

A Report of the Activities of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants (Summary)

We are happy to present a brief report of the activities of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants (CEPCM) for the period from Sept 2010 to Aug 2011.

Commission Meetings

During the period between Sept 2010- Aug 2012 the Commission met 5 times to discuss issues related to the pastoral care of the migrants in India and abroad. Besides, the Secretary keeps 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 preparations for the Mission Year.

Besides, the Commission has been also 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 were sent to all the faithful through email.

Approved Centers of Marriage Preparation Courses outside the Syro-Malabar Eparchies

The Commission has given approval to the 'Marriage Preparation Course' conducted by the following centers: Austria, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore

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 highlighting the concerns and challenges of the pastoral care of our migrants in the various parts India and abroad was submitted to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of the Migrants and Itinerant people on the occasion of the ad limina visit of the Syro-Malabar bishops in April-May 2011.

Appointments of Co-ordinators, Pastors and Extension of Terms

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

Abroad:

Rev. Fr. Varghese Konthuruthy (IJK)- Diocese of Nottingham, UK
Rev. Fr. Paul Payyapilly (TCR)- Diocese of Cork and Ross, Ireland
Rev. Fr. Antony Perumayan (EKM)- Diocese of Down and Connor, Ireland

Rev. Fr. Andrews Maliekal (IJK) (Saudi Arabia)
Rev. Fr. Biju Ammiyanickal (TLY) –Saudi Arabia
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Chamakkala (CHY)- Saudi Arabia
Rev. Fr. Peter Kavumpuram MST- Diocese of Melbourne, Australia

India

Rev. Fr. Thomas Kalariparampil (KTHM) –Goa
Rev. Fr. Joseph Thekkel VC- Diocese of Aurangabad
Rev. Fr. Thayyanattuvelil VC- Diocese of Vijayawada
Rev. Fr. Joby Kachapilly (PKD)-Diocese of Salem

Proposed Names for Ministry Abroad

The Commission had contacted various dioceses in Europe 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 few places. The following priests are presented by the Major Archbishop for ministry abroad.

Rev. Fr. Fredy Elavuthingal (TCR)- Diocese of Adelaide, Australia
Rev. Fr. Paul Chalissery (TCR)- Diocese of Middlesbrough, UK
Rev. Fr. Jose Bharanikulangara (EKM)- Archdiocese of Armagh, Ireland
Rev. Fr. Thomas Alukka (EKM), Diocese of Wollongong, Australia
Rev. Fr. Jaison Karippai (IJK)- Archdiocese of Birmingham, UK
Rev. Fr. Sebastian Thuruthipillil (KTHM)- Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, UK
Rev. Fr. Joseph Thayil (MVY)-Archdiocese of Westminster, UK
Rev. Fr. Joseph Vembadamthara VC- Diocese of Motherwell, UK
Rev. Fr. Thomas Thaikootathil MST -Diocese of Salford, UK
Rev. Fr. Binesh Joseph CST- Diocese of Darwin, Australia

Syro-Malabar Mission Year 2011-2012

As per the direction of the XVIII Synod of bishops (session/2) held in August 2010 the Commission had facilitated the preparation of the action plan for the celebration of the Syro-Malabar Mission Year with due consultation at various levels. This Action plan was presented in the Synod held in January 2011 and the Synod approved the action plan with few modifications. The five member Episcopal Central Organizing Committee appointed by the Synod consisting of three Commission members and Bishops Arackal Mathew and Raphael Thattil met 3 times and expanded the committee to 40 inducting representatives from priests, religious and lay faithful. This Central Organizing Committee had already three meetings at Mount St. Thomas. It constituted 10 other Committees to assist it and assigned to them definite tasks. Intense preparations are afoot at various levels for the celebration of the Mission Year. Success of the Mission Year will depend on the combined and untied efforts of the whole Church at all levels, during the coming year.

Developments in the Migrant centers in India:

Erection of Personal Parishes in Aurangabad, Vijayawada, Salem and Surat

Syro-Malabar personal parishes are erected in the Latin Dioceses of Aurangabad, Vijayawada, Salem and Surat by the respective Ordinaries of these dioceses and on the recommendation of the Major Archbishop Syro-Malabar pastors are appointed as parish priests. Through the mediation and reconciliatory efforts of Bishop Jose Chittooparampil the two Syro-Malabar groups in Surat have been reconciled and Bishop Godfrey of Baroda has blessed the chapel at Pandessara built by the community under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Benny Thonikuzhy MST. On the recommendation of the Major Archbishop, Bishop Godfrey has appointed Rev. Fr. Joy Manickanamparampil CMI of the Chavara Province, Bhavnagar as the parish priest for a period of three years. The parish there will have now 3 centers for the Holy Qurbana. The Commission sincerely thanks Bishop Chittooparampil for his efforts and wishes the community there all the best.

Our present concerns and Pressing Needs

Arabian Gulf: The situation of about 400,000 Syro-Malabar faithful living scattered in the different Arabian Gulf Countries remain the same. No proper pastoral care arrangements are made for the faithful in any of these countries. Two recent developments in this region are of special importance to our Church. Recently the boundaries of the two Vicariates have been reorganized into Vicariate of Southern Arabia (UAE, Oman and Yemen) under bishop Paul Hinder and Vicariate of Northern Arabia (Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia) under Bishop Camillio Ballin. Recently Bp Camillio Ballin appointed Fr Mathew Kunnelpurayidon OCD as Co-ordinator of the Syro-Malabar Church in Kuwait on the recommendation of the Major Archbishop. We are waiting for the results of these arrangements. It is urgent that the Syro-Malabar Church has at least an Exarchate in Gulf Countries to attend to the pastoral care of our faithful.

Europe: In Italy, a National Co-ordinator and a few chaplains are appointed for the Syro-Malabar faithful. But the community is not yet organized well into a well knit Church. 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. But in many dioceses in UK, Syro-Malabar chaplains have been appointed with proper recommendation. What UK and other European countries urgently need is the appointment of national Co-ordinators with some legal standing to co-ordinate the pastoral activities of the chaplains.

Singapore: 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. Although the community has been asking for the appointment of a Syro-Malabar priest as their pastor and the Commission had discussed the issue with the bishop personally and had made a formal written request, the bishop has not yet accepted the request. The Syro-Malabar community, however, is getting organized there.

India:

Hyderabad: The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad have a big Syro-Malabar concentration of about 30,000, yet not even a personal parish is erected for the Syro-Malabar Church there. There are no officially appointed priests to care for the pastoral needs of our migrants in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Recently our community constructed Syro-Malabar cultural centre at Kukatpally (Secunderabad) and purchased a plot of land of 62 cents at Thumgunda (Secunderabad). They are also in the look out of purchasing landed property in other parts of Syro-Malabar concentration. So for the Archbishop has not given any written permission for the Holy Qurbana centers and for the starting of catechism classes.

Trichy: There is no officially appointed Syro-Malabar priest. The pastoral activities are coordinated by student priests from the diocese of Palghat. 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.

Bangalore, Delhi, Chennai: The chaplains and the faithful in these cities are eagerly waiting for the establishment of the eparchies in these cities.

Inflow of Unauthorized Preachers, Parallel Lay Associations:

Inflow of unauthorized preachers and the rivalry among lay parallel associations claiming Syro-Malabar official representation are causing confusion and serious problems in many of the migrant communities abroad.

Conclusion

During the year 2010-2011 the Commission was trying to systematize the pastoral care activities for the migrants. We are also exploring new ways for mission animation in the mother Church during the Mission Year. May we take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Mar. Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the late Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar George Alencherry, the present 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 2010-2011. Sincere thanks also to the bishops and the Major Archbishop who have generously lent the service of some of their best priests for the pastoral care of the migrants.

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel
Chairman

Fr. Jose Cheriampanatt mst
Secretary

Mar Stock Palathara CMI
Mar Antony Chirayath
(Episcopal Members)