



SYRO-MALABAR VISION

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"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

New Year Greetings to All Esteemed Readers of
Syro-Malabar Vision



Archbishop
Mar Andrews Thazhath

"Your mother was like a vine planted by the waters; it was fruitful and full of branches because of abundant water." (Ezekiel 19:10)

Our Mother Church can be compared to a vine that bears abundant fruit. These fruits are of two kinds. The first and most important are spiritual fruits. The holy sacraments and the divine grace received through them are the spiritual fruits that the Church, as a mother, bestows upon her children. At the same time, this vine also produces material fruits. These are offered not only to her own children but to the whole world. Dispelling the darkness of the world with the light of education, embracing orphans, the destitute, and the differently abled, and providing shelter and healthcare are clear expressions of the Church's material fruits.

The Church bears spiritual fruit through the spiritual nourishment she receives from the Lord. At the same time, material elements such as the ministers who administer the sacraments (priests), those who receive them (the People of God), and the places where they are celebrated (churches) are also necessary for spiritual fruitfulness. Likewise, although the Church produces material fruits through the inspiration of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, this too requires many supporting material factors. The numerical strength of the faithful, their economic condition, and their influence in society and in the administration of the State are examples of such material factors. It is precisely to reflect on these essential material elements for the spiritual and material fruitfulness of the Church, to address their weaknesses, and to strengthen them that we observe Community Empowerment - 2026.

Some raise the question: why use the

STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY, BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST



► The word "Church" points to the profound spiritual meaning of faith, sacramental life, and divine mission. The use of the term "community" does not deny this spiritual reality of the Church; rather, it brings it into the wider realm of human relationships, participation, and responsibility. Community highlights unity, mutual dependence, and shared life among believers.

term "community"? Would it not suffice to use the term "Church"? However, the word "community" is deliberately used to indicate a distinct perspective. When we speak of the Church, what generally comes to mind is the spiritual dimension: churches, sacraments, priests, and religious. But when we use the word community, our perspective naturally shifts. Our thoughts turn to our culture, traditions, customs, population, employment, economic life, and political and administrative participation—our concrete, material realities.

The word "Church" points to the profound spiritual meaning of faith, sacramental life, and divine mission. The use of the term "community" does not deny this spiritual reality of the Church; rather, it brings it into the wider realm of human relationships, participation, and responsibility. Community highlights unity, mutual dependence, and shared life among believers. It helps us recognize the Church not merely as an institution or a set of rituals, but as a living fellowship of people—a faith community that bears witness in everyday life. Thus, the term

"Church" is not diminished; instead, the term "community" becomes relevant to express clearly the social and relational dimension of the Church.

In earlier times, the word "caste" was commonly used, which gave rise to notions of hierarchy and inequality. With the spread of Western education, the growth of the Indian national movement, and the influence of social reform movements, ideas of social justice and equality gained ground. Communities began to see themselves not in terms of caste hierarchy but as communities aiming at unity, mutual love, and the upliftment of their members. In this sense, the term "community" can be understood as a progressive concept.

Some mistakenly equate community consciousness with communalism. This is not correct. Community consciousness is a sense of belonging and self-respect. It is the awareness that one should love and take pride in what is one's own—one's people, culture, traditions, and customs. Community consciousness is entirely different from communalism, which arises from narrow-mindedness,

jealousy, and the desire to harm others. Community consciousness must be understood as Christian fraternity. We know that the early Christian community was of one heart and one soul, loving one another deeply. This spirit of fraternity must grow ever more strongly among us as well.

The relationship between the Church and the community is like that between soul and body. The body is the physical dwelling of the soul. The community forms the material environment of the Church. If the Church is a vine that bears abundant fruit for the good of all humanity, the community reminds us of the vine's self-nourishment and inner strengthening. Both together form a complete whole. In Catholic life, the spiritual and material dimensions do not move along separate paths; rather, the Church seeks their integration. Community empowerment within the Church conveys this message of wholeness. Let us love our Church and our community, strengthen them, and help them grow. May Community Empowerment - 2026 become an effective instrument for this purpose. ■

EDITORIAL



MOVING FORWARD IN UNITY WITH HOPE

We are journeying through the commemoration of two momentous events: the 2025th anniversary of the Incarnation of our Lord and the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, where the Churches, in 325 AD, together professed their faith in the One Lord. Significantly, the recent gathering that opened new horizons for global ecclesial communion took place on the very soil of Nicaea in Turkey, in the presence of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV.

The proclamation of the early Church: "For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), captures the very essence of the mystery of the Incarnation. God entered human history in order to redeem it from its limitations and lead it into the freedom of divine life. The angelic hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests," beautifully expresses the universality of the Incarnation. Even after millennia, the name of Jesus, the Church of Jesus, and His representative here on earth remain irreplaceable and enduring realities.

The Council of Nicaea was convened not to settle administrative concerns, but to safeguard the truth of the Church's faith and thereby strengthen ecclesial unity. At its heart was the fundamental question: Who is Jesus Christ? The Council affirmed the divinity of Christ, declaring that the Son is "of one substance with the Father." The Nicene Creed thus became the first formal and universal declaration of faith in Christianity. In this sense, it is truly fitting to say that the Council of Nicaea gave voice to the faith of the Church.

The Council also stands as a shining example of synodal communion in action. The collective discernment of the Synod Fathers was not a mere exchange of human opinions, but a genuine participation in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a living expression of the conviction that "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28). In today's context of deep and divisive crises, the model of dialogue, discernment, and unity adopted at Nicaea becomes all the more relevant. When we gather in a fraternal spirit, pray together, and communicate openly in the spirit of synodality, then even amid complex religious, social, and political challenges, external pressures and internal tensions cannot weaken us. Instead, they will strengthen our resolve to ensure the holistic well-being of the people of God.

Faith in the one Lord who became man continues to be the foundation and inspiration for Christians across the world as they strive to bear the radiant fruits of the Incarnation. When Jesus and His Gospel take precedence, beyond systems, structures, and juridical definitions, it becomes a sure and unfailing path to unity. As we move forward, let us walk this path of unity with renewed hope, proclaiming our faith in the one Lord, and drawing wisdom from the commitment, vision, and foresight of the Fathers of Nicaea, lessons that every Christian of this age is called to embrace.

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JANUARY 2026

A DAY TO REMEMBER

January 1: Beginning of the Year, Naming of Our Lord

January 2: Feast of the Motherhood of God

January 3: Saint Kuriakose Elias

January 6: Feast of the *Denha* of Our Lord

A principal feast of the Church. A day of obligation. The Anaphora of Mar Nestorius is used in the Holy *Qurbana* today. Episcopal ordination of Bishop Mar Mathew Moolakkatt (1999)

January 8: Death of Bishop Mar Alexander Choolaparambil (1951)

January 9: Saint John the Baptist

Today the Anaphora of Mar Nestorius is used in the Holy *Qurbana*

January 10: Death of Metropolitan Mar Augustine Kandathil (1956)

January 11: Installation of Major Archbishop Metropolitan Mar Raphael Thattil (2024)

January 14: Saint Devasahayam

January 16: Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

January 18: Beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 20: Saint Sebastian

January 24: Saint Francis de Sales

January 25: Conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Conversion of Saint Paul

January 26: Three Days' Fast - Monday Indian Republic Day, Death of Bishop Mar Mathew Makil (1914), Saints Timothy and Titus

January 27: Three Days' Fast - Tuesday

January 28: Three Days' Fast - Wednesday Saint Thomas Aquinas

January 29: Proclamation elevating the Syro-Malabar Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church and appointing Metropolitan Mar Antony Padiyara of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam- Angamaly as the first Major Archbishop (1993)

January 30: World Day of Peace

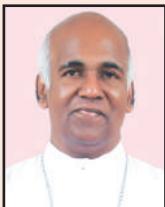
January 31: Saint John Bosco

► FESTAL GREETINGS ◀

January 20



Mar Sebastian Vadakel



Mar Sebastian Adayantrath



Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal



Mar Sebastian Pozholiparambil

January 31



Mar Bosco Puthur

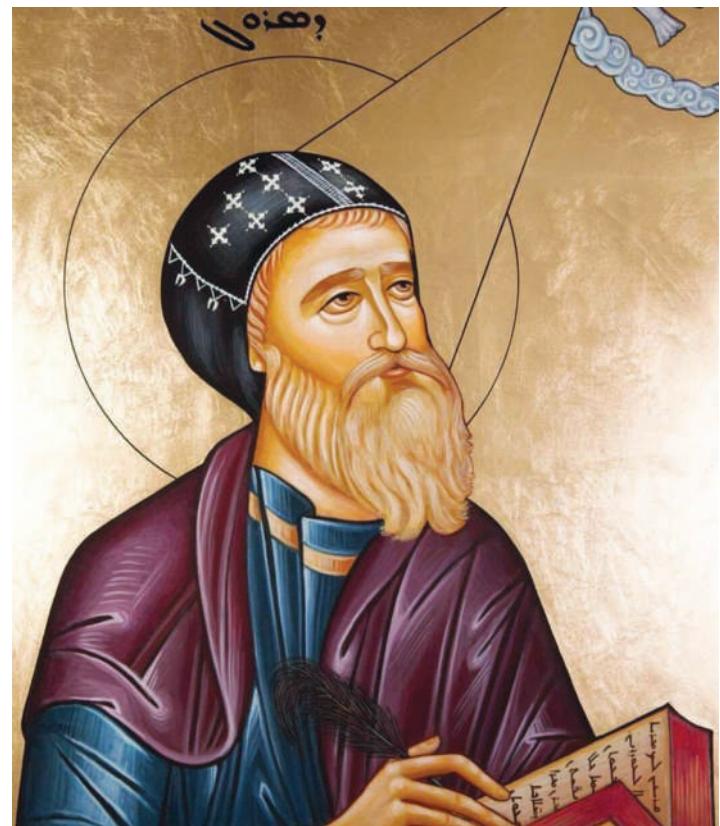


Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam

Jacob was born in A.D. 451 in the town of Kurtam in Mesopotamia. After completing his primary education, he joined the theological school of Edessa. There he gained deep knowledge not only in Sacred Scripture, liturgy, and the writings of the Church Fathers, but also in grammar, rhetoric, music, and mathematics. Unwilling to be drawn into the theological controversies that caused disputes at the great ecumenical councils of the fifth century (Ephesus and Chalcedon), he chose a life of prayer in the monastery at Hawra in Sarug.

Appointed as the Chorepiscopus of Hawra, he continued in that position until he was consecrated Bishop of Batnan, the capital of Sarug, in A.D. 518. He passed away on November 21, A.D. 521, at the age of seventy. He is venerated as a great scholar and saint of the Syriac Church. He enriched

ST. JACOB OF SARUG



Syriac literature with 763 poetic homilies (memre), 43 letters, and eight festal homilies. An anaphora and a baptismal rite also bear his name. His distinctive contribution to Syriac poetry was the use of compositions written in couplets of twelve syllables each. Because of his unique literary style and profound spiritual vision, he earned the titles "The Harp of the Church" and "The Flute of the Holy Spirit."



From the Heart of
the Father and Head

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



At the dawn of a new year, we all stand at the threshold of hope and renewal. Every New Year is an opportunity for a fresh beginning gifted to us by God. It invites us to look back and evaluate the paths we have travelled, to recognize and correct the mistakes we have made, and at the same time to move forward with renewed resolutions and dreams. Even as the challenges of our times, and the wars, violence, and intolerance that afflict the world, sow anxiety in the human heart, the hope we have received in Christ continues to shine as a light that never fades. The strength with which we welcome the New Year arises from the hope born of the faith that God is with us even in the midst of every crisis.

This hope must not remain confined to memories but must be transformed into action. Compassion and charity are the heart-language of Christian life. True New Year renewal begins where food is given to the hungry, where those who suffer are consoled, and where we

FROM A NEW BEGINNING SPRINGS RENEWED HOPE

► This hope must not remain confined to memories but must be transformed into action. Compassion and charity are the heart-language of Christian life. True New Year renewal begins where food is given to the hungry, where those who suffer are consoled, and where we stand alongside the neglected and the marginalized.

stand alongside the neglected and the marginalized. When, as individuals, families, and communities, we nurture a culture of compassion and tenderness, the world becomes more humane and more deeply imbued with the presence of God.

One of the most essential values needed in today's world is tolerance. Respecting differences of religion, culture, language, and opinion, and learning to live with mutual respect and dialogue, is the path to peace. We must not lightly ignore the growing intolerance among us that makes peaceful coexistence and fraternity impossible. In this time when intolerance and hatred are increasing, may the New Year grant us the courage to make new resolutions-choosing the path of tolerance and coexistence rather than mutual blame.

We have heard about the eagle-about its preparations to become new again by withdrawing into solitude and,

despite great pain, plucking out its own feathers. Even if it is painful, we must carry out such processes of renewal within the Church, as well as in our family and social circles. Only then will we be able to become a new creation as Christ desires. To achieve that, what we must first do is become a new creation in Christ. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). We should no longer shed tears remembering the old. We must no longer grumble by talking about old things. We should not pull out the old and dissect it, because the old has passed away. Do not remember or consider the things of the past. Behold, I am doing a new thing; do you not perceive it springing up? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:18-19). As we step into this new year, let us surrender our worries and uncertainties into the hands of the Almighty. Just as the eagle finds new strength to soar

higher than before, may this season of renewal empower us to rise above our challenges with courage and grace. Let our hearts be filled with the light of hope, and may our lives become a living testimony to God's transformative love. Believing in this Word of God, let us welcome the New Year. Let us firmly believe that God will make everything possible even amidst impossibilities. To the dear readers of Syro-Malabar Vision, I lovingly wish you a New Year filled with goodness and divine blessings.

In this New Year, let us learn from our yesterdays and dream of our tomorrows. Let us kindle the lamp of hope in our hearts, extend the hands of compassion, and speak the language of tolerance. Thus, may the Kingdom of God grow more visibly in our hearts, in our families, in the Church, and in society. May Almighty God bless this New Year for all of you with peace, joy, and spiritual abundance.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM: MIRACLE AND SCIENCE



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott

The "Star of Bethlehem" was an extraordinary phenomenon that appeared in the sky in connection with the birth of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Matthew clearly describes this heavenly sign that guided the Magi to Jesus. The primary purpose of the star was to lead the Magi to Christ. These wise men from Persia—Balthazar, Gaspar, and Melchior—may have been familiar with Old Testament prophecies (Numbers 24:17). The Bible states that the star went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

Scientific Theories and Their Limitations

For centuries, scientists and scholars have studied this mystery. Three major scientific explanations are commonly proposed:

• **Planetary conjunction:** The extraordi-

► Bromiley writes in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* that the most important question is not what the Star of Bethlehem was, but whom it led people to.

nary brightness caused by the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus around 2 B.C.

- **Supernova:** A sudden burst of light caused by the explosion of a star.
- **Comet:** A celestial body that appears to move across the sky.

However, none of these natural phenomena fully explains Matthew's description. Since stars appear to move continuously due to the Earth's rotation, a natural star cannot precisely come to rest over a particular house.

A Supernatural Divine Intervention

Many theologians believe that, like the virginal birth of Christ, the Star of Bethlehem was also a supernatural event. St. John Chrysostom emphasizes that the star was not an ordinary star but a unique divine sign, observing: "If that star had not descended from the heights of heaven and stood directly above the child's head, how could it have pointed out such a small place as a manger or a stable?"

Michael R. Molnar, in his book *The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi*,

writes that during the reign of Herod, a great celestial sign appeared indicating the birth of a great king in Judea. God sometimes temporarily alters the laws of nature to accomplish His greater purposes. Such an event cannot be fully explained within known natural laws. It is not surprising that a supernatural sign accompanied the birth of the Son of God. The star that guided the Magi must be understood as one of God's extraordinary works, uniquely designed for a specific purpose. It was a star of hope, leading the Magi to the fulfillment of their expectations.

It is noteworthy that only the wise men understood the significance of this star. Herod and others neither saw nor recognized it. This suggests that it was not merely a general astronomical phenomenon, but a divine guide intended specifically for the Magi. God can use extraordinary means for extraordinary purposes. Writing in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley states: "The God of the Bi-

ble is the Creator of all heavenly bodies, and they bear witness to Him. He certainly can intervene and alter their normal course." Since Psalm 19:1 proclaims that "the heavens declare the glory of God," God may have chosen the star as a special means to testify to His incarnation on earth.

Conclusion

Bromiley writes in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* that the most important question is not what the Star of Bethlehem was, but whom it led people to. As Psalm 19:1 declares, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God." The star was a marvelous sign chosen by God to announce the birth of the Savior to the world. It was not merely an astronomical object, but a guide leading to Christ, the Light of the world. Therefore, our hearts should be lifted not toward the star itself, but toward the Savior to whom it pointed.

"In the dark night of sin, the Star of Bethlehem shines brightly. Over the radiance that emanates from the manger falls the shadow of the Cross." - St. Augustine

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT YEAR FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT



Fr. James Kokkavayalil

The Syro-Malabar Church has entered into the Community Empowerment Year. The year 2026 has been set apart to reflect more deeply on our *Nasrani* community, to study its glorious history in depth, to understand its distinctiveness and unique identity, to create awareness among members about existing challenges, and to adopt possible remedial measures.

Our community possesses its own distinct identity. Strong family bonds sustained over centuries, monogamous marriage, moral living, charitable works, Sunday observance, and family prayer are distinctive features of the Christian community. Though we are heirs to a rich heritage, today we face challenges and marginalization in several fields. We must be able to adopt creative solutions rather than waiting for governments alone to resolve all issues. Community empowerment lies in discovering what we ourselves can do.

The *Nasrani* community in Kera-



la and the Syro-Malabar Church have reached their present state by overcoming numerous challenges. The crises faced and struggles waged by our community in history may be unparalleled by any other in Kerala. Autocratic actions by rulers, military invasions, civil disobedience movements, the Liberation Struggle, educational movements, migrations, and displacements were all fiery paths we walked. Alongside these struggles, our contributions to the Kerala Renaissance and nation-building in India are invaluable.

We have made significant contributions in education, culture, arts, literature, theatre, cinema, sports, economics, politics, civil service, agriculture, and healthcare. Eminent personalities of national and international importance have emerged from our community. These

contributions need systematic study and dissemination.

If strong teaching teams are formed at the eparchial level to create awareness on community issues in parishes, family units, organizations, religious communities, seminaries, and clergy gatherings, the observance of the Community Empowerment Year can be considered half accomplished.

Units of the Catholic Congress, the community organization, must be established in all parishes to strengthen socio-political engagement. The community's voice, Deepika daily, must be promoted, as it is through Deepika that the Church's stand on various issues reaches each member. It is a matter of pride that Deepika carries one of the strongest and most balanced editorial pages in Kerala today.

Pro-life activities can help support families with more children. Business associations should be formed at eparchial and parish levels to encourage mutual support. Job fairs, career guidance, aptitude tests, and similar initiatives through Sunday Schools, educational institutions, and youth organizations can open better employment opportunities.

Participation in *Gram Sabhas* must be encouraged, as many government benefits are distributed through them.

Voter registration is crucial, especially for those whose names were removed through the SIR process or who have not yet registered. Community members should be encouraged to contest and succeed in local body elections and in elections of residents' associations, co-operative banks, and societies.

Effective liaison with government institutions within parish boundaries is essential. Maintaining migrant registers and informing local Syro-Malabar Church structures about parishioners living elsewhere will greatly aid pastoral care of our people spread across the world. Strengthening relations with other Churches, communities, media, political leaders, and officials is also necessary.

Promotion of *Nasrani* food culture, dress, customs, and traditions, along with organizing protests demanding the release of the Justice J.B. Koshy Commission report, are among the many initiatives possible during this year.

Community empowerment initiatives must aim beyond routine activities, focusing instead on the holistic upliftment of the community and its members across various sectors. By clearly understanding the objectives of this year and implementing them effectively, let us unite in working for the progress of our community.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN THE EPARCHY OF MISSISSAUGA



The initial phase of the Community Empowerment Program of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Mississauga has officially begun. The program is being implemented in response to the call of

the Syro-Malabar Church. Recognizing the unique circumstances and challenges faced by a migrant faith community, the initiative was launched through an eparchial-level online consultation involving

priests, religious sisters, and lay faithful. Awareness seminars and brainstorming sessions were held throughout November.

In early December, a Central Com-

mittee and an Executive Committee were constituted for coordination and supervision. On December 25, 2025, Bishop Mar Jose Kalluvilil officially inaugurated the Community Empowerment Year by lighting the lamp. The ceremony at the eparchial headquarters was attended by the CEY Director, clergy, cathedral representatives, lay leaders, youth, and children. Similar inaugural ceremonies were held on Christmas night in all foranes and parishes.

The first phase focuses on parish-level self-reflection to identify social, cultural, spiritual, and pastoral challenges faced by the migrant community. Subsequent phases will focus on implementing projects and formulating sustainable action plans for the future. The program prioritizes spiritual and faith formation, participatory leadership, skill development, social awareness, preservation of cultural identity, and pastoral care.

ARNOBIUS ON THE CHURCH IN INDIA



LITURGICAL
RESEARCH
CENTRE STUDY
SERIES

Rev. Dr. James Pulurumpil

St. Jerome's *Chronicle* testifies that before embracing Christianity, Arnobius was a well-known rhetorician in the town of Sicca in present-day Tunisia. After his conversion, he became a defender of the faith from Africa during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. At the request of the local bishop, he composed the work *Adversus gentes* in seven volumes in A.D. 303. From the ninth century onward, the work came to be known as *Adversus nationes*. The book highlights the greatness of Christianity.

► Arnobius records in his work the missionary activity of St. Thomas the Apostle in India. He notes that, witnessing the miracles performed by St. Thomas, the people of India abandoned paganism and embraced Christianity. Although Arnobius initially opposed Christianity, after his conversion he spoke forcefully against pagan beliefs.

The historian Lactantius was a disciple of Arnobius.

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He writes as follows:

"In India, Persia, Media, Arabia, Egypt, Asia, Syria, Galatia, Parthia, Achaia, Macedonia, Epirus, and in all lands where the sun rises and sets, and finally even in Rome, the Gospel has been proclaimed. People everywhere have abandoned their former religions and embraced Christianity. There was no delay in recognizing the truth of Christianity" (Arnobius of Sicca, *Adversus gentes*, PL 5, 828).

These words, written in the early fourth century, provide strong evidence that Christianity existed in India at that time. According to Arnobius, the Indians were among those who had renounced paganism and accepted Christianity. When writing about peoples who became Christians in the third century or earlier, he mentions India first and Rome last. In his understanding, India was the land of the rising sun and Rome the land of the setting sun—the easternmost and westernmost boundaries of the known world. Arnobius sought to convey that the Gospel had spread throughout the entire world known at that time.

He does not mention the names of the apostles who preached among the various peoples, as his intention was only to show which nations had accepted the Gospel. At that time, it was commonly believed that Thomas was the apostle of India, Peter and Paul of Rome, John of Ephesus, and Andrew of Achaia. This is why many of the Church Fathers recorded these traditions in their writings.

NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER



Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikkattumyalil

An excessive sense of "I" or self-centeredness is the core feature of the personality disorder known as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). People with this condition tend to think that they are superior, expect constant approval from others, dislike criticism, and feel that they should not be criticized. They make relentless efforts to acquire wealth, status, and fame. However, studies indicate that such individuals often have very low self-esteem and self-confidence. These traits usually begin to appear in childhood itself. This condition is seen more frequently in men than in women, and its intensity often decreases with increasing age.

Symptoms

An inflated sense of self-importance dominates their mind, along with a compulsive need for others to regard them as superior. They live in a fantasy world centered on their own success, power, beauty, and abilities. They believe that their uniqueness can be understood only by exceptional or special people. There is a constant demand for praise and admiration, a tendency to use others for personal benefit, and a lack of respect for others. They show little or no empathy, are unwilling to meet the needs of oth-



► Childhood experiences such as excessive praise or harsh criticism, along with unreliable or inconsistent parenting, contribute to the development of Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Genetic and biological factors also play a significant role.

ers, and often feel intolerance, jealousy, or envy. They may wrongly believe that others are jealous of them, display irrational and excessive self-confidence, live with the conviction that they are always right, and show resistance to self-criticism or admitting mistakes.

Types of Narcissistic Personality

Grandiose Narcissist:

This type displays overt arrogance, believes "I am the best," looks down upon others, and places excessive importance on power, position, and reputation.

Vulnerable Narcissist:

Such individuals appear outwardly

calm and innocent, but internally they possess an exaggerated sense of self-importance. Envy and inner distress are more pronounced in them.

Malignant Narcissist:

This is the most dangerous type. Cruelty, psychological abuse, controlling behavior, threats, and a lack of guilt or remorse are prominent features.

Communal Narcissist:

These individuals attempt to portray themselves as very good people. They seek praise and admiration through service and social work.

Somatic Narcissist:

Excessive importance is given to physical appearance and fitness. They focus intensely on looks, clothing, and youth, and judge others primarily on the basis of physical attractiveness.

Cerebral Narcissist:

These individuals exhibit exaggerated pride in their intelligence. They boast about knowledge, academic degrees, and intellectual abilities.

To some extent, such traits may be present in everyone. Narcissistic Personality Disorder is diagnosed only when these characteristics severely disrupt daily life, relationships, and professional functioning.

Causes

Childhood experiences such as excessive praise or harsh criticism, along with unreliable or inconsistent parenting, contribute to the development of Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Genetic and biological factors also play a significant role.

Psychological Approaches

It is important to understand that the primary treatment for Narcissistic Personality Disorder is psychotherapy rather than medication. Medications may be appropriate to address associated symptoms such as depression, irritability, or anxiety. During therapy, attention is given to how the affected person interacts with the therapist, examining and modifying grandiose self-perceptions and underlying vulnerabilities, teaching ways to regulate emotions, and helping transform self-centered traits into healthier patterns of behavior.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT DOMINIC

Tracing the journey of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Trinity, which began with Palakkad as its centre

Rooted in the ideals expressed in the motto to praise, to bless, to preach, to contemplate, and to share the fruits of contemplation, the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Trinity form a religious congregation of sisters. This congregation was founded in 1966 under the leadership of the blessed memory of the Most Reverend Mar Joseph Kundukulam and Fr. Joseph Vilangadan. In the same year, Sr. Clara Maliyekkal, Sr. Daniela Vasupurathukaran, Sr. Martina Inchotikkaran, and Sr. Sebastiana Kariyatti were sent to Germany as the first members of the congregation. After the profession of perpetual vows, they returned to Kerala in 1975. With the permission of the Most Reverend Mar Joseph Irimpan, on 17 December 1975, the first house was established in Mannarkkad of the Palakkad Eparchy under the name Holy Spirit Dominican Convent. This is today the Generalate of the congregation. On 28 January 1998, the congregation was officially proclaimed as an autonomous religious congregation of sisters of the Syro-Malabar Church with Major Archiepiscopal status, under the name Dominican Sisters of the Holy Trinity. The blessings of the congregation



at Landsberg and the untiring efforts of Sr. Gertrudes and Sr. Ulrika played a significant role in this development.

Today, this ecclesial community comprises 102 sisters living in 18 religious houses. The sisters carry out their ministry in the Eparchies of Palakkad, Thrissur, Irinjalakuda, and Thalassery, and outside Kerala in Mangalore, Andhra, Assam, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, and Germany. The proclamation of the Gospel is the core of the Dominican charism. In fidelity to this charism, the Dominican Sisters render service through education, training for children with special needs, healthcare, parish apostolate, ministries



in retreat centres, missionary activities, perpetual adoration, counselling, faith formation, home visits, leadership of various pious associations, and social initiatives aimed at the empowerment of women. Dominican spirituality is monastic, contemplative, and apostolic in character. Love and devotion to Christ

and His Word, love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary, apostolic zeal, study of Sacred Scripture, ardour for the salvation of souls, personal sanctification, liturgical life, silence, and a spirit of reparation are the principal elements of Dominican spirituality. ■

PARENTING: FIRMNESS OR FLEXIBILITY



FAMILY CORNER

There are various styles of parenting. One among them is intensive parenting. This is a style in which parents intervene excessively in their children's lives, tightly control matters in the name of securing a good future, and strive to make their children's lives "perfect." The underlying attitude here is, "I will decide everything." In order to develop the child's abilities and turn them into high achievers, parents arrange tuitions, music, dance, sports—everything imaginable. How much interest or aptitude the child actually has in these areas becomes irrelevant. What matters to the parents is that the child must obey what they say. They do not allow the child to make even a single mistake. Even the choice of the child's friends is often made by the parents themselves. This is a parenting style in which control and influence are exercised over the child in every possible way. Everything is done



with the intention of ensuring that the child does not go astray. But how good is this approach? Or does it also have its drawbacks? It would be most appropriate to say that it has both advantages and disadvantages.

Let us therefore first examine the positive aspects of this parenting style. One major benefit is that children receive safety and discipline. The chances of a child going astray or falling into bad company are minimal. This approach is highly supportive of academic achievement, the development of certain

habits, and success in studies. Children also get opportunities to showcase their talents. However, the disadvantages of this parenting style outweigh its benefits. Intensive parenting often harms children. It subjects them to excessive pressure. The psychological burden placed on children in their attempt to be "perfect" for their parents is immense. They may end up struggling with anxiety, depression, and burnout. Since parents make all the decisions, children's self-confidence diminishes. They become incapable of making or implementing

decisions on their own. In the absence of their parents, they may even fail to handle problems independently.

Due to tightly packed daily routines, children are unable to discover their own happiness or act according to their personal interests. The clash between freedom and control can also lead to friction in the relationship between parents and children.

When parents interfere in every matter, children lose the practical skills required to interact independently in society and to solve problems on their own. In such a situation, the question arises: what should parents do? What is needed here is a healthy balance. Instead of excessive control or complete freedom, parents should adopt a balanced and healthy approach that lies somewhere in between. Children should be allowed to grow by being given small decisions and responsibilities appropriate to their age. Rather than wishing that children never make mistakes, parents should train them to handle failures and errors. After all, failure often teaches us many lessons. Likewise, children should be given opportunities to learn from their failures. Instead of imposing greater control, parents should offer more guidance and support. Children should be provided with time for study, play, and rest. Parents should listen to their children and spend time with them. ■

PASTORAL COUNCIL



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Mathew Souriamkuzhi

The Pastoral Council is an eparchical consultative body established in accordance with the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, especially the Decree *Christus Dominus*. Its purpose is to investigate, assess, and propose practical conclusions regarding matters that pertain to pastoral activity in the eparchy, under the authority of the eparchical bishop. Unlike the Eparchical Assembly, which is convened for a specific occasion and then concludes, the Pastoral Council is a permanent consultative body, established for a fixed term according to the statutes issued by the eparchical bishop. It does not cease with a single event, but continues its work over time, focusing exclusively on the pastoral life of the eparchy and on matters related

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to pastoral works, in order to suggest practical solutions.

According to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO c. 272), the eparchical bishop is to establish a Pastoral Council only if pastoral circumstances in the eparchy so recommend. This means that the Pastoral Council is not a body that must be established in every eparchy, as is the case with the Presbyteral Council, which is required by law. Since the CCEO does not specify particular matters that must be discussed with the Pastoral Council, the bishop is not obliged by law to consult it on any given issue. However, it is highly advisable that the bishop listen to the Pastoral Council and seriously consider the practical suggestions it puts forward, in the spirit of pastoral discernment and communion.

The Pastoral Council is constituted and functions in accordance with the special statutes issued by the eparchical bishop. These statutes are to determine the term of office of the Council, the number of members, the manner of election, the frequency and conduct of meetings, the internal organization, and any committees or offices within the Council. In accordance with these statutes, the members of the Pastoral Council are to be chosen from among clerics, religious or members of societies of common life in the manner of religious, and laypersons. The Council should be composed of the Christian faithful of the eparchy, representing, as far as possible, a variety of individuals, associations, and other endeavors. The eparchical bishop may determine the appropriate proportions of clerics, religious, and laypersons, and may

provide for members to be designated as ex officio, elected, or nominated. In short, the Pastoral Council ought to include representatives from all sectors of the eparchy's life, so that it truly reflects the whole People of God in that eparchy.

If appropriate, the bishop may invite members of other Churches *sui iuris* to participate in the Pastoral Council, in addition to its regular members. In particular, it is suitable to invite members of other Churches *sui iuris* who have been entrusted to his pastoral care. No one should be appointed to the Pastoral Council except those Christian faithful who are outstanding in firm faith, good morals and prudence (CCEO c. 273 §4). Canon 512 §1 of the Code of Canon Law (CIC) further specifies that only those who are in full communion with the Catholic Church are to be designated to the pastoral council.

It belongs to the eparchical bishop to convoke the Pastoral Council as needed, to preside over it, and to publish the matters dealt with in it (CCEO c. 275). The Pastoral Council ceases to exist when the eparchical see becomes vacant (CCEO c. 274 §2). The new bishop is not obliged to retain the same members of the Council. ■

UNA CARO (ONE BODY)



JOURNEY OF FAITH & LEARNING

Rev. Dr. Augustine Chennattu

Una Caro (meaning One Body) is a catechetical document published by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. It was approved by Pope Leo XIV on 21 November 2025 and promulgated on 25 November 2025. The full title of the document is "A Catechetical Document on the Value of Marriage as a Distinguished Unity and Mutual Belonging, Praising Monogamy."

Purpose and Background

According to Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery, three major factors motivated the publication of this document. These are: the global technological environment that encourages human beings to perceive themselves as limitless; the need to address African cultural understandings of polygamy; and the growth of non-monogamous relationships in Western societies. The document seeks to present monogamy not as a restriction, but rather as an opportunity to love infinitely.

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en chapters. It draws insights from a wide range of sources, including Sacred Scripture, Church history, theology, and poetry. Quotations from writers such as Walt Whitman, Pablo Neruda, and Emily Dickinson are also included. Grounding its reflection on monogamy in the biblical foundation of the Book of Genesis, the document studies marriage in the light of the teachings of the Church Fathers, ecclesial magisterium, and contemporary theological thought.

Principal Theological Themes

The document highlights two fun-

damental elements: mutual belonging and conjugal love. Mutual belonging, established through the free consent of the spouses, reflects Trinitarian communion and contributes to the stability of the marital bond. While this belonging is deeply intimate, it also respects the dignity and freedom of each person. The document strongly condemns every form of domination, violence, and psychological control that undermines this mutual respect. Conjugal love is presented as a unifying power and as a

divine gift. Through marital love, sexuality is understood as God's gift, oriented toward self-giving and the good of the spouse.

Social and Educational Dimensions

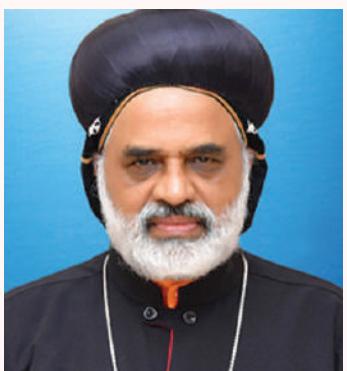
The document addresses contemporary challenges such as the increase in divorce, fragile marital relationships, the trivialization of adultery, and the promotion of polygamy. It also points out the paradox of modern times, in which marital relationships break down even as cultural narratives continue to exalt love as something noble. In response, the Dicastery emphasizes the need for an educational approach that develops a "new pedagogy," helping today's youth to understand love not merely as an emotion, but as responsibility and fidelity. The document further reminds married couples of the importance of not living in isolation, but of engaging together in shared social and communal activities.

Audience and Pastoral Application

Although the document is addressed primarily to bishops, its broader aim is to help married couples and young people to understand the richness of Christian marriage. Monogamy is presented as an essential element of marriage, closely connected with exclusive union and mutual partnership. By linking monogamy with the unitive purpose of sexuality and mutual belonging, the document firmly affirms it as an indispensable dimension of the marital vocation. ■



Archbishop
Dr. Varghese Chakkalackal



Dr. Samuel
Mar Irenios



Archbishop
Mar Thomas Tharayil

Kochi: His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Varghese Chakkalackal,

Archbishop of the Kozhikode Archdiocese, has been elected

President of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC).

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE KERALA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' COUNCIL

The election took place during the KCBC winter session held on Friday, December 12, at the POC, Palarivattom. Archbishop Dr. Varghese Chakkalackal was elected following the completion of the term of Cardinal Mar Baselios Cleemis, Head of the Malankara Church and Arch-

bishop of the Thiruvananthapuram. His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Samuel Mar Irenios, Bishop of the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta, was elected Vice President of the KCBC, and His Grace Mar Thomas Tharayil, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, was elected Secretary General.

MEDIA IS THE LIVING INTERFACE BETWEEN CHURCH AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP



Kakkadan: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil stated that the media play a decisive role in the Church's dialogue with the modern world. He was delivering the message while participating in the Christmas celebration of media professionals held at Mount St. Thom-

as, the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church.

Christmas is the great moment when God speaks to humanity. That message did not reach human beings through a direct divine proclamation, but rather through messengers chosen by God. On the night of

Bethlehem, angels, shepherds keeping vigil, and the Magi who followed the light of the star from afar-all of them became bearers of God's message. In this sense, they were the first media persons. Today, media professionals are the ones who continue the legacy of these divine messengers.

The mission of the media is to serve as a bridge between the Church and the world, to read the signs of the times, and to responsibly communicate truth to society. Like the message of Christmas, media work too must be a source of light. It should carry the light of truth into minds enveloped in dark-

ness and to the margins of society, the Major Archbishop reminded.

Just as God's salvific message reached the world through messengers, in today's context, it is through the media that human suffering and hopes are conveyed to the conscience of the world. When media professionals become servants of truth, justice, and peace, they become continuators of the mission of Christmas, Mar Raphael Thattil added.

Media professionals representing various institutions participated in the programme. Speaking on behalf of the journalists, Ernakulam Press Club

President R. Gopakumar addressed the gathering. Chancellor of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, delivered the welcome address, and Syro-Malabar Church PRO Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkott proposed the vote of thanks.

Carol singing, cordial interaction between media professionals and Church leadership, and a fellowship meal were also part of the celebration. The Christmas gathering held at the Church headquarters proved to be a meaningful occasion that helped strengthen and creatively nurture the relationship between the media world and the Church.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION MUST NOT BE USED FOR INSULT

Kochi: The Syro-Malabar Church has expressed strong protest against a work of art displayed on Mattancherry Bazaar Road in the name of the Biennale, in which the "Last Supper," one of the most sacred symbols of the Christian faith, was presented in a distorted and offensive manner. The Church spokesperson stated that portraying the scene of the Last Supper regarded by millions of

believers as a symbol of profound spiritual inspiration-in a derogatory manner constitutes a violation of the fundamental respect owed to religious beliefs.

The fact that this image, which was published in the December 2016 issue of *Bhashaposhini* and subsequently withdrawn following objections from the faithful, has once again been displayed raises serious

suspicion that this is a deliberate and malicious attempt to insult the Christian faith. The Church has no doubt that artistic freedom is an essential component of a democratic society. However, representations that mock religious beliefs, distort sacred symbols, and wound the religious sentiments of believers cannot be justified in the name of freedom of expression.

The Syro-Malabar Church emphasized that the freedom of expression must be exercised with responsibility and mutual respect-this being a fundamental principle of a pluralistic society. The Church urged the concerned authorities to take seriously the reality that the Christian community has been deeply hurt by this incident.

Cultural spaces, which ought

to be platforms for healthy cultural dialogue and artistic expression, should not be turned into arenas of insult and division targeting any religious community. The Syro-Malabar Church expressed hope that the concerned authorities would take just and responsible action in this matter, according to the statement issued by the PRO.

POLITITIANS WITH VIVID VISION ARE THE WEALTH OF THE NATION: MAR JOSE PULICKAL



Kanjirappally: Mar Jose Pulickal, Bishop of the Eparchy of Kanjirappally, stated that visionary public representatives who

engage constructively in society are an invaluable asset to the nation. He was inaugurating and addressing a felicitation meet-

ing of three-tier Panchayath representatives belonging to the Eparchy of Kanjirappally from the districts of Kottayam, Idukki, and Pathanamthitta, held at the Pastoral Centre.

He reminded the gathering of the need for constructive interventions in forest and wildlife-related issues and for fostering development concepts rooted in values, humanity, and nationalism.

He noted that an active relationship with God strengthens

relationships with fellow human beings, and that only when divine peace fills our hearts can we become true bearers of peace and guardians of the nation's atmosphere of harmony. In the benedictory address, former Bishop of the Eparchy of Kanjirappally, Mar Mathew Arackal, emphasized that public representatives should adopt a value-based approach to action, rising above narrow-minded thinking, for the integral development of the nation.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, Dr. Cyriac Thomas, delivered the keynote address and

reminded the participants of the importance of presenting a dignified model of politics by adhering to parliamentary decorum.

Eparchial Protosyncellus Fr. Joseph Vellammattam offered the welcome address. Syncellus Fr. Bobby Alex Mannamplakkal moderated the programme. Syncellus Fr. Sebastian Kollamkunnel, Procurator Fr. Philip Thadathil, Chancellor Fr. Mathew Souryamkuzhi, Dr. Juby Mathew, and Pastoral Animation Director Fr. Stanley Pulolickal led the arrangements.

MAJOR ARCHBISHOP'S VISIT TO ROME

PERSONAL AUDIENCE WITH HOLY FATHER LEO XIV

VISITED VARIOUS DICASTERIES



Vatican City: Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, held a significant meeting with His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on 15 December 2025 at 10.00 a.m. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, Secretary of the Syro-Malabar Synod of Bishops,

and Bishop Mar Stephen Chirappanath, Procurator of the Major Archbishop in Rome, were also present with the Major Archbishop.

During the meeting, which lasted for about an hour, the Major Archbishop expressed the heartfelt gratitude of the

Church to the Holy Father for granting four new provinces outside Kerala for the Syro-Malabar Church, approving an Apostolic Visitation in the Gulf region, and giving approval to the synodal decision to reorganise the boundaries of twelve eparchies. Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil informed the Holy Father that these decisions provide great strength and hope for the spiritual care of Syro-Malabar faithful worldwide and for the fulfilment of the Church's missionary mandate.

The Holy Father, who acknowledged the valuable contributions made by the Syro-Malabar Church at various levels

of the Universal Church and in missionary activities, recalled with warmth his closeness to the Syro-Malabar Church and his earlier visits to Kerala.

During the meeting, the Major Archbishop and other bishops also apprised the Holy Father of the present situation in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly. The Major Archbishop explained the steps being taken to restore peace and unity, and the efforts being made to achieve reconciliation through dialogue and tolerance. After listening attentively, the Holy Father emphasised the

need for the faithful, clergy, and religious of the Archeparchy to cooperate fully with the measures being undertaken to ensure communion and unity.

As part of the visit, the Major Archbishop and the Synod Secretary also met Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State; Cardinal Claudio Guggerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches; and the heads of several other Vatican dicasteries. They discussed various ecclesial matters and expressed gratitude for the support being extended.



With His Eminence Pietro Cardinal Parolin,
Vatican State Secretary



Jubilee Celebrations held at St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican

As part of the Jubilee celebrations of the Syro-Malabar Apostolic Visitation in Europe, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael

Thattil led the Jubilee pilgrimage to St. Peter's Basilica. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, Secretary of the Syro-Malabar Synod

of Bishops, Bishop Mar Stephen Chirappanath, Apostolic Visitor for the Syro-Malabar faithful in Europe, along with priests, reli-

gious, and hundreds of faithful participated in the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage was a manifestation of ecclesial communion with the Universal Church and, in a special way, with the See of Saint Peter. Entering through the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil prayed for an outpouring of God's abundant mercy and grace upon the Syro-Malabar faithful entrusted to his pastoral care. Symbolising spiritual renewal and hope, the

pilgrimage became an unforgettable moment of the Jubilee Year.

Following the pilgrimage, the Major Archbishop celebrated the Holy Qurbana at St. Peter's Basilica and delivered a message. Archbishop Joseph Pamplany and Bishop Mar Stephen Chirappanath were the concelebrants at the Eucharistic celebration, which became a powerful witness to the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church.

SPARK OF GRACE: A CELEBRATION OF TALENTED TEENS



Kakkad: *Prathibha Sangamam*, a gathering of talented children selected from various Eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church, was held at Mount St. Thomas on December 26, 27, and 28, 2025. The programme was inaugurated by Bishop Mar Paul Alappatt, Member of the commission for catechetics. This programme serves as a Church-level platform to honour children from Sun-

day Schools of various Eparchies who have received exemplary faith formation.

The programme is organized every year at the Church level with the objectives of deepening faith in Jesus Christ, growing in love for the Church, recognizing the significance of Christian identity as members of the Syro-Malabar Church, and growing together as Church.

At the gathering organized under the leadership of the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Commission, the father and head of the Church, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil, honoured the talented children. Commission Chairman Mar Jose Pulickal and Commission Member Mar Paul Alappatt interacted with the chil-

dren. Commission Secretary Fr. Joshy Panampambil, Assistant Secretary Fr. Joseph Kallarakal, Fr. Manu MST, Sr. Gislet MSJ, Sr. Divina, Jebin, and Sachin coordinated the programme.

More than sixty students studying in the 12th standard from various Eparchies participated. Eminent personalities from various fields led the classes.

Ann Joshi (Thalassery), Jewel Maria Aneesh (Idukki), Leah Rogi (Pala), Riona Maria (Thamarassery), Therese Mathew (Kothamangalam), Abel Binoy (Changanacherry), Athul Babu (Mananthavady), Joel P. Jogi (Kanjirapally), Melvin George Mathew (Kottayam), Richard Joseph (Mandy).

Round. The dance steps followed a specially composed song. The rally began from St. Thomas College, Thrissur.

WITH BUON NATALE, THRISSUR LIFTS THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS



With flash mob dances by Santa Clauses moving in perfect rhythm and beautiful Christmas tableaux creating scenes of wonder in the cultural capital, Buon Natale immersed Thrissur city in festive excitement. The Buon Natale rally reached the city centre around 5 p.m. on December 27 amid the exuberance of Christmas celebrations. Around fifteen thousand Santa Clauses clad the city in red as they marched around Swaraj

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of State Suresh Gopi, Mayor Niji Justin, Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, Mar Eugene Kuriakose, Cardinal Mar George Jacob Koovakad, Auxiliary Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil, and Ministers K. Rajan and R. Bindu participated. The Buon Natale procession organized under the leadership of Thrissur citizens and the Archeparchy of Thrissur can undoubtedly be called Thrissur's cultural festival.

human heart across all ages.

The inns that had no room for God continue to remain closed even today. They symbolize situations where neither God nor powerless human beings find space. Even now, God continues to seek space in human hearts, in families, and in social systems. The Christmas night proclamation, "Peace to people of goodwill," becomes a real possibility before those who are willing to make space for God and for their brothers and sisters.

He delivered this message during the Christmas liturgical celebrations held at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkad, the central administrative headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church.

CHRISTMAS: A PILGRIMAGE TOWARDS THOSE WHO SEEK SPACE - MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil of the Syro-Malabar Church stated that Christmas teaches us the spirituality of making space and welcoming others. The Blessed Virgin Mary opened her entire heart to allow the Word of God to dwell within her. Joseph surrendered his life in obedience to God's plan.

Shepherds and Magi willingly left behind their comforts and securities to welcome the Divine Child. These life examples remind us that Christmas is incomplete without making space for God and for our fellow human beings.

One simple answer to the question of why God was born in a manger is that every human-scented place was shut against Him until He reached the cattle shed. When human doors were closed, God sought refuge in a silent manger. This is not merely a historical account, but a reality that reveals the state of the

gious festivals peacefully. This is the time for the nation to stand united against all attempts to create division in the name of religion.

The Major Archbishop stated in a press release that he prays for everyone to receive the spiritual strength to share love and peace in the face of hatred, violence, and brutal aggression. His response came against the backdrop of more than twelve incidents of violence reported in various parts of India during the 2025 Christmas season alone, targeting Christmas celebrations.

INTOLERANCE TOWARDS CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IS CONDEMNABLE: MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL



Kakkad: Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, has called upon everyone to remain vigilant in safeguarding religious harmony with evangelical courage. He was responding to the increasing incidents of attacks, threats, and disruptions targeting Christians and Christmas celebrations in various parts of India.

Such reports are extremely alarming. Acts of violence and intolerance carried out by certain extremist religious groups pose a serious challenge to India's pluralistic culture and secular spirit. Obstructing Christmas celebrations that proclaim a message of peace and love, denying freedom of worship, and intimidating innocent believers are not befitting of a democratic nation.

It is imperative to ensure constitutional protection for all citizens and to create an environment where people can live without fear. All citizens, without distinction between minority and majority, have equal rights to celebrate reli-

SERVANT OF GOD FR. JOSEPH PANJIKKARAN DECLARED VENERABLE



Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed Servant of God Monsignor Joseph Panjikkaran as Venerable. The declaration was made at the Vatican on December 18, 2025. Along with Servant of God Fr. Joseph Panjikkaran, Franciscan priest Bernardo Attonayi from Naples, Italy, and Domenica Caterina were also elevated to the rank of Venerable.

Diocesan-level studies concerning Fr. Panjikkaran began after he was declared a Servant of God on July 18, 2010. These

diocesan investigations were completed on June 23, 2015, and all documents were forwarded to the Vatican. On July 27, 2020, the comprehensive dossier (Positio) containing the documentation related to him was submitted to the Vatican department responsible for canonization processes. Following extensive studies by historians and theologians, a panel of cardinals examined the materials. Once Fr. Panjikkaran's holiness of life was established, a report recommending the declaration

of Blessed was submitted to the Pope.

In the Catholic Church, the declaration of a person as a saint involves a multi-stage process that includes a local investigation, Vatican review, and confirmed miracles. The process begins with the title Servant of God, proceeds to Venerable, then-on the basis of one confirmed miracle-to Blessed, and finally-after a second confirmed miracle-to Saint. Monsignor Joseph Panjikkaran has now been elevated to the second stage, the

rank of Venerable.

Monsignor Joseph Panjikkaran was born on September 10, 1888, in Uzhuva village of Cherthala. He was the first among the Syrian Catholics to earn an M.A. degree. With a desire for missionary work, he joined the seminary and was ordained a priest on December 21, 1918. He focused his ministry among the sick, the weak, and the destitute in regions that today fall under the dioceses of Ernakulam, Kothamangalam, and Idukki. He founded Dharmagiri, Kerala's first Catholic hospital, and also established the religious congregation Medical Sisters of St. Joseph (MSJ), a community dedicated to comforting suffering humanity through patient care, with evangelization through healing as its goal. The Scripture verse that guided Fr. Panjikkaran was:

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Well known in the Kerala Catholic Church as a historian, journalist, and healthcare servant, Fr. Panjikkaran passed away on November 4, 1949. Though he lived only 61 years, he accomplished works that could have filled two lifetimes. From that day onward, people of all castes and religions have come to pray at the tomb of the saintly Joseph Panjikkaran. Disregarding his noble family background and higher academic degrees, Monsignor Joseph Panjikkaran dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the work of the Gospel. A spirit of active engagement focused on the salvation of souls was the distinctive hallmark of his life.

COMMEMORATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD FR. JOSEPH KANDATHIL



Gardens institutions, was commemorated with devotion.

Fr. Joseph Kandathil earned the title Kerala Damian because, inspired by the life and mission of St. Damian, he embraced leprosy patients and those marginalized by society, dedicating his entire life to their service. He was born on 27 October 1904 at Chempukandam, Vaikom, as the third son of Varkey Thomas and Clara, and was ordained a priest on 17 December 1933 by Mar Augustine Kandathil Metropolitan.

He began his priestly ministry as assistant vicar at Muttom Church, Cherthala. The early phase of his priesthood itself became a decisive turning point in his life. The pitiable condition of leprosy patients whom he encountered during house visits, along with the widespread poverty and unemployment prevalent in the Cherthala region at that time, deeply influenced him.

In 1942, he established a leprosy hospital in Cherthala, and in the following year he founded

the ASMI Congregation. In 1986, the congregation was elevated to Pontifical status. Today, ASMI Sisters are engaged in apostolic service in various Indian states as well as in Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Italy, and Germany.

In 1969, the Vatican honoured Fr. Kandathil by conferring on him the title of Monsignor. He passed away on 12 December 1991. His mortal remains are interred at the Sacred Heart Chapel, Mathilakam, Cherthala. On 24 October 2019,

Fr. Kandathil was elevated to the status of Servant of God.

People firmly believe that the *nercha kanji* distributed daily at 5.00 p.m. in his memory has healing properties. Having established leprosy hospitals, healthcare institutions, homes for the destitute, and old-age homes across Kerala and various parts of India, the cause for canonization of Fr. Joseph Kandathil is presently in progress. Let us pray fervently for the successful advancement of his canonization.

Champakulam Kalloorkkandu St. Mary's Church, was the filial Church of Niranam—one of the seven and a half churches founded by Apostle St. Thomas—is the first church of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry. A total of 501 volunteers from the *Mathruvedi*, *Pithruvedi*, and *Kudumbakkottayma* office bearers of the Kuttanad region provided leadership for the pilgrimage.



Champakulam: With the intention of receiving the plenary indulgence proclaimed by the Pope during the Jubilee Year

and praying for blessings upon families and the nation, the Kuttanad region Archepiscopal Jubilee Pilgrimage was held on December 13, 2025, from Champakulam St. Mary's Basilica to the Parel Marian Pilgrimage Centre, under the leadership of Metropolitan Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry. The pilgrimage, which be-

gan at Champakulam St. Mary's Basilica and proceeded under the leadership of the Champakulam, Alappuzha, Muhamma, Pulinkunnu, and Edathua foranes, was attended by Vicar Generals, forane vicars, parish priests from 77 churches, religious, parents, youth, and Sunday School children along with the Archbishop.

The annual celebration of the *Mathruvedhi* of the Bhadravathi Eparchy was held under the presidency of Bishop Mar Joseph Arumachadath, head of the Eparchy. The *Mathruvedhi* Global President Beena Joshi inaugurated the celebration. Various cultural programmes were organized in connection with the annual event. A total of

250 participants from 17 parishes of the Eparchy took part. Infant Jesus Parish won the overall championship. Numerous cultural programmes were also conducted under the auspices of *Mathruvedhi*. Vicar General Fr. Thomas Chittilappilly, Fr. Abraham Areeparambil, and Sister Royce S.H. addressed the gathering.

MATHRUVEDHI ANNUAL MEETING AT BHADRAVATHI



JESUS' MESSAGE IS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD: VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA



Delhi: The message of peace and unity proclaimed by Jesus Christ is meant for the entire world, said the Vice President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan. He was delivering his message at the Christmas celebration held in Delhi under the auspices of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). He observed that the very essence of Christianity is rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to establish peace and unity. Values such as compassion, mutual respect, and the dignity of every human person, he noted,

strongly resonate with the foundational values of India. In the contemporary context, when societies across the world are confronted with divisions and conflicts, these values assume even greater relevance. Prior to the formal programme, the Vice President, along with other

distinguished guests, visited the Nativity scene and paid homage to the Infant Jesus.

The Governor of West Bengal, Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose, was the Guest of Honour. His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church; Cardinals Dr. Oswald Gracias and Dr. Anthony Poola; His Beatitude Cardinal



MARIAN PILGRIMAGE IN THE ARCHEPARCHY OF THALASSERY



Thalassery: The Marian Pilgrimage of the Archeparchy of Thalassery, which has grown into the largest pilgrimage in Malabar, concluded successfully. The pilgrimage was conducted on foot, reciting the Rosary, from Edur St. Mary's Archiepiscopal Church and Alakode St. Mary's Forane Church to the Chembéri Lourdes Matha Basilica. The distance to the Chembéri Basilica is 35 kilometres from Edur and 23 kilometres from Alakode. Passing through the heart of the Archeparchy of Thalassery, the pilgrimage extended for nearly 60 kilometres and witnessed the participation of around twenty thousand faithful. A total of 125 priests and more than 500 sisters took part in the pilgrimage.

Large numbers of pilgrims participated from nine foranes: Alakode, Vayattuparamba, Paisakari, Manikadavu, Nellikkampoyil, Edur, Chembéri, and

Kunnoth. Marian evenings featuring reflections on the Word of God centred on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Eucharistic adoration, Holy Qurbana, and opportunities for confession were organised during the pilgrimage. The pilgrim group from Edur was led by the Metropolitan Archbishop of Thalassery, Mar Joseph Pamplany. Marian evenings held at various forane centres were led by Vicar General Msgr. Mathew Elamthuruthipadavayil, Fr. Tom Olikkatt, Fr. Joseph Muttathukunnel, Fr. Sebastian Puthuppally, Fr. Pius Padinjaremuriyil, and Fr. Sebastian Thengumpallil.

The pilgrim groups reached the Chembéri Lourdes Matha Basilica at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, December 6. Holy Qurbana for the pilgrims was celebrated at 3:00 a.m., with Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany as the main celebrant, who also delivered the homily. Mar George Valia-

mattam, the Protosyncellus of the Archeparchy of Thalassery Msgr. Antony Muthukunnel, Vicar Generals Msgr. Sebastian Palakkuzhy and Msgr. Mathew Elamthuruthipadavayil, along with forane vicars, joined as concelebrants.

All the families of the Archeparchy were consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Under the leadership of the Rector of the Chembéri Lourdes Matha Basilica, Rev. Dr. George Kandirakkatt, all necessary arrangements for the pilgrims were meticulously organised. The Chancellor of the Archeparchy, Fr. Joseph Muttathukunnel, expressed gratitude to all who contributed to the pilgrimage. The prayerful journey undertaken with sacrifice by the people of God throughout the night along the hill highway, reciting the Rosary, became a profound occasion of spiritual renewal for the entire Archeparchy. Opportunities for gaining plenary indulgence were also provided. The Marian Pilgrimage is organised every year in connection with the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

WOMEN'S FORUM ANNUAL CONVENTION AT BIRMINGHAM



Birmingham: The Great Britain Syro-Malabar Eparchy Women's Forum Convention (THAIBOOSA 2025) was held at New Bingley Hall. Thousands of women representatives from all parishes, missions, and proposed mission centres of the Eparchy participated. The convention was inaugurated by Bishop Mar Joseph Srampickal, head of the Eparchy. He stated that the role played by Women's Forum members in strengthening and fostering the growth of the Eparchy, in faith formation, in handing on the traditions of the Syro-Malabar Church to future generations, and in spreading the spirit of the Synod on Synodality in the Eparchy is of great value. Women's Forum Eparchial President Twinkle Raison

presided over the meeting.

At the symposium, Bishop Mar Joseph Srampickal, Eparchial Protosyncellus Rev. Dr. Antony Chundelikkatt, Women's Forum Commission Chairman Fr. Jose Anchanikal, Director Rev. Dr. C. Jean Mathew S.H., Jolly Mathew, Dr. Shincy Mathew, Merlin Mathew, Alphonsa Kurian, Dolly Josy, Dimple Varghese, and Sheeja Jacob addressed the gathering. After the convention, Holy Qurbana was celebrated under the leadership of Bishop Mar Joseph Srampickal. The programme included the release of a souvenir, prize distribution, installation of new office bearers, and cultural programmes from various regions.

JUBILEE QUIZ COMPETITION OF THE ARCHEPARCHY OF KOTTAYAM



Thellakom: As part of the Jubilee Year commemorating the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, a Jubilee Quiz Competition was conducted for families and consecrated religious commu-

nities of the Archeparchy of Kottayam. Fourteen families from fourteen foranes and eight teams from four consecrated religious communities participated in the competition. In

the quiz competition for families, Binumon Joseph & family, Mukalel, Njizhoor; Alexander K.C. & family, Kuppananickal, Uzhavoor; and Jay K. George & family, Kochadampallil Cathe-

dral secured first, second, and third places respectively.

In the quiz competition for consecrated religious communities, Rev. Dr. Sr. C. Liz Maria SVM & Sr. Binzi SVM; Sr. Elizabeth SVM & Sr. Hitha SVM; and Rev. Dr. Sr. Lekha SJC & Sr. Deji SJC secured first, second, and third places respectively. The Metropolitan Archbishop of Kottayam, Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, congratulated the winners and distributed the prizes. Winners of the family quiz received cash awards of ₹50,000, ₹30,000 and ₹20,000 along with certificates from the Archeparchial Family Commission. Winners of the quiz for consecrated religious received cash awards of ₹20,000, ₹15,000, and ₹10,000 along with certificates. The competition was led by Jubilee Committee Convenor Rev. Dr. Thomas Adoppillil, committee members Rev. Dr. Joy Karukaparambil, Fr. Jibin Manalodiyil, Rev. Dr. Sr. Anns Maria SVM, Rev. Dr. Sr. Aparna SJC, Johnny T.K., and Quiz Master Dr. Ajith James Jose.



DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

DECEMBER 03 - DECEMBER 31

- **03 Wednesday:** Celebrated the Holy *Qurbana*, delivered the message, and inaugurated the meeting of Syro-Malabar deacons convened at Mount St. Thomas under the auspices of the Clergy Commission.
- **06 Saturday:** Celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* and delivered the message as part of the 1020th anniversary celebrations of St. Mary's Assumption Forane Church of the Archeparchy of Thrissur.
- **07 Sunday:** Celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* and delivered the message at the newly consecrated Kizhakkambalam Forane Church of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly. Participated in the episcopal ordination of the newly appointed Bishop of the Eparchy of Kochi, Rev. Msgr. Antony Kattyparambil, and conveyed greetings.
- **08 Monday:** Celebrated the Holy *Qurbana*, blessed the newly constructed chapel, and delivered the message in connection with the feast at Vynthassery Amalbhava Matha Church of the Archeparchy of Thrissur.
- **10 Wednesday:** Presided over the funeral service of Rev. Fr. Paul Katakkakathoot at Moozhikulam St. Mary's Church of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.
- **12 Friday:** Met His Eminence Claudio Cardinal Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, at Rome. Participated in the Christmas celebrations organized at *Domus Mar Thoma* the Procura Syro Malabar Church in Rome with priests, religious, and seminarians who belong to the Syro Malabar Church, engaged in pastoral ministry and studies.
- **13 Saturday:** Visited various dicasteries in Vatican.
- **14 Sunday:** As part of the Grand Jubilee of the Nativity of Jesus, made a pilgrimage with the Syro-Malabar faithful in Rome to St. Peter's Basilica and celebrated the Holy *Qurbana*.
- **15 Monday:** Paid a visit to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Papal Palace in the Vatican. Subsequently met Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State.
- **18 Thursday:** Participated in the Christmas evening organized at the CBCI headquarters in Delhi.
- **19 Friday:** Participated in the Christmas reception hosted by the Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, at his official residence for Christian Church leaders.
- **20 Saturday:** Delivered a message and interacted with media personnel at the Christmas gathering convened at Mount St. Thomas.
- **21 Sunday:** Visited the retired priests' residences in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly and extended Christmas greetings.
- **25 Thursday:** Led the Nativity liturgical celebrations at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.
- **27 Saturday:** Ordained nine deacons of the CMI Coimbatore Mission Province to the priesthood. Ordained thirteen deacons of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly to the priesthood.
- **29 Monday:** Ordained Deacon Dinil Kummal, a member of the MSJ congregation, to the priesthood at Kuriachira Parish Church of the Archeparchy of Thrissur.
- **31 Wednesday:** Inaugurated the 33rd Evening Bible Convention and celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* at Maruthorvattam St. Sebastian's Parish Church of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.

TRICHUR ARCHEPARCHY OPENS TO YEAR OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



Thrissur: The conclusion of the Christ Jayanti Jubilee Year and the Archeparchial-level inauguration of the Community Empowerment Year of the Syro-Malabar Church were

held at Puthenpally Basilica, with Metropolitan Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath of the Thrissur Archeparchy lighting the ceremonial lamp along with representatives of the clergy,

religious, and laity. In his introductory address, Auxiliary Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil called for united efforts for the holistic progress of the community. The programme included

prayer service, address, Holy *Qurbana*, Eucharistic procession, and Eucharistic blessing. The Eucharistic procession held at the Basilica Church was led by Archeparchial Vicar Generals Msgr. Jose Konikkara and Msgr. Jaison Koonamplackal.

Along with the Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil, Vicar Generals Msgr. Jose Konikkara and Msgr. Jaison Koonamplackal, Pastoral Council Secretary Joshy Vadakkan, CRI President Fr. Sijo

Painadath, Presbyteral Council Secretary Fr. Alex Marottical, Archeparchial Coordination Committee Secretary Shinto Mathew, Catholic Congress Vice President Leela Teacher, Mathruvedhi President Ujjwala Biju, KCYM President Jishad Jose, and CLC Vice President Meettu Manoj jointly lit the lamp. Marking the formal conclusion of the 2025 Jubilee Year, a Jubilee gathering of catechists was also organized.

MOTHERS ARE GUARDIANS: MAR JOSE PULICKAL



Kanjirappally: Mar Jose Pulickal, Bishop of the Eparchy of Kanjurappally, reminded that mothers are the guardians of the family, the Church, and society. Just as the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mediatrix of the Mothers' Forum, trusted in God, so too must we place our trust in God; and just as co-mediators St. Monica and St. Gianna protected their families during great crises, mothers today must stand as guardians, caregivers, and sources of strength in their families.

He was inaugurating Vision 2025 and addressing the 30th

anniversary celebrations of the Eparchial Mothers' Forum of Kanjurappally. Fr. Thomas Venmanthara, Director of Family Apostolate, celebrated the Holy *Qurbana*. At the public meeting, Eparchial President Mrs. Jiji Jacob Puliyamkunnel presided. Various cultural programmes added brilliance to the celebration. As part of the 30th anniversary, the souvenir *Sukrutham* was released. Mothers from 148 parishes of the Eparchy participated. Eparchial Director Fr. Mathew Olikkal and Animator Sr. Rosmi also addressed the gathering.

THE EPARCHY OF THAMARASSERY HOSTED A GATHERING OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE



Thamarassery: As part of the Ruby Jubilee of the Eparchy, the Eparchial Family Apostolate organized a Christmas celebration titled "With the Shepherd" for persons facing physical and mental challenges and their family members, in the presence of the Eparchial Bishop of Thamarassery, Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil. The event

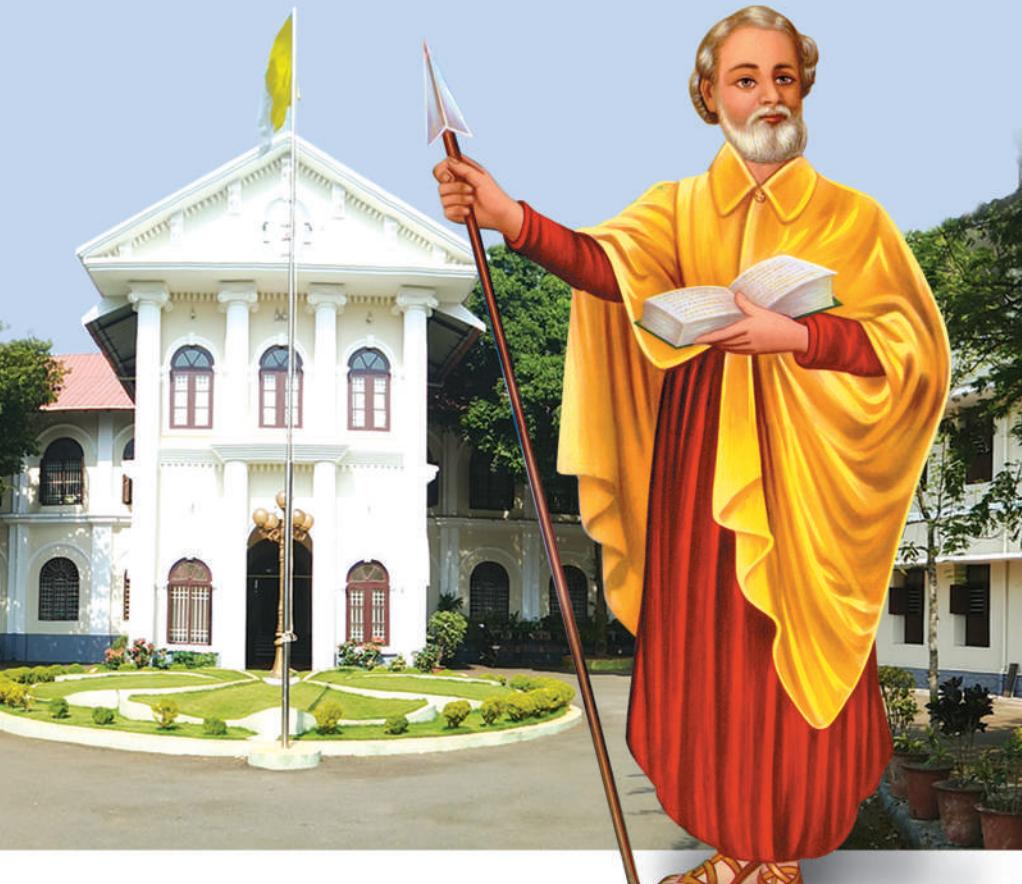
was held at the St. George Parish Auditorium, Puthuppadi. Mar Remigius inaugurated the gathering. Puthuppadi Parish Vicar Fr. George Kalathoor, Family Apostolate Director Fr. Jinoy Panackal, Zone Director Fr. Milton Mulangassery, COD Director Fr. Sai Parakulangara, Eparchial President Prakash Pulikkekara, Programme Co-

ordinator Manoj, Eparchial Secretary Marykutty, and Rugmini Amma spoke on the occasion. The programme included a photo session, cake cutting, festive meal, cultural programmes, and Christmas gift distribution. A total of 313 participants, including persons with disabilities and their family members, attended the gathering.



Archdiocese of Trichur

The Cradle of Christian Faith in India



The Christian faith and heritage of Thrissur dates back to the arrival of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Christ, in 52 A.D. Palayur, the cradle of Christian faith in India, where the Apostle Thomas set his foot, preached the Good News, and established the first community of faithful, is within the Archdiocese of Trichur. The Thousands of pilgrims on foot thronging for the annual Lenten *Mahatheerthadanam* to Palayur is a living witness of the twenty centuries of unbroken Christian faith and legacy of this land. Muziris (Kodungallur), the ancient port city, where St. Thomas arrived in AD 52 is also located in the district of Thrissur. Besides the dynamic tradition of history dating back to the footprints of the Apostle of Christ, Thrissur is also blessed by the birth and sanctified lives of two Catholic saints and a number of venerable souls of deep faith and virtuous deeds.

The Archdiocese of Trichur, today, comprises of around five lakh Syro-Malabar Syrian Catholic faithful. It continues to give vibrant living witness to Christian faith through its parish communities, various pious associations, educational, social and healthcare activities animated and organised by its various institutions and centres of excellence. The Archdiocese of Trichur proudly holds a Guinness World Record for organizing Buon Natale, the largest gathering of Santa Clauses in the World in a Christmas carol procession.

Historical Milestones:

- 1887 May 20** - Pope Leo XIII established the Vicariate of Trichur
- 1896** - Jurisdiction of the Trichur Vicariate was redefined by Pope Leo XIII
- 1923** - Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy and the Diocese of Trichur became a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Ernakulam
- 1974 June 20** - Erection of Diocese of Palghat, bifurcating Diocese of Trichur
- 1978 June 22** - Erection of Diocese of Irinjalakuda, bifurcating Diocese of Trichur
- 1986 Feb. 07** - Pope John Paul II inaugurated the Centenary of Trichur Diocese
- 1995 May 18** - Pope John Paul II elevated Diocese of Trichur to an Archdiocese; Palghat and Irinjalakuda are suffragans of Archdiocese of Trichur
- 2010 April 11** - Erection of Diocese of Ramanathapuram, suffragan of Trichur
- 2025 August** - Diocese of Hosur is added to the Trichur Metropolitan Province.

Shepherds of the Archdiocese

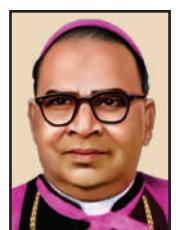
Mar Adolphus Medlycott (1887-1896)



Mar John Menachery (1896-1919)



Mar Francis Vazhappilly (1921-1942)



Mar George Alappatt (1944-1970)



Mar Joseph Kundukulam (1970-1997)



Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy (1997-2007)



Mar Andrews Thazhath (2007-)

Auxiliary Bishops



Mar Andrews Thazhath



Mar Raphael Thattil



Mar Tony Neelankavil

CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE

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In the path of holiness



St. Euphrasia



St. Mariam Thresia

God has blessed the undivided Archdiocese of Trichur with two saints. The faithful of the region rejoice as two of their consecrated brethren have been elevated as 'Venerable' and another three are honoured as 'Servant of God' in the Catholic Church.



Venerable Fr. Augustine John Ukkenn



Venerable Sr. Celine Kannanaickal



Servant of God Fr. Joseph Vithayathil



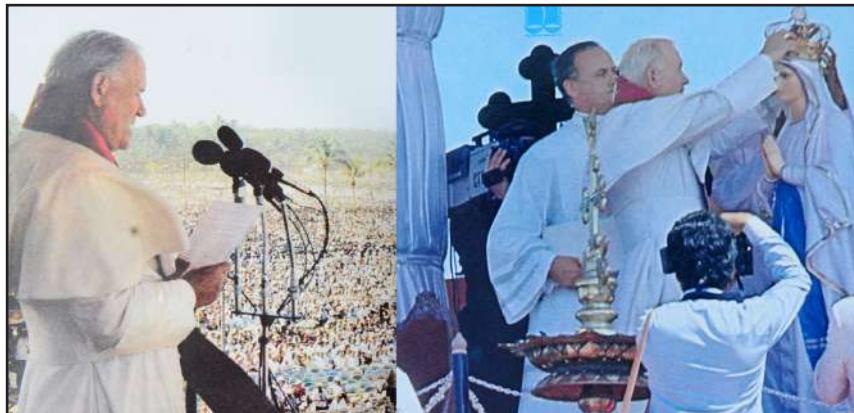
Servant of God Fr. Antony Thachupurambil



Servant of God Fr. Canisius Thekkakara, CMI

Memorable Events

Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who are venerated as saints today, were given enthusiastic reception by the people of Thrissur. Pope John Paul II visited Thrissur on February 8, 1986, marking a historic moment. He inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the Diocese in the presence of thousands of faithful. Mother Teresa visited Thrissur twice: on December 30, 1990 and January 18, 1994.



In the late 1980's, Thrissur played a leading role in opposing the controversial play Aaram Thirumurivu (Sixth Holy Wound).

In January 2004, the CBCI General Assembly was hosted by the Archdiocese of Trichur.



Jubilee Mission Medical College



Damian Institute



Marymatha Major Seminary



Pope Paul Mercy Home



St Thomas College



Jyoti Engineering College

Priests & Religious Communities

The Archdiocese of Trichur has 442 incardinated priests to minister its 225 parishes and 34 mission stations under 16 Forane Regions. There are 21 religious congregations for men, including the Malabar Mis-

sionary Brothers, and 61 religious congregations for women actively serving in the Archdiocese. The Generalate Houses of four different congregations of consecrated religious life are situated in the Archdiocese. Nine religious congregations have their Provincial Houses within the geographical boundaries of the Archdiocese. A number of educational institutions, hospitals, and charitable organizations and centres function effectively and efficiently under the leadership of the above religious congregations.

Missionary Outreach

Following the directives of the Syro-Malabar Bishops Conference, the Diocese of Trichur undertook pastoral responsibility for migrant faithful in Mumbai in 1987. The Archdiocese has played a vital role in the initial growth and development of the Diocese of Kalyan.

The priests of the Archdiocese of Trichur are actively engaged in missionary activities of the Visakhapatnam Region of the Archdiocese of Shamshabad.

The services of the priests of the Archdiocese are also extended generously to the Syro-Malabar Dioceses outside Kerala, at their request to fulfil the pastoral needs.

Charitable and Social Services

The Archdiocese of Trichur has always been at the forefront of charitable and humanitarian activities and services, witnessing to Jesus's teaching of Good News of love and compassion to all mankind. The various institutions of humanitarian services commenced during the last 138 years of its history, reflect the Archdiocese's enduring commitment to the humankind.

During natural calamities and crises, the Archdiocese and its parishes functioned as relief centers. Relief camps were organized in churches and institutions during the great flood of 2018. Multiple relief projects, named "Save Thrissur", were implemented under the leadership of the Archdiocese's Social Action and Animation Wing, *Santhwanam*.

During the sunami, floods, landslides, and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Archdiocese was actively involved in relief efforts, and formed task forces to support affected families and public at large.

Media Apostolate

Recognizing the undeniable influence of the media in proclaiming the Gospel of salvation and safeguarding the common good, the Archdiocese has maintained an active and committed presence in media ministry, throughout its existence. Through platforms such as the *Catholicasabha* newspaper and the *Media Catholica* YouTube channel, the Archdiocese remains vigilant and engaged in dialogue with the society. A well-functioning Archdiocesan Public Relations Office carries out timely and creative interventions in the media sphere.

Annual Lenten Pilgrimage to Palayur

The Palayur *Mahatheerthadanam*, a pilgrimage on foot to Palayur, initiated in 1998 by Archbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, continues to draw thousands of faithful year after year.



Buon Natale

Buon Natale, the globally renowned Carol Procession, started in 2013 by Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, is a unique public celebration of faith. Buon Natale entered the Guinness World Records in 2014 as the largest gathering of Santa Clauses in the World. This annual public celebration, falling on December 27, stands as a powerful witness of Christian faith and a festival of charitable services.



PRIESTHOOD ROOTED TO LOVE FOR CHRIST CAN TRUELY BUILD UP THE CHURCH: MARJOR ARCHBISHOP



Kakkanad: Priests are called to build up the Church inspired by their love for Christ, said Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. He was addressing the conference of deacons who will be ordained to the priesthood during the years 2025-26, held at Mount St. Thomas, the

central headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Major Archbishop reminded the deacons that they must grow beyond narrow local perspectives and cultivate a strong sense of identity as members of the Syro-Malabar Church, rooted in knowledge and pride in its an-

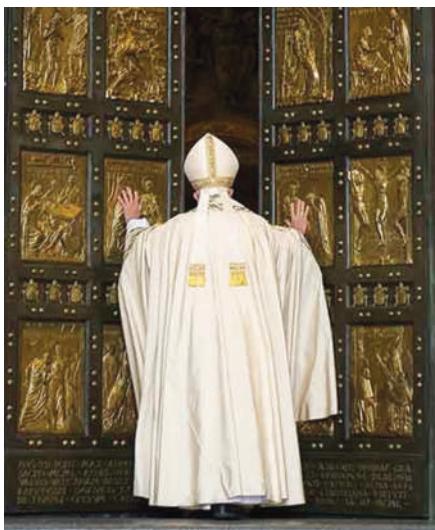
cient ecclesial heritage.

A total of 250 Syro-Malabar deacons, who will be ordained for various eparchies and religious congregations, gathered at the Church headquarters. The general session, which began at 10 a.m. on December 3, was inaugurated by

the Father and Head of the Syro-Malabar Church, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil. Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil, Chairman of the Clergy Commission, delivered the welcome address. The keynote address was given by renowned spiritual preacher and author Fr. Bobby Jose Kattikad. Rev. Dr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, Chancellor of the Curia, and Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott, Secretary of the Clergy Commission, also addressed the gathering.

A solemn Holy Qurbana was celebrated by the Major Archbishop. The conference of deacons was organized under the auspices of the Commission for Clergy of the Syro-Malabar Church.

JUBILEE YEAR COMES TO A CLOSE



Rome: Marking the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, the Holy Doors of the four major Papal Basilicas

in Rome were closed. With the closing of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican on January 6, 2026, by Pope Leo, the Jubilee Year of the Catholic Church formally came to an end. During the Jubilee Year, nearly 30 million pilgrims passed through the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica.

This Jubilee Year of the Universal Church invited the faithful to embrace and be renewed in the hope of Christ-a hope that does not disappoint. As the Holy Father reminded the faithful, we are entering a special time of pilgrimage, for Jesus Himself is "the destination of our pilgrimage," the way and the path we are called to walk.

"Pilgrims of Hope" was the central theme of the Jubilee celebrations marking the 2025th anniversary of the birth of

Jesus Christ. Pope Francis officially proclaimed the Jubilee Year on May 9, 2024, the Solemnity of the Ascension, through the Scriptural theme "Hope does not disappoint." On Christmas Day 2024, Pope Francis himself opened the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica for pilgrims. This Jubilee Year was thus opened by Pope Francis and concluded by Pope Leo-an occurrence not seen since 1700, when Pope Innocent XII opened the Jubilee and Pope Clement XI closed it.

The official conclusion of the Jubilee Year began with the closing of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Mary Major (Santa Maria Maggiore), where Pope Francis is buried. Cardinal Rolandas Makrilia presided over the ceremony. On December 27 at 11 a.m., the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. John Lateran

was closed by Cardinal Baldassare Reina. On December 28 at 10 a.m., Cardinal James Michael Harvey presided over the closing of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

The Jubilee Year 2025 will formally conclude when Pope Leo XIV closes the bronze door of St. Peter's Basilica at 9:30 a.m. on January 6, 2026. It is believed that the faithful obtain a plenary indulgence by passing through the Holy Doors during the Jubilee Year, a tradition that has continued since Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Jubilee in the year 1300. The Jubilee celebrations in the local Churches concluded on December 28, 2025, the Feast of the Holy Family. The Holy Door will be opened again in 2033, which the Church will observe as an Extraordinary Holy Year of Redemption.

A CATHOLIC CHURCH IS MY PREFERRED PLACE TO PRAY: POPE LEO XIV



Responding to a journalist's question about whether he prayed during his visit to the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Pope Leo XIV offered a response that revealed the depth and simplicity of his prayer life. "Who said I did not pray? Perhaps even at this very moment my prayer continues. To tell the truth, what gives my soul the greatest peace is praying in a Catholic church where the living presence of the Holy Qurbana is found," the Pope said.

His words expressed a profound faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and offered encouragement to deepen faith in the Eucharistic mystery. The Pope made this statement while returning to the Vatican from his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo.

CHRISTIANS HAVE NO ENEMIES, ONLY BROTHERS AND SISTERS: POPE LEO XIV



Christians have no enemies; they have only brothers and sisters-even in moments of misunderstanding-said Pope Leo XIV while delivering his message at the Vatican on the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr. He noted that amid the uncertainty and suffering of the contemporary world, joy may seem

impossible, yet martyrdom is a birth into heaven.

The Pope reflected that we do not choose to be born into this world, but later we pass through many experiences that knowingly invite us to come into the light and to choose the light. Across the world, even at great personal cost, there are people who choose justice, give priority to peace over fear, and serve the poor rather than themselves.

In today's world marked by uncertainty and suffering, joy may appear unattainable. Those who believe in peace and choose the unarmed path of Jesus and the martyrs are often ridiculed and marginalized in public discourse.

A DECADE OF VIOLENCE: 212 PRIEST ABDUCTED IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, a country notorious for anti-Christian persecution, armed groups have kidnapped more than 200 priests over the past decade. The figures were released after a detailed study by the Pontifical foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). According to the report, 212 priests were abducted between 2015 and 2025.

Of the 212 priests kidnapped, 183

have been released. However, 12 priests were killed. ACN also reports that three priests later died after their release, unable to endure the trauma and injuries they suffered during captivity. The new report once again confirms that Nigeria remains a country of grave danger for both Christian faithful and clergy. Incidents of priestly abductions have been

recorded in at least 41 of the country's 59 eparchies. Four priests remain in captivity.

Armed groups and criminal gangs often target priests for ransom, especially in regions affected by insecurity and weak law enforcement. These incidents cause deep fear and trauma not only among the clergy but also within the Christian communities they serve. The

Church in Nigeria has repeatedly called for urgent government action to ensure the safety of religious leaders and citizens. At the same time, the faithful continue to respond with prayer, solidarity, and hope amid suffering. Pope Leo has also assured prayers and solidarity with the suffering Church in Nigeria, appealing for peace and respect for human dignity.