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VOCATION: AN JOURNEY TOWARDS THE FULLNESS OF EXISTENCE



Sr. Dr. Jennis CSN

At a festive ground, balloons rise high in the colours of the rainbow... A little boy stands watching them with curiosity as they dance with the wind. Looking at the collection of balloons of various colours in the hands of the vendor, he innocently asks: "Uncle, will this black balloon also fly?" Hearing the question, the man took a black balloon from his bundle, filled it with hydrogen, and released it into the air. Handing the string of the balloon that soared into the heights of the sky to the child, he said: "My child, it is not the colour, size, or brand of the balloon that makes it fly, but the hydrogen gas within it."

Human life is similar. What elevates a person to greater heights is not one's appearance, prestige, or status, but the divine vitality that dwells within. It is this divine beauty that energizes human choices with creativity and virtue.

What is Divine Vocation?

Divine vocation is the state of life freely chosen by a person, with full awareness, in the context of life situations and divine interventions, in order to attain the fullness of one's existence. It is not merely a profession or a way of life, but a responsible response to God and to humanity. By surrendering our personal plans to God and interiorizing His plan within our hearts, it becomes a journey from ourselves towards God. As Pope John Paul II states: "Vocation is a mystery of love; it is God's choice and the loving response of the human person."

Different Expressions of Divine Vocation

Divine vocation is manifested through various paths such as priesthood, consecrated life, family life, and single life. All vocations are equally holy and noble.

Priesthood: A life of dedication that stands as a bridge between God and humanity.

Consecrated Life: A call to live according to Gospel values and to be a faithful disciple of Jesus.

Family Life: Participation in God's creative work and the foundational unit of the Church.



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Single Life: A state of total dedication to God for selfless service.

Divine vocation becomes active when a priest stands for the people, when a religious shares in the sufferings of society, and when a family flourishes in love.

The Changing World and Its Challenges

In an age where humanity runs after the paradise promised by science and technology, spiritual perspectives are constantly shifting. As materialism and selfishness shake the very foundations of existence, success is measured merely in terms of wealth and status. In such a context, when exemplary lives become rare, the inner courage among the youth to move forward according to God's will diminishes. Hence, the need to guide them in discerning the voice of God becomes increasingly urgent.

Silence Amidst Noise: The busyness of the digital world and the unnecessary noise surrounding modern life weaken the spiritual listening capacity of individuals. Therefore, special spiritual formation is needed to recognize the gentle voice of God amidst such distractions.

Resistance to Value Erosion: In a time

when consumerism and secularism define success, young people need clear spiritual convictions to discern the path of true goodness.

Inspiring Courage: To surrender personal desires before the will of God and to choose a radical way of life (priesthood or consecrated life) requires great courage in today's world. Such courage can be fostered through the guidance of elders.

Providing Direction: Amid the loneliness of the digital world and aimless pursuits, helping the youth understand that divine vocation leads to the fullness of existence can form a generation that does not lose its way.

Family: The School of Faith Formation

The family is the fundamental unit of the Church and society. Known as the "domestic Church," it is the primary place of faith formation for an individual. It is within this context of love and culture that the foundation for priestly and consecrated vocations is laid. Families rooted in Christian values and virtues form the basis of priestly and religious vocations. However, today's nuclear family culture, materialism, hedonism, "digital

loneliness," and the slavery to work often destroy the seeds of vocation. Spiritual paths marked by simplicity and service appear unattractive to many. A generation raised in comfort often struggles to cultivate the spirit of sacrifice and self-denial required to follow Christ. Distorted views on sexuality and addiction further lead the human intellect into bondage within the digital world.

The Need for Idealistic and Courageous Youth

Setting aside personal preferences and embracing a life of celibacy and simplicity in following Jesus may seem unattractive to the present generation. Yet, holy priests and consecrated persons are indispensable for leading the world to God. As Pope Francis affirms: "Where there are consecrated persons, there is joy. You are called to be prophets who can awaken the world." As the Scripture reminds us, "The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord... but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs" (1 Cor. 7:32-35), young men and women are called to come forward to serve with an undivided heart.

The words of Pope Francis, "Divine vocation is a witness to joy," remind us that consecrated life is not merely the observance of rules, but a profound expression of joy arising from an encounter with Christ. The smile that blossoms on the face of one who embraces a vocation, even while renouncing worldly comforts, is a testimony that a treasure greater than the world has been found. This joy is not selfish; rather, it is a heavenly experience shared when one participates in the sufferings of others and becomes a refuge for the marginalized. The greatest message a person living according to Gospel values offers the world is that true fulfilment and joy are found in surrendering to the will of God. This joy, rooted in the assurance that one's existence is secure in God's love, transforms every vocation into an attractive witness before the world.

Conclusion

The decline in priestly and consecrated vocations is a serious crisis faced by the world today. Therefore, reverence for priestly and religious life must be fostered within our families. Young hearts desiring to live a radical life must be encouraged. May many young people arise in the Church as signs of the compassionate presence of the Nazarene. "Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24). ■

EDITORIAL



VOCATIONS THAT DEMAND TESTIMONY

The calling of God is one of the enduring and interwoven themes in the history of the relationship between God and humanity. At the practical level, this divine calling is realized in the positive and free response of the human person, who chooses to cooperate in carrying out the divine plan. It is not merely a personal preference or a chosen way of life, but a profound process of dialogue, discernment, and faithful response to the revealed will of God. In essence, the calling of God is the harmonious interplay between divine grace and human freedom, by which a person is chosen and enabled to fulfil a specific mission.

In recent times, pastoral theology has broadened its understanding of vocation, recognizing family life and single life also as authentic vocations, moving beyond the earlier tendency to identify vocation exclusively with priesthood or consecrated life. In our times, the culture of extramarital relationships and the denial of marriage, often promoted by certain contemporary ideologies that weaken traditional family structures, has begun to cast doubt on the relevance of God's call within family life. The lived experience itself clearly shows that when families are weakened or fragmented, priestly and religious vocations inevitably diminish as well.

The authenticity of every vocation is ultimately measured by the testimony it bears. Priests, consecrated persons, married couples, and those living the single life are all called to witness, each in their own context. To withstand the cultural tendencies that dilute or obscure the call of God today, it is essential to live with clarity of conviction and integrity of life. Where the divine dignity of vocation and the responsible, free response of the human person lose their significance, lives become unstable and directionless. It is precisely in this context that vocations marked by authentic witness become more urgent and necessary than ever.

The exhortation of the Apostle Paul: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2), must be received with renewed seriousness. The radiance of priestly and consecrated life is often dimmed in its tension with prevailing worldly values. One of the pressing crises of our time is the tendency to neglect the divine and spiritual dimensions of vocation in the pursuit of social acceptance. When young people argue that one need not be a priest or a religious to serve as a teacher, nurse, or social worker, they implicitly expose a deeper problem: the loss of awareness of the unique mystery and identity of consecrated persons who work as teachers, nurse and social workers. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Christus Vivit*, "Your vocation is not only what you do, but also who you are." When life becomes disconnected from what one proclaims and teaches, the power of witness is weakened and loses its attractiveness.

Even today, the Church and the world stand in need of disciples who bear the Gospel of Jesus. If the cultures, perspectives, and philosophies of our time are to remain open to God, they require living bridges that sustain the relationship between God and humanity. The calling of God must therefore be understood as a divine mission: to share the love, compassion, and mercy of Jesus Christ, who offered Himself for the salvation of the world, with all who are wounded, neglected, and poor. The inclusive love of God calls for men and women who, with attentive eyes, listening ears, compassionate hands, and courageous voices, become living bridges between God and humanity in every age.

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

May 1: Death anniversary of Mar Mathew Anikuzhikattil (2020)

Episcopal ordinations of Mar George Valiamattam (1988) and Mar Andrews Thazhath (2004)

May 2: Episcopal ordination of Mar Joseph Kallarangatt (2004)

Feast of Saint Athanasius

May 3: Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles

May 4: Death anniversary of Bishop Adolph Edwin Medlycott (1918)

May 6: Feast of Saint Dominic Savio

May 14: Feast of the Ascension of the Lord

Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle

May 15: Episcopal ordination of Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedom (2004)

Feast of Blessed Virgin Mary, Protectress of Harvest

May 20: Inauguration of the First Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church (1993)

Consecration of the First Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Antony Cardinal Padiyara (1993)

Episcopal ordination of Mar Joseph Perumthottam (2002)

May 24: Feast of Pentecost

From the Sunday of Pentecost onwards, "the Angel of the Lord..." is recited

May 26: Episcopal ordination of Mar Kuriakose Bharanikulangara (2012)

May 29: Friday of Gold

Installation of Major Archbishop Emeritus Mar George Alencherry (2011)

May 30: Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

May 31: Episcopal ordination of Bishop Mar John Panamthottathil CMI (2023) Feast of the Most Holy Trinity

May 16



Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt

FESTAL GREETINGS

SAINT THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH



Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam

Born in the first half of the second century into a pagan family near the rivers Tigris and Euphrates (in a region that forms part of modern Iraq), Theophilus was one of the well-known philosophers of the Eastern Roman Empire. Having begun to study the Sacred Scriptures in order to gather arguments against the Christian faith, he was profoundly transformed by the Word of God and embraced Christianity. Saint Jerome testifies that his theological writings were composed during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180) (*De Viris Illustribus* 25). Appointed as the sixth bishop of Antioch around A.D. 170, his name is recorded in the *Chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea*. Saint Jerome also attributes to him a work against Marcion, a three-book treatise addressed to Autolycus, and a work against the heresy of Hermetogenes (DVI 25).



His work addressed to his pagan friend Autolycus is an effort to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian faith over the moral and philosophical systems of pagan religions. He succeeds in this endeavour by focusing on Christian theology, the Scriptural understanding of the origin of humanity, and the futility of the pagan worldview. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, the three books of this treatise were composed at different periods (*Ecclesiastical*

History IV, 24).

At a time when Trinitarian theology was beginning to develop, he was the first to employ the Greek term "Trias" to denote the Holy Trinity. Historians hold that he departed this life around A.D. 180 at Antioch, situated in present-day Turkey. The third book of the work addressed to Autolycus bears witness that its author was bishop of Antioch at the time of the death of Emperor Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180.



From the Heart of
the Father and Head

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



The month of April is, for the Church, a special time set apart to reflect deeply and pray earnestly for vocations. Filled with the joy of

the Easter, this month is seen as a season of spiritual renewal and of discerning the will of God. The hope and new life offered by the Resurrection of Christ become a profound inspiration for those who desire to embrace a vocation. Every called life is an invitation to die with Christ and to share in His glory. The strength given by the Risen Lord to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to the world becomes the focus of our meditation during this time. Every believer has the responsibility to discern whether there is a call from God in their children and relatives and to encourage them to respond to it courageously. As Pope Saint John Paul II reminds young people: "Do not be afraid to think about your vocation. Open the doors of your life to Christ. Make room in your hearts for His love. In following Christ, you lose nothing; rather, you gain everything."

A vocation is not merely a personal choice; rather, it is a loving invitation formed in the heart of God from all eternity. The prophetic word, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I consecrated you" (Jeremiah 1:5), reveals the deep biblical foundation of every vocation. Each vocation is a great gift from God. All of us are called to become sacred instruments in the hands of God to

VOCATION: THE HEARTBEAT OF THE CHURCH AND THE SOUL OF HER MISSION



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recognize and foster this call. Vocations are the most vital link in the life and missionary mandate of the Church.

If evangelization is the fundamental mission of the Church, then the need of the time is to find willing laborers ready to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Forming young hearts that experience the love of Christ and desire to share it with others is a common responsibility of the Church. When

it is said that priests and consecrated persons who enter families are the best vocation promoters, it also means that Christian families are the first nursery of vocations. Parents must create a spiritual environment in which their children can hear the voice of God. As Pope Francis teaches, "A vocation is not like winning a lottery or an unexpected stroke of luck; rather, it is a great adventure with Christ." The whole Church must awaken

to invite the younger generation into this adventure. Families, which are a small image of the Church, must nurture an atmosphere conducive to recognizing God's voice. The fervent prayer and authentic faith life of parents first awaken in children the desire to seek God's will. A child learns to listen to the gentle voice of God over the noise of the world through the prayerful atmosphere at home. When parents instill in their children the awareness that priestly and consecrated life is a great blessing, the family becomes a true nursery of vocations. From such families, sanctified by prayer, arise strong vocations capable of carrying forward the mission of the Church.

As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out, "God calls us not primarily to do great things, but to be with Him." It is this "being with Him" that we must encourage. Priestly and consecrated life is not the pursuit of a career, but a profound love for Christ. Our parishes and homes must become places that enable young hearts to hear the gentle voice of God amid the noise of the world. New vocations are essential for the Church's mission of proclaiming the Gospel. They bring renewal and vibrant growth to the Church. By nurturing vocations, we are safeguarding the very future of the Church. Let us come together in prayer, accepting this great responsibility, so that our children may be empowered to say "yes" to God's call. Inspired by the love of Christ, let us participate in this missionary journey of the Church.



EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS

Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott

In the fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel, the central point of the long dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman can be described as the statement: "the hour is coming when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (*proskynēsousin tō Patri en pneumati kai alētheia*) (John 4:24). Most translations render this phrase as "worship in spirit and truth." But what exactly does this "worship in spirit and truth" mean? Many complex and sometimes obscure interpretations have been offered.

"Spirit" and "truth" are often understood as referring to the Holy Trinity: the Son (Jesus, whom the Johannine tradition presents as the Truth of God incarnate—that is, the fullness of divine revelation and covenantal fidelity) and the Holy

Spirit. Accordingly, true worship "in spirit and truth" may be interpreted as a movement toward the Father through Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, apart from this theological reading, it is worthwhile to consider another interpretation that is both reasonable and more accessible.

In the expression "worship in spirit and truth," the words "spirit" and "truth" are usually taken as two qualifiers of worship. Yet, when we examine the Greek original closely, we find that both nouns (*pneumati* and *alētheia*) share a single preposition (*en*) and are connected by the conjunction (*kai*). Structurally, these nouns function adjectivally, qualifying the nature of worship. In Greek linguistic usage, such a construction—where two nouns convey a single unified idea—is known as Hendiadys. The biblical scholar Ethelbert William Bullinger defines Hendiadys as "the expression

of one idea through two formally coordinate terms joined by 'and,' instead of a noun and adjective or a verb and an adverb. One component specifies the other." Numerous examples of this figure of speech can be found in Sacred Scripture (cf. Genesis 3:16; 4:4; Psalms 63:5; 113:4).

In light of this, the phrase may be more accurately translated as: "the hour is coming when true worshippers will worship in a truly spiritual manner." Compared to the conventional rendering "in spirit and truth," this translation—"to worship truly in spirit"—appears clearer and more direct in conveying the intended meaning.

What, then, is meant by "truly spiritual worship"? First, it must be spiritual in the fullest sense. It is the experience in which the human spirit encounters God, who is Spirit. In such worship, external formalities or attachment to particular

places lose their absolute significance. Second, this worship is a continuous and living movement: it flows from a person renewed in the Holy Spirit, passes through Jesus Christ, and is directed toward the Father. Its ultimate goal is participation in the very being and life of God.

This revelation concerning true worship was not only a corrective to the ritualistic tendencies of Jesus' own time, but it remains equally relevant today. Even now, many become entangled in external formalism, losing the inner spirit and vitality of worship, while clinging rigidly to rituals and forms. Through the narrative of the Samaritan woman, the Evangelist offers a profound and beautiful message: God seeks worshippers who worship without hypocrisy, without mere external display, and without claims of superiority—worshippers who adore Him in genuine spirit and truth.

THE MARIAN MONTH



*** * *** In the early Church, May 15 was observed as a feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Moreover, May 31 is celebrated as the Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady. It is recorded that St. Philip Neri used to decorate images of the Blessed Mother with flowers and sing hymns in her honor during the month of May. Historically, the devotion of the Month of May is said to have originated in Italy in the sixteenth century, from where it gradually spread to other countries.

“O Good Mother Mary,
O Immaculate Father Joseph...”

These are the opening lines of a Marian hymn that once resonated in the evening

family prayers of the Syrian Catholic households of Kerala during the month of May. There was a time when May was observed with deep devotion and rever-

ence as a month specially dedicated to the Blessed Mother. For this reason, May can truly be called a season of spiritual festivity for every Marian devotee. There is, indeed, no other month set apart in such a special way to honor the Immaculate Mother.

During the days of May, it was customary to beautifully decorate the Marian grotto, sing hymns in praise of the Mother, recite the prayers of the Month of Devotion and the Litany, and conclude the month with the preparation of *pachor*. These remain cherished Marian memories filled with nostalgia for a whole generation.

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According to one tradition, Fr. Latomia, a Jesuit priest and teacher, initiated this

devotion in response to the moral decline he witnessed among his students in Rome. His intention was to entrust his students to the Blessed Mother and guide their lives toward goodness. As the spiritual power of this devotion became evident, it spread widely to other regions.

The formal recognition of the May devotion in the Church began in 1945 under Pope Pius XII. Later, Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Mense Maio* dated April 29, 1965, elaborated on the importance of this devotion and the abundant graces that flow from it.

At its core, the Month of May devotion is founded on one simple reality: our love for the Blessed Mother, our reverence, and our gratitude to the Mother of God. At a time when Pope Leo XIV calls for a renewed understanding of Marian devotion, it is our responsibility to preserve this devotion and piety without slipping into any form of exaggeration or misunderstanding.

If, in any way, the observance of the Month of May has weakened or been neglected among the younger generation, let each one of us strive to revive this rich tradition of faith. Those who are taught to love the Mother can never be rejected by the Son.

O Blessed Mother, Queen of the Month of May, reign in our lives and in our hearts. ■

WHY ARE CHILDREN HESITANT TO SPEAK?



FAMILY CORNER

His wife died at the time of their son's birth. From that day on, a thought took root in his mind—that it was the son who had taken away his wife. Because of this, he was never able to love his son wholeheartedly. Instead, he subjected the boy to harsh punishments. Even in front of classmates and teachers, he did not hesitate to humiliate or mistreat him. Being a police officer, he treated his son much like he would treat an accused person.

As time passed, the two stopped speaking to each other altogether—living in the same house like strangers. Meanwhile, the son got entangled in several bad influences. The father tried to win him back, but failed. In all those years, the son had not even once addressed him as “father.” Eventually, both of them meet an inevitable tragedy. This is the storyline of a recent Malayalam film.

Though not always this extreme, similar situations—with varying intensity—can be seen in many of our families or in those around us: a growing distance between parents and children, marked by silence and a breakdown in communication.

In how many homes do children not



*** * *** Psychology points out that, often unintentionally, parents themselves are responsible for this silence. It is considered a major flaw in parenting. A key factor is the tendency of parents to judge without listening. When children come forward to share something, many parents believe that immediately advising, criticizing, or comparing them is the right approach.

speak to their fathers! There are fathers who lament that all they remember is their child calling them “appa” in early childhood—nothing more. Some children withdraw to their rooms when the father comes home, or even leave the house. Many speak to their fathers only when they need something. Such strained father-child relationships are not uncommon. When we ask what lies at the

root of this, we realize that this distance does not arise overnight. It is the result of accumulated experiences, after which children gradually stop speaking to their parents.

Psychology points out that, often unintentionally, parents themselves are responsible for this silence. It is considered a major flaw in parenting. A key factor is the tendency of parents to judge with-

out listening. When children come forward to share something, many parents believe that immediately advising, criticizing, or comparing them is the right approach.

But when this becomes a pattern, children begin to lose their sense of emotional safety—something parents often fail to recognize. Similarly, when parents dismiss their children's feelings—responding with phrases like “this is nothing” or “you don't need to make such a big deal”—children begin to feel that their emotions are not valued.

Gradually, they become reluctant to speak openly with their parents. Excessive control and fear-based upbringing also distance children from them. Attempts to extract the truth through threats produce the same effect. In such situations, children slowly retreat into silence, discovering that not speaking is the easiest way to avoid problems. Over time, communication ceases altogether.

What, then, is the solution? Give children your full attention when they speak. Acknowledge their feelings. Avoid immediate judgment. Build their confidence. When parents begin to communicate, “I am ready to listen to you and accept you,” children's silence will gradually turn into conversation.

Understand this clearly: when children fall silent, it is not merely a problem—it is a sign. ■

THE PERMANENT SYNOD IN PATRIARCHAL AND MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCHES: CONSTITUTION AND FUNCTIONS ACCORDING TO THE CCEO



CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Joseph Mattathil

The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) envisages a distinctive system of governance for the Eastern Catholic Churches, particularly those that possess the status of Patriarchal or Major Archiepiscopal Churches. Within this system, the Permanent Synod occupies an important place in the governance of the Church. Unlike the Synod of Bishops, which meets periodically to deliberate on major ecclesial matters, the Permanent Synod is a standing body that assists the Patriarch or the Major Archbishop in the day-to-day administration of the Church. It is a collegial body of bishops that works together with the head of the Church in matters of governance. The Permanent Synod offers advice and opinions that assist the Patriarch or Major Archbishop in exercising his responsibilities. The CCEO clearly states that in many ecclesiastical matters the Patriarch or Major Archbishop must obtain either the consent (*consensus*) or the counsel (*consilium*) of the Permanent Synod before acting. Whenever the law prescribes such consent or counsel, these authorities are bound to observe those requirements. While the Synod of Bishops functions as the principal legislative body meeting at fixed intervals, the Permanent Synod functions throughout the year and ensures continuity in ecclesiastical governance. In this way

it upholds the synodal tradition of the Eastern Churches, according to which authority is exercised not merely in a hierarchical manner but through the collective deliberation and cooperation of bishops.

According to CCEO c. 115, the constitution of the Permanent Synod is determined in a specific manner. The Permanent Synod is composed of the Patriarch or the Major Archbishop and four bishops designated for a term of five years. The law prescribes clear norms regarding the designation of these bishops. Three members are elected by the Synod of Bishops, while the fourth member is appointed directly by the Patriarch or the Major Archbishop. Among the bishops elected by the Synod of Bishops, at least two must be eparchial bishops. In order to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted functioning of the Permanent Synod, the Synod of Bishops also designates four bishops as substitutes in advance. These substitutes replace members who are unable to participate in a session according to the order determined by the Synod of Bishops. Through this arrangement the continuity and effectiveness of the Permanent Synod are safeguarded.

The responsibility of convoking the Permanent Synod belongs to the Patriarch or the Major Archbishop (CCEO c. 116 §1), and he presides over its sessions. If the head of the Church is unable to participate, the number of members is first restored to five by calling a substitute, and then the bishop who is senior by episcopal ordination presides over the session. When matters concerning the personal affairs of a member bishop,

or those relating to his eparchy or office, are discussed, the concerned bishop may be heard, but he does not participate in the decision-making process, and another bishop substitutes for him according to the norm of the law (CCEO c. 116 §3).

The CCEO also provides precise norms regarding the procedures and voting methods of the Permanent Synod, ensuring transparency and collective responsibility. According to CCEO c. 117, the acts of the synod must be signed by the president and by all the members who participated in the synod. This requirement clearly indicates that the decisions represent the collective judgment of the body of bishops. CCEO c. 118 prescribes that voting must be secret in matters concerning persons; however, in other matters as well, voting must be secret if even one member expressly requests it. These norms protect the freedom of opinion of the members and safeguard the credibility of the voting process.

In various administrative matters prescribed by ecclesiastical law, the Patriarch or the Major Archbishop must seek either the consent or the counsel of the Permanent Synod before making decisions. This requirement reflects the collegial style of governance in the Church. Even when such matters arise during the session of the Synod of Bishops, CCEO c. 119 states that the decision on the matter is normally reserved to the Permanent Synod. However, if the head of the Church judges it appropriate, he may entrust such matters to the Synod of Bishops with the consent of the Permanent Synod.

According to CCEO c. 120, the Permanent Synod must be convoked at fixed times at least twice a year. In addition, the head of the Church may convoke it whenever he considers it necessary, or whenever matters arise that require the consent or counsel of the synod according to the law. If for a serious reason the Permanent Synod cannot be constituted, the Synod of Bishops must inform the Apostolic See. In such exceptional circumstances, the Synod of Bishops designates two bishops—one of whom must be an eparchial bishop—who together with the Patriarch act in lieu of the Permanent Synod for as long as the reason lasts (CCEO c. 121).

In summary, the Permanent Synod is an indispensable element in the governance of Patriarchal and Major Archiepiscopal Churches. By assisting the Patriarch or Major Archbishop in the daily administration of the Church, it gives concrete expression to the ancient Eastern tradition of synodality, that is, governance exercised through collective deliberation. Its carefully regulated structure, along with its clearly defined functions involving consent and counsel, ensures transparency, participation, and shared responsibility in ecclesiastical administration. Through this system, authority is not concentrated solely in one individual but is exercised through the communion and collaboration of bishops for the good of the Church. Thus, the Permanent Synod stands as an important instrument for safeguarding ecclesial discipline, promoting unity among the bishops, and supporting the spiritual mission of the Church. ■



JOURNEY OF FAITH & LEARNING

Rev. Dr. Roby Koonthaniyil

The Apostolic Letter *“A Fidelity that Generates the Future”* issued on December 8, 2025, by Pope Leo XIV for the Universal Church is a prophetic voice that redefines priestly ministry in the contemporary world. Promulgated on the diamond jubilee of the Second Vatican Council, this Apostolic Letter serves as a guiding light for priests to deepen their vocation and mission in the modern age. The document affirms that the future of the Church and of the priesthood is grounded in priestly fidelity.

The Holy Father underlines the truth that the renewal of the Church depends on the spiritual renewal of priests. Both priestly formation and priestly life are explained and evaluated on the basis of the value of fidelity. Fidelity is not a static condition; rather, it is a creative

“A FIDELITY THAT GENERATES THE FUTURE:” A RENEWED VISION OF PRIESTLY LIFE AND FORMATION

dynamism that generates the future. It is a continuous journey sustained by divine grace and ongoing conversion.

1. Fidelity and Ministry

The priestly vocation begins with a personal encounter with Christ. The question addressed to Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee—“Do you love me?”—must be faced daily by every priest. One must never forget that before being a shepherd, a priest is first a disciple of Christ. Priestly formation does not end in the seminary; it is a lifelong process of human, spiritual, and intellectual renewal. Seminary formation is not merely academic training, but a school of learning to love like Jesus. A priest is called to be a bridge leading people to Christ, and for this, both human maturity and spiritual strength must harmoniously converge.

2. Fidelity and Fraternity

Priestly fraternity is not merely friendship, but a unique gift received

through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. A priest participates in two forms of fraternity: firstly, the fraternity with all the faithful through Baptism, and secondly, the sacramental fraternity with the bishop and fellow priests. The Holy Father identifies individualism as a serious threat to fraternity. There is no place for individualism in Christian ministry. Mutual love and cooperation among priests enhance the credibility of the proclamation of the Gospel.

3. Fidelity and Synodality

Priests are called to move from an authoritarian style of leadership to a synodal style of participation. Recognizing the charisms of the laity and involving them in the mission of the Church not only lightens the burden of priestly ministry but also renders it more fruitful. The priest is configured to Christ not to exercise domination over others, but to serve. Ecclesial ministries must move away from a model centered on one individual toward a more inclusive

and participatory approach.

4. Fidelity and Mission

A priest who becomes self-centered loses missionary zeal. It is in self-giving for the people that a priest discovers his true identity. Without falling into the trap of mere efficiency or becoming passive, he must proclaim the Gospel, animated by pastoral charity. Through a life of simplicity and humility, priests are called to bear authentic witness to Christ.

Conclusion: Fidelity and the Future

The Holy Father calls for addressing the decline in priestly vocations and for facing the future with hope. Rather than succumbing to fear over the scarcity of vocations, the Church must pray for a new Pentecost. Priests must courageously present the radical demands of the Gospel to the youth. Like John Mary Vianney, priests are called to offer themselves as the love of the Heart of Christ, thereby making the future of the Church radiant with hope. ■

HISTRIONIC PERSONALITY DISORDER



Rev. Dr. Sijon Kuzhikkattumyalil

Individuals with Histrionic Personality Disorder have a strong and constant need to gain the attention and approval of others. They often behave in a dramatic manner and express emotions in an exaggerated way. They may also attempt to attract attention through sexually provocative dressing and behavior. As a result of poor or impulsive decisions, they frequently find themselves in problematic situations.

Symptoms

They often display uncontrollable anger and stubbornness. A fear of being left alone and an excessive dependency on others are commonly seen in them. They tend to exhibit unstable behavior, frequently changing what they say from one moment to the next. They can be highly skilled at lying and convincingly presenting falsehoods as truth. Exaggeration in all matters, imagining and presenting self-created situations as reality, and attempting to make others believe these as true are notable traits.

They may show a tendency to do anything to achieve personal goals, feign illness to gain attention and care, and even threaten suicide. Their behavior is unpredictable—one moment they may speak cheerfully, and the next moment they may erupt without any apparent provocation. Their emotional expressions toward others are often superficial and outwardly exaggerated.

They also tend to shift the blame for their own weaknesses and failures onto others. They are capable of building relationships effectively for personal gain, often with clear underlying motives. While they may display sharp analytical abilities, their interpretations are usually influenced by their own interests.

Causes

There is no single cause for this disorder; rather, it arises from multiple factors. Genetic and environmental influences, lack of attention during childhood, excessive encouragement of dramatic behavior in early years, psychological factors such as low self-esteem and an intense need for approval, and abnormal behavioral patterns of parents can all contribute to the development of this disorder.

Psychological Approaches

For individuals diagnosed with this condition, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can be beneficial in helping them regulate emotions, develop genuine relationships, and increase self-awareness.



*** ** For individuals diagnosed with this condition, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can be beneficial in helping them regulate emotions, develop genuine relationships, and increase self-awareness. There is no specific medication for this personality disorder. However, if comorbid conditions such as severe anxiety or depression are also diagnosed, the assistance of a mental health professional is necessary.**

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depression are also diagnosed, the assistance of a mental health professional is necessary.



Rev. Dr. James Puliurumpil

St. Thomas the Apostle travelled freely throughout South India. The limited facilities of that time did not hinder him from proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The situation of the other Apostles was not different in that period. This is evident from several of the letters of Paul the Apostle. During his second missionary journey, Thomas primarily preached the Gospel along the southwestern and southeastern coastal regions of India. This can be understood from the *Acts of Thomas*.

Santhome Mylapore, St. Thomas Mount, and Chinnamalai are the three principal sites in the southeastern region associated today with the martyrdom and tomb of St. Thomas. These three places are closely connected and are situated near each other, forming part of present-day Chennai. Although this coastal region and its towns, especially Mylapore, had connections with foreign lands, stronger links existed between foreign traders and the Malabar coast, particularly with Muziris, Niranam, and Purakkad. As

MYLAPORE: THE HOLY PLACE OF THE ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS



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Mylapore was the most prominent town on the southeastern coast, it came to be known as the “Gateway of the East.”

Besides Mylapore, other important towns on the eastern coast included Kaveripattanam and Pondicherry. Recent studies indicate that Christians were present from Kaveripattanam in the south up to Supattanam (Mylapore) in the north. The coastal towns not only maintained connections with foreign countries but also had extensive trade relations among themselves. These connections were facilitated both by land and sea routes. Roman gold coins discovered along the Malabar and Chola coastal regions testify to their international trade links. Hence, it can be reasonably assumed that the apostolic activities of St. Thomas, centered in these towns, were carried out with relative ease. The routes used by traders and travellers were also utilized by the Apostle. Journeys across forests, mountains, and rivers were not uncommon in those times. The martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle at Mylapore, a major town of the eastern coast, transformed it into a holy place for the St. Thomas Christians. ■

THE RADIANT FACE OF MISSIONARY ZEAL

The Congregation of the Samaritan Sisters (CSS), founded by Msgr. Paul Chittilappilly, is a Major Archiepiscopal Religious Congregation in the Syro-Malabar Church

When the Damian Leprosy Institute was established at Mulayam in the early 1950s, Rev. Fr. Paul Chittilappilly, a priest of the then Diocese of Thrissur and a lecturer at St. Thomas College, had but one aim: to rehabilitate and care for the destitute leprosy patients who wandered through the streets of Thrissur. It was for the administration of this institution and for the compassionate care of its inmates that the Congregation of the Samaritan Sisters was founded on 25 January 1961 in the then Diocese of Thrissur, now the Archeparchy of Thrissur. The inspiration behind the founding of this religious congregation was the call of Christ: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37).

The charism of the congregation is to experience the tender and merciful love of God through a constant awareness of His presence and an intimate communion with Him, and to share this experienced love with the sick, the poor, and the suffering, especially those afflicted with leprosy, through loving and dedicated service. Compassion towards those who endure physical, mental, and spiritual suffering constitutes the very spirit of the congregation. Harmoniously integrating prayer and work, giving priority to apostolic activities aimed at the integral liber-



ation of the human person, embodying the merciful love of God the Father, becoming a good neighbour to all in need, organizing ministries in accordance with the signs of the times, making themselves readily available for the service of the local Church, remaining vigilant against social evils such as hunger, suffering, ignorance, and neglect, and dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to missionary endeavours, these form the essential elements of the consecrated life embraced by its members.

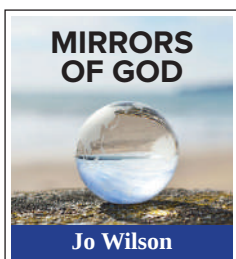
The diverse apostolic ministries undertaken by the congregation include hospitals, nursing schools and colleges, homes for the aged, orphanages, nursery schools, day-care centres, craft and tailoring centres, schools for children with intellectual disabilities, rehabilitation centres for the mentally ill, institutions



for patients suffering from HIV/AIDS, hostels for girls, as well as evangelization, counselling, women's empowerment, family apostolate, and various social welfare initiatives. Elevated to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Religious Congregation on 14 December 2001, the congregation today comprises around 430 sisters.

At present, the congregation has 77 convents and nine mission centres spread across various states of India, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Punjab, and Assam, as well as in Germany and Italy. ■

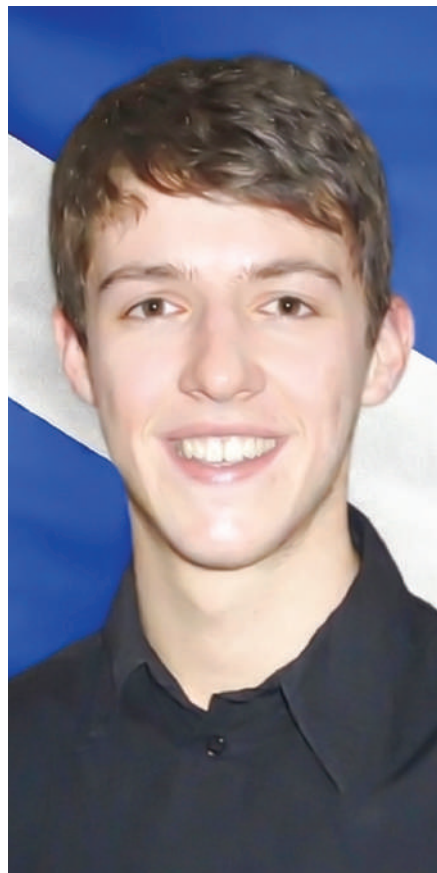
THE LIFE OF A SWEET SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD



Vinayak Nirmal

"I always desire to remain close to God, because it is to God that I give first place in my life." These lines were found in the diary of seventeen-year-old Jo Wilson, who unexpectedly passed away at the age of seventeen. Just five days after his seventeenth birthday, on 20 December 2011, Jo breathed his last at Wishaw General Hospital. His passing was sudden and unforeseen, and it left his family, friends, and all who knew him heartbroken.

Jo was born in 1994 in Carfin, North Lanarkshire, as the son of Alan and Veronica Wilson. He belonged to a Catholic family of Irish and Scottish heritage. His home was within walking distance of Carfin Grotto, the national Marian shrine of Scotland, often referred to as the "Lourdes of Scotland." Jo was a frequent visitor there. When he fell into a coma due to a heart condition, hundreds gathered before the grotto, lighting can-



dles and praying fervently for his recovery. Like the Blessed Mother, Thérèse of Lisieux had also captured Jo's heart. The spirituality of the "Little Flower" deeply attracted him.

Jo was remarkably different from other young people of his age. He was a teenager marked by deep faith, a joyful dispo-

sition, and compassion for the marginalized and the poor. This is how others described him. Once, during a class discussion on saints, the teacher asked the students what kind of saint they would like to see in the present age. Almost unanimously, they pointed to Jo—an indication that even during his lifetime, he was recognized as someone living a saintly life.

In 2010, the news that Pope Benedict XVI would visit Scotland filled Jo with great joy. He wrote: "When the Pope comes, I prayed the Rosary for many conversions. Jesus is present on the altar—or at least as close as we can possibly be to Him on earth. I know the world will never be perfect. That is why I want to be a believer."

"Think about those who suffer because of war, who are hungry, rejected, persecuted, unloved. I am certain that all these people, considered the most unfortunate on earth, are seated on the highest thrones in heaven. How comforting that is!" These reflections from Jo's writings clearly reveal the depth of his relationship with God.

Jo's death was caused by a rare heart condition known as Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome. His parents and

younger sister found some strength to bear the pain of his sudden loss, perhaps because they had witnessed his deep love for God, expressed through his zeal for attending the Holy Qurbana, prayer, and leading others closer to God. It was while preparing a memorial tribute that his father discovered Jo's personal diary, which he had been quietly writing since the age of fifteen. It opened a window into his inner spiritual life and revealed how profoundly he loved God. In his diary, Jo had written that although he once desired to become a doctor, his present aspiration was to become a priest.

In 2012, the headmaster of his school suggested publishing selected excerpts from Jo's diary. These were released under the title "Jo's Words." It was through these writings that Jo began to be regarded by many as an extraordinary witness of faith. People started praying to him and seeking his intercession. Even those unfamiliar with the Church or the lives of the saints sensed a fragrance of holiness in his words. The Diocese of Motherwell has now initiated the preliminary steps toward his cause for canonization. If miracles, as required by the Church, are obtained through his intercession, Jo Wilson may one day be recognized as the first millennial saint from Scotland. ■

MAJOR ARCHBISHOP MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY



Kakkanad: The 70th birthday celebrations of Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil were held on April 21, 2026, at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad. The celebrations began in the morning with the Holy *Qurbana* celebrated by His Beatitude along with priests, consecrated persons, and the staff of the Curia. In the evening, a gathering was held to facilitate the Major Archbishop.

Fr. Abraham Kavilpuray-

THE HEALING COMPANION OF THE GOD WHO WALKS WITH US



Archbishop
Mar Joseph Pamplany

In the present time, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil is the great shepherd appointed by God through the structures of the Church to lead the Syro-Malabar Church. Through attitudes of listening, dialogue, and self-effacement, the Father and Head of the Syro-Malabar Church is opening paths of light for the Church and society with a radiance of serenity capable of extinguishing the sparks of unrest and negative thoughts.

The Joy of a Large Family

At a time when a culture is emerging that renders even nuclear families irrelevant and chooses not to have children, Mar Thattil becomes a wonder in that he takes pride and joy in saying that he belongs to a large family. He was born on April 21, 1956, at Thrissur, as the youngest of ten children of Ouseph and Thresia Thattil. It is often humorously recalled by His Beatitude that he was born at the very moment when the fireworks of Thrissur Pooram were bursting.

Although the early death of his father shook the family, the hard work, reliance on God, and foresight of his mother carried the family forward. There-

*** A meditative journey through the life of Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil in the context of his seventieth year ***



fore, the person who influenced him most in life is his mother. It would not be wrong to believe that his natural tendency to face challenges and confront difficulties comes from what he imbibed from her. The family that his mother held together has now grown abundantly and bears fruit in various fields of society. Today, this family continues to give a message of fraternity and unity centered on Mar Thattil, the youngest member.

A Priest of the Thrissur Diocese

After completing his schooling, he pursued priestly formation at the diocesan minor seminary and St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, and was ordained a priest on December 21, 1980, through the laying on of hands of Mar Joseph Kundukulam. The fields of ministry of Fr. Thattil were diverse. Beginning as assistant priest at St. Thomas Church, Aranattukara, he continued as Father Prefect

in the minor seminary before going for higher studies.

After obtaining a doctorate in Canon Law from the Oriental Institute in Rome, Fr. Thattil returned and served in the Archeparchy of Thrissur as Vice Chancellor, Chancellor, Director of Catechism, Vicar General, and Manager of St. Thomas College. However, more than anything else, what gave him profound experience and greatly reshaped his pastoral vision was his long tenure as secretary to Mar Joseph Kundukulam, who was known as the "Father of the Poor."

New Initiatives in Priestly Formation

When Marymatha Major Seminary at Mulayam was established, it was Fr. Thattil whom Archbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy chose as its first Rector. Those who received formation under him testify that he was able to understand the pulse of the times and guide priestly formation in a God-centered and relevant manner. The formation program that ensured preparation for pastoral ministry at all practical levels was widely accepted and fruitful.

Auxiliary Bishop

While serving as Vicar General of the Archeparchy of Thrissur, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the archeparchy. "To be broken and shared" was the motto he chose. He received episcopal ordination on April 10, 2010, from Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath. He fulfilled the responsibilities of Auxiliary Bishop through his characteristic pastoral style in the administration of the archeparchy. His leadership, marked by collaboration with priests, consecrated

persons, and the laity, was noteworthy. He showed great attention in resolving issues and in listening to everyone.

During his tenure as Manager of St. Thomas College, his far-sighted decisions, courageous positions, and deep personal relationship with teachers and students inspired the naming of a newly discovered plant species by the Botany Department in his honor as *Ophioglossum raphaelianum*.

Apostolic Visitor

In 2014, Pope Francis appointed Mar Thattil as Apostolic Visitor for the Syro-Malabar faithful living in regions outside the jurisdiction of any Syro-Malabar eparchy in India. Those were years of tireless labor day and night. As a missionary, he traveled throughout India to establish the necessary pastoral structures for the faithful entrusted to him. He became convinced that the missionary approach of the Syro-Malabar Church needed to change.

He was able to submit detailed reports to the Holy Father. As a result of this great effort,



THATTIL CELEBRATES 50th BIRTHDAY

idathil, The Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, cordially welcomed the gathering. Major Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Mar George Alencherry presented a shawl, and Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath presented a bouquet as a symbol of the honour bestowed by the Church. Awgin Mar Kuriakose of the Chaldean Syrian Church, Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany, the Synod Secretary, CMI Prior General Fr. Paul Achandy CMI, Catho-

lic Congress Global President Prof. Rajeev Kochuparambil, and Mother Usha SH, Superior General of the Sacred Heart Congregation, spoke offering greetings on behalf of various sections of the Church. Archbishops Mar Thomas Tharayil, Bishops Mar Tony Neelankavil, Mar George Madathikandathil, Rt. Rev. Antony Valunkal, and Yohanon Mar Theodosius. Lay representatives, specially invited guests and Secretaries of the Major Archiepiscopal Commis-



sions also participated in the function. A documentary titled “One Who Touches the Heart Through Words”, based on the life and ministry of Mar Raphael Thattil, was screened during the event. Candles baned a renowned music band composed of youth, graced the occasion with their melodious and spirit awakening songs.

In his reply, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil expressed gratitude for the love, respect, divine blessings, and prayers of the faithful. The Finance Officer of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Fr. Joseph Tholanickal, delivered the vote of thanks.



through the letter dated October 9, 2017, addressed to all the bishops of India, the Holy Father granted the Syro-Malabar Church pastoral jurisdiction over the whole of India, establishing new eparchies such as Shamshabad and Hosur and redefining the boundaries of Thuckalay and Ramanathapuram. In that letter, the Holy Father himself noted that the detailed reports submitted by Mar Thattil contributed to this decision.

Missionary Bishop of Shamshabad

On January 7, 2018, Mar Thattil assumed office as the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Shamshabad, established on October 9, 2017. With missionary zeal, he gave form to what had no form and built up the eparchy. It was his vision and practical wisdom that shaped the eparchy into what it is today.

He was able to organize the pastoral structures of the vast eparchy, spread across 23 states and

three union territories, with the cooperation of other eparchies and religious congregations. For more effective pastoral care, he also presented to the Synod a plan to share parts of this extensive territory with nearby Syro-Malabar eparchies.

The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

Following the retirement of George Alencherry on December 7, 2023, the first session of the 32nd Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, held in January 2024, elected Mar Raphael Thattil, then Bishop of Shamshabad, as the fourth Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. With the approval of the Holy Father, his enthronement took place on January 11 at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia in Kakkanad.

The providence of God, which surpasses human expectations, became visible in the leadership ministry of the new Major Archbishop. He assumed leadership at a time when the Church was

passing through complex situations. The two years and two months since his election have been very crucial in the history of the Syro-Malabar Church.

The conditions were created to complete the restructuring of diocesan boundaries that he had proposed earlier. By modifying the boundaries of twelve eparchies, incorporating parts of the vast Shamshabad eparchy, decrees were issued. Outside Kerala, metropolitan provinces such as Faridabad, Ujjain, Kalyan, and Shamshabad were established, and metropolitans were appointed.

At a time when waves of disunity were increasing, he took courageous steps aimed at fostering unity in the Church. Continuing the efforts begun by his predecessors, he made possible the appointment of an Apostolic Visitor for the Syro-Malabar

Eparchy and to establish a new lay movement called *Jeevan Jyothi* to coordinate the missionary activities of the laity.

Perhaps the full significance of the contributions he has made in this short period and their positive impact on the life of the Church may not be fully understood in the present complexities. However, it is certain that how he responded to the challenges of this time with the integrity of his approach will be remembered with gratitude in the history of the Church.

A Strong Inner Person

Mar Thattil is a person of strong interior depth. Only one who is inwardly strong can appear outwardly calm. The smile and serenity seen on his face are signs of his inner strength and dignity. Those who perceive everything with purity do not lose self-control even amid insecurity and unrest.

and simplicity gained from his upbringing and life journey remain evident in him.

True to the meaning of the name “Raphael,” he is able to walk with others as God’s healer, leading those who approach him into an experience of divine healing.

Felicitations

God’s choices are always astonishing. From the very beginning of the Church, we see the “mystery” of Christ choosing ordinary people, anointing them, and making them sharers in His great mission. Even today, Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, is part of that continuing divine mystery.

“For the Lord does not see as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). As we journey through



faithful in the Gulf region. He also completed the timely renewal of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

Within a short span, he visited all the eparchies, conducted apostolic visitations in Europe, and visited the Gulf countries. He also initiated steps to estab-

lish a new lay movement called *Jeevan Jyothi* to coordinate the missionary activities of the laity. Perhaps the full significance of the contributions he has made in this short period and their positive impact on the life of the Church may not be fully understood in the present complexities. However, it is certain that how he responded to the challenges of this time with the integrity of his approach will be remembered with gratitude in the history of the Church.

That is why he is able to smile in every situation and never loses that smile in any circumstance. The words that flow from his heart are the fruit of this inner joy. Harsh expressions or complicated ideas do not find a place in his writings, speeches, or conversations. The innocence

of the seventy years of His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, this truth becomes evident. May the merciful God continue to fill with His goodness this great shepherd whom He has chosen to lead the Syro-Malabar Church.

DEEPIKA SESQUICENTENNIAL RUBY JUBILEE: DEEPASHIKHA RALLY FLAGGED OFF



Kakkanad: The Church has always stood with Deepika, and Deepika has always stood with the Church, said Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. He was inaugurating the Jubilee Deepashikha Rally, organized as part of the Deepika Sesquicentennial

Ruby Jubilee celebrations, at the Church headquarters, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad.

He noted that Deepika has steadfastly carried out its media mission with courage—whether when agricultural produce prices fell, when people faced displacement, when farmers

were neglected by authorities, or when wild animals posed threats to human life in the high ranges. Having completed 140 years, Deepika must continue its mission with renewed strength, as it remains a necessity for society as a whole. The Major Archbishop assured the

continued support and encouragement of the Church.

As part of the Jubilee commemorations, the planting of saplings at 140 centres was also inaugurated by the Major Archbishop, who planted a mango sapling at the Mount St. Thomas campus. The Jubilee

Deepashikha was handed over by the Major Archbishop along with CMI Prior General Fr. Dr. Paul Achandy CMI to Deepika Kochi Resident Manager Fr. Joseph Koluthuvallil. Directors of Rashtra Deepika, including Fr. Dr. Thomas Pothanamuzhy and Fr. Thomas Vaikkathuparambil, along with Fr. Joseph Koluthuvellil, Marketing AGM Rebi George, UCM Bino Varghese, and Bureau Chief Sijo Painadath, addressed the gathering. The Jubilee Torch Rally will reach 140 centres across various sectors of society on different days as part of the Deepika Sesquicentennial Ruby Jubilee celebrations.

FORMATION PROGRAMME FOR MINOR SEMINARY FORMATORS HELD

Kakkanad: In view of the need to introduce timely and contextually relevant changes in priestly formation in response to the demands of the modern era, a three-day training programme for minor seminary formators of the Syro-Malabar Church was organized at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad, from April 28 to 30.

The programme was arranged under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Clergy Commission, in accordance with the directives of the first session of the 34th Synod of the Church. The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church inaugurated the programme at the



Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas. In his inaugural address, he emphasized the vigilance and responsibility required of formators in preparing seminarians to face the challenges of the contemporary world.

Mar Tony Neelankavil, Chairman of the Commission for the Clergy, delivered the keynote address, presenting the

theme by integrating the spiritual and human dimensions of priestly formation. The Secretary of the Clergy Commission, Rev. Fr. Tom Olikkarott, welcomed the gathering, while the Chancellor of the Church, Rev. Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, offered felicitations.

The three-day programme was structured around five

key dimensions of formation: spiritual, human, intellectual, psychological, and missionary. Experts in various fields led the sessions and engaged in fruitful interaction with the participants. Among those who led the sessions were Fr. Augustine Kallely, Fr. Saijo Thaikkattil, Fr. George Kuzhippallil, and Fr. Lindo Kuttikadan.

Around sixty formators from various Syro-Malabar eparchies across India participated in the programme. It was observed that these renewed approaches to formation would bring significant transformation in shaping the personalities of seminarians, who are the future promise of the Church. Rev. Sr. Letitia SMC proposed the vote of thanks.

MAR WALAH ACADEMY ORGANIZES SYRIAC LANGUAGE COURSE



Kakkanad: With the aim of preserving the heritage of the Syriac language and introducing it to the younger generation, a basic course in the

Syriac language was organized under the auspices of the Mar Walah Syriac Academy at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad.

The Mar Walah Syriac Academy was established to promote the study of Syriac by highlighting its liturgical and cultural significance. The classes were con-

ducted from Monday, April 13 to Saturday, April 18, 2026.

The programme gave special emphasis to Syriac grammar, pronunciation, and liturgical music. The inaugural session of the course was held at 10:00 a.m. on April 13 and was presided over by Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church.

Rev. Dr. Jobin Kanjirathinkal, Executive Director of the Mar Walah Syriac Academy, welcomed the gathering. Mar

Tony Neelankavil, Chairman of the Academy, delivered the introductory address, while Rev. Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, Major Archiepiscopal Chancellor, offered felicitations. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Sr. Alphonse Jose SMS.

The sessions were led by Rev. Dr. Francis Pittapillil and Sr. Kochuthresia Kavunkal. Around thirty-five participants, including priests, religious, laity, and seminarians from various age groups, took part in the course.

FCRA AMENDMENT: CONCERNS MUST BE ADDRESSED, SAYS MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

Kakkanad: The proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) by the Central Government should not, in any way, hinder the operational freedom of transparent voluntary and educational institutions, stated Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church.

He emphasized that the regulatory measures being introduced must not be aimed at weakening lawfully functioning organizations or the charitable ac-

tivities carried out by Christian Churches. Expressing solidarity with the views already voiced by various heads of Christian Churches on this matter, the Major Archbishop urged the Government to address the concerns that have arisen in connection with the proposed amendments.

He further noted that the charitable services rendered by Christian Churches for the upliftment of marginalized sections have been recognized even by the authorities themselves

as a significant contribution to India's social development. Institutions such as homes for the destitute, palliative care centres, rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities, care centres for AIDS patients, and free dialysis units run by the Church provide relief to lakhs of people irrespective of caste or religion. The Church has been able to ensure quality healthcare and education even in rural areas through a combination of local support and foreign funding. Any move to obstruct such

services, which are carried out in full compliance with legal norms and aimed at bringing the marginalized into the mainstream of society, would amount to an injustice against the poor and the underprivileged, he added.

The Major Archbishop also expressed concern over the possibility of stringent measures such as cancellation of licenses and confiscation of assets on the basis of minor delays in report submission or technical lapses in auditing, describing such

moves as questionable.

He further stated that legislation should be framed in a spirit of trust, without placing the services of voluntary organizations and religious institutions under a cloud of suspicion. In light of the fact that the matter is likely to be discussed in Parliament, the Major Archbishop appealed to Members of Parliament from Kerala to participate constructively in the deliberations, keeping the common good in view.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF VOCATION PROMOTERS



Kakkanad: The annual meeting of the vocation promoters of the Syro-Malabar Church was held at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad. The conference, conduct-

ed on April 16, 2026, was inaugurated by Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil.

In his inaugural address, he reminded the gathering that a vocation is a great gift

from God, and those entrusted with recognizing and fostering this call are instruments in the hands of God. He also emphasized that priests and consecrated persons who directly engage

with families are the most effective vocation promoters in the Church.

The meeting was presided over by Mar Joseph Arumachadath MCBS, Chairman of the Vocation Commission. Mar Mathew Nellikkunnel, a member of the Commission, delivered the benedictory address. Vocation Commission Secretary Fr. Joshy Panamparambil, Fr. Dr. Augustine Kallely, Sr.

Diveena Rose CSM, Sr. Jerby Maria FCC, Sr. Jomy Rose CSN, and Sr. Keerthana CHF also addressed the gathering.

The annual conference, which brought together vocation promoters from various eparchies and religious congregations, served as a platform for meaningful discussions and planning of initiatives for the coming year, particularly in the promotion and nurturing of priestly and religious vocations within the Church.

CONSECRATED LIFE IS A WITNESS THROUGH PRESENCE: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP



Kakkanad: Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil stated that the true relevance of consecrated life lies not merely in words, but in the witness it offers to society through one's very

presence. He reminded that what the world needs today are simple and authentic models of life that can be understood without the need for explanations.

He was inaugurating the

conference of Superiors General of the consecrated and apostolic societies of the Syro-Malabar Church, held at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad.

The gathering, convened to reflect on the role of consecrated persons during the Church's Year of Community Empowerment, featured a keynote address by Mar Thomas Tharayil,

Convener of the Public Affairs Commission.

Around sixty Superior Generals and other Major Superiors from various religious congregations within the Church participated in the conference. Among those who addressed the gathering were Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST, Chairman of the Commission; Mar Joseph Arumachadath MCBS, Commission Member; Rev. Dr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS, Commission Secretary; Rev. Dr. James Kokkavayalil, Secretary of the Public Affairs Commission; and Sr. Jessy Maria OP, Joint Secretary of the Commission.

SEMINAR ON JUSTICE J. B. KOSHY COMMISSION REPORT



Kochi: A one-day study seminar was organized at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad, under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Public Affairs Commission to evaluate the recommendations of the Justice J. B. Koshy Commission report, which studied the socio-economic backwardness of Christians in Kerala. The seminar was inaugurated by Mar Jose Pulickal, Bishop of Kanjirappally and

Episcopal Member of the Commission. In his inaugural address, he recalled the sustained efforts of the Church-from raising the demand before the government for the constitution of such a commission to its continuous interventions leading to the publication of the report. In his concluding message, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil directed that the eparchies should undertake intensified efforts to disseminate the key

findings of the Commission report among all members of the community. He also affirmed that the Church remains firm in its demand that the report be implemented in consultation with the Churches, and that it will continue to pursue necessary steps toward this goal, irrespective of which government is in power.

Expert committee members Dr. Mary Regina, Dr. Sijo Jacob, Dr. Josekutty J. Ozhukayil,

and Dr. Chacko Kalamparambil presented papers based on various chapters of the report. The sessions were moderated by Vicars General from different eparchies, including Msgr. Antony Muthukunnel, Msgr. Sebastian Vethanath, Msgr. Vincent Nedungatt, and Msgr. Joseph Vellamattam.

Among those who addressed the gathering were Fr. Abraham Kaviipurayidathil, Chancellor

of the Syro-Malabar Church; Fr. James Kokkavayalil, Secretary of the Public Affairs Commission; and CARP Coordinator Tom Joseph Chambakulam. Priests and lay representatives from various Syro-Malabar eparchies across Kerala participated in the seminar. The meeting also discussed steps to establish mechanisms for the timely implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

'THE CHOSEN' NOW IN MALAYALAM; OFFICIAL LAUNCH HELD



Kakkanad: The official launch of the Malayalam version of *The Chosen*-the globally acclaimed television series on the life of Jesus Christ, followed by millions of viewers worldwide-was inaugurated by Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil of the Syro-Malabar

Church. The ceremony was held at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad. On the occasion, the Major Archbishop assured the Church's support for the evangelization efforts carried out through *The Chosen*. He noted that the Malayalam ver-

sion has been prepared as part of efforts to bring this globally influential series to audiences in India.

Expressing hope, he said that the series-presenting the life of Jesus and the calling of the Apostles through a distinctive visual narrative-would be-

come a profound spiritual experience for Malayalam-speaking faithful as well as the wider public.

Mr. Ashish Nag, Asia Lead for *The Chosen*, and Mr. Ajin Joseph, Catholic Engagement Manager for the series and representative of Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, stated that this initiative is part of a broader effort to make the series accessible to more people in India through collaboration with various Churches.

Selected portions from the series were also screened for priests and consecrated persons at the Curia. The Malayalam episodes of Season 1 of *The Chosen* are now available free of charge on the *The Chosen* App, on the website watch.thechosen.tv, and on Netflix. This collaboration with the global television series *The Chosen* forms part of the Syro-Malabar Church's active engagement in promoting Gospel values through visual media.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF MAR JOSEPH PALLIKAPARAMPIL



Pala: The 100th birthday of Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil was joyfully celebrated on Thursday, April 10, at the Bishop's House in Pala. His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, His

Beatitude George Cardinal Alencherry, and His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, along with several prominent figures from the socio-political sphere, were present to extend their felicitations to the centenary prelate.

In his address, Mar Raphael Thattil described Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil as "a remarkable phenomenon who has lived a long and exemplary life." He noted that none could equal him in disciplined living and profound spiritual fulfillment. As a mark of honour

on behalf of the Syro-Malabar Church, the Major Archbishop felicitated him with a ceremonial shawl.

In his welcome address, Mar Joseph Kallarangatt remarked that along with his glorious hundred-year life, the Bishop has also beautified everything around him. He added that never before had the Pala Eparchy and the Bishop's House appeared so radiant, attributing this beauty to the joyful celebration of the centenary of Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil, the second Bishop of Pala.

His Beatitude George Cardinal Alencherry honoured him by presenting a bouquet. In his felicitation address, His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias observed that Mar Pallikaparampil possessed a personality akin to Saint Francis of Assisi, embracing both nature and humanity with deep affection.

More than forty-five bishops from various Churches participated in the celebration. Priests, religious sisters, family members of Mar Pallikaparampil, and other invited guests were also present on the occasion.

SMYM STATE SENATE CONVENED AT PALA



Pala: The State Senate meeting of the Syro-Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM), the youth movement of the Syro-Malabar Church, was inaugurated at the Alphonsian Pastoral Centre, Pala, by Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil.

In his inaugural address, the Major Archbishop reminded that young people are not merely the future of the Church,

but its vibrant present. He emphasized that, amid the complex challenges of the modern world, youth must be prepared to bear courageous witness to Christ. He further noted that the Church is implementing a renewed pastoral approach that ensures greater participation and leadership opportunities for youth in its ministries.

He also highlighted that evangelization in the digital world and socially responsible engagement should be among

the new priorities of youth ministry. At the same time, he encouraged young people to move forward with pride in their Eastern Syriac heritage and active involvement in ecclesial communities.

Youth representatives and clergy from various Syro-Malabar eparchies participated in the event. Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, SMYM Global Director Fr. Jacob Chakkathra, and President Adv. Sam Sunny Odackal were among those who addressed the gathering.

CONCLUSION OF THE RUBY JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF THE EPARCHY OF THAMARASSERY



Pulloorampara: Marking four decades of rich faith heritage and the resilient history of the high-range people, the Ruby Jubilee celebrations of the Thamarassery Eparchy came to a solemn and grace-filled conclusion. The concluding celebrations were held on Saturday, April 18, at the Bethania Renewal Centre, Pulloorampara.

The Jubilee celebrations commenced with the solemn celebration of the Holy Qurba-

na, presided over by the Major Archbishop. The Most Rev. Dr. Varghese Chakkalakkal, Archbishop of the Calicut Archeparchy, delivered the homily. Bishops from various Catholic eparchies of Malabar concelebrated.

The solemn public gathering that followed was inaugurated by Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. In his inaugural address, he described

the Thamarassery Eparchy as a "fortress of unity," where clergy and laity walk hand in hand. He noted that, despite financial limitations, the eparchy has successfully overcome numerous challenges through collective effort. He also highlighted the exemplary relief activities undertaken by the eparchy during times of flood, which, he remarked, even surpassed those of governmental agencies.

The Major Archbishop fur-

ther appreciated the eparchy's active involvement in addressing farmers' issues and its commitment to ensuring fair prices for agricultural produce. He also pointed out that initiatives such as the 'START' training centres, which aim at empowering children, serve as a model for other eparchies in the Church.

Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, Bishop of Thamarassery Eparchy, welcomed the gathering. Mar Joseph Pamplany,

Archbishop of the Tellicherry Archeparchy, presided over the function. Among those who offered felicitations were Mar Jose Porunnedom (Mananthavady Eparchy), Mar Alex Vadakumthala (Kannur Eparchy), Mar Thomas Elavanal (Bishop Emeritus Kalyan), Auxiliary Bishop Mar Alex Tharamangalam (Mananthavady Eparchy), Mar Joseph Thomas (Bathery Eparchy), Auxiliary Bishop Rt. Rev. Dennis Kuruppasery (Kannur), Proto-Syncellus Fr. Abraham Vayalil, Jubilee Convener Fr. John Oravankara, Sr. Elsy Vadakkemury MSMI, and Pastoral Council Secretary Mr. Benny Lukose.

The Jubilee celebrations, which beautifully wove together the growth and achievements of four decades, concluded as a profound source of inspiration and renewed vigor for future generations.

MOTHERS AS BEARERS OF VIRTUE AND BUILDERS OF SOCIETY: MAR PETER KOCHUPURACKAL



Thalassery: Every mother is a bearer of the fragrance of vir-

tue, a strengthener of the new generation, and a key contrib-

utor to the building of society, said Mar Peter Kochupurackal, Bishop of the Eparchy of Palakkad and Bishop-in-Charge of the Syro-Malabar *Mathruvedi*. His Excellency was inaugurating and addressing the Global General Body Meeting of the Syro-Malabar *Mathruvedi* held at Sandesh Bhavan, Thalassery.

Global President of *Mathruvedi*, Beena Joshy, presided over

the meeting. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany of Thalassery offered the benedictory address. Fr. Denny Thanickal, Global Director of *Mathruvedi*; Fr. Joby Kovat, Director of *Mathruvedi* of Thalassery Archeparchy; Global Animator Sr. Jeesa CMC; General Secretary Siji Lukson; and Sissy Antony, President of *Mathruvedi* of Thalassery

Archeparchy, also spoke on the occasion.

As part of the Year of Community Empowerment, mothers participated in a rally dressed in traditional attire. Seminars, discussion sessions, and a pilgrimage to Vilakkannur were also organized. Around 130 representatives from 20 eparchies took part in the gathering.



DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP FROM 29 MARCH TO 25 APRIL

- **29 Sunday:** Officiated the Palm Sunday Celebrations at St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly and celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* at St. Mary's Convent chapel.
- **31 Tuesday:** Presided over the consecration of the Holy Myron at St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.
- **1 Wednesday:** Celebrated a memorial Holy *Qurbana* on the death anniversary of His Beatitude Cardinal Mar Varkey Vithayathil at Mount St. Thomas in the morning. Later, prayed the office for the dead at the Cardinal's tomb in St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica, Ernakulam.
- **2 Thursday:** Presided the Maundy Thursday ceremonies and celebrated the Solemn Holy *Qurbana* at Mount St. Thomas.
- **3 Friday:** Presided over the Good Friday ceremonies at Mount St. Thomas.
- **4 Saturday:** Celebrated the Great Saturday ceremonies at Mount St. Thomas and celebrated Holy *Qurbana* on the death anniversary of Archbishop Mar Abraham Kattumana, the Pontifical Delegate. Later on the day visited the tomb of the deceased Archbishop in St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica at Ernakulam and said the office for the dead.
- **5 Sunday:** Celebrated Easter Liturgy at Mount St. Thomas.
- **7 Tuesday:** Received Sri K.G. George, Cabinet Minister for Energy (Karnataka) at Mount St. Thomas, Kakknad.
- **10 Friday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at Mount St. Thomas, Kakknad on the 16th anniversary of the Episcopal Consecration.
- Officiated the second part of the funeral for Rev. Dr. Francis Alappatt at Our Lady of Dolours Basilica, Trichur.
- Presided over the felicitation meeting held on the occasion of the 100th birthday celebrations of Bishop Mar Joseph Pallickaparambil at Bishop's House, Palai.
- **11 Saturday:** Inaugurated the Syro-Malabar Mission Benefactors' Meet at Mount St. Thomas.
- Presided over the final part of the funeral of Fr. Paul Thenayan of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly.
- **12 Sunday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at St. Francis Assisi Church, Kakknad.
- Released the 140th Jubilee Logo of *Deepika* at Mount St. Thomas.
- **13 Monday:** Inaugurated the Syriac language Course conducted by Mar Walsh Aacademy, Liturgical Research Centre at Mount St. Thomas.
- **14 Tuesday:** Inaugurated the first State Senate of SMYM at the Alphonsian Pastoral Centre, Palai.
- Inaugurated the *Deepasikha Prayanam* for the 140th Jubilee of *Deepika* at Mount St. Thomas, Kakknad.
- **15 Wednesday:** Inaugurated the meeting of Major Superiors of Syro-Malabar Religious Congregations at Mount St. Thomas, Kakknad.
- Inaugurated the Verapoly Puthenpally Bible Convention and delivered message on the occasion.
- **18 Saturday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at Bethania Renewal Centre Pulloorampara and inaugurated the public meeting held thereafter, concluding the Ruby Jubilee celebrations of the Eparchy of Thamarassery.
- **19 Sunday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at St. John Nepomucene Forane Church in the Eparchy of Irinjalakuda and inaugurated the public meeting on the occasion of 1625th Anniversary.
- **20 Monday:** Received Mar Joseph Pallikparambil at Mount St. Thomas, who celebrated 100th birthday, together with Mar Joseph Kallarangatt and the Curia members.
- **21 Tuesday:** On the 70th birthday, celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at Mount St. Thomas in the morning together with the members of the Curia. In the evening, celebrations started with the solemn celebration of *ramsa*, followed by a felicitation programme, participated by Bishops, major superiors and other invited dignitaries.
- **22 Wednesday:** Inaugurated the Eparchial Catechism Directors' Meeting, organised by the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Commission.
- **23 Thursday:** Celebrated Holy *Qurbana* at St. George Forane Church, Muthalakodam in the Eparchy of Kothamangalam, on the Feast of St. George.
- **24 Friday:** Celebrated the *Raza Qurbana* at St. George Forane Church, Aruvithura in the Eparchy of Palai, on the Feast of St. George.
- Inaugurated the study seminar on the on the Justice J.B. Koshi Commission Report at Mount St. Thomas, organised by the Commission for Public Affairs.
- **25 Saturday:** Presided over the ceremonies of vestition, first and final and Professions of the candidates at the DCPB Convent, Keezhor.

MAR RAPHAEL THATTIL RECEIVES THE LOVING GREETINGS OF A CENTENARIAN



Kakknad: The visit of Mar Joseph Pallikarampil, former Bishop of the Pala Eparchy, to personally convey his greetings to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Ra-

phael Thattil, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, was a deeply touching and remarkable moment. Even at the age of one hundred, Mar Pallikarampil's presence-marked by undimin-

ished enthusiasm-brought joy and admiration to all. His visit, filled with fatherly affection, stood as a noble witness to the spirit of unity and mutual respect within the Church.

On Monday, April 20, Mar Pallikarampil arrived at Mount St. Thomas, Kakknad-the Major Archiepiscopal Curia-accompanied by the Bishop of Pala Eparchy, Mar

Joseph Kallarangatt, along with members of the curia. They were received by the Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Rev. Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, along with other clergy. This meeting, bringing together two generations of the Church, added a profound spiritual depth to the septuagenarian celebrations. Mar Pallikarampil, who entered his hundredth year on April 10, was also greeted by the Major Archbishop at the Curia, who assured him of the prayers of the Church.

64TH LRC SEMINAR AT KAKKANAD

Kakknad: The 64th LRC Seminar organized by the Heritage and Research Centre at Mount St. Thomas will be held on May 22 and 23, 2026. The theme of this year's seminar is "Migration: Challenges and Op-

portunities in the 21st Century."

Migration has become a major social reality in today's world, with increasing numbers of people moving to other countries and states in search of employment, education, security,

and a better quality of life. However, migration also presents several challenges, including cultural adjustment, language barriers, legal uncertainties, and lack of job security. Studies indicate that family bonds often weaken and, in some cases, migrants experience social dis-

crimination.

At the same time, migration opens up new opportunities such as better employment prospects, economic advancement, and exposure to diverse cultures, contributing to personal growth. Experts from various fields will present twelve

research papers at the seminar.

Those interested in participating must register before May 10. For registration: lrcseminars@gmail.com / WhatsApp +919497324768. For further details, contact Rev. Dr. Jobin Kanjirathinkal, Executive Director of LRC.

NALLANILAM SEASON II – 2026

Kanjirappally: In connection with the Golden Jubilee year of the Kanjirappally Eparchy, the Eparchial Family Apostolate, Bible Apostolate, and Family Forum jointly organize the "Nallanilam" Scripture

Study Competition with the aim of internalizing the Word in heart and life. The copy of the book "Nallanilam Bible Scripture Study Guide," prepared to help understand and learn biblical verses effectively, was re-

leased by the Eparchial Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal by handing it over to the Eparchial Mathruvedi President Jiji Jacob Puliyamkunnel. The brochure of the *Nallanilam Bible Memorization Programme* was released by the Protosyncellus Rev. Fr. Joseph Vellamattam, who presented it

to the Eparchial Pithruvedi President Saju Joseph Kochuveetil.

On the occasion, the Eparchial Director of the Family Apostolate Rev. Fr. Mathew Olikkal, Family Forum Director Rev. Fr. Thomas Venmanthara, Bible Apostolate Director Rev. Fr. Manuraj Jude Puthenveetil,

and members of the Eparchial Executive were present. Leadership for the initiative was provided by the Family Apostolate Eparchial Animator Sister Rosmy SABS, Regent Jerry Vaniyappurackal, and the executive members of *Mathruvedi* and *Pithruvedi*.



EPARCHY OF ADILABAD

ERECTED ON 06 OCTOBER 1999



Mar Joseph Thachaparambath CMI
Bishop of Adilabad



Mar Joseph Kunnath CMI
First Bishop of Adilabad



Mar Prince Antony Panengadan
Second Bishop of Adilabad

Born from the Diocese of Chanda in July 1999, the Diocese of Adilabad was formally established by Pope John Paul II to better serve the faithful of Telangana. It officially came into existence on October 6, 1999, with the consecration of its first shepherd, Bishop Joseph Kunnath, CMI.

Following Bishop Kunnath's retirement, Bishop Prince Antony Panengadan was installed as the second bishop in October 2015, further strengthening the community's foundations through evangelization.

The lineage of leadership continued into a new era with Bishop Joseph Thachaparambath, CMI, who was consecrated as the third bishop on October 25, 2025, at the Ephatha Retreat Centre. Today, this flourishing diocese encompasses 17 civil districts, standing as a vibrant beacon of faith and service across the Telangana state.

Statistics			
Bishops	2	Catholics	18,250
Parishes	25	Quasi Parishes	18
Mission Stations	90	Eparchial Priests	51
Religious Priests	75	Minor Seminarians	8
Major Seminarians	5	Religious Sisters	225
Religious Brothers	05	Religious Congregation Schools	28
Diocesan Schools	13	Religious Congregation Dispensaries	5

DIOCESAN CURIA

Protosyncellus

Very Rev. Dr. Jose Manickathan CMI

Chancellor

Rev. Fr. Joshy Ambattu

Procurator

Rev. Fr. Robin Mathew

Judicial Vicar

Rev. Dr. Polisetty Jojappa

Secretary to Bishop

Rev. Fr. Ebin Joseph



EPARCHY OF ADILABAD

INITIATIVES OF THE EPARCHY

JEEVASWARAM BIBLE CONVENTIONS

To effectively share the Good News with millions in the Diocese of Adilabad, “Jeevaswaram Bible Conventions” were launched as three-day zonal gatherings targeting thousands of people across towns and villages. Since the first successful event in October 2016, 31 of these mass conventions have been held to great reception. Recognizing their powerful impact, the diocese hosts four conventions annually to systematically reach every district.



ANNADANAM

In a quiet yet powerful testament to boundless charity, the doors of the Bishop’s House in Mancherial have remained open since 2018, where the Diocese of Adilabad lovingly provides daily lunch to comfort and nourish 150 hungry people every single day.

SHADE- HOME FOR ELDERLY AND SICK

Serving as a beacon of inclusive love, SHADE—a charitable unit of the Diocese of Adilabad Society—provides a safe haven for 20 disabled and elderly destitute individuals, irrespective of their caste or creed. Sustained by local generosity and the enduring legacy of the late German philanthropist Rev. Fr. Herbert, these residents receive devoted, tender care from the Missionary Sisters of Little Flower.



EPHATHA RETREAT CENTRE

Conceived as the spiritual heart and lifeblood of the Diocese of Adilabad, the Ephatha Retreat Centre began its journey with a foundation stone blessed by Pope Francis in 2016. Despite the challenges and delays brought on by the global pandemic, the diocese persevered to complete the sanctuary by the end of 2021 with the help of generous benefactors. On January 6, 2022, the centre was solemnly consecrated by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli. It is an enduring reservoir of faith and spiritual renewal for the diocese. Friday conventions, Night vigil and residential retreats are regularly organized for all.



PALLEVASAM

Inspired by Christ’s example of dwelling among humanity, “Pallevasam”—Telugu for “living in the village”—is a beautiful evangelization initiative where Sisters immerse themselves in remote hamlets to share the Good News. By living directly alongside the people, they build deep, personal relationships and teach the faith through genuine friendship rather than just words. This profound connection leaves a lasting impact, often bringing tears to the villagers’ eyes upon the Sisters’ departure.



HOPE FROM THE PERIPHERIES: POPE'S HISTORIC AFRICAN JOURNEY

Vatican City: Proclaiming his commitment to those living on the “peripheries” of the world, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV undertook an 11-day historic Apostolic Journey to Africa. During the visit, which lasted from April 13 to 23, 2026, the Pope visited Algeria, Cameroon, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea. For the African continent, home to more than 280 million Catholics, the visit marked a significant milestone in the history of the Church. It was not merely a diplomatic tour, but a strategic engagement with one of the fastest-growing communities in the global Church. Amid poverty, exploitation, and interreligious conflicts, the visit underscored the urgent need to support the most vulnerable members of the Church.

Before his election as Pope,

the first phase of his journey began in Algeria, a land associated with the memory of Saint Augustine, the spiritual father of the religious order he once led. By visiting the ancient ruins of Hippo and the Basilica of Saint Augustine, the Pope paid tribute to the spiritual roots that shaped his thought and preaching. At the Basilica of *Our Lady of Africa* in the capital of this Muslim-majority country, he emphasized interreligious dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

In Cameroon, in Central Africa, the Pope made an urgent appeal to end the violent conflict between English-speaking separatists and French-speaking government forces. In this land where Catholicism has had deep roots since the 19th century, he called for a path of reconciliation to overcome pov-

erty and war. In Angola, one of the earliest regions in Africa to receive the Catholic faith, he highlighted the stark contrast between rapid economic growth in the capital Luanda and the suffering of the poor. At the Marian shrine of *Mama Muxima*, he spoke about environmental protection and the exploitation carried out by foreign powers.

In the final phase of the journey, upon arriving in Equatorial Guinea, he visited the memorial of the victims of the 2021 explosion and a prison housing political detainees. He also articulated his positions on global issues such as climate change, migration, and interreligious relations. By traveling to places never before visited by a Pope, Pope Leo XIV conveyed the message that the future of



the Catholic Church is being shaped in Africa. Reiterating that war is a failure of humanity, he strongly criticized the arms trade and the exploitation of re-

sources by foreign powers. The Pope called upon world leaders to build a just peace rooted in forgiveness and compassion within human hearts.



NEW FATHER AND HEAD FOR THE CHALDEAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rome: Bishop Mar Amel Shamon Nona has been elected as the new head of Chaldean Catholics Church. This important announcement was made during the Holy Synod held in Rome on April 12, 2026. The new Patriarch has taken the name Mar Paul III Nona. This appointment follows the retirement of His Beatitude Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako, who had led the Church for many years.

Born in 1968 in Alqosh,

northern Iraq, Mar Paul III is regarded as one of the most prominent leaders in the Chaldean Church. Before assuming this role, he served as Bishop of the Chaldean Diocese of St. Thomas the Apostle in Australia and New Zealand.

The Chaldean Church traces its origins to the apostolic ministry of Thomas the Apostle and his disciples Addai and Mari. The Church follows the East Syriac liturgical tradition, and

even today, the Holy Qurbana (Mass) is commonly celebrated in Aramaic—the language spoken by Jesus Christ.

The headquarters of this ancient Patriarchate, which has around 1.5 million faithful, is located at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Sorrows in Baghdad. Due to religious persecution and conflicts in the Middle East, many Chaldean faithful have migrated across the world. Today, there are large commu-

nities in United States, Canada, Australia, and across Europe, along with several dioceses in Iraq and Iran.

Previously, during his tenure as Archbishop of Mosul, he demonstrated strong leadership by encouraging and supporting the faithful amid the devastations of war. Believers now hope that his leadership will provide new direction and strength to the global Church.

FIRST GATHERING OF MALAYALI RELIGIOUS SISTERS IN THE AMERICAN CONTINENT



Chicago: As part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the establishment of the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Chicago and the episcopal ordination Silver Jubilee of Bishop Emeritus Mar Jacob Angadiath, a historic gathering of Malayalam-speak-

ing religious sisters serving in the United States and Canada was held at the Sacred Heart Knanaya Catholic Church in Chicago.

The public meeting associated with the event was inaugurated by Most Rev. Robert Pipta, Bishop of the Ruthenian-Byz-

antine Catholic Eparchy in the United States, in the presence of numerous clergy and representatives of over 28 religious congregations.

A seminar held in connection with the gathering was led by Most Rev. Thomas Paprocki.

The solemn Holy *Qurbana* celebrated at 5:00 PM was presided over by Mar Joy Alappatt as the principal celebrant, with Most Rev. Robert Pipta delivering the homily. Mar Jacob Angadiath and several priests concelebrated.

The subsequent public function was formally inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Most Rev. Robert Pipta, with Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt presiding. Jubilee Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, Rev. Fr. Alexander Kurien-Liaison

Officer for Interreligious Affairs at the White House Faith Office and a member of the Malankara Orthodox Church—along with Dominican religious Rev. Sr. Amelia and Sr. Annie Serene, delivered felicitation addresses.

The gathering was chaired by Fr. Thomas Mulavan, Vicar General, who also delivered the welcome address, while General Coordinator Tony Pullappallil proposed the vote of thanks. The event concluded with a cultural program presented by talents from the Chicago Cathedral, St. Mary's, and Sacred Heart parishes.



His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil the Major Archbishop offered the Office for the Dead on the 31st Death Anniversary of Archbishop Mar Abraham Kattumana, at the tomb in St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica.



His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. Prayed the office for the Dead on the Death Anniversary of his Beatitude Cardinal Mar Varkey Vithayathil the second Major Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Church, at the tomb in St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica, Ernakulam