

**Mar Joseph Srampickal**  
Bishop, Syro Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain



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## **Great Britain Syro Malabar Eparchial Women's Forum**

***"If you only knew the gift of God"*** (Jn.4.10)

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

"The hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of women is being acknowledged in its fullness, the hour in which women acquire in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved. That is why, at his moment when the human race is undergoing so deep a transformation, women imbued with a spirit of the Gospel can do so much to aid humanity in not falling" (*Mulieris Dignitatem* 1)

The unique space of women in our society and the Church is increasingly acknowledged today than ever before. In this context, the formation of Great Britain Syro Malabar Eparchial Women's Forum is a significant decision in the life of our new Eparchy. The Holy Catholic Church has always been in forefront to recognise and acknowledge the dignity of women, in particular to appreciate the great value of maternity in the world. In recent time Pope Francis has pointed out the importance of feminine genius, suggesting us to make use of the feminine gifts. Joining the vision of the supreme Pontiff, I have appointed in our Eparchy a woman director for the Women's forum. With this decision I would like to articulate how the new Eparchy of Syro Malabar acknowledges and values the gifts and services of women in the Church.

The presence of the Syro Malabar families in our local parishes were much appreciated due to our powerful witness to Catholic faith. Family is a micro image of the Holy Trinity, the greatest mystery of our faith. It is the image of the Holy Family, the earthly home of the Word made flesh, it is the domestic Church. In this context, the first and foremost goal of the Women's Forum in the Eparchy is to foster the family relationships and to work for the integral growth of families in the Eparchy. However, it is made possible only through dedicated service of women of the Eparchy who should be the source of binding love and selfless care. Different programmes and projects of the Forum aim at helping women in this direction.

I understand that women of our Eparchy are well educated, highly skilled and greatly talented. Their gifts should be available to the whole community. Charity that begins at home doesn't end there. This is to emphasis that their *koinonia*, (fellowship) builds up not only the domestic churches but also the Syro Malabar Church in Great Britain and the universal Church at large. As a result, I believe that the Forum will become more vibrant and dynamic, bearing fruits of Christian faith and our tradition in the context of Great Britain.

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The presence of women in the family should become salvific like Mary, the mother of God, who cooperated through her dedication and services in the salvation plan of her Son, Jesus. The motherly intercession of Mary will help women to discern and to prioritise their duties in families and at the same time to get involved with Christian ethos in the secular world. Each woman should recognise her own unique identity and special gifts received with her vocation to be a woman. Then only she can fully and meaningfully participate and contribute to the growth of the Church. Women have a distinctive capacity to keep up the moral and spiritual values in their living context and then to impart these values to next generation. There is no substitute for her in a family since the power of woman founded in her sensitivity, compassion, gentleness and motherhood. These qualities are seen in the life of Mother Mary at Nazareth, Bethlehem, Egypt, Cana, Calvary and Sheion.

According to Carmelite Saint Edith Stein, a great woman philosopher that, 'women seek what is dynamic, personal and perfect. Her maternal nature always thirsts to protect and to nurture life. Nevertheless, a Catholic woman receives divine life from the Holy Altar.' Therefore, her life should be ecclesial and it shall embrace perfection only when she adores God with the Church in Spirit and Truth. The source of all feminine genius of women is the Holy Eucharist. Thus, thinking and feeling with the Church (*sentire cum Ecclesia*) and loving the Church in the model of Mother Mary, I wish and pray that the women of our Eparchy may form and shape the young generation on our great and venerable traditions and values.

I request the priests in charge of all our Qurbana centres to gather the women of respective centres to form a unit of the Eparchial Women's Forum. They should elect a president, vice-president, secretary, joint-secretary, treasurer and four executive members (two executive members if the number of members in the unit is less than 25) before 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017. The list of the office bearers should be sent to the Women's Forum Director [smegbwomensforum@gmail.com](mailto:smegbwomensforum@gmail.com). This shall be considered as the preliminary step before the formation of the regional and Eparchial office bearers.

May Mary 'the woman of Eucharist' help us to love and serve the word of God.

Yours in our Lord and our God,

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