



## **SYRO MALABAR. EPARCHY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

### **Pastoral Letter - 10**

Relying on God's grace and protection, Mar Joseph Srampickal, Bishop of Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain, writing to all Priests, Religious and the Faithful.

### **LISTEN IN SILENCE TO THE GOD WHO SPEAKS**

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The gospel begins revealing the God who speaks. Evangelists present the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, Elizabeth, Zachariah, and the Shepherds as people who were ready to listen to the voice of God. But St. Joseph was different from the others as he changed his decision after listening to God's voice. He who chose to divorce his wife for a reason he felt justified, changed his decision realizing that it was the will of God for him to accept her.

This year, the Catholic Church of England and Wales calls upon to meditate on the God who speaks. During this Lenten season, I invite you all the children of God, to accept the example of St. Joseph, who subjected himself with integrity to the sovereignty of the God who speaks. In the silence of privacy, St. Joseph listens to God's voice and reorganises his life accordingly. We might lose our ability to listen to God's voice if we engage ourselves in the world's talk (John 12:28). Let's have a lent of silence and be the ones who take decisions according to the will of God. Let us meditate on the word of God, 'Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle'. (Jacob 3:2).

The true preaching of the gospel takes place when we live the word of God we heard. Let us preserve in our hearts, the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words."

The Gospel calls St. Joseph, 'the righteous'. Righteous way is the opposite of evil way. I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word (Psalms 119:101). St Joseph stands as a testament that listening to the word of God is the obvious sign of righteousness. 'See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven!' (Hebrews 12:25). This Bible verse reminds us about the seriousness of listening to the word of God and living it out.

God tells us today about St. Joseph, the same way Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians “Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do’ (Genesis 41:55). Joseph of Old Testament, son of the Patriarch Jacob, was a type of St. Joseph, and the former by his glory prefigured the greatness of the future guardian of the Holy treasures of the Church. When God the Father presented Jesus and His Mother to the world as an infinite blessing free from sin and curse, He gave St. Joseph the sacred mission to be the custodian of this treasure. Let us reach out to St. Joseph to solve any shortcomings we have. He will open up the immense repository of the divine wealth to us.

Along with the Holy Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic adoration, Holy Rosary to Virgin Mary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the Stations of the Cross, reciting the Memorare, Prayer to St. Joseph and the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, will add up to our spiritual growth. Let us observe this Lenten season as a ‘Lent of tongue’, by reading the Bible even more and choosing one verse every day and sharing it with others. I wish you all a blessed Lenten season and extend my heartfelt blessing.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Yours in Our Lord and Our God,

+ *Joseph Srampickal*

Mar Joseph Srampickal

Bishop, Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain

Preston, 22/02/2020

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NB: This Pastoral letter must be read in all Syro-Malabar Qurbana Centres/Parish during the celebration of the Holy Qurbana before 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.