SYNODAL NEWS

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MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCH

Vth Synod of Bishops 1997
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This is an important and precious time for the Syro-Malabar Church, a time under the guidance of Archbishop Mar Varkey Vithayathil as Apostolic Administrator following the resignation of the first Major Archbishop Cardinal Antony Padiyara. It is not anything less important than the elapsed period, but rather more precious than that, for there are several things to accomplish. The particular laws of our Church are to be codified and every threat to the unity of the Church is to be faced. It is opportune to take every measure to revitalize our Church in the pursuit of its evangelical and missionary activities. Further, the bond of communion and unity among the pastors of the Church is to be strengthened. For, as the people of God united in prayer and communion, our Church has to move to its legitimate autonomy. God gives each one time to do what He wants. Time is a gift of God and we must not lose or waste it. It is for us to fill the days and years. There is always time to do what God wants us to do. We must put ourselves completely into each moment that He offers. This time is ours and our feet is rooted in today to leap into the future.

A Synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church at this juncture is of great importance. The most important thing that this Session of the Synod of bishops had to accomplish was the restoration of communion among the members. Pope John Paul II in his letter to Mar Varkey Vithayathil wrote: “I wish to emphasize once more the importance of this communion, especially in Church in which the Synod structure is essential. That such communion should abide in the hearts of the bishops who bear pastoral responsibility for the life of the community is essential”. In consonance with the wish of the Pope, this Synodal Assembly included an item, namely “restoring unity in the Church: ways and
means" on its agenda and thus it initiated a process to the resto-
ration of that vital element, communion.

The Synod dedicated several of its sittings to address the issue
of restoring communion and to chalk out the ways and means of
attaining it. It is true that no communion can be restored in a
few days' time. It needs sustained efforts like discussion, dialogue
and prayer.

This time the Synodal News brings to you only a limited
amount of documentation, mainly the report of the Ṿh Synod
(1997), the accounts of the Curia and other related matters and
news. Promulgation of our particular laws on marriage made
through this issue is a notable point in the history of the Church.
Particular laws and other pertinent matters that remains to be
completed can be published only later.

—Editors
Your Graces, Your Excellencies,

The Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church is meeting once again to deliberate on the future of this Church. As you are aware the last couple of months have been eventful in our Church. His Eminence Cardinal Antony Paidyara, the Major Archbishop, resigned from his office and I was appointed the Apostolic Administrator in his place. Mar Joseph Kundukulam also resigned from the charge of his archeparchy. There were also a couple of episcopal transfers. Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy was transferred to Trichur as the new Metropolitan; Mar Paul Chittilapilly was relieved of his charge in Kalyan and was given the see of Thamarassery; Mar Jacob Manathodath was transferred to Palghat as the new eparchial bishop. Rev. Fathers Mani Giles CMI and Thomas Elavanal MCBS were nominated bishops and were appointed to the Sees of Mananthavady and Kalyan respectively. The Holy See created the new see of Thuckalay bifurcating Changanacherry and appointed Mar George Alencherry from the eparchial clergy of Changanacherry as its first bishop. I congratulate most cordially all of you on your new appointments and wish God’s blessings upon you for the success of your missions. I also welcome all of you, Venerable Fathers, to this assembly of the Synod.
Before we begin deliberations I wish to pay my homages to the late Pontifical Delegate Archbishop Abraham Kattumana who did not spare himself while carrying out the mission he was entrusted with in respect to our Church. May God reward him for his tireless services and grant him eternal rest. I remember with gratitude also Cardinal Antony Padiyara the first Major Archbishop of this Church. I thank him for what he had been for our Church. I extend my thanks also to Mar James Pazhayattil, who assisted the Major Archbishop in carrying out his duties while having his own eparchy to look after.

Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry informed me that he is going to Poland for taking part in the Eucharistic Congress. He will join us on one of these days. I hope that you will give him leave of absence. Mar Joseph Kundukulam will leave after the forenoon session because of poor health. Cardinal Antony Padiyara is currently on a tour abroad in Europe and America. He will be back in India only in September. Bishops Sebastian Valloppilly and Joseph Irimpan are not taking part in this assembly owing to ill health. We shall remember all of them in our prayers during these days.

The members of this Synod are not strangers to me. I had the privilege to preach a retreat to most of you some years ago. I never thought at that time that one day I would have to preside over this Synod. Well, God’s ways are unknown to us and sometimes even incomprehensible. Even though I know the members, taking part in the Synod is a new experience for me. I have made an effort to go through the deliberations of the previous synodal assemblies to prepare myself for guiding the session effectively. Likewise I have gone through much of the archival material on a variety of issues in our Church and in relation to the Roman dicasteries. It is my hope and prayer that I may be an instrument in the hands of God for a greater spirit of communion among the members of the Synod as desired by the
Holy Father. Indeed, I need your co-operation, support and help which I request from you.

As you know, I have to care for the affairs of the archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly as well as of the whole Syro-Malabar Church. The absence of an auxiliary bishop makes my work difficult. I was trying to adjust my programmes in such a way that neither of the offices suffer much. Following the practice of the Major Archbishop-Emeritus I am also staying at Mount St. Thomas once a week. In May I had been to Rome on invitation from the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Before leaving for Rome I have had personal meetings with the members of the Synod within the territorium proprium and few from outside. The meetings helped me much to get a good idea of how you think about the problems in our Church. Indeed, I have let the authorities in Rome know the present situation here.

You had already proposed that this assembly should discuss the lineamenta for the discussions in the Asian Synod to be held in Rome sometime next year. I could learn that discussions were held at the eparchial level. I am hopeful that this assembly will be able to produce some sort of a document to be submitted to the Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops in Rome. We have also other items to deliberate upon. However, the most important item, in my opinion, is the proposal to seek ways and means to restore peace and harmony in our Church. The Holy Father has commissioned me specifically for this task. I would propose that we dedicate sufficient time for this purpose in this assembly. Nothing else has more urgency and importance than this matter as far as our Church is concerned. Our faithful expect us to be of one heart and one soul before being and doing anything else.
I would like to reflect with you on some of the points the Holy Father has made in his letter to me on the occasion of my appointment as Apostolic Administrator of this Church. In that letter, after recalling his words to the Syro-Malabar bishops assembled in Rome for their Synod in January 1996 the Pope said on the topic of communion among bishops: *I wish to emphasize once more the importance of this communion, especially in a Church in which the synod structure is essential.*

As I understand it, this communion which the Holy Father repeatedly stresses means an openness to the Holy Spirit and to one another in charity and unity. This communion in the Holy Spirit can exist even when there are differences of opinion caused by the imperfections of life in this world. The Holy Father asks me to help the bishops to grow in this spirit of communion. All I can do is to ask you to make a sincere effort to discover the obstacles to this spirit of communion and eliminate them. Are some of these obstacles: the desire to score victory in a long-standing dispute, the want of courage to disagree with one’s friends and advisers, personal and regional loyalties, party-spirit, derogatory remarks made in publications and seminars and elsewhere, inability to forgive wrongs done, unfair or wrong means used to achieve one’s ends, misunderstandings, baseless suspicions and the like? Let us make a sincere examination before the Lord of Truth who knows our inmost motives. Before we try to put the blame on others, let us see if there is anything blameworthy on our part in order to correct it.

When such a communion of hearts is achieved, its fruit according to the Holy Father will be the increasing convergence of thought and unity of action of an Episcopal Synod. Honest dialogue will take place. The Synod will not think and vote along party lines. Each one and the whole group will be open to the Spirit and to one another. The Holy Father says that the
only criteria for the decisions to be made should be the truth and the common good.

Let us have a brief look at the state of the Syro-Malabar Church over which the Holy Spirit has placed us as Pastors by divine right. Because of the long-standing disagreement and subsequent disunity among their bishops, the Christian faithful are scandalized, their respect and love for their Pastors are fast diminishing, indiscipline is creeping into a once highly disciplined Church, many are disillusioned with the Hierarchy and are seeking religious experience in biblical and charismatic movements. Many have left the Catholic Church and joined other Christian denominations. We have become the laughing stock of other Christian Churches and people of other faiths. Some are fishing in our troubled waters trying to separate us from the See of Peter in the name of the Law of Thomas. The great mission of evangelization that our Church has in India and abroad is greatly hampered. In such a situation should we not feel a great responsibility to save our Church from an impending catastrophe by coming to some agreement regarding the disputed issues particularly those concerning the restoration of our liturgy?

While asking me to help bring about a greater spirit of communion among our bishops the Holy Father has pointed out that with the assistance of the late Archbishop Abraham Kattumana and subsequently of Bishop James Pazhayattil, a significant amount of preparatory work has been done in the initial development of this new Major Archepiscopal Church. His Holiness entrusts me with the task of continuing this development. Let us have a look at the work that remains to be done by the Synod in the near future. We need to try and complete as soon as possible the work of drawing up the Particular laws of our Church. There are many matters in the area of liturgy to be
expedited such as putting into use the text of the sacraments, liturgy of the Hours, the Calendar, the Pontifical, translating the remaining two anaphoras, propria etc. Even though the order of the liturgy is reserved to the Holy Father, it has been made clear to me in Rome that the Synod can and should discuss liturgical matters.

Through prayer and discernment may we receive the light of the Holy Spirit to make this Synod a fruitful one. May Mary the Queen of the Apostles and Our Father in faith St. Thomas assist us by their prayers.
Introduction

The Vth Synod (1997) was held from 9 to 21 June 1997 at pastoral Orientation Centre, Palarivattom. Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R., the Apostolic Administrator of the Syro-Malabar Church *sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis*, presided over the sittings. The session was officially opened by him at 10.00 am on Monday, 9th June. In his opening speech he congratulated Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, the newly appointed Metropolitan of Trichur, and Mar Paul Chittilapilly and Mar Jacob Manathodath, the new eparchial bishops of Thamarassery and Palghat respectively and Mar Emmanuel Pothanamuzhy, Mar George Alencherry and Mar Thomas Elavanal, the new bishops of Mananthavady, Thuckalay and Kalyan respectively. He also paid his homage to the late Pontifical Delegate Mar Abraham Kattumana and recalled the services of the Major Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Antony Padiyara and his assistant Mar James Pazhayattil. He pointed out in his speech that he has been commissioned to help the members of the Synod to come to a greater communion and asked the members to co-operate with him and help him in fulfilling this mission.

Sittings

Every day there were four sittings of an average of one hour and a half each, starting at 9:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm. On the final day the sessions ended at 12:00 noon. Every day the session began with a prayer, led by one of the members followed by the presentation by the Secretary of the minutes of
the previous day. The minutes were approved by the Synod. Each day’s sessions ended with a short prayer.

**Participants**

The following members participated throughout the sessions: Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R. (Apostolic Administrator), Mar Joseph Powathil (Changanacherry), Mar Jacob Thoomkuhyz (Trichur), Mar George Valiamattam (Tellicherry), Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry (Kottayam), Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil (Palai), Mar George Punnakkottil (Kothamangalam), Mar Abraham D. Mattam VC (Satna), Mar John Perumattam MST (Ujjain), Mar Gratian Mundadan CMI (Bijnor), Mar James Pazhayattil (Irinjalakuda), Mar Gregory Karotemprel CMI (Rajkot), Mar Joseph Pastor Neelankavil CMI (Sagar), Mar Mathew Vattakuzhy (Kanjirapally), Mar Paul Chittilapilly (Thamarassery), Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI (Chanda), Mar Jacob Manathodath (Palghat), Mar Simon Stock Palathara CMI (Jagdalpur), Mar Emmanuel Pothanamuzhy CMI (Mananthavady), Mar George Alencherry (Thuckalay), Mar Thomas Elavanal MCBS (Kalyan) and Mar Joseph Kundukulam (Emeritus - Trichur). Mar Kundukulam left the hall because of health reasons after the opening sitting. Likewise Mar Vattakuzhy left after one week for reasons of health. Mar Kunnacherry was absent on the opening day as he was away in Poland for attending the Eucharistic Congress.

Cardinal Antony Padiyara (Major Archbishop-Emeritus) could not participate in the Synod as he was abroad. Mar Sebastian Vallopilly (Tellicherry - retired) and Mar Joseph Irimpen (Palghat- retired) were absent owing to ill-health. Fr Jose Porunnedom, Assistant Secretary of the Synod was also present throughout the sessions. Fr Mathew Madathikunnel (Finance Officer of the Curia) and Fr. James Kallumkal VC
(Assistant Chancellor) took care of the organization of the Synod. The Synodal Fathers were accommodated at POC, Palarivattom where the sessions also were held.

**Experts**

The following persons were present in some of the sittings to help discussions on various subjects. Fr. James Thalachelloor (Secretary, Commission for Particular Law), Fr. Mathew Madathikunnel (Convener, Sub-committee for drafting the Statutes of Palliyogam), Fr. Andrews Thazhath (Sub-committee for drafting the Laws on marriage), Fr. Sebastian Thayyil (Convener, Sub-committee for drafting the Laws on clerics), Advocate Joy Thomas (Consultor, Commission for Particular Law) and Advocate A.V. George Anjilithara (Consultor, Commission for Particular Law), Fr. Joseph Kallarangatt and Fr. Xavier Kochuparampil.

**Agenda**

The agenda of the session was finalized in the opening session. The provisional agenda was approved without any change in its content though the order was reversed. The following were the items on the agenda:

- *Lineamenta* for discussions in the Asian Synod
- Restoring unity in the Church: ways and means
- Prohibiting use of unauthorized liturgical books
- *Bema* in the middle of the nave of the seminaries and other formation houses
- Report on the revised texts of the sacraments
- Reservation on “matters liturgical”: Explanation
- Urgency to formulate the complete particular law
- New Chairman for the Synodal Commission for Particular Law
- Finance of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia
- Request to bifurcate the eparchy of Rajkot
- Request of CST for an eparchy in Rajasthan
- Request of the MST for an eparchy at Mandya
- Request of MST for Major Archiepiscopal status
- Request of the Bishop of Thamarassery to transfer the Manimoooy forane from Mananthavady to Thamarassery
- St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary: Change of status and other matters
- Collecting statistical data of the Syro-Malabarians outside the *territorium proprium*: Proposal from Hyderabad
- Visit to Mount St. Thomas

**Recolletion**

The forenoon on Tuesday, 10 June was spent by the Synod members in prayer and recollection. The Apostolic Administrator himself preached the recollection.

**Review of the decisions**

A review of the decisions of the previous assembly was made. There were doubts as to whether the various particular laws approved by the Synod on previous occasions were promulgated or not. After a brief discussion the Synod decided to invite the secretary of the Commission for Particular Law and the convener of the two sub-committees that prepared the draft of laws on marriage and clergy and seek a clarification from them in this regard on Friday, 13 June.
Discussions

On restoring communion

The major part of the sittings were devoted to discussions on finding out ways and means to restore communion among the members of the Synod. The Synod devoted a number of sittings to open dialogue in view of removing the serious blocks and of establishing greater communion. According to the decision of the Synod the minutes of those sessions were not recorded and the proceedings are kept complete secret. During these sittings only the members of the Synod were present in the hall.

After several sittings the Synodal members signed a common document to be submitted for the consideration of the Holy See. The Apostolic Administrator asked the members to give their personal observations in writing about the document before July 10 which also will be submitted to the Holy See. One of the Synodal members was entrusted with the task of drafting a press statement. The statement prepared by him was accepted with a few modifications and released to the press on the last day.

Collection of statistics - offer from Hyderabad

An offer from two gentlemen from Hyderabad for collecting the statistical data of the Syro-Malabarians in Andhra Pradesh was presented by the Apostolic Administrator. Since the previous assembly had entrusted the Syro-Malabar Religious Conference (SMRC) with a similar task the Synod decided to let the correspondents from Hyderabad know of it. The merits and demerits of entrusting such a study to private individuals also were evaluated.
Clarification of the status of St. Joseph’s Pontifical Seminary

The change of status of the St. Joseph Pontifical Seminary at Alwaye and related issues also came up for discussion in the Synod. One of the members expressed his strong reservation against discussing this matter in the Synod because according to him the Seminary is under the Kerala Catholic Bishops’ Council (KCBC) and hence the Synod has no role in it. He also pointed out that the Synod had no role in the division. Bishop Jacob Manathodath who represents the Syro-Malabar bishops in the KCBC Commission for the Alwaye Seminary briefed the house on the present state of division and the provisions made. The Apostolic Administrator informed the house that he was asked by the President of the KCBC, Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios to appoint rector and other officials to the Mangalapuzha campus. He also said that he has not made the appointments because he was not sure of his competence. The Apostolic Administrator was authorized to make the necessary appointments to the Seminary after consulting the Permanent Synod. With regard to the civil suit pending in the court Fr. Joseph Kariyil, deputy-secretary of the KCBC, briefed the Synod on the present situation.

Transfer Manimooly forane to Thamarassery

A request of the bishop of Thamarassery to transfer the Manimooly forane from Mananthavady to Thamarassery was discussed briefly. Though an objection was raised against the Synod discussing such matters on ground that the concerned authorities do not respect the mind of the Synod regarding them the majority was for a discussion. Proposals were made to set up an independent commission to study the matter and report to the Synod or to request the concerned bishops to discuss the matter between them first and request for an intervention of the Synod if need be. One member suggested that a reorgani-
zation of the entire territory of the three eparchies of Tellicherry, Mananthavady and Thamarassery would be desir-able. The bishops of Thamarassery and Mananthavady in-formed the house that they have not yet discussed this matter between them. The bishop of Mananthavady added that he would not be in a position to comment on the request without consulting his clergy. After listening to the interventions the Apostolic Administrator ruled that the concerned bishops after consulting each other can approach the Synod if they find an intervention of the Synod is opportune.

**Finances of the Curia**

In the afternoon sitting on Friday, 20 June Fr. Mathew Madathikunnel, the finance officer of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia, presented the report of the financial administration for the year 1996-97. In order to raise funds for the construction of the new curia building the synod decided to do the following: 1) that the Apostolic Administrator write personal letters to pro-spective donors who may be ready to contribute substantial amounts; 2) that the Finance Officer with the help of the curial officials of the eparchies meet personally persons who are able to contribute larger amounts. 3) that the Apostolic Administra-tor request the major superiors of the Institutes of Consecrated Life to extend credit to the Curia for interest at bank deposit rates.

**New chairmen**

As Mar Mathew Vattackuzhy resigned from the office as chairman of the Commission for Particular Law owing to ill health the Apostolic Administrator appointed Mar Paul Chittilapilly in his place. The Apostolic Administrator informed the Synod of the desire of Mar Joseph Kundukulam to be re-lieved of his offices, namely, as member of the Permanent
Synod, Member of the Superior Tribunal, chairman of the Commission for Catechism and Chairman of the Finance Council, because of health reasons. He appointed Mar George Alencherry as the new Chairman of the Commission for Catechism and Mar George Punnakkottil as the chairman of the Finance Council.

**Codification and promulgation of Particular Laws**

The afternoon sitting on Thursday, 19th June was devoted to the study of the present state of the codification of the particular laws. Fr. James Thalachelloor (Secretary, Commission for Particular Law), Fr. Andrews Thazhath (Convener, sub-Committee for Marriage Laws) and Fr. Sebastian Thayyil (Convener, Sub-Committee for Law on Clerics) also were present in the hall. The secretary presented a brief report on the state of the various particular laws which are being codified. The Statutes of the Permanent Synod, Superior Tribunal, Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal, and of the St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary have been promulgated. The Statutes of the *Puarastya Vidhyapitham* have been approved by the Synod and promulgated by the Congregation for Catholic Education. Regarding the particular laws on marriage the Synod asked the Apostolic Administrator to promulgate them in such a way that they become effective on 1st January 1998. The laws about clerics, though approved by the Synod, are to be promulgated at a later stage after filling the lacunae.

**Draft of the statutes of ‘Palliyogam’**

The sittings on Wednesday 18th June were spent on discussion of the draft statutes of *Palliyogam*. Rev. Frs. Mathew Madathikunnel, James Thalachelloor, Andrews Thazhath and Sebastian Thayyil, Advocates Joy Joseph (Kottayam) and A.V. George Anjilithara (Changanacherry) also participated in the
discussion. A few points raised by Prof. K.T. Sebastian, who is a
counselor of the Commission for Particular Law, in connection
with the statutes also were considered by the Synod. As to the
question whether the Palliyogam is a consultative or a deliberative
body the answer of the Synod was that it is a consultative
body as per common law but in practice it may be a deliberative
body. The decisions of Palliyogam however become effective
only if they are approved by the eparchial bishop who may ap-
prove or disapprove them.

The members of the Synod as well as the advocate-experts
who participated in the discussion were asked to send to the
convener of the sub-committee within one month their observa-
tions about the entire draft especially about that part of the
draft which could not be discussed for want of time. The sub-
committee will then reformulate the draft incorporating the
suggestions. The members of the Permanent Synod and the
Commission for Particular Law will study the draft and refor-
mulate it if necessary. This text will be discussed later in a meet-
ing of the representatives of the eparchial pastoral and
presbyteral councils to be held sometime before the next Synod.
The Apostolic Administrator said that this revised text will be
presented in the next session of the Synod.

Lineamenta for Asian Synod

On Tuesday 17th June the paper containing the Syro-
Malabar Synod’s response to the lineamenta of the Synod of
Bishops’ Special Assembly for Asia was examined with the help
of the committee-members Frs. Joseph Kallarangattu and
Xavier Kochuparampil. After the brief introduction given by
Mar Powathil about the nature, composition, time etc. of the
Asian Synod Mar Punnakkottil, the convener of the committee
that prepared the paper briefed the members on the back-
ground of its preparation. He said that it has been prepared
collating the results of the discussions held at the eparchial level and in the theological faculties as well as in a meeting of the theologians of our Church. Then the entire document was read out part by part and the members of the Synod expressed their observations and comments on them. A detailed discussion could not be held for want of time on the second part of the paper. The Apostolic Administrator requested the members to present in writing their observations, if any on that part either to Fr. Xavier Kochuparambil or to the Chancellor of the Curia by the end of the week. The committee will redraft the document incorporating the changes proposed by the Synodal members and submit it to the Apostolic Administrator as early as possible. This revised document will be studied by the Permanent Synod where after the final draft will be prepared and sent to the Secretariat of Synod in Rome before 1 August 1997.

Other topics

Protests by priests and the laity

A dharna was staged by some lay people on Tuesday, 10th June before the building where the Synod was held. The Apostolic Administrator together with some other bishops listened to their grievances. Likewise on Tuesday, 17th June a group of priests from various eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church appeared before the Synod building and requested the Apostolic Administrator that they be heard by the entire Synod. On instructions from him the priests gathered in the hall of POC and the Synod listened to their grievances. As desired by the majority of the members the Synod had a brief discussion on these two incidents. All those who made their interventions in this regard said that such acts are deplorable. As to the action to be taken in this regard the members could not come to an agreement.
New Eparchy at Thuckalay

Some of the members pointed out that a clarification is needed regarding the erection of the eparchy of Thuckalay. They said that the Synod never asked for a new eparchy at Thuckalay but at Kanyakumari and that if there was a need to change the see the matter had to be referred to the Synod by the concerned. It was made clear that the proposal for a new eparchy was approved before the Synod came into being and hence it was not presented before the Synod.

Dialogue with SMRC

On special invitation the members of the executive body of the Syro-Malabar Religious Conference (SMRC) had a dialogue with the Synodal members on Monday, 16 June, afternoon. Archbishop Jacob Thoomkuzhy and Bishop Joseph Pallikalparampil informed the assembly that they talked to the representatives of the SMRC regarding the pastoral activities of the religious in the parishes and that they wish to meet the Synod to discuss further this matter. Rev. Frs. Antony Plackal VC, Alex Ukken CMI, Paul Karumathy CST, Norbert Edattukaran CMI, and Abraham Moloparampil MCBS, Rev. Bro. Tom Adanolicke MMB, Rev. Srs. Felicitta SABS, Santa CMC and Digna Joseph FCC were present for the dialogue. Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy, one of the members of the committee appointed by the Synod to meet the SMRC, briefed the members about the meeting. Mar Joseph Pallikalparampil, the other member of the committee, said that the main point discussed was the possible involvement of the religious in the pastoral activities in the parishes.

Following the self-introduction by the committee members both the Synodal members as well as the members of the SMRC executive had an open exchange of views in this regard. The bishops expressed their apprehensions in this field and the
religious representatives expressed their concerns. Two possibilities were proposed. To entrust the entire pastoral charge of a given area in a parish to a religious house 1) either as an independent parish or 2) as a unit of the parish in which the religious have the full responsibility of the pastoral care under the guidance of the parish priest. It was pointed out that the first alternative could be considered wherever possible. The second one was found to be a more viable alternative. As a concrete step towards solving the problems under discussion the Synod decided to set up a committee to study the various aspects of the matter and to propose some general guidelines for regulating the collaboration of the religious in the pastoral work of the parishes. The committee will consist of representatives of the bishops, the religious and parish priests. The Permanent Synod will constitute the committee. The committee should formulate some guidelines and present them at the next Synod.

As regards the formation programmes for religious candidates conducted by some eparchies the SMRC Executive expressed their appreciation and observed that these courses should be arranged in such a way that they do not affect their proper religious formation. They further wanted that they also should be involved in the planning and execution of the programmes and that these courses should not be made compulsory. The courses conducted by the eparchies for junior sisters were also observed to be very useful. The number of daily classes may however be reduced so that the sisters may have enough free time. It was proposed that the major superiors of the concerned Institutes can have a dialogue with the local hierarchy and settle the issue.

The members of the executive of SMRC were asked as to how far they have progressed with the project of publication of a Syro-Malabar Directory which the Synod had entrusted to
them. Fr. Plackal said that nothing has been done in this regard. A committee is to meet in July to discuss this matter. Fr. Plackal would thereafter let the Apostolic Administrator know how the committee plans to execute the project, the extent of data they propose to include in the Directory and the amount of money they estimate to spend on it. It is intended to be a Directory of the whole Syro-Malabar Church. The Apostolic Administrator agreed to share with the SMRC the details of an offer made by two gentlemen from Hyderabad to undertake a survey of the Syro-Malabarians in Andhra Pradesh.

**Method of counting the assemblies of the Synod**

The question of the method of counting the assemblies of the Synod came once again for discussion. After considering the various suggestions the Synod decided to count in future the assemblies of the Synod as follows: The Synodal assemblies of one year will be considered as one Synod and will be indicated by Roman numerals with the year in brackets (Eg. Vth Synod (1997). If there are more sessions (which until now have been called assemblies) they will be counted as session 1, session 2 and so on (Eg. Vth Synod (1997) Session 1). After each session the Synod will decide whether there will be another session in the same year. If there is only one session in a year it will be recorded without ordinals of the session (Eg. Vth Synod (1997). If the decision of the Synod was to have no more session in a given year but had to convoke another Synod for some reason it will be counted as another Synod (Eg. VIth Synod (1997). The meetings hitherto called sessions will be known as sittings in future. (Eg. Vth Synod (1997), Session 1, sitting 1).

**Report about apostolic visitation**

In one of the sittings Mar Gregory Karotemprel, the Apostolic Visitor for USA and Canada in answer to a query said
that he has submitted to the Holy See the report about his visitation in North America. To another query he said that a copy of the report could be submitted to the Synod if he gets permission from the Holy See to do so.

**SMC on Internet**

Mar Karotemprel informed the Synod that it would be good for the Syro-Malabarians abroad if a web-site in the internet is prepared about the history and other details of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Synod authorized him to do the necessary in this regard. At the same time he was asked to circulate among the members a copy of the write-up that will be used for the web-site. He agreed to find out a source to meet the expenses to be incurred in this regard.

**On recording the procedure**

The Synod had on earlier occasions decided that a member’s intervention would not be recorded if he so requested. This point came up again for discussion. It was finally clarified that it is the Synod that took such a decision. The Synod may decide otherwise if it feels that a statement by a member needs to be recorded.

**Visit to Mount St. Thomas**

On Thursday, 19th June the Synodal members paid a visit to Mount St. Thomas and examined the progress of the construction of the new Curia building.

**Next Assembly**

The Synod decided to hold the next Synod from 12 to 24 January 1998.
Conclusion

The Apostolic Administrator officially closed the Vth Synod (1997) at 12.00 noon on 21 June with his concluding speech. He thanked all the Synodal members for their help and co-operation in making the session fruitful. In his speech he reminded the members that there is yet a long way to go before the Synod can function as a full fledged Synod of an Oriental Church. He invited all to help make it a reality.

Bishop Jacob Manathodath
Secretary
CONCLUDING SPEECH

BY

MAR VARKEY VITHYATHIL C.Ss.R.

Your Graces, Your Excellencies,

We have come to the two-week long session of this Vth synod. You all will agree, I am sure, that we have covered all the items on the agenda. As you know, two were the main items, namely, the discussion on the lineamenta for the Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Asia and seeking ways and means to restore unity and harmony among ourselves. The committee that was constituted to prepare the paper on the lineamenta has done a remarkably good job. Mar George Punnakkottil, the convener of the committee and his collaborators deserve a special thanks. As for seeking ways and means to restore unity and harmony among ourselves I believe that we have come one step closer. We had several closed and off-record sittings. I appreciate very much the sincerity and openness with which you spoke out and shared your views and feelings in this regard. I sincerely thank you for your co-operation.

We have achieved a lot in the codification of our particular laws. We have also discussed the draft of the statutes of Palliyogam. We made also an evaluation of the present state of the codification. On this occasion I place on record on behalf of the Synod our thanks to Mar Mathew Vattackuzhy for his tireless services as Chairman of the Commission for Particular Law until now. I am sure that the Commission under Mar Paul Chittilapilly, its new chairman, will complete the work that still remains to be done without much delay.
We have yet a long way to go before we can function as a full fledged Oriental Synod. In matters of liturgy there are many things yet to be clarified and decided. We have to clarify them and take decisions on them in the not too distant future.

We have experienced these days the reaction of some of our faithful including priests to the sad state of affairs of our Church. While we totally disapprove the manner with which they staged their protest, we have to feel duty bound to examine the causes of such protests.

I would like to thank each one of you for your active participation and co-operation in the Synod. We shall meet again in the second week of January 1998.
STATEMENTS

(ശുദ്ധ് കാക്ഷങ്ങളാകാണെത്തി മേളയില്‍ നിന്നും തൊഴില്‍ക്കേടു വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി.)

ശുദ്ധ് കാക്ഷങ്ങളാകാണെത്തി മേളയില്‍ നിന്നും തൊഴില്‍ക്കേടു വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി. മേളയില്‍ നിന്നും തൊഴില്‍ക്കേടു വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി. എന്നെത്തിയ തൊഴില്‍ വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി. എന്നെത്തിയ തൊഴില്‍ വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി. എന്നെത്തിയ തൊഴില്‍ വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി. എന്നെത്തിയ തൊഴില്‍ വക്കുന്നത്രേള്ളി തുലയില്‍ എന്നെത്തി.
1997 ജൂൺ 9 വിക്കാരം 21 ചെട്ട മാവുളപ്പെടുന്ന
നി.നി.നി.നി.നി.നി. തീയതി പില്ലായൻ അലോഹൻ
ജൂയ നിലമ്പ് പില്ലായനത്തെ വെള്ളത്തോട്

പില്ലായൻ ചെയ്തുമേൽ അവമോചനങ്ങൾ നിലമ്പ് അയാളിന്റെ
അന്വേഷണത്തിൽ നിന്നാണ് നിന്നിക്കിവന്നതാണ് നിന്നിക്കി
ചെയ്തിരുന്നത്. അന്വേഷണത്തിലെ ഉയർന്നോടികളെ അവമോചനങ്ങളില്ലാതെ
ശാസ്ത്രീയമായി ആവശ്യമാക്കാൻ കാണുന്നത് നിലമ്പ് നിലമ്പിൽ പില്ലായൻ വെള്ളത്തോട് വെള്ളത്തോട് വെള്ളത്തോട്
ഉത്തമമായ അനുഭവവുമുണ്ട്. അങ്ങനെ സാമ്പത്തിക വെള്ളരി
ഉയർന്നോടിരുന്ന പില്ലായൻ കൈക്കാണിക്കാൻ സേവനത്തിനങ്ങൾ പലതാണ്
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വിദേശീയരുടെ കരിഞ്ഞാകാലം കുട്ടികൊഴിയുന്ന മാന്ത്രേകങ്ങളുടെ വേലിയം തുരളിപ്പം നേടുകയാണ് വിവിധ പ്രദേശങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വിദേശീയനായ ആലുകയാണ് ആവശ്യം.

നേടിയിരിക്കുന്ന വിദേശിയിലെ അവസ്ഥായി നിലയെല്ലാം തായ്കത്തിന്റെ രാഗത്തിൽ നിരൂപണം നടത്തുകയാണ് നിരൂപണം നടത്തുന്നതിനുമേലുള്ള നിരൂപണം നടത്തുന്നതിന്റെ തലമൂലമായി അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ആവശ്യമെത്തുന്നതിനെ അടക്കാന്തേയും മനോരാജ്ഞാനം മനോരാജ്ഞാനം നീം നീം നിരൂപണം നടത്തുന്നതിനെ അടക്കാന്തേയും മനോരാജ്ഞാനം നീം നീം നിരൂപണം നടത്തുന്നതിനെ അടക്കാന്തേയും.

21-6-97
Apostolic Constitution assigning the See of Antinoita to Mar Varkey Vithayathil.

Joannes Paulus episcopus servus servorum Dei

Venerabili fratris Vachey Vithayathil archiepiscopo hacernus titulus Acheiensi neonei Administrato-
ri Apostolico dicionis Eenahulanensis - Angamaliensis ab archiepiscopalem sedem titulo Antinoitanam-
translato, salutem et Apostolicae Benedictionem. Quem nuptiis quidem in apostolorum esse collegium su-
scipere volumus per manuam nostri impositionem eodemque tempore ab ecclasiis chrisi fideliem
Sicco-Malabaricen commune communis Eenahulanensis - Angamaliensis sub archiepiscopali titulo Achei-
si destinamus fidetem, te hodie, Venerabilis fratre, eussus appellamus conveniencetque de alio docemus de-
cesso quod ad te proprie pertineret. Cestis enim eug utilitatis et commoditatis causis consentaneum Nobis vide-
trce ut ab aliebus nominis titulatem designetis sedem quae dignitate profecta in Ecclesia antecellit. Ex apo-
stolicae idee postestatis Nosseam amplitudine omnibus te solvimus vinculis ege pristern illam ecclesiam titulo
Acheiensen, dum videlicet intus us te augemus et insignibus secundum sacros canones archiepiscopalis cathet-
dae Antiochianae in postumum tempus, integris sane reliquis tuis munecibus et officiis apud memoraturn
gegem Eenahulanensin - Angamaliensin. Libenter vero hanc actui Nos opportunitatem Divini Pontificis
ipsius animo et abstarcto coheranuntre ut peculialis tuae dignitatis perpetuo memori nonun singularis cum
ipsa Petri Cathedra coniunctionis maiore cotidie studio servoreque pastoralis cuncta sic tibi opea commen-
data perpetuus, necessaria tibi ad omnipotentem Deo solacia auxilia fideliere pretenti obventura esse con-
fitur: Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die unvedicesimo mensis Aprilis, anno Domini millesimo nonen-
tesimo nonagesimo septimo Pontificatus Nostri undevicesimo.

Joannes Paulus

Antonius H. Marcell, Procons. Arch.
No. 642/97

DECREE

The Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth founded in 1948 by Mar Augustine Kandathil, the late Metropolitan of Ernakulam with the co-operation of Rev. Fr. John Pinakkatt and Rev. Msgr. Mathew Mankuzhikari at Paduapuram in the archeparchy of Ernakulam has ever been engaged in the integral development of families in faithfulness to the charism of its founding fathers. The Congregation which has been of eparchial right, as it grew in number, has extended its apostolate to other eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church and the Latin Church as well. Considering the good of the Congregation in general and the better co-ordination of its activities in particular Rev. Sr. Marietta CSN, its Superior General submitted with the consent of her Council a request to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, for elevating the said Congregation to the status of a Congregation of Major Archiepiscopal Right.

Having obtained the required consent of the Permanent Synod as per CCEO c. 506 §3 and after having duly consulted the concerned local hierarchs in conformity with CCEO, c. 414, §3, I, Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R., Apostolic Administrator Sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis, vested with the authority of the Major Archbishop, taking into consideration the good of the Congregation and its praiseworthy services to the Universal Church and to the Syro-Malabar Church in particular, hereby solemnly recognize and declare the
Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth

as a

Congregation of Major Archiepiscopal Right

with all the rights, duties and privileges attached to such status in the common law and the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church. The internal administration of the Congregation, however, will be subject to the Constitutions and the Statutes of the Congregation duly approved by the competent authorities. It is further specified that the authorities of the Congregation must submit for approval to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church or anyone who assumes his charge from time to time the revised Constitutions in accordance with the observations given along with this decree within two years from the date of its issue.

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas on the first day of the month of May of the year nineteen ninety seven.

(Sd/-)
Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R.
Apostolic Administrator

(Seal)

(Sd/-)
Fr. Jose Porunnedom
Chancellor
The Congregation of the Malabar Missionary Brothers founded by Rev. Msgr. Zacharias Vazhappilly in 1948 in the archeparchy of Trichur as an eparchial Congregation has ever been rendering exemplary service in caring for the abandoned, particularly those who are mentally handicapped. Following the example given by their heavenly model St. Francis of Assisi the Malabar Missionary Brothers have been a model of poverty and detachment in apostolic works. During the last half a century the Congregation has grown cosiderably in all its dimensions. The Malabar Missionary Brothers have grown beyond the confines of the archeparchy of Trichur and are serving the people of God in ten eparchies including two in the Latin Church. Given the growth and stability of the Congregation Rev. Bro. Louis Manjaly MMB, Superior General of the Malabar Missionary Brothers, submitted with the consent of his Council a request to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, for recognizing the said Congregation as one of Major Archiepiscopal Right.

Having obtained the required consent of the Permanent synod as per CCEO c. 506 §3 and after having duly consulted the concerned local hierarchs in conformity with CCEO c. 414 §3, I, Mar Varkey vithayathil C. Ss. R., Apostolic Administrator Sede vacante ad nutum Sanctae Sedis vested with the authority of the Major Archbishop taking into consideration the good of the Congregation and its praiseworthy services to the Universal Church and to the Syro-Malabar Church in particular, hereby solemnly recognize and delcare the
Malabar Missionary Brothers

as a

Congregation of Major Archiepiscopal Right

with all the rights, duties and privileges of such status accorded by common law and the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church. The internal administration of the Congregation, however, will be subject to the Constitutions and the Statutes of the Congregation duly approved by the competent authorities. It is further specified that the authorities of the Congregation must submit for approval to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church or any one who assumes his charge from time to time the revised Constitutions and the Statutes in accordance with the observations given along with this decree within one year from the date of its issue.

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas on the first day of the month of May of the year nineteen ninety seven.

(Sd/-)
Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R.
Apostolic Administrator

(Seal)

(Sd/-)
Fr. Jose Porunnedom
Chancellor
DECREE

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha founded in 1948 by Rev. Fr. John Kizhakooden at Ponnukkara in the archeparchy of Trichur has ever been serving the poor and the downtrodden in faithfulness to the charism of its founder. During the last fifty years the Congregation has grown considerably in numerical strength as well as in apostolic vitality. The members of this Congregation, which has been of eparchial right, are rendering selfless and exemplary service in the various Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and latin eparchies both inside and outside India. Considering the growth of the Congregation and the geographical extension of its services the Major Archiepiscopal status has been found more suitable and therefore, Rev. Sr. Bertholomeo, its Superior General, submitted a request with the consent of her Council to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, for declaring the said Congregation as one of Major Archiepiscopal Right.

Having obtained the required consent of the Permanent synod as per CCEO c. 506 §3 and after having duly consulted the concerned local hierarchs in conformity with CCEO c. 414 §3, I, Mar Varkey vithayathil C. Ss. R., Apostolic Administrator Sede vacante ad nutum Sanctae Sedis vested with the authority of the Major Archbishop taking into consideration the good of the Congregation and its service for the poor and downtrodden of the Society in the spirit of St. Martha, hereby solemnly recognize and delcare the
Congregation of the Sisters of ST. Martha

as a

Congregation of Major Archiepiscopal Right

with all the rights, duties and privileges attached to such status in the common law and the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church. The internal administration of the Congregation, however, will be subject to the Constitutions and the Statutes of the Congregation duly approved by the competent authorities.

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas on the first day of the month of May of the year nineteen ninety seven.

(Sd/-)
Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R.
Apostolic Administrator

(Seal)

(Sd/-)
Fr. Jose Porunnedom
Chancellor
The Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle (MST) was founded in 1968 in the eparchy of Palai by Mar Sebastian Vayalil, the late eparch of Palai in concurrence with the then bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church and in consultation with the Holy See. Having been conceived exclusively as a missionary society MST has ever been engaged in the missionary apostolate both in India and outside remaining faithful to the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church. During the past decades along with the growth in numerical strength MST has become increasingly conscious of its missionary nature and ecclesial belongingness, namely, as a Missionary Society of the Syro-Malabar Church. Founded as an organized missionary effort of “the diocesan clergy of the Syro-Malabar Church” the members of MST do not consider the imitation of the life of a religious institute as their vocation.

MST which has had the juridical nature of a Society of Common Life after the Manner of Religious Life (Motu Proprio Postquam Apostolicis Litteris cc. 224-231) and has been of eparchial right until now found it fit to be changed into Society of Apostolic Life (c. 572) of Major Archiepiscopal right. Therefore the Fifth General assembly of MST which met in 1993 resolved to proceed to realize it. The process of the revision of the Constitutions, accordingly, was started immediately and the General Assembly held in 1996 after serious study and prayerful reflection of the matter unanimously approved the revised Constitutions.
The Congregation for the Oriental Churches to which a copy of the revised Constitutions was submitted found 'the legislative texts satisfactory' and observed that "the fact of approval of the new Constitutions of MST on the part of the Major Archiepiscopal Authority will supply for the present possible insufficiency of particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church and will itself be constitutive of the particular law in this area of Church life", though, "when the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church is eventually formulated and promulgated, the Constitutions of MST must be in harmony with it" (cfr. Prot. No. 173/84 dated 22 March 1997).

Considering the good of the Society in general and the better co-ordination of its activities in particular The Very Reverend Father Sebastian Vadakel MST, its Director General forwarded a request of Mar Joseph Pallikaparampill, the local hierarch to whom MST is immediately subject, to the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, to approve the Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle (MST) as a Society of Apostolic Life of Major Archiepiscopal Right." To that the Director General added a petition of his own to this effect.

Therefore having considered all things and having obtained the required consent of the Permanent Synod as per CCEO c. 506 §3 and after having duly consulted the concerned local hierarchs in conformity with CCEO, c. 414, §3, I, Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R., Apostolic Administrator Sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis, vested with the authority of the Major Archbishop, taking into consideration the good of the Society and its praiseworthy services to the Universal Church and to the Syro-Malabar Church in particular, hereby accept and approve the modification of the character of the Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle from a Society of Common Life after the manner of Religious Life of eparchial
right to a Society of Apostolic Life of Major Archiepiscopal Right in accordance with the norms of CCEO, c. 572 with all the rights, duties and privileges attached to such status in the common law and the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church which will be eventually formulated and promulgated. The internal administration of MST, however, will be subject to the Constitutions of MST which are herewith approved. Until the particular law that governs the Societies of Apostolic Life is formulated and promulgated in the Syro-Malabar Church the Constitutions of MST shall be considered as the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church in this area of Church life. However, when such a particular law is promulgated the Constitutions of MST must conform with it.

All contrary dispositions notwithstanding.

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas on the third day of the month of July of the year nineteen ninety seven, Dukhrana of St. Thomas the Apostle.

(Sd/-)
Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R.
Apostolic Administrator

(Seal)

(Sd/-)
Fr. Jose Porunnedom
Chancellor
No. 713/97

DECREE

The Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church for the regulation of Marriage of its faithful appended to this Decree was approved by the Synod in its session held in November 1996. The Synod in its session held in June 1997 decided that they should be promulgated by the Major Archiepiscopal Authority in such a way that it becomes effective on 1st January 1998. Therefore, in conformity with the said decision of the Synod, I hereby formally promulgate it. This law will come into force on 1st January 1998. The Venerable Hierarchs of the Syro-Malabar Church are requested to make this known to the faithful of their respective eparchies and in particular to the priests who have care of parishes and similar ecclesiastical units.

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St. Thomas on 15 July 1997.

(Sd/-)
Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R.
Apostolic Administrator

(Seal)

(Sd/-)
Fr. Jose Porunnedom
Chancellor
Particular Laws Concerning Marriage in the Syro-Malabar Church

(As decided in the Synodal session held from 9 to 21 June 1997 at Pastoral Orientation Centre, Palarivattom the Particular Laws Concerning Marriage in the Syro-Malabar Church were promulgated by Mar Varkey Vithayathil C.Ss.R., the Apostolic Administrator. The text of the Laws are the following.)

Prenuptial Enquiry Form (CCEO, cc. 782-785)

Canon 1. Prior to betrothal the parties have to fill in the prenuptial enquiry form before their respective parish priests in order to make sure that they enter into marriage covenant with due preparation, knowledge and consent.

Marriage Kuries

Canon 2. §1. In connection with the celebration of marriage, the following Kuries (Forms) must be exchanged between the concerned parish priests.

§2. Form A - For betrothal

§3. Form B - Information regarding the betrothal conducted and the proposed dates of the publication of banns and the celebration of marriage.

§4. Form C - Desa Kuri or kettu Kuri, that is, no objection certificate for the licit celebration of marriage.

§5. Form D - Certificate for entry of the celebration of the marriage in the marriage registers of the parishes of the spouses as well as in the baptismal regis-
ters of the parishes where the baptism of the couple took place.

§6. **Form E** - Notification to be sent back to the parish priest of the place of celebration of marriage regarding the entry of Form D in the baptismal and marriage registers of the concerned parishes of the spouses (CCEO, c. 841 §§ 1-2).

**Preparation for Marriage**

*Canon 3.* §1. The parish priest shall either officiate the betrothal ceremony or give Form A for betrothal to the parish priest of the other party only when it is morally certain that the party has at least the basic knowledge of Christian faith and morals and about the nature, purpose and essential properties of the Sacrament of marriage.

§2. The local hierarch shall see to it that in his eparchy marriage preparation courses are conducted and norms are made regarding the attendance at such courses.

**Free-State Certificate**

*Canon 4.* §1. Those who have lived for more than one year outside the eparchy after reaching marriageable age, have to produce a free state certificate.

§2. If one have lived in different places after reaching the marriageable age, he/she has to produce a free state certificate at least from the parish priest of that place where he/she lived for the last one year. He/she also has to make an affidavit regarding his/her free state covering the period of his/her stay in other places.
§3. Though the certificate of parish priest is normally required for this purpose, the certificates of civil authorities or other persons beyond suspicion may be accepted in case of the non-availability of the former.

§4. Exemption from the above norm may be granted only by the local hierarch of the party on any appropriate arrangement decided by him.

**Betrothal (CCEO, c. 782)**

**Canon 5.** The celebration of marriage shall be preceded by betrothal which is to be celebrated sufficiently in advance in order to give time for the publication of marriage banns.

**Canon 6.** Betrothal is to be celebrated before the local hierarch or the parish priest of either of the parties or a delegated priest or deacon, in the presence of two witnesses in the parish church or with the permission of the parish priest at another church convenient to the party. However, in places other than churches, it cannot be celebrated without the permission of the local hierarch.

**Canon 7.** §1. The betrothal may be conducted only on obtaining the form A or a corresponding document.

§2. In cases of inter *sui iuris* Church marriages, the law or custom of the other party shall be respected regarding betrothal or engagement.

**Canon 8.** The celebration of betrothal should be entered in the register maintained for the purpose and be signed by the parties, witnesses and the officiating priest or deacon.
Canon 9. After the celebration of betrothal the parish priest of the other party should be intimated through Form B.

Canon 10. In Forms A and B date of birth and date of baptism shall be entered.

Canon 11. The betrothal has to be solemnized according to the liturgical text.

Canon 12. §1. The local hierarch of either of the parties may grant dispensation from betrothal for just and sufficient reasons on written application of both the parties.

§2. In case of need, the local hierarchs may grant permission to have betrothal in writing by the parties separately regarding their willingness for the proposed marriage before their proper parish priests in the presence of two witnesses. The parish priests shall communicate the matter to each other.

Canon 13. If a party does not want to proceed to marriage after betrothal, he/she has to obtain permission from the local hierarch in order to enter marriage with another person (CCEO, c. 782 §2).

Publication of Banns

Canon 14. §1. Marriage banns are published in order to bring to the notice of the parish community about the proposed marriage and to give the community an opportunity to bring to the attention of the parish priests impediments, if any, which would impede the celebration of the said marriage.

§2. Permission may be granted by the local hierarch of either of the parties for the publication of banns
even before betrothal on written application of both the parties.

Canon 15. Banons are to be announced on three Sundays or days of obligation during the Sacred Liturgy in the parish churches and if needed also in the filial churches of the parties concerned. Alternatively they may be announced once and published on the notice board of the church for a period covering two more days of obligation.

Canon 16. §1. For just and sufficient reasons, the publication of banons could be dispensed.

§2. The parish priest can dispense from one of the banons and the Protopresbyter from two. Dispensation from all the three banons may be granted only by the local hierarch.

§3. If banons are published only once, the marriage cannot be celebrated on the same day without the permission of the local hierarch.

§4. In the case of dispensation from banons as per §§2&3, either of the parties has to submit a petition, stating the reasons, to the competent authority of the place where the marriage is celebrated.

§5. If dispensation from banons is to be obtained, it has to be entered in the register for betrothal and in Form B. If dispensation is received, the matter shall be communicated to the concerned parish priests.

Canon 17. If marriage did not take place within six months from the completion of the publication of banons, they have to be repeated unless the local hierarch dispenses from this norm.
Canon 18. During the course of the publication of banns, if the existence of a public impediment comes to light, the publication of banns has to be stopped. If however the impediment is occult and dispensation is possible the publication of banns is to be continued and completed. The parish priest shall proceed to the celebration of the marriage only after the dispensation has been duly obtained.

Canon 19. Marriage shall be lawfully blessed only after obtaining the Form C.

Marriage Donations and Church Dues.

Canon 20. The spouses are to give marriage offerings or vivahakkazhcha, in connection with the celebration of marriage, to their respective parish churches according to the norms fixed in each eparchy. Regarding the utilization of this amount the prevailing custom and regulation in each eparchy shall be followed.

Marriage Registers (CCEO, cc. 841-842)

Canon 21. §1. Immediately after the solemnization of marriage the details are to be carefully entered in the relevant parish registers and Form D must be filled in and sent to the concerned parish priests to be entered in the baptismal register and also in a marriage register specially maintained for the purpose. Form E shall be sent in return by the concerned parish priest to the parish priest of the place where the marriage took place.

§2. The priest who blesses the marriage or the parish priest of the place of marriage who discovers any error in the form or substance of any entry in the marriage register (Marriage Certificate Book) may,
within one month of the discovery of such error, in the presence of the persons married or, in the case of their death or absence, in the presence of two other witnesses, correct the error by entry in the margin, without any alteration of the original entry and shall sign the entry in the margin and add thereto the date of such correction. Every correction made shall be attested by the witnesses in whose presence it was made.

Canon 22. Civil law must be followed as regards the marriageable age without prejudice to CCEO, c. 800 §1. Accordingly in India man must have completed 21 years and woman 18 years (CCEO, c. 800 §2).

Mixed Marriage

Canon 23. §1. Marriage between two baptized persons, one of whom is Catholic and the other of whom is non-Catholic, is prohibited without prior permission of the competent authority (CCEO, c. 813).

§2. For a just and reasonable cause the local hierarch can grant permission for a mixed marriage (CCEO, c. 814).

§3. In granting this permission, the agreements if any, made between the Catholic Church and a non-Catholic Church are to be followed.

Canon 24. With due regard for the cases mentioned in canons 23 §2 and 32, the local hierarch shall not grant permission for mixed marriage, unless the following conditions are fulfilled (CCEO, c. 814):

i. The Catholic party declares that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of falling away from the
faith and makes a sincere promise to do all in his or her power to have all the offspring baptized and educated in the Catholic Church.

ii. The other party is to be informed at an appropriate time of these promises which the Catholic party has to make, so that it is clear that the other party is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party.

iii. Both parties are to be instructed on the essential ends and properties of marriage, which are not to be excluded by either spouse (CCEO, c. 814).

*Canon 25.* §1. In all cases of mixed marriages, the pastors shall see that the partners are duly prepared for the same.

§2. When the parties apply for a mixed marriage they should be told that the marriage within the same faith is better for the harmony of the family and the upbringing of the children.

§3. If they insist on conducting the mixed marriage they should be instructed properly about the faith of the couples, the celebration of marriage, the formation and practice of faith after marriage, the duties towards children, and about the special agreements made between the Churches, if any.

§4. It should be stressed that while each partner holds his/her ecclesial faith as supreme or paramount, he/she should respect the ecclesial faith of his/her partner.

§5. A Pre-marriage preparatory course and a pre-marital counselling session are highly recommended.
§6. The bride/bridegroom shall produce her/his baptism certificate.

§7. The priest must ensure that the bride/bridegroom is eligible for marriage

Canon 26. §1. For mixed marriage, with due regard for cases mentioned in Canons 23 §2 and 32, the parties shall submit a written petition together with the endorsement of the parish priest of the Catholic party to the local hierarch requesting permission for mixed marriage.

§2. Together with this petition, the Catholic party shall submit a written declaration regarding the promises and obligations mentioned in canon 24 n.1 (CCEO, c.814 §1).

§3. Before endorsing the petition for permission for mixed marriage, the parish priest of the Catholic party shall inform the non-Catholic partner about the above said declaration of the Catholic party and shall notify the matter in the petition. If the non-Catholic party has no objection, he or she may be invited to counter-sign the declaration of the Catholic party to the effect that he or she is aware of the promises of the Catholic party.

§4. The parties should, in the course of the contacts that are made in this connection, be invited and encouraged to discuss the Catholic baptism and education of the children they will have, when possible come to a decision on this question before marriage (CCEO, c. 815).

Canon 27. Betrothal and publication of banns may be allowed in these cases at the discretion of the local hierarch
after duly considering the nature and circumstances of the petition; if these are allowed their form also shall be stipulated in the same rescript.

**Canon 28.** §1. The form of the celebration of marriage prescribed by law is to be observed if at least one of the parties celebrating the marriage was baptized in the Catholic Church or was received into it (CCEO, c. 834 §1).

§2. A marriage between a Catholic and a member of an Eastern Church is valid if it has taken place with the celebration of a religious rite by an ordained minister, as long as all other requirements of law for validity have been observed. For lawfulness in these cases, the canonical form of celebration is to be observed.

§3. Canonical form is required for the validity of marriages between Catholics and non-Catholic non-Oriental Churches and ecclesial communities.

**Canon 29.** §1. With due regard for canons 23 §2 and 32 §3, dispensation from the form for the celebration of marriage required by law is reserved to the Apostolic See or the Major Archbishop, who will not grant it except for a most grave reason (CCEO, c. 835).

§2. Petition for this dispensation must have the endorsement of the parish priest of the Catholic party and of the hierarch of the place of marriage.

§3. Even if dispensation from the form of celebration of marriage is granted for a most grave reason, there should be a public form of celebration and a sacred rite.
Canon 30. §1. Before or after the canonical celebration of marriage, it is forbidden to have another religious celebration of the same marriage to furnish or new consent; likewise, a religious celebration is forbidden in which both the Catholic priest and non-Catholic minister ask for the consent of the parties (CCEO, c. 839).

§2. However, avoiding scandal, the officiating Catholic priest may invite a non-Catholic minister for a reading of a scriptural passage or giving a brief exhortation and bless the couple. In like manner, the Catholic priest may participate in a mixed marriage with the dispensation from the form of the celebration of the marriage.

Canon 31. §1. A mixed marriage celebrated according to the Catholic form ordinarily takes place outside the Eucharistic liturgy. However, for a just cause, the local hierarch may permit the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, if it is a marriage with a non-Catholic Oriental.

§2. There shall be no celebration of Holy Qurbana in connection with the marriage between a Catholic and a non-Oriental.

§3. The norm of CCEO c. 671 and special norms given by the Apostolic See or the Synod of Bishops, if any, are to be observed regarding the reception of Holy Communion on the occasion of such marriages (CCEO c. 671 §§1,2,5).

Canon 32. §1. For marriages between members of the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church,
the pastoral guidelines agreed upon by these two Churches are to be followed.

§2. Accordingly, as part of the preparation for these inter Church marriages, besides what is given in canon 25 §§ 1-6, the following norms are to be followed:

i. The priest should ensure that the bride/bridegroom has paid the church donations in connection with marriages according to the practice of the Churches.

ii. The bride and bridegroom, after mutual consultation, may select the church in which the marriage is to be celebrated.

iii. Written permission for inter-Church marriage from the respective bishops should be obtained by the bride and the bridegroom.

iv. Betrothal may be permitted according to the custom of the place.

v. Banns should be published in the respective churches, which also announce that it is an inter-Church marriage.

vi. Once the permission is obtained from the bishops, the respective parish priests are expected to issue the necessary documents for the conduct of marriage.

vii. Marriage in lent or advent seasons is only to be conducted with the permission of the Bishops.

§3. The following norms for the celebration of the Inter-Church Marriages are to be observed:
i. The liturgical minister should be the parish priest of the church where the marriage is celebrated or his delegate from the same ecclesiastical communion.

ii. There is to be no joint celebration of marriage by the ministers of both Churches. The marriage is to be blessed either by the Catholic or by the Syrian Orthodox minister. However, there could be some kind of participation at the liturgical service by the other minister who could read a scriptural passage or give a sermon.

iii. On the occasion of these celebrations the couple, and any members of their families who belong to these Churches, are allowed to participate in the Holy Eucharist in the church where the sacrament of matrimony is being celebrated.

iv. Proper entries must be made in the church registers and marriage certificates should be issued for a record to be made in the register of the other church.

§ 4. Regarding the pastoral care of the Catholic-Syrian Orthodox Inter-Church Families the following guidelines are to be observed:

i. The Catholic partner is to be reminded that he or she has to commit himself/herself to imparting to their children proper Catholic formation, to the extent possible and in agreement with his/her partner. Such a formation should be fully in harmony with the Catholic tradition to which he/she belongs.

ii. The pastors of both partners are bound in conscience to provide continued pastoral care to the inter-Church families in such a way as to contribute to their sanctity, unity and harmony.
iii. Each partner is to be advised to attend the liturgical celebrations of his/her respective Church, but the couple may be allowed to participate jointly in the eucharistic celebration on special occasions when this joint participation is socially required.

iv. Any declaration of the nullity of such marriages is only to be considered with the consent of the bishops concerned from both Churches.

v. The funeral service should, as far as possible, be conducted according to the rite of the dead person's Church, even though he/she may be buried in either of the cemeteries, especially if the other partner is already buried there in a family tomb.

Canon 33. For Marriages with dispensation from the impediment of disparity of cult, the norms and conditions for mixed marriages between a Catholic and a non-Catholic non-Oriental are also to be fulfilled (CCEO. cc. 803 & 814).

Canon 34. Local hierarchs and other pastors of souls are to see to it that the Catholic spouse and the children born of a mixed marriage do not lack spiritual assistance in fulfilling their spiritual obligations, and are to assist the spouses in fostering the unity of conjugal and family life (CCEO, c.816).

Canon 35. Whenever a parish priest comes to know that a Catholic party of his parish has contracted marriage with a non-Catholic or a non-Christian without the required permission or dispensation, he shall report the matter to the local hierarch. Ecclesiastical penal action may be taken against those responsible for the transgression and scandal.
Place of Marriage (CCEO, c. 831 §2)

Canon 36. §1. The marriage is to be celebrated in the parish church of either of the spouses according to the custom in the eparchy, or with the permission of the proper parish priest in any other church convenient for the parties.

§2. In extraordinary circumstances, the local hierarch may grant permission for the celebration of marriage at a suitable place other than the church.

Canon 37. Marriage of persons other than parishioners, of whom at least one is a Syro-Malabar, shall be lawfully blessed by the parish priest or his delegate only on receipt of Form C or a similar document from the concerned parish priests.

Marriage through proxy (CCEO, c. 837)

Canon 38. Marriage through proxy is not allowed.

Time of Marriage (CCEO, c. 838 §2)

Canon 39. In accordance with the tradition of the Church and keeping the penitential spirit of the liturgical seasons of Annunciation (Suvara) and lent (Sauma), the celebration of marriage is prohibited from the 1st to 24th December inclusively and from 1st Monday of lent until Holy Saturday inclusively. However, for just and sufficient reasons, the local hierarch of the place of celebration of marriage may give permission for marriage during these periods on written petition by either of the parties and on the undertaking that the marriage will be celebrated without pomp and show.

Canon 40. The special regulations given by the eparchial bishops regarding the time of the celebration of marriage
on certain days like Sundays, must be carefully observed.

**Form of Marriage (CCEO, c. 836)**

*Canon 41.* Marriages are to be celebrated according to the approved liturgical text.
Statement of Accounts

MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CURIA OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH
MOUNT ST. THOMAS, COCHIN - 682 021

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1997.

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<tr>
<th>PARTICULARS</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>PAYMENTS</th>
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<td>Ps</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rs</td>
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### III. AGRICULTURE & POULTRY:

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### IV. DONATIONS & CONTRIBUTIONS:

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### V. CAPITAL RECEIPTS:

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<td>PARTICULARS</td>
<td>RECEIPTS</td>
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<td>Curia Building—Site Engineer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery &amp; Equipments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribunal Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. CURRENT ASSETS &amp; LIABILITIES:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Collection returned</td>
<td>77,588.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Obligations</td>
<td>1,42,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Synodal News</td>
<td>2,680.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance—Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal</td>
<td>3,965.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIII. CLOSING BALANCES:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Deposits at Banks</td>
<td>63,52,287.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB Accounts at Banks</td>
<td>2,24,673.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Account at Banks</td>
<td>667.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in hand</td>
<td>199.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,28,00,455.28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AUDITOR'S REPORT

Verified with the books of accounts produced before us
and found correct according to explanations given to us.

ERNAKULAM,
19-05-1997
(Sd/-)
C.J. Romid F.C.A.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
(M/s. P.V. Chacko & Co.)
P.B. No. 3587, M.G. Road, Cochin - 35

This account was also audited quarterly and annually by the Internal Auditors, Rev. Fr. Lawrence Olakkengal and Mr. M.C. George, Mundackal. The account was approved by the Permanent Synod on 13-6-1997. It was presented also in the Financial Council and the Synod of Bishops.

Mount St. Thomas
30-06-1997
(Sd/-)
Finance Officer
*New members inducted in the Ordinary Tribunal*

Fr. John Kochupurackal, the Assistant Superior General of the Congregation of St. Theresa (C.S.T), is appointed Judge of the Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal with effect from 26.06.1997.

Fr. Antony Madathumpady, the parish priest of St. Sebastian’s Church, Ambunad, in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly, is appointed notary in the Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal with effect from 26.06.1997.

Both of them took the oath of office and secrecy before the Apostolic Administrator on the same day and started their work in the Tribunal.

*New Chairmen*

In the place of Mar Mathew Vattackuzhy, Mar Paul Chittilappilly is appointed as the chairman of the Commission for drafting the particular laws of the Malabar Church.

As Mar Joseph Kundukulam retired from his office, Mar George Alencherry is appointed as the chairman of the Commission for Catechism.

Mar George Punnakottil took charge as the chairman of the finance council.

*Seminar for Tribunal Personnel*

A seminar on Tribunal proceedings is arranged for the persons working in ecclesiastical tribunals on 1-5 December 1997 at Renewal Centre, Ernakulam. Msgr. Charles Scicluna,
an expert from the Supreme Tribunal of Apostolic Signatura will be the resource person. The seminar is arranged under the auspices of the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal. All persons working in Ecclesiastical Tribunals as judges and defenders of Bond and all others who have a degree in canon Law are invited to participate in the seminar.

**Theology Section Started**

The Most Rev. Pascal Topno, the Archbishop of Bhopal, inaugurated the theology section in Ruhalaya Major Seminary of the MST on July 8, 1997. The seminary intends to give an accent to the ecclesial missionary formation of the seminarians.

**Mar Joseph Irnimpen Expired**

Mar Joseph Irnimpen, who was the first bishop of Palghat, died at the age of 78 on 23rd August 1997. Since his retirement in December 1994, he was living in St. Joseph’s Priest Home, Malampuzha. His mortal remains were interned in the specially prepared tomb in St. Raphael’s Cathedral, Palghat on 25th August 1997.
SYNODAL NEWS

BULLETIN OF THE SYRO-MALABAR MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCH

No. 10 August 1997

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For further information please write to:

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   SYNODAL NEWS
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   Thrikkakara P.O.
   Kochi 682 021, India.

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