



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)

SYRO-MALABAR MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL COMMISSION FOR EVANGELIZATION AND PASTORAL CARE OF THE MIGRANTS

REPORT: September 2017 - August 2018

INTRODUCTION

We are happy to present a short report on the activities of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants (CEPCM) from September 2017 to August 2018. Some observations and suggestions are given at the end for the consideration of the Synod.

1. MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION MEMBERS

The Commission members met thrice in meeting between September 2017 and August 2018 along with the secretaries, at Mount St. Thomas, to discuss the new situation in India after the new canonical provision for evangelization and pastoral care in the whole country and the issues related to the pastoral care of the migrants abroad. The Commission decided to organize three Mission Consultations inviting those in charge of the evangelization / mission *ad gentes* in Eparchies, Institutes of Consecrated Life and representatives of lay missionary associations.

2. MISSION CONSULTATIONS

The Commission organized the proposed three Mission Consultations, two at Mount St. Thomas and one at Satna, in the months of April, June and July and discussed the possibilities and challenges in the light of the erection of the two eparchies (Hosur and Shamshabad) and the extension of the territories of the two existing Eparchies (Ramanathapuram and Thucklai). The Commission invited representatives of the entire faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church to reflect on how to respond to this new situation as a Church and to make proper plan of action for the '*ad gentes* mission' in India.

2.1. MISSION CONSULTATION AT MOUNT ST. THOMAS ON 27 APRIL 2018,

The first Mission Consultation was held on 27 April 2018 at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad. The invitees were the priests, brothers and sisters who are in-charge of evangelization / mission *ad gentes* in the Syro-Malabar Eparchies in the '*territorium proprium*' and in the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of the Syro-Malabar Church, or the Syro-Malabar Provinces in Kerala. There were 45 participants from different Eparchies and Institutes of Consecrated Life.

The meeting began with a prayer session led by Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS, Secretary of the Commission and Sr. Praveena CSN, the Office Secretary. Bp. Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST, the Chairman of the Commission welcomed all to the meeting, requesting all to reflect on how to advance and coordinate our mission work in this new context and in the territories having different languages, culture and life style. The Major Archbishop, Mar George Cardinal Alencherry lighted the lamp and inaugurated the meeting. In his inaugural address, he spoke of the role of the Commission to coordinate the evangelization activities of the whole Syro-Malabar Church. He reminded all the participants of the duty of working together as a Church to make this new provision for evangelization in entire country fruitful.

Bp. Mar Raphael Thattil, Bishop of Shamshabad, requested all to think of the universality of the Church beyond one's own Eparchy or Institute and to come forward for *ad gentes* mission so that the light of faith in us may enlighten all the people in India. Rev. Fr. Paulachan Kochappilly CMI, in his orientation talk, spoke of the external and internal challenges to the evangelization, and the means to overcome them. The former Secretaries of the Commission, Rev Fr. Jose Cheriambanatt MST and Rev. Fr. Shaji Kochupurayil MCBS, also shared their views. The sharing session was followed by 'Discussion and Planning' session. After the concluding message by the Curia Bishop Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal and an appraisal by the Chairman of the Commission Mar Sebastian Vadakel, the meeting concluded with the vote of thanks by Sr. Praveena CSN.

2.2. MISSION CONSULTATION AT MOUNT ST. THOMAS ON 9 JUNE 2018

The second Mission Consultation was held on 9 June 2018 at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad. The invitees were the leaders of the lay associations of the Syro-Malabar Church that are involved in the 'ad gentes mission'. The meeting was in view of exploring ways of more active participation of the lay faithful in the missionary endeavours of the Church. Thirty persons representing AKCC, Christeen, CLC, CML, FIAT Mission, Jesus Youth, Pro-Life, SMYM and Covenant attended the meeting. The meeting began at 10.05 a.m. with a prayer session led by Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS and Sr. Praveena. Bp. Sebastian Vadakel MST welcomed all to the consultation meeting and recognized the role of the laity in the missionary endeavour of the Syro-Malabar Church as collaborators. The Curia Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mar Sebastian Vaniyapurackal inaugurated the Mission Consultation by lighting the lamp. He reminded the participants that the "commission to preach" is an obligation for all the faithful in the Church. The inaugural address was followed by the sharing by Rev. Fr. Jose Cheriambanatt MST. He requested all to pray to the Lord to send the labourers and to be the labourers. After the sharing session, there was time for discussion and planning. Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, in his concluding message, requested the participants to come forward and to cooperate and support the missionary endeavours of our Church/Eparchies/Institutes of Consecrated Life so that our joint missionary efforts may bear abundant fruit. Through constant prayer we shall move the hearts of the people and the light of Faith lit by St. Thomas the Apostle shall light the entire nation. The meeting concluded around 3.45 p.m. with an appraisal by Mar. Sebastian Vadakel and vote of thanks by Sr. Praveena CSN.

2.3. MISSION CONSULTATION AT SATNA ON 17 JULY 2018

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* and the Major Superiors/Mission Superiors/Mission Councillors of the Institutes of Consecrated Life who work outside the *territorium proprium*. There were 67 participants who represented the mission Eparchies and the Institutes of the Consecrated Life

Eparchies	Institute for Men	Institute for Women
Adilabad, Bijnor, Chanda, Faridabad, Gorakhpur, Jagdalpur, Rajkot, Sagar, Satna, Shamshabad, Ujjain	CMI, CST, MCBS, MST, VC	CHF, CMC, CSN, DBS, DM, DP, DST, FCC, MSMI, SABS, SD, SH, SJB

The Meeting began at 9.30 a.m. with a prayer dance. Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS, Secretary of the Commission, welcomed all 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, Bp. Mar Joseph Kodakallil reminded the group of their responsibility to preach the Gospel in the whole world and invited the members to think seriously, to chalk out strategies and to plan out programs to reach out to the peripheries and to be more effective in evangelization. Mar Sebastian Vadakel MST, in his Presidential Address, reminded everyone of the duty to work for evangelization in the whole of India. This is important as the Church has received the right for which she was requesting for and as Christ's commission to preach the Gospel is equally open to all the three Individual Churches in India. Bp. Mar Joseph Kollamparampil CMI, in his felicitation address, asked all to work enthusiastically at this new opening and new opportunity. After the self-introduction by the participants, Rev. Dr. Thomas Chirapurath CMI spoke, basing own the mission experience in Chanda, the first mission Eparchy of the Syro-Malabar Church, and 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 experience in the field and their views and opinions regarding the new approach in the context. The afternoon session was to plan out our future ministry in the mission area. Bishop Sebastian Vadakel concluded the session emphasising the crucial importance of prayer and personal encounter with Jesus for the evangelizing mission. 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 concluded with the blessing of the Bishops at 4.15 p.m.

2.4. Observations and Suggestions from the Consultations

Following are the main observations and suggestions that the participants made during the consultations.

2.4.1. Awareness Programme: The participants stressed the need of conducting mission awareness programs for the parish priests, the youth, the students, the catechism teachers and other sections of the faithful. They stressed the need to:-

- Remove the distorted vision on the mission 'ad gentes' and to give them real understanding of the mission activities.
- Help the parish priests, to know the mission areas closely and to give the priests opportunities to visit the missions.
- Give all the priests at least three-year compulsory service in the mission areas.
- Take interested families to the mission areas for personal mission experience.
- Encourage mission visits at forane or eparchial level.
- Appoint the priests with mission experience as parish priests.
- Arrange mission meetings in the missions.
- Organize the lay faithful to visit the mission to have direct mission exposure once.
- Encourage missionaries during their home visits to preach on missions in the parishes.
- Prepare newsletters on the missions and to make the people aware of the mission centres and the activities there.
- Conduct seminars especially for the religious sisters to explain the significance and nature of the recently received canonical provision for the Syro-Malabar Church, especially in India.
- Gather opinions on the mission from all the faithful – priests, religious and laity.

- Give mission awareness to the seminarians, the catechism teachers and the youth and in the parishes through exposure programs, sharing and visits.

2.4.2. Training for the Mission – All the three consultations suggested the need of ongoing training for all the missionaries.

- Form a mission team and start an Institute or a Common Training Centre for the training of missionaries at the central level (both for the consecrated and the laity).
- Need of training to the laity in the preaching of the Word of God.
- Training centres to experience the power of the Spirit in the works of evangelization mission.
- Need of a centre for training laity in *ad gentes* mission and of Regional Training Centres for the Catechists.
- Start a School of Evangelization faithful to the Syro-Malabar heritage and culture.

2.4.3. Strengthening CML: The participants of the Consultations wanted that the CML be strengthened to revive the missionary spirit among the people. They remembered with gratitude the contributions of CML to the mission through prayers and support by encouraging vocations to the missions, financial support and mission visits.

- Good to prepare full timers from the CML for the missions as the 'Jesus Youth' does.
- Enkindle the mission spirit in the children through CML and its activities like *pidiyari*, mission collection, etc.

2.4.4. Empowerment of the Laity: The participants stated the necessity of empowering and recognizing the lay faithful in the Church, especially for the missions.

- Recognize the laity in the ecclesial forums and engage the laity and their resources for the entire Church.
- Make the lay faithful aware of their duty of evangelization and train them to evangelize in their own life situations.
- Trust the laity and make them collaborators. Motivate them to acquire top positions in the government level like IAS or Civil Services through which Christian values are conveyed.
- Channelize the charisms of different lay associations and organizations for the mission.
- Give formation to the laity for working in the mission.
- Take the lay leaders to the missions.
- Arrange opportunities for the interested couples to work in the missions.
- Use the service of the retired people for the missions.
- Involve all the lay missionary movements started in the Syro-Malabar Church but later affiliated to the Latin Church. Why didn't they find space within our Church? Is it because they found more freedom and better support from the Latin authorities? Is it not because of our attitude towards them?
- Consider the faithful and their children in our own institutions for job and education.
- Think of the possibility of having a Youth Mission Service link for free service in the missions.
- Conduct the gatherings of the youth in the missions.
- Find out the reasons why the youth go away from the Church, and try to involve them in the life of the Church.

2.4.5. Language of the Place: The participants stressed the importance of using the local language in Liturgy and para- liturgical prayers.

- The use of Malayalam in Liturgy and other prayers in the mission areas is to be discouraged.
- Make the study of the languages of the mission areas part of the seminary curriculum.
- Missionaries should use the local language as means of communication in the missions. That will make the local Christians feel at home in the Church.

2.4.6. Uniformity in the Liturgy: The participants underlined the necessity of uniform model of celebrating liturgy wherever the Syro-Malabar Church is present. Besides, the differences in the Liturgy divide the Syro-Malabar migrants into different groups.

2.4.7. Support for the Mission: The participants also stressed the need of supporting our missions through prayer, money and personnel. It is important that:

- We should think and act beyond one's own parish/Eparchy/Institute.
- Each parish/forane praying for a mission centre/an Eparchy in the mission.
- The Church in Kerala should support the Church in the missions with money and personnel.
- Efforts should be made to provide more copies of Bible in the local languages and other religious materials for the people in the mission areas.
- To strengthen the mission funding institute at the Major Archiepiscopal level.

2.4.8. Vocations to the Missions: The participants of the consultation expressed their concern over the decrease in the number of vocations to the missions. They suggested to:

- Channelize vocations to the missions.
- Change the practice of taking 'the best' for the eparchies in Kerala and giving the remaining for the mission eparchies.
- Send only those who have passion for mission, to mission areas.
- Find out the reasons why parents are not sending the children to missions.
- Prepare a textbook on the mission and teach it as an auxiliary catechetical text.
- Conduct vocation camps and have vocation banks at Eparchial level.
- The topic of the Syro-Malabar Congregations working in the Latin dioceses also came up for discussion. It was noted that there are cases of conflicts in the areas of vocation promotion and in the management of their own institutions. Such situations require the mediation of the hierarchy. There are situations where the Latin bishops deny the admission of candidates from their dioceses to Syro-Malabar Institutes, especially in the new context. In some dioceses, bishops have already blocked the Syro-Malabar sisters from admitting such candidates to their institutes.

2.4.9. Use of Modern Media: The urgency of using social media for evangelization was felt by the participants. They proposed

- To propagate Christian ideas and values through social media.
- To give a clear picture of the issues or situations when the Church is attacked.
- To make the society aware of the works of the missionaries in the missions.
- To publish the lives of saints for the use of children and to conduct retreats for them.

2.4.10. Institutions: The participants evaluated the evangelizing role of our institutions and felt the need of a change in our attitude towards the institutions in the missions. They observed,

- The need of a shift from institutions to direct evangelization.
- At present there is an overemphasis on the institutions and educational activities, forgetting the spiritual dimensions.

- The missionaries should come out of the comfort zone of institutions and go to the people in the peripheries.
- It is important to evaluate whether the institutions of the Church enhance the faith or they become counter witness to the faith and Christian values.
- The big institutions in the cities should support the village schools and other village activities.
- The participants suggested that every big institution should adopt a tribal/village school and educate the tribals / village children.
- Missionaries need to focus more on direct evangelization than on social work.

2.4.11. Other Suggestions

- Revisit the Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church. It needs urgent revision as the situation has changed
- Do direct evangelization wherever it is possible.
- Need to start a Commission for Charismatic Renewal in the Syro-Malabar Church.
- Church needs to seriously consider and promptly act against the scandals caused by priests and religious.
- There should be many opportunities for the faithful of all sections to come together, know each other and discuss common issues that affect the Church. Arrange such gatherings of the associations and organizations at least once in a year.
- Consider the situations in which the Syro-Malabar missionaries work for the evangelization but baptisms, done in the Latin Church.
- There is a need for extending the Syro-Malabar Marriage Bureau to the mission areas.
- Form SMRC units in every eparchy.
- Be careful not to create conflicts among the Churches in the evangelizing work.
- Constitute a team at Church level to help the missionaries in crisis like attack. Such a team can contact high officials at central level and reach help immediately.

3. PASTORAL CARE OF THE MIGRANTS.

The Syro-Malabar Church has sizable migrant communities in the Gulf countries, Singapore and South Africa. The situation in the Gulf region and in Singapore is very alarming. Our faithful report that they are not given freedom ‘to worship according to the prescriptions of the Syro-Malabar Church and to follow their own form of spiritual life,’ as per the common law of (CCEO c. 17). Besides, they complain that the Bishops of the place do not give due consideration to the Syro-Malabar Church, even though they at times support some groups or individuals. Consequently, our Syro-Malabar faithful are divided among ourselves. Though the Commission is maintaining contacts with the migrant communities there, the Commission has limitations to visit our faithful due to the indifference or non-support from the ecclesiastical authority in those regions. The invitation to priests from Kerala/India given by the communities provokes the Hierarchs there.

3.1. The situation in the **Gulf Countries**, especially in Qatar, needs immediate attention. The Syro-Malabar Church in Doha is the result of the hard work of our faithful. Now, as the faithful there are divided into different groups, these divisions are used by the hierarchy and the priests-in-charge against our own faithful. If the situation continues, the fruit of hard work of our faithful will be wasted. Several representatives from Qatar came to Mount St. Thomas individually and in

groups to visit the Major Archbishops and other concerned Bishops. There was one such meeting of the representatives at Mount St. Thomas in the presence of the Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alencherry on 11 May 2018 at 9.15 a.m. The other attendees were

	Names	Designation
1	Bishop Sebastian Vadakel MST	Chairman, CEPCM
2	Bishop Mathew Arackal	Chairman, Commission for Family, Laity and Life
3	Bishop Remigios Inchananiyil	Bishop Delegate for AKCC
4	Bishop Sebastian Vaniyapurackal	Curia Bishop
5	Fr. Antony Kollannur	Major Archiepiscopal Chancellor
6	Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS	Secretary, CEPCM
7	Mr. Siby Vaniyapurackal	Founder Chairman of IDCC & Founder President of SMCA
8	Mr. Francis Thekkethala	Local Coordinator
9	Chev. Dr. Mohan Thomas	SMCA Gulf Coordinator
10	Mr. Davis Edakalathur	President, Laity
11	Mr. Jose Kavalam	Founder Member of Church
12	Mr. Clarence Elavathingal	Coordinator, IDCC
13	Mr. Joy Antony	President, SMCA
14	Mr. K.P Kurian	Current Trustee
15	Mr. Sunny Mathew	Secretary, Parish Council, Doha

They presented their grievances and anxieties and asked the support of the authorities of the Church in their struggle. They demanded steps to solve the division between SMCA and Laity so that the Latin hierarchy does not take advantage of it. The position of the Church on SMCA was made clear to them. The SMCA is the officially approved lay association in Gulf and it should function as a unit of Syro-Malabar Catholic Congress. Other associations should also merge with Catholic Congress and function as SMCA.

3.2. The migrant faithful in **Singapore** were also longing for a priest of our own Church to provide pastoral care for them. Recently, the Archdiocese of Singapore has appointed Rev. Fr. Antony Kuttianickal CMI as chaplain of 'the Malayalam Community'. SMCCS is trying to organize Syro-Malabar catechism classes and other faith formation programs in the community. The Commission is planning also a visit to the Syro-Malabar Community in Singapore.

3.3. The Syro-Malabar faithful living in **South Africa** are gradually being formed as a community. Rv. Fr. Albin Paul Nallakkutt, serving in the Archdiocese of Pretoria as the Chaplain of the Syro Malabar Community there, is trying his best for the formation of the Syro-Malabar Community in different places. Fr. Jomon Nelluvely was sent there, but he had to return due to health and personal reasons. In his place, Fr. Joseph Banglavuparambil, belonging to the Archieparchy of Changanacherry, has started his ministry as the chaplain of the Syro-Malabar faithful living in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg.

4. Certain Important Suggestions for the Consideration of the Synod

- 4.1. The '*Ad Gentes* Mission' of the Syro Malabar Church in India, and abroad needs to be given greater attention. The faithful have to be encouraged to support the mission through prayers, personnel, and resources.
- 4.2. The CML has to be strengthened in all the eparchies. Through CML the missionary spirit in the faithful, especially the children and the youth and vocations to the missions, can be promoted.

- 4.3. Better collaboration of the laity shall be sought in the evangelizing mission of the Church. The lay missionary movements need be encouraged and trained to support the Church's missionary efforts.
- 4.4. Church shall arrange missionary training programmes for the priests, religious and lay missionaries of our church.
- 4.5. Syro Malabar Priests shall be given the opportunities to serve in the missions for at least one term, so that they get enriched and the missions get the service and support of the Priests from the home eparchies.
- 4.6. The Church needs to intensify the efforts to provide proper pastoral care to the Syro-Malabar faithful in the Arabian Gulf Countries. Immediate attention has to be given to keep the unity among our faithful in the Gulf Countries.
- 4.7. The 'Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church has to be revisited and revised at the earliest.
- 4.8. Church should open various centres for the training of lay missionaries in the mission areas.

5. FINANCIAL STATUS.

Pastoral Care of The Migrants
Income & Expenditure
From 1 April 2017 to 31 July 2018

Receipts

Bank Interest : 30,440.00

Expenditure

Machinery & Equipments	:	520.00
Miscellaneous	:	5,200.00
Mission Exhibition	:	1,68,500.00
Mission Seminar	:	1,11,261.00
Office Exp.	:	45,976.00
Postage	:	524.00
Printing Charge	:	6,522.00
Salary & Allowances	:	1,87,000.00
Telephone charges	:	4,829.00
Travelling Expense	:	8,000.00
Vehicle Insurance	:	1,037.00
Vehicle repair	:	<u>280.00</u>

Total : 5,39,649.00

Total Income

Previous Balance : 14,57,869.00

Income of 2017 – 2018 : 30,440.00

: 14,88,309.00

Balance:

14,88,309.00 –

5,39,649.00

9,48,660.00

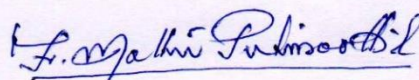
Fixed Deposit : 3,00,000.00

F.C. Account : 5,75,572.00

SB A/C : 71,908.00

” ” : 1,180.00

Total Balance : 9,48,660.00



Fr. Mathew Pulimootil
Finance Officer

TRUSTEE & FINANCE OFFICER
SYRO - MALABAR
MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCH
MOUNT ST. THOMAS, KAKKANAD P.O.

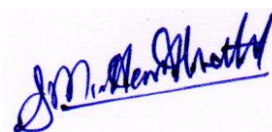
CONCLUSION

The Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants has been trying to coordinate the '*ad gentes*' mission of the Church better, especially in the context of the recent canonical provisions in India. It organized three mission consultations in view of this collaboration and coordination. The enthusiasm shown by the participants was very positive. The whole hearted cooperation of all, especially of the Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala, was felt as a must for the success of the evangelizing mission of the Church in the whole country. During this period the Commission was also trying to coordinate the pastoral care of the migrant communities in Gulf countries, Singapore and South Africa better, but could not succeed much. Some solution for the gulf situation has to come at the top hierarchical level from the Church. The Commission kept up contacts with the migrant communities and tried to encourage them and guide them in their difficulties.

May we take this opportunity to extend our sincere gratitude to Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop, and all the members of the Synod of Bishops for your guidance, support and prayers. We express our sincere thanks to the members and staff of Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas, for the support and encouragement extended to the Commission in 2017-2018. The Commission gratefully remembers the dedicated service of Sr. Praveena CSN, the office secretary and Fr. Sebastian Muttamthottil MCBS the Secretary for their dedicated service throughout the year.



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