XVII SYNOD (2009)

SPEECHES

REPORTS

DECISIONS

DECREES

PASTORAL LETTERS

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BULLETIN OF THE SYRO-MALABAR MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCH

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EDITORIAL

This moment in history is a moment of great expectations for the Syro-Malabar Church. On 21st July 2009, the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care, prepared by the CBCI Special Commission for Evangelization and approved by the Standing Committee were sent to all the members of CBCI as mandated by the same Committee. This indeed is a very positive step towards resolving the age-old problems connected with the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar faithful outside the proper territory of the Syro-Malabar Church. Numbers 11 & 12 of these Guidelines are indeed epoch-making directives in this regard. Number 11 says: “The question of establishing more dioceses of the Oriental Rite overlapping the Latin Diocese and the question of all-India jurisdiction must be thoroughly studied by all the three ritual Churches, keeping in mind both the ideal of unity in diversity, its concrete implications and the ground reality as well as taking into account the reports submitted by the Apostolic Visitators. This study could be entrusted in each Episcopal Body to a small committee on completion of which, all these committees could come together to reflect and discuss and present the findings to the CBCI SCE before submitting them to the Standing Committee and, after its due approval, ultimately present the recommendations or guiding principles for the approval of the next General Body Meeting in 2010.” However, one need not wait till the CBCI General Body meeting in 2010 for the erection of Syro-Malabar eparchies in the Metropolitan cities of India. No. 12 of the Guidelines says: “In the meantime, the concerned diocesan/eparchial Bishops in collaboration with the Major Archbishops, should explore the possibility of creating Syro-Malabar dioceses in the metropolitan cities and a Syro-Malankara diocese with personal jurisdiction for the pastoral care of its faithful extra territorium proprium. Besides we could consider the appointment of Syro-Malabar Exarchs with personal jurisdiction for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar faithful living in India extra territorium proprium.” The present Synod
took up the welcome note from the CBCI and requested the Major Archbishop to take the necessary steps to dialogue with the Latin Bishops concerned so that they may initiate the process of erecting the Syro-Malabar eparchies in the Metropolitan cities of India. The Major Archbishop has appointed some Major Archiepiscopal Delegations of Bishops to the various Metropolitan cities of India to study the possibility of creating Syro-Malabar eparchies in the Metropolitan Cities of Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore and Exarchate/Exarchates in the remaining areas outside the already existing Syro-Malabar jurisdictions and the three eparchies to be erected in the regions of Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore outside the territorium proprium. Although the initial efforts of these delegations were not all that rosy, one can reasonably hope that the process has finally begun and the end is not far away. Let us hope and pray that there is whole-hearted co-operation from everyone concerned and the full flowering of the Syro-Malabar Church takes place soon.

The Holy Father has declared a Year for Priests inaugurated on the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday 19 June 2009 – a day traditionally devoted to prayer for the sanctification of the clergy – to be concluded on the same Solemnity in 2010 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birthday of John Mary Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests worldwide and now of all priests. In the words of the Pope, this year is meant to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a more forceful and incisive witness to the Gospel in today’s world. The Synod discussed this celebration in which the Major Archbishop made a passionate appeal for full unity in the Church including liturgical matters. The Synod decided to organize the meetings of priest representatives from all the eparchies in two or three batches so that greater unity, even in the affective level, is generated. The Synod also decided to request the Major Archbishop to issue a pastoral letter and a letter to the priests on this occasion. The Major Archbishop in his letter to priests appreciated the commendable service the priests are rendering to the Church and Society and
thanked them and exhorted them: “In this year for priests, we must seek the means to grow as the people of God with one heart and soul. I entreat each one of you to make every effort to attain this goal with the openness of the heart that the Holy Spirit gives you.” The Synodal News also wishes every priest great blessings from God in this year for priest.

The Editorial Board is happy to present this issue of the Synodal News (Vol. 17, Nos. 1&2, 2009), which contains the Acts of the XVII Synod (2009), held from 17–28 August 2009. Other items included are reports of the various commissions, the post-Synodal Circular, the pastoral letter on Sabhadinam, pastoral letter on the occasion of the year of priests, Guidelines for the pastoral care of migrants and some other usual items. It is hoped that these items will help the readers to be informed of the major events and decisions in the Syro-Malabar Church.
XVII SYNOD (2009)
Mount St. Thomas, 17-28 August 2009

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

My dear brother Archbishops and Bishops,

Once again we are assembled here at Mount St. Thomas, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church, for the XVII Synod of Bishops of our Church that is being held from 17-28 August 2009. I cordially welcome all of you to this Synodal Session. I am glad to note that all with the exception of a few bishops emeriti, are attending this session. At the very outset, let us entrust ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that he may guide us in all our discussions and deliberations through which we may arrive at solutions that are just and right to the different issues our Church has to face in our present-day circumstances.

The recollection talk given by Bishop Sebastian Vadakel MST and the solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist have enabled us to place ourselves in the divine milieu, letting the grace of God flow through our beings. I thank Bishop Vadakel for preparing us for this Synodal session through his enlightening and stimulating words.

When we glance through the major events in the Syro-Malabar Church in the past one year, the outstanding event is, naturally, the canonization of St. Alphonsa in Rome, the first woman saint from India on 12 October 2008 and the subsequent celebration at Bharananganam in which His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches also took part, which gave the opportunity of his meeting with the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church in Palai. Even though it is nearly a year, we have not received any answer to the petition sent by all of us to the Holy Father concerning the needs of our migrant faithful. As I
was taken ill during the XII General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome due to some cardiac problems, I could not participate in these events neither in Rome nor here in Kerala. On the first anniversary of her death, when her feast was celebrated on a grand scale in Bharanaganam with Raza in the church there, I also participated and somewhat compensated for what I missed during the celebrations in the previous year. Still there is a large concourse of pilgrims to the shrine church of St. Alphonsa in Bharananganam. We shall commit our Synod and our Church to the intercession of St. Alphonsa so that in these trying times of the Church, she may through her example and intercession bring out gems of sanctity from the crucible of suffering that the Church is exposed to in the modern times.

Although I could not participate fully in the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome, I did manage to present the aspirations of the Syro-Malabar Church through my intervention during the Synod. I got a letter from the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Nikola Eteroviæthanking the Syro-Malabar Church for its contribution to the success of the synod on the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church. We expect very soon an Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father regarding the fruits of the Synod.

Another important event was the consecration of the first Syro-Malabar Church in the Gulf Countries, in Doha, in the State of Qatar on 22nd of May 2009, in the presence of the local Bishop Paul Hinder, Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, and myself and Syro-Malabar representatives from all the Gulf Countries. I congratulate the Syro-Malabar faithful of Doha and their leaders on this great achievement which is indeed a model that could be emulated by many communities of the Syro-Malabar Church in similar situations. Our Church also celebrated along with all the other Catholic Churches the conclusion of the year of St. Paul and the inauguration of the year for priests. We shall
discuss during this session of our synod how best we can celebrate the year for priests in the Syro-Malabar Church. Being a Church blessed with a large number of priestly vocations, we should consider how we can promote the holiness of our priests and the effectiveness of their ministry.

On 14th August 2009 I had the privilege of announcing the appointment of the successor of Bishop of Gratian Mundadan. He is Mgr. John Vadakel, CMI, who was working as the Vicar General of the diocese. I wish him every success in his Episcopal ministry and cordially welcome him to the Episcopal fraternity of the Syro-Malabar Bishops Synod. I have invited him to be with us these days, at least for some Synodal sittings as an observer.

We are all happy at the outcome of the Lok Sabha elections in India. The general feeling is that for the next five years, we have a stable and secular government which respects democracy and human rights. It also bore witness to the success of the united stand we bishops could take against every kind of atheistic ideologies, violation of human rights and minority rights and even basic human values. I am sure that this has increased our confidence in our struggle for the respect of human rights and minority rights, religious and moral values and the uplift of the poor and the marginalized. Certainly we will have to work together as one body in the days to come in standing for truth and the perennial values of our faith. The recent encyclical of the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, was a great gift to the world. We should promote the study of this encyclical, especially the moral and social teachings contained in it and see how we can put those teachings into practice. It is indeed an antidote to the motive of ‘profit at any cost’ followed in the consumer society of our times.

After many discussions in the various fora and the hard work of the Commission for Liturgy and especially its secretary Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, and the *recognition* from the Holy See the Liturgical
Texts for Christmas, *Viboothi* and Holy Week liturgy are ready for use. Accordingly I have promulgated them in the hope all the faithful will find it very helpful to celebrate these mysteries very meaningfully.

The first ever International Laity Assembly held from 13th to 15th August 2009 at Mount St. Thomas was indeed a historic event in which over 300 delegates from all over the world took part with great enthusiasm and love for their mother Church, the Syro-Malabar Church. We can call this as a renaissance of the role of the laity in our Church. We will be discussing the important suggestions from this assembly during this Synodal Session. My congratulations to Bishop Arackal and the members of his team for organizing this International Laity Assembly. I am sure that this Assembly is going to be the beginning of a resurgence of a more active participation of the laity in the mission of our Church, following the example of Puthenparambil Thommachan whose portrait was brought to the Assembly Venue from Edathua in an impressive procession. I think it is also quite fitting that I make a personal tribute to a great lay leader, Mr. P.C. Abraham, the co-founder of the Mission League and popularly known as Kunjettan who died on 12th August after he met with an accident. He has been the inspiration for thousands of young people to dedicate their lives for the cause of the Church and who serve the Church loyally as Bishops, priests and religious all over India and abroad. May his soul rest in solace in the presence of the Almighty and continue his intercession for the missionary endeavours of the Church.

Our Church is grateful to the Holy Father for raising St. George’s Church, Angamaly which has an important place in the history of our Church to the dignity of a Minor Basilica.

As usual there is a long list of items on the agenda of this session of the Synod. This year I have prepared the provisional agenda of the Synod in consultation with the permanent synod which will be finalized by the Synod session soon after this address. In this
Session of the Synod, we have to decide upon choice of candidates for various bishoprics, discuss about the erection of new dioceses as per the guidelines for pastoral care approved by the CBCI Standing Committee, plan for the forthcoming Major Archiepiscopal Assembly, etc. The Synodal Committee for the evaluative study on the functioning of the Synod has presented its report and we will be seriously discussing about its proposals. There will also be the report presentation by the various commissions, seminars, the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal and the Finance Report of the Curia after listening to which we will have to evaluate their functioning and propose ways and means for improvement. I request your whole-hearted co-operation and active participation in these discussions and deliberations so that we may arrive at the best solutions.

In conclusion, let me invoke God’s blessing upon all of us so that we may have a very fruitful session of our Synod. May the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of our Apostle St. Thomas and St. Alphonsa, the first woman saint of India and first saint of our Church and all the blesseds of our Church, help us during these days. With these words I formally declare the XVII Synod of the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church open.

Mount St. Thomas Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil 17 August 2009 Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church
XVII Synod (2009)  
17-28 August 2009

REPORT

The XVII Synod (2009) began with a recollection preached by Bishop Sebastian Vadakkel, MST at 10.00 a.m., followed by some time for personal prayer and a concelebrated Holy Qurbana of the Bishops, the Major Archbishop being the main celebrant. During his homily, the Major Archbishop appealed to the Bishops to work for greater unity in the Church especially in the matter of uniformity regarding the celebration of the Liturgy. As a concrete measure he proposed that a few representatives of Bishops together with some experts could discuss with priest-representatives of different dioceses and arrive at practical solutions to the problem.

The first sitting of the day started at 2.30 p.m. with a prayer by the Major Archbishop.

The formal inauguration of the Synod: The formal inauguration of the Synod took place at 2.30 p.m. In his inaugural address the Major Archbishop welcomed all the Bishops to the present session of the Synod. He thanked Bishop Sebatian Vadakkel for preparing the bishops for the Synodal session through his illuminating and inspiring words. He referred to the canonization of St. Alponsa and the celebration afterwards at Bharnanganam, the fact that he could not attend fully the Synod in Rome due to ill-health, the consecration of the Syro-Malabar Church in Doha by him, the conclusion of the Year of St. Paul and the inauguration of the Year for Priests, and the recent Encyclical of the Holy Father ‘Caritas in veritate.’ The Major Archbishop congratulated Fr. John Vadakel, CMI, the newly appointed Bishop of Bijnor and with the consent of the Synod informed him that he could attend the sittings of the Synod at his own choice as an observer. He expressed his satisfaction in the publication of the Liturgical Texts for Christmas, Viboothi and the
Holy Week by the Liturgical Commission for the use of the Church. He appreciated the efficient organization of the recent International Laity Assembly by the Commission for Laity and congratulated the Chairman Bishop Mathew Arackal and the members of his team. Referring to the sad demise of Mr. P.C. Abraham, the co-founder of the Mission League and popularly known as Kunjettan who died on 12th August after he met with an accident, he commended his soul to God’s mercy. He expressed his gratitude to the Holy Father for raising St. George’s Church, Angamaly which has an important place in the history of our Church to the dignity of a Minor Basilica. Concluding his inaugural address, the Major Archbishop declared the XVII Synod open.

Participants: The following members were present for the Synodal Session. Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, (Major Archbishop), Mar George Valiamattam (Tellicherry), Mar Mathew Moolakkatt OSB (Kottayam), Mar Andrews Thazhath (Trichur), Mar Joseph Perumthottam (Changanacherry), Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy (Archbishop Emeritus, Trichur), Mar Joseph Powathil (Archbishop Emeritus, Changanacherry), Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil (Emeritus, Palai), Mar Gratian Mundadan CMI (Emeritus, Bijnor), Mar Abraham Mattam VC (Emeritus, Satna), Mar Joseph Pastor Neelankaval CMI (Emeritus, Sagar), Mar Mathew Vattackuzhy (Emeritus, Kanjirapally), Mar George Punnakottil (Kothamangalam), Mar James Pazhayattil (Irinjalakuda), Mar Gregory Karotemprel CMI (Rajkot), Mar Paul Chittilapilly (Thamarassery), Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI (Chanda), Mar Jacob Manathodath (Palghat), Mar Simon Stock Palathra CMI (Jagdalpur), Mar George Alencherry (Thuckalay), Mar Thomas Elavanal MCBS (Kalyan), Mar Thomas Chakiath (Auxiliary, Ernakulam-Angamaly), Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST (Ujjain), Mar Lawrence Mukkuzhy (Belthangady), Mar Joseph Kunnath CMI (Adilabad), Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakek VC (Satna), Mar Mathew Arackal (Kanjirapally), Mar Jacob Angadiath (Chicago), Mar Sebastian Adayanthurath (Auxiliary, Ernakulam Angamaly), Mar Mathew Anikuzhikattil
(Idukki), Mar Joseph Kallarangatt (Palai), Mar Jose Porunnedom
(Mananthavady), Mar Anthony Chirayath (Sagar), Mar Thomas
Thuruthimattam CST (Gorakhpur), Mar Joseph Pandarasseril
(Auxiliary, Kottayam) and Mar Joseph Arumachadath (Bhadravathi).

**Leave of Absence:** The Synod granted leave of absence to a few
Bishops from certain sittings of the present Session of the Synod for
various reasons.

**Moderators:** The Major Archbishop nominated Archbishop
Mathew Moolakkatt, Bishop Jacob Manathodath and Bishop
Lawrence Mukkuzhy as moderators of the sittings of the Synod.

**Notary for the Present Session of the Synod:** The Major
Archbishop, after taking the opinion of the synod nominated Fr.
Pauly Kannookadan to be the Notary of this session of the synod.

**Tellers:** After consulting the Bishops, the Major Archbishop
appointed Bishop Thomas Thuruthimattam, CST, Bishop Joseph
Pandarasseril and Bishop Joseph Arumachadath, MCBS, Tellers
for the elections during the current session.

**Committee for the Media:** The Major Archbishop nominated
Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, Bishop Mathew Arackal, and
Bishop Thomas Chakiath as members of the committee for the media
for this session of the Synod.

**Vice Chancellor:** The Major Archbishop informed the house that
with the consent of the Permanent Synod, he appointed Fr. James
Kallumkal, V.C., Vice Chancellor of the Curia, with effect from 12th
September 2009.

**Liturgical Celebrations:** The Major Archbishop entrusted Bishop
Sebastian Adayanthrath to see to the ordering of the liturgical
celebrations during the Synod.

**Main Celebrants for the Holy Qurbana:** As proposed by Bishop
Vijay Anand Nedumpuram, CMI the Synod welcomed the idea of
selecting the main celebrants of the Holy Qurbana during the Synod
not only on the basis of the seniority of Bishops, but also other considerations like including even junior bishops as main celebrants.

**Cancellation:** To an enquiry by Bishop Gratian Mundadan, CMI the Major Archbishop informed the Synod that the Permanent Synod cancelled the Interaction of the Synodal Fathers with the Cross-section of the faithful proposed earlier by them, as there was already an International Laity Assembly and another consultation could not be organized within a short-time.

**Participation in the IX\textsuperscript{th} FABC Plenary Assembly:** The Major Archbishop thanked Bishop George Alencherry and Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt, the delegates of the Synod who participated in the IX\textsuperscript{th} FABC Plenary Assembly at Manila.

**Communicating the Experience of FABC Plenary Meeting at Manila:** Bishop George Alencherry and Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt, delegates of the Syro-Malabar Church to the FABC Plenary Meeting at Manila, gave a short account of their experiences of the meeting. Bishop George Alencherry said that the Plenary Meeting was very well organized with the participation of 70 Bishops including 6 Cardinals from 22 countries of Asia. He remarked that the most salient feature as far as we were concerned was the recognition given to the Oriental Churches with celebrations of Holy *Qurbana* in Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara rite. The Bishops of the Latin rite appreciated very much our liturgy and the homily preached by Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt. The topic of the Plenary Meeting was “Living the Eucharist in Asia” which was studied thoroughly and many practical suggestions for pastoral and missionary work were deduced from the discussions and the common gatherings. These suggestions will be included in the final report of the Plenary Assembly.

**Review of the Decisions of the Previous Synod:** Bishop George Alencherry, the Secretary of the Synod read out the decisions of the previous session of the Synod. The Synod reviewed their implementation. It was suggested that the decisions that were not yet implemented could be listed separately in the list of decisions of
the present Synod for consideration of the following Synod. At the request of Archbishop Andrews Thazhath to delete the mention of Mary Matha Seminary from the decision concerning the contribution to Kunnoth seminary, the Secretary presented in another sitting of the Synod the corrected decision regarding the contribution to Kunnoth seminary decided in the previous Synod as follows: To approve as a first measure to solve the financial crisis of the Kunnoth Seminary the diverting of the full amount of the dues of the seminarians of Mangalapuzha and to request the Seminary Commission for Vadavathoor to examine the seminary accounts and see the possibility of giving similarly to Kunnoth Seminary the dues of the seminarians there. This corrected formulation of the decision was approved by the Synod.

**Finalising the Agenda:** At the request of Archbishop Mathew Moolakkatt, the Moderator, the Bishops proposed a few more items to be included in the agenda. With these additional items, the final agenda had the following items:

1. Guidelines of the CBCI Standing Committee for Pastoral Care-New Eparchies in India especially in Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore and for the rest of India.

2. Pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar Migrants in India and outside India.

3. Steps to make the evangelization apostolate of the Syro-Malabar Church more effective and better coordinated.

4. The Mission Congress of India and participation of the Syro-Malabar Church in it.

5. Syro-Malabar Bhavan / Secretariat in Delhi with a liaison officer/bishop/priest.

6. Transfer of the Faridabad property to the Syro-Malabar Church.


10. A Building complex which contains offices cum convention hall and hostel for the different training activities of various commissions apart from the curial office and residence of the bishops.

11. Renovation of the present building.

12. Our Public Relations, Think-tank, Public Relations Officer, Vigilance Cell, Political Cell, Lay Leadership, etc. for the Syro Malabar Church.

13. Church and Politics.


15. Sharing of Arch/Diocesan affairs among the bishops.


17. How to make our catechesis more effective.

18. Catechetical text book in English on sex education.

19. Revising the minimum and maximum amount fixed for the Syro-Malabar Church exceeding which permission is needed from the Major Archbishop or the Synod.

20. Changing the bye-laws of the Pastoral Council, Prathinidiyogam, Major Archiepiscopal Assembly, etc., to accommodate the directive of the CBCI regarding representation of women.

22. Procedure for giving the *nil obstat* from the part of the synod in the case of requests for initiating the beatification processes of saintly persons in the Church.

23. Study on the question of stipends for concelebration and approval for including them in the particular law of our Church.

24. List of provisions of the Common Law that required complementary norms and not yet included in the Particular Law.

25. Draft statutes regarding the Curial Bishop.


27. Follow up of the Laity Assembly held on 13th to 15th August 2009.

28. Celebration of the Year for Priests at the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Level – Priests’ gathering with representatives from all dioceses regarding liturgy.

29. Formation of a new liturgical calendar.

30. Promulgated and printed texts (the text integrating the Liturgy of Hours and the text without the Liturgy of Hours) of the Holy Week Liturgy – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Passion Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday and *Vibhoodi* Liturgy.

31. *Propria* Texts to be incorporated in the Holy *Qurbana Taksa*.

32. Presentation of the detailed study on the suggestions given by the Conference of the Representatives of Priests, excepting the one on mystagogical catechesis.

33. Guidelines for an integrated celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* with the liturgy of the hours.

34. The draft text of the Second Anaphora.
35. The finalized drafts of the following Liturgical Texts for the Synodal discussion.
   a) Dedication of the Church
   b) Blessing of the Deppa
   c) Rededication of the Churches
   d) Blessing of the Sacred Vessels
36. Liturgical text for the blessing of marriages with non-Christians.
37. English Translation of the Pontifical.
38. Liturgical gown and head dress.
39. Study on the practice of praying the liturgy of the hours of a day starting from the evening of the previous day.
40. Follow up of the dialogue with the Seminary Staff.
41. Finalized syllabus for the minor seminary formation.
42. Teaching of missiology in all the major seminaries of our Church.
43. An orientation course for the members of the staff from all the major seminaries on priestly formation.
44. Training programme for the new members of the Staff in the Major Seminaries.
45. Suggestions from the conference of Rectors of Major and Minor seminaries, both diocesan and religious.
46. First draft copy of the Directory on the Ministry and Life of the Priests.
47. Charter for Women Religious formation.
48. Suggestions from the conference of the Major Superiors of the Women religious.
49. Discussion on the suggestions from LRC Research Seminar conducted at Delhi on the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and Abroad.

50. Discussion on the suggestions from the Research Seminar on Catholic response to bills on Euthanasia, Church properties, Population Planning, Christian Marriage, Suicide and Adoption proposed by Kerala Law Reform Committee.

51. Introduce the new volume of the Thomas Christian Heritage, the Journal of the LRC and the new books of LRC.

52. Syro-Malabar Research Centre Award 2009.


54. The progress of the project of the critical study version of Holy *Qurbana*.

55. Elections to various offices.

56. Appointment of the Commission for Vadavathoor.

57. Presentation of reports by the three Major Seminaries.

58. Presentation of reports by the various commissions and Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal.

59. Presentation of the financial report.

60. Pension funds and retirement benefits for the Syro-Malabar Clergy.


62. Request for ratification of the Marriage Preparation Courses conducted by the coordinator of the Syro-Malabar Pastoral Care in Bangalore.

**Sharing of Information Regarding the Developments in the Dioceses:** As the first item the Synod took up for consideration this proposal of Bishop Jacob Angadiath. Accordingly each bishop
briefly presented the pastoral and missionary activities of his diocese for the information of other Bishops.

**Final Statement of the Synod:** Bishop George Alencherry proposed that it was good to issue a final statement from the Synod for the whole people of God of our Church in order to make known to them what transpired during the Session of the Synod that calls for their attention as regards their life in the Church. There followed a discussion on the subject and the Synod decided to accept on principle the possibility of issuing a message by each Synod based on the special topic that the Synod might take up for deeper study and discussion.

**Pastoral Circular:** The Synod also decided to issue a pastoral circular comprising the contents of the discussions and decisions so as to strengthen the ecclesial life of the faithful. A committee of three Bishops was appointed by the Synod with Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam as Convener and Bishop Joseph Kunnath and Bishop Thomas Elavanal as members in order to prepare the pastoral circular from the present Synod. This Committee of Bishops presented the Draft of the Circular and the Synod scrutinized it in detail. After having made a number of modifications the Synod approved it for publication by the Major Archbishop who proposed that this circular could be made public not only through the diocesan bulletins but also through the organs of the eparchies and parishes.

**Report of the Synodal Committee for the Evaluative Study on the Functioning of the Synod:** Archbishop Joseph Powathil and Archbishop Andrews Thazhath presented to the Synod the findings of the evaluative study on the functioning of the Synod made by the Synodal Committee appointed for the purpose. Basing on the responses received from the Bishops, the Committee presented to the Synod the following proposals which were approved by the Synod. They are listed here below as 1. Decisions, 2. Guidelines and 3. Suggestions:
1. Present a working paper at the beginning of every Synod reviewing the decisions of the previous synod, presenting the important themes of the present Synod and explaining the nature, the procedure, the competence and the objectives of the Synod on the basis of the theological and juridical aspects of the statutes of the Synod.

2. Make available the documents of the Synod including the Synodal decisions and Statutes to all the new members of the Synod in advance for their personal study in preparation of the Synod.

3. Tabulate the decisions of the Synod in the computer and make available at the time of discussion.

4. To have a particular theme for each Synod.

5. Invite the agenda at least six months in advance. Make frequent follow up from the secretariat. If necessary collect explanatory notes from the concerned persons. The Synod secretary should take initiative to prepare the Agenda and present in the Permanent Synod. Permanent Synod should discuss the agenda and finalize them before sending it to the Bishops.

6. Divide the Agenda into two sections: Dogmatic and Pragmatic.

7. Dogmatic matter may be entrusted to the resource persons for serious study and for preparing documented study papers. Give credibility to the resource persons. Send the study papers to the Synodal Fathers in advance for their personal study.

8. Give a note on the contents or a summary regarding the matter of discussion on pragmatic themes.

9. Encourage the Bishops to make personal study on the points of Agenda.

10. To have a common prayer before the synodal sessions of each day.
11. Prepare the time table in advance under the initiative of the Secretary in consultation with the permanent Synod.

12. Fix time for each item of the Agenda.

13. Make precise interventions and avoid repetitions.

14. Limit the discussions to complete on time.

15. The moderator should summarize the points raised in the discussion and help the Synod to reach a conclusion.

16. Moderator has to intervene for consensus, if needed.

17. Request in advance written submissions regarding the dogmatic topics. The Secretary/moderator should present the consolidated report of the written submissions before the discussion.

18. Not to prolong the discussions, and to avoid repetitions and conclude the item of agenda in the allotted time.

19. Produce the appropriate documents backing the statements.

20. Get written observations, if necessary.

21. In special cases the Bishops may sit privately for discussions on differing opinions.

22. To entrust matters not pertaining to all to a group for study or discussions, and bring the results to the Synod for decision e.g. INFARM, Kerala Education problems.

23. Give clear guidelines to the moderators.

24. In certain cases of stagnancy, the Major Archbishop may intervene.

25. Respect and accept all decisions of the Synod in spite of the individual differences in theological convictions especially with regard to the liturgical matters.

26. Respect the common principles in all dioceses.
27. Accept and own the decisions by all the Fathers of the Synod.
28. To have Episcopal supervision in implementing the decisions.
29. Motivate the Bishops to implement the decisions by the Synod and the Major Archbishop.
30. Inform the religious the necessary decisions from the Secretariat and give them directives to implement the decisions.
31. After every Synod send a circular by the Major Archbishop informing the important synodal decisions.
32. The Local Hierarchs to conscientize the faithful to implement the decisions of the Synod.
33. Select certain themes of Ecclesial/Social importance, make necessary preparatory discussions in the diocesan bodies before the synodal discussions and get the feedback of the laity, religious and priests and produce a particular document on that theme after the Synodal discussions.
34. Before taking major decisions collect the opinions of the faithful.
35. To have a follow up mechanism. Permanent Synod should monitor it. The secretary of the Synod should take initiative.
36. Permanent Synod to monitor the activities of the Curia, implementation of the Synodal decisions, and agenda of the Synod.
37. Permanent Synod to remain as body of regular consultation.
38. To send regular reports of the activities of the permanent Synod to all the Bishops of the Synod.
39. To prepare an action plan for the functioning of the commission and presenting it in the synod for discussion.
40. Strengthen the role of the secretary of the Synod
41. To convene the meeting of the commissions at least twice in a
year to plan the activities of the secretariat of the Major archiepiscopal curia.

42. To have statutes or bye-laws for the functioning of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

43. Finance Council as well as Finance officer to visualize the necessities and make appropriate finance planning. Find out possibilities and requirements.

44. Plan about making use of the property to generate funds (eg. Convention Halls, Church buildings, Shopping Complex etc).

45. Taxation of the Churches, Dioceses, Religious Houses, Shrines etc.

46. The secretariat to monitor theses activities.

47. Major Archbishop may express his views as the head of the Church.

48. Major Archbishop may properly make use of the curial set up.

49. Major Archbishop may, in principle, reside in the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

50. To conscientize all the members of the Church regarding the promotion, preservation & adaptation of the patrimony of the Church.

51. The Synod has to preserve and promote the patrimony of the Church.

52. To have only one Liturgical text in all dioceses even the text prepared for catechetical purposes with explanations.

53. To give catechesis to the young generation in matters of liturgy.

54. Promote mystagogical Catechesis.

55. Prepare a common text of the mystagogical Catechesis.

56. To organize evangelization and catechetical apostolate through internet under the initiative of the commission for catechesis.
57. Give orientation to all students of the same age and motivate them.

58. To have continuous correspondence and contact with the students to promote vocations.

59. Conduct formation programme for the religious to a fixed period by the dioceses with a common syllabus.

60. To foster Young couple’s ministry and pro-Life concerns.

61. Give orientation to the vocation promoters in the Syro-Malabar Church.

62. Arrange occasions for Intermingling of the Priests of different dioceses.

63. Conduct programmes of common interaction of the representatives of the Priests, religious and laity not only on the themes of Liturgy but also on social issues.

64. To have a Media committee in the dioceses and in the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

65. Publish every year the data of the charitable works undertaken by the dioceses and religious congregations of the Syro-Malabar Church.

66. Organize the media persons who could do better for the Church.

67. Strengthen the Electronic Media; Update the electronic media daily; Foster easily accessible Media.

68. Make available Deepika to more readers.

69. To have a media cell, think tank, data bank with selected experts at the Curia.

70. To have a Media team for the Church.

71. To have a spokesman to represent the Church and a team
including lay people to discuss on issues and make the Synodal Fathers aware of current issues.

72. Informal contacts of the Synodal Fathers among themselves might be encouraged.

73. Unified attempts to stand for the common causes should be fostered e.g. All India Jurisdiction, Pastoral Care of the migrants, Missionary Fund, etc.

74. Explain and give clear guidelines on the principle of subsidiarity.

75. To have a lay man as the secretary of the Laity Commission.

76. Laity Commission to take initiative to strengthen the lay organizations.

77. To have Syro-Malabar associations for the youth, women and for the grown ups (or Syro-Malabar Council for the laity).

78. To have a separate section of the Religious with a secretary from the Religious in the commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life.

79. To strengthen the commission for dialogue and Ecumenism.

80. The Major Archiepiscopal Church to take leadership and supply persons and funds to co-ordinate the pastoral care of the migrants, evangelization of the mission areas, to visualize and organize the possibilities for starting new dioceses.

81. Divide and give mission stations or centres of Pastoral Care to various dioceses and religious congregations.

82. To start a Syro-Malabar mission seminary to give initial formation.

83. To raise a mission fund to help the mission dioceses and centres.

84. To promote missionary spirit among priests and seminarians of the Mother Church.
85. The dioceses and parishes of the Mother Church to support the mission centres.

86. Foster the Charitable activities initiated by the *Regional Bishops' Council*, Caritas India and CBCI.

87. To establish a fund for the charitable works by the Major Archbishop.

88. To give space for charitable works and missionary activities in the projects of the Major Archbishop.

89. Prepare and publish a document concerning the guidelines of the charitable activities of our Church.

90. Popularize the laws of the Church both the oriental code as well as the particular laws.

91. To have a legal cell to help the Major Archbishop to interpret the laws.

92. Formulate more laws in the particular laws of our Church and to complete the particular laws and publish them as a separate volume.

The Moderator congratulated the Synodal Committee for the Evaluative Study on the painstaking efforts they have put in to prepare the report with utmost care.

**Public Relations & Church and Politics:** Archbishop Andrews Thazhath introduced the topic of public relations of our Church for discussion in the Synod. He proposed the need for constituting a Media Commission or Team including lay persons to prepare and present the official responses of the Church to the issues and problems that surface in the society. This organ can function as part of the Curia. Bishop George Alencherry presented the role of the Church in political and social issues, emphasizing the real nature of the Church as a Kingdom Community maintaining the Gospel values as against a bargaining communal reality inviting the jealousy of other social and religious communities, the participatory role of the laity in
the Church and enlisting the cooperation from other *sui iuris* Churches of the Catholic Communion together with the Non-Catholic Episcopal Churches. He said that Major Archiepiscopal Curia should take a dialogical leadership in this matter.

Many Bishops expressed their views on this topic. Almost all emphasized the need of Lay participation in the Church and to have a structure to guarantee the on-going involvement and participation of the Laity in the functioning of the Church especially on political and social fields. There was a strong opinion that the interest of the Church in the educational and political fields has to be defended strongly especially in the present circumstances of Kerala. It was emphasized that in these years the Church could forestall many dangers from the part of the present Government and get many important legal and political positions established for the good of the Church. Some Bishops shared the view that our community has invited jealousy from other religious and communal realities. To this comment it was pointed out that this situation was created by the calculated efforts of some political and social groups of vested interests to polarize the religious communities by a racist propaganda. Another valid point expressed by some bishops was that in the past the Church failed to some extent in giving an effective catechesis for the large sections of our community especially those who are in the political, bureaucratic and other elite sections of the society. In this context some Bishops emphasized the need for giving participatory role or functions for the laity in the curial structures and other institutions of the dioceses and even of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. Taking up the previous days' reflections, there was a discussion on the ways and means to respond to the political and social problems that the Church confronts. As this subject needed a detailed study with sufficient preparation, it was suggested that it could be done with a basic research paper the execution of which the Synod decided to entrust to the Synodal Committee for Public Affairs to be presented in the following Session of the Synod.
It was also pointed out that in Public Relations and political issues we should have a structure to project the face of our Church to the public. Many practical suggestions were put forward by the Bishops for this purpose. To set up the new structure it was suggested that the Synodal Committee for Public Affairs (Archbishop Joseph Powathil, Convener, Bishop George Punnakottil and Bishop Thomas Chakiath) together with Bishop Mathew Arackal, Chairman of the Commission for Laity would prepare an outline of the possibilities to create a structure for Public Relations on behalf of the Church to be presented in the current session of the Synod. Accordingly Archbishop Joseph Powathil, Convener of the Synodal Committee for Public Affairs read out in another sitting of the Synod the proposals to create a Think Tank (Media Cell) for the Syro-Malabar Church. The Committee proposed a panel of names to form a Team for the Media Cell and its mode of functioning. It was clarified that the Media Cell was to represent the Syro-Malabar Church while functioning as the PRO of the Major Archbishop. The Convener of the Media Cell will be normally its official Spokesperson. The Synod approved these Guidelines and the Bishops were asked to give to the Committee their further comments and suggestions.

Archbishop Joseph Powathil proposed also certain lines of action that the Church could take in public affairs. He said that the Committee had formed two sub committees, one for writing a proper history of the Christian Community and its contribution to the Kerala society, and another for organizing cultural forums in different regions to encourage the Christian writers and artists. He said that it was highly necessary to study the property Bill and give the correct information about it to our people.

Release of the Liturgical Texts of Christmas, Vibhooti and Holy Week: At the beginning of the day’s sitting, the Major Archbishop released the newly promulgated Liturgical Text of Christmas, Vibhooti and Holy Week by giving the copies of the Texts to Bishop Abraham Mattam, V.C. The Major Archbishop
appreciated the work of the Commission for Liturgy and thanked all those who have worked for the publication of these Texts.

Guidelines for an Integrated Celebration of *Qurbana* with the Liturgy of the Hours: Bishop George Pannakottil, the Chairman of the Commission for Liturgy, presented the guidelines for an integrated celebration of *Qurbana* with the liturgy of the hours and the Synod approved them. As suggested by Bishop Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI, the Synod decided to have an integrated celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* with *sapra* during the current Session of the Synod.

Propria: Bishop George Pannakottil, the Chairman of the Commission for Liturgy, presented to the Synod the finalized draft of 24 selected *propria* prayers for the Holy *Qurbana* and the Synod approved them to be incorporated into the *Taksa* of the Holy *Qurbana*. The Synod also decided to authorize the Commission for Liturgy to print in one volume the present four-volume text of the *propria*.

Points from the Study of the Central Liturgical Committee on the Suggestions from the Meeting of Priests: Bishop George Pannakottil presented the points from the study of the Central Liturgical Committee on the suggestions from the *meeting* of priests from which the Synod approved the following suggestions:

1. Vestments for Concelebrants in the Holy *Qurbana*: On solemn occasions it is desirable that all the concelebrants should wear the full set of the vestments. On other occasions the proper vestments of the concelebrants are at least *kothina*, *urara*, and *sunara*. But on certain occasions, as circumstances demand, the concelebrants may be vested only with *urara* over the cassock. No priest shall celebrate the Holy *Qurbana* with the *urara* put on the casual dress.

2. Revision of the set of readings of the Holy *Qurbana*: As suggested by the *meeting* of priests, the Synod decided to
revise the present set of readings of the Holy Qurbana and to prepare also a new set of readings and to entrust the task to the Commission for Liturgy. The Synod also decided that the preparation of the lectionary may be done after the finalization of the sets of readings of the Holy Qurbana.

**Liturigical Text for the Consecration of the Church:** Bishop George Punnakottil presented for the scrutiny of the Synod the text for the consecration of the church modified by the Synodal Committee as per the direction of the previous Synod. The Synod after the scrutiny of the Text, approved it with the accepted modifications.

**Blessing/Consecration of the Chapels of the Religious Houses:** During the scrutiny of the Text of the Consecration of the church, there came up for discussion the question of blessing/consecration of the chapels of the Religious Houses. It was decided that if the chapels were consecrated for the purpose of offering the Holy Qurbana on an altar permanently fixed, the Text of the Consecration of the church was to be used for the liturgy of consecration and if there was no permanent altar in the chapel the Text of the blessing of chapels could be used.

**Rite of Blessing of the Religious Houses:** At the request of Bishop Vijay Anand Nedumpuram, CMI the Synod decided to include a Rite for the blessing of the Religious Houses, in the Liturgical Text of the Sacramentals to be prepared by the Commission for Liturgy.

**Position of the Tabernacle in the Church:** Another point that came up for discussion was concerning the position of the Tabernacle in the church. The Synod entrusted the Commission for Liturgy to make a study about the most suitable position for the Tabernacle in the church keeping in mind the directive of the II Vatican Council that the Tabernacle should be positioned in a prominent place in the church. The Committee was requested to present the proposal in the following Synod.
Liturgical Text for the Re-dedication of the church and the Blessing of Deppa: The Synod scrutinized the Liturgical Texts for the Re-dedication of the church and the Blessing of Deppa and approved them with the accepted modifications. It was decided that the use of Deppa was to be made a requisite for the celebration of the Holy Qurbana on non-consecrated altars.

Election of the Synodal Commission for Vadavathoor: Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt, Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Vadavathoor, gave a short report of the functioning of the Commission during the past five years. He said that the Commission frequently met the Staff and the students, both together and as individual members. The Commission, he said, had communicated the directives of the Synod both to the Staff and to the students. The Commission appointed nine new professors for the seminary all of whom are well qualified and fitting persons to be on the staff of the seminary. He said that as Chairman he experienced the cooperation and unity in the working of the Commission and thanked the member bishops on this score. Then followed the election of the Bishops for the new Commission for Vadavathoor Seminary. The Synod elected Archbishop Mathew Moolakkatt Chairman of the Commission, Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam and Bishop Thomas Chakiath members. The Moderator thanked Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt for his remarkable service as Chairman of the Commission.

Guidelines for the Pastoral Care: Archbishop Andrews Thazhath read out to the Synod the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care prepared by the CBCI Special Commission for Evangelization and approved by the Standing Committee. He explained the process of drafting these Guidelines and during the discussion that followed many points for the further procedure based on the Guidelines were clarified. The Synod decided to request the Major Archbishop to take the necessary steps to dialogue with the Latin Bishops concerned so that they might initiate the process of erecting dioceses in the
Metropolitan cities of Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore, and an Exarchate situated in or near the cities of Nagpur or Secunderabad. Then the Major Archbishop informed the Synod that he had already appointed two Bishops each for this dialogue with the Latin Bishops on his behalf. The Bishops appointed are Archbishop Andrews Thazhath(Convener) and Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath for Delhi, Bishop James Pazhayattil(Convener) and Bishop George Alencherry for Chennai, Bishop Lawrence Mukkuzhy(Convener) and Bishop Jose Porunndom for Bangalore and Bishop Sebastian Vadakel(Convener) and Bishop Anthony Chirayath for the Exarchate/s to be created for the whole territory outside the Syro-Malabar jurisdiction together with the three eparchies in the regions of Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore.

Procedure for the Creation of Eparchies in the Metropolitan Cities and Exarchates: As a follow up of the discussion on the CBCI Guidelines for Pastoral Care, the Synod discussed the procedure possible to create eparchies in the Metropolitan cities and exarchate(s) for the pastoral care of our faithful in extra territorium proprium in India. One of the points raised was whether the Synod should ask for one exarchate or three exarchates for the whole territory outside the Syro-Malabar jurisdiction together with the three eparchies in the regions of Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore. Some Bishops proposed three exarchates: One in the North, another in the South and a third in the East while some others favoured one exarchate. After some discussion on this point there was a convergence of opinions i.e., to ask for three exarchates. Another point of discussion was whether the exarchate(s) should be entrusted to religious congregations or dioceses. There were opinions favouring either option. Some Bishops were of the opinion that whether it be given to the care of the Religious or dioceses, the exarchate(s) should be organized and developed in an ecclesial manner under the guidance of the Synod of Bishops. Concluding the discussion, it was decided that the two-member Committee of Bishop Sebastian Vadakel and Bishop Anthony Chirayath, already
appointed by the Major Archbishop, would study the procedure for establishing the exarchate(s), taking into consideration all the opinions expressed by the Bishops and propose their recommendations to the Major Archbishop who would take further steps needed.

**Guidelines for the Apostolate of the Religious in Latin Dioceses:** During the discussion on the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care it was decided that when the Religious of our Church start apostolates on behalf of our Church in the dioceses of the Latin Rite they should be advised to do so with the knowledge of the Major Archbishop (Cf. CCEO c. 193) in order to safeguard the ecclesial character of their ministry. Many Bishops stressed the need for regulatory measures regarding the missionary drive of the Religious. Some Bishops suggested that a particular law should be enacted and got approved by the Apostolic See. After discussing the pros and cons the Synod decided to request the Major Archbishop to give necessary guidelines to the religious going for Apostolates in the Latin Dioceses and to entrust the preparation of these Guidelines to the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants. The Synod authorized the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants also to convene a meeting of Major Superiors to give the correct orientation to the religious regarding their apostolate in the dioceses of the Latin Rite in extra **territorium proprium** in India and abroad.

**Major Archiepiscopal Assembly:** The Synod decided to hold the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly from 20 (10.30 a.m.) to 22 (1.00 p.m.), August 2010. The Assembly will start at 11.00 a.m. on Friday, 20th with the celebration of the Holy Qurbana. The sittings of the Synod will be suspended during the days of the Assembly. A committee of Bishops consisting of Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath, Convener, Bishop Mathew Arackal and Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, Members, was constituted to organize the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. Fr. Pauly Kannoookadan was selected to
act as Secretary of the Committee. The following points regarding the conduct of the Assembly were pointed out by the Bishops:

1. All the Bishops should participate fully in the Assembly.

2. “You are a Holy People” (1Pet. 2: 9) was proposed by one Bishop for the theme of the Assembly. After having considered also other proposals from the dioceses, the Committee will present its suggestions to the Major Archbishop who will finally decide upon the theme.

3. Expenses are to be met by the eparchies while the Organizing Committee will try to find out other sources of income to finance some items of the expenditure.

4. There should be sufficient representation for women in the Assembly.

5. The main papers presented in the Assembly may be translated into Hindi/English for the benefit of the non-Malayalee participants.

6. Together with the discussion on the theme of the Assembly there should be deliberations on current problems in the Church and Society.

7. Half a day should be allotted to hear the comments and opinions of the participants.

8. The migrant faithful should be given representation in the assembly in consultation with their parish priests and priest coordinators.

9. The Major Archbishop may send a circular letter announcing the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly and inviting topics for discussion from the faithful. The eparchies may discuss the theme of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly in their pastoral councils and send the reports to the Secretariat for the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. The Major Archbishop may send also a pastoral letter officially convoking the Assembly.
The Synod decided to have an amendment for the number of participants nominated by the Major Archbishop for the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. The Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions was entrusted with the task of formulating the amendment and presenting it in the current Session of the Synod.

**Amendment to the Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly**: Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, as requested earlier, presented to the Synod the formulation of an amendment to the Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly regarding the number of participants who could be nominated by the Major Archbishop:

The XVII Synod of Bishops in its afternoon sitting on 24th August 2009 resolved to make the following addition to the ‘Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly’, Article 6§2, as clause 4. “The Major Archbishop in consultation with the Permanent Synod may nominate to the Assembly, an adequate number of priests, religious and lay faithful to provide proper representation to the Syro-Malabar faithful living outside the Syro-Malabar eparchies or exarchies.”

The amendment was passed unanimously by the Synod by the raising of hands. The Synod requested the Major Archbishop to promulgate this amendment as a particular law of the Church.

**Subscribers to the Synodal News**: Fr. Antony Kollannur, Chancellor of the Curia and Chief Editor of the Synodal News requested the Bishops to give a directive to all the parishes in every eparchy to subscribe the Synodal News as it is done in the Archdiocese of Trichur in order to disseminate the items of information coming from the Synod to the priests and the people. He said that the subscription fee is only Rs. 50/- which could be met either by the diocese or by the parishes.

**The Cause for Canonization of Mgr. Joseph Panjikaran**: Bishop George Punnakottil consulted the Synod about the
appropriateness of initiating the cause for canonization of Mgr. Joseph Panjikaran. He presented to the Synod a short biography, report on the life and ministry, the virtues and reputation, etc. of Mgr. Joseph Panjikaran. The Synod asked for some clarifications on the holiness of the person and finally gave its consent to initiate the process for his beatification.

**Marriage Preparation Course:** The Synod discussed the need for giving recognition to the marriage preparation courses conducted by the centres of our faithful in diaspora, both in India and abroad. Many Bishops insisted that these courses should be based on a recognized syllabus and conducted with sufficient duration of time. The Synod decided that the certificates issued by the authorities of the Syro-Malabar Migrants who conduct the Marriage Preparation Courses with the approval of the Commission for Evangelization should be recognized by all. There was also a suggestion to give in websites of our dioceses the dates of marriage preparation courses well in advance so that the would-be spouses of our migrant faithful could arrange their holidays accordingly and participate in the marriage preparation course.

**Follow up of the Dialogue with the Staff of the Major Seminaries:** Bishop George Alencherry presented to the Synod three points regarding major seminary formation: 1. The major seminary formation should be one of the items of serious concern of the Synod in the changing situations of the family and the society. If all the seminary commissions together present to the Synod every year a brief report containing the points for improvement in the matter of formation of our seminarians, the Synod could gradually evolve a uniform mode of formation for all the seminaries. 2. The seminary commissions may prepare some guidelines for the formators (Rectors, Father Prefects and Spiritual Fathers) of all our seminaries. 3. All the formators in our seminaries must be persons who have undergone the formators’ course. Adding to these proposals some other Bishops also stressed the need for reform in the seminary
formation. The dioceses should give good priests as formators in the seminary; many skills are needed for the formators to understand the present generation; formation should be psycho-spiritual; it is good to have a united effort from the part of the three seminary commissions and the Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life to study the matters of formation in the seminary and take steps for improvement. The Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life informed the Synod that an orientation course based on the Charter for Priestly Formation and a Formators’ Course were being planned and would be conducted in the coming months. In conclusion, the Synod decided to discuss in the Synod the major seminary formation as an item of serious concern every year and to request the Commissions of the three seminaries to present to the Synod the issues that needed its attention, after having interacted among themselves on those issues. The Synod also considered the nature of the responsibility of Bishops in the Formation Programmes of Clerics in seminaries conducted by the Religious and decided that the Bishops should ensure that it is done as per Common Law (CCEO c. 330 & 536 §2) and the Charter for Priestly Formation approved by the Synod.

Report of the Conference of Rectors: Bishop Thomas Chakiath presented to the Synod the report of the conference of Rectors of the Major and Minor Seminaries and pin-pointed the important suggestions regarding the selection of candidates, assessment of the promotion of the students to the Major Seminaries, awareness programme on the Charter for Priestly Formation in the Major Seminaries, Formators’ Training Programme, Revision of the Regency and Fourth Year Minor Seminary Course. During the discussion that followed, the Bishops gave the following suggestions:

1. The Fourth Year Minor Seminary Course is to be recommended and wherever possible it is to be introduced.
2. In the Minor Seminary formation the relationship of the Bishop with the seminarians is an important factor that gives a correct orientation for the training.
3. The priests and the lay persons should have a role in the formation of the seminarians.

4. The characteristics of the present generation have to be carefully studied.

5. There should be a missionary and pastoral orientation in the formation of the seminarians.

6. The Bishops have responsibility with regard to the formation programmes in seminaries conducted by the Religious.

Bishop Thomas Chakiath informed the Synod that the Common Syllabus for the Minor Seminary Formation was modified as per the suggestions of the Synod and sent to the Rectors of the Minor Seminaries.

Ecumenism and Dialogue: Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam pointed out the need of including as a programme of the Synodal Session an interaction with the Bishops of the other Churches and the leaders of other religions. To this suggestion some Bishops responded saying that attempts of ecumenical coming together were not very successful in the past due to the conflicting situations existing among the non-Catholic Churches.

Synod in Rome: Archbishop Joseph Powathil brought to the attention of the Synod that the Servant of God Pope John Paul II had told the Bishops at the conclusion of the 1996 Synod in Rome that he would meet the Bishops again after a certain lapse of time. He suggested that the Synod could profit from this suggestion of the Holy Father and request the Congregation for the Eastern Churches to organize a similar Synod at the time of the next ad limina visit. He said that the Synod in Rome could bring important issues like the pastoral care of our migrants to the attention of the Roman Dicasteries and the Holy Father. The Synod approved the suggestion.

Archbishop Andrews Thazhath added to this suggestion another proposal approved earlier by the Synod to organize a
research seminar under the aegis of the LRC on the same topic of the Pastoral Care of the Migrants. Bishop Anthony Chirayath said that the St. Thomas Fellowship in Rome would very well support this project of our seminar.

**More Effective Catechesis:** Archbishop Joseph Powathil presented the problem that our present day catechesis has to take into account. He said that in spite of all our efforts to give objective catechesis through books the children are going astray after their adolescence in matters of faith and getting influenced by Pentecostal Groups and Sects. He felt the need of introducing new methods of catechesis. Many Bishops participated in the discussion that followed. The main suggestions that came up are the following:

1. There should be an evaluation of our catechetical apostolate by the Commission for Catechesis.
2. Catechism classes should be made more effective.
3. We should get the parents of children interested in catechesis.
4. The influence of the media on our children should be taken into account.
5. Catechesis should be liturgical, Biblical, and should give more importance to prayer experience.
6. Youth catechesis is to be encouraged.
7. There should be continued Adult Catechesis with special text books.
8. Teachers of catechism should be given better formation.
9. Children should be given training for media evaluation.
10. The children should not be subjected to pressures of any sort in undergoing catechesis.
11. Both the children and the teachers have to be encouraged to engage in catechesis impelled by personal liking.
12. Home catechesis or Pre-school catechesis may be encouraged.

13. A handbook for parents helping them to give home catechesis may be provided.

14. A web-site of catechesis may be effectively launched.

Some Bishops informed the Synod that there was diploma course for students of Plus 1 and Plus 2 on University level and in spite of its limitations this course is doing some good for the Christian orientation of our youth.

The lack of teaching Church history in catechesis was pointed out as a matter of concern to which the Chairman of the Commission for Catechesis said that the present series of text books included insights from Church history in a progressive manner that would be contributing to the life witness of the children.

**Statutes of the Commission for Laity:** Bishop Mathew Arackal, the Chairman of the Commission for Laity, presented to the Synod the draft of the Statutes of the Commission for the scrutiny and subsequent approval of the Synod. The discussion on the Statutes generated varied responses from the Bishops. The Synod felt that the nature of the Laity Council needs more clarity and that the Statutes could be formulated only after having decided upon the structure of this council. All the Bishops were of opinion that the Laity Council visualized by the Commission should coordinate the Lay Associations and strengthen their participatory role in the Church. The Commission was asked to make further study on the basis of the discussion in the Synod and to present a re-drafted text of the Statutes.

It was suggested that the probable overlapping of activities between the Commission for Laity and the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants could be clarified by their joint discussion on the matter.
Follow up of the International Laity Assembly: Bishop Mathew Arackal presented to the Synod a brief report of the International Laity Assembly conducted recently. He said that all the participants appreciated the way the Assembly was organized and that the Assembly gave them an occasion to have a close contact with the Major Archiepiscopal Curia and to experience a sense of belonging to the Syro-Malabar ecclesial communion. Many Bishops expressed their appreciation of the event.

Celebration of the Year for Priests: the Major Archbishop placed before the Synod his proposal to have a dialogue with the representatives of priests by a representative body of the Bishops from the Synod with a view to arrive at full unity in the Church including liturgical matters. He visualized that if in the Year for Priests this unity was achieved, it would be a great achievement for the Church. The Bishops in general welcomed the idea. But some Bishops expressed their hesitation regarding the implications of such a dialogue. It was decided that the Major Archbishop could convene the meetings of the representatives of priests from all the eparchies in Kerala in two or three batches and that the Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life could take up the organization of these meetings.

The Synod also decided to request the Major Archbishop to issue a Pastoral Letter to highlight the importance of the Year for Priests. The Bishops suggested the following points to be included in the Pastoral Letter: Appreciation of the service done by priests and their contributions to Church and humanity, the sacramental reality of priesthood, the importance of the sacrament of penance and the role of the priest as a confessor and the spirit of reconciliation, personal sanctification, and human relationships especially with the Laity. There was a suggestion that it was fitting to make a reference in the Pastoral Letter to St. John Mary Vianney and Blessed Thevarparampil Kunjachan. The Synod decided also to request the Major Archbishop to send a letter to the priests expressing his
solicitude towards them, emphasizing the importance of their sublime vocation as priests and reminding them of the concern they should have in fostering vocations to priesthood and religious life. The Synod entrusted the Commission for Clergy and Institutes for Consecrated Life to prepare the draft of the Pastoral Letter and the Letter to the Priests to be sent by the Major Archbishop. Some Bishops pointed out that in the message of the Synod the theme of the Year for Priests should be specially included.

Website of the Syro-Malabar Church - [www.smcim.org](http://www.smcim.org): Bishop Jose Porunnedom, Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body of the Syro-Malabar Church Internet Mission, presented to the Synod, by LCD Projection, the present state of the website of the Syro-Malabar Church as furnished by Mr. Pious Joseph and Team with whom the Governing Body had entered into a contract with the authorization of the Synod. The Bishops appreciated the programming of the website. Bishop Jose Porunnedom enquired whether the Synod was in favour of extending the period of the contract up to April 30, 2011 to which the Synod gave its consent. He requested the Bishops all the support possible to this website programme by appointing a priest-coordinator in the diocese and by creating diocesan, parish and institute-wise websites in collaboration with the Syro-Malabar Internet Mission.

Pension Fund: Archbishop Mathew Moolakkatt read out a letter from ROACO expressing its willingness to extend partial help towards the Pension Fund Scheme of the retired priests of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Synod discussed the manner in which the Bishops could cooperate with this project. The Synod decided that a project could be presented to ROACO in which Rs. 10,000.00 might be indicated as the monthly pension for a retired priest and that every Bishop was willing to meet half of the amount from the diocese expecting the other half from ROACO. The Bishops consented that the amount received from ROACO could be distributed from the Curia to the eparchies. The Synod said that the
situation of religious priests who had worked full time as missionaries or parish priests in the Syro-Malabar eparchies could also be included as a second part of the project requesting the pension privilege for them too. The Synod entrusted the task of preparing the project to the Finance Commission and requested it to hand over the project to the Major Archbishop prior to his departure for Rome on 9th September 2009.

**Amendments to the Particular Law:** Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, Convener of the Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions presented to the Synod the Amendments to the Particular Law proposed by the Redaction Committee. The Synod discussed the Amendments of four propositions and approved them as follows:

Art. 51: “The parish priest and the assistant parish priest take possession of their office as per particular law (Art. 19) and the other clerics as per the eparchial norms with due regard for the norms about major archbishop, metropolitan and bishops (c. 288).

Art. 86 and 87 to be omitted {already implied in art. {21 & 22}}

Art. 137§1: “The Sacrament of Divine Eucharist is to be solemnly administered at the age of reason after due catechetical instruction and reception of the sacrament of penance. There is however provision for giving Divine Eucharist earlier together with baptism.”

Art. 148§1: to be changed as follows: “the names of candidates for promotion to sacred orders of presbyterate and diaconate, whether eparchial or non-eparchial are to be announced in the parish church of each candidate during the Divine Liturgy on two consecutive days of obligation before the ordination.”

Art. 173§2: to be changed as follows: “permission may be granted by the Proto Presbyter of either of the parties for the publication of banns even before betrothal on written application of both the parties, endorsed by the respective parish priests. The parish priest of the party who has obtained the dispensation shall
communicate the matter to the parish priest of the other party along with Form B.”

Art. 188§3: to be changed as follows: “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.” The word ‘sacred rite’ is dropped because according to our code, it means the priestly blessing, so once exemption is granted then this could not be insisted upon.

Art. 210: “The parish priest can receive a baptized non-catholic individual lay person into the catholic Church as per the eparchial norms. The person to be received into the Catholic Church shall submit a written petition to the authority determined in the eparchial norms, with the recommendation of the parish priest.”

**Synodal Decisions to be Included in the Particular Law:** Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, then presented the following Synodal decisions to be included in the Particular Laws, according to an earlier decision of the Synod. They are the following:

Xth Synod (2002), Decision No. 32: In designating the delegates from the eparchies the eparchial bishop shall follow the common law in this regard which is as follows: “To the patriarchal assembly are to be convoked from each eparchy at least one presbyter enrolled in the same eparchy, especially a pastor, one from among the religious or members of societies of common life according to the manner of religious, as well as two lay persons, unless the statutes determine a greater number, all of whom are designated in a manner determined by the eparchial bishops and indeed, if it is a case of a member of a religious institute or a member of a society of the common life according to the manner of religious, with the consent of the competent superior (CCEO, c. 143, #1, Para.6).”

XIth Synod (2003), Decision No. 10: “To clarify that simple burial means a burial with no homily, no Qurbana, no use of mike,
using only two ornamental umbrellas (Muthukudas), one cross and one priest for the burial. In scandalous cases of suicide not even the simple burial may be given. In such cases the body will not be allowed to be taken inside the Church. The priest may bless the grave sometime outside the funeral service.” The Synod decided to include this decision in the section on the guidelines of the Particular Law.

XIVth Synod (2006), Session 2, Decision No. 2: 1. The appointment of the Exarchs is of a stable nature and that their term of service would terminate by the circumstances mentioned in the common and the particular laws. 2. The Exarchs, who were priests and who retired as per the provisions of CCEO c. 210, might retain even after their retirement the privileges and insignia which they had enjoyed. However, the other Exarchs would not have the right to use the insignia and privileges once they lost their office.

XVIIth Synod (2009), Decision No. 29: The Major Archbishop in consultation with the Permanent Synod may nominate to the Assembly, an adequate number of priests, religious and lay faithful to provide proper representation to the Syro-Malabar faithful living outside the Syro-Malabar eparchies or exarchies.

XVIIth Synod (2009), Directive on Stipends: No priest is authorized to take stipend for himself for a concelebrated Holy Qurbana after having celebrated another Qurbana for which he received the stipend. If in a day he is offering the Holy Qurbana only in a concelebration, he can take the stipend for that Qurbana. If a priest binates or trinates the Holy Qurbana for pastoral purposes, the stipends of those Qurbanas should be given for the purposes specified by the Local Hierarch.

The Synod asked the Committee for Canonical Questions to formulate these decisions in the canonical language while they are included in the Particular Law and to consult competent civil lawyers to ascertain the implications of the Civil Law vis-à-vis the formulations of the Particular Laws and to correct the formulations, if needed.
The Synod gave its consent to publish the Particular Laws in Book Form.

The Synod requested the Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions to present the following Guidelines also other approved guidelines in the following Synod to decide upon their status in the Particular Law: 1. Guidelines on Permanent Diaconate, 2. Procedure for the collection of names, gathering of information and election of Episcopal candidates, 3. Simple Burial, 4. Ascription of Religious in other sui iuris Churches, 5. Erection of Houses of other sui iuris Churches in the Syro-Malabar Church, and 6. The manner of receiving the Holy Communion and other approved guidelines.

**Reception of Holy Communion together with and after the Sacraments of Initiation:** The Synod decided to entrust the Commission for Liturgy to make a study on the question of the reception of Holy Communion together with the sacraments of initiation, the solemn reception at the age of reason, and the reception until the age of reason, and present it to the following Synod.

**Announcement of Clerical Ordinations in the Parishes of the Ordinandi:** The Synod took up for consideration the procedure of announcing the clerical ordinations of Diaconate and Presbyterate in the parishes of the Ordinandi requested by their dioceses/Religious Congregations of ascription. After a short discussion, the Synod came to the understanding that the Bishop/Major Superior of the person to be ordained might write to the parish priest concerned requesting the announcement of the ordination with a copy of the letter sent to the Bishop of the diocese of origin of the candidate. The Parish Priest is obliged by the Particular Law to give due reply to the Bishop/Major Superior with the copy to his own Bishop.

**Revising the Minimum and Maximum Amount for the Alienation of Property:** Bishop Thomas Chakiath presented to the Synod the need for revising the minimum and maximum amount fixed for the Syro-Malabar Church. After a short discussion the
Synod decided to raise the amount in the following manner: “Alienation of property exceeding Rs. 10 Lakhs upto 10 Crores, is to be done with the consent of the finance council and the eparchial consultors. An amount exceeding Rs. 10 Crores upto 50 Crores, needs the permission of the Major Archbishop, with the consent of the Permanent Synod and for an amount exceeding 50 Crores, the permission of the Major Archbishop with the consent of the Synod of Bishops.” However, as it was felt that the decision to raise the Minimum and Maximum amount for alienation of property was not perfectly in accordance with the regulation given in the Common Law, the Synod decided that the matter should be again studied by the Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions and presented in one of the sittings of this Session of the Synod.

**Changing the Bye-laws to Suit the Directive of CBCI Regarding Representation of Women:** Bishop Thomas Chakiath proposed that it would be appropriate to raise the percentage of women in the *Prathinidiyogam* (*Pallyogam Procedure Rules, 10.1*), Pastoral Council, and Major Archiepiscopal Assembly (Statutes, Art. 6 §2, n.3) from the minimum 10 percent to 30 percent or 50 percent. The Synod after having discussed the pros and cons of the proposal decided that the matter must be first referred to the eparchial consultative bodies and after having received their opinions and the mind of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly a decision could be taken in the following Synod.

**Procedure for nihil obstat for Initiating the Causes for Beatification:** Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, Convener of the Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions presented to the Synod clarifications for initiating the causes for beatification. The points to be noted are the following: The petition for opening a beatification process of a saintly person can come from any member of the people of God or any group of the faithful or from the bishop of the concerned person. The formal petition has to be normally presented to the Bishop in whose territory the person to be beatified died,
through the postulator appointed for the cause. The Bishop then has to consult the Synod of Bishops about the appropriateness of initiating the cause. As the Synod of Bishops cannot give its opinion unless in advance it gets information about the person considered for beatification, i.e., his/her biography, report on the life and deeds, the virtues, martyrdom or reputation of sanctity, signs and miracles attributed to the intercession of the person, etc. These matters must be sent to each member of the Synod along with the agenda, if this item is included in the Synod. The Bishops naturally have the freedom to make further enquiries personally about the cause concerned about the appropriateness of initiating the cause. What is requested here is only consultation and not exactly *nihil obstat*. The Synod can discuss the matter and the observations of the members for or against the cause are to be given by the President of the Synod to the Bishop who has to attach these observations also with the documentation sent to the Apostolic See.

**Stipends for the Concelebrants in the Holy *Qurbana***: Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, Convener of the Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions presented to the Synod a study on the question of stipends for concelebrants in the Holy *Qurbana*. By this study it was clarified that no priest is authorized to take stipend for himself for a concelebrated Holy *Qurbana* after having celebrated another *Qurbana* for which he received the stipend. If in a day he is offering the Holy *Qurbana* only in a concelebration, he can take the stipend for that *Qurbana*. If a priest binites or trinates the Holy *Qurbana* for pastoral purposes, the stipends of those *Qurbanas* should be given for the purposes specified by the Local Hierarch.

**Presentation of the Reports from the Major Seminaries**: The Rectors of St. Joseph’s Pontifical Seminary, Aluva, St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, and Good Shepherd Seminary, Kunnoth came to the Synod to present the reports of the seminaries. The Moderator welcomed them. First Mgr. Bosco Puthur presented the report of Aluva Seminary. He said that he was satisfied with the
present functioning of the seminary. The spiritual formation is going on well with the guidance of three spiritual fathers. There is teamwork of the Staff. There are a few new Professors appointed who are very much committed to their work. Mgr. Bosco highlighted the special programmes of the seminary, namely, Bible Forum, Writers’ Forum, Visit to Hospitals and Leprosy Asylums, Prison Ministry, Mission Sunday campaign, etc. He has collected by his own efforts a sum of money from the Funding Agencies to meet the needs of the Seminary. He informed the Synod that certain religious communities like ‘Messengers of Peace and Harmony’ approved by the Archbishop of Delhi were recruiting seminarians dismissed for grave reasons from Syro-Malabar seminaries and were promoting them to priesthood. Bishop Jacob Manathodath, Chairman for the Commission for Aluva Seminary appreciated the functioning of the seminary and in particular the leadership of Mgr. Bosco Puthur.

Fr. George Madathikandam, Rector of Vadavathoor Seminary presented the Report in which he highlighted the following programmes: The availability of three spiritual fathers, the practice of lectio divina, Holy Qurbana in different languages, pastoral initiation through Jesus Fraternity, reach out social groups, exposure programmes of Deacons, visits of hospitals by seminarians, inter-seminary competitions, homily competition, etc. He said that the Staff and the Students cooperated very well in the formation programmes. Appreciating the teamwork and harmony in the seminary, Archbishop Mathew Moolakkatt congratulated Fr. George Madathikandam for his leadership as Rector.

Fr. Thomas Anikuzhikattiil presented the Report of Kunnoth Seminary. He said that in spite of the limitations with which the seminary is functioning, the Staff is very much dedicated to the formation of the seminarians. The main features of the formation are Extension Lectures, Special Tuition by the seminarians for poor students, website for the seminary, Group-wise social service, Prison Ministry, etc. Archbishop George Valiamattam expressed his
satisfaction regarding the functioning of the seminary and gratefully remembered the service of Fr. Geo Pulickal, the former Rector and Fr. George Myladoor, the former Finance Officer. Both Archbishop George Valiamattam and Fr. Rector presented to the Synod the financial difficulties of the seminary which the Bishops also are well aware of. In the Report Fr. Rector has presented certain measures to find out funds for the seminary to which the Ad-hoc Committee for the Seminary may have to pay attention. Archbishop George Valiamattam requested the Synod to constitute a Commission for the Seminary as the present Ad-hoc Committee is large and as it is difficult to convene all the members of the Committee for common deliberations and actions.

In the discussion that followed the Bishops pointed out the special thrusts to be given and steps to be taken in the seminaries like mission orientation, intellectual formation, teaching of Church documents, fostering of reading habit, teaching of the Mission policy of the Syro-Malabar Church, Qurbana in Hindi, etc. There was a suggestion that the report of the major seminaries could be presented in a uniform format. As a piece of information Mgr. Bosco informed the Bishops that this year onwards the seminarians were registered in IGNOU as private registration in the Universities in Kerala were not any more possible.

Reports of Various Commissions

Commission for Liturgy: Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, Secretary of the Commission presented in summary form the manifold activities of the Commission. He gave a short list of all the liturgical books recently published by the Commission under the successive Chairmanship of Bishop Paul Chittilapilly and Bishop George Punnakottil. He enumerated also the meetings of the Central Liturgical Committee that took care of the preparation of the Liturgical Texts and the programmes of consultation. He informed that the English translation of the Text of the Liturgy of the Hours was in preparation under the direction of Bishop Mathew
Vaniakizhakkel, VC and Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST. He brought to the attention of the Synod the joint venture of the Liturgical Commission and the Commission for Catechesis for publishing a text book for mystagogical catechesis. Bishop George Punnakottil appreciated the work of Bishop Paul Chittilapilly, the former Chairman and the constantly painstaking service of Fr. Pauly Kannookadan. The Bishops in unison appreciated highly the service of Fr. Pauly who always extended his help for the work of other Commissions and the activities of the Curia.

**Commission for Catechesis:** Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, Member of the Drafting Committee of the Commission for Catechesis presented the report on behalf of Fr. Jose Puthiyedath, the Secretary of the Commission. The Commission has completed the publication of the catechetical series of text books for Sunday Schools the translations of which have been done in English, Hindi and Kannada. The Commission thanked Bishop Lawrence Mukkuzhy and Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, for having taken the initiative for the translations of catechism texts in Kannada and Hindi respectively. Bishop George Alencherry, the Chairman of the Commission said that the Commission had some more books on catechesis to be published and certain orientation programmes to be undertaken in the coming years. A good Website also is in the offing.

**Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants:** Fr. Justin Vettukallel, MST, Secretary of the Commission presented to the Synod the report of the Commission’s activities during the past year. Together with the report Bishop Sebastian Vadakkel, MST, Chairman of the Commission informed the Synod some of the initiatives taken by the Commission for the pastoral care of our faithful abroad and suggestions for future course of action: 1. The Commission has prepared a set of guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Syro-Malabar Migrants and the Major Archbishop promulgated them for the purpose of establishing better relationship with the Bishops of the Latin Rite and implementing the provisions
of canon law regarding the pastoral care of our migrants. 2. The Commission visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, U.K. and other European Countries in order to coordinate the work of the Syro-Malabar chaplains for the pastoral care of our migrants explaining to them the mind of the Mother Church. 3. The Commission suggested that all the Lay Associations of our migrants should be brought under one umbrella making one Lay Organization for the whole Syro-Malabar Church with a common framework that could be adapted to the situations of each Country. There was a suggestion that this could be done in collaboration with the Commission for Laity. 4. It was proposed that only authorized preachers shall be allowed to give retreats to our migrants in foreign countries. 5. The Commission to meet the migrants. They may do so after having informed the Bishops of the place and the chaplains of our faithful of their visits. This procedure will help our people to organize better the liturgical celebrations and other cultural programmes on these occasions, so as to foster their sense of belonging to the Syro-Malabar Church.

The Synod discussed the problems arising from the separate liturgical celebrations in connection with the cultural gatherings of the Knanaya Associations. The Synod discussed the ways and means to solve the problems and to foster greater unity of the Syro-Malabar faithful in different communities.

Similarly the Synod authorized the Commission to convene a meeting of the priests of our Church sent by the Major Archbishop for the pastoral care of our faithful in extra territorium proprium in India and abroad and to give them the orientation of functioning there with an attitude of integration both with our migrant faithful and with the realities of the Latin Church present there.

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, Chairman of the Commission informed the Synod that a meeting of the Diocesan Directors of Evangelization would be conducted on 1st September 2009 and that another meeting of General Councillors in charge of Evangelization of the Institutes of Consecrated Life was in the offing.
The Commission is also planning to publish a news letter on the missionary activities of the Church.

**Indian Mission Congress (Yesu Mahotsav):** Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST, briefed the Synod about the dynamics of organization of the Indian Mission Congress to be conducted from 14 – 18 October 2009 at Goregaon, in Mumbai and emphasized the need of our participation in it. He said that there would be participation of the *sui iuris* Churches with the special programmes of each Individual Church like the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, morning and evening prayers, and exhibitions of each individual Church’s heritage. He requested the Bishops to give the contributions as per the directions given by the organizing committee and to give Rs. 7000/5000 from our dioceses in addition to meet the expenses of the exhibition.

**Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life:** Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, Secretary of the Commission presented briefly the report of the Commission. As many of the programmes and the future plans of the Commission were already discussed in the Synod, the items mentioned in the report were not discussed again. The Secretary informed the Bishops that the Charter for Women Religious and the Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests were in preparation. Some of the Bishops suggested that an additional meeting of the new priests could be conducted after Easter other than the one after Christmas. Another suggestion was to invite those new priests who were unable to come for the first meeting, to attend the following meeting. Bishop Thomas Chakiath, Chairman of the Commission expressed his thanks for the service of Fr. Pauly Kannookadan.

**Commission for Doctrine:** Fr. Siby Pulickal, Secretary of the Commission for Doctrine presented the report of the activities of the Commission. One of the main concerns of the Commission is to counteract the false doctrines propagated by the many sects and Christian groups. For this purpose the Commission has published
three leaflets to give a new catechesis to the Catholic faithful on Biblical interpretation, Sacred Scripture and Divine Tradition, and Scripture and Liturgy. Two more leaflets on Life after Death, Sins of Ancestors and Curse upon the Generations are in preparation which the Commission has given to the Bishops for their comments. The Commission is planning to organize a conference of priests and sisters who have Doctorate in various ecclesiastical disciplines, preferably at the time of the Synod in January. One Bishop suggested that this conference could be organized for groups based on expertise on similar subjects. A third item of work that the Commission visualizes is to have a dialogue with the Spirit in Jesus movement. About this dialogue, the Bishops gave the caution that they should be persuaded to accept the authority of the Church rather than discussing the problems of their faith as they are people with fixed ideas and as it is difficult to change their mental framework. The Commission has decided to start this dialogue between a group of theologians and a team of the Spirit in Jesus. Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt, the Chairman of the Commission for Doctrine explained to the Bishops the effectiveness of the proposed programmes of the Commission and welcomed the suggestions given by the Bishops.

**Commission for Ecumenism:** Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam presented to the Synod the programmes conducted by the Commission and the projects in view for future action. He said that the need of the hour was to get the Lay faithful involved in ecumenism. He advocated a grassroots-level ecumenism which the Bishops could do during their pastoral visits by organizing interaction groups with the non-Catholic leaders in a parish. He said that the most important work of ecumenism is to foster ecumenical spirit by prayer and that the prayer meetings had to be taken down to the local levels of parishes and associations. He visualized an ecumenical prayer as part of the Liturgy of the Hours on Thursdays. He sought the opinion of the Bishops in organizing an ecumenical gathering of all the Churches of St. Thomas Christians. Some of the Bishops favoured the idea and cited the example of the ecumenical gathering
at Kuravilangadu. There was a proposal to conduct the ecumenical gatherings on rotation basis under the auspices of one Church inviting the other Churches. At the request of the Synod, Archbishop Joseph Powathil accepted the suggestion to explore the possibilities of such an ecumenical venture. Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam introduced the prayer book for Church Unity Octave with two types of prayers, one for the Catholic communities and the other for ecumenical prayer meetings.

**Commission for Laity:** Adv. V.C. Sebastian, the Secretary of the Commission for Laity presented the activities of the Commission. He was highlighting mainly the features of the International Laity Assembly and the impact it has created among those who participated in it. He proposed also the future lines of action for the Commission. Bishop Mathew Arackal, Chairman of the Commission for Laity appreciated the committed service of Adv. V.C. Sebastian.

**Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal:** Fr. Jose Chiramel, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Tribunal briefly presented to the Bishops the activities of the Tribunal. He gave the statistics of the cases dealt with by the Tribunal and said that not many cases were pending. He said that the Tribunal system in the Syro-Malabar Church has attained a higher degree of efficiency in action and uniformity in procedure. The Bishops appreciated the dedicated service of all the personnel in the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal. Some Bishops suggested that the Laity could be made aware of the functioning of the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal. Archbishop Mathew Moolakkatt, the General Moderator of the Superior Tribunal appreciated the functioning of the Tribunal and thanked all those who were working in it.

**Financial Report of the Curia:** The Moderator welcomed Fr. Mathew Pulimoottil, the newly appointed Finance Officer to present the financial report of the Curia 2008-2009. He read out the Statement of Accounts and gave necessary clarifications on certain entries in the accounts. He presented also the Budget for the following financial year. There was a proposal supported by some Bishops
to give a Statement of Accounts to our contributors so as to keep them informed of the right spending of the money being given by them. The Synod passed the Statement of Accounts and the Budget. The Major Archbishop thanked the Finance Officer and Mr. Romid, the Auditor for their efficient service. He also added a special word of thanks to Fr. Mathew Elappanickal, the former Finance Officer who had done almost all the work accounted in the present Statement of Accounts.

Mr. Romid, the Auditor on behalf of the Finance Officer explained to the Bishops the provisions of a Draft Bill, Direct Taxes Code – 2009, that might get the approval of the Parliament in due course. He said that the Bill is open for comments from the Public and called the attention of the Bishops to modifications required in the formulations of the Bill in order to protect our right demands and privileges as a minority religious community. The Synod asked the Auditor to prepare a memorandum containing the relevant proposals for modifications of the Bill to be submitted to the Union Finance Minister when he would come to release St. Alphonsa commemorative coin on Sunday, 23rd August 2009 at Bharananganam. The Synod also decided to entrust the Finance Commission to study the matter in detail and if needed, make further representations before the Government. Later Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt informed the Synod that he made the arrangements for Mr. Romid, the Auditor to submit to the Union Finance Minister the memorandum of the Synod regarding the proposals for modifications of the Draft Bill, Direct Taxes Code – 2009 and that the Minister accepted it gracefully and promised that he would do whatever is possible in this regard.

**Giving the Statement of Accounts to the Contributors:** The Synod decided to give copies of the Summary Statement of Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia to all contributors and to communicate the contents of the same to the members of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly in session.
Resolution Regarding the Faridabad Property: At the suggestion of the Auditor the Synod decided to give an authorization letter to the Finance Officer to accept the Faridabad property by a gift deed from Fr. Jose Edassery to whom Bishop Abraham Mattam and Bishop John Perumattam would give the power of attorney to hand over the said property to the Trust of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

The Syro-Malabar Bhavan in Delhi: Bishop Gratian Mundadan, CMI, presented the project of the Syro-Malabar Bhavan in Delhi and the Bishops asked for clarifications regarding the project. Bishop Gratian informed the Bishops that his plan was to shift his residence to Delhi and to help the realization of the project of the Syro-Malabar Bhavan in Delhi. He said that there was the possibility of getting land in Greater Noida on the High Way between Delhi and Agra but for the fact that the price of the land is on the increase. The Synod decided to constitute a Committee consisting of Bishop Gratian Mundadan, CMI, (Convener), Bishop Mathew Arackal and Bishop Sebastian Adayanthath (Members) to seek the possibilities of purchasing a sufficiently large plot of land in or around New Delhi, combining the process of raising funds with the deal of purchase of the Land. Archbishop Andrews Thazhath and Bishop Gregory Karotemprel were requested by the Synod to extend a helping hand to the functioning of this Committee.

A Building Complex: Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, CMI, Chairman of the Finance Commission presented the project of a building complex which contains offices cum convention hall and hostel for the different training activities of various commissions apart from the curial office and residence of the bishops. As it was not possible to present the detailed project of the Building Complex during this Session of the Synod, the Synod requested the Finance Commission to present it in the following Session of the Synod. In general the Bishops were of opinion that some permanent provision should be found for the maintenance of the Major Archiepiscopal
Curia and that a Secretariat with necessary conveniences for functioning also was a felt need. But some Bishops suggested that the construction of a building complex should not in any way tarnish the image of the Church proclaiming the Gospel to the poor. Some Bishops positively supported the project if the proposed collection of Rs. 100/- from each Syro-Malabar family could be avoided and some other means of raising funds could be found out. The impropriety in collecting funds from the educational institutions and the negative impact it would create in the society also was pointed out. Finally the Synod entrusted the Commission to propose the detailed project in the following session of the Synod.

**Extension of the Curial Building:** The Major Archbishop intervened to propose the project of constructing extensions to the curial building so as to meet the needs arising from the increase of the number of bishops. During the discussion that followed there was consensus to build twenty rooms more for the accommodation of Bishops. Another suggestion was to furnish the residence of the Major Archbishop with more conveniences and a conference hall attached to it. The convenience of a lift also was proposed. The Synod entrusted the Finance Commission to probe the possibilities of extending the present building taking into consideration the proposals given by the Bishops and to present the project in the following Synod. Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, CMI, requested the Synod to grant permission to collect funds for the following construction projects: 1. An extension on top of the present curia building with 20 rooms more for Bishops and other amenities decided by the Synod, 2. A Museum Building, 3. A Library Building, 4. A Vocation Promotion Centre, and 5. A Pastoral Centre near the present museum with 100 Rooms, an Auditorium, Commission Offices and a conference room along with the rooms for resource persons, dining hall, kitchen and store room. The Synod authorized Bishop Gregory Karotemprel to seek funds for these construction projects and gave the consent to place the names of donors on a plaque in each room or section if and when the project is realized.
The Seating Arrangement for the Synodal Sitting: It was suggested that all the Bishops should have a direct orientation to the persons speaking from the dais and the presentations on the stage. To realize this, the seating arrangement may be done in an appropriate way either by arranging the seats in semi-circles or some other way to suit the purpose.

Power Point Presentation: The Synod considered the proposal of the Synodal Committee for the Evaluative Study on the Functioning of the Synod regarding the electronic media and as an application of it decided to seek the feasibility of installing the multi-media projection facilities like Power Point presentation in the Synod Hall.

Report of LRC: Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, Executive Director, LRC presented the report of the activities of LRC. He said that during the past one year period LRC conducted one research seminar at Delhi on the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and Abroad and another on Catholic Response to the Bills proposed by the Kerala Law Reform Commission at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad. LRC published three books: 1. Proclamation of the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, 2. The Christology of the Syro-Malabar Church, and 3. The Ecclesial and Pastoral Care of the Migrants of the Syro-Malabar Church. Two numbers of the Journal of LRC, Thomas Christian Heritage were also published. The Library and Documentation Centre of LRC has been enriched by the collection of 157 published and non-published doctoral theses of Syro-Malabar priests and sisters. A separate section for the manuscripts of Varthamanapusthakam and its printed copies has been recently arranged in the Museum of LRC. Fr. Pauly Kannookadan informed the Synod that Fr. Jose Palakeel and Fr. Pauly Maniattu were appointed Members of the Board of Directors of LRC in the place of Fr. Antony Kozhuvan and Fr. Jose Kochuparambil who had completed their term of office. Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, Chairman LRC said that the first LRC Award would be declared without much delay. He also
informed that two seminars were in preparation, one in Chennai and the other at Mount St. Thomas. Finally he thanked Fr. Pauly Kannookadan for his dedicated service.

The Bishops suggested that an Award might be instituted also for the prominent persons in the mission eparchies and that the original manuscripts on the history of our Church or at least copies of them might be collected from the CMI Monastery, Mannanam where many of the precious manuscripts are preserved. There was another suggestion that the usage of ‘arapally’ also required some more research studies.

**Appreciation of the Drama on St. Paul:** Bishop Jacob Manathodath, the Moderator thanked Bishop Mathew Arackal for arranging the beautiful play on St. Paul at P.O.C. for a spiritual and cultural enrichment of the Bishops.

**Congratulations and Felicitations:** The Major Archbishop congratulated Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt on the successful organization of the functions at Bharananganam in connection with the release of the St. Alphonsa Birth Centenary Commemorative Coin by Union Finance Minister Sri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee. Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt then presented to the Major Archbishop the newly released St. Alphonsa Commemorative Coins of Rs. 100 and Rs. 5 and to the Bishops the coins of Rs. 5/- as a souvenir of the historic event.

On 24th August, the day being the 21st Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Paul Chittilapilly and inauguration of the Eparchy of Kalyan, the Major Archbishop extended to Bishop Paul Chittilapilly hearty felicitations.

**Irregular Way of Recruiting Syro-Malabar Ex-Seminarians:** The Synod took up for discussion the serious problem created by some ecclesiastics who recruit to their religious communities like ‘Messengers of Peace and Harmony,’ Syro-Malabar seminarians dismissed from seminaries for grave reasons. It was reported that
there were cases of such seminarians already ordained for the Archdiocese of Delhi. The Synod expressed its serious concern in this matter and requested the Major Archbishop to write to the Archbishop of Delhi and the Superiors General of these Religious Communities.

**Making the Laity Aware of the Functioning of the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal:** Bishop Vijay Anand Nedumpruam, CMI requested clarifications about making the laity aware of the functioning of the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal. The Bishops were of opinion that the Journal of Eastern Legal Thought was a good means for this and that groups like Advocates could be given classes on Canon Law and Juridical Process in the Church.

**Liturgical Gown:** Bishop George Alencherry presented to the Synod the need for having a Liturgical Gown for the ministers (Bishops & Priests) in the Syro-Malabar Church. He said that ours was the only Church the ministers of which who did not have a Liturgical Gown that could be used for Para liturgical services and on occasions of official representation in the liturgical celebrations of other Churches. The Synod discussed the matter and entrusted the Commission for Liturgy to study it and present its proposals in the following Synod.

**Professional Courses:** Archbishop George Valiamattam presented his views regarding the organization of professional courses for the educated Syro-Malabar youth seeking different kinds of jobs. Many Bishops shared his views and said that the training of our people for civil service jobs and other higher responsibilities in society was the need of the hour. The existing courses at Thamarassery, Palai and Kottayam were suggested as some kind of models in this line of action. Some suggested the advantage of starting community colleges through which the youth would get training in job-oriented courses. Archbishop George Valiamattam emphasized the point that more than merely giving proficiency in different careers, it was the need of giving formation to our educated youth a Christian orientation of life
that was to be taken care of. There was also a suggestion that civil lawyers also could be given Christian orientation through similar courses.

**Deepika:** Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam, Secretary of the Apex Body of Deepika described to the Synod the present situation of the functioning of Deepika saying that the financial difficulties were gradually getting over. Many Bishops asked for clarifications and Archbishop Perumthottam gave his responses. He appealed to the Bishops to cooperate wholeheartedly for making Deepika the Daily of the Christian Community as a whole and to take steps to increase its circulation as far as possible.

**Honouring Priests, Religious and Lay Faithful:** Bishop George Alencherry made an appeal to the Synod to institute Medals of Honour for distinguished persons from among our priests, religious and lay faithful. He recalled the fact that the Synod during the past years had made certain reflections in this line and had not taken any decision. As the matter was still open for consideration, he said that the Synod could institute Medals of Honour rather than giving special Titles of Honour to the people. As the Bishops in General supported the idea, the Synod constituted a Committee of Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST (Convener), Bishop Sebastian Adyanyanthrath and Bishop George Alencherry (Members) to study the matter and present it in the following Session of the Synod. This Committee has to study the categories of special honour and the criteria for giving them together with the privileges that might be attached to these honours.

**Press Release:** Bishop Mathew Arackal presented the draft of the press release and the Synod approved it with a few modifications regarding the content.

**Scrutiny of the Decisions:** The Secretary read out the decisions of the XVII Synod (2009) and the Synod approved them.
Forthcoming Sessions of the Synod (2010-2011): The Synod decided to hold two Sessions of the Synod, one from 11 (10.00 a.m.) to 15 (6.00 p.m.), January 2010 and the other from 17 (10.00 a.m.) to 28 (12.30 p.m.), August 2010 and to set apart the dates 10-14 January 2011 in the Year-plan of the Bishops for the first Session of the 2011 Synod.

Conclusion of the Synod: In his concluding speech the Major Archbishop thanked Almighty God for his abiding presence during this Session of the Synod which enabled the members to arrive at the right solutions to the many issues that were discussed. He also congratulated the Bishops for their brotherly love and communion that made the synodal session very fruitful. He appreciated highly the sharing of information by the Bishops regarding the developments in their eparchies which served as a sign of the unity in the episcopate and a great encouragement to one another in carrying out the enormous responsibility entrusted to the Bishops by the Lord Himself. He thanked the Committee for the Evaluative Study of the functioning of the Synod for their study and the report they presented with very constructive and innovative suggestions for the better functioning of the Synod. He also praised the efforts of the Public Affairs Committee in constituting a Think Tank and a Media Cell for our Church and in formulating certain guidelines for their conduct and expressed the hope that with these structures and guidelines in place and the participation of eminent lay persons at the top level, we will be able to timely intervene in the Media and project the correct image of our Church. He also spoke optimistically about the breakthrough that has been made in the discussions regarding the pastoral care of the migrants of our Church by the approval of the Guidelines for pastoral care by the CBCI Standing Committee. He expressed the hope that the spirit of dialogue and understanding that has been manifested in a greater degree recently might be sustained and resulted in fulfilling the aspirations and legitimate rights of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and abroad. He congratulated
the Commission for the Laity who organized the recently held International Laity Assembly and prayed that it be the beginning of the resurgence of a more active Laity with greater participation in the life of the Church as well as greater involvement in the Society on behalf of the Church. He also thanked the other Commissions and everyone who helped in the conduct of the Synod, namely, Bishop George Alencherry, the Secretary of the Synod, the Bishop Moderators, Fr. Antony Kollannur, the Chancellor and the staff of the chancery, Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, the Notary and the residents of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia who made the stay during the Synodal Session very pleasant. He concluded his address by raising the call for unity and concerted effort from the part of everyone to engage in dialogue with all the sections of the people of God on matters that keep us divided so that perfect unity may be achieved in the Syro-Malabar Church. Informing the members about the following Synodal Session to be held from 11th – 15th January 2010 and invoking the blessings of God and the intercession of Mary our mother and St. Thomas our Apostle, the Major Archbishop declared the XVII Synod closed.

The Synodal Session ended with the angelus at 6.00 p.m.

Bp. George Alencherry, Secretary
Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church

Fr. Antony Kollannur, Chancellor
Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

Mount St. Thomas,
28 August 2009
XVII Synod (2009)  
17-28 August 2009

DECISIONS

1. To accept in principle the possibility of issuing a message by each Synod based on the special topic that the Synod might take for deeper study and discussion.

2. To issue a pastoral circular comprising the contents of the discussions and decisions so as to strengthen the ecclesial life of the faithful.

3. To entrust the Synodal Committee for Public Affairs to prepare a research paper on the ways and means to respond to the political and social problems that the Church confronts and to present it in the following session of the Synod.

4. To approve the Guidelines for an Integrated Celebration of Qurbana with the Liturgy of the Hours.

5. To approve the finalized text of 24 selected propria prayers for the Holy Qurbana to be incorporated into the Taksa of the Holy Qurbana.

6. To revise the present set of readings of the Holy Qurbana and to prepare also a new set of readings and to entrust the task to the Commission for Liturgy. The Synod also decided that the preparation of the lectionary may be done after the finalization of the sets of readings of the Holy Qurbana.

7. To approve the following liturgical regulations regarding the vestments for concelebrants in the Holy Qurbana: On solemn occasions it is desirable that all the concelebrants should wear the full set of the vestments. On other occasions the proper vestments of the concelebrants are at least kothina, urara, and sunara. But on certain occasions, as circumstances demand, the concelebrants may be vested only with urara
over the cassock. No priest shall celebrate the Holy *Qurbana* with the *urara* put on the casual dress.

8. To approve the Liturgical Text for the consecration of the church with the accepted modifications.

9. To give the directive that if the chapels were consecrated for the purpose of offering the Holy *Qurbana* on an altar permanently fixed, the text of the Consecration of the church was to be used for the liturgy of consecration and if there was no permanent altar in the chapel the text of the blessing of chapels could be used.

10. To entrust the Commission for Liturgy to make a study about the most suitable position for the Tabernacle in the church keeping in mind the directive of the II Vatican Council that the Tabernacle should be positioned in a prominent place in the church. The Committee was requested to present the proposal in the following Synod.

11. To approve the Liturgical Texts for the Re-dedication of the church and the Blessing of *Deppa* with the accepted modifications.

12. To make the use of *Deppa* a requisite for the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* on non-consecrated altars.

13. To give the directive that when the Religious of our Church start apostolates on behalf of our Church in the dioceses of the Latin rite they should be asked to do so with the approval of the Major Archbishop (CCEO c. 193), to safeguard the ecclesial character of their ministry.

14. To authorize the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants to convene a meeting of the priests of our Church sent by the Major Archbishop for the pastoral care of our faithful in *extra territorium proprium* in India and abroad and to give them the orientation of functioning
there with an attitude of integration both with our migrant faithful and with the realities of the Latin Church present there.

15. To include a Rite for the blessing of the Religious Houses, in the Liturgical Text of the Sacramentals to be prepared by the Commission for Liturgy.

16. To hold two Sessions of the Synod, one from 11 (10.00 a.m.) to 15 (6.00 p.m.), January 2010 and the other from 17 (10.00 a.m.) to 28 (12.30 p.m.), August 2010 and to set apart the dates 10-14 January 2011 in the Year-plan of the Bishops for the first Session of the 2011 Synod.

17. To give copies of the Summary Statement of Accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia to all contributors and to communicate the contents of the same to the members of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly in session.

18. To hold the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly from 20 (10.30 a.m.) to 22 (1.00 p.m.), August 2010.

19. To constitute a committee of Bishops consisting of Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrat as Convener, Bishop Mathew Arackal and Bishop Gregory Karotempral as Members and Fr. Pauly Kannookadav as Secretary to organize the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly.

20. To recognize the certificates issued by the authorities of the Syro-Malabar Migrants who conduct the Marriage Preparation Courses with the approval of the Commission for Evangelization.

21. To entrust the Finance Commission to probe the possibilities of extending the present building taking into consideration the proposals given by the Bishops and present the project in the following Synod.

22. To extend the period of the contract of the Governing Body of the Syro-Malabar Internet Mission with Mr. Pious Joseph and Team up to April 30, 2011.
23. To discuss in the Synod the major seminary formation as an item of serious concern every year and to request the Commissions of the three seminaries to present to the Synod the issues that needed its attention, after having interacted among themselves on those issues.

24. To refer the proposal to change the Bye-laws of Pratinidhiyogam (Palliyyogam Procedure Rules, 10.1), Pastoral Council, and Major Archiepiscopal Assembly (Statutes, Art. 6 §2, n.3), to Suit the Directive of CBCI Regarding Representation of Women to the eparchial consultative bodies and after having received their opinions and the mind of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly to take a decision in the following Synod.

25. To request the Major Archbishop to convene meetings of the representatives of priests from all the eparchies in Kerala in two or three batches and to entrust the Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life with the organization of these meetings.

26. To entrust the Synodal Committee for Canonical Questions to study again the question of the revision of the Minimum and Maximum amount for alienation of property and present a re-formulation of the amendment of the particular law concerning this matter in one of the sittings of this Session of the Synod.

27. To specify the responsibility of Bishops in the formation programmes of clerics in seminaries conducted by the Religious as ensuring that it is done as per Common Law (CCEO c. 330 & 536 §2) and the Charter for Priestly Formation approved by the Synod.

28. To entrust the Commission for Liturgy to make a study on the question of the reception of Holy Communion together with the sacraments of initiation, the solemn reception at the age of
reason, and the reception until the age of reason, and present it to the following Synod.

29. To amend the Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly regarding the number of participants who could be nominated by the Major Archbishop as follows: "The Major Archbishop in consultation with the Permanent Synod may nominate to the Assembly, an adequate number of priests, religious and lay faithful to provide proper representation to the Syro-Malabar faithful living outside the Syro-Malabar eparchies or exarchies."

30. To approve the following amended propositions of the Particular Law:

Art. 51: "The parish priest and the assistant parish priest take possession of their office as per particular law (Art. 19) and the other clerics as per the eparchial norms with due regard for the norms about major archbishop, metropolitan and bishops (c. 288).

Art. 86 and 87 to be omitted.

Art. 137§1: "The Sacrament of Divine Eucharist is to be solemnly administered at the age of reason after due catechetical instruction and reception of the sacrament of penance. There is however provision for giving Divine Eucharist earlier together with baptism."

Art. 148§1: "The names of candidates for promotion to sacred orders of presbyterate and diaconate, whether eparchial or non-eparchial are to be announced in the parish church of each candidate during the divine liturgy on two consecutive days of obligation before the ordination."

Art. 173§2: "Permission may be granted by the Proto Presbyter of either of the parties for the publication of banns even before betrothal on written application of both the parties, endorsed by the respective parish priests. The parish priest of the party who
has obtained the dispensation shall communicate the matter to the parish priest of the other party along with Form B.”

Art. 188§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.”

Art. 210: “The parish priest can receive a baptized non-catholic individual lay person into the catholic Church as per the eparchial norms. The person to be received into the Catholic Church shall submit a written petition to the authority determined in the eparchial norms, with the recommendation of the parish priest.”

31. To approve the following Synodal decisions to be included in the Particular Law:

Xth Synod (2002), Decision No. 32: In designating the delegates from the eparchies the eparchial bishop shall follow the common law in this regard which is as follows: “To the patriarchal assembly are to be convoked from each eparchy at least one presbyter enrolled in the same eparchy, especially a pastor, one from among the religious or members of societies of common life according to the manner of religious, as well as two lay persons, unless the statutes determine a greater number, all of whom are designated in a manner determined by the eparchial bishops and indeed, if it is a case of a member of a religious institute or a member of a society of the common life according to the manner of religious, with the consent of the competent superior. (CCEO, c. 143, #1, Para.6).

XIth Synod (2003), Decision No. 10: “To clarify that simple burial means a burial with no homily, no Qurbana, no use of mike, using only two ornamental umbrellas (Muthukudas), one cross and one priest for the burial. In scandalous cases of suicide not even the simple burial may be given. In such cases the body will not be allowed to be taken inside the Church. The priest may bless the grave sometime outside the funeral service.” The Synod decided to
include this decision in the section on the guidelines of the Particular Law.

XIVth Synod (2006), Session 2, Decision No. 2: 1. The appointment of the Exarchs is of a stable nature and that their term of service would terminate by the circumstances mentioned in the common and the particular laws. 2. The Exarchs, who were priests and who retired as per the provisions of CCEO c. 210, might retain the privileges and insignia which they had enjoyed, even after their retirement. However, the other Exarchs would not have the right to use the insignia and privileges once they lost their office.

XVIIth Synod (2009), Decision No. 29: The Major Archbishop in consultation with the Permanent Synod may nominate to the Assembly, an adequate number of priests, religious and lay faithful to provide proper representation to the Syro-Malabar faithful living outside the Syro-Malabar eparchies or exarchies.

XVIIth Synod (2009), Directive on Stipends: No priest is authorized to take stipend for himself for a concelebrated Holy Qurbana after having celebrated another Qurbana for which he received the stipend. If in a day he is offering the Holy Qurbana only in a concelebration, he can take the stipend for that Qurbana. If a priest binates or trinates the Holy Qurbana for pastoral purposes, the stipends of those Qurbanas should be given for the purposes specified by the Local Hierarch.

32. To give the consent to publish the Particular Laws in Book Form.

33. To authorize Bishop Gregory Karotemprel to seek funds for the following construction projects: 1. An extension on top of the present curia building with 20 rooms more for Bishops and other amenities decided by the Synod, 2. A Museum Building, 3. A Library Building, 4. A Vocation Promotion Centre, and 5. A Pastoral Centre near the present museum with 100 Rooms, an Auditorium, Commission Offices and a
conference room along with the rooms for resource persons, dining hall, kitchen and store room.

34. To give the consent to Bishop Gregory Karotemprel to place the names of donors on a plaque in each room or section if and when the construction projects are realized.

Bp. George Alencherry, Secretary
Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church

Fr. Antony Kollannur, Chancellor
Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

Mount St. Thomas,
28 August 2009
XVII Synod (2009)
17-28 August 2009

CONCLUDING ADDRESS OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP

My dear brother Archbishops and Bishops,

After two weeks of intense discussions and deliberations we have now arrived at the conclusion of the XVII Synod (2009) of our Church. At this moment, it is fitting that we raise our hearts in thanksgiving to Almighty God who has been guiding us during these days through His Spirit enabling us to take appropriate decisions on the various issues we had taken up for consideration in this Session of our Synod. I am very happy to stress the great spirit of communion and brotherly love manifested by each one of you which made it easier to find practical solutions to the many issues we addressed in this Session. I thank every one of you for your co-operation in making our Synodal Session fruitful.

One of the special features of this Session of our Synod was the sharing by the eparchial bishops regarding their Episcopal ministry in their respective eparchies. It was indeed a sign of our unity in the episcopate and a great encouragement to one another in carrying out the enormous responsibility entrusted to us by the Lord Himself.

A very far reaching thrust we have taken in this Synodal Session is our decision to make our reflections and decisions more directly addressing our faithful. Whatever we discuss in the Synod and whatever conclusions we may arrive at after our discussions, it is very important to bear this dimension very emphatically in our minds that we are here representing the people of God of our respective eparchies, including the priests, the religious and the laity. As a follow up of this conviction, we have decided to issue a Final Statement of the Synod to the People of God whenever a special
theme is taken up for our study and reflection and on other occasions, to issue a pastoral circular comprising the contents of the discussions and decisions of the Synod so as to strengthen the ecclesial communion of the faithful with us. I am sure this is a very significant step in the right direction.

The report of the Synodal Committee for the Evaluative Study of the Functioning of our Synod which we studied in detail has indeed contributed greatly to make a thorough evaluation of the functioning of this apex body of our Church, fine tuning its efficiency by proposing significant conceptual and structural changes in its functioning. Let us hope that with the recommendations of this Committee we will be able to strengthen the functioning of the Synod and that of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. My sincere thanks to the Committee headed by Archbishop Joseph Powathil and his collaborators in the Committee Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, Bishop George Punnakottil, Bishop Gregory Karotemprel and Bishop Jose Porunnedom.

Over the past the image of the Church, especially in Kerala has suffered greatly due to our failure to project a correct and united image of the Church in the Media. We have realized that we should take our Lay people into confidence and involve them meaningfully in this area of Public Relations and Media. Our discussions and deliberations have enabled us in constituting a Think Tank and a Media Cell for our Church and in formulating certain guidelines for their conduct. I am optimistic that with these structures and guidelines in place and the participation of eminent lay people at the top level, we will be able to timely intervene in the Media and project the correct image of our Church.

We have been presenting our request to the Holy See for the legitimate rights of the Syro-Malabar Church for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of our Migrants all over the World. The Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care for the Migrants and the Apostolic Visitor also have been making
every effort to bring us closer to a solution to this longstanding need of our Church. In this session of our Synod we also heard the report of the activities of the Commission which has strengthened contacts with the Syro-Malabar Communities in many parts of the World and prepared guidelines for the pastoral care of the migrants. I congratulate the Commission and its Secretary Fr. Justin Vettukallel, MST whole heartedly for their dedicated work.

All of us are very glad that a breakthrough is within sight with the approval by the CBCI Standing Committee of the Guidelines for Pastoral Care prepared by the CBCI Special Commission for Evangelization. As a follow up of these Guidelines, I have appointed two Bishops each for a dialogue on behalf of our Church with the Latin Bishops concerned so that they might initiate the process of erecting three eparchies in the regions of Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore and Exarchate/s for the whole territory outside the Syro-Malabar jurisdiction together with the three eparchies in the regions of Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore. Let us hope and pray that the spirit of dialogue and understanding that has been manifested in a greater degree recently may be sustained and result in fulfilling the aspirations and legitimate rights of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and abroad.

We have also decided to give a closer attention to the formation of priests in the various seminaries. The Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life has already got ready the Syllabus for Minor Seminary Formation. The reports presented by the various Major Seminaries have also given us a clear picture about the training programmes followed in these seminaries. We have decided to discuss in the Synod major seminary formation as an item of serious concern every year and to request the Commissions of the three seminaries to present to the Synod the issues that needed its attention, after having interacted among themselves on those issues. The Commission has planned an orientation course based on the Charter for Priestly Formation and
a Formators’ Course that would be conducted in the coming months. Besides, the Commission has also planned various seminars and meetings for priests and religious. I wish to congratulate the Commission for its effort in this regard.

The International Laity Assembly conducted recently here at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia has indeed generated lot of interest among our Lay people and has been instrumental in creating in them a desire to be closely associated with the Church Structures. I congratulate Bishop Mathew Arackal, the Chairman of the Commission for Laity, the other members of the Commission and its secretary Mr. V.C. Sebastian for having organized such an event of great magnitude. We have had an initial discussion of the Statutes for the functioning of this Commission and its advisory bodies. We hope that further discussions will bring more clarity in this regard and help the participation of the Laity in the life of the Church as well as their role in the Society on behalf of the Church regulated by approved norms and guidelines.

The Church is the People of God comprising of priests, religious and the laity. However the Laity has a special role to play in the World as their proper and specific quality which is defined by CCEO as secularity (c. 399). So living in the World, they have “to seek the Kingdom of God by dealing with and regulating temporal matters in conformity with God’s will. Therefore in their private, family, and politico-social life it is for them to be witnesses to Christ and manifest him to others, to defend just legislation in society, and radiating faith, hope and charity, to act like leaven for the sanctification of the World” (CCEO c. 401). Therefore, it is our great responsibility to grow in our loyalty to God and compassion towards our fellow brethren in the society, to be its conscience in the face of breaking up of families, moral degradation, ecological pollution, growing Alcoholism in the society, Hooliganism reaching almost the levels of anarchism, negation of faith in God and Divine Values, etc., that are
rampant in our society. The Lay people have to be the compassionate face of the Church in natural calamities, epidemics like the Chickungunya, H1 N1, etc., that have played havoc in the lives of many of our countrymen, especially where the Hierarchy or the clerics and the religious could not easily enter. Therefore, as the II Vatican Council in its decree on the Apostolate of Laity, n. 6 says, “the Laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian love, let them act directly and definitively in the temporal sphere.” I am sure the efforts of the Commission for Laity would certainly bring about this rebirth of the role of the laity in the Church and in the World.

The reports presented by the various Commissions such as the Commission for Liturgy, Commission for Catechism, Commission for Doctrine, Commission for Ecumenism, and the Major Archepiscopal Tribunal, Liturgical Research Centre and the Finance Report of the Curia have given us an idea of the activities of these commissions and bodies and we could propose suggestions for improvements. I am sure all of you would agree with me in saying that they have done very well and have contributed greatly to the functioning of the Major Archepiscopal Curia. My congratulations and sincere thanks to all of them.

We have decided to hold the Major Archepiscopal Assembly from 20 (10.30 a.m.) to 22 (1.00 p.m.), August 2010 and has appointed a committee of Bishops consisting of Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath, Convener, Bishop Mathew Arackal and Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, Members, and Fr. Pauly Kannookadan as Secretary. I wish the Committee every success.

On 23rd August we had the great joy at the release of the St. Alphonsa Commemorative Coin by Honourable Union Minister for Finance, Sri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee. We shall seek St. Alphonsa’s intercession that God may bless our Church with many
more saints like her and strengthen the holiness of life among our faithful. Besides the other Blessed and Servants of God from our Church, in this session of our Synod we have given the *nihil obstat* for initiating the cause of one more person of proven holiness, namely, of Mgr. Joseph Panjikaran. We have also approved the Guidelines for granting the *nihil obstat* of the Synod in similar requests for initiating the causes of saintly persons. Let us hope for a resurgence of holiness in our Church as exemplified by these saintly persons.

During this Synodal Session as usual we spent some time for the discussion on the Liturgy. The discussions we had during the sittings helped us greatly in approving some liturgical texts for the Consecration of the church, for the Re-dedication of the church and for the Blessing of *Deppa* etc. We have also approved the 24 texts of the *Propria* to be printed in the *Taksa*. I wish to thank Bishop George Punnakotttil, the Chairman of the Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Liturgy and the other Bishop Members and Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, the Secretary of the Commission for their efforts.

In this Session of the Synod, we were able to elect the *terna* for one diocese and to prepare the list of candidates for some others. We have also carried out the elections of members of the Synodal Commission for Vadavathoor Seminary. I wish the newly designated Members of this body every blessing of God in their work.

We had discussed in the previous Synod the financial problems in our seminaries and especially that of the Good Shepherd Seminary of Kunnoth. I wish to express my gratitude to all of you who have come to the rescue of the Kunnoth Seminary by responding generously to my call to contribute a substantial sum for this purpose in spite of the financial constraint in which each one of you is operating. To our delight, CNEWA, whose Secretary General, Mgr. Robert Stern visited us, has fulfilled its promise of granting a matching subsidy to this venture and now we have earned some breathing space in this difficult situation. We hope that with the help of God we will be able to find permanent solutions to these problems in the future.
Finally as I conclude, I would like to draw your attention to a dream of mine which I had shared with you in my homily during the inaugural Mass of the Synod. As I took charge of my office as the Administrator of the Syro-Malabar Church, I had received the mandate from Servant of God, Pope John Paul II to bring unity in the Church. Although we have achieved a great degree of unity, we have still miles to go till we reach that perfect unity. I think it is high time that we put our souls together in the presence of God and commit ourselves to this call for unity. As we celebrate the Year for Priests this year, I have an inner feeling that this unity is achievable, if we really believe in it and are prepared to make the sacrifices needed. It is a positive sign that we could take a decision to this effect during this Session of our Synod. The proposed meeting of the Major Archbishop with some priest representatives from every diocese, with the help of some experts, I think, will certainly initiate a sincere dialogue and bring us closer to a better understanding and greater unity even in matters of Liturgy which has hitherto remained a stumbling block to full unity. Let us allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God. He is sure to move mountains that block the true vision of truth.

I would like to express my gratitude in a special way to all those who helped us in the conduct of the Synod, Bishop George Alencherry, the Secretary of the Synod, the Moderators Archbishop Mathew Moolakkatt and Bishops Jacob Manathodath and Lawrence Mukkuzy who have wisely guided the proceedings of this Session of our Synod, Fr. Antony Kollannur, the Chancellor and the Staff of the chancery, Fr. Pauly Kannookadan, the Notary, Fr. Mathew Pulimottil and the fathers, the sisters and their helpers who serve at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia.

The next Synod is scheduled for 11th – 15th January 2010. May Our Lord Jesus Christ, through the prayers of His Mother Mary, St. Thomas our Apostle, St. Alphonsa, the first saint of our Church, shower his blessings on us so that the work of this session
of the Synod bear abundant fruit. With these words I formally declare this Session of the XVII\textsuperscript{th} Synod of the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church closed.

Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil

Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church
HOMILY OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP FOR THE QURBANA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XVII Synod

Held from 17th to 28th August 2009

The Rev. Father B.J. Surappan

To begin with, let us express our gratitude to the highly esteemed Major Archbishop of the XVII Synod. Our beloved Father B.J. Surappan has been a great inspiration to us all. His words are filled with wisdom and guidance. In his homily, he has highlighted the importance of unity and collaboration among the Synod members. He has emphasized the need for us to work together towards a common goal. The Rev. Father B.J. Surappan has reminded us of the significance of our role in the Church. He has encouraged us to uphold the values of love, peace, and harmony in our daily lives. The homily has been a source of encouragement and motivation for all those present. It has reminded us of our responsibility towards the Church and our fellow believers. The Rev. Father B.J. Surappan has ended his homily by urging us to be humble and open-minded. He has encouraged us to be receptive to new ideas and perspectives. The homily has been a true reflection of the spirit of the Synod. It has been a powerful reminder of our commitment to the Church and our duty to serve it with dedication and devotion.
കാര്യാലയത്തിന്റെ തലത്തിലുള്ള പ്രവൃത്തികമ്പോലേക്കായി. വാസ്തുംകലയിൽ കാര്യമായി നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്ന ഓരു വിധത്തിൽ വാസ്തും കൈകാലികമായി.
നല്കാറ്റ കെട്ടി അധിപനായികരെ സ്വയംവരിക്കാൻ ഉയരംശീലയുടെ അപര വിവിധതയിലാരംഭിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. അതിന്റെ രീതിയിൽ മെധൈയൂസസ് കെട്ടി തിരിച്ചെടുത്താണ് മുഴുവൻ കെട്ടി പതിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. ഏറ്റവും അതിന്റെ കെട്ടി ശേഷിയേല്പരി മെധൈയൂസസ് കെട്ടി അതിന്റെ അവസാനത്തില്‍ കെട്ടി അന്തഃപ്രാവരണത്തില്‍ നാട്ട് കെട്ടി മെധൈയൂസസ്. ഏറ്റവും അതിന്റെ അവസാനത്തില്‍ കെട്ടി മെധൈയൂസസ് കെട്ടി അതിന്റെ അവസാനത്തില്‍ കെട്ടി മെധൈയൂസസ് കെട്ടി അതിന്റെ അവസാനത്തില്‍ കെട്ടി മെധൈയൂസസ്.
Mount St. Thomas

17 August 2009
APPOINTMENT ORDER OF MAR JOHN VADAKEL, BISHOP OF BIJNOR

BENEDICTUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI diletto Filio Joanni Vadakel, ex Congregatione Carmelitanorum Mariae Immaculatae, hactenus Protsyncello Eparchiae Biinorensis, ad candem Eparchiam Episcopo destinato, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Decet Nos qui supremi Ecclesiae Pastoris officio fungimur iis rebus consulere quae ad singularum Ecclesiarum bonum utilitatemque conducunt; ita ut omnes fideles spiritalibus beneficiis usque fruantur. Cum vero Eparcialsis Sedes Biinorensis vacans extriterit ob renuntiationem Venerabilis Fratris Gratiani Mundadam, alium sacrum presule qui eam reget ristuc destinare statuimus. Idcirco, dilecte fili, te, vita moribus doctrina et pastorali experientia praeditum; idoneum cogitavimus ad hoc munus obeundum. Qua propter, de Apostolica Nosstra potestate te ad Eparciam Biinorensem eligimus cidemque Pastorem praeficimus, cui cuncta iura concedimus, addentes quoque obligationes quae ad canones Ecclesiarum Orientalium cum dignitate tua tuoque munere consociantur. Quod vero attinet ad ordinationem tuam, ad fidei professionem necnon ad promissionem officium fideliter implendi, praescripta canonum quos diximus plane servabis. Enixe insuper rogaris ut hane nominationem tam clerum quam fideles doceta, ut bene sciant te sibe esse legitime praepositum; quos dilectissimos filios et filias paterne hortamur ut te Pastorem libentes excipient tecumque caritatis, unitati set oboedientiae vinculis sint usque coniunti. Tibi denique, dilecte Fili, Immaculata Virgine Maria te protegente, caelestia poscimus dona, quibus adiutus tuos fideles ita pascas ut iidem studiant cotidie divinum exsequi caritatis praecipuum. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die uno et vicesimo mensis Augusti, anno Domini bis mellesimo nono, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Benedicuts PP. XVI
Prot. No. 417/2009

PASTORAL LETTER

VARKEY CARDINAL VITHAYATHIL, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, to the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Men and Women Religious and Lay Faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church, blessings and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

The feast of Dukrana is a very important day for the Syro-Malabar Catholics worldwide. It is the day on which St. Thomas the apostle of India and our father in faith gave witness with his own life to his proclamation of faith “My Lord and My God.” For everyone who celebrates this feast it should be the beginning of a rebirth in faith. Let me extend my feast day greetings to all the members of the Syro-Malabar Church living in Kerala and outside Kerala, in India and abroad, bearing witness to the Christian faith they have received from St. Thomas. On this occasion I would like to make a special mention of those migrant Syro-Malabar faithful living outside Kerala in India and abroad, who having left their native land and home, while struggling hard for the well-being of their families, strive sincerely to preserve the deposit of faith they have inherited in the limited conditions of the diaspora. The first Syro-Malabar church in the Gulf Region which I blessed on 22 May this year in Doha, Qatar is indeed the best example of their self-sacrifices and painstaking efforts to preserve their own unique faith-life. The consecration of this church is indeed a very commendable achievement. I congratulate wholeheartedly all those who worked hard behind this success. I wish that this be an example and inspiration also for the Syro-Malabar communities in other places.
On this occasion I wish to draw your attention to how vigilant we should be to preserve the purity of our faith. In a situation where there are no clear organizational structures of church administration and especially where there are no possibilities for pastoral care in our own ecclesial traditions or facilities for imparting the faith formation, the possibility of going astray from our original faith inherited from our forefathers is very great. Today there are many sects spreading teachings that are fundamentally opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is a sad fact that lured by these sects many have ended up in interpreting the Bible falsely, in neglecting the sacramental life and even in breaking off from the catholic communion. Let me bring to your notice the relevant portions from the pastoral letter issued by the Kerala Catholic Bishops’ Council in March this year regarding the newly formed sects.

“In recent times some lay gospel preachers have started their own gospel retreat teams and prayer groups and gradually having separated themselves from the authentic catholic teachings and controls have become separate sects on their own. Many of their bible interpretations are contrary to the sacred traditions and teachings and even to common sense.” The pastoral letter refers to some gospel movements and prayer centres which have been recently started in Kerala and which have no ecclesiastical recognition and permission and which have been falsely presenting themselves as having ecclesial recognition. These movements include the Emperor Emmanuel Trust having its centre at Muriad in the diocese of Irinjalakuda, “Amma” at Mala, the Upper Room of Kanjirappally, Corner Stone of Ernakulam, Spirit in Jesus, Atmabhishekam, and ecclesial communities like the Heavenly Feast. The pastoral letter warns the faithful not to participate in prayer meetings and retreats organized by such sects and groups not recognized by the
Catholic Church. The Syro-Malabar Bishops’ Synod held in August 2008 also had recommended taking action against movements like the Spirit in Jesus, Emperor Emmanuel, Upper Room, etc. Since these sects mentioned above have been prohibited in one or more dioceses and the evil effects of their activities are not confined to the dioceses where they originated, the Permanent Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church recommended extending their prohibition to the whole of the Syro-Malabar Church. Accordingly, I hereby, declare that these movements mentioned above are prohibited in the whole Syro-Malabar Church. Let me exhort all of you not to take part in the programmes organized by these sects or to co-operate with their activities in any way. Those who invite retreat preachers or groups for retreats and prayer meetings should ensure that they have the approval of the competent authorities of the Catholic Church.

The Church is the communion of the faithful. Every person in the Church has a unique role to play in the mission of the Church. Bishops, priests, religious and lay people all sincerely strive to preserve the deposit of faith and to bear witness to it by fulfilling their unique roles. Perhaps it is to be admitted that the role of the laity in this mission had not received adequate attention until recently. It was to rectify this that a commission for laity was established during the last synod. The Laity Commission has already made great progress in ensuring the participation of the laity in the activities of the Church through its various programmes. As part of these activities, an International Laity Assembly is planned for 13 to 15th August 2009. I request your whole-hearted co-operation for its success. Besides, an interaction of the Synodal Fathers with a cross section of the faithful i.e., representatives from the priests, religious and lay people, in view of the forthcoming synod also has been proposed by the Permanent Synod. It is hoped that through all
these measures, we can ensure the active participation of all sections in fulfilling the mission of the Church.

In the area of pastoral care, especially with regard to the pastoral care to our Syro-Malabar faithful in diaspora, we are earnestly making every effort to guarantee adequate pastoral care in our own ecclesial traditions. Although we have not succeeded in this as we have expected, we should continue our efforts without losing hope. At the same time we should remember that there is a great need of priests to fulfil this mission. Vocations to priesthood should grow from our own families. The Holy Father has declared a year for priests from 19 June 2009 to 19 June 2010. I wish that the celebration of this year provide a very powerful impetus for all of us to promote genuine vocations – to priesthood and to religious state – from our own families.

Not only with human resources, but also with financial assistance should we co-operate in the great mission of the Church. On the occasion of the Sabhadinam, I want to draw your attention to the decision of the Synod of Bishops held last year to take, as in the previous year, this year also, and in the coming years also, a collection of one Rupee per person from all the Syro-Malabar faithful. I request the whole-hearted co-operation of all in this regard.

As we celebrate the feast of Dukrana, let us once again recall to our mind that every Syro-Malabar Catholic in India and abroad has the great responsibility of preserving, fostering and witnessing to the deposit of faith he/she has inherited from St. Thomas. The great example of this is the beloved daughter of the Syro-Malabar Church, St. Alphonsa, the first canonized woman saint of India. We have to become aware of the forces and movements that strive to lead us astray from this faith and to draw us away from our Catholic communion. We have to be ever vigilant against them. We shall
take every effort to strengthen this communion, realising that in whatever level of the Church structure we are, our role in the mission of the Church is unique and irreplaceable. Once again wishing all of you sincere greetings of the feast of Dukrana, I bless you, in the name of the Father + and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit + Amen.

Given at Kakkanad from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St Thomas on 25 May 2009.

+Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

N.B: This pastoral letter is to be read out during the Holy Mass on June 28 in all churches and chapels of the Syro-Malabar Church where there is Sunday Mass for the public.
Prot. No. 741/2009

CIRCULAR OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP
after the XVII Synod of Bishops of the
Syro-Malabar Church

My dear priests, religious and lay faithful,

I am very glad to inform you that the XVIIth Synod of the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church took place in the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad from 17th to 28th August 2009. We the Bishops began the Synodal Session preparing ourselves spiritually through prayer and recollection and the concelebrated Holy Qurbana. We earnestly desired and prayed for a deepening of love and unity at all levels of the Church and for the fruitfulness of her efforts in providing pastoral care to her faithful and for overcoming the different challenges on her way.

The brief sharing by the Bishops on the pastoral work in their respective eparchies was proved to be very useful. It revealed the diversity of this ministry of the Church and the unique challenges she faces in this area. The Bishops also remembered with gratitude the canonization of Blessed Alphonsa as an event most joyful for the whole of India and especially to our Church. The fact that the Central Government issued a St. Alphonsa Birth Centenary Commemorative coin was indeed very significant.

The functioning of the Synod was subjected to a thorough scrutiny and evaluation which gave insight and motivation for improvement in its functioning. The Synod also expressed its condolence at the sad demise of P.C. Abraham, Pallattukunnel, known popularly as Kunjettan, the co-founder of the Little Flower Mission League and remembered gratefully his zealous service to mission work and prayed for the repose of his soul.
Liturgy

Let me communicate to you with joy that we could reform and bring into effect the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Rites for Christmas, Penitential Rite at the beginning of Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter through the publication of these Texts. These Liturgical Texts are the results of prolonged study and discussion. They have been unanimously approved by the Bishops of our Church and have been granted recognition by the Holy See. Now they are being published for use in our Church. I recall with gratitude the Members of the Commission for Liturgy and that of the Central Liturgical Committee who worked hard to prepare these Texts. I wish and exhort that they are duly accepted and used in the whole of our Church. The reformed Liturgical Rite for the consecration of churches has been thoroughly examined by the Synod Fathers and has been approved with some modifications. This will be promulgated after getting the recognition from the Holy See. When Holy *Qurbana* is to be offered on an altar which is not consecrated, *deppa* is to be used. The Synod also decided to prepare a liturgical rite for the blessing of religious houses.

The Synod also considered some other points related to Liturgy which should be known to all. To consecrate a fixed altar used for the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*, the liturgical rite for the consecration of churches is to be followed. If the altar is not permanently fixed, the rite for blessing of chapels could be used. The Synod also selected the prayers from the *Propria* to be included for the time being in the *Taksa* and decided to print the *Taksa* with these prayers included in it. The rite for the celebration of *Sapra* and *Ramsa* integrated with Holy *Qurbana* also was approved by the Synod.

I would also wish to inform you that on solemn occasions, for the concelebrations of the Holy *Qurbana*, the Synod considered it
to be fitting that the concelebrants put on the full vestments. On other occasions they have to put on at least Kothina, Sunara and Urara as liturgical vestments. On certain unavoidable circumstances, the Synod felt that the concelebrants could concelebrate with at least the Urara put on the cassock. When priests from different rites are concelebrating, the law is that the celebration is conducted according to the liturgical rite of the Main Celebrant. I also remind you that the normal rule for such occasions is that the concelebrants put on their own respective liturgical vestments. Regarding the rite for the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, an important element yet to be reformed is the readings. The Synod has entrusted the Commission for Liturgy to make the necessary changes in the present set of readings and to prepare a new set of readings. After having completed the work of the readings, the Synod will consider preparing the Lectionary.

In concelebrations, the concelebrants should follow the instructions given in the Taksa regarding the recitation of prayers. Even when some prayers are said jointly by the concelebrants and the main celebrant, the dominant voice should be that of the main celebrant. With regard to the stipends for a concelebrated Qurbana, if a concelebrant has already accepted stipend for a Qurbana for the day, he cannot accept once again stipend for the concelebrated Qurbana. If owing to reasons of pastoral care one has to celebrate a second or a third Qurbana in a day, the stipend for these Qurbanas have to be offered for the intention of the Bishop.

By the simple form of burial what is intended is a burial with no homily, no Qurbana, no use of mike, using only two ornamental umbrellas (Muthukudas), one cross and one priest for the burial. In scandalous cases of suicide not even the simple burial may be given. In such cases the body will not be allowed to be taken inside the Church. The priest may bless the grave sometime outside the funeral service.
Pastoral Care of the Migrants

We have been making every effort to find an adequate solution to the problems connected with the pastoral care of our migrants outside the proper territory of our Church. I am glad to state that the Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants has been always vigilant about these issues and take effective steps to overcome them. However, there are still many problems and obstacles remaining. The Bishops discussed about the ways and means of providing adequate pastoral care in the present situation and the possibility of erecting new eparchies for the migrants. Discussions are under way with the Latin Bishops to ensure their cooperation. We have given clear guidelines to our priests sent for pastoral work among the migrants. In order to maintain the ecclesial nature of our pastoral care, such measures are essential. There should be much tolerance, deeper ecclesial awareness, earnest prayers and the sincere cooperation of all concerned to find a permanent solution to the problems involved in giving pastoral care to our migrants.

General Issues

The Synod has formed a Media Cell to respond after thorough study and assessment to the many contemporary issues of social and political nature from the stand point of the Church and to create awareness in the society favourable to it. The convener of this Media Cell will function as the PRO of the Syro-Malabar Church. It is our great responsibility to grow in our loyalty to God and compassion towards our fellow brethren in the society, and to be its conscience in the face of breaking up of families, ecological pollution, goondaism, alcoholism, corruption, atheism, etc. I exhort priests and other responsible persons to give leadership in organizing extensive study on the Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI on social issues, Caritas in veritate.
Major Archiepiscopal Assembly

The third Major Archiepiscopal Assembly of the Syro-Malabar Church is decided to be held from 20th – 22nd August 2010. It is hoped that this Assembly comprising of Bishops and representatives of Priests, Religious and the Laity will be able to augment understanding and co-operation in the Church through an in-depth study and analysis of the various issues and exchange of ideas. The Synod desires that proper representation is given to the migrant faithful of our Church outside its proper territory. Taking into consideration all these factors, the Synod has decided to make necessary changes in the Statutes of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. You will be given a detailed information regarding the forthcoming Assembly from time to time.

International Laity Assembly

I am happy to note that the three-day International Laity Assembly held under the auspices of the Commission for the Laity just before the Synodal Session was a great success. Everyone felt that the occasion provided by this assembly for the representatives of different communities of our migrants dispersed in various countries to come together at the Head Quarters of the Syro-Malabar Church and discuss and exchange ideas on many issues of ecclesial, social and pastoral nature regarding our Church has indeed helped strengthen the bond and commitment of the Lay people with the Mother Church. The Synod Fathers have advised the Commission to take greater care in strengthening the existing Lay Associations and harmonizing their activities.

I request the prayers and cooperation of all the Syro-Malabar eparchies for the success of the Indian Mission Congress to be held in Bombay from 14th – 18th October 2009.

Seminary Formation

Another topic that drew great attention from the Bishops in
the Synod was the formation of our seminarians. The Bishops discussed this issue seriously in the light of the opinions and appraisals expressed by the conference of the Seminary Rectors. The Synod was of the opinion that the fourth year course of the Minor Seminarians were to be encouraged as it was found to be very fruitful. The Synod also observed that the priests and the lay people should have greater interest and awareness regarding the formation of seminarians. The formation the seminarians get today should be geared towards enhancing their pastoral and missionary orientation. The Bishops should have responsibility with regard to the formation programmes even in seminaries conducted by the Religious. The Synod directed that the Bishops should ensure that the formation in the seminaries is done as per Common Law (CCEO c. 330 & 536 §2) and the Charter for Priestly Formation approved by the Synod and that there should be constant attention and evaluation of the formation programme in the Major Seminaries by the Bishops.

The Bishops have to work earnestly in unison to make the seminary formation programme flawless, taking into consideration the special characteristics of the modern generation. The seminarians should at opportune times arrive at inner convictions regarding the teachings of the Church.

**Faith Formation**

Another important topic that the Synod considered was faith formation. Through faith formation we should be able to impart to the children genuine convictions and motivations to stand firm in the faith and to bear witness to it. We should employ new teaching methods suited for this purpose. The interest and care of the parents in the faith formation of the children is indispensable. The children should be fortified against the onslaught of the evil influence of the present day Media. Faith formation should be rooted in Liturgy and cultivated in prayer experience. Knowing Church History also is very important. Faith formation should be continued even after completing Sunday Catechism and it should be provided to the youth
and adults in a suitable manner. Catechism Teachers should have the best training. Family catechesis and the faith formation that the children should get from their homes also have to be encouraged very much. For this a handbook for parents helping them to give home catechesis is to be provided. The Bishops also proposed launching a website with faith formation as its primary goal.

**Year for Priests**

In order to strengthen unity, understanding and earnestness in the whole Church in all matters, the Bishops wanted to celebrate the Year of Priests giving emphasis to the sanctification of priests and encouraging genuine vocations. I exhort everyone to cooperate wholeheartedly with the various action plans organized in different eparchies to celebrate the Year of Priests. As part of the observance of the Year of Priests, I would like to convene the meetings of the representatives of priests from all the eparchies in Kerala in two or three batches and to talk to them. I request the support of everyone in this regard. I remind all priests that they should recognize the importance and greatness of the vocation to priesthood and that they should promote vocations to priesthood and religious life. I intend to write to the priests more elaborately on the topic of the Year of Priests later.

**Other topics**

**Marriage Preparation Course of the Migrants**

The Marriage Preparation Courses attended by our faithful in diaspora, both in India and abroad, if they have the approval of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants, should be considered as the valid preparation for the reception of the sacrament of matrimony. I exhort everyone to give in websites of our dioceses the dates of marriage preparation courses well in advance so that the would-be spouses of our migrant faithful could participate in these marriage preparation courses. Those who are getting married should prepare themselves for marriage taking part
in these preparatory seminars. Everyone should cooperate with this regulation knowing well that this is put in place to ensure the stability of the bond of marriage.

It is highly desirable that the websites of the respective Syro-
Malabar eparchies are linked with the website of the Syro-Malabar Church: www.smcim.org

Announcing the Banns

From now on the Proto-Presbyters (Forane Vicars) will have the competence to give in special circumstances permission for announcing the banns even before the conduct of betrothal. For this permission, both the parties in marriage should submit their petition with the recommendation of the respective parish priests. The parish priest of the party who has obtained the dispensation shall communicate the matter to the parish priest of the other party along with Form B.

The names of candidates for promotion to sacred orders of presbyterate and diaconate are to be announced in the parish church of each candidate during the Divine Liturgy on two consecutive days of obligation before the ordination.

Commissions and Committees

Reports of the various Commissions and Committees functioning in the Syro-Malabar Church, the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal, the Liturgical Research Centre, and that of the three Major Seminaries of our Church were presented in the Synod. The Bishops gave necessary instructions regarding their functioning. I am very glad that all these Commissions and Committees are working very well. The Financial Report of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia also was presented. It was also decided to give a summary statement of accounts of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia during the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. The benefactors who have contributed for the running of the Curia also will be given this summary statement.
I wish and pray that all the structures intended for the integral growth and development of our Church may become more efficient.

The more detailed information regarding the Synod is published in the Synodal News. I exhort that all parishes, religious houses and other interested persons to become subscribers of the Synodal News and take interest to know closely the activities of our Church and to collaborate with them befittingly.

Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad
8 September 2009
Prot. No. 874/2009

PASTORAL LETTER

VARKEY CARDINAL VITHAYATHIL, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, to the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Men and Women Religious and Lay Faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church, blessings and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI declared the year 2009-2010 as the year for priests. On this occasion when the Church celebrates the year for priests, I am happy to share with you some thoughts regarding priests and the good the entire human race receives through the ministry of priests. Priests and their ministry have a distinct role to play in the plan of salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished on earth. Jesus chose and appointed the twelve apostles to be with him to continue his salvific mission and to be sent out to proclaim the message of salvation. Priests are persons called and designated by God to render service to the society as the co-workers of Bishops, the successors of the apostles, in the onward march of the Church built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as its cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

Even though the whole people of God through baptism and confirmation participate in the priesthood of Christ, priests are appointed as priests, teachers and shepherds to protect and nourish the Church, the Body of Christ, through their ministry. Priests who are appointed to sanctify, teach and shepherd the people of God participate in these triple office of Christ. Priests, who through the sacred ordination receive the ministerial priesthood of Christ, sanctify themselves by fulfilling these offices faithfully. It is by the ministry of
priests that the people of God in every stage of their life, from birth to death, grow up and are nourished and strengthened in their faith life. We have a tradition that gives great importance to the ministry of priests both in the life of every individual and in the society. We give a similar position of a father in a family to our priests who are the heads of the larger family that is the parish community. In the same way we recognize the preeminent position of the Bishops at the apex level of the Diocesan structures.

One of the purposes of the declaration of the year for priests is the renewal and sanctification of the life of priests the world over. To achieve this, both the priests and the entire people of God must attain the wisdom regarding priesthood as an ineffable gift of God. Priesthood is a great gift that God gives to the human race. We consider the ordained Bishops and priests as persons standing in the place of God and believe that we obtain the experience of God’s presence through them. That is the meaning of greeting a priest when we meet him, saying “praise be to Jesus Christ”. Our priests are persons working tirelessly in different realms of the society both for the spiritual and material growth and development of the human person. We can be proud of this fact. In particular, the Syro-Malabar priests are making remarkable contributions in the mission fields in India and abroad. Besides working as spiritual fathers in the pastoral field, our priests are rendering commendable service in the field of education and social work. I congratulate the priests for the wonderful priestly ministry they exercise in the Church as another Christ and thank the Lord for the same.

The whole people of God must pray for priests that they be strengthened to continue their priestly ministry with steadfastness in their vocation and that through their selfless lives they may be faithful to the Lord who called them. Jesus chose the apostles after long hours of prayer (Mk.3: 13-19). Jesus has requested us to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Mt. 9:38). God accomplishes today through frail human persons, the priests,
the same mission of Jesus Christ who, fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel that the Lord God himself will search and find Shepherds of his mind to shepherd his people, incarnated himself as the good shepherd. Priests require constant help from God. All of us are obliged to pray daily for priests. The people of God must acknowledge in their hearts the words of Jesus: “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn.15:5).

The context that occasioned the declaration of the year for priests is the one hundred and fiftieth death anniversary of St. John Mary Vianney, who was the vicar of Ars’. St. John Mary Vianney who died in the year 1859 was considered the patron of all parish priests. Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of the celebration of the year for priests declared him patron of all priests. The year for priests that began on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 2009 will conclude on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 2010. The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is also a day of sanctification of priests. When St. John Mary Vianney was appointed parish priest of Ars, it was a parish where the Love of God was at a low ebb. God wrought wonders there through the saint. He became a humble instrument of the merciful love of God. Another shining example for diocesan priests is Thevarparambil Kunjachan from our Syro-Malabar Church who was recently declared Blessed. Humble as he was, he was a saintly person who reached the highest level of sanctity through his humble service.

We are known for keeping a tradition of loving and respecting priests and co-operating with the leadership they give to the community. The laity has a definite role in the Church as co-workers of priests, in establishing the Kingdom of God that Jesus announced. The celebration of the year for priests should help in deepening the personal relationship between priests and laity. At the same time priests as persons dedicated to God and the Church they must equip themselves for a more fruitful service through their selfless
commitment. Let us pray that Jesus who said, "you did not choose me, but I chose you" (Jn 15:16) and promised, "I am with you always to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20), may protect and guide us. Let us commend all our priests to the Blessed Virgin Mary, queen of priests and our mother, for her protection and intercession. I invoke God's blessing on each one of you.

Given at Kakkanad from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St Thomas on 4 November 2009.

Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

N.B: *This pastoral letter is to be read out during the Holy Mass on December 6, 2009 in all churches and chapels of the Syro-Malabar Church where there is Sunday Mass for the public.*
LETTER OF THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOP TO HIS BROTHER PRIESTS IN THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE YEAR FOR PRIESTS 2009-2010

My dear Priests!

On the occasion the Church celebrates the year for priests, I am happy to share with you some thoughts regarding the great gift of priesthood. Your vocation as priests gives you a decisive role in the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The same is true about me and my brothers in episcopacy who are called by God for leadership ministry in the Church. We are co-workers of God (1 Cor. 3:8). Jesus chose the twelve apostles to be with him and to be sent out to proclaim the Good News and gave them the power to cast out demons. This is true also with regard to Bishops who are successors of the apostles and priests who received the order of priesthood by the imposition of hands of the Bishops.

It is this faith of the people of God that enables them to consider priesthood as a great gift of God. It is the same faith that motivates the priests to engage passionately in pastoral ministry. You are able to love thousands of persons with the love of Jesus in your heart and bring help and consolation to many who are sinners, afflicted and helpless. For how many lives your prayer and loving presence and encouragement have become the cause of divine blessing! My dear priests, I pray that you are able to understand and experience the uniqueness and the joy of priesthood and to fulfill your ministry to the people of God with greater zeal. Let me jot down here some of my hopes and convictions about you.
It is beyond doubt that priesthood is a radical and hazardous vocation that demands total dedication (Lk. 9:2). We are called to live dreaming about the establishment of the kingdom of God. It is not the whims and fancies of the world, nor its expectations that lead our lives. You are priests who fulfill the duties entrusted to you with great dedication, however much burdensome the duties may be. The Syro-Malabar Church has a great priestly tradition. Our priests have always sustained a style of work characterized by hard work, sense of commitment and deep spirituality. The manifold ministries themselves carried out in various parts of India by the Catholics who form only one and a half percent of the total population bear witness to this fact.

Some of you, especially those working in the mission fields are working in very dangerous situations. The fact that all the apostles chosen by Jesus for evangelization, except St. John, embraced martyrdom has been a great source of enthusiasm and marvelous courage to all those who have been called to the ministry of the Kingdom of God down the centuries. The great passion with which St. Paul preached the gospel ever remains as an excellent example in the field of evangelization. I pray that you may be able to carry out your priestly ministry with great dedication, however much difficult it is and is devoid of any recognition from anyone.

I am sure all of you have read the life-history of St. John Mary Vianney, the heavenly patron of priests. The attitude, style of functioning and approaches he adopted made him a world renowned spiritual father, even though he lived one hundred and fifty years ago. He began his ministry to the people of Ars whose faith had been cooled off, committing himself to the Lord who called him. He firmly believed God would work wonders through his humble hands. Historians testify that he spent long hours in prayer to achieve this goal. This should help us realize the truth that we are insignificant instruments in the hands of the Lord. We shall always keep in our mind the verse of the Psalmist: “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Ps. 127:1).
St. John Mary Vianney might have kept in his mind every day the words of Jesus: "You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name" (Jn 15:16). He went ahead with his pastoral ministry with the deep conviction that Jesus who wrought miracles through His humble disciples was by his side. The result of his ministry was astounding. Only when we have this deep faith experience, our ministry will be fruitful according to the mind of God. I exhort you to make every effort to make this faith experience your own in this year for priests.

The field of activity of each one of us is determined according to the mind and plan of Jesus. We are commissioned to establish the Kingdom of God in the places and situations where we are sent. Therefore, we have to discern and decide in prayer and see how each programme that we ourselves plan and execute is in harmony with the kingdom of God. We have to doubt whether some of our programmes are acceptable in the sight of God due to our craze for fame and glory. There is no doubt that the fruitfulness of our priestly ministry is very much dependent on the purity of intention with which we do it. The life of Blessed Thevarparambil Kunjachan who lived and died in this age is a shining example for us in this field. He had nothing to his credit according to the standards of the world. The only thing he did was to serve long forty-nine years as an assistant parish priest. His ministry was for the poorest of the poor and the destitute. His life reveals the truth that man's assessment is entirely different from that of God.

We must take care that worldly considerations and spirit of competition do not get into our fields of activity. The establishment of the Kingdom of God depends on the success we make in this attempt. We should remember that everything that could be counted and measured are transitory. Only those activities that are not infected by pride and selfishness and are purified with good intentions will be ultimately acceptable in the sight of God. They alone are capable of
contributing to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This is the irrefutable truth that St. John Mary Vianney and Blessed Kunjachan teach us.

In this year for priests we should make as the topic of our special meditation the words spoken by Jesus to the apostles during the last supper: “Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn.15:5). Then only will we be able to attain the spiritual renewal that is expected of us in this year for priests.

Prayer and meditation on the Word of God are the great means by which we can abide in the Lord and the Lord in us. All the renowned Spiritual Fathers in the Church teach that it is prayer life that strengthens and revitalizes the priestly ministry. It is certain that if you can lead a life keeping the presence of God always in your mind and meditating daily on the Word of God, then the people who approach you will experience a divine spirit in you and in what you say and in what you do. You being persons acting in the place of Christ, I need not draw your attention to this fact that the people of God expect a divine spirit from you. There are deeper meanings to the greeting “Praise be to Jesus Christ”, with which the people of God greet priests, with their folded hands. For them priest is one who stands in the place of Jesus Christ.

This places a great challenge before us to make our own the attitudes and style of functioning of Jesus. Only when your hearts are transformed into the likeness of the love-filled heart of Jesus, can you claim the uniqueness of priesthood. People should feel the nearness of God when the sacrament of reconciliation is administered. Priesthood and priestly ministry are continuation of the love and compassion of God to His people. We partake in the priesthood of Christ who is the personification of the love of God. A priest who imbibes the spirit of the Eucharist and becomes the sacrifice of the Lord to the people is the incarnation of Divine Love.
The great example of humility that Jesus taught us by washing the feet of the apostles should be deeply imprinted on our minds. In this year for priests, we should take special care to manifest our love and recognition to all, especially to the helpless and the destitute. The comportment of Jesus is to be the model for us in this regard.

Priests, as co-workers of the Bishops, who are successors of the apostles are bound to nurture filial love and obedience to them. This relationship is of a sacramental nature. The statement of St. Paul that the Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20) is always pertinent. The centrality that Jesus accords to the apostles and to their successors in the Church is based on the very nature of the Church. It is only when you work along with your bishops and according to their directions that your priestly ministry becomes fruitful. There is a touching incident in the life of blessed Thevarparambil Kunjachan. He collected a good amount of money to construct a church for the Dalit Catholics. When he approached Bishop Sebastian Vayalil for permission to construct the Church, permission was denied and the Bishop directed him to hand over the money for the construction of a hospital. Very happily he did what the Bishop requested him to do. We see a heroic virtue in this act of obedience. It shows that he had the strong support of his deep faith to see God in the person of the Bishop.

I would like to draw your attention to the transformation that occurred in the apostles when they were anointed by the Holy Spirit. Their narrow minds were broadened to embrace the whole of humanity and they became capable of aiming at and working for the salvation of all. This large-heartedness prompted them to go and preach the Word of God in different parts of the world. God has given the same large-heartedness to you also when you were ordained priests. The concerns about your own parish and diocese should not narrow down your minds. We should be transformed to have the mind of Jesus. While engaged in the ministry entrusted to
us, we should have concern for the Universal Church and for all peoples. In the near future, the Holy Father may entrust the Syro-
Malabar Church with the mandate of evangelization with definite
structures in different parts of India. If that happens, we should be
able to find persons and means for the same. I pray that you may
be able to imbibe the zeal and large-heartedness of the apostles.

Let me share with you a personal matter. When His Holiness
John Paul II appointed me head and father of the Syro-Malabar
Church, one thing that he specially commissioned me was to create
a better atmosphere of love and communion in our Church. The
Holy Father did it at a time when there was a great psychological
divide among the different sections of the Church on the basic ideas
regarding the renewal of Liturgy. By the Grace of God, we were
able to rise above this division to a certain extent. You as priests
have a great share in this accomplishment and I thank you for the
same. You are well aware that the liturgical reform and the growth
in communion we have hoped for, have not yet reached its perfection.
In this year for priests, we must seek the means to grow as the
people of God with one heart and soul. I entreat each one of you to
make every effort to attain this goal with the openness of the heart
that the Holy Spirit gives you. I will be happy to receive your
suggestions in this regard.

There is an observation that the number of priests with wider
reading and deeper knowledge is decreasing. The saying that
‘knowledge is power’ is ever more pertinent today than at any other
time. The knowledge-explosion in the field of science and technology
are beyond our comprehension. Therefore, the sphere of knowledge
has become one of specializations. We should become specialists
in the field of spiritual wisdom. We should deepen our knowledge
in Biblical Studies, Theology, Philosophy, Church History,
Psychology, etc. We should also make every effort to learn the
documents of the Church published from time to time and to teach
them to the people of God.
Let me here refer to a matter that causes great anguish to you and to me. In recent years there is a decline in the exalted position and recognition that the priests used to receive traditionally in the Church and Society. There may be several reasons for this. The not-so-ideal manner of living of a few priests, their conduct and conversations not in tune with the dignity of priesthood, and above all their lack of spiritual life, may have contributed to this situation. The unprincipled and non-transparent activities of some priests also may have paved the way for it. All of you, both as individuals and as a community of priests, must consider this issue seriously. All must take care to make adequate amendments through mortification and self-discipline. All of us have the obligation to pray for and counsel compassionately any brother-priest living quite contrary to the expectations of the Church. In this year for priests I invite all of you to take a firm resolution that you will not in any way be a cause to diminish the radiance of priesthood.

The year for priests is not merely an occasion for conducting some programmes, but it is a time for each priest to discover the uniqueness of his priesthood, to grow in the priestly communion, and to deepen the relation with one’s own Bishop. The Holy Father has invited the people of God for a year long meditation on God’s gift of priesthood and for greater care to nourish vocations to priesthood. All the eparchies have already chalked out an action plan in this regard. I exhort all of you to take great care to faithfully implement them. I pray that you may be able to grow and work according to the great expectations of the Lord who called you. I invoke God’s blessing on each one of you.

Given at Kakkanad from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar Church at Mount St Thomas on 4 November 2009.

Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church
GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL CARE OF THE MIGRANTS

Mission

The love of Christ towards migrants urges us (cf. 2Cor. 5:14) to look afresh at their problems and to respond more efficiently to the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar faithful living outside the *territorium proprium* of the church in India and abroad.

The Major Archiepiscopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants is constituted to assist the Major Archbishop of the Church in carrying out his responsibilities towards the migrant Christian faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church.

A. The Hierarchs of other *Sui iuris* Churches and the Commission

1. The commission shall "seek appropriate information concerning the Christian faithful who reside outside the territorial boundaries of the Church" (*CCEO 148§1*) and submit it to the Major Archbishop.

2. On the verification of the information collected or the demand made by the faithful living outside the territory, the commission may approach the respective ordinaries of the place and make request to exercise the most suitable juridical option from among those foreseen by the CIC and the CCEO (*Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* No. 50).

3. Even though entrusted to the care of a local hierarch/local ordinary or pastor of another Church *sui iuris*, they still remain ascribed to their own Church *sui iuris* (*CCEO 38, cf. CIC 112, §2*). Therefore, the commission shall see that the community is given adequate pastoral care as per the patrimony of the Syro-Malabar Church and help the hierarchs or pastors to fulfill their responsibility.
4. Where there are faithful of a different rite, the local hierarch/ local ordinary should provide for their spiritual needs through priests or parishes of that rite (CIC 383§2, CD 22, EMCC 53). The commission should ensure that the priests ministering the faithful are well trained and equipped to foster the faith of the community in the patrimony of the Syro-Malabar Church.

5. The local hierarch/local ordinaries, who appoint presbyters, pastors or synclerii for the care of Christian faithful of Patriarchal/Major Archiepiscopal Churches, are to formulate plans of action with the Patriarchs/Major Archbishops who are concerned in the matter (CCEO 193§3). When the time is ripe for the appointment of a pastor/chaplain, the commission shall request the Major Archbishop to present the name of the priest to the hierarch, so that he can appoint him for the care of the community. There shall be a written contract regarding the term and conditions of the service of the priest between the commission chairman and the local hierarch/local ordinary.

6. Wherever there is a considerable number of faithful to form a parish, the commission can suggest the possibility of the matter to the local hierarch that he erect a personal parish for the Syro-Malabar faithful. (CIC 518). No centre shall continue as a mission or a mass centre if it has 100 families or more. Only personal parishes with Syro-Malabar priests as pastors (appointed as in No.5) will ensure the context suitable for proper pastoral care for the Syro-Malabar migrant community (CCEO 280§1).

7. Even when the separate parishes or centers are erected for the Syro-Malabar faithful, these will continue to form integral parts of that diocese of the appointing bishop, and the parish priests/chaplains of the Syro-Malabar personal parish/center will remain members of the same diocesan presbyterate (EMCC 55). Therefore, the Syro-Malabar priests taking care
of the Syro-Malabar faithful in the dioceses/vicariates of other *sui iuris* churches shall be obedient to these local hierarchs/ local ordinaries under whose jurisdiction they are. However, they shall exercise their ministry in conformity with the patrimony (liturgical, theological, spiritual and canonical) of the Syro-Malabar Church (cf. *CCEO* Can. 28§1 and *PaG* 72).

8. The commission shall keep regular contacts with the Hierarchs/ Ordinaries of the emigrant personal parishes and Mass/mission centers, to discuss matters concerning those parishes/centers. Further, the commission shall issue circulars and pastoral letters on behalf of the Major Archbishop, in consultation with the local hierarch/ordinary, for the faith formation of the community in those parishes/centers.

B. The Pastors / Chaplains in-charge of the Syro-Malabar Migrants

9. Normally only those Syro-Malabar priests, who are ascribed to the Syro-Malabar Eparchies or institutes of Consecrated life/Societies of Apostolic life of the Syro-Malabar Church or to their Syro-Malabar provinces, shall be appointed parish priests/chaplains to do pastoral care for the Syro-Malabar migrants. However, when needed and available the help of other priests of the Syro-Malabar origin may also be enlisted for the same.

10. Priests doing pastoral care for the migrant community, whether in India or abroad should undergo a short term training offered by the commission. They should personally meet the Major Archbishop/the Chairman Bishop of the Commission before taking up their ministry.

11. The appointed pastors/chaplains shall observe the Particular Laws of the Syro-Malabar Church in the administration of the parish. Therefore, in all erected parishes/centers, they shall ensure the participation of the faithful after the model of
**palliyyogam** (Parish Council) in organizing parish activities and in the administration of the temporal goods. In other cases, there shall be the proper sharing of the responsibilities of the administration with elected members from the community.

12. The Sacred Liturgy and the Sacraments celebrated for our migrant communities shall always be the Syro-Malabar liturgy using the approved texts and adhering to the rites and the mode of celebration approved by the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church.

13. In the personal parishes and other established centers, even if not erected as parishes, the faithful should be invited to register their families and names and the church registers and documents shall be properly maintained and preserved. However, ample opportunities of co-operation and interaction with the other Catholic communities in the proximity are very essential to foster Christian fraternity avoiding any sort of exclusivity.

14. The pastors/chaplains shall take interest to guide the community to preserve the Syro-Malabar heritage especially in the practice of fast, abstinence and penance, celebration of the major feasts and in conducting various spiritual exercises for the community. They shall organize regular catechism classes for the children and youth using the texts approved by the synod. Great importance should be given to the proper catechetical formation of the faithful as per the tradition and heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church.

15. The pastors/chaplains need to be in regular contact with Major Archiepiscopal Commission and should send it annual reports regarding the state of the community, the apostolic activities and events in the parish.

16. They shall promote and strengthen Christian life by establishing pious associations of the Christian faithful with the approval of the local Hierarchs/ordinaries.
17. As regards the administration of the temporal goods, making collection among the faithful for any purpose etc. the particular law of the diocese and the direction of the local Hierarch shall be strictly followed.

18. Through regular family visits, organizing family unit prayer meetings, study classes etc. the pastors should help the migrant communities to feel united and strengthened in their Christian faith. They also need to be initiated into the customs and manners of the people of the land where they live. The positive interaction with the fellow Christian faithful of the land should be mutually enriching experience for both the communities.

19. Promoting the missionary thrust of our church, the migrant community must be made an evangelizing community wherever they are. They should be properly instructed of the missionary character and responsibility of theirs and be encouraged to contribute their share to the missionary activities of the Syro-Malabar Church. Pastors should conduct special mission animation programmes for the faithful and promote priestly, religious and lay missionary vocations from among the faithful.

20. Normally, the parish priest/chaplains presented by the Major Archbishop may be appointed for a period of three years. Their term may be extended for another period of two years. After that they may be called back or appointed in some other place with the agreement of their own hierarchs/ordinaries. In case of necessity they may even be called back during this period by the Chairman of the Commission sending an advance notice of two months to the local hierarch/ordinary to the effect. Similarly, the local hierarch/bishop may, in serious cases, with due information to the commission, send back such a priest replacing him with another Syro-Malabar priest presented by the Major Archbishop.
At the very beginning of the report we sincerely thank Bishop Mar Paul Chittilapilly, who had been the chairman of the commission for last five years. We acknowledge with gratitude his dedication to foster unity as well as the identity of our Church. We thank in a special way Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, the former member of the commission for his valuable contribution in the liturgical restoration.

1. Report of the Joint meeting of the Central Liturgical Committee, Diocesan Catechism Directors and Catechism Text Book Drafting Committee

The joint meeting of the Central Liturgical Committee, Diocesan Catechism Directors and Catechism Text Book Drafting Committee was held at Mount St.Thomas, Kakkanad from Monday 24th November to Tuesday 25th November 2008. The meeting discussed in detail the points of orientation prepared by Synodal committee to draft the text book of mystagogical catechesis. Bp Mar George Punnakottil, Chairman of the Commissions for Liturgy; Bp Mar George Alencherry, Chairman of the Commissions for Catechesis; Bp Mar Jacob Manathodath, Abp Mar Andrews Thazhath, Bp Mar Joseph Kallarangatt and Bp Mar Jose Porunnedom participated with the Central Liturgical Committee, Diocesan Catechism Directors and Catechism Text Book Drafting Committee in the discussions and finalized the points of orientation.

2. Meeting of the Drafting Committee of the Mystagogical Catechesis

The meeting of the Drafting Committee of the Mystagogical
Catechesis was held at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad from Friday 29th at 6 P.M. to Saturday 30th May at 12.30 P.M. The meeting discussed in detail the points of orientation and the procedure to draft the text book of mystagogical catechesis. Bp Mar George Alencherry, Chairman of the Commission for Catechesis; Abp Mar Joseph Powathil, Abp Mar Andrews Thazhath, Bp Mar Jacob Manathodath, Bp Mar Sebastian Adayantharath, Bp Mar Joseph Pandarasseril and 13 Priests participated in the Committee. While preparing this Catechesis the committee proposed to keep the following Guidelines to draft the Mystagogical Catechesis of the Syro-Malabar Church.

1. First of all we may take into account the important thrusts of the mystagogical catechesis according to Sacramentum Caritatis (No.64)
   a) Mystagogical Catechesis interprets the rites in the light of the events of our salvation, in accordance with the Church’s living tradition.
   b) Mystagogical catechesis must also be concerned with presenting the meaning of the signs contained in the rites.
   c) Mystagogical catechesis must be concerned with bringing out the significance of the rites for the Christian life in all its dimensions.

2. The text should have an ecclesial orientation

3. Theological dimensions of the liturgical rites are to be explained.

4. The mystagogical explanation should be oriented to meaningful Christian life.

5. While explaining a liturgical rite its short history should be given so that the meaning of the mystery is better understood.

6. Important variant practices with regard to a liturgical rite may
be integrated into the general text; however some of the norms or particular applications may be given in the notes.

7. The Mystagogical catechesis should have a common vision of the Church with regard to the explanation of the mysteries.

8. The Mystagogical Catechesis should have a futuristic vision, leading the Church forward.

9. The symbols are to be explained with much care in order to cope with the present challenges affecting the symbols.

10. The Mystagogical Catechesis should lead the Church to unity with a unified vision of the interpretation of the important liturgical rites.

11. This work should have clarity with regard to interpretation and should remain as a reference book with regard to liturgical matters in the Church. At the same time the book should keep the methodology of Catechetics.

12. Various committees are appointed by the both commissions to draft the particular chapters

3. The Synodal Committee Meeting to prepare the text of the Dedication of Churches, Rededication of Churches, Blessing of the Deppa, the blessing of the Sacred Vessel according to the suggestions of the Synod.

The meeting of the Synodal Committee to scrutinize the language perfection and textual authority of the Liturgical texts (Bishop George Punnakottil; Bishop Thomas Elavanal; Bishop Sebastian Adayantharath; Archbishop Jacob Thoomkuzhy; Bishop Mathew Anikuzhikattil; Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam; Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt and Bishop Jose Porunnedom) was held from 28 April 10 AM to 29 April 8 PM and prepared the finalized draft of Dedication of Churches, Rededication of Churches, Blessing of the Deppa and the blessing of the Sacred Vessel.
4. Recitation of the Liturgical texts for Christmas, Penitential Service to begin the Great Fast (Vibhooti), Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Passion Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

As a preparation to the publication of the Liturgical texts for Christmas, Penitential Service to begin the Great Fast (Vibhooti), Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Passion Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday the commission organized a session of recitation of the above mentioned liturgical texts. Besides 29 deacons of St. Joseph’s Seminary, Mangalapuzha, the Bishops of the Commission, Fr Antony Nariculam, Fr Pauly Manniattu, Fr Cherian Kunnianthodath and Msgr Bosco Puthur participated in this programme. This recitation scrutinized the language perfection of the texts.

5. Publication of the Liturgical texts for Christmas, Penitential Service to begin the Great Fast (Vibhooti), Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Passion Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday

The Liturgical texts for Christmas, Penitential Service to begin the Great Fast (Vibhooti), Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Passion Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, are promulgated on 6th August 2009 by Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop and published by the Commission after having obtained the approval of the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church in its sessions held from 10th to 22nd July 2000, 30th October to 11th November 2000, 9th to 21st January 2006, 21st August to 2nd September 2006 and 18th to 29th August 2008 and the recognitio of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 2nd April 2009. These texts will be effective from 14th September 2009.

6. Request for recognitio of the Holy See to promulgate them for liturgical celebrations in the Syro-Malabar Church.

The Commission for Liturgy submitted with the modifications of the Synod to the Major Archbishop the following Liturgical Texts
which are approved unanimously by the Fathers of the Synod of the Syro – Malabar Church to request the recognitio of the Holy See to promulgate them for liturgical celebrations in the Syro-Malabar Church:

a. Profession of the Religious

b. Dedication of the members of the Secular Institute and Apostolic Life.

7. English Translation of the Pontifical

The translation of the following liturgical texts of the Installation of the Major Archbishop, Episcopal Ordination, Installation of the Bishops, Priestly Ordination, Ordination to Karoya, Ordination to Hevpadyakna, Ordination to Msamsana, Blessing of the Oil are prepared. The meeting of the commission met twice with language experts Prof Mary Antio and Prof Sr Mary Pastor, to scrutinize the textual authority and language perfection of the translations prepared by Fr Philip Vadakeckalam

8. Proposals for Improvements regarding the propria

As per the mandate given by the Synod, the commission called forth proposals for improvements regarding the propria from the eparchies in the light of which the final text of the propria could be prepared by the Synodal Committee for Propria. The Archdioceses of Tellicherry, Ernakulam, Changanacherry, Dioceses of Palai, Idukki, Kanjirapilly, Thamaraserry, Kalyan, Satna had given proposals for improvements.

9. The Synodal Committee meeting to scrutinize the language perfection and textual authority of the Propria to be integrated in the Taksa of the Holy Qurbana

The meeting of the Synodal Committee to scrutinize the language perfection and textual authority of the Liturgical texts was held from 06 July, Monday 10 AM to 07 July 4 PM and prepared the finalized draft of the propria to be integrated in the Taksa of the Holy Qurbana, and the English translation of the Pontifical.
10. Integrated Celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* with the Liturgy of the Hours

The Commission for Liturgy prepared the guidelines for an integrated celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* with the liturgy of the hours as a model for all the seminaries of our Church.

11. The Report of the Syro–Malabar Central Liturgical Committee Meeting

The meeting of the Syro-Malabar Central Liturgical Committee began on Tuesday 10th March 2009 at 5 PM. The Chairman of the Commission for Liturgy Bp Mar George Punnakottil presided over the meeting. Mar Sebastian Adayantharath moderated the discussions. Besides the Chairman of the Commission 21 members of the Central Committee participated in the meeting.

1. The Chairman welcomed Fr Antony Kamukumpally the new diocesan representatives of Changanacherry. He appreciated and thanked Fr Thomas Kottaram the outgoing representative for his valuable contribution as the member of the Committee for long years.

2. The Central Liturgical Committee discussed the draft text of the general structure of Sapra and passed it with certain modifications.

3. The committee discussed the suggestions given by the *Conference of the Representatives of Priests*, in order to present the findings to the following Synod through the Commission for Liturgy as per the mandate given by the Synod. Fr Pauly Manniattu and Fr Pauly Kannookadan presented papers on Concelebration of the Holy Qurbana and the Lectionary of the Syro–Malabar Church respectively. The findings are the following:

*Vestments of the Concelebrants*

a. காண்புழுக்களை குறிப்பிட்டு மேற்கொள்ளவும் வேலைகளை விளக்கும்
full set തൊഴുതാനവധികും വിദേഹദേവനന്തത്തിലെ താനത്താനന്തിനാണ്.

b. മുഖമുഖനാലാം ഒരു കഴിവിന്റെ തലവ്രാന്തം താനത്താനന്ത അതിനായി അതിന്റെയുള്ളതാണ്.

c. തൊഴുതിനെ നിബിഡമാരായി പാർട്ടിയിൻറെ താനത്താനന്ത അവധികും അതിനെ.

d. മുന്നുമുഖ മുഖനാലാം പാർട്ടിയുടെ 3,5,7 എന്ന ക്ലാസുകളാണ് full set തൊഴുതിനെ കൂടാതെയുള്ളതായി താനത്താനന്തിന്റെയുള്ളതാണ് പിന്നിൽവഴി രുചിയേക്ക്.

Intention of the Concelebrants

e. മുഖമുഖനാലാം പാർട്ടിയുടെ അവധികും തമ്മിൽക്കാല താനത്താനന്ത സ്തിപ്പെട്ടം എന്ന കാര്യാലയം സ്തിപ്പൽ

f. നാരായണ റെംപോറ്റ് ഇന്റെ സിറ്റി മാസം പിന്നിൽ താനത്താനന്തിന്റെ സ്തിപ്പൽ-ന്യായ അനന്തരാജൻ

Prayers of the Concelebrants

g. മുഖമുഖനാലാം സ്തിപ്പൽ

h. മുഖമുഖനാലാം share എന്നത്

i. മുഖമുഖനാലാം സ്തിപ്പൽ 

j. മുഖമുഖനാലാം 

k. മുഖമുഖനാലാം 

l. മുഖമുഖനാലാം 

Concelebration with the priests of other rites

Concelebration during the Marriage blessing or the Betrothal

Celebration of the Holy Qurbana during the Priestly Ordination

New set of lectionary for our Church & Revision of the present set of the readings
o. **Liturgical Music**

p. **Other Suggestions**

q. **Liturgical Text for the Blessing of Marriages with Non-Christians**

r. **Commission’s Assistance for the Solemn Liturgical Celebrations at Doha, Manila**

14. **A Word of Thanks**

The meeting was concluded at 12.30 PM on Thursday 12th of March. The secretary proposed the vote of thanks.
Vithayathil, to all the members of the Synod of Bishops, to all members of the Syro-Malabar Central Liturgical Committee and to all the members of the Curia and the whole staff at Mount St. Thomas for their love and concern towards the activities of the Commission for Liturgy. Our thanks go to the office staff and accountant of the commission Sr. Nirmala SH. With deep gratitude to all, who helped us in our different activities, the commission for Liturgy presents this report.

Fr Pauly Kannookadan  
Secretary

Bishop George Punnakotil  
(Chairman)

Bishop Thomas Elavanal

Bishop Sebastian Adayantharath
REPORT OF THE MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL COMMISSION FOR CATECHESIS 2008-2009

Since August 2008 the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Committee held six expert committee meetings, two special committee meetings, and one Catechism Directors meeting. As a result of our work we could publish the catechism text books for Std. XII in Malayalam, Std. X in English. By this year we could complete the publication of catechism text books in Malayalam. By next year we are planning to complete the publication of English catechism books up to Std. XII. The details regarding the activities of the commission are given below.

Expert Committee & Special Committee meetings

In order to prepare and finalize the draft of the textbook for Std. XII the expert committee held six meetings at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad. The draft of the textbook for std. XII, was presented before the special committee of Bishops on 23rd & 24th March 2009 and the committee asked the expert committee to revise and reedit the whole text and present it for approval. Thus the expert committee revised and re-edited the whole textbook and sent to the diocesan directors to get their opinions and suggestions for the improvement. After incorporating the main suggestions from the diocesan centers the text was presented to the Special Committee of Bishops held on 6th & 7th May 2009 and the committee approved the text for publication with certain corrections and alterations.

Publication of Textbook: Std. XII

Having incorporated the suggestions and corrections given by the Special Committee of Bishops and having received the permission from the Major Archbishop Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, the Commission for Catechesis published the textbook for Std. XII
on 25th May 2009. On this occasion we extend our sincere thanks to the members of the expert committee, especially to Rev. Fr. Jolly Vadakan who prepared the draft text for std. XII. We remember with thanks all the members of the expert committee and all others who contributed to the publication of this textbook.

**English Edition of Catechism Text Books**

Together with the publication of the Malayalam textbook for Std. XII, we are happy to inform you that we could also publish the English Edition of the Catechism Text Book for Std. X. On this occasion we extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the publication of the book. In a special way we extend our sincere thanks to Sr. Sergius CMC, who prepared the draft text of this book and to Prof. K. P. Cherian who made the language correction.

**Kannada Translation**

Another important event in the activities of the SMCC is the publication of the Kannada translation of these textbooks. Last year we have published textbooks for Std. VII & VIII. This year we could also publish the textbook for Std. IX & X. On this occasion we extend our sincere thanks to Bp. Lawrence Mukkuzhy, the Bishop of Belthangady and to Fr. Sunny Alappatt the director of the Catechetical Centre, Belthangady for the leadership they took for the publication of these texts.

**The Hindi translation**

The Catechetical Committee for the North Indian Missions published the Hindi translation of textbooks for Std. VII & VIII in June 2008. This year they have published the textbooks for std. IX. On this occasion we express our sincere thanks to Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, the Convener of this committee, and all the experts who contributed to the publication of these textbooks.

**Special Publications & Editions of Catechism Books**

As per the request of Fr. Jose Thachukunnel Ofm, the chaplain
of the Syro-Malabarians in Qatar, the Catechetical Commission gave a special permission to print English Catechism text books for the catechism students in Qatar and Middle East. For this we have already sent the copies of the textbooks. In the same way Fr. Thomas Kalarathil SDB from West Bengal asked for the permission to publish our Catechism text books, with some adaptations, for the dioceses in West Bengal. Considering the request the Commission gave permission to publish the text with the imprimatur of the Local Bishops’ Conference.

Our Future Plans

The expert committee meeting held on 19th & 20th May 2009 at Mount St. Thomas discussed about the future plans. In this meeting we have decided to make a final edition of the Malayalam catechism text books from Std. I to XII, with language corrections and incorporating the essential corrections needed. With this purpose a two day joined meeting of the expert committee with the Diocesan Catechism Directors was held, at Mount St. Thomas on 29th & 30th September 2009.

On this occasion, on behalf of the commission we express our hearty thanks to all who cooperated with us in the completion of these works. In a special way we express our sincere thanks to His Beatitude Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil for his wholehearted support and encouragement. We also express our sincere gratitude to all the Bishops of the Synod, especially the Bishops of the Special Catechism Committee, for their words of encouragement and support.

Fr. Jose Puthiyedath
Secretary, SMCC
Sincere thanks to Bishop Gregory Karotemprel and the team

At the very outset of this report, may we sincerely thank His Excellency Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, who had been the chairman of the commission for 15 years from the very constitution of the commission in 1993. We acknowledge his wisdom, his daring steps and passion for the care of the Syro Malabar migrants around the globe. Under his chairmanship, the commission took a number of daring steps to organize the Syro Malabar migrants outside the jurisdiction and to ensure adequate pastoral care to them. To mention just a few of them, the correspondence with the Apostolic See, various Episcopal conferences, individual bishops in different countries, number of visits and personal contacts with bishops, priests and lay faithful, representation in various international conferences, the promulgation of the Mission Policy and subsequent studies and seminars, publication of two directories, the Global meet and the Gulf meet are some aspects of the achievements thanks to his commitment to the cause. As a result of these efforts, we have several Syro Malabar communities receiving pastoral care as per our tradition, although in an inadequate measure. The commission looks forward to the continued support and guidance of Bishop Karotemprel in carrying out this mission on behalf of our Church. May we also accord our gratitude towards all the other Episcopal members and the secretaries who collaborated with him, especially Bishop Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI and Bishop Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakkel VC and the former secretaries, Rev. Frs. Jose Pooney CMI, Elvis Mangalappilly MST and Joby Kottumkal MST, for their laudable service to the commission.
Commission Meetings

In the past one year the commission came together four times. The first one was a joint meeting of the former and new chairmen and members of the commission and it was held on 27th noon August 2008. His Excellency Bishop Karotemprel, the former chairman briefed the specific modes of functioning of the commission. We sincerely thank Bishop Karotemprel and all the Episcopal members of the previous team for coming together to facilitate the process of the transfer of apostolate to the new team. The other three meetings were for planning and consultation held in different places at different times of the year. Besides, the Commission Chairman and Secretary held several informal meetings in Mount St Thomas with various delegates and groups.

Viswasa Darsanam 2008

Meeting of the Youth, the Children and their Parents from Saudi Arabia. It was arranged separately for two groups from the Gulf; one on the 1st of August 2008 and the other on the 30th of the same month. The second meeting was exclusively for the emigrants of Saudi Arabia. It was held on 30th August 2008 at Mt St Thomas, Kakkanad. There were 22 participants from different parts of Saudi Arabia.

The Major Archbishop His Beatitude Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil inaugurated the seminar at 10:30 am. Bishop Mar Gregory Karotemprel CMI, the former chairman of the commission welcomed all the dignitaries and the participants to the seminar. Bishop Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram and Bishop Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakkel, the former Episcopal members and Bishop Mar George Alencherry, were present during the inaugural session and spoke to the participants. Mr James Ovelil, one of the participants, proposed vote of thanks at the close of the inaugural session.

Rev. Fr Jolly Vadakkan, Rev. Fr Pauly Kannookadan and Rev. Fr Shaji Sasseril MST guided different sessions of the day.
The participants requested the Major Archiepiscopal Commission to send priests to Saudi Arabia, at least for Christmas and Easter seasons. A memorandum was also submitted by James Ovelil from Riyadh. The discussions and sharing went on till 4.45 pm. Mr Siby Joseph proposed vote of thanks representing the participants. Fr Justin Vettukallel thanked Bishop Mar Gregory Karotemprel for his committed service to the commission as its chairman, for the last 15 years. He also introduced the new Chairman Bishop and the two Episcopal members to the participants.

The visit to the UK

His Excellency Bishop Mar Simon Stock Palathara visited the Untied Kingdom in the month of November. He was able to interact with many of our appointed priests in the country and also listened to the concerns of the people there.

Visits to Kuwait

His Excellency Bishop Sebastian Vadakel visited Kuwait from January 2-6th, 2009, in connection with the annual Christmas and New Year celebrations of SMCA Kuwait. He was accorded a warm welcome by His Excellency, Bishop Camillo Ballin of Kuwait as well as the Syro Malabar Community. Bishop Vadakel held special meetings with Bishop Camillo Ballin and the Apostolic Nuncio in Kuwait and pressed for the appointment of a Syro-Malabar priest as co-ordinator for the pastoral care of the migrants there.

His Excellency Bishop Anthony Chirayath also visited Kuwait at the invitation of Bishop Ballin. The occasion was the St Thomas day celebrations. He celebrated Holy Masses in all the four churches in Kuwait and met with SM migrants. The progress of the pastoral care of SM migrants, though slow, is satisfactory

Guidelines for Pastoral Care of the Syro Malabar Migrants

On January 23, 2009, His Beatitude Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayahtil, approved a 20 point guidelines to help the systematization
of the pastoral care of Syro Malabar faithful outside the proper territory. The immediate reason for the guidelines was the request of the Vicar Apostolic of Kuwait for such a written guideline. However, the guidelines was formulated with the general needs of the Syro Malabar migrants in mind and the commission finds it really helpful in dealing with the local ordinaries as well as the pastors appointed for the pastoral care.

Visit to Saudi Arabia

In response to the request of the Syro Malabar Community in Saudi Arabia, Fr Justin Vettukallel, the secretary of the Commission visited Saudi Arabia from April 2 to 30, 2009. He was there to help them with Holy week liturgy and to co-ordinate the Syro Malabar community. He visited all the three big cities and talked to the prayer group leaders. Now they are organized in three regions: Central region with Riyadh as the centre, Eastern region with Dammam as the centre and Western region with Jeddah as the centre. People are ready to support the priests and they expect the Church to send some one at least for short periods. Except in the Eastern region, the Syro Malabar Co-ordination is done very well. Despite the odds, they have regular gatherings, prayer meetings and catechism classes for the children following the syllabus approved by the synod.

Consecration of the first Syro Malabar Church in Doha- Qatar

On May 22, 2009, His Beatitude Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayahtil, the Major Archbishop dedicated the first Syro Malabar church in the Middle East. His Grace Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath was also present for the ceremony. With pride, we appreciate the great initiatives of our community in Doha, for their daring steps and commitment to fulfill this dream. Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, the former chairman and Fr Justin Vettukallel participated in the ceremonies representing the Commission.

In the afternoon of the same day, there was a special meeting of the lay representatives from the Gulf region, organized by the
Commission for laity. The delegates from the region shared their concerns regarding the pastoral care in their respective countries and the secretary could interact with all the delegates present for the meeting.

**Visit to the European Countries**

The Chairman, Bishop Vadakel, visited from May 8 to June 10, 2009 most of the Syro Malabar communities in Europe which get organized pastoral care. He began the visit from the United Kingdom. Along with Reverend Fr Parayady, the co-ordinator, he visited the community centers in various parts of the UK and offered Holy Qurbana in many places. He also visited the Southern Ireland, Dublin and also met the priest in charge of Cork. He then proceeded to Austria and celebrated Holy Qurbana with the faithful in Vienna. He also went to Switzerland and Italy and met the coordinators and chaplains assigned for the pastoral care and interacted with the community leaders. With the visits to Frankfurt and Köln in Germany, he completed the series of visits in Europe. He was able to talk to most of the Local Ordinaries of the concerned dioceses and meet all the priests appointed for pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar migrants.

Although there are conflicts in certain communities, in general, our faithful are happy with the services from the priests sent from the Mother Church. The Bishops of the United Kingdom have great appreciation for our faithful in their dioceses and spoke highly about the service of the Syro Malabar priests caring for the migrant community. The bishops are very happy about the presence of the Syro Malabar Community in their dioceses, since they are very active in the parish community being inspiration to the other Catholics there.

However, there are also certain issues that require our attention and intervention, such as unauthorized lay associations, the rush of retreat preachers from Kerala without any consultation with official chaplains, the mode of faith formation program, ongoing formation of the youth and the adults etc.
Faith formation/Catechism in the migrant communities

In collaboration and consultation with the Commission for Catechism, the Commission for Pastoral Care of the Migrants is trying to organize the faith formation program run by our migrant communities, giving them guidance, training for the lay staff and merit certificates for the students. A guideline for the same is being prepared for this purpose. We are also planning to launch on-line faith formation program with the collaboration of the experts already in the field.

Website for the commission

To reach the Syro Malabar faithful across the globe and to make available the necessary information for every one, a website: www.cepcm.org is recently launched. We are hoping to employ this medium for faith formation programmes in the future.

Yesu Mahotsav 2009 (Indian Mission Congress 2009)

As a follow up of the Asian Mission Congress held in Thailand in 2006 the CBCI is going ahead with the preparation of the Indian Mission Congress to be held at Goregaon in Mumbai in the month of October 14-18 in 2009. It is named as Yesu Mahotsav 2009. The Central Organising Committee of IMC has the Chairman and Secretary of the Syro-Malabar Commission for Evangelisation and Pastoral Care of Migrants as its members. On behalf of the Syro-Malabar Church the Commission has formed subcommittees to present the cultural program and exhibition and to lead the prayer sessions assigned to us.

13. Priests for Migrants’ Care

On request of the Major Archbishop and with the support of the Archbishops/bishops in the mother church, the Commission was able to select and send a few Syro-Malabar priests for pastoral care in India and abroad. A few priests to the UK are awaiting the visas.
Other Activities

The Commission has been successful in maintaining an effective correspondence with the appointed pastors/chaplains and migrants of the Syro-Malabar Church, principally through e-mail and telephone calls. Christmas and Easter greetings and messages are sent to all the faithful through email. Correspondence is regular with almost all the centres/places/countries of the Syro-Malabar migrants. Although the Commission is consulted and communicated, it has refused from seriously involving in the pastoral care in India since it is to be understood the function of the Apostolic Visitor.

Evangelization Efforts of the Syro-Malabar Church

In the year that passed the Commission has not been able to do much in co-ordinating and encouraging the *ad gentes* missionary initiative of the Syro-Malabar Church. But it intends to give proper attention to their responsibility entrusted to it in the coming year. The commission has already got the list of the Diocesan directors of mission in all the Syro-Malabar dioceses and the first meeting of these directors is planning to be held at Mount St. Thomas, 1st September 2009. This is to plan out the future programme in this line. The commission intends to call a similar meeting of all those in-charge of Evangelization in the Institutes of Consecrated life and Societies of Apostolic Life in the Church soon. The mission policy of the church needs to be implemented and these meetings should help a long way in that line.

The action plans of the Commission for the near future.

- Co-ordinate and revitalize the mission *ad gentes* initiatives of the Church, with better participation from the Mother Church and the religious congregations.
- Organize training programmes for the priests doing pastoral care for the migrants.
• Focus on the faith formation of the children and the youth in the migrant communities.

• Make the Migrant community conscious of their ad gentes mission respectively

• Organize the communities in the East Asian countries in Singapore and Malaysia and African countries in South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania.

• Prepare a course the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and work for the formulation of the Policy on Pastoral Care of Migrants.

Conclusion

During the year 2008-2009, the commission was trying to study the pastoral care centres and understand the role of the commission, in the pastoral care of migrants and the evangelisation of the Syro Malabar Church. We are planning to explore new ways for mission animation in the Mother Church and co-ordination among mission dioceses. As far possible, we plan to systematically organize the pastoral care we are giving abroad. We also make use of this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, all the members of the Synod of Bishops, members and the staff of Mount St Thomas, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia for the support and encouragement that they have been extending to the Commission.

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, Chairman
Fr Justin Vettukallel mst, Secretary

Mar Simons Stock Palathara CMI
Mar Antony Chirayath
(Episcopal Members)

I. Report of the Conference of the Rectors of the Major and Minor Seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church

The Commission for Clergy and Institutes of the Consecrated Life had organized a conference of the Rectors of the Major and Minor Seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church as per the direction of the Synod. This conference was held at Mount St. Thomas from Thursday, March 5, 2009 at 10 AM to Friday, March 6, at 1 PM. 60 Rectors participated in the Conference.

The Agenda of the Conference was as follows:

1. To update the priestly formation according to the findings of the survey conducted by the Commission.
2. To evaluate the implementation of the Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church in our Seminaries.
3. To discuss on the draft of the common syllabus for the Minor Seminary Formation.

Bishop Mar Thomas Chakiath the Chairman of the commission welcomed the participants. His Beatitude Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop inaugurated the conference. In his inaugural speech exhorted to kindle in the students the fire of love for Jesus nourished by prayer. The candidates for priesthood should be formed with human qualities as normal persons. Bishop Mar James Pazhayattil who presided over the meeting reminded the rectors in his presidential address to motivate the students for priesthood with sanctity, dedication, deep faith and sincerity. Fr Pauly Kannookadan, the secretary of the commission
explained the dynamics of the conference. Bp Joseph Arumachadath moderated the first session on updating the priestly formation according to the findings of the survey conducted by the Commission. Rev. Dr Paul Parathazham delivered the orientation talk on the basis of the survey on Life and Ministry of the Priests conducted by the commission. In his talk he presented the reports of the survey and explained that the findings show that competence of life is very much appreciated than the abilities of a priest. Rev. Dr Thomas Srampical explained the important orientations of the Charter for Priestly Formation. Msgr Bosco Puthur presented the common syllabus for the minor Seminary Formation. Rev. Dr George Madathikandathil and Rev. Dr Mathew Varimattom CST moderated the third and fourth sessions. Bishop Thomas Chakkiath moderated the general discussion. The common syllabus for the Minor Seminary Formation was approved with a few modifications. Enclosed, please find the modified common syllabus. With the vote of thanks by Rev. Fr Geo Pulickal the meeting came to an end at 1PM.

The following are the main suggestions emerged from the general and group discussions:

1. The meeting recommended giving clear guidelines regarding the selection of the candidates to the priestly vocation and norms for assessment of the promotion of the students to the Major Seminaries. A committee was formed for this purpose comprising Fr Kuriakose Puthenmanayil, Fr Stanley Pulparayil, Fr Joseph Chalasserry, Fr Jose Ezhanikkatt CST, Fr Thomas Srampical and the Secretary of the Commission.

2. In the selection of the candidates the following elements were suggested by the rectors:

   - The family background should be studied in consultation with the parish priest, the school teacher of the tenth standard, animators of the parish associations.
Some sort of psychological screening should be taken in the selection of the candidates.

Students from very poor financial background, broken families, from families which have a background of mental illness, Suicide tendency, alcoholic addiction etc should be avoided.

Before admitting the candidates, the vocation promoters should visit the houses of the students and make an evaluation of the family background.

3. The following points were suggested regarding the assessment of students for promotion to the Major Seminaries

- Before promoting the students arrange a psychological evaluation or counseling to evaluate their real motivation with the consent of the students.

- Organize at least one month prayer and reflection at the end of their minor seminary course so that they could personally assess their own call to Priesthood.

- Make necessary consultation with the student and with his parents before promoting them to the Major Seminary.

- Consider also the opinion of the seminary mates to assess the student.

- Never promote a student when the authorities are not convinced of his real motivation.

- Keep the file of the students updated and hand it over to the rectors of higher seminary education.

- Prepare the student and parents before asking one to discontinue his seminary formation so that they will not be wounded.
4. It was suggested to conduct awareness programme on the Charter for Priestly formation in the four major seminaries in Kerala (Vadavathoor, Mangalapuzha, Mary Matha and Kunnoth), one at Bangalore and another one in North India under the initiative of the commission for the staff members of the Minor and Major Seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church.

5. The following elements are suggested in the Major Seminary formation:
   - Participatory role of the parents in the formation should be fostered
   - Area of human formation should be developed
   - Ongoing formation in value education, prayer life should be given.
   - Reach out programmes regarding mission theology and Pastoral theology should be encouraged.
   - Train the students to face the present day challenges.
   - Priority should be given to competence of life than the abilities.

6. Formators’ training programme was suggested to be conducted in the Major Archiepiscopal level for the staff members of the seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church.

7. It was also recommended to revise the present system of regency program and think about the new trends practiced by some of the dioceses.

8. The Archdiocese of Changanacherry, Trichur, Kottayam, Tellicherry and the diocese of Palai have already started the Fourth year minor seminary course. The major seminary Rectors pointed out the benefits of this course. Hence the Conference suggested starting the fourth year course in other dioceses too.
II. Syllabus for the Minor Seminaries with Amendments suggested by the Seminary Rectors on 5-6 March 2009

The meeting of the committee to draft a common syllabus for the Minor Seminaries (proposed by the conference of the Rectors held on 10-11 October 2007) was held at Mount St. Thomas on 23 July 2008. The Commission then presented a draft of the syllabus in the Synod 2008. As per proposal of the Synod, the draft was sent to the Rectors of the Minor Seminaries for their comments, corrections and suggestions. In the meeting of the Rectors of the Major and Minor Seminaries, held on 5-6 March 2009, the draft, as such, was accepted, with a few amendments, which are herein incorporated.

SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

Utmost care is to be given to the selection of candidates to the Minor Seminary. The Minor Seminary Rector, along with members of the formation team, shall visit the house of the candidate and shall gather necessary information from the Parish Priest and other people concerned. "Screening by qualified persons or similar programmes done before selection or in the early stage of formation will be useful for the better understanding of the candidates and their self understanding, especially motivational factors" (The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church, No.52).

MINOR SEMINARY

"The objective of the minor seminary formation is to help the candidates to discern their vocation and lay foundation for a priestly personality involving all the areas of formation, particularly human maturity, skills and disposition in order to pursue major seminary formation effectively". (The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church, No.69).

Minor Seminary formation shall be personal and interactive, like Malpanate, Gurukulam, etc. Learning by doing shall be the principal methodology. Regular visit by the Bishop and other diocesan
authorities to the Minor Seminary will foster in the seminarians love for the Diocese and ecclesial sense. Role of the parents and parish priest is important for the effective formation of the seminarians. Holidays too belong to the period of formation. Proper guidance, accompaniment and evaluation are needed for the fruitful use of the home holidays of the seminarians.

I YEAR

1. Spiritual life and priestly orientation.

   Introduction to community and personal prayer life, meditation and spiritual reading, spiritual direction, examination of conscience, Sacrament of Reconciliation, etc. There shall be regular Spiritual Conferences, monthly recollections, and other Spiritual exercises. Students shall be gradually introduced to the ascetical traditions of the Church, like, fasting, abstinence, etc.

Bibliography


2. Documents and Vat. II on Priesthood and Priestly Formation

3. Pastores Dabo Vobis

4. John Paul II, Gift and Mystery

5. Spirituality and Religion


2. Classes on Bible, Knowing the Bible and praying the Bible
Classes on Bible at this level shall be oriented to create in the candidate personal interest for reading the Bible meditatively (*Lectio Divina*) and using the Bible for personnel prayer.

**Bibliography**

Fr. Joseph Kottackal, *Introduction to Bible*

Practical Class on how to use Bible for prayer and meditation

3. Human formation, Initiation programme, Group dynamics, Good manners, Value Education, Cleanliness, Psychology and Counseling, Sex Education, Psychological screening

**Bibliography**

Fr. Joseph Thondiparambil, *Growing Up Gracefully (Hints on Politeness and Good Manners)*

Mathew Chandrankunnel, *Enghine Manyarakam*

4. Developing Talents, Computer Training, Public Speaking, Music, Reading and Writing, Acting, Painting, Yoga, etc.

**Bibliography**

Tom Jose, *Nedhruthuvavum Prasangakalayum*

5. Languages

**English Grammar**

Spoken and Communicative English

**Bibliography**

Wrenn & Martin, *English Grammar*

Fr. Francis Karakkatt, *Spoken English*

**Malayalam**

**Bibliography**

Mathew Ulakamthara, *Vyakaranadeepam*

Panmana Ramachandran, *Thettillatha Malayalam*
Syriac

Bibliography

Fr. Gabriel, *Syriac Grammar*

Latin

Bibliography

Fr. Jean SJ, *Latin Grammar*

Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu as optional languages

6. Church History

History of the Diocese and Introduction to the history of the Syro Malabar Church

Bibliography

Church History Text Book- Xavier Koodapuzha, etc.

Benedict Vadekkakara OFM Cap., *Origin of Christianity in India.*

7. Introduction to Liturgy

Aim of this class is to introduce the candidates to the spirit of active participation in the Holy Eucharist and Liturgy of Hours.

Bibliography


8. Games and Manual work

There shall be in the time table adequate provision for games and other physical exercises. Seminarians shall imbibe the spirit of manual work, by practicing daily garden work and other agricultural works.
II AND III YEAR

I and II year of Higher Secondary School (Some Dioceses send their seminarians home for Higher Secondary Education, after the I year in the Minor Seminary, with periodical gathering and guidance)

Catechism (Texts of XI & XII classes)

At least 1.30 hours of weekly spiritual enrichment programme on the integration of secular studies into their spiritual life and formation.

Other ordinary spiritual exercises of the Seminary

IV YEAR

The main thrust of the IV year is to deepen one’s faith experience and to discern vocation to Priesthood in a prayerful atmosphere. Prayer, work and study, in that order, are the means to acquire those goals in this stage of formation.

1. Psychology and Counseling

Psychology and counseling programme at least for two weeks, preferably at a different place, at the very beginning of the IV year course, will greatly benefit the students in order to make mature self-assessment and purification of motivation.

2. Spiritual Life

45 minutes of Additional meditation with periodical assistance on different methods of meditation and contemplation.

Once a week fasting.

30 minutes Bible reading - in the IV year the candidate shall read the whole Bible at least once.

Weekly personal conference with the spiritual Father in order to facilitate openness and transparency.
At least half an hour of personal prayer at a convenient time of one's own choice.

3. Work

It includes household works, cleaning, washing, helping in the kitchen, etc.

One hour outdoor work. Garden work or other agricultural works.

One hour games.

4. Study

Advance course of Malayalam, Syriac, Latin, Hindi and other optional languages

Spoken English

Preparation for entrance examination

5. Exposure Programmes

a. Spiritual Experience Oriented Programmes
   i. Ashram Experience
   ii. Retreat House Experience
   iii. Mission Experience

b. Social Service Programmes
   i. Aakasa Paravakal or similar institutions
   ii. Houses of Mentally and Physically challenged
   iii. Different Colonies
   iv. Hospita
   v. Slums, etc.

c. Knowing the Diocese
   i. Exposure to a parish community
ii. Exposure to the community of religious seminarians

d. Channelizing and Developing Talents

Computer Lab, Language Lab.

Yoga Class, Music, etc.

Outings, film forum, visiting places of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, etc.

**Tentative Timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.30 am</td>
<td>Rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>Morning prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>Holy <em>Qurbana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 to 10.30</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 to 10.45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45 to 12.15 pm</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>Visit blessed sacrament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30 to 2.30</td>
<td>Computer lab, music &amp; developing talents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>Rosary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 to 6.00</td>
<td>Work, play &amp; bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00 to 8.00</td>
<td>Ramsa &amp; study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Leliya; Bible Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Night rest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Report of the New Priests’ Meet

The New Priests’ Meet was conducted on Thursday, 29th January, 2009 at Mount St. Thomas. 103 newly ordained priests participated in the meeting from 14 dioceses and 10 religious congregations.

The Meet was begun with a prayer led by Sr Nirmala SH, Sr Joice SH, Sr Amala SH. Bishop Mar Thomas Chakkiath, the Chairman of the Commission welcomed the new priests. His Beatitude Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop inaugurated the meet. Fr Pauly Kannookadan the secretary of the commission thanked the Major Archbishop and the New Priests. At 11.30 the new priests under the leadership of the Chairman of the Commission celebrated the Holy Qurbana. Bishop Mar Joseph Arumachadath gave the homily. After the group photo there was the dinner.

In the concluding meeting the Major Archbishop gave them gifts and wished them successful pastoral ministry. Fr Venus Karamullil MST as representative of the new priests expressed vote of thanks. They were very much impressed by the gathering under the presidency of the Major Archbishop and Episcopal members of the Commission. The New priests expressed their feeling in the evaluation of the meeting that this helped them to be more aware of their belongingness to the one and same Church in spite of their particular dioceses or religious congregations, differences in their formation in various seminaries, difference in their pastoral and missionary activities, which they have now undertaken.

IV. Meeting of the Major Superiors of the Institutes of the Consecrated Life for women

A meeting of the Major Superiors of the Institutes of the Consecrated Life of Syro-Malabar Church was held at Mount St. Thomas on Friday 16 January 2009 under the auspices of the Commission for Clergy and Institutes of the Consecrated life. Major
Archbishop Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil inaugurated the meeting by lightening the lamp. 130 Major Superiors participated in the meeting. Bishop Thomas Chakkiath, the chairman presided over the meeting. Bishop Joseph Arumachadath introduced the theme on the challenges of religious life today. Sr Bertha SABS, Sr Ajaya MSJ, Sr Pushpa CHIF presented papers on the various aspects of religious formation. There were group discussions on important challenges of religious life and on religious formation. The nine secretaries presented reports of the findings of the group discussions. In the general discussion the following suggestions were made:


2. To celebrate the final professions solemnly while the vestition and first profession in simple manner.

3. To organize annually a meeting of the women formatters and conduct discussions on the challenges of the formation and find solutions to overcome it.

4. To conduct a pastoral course of two or three months in the Church level during their Juniorate Course in preparation to the final profession.

5. To start new Centres or make use of the present centres for crisis intervention in the spiritual and mental realms.

6. To conduct every year the meeting of Major Superiors of the Institutes of the Consecrated Life for Women.

7. To organize also certain psychological analysis in the selection of the candidates for the Institutes of the Consecrated Life for Women.
8. To have a meeting of new sisters of finally professed of various Institutions of the Consecrated Life.

The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks by Mother General Sr Edward CMC at 4 PM.

V. Directory on the Ministry and Life of the Priests

As suggested in the Synod held in November 1999 and July 2002, the Commission is taking steps to prepare a definitive text of the *Directory on the Ministry and life of Priests*. The first draft of the Directory had been sent for discussion among the Eparchial Clergy in April 2000. In the first meeting of the reconstituted Commission at Mount St. Thomas on Friday, 26th August 2004 it was decided to reformulate the draft of the *Directory* considering the suggestions received from the Eparchies. In preparation to reformulate the Directory the Commission conducted a survey as per the suggestion of the committee. The findings of the survey were presented in the August Synod 2008, the meeting of the Committee to redraft the Directory and the Rectors’ Meet. The Drafting Committee met on 6th March 2009, at 1 PM and entrusted Rev. Dr Thomas Srampical, Msgr Bosco Puthur and Rev. Dr Mathew Vellanickal to prepare the new drafts on the identity, spirituality and ongoing formation of the priests.

VI. Charter for Women Religious Formation

A meeting of the Major Superiors of the Institutes of the Consecrated Life of Syro-Malabar Church was held at Mount St. Thomas on Friday 16 January 2009 under the auspices of the Commission for Clergy and Institutes of the Consecrated life. In the meeting it was decided to prepare a Charter for formation of the Institutes of the Consecrated Life for Women of the Syro-Malabar Church with the collaboration of the various Institutes of the Consecrated Life. A committee consisting of Sr. Bertha S.A.B.S, Sr. Pushpa CHF, Sr.Ajaya MSJ, Sr.Edward CMC, Sr. Mercitta
SABS, Sr. Espirita S.H, Sr. Cilia FCC, Sr.Presanna CMC, Sr.Thiajusa SD was nominated to draft the Charter.

The meeting of the Committee was held on 4th February 2009 under the chairmanship of Bishop Thomas Chakkiath. The committee prepared an outline of the charter. The committee also suggested to nominate two experts each from FCC, CMC, SABS, SH, CHF, SD, MSJ, CSN and one each from MSMI, CSC, CPS, ASMI, SS, SVM, SKD, DST, SJC. The nominated members with the Central Committee met on Friday 17th April 2009. The Committee finalized the outline and entrusted various committees to draft the Charter.

VII. Proposed Plan for the Year 2010

1. Awareness programme on the Charter for Priestly formation in the four major seminaries in Kerala (Vadavathoor, Mangalapuzha, Mary Matha and Kunnoth), one at Bangalore and another in North India under the initiative of the commission for the staff members of the Minor and Major Seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church.

2. Formators' training programme in the Major Archiepiscopal level for the staff members of the seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church.

3. Get together of the New Priests of the Syro Malabar Church both diocesan and religious to be conducted at Mount St.Thomas. The aim of the Gathering was to foster unity in the Church as well as to introduce them to the pastoral and missionary ministry of the Syro Malabar Church.

4. Get together of the Newly Professed Women Religious (Final Profession) of the Syro Malabar Church to be conducted at Mount St.Thomas. The aim of the Gathering was to foster unity in the Church as well as to introduce them to the Instituted Life of the Consecrated Life of the Syro-Malabar Church.
5. Meeting of the Major Superiors of the Men Religious and the Women Religious. The Meeting is intended to find ways and means to face the challenges of the Religious and Priestly life.

6. Another get together of the Sacerdotal Silver Jubilarians of the Syro-Malabar Diocesan Priests. The Gathering aims to revitalize them in their pastoral ministry and to foster unity in the Church.


8. Redrafting of the Directory on the Life and Ministry of the Priests. The Directory is intended to give clear guidelines on the identity, spirituality and ongoing formation of the Syro-Malabar priests.

**Special Activities of the Commission**

1. Consultation meeting of the Vicars General, Chancellors, Secretaries of the Presbyteral Council.

2. Theological Seminar on Priestly life of the Syro-Malabar Church in collaboration with LRC

3. Pastoral Conference of the representatives of the priests of the Syro-Malabar Church on the Ministry and Life of the Priests.


**VIII. A Word of Thanks**

The Commission has been striving in a modest way to create an atmosphere of unity in the Syro-Malabar Church especially among the Priests. Through its programs, the commission has been able prepare a venue for priests and religious to come together and deliberate about the challenges of our ministry in an atmosphere of fraternal cordiality and pastoral serenity. The Chairman and members of the Commission with the secretary take this opportunity to place
on record our gratitude to the Major Archbishop, Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, to all the members of the Synod of Bishops and to all the members of the Curia and the whole staff at Mount St. Thomas for their love and concern towards the activities of the Commission for Liturgy. Our sincere thanks go to the office staff of the commission Sr. Nirmala SH. With deep gratitude to all, especially priests, sisters and staff of Mount St. Thomas who helped us in our different activities, the Commission presents this report.

Fr Pauly Kannookadan Mar Thomas Chakkiath
(Secretary) (Chairman)

Mar Thomas Thuruthimattam
Mar Joseph Arumachadath
REPORT OF THE MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL COMMISSION FOR DOCTRINE
AUGUST 2008 – AUGUST 2009

The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Doctrine, consisting of Bp. Joseph Kallarangatt, Bp. Joseph Kunnath and Bp. Mathew Vaniakizhakkel, had three sittings during this period. In the first meeting held at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on 21st February 2009, it was decided to continue to avail the services of Fr. Siby Pulickal for the Commission and the chairman of the Commission evaluated the progress in the preparation of the leaflets and expressed satisfaction over the work being done under the chairmanship of Bp. Gratian Mundadan. Acknowledging the need of a new catechesis today regarding many topics the commission prepared leaflets on the following topics:

1. Biblical Interpretation: Basic Principles
2. Sacred Scripture and Divine Tradition
3. Sins of the Ancestors and Curse upon the Generations: Scriptural and Theological Interpretation
4. Life After Death: Heaven, Hell and Purgatory
5. Scripture and Liturgy

These articles were prepared by Mgr. Mathew Vellanickal, Dr. Michael Karimattam, Dr. Joseph Pamplany, Dr. Mathew Illathuparambil and Dr. Pauly Maniyattu. The commission extends sincere thanks to these renowned theologians of our Church for their scholarly work. These articles were examined by many other scholars like Dr. Joseph Srgampickal, Dr. Philip Thayyil VC, Dr. Seby Chalackal, Dr. Bosco Puthur, Dr. Antony Narikulam, and Dr. Joseph Maleparambil MCBS. The Commission found that there
was an urgent need of a new catechesis today regarding the above mentioned topics and it must be done continuously on a long-term basis. Many problems have arisen because many preachers interpret the bible with little scientific knowledge and very little theological background. Very often personal likes and interests unduly enter into biblical interpretation. While accepting the positive contribution of the preachers, necessary corrections should be given to them. We request the support and assistance of all the bishops to give wide publicity to the leaflets and to see that they are discussed in detail in family units with seriousness.

The second meeting of the Doctrinal Commission was held in Pala on 13th May 2009. This was to discuss the vision, scope and mode of operation of the Doctrinal Commission. It was decided that the commission should have a role in promoting the spirit and identity of the Syro-Malabar Church. This will help the Doctrinal Commission relate with all other commissions more effectively. Secondly, it was also decided that the commission shall have a role of vigilance with regard to faith and morals. The commission shall keep a close watch over the life of the church in all its aspects: spiritual movements, theological activities, liturgical and popular devotions. Thirdly, it was decided that the Doctrinal Commission should arrange a meeting of all the Doctoral Degree holders of our Church in any ecclesiastical disciplines. This may help the commission to forge a better vision regarding the future functioning of the Commission.

The third meeting of the Doctrinal Commission was held at Mount St. Thomas Kakkanad on August 20, 2009. In this meeting, the report of the Commission for the Synod was finalized. The drafts of the leaflets were discussed in this meeting and decided to present two among the five to the Synod for consideration. The commission also evaluated the preparation for the gathering of the doctoral degree holders of our Church. The leaders of the Spirit in Jesus movement have expressed their readiness to sit with the Doctrinal Commission
for a dialogue. As a preliminary step the Doctrinal Commission would like to depute a team of experts to meet with them.

We thank the Synodal Fathers very sincerely for your support and encouragement.

Mount St. Thomas  
20\textsuperscript{th} August 2009

For the Doctrinal Commission
Fr. Siby Kurian Pulickal  
(Secretary)
REPORT OF THE MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL COMMISSION FOR LAITY
2008 - 2009

As His Beatitude Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil has rightly observed: "the most important fruit expected of the Commission for Laity is the restoration of the real role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church." The key functions of the Commission comprise organizing the Syro-Malabar laity including the youth, children, women and laymen in general, training them in our traditions, settling family and group issues, helping them in their immigration problems, assisting them to have proper jobs etc., leading to a comfortable and spiritually awakened living witnessing the life of Jesus Christ.

As a starting step, the Commission for Laity convened a meeting of top laity leaders of the Syro-Malabar Catholics in Kerala at Mount St. Thomas, Ernakulam, on 2 October, 2008, and sought their suggestions regarding an effective action plan and implementation of laity programmes. The activities received a fresh impetus with the appointment of Adv. V.C. Sebastian as Secretary (Ad hoc) for the Commission with the approval of the Permanent Synod. Regional meetings of the laity were held in Rome and Switzerland in February where Mar Mathew Arackal was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic participation of emigrant Syro-Malabar Catholics. In the same month, a one-day seminar was conducted in collaboration with the Liturgical Research Centre and the Tribunal of the Church to conscientize the faithful about the dangers involved in the recent Law Reform recommendations of the Government of Kerala. Three hundred top-rated laity participants from various dioceses attended the programme. A two-day conference of Secretaries of Pastoral Councils of all Syro-
Malabar dioceses in the Proper Territory was held at Mount St. Thomas on 21 and 22 March to arouse better laity coordination at the diocesan level. A Women’s Conference was held at Mount St. Thomas on 25 and 26 April which had representation from all dioceses.

A Syro-Malabar Laity Conference of the Middle East was held in Doha, Qatar, on 22 May, which was attended by the Secretary of the Commission, with a view to enhancing an effective coordination of the laity leaders from the entire Gulf countries. A Syro-Malabar Youth Conference was held at Mount St. Thomas, on 27 and 28 June. On 18 July, the Secretary addressed a meeting of the Pastoral Council of Kalyan diocese, Mumbai. The proclamation of International Laity Assembly was inaugurated by Mar Jacob Angadiath in Philadelphia, USA on 18 July. The above activities, all meant to strengthen the Church through active laity involvement, will culminate in the International Laity Assembly to be held at Mount St. Thomas (Puthenparambil Thommachan Nagar) from 12 to 15 August. The focus of the Assembly is Syro-Malabar Church-2030 and it will deal with the topics like the Spiritual, Social, Family, Media, Economic and Environmental aspects, Youth, Women, Education, Agriculture and Healthcare in 2030, Challenges Faced by the Pravasis etc.

During our discussions with laity leaders in various countries, they have mentioned some of their common issues, which they hope, can be mitigated by us. A few American and European parents have expressed their desire to educate their children in India and they want to know whether the Commission is able to help them identify proper Catholic institutions and get them admitted there. Some have suggested a marriage bureau for their children. Many parents, when they are old, prefer retirement homes here in Kerala, with adequate facilities. Keralites, after their settlement in Malabar and Idukki regions, have nowhere to go for the further expansion of their agricultural projects. They are requesting us to find out new
agricultural areas in India, Brazil and Australia which are settlement-friendly. After a few meetings with the people who are really interested in this line, we have located an area in Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra by the border of Goa where rubber and all Kerala crops grow. We intend to build up a socially and spiritually conscious Syro-Malabar township in this locality. Negotiations are going on with a few banks who are ready to finance this project. The Rubber Board of India has promised subsidy for rubber cultivation. An effective team of the Laity Commission visited the area three times and one plot of 1000 acres is almost fixed. This scheme, when worked out, will help many of our landless people as well as people with inadequate land, to possess a reasonable area of arable land.

A few more proposed activities:

- To conduct periodical meetings of the Syro-Malabar Laity at various levels—diocesan, state, national and international
- To organize orientation programmes for children, youth, grown-ups and women about the traditions, culture and values of the Syro-Malabar Church.
- To organize retreats & orientation programs in life skills for Laity leaders
- An International publication propagating the laity activities.
- Syro-Malabar Townships
- Advanced Educational institutions
- Senior Citizens’ Home
- International Guidance Cell
- Civil Service Training Centers

Adv. V.C. Sebastian
Secretary

Mar Mathew Arackal
Chairman

Mar Mathew Anikuzhikattil
Mar Sebastian Adayanthurath
REPORT OF THE SYRO-MALABAR LITURGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE
September 2008 – August 2009

I. Research Seminars

1. Research Seminar on the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro Malabar Church in India and Abroad at Delhi

A research seminar on the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro Malabar Church in India and abroad under the auspices of the Liturgical Research Centre was held at INDIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTE, Delhi, on 14th November Friday 10 AM – 16th November 2008 Sunday 5PM November 2008. Bishop Mar Gratian Mundadan, Bijnor; Bishop Mar Gregory Karotemprel, Rajkot; Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazath, Trichur; Bishop Mar Sebastian Vadakkel, Ujjain, Bishop Mar Vijay Anand, Ujjain; Bishop Mar Antony Chirayath, Sagar; Bishop Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakel, Satna; Bishop Mar Thomas Elavanal, Kalyan; Bishop Mar Thomas Thuruthimattam, Gorakhpur; Bishop Mar Jacob Mar Barnabas, Apostolic Visitor of the Mlanakara Catholic Church; Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedam, Manathavady; Bishop Mar Joseph Kunnath, Adilabad; Bishop Rev. Peter Celestine Elampassery, Jammu Kashmir, 67 priests, 28 sisters, and 12 lay persons participated in the Seminar. The seminar was inaugurated by Archbishop Most Rev. Pedro Lopez Quintana. In the inaugural address Archbishop Quintana exhorted the assembly to be strong in unity to face the challenges of the modern world.

Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, Chairman LRC delivered the presidential address. It was followed by the Reading of the Message of the Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil by Rev Dr. Antony Kollannur, the Chancellor of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. Rev. Dr Pauly Kannookadan, the Executive Director delivered the welcome speech
and Rev. Fr. Jose Edasserry, the coordinator of the Syro Malabar church, Delhi Mission gave the vote of thanks. Bishop Mar Sebastian Vadakel, the Chairman, Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants moderated the first session in which Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedam presented the paper on the Juridical Dimensions on the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and abroad. Rev. Dr. George Karakunnel, a well-known theologian and a professor of St. Joseph's seminary, Alwaye began the afternoon session by presenting the paper on the Theological Dimensions on Ecclesial Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and abroad. This session was moderated by V. Rev. Fr. George Manimala, Episcopal Vicar, Delhi.

The third session, an experience sharing of the Pastoral Care of the migrants, was in the evening at 5 p.m. moderated by Bishop Mar Joseph Kunnath. Rev. Fr. Jose Edasserry, Delhi Mission; Rev. Dr. Varghese Perepandan, Chennai Mission; Rev. Dr. Paulachan Kochapilly, Bangalore Mission; Mr. Siby Vaniapurackal, Gulf Mission were the resource persons to share the views about the pastoral care of the migrants of the Syro Malabar Church. Bishop Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakel had presided the Holy Qurbana in Hindi at 7 pm. The sharing session continued at 9 pm moderated by Bishop Mar Vijay Anand regarding the missionary activities of the dioceses outside proper territory.

The programme of the second day began with the presentation of the paper by Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil on the Missionary Dimensions of the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church in India and abroad. This session was moderated by Bishop Mar Thomas Thuruthimattam.

Bishop Mar Thomas Elavanal moderated the Panel Discussion on the analysis of the present situation of the Ecclesial Mission of the Syro Malabar Church in India and abroad. Panelists were Bishop Mar Gregory Karotemprel, on the Pastoral Care, Bishop Mar Gratian Mundadan, on Missionary Activities, Bishop Jacob Mar
Barnabas, on present Challenges and Rev. Dr Paulachen Kochapilly, on the survey of the Missionary activities and Pastoral Care of the faithful. The participants of the Seminar gathered again to continue the panel discussion at 2.30 pm. It was followed by group discussion in six different groups from 3.30 – 4.30pm. At 5.00 pm. All gathered again with their own reports in the auditorium and presented their views and opinions. During the reporting of the Group Discussions & General Discussion Bishop Mar Antony Chirayath was the chair person to moderate.

Bishop Mar Vijay Anand presided over the concelebrated Eucharistic liturgy on Saturday. In the evening session Bishop Mar Jose Porunnedom, the Chairman of the Committee to draft the final statement presented statement and was passed with a few modifications after a detailed discussion. The seminar session at ISI was concluded at 8.45 with the Vote of Thanks by Dr V.J Papoo

The concluding session was organized in collaboration with Delhi mission at the Cathedral premises of the Archdiocese of Delhi on Sunday 16th November. The function started with a procession with relic of St. Alphonsa. More than 6000 faithful from the various parishes of Delhi Mission participated devotedly. At the conclusion of the procession the new Indian Postal Stamp of St. Alphonsa was released by the Superintendent of the Indian Postal Department giving the first copy to Sri Cyriac Joseph, the Honourable Supreme Court Justice. Bishop Celestine and Sr. Celia, the Superior General of the FCC delivered the welcome speech and Vote of thanks respectively. Mrs Sheela Dixit, the Chief Minister of Delhi felicitated at this occasion. Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath presided over the concelebrated Holy Qurbana and Bishop Mar Gratian Mundadan gave the homily. The Concluding meeting was inaugurated by Central Minister Sri Oscar Fernades and was presided over by Archbishop Most Rev. Vincent M. Concessao. The newly published Journal was released by the Archbishop during this session giving the first copy to Bishop Mar Gregory Karotembrel. The suggestions of the Seminar are the following:
To the Syro-Malabar Major Archbishop:-

1. To set up a networking of interested Bishops, clergy and religious serving the Latin ecclesiastical units throughout India and abroad.

2. To conduct orientation programmes at regular intervals either at the eparchial or major archiepiscopal level for those who are going outside the proper territory of the Syro-Malabar Church, both in India and abroad for pastoral ministry.

3. To initiate a networking between the Syro-Malabar faithful in diaspora and their mother parishes and communities. Similarly those who move to places outside the proper territory are to be requested to carry official letters from the mother parishes to the local ecclesiastical authorities.

4. To formulate clear guidelines at the Major Archiepiscopal level for those priests both diocesan and religious as well as for the religious who are going to other Churches for pastoral ministry.

5. To take steps to ensure adequate participation of the laity in all activities of the Church. Jesus Youth may be asked to collaborate in the evangelization programmes.

6. To honour prominent members of the laity from the Syro-Malabar communities around the world for their distinguished service in the Church.

7. To set up a network of the organized Syro-Malabar laity bodies from all over the world under the Laity Commission of the Syro-Malabar Synod. Regular contact and interaction has to take place between the Major Archiepiscopal authorities and these bodies as well as among themselves.

8. To establish a Mission Fund and provision for supplying personnel to the mission eparchies at the Major Archiepiscopal level.
To the Latin Hierarchy in India and the Gulf States:-

9. To establish parishes and other canonical units in view of erecting eparchies as mentioned above, exclusively for the Syro-Malabar faithful in all places in India wherever there is no Syro-Malabar jurisdiction.

10. To allow the Apostolic Visitor to take steps to educate the Syro-Malabar faithful in those areas where there are already some form of structures for pastoral care about the Rite of our Church in consultation with the clergy, religious and lay leaders of the areas. An electronic Bulletin and if possible a printed Bulletin may be planned for this purpose.

To the Vicars Apostolic of Kuwait and Arabia:-

11. To erect personal parishes and to appoint priests approved by the Major Archbishop wherever there are sizable number of Syro-Malabarians in their Vicariates. This is in view of establishing eparchies exclusively for the Syro-Malabarians in those areas.

12. To permit to conduct seminars similar to the one conducted in Delhi under the auspices of the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Centre in order to conscientise the Syro-Malabar faithful in their Vicariates about their right and duty to know, appreciate and live their ecclesial tradition.

To the Apostolic See:-

13. To issue a document explaining that the communion ecclesiology rediscovered by Vatican II does not mean a communion of dioceses but the communion of individual *sui iuris* Churches having their own Rites. In the same document emphasis should be given to the fact that it is an injustice to deny pastoral care in one's own tradition that is a fundamental right of the faithful.
14. To erect an eparchy in Doha that is to be co-extensive with the territory of the Vicariates Apostolic of Arabia and Kuwait and in the meantime to give directives to the respective Vicars Apostolic to erect personal parishes for them and appoint Syro-Malabar parish priests in consultation with the Major Archbishop.

15. To erect an eparchy each in Frankfurt (Germany) and Manchester (UK). Adequate structures are to be established also for the Syro-Malabarians in Oceania as well.

16. To declare the whole of India as the proper territory of the Syro-Malabar Church.

17. If that is not possible immediately, erect Syro-Malabar eparchies in:
   a) **Delhi**: Coextensive with the territory of the neighboring Latin dioceses.
   b) **Bangalore**: Coextensive with the territory of the neighboring Latin dioceses
   c) **Chennai**: Coextensive with the territory of the neighboring Latin dioceses

18. To appoint one or more Exarchs with Episcopal character and jurisdiction to look after the Syro-Malabar faithful who will be outside these prospective eparchies in India.

19. To make the territory of all the above mentioned eparchies as well as those of the existing eparchies outside the *territorium proprium* as the proper territory of the Syro-Malabar Church.

20. To make the two eparchies among the above mentioned Metropolitan Sees with others as their suffragans taking into consideration the linguistic and cultural realities as well as distance.
To the Theologians of the Syro-Malabar Church:-

21. To take a conscientious effort to get established the communion ecclesiology as rediscovered by the Vatican II and as existed in the first millennium highlighting the Trinitarian model of existence where the perfect oneness or unity is preserved without sacrificing the individuality of each divine person.

22. To disseminate these ideas with well founded arguments by such means as an electronic bulletin.

23. The formation houses under the Syro-Malabar Church, especially the major seminaries can take the initiative in this matter and network among themselves for exchange of ideas and collaboration among scholars.

24. The theologians of the Latin and Syro-Malabar Churches may come together to reflect on the communion theology rediscovered by the Vatican II as well as the issues related to the pastoral care and evangelization that are the two dimensions of the mission of the Church.

2. Seminar on the Catholic Response to the Bills on Euthanasia, Church Properties, Population Planning, Christian Marriage, Suicide and Adoption Proposed by Kerala Law Reform Committee

The thirty fifth research seminar on the Catholic Response to the bills Proposed by Kerala Law Reform under the auspices of the Liturgical Research Centre in collaboration with Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal and Commission for Laity was held on 21 February 2009 Saturday at Mount St.Thomas, Kakkanad. The participants of the seminar arrived around 9 AM at Mount St. Thomas on 21 February 2009 Saturday and registered their name and had tea. The inaugural session began with a prayer invoking the blessings upon the auspicious gathering led by Sr.Amala S.H, Sr.Nirmala S.H, Sr. Gladis S.H and Sr. Linda S.H. at 9.30 AM.
Prayer was followed by a cordial welcome speech by Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, Episcopal Member LRC. It was followed by Lightening of Lamp by the invited guests.

The inaugural session continued with the inaugural address by Major Archbishop Mar Varkay Cardinal Vithayathil. First Session began at 10.10 AM on Catholic Response to the Bills on Euthanasia & Suicide Moderated by Bishop Mar Mathew Anikuzhikattil. Two Persons namely Rev. Dr Hormis Mynatty and Dr V.J. Paul, Vazhapilly presented papers on this theme.

Rev. Dr Mathew Kochupurackal, Adv. Jose Kannanthanam, and Rev. Dr Xavier Kudiamasserry presented papers in the Second Session on Catholic response to the bill on Church Properties. This Session was moderated by Rev. Dr Paul Thelakkatt.

In the Panel Discussion Rtd. Dt Judge Sri K.C. George, Rev. Dr Antony Kollannur, Adv. Lilly James, and Mr Sabu Jose gave talk on the Catholic Response to the Bills on Christian Marriage, Adoption, and Population Control. It was moderated by Dr A.T. Devasia Arackal.

After panel discussion there was around one hour General Discussion about the theme and Presented the Resolution to the audience. Before we concluded the seminar Bishop Mar A.D. Mattam Mr P.C. Cyriac IAS, Mrs Lida Jacob IAS, and Prof Cyriac Thomas gave concluding message and Adv V. C. Sebastian, Secretary Commission for Laity gave vote of Thanks. Including Four Bishops, around three hundred people participated in the seminar.

**Suggestions of the Seminar:**

1. The Church should have an ongoing vigilance to remove the anti Christian elements of the bills on Euthanasia, Church Properties, Population Planning, Christian Marriage, Suicide and Adoption Proposed by Kerala Law Reform Commission.

2. The Church should constitute a trained Media Cell to be vigilant to know and to respond timely to the Anti Christian elements.
hidden in the text books, new laws, channels, news papers, policies of Government etc.

II. LRC Publications

New Books published by LRC

_The Proclamation of the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church_: Pauly Kannookadan (Ed.), Pp 136 Price Rs.150.00, Outside India Euro 15, Mount St.Thomas 2008


_The Proclamation of the Word of God in the Life and Mission of Church_: Pauly Kannookadan (Ed.), Pp 136 Price Rs.150.00, Outside India Euro 15, Mount St.Thomas 2008


_The Ecclesial Mission and Pastoral Care of the Migrants of the Syro-Malabar Church_: Pauly Kannookadan (Ed.), Pp 172 Price Rs.180.00, Outside India Euro 15, Mount St.Thomas 2009

III. Journal of LRC – THOMAS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

The Syro-Malabar Liturgical Research Centre (LRC) publishes an international Journal by name _Thomas Christian Heritage_, biannual published on November 21, the feast of the arrival of the Apostle Thomas in India and on July 3 the feast of the martyrdom of Apostle Thomas. It is intended to promote research studies on theology, spirituality, history, discipline and liturgy of the Thomas Christians. The first issue of the Volume no I of the biannual _Thomas Christian Heritage_ was released by Archbishop Most Rev. Vincent Concessao, the Archbishop of Delhi on November 16, 2008 at Delhi during the concluding function of the national research seminar on _Ecclesial mission of the Syro-Malabar Church_.
The first Volume contains two books. They are the following:

The first book of the first volume contains articles on the Christology of the Syro-Malabar Church published on November 21, 2008.


IV. Library and Documentation Centre

The library functions in the Curia building and the Documentation Centre in the Museum building. The new sections started in the Documentation centre are the following:

1. Collection of Liturgical Manuscripts and Printed books of the Syro-Malabar Church

A new section on Liturgical books of Syro-Malabar Church consisting of printed texts and copies of the Manuscripts.

2. Collection of the Doctoral Dissertations

Another section of the published and unpublished Doctoral Dissertations on the Ecclesial subjects by the Syro-Malabar scholars.

V. St. Thomas Christian Museum

St. Thomas Christian Museum is an important milestone in the activities of the I.R.C. Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil C.Ss.R., the Major Archbishop, canonically erected St. Thomas Christian Museum on December 15, 2000 and formally inaugurated it on November 10, 2001. The museum is open to the public on all days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The following works were already completed during this year.

1. A hall is arranged to exhibit the Manuscript of Varthamanapustakam, printed books of this first travelogue, rout map of the travel and a short explanation of its content.
The whole manuscript is digitalized and made ready for study and research.

2. Another hall is arranged for rare books, Early Documents, Ancient manuscripts, Stamps, Coins, Stone inscriptions, Palm leaf book and other valuable articles of historical importance.

3. A room is prepared to exhibit the DNA molecular model prepared by Fr Prof. Isaac Alappatt CMI. rtd Head of Zoology Dept, Christ College, Irinjalakuda.

4. A Bullock Cart was donated by Mr Antony Thottapilly, two Manchals were donated by Mala Forane Church, and many other new articles were added to the collection of the Museum.

5. A wall in front of the Museum is constructed to depict the churches instituted by Apostle Thomas.

With gratitude we remember the benefactors who have donated valuable articles to the Museum.

VI. Research Activities

Appointment of Research Assistants

In the meeting of the Board of Directors held on January 8, 2009, two suggestions were made regarding the research studies. They are: a. to conduct advanced course in East Syriac and Sanskrit, b. to nominate more research assistants to help the three research fellows. As follow up of the decision it was planned to select one priest to work for the critical study version of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana in collaboration with the Paurastyavithypitham, Vadavathoor.

Consultation of LRC Library by Research Students

The source books and manuscripts of LRC library are made available to the research students. Some students have already made use of this research facility.
VII. Research Centre Award

As per approval of the Synod the LRC instituted an Award for prominent persons who have contributed excellent service in Art, Architecture, Music, literature, theology etc. by name ‘Syro-Malabar Research Centre Award’. First award will be presented in 2009 November.

VIII. Thanks to the Outgoing Members of the Board of Directors

We sincerely thank Fr Antony Kozhuvanal, who was the member of the Board of Directors for last nine years and Fr Jose Kochuparambil, who was the member of the Board of Directors for last six years. We acknowledge with gratitude their dedicated service in the activities of the LRC.

On January 8, 2009 there was a cordial meeting in the Major archiepiscopal Curia in connection with the Board of Directors meeting when the Major Archbishop Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil welcomed Fr Jose Palakeel and Fr Pauly Maniyattu, the new members of the Board of Directors. Major Archbishop thanked Fr Antony Kozhuvanal and Fr Jose Kochuparambil for their availability and dedication for the service of the Church through LRC. Abp Andrews Thzahath, Msgr Bosco Puthur and Fr Pauly Kannookadan expressed the gratitude of LRC to both of them.

IX. Finance

We remember with deep gratitude and appreciation for the financial help the LRC has received from both local and foreign benefactors for the various programmes. We acknowledge with gratitude the reception of the financial subsidy from Missio, Aachen in order to conduct the research seminars. Another of our benefactors is Oeuvre d’Orient of Paris, who gives us annual subsidy. May we place on record our gratitude to the Directors of Missio and Oeuvre d’Orient, all co – workers and to all benefactors for the financial subsidy they give annually for the Museum.
X. A Word of Thanks

First of all we thank God for His loving protection and wise guidance. We take this opportunity to place on record our gratitude to the Major Archbishop, Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, to all the members of the Synod of Bishops, and to all the members of the Curia and the whole staff at Mount St. Thomas for their love and concern towards the Liturgical Research Centre.

We acknowledge with gratitude the dedicated service of the Board of Directors. Our sincere thanks go to the Office Secretary and accountant of LRC Sr. Amala SH and to the ministerial staff Miss Jincy. With deep gratitude to all, who helped us in our different activities, Liturgical Research Centre presents this report.

Archbishop Andrews Thazhath (Chairman)
Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt (Episcopal Member)
Fr Pauly Kannookadan (Executive Director)
Fr Jose Palakeel MST (Member)
Fr Pauly Maniyattu (Member)
REPORT ON THE STATE AND ACTIVITY OF THE MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL TRIBUNAL 2008

MATTERS WORTHY OF SPECIAL MENTION

Annual *Eastern Legal Thought*

Under the auspices of the Syro Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal a periodical entitled *Eastern Legal Thought* on Church law and jurisprudence is published every year since its inception in 2002.

Seminar for the Tribunal Personnel

The Syro Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal organized, as it does every year, a seminar for the ministers working in various metropolitan and eparchial tribunals and curia in India from Monday to Wednesday, May 26-28, 2008. Eighty eight persons who hold licentiate or doctorate in Canon Law participated in the seminar. Rev. Dr. Nikolaus Schöch, Substitute Defender of the Bond at the Apostolic Signatura was the chief resource person. Topic of study was *The Recent Trends in Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence*. The seminar was inaugurated by Mar Varkey Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church and presided over by Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakatt, the General Moderator for the Administration of Justice in the Syro Malabar Church.

Meeting of the Judicial Vicars

As per the direction of Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakatt, the General Moderator for the Administration of Justice in the Syro Malabar Church, the Syro Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Ordinary Tribunal convened a meeting of all the Judicial Vicars of the Syro Malabar Church at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on Thursday, December 18, 2008 from 10.00 am to 04.00 pm.
It was generally observed that the tribunal system in the Syro Malabar Church has attained a higher degree of efficiency in action and uniformity in procedure. However, the meeting of the judicial vicars discussed on various measurers for the betterment of the activities of the tribunal.

New Notary to the Tribunal

Rev. Fr. Anto Pudussery CMI, the Auditor General of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate replaced Rev. Fr. Thomas Pulikkan CMI in the office of notary in the tribunal. It was made necessary when Fr. Pulikkan had to transfer himself following his election as a councillor of the province of his religious institute.

TRIBUNAL MINISTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>DATE OF</th>
<th>DATE OF</th>
<th>Academic Degree</th>
<th>in Canon Law</th>
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<tr>
<td>I. PRESIDENT</td>
<td>S=Priest</td>
<td>DATE OF</td>
<td>DATE OF</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Judicial Vicar)</td>
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<td>Birth</td>
<td>Appointment</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Fr. Mathew Kochupurackal</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>03.11.1963</td>
<td>16.08.2002 President</td>
<td>D.O.C.L.; DJp</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>on 16.08.2002 President</td>
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<td>on 13.05.2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. VICE-PRESIDENTS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>24.04.1952</td>
<td>12.11.1994 Vice President</td>
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<td>(Adj. Judicial Vicars)</td>
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<td>2. Jose Chiramel</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>27.11.2006</td>
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III. JUDGES

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<th>NAME</th>
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<th>DATE OF</th>
<th>Academic Degree</th>
<th>in Canon Law</th>
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<tr>
<td>9. Fr. Borchmans Kodackal</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>09.11.1951</td>
<td>18.08.2007</td>
<td>D.C.L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fr. Michael Vattappalam</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>05.20.1964</td>
<td>18.08.2007</td>
<td>D.O.C.L.; DJp</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Fr. Thomas Adoppilil</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>18.09.1958</td>
<td>17.08.2007</td>
<td>D.C.L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. DEFENDERS OF BOND

2. Fr. Mani Kuthodiputhenpurayil CST  S  05.04.1966  17.08.2007  D.O.C.L.

V. (Substitute) PROMOTERS OF JUSTICE
2. Fr. Mani Kuthodiputhenpurayil CST  S  05.04.1966  17.08.2007  D.O.C.L.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME VI. ADVOCATES</th>
<th>DATE OF Birth</th>
<th>DATE OF Appointment</th>
<th>Academic Degree in Canon Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fr. Jose Nollissory</td>
<td>17.08.1941</td>
<td>20.12.2005</td>
<td>M.C.L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fr. Gregory Naduviledom</td>
<td>17.12.1945</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>L.O.C.L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fr. Matthew Madathikunnel</td>
<td>27.6.1934</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>D.O.C.L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fr. Sebastian Thayyil</td>
<td>20.03.1951</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>D.O.C.L.</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. Fr. Wilson Kannanaikal</td>
<td>10.08.1960</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>M.C.L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fr. George Kollakombil</td>
<td>23.06.1937</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>D.C.L.</td>
</tr>
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<td>8. Fr. Thomas Kalapurackal</td>
<td>04.11.1962</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>M.C.L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Fr. Jose Koonampambil CMF</td>
<td>19.03.1949</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>J.U.D; D.Jp</td>
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VII. NOTARIES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Birth</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Fr. Anto Pudussercy CMI</td>
<td>12.08.1951 13.06.2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sr. Linta Pucikathadathil SH (Offic. Secretary)</td>
<td>07.07.1976 03.07.2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITY OF THE TRIBUNAL IN SECOND INSTANCE**

CAUSES OF MATRIMONIAL NULLITY HANDLED AFTER AN ORDINARY PROCESS IN FIRST INSTANCE.

Number

1. Causes pending at the beginning of the year: 07
2. Causes introduced this year: 145
3. Decrees of ratification (total number): 133
4. *Grounds of Nullity considered in the decrees:*

(If a decision considered several grounds of nullity, these are to be indicated separately; thus the total number of decisions under 4 may be greater than that under 3)

- CCEO c. 801 (Impotence): 01
- CCEO c. 818,1° (Lack of sufficient use of reason): 00
- CCEO c. 818,2° (Grave lack of discretion): 10
- CCEO c. 818,3° (Inability to assume): 25
- CCEO c. 820§2 (Error of quality): 40
- CCEO c. 821 (Fraud): 09
- CCEO cc. 820§2, 821 (Fraudulent error): 02
- CCEO c. 824§2 (Simulation total): 10
- CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against fidelity): 15
- CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against children): 02
- CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against good of the spouses): 07
- CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against indissolubility): 03
- CCEO c. 825 (Force and fear): 31
- CCEO c. 826 (Condition):

5. **Sentences Given (after an ordinary examination):** 12

   a) In favour of nullity ("constat de nullitate", at least on one ground): 10
   b) In favour of the bond ("non constat de nullitate"
   on every ground alleged): 02

6. **Grounds of Nullity considered in the sentences**

(if a sentence considered several grounds of nullity, these are to be indicated separately; thus the number of decisions under 6 may be greater than the sum of 5a and 5b)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grounds of Nullity Considered</th>
<th>AFFIRMATIVE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE</th>
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<td>(constat de nullitate)</td>
<td>(nn constat de nullitate)</td>
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<td>CCEO c. 818,2° (Grave lack of discretion)</td>
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<td>CCEO c. 820 §2 (Error of quality)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCEO c. 824§2 (Simulation total)</td>
<td>02</td>
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</table>
7. Causes abandoned:
   a) Through renunciation  nil
   b) Through abatement (Peremptio)  nil

8. Causes pending at the end of the year  07

ACTIVITY OF THE TRIBUNAL IN THIRD & SUBSEQUENT INSTANCES

CAUSES OF MATRIMONIAL NULLITY HANDLED AFTER A PROCESS IN SECOND INSTANCE  Number

1. Causes pending at the beginning of the year:  01
2. Causes introduced this year:  15
3. Decrees of ratification (total number) as per CCEO can.1369):  14
4. Grounds of nullity considered in the decrees:
   (If a decision considered several grounds of nullity, these are to be indicated separately; thus the total number of decisions under 4 may be greater than that under 3)
   CCEO c. 818, 2° (Grave lack of discretion):  02
   CCEO c. 818, 3° (Inability to assume):  01
   CCEO c. 820§2 (Error of quality):  03
   CCEO c. 821 (Fraud):  01
   CCEO c. 824§2 (Simulation total):  01
   CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against fidelity):  —
   CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against good of the spouses):  —
   CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against good of children):  01
   CCEO c. 824§2 (Intention against indissolubility):  01
   CCEO c. 825 (Force and fear):  03
   CCEO c. 826 (Condition)  01
5. Sentences given (after an ordinary examination):
   a) In favour of nullity ("constat de nullitate", at least on one ground) 01
   b) In favour of the bond ("non constat de nullitate": on every ground alleged) —

6. Grounds of nullity considered
   in the sentences (if a sentence considered several grounds of nullity, these are to be indicated separately; thus
   the number of decisions under
   the sum of 5a and 5b)

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<thead>
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<th>AFFIRMATIVE (constat de nullitate)</th>
<th>NEGATIVE (non constat de nullitate)</th>
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<tr>
<td>CCEO c. 824§2 (Simulation total):</td>
<td>01</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCEO c. 825 (Force and fear)</td>
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7. Causes abandoned:
   a) Through renunciation (due to the death of the respondent): nil
   b) Through abatement (Peremptio): nil

8. Decrees of Nullity of Sentence: nil

9. Causes pending at the end of the year: 01

Activities of the Lower Tribunals in the Year 2008

There are 16 eparchies in four metropolitan provinces within the proper territory of the Syro Malabar Church. All the four metropolitan provinces have metropolitan tribunals and they function as the tribunals of appeal in the second instance as per c. 1064§1. The metropolitan tribunal of Kottayam judges cases only of the eparchy of the metropolitan of Kottayam. The eparchies of Belthangady and Thuckalay have single judge tribunals, and the eparchy of Bhadravati has not yet erected a tribunal.
The activities of the eparchial and metropolitan tribunals during the year 2008 are briefly given in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Eparchial and Metropolitan Tribunals (1 instance)</th>
<th>Cases Pending</th>
<th>Cases Introduced</th>
<th>Sentences Given</th>
<th>Cases Abandoned</th>
<th>Penal Cases</th>
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<th>Cases introduced</th>
<th>Decrees of Ratification</th>
<th>Sentences Given</th>
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Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad
15.01.2009

Fr. Mathew Kochupurackal
President
# Major Archiepiscopal Curia
## Of the Syro-Malabar Church
### Mount St. Thomas, Kakkannad, Cochin - 682 030
#### Summary of the Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007 - 08</th>
<th>2008 - 09</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECEIPTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>PAYMENTS</strong></td>
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<td>Contribution Received for Running Expenses</td>
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<td>2,338,821</td>
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<tr>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>Mission Sunday Collection &amp; Gift</td>
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<td>121,316</td>
<td>Administrative Receipts</td>
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<td>39,100</td>
<td>Synodal and Commission Meetings</td>
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<td>200,327</td>
<td>Agriculture Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>163,537</td>
<td>Major Tribunal Income</td>
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<td>31,223</td>
<td>Synodal News Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>163,931</td>
<td>Liturgical Research Centre Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205,350</td>
<td>Commission for Liturgy Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111,392</td>
<td>Catechism Commission Income</td>
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I. INCOME & EXPENDITURE
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<tr>
<th>Syro Malabar Church Mission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syro Malabar Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>110,589</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Expenses</td>
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<td>Donations &amp; Charity</td>
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<th>II. CAPITAL RECEIPTS &amp; INVESTMENTS</th>
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<td>Foreign Contribution Received</td>
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<td>Capital Fund &amp; Corpus Donation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Furniture &amp; Equipments</td>
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### III. CURRENT LIABILITIES & ASSETS

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### IV. BANK & CASH BALANCES

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Sd/-
C.J. Romid FCA
Chartered Accountant

Sd/-
Fr. Mathew Pulimoottil
Finance Officer