

## **Annual Report of the Activities of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants -August 2012**

We are happy to present a report on the activities of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants (CEPCM) for the period from Sept 2011 to Aug 2012. At the end we have highlighted some of the serious problems and issues that affect our people calling for the immediate attention of the Synod.

### **Commission Meetings**

Between Sept 2011 and Aug 2012, the Commission met three times to discuss the issues related to the pastoral care of the migrants in India and abroad. Besides, the Secretary kept all their Episcopal members informed of all the developments through email regularly. There were also other occasions for the Commission members to meet in connection with the Mission Year. Besides, 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 greetings and messages were sent to all the centers through e-mail. Correspondence is regular with almost all the centres/places/countries of the Syro-Malabar migrants.

### **Erection of the Eparchy of Faridabad**

The erection of the Eparchy of Faridabad in the Mission Year is a great success of the effort of the Synod for the equal rights of the Syro-Malabar Church for the pastoral care of our migrants in India. The Commission extends its prayers and best wishes to the newly appointed Archbishop Mar Kuriakose Bharanikulangra and to the Eparchy.

### **Annual Report to Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Itinerant People**

An annual report of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants was submitted to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Itinerant People in the month of July highlighting, activities, the major challenges and concerns of our Church in the pastoral care of the migrants of our Church in India and abroad.

### **Pastoral Visit of Major Archbishop to Migrant Centers**

Major Archbishop visited some of the migrant communities in India and abroad. His visit has boosted the enthusiasm and spirit of the communities. He visited some of the Archbishops and Bishops and discussed matters concerning the pastoral care of our migrants.

### **Visit of the Commission Chairman, Members and Secretary**

The Commission Chairman, members and secretary visited different migrants centers like Bangalore, Surat, Aurangabad, Goa, in India and few other centres in abroad in connection with various occasions and celebrations there.

### **Orientation Classes for Catechism Teachers**

As part of the faith formation of the migrant communities the Commission has started contacting the priests in charge and other responsible persons in the respective centres to

arrange training programs for the catechism teachers. The training is given by the Synodal Commission for Catechism.

### **Saudi Meet**

As per the request of the people and the priests working in Saudi Arabia a family gathering of our migrants there is arranged on 14 August at Mount St. Thomas Kakkand. More than 100 families are expected to participate in it.

### **Mission Seminar for Migrants in Kolkata**

In connection with the Mission Year the Commission in collaboration with the Kolkotta CMI mission arranged a mission seminar cum get together of the Syro-Malabar migrants in Kolkata on 15 July 2012. The seminar was well attended by the Syro-Malabar faithful. Archbishop of Kolkata inaugurated the Mission Year programmes. The Commission Chairman, Secretary and Rev. Fr. George Thanchan CMI gave orientation talks.

### **Mission Year Gatherings in Bangalore, Bhopal and Aurangabad**

In connection with the Mission Year, mission gatherings were also arranged in many migrant centres like Bangalore, Bhopal, Aurangabad to animate the missionary dynamism of the Syro-Malabar faithful. The Commission members or secretary participated in most of these get together.

## **Developments in the Migrant centers in India**

### **Aurangabad**

The community has so far no infrastructure of its own and the Holy Qurbana and other liturgical services are administered mostly in rented buildings. The local Church shows reluctance to share its Churches or buildings for the use of the Syro-Malabar community.

### **Bhopal**

A community of 350 families plus 1000 students and bachelors are getting organized in Bhopal. The chaplain is staying in a Latin parish at Ratanpur, Bhopal but the community has now set up a well furnished office at Shakti Nagar, Bhopal and the parish meetings are held there. It is urgent that catechism classes be organized for the Syro-Malabar children as per our own syllabus and tradition.

### **Goa and Daman**

The Archbishop of Goa is positively supporting the three Syro-Malabar priests appointed in the Archdiocese. They are celebrating regular Sunday Holy Qurbana in six different centers and conduct Sunday catechism classes for the children. They plan to start catechism classes in more units. The community also publishes bulletin named shalom with news and articles. The Commission thanks Rev. Frs. Mathew Pulimootil and George Kurisummootil who rendered commendable service for the past three years and acknowledges the good will of the Bishops of Thamarassery and Kothamangalam who lent their services for the care of the Syro-Malabar migrants.

### **Hyderabad**

The community under the leadership of Fr. Thomas Maruthanikatt has purchased a plot of land of 62 cents at Thumgunda (Secundrabad) and the construction of a community hall is in progress. The community under the leadership of Fr. Siby Kaitharam MI has constructed a Syro-Malabar cultural centre at Kukatpally (Secundrabad). Recently they thought another plot of land at Mallapur. They are also on the look out for landed property that could be purchased in other areas of Syro-Malabar concentration.

### **Kolkotta**

The community is organised into a well knit parish through the committed work of the CMI fathers. The community under the leadership of CMI Congregation has purchased a plot of land for the construction of a Church at Behala and another plot of land at Mominpur for a common cemetery for the use of our community.

### **Pondicherry**

The community in Pondicherry is getting organised into a well knit Church. With the local contribution the construction of the presbytery with 3 guest rooms is over.

### **Salem**

The Community under the leadership of Fr. Joby Kachapally is getting organised in Salem. There are around 105 families and more than 2500 students. With the local contribution a beautiful Church is under construction and is expected to be ready for consecration by the end of the year. Three religious Congregations (CMC, FCC and CHF) are extending their service in the pastoral ministry. Jesus Youth is very active in Salem. They try to help the students who succumb to drugs and other related evils.

### **Surat**

Due to the intervention of Major Archbishop, MCBS Congregation has volunteered to take over the administration of the St. Thomas English medium school run by the Syro-Malabar Catholic Charitable Trust Gujarat. Rev. Fr. Gracious Pulimuttill MCBS is appointed as the priest in charge of Syro-Malabar personal parish at Surat. We sincerely appreciate the commendable service of Fr. Joy Manickanampampil CMI. We place on record our sincere thanks to the CMI Provincial of Blessed Chavara Vice Province, Bhavnagar for his support to the Surat community.

### **Sylvassa**

The community under the leadership of Fr. Mathew Kizhakkearanjanijil from the eparchy of Palai is organising various activities for the faith formation of the faithful. The construction of the second floor of the parish hall is complete. They are planning to purchase a plot of land adjacent to the Church.

### **Vadodara**

The Syro-Malabar community at Vadodara is spread over a 25 km radius. There is regular Sunday liturgy and catechism in three centres. The local Ordinary is not much in favour of developing our own separate structures for the Syro-Malabar Church.

## **Outside India**

### **Australia**

The population of the Syro Malabar migrant faithful has been increasing for the last two years and we hope that the same phenomenon will continue in the upcoming years. Our community in Melbourne purchased an office cum residence for the chaplain with a loan from the Diocese worth five hundred thousand dollars. They are planning to purchase landed property though land is expensive and regulations are very strict. The Archdiocese of Melbourne is helping to sort out the issues with the proposed properties. The Archbishop of Melbourne has shown interest in the proposal of the Syro-Malabar community to give it one or two Churches which are not fully utilized by the Archdiocese.

### **Ireland**

The population of the Syro Malabar migrant faithful has fallen considerably since last year due to migration to Australia and the same phenomenon would continue in the upcoming years. There are some Syro-Malabar communities without proper pastoral care. We have initiated contact with some dioceses for appointment of Syro-Malabar chaplains. The community in Dublin is on the look out for our own infrastructure. The recent visit of the Major Archbishop was a great encouragement for them.

### **New Appointments**

The following priests have been appointed in the last year as chaplains with the recommendation of the Major Archbishop for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar migrants in the following Dioceses.

### **Abroad:**

Rev. Fr. George Manthuruthil (CHY) - Saudi Arabia  
Rev. Fr. Kurian Perumpallikunnel CMI-Archdiocese of Pretoria, South Africa  
Rev. Fr. Thomas Alukka (EKM) - Diocese of Wollongong, Australia  
Rev. Fr. Binesh Narimattathil CST - Diocese of Darwin, Australia  
Rev. Fr. Biju Augustine (TLY) - Diocese of Rome, Italy  
Rev. Fr. Jaison Karippai (IJK) - Archdiocese of Birmingham, UK  
Rev. Fr. Thomas Thaikootathil MST, Diocese of Salford, UK  
Rev. Fr. Joseph Mathew Thayyil (MVY), Archdiocese Westminster, UK  
Rev. Fr. Shinu Jacob Ponneth (KLM), Diocese of Leeds, UK  
Rev. Fr. George Thelliankal CMF, Archdiocese of Glasgow, Scotland  
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Thuruthipallil (KLM), Diocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Scotland  
Rev. Fr. Rogi Narithokkil CST, Diocese of Dundee, Scotland  
Rev. Joseph Vembadamthara VC, Diocese of Motherwell, Scotland  
Rev. Fr. Manoj Ponkattil (Adilabad) Archdiocese of Dublin, Ireland

### **India**

Rev. Fr. Mathew Kizhakkearanjanyil (PLA) Sylvassa -Archdiocese of Goa and Daman  
Rev. Fr. Thomas Moolechalil (PLA) - Archdiocese of Goa and Daman  
Rev. Sebastian Thanippallil VC - Diocese of Aurangabad  
Rev. Thottapattu John SJ - Diocese of Ahmedabad  
Rev. Fr. Varghese Panackachalil MCBS - Diocese of Ahmedabad  
Rev. Fr. Arun Paravakkad MCBS - Diocese of Ahmedabad  
Rev. Fr. Gracious Pulimoottil MCBS - Diocese of Baroda  
Rev. Fr. K.T. Mathew SJ-Diocese of Ahmedabad  
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Thannickal MCBS- Diocese of Ahmedabad

### **Proposed Names for Ministry Abroad**

The Commission contacted various dioceses in Europe and Australia with Syro-Malabar concentration seeking the possibility of appointing Syro-Malabar priests for the pastoral care of our migrants and have received positive response from a few places. The following priests are presented by the Major Archbishop for ministry abroad.

Rev. Fr. Fredy Eluvauthingal (TCR) - Diocese of Adelaide, Australia

Rev. Fr. Jose Bharanikulangara (EKM) - Archdiocese of Armagh, Northern Ireland

Rev. Fr. Joseph Pinakatt (KLM), Diocese of Aberdeen

Rev. Fr. Biju Mathew Kottanalloor CST, Archdiocese of Southwark, UK

Rev. Fr. Francis Neelamkavil (TCR), Diocese of Cork and Ross, Ireland

### **Our Major Concerns**

Most of our priests are doing excellently well in their ministry but in some cases personal problems and other interests create unhealthy situations in the centers. The pastoral ministry among the migrants is a very demanding and difficult ministry. The Commission expresses its deepest gratitude to the /Archbishops/Bishops and Major Superiors who have lent the service of some of their best priests for the pastoral care of the migrant faithful.

### **Inflow of Un authorised Preachers to migrant Centres**

Inflow of unauthorised preachers to migrant centres still continues to be a matter of serious concern in most of the migrant centres and communities.

### **Mushrooming of Lay Associations**

The mushrooming of rival lay associations claiming to represent Syro-Malabar Church is of serious concern in many of the countries. It may be prudent that our bishops do not to accept the invitation of such associations, unofficial chaplains or persons to visit or to participate in their functions without reference to the Commission or to the Syro-Malabar Co-ordinator and the local Ordinaries.

### **Arabian Gulf:**

Though there are around 450, 000 of Syro-Malabar faithful living scattered in the Arabian Gulf countries distributed in the two Vicariates of Arabia and Kuwait, there is still no organised pastoral care provided to our people in any of these places. The Vicars Apostolic are opposing the idea of appointing Syro-Malabar priests proposed by the Major Archbishop. The extensive presence of Syro-Malabar faithful calls for the creation of a Syro-Malabar juridical set up for the whole of the Arabian Gulf countries. On-going dialogue is necessary to reach a permanent canonical solution.

### **Australia and New Zealand**

Most of the Dioceses in Australia and New Zealand have, at the request of the Syro-Malabar Church, appointed Syro-Malabar priests recommended by the Major Archbishop as chaplains to the migrant communities. Still there are number of dioceses in Australia with large Syro-Malabar faithful without proper arrangement for their pastoral care. What we are aiming at in

these countries is a more stable canonical arrangement for the proper pastoral care of our migrants.

### **Europe**

In countries like Germany, Switzerland, and France no Syro-Malabar priest is officially appointed as parish priest or chaplain with proper recommendation of the Major Archbishop. In Italy, a national Co-ordinator and a few chaplains are appointed for the Syro-Malabar faithful. But the community is not yet organised into a well knit Church. But in many dioceses in the UK Syro-Malabar chaplains have been appointed with proper recommendation. What the UK and other European countries urgently need is the appointment of national Co-ordinators with some canonical standing to co-ordinate the pastoral activities of the chaplains. Although the Bishops have not yet accepted the request of the Commission to appoint a National Co-ordinator for the Syro-Malabar Church in the UK, the Bishops' Conference seems to be seriously thinking in that line.

### **African Countries**

There is a sizeable number of our people in the African Countries of Nigeria, Libya, Tanzania and South Africa. We have sent one priest to the Archdiocese of Pretoria, South Africa. The Commission has recently contacted the Archbishop of Kampala, Uganda seeking the possibility of sending a Syro-Malabar priest to cater to the spiritual needs of around 80 families plus bachelors. We look for the erection of personal parishes and other arrangements for effective pastoral co-ordination of our migrants in these countries.

### **Asian Countries**

#### **Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong Other Cities of Asian Countries**

In Singapore alone there are around 1000 Syro-Malabar families settled there. People are very eager to get the service of Syro-Malabar priests for their pastoral needs. Now they do not get any pastoral service as per the Syro-Malabar tradition. The Major Archbishop and the Chairman of the Commission have discussed with the local Bishop the possibility of appointing a full time Syro-Malabar priest for the pastoral care of our migrants in Singapore. But the local Ordinary has not yet accepted the request of the community or the Commission for the appointment of a Syro-Malabar pastor in the country. The Syro-Malabar community, however, is getting organized there.

Similarly in Hong Kong and Malaysia and other cities of Asian countries there is a sizeable number of our migrants. It is an urgent need to have at least one Syro-Malabar priest, appointed as official chaplain in each of these countries.

### **India:**

#### **Hyderabad/ Secunderabad**

The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad have a big Syro-Malabar concentration, which is about 30000. But not even a personal parish has been erected for the Syro-Malabar Church there. Besides, no Syro-Malabar priest is officially appointed as parish priest or chaplain with proper recommendation of the Major Archbishop. What is urgently needed is

the appointment of a Co-ordinator with some legal standing to co-ordinate the pastoral activities of the chaplains.

### **Trichy:**

In Trichy there is no officially appointed Syro-Malabar chaplain, but the pastoral activities are coordinated by student priests. The community there registered a society under the name St. Thomas community and under the leadership Fr. Jomon Puthenkalm, from the Diocese of Palghat, collected an amount for purchasing a plot of land for the office of this registered society. Now Fr. Anto Keettikkal from the Diocese of Palghat is coordinating the pastoral activities there with the help of other student priests there.

### **Umergaon**

There are 23 families at Umergaon, in the Diocese of Baroda. They had been insistently demanding the part time service of Syro-Malabar priest for their pastoral needs but the local Ordinary has refused to accept their request. They have to arrange the service of Syro-Malabar priests from neighbouring places for their pastoral needs.

### **Syro-Malabar Mission Year 2011-2012**

From the time of the preparation of the action plan for the Mission Year the Commission has devoted much of its energy for the success of the year. The major concentration of the Commission during the year has been on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Mission Year at various levels of the Church. Our migrant communities in abroad and India have organized many programmes in connection with the Mission Year. The Commission took the initiative to conduct Mission Quiz, Essay competitions etc in different mission centers. Since a separate report is presented on the Mission Year programmes we do not mention them in it.

### **Programmes Planned**

- Global meet in July 2013
- Directory of the migrant communities
- Orientation classes for chaplains
- Orientation classes for catechism teachers in collaboration with the Commission for catechism
- Follow up programmes of the Mission Year in parishes, formation centers, Institutes of consecrated Life and Mission Eparchies

### **Conclusion**

During the year 2011-2012 the Commission was trying to systematize the pastoral care activities for the migrants. Besides, we were also exploring new ways for mission animation in the mother Church as a follow up of the Mission Year. May we take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop, all the members of the Synod of Bishops, members and staff of Mount St. Thomas, the Major Archiepiscopal Curia for the support and encouragement that they extended to the Commission in the year 2011-2012. Sincere thanks also go to the Major

Archbishop, Archbishops/Bishops and Superior Generals and Provincials who have generously lent the service of some of their best priests for the pastoral care of the migrants.



Bishop Sebastian Vadakel  
Chairman  
Mar Stock Palathara CMI  
Mar Antony Chirayath  
(Episcopal Members)



Fr. Jose Cheriampanatt MST  
Secretary