

Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas, the Apostle, Melbourne



Prot. No. MPL: 160/24/6

17 December 2024

Circular 2025 Jubilee Year



Dear brother priests, parents, brothers, children in Jesus,

I wish you all the prayerful greetings and blessings for the upcoming Christmas and New Year. The core message of Christmas is taught to us by St. Matthew through today's Gospel: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and He will be called Emmanuel, which means God with us."

God does not dwell beyond the sky or in the depths of the sea, but dwelt among us, and He still does. The Gospel of St. Luke 17:21 says: "The kingdom of God is within you." St. Paul also teaches the same message: "You are the temple of God." (1 Cor. 3:16) The words of St. Athanasius that the Son of God was born as the Son of Man to make us the sons and daughters of God combine these ideas. Christmas is an opportunity to discover and experience the presence of Jesus who dwells among us.

We are entering the year 2025, the year in which Jesus, the Savior of the world, dwelt among us through the incarnation. Pope Francis has declared 2025 to be a Jubilee Year. The Jubilee celebration, which will last from December 24, 2024 to the Feast of the Holy Family 2025, is an opportunity for our spiritual growth and renewal.

In the history of the Catholic Church, Pope Boniface VIII was the first to declare and initiate a Jubilee Year in 1300. Later, Jubilee Years were celebrated every 25 and 50 years, and Extraordinary Jubilee Years were declared on special occasions.

A Jubilee Year is a special year of grace. It is an opportunity for the faithful to receive a plenary indulgence. The Pope has given us the theme '*Pilgrims of Hope*' for the 2025 Jubilee Year.

In the context of the Jubilee theme that we are pilgrims of hope, Pope Francis reminds us of a few important things: firstly, the spread of the COVID-19 disease that the world has faced in recent years and the unprecedented crises we have faced as a result; secondly, the wars, acts of terrorism, natural

disasters, and the hunger and suffering that have been affecting people in various countries of the world. But our God is the one who walks with us in our joys and sorrows, holding our hand. We do not get hope from the world, but from God. Hope always leads life forward. Jesus, who came with hope into a world of despair and sorrow, dwells in us as a beacon of hope in this dark world.

Psalm 71:5 reminds us of this thought: “You are my salvation, my fortress, my hope.” The letter to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 5, teaches us that hope never disappoints us.

We are pilgrims of hope. Our life is a pilgrimage, and each of us is a pilgrim. We come from God and must return to God. Every pilgrimage reminds us and teaches us this clearly.

The Jubilee celebrations in the Catholic Church have a profound spiritual significance, marked by themes of mercy, reconciliation, and renewal. The Pope calls us on this occasion to be united and reconciled with God and our brothers and sisters.

I look forward to your sincere cooperation and prayers in the following matters for the spiritual renewal and well-being of our Eparchy in connection with the 2025 Jubilee Year.

- 1) We officially begin the 2025 Jubilee Year by lighting the Jubilee Candle and reciting the Jubilee Prayer on Christmas Day.
- 2) In response to the Pope's call, a pilgrimage is being made to Rome and other places of pilgrimage in Europe. Those interested may contact your parish priest for more details.
- 3) We are declaring our newly built Cathedral Church as a pilgrimage center for this Jubilee Year. It is meaningful for parishes to come to the Cathedral Church as a pilgrimage and participate in the Holy Qurbana and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- 4) A special renewal programme will be held for parents, young people and children during the Jubilee Year.
- 5) Online classes on the 4 documents of the Second Vatican Council will be provided to eparchial members.

Once again, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy Jubilee Year. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forever. Amen.

In Christ,
Bishop Mar John Panamthottathil CMI

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of love enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom. May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, **Pilgrims of Hope**, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.