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Parish/Mission: Requirements and Procedures

“The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this” (Is. 9,7)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

On the Feast of the Apostle St. Thomas, I write this circular in continuation with my previous circular (Circular 05/2018) regarding the formation of Parishes/Missions of our Eparchy. The prime intention of our Eparchy is to bring all our faithful under the umbrella of a parish/Mission before the end of our Five-Year Plan (2022). The aim of creating new mission is to provide maximum pastoral care to our people and nourish their pastoral needs under an ecclesiastical structure. The establishment of a Mission can be done only through making clear procedures and regulations. The Eparchy is working hard to provide enough number of priests to cater to the demands arising from the new arrangements. Therefore, the following requirements and procedures need to be followed in order to form new Missions in our Eparchy.

I. Requirements:

1. Mission should have at least 100 families within a radius of 25 miles.
2. An *ad hoc* committee shall be formed to function the day to day activities and help the official establishment of each proposed Mission. It will be a body of representatives and *Kaikkarans* of each Qurbana centre with the Priest-coordinator as the chairman. This coordinating committee will continue until the official *Prathinidhiyogam* is established in the new Mission. When the Mission is established the be ‘Priest-coordinator’ will be appointed as Mission Director. The *ad hoc* committee will arrange an effective means of functioning and prepare the Mission towards its full operation.
3. Holy Qurbana is to be celebrated on all Sundays and on the days of obligation in the Parish/Mission.
4. Each Mission shall be divided into small ecclesial units called Family Units (Cf. Circular No. 06/2017 dated 04 April 2017 on Family Units) with 8 to 12 families. The Parish Priest/Mission Director shall be the pastoral head of this

unit. One leader shall be elected from each Family Unit and his/her term of service shall be for two years and he/she will be the parish council member of the Parish/Mission. The Leader should be a registered member of the parish/Mission, practicing and witnessing Syro-Malabar Faithful, male or female, aged 21 or above and subject to DBS clearance. The election of the entire *prathinidhiyogam* or of a member is validated only with the approved by the local hierarch.

5. The *ad hoc* committee has to take leadership to make available a common Church/Centre for Sunday Holy Qurbana and Catechesis.
6. The *ad hoc* committee has to find resources and means of the maintenance of the Facility, Service and Persons (Church, Community building, Holy Services and Priest Maintenance).
7. Availability of a permanent priest to do the full-fledged ministry as a Parish priest/ Mission Director.
8. Where there are different Holy Qurbana Centres in a proposed Mission Catechesis, Holy Qurbana on Sundays and days of obligation, Annual retreat, Feast Celebrations, Accounts, the choir, various pious associations like Women's Forum, Mission League, Savio Friends, Syro-Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM) etc. are to be merged together.
9. An accountant must be elected for the Book Keeping. There should also an internal auditor.

II. Procedures:

1. A written request addressed to the Bishop by all *ad hoc* committee/*prathinidhiyogam* members and the Mission Coordinator is inevitable. A copy of the minutes of the *ad hoc* committee/*prathinidhiyogam* meeting together with the names of all who agreed and disagreed for the request should be included.
2. Members of the Proposed Mission should be informed about this request either through *pothuyogam* or family units' meeting, in advance to the preparation of this request.
3. The date and a report of the above communication made to the members of the Proposed Mission, should be attached with the request.
4. The names of Syro Malabar families and the number of Syro-Malabar faithful should be registered and documented together with the request.

5. At least two Suggested patron names for the Mission may be included in the letter, with its order of priority. The name will be finalised by the Bishop.
6. A geographical boundary map with its Post Code or Road Map need to be attached: so that in future all the actions related to the Ecclesiastical and State laws can be worked out well without any complaint.
7. All financial activities should be taken through the Eparchial CIO bank accounts and according to the Finance policy of the CIO. Since the Eparchy is a registered Charity (CIO), I urge you to comply with all the needful regulations of the Finance Guidelines and procedures, Fund raising policy GDPR, Safeguarding, Health and Safety regulations. (With regard to the policies please refer to our Eparchial website - <http://www.eparchyofgreatbritain.org>).
8. If a single Holy Qurbana centre within the Proposed Mission intends to become a Mission by itself, the respective Priest in charge should communicate in writing to the Eparchial Curia prior to any open discussion in that community about the matter. The letter should include the concerns of other Holy Qurbana centres in that same Proposed Mission and a proposal for their future Mission formation. Regional Coordinator may add a Satisfactory note on the procedures followed.
9. Vicar General in charge may make sure all the procedures are fulfilled together with the availability of a priest who could take charge of that Mission and give consent to submit the request to the Bishop.
10. If desirable and necessary, the Mission Formation Team of the Eparchy may visit the requested place and verify before its completions.

NB. The exceptions to the above norms are at the discernment of the Eparchial Curia. The proposed missions are expected to be established as missions as soon as possible and not late than a year. If any proposed mission, because of particular circumstances, is not able to fulfil the requirements of this circular, they may join the Mission near to them for the registration and administrative matters.

Parish: A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful in a particular territory established on a stable basis in the eparchy, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor, under the authority of the Eparchial Bishop (CCEO Cann. 279, 280 and CIC Can. 515 §1). The bishop will establish a Parish if a Proposed Mission fulfils all the above-mentioned requirements together with its own worship place.

Everything to the contrary notwithstanding.

I invoke God's abundant blessings upon all of you, especially on those who work hard for the realization of this plan through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of the Church, St. Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, *Mar Thoma Sliha*, our Father in Faith, St. Alphonsa of Immaculate Conception, the Patroness of our Eparchy and all the saints.

Yours in our Lord and our God,

+ Joseph Srampickal

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