

Report of the Activities of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants

What follows is 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 to Dec 2010. At the end we have highlighted some of the serious problems and regions that call for immediate attention.

Guidelines for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

As per the direction of the Synod of bishops, the Commission has facilitated the preparation of draft guidelines for the apostolate of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in other *sui iuris* Churches, keeping up the ecclesial identity. It was prepared with the help of a drafting committee of eight persons with Father George Thachan, the Vicar General of CMI as the convener. The Committee has incorporated the suggestions and feelings expressed by the major superiors during the two meetings organized by the commission. It awaits discussion in the Synod and the approval by the Major Archbishop.

Meetings of the Commission

The Commission met four times during this period to discuss various issues. Besides, the Commission held regular consultation through online correspondence.

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

The Commission has given approval to the 'Marriage Preparation Course' conducted by the following centers,

Outside India: Austria, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia

Within India- Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore

Orientation Classes for Priests engaged in Pastoral Care

As per the direction of the Synod held in January 2010, a few orientation classes for priests engaged in pastoral care of the migrants have already been conducted. The first orientation class was conducted for the priests working in the Western Region in India, (the Archdiocese of Goa and Daman, the dioceses of Baroda and Ahmedabad), at Kripa Training Centre, Ujjain, M. P. Orientation classes were also held for priests ministering in UK and Australia.

Developments in the Migrant centers in India:

Aurangabad:

A community of above 100 families is getting organized at Aurangabad. The Bishop of Aurangabad has agreed to erect a personal parish for the Syro-Malabar faithful in the diocese and the Major Archbishop has presented Fr. Paul Manithottil VC for appointment as parish priest of the personal parish.

Ahmedabad

Syro-Malabar Catholic Association Gujrat has been approved by the local Bishop and it has submitted an application for the approval from the Commission.

Vijayawada

With the request and permission of the Bishop of Vijayawada, the Major Archbishop has presented Rev. Fr. George Thayyanattuvelil VC for appointment as chaplain for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar migrants in the Diocese of Vijayawada.

Visits Abroad

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, the chairman of the Commission, made a visit to UK from 21st Oct to 2nd November 2010. Orientation classes for the Syro-Malabar priests were held in two places in UK, London and Brimingham. About 25 priests participated in them. He visited the Archbishops of Brimingham, Sadak and Westminster. Then he visited Northern Ireland and discussed on the provisions to be made for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar migrants in Ireland. Happy to inform that Fr. Perumayan, from the Archdiocese of Ernakulam Angamaly, has already reached Ireland for appointment in the diocese of Down and Connor. At present there are two Syro-Malabar priests officially appointed in Ireland. Fr. Joseph Karukayail is the other in the Diocese of Derry.

Visit to Australia

The Chairman of the Commission made a visit to the Syro-Malabar migrants in Australia from 27th to 12th October. The local Bishops are in general supportive and extend necessary helps to the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar migrants. After the appointment of Rev. Fr. Francis Kolencherry as the National Co-ordinator of the Syro-Malabar migrants the pastoral activities have become more coordinated. His Excellency visited some of the Archbishops and bishops and discussed the issues related to the pastoral care of our migrants. At Canberra, he ordained a seminarian of Syro-Malabar origin, incardinated to the Archdiocese of Canberra as deacon. Orientation classes for priests were also held.

Visit to Singapore

As part of organising the Syro-Malabar migrants in Singapore, Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, Chairman of the Commission accompanied by Fr. Jose Cheriampanatt, Secretary of CEPCM made a visit to Singapore from 27th Nov to 30th Nov. With the permission of the local Ordinary Syro-Malabar Qurbana was celebrated on 27th November in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Boon Lay in which above 500 Syro-Malabar faithful participated. According to reliable sources 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. Bishop Mar Sebastian Vadakel discussed with the local Bishop the possibility of appointing a full time Syro-Malabar priest for the pastoral care of our migrants, but the Bishop has not yet given any positive reply.

Other Activities/plans

The Commission has been successful in maintaining an effective correspondence with the appointed pastors/chaplain and migrants of the Syro-Malabar Church, principally through e-mail and telephone

calls. Christmas greetings and messages were sent to all the faithful through email. Correspondence is regular with almost all the centres/places/countries of the Syro-Malabar migrants.

Mission Year in the Syro-Malabar Church

In view of preparing the concrete action plan for the celebration of the Syro-Malabar Mission Year the following meetings were held:

1. Meeting of the Bishops outside the Proper Territory- on 23 Aug 2010
2. Meeting of the Diocesan Directors of Mission/Evangelization, Major Seminary Rectors, Diocesan, State and National Directors/ Secretaries of Mission League with Curia Bishop and Chairman of CEPCM (11 Nov. 2010)
3. Meeting of the Major Superiors of the Major Congregations and Societies of Apostolic life with Curia Bishop and Chairman of CEPCM (11Nov.2010)
4. Meeting of Diocesan Directors of Mission/Evangelization, CRI Representatives, 4 Major Seminary Rectors, lay representatives from Mission Eparchies on 17th Dec 2010 at Divya Vani Bhopal.

The Commission then formed a drafting committee consisting of 10 experts engaged in various ministries to prepare a detailed action plan suggesting their long term and short term implications in the mission of the entire Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church. To facilitate this, a meeting of the members of the Drafting Committee was held on 20th Dec 2010 at Mount St. Thomas.

Change of Secretary

Rev. Fr. Justin Vettukallel who served as the Secretary of the Commission for the past two years is transferred and Fr. Jose Cheriampanatt MST has replaced him. Fr. Justin was given send off and Fr. Jose, welcome on 8th Nov.2010 at Mount St. Thomas. Sr. Savidha CHF is appointed the office Secretary of the Commission.

Our present concerns

Gulf: Though there are about 400, 000 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, except Doha. The Vicars Apostolic are opposing the idea of appointing the Syro-Malabar priests proposed by the Major Archbishop as pastors, holding on to the *Rescript*. On 17th Dec, a meeting of Bishop Paul Hinder, the Vicar Apostolic of Arabia, Fr. Mathew OCD, the Vicar General of Kuwait, Cappucian Provincial Superior in Jordan with the Curia Bishop, the Chancellor of the Curia, the Chairman and the Secretary of the Commission was held at Mount St. Thomas to discuss the issue of the pastoral care in the Gulf countries. The position of our Church that the Vicar Apostolic should provide proper pastoral care to our faithful through the service of Syro-Malabar priests proposed by the Major Archbishop was made clear to them. Though they did not accept the demand there was a general consensus to continue the dialogue further until an agreement is reached.

India:

Surat: The situation in Surat is still confusing. The local Bishop has appointed a Syro-Malabar Jesuit priest without consulting the Major Archbishop as parish priest. Only few families of ours accepted

him. The community still remains divided and majority are holding parallel liturgical services with the help of priests called from different places.

Hyderabad: The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secundrabad have a big Syro-Malabar concentration, that is about 20000, yet not even a parish is erected for the Syro-Malabar Church. There are no officially appointed priests to care for the pastoral needs of our migrants. The Syro-Malabar community there, under the leadership of Fr. Siby Kaitharan MI, is now building a Syro-Malabar Cultural Centre in Hyderabad with the local resources.

Malaysia, Singapore: There are a good number of Syro-Malabar faithful settled in such countries. But we have not been able to give any pastoral care to the faithful there. The local Ordinaries and the Latin parish priests are opposed to the idea of the appointment of any Syro-Malabar priests in such places.

Inflow of unauthorised preachers to migrant centres is a matter of serious concern in most of the migrant centers and communities.

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel
Chairman

Secretary
Fr. Jose Cheriampatt

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