

# **SYROMALABAR MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCH**

England and Wales

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## **GUIDELINES FOR THE NATIONAL COORDINATION OF THE SYRO-MALABAR MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES.**

A National Coordination for the Syro-Malabar Community has been established by His Eminence Vincent Cardinal Nichols, the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales with effect from 1 December 2013. The responsibility of the Coordinator is to have a pastoral oversight and see that the Chaplains and the priests helping the Syro-Malabar faithful follow the directives of the Major Archiepiscopal Church, suggest suitable pastoral structures and formation programmes and to assist the Diocesan Ordinaries in this regard in consultation with the Bishop Promoter of Ethnic Chaplaincies in England and Wales and the Major Archiepiscopal Church. (Ref.: 'Structures and Procedures: The Role of the National Coordinator for the Syro-Malabar Church England and Wales' given together with the appointment of the National Coordinator by Vincent Cardinal Nichols, the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales on 15 November 2013.)

1. The Parishes / Mass Centres are to be named specifying that it is a *SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH MASS CENTRE*. Website, notices or other communications should clearly notify the name. The members of other *sui iuris* Churches are not juridical members of this chaplaincy. The Mass Centres are a part of the local diocese and the priests and the faithful shall be obedient to the local ordinaries under whose jurisdiction they are. (*Erga Migrantes Caristas Christi*, no. 55).
2. Liturgy shall be celebrated as prescribed in the approved Liturgical texts and in accordance with the directives given by the Syro-Malabar Synod.
3. Priests who need to minister Sacraments in other *sui iuris* Churches have to obtain the faculties of *biritualism* from the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Rome. (CCEO 674 ii)
4. Priests doing any spiritual ministry outside their area of jurisdiction have to get the permission of the Syro-Malabar chaplain / priest in

charge of the Mass Centre. The Permission of the diocesan Bishop is needed if one is exercising ministry in another diocese. Any common religious programme with the participation of the faithful from outside one's ecclesiastical jurisdiction can be organised only with the prior permission of the Syro-Malabar Coordinator.

- 5 *MINISTERS* entering the UK with visiting visa are prohibited by the Home Office to preach or to be the main celebrant of the Mass. Those permitted by the State should also submit the *celebrat* or authorization letter (not older than one year) to the diocese(s), preferably a hard copy, for permission and give a copy of the same to the Coordinator.
- 6 Any lay person giving talks in prayer groups, retreats etc. shall produce a recent letter of authorization from his/her Bishop (diocese of origin or residence) to the Coordinator.
- 7 Weekly / fortnightly / monthly Mass, catechism, family units, an annual retreat and as far as possible other celebrations given in the liturgical texts and devotional practices are to be celebrated in a Mass Centre. Other spiritual gatherings or celebrations shall not be arranged in such places and times as to coincide with those of the Mass Centre(s). Common activities, spiritual or otherwise and diocesan or inter-diocesan programmes affecting the normal Mass and catechism classes in different Mass Centres are to be avoided on Saturdays and Sundays. Priests appointed otherwise or residing in UK shall not organise Mass or other religious programmes in the parishes, houses, or places of their stay in view of the public.
- 8 Any liturgical or spiritual celebration / gathering shall be organised only with the permission and if possible also in the presence of the chaplain / priest in charge of the Mass Centre. If there is no chaplain or priest in charge in an area get the permission of the National Coordinator. Faithful are to be discouraged from participating in unapproved pastoral activities and prayer groups. (See the Circular Prot. No. 2267/2013 given by George Cardinal Alencherry dated 01-12-2013.)
- 9 There shall be Parish / Mass Centre General Body meeting and Mass centre Council meetings (*pothuyogam* and *pratinidhiyogam*) in every Mass Centre. The list of the *kaikarans* and the representatives of the *pratinidhiyogam* shall be given to the National Coordinator for approval within a week of the election. The norms for forming and conducting the *pothuyogam* and *pratinidhiyogam* are according to the *Particular Laws of the Syro-Malabar Church*. Some laws are to be adapted to the needs of the Chaplaincy. (Ref.: *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Migrants* no. 11 in Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mount St. Thomas, Kochi, page 145.)

- 10 Mass Centre can be started by the Chaplains or any other priest only in consultation with the Coordinator. Small centres in proximity shall be reorganised for better functioning of the catechism classes, retreats and availability of the Chaplain.
- 11 The *SAFEGUARDING RULES* given by the State and insisted by the Dioceses are to be followed by the priests and people concerned (e. g. Catechism teachers, family unit leaders conducting unit gatherings and prayer group leaders). Each Chaplain may select the safeguarding representatives and publish their names and contact details through announcements, notice boards or websites.
- 12 *SPECIAL REQUESTS*: Invitations to bishops, priests or lay people from outside for celebrations and functions such as retreats, conventions, feasts, celebrations etc and special requests for buying or selling of immovable properties, establishment of parishes, houses, invitation to religious communities for pastoral work etc on behalf of the Syro-Malabar Church shall be made or submitted with the approval and/or through the Coordinator.
- 13 Those who organise spiritual activities, in which a considerable number of Syro-Malabar Catholics are likely to participate, shall also get the approval of the Chaplain / priest in charge of the Mass Centre(s).
- 14 An *ASSOCIATION* for the Syro-Malabar Laity shall be formed by welcoming all those who are interested in it. A national governing body is to be constituted through elections in Mass Central, diocesan and national levels. Any such groups existing already shall merge themselves into this national one. A body of elected or appointed lay members shall govern the association in consultation with the spiritual director appointed by the Migrant Commission.
- 15 *FINANCE*. Accounts are to be kept properly for all sorts of collections and spending, in each Mass Centre and at the Chaplaincy level. The money coming in shall be credited in charitable accounts as directed by the diocese. According to the UKBA tax is to be paid for the money collected for any purpose if not operated through a charitable account. No appeal for collection other than for the functioning of the chaplaincy shall be made without the prior permission of the local diocesan office and the Coordinator.
- 16 *THE ALLOWANCE* for the chaplains is as fixed by the diocese which sponsored the chaplain. Chaplains / priests with other appointments or chaplains with chaplaincy allowance going for Mass outside the chaplaincy area may receive £50.00 plus travel allowance (standard train fare or car mileage). Retreat allowance for a preacher shall be £25.00 per hour of talk and travel

allowance. As practised here in the parishes a collection during Christmas or Easter may be taken from the people to be donated to the Chaplain or Priest in charge. Stole Fee (*padisadhanam*) for different liturgical and paraliturgical celebrations is approved by the Migrant Commission and the Bishop Promoter in England and Wales.

- 17 A suitable *NATIONAL COORDINATION OFFICE* shall be acquired at the earliest considering commuting convenience and any offer from any diocese(s). Fund shall be raised for the purchase of the property. The Chaplaincies and other Mass Centres shall contribute regularly in proportion to the number of families in the Chaplaincy/Mass Centre for the buying and maintenance of the national Office.
- 18 There shall be at least *TWO MEETINGS* of the Chaplains every year. One of these meetings shall be arranged together with the Priests helping the Chaplaincy and the elected and nominated members from the chaplaincies.

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