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# **SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS (1925-2019)**



**Paul Pallath  
Sandra Kannankara SIC**

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**Paul Pallath**  
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**Syro-Malankara Catholic Church: Important Documents  
(1925-2019)**

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

We have thought of publishing this book, to provide accurate and authentic information concerning the reunion of Mar Ivanios with the Catholic Church, the erection of Syro-Malankara Catholic hierarchy as well as the growth and development of the Malankara Catholic Church. This is not a usual book, but a collection of original and authentic documents, which are of perennial value.

After this General Introduction, there are three introductory articles which respectively present the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church until the time of the reunion of Mar Ivanios, the general historical and ecclesial situation of that epoch, all the failed reunion attempts of the St Thomas Christians after the tragic division and a brief biographical profile of Mar Ivanios, the protagonist and prophet of Christian unity in the XX century.

Then the work is divided into three parts. The first part, dedicated to the reunion of Mar Ivanios and the origin of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, is subdivided into four sections, systematically arranging 54 documents in chronological order. The second and third parts are not subdivided, since only few documents are available. They respectively treat the constitution of the hierarchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church as well as its growth and development.

Each document is preceded by a brief introduction, in which the place and date of the document, its essential content and exact source are indicated. The unpublished documents presented in this work are mainly taken from three archives: 1) The Vatican Apostolic Archives (in Latin *Archivum Apostolicum Vaticanum*), which was known as the Vatican Secret Archives until Pope Francis modified its name on 28 October 2019; 2) Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches; 3) Archives of the Major Archeparchy of Trivandrum.

Documents originally written in English are maintained as such without making any modification even in capitalization and application of punctuation marks. However, in documents translated from other languages current linguistic expressions and punctuation marks are employed. For all non-English documents the original

language is indicated at the end of the initial presentation of each document.

Names of persons and places are written in different ways by authors, and this happens especially when Indian names are transliterated into English. For example, Ivanios is written also as Ivanius or Evanius; similarly, Gregorios or Gregorius. Examples for places: Bathery or Battery; Thiruvalla, Tiruvalla or Tiruvella; Changanacherry or Changanassery; Mavelikkara or Mavelikara. In English itself the adjective of Antioch is written in three different ways: Antiochene, Antiochian or Antiochean. Attempts have been made to maintain consistency in our writings, preferring always the first expression, while maintaining original English documents untouched.

**Introductory Article One**  
**MALANKARA SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**FROM ITS INCEPTION UNTIL THE TIME**  
**OF REUNION**

**Introduction**

Any book dealing with Christianity or specifically Eastern Christianity in India treats the apostolate of St Thomas in India, origin and development of the Indian Church, its relationship with the Church of the East in the Persian Empire, the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries in the XVI century and their attempts for Westernization leading to schism and divisions among the St Thomas Christians.<sup>1</sup> Hence we provide only a brief account of the main events during this period insofar as it is necessary to comprehend the context of the origin of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. Then a succinct history of the said Church from its beginning until the reunion movement in the XX century is presented, which enables readers to understand the documents published in this work.

**1. Brief Account of Eastern Christianity in India until the Origin of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church**

According to the vigorous, living and constant Indian tradition, the Apostle Thomas, who confirmed his faith in the Risen Lord proclaiming him Lord and God (Jn 20: 28), landed in 52 AD on the Malabar Coast near the ancient port of Muzaris (Cranganore) in South India. After converting several thousands to Christ from the

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<sup>1</sup> Only some examples: E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Bombay 1957; P. J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, London-Bombay 1970; J. Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India, Volume II, From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century*, Bangalore 1982; S. Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707*, Cambridge 1984; A. M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India, Volume 1: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century*, Bangalore 1984; Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal (St Thomas Christians)*, second edition, Kottayam 1992; X. Koodapuzha, *Christianity in India*, Kottayam 1998.

Jewish and Hindu populations and founding seven Christian communities, Thomas died a martyr at Mylapore near Madras in the present federal state of Tamil Nadu in 72 AD. Several factors such as the accessibility of the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world to South India, the presence of Jewish colonies, local literary and art forms, the testimony of the Fathers of the Church, the tomb of the Apostle at Mylapore, apocryphal writings, liturgical traditions of both the Eastern and Western Churches, some archaeological evidences, paleo-Christian monuments and epigraphs, and above all the presence of a Christian community in the name of the Apostle (St Thomas Christians) from the very first century itself, concur and converge on the essential historical core of the mission, martyrdom and burial of Apostle Thomas in India.<sup>2</sup>

Like the other apostles, St Thomas who had disseminated the Christian faith in South India, also ordained sacred ministers to succeed him in the Christian communities established by him. But after the presumed interruption of hierarchical succession in India, due to various historical, ecclesiastical and canonical reasons, from time immemorial the St Thomas Christians had to depend on the Patriarch of the Church of the East in the Persian Empire for the appointment and consecration of bishops. The Patriarch of the Church of the East, who was considered the canonical head of the Church of St Thomas Christians, did not intervene in the administration of the Church, nor exercise any jurisdictional powers. Once appointed, the “metropolitan of all India” was fully autonomous, who had no obligation to participate in the patriarchal synod in Persia. The Chaldean Indian metropolitan was chiefly occupied with the *munus sanctificandi*, while the effective leader

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<sup>2</sup> Specifically about the apostolate of St Thomas in India one may consult: A. E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas, An Inquiry with a Critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae*, London 1905; L. Zaleski, *Apostle Thomas in India: History, Tradition and Legend*, Mangalore 1912; A. C. Perumalil, *The Apostles in India, Fact or Fiction?* Patna 1971; C. Dognini-I. Ramelli, *Gli Apostoli in India nella patristica e nella letteratura sanscrita*, Milano 2001; B. Vadakkekara, *Origin of India's St Thomas Christians: A Historiographical Critique*, Delhi 1995, revised edition, *Origin of Christianity in India: A Historiographical Critique*, Delhi 2007; G. Nedungatt, *Quest for the Historical Thomas Apostle of India: A Re-reading of the Evidence*, Bangalore 2008; J. Puliurumpil, *St Thomas in India: Patristic Evidences*, Kottayam 2012.

and real governor of the Indian Church was the “Archdeacon of all India”, a priest from among the St Thomas Christian community. The Archdeacon, assisted by the general church assembly (*yogam*), composed of the representatives of the clergy and laity, practically governed the Church except in matters that needed the exercise of episcopal Order. The hierarchical relationship of the Indian Church with the Church of the East continued until the death of Mar Abraham, the last Chaldean metropolitan in January 1597.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the Portuguese Western missionaries at the beginning of the sixteenth century opened a new chapter in the history of the Church of St Thomas Christians. The Portuguese missionaries, who had maintained a friendly relationship and *communicatio in sacris* with the St Thomas Christians, mainly for political motives began to accuse these Christians of heresy and schism after the erection of the diocese of Goa on 31 January 1533 and especially after its elevation to the status of an archdiocese on 4 February 1558. In fact, the Portuguese religious and political authorities orchestrated projects to sever the hierarchical relationship of the Indian Eastern Church with the Chaldean Church, extirpate the Eastern rite and spiritual heritage, appoint Latin bishops in the see of the St Thomas Christians and to bring it under the Portuguese *Padroado*, after suppressing its autonomous metropolitan status and reducing it to a simple suffragan of the archdiocese of Goa.<sup>4</sup>

For preparing the ground ready for the realization of the said project Aleixo de Menezes, the Archbishop of Goa (1595-1610), visited Malabar and conducted the Synod of Diamper from 20 to 26 June 1599.<sup>5</sup> After the synod, on 20 December 1599, Pope Clement

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<sup>3</sup> For documentation and details, see P. Pallath *The Catholic Church in India* (fourth edition), Changanacherry 2019, 33-41 and 48-54.

<sup>4</sup> All these historical facts are demonstrated on the basis of original sources and documents in the book: P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 118-153.

<sup>5</sup> For details concerning the Synod of Diamper, see J. Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper, (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 152)* Rome 1958; J. Wicki, “Die Synode von Diamper in Malabar (1599) und ihre Beurteilung (1600-1975)”, *Annuario Historiae Conciliorum*, 1-2 (1977) 190-205; P. Pallath, “The Synod of Diamper Valid or Invalid?”, in G. Nedungatt (ed.), *The Synod of Diamper Revisited*, Rome 2001, 199-226; for the acts and decrees of the the Synod of Diamper in



VIII suppressed the metropolitan status of the see of St Thomas Christians, made it a suffragan of the archdiocese of Goa and appointed the Latin missionary Francis Ros SJ as the new bishop. With the apostolic letter *In supremo militantis* of 4 August 1600 Pope Clement VIII also imposed the Portuguese Patronage over the Indian Eastern Christians. In 1605 the residence of the bishop was transferred from Angamaly to Cranganore because of the presence of a Portuguese fortress there and hence gradually the see of St Thomas Christians came to be known as the (Arch)diocese of Cranganore.<sup>6</sup>

After Bishop Francis Ros (1599-1624), two other Latin Jesuit bishops, Stephen Brito (1624-1641) and Francis Garcia (1641-1659) ruled the St Thomas Christians. Gravely frustrated by the Jesuit Latin governance under the Portuguese Padroado, which jeopardised the autonomy, the ritual identity and the spiritual heritage of their Church, on 3 January 1653, the St Thomas Christians, under the leadership of Archdeacon Thomas Parampil and prominent priests, assembled in the Church of Our Lady of Life at Mattancherry and resolved with a solemn oath not to obey Archbishop Garcia or any other prelate from the Society of Jesus and not to admit any Jesuits to their churches. This event is generally known as the *Coonan Cross Oath*, namely oath at the slant or bent cross. Afterwards on 22 May 1653 at the church of Alangad twelve priests imposed their hands on Archdeacon Thomas Parampil and “consecrated” him as bishop with the title of Mar Thomas.<sup>7</sup> It can be affirmed without exaggeration that from the time of Apostle Thomas until 1653 the St Thomas Christians remained united under one head, without any division or schism among them.

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English: M. Geddes, *The History of the Church of Malabar, together with the Synod of Diamper*, London 1694, 97-443; J. Hough, *The History of Christianity in India from the Commencement of the Christian Era*, vol. 2, London, 1839, 511-683; Scaria Zacharia, *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper 1599*, Edamattam 1994, 73-214.

<sup>6</sup> Docuemnts concenirng these historical facts (Latin original with English translation) can be found in the book: P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents concerning the Catholic Church in India*, Kottayam 2004, 68-107.

<sup>7</sup> For details see, J. Thekkedath, *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S.J., Archbishop of Cranganore (1641-59)*, Rome 1972; J. Kollaparambil, *The St Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, Kottayam 1981.

Most of the parishes abandoned the Jesuit Padroado Archbishop Francis Garcia SJ and in bona fide rallied behind the new "bishop Thomas". Realizing that the consecration of Archdeacon Thomas was not valid, several Christians sooner or later abandoned him. After receiving reports about such tragic events in Malabar, in accordance with the proposal of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Pope Alexander VII sent two groups of discalced Carmelites, headed respectively by Joseph of St Mary Sebastiani and Hyacinth of St Vincent, both apostolic commissaries endowed with special faculties to investigate and settle the problems of the Malabar Church. Although many Christian faithful returned to the true fold, the attempts of the apostolic commissaries did not succeed in recomposing the broken unity because the archdeacon and his party required that he be consecrated bishop. Since such a demand seemed unacceptable to Sebastiani, as the last nail in the coffin, on 1 February 1663 he excommunicated the archdeacon and his companion Ittithomman Anjilimoottil from the Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup> Thus the schism initiated in 1653 was officially ratified, perpetuating the division of the St Thomas Christians into Catholic and non-Catholic groups. In the course of time in popular parlance the Catholic section was called *Pazhayakuttukar* (the old party), while the Orthodox group was designated *Puthankuttukar* (the new party), since the latter adopted a new way of faith and worship with regard to India.

## **2. Hierarchical Relationship of the New Party with the Patriarch of Antioch and the Origin of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Churches**

After the excommunication from the Catholic Church and the failure of all attempts at reconciliation Mar Thomas I, aware of not being an ordained bishop, wrote to the Chaldean Patriarch and the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch for a bishop by whom he could be validly consecrated. The Chaldean Patriarch did not respond, but

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<sup>8</sup> For details see, Giuseppe di Santa Maria Sebastiani, *Prima Speditione all'Indie Orientali*, Roma 1666; *Seconda Speditione all'Indie Orientali*, Roma 1672; P. Pallath, *The Grave Tragedy of the Church of St Thomas Christians and the Apostolic Mission of Sebastiani*, Changanassery 2006.

in 1665 the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch sent a Jacobite Bishop Abdul Jaleel Mar Gregorios to Malabar.<sup>9</sup> Since the followers of Mar Thomas (the archdeacon) were aware of the fact that he was not a real bishop, they solemnly received Mar Gregorios and accepted him as their prelate. Indubitably an Eastern bishop of Syriac tradition was more acceptable to the community than any Latin bishop. From the time of his arrival, Mar Gregorios began to perform the episcopal functions, while Mar Thomas carried out the administration of the Church. Since the separated community established communion with the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, some information about the Syrian Orthodox Church is needed to understand the “new faith” and ecclesial nature of the former.

### **2.1. Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch with Which the Malankara Community Established Relationship**

Antioch, the third largest city of the Roman Empire, was one of the oldest centres of Christianity. According to tradition, the Church in Antioch, where “the disciples were for the first time called Christians” (*Acts* 11, 26), was founded by Apostle Peter. From Antioch Christianity spread to Asia Minor, Cilicia, Macedonia, Greece, eastern Syria, northern Mesopotamia and the Caucasus. The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325) granted special privileges to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch (c. 6), which were later confirmed by the second canon of the Council of

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<sup>9</sup> *De Fontibus Juris Ecclesiastici Syro-Malankarensium*, P. J. Podipara (ed.), S. Congregazione per la Chiesa Orientale, Codificazione Canonica Orientale, Prot. N. 410/37, *Fonti*, Serie II, Fascicolo VIII, Vaticano 1937, 213; C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, Alwaye 1973, 22-24; C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India, A History of the Malankara Orthodox Church*, Kottayam 2003, 56. The last Author C. V. Cheriyan belonging to the Malankara Orthodox Church, after taking Master’s degree in History from the University of Travancore, joined the staff of CMS College (Kottayam) as Lecturer in History in 1953; afterwards he continued there as Professor and Head of the Department of History and Political Science. The University of Kerala conferred on him the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences in 1971. In 1983 he was designated Professor and Director of the School of International Relations in Mahatma Gandhi University. Later he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences there. He published many books and articles related to history.

Constantinople in 381. In the course of time Antioch became a patriarchate together with the other two great sees.<sup>10</sup>

The Christological conflicts of the fifth century, especially the Council of Chalcedon (451) provoked a schism in the Antiochene Church: one group accepted the Christological formula of the Council, while the other repudiated the conciliar doctrine, considering it unauthentic. Subsequently, along with the Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch, an Orthodox Patriarchate was established by the anti-Chalcedonian party.<sup>11</sup> The Byzantine emperors Justin (518-527) and Justinian (527-565) adopted a policy of persecution against those who did not accept the Chalcedonian formula, and hence the anti-Chalcedonian Church went into a state of decline. The bishop of Edessa, Jacob Baradeus (545-578) reorganized the persecuted anti-Chalcedonian Churches reviving and strengthening them with the secret ordination of a great number of priests and bishops in Syria, Armenia, Asia Minor, Isauria and Egypt. In 558/559 Jacob Baradeus ordained Ahudemme of Beth Arbaye as bishop of Tikrit in the Sasanian Empire. With this event Syrian Orthodox Christianity was established in Persia, although the Church of the East with its catholicos-patriarch in Seleucia-Ctesiphon constituted the vast majority of Christians in the Empire.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, *The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch at a Glance* (second edition), Damascus 2008, 19-32; L. Laham, « Le patriarcat d'Antioche au premier millenaire », in *I patriarchati orientali nel primo millennio* (Relazioni del Congresso tenutosi al Pontificio Istituto Orientale nei giorni 27-30 Dicembre 1967), Roma 1968, 115-121; V. Parlato, *L'ufficio patriarcale nelle Chiese orientali dal IV al X secolo*, Padova 1969; 9-20; J. Chiramel, *The Patriarchal Churches in the Oriental Code*, Alway 1992, 15-19.

<sup>11</sup> E. Eid, *La figure juridique du patriarche*, Roma 1962, 15; V. Parlato, *L'ufficio patriarcale nelle Chiese orientali*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *The Catholic East*, Rome 2019, 163-165; cf. also E. Hambye, "Syria and the Syrian Christians", *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 16 (1964) 330-337; D. D. Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus: the State of Research, a Review of Sources and a New Approach", in *Muséon* 91 (1978) 45-86; W. Hage, "Jakobitische Kirche", in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* XVI, Berlin-New York 1987, 474-485; B. Dupuy, "L'Eglise syrienne d'Antioch, des origines à aujourd'hui", *Istina* 34 (1990) 171-188.

Considering the foundational efforts of Jacob Baradeus for the revival of the Syrian Orthodox Church, it began to be called also “Jacobite” after his name. The non-Catholic patriarchate began to be known also as Jacobite patriarchate. In the course of history, several qualifications such as “Monophysite”, “pre-Chalcedonian anti-Chalcedonian or non-Chalcedonian”, “Ancient Oriental” and “Oriental Orthodox” have been applied to the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antiochene tradition. Obviously the Church was denominated Monophysite, pre-Chalcedonian, anti-Chalcedonian or non-Chalcedonian because of its refusal to accept the Christological doctrine of the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) which asserted that Christ is one single person in two natures. Really, the Syrian Jacobite Church, designated as Monophysite, sustained only the Christology in line with the doctrine of St Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>13</sup> The Syrian Orthodox Church accepts only the first three ecumenical councils: Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431).

Antiochene rite is the basic tradition, designated also West Syrian rite, enshrining the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, formed first in Jerusalem, and then developed in Antioch, the third greatest city in the Roman Empire and the capital of the Oriental region. The official liturgical language is obviously West Syriac. For the Eucharistic liturgy two anaphoras, of the Twelve Apostles and of St James, are mainly employed.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2. The Start of the Introduction of Syrian Orthodox Faith in Malabar

The Coonan Cross Oath was against the Portuguese Padroado jurisdiction, represented at that time by the Jesuit bishops and missionaries who tried their best to suppress the Eastern rite and ecclesial traditions, the law of Thomas and the autonomy of the

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<sup>13</sup> In the common declaration of 27 October 1971 Pope Paul VI and the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Mar Ignatius Jacob III agreed that “there is no difference in the faith they profess concerning the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and become really man, even if over the centuries difficulties have arisen out of the different theological expressions by which this faith was expressed”. in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971) 814.

<sup>14</sup> E. G. Farrugia (ed.), *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Catholic East*, Rome 2015, 1772-1773.

Church of St Thomas Christians. The Antiochene Bishop Mar Gregorios (1665-1670), on the other hand, knowing the pulse of the community, promised to restore and promote the heritage and traditions of the St Thomas Christians. In fact, he reinstated some of the authentic traditions which had been abandoned after the Synod of Diamper. However, he did not consecrate Mar Thomas I as bishop because his intention was to bring the separated group to the Jacobite faith and Antiochene tradition. He tried very tactfully to gradually introduce Jacobite Orthodox doctrines and the Antiochene rite in Malabar. He also succeeded in creating a general antipathy against Rome and the Catholic Church before his death in 1670.<sup>15</sup> The arrival and activities of Mar Gregorios strengthened the party of Mar Thomas I and widened the rift between the Catholic and non-Catholic groups. The Coonan Cross Oath itself began to be misinterpreted by the non-Catholic group as a rebellion and schismatic act against the Roman Pontiff and the hegemony of the Roman Church.

After the death of Mar Thomas I on 22 April 1670, Mar Thomas II (1670-1686),<sup>16</sup> Mar Thomas III (1686-1688), Mar Thomas IV (1688-1728) and Mar Thomas V (1728-1765) governed the community. According to general opinion none of these "bishops" had received valid episcopal consecration. During the governance of Mar Thomas II, in 1685 two more Jacobite bishops arrived, Eldo Mar Basilios and Hidatulla Mar Ivanios, for the continuation of the gradual Antiochenization of the Malankara community. The Antiochene Bishop Mar Basilios died twelve days after his arrival on 29 September 1685 and was buried at the Kothamangalam church, but Mar Ivanios continued the work until his departure from this world on 13 August 1693. After the death of Mar Ivanios in 1693 no Antiochene Orthodox bishop reached

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *De Fontibus Juris Ecclesiastici Syro-Malankarensium* (Fonti, II-VIII), 56; Paulino a S. Bartholomaeo, *India Orientalis Christiana*, Romae 1794, 99-100; J. Thekkedath, *Christianity in India, Volume II, From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century*, Bangalore 1988, 100-102; L. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, Cambridge 1982, 111-112; D. Ferroli, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, vol. 2, Bangalore 1951, 62-63.

<sup>16</sup> Since the first successor of Mar Thomas I died eight days after his election, he is not often counted in listing the heads of the Malankara community.



Malabar for a long period of time and the local head governed the Church in an autonomous manner. Although some Antiochene Christological elements were introduced, the community continued to live the faith according to the Syro-Oriental or Chaldean tradition, celebrating the liturgy in the Chaldean rite.<sup>17</sup>

### **2.3. Progress of Antiochene Tradition and the First Validly Consecrated Bishop**

Like his predecessors, Mar Thomas V also made some efforts to be reunited with Rome, but without any success. Thoughts about his lack of valid episcopal consecration always tormented Mar Thomas V, who asked the Dutch authorities in Cochin (the Dutch had already conquered Cochin in 1663) to fetch a bishop from the Persian Gulf, promising to pay a great sum of money for his travel expenses. Owing to the continuous efforts and constant requests of Mar Thomas V, supported by the Dutch authorities, the Antiochene Patriarch sent two prelates, Sacralla Mar Basilios and Mar Gregorios, who reached Cochin on 23 April 1751, together with Ramban John (Youhanan) and two Syrian clerics.<sup>18</sup> These bishops claimed jurisdiction over the Malankara Church and tried to introduce many more Antiochene customs and Jacobite tenets among the Malankara Christian faithful. It is they who brought to the Malankara Church various Anaphoras of the Antiochene tradition, including the liturgy of St James, and propagated them in the Church, though without replacing the Chaldean liturgy completely.<sup>19</sup>

Mar Thomas V invited the Antiochene prelates and gave them sanctuary in Malankara in order that he might be consecrated bishop by them. However the said prelates tried to establish their authority

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<sup>17</sup> The *Coonan* Cross Oath and the subsequent schism occurred more than half a century after the Synod of Diamper. After the schism the non-Catholic group also continued to use the Syro-oriental or Chaldean liturgy as corrected and endorsed by the Synod of Diamper. Cf. C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 79-84.

<sup>18</sup> *De Fontibus Juris Ecclesiastici Syro-Malankarensium (Fonti, II-VIII)*, 59; Paulino a S. Bartholomaeo, *India Orientalis Christiana*, 111-112; L. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, 120.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 328.

over the Malankara Church and postponed the consecration of Mar Thomas V because they knew well that it was the want of a valid episcopacy that made the heads of this Church turn towards Antioch, and the hope of establishing Antiochene supremacy would be in vain if they consecrated Mar Thomas V as bishop.<sup>20</sup> This conflict between Mar Thomas V and the Antiochene bishops reached its climax when Mar Basilios consecrated Ramban John, who had come with him, as Mar Ivanios and appointed him the metropolitan of the Malankara Church in 1752. However, he was never acknowledged in his position and Mar Thomas V continued to function as the head of the Malankara Church.<sup>21</sup> Since the Antiochene prelates did not consecrate Mar Thomas V, he refused to pay the money promised to the Dutch governor for their travel expenses. The consequence was a grave and long conflict between the Dutch authorities in Cochin, Mar Thomas V and the Antiochene bishops.

Since the conflict continued, the king of Travancore intervened to bring about reconciliation between the parties and, as a compromise, the Antiochene bishops agreed to consecrate Mar Thomas V. However, the Antiochene Bishop Mar Basilios breathed his last in 1764. Mar Thomas V died in 1765, without having received episcopal consecration; he was succeeded by a nephew, who assumed the title of Mar Thomas VI. After a long delay, in accordance with the aforementioned agreement, under pressure from the king of Travancore, the Antiochene prelate Mar Gregorios, assisted by Mar Ivanios, consecrated Mar Thomas VI at St Mary's Church at Niranam in the first week of January 1772. The new bishop, the first validly consecrated bishop of the Malankara Church, took the name Mar Dionysius I.<sup>22</sup> This newly assumed name

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 35-36.

<sup>21</sup> C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 276.

<sup>22</sup> *The Travancore State Manual*, edited by V. Nagam Aiya, vol. 2, New Delhi-Madras 1989, (it contains in pages 135-223 the contribution of G. T. Mackenzie, "History of Christianity in Travancore"), 208-209; E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 145; C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 37-38; Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 625-626.

seems also to indicate the discontinuity with his five predecessors, who were not validly consecrated bishops.<sup>23</sup>

In the profession of faith and petition dated 12 March 1778, sent to Pope Pius VI through Joseph Cariattil, Mar Dionysius I himself explicitly admitted that none of his predecessors had been validly consecrated and because of this he “received again the imposition of hands from the first tonsure up to the episcopacy inclusively from the Jacobite Gregory”.<sup>24</sup> As the Orthodox historian C. V. Cheriyan rightly observes: “The consecration of Mar Thomas VI as Mar Dionysius I in the presence of Mar Ivanios [...] was the first episcopal consecration in Malankara Church by an Antiochene prelate”.<sup>25</sup> Hence it is evident that all the predecessors of Mar Dionysius I were pseudo-bishops and their episcopal acts were invalid. However, after the valid episcopal consecration of Mar Thomas VI with the name Mar Dionysius I in 1772 the Malankara Church not only obtained a kind of stability and autonomy, but also could maintain the apostolic succession, true priesthood and valid sacraments.

#### 2.4. Origin of the Thozhiyoor Church

Though the two Antiochene bishops remained in Malankara even after the consecration of Mar Dionysius I, they did not exercise any jurisdiction. Mar Dionysius I alone governed the Church as its only head and leader. It seems that due to disagreements with Mar Dionysius I, on 28 November 1772 Mar Gregorios consecrated also Ramban Kurian Abraham Kattumangattu as Bishop Abraham Mar Koorillos, but he also could not exercise any power in the Church. After 21 years of ministry in Malankara, Mar Gregorios died in

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<sup>23</sup> From here, in our writings the official name Mar Dionysius I will be used to refer to Mar Thomas VI, except in original documents and citations which contain the original name.

<sup>24</sup> Rome, Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (Propaganda Fide), *Scritture riferite nei Congressi, Indie Orientali e Cina*, vol. 39, f. 14; English trans. in *The Varthamanappusthakam*, written by Father Thomas Paremmakkal, translated into English with an introduction and notes by P. J. Podipara, (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 190), Rome 1971, 140.

<sup>25</sup> C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 277.

1773. The third Antiochene Bishop Mar Ivanios supported Mar Dionysius I until his death in 1794.

Even after the consecration of Abraham Koorillos Kattumangattu, Mar Dionysius I alone was considered the official metropolitan and head of the Malankara Church, both by the faithful and the local governments. In fact, due to the prohibition of the kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin Abraham Mar Koorillos was forced to take refuge in “British Malabar”, where he established the Independent Syrian Church of Malabar at Thozhiyoor (Anjoor) in the present district of Trichur. This Church, consisting even today of only a single diocese, follows the Antiochene Syrian Orthodox or Jacobite tradition.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.5. Anglicanization of the Malankara Community (1816-1836)

After the death of Mar Dionysius I on 8 April 1808, he was succeeded by Mar Thomas VII (1808-1809), Mar Thomas VIII (1810-1815), Mar Thomas IX (1815), Mar Dionysius II (1816), Mar Dionysius III (1817-1825) and Mar Dionysius IV (1825-1846). At the dawn of the nineteenth century, British supremacy was established in the kingdoms of Kerala. In fact, as early as 1795 the English had confiscated Cochin from the Dutch and, since 1800 a British Resident had been stationed in the royal courts of Travancore and Cochin, who began to closely control the affairs of the said kingdoms. This in the course of time brought the Malankara Church in touch with the Church of England, subsequently engendering the Anglicanization of the former. Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), who had begun to work among the

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<sup>26</sup> At present the Thozhiyoor Church is centred in Kunnankulam and has about 25,000 members. For more about this Church, see E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 144; X. Koodapuzha, *Christianity in India*, 160; E. R. Hambye, *History of Christianity in India, Volume III, Eighteenth Century*, Bangalore 1997, 53-54; C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 224-225; S. Kanjiramakalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, Kottayam 2016, 86.

Christian faithful of the Malankara Church in 1816, strove to reform the Church in attune with their faith and doctrines.<sup>27</sup>

At the start of the governance of Mar Dionysius III (1817-1825) decisions were even officially taken to promote a close collaboration between the Church of England and the Malankara community. The Anglican missionaries were permitted to teach and preach in the churches and in the Malankara seminary, which was erected with their financial support at Kottayam in 1815. The missionaries, who regarded the Malankara community as a primitive Church corrupted by contact with Roman Catholic tenets, wished to remove all ritual and doctrine which could not be “brought to the test of the rule of Scripture”.<sup>28</sup> Veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God, prayers for the dead and the presence of images in some of the churches were considered abominable errors by these missionaries. They endeavoured to expunge such “erroneous doctrines” from the liturgical, canonical and theological books and to impart Protestant formation to seminarians and priests.

## **2.6. Assembly of Mavelikkara in 1836 and Consolidation of Relationship with the Patriarch of Antioch**

Mar Dionysius III, who initially supported the work of the Protestant missionaries among the Malankara faithful, died in 1825 and was succeeded by Mar Dionysius IV (1825-1846). On 16 January 1836 he held an assembly or synod of the priests and lay leaders at Mavelikkara, which decided to end the Anglicanization of the Church and declared that the Malankara Church was subjected to the supreme power of the Patriarch of Antioch. The synod categorically stated:

We, the Jacobite Syrians being subject to the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch, and observing, as we do, the liturgies and ordinances instituted by the prelates sent under his command, cannot

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<sup>27</sup> For details concerning the beginning and progress of Anglicanization, see C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 231-246; S. Kanjiramkalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, 91-92.

<sup>28</sup> *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. 2, 214-215; cf. also L. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, 125-126.

deviate from the liturgies and ordinances and maintain a discipline contrary to them.<sup>29</sup>

In this synod the Antiochene liturgy and canonical discipline were formally and officially accepted by the Malankara Church.<sup>30</sup> The decision was also taken to strengthen ties with the Antiochene Patriarch because this was considered the only way of preventing the English Protestants from modifying the faith and rite of the Malankara Church.

After the decision of the synod of Mavelikkara in 1836, owing to the efforts of the missionaries over time several hundred members of the Malankara Church became Anglicans.<sup>31</sup> However, a minor section of the Malankara clergy and Christian faithful under the leadership of Fr Abraham Palakunnathu of Maramon favoured Anglicanization, but did not want to leave the Malankara Church and join the Anglican missionaries. Fr Abraham Palakunnathu started to correct the Antiochene liturgy, rewriting and reforming it along Protestant lines. In 1841 Abraham Palakunnathu sent one of his nephews, Deacon Mathew Palakunnathu, to the Syrian Orthodox Jacobite Patriarch, Ignatius Mar Elias II with the request to consecrate him bishop. They did not reveal to the Patriarch their real intention of Protestant reformation, but pretended to safeguard the Orthodox faith. Without making any inquiry, the Patriarch consecrated Mathew Palakunnathu metropolitan of Malankara under the name Mathew Mar Athanasius, who returned to Kerala in 1843.

Immediately after his arrival Mathew Mar Athanasius claimed the office of the Malankara metropolitan. The presence of two metropolitans in the Malankara community naturally engendered

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<sup>29</sup> *Fontes Juribus Canonici Syro-Malankarensium*, P. J. Podipara (ed.), S. Congregazione per la Chiesa Orientale, Codificazione Canonica Orientale, Prot. N. 494/37, *Fonti*, Serie II, Fascicolo IX, Vaticano 1940, 26; P. Cherian, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society*, Kottayam 1935, 390.

<sup>30</sup> C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 91; C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 330-332.

<sup>31</sup> These "Syrian Anglicans" really became members of the Church of England and did not form a distinct Church. At present they are members of the Church of South India (CSI). See P. J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, 227; S. Kanjiramakalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, 89-90.

jurisdictional conflicts. Reports were sent to the Patriarch accusing Mar Athanasius of communion with the Anglicans. In 1846 the Patriarch sent his delegate Mar Koorillos or Cyril (1846-1866) to assess the situation and to take whatever action he deemed necessary. On reaching Malabar, Mar Koorillos declared himself metropolitan of the Malankara Church and Mar Dionysius IV abdicated in favour of Mar Koorillos with the intention of impeding Mar Athanasius from taking possession of the office as the head of the Malankara Church. Mar Koorillos completed the replacement of the Chaldean rite with the Antiochene rite and introduced West Syriac script among the Christian faithful of the Malankara Church.<sup>32</sup>

Since both Mar Koorillos and Mar Athanasius styled themselves heads of the Malankara Church, the intervention of the civil authority became necessary. In 1852 the Travancore Royal Court passed judgement and officially declared Mar Athanasius to be the metropolitan of the Malankara Church, in virtue of his credentials brought from Antioch. The Syrians of Malankara were ordered to accept him as metropolitan and to obey him according to the previous custom.<sup>33</sup> Since the Travancore government and the British officials supported Mar Athanasius, Mar Koorillos could not exercise any effective jurisdiction, although he remained in Malankara. Practically Mathew Mar Athanasius continued as the official head of the whole Syrian Orthodox or Jacobite community in Malabar. Although he had Protestant leanings, he did not attempt to carry out the reforms planned by his uncle Abraham Palakunnathu.

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<sup>32</sup> *De Fontibus Juris Ecclesiastici Syro-Malankarensium* (Fonti, II-VIII), 63; E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 150; C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 331.

<sup>33</sup> The Travancore Royal Court Judgment, no. 173; in *Fontes Juribus Canonici Syro-Malankarensium* (Fonti, II-IX), 27.

## 2.7. Assembly or Synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876 and the Absolute Supremacy of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch

In 1865 those who opposed Mar Athanasius sent Joseph Pulikkottil, a native priest of Malankara to the Orthodox Syrian Patriarch of Antioch. The Patriarch consecrated him bishop under the name Mar Dionysius V and appointed him as the Malankara metropolitan to succeed the Antiochene Bishop Mar Koorillos. He returned in 1866, but did not succeed in ousting Mar Athanasius. In this context in 1868 Mathew Mar Athanasius, the official metropolitan of the Malankara Church, recognized by the Royal Court, decided to nominate a successor in advance. With the help of the bishop of the Jacobite sect of Thozhiyoor, on 31 May 1868 he consecrated one of his cousins named Thomas and declared the new prelate his successor, under the name of Thomas Mar Athanasius.

Solicited by Mar Dionysius V, in 1874 Patriarch Ignatius Mar Peter III went to London, in order to voice his claims and to diminish the activities of Protestants in Malankara, where he arrived in 1875. After obtaining the support of the Travancore government and that of the British officials, from 27 to 30 June 1876 Patriarch Peter III convoked an assembly or synod of the parishes of the Malankara Church at Mulanthuruthy in which the supremacy and jurisdiction of the Antiochene Patriarch were accepted and acknowledged. An association of the whole Malankara community was formed, of which the patron would be the Patriarch of Antioch, while the ruling metropolitan was to be the president. Arrangements were made also for the collection of money (*Ressisa*) to be remitted to the Patriarch.<sup>34</sup> Concerning the authority of the Patriarch, in the final document issued by the assembly it was publicly affirmed:

From ancient times the people of Malabar and their churches are under the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch. In this no one else has power. Since our bishops and priests receive (holy) Orders from you, you have power to appoint and depose them. Your Holiness (Jacobite Patriarch) has the spiritual care of the Syrian people and churches of Malabar and also the powers of nominating and deposing bishops.

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<sup>34</sup> For details, see C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 58-63; C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 288-296.



We and our posterity will not, until death, deviate either to the right or to the left from the faith of the three Councils of our holy Church handed over or from the precepts of our religion of true faith and of Your Holiness who is the head. We, therefore, unanimously swear before God and Your Holiness touching the cross and the Bible that until the last breath there will not be any change for this.

Requesting Your Holiness to put into effect all canons and laws pertaining to religion, we pray to confirm the decisions as read now for the administration of our Church, to confirm on the commission of 24 members and the metropolitan elected to it as responsible without partiality in all things pertaining to religion and community, and to appoint a metropolitan from outside who shall watch that nothing may happen against faith or obedience.<sup>35</sup>

The synod acknowledged the authority of the Patriarch to appoint and depose bishops, the Orthodox Jacobite “faith of the three councils” without any change, as well as “all canons and laws” of Antiochene tradition. With this synod the Malankara Church was definitively and completely brought under the absolute supremacy of the Antiochene Patriarch. In actual fact, the Malankara Church was annexed to the Antiochene Patriarchate and the Patriarch became the true and supreme head of the Malankara Church.

### **2.8. Origin of Mar Thoma Syrian Church (Doctrinally Protestant)**

Due to the intervention of the Patriarch the government of Travancore withdrew its support of Mathew Mar Athanasius, the pro-Anglican bishop and until then the official metropolitan of the Malankara Church. He and his would-be successor Thomas Mar Athanasius did not take part in the synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876. Hence the Patriarch excommunicated them and the pro-Anglican group from the Malankara Jacobite Church. Despite the excommunication by the Patriarch and the withdrawal of governmental support, Mathew Mar Athanasius refused to leave his office or to recognize Metropolitan Mar Dionysius V and surrender the temporalities of the Church to him. As already planned, in 1877 Thomas Mar Athanasius succeeded Mathew Mar Athanasius as the

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<sup>35</sup> *Fontes Juribus Canonici Syro-Malankarensium (Fonti, II-IX)*, 29-30; C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 63.

Malankara metropolitan and took possession of the properties belonging to the said office.

In the long litigation that followed between Mar Dionysius V (appointed by the Patriarch) and the pro-Anglican Bishop Thomas Mar Athanasius over the seminary and other temporal properties of the Malankara Church, the Travancore Royal Court of Final Appeal pronounced its definitive judgement on 12 July 1889, which was in favour of Mar Dionysius V and thus the pro-Anglican party was finally defeated. In fact, the Court recognized Mar Dionysius V as the metropolitan of the Syrian Jacobite Church in Malankara and ordered Thomas Mar Athanasius to surrender the insignia and office of metropolitan of the Malankara Church and give up possession of all the properties and moneys belonging to the Church.<sup>36</sup>

The Royal Court judgement marked the final and definitive defeat of Thomas Mar Athanasius and the pro-Anglican group. In accordance with the judgement they had to give up all the churches and temporal properties. However, three parishes accepted the authority of Thomas Mar Athanasius. They decided to form an independent Church known as the "Reformed Party". Later they adopted the name "The Mar Thoma Syrian Church".<sup>37</sup> This Church follows the Syro-Antiochene liturgical tradition, partially Anglicanized in harmony with Protestant doctrines.

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<sup>36</sup> See, *Fontes Juribus Canonici Syro-Malankarensium (Fonti, II-IX)*, 30-34; see also *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. 2, 218-219; A. P. Urumpackal, *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar*, Rome 1977, 58-59; for details concerning the case and the final judgment, C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 297-302.

<sup>37</sup> Over the course of time the Mar Thoma Syrian Church has spread to different parts of India and even abroad. At present this Church, headed by a Major Archbishop, has 13 dioceses and about 1100000 members. For more about this Church, see X. Koodapuzha, *Christianity in India*, 156-159; S. Kanjiramakalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, 86-88.

## 2.9. Progression as Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

As we have seen above, with the synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876 the Antiochene Patriarch became the head of the Malankara Church with full patriarchal powers in both spiritual and temporal matters.<sup>38</sup> He divided the Malankara Church, which had remained one unit until then, into seven dioceses and consecrated six more bishops in order to govern them.<sup>39</sup> Even after this division of the Malankara Church and the appointment of new bishops, Mar Dionysius V (1866-1909), the then metropolitan, continued to be the local head of the whole Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, as *primus inter pares*.

The implantation of the Antiochene rite and the Syrian Orthodox or Jacobite faith in Malankara was a long and continuous process which began in 1665 with the arrival of the first Antiochene prelate Mar Gregorios and was almost completed during the period of Mar Cyril or Koorillos (1846-1866). Cyril Malancharuvil rightly observes:

The introduction of the Antiochene rite into the Malankara Church was a gradual process. Examining this process closely we see that the Antiochene liturgy with its rituals was fully adopted, though gradually, and declared officially in 1836 to be the liturgy of the Malankara Church. Later the Antiochene prelate Mar Cyril completed the evolution, leaving no room for other liturgical elements to exist in it. As for the disciplinary system, very few innovations were made, though a few elements that were properly Antiochene and intimately connected with liturgy and rituals were introduced at various stages. However, the discipline of the Malankara Church was declared formally and “*de jure*” Antiochene and the transition was complete as it had adopted the “*Nomo-Canon*” of Bar Hebraeus as the code of law for it, although the church-government was left to be regulated, for the most part, by the traditions and customs of the Malankara Church, drawn from

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Fontes Juribus Canonici Syro-Malankarensium* (*Fonti*, II-IX), 29-30.

<sup>39</sup> *De Fontibus Juris Ecclesiastici Syro-Malankarensium* (*Fonti*, II-VIII), 64-

different sources and developed through various stages of its history.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly the imposition of the jurisdiction and supremacy of the Antiochene Patriarch over the Malankara Church was also a gradual process. The Malankara metropolitans sought the help of the Antiochene Patriarch and asked him for Antiochene bishops either to receive valid episcopal consecration or to protect themselves from the undue intervention of the English Protestant missionaries and civil authorities who wanted to anglicanize the Malankara Church, modifying its faith and rite. However, the Antiochene Patriarch and bishops strove to bring the Malankara Church under their direct jurisdiction, the Patriarch obtaining complete authority over this Church in the synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876. It is no wonder that the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch and his bishops, taking advantage of the propitious occasion, endeavoured to form an Orthodox Church of Antiochene tradition in India in an epoch in which the logic of the fierce competition of proselytism between Catholics and non-Catholics prevailed.

Paradoxically those St Thomas Christians who happened to break communion with the Catholic Church in order to safeguard the Chaldean rite, genuine ecclesial traditions and the autonomy of their Church, were subjected to such a thorough Antiochenization process that in the end, constrained by the vicissitudes of history, they completely relinquished “their own rite” and received the Antiochene rite and Syro-Orthodox or Jacobite faith, placing themselves under the absolute and full supremacy of the Jacobite Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, thus totally jeopardizing the autonomy and original identity of their Church. However, as we will see below, such acts by the Patriarch only provided fuel for another regrettable outburst and attempt to assert autonomy which was destined to

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<sup>40</sup> C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 95. Cyril Malancharuvil belonging to the Order of Imitation of Christ (OIC) was appointed as Bishop of Bathery on 28 October 1978 and he assumed the name Cyril Mar Baselios. He was promoted as the Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum and head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on 6 November 1995. When the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church was raised to the status of a major archiepiscopal Church on 10 February 2005, he was appointed as the first Major Archbishop and he adopted the official title, Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos.

perturb the Malankara Church for several decades, provoking even violent conflicts and public litigation.

## 2.10. Development of Two Contrasting Malankara Orthodox Syrian Churches

Patriarch Peter III, who brought the Malankara Church under the complete supremacy of the Antiochene Orthodox Patriarch in the synod of Mulanthuruthy, died in 1894. Afterwards Ignatius Abdul Masih II<sup>41</sup> was installed as Patriarch on 16 June 1895. However in 1905 the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid (who reigned from 31 August 1876 to 27 April 1909) deposed Mar Abdul Masih II, the canonical Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and subsequently Mar Ignatius Abdullah Sattuf was enthroned as Patriarch Mar Ignatius Abdullah II on 28 August 1906. In Kerala Mar Dionysius V was succeeded by Mar Dionysius VI (1909-1934).<sup>42</sup>

The new Antiochene Patriarch Abdullah II, who came to Malankara in 1909, claimed complete supremacy over the Malankara Church, both in spiritual and temporal matters. The Malankara Metropolitan Dionysius VI, however, argued that the Patriarch had supremacy only over spiritual affairs and not over the temporalities of the Church. By spiritual supremacy he meant the consecration of bishops and holy Chrism, as well as a general supervision over the Orthodox faith, but no intervention in the internal government of the Church nor over its temporalities. The dispute over the authority of the Patriarch reached its climax on 31 May 1911 when the Patriarch excommunicated Mar Dionysius VI and his followers and enthroned Mar Koorillos (1911-1917) as the metropolitan of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The name of the Patriarch is written differently by authors: Abded Mshiho II, Abded M'siha II, Abdul Messiah II, Abdul Massiah II, Abdal Messih II, etc.

<sup>42</sup> C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 302; T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, Trivandrum 2015, 74-85.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 153-154; N. J. Thomas, "The Eastern Orthodox Church in India", in H. C. Perumalil and E. R. Hambye (eds.), *Christianity in India*, Alleppey 1972, 204; C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 64-67; for details, C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, 302-312.

As a consequence of such drastic intervention by the Patriarch, two competing parties were formed in the Malankara Church, though in faith and worship they were Jacobites of the Antiochene tradition. The excommunicated group began to be popularly called the *Metran Kakshy* (Bishop's Party); those who accepted the claims of the Patriarch formed the *Bava Kakshy* (Patriarch's Party). The Bishop's Party denied the authority of the Antiochene Patriarch over the temporal affairs of the Malankara Church and thereby implicitly questioned his authority also over spiritual affairs, while the Patriarch's Party acknowledged his authority over both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church.<sup>44</sup>

Mar Dionysius VI and his followers, in an assembly held at Kottayam on 7 September 1911 declared the nullity of the proceedings of the Patriarch and decided to constitute an autonomous Church. They sought the help of the deposed Antiochene Patriarch Abdul Masih II, who reached Kerala on 13 June 1912 and released Mar Dionysius VI from his excommunication. On 15 September 1912 Mar Abdul Masih II instituted the Catholicate of the East and installed Murimattathil Paulos Mar Ivanios with the title of Moran Mar Paulos Baselios as the first catholicos of Syrian Orthodox Church in Malankara. Three bishops were also consecrated.<sup>45</sup>

In the bull issued immediately after the investiture ceremony on 15 September 1912, regarding the canonical competence of the catholicos the Patriarch affirmed: "the authority to serve all the spiritual elements in public, which are necessary for protecting the tradition of the Holy Church has been given to him by the Holy Ghost as was given to the holy Apostles by Our Lord Jesus Messiah. Authority means the authority to ordain metropolitans, bishops and to consecrate holy Myron and to serve all the other spiritual items

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. A. P. Urumpackal, *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar*, 74.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *De Fontibus Juris Ecclesiastici Syro-Malankarensium* (Fonti, II-VIII), 75-76; N. J. Thomas, "The Eastern Orthodox Church in India", 205-206; C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 68-70.

[...]”.<sup>46</sup> With regard to the autonomous nature of the catholicate, in the bull issued on 19 February 1913 the Patriarch decreed:

The Catholicos, aided by the metropolitans, shall ordain chief priests and consecrate Holy Myron in accordance with the canons of the Holy Fathers. In your metropolitans is vested the permission and authority to install a Catholicos, when a Catholicos dies. No one can resist you in the exercise of this right and, do all things properly and in conformity with precedents [...].<sup>47</sup>

From these two bulls issued by the Patriarch it is evident that he granted this Orthodox faction the canonical status of an autocephalous Church with the power to elect bishops, metropolitans and the catholicos, without any dependence on the Patriarch of Antioch.

In the course of time the Patriarch’s Party took the name Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church and the Bishop’s Party assumed the title Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church (the Patriarch’s Party) remained a part of the Antiochene patriarchal structure, the Patriarch of Antioch thus having full supremacy and jurisdiction in spiritual and temporal affairs. The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Bishop’s Party) really became an autocephalous Church, completely independent of the Patriarch of Antioch. As we will see below, it is from the autocephalous Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church that a group came into full communion with the Catholic Church, thus giving rise to the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

For those who remained in the Orthodox Church, the constitution of the catholicate, “which lays down the institutional structure of the Church for preserving its integrity and autocephaly and for administering its spiritual, ecclesiastical and temporal functions”, was brought into force by the Malankara Association

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<sup>46</sup> The bull can be found in C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, appendix 9, 460-462.

<sup>47</sup> The bull of the patriarch in C. V. Cheriyan, *Orthodox Christianity in India*, appendix 10, 462-465; also in A. P. Urumpackal, *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar*, Appendix I, 137-140.

held on 26 December 1934.<sup>48</sup> The holy synod of the catholicate, composed of the catholicos and other bishops of the same Church, consecrates bishops and metropolitans and performs all patriarchal functions. The synod has legislative, administrative and disciplinary powers in all spiritual and ecclesiastical matters.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> A Latin version of the Constitution can be found in *Fontes Juribus Canonici Syro-Malankarensium (Fonti, II-IX)*, 26, Appendix, pp. 321-339. This Constitution, with the amendments of 1951 and 1997, still remains the essential law of the Catholicate.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. The Constitution, nos. 4, 7 and 8; C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 123.





**Introductory Article Two**  
**EFFORTS FOR THE UNITY OF ALL THE ST**  
**THOMAS CHRISTIANS AND THE ECCLESIAL**  
**SITUATION AT THE TIME OF MAR IVANIOS**

**Introduction**

This article has two sections. The first section deals with the concerted efforts of the St Thomas Christians for reconciliation and unity under one head from the time of schism until the endeavours of Mar Ivanios, which constitute a remote background. The second section is dedicated to the general ecclesial background of that time; in fact the Patriarch of the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch, bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, bishops of the Latin Church in Kerala, the Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies, the Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff were actively involved in the ecumenical efforts of Mar Ivanios. A brief consideration of all such ecclesial realities would be highly helpful to understand the documents presented in this book.

**SECTION I: EFFORTS OF THE ST THOMAS CHRISTIANS FOR  
ONE CHURCH UNDER ONE HEAD**

After the division of the Malabar Church following the *Coonan* Cross Oath in 1653 and the definitive excommunication of Mar Thomas I in 1663, for more than a century both Catholics and non-Catholics cherished an inalienable craving for the reunion of all the St Thomas Christians under one head. Strenuous efforts for a rapprochement began from the very moment of schism itself. After the *Coonan* Cross Oath only a small group of St Thomas Christians remained in the archdiocese of Cranganore under the Padroado Archbishop Francis Garcia, while the majority were placed in the vicariate apostolic of Malabar under the jurisdiction of the Carmelite vicars apostolic of the Propaganda Fide. Hence practically all the reconciliation efforts took place mainly under the governance of Carmelite vicars apostolic and the Roman Congregation of Propaganda Fide, although at times the Padroado authorities intervened in the affair.

## 1. The Failed Attempts of the First Five Pseudo-Bishops for a Reunion (1663-1764)

Initially the leaders of the “revolution” had no intention of abandoning the Catholic faith, or the Chaldean rite. An examination of the history of the pseudo bishops (from Mar Thomas I to Mar Thomas V) who governed the schismatic group from 1653 to 1764 demonstrates that only when their efforts to be united with the Catholic Church had failed, did they turn to the Antiochene Patriarch as a last resort to obtain valid episcopal consecration for ensuring the spiritual good of their faithful.<sup>1</sup>

The attempts at reunion during this period failed mainly because the heads of the Malankara community demanded that they be consecrated bishops and be received into the Catholic Church with jurisdiction over their faithful. However the Carmelite vicars apostolic of Malabar (later Verapoly), the Portuguese Padroado authorities and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide were not prepared to receive the separated group with their head as a bishop with jurisdiction, since it was detrimental to their authority over the St Thomas Christians.<sup>2</sup> The reception of the separated group with their leader as bishop of “their own rite and nation” might have signified the reunion of all the St Thomas Christians under one head, as had been the case before the sixteenth century, and the probable end of the authority of the Latin bishops over the St Thomas Christians.

One must also note that, even though the first five heads of the separated community were not consecrated bishops, they exercised all the episcopal functions, including the ordination of priests.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 102-110; T. Pallipurathkunnel, *A Double Regime in the Malabar Church (1663-1716)*, Alwaye 1982, 157-163; F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, Bangalore 1999, 132-136; P. J. Podipara, *The Efforts for Reunion in Malankara, South India*, in T. Kalayil (ed.), *Collected Works of Rev. Dr. Placid J. Podipara CMI*, vol. 1, Mannanam 2007, 222-225; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil: the Pioneer Ecumenist of the St Thomas Christians*, Rome 2010, 29-44.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 59, 61-62, 108, 133, 138, 143, 149-150 and 164; cf. also C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 102-110; Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 612-628.

Consequently there was the doubt that at least some successors of Mar Thomas I, selected from among the “priests” not validly ordained, were simple laymen. Having overcome the initial worries, Propaganda Fide studied with benevolence and interest the case of Mar Thomas V (1728-1764), who was for the dicastery only an “intruder” or “laicus mitratus”, who exercised all the episcopal functions without any sign of repentance. Although the praxis of the Holy See at that epoch was to receive into the Catholic Church with episcopal dignity only validly consecrated “schismatic bishops”, Propaganda was ready to confer the sacred Orders on Thomas V, on condition that he had shown true conversion. In the letter of 5 September 1750 addressed to the vicar apostolic of Malabar Propaganda Fide pointed out:

His Holiness in his usual apostolic clemency and fatherly benevolence does not refuse to grant at a more opportune time the mentioned Archdeacon the graces that he asks both for his own person and for his so-called priests, but he wants first to verify their sincere reformation and to have suitable and clear proofs for the same.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore the Congregation expressed its positive opinion on the possibility of conferring the episcopal character on the head of the Malankara community and the sacred Orders on his priests under rigorous conditions, but was contrary to granting ordinary jurisdiction since this would be harmful to the authority of the vicar apostolic.<sup>4</sup>

It seems that subsequently the attitude of Propaganda Fide changed in a negative sense, since Mar Thomas V did not manifest any sign of repentance. On 3 September 1757, in its “Instructions for Msgr Vicar Apostolic of the Serra of Malabar with regard to the Chaldean Archdeacon, named Thomas, who pretending to be a bishop since sometimes not only celebrates the Mass, but still

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<sup>3</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere* (1750), f. 158v-159. Formerly this Archives was called Archives of the Congregation for the Propagation Faith (Archivum Congregationis de Propaganda Fide) corresponding to its previous name.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere* (1750), f. 159.

exercises the Pontifical, and confers, although invalidly, the sacred Orders”, the Congregation specified:

But since the aforesaid Archdeacon is persisting, as you have notified, in using the episcopal insignias, and in unduly usurping the power that he does not enjoy, it is the mind of the said Sacred Congregation that you continue to exercise all the obligations of Christian charity in his regard, as becomes your pastoral character, procuring as far as is possible his effective and sincere conversion. In doing this, however, you should be very careful not to give them any hope whatever of being ever raised to the ecclesiastical dignities, and of being rehabilitated by this Holy See all those persons, whom he promoted to the sacred Orders, without having any legitimate authority to do so.<sup>5</sup>

In any case, the attempts at reconciliation with Rome failed and therefore, as already indicated, Mar Thomas V turned to the Syro-Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch in the hope of obtaining episcopal consecration.

## **2. Reunion Efforts of Mar Thomas VI (Later Mar Dionysius I) and Mar Joseph Cariattil (1765-1786)**

The efforts for reunion spearheaded by Mar Thomas VI, the sixth head of the Malankara community, deserve our special attention. He was born in 1728 into the Catholic family Parampil at Kuravilangad and was given the name Joseph. His uncle Mar Thomas V induced him to become a priest in the non-Catholic community. On 29 June 1761 Mar Thomas V raised to “episcopal dignity” Fr Joseph Parampil who succeeded him in 1765 with the title Mar Thomas VI.<sup>6</sup> From that same year on, Mar Thomas VI began his attempts for a reconciliation with Bishop Florence of Jesus OCD (1750-1773), the vicar apostolic of Malabar, but based on the suggestions of missionaries, Propaganda Fide was ready to grant only a brief conferring the dignity of Protonotary Apostolic to the “mitred layman” if he desired to become an ecclesiastic or the

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<sup>5</sup>Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere*, vol. 190, f. 213r; also in Ambrosius a S. Theresia OCD, *Hierarchia carmelitana seu series illustrium Praesulum ecclesiasticorum ex Ordine Carmelitarum Discalceatorum*, Fasciculus IV, Romae 1939, 251.

<sup>6</sup> About Mar Thomas VI see also Introductory Article One, no. 2.3.

dignity of Knighthood (Speron d'Oro), if he preferred to remain in the lay state.<sup>7</sup> The intention of the Congregation was to convert the "mitred layman" by offering him some honorific titles and to reunite his people to the vicariate apostolic of Malabar.

But such proposals became irrelevant since even before they were made known to Mar Thomas VI, he was consecrated bishop by the Antiochene Bishop Gregorios in the first week of January 1772 under the name Mar Dionysius I. After his valid episcopal consecration Mar Dionysius I continued his attempts at reconciliation through the Propaganda vicar apostolic of Malabar, Florence of Jesus (1750-1773), the Padroado archbishop of Cranganore, Salvador dos Reis SJ (1756-1777) and through the visitor apostolic Fr Lawrence Justiniani (1773-1788).<sup>8</sup> Regarding his attempts through the vicar apostolic of Malabar and the archbishop of Cranganore, in his petition addressed to Pope Pius VI, Mar Dionysius I stated:

Several times I earnestly requested and prayed with sighs through the presbyters of the orthodox faith (Catholics), Msgr Salvador dos Reis, the metropolitan of Cranganore and Florence of Jesus, the Bishop of Aeropolis and the vicar apostolic of Malabar and Cochin, to aggregate me with all my people to the unity of the body of the Catholic Church by giving absolution from the excommunication that has fallen on us since the time of our forefathers, and if they were unable to do this, to send my petition to the Apostolic See of Rome. But they refused and kept away.<sup>9</sup>

In the meantime the vicar apostolic of Malabar Bishop Florence of Jesus died and Bishop Francis Sales OCD (1775-1779) succeeded him. Based on the reports and suggestions of Francis Sales who had submitted a report in Rome before his elevation to the dignity of the

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere*, vol. 218, ff. 381-382.

<sup>8</sup> For details, J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar: for the One True Fold", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 30 (1964) 153-155; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 46-54.

<sup>9</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scrittura riferite nei Congressi: India Orientale e Cina*, vol. 39, f. 14; English trans. *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 140; see also *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. 2, 209.

vicar apostolic, on 22 July 1774 the Congregation of Propaganda Fide confirmed its decision to grant the dignity of Protonotary Apostolic or an annual subsidy of 100 or less Roman Scudi to Mar Dionysius I for his surrender to the Holy See.<sup>10</sup> On 6 August 1774 the Congregation also gave the following instruction to the new vicar apostolic Bishop Francis Sales concerning the reunion of Mar Dionysius I, who was then a validly consecrated bishop with jurisdiction over his people:

Regarding the conversion of the mitred layman Mar Thomas, and of the schismatic bishop who intruded himself into that mission, the vicar apostolic with his zeal and prudence should employ all those means, which he believes opportune and practical. And as regards the first individual, whose conversion would be more important, besides the primary and most appropriate means of exhortation and persuasion, you can make use of some offer in disposing him more readily to acknowledge the truth, for example, you may permit him to exercise some supervision over his subjects in the administration of temporal goods, but never in anything of spiritual matters. In order to assist him in his indigence, it will not be far from the mind of the Sacred Congregation to grant him an annual allowance of 100 scudi or less according to the decision of the vicar apostolic, who should be very careful not to encourage talk about the nation's desire to have its own bishop or head of its rite because if this were conceded to the people, there would be evident danger of the same nation separating itself abruptly, or at least gradually, from its dependence on the vicar apostolic which is considered necessary to maintain such a large and excellent flock in the faith and in union with the Catholic Church.<sup>11</sup>

Since a general impression had been created in Rome and elsewhere that the St Thomas Christians were heretics and schismatics, brought back to the Catholic faith and communion of the Roman Pontiff by

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 839, f. 222; J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 155.

<sup>11</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 839, f. 222; also in Ambrosius a S. Theresia, *Hierarchia Carmelitana*, 277. In tis citation simply Mar Thomas is used to refer to Mar Thomas VI, who assumed the name Mar Dionysius I at the time of his valid episcopal consecration.

the Western missionaries in the Synod of Diamper in 1599, the Congregation feared that the presence of a native bishop with jurisdiction would be detrimental to the faith and communion of the St Thomas Christians. Hence, the idea of receiving Mar Dionysius I with jurisdiction over his community was unacceptable to the Holy See.

The exceptional and heroic attempts of Mar Dionysius I for a rapprochement continued through the new vicar apostolic Bishop Francis Sales, who however was not favourable to the idea either. His endeavours for reunion must be viewed within the historical context of the division of the Catholic St Thomas Christians between the archdiocese of Cranganore, governed by Jesuit bishops of Portuguese Padroado, and the vicariate apostolic of Malabar, administered by the Carmelite vicars apostolic of Propaganda Fide, who were in constant conflict for supremacy over the St Thomas Christians but astonishingly concordant in avoiding the presence of any native Catholic bishop with jurisdiction since this was seen as a threat to their authority by both of them. The problem of retaining episcopal jurisdiction remained the only obstacle for the reunion of Mar Dionysius I and his community with the mother Church.

### **2.1. The Delegation to Rome under the Leadership of Joseph Cariattil**

Due to the constant requests of Mar Dionysius I, Bishop Francis Sales sent to him, with ample instructions, Fr Joseph Cariattil,<sup>12</sup> the first St Thomas Christian to have a doctorate in philosophy and sacred theology from the Propaganda Fide College and a professor at the Alangad seminary in the vicariate apostolic of Malabar. After a meeting with Mar Dionysius I, being convinced of

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph Cariattil was born on 5 May 1742 at Alangad in the vicariate apostolic of Malabar under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide. After his preliminary formation at the Alangad seminary under the Carmelite missionaries, from 1755 to 1766 he studied philosophy and theology at the Propaganda College in Rome. He was ordained priest on 25 March 1766 at St John Lateran cathedral in Rome. After his return to Malabar on 10 November 1767 he was appointed professor of Syriac at the aforementioned Alangad seminary in January 1768. For details concerning the early life and activities of Cariattil, J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 57-84.



the sincerity of his conversion, Cariattil encouraged and emboldened him promising to do all he could to realize the reunion, even if he had to “go to Rome once again for you, sacrificing my life to God”.<sup>13</sup> Then Cariattil approached Bishop Francis Sales, who stated: “if Mar Thomas wanted to join the *Pazhayath* he would not allow him to exercise jurisdiction in Malabar, but he would try to procure for him some dignity other than that of a bishop, or, if Mar Thomas wanted to retain his dignity as a bishop, he would try to send him to Europe”.<sup>14</sup>

Having considered the grave problems that perturbed the Malabar Church during the governance of Bishop Francis Sales, with two decrees dated 25 February 1777 Propaganda Fide deposed him from the office of the vicar apostolic and appointed Bishop Charles of St Conrad, vicar apostolic of Great Mogul (Bombay) as the administrator of Malabar as well. After the death of Archbishop Salvador dos Reis on 7 April 1777, the archdiocese of Cranganore also remained vacant and a Goan priest Pedro Figueiredo was appointed administrator by the archbishop of Goa.<sup>15</sup> Thus both sees of the St Thomas Christians, the vicariate apostolic of Malabar and the archdiocese of Cranganore were practically vacant at that time.

Since all efforts for reunion through the Padroado and Propaganda authorities in Malabar failed, in April 1778 the general church assembly of 72 parishes of the Catholic St Thomas Christians of both jurisdictions decided to send a delegation under the leadership of Fr Joseph Cariattil, accompanied by Fr Thomas Paremakkal, to Portugal and Rome to procure whatever benefits possible for the Malabar Church and especially to treat the reunion of Mar Dionysius I directly with the superior authorities, setting aside the mediation of the missionaries in Kerala.<sup>16</sup> Cariattil belonged to the Propaganda vicariate apostolic of Malabar, while

<sup>13</sup> *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 60 and 62.

<sup>14</sup> *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 60. In the quotation the expression *Pazhayath* signifies *Pazhayakootukar*, namely the old party or the Catholic party.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Ambrosius a S. Theresia, *Hierarchia Carmelitana*, 267-271; D. Ferroli, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, vol. 2, 91-92; F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, 82-84 and 101.

<sup>16</sup> *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 65 and 77.

Thomas Paremakkal was a leading priest of the Padroado archdiocese of Cranganore. Hence they represented all the Catholic St Thomas Christians.

Both the Propaganda and Padroado missionaries in India strove their best to impede the delegation's mission. Among other things the Carmelite missionaries gave the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to understand that the purpose of the journey of the two priests was to free the Malabar Church from the governance of the missionaries sent by the same Congregation.<sup>17</sup> The delegation reached Lisbon on 18 July 1779 and submitted a petition to Francesca Maria, the reigning Queen of Portugal in August 1779. The petition contained six points, among which the request for a "learned and God-fearing Portuguese" as archbishop of the vacant see of Cranganore and all possible help for the reunion of Mar Dionysius I with his community of eighty thousand people.<sup>18</sup>

On 6 November 1779 Cariattil and Paremakkal embarked for Rome, reaching there on 3 January 1780. As a result of the false reports of the Carmelite missionaries and because the two messengers of Christian unity first went to Lisbon and submitted a petition to the Queen, they received only rebukes and threats from the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Giuseppe Maria Castelli and from its Secretary Stefano Borgia, who accused the delegation of trying to do away with the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide in Malabar through the Portuguese royal authority.<sup>19</sup> Charles Payngott, former archivist of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches and a scholar of the Syro-Malabar Church, highlights the reason for such a negative attitude on the part of Propaganda Fide:

During their stay in Rome Cariattil and his companion had several meetings with Castelli and Borgia. Both these men, however, showed Pharaonic obstinacy in their unfriendly attitude towards the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. C. Payngot, "Mar Joseph Cariattil Archbishop of Cranganore", in C. Payngot (ed.), *Homage to Mar Cariattil, Pioneer Malabar Ecumenist*, Rome 1987, 33-34; cf. also, F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, 71-72 and 109-110.

<sup>18</sup> For the petition and its explanation, see *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 106-108; cf. also J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 107-112.

<sup>19</sup> See *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 131-138; cf. E. R. Hambye, *History of Christianity in India*, 31; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 115-118.

Malabarians. This hostility sprung from the fear that admitting Mar Thomas into Catholic Communion would bring an end to the apostolic vicariate of Malabar and in that way the Propaganda Fide might lose a part of its ecclesiastical empire. For this reason Castelli was trying to subdue the deputation by threats and insults.<sup>20</sup>

Propaganda Fide was not ready to give credit to the envoys of the Malabar people, who had come to Rome without any authorization or recommendation from their local ecclesiastical authorities. Hence, on 11 March 1780 Cardinal Castelli wrote to the vicar apostolic of Great Mogul and at that time administrator apostolic of Malabar, Bishop Charles of St Conrad, asking him to inquire into the matter sincerely and to obtain exact and correct information for the Congregation with regard to Mar Dionysius I and his followers.<sup>21</sup>

Cardinal Castelli, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, died on 9 April 1780 and was succeeded by Cardinal Leonardo Antonelli. The new Prefect was not so unfriendly to the Malabar priests as his predecessor. In spite of innumerable hurdles and difficulties, the delegation succeeded in meeting Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) and submitted to him the profession of faith and petition of Mar Dionysius I, the letter of the Malabar general church assembly and two other petitions prepared by the delegation concerning the reunion and the needs of the St Thomas Christians.<sup>22</sup> In the meantime, Portugal also recommended the petition of Mar Dionysius I and desired that the Padroado archbishop of Goa be commissioned to receive him into the Catholic Church.<sup>23</sup> Cariattil and Paremakkal could not achieve much in Rome and, without obtaining a definite or precise answer concerning the affairs, they left for Lisbon on 20 June 1780.

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<sup>20</sup> C. Payngot, "Mar Joseph Cariattil Archbishop of Cranganore", 34-35.

<sup>21</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere*, vol. 236, ff. 189v-191; see also J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 162.

<sup>22</sup> For details, see *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 139-153; J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 160-161; F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, 141-145; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 133-142.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 154.

Evidently the documents submitted to the Pope were handed over to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide for evaluation and action. The Prefect of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Antonelli found the profession of faith of Mar Dionysius I incomplete; his episcopal character and the sincerity of his conversion also appeared doubtful to him. In spite of this, also respecting the desire of Portugal, on 28 September 1780 Cardinal Antonelli, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide granted Emmanuel of St Catherine OCD, the Padroado bishop of Cochin and administrator of Goa (at that time the bishop of Goa was in Europe) special faculties to ascertain, personally or through a delegate, the truthfulness of the affirmations made in the petitions, the validity of the episcopal consecration of Mar Dionysius I, the sincerity of his conversion and then to receive him into the Catholic Church after his profession of faith according to the prescribed formula, but under some rigorous conditions and prohibiting him from all functions of episcopal order and jurisdiction for the time being.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.2. Joseph Cariattil, Archbishop of Cranganore

After returning to Lisbon in October 1780, Cariattil and Paremakkal continued their mission and endeavoured to obtain whatever was possible from the Portuguese government for the common good of the Malabar Church. Surprisingly on 16 July 1782 Portuguese Queen Francesca Maria nominated Joseph Cariattil archbishop of the vacant Padroado see of Cranganore.<sup>25</sup> With the letter of 17 August 1782 the Queen requested Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) to confirm the nomination of Cariattil and the Pope did so on 16 December 1782. However, in the papal bull of confirmation not only was the rite of Cariattil changed into the Latin but he was also prohibited from returning to his own rite. The bull reads:

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<sup>24</sup> See Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere*, vol. 236, ff. 729-740; for details, J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 162-164; cf. also *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 162-170; E. R. Hambye, *History of Christianity in India*, 55; F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, 146-148.

<sup>25</sup> *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 207.

Upon the presentation of the most serene and most faithful Queen, His Holiness has made provision for the archdiocese of Cranganore in West Indies (sic), being vacant due to the death of Salvador dos Reys, its last archbishop of happy memory, died outside the Roman Curia, in the person of Rev. Joseph Cariattil, priest of Cranganore or another city or diocese and teacher of sacred theology, of recognized faith and having every virtue. His Holiness appointed him archbishop and pastor of the aforesaid Church of Cranganore, entrusting him with its pastoral care, with the indult that he can embrace the Latin rite, lawfully remain in it and receive episcopal consecration in it from a single bishop in India, assisted by two ecclesiastical dignitaries, notwithstanding any kind of eventual obligation on his part and whatever else to the contrary, and prohibiting him to return to his own native Syro-Chaldean rite and with the decision that he should take care to erect the dignities, the canonicate and the baptismal font in that holy Church as soon as possible [...].<sup>26</sup>

The rite of Cariattil was changed because, according to the concept of that epoch, no Oriental could be a bishop of a Latin diocese or of a diocese in which there were also Latin Christians. Following the imposition of Portuguese patronage, the archdiocese of Cranganore was as considered one of the Latin dioceses in India. Moreover, after the territorial division effected by Archbishop Menezes, following the jurisdictional conflicts between the bishops of Cochin and Cranganore, there were also Latin Christians in the archdiocese of Cranganore.<sup>27</sup>

The nomination of Cariattil as archbishop of Cranganore appears to be a strategic action motivated by the desire on the part of the Portuguese to get rid of the Propaganda missionaries in Kerala, although the delegation never fostered such intentions.<sup>28</sup> When the mission of the delegation in Rome failed, Padroado

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<sup>26</sup> Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Acta Camerari Sacri Collegii S.R.E. Cardinalium*, 39, f. 238v.

<sup>27</sup> For details and documentation, see P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 146-153; *Important Roman Documents*, 80-107.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. E. R. Hambye, "Mar Joseph Cariattil between Propaganda and Padroado", in C. Payngot (ed.), *Homage to Mar Cariattil, Pioneer Malabar Ecumenist*, Rome 1987, 54; B. Vadakkekara, "Cariattil-Paremmakkal Representation to Rome and Lisbon towards Restoring Ecclesial Unity among India's St Thomas Christians (1778-1786)", in C. Payngot (ed.), *Homage to Mar Cariattil, Pioneer Malabar Ecumenist*, Rome 1987, 20.

affirmed its superiority in Malabar by nominating Cariattil as archbishop.

On 17 February 1783 Mar Cariattil was consecrated bishop in the church of St. Benedict in Lisbon and on 17 March of the same year he received the sacred pallium.<sup>29</sup> The enemies of the new archbishop were numerous, strong and ever active. The return journey of Cariattil and Paremmakkal was delayed for about two years because the impression was created in Portugal that the appointment of Cariattil as the archbishop of Cranganore would be detrimental not only to the Propaganda missionaries but even to the Portuguese. Regarding this delay Paremmakkal stated:

It is publicly known to all that all the Portuguese, especially Martin de Mel, the minister for India, venomously hate these (Propaganda) missionaries who try to uproot their power in India. Again, it was precisely to uproot the (Propaganda) missionaries from Malabar that our archbishop was consecrated. But after this, the minister mentioned above and many among the important persons in Lisbon understood that by this one act that they had undertaken to uproot the (Propaganda) missionaries from Malabar, all the Europeans would be uprooted from there. They were led to this conclusion by the words of many Europeans in Lisbon who ruled over India, and by the letters written against us with one mind by the missionaries from India and by the other Portuguese Padres. So, the minister mentioned above and many of the important persons in Lisbon repented of what they had done. But they also realized that it would be a disgrace and dishonour for them if they detained the archbishop in Lisbon without sending him to Malabar. They, therefore, by general consent, decided that he was to be sent to Malabar by all means.<sup>30</sup>

As Paremmakkal indicated, it was only after the consecration of Cariattil that the Portuguese authorities understood the mistake they had committed by such action and the danger of having a native bishop in Malabar, namely the possible unification of all the St Thomas Christians under an indigenous head. Based on the ominous reports of the missionaries, the Propaganda Fide was not very enthusiastic either about the return of Cariattil. However, the Portuguese authorities decided to send him back to India since it was

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<sup>29</sup> *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 233-234.

<sup>30</sup> *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 281; see also pages 237-238.

judged inopportune to keep him in Portugal for a long time, considering also the antagonism of the St Thomas Christians against the missionaries in Malabar, who were also held responsible for the delay of bishop's return home.

### **2.3. Authorization for Reunion, Partial Fulfilment of the Mission**

As we have already seen, on 28 September 1780 Emmanuel of St Catherine, bishop of Cochin and administrator of Goa, was authorized to ascertain the truth of the petitions and to receive Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Church, but he did nothing because of various circumstances. As he did not obtain the royal permission to leave Goa for Malabar, after the elapse of a year, he commissioned Fr José da Soledade OCD, the new ecclesiastical governor of Cochin (later its bishop) to deal with the matter. The latter prepared a long report, evaluating all the relevant facts and on 16 January 1782 sent it to Bishop Emmanuel, who was commissioned to receive Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Church. Since he felt that he did not have all the faculties to act according to the recommendations of Soledade, he forwarded the report to Propaganda Fide on 15 February 1783 with his own comments and observations, which were not very favourable to Mar Dionysius I.<sup>31</sup> On 18 July 1783 Emmanuel was appointed the archbishop of Goa and Soledade became the bishop of Cochin.

After receiving the aforementioned report, considering the new ecclesiastical situation engendered by the promotion of Emmanuel to the metropolitan see of Goa, the appointment of Fr Soledade as the bishop of Cochin and especially the elevation of Cariattil to the dignity of the archbishop of Cranganore, Propaganda Fide made a thorough study of the whole matter. The general meeting of 17 May 1784, after mature consideration of the problems, did not make a definitive decision but resolved to commit the matter to Mar Cariattil. In fact, the decision was taken to request the Holy Father

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<sup>31</sup> The original report written in Portuguese, in Rome, Archives of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 867, ff. 133r-143v; Italian translation, *Ibidem*, ff. 154r-161r; the forwarding letter of Archbishop Emmanuel, *Ibidem*, f. 153.

to grant Mar Cariattil the same faculties which had been granted four years earlier to Bishop Emmanuel for handling the case of Mar Thomas.<sup>32</sup>

On the basis of the inconclusive reports from India, the cardinals decided to write to Mar Cariattil, asking him to conduct a fresh enquiry on Mar Dionysius I, especially with regard to the genuineness of his conversion, true faith, episcopal consecration, conduct and lifestyle, and to refer back to the Congregation with all frankness and sincerity.<sup>33</sup> The cardinals judged that, after fulfilling the said obligation, Cariattil could receive Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Church, but the conferral of episcopal jurisdiction was reserved to the Holy Father.<sup>34</sup>

With the letter of 10 July 1784, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide communicated to Mar Cariattil the said decision, empowering him to receive Mar Thomas into the Catholic Church after verifying the validity of his priesthood and after obtaining a new complete profession of faith according to the formula of Pope Urban VIII.<sup>35</sup> With regard to this specific point the Congregation stated:

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<sup>32</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 867, f. 125v.

<sup>33</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 867, ff. 125-126; for details concerning the reports from India and the reasons behind the decision of Propaganda one may see the *Ponenze* of Cardinal Ghilini, in Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 867, ff. 105r-126r; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 285-302.

<sup>34</sup> "Quo peracto, vigore facultatem a SS.mo D. N. benignitur concessarum, dictum Mar Thoma, previa absoluteione a censuris, ad Catholicam Communionem admittat quatenus vero sit sacerdos, ab irregularitate absolvat, et ad sacerdotalia obeunda munera reabilitet; functiones tamen omnes episcopales omnimodo ipsi prohibeat usqueque de vera validaque illius consecratione ex iudicio Ssmi D. N. non consistenter". Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*, vol. 867, 126r.

<sup>35</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere* 244, ff. 570r-573v.



If Your Lordship verifies that his conversion is true and sincere, you can, by virtue of the extensive faculties His Holiness accords to you to this effect, admit him to the Catholic Communion after having absolved him of the irregularity and rehabilitate him in the priestly ministry. You should, however, prohibit him absolutely to perform any episcopal function whatsoever, until the Holy See would, by a formal sentence, declare his consecration true and valid.<sup>36</sup>

By granting the faculty to the Padroado Archbishop Cariattil, Propaganda in a way confirmed its authority in Malabar. Padroado reacted immediately, requesting that the archbishop of Goa should also be delegated to receive Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Church.<sup>37</sup> The request was rejected by Propaganda, but as a compromise the archbishop of Goa was permitted to send a representative to be present at the reception of Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Communion.<sup>38</sup>

It is generally believed that Cariattil was granted all the faculties to receive Mar Thomas into the Catholic Church. In actual fact, Cariattil was empowered to receive him into the Catholic Church only as a simple priest. Cariattil was explicitly asked to prohibit him from performing any episcopal functions whatsoever until the Holy See had declared his consecration true and valid by a formal sentence. However, with this provision of the Holy See, about five years of intense travail of the two Indian heralds of Christian unity in Rome and Lisbon turned out to be at least a partial success, thus unleashing a ray of hope for the re-composition of the unity of all the St Thomas Christians. In any case the question of the reunion of Mar Dionysius I officially came under the authority of Mar Cariattil, who was sure to achieve this goal, even though he had to work with the archbishop of Goa, within the bounds imposed by Propaganda Fide.

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<sup>36</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Lettere* 244, f. 572r-v.

<sup>37</sup> Vatican City, Historical Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Scritture riferite nei Congressi, Indie Orientali e Cina*, vol. 37, ff. 698r-690r.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *The Varthamanappusthakam*, 279; F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, 165-166; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 170-171.

#### 2.4. The Unexpected Death of Cariattil and the Last Blow to Reunion

After further delay in Lisbon, on 20 April 1785 the two pioneers of ecumenism took passage on a Portuguese ship and on 23 April they started their return voyage. After a long stay at Bahia in Brazil, after sailing round the island of Sri Lanka the ship reached the Malabar Coast in the beginning of April 1786, but Archbishop Cariattil and Paremmakkal had to proceed to Goa, where they arrived on 1 May 1786 and stayed for more than four months. Unfortunately, on 9 September 1786 Mar Cariattil died in Goa, causing an irremediable and perpetual loss to the Church of St Thomas Christians. He passed away in the archbishop's house and was buried on 11 September 1786 in the cathedral church. The real cause of his death still remains an inscrutable mystery.<sup>39</sup> If Mar Cariattil had reached Kerala, Mar Dionysius I and the Malankara community would have been received into the mother Church before officially accepting the Orthodox doctrines and the Antiochene rite and thus St Thomas Christians would have remained one and undivided, without any of the numerous divisions found among them today. Instead, the premature death of Mar Cariattil extinguished the last flames of hope that the old wounds would eventually heal.

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<sup>39</sup> For more information and various interpretations concerning the death of Mar Cariattil, see C. Payngot, "Mar Joseph Cariattil Archbishop of Cranganore", 42-45; F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self-Rule (1775-1787)*, 211-217; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 187-223; cf. also Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 668; E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 96; P. J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, 150.

### 3. Reunion Efforts of Mar Dionysius I after the Death of Cariattil (1786-1799)

Further reunion efforts of Mar Dionysius I could be understood only in the ecclesial background of that time. After the death of Mar Cariattil, also to calm the people, Emmanuel of St Catherine, Archbishop of Goa appointed Thomas Paremmakkal as the administrator of the archdiocese of Cranganore (1787-1799), but he could not do anything substantial for the reunion of Mar Dionysius I, especially because of the negative attitude of the missionaries in Malabar.

After the death of the last Jesuit archbishop, Dom Salvador dos Reis in 1773, with the exception of a brief period of Bishop Paul da S. Thomé d'Acquina OP (1821-1823) there were only administrators in the archdiocese of Cranganore and so there was no one to perform episcopal ministry. Hence, after the failure of the attempts to obtain from the Portuguese Queen and Propaganda Fide the appointment of Thomas Paremmakkal as archbishop,<sup>40</sup> in November 1796 the Christians of Malabar sent a delegation of four Christian faithful to the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Joseph IV with a letter requesting him to grant a bishop, as was the custom before the sixteenth century. Mar John Hormez, archbishop of Mosul and the administrator of the patriarchate after the death of Patriarch Joseph IV in 1791 several times wrote to the Propaganda Fide asking for instructions and seeking permission to consecrate a bishop to be sent to Malabar, but received no reply. After sixteen months of waiting, considering the grievances of the Christians of Malabar, especially those of the Archdiocese of Cranganore, which remained without a bishop for such a long time, Mar John Hormez ordained Paul Pandari, a member of the delegation, to the priesthood and then consecrated him with the name Abraham, as titular bishop for the monastery of St Behnan near Mosul and sent him to Malabar together with two Chaldean priests to teach Syriac.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Rome, Archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, *Ponenze 1865*, 304-305.

<sup>41</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *A Period of Jurisdictional Conflict in the Suriani Church of India 1800-1838*, Kottayam 1994, 7-13; cf. also E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 103-104.

Bishop Paul Pandari (Abraham), accompanied by two Chaldean priests arrived in Malabar in March 1798, but Thomas Paremakkal, the ecclesiastical administrator of Cranganore, did not permit him to exercise any jurisdiction, although he was a native bishop from the flock, since it became evident that he was ordained without the approval of the Roman Pontiff. After the death of Paremakkal, the canonical chapter instituted by him elected Fr. Abraham Kattakayam as the administrator of Cranganore (1799-1800). The Padroado ecclesiastical authorities of Cochin and Goa considered the election of Kattakayam as a schismatic act and did not recognize him. Supported by Kattakayam, Paul Pandari began to exercise jurisdiction, pretending to be the head of St Thomas Christians and ordained some priests.<sup>42</sup>

Mar Dionysius I continued his efforts for reunion with the Catholic Church through different ecclesiastical authorities of that period. Bishop Aloysius Mary of Jesus (1784-1802) OCD, vicar apostolic of Malabar, together with the Carmelite missionaries acted as the representatives of Propaganda, while Emmanuel of St Catherine, Archbishop of Goa, and Joseph Soledade, bishop of Cochin, represented Portuguese Padroado. In addition to the aforementioned native administrators of Cranganore, Thachil Mathew Tharakan, an influential lay leader represented the Catholic St Thomas Christians and endeavoured to facilitate the reunion efforts.<sup>43</sup>

As before, further reunion efforts of Mar Dionysius I are also to be evaluated in the background of competition and struggle between the Propaganda and Portuguese Padroado jurisdictions. From 1780 on, that is from the time that faculties were granted to Bishop Emmanuel, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide maintained a rather positive approach to the reception of Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Communion, in spite of ambiguous

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<sup>42</sup> For details concerning the causes, origin and end of the "Pandari Schism", see J. Puliurumpil, *A Period of Jurisdictional Conflict, 5-52; Pandari Seesma (Pandari Schism)*, Kottayam 2004. The so-called Pandari-Kattakayam schism terminated at the end of 1800 when the archbishop of Goa canonically nominated a native priest, George Sankurikkal, as administrator. The new administrator died in 1801.

<sup>43</sup> J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 226.

reports and numerous negative letters, as well as doubts and grumblings of the ecclesiastical authorities and missionaries in Malabar against the reunion. The Congregation prescribed the profession of faith according to the formula of Pope Urban VIII as a necessary condition for accepting Mar Dionysius I into the Catholic Church. The Congregation was also disposed to grant jurisdiction over his flock after verifying the validity of his episcopal consecration.<sup>44</sup>

Since all such attempts failed, Abraham Kattakayam (administrator of Cranganore), the schismatic bishop Paul Pandari (Abraham) and the lay leader Thachil Mathew Tharakan reached an agreement with Mar Dionysius I and the representatives of the non-Catholic group to receive the latter into the Catholic Church. The agreement between both parties was signed during a meeting at the Holy Cross Church at Alleppey in Kerala on 20 May 1799. The agreement reads:

By the Grace of God and by the order of the Holy Roman Church, Mar Dionysius, Metropolitan of Malabar, with the representatives of the churches under his jurisdiction; Mar Abraham (Paul Pandari), Bishop appointed by His Excellency the Most Reverend Patriarch of the Chaldeans in obedience to the Holy Roman Church; the Governor (administrator) who governs the Archdiocese of Cranganore with the representatives of the churches under his jurisdiction; and the Presbyter Hormisdas, Deputy of the Patriarch, assembled in the Holy Cross Church at Alleppey and having heard and disposed of all the controverted points of both parties, made under oath this document of solemn contract that all future might be united together (sic).

[...] And now we of both the parties unitedly agree on oath to join together as our forefathers did, submitting ourselves to the Holy Father, the Pope, celebrating the Mass, reciting the breviary, observing the fasts and other rites as they were prescribed by the Synod of Diamper and to report accordingly to the Holy Father, the Pope, with the view of obtaining the permission to conduct all ceremonies according to the Syro-Chaldean rite of those who are

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<sup>44</sup> For the reunion efforts of Mar Thomas VI after the death of Cariattil and the causes of their failure, see J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 173-190; E. R. Hambye, *History of Christianity in India*, 56-60; Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 690-694; P. J. Podipara, *The Efforts for Reunion in Malankara*, 226-227; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 226-236.

submissive to the Holy Roman Church. Moreover, we agree that those who observe at present the Jacobite creed and rites shall abjure them and make the profession of faith prescribed by Pope Urban VIII for the Orientals and submit to the orders of His Holiness the Pope. And so agreed on oath on this 20th day Edavam (May) 1799 AD we both of the parties have declared and signed this contract at the Church of Holy Cross at Alleppey, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>45</sup>

Practically, this agreement fulfilled all the conditions prescribed by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide at various times. Accordingly Mar Dionysius I, with a few followers, solemnly accepted the Catholic faith in St Michael's Church, Thathampally (Kerala) on 11 June 1799; they made the profession of faith according to the prescribed formula before Bishop Paul Pandari and declared their acceptance of the Synod of Diamper. Bishop Pandari absolved Mar Dionysius I from all ecclesiastical censors in the name of Archbishop Hormez. All this was concluded with a solemn document according to which the party that might go against the decision would have to pay a fine of 30,000 rupees to the Travancore Government.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately the reunion at Thathampally did not last long, since Bishop Paul Pandari and Fr. Abraham Kattakayam, the administrator of Cranganore did not have any recognized authority from Rome. Mar Dionysius I understood that the union would not last long, because of the lack of competent authority in those persons who received him into the Catholic Church. The aforementioned Catholic bishops of Goa, Cochin and Malabar did not recognize Mar Dionysius I as a Catholic bishop and did not take any interest in regularizing the union or receiving him canonically into the Catholic Church. Hence after six months of life as a Catholic, in December

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<sup>45</sup> Original Malayalam text in M. O. Joseph, *Thachil Mathu Tharakan*, Ernakulam 1962, 233-235; English translation in C. J. Cathanar George, *The Catholicity of the St Thomas Christians*, Trivandrum 1994, 19-21; the present English text is reproduced as found in P. J. Podipara, *The Efforts for Reunion in Malankara*, 226-227.

<sup>46</sup> J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 187-188; Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 691; P. J. Podipara, *The Efforts for Reunion in Malankara*, 227; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 235-236.

1799 Mar Dionysius I reverted again to schism, paying the Travancore Government the accorded fine.<sup>47</sup>

Mar Dionysius I died on 13 May 1808 without realizing his dream of re-establishing the unity and communion of all the St Thomas Christians within the bosom of the Catholic Church. He was buried at the Puthenkavu Church in Kerala.

#### 4. Reunion Efforts of Mar Dionysius V and Emmanuel Nidiry (1882-1888)

After the death of Mar Dionysius I in 1808, we find only one serious attempt for reunion during the governance of Mar Dionysius V (1876-1909), who also insisted on the retention of the hierarchy and the rite.<sup>48</sup> From among the Catholic St Thomas Christians, Fr Emmanuel Nidiry emerged as the protagonist of the ecumenical movement.<sup>49</sup> In the years 1980s, in collaboration with Mar Dionysius, Nidiry developed the project of the Syrian National Union Association (*Nâzrani Jathiaikia Sangham*) to foster unity and communion between the Catholics and the native Jacobites, and to promote common affairs in social, cultural, educational and economic fields.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> J. Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar", 186-187; Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Kristianikal*, 691-692; P. J. Podipara, *The Efforts for Reunion in Malankara*, 227; J. C. Kollara, *Archbishop Joseph Cariattil*, 235.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 119-121; P. J. Podipara, *The Efforts for Reunion in Malankara*, 228-229.

<sup>49</sup> Emmanuel Nidiry was born into a traditional Catholic family on 27 May 1842 at Kuravilangadu. He was ordained priest in 1876. On 8 September 1889 Bishop Charles Lavigne appointed him Vicar General of the Vicariate Apostolic of Kottayam with pontifical privileges. He died on 20 June 1904 at the age of 62 and was buried in Marth Mariam Church at Kuravilangadu. For more about the life, activities and contributions of Nidiry, see V. C. George, J. Kallarangatt, "Nidhirickal Manikathanar (1842-1904) the Mahatma of the Syrian Christian Community of India: A Death Centenary Tribute", *Christian Orient* 25/1 (2004) 3-23; G. Nedungatt, "Manikathanar in Centenary Prospect", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 70 (2004) 313-357; G. Kanjirakkatt, *Emmanuel Nidiry: the Promoter of Autonomy and Unity of the Church of St Thomas Christians*, Kottayam 2011.

<sup>50</sup> For details concerning the nature and functioning of the Association, C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India*, 260-265; G. Kanjirakkatt, *Emmanuel Nidiry*, 119-133.

From the Catholic side, obviously Andrea Aiuti, Apostolic Delegate of East Indies (1887 to 1892), Leonard Mellano of St Luis OCD, vicar apostolic and later archbishop of Verapoly (1868-1897) and Charles Lavigne, vicar apostolic of Changanacherry (1887-1896) acted as representatives or consultants of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. They often expressed doubts about the sincerity of the conversion of Mar Dionysius V and the dangers of collaboration between Jacobites and Catholics by means of the aforementioned association. Moreover, they were preoccupied with the probable danger of losing their power over the Catholic St Thomas Christians in the presence of a Catholic native bishop from their own community<sup>51</sup>

After several communications, reports and consultations, the general meeting of Propaganda Fide held on 25 June 1888 considered the proposed reunion of Mar Dionysius V. The cardinal members were asked to respond to 9 questions or doubts on various aspects of the conversion of Mar Dionysius V.<sup>52</sup> We do not attempt a literal translation of the questions and the corresponding responses given by the cardinals, but only a thematic presentation of the points.

1. Validity of the baptism of Jacobites in Malabar: the matter and form and the manner of application are to be examined. The essential matter and the true form are to be prescribed for the future use.

2. Validity of the sacred Orders conferred by Jacobite Bishops: the Apostolic Delegate, through the vicars apostolic of Kottayam and Trichur, is to explore, whether the present Jacobite bishops of Malabar have been validly consecrated, and whether they have duly conferred the Orders as regards the substance. If some ordinations were found to be null or dubious, they are to be repeated absolutely or conditionally, if the subjects are truly worthy.

3. Hierarchy and jurisdiction: their hierarchy will be preserved and the jurisdiction of bishops in their respective dioceses will be protected.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. G. Kanjirakkatt, *Emmanuel Nidiry*, 125-146.

<sup>52</sup> These 9 questions can be found in Rome, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Acta* 1888, vol. 19, f. 131; English adaptation in G. Kanjirakkatt, *Emmanuel Nidiry*, 147-148.



4. Converted Jacobite priests: they will be permitted to exercise their orders and their respective offices will be maintained, in accordance with the laws, conditions and precautions in force.

5. Syrian rite: the rite will be maintained, omitting the modifications introduced into it. However, the liturgical books and ritual uses of the Jacobites are to be examined.

6. Use of leavened bread for the Eucharist: it can be permitted, provided that they confess, both in leavened and unleavened bread the Body of Christ can truly be made. The Apostolic Delegate should endeavour to eliminate it (leavened bread), but in case of difficulty, he is to obtain information on the quantity of the salt or oil used and the motive for such mixing.

7. Married priests and ecclesiastical celibacy: there is no problem regarding priests married before ordination, but the case of each priest married after the ordination will be considered individually. For the future Msgr. Apostolic Delegate is to investigate whether and what is the basis of the declaration of Mar Dionysius in favour of celibacy.

8. Request for sustenance and books: after the conversion they will be supported; some copies of the books will be sent through the Apostolic Delegate.

9. Instructions for Msgr. Aiuti: he should continue to cultivate the good dispositions of Mar Dionysius as best he can.<sup>53</sup>

On the same day the resolutions of the general meeting were presented to Pope Leo XIII, who immediately approved them.<sup>54</sup> The resolutions of Propaganda Fide were rather positive, although some of them were not definitive and hence needed further examination and settlement. On 30 June 1888 Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni,

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<sup>53</sup> Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Acta* 1888, vol. 19, f. 132; also in Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponenza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Appendice al Sommario*, paragrafo II-2, pp. 119-122; our own free English adaptation from the original Latin-Italian text.

<sup>54</sup> Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Acta* 1888, vol. 19, f. 132.

Prefect of Propaganda Fide, informed Apostolic Delegate Aiuti of the resolutions of the general meeting.<sup>55</sup>

Discussions and dialogue continued on the basis of the aforementioned resolutions, but much progress could not be made because of suspicions, doubts and misunderstandings. It was even thought that the real intention of Mar Dionysius V was to unite the Catholic St Thomas Christians with the Jacobites and to become their common spiritual head with the title of Patriarch of Malabar. Moreover at that time mutual collaboration between Catholics and non-Catholics as well as the creation of common educational and ecclesiastical institutions, as envisioned by Syrian National Union Association, were unacceptable to both the local and the Roman ecclesiastical authorities, because they thought that this would create religious indifference among the Catholics, who might join the Jacobites. In brief, because of various ecclesiastical and socio-political reasons the reunion attempts of Mar Dionysius V and Emmanuel Nidiry also failed.<sup>56</sup>

We have briefly considered all the efforts of the St Thomas Christians for reunion from the time of division and schism in the XVII century until the close of the XXIX century. Different golden occasions for a reunion of all the St Thomas Christians under one head and the constitution of a single Eastern Catholic Church, as it existed before the sixteenth century, were squandered mainly because the Western bishops and missionaries in Malabar considered the preservation of their power and jurisdiction over the St Thomas Christians more important than the unity of their Church. Now we proceed with the reunion efforts of the XX century spearheaded by Mar Ivanios through original documents. However, in order to better comprehend such endeavours unravelled by documents, it is necessary to have a panoramic view of the general ecclesial situation at that time.

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<sup>55</sup> Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Lettere e Decreti 1888*, vol. 21, ff. 231-232.

<sup>56</sup> For details, see C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India*, 268-274; G. Kanjirakkatt, *Emmanuel Nidiry*, 149-154 and 161-167.

## SECTION II: GENERAL ECCLESIAL SITUATION AT THE TIME OF REUNION MOVEMENT OF MAR IVANIOS (1925-1930)

The Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch and its Catholic Patriarchs were actively involved in the reunion movement, especially at the initial stage. Also the Syro-Malabar Church and the Latin Church in Kerala contributed to the realization of the project of Mar Ivanios. Obviously the Apostolic Delegation in India and the Congregation for the Eastern Church acted in mutual consultation and collaboration with their clarifications, guidance and decisions. A brief exposition of these Churches and institutions is necessary to understand the documents presented in this work.

### 1. Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch and Its Patriarchs

Although from the XII century there were several attempts for the reunion of the Syriac Orthodox Church as a whole or individual bishops and groups with the Catholic Church, they did not fully succeed and communion was always broken after a period of time for socio-political and ecclesial reasons.<sup>57</sup> The present Syrian Catholic Church was formed in the second half of the XVIII century. In 1774 the Syriac Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo, Michael Jarweh formally joined the Catholic Church. After the death of Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius George IV in 1781, a group of Syriac Orthodox bishops invited Michael to go to Church's headquarters in Mardin and to accept the patriarchal office. Michael agreed to the invitation on condition that the bishops promised to become Catholics. Early in 1782, four of the six bishops convened in the Deir al-Za'faran, became Catholics and elected him Patriarch. He was enthroned as Ignatius Michael III (1783-1800).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> For a brief account of all such reunion attempts, see Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *The Catholic East*, 167-171.

<sup>58</sup> Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *The Catholic East*, 172; cf. also W. De Vries., *Rom und die Patriarchate des Ostens*, Freiburg-München 1963, 96-97; R. Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches*, 152-153; *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 5: Eastern Christianity*, edited by M. Angold, Cambridge 2008, 514-516. The Syrian Catholic patriarch always adds the name of Ignatius to his original name.

Patriarch Ignatius Michael III and his followers did not receive confirmation from the sultan, as was necessary at that time, and hence he took refuge in Lebanon. With Patriarch Ignatius Michael III (Jarweh) there began an uninterrupted succession of Syrian Catholic Patriarchs, despite rather long interim period of vacancy between the death of a Patriarch and the election of his successor. Two years after the death of Patriarch Ignatius Michael III, he was succeeded by Ignatius Michael IV Daher (1802-1810), Ignatius Simon II Hindi (1811-1818) and then by Ignatius Peter VII Jarweh (1820-1851). During the governance of the latter, in 1830 the Catholic Church conducted negotiations with civil authorities that led to the legal recognition of Catholics in the Ottoman Empire. In that year the Syrian Catholic Church was officially recognized as a distinct *millet* by the Ottoman government and in 1831 the residence of the Patriarch was established in Aleppo (Syria). Twenty years later, constrained by unfavourable circumstances, the same Patriarch shifted his residence to Mardin in Syria (now in southern Turkey), where his successors remained until the First World War (1914-1918). Because of persecutions and massacres during the said World War many Syrian Catholics fled to Beirut (in Lebanon), to which the patriarchal see was moved in 1920s.<sup>59</sup>

Here follows a list of Patriarchs who governed the Syrian Catholic Church until the time of reunion of Mar Ivanios and his followers and the formation of the Malankara Catholic Church:

Ignatius Antony I Samheri (1852-1864), after a vacancy from 1864 to 1866;

Ignatius Philip I Arkus (1866-1874);

Ignatius George V Shelhot (1874-1891), vacant from 1891 to 1893;

Ignatius Behnam II Benni (1893-1897);

Ignatius (Denis) Ephrem II Rahmani (1898-1929);

Ignatius Gabriel I Tappouni (1929-1968).

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<sup>59</sup> Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *The Catholic East*, 172-174; R. Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches*, 153. The Patriarchate still remains in Beirut.

As we see below, the efforts for reunion began during the governance of Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani (1898-1929), with whom Mar Ivanios made the initial correspondence in view of communion with the Catholic Church. He was one of the most distinguished Syriac scholars of the twentieth century, a strong leader of the Syrian Catholic Church and an extraordinary pastor, who contributed also to religious life and seminary formation. His successor Ignatius Gabriel I Tappouni served as the Church's Patriarch for nearly four decades. In 1935 he became the first Syriac Catholic to be created cardinal.<sup>60</sup>

## **2. Latin Hierarchy in Kerala at the Time of the Reunion Efforts of Mar Ivanios**

After the arrival of Portuguese missionaries in India, on 12 June 1514 with the apostolic letter *Pro excellenti* Pope Leo X (1513-1521) erected the diocese of Funchal on the island of Medeira (Portugal) as a suffragan see of the archdiocese of Lisbon and placed the whole of India under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Funchal, since there was not yet any Latin diocese in India at that time. In fact the diocese of Funchal comprised, in addition to India, all the other African and Asian territories under Portuguese patronage.<sup>61</sup> Obviously the Latin mission stations in Kerala, originated after the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries at the dawn of the XVI century were included in the same diocese.

On 31 January 1533 Pope Clement VII (1523-1534) raised the diocese of Funchal to the rank of an archdiocese and erected the diocese of Goa, as a suffragan of Funchal; thus the Latin communities in Kerala came under Goa.<sup>62</sup> Later, on 4 February 1558 by the apostolic constitution *Etsi sancta* Pope Paul IV (1555-1559) constituted the ecclesiastical province of Goa, elevating the diocese of Goa to the status of a metropolitan archdiocese and erecting the

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *The Catholic East*, 173-174; *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Volume 5: Eastern Christianity*, 516-517.

<sup>61</sup> *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae in Ecclesiis Africae, Asiae atque Oceaniae*, tomus 1, Olisipone 1868, 100-101.

<sup>62</sup> *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, tomus 1, 148-149; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 18-19

dioceses of Cochin in India and Malacca (Malaysia) as suffragan sees.<sup>63</sup> The diocese of Cochin included the Malabar Coast (excluding the territory of the St Thomas Christians), Coromandel Coast, Madura Mission and Karnatic Mission, as well as Burma and Ceylon.

The vicariate apostolic of Malabar, originally constituted in 1659 for the Catholic St Thomas Christians (after the schism in 1653) under the authority of Propaganda Fide, in the course of time mutated into the vicariate of Verapoly belonging to the Latin Church, in which both Eastern and Western Christians were enrolled. With the apostolic letter *Multa praeclare* of 24 April 1838 Pope Gregory XVI suppressed the Portuguese Padroado jurisdiction in India and China except in the archdiocese of Goa.<sup>64</sup> The archdiocese of Cranganore, the ancient see of the St Thomas Christians, was of Portuguese Padroado jurisdiction and hence it was also suppressed together with the Padroado dioceses of Cochin and Mylapore and all the Christian faithful of these dioceses, both St Thomas Christians and Latin faithful, were ordered to become members of the vicariate of Malabar.

Since the vicariate apostolic of Malabar became very vast owing to the addition of the territories of the suppressed Portuguese Padroado dioceses, in 1845 it was divided into three, the vicariates apostolic of Quilon, Verapoly and Mangalore. The vicariates apostolic of Quilon and Mangalore were exclusively for Latin Christians, while in the vicariate apostolic of Verapoly, together with the St Thomas Christians, there were also Latins as in the former vicariate. In brief, at that time all the Latin Christians in Kerala were found in the vicariates of Verapoly and Quilon, which were always governed by vicars apostolic belonging to the Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD).

As a result of negotiations between the Holy See and the Portuguese government, a concordat for the continuation of the

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<sup>63</sup> The apostolic constitutions *Etsi sancta* (Goa) and *Pro excellenti* (diocese of Cochin) can be found in *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae*, tomus 1, 191-192 and 193-195 respectively.

<sup>64</sup> *Iuris Pontificii de Propaganda Fide*, edited by Raphaelis de Martinis, vol. 5, 195-198; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 114-125.

Portuguese Crown's exercise of the rights of patronage in India and China was formulated on 21 February 1857. With the publication of this concordat on 30 May 1860 the Latin diocese of Cochin was also re-established, as a suffragan of the archdiocese of Goa, as it was before.<sup>65</sup> On 1 September 1886 Pope Leo XIII established the new Latin hierarchy in India under the authority of Propaganda Fide, with the apostolic letter *Humanae salutis auctor*.<sup>66</sup> With this apostolic letter the vicariate apostolic of Verapoly was elevated to the status of a metropolitan archdiocese of the Latin Church with Quilon as its suffragan see. When the movement for reunion began in 1926 the Latin Church in Kerala region consisted of only three dioceses: the archdiocese of Verapoly and its suffragan diocese of Quilon, as well as the diocese of Cochin, which was at that time suffragan of Goa.<sup>67</sup> On 14 July 1930 the archdiocese of Verapoly was bifurcated and the diocese of Vijayapuram was constituted, obviously as a suffragan of the former.<sup>68</sup> A few details concerning the bishops who governed these dioceses at that time are also provided below.

Archdiocese of Verapoly: Archbishop Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD was born on 10 February 1872 at Burgos in Spain. He was ordained priest of the Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD) on 10 June 1895 and was appointed coadjutor archbishop of Verapoly on 18 June 1915. On 18 December 1918 he succeeded Archbishop Felipe Arguinzonis y Astorbiza OCD (1897-1918), who resigned on the same day. He governed the archdiocese until his resignation on 12 November 1934; he died on 14 June 1945.<sup>69</sup>

Diocese of Quilon: Aloysius Maria Benziger OCD was born in Einsiedeln in Switzerland on 31 January 1864. He joined the

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<sup>65</sup> *Conventio inter Pium IX et Petrum V Regem Portugalliae, Iuris Pontificii de Propaganda Fide*, vol. 7, 316-322; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 126-129.

<sup>66</sup> Pope Leo XIII, *Humanae salutis auctor*, in *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. 5, Romae 1886, 164-179; *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 19 (1886) 176-184.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Annuario Pontificio* 1926, 779-780.

<sup>68</sup> Pope Pius XII, apostolic constitution *Ad Christi Nomen*, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 24 (1932) 67-69.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Hierarchia Catholica*, vol. 9 (1903-1922), Padova 2002, 35.

monastery of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in Belgium in May 1884. He was ordained to the priesthood on 22 December 1888 and was appointed coadjutor to the Bishop of Quilon, Ferdinand Maria Ossi on 17 July 1900 whom he succeeded on 16 August 1905. He governed the diocese until his retirement on 23 July 1931.<sup>70</sup>

Diocese of Cochin: Bishop José Bento Martins Ribeiro was born on 29 August 1859 in Louriçal do Campo in Portugal. He was ordained to the priesthood on 17 August 1890. He was selected as bishop of Cochin by the Portuguese government on 8 January 1909 and was confirmed by the Pope on 28 February 1909; he died on 21 May 1931.<sup>71</sup>

Diocese of Vijayapuram: the first bishop of Vijayapuram, which was constituted only on 14 July 1930, was Juan Vicente Araña y Idígoras OCD from Berriz in Spain (1931-1946). He was appointed after the reunion of Mar Ivanios (20 September 1930) and hence he did not play any significant role in relation to the event.

### 3. Syro-Malabar Church at the Time of Reunion

Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church supported Mar Ivanios and helped the reunion movement in various ways. Hence we briefly present the ecclesial situation of the said Church at that time. After about three centuries (1599-1886) of Western governance over the Catholic St Thomas Christians, when the Latin hierarchy was established in India on 1 September 1886, the ancient archdiocese of Cranganore was definitively suppressed, the vicariate apostolic of Verapoly was elevated to the status of a metropolitan archdiocese of the Latin Church with Quilon as its suffragan see and all the Catholic St Thomas Christians became members of the said archdiocese.<sup>72</sup> Thus the Catholic Church of St Thomas Christians, as an individual Eastern Church, canonically became extinct.

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. *Hierarchia Catholica*, vol. 8 (1846-1903), Padova 1978, 474 and 533.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Hierarchia Catholica*, vol. 9, 133.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, *Humanae salutis auctor*, 1 September 1886, *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. 5, Romae 1886, 164-179; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 152-173; for details, *The Catholic Church in India*, 83-140.



However, with the apostolic letter *Quod iampridem* of 20 May 1887, Pope Leo XIII separated the Eastern Catholics from the Latin Christians of the archdiocese of Verapoly and constituted for the former two separate vicariates apostolic, Trichur and Kottayam (later named Changanacherry).<sup>73</sup> The vicars apostolic were still Latins: Charles Lavigne, titular bishop of Milevum and vicar apostolic of Kottayam (1887-1896) and Adolf Edwin Medlycott, titular bishop of Tricomia and vicar apostolic of Trichur (1887-1896). Although Latin vicars apostolic were appointed, this event marked the rebirth of the Catholic Church of St Thomas Christians as the Syro-Malabar Church.

With the apostolic letter *Quae rei sacrae* of 28 July 1896 Pope Leo XIII reorganized the territory of the Syro-Malabar Church, erecting the three vicariates apostolic of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry (formerly Kottayam).<sup>74</sup> Moreover, three native priests were also appointed as vicars apostolic: John Menacherry, titular bishop of Paralus and vicar apostolic of Trichur, Mathew Makil, titular bishop of Tralles in Asia and vicar apostolic of Changanacherry and Aloysius Pazheparambil (or Pareparambil), titular bishop of Tium and vicar apostolic of Ernakulam. The Apostolic Delegate for all the countries, generally called at that time East Indies, Wladyslaw Michal Zaleski, who resided at Kandy in Sri Lanka, consecrated the first three Syro-Malabar bishops on 25 October 1896 in the cathedral church of Kandy, obviously in Latin rite.

Later with the apostolic letter *In Universi* dated 29 August 1911 Pope Pius X separated all the Southist parishes and churches from the vicariates of Changanacherry and Ernakulam and erected the new vicariate of Kottayam exclusively for the Southist community.<sup>75</sup> As had already been decided, with two decrees dated 30 August

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Leo XIII, *Quod iampridem*, 20 May 1887, *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. VII, Romae 1888, 106-108; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 190-193.

<sup>74</sup> Leo XIII, *Quae rei sacrae*, 28 July 1896, *Leonis XIII Pontificis Maximi Acta*, vol. XVI, Romae 1897, 229-232; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 194-197.

<sup>75</sup> The apostolic letter *In Universi*, in *Canc. Brev. Ap. Pius X an. 1911, Divers.*, lib. IX, pars 2, 607; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 198-201.

1911 the vicar apostolic of Changanacherry, Mar Matthew Makil was transferred to the new Southist vicariate of Kottayam and Fr Thomas Kurialacherry was appointed the vicar apostolic of Changanacherry.<sup>76</sup> On 8 December 1919 Aloysius Pazheparambil, vicar apostolic of Ernakulam died and Augustine Kandathil, coadjutor vicar apostolic of Ernakulam from 29 August 1911, succeeded him.

After considering the progress of the Syro-Malabar Church, upon the recommendation of the 'Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church', by the apostolic constitution *Romani Pontifices* of 21 December 1923 Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malabar hierarchy with Ernakulam as metropolitan see and Trichur, Changanacherry and Kottayam as suffragan dioceses.<sup>77</sup> Vicar Apostolic Augustine Kandathil was elevated to the rank of Archbishop of Ernakulam and the other three vicars apostolic to that of diocesan bishops. After the death of Thomas Kurialacherry on 2 June 1925, James Kalacherry was appointed bishop of Changanacherry on 29 October 1927. In the diocese of Kottayam Vicar Apostolic Mar Mathew Makil died on 16 January 1914; his successor Mar Alexander Chulaparambil was appointed titular bishop of Busiris and vicar apostolic of Kottayam on 16 July 1914. When the Syro-Malabar hierarchy was constituted on 21 December 1923, he became the first diocesan bishop of Kottayam.

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<sup>76</sup> Apostolic letter *Magni momenti* transferring Mar Mathew Makil, in Kottayam, Archeparchial Archives, Shelf 04, Box 2, 30, printed text in J. Kollaparambil and B. Mukalel (eds.), *Archeparchy of Kottayam Erected by St Pius X for the Southist People, Papers Presented at Centenary Symposia* (Malayalam), Kottayam 2014, 190. Apostolic letter *Titulares Ecclesias* appointing Thomas Kurialacherry, in *Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum*, Prot. N. 1520, Changanacherren., *Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Thomae Kurialacherry (1873-1925), Positio super virtutibus*, vol. 3, Rome 1996, 273-274.

<sup>77</sup> The apostolic constitution *Romani Pontifices, Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 7 (1924) 257-262; P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 206-219.

#### 4. Roman Pontiff, Apostolic See and Apostolic Delegation at the Time of Reunion and Constitution of Syro-Malankara Hierarchy

The full communion of a section of the Orthodox Syrian Church with the Catholic Church and the subsequent constitution of the Syro-Malankara Catholic hierarchy were the results of constant efforts of Mar Ivanios supported by other concerned persons for a period of about eight years (1925-1932). During this period the Roman Pontiffs Pius XI (1922-1939) governed the universal Church; he took the final decision to receive Mar Ivanios and his followers into the Catholic communion and then to constitute the Syro-Malankara hierarchy.

With the *motu proprio Dei Providentis* of 1 May 1917 Pope Benedict XV separated the Eastern section of Propaganda Fide called the "Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the Affairs of the Eastern Rite" and erected the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church.<sup>78</sup> This name continued until 15 August 1967, when Pope Paul VI, with the apostolic constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, changed it to Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches in accordance with the communion ecclesiology of Vatican II.<sup>79</sup> Hence in all the documents of the period under consideration the name (Sacred) Congregation for the Eastern Church is found. The same name is also used in this work, respecting the chronological order. At present the general tendency is to employ the expression "Eastern", instead of "Oriental" in English language. Hence in our writings and translations the word "Eastern" is preferred, while maintaining unaltered original English documents.

Until the promulgation of the aforementioned apostolic constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* on 15 August 1967 the Roman Pontiff himself was the prefect of the Sacred Congregation

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<sup>78</sup> Benedict XV, *Dei Providentis (motu proprio)*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 9-I (1917) 529-531. The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the Affairs of the Eastern Rite was erected by Pope Pius IX on 6 January 1862 with the apostolic constitution *Romani Pontifices*.

<sup>79</sup> Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, no. 41, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967) 899.

for the Eastern Church.<sup>80</sup> The practical and executive head of the Eastern Congregation was a cardinal secretary. For this reason the letters and official communications were addressed to the secretary of the Congregation and not to the prefect. The cardinal secretaries of the Congregation for the Eastern Church during the reunion movement were Giovanni Tacci Porcelli (1922-1927) and Luigi Sincero (1927-1956).

Normally official communications between the Apostolic See and the Eastern Churches (and the local Latin Church) were made through the papal representative of the respective country. The Apostolic Delegation in India was established in 1881. At that time there was only one Apostolic Delegate for all the countries in the Indian subcontinent, designated by the general name "East Indies". On 12 June 1948 this Delegation was raised by Pope Pius XII to the rank of an Internunciature and eventually became a Nunciature on 22 August 1967 during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI.

Hence in the first half of the XX century there was only an Apostolic Delegation in India and the papal representative was called Apostolic Delegate. For this reason, in the documents of that time the papal representative is designated as Apostolic Delegate and not as Apostolic Nuncio. During the period of reunion movement under consideration the apostolic delegates were: Edward Aloysius Mooney (1926-1931) and Leo Peter Kierkels (1931-1952). At that time the residence of the Apostolic Delegate was in Bangalore, in the present federal state of Karnataka.

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<sup>80</sup> In fact, in the *Annuario Pontificio* of those years it was written: "La Santità di Nostro Signore, Prefetto".



**Introductory Article Three**  
**MAR IVANIOS: PROPHET AND PROTAGONIST OF**  
**CHRISTIAN UNITY IN INDIA**

**Introduction**

We always come across people and noble souls in history who led a life of self-negation and prayer. But it is only very seldom, that we find lives offered entirely as a living sacrifice, sweet smelling and pleasing to God, dedicated to the service of the People of God. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios Panickaruveetil is one among them; in his life, he experienced divine providence and expressed absolute trust in God at every stage of his life. His spiritual-personal life was a unique symbol of integration of his 'self' with God, bringing together his intellectual, physical and spiritual powers to the service of humanity. By the power acquired through these integrated efforts, he visualized and heralded the integral development of the Church and society of his time. God endowed him with the special charism for the spiritual renewal of the then existing Malankara Orthodox Church to which he belonged. Fascinated by the compassionate love of Jesus, he surrendered himself to God and blended harmoniously the service of God and His people.

**1. Birth of Geevarghese in Panickaruveetil Family in Mavelikkara (1882)**

Christianity began in Kerala with the founding of seven ancient communities by the Apostle St Thomas, who reached Kerala in AD 52. One of those churches was situated in the outskirts of Mavelikkara, a place called Niranam.<sup>1</sup> This region still has strong centres of the Orthodox Christian tradition. One of the reasons for this is that the original church formed by St Thomas, the apostle, has influenced the Christian believers of this area profoundly. The Christians of Mavelikkara were the members of the Niranam church. The town boasts of a rich historical and cultural background. It was an ancient centre of commerce and trade in Kerala.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information and essential bibliography on the apostolate of St Thomas in India, see Introductory Article One, no. 1.

After the reorganisation of the Federal States of India in 1956,<sup>2</sup> Mavelikkara was one of the *taluks* of Kollam (Quilon) district of Kerala and later it became part of the district of Alappuzha. Quilon city situated in the west coast of India was well known for ages as one of the greatest ports of Indian trade with western Asia and the Levant.

Geevarghese (later Archbishop Mar Ivanios Panickaruveetil) was born on 21 September 1882<sup>3</sup> in the famous Panickaruveetil<sup>4</sup> family at Mavelikkara, as the eldest son of Thoma Panicker and Annamma who were Malankara Jacobite faithful. Thoma Panicker was a successful farmer, grower of coconut, pepper and paddy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Madras 1967, 309-316.

<sup>3</sup> As regards to the date of birth of Mar Ivanios, there was confusion that he was born on the Feast of Nativity of Mary, the Mother of God, which is celebrated on 08<sup>th</sup> September. There was a general confusion made during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Malabar Coast regarding the usage of the Gregorian and Julian calendar. The people in general were using the Malayalam calendar known as *Kollavarsham* which was also divided into 12 months. The Gregorian calendar was also on use. There was generally a difference of 13 to 14 days between the beginnings of a month. Common people usually mixed up both calendars and used to take the month and date of the *Kollavarsham* and the year of the Gregorian calendar. Now the exact date of each calendar has been calculated using a table and it is found that the date of birth is 21 September 1882. According to Malayalam reckoning the Nativity of Mary was celebrated on 08 *Kanni* in 1882, which according to the Gregorian calendar falls on 21 September. Cf. Mar Ivanios, *Memories of His Grace Mar Ivanios* (Malayalam: *Mar Ivanios Pithavinte Ormakkuruppukal*), manuscript of 1950: Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMEAT-MS-Box, 75, 22; cf. also S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion* (Malayalam: *Punaraikythinte Adhyakalanga*), edited by Tharakan Anniyil, Trivandrum 1990, 177.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Dravidian Traditional dictionary (no. 3884) *Panikkan* as a word of Dravidian etymology is derived from the root word *Pani* meaning service, work etc. *Panikkan* means a person who commands as well as who serves.

<sup>5</sup> Thoma Panicker was a successful farmer, grower of coconut, pepper, paddy, etc. Slavery was common in India down to the middle of the nineteenth century, but with the help of the representatives of the Church Missionary Society (1848) it became illegal in South India. However, Thomas Panicker owned hundreds of servants with their families, who were regarded as bondsmen. He was rigorously just and his workers used to boast of their luck in having such an upright master. Arunima Ghosh, *There Comes Papa: Colonialism and the Transformation of Maturity in Kerala, Malabar c. 1850-1940*, Hyderabad 2003, 56; also see, M.

Annamma Panicker, the mother of Mar Ivanios, was the only child of Mathai Asan from Palliyil Areppurath near Kayamkulam. Panickaruveetil is a traditional Orthodox Christian family in Mavelikkara within the erstwhile Indian princely state of Travancore, currently in the Alleppey district of Kerala.<sup>6</sup> The family was honoured with the title of 'Mallitty-Panicker'<sup>7</sup> bestowed by Marthanda Varma, the Maharaja of Travancore, one of the great rulers of the Perumal line of kings.<sup>8</sup> Pleased with the outstanding courage of one of the ancestors of this family, who once ignored his own safety in protecting the king from the attack of a wild beast, the prince bestowed on him the title, 'Malluketty Panicker.'<sup>9</sup>

Thoma Panicker, father of Geevarghese, was the last martial arts performer of the Panicker family. Till the age of 50, Thoma Panicker, who had been the head of the Mallitti-Panicker family for twenty years, performed such martial arts and received benefits from the local temple.<sup>10</sup> However, in 1895 the members of the Panicker family gave up the temple service and privileges.<sup>11</sup> Thoma Panicker had four brothers, one of whom was Rev. Father Thariathu

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Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios (1882-1953): Apostle of Church Union* (second edition), Kottayam 2002, 22.

<sup>6</sup> T. Anniyil, "A Malankara Catholic Diocese in Mavelikara, the Land of Folklore", in *Kahalam* (January-February 2017) 11.

<sup>7</sup> 'Mallitty' signifies 'faithful loving friend' and 'Panicker' means 'warrior'. M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 20.

<sup>8</sup> "In *Keralam*, Cheraman Perumal was reckoned as the greatest and the most powerful emperor in the realm. He was a pure *Kshatria* of the solar race and to connect a royal family with such a personage was thought to be the highest honour in *Keralam* as was the case with the Cochin royal family". Cf. P. Shungoonny Menon, *History of Travancore: from the Earliest Times*, New Delhi 1998, 41.

<sup>9</sup> This title's short form 'Mallitty Panicker' is from math+ Itty+ Panicker, that is, math = my, Itty = dear one/ beloved. The crown prince gave the title Mallitty Panicker because it meant, 'My beloved Panicker.' T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 18-19; These details were intimated by a senior family member to Father Thomas Inchakkalody. Cf also S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 177.

<sup>10</sup> Martial arts were, apart from their obvious use in war, customary parts of performance arts in temple festivals.

<sup>11</sup> It happened when the European missionaries of Church Missionary Society who centred their work in Mavelikkara spoke and taught that the performances at the temples were idolatrous and unsuitable for Christians T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 19.



Zachariah Panicker.<sup>12</sup> Annamma, the mother of Geevarghese was very devoted to Mother Mary. She was a voracious reader and an authority on traditional chants. She was a God-fearing woman who used to tell her son about “the unity that had existed in matters of faith and worship before the tragic break that had begun with the swearing at Coonan Cross”.<sup>13</sup>

Geevarghese was baptised thirteen days after his birth. The parents took their new-born child to the nearby Puthiyakavu St Mary’s Malankara Jacobite Church, Mavelikkara.<sup>14</sup> He was baptized and anointed with the Holy Myron by his priest-uncle Zachariah Panicker on 04 October 1882<sup>15</sup> and was named Geevarghese.<sup>16</sup> He was the second child of a family of six children, three sons and three daughters.<sup>17</sup> One of the three sons died in his childhood at the age of nine.

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<sup>12</sup> Father Zachariah Panicker, the uncle of Mar Ivanios, was a celibate priest throughout his life and served several churches in and around Mavelikkara as the vicar. It was from Father Zachariah Panicker that he imbibed Christian zeal and fervour.

<sup>13</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Puthiyacavu-Mavelikkara, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, the native parish of the Servant of God, was part of the diocese of Kollam. Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala was the bishop of Kollam at the time of the birth of Geevarghese. The Church to which the family belonged was a divided Church beset with controversies and spiritual sloth at the birth of Geevarghese.

<sup>15</sup> *Declaration of Aloysius-Maria Benziger, bishop of Quilon, regarding the validity of baptism and Episcopal ordination of Mar Ivanios (1930)*: Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAT- 2/30; see document 49 in this book.

<sup>16</sup> In the course of time Mar Ivanios had a series of names such as: P. T. George, Geevarghese Panicker, *Kochukivareechan*, Father P. T. Geevarghese, M.A. Achan, Abo Geevarghese, Bethany Metran (Bishop), and Archbishop Mar Ivanios.

<sup>17</sup> The younger brother, Mathai Panicker, was an integral part of every major event of the life of the Mar Ivanios as an ideal friend.

## 2. Early Education (1888-1897)

Geevarghese had his early education at home under the motherly care and guidance of Anna Panicker who instilled in the child the basis of the Christian faith and the idea of celibate priestly life.<sup>18</sup> At the age of five the talented *Kochukeevareechan* (Child Geevarghese) started his education in a *kalari* (pre-school) as per the old educational system. The school run by David *Asan* was adjacent to the Mavelikkara Puthiyakavu church.

At that time, majority of people was satisfied with the primary education in the *kalari* of the *Asans*.<sup>19</sup> Schools with matriculation were very rare in Travancore.<sup>20</sup> Geevarghese lived in his own house till the age of twelve and completed the rural education. The boy was put in the neighbouring English School run by the Protestant Church Missionary Society for further studies. In order to ward the child from Protestant influence, the Orthodox Bishop Gregorios of Parumala instructed the boy to be transferred to the Mavelikkara Kottackakom Government English Medium School.<sup>21</sup> Geevarghese, who stood first in all the five years at the school, had made an admirable pass from the fourth form.<sup>22</sup> The teachers, relatives and friends who had good faith in the bright future of the boy, started compelling his parents to send him for higher studies. There was an English High School only in Kottayam, which was thirty miles away from home.<sup>23</sup> His mother inspired the child to choose the path of priesthood, despite some reluctance on the part of his father.

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<sup>18</sup> M. Gibbons, Archbishop Mar Ivanios, 23.

<sup>19</sup> There were not public schools in Kerala at the time of Geevarghese. Children got primary education in local village schools called *kalari*. K. V. Eapen, *A Study of Kerala History*, Kottayam 1956, 243-249.

<sup>20</sup> There were English schools in those days only in towns like Kottayam, Alapuzha, Mavelikkara, Kollam, Trivandrum and Nagercoil.

<sup>21</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 34.

<sup>22</sup> George Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios: The Prophet of Ascetic Wisdom*, Kottayam 2003, 27.

<sup>23</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 34.

### 3. Vocation and Seminary Formation (1898-1899)

In January 1898<sup>24</sup> at the age of fifteen years and three months, Geevarghese was admitted in Mar Dionysius Seminary High School (MD Seminary) according to the instruction of the Jacobite Bishop Pulikottil Mar Dionysius.<sup>25</sup> The bishop made all the arrangements for Geevarghese to stay in the Old Seminary and study in the MD Seminary High School two miles away.<sup>26</sup> In the Seminary, the bishop entrusted the boy in the hands of Rev. Malpan Vattasseril. According to the suggestion of the bishop, his name was changed as P. T. Geevarghese in the school registers and from then on, he came to be known by this name. Seeing his enthusiasm in reciting prayers, attending Holy *Qurbano* and keeping the holy places neat and clean, Malpan Vattasseril made him the sacristan of the Old Seminary chapel.<sup>27</sup>

P. T. Geevarghese's life in Kottayam, in a wonderful way, laid the base for a marvellous future. K. C. Mamman Mappilla<sup>28</sup> was the headmaster at the Mar Dionysius Seminary High School. Since P. T. Geevarghese showed unusual talent in learning his daily lessons, the headmaster's eyes fell on him. Nothing would discourage the boy's determination or affect his concentration, so he could score more marks in all classes and subjects. As he had an ardent desire to become a priest, he enjoyed his stay and studies in the Mar Dionysius Seminary School and successfully completed his high school education. P. T. Geevarghese received his minor orders on his sixteenth birthday, 21 September 1898. The school was proud of P. T. Geevarghese; he was the captain of the football team and holder of a gold medal for declamation in 1899.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The academic year ran from January to December in India at that period. M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 30.

<sup>25</sup> Mar Dionysius, who served the Malankara Jacobite Church for over 44 years (1865-1909), was staying in Mavelikkara.

<sup>26</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 36.

<sup>27</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 38.

<sup>28</sup> He was a prominent person who throughout his life spoke and wrote for the progress of the Christians of Kerala in politics, social life, literature and economics.

<sup>29</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 31.

During the years of his High School studies in MD Seminary School staying in the old seminary, he understood the awful condition of the Jacobite Church. It created much anxiety in him regarding the future of his Church. Hence he took an extraordinary vow to dedicate himself for the community: "I vow to dedicate my life to the spiritual uplift of the community that gave me birth. This I hope to accomplish by means of education and sanctification of its clergy".<sup>30</sup>

#### 4. Deaconate and Graduation (1900-1908)

Seeing the admirable performance of P. T. Geevarghese at the matriculation examination Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius, who had the aim to take him for the service of the Church, enquired the willingness of his family members and the parishioners to ordain him a deacon and he obtained it.<sup>31</sup>

Metropolitan Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius ordained P. T. Geevarghese a deacon at Puthiyakavu parish, Mavelikkara on 09 January 1900, in the presence of many priests, friends and relatives.<sup>32</sup> He considered it a great blessing that he could serve the Lord throughout his life as a priest.<sup>33</sup> As he had shown remarkable intelligence and matching perseverance, Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius permitted him to continue his studies in Christian Missionary Society College (CMS College), Kottayam. On successfully completing his studies, Mar Pulikkottil, in consultation with Malpan Vattasseril,<sup>34</sup> decided to send the deacon to the Madras Christian College in 1903<sup>35</sup> for his graduation. The optional subjects he took

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<sup>30</sup> *Concise Biographical Test prepared for Kierkels by Mar Severios on 06 March 1950*: Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz Ind.*, Fasc. 98; cf. also M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 30.

<sup>31</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 39.

<sup>32</sup> G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 30.

<sup>33</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Malpan Vattasseril Geevarghese later became metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysius VI.

<sup>35</sup> Madras Christian College was set up in Madras by the leaders of the Free Church of Scotland in a 400-acres area with many two storied buildings and other facilities. It was the practice of all *Malayalee* youngsters to go there and get higher

for his Bachelor of Arts were Indian History and Economics.<sup>36</sup> He was the leader of all the Indian students who were his classmates in the College. He frequently gave speeches and talks helpful in generating greater faith and devotion among his classmates who were members of the Jacobite Church.<sup>37</sup>

After completing the Bachelor's degree with flying colours, with the encouragement of the Metropolitan, Geevarghese inscribed for the Master's Degree, in 1905. During his stay in Madras, he stayed with A. M. Philippose, a Jacobite lay student, sharing a rented house. A. M. Philippose testifies that the life of the community occupied most of their conversations as their hearts were burning with love for the Church.<sup>38</sup> The four years of studies in Madras gave him profound knowledge and insight into the origin and nature of the Malankara Church which influenced many of his important future decisions. 'Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians?'<sup>39</sup> was the topic he selected for his dissertation in fulfilment of his post-graduate studies. In 1907, Deacon P. T. Geevarghese came back to Kottayam with the rare distinction of acquiring a Master's degree.<sup>40</sup> The Deacon was the first M.A. degree holder among the clergymen from the Jacobite Church.<sup>41</sup> He was aware of the confusions that were widespread among his people on religious principles. He began to be popular among his people.<sup>42</sup>

Right from the time he was a minor cleric P. T. Geevarghese was observing his community with keen interest and bemoaned its

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education. For more details, Cf. A. M. Philippose, *Autobiography* (Malayalam: *Atmakadha*) Tiruvalla 1960, 62.

<sup>36</sup> G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 30.

<sup>37</sup> Recollecting about the time spent together with Mar Ivanios in Madras, Marett Judge says that the theme of their conversation was "love the community, lift up the community, do everything possible to lift up the community". A. M. Philippose, *Autobiography*, 64.

<sup>38</sup> A. M. Philippose, *Autobiography*, 64-65.

<sup>39</sup> P. T. Geevarghese, "Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians?", in *Four Historic Documents*, Part 3, Kottayam 1907, 1-164.

<sup>40</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 59.

<sup>41</sup> G. Chediath, K. Valuparambil and P. Chempakassery (eds.), *Archbishop Geevarghese Mar Ivanios in His Thoughts*, Trivandrum 2004, 113.

<sup>42</sup> "A Modern Apostle" (Editorial), in *Lamp* 46 (November 1947), 324-325.

decline in spiritual and missionary fervour. During his studies at Kottayam and Madras, with his fellow-clerics he organized a 'mission circle' in which they discussed Christian doctrines, conducted discourses on Sacred Scripture, the Liturgy and prepared sermons and instructions for the laity.<sup>43</sup> Even during the long holidays, P. T. Geevarghese who was not yet eighteen, remained behind in the Old Seminary sacrificing the joys of the home and the welcome of loving parents, so that he might continue alone the mission activities.<sup>44</sup>

Though there was the custom of making confession and receiving holy communion in the Jacobite Church during the Lenten time, especially in the Holy week, these were not done often by the faithful. As a deacon, P. T. Geevarghese, who understood that the frequent reception of those sacraments was very essential for the spiritual renewal and growth, started an effort to encourage it.<sup>45</sup> He was convinced that the social and moral decadence had been the consequence of spiritual decadence. He started going from one parish to another giving religious instructions. Margaret Gibbons wrote: "The love of Christ urged him; the desire of their spiritual uplift sustained him".<sup>46</sup> These kinds of activities gave him the name *Koodasha Shemmathan*, namely 'Deacon of the Sacraments'.<sup>47</sup>

## 5. Principal of the Mar Dionysius Seminary High School (1908)

After the post-graduation, the young talented deacon was appointed temporarily the Principal of the MD Seminary English High School in 1908.<sup>48</sup> Malpan Vattasseril, who was a former

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<sup>43</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 33.

<sup>44</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 40.

<sup>45</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 32.

<sup>46</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> Philip C. Pantholil, "The Great Archbishop Kerala Has Ever Seen" (Malayalam: "Malayalam Kanda Mahanaya Mahacharyan"), in *Aikya deepam* (July 1993), 9-12.

<sup>48</sup> Mar Dionysius Seminary English High School was then the prime institution in Kottayam that belonged to the Jacobite Church. At that time the efficient K. C. Mamman Mappila B. A., had been headmaster of MD High School

principal of the school, also supported this decision. This gave him an opportunity to present himself as an ideal teacher with lots of leadership qualities.<sup>49</sup> P. T. Geevarghese tried his level best to raise the seminary to the status of a first grade college for the education and the formation of the clergy. Almost in all the classes the principal used to teach different subjects. “Not less than 20 hours a day he devoted to the School with hardly four hours of rest”.<sup>50</sup> “The classes of the principal were interesting and informative. There was no let-up in the matter of discipline”.<sup>51</sup> He was extremely patient with those boys who had problem in learning. He picked them out and spent extra time with them to bring them up at par with the other boys. He wanted to improve the quality of the education and at the same time he wished to make the students understand that character-building also went hand in hand with education.<sup>52</sup> While he was principal, the only ambition he could not fulfil was the idea of upgrading the MD Seminary into a college and to have qualified unmarried priests to teach there.<sup>53</sup>

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that P. T. Geevarghese returned with M.A. degree and he was appointed Principal in the Seminary High School. This very act was observed as a sign of respect and love Vattasseril Mar Dionysius had towards the deacon, which was quite disappointing to Mr Mamman Mappillai, the then headmaster. Cf. K. C. Mammen Mappilai, *Reminiscences*, Malayala Manorama Publication, Kottayam (no year) 77-117. However, before long he had turned his attention to journalism and the Newspaper *Malayala Manorama*. Many responsibilities regarding the school were transferred from him.

<sup>49</sup> G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 33.

<sup>50</sup> T. Inchakalodi, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. I, 70.

<sup>51</sup> *Concise Biographical Sketch of Mar Ivanios*: Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Fasc. 98, 7.

<sup>52</sup> P. C. Abraham, *In His Master's Footsteps: Life Story of the Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Kottayam 2001, 32.

<sup>53</sup> V. Kilichimala, *Mar Ivanios a Study* (Malayalam: *Mar Ivanios Oru Patanam*), Alwaye 1990, 14.

## 6. Priestly Ordination, Continuation as Principal, Missionary Zeal (1908-1913)

Deacon P. T. Geevarghese was longing for priestly ordination. He spent several days at the tomb of Mar Gregorios of Parumala, fasting and praying.<sup>54</sup> The spirit of dedication and sacrifice which he learned from the family increased in him greatly during the seminary training. The spiritual atmosphere in the seminary and the favourable circumstances were beneficial for practising virtues. A. M. Philippose noted that, the motto that guided his activities from his childhood was to “spend himself for Christ and being spent for Christ”.<sup>55</sup> The deacon’s activities gained better focus and direction when his master Vattasseril Malpan became metropolitan as Mar Dionysius VI.<sup>56</sup> He took special care to make the best use of the deacon’s talent in church affairs. The deacon had already been mentally prepared to serve God remaining a celibate. The decision warmed the metropolitan’s heart, because he saw in the deacon not just a capable priest in the service of the Church, but a true successor to follow him.<sup>57</sup> On 15 August 1908 he was ordained priest by Bishop Vattasseril Mar Dionysius at Parumala Seminary, in the presence of Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius and Mar Osthathios, a representative of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch.<sup>58</sup> After the ordination Father P. T. Geevarghese continued as principal in this Seminary High School until 1913.

The renewal programmes initiated as a deacon became more successful after P. T. Geevarghese was ordained a priest. He came to be known as M.A. Achan,<sup>59</sup> since he was the first among the

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<sup>54</sup> P. C. Abraham, *In His Master’s Footsteps: Life Story of the Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 39.

<sup>55</sup> A. M. Philippose, *Autobiography*, 72; V. Kilichimala, *Mar Ivanios a Study*, 15.

<sup>56</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 38; Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, 10.

<sup>57</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 35.

<sup>58</sup> P. C. Abraham, *In His Master’s Footsteps: Life Story of the Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 39.

<sup>59</sup> P. C. Pantholil, *Mar Ivanios in My Memory*, Trivandrum 1980, 19.



priests in the Jacobite Church to obtain a master's degree in Arts.<sup>60</sup> When he became a priest, he prepared and renewed his daily routine and followed it strictly. He could arouse the people from their lethargic frame of mind to take an active interest to study the Bible and to understand all the rites of the Church.<sup>61</sup> Once he invited his companions to serve in the slums of Parumala and said to them, "I like Parumala very much and I intend to work in the slum areas of this place. The people are very poor and in every sense shunned by others. Let us work there and do some things to change their lives for them".<sup>62</sup> He worked among the scheduled castes and preached among them the Gospel to turn their eyes and hearts towards God. Hardly anyone else matched him in keenness of perception and perseverance.<sup>63</sup>

## 7. Promoter of the Autonomous Catholicate (1910-1912)

While Father Geevarghese was the principal of MD Seminary, so many historical events occurred in the Jacobite community and he played a vital role in many of them. The series of events began with the visit of Mar Abadalla the reigning Orthodox Syrian Patriarch to the Church in Kerala. As Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI, the then head of the Malankara Orthodox Church, stood against his desire to assume direct jurisdiction over the Church, Mar Abdullah excommunicated the Metropolitan on 31 May 1911.<sup>64</sup> As the right-hand man of Mar Dionysius VI,<sup>65</sup> Father Geevarghese

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<sup>60</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 71.

<sup>61</sup> P. C. Abraham, *In His Master's Footsteps: Life Story of the Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 39.

<sup>62</sup> P. C. Abraham, *In His Master's Footsteps: Life Story of the Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 40.

<sup>63</sup> G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 35.

<sup>64</sup> For details concerning the visit of Patriarch Abdulla, excommunication of Mar Dionysius VI and the division of the Malankara Church, see Introductory Article One, no. 2.10.

<sup>65</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam (The Mountain Torch)*, Tiruvalla 1929, 18. It is the autobiography of Mar Ivanios, which narrates the beginning, foundation and the development of Bethany Ashram until 1929.

always stood at the side of Mar Dionysius,<sup>66</sup> to give him clarifications and expert advice as a historian and canonist, in his attempts to face the challenges of the new situation.<sup>67</sup> The Patriarch proceeded to consecrate a rival Metropolitan and erect a new governing body for the Church and consequently the Jacobite Church in India divided into the so-called 'Patriarch's Party' and the 'Bishop's (*Metran*) Party' (later Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church). Those were really difficult times. There were attempts to take the lives of Mar Dionysius VI and Father Geevarghese.<sup>68</sup>

Father P. T. Geevarghese was convinced that the only way to free the Malankara Jacobite Church from the autocratic domination of the Patriarch of Antioch was to establish a Catholicate in Malankara.<sup>69</sup> He set out plans and succeeded to give hierarchical autonomy to the Church. These plans came to fruition with the erection of Catholicate in Malankara on 15 September 1912.<sup>70</sup> Father P. T. Geevarghese invited Mar Abdul Masih, a Patriarch emeritus whom a faction of the Syrian Church still venerated as the real Patriarch, to come over to India and to erect the Catholicate. Even authors who normally oppose the subsequent actions of Father

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<sup>66</sup> The demands of Abdulla II were generally rejected by the bishops and laity, although a few of them accepted them. Father Geevarghese got many occasions for conversing with the Patriarch about the Church and other matters. Cf. G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 35; *Judgment of the District Court*, n. 73 (1943) 96; Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 32. "He (Mar Dionysius VI) resisted the excommunication because, according to him, it was invalid canonically and on the grounds of the principles of natural justice". *Judgment of the District Court*, n. 75 (1943) 100; cf. also J. Cheeran, *The Indian Orthodox Churches of St Thomas AD 52-2009*, Kottayam 2009, 393.

<sup>68</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 24.

<sup>69</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 18; cf. also Z. M. Parett, *Vattasseril Mar Dionysius*, Kottayam 1969, 553.

<sup>70</sup> Mar Ivanios, *A New Branch of the Tree of Life: The Syro-Malankara Church*, in *The Eastern Branches of the Catholic Church* (New York 1938) 27-35. Murimattathil Paulos Mar Ivanios was installed with the title of Moran Mor Paulos Baselios as the first catholicos of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Malankara at the Niranam Church. This paved the way for the establishment of a new juridical institution in the Indian Church for the first time. D. Attwater, *The Dissident Eastern Churches, and Catholic Eastern Churches*, Milwaukee 1936, 285.

P. T. Geevarghese openly admit the role he played in this historical event.<sup>71</sup> Father Joseph Cheeran, an Orthodox priest, writes about it:

Making great sacrifices he [Father P. T. Geevarghese] tried to create a leading row of academically qualified priests. [...] When Abdulla excommunicated His Grace Vattasseril without reason, he stood firmly with his teacher. By making correspondence with Abded M'shiha, the senior Patriarch of Antioch, Father P. T. Geevarghese obtained the order which proves that the ban is invalid. Later the senior Patriarch was invited to Malankara in 1912 and gave leadership in establishing Oriental Catholicate in Malankara.<sup>72</sup>

According to the same author it is by the help of "Father P. T. Geevarghese, the bright disciple of Metropolitan Vattasseril" that "the Catholicate became a reality in the Malankara Church as a priestly authoritative institute".<sup>73</sup>

## 8. Professor at Serampore College (1913-1919)

While the struggle for supremacy in the Church was still going on, Father P. T. Geevarghese was called to take up the professorship in Serampore College in Calcutta.<sup>74</sup> For this he had to leave the Church and his great Master Mar Dionysius VI, that caused great pain in him, but he considered it as a design of divine providence. He resigned his principalship in MD Seminary and set on his journey to Serampore with the decision to use the money he would get to found a college for theological studies for priests and to upgrade the

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<sup>71</sup> Today, there is every attempt to negate the role Father P. T. Geevarghese played in the establishment of the Catholicate. Father J. Cheeran is a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church of India from which Mar Ivanios joined the Catholic Church. The Orthodox Church was deadly against Mar Ivanios. They defamed him with words and actions. It is notable that a member of that community points out the role of Mar Ivanios in establishing the Catholicate. A. M. Philippose, *Autobiography*, 85-86.

<sup>72</sup> J. Cheeran, *The Indian Orthodox Churches of St Thomas*, 108.

<sup>73</sup> [Marthoman.tv/Cheerancheranachan.htm](http://Marthoman.tv/Cheerancheranachan.htm), accessed on 23.05.2014; Joseph Cheeran, *60th Year of the Catholicate Foundation*, Kottayam, 2012, 1-2.

<sup>74</sup> Serampore was a protestant institution (Baptist mission) which encouraged not only English education but also theological studies in India, started by William Carney, Joshua Marshman and William Ward in 1818. M. E. Gibbs, "Anglican and Protestant Missions (1706-1857)", in H. C. Perumalil and E. R. Hambye (eds.), *Christianity in India: A History in Ecumenical Perspective*, Alleppey 1972, 223.

MD Seminary School. He already made some efforts for its uplift and up-gradation.<sup>75</sup> It was his conviction from the very beginning that only proper education could heal the spiritual wounds of the community.<sup>76</sup> He took up the post of professor in the Serampore College in 1913.<sup>77</sup> He taught Church history, political history and Syriac language in the College. Father Geevarghese envisaged his possible stay at Serampore as an opportunity to give better education to the priests of his community so that they would become an asset to the future theological seminary for the whole Malankara Church. He learned that at Serampore College, along with the English language, there were opportunities and encouragement for theological studies.<sup>78</sup> He took much care to see the deacons get proficiency in English and Syriac.<sup>79</sup> He succeeded to include Syriac as one of the main subjects in the College.<sup>80</sup>

At Serampore he paid special attention in keeping the Syrian Christian students in loyalty to their faith and tradition. In the Students' Chronicle and Serampore College Magazine of August 1914, it is written:

About a dozen 'Syrian Christian students' from Malabar have joined our college this year. As a college we have the advantage of a 'Syrian

<sup>75</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 112.

<sup>76</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 51.

<sup>77</sup> "Serampore College" (Editorial), in *The Students' Chronicles and Serampore College Magazine* (August 1914) 8-9; cf. also "Serampore College Malayali Association" (Editorial), in *Students' Chronicle* (May 1919), 8-9.

<sup>78</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 113.

<sup>79</sup> Father Geevarghese was aware that proficiency in Syriac was indispensable for priests since they had to read and grasp literature written in Syriac that contained the liturgy, theological mysteries, scientific interpretations and history of the Syrian Orthodox Church. So he tried to make Syriac an optional subject in the College. He could make it practical in the University of Calcutta. As a result of his intelligent approach the Universities of Kolkata and Madras included Syriac as one of the main subjects. T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 115-116.

<sup>80</sup> It is worth remembering that Robinson, who was one of the professors in Serampore College, stated in the introduction of the first edition of grammar book in Syriac known in his name that the genuine author of that book is Father Geevarghese. Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 50; cf. also Mar Ivanios, *First and Second Book of Aramaic*, Tiruvalla 1949.

Christian Professor' on the staff, Rev. Father Geevarghese M. A. The 'Syrian students' are under his special supervision and there is a 'Syrian chapel' connected with the college where services are held in accordance with the usages of the 'Syrian Church'<sup>81</sup>

At the same time he was conscious of the necessity to come into contact with other communities in order to broaden and deepen their experience.<sup>82</sup> In his autobiography '*Girideepam*,' he wrote later in 1929:

I am happy and thankful that I have been able to work sincerely and wisely to turn the deacons and brothers at Serampore into loving children of the Head of the Malankara Church and also make them ideal craftsmen and protectors of the Malankara Community.<sup>83</sup>

History shows how during his stay at Serampore (1912-1919), the young priest trained himself to become God's instrument to realize His plans for the Church.<sup>84</sup>

Father Geevarghese turned his attention also to the condition of the womenfolk of the Malankara Church and in view of their welfare and better education he brought a few of 'Malankara girls' to Calcutta. Some of them were sent to the Diocesan College Calcutta for higher studies and another group was sent to the convent of Mother Edith OMSE<sup>85</sup> at Barisole. An important way he found out for the reformation of the society was to awaken the women. He says: "The prosperity of any society will depend on the character reformation of its women"<sup>86</sup> While at Serampore, Father Geevarghese approached Sister Mary Victoria, principal of

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<sup>81</sup> "Serampore College" (Editorial), in *The Students' Chronicle* (August 1914), 8-9.

<sup>82</sup> "Arts Department" (Editorial), in *The Serampore Students' Chronicles* (May 1919), 9-10.

<sup>83</sup> Mar Ianios, *Girideepam*, 54.

<sup>84</sup> S. Anniyil, *Memories of Mother Salga* (Malayalam: *Mother Salgayude Ormmakkurippukal*), Kottayam 2008, 6-7.

<sup>85</sup> Mother Edith (1864-1959) was a member of the Oxford Mission Sisters of the Epiphany of the Anglican Communion. She was the close collaborator with Father Geevarghese in the education of girls and their formation. Gertrude OMSE, *Mother Edith OMSE*, London 1964; cf. also M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 40.

<sup>86</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 51.

Diocesan College of Calcutta run by European sisters belonging to the Anglican Church to discuss the matter with her.<sup>87</sup> She agreed to admit a few of the 'Malankara girls' to the Diocesan College and assured him to give special care to the girls.<sup>88</sup>

In 1918 Father Geevarghese met Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI and informed him about his idea of women's education and sought his permission to take girls to Calcutta. The metropolitan appreciated the idea and granted permission.<sup>89</sup> Thus a number of young girls from Syrian Christian noble families went with him to Barisole. Achamma, the daughter of Advocate E. J. John was the first one to respond to his invitation. Several others followed her to Calcutta.<sup>90</sup> Among them some of the girls were admitted in the Diocesan College, some others in Barisole in West Bengal to learn English literature and a few of the girls had taken Syriac as optional subject in Calcutta University.<sup>91</sup>

As professor of Church history, Father Geevarghese had to read a lot on the said subject and his studies prompted a spirit of retrospection in him. An evaluation on the obligation of the Malankara Church in evangelization revealed to him that the Church had utterly failed in her primary obligation of preaching the Good News and this failure struck his conscience.<sup>92</sup> He was in great agony; he kept praying to God to get clarity in his thoughts. To spread the Gospel in India, to show Jesus Christ to all, he decided to spend his time at Serampore to prepare labourers for evangelization. He found that such an aim could be attained only through ardent prayer and penance.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> P. C. Pantholil, *Mar Ivanios in My Memories*, 22.

<sup>88</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 63.

<sup>89</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 63.

<sup>90</sup> S. Anniyil, *Memories of Mother Salga*, 7; cf. also, S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 178.

<sup>91</sup> S. Anniyil, *Memories of Mother Salga*, 4.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. V. Kilichimala, "Great Ivarian Services for the Society", in *Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Reunion of the Malankara Church*, Trivandrum 1980, 30-34.

<sup>93</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Prayer of the Heart* (Malayalam: *Hardhava Prarthana*) Tiruvalla 1927, 46-47.

The Spirit of the Lord led Father Geevarghese further from his original desire to upgrade the MD Seminary School to a Theological College. He wanted to form a missionary community so that the members could go from parish to parish to preach the Gospel and thus heal the wounds of the community, teach catechism to the children and make people true believers.<sup>94</sup> He understood that this idea had taken possession of his heart to the extent that he could not even get rid of it even in his sleep.<sup>95</sup> As a result of his commitment to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the agent of all renewal in the Church, he decided to prepare a group of men for preaching the Gospel all over India by founding a missionary society. But again Father Geevarghese's mind began to waver in pain about the success of the missionary society. It was his noble habit to put his thoughts and plans before the Almighty and seek and wait for the will of God to be revealed.<sup>96</sup> When he placed before God his plan of establishing a Missionary Society, he felt that an unseen divine force was guiding his mind towards establishing a monastery.<sup>97</sup> Placing himself under the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit and undergoing a long period of agonizing spiritual purification, Father Geevarghese reached a higher stage of spiritual vision. "There is nothing more sublime than union with God in this valley of tears".<sup>98</sup> This enlightenment changed his life radically. Referring to the biblical truth that it is only through Jesus Christ one can come to God (Jn. 14: 6) he got convinced that those who want to be close to God must imitate Jesus Christ in everything, which implies a radical self-renunciation and the consequent sacrifices.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 57.

<sup>95</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 58; cf. also, S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 179.

<sup>96</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 60.

<sup>97</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 60; cf. also, George Prabeesh (ed.), *Watchful Shepherded* (Malayalam: *Jagarukanaya Ajapalakan*), *Collection of the Pastoral Letters of Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Trivandrum 2012, 143-152.

<sup>98</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 60; cf. also A. Padinjaremanil, *Mar Ivanios: Bethany Founder and Initiator of Reunion*, Kottayam, 2018 (Reprinted), 18-19.

<sup>99</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 61; Mar Ivanios, *A Guide to Religious Life* (Malayalam: *Sanyasajeevitha Sahayi*), Tiruvalla 1929, 6.

## 9. Women into Religious Life (1915-1918)

When Father Geevarghese brought some Syrian Christian young women to Calcutta, his primary intention was social and educational uplift of the Syrian Christian womenfolk. The social background of women in India and in Kerala, especially that of the Syrian Christian women was caught up in a web of established customs, blind beliefs and traditions.<sup>100</sup> In his autobiography, Father Geevarghese wrote:

The prosperity of any community depends upon the characteristic culture of its women. The women flock of our community is at its lower ebb in the level of education. In order to raise them up from that level, there should be facilities for their education with a view to enhance their devotion to God and purity of life.<sup>101</sup>

He was always convinced that there was a religious dimension to their uplift. "The presence of God, both in the family as well as in the Church, depends to a great extent on the attitude of women, who have dedicated themselves to God".<sup>102</sup> Already during his priestly ministry in Kottayam, Father Geevarghese had suggested the idea of starting religious orders for women, but the idea was turned down by the Metropolitan.<sup>103</sup> When he became familiar with the lives of Epiphany Sisters in Calcutta and vicinities, he wanted to make use of that opportunity. He wrote of his intentions: "Convents are inevitable for the spiritual growth of the community and for its educational advancement. It is an established fact that women are more talented and efficient than men in the service of the sick".<sup>104</sup>

Until then there was no organised canonical religious life in the Malankara Orthodox Church. Father Geevarghese was gratified in

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<sup>100</sup> The women who were confined to the kitchen had to be empowered to come to the stage with self-confidence so as to challenge those who were domineering on the stage. S. Anniyil, "Bethany Congregation of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ", in *Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Reunion of the Malankara Church*, Trivandrum 1980, 94-96.

<sup>101</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 62.

<sup>102</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 62-63.

<sup>103</sup> Margret Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 45.

<sup>104</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 124; cf. A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 20.



spending all his salary in Serampore for this good cause.<sup>105</sup> Mother Edith OMSE,<sup>106</sup> the superior, and Sister Helen OMSE opened the doors of the Epiphany convent for the ‘Malankara girls’ and very sincerely and lovingly served for the all-round development of the young girls.<sup>107</sup> When three girls came to Barisole to stay with the Anglican Missionary Sisters in 1915, they started to lead community life under the Anglican sisters. During 1915-1916 Sister Elianore and during 1917-1919 Sister Helen gave them training at Barisole and taught them how to live an ideal community life.<sup>108</sup>

The sisters regularly contacted Father Geevarghese and gave him report on the progress of the girls. From 1915 to 1917 deacon Alexander Mattackal and from 1917 deacon Jacob Olassayil stayed with the Epiphany Fathers at Barisole and daily came to the place where the girls stayed and taught them Malayalam and English.<sup>109</sup> Though a protestant, Mother Edith became sensitive about the lack of opportunity for the Malankara girls under her religious training to attend the Antiochene Eucharistic Celebration. She was so generous that she built a chapel for them. At Barisole, on all Sundays Mother Edith took classes for the girls about the nobility and spirituality of

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<sup>105</sup> C. Thazhamon, “Liberation of Women: An Approach of Mar Ivanios” (Malayalam: *Sthree Vimochanam, Mar Ivaniosinte Sameepanam*), in *Aikyadeepam* (October 1994) 13-14.

<sup>106</sup> Mother Edith OMSE (1864-1959) was a member of the Oxford Mission Sisters of the Epiphany. Mother Edith was instrumental in the founding process of this Congregation of men and women. The institute for men is known as the Oxford Mission Brotherhood of Epiphany (OMBE) founded in 1880 and the women’s institute is known as the Oxford Mission Sisterhood of Epiphany (OMSE). For details, Gertrude OMSE, *Mother Edith OMSE*, London, 1964; M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 45; cf. also Advisory Council on Religious Communities, *Guide to the Religious Communities of the Anglican Communion*, London 1962, 18-20 and 118-120.

<sup>107</sup> Mother Edith, “An Ancient Church and a New Venture of Faith in It”, in *Christian East*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1928) 107-109.

<sup>108</sup> Mother Deneha wrote in her memoirs that, eleven girls got training at Barisole: three girls in 1915, three in 1917 and five in 1918. Cf. Mother Deneha, *History of the Bethany Sisters Congregation* (Unpublished Chronicles): Nalanchira, Archives of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ, A.SIC.MD-2a.

<sup>109</sup> S. Anniyil, *Memories of Mother Salga*, 20; cf. also Mother Deneha, *History of the Bethany Sisters Congregation*, (Unpublished Chronicles): Nalanchira, Archives of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ, A.SIC.MD-2a.

religious life and used to give them well prepared notes on the topic. In March 1918 the three senior most girls among them were admitted to the status of postulancy by Father Geevarghese himself, who sought the will of God regarding the beginning of a religious congregation.<sup>110</sup> The attitude of Malankara Church leadership at that time, including the Metropolitan was not at all favourable to these developments, and the formal beginning of religious life for these girls had to be delayed until later.<sup>111</sup>

### 10. Initial Formation of a Monastic Community of Men in Serampore (1917-1918)

In the meantime, his reflections on starting a missionary group matured into choosing monastic life, because "attaining God was nobler than serving God".<sup>112</sup> This inspiration did not come as a surprise. The profoundly spiritual atmosphere in which Geevarghese was brought up had a deep influence in aspiring for religious life even as a boy.<sup>113</sup> He himself had spoken of it several times, "The most important thing that lay in my heart even as a child of eight or ten years, was to raise myself to the stature of a saint in the religious life of a monastery".<sup>114</sup> He began his autobiography, *Girideepam* like this: "The desire for monastic life was in us from our tender age".<sup>115</sup> As a priest and scholar, already he had deeply imbibed the spirituality of the Christian East, especially of St Basil. He said once, "My study of early Christianity helped me to appreciate the sanctity and beauty of the lives of men dedicated to God in the religious life".<sup>116</sup> His spiritual life was well founded on the spirit of the Sacred

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<sup>110</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Prayer of the Heart*, 1-15.

<sup>111</sup> S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 5-6.

<sup>112</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 60.

<sup>113</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, 10; M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 4-5; see also, T. Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 25-35; J. Neuner, "The Bethany Brothers", in *Bethany Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Trivandrum 1969, 116.

<sup>114</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, Tiruvalla 1925, 10.

<sup>115</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 17.

<sup>116</sup> Mar Ivanios, "The First Anniversary of My Reunion with the Catholic Church", in *King's Rally*, vol. 8 (1931) 288-289.

Scriptures and on the rich and beautiful Antiochene liturgy that he meticulously practised and taught others.<sup>117</sup> According to Edward Hambye,

There is no doubt that the young deacon and the mature priest enjoyed a particular awareness of things spiritual and apostolic. [...] His natural shrewdness was blended with a vision of the unseen world, which had been nurtured on the best Christian sources possible, the Bible and the liturgy.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to this, to get practical insights into the ways Indian *sanyasins* lived, he frequently visited Ravindranath Tagore's Santhinnikethen and the Sabarmathi Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>119</sup>

By the year 1917, these aspirations began to take more concrete shape and Father Geevarghese wrote to Mar Dionysius about his desire to start a monastic order.<sup>120</sup> He began to form the group of Syrian Christian clerics around him into a community of shared religious ideals. He and his followers converted their residence into a sort of an Ashram and began to observe the rules and regulations of St Basil, adapting them to the Indian culture.<sup>121</sup> The majority of the deacons submitted themselves to his spiritual guidance and formed a monastic circle where they made a fervent study and practice of monastic life along with their academic career.

“Under his influence the atmosphere of the hostel grew deeply religious”.<sup>122</sup> At the end of a long process of research and studies

<sup>117</sup> L. Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, Kottayam 1977, 121-136.

<sup>118</sup> E. R. Hambye, “Mar Ivanios, His Monastic Ideal and Ecumenism”, in *Bethany Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Trivandrum 1969, 135.

<sup>119</sup> S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 179.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Leo Kierkels on 12 June 1942*: Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Fasc. 73.

<sup>121</sup> The farsighted Father Geevarghese understood that fruitful mission work could be done in India, which is a Hindu country, only if we follow the lifestyle of Hindu monks. Though a very few western missionaries like Father Robert De Nobili, St John de Britto etc., tried nationalization process in the mission field in the last century, the bud of it was nipped due to the lack of people to carry it on. G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 57-58; cf. also, P. C. Pantholil, *Mar Ivanios in My Memories*, 23.

<sup>122</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Bombay 1957, 158.

Father Geevarghese could give a certain concrete form to the monastic ideal suited to the need of his Church and in accordance with his aspirations.<sup>123</sup> He considered St Basil as the model and founder of organized monastic life in the East. Being well trained in the Oriental traditions he was very much attracted to the monastic rules of St Basil. He and his disciples accepted these rules as a guide in their quasi-monastic life and adapted them with whatever modifications necessitated by situations. Mother Edith of the Sisters of Epiphany translated some part of these rules into English from Greek for their use.<sup>124</sup> They strictly observed some rules essential for the monastic life. There they obliged themselves to keep the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Their daily life was comprised of the recitation of the Divine Office in community at a fixed time, morning and evening meditations, examination of conscience, etc.<sup>125</sup> They imposed upon themselves the rule of great silence beginning after the night prayers and ending with the next day's morning prayers, which was followed by meditation.<sup>126</sup>

The small community of Serampore continued to live their quasi-monastic life under the leadership of Father Geevarghese for two more years. Then he began to look for a suitable land site in Kerala, to transplant this small monastic group. He realized that the college campus was not at all a good place to fulfil his great vision; it should be established amid the Malankara Church in order to produce better fruits. When he decided to transplant the Ashram to Kerala on 15 March 1919, he resigned the professorship of Serampore College,<sup>127</sup> to dedicate himself completely for monastic life.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 61.

<sup>124</sup> Mar Ivanios, *St Basil: Some Teaching on the Religious Life*, Mother Edith (trans.), Mysore 1930.

<sup>125</sup> A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 37-43.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 65.

<sup>127</sup> "Serampore College Malayali Association" (Editorial), in *The Students' Chronicle* (May 1919) 8-10.

<sup>128</sup> Bar Sleeba, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ* (manuscript): Kottayam, Generalate Archives of the Order of the Imitation of Christ, 12-16; also in Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAET-Box 75, 21.

## 11. Formal Beginning of Monastic Order for Men (1919)

The place chosen for the monastery was Perunad, near Ranni, a remote hilly area in the Western Ghats. Father Geevarghese himself visited the place and found it satisfactory and made arrangements for the preparatory work. He expressed the reason behind this transfer in his autobiography: "Silence and solitude are essential to monastic life. [...] Therefore crowded cities and towns are not at all suitable for the growth of this community"<sup>129</sup> Through the help of his friend Mr John Elenjikal he found a convenient place (100 acres of land) on the slope of the dense forest of Mundanmala (Dwarf Mountain) at Perunad, near Ranni, Kerala, and purchased it.<sup>130</sup> By taking a loan of Rs. 2000/- from his father he bought another 300 acres from the Government authorities. This place called Mundanmala was a hilly area and the habitat of wild animals and was on the way to Sabarimala, the Hindu pilgrim centre.<sup>131</sup> They cleared the forest, put up huts using bamboos, grass and mud and inaugurated the Ashram on 15 August 1919, admitting candidates into the hut. M. Gibbons describes:

There was heard in those wildernesses the mating call of the fierce Indian Tiger, the trumpeting of tusker elephants, the snorting of wild boars and the snarl of angry leopards. Wolves and bears were often seen and herds of wild pigs wandered about night and day in close proximity to the Bethany compound.<sup>132</sup>

The ultimate aim of the monastery, which Father Geevarghese intended to found, was to follow Jesus in his life of prayer and in his life of activities as well as to attain union with Him.<sup>133</sup> He named the order as "the Brotherhood of the Imitation of Christ" and "the

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<sup>129</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 71.

<sup>130</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 146; M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 27; cf. also Bar Sleeba, *Brief History of the Bethany Order*, 11-12.

<sup>131</sup> S. Annilyl, *Memories of Mother Salga*, 23-24.

<sup>132</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 27.

<sup>133</sup> Mar Ivanios, *A Guide to the Religious Life*, 7.

Sisterhood of the Imitation of Christ".<sup>134</sup> He was also pondering over a name to be given to individual ashrams of the Brotherhood. He wished to put the name which reflected the discipline of religious life and reminded the deep relationship with Jesus.<sup>135</sup> While he was searching through a Bible dictionary, the word 'Bethany' came to his attention.<sup>136</sup> This brought the picture of a place where Jesus was received and the picture of the three important persons, Lazarus, Martha and Mary (Jn 11:5), to his mind. These three were friends of Jesus and there was love among them. Going deeper into the personal attitude of these persons of Bethany and their triple ways of service to the Lord, he chose Bethany as the name of the Ashram he founded.<sup>137</sup> According to Mother Salga, the profound reflection of Father Geevarghese to choose this name was "a constant reminder to the Sisters of the devoted love and welcome extended to Our Lord at all times".<sup>138</sup> He decided this with the intention of giving witness to Christ in India through a life of prayer and activities.<sup>139</sup>

Yet another means to express the ideal of life Father Geevarghese sought to witness was the selection of the religious habit of the monks.<sup>140</sup> From Serampore itself he asked the opinion of his metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI regarding the dress and nature of the new order. He wrote:

About the religious habit, 'Hereby we request your grace to assign a religious habit fitting the special mission of preaching the Gospel to the gentiles in India, for myself and my colleague deacon Alexander

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<sup>134</sup> Mar Ivanios, *First Constitution of the Order of the Imitation of Christ*, Tiruvalla 1919. The text is available in L. Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual life of Mar Ivanios*, 170-183.

<sup>135</sup> A. Padinjaremanil, *Mar Ivanios*, 22.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (11<sup>th</sup> edition), Nashville 1980 vol. I, 387-388; cf. also Ralph Gorman, *Bethany, the Spot that Jesus Loved*, in *Bethany Letter*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1935) 5-7.

<sup>137</sup> Lazarus witnesses the life of the risen Christ, Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening his word represents the life of prayer and contemplation, and Martha busy and anxious to serve the Lord represents the life of active service. Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 71.

<sup>138</sup> S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 177.

<sup>139</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 75.

<sup>140</sup> S. Anniyil, *Memories of Mother Salga*, 45-46.

Mattackal. It should be acceptable to all people throughout India irrespective of caste and religion. It should be very cheap and indigenous and should not provoke others to condemn or label it as foreign. It should be such that Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims would easily accept it without prejudice as a habit suited to men of God engaged in the work of God: and it would be all the better if it should be different from the habit worn by various religious groups in India.<sup>141</sup>

In consultation with the bishop and other people concerned, finally Father Geevarghese decided that the *ashramites* wore the saffron coloured dress like the Indian monks, with a desire to embrace the Indian people who had not yet come to know Christ and to present the Ashram still more rooted in the Indian soil. The members of Bethany led a very simple life style and they lived in small huts.<sup>142</sup> And they had put into practice the motto, "Live by doing penance and identifying with surrounding nature".<sup>143</sup> It was a novelty that attracted everyone's attention. The Christians of Kerala and even the Hindus joyfully encouraged this movement through collection of handful rice, small pot savings and various other donations.

Father Geevarghese and his followers entered the premises of the newly constructed Ashram on 15 August 1919. Then prostrating before their cells after the Jacobite tradition they entered it to begin their austere lives in order to acquire the height of holiness. On 23 May 1920, on the feast of Pentecost, the first four members, Father Geevarghese, Father Alexios Mattackal,<sup>144</sup> Deacon Jacob Ollassayil

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<sup>141</sup> Letter of P. T. Geevarghese to Mar Dionysius VI on 25 November 1917: Archives of the Major Archeparchy of Trivandrum, AMAET; cf. also T. Inchakkalody; *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 130.

<sup>142</sup> They built a long and large hut which was made out of bamboo wood. The roof of the hut was covered with grass. The cells of the monks were separated by bamboo curtains which served as walls. The earthen floor was painted with a solution of cow dung. They are satisfied with the vegetarian food. They had it, sitting on the floor and eating from the earthen bowls. The big hut was divided into chapel, cells of the monks and kitchen. Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 86-87; cf. also Bar Sleeba, *Brief History of the Bethany Order*, 25-29.

<sup>143</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 79.

<sup>144</sup> Bar Sleeba, *Brief History of the Bethany Order* (manuscript already cited). Bar Sleeba noted about the ordination of Deacon Alexander Mattackal, "There was a Bethany church at Perunadu established for the needs of the Christians there. Deacon Alexandrios was ordained by His Excellency Kandanadu Mar Ivanios

and Deacon Koshy Kuttiyil, made their vows of religious profession and drew up the first constitution of Bethany Ashram.<sup>145</sup> The members of Bethany accepted the monastic rules of St Basil the Great with certain modifications as their basic rules.<sup>146</sup> Father P. T. Geevarghese was elected as the superior of the Ashram and came to be known as *Abo Geevarghese*, according to the Syriac tradition.<sup>147</sup> Above all he was a very loving father. This was the first monastic community in the entire history of Jacobite tradition in India: the ancient ascetic order of *Rambans* was, of course, known to it previously, but *Rambans* lived as individuals and not as a community. Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI himself through a pastoral letter informed the faithful about the foundation of Bethany Ashram and appealed their co-operation for the success of this spiritual event in the Malankara Church.<sup>148</sup>

## 12. Life at Bethany under the Guidance of Abo Geevarghese (1919-1925)

Abo Geevarghese's life as a monastic founder and a monk was defined by the deeply ecclesial nature of his own understanding of his call. He let the historical situation of his Church inspire and guide the particular aspects of his life as a religious. We can describe this

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Metropolitan and appointed as the Vicar of that Bethany church". Cf. also J. Perumpral, "Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ", in *Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Reunion of the Malankara Church*, Trivandrum 1980, 91-92.

<sup>145</sup> P. T. Geevarghese, *The Constitution of the Bethany Ashram*, Perunadu 1919; Cf. also Bar Sleeba, *Brief History of the Bethany Order*, 21.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 148-149.

<sup>147</sup> Letter of Father Abraham OIC to Cardinal Tisserant on 08 December 1951: Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Malankaresi-Religiosi*, Fasc.I, Prot. N. 74/49.

<sup>148</sup> "[...] To bring about a rebirth and regeneration in the spiritual life and apostolic activities of our Church, Bethany ashram has been founded by Father Geevarghese. [...] The Bethany monks with trust in God [...] have decided to spend their lives in the religious discipline and apostolic activities. All the members of the Church should co-operate with them and help Bethany. [...]". Kaippattor Parish Archives, *Pastoral Letter of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius*, 1919; Cf. also L. Moolaveetil, *Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, 41-42, footnote 19. We could not find the original document in the archives; we have taken the reference from the book written by one of the members of his own order.



complex chapter of his life under four headings: the spiritual core of his apostolate, his commitment to catechetical and evangelizing activities, the ideal of inculturation and the work of social emancipation.

### 12.1. The Spiritual Renewal of the Church

The Life at Bethany as described by Mar Ivanios was remarkable for its direct dependence on divine providence in matters of everyday life.<sup>149</sup> His autobiography presents this life as a stark contrast with the life of the institutional Church of its time, immersed in factional feuds, greed and violence. The monks had a joyful life filled with hope and trust in divine providence amid the day-to-day toil, dangers from the forest land and extreme poverty. The love of God was an experience of everyday, often coming in miraculous signs of divine protection, extraordinary acts of beneficence by the people of God and the courageous perseverance of the *ashramites* themselves amidst various difficulties.<sup>150</sup> Placing hope in God he could dream of big projects without any resources at hand; he realized them. He placed all his trust in God.<sup>151</sup>

The monks meditated for one hour on every morning and evening, recited canonical hours separately in seven determined hours, and observed silence in between, limiting conversation to the minimum. During the daytime, when there was no common prayer, a bell was rung in the Ashram at every fifteen minutes, reminding the monks to stop what they were doing to spend a moment in remembrance of God. The Holy Eucharist formed the centre of the day-to-day life in the Ashram.<sup>152</sup> In his book, *In the Divine Presence*, he clearly explained that the Eucharist is the fountain head of spiritual life; by worshiping this Eucharistic Lord one could attain

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<sup>149</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 1-124; cf. also, Philip C. Pantholil, *Mar Ivanios in My Memory*, 11.

<sup>150</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 103-118.

<sup>151</sup> Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAET-Box no. 50, 1.5; for the detailed interview Cf. L. Moolaveetil, *Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, Appendix III, 192-196.

<sup>152</sup> P. Chempakassery, "The Eucharist in the Teachings of Mar Ivanios", in *Mar Ivanios in His Thoughts*, Trivandrum 2004, 38.

merits which enabled one to acquire eternal salvation.<sup>153</sup> Contrary to the Jacobite practice of celebrating the Holy Eucharist only on Sundays and feast days, Mar Ivanios started the practice of daily Eucharistic celebration in Bethany. In order to facilitate constant communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, Mar Ivanios started the custom of preserving Blessed Sacrament for adoration, which was quite a novelty in the Orthodox Church.<sup>154</sup> "This was a great consolation to the devout brethren".<sup>155</sup> He advised the faithful to enter into friendship with Jesus who comes to live in the life of the Christians through the Eucharist.<sup>156</sup>

Their prayer and meditation were strengthened through a highly ascetical lifestyle regarding food, clothing, place and modes of taking rest, and manual work.<sup>157</sup> Manual labour played a great role in the lives of the monks of Bethany. They cleared and tilled the forest and raised beautiful gardens. All domestic duties were performed by the priests and brothers of the Order. During the day everyone was expected to engage in some form of manual work, except during hours of spiritual observances.<sup>158</sup> The life of simplicity of the founder was praiseworthy and notable. About the transformation in his life, Margaret Gibbons, the Irish biographer, writes:

Foremost among them in any and all of the above was their Abun—the once fastidious M.A. Achen of the MD Seminary who must have his garments tailored in Madras, but an Achen transformed now into a humble monk who is foremost in the farmyard shovelling up manure, not caring for the stains; he will wash them out; he has learned all that.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Mar Ivanios, *In the Divine Presence* (Malayalam: *Thirumunpil*), Tiruvalla 1926, 1-8.

<sup>154</sup> A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 39.

<sup>155</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 53.

<sup>156</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Meditation of Holy Qurbano Third Part* (Malayalam: *Kurbana Dyanam Moonam Bhagam*), Tiruvalla 1923, 16.

<sup>157</sup> For a brief description of the rhythm of life in the Ashram, cf. A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 37-43.

<sup>158</sup> A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 38.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 56.

The special characteristic of Bethany was to imitate the simple life of Jesus, who was in union with God the Father in prayer and went about in doing good to all (Acts 10: 38).<sup>160</sup> One particular expression of this simplicity and humility was the mendicant way of life practiced in the early days of Bethany.

As spiritual transformation of the Church at large was his personal mission, Abo Geevarghese made this life in simplicity and dependence on God open and accessible to the people. The ashram belonged to the Malankara Orthodox Church and therefore the spiritual life of the monks contributed much spiritual values to the community. With the arrival of the Bethany monks this forest mountain was transformed into Mount Bethany.<sup>161</sup> Very soon Bethany ashram at Mundanmala became a centre for prayer. The number of people who came from outside steadily began to increase as years passed by. The life of the founder and his colleagues in the first community was prayerful and austere. They carried out pastoral activities.<sup>162</sup>

Abo Geevarghese had always understood liturgy as the mainstay of spiritual life in the Church. One of the primary focuses of the work carried out by Bethany was the liturgical awakening of community around it. The liturgical services in most churches of the Malankara Orthodox Church were conducted in an unpleasant manner, which was not spiritually inspiring. The efforts made by the Bethany *ashramites* to reform the existing practices were noteworthy. The activities of Bethany generated among the people an interest in unity of worship, chanting hymns fervently, preservation of the sanctity of the church and conduct of prayer sessions during Lent.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> S. Anniyil, "The Congregation of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ" (Excerpts from the Diary of Mother Salga), in *Platinum Jubilee Souvenir (1925-2000) of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ*, Trivandrum 2000, 109-110.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 118; cf. also, L. Moolaveetil, *Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, 39.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. L. Moolaveetil, *Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, 89-90.

<sup>163</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 141.

The liturgical prayers and worship became systematic and rhythmic by the arrival of the Bethany monks and priests. Rules and regulations were made and distributed to the leaders and the monks took care to see them observed. Moreover, the monks went to local churches and taught and prompted the members to receive the Holy Communion and the sacrament of confession with piety.<sup>164</sup> By conducting sermons, meditations and classes they taught the faithful how to behave in the church, participate in the worship and prayers, handle the holy things in the church and thereby helped the people and children understand the importance of the holy places. The selfless services of the monks without taking any remuneration filled the minds of the people with great spiritual zeal and vigour.<sup>165</sup> The *ashramites* as well as the superior of Bethany took extreme care to conduct prayer and other religious services with utmost perfection at the season of Lent. Thousands of pilgrims from distant places gathered at Bethany during the Holy Week, stayed there the entire week to listen to the sermons and participate in the special prayers, abstinence, fasting and veneration, as well as to gain spiritual strength through the sacrament of confession and Holy Communion.<sup>166</sup> Father Geevarghese promoted the liturgical celebrations by encouraging the old and young to attend the Sunday Masses and instilled in them a love and commitment to the Church through his long and convincing discourses. He also promoted family prayer by insisting that the family pray together in the morning and evening.<sup>167</sup>

Christian families were the focus of this effort of spiritual transformation. Bethany was a popular movement in the sense that the Ashram thrived through a kind of living connection with Christian families around it. As we have already indicated the monks often found their livelihood from beneficence received from families through subscriptions, contribution of edible grains known as

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<sup>164</sup> K. Kulapurath, "Liturgy Is a Means of Union with God: Mar Ivanio's Vision of Liturgy", in A. Valiyavilayil (ed.), *The Theological Vision of Mar Ivanios*, Pune 2004, 36-101, 121.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 140.

<sup>166</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 76; cf. also, M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 58.

<sup>167</sup> G. Prabeesh (ed.), *A Watchful Shepherd*, 127-130.

*pidiyari*, and other forms of generous helps. This connection was used by the Ashram and its founder also to enrich these families spiritually. Abo Geevarghese would often speak about the 'Third Order' of the *Bethanians*, those who live in the families.<sup>168</sup> Without abandoning their properties and without having to live in the Ashrams, they can witness the love of God, by leading a family life based on Christian principles, after the model of the Holy Family of Nazareth. They can also participate in evangelizing mission of the Church primarily by converting themselves into a life of Gospel values. He instructed Christian families to live in charity, austerity and constant prayer.<sup>169</sup>

## 12.2. Catechetical and Evangelical Initiatives

There were considerable and innumerable spiritual benefits the people received from the inestimable services of the Bethany monks. In the early days of Bethany (before 1925), the activities of *Bethanians* were limited to the local communities of the Jacobite church. The monks went out to help in parish communities, giving catechetical lessons, visiting houses and preaching the Gospel in communities. Parish communities began to take benefit of their services by organizing evening conventions that went on for weeks at a time. Kaviyoor Church has reminiscence of such a convention that went on for two months without interruption.<sup>170</sup> One great initiative was the famous Makkamkunnu convention, which has now become a customary part of Lenten timetable of the Orthodox Church.<sup>171</sup> This convention began under the auspices of Bethany and Abo Geevarghese made it a point to participate in it annually. *Bethanians* were also helping the Church in spreading the Gospel among non-Christians, especially in places like Arattupuzha and Veeyapuram.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC (ed.), *Vishvasadharoni: Notable Speeches of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios*, Pattom 2010, 49-78.

<sup>169</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Married Life* (Malayalam: *Vivaha Jeevitham*) Tiruvalla 1928, 1-12.

<sup>170</sup> A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 46.

<sup>171</sup> S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 59-63.

<sup>172</sup> Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 44.

True to the spirit of sacramental renewal, which was the ideal of Abo Geevarghese all his life, the monks gave great importance to sacramental catechesis in parishes, where the *Bethaninas* went about in groups. While the larger interest was evening conventions, during the daytime they organized group catechesis for men and women separately, often teaching them how to participate meaningfully in liturgical celebration and giving them lessons on the meaning of sacraments.<sup>173</sup> Such catechetical works attained a new dimension with the start of a printing press in Thiruvalla around 1921<sup>174</sup> and the publication of catechetical books on the Eucharist and the sacraments.<sup>175</sup>

### 12. 3. Inculturation

The most distinguishing mark in the activities and spirituality of Abo Geevarghese was the indigenous character. He states in the Holy Rule which he wrote, “The special end of the congregation shall be to imitate [...] our Lord Jesus Christ [...] through the adaptation of the Indian ways of life”.<sup>176</sup> As his life was, so Father Geevarghese intended that the community he founded also must bear the stamp of the Indian culture. He saw that in a country like India with a long traditional culture which is intimately bound up with religion, there could be no place among the people for a culture foreign to the Indian mind. The Holy rule that he gave the monks states,

To imitate Jesus Christ in an indigenous way with due consideration of time and place, is to safeguard discreetly the inner spirit and lifestyle of Indian religious life in order that the rich Indian culture and religious life, which tends to union with God, might be made

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<sup>173</sup> Bar Sleeba OIC, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ* (Malayalam: *Bethany Mishihanukarana Sannyasa Sabhayude Charitrasamshepam* (hereafter this published book is cited), Kottayam 2018, 140.

<sup>174</sup> A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 45.

<sup>175</sup> For example, *Jeevaparakasham* (three parts), Thiruvalla 1923-1925; *Vishudha Kurbana Dhyana Padanam* (four parts), Thiruvalla 1923-1925; *Papamochanam* (four parts), Thiruvalla 1923.

<sup>176</sup> P. T. Geevarghese (Mar Ivanios), *The First Constitution of the Bethany Ashram*, Perunad 1919. Here we follow the *Bethany Holy Rule* of 1931 (the revised and published copy soon after the reunion) Chapter I, no. 2.

perfect in Christ. The members of our congregation should always remember that it is the essential nature of our inherited spirituality and religious life to try our best to attain union with God, the Lord of all and Fountain of all goodness and live constantly in Him and with Him.<sup>177</sup>

He accepted all that is true and beautiful in the Indian culture.<sup>178</sup> He found it necessary for the evangelization of India, an important aim of the Bethany. Under no circumstances was his Church nor the religious movement he pioneered accused of foreign flavour. The genuine Indian values like primacy of prayer, simplicity, renunciation, detachment from merely human aspirations, searching for God, etc., were highly regarded and practiced by Mar Ivanios and his followers. “He was a pioneer of inculturation [...] and embraced the soul of it”.<sup>179</sup>

Father Abraham, one of the early associates of Abo Geevarghese in Bethany identifies five points where the Ashram internalized the values of Indian culture. 1) the vestments, 2) the diet, 3) the nomenclature, 4) ascetic discipline, 5) life in simplicity and poverty.<sup>180</sup> Like the Indian *sanyasins*, they clad themselves in saffron vestments and ate a completely vegetarian diet. The nomenclature for the structure of the ashram (like guru – master, *ayathan* – disciple etc.) were all inspired by traditional Indian culture. Ascetic discipline and life of simplicity were assimilated both from the Syrian monastic discipline and the Indian tradition. The choice of forest and handmade huts for dwelling places also was inspired by the Indian ashrams.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> *The Bethany Holy Rule of 1931*, Chapter I, no. 2.

<sup>178</sup> L. Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, 141.

<sup>179</sup> John Berchmans, *Religious in the Malankara Church*, in *Christian Orient* 3 (September-October 1982) 108.

<sup>180</sup> A. Padjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 28-29.

<sup>181</sup> The Indian identity of the movement was so thorough and complete that in 1925, as a newly consecrated bishop, Mar Ivanios could almost boast about it as the ashram's distinct legacy, which was adopted even into his episcopal attire. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC (ed.), *Viswasa Dhorani: Notable Speeches of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios*, Trivandrum: 2010, 49-78.

## 12.4. Social Emancipation

Throughout the life of Abo Geevarghese, he was an ideal pastor, monk and a watchful shepherd of souls who loved and cared for all people, especially the poor and the needy without any prejudice of caste or creed. He believed, “True service of God is not opposed to any genuine humanitarian service but is the foundation and life source of serving the humans and all other beings”.<sup>182</sup> He said, “Meet Jesus Christ in everyone you encounter and love and honour the Lord through them. [...]. Love all brothers of the community without discrimination”.<sup>183</sup>

Abo Geevarghese always considered Bethany as a charitable initiation (*dharma sthapanam*) in its nature. Right from the initial discussions about founding the Ashram the Abo had conceived it as such: the original plan included an orphanage, a hospice and a hospital.<sup>184</sup> Within the circumstances, the hospital functioned only as a homeopathy dispensary for a while but the *ashramites* did indeed take care of the sick when there was a chance. During the annual pilgrimage to Sabarimala, the Hindu forest sanctuary, hundred fell ill with cholera and fever and the monks would go down to the valley to serve them.<sup>185</sup> At times they even brought the seriously sick to the Ashram and took care of them until they recovered fully.

The orphanage was an important part of the Ashram right from the beginning.<sup>186</sup> The well-wishers of the Ashram began to bring

<sup>182</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Support for Prayer* (Malayalam: *Prarthana Sahayi*), Tiruvalla 1926, 20.

<sup>183</sup> Mar Ivanios, *A Guide to Religious Life*, 55.

<sup>184</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, 18-19.

<sup>185</sup> Bar Sleeba OIC, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ*, 80-85.

<sup>186</sup> Margaret Gibbons records that his love and paternal care for orphaned children began to manifest already while he was in Calcutta. He used to visit “the crowded dwellings of the wretched and the unfortunate, where babies suffering from malnutrition were found. Father washed the smelly little bodies, bathed them in oil and gave them back soothed and refreshed to their poor mothers. Moreover, in his ruthless efforts after self-conquest he used to kiss the scrofulous eruptions that disfigured the burning skin of those pitiful little ones”. M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 51.



boys; irrespective of caste, creed and religion, the orphanage was the home for such boys brought through diverse ways.<sup>187</sup> One of the monks was entrusted with the care of the children and teaching them moral subjects.<sup>188</sup> Even during periods of extreme financial difficulty, he continued to support the Orphanage.<sup>189</sup> The orphanage started with two boys who were accommodated in the ashram itself. When the number increased, a house was built for them in 1920's. About fifteen children were there with different natures and talents. The monks gave special care for the orphans' spiritual well-being, education, character formation and cultural progress. Most of them could form their future in a good way.<sup>190</sup>

One of the important themes in all this work was the overcoming of caste barriers which were a great obstruction for social work in those days. Father Bar Sleeba's long account of the hospital and orphanage emphasizes that the children and people from lower caste were the main beneficiaries of these services.<sup>191</sup> Overcoming this cultural barrier helped later when the *Bethanians* set out on preaching the Gospel among the lower caste families of central Travancore. In the same vein, the main beneficiaries of Thirumoolapuram *balikamadhom* school were from the lower castes as well.<sup>192</sup>

In general, a 'preferential option for the poor' was part of Bethany's spiritual vision. In the words of the founder, he could feel the Saviour telling him:

I shall give you the strength, knowledge and the skill to bring the poor close to my heart. [...] Love everybody not just in words and actions, but even in your thoughts. It is very easy to see how deep your love for me is. If you truly love your brothers and sisters you have true

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<sup>187</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 102.

<sup>188</sup> L. Mooleveetil, *Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, 81 and 102-104.

<sup>189</sup> The orphans remained the only 'wealth' he took away from the Bethany Mount when he left in 1930. "Interview with a Nalanchira Parish Member, Gabriel Nadar" (Editorial), in *Kahalam* (July 1990) 33-34.

<sup>190</sup> B. G. Jacob, *An Orphan Boy of Mar Ivanios*, Trivandrum 1974, 37-38.

<sup>191</sup> Bar Sleeba OIC, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ*, 63, 69.

<sup>192</sup> S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 48-53.

love for me. They belong to me. I love them. It is I who interact with you through them.<sup>193</sup>

Such an insight into Christian love helped him to treat everyone with respect and sense of dignity. Even those who were dependants of the various houses where he lived felt that they were received into one big family.

### 13. The Move to Tiruvalla (1924)

While such activities were going on at Perunadu, the girls who had completed postulancy in 1918 at Barisole and had come back with Mar Ivanios in 1920 were patiently waiting for formal incorporation into monastic lifestyle.<sup>194</sup> With the encouragement of Epiphany Sisters, two young English teachers had earlier come down to Thirumoolapuram to help with the *Balika Madhom* School. The postulants were happy to be taught by them. Their religious studies were going on under the supervision of Sister Helen who kindly agreed to assist them until they were ready. Close to the school campus, Abo Geeevarghese procured another campus to which they had moved the formation house of the *ashramites* for one year (1921) and then started the printing press. As the activities around this centre intensified, a new Ashram was founded at Tiruvalla in 1924, which became the centre of activity for Abo Geeevarghese, both as the head of the Ashram and later as bishop.

By that time, in 1923 the Bishop's party headed by Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI (Vattasseril) had lost the litigation against the Patriarch in the civil court and after a brief effort at reconciliation (visit of the Metropolitan to Turkey in 1923) he was trying to move ahead with new proposals of leadership. Part of this plan was to give Bethany an almost autonomous juridical identity by raising its founder to episcopate.

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<sup>193</sup> Mar Ivanios, *In the Divine Presence*, 4.

<sup>194</sup> S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 26-28.

## 14. Episcopal Ordination (1925)

Abo Geevarghese was initially reluctant to accept the nomination as bishop. "He was a quest after divine bliss sought through ascetic orders - living in mud huts, sticking to the strict regimen set for themselves by the *ashramites*, eating out of earthen bowls, steps forward penury and self-negation".<sup>195</sup> Abo Geevarghese left his thoughts before God. The subject of receiving the vows of the trained girls at Thirumoolapuram was in his mind. Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI would never do it. Some of the senior girls had entered into postulancy in 1918. Finally, the Abo Geevarghese decided to accept the decision of the metropolitan. He informed the metropolitan that he did not want the charge of any diocese and he must be ordained bishop of Bethany.<sup>196</sup> It was his desire to be free from all administrative bonding other than that of the ashram life. Here are his words:

I have not received Episcopal ordination for any of the seven Episcopal dioceses belonging to the Malankara Jacobite Church; no one has enthroned me like this, or no one has appointed me as a bishop of one of them. I have not been elected as a bishop in the meeting convened by the priests or laity of the Jacobite Church; and either the Malankara Jacobite Association or its managing committee has known about my ordination. Not only that I have not dipped my pen in the ink to write any contract but also that no one has asked me to do so; I have not written or uttered a word cursing saint Leo, the pope. I have made known to the bishop who ordained me that I cannot even say a word cursing him.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>195</sup> G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 66.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. G. Onakkoor, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 73.

<sup>197</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 226. According to the ancient Jacobite tradition, before being ordained as bishop one should sign and repeat the statement cursing the Council of Chalcedon and Pope Leo. Besides confessing the faith of the Jacobite Church and accepting the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch through the written contract called '*Shalmooso*,' it was necessary that the one who receives ordination has to add in it that he condemns Pope Saint Leo I who once ruled as the supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church (5th century). Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, 34-35; cf. also Bar Sleeba OIC, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ*, 153.

On 28 January 1925 (according to Syrian counting on 15 January 1925, at the feast of Mother of Seed)<sup>198</sup> Abo Geevarghese was raised to the position of Remban at Thirumoolapuram Church<sup>199</sup> and on 01 May 1925, at the Niranam Church, at the age of 42, he was ordained Bishop of Bethany with the name, Geevarghese Mar Ivanios.<sup>200</sup> The Catholicos, Mar Gregorios, the metropolitan of Niranam (third catholicos), and two bishops ordained him bishop.<sup>201</sup> After the Episcopal ordination there was a meeting in the Church premises to felicitate the Catholicos and Bishop Mar Ivanios. In his enlightening speech Mar Ivanios elaborated the ideals of Bethany ashram, the mission of a Syrian Christian, the need for reunion among Christians of Kerala and the responsibilities of the Catholicos.<sup>202</sup> On that occasion he boldly and publicly urged reunion of all Christians under one Church, “under one Shepherd”.<sup>203</sup>

On this occasion, as an Orthodox bishop he said on 1 May 1925: “I was making a humble effort to discipline myself in the religious life for which I had an irresistible craving from my childhood itself”.<sup>204</sup> He said that since the Christian Church had been compared to the human body, the religious institute should be like the heart that resides in it. The mission of the community was to love God above all and for His sake love and serve the people and communities around us. He continued in his speech:

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<sup>198</sup> S. Anniyil, *Memories of Mother Salga*, 39.

<sup>199</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 145; cf. also, Bar Sleeeba OIC, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ*, 153.

<sup>200</sup> He was happy that he had been given the name of the Apostle Saint John (Ivanios in Greek) by the bishops of the Church. He said that although he had taken the name of the Apostle who was a messenger of peace and love, to live up to his name would require the blessings of the other bishops and the prayers of all gathered there. Cf. T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 145.

<sup>201</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, 36.

<sup>202</sup> *Speech of Bethany Bishop after His Episcopal Ordination* (Malayalam: *Metrabhishekanantharam Nadathiya Marupadi Presangam*), in Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC (ed.), *Vishvasadhorani: Notable Speeches of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios*, Trivandrum 2010, 47-75.

<sup>203</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 69.

<sup>204</sup> Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC (ed.), *Vishvasadhorani: Notable Speeches of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios*, 49; see also “Mar Ivanios’ Speeches on the Occasion of His Consecration”, in *Bethany Magazine*, Tiruvalla 1925, 196.

[...] We believe that God who has called us to this extremely pure ascetic life will bless us with the grace that we do not really deserve and through us shower blessings on this community, all the Christian communities of this place and all the communities of this country. God's grace will never fade. We make use of this opportunity to thank the bishops who have elevated the founder of Bethany to the position of the Bishop of Bethany.<sup>205</sup>

### 15. Initial Ministry as Bishop of Bethany (1925)

One of the first juridical decisions of Mar Ivanios as the bishop was to accept the religious profession of his women postulants. On 13 May 1925 Mar Ivanios gave an exhortation to the 'Malankara girls' immediately after his Episcopal ordination with much emotion, "Dear Children, I accept this cross only for your sake".<sup>206</sup> Three of the 'girls' went through a process of immediate preparation, took a retreat in September and on the birthday of the founder, 21 September 1925 they made their religious profession.

As we have noticed, Mar Ivanios was not consecrated as bishop of any particular diocese and his jurisdiction was not geographically limited. The legal complications between the two parties in the Jacobite Church had created a situation in which some of the traditional churches were legally in no man's land and some of them did not have their own priests. Some of these churches voluntarily accepted the service of Bethany priests and some others were handed over to them by Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI. Puramattom, Vennikkulam, Mangalam, Vengal, Pathikkadu, Paduva, Thiruvalla, Kadamankulam and Vanachira were the parishes thus handed over to Bethany priests.<sup>207</sup> These Churches then juridically came under the bishop of Bethany and were called Bethany churches.

After being ordained bishop, Mar Ivanios established new churches in many places and strove incessantly for the spiritual development of the people, prompting them to lead an active Christian life. As his jurisdiction was not geographically defined he

<sup>205</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 160.

<sup>206</sup> Trivandrum, Archives of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ, 1925, A.SIC.N-1; cf. also, S. Anniyil, *Early Days of Reunion*, 52.

<sup>207</sup> A. Padinjaremannil, *Mar Ivanios*, 53.

could establish new communities in any of the seven existing dioceses of the Church—though his activity was practically limited to the Southern part of the province. People were aware of the advantages of having a church owned by Bethany in their respective places; hence they encouraged, and supported this endeavour.<sup>208</sup> The superior of Bethany ashram visited these churches regularly and created spiritual awareness among the people. The monks gave much importance to teach the parishioners about the sacraments and to prepare them for true penitential confession and for receiving the Holy Communion.<sup>209</sup> Some of these churches were just ‘mission stations’ and some others ‘chapels’ and only a few of them were full-fledged parishes.<sup>210</sup> The parish churches had a resident parish priest. These churches were part of the Jacobite Church under the leadership of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI, but had their own peculiarities in architecture, jurisprudence and even in some liturgical observances. For example, Mar Ivanios says about the books used by the Bethany churches:

It is true that Bethany Churches use certain books used by the Jacobite Church. But it should be stated that there are a few books used only in the Bethany Church which are not used in the Jacobite Church. Many of you are not unfamiliar with the book called “*Hardhava Prarthana*” [*Prayer of the Heart*] which is used in the morning, noon and evening in Bethany Churches and which include certain special prayers.<sup>211</sup>

And in places where he conducted conventions, he used to speak about the material needs of Bethany for carrying out its different charitable activities. Bethany received considerable contributions from people belonging to all castes and creeds.<sup>212</sup>

The pastoral necessities of these new communities also demanded an increase in the work of printing and publishing. Just as we mentioned above, the Bethany churches were using additional

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<sup>208</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 129-130.

<sup>209</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 129.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Bar Sleeba OIC, *Brief History of the Bethany Order of the Imitation of Christ*, 160-162.

<sup>211</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Bethany Yogam*, 52.

<sup>212</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 84-97.

texts of prayer, many of them written originally by the Bishop of Bethany himself. Thus many handbooks of prayer (for various age groups), ascetical life and meditation as well as other books and booklets of sacramental and liturgical catechesis were also published in 1926 and in the following years.

After the promotion to the episcopate, the informal responsibility of Mar Ivanios as the principal advisor of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI heavily increased in all ecclesial matters, including the litigations between the two Orthodox fractions. Since the direction in which the litigations were heading were a little ambiguous at that time, and the previous verdict was not obviously helpful for his faction, Mar Dionysius VI was thinking about all options to secure the future of his community. One idea that emerged was to enter into communion with another ancient Christian community. By the same time Mar Ivanios was reaching out to the people, spreading his convictions on Church unity through his speeches and writings.<sup>213</sup> However, there was an obvious difference: while the aim of Mar Dionysius VI was the strengthening of his group of followers, Mar Ivanios was thinking about unity as a theological imperative, as made abundantly clear in his speech after the episcopal consecration.<sup>214</sup> His long studies in history and canon law of various Churches, meant originally to support the legal battles of Mar Dionysius VI, convinced him by this time that there could not be real unity in the Church without an expression of communion with the Church of Rome.<sup>215</sup>

## 16. The Beginning of Formal Efforts for Reunion (1926)

In 1924 Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI visited the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch in Mardin to try to be reconciled with him, but all such attempts were unsuccessful. On his way to Mardin Mar Dionysius VI met the Syrian Catholic Archbishop George

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<sup>213</sup> Mar Ivanios, "Speech of Bethany Bishop after His Episcopal Ordination", in Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC (ed.), *Vishvasadhorani: Notable Speeches of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios*, 47-75.

<sup>214</sup> Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC (ed.), *Vishvasadhorani: Notable Speeches of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios*, 49-78.

<sup>215</sup> M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, 76-77.

Dallal in Baghdad and discussed with him about ecclesiastical matters.<sup>216</sup> This can be considered as the first contact with a bishop of the Syrian Catholic Church that later somehow engendered thoughts about reunion with it. After the return of Mar Dionysius VI to India, in 1925 he received a letter at Parumala Seminary from Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani, Patriarch of the Antiochene Syrian Catholic Church encouraging him to reunite with the Catholic Church. In the letter the Patriarch wrote:

Your Church in Malankara had been following the rites and *thaksos* of the Antiochene Church very faithfully. In order to fulfil the Gospel of one fold and one shepherd, you and the entire Malankara Church must get reunited with us. I live in catholic unity in communion with the pope of Rome. You will get the permission to follow the *thaksos*, the order of the liturgy and the ancient canons of Antioch that you had been following so far. I promise that the catholicos, the metropolitans and bishops (Episcopoi) will be ordained from people among you from generation to generation. I hope you will think about this and reply favourably.<sup>217</sup>

Metropolitan Dionysius VI entrusted Mar Ivanios to write a reply to this letter and when Mar Ivanios asked the metropolitan whether he was willing to join the Catholic Church, he said, 'I am willing to join.'<sup>218</sup> The Metropolitan openly spoke with other prelates of the Church about the advantages of establishing communion with one of the ancient sister Churches. The synod of bishops held at Parumala in Tiruvalla on 01 November 1926, presided over by the catholicos Mar Baselios authorised the bishop of Bethany to enter into negotiations with the authorities of the Roman Church with a view to full communion.<sup>219</sup> Mar Dionysius VI did not join the Synod directly as he was leading the litigations

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<sup>216</sup> Cf. G. Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, Kottayam 2003, 90-91; cf. also document 1 in this book.

<sup>217</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Memories*, 9; cf. also T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 230-231.

<sup>218</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 231.

<sup>219</sup> Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation of the Eastern Churches, *Malabaresi-Converts. dei Jacobiti*, Fasc.I, Prot. N. 82/28, 21; cf. also G. Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 89-94; Silvester Kanjiramukalil, *Punaraikya Rekhakal (Documents on the Reunion Attempt)*, enlarged edition, Kottayam 1989, 67-72.



against 'patriarchal faction' in the civil court, but he was ready to accept their decisions, whatever they might be. Mar Ivanios presented the matter of Patriarch Rahmani's letter to other bishops and prepared a draft response for the Patriarch.<sup>220</sup>

Thus, the endeavours of Mar Ivanios for reunion with the Catholic Church started. Since the aim of this introductory article is to present the life of Mar Ivanios until the beginning of his efforts for reunion, it ends at this point. The remaining part of his life coincides with his heroic and patient attempts for reunion with the Catholic Church and the formation of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, whose documentation constitutes the main content of the present book. In fact, the rest of the life of Mar Ivanios is inseparably interwoven with the reunion movement, as well as with the origin and growth of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

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<sup>220</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol 1, 232.

## Part One

# REUNION OF ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ORIGIN OF THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

As we have already seen, the conflicts on the jurisdiction of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch provoked a division in the Malankara Orthodox Church and the formation of two factions, namely the Patriarch's Party and the Bishop's Party. Antiochene Patriarch Abdul Masih II constituted the bishop's party, subsequently named Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, as an autonomous and independent catholicate on 15 September 1912 and on the same day Moran Paulose Mar Baselios was installed as the first catholicos.<sup>1</sup> Patriarch Abdul Masih II also consecrated three bishops: 1) Mar Ivanios Yoakim 2) Mar Philexinos Geevarghese 3) Mar Gregorios Geevarghese (cf. document 4).

Paulose Mar Baselios, the first catholicos of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church died on 2 May 1913. Due to various adverse circumstances and uncertainties the office of catholicos remained vacant for about 12 years. Then Mar Philexinos Geevarghese, one of the three bishops, consecrated by Patriarch Abdul Masih II, was installed by the synod as the second catholicos on 30 April 1925, who assumed the official name, Baselios Geevarghese I. On the following day, 1 May, Fr P. T. Geevarghese was ordained bishop of Bethany under the name Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, who would become the protagonist of the reunion movement.<sup>2</sup>

All attempts for reconciliation with the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and for the reunification of the two factions of the Malankara Orthodox Church failed. Afterwards, under the influence of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani, the bishops of the autonomous catholicate began to consider the possibility of an eventual communion with the Catholic Church. The synod of bishops held at Parumala in Tiruvalla on 1

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Introductory Article One, no. 2. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Introductory Article Three, no. 14.

November 1926, presided over by the Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese I, authorized Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, bishop of Bethany to begin negotiations with the competent authorities of the Catholic Church with a view to establish communion with it.<sup>3</sup>

Mar Ivanios carried out correspondences regarding reunion with the knowledge, consent and support of the bishops of the Orthodox Church.<sup>4</sup> This fact is again corroborated recently by the following quasi-official statement:

On 1 November 1926, the Episcopal Synod held at Parumala near Tiruvalla, Kerala, decided again open negotiation with Rome for communion with the Catholic Church in order to establish peace in Malankara. The Synod authorized Mar Ivanios, then Bishop of Bethany, to make the necessary correspondence with Rome regarding communion. He earnestly followed the mandate of the Episcopal Synod.<sup>5</sup>

The intention of Mar Ivanios and the Orthodox bishops was to re-establish communion with the Catholic Church, preserving the Antiochene liturgy, canonical discipline and the local hierarchy, maintaining the jurisdiction of the respective bishops. At first Mar Ivanios thought that such communion would be possible only through the mediation of Syrian Catholic Patriarch and by establishing some kind of union with the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch. Hence the initial correspondence of Mar Ivanios for reunion was with the then Syrian Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Documents 4 and 8. See also G. Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 89-94; S. Kanjiramakalil, *Punaraikya Rekhakal*, 67-72.

<sup>4</sup> Further documentation concerning such authorization can be found in T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 225-239.

<sup>5</sup> The Syro-Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal Church, *The Code of Particular Canons of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*, Trivandrum 2012, XV (Preamble).

## Section I

PRELIMINARY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SYRIAN  
CATHOLIC PATRIARCH AND THE APOSTOLIC SEE  
REGARDING REUNION

As we have already seen, on the occasion of the visit of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch he met with the Syrian Catholic Bishop George Dallal in Baghdad and discussed with him about ecclesiastical matters. Subsequently the Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani sent a letter to Mar Dionysius VI proposing communion with the Catholic Church and Mar Ivanios was asked to send a reply to the Patriarch. However, the first letter of reply dated 17 July 1925 was not sent directly by Mar Ivanios to the Patriarch, but by his secretary Father Jacob Kalapurackal (later bishop Jacob Mar Theophilos) to the secretary of Patriarch Rahmani in an unofficial manner (cf. document 1). Hence the reply, although written by the Patriarch himself, was sent to the secretary of Mar Ivanios (document 2)

However, later Mar Ivanios consulted Mar Augustine Kandathil, Archbishop of Ernakulam (1923-1956), Mar James Kalassery, bishop of Changanacherry (1927-1949) and Mar Alexander Choolaparambil, bishop of Kottayam (1923-1951); all of them proposed him to establish direct contact with Rome for eventual reunion.<sup>6</sup> Hence, in order to understand the position of the Apostolic See, on 1 November 1926 Mar Ivanios sent an unofficial memorandum (document 3), without any signature and name, but setting out clearly the kind of reunion he prospected. The memorandum was sent through Fr John Ribeiro, a Latin priest from the diocese of Quilon, who had his priestly formation at the Urban College of Propaganda Fide in Rome and who was leading retired life at Mavelikkara, his native place. Fr John Ribeiro acted as a mediator between Mar Ivanios and the Apostolic Delegate from the beginning of the reunion movement until its conclusion.

Obviously Fr John Ribeiro forwarded the memorandum of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney to be sent to the Holy See, but he decided to conduct a thorough study on the

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<sup>6</sup> For details see T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 255-268.

proposed reunion project, before any further action. He sought the opinion of Aloysius Maria Benziger OCD, bishop of Quilon; Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD, archbishop of Verapoly; and Mar Augustine Kandathil, archbishop of Ernakulam. After obtaining the opinions of the mentioned three bishops, Apostolic Delegate Mooney prepared his own report and together with it he forwarded the memorandum of Mar Ivanios and the opinion of the bishops to the Congregation for the Eastern Church on 17 October 1927.<sup>7</sup> All these documents are presented except the brief writing of Archbishop Augustine Kandathil, which indicates only some problems which might arise for the Syro-Malabar Church as a result of the proposed reunion (it is omitted also because the same ideas are expressed also in another letter which will be subsequently reproduced).

At this point we would like to make a clarification. The authors who previously dealt with the reunion of Mar Ivanios thought that the first memorandum was immediately sent to Rome and an unofficial reply with six questions was soon sent to Mar Ivanios, to which he responded with the second memorandum. Thomas Inchakkalody wrote: "As soon as the first memorandum, which was sent unofficially, was received in Rome, an unofficial reply comprising of six questions related to the Jacobite Church in Malankara was sent to Mar Ivanios from Rome through the Apostolic Delegate [...]. The second memorandum with answers to the above questions was sent to Rome through the Apostolic Delegate in January 1927".<sup>8</sup> Authors like Louis Moolaveetil, Silvester Kanjiramukalil and Cyril Malancharuvil also state that an unofficial reply was sent from Rome in 1928 and besides the reply, a questionnaire on the Malankara Orthodox Church consisting of six questions was also sent through the Apostolic Delegate in India.<sup>9</sup> According to the latter two authors in response to the six questions,

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Relazione*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 266; he has not indicated the date or even the year of the reply from Rome.

<sup>9</sup> C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 123-124; L. Moolaveetil, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 23 and 28; S. Kanjiramukalil, *Punaraikya Rekhakal (Documents on Reunion)*, Kottayam 1989, 84 and 88.

Mar Ivanios sent the second memorandum to Rome on 22 January 1927 or in January 1927.<sup>10</sup> The chronological discrepancy is evident: the first unofficial reply of Rome to the first memorandum with the questionnaire was received in 1928, while the second memorandum consisting of the responses to the questionnaire was sent to Rome in January 1927.

As we have seen above, after the reception of first memorandum Apostolic Delegate Mooney did not send it immediately to Rome, but made a profound study also consulting the Catholic bishops in South India. He sent the first memorandum to Rome only on 17 October 1927 with his forwarding letter and the opinion of the aforementioned bishops (documents 6-8). It is possible to rightly conclude that as a part of his study Apostolic Delegate Mooney himself prepared the questionnaire and sent it to Mar Ivanios, in order to obtain necessary clarifications before proceeding further. The supplementary statements or the so-called second memorandum, required for the use of the Apostolic Delegate was never sent to Rome. In the Roman archives the second memorandum is not found; moreover it is not mentioned in any of the numerous documents of the Holy See concerning reunion.

After the reception of the memorandum of Mar Ivanios and the report of the Apostolic Delegate, together with the opinion of the aforementioned bishops, at the audience of 13 November 1927 the Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church informed the Holy Father of the prospected movement of reunion, especially of the content of the memorandum. In the light of the said audience on 12 December 1927 a memo was sent to the Apostolic Delegate Mooney in Italian language, asking him to translate its essential content into English and to send it to Mar Ivanios (without any signature) through Fr. John Ribeiro.<sup>11</sup> The Apostolic Delegate acted according to the indications and the

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<sup>10</sup> L. Moolaveetil, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 23 and 28; S. Kanjiramakalil, *Punaraikya Rekhakal*, 84 and 88.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponenza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Relazione*, 3. It seems that the Apostolic Delegate was asked to send the reply to Mar Ivanios without any signature, because the latter also sent an unsigned memorandum. This also demonstrates the unofficial nature of the initial contact and dialogue.

preliminary response to the Memorandum was sent to Mar Ivanios on 5 August 1929.

**Document 1**  
**Letter of Fr Jacob Kalapurackal, Secretary of Mar**  
**Ivanios to the Secretary of Patriarch Ignatius**  
**Ephrem II Rahmani**

Tiruvalla, 17 July 1925: *as we have seen, the first letter was not sent directly by Mar Ivanios to Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani, Catholic Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, but by his secretary Father Jacob Kalapurackal (later bishop Jacob Mar Theophilos) to the secretary of the Patriarch, in an unofficial manner. Despite diligent research, the original letter has not yet been found out. However, in the report sent by the Patriarch to the Congregation for the Eastern Church on 12 May 1927 concerning "the good disposition of the Malabar Jacobite Syrians for the Holy Union" he practically reproduced the content of the said letter. The report of Patriarch Rahmani containing the content of the letter is inserted here (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabaresi-Converts. dei Giacobiti, Fasc. I, 14-17; original is in Italian).*

Since many years a declared schism has reigned among the Jacobite Syrians of Malabar, which divides those faithful into two parties: one subject to the Jacobite Patriarch, the other disobedient at most.

The liturgical and literary books with Syriac types published by the printing-press founded by me in 1900 in the seminary of Sciarfe were the means which Divine Providence wanted to use to make us known by those Christians that they have the same rite of ours (of course with the Jacobite errors). Some of them had applied to us for some copies of our liturgical and literary books in the pure Syriac language.

Moreover, one of their bishops accompanied by some priests and monks, travelling through Baghdad in 1924, received cordial

hospitality from our Archbishop Monsignor George Dallal and he used that occasion to enter into correspondence with us.<sup>12</sup>

From my part, I took advantage of that circumstance to send him a very polite letter, in which I invited him to the Holy Union.

The schism becomes more violent day by day. The Jacobite Syrian Patriarch, who moved from Mardin to Jerusalem for more than a year, has made an effort and he is still striving to win over the rebel party, but he cannot.

I notice that a monk-priest, arrived from Malabar – I have been in Jerusalem for some weeks – went to visit my vicar in the same city, declaring to him that he wants to become a Catholic. He waits for me to call him.

Generally, the discontent among the Jacobites of their Patriarch and his bishops grows, because, as they say: “they seek what pertains to them (*quaerunt quae sua sunt*)”, not the interest of the flock.

Even a monk-priest of the monastery of Mar Mathai near Mossul recently sent me an autograph letter containing his profession of the Catholic faith and he currently resides in our monastery in Mar Behnam. Another Jacobite priest with his family, returning from the Americas, where he resided for four years, came to see me in Beirut (Beyrouth) to beg me to receive him as a Catholic with his family.

Reserving the right to mention, in a special report, about the converts among the emigrants (and they are a few thousands), I limit myself to expose the current good dispositions of the Malabars to join us and through us the Catholic Church.

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<sup>12</sup> Mar Athanasius Cyril George Dallal was archbishop of the Syrian Catholic archdiocese of Mossul from 14 September 1912 until his death on 14 December 1951.



Here are some excerpts from the letter I received a few months ago from Fr. Jacob of Kottayam, secretary of Archbishop Dionysus (sic).

“Many of us - he declares - desire the union with you, as you wish and at the same time with the Catholic and Apostolic Church, which dominates the whole world. However, it is necessary to find the way allowing us to reach the desired goal. Of the two parties, which are found in Malabar today, ours has four archbishops and bishops with almost three hundred churches, the other party has two archbishops with one hundred and thirty churches and this second party adheres to the Jacobite Patriarch named Elias. But we are in breach with him”.

Let me be allowed - added the same writing priest - to make Your Beatitude known our wishes for the union.

1. We accept the liturgical books of the Syrian Catholics as they are printed by you: Missal, Ritual, book of the funeral rites, etc. They will be for our use without any change.

(It is known that our books are not only exempt from any monophysitic expressions, but they contain the name of the Pope as Head of the universal Church and many explicit Catholic dogmatic expressions). We require - continues the Secretary - that you assure us in writing that the said liturgical books will not be changed over time with those of the Latin rite, nor with those of the Syro-Malabar rite, because the latter do not like our people, neither the bishops nor the priests, who instead are very fond of the ancient rites of the Antiochene Apostolic Church.

2. The Indies have had as prelates and ministers, bishops chosen from among our own people. And here even the Syro-Chaldean Malabars have already their national archbishops and bishops. We want to be assured that as we join, we will also maintain our ministers appointed from among us for the future.

3. We need a seminary, because from the time of our relationship with the Patriarch, the revenue from teaching destined to pay the professors, as well as the income for the maintenance of the seminarians, have been seized.

As for the schools for the education of boys and girls, we have them. One of our bishops founded a monastery, an orphanage and a monastery for the nuns who take care of the education of girls.

We have also a printing-press. However, it is necessary for us to have a building for the seminary.

4. While we unite with the Antiochene Church and at the same time with the Catholic Church, we are afraid of losing the pious legacies and their income to provide for worship and for the maintenance of priests and churches themselves according to the custom in force in the Indies”.

I insist that the contents of this letter be kept under the most scrupulous secrecy, for fear that its disclosure be an obstacle to the union.

Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani,  
Antiochene Patriarch of the Syrians.

## Document 2

### Reply of Antiochene Catholic Patriarch Ephrem II Rahmani to Fr Jacob Kalapurackal, Secretary of Mar Ivanios

Beirut, 12 October 1926: *the Patriarch expresses his great joy over the desire of the Indian Syrian Orthodox bishops, clergy and faithful to join the holy universal Catholic Church headed by the Pope of Rome by union with the Syrian Catholic Church. The Patriarch also reveals that the Catholic Syrian Church is following the early Antiochene order of worship, which will not be modified* (English translation in T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, Trivandrum 2015, 241-244; original is in West Syriac).

Apostolic greetings and peace of God to our dear and affectionate son Father Jacob who is the secretary to Geevarghese Ivanios, bishop of Bethany,

Dearly beloved in the Lord!

I read with great joy and delight the letter of good news sent on 17 July last year (1925), and the article sent joyfully to our secretary. I have fully understood its contents. I sincerely pray that God showers his blessings on you and on the people of the dioceses of Malabar. I specially pray for God's grace on all of you so that you may live in faith enjoying the peace of God and protected from all deceit and evil, enriched by your good deeds.

I praise and thank God, for his great mercy, which has brought in your hearts the spiritual reawakening of harmony and unity. I am a bit late in replying to your letter, as I was away on a tour of the Western countries. I only returned to my See in Beirut this month.

The fact that the holy bishops, priests and the Syrians of India have expressed their intense desire to join the Universal Holy Catholic Church with the Pope of Rome as the chief head gives me great joy and I convey my happiness to you. I hope and pray that all is well with our dear brethren, the honoured Mar Baselios Geevarghese Catholicos, Bishop Geevarghese Divannasios of Malankara and Mar Ivanios Geevarghese Episcopo of Bethany. Along with the Psalmist, David and the Holy fathers let me exult: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

We have been very carefully following the early Order of Worship of the Syrian Antiochian Church. The rituals in it have been kept like the apple of our eye. We will not allow or agree to even the minutest addition or deletion from it. Either in the East or the West, there does not exist a better Order of Worship than ours. The Syriac language was used by our Lord the Messiah and the glorious Apostles and has been in use ever since. I will neither agree to any change in the rites of our Church as has been done and followed by the Chaldeans of Malabar nor change it in accordance with the western rites of the Latin Church. I have published the books you follow and you would have understood how carefully I have done it. You will have understood the problems we had in protecting the earlier rites while publishing the order of service for the Holy Qurbano, funeral, ordination, etc.

Let me manifest my love for you by proclaiming that when you become united with us you will have priests, ashramites and spiritual leaders from amongst you to lead you.

Let me make a clarification regarding your concern that you will lose your churches and ashrams on reuniting with us. Once you get reunited with us along with bishops, priests and blessed brethren we will use our persuasive powers with the Pope to persuade the authorities in London, so that you can retain your churches and ashrams. We will earnestly pray for your reunion and for the welfare of your priests and for your seminarians. In the name of our living Almighty God I assure you, as the Lord has proclaimed, they will become the light of the world and the salt of the Earth. Therefore let them be informed in the truths so that they can instruct others the ways of God. They have the responsibility to be the image of our Lord Jesus to the people of their parishes so that they can be good examples and manifestations of God on earth.

I pray God Almighty to bless you and your dioceses and keep you under the wings of His care so that you will prosper and be delivered from all evils enabling you to keep all the commandments of the Church.

Submitting to His abundant glory, I believe that all the Syrian Christians in India who are believers will be united in His name. I look forward to a reply for this letter.

Abide in the Lord in all safety,  
Patriarch Rahmani.

### **Document 3**

## **Memorandum of Mar Ivanios on Behalf of the Synod of the Malankara Orthodox Church to the Apostolic See of Rome**

*Tiruvalla, 1 November 1926: according to the suggestion of the Syro-Malabar bishops, in order to understand the position of the Apostolic See, on 1 November 1926 Mar Ivanios sent an unofficial memorandum, without any signature and name, but setting out clearly the nature of reunion he prospected. As we have seen, the memorandum was sent through Fr John Ribeiro, a Latin priest from the diocese of Quilon, who forwarded it to Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney in order that it might be transmitted to the Apostolic See of Rome (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major*

Archeparchy, AMEAT-HAN-COR-8, Box no. 1; Italian translation, in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabaresi: Convers. dei Giacobiti*, Fasc. I, 5. b).

### WHAT IS WANTED

The entry of the Jacobite church into the unity of the Catholic Church,

- i. Preserving their ancient rites and rituals,
- ii. Conserving the jurisdiction of the uniting bishops over their own flock.

### STATEMENTS

Since the year 1665 some of the Syrians in South India have been members of the Jacobite Church and recognized the spiritual supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, living in Mardin in Turkey. And the Jacobite Church in India enjoyed autonomy as regards the internal affairs of the Church.

Since 1910, the Jacobite Church in South India has been split into two sections. One section owes allegiance to Elias III, the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch living in Mardin. The other section owes allegiance to the catholicos of the East living at Vakathanam, near Kottayam, Travancore. The catholicate was established in India by the Jacobite Patriarch Abdul Messiah II who visited Travancore in 1912. The catholicate is the revival of the early catholicate of the East which had its see at Tigris in Mesopotamia. The catholicate is independent of the patriarch of the Antioch. And within the catholicate, patriarchal powers are exercised by the Holy Synod which is composed of the catholicos and his comprovincial bishops.

It is the bishops of the catholicate that seek reunion with the Holy See. The Holy Synod of the catholicate consecrates bishops and metropolitans and performs all the patriarchal functions and exercises patriarchal powers within the archdiocese of the catholicate. The Holy Synod claims to itself legislative, administrative, and disciplinary powers in all matters spiritual and ecclesiastical within the archdiocese.

The Holy Synod of the catholicate prays that they be admitted into unity of the Catholic Church, themselves,

- i. Preserving the ancient rites and rituals,
- ii. Retaining for the Holy Synod and for the individual bishops their jurisdiction over all the Jacobite Syrian that come into reunion, and
- iii. Accepting the supremacy of the Holy See, the pope being the successor of St Peter, the chief of the apostles of our Lord.

The Holy Synod does not want to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic patriarch of Beyrout. For the Holy Synod itself exercises patriarchal jurisdiction within the archdiocese of the catholicate in South India.

The archdiocese consisted of seven episcopal dioceses and lately an eighth diocese has been added to the seven. And the eight dioceses are placed under the jurisdiction of the three bishops of the catholicate who are the present members of the Holy Synod. Their names with the names of their respective dioceses are given below:-

- i. The Most Rev. Moran Mar Baselios (Givergis) catholicos of the East and bishop of the dioceses of Kottayam, Kandanad and Angamalee.  
Headquarters: Vakathanam, Kottayam, Travancore.
- ii. The Most Rev. Mar Gregorios (Givergis) metropolitan bishop of the diocese of Niranam, Quilon, Thumpamun, and Cochin.  
Headquarters: Kundara, near Quilon, Travancore.
- iii. The Right Rev. Mar Ivanios (Givergis) bishop of the diocese of Bethany.  
Head quarters: Tiruvalla, Tranvancore.

The bishop of Bethany has two religious orders under him, one of men (clerical) and the other of women who do educational work. They have also an orphanage under their care.

The Holy Synod will finally decide about the reunion after definitely hearing from the Roman Church. If after Rome has done her part to enable reunion being effected, the Holy Synod were to

refuse to enter into the unity of the Catholic Church, one at least of the bishops will make his submission to the pope and beg His Holiness to give him jurisdiction over all the Jacobite Syrians in order to make it possible for the union-loving Jacobites who would seek reunion, but would be kept out on account of differences of rite, to become members of the Catholic Church and continue to use the same rites and rituals that they have been using hitherto. These rites are already in use in the archdiocese of the patriarch of the Syrian Catholics in Syria and Mesopotamia.

The Syrian Christians in South India are about 900,000 strong, about one half of whom are already within the Roman communion using modified form of the Chaldean Syrian rite. The other half consists of about 300,000 Jacobites and 125,000 Mar Thomites. The Mar Thomites follow practically the same rites as the Jacobites, although they have accepted a few teachings of the Protestants. The Jacobites follow the traditional Christian belief. They are not the followers of Eutyches in their belief that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is divinity and humanity perfected in one Man.

If the Holy See agrees to this appeal then more than four and a half lakh non-Catholics will accede to the Catholic faith following the rites they were hitherto following and accepting the primacy of their bishops and priests.

(Sent by Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany, but without any signature).

#### **Document 4**

### **Supplementary Statement (or Memorandum II) of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney**

*Tiruvalla, 22 January 1927: the supplementary statement (second memorandum) was written as answers to six questions and doubts raised by Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney, after having read the first memorandum. It provides information concerning the origin of Jacobite Church in Malankara, its division into two factions, the legitimate Patriarch of Antioch, as well as the probable number of bishops, priests and churches wishing to be reunited with the Catholic Church. Despite diligent research, the*

*original text containing the aforementioned six questions has not been found out. However, they have been reproduced by the authors who have already published the second memorandum (original manuscript of the memorandum alone in Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMEAT-HAN-COR-8, Box no. 1; the printed text of the memorandum preceded by the six questions, in T. Inchakkalodi, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 266-274; L. Moolaveetil, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 28-41).*

### **Six Questions**

1. When did the Jacobite Church and the Antiochian rite gain entry in Malankara? What are the troubles faced by the Jacobite Church now?

2. How many churches and people are there in the faction that wishes to be reunited with the Catholic Church?

3. From that faction, how many churches and people will reunite with the Catholic Church immediately?

4. How many bishops were ordained by Patriarch Abdulla and Patriarch Abded M' siha? Who are they?

5. How many of them and where did they decide to reunite with the Catholic Church?

6. Who is the canonical patriarch among Patriarch Abdulla and Patriarch Abded M'siha?

### **Supplementary Statement (Memorandum II)**

[The auspended Memorandum II is a supplementary statement in answer to the questions asked. Please find the answer to questions 1 and 6 in paragraphs 1-7. The answer to question 2 is given in paragraphs 9 and 10. The answer to questions 3 is given in paragraphs 9 and 10. The answer to question 4 is given in paragraphs 6 and 8. The answer to question 5 is given in paragraph 7].

1) It is an undisputed fact that from AD 1599 to 1665 all the Syrian Christians on the Malabar Coast were subject to the Pope. In 1665 a section of them broke off from the Roman Communion and placed themselves under the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. And since then the Antiochian rite has been in use in Malabar. In 1875 the Jacobite Patriarch for the first time visited



Malabar and consecrated six bishops as suffragans to Mar Dionysius Joseph, the then Metropolitan of Malabar.

This patriarch, Peter III was succeeded by Abdul Messiah II (Abdul Masih) who was for several years the undisputed patriarch of all the Jacobite Syrians both in Turkey and in Malabar. But in AD 1906 the Turkish Government deposed him, probably at the instigation of a few Jacobite bishops in Turkey; and Abdullah Suttuf succeeded him.

2) Doctor Adrian Fortescue in his history of the Lesser Eastern Churches (pages 339-340) says the following about Patriarch Abdullah's succession to the patriarchal throne and adds that he "had these details from first hand sources in Syria" (see footnote).

He (as bishop) was a Syrian uniate for nine years, and held the uniate see of Homs. Then in 1905, he went back to the Jacobites, received again his See of "Diyarberker" and a promise of the Patriarchal Throne when it became vacant. Soon after, in 1906, the former Patriarch Ignatius Abdul Massih (Abdul Messiah II) was deposed and went to Malabar. In spite of the promise, it cost Suttuf much intrigue and £ T. 350/- (borrowed from the resident Jacobite bishop at Jerusalem) to secure his own election; eventually he had to spend altogether £ T. 500/-. He was enthroned on August 15, 1906.<sup>13</sup>

3) Patriarch Abdul Messiah II never accepted his deposition and always claimed to be the rightful and canonical patriarch, and considered Abdullah Suttuf as a usurper.

4) According to the canon of the Jacobite Church, Abdul Messiah II is the canonical and rightful patriarch, while Abdullah Suttuf is an anti-patriarch. Doctor Adrian Fortescue testifies that "of the canon law, which rules all these people the classical collection is that of Barhebraeus (Ibid. page 342)". The Syriac text has been published in Paris in 1898. This is the canon accepted by the Jacobite Church for centuries. The canon law is clear on the status of the two patriarchs. The following passage is the only passage in the whole of the canon law treating the question of rival patriarchs:

When there is no dissension of faith, and a split of this kind occurs from self-will and love of power, and two patriarchs or two metropolitans are consecrated to one throne, the first shall minister,

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<sup>13</sup> *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, Catholic Truth Society, London 1913.

and the other shall sit idle. For even Arsenius who was appointed to the throne of Rome sat idle, while Domosus who was consecrated before him ministered, as Socrates says in his Ecclesiastic. And also Maximus the Cyrie who was consecrated to Constantinople after Gregory the theologian was rejected as the third Canon of the One Hundred Fifty confirms. And Arch-deacon Gayona who was consecrated to Alexandria after Theodosius was sent into exile by Emperor Justinian, and Theodosius sat on the throne as John of Asia informs (us). Barhebraeus, Nomocanon Ch. VII.

5) Patriarch Abdul Massih II sent several letters to Malabar declaring that he still continued as the rightful and canonical patriarch, and that Abdullah Suttuf was a usurper. In 1909 Abdullah Suttuf came to Malabar and tried to secure registered documents securing for him control over the temporalities of the Church of Malabar. Mar Dionysius Givergis, the Metropolitan of the Malabar Jacobite Church, objected to this procedure on the ground that the Church of Malabar, although recognizing the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch was an autocephalous church. And Patriarch Abdullah Suttuf excommunicated Mar Dionysius. Patriarch Abdul Messaih II declared from Turkey that Abdullah Suttuf had no jurisdiction in Malabar and that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius was uncanonical and invalid. And in 1912 Patriarch Abdul Messaih II came to Malabar, and "Abdul Massih, still lawful patriarch, acknowledged Dionysius and by his supreme authority made the Malabar Jacobites autocephalous" (see footnote to page 373, *The Lesser Eastern Churches*-Adrian Fortescue). This patriarch raised to the degree of Catholicos Bishop Mar Ivanios Paulose (titular metropolitan), bishop of the diocese of Kandanad who was consecrated bishop in 1876 by Patriarch Peter III when the latter visited Malabar. The following statement given by Dr. Adrean Fortescue is correct. "This Catholicos was to be independent of Antioch and the Syrian Jacobites. He may ordain bishops by his own authority; when he dies, they (the bishops of the Catholicate) are to choose his successor. So Abdul Massih set up an autocephalous Jacobite Church at Malabar. Abdul Massih during his visit ordained three new bishops to be suffragans of the Catholicos."<sup>2</sup> (*The Lesser Eastern Churches*, page 373).

6) The bishops thus consecrated are 1) Mar Ivanios Yoakim 2) Mar Philexinos Givergis 3) Mar Gregorius Givergis.

Of these, Mar Philexinos was on the death of the first Catholicos, consecrated his successor with the title of Moran Mar Baselius. And subsequently these three bishops together consecrated Mar Ivanios Givergis, bishop of the diocese of Bethany. Since then Mar Ivanios Yoakim died. Mar Dionysius did not take part in the consecration of the Catholicos and the Bishop of Bathany. But his grace is a great supporter of the Catholicos and belongs to this party.

7) At a meeting of the Bishops' Synod held at Perumalai, Tiruvalla, on 1 November 1926, at which

1) His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius, Catholicos;

2) The Most Rev. Mar Gregorius (titular) Metropolitan, Kundara; and

3) The Right Rev. Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany, were present, it was decided that the Bishop of Bethany be authorized to make enquiries with the authorities of the Roman Church with a view to reunion. It was further decided that this resolution as well as the correspondences and proceedings connected with it be kept strictly secret, and that the Most Rev. Mar Dionysius be not informed of this at present, but that at a later stage, the whole matter be made known to His Grace. Mar Dionysius has not formed any new party, but is connected with litigation.

8) Patriarch Abdullah Sattuf consecrated two bishops in Malabar. They are:

1) Most Rev. Mar Athanasius (residing at Alwaye);

2) The Most. Rev. Mar Severius (bishop of the Southist section, residing at Kottayam).

And lately, a few weeks ago, the present patriarch consecrated at Jerusalem two more bishops for the Patriarch's Party of Jacobites in Malabar. These new bishops have not yet arrived in India. They are named as follows:

3) Mar Dionysius Michael:

4) Mar Dioscorus Thomas. This latter is to be the suffragan of Mar Severius. This list does not include Mar Osthathios, the patriarch's delegate in Malabar, who is a native of Turkey. Four new candidates have been nominated for consecration in that section of

the Jacobite that adhere to the Catholicos; but the consecration of these has been postponed for the present.

9) The strength of the party that adheres to the Catholicos is about 150,000. The statement in Adrian Fortescue that this party, called the Metran's party numbers about 200,000 is an exaggeration (*The Lesser Eastern Churches*, page 374). This party has about 300 churches. Of these, over 100 are new churches erected after separation from the patriarch. The patriarch's party has no right to these churches. The remaining churches in the possession of this party are older ones, and it is a question of law whether adverse possession of these churches for the last 16 years establishes their permanent right. In Travancore the high court has decided that it does.

10) One cannot at this stage say with any certainty how many churches and people will come into reunion at the very beginning. As soon as assurance is given that the request made in memorandum I is granted by the Holy See, definite steps will, it is hoped, be taken to bring into reunion as many churches and people as possible. This may take some time. For, we shall have to fight against inherited prejudice, ignorance and intense conservatism, as well as in some cases vested interests. But there is no need to doubt that the faith shown in doing the needful to facilitate reunion will be amply justified by the results. It seems that the best plan for successfully bringing all these separated Christians into reunion is utterly to disregard the number of Christians or churches that would come in at the outset. The cause of the reunion of Christendom is God's own cause, and is bound to succeed. Once the Antiochane rites which is already in use in the Roman Communion under the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, Ignatius Aprem II Rahmane, is accepted for the use of the uniting Jacobites, and the bishops that would come into reunion be recognized to continue the same status and jurisdiction as they now enjoy, a strong current will, it is hoped, set in towards reunion both within the Jacobite Church and the Mar Thomas Church. This current will, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit get stronger every day until all the Jacobites and the Mar Thomites (who in spite of their protestant teaching, follow the same rite as the Jacobites) will all come into reunion, and in this way our Lord's last prayer, "That

they all be one”, will be fulfilled in the near future as far as this part of the country is concerned.

11) A word may be added here as to why this memorandum has been thought of. Three considerations have weighed with the writer of this memorandum.

- i) The conviction that it is the will of our Blessed Lord that all Christians should be united, and the sooner the reunion is effected, the better for the glory of our Blessed Savior. The present condition of the Christian world cannot but break the heart of any person who desires to love our Blessed Lord.
- ii) The Catholic Church ought not to be, and never has been identified with the Western Patriarchate. Eastern Christians, like the Jacobites in Malabar can and ought to have all facilities to end the schism in Christendom as far as it lies in their power.
- iii) The attitude of the Holy See towards Eastern Churches has been sympathetic. The following passages in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, as well as similar announcement, have greatly encouraged the writer of this memorandum.

“The Council of Florence has not been forgotten in the East. It showed Eastern Christians what the conditions of reunion are and it has left them always conscious that reunion is possible and is greatly desired by Rome. And, on the other hand, it remains always as an invaluable precedent for the Roman court. The attitude of the Holy See at Florence was the only right one; to be quite unswerving in the question of faith and to concede everything else that possibly can be conceded. There is no need of uniformity in rites or in canon law; as long as practices are not absolutely bad or immoral, each Church may work out its own development along its own lines. Customs that would not suit the West may suit the East very well; and we have no right to quarrel with such customs as long as they are not forced upon us. So at Florence, in all these matters there was no attempt at changing the old order. Each church was to keep its own liturgy and its own Canon law as far as that was not incompatible with the

Roman prima which is *de fide*. The very decree that proclaimed, “the pope guides and rules the whole church of God”, without prejudice to the rights and privileges of the other patriarchs.” And the East was to keep its married clergy and its leavened bread and was not to say the *Filioque* in the Creed, nor use solid statues, nor do any of the things that they resent as being Latin. This has been the attitude of Rome ever since. Many popes have published Decrees, Encyclicals, Bulls that show that they have never forgotten the venerable and ancient Churches cut off from us by these schisms. In all these documents consistently the tone and the attitude are the same.

“Pope Pius IXth in his Encyclical, ‘In Supreme Petri’ (Epiphany, 1848) again assures non-uniates that “we will keep unchanged your liturgies, which indeed we greatly honour; schismatic clergy who joined the Catholic Church are to keep the same rank and position as they had before.”

“In the encyclical “Praeclara Gratulationis” of June 20, 1894, that has been often described (as Leo’s) testament, he again turned to the Eastern Churches and invited them in the most courteous and gentle (manner) to come back to communion with us. He assures [...] that no great difference exists between their faith and ours [...]. (Vol. V, pp. 238-239).

[Not signed, written by Mar Ivanios].

## Document 5

### Reply of Mar Ivanios to Antiochene Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani

Tiruvalla, 30 October 1927: *after sending the aforementioned unsigned memorandum through Fr. John Ribeiro and the Apostolic Delegate to the Apostolic See, Mar Ivanios thanks Patriarch Rahmani for his response concerning reunion (see document 2). He does not mention about the said memorandum, but expresses satisfaction on the fact that the same Antiochene Syrian liturgy is followed by the Syrian Catholic Church without alterations (as Reproduced in T. Inchakkalody, Archbishop Mar Ivanios, vol. 1, Trivandrum 2015, 244-245; the original kept in Trivandrum,*

Archives of the Major Archeparchy has been either lost or misplaced after consultation by the mentioned Author).

Father of all Fathers and Head of all Heads who has power over the Syrian Catholics of the East, who rules over the apostolic throne of Antioch, Aboon Aprem II Moran Mor Ignathios, Patriarch Rahmani,

After respectfully kissing your pure and sacred hand, I wish to inform Your Beatitude, in the holy name of our Lord who protects and glorifies your lofty priesthood, the following: -

I have received the loving and affectionate letter sent to my humble secretary by Your Beatitude from Beirut written on 12 October. I praise God Almighty for every word mentioned in your letter. I hope and pray that the gates leading to the unity of all the Catholics in the world will be opened to us also shortly. It is with great joy that I have learned that your Beatitude follows without fail all the Order of the Liturgy of the Antiochian Syrian Church. We believe in the name of God that the rites followed in India by the Episcopal Synod will be protected along with the Antiochian rites even after we are united with you and the Roman Catholic Church. I will write to you about this and similar issues shortly.

Moran Mor Baselios Geevarghese Catholicos, who sits on the Eastern apostolic throne and his fellow bishops, send their regards and ask after your health.

I sincerely believe that this letter and the ones I have sent earlier will be treated confidentially and will not be published. I request you to kindly remember me in your prayers and in your Holy Qurbano. Please send the reply to this letter as registered post. I pray that you stretch forth your right hand and bless me.

*Barekmor, Al subukhono,*

Your Beatitude's humble Servant,

Ivanios, the humble servant of Bethany,

Geevarghese Episcopo.

## Document 6

### Letter of Aloysius Maria Benziger to Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Expressing His Opinion on Reunion

Quilon, 27 February 1927: *upon request of Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Aloysius Maria Benziger, bishop of Quilon studied the memorandum of Mar Ivanios (document 3) and prepared his response to the former. It contains three sections: I) analysis of and observation on the memorandum; II) historical aspects of the schism among the St Thomas Christians, origin of the Jacobite Church, the division of the latter and the constitution of the Catholicate; III) exposition of his opinion. Since the first two points are sufficiently treated elsewhere here only the third point, namely the observations of Benzinger on the reunion are presented (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario III, pp. 13-22; original is in Latin).*

With this letter I return to Your Excellency the memorandum which one of the Jacobite bishops of Malabar presented to Rev. Father John Ribeiro, a priest of my diocese and about which Your Excellency desired to know my humble opinion. The petition, although not signed by anyone, was undoubtedly written by Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany, near Tiruvalla, within the boundaries of the diocese of Changanacherry [...].

#### III. Exposition of My Humble Opinion

1. It seems very desirable that a response be given to the memorandum without hesitation. The troubled state of things among the Jacobites in Malabar moves many of them and turns their thoughts to the Catholic Church. However, now the question whether this position is assumed by the holy synod sincerely or not, can easily interpose an obstacle to the conversion of Jacobites. Therefore, this propitious time is not to be allowed to slip by in vain; it seems crucial that a response should not be delayed.

2. I consider it opportune to consult the Catholic bishops, in whose territory the Jacobites of Malabar reside. They are the



archbishop of Ernakulam, the bishops of Changanacherry, Kottayam and Trichur, as well as the archbishop of Verapoly and the bishop of Cochin, although they belong to the Latin rite. In order that time may not be wasted in vain, and at the same time the basis of the action of all may be equal, it seems to be very advisable, that a copy of the response to be sent by the Holy See is to be forwarded to every one of them, who are to remit their observations, before a specified period of time.

3. I most submissively state something on what should be the nature of the response:

a) Formerly there was only one community of Syrian Christians in Malabar and the Holy See chooses that again it be made one. For this reason, those who wish to be aggregated to the Holy See from the Syrian Jacobites should follow the rite and tradition legitimately approved for the Syrian Catholics in Malabar.

b) This law could be released by their ordinaries for those priests, for whom, because of too advanced age, it would be very hard to learn the Syro-Malabar rite, in such a way that they can celebrate Mass according to the Syrian rite.<sup>14</sup>

c) Those priests who are in lawful marriage will continue in it, but thereafter all future clerics will be celibate.

d) If at any time a whole parish, together with its parish priest, converts to the Catholic Church, the Ordinary could allow the priest, while observing all that must be observed, to remain in the function of pastor, but under the paternal guidance and protection of any prudent priest, residing in the vicinity.

e) If however, an entire Jacobite diocese or at least many of the same Church with the bishop are converted, the Holy See will consider the matter kindly and, if it ascertains that it can be done, it will assign jurisdiction to the bishop over his flock; moreover, insofar as it seems necessary, it will grant faculty to the same bishop, as well as to priests, either to some or to all, to use the Syrian Missal

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<sup>14</sup> This is written considering the fact that priests and faithful who were occasionally converted at that time from different Malankara Syrian Orthodox factions of Antiochene tradition followed the Syro-Malabar rite (Authors).

and Ritual for a specified period of time or for life. The future clergy ought to be instructed in the Syro-Malabar rite.

f) Finally, if conversions would be more frequent, the Holy See will ask the bishops of the Syro-Malabar rite to order some of their priests to study the Syrian Missal and Ritual so that, when it is needed, they can be consulted on the correct use of their books by those who, as it is said, are permitted to use them, at any time it seems opportune.

Aloysius Maria Benziger, Bishop of Quilon.

### Document 7

#### **Opinion of Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD, Archbishop of Verapoly, Sent to Apostolic Delegate Mooney**

Verapoly, (undated, but towards the end of 1927): *after reading the memorandum of Mar Ivanios, Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD, archbishop of Verapoly, expresses positive opinion about the proposed reunion, but he is contrary to the erection of an independent hierarchy. Some unnecessary parts of this letter are omitted* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario* IV; pp. 23-24; original is in Italian).

[...] I am in the midst of important Jacobite centres, and naturally this allowed me to observe the change in their dispositions. On the one hand, continuous quarrels of the last sixteen years between the two parties, that of the Patriarch and that of the Metropolitan, and the various judgments of civil courts, now in favour of one, then in favour of the other party, have shaken consciences and induced not a few to consider that above the Patriarch there must be a higher and more firm authority, whose decisions in ecclesiastical matters must be accepted by all true followers of Christ.

On the other hand, the broader education that some of the Jacobite clergy have received or are receiving has opened their minds to new horizons. This and the reading of magazines and

newspapers in which there is a lot of talk about the meeting of the Christian Churches (albeit in a rather Protestant sense) and in which the conversations of Malines were reported and discussed,<sup>15</sup> all helped to push a group of Jacobites to think seriously about the possibility and conditions for their reunion with the Catholic Church.

I myself was approached by Jacobites, both priests and lay people, who asked me questions about it. Among the Jacobites of this tendency a great influence is exercised especially by one of their bishops. He is a highly educated person; he was for several years a professor in the "Christian College" of Calcutta and is esteemed as a man of broad-mindedness. He is a close friend of Mar Dionysius, the metropolitan excommunicated by the Patriarch. Created bishop about seven or eight years ago, he called his residence with the name of Bethany and erected an orphanage, a convent and various other institutions in imitation of Catholic institutions. His house is adorned with beautiful Catholic images and his library contains, I am told, many Catholic books. I know that several Catholics have been invited to his home to privately discuss the Jacobite meeting with the Catholic Church and he often talks about this subject with his friends. It is my impression, as well as the impression of those who have conversed with him on this subject, that he has not so far made his sentiments public only out of consideration for his old friend and patron Mar Dionysius [...]. I believe that we cannot expect mass conversions (something like an entire diocese) of Jacobites to the Catholic Church if we insist on making them accept the rite, discipline and jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Catholics.

The Jacobites, or at least a part of them, believe and hope that the Holy See, in order to ensure the salvation of such a significant number of souls and to bring so many Christians back to Catholic unity, will be content with imposing on them only what is necessary and essential and will consent to their requests in less important matters. In this hope and belief they will not want to give up having their own Catholic hierarchy in Malabar [...].

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<sup>15</sup> The Malines Conversations were a series of five informal ecumenical conversations exploring possibilities of reunion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, held in the Belgian primatial see of Malines from 1921 to 1927 (Authors).

After all, while admitting in theory that it would be better for the Catholic Church in Malabar not to introduce a new rite with a separate hierarchy, which will complicate matters and create confusion and inconvenience, I would prefer that these Jacobites, if they come en masse, that is, something like entire dioceses with their bishops, might be received into the Catholic Church and be united with us in faith and obedience to the Holy See, albeit with a different rite and discipline rather than seeing them excluded and intent on organizing an independent Church, namely independent of Rome and independent of Antioch.

Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD, Archbishop of Verapoly.

### **Document 8**

#### **First Report of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to the Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church**

Bangalore, 17 October 1927: *Fr John Ribeiro forwarded the memorandum which he had received from Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney, who personally studied the matter, also seeking information from Aloysius Maria Benziger, bishop of Quilon, as well as from archbishops of Verapoly and Ernakulam. Then he formulated this report (No. 223\27) containing a brief history of the schism, his own evaluation of the memorandum and proposals for eventual action, and sent it to Cardinal Luigi Sincero, secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, together with the opinions of the aforementioned three bishops (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario I, pp. 1-10; original is in Italian).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

As Your Most Reverend Eminence knows, from time to time there is some movement among the schismatics of Malabar towards their reunion with the Catholic Church. More than once this movement seemed to lead to a mass return of these schismatics, but unfortunately the good hopes did not come true and there were only

a few individual conversions or conversion of small groups. Today again we find one of these movements, perhaps this time triggered by the schism that divides more than half of the Jacobites from their Patriarch of Antioch and that brought quarrels for the possession of churches and ecclesiastical assets that the two sides took to the civil courts.

In order to clarify the matter a bit, let Your Eminence permit me to summarize the history of this schism in the schism.

Since 1665 the *Surianis* (Syriac Christians) of Malabar who had rebelled against the Catholic Church had a metropolitan and Jacobite hierarchy from the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, who lived in Babylon (*sic*), and with that they had the Syrian rite and the Monophysite heresy. The series of Jacobite bishops in Malabar uninterruptedly continued up to our days and their Church did not suffer significant divisions except in 1843<sup>16</sup>, when due to the influence and help of the Protestants, Bishop Mar Mathew Athanasius rebelled against the Patriarch and managed to establish an independent Protestantized Church, reforming the Syrian liturgy by translating it into Malabar language (Malayalam), removing all prayers to the Virgin Mary and saints and also prayers for the dead.

In 1906 the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch Abdul Masih was deposed by the Turkish government and Abdullah Sattuf (former uniate Bishop of Homs, who returned to the heresy the year before) was named in his place. He came to Malabar in 1909 and was welcomed as the Patriarch. However, since he tried to obtain legal documents that assured him control over the Church's assets, the Metropolitan of Malabar Mar Dionysius Geevarghese opposed him claiming that the Malabar Church, though recognizing the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch, was nevertheless an autocephalous Church. The final result (of the dispute) was that the Patriarch excommunicated the metropolitan.

It seems that the excommunicated and his followers remembered that the deposed Patriarch Abdul Masih had not accepted his deposition and continued to protest that he was the only legitimate and canonical Patriarch and consider Abdullah Sattuf as

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<sup>16</sup> The Bishop of Kollam says in 1875 (*Office-note*).

an usurper; but it is certain that the deposed Patriarch first proclaimed from Turkey that Abdullah Sattuf had no jurisdiction in Malabar and therefore the excommunication of Mar Dionysius was against the canons and thus invalid. Then in 1912 he came to India, recognized Mar Dionysius and by virtue of his supreme authority made autocephalous the Jacobite Church in Malabar, raising the Bishop of Kandanad Mar Ivanios to the rank and dignity of "catholicos" and consecrating three new bishops as suffragans of the "catholicos".

This "catholicos" would be a restoration of the ancient catholicate of the East which had its see (headquarters) in Tigris in Mesopotamia; it is independent of the Patriarch of Antioch, and the patriarchal powers are exercised by the synod which is composed of the "catholicos" and the bishops of the catholicate according to the canon law of Bar Hebraeus. At the demise of the "catholicos", the synod elects the successor.

The ex-Patriarch Abdul Masih, when he left India, repented of all he had done, but the result of his work is that today the Jacobites of Malabar, excluding the aforementioned Reformers, are divided into two irreconcilable parties. The first, known as the *Metran* (Bishop's) party, with around 150,000 members, refuses obedience to the Patriarch of Antioch and instead obeys the "Catholicos" and the synod. To this party belongs the old Metropolitan Mar Dionysius, excommunicated by the Patriarch in 1909. Presently there are four bishops who belong to this party; four others were nominated, but their consecration was postponed to better times.

The other party with about 140,000 adherents remained loyal to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, who has here a delegate, a native Turkish bishop and he has created four Malabar bishops. Between the two parties, a civil court case has been conducted since 16 years for the possession of about 200 churches and considerable property, a case which, having been judged in the first instance in favour of the *Metran* and on appeal, in favour of the Patriarch, is still pending, expecting the final judgment in a few months.

This being the circumstances, a meeting was held in Parumala at Tiruvalla on 1 November (1926) in which were present:

Maran Mar Baselius Geevarghese, “Catholicos” of the East (Bishop of the dioceses of Kottayam, Kandanad and Angamaly);

Mar Gregorios, titular Metropolitan (Bishop of the dioceses of Niaranam, Quilon, Thumpamon and Cochin);

and Mar Ivanios Geevarghese (Bishop of the diocese of Bethany).

In the meeting it was decided to authorize Mar Ivanios, as he himself writes, to gather information from the authorities of the Catholic Church in view of a possible reunion.

In this same synod it was also decided to keep strictly secret this decision and all the correspondences and procedures connected with it, and that Mar Dionysius (the excommunicated Metropolitan) was not informed of this at this time, waiting to make him known of everything when the move achieves a certain development.

Before the end of November itself, in fact, I received letters from Rev. Fr. Ribeiro, a Catholic priest of the diocese of Quilon<sup>17</sup>, who informed me how the Jacobite Bishops (of the *Metran* party) wished to be reunited with the Catholic Church and, on behalf of Mar Ivanios, communicated me their wishes and their proposals for the reunion. A few days later, I received a memorandum also written by the aforementioned Mar Ivanios through Rev. Fr. Ribeiro, of which I add the translation.<sup>18</sup> After having directed Rev. Fr. Ribeiro to put the affair back in the hands of his Ordinary, the Bishop of Quilon, I myself, both to make sure that it was a serious matter and not one of the usual fruitless moves of some discontent persons, and to hear the opinion of a practical and experienced person, likewise approached Mgr. Benziger, the Bishop of Quilon. He, in his 27 years as a bishop in the midst of these schismatics, whose conversion he carried out fruitfully, had the opportunity to know their character and dispositions very well. Msgr. Benziger replied me by sending a

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<sup>17</sup> An Indian priest of the Latin Rite, former student of Propaganda (footnote as in the original).

<sup>18</sup> The original memorandum was written in English, which we have reproduced as document 3. The Italian translation of the same memorandum sent by the Apostolic Delegate can be found in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario* II, pp. 10-13 (Authors).

comment on the memorandum of Mar Ivanios in which he also expressed his opinion on how to carry it out successfully (see document 6). Then I also wrote to all the Ordinaries of Malabar, submitting to them the main requests of the Jacobites and the proposals of the Bishop of Quilon, asking them of their opinion. Although all of them seem to consider these approaches of the Jacobites as a serious and important matter, and all vote for the reunion of the separated brethren and believe it is opportune to respond to the request of Mar Ivanios, nevertheless they do not agree in their proposals on how to deal with the Jacobites returning to union. I will have the opportunity to refer to the opinions expressed by them, but I think it is good to extensively refer some extracts from the letters of the Archbishops of Verapoly and Ernakulam which illuminate those particular points.

All the same, it took a few months of time, especially since I wanted to study the issue, not forgetting to look in the Delegation's archives for the decisions given by the Holy See in similar cases, especially the acts and decrees of the plenary meeting of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the Affairs of the Eastern Rite, held on 25 January 1888 to decide on a very similar case, that is the conversion of another Mar Dionysius, also Metropolitan of the Jacobites of Malabar.<sup>19</sup>

Since then Your Eminence would perhaps like to know my submissive point of view on the subject, I am going to state the opinion I have now formed, based on my direct knowledge of the Syrians of Malabar, on the views of the bishops interrogated and on the study of the questions. For the sake of better clarity, I think it appropriate to present my opinion in the form of observations to the main points of the question raised by Mar Ivanios:

1. Regarding the full acceptance of all Catholic doctrines and the submission to the Holy Father as the divinely constituted head of the Church, I observe that the Jacobites of Malabar are not really Monophysites, and their faith is more affected by the modernist

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<sup>19</sup> The decisions of the said plenary meeting are reproduced in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponenza del 4 luglio 1930, Appendice al sommario*, pp. 119-122; see also Introductory Article Two, section 1, 3 (Authors).



infiltrations caused by Protestant influences than by historical errors and heresies. They will need instruction, yes, but it does not seem that there is any doubt about their good disposition on this point.

2. As for the rite, it would be desirable for the Jacobites returning to the union to readopt the Syro-Malabar rite which they abandoned in 1665 in search of protection from the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch. This is what the Archbishop of Ernakulam and Bishop of Quilon would like; but it does not seem that mass conversions can be hoped for if a change of rite is required, and for this reason also all the other Bishops of Malabar are of the opinion that it is convenient to permit them to maintain the pure Syrian rite.

3. Also with regard to the episcopal jurisdiction of the present bishops, it seems to me that without running the most probable danger of obtaining nothing, we cannot deny that, if one of these bishops converts with a considerable part of his clergy and people, he will have to keep jurisdiction over his flock; and that, in the case of several bishops who convert, a hierarchy, independent of the Syro-Malabar and Latin Archbishops, will have to be established. The Ordinaries of Verapoly, Trichur and Changanacherry are also of this opinion, and this has been the practice followed in the past by the Holy See in similar cases.

4. Mar Ivanios and his people want their hierarchy be immediately subjected to the Holy See and has nothing to do with the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, and the Catholic Bishops of Malabar also agree to it, because it is a fact that whenever the Patriarchs of the East, both Catholics and schismatics, wanted to interfere in the affairs of Malabar, they brought nothing but swindling, turmoil and schisms.

In this regard, I believe it is right to report to Your Eminence the transgression of the current Catholic Patriarch of Antioch in this affair of the Jacobites as it is notified to me in a recent letter by the bishop of Quilon, of which I add a faithful translation.<sup>20</sup> And I need

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<sup>20</sup> On 2 October 1927 Aloysius Maria-Benziger, bishop of Quilon wrote a letter to the Apostolic Delegate Mooney against the interference of Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani in Malabar. The Italian translation of this letter can be found in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario* V, pp. 25-26.

not add here that I share the fears expressed by Msgr. Benziger, and in submitting the matter to the wise consideration of Your Eminence, I cannot help but deprecate an intervention of Msgr. Rahmani which would only add new divisions and complications to the many of which Malabar is already full.

If it is good for the uniates of the pure Syrian rite that, if ever they can be had in Malabar, they will be rendered completely free from any influence and dependence of the Patriarch of Antioch, but it seems to me hardly convenient that the request to give them a local Patriarch or "catholicos" is granted; at most they could have a metropolitan, and this is also to avoid arousing jealousies of the Syro-Malabars. Moreover it seems to me absolutely necessary to find a way to put bishops and converted parish priests under the direction and control of someone who can direct them and advise them effectively towards the attainment of a discipline that is less easy, democratic and secular and a little more Catholic than that they do not have at present. The Archbishop of Ernakulam wisely refers to this need also to avoid the disastrous consequences that their example would have on the Syro-Malabars who are just reduced to some sort of regularity. It should be added that today, while the lay Jacobites are generally better educated and are in better civil conditions than the Syro-Malabar people, most of their married clergy are very ignorant and many among the few emerging priests had their education in Protestant schools. It should also be ensured that the customs and privileges granted to them are not only contrary to faith and morals, as they propose, but that they are at least in conformity with the discipline of the Eastern Catholic Church; all the more so because it can be foreseen with certainty that all the concessions that are granted to the converted Jacobites will have a repercussion on the Syro-Malabars, who will be agitated and will try every means to obtain at least similar (concessions).

5. And finally I come to deal with the celibacy of the clergy. Mar Ivanios makes no reference to this, but all the Latin and Syro-Malabar bishops invoke that, while allowing Jacobite priests to retain their legitimate spouses even after conversion without

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This letter is not reproduced in this book, in order to avoid monotonous repetition of the same ideas, also contained in his other writings (Authors).

prejudice to the exercise of priesthood and jurisdiction, in the future the law of celibacy should be rendered mandatory for all priests. They claim that a married Catholic clergy would exert a very bad influence on the celibate clergy. Since the conditions of Malabar are very different from those of the Near East, given the novelty of the thing in India, given the fact that the married clergy here is synonymous with schismatic clergy, also given the serious obstacle that this concession would be for a better discipline of the converting clergy, and finally given the reality of the referred (bad) influence, I fully share the opinion of the bishops of Malabar. Many of them also affirm that the introduction of celibacy for the clergy, today Jacobite, would probably not be opposed by their Bishops, while it would certainly be well accepted by their flock.

Having exposed how the things are today in Malabar regarding the Jacobites, if I am allowed to express a suggestion, I opine, Most Reverend Eminence, that it is convenient to give Mar Ivanios a prompt reply at least in principle, also to prevent these poor Jacobites end up giving in to the suggestions and flattery of the Protestants, believing that they are neglected by Rome, as it already happened to those who broke away from the Jacobite Patriarch in 1843 and who today constitute the Reformed Syrian Church, in fact far more Reformed than Syrian.

Since for the practical implementation of the reunion of these separated brethren direct contacts and conversations with their bishops will be needed. I do not see a better solution for this affair than to entrust (after the Sacred Congregation has decided, if it deems it appropriate, the fundamental principles and the main points of the question and having given instructions in this regard), to a commission of Malabar bishops who well know the persons and things, the task of directly dealing with the Jacobite bishops about the practical details that can better lead to the desired reunion. Under the present circumstances, the archbishops of Verapoly and Ernakulam would be, in my opinion, the most suitable to be part of this commission. For them, who live in the environment (territory) it would not be difficult to make sure of the sincerity and extent of the movement towards union, to maintain contact with the Jacobites and to keep an eye on the subsequent developments of this movement, as well as to devise the best way for the necessary

direction of bishops and parish priests after the conversion. Due to long distance, lack of direct knowledge of the persons and less familiarity with the cunning scimmage and with the sophisticated fantasies of the Jacobites, the Delegate is not able to deal directly with the case; he could be asked the decisive vote in those resolutions to which the two aforementioned prelates would not agree. It is well understood however that the conclusions to which the proposed commission is to arrive, although its task is restricted to the details, would neither be effective nor be made public without the prior approval of the Sacred Congregation.

Having expressed my submissive opinion on the questions raised by Mar Ivanios' request, I refer the matter to the enlightened judgment of Your Eminence who will know to weigh circumstances and facts and, if he deems it appropriate, will have the kindness to send me his venerated orders and wise instructions on the matter.

Edward Aloysius Mooney, Apostolic Delegate.

## **Document 9**

### **Unofficial Response of the Congregation for the Eastern Church to the Memorandum of Mar Ivanios**

Vatican City, 12 November 1927:<sup>21</sup> *after reading the report of the Apostolic Delegate and informing the Holy Father of the matter, Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church sent a rather positive response to the Apostolic Delegate. A draft Italian text of the answer to be given to Mar Ivanios was also attached. It seems that since Mar Ivanios sent the memorandum without any signature the Apostolic Delegate was*

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<sup>21</sup> In documents 21 and 24 the date of this unofficial reply is indicated as 5 December 1927, while in document 28 the date is 7 December 1927. Louis Moolaveetil indicates that Mar Ivanios received the reply in March 1928. See his book *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 24. This may be true because the undated reply was attached to the letter addressed to the Apostolic Delegate who translated it into English (except the Latin quotations) and sent it to Mar Ivanios, not directly, but through Fr. John Ribeiro. In any case Mar Ivanios responded to the reply on 17 March 1928 as documents 11 and 12 demonstrate (Authors).

*asked to provide the response in the same manner* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponenza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario* VII, pp. 28-31; original is in Italian. English version of the attached reply to Mar Ivanios can also be found in L. Moolaveetil, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 24-28; T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, 263-265).

**A) Letter of the Congregation for the Eastern Church to Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney**

Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord,

With concern I reported to the Holy Father what you had written to me in your letter of 17 October (1927), No. 223/27 (see document 8).

His Holiness learned with paternal satisfaction the desire of the Synod of the so-called "Catholicate" for union with Rome and the thoughtful zeal with which Your Lordship took this to heart as something very important.

Hereby I send to Your Lordship a text which, after having made the appropriate translation, you will be pleased to send, without signature, prudently and with reserve, to the Most Reverend Mar Ivanios, through Fr. Ribeiro.

You will verbally inform (the same) Mar Ivanios that the other points of their desire will be studied by this Sacred Congregation in a spirit of benevolence. In the meantime, keep me informed of the further attitudes of the Synod towards the Holy See.

The Sacred Congregation will see later whether it is appropriate to proceed further, appointing the commission that your Lordship has indicated in the letter, and I will not fail to take also other measures that would seem appropriate.

Cardinal Luigi Sincero.

**B) Reply to the Memorandum of Mar Ivanios Attached to the Letter Reproduced above**

The recent expression of a desire on the part of the Synod of the Catholicate for reunion with the Catholic Church under the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff, the successor of St Peter and the Vicar of Christ on earth, was received by the Holy Father with that deep sense of satisfaction which is but natural in view of his fatherly affection and pastoral solicitude for all Christians.

The wish that there may be "one fold and one shepherd" represents the deep and abiding aspiration that dominated the thought of the Holy Father from the very beginning of his pontificate. In his first encyclical to the Catholic world, letting his heart go out to those, all too many indeed, who as yet "are not of this fold" though in God's designs they should be of it, he added: "He who represents the Eternal Pastor cannot but be inflamed with the same desire that surged in His Sacred Heart, cannot but repeat the very phrase, brief indeed but full of love and indulgent fatherly affection, which he used, "them also must I bring". I cannot but experience an ineffable joy as I recall the prophecy of Christ, "and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd".

Again in the Encyclical issued on the occasion of the third centenary of the blessed death of St Josaphat, Martyr, the present Pontiff gave expression of greater length to his desire that all separated brethren return to Catholic unity and asserted that to this end it is necessary that they seek to know the true life of the Church; on the other hand he strongly urged Catholics of the Latin rite to study more deeply the history and customs of Christians of Oriental rites, expressing the hope that this increase of mutual understanding and the strong force of prayer on both sides may have this blessed effect that they who for any reason whatsoever have cut themselves off from the Church may be brought back to Catholic unity and thus enter the enjoyment of those rights which the Church safeguards for all alike: "*Aequo iure utantur coniuncti populi, cuiusvis sint generis aut linguae, quorumvis rituum sacrorum quos Romana Ecclesia et sanctissime semper venerata retinuit semperque decrevit*

*retinendos, iisdem se tamquam pretiosis vestibus exornans, quasi regina ... in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate”.*

From these words the bishops of the Malabar Catholicate may clearly see how their expressed desire to retain their liturgical books will be treated by the Holy See. In readmitting separated Christians to unity, the Roman Pontiffs with vigilant care have ever followed the policy of approving or permitting the retention of their rites, if, and in so far as, these rites contained nothing contrary to Catholic Faith, nothing that might constitute a danger for souls or bring the Church into disrepute. One might quote in this connection the words of the famous Bull of Benedict XIV, “*Esti Pastoralis*” of 26 May 1742, paragraph 9: “*Romani Pontifices satius consultiusque duxerunt ritus huiusmodi, qua in parte nec fidei catholicae adversantur, nec periculum generant animarum, aut ecclesiasticae derogant honestati, approbare seu permittere*”, (*Collect. Propaganda Fide*, vol. I, page 238).

The same Pope repeated these very words in another notable document, the Bull “*Allatae nobis*” of 26 July 1755, in which, instancing the celebrated reunion of the Ruthenians with the Holy See during the pontificate of Clement VIII, he referred to the decree published on that occasion by the Ruthenian Archbishops and Bishops and quoted its words in regard to the conditions under which they had petitioned for reunion: “*Salvis tamen et in integrum observatis coeremoniis et ritibus cultus divini peragendi, et sanctorum Sacramentorum, iuxta consuetudinem Ecclesiae Orientalis, correctis tantummodo iis articulis, qui ipsam unionem impedirent; ut more antiquo fierent omnia, sicut olim unione durante fuerunt*”, (*Collect. Propaganda Fide*, vol. I, page 237).

Of the same tenor and if possible, yet more clear than the above are the words of Pius IX in the decree “*Romanae Pontifices*” with which on 6 January 1862 he set up in the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda a special section to deal with the matters concerning Oriental rite. In that document, for instance, we read: “*Hinc ipsi decessores Nostri non solum in animo numquam habuere orientales gentes ad ritum latinum ducere, verum etiam quoties opportunum esse existarunt, luculentissimis verbis clare aperteque declararunt, se nolle proprios orientalium Ecclesiarum ritus, utpote venerabili suae originis antiquitate, et sanctorum Patrum*

*auctoritate commendatos, destruere vel immutare, sed unice velle ne quid in ritus ipsos forsitan induceretur, quod fidei catholicae adversetur, vel periculum generet animarum, vel ecclesiastice deroget honestati*" (Item, *Collect. Propaganda Fide*, vol. II, page 669).

## Document 10

### Report of Bishop James Kalacherry regarding the Jacobites of Malabar and the Movement for Reunion

Changanacherry, 14 March 1928: *according to the proposal of Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Mar James Kalacherry, Bishop of Changanacherry compiled this informative report concerning the Jacobites in Malabar. During his visit to the Apostolic See the same Delegate personally presented it to the Congregation for the Eastern Church in April 1928 (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabaresi: Convers. dei Giacobiti, Fasc. I; Italian translation in Malabar-Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario VIII, pp. 31-35).*

Your Excellency,

I beg to narrate here briefly some details about the Jacobites, which I gathered from conversation with a few important personages among them these days, Mar Evanius (Ivanios) in particular who paid a visit to me very secretly yesterday night.

I. Statistics: The Jacobites number about 300,000 people, with about 360 churches, 400 priests and 116 clerics, 4 little monasteries, and as many seminaries. Their bishops are 10 in all classified as follows:

- |                 |                    |                                |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| A. Metran party | i. Mar Bailius     | Catholicos                     |
|                 | ii. Mar Dionysius  | Metropolitan (only little now) |
|                 | iii. Mar Gregorius |                                |
|                 | iv. Mar Evanius    | M. A. (Monk)                   |



B. Patriarch's Party	i. Mar Athanasius	Nordists
	ii. Mar Timotheus	
	iii. Mar Michael Dionysius	
	iv. Mar Diascorus	Suddhist
	v. Mar Ortatios	Former delegate from Syria, Antioch (Special)
	vi. Mar Julios	Recent delegate from Syria, Antioch.

Thus there are 8 indigenous bishops and two foreign bishops. These foreign bishops have been sent as delegates of the Patriarch. Mar Julios, the more recent delegate has been especially deputed to absolve the interdicted Dionysius in case he fulfils certain conditions dictated by the Patriarch.

II. Romeward Movement: The Metran party have certain leanings towards Rome, even since the triumph of the patriarchal party in whose favour the Travancore High Court had decided the 'Vatti-panam' case. The Bishops of the Metran party believe that subjection to some legitimate Patriarch is essential to salvation. But as they cannot side with the present (wicked) patriarch of Antioch, the only alternative left is to side with the great Patriarch of Rome, whom their ancient canons acknowledge as true and chief Patriarch of Christendom. Though Mar Ivanios seems to have conviction that Roman allegiance is necessary for salvation, he does not profess so before his brother-bishops. "Rome is the best way to salvation," and since Antioch has at present turned senseless, "Rome *hic et nunc* is the only plank of salvation." Such is the drift of thought Mar Evanius has impressed into the minds of the other bishops. Gradually he hopes to convince them that Rome is the only ark of salvation for the past, present and future.

III. Mar Evanius (Ivanios): has some 20 priests and 10 churches under him. These have been formed by his own efforts. He is imbibing into them catholic spirit of celibacy and obedience. He commands respect among the Jacobite laity and clergy in general, though a good number look upon him with suspicion. Why did the monk get himself consecrated as a bishop? they ask. Is it not out of ambition? Once become a catholic, he would have no chance of

becoming bishop. So he first becomes bishop and then he could remain so if he is received by Rome, such is the interpretation of his motives even by the Jacobites of his party (non-patriarchal). But this opinion may be false. God alone knows one's heart as it is. *Nemo malus credendus est nisi probatus*. I have no proof to show that his motives are bad. His life is pious. He keeps rigidly monastic rules. He is fully occupied in entirely religious affairs, studying, copying, practicing and preaching Catholic religion chiefly on its ascetic side. If he became a bishop, it may be for getting more influence with the people and priests of his community, as well as with Rome itself. Rome, he might have thought in his simplicity, may more easily listen to him as a bishop than as a priest. So we may excuse the monk bishop.

IV. The question of rite: The Siro-Antiochian rite is vehemently desired by Mar Evanius and the other bishops. Why? The answer is: why not? His argument is that unless the rite is kept unchanged, only very few will be converted. This is probably true. But are you sure I asked, that a good many will follow you, if the rite is kept up? With God's grace I hope so, he said. A rite, I observed, implies, three things, form of language, mode of dress, mode of government (Jurisdiction). Rome might grant you, I said, the first two according to Antiochian fashion, but the government of the flock may not be immediately entrusted to your own hands, as a term of probation is quiet necessary. But Mar Evanius does not agree to this. The 'Catholicos', who is a native, elected by the bishops of the metran party as almost a counter-patriarch, actually rules the bishops and priests of the above party. His authority is desired to be recognized by Rome, as also of the other bishops a subject to him. The 'Catholicos' (Mar Basilios) residing only five miles away from Changanacherry is a man of good repute, though not so learned as Mar Evanius. He has power to consecrate bishops, after having elected them in a synod of the bishops of his party. He gives also laws to the whole province, provided they are approved by the synod of bishops whose ex-officio president is himself.

Such in short is the status *questionis*. I am convinced of their sincerity and purity of motives, as also of their moral weakness and obstinacy of not submitting to Rome unconditionally. That they do not want to submit to the catholic patriarch of Antioch was clear

from Mar Evanius' conversation with me. Well, this is harmless, if not more beneficial. As to independent jurisdiction, my humble opinion (which is not mature enough) is that it may be granted with the distinct understanding that Rome will directly interfere in the choice of successors to the present bishops, and insist on clerical celibacy.

With most etc.

James J. Kallacherry, Bishop of Changanacherry.

### Document 11

## **Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Thanking Him for the Reply from the Congregation for the Eastern Church**

Tiruvalla, 17 March 1928: *Mar Ivanios thanks the Apostolic Delegate for expediting an answer from Rome and requests his help to bring the negotiations to a happy end* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Ser.1, Fasc. 87A).

My Lord,

I am very grateful to Your Lordship for expediting an answer from Rome. The Rev. Father Ribeiro gave me the message last Friday. I am sending him today an acknowledgment of the same, requesting further consideration of my memorandum. Since Your Lordship will see my letter, I do not repeat the contents here. May I make a special request that Your Lordship with (*sic*) most kindly do all that lies in your Lordship's power to bring these negotiations to a settled issue. I am interceding help of the Altar at every Mass.

I remain, Your Lordship's most sincerely

Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany.

**Document 12**  
**Letter of Mar Ivanios to Father John Ribeiro**  
**concerning the Response of the Congregation**  
**for the Eastern Church**

Tiruvalla, 17 March 1928: *as directed by the Congregation for the Eastern Church, the Apostolic Delegate sent the translation of the unsigned preliminary response of the Apostolic See to the memorandum of Mar Ivanios through Fr. John Ribeiro (document 9B). The text does not contain any response to the last point of the memorandum, namely the jurisdiction of the reunited bishops and the position of Catholics. So Mar Ivanios, in his reply to Fr. John Ribeiro mainly points out this shortcoming (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser.1, Fasc. 87A, 56-59).*

Dear Father Ribeiro,

Thank you for the message, or rather the messages, written and oral, which you gave me last Friday. I deeply appreciate the spirit of the message, and I would be grateful if you should be so good as to convey to His Excellency the delegate apostolic and to His Lordship the bishop of Quilon, my most hearty thanks.

You will remember that my memorandum stated three propositions that are to serve as the basis of reunion, namely:-

- (1) The acceptance on our part of the supremacy of the pope.
- (2) The retention of our present rite.
- (3) The recognition by the Holy See of the patriarchal jurisdiction of the catholicate, subject to the primacy of jurisdiction of the pope.

I desire to record my most cordial appreciation of and perfect agreement with the principles mentioned in the written statement you gave me regarding the Holy See and the approving or permitting the retention of the rites of Eastern Christians uniting with the Holy See. Our rite is the ancient Syro-Antiochene rite. I have with me printed copies of the Missal now in use in the Syrian Catholic patriarchate of Antioch (Beirut), and I find it is the same as ours, except for a few minor differences, namely:-

(a) The Beirut Missal mentions the pope while ours doesn't. As soon as the reunion is affected, our missal will be brought into line with it.

(b) The Nicene Creed which we use today does not contain the *flioque*. Even before the separation between the eastern and western churches, the easterners were using the Nicene Creed without the *flioque*, and this was no hindrance to unity in those days. We ask to be allowed to continue the use of the creed in its eastern form. We know that there are no dogmatic differences between the east and west in the doctrines of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation.

The written statement that you gave me does not say anything about the third proposition stated in my memorandum. I note that your verbal message to me stated that this question of jurisdiction will be treated by the Holy See "in a Spirit of benevolent consideration." I am grateful for this assurance. I want to be able to lay before His Beatitude the catholicos and the synod a definite statement from the Holy See on this matter also. I should be grateful if His Excellency the apostolic delegate will help again in this matter.

In this connection it may be pointed out that the catholicate that exists today in Malabar is not a new institution. For several centuries successive generations of patriarchs and catholici (*sic*) lived in communion with each other and each had his own synod of bishops, and ruled respectively the western and eastern halves of the Syrian Church, the patriarch ruling over that Eastern province of the Roman Empire, whose head-quarters were at Antioch, while the catholici exercised patriarchal jurisdiction over Mesopotamia and the Asiatic churches outside the Roman Empire. The catholicos had his head-quarters at Tigris (Tegrit) and was known as, "the catholicos of the east" "the catholicos of the Tigris," and "the Mafrain of the east." Cut-off from the rest of the Christian Church, the Syrian Church, did not during those centuries work on the monarchical principle of one head for the whole Syrian Church; and the patriarch and catholicos recognized each other's jurisdiction. My chief authority for these historical statements is the ecclesiastical history of Bar-Hebraeus, which I am sorry to say has not been translated into English. In matters of jurisdiction the catholicos was independent of the

patriarch, while in ceremonial matters, the patriarch had precedence. The present catholicos of our church in Malabar is the successor of the ancient catholici, and is consecrated to their See, and is called by the same titles as they were. There is no other dignitary in the Syrian Church anywhere today who claims to be the successor of the ancient catholici of the east.

We know that the Syrian catholic patriarch of Antioch (Beyrout) exercises patriarchal jurisdiction in his archdiocese and is subject to the pope. We ask to be allowed to enter into union with the Holy See on terms similar to those subsisting between that patriarch and the Holy See. I should be thankful if you could procure for me a statement of the exact conditions that govern the relationship between the patriarch and the Holy See, and also a copy of the canon law in use today in that patriarchate, in English or in Syriac. Perhaps you will be interested to learn that I am studying the new code of canon law published by the Holy See.

I trust that the entire correspondence on this subject will be treated as strictly confidential. May I suggest that in future correspondence with us, an official translation of Latin quotations will be given.

Let us all continue to pray that the Holy Spirit may so guide all those servants of His that consider this question of reunion as to attain the eternal glory of God and the perfect fulfilment of His Holy will in all of us. I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany.

Section II  
REUNION AND THE JURISDICTION OF THE SYRIAN  
CATHOLIC PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH  
IN MALANKARA

As we have seen, at the initial stage Mar Ivanios thought of a reunion with the Catholic Church, by establishing communion with the Catholic Syrian Church of Antioch and its Patriarch. Some correspondence took place in that sense, also because Mar Ivanios had to depend on the said Patriarch for obtaining the liturgical books of the Antiochene tradition, with Catholic variations concerning some aspects of the faith. Naturally the Patriarch preferred the reunion of the Malankara Orthodox Church with the Syrian Catholic Church. Hence the Patriarch often sent brief reports to the Congregation for the Eastern Church concerning some individual conversions of Jacobite priests or letters from Malankara requesting liturgical books of the Antiochene rite. The Patriarch sent also an Italian translation of the letter which Mar Ivanios wrote to him on 30 October 1927 (see document 5). Patriarch Rahmani insistently asserted that "the Malabar Jacobites placed as a condition and basis of their union the preservation of the Syrian rite of Antioch and also the subjection to the Catholic Patriarch".<sup>22</sup>

Regarding the preservation of rite there was almost unanimity, without any reasonable doubt. However, regarding jurisdiction there was serious contrast between the position of Patriarch Rahmani, who continued to send letters and reports supporting his claims and what was affirmed by Mar Ivanios in the Memorandum and by the Apostolic Delegate in his reports. This appeared to the Congregation for the Eastern Church as a serious problem to be resolved before any definite decision on the reunion. Hence a copy of the relevant letters of the Patriarch was sent to the Apostolic Delegate for his evaluation and observations. This critical point was also referred to the Holy Father at different audiences in 1928. Moreover with the letter dated 31 August 1928 the Congregation directly asked the

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona* del 4 luglio 1930, *Relazione*, 4-5.

secret opinion (*sub secreto*) of the archbishops of Verapoly and Ernakulam as well as that of the bishop of Quilon. As requested, these three bishops directly sent their reports to the Congregation for the Eastern Church. After studying the communications of Patriarch Rahmani, also the Apostolic Delegate sent his second report on the reunion on 29 October 1928. All of them unanimously agreed that dependence of the converted persons on the Syrian Catholic Patriarch was neither desired by anyone, nor could it be recommended.<sup>23</sup> The documents concerning the question of jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch in Malabar are presented in this section.

### Document 13

#### **Letter of Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani to Mar Ivanios on Reunion with the Catholic Church under His Jurisdiction**

Beirut, 15 January 1928: *the Patriarch sent this reply in response to the letter of Mar Ivanios dated 30 October 1927 (see document 5). The Patriarch prospects the reunion of the Jacobite bishops of the Metran Party with the Catholic Church by entering into communion with the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch under his jurisdiction. He promises to maintain the office of the Catholicos and the jurisdiction of individual bishops over their respective flock* (translated from original West Syriac most probably by Mar Ivanios and sent to the Holy See by Bishop Benzinger, in Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser. I, Fasc. 87A, 10-13*; its Italian version in Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario IX, allegato I, pp. 39-42*; a slightly different English translation can be found in T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 1, Trivandrum 2015, 251-254).

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<sup>23</sup> Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza del 4 luglio 1930, Relazione, 5-7.*



(In the holy name of the almighty, perfect in essence, without beginning and end and eternal Father!

Your humble servant of the Apostolic Throne of the East and Antioch, the humble Ephrem II, Ignatius Patriarch Rahmani).

May the apostolic blessing that descended upon the Holy Apostles in the upper Chamber of Zion come and dwell upon His Lordship Mar Ivanios Geevarghese, Bishop of Bethany in India (who is) our beloved brother in Our Lord. Peace.

We rendered unceasing glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief of the shepherds and we offered many thanks with our heart and indivisible praises when we read the letter of Your Lordship dated 30 October of last year 1927 (document 5). Your sweet acquaintance gladdened us, and the news of your health and your splendid ideas and especially those of union and unity cheered us, for which we glorified and exalted the God of all, in as much as He has showed forth in your clear mind the luminous rays of union with the Holy Catholic Church of Rome and with the apostolic See of Antioch of the Syrians. And with the Divine Psalmist David we cried out saying: "Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who will walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance; they exult in your name all day long, and extol your righteousness" (Ps 89:15).

Indeed your Lordship has stated in your letter that our letter addressed to your revered Secretary was well pleasing to you, and in that letter from our sincere mind we declared to you and showed forth before you the clear way of union with Church of Rome and with us; in this way you may become members of the household of the holy Church which extends from end to end of the inhabited world; and its great head is the Pope, the heir to the throne of Simon, the prince of the Apostles. And you will be reckoned as the honoured member of the holy Church of Antioch, of which name we are particularly proud, because in it (Antioch) those who were converted by the preaching of the Gospel were first called Christians. We carefully keep like the apple of eye the apostolic rite in the Syriac language which Our lord and His Apostles established and all the canons and the requisites, while we do not at all ask that we shall earnestly examine about the accuracy of the rite, so as to reform and arrange the uses of the community of the faithful in India. Because we have already recognized that it is the first and foremost rite that

was instituted by the holy apostles and illuminated by the learned fathers and doctors of the Church of Antioch of the Syrians, for this is the reason why we long that you should unite with us not on account of love of power and overlordship. God forbid. In order to enable your Lordship to verify our word, we send today one book of Anaphora (Missal) and some sections of the book of Ordination to the priesthood which we are printing at present. The remaining ecclesiastical books we shall take care to send to your Lordship afterwards.

Again we add and say: the Lord Bishops that unite with us will rightly continue in their very Sees (on their very thrones) and the spiritual authority will be kept safe (preserved) to them and to the bishops who will be consecrated in India from time to time. And the Pontiffs of the dioceses will be chosen from India itself.

His Beatitude the Catholicos Mar Baselios, the exalted Maprian and those who succeed him in your land of India will have authority over all the lord bishops and the clergy and people there, while in the matter of canons and ordinances they will be answerable to the head of the Catholic Church, namely the Pope of Rome and to the Patriarch of Antioch so as to fulfil thereby the word of Christ Our Lord, "It will be one fold and one shepherd".

It is our duty before God that all our strength is emptied for the sake of union whereby all the clergy and people may advance in spiritual things and progress towards the exalted height of virtues and glories. Therefore like the deer that pants for streams of water, our soul calls out towards the Lord on behalf of this affair of union. And we eagerly wait for an open and plain letter from Your Lordship and from their Excellencies the remaining bishops of India.

Do write and declare to us your particulars and firm mind concerning your union with the Catholic Church of Rome and with us. When we receive from you a letter like this, we will at that time and by all means help fulfil your requests and grant your petitions. Would that His eminence Mar Baselios Catholicos Geevarghese had himself sent to us a letter like this.

Rely on it and be assured that we shall not reveal to any one except the Pope of Rome, the Supreme Pontiff one word of the private correspondence between us, until the affair of union is

completely accomplished and perfected according to your mind and desire.

We are further prepared to send to your community if need be two or three priests and one bishop from amongst our clergy who are well-versed in Syriac and in English, in order that they may declare and explain by word of mouth the preparedness of our heart which we have written to you.

Finally with sincere love and eagerness we embrace our brother Mar Baselios Geevarghese Catholicos the exalted Maprian and we kiss your beloved Lordship and the remaining noble bishops. We lift up the hand of our heart towards God, the Lord of lords and we beseech Him groaningly that His praiseworthy affairs may prosper and succeed. While we beseech His abundant grace that His divine gifts may abound in you and that heavenly and earthly blessings may be multiplied to you and all the members of your dioceses (flocks) and that with His compassionate eyes He may deliver you from all dangers and trials and that He may stand before you in all good work.

Continue in health in Our Lord (signed)

Written in the Patriarchal residence at Beirut, on 15 January, year 1928 of Our Lord,

Your humble Ignatius Aprem II of Antioch and the East,  
Patriarch Rahmani.

## Document 14

### Letter of Mar Ivanios to Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani

Bethany (Tiruvalla), 27 July 1928: *Mar Ivanios thanks the Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani for his letter (document 13) and seeks information concerning bishops, clergy, people and institutions of the Syrian Catholic Church (as reproduced in T. Inchakkalody, Archbishop Mar Ivanios, vol. 1, Trivandrum 2015, 249-251; the original kept in Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, has been either lost or misplaced after consultation by the mentioned Author).*

In the name of our Lord who protects and exalts the esteemed priesthood in you, the great, exalted, illustrious Beatitude Patriarch *Aboon* Moran Mor Ignathios, who reigns from the Apostolic Throne of Antioch,

After kissing your holy hands let me inform your high priesthood that I have received on time the letter sent to me this year on 15 January (*Konunhroi*). I have shown it to Moran Mor Baselios, the Catholicos of the East and to His Grace Metropolitan Geevarghese. I send this letter in accordance with their advice.

Last week I had sent a letter to you in English. I hope you have understood everything about this humble servant from that letter. I understand from your letter that there are a few priests with you who know English. Since we are better able to write in English, henceforth we will write to you in English if you do not forbid us. You can write to us either in Syriac or English as you wish. All our priests and bishops are seriously thinking about the unification and integration and specially praying to God.

We would like to know about the dioceses under your throne. We desire to know about the number of bishops, priests, people, and educational institutions under you and also as to how the needs of the priests and the seminarians are met. I hope that you will not feel even the slightest offence because I ask such questions.

His Grace Moran Mor Baselios Catholicos and His Grace Metropolitan Geevarghese along with me, your humble servant, went through the *Thakso* of the Holy Qurbono sent to us. There is not much difference between that *Thakso* and the *Thakso* used by us here. We wish to see the other books of worship used by you there. Kindly send us the books which will assist the priests in their service, the Book of Penkeeso and other canonical laws.

His Grace Moran Mor Baselios Catholicos and His Grace Metropolitan Geevarghese and all of us enquire after your health and specially beseech your blessings. I hope in God that soon I will be able to write more clearly about the communion with the Roman Catholic Church and with your See.

*Barekmor Alsubukhono*

Yours,

Your Servant, the humble Mar Ivanios Geevarghese,

Episcopo of Bethany,

From the Bethany Bishop's House on 27 July (*Thomus*) 1928.

**Document 15**

**Opinion of Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD,  
Archbishop of Verapoly on the Reunion  
under the Authority of the Syrian  
Catholic Patriarch of Antioch**

Verapoly, 1 October 1928: *in accordance with the request of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD, archbishop of Verapoly, provides his evaluation concerning the movement of reunion and expresses his opinion about placing the eventually reunited persons under the jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario X*, pp. 44-48; original is in Latin).

Most Reverend Eminence,

In response to the esteemed letter of that Congregation, numbered 82/28 and dated 31 August 1928, concerning the intention (resolution) which is said to exist among many Jacobites of Malabar to return to the bosom of the Holy Roman Church, and regarding the discussion to constitute them, if they return, under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, let it be permitted me to testify that really such intention or desire (exists) in a minor section of the Jacobites.

Since a great number of the Jacobites inhabits in places of the southern territory of my archdiocese, the journeys which I must frequently make through those places, either for visiting my churches or for promoting the work of conversions among pagans, have provided me opportunity either to converse with some of the Jacobites or to learn the desires, aspirations, doubts, anxieties, which agitate their minds. Disputes that have taken place these last 18 years among their different groups, a group adhering to the authority of the Patriarch, the other contrary to the Patriarch defending the rights

of the Metropolitan, as well as different events and decisions of secular tribunals, now in favour of a party, then in favour of the other, so excited the minds and commoved the consciences, that many truly feel the necessity of a more solid spiritual authority, to whose decisions, as they are from Christ, they are able to stand firmly. The same education also, more ample than what was obtained in the past, which some of the Jacobite clergy, although not yet many, received and are receiving, has disposed their minds to evaluate and judge about religious matters of the Catholic faith with a criterion not as contrary as in the past. Moreover the reading of journals from Europe, in which many things are frequently written (although much in the Protestant sense) concerning the reunion of all the Christian Churches, induced many of the Jacobites to think about some formula which may render it possible for them to be united with the Roman Church, whose authority, moral influence and perfect organization in the whole world they cannot but recognize.

It will be very opportune to observe that the judicial sentence which the supreme tribunal of the Kingdom of Travancore recently issued, after having newly considered the penalty of excommunication inflicted by the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch against the Metropolitan of Malabar, Mar Dionysius, declared null and void such punishment on the basis of the law of justice and natural equity. Moreover, Metropolitan Mar Dionysius was restored to the possession of his rights over the churches, temporal goods, etc., which constituted a matter of very long litigation. Thence it naturally follows that the winning party, which was defending the right of the Metropolitan against the Patriarch, will remain free and separated from the other party who adheres to the authority of the Patriarch. Indeed now it happens that among the Jacobites, who constitute the section adherent to the Metropolitan, the desire to unite with the Roman Church has specially manifested. Therefore, since now they feel that they have been irrevocably placed outside the authority of the Patriarch, it is to be believed that they vehemently experience the necessity of constituting themselves under the authority of some supreme ecclesiastical authority. Indeed some of them seem to think about their resolution (plan) that it is sufficient to constitute a Church, independent from the Patriarch

under Metropolitan Mar Dionysius who, together with the synod of other bishops adhering to him, exercises supreme governance of the Jacobite Church in Malabar. However, others who understand that the apostolic authority is not present in Metropolitan Mar Dionysius unless he himself is not united to the Supreme Head representing Christ on earth, seek a formula by which it would be possible to establish such a connection. See, therefore, the intimate reason which stirs up the present aspiration of some Jacobites to unite themselves with the Roman Church.

One of the Jacobite bishops, called the bishop of Bethany (rather a titular see than a proper diocesan one), under Metropolitan Mar Dionysius, and an intimate friend of Mar Dionysius, whom he himself made bishop, initiated the project of a union with the Holy Roman Church. Indeed he manifests to feel great admiration and esteem towards matters concerning the Catholic Church and strives to imitate many of the institutions of the Catholic Church. However, it is very uncertain that Metropolitan Mar Dionysius demonstrates himself prepared to follow the bishop of Bethany in such submission to the Roman Church. Lastly, although the bishop of Bethany has declared concerning the other bishops that they agree with him on this matter, I do not dare to state anything certain about their sincerity. Nevertheless I would say that although in the beginning only the bishop of Bethany would be reconciled with the Holy Roman Church, seeing the authority and influence he exercises on the better and religious section of the Jacobites, it is to be believed that many of the clergy and people will follow him.

However, when one will come to decide on the state or condition in which the bishop of Bethany must remain, if he comes to the bosom of the Roman Church, and on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to which must be subjected the priests, faithful, institutions, who would profess submission to the Supreme Roman Pontiff, there is no one here who does not see the problem; it is the most delicate of all questions and entwined with difficulties. In this matter one thing seems to be certain: the bishop of Bethany, other bishops (if they convert), as well as those priests and people who are prepared to follow the bishop of Bethany, do not wish to remain under the Catholic hierarchy, namely the Syro-Malabar hierarchy, already existing in these parts, but to form a separate ecclesiastical

hierarchy. Therefore, if some of the Jacobite bishops, namely three or four, together return to the bosom of the Catholic Church, I would dare to express my humble opinion concerning the possibility and opportunity of receiving them and with them constituting a separate ecclesiastical hierarchy with its own liturgy and discipline, in such a way that one of them be appointed archbishop with the power of metropolitan, the other bishops being his suffragans, and this immediately under the Apostolic See, without giving any jurisdiction to the Antiochene Syrian Catholic Patriarch. I am afraid that if the authority of Antiochene Syrian Catholic Patriarch would be extended to Malabar, many complications and difficulties emerge even for the Catholics of the Syro-Malabar rite.

However, what should be done, if only one Jacobite bishop, he being certainly the bishop of Bethany, subject himself to the Roman Church? To constitute a hierarchy only with a single bishop seems to be a contradiction in terms. Perhaps a disciplinary solution can be adopted, constituting him a vicar apostolic of the Apostolic See. However I am afraid that such solution would not be acceptable to the very bishop of Bethany or to other Jacobites who with him seek reconciliation with the Roman Church, because an impression has been created in this Malabar region that the office of vicar apostolic does not carry with it adequate dignity or nobility. Beyond doubt in that case, the bishop of Bethany, although thus far he has advocated independence both from the Syro-Malabar hierarchy existing in this region and from the jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, may now prefer to remain under the authority of the Patriarch rather than to be endowed with the mere authority of a vicar apostolic. Not only it is gathered from the letter which the Sacred Congregation has given to us, but also I have learned from the letters which the Nuncio in these regions has confidentially circulated, that in this matter some communication has taken place between the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and the bishop of Bethany.

In this most delicate question, whether it is truly necessary to constitute those Jacobites who return to the bosom of the Roman Church, under the authority of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, now I do not dare to offer an opinion. On the one hand fears cannot but arise concerning the complications which would result,



if the jurisdiction of the Patriarch is extended to this part; on the other hand the salvation of souls urges that extreme measures are also to be tried, so that those sheep may not be lost, whether a few or many, whom the Good Shepherd wishes to lead back to his sheepfold. In the present circumstances it is sufficient to express my fears, whether concerning the possibility of those difficulties and complications or concerning the danger that the bishop of Bethany and other Jacobites with him do not seem to have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, demonstrate themselves continuously deaf, if the proposal to submit themselves to the Holy Roman Church is not now actuated by them.

Ángel María Pérez y Cecilia OCD, Archbishop of Verapoly.

### Document 16

#### **Opinion of Aloysius Maria Benziger, Latin Bishop of Quilon, on the Reunion and Especially on the Authority of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch**

Quilon, 3 October 1928: *from the very beginning Bishop Benziger was opposed to the jurisdiction or interference of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch in Malabar. As he indicates in the present report, he wrote different letters to the Congregation for the Eastern Church for impeding the intervention of the said Patriarch in the affairs of Malabar. In the present report he repeats and clearly articulates his ideas on the same matter and indicates the probable canonical status of the eventually reunited community (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario XI, pp. 49-58; original is in French).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

By Your Order No. 82/28 of August 31, Your Eminence asks me information on the movement among the Jacobites of Malabar towards our Holy Church, and my opinion on the action of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch in view of bringing these Jacobites under his jurisdiction.

## I. Preliminary Remarks

Towards the end of 1926 (thus almost two years ago), Mar Ivanios, on behalf of three bishops, sent a memorandum (unsigned) through Reverend J. W. F. Ribeiro, a priest of my diocese, to His Excellency Msgr. Mooney, Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies. These three bishops are: Mar Basilio the "Catholicos of the East" (?), Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios. They express desire for union with our Holy Church, but ask that 1) their Syrian rite (not the Syro-Malabar rite) and 2) their jurisdiction be left to them. They request that this memorandum and subsequent communications be treated as strictly confidential.

On 21 January 1928 His Excellency Msgr. Delegate sent me an (unsigned) communication from the Sacred Congregation for transmission, through Rev. Ribeiro to Mar Ivanios (see document 9 B). This communication assures the bishops of the memorandum that the Holy See will leave their Rite to them, but nothing is said on the other question: their jurisdiction.

The result of this communication is contained in a letter, which Mar Ivanios, after consulting Mar Basilio, addressed to Rev. Ribeiro and which I transmitted to Msgr. Delegate on 15 March 1928 (*sic*).

On 13 July 1928 Mar Ivanios came to Quilon (as secretly as possible) to show me a letter, ornamented and very solemn, that His Beatitude Monsignor Rahmani, Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch had addressed to him on 15 January 1928, and consulted me before responding to it. The result of this meeting I explained in a letter of July 25 to Your Eminence. My letter also contained a letter from Mar Ivanios to His Excellency Monsignor Delegate, dated July 21. I hope that my letter has reached Your Eminence and that the letter of Mar Ivanios has been communicated to Monsignor Delegate.

Before responding to Order No. 82/28 of Your Eminence, I must observe that Quilon, my residence, is outside of the centre of Jacobites and that, therefore, it is more difficult for me than for other venerable prelates of Malabar to be well informed about the various movements and actions. In this town of Quilon, there are only about twenty Jacobite families from various parties, and none of their

priests resided here. For this reason, from the beginning I have prayed that venerable prelates of Changanacherry, Kottayam, Ernakulam and also that of Verapoly (of the Latin rite) be consulted. There are many Jacobites in my diocese too, but all of them reside close to the boundary, in the north of the diocese. Mar Ivanios lives outside of my diocese, in Tiruvalla, only ten kilometres from Changanacherry.

## II. The Movement towards Our Holy Church

1. The Jacobites of Malabar are divided into three main parties:

The Party of the Patriarch (Patriarch's Party) has around 150,000 subjects (?), with at least 5 bishops:

Mar Ostathios, the delegate of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch;

Mar Athanasius, the metropolitan consecrated by Patriarch Abdulla Sattuf in 1910;

Mar Silverius (for the Southist people), consecrated by Patriarch Abdulla Sattuf in 1910;

Mar Dionysius Michael, consecrated by the present Patriarch Elias in 1928;

Mar Dioscorus Thomas, consecrated by the present Patriarch Elias in 1928.

The Party of the Catholicos, better known as the party of the bishop or Dionysius (Metran's party) has around 150,000 subjects (?), with at least 4 bishops:

Mar Basilios, the "Catholicos", consecrated by ex-Patriarch Abdul Masih in 1912;

Mar (Joseph) Dionysius VI, the metropolitan consecrated by Patriarch Abdulla Sattuf in 1908;

Mar Gregorios, consecrated by ex-Patriarch (?) Abdul Masih in 1912;

Mar (Geevarghese) Ivanios, consecrated by Catholicos Mar Basilios, a few years ago.

This Party, along with the Catholicate, was formed in 1912, subsequent to and almost regardless of, the excommunication of Metropolitan Mar Dionysius by Patriarch Abdulla Sattuf. This Party then rejected the authority of the Patriarch, whom previously they had solemnly received in Malabar, and they called ex-Patriarch Abdul Masih II, who then came to Malabar, declared the excommunication invalid and instituted the "Catholicate".

The Reformed Party or that of Mar Thomas has around 120,000 subjects, with two bishops:

Mar Thomas Titus;

Mar Thomas Abraham.

This Party was formed under the influence of English Protestants, who reformed the Liturgy for them. The other Jacobites no longer recognize their ordinations, even doubt the validity of their baptism.

2. After the separation of the Reform Party, there were long and costly litigations before the courts (tribunals) for their respective rights to own churches, etc. Since 1912 disputes have started between the Patriarch's Party and the Bishop's (*Metran*) Party.

At the first instance the Court decided that the Patriarch's excommunication against Mar Dionysius was not valid and therefore did not prevent him from administering the ecclesiastical property of the Jacobites. The High Court overturned this judgment in 1923, recognizing the excommunication as valid. However, the same High Court of Travancore, in revision petition, declared on 2 July 1928 that the excommunication was invalid "because the Patriarch had not observed the formalities which natural law requires". Immediately litigation started: the Patriarch's Party wants to prove that Mar Dionysius separated himself off from the Jacobite community to which he had belonged and that by separating himself from this community or Party he lost all rights to the temporal goods of this community. This case, and others to follow, will be very long and costly. In these circumstances, Your Eminence understands how delicate it is for Mar Ivanios and the other two bishops to make known their desire and approach towards union with the Holy See. This was the reason why they did not sign their memorandum and

why they are anxious that in the meantime all correspondence will remain secret.

3. The clergy and the Jacobite people see these sad dissensions and the decrease of religious respect towards their head and their bishops. On the other hand, in the Catholic Church they see unity, respect and obedience towards the Sovereign Pontiff. This makes them think.

4. They also evaluate, I believe, the advantages of a celibate clergy, whose time is not absorbed by the worries of family and its maintenance as well as the increasingly expensive education of children.

5. How much the great expenses for the sad disputes between the parties encumber the people, I do not know, but without doubt, those who reflect a little must fear the consequences which will result for one party or the other and for both.

6. However, as these disputes were decided by the courts and by the same High Court in one direction and then in the opposite direction, and since they are almost only the beginning, the two parties remain in suspense. The devil takes the opportunity to entrap them and in the meantime to aggravate the bad consequences, like disgust and religious indifferentism.

7. Mar Dionysius enjoys great sympathy. He does not seem to want, in theory, to break with Antioch and seems opposed to any union with the Holy See. Barring a special grace, his personality will greatly delay this union. I fear that two of the three bishops of the memorandum will continue under the influence of Mar Dionysius. However, I believe that Mar Ivanios will be faithful to grace and submit to the Holy See.

8. With undecided prelates, the people look like a flock without pastors to lead them, while the devil takes advantage.

9. Although the memorandum of the three bishops and the correspondence of Mar Ivanios are believed to be secret, there are strong rumours of "certain proceedings and communications with the Holy See and with the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch". And these rumours provoke one more suspense that stops those of good will and makes them procrastinate to follow grace.

10. The current conversions are not numerous, although many Jacobites express some inclinations. Here is the result of these conversions in my diocese of Quilon in recent years: in 1922 - 83; in 1923 - 59; in 1924 - 41 and 1 priest; in 1925 - 30; 1926 - 198 and 4 priests; in 1927 - 190 and 1 priest; in 1928 - 225.

11. I believe that Mar Ivanios will submit, whatever answer the Holy See gives, and that a number of his adherents will follow him. I do not dare to hope for a mass conversion, but I have the confidence that little by little, always more persons will join our Holy Church.

### **III. The Action of Patriarch Rahmani**

1. As far as I know, the Syrian Catholic Patriarchs of Antioch have not taken any special interest in Malabar ever before.

2. To form a fair opinion on the appropriateness of the action or interference of His Beatitude Patriarch Rahmani, one should know his dispositions towards and relations with the Holy See. I do not know them at all, nor the circumstances of his Patriarchate.

3. Considering the importance of the matter and the tenor of his letter of 15 January 1928 to Mar Ivanios (see document 13), if Monsignor Rahmani wrote this letter without the consent (of the Holy See), it is very imprudent.

4. In the aforesaid letter of 15 January 1928, Patriarch Rahmani invites Mar Ivanios and the other bishops of this Party to unite with the Apostolic See of the Syrians of Antioch. He assures that the bishops who will unite, will continue in their sees, will retain their spiritual authority, and that "His Beatitude the 'Catholicos' Mar Basilios, exalted Maphrian, and his successors will have authority over the other bishops". This letter touches on two serious questions: union under the Patriarch of Antioch and the recognition (acceptance) of the "Catholicate".

5. Concerning union under the Patriarch, I observe:

a) In the memorandum of 1926, the three bishops say that they do not want to be under the jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, but directly under the Holy See.

b) During his visit to Quilon on 13 July 1928 (after having received the letter from the Patriarch), Mar Ivanios told me again

that he did not want to be under the Patriarch, but that the other two bishops showed less repugnance. He added, "the name Antioch has a certain attraction".

c) I believe that this liaison with Antioch would not displease the clergy and Jacobite people of Malabar at first sight, and would not prevent conversions, but could even facilitate the same, provided the Patriarch is very prudent and well united with the Holy See (I could be wrong, however). Yet I fear that sooner or later difficulties will arise, especially if the Patriarch shows some desire for money or equally if he does not help Malabar, as Europe and America help the Syro-Malabars who are directly under the Holy See. However, the Holy See would find a way to avoid it.

d) Your Eminence is well aware that the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch wanted to assert his rights over the Malabar. The Chaldean Patriarch Joseph VI Audo, not having succeeded in the Vatican Council, on his own authority dared to send a Catholic Bishop Mellus in 1874 to Malabar and the Holy See obliged the Patriarch, under pain of excommunication, to revoke this bishop. The Patriarch finally obeyed in 1876, but Bishop Mellus did not obey and provoked a schism among the Syro-Malabar Catholics (the work *Genuinae Relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam et Assyriorum Orientalium seu Chaldaeorum Ecclesiam*, S. Giamil ed., Romae 1902, talks about it, especially in pages 424-430). The same work also speaks of petitions, sent by the Syro-Malabars, in favour of a union with the Chaldean Patriarch (pages 621, etc.). The union of the converted Jacobites under the Patriarch of Antioch would awaken the old claims of the Chaldean Patriarch.

e) It would also revive considerable actions of many Syro-Malabars in favour of a union of them with the Chaldean Patriarch. And if they are told that the Syro-Malabar rite is different from the Chaldean rite (pure), they will resume their grievances against the Synod of Diamper (in 1599) and against the modifications of their previous rite (Chaldean rite), especially that the Syro-Malabar rite still seems to remain incomplete. (Indeed this rite does not yet have a "Pontifical", so that the ordinations and episcopal consecration are conducted in Latin, according to the Latin "Pontifical").

6) Regarding the recognition of the "Catholicate", I observe:

a) From the beginning, it would be necessary to clearly determine the nature of this “Catholicate”. As the three bishops in their memorandum conceive it, it seems to me exaggerated.

b) The memorandum says that this “Catholicate” is the restitution of the ancient “Catholicate” of the East which had its seat in Tigris. I do not sufficiently know the history, but I believe that the Jacobite Church never had a “Catholicos of the East”, but simply a “Maphrian” and that the “Catholicate” of the East is precisely the Chaldean Patriarchate, in which it was transformed and to which the Holy See in the XVI century recognized rights in India (See the aforesaid *Genuinae Relationes*, pages 17, 23, etc.).

c) As it is evident from the memorandum itself, this “Catholicate” was established in Malabar in 1912, by Mar Abdul Masih II and this as a quasi-challenge against Mar Abdulla Sattuf who had just excommunicated Mar Dionysius, the leader (de facto) of this Party. Which of these two, Mar Abdulla Sattuf or Mar Abdul Masih, was the lawful Patriarch in 1912? If Mar Abdul Masih had ceased to be the legitimate Patriarch in 1906, if he acted invalidly in 1912, it seems dangerous to me to recognize this outrage and arrogance. This would seriously offend the Jacobite Patriarch and his adherents in Syria and Malabar.

d) As the more common opinion is that Abdul Masih had really ceased to be the legitimate Patriarch since 1906, if this opinion is erroneous, it would be necessary to rectify such opinion by a clear statement, in order to prevent a dangerous impression and reproaches that the enemies of our Holy Church and the malcontent people could make: the Holy See favours the rebels.

e) The recognition or the concession of the “Catholicate” would not fail to move our Syro-Malabar Catholics who, more numerous and loyal, would not cherish to have less than their brethren who, in the seventeenth century, separated themselves from them to become Jacobites.

#### **IV. My Humble Opinion**

After the above considerations, I obey the order of Your Eminence and therefore I give my humble opinion:



1. It seems to me very important, that the Holy See should not delay in sending a reply concerning the second request of the memorandum of 1926.

2. The reply might:

a) promise to recognize or confer episcopal jurisdiction on the bishops who will unite over those of their subjects or Jacobites, who will accompany them, provided the Holy See is satisfied with the validity of their consecration, faith and sincerity;

b) state that these bishops will be immediately under the Holy See;

c) reserve to the Holy See to consider the question of a hierarchical organization later (of simple dioceses or with an archbishop or a primate or a "catholicos"), which will depend on the number, more or less considerable, of the faithful who will unite.

3. In order to better examine their liturgical books, to deal with the education of seminarians, etc., it seems to me desirable that the Holy See invites these three bishops or one of them to come personally to Rome, with their liturgical books. This invitation could still particularly be made to Mar Ivanios, through His Excellency the Delegate. And to facilitate and encourage this journey, we could offer Rev. J. W. F. Ribeiro DD as a travelling companion. Rev. Ribeiro is a very pious and very faithful priest, who made his studies at the Propaganda College in Rome, and was ordained priest in 1895. Mar Ivanios has full confidence in him.

Aloysius Maria Benziger, Bishop of Quilon.

### Document 17

#### **Opinion of Augustine Kandathil, Syro-Malabar Archbishop of Ernakulam, on the Jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch**

Ernakulam, 6 November 1928: *Archbishop Augustine Kandathil is diametrically opposed to any jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch in Malabar. He considers it very detrimental even to the right administration and clerical discipline of the Syro-Malabar Church. Although this document is written a*

*little later, we have inserted it here together with the opinions of the other two bishops in order that readers may have a comprehensive idea about the complex question of the canonical status of the would be reunited community (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario XII, pp. 59-62; original is in Latin).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

After having received the letter of the Sacred Congregation, no. 82/28, on 31 August 1928, which was sent in secret, I made inquiries in various ways. I expose to Your Eminence the information which I was able to obtain.

On 7 July 1926 I wrote to Your Eminence that among the Jacobites who inhabit the southern parts of River Pampa (Ranni), there is desire for reunion with Rome and therefore it is good and opportune to constitute a Syro-Malabar vicariate, with its vicar apostolic residing in some city of those regions, like Kottarakara or Trivandrum. For this in the beginning of this year I received a response through the Most Reverend Apostolic Delegate of the Indies that the Sacred Congregation does not consider it prudent to grant the request. Since until now the desire for reunion persists among the Jacobites of the southern part of Malabar, I request the Sacred Congregation to be willing to reconsider what I proposed. Already there 500 or 600 lay persons and 7 priests have become Catholics: they have one or two churches (parishes). They use our Syro-Malabar rite.

Certainly the desire for reunion exists among some Jacobites of that region and Mar Ivanios, the Jacobite bishop of the monks, at the place called Bethany, is the chief among them. He belongs to the Bishop's Party and he has under him about 15 clerics and celibate Jacobite monk-priests, a community of some women (religious) and about ten churches (parishes) erected by him. In the administration he follows the Catholic manner; and thus he seems to take care that he himself and his followers be disposed to embrace the Catholic faith. If he becomes Catholic, we believe that his monk-priests will follow him and we hope that afterwards others also, seeing his example, will embrace the Catholic religion. It is said that now he

does not have so much influence among the Jacobites as what he had when he was a simple priest. We do not see a general movement or the beginning of a flow to the Catholic Church among the Jacobites who number more than 300, 000. However, if we work much we see that major conversions will easily take place there (in the southern part). Such particular movement to conversion, of which I have said above, is not present among the Jacobites who inhabit the northern part of Malabar. Indeed many educated Jacobites in the southern and northern parts, as they do not care for religion, but only for power and freedom from all ecclesiastical discipline, they are opposed to the conversion of their Jacobite brethren in every way possible.

It seems that Mar Ivanios would like to be independent from other authorities, but directly be subject to Rome and to retain his rite. I do not know whether this desire proceeds from ambition, conservative spirit or from a quasi-sense of honour. However, the fear of deprivation of his power and the facility of conversion of his own people seem to impel him to the same.

Although the Jacobites to be converted are constituted as directly dependent on Rome, since among the Jacobite Ordinaries there is no ecclesiastical discipline and since lay people govern the churches (parishes) in their own manner, it will be necessary that under the good direction of a Catholic prelate those converted persons continuously learn the Catholic way in all things.

It is worthy of consideration that the lay people and priests already converted and who followed our Syro-Malabar rite are now much more satisfied with the change of rite than with their own rite which, as they then desired, would have followed. They openly say so.

In the conference of the Syro-Malabar prelates held in 1920 under the most illustrious and most Reverend Lord Pietro Pisani, the then Apostolic Delegate, it was proposed that if the converted Jacobite priests would like to preserve their rite, this could be permitted, but the future clergy should make their studies as the Syro-Malabar alumni and should observe celibacy.

Whatever be the constitution of the converted Jacobites regarding the rite, the future clergy should be celibate and should make the studies as we do. It is said that a Jacobite priest obeyed

Patriarch Rahmani, who received him to the Catholic faith. He returned to Malabar and made attempts to bring the Jacobites under the same Patriarch. However, it seems that Mar Ivanios would not wish to be under him. No wonder, because the Jacobites, especially the educated ones among them, do not wish to have someone from Antioch over them, as they (Antiochenes) are much inferior to the people of Malabar. Likewise, the same will be the sensation about Patriarch Rahmani (not about the person itself of the Patriarch) and his priests.

Certainly we also do not wish in any manner that the Syrian Catholics of Antioch have something to do in Malabar, because if they are compared with the people of Malabar, they are much inferior in civilization, social culture, education, etc. The married clergy will create a bad impression among pagans and would also be a scandal among the Syro-Malabars. After sometimes, they will not enjoy any esteem even among the converted Jacobites; they will not have any authority and thus the way will be opened for rebellion and schism. Moreover, our administration of Syro-Malabar dioceses will also be filled with difficulties, and the way will be opened for enervation and disturbance of discipline in such a way that the Syro-Malabar Church also will encounter great difficulties. Therefore, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch should not have any jurisdiction in Malabar and those people should not have anything to do with us.

It is to be noted that in the conference of the Syro-Malabar prelates held in 1920, presided over by the most illustrious and most Reverend Lord Pietro Pisani, the then Apostolic Delegate, the prelates sent requests to the Holy See so that the Syro-Malabars might not come in any manner under the power of the Syro-Chaldean Patriarch for the aforementioned reasons.

Again I present my requests, that Your Eminence may kindly reconsider the cause of instituting a new Syrian (Syro-Malabar) Mission at the southern part of River Pampa (Ranni).

Mar Augustine Kandathil, Archbishop of Ernakulam.

**Document 18**  
**Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney**  
**concerning the Relationship with the Syrian**  
**Catholic Patriarch**

Tiruvalla, 21 July 1928: *Mar Ivanios informs Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney about the correspondence that has taken place between himself and the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and seeks his advice regarding the canonical relationship with the same Patriarch. He also refers to the liturgical books to be used by the community after reunion (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 27-30).*

May it please Your Excellency,

I beg of your Excellency to allow me to approach your Excellency with this letter. I trust that Rev Father Rebeiro forwarded to your Excellency my letter answering the unofficial communication from Rome regarding the recognition of the rites of the Syrian Church of Malabar (Jacobite). Lately I received a letter written in Syriac from His Beatitude the Syrian Catholic patriarch of Antioch (Beyrout). I enclose the translation of the same (see document 13). In this connection I beg to state that in A D 1925, His Beatitude wrote to His Grace Mar Dionysius, Jacobite metropolitan of Malabar, suggesting that a reunion may be effected between the Malabar Jacobite Church and the Syrian Catholic patriarchate. Mar Dionysius did not give a hopeful answer to this letter. In 1926 my secretary wrote to the secretary of His Beatitude the patriarch, making enquiries regarding the possibility of re-union (see document 1). But the letter remained unanswered for several months. In the meantime, the synod of the bishops of Malabar Catholicate authorized me to make private enquiries regarding the possibility of reunion with the Church of Rome with special reference to the condition mentioned in the first memorandum unofficially submitted to your Excellency (document 3). The second memorandum was submitted in answer to the questions that were sending to me in January 1927 (document 4). His Beatitude the patriarch subsequently answered my secretary's letter; and then I wrote back to thank His Beatitude for his letter and stated that since

no answer was received for several months from His Beatitude, we had opened direct correspondence with Rome and requested His Beatitude to render us every possible help to achieve reunion along the lines that we are seeking. And the present letter (please see the enclosed translation) is His Beatitude's answer. And now I am writing back to His Beatitude thanking him for His great kindness. I am also adding that direct correspondence is being continued with Rome through your Excellency.

I desire to hear from your Excellency whether in your Excellency's judgment reunion along the lines suggested by His Beatitude the patriarch, or a direct reunion between the Malabar catholicate and Rome would be more helpful to the advancement of the kingdom of God in this country. May I further submit the following proposals in continuation of my letter addressed to the Rev. Father Rebeiro which I believe is with your Excellency.

I. That we adopt for use in Malabar the Missal, the breviary and other books that are used in the archdiocese of His Beatitude the patriarch. These books are printed; may I ask for printed copies of the priest's books and the pontifical books? After seeing these books, I shall inform your Excellency whether there are any differences between the usages in Malabar and Syria.

II. That we modify the present constitution of our church which provides for the synod of bishops limiting the authority of the catholicos, and that the catholicos be recognized as having supreme jurisdiction over the bishops of the catholicate which the catholicos himself will be subject to His Holiness the pope.

III. That the extent of the patriarchal jurisdiction of the catholicos be defined so as to safeguard the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff and to conserve the monarchical principle of government in the Catholic Church.

May I request your Excellency to treat all the correspondence on this subject as strictly confidential, and that your Excellency's answer is sent to me by registered post. In prayer that the Holy Spirit may enlighten and guide us all to fulfil His Holy Will, I remain,

Your Excellency's very sincerely, in our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany.

## Document 19

### Letter of Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani to Mar Ivanios, Providing Information concerning the Syrian Catholic Church

Beirut, 22 October 1928 (Thomas Inchakkalody indicated the date as 22 October 1929, but the year should be 1928, because the Patriarch died already on 7 May 1929): *this is the reply of Patriarch Rahmani to the letter of Mar Ivanios on 27 July 1928 (document 14) seeking information concerning the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch since at that time a definitive decision was not taken on whether the reunion was to be effected under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch or directly under the Apostolic See. The Patriarch has provided the information sought by Mar Ivanios (as reproduced in T. Inchakkalody, Archbishop Mar Ivanios, vol. 1, Trivandrum 2015, 251-254; the original West Syriac letter kept in Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, has been either lost or misplaced after consultation by the mentioned Author).*

Moran Mor Ignathios Aprem II Rahmani, Patriarch of Antioch.

May the apostolic blessings received by the Apostles at the house of Zion alight on Episcopo Mar Ivanios Geevarghese, the Bishop of Bethany! May the grace of God protect him from all dangers that might befall him!

We have received the loving letter written to us on 27 July (*Thomus*) this year and also the letter written in English sent on the same day. We praise God for keeping you in good health. We are happy to know that you are praying for us and loving us with a pure heart. We will relentlessly pray for you and your parishes. We await with hope to see that happy day when our aspirations will be fulfilled and according to the will of God the dear Syrian Malankara people will be united with us and the Holy Catholic Church. Our heart throbs with happiness to know that you have shown our letter to His Grace Moran Mor Baselios Catholicos and His Grace Metropolitan Gregorios and that it was acceptable to them and that they encouraged you to reply. We have no problem with you sending any

number of letters in Syriac or English. We know both the languages. But the reply from us will be written in Syriac.

You have made it explicitly clear that all the priests and bishops of India desire and are praying for unity. Let us pray to God who gives us light, for the speedy realization of that worthy endeavour so that we can say "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity".

Given below are the dioceses of the metropolitans and bishops under the throne of Antioch in Syria.

Mosul, Haleb, Darsukh, Baghdad, Hamad, Hemas, Mesram, Lebanon, Besnahereen are the sees. They are under the bishops appointed by us.

Many Syrian Catholic people who submit to the throne of Antioch dwell in and around Mosul, Haleb, south of Mardeen, Funokia, Misrene, Alexandria, Ursem, Bethlehem and Yopha.

We have three seminaries that train priests for priesthood. Of that one is in the hilltops of Lebanon, another is in Urssem and the third is in Mosul. We have three dayaras in the revered name of Blessed Mar Aprem. One is in Lebanon, another in Rome and the third in Mesrum. We also have another three dayaras, one in the name of Mar Behanan near Mosul, another in the name of Mar Yuliano at Karitheem and one in the name of Mar Moosa at Napek. Not only in the towns but also in the villages we have established at least one educational institution.

The remuneration for the cor-episcopoi and priests are borne from the offerings in the churches or from the donations given by the faithful or pious organizations.

You had asked us to send the books required for use in the churches. Some of them had been sent to you. Thakso of the Holy Qurbono, common order of worship, some parts of the book for ordination, etc have been sent to you. The order of service for funerals, Basgasakoodaseetho, the Penkeeso of Denaho, the lectionary containing the Gospels and Epistles, the Order of the Yearly Feasts of our Lord (Anduthakso) and the canonical laws of the Church are being sent to you.

Our spirit exults and we are filled with joy on knowing that you will write in detail regarding your union with the Roman Catholic



Church and the apostolic throne of Antioch. Along with the psalmist David let us also pray for that wonderful day with eagerness. "This is the day which the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

We pray God to bless you and all your parishes with spiritual and worldly blessings and keep you under His benediction. May God bless you and protect you from all dangers and sorrows and may all retribution be taken away from you! May peace and serenity reign over you!

Hoping that all is well with Mar Baselios Catholicos and Mar Metropolitan Gregorios and all the priests and people of the Dayaras who respect you.

Yours, Ignathios Aprem II of Antioch in Syria,  
Patriarch Rahmani.

## **Document 20**

### **Response of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to Mar Ivanios**

Bangalore, 23 October 1928: *Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney responds to the letter of Mar Ivanios (document 18) assuring him that the content of his letter will get attentive and sympathetic consideration and that it is referred to Rome (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 31).*

My Lord,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your very kind communication of July 21<sup>st</sup> which however has only recently come to my notice on my return from several months' absence from India. I hope that this fact will explain my tardiness in letting you know of the safe delivery of Your Lordship's letter.

Let me at the same time assure Your Lordship that the contents of your letter will receive attentive and sympathetic consideration at my hands, though Your Lordship will readily understand that it may take some time to make a definite answer to the questions proposed on account of the necessity of referring the matter to Rome.

In the meantime I am happy to say that Mons. Benziger of Quilon has consented to obtain and transmit to you the liturgical books about which Your Lordship made enquiries.

With a fervent prayer that the Holy Spirit who hath begun a good work may perfect it to the fulfilment of your Lord's own desire that there be one fold and one shepherd, I am, my Lord.

With sentiments of respect and esteem,

Sincerely yours in Christ, Edward Mooney.

### Document 21

## Second Report of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to the Congregation for the Eastern Church

Bangalore, 31 October 1928: *as we have already indicated, on 31 August 1928 the Congregation for the Eastern Church asked the opinion of Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney on the question of the authority of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch in Malabar after the eventual reunion, forwarding to him also a copy of the principal letters that Patriarch Rahmani sent to the Congregation for vindicating such claims. After studying the communications of Patriarch Rahmani and evaluating all the circumstances, the Apostolic Delegate sent this second report to Cardinal Luigi Sincero, secretary of the Congregation (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario XIII, pp. 62-70; original is in Italian).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

With the venerated office No. 82/28 dated 31 August 1928, Your Most Reverend Eminence, following your esteemed letter of 16 January, gave me further information about the activity explained by the Most Excellent Syrian Patriarch Msgr. Ignatius Rahmani regarding the reunion of a certain number of Jacobites of Malabar with Rome, through his Patriarchate. You asked me also for appropriate information so that the Sacred Congregation would be able to adopt a precise and categorical line of action. In this regard, I have the honour to report what follows.

1. *Regarding the desire or not of the converting Jacobites to depend on the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch.*

Now I am in a position to explain, perhaps better than I was able to do in my conversations with Your Eminence in this regard during my recent sojourn in Rome, the differences concerning the desire or not of the Jacobites to depend on the Patriarch of Antioch, which are found in the "memorandum" of Mar Ivanios, that I transmitted to the Sacred Congregation in October 1927 (Prot. N. 223/28) and the letter sent by the same Mar Ivanios to the Syrian Patriarch shortly after that date and transmitted by him to Your Eminence in December 1927 (Prot. of the Sacred Congregation, No. 3590, attached).

The correspondence of the Patriarch with the Jacobites of Malabar began with a letter of the same to Mar Dionysius, former Metropolitan of the Jacobites of Malabar who, excommunicated by the Jacobite Patriarch in 1912, stirred the foundation of the party called "metran" by obtaining from a deposed Patriarch of Antioch the institution of the "Catholicate" and of a separate hierarchy, and who, although does not currently occupy any official position in this hierarchy, is however an influential and known leader of this dissident party. To the letter of Patriarch Rahmani, Mar Dionysius responded rejecting the offers. Then in 1926 Mar Ivanios, one of the three bishops of the said "Catholicate" and more precisely the one who is more disposed to reunion with Rome, wrote through his secretary, to the secretary of the Patriarch to explore the possibility of such a reunion through the patriarchate. As Patriarch Rahmani delayed to respond, Mar Ivanios communicated with me the desire of the catholicate through Rev. Fr. Ribeiro and the Bishop of Quilon, to know under what conditions the reunion with Rome could be carried out (see Memorandum, Prot. of this Delegation No. 223/27).

Before receiving the response of the Sacred Congregation (Prot. No. 2970/27) Mar Ivanios received, in response to his communication of 1926, a letter from the secretary of the Patriarch, to which he in his turn replied with a letter, which the Patriarch transmitted to Your Eminence (Protocol of the Sacred Congregation No. 3590, attached). In the said letter Mar Ivanios informed the Patriarch that the question of the "Catholicate" had already been submitted to the consideration of the Roman Curia (without however

saying that this was done by means of this Delegation) and added a plea to the Patriarch to help him to achieve "the union with the Holy See of Rome and with the See of Antioch". The explanation of this addition, according to my humble opinion, lies in the fact that Mar Ivanios did not yet know whether Rome wanted to deal the matter directly or through the Patriarch.

After having received the response of the Sacred Congregation (Prot. No. 2970/27), Mar Ivanios had a reply from Patriarch Rahmani on 15 January 1928, in which the Patriarch promised the "Catholicos" and the converting Bishops the continuation of their jurisdiction over their flocks and implicitly also the maintenance of their customs. Moreover, he offered to send two of his priests and also a bishop to Malabar to continue the discussions. Of this letter, however, he assures me that Your Eminence already possesses a copy, as well as the very recent one that Mar Ivanios wrote to me on 21 July 1928, with which he affirms to have informed, on the advice of the Bishop of Quilon, the Patriarch that, having already begun a direct correspondence with Rome through the Delegation, he believed that it would be better to continue by that way.

Having explained in this manner the sequence of the correspondence that Mar Ivanios had with the Syrian Patriarch and with this Delegation, I proceed to point out its significance in relation to the wishes of the interested bishops to depend or not on the Syrian Patriarch in the case of their eventual reunion with Rome.

I am certain that Mar Ivanios, who took the initiative in these negotiations, firmly prefers a direct reunion with Rome without any dependence on the Syrian Patriarchate. The other two bishops, however, namely Mar Basilios, the "Catholicos", and Mar Gregorios demonstrate minor reluctance to relate with Syrian Patriarchate, and this especially after the recent letter of Patriarch Rahmani with which he gave those Bishops, immediately and without making inquiries, all those general assurances they wanted and about which, as they soon noticed that, the Sacred Congregation had maintained a prudent silence in the communication of 5 December 1927 (Prot. No. 2970). This promise of the Patriarch, as Mar Ivanios reported in a recent conversation with the Bishop of Quilon, is "very attractive". I have no doubt, however, that the Jacobite Bishops are well

disposed to follow the directives of Your Eminence with regard to their relationship with Antioch.

*II. Concerning the appropriateness or not to make the Jacobites depend on the Syrian Patriarch in the case of their conversion, consequently to continue the procedures of their reunion through the same Patriarch.*

First of all, let me note that this prospect does not derive from any historical source that could justify the “indeclinable responsibility” that Patriarch Rahmani says he feels about the Jacobite Church of Malabar. Historically the mother Church of the Jacobites of Malabar is not at all the Syrian Church of Antioch, but rather the Chaldean Church. It was only in 1665 that the ancestors of today’s Jacobites of Malabar saw their brethren returning to the Church after a general uprising against the Portuguese Jesuits, in their obstinacy invoked the help of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and, having changed their historical (Chaldean) rite for the Syrian rite of the Jacobite Patriarch, they submitted to his jurisdiction. Therefore they are only second-hand Antiochenes and they never had anything to do with the Catholic Church of Antioch.

Then in the present circumstances, it is likely that the intervention of Patriarch Rahmani may help to achieve a kind of reunion of the Jacobites, because he would have priests at his disposal to send here to ensure the correctness of their liturgical customs, since the name of Antioch has, it must be confessed, a certain attraction for the Jacobites; and also because the Patriarch would be, as has already been demonstrated with his letter of 15 January of last year, very compliant to the desires of the Jacobites. However, it is more than evident to anyone who knows Malabar that the consequent dependence on Antioch would have very grave disadvantages both in the organization of the new Church and in the repercussions that would affect the Syro-Malabar Church which is still in a state of formation.

In fact, as to the organization of the new Church, to say nothing of the difficulties that would oppose the necessary local vigilance of the representative of the Holy See on a Church alien to the Catholic discipline and that would depend on distant Syria, Patriarch

Rahmani has already compromised with regard to the recognition of the so-called "Catholicate", nor can we hope that he can logically provide for the education of a celibate clergy, something otherwise possible and supremely advisable also for the intimate contact in everyday life that will have the new converts with their compatriots of the Syro-Malabar rite and with the Latin rite. In the diocesan and parochial administration, the current circumstances impose the necessity to establish among the converts a truly Catholic discipline, in conformity with the one that is gradually forming among the Syro-Malabars and replacing the almost democratic one that exists today among the Jacobites.

The approval of something easier for a section of Eastern Catholics in Malabar would open the door to a general relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline over there, and granting the new hierarchy a dignity apparently superior to that of archbishop would certainly provoke similar claims by the Syro-Malabar bishops who, as Your Eminence well knows, already aspire to precedence over the Latins of the region, and perhaps would give occasion to the revival of an ancient desire of union with the Chaldean Patriarch, from whom they could obtain all that the Syrian Patriarch would grant to the converting Jacobites.

Therefore, considering all these facts, I am of humble opinion that the dependence of a Catholic hierarchy in Malabar on the Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch is to be excluded. If instead Your Eminence had reasons to establish such dependence, I would humbly suggest at least the following:

- a) The establishment of any hierarchical rank such as that of the "Catholicos", which could give the Syrians an appearance of precedence over the Syro-Malabar hierarchy is to be ruled out;
- b) A future celibate clergy is to be ensured;
- c) Adequate vigilance over the education of the clergy and ecclesiastical administration is to be provided for in some manner.

And here I must bring to the notice of Your Eminence that a priest named Rev. Fr. Samuel recently arrived in Malabar from Syria, an Indian by birth and a Jacobite, who went to Baghdad (*sic*)

and converted to Catholicism. He is now said to have been sent by Patriarch Rahmani, who grants him a monthly subsidy, with instructions to work on the conversion of the Jacobites. He has already succeeded in inducing some Jacobites to send a petition to the Patriarch in order to obtain from him an Antiochene bishop. The response of Patriarch Rahmani has not yet arrived, but it is expected here that the action of Rev. Samuel will end up provoking an open disagreement between him and his followers on the one side and the bishops of the "Catholicate" on the other, and this will add new confusion in the mishmash of ideas, plans and parties that today stir the souls of those troubled populations.

III. *About the development of the Jacobite movement towards union.*

I am convinced, Your Eminence, that there will not be further progress until the Holy See, as you have already responded to the request of the Jacobites concerning the preservation of their rite, does not give a definitive answer also to their question about the jurisdiction of the converting bishops over their flock. In this regard, according to my humble opinion, which is also shared by the bishops of Malabar, it could be answered that, if one of these Jacobite bishops converts with a considerable part of his clergy and people, given the necessary guarantees both concerning the validity of his consecration and concerning the faith and sincerity of the individual, will have jurisdiction over his flock with immediate subjection to the Holy See, and that in the event that more bishops convert, the constitution of a hierarchy independent of both the Syro-Malabar and Latin hierarchies, with an Archbishop at its head.

*However, I consider it is important to exclude from the very beginning every thought of the "Catholicate", a very recent and arbitrary institution of a schismatic and deposed Patriarch, an institution whose conservation could give rise, as I mentioned earlier, to endless difficulties, and which would also provoke no slight scandal to the Malabar people who would thus see the most rebellious party among the many that swarm in the country is rewarded. It is also important that the other conditions of education and celibacy of the clergy are imposed, of which I have already spoken above.*

I think it is good to note here that if the Holy See wishes to avail itself of the cooperation of some local bishops, the most suitable persons would be, unlike what I suggested in my report of 17 October 1927, Protocol No. 223/27, the Latin Bishop of Quilon and the Syro-Malabar Bishop of Changanacherry. This is both because they are in closer contact with the Jacobites, the great majority of whom are within the limits of their dioceses, and because they will be able to agree on a common action much more easily than what can be expected from the archbishops of Verapoly and Ernakulam to do.

Finally, Most Reverend Eminence, I have a duty to prospect, in so far as human frailty allows to discern (*in quantum humana fragilitas nosse sinit*), the hopes that can be nurtured on the result of today's Jacobite movement towards the reunion. The elderly Jacobite Metropolitan Mar Dionysius, who exerts a very strong influence on the "metran" party, is firmly opposed to any movement towards the reunion and it is very likely that he will be able to use his influence on the "Catholicos" Mar Basilius and on another bishop of the party, Mar Gregorios. There is a well-founded hope instead that, having given a favourable response from Rome to the questions presented, Mar Ivanios will acquiesce the favour and will be able to lead with him to the unity of the Church at least a large part of the diocese organized by him which includes ten churches with twenty priests. They along with those Jacobite priests and lay people who, converted in these last years wished to maintain their rite or to return to it,<sup>24</sup> on hypothesis would form the nucleus of a new Church in Malabar for which it will be possible to hope for a considerable development in the course of time, also with the demise of those persons, like the seventy-year-old Mar Dionysius, who presently obstruct the movement.

With this hope I approve the suggestion of Bishop Benziger that Mar Ivanios, on the hypothesis of his conversion, be invited to Rome, from where, after having imbued more profoundly the Catholic spirit and after cooperating in the correction of their

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<sup>24</sup> Here the Apostolic Delegate refers to those few Jacobite priests and faithful who already converted and who followed the Syro-Malabar rite. Cf. Document 6 and document 16, no. II,10.



liturgical books, could return to India to be an apostle among his ancient co-religionists. As he stands out among the Jacobite Bishops for the doctrine and good dispositions, on him rely almost all the hopes that humanly can cherish for the eventual return of these estranged to the bosom of the Church.

Edward Aloysius Mooney, Apostolic Delegate.

## Document 22

### Letter of Mar Ivanios to the Syrian Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani

Tiruvalla (Bethany), 25 November 1928: *it was not definitively decided whether reunion should be achieved directly with the Church of Rome or through the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch. Hence Mar Ivanios continued communications also with the Catholic Syrian Patriarch of Antioch. He seeks information regarding the relationship between the Patriarch and the Holy Father, the Patriarch and his bishops, as well as that of the Patriarch and the catholicos of Malabar in case of reunion. He also requests for the missing liturgical books and for the Nomocanon of Bar Hebraeus (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archieparchy, AMAET-HAN-COR-12, i-v).*

Your gracious beatitude,

I am indeed thankful to your beatitude for your letter dated 25 September 1928. I rejoice and thank God that your beatitude keeps good health and is able to attend to the manifold duties of your high position. It grieved me very much to read what your beatitude has written about the sad loss that the church has sustained during the terrible war of 1914-18. From other sources also we learnt in those days about the terrible massacres of Christians within the Turkish territory. It needs plenty sacrifice to build up the church again in those devastated region and we pray God to bless every effort made to re-Christianize that country. India too is a vast country with a population of over 300,000,000 and only about 4,000,000 are Christians. There is great need to evangelise the millions here. We have made a humble beginning. It has pleased God to raise up religious Orders of men and women also to help in this great work.

We have at present the brotherhood of the imitation of Christ and the sisterhood of the imitation of Christ both of them practically keeping the rule of St Basil the great saint. Both these orders help the missionary and educational work connected with my diocese.

It has given such a great joy to us that the Syriac language and liturgical books and rituals and practices that we have in India as far as we know are practically the same as the usage of your beatitude's archdiocese. It is with a view to ascertaining this more definitely and finding out what differences exist between the usages here and there that we ask for books. We are an extremely conservative people and we desire to keep up our rites and rituals. And we are glad to know that reunion will not necessitate abandoning the ancient Syriac customs and rites. So we desire to conserve the hierarchy of the catholicos and bishops from generation to generation. We are very happy to think that your beatitude has in brotherly consideration of our deep rooted desires and sentiments most kindly guaranteed the continuity of our hierarchy even after reunion. Under His beatitude the catholicos there are at present in Malabar eight Sees, metropolitanical and Episcopal. His Beatitude the catholicos exercises patriarchal jurisdiction over all these dioceses with the advice and counsel of the synod of bishops. The present number of bishops does not suffice for these several Sees and therefore several dioceses are temporarily in charge of one and the same bishop. We have elected several candidates for consecration to the high-priestly order and we are looking forward to consecrating them in the near future.

May I take the liberty to enquire and ask your beatitude most kindly to answer the following questions:-

I. What is the relation between your beatitude and the Pope of Rome? We should be glad to see the copy of the concordat or agreement that defines the relation between your beatitude's See of Antioch and the See of Rome. And we want also very clear statement defining the present relation between the two Sees.

II. What is the relation between your beatitude and the metropolitans and bishops of your beatitude's archdiocese. If there is a synod what functions does it perform?

III. After our reunion what will be the relation between your beatitude and the catholicos? We want a clear statement as to your beatitude's ideas concerning this important question.

May I add a few words about the books. In your beatitudes letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> January 1928 (document 13) your beatitude told me that you were sending me one copy of the book of *Anaphora* and a few sheets of the book of ordination (ordination to the grades of singer, reader and subdeacon). These I received safely and am thankful to your beatitude for sending these books. No other books were sent at that time. The books which your beatitude's letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 1928 (document 19) says were sent to me have not been received yet. I should be thankful if your beatitude will kindly order that letters and books-parcels are sent to me here after per registered post. May I request your beatitude to order that one copy each of all the ecclesiastical books printed in Syriac, or Syriac and Arabic alternately are sent to me by the publishers. I should be glad to be allowed to pay for these books. Besides the priest's books we want the handbook to the *Anaphora* which the deacon and the faithful use at the Holy Eucharist and any other Syriac books printed for the use of the laity and the deacons. I want also the Canon Law. I understand from your beatitude's letter that this has not been printed yet. I should be thankful if your beatitude will kindly send me a manuscript copy of this book. I shall get it copied out here if necessary and returned the manuscript safely. I may add that we use here the first few chapters of the book of Nomocanon written by Gregorios Bar Hebraeus. The copy that is printed in Paris agrees with our manuscript. We are seriously considering the question of reunion and heartily praying for God's guidance.

I should be thankful if your beatitude will most kindly send me answer to this letter at the earliest conveniences.

We continue to pray that our Blessed Lord will guide us all to fulfil His holy will. I do hope that this will find your Beatitude in the best of health. I remain,

Your Beatitude's very sincerely and respectfully,

[Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany].

**Document 23****Letter of Cardinal Luigi Sincero to Apostolic Delegate Mooney Entrusting to Him the Task of Guiding the Reunion Movement**

Vatican City, 19 December 1928: according to the dispositions of the Holy Father at the audience on 1 December 1928, Cardinal Luigi Sincero, secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church entrusts the task of guiding the reunion movement to Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney in collaboration with the Catholic bishops of Kerala. For the information of the Apostolic Delegate the Prefect also forwarded to him the reports of the archbishops of Ernakulam and Verapoly (documents 15 and 17), which were directly sent to the Congregation, on the important question of the jurisdiction of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B; also in Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario XV*, pp. 71-72; original is in Italian).

Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord,

I am pleased to make known to Your Most Reverend Lordship that at the Audience of 1 December, having been informed of the hopes nourished for the conversion-movement of the Jacobites in Malabar, the Holy Father has deigned to dispose that the Sacred Congregation entrusts the matter to the prudence of Your Lordship, who may make accords with the bishops of Quilon and Changanacherry, besides hearing the archbishops of Ernakulam and Verapoly.

For this scope, I send the reports of the Archbishops of Ernakulam and Verapoly to your Lordship (with the request to return them), so that you may read them.

And then it is the august wish of the Holy Father that the priest Samuel is to be recalled, who so far has acted on behalf of Patriarch Rahmani, prohibiting him to interfere further in this delicate affair. Moreover, Patriarch Rahmani is to be informed that the matter is

directly dealt with in Rome and therefore he should not take interest in it.

However, given the state of health of the Patriarch, for now the Sacred Congregation does not believe it appropriate to communicate the above, and hence it is waiting to do so at the first favourable occasion.

His Holiness has then strongly recommended to take care that the people, of whom there is hope of conversion, are to be well instructed on the step they would intend to make, so that conversions be inspired by non-human motives of a spiritual order, because mass conversions rather represent an unconscious motion.

From this it clearly appears that with how much caution and prudence both the Apostolic Delegate and the Bishops dealing with this movement must proceed. Afterwards they will refer to the Sacred Congregation on what is to be done with Mar Ivanios and with those who declare and appear to be disposed to embrace Catholicism.

Thanking you for what you have done and will continue to do for the hoped-for return of the Jacobites to the Roman Church, I take advantage of the occasion to reaffirm myself with special respect, of your Most Reverend Lordship,

Most affectionately like a brother,

Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary,

A. G. Cicognani, Assessor.

## Document 24

### **Third Report of the Apostolic Delegate Mooney to the Congregation for the Eastern Church**

Bangalore, 3 March 1929: *in this report (no. 1029/29) Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney insists on the need of providing a definitive reply to the Jacobite bishops who are willing to embrace the Catholic Church. He also indicates the probable content of such a reply, concentrating mainly on the question of rite and the nature of the reunited bishops' jurisdiction or canonical status (Vatican City, Vatican Secret Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser.*

1, Fasc. 87B; also in Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponenza del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario XVI*, pp. 72-75; original is in Italian).

Most Reverend Eminence,

Informing Your Most Reverend Eminence of the reception of the esteemed official letter No. 82/28 on 19 December of last year concerning the movement of conversions among the Jacobites of Malabar, first of all I must sincerely thank Your Eminence for the confidence shown in entrusting such a delicate affair to this Delegation and to the local bishops rather than to the Patriarch of Antioch.

What I hear from various sources shows and confirms how prudent was the decision to exclude the Patriarch from the affair, and it is to be hoped that the state of health of Patriarch Rahmani has improved so much that this decision can be communicated to him because recently I have been told other unfavourable news about the work of *Priest Samuel*, appointed by the Patriarch to promote his interests in Malabar. This Reverend Samuel has not yet introduced himself to any of the Catholic Bishops, he has never exhibited a "celebret" to be allowed to celebrate the Holy Mass, he lives in a house of lay people, he celebrates in private houses and, so the Bishop of Kottayam tells me, even in churches of the Jacobites. After my last letter to the Sacred Congregation, the Patriarch wrote again to several lay people of Malabar asking for their help to erect a Church in Malabar under his jurisdiction, also expressing his intention to send a vicar of him with other priests as soon as possible.

Then I assure Your Eminence that in this complicated matter we will proceed with all cautions recommended by Your Eminence and I will not miss, in obedience to the venerable orders of Your Eminence, to report to the Sacred Congregation what is to be done with Mar Ivanios and with those who declare and appear to be disposed to return to the bosom of the Church. In this regard it is my duty to immediately inform Your Eminence that it is my conviction, shared also by the bishops named in the letter of Your Eminence, that no further steps can be taken without being able to give the Jacobite bishops, through Mar Ivanios, a *more complete reply to their "memoranda"* of 1926, *memoranda* that led to the present

negotiations. Therefore based on the opinions expressed by the bishops, to whose advice Your Eminence refers me, I would humbly suggest that they can be given a response according to these guidelines:

1. *About the rite*

To each considerable group of Jacobites, who return to the Church with their bishop, is to be granted permission to maintain the use of the pure Syrian rite, which they have constantly used since 1650; however, obviously their liturgical books must be examined and purged of any possible error contrary to the Catholic doctrine. Here I have to observe that among the Catholic bishops consulted at the beginning there were, as I indicated in my report No. 223/27 of 17 October 1927 (document 8), some differences of opinion concerning the advantage of granting the converts to use the pure Syrian rite or to force them to accept the Syro-Malabar rite, but this matter was practically closed at the arrival of letter No. 2970/27 of 5 December 1927 (document 9) with which Your Eminence ordered me to transmit an unsigned declaration to Mar Ivanios from which the Jacobites could not but deduce that, in case of their return to the Church as a group, they would be allowed to maintain their rites and rituals.

2. *About the jurisdiction of the Bishops who will convert and the organization of their Church (that is, about the important question on which Mar Ivanios has returned to insist, after having received the aforementioned unsigned declaration):*

a) If different bishops will return to the Church with a significant part of their flock, provided that sufficient guarantees are furnished about the validity of their consecration, the Holy See will put them in charge of their flocks establishing in Malabar a Catholic hierarchy of pure Syrian rite under the metropolitan jurisdiction of an archbishop directly subject to the Holy See (as the Syro-Malabar hierarchy now) providing them, as the Holy See will consider better and until it may be necessary, with a guide on matters of Catholic faith and discipline.

b) If a single Bishop returns to the Church with a considerable number of priests and lay people, the Holy See, given the aforementioned guarantees, will put him in charge of this group of

converts and then it will consider how his services can be used better for the conversion of his brethren.

3. The Jacobites converted under the aforementioned circumstances can maintain their legitimate *ecclesiastical customs* if they are not contrary to the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church, with the exception that, without prejudice to the converted married priests, the new clergy should be unmarried from now on.

If Your Eminence authorizes me to communicate with all prudence, through Mar Ivanios, to the Jacobite Bishops who wait for an answer, such a declaration or any other declaration that gives an explicit answer to the questions that they have repeatedly asked, we will be able to see what hopes of a conversion of them are truly founded. However, until we will not be able to give a definitive answer to their requests, the affair must necessarily remain as suspended as it is now, and we are obliged to avoid any discussion with them on the matter because we would provide them none other than the opportunity to present again the same embarrassing questions.

Bowed to the kiss of the Sacred Purple with sentiments of profound respect I have the honour of professing myself, of Your Most Reverend Eminence,

Aloysius Edward Mooney, Apostolic Delegate.

### **Document 25**

#### **Additional Information Sent by Apostolic Delegate Mooney to the Congregation for the Eastern Church**

Bangalore, 6 March 1929: *with this letter Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney returns to the Congregation for the Eastern Church the reports of the archbishops of Ernakulam and Verapoly which were sent to him for evaluation. Also in this letter he emphasises the need of providing a definitive reply to the Jacobite bishops desiring reunion with the Catholic Church* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario XVII*, pp. 75-76; original is in Italian).



Most Reverend Eminence,

Here enclosed I have the honour of returning to Your Most Reverend Eminence the reports of the Archbishops of Verapoly and Ernakulam, kindly sent to me by Your Eminence with the esteemed letter No. 82/28 on 17 December of last year so that I could read them.

Having carefully studied these documents, I cannot but point out that, while the Archbishop of Verapoly clearly discusses the matter proposed to him and makes very practical observations, the Archbishop of Ernakulam makes it an occasion more than anything else to renew his petition for the establishment of a Syro-Malabar Ordinariate within the boundaries of the current diocese of Quilon, a territory which the Syro-Malabars crave to occupy since a long time. Your Eminence has already answered to this petition declaring it inappropriate, but in view of this insistence by the Archbishop, you will permit me to express my humble opinion by saying that, in the current circumstances, the thing is more than ever inappropriate, indeed even harmful. However, on the other hand, also the Archbishop of Ernakulam testifies that the Jacobites wish to maintain their pure Syrian rite and to be independent of both the Syro-Malabar hierarchy and Patriarch Rahmani, whose interference in the matters of Malabar is seen by the same Archbishop with great concern.

Allow me, Your Eminence, to avail myself of this occasion to report on the latest news about the Jacobite bishops of the *Metran* Party, namely those, on behalf of whom, Mar Ivanios prepared his memorandum of 1926. A little while ago the "Catholicos" Mar Basilios died and Mar Gregorios, one of the Bishops who adhered to the same Memorandum, was appointed in his place, and other two bishops were consecrated. It is to be pointed out that the festivities for the enthronement of the new "Catholicos" gave the Protestants (that is, the Anglican Metropolitan of Calcutta, the "Church Mission Society" and the local YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association) occasion to make a gesture of friendship towards the Jacobites. Here, in fact, nowadays there is the great danger for these poor schismatics, of the Protestant infiltration in their religious life.

(Archbishop Edward Mooney, Apostolic Delegate).

**Document 26****Letter of Mar Ivanios to Bishop Benzinger Providing Information about His Own Elevation as Metropolitan and Consecration of the New Catholicos and Two Bishops**

Vatican City, 15 April 1929: *this letter is important because it provides firsthand information concerning the enthronement of the new Catholicos, consecration of two other bishops and the elevation of Mar Ivanios to the rank of Metropolitan of Bethany* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser 1, Fasc. 87B; original is in English).

Your Lordship,

I heard from the Rev. Fr. John Rebeiro that some of the books have come, but have not been able to send for them. I am (*sic*, but have) come to Vadasserikara for the Lenten Season and shall be returning to Tiruvalla on the 14<sup>th</sup> May.

A few days back, Dr. Kalassery, the Bishop of Changanacherry visited me at Tiruvalla and congratulated me on my installation as Metropolitan and in the course of our conversation, His Lordship told me that he was cooperating to facilitate the cause of re-union.

The settlement of the Roman question is a great victory for the cause of Christianity in the world; and I humbly send my most hearty congratulations to the Holy See on this wonderful achievement. The Lateran treaty is the most Christian agreement that could be thought of under the present circumstances. I have no doubt that the influence of the Church will increase several fold for the enhanced happiness of mankind, the better hailing role of Christian nations and the greater glory of God.<sup>25</sup>

As I had informed your Lordship in my last letter, the new Catholicos was consecrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> February (1929) and the Bishop of Bethany was installed as the Metropolitan of Bethany and

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<sup>25</sup> Here Mar Ivanios refers to the Lateran Pacts, which were signed by the Holy See and the Italian Government in the Lateran Palace on 11 February 1929 (Authors).

on the following day two new Bishops were consecrated, namely the Right Rev. Mar Theophilos and the Right Rev. Mar Gregorios. The Right Rev. Mar Theophilos is a member of the order of the Imitation of Christ, the Religious Order that Our Lord most mercifully enabled me to form.

Hope this will find your Lordship in the best of health,  
I remain, Your Lordship's very sincerely,  
✠ Ivanios of Bethany.

**Document 27**  
**Letter of Cardinal Luigi Sincero to Apostolic  
Delegate Mooney Seeking Full Information  
about the Bishops to be Reunited**

Vatican City, 15 April 1929: *according to the praxis of the Apostolic See in this letter Cardinal Luigi Sincero asks the Apostolic Delegate to transmit full information concerning the bishops of the Metran Party who wish to be reunited with the Catholic Church (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser 1, Fasc. 87B; original is in Italian).*

Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord,

Your letters of 3 and 6 March 1929, Prot. 1029/29-1097/29 (documents 24 and 25) about the proposed conversion movement of Jacobite Bishops of *Metran* party reached me.

However, before giving further assurances, especially with regard to jurisdiction, I consider it prudent that diligent information on the life and morals as well as on all other qualities concerning the two bishops: Mar Ivanios and Mar Gregorius, and possibly about other bishops who manifest a desire for union should be collected, in order to see whether, by returning to the unity of the Church with the majority of their clergy, they could be authorized to continue to exercise the pastoral ministry of the bishop for their people.

I leave the delicate task to the wisdom of Your Most Reverend Lordship, being sure that you will find the best way to give me the information I desire.

While I thank you from now on, I take this opportunity to confirm myself with all respect, of your Most Reverend Lordship,  
Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary,  
A. G. Cicognani, Assessor.

Section III  
TOWARDS A DEFINITIVE DECISION ON REUNION:  
PRESERVATION OF RITE, JURISDICTION OF THE  
REUNITED BISHOPS AND THE TITLE OF  
CATHOLICOS

Although about 4 years passed after the first memorandum, the reunion did not take place, because several issues were to be settled, such as the rite of the reunited community (Syro-Malabar or Antiochene), reunion directly under the Holy See or under the authority of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, jurisdiction of the bishops who convert, recognition of the catholicate and the office of the catholicos, clerical celibacy, use of Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed without the addition *Filioque*. Even before the reunion movement triggered by Mar Ivanios there were conversions of individual priests and Christian faithful who followed the Syro-Malabar rite, since at that time Catholic Antiochene rite did not exist in India. So in the initial period of communications concerning reunion, it was thought that the reuniting community should adopt the Syro-Malabar rite. However, it became immediately evident that according to the policy of the Holy See at that time the reunited community could continue with the Syrian Antiochene rite.

On other questions the dialogue between Mar Ivanios and the Holy See continued through the mediation of Apostolic Delegate Mooney and some kind of agreement was reached on all points except the recognition of catholicate and the position of catholicos, both were considered unacceptable to the Holy See. Also because the Holy See assumed such a position, the catholicos and the bishops under his swing lost all interest in reunion. Notwithstanding this, Mar Ivanios and his suffragan Mar Theophilos persisted in their decision to embrace the Catholic Church.

**Document 28**  
**Normative Letter of the Sacred Congregation for the  
 Eastern Church to Apostolic Delegate Mooney  
 concerning Reunion**

Vatican City, 26 June 1929: *since the Apostolic Delegate insistently asked for a definitive reply concerning reunion, Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church provided some normative principles, according to which the same Delegate could regulate his actions, although the necessary information concerning each bishop required by the Congregation had not yet reached it* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser 1, Fasc. 87, B; also in Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario XVIII*, pp. 76-80; original is in Italian).

Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord,

After your precious reports Nos. 1029 and 1097, respectively on 3 and 6 March of this year, on 15 April I wrote to you, in order to obtain the broadest information which could be in your possession, or that you could cautiously gather, concerning the life and morals (*de vita et moribus*) of the Jacobite bishops of the *Metran Party* who, with the "memorandum" transmitted to me by Your Lordship on 17 October 1927, No. 223/27 (document 3), expressed their good intention of wishing to reunite with the Roman Church and their desires in this regard.

In this concrete case such information is required by prudence, because before giving schismatic Prelates exacting assurances that, after the eventual reunion they will be kept in their hierarchical rank and at the governance of the flock, it is extremely important to know the persons and circumstances well, then above all, as far as possible, the real reasons engendering the petitions.

However, while I wait for the aforementioned information, it seems to me appropriate to fix for you some points which you can use, in case you do not consider appropriate to delay anymore some additional assurances for the bishops of the memorandum.

The more so because, according to the information that Your Lordship diligently gave me with the aforementioned letter dated 6 March, No. 1097, other bishops were elected in the *Metran* Party and one of the authors of the memorandum, Mar Gregorios, was elevated to the dignity of "Catholicos".

Then another reason, which makes me to foresee the opportunity of some additional ensuring communication, is the Protestant danger constituted by varied and, unfortunately too powerful organizations - the Anglican Metropolitan of Calcutta, the "Church Mission Society", the YMCA, which seek to deceive and conquer those poor separated brethren for heresy.

Therefore, here follow some foundational principles (bedrocks) for you on which you can regulate yourself for eventual notifications.

I. Concerning the Rite: confirming the principles already exposed in the letter sent to you on 7 December (*sic*) 1927, in order that it might be given - unsigned - to the bishops of the memorandum, Your Lordship will be able to assure that the principle to which the Holy See adheres, when it concerns the reunion of schismatics, is the preservation of their rite. Therefore, the Jacobites, who eventually convert, will be able to maintain their rites and rituals "insofar as these are not contrary to the Catholic faith, do not contain a danger for souls and do not derogate from ecclesiastical honesty" (Benedict XIV, *Etsi Pastoralis*, 26 May 1742), and unless the preservation of the rite is practically impossible for special circumstances of persons or places.

II. Concerning Jurisdiction: both the individuals and the dissident communities, who would come to the union, although they maintain the pure Syrian rite, will have no dependence on the Syro-Catholic Patriarch of Antioch; but the Holy See will provide for them conveniently according to the cases.

If a Bishop will convert with a significant part of his flock, the Holy See is disposed to keep him under its immediate jurisdiction.

III. Regarding the assurance that the bishops, who convert with a significant number of priests and the flock, will be kept in their jurisdiction: this is, while observing all that must be observed, the ordinary norm; therefore, you could mention it; however, without

going into exacting details before having the information just required about this.

IV. Then having considered the suggestion of Your Most Reverend Lordship in your letter of 29 November 1928 concerning the opportunity to exclude, from the very beginning, any recognition of the catholicate, both for historical reasons and for the questionable considerations and circumstances which led to the adoption of such a title by the Malabar Jacobites of the *Metran* Party, the Sacred Congregation approves that Your Lordship, if you consider it appropriate, declares that the title of "catholicos" will hardly be maintained.

V. Then, if it seems appropriate to you in the case, Your Lordship can remind the aforementioned bishops that, for the same particular esteem that the Holy See has towards the clergy of Malabar, it would like that also the Jacobites, who may come to the union, adopt a truly Catholic discipline. This is in the interest of the same communities eventually reunited, so that they do not remain in a condition of inferiority with respect to the Syro-Malabar and Latin Catholics. Therefore, we would like to see celibacy adopted, even by the converted Jacobites; this however without any prejudice to the already married clergy.

VI. Finally, with regard to the commission which Your Lordship has suggested, this Sacred Congregation grants you all faculty to establish it with the persons, whom you have recently indicated, namely the Most Reverend Bishops of Quilon and Changanacherry. It would seem appropriate to add the Metropolitan Archbishop of Ernakulam to the aforementioned, also to provide this commission a more Eastern characteristic, although I am persuaded (and with satisfaction) that the Latin Bishop of Quilon will give a major contribution. Then Your Lordship will assume the presidency of that commission, but without the need of attending the meetings.

VII. About inviting Bishop Mar Ivanios to come to Rome, it does not seem convenient to me, at least for now.

VIII. In your report on 3 March of this year No. 1029, Your Lordship notified me other unfavourable considerations concerning priest Samuel.

Now having considered what is clearly established about the non-dependence of the possible new converts on the Syrian Patriarch, it is evident that this priest must immediately and completely refrain from any activity, which has the character of an assignment granted him by the said Patriarchate.

This decision was taken after an Audience with the Holy Father since December of last year; only the notification to the Syrian Patriarch was deferred, for a piteous respect to the state of health in which the late Prelate was at that time.

However, from the letter which the late Patriarch sent to the Holy See on the subject, it results that the said priest is a converted Malabar-Jacobite and that the aforementioned Patriarch thought to be authorized to make him return to Malabar, practically as his missionary, to convert the schismatic brethren and attract them to the orbit of the said Patriarchate. Hence, having considered the fact that perhaps this priest will not have any desire to withdraw to Syria or Mesopotamia, namely to a diocese dependent on the Syrian Patriarch, I remit to Your Most Reverend Lord to decide the most suitable way for his accommodation. Being unable to admit a transient priest, Your Lordship sees if and how this priest can be incardinated in a diocese of Malabar. I do not exclude that, if necessary, the aforementioned priest can be placed, at least for now, under the immediate jurisdiction of the Apostolic Delegate.

Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary.

## **Document 29**

### **Information of the Apostolic Delegate Mooney concerning the Life and Morals of Individual Bishops of the "Metran Party"**

Bangalore, 3 July 1929: *as required by the Congregation for the Eastern Church, Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney sends personal details concerning each Jacobite bishop of the Catholicate or the Metran Party* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.* Ser. 1, Fasc. 67B: also in Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar*:



*Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona* del 4 luglio 1930, *Sommario XIX*, pp. 80-83; original is in Italian).

Most Reverend Eminence,

I acknowledge receipt of the venerable official letter no. 82/28 on 15 April 1929 with which Your Most Reverend Eminence orders me to obtain diligent information on the life, morals and qualities of the Jacobite Bishops who expressed the desire to return to the unity of the Church.

Having collected the necessary information through the bishops of Quilon, Kottayam and Changanacherry,<sup>26</sup> who know the situation better than anyone else, now I am able to report to Your Eminence as follows.

After the death of Catholicos Mar Basilius a few months ago, the Synod of the dissident Jacobite bishops appointed the new "catholicos" in the person of Mar Gregorios, who assumed the name of Mar Basilius after the election. On that occasion two new Bishops were elected and then consecrated so that now the following Bishops belong to the "*Metran*" Party, also known as the Party of Mar Dionysius or the Party of the "Catholicos":

1° Mar Basilius (Gregorios Geevarghese), "catholicos" of the whole Malabar.

2° Mar Dionysius (Dionysius Geevarghese), metropolitan of the whole Malabar.

3° Mar Ivanios, now metropolitan of Bethany.

4° Mar Gregorios, recently consecrated bishop of Kottayam.

5° Mar Theophilus, recently consecrated suffragan of Bethany.

All these five bishops are celibate and it seems that nothing can be suspected against their morality, especially since, having considered the continuous quarrels and discords in which they are involved, in Malabar even simple shadows would certainly have given rise to rumours and slanders about the matter. Then these same

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<sup>26</sup> The information provided by these three bishops can be found in Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser. 1, Fasc. 67B (Authors)*.

quarrels urge them to take special care of ensuring the validity of their consecration.<sup>27</sup>

*Mar Dionysius* is about 70 years old and he is in fact the head of the party which has his name. Ambitious, avaricious, intriguing, insincere and of tyrannical manners, he rebelled against the schismatic Patriarch of Antioch and he has been able to gain many followers by stirring the nationalist spirit of revolt against a foreign supremacy. He is far from being well-disposed towards Rome and for many of his followers perhaps he is the main stumbling block on the way of return to the Church.

*Mar Basilios* (former *Mar Gregorios*), the current "Catholicos" of Malabar, is about 55 years old and he belongs to a rich and influential family. He is less intriguing than *Mar Dionysius*; however, he does not stand out for excessive piety and not even for humility; if the rumours are true, he solicited votes for his election to the office of "Catholicos". It is also said that he has an irascible character and he is very ignorant. Although he has not a reputation for being in favour of a union with Rome, he is yet one of the signatories of the Memorandum presented to the Sacred Congregation.

*Mar Ivanios*, recently appointed Metropolitan of Bethany, is 48 years old and he is the most learned of the Jacobite Bishops and the most well-disposed to return to the union with Rome. He graduated in one of the Indian Universities, but having had a Protestant education he still maintains some heterodox ideas; however, I have been reassured that he is seriously studying the Catholic doctrine. He is very pious and esteemed as a right man by all. He is the superior of a religious congregation of monks founded by him ten years ago and which, although it counts not more than about twenty members, enjoys much reputation in Malabar. Recently *Mar Ivanios*

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<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the present Apostolic Delegate confirms what, about the validity of ordinations, the Delegate Msgr. Aiuti assured at his times. (*Office-note*). Archbishop Andrea Aiuti was the Apostolic Delegate of East Indies from 31 March 1887 to 24 July 1891. At the time of the reunion attempts of *Mar Dionysius V* (1876-1909) he confirmed the validity of the ordinations of Jacobite priests and bishops. See Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Appendice al Sommario*, paragrafo I-3, pp. 121-124 (Authors).

has also founded a congregation of nuns on the model of the Catholic nuns, about which also there is very good opinion. It is referred to me that he would be ready to become a Catholic, but he delays because he wants to be sure that sooner or later Rome will allow him to maintain his rite and his jurisdiction and in that case he is certain to be able to lead with himself at least 3,000 souls, who are under the influence of his clergy, to the union with the Church and he hopes to increase that number after the death of Mar Dionysius.

*Mar Gregorios*, recently created Bishop of Kottayam, is about 50 years old. He is not very learned, but he is a pious and worthy person. It is said to me that he did not want to be appointed Bishop.

*Mar Theophilos*, new Bishop of Bethany, is one of the monks of Mar Ivanios, whose ideas he shares. He is 38 years old, and all have described him to me as a learned, right, pious person and is held in high esteem by all.

Concerning the hoped-for union, the Bishop of Quilon fears that the right opportunity for a mass return has now passed. It is still hoped nevertheless that Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos can lead the group of their adherents to the bosom of the Church. Of course, there is nothing to hope for Mar Dionysius and very little for Mar Basilios. About Mar Gregorios, my opinion is that, if he comes to the Church, we can trust him, but in all probability, he will follow the majority.

Hoping to have fulfilled the task that Your Eminence has deigned to entrust me, I bow to the kiss of the Sacred Purple and with sentiments of deep veneration I have the honour of confirming myself, of Your Most Reverend Eminence,

Edward Mooney, Apostolic Delegate.

**Document 30**

**Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney  
concerning the Preservation of the Creed  
without *Filioque***

Tiruvalla, 27 July 1929: *Mar Ivanios expresses to Apostolic Delegate Edward Aloysius Mooney his desire to retain the Nicene Creed in its original form without introducing filioque. He also informs the Apostolic Delegate of the new situation created after the election of the new Catholicos who may not favour reunion with the Catholic Church. He also seeks the opinion of Mooney on the difficult question: whether reunion is to be sought directly under Rome or through the Patriarch of Antioch (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc.87 B, 60-62).*

May it please your Excellency,

I must thank Your Excellency and the Lord Bishop of Quilon for procuring for me the Syriac books I had asked for. A few books still remain to be procured, and I am writing to His Lordship about them.

As far as I can see now, we shall not have difficulties in the way of adopting these books for using here, for there is very little difference between the usages in Syria and south India. With a view (the word is illegible) concession to popular sentiment it may be desirable to allow some of these differences to be retained. For instance, the use of the Nicene Creed in its original Eastern form, that is without the *filioque* clause.

I am much looking forward to hear from your Excellency in reply to my letters dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1928, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1928.

Since I last wrote to Your Excellency, a few events have taken place in the Syrian Church in South India. His Beatitude Mar Baselius (Givergis I) catholicos of the east passed away, and the synod elected and established Mar Gregorios as his successor, and the new catholicos is as usual styled Mar Baselius. Further the bishop of Bethany (my humble self) was established as the metropolitan of Bethany, and two new bishops were consecrated; one of them being the Rt. Rev. Theophilus, bishop of Tiruvalla. The

metropolitan of Bethany and the bishop of Tiruvalla together constitute a hierarchy. A movement towards the reunion of His beatitude the catholicos with the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch is likely to be set on foot, and if that were to succeed, it will indefinitely put off reunion of our Church with the Holy See. The late catholicos favoured reunion with the Holy See; but the attitude of the present catholicos is doubtful. If His Beatitude were to decide to unite with the Jacobite patriarch, I feel that there would be at least two, possibly three of us - the metropolitan of Bethany and one or two bishops - who would desire to unite with the Holy See. I am writing to request Your Excellency to do whatever lies in your Excellency's power to facilitate reunion of these latter with the Holy See. We desire to be guided by Your Excellency's advice as to whether we should seek to be directly under Rome or seek reunion through the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch.

In this connection may I report Your Excellency that His Lordship, the bishop of Changanassery, Dr James Kalassery visited me some weeks ago; fortunately the bishop of Tiruvalla was with me at that time, and the bishop of Changanassery was able to meet us both. His Lordship greatly encouraged reunion.

I trust this will reach Your Excellency in the best of health. I remain,

Your Excellency's very sincerely,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

### Document 31

#### **Letter of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to Mar Ivanios, Transmitting the Reply of the Holy See on the Memorandum of 1926**

Bangalore, 05 August 1929: *the Apostolic Delegate responds to the letter of Mar Ivanios stating that he is sending the response of the Holy See to the original memorandum, which also contains answers to the problems raised by him in different letters. He also hopes that the question of filioque may not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to reunion* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 58).

My Lord,

Acknowledging the receipt of your kind letter of July 27<sup>th</sup>, I am happy to be able to send you herewith the answer of the Holy See on the points raised in the memorandum presented by Your Lordship in your own name and the name of your colleagues of the catholicate at the beginning of our correspondence. It seems to me too, that this reply covers at least in principle the questions set forth in your Lordship's letter of July 21<sup>st</sup> 1928. As the omission of the "filioque" clause, I am, of course, not in a position to give an authoritative decision in the matter, and, if I may be very frank in stating my opinion, I do not think that the question should be pressed at the present juncture. Surely, in the circumstances, it cannot constitute an essential element in the grave decision, Your Lordship, and your identical liturgical texts for all those who in Catholic communion use the Syrian liturgy, the point, if insisted upon, would be referred to the Holy See whose decision, I am confident, would be loyally accepted by those who happily return to Catholic unity.

With a fervent prayer that "as to every one of us is given a glance of grace according to the measure of Christ's giving" to us, it may be granted that "we meet into the unity of faith," I remain, My Lord,

With sentiments of respect and esteem,

Sincerely yours in Christ, Edward Mooney.

**Document 32**  
**Reply of the Holy See to the Points Raised in the**  
**Memorandum of Mar Ivanios**  
**concerning Reunion**

Bangalore, 05 August 1929: *in accordance with the normative principles established by the Congregation for the Eastern Church and communicated to the Apostolic Delegate with the letter of 26 June 1929 (document 28), he drew up the formula of reunion in four points and sent them to Mar Ivanios, together with the letter of 5 August 1929, inserted above as document 31 (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 59).*

Reply of the Holy See on the points raised in the memorandum presented by the Most Rev. Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of the Bethany:

I. As regards rites: in conformity with the declaration already made in January 1929, the principle on which the Holy See deals with the adherents of a historic rite, sanctions the retention of that rite on their return to Catholic unity. This principle will be applied to returning Jacobites in so far, of course, as their rites and ritual books contained nothing that is contrary to Catholic faith, morally dangerous or inconsonant with ecclesiastical decorum. This principle is naturally subject to exception where particular circumstances of person or place render the retention of a certain rite practically impossible.

II. In reference to the desired assurance that bishops returning to the unity of the Church together with a notable part of their priests and people shall be confirmed in their government of their flock: this again is the ordinary rule on which the Holy See proceeds, given of course, the required guarantees regarding orthodoxy of faith, validity of orders and personal repute in those concerned, and this is the rule which the Holy See proposes to follow in regard to the reunion of Jacobites in Malabar.

III. On the question of hierarchical organization, it is to be considered as settled that Jacobites of Malabar returning to the unity of the Church either individually or in groups, are to be in no way dependent on the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch. With this premise, the Holy See will make provision as seems best in the circumstances. Thus for instance, if, as above, one bishop returns with a considerable part of his clergy and flock, the Holy See will be inclined to retain him under its own immediate jurisdiction. In further eventual organization of a hierarchy along Catholic lines, there can, of course, be no question of a synodal form of episcopal government, nor can any hopes be entertained for the retention of a position or title like that of 'catholicos' which is not supported by a long-standing ecclesiastical tradition in Malabar.

IV. In the matter of clerical discipline, finally, the Holy See, out of a feeling of particular esteem for the clergy of Malabar, would not want to see those who return to Catholic unity from Jacobitism lag behind their Syro-Malabar and Latin countrymen in a matter of

such prime importance as clerical celibacy, and would therefore desire to see them adopt this disciplinary measure for their future priesthood; but this, of course, without any prejudices to the ecclesiastical standing of those convert priests who are now married.

Delegate Apostolic (Edward Mooney).

### Document 33

#### **Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney Appreciating the Positive Reply of the Holy See, but Asking for the Preservation of Catholicate**

Tiruvalla, 17 September 1929: *Mar Ivanios acknowledges the reply of the Holy See on the points raised in the memorandum. He expresses gratitude for the assurances that the reunited community will be allowed to continue the Antiochene rite and the reunited bishops will be confirmed in the government of their flock. He underlines the reasons for maintaining at least the title of catholicos, even without any real jurisdiction, for facilitating reunion (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser I, Fasc.87B, 105-112 ).*

Your Excellency,

I write to thank your Excellency for your kind letter no. 1356/29 dated the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1929, and the enclosure to it no. 1309/29 dated the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1929, the reply of the Holy See on the points raised in my memorandum. I showed these to the Rt. Rev. Mar Theophilos, bishop of Tiruvalla. We both feel that it is the will of God that the Orthodox Syrian (Jacobite) Church of Malabar should seek reunion with the Holy See. Following God's guidance in this matter, we have decided to take definite steps in this direction, and fully acknowledge the primacy of and render unreserved submission to, the successor of St Peter in the See of Rome. We are very grateful for the encouraging reply of the Holy See on the points raised in my memorandum. May we assure your Excellency that the requests that we make to the Holy Father in this letter are not intended as conditions preceding reunion. They are merely our



fervent prayers, which if granted, we believe, will considerably help forward the cause of reunion in Malabar.

### I. Our rites

a) We are grateful for the assurance that we shall be allowed to continue the use of our rites and ritual books. If there is anything in them, "contrary to Catholic faith and morals, or inconsistent with ecclesiastical decorum," we should certainly be prepared to alter them.

In the Syrian Catholic patriarchate of Antioch it is the custom to read some of the prayers of the rites in the vernacular. Their ritual books give Arabic translations of several prayers, printed in parallel columns with the Syriac text. It is the traditional practice in Malabar also to say some of the prayers in Malayalam.

### b) The *flioque* clause

The only creed that we use in Malabar is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed without the *flioque*. Every time that a layman says his prayers, the morning the evening and other canonical hours, he recites this creed. If changes were to be introduced in the creed or in the prayers of the people in everyday use, the enemies of reunion will, we fear, use them as Shibboleths, and attempt to frustrate our efforts to carry the people with us.

II. We are grateful for the assurance that the reuniting bishops will be confirmed in the government of their flock.

### III. Hierarchical Organization.

#### a) The Catholicate

The Statement in the reply of the Holy See to my memorandum that, "No hopes be entertained for the retention of a position or little like that of catholicos," has grieved us. I have not been able to show this reply to His Beatitude. May I beg leave to draw your Excellency's attention to the following:

1. The institution of the catholicate, although it is new in Malabar, has a history behind it of several centuries in the Syrian Church, and the present catholicos in Malabar is the lineal

descendant of the ancient catholicoi of the east, and is consecrated to the ancient See of Tigris (Tagril). There is no other dignitary in the Syrian Church who claims this position and title.

2. From early times the catholicoi exercised jurisdiction over the adherents of the Syrian rite outside the territory of the Syrian patriarch of Antioch.

3. The late Syrian Catholic patriarch of Antioch (Ephrem II Rehmani) who started correspondence with us on the subject of reunion guaranteed that the entire hierarchical organization of the Orthodox Syrian (Jacobite) Church now existing in Malabar would be recognized and perpetuated, subject to the ultimate supremacy of the pope.

4. We shall be prepared to give up the synodal form of government.

5. Like all other eastern peoples, the Orthodox Syrians in Malabar are extremely conservative, and do not move except in groups. Moreover, the catholicos is looked upon as the national head of the Orthodox Syrians. And to get his Beatitude in, means a great deal for the cause of reunion.

6. The present catholicos has seen all the letters that the late Syrian Catholic patriarch sent us, and believes that the assurances given by the Patriarch have been lawfully granted.

7. We want to leave no stone unturned to get the catholicos to lead us all into the unity of the Churches for it will help to bring in a large body of the clergy and the people into reunion, and also make the position of myself and his Lordship Mar Theophilos less difficult.

May I venture therefore humbly to submit a suggestion for the most kind consideration of the Holy See:

That the position and title of the catholicos be allowed to continue, his function being defined as corresponding more or less to that of the primates of the National Churches in Europe and America, and consisting only of the authority to conserve conferences of all the Ordinaries of our rite in this country, and preside over these conferences.

This arrangement will not be out of order at present; for, the metropolitan of Bethany has not taken the oath of obedience to the catholicos.

b) The Metropolitan of Bethany

The Orthodox Syrian Church in Malabar is territorially divided into seven episcopal dioceses. At his consecration the bishop of Bethany was authorized to establish churches under his jurisdiction in any or all of these seven dioceses, and incardinate into his diocese the subjects of the other Ordinaries. The necessity for this arrangement arose from the desire on the part of the synod to have churches (parishes) established in Malabar that would be free from the control of the laity. Subsequently the bishop of Bethany was installed as the metropolitan of Bethany. The metropolitan of Bethany has organized churches under his jurisdiction in five out of the seven episcopal dioceses in Malabar, and is hoping to do the same in the remaining two dioceses also. Some of the parishes thus established are placed under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Tiruvalla. At a later stage, it might become necessary to redefine the territorial limits of the dioceses of the reuniting ordinaries.

c) The Bishop of Tiruvalla

The metropolitan of Bethany and the bishop of Tiruvalla constitute a small hierarchy. The Rt. Rev. Mar Theophilos took the oath of canonical obedience to, and was consecrated as the suffrage of the metropolitan of Bethany, and holds from the latter his Systaticon, that is, the letter of authorization to administer the diocese of Tiruvalla.

#### IV. Clerical Discipline

The ordinary practice of the Orthodox Syrian Church is to insist upon the candidates for the secular priesthood marrying before admission to the holy orders. But the metropolitan of Bethany and the bishop of Tiruvalla have abandoned this practice, and do not ordain men who have not vowed to live the celibate life. The other reuniting bishops also will, no doubt, agree to introduce the system of clerical celibacy for their future priesthood.

V. The word 'Jacobite' now here occurs in our formularies and our church is officially styled, "The Orthodox Syrian Church." May the reuniting Orthodox Syrians style themselves as 'Catholic Orthodox Syrians.' This designation will help in Malabar under the archbishop of Ernakulam.

VI. If the metropolitan of Bethany and the bishop of Tiruvalla alone came out now, it will not bring in a large population with them. For these ordinaries have been doing pioneering work in the direction of spreading Catholic influence amongst the people, and Catholicising the organization and administration of the laity. They have thus far established or projected only about thirty churches, spread over different parts of the country. And these of course, will come in with their clergy and people.

VII. In many localities the clergy will be prepared to come in with their people, if churches can be provided. The older churches are all Jacobite trust. We are working now to establish new churches that will be free to come into reunion. Almost every month we start a new church, and the work is progressing through God's abundant mercy.

VIII. There are several matters connected with canons and discipline about which I should like to address the Holy See. But these matters, though important, are not very urgent at present. I shall write to your Excellency about these later.

IX. I enclose a letter of the Rt. Rev. Mar Theophilos expressing his Lordship's concurrence with this letter of mine.

X. May I particularly request your Excellency that all these correspondences and the final decision of the Holy See be kept secret both in Rome and in India.

With best wishes and respectful regards, I remain,

Yours Very Sincerely,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

**Document 34**

**Letter of Mar Theophilos to Apostolic Delegate  
Mooney Manifesting His Agreement to the  
Content of the above Letter**

Tiruvalla, 17 September 1929: *Mar Theophilos, bishop of Tiruvalla informs Apostolic Delegate Mooney that he fully agrees with Mar Ivanios on all that he has written in the letter reproduced above (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 113).*

Your Excellency,

I write to inform your Excellency that I have seen letter no. 5, dated 17<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1929, which the Most Rev. Mar Ivanios, metropolitan of Bethany has written to your Excellency, and that I fully concur with His Grace in all that he has written therein.

With respectful regards, I remain,

Your Excellency's sincerely, Theophilos, Bishop of Tiruvalla.

**Document 35**

**Letter of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to Mar Ivanios,  
Asking Him to Communicate the Definitive  
Statement of the Holy See to All the Bishops  
of the Catholicate**

Bangalore, 11 October 1929: *Apostolic Delegate Mooney acknowledges the receipt of the letters of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos (documents 33-34), but regrets that the normative statement of the Apostolic See has not been communicated to all the bishops of the Catholicate, in whose name the memorandum was originally written. Hence the Apostolic Delegate asks Mar Ivanios to confidentially communicate the content of the definitive statement to all the bishops concerned and to apprise him of their answers (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAET-HAN-COR-17, 17; also in Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 114-115).*

My Lord,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of Your Lordship's letter of September 17<sup>th</sup> and to express my deep felt joy at the decision taken by yourself and Mar Theophilus which I pray God to bless and render productive of much good to the cause of Christ in Malabar.

I have seriously pondered over the points which you desire me to bring to the attention of the Holy See. I feel that it is my duty to say to you with the brotherly frankness which should characterize our dealings, that I find myself in a most embarrassing position in being asked to do this without being able at the same time to assure the Holy See that its maturely considered reply to the memorandum of November 1926, has been submitted to the consideration of all the bishops on whose behalf the memorandum was presented. This circumstance in itself would, I fear, hamper us appreciably in further correspondence with Rome on the subject.

May I not therefore, in a spirit which I am sure your Lordship will not misunderstand, ask you to communicate confidentially the papal statement of August 5<sup>th</sup> to all the bishops concerned and apprise me of their answer about the clearly implied paternal invitation it carries. I cannot bring myself to think that any bishop, whose heart is at stake about the supreme spiritual issues, will allow his decisions to be determined by a consideration which does not touch the substance of the Christians involved. In any case, to defer the consideration of that important document, would prolong a period of possibly harmful uncertainty and, if I may say so, might well expose Your Lordship and myself to note unjustifiable criticism on the part of the bishops from whom it is withheld.

Assuring Your Lordship of my earnest prayer that the paraclete - the spirit of light and strength and unity whom Christ promised to His Church - will guide us all in the accomplishment of God's Holy purposes in us, I remain,

With sentiments of high regard and esteem,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Edward Mooney, Delegate Apostolic.

**Document 36**  
**Reply of Mar Ivanios to the Aforementioned Letter  
of Apostolic Delegate Mooney Explaining the  
Delicate Situation**

Vadasserikara, 02 November 1929: *in this preliminary and immediate response after the reception of the aforementioned letter of the Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Mar Ivanios promises to confidentially communicate the normative statement of the Apostolic See to all the bishops of the Catholicate as soon as possible (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 119-120).*

Your Excellency,

I write to thank Your Excellency for the very kind letter no. 1484/29 dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 1929, which reached me this evening.

I am afraid that if the catholicos came to know that His beatitude's position has not been recognized by the Holy See, he may not favour reunion at all. My great desire is to get the catholicos to lead us all in the path of reunion. He made me withhold the papal statement of 5<sup>th</sup> August 1929 from His beatitude for the time being and to write to Your Excellency as I did on September 17<sup>th</sup>. I am very sorry to have failed to look at the matter from the same point that Your Excellency has received it. Kindly allow me to say how grateful I am for the most kind and frank manner in which Your Excellency has expressed on the matter.

The memorandum of November 1926 was presented to Your Excellency on behalf of:

1. His Beatitude Moran Mar Baselius (Givergis I), catholicos,
2. The Most Rev. Mar Gregorios (Givergis), metropolitan, and
3. The bishop of Bethany.

Of these three, the catholicos passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1928. And on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1929, the Most Rev. Mar Gregorios was appointed catholicos; according to custom, the new catholicos assumed the name Baselius (Givergis II). The bishop of Bethany was established as the metropolitan of Bethany. Two new bishops

also were consecrated, namely, Mar Theophilos and Mar Gregorios (Kyriakos).

As soon as I read Your Excellency's letter no. 1484/29, dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 1929 I decided to follow Your Excellency's advice, and communicate confidentially the papal statement of 5<sup>th</sup> August 1929, to His Beatitude the catholicos and to His Lordship Mar Gregorios. I have decided furthermore, to tell them that in my judgment, to accept the most generous invitation of the pope is the only right call to follow in order to fulfil the holy will of our Blessed Lord and to glorify the Heavenly Father. I will communicate their answers to Your Excellency in due course.

Thanking Your Excellency for the most kind promise of Your Excellency's prayers, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Our Blessed Lord,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

### **Document 37**

#### **Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney on the Attitude of the Catholicos regarding Reunion**

Vadasserikara, 14 November 1929: *in accordance with the directive of the Apostolic Delegate, Mar Ivanios communicated to the catholicos the normative statement on reunion. Mar Ivanios is hopeful that the catholicos would decide in favour of reunion, if the title of Catholicos is maintained at least as he proposed* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Ser. I, Fasc.87B, 118).

Your Excellency,

His beatitude the catholicos was informed about the papal statement of August 5<sup>th</sup> and has sent word that he will be prepared to promote reunion with Rome, provided he is not asked to anathematize any of the fathers, or change any article of the faith.

His Lordship Mar Theophilos is here now. We both are hopeful that a favourable answer from Rome on the points mentioned in my



letter of 17<sup>th</sup> September 1929 may enable His beatitude to decide in favour of reunion.

I have not heard from His Lordship Mar Gregorios. The chances are that his decision will depend on that of the catholicos. When I hear from him, I shall communicate to Your Excellency. It is possible he may not answer independently. With heartfelt regards, I remain,

Your Excellency's very devoted,  
Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

### Document 38

#### **Fourth Report of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to the Congregation for the Eastern Church, with which He Transmits the Reply of Mar Ivanios and His Observations thereupon**

Bangalore, 5 December 1929: *Apostolic Delegate Mooney forwards to the Congregation for the Eastern Church the reply of Mar Ivanios to the normative statement of the Congregation, the agreement of Mar Theophilos and the response of the same Delegate after the reception of the said documents (documents 33-35). In the present report the Apostolic Delegate adds his own comments and evaluation on important points* (The report and the Italian translation of the three attached documents in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza del 4 luglio 1930, Sommario XXL*, pp. 84-94; the report also in Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Ser. I, Fasc.87B).

Most Reverend Eminence,

As a follow-up to my report No. 1455/29 of 26 September 1929 (documents 33-34), I have the honour to transmit here enclosed (attachment no. 2) to Your Most Reverend Eminence a copy of the letter that Mar Ivanios addressed me in reply to the report including the directives of the Holy See which Your Eminence deigned to notify me with the esteemed letter No. 82/28 on 26 June of last year.

Mar Ivanios, who replies on his behalf and on behalf of Mar Theophilos, his suffragan bishop, thanks, expresses their gratitude and assures that they have decided to fully acknowledge the primacy of the Supreme Pontiff and to submit themselves without any reservation to the successor of Saint Peter in the See of Rome. Then the two bishops formulate, *but not as conditions for their reunion*, some questions about the use of the “filioque” in the ritual prayers; about the “Catholicate”, which they would like to maintain as a title, with a position similar to that of Primate; and about the name which their Church would assume. Then, they expose the state of their episcopal jurisdiction, expressing the hope that even the other bishops, who eventually want to reunite, will have no difficulty in establishing the celibacy of the clergy, which they have already adopted. Finally they make a concealed request to be able to delay a little their reunion with Rome in order to be able to gain more people for their cause.

As Your Eminence can see from the letter of Mar Ivanios, he sent me his reply without having previously communicated the foundational principles (cornerstones) established by the Holy See for the reunion also to the “Catholics” and to Mar Gregorios. Therefore, I considered appropriate to insist on Mar Ivanios to want to communicate the directives of the Holy See to all the signatories of the Memorandum sent to Rome (document 35). The reply that Mar Basilios orally gave to Mar Ivanios and that he communicated to me is such that it does not let hope for anything good concerning his reunion; instead, Mar Gregorios has not replied yet, but Mar Ivanios’ opinion is that he will hardly separate himself from the “catholics.”

Now to return to Mar Ivanios’ reply, I allow myself, being sure to interpret Your Eminence’s desire, to make some brief comments on some points raised in it.

1. Concerning the request of being able to maintain the Nicene Creed without the “filioque”.

Having gathered information, it turns out to me that the Nicene Creed without the “filioque” is the only one used by the Jacobites of Malabar and even by the lay people in their daily prayers in vernacular language. In this regard, the bishop of Quilon proposes that, having been inserted the “filioque” in the liturgical books, as it

is used by the Syro-Antiochene Catholics, for now the people can continue to use the Creed without the “filioque” in vernacular language. If this is possible, it seems to me to be recommended as the possible solution that saves the principle without giving rise to the inconveniences feared by Mar Ivanios.

## 2. Concerning the “Catholicate”.

The weak historical reasons and those of convenience advanced by Mar Ivanios for still recommending the recognition of the “catholicate” are certainly, according to me, not valid to destroy the reasons adduced in my previous reports against its recognition. It seems to me that now such recognition is more inopportune than ever, after the recent attitude taken by the present “catholicos”, especially because if this “catholicate” were recognized and Mar Basilios, as it is almost certain now, did not submit, we would end up with two “catholicates” in Malabar, one Catholic and the other Jacobite.

## 3. Concerning the jurisdiction.

Beyond the fact that the metropolitan of Bethany and the bishop of Thiruvalla do not have their own territory, but only jurisdiction over churches scattered in the other Jacobite dioceses, I point out that at present there is not even a clear territorial division between the churches subject to Bethany and those subject to Thiruvalla, rather the two Sees are located in the same town of Thiruvalla. Given the harmony which reigns between Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos it will not be hard to dissolve the difficulty. Things would get complicated only if any other Jacobite Bishop came to the Church.

Then I have to note here that for Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos there does not exist another grave difficulty, namely that of the properties, which instead the other Jacobite bishops, who would wish to join Rome, should face. In fact, while the sacred buildings and the other ecclesiastical properties of the two dioceses of Bethany and Thiruvalla are registered under the name of Mar Ivanios, those of the other Jacobite dioceses belong, before the civil law not to their respective Ordinaries, but to the populations.

## 4. Concerning the denomination to be given to the new united Church.

Mar Ivanios' proposal derives from the fact that the Syro-Malabar Catholics are known in India simply as "Catholic Syrians" and it is necessary to find a name that distinguishes the new Catholics from them. However, the suggested name is obviously impossible for historical reasons. Perhaps the name of "Syriac Catholics" as opposed somehow to that of "Suriani Catholics" would serve the purpose, but Your Eminence will be abler than me to find a happy and suitable denomination.

#### 5. Concerning the deferral of the reunion.

Although he does not say this expressly, it seems to me that the meaning of the last paragraphs of Mar Ivanios' letter is that he hopes to be able to lead more people to the unity of the Church by somewhat deferring his public submission to Rome, but it is not necessary that I comment on such a proposal. Therefore, while I await the response that the Sacred Congregation will consider better to give to the questions of Mar Ivanios, I thank Your Eminence in advance for those further directives on the canonical modalities of such reunion, which Your Eminence will kindly deign to send me in view of the hoped-for reunion of two of the Jacobite bishops.

Bowed to the kiss of the Sacred Purple with sentiments of profound respect I have the honour of professing myself, of Your Most Reverend Eminence,

Edward Mooney, Apostolic Delegate.

### Document 39

#### **Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney concerning the Probable Reunion of Mar Gregorios**

Vadasserikara, 13 January 1930: *when the normative statement of the Congregation was communicated to Mar Gregorios, he did not reply immediately, but later he visited Mar Ivanios and told him that he would follow the Catholicos and other bishops with him. Mar Ivanios informs the Apostolic Delegate of the position adopted by Mar Gregorios (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser. I, Fasc. 87 B, 130).*

Your Excellency,

In continuation of my letter dated November 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 14/29, I am writing to inform your Excellency that His Lordship Mar Gregorios visited me last week; and we had ample opportunity to talk over the question of reunion. His Lordship said that he would likely join in if the step was a move towards unity on the catholicos behalf and the bishops with him.

May I urge your Excellency for an answer from Rome, as early as possible, on the points mentioned in my letter dated the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1929.

With most cordial regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

#### Document 40

### Letter of Mar Ivanios to Fr. John Ribeiro Expressing His Readiness to Embrace the Catholic Faith, together with Mar Theophilos

Vadasserikara, 23 January 1930: *as in the beginning the communication between Mar Ivanios and the Apostolic Delegate continued through the mediation of Fr. John Ribeiro, a Latin priest of the diocese of Quilon. In this letter Mar Ivanios informs Fr. Ribeiro that he and Mar Theophilos are ready to embrace the Catholic Church, even if the Catholicos and other bishops refuse to do so* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87.B, 125-126).

Dear Father Ribeiro,

Thank you for your letter which dated the visit of 16<sup>th</sup> January. I should be thankful if you will be so good as to forward my letter dated the 13<sup>th</sup> January to His Excellency the apostolic delegate without delay. In my letter to His Excellency dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November, I promised that I will communicate the papal statement of 5<sup>th</sup> August 1929 to His Lordship Mar Gregorios, the newly consecrated bishop of Kottayam and convey to His Excellency His Lordship's reply. It is in fulfilment of this promise that I wrote to His Excellency on January the 13<sup>th</sup>. I am eagerly waiting to hear from His Excellency.

As soon as I hear from him, I hope to confer the question of reunion with the leading people of the Orthodox Syrian Church. I want to do all that lies in my power to give them the fullest and a prayerful opportunity to consider this; it's the most important problem of Christianity in Malabar at present.

Some of my friends who talked with the catholicos lately have informed me that His Beatitude is likely to favour reunion if conditions are favourable. May I say a word about our ordinary use of term "faith." This word is used not simply to signify dogma, but in a wider sense comprehending dogmas and such concrete symbols of the faith, as practices, rituals and even disciplinary matters.

The decision that His Lordship, Mar Theophilos and I have made, do not depend at all on the nature of any decision that the catholicos and others may make regarding reunion. I cannot be sure as to what attitude the catholicos might eventually adopt. It is very possible that the catholicos may turn out to be the worst enemy of reunion and even possibly censure me and Mar Theophilos, but I must do my duty through His Beatitude and the other bishops in all my humility and love.

I remain, Yours sincerely,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

### Document 41

#### **Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney concerning the Attitude of the Catholicos and the Prospects of Reunion**

Tiruvalla, 03 February 1930: *Mar Ivanios informs the Apostolic Delegate some issues regarding reunion and the comportment of the catholicos, who may take punitive action against him and Mar Theophilos* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 131-133).

Your Excellency,

I trust your Excellency is in receipt of my letter dated the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1930. I do not know what attitude the catholicos will

eventually take regarding the question of reunion. There are three designated bishops who were elected by the synod and whose consecration should take place this year, probably after Easter, 1930. If His Beatitude the catholicos should decide against reunion, he will demand from these candidates a definite promise that they will never favour reunion with the Holy See. I was able to meet two of these candidates and communicated to them the papal statement of August 1929. They both assure me that they are not prepared to give the above mentioned undertaking, if the catholicos were to demand it, and that they are prepared to accept consecration at my hands and to take the oath of obedience to me as metropolitan, and eventually to reunite with the Holy See. They are also prepared to follow me into reunion in their present status, and further wait upon the will of God about them. His Lordship Mar Theophilos and I do not wish to take any step in this matter without the fullest approval of the Holy See. In fact, we would prefer to do nothing until after reunion has been affected, and the necessity for more bishops becomes imperative.

From some source or other, news has spread in this country that we are seriously contemplating reunion. It is also rumoured that the catholicos will publicly censure and excommunicate me and Mar Theophilos, and that lawsuits will be instituted to dispossess us of all our property and the churches we have established. Another difficulty too has arisen. I have under me two religious orders, one of men (a clerical order) and the other of women (a teaching order). These orders are not numerically large; the first order consists of 21 members (seven of them priests), and the second order consists of 13 members, including novices and postulants. These will certainly follow me into reunion. They have very little funds, and are maintained out of donations collected from different parts of the country. The enemies of reunion have taken advantage of the rumour about us and are publicly discouraging people from giving any contributions to these orders. In spite of these difficulties it seems to me that on account of the magnitude of the issues involved, I should acquaint our people with the most gracious invitation of the Holy See calling upon the Malankara Orthodox Syrians to enter into the unity of the Catholic Church, and give them the fullest prayerful opportunity to consider this matter. I am waiting for your Excellency's reply to my letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> September 1929.

With best wishes and very high regards, I remain,  
Yours in our Blessed Lord, Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany.

### Document 42

## **Reply of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to Mar Ivanios, Informing that the Incidental Questions Raised by Him Are Submitted to the Final Decision of the Congregation for the Eastern Church**

Ceylon, 17 February 1930: *Apostolic Delegate Mooney acknowledges the receipt of the letters of Mar Ivanios (Documents 39 and 41) and informs him that he has submitted all matters of concern to the consideration and final decision of the Congregation for the Eastern Church (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archieparchy, AMAET-HAN-COR 19).*

My Lord,

I beg to assure Your Lordship that I have received your letters of January 13<sup>th</sup> and of February 3<sup>rd</sup>. This delay in acknowledging them is due to the fact that I have been on tour for the past month. Whatever mail is forwarded to me from the delegation in Bangalore is therefore somewhat late and irregular in reaching me.

According to the assurance given to you in my letter of November 25<sup>th</sup>, I have submitted to Rome the incidental questions raised in your communication shortly preceding that date. In reply I have been informed that the points in question are receiving the attention of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church. I shall not fail to apprise you of the answer of the Congregation as soon as it reaches me. In the meantime, it seems to be that, as I observed in a former letter, these points which are surely of secondary importance should not materially influence the judgment of anyone who seriously considers the whole question.

You will allow me to remark that I find myself in entire agreement with the opinion Your Lordship expresses with regards to the Episcopal candidates of whom you speak in your letter of February 3<sup>rd</sup>. To proceed with their consecration in the present



circumstances would, according to my mind, be a mistake, and might put them in quite an embarrassing position.

I was indeed sorry to hear of the financial difficulties which are beginning to preoccupy you concerning the members of the religious communities under Your Lordship's direction, but I am confident that Divine Providence will not fail either you or them, in the trials which a devoted following of the dictates of consciences may occasion.

Assuring Your Lordship that I am following with deep and prayerful interest the course of events which seem now to approach the crisis when momentous a decision must be faced in a spirit of courage and fidelity; and that I shall do all in my power to let you have the supplementary answer we are expecting from Rome, I remain,

With every best wish in the Lord, Sincerely yours,  
Edward Mooney, Delegate Apostolic.

### Document 43

#### Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Mooney concerning the Comportment of the Catholicos

Tiruvalla, 05 March 1930: *Mar Ivanios acknowledges the receipt of the letter of the Apostolic Delegate (document 42) and informs him of the interdict issued by the catholicos and the synod, forbidding him to start new parishes (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87B, 140-141).*

Your Excellency,

I am very thankful to your Excellency for your kind letter no. 1735/30 dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 1930. I am indeed grateful to your Excellency for your most kind thoughts of us.

Your Excellency is aware that I, as the metropolitan of Bethany, have been putting up churches in all the seven Episcopal dioceses into which the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar is territorially divided, and outside Malabar too, and incardinating into the Bethany churches and parishioners of the Orthodox Syrian congregations. Lately, on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, His beatitude the

catholicos visited me and Mar Theophilos, and questioned us if we were contemplating reunion with the Church of Rome. We answered that we were not prepared to reply to that question. Again, on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, the Most Rev. Mar Dionysius and the Rt. Rev. Mar Gregorios together visited me and repeated the same question as that of the catholicos, and I gave the same answer as before. Since then, they (the catholicos, Mar Dionysius and Mar Gregorios) met in synod and sent me a letter of interdict, marked "confidential" and signed by the three of them. This letter forbids me and Mar Theophilos to start any more churches and adds that if the interdict is disobeyed, we shall be visited by public censure.

I have decided to obey the interdict, and make use of the present situation as an opportunity to concentrate on the work we have on hand. On all sides there are signs that sufferings are in store for us, but we are confident that the most merciful Lord will give us that fortitude and strength with which He bore the cross for us.

I am much longing for the answer from Rome on the points mentioned in my letter dated the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1929.

With the best wishes and regards, I remain,

Your Excellency very sincerely,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

#### **Document 44**

### **Letter of Bishop Benziger to Apostolic Delegate Mooney concerning the Future of Those Jacobites Already Converted and Adopted the Syro-Malabar Rite**

*Quilon, 29 May 1930: even before the start of the reunion movement there were individual conversions of priests and small groups of Christian faithful from the Malankara Jacobite Church, who followed the Syro-Malabar rite. Now the Bishop of Quilon, Aloysius Maria-Benziger asks the Apostolic Delegate who was at that time in Rome to clarify their canonical status together with the Cardinal Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church. A copy of this letter was also sent to Mar Ivanios (Vatican City,*

Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind.*, Ser. 1, Fasc. 87A, 126-131).

Your Excellency,

Allow me to submit the following question which is to arise as soon as Mar Ivanios will have entered our Holy Church. Being in Rome your Excellency may desire to speak of it with His Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of the Oriental Churches.

What to do with those Jacobite Priests and laymen who have since 1916 and more particularly since 1926 converted in my Quilon diocese and who have been up to now been considered to be belonging (after their conversion) to the Syro-Malabar rite, though under my jurisdiction.

Such priests are now ten and all except one of 65 years celebrate Mass and administer holy Sacraments according to the Syro-Malabar rite. One converted in 1916; one in 1921; four in 1926 (of whom one at the age of seventy four died a holy death); one in 1927; one in 1929; one in 1930- besides two Jacobite converts whom I admitted in our Seminary in 1917 and 1923 and ordained from the Jacobites. There are two others, father and son, awaiting the result of my letter of October 22, 1929 to His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary- No.12416, re: Rev. Thomas Joseph.

The converted laymen are about 1,200, spread by families over many villages, North of Quilon. The greater part converted within the last four or five years. They live and are ascribed to various parishes of the Latin rite, except 1) at Puthenpidica where they constitute the parish being about 360 with a nice church and parochial house which I built for them in 1926, 2) at Kattanam, Kodasanad, Ilanthur, Kottampalli, and Chengannur, where we brought a small site and erected a small provisory chapel in each place for a few Jacobite convert families, with the hope that their number would increase, 3) and yesterday I approved and established Kalayapuram as a new centre; there are two converted Jacobite families and about 400 persons (Jacobites) have repeatedly promised to convert, besides about 300 pagans who also have promised.

If Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos convert, and are constituted as bishops of Bethany (which lies in any diocese, near its northern

limit), and of Tiruvalla (which is some six miles south of Changanacherry) for the Syrian rite (Catholic Orthodox Syrians) does the Holy See wish that those Jacobite converts, priests and laymen, converted prior to Mar Ivanios' conversion, and whom we have since their conversion considered as of the Syro-Malabar rite, pass under the jurisdiction of Mar Ivanios as bishop of Bethany? I believe that many, perhaps most, of the converts would desire it, though I am not quite sure, but I am convinced that no one would oppose were the Holy See to dispose so, and on my part I have no objection.

As insinuated in a former letter to Your Excellency, the limit between those two dioceses Bethany and Tiruvalla, might be the northern limit of the Quilon diocese, i.e. the Ranni (or alias Pambayar) River which separates Quilon from Verapoly, - and from Viyapurem (where that river turns northward) a straight line to the Arabian Sea south of the village Porukad (or alias Pirakad) which line separates Quilon from Cochin. The division was indeed insinuated by Mar Ivanios himself at his last visit to me.

With most profound veneration, I am,

Your Excellency's very humble servant,

Friar Aloysius Benziger, Bishop of Quilon.

### Document 45

#### Letter of Mar Ivanios to Bishop Aloysius Maria Benziger concerning the Number of Priests to be Reunited

Tiruvalla, 03 June 1930: *Mar Ivanios informs Bishop Benziger about the number of priests who are ready for reunion* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabaresi: Convers.dei Giacobiti*, Fasc. II, 27).

My Lord,

I am grateful to your Lordship for your very kind reply dated 29<sup>th</sup> May. I am confident, that the presence of His Excellency, the apostolic delegate in Rome, will be very helpful. It will enable the

sacred congregation for oriental churches to make definite proposals to the Holy Father.

Within the last weeks I have been making enquiries regarding the probable number of priests who would come out with us. We have been able to reckon about fifty. Some of the priests told me that they would want to wait a little while, in order to work up to carry their congregations with them when they join us. From the very day that three priests join us, we shall have to support them and also to put up chapels or churches for them and their congregations.

This is a time of great hardships and trials for me. I am grateful for the help of your Lordships' prayers, which I know have great weight with Our Blessed Lord. His loving arms enwrap me. I remain,

Your Lordship's most devoted,  
Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

#### Section IV

### PLENARY MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCH, FINAL DECISIONS AND THE REALIZATION OF REUNION

The plenary meeting of the Congregation for the Eastern Church held on 4 July 1930 considered two questions: what further instruction and assurances were to be given to Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, who wished to be reunited with the Catholic Church and what provisions were to be adopted for their eventual return. Nine cardinals were present for the meeting, their Eminences Michele Lega, Pietro Gasparri, Willem Marinus Van Rossum, Andreas Franz Frühwirth, Luigi Sincero, Bonaventura Cerretti, Enrico Gasparri, Luigi Capotosti, Franziskus Ehrle.

Cardinal Bonaventura Cerretti, the Relator of the meeting presented the Report entitled: *Malabar, Concerning the Desire Expressed by Some Jacobite Bishops of the "Metran Party" for Reunion with the Catholic Church*. The Report contains a brief history of all that happened from the time of the first memorandum of Mar Ivanios on 1 November 1926 until the plenary meeting of 4

July 1930.<sup>28</sup> The Report is followed by the decisions of the plenary meeting as additional handwritten pages, Summary consisting of XXI documents (many of which have been translated into English and included in this book) and an appendix, which contains information concerning the Jacobites, decisions of the plenary meeting of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide on 25 July 1888 concerning the reunion of the former Jacobite Metropolitan Mar Dionysius V, information about the life and activities of Mar Ivanios and relevant documentation on the addition of “filioque”.<sup>29</sup>

After profound study of and fruitful discussions on the two proposed questions the cardinals made unanimous decisions on all points concerning reunion. As usual, after the plenary meeting, the decisions of the cardinals were presented to Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), who approved them on 5 July 1930.

The decisions of the plenary meeting approved by Pope Pius XI were communicated to Apostolic Delegate Mooney, granting him faculty to receive Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos to the Catholic Church. Since the Apostolic Delegate was absent from India, he subdelegated Aloysius Maria Benzinger, bishop of Quilon for the same purpose, forwarding to him, through his secretary Monsignor V. Belgeri, the decisions of the Congregation, to be transmitted to Mar Ivanios.

After declaring the validity of baptism, priestly ordination and episcopal consecration, having received the profession of Catholic faith, Bishop Benzinger united Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos with the Catholic Church on 20 September 1930. Then, on the same day Bishop Benzinger also received Fr. John OIC, deacon Alexander (later Fr. Seraphion OIC) and Mr. Chacko Kilileth in to the Catholic Church. This historic event marked the birth of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

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<sup>28</sup> In order to avoid repetition, this Report is not presented in this book. We have meticulously reconstructed the history of the reunion movement in the introduction of sections and in the presentation of each document, also with the help of the said Report.

<sup>29</sup> All the documents mentioned in this paragraph are found in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Ponenze* del 1930.

## Document 46

## Decisions of the Plenary Meeting of the Congregation for the Eastern Church concerning Reunion and Approval of Pope Pius XI

Vatican City, 4 July 1930: *the plenary meeting held on 4 July 1930 made definitive and final decisions on all disputed questions and doubts concerning reunion. On 5 July 1930 the decisions were presented to Pope Pius XI, who approved them, thus paving the way for the realization of the long-cherished desire of Mar Ivanios for communion with the Catholic Church* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Ponzona del 4 luglio 1930*, additional handwritten pages in Italian after the Report).

**Malabar:** Concerning the desire expressed by some Malabar Jacobite Bishops of the “Metran Party” for union with the Catholic Church.

**Present:** The Most Eminent Cardinals Lega, P. Gasparri, Van Rossum, Frühwirth, Sincero, Cerretti, E. Gasparri, Capotosti, Ehrle.

**Relator:** Most Eminent Cardinal Bonaventura Cerretti.

**Doubts:** I “Whether and what further instructions or assurances it is convenient to give to the requests of the Jacobite Bishop Mar Ivanios and his suffragan Mar Theophilos, which are exposed in the last letters” (cf. documents 33, 34, 35, 38).

II. “Whether and what provisions are to be adopted for the eventual return of the two above-mentioned Jacobite Bishops”.

The Most Eminent Fathers, after a copious report of the Cardinal Relator, agree upon the following resolutions.

**To Doubt (question) I:** Having considered the fact that, of the five bishops forming the *Metran* Party, who sent the Memorandum, there are two left, Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, who appear honest, beyond all exception and esteemed by everyone (about Mar Ivanios all say that he is pious, learned, supporter of celibacy, a man of virtuous life, founder of two religious institutes; and about Mar Theophilos, his suffragan, it is said that he follows him with

conviction and seriousness), they are to be trusted, after the negotiations (paperwork) that took place between the Sacred Congregation, the Apostolic Delegate and Msgr. Benzinger concerning the two Jacobite bishops; now it should no longer be delayed to receive Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos in the Church and they should be given a formal assurance about this.

Concerning further instructions, their desires are to be met, as largely it has already been done, in the following manner.

1) The pure Syrian rite of Antioch will be maintained and that therefore they will not be confounded with the Syro-Malabars whose rite is of Syro-Chaldean origin.

2) Having verified the validity of baptism, especially that of the sacred ordination and consecration of the above said two bishops, they will be kept in their respective office and jurisdiction, that is Mar Ivanios will remain bishop of Bethany with the personal title (*ad personam*) of archbishop metropolitan; and Mar Theophilos as bishop of Thiruvalla with jurisdiction over the clergy and people: there are about twenty members of the clergy and three thousand people who are ready to follow faithfully the two bishops.

3) One should not speak about the catholicate or catholicos, because not converting the present catholicos, it is premature to decide now what would be done, if he were converted. In the present circumstances (*in praesentibus rerum adiunctis*) the archbishop of Bethany and the bishop of Thiruvalla will directly depend on Rome (it is not possible to speak about any dependence on the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, because it is not desired).

4) The liturgical books (missals, rituals, pontifical), which are those coming from the Propaganda, will be kept, removing however non-proper and erroneous expressions, which eventually have been introduced.

For the purpose of examining those books Msgr. James Kalacherry, bishop of Changanacherry, who knows well Syriac and Msgr. Benziger, bishop of Quilon, inside whose territory Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos reside, are designated.

5) As for the "Filioque," being assured that the Catholic doctrine has been accepted not only by the bishops who have already declared it, but also by the people, the question of its insertion in the



“Creed,” becomes secondary and of a disciplinary character. In this case therefore it will be enough to follow the norms given by Benedict XIV: “[...] although the Greeks are also bound to believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Father, nevertheless they are not bound to pronounce it in the Symbol (Constitution *Etsi pastoralis* I). “[...] Having held the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as a sure dogma of the Faith and having recognized the power of the Church to add the phrase to the Symbol, the Orientals and the Greeks can be permitted to recite the Nicene Symbol, in which the addition *Filioque* is not found, if this will not cause any scandal (Encyclical Letter *Allatae sunt* 30).

Having exposed this, *Filioque* is to be recited in the liturgy, while using the Antiochene liturgical books, in which this phrase is found; in the popular prayers however it could also be done according to the present practice.

6) The name of these new Catholics will be Catholic “Syro-Malabars of the Antiochene Rite” or “Malabar Catholics of the Syro-Antiochene Rite”, and “Antiochene Malabar or “Syro-Malabar Church.” Then if they call among themselves Syrians and not *Suriani*, it is indifferent.

**To Doubt (question) II:** Given the formal assurance of their acceptance, as above, the Holy See should require the necessary guarantees, especially regarding the validity of sacraments. Therefore:

Regarding Baptism, it is to be examined whether it had been introduced here and there an equivocal, uncertain and insufficient manner (in general it does not appear);

Regarding Ordination, although having the example of Jacobite priests who, having converted, were admitted to the exercise of the order after prior absolution from irregularities, the Apostolic Delegate does not omit to investigate personally or through others. For this purpose, the vote of Cardinal Gotti and the instructions of Propaganda on 25 July 1888 should be kept in view.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> These elements are reproduced in Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti*,

The Delegate personally or through Msgr. Benzinger or others, is to absolve the two bishops from possible irregularities; he is to take care that the priests and laity who wish to convert make the profession of faith, in the best manner they think. Regarding celibacy, in the future no one is to be admitted to the major orders unless he does not wish to remain celibate: for the present the married priests are tolerated and the married deacons can receive the priesthood (Mar Ivanios has already introduced this). The two bishops should invigilate over their rights in vindicating the churches. At least as a proposal, it is suggested to divide the territory between them according to the boundary of the River Ranny: Mar Ivanios in the South and Mar Theophilos in the North. In the future it will be seen whether it is convenient to provide for a seminary.

The Sacred Congregation is to keep in mind the recommendation of the Apostolic Delegate to give the two Bishops a financial support at the beginning.

The Apostolic Delegate is specially delegated to execute the abovementioned provisions with the faculty to subdelegate.

#### **At the Audience of the Most Holy Father on 5 July 1930**

After a report having been submitted to the Most Holy Father concerning all these by the undersigned Cardinal Secretary on 5 July 1930, His holiness has deigned to approve the aforementioned resolutions.

Signed: Cardinal Luigi Sincero.

**Document 47****Letter of Monsignor V. Belgeri, Secretary of the  
Apostolic Delegate to Bishop Benzinger  
concerning Reception of Mar Ivanios  
into the Catholic Church**

Bangalore, 20 August 1930: *after the plenary meeting of the Congregation for the Eastern Church and the approval of its decisions by Pope Pius XI, Cardinal Luigi Sincero communicated them to Apostolic Delegate Mooney with the letter of 7 July 1930.<sup>31</sup> Since he was absent from India at that time, according to his directives, an English translation of the essential content of the decisions and provisions was sent by his Secretary Monsignor V. Belgeri to Mar Ivanios through Bishop Benzinger, who was subdelegated to receive Mar Ivanios into the Catholic Church. The last part of the document consists of the directives of the Apostolic Delegate himself regarding matters left to his competence by the Congregation. Bishop Benzinger who was involved in the reunion movement from the very beginning was subdelegated to receive the profession of faith of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos and to receive them to the Catholic Church (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAET-HAN-COR-23).*

Apostolic Delegation, Bangalore, No 2035/13.

In the "Plenary session" of the 4 July last, their Eminences the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church have duly examined the question of "Desiderata" exposed by the Jacobite bishops of Malabar, belonging to the *Metran* party and especially of the Most Rev. Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany and Mar Theophilos, his Suffragan, about their reunion with the Catholic Church.

Considering that from among the five bishops belonging to the *Metran* party, Mar Ivanios who composed the Memorandum of November 1926, remained faithful to the proposal already then

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<sup>31</sup> Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 82/28, *Malabaresi-Converts. dei Giacobiti*, Fasc. II.

exposed, also in the name of two other bishops, and considering that Mar Ivanios as well as Mar Theophilos, his Suffragan (who has joined with him and subscribed to the proposed “desiderata”), from the information taken, are known to be worthy persons, sincere, beyond any exception and well esteemed: to the state of things, after the negotiations already conducted between this Sacred Congregation, Your Excellency and Monsignor Benziger regarding these two Jacobite bishops, it is found that there is no more need of postponing further the reception of the above mentioned bishops into the bosom of the Church and that it is necessary to give them a formal declaration of this benevolent disposition.

It is therefore convenient to meet the desiderata of the aforesaid two bishops, as it has already been done in greater part:

1. Assuring that the pure Syrian Rite of Antioch will be maintained and that therefore they will not be confounded with the Syro-Malabars whose rite is of Syro-Chaldean origin.

2. Moreover, assuring them that, having verified the validity of the baptism and of the sacred ordination and the consecration of the above said two bishops, they will be kept in their respective office and jurisdiction, that is, that Mar Ivanios will remain bishop of Bethany with the personal title (*ad personam*) of Archbishop Metropolitan; and Mar Theophilos Bishop of Tiruvalla.

3. As for the title of the “Catholicate or catholicos,” it is not advisable to touch this question, in view also that, as the present catholicos is not going to be converted, it is premature to decide now what should be done in case of his conversion.

The archbishop of Bethany and the bishop of Tiruvalla (*in praesentibus rerum adiunctis*) will at present depend directly on the Holy See, without any dependence on the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch.

4. Regarding the liturgical books (missal, ritual, pontifical) which are those coming from the Propaganda, the same will be kept, correcting however the expressions not proper and erroneous, which eventually have been introduced.

For the purpose of examining those books the Syro-Malabar bishop of Changanassery, who knows well Syriac and Msgr. Benziger, Bishop of Quilon, will be charged by the delegate

apostolic, for the reason also of the territorial vicinity of the two bishops desiring the reunion.

5. As for the "Filioque," being assured that the Catholic doctrine has been accepted not only by the bishops who have already declared it, but also by the people, the question of this insertion or at least of such an incision in the "Creed," becomes secondary and of a disciplinary character.

In this case therefore it will be enough to follow the rules given by Benedict XIV (Constitution *Etsi pastoralis* I, and Constitution *Allatae sunt* 30).

Having exposed the above and considering that in the Antiochian liturgical books used by the aforesaid Jacobites the word "*Filioque*" is already given, this word will be recited in the liturgy: in the popular prayers however it will be continued according to the present practice.

6. Regarding the name, these new Catholics may be called "Syro-Malabar Catholics of the Antiochean Rite" or "Malabar Catholics of the Syro-Antiochean Rite" or "Malabar Antiochean Church" or "Syro-Malabar Church." In this way, they will be distinguished from the Malabar Catholics of the Chaldean rite.

After having given the above instructions, the letter of His Eminence enumerates the following provisions for the eventual union of the two bishops:

### PROVISIONS

1. The Holy See having given the formal assurance of their acceptance, as above, it is required however to secure the necessary guarantees, especially regarding the validity of the sacraments. Hence as regards the sacred ordination, the apostolic delegate will not omit to carefully enquire, himself or through some others, and case for case, about the validity of the sacred ordination of the would be converts.

2. It will also be necessary to keep in mind the instructions given by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, dated 25 June 1888.<sup>32</sup>

3. His Excellency the delegate apostolic by himself or Msgr. Benziger or others will absolve the two bishops from the irregularity: will take care that the priests and laity who wish to convert make the profession of faith, in the best way possible.

4. As regards the celibacy, in future no candidate will be admitted to the sacred orders unless he promises to remain unmarried. For the present however married priests who convert will be accepted and tolerated and the married deacons may receive the priesthood.

5. The two bishops will endeavour to vindicate their rights over the churches.

6. The Holy See desires also that a clear and definite limitation or jurisdiction with territorial limits be established between the two bishops seeking now the reunion.

7. We shall see later whether it will be convenient to provide for the erection of a seminary.

His Excellency the apostolic delegate has been charged to put into execution all the above, with the powers to delegate accordingly.

After having given the above instructions, the letter of His Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of the said Sacred Congregation enumerates the following provisions for the eventual union of the two bishops.

The second part sets forth certain guarantees Rome asks from them. I am therefore asking Your Lordship to communicate the provisions of the documents to Mar Ivanios on behalf of His Excellency the apostolic delegate.

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<sup>32</sup> Here the reference is to the decisions of the plenary meeting of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide at the time of the failed reunion attempts of Mar Dionysius V, which we have reproduced in Introductory Article Two as number 3. Original text in the Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, *Acta* 1888, vol. 19, f. 132 and in Prot. 82/28, *Malabar: Vescovi Giacobiti, Pienza* del 4 luglio 1930, *Appendice al Sommario*, paragrafo II-2, pp. 119-122.

For this purpose, I am quoting here a few explanations and instructions I have received from His Excellency the apostolic delegate on the matter.

“The item about the territorial division between the two bishops” writes His Excellency, “is not mandatory but a suggestion to me – it will be best the cardinal thinks, to let them go on together for a while and when the opportune time comes to make the division, after we see what the movement amounts to”.

Regarding celibacy the instructions are clear enough about deacons and priests, as for other married clerics, each case may be proposed (and the permission will be given). In obedience to the orders of Rome and at the request of His Excellency the apostolic delegate I am also asking Your Lordship to come in touch with Msgr. Kallacherry (to whom I shall also write) for the examination of the liturgical books of the Jacobites and, before that, for the investigation of the validity of the orders of the two reuniting bishops and their clergy. For this purpose, the apostolic delegate is giving the following instructions:-

“Msgr. Benziger and Msgr. Kallacherry need not refer the data either to me or the Congregation but if they are personally satisfied that the baptism, ordination and consecration of the bishops is valid, they can go ahead. Even the absence of doubt on the part of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos can be taken into account.

In short, a summary examination that convinces them (such as they have already made regarding the priests received) will suffice.

Then Msgr. Benziger who has the faculties to give the necessary dispensation can receive the profession of Faith.”

Signed: V. Belgeri, Secretary to the Apostolic Delegate.

**Document 48****Letter of Monsignor V. Belgeri, Secretary of  
Apostolic Delegation to Bishop James Kalacherry  
concerning the Examination of  
Liturgical Books**

Bangalore (Wellington, Apostolic Delegation, 2041/30), 23 August 1930: *Secretary of the Apostolic Delegation V. Belgeri informs James Kalacherry, Bishop of Changanacherry, about the decision of the Holy See to receive Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilus into the Catholic Church and indicates the manner of examining the Antiochene liturgical books to be used by the new Catholic community* (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser.1, Fasc. 87A).

My Lord,

The Holy See has given to Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilus (*sic*), the Jacobite Bishops Bethany and Tiruvalla, a definite answer to their request for reunion with our Holy Catholic Church.

To them was granted "inter alia" the retention of their rite (pure Antiochene Syrian) and their liturgical books (missal, ritual, pontifical). The Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church however has commissioned Your Lordship and the Bishop of Quilon to examine those books in order to expurgate eventual errors.

Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilus on their coming over to the Church will be kept in their offices and jurisdiction and recognized as Bishops of Bethany and Tiruvalla, but an investigation is to be held on the validity of their Orders. For this purpose His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate asks Your Lordship and the Bishop of Quilon to do the necessary inquiries. Your Lordship and the Bishop of Quilon need not refer the data either to the Delegation or to the Sacred Congregation, but if both Your Lordship and Msgr. Benzinger are satisfied with the Baptism, Ordination and Consecration of the Bishop is valid, you can go ahead. Even the absence of doubt on the part of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilus can be taken into account. In short, a summary examination that convinces you (such as you have already made in regard to the



priests received) will suffice. Then Msgr. Benzinger, who has the faculties to give the necessary dispensations, can receive their profession of Faith.

Msgr. Benzinger, who had been in direct communication with Mar Ivanios for the last three years on this subject and was requested to hand over to the reuniting Bishops the reply of the Holy See, will be able to give you further particulars. Now on behalf of His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate I am asking Your Lordship to get in touch with the Bishop of Quilon and give all the necessary help in the matter.

Wishing you a complete success for the greater glory of God, I remain My Lord,

Secretary, Apostolic Delegation (V. Belgeri).

#### **Document 49**

### **Declaration of Bishop Benziger on the Validity of Baptism and Ordinations of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos and Their Reception into the Catholic Church**

*Quilon, 20 September 1930: being subdelegated by Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Bishop Aloysius-Maria Benziger ascertained and declared the validity of baptism, priestly ordination and episcopal consecration of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, and received them to the Catholic Church (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAET-BP-BBC-2/30).*

Before God Almighty and to all who will see or hear this, I do hereby attest and declare as follows: -

Their Eminences the cardinals of the "Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church," after mature consideration and being convinced of the earnestness and worthiness of His Grace Mar Ivanios, (P T Geevarghese), and of His Lordship Mar Theophilos, (K. A. Jacob), have on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1930 resolved: that those prelates be affectionately received into the bosom of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; - that, after verifying the validity of their baptism, ordination and consecration, they be received in their

respective office and jurisdiction, under the immediate dependence on the Holy See and retaining the Syrian Rite of Antioch.

His Holiness Pope Pius XI having graciously approved and confirmed those resolutions on 5<sup>th</sup> July, His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies has been charged to give effect to them, with power of subdelegation.

And His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate, being absent from India, has deigned to subdelegate me, his unworthy servant.

Therefore, being convinced that there is no reasonable ground to doubt the validity of their baptism, ordination and consecration, and having received this day, the 20<sup>th</sup> September, in the Episcopal Chapel at Quilon their profession of holy faith, and having duly absolved them from all irregularity, I have united with the holy catholic Church His Grace the Most Rev. Mar Ivanios, as bishop of Bethany, with the personal title of an archbishop metropolitan and His Lordship the Rt. Rev. Mar Theophilos, as bishop of Tiruvalla, and have declared and do declare them free to exercise the power of their sacred orders and of jurisdiction.

Bishop of Quilon, Aloysius Maria-Benziger.

### Document 50

#### **Directives of Bishop Benziger concerning the Name of the Church and Future Church Administration**

*Quilon, 20 September 1930: after the reunion, in accordance with the concerned documents from the Congregation for the Eastern Church, Bishop Benzinger provides certain practical directives to the reunited bishops regarding some liturgical and theological aspects of the nascent Church and its future administration (Trivandrum, Archives of the Major Archeparchy, AMAET-BP-BKC-1, 30).*

My dear Lords Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos,

Giving to your Grace and to Your Lordship my Testimonial Letter no. 2408, I deem it opportune to make the following in accordance with instructions from the "Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church" addressed to the apostolic delegation and thence

committed to me under letter no. 2035 of August 20<sup>th</sup>, which I have already communicated to your Lordships on August 25<sup>th</sup> (document 47).

1. Your Lordships and those who will convert by your zeal will retain the same Syrian rite of Antioch as contained in the liturgical Books (the Missal, ritual, and pontifical), which had originated from the "Sacred Congregation of Propaganda," correcting improper expressions and mistakes that may have been introduced. To examine those books H. Lordship the bishop of Changanacherry who knows the Syrian language, and myself have been charged. On my part, I shall rely mainly on H. L. Bishop Kalacherry and I request therefore that those books be submitted to His Lordship.

2. For the present, Your Lordships will depend immediately on the Holy See, without any dependence on the Syrian patriarch of Antioch. As representative of the Holy See, His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate, after His return to Bangalore, Your Lordships will be able to address whatever doubts or questions may occur or directions needed.

3. As to the "filioque" this must be inserted in the creed of the liturgy if it is not already inserted, but it is not required to be introduced in the other ordinary prayers.

4. As for a distinctive name, Your Lordships have proposed: "The Malankara Syrian Church" and the Malankara Syrian catholicos." As this name is not exactly one of those proposed by Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church, I shall communicate Your Lordships' desire through His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate. Meanwhile I believe that name may be adopted.

5. Before receiving adult persons of over 14 years of age into our Holy Church, if their baptism is certainly invalid (each case should be considered) they should be baptized. If their baptism is valid, they must make a profession of faith, are then declared admitted and their names inscribed, after which they must make a good confession before they may receive Holy Communion. If the baptism is doubtful, after the profession of faith, they must be baptized under condition that they make their confession and be absolved conditionally. For the profession of faith, the Malayalam formula which I have given your Lordships should be used when,

possible. It is an authorized translation of the formula prescribed by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in 1890.

6. Before converted clerics may be allowed to exercise their orders, or be promoted to higher orders, they need to be absolved from "Irregularity." Until H. E. the Apostolic Delegate returns to India, I have the necessary faculty to absolve them. But before I may make use of it, His Lordship the Bishop of Changanacherry and myself must be informed about and be satisfied with the validity of the orders already received. I request therefore Your Lordships to kindly expose to H. L. the Bishop of Changanacherry the case of such clerics who are from within his territory and obtain His Lordships' recommendation to be forwarded to me. In case the clerics are not from within the territory, their case be exposed to me directly by Your Lordships.

7. In the future nobody may be promoted to the sacred orders before he has promised celibacy. But, at present, priests who are already married may be received and deacons who are already married may be promoted to the priesthood. As no directions have been given regarding lower clerics who are already married and whose promotion is desired, each case may be exposed to the Excellency the Apostolic Delegate.

8. After some time only when it will appear more opportune, Your Lordship may consider and propose a territorial division of the diocese of Bethany and Tiruvalla.

9. Similarly, after seeing how the movement will be developing, your Lordships may make proposals regarding a seminary.

With profound veneration I am,

Your Grace's and Your Lordship's very devoted servant,

Aloysius-Maria Benziger, Bishop of Quilon.

**Document 51****Letter of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos to  
Apostolic Delegate Mooney, Thanking Him  
for His Endeavours to Facilitate Reunion**

Tiruvalla, 22 September 1930: *after reunion Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos thank Apostolic Delegate Mooney, who played a vital role for achieving reunion from the very beginning of negotiations until their profession of faith and entrance into the Catholic Church (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind. Ser.1, Fasc. 87A, 151-152).*

Your Excellency,

On the 20th of September 1930 at Quilon we sang the *Te Deum* after making our profession of faith in the presence of the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Quilon and their Lordships the Bishop of Changanacherry, and the Bishop-Designate of Kottar. We are most grateful to Your Excellency for all that Your Excellency has done to facilitate our reunion with the Holy See. Our gratitude to God is inexpressible in that Your Excellency and the Lord Bishop of Quilon were in the designs of the Divine Providence the instruments in His hands for achieving the great desire of ours for the glory of His Holy Name. We know that Your Excellency has from the beginning of our correspondence shown great confidence in us. May we assure Your Excellency that it will be our utmost endeavour to prove ourselves worthy of the trust and confidence Your Excellency has so generously placed in us.

We much look forward to the return of Your Excellency to this country and long for the day when we shall have the privilege of expressing our most cordial gratitude to Your Excellency in person. We are confident that although ours is the humblest of beginnings, the most merciful Lord has prepared a ripe harvest for the glory of His Holy Name in this country. Commending ourselves to the affectionate regards and prayers of Your Excellency, we remain,

Your Excellency's most devoted,

Ivanios, Archbishop of Bethany,

Theophilos, Bishop of Tiruvalla.

**Document 52**

**Letter of Bishop Aloysius Maria Benzinger to Msgr. Belgeri Thanking Him for His Endeavours to Facilitate Reunion**

Quilon, 22 September 1930: *Bishop Aloysius Maria Benzinger informs Father Belgeri, secretary of the Apostolic Delegation that in virtue of the faculty granted to him, he received Mar Ivanios, Mar Theophilos and three other persons into the Catholic Church (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser.1, Fasc.87A, 157).*

Sub: Union of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos to Our Holy Church, Ref. no. 2035 of 20 August 1930 (document 47).

Very Rev. dear Father Belgeri,

In accordance with the instructions under your no. 2035 of August 20th and in virtue of Apostolic Faculty granted to me, I have received the Profession of Faith and have absolved from all irregularity and declared as recognized by the Holy See and free to exercise their powers and offices His Grace, the Most Reverend Mar Ivanios (P. P. Geevarghese), Bishop of Bethany, with the title of an Archbishop Metropolitan "ad personam", and His Lordship, the Rt. Rev. Mar Theophilus (K. O. Jacob), Bishop of Tiruvalla, in the afternoon of the 29th instant, in my Chapel here, in the presence of Their Lordships the Bishop of Changanacherry and the Bishop Elect of Kottar and of my household and of Rev. Father John O. I. C., a Jacobite Priest, Rev. Deacon Alexander O.I.C. and Mr. Geevarghese Jacob, a Jacobite layman, nephew of Mar Ivanios. The same afternoon I have also received into Our Holy Church the said Priest, Deacon and layman. Yesterday Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos said holy Mass according to the Catholic Missal of the Syrian Rite of Antioch.

They left yesterday evening to receive into Our Holy Church today the Religious and the Sisters of their Congregation, O. I. C., "Order of the Imitation of Christ", - and they hope to receive these next days a number of other Priests and of laymen - and that the movement will spread, notwithstanding the bitter and open

opposition of the other leaders of the Jacobite Church, especially of those of the Mar Dionysius' party from which they have separated. May God grant it [...].

With sincere esteem, I am,

Very Rev. dear Father, Your very devoted Servant,

Aloysius Maria Benzinger, Bishop of Quilon.

### **Document 53**

## **Thanksgiving Letter of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos to Pope Pius XI Immediately after Reunion**

Tiruvalla, 23 September 1930: *after the reunion, as Catholic bishops, Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos thank Pope Pius XI for his kindness to receive them into the Catholic Church, promising him "our utmost love, loyalty and devotion" (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. Num. 600/49, Malankaresi-Trivandrum, Fasc. I, 58-59).*

Most Holy Father,

The most merciful Lord God through the great benevolence of Your Holiness has granted to us the privilege of being re-united with the Holy See. On the 20th of Sept. 1930, we made our profession of faith before the Rt. Rev. Dr Benziger, the Lord Bishop of Quilon. Our hearts are full of joy and thankfulness. We are most grateful to Your Holiness for the kindest thoughts towards both of us and for all the facilities so generously and paternally granted to enable the Jacobites of this country to return to the bosom of the Holy Mother Church. We know that our Blessed Lord desires and deserves our whole-hearted love and devotion, and that in cherishing them towards Your Holiness's person and apostolic throne, we shall be serving Him and pleasing Him most. Trusting in his liberty and depending on Your Holiness' blessing, we venture to assure Your Holiness that all the days of our life it will be our most sincere effort for the glory of our Lord to give Your Holiness our utmost love, loyalty and devotion.

We need all the help that Your Holiness's prayers and blessings can fetch us from the Lord. We shall be most grateful, if when this humble letter is placed in Your Holiness's hands, Your Holiness will take it, that we are both personally present at Your Holiness's feet to render our humble homage of the most cordial love and respects, and graciously bless us. The glory of God through his Holy Church shall be our motto.

In prayer to God for the most abundant blessings on Your Holiness and commending ourselves to Your Holiness' most affectionate regards,

We remain, most dear and Holy Father,

Your Holiness's very humble children,

✠ Mar Ivanios, ✠ Mar Theophilus

### Document 54

#### Letter of Mar Ivanios to Fr Ribeiro concerning the Situation of the Church after Reunion

Tiruvalla, 10 November 1930: *Mar Ivanios asks Fr John Ribeiro information regarding the date of return of Apostolic Delegate Mooney to Bangalore. He thanks Ribeiro and also informs him about the situation immediately after the reunion (Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, Arch. Nunz. Ind., Ser. I, Fasc. 87A, 154-155).*

Very Rev. and Dear Father,

I am indeed so thankful for your very kind letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1930 which reached me only this afternoon. I was about to write to your Reverence to enquire when His Excellency the apostolic delegate was likely to arrive in India. I am really looking forward to go to Bangalore and pay my respects to His Excellency in person as soon as he arrives.

Your Reverence's welcome letter gives me an idea about the dates. I am writing to the Lord Bishop of Quilon to find out whether His Lordship is thinking of visiting His Excellency on his arrival in this country and am informing him that if he is going to Bangalore, I would be glad to go with him.



Your Reverence, I am so thankful for the great consideration shown in asking for the particulars about our present situation. The day following our reception all the members of the sisters and most of the brothers were also received. A few priests and laity too made their profession of faith. I am happy to add that my aged father (86 years) and mother (82) were received by me into the bosom of the Holy Mother Church.

His Lordship Mar Theophilos has been to a church in the hope that his personal presence might prevent disturbances there. I am forwarding Your Reverence's letter to him. I shall be sending in a few days a statement of the particulars you asked for. Since our letters get lost these days, it would be safer if Your Reverence would kindly see that communications addressed to us are sent per registered post. Once again, I thank Your Reverence for Your great kindness. I remain,

Yours in the Love of Our Lord,

Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany.

**Part Two**  
**CONSTITUTION OF SYRO-MALANKARA**  
**CATHOLIC HIERARCHY**

The two Malankara bishops Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos were received into the Catholic Church in their episcopal dignity and with ecclesiastical power over their faithful, but without erecting a hierarchy and without establishing a clear and precise division and delimitation of jurisdiction with territorial boundaries. Mar Ivanios, as though he were the head of the new Church, maintained the personal title (*ad personam*) of archbishop metropolitan and could exercise personal jurisdiction over all the faithful from the Orthodox dioceses who embraced the Catholic Church. The juridical status of Mar Theophilos instead, was not sufficiently clear, since no territorial division was effected and no specific task was entrusted to him. In practical terms, Mar Theophilos collaborated with Mar Ivanios for the pastoral governance of the emerging Eastern Catholic Church.

Regarding the territorial division the directive was to let the two bishops “go on together for a while and when the opportune time comes to make a division after we see what the movement amounts to” (document 47). Also in the directives given by Bishop Benzinger it was stated: “After some time only when it will appear more opportune, Your Lordship may consider and propose a territorial division of the diocese of Bethany and Thiruvalla” (document 50).

As expected, the reunion movement progressed well; already in 1932 there were 43 priests, 67 mission centres and 5850 lay Christian faithful in the Malankara Catholic Church.<sup>382</sup> Hence Mar Ivanios demanded a territorial division of the Malankara Catholic Church into two ecclesiastical circumscriptions and the constitution of a regular hierarchy with a metropolitan see and a suffragan eparchy. One of the main intricate questions to be resolved was the

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<sup>382</sup> Statistics as given in T. Inchakkalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Trivandrum 2015, vol. 2, 108.

determination of the metropolitan see of Mar Ivanios, who always insisted that his see should be Trivandrum. On the other hand, the Latin Carmelite missionaries maintained that Trivandrum, which was at that time within the boundaries of the Latin diocese of Quilon, should be constituted as a Latin diocese, fixing the see of Mar Ivanios in Mavelikkara or Adoor.

As the dispute continued, on 13 February 1932 by the apostolic constitution *Magnum Nobis*, Pope Pius XI established two ordinariates for the Syro-Malankara Church, separated from each other by the course of the Pampa River (document 57). Although this is the general opinion, in the said apostolic constitution only the ordinariate of Mar Ivanios is explicitly mentioned. In fact, it was the decree of the Congregation for the Eastern Church issued on the same date (13 February 1932) that divided the territory into two separate ordinariates and determined the titular sees for the two Malankara bishops (document 58). To Mar Ivanios was assigned the titular see of "Phasis", and to Bishop Theophilos the titular see of "Arad". Evidently this provision was only an interim arrangement in view of the constitution of a stable and definitive hierarchy. Mar Ivanios was granted permission to reside in Trivandrum, although it was not considered as his see at that time.

The apostolic letter *Magnum Nobis* was not promulgated in any of the official organs of the Holy See. It was not even published "in Malabar as it was felt that the assignment of titular Sees to bishops who were residential earlier, would be unpleasant to the reunited group and confusing to the Jacobites".<sup>383</sup> In the same manner the decree of the Congregation for the Eastern Church assigning titular sees to Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos was also not made public. For the first time we are publishing these documents, until now remained in the Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.

In April-October 1932 Mar Ivanios visited Rome and some European cities. During his stay in Rome from 21 April to 2 July 1932 he got the privilege of visiting Pope Pius XI for five times; of these, the fourth one was a general visit accompanying the university

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<sup>383</sup> C. Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 132, footnote 5.

students upon their request and the other four were confidential.<sup>384</sup> According to the documentation presented in this work, on the occasion of the first visit of Mar Ivanios on 26 April 1932 the Holy Father approved the project of erecting the Syro-Malankara hierarchy with two dioceses.<sup>385</sup> However, according to Thomas Inchakkalodi, on the occasion of the second visit on 2 May 1932 Mar Ivanios submitted a memorandum to the Pope, which included the request for a Syro-Malankara hierarchy, consisting of an archdiocese with its see in Trivandrum and a diocese with its see at Thiruvalla and the Pope granted the request.<sup>386</sup> It is possible that during the second visit Mar Ivanios submitted a memorandum with the specific request for Trivandrum as his metropolitan see. At any rate it is abundantly clear that during these visits the Pope verbally granted the request of Mar Ivanios for the constitution of Syro-Malankara hierarchy with Trivandrum as metropolitan see and Thiruvalla as its suffragan diocese.

Since the Holy Father verbally approved the project as already mentioned, the Congregation for the Eastern Church had to expedite the procedures. However, seeing the petitions of the Carmelite missionaries concerning the assignment of Trivandrum as the metropolitan see of Mar Ivanios, the Congregation immediately wrote to Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels seeking his opinion. He provided clarifications for the objections advanced by the Carmelites and reiterated his positive opinion on the erection of Trivandrum as the metropolitan see of Mar Ivanios. Although the Carmelites sent other petitions, they did not constitute an

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<sup>384</sup> *Letter of Mar Ivanios to Apostolic Delegate Leo Kierkels regarding his travel to Naples* on 21 April 1932: Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Archives, *Arch. Nunz. Ind. Serie II - Fasc. 331*, 156; for details concerning these visits, T. Inchakkalodi, *The Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. 2, Trivandrum 2015, 75-81.

<sup>385</sup> See the letter of Cardinal Luigi Sincero to the Apostolic Delegate on 26 April 1932 (document 60); cf. also the letter of Cardinal Sincero to the Secretary of Propaganda Fide on 19 August 1932 (document 69).

<sup>386</sup> Thomas Inchakkalodi states that Mar Ivanios also submitted a memorandum to the Pope consisting also of this request. T. Inchakkalodi, *The Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. II, 76. However the Author does not provide any reference and we have not succeeded in tracing out such a document. If it was submitted, the content might be the same as the one already sent to the Congregation for the Eastern Church on 18 September 1931 (see document 55).

insurmountable obstacle for the project approved by the Pope. After all clarifications and necessary communications, with the apostolic constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi* of 11 June 1932 Pope Pius XI constituted the Syro-Malankara hierarchy with an ecclesiastical province consisting of two sees: Trivandrum as the metropolitan see and Thiruvalla as its suffragan.<sup>387</sup>

## Document 55

### Letter of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos Requesting the Constitution of a Regular Hierarchy with Trivandrum as Metropolitan See

Thiruvalla, 18 September 1931: *letter of Mar Ivanios, at that time archbishop (metropolitan) of Bethany and Mar Theophilos, residing in Thiruvalla, to His Eminence Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church, in which they request the territorial division of the emerging Malankara Catholic Church. They also seek the constitution of a regular ecclesiastical hierarchy recognizing Trivandrum as the metropolitan see of Archbishop Mar Ivanios and Tiruvella as the see of Mar Theophilos (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese).*

Your Eminence,

We beg leave to approach Your Eminence regarding the territorial division of dioceses between us. In the letter which was addressed to Your Eminence, on this subject dated on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1931, we had ventured to suggest the River Pampa as the boundary line separating our dioceses, the territory to the left of the Pampa constituting the diocese of Mar Ivanios, and that to the right of the Pampa the diocese of Mar Theophilos.

It is now a year since we made our submission to the Holy Father; since then, the work of conversion amongst the schismatics has advanced steadily and we are happy to report to Your Eminence

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<sup>387</sup> Pope Pius XI, Ap. Const. *Christo Pastorum Principi*, AAS 24 (1932) 289-292, IRD, 264-273.

that within the last twelve months we have received from schism into the Catholic Church twenty nine priests, three deacons, a few clerics, and about three thousand laity, and that we are hopeful that a great harvest is awaiting in this country for the glory of God. We feel the need for more definite organisation.

May we venture to request Your Eminence that the Church of the Malankara Syrian Rite in this country be formed into an ecclesiastical province with the regular organisation of the hierarchy, and that Trivandrum be recognised as the Metropolitan see of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, and that Tiruvella be continued as the see of Mar Theophilos.

His Excellency Archbishop Mooney in his letter No. 2244/31 dated Apostolic Delegation, Bangalore, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1931, suggested to Mar Ivanios that since the original Bethany was no longer in his possession, some definite locality be selected which can be the geographical basis of his title and if possible a place of residence. We have given careful consideration to this suggestion of His Excellency.

We venture humbly to suggest that Mar Ivanios be designated as the Archbishop of Trivandrum, and that the name Bethany be confined to the Religious Institutes of men and of women which go by that name and which have been founded by Mar Ivanios. As may be seen from the appended map, the territorial division that we propose is such that the Archdiocese of Trivandrum will coincide with the Latin dioceses of Quilon, Kottar, and a small strip of land on the coast near Trivandrum comprised in the diocese of Cochin. The diocese of Tiruvella will coincide with the dioceses of Vijayapuram, Verapoly, and Cochin. We beg further to add that outside of the above said territorial limits, there are Malankara Syrian Catholics whom we have received into the Church, and many more waiting to be received. About these we hope to forward another letter to Your Eminence; for we feel that the jurisdiction over these people might be recognised as personal rather than territorial.

With profound veneration, we remain,

Your Eminence's humble servants in Jesus Christ,

Archbishop of Bethany, Bishop of Tiruvella.

## Document 56

### Report of Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels to Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Expressing His Favourable Opinion for the See of Trivandrum

Bangalore, 26 November 1931: *from the Report of Apostolic Delegate (no. 612/31) only his opinion on the territorial division of Malankara region between Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos is presented here (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese; original is in Italian).*

[...] With regard to the division itself, having considered everything, this seems the best which can be conceived in the case. The diocese of Mar Theophilos would include the territory of the Latin dioceses of Verapoly, Vijayapuram and the northern part of Cochin, coinciding with the Syro-Malabar dioceses of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry. The archdiocese of Mar Ivanios would include the territory of the Latin dioceses of Quilon, Kottar and the southern part of Cochin. With regard to the respective sees, Thiruvalla, the current see of Mar Theophilos, seems well chosen and there are no reasons, to my knowledge, to change it. Mar Ivanios proposes Trivandrum for his see, capital of the State of Travancore, where the Jacobites have a parish and the Marthomites another one. There Mar Ivanios would be in touch with the most influential schismatics and so he would hope to be able to exercise an effective apostolate. After all, it is not unlikely however that in the not distant future the Latin diocese of Quilon should be divided and, in this case, the new see could only be Trivandrum, where the Latin Catholics are much more numerous than the Syrians, with flourishing institutions. At the moment not knowing to suggest any other see for Mar Ivanios, I reserved to myself the responsibility to look for other information in this regard, as I mentioned above. However, I think that it would be difficult to find a more suitable see for Mar Ivanios, unless a titular see is assigned to him with a residence in Trivandrum or in another place according to his choice,

although, as it seems, Mar Ivanios wishes Trivandrum for his see not so much as a residence but as a title [...].

✠ Leo P. Kierkels C. P., Apostolic Delegate.

### Document 57

## Apostolic Letter *Magnum Nobis* Appointing Mar Ivanios as Titular Archbishop of Phasis and Ordinary of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Faithful

Vatican City, 13 February 1932: *by the Apostolic letter "Magnum Nobis" Pope Pius XI appointed Mar Ivanios as the titular archbishop of Phasis and ordinary of the Syro-Malankara Catholic faithful as a temporary measure until the constitution of a regular hierarchy* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*; original Latin text in appendix 1).

Bishop Pius, Servant of the servants of God.

Greetings and apostolic blessing to venerable brother Mar Ivanios, archbishop of the Antiochene rite, elected to the titular archiepiscopal see of Phasis.

It has been a great joy, when we received you, archbishop of the Antiochene rite in the Malabar region, and together with you another bishop of the same rite, venerable brother Theophilos, as well as many priests with a great number of the people of your folk, having followed in the footsteps of their pastors, by the assistance of divine grace, happily entered the bosom of the Holy Mother Catholic Church. Therefore, we gave our most humble thanks to the greatest and the most benevolent God and we congratulated you from our heart and again congratulate you, that you offer ears to the most merciful Father of lights, who has deigned to enlighten your minds and hearts.

Since it has been rightly recognized that you received the sacred orders and episcopal consecration validly, desiring to preserve you in the same grade of dignity also in the future, we have



decided to confer upon you a certain title of those Churches, formerly gleaming with splendour of powers and prosperity of religion, whose memory by no means deserves to be obliterated. Therefore, according to the counsel of our venerable brothers, cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, we appoint you, who has enjoyed archiepiscopal dignity until now, to the titular archiepiscopal Church of Phasis in Lazica (Italy), vacant through the transfer of venerable brother William Mark Duke to the metropolitan Church of Vancouver. We confer on you the title with all rights and privileges, responsibilities and obligations inherent to this sublime dignity.

Moreover, desiring that you remain in the pastoral care and governance of that new portion of the Catholic fold, called Syro-Malankaras, also willingly complying with your desires, we have decided to assign you a territory for starting your ministry, until true and proper dioceses and an ecclesiastical province are canonically established. Therefore, we appoint and constitute you as the Ordinary of Syro-Malankara faithful of the Antiochene rite, residing in the Malabar region, which is situated in the south of Pampa River with all powers and faculties belonging to Ordinaries by law. We order in the Lord that, the clergy and the faithful entrusted to you, whom you yourself will inform of this election in the best way possible, following you with due honour as the father and pastor of their souls, are to give obedience to your beneficial admonitions and orders as well as to exhibit reverence, and you consider them as devout children, so that they may truly recognize you as a benevolent father.

We wish, however, that you are fully obliged to emit the profession of the Catholic faith and offer the usual oaths before venerable brother Peter Kierkels, titular archbishop of Salamis and Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies or of another Catholic Prelate delegated by him for this purpose, according to the usual formulas prescribed for the Orientals; and to transmit to the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church the copies of those documents bearing your sign and seal, as well as those of the Apostolic Delegate or of the aforementioned delegate within six months. We have the firm hope and trust that, being assisted by the gracious right hand of the Lord, you will continue to exercise pastoral ministry with so

much diligence that the faithful entrusted to your care may be confirmed more and more in faith and charity; and those who until now live separated from the true Church of Christ may finally recognize the Catholic truth and thus there may be formed one folk and one shepherd.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, in the year of the Lord 1932, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, in the eleventh year of our Pontificate.

Cardinal Andreas Frühwirth, Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church,

Joseph Wilpert, Dean of Promontories Apostolic,

Hector Castelli, Promontory Apostolic.

### Document 58

## Decree of the Congregation for the Eastern Church Assigning Titular Sees to Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos

Vatican City, 13 February 1932: *by this decree the Congregation for the Eastern Church assigned the titular archiepiscopal see of Phasis to Mar Ivanios and the titular episcopal see of Arad to Mar Theophilos, creating two ordinariates and dividing the territory between the two bishops on the basis of the course of the Pampa River* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*; original text in Latin text in appendix 2).

Since in the month of September 1930, two most excellent Malabar prelates, namely Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, who belong to the Antiochene rite, happily entered the Catholic Church and since from that time many priests and several people, by divine grace, followed in their footsteps, having verified in this case as valid the priestly and episcopal sacred ordination previously received by them, and having named this new portion of the Catholic flock as "Syro-Malankara", it has seemed appropriate to preserve the aforementioned two Prelates in their grade of dignity and order, as well as in the pastoral care and governance of the faithful of that

rite, until true and proper dioceses have been canonically established for them, and to confer a titular Church on each of the bishops mentioned above.

Therefore, our most Holy Father Pius XI, Pope by divine providence, in an audience on the day indicated below, granted to the Most Eminent Cardinal Secretary of this Sacred Congregation, chose Most Excellent Lord Mar Ivanios to the vacant archepiscopal Church of Phasis, and conferred on him the title of said Church of Phasis; equally he appointed Most Excellent Lord Theophilos to the vacant episcopal Church of Arad, assigning to him the title of the said Church of Arad.

His Holiness, complying with the wishes of those bishops, until a true and proper ecclesiastical province has not been canonically established, has deigned to circumscribe the territory of both with boundaries, for administering their respective offices. Therefore, he decreed that the Most Excellent Mar Ivanios should be considered ordinary of the Syro-Malankara faithful of the Antiochene rite in the Malabar region, which lies to the south of Pampa River. The Most Excellent Mar Theophilos should be the ordinary of the faithful of the same rite in the Malabar region, which is situated at the northern side of the same river. However, the Most Holy Father has wished that each Ordinary be endowed with, for the territory assigned to each one, all the rights, faculties, and privileges which are proper to Ordinaries, and all of which he confirms by this letter.

Therefore, the Apostolic Letters concerning this provision and arrangement should be dispatched under the seal, with additional decrees on making the profession of faith and offering the customary oaths.

Notwithstanding anything else to the contrary.

Given in Rome, from the offices of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church, on 13 February 1932.

Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary.

**Document 59****Confidential *Pro Memoria* Submitted by Carmelite Missionaries against the Assignment of Trivandrum as the Archiepiscopal See of Mar Ivanios**

[Rome], 25 April 1932: *this Pro Memoria (memorandum) against the assignment of Trivandrum as the see of Archbishop Mar Ivanios is not a signed document. However, from other sources we learn that this was submitted by the secretary of the Carmelite Missions on behalf of the Carmelite Missionaries in Quilon and Trivandrum, the latter being part of the diocese of Quilon at that time. The memorandum was most probably accompanied by a forwarding letter (obviously not very relevant) which we have not yet found (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese; original is in French).*

**Archiepiscopal See of His Excellency Mar Ivanios: *Pro Memoria***

1. The map opposite represents the Latin diocese of Quilon, bordered to the north by the Ranni River, to the east by the peaks of the Ghats Mountains, to the south by the diocese of Kottar and to the west by the Indian Ocean. It is in the territory of this diocese that His Excellency Mar Ivanios, archbishop of Bethany and convert from Jacobitism, exercises his apostolate among the Jacobites, while Mar Theophilos takes care of the Jacobites who are found north of the Ranni River, within the archdiocese of Verapoly. According to statistics officially published in the *Catholic Directory of India 1932*, in his archdiocese Mar Ivanios constituted 7 districts: Trivandrum, Kottarakara, Adoor, Pathanamthitta, Mavelikkara, Kayankulam and Chengannoor.

2. His Excellency Mar Ivanios has not yet made the choice of the place of the archiepiscopal residence, but everything seems to indicate that his intention is to settle in Trivandrum and that he will request the approval of this choice from the Sacred Congregation.

3. The authorities of the diocese of Quilon and Bishop Benzinger (who is on the spot and knows the real situation perfectly), unanimously declare that the approval of such a choice is completely undesirable and would harm the interests of both the archdiocese of Bethany and the diocese of Quilon, for the following reasons.

a) The overwhelming majority of converted Jacobites and those to be converted live in the northern part of the diocese of Quilon and precisely between the Ranni River and a line to be drawn from west to east at the height of the city of Quilon. It is in this territory that Mar Ivanios constituted 6 of the 7 districts and not in that of Trivandrum whose centre is 45 miles (75 km) from Kottarakara which is at the southern limit of this territory.

b) The district of Trivandrum, which is listed in the *Catholic Directory* as the first of the Archdiocese of Bethany, is actually much less important than the others and has a more fictitious than real existence. In Trivandrum itself there are a few hundred Jacobites belonging to various parties. However, this population is only a very small minority compared to those who live in the north. Moreover, it is not a fixed population, because it is composed almost exclusively of students who come there only to study, and of government employees and lawyers who only reside there, because of their employment or occupations and who return to their families in the north as soon as they are free. As for the 4 "stations" belonging (according to the *Directory*) to the district of Trivandrum, there are three (Nedumangad—12 miles northeast of Trivandrum, Thiruvankod and Neyoor—both located in the Diocese of Kottar in more than 30 miles from Trivandrum) where there are only a handful of Jacobites in all. The fourth station—Chathannur—is located 36 miles north of Trivandrum and it is difficult to understand how it is made dependent on Trivandrum when it is only natural to attach it to Kottarakara which is only 15 miles away.

c) His Excellency Mar Ivanios does not yet have a church, chapel or temporary residence in Trivandrum. There have been no conversions yet, except for one or other student.

d) The city of Trivandrum, which is now of no importance for the archdiocese of Bethany, is on the contrary a very important centre for Latin Catholics who have 4 churches there, a convent for

men and 4 for religious women, 2 important high schools and several primary schools, etc. The Carmelite missionaries of this district make thousands of conversions from among the pagans every year. This city is therefore naturally called to become, in the very near future, perhaps the seat of a new Latin diocese. In fact, Bishop Benzinger insisted on the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda for the immediate erection of this new diocese with Trivandrum as its see.

The Carmelite missionaries have the greatest esteem and sympathy for His Excellency Mar Ivanios and his work. Also it is with the aim of avoiding any friction, caused by inconveniences which generally result from the existence of two episcopal sees of various rites in one and the same place, that the authorities of the diocese of Quilon and Bishop Benzinger ask that the see of the archbishop of Bethany is not to be fixed in Trivandrum but in one of the populous areas of the north of the diocese of Quilon where the great majority of Jacobites who have been converted or to be converted live and where Mar Ivanios has already constituted 6 districts.

5. After this presentation we humbly but insistently urge the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church to kindly seek, before taking a decision on this subject, the advice of both His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate of the Indies and of the Apostolic Administrator of Quilon and Bishop Benzinger.

### **Document 60**

#### **Letter of Cardinal Luigi Sincero to Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels Seeking His Opinion on the Memorandum Submitted by the Carmelites**

Vatican City, 26 April 1932: *letter of Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church to Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels seeking his opinion about the objections raised by the Carmelite missionaries on the erection of a Syro-Malankara ecclesiastical province with Trivandrum as the*

headquarters and see of Mar Ivanios (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*; original is in Italian).

Your Excellency,

This Sacred Congregation has a mind to come to the canonical erection of two Syro-Malankara dioceses as soon as possible and the Holy Father approved this in the audience granted to Mar Ivanios this morning. With his letter, Mar Ivanios expressed the desire that the archiepiscopal see of Trivandrum, capital of the State of Travancore, is given him and Your Most Reverend Excellency was already in favour of that choice in a letter of 26 November 1931 (document 56).

However, now at this Sacred Congregation there is a memorandum (*pro memoria*) sent by the Carmelite Fathers, in which various reasons are set out why it would not be considered appropriate to erect Trivandrum as the residential archiepiscopal see of Mar Ivanios. I submit it to Your Excellency so that you examine it carefully and give your opinion on the matter with all frankness.

I am also sending an excerpt from a letter from Monsignor Kandathil, Archbishop of Ernakulam about the same subject.

I would be very grateful to Your Excellency if, in responding to this Sacred Congregation with some promptness, you would also have the kindness to add the detailed boundaries which would delimit the two dioceses to be constituted.

Monsignor Assessor, without mentioning the enclosed document, asked Mar Ivanios if it is really advantageous to choose Trivandrum for his residence or some other centre, having regard for different rites. Mar Ivanios has strongly insisted on Trivandrum, stating that his work would have a great obstacle if he thought of another place and he could not consequently give his consent for another place.

As for the cathedrals (we have to mention them in the Bulls) it was decided to agree with Mar Ivanios to limit ourselves for now to two pro-cathedral churches, having considered the poverty of the two dioceses to be erected; the one of Trivandrum would be

dedicated to the "Blessed Virgin, Mother of God", with a holy co-patron, chosen by the Holy Father himself, St Peter, and the other one of Thiruvalla to St John the Evangelist.

I thank you very much, awaiting your reply as soon as possible with grateful esteem.

Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church.

### Document 61

#### **Letter of Fr. Herman de J. Norbert OCD against the Assignment of Trivandrum as the See of Mar Ivanios**

Rome (Generalate of the Discalced Carmelites), 3 May 1932: *letter of the secretary of the Missions, Fr. Herman de J. Norbert OCD to the Cardinal Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, in which he integrates the content of a letter he received from Rev. Fr. Bernardino, apostolic administrator of the diocese of Quilon. Fr. Bernardino insists that Trivandrum should not be granted to Mar Ivanios as his metropolitan see, since there a Latin diocese should be constituted* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*, no. 43; the first and last paragraphs written by the secretary of the Missions are in French; the original letter inserted is in English).

Your Eminence,

As a follow-up to the memorandum (document 58) which was handed over on 25 April by the undersigned to the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church regarding the choice of a place for the archiepiscopal see of His Excellency Mar Ivanios, I allow myself to pass on to Your Eminence the extract of a letter (dated 2 April 1932) from Very Rev. Fr. Bernardino, apostolic administrator of the diocese of Quilon, in which he intensifies his instances so that this see is in no case fixed in Trivandrum but is established in the northern region of this diocese. He writes as follows:

"It seems that His Excellency Mar Ivanios is trying his best and is working very hard with a view of establishing his See at



Trivandrum. More than once His Excellency has expressed this desire and was even in correspondence with Mrs. Van Ross for taking her bungalow on rent, which is situated in the centre of Trivandrum town and not far away from our St. Joseph's church. This is evident also from the new issue of the "Catholic Directory of India - Madras" wherein he gives the District of Trivandrum as his first district with the following stations: 1, Nedumangad, 2, Chatthannur, 3, Thiruvankod, 4, Neyoor, - with Rev. Fr. M.G. Jacob as Vicar in charge.

"There is no doubt that His Excellency Mar Ivanios intends making Trivandrum as his future See with the only aim and purpose of having more influence with the Government, while at present he has not a single catholic there and most of the Jacobite Syrians are at Trivandrum for the sake of employment or for higher studies.

"If Mar Ivanios establishes himself at Trivandrum this will surely create a lot of misunderstandings and will be a great source of troubles for our Missionaries and for our Diocese, owing to his ways of doings and interference and his policy. We should therefore do our best to prevent such a thing and represent the matter to the Sacred Congregation and to the Holy See in order that he may not be allowed to put his See at Trivandrum. The Sacred Congregation should not sanction Trivandrum as his Metropolitan See, much more as there are only few Syrians (Jacobite Syrians) not only at Trivandrum, but also South of Quilon. The bulk of Syrians (Jacobites) is only from Kottarakara to Changannur, i.e. to the river Ranni, the limit of our Diocese, and in Quilon (town) there are very few Jacobites and most of them employed in Government services or as Vakils (advocates). Mar Ivanios should make his future See or Residence at Mavelikkara or Adoor, as being the centre of his works and in the midst of the Jacobites, and not think of Trivandrum. Besides in the south of Trivandrum there are no Jacobites, except one or two families at Thiruvankode and some at Nedumangad, employed in the Estates".

Once again, I would like to assure Your Eminence that the authorities and missionaries of Quilon are animated by the best dispositions towards His Excellency Mar Ivanios and his work. For many years they have been engaged in winning the Jacobites back

to the Church. It is also one of their great concerns to do all that is within their capacity to ensure the best understanding between the Latins and the converted Jacobites. It is precisely for this purpose that they attach such great importance to the see of Mar Ivanios being established in the northern part of the diocese of Quilon where the vast majority of Jacobites who have been converted or to be converted live and not in Trivandrum which is very far from this region and which is one of the most important centres of Latin Catholics and which is already proposed as the see of a new Latin diocese.

By kissing the Sacred Purple of Your Eminence, I remain,  
of Your Eminence, the humblest servant,  
Fr. Herman de J Norbert, Secretary of the Missions.

## Document 62

### Audience with the Holy Father on the Erection of Trivandrum as the See of Mar Ivanios

Vatican City 14 May 1932: *Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Assessor of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, referred to the Holy Father the difficulties raised by the Carmelites concerning the erection of Trivandrum as the see of Mar Ivanios* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 5*; original is in Italian).

*From the Audience with the Most Holy Father (Ex Audientia SS.mi)*

I mentioned to the Holy Father the first difficulties which arose regarding the Malankara archiepiscopal See, which Mar Ivanios wants in Trivandrum and the Carmelite Fathers in Mavelikkara or in Adoor: about this a letter has been written to the Apostolic Delegate (document 60).

Although the Holy Father has said to wait for the response of the Delegate, he has not found the Carmelites' reasons strong. However, we will see about this later.

Signed: A. G. Cicognani, Assessor.

**Document 63**  
**Positive Opinion of Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels concerning the Constitution of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan See**

Bangalore (Wellington, Apostolic Delegation of the East Indies), 19 May 1932: *with letter no. 1186/32 Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels responds to the letter of Cardinal Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church (see document 60), in which he refutes the objections raised by the Carmelites concerning the constitution of Trivandrum as the see of Mar Ivanios and expresses his favourable opinion on the same (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 6; original is in Italian).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

I have just received the much-esteemed letter No 268/32 of last 26 April and, after a mature consideration, I answer with care as follows.

Analysing the memorandum of the Carmelite Fathers (which I send back, enclosed herewith), the difficulties reported against the proposed erection of the Malankara Archdiocese of Trivandrum can be reduced to four:

1. Demographic eccentricity of that city with respect to the Jacobite population of the archdiocese to be erected;
2. Need to erect a Latin diocese there;
3. Disadvantages of two sees of different rite in the same city;
4. Absence of a Malankara church in Trivandrum.

The first difficulty, although real, does not seem so important, as there are similar cases in India itself. The see of Mylapore, for example, is located in a territory separate and far from the largest and most populated portion of Catholics of the diocese. Nellore is also located far from the most Catholic centre of the diocese (map enclosed). In the North of India Patna, Dhaka and Dinajpur are examples of episcopal cities with very few Catholics with respect to

the rest of the diocese. So, the case of Trivandrum would not be the first nor the only case of demographic eccentricity of a see with respect to the Catholic centres of the diocese.

The need (to erect a Latin diocese), which is reported as a second difficulty, is indeed real and I would say almost urgent. For several years the erection of Trivandrum as a Latin see has been planned and it has been supported by both Monsignor Benziger and Monsignor Mooney. One of the reasons adopted by Monsignor Benziger was the fear that the schismatics would anticipate us to make Trivandrum an episcopal see (bishopric); this confirms that the Jacobites themselves consider that city important enough to have a see of their rite there. As for the Latin see, recently, on the occasion of the vacancy of the see of Quilon, I have also strongly recommended that project and I suppose that the matter is currently being examined by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. It would not be possible to find another suitable place in that region for the see of a new Latin diocese. Then, whether its erection is an obstacle or not, to that of the Malankara see in the same city depends on the weight that the third difficulty can exert.

Two sees of different rites in the same place can certainly give rise to disadvantages and this would undoubtedly be inadvisable, if the hope of a greater good did not suggest otherwise. Now it seems certain that the choice of Trivandrum for the Malankara see would have all the advantages described by Monsignor Kandathil in his letter of 31 March to Monsignor Assessor, advantages which should fully compensate the possible inconveniences mentioned above. After all, the combination of sees in the same city is considered on the basis of the title or on the basis of the residence: in the first alternative several titles common to different rites can be cited, such as Antioch and Alexandria; in the second alternative examples of cities where several Catholic bishops reside can also be found exactly in India, such as Ernakulam, where the archbishop of the city and the one of Verapoly reside; and Kottayam, in which the local bishop and the one of Vijayapuram reside. Therefore, both as title and as residence, the erection of Trivandrum into the see of two different rites would not be unprecedented, nor it would be difficult in the case of diversifying the names of the Curia as I say below. On the other hand, finding another see for Mar Ivanios also seems

impossible, unless choosing some insignificant place or some city which is currently a schismatic see; this would certainly be exploited by the Jacobite leaders to antagonize their followers against Mar Ivanios and to greatly hinder the movement towards the Catholic Church.

Finally, coming to the fourth difficulty, which would have some importance in view of the need for a "pro-cathedral", I suppose that Mar Ivanios himself will propose some concrete project to resolve the difficulty.

Given the urgency of this matter, I have not thought it to be necessary to ask the opinion of Monsignor Benziger or of the apostolic administrator of Quilon, who however, seem to have no other reasons than those set out by the Carmelite Fathers.

Concluding, therefore, I would be of the humble opinion, subordinate to that of the Sacred Congregation and of Propaganda Fide, if the Holy See has no difficulty in having the title of Trivandrum common to the Latin and Malankara sees, it will be advantageous to satisfy Mar Ivanios' desire regarding the choice of his see.

For diversifying the names of the Curia, the indigenous form could be adopted for the Malankara see and the English form for the Latin see, analogous to what was done to distinguish the Syro-Malankaras from the Syro-Malabars, adopting two different forms of the same name. The indigenous name (that is, in Malayalam language) of Trivandrum is Tiruvananthapuram or more briefly Ananthapuram, according to the information of competent people. I am investigating if there is any other historical name and if so, I will send a telegram, then confirming it with a letter. However, I would dare to recommend that Mar Ivanios also be consulted about the advantage of such a name.

With regard to the detailed boundaries, a geographical description would be intricate and it would give rise to several difficulties. It seems that the best and most practical indication is one contained in my letter No. 21/31 of last 26 November (coincidence with the present Latin dioceses). It would not be necessary to name the Pampa River (also called Ranni or Pambyar) since any inaccuracy would be precluded by saying that the territory

of the Malankara archdiocese of Trivandrum coincides with that of the Latin dioceses of Quilon and Kottar and with the southern part of the Latin diocese of Cochin, and the territory of the diocese of Thiruvalla coincides with that of the Latin dioceses of Verapoly, Vijayapuram and the northern part of the Latin diocese of Cochin (see map enclosed to my report No. 612/31).

Submitting the above to the enlightened judgment of Your Most Reverend Eminence, bowed to the kiss of the Sacred Purple with sentiments of profound respect I am proud of professing myself of Your Most Reverend Eminence,

Most humble, most devout and most obedient,

✠ Leo P. Kierkels C. P., Apostolic Delegate.

#### Document 64

### **Audience with the Holy Father and the Decision to Erect the Syro-Malankara Ecclesiastical Province with Trivandrum as Metropolitan See**

Vatican City, 11 June 1932: *during the audience Msgr Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Assessor of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, presented the project for the constitution of the Syro-Malankara ecclesiastical province of Trivandrum to Pope Pius XI, indicating the difficulties and objections raised by the Carmelites. After evaluating everything the Pope definitively decided to constitute the said ecclesiastical province. The document prepared for the audience with the Holy Father and the final decision of the Pope are presented here (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 7; original is in Italian).*

#### For the Audience with the Holy Father

I. For the erection of the new Syro-Malankara ecclesiastical province now all the necessary elements are present: archdiocese and diocese, boundaries, residence, pro-cathedral and diocesan council (*consilium dioecesanum*).

Some difficulties still remained to be resolved for the archiepiscopal residence in Trivandrum; they are:

- a) the see would be far from the centre of the Jacobite population, more diffused in the north of the new archdiocese;
- b) the probability that Trivandrum will be erected into a Latin see;
- c) drawbacks of two sees of different rite in the same city.

The Sacred Congregation made them examined by the Most Excellent Apostolic Delegate of India, who in his report of last 19 May 1932 (document 63) resolved them as follows:

- a) It does not seem a real difficulty because similar cases already exist in India.
- b) First of all, it is not known whether and when Trivandrum will be erected into a Latin diocese; response to the Carmelite Fathers: there are the Syro-Malabar archbishop of Ernakulam and the Latin one of Verapoly, two bishops also in Kottayam. Moreover the Syro-Malankara see of Trivandrum would be archiepiscopal, while the Latin one would only be episcopal. The schismatics endeavour to settle down in Trivandrum, it is better to prevent them.
- c) It is not the first case that the same city is title and residence of several episcopal sees of different rite; moreover, in the present case, the possible disadvantages are far outweighed by the advantages which are to be obtained (Trivandrum is the capital of the State of Travancore, therefore it is the see of the government and Mar Ivanios hopes to get practical benefits from this fact: really, the experience has already proved this).

II. The erection of a new ecclesiastical province would be in itself the subject of a plenary meeting, but since it is an urgent matter, the Sacred Congregation quietly thinks that it could be made up for inserting the following caption in the bulls: "Having heard the counsel of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate of the Indies and those who are of concern

(*audito consilio S. C. Orientalis, Excmi D. Delegati Apostoli Indiarum, et quorum interest*).

Then, since various kinds of aforesaid difficulties have been fully resolved by the Apostolic Delegate, the Sacred Congregation does not think that it is necessary to consult the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide in this regard.

The Syro-Malankara archbishop could be named with the official title: Archbishop of Trivandrum of Antiochene Rite or Archbishop of Trivandrum of Syro-Malankaras (*Archiepiscopus Trivandrumsis antiocheni ritus or Archiepiscopus Trivandrumsis Syro-Malankarensium*).

*From the Audience with the Most Holy Father (Ex Audientia SS.mi)*

On 11 June 1932

The Holy Father, having heard the pros and cons for the choice of Trivandrum as the see of the Syro-Malankara metropolitan, thinks that we can assent to the requests of Monsignor Mar Ivanios and approves the choice of the city.

So, let the bulls be promulgated and the archbishop be named "Archbishop of Trivandrum" (*Archiepiscopus Trivandrensis*), to which the great honour will be added, "of the Syro-Malankaras of Antiochene rite" (*Syro-Malankarensium antiocheni ritus*).

This can be communicated to the Apostolic Delegate and to Mar Ivanios, but it can verbally be said to the Carmelite Fathers, after the preparation of the bulls.

A. G. Cicognani, Assessor.



**Document 65**

**Apostolic Constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi*  
Constituting Syro-Malankara Catholic Hierarchy**

Vatican City, 11 June 1932: by the apostolic constitution "*Christo Pastorum Principi*" Pope Pius XI constituted the Syro-Malankara hierarchy, with Trivandrum as metropolitan see and Thiruvalla as suffragan diocese. The constitution was promulgated with the date of the decision of the Holy Father, although it was rendered public only later. Hence the Carmelites continued to write against the assignment of Trivandrum as the metropolitan see of Mar Ivanios (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 24 [1932] 289-292).

Pius Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

To Christ, the Chief of pastors, We rendered the most humble and fervent thanks, when two most distinguished Syro-Malankara bishops of Antiochene rite, namely Archbishop Mar Ivanios and Bishop Mar Theophilos, as well as several priests and a large number of people from their flock, following in the footsteps of their pastors, happily entered the bosom of the holy mother Catholic Church, by the action of divine grace. We heartily congratulated these bishops because they listened with docility to the most compassionate Father of lights who deigned to illuminate their minds and hearts; and they endeavoured assiduously with all their might and strength to further extend the Kingdom of Christ among those faithful. Hence, a few months after those faithful had embraced Catholic unity, wishing to provide for their spiritual good, with the apostolic letter *Magnum Nobis*, issued under seal on 13 February of this year, we established two ordinariates in the meantime within the boundaries of the Malabar region, each one separated from the other by the course of the Pampa River, and entrusted them to the abovementioned bishops. Since now the number of Syro-Malankara faithful of Antiochene rite has fortunately and happily increased day by day and with the Lord's blessing, has already reached several thousands within a short time, it has seemed to us opportune and salutary to dispose and order ecclesiastical matters in a more fitting and stable manner erecting a

new ecclesiastical province of Antiochene rite in the Malabar region. Hence we, favouring the desires of the aforementioned bishops and wishing to offer a new testimony of our affection towards the noblest Eastern Churches, after obtaining the favourable opinion of our venerable brother Leo Kierkels, titular archbishop of Salamis, the Apostolic Delegate in the East Indies, upon the counsel of our venerable brothers the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church appointed to the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church, having supplied for the consent, as far as it may be necessary, of those whom it concerns or of those who may presume that it concerns them, by the fullness of our apostolic power, we decree and establish these that follow.

I. After having suppressed the two aforementioned ordinariates in the Malabar region at the north and the south of the Pampa River, from their territory we erect a new and distinct ecclesiastical province for the Syro-Malankara faithful of the Antiochene rite, which will consist of two sees, namely the archiepiscopal see of Trivandrum and the episcopal see of Thiruvalla.

II. The archdiocese of Trivandrum, whose boundaries will be the same as those of the dioceses of Quilon, Kottar and the southern part of the diocese of Cochin, shall comprise the districts of Trivandrum, Kottarakara, Adoor, Pathanamthitta, Mavelikkara, Kayamkulam and Chengannoor.

III. We constitute the see of the archbishop of Trivandrum in the city of Trivandrum, from which the archdiocese itself takes its name.

IV. We constitute the archiepiscopal Church of Trivandrum as the metropolitan see of this new ecclesiastical province; therefore, we grant to it and to its archbishops in office, all rights and privileges, honours and prerogatives which by common law and legitimate customs of the Syro-Antiochene Church belong to them; in the first place, the faculty for the archbishops to use the pallium within the boundaries of the ecclesiastical province according to the liturgical laws, but only after it has been requested and obtained from the Apostolic See in a sacred consistory.

V. The diocese of Thiruvalla, whose boundaries will be the same as those of the dioceses of Verapoly and Vijayapuram, as well

as the borders of the northern part of the diocese of Cochin, shall consist of the districts of Thiruvalla, Niranam, Kottayam, Moovattupuzha and Kunnamkulam.

VI. We fix the see of the bishop of Thiruvalla in the city of Thiruvalla, from this city the diocese itself takes its name.

VII. We grant to the cathedral church of Thiruvalla and to its bishops in office all rights and privileges, honours and prerogatives which by common law and the legitimate custom of the Syro-Antiochene Church belong to them.

VIII. We constitute this new cathedral of Thiruvalla as the suffragan of the metropolitan Church of Trivandrum and we subject its bishops in office to the metropolitan right of the archbishop of Trivandrum.

IX. We oblige the metropolitan Church of Trivandrum and its archbishops in office as well as the cathedral Church of Thiruvalla and its bishops with the same responsibilities and obligations, by which other metropolitan and cathedral churches and their bishops are bound.

X. We fix the cathedrals of the bishops of Trivandrum and Thiruvalla, the former in the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God in the city of Trivandrum, and the latter in the church of St John the Evangelist in the city of Thiruvalla. Therefore, we grant to these churches, until it is otherwise provided, all rights and privileges which other metropolitan and cathedral churches enjoy.

XI. The offerings which are usually made by the faithful, the revenues and all goods of any kind which will have come to these churches in the future under any title, will constitute the archiepiscopal or episcopal funds (*mensa*).

XII. Regarding the administration and governance of the Churches of Trivandrum and Thiruvalla, the election of the college of consultors according to the norm of law, the institution of seminaries, the rights and obligations of the clergy and the faithful and other such matters, we order to observe what the sacred canons prescribe. Nevertheless, especially with regard to the clergy we determine that as soon as the erection of the aforementioned archdiocese and diocese has been executed, by the very fact, all

clerics are to be considered as ascribed to that Church (diocese), in whose territory they lawfully reside.

XIII. Finally we reserve, to ourselves and to the Apostolic See, the faculty of altering and differently defining the aforementioned circumscriptions according to the circumstances of times as often as it will seem expedient in the Lord.

Therefore, after having disposed matters as above, we depute the aforementioned venerable brother Leo Kierkels, the Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies for the execution of all these; therefore, we grant him all the necessary and opportune faculties, both of resolving all controversies which may arise in any manner in the act of execution and even of sub-delegating, for obtaining the result for which the action is undertaken, another person constituted in office or ecclesiastical dignity, and we oblige him to transmit to the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church, within six months from the reception of this letter an authentic copy of the act of completed execution.

We wish and decree that, also because any of those persons whom it concerns or those who presume that it concerns them, have not been heard and in particular they have not consented to the aforementioned matters, even if deserving express and individual mention, the present letter and whatever is contained in it cannot be censured, impugned or brought into controversy at any time, for a defect of subreption or deception, of nullity or of our intention, or for any other defect even if a substantial and unthought-of one, but this letter, as it has been compiled and issued with a sure knowledge and from the plenitude of power, is and will be perpetually valid and will obtain and maintain its complete and full effect and it must be inviolably observed by all those whom it concerns; and it is and will be certainly null and void, if anyone should presume to act otherwise over these matters, by any authority, knowingly or unknowingly. Finally we wish that the same faith which would be given to this letter, if the original were exhibited or shown, must be accorded to the transcripts of this letter, even printed ones, but signed by any public notary and sealed by any person constituted in ecclesiastical dignity. Notwithstanding insofar as it is necessary, regulations promulgated in synodal, provincial, general and universal councils, special or general constitutions and apostolic ordinances, and

whatsoever other dispositions of the Roman Pontiffs our predecessors and whatsoever else to the contrary.

Let it be unlawful for anyone to infringe up on or contradict this (our) letter of erection, elevation, concession, statute, derogation, mandate and of our will. However, if anyone should rashly presume to attempt this, let him know that he will incur the wrath of the Almighty God and of his Apostles, blessed Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of June, in the year of the Lord 1932, on the feast of Saint Barnabas the Apostle, in the eleventh year of our Pontificate.

### Document 66

#### **Preliminary Communication to Mar Ivanios about the Constitution of Syro-Malankara Hierarchy**

Vatican City, 16 June 1932: *Monsignor Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Assessor of the Congregation for the Eastern Church informs Mar Ivanios that the ecclesiastical province of the Malankara Church with Trivandrum as the metropolitan see has been constituted* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*, no. 8; original is in English).

Your Grace,

I am pleased to make you known that, by the decree of the Sacred Oriental Congregation dated 11 June, the new ecclesiastical province of Syro-Malankara Antiochene rite has been constituted, and Trivandrum has been chosen as the see of the archbishop.

Presenting my hearty congratulations and kindest regard, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) A. G. Cicognani, Assessor.

## Document 67

**Opinion of Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels on the Carmelite Proposal of Mavelikkara or Adoor as the See of Mar Ivanios**

Bangalore (Apostolic Delegation of the East Indies), 22 June 1932: *although the decision to constitute the Syro Malankara hierarchy was already made, the Cardinal Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church forwarded to the Apostolic Delegate the letter of the Carmelites (document 61) proposing Mavelikkara or Adoor as the see of Mar Ivanios to obtain his opinion about it. With letter no. 1248/32, he rejects the proposal and reiterates his previous opinion about the suitability of Trivandrum as the see of Mar Ivanios (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 13; original is in Italian).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

I have maturely considered the letter (which I send back enclosed herewith) regarding the choice of Trivandrum as the see for Mar Ivanios and in homage to the venerable instructions of Your Most Reverend Eminence I express the following humble opinion.

The letter does not contain new reasons against that choice, but it proposes two other places and alludes to "the manner of doing, interference and politics" by Mar Ivanios, which would make the aforesaid choice less desirable. Of the two places at issue, Mavelikkara and Adoor, the former is the capital of the Taluk, more or less of the same importance as Thiruvalla, the latter is more insignificant. Strictly speaking, Mavelikkara could be considered, but I think it is the native place of Mar Ivanios and he has openly expressed his contrariety for such a choice, which certainly would not give more impulse to conversions, as the choice of Trivandrum would do hopefully.

As for the drawbacks inherent in the person of Mar Ivanios, I have not known about them so far. He is very active and he endeavours to advance the cause of conversions in every way.

It is also foreseeable that, as archbishop of Trivandrum, he would eclipse a bit the Latin bishop among the indigenous aristocracy. However, I do not think that this would greatly damage the Latin cause, which does not lack other means of maintaining its prestige.

In conclusion, therefore, I would dare to confirm, subordinately to the enlightened judgment of Your Most Reverend Eminence, the humble opinion already expressed in my report No. 1186/32 of last 19 May (document 63).

Meanwhile, bowed to the kiss of the Sacred Purple, with the most respectful sentiments I am proud of professing myself, of Your Most Reverend Eminence,

Most humble, most devout and most obedient,

✠ Leone P. Kierkels C. P., Apostolic Delegate

### Document 68

#### Letter of Archbishop Carlo Salotti to Cicognani Presenting the Objections of the Carmelites against the Choice of Trivandrum

Rome (Sacred Congregation "de Propaganda Fide"), 12 August 1932: *the Carmelite Fathers wrote against the erection of Trivandrum as the see of Mar Ivanios also to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, which was (and is) competent for the Latin Church in the region. In the present letter (Prot. no. 2986/32) Archbishop Carlo Salotti, Secretary of the same Congregation informs Msgr Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Assessor of the Congregation for the Eastern Church, about the difficulties raised by the Carmelite Fathers concerning the erection of Trivandrum as the metropolitan see of Mar Ivanios, but without wishing to intervene in the decisions of the Dicastery (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 15; original is in Italian).*

Most Reverend Excellency,

Some time ago this Sacred Congregation received from the procurator of the Discalced Carmelite Fathers a letter of the prior of the Carmelites of Trivandrum, to which a memorandum was added concerning the reasons which militated against the assignment of Trivandrum as archiepiscopal see to Mar Ivanios, Ordinary of the Malabars of Malabar (*sic*).

Only now a copy of the letter and the memorandum are enclosed for appropriate information and norm of that Sacred Congregation.

In fact, until today this Sacred Congregation has not thought it appropriate to intervene in the matter, both because it was not interrogated, and because it was of the opinion that as many ordinaries as different rites in which the Catholic population was divided could reside without difficulty in Eastern cities, and that therefore the assignment of Trivandrum to Mar Ivanios could not have hindered the erection of Trivandrum into a Latin see; if some difficulties, which are being studied today, could have been overcome.

However, now this Sacred Congregation is informed by various sources that "the erection of a Syro-Malankara see, instead of a Latin see, in Trivandrum would engender the greatest displeasure to many Catholics of that city; it would provoke antipathy between the two rites and would make people and clergy murmur, especially if they knew that neither the metropolitan of Verapoly, nor the apostolic administrator of Quilon were consulted". It is also added that the aforementioned fear of irritation and discontent within the Catholic communities "is considered very well founded if the erection of Trivandrum as Syro-Malankara see is not soon followed by the erection of the same city as a Latin see".

In this regard, this Sacred Dicastery points out that for the erection of the Latin see there are serious difficulties because of the concordat recently signed between the Holy See and Portugal and that consequently it is not completely within its power to pave the way for a solution of those same difficulties.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> The concordat signed between the Holy See and the Portuguese Government on 15 April 1928 on the erection of dioceses and the appointment of



I have thought of signifying you all this only for information, without wishing to intervene in the decisions of that Sacred Dicastery.

With sentiments of profound respect, I am proud of professing myself, of Your Most Reverend Excellency,

Most devout, + Carlo Salotti,

Titular Archbishop of Filippopolis, Secretary.

### Document 69

## Letter of Cardinal Luigi Sincero to Archbishop Carlo Salotti on the Constitution of Trivandrum as the See of Mar Ivanios

Vatican City, 19 August 1932: *with this letter Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church communicates to Archbishop Carlo Salotti, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda that the Syro-Malankara ecclesiastical province with Trivandrum as the metropolitan see has already been constituted* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*, no. 29; original is in Italian).

Your Excellency,

While informing you of receiving the esteemed letter no. 2986/32 of 12 November, containing a memorandum of the Reverend Carmelite Fathers of Trivandrum (India) against the project of the erection of an archiepiscopal see for the faithful of Syro-Malankara rite in that city, I am honoured to inform Your Most Reverend Excellency that this Sacred Congregation, by the decree of 11 June, communicated to the Apostolic Chancellery on the following 27 June, would erect the new ecclesiastical province of Antiochene rite with two dioceses, one metropolitan with see in Trivandrum, the other one suffragan with see in Thiruvalla. The

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bishops can be found in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 20 (1928) 129-133; Latin text with English translation in P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents*, 174-181.

assignment of Trivandrum as the see of the new archbishop converted from Jacobitism, Mar Ivanios, was due to the strong and insistent petitions of the same, also made verbally to the Holy Father. The difficulties set out in a letter by the Carmelite Fathers, already known to this Sacred Congregation from a memorandum, which was presented by the secretary himself of the Carmelite missions, were pondered over and examined, as it was appropriate, and the opinion of the Apostolic Delegate was also sought on the matter. All things having been considered, also the project of the Jacobite schismatics themselves to establish an episcopal see in Trivandrum and given the urgency of the erection of the Catholic see, as the new converted archbishop invoked, this Sacred Congregation (not wanting then to oppose Mar Ivanios with a denial of his proposal, at the beginning of his zealous ministry within the Church) at the audience of the last 11 June explained the pros and cons to the Holy Father and on the same day in deference to what His Holiness was kind to dispose, the Decree in question was issued.

I have the obligation to confidentially communicate this to Your Most Reverend Excellency.

In the meantime, ... (*sic*),

Cardinal Luigi Sincero.

## Document 70

### Letter of Fr. Bernardino of St. Therese OCD to Cardinal Luigi Sincero against the Erection of Trivandrum as the See of Mar Ivanios

Quilon, 12 September 1932: *although decision was taken to constitute the Syro-Malankara Hierarchy with the metropolitan see in Trivandrum, the apostolic constitution was not immediately promulgated. Hence the Carmelite missionaries continued to send their objections to the Holy See. In the present letter (no. 6857) Friar Bernardo of St. Therese OCD,<sup>389</sup> apostolic administrator of the*

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<sup>389</sup> Bernardino of St. Theresa OCD (Giuseppe Baccinelli), known also as Bernardo or Bernardine, was born on 15 Mar 1807 in Rome. On 8 December 1824 he emitted religious profession as a member of the Order of Discalced Carmelites and then he departed as a missionary in India. After the resignation of Bishop

*diocese of Quilon, strongly advocates that the see of Trivandrum should not be assigned to Mar Ivanios, indicating the reasons for the same* (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, *Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese*, no. 21; original is in Italian).

Most Reverend Eminence,

Having bowed at the feet of Your Most Reverend Eminence, as apostolic administrator of this diocese of Quilon, I think it is my duty in the present circumstances to expose to Your Most Reverend Eminence with all humility and reverence a very serious matter in the hope that Your Most Reverend Eminence will still be able to remedy it.

In these recent weeks some news has come to me regarding His Excellency Mar Ivanios, who during his stay in Rome apparently took appropriate steps with the Holy Father in order to obtain the erection of a see of Syro-Malankara rite in Trivandrum, capital city of the State of Travancore, as metropolitan see, with the title of "archbishop of Trivandrum". This news was also published in several English and other European newspapers, as well as in India. Furthermore, I myself have seen different letters written by His Excellency Mar Ivanios, signed by him as archbishop of Trivandrum.

I fear very much that it has been taken advantage of the goodness of Our Holy Father and that His Holiness, without suspecting anything serious, trusting in the good sense of His Excellency Mar Ivanios, gave some hope or even promised the creation of an archiepiscopal see of his Syro-Malankara or Antiochene rite in the capital of Travancore. If this news were true, it would undoubtedly be a cause of great displeasure and discontent among the peoples and the faithful of Latin rite, arousing animosities

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Benzinger on 23 July 1931 he was appointed as administrator of the Diocese of Quilon. On 12 March 1853 he was appointed administrator and coadjutor to the vicar apostolic of Verapoly with the right of succession. On 20 June 1859 Bernardino was appointed vicar apostolic of Verapoly, and he governed it until his death on 5 September 1968. Cf. Ambrosius a S. Theresia, *Hierarchia carmelitana*, 338.

and even agitations with great detriment of our Holy Religion and scandal among the pagans, while on the other hand the Protestants would take advantage. Then the clergy are astonished and deeply indignant, as well as the faithful, who do not absolutely like to have a bishop of Syro-Malankara or Antiochene rite in Trivandrum, but all unanimously and in agreement ardently desire the erection of an episcopal see of Latin rite with see in Trivandrum. Therefore, having heard with great regret that His Excellency Mar Ivanios has made it to be printed and published that he established his residence in Trivandrum and he was designated as archbishop of Trivandrum, they wanted at all costs to send protests to the Holy See. I did everything possible to prevent such agitation as it is contrary to the spirit of our Holy Church, reassuring them that I myself would expose the matter and the serious situation to Your Most Reverend Eminence.

Having said this, I think it is appropriate and necessary to inform the Sacred Congregation of facts and important details, as well as sufficient reasons, so that the Holy See may be aware of everything and it may have an exact idea of the present state of things, and it may know how to act before taking a decision, if it is not too late.

1. At present His Excellency Mar Ivanios has not yet converted any Jacobite in Trivandrum and now there is no Catholic of his rite. Most of the Jacobites, who are in Trivandrum, are there only for employment or for studies at the government universities. According to the last census of 1931 in the city of Trivandrum there are 875 Syrian Jacobites, and 634 Syrians of the party of Mar Thomas (= Marthomites) or Protestant sect. In the whole division of Trivandrum, made up of 8 Taluks, of which 4 in the diocese of Kottar and the other 4 in the southern part of the diocese of Quilon, which was proposed to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the erection of a new diocese of Latin rite with see in Trivandrum, there are only 1041 Syrian Jacobites and 787 of the party of Mar Thomas, in all 1828 persons in the entire division. Instead, the Latins are very numerous and they count 179.579 faithful, of whom 107.883 in the diocese of Kottar and 71.696 in that part proposed for the new diocese of Trivandrum, not counting 35.000 in the territory of the diocese of Cochin.

For further clarification, hereby I send a topographic map of the two divisions of Trivandrum and Quilon, from which Your Most Reverend Eminence will be able to better understand the situation.

2. Then I think it is appropriate to give below the number of Jacobites, who are in the whole division of Trivandrum and in each Taluk.

Taluk	Syrian Jacobites	Marthomites
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	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
1. Thovala	0	0	0		1	0	1
2. Agastiswaram	9	8	17		4	1	5
3. Kalkulam	37	21	58		21	5	26
4. Vilavankode	11	6	17		24	17	41
5. Neyathinkara	12	3	15		7	4	11
6. Trivandrum	527	348	875		403	261	664
7. Nedumangad	26	17	43		15	11	26
8. Chirayinkal	13	3	16		9	4	13
Total	635	406	1041		484	303	787

3. On the contrary, in the city of Trivandrum we have 9,328 Catholics, of whom 8,453 of Latin rite and 797 Roman-Syrians and others, besides 13,246 Catholics of Latin rite belonging to the diocese of Cochin, but within the limits of the city itself, thus making a total of 22,574 Catholics. Beyond this flourishing Christianity in the city we have the following institutions and parishes under the jurisdiction of Quilon:

4 parishes with 6 elementary schools;

1 novitiate-convent of the Discalced Carmelites with 8 fathers, 10 students, 2 novices and 7 lay brothers;

1 residence of missionaries with 3 Carmelite fathers and a lay brother with a higher English school, a high school and a boarding school;

1 convent of Carmelite tertiaries with 34 sisters, an English high school, a boarding house, an industrial school and a college for university students;

3 communities of Sisters of the Holy Cross of Menzingen, taking care of two government hospitals and a leprosy home;

1 hostel for university students with 61 students.

Moreover, there are Catholic and youth associations as well as that of St Vincent for the poor and other pious associations.

5. The Jacobites reside in the division of Quilon and in the other northern divisions of Travancore. In that of Quilon there are about 156,000, almost all in the north of Quilon, between Quilon and Chengannur.

The official census of 1931 gives the number of the Syrian Jacobites 337,872 and of Marthomits 142,486, with a total of 480,358 in the whole Travancore and precisely in the divisions of Quilon and Kottayam.

Therefore, a see for His Excellency Mar Ivanios in Trivandrum would undoubtedly be out of place and far from the mass of Jacobites. His Excellency Mar Ivanios should rather choose his residence and see in the centre of his people, between Quilon and Chengannur, and not settle in the midst of our Catholics of Latin rite, then to create endless difficulties and miseries and to cause discontent and agitations with great detriment to our Holy Religion and scandal to pagans.

6. Recently two monk-priests of His Excellency Mar Ivanios came to settle in Trivandrum with a lay brother in a rented private

house, but after a few weeks one of the two priests had to leave Trivandrum and return to Bethany, and the other openly told one of our priests to have committed an enormous mistake in settling in the capital city of Trivandrum, there not being any scope for or hope of conversion.

Having exposed this, I humbly beg Your Most Reverend Eminence to take this report into consideration and to present it to His Holiness with all circumstances, begging the Holy Father to kindly consider the present state of things and not to grant Trivandrum as episcopal or metropolitan see for His Excellency Mar Ivanios of Syro-Malankara rite, and not to establish his residence there, but rather to establish his residence and see among his peoples and instead to erect Trivandrum as an episcopal see of the Latin Rite, as it was already proposed by His Excellency Monsignor Aloysius Maria Benziger in May 1929.

Bowed at your feet, I kiss your holy purple and begging your holy blessing with my profound respect I profess myself,  
of Your Most Reverend Eminence, humble servant  
Fr. Bernardino of St Therese, D. C., Apostolic Administrator

### **Document 71**

#### **Letter of Apostolic Delegate Leo Peter Kierkels to Cardinal Luigi Sincero on the Execution of the Apostolic Constitution**

Bangalore, 23 March 1933: *although the apostolic constitution "Christo Pastorum Principi" erecting the Syro-Malankara hierarchy carries the date of the papal decision (11 June 1932), it was promulgated only in September 1932 and executed on 23 March 1933. With this letter (No. 2319/33) His Excellency Leo Peter Kierkels, Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies informs Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church that the apostolic constitution erecting the Syro-Malankara hierarchy has duly been executed (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 29; original is in Italian).*

Most Reverend Eminence,

The apostolic constitution, with which the new Syro-Malankara ecclesiastical province was erected, assigned to me the honourable task of rendering it executive within 6 months from the date of its reception and of transmitting an authentic copy of the execution to the Sacred Congregation. The said constitution reached me on 13 September 1932, but the absence of Mar Ivanios and the lack of a church of his rite in Trivandrum did not allow it to be executed immediately. Upon his return Mar Ivanios immediately started work to erect a church and to obtain the governmental authorization necessary to be able to publicly officiate it. Fortunately, all this could be done within the prescribed six months which finished on 12 March.

That day my executive decree was published in the presence of Monsignor Benziger, who was deputed to this, and now I hasten to transmit the enclosed authentic copy of the same decree to the Sacred Congregation.

Bowed to the kiss of the Sacred Purple, with the most respectful sentiments I am proud of professing myself, of Your Most Reverend Eminence,

Most humble, most devout and most obedient,

✠ Leone P. Kierkels C. P., Apostolic Delegate.



**Document 72**  
**Letter of Archbishop Mar Ivanios to Cardinal Luigi Sincero on the Execution of the Apostolic Constitution**

Trivandrum, 17 March 1933: *with this Letter (no. 340/33) Archbishop Mar Ivanios informs Cardinal Luigi Sincero, Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church of the execution of the apostolic constitution "Christo Pastorum Principi" erecting the Syro-Malankara hierarchy (Vatican City, Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Prot. 268/32, Malankaresi-Affari generali: Erezione della provincia ecclesiastica malankarese, no. 28; original is in English).*

Your Eminence,

I am happy to inform Your Eminence that the Apostolic Constitution "Christo Pastorum Principi" dated the 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1932, establishing the Hierarchy for the Syro-Antiochean Rite and constituting the Ecclesiastical Province of Trivandrum has been duly executed on Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1933 by His Excellency Archbishop Benziger who was subdelegated for the purpose by the Delegate Apostolic in my Pro-Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the City of Trivandrum.

I made the profession of Faith and took the customary Oaths in the presence of His Grace Mar Augustine Kandathil, Archbishop of Ernakulam, and the Bull relating to my appointment as the Archbishop of Trivandrum was publicly read, both in Latin and in English. His Excellency the Bishop of Tiruvella was present.

The Executorial Decree of His Excellency the Delegate Apostolic appointing His Excellency Archbishop Benziger as the sub-delegate, as well as the Apostolic Constitution, were publicly read both in Latin and in English. And His Excellency the Subdelegate formally declared that the Apostolic Constitution "Christo Pastorum Principi" has been duly executed. His Excellency made a brief speech and I too was able to take advantage of the occasion to give expression to the deepest sentiments and gratitude to the Most Holy Father and to thank the Sacred Congregation and

the two delegates Apostolic who were concerned in this consummation. Subsequently an address was presented to His Excellency the Subdelegate by the clergy and laity of the newly constituted Ecclesiastical Province, in which they gave expression to their feelings of homage and filial devotion to the Most Holy Father. Their Excellencies the Archbishop of Ernakulam and the Bishop of Tiruvella were present on the occasion.

A large number of prominent Jacobites and Government officials were present at these functions and were deeply impressed with the majesty of the Catholic Church.

I am full of gratitude to Your Eminence for all that Your Eminence and the Sacred Congregation has so kindly done to bring about this happy consummation. His Excellency Mgr. Benziger and His Excellency Mgr. Kandathil of Ernakulam will send up Your Eminence their reports as well as the documents pertaining to these functions.

With sentiments of deep esteem and profound veneration, I remain,

Your Eminence's humble and devoted servant in Jesus Christ,  
Mar Ivanios, Archbishop of Trivandrum.



### Part Three

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

First, we provide a simple description of the historical evolution, growth and development of the Syro-Malankara hierarchy. Then each document will be presented in chronological order, with exact references. As we have seen above, with the apostolic constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi* of 11 June 1932 Pope Pius XI constituted the Syro-Malankara hierarchy with an ecclesiastical province, consisting of two sees: Trivandrum as the metropolitan see and Tiruvalla as its suffragan eparchy (document 65).

On 28 October 1978 Pope John Paul II bifurcated the diocese of Tiruvalla and erected the diocese of Bathery with the apostolic constitution *Constat Paulum* (document 72). At that time the territory of this vast diocese included the civil districts of Kannur, Kasaragod, Wayanad, Malappuram and Kozhikode in Kerala; Coimbatore, the Nilgiris and Karur Taluk in Tamilnadu; Mysore, Mandya, Hassan, Coorg, Chickmangalore and Shimoga in Karnataka. On 16 December 1996 the region of Kanyakumari was separated from the archdiocese of Trivandrum and the eparchy of Marthandom was constituted as its suffragan (document 73). On 15 January 2003 the same Pope dismembered the civil districts of Ernakulam, Trichur and Palakkad in Kerala, as well as Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli in Tamilnadu from the eparchy of Tiruvalla and created the eparchy of Muvattupuzha (document 74).

After the promulgation of the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* in 1990, the Syro-Malankara Church was considered as a metropolitan Church *sui iuris*. Considering the growth, maturity and "brilliant position" of the Malankara Church, with the apostolic constitution *Ab ipso sancto Thoma* of 10 February 2005, Pope John Paul II elevated this Church to the status of a major archiepiscopal Church (document 75).

With the consent of the synod of bishops and having consulted the Apostolic See, on 14 May 2006 Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios established the ecclesiastical province of Thiruvalla in

accordance with canon 85 § 1 of the Eastern Code, raising the eparchy of Thiruvalla to the status of a metropolitan see, with the eparchies of Bathery and Muvattupuzha as its suffragan sees.<sup>390</sup> Subsequently, on 1 January 2007 Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios constituted the eparchy of Mavelikara as a suffragan of the archdiocese of Trivandrum.<sup>391</sup>

On 25 January 2010 Major Archbishop Baselios Mar Cleemis, with the consent of the synod and having consulted the Apostolic See of Rome, created two new eparchies. The eparchy of Pathanamthitta in Kerala was erected bifurcating the major archdiocese of Trivandrum as its suffragan see (document 78). The eparchy of Puthur was created in the state of Karnataka consisting of the northern part of the eparchy of Bathery as a suffragan of the archdiocese of Tiruvalla (document 79). On 14 July 2010 Pope Benedict XVI erected a new exarchate for the Syro-Malankara Catholics in the United States of America (document 80).

On 26 March 2015 Pope Francis erected the “Eparchy of Saint John Chrysostom of Gurgaon” (document 81). The eparchy stretches across the northern part of India, embracing 22 of the 29 federal states of the country. On the same day the Pope also established the exarchate of St Ephrem of Khadki for the Syro-Malankara Catholics of Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and parts of Tamilnadu and Karnataka (document 82). The exarchate extends throughout the southern part of India that had formerly not been under any eparchy of the Syro-Malankara Church. With these acts of the Pope practically the Syro-Malankara Church has obtained the right for the pastoral care of its faithful anywhere in India.

On 4 January 2016 Pope Francis elevated the Syro-Malankara apostolic exarchate in USA as the eparchy of St Mary, Queen of

<sup>390</sup> Document 76; cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 15-16 maggio 2006, 1. In the decree of the major archbishop the date is indicated as 14 May 2006. *Malankara*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2006) 59. The announcement of the constitution of the ecclesiastical province of Tiruvalla was made on 15 May 2006. According to *Annuario Pontificio*, the date of constitution is 15 May 2006.

<sup>391</sup> Document 77; cf. *L'Ossevatore Romano*, 2-3 gennaio 2007, 1; *Malankara*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2007) 80-81; *Annuario Pontificio* indicates 2 January as the date of erection.

Peace, whose bishop has jurisdiction also over the Christian faithful of the same Church in Canada (document 85). On 5 August 2017 Major Archbishop Cleemis erected the eparchy of Parassala according to the provisions of the Eastern Code. The eparchy in the ecclesiastical province of Trivandrum covers some parts of Kerala and Tamil Nādu (document 84). On 25 January 2019 Pope Francis elevated the apostolic exarchy of St. Ephrem of Khadki to the rank of an Eparchy maintaining the same name (document 83).

The original texts of the constitutions erecting eparchies and apostolic exarchies by Roman Pontiffs are in Latin and they have usually been published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. We have reproduced them in the appendix. The Latin formula usually found in apostolic constitutions after the name of the Pope and the expression, Servant of the servants of God: *Ad perpetuam rei memoriam* is translated in various ways by authors: for perpetual remembrance of the fact, for posterity, as a perpetual record, for perpetual memory of the matter, for an everlasting memorial, for everlasting memory, for a perpetual remembrance, etc. A literal translation of the phrase would be: for perpetual memory of the matter, but we have preferred the simple expression, for perpetual memory, omitting “of the matter”, because it is understood.

After the elevation of the Syro-Malankara Church to the status of a major archiepiscopal Church on 10 February 2005, the major archbishop can, with the consent of the synod of bishops and having consulted the Apostolic See, erect provinces and eparchies, modify their boundaries, as well as unite, divide and suppress them inside the proper territory (cf. *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, canon 85 § 1). The original decrees of the major archbishop performing such administrative acts are in English and they have been published in the official bulletin, called *Malankara: Synodal Acts and Voice of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*. We have reproduced them exactly as they are found in the originals.

## Document 73

### Constitution of the Eparchy of Bathery

Vatican City, 28 October 1978: *with the apostolic constitution "Constat Paulum" Pope John Paul II constituted the eparchy of Bathery as a suffragan of the archdiocese of Trivandrum (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 71 [1979] 5-6; original Latin text with English translation in P. Pallath, Important Roman Documents concerning the Catholic Church in India, Kottayam 2004, 274-275; Latin text also in appendix 4).*

John Paul Bishop, Servant of servants of God, for perpetual memory.

It results that Paul VI, our predecessor of good memory, after hearing the supplications which the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches had made to him, not so very long ago decreed that, after some places - which were indicated expressly - had been dismembered from the eparchy of Tiruvalla, a new eparchy should be erected with its own proper and distinct name; nor is it unknown to us that the same provision was also confirmed by our former predecessor John Paul I. On account of this, as we consider this decision to be beneficial for the pastoral care of the Christian faithful dwelling in those regions, we ourselves have not doubted to consider it fully ratified. Therefore, by means of this letter of ours what follows must be considered decided and decreed. We confirm and order that henceforth after the civil regions called Malapuram, Kozhikode, Cannanore, Nilgris, Mysore, Coorg, Mandya, Hassan, South Canara, Chikmagalur and Shimoga having been dismembered from the eparchy of Tiruvalla a new eparchy to be called Bathery is to be founded, whose see will be in the same city of Battery itself, where a sacred cathedral shall be built. This new diocese will have its own minor seminary, which is hoped to be erected as soon as possible. Moreover, the same (eparchy), as a suffragan Church shall hereafter be subject to the metropolitan see of Trivandrum. We wish that this apostolic letter of ours is to be considered valid now and for the future, notwithstanding whatsoever else to the contrary.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on 28<sup>th</sup> day of October, in the year of the Lord 1978, the first of our Pontificate.

## Document 74

### Constitution of the Eparchy of Marthandom

Vatican City, 16 December 1996: *with the apostolic constitution "Singulares omnino" Pope John Paul II constituted the eparchy of Marthandom as a suffragan of the archdiocese of Trivandrum (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 89 [1997] 436-437); Latin text also in appendix 5).*

John Paul Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

More recently it is possible to see that the most beloved Syro-Malankara flock of Trivandrum in India has made singular progress in catholic life and Christian action, for which the entire Mother Church is delighted. Since its extensive boundaries and multitudes of faithful under its governance have made it more difficult the pastoral work of the sacred pastors and the daily ministry of apostolate there, it has been prudently recommended that from those boundaries another eparchy be established, which would not only render the governance easier but also guarantee the very fruits of piety and faith. Hence by the fullness of our Apostolic power, we separate the civil region, which is called Kannyakumari in the vernacular, from the aforesaid Archdiocese of Trivandrum and we convert it into the eparchy of Marthandom; while we wish that its eparchial see be located in the same city of Marthandom and this new community be subject to the Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum as a suffragan see. Moreover, while ordering that all those things which the holy canons stipulate concerning such constitution or erection of the eparchy be observed as diligently as possible, we strongly command the venerable brother, Metropolitan of Trivandrum, to take care that our decree be singly put into effect as soon as possible, so that the new flock may more confidently enter the way of the desired increase of its proper blossoming. Moreover, with a mind moved by the love of the pastor of all Churches we earnestly entreat the Divine Pastor to cherish and promote with gracious love the eparchy of Marthandom born this day and we exhort all its clergy and faithful, being mindful of its dignity and higher status, to enthusiastically undertake the building up of the



Church, leading to its prosperity according to the will of Christ. Finally, we decree this letter of ours to be perpetually valid, and to have its legal force, notwithstanding whatsoever else to the contrary.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, in the year of the Lord 1996, the nineteenth of our Pontificate.

## **Document 75**

### **Constitution of the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha**

Vatican City, 19 December 2002: *with the apostolic constitution "Communitates terrarum" Pope John Paul II constituted the eparchy of Muvattupuzha as a suffragan of the archdiocese of Trivandrum (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 95 [2003] 380-381); Latin text also in appendix 6).*

John Paul Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

Many and various ecclesial communities all over the world have their own proper forms and conditions. We wish to preserve these as legitimate and we strive to enable them to flourish in their own proper rites. Now we think of the eparchy of Tiruvalla and about its vast territory and the more effective care of its faithful. Therefore, as per the recommendation of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, we have decided that it is opportune to detach certain areas from it and to create a new eparchy. Therefore, by our apostolic authority we establish the new eparchy to be known as the eparchy of Moovattupuzha with the episcopal see in the town of Moovattupuzha, with the regions in the Ernakulam, Trissur and Palakkad districts of the State of Kerala as well as those in Coimbatore and Tiruchirapally and make it suffragan to the metropolitan archeparchy of Trivandrum. This decision will be executed by His Excellency the Bishop of Tiruvalla along with His Excellency the Bishop of Moovattupuzha.

In order to perform this, the customs and appropriate laws as well as those prescribed in the Eastern Code should be observed disregarding all obstacles. Turning our cordial attention to this new community, we wish that it begins earnestly the new spiritual

journey according to customary precedents and fervent piety so as to attain great progress and to secure salutary benefits for the faithful.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, in the year of the Lord 2002, the twenty-fifth of our Pontificate.

### Document 76

## Elevation of the Syro-Malankara Church to the Rank of a Major Archiepiscopal Church

Vatican City, 10 February 2005: *with the Apostolic constitution "Ab ipso sancto Thoma" Pope John Paul II elevated the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, until then a metropolitan Church sui iuris, to the rank of a major archiepiscopal Church with all the rights and obligations* (original Latin text and English translation in *Malankara*, vol. 1, no. 1 [2005] 12-14; Latin text also in appendix 7; perhaps inadvertently, this document has not been published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*).

John Paul Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

By St Thomas the Apostle himself was founded the Christian Religion in India and was fruitfully guided by his successors and it prospered in the course of the past centuries under various traditions. The Syro-Malankara community, which entered into communion with the Holy See in 1930, has secured the greatest increase in number of its faithful and pastors and at the same time safeguarded its own ancient ecclesiastical patrimony and faith. Hence, considering the brilliant position of this Church, which we fully reckon and esteem, we have decided to raise the same community of the Syro-Malankarites as the Major Archiepiscopal Church of Trivandrum with all the rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches.<sup>392</sup> This Church shall be

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<sup>392</sup> The original Latin expression, "secundus iura et canones Ecclesiarum Orientalium", can be translated thus: "according to the rights and canons of the Eastern Churches". However, we have not modified the translation, because it was

recognized under the afore-mentioned title and its boundaries shall be the same as the boundaries of the former Metropolitan Church of Trivandrum and the permanent see of the Major Archbishop shall be the city of Trivandrum. We determine those things through this official document and command that they shall ever be safeguarded and declare that nothing contrary to them shall prevail. We hope that this, our declaration and the new arrangement shall be helpful to the apostolic work of the Church and shall produce visible fruits to the entire congregation of the faithful, in the years to come.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, in the year of the Lord 2005, twenty-seventh of our Pontificate.

### **Document 77**

## **Erection of the Ecclesiastical Province of Thiruvalla and the Elevation of the Eparchial See of Thiruvalla to the Rank of a Metropolitan See**

Trivandrum, 14 May 2006: *Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church with his decree constituted the ecclesiastical province of Tiruvalla with the eparchies of Bathery and Muvattupuzha as its suffragan sees (Malankara, vol. 2, no. 1 [2006] 58-59).*

Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, for the perpetual good of the Church.

Praise be to the Holy Name of the Triune God, Self-existent, Almighty, Eternal and Consubstantial.

The Church in India tracing its origin from the preaching of St Thomas the Apostle of Jesus Christ grew up under various traditions in the past centuries. The Syro-Malankara Church regained communion with the Universal Church under the leadership of Archbishop Mar Ivanios of venerable memory in the year 1930. The Hierarchy of this Church was constituted in the year 1932 by His Holiness Pope Pius XI of venerable memory through

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published in the bulletin *Malankara* and has been established as the official text by use for more than 16 years.

the Apostolic Constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi*, consisting of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan See and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla as its suffragan. The Church increased in number and grew in strength on its ancient apostolic tradition and faith. "Considering the brilliant position of the Church" His Holiness Pope John Paul II of happy memory elevated this Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church "with all rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches" (Apostolic Bull *Ab ipso sancto Thoma*). Thereafter, our humble self, was appointed Major Archbishop by the Holy Father, and was duly installed as Catholicos according to the sacred tradition of this Church. And further, the Holy Episcopal Synod of this Church was constituted as per the norms of the Holy Canons.

The Holy Episcopal Synod in session on 1 and 2 December 2005, decided to create Metropolitan Provinces in our Church to carry out the effective pastoral care for our faithful. The same Holy Synod, considering the unique historical position of the See of Tiruvalla as the cradle of the ecclesial communion movement and as the mother of other eparchies of our Church, consented to elevate it to the status of a Metropolitan See. The Holy Synod recommended to create the Metropolitan Province of Tiruvalla with the Eparchial Sees of Bathery and Muvattupuzha as its Suffragan Sees. Therefore, after due consultation with the Apostolic See, by virtue of canon 85 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, I, Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, hereby, elevate the See of Tiruvalla to the status of a Metropolitan See and constitute the Ecclesiastical province of Tiruvalla with the Eparchies of Bathery and Muvattupuzha as its Suffragan Sees. The New Metropolitan See of Tiruvalla and the Ecclesiastical Province of Tiruvalla will enjoy all rights, duties and privileges as envisaged in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches and as specified in the particular law and legitimate customs of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The boundary of the Metropolitan Eparchy of Tiruvalla shall be the same as that of the former Eparchy of Tiruvalla, while the boundary of the Ecclesiastical Province of Tiruvalla shall be the combined geographical boundaries of the Eparchies of Tiruvalla, Bathery and Muvattupuzha.

Nothing contrary to this decree shall prevail. We hope that this our decree and the new arrangement shall be helpful to the apostolic life and work of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and produce abundant fruits for this Church in communion with the entire Universal Church.

Given in Trivandrum, from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at the Catholicate Centre on the fourteenth day of the month of May 2006, in the year of our Lord, the second year of Our Major Archiepiscopal Office.

✠ Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, Major Archbishop Catholicos,  
Fr. Anthony Vallyavillayil OIC, Chancellor.

### Document 78

#### Decree Erecting the Eparchy of Mavelikkara

Trivandrum, 1 January 2007: *Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church with his decree erected the eparchy of Mavelikkara as a suffragan see of the archdiocese of Trivandrum (Malankara, vol. 2, no. 2 [2007] 80-81).*

Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, for the perpetual good of the Church.

Praise be to the Holy Triune God, Self-existent, Almighty, Eternal and Consubstantial!

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is blessed with the apostolic foundation through the evangelizing mission of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. The Hierarchy of this Church, consisting of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan Eparchy and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla as its suffragan, was constituted in the year 1932. The Church increased in number and grew in strength on its ancient apostolic tradition and faith. "Considering the brilliant position of the Church" His Holiness Pope John Paul II of happy memory elevated this Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church "with all rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches" (Apostolic Bull *Ab ipso sancto Thoma*).

Thereafter, the Holy Episcopal Synod of this Church has been solicitous of the pastoral need of the Church to foster divine life and service through administrative organizations.

The Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Church held from 31 October to 3 November 2006 discerned the need to create a new Eparchy consisting of the north-western part of the Major Archeparchy of Trivandrum, to carry out effective pastoral care for the Faithful of that region. Considering the unique historical position of the city of Mavelikara, as a centre of ecclesial life, and as the birth place of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, the initiator of the ecclesial communion movement among the St. Thomas Christians, the Holy Episcopal Synod proposed Mavelikara as the See from which the new Eparchy can take its name. It was decided that the new Eparchy shall consist of the presbyteral districts of Mavelikara, Kollam and parts of Chengannoor and Adoor. Therefore, We, Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, in consultation with the Apostolic See, as per canon 85 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, hereby are pleased, to erect the Eparchy of Mavelikara. The permanent See for the residence of the Eparchial Bishop of Mavelikara is the city of Mavelikara from which the Bishop also takes his title. The Patroness of the Eparchy is St. Mary. The Cathedral of the Eparchy shall be St. Mary's Church Punnamoodu, Mavelikara. The new Eparchy shall be Suffragan of the Major Archiepiscopal See of Trivandrum and enjoy all rights, duties and privileges as envisaged in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches and as specified in the Particular Law and legitimate customs of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The boundary of the Eparchy of Mavelikara shall be the boundary of the civil district of Alapuzha south of River Pampa, and the boundaries of the parishes of the presbyteral district of Kollam in the civil district of Kollam and the boundaries of the parishes on the western part of the Main Central Road in the civil district of Pathanamthitta.

Nothing contrary to this decree shall prevail. We hope that the new Eparchy created through this decree shall be helpful to the apostolic work of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and produce abundant fruits for this Church in communion with the entire Christian Faithful of the Universal Church.

Given at Trivandrum, from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at the Catholicate Centre on the first day of the month of January two thousand and seven, in the year of Our Lord, the feast of St. Basil, the Great, Our Heavenly Patron, the second year of Our Major Archiepiscopal Office.

✠Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos,  
Fr. Antony Valiyavilayil OIC, Chancellor.

## Document 79

### Erection of the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta

Trivandrum, 25 January 2010: *Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church with his decree erected the eparchy of Pathanamthitta as a suffragan see of the archdiocese of Trivandrum (Malankara, vol. 6, no. 1 & 2 [2010] 65-66).*

Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, for the perpetual good of the Church.

Praise be to the Holy Name of the Triune God, Self-existent, Almighty, Eternal and Consubstantial!

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is blessed with the apostolic foundation through the evangelizing mission of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. The Hierarchy of this Church, consisting of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan Eparchy and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla as its suffragan, was reconstituted in the Catholic Church in the year 1932. The Church increased in number and grew in strength on its ancient apostolic tradition and faith. "Considering the brilliant position of the Church," His Holiness Pope John Paul II of happy memory elevated this Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church "with all rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches" (Apostolic Bull *Ab ipso sancto Thoma*). Thereafter, the Holy Episcopal Synod of this Church has been solicitous of the pastoral needs of the Church to foster divine life and service through administrative organizations.

The Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Church held from 17 to 21 November 2008 discerned the need of creating a new Eparchy bifurcating the Major Archeparchy of Trivandrum, considering the good of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, the pastoral needs of the People of God, the efficacy of evangelization, reunion and ecumenical endeavours. As a centre of ecclesial life, the Holy Episcopal Synod proposed Pathanamthitta as the See from which the new Eparchy takes its name.

It was decided that the new Eparchy shall consist of the Presbyteral Districts of Pathanamthitta, Konni, Ranni-Perunad and Pandalam and the parishes of Anandapally, Angadickal, Chandanapally, Pongalady and Thatta of Adoor Presbyteral District, spread over the civil district of Pathanamthitta. Therefore, We, Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, in consultation with the Apostolic See, as per canon 85 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, hereby, are pleased to erect the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta. The permanent See for the residence of the Eparchial Bishop of Pathanamthitta is the city of Pathanamthitta from which the Bishop also takes his title. The Patron of the Eparchy is St. Thomas, the Apostle of India. The Cathedral of the Eparchy shall be St. Peter's Church, Pathanamthitta. The new Eparchy shall be a Suffragan of the Major Archiepiscopal Eparchy of Trivandrum and enjoy all rights, duties and privileges as envisaged in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches and as specified in the Particular Law and legitimate customs of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The boundary of the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta shall be the boundaries of the aforesaid Presbyteral Districts and the five parishes of the Presbyteral District of Adoor.

Nothing contrary to this decree shall prevail. We hope that the new Eparchy created through this decree shall be helpful to the pastoral and apostolic work of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and produce abundant fruits for this Church in communion with the entire Christian Faithful of the Universal Church.

Given in Trivandrum, from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at the Catholicate Centre on the Twenty Fifth day of the month of January Two Thousand and Ten, in the year of Our Lord, the Third year of Our Major Archiepiscopal Office.



✠Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos,

Fr. Antony Valiyavilayil OIC, Chancellor.

## **Document 80**

### **Erection of the Eparchy of Puthur**

Trivandrum, 25 January 2010: *Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church with his decree erected the eparchy of Puthur as a suffragan see of the archdiocese of Tiruvalla (Malankara, vol. 6, no. 1 & 2 [2010] 70-71).*

Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, for the perpetual good of the Church.

Praise be to the Holy Name of the Triune God, Self-existent, Almighty, Eternal and Consubstantial!

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is blessed with the apostolic foundation through the evangelizing mission of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. The Hierarchy of this Church, consisting of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan Eparchy and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla as its suffragan, was reconstituted in the Catholic Church in the year 1932. The Church increased in number and grew in strength on its ancient apostolic tradition and faith. "Considering the brilliant position of the Church" His Holiness Pope John Paul II of happy memory elevated this Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church "with all rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches" (Apostolic Bull *Ab ipso sancto Thoma*). Thereafter, the Holy Episcopal Synod of this Church has been solicitous of the pastoral need of the Church to foster divine life and service through administrative organizations.

The Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Church held from 17 to 21 November 2008 discerned the need to create a new Eparchy consisting of the north-western region of the Eparchy of Bathery, to carry out effective pastoral care for the Faithful of that region. Considering the unique position of the city of Puthur, the Holy

Episcopal Synod proposed Puthur as the See from which the new Eparchy can take its name.

It was decided that the new Eparchy shall consist of the Presbyteral districts of South Kanara and Shimoga spread over the civil districts of Dakshina Kannada, Chamrajnagar, Chickmagalur, Hassan, Kodagu, Mandya, Mysore, Shimoga and Udupi of the State of Karnataka. Therefore, We, Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, in consultation with the Apostolic See, as per canon 85 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, hereby are pleased to erect the Eparchy of Puthur. The permanent See for the residence of the Eparchial Bishop of Puthur is the city of Puthur from which the Bishop also takes his title. The Patron of the Eparchy is St. Joseph. The Cathedral of the Eparchy shall be St. Joseph's Church, Puthur. The new Eparchy shall be a Suffragan of the Archeparchy of Tiruvalla and enjoy all rights, duties and privileges as envisaged in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches and as specified in the Particular Law and legitimate customs of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The boundary of the Eparchy of Puthur shall be the boundaries of the aforesaid presbyteral districts in the State of Karnataka

Nothing contrary to this decree shall prevail. We hope that the new Eparchy created through this decree shall be helpful to the apostolic work of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and produce abundant fruits for this Church in communion with the entire Christian Faithful of the Universal Church.

Given in Trivandrum, from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at the Catholicate Centre on the Twenty Fifth day of the month of January Two Thousand and Ten, in the year of Our Lord, the fifth year of Our Major Archiepiscopal Office.

✠ Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos,

✠ Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, Curia Bishop and Chancellor.

## Document 81

### Erection of Syro-Malankara Exarchy in the United States of America

Vatican City, 15 July 2010: *with the apostolic constitution "Sollicitudinem gerentes" Pope Benedict XVI erected the apostolic exarchate of the United States of America for the faithful of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, living in that country (Acta Apostolicae Sedis 102, no. 9 [2010] 529-530; Latin text also in appendix 8: English translation in Malankara, vol. 6, no. 1 & 2 [2010] 124).*

Benedict Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

In our concern for the Eastern Churches and in our desire that they may flourish and develop with new apostolic vigor,<sup>393</sup> we turn our attention at this time to the faithful of the Syro-Malankara rite living in the United States of America. Indeed, having accepted the opinion of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches and having given prior deliberation to the counsel of His Beatitude Basilio Cleemis Thottunkal, Major Archbishop of Trivandrum for Syro-Malankara Catholics, and to that of the Synod of Syro-Malankara Bishops as well as the President of the Bishops' Conference of the United States of North America, we, after due consideration of this matter, by our apostolic authority, establish the Apostolic Exarchate of the United States of North America for the faithful of the Syro-Malankara rite living there. We subject this new community to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches; the other details are to be carried out in accordance with the prescripts of the Canons of the Eastern Churches. Once the constitution of the abovementioned Exarchate has been properly executed, an authentic copy of the acts of the completed execution is to be sent to the already-mentioned

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<sup>393</sup> In the facsimile of the original handwritten constitution reproduced in *Malankara*, vol. 6, No. 1 & 2 [2010] 123, the adjective "Eastern" is not found, but after the expression "new apostolic vigour", "cfr. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 1" is inserted. However, in the official text promulgated in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* the said adjective Eastern is added, but the reference is dropped. Thus the translation has been modified in accordance with the official promulgated text.

Congregation. Finally, we mandate that this our decree be held binding both now and in the future, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of July, in the year of the Lord 2010, the sixth of our Pontificate.

## **Document 82**

### **Constitution of the Eparchy of Saint John Chrysostom of Gurgaon**

Vatican City, 26 March 2015: *with the apostolic constitution "Quo aptius" Pope Francis erected the Eparchy of Saint John Chrysostom of Gurgaon. The eparchy stretches across the northern part of India, embracing 22 of the 29 federal states of India (Acta Apostolicae Sedis, vol. 107, no. 6 [2015] 508; Latin text also in appendix 9).*

Francis Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

It was deemed proper to erect a new Eparchy for the spiritual welfare and governance of the Syro-Malankara Christian faithful, living in the northern parts of India. We, having been installed in the Chair of the Prince of the Apostles, after having consulted our Venerable Brother Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches and after having mature consideration on the matter, with our supreme Apostolic Authority, erect the new Syro-Malankara Eparchy of St. John Chrysostom of Gurgaon, with all the rights and obligations, such as proper to the eparchies, which comprises all the states of North India, touching the far ends of the Country, besides the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. We fix the see of this new Eparchy in the city of Gurgaon. The establishment and administration of the new Eparchy is to be carried out according to the norms of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. Indeed, these things that We have decreed are to be duly put into effect and, after the execution of the same, the customary documents concerning it are to be drawn up and forwarded to the Congregation

for the Eastern Churches. Finally, We wish that this Apostolic Constitution is considered as valid, now and in the future, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, in the year of the Lord, 2015, the third of our Pontificate.

### **Document 83**

## **Erection of the Apostolic Exarchy of St Ephrem of Khadki**

Vatican City, 26 March 2015: *with the apostolic constitution "Nos qui" Pope Francis erected the Syro-Malankara apostolic exarchy of St Ephrem of Khadki (Acta Apostolicae Sedis, vol. 107, no. 6 [2015] 502-503; Latin text also in appendix 10).*

Francis Bishop, Servant of servants of God, for perpetual memory.

We who succeed in the position of the blessed Peter are striving to consider with great solicitude the spiritual good of the entire sheep of the Lord. Therefore, in order to provide more appropriately and completely for the care of souls in the Southern region of India, we have carefully listened to the advice of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches which thinks its opportune to constitute a new Syro Malankara ecclesiastical circumscription. Therefore, having obtained the favourable opinion of those who are concerned, We by our Apostolic authority decree all the following. In that region, which includes the whole and entire states of Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as well as some parts of the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and in which hitherto there is no circumscription of the Syro Malankara Church, now We establish an Apostolic Exarchy by the name "Saint Ephrem of Khadki of Syro-Malankara people". Moreover, we decree that the Cathedral of the same Exarchy is to be set up in the city of Khadki. The new circumscription (exarchy) shall be directly subjected to the Apostolic See and We grant to it all rights, honours and privileges, which are due to such Churches; however, We also impose rightful obligations on the presiding Prelate according to the norm of sacred

canons. For the rest, in the arrangement of everything, approved usages and legitimate customs of the Eastern Churches are to be fully observed. Finally, We wish that these ordinances of ours be executed and an authentic copy be soon sent to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches. We wish that this letter is and will be effective now and in the future. No contrary prescriptions of any kind could obstruct the effectiveness of this letter, since by this letter we derogate from them all.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March, in the year of the Lord 2015, the third of our Pontificate.

### **Document 84**

## **Elevation of the Syro-Malankara Exarchate in the United States of America to the Rank of Eparchy**

Vatican City, 18 December 2015: *with the apostolic constitution "Ad aptius consulendum" Pope Francis erected the Syro-Malankara apostolic exarchy in the United States of America as the Eparchy of Saint Mary, Queen of Peace, of the United States of America and of Canada for the Syro-Malankara faithful residing in those countries (Acta Apostolicae Sedis vol. 108, no. 1 [2016] 1-2; Latin text also in appendix 11).*

Francis Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

In order to provide more suitably for the spiritual welfare and governance of the Syro-Malankara faithful living in the United States of North America and in Canada, it has seemed that a new Eparchy encompassing both Nations be established for them. Therefore, we who have been placed in the Cathedra of the Prince of the Apostles, upon consultation with Our Venerable Brother, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, after due consideration, by our supreme apostolic authority, do hereby erect the Eparchy of Saint Mary, Queen of Peace, of the United States of North America and of Canada, for the Syro-Malankara faithful, together with all the rights and obligations proper to such a Church (eparchy); we place its

eparchial see in the town of Elmont, while the establishment and administration of the same are to be carried out according to the norms of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. Indeed, these things that we have decreed are to be duly put into effect and, after the execution of the same, the customary documents concerning it are to be drawn up and forwarded to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches. Finally, we wish that this Apostolic Constitution is considered as valid, now and in the future, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of December, in the year of the Lord 2015, the third of our Pontificate.

## **Document 85**

### **Erection of the Eparchy of Parassala**

Trivandrum, 5 August 2017: *Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church with his decree erected the eparchy of Parassala as a suffragan See of the archdiocese of Trivandrum (Malankara, vol. 13, no. 1 & 2 [2017] 53).*

Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, For the perpetual good of the Church.

Praise be to the Holy Name of the Triune God, Self-existent, Almighty, Eternal and Consubstantial!

Through divine providence it has come about that the Malankara Church is founded by St Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. The Hierarchy of this Apostolic Church that lost universal ecclesial communion was reconstituted in the Catholic Church in the year 1932 by his Holiness Pope Pius XI consisting of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan Eparchy and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla as its suffragan. The Church increased in number and grew in strength on its ancient apostolic tradition and faith. "Considering the brilliant position of the Church," His Holiness Pope St. John Paul II elevated this Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church "with all rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons of the

Oriental Churches” (Apostolic Bull *Ab ipso sancto Thoma*). The Holy Episcopal Synod of this Church has been solicitous of the needs of the Church to foster divine life and service through administrative organizations. The 20th Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Church held on 16 September 2017, considering the pastoral needs, the efficacy of evangelization and the reunion and ecumenical endeavours of the People of God in the southern region of Trivandrum discerned the need to create a new Eparchy bifurcating the Major Archeparchy of Trivandrum. As a centre of ecclesial life, the Holy Episcopal Synod proposed Parassala as the See from which the new Eparchy takes its name.

It was decided that the new Eparchy shall consist of the Presbyteral Districts of Parassala, Kattakkada, Neyyatinkara spread over the civil district of Parassala. Therefore, We, Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, in consultation with the Apostolic See, as per canon 85 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, hereby, are pleased to erect the Eparchy of Parassala. The permanent See for the residence of the Eparchial Bishop of Parassala is the city of Parassala from which the Bishop also takes his title. The Patron of the Eparchy is St. Mother Theresa of Kolkata. The Cathedral of the Eparchy shall be St. Mary’s Church, Parassala. The new Eparchy shall be a Suffragan of the Major Archiepiscopal Eparchy of Trivandrum and enjoy all rights, duties and privileges as envisaged in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches and as specified in the Particular Laws and legitimate customs of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The boundary of the Eparchy of Parassala shall be the existing boundaries of the parishes of Parassala, Kattakkada (except Puliyaikonam Parish) and Neyyantinkara Ecclesiastical Districts and that of the two parishes of Thiruvallam and Nelliode belonging to the present ecclesiastical District of Trivandrum.

Nothing contrary to this decree shall prevail. We hope that the new Eparchy created through this decree shall be for the greater glory of God and the good of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and produce abundant fruits for this Church in communion with the entire Christian Faithful of the Universal Church and for the society at large.



Given in Trivandrum, from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia at the Catholicate Centre on the Fifth day of the month of August Two Thousand and Seventeen, in the year of Our Lord, the Tenth year of Our Major Archiepiscopal Office.

✠Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos,

✠Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC, Curia Bishop and Chancellor.

### **Document 86**

## **Elevation of the Apostolic Exarchy of Saint Ephrem of Khadki to the Rank of Eparchy with the Same Name**

Vatican City, 23 November 2019: *with the apostolic constitution "Scietiae Crucis" Pope Francis elevated the apostolic exarchy of Saint Ephrem of Khadki to the rank of an Eparchy with the same name (Acta Apostolicae Sedis, vol. 111, no. 3 [2019] 254-255; Latin text also in appendix 12).*

Francis Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, for perpetual memory.

"Let us expel the nocturnal darkness of the mind illumined by the day-light of the science of the Cross, so that our mind may minister to the Lord in the renewal of our purity and of this glittered day, that does not begin by the motion or course of the sun, but by a sign that we should strive to imprint in our person through assiduous devotion towards Christ (cf. Saint Ephrem, *Sermo* 3, 2). Having been constituted the heir of this spiritual beauty, we ought above all, as we consider the benefit and progress of the same flock, to yield to every possible means of saving grace, disposing all things in individual Churches, by which the highest good of souls and the desirable spiritual fruit of the faithful are exceedingly provided; now we turn our attention to the beloved Christian faithful of the Syro-Malankara Church in South India, whose providential growth we observe with the utmost care. Therefore, having been furnished the favourable votes of our venerable brother Baselios Cleemis Thottunkal, Major Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro-

Malankaras, and of the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malankaras, and having heard the counsel of our venerable brother, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, by the fullness of our apostolic power, we elevate the same Exarchy of Saint Ephrem of Khadki for the faithful of the Syro-Malankara rite residing in the southern part of India to an Eparchy to be called by the same title, without modifying anything concerning the seat of the Cathedral Church, the see of the bishop and the headquarters of the Curia, and having assigned all the fitting rights and granted all privileges according to the norms of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

We establish this Eparchy to be subject to the Syro-Malankara Major Archbishop of Trivandrum and to the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malankaras, and yet its bishop to be a member of the Conference of Bishops of India, declaring that its patron before God be St. Ephrem the Deacon. All the priests already exercising ministry in the Exarchy by that very fact are to be incardinated in the newly constituted Eparchy; likewise, the alumni of the Seminary coming from the parishes of the same territory are to be ascribed to the new circumscription. All the other things are to be regulated according to the norms of the said Code.

Finally, we wish that this Constitution of ours be perennially ratified; notwithstanding anything else to the contrary.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of November, in the year of the Lord 2019, the seventh of our Pontificate.



## APPENDIX ORIGINAL LATIN DOCUMENTS

As we have already seen, official documents of the Roman Pontiff and the Apostolic See concerning the constitution of Syro-Malankara hierarchy and the erection of eparchies and exarchies are in Latin language. Normally such documents are published in the official commentary or register of records, called *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (1909-). We have provided exact reference for all documents published in this source where the English translation of each is presented. Here we reproduce the original Latin texts as they are found in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. Documents, which are not published in the said *Acta*, are taken from the Archives of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches.

### Appendix 1 **Litterae Apostolicae *Magnum Nobis* de duorum ordinariatuum Ereptione**

Pius Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Venerabili Fratri *Mar Ivanios*, archiepiscopo antiocheni ritus, ad titularem Ecclesiam archiepiscopalem Phasianam electo, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

Magnum Nobis gaudium fuit cum accepimus Te, archiepiscopum antiocheni ritus, in Malabarica regione, ac tecum simul alium eiusdem ritus episcopum, venerabilem Fratrem Mar Theophilos, eiusdem ritus Episcopum, pluresque sacerdotes cum ingenti de grege vestro incolarum numero, suorum pastorum, divina opitulante gratia, vestigia secutos, in Sanctae Matris Catholicae Ecclesiae gremium feliciter ingressos esse. Deoque idcirco Optimo Maximo humillimas persolvimus gratias, vobisque ex animo gratulati sumus et iterum gratulamur, quod pientissimo Patri luminum, qui mentes et corda vestra illuminare dignatus est, dociles praebuistis aures.

Cum autem rite recognitum sit sacros ordines et episcopalem consecrationem valide vos recepisse, volentes vos in eodem

dignitatis gradu etiam in posterum servare, vobis conferre statuimus aliquem illarum Ecclesiarum titulum virtutum splendore et religionis prosperitate olim fulgentium, quarum memoriam minime elabi decet. Te itaque, qui archiepiscopali dignitate hucusque fruebaris, de venerabilium fratrum nostrorum S.R.E. cardinalium consilio, ad titularem Ecclesiam archiepiscopalem Phasianam in Lazica per venerabilis Fratris Gulielmi Marci Duke ad metropolitanam Ecclesiam Vancouveriensem successionem vacantem, suprema nostra auctoritate eligimus eiusque Tibi titulum conferimus cum omnibus iuribus et privilegiis, oneribus et obligationibus sublimi huic dignitati inhaerentibus.

Cupientes insuper Te in pastorali cura et regimine manere novae illius catholici gregis portionis, Syro-Malankarensium nomine nuncupatae, tuis etiam votis libenter obsecundantes, territorium pro tuo munere obeundo, usque dum verae ac propriae dioeceses et ecclesiastica-provincia istic canonice constituentur, Tibi assignare statuimus; Te igitur Ordinarium deputamus et constituimus fidelium Syro-Malankarensium, antiocheni ritus, in regione Malabarica commorantium, quae ad Pampae fluminis meridiem vergit cum omnibus potestatibus et facultatibus Ordinarii de iure pertinentibus. Clero autem et populo Tibi commisso, quos Tu ipse ac hac tua electione meliori quo fieri poterit modo certiores facies, in Domino mandamus ut Te tamquam patrem et pastorem animarum suarum debito honore prosequentes, salubribus tuis monitis et mandatis obedientiam sicut antea praestent ac reverentiam exhibeant, ut Tu eos devotos filios habeas, ipsi vero Te patrem benevolum agnoscant.

Volumus autem ut in manibus venerabilis Fratris Petri Kierkels, archiepiscopi titularis Salaminensis in Indiis Orientalibus delegati apostolici, vel alicuius catholici Antistitis ad ipso ad hoc deputati, fidei catholicae professionem emittere ac sueta iuramenta praestare, iuxta formulas pro Orientalibus praescriptas, harumque exemplaria, Tui ac delegati apostolici, seu praefati Antistitis, subscriptione ac sigillo munita, ad S. Congregationem pro Ecclesia Orientali infra sex menses transmitters omnino tenearis. Firmam autem spem fiduciamque concipimus fore ut, dextera Domini Tibi assistente propitia, pastorali munus tanto studio exercere prosequaris, ut fideles tuis concrediti curis in fide et charitate magis

magisque confirmentur; qui autem adhuc a vera Christi Ecclesia vivunt seiuncti catholicam tandem agnoscant veritatem, sicque fiat unum ovile et unus Pastor.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo trigesimo secundo, die tertia decima mensis februarii, pontificatus nostri anno undecimo.

Fr Andreas Card.Frühwirth, Cancellarius S.R.E.

Joseph Wilpert, Dec. Prot. Ap.

Hector Castelli, Prot. Ap.

## Appendix 2

### **Decretum Congregationis pro Ecclesia Orientali titulares Dioeces assignans pro Mar Ivanios et Mar Theophilos**

Cum mense Septembri a. 1930, in Ecclesiam Catholicam feliciter ingressi sint duo Excellentissimi Praesules Malabarici, Mar Ivanios nempe et Mar Theophilos, ad antiochenum ritum pertinentes; ac exinde plures sacerdotes atque incolarum numerus eorum vestigia, divina operante gratia, sint secuti; recognita in casu uti valida sacerdotali ac episcopali Sacra Ordinatione ab ipsis antea suscepta, atque nomine "Syro-Malankarensium" hac nova portione catholici gregis nuncupata, opportunum visum est praefatos Presules in proprio dignitatis gradu ac ordine, nec non fidelium gregis illius ritus cura pastoralis ac regime servare, atque, donec verae ac propriae dioeceses pro iis canonice constitutae fuerint, unicuique Episcoporum supra memoratorum titularem Ecclesiam conferre.

Quapropter Ss.mus D. N. Pius Div. Provv. Pp. XI, in Audientia subsignata die Em.mo Cardinali Secretario huius S. Congregationis concessa, ad vacantem Ecclesiam Archiepiscopalem Phasianam elegit Excellentissimum P. D. Mar Ivanios eique titulum dictae Ecclesiae Phasianae contulit, et ad vacantem titularem Ecclesiam Episcopalem Aradensem Excellentissimum P. D. Mar Theophilos pariter nominavit, eique titulum dictae Ecclesiae Aradensis assignans.

Eadem Sanctitas Sua, votis eorumdem Episcoporum obsecundans usque dum canonice non constituta fuerit vera ac propria provincia ecclesiastica, territorium, pro respectivo munere obeundo, utriusque terminis circumscribere dignata est. Decrevit itaque ut Excellentissimus Mar Ivanios sit Ordinarius habendus fidelium Syro-malankarensium, ritus Antiocheni, regionis Malabaricae, quae ad meridiem fluminis Pampae vergit, et Excellentissimus Mar Theophilos Ordinarius fidelium eiusdem ritus Malabaricae regionis, quae in eiusdem fluminis plagam septentrionalem spectat; utrumque vero Ordinarium SS. mus Dominus praeditum voluit, pro territorio unicuique praefinito, omnibus iuribus, facultatibus et privilegiis, quae sunt propria Ordinariorum: quae omnia hisce Litteris confirmat.

Quare apostolicae sub plumbo Litterae de hac provisione et ordinatione expeditantur, additis decretis fidei professionem emittendi et sueta iuramenta praestandi.

Contrariis quibuscumque minime obstantibus.

Datum Romae, ex Aedibus S. C. Orientali, die 13 Februarii, anno 1932.

Card. L. Sincero a Secretis.

### Appendix 3

#### **Constitutio Apostolica de novae Ecclesiasticae Antiocheni Ritus Provinciae pro fidelibus Syro- Malankarensibus Ereptione in Malabarica Indiarum Orientalium regione**

Pius Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Christo Pastorum Principi humillimas ferventesque persolvimus gratias cum duo praeclarissimi antiocheni ritus Syromalankarenses Antistites, Mar Ivanios nempe archiepiscopus et Mar Theophilos Episcopus, pluresque sacerdotes ac ingens de eorum grege incolarum numerus, suorum Pastorum, divina operante gratia, vestigia secuti, in Sanctae Matris Catholicae Ecclesiae gremium feliciter ingressi sunt: ipsisque Praesulibus ex animo

gratulati sumus, quod pientissimo Patri luminum, qui eorum mentes et corda illuminare dignatus est, dociles praeberunt aures, omnique ope atque opera in Christi regno inter fideles illos magis dilatando assidue elaborarunt. Paucis itaque transactis mensibus ex quo fideles illi catholicam amplexi sunt unitatem, Nos, eorum spirituali bono consulere cupientes, duplicem interea ordinariatum intra fines Malabaricae regionis, cursu Pampae fluminis unum ab altero seiunctum, Apostolicis sub plumbo Litteris *Magnum Nobis*, die tertiadecima Februarii vertentis anni datis, constituimus ac venerabilibus praefatis Praesulibus concredidimus. Cum vero istorum fidelium Syromalankarensium antiocheni ritus numerus fauste feliciterque magis in dies auctus sit ac brevi tempore, auctore Domino, ad nonnulla millia iam pervenerit, opportunum et salutare visum est res ecclesiasticas aptiore ac firmitate ratione disponere et ordinare, novam erigendo in regione illa Malabarica ecclesiasticam ritus antiocheni provinciam. Quapropter Nos, praefatorum Praesulum faventes votis ac novum erga nobilissimas orientales Ecclesias Nostrae dilectionis testimonium praebere volentes, praehabito favorabili voto venerabilis fratris Leonis Kierkels, Archiepiscopi titularis Salaminensis, in Indiis orientalibus delegati apostolici, de venerabilium fratrum Nostrorum S. R. E. Cardinalium Sacrae Congregationi pro Ecclesia Orientali praepositorum, suppleto, quatenus opus sit, quorum interest, vel eorum qui sua interesse praesumant consensu, ea quae sequuntur, apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, decernimus ac statuimus:

I. Suppressis duobus quos supra diximus ordinariatibus in regione Malabaricae ad Pampae fluminis septentrionem et meridiem, ex eorum territorio novam ac distinctam ecclesiasticam provinciam pro fidelibus Syro-Malankarensibus antiocheni ritus erigimus, quae duabus constabit sedibus archiepiscopali nempe Trivandrensi et episcopali Tiruvallensi.

II. Trivandrensis archidioecesis, cuius fines iidem erunt ac dioecesium Quilonensis, de Kottar et dioecesis Coccinensis partis meridionalis fines, districtus *Trivandrum*, *Kottarakara*, *Adoor*, *Pathanamthitta*, *Mavelikara*, *Kayamkulam* et *Chengannoor* complectetur.

III. Archiepiscopi Trivandrensis sedem in urbe *Trivandrum*, a quo archidioecesis ipsa nomen mutuatur, constituimus.



IV. Archiepiscopalem Ecclesiam Trivandrensem novae huius ecclesiasticae provinciae metropolitanam constituimus; illi propterea, eiusque pro tempore Archiepiscopis omnia concedimus iura et privilegia, honores et praerogativas, quae iure communi et Ecclesiae Syro-Antiochenae legitimis consuetudinibus eisdem competunt; facultatem in primis pro Archiepiscopis pallio intra ecclesiasticae provinciae fines iuxta liturgicas leges utendi, postquam tamen ipsum ab Apostolica Sede in sacro Consistorio postulatum ac obtentum fuerit.

V. Dioecesis Tiruvallensis, cuius limites iidem erunt ac dioecesium Verapolitanae et de Vijayapuram, nec non dioecesis Coccinensis partis septentrionalis fines, districtibus *Tiruvalla*, *Niranam*, *Kottayam*, *Moovattupuzha*, et *Kunnamkulam* constabit.

VI. Episcopi Tiruvallensis sedem in oppido *Tiruvalla* statuimus, a quo dioecesis ipsa nuncupatur.

VII. Cathedrali Ecclesiae Tiruvallensi eiusque pro tempore Episcopis iura omnia et privilegia concedimus honores et praerogativas, quae iure communi et legitima consuetudine Ecclesiae Syro-Antiochenae eisdem spectant.

VIII. Novam hanc cathedralem Tiruvallensem suffraganeam constituimus metropolitanae Ecclesiae Trivandrensi, eiusque pro tempore Episcopos metropolitico iuri Archiepiscopi Trivandrensis subicimus.

IX. Tum metropolitanam Ecclesiam Trivandrensem eiusque pro tempore Archiepiscopos, tum cathedralem Ecclesiam Tiruvallensem eiusque Episcopos iisdem adstringimus oneribus et obligationibus, quibus ceterae metropolitanae et cathedrales Ecclesiae earumque Antistites adstringuntur.

X. Antistitum Trivandrensis et Tiruvallensis cathedras, alteram in ecclesia B. Mariae Virginis Matris Dei in *Trivandrum* urbe, alteram in ecclesia S. Ioannis Evangelistae in *Tiruvalla* oppido figimus. Hisce itaque ecclesiis, donec aliter provideatur, omnia concedimus iura et privilegia quibus aliae metropolitanae et cathedrales ecclesiae fruuntur.

XI. Archiepiscopalem seu episcopalem mensam oblationes a fidelibus fieri solitae, redditus ac bona omnia constituent, quae Ecclesiis ipsis quocumque titulo in posterum pervenerint.

XII. Quod autem attinet ad Trivandrensis et Tiruvallensis Ecclesiarum administrationem et regimen, ad Consultorum Collegii ad iuris normam electionem, ad Seminariorum institutionem, ad clericorum et fidelium iura et onera, aliaque huiusmodi, servanda iubemus quae sacri canones statuunt. Quod vero ad clerum praecipue spectat, statuimus ut simul ac praedictarum archidioecesis et dioecesis erectio executioni mandata fuerit, eo ipso clerici omnes Ecclesiae illi censeantur adscripti in cuius territorio legitime exstant.

XIII. Nobis denique ac Sedi Apostolicae facultatem reservamus praefatas circumscriptiones pro temporum adiunctis immutandi et aliter definiendi quoties id in Domino expedire visum fuerit.

Rebus itaque ut supra dispositis, ad eadem omnia executioni mandanda deputamus quem supra memoravimus venerabilem fratrem Leonem Kierkels, Indiarum Orientalium Delegatum Apostolicum; eique propterea necessarias et opportunas tribuimus facultates tum omnes dirimendi controversias in executionis actu quomodolibet orituras, tum etiam subdelegandi ad effectum de quo agitur alium virum in officio vel ecclesiastica dignitate constitutum, eidemque onus imponimus authenticum exemplar peractae executionis actus intra sex menses ab his Litteris acceptis ad Sacram Congregationem pro Ecclesia Orientali transmittendi.

Praesentes autem Litteras et in eis contenta quaecumque, etiam ex eo quod quilibet, quorum interest vel eorum qui sua interesse praesumant, auditi non fuerint ac praemissis non consenserint, etiam si expressa et individua mentione digni sint, nullo unquam tempore de subreptionis vel obreptionis aut nullitatis vitio seu intentionis nostrae, vel quolibet alio licet substantiali et inexcogitato defectu notari, impugnari vel in controversiam vocari posse; sed eas tamquam ex certa scientia ac potestatis plenitudine factas et emanatas perpetuo validas existere et fore, suosque plenarios et integros effectus sortiri et obtinere atque ab omnibus ad quos spectat inviolabiliter observari debere; et si secus super his a quocumque, quavis auctoritate, scienter vel ignoranter contigerit attentari, irritum prorsus et inane esse et fore volumus et decernimus. Volumus denique ut harum Litterarum transumptis, etiam impressis, manu tamen alicuius notarii publici subscriptis ac sigillo alicuius viri in ecclesiastica dignitate vel officio constituti munitis, eadem prorsus

tribuatur fides, quae hisce Litteris tribueretur, si originaliter exhibitae vel ostensae forent. Non obstantibus, quatenus opus sit, regulis in synodalibus, provincialibus, generalibus universalibusque Conciliis editis, specialibus vel generalibus constitutionibus et ordinationibus Apostolicis, et quibusvis aliis Romanorum Pontificum praedecessorum Nostrorum dispositionibus, ceterisque contrariis quibuscumque.

Nemini autem has litteras nostras erectionis, evectionis, concessionis, statuti, derogationis, mandati et voluntatis Nostrae infringere vel contraire liceat. Si quis vero ausu temerario hoc attentare praesumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei et beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum Eius se noverit incursum.

Datum Romae apud S. Petrum, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo trigesimo secundo, die decima prima mensis Iunii, in festo S Barnabae Apostoli, Pontificatus nostri anno undecimo.

#### Appendix 4

### Quibusdam locis ab Eparchia Tiruvallensi detractis nova conditur Eparchia nomine Batteriensis

Ioannes Paulus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Constat Paulum VI, Decessorem Nostrum bo.me., precibus auditis quas ei adnumerat Sacra Congregatio pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus, haud ita pridem statuisse ut, quibusdam ab Eparchia Tiruvallensi detractis locis nominatim descriptis, nova iisdem Eparchia erigeretur proprio ac distincto nomine nuncupanda; neque Nos latet eandem rem etiam a postremo Decessore Nostro Ioanne Paulo I confirmatam esse. Hanc ob causam, decretum considerantes profuturum ad pastorales curas Christifidelium in illis regionibus degentium, non dubitavimus quin id Nosmet ipsi ratum omnino haberemus. Per has igitur Litteras Nostras haec, quae sequuntur, statuta decretaque habeantur. Confirmamus et iubemus ut civilibus regionibus, vulgo "Malapuram" et "Kozhikode" et "Cannanore" et "Nilgiris" et "Mysore" et "Coorg" et "Mandya" et "Hassan" et "South Cañara" et "Chikmagalur" et "Shimoga" ap pellatis, dehinc ab Eparchia Tiruvallensi seiunctis, condatur nova Eparchia

Batteriensi nuncupanda, cuius sedes erit in ipsa urbe Battery, ubi et cathedralis sacra aedes constituetur. Nova ista Eparchia suum sibi habebit Seminarium minus, quod optandum est ut quam primum ibi excitetur. Eadem praeterea, ut Ecclesia suffraganea, Sedi metropolitanae Trivandrensi posthac obnoxia erit. Has Nos Litteras Apostolicas et nunc et in posterum ratas esse volumus, contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die duodecesimo mensis Octobris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo octavo, Pontificatus Nostri primo.

### **Appendix 5**

## **Trivandrensis Syrorum Malankarensium Metropolitana excitatur Eparchia (Marthando- mensis) Syrorum Malankarensium**

Ioannes Paulus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Singulares omnino recentius videre licuit progressus vitae catholicae actionisque christianae fecisse carissimum in India gregem Trivandrensem Syrorum Malankarensium, unde tota nimirum Mater laetatur Ecclesia. Cum vero ipsius dicionis illius latiores fines fideliumque multitudines difficilius reddidissent sacrorum inibi pastorale opus atque cotidianum apostolatus ministerium, suasum prudenter est ut iisdem de finibus alia conderetur eparchia quae non facilius modo gubernaretur sed eosdem pietatis fideique fructus etiam sponderet. Pro apostolicae igitur potestatis Nostrae amplitudine civilem regionem, cui vulgare est nomen Kanyakumari, abscindimus ab memorata Archieparchia Trivandrensi quam in Eparchiam convertimus Marthandomensem, dum eparchialem nempe sedem in urbe collocari volumus ipsa Marthandom novamque hanc communitatem subdi Metropolitanae Eparchiae Trivandrensi veluti suffraganeam. Iubentes praeterea singula illa quam diligentissime adservari quas de huius modi constitutione sive eparchiae erectione sacri statuunt canones, mandamus graviter Venerabili Fratri Metropolitae Trivandrensi ut hoc Nostrum decretum singillatim quam primum curet ad effecta

propria deducendum, quo citius possit novellus ille grex fidentiusque suam proprii floris auctusque optati ingredi viam. Quod superest, vehementer pastoris omnium ecclesiarum animo adfectu amore Divinum Pastorem precamur ut natae sic hodie Eparchiae Marthandomensi propitius faveat et arrideat hortamur universum eius clerum ac populum ut suae memores dignitatis et altioris condicionis alacriter suscipiant ecclesiam suam deinceps aedificandam et ex Christi voluntate prosperandam. Litteras denique hasce Nostras firma esse in perpetuum edicimus suamque rite vim quibusvis rebus contrariis haudquaquam obstantibus habituras.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die sexto et decimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo nonagésimo sexto, Pontificatus Nostri undevicesimo.

## **Appendix 6**

### **Nova eparchia in India constituitur Muvattupuzhensis appellanda**

Ioannes Paulus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Communitates terrarum in orbe ecclesiales multiplices variasque prae se ferunt formas condicionesque, quas legitimas Nos tueri volumus, atque contendimus et studemus, ut floridiorem statum per proprium ritum illae adipiscantur. Nunc de Tiruvallensi eparchia cogitamus ac de eiusdem amplo territorio fideliumque efficaciori cura. Itaque, postquam de hac re Congregationis pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus Praefectus rettulit, iudicavimus opportunum nonnulla loca ab eadem distrahere et novam eparchiam condere. Quapropter Apostolica Nostra de auctoritate novam eparchiam constituimus ab urbe "Muvattupuzha" Muvattupuzhensis appellandam, ubi eparchialis sedes locatur, quae regiones in districtis Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad in Statu Keralensi, necnon Coimbatore et Tiruchirappalli positas complectitur, quamque metropolitanae archieparchiae Trivandrensi suffraganeam facimus. Huius provisionis executionem absolvent Excellentissimus Episcopus Tiruvallensis una cum Excellentissimo Episcopo Muvattupuzhensi. Ad haec tandem perficienda consuetudines iuraque congrua

serventur et quae a Codice Orientali praecipuntur, quibusvis rebus minime officientibus. Novensilem tandem ad hanccommunitatem benignum animum Nostrum convertentes, exoptamus, ut novum spiritale iter animose ipsa suscipiat, quae per translaticias consuetudines et fervidam pietatem magnum progressum consequatur et fidelibus salutifera largiter afferat beneficia.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die undevicesimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini bismillesimo altero, Pontificatus Nostri quinto et vicesimo.

### **Appendix 7**

#### **In India Archiepiscopus Maior Trivandrensis Syrorum Malankarensium erigitur**

Ioannes Paulus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Ab ipso Thoma apostolo eiusque successoribus excitata feliciter in India christiana religio pro variis inibi traditionibus saeculorum decursu effloruit. Communitas nominatim Syro-Malankarensis quae ab anno MCMXXX communionem cum Sancta Sede coniunxit, maximis incrementis in fidelium numero et pastorum multitudine est aucta, cum simul proprium patrimonium ecclesiasticum fidemque antiquitus traditam servaret. Floridam igitur ob hanc illius Ecclesiae condicionem, quam prorsus comprehendimus et deleximus, in animum iam inducimus eadem communitatem Syro-Malankarensis, secundum iura et canones Ecclesiarum Orientalium, convertere in Ecclesiam Archiepiscopalem Maiorem Trivandrensem Syrorum Malankarensium titulo decernentes ditionis eius fines eisdem limitibus circumscribi quibus antiqua Ecclesia Metropolitana Trivandrensis atque Archiepiscopi proinde maioris sedem stabilem in ipsa urbe Trivandrensi constituimus. Quos autem hoc Documento fieri censuimus, perpetuo custodiri iubemus contrariis quibuslibet causis haudquaquam obstantibus. Futurum certissime interea esse arbitramur ut haec Nostra sententia novaque rerum ordinatio plurimos pariat salutes fructus posteris annis in apostolatu cotidiano et totius gregis illius flore conspicuo.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die decimo mensis Februarii, anno Domini bismillesimo quinto, Pontificatus Nostri vicesimo septimo.

## Appendix 8

### **Conditur Exarchatus Apostolicus pro christifidelibus ritus Syro-Malankarensis in Foederatis Civitatibus Americae Septentrionalis commorantibus**

Benedictus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Sollicitudinem gerentes Ecclesiarum Orientalium atque cupientes ut eadem floreat et novo robore apostolico vigeant, cogitamus nunc de christifidelibus ritus Syro-Malankarensis in Foederatis Civitatibus Americae Septentrionalis commorantibus. Audita quidem sententia Congregationis pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus, consiliis praehabitis Suae Beatitudinis Basilii Cleemis Thottunkal Archiepiscopi Maioris Trivandrensis Syrorum Malankarensium, Synodi Episcoporum Syro-Malankarensium necnon Praesidis Conferentiae Episcopalis Foederatarum Civitatum Americae Septentrionalis, re mature perpensa, Apostolica Nostra potestate constituimus Exarchatum Apostolicum Foederatarum Civitatum Americae Septentrionalis pro christifidelibus ritus Syro-Malankarensis illic commorantibus. Novam hanc communitatem obnoxiam facimus Congregationi pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus. Cetera secundum praescripta canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium perficiantur. Expleta feliciter constitutione dicti Exarchatus, ad memoratam Congregationem authenticum exemplar actus peractae executionis remittatur.

Hanc denique Constitutionem Nostram tam nunc quam in posterum ratam esse iubemus, contrariis quibuslibet causis minime obsistentibus.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die decimo quinto mensis Iulii, anno Domini bismillesimo decimo, Pontificatus Nostri sexto.

**Appendix 9****In India nova conditur Eparchia Sancti Ioannis  
Chrysostomi Gurgaonensis Syro-Malankarensium**

Franciscus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Quo aptius consuleretur spirituali bono atque regimini Christifidelium Syro-Malankarensium in India septentrionali degentium, visum est pro iisdem Eparchiam novam condere. Nos igitur in Apostolorum Principis cathedra constituti, audito Consilio Venerabilis Fratris Nostri Leonardi S.R.E. Cardinalis Sandri, Praefecti Congregationis pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus, re mature perpensa, summa Apostolica auctoritate Eparchiam Sancti Ioannis Chrysostomi Gurgaonensis Syro-Malankarensium, quae comprehendit omnes septentrionales civitates, usque ad extremos Patriae fines, necnon medias civitates Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh atque Orissa, erigimus, omnibus factis iuribus et obligationibus talium Ecclesiarum propriis; cuius Sedem eparchialem in urbe Gurgaonensi ponimus. Eius autem constitutio et administratio ad normas Codicis Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium fiet. Quae vero iussimus ad effectum rite adducantur, deque absoluto negotio sueta documenta exarentur et ad Congregationem pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus mittantur. Hanc denique Apostolicam Constitutionem nunc et in posterum ratam esse volumus, contrariis rebus nihil obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die vicesimo sexto mensis Martii, anno Domini bis millesimo decimo quinto, Pontificatus Nostri tertio.



**Appendix 10**  
**In India nova Exarchia Apostolica constituitur Sancti**  
**Ephraimi Khadkiensis Syro-Malankarensium**  
**appellanda**

Franciscus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Nos, qui successimus in beati Petri locum, spirituali totius Dominici gregis bono magna sollicitudine consulere nitimur. Quo igitur aptius et commodius animarum curae in regione meridionali Indiae provideretur, attente exaudivimus consilium Congregationis pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus, quae censuit opportunum esse novam Syro-Malankarensis circumscriptionem ecclesiasticam conditum iri. Accepto igitur favorabili voto omnium quorum interest, Nos, auctoritate Nostra Apostolica, haec omnia quae sequuntur decernimus. Ea in regione quae totas et integras civitates Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, et Telangana necnon quasdam partes civitatum Karnataka et Tamil Nadu complectitur ubi hucusque eiusdem Ecclesiae Syro-Malankarensis circumscriptiones desunt, nunc Exarchiam Apostolicam nomine Sancti Ephraimi Khadkiensis Syro-Malankarensium condimus. Iubemus insuper ut cathedra eiusdem Exarchiae in urbe Khadkiensi ponatur. Nova circumscriptio Apostolicae Sedi directo subicietur, omniaque iura, honores, privilegia, quae talibus Ecclesiis cedunt, et huic damus; sacrorum vero Antistiti etiam onera iusta imponimus ad normam sacrorum canonum. Ceterum, in hac rerum ordinatione probati usus ac legitimae Orientalis Ecclesiae consuetudines omnino serventur. Volumus postremo ut haec Nostra decreta exsequantur, quorum exempla sincere scripta ad Congregationem pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus cito mittantur. Has vero Litteras nunc et in posterum efficaces esse et fore volumus. Quarum Litterarum efficacitati nulla, cuiusvis generis, contraria praescripta officere poterunt, cum per has Litteras iisdem derogemus omnibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die vicesimo et sexto mensis Martii, anno Domini bis millesimo quinto et decimo, Pontificatus Nostri tertio.

**Appendix 11**  
**Constitutio Apostolica Nova Conditur Eparchia**  
**Sanctae Mariae Reginae Pacis in Foederatis**  
**Civitatibus Americae Septentrionalis et in**  
**Canada Syro Malankarensium**

Franciscus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Ad aptius consulendum spirituali bono atque regimini Christifidelium Syro Malankarensium degentium in Foederatis Civitatibus Americae Septentrionalis et in Canada, visum est pro iisdem Eparchiam novam condere in territorio quod utramque Nationem comprehendit. Nos igitur in Apostolorum Principis Cathedra constituti, audito Consilio Venerabilis Fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Praefecti Congregationis pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus, re mature perpensa, summa Apostolica auctoritate condimus Eparchiam Sanctae Mariae Reginae Pacis in Foederatis Civitatibus Americae Septentrionalis et in Canada Syro Malankarensium cunctis cum iuribus et obligationibus talis Ecclesiae propriis; cuius Sedem eparchialem in urbe Elmontensi ponimus, dum eiusdem constitutio et administratio ad normas Codicis Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium fient. Quae vero iussimus ad effectum rite adducantur, deque absoluto negotio sueta documenta exarentur et ad Congregationem pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus mittantur. Hanc denique Apostolicam Constitutionem nunc et in posterum ratam esse volumus, contrariis rebus nihil obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die duodevicesimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini bis millesimo decimo quinto, Iubilaeo Misericordiae, Pontificatus Nostri tertio.

## Appendix 12

### Exarchia Apostolica Sancti Ephraimi Khadkiensis in Eparchiam Eodem Titulo Extollitur

Franciscus Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei, ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Scientiae Crucis diurna luce collustrati expellamus nocturnas mentis tenebras, ut mens ministret Domino in renovatione puritatis nostrae et huius coruscanti diei, qui non incipit a motu et cursu solis, signo satagamus imprimere in nostra persona per assiduum in Christum studium (cfr s. Ephraem, *Sermo* 3, 2). Cuius spiritualis pulchritudinis heredes constitutos, potissimum nos oportet, dum universi eiusdem gregis utilitati et profectui consulimus, salutiferae gratiae omnimodis indulgere, omnia in singulis Ecclesiis disponentes, per quae summum animarum bonum ac gratus spiritualis fidelium fructus sommpere praestentur, mentem nostram convertentes ad dilectos christifideles Indiae meridionalis Ecclesiae syrae-malankarensis, quorum summo studio provida inspicimus incrementa. Proinde, Archiepiscopi Maioris Trivandrensis Syrorum-Malankarensium, Venerabilis Fratris Nostri Basilii Cleemis Thottunkal, Synodique Episcoporum syrorum-malankarensium favorabilibus praehabitis votis auditoque Venerabilis Fratris Nostri Praefecti Congregationis pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus consilio, Apostolicae Nostrae potestatis plenitudine, eandem Exarchiam Sancti Ephraimi Khadkiensem pro fidelibus ritus syri-malankarensis in India inferiore degentibus in Eparchiam eodem titulo nuncupandam extollimus, nihil immutatis ecclesiae cathedralis sede atque loco residentiae Episcopi et conclaviis Curiae, cunctis consentaneis impositis iuribus privilegiisque concessis secundum normas Codicis Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium.

Hanc Eparchiam Archiepiscopo Maiori Trivandrensi Syrorum-Malankarensium et Synodo Episcoporum syrorum-malankarensium subiectam statuimus, necnon eius Episcopum membrum Conferentiae Episcoporum Indiae, eiusdem Patronum apud Deum sanctum Ephraem diaconum, renuntiantes. Omnes sacrdotes iam in Exarchia ministerium exercentes ipso facto novae constitutae Eparchiae incardinantur atque item Seminarii alumni e paroeciis

eiusdem territorii provenientes novae circumscriptioni adscribantur.  
Cetera vero secundum normas dicti Codicis temperentur.

Hanc denique Constitutionem Nostram iugiter ratam esse  
columus, contrariis quibuslibet rebus non obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die vicesimo tertio mensis  
Novembris, anno Domini bismillesimo duodevicesimo, Pontificatus  
Nostri sexto.



## INDEX OF THEMES

This index contains themes of theological, liturgical, spiritual, canonical, cultural and historical importance. It does not include names of persons or places. Abbreviations: ap. = apostolic; const. = constitution.

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After three introductory articles, this book presents 86 original and authentic documents which provide clear, true and accurate information concerning the origin, growth and current canonical status of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

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