



Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST (Chairman)
Fr. Sebastian Joseph Muttamthottil, MCBS (Secretary)

Archbishop Mathew Moolakkattu, OSB (Member)
Bishop Mathew Arackal (Member)

MISSION CONSULTATION AT SATNA - 17 JULY 2018

REPORT

The Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants organized three Mission Consultations in the context of the recent ecclesiastical provisions of erection of the two Eparchies (Hosur and Shamshabad) and extension of the two existing Eparchies (Ramanathapuram and Thucklai) that has posed new challenges and provided new opportunities of ‘*ad gentes* mission’ for the Syro-Malabar Church. The letter of the Holy Father Pope Francis to all the bishops of India is a reminder that obliges us to think why “In India, even after many centuries, Christians are only a small proportion of the population.” Pope’s request to all “the beloved Churches in India to be generous and courageous in witnessing to the Gospel in the spirit of fraternity and mutual love” is also an invitation to accelerate the missionary activities of Indian Church. Along with this, the Synod of the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, held from 8 to 13 January 2018 has requested all to extend their generous support for works of evangelization mission. The Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, in his Circular after the first Session of the XXVI Synod of Bishops of 2018, also writes, “The right for evangelization and pastoral care throughout the country given to the Syro-Malabar Church is a great opportunity for intensification of the evangelization mission of the Church in India.” It was in this context the entire faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church put our heads together and reflected over how to respond to this new situation as a Church to reflect over this topic and make proper plan of action for the ‘*ad gentes* mission’ in India.

The third Mission Consultation was held on 17 July 2018 at Edessa Pastoral Centre, Satna. The invitees were the Protosyncelli/Syncelli/Mission Coordinators of the Syro-Malabar Eparchies outside the *territorium proprium* in India and the Major Superiors/Mission Superiors/Mission Councillors of the Institutes of Consecrated Life who work outside the *territorium proprium* in India. There were 67 participants who represented the Eparchies and the Institutes of the Consecrated Life including three bishops - Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST, Chairman of the Commission and of the Eparchy of Ujjain, Mar Joseph Kodakallil of the Eparchy of Satna and Mar Joseph Kollamparampil CMI of the Eparchy of Jagdalpur.

The Meeting began at 9.30 a.m. with the invocation of God through a prayer dance performed by the candidates of the SH Study House, Pateri, Satna. In the welcome address, Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS, Secretary of the Commission spoke about the purpose of the meeting and welcomed all the participants to the meeting. Mar Joseph Kodakallil, Bishop of Satna, lighted the lamp and inaugurated the Mission Consultation. In his inaugural address, quoting the words of Pope Francis, Bishop Kodakallil reminded the participants of their responsibility to preach the Gospel in the whole world. He invited the members to think seriously, to chalk out strategies and plan out programs to reach out to the peripheries and to be more effective in evangelization.

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Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST, in his Presidential Address, set the missionaries on fire. We were requesting or fighting for all India Jurisdiction which means pastoral care of the migrants and evangelization everywhere in India, he said. Now through the Letter of Pope Francis to all the bishops of India, Christ's commission to preach the Gospel is open for three Individual Churches. He asked all to take up and own up the responsibility to preach the Gospel in co-operation and mutual sharing. He made the group aware that the missionary method should be different in different places.

It's a new opening, a new opportunity also it poses many new challenges, said Mar Joseph Kollamparampil CMI, Bishop of Jagdalpur in his felicitation which was followed by self-introduction by the participants.

After tea break at 10.45, Fr. Thomas Chirapurath CMI gave an orientation talk. He said that 'the joy of the Gospel' was brought to India by St. Thomas in the first century itself. With the erection of Chanda mission, it was a "second spring" for evangelization in the Syro-Malabar Church. Quoting the words of Pope Francis, he said, evangelization is first and foremost result of personal encounter with Jesus which is the source of inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. He then explained the 'mission methodology' of late Bishop Januarius which became a model for Chanda missionaries.

In the sharing session, missionaries from different mission areas shared their experiences in the field, and their views and opinions regarding the new approach in the context of having freedom for pastoral care and evangelization in the whole India. The main aspiration expressed in the sharing was the need of a school of evangelization with our specific patrimony for training of catechists and lay groups in the mission area.

The afternoon session was meant to plan out our future ministry in the mission area. The freedom of Syro-Malabar Church for evangelization all over India is a new phenomenon. Since some areas like Punjab and Telangana are fertile for evangelization, we shall concentrate our energy in such places. Our approach or policy can be 'beat the rod when it is hot'.

Proposals by the Participants

1. The present missionary activities have a distorted vision of having institutions and of giving priority in giving education forgetting the spirituality.
2. There is a strong need to come out from the comfort zone and to go the peripheries.
3. We must change the mode of evangelization. We need prayer centres than mission centres/institutions. Without prayer, other works will be futile. We shall have also centres for the adoration of the Eucharis which is the source and summit of all missionary activities. When we pray in the centres, the non-Christians request our prayers.
4. There shall be training centres to experience the power of the Spirit.

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5. We need to stop Malayalam in mission areas and should have language of the place in order to have baptized local communities.
6. Common Training Centre for the missionaries is a need. Besides, a centre for training laity in *ad gentes* territory or a Regional Training Centre for the Catechists also is needed. We shall have also a School of Evangelization with our own patrimony
7. There should be unity in liturgy, and in the name of unity, we shall not go for uniformity.
8. In the present context, there are anxieties of getting vocations from the mission areas.
9. The irony of evangelization mission by the Syro-Malabar missionaries and baptism in the Latin Church is to be addressed.
10. Christian presence and witness through personal integrity is the way of evangelization where there is hostility towards Christians.
11. Christubhaktas are to be promoted.
12. When we run the institutions, can we not concentrate on the local village schools and improve their quality?
13. Direct evangelization shall be done wherever it is possible and it needs the strength of intercessory prayers.
14. Provide more materials for the people in the mission areas like the Bible, pious articles, etc.
15. A Marriage bureau for the mission area shall be organized.
16. There is a strong felt need of a shift from institutions to evangelization.
17. We shall have, as far as possible, inculturation or cultural adaptations.
18. We shall not imitate or replicate the Latin Church in evangelization; have a unique way of evangelization.
19. We need to listen the people first what they have to say and then act for them.
20. Our social works are to be evaluated and there is a need of going to the peripheries.
21. Every institution shall adopt tribal schools and educate the tribals.
22. A WhatsApp group shall be set up for easy communication and we shall use the Media for propagating our works.
23. There is a need of conducting a seminar explaining, especially to the sisters, the significance and nature of the present context of having Syro-Malabar Jurisdiction all over India (vs All India Jurisdiction).
24. We shall gather opinions on mission from all the faithful – priests, religious and laity.
25. SMRC units shall be set up in every eparchy.
26. What does the Eparchy of Shamshabad expect from other Eparchies and Institutes of Consecrated Life?

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27. There are instances of lay movements started in the Syro-Malabar Church and later hijacked by the Latin Church. They find more freedom and better support from the Latin authorities. Is it not because of our attitude towards them?
28. We shall empower the laity in evangelization mission.
29. The Church should make the lay faithful aware that they are also obliged with the duty of evangelization. We shall train them to evangelize in their own life situations.
30. We must be cautious not to have conflicts among the Churches in evangelizing.
31. There are issues for the Syro-Malabar Congregations working in the Latin dioceses. If they help the Syro-Malabar Church, they will lose all their institutions and will not be allowed to admit candidates. Bishops have already blocked our sisters from admitting the candidates from the Latin dioceses. How to manage such challenges before our Congregations when they help our mission? Besides, we need to support our own Congregations in the new situation by providing daily Holy Qurbana, spiritual assistance, etc.
32. Why we insist Syro-Malabar liturgy for the Latin candidates?
33. Problem of using Malayalam in Liturgy and other prayers in the mission areas. The young go away from our parishes and frequent Latin parishes where they can follow the language. Therefore, need of using the language of the locality in the liturgy and other prayers is to be addressed.
34. There shall be awareness programme at parish level for the laity on the mission.
35. We need to combine the Syro-Malabar heritage and culture of the place in evangelization.
36. We shall have a Team to help the missionaries in crisis like attack. We should contact with some high officials at central level to have such a team.

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel concluded the session emphasising the crucial importance of prayer and personal encounter with Jesus. As the Church is missionary in nature, we are called to preach the Word of God in season and out of season.

Sr. Praveena CSN expressed gratitude to the bishops, to the participants and to all those who worked for the success of this mission consultation. The meeting was concluded at 4.15 p.m. with the blessing of the Bishops.

Bp. Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST, Chairman
Abp. Mar Mathew Moolakkatt OSB, Member
Bp. Mar Mathew Arackal, Member

Fr. Sebastian Joseph Muttamthottil MCBS,
(Secretary)
Sr. Praveena CSN, Office-Secretary

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