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## EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN KERALA: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES



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The educational sector in Kerala is presently passing through a period marked by numerous complexities and challenges. Both public education and higher education in Kerala are facing serious crises today, especially in the context of the implementation of the New Education Policy of 2020 and the socio-cultural and economic transformations brought about by globalization.

Although Kerala is often described as a hub of education, a model state, and a paradise of literacy, there are clear indications that many of these claims are superficial. While Malayalis continue to migrate to other states in India and abroad for higher education, people from outside Kerala rarely come to Kerala in search of education. This itself substantiates the reality.

The decline in both the quality and quantity of public and higher education in Kerala should awaken us to the seriousness of the situation. The deficiencies in the curriculum and teaching methods at the school level must be addressed. Even students who secure full A+ grades in Class Ten examinations are often unable to use Malayalam or English without mistakes. More alarmingly, some students are unable to correctly write even their own names or the names of their educational institutions. This reveals the depth of our deterioration. Another challenge faced by Malayali students is the decline in communication skills. Since Kerala lacks the “village system” prevalent in many other Indian states, and because each household tends to remain isolated, socialization in Kerala is comparatively limited. This reality often affects children’s communication abilities and makes students introverted and excessively timid. As successive governments openly and covertly design syllabi aimed at imposing their ideological frameworks upon children, essential values such as democracy, secularism, truth, justice, love, tolerance, God-consciousness, equality, civic responsibility,



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and respect for parents, elders, teachers, women, and the marginalized are increasingly forgotten. It must also be noted that there is a serious lack of opportunities to practically implement and internalize what is learned as part of the curriculum.

In the field of public education, discontinuing the policy of all-pass promotion and ensuring that students are effectively taught to read, write, and speak at least Malayalam, English, and Hindi properly would contribute significantly to improving educational standards. Reducing the importance of English, an international language, will in no way benefit students. The curriculum must be designed in such a way as to foster critical thinking and value-based awareness among students.

Educational systems must also include extracurricular activities that enrich students’ communication skills and help them become more outgoing. Alongside this, physical education classes should be made compulsory for children. Training that enables students to live in harmony with nature and society, as well as opportunities for skill development, should begin from the school level itself.

The challenges faced by the higher education sector are merely a continu-

ation of these realities. When students lacking foundational knowledge and adequate language proficiency enter higher education, a decline in standards becomes inevitable. In some universities, attendance is not considered for internal assessment, resulting in a growing tendency among students to avoid attending classes altogether. Influenced by distorted ideas propagated through certain campus films, many students have come to believe that classes in higher educational institutions are merely nominal, that attending classes is unnecessary, and that higher education campuses are places only for songs, dances, and extra-curricular activities.

Many seasoned teachers and scholars are left astonished when they witness Boards of Studies framing syllabi not in accordance with the standards of excellent universities, but rather to safeguard ideological agendas and selfish interests. When persons with scholarship and experience are excluded from university Boards of Studies and teacher union activists are installed in their place, one must understand that the grave of higher education has already been dug. Those who realize this reality increasingly send their children outside Kerala to study the syllabi of institutions such as the

University of Delhi and other Central Universities. Teachers who are incapable of learning and teaching new syllabi, or unwilling to make the effort required, further accelerate this process.

Governments in Kerala often fail to pay adequate attention to introducing innovative programmes—especially in the aided sector—or sanctioning teaching posts in educational institutions. The aided courses sanctioned in 105 aided colleges in 2020 have still not been granted permanent teaching posts. When classes are handled by temporary guest lecturers without continuity, both the quality and discipline of education are compromised. Under the pretext of financial constraints, the removal of proportional value for postgraduate teachers has adversely affected the quality of postgraduate education, the standard of student projects, and the research activities of teachers. Consequently, the decline in the teacher-student ratio and in research standards has negatively affected students, the quality of mentoring, and the accreditation of institutions.

Outside Kerala, quality colleges are transforming themselves into autonomous colleges, private universities, and deemed universities. However, colleges in Kerala are compelled merely to watch this development due to the rigid opposition of political parties. Authorities fear that if institutions grow independently, they may no longer remain under political control, and this anxiety has held Kerala back from progressing in this direction. One hopes that the new government will bring meaningful reforms in this sphere.

Educational institutions are engaged in the task of forming students from varied social and psychological backgrounds into cultured and disciplined individuals. However, when organizations and political parties exaggerate isolated incidents occurring within institutions and place educational establishments under constant pressure, institutions are forced to expend their energy, time, and financial resources merely to confront such attacks. This results in a serious loss to society. Likewise, when governments and universities misuse their authority to keep educational institutions under control, and institutions are forced to resort to legal measures to protect their rights, valuable resources that ought to have been spent for society are wasted.

Today, a dangerous cultural shift is

**Continued on page 4**



## EDITORIAL



### EDUCATION: FORMATIVE MISSION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Education remains one of the most powerful instruments for shaping the future of individuals and societies. Yet, in an age increasingly obsessed with credentials, rankings, and employability, there is a growing danger of reducing education to a mere pathway to jobs or examination success. Such a narrow understanding impoverishes both the learner and society. True education is far more than the transmission of information; it is the formation of the whole person - mind, heart, conscience, and character.

The contemporary world is undergoing unprecedented transformation. Technological advances and the explosion of information have opened remarkable opportunities for human progress. At the same time, they have intensified challenges such as moral relativism, erosion of values, social fragmentation, and the rise of self-centred lifestyles. In this context, education must do more than impart knowledge. It must cultivate wisdom, critical judgment, and the capacity to discern truth from falsehood.

The Catholic Church has consistently regarded education as a sacred mission. The ultimate purpose of Christian education is not merely to produce competent professionals but to form responsible, compassionate, and morally sound human beings. Genuine education nurtures a sense of justice, social responsibility, solidarity with others, and openness to God. It prepares young people not only to succeed in life but also to contribute meaningfully to the common good.

This task cannot be entrusted to schools alone. Education is a shared responsibility of the family, the school, and society. Parents are the first and most influential educators of their children. Teachers serve as guides who illuminate minds and inspire hearts. Society, in turn, provides the environment in which educational values are either strengthened or weakened. Only through the harmonious collaboration of these three pillars can a generation be formed that is intellectually capable and morally resilient.

Our society has made remarkable strides in expanding educational opportunities and achieving academic excellence. Yet, the present moment calls for a renewed commitment to the spiritual and ethical foundations of education. Knowledge without values can become dangerous; skills without compassion can become self-serving; success without a spirit of service can leave individuals and societies impoverished.

In his first encyclical on safeguarding human dignity in the age of artificial intelligence, Pope Leo XIV highlights the crucial role of education and the responsibility of parents in choosing schools. He reminds us that schools are places where young people learn to seek and love the truth, reflect on the meaning of life, and recognize the dignity of every human person. Consequently, parents who desire their children to develop healthy relationships, critical thinking, and sound values must carefully choose educational environments that are consistent with their moral, cultural, and religious convictions (No. 143).

Education must shape not only the intellect but also the heart. When education neglects character formation, knowledge may increase while humanity diminishes. The world today needs men and women of courage, integrity, and compassion-individuals capable of resisting the forces of dehumanization and standing firmly for truth and goodness. As a new academic year begins, it is fitting to renew our commitment to an education that forms the whole person. May God's abundant blessings accompany all students, teachers, parents, and everyone engaged in the noble mission of education!

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## A DAY TO REMEMBER

**June 1:** Saint Justin Martyr

**June 2:** Death Anniversary of Blessed Mar Thomas Kurialacherry (1925)

**June 4:** Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ

**June 8:** Saint Mariam Thresia

**June 9:** Mar Aprem

**June 11:** Death Anniversary of Mar Sebastian Mankuzhikkary (1994)

Saint Barnabas

**June 12:** Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

**June 13:** Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Saint Antony of Padua

**June 14:** Death Anniversary of Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry (2017)

**June 18:** Death Anniversary of Mar John Perumattam (2011)

Episcopal Ordination of Mar Peter Kochupurackal (2020)

**June 22:** Saint John Fisher, Saint Thomas More

**June 24:** Birth of Saint John the Baptist

**June 27:** Saint Irenaeus

**June 29:** Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Apostles

### ▶ FESTAL GREETINGS ◀

**June 1**



**Mar Gratian Mundadan**

**June 13**



**Mar Prince Antony Panengadan**



**Archbishop Mar Antony Kariyil**



**Mar Antony Chirayath**



**Mar Tony Neelankavil**

**June 29**



**Mar Pauly Kannookadan**



**Mar Paul Alappatt**



**Mar Peter Kochupurackal**

## ST. JUSTIN, THE MARTYR



Rev. Dr. Alex Sebastian Kollamkalam

St. Justin was born around the year AD 100 into a pagan family in Neapolis of Palestine. In the course of his search for truth, he was trained in the Stoic and Platonic schools of philosophy. However, finding no true satisfaction in them, he turned to the study of the Sacred Scriptures. This ultimately led him to Christianity. Having embraced the Christian faith at Ephesus around AD 132, he thereafter travelled through various places teaching others this new philosophy, namely the Christian faith. Eventually, he arrived in Rome and established a school of theology there.

However, because of his propagation of the Christian faith in Rome, he was brought before the Roman Prefect and, together with his six companions, was put to death by beheading. He attained martyrdom by beheading around AD 165. The ancient work *The*



*Martyrdom of St. Justin and His Companions (Martyrium Sancti Iustini et Sociorum)* presents in detail the account of his martyrdom.

Although St. Jerome provides an extensive list of the writings of St. Justin in his work *De Viris Illustribus* (DVI 23), the most notable among them are the two *Apologies* addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Roman Senate questioning the unjust persecution of Christians, as well as the *Dialogue with Trypho*, which establishes the superiority of the Christian faith over Judaism.

Having realized through his own life that philosophy is a pathway leading to theology, he explained this relationship through the concept of the *Logos Spermatikos*. He taught that the Divine Word existed in the form of a seed among the prophets of the Old Testament and even among the Greek philosophers, and that its fullness is found in Jesus Christ.

Having sacrificed his life for the proclamation and defence of the faith, he is honoured in the Church as one of the foremost among the Greek Apologists. ■





**From the Heart of  
the Father and Head**

Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil



**W**e stand at the threshold of a new academic year. At the outset, I extend my heartfelt prayers and best wishes to all dear stu-

dents who are returning to their schools after the summer vacation, and to the teachers who guide them into the world of knowledge.

We should welcome this academic year with the conviction that "the greatest gift we can give a child is to teach him how to think." Education is not merely about learning letters or securing high marks; rather, it is a profound process of character formation and of shaping a generation rooted in goodness. Beyond the accumulation of information, our educational efforts must aim at building a society marked by virtue, compassion, and justice. Value-based education that enables children to respect others, love nature, and show concern for their fellow human beings is one of the greatest

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needs of our time. We must realize that goodness in life is more important than ranks in examinations. As Sacred Scripture reminds us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). Our children must grow in this awareness and reverence for God.

Along with academic excellence, it is equally essential to cultivate a strong sense of civic responsibility in today's children. Schools are not merely places where textbooks are studied; they are centres where young people learn how to live in society. Children must learn to protect public property, obey laws, keep their surroundings clean, and respect not only their own rights but also the rights of others. The future of our nation is being shaped in today's classrooms. Therefore, teachers and parents must pay special attention to forming children into selfless and socially committed citizens.

The contribution of the Catholic Church in elevating Kerala to its present cultural and educational stature cannot

be forgotten. Through the revolutionary concept of the "Pallikkoodam" (parish school), the Church succeeded in bringing the light of knowledge to people from all sections of society, irrespective of caste, religion, or social status. By opening the doors of learning to those who were once denied education, holy pioneers such as Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara illuminated a golden chapter in Kerala's literacy movement. It is by cherishing this noble heritage that our educational institutions continue their mission today. As the renowned philosopher Aristotle observed, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." Keeping this message in mind, we must give priority to nurturing the goodness of the human heart.

Success in education rests upon the harmonious cooperation of four complementary pillars: students, teachers, parents, and management. Parents are the first teachers of their children. Teachers, with parental care and affection, must guide students in schools. When active

communication between parents and teachers is supported by a committed management, students are assured a safe and healthy environment. The biblical exhortation, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6), should serve as a guiding principle for both parents and teachers.

Love, peace, patience, and a spirit of service are the Christian values that form the foundation of our educational institutions. Taking Jesus Christ, the Divine Teacher, as our model, we must transform our schools into shelters of love and compassion rather than mere coaching centres. It is this Christian ethos that teaches children not to be discouraged by failures and to regard their classmates not as rivals but as brothers and sisters.

I pray that this new academic year may be a season of knowledge, growth, and divine blessings for all our schools and students. May the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, be a source of strength and protection for everyone. ■

## CAN LOTS BE CAST TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD? THE CASTING OF LOTS BY THE APOSTLES AND THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH



**EXPLORING BIBLE QUESTIONS**

Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott

**A**fter the Ascension of Jesus, the Apostles, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the other women, were gathered in the Upper Room on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, persevering in prayer with one mind and heart. It was during this time that St. Peter proposed that someone should be chosen to replace Judas, who had forfeited his apostolic ministry through unfaithfulness and suicide (Acts 1:15-21). Peter the Apostle laid down two principal conditions for becoming an Apostle:

1. The person must have accompanied Jesus throughout His public ministry, from the baptism preached by John until the Ascension.

2. He must be a witness to the Resurrection of Jesus.

Among them were two men who fulfilled these qualifications: Matthias and Joseph Barsabbas. However, the Apostles were unable to determine whom they should choose. Therefore, after praying, they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias. From that moment, he was counted among the Twelve Apostles (Acts 1:26).

Certain questions naturally arise in many minds: Is the casting of lots truly

a legitimate means of discerning the will of God? Why does the Church not follow such practices today? Was the selection of Matthias truly according to the will of God? The following answers emerge from biblical understanding.

Jesus had given a promise to His disciples: "You shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22:30). The number twelve symbolized the fullness of the tribes of Israel. Before the official missionary activity of the Church could begin with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, it was necessary for the structure of the Church that this number be restored once again to twelve.

**Why Was a Replacement Chosen Only for Judas?**

A question may arise here: when James, the son of Zebedee, was later martyred (Acts 12:2), why was no replacement chosen for him? The reason is that James remained faithful to Christ until death. Since the Apostles believed in the resurrection of the dead, they knew that James' place in the heavenly kingdom remained secure. Judas, however, betrayed the Master and, through suicide, lost his apostolic office and communion. Therefore, a replacement for Judas' throne became necessary.

**The Old Testament Tradition of Casting Lots**

In biblical history, the casting of lots was not considered a mere game of chance, but rather a sacred means of

discerning the will of God. Especially during periods when there were no prophets among the people, the Israelites resorted to this practice.

**Sin Offering:** The goats designated for sacrifice were chosen by casting lots (Lev 16:8).

**Division of the Land:** Joshua distributed the land among the tribes of Israel by casting lots before the Lord (Josh 18:10).

**Post-Exilic Period:** After returning from the Babylonian exile, the people once again cast lots in seeking the will of God (Neh 10:34).

The spiritual significance behind this practice is explained in the Book of Proverbs:

"Casting lots puts an end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders" (Prov 18:18).

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Prov 16:33).

Because the Apostles deeply believed in the laws and traditions of the Old Testament, they prayerfully cast lots in order to discern the mind of God beyond mere human reasoning. Therefore, their action was entirely lawful and proper within that context.

**Why Does the Church No Longer Cast Lots Today?**

This is the final instance recorded in the Acts of the Apostles where a decision is made through the casting of lots. At the end of the first chapter, this election takes place; immediately at the beginning of the second chapter, the

Holy Spirit descends upon the Church in the form of tongues of fire.

In the Old Testament period, lots were cast to seek the will of God when prophets were absent. But in the New Testament Church, the Lord Himself gave the Church the Holy Spirit as her guide and helper. From Pentecost onward, it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Church and reveals decisions. Therefore, later ecclesial decisions are seen emerging through the revelations and promptings of the Spirit:

"The Spirit told me..." (Acts 11:12)

"The Holy Spirit said: 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul...'" (Acts 13:2)

"It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15:28)

It was because the official coming of the Holy Spirit had not yet taken place during those ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost that the Apostles adopted the Old Testament method of casting lots. Today, since the living presence of the Holy Spirit abides within the Church, we no longer require such external means to discern the will of God.

**Conclusion**

The Holy Spirit continually helps us to enter into direct communion with God and to discern His holy will. Today, God guides the decisions of the Church through the prayer and spiritual discernment of ecclesiastical authorities. Therefore, we are called to remain grateful to the Holy Spirit who leads us and to live attentively, listening to the invisible interior voice of the Spirit. ■



# EDUCATION: SHOULD IT BE RESTRAINED INTO BONSAIS OR GIVEN FREEDOM TO GROW INTO BANYAN TREES?



**Rev. Dr. Martin Kolambrath**  
Principal, St. Thomas College, Thrissur

At first glance, bonsai trees may evoke curiosity and admiration; yet, on a second look, they often leave behind a sense of pain that touches the heart. The cruelty involved in confining something within an artificially restricted space is not insignificant. It is worthwhile to reflect whether the educational sector in Kerala, which offered enviable growth during the early decades following the formation of the State, has gradually become stunted like a bonsai. Rather than wasting energy in identifying culprits, it would be far more constructive to seek meaningful solutions to the problem.

It is astonishing to witness students completing the tenth standard with full A+ grades while still being unable to write their own names, addresses, or even a few sentences on any subject in Malayalam or English without spelling or grammatical mistakes. More alarming is the fact that many of them are unable to read even a single paragraph in Malayalam fluently and without hesitation. This points towards the imminent decline of the Malayalam language. English may somehow survive, but Malayalam will certainly fade away. Of course, if one chooses to say that there is nothing to fear because Artificial Intelligence will



➔ **With regard to higher education, even though it may be painful to admit, enlightened Kerala remains considerably behind. Outdated syllabi and obsolete courses themselves stand as the primary evidence. The excessive spread of campus politics, disturbed academic environments, and the persistent tendency of successive governments to keep the educational sector tightly controlled and restrained have all contributed significantly to this decline. Agitations, vandalism, and the atmosphere of insecurity created within campuses are among the major reasons why students increasingly leave Kerala in search of education elsewhere.**

solve everything, then we may simply wait and see.

In primary education, it is absolutely necessary to restore the earlier insistence that children who have not properly mastered letters and numbers should

not be promoted to the next class. Likewise, in secondary education, we must be prepared to bid farewell to the inflated balloons of excessively high pass percentages. Instead, educational methods must be developed that help each

student grow gradually and firmly like a tree that sprouts from the depths of the soil, withstands adverse seasons of wind, heat, rain, and drought, absorbs water and nourishment, and matures steadily over time.

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At least now, instead of reducing educational institutions into mere bonsais, they must be granted the freedom to grow into banyan trees. Colleges that have already proven their excellence should be granted autonomous status, and institutions that have demonstrated their competence as autonomous colleges should be elevated to the next stage as "Deemed-to-be Universities." States that are now leading the field of higher education implemented such measures decades ago.

One may hope that the culture of bonsai-like restriction in the educational sector will come to an end and that institutions will be given the freedom necessary to grow into mighty banyan trees. Hope does not disappoint.

## Continuation of page 1 Educational Sector in Kerala

evident wherein students, parents, and society increasingly believe that teachers who detect malpractice in examinations and authorities who take action against copying are the real offenders, rather than recognizing copying itself as wrong. Politicians and media that encourage this mentality are among the greatest curses of our times. It is essential today to encourage teachers and authorities to fulfil their duties and to educate students that malpractice is morally wrong. Otherwise, this culture may render many teachers indifferent. Its natural consequence would be the emergence of an undisciplined generation.

There is an important reality that governments, often reluctant to invest in education, must understand: if Kerala once stood at the forefront of human resource development, the primary reason was the investment made by governments and various educational institutions. Governments that collect educational cess and other taxes have the responsibility to utilize these funds for the intended purpose. Money allocated for education

and research is never a loss; rather, it is an investment in society. Therefore, governments should never exhibit stinginess in investing in the educational sector.

It is increasingly evident that governments and universities are adopting methods of tightly restricting aided educational institutions through various laws and regulations. If governments are willing to allow aided institutions to function with legitimate freedom, fill vacant teaching posts, sanction positions for new courses, and provide financial assistance, it would mark the beginning of a new era in the educational sector.

Another important issue concerns the minority rights guaranteed under Article 30 of the Constitution of India. While this Article protects the right of all minorities based on religion or language to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, there appears to be a growing tendency among authorities to undermine minority rights. Denying or questioning the right of minority institutions to select qualified administrators is unbecoming of any elected government. Governments attain greatness when they protect minority institu-

tions. As the number of students in both public and higher education decreases, the practice of abolishing teaching posts must be discontinued. When the quality of public education improves, parents will naturally return their children to comparatively affordable public educational institutions.

The increasing availability of alcohol and narcotic substances around educational institutions is a grave reality that often misleads even young children. Governments must urgently take steps to eliminate the social evils prevailing within campuses and their surroundings. Another major villain of the present age is the mobile phone. Due to the absence of legal backing, even teachers are unable to prohibit mobile phones in classrooms. As a result, students increasingly become addicted to games, immoral content, and social media. Governments must demonstrate the courage to take effective action against this menace.

Another important necessity is to provide teachers with the freedom and authority required for proper discipline. Many parents proudly claim that the older generation received exempla-

ry discipline through the guidance and correction of their teachers, yet the same parents often rush to educational institutions to create problems whenever a teacher merely reprimands their child. Such situations frequently render teachers indifferent. At the same time, it must also be remembered that teachers occasionally exceed the limits of their legitimate authority.

The unhealthy politicization prevailing within educational institutions and the support extended to it by political parties play a major role in destroying the academic atmosphere and discipline of institutions. This, unfortunately, remains a distinctive feature of Kerala.

The author shares these reflections on education, grounded in personal experience, with the intention of drawing the urgent attention of society and authorities to the challenges and decline in the public and higher education sectors of Kerala. If governments, society, and educational agencies recognize the pitfalls and deterioration in this field and move towards effective remedies, it will pave the way for a renewed educational culture and, consequently, for the upliftment of society itself.





## JOURNEY OF FAITH & LEARNING

Fr. Saji Mathew Kanayankal CST

The booklet *Integral Ecology and the Family*, published on October 4, 2025, was jointly issued by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development of the Vatican, in response to the appeal of Pope Francis to respond appropriately to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. Through his teachings, Pope Leo XIV too reaffirms the importance of contemplating creation and emphasizes the necessity of understanding the Creator's original plan.

Grounded in the teachings of the Church, this instruction recalls the unique responsibility entrusted to families in relation to integral ecology, reiterating that every creature has its own significance within God's plan. Since everything created by God is good, protecting creation becomes the mission of every person. Humanity, being only one among all creatures, must never forget the reality that it shares this earth with other living beings. Our responsibility toward the universe must therefore be exercised in solidarity with all forms of life. Consequently, families have a definite role in fostering values that safeguard our common home and every creature within it with care and responsibility, and in transmitting these values to future generations. As urged in the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, the purpose of

# INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND THE FAMILY

this booklet is to inspire and encourage families to embrace attitudes and actions that promote integral human development through the care of our common home.

Divided into two sections, the first part of this instruction presents the fundamental concepts of integral ecology based on the principal writings of Pope Francis. The second part is organized into seven chapters founded upon themes drawn from the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*. Each theme is developed in relation to the Church's teaching on the family. One of the distinctive characteristics of this document is the comprehensive integration of the teachings and insights of contemporary Popes in both its presentation and analysis. Every chapter is divided into four sections: explanation, implications, questions for reflection and discussion, and practical suggestions.

The first section, which elucidates foundational themes of the vision of integral ecology such as integral ecology, the common good, integrity, and sustainability, integrates the Church's teachings on the human family as expressed in papal magisterial teachings such as the Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, and the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*. It concludes with an explanation of the concept of "commitment from below" proposed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*.

The second part of this booklet con-



➤ One of the principal features of this work is its holistic approach, integrating economic, cultural, and social dimensions into the experiential expression of the vision of integral ecology. The booklet concludes with the message that its essence is contained in the words of Pope Francis: that families may carry the vision of integral ecology within their hearts.

sists of seven chapters. These chapters examine themes such as listening to the cry of the earth, hearing the cries of the poor and the vulnerable, promoting an ecological economy, ecological lifestyles, integral ecology and education, ecological spirituality within families, and the participation of families in community life. Care has been taken in each chapter to concisely incorporate the teachings of the Church within the presentation of the subject matter. More than mere theoretical analysis, the chapters include questions for discussion and reflection,

followed by practical suggestions and guidelines applicable at various levels of daily life.

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# THE MAR THOMA HERITAGE OF THE CITY OF CHENNAI



LITURGICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTRE STUDY  
SERIES

Rev. Dr. James Puliurumpil

Santhome, situated about four miles south of Chennai, or the old city of Madras, forms a part of that historic city. During the medieval period, this region was known as *Beth Thuma*. Arab travellers who visited the city were the ones who gave this name to the place. Their travel accounts indicate that the region was called by this name in the sense of "the place of Thomas." They also wrote in their works about the Mar Thoma Christians who lived in the city. When the Portuguese arrived there at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they called the city "Santhome." Thus, "Santhome" (*St. Thomas*) is the Portuguese form of *Beth Thuma*. It was because they found the tomb of St. Thomas there that the Portuguese unhesitatingly called the city Santhome. The tomb of a great personage is what made this city famous. Therefore, the very fact that the tomb of St. Thomas

➤ The tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore is neither a Portuguese invention nor a fabrication created by the Portuguese, but a historical reality. It is a historical truth that cannot be denied and can be verified through historical evidence. Just as the tombs of the other eleven Apostles are located in different parts of the world, the tomb of St. Thomas is situated at Mylapore in India. No one anywhere else in the world claims to possess the tomb of St. Thomas. Moreover, there exists no possibility whatsoever for such a claim.

was located there brought this city great fame in Europe in earlier centuries. The long list of European travellers who visited the city confirms this fact.

Before the arrival of the Portuguese in India at the dawn of the modern period, numerous travellers, pilgrims, and visitors from Arabia, Syria, Persia, and the Mediterranean regions had already visited Mylapore, as recorded in their travel narratives. Hence, contrary to certain accusations, the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore is neither a Portuguese invention nor a fabrication created by the Portuguese, but a historical reality. It is a historical truth that cannot be denied and can be verified through historical evidence. Just as the tombs of the other eleven Apostles are located in different parts of the world, the tomb of St. Thom-

as is situated at Mylapore in India. No one anywhere else in the world claims to possess the tomb of St. Thomas. Moreover, there exists no possibility whatsoever for such a claim.

Until the recent adoption of the name Chennai, this city was known as Madras. The name Madras emerged during the English colonial period. Today, Mylapore forms part of the city of Madras and may rightly be considered its ancient quarter. The origin of the name "Madras" is connected with a Christian monastery that existed in the city. The Syriac word for monastery or monastic house is *Madrasa* (*Madrasta*), while the Arabic term is *Madrasa*. Early English records use the term *Madrast*. Gradually, this evolved into "Madras." It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the renowned monas-

tery at Mylapore gave the city its name. Certain records left by foreign travellers who visited Mylapore also mention a monastery associated with the memory of St. Thomas the Apostle, lending further support to this view.

In the accounts describing the death of the Apostle, we read that his disciples carried the body of Thomas to the monastery situated by the seashore below (the site where the Basilica now stands) and buried him there. It was the ministry, martyrdom, and tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore that gave the place the name *Beth Thuma*, which later evolved into Santhome. Thus, the connection between Mylapore, Madras, and Chennai becomes evident.



# HEIRS TO A MINISTRY OF COMPASSION

**The Josephine Sisters of Villoonni are a congregation that continues the compassionate ministry of Jesus.**

The community of the Josephine Sisters, Villoonni, was founded by Rev. Fr. Cyriac Kottayarikil on 25 November 1953, with the permission and approval of His Grace Mar Mathew Kavukattu, the then Archbishop of Changanacherry. The foundation arose from the sincere desire of several devout women in the Villoonni parish who wished to dedicate their lives to prayer and service but were unable to join existing religious congregations due to educational and financial limitations.

## Origin and Establishment

At the same time, Mr. Ouseph Chacko Thuruthumalil, a parishioner of Villoonni, generously offered his land as a memorial of the Golden Jubilee of his marriage. Recognizing this providential opportunity, Fr. Cyriac Kottayarikil initiated the construction of an institution to support women aspiring to consecrated life. With the Archbishop's consent, the foundation stone was laid on 15 January 1952 by Archbishop Mar Mathew Kavukattu.

Upon completion, the institution was formally inaugurated on 25 November 1953 by His Eminence Cardinal Eugene Tisserant, Prefect of the Congregation

for the Eastern Churches, during his visit to Kerala. The house later developed into the association known as the Josephine Sisters.

## Growth and Eparchial Recognition

A significant milestone occurred in 1978, when Archbishop Mar Antony Padiyara approved the establishment of a novitiate for candidates aspiring to consecrated life. After completing their formation, twenty-nine members made their First Profession of Vows on 15 November 1978.

In 1988, a new cream-colored religious habit consisting of a habit, morris, belt, and veil was officially approved by the Church authorities. In the same year, the Josephine Sisters became an independent religious community, and Sr. Ancy Jose Mundackal was elected as the first Superior General.

## Elevation as an Eparchial Congregation

A historic milestone in the journey of the Josephine Sisters was achieved on 16 January 2026, when the congregation was officially elevated to the status of an Eparchial Congregation by His Grace Mar Thomas Tharayil, Archbishop of Changanacherry. This recognition granted the congregation formal ecclesiastical



status within the Syro-Malabar Church and marked a new chapter in its spiritual and apostolic mission. The elevation stands as a testimony to the growth, stability, and dedicated service of the congregation to the Church and society.

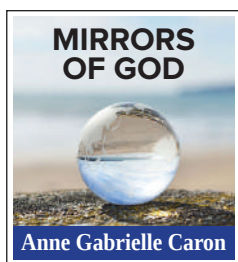
## The Charism and Apostolic Ministries of the Josephine Sisters

The charism of the Josephine Sisters is to embody and share the compassion and mercy of Jesus Christ by serving the poor, the needy, the sick, the elderly, and

the destitute. Inspired by this spirit, the sisters are actively engaged in various apostolic ministries, including service to the poor, care for the sick and the elderly, parish ministry, educational services in schools, and other charitable works.

At present, the congregation consists of 85 sisters serving in 25 communities in India and abroad, continuing their mission of compassionate service to society and witnessing Christ's love through their dedicated ministry.

# SHE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE SUFFERING OF JESUS



**Vinayak Nirmal**

She was only two-and-a-half years old when she entered the church for the baptism of her younger brother François. At that moment, her eyes fell upon a painting on the wall: Christ hanging on the Cross, nails piercing His hands and feet, crowned with thorns, blood flowing from His body. That sight deeply wounded her tender heart. Bursting into tears, she cried aloud immediately: "Jesus is in pain... Jesus is in pain!"

One among the rare souls who could truly understand the suffering of Jesus on the Cross—that was Anne Gabrielle Caron.

Anne Gabrielle was born on January 29, 2002, in Toulon, France. Her father, Alexandre Caron, was a naval officer, and her mother, Marie Dauphin, was a literature teacher. The couple had five children, of whom Anne Gabrielle was the eldest. Her constant desire was to see Jesus. Perhaps because someone had



once told her that one could see Jesus only after dying and going to heaven, she desired to die when she was merely four years old.

From the age of six, she began to limp while walking. At first, her parents mistakenly thought that she was imitating her grandfather, who was struggling to return to normal life after suffering a stroke. Initially they even scolded her for it. Later, however, they realized that she was not imitating anyone, but that there was something seriously wrong with her leg. After an X-ray examination, the doctor reassured them that there was

nothing to fear. Yet Anne's pain did not diminish. Gradually, the difficulty in walking turned into severe pain while walking. During the nights, the pain became unbearable. She began to cry aloud at night saying, "My leg... it hurts me."

Two months later, she was taken to another doctor. It was there that Anne was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma, a severe form of cancer affecting the bones of the pelvis and legs. The doctor spoke plainly: "Treatments may perhaps lessen her pain, but her illness will never be cured."

Sadly, it was during that same year that she was to receive her First Holy Communion. "With great eagerness... Jesus is waiting for me. I want Jesus quickly," she would say. Those were the days when she remained hospitalized for treatment. By the time she was brought from the hospital to the church, the ceremonies were almost over. Nevertheless, the priest paused the liturgical celebration and placed the Holy Eucharist upon her tongue.

Two years passed through treatments and suffering. Her pain was intense. Speaking to her mother about those painful moments, Anne once said: "Mother, I am terribly afraid of suffering pain. So I call Jesus to help me. I hold Je-

sus' hand. Jesus helps me."

Her prayer and desire were not merely to bear her own unbearable sufferings, but also to accept the sufferings of all the children in the hospital. When her mother came to know of this desire, she asked: "My child, your own pain is already too much for you. Why then do you want to take upon yourself the pain of others as well?" Anne's reply was remarkable: "It may be difficult for them to bear the pain. So I think I can suffer so that they may not suffer." One day she asked her mother, "Mother, will I die?" Her mother still remembers that it was on the eve of her first chemotherapy session. "We will do everything possible to make you well," was all her mother could reply. Anne responded peacefully: "I am happy to die, Mother, because I will be with Jesus."

Her desire was fulfilled. On July 23, 2010, around nine o'clock in the morning, her pain became severe. At 11:50 that night, Anne Gabrielle journeyed to heaven to behold Jesus face to face. "Will I go to Purgatory?"—that was the final question she asked Fr. Arnold. "No, you will go straight to heaven," the priest replied. On September 12, 2020, the diocesan phase of Anne Gabrielle's canonization process was officially initiated.



# THE OFFICE OF THE EPARCHIAL CHANCELLOR



## CANON LAW

Rev. Dr. Joshy Kulathumkal

Canons 252 to 261 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) describe the position of the Chancellor in the eparchial curia, as well as their responsibilities regarding the preservation of the eparchial archives. The word 'Chancellor' originates from the Latin word *cancellarius*, which means 'Gate-keeper'. In reality, the Chancellor is the custodian of the eparchial archives, or the entire documentary center of the eparchy.

Originally, in the ancient Roman Empire, the Chancellor was the gatekeeper who stood before the railings of the Roman court. Over time, this official took on the duties of the magistrate's secretary. The system of the 'Chancery' emerged adjacent to the Bishop's office starting from the 12th century. Subsequently, the Chancellor became responsible for signing and preserving the Bishop's letters. Post the Council of Trent, in addition to preserving curial documents, the Chancellor was legally recognized as the Principal Notary of the eparchial curia. The position of

➔ **The Eparchial Bishop must mandatorily appoint a Chancellor in the eparchial curia. The Chancellor must be a priest or a deacon. However, the Code of Canons for the Latin Church (CIC) places no such restrictions. Therefore, in the Latin Church, any layperson-regardless of gender-can be appointed to the position of Chancellor.**

Chancellor was officially incorporated into Church legislation for the first time in the 1917 Code of Canon Law. This position has been retained in the current Code of Canon Law with necessary modifications.

The Eparchial Bishop must mandatorily appoint a Chancellor in the eparchial curia. The Chancellor must be a priest or a deacon. However, the Code of Canons for the Latin Church (CIC) places no such restrictions. Therefore, in the Latin Church, any layperson-regardless of gender-can be appointed to the position of Chancellor. If required, an assistant may be provided to the Chancellor, designated as the Vice-Chancellor. All regulations applicable to the Chancellor also apply to the Vice-Chancellor. By virtue of the law itself (*ipso iure*), both the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors are official notaries of the eparchial curia.

The Chancellor must be a person of good character, above reproach, possessing a good reputation, and living a

life free from suspicion. Since they hold a position that certifies the authenticity and credibility of legal documents, one can easily imagine the consequences if they were untrustworthy.

Unless the particular law provides otherwise, the primary duty of the Chancellor is to collect, arrange, and securely preserve the documents of the curia in the eparchial archives. The particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church has not included any specific variations on this matter. The Chancellor must co-sign the documents issued by the Eparchial Bishop. His signature certifies the credibility and authenticity of these documents. Since the Chancellor is a notary by virtue of the law, the duties of a notary are also entrusted to them. They must draft the proceedings and documents regarding decrees, decisions, obligations, or other matters requiring intervention. It is their responsibility to faithfully record all actions and sign the proceedings, indicating the place, day, month, and year. They

are required to make documents and proceedings available to anyone who legally requests them and to certify that copies match the original.

Since the Chancellor has direct responsibility for the archives, he must not only be an expert in Canon Law but also a qualified archivist. Additionally, he should have practical knowledge of as many languages as possible. The Chancellor must ensure that the archive is always kept locked. Its keys must remain exclusively with the Bishop and the Chancellor. No one is permitted to enter the archives without the sole permission of the Bishop, or the joint permission of the Protosyncellus (Vicar General) and the Chancellor. However, the keys to the secret archives or secret safe must remain only with the Eparchial Bishop. No documents may be removed from the archives without the Bishop's permission or the joint permission of the Protosyncellus and the Chancellor. Furthermore, no documents whatsoever may be removed from the secret archives.

In short, by meticulously preserving the eparchial archives, certifying the authenticity of important canonical documents, and serving as a trusted assistant to the Bishop, the Chancellor helps maintain the transparency, legal integrity, and continuity of the Church. ■

# IS PERSONAL PRAYER NECESSARY?

The easiest way to develop personal closeness and love toward someone is to speak openly with that person. It is through open conversation that one gains the freedom and intimacy to share everything mutually. A relationship deepens when both persons begin to share the same wavelength. If open communication is essential even for the growth of relationships between ordinary human beings, it is far more necessary for intimacy with God. Open conversation with God is what we call prayer.

There are many forms of prayer. Each type of prayer is in itself good and necessary. Yet among them, personal prayer is something that can never be neglected. Jesus Himself revealed the importance of personal prayer. The greatest example of this is that Jesus Himself prayed. Beyond communal prayer, the Bible makes it clear that Jesus also prayed personally. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt 6:6). This passage

➔ **Personal prayer is the path through which we recognize the love of God. Often we imagine that we are hidden from God's eyes and that because of our sins God has become distant from us. But that is not true. It is when we speak to God through prayer that we begin to experience His love touching our hearts. Even when children become disobedient and drift away, a good father still longs for their return and remains willing to listen to them.**

also teaches us what prayer ought to be.

Personal prayer is the path through which we recognize the love of God. Often we imagine that we are hidden from God's eyes and that because of our sins God has become distant from us. But that is not true. It is when we speak to God through prayer that we begin to experience His love touching our hearts. Even when children become disobedient and drift away, a good father still longs for their return and remains willing to listen to them. God is the same. Even if we go astray or stumble, He is always ready to hear us. To return once again to that former love, we must open our hearts and speak to Him. We may have drifted away from God, but God never

distances Himself from us. We realize this only when we speak to Him and when He responds to our conversation.

Personal prayer is the easiest way to become friends with God. A good friend illumines our life. We may be persons with many weaknesses, yet if we have a true friend, much goodness can come into our lives through that friendship. A friend who motivates us, accepts us, and guides us along the right path is truly a blessing. God too is like this. Prayer is the means through which He enters our lives as a friend. Through prayer, our life becomes freer, more beautiful, and more meaningful. We lose nothing through it; rather, we receive many blessings.

Prayer gives us courage and strength-

ens us. It also brings us consolation. We are people who carry many burdens in life and live under immense pressures. Yet when we surrender all these things to God through prayer, we experience freedom in our spirit. God knows our hearts and the burdens we carry. That is why Christ says: "Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

Therefore, never neglect personal prayer. If you have not practised personal prayer until now, begin today itself. But do not approach God in prayer merely for the sake of petitions and intentions. Rather, accept Him as a friend and speak to Him. Open your heart before Him without hesitation or concealment.

There is no other person in this world before whom you can remain so transparent. God alone is capable of accepting you exactly as you are. Speak to Him every day. That conversation itself is your prayer. You can speak openly to Him while travelling, while working, and in every circumstance of life. Then your whole life itself will become a prayer. ■



## SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF RELIGIOUS SISTERS



Kakkanad: Under the auspices of the Commission for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of the Syro-Malabar Church, a gathering of religious sisters cel-

ebrating their Silver Jubilee was organised on May 25 at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Major Archbishop Mar Raphael

Thattil, delivered the keynote address. In his message, the Major Archbishop said that every jubilee is an occasion to thank God for the graces received along the journey of life and

to move forward with renewed courage and strength. He recalled that the services rendered by religious sisters in the spiritual, social and healthcare sectors are invaluable. Mar Thattil also exhorted them to continue their ministries without discouragement or expectation of reward, taking inspiration from the consolation offered to Jesus by Saint Veronica.

A solemn Holy *Qurbana* was celebrated on the morning of May 25 by Commission

Chairman Mar Sebastian Vadakel. The subsequent meeting was presided over by Mar Sebastian Vadakel. Major Archiepiscopal Chancellor Rev. Dr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil, Commission Secretary Rev. Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS, and Office Secretary Sr. Jessy Maria OP offered felicitations. More than one hundred sisters from various religious congregations participated in the jubilee gathering, which concluded with Agape.

## 'JEEVAN JYOTHI' KERYGMA TRAINING PROGRAMME



Kakkanad: A four-day residential training camp for evangelisers, organised by 'Jeevan Jyothi', the lay missionary movement of the Syro-Malabar Church, was held at Mount St.

Thomas, Kakkannad, from May 12 to 16. Fifty-five participants, including religious sisters, from various eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church attended the programme.

Rev. Fr. Francis Eluvathingal, the secretary of the commission of evangelization and pastoral care of migrants and K. K. Joseph explained the aims and objectives of the training

programme. The *Missio* team comprising Tomichen, Augustine and Seena Cletus, under the leadership of Retd. Prof. Aliceskutty, led the four-day sessions. The gathering evaluated that the next phase of the Jeevan Jyothi missionary movement would be to initiate activities in all 35 eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church. A proposal was also raised to begin Bible study series and theological study programmes for missionaries under the leadership of Jeevan Jyothi.

On the concluding day, Holy *Qurbana* was celebrated by the Major Archbishop Mar Raphael

Thattil. The sessions and discussions for evangelisers were led by Evangelisation Commission Chairman Mar Prince Antony Panengadan. Presiding over the concluding session, the Major Archbishop reminded the participants of the importance of evangelisation and called upon all the laity to move forward in the missionary mission of the Church in communion with the Church. Certificates were distributed on behalf of the Syro-Malabar Church to those who participated in the Kerygma Training by Mar Prince Antony Panengadan. Rev. Fr. Francis Eluvathingal expressed gratitude to all.

## 64<sup>TH</sup> LRC SEMINAR ON MIGRATION



Kakkanad: The 64th LRC Seminar organised by the Liturgical Research Centre (LRC) at Mount St. Thomas was inaugurated by His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. The theme of the seminar was "Migration: Challenges and Possibilities in the Twenty-First Century." Twelve

research papers related to migration were presented during the seminar held on May 22 and 23.

In his inaugural address, the Major Archbishop appreciated the leadership provided by the LRC in fostering serious academic and theological discussions on contemporary issues affecting society and the Church. He pointed out that

migration has deeply influenced the history and socio-spiritual life of the Syro-Malabar Church. While migration has opened avenues for education, employment and economic growth, it has also raised serious cultural and family-related challenges. Mar Raphael Thattil added that the principal objective of the seminar was to analyse the

social, theological and humanitarian dimensions of migration through these research papers.

LRC Chairman Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil delivered the keynote address, while Mar Jose Pulickal delivered the benedictory address. Major Archiepiscopal Chancellor Rev. Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidathil offered felicitations at the function. LRC Executive Director Rev. Dr. Jobin Kanjirathinkal delivered the welcome address.

Priests, consecrated persons, research scholars, teachers, social workers and representatives from various sectors participated in the seminar. The papers dealt with migration is-

ues in India and abroad, overseas migration among the youth of Kerala, employment conditions, socio-political challenges, the migration ministry of the Syro-Malabar Church, biblical and theological perspectives, papal teachings, and cultural and historical themes. Scholars and researchers from various fields, including Dr. Gabriel Simon, Dr. K. P. Mani, Rev. Dr. Syriac Valiya Kunnumpurath, Rev. Dr. James Puliurumpil, Rev. Dr. Aljo Karerakkattil, Rev. Dr. Joseph Ayyankanal MST, Rev. Dr. George Kudilil, Rev. Dr. Francis Eluvathingal, Rev. Dr. Thomas Koonan SDB, and Rev. Dr. Mathew Illathuparambil, presented research papers.

## ANNUAL GATHERING OF BENEFACTORS



Kakkanad: The annual gathering of benefactors supporting the mission activities of the Syro-Malabar Church was held on April 11 at Mount St. Thomas, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church.

Around fifty benefactors from various places participated in the gathering. The programme began with Eucharistic Adoration followed by the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*. During the public meeting, Rev. Fr.

Francis Eluvathingal, secretary of the commission of evangelization and pastoral care of migrants delivered the welcome address. The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, delivered

the keynote message at the gathering. He gratefully recalled the generous support extended by the benefactors towards the Syro-Malabar Church, its mission activities, the formation of missionary priests, religious and laity, and the development of mission eparchies. The Major Archbishop also stressed the need for more people to come forward zealously to participate in the missionary activities of the Church.

The benefactors who addressed the gathering spoke about the importance of the lay missionary movement 'Jeevan

Jyothi' and the spiritual benefits received through visits to mission centres. They also shared their blessed experiences gained through involvement in mission activities. Mission Director of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Prince Antony Panengadan, held discussions with the benefactors. He remarked that the benefactors are becoming great partners in the mission activities of the Church through their generosity. Benefactors supporting the mission activities were honoured during the function. The annual gathering concluded with a fellowship meal and vote of thanks.



# FIRST PHASE OF VILANGAD REHABILITATION PROJECT COMPLETED; 70 HOUSES HANDED OVER



Vilangad: The first phase of the rehabilitation project implemented by COD, the Social Service Society of the Eparchy of Thamarassery, under the leadership of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council for the victims of the devastating landslide that occurred on July 30, 2024, in the Vilangad region, has been completed. The key handover ceremony of the 70 houses constructed as part of the project and the inauguration of the second phase of activities were held at the premises of St. Alphonsa Church, Manjakunnu. KCBC President and Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Calicut, Most Rev. Dr. Varghese Chakkalackal, inaugurated the gathering. Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany presided over the function, while Bishop of Thamarassery Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil delivered the introductory address.

In his inaugural address, Archbishop Varghese Chakkalackal stated that amidst those who made great promises during the time of disaster and later withdrew, the Church became a model by fulfilling the promises it had made. During

the gathering, he also inaugurated the second phase of the Vilangad rehabilitation project titled "Safe Within: Reconnect Wayanad and Vilangad." He noted that although KCBC had initially announced the construction of 100 houses in Vilangad and Wayanad for landslide victims, the project was later expanded to 150 houses. Of the 70 houses completed in the first phase of rehabilitation, 41 were constructed under the KCBC project for Vilangad, while 29 were built with the support of various religious congregations, eparchies and organisations. Construction of 12 additional houses is progressing as part of the second phase of the project. Approximately ₹10.58 crore has been spent on the project so far. The rehabilitation activities of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council were coordinated by the Kerala Social Service Forum (KSSF), which coordinates the social service activities of the Catholic Church in Kerala. In the Eparchy of Thamarassery, the responsibility for coordinating these activities was entrusted to COD, the social service wing of the epar-

chy. COD Director Rev. Fr. Sai Parankulangara presented the activity report. Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil expressed heartfelt gratitude to all those who supported the project.

All 70 houses constructed under the project were completed within 21 months. Rather



than following a single model, the houses were designed differently according to the number of family members and their specific needs, with each house having a minimum area of 1,000 square feet. The organisers also clarified that by constructing the houses on plots identified by the families themselves according to their preferences, the emotional bond of having "their own home" could be preserved.

As part of the programme, the key of the 70th house was handed over jointly by Mar Joseph Pamplany and Auxiliary Bishop of the Eparchy of Mananthavady, Mar Alex Tharamangalam, representing all the beneficiary families. As part of the second phase activities, the task force formed under the "Safe Within: Reconnect Wayanad and Vilangad" project led by Caritas India was inaugurated jointly by Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil and Dr. Hussain Madavoor, President of the Meppayur Salafiya College Association. A counselling team providing psychological support to disaster victims and a volunteer task force will be major components of the second phase project.

Tharayil, KCBC Disaster Management Committee member Rev. Fr. Michael Vettikkad, Devagiri St. Joseph's College Administrator Rev. Fr. Bonny Augustine CMI, KCMS President and SIC Superior General Sister Dr. Ardra SIC, Apostolic Carmel Sisters Provincial Superior Sister Jasina AC, Vilangad Forane Vicar Rev. Fr. Wilson Muttathukunnel, All Kerala Lay Animator of Jesus Youth Reji J. Karott, Vanimel Grama Panchayat Member Sheby Sebastian, and KSSF Director Rev. Fr. Jacob Mavunkal addressed the gathering.

Prominent personalities from the political, social and religious spheres, representatives of various organisations, priests,

The priorities of the second phase include the construction of 12 new houses, projects enhancing livelihood opportunities, the formation and training of a task force prepared to respond during natural disasters, and the strengthening of counselling teams for psychological support.

COD President Mons. Abraham Vayalil, KCBC Deputy Secretary General Rev. Fr. Thomas

religious, local residents and a large gathering of people from different parts of the region participated in the function. A committee led by Manjakunnu Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Bobby Poovathingal, COD Project Coordinator Albin Zacharias, Project Officer Siddharth S. Nath, Prince Thomas, Christina Rose George and Shani Joseph coordinated the programmes.

## SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH DELEGATION MEETS THE CHIEF MINISTER



Thiruvananthapuram: A delegation of the Syro-Malabar Church paid a visit to the Chief Minister of Kerala, V. D. Sathiesan, on Friday morning, May 29, and conveyed the greetings and good wishes of the Church. The delegation comprised Mar

Andrews Thazhath, Mar Joseph Pamplany, Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, Mar Jose Pulickal, Rev. Dr. Tom Olikkarott, PRO, Rev. Fr. James Kokkavayalil, Secretary of the Public Affairs Commission, Rev. Dr. John Thekkekara, Liaison Officer in

Thiruvananthapuram and Prof. Rajeev Kochuparambil, President, Catholic Congress

The delegation handed over to the Chief Minister a letter from the Major Archbishop, Mar Raphael Thattil, outlining various matters concerning the

Church and the community that require the Government's consideration. The Chief Minister assured the delegation that immediate attention would be given to the issues raised by the Church and that strong interventions would be undertak-

en to protect the rights of the Christian minority and to address the challenges they face.

In addition to the Chief Minister's Office, the delegation also visited and conveyed the Church's greetings and presented various concerns and requests to Shri. Ramesh Chennithala, the Home Minister, Shri. Sunny Joseph, the Minister for Electricity Department, Shri. Roji M. John, the Minister for Higher Education, Shri. A. P. Anil Kumar, the Minister for Revenue Department and Shri. Mons Joseph, the Minister for Water Resources Department.



## VENERABLE FR. KADALIKKATTIL MATHEW, A HOLY SOUL WHO LIVED FOR THE GLORY OF GOD: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP



Pala: Venerable Fr. Kadalikattil Mathew was a holy soul who dedicated his life for the glory of the Lord with the conviction that every person around him bore the image of

God, said the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil. The Major Archbishop was delivering the homily after celebrating the *Qurbana* at the SH Provincial House Chapel, Pala, in connection with the 91st death anniversary observance of Venerable Fr. Kadalikattil Mathew.

Large numbers of devotees from various parts of the state

visited the SH Provincial House Chapel at Pala, where the tomb of the Blessed is situated, during the novena prayers held in connection with the death anniversary as well as on the principal feast day. The blessing of the memorial meal conducted in connection with the anniversary observance was performed by Bishop of the Eparchy of Palai, Mar Joseph Kallarangatt. In his

message, Mar Joseph Kallarangatt said that Fr. Kadalikattil, who loved everyone without distinction of caste, religion, colour or class, played a major role in promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart in Kerala.

SH Congregation Superior General Sister Usha Maria, General Education Councilor Sister Ancy Paul, Pala Provincial Superior Sister Merlin Arepparambil, Vice Postulator Sister Therese Koyippuram and others provided leadership for the celebrations.

## THRISSUR ARCHDIOCESE DAY CELEBRATED COLOURFULLY



Thrissur: The Thrissur Archdiocese Day and the 140th anniversary of the establishment of the eparchy were celebrated colourfully on May 16 at St. Francis Xavier's Forane Church, Wadakkanchery. The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, inaugurated the Archdiocese Day celebrations.

Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Thrissur, Mar Andrews Thazhath, presided over the function. Auxiliary Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil welcomed the gathering.

In his inaugural address the Major Archbishop mentioned about the historical milestones: Mar Adolph Medlycott, the noted historian, was the first bishop

of the Thrissur Archdiocese. He was followed by Mar John Menachery and Mar George Alapat, and later by Bishop Mar Joseph Kundukulam, known as the "Father of the Poor," who also guided the eparchy with distinction. It was Mar Kundukulam who established the Pope Paul Mercy Home at Peringandoor for children with

mental challenges. He was also the one who advised the government regarding the Laksham Veedu housing scheme. Later, Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, who founded Jubilee Medical College among other institutions, also led the archdiocese commendably. Mar Raphael Thattil recalled that the leadership of the archdiocese has now reached Mar Andrews Thazhath the current Archbishop.

The role played by the Thrissur Eparchy in uplifting backward regions has been immense. This fraternity, the Major Archbishop said, is the fruit of brotherly love. The services rendered by the eparchy were never intended for the accumulation of wealth. He pointed out

that Church institutions accomplished many times more in the field of literacy than what the government itself undertook. "The profit of the Church is the treasure in heaven," he added. The Church also showed courage in rehabilitating leprosy patients who once lived in Thrissur city, and today leprosy has been eradicated from Kerala. The Major Archbishop further said that the Christian community should not begin and end within the walls of the church alone, but should become a life broken and shared for one's brothers and sisters, just as the bread is broken on the altar.

Mar Raphael Thattil also presented the special honours conferred by Pope Leo XIV upon Rev. Fr. Thomas Kakkassery and Rev. Fr. Jose Vallooran, priests of the Archdiocese. He also presented the the order of the St. Gregory the Great titles received by Mr. Davis Edakalathur Prof. K. M. Francis and Adv. Biju Kundukulam, Dame title for Dr. Mary Regina, as well as the Archdiocesan Awards conferred upon Bro. Jose Chungath and Santi Abraham Vadayattukuzhy.



Fr. Jose Vallooran  
Pro Ecclesia et  
Pontifice



Fr. Thomas Kakkassery  
Pro Ecclesia et  
Pontifice



Chevalier Mr. Davis  
Edakalathur



Chevalier Prof.  
K. M. Francis



Chevalier Adv. Biju  
Kundukulam



Dame Dr. Mary  
Regina

## THALASSERY MINOR SEMINARY SHIFTED TO VELLARIKKUNDU



Vellarikkundu: The Minor Seminary of the Archdiocese of Tellicherry officially began functioning at Vellarikkundu. The seminary, which had been functioning at Thalassery for the past 65 years, has been shifted to Vellarikkundu from this academic year onwards. The inauguration and blessing of the new seminary building were performed by the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Thrissur and former Presi-

dent of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, Mar Andrews Thazhath. Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath was the main celebrant of the concelebrated *Qurbana*. Metropolitan Archbishop of Tellicherry Mar Joseph Pamplany, Mar George Njaralakatt, Auxiliary Bishop of the Eparchy of Mananthavady Mar Alex Tharamangalam, Vicars General Mons. Antony Muthukunnel, Mons. Mathew Elamthuruthipadavil

and Mons. Sebastian Palakkuzhy, along with various Forane Vicars and nearly one hundred priests, concelebrated the *Qurbana*.

Archbishop Mar Joseph Pamplany presided over the public meeting. Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath officially inaugurated the gathering. Mar George Njaralakatt, Mar Alex Tharamangalam, Mons. Antony Muthukunnel, Mons. Sebastian Palakkuzhy, Vellarikkundu Forane Vicar Rev. Fr. Johnson Anthyankulam, Rev. Fr. George Karot, Rev. Fr. Antony Thekkemuriyil, Sr. Anjali FCC and Joshua Ozhukayil offered felicitations. Minor Seminary Rector Rev. Fr. Thomas Melvettath expressed gratitude.



Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil received Shri. Roji M John, the Hon. Minister for Higher Education at Major Archiepiscopal Curia, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad.



## KOTHAMANGALAM EPARCHY DAY CELEBRATED



Kothamangalam: The Kothamangalam Eparchy Day celebrations, along with the nonagenarian celebrations and the beginning of the Episcopal Golden Jubilee of Mar George Punnakottil, as well as the seventieth birthday celebrations of Mar George Madathikandathil and the eparchy, were held on Sunday, May 3, at the auditorium of St. George Cathedral Church. The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, inaugurated the public meeting. In his inaugural address, the Major

Archbishop said that the richness of vocations in the Eparchy of Kothamangalam stems from the nobility of the families in the eparchy and added that the eparchy should continue to foster more missionary vocations. He also remarked that Kothamangalam is an eparchy well known for its exemplary social service activities and that this was the result of the encouragement given by Mar Punnakottil and Mar Madathikandathil towards social service initiatives. Mar Raphael Thattil further noted that Mar George Punna-

kottil was a distinguished shepherd who rendered dedicated service in both the Eparchies of Kothamangalam and Idukki. He described Mar Punnakottil as a tireless worker who was never idle and added that the present shepherd, Mar George Madathikandathil, is a bishop marked by simplicity and firm convictions.

Mar George Alencherry delivered the benedictory address. Cardinal Mar George Alencherry honoured Mar George Punnakottil, who is celebrating his nonagenarian jubilee, Mar George Madathikandathil, who is celebrating his seventieth birthday, and Most Rev. Dr. Joshi Pottakkal, who assumed office as Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mainz, by presenting them with ceremonial shawls.

Rev. Fr. George Oliyappu-

ram Senior, who completed seventy years of priestly ministry, retired Judge C. V. Francis, a member of Vazhakala parish who served as Study Secretary of the Justice J. B. Koshy Commission, and Sister Faustine of the SD Congregation, who made notable contributions in the fields of healthcare ministry and family apostolate, were also honoured during the function.

Prior to the public meeting, a thanksgiving *Qurbana* was celebrated at St. George Cathedral under the leadership of Mar George Punnakottil in connection with his nonagenarian jubilee. Bishops from the eparchy and priests from the Eparchies of Kothamangalam and Idukki concelebrated the *Qurbana*. During the Eucharistic celebration, Bishop of the Eparchy of Idukki, Mar George Nellikkunnel, delivered the homily.

Among those who addressed the celebrations were Jacobite Church Kothamangalam Regional Bishop Elias Mar Julius, Bishops from the Eparchy of Kothamangalam including Mar Thomas Pulloppillil, Mar Chacko Thottumarickal, Mar Joseph Kodakal and Mar Benny Edathattel, CMI Carmel Province Provincial Rev. Fr. Joby Kochumuttom, Rev. Dr. Francis Alappatt, P. J. Joseph MLA, MPs Francis George and Dean Kuriakose, MSJ Provincial Superior Sister Abhaya, and Pastoral Council Joint Secretary Jibin Jose. Mar George Punnakottil, Mar George Madathikandathil and Mar Joshi Pottakkal delivered reply speeches. Eparchial Vicars General Mons. Pius Malekandathil delivered the welcome address and Mons. Vincent Nedungatt proposed the vote of thanks.

## THE SECOND EPARCHIAL ASSEMBLY OF KANJIRAPALLY



Kuttikkanam: The Eparchy of Kanjirapally, which was established in 1977 by bifurcating the eastern region of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, has entered its Golden Jubilee year. The Golden Jubilee celebrations of the eparchy commenced with the Second Eparchial Assembly. The assembly, held at Marian College, Kuttikkanam, from May 11 onwards, was attended by 180 representatives from various sectors. The assembly, convened under the presidency of Bishop Mar Jose Pulickal, evaluated the pastoral and so-

cial service orientations of the eparchy and proposed timely recommendations for renewal. The discussions were based on a working document prepared in the light of guidelines deliberated at various levels within the eparchy.

The Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, inaugurated the Eparchial Assembly. In his inaugural address, the Major Archbishop stated that he gratefully remembers the dedicated ministries rendered by the faithful

of the Kanjirapally Eparchy and the bishops who guided the eparchy, whose contributions provided direction and inspiration for the holistic growth of the Syro-Malabar Church. He noted that the dedicated service, vision and spirituality of Bishops Mar Joseph Powathil, Mar Mathew Vattakuzhy, Mar Mathew Arackal and Mar Jose Pulickal became instrumental in the remarkable growth of the eparchy. The Major Archbishop further added that the eparchy has become a model for the uni-

versal Church in the fields of education, healthcare and social service. The Major Archbishop also remarked that the functioning style of the eparchy's social service initiatives, including Peermade Development Society, Malanadu Development Society, Marian College and Amal Jyothi Engineering College, should become exemplary models for society.

Mar Jose Pulickal presided over the gathering. In his presidential address, he said that the Eparchy of Kanjirapally gives priority to ministries

rooted in goodness, compassion and care. He added that the eparchy would continue to exist as a community of unity, sharing and mutual concern in the spirit of the early Christian community. In his benedictory address, Mar Mathew Arackal recalled that the growth of the eparchy over the years stands as a sign of the unity, faith and communion of the People of God. Proto-Syncellus Rev. Dr. Joseph Vellamattam and Pastoral Council Joint Secretary Adv. Shansimol Philip also addressed the gathering.

## NEW CATECHETICAL YEAR IN THE EPARCHY OF IRINJALAKUDA



With the motto "Vision of Christ through a Compassionate Life," the Faith Formation Academic Year 2026-27 of the Eparchy of Irinjalakuda commenced with solemn celebrations at St. Xavier's Church, Thekkanthanissery. Bishop

Mar Pauly Kannookadan inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Mar Pauly Kannookadan was also the principal celebrant of the solemn *Qurbana*. In his inaugural address, he reminded the faithful that a true vision of

Christ becomes possible only by practising God's mercy in daily life. He added that the aim of this academic year is to form a generation marked by prayer and compassion. Eparchial Catechetical Director Rev. Fr. Rejoy Pazhayattil delivered an analysis

of this year's motto, "Vision of Christ through a Compassionate Life."

The announcement of the best catechetical unit of the previous academic year was made by Eparchial Vicar General Rev. Mons. Jose Maliyekkal.

Rev. Fr. Lijo Manimalakunnel announced the awards for the best IFL Diaries. Rev. Fr. Siby Kallaparambil announced the winners of the logo design competition for the new academic year and distributed the prizes.

Special awards were also presented to catechism students who participated regularly in the *Qurbana* throughout the entire year. The inauguration of the parish-level Karunya Nidhi distribution was also held in connection with the programme. Sr. Maria Therese FCC expressed gratitude.



## 140<sup>TH</sup> CHANGANACHERRY ARCHEPARCHY DAY CELEBRATED



Changanacherry: The 140th Archeparchy Day of the Archeparchy of Changanacherry was celebrated at Fr. Dominic Thottassery Nagar in the premises of St. Xavier's Forane Church, Thrickodithanam. Bishop Samuel Mar Irenios inaugurated the Archeparchy Day celebrations. In his address, the bishop ob-

served that the Archeparchy of Changanacherry possesses a faith tradition that has never deviated from apostolic teachings. He added that the Archeparchy is an apostolic community blessed with vigilant shepherds and generous faithful who willingly share their faith and resources. He also recalled the

memorable contributions made by the Archeparchy of Changanacherry toward the establishment and growth of the Malankara Catholic Church.

Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil presided over the gathering. He extended greetings to Archbishop Emeritus Mar Joseph Perumthottam, who is entering the Silver Jubilee year of his episcopal ordination. Archbishop Mar Joseph Perumthottam delivered the benedictory address, while Commodore Varghese Mathew Karukakkalathil, State Naval

Officer-in-Charge, delivered the keynote address.

Archbishop Mar Thomas Tharayil presented the Archeparchy's Excellence Awards to noted social worker Shantha Jose of Thiruvananthapuram and former MLA Dr. K.C. Joseph, who made significant contributions to the development of Kuttanad. Individuals who excelled at the national and state levels, young entrepreneurs and young couples blessed with more than seven children were also honoured during the function.

Archeparchial Proto-Synce llus Mons. Antony Ethakattu, Thrickodithanam Forane Parish Vicar Rev. Fr. Sebastian Punassery, Archeparchy Day Coordinator Rev. Fr. Cherian Kakuzhy, Archeparchial PRO Adv. Joji Chirayil, FCC Congregation Provincial Superior Sister Brijji FCC, Pastoral Council Secretary Dr. Rekha Mathews and Yuvadeepthi SMYM Deputy President Lucy Philipppose addressed the gathering. Syncellus Mons. Mathew Chagankary administered the Archeparchy Day pledge, while Syncellus Mons. Scaria Kanniyakonil led the prayer.

## TEACHING METHODS MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE DIGITAL AGE: BISHOP MAR JOSE PORUNNEDOM

Dwaraka: Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedom of the Eparchy of Mananthavady stated that significant changes must be introduced in educational methods in accordance with the needs of the digital generation of the modern age. He also reminded the gathering that no form of artificial intelligence can replace the personal bond between teachers and students, irrespective of technological advancement. He was speaking at "Sadgamaya 26," a programme organized at Dwaraka Pastoral Centre incorporating the an-

nual general body meeting of teachers under the Mananthavady Eparchy Corporate Educational Agency and a felicitation for retiring staff members.

In his inaugural address, Mar Jose Porunnedom said that human interaction in education leaves a lasting impact on children, which no technology can surpass. He emphasized that teachers should give special attention to instilling noble values in children in order to form a strong future generation. He further suggested that the talents and experience of

employees retiring from official service should continue to be utilized for the welfare of society through voluntary service.

Bishop Mar Alex Tharamangalam presided over the function. He expressed profound gratitude for the collective contributions made by the teaching community to the field of education. Forty teachers and two non-teaching staff members retiring from service were honoured and presented with mementoes during the ceremony.

Corporate Manager Rev. Fr.



Sijo Elankunnappuzha began the programme with prayer and delivered the introductory remarks. A seminar session on the topic "Teaching Perspectives for Generation Z (Gen Z)" was also conducted under the leadership of Bishop Mar Jose Porunne-

dom, addressing the changing needs of learners of the new generation.

Saji Jose, Shinoj Pappachan and Johnson K.G. offered felicitations, while teacher representative Thomas M.U. delivered the vote of thanks.

## CULTURE OF LIFE MUST BE PROMOTED: MAR JOHN NELLIKUNNEL



Chottupara: Bishop Mar John Nellikunnel of the Eparchy of Idukki stated that life is a gift from God and that the life given by God must be protected and

nurtured at any cost. He also stressed that, at a time when a culture of death is becoming increasingly prevalent, society must promote a culture of life.

He was delivering the message after celebrating the Holy *Qurbana* in connection with the Gianna pilgrimage conducted to the renovated St. Gianna Church, Chottupara, under the leadership of the Mathruvedi of the Eparchy of Kanjirapally.

Mar John Nellikunnel reminded the faithful that St. Gianna, the co-patroness of Mathruvedi, accepted the life entrusted to her with the conviction that it was a gift from God.

He further said that St. Gianna, who firmly resisted all pressures from acquaintances and even medical advice urging her to destroy the life in her womb, remains a model for everyone in safeguarding life under all circumstances. Vicar General Rev. Fr. Joseph Vellamattam and Forane Directors concelebrated the Holy *Qurbana*.

Chottupara Church is the only church in the Idukki Eparchy dedicated in the name

of St. Gianna. Vicar General Rev. Fr. Joseph Vellamattam inaugurated the pilgrimage by handing over the flag to Eparchial Mathruvedi President Jiji Puliymakunnel. Thousands of pilgrims from the 13 foranes of the eparchy were received and welcomed by Parish Priest and Forane Director Rev. Fr. Rintu Kizhakkevelikkakathu along with the parish community during the prayerful Rosary procession. Eparchial Director Rev. Fr. Mathew Olickal expressed gratitude.

## 'SPERANZA 3.0' INSPIRES YOUTH WITH FIRM FAITH



Irinjalakuda: 'Speranza 3.0,' the musical retreat organized as part of the Youth Year celebrations of the Eparchy of Irinjalakuda, emerged as a notable spiritual initiative for the em-

powerment of Catholic youth. The three-day camp was organized at Christ College, Irinjalakuda, under the joint leadership of KCYM, CLC and Jesus Youth units of the eparchy. The

retreat aimed at forming a generation of young people firmly rooted in faith through music ministry, spiritual sessions and life testimonies.

The retreat commenced at

4 p.m. on May 21 and was inaugurated by Bishop Mar Pauly Kannookadan. He subsequently celebrated the Holy *Qurbana* and delivered the message. He exhorted the younger gener-

ation to live firmly grounded in Christian values amid the challenges of the contemporary world. The retreat concluded at 5 p.m. on May 23. More than 500 young men and women from various parts of the eparchy participated in the spiritual gathering. Throughout the camp, spiritually enriching and motivational sessions were led by eminent priests and lay ministers from different parts of Kerala. Opportunities for confession and counselling were also arranged. More than 180 volunteers from various youth organizations worked behind the scenes to ensure the successful conduct of the retreat.





DIARY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

FROM 25 APRIL - 25 MAY

APRIL

- **26 Sunday:** Celebrated *Holy Qurbana* at St. Joseph's Shrine, Pavaratti in the Archeparchy of Trichur.  
Consecrated the newly built St. Joseph's Church, Kokkunnu, in the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly and celebrated the *Holy Qurbana*.
- **28 Tuesday:** Inaugurated the Minor Seminary Formators' Meet at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.
- **29 Wednesday:** Celebrated *Holy Qurbana* with the Minor Seminary Formators at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.

MAY

- **1 Friday:** Celebrated *Holy Qurbana* on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Kerala Charismatic Movement at the Divine Retreat Centre, Muringoor.
- **2 Saturday:** Called on H. H. Awa III, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East at the Metropolitan Palace of the Church of the East, Thrissur.
- **3 Sunday:** Inaugurated the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the erection and Eparchial Day of the Eparchy of Kothamangalam. Participated in the celebrations

at St. George Cathedral, Kothamangalam in connection with the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and the beginning of the golden jubilee of the consecration of Bishop *Emeritus* Mar George Punnakottil, the 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration of Bishop Mar George Madathikandathil and the reception to Bishop Joshy Pottackal, the Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese of Mains in Germany,

- **6-10:** Participated in the 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *L'Oeuvre d'Orient* in Paris.
- **13 Wednesday:** Inaugurated the Eparchial Assembly of the Eparchy of Kanjirapally at Marian College, Kuttikkanam.
- **14 Thursday:** Blessed the Sannidhana Ashram of the MCBS Congregation at Illithode.
- **16 Saturday:** Delivered the Jubilee Message on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese of Kochi of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church at Sion Seminary, Koratty.

Distributed certificates to the participants of the Missionary Training Programme organized by the Syro-Malabar *Jeevan Jyothi* Lay Missionary Movement at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.

Inaugurated the 625<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Holy Cross

- Forane Church, Manjapra.
- **17 Sunday:** Celebrated *Holy Qurbana* at St. Gianna Church, Marad  
Blessed and inaugurated the De Paul Cancer Care Centre, Kalamassery, under the auspices of Vincentian Congregation.
  - **19 Tuesday:** Officiated at the Final Station of the funeral of Rev. Dr. George Nelliserry of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly at St. Antony's Church, Elavoor.
  - **20 Wednesday:** Inaugurated the Archeparchial Day of the Archeparchy of Trichur at St. Francis Xavier Forane Church, Wadakkanchery.
  - **21 Wednesday:** Celebrated *Holy Qurbana* and officiated at the Final Profession of FCC Sisters at the FCC Generalate, Aluva.
  - **22 Friday:** Inaugurated the LRC Seminar at the LRC Auditorium, Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.
  - **23 Saturday:** Celebrated *Holy Qurbana* on the 91<sup>st</sup> death anniversary of Venerable Fr. Mathew Kadalikkatt at the S.H. Provincial House, Pala.
  - **25 Monday:** Inaugurated the Silver Jubilarians Meet at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad.

FOUNDATION STONE LAID FOR SMCA KUWAIT PEARL JUBILEE MEDICAL CENTER



Odisha: The foundation stone for the SMCA Kuwait Pearl Jubilee Medical Center, a major charitable project being established in Odisha as part of the Pearl Jubilee celebrations of the Syro-Malabar Cultural Association Kuwait (SMCA Kuwait), was laid by Archbishop Mar Prince Panengadan of the Archeparchy of Shamshabad.

SMCA Kuwait, which has already constructed hundreds of houses across various Syro-Malabar eparchies, is establishing this medical centre with the objective of providing essential healthcare services in the rural regions of Odisha. The project is envisioned as a major initiative to ensure affordable

and quality medical treatment and healthcare facilities for local residents. Priests, sisters, SMCA representatives, social workers and local residents participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony.

Mar Prince Panengadan remarked that this humanitarian and compassionate service initiative undertaken by SMCA Kuwait would become a great blessing for society. Expressing gratitude to all the families who cooperated in this noble charitable endeavour, the Archbishop invoked God's abundant blessings upon everyone.

SMCA Kuwait President Antony Manoj, General Secretary Bobin George, Treasurer Sony Mathew and Social Welfare Convener George Manuel stated that the Medical Center project, being implemented under the leadership of the organization's 30th Central Executive Committee in connection with the 30th anniversary of SMCA Kuwait, would mark a new chapter in the association's charitable activities. They also expressed hope that the centre would grow into a source of hope and relief for people who remain underserved in the healthcare sector.

GRAND INAUGURATION OF DEEPIKA'S 140<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN KOTTAYAM



Kottayam: The 140th anniversary (Centenary Ruby Jubilee) celebrations of *Deepika*, India's first Catholic daily newspaper and a pioneering presence in Malayalam journalism, commenced with great solemnity and grandeur in Kottayam, the renowned "City of Letters." The year-long jubilee celebrations were formally inaugurated at Mamman Mappila Hall by the Vice President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan. Distinguished

guests included Governer Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan, and Mar Mathew Moolakkatt.

The celebrations commemorated the remarkable 140-year journey of *Deepika*, which began on April 15, 1887, in Changanacherry as a verandah publication under the name *Nasrani Deepika* and later shifted its headquarters to Kottayam. In his inaugural address, Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan recalled *Deepika's* longstanding and commendable service to society, noting that it has served as a voice for both the Church and the wider community while steadfastly defending the rights of the marginalized. He emphasized that its legacy remains an inspiration for future generations.

As part of the jubilee year, the management of *Deepika* has planned a variety of social and media initiatives, including special reader engagement programs, media seminars, and charitable activities to be conducted throughout Kerala and across the globe. The inaugural function concluded with the participation of a large gathering that included the Chief Editor and Managing Director of *Deepika*, clergy, religious, and readers from various walks of life.

KCBC EXTENDS FULL SUPPORT TO 'OPERATION THOOFAN'

The KCBC Temperance Commission has extended its full support and cooperation to "Operation Thoofan: The Narco Hunt," the anti-drug initiative launched by the Home Department to curb the narcotics mafia in the state. Commission Chairman Bishop Ambrose Puthenveetil, Secretary Rev. Fr. Thomas Saiju Chirayil and State Secretary Prasad Kuruvilla also demanded that neighbouring border states be included in the anti-narcotics operations.

"Operation Thoofan" will be launched on June 1, the reopening day of schools in the state.

One of the principal aims of the initiative is to prevent drug abuse among students. The police will formulate action plans in coordination with school authorities and the Excise Department.

Although anti-drug operations are already being carried out in the state under the name "Operation D-Hunt," the Home Department aims, through this new initiative, to eradicate the narcotics mafia completely.





# SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF MISSISSAUGA, CANADA



**BISHOP**  
**H.E. MAR JOSE KALLUVELIL**



**Proto Syncellus**  
**Rev. Fr. Augustine**  
**Kallumkatharayil**



**Syncellus**  
**Rev. Fr. Tenson**  
**Paul**



**Chancellor**  
**Rev. Fr. Harold Jose**  
**Ambattupadavil**



**Finance Officer**  
**Rev. Fr. Jojo**  
**Changanamthundathil**



**Judicial Vicar**  
**Rev. Fr. Bobby Joy**  
**Muttathuvalayil**



## HISTORY OF THE EPARCHY

The Syro-Malabar Church is one of the 23 Sui Iuris Oriental Churches in Catholic Communion with its own characteristics of liturgy, spirituality, theology and canonical traditions. Since the early 1960s, Syro-Malabar Catholics have made Canada their home, bringing with them a vibrant heritage of faith, tradition, and culture. Although the faithful are scattered and settled among the several Canadian provinces and territories, they have maintained their faith and ritual identity through their limited community connections and contacts with their mother Church, the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in India. From 1960 to 1980, most of these communities relied on part-time pastoral services provided by priests from the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church and other Indian Catholic religious orders, who were serving in various Latin Catholic dioceses across Canada. We would like to convey our gratitude to those priests who took care of the community. From 1980-2015, the Syro-Malabar Catholic Community in Canada grew in size mainly due to the arrival of new Syro-Malabar Catholic immigrants from India and other countries. We gratefully acknowledge the amazing generosity and pastoral support of all Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of Canada.

### Erection of the Syro-Malabar Apostolic Exarchate

August 6, 2015, is a memorable day in the history of the Syro-Malabar Catholics in Canada. It was on that day the Holy Father Pope Francis, "Desiring to protect and promote the spiritual riches of the Oriental Churches..." (Cf. Decree of Erection), erected the Apostolic Exarchate for the Syro-Malabar Catholics in Canada and appointed Very Reverend Dr. Jose Kalluvelil as the Apostolic Exarch by the Apostolic Constitution "Spiritualium ubertatem". The Episcopal Ordination of the Apostolic Exarch and the formal inauguration of the Syro-Malabar Exarchate took place on September 19, 2015, at the Church of Virgin Mary and Athanasius Canadian Coptic Centre by His Beatitude George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church.

Ever since the erection of the Syro-Malabar Apostolic Exarchate, we initiated our faith journey with specific Vision and Mission. Our main objectives are, To Form, To Fortify and To Evangelize the People of God and provide them with all the necessary pastoral care. Based on the promise of Christ: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt. 6:33), despite of the initial struggle, we could slowly build up the Exarchate from scratch.

### Elevation to Eparchy

The Apostolic Exarchate for the Syro-Malabar Catholics in Canada was elevated to the rank of an Eparchy with the title of Mississauga by His Holiness Pope Francis on 22 December 2018. The inauguration of the Eparchy and the installation of Mar Jose Kalluvelil were solemnized on 25 May 2019 by His Beatitude George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, at St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Cathedral, Mississauga. Today, under the pastoral care of Mar Jose Kalluvelil, we serve 30,000+ faithful through 66 centers (20 Parishes, 32 Missions, and 14 Holy Qurbana Centers) across Canada, supported by 33 priests and 7 religious sisters.

## EPARCHY AT A GLANCE

|                                             |      |
|---------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Bishop                                   | : 1  |
| 2. Priests incardinated                     | : 4  |
| 3. Priests working in the Eparchy           | : 31 |
| 4. Religious women                          | : 8  |
| 5. Deacons                                  | : 2  |
| Brothers                                    | : 7  |
| 6. Departments, Commissions & Committees    | : 31 |
| 7. Parishes, Missions, Holy Qurbana Centers | : 66 |
| 8. Parishes                                 | : 20 |



|                                                                                                |          |  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--|--|
| 9. Missions                                                                                    | : 33     |  |  |
| 10. Holy Qurbana Centers                                                                       | : 13     |  |  |
| 11. Owned Church Building                                                                      | : 7      |  |  |
| (Cathedral, Scarborough, Edmonton, Calgary, Oshawa, London Knanaya, London)                    |          |  |  |
| 12. Owned Rectories                                                                            | : 8      |  |  |
| (Bishop House, Cathedral, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Scarborough, London Knanaya, Saskatoon) |          |  |  |
| 13. Convents                                                                                   | : 3      |  |  |
| (CMC, CHF, AO)                                                                                 |          |  |  |
| 14. Families                                                                                   | : 7245   |  |  |
| 15. Syro-Malabar Catholics                                                                     | : 30000+ |  |  |

The First Eparchial Assembly - November 09-12, 2023

The Eparchial Bishop convenes Eparchial Assembly to discuss the important matters concerning the Eparchy. The Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy of Mississauga convened the First Eparchial Assembly from November 09-12, 2023, at the Valley of Mother of God, Orangeville, Ontario. The primary aim of the Assembly was a comprehensive evaluation of the Eparchy's present ministries and the formation of future pastoral strategies. The theme of the Assembly, 'Be a mission and build the Church' was highlighted the central emphasis on the Mission of the Church. His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, then Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, bestowed his blessings upon the Assembly members and prayed for their guidance by the Holy Spirit. His Excellency Mar Jose Kalluvilil, the Bishop of Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy of Mississauga was the Chairperson of the Assembly, while His Grace Mar Joseph Pamplany, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Thalassery and Secretary to the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Synod served as the General Moderator. Most Rev. Douglas Crosby, President, CCCB Commission for Evangelization and Catechesis and the Bishop of Hamilton gave inaugural address on 'Missionary and Pastoral Collaboration of Church Sui Iuris in Canada. Most Rev. Bryan Bayda, Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Toronto presented an excellent paper on 'Missionary Vocation of Youth: Today and Tomorrow', and His Grace Most Rev. Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada was the chief guest in the closing ceremony. We were truly blessed by the presence of five bishops, who contributed their expertise in Catholic faith, teachings, and tradition, during this three-day event. This assembly, comprising 75 participants, including priests, religious and the selected lay faithful, represented the entire faith community of the Eparchy. The Eparchial Assembly ended with fourteen important suggestions with a time bound action plan and submitted to Bishop Mar Jose Kalluvilil for future pastoral plan of the Eparchy.



Inauguration of the Decennial Celebration

We are blessed to inaugurate the Decennial celebration of the Eparchy of Mississauga on September 28, 2024, at St. Alphonsa Forane Church in Edmonton. This momentous occasion was honored by His Grace Most Rev. Archbishop Ivan Jurković, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, who inaugurated the ceremonies. His Excellency Bishop Jose Kalluvilil declared the 10th year of the Eparchy of Mississauga as the Eucharistic Year from September 28, 2024, to September 20, 2025. His Grace Most Rev. Archbishop Richard Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton, delivered the benedictory speech and unveiled the logo, marking a decade of spiritual growth and community service. We renowned this important milestone through significant events and initiatives throughout the year.



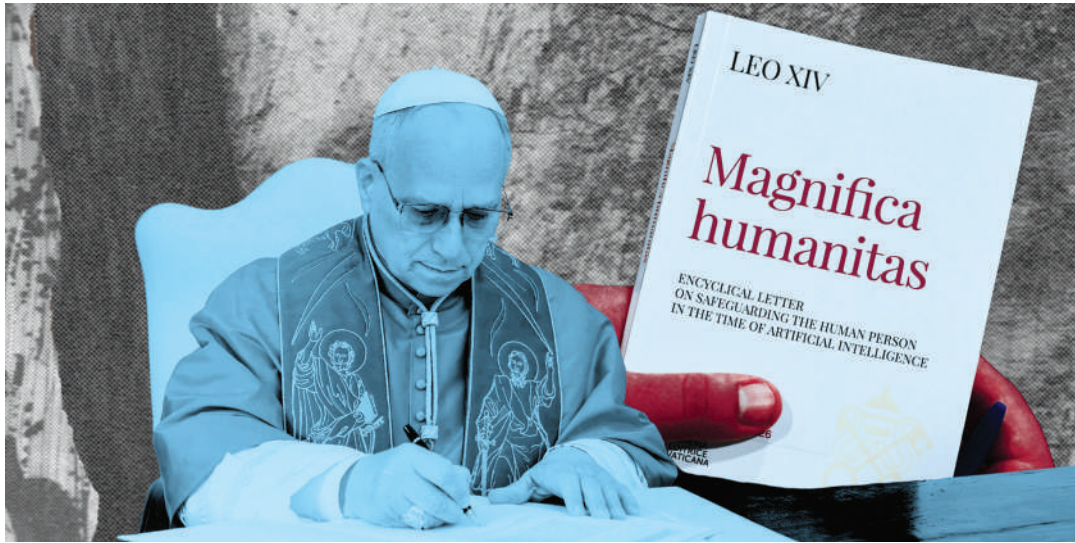
Decennial Year Concluding Celebration, September 20, 2025

The Eparchy of Mississauga celebrated the Concluding Ceremonies of its Decennial Year on September 20, 2025, at St. Alphonsa Cathedral in Mississauga. The event was graced by the esteemed presence of numerous spiritual leaders and dignitaries from across Canada. Bishop Mar Jose Kalluvilil delivered the welcome speech during the public meeting. His Beatitude Mar Raphael Thattil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, celebrated the Holy Qurbana and officially inaugurated the Decennial Year's concluding ceremony. His Eminence Francis Cardinal Leo Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto delivered the benedictory address. Mar Jacob Angadiath, Bishop Emeritus of Eparchy of Chicago, released the Decennial Souvenir, and Most Rev. Bryan Bayda, Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Toronto, offered felicitation during the public meeting. Several priests, dignitaries, community leaders, and faithful from across Canada also participated in the celebration.





## MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS: FIRST ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIV



Vatican City: Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* ("The Greatness of Humanity"), focusing on the timely theme "The Protection of the Human Person in the Age of Artificial Intelligence," was officially released at a solemn ceremony held in the Synod Hall of the Vatican on May 25 at 11:30 a.m. local time. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Sec-

retary of State; Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith; Cardinal Michael Czerny, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Professor Anna Rowlands, noted theologian from Durham University; and Christopher Ola, co-founder of Anthropic, delivered presentations during the event. The

ceremony concluded with the Apostolic Blessing imparted by the Holy Father.

The 122-page encyclical is divided into five chapters and centers on the theme "The Protection of the Human Person in the Age of Artificial Intelligence." While affirming that technology is not inherently opposed to humanity when viewed in the light of the Church's social

doctrine, the Pope emphasizes that it must never be allowed to undermine human values and dignity.

In the encyclical, Pope Leo XIV calls for extreme vigilance in the development and use of artificial intelligence. He stresses that clear accountability must be established at every stage of AI development. The misuse of AI, he notes, can only be prevented through independent oversight, robust regulatory frameworks, and sound policymaking. The Pope also highlights the need to combat hate campaigns and misinformation in the digital sphere and calls for the protection of personal data and the preservation of a communications environment characterized by transparency and responsible journalism.

The document further insists that the dignity of every human person, created in the image of God, must be safe-

guarded by protecting the right to life from conception until natural death. It also advocates for the advancement of women's social status and the recognition of the rights of minorities. The Pope firmly states that any plan aimed at the destruction or subjugation of a nation is gravely immoral and unacceptable.

Pope Leo XIV strongly condemns the growing global arms industry, the nuclear arms race, and the emergence of new armed conflicts. The encyclical concludes by reminding the faithful that they are called to be instruments of peace, rejecting the pursuit of power and force and instead working to preserve harmony and reconciliation.

The Holy Father signed the document on May 15, the 135th anniversary of the publication of *Rerum Novarum* ("Of New Things"), the landmark encyclical on capital and labor issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891.

## ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO SWITZERLAND EINSIEDELN MARIAN SHRINE



Zurich: The annual spiritual pilgrimage of the Syro-Malabar community to the renowned Marian pilgrimage shrine of Einsiedeln Abbey in Switzerland was held with great de-

votion and solemnity. Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Raphael Thattil, participated in this year's spiritual gathering, held on May 30, as the distinguished guest.

The Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln Abbey is one of Europe's most important and historic Marian pilgrimage centres. Dating back to the ninth century, this renowned shrine houses

the revered statue of the "Black Madonna," which is believed by the faithful to be associated with numerous miracles. The sacred image is enshrined in the "Chapel of Grace," a chapel constructed in remembrance of the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus Christ. Located about forty minutes from Zurich, the shrine has become the destination of the annual pilgrimage organized by the Syro-Malabar community in Zurich.

As part of the pilgrimage, the Major Archbishop, Mar Ra-

phael Thattil, was the principal celebrant of the solemn Holy *Qurbana* offered at the shrine. Also present were Mar Stephen Chirappanath, Apostolic Visitor for the Syro-Malabar faithful in Europe, and priests serving in various Syro-Malabar missions across Switzerland. Hundreds of expatriate Malayali faithful from different regions of Switzerland and neighbouring countries participated in this year's pilgrimage, prayerfully receiving spiritual blessings and renewing their Marian devotion.

## 170<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF L'ŒUVRE D'ORIENT, FRANCE



Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil participated in the 170th anniversary celebrations of L'Œuvre d'Orient, the renowned French Catholic organization dedicated to the support and protection of the Eastern Catholic Churches. The historic event, which drew the attention of the global Catholic community, was held in Paris

on 9–10 May, 2026.

As part of the celebrations, a solemn Thanksgiving Holy *Qurbana* was celebrated on May 10 at the iconic Notre-Dame de Paris. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches. He was joined by Archbishop Laurent Ulrich and

Msgr. Hugues de Woillemont, Vicar General for Eastern Catholics in France and Director General of L'Œuvre d'Orient together with the Patriarchs and Major Archbishops of the Eastern churches.

The two-day programme featured conferences and discussions on the challenges faced by Eastern Christians world-

wide, the missionary mission of the Eastern Churches, and the preservation of their rich traditions. Special prayers were also held in the Eastern Christians Chapel of Notre-Dame Cathedral as a visible sign of the unity of the Eastern Churches.

Participants gratefully recalled and honored the invaluable contributions made by

L'Œuvre d'Orient over the past 170 years in the fields of education, social service, and spiritual formation. During the fraternal gathering that followed, Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil met with various Church leaders and shared insights into the global missionary outreach and pastoral initiatives of the Syro-Malabar Church.