



Mar Raphael Thattil

Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

Prot. No. 0715/2024

CIRCULAR

FIFTH MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL ASSEMBLY

Mar Raphael Thattil
the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church
to the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Men
and Women and Lay Faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church.
May the grace of the Lord be with you all!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

I write to you now to inform you of the Fifth Major Archiepiscopal Assembly of our Church. The Major Archiepiscopal Assembly, also known as the *Sabhayogam*, is a consultative body of the entire Church presided over by the Major Archbishop. It is a joint meeting of the Bishops, Priests, Religious, and Lay representatives of the Church.

The basis of the Assembly is the reality that the Major Archiepiscopal Church is a large communion. The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches clearly states the aim of the Assembly. It is a consultative body to assist the Major Archbishop and the Synod of Bishops when important matters need to be decided in the Church. The role of the Assembly is to discuss matters of greater importance at respective times, and to assist the Synod of Bishops in formulating action plans, taking into account the common good of the Church and the society.

According to the Canon Law, the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly should be convened once every five years. After our Church was elevated to the Major Archiepiscopal status in 1992, the first Assembly took place in 1998. Subsequently, it was held in 2004, 2010, and 2016. The Fifth Assembly is taking place in 2024, eight years after the previous one in 2016. The uncertainty that prevailed in the context of the Covid pandemic was the reason for the delay in holding the Assembly, which should have taken place in 2021.

The forthcoming Assembly is hosted by the Eparchy of Palai. The Assembly, which is held at Alphonsian Pastoral Institute, Pala, will begin on the evening of Thursday, August 22, 2024, and conclude by noon on Sunday, August 25. The preparations for the successful conduct of the Assembly are being carried out by various committees under the leadership of Mar Pauly Kannookadan, the Convenor of the Assembly Committee, and Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, the Bishop of Palai.

The Canon Law stipulates who should participate in the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. The members of the Assembly are representatives from the eparchies and



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religious congregations. As the number of Eparchies and religious congregations increased in the Church, the number of participants in the Assembly also increased accordingly. In 2016, there were 488 participants in the Assembly. In addition, there were committee members and other assistants. Considering the practical aspects of conducting the Assembly and to create the suitable atmosphere for presenting and consolidating everyone's ideas effectively, the Synod of Bishops decided to reduce the number of participants of the Assembly. Accordingly, with the approval of the Apostolic See, the amended Particular Law of the Church on the participants of the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly was promulgated through a Decree on 25 March 2024. According to this newly promulgated law, 360 members are participating this time, including Bishops under the age of 80, Priests, Religious, and Lay representatives.

The theme of the Fifth Major Archiepiscopal Assembly is *Mission and Response of the Syro-Malabar in Response to the Needs of the Time*. Based on this, three topics will be discussed in the Assembly: Renewal of Faith Formation, Lay Participation in Evangelization, and Empowering of the Syro-Malabar Community.

Dearly beloved, I lovingly request that the entire Church pray with one mind so that all those participating in this Assembly may be led by the Holy Spirit, share ideas having the common good in mind, and formulate ideas that will contribute to the glory of God and the growth of the Church. The *Karozutha* given together with this circular shall be recited during the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* from August 4 onwards.

Given from the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro-Malabar at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad on 24 July 2024.

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1. This circular shall be read in all the parish churches, institutions, religious houses, formation centres and the major seminaries of the Syro-Malabar Church during the Holy *Qurbana* on Sunday, 4 August 2024.

2. *Karozutha* to be recited during the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* from August 4 onwards:

D: We entrust to God the Syro-Malabar Church as it prepares for the Fifth Major Archiepiscopal Assembly and especially all the participants of the Assembly. We pray that the Holy Spirit may grant His special presence and bless the Assembly to reflect on the theme "*Mission and Response of the Syro-Malabar in Response to the Needs of the Time*," to discern the signs of the times and to formulate the perspectives that will help the community move forward united in love.

Community: Lord, have mercy on us!