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CHRISTIANS AND INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

► The contribution of the Christian community to the history of India's freedom struggle is invaluable. A brief journey through the path of those brave warriors who sacrificed their lives and possessions for the progress and independence of the nation:



Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar



Annie Mascarene



P.W. Sebastian



Akkamma Cherian



George Joseph



Joseph Baptista

Tom Jose Kalappurackal

Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar

The author of *Varthamanapusthakam*, the first travelogue in Malayalam, was a nationalist who, as early as the eighteenth century, declared that India belonged to Indians and should be governed by them. He introduced the word "quarantine" to Malayalam and was a zealous advocate for the reunification of the Christian community. A historian of renown and a man of action, Thoma Kathanar was born on 10 September 1736 in Kadanad village of Meenachil taluk, Kottayam district, to Paremmakkal Kuruvila and Annamma. He served as the Governor of the Syrian Catholics and passed away on 20 March 1799. His tomb is located at the new church in Ramapuram.

Annie Mascarene

Known as the "Heroine of Travancore," she was a trailblazing freedom fighter. A founding leader of the Travancore State Congress, she was the first woman on its working committee, a member of the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly, the first woman from the capital to be elected to the first Lok Sabha as an independent, the first woman minister of Kerala, and the first woman to resign from the cabinet. She was also a signatory to the draft Constitution of India. Born on 6 June 1902 to Gabriel, a clerk in the Travancore administration, and Mary. While practicing law at the Vanchiyoor Court, she joined the State Congress. Arrested on 26 April 1938 for participating in the Non-Cooperation Movement, she also played a key role in the Quit India Movement and was arrested again on 30 August 1942. After two years of rigorous imprisonment, she became secretary of the State Congress and participated

in the Udaipur session of the All India State Congress. Annie was later elected unopposed to the Constituent Assembly of India. She passed away on 19 July 1963.

P.W. Sebastian

A freedom fighter from Thrissur, he joined Mahatma Gandhi in the independence movement. Born on 26 December 1890 in the Poovathinkal family at East Bazaar, Thrissur, he was inspired by Motilal Nehru while in Bombay. In 1921, he was the only Malayali to take part in Gandhi's foreign cloth boycott at Parle, Mumbai. He initiated this movement in Thrissur and published the newspaper *Lokamanyan*. He was a principal organizer of the Vaikom Satyagraha and when Gandhi visited Thrissur in 1927, it was Sebastian who brought him a palm-leaf umbrella. He authored works such as *Khilafat*, *Jallianwala Bagh*, and *Swaraj*.

Though largely forgotten by official histories, this unsung hero lies buried in the cemetery of Kuriachira Church, Thrissur.

Akkamma Cherian

Hailed by Mahatma Gandhi as the "Jhansi Rani of Travancore," she was a valiant freedom fighter. Born on 12 February 1909 in Kanjirapally, Kottayam, to Thomman Cherian of Karippaparampil and Annamma of Punnakkudiyil, she stepped into the freedom struggle when the Travancore State Congress launched an agitation against the misrule of Dewan C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. Accamma led a massive procession to the royal palace, and she was imprisoned multiple times for her activism. She passed away on 5 May 1982.

Bhaje Bharatam Mathunny

A Christian fighter who made an in-

What is Freedom?

Where is Freedom?

August 15 - An occasion to remind and reflect upon the meaning and reality of freedom. A day of contemplation and memory. Heartfelt greetings to all the cherished readers of Syro-Malabar Vision on the twin celebrations of

India's Independence Day and the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Continued on page 5

EDITORIAL



WHEN FREEDOM IS IMPRISONED!

On August 15, 2025, our motherland will celebrate the 78th anniversary of its independence from foreign rule. Let us remember Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation and the millions of patriots who sacrificed their lives for this freedom. May their memory live on forever! The Constitution that charted the destiny of a newly independent India came into force in 1950. The brilliance of the visionary Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his deep commitment to justice and peace for all are clearly reflected in this foundational document. Since gaining independence in 1947, our country has made remarkable progress. India has risen as a global power in many fields—an achievement worthy of immense pride. Yet, certain dark forces that continually threaten to dim this brilliance have often held our nation back.

Even before the echoes of the first Independence Day celebrations faded, the gunshot that felled the Father of the Nation cast a dark shadow over our fledgling dreams of freedom. Although India was declared a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic, the maternal face of Mother India has repeatedly been disfigured by the cruelty of powerful factions that emerged from within. Freed from foreign domination, India has in many ways become a captive to heartless politics, godless religiosity, communal divisions that have forsaken fraternity, and terror groups devoid of any humanity. As a result, true freedom has become a luxury accessible only to a very small fraction of the Indian population. The enduring reality that the poor, the marginalized, the politically voiceless, and the unorganized—regardless of caste, creed, or language—have remained victims of human, social, and economic exploitation reveals the neglected and often untold side of India's post-independence narrative.

The true strength of any society must be measured by how it protects its most vulnerable members. It is from this perspective, the rights of minority communities in India must be approached and upheld. Those who have an open and honest approach to the history of India, cannot deny the invaluable contributions of Christians—who are a minority within a minority—in building this nation. When the selfless service of priests and sisters through schools, hospitals, and countless other social initiatives—especially in the northern states of India—is misrepresented as religious conversion or even human trafficking, and when they are subjected to baseless accusations and mob trials, it is the true face of humanity of the secular India that stands shattered.

Sister Preethi and Sister Vandana, who languish in jail after being arrested under false charges by a hijacked justice system, have become symbols of the courage, compassion, and love of humanity that are being imprisoned in our nation today. The history of the Church testifies that those who, inspired by Jesus who gave His life for humanity, without annihilating others, dedicate themselves to uplifting the poor and the broken cannot be silenced—not by prison, not by torture, not by humiliation, nor by mobs. This legacy continues unabated, as it has across millennia.

The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who offers us a shining model of motherhood, is a source of inspiration for us today. The intercession of the Blessed Mother, who triumphed over adversity through her total docility to the will of God, and ascended into divine freedom, along with the silent witness of Sisters Preethi and Vandana, urges us to forward and live our commitment to the Gospel. Her strength, born through suffering, empowers us to act. We still have a long way to go: to live without surrendering our spiritual and material freedom, to proclaim the Gospel without fear, and to remain steadfast as witnesses to love, liberty, and mercy.

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

August 1: Fifteen days fasting begins, St. James of Nisibis, Saint Alphonse Liguori

Mary, Indian Independence Day

Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil (1973)

August 21: St. Pius X, Pope

August 23: Death Anniversary of Bishop Mar Joseph Irimpen (1997)

August 24: St. Bartholomew the Apostle

August 28: St. Augustine

August 29: Saint Simoni and her Seven Sons, St. Euphrasius

August 8: Mar Mari, St. Dominic

August 11: St. Clare

August 14: St. Maximilian Kolbe

August 15: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

August 8



Bishop Mar
Dominic Kokkat

August 10



Bishop Mar Lawrence
Mukkuzhy

FESTAL GREETINGS



Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam

Born into a wealthy family in Nisibis in the last decades of the third century, James renounced his home and property to lead an austere life of asceticism in the Mesopotamian mountains, as testified by Theodoret of Cyrrhus. He did not build a house or labor for food. He lived by eating what nature provided and residing in open places and caves. He wore clothing made from coarse goat's hair ("The History of the Monks of Syria," I, 2).

Attracted by the many miracles God performed through him, the people of Nisibis demanded that James be appointed as their first bishop, and he was consecrated bishop in A.D. 308. Though he had to move from the mountain to the city, he did not change his diet or clothing. He continued with rigorous fasting, wore sackcloth, and slept on bare ground even after becoming a bishop (Theodoret, "The History of the Monks of Syria," I, 7).

Known as the father of the Church of Nisibis, James was the spiritual teacher of the prominent Syriac Church Father Mar Aphrahat and the founder of the theological school of Nisibis. Mar Aphrahat testifies about the Church of Nisibis, saying, "It was Mar Jacob who gave birth to her, fed her during infancy" ("Nisibene Hymns," 14, 6).

He participated in the First Council of Nicaea and encouraged other council fathers to



undertake fasting and acts of penance for the conversion of the seven bishops who secretly supported the Arian heresy ("The History of the Monks of Syria," I, 10).

When the Persian king Shapur II attempted to capture Nisibis, which was part of the Roman Empire, it was the

prayers of Bishop Mar Jacob that saved the city from destruction. Later, when the city fell to the Persian emperor in A.D. 363, the Christians, while fleeing the city, declared, "Had he been alive, this disaster would not have happened," and took his relics with them ("The History of the Monks of Syria," 11-12, 14). ■

HORIZONS OF FREEDOM



From the Heart of
the Father and Head

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



Once again, we are blessed to celebrate Independence Day alongside the Feast of the Assumption. It is a most significant day for us, who are both Indians and Christians. India is our motherland. We call her *Bharatam-ba*-Mother India. Likewise, the Blessed Virgin Mary is our Heavenly Mother.

We are among the rare peoples in the world who have the privilege of celebrating the nation's Independence Day and the Assumption of the Blessed Mother on the same date. This is something we can rightly take pride in.

August 15 is a day that opened up new horizons of freedom for us after centuries of slavery and oppression. The history of India's freedom struggle clearly tells us that the journey toward independence was not easy. Countless conflicts, bloodshed, and sacrifices occurred along the way. Yet great leadership overcame all these trials and forged ahead. Those leaders had a single goal-freedom! The mighty British Empire eventually crumbled before their unwavering determination. And

finally, we entered the realm of freedom. Thus, August 15, 1947, became our golden day-our moment of liberation.

As we all know, India is the largest democracy in the world, with 36 states, 1.5 billion people, and an immense diversity of languages and cultures. But these differences have not divided us-instead, they have led us toward unity. This is the unique greatness of India: unity in diversity. The struggle for independence and the freedom that followed opened up a new world for us.

We came to understand what freedom truly means. We were given the opportunity to live with self-respect in our own land, no longer in bondage to anyone. But the question remains: do all of us truly understand and use this freedom responsibly? While the Constitution of India guarantees every citizen the freedom to believe in the religion of their choice, it is troubling that Christians in various parts of India continue to face persecution and humiliation in the name of religion and faith. As we celebrate Independence Day, this is a matter of deep concern. Let us not forget that ours is also a land where people have been wounded in the name of religion.

Therefore, it is essential that we strive

to prevent any further injury or division based on religion or faith. We must safeguard communal harmony. Let us rise above the divisions of religion, caste, color, and creed, and move forward united as Indians. Let us work for the well-being and prosperity of our nation. Let us love our country. Let us safeguard its integrity. When we take the pledge, "India is my country," let us not forget that we are also embracing its diversity. We need the freedom to believe and to act. And that freedom must be one that no one can take away.

The Feast of the Assumption teaches us that the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken up into heaven, body and soul, after her earthly life. This is a truth of faith professed by the Catholic Church. On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly defined the Assumption of Mary as a dogma of faith. It is one of the four Marian dogmas held firmly by the Catholic Church and is the most ancient Marian feast.

In 451 AD, when the Council of Chalcedon was held in Constantinople, Emperor Marcian asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem to bring the relics of the Blessed Mother to be enshrined there. But when

they opened her tomb, it was found to be empty. This gave rise to the tradition that Mary was assumed into heaven with her body-a belief held by the Apostles themselves.

The Blessed Mother is the one who entered through the gates of heaven. She opened the gates of paradise that Eve had closed through sin. And it is through the door opened by the Blessed Mother that we are all called to enter. Many believe that Mary is the shortcut to heaven-not only a shortcut but also a sure guide to that heavenly homeland.

We are to reach heaven by following the example of the Blessed Mother. And we are also called to lead others there. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, with her inspiration and encouragement, remain firmly rooted in our spiritual lives as a source of motivation for both our own ascent to heaven and the guidance of others along the way. The Blessed Mother was the freest of all people. May she lead us into the vastness of true spiritual freedom.

With heartfelt prayers, I extend to everyone my wishes for a blessed Independence Day and Feast of the Assumption.

MESSAGE OF THE CURIA BISHOP

Bishop Sebastian Vaniyapurakal



We Indians are blessed with the rare opportunity to celebrate our Motherland's Independence Day and the Assumption of the Blessed Mother on the same day. I began to feel greater pride and wonder about India during my five-year stay in Rome for higher studies.

While visiting various parishes in Italy during vacations for pastoral service, I encountered many who were curious to know more about India. One of their frequent questions was about the percentage of Christians in India. When I answered around 2.5%, their reaction would be: "Only that much?" Their next question would be the total population, and when I said 1.44 billion, they would raise their eyebrows in amazement. When I clarified that 2.5% of 1.44 billion amounts to over 35 million, they were shocked - especially considering Italy's total population is only 59 million.

They would next inquire when Christianity came to India. Most assumed that the Church began in the 16th century

THE MIRACULOUS POWER OF THE EXPRESS NOVENA

Today we also prayerfully celebrate the dogma that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus the Savior, was assumed into heaven body and soul. This dogma was proclaimed by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950.

with the arrival of European missionaries. But when I said that St. Thomas the Apostle came to India in the first century, proclaimed the Gospel, and established communities, they would listen with great astonishment. The Church in India also has the unique distinction of being named after the Apostle who preached there - the Church of St. Thomas Christians.

Many are eager to know about Indian languages. India is a country with 22 official languages recognized by the Constitution. When I explain the religions, they are equally amazed. India is a vast nation with 80% Hindus, 15% Muslims, 2.5% Christians, 2% Sikhs, and 0.5% Jains.

Despite immense diversity in language, culture, and lifestyle, this great country continues to amaze the world.

Though disputes and crises exist in many parts due to these diversities, India strives to become a unified nation through tireless efforts. After many years under foreign dominance, India finally attained independence from the British on August 15, 1947 - a memory we now celebrate as Independence Day.

Today we also prayerfully celebrate the dogma that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus the Savior, was assumed into heaven body and soul. This dogma was proclaimed by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950. Even amidst crises, adversities, and deep sorrow, Mary remained steadfast in faith, always saying, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word."

The Blessed Mother never allowed her heart to be bound or darkened,

always living in spiritual freedom. Mother Teresa had a firm belief that no prayer made through Mary would go unanswered. Based on this belief, she practiced a special form of prayer called the "Flying Novena" or "Express Novena." Whenever faced with urgency or confusion, she would recite "O Most Merciful Mother" nine times, and often a tenth time in thanksgiving, believing firmly that everything would go well with this prayer.

Let us also place our trust in the intercession of the Assumed Blessed Virgin Mary and pray fervently for our Motherland, India, and for the Church in India.

With love, I wish all of you the blessings of the Feast of the Assumption and Independence Day.

A FEAST THAT INVITES US TO LOOK UPWARDS

► This feast reminds us of eternal life after death, and that the ultimate goal of every Christian is to reach heaven. It is a reminder for a world immersed in momentary pleasures, forgetting the value of body and soul, that the final destiny of human life is union with God. It affirms that both body and soul are precious to God and that God embraces the fullness of human life.



Sr. Dr. Jissi Maria CMC

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the most ancient feasts in the Universal Church. God did not allow the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who gave birth to the Son of God, to undergo decay. This feast proclaims the message that the Blessed Mother was taken up into heaven, body and soul.

On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius

XII declared the Assumption of Mary as a dogma of faith through the apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. In it, he proclaimed: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, after having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."

Feast of the Assumption: In History

Even before the official proclamation of the Assumption as a dogma, the Church had been celebrating this feast on August

15. History reveals that from the end of the sixth century, the Assumption began to be celebrated throughout the universal Church. Emperor Maurice, who ruled Jerusalem during the late sixth and early seventh centuries, decreed that this feast be celebrated on August 15 in his empire. According to the Greek tradition, the Eastern Catholic Churches and Eastern Orthodox Churches commemorated the Assumption of the Blessed Mother on

August 15 as the Feast of the *Dormition* of Mary. This feast was also known by two other names. In Syriac, it is called *Shunaya Thirunal*, which means "transference" or "change of place" from this earth to paradise. In the Latin Church, it is known as *Assumptio*, meaning Assumption. Although different Churches - Greek, Syriac, and Latin - use different terms, the theological explanation remains the same: The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, was taken into paradise after her earthly life!

Although the Holy Scriptures do not explicitly mention the Assumption of Mary, many Church Fathers interpret the vision in Revelation 12:1 as a sign of her exaltation to heavenly glory: "A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head."

A Feast That Offers Heavenly Reflection

This feast reminds us of eternal life after death, and that the ultimate goal of every Christian is to reach heaven. It is a reminder for a world immersed in momentary pleasures, forgetting the value of body and soul, that the final destiny of human life is union with God. It affirms that both body and soul are precious to God and that God embraces the fullness of human life. Pope St. John Paul II said: "Contemplating Mary's Assumption, we are reminded that earth is not our final dwelling place. If we live according to heavenly values, we too shall one day share in heavenly glory." Human life does not end in this world-it is a pilgrimage toward the fullness of God.

Assumption: A Sign of Hope and Glory

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is not merely a celebration of her glory, but also a sign and promise of hope that God offers to every Christian who faithfully follows Jesus. This belief affirms that death is not the end of human life, nor is it destruction, but rather eternal life in the presence of God. Pope Francis has said: "The Feast of the Assumption calls us to look upward-to heaven. It invites us to believe in God's plan." The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that in Mary we behold the future prepared for all who believe in God: "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians" (CCC 966). In this Jubilee Year, may the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary grant grace to all the children of the Church, who are called to be pilgrims of hope, to journey along the path of hope and glory.

Continuation of page 1

❖ **The involvement and advancement of Christians in India's freedom struggle are often overlooked or underrepresented. One may rightly suspect deliberate attempts to obscure or suppress this part of history. Yet, the greatest truth is that no matter how much the truth is trampled upon, it cannot be hidden forever. The lives briefly sketched above are living witnesses to this truth. Let us, therefore, remember these forebears-alongside all the fearless patriots who fought for freedom-with respect, gratitude, and love.**

delible mark on the freedom movement in Travancore, he was born in 1898 in Ullannur, Kulanada, Pathanamthitta. He played a pivotal role in organizing the first All Travancore session of the Indian National Congress held in 1922 at Chennannur. Actively involved in the Vaikom Satyagraha, he founded the newspaper *Bhaje Bharatam*, whose fiery editorials kindled patriotic fervor and criticized the British administration and Travancore's Dewan. The government banned the publication, confiscated the press, and fined and imprisoned Mathunny. Upon his release, he had lost both his press and property. He died on 17 April 1937 and is buried at the Orthodox Church cemetery in Ullannur.

S.K. George

Inspired by Gandhian ideals, he became an ardent follower and interpreter of Gandhian philosophy. Born on 10 March 1900 in Kottayam to Thommi Kuruvila and Eliya of Srampickal, he was convinced that it was a historical duty of Christians in India to stand with the national movement. In 1932, he published *India in Travail* in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, calling upon all Christians to join the civil disobedience movement. His major works include *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity* and *The Life and Message of Jesus Christ*. He passed away on 4 May 1960.

Samuel Aaron

Born on 13 March 1894 in Ezhimala, Kannur, he was a leader of the nationalist movement in Malabar. He upheld Gandhian ideals, took part in civil disobedience, endured police brutality, and served multiple prison terms. He organized receptions and accommodations for participants of the Salt Satyagraha in Payyannur and raised funds to support the cause. He died in 1975.

George Joseph

A towering figure in India's national politics, he was a lawyer, journalist, and Gandhi's close disciple. Born in Chennannur on 5 June 1887, he was a prominent leader of the Vaikom Satyagraha and a key strategist in the temple entry movement. He vocally opposed the anti-Christian policies of Dewan C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. George Joseph was active in the Home Rule Movement and took part in many protests in Travancore. He passed away at the age of fifty on 5 March 1938.

Fr. Cyriac Vettikappally

A Catholic priest who participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha and shared a stage with Mahatma Gandhi. Born on 2 February 1878 in Vaikom to Kuruvila and Maria, he was elected to the Travancore Legislative Council in 1922. In 1924, he joined a delegation that submitted a petition to the Regent Maharani advo-

cating for Christian minority rights. On 17 March 1925, under his leadership, several priests visited the Satyagraha Ashram and expressed support for the movement. Though Gandhi maintained that non-Hindus should not take direct part, Fr. Vettikappally played a leadership role as a Council member. He passed away on 27 February 1947. His photo and name are displayed at the Vaikom Satyagraha Memorial Museum.

Titus Theverthundi

The only Christian participant in the Dandi March, he was born on 18 February 1905 in Chirayiramp, Maramon, Pathanamthitta, to T.K. Titus and Eliyamma. He and his wife Annamma moved to Sabarmati Ashram and became active in khadi promotion. Annamma donated all her jewelry to Gandhi. Titus took part in the Dharasana Salt Satyagraha, where British police assaulted peaceful protesters. After independence, he settled in Bhopal and died on 8 August 1980.

Joseph Baptista

Born on 17 March 1864 in Bombay, he was a lawyer and early nationalist. He was the first to declare the now-iconic slogan "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it," later made famous by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was a founding member of the Home Rule Movement along with Tilak

and Annie Besant. He died on 18 September 1930.

K.T. Paul

Kanakarayan Thiruselvam Paul, born on 24 March 1876 in Salem, was a leading Christian freedom fighter and president of the All India Conference of Indian Christians. He represented Indian Christians at the First Round Table Conference in London in 1930 and served as national general secretary of the YMCA. He passed away on 11 April 1931.

There are hundreds of other Christians who made invaluable contributions to India's freedom movement. Some notable names include "Utkal Gaurav" Madhusudan Das, Venkat Chakkara, Brahm Bandhav Upadhyay, Neeraj Vishwas, Kali Charan Banerjee, and Harendra Mukherjee.

The involvement and advancement of Christians in India's freedom struggle are often overlooked or underrepresented. One may rightly suspect deliberate attempts to obscure or suppress this part of history. Yet, the greatest truth is that no matter how much the truth is trampled upon, it cannot be hidden forever. The lives briefly sketched above are living witnesses to this truth. Let us, therefore, remember these forebears-alongside all the fearless patriots who fought for freedom-with respect, gratitude, and love.



Rev. Dr. James Puliurumpil

One ancient Syriac document of the early third century *The Doctrine of the Apostles* is considered to be an authentic teaching of the apostles. This book deals with the customs and practices of the ancient Church, especially of the church in the Syriac world. We get a good deal of knowledge regarding India and Persia and the apostolic work of St. Thomas in India and of Addai and Mari in some regions of Persia. This work is akin to the *Didascalia ton Apostolon* and the *Constitutiones Apostolicae* in Latin and the *Apostolic Ordinances* in Coptic, Ethiopic and Arabic. These documents incorporate the Didache (Διδάχη), which can be called the primitive Manual or Catechism of the Church, but cover more extensive ground. The *Doctrine of Apostles* in Syriac is earlier than others of this class. These writings contain a collection of ancient ecclesiastical ordinances which obtained later the force of Church canons. Though the Syriac, Greek and others are similar, each has its characteristic traits. The Syriac text is a compilation of Synodal canons by Ebed-Jesu of

THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES ON THE INDIAN CHURCH

❖ **"India and all its own countries and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the apostle's hand of priesthood and from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the church which he built and ministered there". Here there is very explicit reference to the point that St. Thomas preached Gospel in India. The word 'India', not 'Parthia' is used here.**

Nisibis, the Nestorian patriarch, which bars the title *Epitome Canonum Apostolicorum*.

In the *Doctrine of the Apostles* we read: After the death of the apostles there were guides and rulers in the churches, and whatsoever the apostles had committed to them, and they had received from them, they taught to the multitudes all the time of their lives. They again at their deaths also committed and delivered to their disciples after them everything which they had received from the Apostles; also what James had written from Jerusalem, and Simon from the city of Rome, and John from Ephesus, and Mark from the great Alexandria and Andrew from Phrygia and Luke from Macedonia and Judas Thomas from India; that the epistles of an Apostle might be received and read in the churches, in every place, like those triumphs of their

acts which Luke wrote, are read. *The Doctrine of the Apostles* mentions the practice of reading in the churches letters written by the apostles: "what James had written from Jerusalem, and Simon from the city of Rome, and John from Ephesus, and Mark from the great Alexandria and Andrew from Phrygia and Luke from Macedonia and Judas Thomas from India". The letters of James, Peter and John may be those included in the N.T., but other letters, namely those of Mark, Andrew, Luke and Thomas do not form part of the N.T. This does not mean that they had not written letters and were not sent to the churches for reading. Not even all the letters of Paul have been survived, as we find in I Cor. 5:9 and Col. 4:16. Therefore, the letter written by Thomas has not survived the time.

In another place of the same book we find: "India and all its own countries

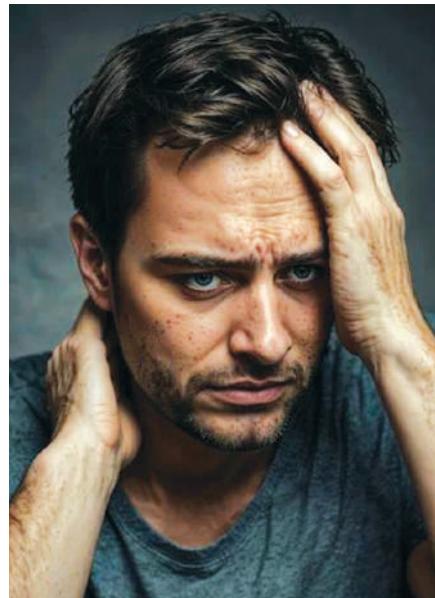
and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the apostle's hand of priesthood and from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the church which he built and ministered there". Here there is very explicit reference to the point that St. Thomas preached Gospel in India. The word 'India', not 'Parthia' is used here. Again the expression 'farthest sea' or the regions of the farthest sea is a clear reference to India, according to many writers. That time there were many countries such as Medes, Bactria, Parthia etc. in the later called Persian Empire and different apostles (means the direct disciples of the apostles) preached in these different areas. St. Thomas the apostle, Addeus (Addai), Mares (Mari), Aggeus (Aggai) are considered to have preached in these places. St. Mares, the disciple of St. Addeus later became the bishop of Ctesiphon.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER: FACTS



Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikattumyalil

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) begins with the presence of repeated, intrusive, and unwanted thoughts that dominate a person's mind in a way that they are unable to control, despite trying hard to do so. This state is known as OCD, or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. OCD is seen in about two percent of the population and occurs equally in both men and women. These repeated, uncontrollable, and distressing thoughts are called *obsessions*, and the repeated physical or mental actions performed by the individual in an attempt to reduce the anxiety caused by these obsessions are referred to as *compulsions*.



Symptoms

Some common obsessions include a persistent feeling that the body is dirty, doubts about whether an action has been done correctly, suspicion about the presence of germs in the body, excessive focus on cleanliness and order, repeated counting, recurring violent or sexual im-

ages in the mind, and repetitive religious or divine imagery. These are frequently observed forms of obsession.

Common compulsions include repeated washing of hands or body, excessive cleaning, checking repeatedly whether an action has been done properly, arranging objects in a particular order again and again, undergoing unnecessary medical tests due to fear of disease, constantly asking others about one's actions or thoughts, and repeating certain words or phrases mentally to avoid bad consequences of their actions. These are all common compulsive behaviors.

Causes

OCD may be caused by genetic factors, reduced levels of serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain, functional abnormalities in the frontal lobe, traumatic experiences in childhood, or excessive punishment. Conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, and ADHD are also sometimes found in association with this disorder.

Treatment Methods

In treatment, the role of the family and support from loved ones is just as important as the involvement of the individual affected. Such individuals should undergo a proper diagnosis by a mental health professional and, if necessary, receive medical treatment under the supervision of an authorized doctor. Psychological therapy is also very important. In behavioral therapy, methods such as *Exposure with Response Prevention* and *Systematic Desensitization* are highly effective. *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)* is also helpful. *Brain Lock Therapy*, which integrates biological, psychological, and cognitive levels, is found to be very effective. Likewise, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)* also offers benefits. *Relaxation techniques and suggestions that build will-power* (Positive Psychotherapy) can also be used here. It is crucial to avoid actions such as discontinuing treatment halfway or failing to make a proper diagnosis in the management of OCD.



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkatt

The month of August presents a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the concept of freedom. It is the month that reminds us of our nation's journey from the bondage of foreign rule to the dawn of independence. In this context, it is fitting that this issue explores the theme of freedom from the perspective of the Holy Scriptures.

"The truth will set you free."

These powerful words from John 8:32 hold deep spiritual significance. To fully grasp their meaning, we must consider the context in which Jesus spoke them. The Gospel records, "Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" (John 8:31-32)

The response from the Jews was puzzling: "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone." This claim seems to overlook the long history of Israel-430 years of slavery in Egypt, 70 years of exile in Babylon, and subjugation under Greek and later Roman rule. Their response reflects a sense of spiritual pride: the belief that as Abraham's descendants, they possessed

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE...

► The freedom that Christ offers is not a license for self-indulgence but a call to greater responsibility and love.

the truth and were therefore free-never misled, deceived, or in need of liberation.

But Jesus revealed a deeper and more profound kind of slavery-one not of physical chains, but of the soul. He corrected their assumption that they didn't need deliverance, saying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." (John 8:34) According to Jesus, sin enslaves people in their daily lives, and the ultimate consequence of this slavery is death. The Apostle Paul echoes this truth: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

From the theological viewpoint of John, the root of sin in the world is the rejection of Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus, the Messiah, declared that only the truth can set us free. This leads us to an important question: Does merely knowing the truth intellectually free us from sin? Or does "knowing the truth" mean something more? In John 18:38, Pilate cynically asks Jesus, "What is truth?"-a question that has perplexed philosophers and seekers for centuries. To understand what Jesus meant when He said, "the truth

will set you free," we need to examine the biblical understanding of the word "truth." The Greek word aletheia and the Hebrew word emeth are both translated as "truth," but they carry slightly different connotations. In the Greek worldview, truth refers to an objective reality or harmony between thought and reality. In contrast, the Hebrew word emeth emphasizes faithfulness to God and His covenant.

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of this divine faithfulness. In Him, God's covenant is fully revealed and fulfilled. That is why Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) Here, "truth" becomes synonymous with the Messiah Himself. To know the truth, then, is not merely to possess correct doctrine or factual knowledge-it is to know, believe in, and live in relationship with Jesus Christ. Only through Him can humanity experience genuine freedom. According to the Bible, freedom is a divine gift bestowed at the very creation of man. "In the beginning, the Lord created man and gave him liberty." (Ecclesiasticus

15:14) Yet, when sin entered the human story, freedom was replaced by various forms of bondage. From a Christian perspective, true freedom is not the ability to do whatever we please, but the ability to desire what is good and live according to God's will. In other words, freedom is realized when our desires align with God's purpose for our lives. When we know and live in Christ, we can experience true freedom-freedom that surpasses external circumstances and resides in the heart. This is the freedom Paul speaks of in Galatians 5:1: "Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." The freedom that Christ offers is not a license for self-indulgence but a call to greater responsibility and love. "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." (Galatians 5:13)

In Christ, freedom becomes a life of love, service, and truth. It is not freedom without restraint, but the freedom to live rightly and purposefully, rooted in God's truth.

EPARCHIAL FINANCE OFFICER



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Joshy Kulathumkal

For the administration of the financial affairs of an eparchy, canon law envisions two structures: the first is the Eparchial Finance Officer or Procurator, and the second is the Eparchial Finance Council. Here we shall discuss the role of the Finance Officer.

The appointment of an Eparchial Finance Officer is the responsibility of the eparchial bishop after consulting with the Eparchial College of Consultors and the Finance Council (Can. 262 §1). If the appointment is made without consulting these councils, it is invalid. However, the bishop is not required to obtain the consent of these councils. Therefore, the authority to appoint a Finance Officer rests entirely with the eparchial bishop. Should the bishop neglect to make this appointment, the Metropolitan Archbishop has the authority to do so (Can. 159, n. 7).

Any honest Christian faithful who possesses knowledge and experience in financial matters is eligible to be appointed as an Eparchial Procurator. It

The Eparchial Finance Officer carries out significant responsibilities on behalf of the eparchy. He oversees the administration, management, and safekeeping of eparchial temporal goods in accordance with the bishop's directives, after consulting the Finance Council, and in compliance with canon law.

is not required by law that priests alone be appointed to this role. Since the term 'Christian faithful' is used, even a member of non-Catholic Eastern Churches can be appointed. At the same time, those who are related to the eparchial bishop up to the fourth degree inclusive of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from holding this office (cf. Can. 263 §§2-3).

An Eparchial Finance Officer is appointed for a fixed term as determined by particular law. According to the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church, the term of appointment is three years (Art. 13, PLSMC). Upon the completion of three years, the bishop may, if he wishes, renew the appointment for another three-year term. A Finance Officer cannot be removed before the end of his term except for grave cause in the judgment of the bishop. Before doing so, the bishop must consult with the College of Consultors and the Finance Council (can. 262 §2).

The Eparchial Finance Officer carries out significant responsibilities on behalf of the eparchy. He oversees the administration, management, and safekeeping

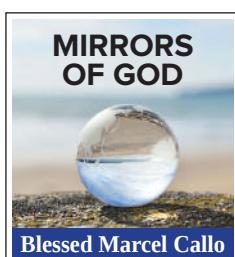
of eparchial temporal goods in accordance with the bishop's directives, after consulting the Finance Council, and in compliance with canon law. Acting under the authority of the eparchial bishop, he is responsible for managing all the temporal goods of the eparchy, ensuring their protection, security, and growth, addressing deficiencies in the administration of lower authorities, and directly administering ecclesiastical goods that lack a lawful administrator (can. 262 §2). He must prepare and maintain the accounts of eparchial movable and immovable properties and present them to the Finance Council and, whenever requested, to the eparchial bishop or the College of Consultors (can. 262 §4). It is also appropriate that he submit a monthly financial report to the eparchial bishop and curia. The Finance Officer must diligently oversee the management of the temporal goods of all parishes and institutions within the eparchy, including auditing their accounts.

The Finance Officer is also the head of the eparchial finance office, which manages all temporal goods of the eparchy. He is responsible for maintaining

records related to eparchial movable and immovable goods, inventories of these properties, inventories of other institutions, and income and expenditure accounts. By virtue of his appointment, the Finance Officer is a member of the Eparchial Finance Council (can. 263 §2), typically serving as its secretary. He is also a member of the eparchial curia by virtue of his office. He has both the right and the duty to advise the eparchial bishop in the day-to-day administration of the eparchy. As a member of the eparchial assembly, the Finance Officer has the responsibility to participate in its meetings (can. 238 n. 2).

When the eparchial see becomes vacant, the Eparchial Finance Officer continues in his office and functions under the authority of the Eparchial Administrator. The same procedure required to remove an eparchial Administrator applies to the removal of the Finance Officer. When a new bishop takes canonical possession of the eparchy, the office of the Finance Officer ceases unless the new bishop reappoints him. He is obliged to render an account of his administration to the new bishop (cf. can. 232). ■

WHERE LOVE AND LIFE BECOME ONE



his love to Marguerite. Even then, it took several more months before he gave her the first kiss. After their engagement, they both committed themselves to a strict spiritual life. This included saying the same prayers, attending Holy Mass as often as possible, and receiving the Holy Eucharist whenever they could.

Marcel Callo was born on December 6, 1921, in Rennes, France. From a young age, he was known for his cheerful nature. He was always ready to help with household chores and to care for his younger siblings. He began working at the age of thirteen. The vulgar language and obscene stories from his coworkers disturbed him deeply. He yearned for the company of devout Catholics and soon found such companionship through the movement *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (Young Christian Workers).

Marcel excelled in wrestling and football alike. His Marian consecration prayer was: "Blessed Mother, keep me as your own. Guard and protect me as your possession and treasure." Marguerite entered his life when he was twenty. Those days filled with love and happiness were suddenly shattered by a series of events that tore through life both deeply and widely.

When World War II began, the city of

Rennes was occupied by German forces. During a bombing, Marcel's sister was killed. The German army deported Marcel to Germany for forced labor under the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO). Out of concern for his family's safety, Marcel unwillingly agreed to go. He went through intense hardship for about three months. Not seeing his family was painful, but even more painful for him was the inability to attend Holy Mass.

This plunged Marcel into deep depression. On top of that, he suffered from migraines, stomach ailments, mouth ulcers, and toothaches. All of this deepened his gloom. But God did not allow him to remain in that darkness for long. "Christ decided to act," said Marcel about that period. He was able to break free from his isolation and join others again. He returned to prayer and began participating in secret Masses.

This joy of Marcel's disturbed the German secret police. They were perplexed—how could a person be happy when there was no reason to hope? They found the reason. Eventually, they arrested Marcel on the charge of being a Catholic. This happened on April 19, 1944. Marcel stood firm before the interrogations. He

openly confessed his Catholic activities. He was then transferred to another prison in Mauthausen. Even while suffering from bronchitis, malnutrition, diarrhea, fever, and exhaustion, Marcel never complained. He boldly declared to his companions that strength could be found in prayer.

On March 19, 1945, the feast of Saint Joseph, Marcel left this world. By that time, he had spent two years among German soldiers. On October 4, 1987, Pope John Paul II declared him Blessed.

Let us call it joyful - to have a friend who knows how to support you during every painful and broken hour that never seems to leave you, not even for a moment. If you have such a friend, you can endure anything. I am grateful to that friend for preparing the path I now walk. Christ is so good." These were the words Marcel wrote in a letter sent home on July 6, 1944.

After Marcel's death, what happened to Marguerite? Isn't that a natural question to ask? Here is the answer: Marguerite never married. She kept Marcel in her heart and lived a single life until her death in 1997. Lives that stand as memorials of love. ■

Blessed Marcel Callo was a man who loved love itself as dearly as life. He was a young man who was prepared to preserve his personal holiness until God gave him the one chosen for him and to kiss her with the purest form of love. The attitude Marcel maintained towards women was in stark contrast to that of many of his peers and friends. He firmly believed that women are to be respected. "I am not someone who entertains myself with a woman. My love is pure and dignified. If I waited until I was twenty to go out with a young woman, it was only to find true love. Before I give my love to the person Christ has chosen for me, she must have already conquered my heart." This was Marcel's perspective on love. Respecting this ideal, God chose and gave him a woman - Marguerite Derniaux.

It was only after a year of friendship and close observation that he expressed

MYSTAGOGY AND FAITH FORMATION

Rev. Dr. Joshy Panamparambil

In the Church's understanding, the Liturgy is the highest expression of the celebration of the mysteries of faith. The formative process by which the faithful are gradually led into a deeper, interior participation in these sacred mysteries is known as mystagogy (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1075). Mystagogy transcends mere doctrinal instruction concerning the divine mysteries and their significance; rather, it constituted an essential and integral phase in the comprehensive process of faith formation within the early Church. Furthermore, it stands as a profound example of effective inculcation undertaken by the early Christian community.

Mystagogy in Greek Culture

The term mystagogy has its origins in ancient Greek culture, where it was employed well before its incorporation into the Christian tradition. In the context of Greek pagan religion, mystagogy referred to an experiential and initiatory process by which individuals were gradually introduced into the esoteric dimensions of sacred rites. Participation in these rituals was often marked by a deeply impactful

and memorable experience, not solely due to an intellectual grasp of their content, but primarily because of the profound and transformative nature of the rites themselves.

Mystagogy in the Early Church

Although several elements pertaining to mystagogy are present within the New Testament, the early Christian community appropriated the term mystagogy from Greek culture. They embraced both the terminology and certain external aspects of the Greek tradition in structuring their program of faith formation. Nonetheless, it is important to underscore that the substantive process of faith formation was more deeply shaped by the Jewish tradition of initiation.

In the early Church, individuals were incorporated into the community of believers through a carefully structured, step-by-step formation process known as the Catechumenate. This formation program typically consisted of four distinct stages: the Pre-Catechumenate, the Catechumenate, Purification, and Mystagogy. The first stage, known as the Pre-Catechumenate, offered an initial proclamation of the Gospel and served to guide new seekers toward a fuller conver-

sion of heart. The second stage, the Catechumenate, was a period of systematic and comprehensive faith formation. The third stage, focused on purification and enlightenment, constituted the immediate preparation for receiving the sacraments of initiation, which were conferred at its conclusion. Finally, the fourth stage, called Mystagogy, was devoted to deepening the neophytes' understanding of the sacraments and forming them in a sacramental way of life.

In summary, mystagogy was the method of faith formation in the early Church, aimed at providing those who were entering the Christian faith with the experience of celebrating the Church's sacred mysteries, explaining their meaning, and ultimately enabling the transformation of their entire lives—thus making them active members of the Church community. Over time, the practice of giving baptism to infants became widespread in the Church, while the number of adult baptisms decreased. Historians indicate that under these circumstances, this training program faced a decline.

Mystagogy Today

In the twentieth century, discussions about mystagogy in the Church regained

strength amid concerns over the growing gap between faith and life. After the Second Vatican Council, the universal Church officially began to teach about mystagogy. Today, by mystagogy, the Church means the sacramental experience of the faithful and its assimilation, through which they are incorporated into the worshiping community (cf. *General Directory for Catechesis* 89).

Mystagogy is a mode of faith formation that moves beyond mere intellectual understanding of divine mysteries, guiding the faithful toward a profound, lived experience of them. This integration of knowledge and experience should ultimately draw individuals into full communion with the faith community. In this light, the faith formation ministry offered to children in our parishes should not be confined to classroom instruction alone. When it is rooted in the life of the parish's worshiping community, faith formation enables children to engage more fully in the celebration of the sacred mysteries and in prayer. In this way, they encounter the faith in a deeply experiential manner and grow in their sense of belonging to the parish community.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE BEMA (AMBO)



Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott

A prevalent misconception that has taken hold among many Catholics is the idea that signs and symbols are childish and that reverence for them is irrational. Yet, the Church's liturgy represents the salvific events fulfilled in Christ through signs and symbols. For instance, the incense, sacred vestments, candles, hymns, etc., used in the Holy *Qurbana* meaningfully aid the faithful in participating in the sacred sacrifice.

The symbolism of the church building is also connected to this. The sanctuary (*madbaha*) is considered the heavenly Jerusalem, the nave (*haikala*), where the faithful stand, is viewed as the earth, and the ambo (*bema*) is regarded as the earthly Jerusalem. Thus, the worshippers experience a foretaste of heaven in the church. Similarly, the altar, the cross, the sign of the cross, and bodily gestures all vividly manifest the Holy *Qurbana*.

Today, what we see is a disregard for the symbolism of the church and the liturgy. The prejudices and ignorance we harbor about symbols, and the tendency to replace the Church's reasoning with

our own subjective logic, are the root causes. As a result, meaningful rites and practices are dismissed as superstition. For example, due to such prejudices, there is a growing trend to reject the ambo, a meaningful symbol, in today's context. In this background, it is reasonable to examine what the teachings of the Church say about the ambo.

The Significance of the Bema

In the Greek-Latin Christian tradition, this structure is called the *Ambo*, while in the Syriac tradition, it is called *Bema*. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* clearly speaks of the importance of the ambo in the Holy *Qurbana*. "The celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* has developed according to a fundamental structure preserved throughout the centuries to our own day. It displays two great parts that form a fundamental unity: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Together they form 'one single act of worship.' The table prepared for us in the Holy *Qurbana* is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord" (CCC, no. 1346).

Elsewhere, the *Catechism* also underscores the importance of the ambo: "The dignity of the Word of God requires the church to have a suitable place for announcing His message so that the attention of the people may be easily directed to that place during the Liturgy of the Word" (CCC, no. 1184).

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy teaches: "The

Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are so closely connected that they form but one single act of worship" (SC, 56). On the tables of the Body of Christ and the Word of God, the Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) declares: "In the sacred Liturgy, through which the work of our redemption is accomplished, the Church unceasingly and especially in the Sacred Liturgy, draws on the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ to offer the faithful the bread of life" (DV, 21).

The *Instruction on the Liturgy and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* issued by the Congregation for the Eastern Churches on January 6, 1996, speaks about the ambo as follows: "In accordance with the Greek Christian tradition, the ambo is a fixed structure that rises prominently from the floor of the nave (the place where the faithful stand) in the church. This structure is called the 'Ambo'. From the ambo, the Gospel was proclaimed and the homily delivered. Similarly, in Syriac churches, the equivalent is the 'Bema'. Located in the center of the church, this elevated place includes the bishop's and priest's chairs, a processional cross, the Gospel book, candles, and a small altar called 'Golgotha'" (no. 105).

Pope Benedict XVI on the Importance of the Ambo

Pope Benedict XVI, in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini*, published on September 30, 2010, also refers to the importance of the ambo.

"The elevated place from which the Word of God is proclaimed during the liturgy—the ambo—deserves special attention. It should be located in a visible area, so that the attention of the faithful is naturally drawn to it during the Liturgy of the Word. It should be artistically designed to harmonize with the altar. This is to visibly express the theological importance of both the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist" (*Verbum Domini*, no. 68).

The Pope also reminds us of the importance of the Gospel procession: "During the introductory rites, the Gospel book should be carried in solemn procession and brought to the ambo by a deacon or priest, emphasizing to the People of God that the reading of the Gospel is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word" (no. 67).

Recovering the Meaning of Symbols

All the signs and symbols in the Holy *Qurbana* are arrangements intended to aid the People of God. The protection of these symbols is a desire and expectation of the Magisterium of the Universal Church. Globally, there are efforts to destroy liturgical symbolism as part of the broader secularizing movement, which seeks to exclude religious signs and symbols from public life. The remedy lies in understanding the multiple layers of meaning in the Holy *Qurbana* and the richness of its symbols, in harmony with the Church's Magisterium and tradition.

THE SECRETS OF JOY



There is hardly anyone who has never felt that life can be hard, rough, or burdensome. But if asked why life feels that way, we might not always be able to give a precise answer. However, as we journey through the lives of certain saints, we begin to understand something: From a worldly point of view, they lacked many things that we consider essential. Yet, their lives were beautifully adorned with the invisible golden threads of supernatural joy. And that's why, even outwardly, they appeared content and happy.

Take the case of **Francis of Assisi**. He was a person who lived in harmony with nature. Every sunrise and the chirping of birds were reasons for his joy. The beauty of nature, the innate mercy and tenderness, and the sense of fulfillment found even in deprivation were all richly present in the life of the saint of Assisi. His life proclaims that by living simply, one does not move away from the joys of life, but rather lives more deeply within them.

Another example is **Thérèse of Lisieux**. She taught that joy in life doesn't necessarily arise from big achievements.



► **If we pay attention, we can find happiness even in seemingly trivial things. Joy is not found only in grand accomplishments or major gains; each person should develop the mindset to rejoice even in the smallest of blessings.**

If we pay attention, we can find happiness even in seemingly trivial things. Joy is not found only in grand accomplishments or major gains; each person should develop the mindset to rejoice even in the smallest of blessings. Never dismiss anything

as insignificant - this is the secret of joy according to little Thérèse.

When it comes to how much pain life can bring upon oneself or others, no saint seems to have borne that burden like **Saint Augustine of Hippo**. He was tormented by internal conflicts. There was no area where he hadn't strayed through bodily desires. And yet, he eventually reached the heights of a complete transformation. Augustine found joy in union with God. Many of us forget how to smile or be joyful because of our past. The mistakes that happened in the past continue to accuse us. The rest of our life becomes burdened with self-condemnation. Accept yourself - with all your wounds and weaknesses. Then, we can journey toward the fullness of joy. This is what we learn from the life of Augustine.

St. Ignatius of Loyola teaches that life will become joyful if we can carefully discern the inspirations of the mind and follow them peacefully. Often, we are unable to recognize or accept the movements of the Spirit. We are so busy with other things that we fail to notice what's happening internally. Occasionally, lend your ear to the invitations of the Spirit - they will reveal the secrets of joy. The inability to rejoice inwardly comes from a lack of inner peace. **St. Padre Pio's** life shows us that personal prayer, reflection, and meditation are essential to cultivate inner peace.

By taking these lessons from the lives of the saints, we too can lead peaceful lives - and through that, become people filled with joy.

COMPROMISES



FAMILY CORNER

It's been only six years since Anoop and Vineetha got married. They have two children. Like many other couples, the early days of their marriage were beautiful. Small disagreements - but they saw them merely as opportunities to grow in love. Once Anoop realized that Vineetha was someone who could get upset or hurt even over trivial matters, he considered it his responsibility to resolve any quarrel. Vineetha enjoyed it immensely when Anoop would say sorry and make up after a fight.

After some time, Anoop started re-thinking: Why is it always him who has to compromise? Why is it always him who must say sorry? Why is it always him who has to take the blame? These questions took root in his mind. Eventually, he began to avoid making up after arguments. He became hesitant to apologize for things that weren't his fault. He insisted that compromises should not be one-sided. Slowly, their married life became increasingly difficult. Vineetha never once tried to realize her own mistakes. She was not willing to accept her faults. She always



blamed Anoop for everything. In the end, she filed for divorce, accusing her husband of constant mental harassment.

What's written here is a small reflection of a situation that is repeated in many families. There are numerous husbands and wives who never realize their own faults, blindly declare their partner to be the cause of every issue, and constantly

► **There are numerous husbands and wives who never realize their own faults, blindly declare their partner to be the cause of every issue, and constantly justify themselves. These are the people who destabilize family life.**

In the story mentioned above, Vineetha was never ready to acknowledge her faults. She believed herself to be one hundred percent perfect. Moreover, the fact that Anoop always apologized helped her further justify herself. She thought that if Anoop apologized every time, it must be because he was at fault. What she failed to see was that Anoop took the blame and said sorry simply to avoid hurting her and to keep her happy. She missed the fact that his willingness to shoulder the blame was a sign of his love for her.

Saying sorry or compromising is not proof that someone is guilty. Rather, it reveals the greatness and maturity of that person's heart. Do not make someone else's apology a reason to self-justify. In family life, it is not good that one person is always crucified while the other is always justified. Compromises should come from both sides. Unfortunately, many couples are like Pontius Pilate - they wash their hands and say, "I am entirely right. All the blame is on my partner." This mindset leads to repeated accusations, and then thoughts like Anoop's begin to arise: Why should I be the one to always take the blame? Why should I be the one to always apologize? Such thoughts disturb the peace of family life.

To safely anchor the boat of married life, both sides must row together. Therefore, compromises must come from both sides.

A TALE OF LOVE FROM FLORENCE TO THAMARASSERY



Sr. Lisetta Azhakath (Mother General)

St. Philip Neri while leaving in Rome deeply desired to go to India as a missionary. He was inspired by the heroic zeal of Saint Francis Xavier and other Jesuit Missionaries who carried the Gospel to distant lands. However, upon the advice of his spiritual director he remained in Rome until his death. Though he never set a foot in India, his missionary spirit would one day be fulfilled through the presence and the ministry of the Sisters of St. Philip Neri. The congregation of the sisters of St. Philip Neri in Florence was started on February 2nd 1793 by Angela Gambhi a revered lady and Fr. Ferdinando Fattoracci belong to Philip Neri oratory

congregation. Centuries later this desire was providentially realised. His Eminence Mar Sebastian Mankuzhikkary, the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Thamarassery, encountered the sisters of St. Philip Neri during a visit to Florence. He was deeply impressed by their apostolic dedication and the Spiritual depth of their Charism. Moved by their mission, he invited them to serve in his Diocese in Kerala, India. The congregations' leadership inspired by the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and its call for renewed missionary activity accepted this invitation. On the 10th of August 1993 two sisters arrived in the Eparchy of Thamarassery and took up residence in the diocesan house to begin

our missionary work. As a part of the growth of the Sisters of St Philip Neri the Indian region separated from the Florence and erected as a religious Institute of Eparchial right with the title of sisters of St. Philip Neri of Thamarassery on January 6th 2021. Our charism is "To speak to everyone's heart with the joy of Christ "(Saint Philip Neri) and to be a sister to the world with their heart turned to God. Our special mission is to co-operate in the apostolic activities and the charitable services of the church to educate and form children and the youth teach catechism. We serve God through the care homes, old age home, counselling, healthcare and renewal of families. By our devoted

seeking of the voice and face of Jesus the master in prayer and service, we are so resolved to care compassionately for all of God's creation and to be in solidarity with those in difficulty, the less privileged and on the periphery and to imbibe the special charism to be sister to the world with the heart turned to God. Today the presence of the sisters of Saint Philip Neri in India stands as a living Testament to the unfulfilled dream of their spiritual father. What St. Philip Neri once longed for has found vibrant expression through the life, prayer and service of his daughters in the Indian Church. Sisters spreading the joy of St. Philip Neri all over the world in India, Italy North India and Germany through many houses and sisters.

FAMILIES: THE FERTILE GROUND FOR DIVINE VOCATIONS - MAJOR ARCHBISHOP MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kakkanad: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil inaugurated the annual meeting of the

Vocation Promoters held at Mount St. Thomas, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the

Syro-Malabar Church. In his address, he emphasized that the communion within families and

their life of prayer form the true foundation for divine vocations. He reminded the participants that priestly and consecrated vocations emerge fruitfully when priests and religious step into homes and engage closely with families.

The meeting was presided over by Mar Joseph Arumachadath, Chairman of the Vocation Commission. Curia Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal delivered the keynote address and offered his blessings to the participants.

Over 250 priests, brothers, and sisters from various eparchies and religious congregations of the Syro-Malabar Church, who are actively involved in vocation promotion, took part in the gathering.

Classes were led by Fr. Roy Kannanchira CMI. Fr. Joshy Panamparambil, Secretary of the Vocation Commission, also spoke at the event, along with Sr. Divina CSM, Sr. Vijaya CS, Sr. Roshni SKD, and Sr. Betty DST.

SYRO MALABAR CHURCH MEDIA SEMINAR HELD



A seminar was organized at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro Malabar Church, for those working in the Church's media apostolate.

The gathering brought together PROs and Media Apostolate Directors from various eparchies and religious congregations, as well as individuals engaged in ecclesial media service in diverse areas.

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, Media Commission Chairman Mar Thomas Tharayil, PRO and Media Commission Secretary of Syro Malabar Church Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarakk, and media professionals Markose Abraham and Jijo Cyriac addressed the attendees.



DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

JUNE 27 TO JULY 24

June

- **27 Friday:** Held a meeting at the General Vicariate with Nadeem Amman, representative of *World Church – World Mission* of the Archdiocese of Cologne, Germany.
- **28 Saturday:** Visited the pilgrimage center in Kevelaer, Germany, dedicated to the Blessed Mother.
- **29 Sunday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and inaugurated the public gathering organized by the Syro-Malabar community in Cologne, in connection with the *Dukhrana* feast of St. Thomas the Apostle and the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- **30 Monday:** Held a meeting at the General Vicariate with the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Cologne, Msgr. Dominik Schwaderlapp.

July

- **July 5, Saturday:** Participated in and delivered the keynote address at the teachers' gathering organized as part of the academic year celebrations of the CMI religious congregation at Carmel Public School, Vazhakulam, under the Carmel Province of Muvattupuzha. Inaugurated the concluding

function of the quadragenary Jubilee celebrations of the Knanaya St. Thomas Old Church, Punna-thura.

- **6 Sunday:** Led the initial funeral rites at the residence for the mother of His Excellency Joseph Pandarasseril, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archeparchy of Kottayam.
- **7 Monday:** Participated in the *Dukhrana* love feast organized by the Archeparchy of Changanacherry at Lourdes Forane Church, Thiruvananthapuram.
- **8 Tuesday:** Inaugurated the gathering of Kuwait returnees held at Mount St. Thomas.
- **9 Wednesday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* and officiated the perpetual vows of the Little Sisters of St. Gilbert at the Knanaya St. Mary's Church, Kothanalloor, in the Archeparchy of Kottayam. Departed for Australia to take part in various events of the Eparchy of Melbourne.
- **11 Friday:** Inaugurated and blessed *Santhome Grove*, the new pastoral center of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Melbourne.
- **12 Saturday:** Consecrated the newly constructed St. Thomas Parish Church in the South East region

of the Eparchy of Melbourne and celebrated Holy *Qurbana*. Blessed the residence started by the L.S.D.P. religious congregation in the Eparchy of Melbourne.

- **13 Sunday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at St. Thomas Cathedral Church of the Eparchy of Melbourne.
- **16 Wednesday:** Participated in the meeting of the secretaries of various commissions held at Mount St. Thomas.
- **20 Sunday:** Gave the inaugural address in preparation for the retreat of the third batch of priests at the *Niveditha Center For Religious Formation and Fellowship* in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.
- **23 Wednesday:** Addressed the young priests of the Archeparchy at the Archbishop's House, Ernakulam-Angamaly. Inaugurated a webinar organized by the Catechetical Commission for Sunday School principals in the Syro-Malabar Church.
- **24 Thursday:** Inaugurated the meeting of vocation promoters held at Mount St. Thomas under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Vocation Commission.

THANK YOU...

Heartfelt thanks and farewell wishes to the dear sisters of the **MSMI Congregation** who are returning to their congregation after offering commendable service from 2022 to 2025 in various offices of the **Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad**. We accompany you with our prayerful best wishes.



Sr. Linda Michael MSMI
Mother Superior



Sr. Mercina MSMI
Assistant



Sr. Seena Rose MSMI
Chancery



Sr. Lincy Augustine MSMI
LRC



Sr. Celine George MSMI
Finance



Sr. Dalia Mathew MSMI
Liturgy



Sr. Merlin George MSMI
Mission



Sr. Jincy Chacko MSMI
Catechism



Sr. Vinaya Prabha MSMI
Incharge, Reception &
Accommodation



Sr. Jisha Job MSMI
Tribunal



Sr. Anjali MSMI
Intercessory Prayer

A WARM WELCOME

A warm welcome to the new team of sisters who have arrived to serve in various offices of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas for the term 2025–2028.



Sr. Navya Tom DST
Sister Superior



Sr. Roseena DST
Asst. Superior



Sr. Roshni Joseph SKD
Chancery



Sr. Jessy Maria OP
Tribunal



Sr. Rosmitha SMC
Finance Office



Sr. Jaya philip CSS
House Keeping



Sr. Lisieux Rose CPS
Mission Office



Sr. Diveena Rose CSM
Catechism



Sr. Alphonse Jose SMS
LRC



Sr. Jancy Chirackal SNDs
Liturgy

COORDINATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF CHURCH MINISTRIES: MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kakkanad: "Unity, continuity of ministry, and willingness to labor together toward a common goal should define the activities of different commissions," said Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil while inaugurating a

gathering of secretaries of various commissions/committees and office-bearers at Mount St. Thomas, at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church in Kakkanad.

He warned that disjointed

goals and individual approaches could hinder the Church's mission of establishing the Kingdom of God. Hence, collaboration and synergy must become the hallmark of commission activities. Curia Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal and Chancellor Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil also addressed the gathering.

More than 28 commissions/committees operate globally under the Syro-Malabar Church to coordinate diverse ecclesial ministries. The representatives of these commissions/committees presented their annual plans and submitted reports of the past year's activities.

MIGRANTS MUST ALWAYS WORK ALONGSIDE THE CHURCH AND ITS STRUCTURES: MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kakkanad: "In changing contexts, migrants must always remain united with the Church and its structures," said Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. He was inaugurating and addressing the first migrant gathering organized by the Saudi Chapter of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Association (SMCA) at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.

He elaborated on the need for the Syro-Malabar Church in the Arabian region, nurtured by migrant laity, to evolve into an eparchical structure. Chairman of the Syro-Malabar Migrant

Commission, Mar Prince Anthony Panengadan, presided over the function. He reminded that migrants are not just migrants, but missionaries as well.

Curia Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal delivered the benedictory address. Office bearers from all regions of Saudi Arabia-Joji Antony, Johnson Mathew, Mathew Thomas Nelluvally, and Sajimon Thomas-presented the activity reports.

The presentation of an educational aid program implemented by the Riyadh Catholic Congress, the distribution of membership

certificates to 113 members of the Riyadh Catholic Congress, and the release of the SMCA Dammam souvenir also took place.

Priests-in-charge of the Central and Southern Regions of Saudi Arabia-Fr. Geo Kadavi, Fr. Johnson Kuriyanipadam, Fr. Philip Aikkara, and Joshi George Vadakkal-delivered addresses. Fr. Bitto Kochetathott, Fr. Sibi Malola CMI, Fr. Jojo Pallichira, and Fr. Tony CSSR also participated. Priests who had served in Saudi Arabia in earlier times were felicitated. Various cultural programs were also conducted.

JOHN KACHIRAMATTAM RECEIVES MAR SEBASTIAN VALLOPPILLY AWARD



Pala: John Kachiramattam was awarded the Mar Sebastian Valloppilly Award instituted by the Bishop Valloppilly Foundation. The award was presented by Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany of the Archeparchy of Tellicherry at a function held

in Pala. "John Kachiramattam is a blazing witness of faith," said Mar Joseph Pamplany.

The award recognizes Kachiramattam's tireless advocacy for the rights of migrant farmers and agricultural laborers. He has served as state president

of Catholic Congress, Catholic Federation, and the All India Catholic Union. A historian and author, he has also received several other accolades including the Syro-Malabar Church's 'Sabha Tharam' award. Dr. Cyriac Thomas, former Vice Chancellor of MG University, presided over the function. Deepika Chief Editor Fr. George Kudilil, Rev. Dr. George Varghese, Mr. Mathew M. Kandathil, and AKCC Global President Mr. Rajeev Kochuparambil were among those who participated.

MAJOR ARCHBISHOP INAUGURATES SANTHOME GROVE



the main celebrant. Mar John Panamthottathil, Bishop of the Eparchy of Melbourne presided over the function. The first bishop of the Eparchy, Mar Bosco Puthur; AP Pauline Richards; MP Cindy McLeish; Consul General of India Dr. Sushil Kumar; Chairman of Pallottine College Gavin Roderick; MP Evan Walters; Syncellus of the Eparchy Fr. Francis Kolencherry; and Finance Officer Dr. Johnson George addressed the gathering.

Many priests serving in various eparchies across Australia and within the Melbourne Syro-Malabar Eparchy, representatives from parishes and missions of the Melbourne Syro-Malabar Eparchy, federal and state ministers, Members of Parliament, and prominent figures from the socio-political sphere of Australia were present at the function.

ENLIGHTENED KERALA MUST UNITE AGAINST THE PLANNED DEFAMATION CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

The KCBC Vigilance Commission has called for the unification of enlightened Kerala against the ongoing widespread, systematic defamation campaigns targeted at Christian-run educational and healthcare institutions, primarily through social media. The commission pointed out that even minor human errors are being exaggerated, and false allegations are being raised to malign individual institutions, thereby tarnishing the reputation of thousands of Christian institutions that have long been role models in Kerala.

These smear campaigns, which portray institutions and their dedicated service personnel as malicious actors, are deplorable. Like all other human-run systems, Christian institutions are also prone to occasional shortcomings or lapses. The leadership of these institutions has always been willing to rectify

such shortcomings and correct mistakes. However, the commission questioned the intent behind those who exploit such situations to run extensive defamation campaigns.

These attacks are often exclusively aimed at Christian institutions. It is important for everyone to recognize that those who continually target Christian establishments and attempt to portray Church leadership and institutions in a poor light do not have society's welfare in mind. If the goal behind these efforts is communal polarization, enlightened Kerala must take a strong and clear stand against them. The commission also reminded authorities, media, and the general public to remain vigilant against such malicious attempts to harass institutions that have made positive contributions to society.



Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil inaugurated the sixth annual general body meeting and family gathering of the Syro-Malabar Cultural Association Kuwait Returnees Forum (SMCAKRF) held at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.

THE ARREST OF NUNS

IN CHATHISGRAH A CHALLENGE TO THE CONSTITUTION



The abuse committed against *Malayali* religious sisters under the accusation of religious conversion and human trafficking is utterly deplorable. It was when they reached the Durg Station in Chhattisgarh to accompany adult women traveling for employment at Fathima Hospital, Agra, that a group obstructed them and alerted the police. Sr. Vandana and Sr. Preethi from the Order of Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate (Green Gardens) were traveling with all necessary documents. Without examining these documents, a mob claiming to be Bajrang Dal activists encircled the sisters, assaulted them, and handed them over to the police.

The Green Gardens Sisters is a religious Congregation that has made significant contributions in the eradication of leprosy and patient care. Subjecting

religious sisters who selflessly engage in social service and community building to mob trials, levying false accusations, and imprisoning them is clear evidence of the collapse of the rule of law and the bias of legal systems.

Creating a societal atmosphere where religious persons are afraid to travel in religious attire, and even denying citizens their fearless right to free movement, is a disgrace to democratic India. The rise of mobs and organizations with vested interests who seem to operate above the Constitution is alarming.

The government must intervene urgently in the growing attacks against the Christian minority and religious persons and take strong action against the offenders to ensure the safety of the Christian community.

PROTEST GATHERINGS IN VARIOUS SYRO-MALABAR EPARCHIES DEMANDING JUSTICE FOR THE SISTERS IN CHHATTISGARH





The Diocese of Mananthalavady was canonically erected on 1 March 1973 by Pope Paul VI through the apostolic constitution *Quanta Gloria*, by bifurcating the Archdiocese of Thalassery. Initially encompassing regions across Wayanad, parts of Kannur and Malappuram in Kerala, as well as the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu and areas of southern Karnataka, the diocese has played a pivotal role in the pastoral and spiritual growth of the Syro-Malabar faithful in these regions. In response to ongoing growth and evolving pastoral needs, the Diocese of Mananthalavady was further divided, leading to the establishment of the Diocese of Bhadravathi on 21 August 2007 and the Diocese of Mandya on 18 January 2010. Today, the diocese continues to be a vibrant witness to faith, mission, and ecclesial service.



THE EPARCHY OF MANANTHAVADY

For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. (John 17:19)

Former Bishops



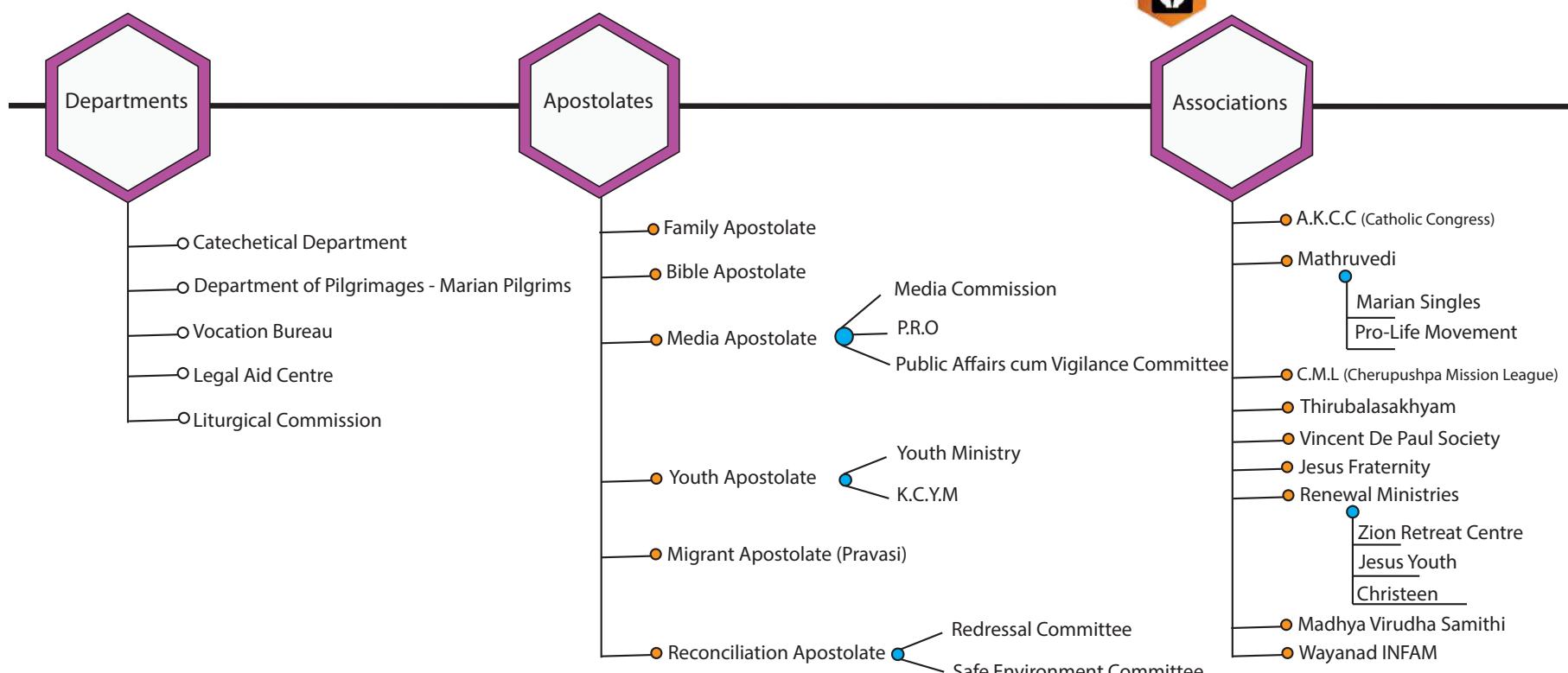
Mar. Jacob Thoomkuzhy
(1973-1995)

Until Christ is formed in you



Mar Emmanuel Pothanamuzhi
(1996 -2003)

Thy will be done



Wayanad Social Service Society (WSSS)



Wayanad Social Service Society (WSSS), with over 50 years of dedicated service, is a leading social development organization of Wayanad district in Kerala. Recognized with Special Consultative Status by the UNESCO, WSSS empowers tribal communities, farmers, women and youth through participatory and rights-based initiatives. Its flagship innovation, Biowin Agro Research, champions eco-friendly as well as climate-resilient farming. Committed to sustainable and people-centered development, WSSS continues to be a catalyst for lasting social change.

Biowin Agro Research



Biowin Agro Research, an initiative of the Diocese of Mananthavady, supports small-scale farmers by organizing the collection, value addition and marketing of their agricultural produce. With over 20,000 organic farmers across Wayanad and the Nilgiris grouped into 1,000 producer units, Biowin promotes sustainable livelihoods. Its products like coffee, spices, fruits and more are marketed under the brand name "SIGWE."

JEEWASS & K.L.M



JEEWASS is the department of the Diocese of Mananthavady for employee welfare and social security, focusing on farmers, common people and unorganized labourers. It was launched following a diocesan level survey that revealed 69% of families lacked access to government schemes. It promotes the Employment, Insurance, and Pension for All. Integrating Kerala Labour Movement (KLM), an undertaking by KCBC, it supports welfare access, entrepreneurship, and institutional staff benefits.

The Corporate Educational Agency of the Diocese of Mananthavady



The Corporate Educational Agency of the Diocese of Mananthavady, established on June 26, 1980, was created to meet the educational aspirations of migrant communities in Wayanad. With DPI recognition, it currently manages 44 schools, educating over 25,000 students with the support of 800 teachers and 75 non-teaching staff. Known for its innovative initiatives like C-SMILES, digital learning, teacher training and literacy focused projects, the agency continues to influence education across Wayanad, Nilambur and Kottiyoor through its student-centric approach. Alongside this, the Diocese also oversees other premier educational institutions like De Paul Public School, Kalpetta, and Sacred Heart School, Kayyur, reflecting the broader commitment of the diocese to academic excellence and value-based education. These schools uphold high standards in pedagogy, infrastructure, and holistic development, further strengthening the mission of the diocese in the field of education.

Mount Mary College (Minor Seminary), Mananthavady



Established in 1977, Mount Mary College (Minor Seminary) Mananthavady, is the minor seminary of the Diocese of Mananthavady. It provides foundational formation for young men discerning priesthood, focusing on their spiritual, intellectual and pastoral growth in a disciplined and prayerful environment. Guided by the motto "To Excel in Love and Wisdom," the seminary plays a vital role in preparing future priests rooted in faith and service. The formation is generously supported by the Pensioners' Guild and other benefactors, who contribute prayerfully and financially to this mission.

Community Radio Mattoli



Community Radio Mattoli, Kerala's first NGO-led community radio, has been a voice for the diverse communities of Wayanad for over 16 years. Broadcasting 24/7, it serves farmers, students, tribal groups, women and workers. A three-time national award winner, it is recognized as Kerala's only leading radio station of its kind and is featured in journalism syllabi across institutions as a model for community media.

Nilgiris Development Society (NDS)



Established in 2008, the Nilgiris Development Society (NDS), is a charitable organization committed to social welfare and health development in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris district. Focused on marginalized communities, unorganized workers, women and children, NDS runs impactful programmes like KARUNAI Pain and Palliative Care, ambulance services and the Tharang Counselling & Animation Center. Through 10 active units, it supports nearly 5,000 families via 200 Self-Help and Joint Liability Groups serving as a living expression of Christ's compassion.

Media Apostolate



Media Apostolate serves as the voice of the diocese. Its core mission is to help the faithful deepen their spiritual experience and share the Christian message with the wider society. Through social media, visual media, and other digital platforms, it communicates diocesan news as well as content related to faith, education and values. With initiatives like M+ News, podcasts, interviews, music albums, Sunday reflections, daily status videos, and live streaming services, the Media Apostolate is actively strengthening the digital presence and outreach of the Diocese.

FEDAR Foundation (Futuristic Education and Research Foundation) & Teclesia



FEDAR Foundation (Futuristic Education and Research Foundation) is committed to guiding students from diverse communities toward quality higher education, employment and financial stability. Engaging over 6,000 students and families online, it operates through three campuses and collaborates with top institutions to foster academic and skill excellence. Among its undertakings is Teclesia, a digital platform that streamlines pastoral services of the Church. The platform was developed by FEDAR in collaboration with Corhub Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Mary Matha Arts & Science College



Established in 1995, Mary Matha Arts and Science College, under the Diocese of Mananthavady, is a leading government-aided higher education institution. Affiliated to Kannur University, the college was awarded NAAC A+ Grade (CGPA 3.34) in 2024, reflecting its high academic standards. Guided by the motto "Education for Total Liberation", the institution offers comprehensive academic programmes including B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., M.Sc., and Ph.D. courses.

Newmans College

Newmans Parallel College, founded in 1971 under the leadership of the Diocese, serves as a vibrant spiritual and intellectual centre. Deeply rooted in the vision of St. John Henry Newman, the college offers a range of undergraduate programmes. Located in Down Bazaar, Mananthavady, Newmans College is committed to value-based education and has made a significant contribution to the holistic development of students and the educational progress of the district.

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY STAND WITH THE SISTERS: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL

Angamaly: The Syro-Malabar Church will give full support to the Malayali religious sisters who were unjustly arrested in Chhattisgarh, said Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. The Church and society will stand for the sisters' justice. He was speaking to the media after visiting the home of Sr. Preeti Mary ASMI, a Green Gardens sister arrested in the case, in Elavoor, Angamaly, and meeting her parents and family members.

The Central and State Governments must strongly resist the efforts of communal forces to violate the secular constitutional rights of the country. The government's and authorities' complicity in the unchecked growth of communalism is worrying. The public must take a firm stand against minority oppression, which tarnishes India's secular spirit. The Church will do everything possible to ensure justice for the arrested sisters, said the Major Archbishop. He also spoke to the relatives of Sr. Vandana Francis ASMI by phone, consoled them, and assured them of his support.



GRAND CONCLUSION OF THE PLATINUM JUBILEE OF THE EPARCHY OF PALAI



Pala: The year-long Platinum Jubilee celebrations of the Eparchy of Palai concluded with grandeur and solemnity. The celebrations, which spanned an entire year, featured a variety of programs implemented across all sectors of the Eparchy. The valedictory public meeting was inaugurated by the Father and Head of the Syro-Malabar Church, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. Major Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Mar George Alencherry presided over the function. "The Eparchy of Palai is a land of authentic faith and deep-rooted traditions preserved without compromise. The emblem of Palai will never go astray. Palai is capable of bestowing the excellence of holiness. It is a land marked by a missionary spirit," said Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil in his address.

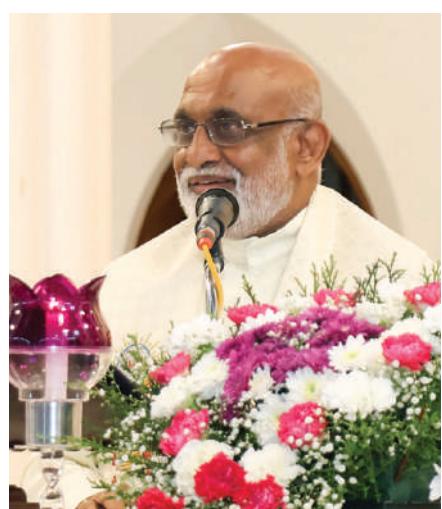
Distinguished guests present included the Head of the Syro-Malankara Church, Major Archbishop Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis; CBCI President and Metropolitan Archbishop of Thrissur Mar Andrews Thazhath; Catholicos Baselios of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church; Metropolitan Dr. Cyril Mar Baselius of the Malabar Independent Syrian Church; Metropolitan Mar Augin Kuriakose of the Chaldean Syrian Church; Dr. Kuriakose Mar Severios, Metropolitan of the Knanaya Jacobite community; Mar Thomas Tharayil Archbishop of Changanassery; Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, Bishop of the eparchy of Palai; Minister Roshy Augustine MLA; Shashi Tharoor MP; KPCC President Sunny Joseph MLA; Jose K. Mani MP; Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany; Bishop Dr. Joshua Mar Nicodimos

of the Nilackal Ranni Diocese; Mar Jose Pulickal; Mar George Rajendran; Mar Jacob Angadiath; Mar Joseph Srampickal; Bishop Mar Jose Sebastian Thekkumcherikunnel; Mar Joseph Kollamparambil; MPs Francis George and Anto Antony; MLAs Mani C. Kappan, Sebastian Kulathinkal, Mons Joseph; former MLAs P.C. George and Joseph Vazhakkan; Advocate Shone George; Mons. Dr. Joseph Thadathil, Protosyncellus of Palai; Sr Mareena Njarakkattil; Dr. K.K. Jose; Sheeba Binoy, and many others who addressed the gathering. Among those present were Mar Sebastian Vadakel, Samuel Mar Irenios, Mathew Mar Polycarp, and Yuhanon Mar Theodosius.

Prior to the public meeting, the Holy Qurbana was celebrated with Mar Thomas

Tharayil, Archbishop of Changanassery as the main celebrant. A homily was delivered by the Head of the Syro-Malankara Church, Major Archbishop Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, Mar Sebastian Vadakel, Yuhanon Mar Chrysostom, Bishop Justin Muthuparambil, Mar George Madathikandathil, Mar George Punnakottil, Mar James Anaparambil, Bishop Sylvester Ponnathan, Mar Thomas Padiyath, Mar Jose Pulickal, Bishop Mar Jose Sebastian Thekkumcherikunnel, Mar Joseph Kollamparambil, Mar Joseph Srampickal, Mar Jacob Angadiath, and Mar Joseph Pallikaparambil were also present. About 400 priests were concelebrants in the Holy Qurbana.

MAR MATHEW MAKIL IS A SYMBOL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT JOSEPH: MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kottayam: Mar Mathew Makil is a symbol of Joseph in the Old Testament and is a blessed figure who has become the guiding star of the Knanaya community, said Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church.

He was delivering the message at the joint event held at Christ the King Cathedral, Kottayam, marking the official declaration of the 'venerable' status of Servant of God Mar Mathew Makil, the first Vicar Apostolic of the Changanacherry Vicariate and later of the Kottayam Vicariate for the southists (Knanya community), as well as the founder of

the Visitation Congregation of Sisters. The event also marked the 50th death anniversary commemoration of the late Bishop Mar Thomas Tharayil, who was the Archbishop of the Archeparchy.

The venerable title of Mar Mathew Makil is a matter of great joy for the Church. He was a visionary who embraced the Knanaya community and dreamed of its flourishing. The priests, religious, and laity who followed him have all contributed together to the present stability of the Archeparchy of Kottayam, said the Major Archbishop.

