

inaugurated on 8 December 2015 itself. The main Door of St. Mary's Cathedral, Khadki will be ceremonially opened at 6.30 pm as the 'Holy Door of Mercy' in our Exarchate. This will be followed by the evening prayers and the Holy Qurbano. All are invited to this celebration. In all parishes of our Exarchate, the Holy Year of Mercy is to be inaugurated on the same day along with the Holy Qurbano of the Feast of Immaculate Conception. If in any case, that day is inconvenient for a Parish it shall be done on Sunday, 13 December 2015 along with the Morning Prayers and Holy Qurbano. The other celebrations of the Jubilee Year will be communicated to you in detail later.

I wish you all a Blessed Christmas! May the grace of the Divine Child of Bethlehem lead us to a Prosperous New Year 2016.

May God bless you all abundantly! May all these be fulfilled through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and of all Apostles, especially the Blessed Apostle St Thomas, our Guardian, and all the saints, especially St Ephrem, the Patron of our Exarchate!

Your humble servant in the service of the Lord,

+ *Thomas Mar Anthonios*

✠ **Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC**

Apostolic Exarch

Exarchate of St Ephrem, Khadki-Pune

Khadki-Pune

16.11.2015

*By the Grace of God and the favour of the Holy See and
in communion with Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis,
the Father and Head of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church and
its Holy Episcopal Synod,
From the Apostolic Exarch of the Exarchate of St Ephrem, Khadki-Pune,
Aboon Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC,
Blessings to the Priests, the Religious, the Seminarians and the Faithful
in the jurisdiction of the Exarchate!*



Prot. No. PL 01/2015

Dear Rev. Fathers, Religious, Seminarians and beloved Faithful,

It is five months since I assumed the responsibility as the Apostolic Exarch of the Exarchate of St Ephrem Khadki-Pune. During this short period, I got many opportunities to visit you personally in various regions and different parishes and religious houses of the Exarchate. The Regional Pastoral Council held in Bengaluru under the guidance of Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Father and Head of our Church, the inauguration of the Exarchate and the installation of the Apostolic Exarch held on 30 May 2015 in Pune, the Exarchial Pastoral Council held on 11 June 2015, the Priests-Religious Gathering held on 12 June in Pune and Regional Pastoral Councils held in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune were the God-given experiences to discern deeply the plan of God for the new Exarchate. We should realize that we are called by God to shoulder greater responsibilities when the wider MCC-ETRI is canonically reorganized into the Eparchy of St. John Chrysostom, Gurgaon-Delhi and the Exarchate of St. Ephrem, Khadki-Pune.

N.B. :*This circular should be read in all our parishes and mission centres during the Holy Qurbano on Sunday, 22 November 2015.*

Getting Closer to the Dream of Mar Ivanios...

When we are blessed with all-India jurisdiction, as per the dream and desire of the Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios, I think, it is high time to re-read and understand him more in the context of evangelization. It was the dream of Mar Ivanios *Pithavu* to share the joy of the Gospel and to proclaim the Good News to all people in India and even abroad.

By the present Canonical Provision the Holy Father Pope Francis bestowed on our Church the right of all-India jurisdiction. This entitles the Malankara Church not only the pastoral and hierarchical care of her own faithful but also the right to proclaim the Good News all over India and to receive any one who believes in the Good News, into our Church. The Eparchy of St John Chrysostom Gurgaon concentrates on the evangelization of the 22 Northern, Central and North-Eastern States while the Exarchate of St Ephrem Khadki looks after the six Southern States outside the *territorium proprium* of our Church.

An Exarchate, a canonical provision in the Catholic Church, is a portion of the people of God which, because of special circumstances, is not erected as an eparchy, and which is established within territorial or other kinds of limits and is committed to an Exarch (Ref. CCEO c 311). Canon Law further lays down that, what is said in the law concerning eparchies or eparchial bishops applies also to exarchs or exarchies, unless otherwise expressly provided or otherwise evident from the nature of the matter (CCEO c 313).

With a thankful heart...

The Exarchate of St. Ephrem has 27 parishes / mission stations spread across 5 Ecclesiastical Districts which we have now created – Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai. It is with great joy and pride that I heard the announcement that Pune is the headquarters

Bengaluru – Carmelaram area we decided to purchase a property. Singasandra (Bengaluru) Parish took initiative to mobilize the resources and they have given the advance for it. The foundation stone has already laid for a new Church in Singasandra. Preliminary studies to initiate missions in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are in the process. Constructions of Padi – Chennai church is in its culmination. The College and School constructions in Chennai are getting completed. I thankfully acknowledge Mrs Ammukutty (W/o Late Mr C.T. Thomas) and sons who donated a plot of land for the Nagpur Mission.

Preparation for Christmas

We are at the threshold of the Lent in preparation to Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. The 25 days of abstinence and charity will help us to cleanse ourselves in order to receive the Lord our God with purified heart and pristine consciousness. Let us wholeheartedly offer our manger-hearts to the Lord so that He transforms it!

Holy Year of Mercy

The Holy Father Pope Francis has declared the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy from 8 December 2015 to 20 November 2016. December 8 is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council and 20 November is the Feast of Christ the King in 2016. The most important aspect of the Jubilee Year is the spiritual journey to ‘the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome’. For this Jubilee Year, the Holy Father has extended the ‘the Holy Door of Mercy’ to all the Cathedrals and Pilgrim Centres in the world. The journey to the Holy Door should become a pilgrimage of sacrifice and surrender to the Mercy of God. Entrance through the Holy Door should lead the pilgrims to absolute repentance and communion with God. In our Exarchate, the Holy Year will be

administrative body which thinks, plans and works along with the Ecclesial, District and Parish level apostolates and associations. The activities of all departments and associations at all levels should be planned, executed and monitored with the Co-ordinator of Exarchial Commissions.

Appointments

I am also happy to inform you that Rt Rev. Msgr Varghese Mattamana, appointed the Protosyncellus, is already fully occupied with the duties of his office. So also our Finance Officer Rev. Fr Varghese Kaithon and our Chancellor Rev. Fr George Mathew OIC (also my Secretary and Rector of the Minor Seminary) have earnestly taken up their offices. Our Cathedral Vicar is Rev. Fr Mathew Varikkatt who was serving as our Regional Co-ordinator. Rev. Fr Varghese Valikkodath, appointed the Co-ordinator of the Exarchial Commissions, through his relentless commitment, is organizing our associations and *Suvisesha Sangham* at all Levels. You already have a glimpse of THE EPHREMITES, the bulletin of our Exarchate that keeps us informed of the day to day life of the Exarchate. Through the “Voice of the Exarch” I try to communicate with you the pulse of the times. I exhort all the Priests, Religious and the Faithful to adhere to the vision of the Exarchate, as far as possible.

New Initiatives

During this time God blessed us to initiate some activities to promote our parishes and missions. We erected a new parish for the Tamil speaking community in Ayapakkam – Chennai. The church construction at Ayapakkam completed its first level. A new mission has begun in Vasco - Goa. It's decided to erect a new parish in Dombivli – Mumbai after 31 March 2016. In view of starting a new mission in

of the new Exarchate. Pune is the cradle of our missions in the Extraterritorial Regions in India, with the Bethany Ashram of Ramwadi taking the initiative. The seed of the Malankara Catholic Church sprouted in Pune, extended its branches to Mumbai, Nashik, Aurangabad, Secunderabad and Hyderabad. The Bethany Fathers have worked hard to build up the communities and churches in these places. We now gratefully acknowledge the commitment and strenuous efforts of Bethany Ashram in building up the Exarchate.

The patronage extended by the Prelates, Clergy and Laity of the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum and the Eparchies of Bathery and Marthandom are at the roots of the organization of our parishes and the erection of educational institutions of Chennai and Bengaluru. All who have been a part of this unique mission deserve deep appreciation and heartfelt gratitude. It is God's providence that the said canonical provisions came into effect during the Birth Centenary Year of Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios who initiated our missions outside Kerala.

Our Exarchate is nurtured by the presence and active ministry of the Religious Sisters of Bethany Congregation and the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary in Pune, Mumbai, Nashik, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai. Through their educational and other institutions they played an active role in bringing together the faithful in these areas and imparting faith formation with zealous and devoted hearts.

Two names are unforgettable in the history of the MCC-ETRI Missions – Very Rev. Dr John Berchmans OIC and Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC. The far-sighted vision of Berchmans Achan in co-ordinating the Malankara faithful across the Extra Territorial Regions in India was remarkable. Barnabas *Pithavu* being the *Apostolic Visitor to the MCC-ETRI*, worked hard in co-ordinating the various apostolates in these areas.

Our Laity has been actively participating in building up each mission and parish which comes under the Exarchate now. Their sweat, money, talent and time have flown into the formation of not only the communities they belong to but also the other parishes in the region or the state. I gratefully remember all the Priests, Sisters and Lay Faithful who have served here till now.

A Vision for the Mission of the Exarchate

I recall with gratitude all who made the occasion of the installation of the first Exarch and the inauguration of the Exarchate on 30 May 2015 an experience of communion and solidarity in building up our Exarchate. His Beatitude Baselios Cardinal Cleemis together with the Bishops of the Holy Episcopal Synod, our Papal Legate in India His Grace Archbishop Salvatore Penachio, His Excellency Thomas Dabre the Bishop of Pune and other Catholic and Non-Catholic Prelates deserve a special mention.

In the gathering of the Pastoral Council together with the Priests and the Religious of our Exarchate on 11 June 2015, a broad vision for the mission of the Exarchate has evolved. It can be summed up as:

- 1. Enhance and deepen the faith life of the families and parishes of our Exarchate through its daily ecclesial life based on the Word of God and sacramental life centered on the Holy Qurbono*
- 2. To engage in activities of reunion and evangelization, the dream of our ancestors bequeathed to us through the Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios.*
- 3. To build up infrastructure in different Districts of our Exarchate through the participation of all the Christian Faithful.*

The faith life in the families, the liturgical celebrations in the parishes and the fervent activities of different Exarchial Commissions

to enliven the apostolates have to be given due importance. The faith-living of the Malankara Catholic Community in the erstwhile ETRI was exemplary. Now our faith life should extend to the wider horizon of sharing the joy of the Gospel with non-Catholics and non-Christians. Various ecclesial departments and pious associations in the Exarchate can systematically equip us for the unique mission entrusted to us by God the Almighty.

The liturgical celebrations in our churches have to be focused on the mystical nature of our liturgy. Everything contrary to this, all sorts of vanity, worldliness, techno-music and extravaganza, have to be avoided in all liturgical celebrations. The pristine tradition of the Antiochean rite, with legitimate adaptations / inculturation / contextualization, has to be strictly followed for the Holy Qurbono in our parishes. A detailed directive will be given for this in due course. With the sense of the sacred, we have to be elevated into the Christ-experience through liturgy with all its rich signs and symbols.

Once we are rooted in spiritual life through faith formation and liturgical celebrations, we are destined to extend our lives to the proclamation of the Good News. It becomes our obligation to transmit the faith we inherited from our ancestors and enriched through our own Christ-experience. This is the culmination of our vision about the Exarchate.

In order to activate and motivate the process of re-evangelization and new-evangelization of our Church and evangelization in new areas, the *Suvisesha Sangham* will occupy a central role in our Exarchate. The Exarchial Commissions are constituted to guide and support the different apostolates and associations (MCA, *Mathrusangham*, MCYM and MCCL). All these commissions and associations have an Exarchial level