



Circular No 2/2026

31 March 2026

Madbaha Servers: Friends of Isho

“I have called you friends” (John 15:15)

My beloved priests, brothers, and sisters in Maran Isho M'Shiha,

The ministry of madbaha servers holds a very crucial and spiritually rich place in the life of the Church. The children, who participate in madbaha service in divine worship, from a young age, assist priests who act in the person of Isho M'Shiha. During the Holy Qurbana, they are angels on earth, appointed to stand around Isho. Rather than being mere assistants to the celebrant, they hold the position of servants of Isho M'Shiha, the eternal High Priest. Therefore, they are the joy and hope of the Church. While serving the Holy Qurbana, madbaha servers become like angels in heaven. Their role, in carrying out the Church's liturgical celebrations in an orderly manner, is indispensable.

The word 'M'shamshana' is derived from the Syriac root 'sh'mash' meaning 'to serve.' In the tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church, only those who received minor orders - karoya and heupadiakna - as well as those who received the diaconate, namely M'shamshana, were appointed for the service of the Madbaha during the Holy Qurbana. However, gradually, this noble ministry was extended to lay faithful, including children. Therefore, those who take part in this ministry must conduct themselves in a manner befitting the dignity of divine worship. Just as Isho served with love, madbaha servers are likewise called to have the same disposition. Not only during the service of the madbaha but also in daily life, they must cultivate virtues such as love, sacrifice, dedication, responsibility, attention to detail, punctuality, and discipline.

Through the service of the madbaha, the children come to know and experience divine worship more deeply, which in turn strengthens their life of faith. When their faith is kindled, they are able to live with true fulfilment in this world. Their service helps make every act of worship in the Church more expressive. Madbaha servers receive the opportunity to experience God's love closely; they are friends of Isho M'Shiha. This friendship with Isho influences their entire life. Madbaha service is also a process that shapes the personality of the server, through which they learn discipline, attentiveness, time management, responsibility, and humility. Being nurtured in these qualities from a young age, helps them grow into good human beings. Children who serve in the Church, not only become role models and an inspiration to others but their dedication also strengthens the worshipping community.

Recognizing the dignity and importance of madbaha servers, reverend priests in all parishes/missions/proposed missions are requested to train them—at least once a month—with the help of animators. Such initiatives will enable them to serve fittingly in the Holy Qurbana. The training is principally aimed at fostering in them a love of Isho,

nurturing them through the holy sacraments, and, consequently, leading them to become Godlike (theosis). This training must also include workshops about the Holy Qurbana and the Church, as well as opportunities for confession and spiritual guidance. In places where animators are not yet appointed for madbaha servers, priests are requested to take steps to appoint them as soon as possible.

An online class to help understand madbaha service more profoundly will be conducted on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, from 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm. The class will be led by Rev Dr Pauly Maniyattu, a renowned liturgy scholar and President of the Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, Kerala. All priests, animators, and madbaha servers are expected to participate.

Let us pray that the children who are Isho's friends through the madbaha service may shine ever more brightly, becoming a living presence of the risen Lord in their families, in the Church, and in the world.

The Grace of our Lord *Isho M'shiha*, the Love of God the Father, and the Fellowship of the *Ruha D'Qudsha* be with you all. Amen.

Yours in our Lord and our God,

+ *Joseph Srampickal*



Yawsep Srampickal

Bishop, Catholic Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain

NB: This Circular must be read in Parishes/Missions/Proposed Missions of the Eparchy during the celebration of the Holy Qurbana on Pesaha Thursday, the feast of the Holy Qurbana, the 2nd of April 2026, (or the nearest Sunday when Holy Qurbana is celebrated, if there is no Holy Qurbana on the 2nd of April 2026)