



St. Thomas NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2017, VOLUME 4, NO. 2

Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle of Melbourne of the Syro Malabars



THE SYRO-MALABAR EPARCHY OF ST THOMAS,
THE APOSTLE, MELBOURNE WELCOMING

LEONARDO CARDINAL SANDRI

On Sunday, 14 May 2017, the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle under the leadership of Bishop Bosco Puthur solemnly welcomed the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, at St John's College, Dandenong, Victoria, Australia. His Eminence was on his official Pastoral visit to Australia where he visited all five Oriental Catholic Church communities. The celebration at the Syro-Malabar Eparchy was attended by the Apostolic Nuncio to Australia, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, Archbishop Robert Rabbat (Melkite), Archbishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay (Maronite), Archbishop Amel Shamon

Nona (Chaldean), Monsignors and many priests.

Holy Qurbana was celebrated later at the College auditorium with the Cardinal Presiding and Bishop Bosco Puthur as the main celebrant. Together with the Cardinal, four Bishops from Oriental Churches in Australia, 28 priests and more than 1500 faithful participated in the Qurbana. Cardinal Sandri was given a liturgical reception by giving a lighted Candle at the Altar by Bishop Bosco Puthur. Cardinal Sandri gave a beautiful yet powerful homily during the Holy Qurbana. The Holy Qurbana was

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concluded with the Apostolic Blessing by Cardinal Sandri. He then shared his appreciation to the congregation for such a large gathering and their active participation. Before the final procession, Cardinal gave a Papal gift to our Eparchy through Bishop Bosco.

The public meeting presided by Cardinal Sandri commenced with a traditional Kerala prayer dance by a group of Catechism students, which



the audience welcomed with a great applause. A short video was shown, narrating the growth of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy in Australia, especially from 2014. Bishop Bosco then welcomed everyone to the ceremony including the invited guests and dignitaries. During the public meeting, Cardinal Sandri

expressed his appreciation and congratulated the deep faith and dedication of the Syro-Malabar faithful as an example to all Christian communities of Australia. Cardinal Sandri also expressed his sincere hopes for the further growth of the Eparchy under the leadership



of Bishop Bosco Puthur. After his presidential address, Cardinal Sandri dedicated the newly purchased property facilities for St Thomas the Apostle South - East parish community. Felicitations by Australian Nuncio, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, highly appreciated the participation of children and youth in our Churches, which he found very encouraging.

"Rexband Music Concert Live Australia Tour 2017" is another major event this year for the



Syro-Malabar Eparchy. Rexband is a worldwide musical ministry of the Jesus Youth Movement that has performed in 21 countries, six World Youth Days including two previous Tours to Australia in 2008 and 2012. The ticket sales inauguration for the Rexband tour was made by Greater Dandenong Mayor, Jim Memeti, who distributed them to the main sponsors

of the concert in the presence of Cardinal Sandri. Before the word of thanks, Cardinal Sandri and Apostolic Nuncio Yllana were given mementos from the Eparchy to express our gratitude for their visit. The public meeting was concluded with a word of thanks by Gene Thalappillil, Eparchy Pastoral Council Secretary.



BISHOP'S MESSAGE



Bishop Bosco Puthur

SYRO-MALABAR
EPARCHY OF
THE ST. THOMAS
THE APOSTLE,
MELBOURNE



Dear friends in Jesus Christ,

This time our Newsletter covers mainly the historic visit of Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, to Australia and to our Diocese. As far as the Oriental Catholic Churches are concerned he is the most important person in Rome after the Holy Father. It is for the first time that the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches visits Australia. It is a historic event, during which he visited mainly the five Oriental Catholic Churches, which have their own eparchies in Australia, namely, Maronites, Melkites, Ukrainians, Chaldeans and Syro-Malabar.

His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri arrived in Sydney, accompanied by his Secretary Monsignor Flavio Pace on 6 May 2017. Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Apostolic Nuncio in Australia and most of the Oriental Catholic Bishops including me were at the airport to receive the special delegate of Holy Father Francis. His Eminence visited the Cathedrals of the three Oriental eparchies who have their headquarters in Sydney. Besides, in Sydney he visited Coptic Catholic Church, Syrian Catholic Church and the Armenian Catholic Church.

Another important event was the visit of Cardinal Sandri to Canberra where he celebrated annual Pope's Mass with the Apostolic Nuncio, Leaders of Oriental Churches, Latin clergy and diplomatic invitees. Cardinal Prefect also addressed the general Assembly of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference at Mary Mackillop Centre, North Sydney, at the tomb of Saint Mary Mackillop.

Cardinal Sandri had lunch with Premier of NSW at Parliament

House and addressed clergy at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. He also met with the heads of Catholic and Orthodox Churches in Sydney.

On 13 May Cardinal Sandri visited St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. He had a prayer meeting with the leaders of Oriental Churches at our Lady of Lebanon, Melbourne. In the morning of 14 May Cardinal Sandri had Holy Mass at Sts Peter and Paul Ukrainian Church North Melbourne.

As we all know the historic visit of the Cardinal Prefect to our Eparchy started at 4.00 on Sunday, 14 May 2017 at St. John's College Auditorium, Dandenong, which was almost full with our people. During the Holy Qurbana, His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri preached a powerful Homily. In which he said, "My dear friends, members of the Syro-Malabar Church here in Australia. Even if you are not in danger or prison, your life cannot be without difficulties. You are far from Kerala, seeking to make a new home and a worthy living in a faraway land. Moreover, there are dangers for you and your family that may not be as obvious as physical threats would be. Financial constraints and fear of the future can lead to having fewer children, even by sinful methods. A post-Christian secular culture tends to erode faith traditions and family ties. By various forms of pressure, even legal sanction, it also seeks to enforce conformity to a relativistic public morality. Especially, those of you who work in the medical field will need strong faith, clear ideas and a readiness to sacrifice, if you are to keep true to Jesus. Take strength from your worship of God in the Divine Liturgy: already in the community



to which the letter to the Hebrews was addressed, it was "the habit of some" to "neglect to meet together" for prayer and fellowship. This is a great mistake. Precisely to facilitate your perseverance in the Christian life and practice this Eparchy of St Thomas of Melbourne was erected."

After Holy Qurbana, there was a short meeting to felicitate our chief guest. Most Rev. Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Apostolic Nuncio addressed the audience in which he asked us to be true witnesses of Jesus Christ in this land to which God has led us in his loving providence. Cardinal Prefect in his short message congratulated the Eparchy for its progress at all levels. As Cardinal Sandri was so happy with the presence of so many young people and children, he invited the children to come forward for a photo with him.

The historic visit of Leonardo Cardinal Sandri came to a close and at 9.30 PM when from Essendon Airport he left for Sydney and he left for Rome on 15 May 2017.

What did the visit of Leonardo Cardinal Sandri achieve? Of course, it is a landmark in the life of the Oriental Catholics in Australia. It gave them better awareness of their own identity and relevance within the larger Catholic communion. To the non-oriental Catholics in Australia it was an occasion to take better note of the significant number of Oriental Catholics and their contribution to the Australian society and Australian Catholic community. For us the sons of the Syro-Malabar Church it was an occasion to feel the nearness and warmth of the Head of the universal Church Pope Francis and his immediate collaborator, Cardinal Prefect of the Oriental Congregation. Together with you, I thank God for this blessed event. May the blessed Mother intercede for us!

Yours in Jesus,
+Bosco Puthur



Relic of St Thomas, the Apostle, and the certificate are being handed over to St Alphonsa Cathedral Melbourne



Relic of St Thomas, the Apostle, brought from Ortona



Raza on the Dukrana of St Thomas



MESSAGE

LEONARDO CARDINAL SANDRI

Your Excellency, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, Apostolic Nuncio to Australia,
Your Excellency, Bishop Bosco Puthur of this Eparchy of St Thomas,
Reverend Priests,
Men and Women Religious,
Distinguished Authorities,
Sisters and Brothers in the Lord!



1. "Sing for joy, the Lord has comforted his people". With these words, the Prophet Isaiah encourages the Chosen People in the context of their exile. God remains faithful; "in a day of salvation I have helped you". As the same chapter goes on to remind us, even if a mother could forget her own child, the fruit of her womb, "I will never forget you". This tender image of God who protects and consoles, even more than a mother, is particularly apt at this time. Only yesterday, our Holy Father Francis was in Fatima to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. God sent Holy Mary, Mother of God, to whom this Cathedral is dedicated, to manifest her maternal solicitude for the universal Church in an extraordinary way in that remote corner of Portugal exactly one century ago.

2. Showing herself in resplendent beauty, descending from the heavens, she recalled the biblical image of the Woman clothed with the Sun. She spoke, as the book of Revelation does, of the battle of good against evil, of wars and persecutions, and of attacks upon the Church. "[The dragon] angry with the woman, went off to make war on the rest of her offspring on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus" (Rev. 12.17). Opposition to the followers of Christianity began early, as we just heard in the second reading, with Saul "still breathing threats and murder against the



disciples of the Lord". It has continued down through the centuries and still most painfully afflicts our beloved Eastern Churches: with particular brutality in Iraq and Syria, but not without trials and dangers in other countries, including India.

3. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" This marvelous phrase, from which Saul's conversion begins, contains a deep mine of meaning. Saul persecutes the disciples of Jesus, and yet the voice of Jesus asks "why do you persecute me?" Later, St. Paul

will write about this great mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ. Jesus Christ still lives and suffers in His disciples, who can repeat with the Apostle: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me". Jesus has identified with the least and most forgotten of his brethren – in a particular way, let us remember tonight Fr Tom Uzhunnalil, SDB, who remains in captivity in Yemen after more than one year. Jesus knows where he is and remains close to him, as does Holy Mary. Thanks to this doctrine of the Mystical Body can we see why the Mother of God is necessarily also Mother of the Church. As such, she came to Fatimah to show her children the way to freedom and salvation, even as the prophet Isaiah had proclaimed "to prisoners 'come, forth' and to those in darkness 'appear'". The path indicated by the Virgin was prayer, penance and trust in God and in Her own Immaculate Heart, which, she promised, would triumph in the end.

4. St. Paul remained blind for three days, a sign of the spiritual darkness from which he was soon to emerge. He did not touch food in those days,



for penance and discipline would be required. Jesus said: "I myself will show him all that he must suffer for my Name". Throughout the years of hardship which followed, the Apostle never lost his trust in God: writing as a prisoner to Timothy he will say, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12).

My dear friends, members of the Syro-Malabar Church here in Australia. Even if you are not in danger or prison, your life cannot be without difficulties. You are far from Kerala, seeking to make a new home and a worthy living in a faraway land. Moreover, there are dangers for you and your family that may not be as obvious as physical threats would be. Financial constraints and fear of the future can lead to having fewer children, even by sinful methods. A post-Christian secular culture tends to erode faith traditions and family ties. By various forms of pressure, even legal sanction, it also seeks to enforce conformity to a relativistic public morality. Especially, those of you who work in the medical field will need strong faith, clear ideas and a readiness to sacrifice, if you are to keep true to Jesus. Take strength from your worship of God in the Divine Liturgy: already in the community to which the letter to the Hebrews was addressed, it was "the habit of some" to "neglect to meet together" for prayer and fellowship. This is a great mistake. Precisely to facilitate your perseverance in the Christian life and practice this Eparchy of St Thomas of Melbourne was erected.

5. Finally, turning to the Gospel, we find St Peter, after the Resurrection, making an ominous announcement: "I am going fishing". Of course, his affirmation could be innocent enough – an invitation for assistance in the practical matter of obtaining some food. Yet, one cannot suspect that a temptation is at work: a temptation to return to his old way of life. The time of journeying with the Master seems finished. Life must go on. His affirmation seems to be an expression of a lack of hope. In response, Jesus decides to call Peter again, by the same means – a miraculous catch of fish – and so remind him that all did not end on Calvary.



Indeed, his new life is only now about to begin: he is a fisher of men, after all, no longer of fish. Like the Apostle Paul, Peter also needs a change of heart, a continual conversion.

Let us, too, learn from this episode. We celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord every year, but do we then turn our mind back to mundane, practical affairs, and become immersed in them? Do we forget our mission, as Christians, to help bring others into the "net" that is the Church? The temptation to despair begins very subtly as a sort of sadness, a resignation, an unrecognized decision to distract oneself from the bigger questions. "Let us hold fast" rather "to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful". Christ our hope has risen into Heaven. From there he has even sent his Mother on certain extraordinary occasions, to keep our gaze fixed on the things above. We are in exile now, we citizens of heaven, but "we have confidence to enter the sanctuary

through the blood of Jesus". We must endure many hardships and opposition before entering the Kingdom of God, but we are not afraid. "Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth", for the Lord will fulfill his promises. Victory is assured through the Cross of His Son, in which we, the members of his Mystical Body, beginning with Immaculate Mary, participate even now. Amen.

Finally, I want to recall with you the meeting of the two first disciples of Jesus, according to the Gospel of Saint John. After the proclamation of their master, Saint John the Baptist, they followed Jesus and said to Him: "Lord, where do you live?" "Come and see", replied Jesus. Dear Brothers and sisters of the Syro-Malabar Church: I say today.. Come and see Jesus, when you see a Syro-Malabar community! This is possible because your deep and joyful faith: be proud of it, and be missionaries in this so great country that is Australia!



SYRO-MALABAR EPARCHY OF ST. THOMAS
PRESENTS

REX BAND



LIVE IN
AUSTRALIA

8th - 20th
Nov. 2017

GOLD SPONSORS:



**CELEBRATE
JESUS** SAT. 11, 6.30 PM
NOVEMBER 2017

PLENARY, MELBOURNE CONVENTION
AND EXHIBITION CENTRE,
1, Convention Centre Pl, South Wharf VIC 3006

CONTACT :

ASSIS MATHEW
0410690783

BENNY JOSEPH
0426911234

DR. SHAJI VARGHESE
0401865790



BISHOP BOSCO'S PROGRAM DIARY

AUGUST 2017

15 TUE : FEAST OF ASSUMPTION
 16 WED & 17 THU: VISITS IN HYDERABAD
 18 FRI : TRAVEL TO KOCHI
 21, MON, SYRO MALABAR SYNOD IN KERALA
 29 FRI & 30 SAT : PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING, MELBOURNE

SEPTEMBER 2017

1 FRI : ETTUNOMBU (SEPT 1 - 8)
 2 SAT : SYRO MALABAR SYNOD ENDS ON SEPT 2
 8 FRI : FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF MARY
 9 SAT : CONFIRMATION AND FIRST COMMUNION - BLACKTOWN
 14 THU : FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
 18 MON & 19 TUE : NZ GATHERING AT AUCKLAND
 22 FRIDAY, MAJOR ARCHBISHOP ARRIVES IN NZ
 23 SAT : IN CHRISTCHURCH
 24 SUN : IN AUCKLAND
 25 MON: MAJOR ARCHBISHOP RETURNS
 29 FRI & 30 SAT : PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING AT MELBOURNE

NOVEMBER 2017

1 WED : ALL SAINTS DAY
 2 THU : ALL SOULS DAY
 10 FRI : REX BAND CONCERT IN CANBERRA
 11 SAT : REX BAND CONCERT IN MELBOURNE
 12 SUN : REX BAND CONCERT IN PERTH
 14 TUE : REX BAND CONCERT IN DARWIN
 17 FRI : REX BAND CONCERT IN SYDNEY
 18 SAT : REX BAND CONCERT IN ADELAIDE
 19 SUN : REX BAND CONCERT IN BRISBANE
 20 MON - 23 THU : CLERGY RETREAT AT NORTH SYDNEY - BP. PETER COMENSOLI
 23 THU : CLERGY MEETING WITH FAITHFUL FROM SYDNEY AT THE TOMB OF ST. MARY MACKILLOP
 24 FRI : - CLERGY MEETING
 27 MON : ACBC COMMISSION MEETING
 28 TUE - 30 THU : ACBC

DECEMBER 2017

1 FRI : ACBC MEETING CONCLUDES IN SYDNEY
 8 FRI : FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY



"DON'T FORGET WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE TREATED THE BIBLE AS WE TREAT OUR CELLPHONE, ALWAYS WITH US, ALWAYS CLOSE TO US!"
(POPE FRANCIS)



Prayer to Mary

Virgin full of goodness, Mother of mercy, I entrust to you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions, my life and my death. My Queen, come to my aid and deliver me from the snares of the devil. Obtain for me the grace of loving my Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, with a true and perfect love, and after Him, O Mary, of loving you with all my heart and above all things. Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Doctor of the Church)