

## **Address by Joseph Mar Barnabas**

### **Suffragan Metropolitan of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church**

His Holiness Pope Francis,

Your Excellencies,

Your Graces

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

By God the Father's will, from which all gifts come, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I wish you peace and greetings.

It is a particular joy for us, to witness today in Vatican, this historic meeting between His Holiness Pope Francis and the Holy synod of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church. First of all, I would like to thank Holy Father for the kind invitation to this event, for the first time in the History of our churches We, the members of the Holy Synod of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian church, His Grace Dr. Issac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa, His Grace Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos Episcopa, His Grace Dr. Mathews Mar Makarios Episcopa, His Grace. Dr. Thoma Mar Theethos Episcopa, His Grace Zacharias Mar Aprem Episcopa, His Grace Dr. Joseph Mar Ivanios Episcopa, His Grace Mathews Mar Seraphim Episcopa, having a formal meeting with Holy Father, the head of the catholic church. On behalf of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Kerala, India and its Metropolitan, the XXII Mar Thoma of the Holy see of St. Thomas, His Beatitude Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan, May I bring your Holiness, warm regards and prayerful greetings.

Holy Father, it is indeed a blessed day in the history of Both our churches to remember and cherish in our ecumenical journey, together in witnessing our Lord. Our Church, we believe to, have been founded by Saint Thomas (Mar Thoma in Syriac), one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ in the year AD 52. Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma, the Mar Thoma XVIII of blessed memory define the identity of the Mar Thoma Church as "Apostolic in origin, Universal in nature, Biblical in faith, Evangelical in principle, Ecumenical in outlook, Oriental in worship, Democratic in function, and Episcopal in character. We are thankful to our Lord for blessing this small church in a unique way, to share the Love of Our Lord to the world.

Holy father, both our churches had some important moments in the history to looked back and cherish. It begins with the presence of the Mar Thoma XX, His Beatitude Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan of Blessed memory in the second Vatican council as an observer. Later, some of our bishops and Metropolitans met the head of the Holy see of St. Peter in Vatican on different occasions. We consider all these moments as precious and historic.

In November 22, 2022, in my private audience with your Holiness, I shared the dream and vision of the church to initiate a dialogue meeting between the catholic church and the Mar Thoma church, Holy Father asked me, why do you need a Dialogue? If it is for mere theological

conversation, we don't need a dialogue. Nevertheless, it is intended for our coexistence in this world for the Glory of our Lord, it is good. Holy Father, it is with great joy I shared with you that, we are officially initiated this journey in December 14, 2023 and this visit is a part and extension of journey together witnessing our Lord.

Holy father, your leadership is a blessing, not only for Catholics, but for the whole world. We thank God that he has given us a pope who fostering love and fraternity in all human beings, ministry of bringing comfort and peace to all God's people, and promote care and healing for all God's Creation.

To affirm in the faith in our Lord and the mission of the Holy church, it is our wish any pray that, may our Lord help us to continue this journey of knowing and understanding each other relaying on the light of love of our Lord. May this meeting of the Holy Synod of the Mar Thoma Church with Your Holiness will bring new hope and perspectives to our mission and ministry to understanding of the responsibility we have to our Churches, our people of faith, the future of Christianity and the future of human life.

I thankfully remember the earnest efforts and contributions of the Dicastery for promoting Christian unity in realising the bilateral dialogue between Catholic and Mar Thoma. We are Ever grateful for the remarkable leadership and contributions of His Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch, His Grace Bishop Brian Farrell, the then Secretary, His Grace Archbishop Flavio Pace, secretary and Fr. Hyacinthe Destivelle O.P.

And may all this be for the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the good of the whole faithful People of God.

**+ Joseph Mar Barnabas**

**Suffragan Metropolitan of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church**