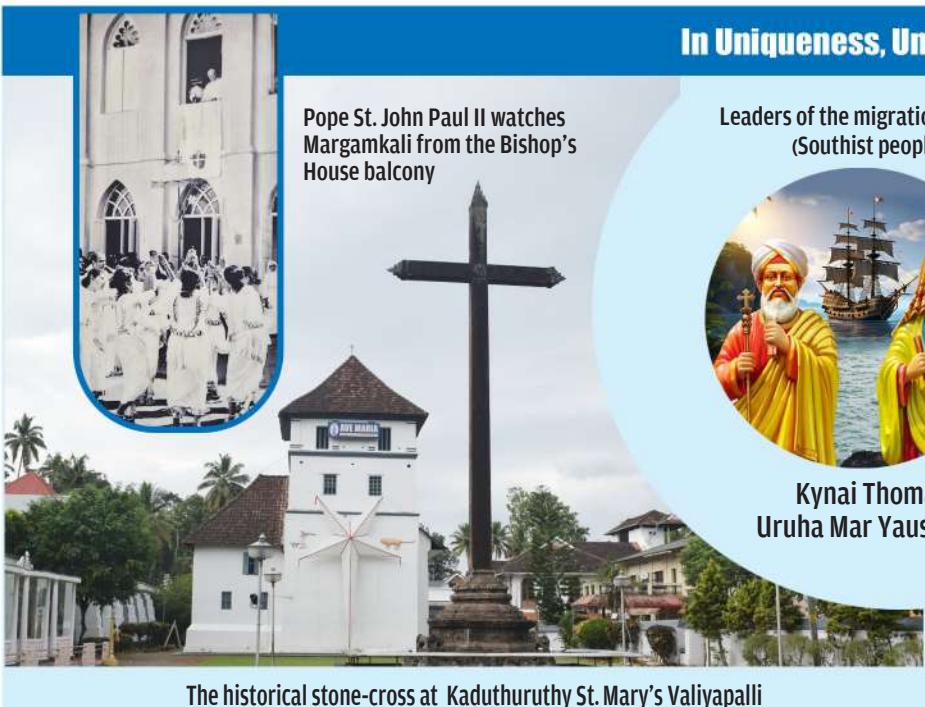
**Fr. Abraham Parambatt**  
Procurator



**Bishops House, Kottayam**

**Archeeparchial Leadership**





## In Uniqueness, Unity & Deep Faith Archearchy of Kottayam

### The Knanaya Catholic Community at a Glance

Families	39984
Members	198924
Diocesan Priests	218
Consecrated priests and nuns	1344
Parishes within the Archearchy	153
Diaspora Missions and Parishes	54
Missionaries from the Archearchy	1144

### Pastoral Centres



5 Pius Associations and 21 pastoral commissions for coordination of activities

Consecrated Communities	Established	Members
Visitation Congregation (SVM)	1892	557
Oblates of the Sacred Heart (OSH)	1921	101
St. Joseph's Congregation (SJC)	1928	384
Caritas Secular Institute	1961	108
Little Daughters of St. John Guibert (LDSJG)	1980	80
Missionary Society of St. Pius X (MSP)	1985	73
Vallambrosian Benedictine Order OSB	1988	41

### The Missionary Bishops of the Knanaya Catholic Community



### Humanitarian Initiatives



#### Hospitals

- Caritas, Thellakom
- Little Lourd, Kidangoor
- M.U.M. Monipally
- Mercy, Payavoor
- Caritas Ayurveda, Thellakom

#### Social Service Centres

- KSSS, Kottayam
- MASSS, Malabar
- GDS, Highrange & 18 Rehabilitation Centers

### Educational Institutions 114

### Legendary visits



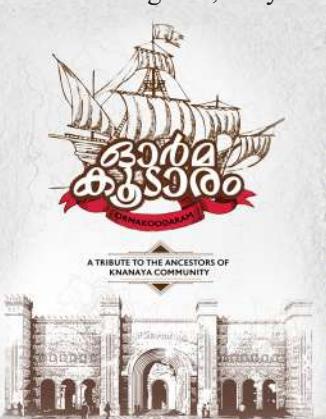
## Knananites Church Centered God's Faithful

The Church established by Knai Thoma and his colleagues in the name of Mar Thoma Sleeha at Knayiparambu in Kodungallur, was the early headquarters of the Eastern Syriac bishops who ruled the Indian church, starting with Bishop Uruha Mar Joseph. Knai Thoma, Uruha Mar Joseph, and the descendants of the Knanaya community were all laid to rest in the vicinity of this church.

In 1524, during the war between the Kozhikode and Kochi kingdoms, this Church at Kodungallur was burned down. But in the same place, the Portuguese later built a church in the name of Marthoma Sleeha. Later, this Church was also destroyed.

In the report of Bishop Rose, it appears that there were churches in Kodungallur in the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Thalia Kuriakos Sahada. In St. Kuriakos Church at Kodungallur, Holy Qurbana was practiced according to the Eastern Syrian order. This fact is contained and preserved in the Vatican archives, which were copied in 1301 by the 14-year-old Deacon Zacharias.

Subsequently when Knanaites relocated from Kodungallur to other locations, this community thrived as a God-centred community and established Churches in all those places, with the leadership of Knanaya priests.



Archbishop Kunnassery Memorial Knanaya Heritage Gallery, Kaduthuruthy  
• A gallery showcasing the history and traditions of the Knanaya community

### Lay Associations

#### KCC



President

Mr. Babau Parambadathumalayil

#### KCWA



President

Mrs. Shyni Chollambel

#### KCYL



President

Mr. Johnys P. Stephen

Mr. Sabu Karisserickal, Pastoral Council Lay Secretary

# ST. PAUL'S COLLEGE AND ITS ATTACHED INSTITUTIONS IN MELBOURNE TO BE TAKEN OVER BY THE SYRO-MALABAR EPARCHY; DEDICATION CEREMONY ON JULY 11



St. Thomas Grove-institutions and facilities that have been operating under

the Pallottine Fathers for the past six decades-are now being taken over by the

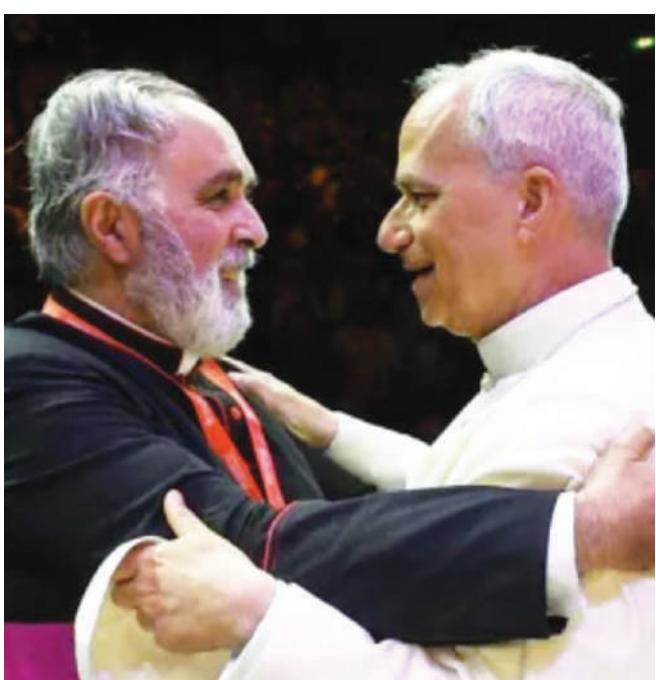
Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Melbourne. The Dedication Ceremony will be presided over by the Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil at 2:00 PM on July 11. The Bishop of Melbourne Bishop Mar John Panamthottathil, the first Bishop of the Eparchy Bishop Mar Bosco Puthur, Vicar General Msgr. Francis Kolenchery, Chancellor Rev. Dr. Sijish Pullankunnel, priests of the Eparchy, the faithful, and public representatives will be present on the occasion.

Located in the serene and scenic valley of Mount Don Buang, under the jurisdiction of Yarra Ranges Council, about 65 kilometers from Melbourne city, this expansive property spans over 200 acres. Key features of the center include a hilltop Cross installation, a chapel with seating capacity for around 300 faithful, a campsite that can accommodate over 70

students, lodging facilities across nearly 70 rooms for approximately 200 individuals, a dining hall capable of serving more than 100 people at a time, and various other amenities suited for silent prayer and spiritual retreats.

Expressing gratitude to the Pallottine Fathers for their services rendered through this center over the past six decades, the Bishop of Melbourne Mar John Panamthottathil affirmed that the heritage and mission of this institution will be carried forward through St. Thomas Grove by the Syro-Malabar Eparchy for the benefit of future generations.

Vicar General Msgr. Francis Kolenchery noted in a press release that St. Thomas Grove will be a valuable asset for diocesan-level retreats, youth camps, and training programs.



## PRIESTS, YOU ARE NOT ALONE: POPE LEO XIV

Pope Leo XIV emphasized that priests are never alone. Referring to Christ's words, "I have called you friends," he stated that these are not merely comforting expressions but keys to understanding the true dignity of priestly ministry. He was addressing the International Meeting of Priests held under the theme, *Joyful Priests: I Have Called You Friends*.

The Pope highlighted the importance of fraternity in priestly formation and life and shared three key insights on priestly formation. Firstly, formation must be a journey of relationships. It should be rooted in meaningful connections and should focus not merely on acquiring knowledge or skills but on deepening one's intimacy with God. Even in the remotest of mission territories, no priest is ever truly alone.

Fraternal bonds among priests are essential. The Pope urged both priests and seminarians to live as true brothers, not as rivals

or isolated individuals. "If there is no genuine and heartfelt fraternity among us, how can we, as ministers, build vibrant communities?" he asked. The goal of priestly formation is to mold individuals who can love, listen, pray, and serve in communion with others. Hence, great care must be taken in the formation of seminarians, the Pope stressed.

He also encouraged priests to show boldness and creativity in proposing new and life-giving ideas to help young people discern their divine vocation and respond to God's call.

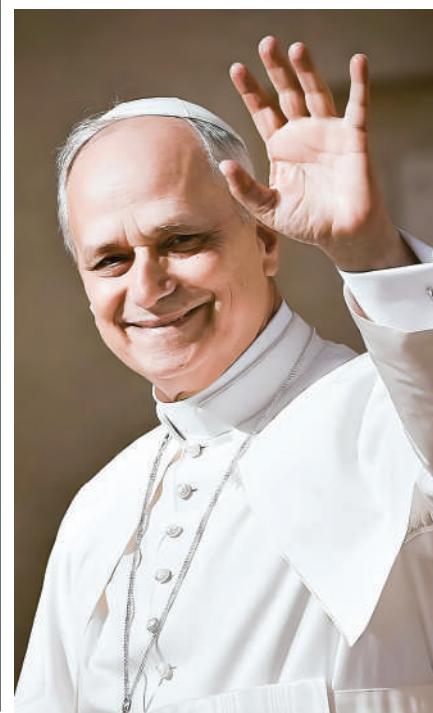
## FEAST CELEBRATED AT COLOGNE LIEBFRAUEN CHURCH



The joint feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Thomas the Apostle was celebrated at Liebfrauen Church in Mülheim, Cologne. The Qurbana was solemnly celebrated by His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, the Major Archbishop of

the Syro-Malabar Church. Bishop Mar Stephen Chirappanath was the concelebrant. Following the Holy Qurbana, a procession, festive meal, and cultural programs were held. The feast was celebrated on June 28 and 29.

## THE SEMINARY MUST BE A SCHOOL OF LOVE: POPE



Regardless of how it is structured, the seminary must be a school of love, said the Pope. In today's world, which is often marked by conflict and selfishness in both social and cultural contexts, we must learn to love and act like Christ. The Pope was speaking to a gathering of around 4,000 seminarians at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, as part of the Jubilee Year celebrations.

When Christ calls someone to the priesthood, it is to live the experience of friendship-with Him and with those around. This experience of friendship must continue to grow in a stable and all-encompassing way even after ordination. The Pope stressed the supreme importance of learning the art of loving with the heart of Christ.