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By the grace of God and by the approval of the Holy See  
from the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church  
**Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos**  
Blessings  
to the Metropolitan-Archbishop, Metropolitans, Corespiscopoi, Rambans,  
Priests, Deacons, Religious and the Faithful

Prot. No.CPL 2/2015



Praise be to the Triune God,  
self-existent, almighty, eternal and consubstantial!

**Subject: the Holy See grants the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church  
jurisdiction and right of ecclesial activities all over India**

Most Rev. Metropolitans, Rev. Corepiscopoi, Rambans, Priests,  
Deacons, Religious and the beloved Faithful in Christ!

Prayerful greetings and blessings of the Easter season!

26 March 2015, the day after the Feast of the Annunciation, is yet another day that goes down in golden letters in the history of the Church. This is the golden day on which the Holy See of Rome decreed and granted to the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church the right and duty to assume the mission of preaching the Gospel throughout India. On that day His Holiness Pope Francis established the new Eparchy of St. John Chrysostom of Gurgaon and appointed Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC its first Bishop. On the same day, the Holy Father established the new Exarchate of St Ephrem of Khadki (in Pune) for the Syro-Malankara Catholics and appointed Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC its first Bishop. ‘St

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John Chrysostom' is the Greek equivalent of the name 'Mar Ivanios'. It is an immense joy that we have, in the capital of our country, an Eparchy in the name of the heavenly patron of our saintly Father in faith. The Eparchy of St John Chrysostom extends over the entire territory of North India, comprising 22 of the 29 States of India. The See of the Eparchy is Gurgaon near Delhi. The residence of the Eparchial Bishop and the Curia of the Eparchy is at Mar Ivanios Bhavan situated at Neb-Sarai in Delhi. The St Mary's Church in this complex will be the Cathedral of the Eparchy.

The Exarchate of St Ephrem of Khadki extends over the entire southern part of India where till now there is no Syro-Malankara circumscription, namely the entire States of Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and the parts of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu which do not belong to the Eparchies of Puttur and Marthandom respectively. The complex of St Mary's Church situated at Khadki in the city of Pune will be the Curia and Cathedral of the Exarchate.

I express ecclesial communion, *obsequium*, co-operation and hearty gratitude of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church to the Holy See and to His Holiness Pope Francis, the successor of Peter, the Head of the Apostolic College.

According to Canon 177 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, an Eparchy is a portion of the people of God entrusted to a Bishop to shepherd, with the cooperation of the presbyters, in such a way that, adhering to its pastor and gathered by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ truly exists and is operative. Likewise, "an *Exarchy* is a portion of the people of God which, because of special circumstances, is not erected as an eparchy, and which being delimited territorially or on some other criterion, is entrusted to the care of an Exarch to shepherd" (c 311). "What is said in the law concerning Eparchies or Eparchial bishops applies also to Exarchies or Exarchs, unless it is expressly provided otherwise in the law or is evident from the nature of the matter" (c 313).

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With this canonical provision, the age old dream of our ancestors and the vision of our beloved Father in faith, Archbishop Mar Ivanios, come true. Under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff and the Catholicos with the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, we have attained all-India jurisdiction for the pastoral care of all the Christian Faithful of our Church and the right to evangelization. After the Synod of Diamper in the year 1599 and the Coonan Cross Oath of 1653 by which we lost jurisdiction over our faithful and communion with the Universal Church, it is for the first time that it is recognized to our Church, the St. Thomas Christians. Hence, this is a historic moment of jubilation. The dream of Mar Ivanios, our beloved father in faith and his prophetic vision have come true.

The mental agony of the Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios was expressed in the following words: "The Malankara Christian Community, which esteems to have been founded by St. Thomas and takes pride in its traditions for the past twenty centuries, has not done hitherto anything worthwhile with regard to the chief objective of its establishment. This is to be considered as a serious crime. It is a fact to be admitted that the lamp lit as directed by the Saviour Jesus Christ in the year 52 AD still remains just like that without shedding light or giving energy to the surrounding remaining in the shade of darkness..." (*Girideepam*, page 50). He continues. "It is good to understand that we are responsible for the evangelization of a country manifold times larger than Travancore and Cochin and that world is not simply the Malayalam-speaking country" (Inchackalodi, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, page 153).

We glorify God at this historic event. I express our hearty gratitude to His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, His Grace Most Rev Salvatore Penacchio the Apostolic Nuncio in India, the Latin Catholic Hierarchy of India for their constant support and the Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in India for their solidarity ever since the beginning of the Reunion Movement. We will exercise this God-given right in collaboration and solidarity with the Catholic Churches and our non-Catholic Sister Churches in India.

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The present canonical provision emerges from the ecclesial vision and relentless pastoral commitment of our bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful. The Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios sowed the seed of the Gospel in the soil of North India in the days of his life in Serampore and nursed it after the communion with the Catholic Church. The timely interventions of His Grace Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios, in whose centenary year, the canonical provisions are made by the Holy Father, encouraged the formation of the ecclesial communities outside Kerala. His Beatitude Cyril Baselios-Catholicos through his erudite theological, especially ecclesiological, and canonical interventions in the national and international fora, always upheld the right and duty of the St. Thomas Christians for the evangelization of India. His intervention paved the way for the establishment of the personal parishes in the Latin episcopal jurisdictions and the appointment of Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas as the Apostolic Visitor for the ETRI. The appointment was a mile stone in coordinating and consolidating effectively the Malankara Missions in India. His Excellency strengthened our ecclesial communities in the regions now brought under the Eparchy of Gurgaon and the Exarchate of Khadki by visiting them constantly. It paved the way to the present canonical provision. I remember with gratitude the committed service of His Excellency.

It is with joy that we receive the appointment of Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC as the first Bishop of the Exarchate centered at Khadki-Pune. As a priest he gave vibrant leadership of pastoral care to our faithful in Pune during the years 1983-'87 and 1993-2000. I make all know that His Excellency continues his ministry of coordination of the administrative functions of our Church as Curia Bishop and as Postulator of the Cause of Canonisation of the Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios while he leads the Exarchate.

By the promptings of the same Spirit, I, together with the Holy Episcopal Synod, could follow the footsteps of my venerable Predecessors, and the Holy See graciously granted the present canonical provision which leads to all-India jurisdiction. I whole-heartedly glorify God.

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The mission of the Syro-Malankara Church outside the proper territory began in 1955 with the foundation of *Bethany Ashram*, in Pune. From Pune, the Bethany Fathers reached out to Mumbai. The Bethanians gave leadership in establishing parishes, churches and mission centres in Mumbai and Pune. I gladly remember that Bethany Ashram in Pune is a source of inspiration for our ecclesial activities. As the consolidation of our ecclesial communities needed further personnel and finance, our Eparchies gave their generous support in other centres. The Archieparchy of Tiruvalla gave leadership in the pastoral care of our faithful in Delhi and took the initiatives in buying land and establishing churches. His Excellency Most Rev Geevarghese Mar Timotheos is remembered with gratitude in this context. The Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum showed great openness in buying land and establishing churches and educational institutions in Chennai and Bhopal. Thus it gave extensive leadership to educational activities in these regions. The Mar Gregorios College of Chennai is a shining example for this. The eparchy of Bathery, though was struggling through financial difficulties of its inception, took up the pastoral initiatives in Bangalore. It is to be remembered especially that all the then existing Eparchies and Bethany Ashram extended their activities to North India and South India to make available pastoral care to our faithful in the metropolitan cities.

The appointment of Very Rev. Fr. John Berchmans OIC, in 1997, as Ecclesiastical Coordinator, by Metropolitan Cyril Mar Baselios of venerable memory, was a turning point in the ecclesial build up of our mission activities in the Extra Territorial Regions of our Church in India (ETRI). Under the dynamic leadership of Fr Berchmans, the pastoral activities of the ETRI was consolidated and progressed. With deep gratitude the Church remembers him.

As the Eparchy of Gurgaon and the Exarchate of Khadki come into existence, I, in the name of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, express gratitude to all the priests who worked in these regions as beginners, chaplains and parish priests. It is a fact that your commitment is transformed into the present canonical provisions. With gratitude the Church remembers the persistent hard work and committed ecclesial love of the sisters of

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Bethany, Daughters of Mary and Holy Spirit religious communities. The undaunted leadership of our lay people in forming the basic communities of prayer prepared the way for priestly services. The missionary zeal of our lay faithful centered on the Word of God and the Holy Qurbono nourished our thriving communities and parishes in the ETRI. The participation of the People of God in ecclesial activities in supplying personnel and finance is unique. The graciousness and mercy of the Great Shepherd to the “Little flock” is encompassing our homes.

The formal inauguration of the New Eparchy of St John Chrysostom of Gurgaon and the installation (*sunthroniso*) of the new Bishop will be at the designate Cathedral, Church of St Mary, Neb Sarai, New Delhi at 8.30 am, on Friday, 1 May 2015. The formal inauguration of the New Exarchate of St Ephrem Khadki (in Pune) and the installation (*sunthroniso*) of the new Bishop will be at the designate Cathedral, Church of St Mary, Bhau Patil Road, Khadki at 8.30 am, on Saturday, 30 May 2015.

I invite you all, the laity, religious, priests and all bishops, to these sacred functions. As we proudly celebrate these joyful events, let us resolve to support the new Eparchy and Exarchate with prayer, personnel and finance.

It is necessary that, from our Eparchies, priests with missionary zeal shall volunteer, to work in our new Eparchy of Gurgaon and Exarchate of Khadki. If our priests, in consultation with their Eparchial Bishops, come forward, through incardination or promise to commit themselves for a few years of ministry, we would be able to open a number of new mission centres. Such commitments are most praiseworthy.

I welcome all religious congregations to take up, in union with the Eparchial Bishop and the Exarch, pastoral and evangelization work in the regions of the new canonical provisions. I lovingly urge all individuals, institutions, religious congregations, provinces of the congregations and eparchies of our Church to pray sincerely for the new Eparchy and Exarchate and give them a substantial financial contribution as they begin from scratches to build them up.

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May God bless you all abundantly!

May all these be fulfilled through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and the College of Apostles, especially of our Father and Apostle St. Thomas and all the saints. Amen

Your humble servant in the Lord

Sd/-

✠Baselios Cardinal Cleemis  
The Major Archbishop-Catholicos  
of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

10.04.2015  
Catholicate Centre  
Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram

Our Father in heaven...

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NB: Read this pastoral letter on the forthcoming Sunday during the Holy *Qurbono* in all our parishes, mission centres and centres of worship and must be published in all our publications/Media.

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