From
His Grace Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios,
Archbishop-Metropolitan of Trivandrum.
By the Grace of God and favor of the Holy See,
Blessings to all the Rev. Vicars, Assistants, Monks, Nuns and Lay people
In the Parishes and Missions under our authority.

“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will guide you.”(Ps.37: 4-5).

Beloved in the Lord,
You have been regularly getting information regarding the actual state of my health from the circulars, sent from here. We don’t think that my health has shown any sign of improvement since my return from Bangalore. Everything humanly possible is being done to curb the sickness. I doubt seriously whether this sickness is not a boat to cross the Jordan of Death.

On the 14th September, our venerable brother Mar Severios, the bishop of Tiruvalla administered the Candela Ceremony to me, in the presence of Most Rev. Augustine Kandathil, the venerable Archbishop of Ernakulam, who was rendering us and the Reunion Movement
right from its very inception his treasured thought, encouragement and cooperation, the bishop of Kottayam and the Auxiliary Bishop of Tuttukudy, and in cooperation with many of our beloved children, the priests, sisters and dear faithful. The words of admonition of the Holy Spirit, “If one has fallen ill, let him send for the Kassise of the Church and let them pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will heal the sick” (James 5: 14-15) emboldened me.

What I understand is that even the most efficient and competent doctors do not cherish the hope of curing my illness. Moreover, it might turn worse and fatal at any moment. I do earnestly praise the most compassionate Lord with a heart overflowing with a deep sense of gratitude for having granted me such a situation-this sick bed. This enables me to remember the faults and mistakes of my past life one by one, and to make a sincere contrition and get reconciliation. And also my beloved children, it is an occasion for you to pray for your spiritual Father. Therefore, by repeating along with the Psalmist, “my heart takes delight in the Lord,” I am gladdened. Dear children, don’t be grief-stricken at my illness. On the other hand, pray to our loving God, that I endure the pains of sickness fruitfully, as an effective means to fulfill His Will in me, and that I get a blessed death.

Perhaps this will be my last message for you. Of all the thoughts now springing in my heart, the most important is how well I have utilized in the past, the talents our divine Lord entrusted to me. Although many of you are more or less aware of all of them, it befits the occasion to remember a few matters in brief. I was born and brought up in the Jacobite Church and was ordained a priest there.

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1 The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick for priests and bishops.
Trusting in God, I tried my level best for the external and internal growth of that Church. From the bishops to the laity, all alike in that Church placed their confidence in me and rendered their unflinching support to me. I dedicated myself totally to that Church for the glorification of God and the salvation of souls, through that Church and in that Church. You are aware of my activities, in cooperation with the group, which is known today as the Malankara Orthodox, when the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch excommunicated Most Rev. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, our teacher, Syriac scholar and prodigy, and the ensuing strife and calamities. At that time I stood in the forefront and worked to get established the Catholicate in Malankara, which the Orthodox consider as the center of hope of their Church. It is just the reality, that if I had not made such an attempt, the Patriarch Abd Msiha would not have come to Malankara or establish the Catholicate here.

Since I was convinced that for the progress of the Jacobite Church, the Religious Orders were of utmost importance, I made use of my whole ability for that purpose when I was Professor at the Serampore College. I established two Religious Orders, known as Bethany, both for men and women. With the aim of raising the standard of the clergy of the Jacobite Church, I extended a helping hand to many priests, for obtaining higher education. I was driven by the longing that, as in the Catholic Church, there must come up a lot of institutions in the Jacobite Church, managed by the Religious Orders. But none of these could be materialized on account of the persisting conflicts and feuds within that Church. Moreover, I was gradually convinced that such cardinal ambitions and vital activities could neither take roots nor grow into fullness in the sectarian ecclesial communities, such as the Jacobite and the Marthomite Churches, which are existent on the stance of defiance to divine authority.

It was during this period that I contacted the High Church section of the Anglicans and the Russian Orthodox Church, hoping that the relationship with them would be beneficial to the Jacobite Church. At least some of you might bear in mind the undeniable fact, that it
was I who had brought here in Malankara the priests and nuns, belonging to the Oxford Mission and laid the foundation for conducting Students’ Conferences and Retreats. However, I was gradually convinced that there was no unity in the faith and practice between these Churches and the Jacobite Church.

Although the Bethany Movement and the Students’ Conferences had almost triggered off a spiritual awakening in the Jacobite Church, the feuds and litigations in the Church were on the rising scale. All the efforts to find an amicable settlement for it miserably failed and all those who earnestly tried for it were filled with despair. A speciality, commonly found in the non-Catholic ecclesial communities, is the conviction of the individuals, that they are greater than the Church. Consequently they revel in piling up heaps of allegations against the Church and so try to purify or renew the Church. It is highly indisputable that any Church, where such activities as these are allowed free play, can never be the true Church, “the pillar and foundation of Truth”, as has been described by St. Paul. It is clear that, by the words of our Lord, “he who does not listen to the Church, be like a tax collector and a heathen to you,” such sectarian churches are not meant.

At this juncture I was led to the conviction that it was necessary to reestablish the Jacobite Church in the unity and leadership of the *Rish Patriarch*. I brought our conviction at the right time to the kind attention of the venerable Bishops of the Orthodox Church. With their knowledge and consent, I took up the necessary correspondence, for achieving this goal. What I embarked at first was to establish the unity with the *Rish patriarch of Rome* through the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch. I do now rightly remember what once our Elanjikal John Vakeel argued, that just as the Catholic community in Antioch was in communion with the See of St. Peter in Rome, the center of unity, the Malankara Church also should strive to be under the Patriarch of Rome without any other dependence. I knew from history that whenever our forefathers sought communion with the Catholic Church, had laid two conditions. The first condition was that the bishops of our own community must govern us. The second was that our familiar rites
and rituals should be recognized as such. These were the causes for the strife and separation at the Coonan Cross in Mattanchery.

I brought these facts to the kind attention of the then governing Pope, His Holiness, and Pope Pius XI, of blessed memory. Having realized that our needs are meet and just he sent us the Decree, expressing his willingness to grant our requests. I informed at the right time the venerable Bishops here about it. But since certain perceptible changes had occurred in their circumstances, unfortunately, they were hesitant in progressing the ecumenical negotiations. Besides, they tried to deter us from proceeding with the matter. However, being firmly convinced that the Reunion with the Catholic Church was quite inevitable for the glorification of God and the salvation of souls, I resolved to go ahead, facing any problem on the way. Thus on 20th September 1930, by making the profession of faith, I reentered into the communion with the Catholic Church, in the presence of Most Rev. Bishop Benziger of blessed memory, at the Olikkara Bishop’s Chapel, Kollam, together with Abun Mar Theophilos, a priest, a deacon and a layman.

With a grateful heart I do remember now that the almighty God kindly granted me the fortune to see the enviable progress that the Reunion Movement made during the short period of time. There is no doubt that God Himself is the cause of the progress of this Movement, started 22 years ago with just five souls. Lying on my bed, when I remember the reunion of our brother bishops, Abun Mar Theophilos, Abun Mar Dioscoros, Abun Mar Severios, of the venerable Pulikkottil Yausep Remban, Cheppatt Philipose Remban, of several priests who had enjoyed great eminence and prestige in the Jacobite Church, and of thousands of laity, the founding of a number of monasteries and convents, the construction of a lot of schools and a College and other charitable institutions, the establishment of hundreds of churches and mission houses from Kanyakumari to Ponnani, they give me immense joy and gladness. With blended palms, I thank for these things the All Merciful Supreme Power for having made me, the weak His instrument.
For your information, the present situation of the Reunion Movement is given below:
Catholics- 76,352; Churches –310; Priests-137; Monasteries- 4; Convents-17; High Schools-15; Middle Schools-18; Primary Schools- 78; College- 1; Hostels- 3; Training Schools-2; Workshop-1; Seminaries-2; Hospitals-2; Press-2.

With a heart overflowing with gratitude, I do now remember all those who had rendered their selfless and unconditional service and cooperation for the progress of the Reunion Movement. With heartfelt gratitude, I cherish now the fond memories of His Holiness, the broad minded Pope Pius XI of blessed memory, who kindly accepted our petition and gave his official permission and blessing to the Reunion Movement and of His Holiness Pope Pius XII, who still extends to the Reunion Movement every sort of help and aid. The telegraphic message in response to our request sent to the Holy See still reverberates in my heart. It was the sweet voice of the affectionate and loving Vicar of Christ: “Welcome—a big Welcome”. The helps rendered to the Reunion Movement by bishop Leo Kirkels, the Apostolic Delegate and later Internuncio in India, the venerable bishops both inside and outside India are unbounded and endless. With tears of joy in my eyes, I place on record our heartfelt gratitude to all the venerable Archbishops, Bishops and Priests of the Syrian and Latin hierarchies in India, who, considering the Reunion Movement as their own, have comforted, encouraged and helped us in our precarious moments of difficulties and miseries.

The Reunion of our venerable brother, Most Rev. Mar Severios, the bishop of Tiruvalla, who is immersed in the relentless pursuit of achieving an overall progress of the Reunion Movement, is a glorious new chapter in the record of the Reunion Movement. May God grant him longevity, so that he might successfully lead the Movement along the golden path of progress. May Mar Theophilos, who cooperated with me right from his younger days and stood as my right hand, in enduring voluntarily miseries and difficulties like me, keep good health and enjoy long life. I not only cherish in my heart but also pay rich
tribute to the fond memories of Mar Dioscoros, who, after having been the Metropolitan of the Knanaya Diocese, reunited and later left for his heavenly abode and of the late Pulikkottil Yausep Remban, who during the early period of the Reunion Movement tirelessly worked very efficiently for its multifarious growth. I do not ignore the services rendered by Cheppatt Philipose Remban, who by being always with me through the bygone moments of sorrows and joys, patiently suffered and courageously acted. I remember our dear priests and pray for them one by one, who have been earnestly and selflessly working with me in the vineyard of the Savior.

As mentioned earlier, when I established the Bethany Ashram, I had also established a convent, keeping in view the spiritual, material and social welfare of our women. It needs mentioning that their service, dedication and encouragement were of utmost importance for the Reunion Movement. I firmly believe that the monastery and convent, like two blossoms on the same stalk, were two essential factors for the very existence of our Movement.

2 That, in addition to these, there are a number of priests from various other monasteries and dioceses, rendering their commendable services in this archdiocese, is worth mentioning.
There is also another Convent, with several houses, known as the Daughters of Mary (Marymakkal), established not long ago, centered at Marthandom. Their activities, discharged in the spirit of service and care for poor, are quite commendable. I do remember all the religious congregations and their inmates and pray to God for their prosperity and bright future. It is indeed delightful to see at this moment that the activities of the above mentioned three religious Orders, with many houses, have spread to the borders of our Archdiocese.

My heart also goes out at this moment to all the faithful, who have gladly embraced the Catholic Church, with the readiness to bear all kinds of troubles and tribulations and have thereafter been leading an exemplary Catholic life.

When the Indian Christians now jointly celebrate the 19th centenary of the arrival of our father St. Thomas In India and the 4th centenary of the demise of St. Francis Xavier, let there come up in our minds the thoughts, that we should march ahead with faith in God and the consciousness of solidarity and oneness, giving up unhealthy competitions and divisive attitudes, obstinacy and selfishness. We should remember at this moment that such diverse beliefs and sectarian thinking are the real causes, which distances our non–Christian brethren from the light of the Gospel. The message that our father St. Thomas, the Apostle and St. Francis Xavier, the greatest evangelist, give us at this moment is that we must march ahead as one shepherd and one fold, by uniting them in the light of the Gospel.

Even at this moment, my heart gets filled with intense grief about the non-Catholic brethren in Kerala, who are the bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh. I intensely longed to see their Reunion; I tirelessly worked and ceaselessly tried for it. But I did not have the
good fortune to see it realized. I hopefully believe, that in the near future our longing may be fulfilled and I pray to our Lord for its realization.

Beloved in the Lord, I am not an exception to what the Holy Spirit proclaims, “No one is just, not even a single one.” If I have been instrumental to causing sorrow or pain to any one of you in the past, I beg your unbounded love to pardon and forgive me in the name of our Savior. Similarly, if anybody have done anything to me, knowingly or unknowingly, I do forget and pardon them all in the name of the loving God.

Our beloved children, what I give you now are the teaching of the Apostle, who said, “Pray for each other; pray for me also.” I consider that your prayers would be invaluable refuge and immense treasure for me, whether I recover from the sickness or I pass away by it. Pray earnestly for me, so that what the Apostle St. Paul said might be quite soothing for me, weak as I am, in my last moment: “I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day” (2 Tim.4: 6-8). Beloved, let us all strive hard to merit that crown of justice.

*Be proud of having become Catholics.* Let your sanctity of life and good example be a lodestar for the non-Catholics. Let each one of you reflect Christ our loving Lord. Let each and every one of you strive and persevere to transform into another Christ. Let parents be zealous in bringing up their children for Christ. Let them give utmost importance to the spiritual growth in Christ-life of Grace- of their
loving children rather than the bodily growth and let them act accordingly.

Dear Children, Let your homes be like the holy Family of Nazareth, an inviolable abode of divine grace, peace and prosperity. Let Christ the King reign in your hearts and homes forever. Finally I do remember all our faithful and bestow upon you my paternal blessing in terms of our merciful Savior’s words. May the Almighty God grant you and me and all the dead the divine grace to listen to the sweet voice, which is consoling and joyful, “You who are blessed by my Father, come and enter into and enjoy the eternal bliss, that had been prepared for you before the foundation of the world, that the eyes had not seen and the heart had never fancied” (Mt 25:32).

May the invisible right hand of our Lord Jesus Christ, along with my hands, though sinful and weak, extend upon you and bless you all, your dear families and all your activities. May these blessings and graces be upon you by the prayers of the holy Virgin Mary, of St. Thomas the Apostle and guardian of India, of Mar Ivanios, the golden tongued and our Patron, of all the saintly men and women. Amen.

Archbishop’s House, Pattom.
21-9-1952.

The Metropolitan-Archbishop of Trivandrum