



# MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL ASSEMBLY 2016

## Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church

Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath (Convener)  
Bishop George Rajendran, SDB (Member)

Fr. Shaji Kochupurayil, MCBS (General Secretary)  
Fr. Joby Maprakavil, MST (Program Coordinator)

Prot. No. 101/2015

30 May, 2015

### CIRCULAR LETTER (Assembly-2016)

**Dear Archbishops, Bishops, Administrators, Superiors General, Seminary Rectors, Provincials and Coordinators,**

Greetings and regards from Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath, Convener of the upcoming Archiepiscopal Assembly -2016 of the Syro Malabar Church.

The Assembly is a moment of Grace in the Syro-Malabar Church. It provides the faithful with an opportunity to be awakened in their Christian vocation in the Church as well as in the world. We have such Assemblies once in five years. The Church experienced God's abundant blessings in the Assemblies held in 1998, 2004 and 2010. The next – and the fourth – Major Archiepiscopal Assembly is going to be held in August 2016, along with the Synod. At this juncture, it is opportune to reflect over again on the general nature and purpose of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly. It was the wish of the II Vat Council to intensify the apostolic activity of the People of God and to enable them to live their proper and indispensable role in the Mission of the Church (AA.1). Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly can be viewed as a realization of this vision of the Catholic Church. Here the Laity, as “part of the structure of a living body”, is specially invited to make their share in the functions as well as in the life of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.

As given in the *Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, the Major Archiepiscopal Assembly is a canonical assembly, where, “in fidelity to the teachings of the Church and in obedience to the legislation given by the Roman Pontiff to the Eastern Catholic Churches,” the Syro-Malabar Church responds to the contemporary issues pertaining to the life of her children in all walks of life. It gathers together representatives from all sections of our Church, and as a consultative body, it advises the Major Archbishop and the Synod on matters of major importance to the Church and her mission. Unlike the Roman Synod which is centered on a particular theme, the Assembly of the Oriental Churches can take several concerns that affect the Church in the given context.

The previous Major Archiepiscopal Assemblies took certain relevant themes of the time and made many attempts and efforts at various levels of ecclesial life to implement the proposals and decisions. It is worth keeping them alive in our Christian witnessing. The first Assembly held in 1998 had the theme: *The Syro-Malabar Church Towards the Third Millennium - Mission and Witness*; the theme of the second Assembly held in 2004 was *Christian Family and Ministry of Education*; and the last Assembly held in 2010 had the theme: *Faith for the Protection and Fullness of Life*. The Church remembers with gratitude all those who worked hard for the success of the previous Assemblies and for the implementation of the decisions.

- 1 -





## MAJOR ARCHIEPISCOPAL ASSEMBLY 2016 Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church

Bishop Sebastian Adayanthrath (Convener)  
Bishop George Rajendran, SDB (Member)

Fr. Shaji Kochupurayil, MCBS (General Secretary)  
Fr. Joby Maprakavil, MST (Program Coordinator)

Unlike in the previous Assemblies, where single themes were dealt with, the Synod of Bishops held in January-2015 has decided to take up a few themes/topics for the Assembly-2016, which are relevant for our Church today. It was also the mind of the Synod to **get themes from the faithful** where the themes may find better and full relevance. Accordingly for the upcoming Assembly, themes are invited from eparchies, religious institutes, communities and individuals, from which the themes for the Agenda of the Assembly will be chosen by the Synod of our Church. During the Assembly the delegates will be invited to respond to these themes and there will be an extended Zero Hour when the delegates will have opportunity to share their views even on issues outside the agenda.

Hence may I request your Graces, Excellencies, Administrators, Major Superiors, Seminary Rectors, and Coordinators (of migrant communities as per the direction of Migrant Commission/Apostolic Visitators) to take necessary steps in your Archdiocese/Diocese/ Congregation/Institute/Community to get themes from the priests, religious, faithful and the persons-in-formation for the Assembly-2016. To help the faithful for such reflections and suggestions, the Synod has proposed some themes like Family, Consecrated Life, Evangelization, Minority Rights, Alcoholism and Liturgical Unity in the Church. Themes and suggestions for the Assembly can be sent “through those convoked as *ex officio* participants or as delegates or through the secretariat of the assembly” (cfr. *Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Article 8) **before 10 August, 2015**, by post or through email. The participants of the Assembly are decided as per the *Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church* (Article 6). You may also ask the faithful to enroll their proposals, themes and suggestions in the website created for the Assembly-2016 ([www.smassembly.org](http://www.smassembly.org)).

A Secretariat has started functioning at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad in view of the Assembly-2016. A Central Organizing Committee, with Bp. Sebastian Adayanthrath as Convener, is formed to assist the faithful and to ensure an active and effective Assembly. Rev. Fr. Shaji Abraham Kochupurayil MCBS is appointed the General Secretary of the Assembly (the contact details are found in the letter head).

The Major Archiepiscopal Assembly-2016 is going to be held in an era when Holy Father Pope Francis greatly influences the Church with the message of God’s infinite mercy and with his own life of simplicity. A common prayer for the success of the Assembly will be circulated at a later stage of the preparations for the Assembly. May the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Thomas, the Apostle help us in all our endeavors!

Yours fraternally in our Lord,

+ Sebastian Adayanthrath  
Convener, Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Assembly-2016

- 2 -