



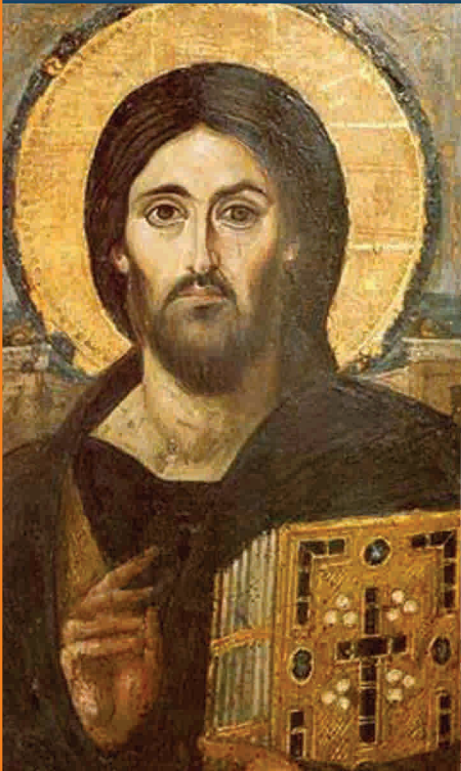
# THE MALANKARA (INDIAN) ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH DIOCESE OF UK-EUROPE & AFRICA



## മലങ്കര ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സംഗമം 2024 - Malankara Orthodox Sangamam 2024

Great Britain Region – 25 May 2024 – Coventry CV8 3FL

Irish Region – 02 June 2024 – Maynooth W23 NX63



www.mosc.in  
catholics@mosc.in Ph: 0481 - 2574323  
2578500

### The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

BASELIOS MARTHOMA MATHEWS III  
CATHOLICUS OF  
THE APOSTOLIC THRONUS OF ST. THOMAS  
AND MALANKARAMETROPOLITAN



CATHOLICATE PALACE  
KOTTAYAM - 686 004  
KERALA, INDIA

April 10, 2024

Blessings to the Metropolitan, Vicars of all the Parishes, Managing Committee Members, all the office bearers and the dearly beloved faithful of the Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa, in the name of the blessed Holy Trinity:

It is with immense pleasure we have learned that in the two regions of the Diocese you are organizing an 'Orthodox Sangamam'. We extend our prayerful greetings and our blessings to the Sangamam through which we anticipate a rejuvenation of fellowship among our faithful. Furthermore we understand that this occasion is for affirming our faith and the doctrines of the Church.

Our diaspora is the future of our Church and we should take all the measures in nurturing our children in true faith.

We are looking forward to being with you all in both Great Britain and Ireland.

God bless

Baselios Marthoma Mathews III



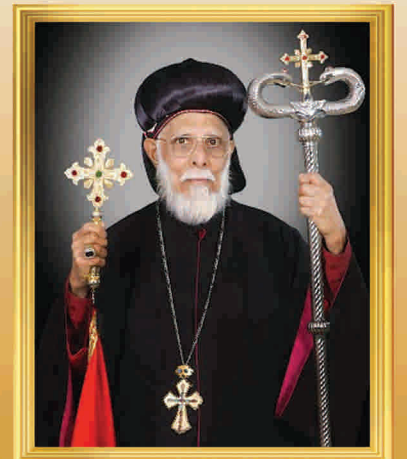
H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III  
Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan

H.E. Abraham Mar Stephanos  
Metropolitan

H.E. Dr. Mathews Mar Thimothios  
Metropolitan



Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios  
Late Lamented Metropolitan



Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios  
Late Lamented Metropolitan

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH (INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH)  
DIOCESE OF UK-EUROPE-AFRICA  
UK REGISTERED CHARITY: 11399802  
+ METROPOLITAN ABRAHAM MAR STEPHANOS

MALANKARA HOUSE  
35 HENMAN CLOSE  
SWINDON SN25 4ZW  
UNITED KINGDOM  
TEL: +44 1793 921224  
MOBILE: +44 7391 210127  
E-MAIL: catholicos@mosc.in  
www.mosc.in

No. E-069/AMS/2024

11 April 2024

Blessings to the Vicars, Managing Committee members and all the faithful of the Diocese in the name of the blessed Holy Trinity:

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Scripture reminds us to "consider how we may encourage one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another," particularly as we anticipate the fulfillment of our faith (Hebrews 10:24-25). This message serves as the cornerstone of the "Malankara Orthodox Sangamam," which aims to celebrate our communion and solidarity, reaffirming our faith and doctrine. It signals to the younger generation our commitment to living out the faith of the Church, a faith deeply rooted in our participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ.

In keeping with this spirit of unity and commitment, we have decided to collectively celebrate the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain on May 25, 2024, and in Ireland on June 02, 2024. These gatherings will be graced by the presence of the head of our Church, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, symbolizing our shared communion and the harmonious existence we strive for within God's redemptive work, manifested through Christ.

Yet, in our journey of faith, we often encounter distractions and concerns that draw us away from the essence of our existence. It is here that our faith becomes our beacon, reminding us of the Lord's assurance in John 14:1, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Building upon this wisdom, Abba Antony, a Desert Father, advises, "do not be anxious about what you have, but say in your soul: 'He has given it to me. When He wishes, He takes it away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.'" While challenging, cultivating this mindset is crucial, enabling us to detach from unnecessary anxieties while aligning ourselves with the eternal journey we are called to undertake.

This teaching aligns with the call for unity and gentleness among us, as highlighted by Saint Paul in Philippians 4: 2, 5. It is this unity and gentleness that the Sangamam seeks to embody and celebrate, marking our commitment to a life of communion in Christ. Such a profound commitment finds its most tangible expression in the life and activities of our parishes. Far from being mere gathering spaces, our parishes stand as sanctuaries of worship. Here, we not only express our faith through prayer but also find rejuvenation for our spirits, empowering us to embody our beliefs in every facet of our daily lives.

As we come together for the Sangamam, we are reminded of the deep roots of our faith, established at the Council of Nicaea and passed down through generations. The Sangamam will not only reaffirm our dedication to this legacy but will also launch a two-year-long commemoration of the seventeen hundredth anniversary of the Council in 2025. This special observance of the Anniversary of Nicaea 2025 is a testament to our enduring faith and the unity that sustains it.

May the guidance of the Holy Spirit lead us towards a joyous and unified gathering at the Sangamam, as we embrace the spiritual journey we are called to undertake. Let this event serve as a beacon of our faith, unity, and commitment to the teachings of Christ and the Church.

+ Metropolitan Abraham Stephanos

IN SEARCH OF  
WHAT CANNOT  
BE SEEN  
2 COR. 4:18

### THE INDIAN (MALANKARA) ORTHODOX CHURCH Diocese of Chengannur

Dr. Mathews Mar Thimothios, Metropolitan  
Prof. Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, India.

Menorah Orthodox Centre  
Venmony P.O., Chengannur – 689509  
Kerala, India.  
Tel: +91 479 2351 722  
Mobile: +91 944 7718 511  
E-mail: thimothiosmathews@gmail.com

Bethel Aramana  
Chengannur P.O.  
Kerala, India  
689 121  
Tel: +91 479 2450420  
E-mail: bethelaramana@gmail.com

UK/ 24 /03

04. 03. 2024

Blessing to the Clergy and all the faithful members of Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa;

Dearly beloved in the name of Holy Triune God,

With immense joy and gratitude, thanking Almighty Lord for all His mercy and blessings.

We extend Our heartfelt felicitations to each one of you on the auspicious occasion of the publication of this special supplement, commemorating the blessed visit of the Supreme Head of the Malankara Orthodox Church, the Catholicos of the East, and Malankara Metropolitan. This momentous event serves as a testament to the unwavering faith and dedication that has guided our Diocese on its remarkable journey.

As I reflect upon the years of my tenure as the Diocesan Metropolitan, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude to the Almighty for entrusting me with the responsibility of shepherding the newly formed Diocese in 2009. It was a journey marked by challenges, but the divine blessings paved the way for growth from humble beginnings. The Diocese, which began with 31 Parishes/Congregations and a single worshipping place, has flourished to encompass 50 Parishes and 12 own worshipping places in 2022. And now I recognise and thank Lord Almighty by seeing the further growth of the diocese in the past years. The struggles and toil endured during the acquisition of the Diocesan Headquarters, Malankara House in Swindon in 2015, are a testament to our unwavering commitment to establish a strong foundation for our community.

Administering and managing a Diocese spanning three continents and five different time zones presented its own set of challenges. Yet, through the grace of the Almighty and the steadfast support of our clergy and laymen, we overcame these obstacles. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who stood by the Diocese during troublesome periods, and I am immensely thankful to the Lord for His Mercy that enabled us to overcome every challenge.

Our focus on the future generations and their spiritual enrichment remains steadfast. It is crucial for us to nurture the faith and values that have sustained us through the years, ensuring a legacy that endures for generations to come.

We would like to express Our deepest gratitude to our predecessor, Mar Makarios of blessed memory, whose guidance has been a source of inspiration throughout. To my successor, Metropolitan Abraham Stephanos, I extend my full support and have confidence in his leadership. May his tenure bring new horizons and continued growth to our beloved Diocese.

In closing, let us rejoice in the shared accomplishments, reflect on the challenges overcome, and look forward with hope to the bright future that lies ahead under the divine guidance of the Supreme Head of Our Church.

May God Bless.

+ Mathews Mar Thimothios Metropolitan

### BRIEF REPORT ON THE DIOCESAN ACTIVITIES

#### DIOCESE OF UK - EUROPE AND AFRICA

The Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa embarked upon a humble journey in 2009, arising out of an administrative and geographical bifurcation of 30 Congregations from the erstwhile Canada-Europe Diocese to form a new spiritual abode. Little did we foresee the divine blessings that awaited us on this journey. The heavenly Father has graciously bestowed His favor, leading to the exponential growth of our Diocese.

Although there has been a presence of Malankara faithful in Europe since the early 1960s, it was from the 1990s that the numbers started growing, particularly with the arrival of medical professionals and students. Starting with 31 Parishes across Europe and Africa in 2009, today, there are 44 Parishes/Congregation in just the UK mainland (England, Scotland and Wales), with a further 10 between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, as well as 9 across Europe in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Malta along with the recent additions of Belgium and France. This is apart from the prayer fellowships at Italy (Rome), Luxembourg, Poland, Netherlands, Georgia and the Nordic regions. Additionally, there are also two active parishes in the African continent in South Africa and Nigeria, along with the vibrant presence of faithful in several more countries such as Botswana, Tanzania, Rwanda, etc.

With the consecration of the first Malankara Orthodox Church in the European continent in London in 2004, as well as the first on the African Continent in South Africa in 2023, the Diocese today boasts 12 places of worship of its own, along with several more venues used primarily for Orthodox services. The expansion is not merely numerical; it resonates in the hearts of our community, growing from 900 families in 2009 to a flourishing 2600 families in 2024.

The functioning of our Spiritual organizations are a testament to the dedication of the faithful of the Diocese. The Sunday School (OSSAE) currently nourishes almost 1800 students across 12 grades with over 200 devoted teachers. The Women's wing (Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam - MMVS), Youth and Student fellowship (OCYM), Acolyte organization (AMOSS), stand as living testimonies to our vibrant community. Special mention must be made of the Pre Marital Counselling program, which has guided more than 400 young couples so far. The successful Annual Family Conference events have further strengthened the bonds within our community, fostering a spirit of unity and collaboration. The Diocesan Charity Program Maithri, continues to extend financial support to many deserving individuals and organizations worldwide.

In the ecumenical world, our presence is not just noted but recognized as we represent the Malankara Orthodox Church with pride. Our presence in the World Council of Churches (WCC), Churches Together in England (CTE),



Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Churches Together in Wales, Churches Together in Ireland as well as the Ecumenical Fellowships in Africa, particularly in South Africa are a statement that we are not mere spectators, but rather in the front line of policy making for the betterment of the Christian unity.

The acquisition of the Diocesan Headquarters (Malankara House) at Swindon in 2015 stands as a beacon of our commitment to administering and managing a diocese that spans three continents and six different time zones.

It is fitting at this juncture to express our deepest gratitude to the former Diocesan Metropolitan, His Grace Dr. Mathews Mar Thimothios, whose pioneering contributions and struggles laid the foundation for our Diocese. To all the clergy, former Diocesan Secretaries, Sabha Managing Committee members, Diocesan Council members, Diocesan Assembly representatives, and our devoted faithful, we extend our heartfelt thanks for your extensive contributions. A special acknowledgment is reserved for our present Diocesan Metropolitan, His Grace Abraham Stephanos, whose remarkable leadership propels us towards a future brimming with hope and promise.

As we embark on this journey of growth and ministry, let us keep alive the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ in this Diaspora world. With immense joy and gratitude, we extend a warm welcome to all, as we gather to commemorate the monumental occasion of the coming together of the faithful of our Diocese – the Malankara Orthodox Sangamam 2024, both in the Great Britain and Irish regions. The occasions will also be blessed by the first Apostolic visit of The Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews III. This sacred event not only signifies a momentous celebration but also provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the remarkable journey of the Diocese of UK-Europe.

My prayers and best wishes for the success of Malankara Orthodox Sangamam 2024. May the divine grace of our Lord be with us always.

With profound reverence,

Fr. Varghese T. Mathew  
Diocesan Secretary

## CHURCH DIGNITARIES



Fr. Dr. Thomas Varghese Amayil  
Priest Trustee

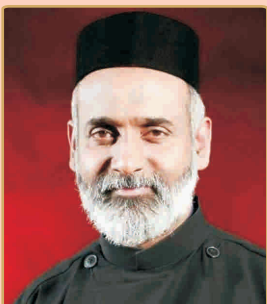


Sri. Ronny Varghese Abraham  
Lay Trustee



Adv. Biju Oommen  
Association Secretary

## SABHA MANAGING COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Fr. George Thankachen



Dr. Sen Kallumpuram



Soji T. Mathew  
Supplement Convener

## MALANKARA ORTHODOXY AND THE NASRANI TRADITION - OUR PATH TO UNITY

The core truth of Christian faith is essentially molded upon the unity of the body of Christ. While the Psalmist sings about how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity (Ps 133:1), both St. Paul and St. Peter also exhorts us all to be perfectly united in mind and thought (1 Cor 1:10, 1 Pet 3:8). Unfortunately today, the biblical command to "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15) has proactively been replaced with the concept of affirming all people in love - being inclusive - regardless of what truth they believe in. It is at this juncture that we need to uphold that which has been handed down to us by our forefathers from centuries ago, even though some would argue that Church unity could be hampered if there is an over-emphasis on faith and tradition.

Orthodoxy, defined as true worship, holds up a great beacon of light. This is not simply in the recognition of the institution of the church, but rather in the unwavering faith and tradition received through Apostolic succession. As the growing migration to the West for both academic as well as employment purposes creates both challenges as well as huge opportunities, it is for self-reassurance, to strengthen the bonds of our community that we gather together for the Malankara Orthodox Sangamam.

We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those involved in the publication of this supplement. It is their dedication and hard work that have been instrumental in bringing this endeavor to fruition. In particular, we express our respect and thankfulness to our beloved Diocesan Metropolitan HG Abraham Mar Stephanos, Diocesan Secretary Rev. Fr. Varghese T. Mathew, Rev. Fr. Nithin Prasad Koshy, Rev. Fr. Aswin Eapen, those who supported financially by giving greetings and advertising, printing press as well as all the members of the Supplement Committee under the leadership of Mr. Soji T. Mathew for their outstanding contributions.

We sincerely pray that the Malankara Orthodox Sangamam will be a new milestone that will redefine the vision with which the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church grows in its Christian witnessing in the diasporas of the UK, Europe, and Africa.

**Fr. SAJI C. JOHN**  
Chairman Supplement Committee.

## DIOCESAN COUNCIL MEMBERS



Fr. Binoy Joshua



Fr. Stanley David James



Libin Varghese



John Samuel



Johnson P. Yohanan



Vinod Kochuparambil

## SUPPLEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Fr. Saji C. John  
Chairman



Fr. Nithin Prasad Koshy



Fr. Aswin Varghese Eappen



Dr. Ajay Mathews



Anil George



Noble Abraham



Dr. Kevin Shaji



Alice Rajan



Jency Sunil



Elizabeth Biju



Emy Anil



Ankitha Litto

## DIOCESE OF UK - EUROPE AND AFRICA Lists of Parishes and Priests

01 Aberdeen St. Thomas	Fr. Varghese P.A.
02 Bedford St. Nicolas	Fr. Aby P. Varghese
03 Belfast St. Gregorios	Fr. Jobson Abraham
04 Bielefeld St. Gregorios (Germany)	Fr. Jibin Thomas Abraham
05 Birmingham St. Stephen's	Fr. Mathew Abraham Palathinkal
06 Bonn-Cologne St. Gregorios (Germany)	Fr. Aashu Alexander Mattackal
07 Bristol St. Mary's	Fr. John Varghese Mannamcheril
08 Cambridge St. Thomas	Fr. Mathews Kuriakose
09 Canterbury St. Gregorios	Fr. Jeelson P. Wilson
10 Chelmsford St. Lukes	Fr. Josen John
11 City of London St. George	Fr. P.J. Binu
12 Colchester St. Stephen's	Fr. Ranju K. Skaria
13 Cork Holy Trinity	Fr. Mathew K. Mathaw
14 Coventry St. Mary's	Fr. Tom Jacob
15 Crawley Holy Trinity	Fr. Mobin Varghese
16 Drogheda St. Peter's & St. Paul's	Fr. T. George
17 Dublin St. Thomas	Fr. Anish John
18 Dublin Lucan St. Mary's	Fr. Saju Philip
19 East Kent St. Peter's and St. Paul's	Fr. Joseph Mathew Elavunkal
20 Edinburgh St. John The Apostle	Fr. Saji C. John
21 Galway St. Elijah	Fr. Anish John
22 Germany St. Thomas	Fr. Jibin Thomas Abraham
23 Glasgow St. Gregorios	Fr. Saji C. John
24 Harlow St. Marks	Fr. Sajjan C. Mathew
25 Hemel Hempstead St. Thomas	Fr. Anoop M. Abraham
26 Hereford, St. Behanan's	Fr. Mathew Abraham Palathinkal
27 Julianstown (Meath, Ireland) St. George	Fr. Eldhose Babu
28 Kings Lynn St. Mary's	Fr. Liju Varghese
29 Leeds St. Gregorios	Fr. Shaiju K. Mathai
30 Leicester St. George	Fr. Josen John
31 Limerick St. George	Fr. Ninan P. Kuriakose
32 Liverpool St. Thomas	Fr. Happy Jacob
33 London (Brookley) St. Gregorios	Fr. Nithin Prasad Koshy
34 Luven(Belgium) St. James	Fr. Aashu Alexander Mattackal
35 Malta St. Peter's & St. Paul's	Fr. Rohith Skariah George
36 Manchester St. George	Fr. Eldo P. Varghese
37 Mansfield St. Mary's	Fr. Binoy C. Joshua
38 Mullingar St. Stephen's	Fr. Ninan P. Kuriakose
39 Newcastle St. Thomas	Fr. Tiji Thankachen
40 Nigeria Lagos St. Stephen's	Fr. Jabin John Joseph
41 North Wales St. Behanan's	Fr. Tom Jacob
42 Northampton St. Dionysius	Fr. Mathews Kuriakose
43 Northwest London St. Mary's	Fr. Shaiju P. Mathai
44 Norwich St. Kuriakose	Fr. Liju Varghese
45 Oxford St. Mary's	Fr. Geevarghese J. Tharakan
46 Paris (France) St. Mary's	Fr. Aashu Alexander Mattackal
47 Peterborough St. Gregorios	Fr. Mathews Kuriakose
48 Poole St. Thomas	Fr. Joe Mathew
49 Portsmouth St. George	Fr. Joe Mathew
50 Preston St. George	Fr. Anub John K.
51 Sheffield St. George	Fr. Binoy C. Joshua
52 South Africa St. Thomas	Fr. Stanley David James
53 South Wales Holy Innocents	Fr. Varghese T. Mathew
54 Southampton	
55 Mar Baselios Mar Gregorios	Fr. Aby Philip Varghese
56 Southend-on-Sea St. Gregorios	Fr. Ranju K. Skaria
57 Stoke-on-Trent St. John The Baptist	Fr. Tom Jacob
58 Stockport Manchester St. Mary's	Fr. Binu Thomas
59 Sunderland St. Mary's	Fr. Varghese P.A.
60 Swindon St. Gregorios	Fr. Aby Philip Varghese
61 Switzerland St. Gregorios	Fr. Aswin Eappen Varghese
62 Taunton St. Thomas	Fr. Geevarghese J. Tharakan
63 Tbilisi (Georgia) St. Elijah	Fr. George Mathew
64 Vienna (Austria) St. Thomas	Fr. Solomon Babu
65 Waterford St. Gregorios	Fr. Mathew K. Mathaw
66 Woking St. Stephen's	Fr. Jins K. John

## MALANKARA ORTHODOX SANGAMAM - PROGRAMME

### GREAT BRITAIN - SATURDAY 25 MAY 2024 (7.30 AM TO 5 PM)

- 7.30 am : Morning Prayers followed by Holy Qurbana
- 1.30 pm : Procession
- 2.30 pm : PUBLIC MEETING
  - Presidential Address : **Abraham Mar Stephanos Metropolitan**
  - Keynote Address : **HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews III**
  - Felicitations : **HE Archbishop Angaelos** (Coptic Orthodox)
  - : **HE Bishop Hovakim Manukyan** (Armenian Orthodox)
  - : **Rt. Revd. Saju Muthalaly** (Church of England)
  - : **Rt. Revd. Mar Joseph Srampickal** (Syro - Malabar Catholic)
  - : **HG Bishop Mathew of Sourozh** (Russian Orthodox)
  - : **Managing Committee Members**
- 4.00 pm : Cultural Events

### IRELAND - SUNDAY 02 JUNE 2024 (8.30AM TO 4PM)

Venue: **St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, W23 NX63**

- 8.30 am : Morning Prayers followed by Holy Qurbana
- 1.30 pm : Flag Hoisting and Procession
- 2.00 pm : PUBLIC MEETING
  - Presidential Address : **Abraham Mar Stephanos Metropolitan**
  - Keynote Address : **HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews III**
  - Felicitations : **Very Rev. Dermot J. Dunne V.F** (Dean, Christ Church Cathedral)
  - : **Rev. Prof. Micheal Mullaney** (President, St. Patrick's Pontifical University)

## SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS - HELPING TO GROW THROUGH TRUE WORSHIP



The Spiritual Organizations of the Diocese help to foster the spiritual needs of the faithful through close and continuous participation. Sunday School units at Parish level which had been active for over 30 years gradually paved way for the centralized OSSAE-UK-Europe & Africa [OSSAE-UEA], which carefully coordinates the Sunday School activities across the Diocese. As of the start of the 2024 academic year, a brand new curriculum based upon the one implemented in the Diocese of Southwest America was introduced. This was essential to overcome several challenges and to encourage active participation and offer an enjoyable Sunday school learning experience for the Sunday school children living across various parts of the Diocese. Regular Teachers' Conferences, Meetings as well as talent Competitions are held on Zonal as well as Diocesan Level to encourage unity at all levels. OVBS has been organized centrally since 2013. There are currently over 50 units within the Diocese which serve over 3500 students under the guidance of approximately 650 teachers.

Although several Parishes had initiated Youth Fellowships or MGOCSM units as

early as the early 2000s, the seeds of a centralized Youth Movement were planted in 2008. In 2012, they were unified under the umbrella of Orthodox Christian Youth Movement (OCYM) to anchor youngsters through a formal structure. The Diocesan Youth Movement (OCYM-UK EU AFR) is thus in its 12th year of active leadership and Christian witnessing aiming to mould the minds and visions of the youth against the background of the contemporary world. Annual events such as the AURA Leadership Program and HODOS encouraging youngsters from the diaspora to meet and share in fellowship and faith through a transformative journey of faith, friendship, and leadership. As of 2023, the Student Hospitality and Fellowship Program OASSIS were integrated with the OCYM and its activities, built upon the success in Europe, extended into UK and Ireland. The initiative aims to connect the wave of new migrations so that all youngsters of the Malankara Orthodox Tradition and held together by providing support, guidance, and a sense of belonging as they settle into new social and cultural environments.

The Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam (MMVS) of the Diocese continues to be a beacon of spiritual empowerment for women

by committing to spiritual growth and service. Units are divided into seven zones, with zonal secretaries organizing events and coordinating members. Every parish unit ensures to have regular prayer and study meetings. In addition, regional, zonal, and diocesan-level conferences and events are organized annually. These conferences provide opportunities for learning about faith and sacraments, as well as social and cultural integration. Online events such as Intercersory Prayers every Wednesday, Bible study every fourth Wednesday and the chain Bible reading initiative along with several outreach initiatives such as financial assistance for education, sick aid, contributions to charity and welfare projects of the Church, etc enable the units members to get continually involved.

The Akhila Malankara Orthodox Shushru-shaka Sangham (AMOSS) is a spiritual organization that aims to promote uniformity in the Church's sacramental practices by systematically instructing acolytes (altar assistants) in all parishes. Under the devoted guidance of the Parish Vicars, acolytes are guided and trained in the liturgical readings, songs as well as duties within the Altar so as to enhance the spiritual experience of the faithful participating in the services.

**IDENTITY AND HERITAGE OF ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS: AN APPRAISAL**



St. Thomas, the apostle of Jesus Christ, came to India to preach the gospel. He preached the gospel in Persia, North India, and South India. The historical reality of the apostolic mission of St. Thomas to Kerala is a tradition that the St. Thomas Christians (Marthoma Nasranis) hold dear to their hearts. The Christian community started by his mission still exists here. They maintain their Thomas consciousness. The identity of the Thomas Christians is defined as "the Way and the Lineage of St. Thomas" (Marthomayude margavum vazhipadum).

The indigenous Church of Thomas Christians came into cooperation with the Persian church in the fourth century. This cordial relationship remained until the sixteenth century. Persian bishops exercised spiritual supervision over the Thomas Christians, who existed as a caste community in Kerala. The Archdeacons (Jathikku Karthavyan) provided social, religious, and political leadership to the Christians. The Palliyogams, which uphold democratic principles, discussed the issues addressed by the community. Trade, agriculture, and military service were the occupations of the Thomas Christians. The Malankara Sabha welcomed the churches that maintain friendly relations like this. But they did not forget to strongly oppose the invasion attempts.

But the Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries who came to Kerala in the sixteenth century with the intention of colonization tried to Latinize this ancient apostolic Church of Nazranis. The Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) in 1599 became a crucial milestone in westernisation. The freedom enjoyed by the believers of this Church, founded in India by St. Thomas, was restored by the Oath of Leaning Cross (Coonan Cross Oath) of 1653. This geographically isolated group of Christians has always tried to maintain an Oriental perspective. So, the Malankara Nasranis sought the help of Oriental Orthodox (both Coptic and Antiochian Orthodox Churches) and Persian Churches to survive the overwhelming Western invasion attempts. The Orthodox Church of Antioch provided spiritual assistance during the crisis. In the

nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries from Europe helped the Malankara Church take new steps in the fields of education, charity, and missions.

The heritage of St. Thomas Christians is a hybrid entity. The cultural expressions held by the Nazranis are taken from the multicultural society in which they live and assimilated into their Christian identity. It has artistic expressions. Margamkali, and Veeradianpaatu are examples of this. The architecture of the churches and the mural paintings in them are unique. There have been various influences on Nasrani art. Buddhism in South India, Brahmins in Kerala, Judaeo-Syrian Christianity in West Asia, Europeans from the sixteenth century, and Dravidians have more or less influenced it.

There are various rituals associated with special occasions, such as the birth of babies, their naming, marriage, death, blessing of houses, etc. It is interesting to note that the name and intercession of St. Thomas are specifically invoked in the hymns and prayers used on these occasions. The Nazranis expected the active presence of priests in these ceremonies. The Copper Plates (Knaithomman and Tharisapalli copper plates; and Veeraraghava Pattayam) received by the Malankara Nasranis from the local rulers are evidence of their social status and involvement in social and economic fields. The names adopted by the ancient Nasranis are also part of their heritage. Nazranis adopted the names of saints from the Holy Book and Christian history. They translated it in an indigenous way. Abraham, for example, became Avarachan and Avira; Emanuel became Mani; and Alexander became Chandy.

Until the early part of the twentieth century, St. Thomas Christians tried to preserve these heritages and carefully share them with the next generation. But globalization and the expanding diaspora created a crisis. In the meantime, the interpretation that such cultural expressions are not Christian has also arisen from some quarters. It was in this context that everyone should realize the necessity of preserving the identity of Marthoma Nasranis. It is part of the identity of those who claim the succession of the Apostle Thomas. Forgetting it creates a challenge to their existence. Let us not forget that it is our responsibility to maintain and share the Thomas Christian identity and associated heritage in these turbulent times.

**Fr. Job Sam Mathew**  
Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam



**ST. MARY'S MALANKARA (INDIAN) ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Kings Lynn, U.K.  
[www.indianorthodoxchurchkingslynn.co.uk](http://www.indianorthodoxchurchkingslynn.co.uk)

*Worship Timings :*  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday - 11.30 a.m. / III<sup>rd</sup> Sunday - 2 p.m.

*Worship Venue:*  
Holy Family Church  
Field Lane, Gaywood, Kings Lynn, PE304AY

Malankara Orthodox Sangamam  
UK Region, 25th May 2024

**ST. PETER'S & ST. PAUL'S IOC, EAST KENT**



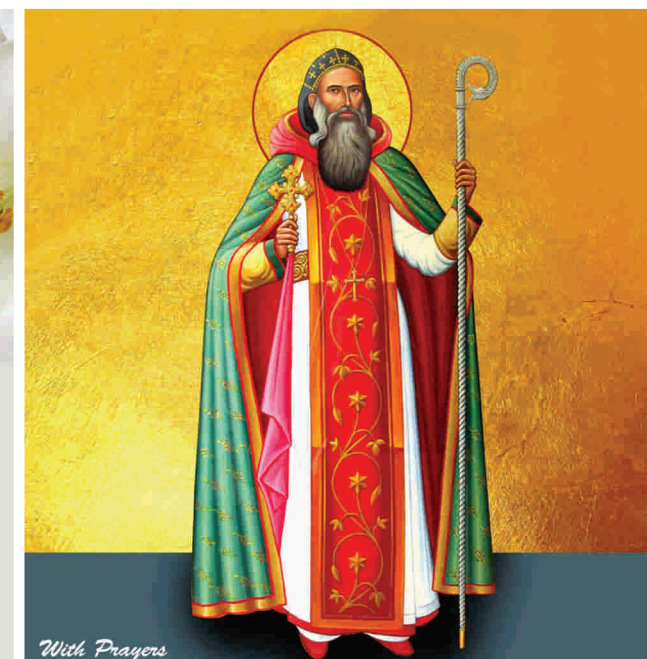
**WORSHIPPING AT:**  
ALL SAINTS CHURCH, CHURCH LANE, WEST FARLEIGH  
MAIDSTONE, KENT, UK, ME15 0PD

*With Prayers*



*H.G. Dr. Zacharia Mar Theophilos Metro politan (1952 - 2017)*

**Alex (Reji), Mary (Somy) & Ryan**  
(Moovakottu Kuttenchira Family, Madappally, Changanacherry)  
St. George Indian Orthodox Church, Portsmouth  
Home Parish : St. Kuriakose Orthodox Church, Mundukuzhy



*With Prayers*

*St. Gregorios Pray for us*  
**Rajan Daniel, Alice Rajan & Alvin Rajan**  
SGIOC - SWINDON, U.K.



**Your Perfect Partner For Business Needs**

**Our Services**

- ✓ Website and Software Development
- ✓ Mobile Application Development
- ✓ E-commerce Solution
- ✓ Digital Marketing
- ✓ Business Telephony
- ✓ Networking Solutions
- ✓ Business Grade Internet + WiFi

+447790998833    [dj@jrjconnect.com](mailto:dj@jrjconnect.com)    [www.jrjconnect.com](http://www.jrjconnect.com)

**tourdesigners (uk) ltd.**

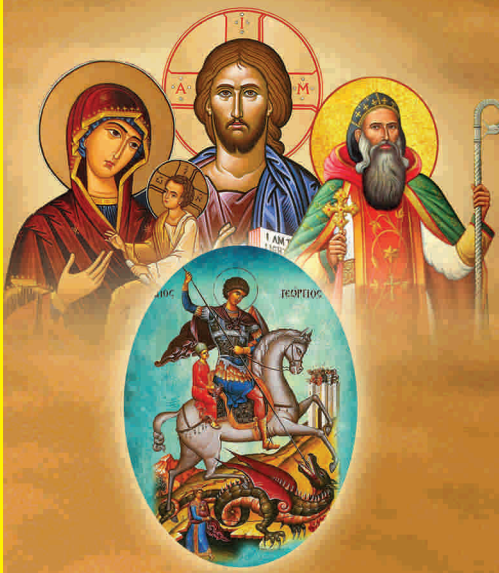
**BEST DEALS ON FLIGHTS TO KERALA**  
SPECIAL RATES TO ALL INDIAN DESTINATIONS

- HOLIDAY PACKAGES
- TRAVEL INSURANCE
- EXPERIENCED AND FRIENDLY STAFF
- OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Trustpilot Excellent  
**02071609710**  
[www.tourdesigners.co.uk](http://www.tourdesigners.co.uk)

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS IN SERVICE

St. George Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church  
Sheffield, U.K.



Worship Venue:  
St Saviours Church  
15 - Mortomley Ln, High Green, S35 3HS

Worship Times:  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 9 a.m. every month

ST.GREGORIOS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
CANTERBURY

Worship Venue:  
All Saints Church  
Military Road  
Canterbury  
CT1 6PA

Worship Times:  
1st, 3rd and 5th  
Saturday of every month  
9:00 AM onwards

ST. GREGORIOS  
INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
A Parish under the UK-Europe-Africa Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (founded by St. Thomas in AD52)  
CANTERBURY | UK

MALANKARA  
ORTHODOX  
SANGAMAM

May 25 2024

LEAMINGTON ROAD, RYTON-ON-DUNSMORE, COVENTRY, CV8 3FL

ശ്രീ  
ര  
മ  
ന  
ി  
ര  
ം  
സ  
ർ  
ര



St.Gregorios Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church  
LONDON. SE4 1UF  
Ph.: 0044 - 2086919456, <https://ioclondon.org/>

Best Compliments  
from :  
Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam & The Orthodox Christian Youth Movement  
St. Gregorios London Unit

**MetroPot**<sup>®</sup>  
Make Indian Food Special!

DELIVERING THE AUTHENTIC  
**FLAVOURS OF INDIA,**  
ALL OVER THE UK

Neatown Ltd, 118 Windmill Road,  
Croydon, London CR0 2XQ.  
info@metropot.co.uk  
**02086658194**

HACCP Certified  
Food Standards Agency  
852/2004 and 853/2004

UNITED KINGDOM  
CR 012  
Manufacturing Licence

www.metropot.co.uk

Freshly Made | Blast Chilled to seal the flavours | Home Delivery Across the UK

**ZION MORTGAGE**  
02080596069

MORTGAGE  
REMORTGAGE  
LIFE INSURANCE  
HOME INSURANCE

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPROCESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP WITH  
REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.

**ZION FINANCIAL**  
FINDING THE BEST LIFE INSURANCE

**AKHILESH MATHEW**  
PROTECTION ADVISOR  
MOBILE : 07403030507