

The Hindu, 19/1/22

Protests continue against Synod decision on uniform Mass

Fast by priests, laity members enters seventh day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

The fast by members of the laity and priests in the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly against a decision of the Synod of Bishops to impose a uniform code of Mass celebration continued for the seventh day on Tuesday.

Father Babu Kalathil, who who on a fast, was shifted to the Lisie Hospital, but continued his fast for the seventh day. Bishop Kuriakose Bharanikulangara of Faridabad visited those on protest at the hospital, said a communication from Almayana Munneettam, the combine of lay people demanding that the

church administration should allow a fully congregation-facing Mass.

Almayana Munneettam leaders Prakash P. John and Thomas Keercheri are those others on a fast. Father Tom Mullanchira is also on a fast in front of the Cardinal's house, the communication said.

The Hindu, 21/1/22

'Congregation-facing Mass to continue'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

The Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church will continue with the practice of fully congregation-facing Mass though the Synod of the church ruled in August last year that the Mass celebration should be uniform with the celebrant facing the

congregation for the first half of the Mass and then facing away from the congregation for the second half.

Archbishop Antony Kariyil, Metropolitan Vicar of the archdiocese, who looks after the day-to-day administration of the diocese, said that it was not possible, under the current circumstances, to issue a fresh circular to

adopt the uniform system of Mass celebration.

The announcement on the Mass celebration saw lay people and priests, who were on a fast, end their protest after nine days.

Archbishop Kariyil would soon issue a circular to all parishes for following the fully congregation-facing Mass celebration.

'No unified mass at Angamaly archdiocese'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Archbishop Antony Kariyil, the metropolitan vicar of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, issued a statement on Thursday saying that it was not possible to implement the unified mass, prescribed by the Church synod, at the archdiocese.

The statement was issued despite the head of Syro-Malabar Church, cardinal George Alencherry, stating in a circular that Mar Kariyil has informed the synod session that concluded on Jan 15 that he will issue a circular to implement unified mass at the archdiocese.

But, the archbishop issued a contradictory statement on Thursday as two priests and two laity members of the archdiocese conducted a hunger strike at the bishop's house demanding the continuation of Mass Versus Populum, the style where the celebrant faces the people.

Archbishop Kariyil said in the circular that Synod had pointed out legal limitations in implementing dispensation (under canon) in the entire archdiocese and had asked him to limit the scope of



Fr Tom Mullanchira, who was on hunger strike demanding continuation of the mass facing the people, ends his fast by taking lime juice from Fr Joseph Parekattil on Thursday

the dispensation through a new circular. He added that though he had agreed with the synod, the crisis became severe even before the Synod ended.

"The hunger strike which was going on for the past nine days is also causing serious human rights concerns...Respecting the lives of those who are on fast and considering the common sentiments in the archdiocese and the pastoral crisis existing here, I am realizing that it is not possible to execute a circular, demanding the implementation of mass in the style prescribed by the synod, at this archdiocese," he said in his statement.

Those who were on hunger strike called off their protests after the archbishop issued a statement. Mar

Kariyil said in the statement that he has formally intimated the Vatican's secretary of state cardinal Pietro Parolin and apostolic nuncio to India archbishop Leopoldo Girelli that under the circumstances issuing a circular, as directed by the synod, will be improper and go against his conscience.

Mar Kariyil added that cardinal Alencherry was also told about it in person and the permanent synod too was informed.

Meanwhile, protesting priests said that they will continue other modes of agitations until the style of mass at the archdiocese is formally recognized. Laity organizations said that any action against Mar Kariyil due to his stand would be strongly opposed.

Bishop visits fasting priest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Faridabad Archbishop Kuriakose Bharanikulangara visited Prakash P. John, N.O. Thomas Keecheri and Father Babu Kalathil, who are on an indefinite fast at Lisie Hospital in Kochi demanding that the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church permanently accord its sanction to the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly for a fully congregation-facing Mass celebration.

There is a difference of opinion between the Syro-Malabar Church authorities and a group of priests and lay people about the way the Mass should be celebrated. While the Synod says that the Mass should be celebrated with the celebrant (priest) facing the congregation for the first half and face away from the people for the second half, the archdiocesan members have demanded a fully congregation-facing Mass celebration.

The Bishop of Chanda diocese, Ephreim Narikulam, visited Father Tom Mullanchira, who is on a fast in front of the Cardinal's residence in the city, said a communication here on Monday. Metropolitan Vicar Antony Kairiyil of the archdiocese met Cardinal George Alencherry on Monday to brief him on the developments following the demand for permission to continue with the fully congregation-facing Mass celebration.

Deadline for receiving applications for Navakeraleeyam extended

The deadline for receiving applications for Navakeraleeyam one-time settlement scheme to clear loan arrears in cooperative banks has been extended up to March 31. The earlier deadline was December 31, 2021.

newindianexpress.com

No uniform mass in Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese: Mar Kariyil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE uniform mode of Holy Mass will not be implemented in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, said Mar Antony Kariyil, the metropolitan vicar of the archdiocese, in a statement issued here on Thursday.

The decision comes in the wake of the huge uproar within the archdiocese against implementing the new format of the mass approved by the synod, and the ongoing hunger strike of the laity and the priests.

The circular issued by Cardinal George Alencherry — head of the Syro Malabar Church — after the conclusion of the synod session on January 15 stated that Mar Kariyil will issue a circular demanding the archdiocese to implement the new format.

However, considering the tense situation in the archdiocese, Mar Kariyil issued the statement contrary to the synod's decision.

Mar Kariyil has assured the priests and the laity belonging to the archdiocese that he will find a solution to end the row. Following his assurance, the two priests and the two laity members ended their strike at the Ernakulam Bishops' House.

In the statement, Mar Kariyil said the synod pointed out

the legal limitations in providing exemption as per the Canon Law to the entire archdiocese and sought to limit the scope of the exemption through a new circular. Though he had agreed with the synod, the pastoral crisis became severe before the conclusion of the synod, he added.



Respecting the lives of those who are on fast and considering the common sentiments in the archdiocese and the pastoral crisis existing here, I have realised that it is impossible to execute a circular, demanding the implementation of the mass in the style prescribed by the synod, in this archdiocese

Mar Antony Kariyil, metropolitan vicar, Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese

“Respecting the lives of those who are on fast and considering the common sentiments in the archdiocese and the pastoral crisis existing here, I have realised that it is impossible to execute a circular, demanding the implementation of the mass in the style prescribed by the synod, in this archdiocese,” Mar Kariyil's statement said.

He also said he has formally conveyed his decision to Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, Apostolic Nuncio to India Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, Cardinal Alencherry and the permanent synod.

Meanwhile, the protesting priests said that though they have ended the hunger strike, they will continue to protest until the old mass of the archdiocese is formally recognised. Laity organisations of the archdiocese said that any action against Mar Kariyil due to his stand would be strongly opposed.

Church Mass row: Lay forums warn of action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

Almaya Munnettam, Daivajana Koottayma, St. Mary's Basilica Koottayma, and Athiroopatha Sutharya Samithi, all representing organisations calling for more transparency and accountability in the administration of the church in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church, has said the laity will react strongly against any decision against the practice of fully congregation-facing Mass.

Any decision against the fully congregation-facing Mass, which had brought peace and harmony in the archdiocese, would not be accepted, said a statement from Augustine Kaniyamattam, representing the laity. He said the implications of the Mass were discussed at a meeting of the representatives of the church on February 13.

Continue practice

The Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese had said it would continue with the practice of fully congregation-facing Mass though the synod of the Syro-Malabar Church said in August last year that the Mass celebration should be uniform with the celebrant facing the congregation for the first half of the Mass and then facing away from the congregation for the second half.

THE HINDU

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conference, at Velloppilli Park at Kaloor in Kochi on Sunday. Nearly 60 noted artists from across the state took part in the camp

Times of India, 21/2/22

Protests in Ekm against changes in Holy Mass

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The parish community of Ernakulam St Mary's Cathedral Basilica held a procession to the bishop's house of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese on Sunday, demanding legitimisation of Mass facing the people, the type of Mass followed in the archdiocese.

Mode of celebrating Holy Mass has been a matter of dispute within the Syro-Malabar Church for the past several years. The main reason for the dispute was that various dioceses used to follow at least two different modes of celebrating Holy Mass, the main difference being the priest facing churchgoers during the ceremony in certain dioceses and facing the altar in other dioceses.

SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

The unified way prescribed by the synod is a combination of both and all dioceses, except Ernakulam-Angamaly, has moved to the format. The archdiocese, one of the biggest in the Church, is continuing their traditional mass based on a canonical exemption granted from the synodal mass by Mar Antony Kariyil, metropolitan vicar of the archdiocese.

The Basilica parish community took out the procession in solidarity with Archbishop Kariyil and demanded permanent formal legalization of the style of mass followed in the archdiocese. Parishioners conducted a gathering outside the bishop's house too.

The gathering was held after the Sunday Mass. Parishioners were holding banners and posters hailing the Mar Kariyil's leadership.



A procession was held to the bishop's house of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese on Sunday

Churchgoers reiterated their preference for mass facing the people to the archbishop. Over hundred parishioners took part in the meet.

Community leaders who addressed the gathering before the bishop's house warned churchgoers to be watchful of those who 'spread poison' in their minds.

"Peace and tranquillity are prevailing in the Basilica parish, and we protest the attempt to disrupt this peace by using some men who favour the side of Cardinal Alencherry. We will stand by the decisions taken by the metropolitan vicar of the archdiocese and will not let any other mode of Holy Mass at our parishes," said Thankchan Periyil of the St Mary's Cathedral Basilica collective.

Meanwhile, another section of laity activists campaigning for implementation of the synodal mass in this archdiocese also staged a demonstration here, leading to a minor confrontation between the two sides on Sunday. Police intervened to diffuse the situation immediately, sources said.

TOI



Parishioners of St Mary's Basilica Church gather in front of the Bishop's House expressing solidarity with Metropolitan Vicar Mar Antony Kariyil on Sunday

Uniform Holy Mass: Parishioners of St Mary's Basilica take out march

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

EXPRESSING solidarity with Metropolitan Vicar Mar Antony Kariyil, parishioners of the St Mary's Basilica Church, Ernakulam, gathered at the Ernakulam-Angamaly Bishop's House on Sunday after the mass.

The parishioners held a small procession to the Bishop's House from the cathedral holding posters hailing the leadership of Mar Kariyil. Considering the strong demand for continuing the mass facing the people in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, Mar Antony Kariyil had stood by his decision of not implementing the new mode of the Holy Mass prescribed by the Synod. The faithful reiterated their preference for mass facing the people to the archbishop. Over a hundred parishioners took part in the meet. The gathering demanded legalisation of the Holy Mass facing the people.

The faithful expressed anguish over deliberate attempts from certain corners to hamper the existing peace at various parishes. The leaders of the collective of the parishioners of the Basilica Church addressed the gathering and warned the churchgoers to be wary of those who spread poison in their minds.

"At a time when peace prevails in parishes across the archdiocese, Cardinal George Alencherry is deliberately try-

With faithful

Considering strong demand for continuing the Mass facing faithful in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, Mar Antony Kariyil had stood by his decision not to implement the new mode prescribed by the Synod

ing to create issues. We will stand by the decisions taken by the Metropolitan Vicar of the Archdiocese and will not let any other mode of Holy Mass at our parishes," said Thankchan Periyil, St Mary's Cathedral Basilica Collective.

Meanwhile, a clash broke out during the gathering as another section of faithful, supporting the Synod's approved Holy Mass raised slogans at the others. The police had to intervene to diffuse the situation.

A singular mode of celebrating the mass has been a matter of dispute within the Syro-Malabar Church for a long time as various dioceses used to follow at least two different modes of celebrating the mass, an obvious difference being the priest facing the faithful during the ceremony in certain dioceses and facing the altar in certain other dioceses. The unified way is a combination of both and all dioceses, except for Ernakulam Angamaly, has moved to the format prescribed by the Synod.

SC issues notice to govt on Cardinal Alencherry's plea

HC Had Dismissed His Plea For Quashing Of Trial Proceedings

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear plea of Cardinal Mar George Alencherry for quashing of trial proceedings against him in Syro-Malabar Church land sale controversy in Kerala and sought response from the state govt and private parties on his appeal against the high court order which had refused to grant him relief.

LAND SALE ROW

A bench of Justices Dinsh Maheshwari and Aniruddha Bose issued notice to the state government and sought response in two weeks.

The Cardinal approached the apex court against Kerala High Court order dismissing his all six petitions challenging orders of judicial magistrate taking cognisance of complaints filed against him and issuing summons to him.

Senior advocate Sidharth Lutra and lawyer Gyanant Singh, appearing for the Car-



Laity activists take out a protest march holding a banner saying, 'Step Down Cardinal Alencherry', to Ernakulam Bishop's house on Friday

dinal, contended that six criminal proceedings initiated against him at Kakkannad while a prior complaint with respect to the same cause of action was pending before judicial magistrate of Ernakulam. They submitted that the complainant had concealed the fact about pendency of his complaint on the same subject matter covering all allegations while filing fresh complaints.

"The complainant filed separate complaints in a different jurisdictional court after the Magistrate in the first case directed him to buttress his case by examining further witnesses and he also concealed the fact that a complaint filed by one Paulachan Puthuppara, on the same subject matter had been dismissed as a civil dispute by the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ernakulam after

due consideration," the petition said.

The high court in August dismissed his petitions. The court had held that the Cardinal cannot seek refuge under Canon Law, which is a personal law applicable to the church, to escape liability under general law of the land.

Challenging HC order, the petitioner alleged that HC did not take note of the fact that a complaint was filed earlier on in 2018 by the same complainant on the same subject matter, covering all allegations made against him in the present set of complaints.

"The High Court failed to consider that the basic material/ allegations on which the Kakkannad court took cognizance had already been investigated and considered by various courts while dealing with various complaints which have either ended with closure report or an observation that it was subject matter of civil proceedings," the petition said.

Laity activists want Cardinal to step down

Kochi: An organization of laity activists in Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese staged a protest at Ernakulam Bishop's house on Friday demanding that Cardinal Ge-



orge Alencherry should step down from his positions over the Syro-Malabar Church land sale controversy.

This came on a day when the Supreme Court agreed to hear the Cardinal's plea to quash the trial proceedings against him in the land sale case and sought a response from the government and private parties on his appeal against the high court order which had refused to grant him relief.

The Cardinal had approached the SC after the high court dismissed his petitions to quash the cases related to the controversial land deals.

Laity activists took out a march holding a banner saying, 'Step Down Cardinal Alencherry'. Laity activist Riju Kanjookkaran said restitution of losses, incurred by the archdiocese due to the controversial land deals, has not happened yet. "The Vatican should intervene in the administration of the Church and implement the restitution of losses. The Cardinal, who is facing multiple criminal cases over the issue, should step down immediately," he said. **TNN**

The Hindu 2/4/22

SC seeks Kerala response on Cardinal plea

Mar Alencherry for quashing six criminal cases against him in the State



The Almaya Munnettam marches to the Bishop's House in Ernakulam demanding Cardinal Alencherry's resignation.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday sought responses from the Kerala government and a complainant on a plea by Cardinal Mar George Alencherry seeking quashing of six criminal cases against him in the State.

A Bench of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Aniruddha Bose took note of the submissions of senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for the archbishop, that several separate criminal cases have been lodged against his client for one alleged offence which is impermissible in law. The Bench posted the plea after two weeks and

asked the State and Joshy Varghese, who had filed complaints, to respond to the plea.

The plea has sought a stay on the investigation ordered by the Kerala High Court to probe "whether the Church had executed a settlement deed in 2007 with respect to a government land or purnamboke land."

A section of Church believers took out a march to the Bishop's House in Ernakulam demanding the removal of the Cardinal "in the wake of the Supreme Court rejecting his petition to stay the proceedings against him in the controversial Church land deal".

Unified Mass system from December 25

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI**

Archbishop Antony Kariyil, Metropolitan Vicar of the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, said in a circular here on Wednesday that the exemption given to the archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly to continue with a fully congregation facing Mass would be valid till December 25.

The Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church had issued directions in August last year that there should be a uniform system of celebrating the Mass in which the celebrant faced the congregation for the first half and then turned towards the tabernacle (holy of holies) for the second half.

The circular said that the dispensation granted on November 26, 2021 would be valid till December 25, 2022.

The exemption was given due to concerns over "serious consequences of public order", the circular said.

At present, the foc

The Indian Express, 7/4/2022

Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese to have uniform mass from Dec 25

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE ERNAKULAM-ANGAMALY Archdiocese Metropolitan Vicar Mar Antony Kariyil on Wednesday said the validity of the exemption granted for the conduct of the uniform Holy Mass would end on December 25 this year, making it mandatory for all the churches under the archdiocese to implement the uniform mass from Christmas.

The priests of the archdiocese accepted the decision of Mar Kariyil, in what is seen as an end to the prolonged deadlock between a section of the priests and the church.

A circular by Mar Kariyil said that, after considering everything, he has decided to modify the previous circular issued on November 26 last year. That particular circular stated that, considering the serious pastoral problems and for the spiritual well-being of the faithful, the archdiocese was exempted from celebrating the Holy Mass (50:50) decided by the Syro-Malabar Synod invoking canon 1538. The circular was amended citing two main reasons: First, the serious consequences of public order that have occurred and are foreseen with the imposition of the synodal decision concerning the Holy Mass.

The second, the parishes will need more time so that everyone will be prepared to

End to deadlock?

In what is seen as an end to the prolonged deadlock between a section of the priests and the church, the priests of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese accepted the decision of Mar Kariyil to modify the previous circular issued on November 26 last year. That circular stated that, considering the serious pastoral problems, the archdiocese was exempted from conducting uniform mass

accept the changes, as acknowledged by the Pope, too, in his recent letter to the archdiocese.

The Pope's letter issued on Friday had urged the archdiocese to implement the uniform mode of the Holy Mass by Easter. The letter also said that exemptions can be allotted for only a determined period of time and permission should be sought from the Major Archbishop, Cardinal George Alencherry.

The priests have accepted Mar Kariyil's decision. "Since the Holy Mass decided by the synod is new to most of the priests, we need time to make them understand. We acknowledge the time given by the archbishop," said Fr Jose Vaillikodath, the public relations officer of the Athirupatha Samrakshana Samithi, a body of priests.

Times of India, 7/4/2022

Archdiocese agrees to implement new mode of Holy Mass after Xmas

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: After Pope Francis intervened to resolve the liturgical crisis in the Syro-Malabar Church, the Ernakulam-



Angamaly archdiocese metropolitan vicar **Mar Antony Kariyil**, who had granted dispensation to the archdiocese from the new format of Holy Mass

prescribed by the synod, on Wednesday limited the validity of the dispensation to December 25, 2022.

With this, the uniform mode of Holy Mass prescribed by the synod will come into force in the archdiocese from December 25. All other dioceses have already switched to the new format.

Archbishop Kariyil said in a circular issued on Wednesday that the dispensation granted on November 26, 2021, was being amended, keeping in mind the serious consequences of pub-

lic order that have occurred and are foreseen with the imposition of the synodal decision concerning the Holy Qur-bana.

EKM-ANGAMALY

“The second reason concerns the necessity -acknowledged also by the Holy Father in his recent letter to the Archeparchy- that parishes will need more time to carry out a more ample catechesis as was done elsewhere so that everyone will be prepared to accept the changes,” the circular said.

The Pope, in his letter to the Archeparchy, had said that as provided for in the Canon Law, it was possible to ask for necessary dispensation from the major archbishop, who is the metropolitan of the Archeparchy, or with the approval of the major archbishop, from his vicar: “The dispensation will be given only for a determined amount of time in accordance with the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches,” the

Pope said in the letter.

Mar Kariyil is the vicar of the major archbishop, Cardinal George Alencherry. “As soon as possible, I will expose to the major archbishop and the bishops of the synod the ecclesiastical difficulties we face in the Archeparchy and the initiatives that are intended to be implemented for catechesis,” Mar Kariyil said in the circular.

Priests of the archdiocese, who have been protesting a change from the ‘mass facing people’, the style which was being followed in the archdiocese, have also offered support to the archbishop. Priests said that though it was a difficult decision, they were going to follow the Pope’s advice due to the love and respect that they have for him.

Meanwhile, the Church synod held a special summit on Wednesday, virtually to discuss the implementation of the unified mass in the archdiocese. The Church said in a press note that the summit will continue on Thursday.

at the eastern entrance of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram as part of the ongoing Painkuni Festival. The festival will conclude on April 15.

lice. Dheeraj Rajendran, 21, a been recovered.

Times of India, 9/4/2022

Rival factions clash at Bishop's House in Ekm

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Row over the implementation of the unified format of Holy Mass in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese took an ugly turn on Friday as two groups of laity activists clashed with each other on the premises of the Ernakulam Bishop's House.

ROW OVER UNIFIED MASS

The scuffle happened soon after priests held a meeting with the metropolitan vicar of the archdiocese, Mar Antony Kariyil, and declared that they would not follow the directive of Cardinal George Alencherry to implement the unified mass from Sunday onwards. Laity activists supporting the official leadership of the Syro-Malabar Church said that one of their members was beaten up by the faction supporting the dissident priests and



Presbyteral council secretary of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese Fr Kuriakose Mundadan speaks to the media in Kochi on Friday

that they were going to file a police case against them.

However, the faction of laity activists supporting the priests said that members of the other faction entered the compound of the bishop's house and made provocative comments leading to the scuffle. Fr Mathew Kilukkan, the public relations officer of the

archdiocese, issued a statement saying that the old format of mass would continue in the archdiocese.

"Mar Kariyil revealed in the meeting of priests held in the bishop's house on Friday that he was compelled to sign the circular which was issued on Thursday and that it was prepared in advance by the curia at Mount St Thomas (the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church). The bishop said in the meeting that the instruction which was given to him was to send his letterhead, seal, and digital signature and to not discuss the matter even with his own curia. Hence, it is clear that the bishop signed the circular due to the pressure. Such a circular signed under pressure is not canonically valid," said the statement.

Meanwhile, Alencherry issued a clarification note on Friday night stating that the circular issued on Thursday was binding. The cardinal pointed

out that the Dicastery of Oriental Churches have specified the same in a letter issued in the aftermath of the pontifical letter.

"The major archbishop will undoubtedly want to send out a circular in the light of the papal letter of March 25, which should be considered the final decision in the matter," the cardinal said in the note, quoting from the letter.

Sunny Palarivattom, a laity activist supporting the official faction of the Church, said that the other group was acting against Christian values.

Thursday's circular had said that the new format of Holy Mass approved by the synod will come into force in the archdiocese from the Palm Sunday. Both Mar Kariyil and cardinal Alencherry would together conduct the mass in the new format in the Ernakulam Cathedral Basilica on Sunday, it added.

The Indian Express, 9/4/2022

Section of priests rejects call for uniform mass from Palm Sunday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

PEACE CONTINUED to elude on the uniform mode of Holy Mass with a section of priests on Friday deciding to reject the cardinal's circular issued on Thursday asking them to implement the mass from Palm Sunday.

The section of priests belonging to Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese in a meeting held at Ernakulam Bishops' House also decided not to read the cardinal's circular and to continue with the present mode of Holy Mass at the churches under the archdiocese during Palm Sunday (April 10) and Easter (April 17).

The priests' meeting was held in the presence of Metropolitan Vicar of Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese Mar Antony Kariyil.

Fr Mathew Kilukkan, public relations officer (PRO) of the archdiocese, in a circular, said Mar Kariyil in the meeting revealed he was forced to sign the circular that was prepared by the curia of Mount St Thomas. The direction from Mount St Thomas was not to discuss with his curia members about the

'Circular is mandatory'

Cardinal George Alencherry issued a statement on Friday night clarifying that the circular issued on Thursday was as per the Church laws and was mandatory. He said the Dicastery of Oriental Churches had specified the same in a letter issued on April 1. "The Major Archbishop will undoubtedly want to send out a circular in the light of the Papal letter of March 25, 2022, which should be considered the final decision in the matter," the statement said.

circular and to send his digital signature, seal and letterhead, said Fr Kilukkan.

The meeting also observed that as per canon law, the circular issued by the cardinal was invalid. "As metropolitan vicar, Archbishop Antony Kariyil is in charge of the administrative affairs of the archdiocese. Therefore, the circular undersigned by Cardinal George Alencherry cannot be accepted," said Fr Kilukkan.

Meanwhile, priests of the archdiocese said they have decided to not read the cardinal's circular.

The Hindu 9/4/2022

Row over unified Mass spills over into street

Rival factions clash in front of Bishop's house

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The controversy over the implementation of a unified format of Mass in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese took an ugly turn, as clashes erupted between rival groups of laity on the premises of the Bishop's house here on Friday.

This followed shortly after priests had a meeting with the Metropolitan Vicar of the archdiocese, Mar Antony Kariyil, and registered their protest against the directive of the head of the church, Cardinal George Alencherry, to implement the unified Mass from Sunday.

A circular issued on Thursday had said that the new format approved by the Synod would come into force from April 10, Palm Sunday.

Lay activists supporting the official leadership of the Syro Malabar Church said one of their members was beaten up by the faction supporting the dissident priests. They threatened to file a police case against the alleged atrocity.

Later, Fr. Mathew Kilukan, public relations officer of the archdiocese, issued a statement saying that the old format of the Mass would

continue. The statement claimed that in the meeting with the priests, Mar Kariyil had revealed that he was compelled to sign the circular issued on Thursday, and that it was prepared in advance by the curia (administrative office) at Mount St. Thomas, the headquarters of the Syro Malabar Church.

The Bishop was asked to send his letterhead, seal, and digital signature with the directive not to discuss

the matter even with his own office. The statement said that this proved that the Bishop signed the circular under duress, and therefore, it was not canonically valid.

Meanwhile, Cardinal Alencherry, in a late evening communication, said the final decision on the matter was vested with him, in his capacity as Major Archbishop of the Archdiocese, in the backdrop of a communication from the Pope.

Cardinal's circular void, says protest forum

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

A circular bearing the signature of Cardinal Mar George Alencherry on the celebration of uniform mass from Palm Sunday was against Canon Laws and hence, would not be read out in churches in Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, Almaya Munnettam, a combine of lay people in the archdiocese, has said.

Metropolitan Vicar of the Archdiocese, Mar Antony Kariyil, had come out in the open saying that he did not sign the circular wholeheartedly. This, in itself

made it null and void, as per Canon Law. In addition, an explosive situation would result if a worship method that was opposed to by church members, was imposed on them by Cardinal Alencherry, it said.

The Archbishop signing a circular that only Bishop Kariyil is empowered to issue, was in itself an illegality, said Binu John, convenor of the combine. He took strong exception to a group of people allegedly showering abuse on priests who were speaking to the media in the front of the Bishop's House on Friday.

the release said.

vehicle movement. A 2,000 on such issues, he added. the Police Bureau is not an

Palm Sunday rites under police guard

Mass celebrated under unified system

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

As Christians across Kerala celebrated Palm Sunday, the first day of the Holy Week, the Palm Sunday Mass and procession at the St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica, seat of the Syro-Malabar Church, in Kochi was held under heavy police protection.

Cardinal George Alencherry, Major Archbishop, led the Mass and the procession, but Archbishop Antony Kariyil did not join the ceremonies. Dozens of police personnel were seen around the cathedral as the Mass was celebrated and the procession was held.

The Cardinal celebrated the Mass under the unified system in which the priest faces the congregation for the first half and then faces the Altar for the rest of the ri-

tuals. However, a large number of priests and laity in the archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly of the Syro-Malabar Church are opposing the unified system because the archdiocese has been celebrating the Mass with the priest fully facing the congregation.

There is also a group that supports the unified system. The synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church had is-

Added caution: Police personnel stand guard on the premises of St. Mary's Cathedral in Kochi while the Mass was being celebrated on the occasion of Palm Sunday. ■ H. VIBHU



sued a diktat in August last year that the unified system would come into effect with Easter this year.

Exemption granted

Though the archdiocese was granted an exemption from the synodal order by Metropolitan Vicar Archbishop Antony Kariyil, it has now been ordered that the unified system would come into effect across the Syro-Ma-

labar Church on Easter Sunday.

Anticipating trouble

The police feared there could be some trouble between the two groups before or after the Palm Sunday ceremonies. However, the celebrations concluded peacefully with both sides being present at the Mass.

Mathai Varkey Muthirenty, general convener, Samyukta Sabha Samrakshan Samithi (forum for protection of the church), expressed optimism that the unified system would be adopted by Easter Sunday.

Riju Kanjookkaran of Almaya Munnettam (lay people's council) claimed the vast majority of priests and parishes did not follow the synodal decision. The council congratulated Archbishop Kariyil, who did not join the Palm Sunday Mass and procession despite being in the Archbishop's house in the city.

Priests mull quitting Syro-Malabar Church

Protesting clergy want to form separate entity with existing ritual while remaining within the Catholic Church

K.A. MARTIN
KOCHI

A section of priests in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church who have been protesting against the introduction of the uniform format of the Mass have said they may consider opting out of the Church and practising the existing ritual while remaining within the Catholic Church. The move comes after Church head Major Archbishop Cardinal Mar George Alencherry and Metropolitan Vicar Archbishop Mar Antony Kariyil sent out a joint circular that the unified Mass celebration will come into effect on Palm Sunday, April 10.

'Forced to sign'

A large number of priests, who met the Metropolitan Vicar on Friday, claimed that he had admitted he was forced to sign the circular endorsing the unified Mass system. The claim of Mar Kariyil, who has not favoured a

unified Mass celebration, has virtually closed the way for a reconciliation on the issue.

The crux of the controversy is that the archdiocese, one of the largest units of the Syro-Malabar Church, has been following the practice of the celebrant (priest) facing the congregation throughout the Mass. However, the Synod of Bishops issued a diktat in August last year that the Mass should be uniform. Many dioceses celebrated it with the priest facing the congregation for the first half and then the tabernacle for the second half.

Father Paul Thelekkat, senior priest, said, "The way the Synod of Bishops is imposing liturgical decisions without dialogue is making the priests and faithful of the archdiocese desperate. Many priests are thinking of opting out of the Syro-Malabar Church." He said there was no question of leaving the Catholic fold.

Quoting examples from other parts of the world, he



Dispute drags on: The crux of the controversy in the Syro-Malabar Church is whether the celebrant should face the congregation or the tabernacle during the holy Eucharist.

said the Eritrean Catholic rite had started in 2015. The Albanian Greek Catholic Church had only 4,028 members. The Archdiocese of Milan had its own Latin liturgical rite known as the Ambrosian rite. The Syro-Malabar rite historically

came under the Chaldean family. Even in the Chaldean rite, they had the option to celebrate the Mass facing the congregation, he said.

Palm Sunday Mass

Father Alex Onampally, media commission secretary of

the Syro-Malabar Church, said it had been decided that the Cardinal would celebrate the Mass in the unified way at St. Mary's Basilica in Kochi on Palm Sunday.

The unified system would come into effect in all dioceses on Easter Sunday, April 17.

Riju Kanjookkaran of the Almaya Munnettam said the Cardinal's circular would not be read out in the parishes during the Palm Sunday Mass.

Mathai Varkey Muthirenty, general convener of the Samyukta Sabha Samrakshana Samithi that favours the unified system, said the Cardinal could not be prevented from celebrating the Mass on Palm Sunday in the unified system.

'Priests, laity upset'

Father Kuriakose Mundadan, secretary of the Presbyteral Council, said the Church authorities had earlier given time till December 25 this year to shift to the unified system, but the sudden change in stance had upset most priests and laity. He said only a minority of the priests supported the unified system while around 450 of the 465 priests in the archdiocese were in favour of continuing with the present system.

The Hindu, 20/4/22

Standoff over uniform Mass continues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

The standoff between those opposing the unified system of Mass celebration and those opposing it in the Syro Malabar Church continued on Tuesday with allegations that Major Archbishop George Alencherry used his supporters and the police to prevent the celebration of

the fully congregation facing Mass by not allowing St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica to be opened.

Almaya Munnettam, lay people's group and Athiroopatha Samrakshana Samithi, the group of priests said the move to close the basilica was a violation of the right to worship.

However, Syrian Catholic

Church sources said the police had intervened only to avoid a law and order problem as the police are not in a position to take a decision on the issue of Mass celebration. The groups opposing and supporting the unified Mass system had gathered at the basilica and the police duty is to maintain law and order, sources said.



TWEET OF
THE
DAY



Dr R Bindu @rbinducpm

As an important milestone in the LDF gov't's efforts to overcome Kerala's unemployment challenge, the state-level K-Skill project - spearheaded by (Iasap, Kerala) will be inaugurated at the Irinjalakuda Christ College with a skill fair on July 30. The scheme provides skill training that will help you get employment in more than 15 sectors. This will also be an opportunity to get yourself registered on various job portals.

Not another mobile 'loan' app under police scanner

Registration functions using bogus phone, bank account numbers

TONY @Kochi

Another case of threat and harassment by operators of online lending apps has surfaced in Kochi. The police registered a case based on a complaint about such an app operated by a native woman. The police tried to trace the app but failed to find the operator. It was found that the app functioned using bogus phone and bank account numbers.



NO ARRESTS SO FAR

- Seventh case against online loan lenders registered at Kochi cyber police station this year
- No arrest could be made yet in any of the cases

The 25-year-old woman approached the police after she started receiving threats and abusive messages frequently. "The complainant took a small amount as a loan from an app named Small Credit Tara Rupee on June 23. However, before the monthly repayment date neared, the complainant started receiving messages and calls asking for the payment. She agreed to make full repayment on the date. Despite the assurance, the complainant started receiving abusive messages. Some of her relatives also received these abusive messages," a police officer said. The complainant approached the police after she was threat-

ened that her morphed photographs would be sent to her relatives and friends. The police registered a case under IPC Sections 354A(1)(iv) for making sexually coloured remarks, 506 for criminal intimidation and 509 for insulting the modesty of a woman, and Section 67 of the Information Technology Act for publishing or transmitting obscene material and Section 120(o) of Kerala Police Act for causing nuisance to any person through anonymous call, message, email and using other messengers.

According to the police, it is the seventh case against online loan lenders registered at the Kochi cyber police station this year. However, no arrest could be made yet in any of the cases. "The operators use bogus mobile phone numbers and bank accounts. They are mostly based in North Indian states. These apps are not affiliated with any banks or operate as per the norms of the Reserve Bank of India. Their modus operandi is to give a small amount as a loan and reclaim more than double the amount lent by means of threat and harassment," a police official said.



The Motor Vehicle Department officials inspecting vehicles on Wednesday to ensure there are no safety violations. | A.SANISH

MVD, police book 175 cases against pvt buses

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) and Ernakulam district police jointly booked 175 cases against private buses for violation of traffic rules on Wednesday. The drive was conducted at six locations in the district including Vypeen, Tripunithura, Kaloor, Fort Kochi, High Court Junction and Foreshore Road. As many

as 35 cases were booked at Kaloor by Aluva sub RTO office. Cases were taken against bus owners for using air horns, operating services without door shutters, use of LED lights and audio system, and employing people without conductor licence. The bus operators were fined for violations and their licences of repeated offence this year will be cancelled, said an officer.

Govt clean chit to Alencherry aimed at community votes, alleges priests' body

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

A SECTION of the priests and laity in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese has come out against the state government reportedly filing an affidavit - before the Supreme Court - giving a clean chit to Cardinal Mar George Alencherry in the controversial land deal row. The priests have termed the state government's move a "political ploy". "The government is aiming at the community votes. The affidavit submitted by the state

government giving clean chit is just a political ploy. This government itself has found financial irregularities in the controversial land deals," said Fr Jose Vailikodath of the Athirupatha Samrakshana Samithy, an organisation of priests belonging to the archdiocese, in a statement.

The Samithy also alleged that the Pinarayi government can give only such an affidavit on behalf of the Cardinal as their political existence depended on community votes.

"All the commissions and

committees that have studied the land deals' case have reported that there were irregularities in the deals, both under civil and canon laws. It is because of the violation of the canon law that he was removed from the administrative affairs by the Vatican," said Fr Vailikodath.

Meanwhile, Almaya Munnetam, the organisation of the laity of the archdiocese, said the efforts to "whitewash" the Cardinal will not work no matter how hard the Church and the state government try.

Jail term of history-sheeter extended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE sentence awarded to a 32-year-old man has been extended from six months to one year after he was arrested for the second time under the Kerala Anti-social Activities (Prevention) Act (KASAP). The government has ordered the extension of the prison term of Anoop, aka Pokan Anoop, a resident of Kottuvalli in North Paravur.

Anoop was involved in three cases under KASAP and was put in jail for six months under KAAPA in November last year. He approached the KAAPA Advisory Committee and the High Court seeking a cancellation of the or-

EXPRESS READ

OBITUARY

Seven of gang nabbed for bar worker's killing

Thrissur: Police on Wednesday took seven members of a gang into custody in connection with the murder of a bar employee at Thalikkulam in the district on Tuesday night.

Byju (40), of Perinjalam Chakkarapadam, was stabbed to death during a brawl at the bar, while the bar owner Krishnaraj and Byju's friend Ananthu were also injured.

The brawl was reportedly a sequel to the owner's questioning of some employees, allegedly for siphoning money off from the bar by tampering with the bills. The gang members had reportedly committed the crime as a 'quotation' by some of the employees.

The gang reached the bar at around 9:30pm on Tuesday and attacked Krishnaraj, who was standing near the bill counter. Byju, who had tried to block the assailants, was stabbed to death. Even though he was rushed to the hospital, he succumbed to injuries. Krishnaraj and Ananthu have been admitted to the hospital. The bar was opened just about ten days ago.

The gang had reportedly been in a car and police intercepted the vehicle after a hot chase and recovered some weapons from the car.

Police identified those in custody as Ajmal, Athul, Yashwanth, Amit, Dhanesh, Vishnu and Amal. They hail from Kottayam and are accused in several other cases too. One more person suspected to be involved in the case is yet to be nabbed, according to Kodungallur DSP Vishwanth Shankar. **TNN**

Students' rep meeting at KTU

Ernakulam: APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University is convening a meeting of representatives of recognized student unions on July 15 at the university headquarters to plan and discuss the next phase of elections to the university union general council and executive council.

Applications for affiliation

Ernakulam: APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University has invited applications for affiliation of institutions for the academic year 2022-23. Institutions can submit the online application and processing will continue till July 20. **TNN**

Govt to recover ex from woman police

Home Dept Issues Order To Recoup ₹1.75L As

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram:

The government has issued an order to recover Rs 1.5 lakh and an additional Rs 25,000 as court expenses, from the woman police officer belonging to the Pink police, for harassing an eight-year-old girl and her father in public.

PINK POLICE HORROR

A high court single bench had earlier ordered to recover Rs 1.5 lakh from police officer Rejitha, and also had imposed an additional cost of Rs 25,000 as the court expenses on her, to be paid to the victims. Based on the court order, the home department has now issued an order to recover the money from the po-



The police officer accused the child of stealing her mobile phone. It was later found to be in the police car itself.

lice officer and to hand it over to the complainants.

The matter that led to the latest order occurred in August last year. The complainants were standing near a Pink patrol vehicle at Monnumukku in Attingal in the state capital amid a crowd,

witnessing the movement of a cargo to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre when the police officer accused the child of stealing her mobile phone. The mobile was later found inside the car itself. The child and her father were frightened by

'Clean chit' to cardinal upsets priests & laity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: An affidavit filed by the state government before the Supreme Court, giving a clean chit to Cardinal George Alencherry in a case related to the controversial land deals of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, hasn't gone down well with a section of priests and laity of the archdiocese.

Organizations, formed by priests and laity of the archdiocese after the controversial land deals rocked the Church, issued statements protesting against the government's move.

Fr Jose Vaillikodath, a senior priest of the archdiocese, said that all commissions that studied the controversial land deals had found there were irregularities, both under Canon law as well as civil laws.

He said that the head of the archdiocese has the administrative responsibilities under the Canon 191 of oriental churches, and Cardinal Alencherry can hence not evade responsibility for the deals that hap-

Attempts by the Church and the govt to 'whitewash' the cardinal will not succeed, said Almaya Munnettam, a laity organization

ned during his tenure.

Fr Vaillikodath said that the income tax department had imposed fines to the tune of crores of rupees on the archdiocese due to the irregularities in the land deals.

Priests said that the state government doesn't seem to be bothered about all this, and the affidavit can only be seen as a move aimed at communal votes. The priests' body also alleged that the move indicates the unholy nexus between the Church and politicians.

Almaya Munnettam, a laity organization of the archdiocese, said that attempts by the Church and the government to 'whitewash' the cardinal will not be successful. The organization said that the cardinal was accused in multiple cases, and the state was now trying to whitewash him.

Cop attacks

Kozhikode: Injuries sustained by a man who was attacked by a police officer when he was trying to enter a forest area on Sunday 7:30.

South: An elephant was killed at a place near Kozhikode and was taken to the forest guard house.

He was found where he was shifted to a hospital. The officer was held and he is receiving medical treatment.

On Sunday 11:30am, a group of people gathered at the village office to discuss the matter. The police officer was held and he is receiving medical treatment.

The Hindu, 26/7/2022

Vatican asks apostolic administrator to step down

Action against Archbishop Kariyil as Mass row in Syro-Malabar Church takes a new turn

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI**

The row in the Syro-Malabar Church over the way the Mass is celebrated has taken a new turn with the Vatican asking Archbishop Antony Kariyil to step down as apostolic administrator of the archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly.

The community of priests in the archdiocese held a protest meeting here on Monday against the decision to ask Archbishop Kariyil to step down. Around 200 priests participated in the meeting.



Around 200 priests of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese protest against the Vatican's decision to ask Archbishop Antony Kariyil to step down as apostolic administrator. ■ R.K. NITHIN

'Archbishop victimised'

A senior priest, who participated in the meeting, said the decision to ask Archbishop Kariyil to step down was not right, an opinion, he said, shared by the majority of the priests and the laity.

Father Kuriakose Mundadan said Cardinal George Alencherry should step down and claimed that Archbishop Kariyil had stood with the faithful and the priests at a time of crisis and he was being ousted for this "offence".

Riju Kanjookkaran of the Almaya Munnettam, an organisation representing lay people, said the decision against the Archbishop was not right and not acceptable. He also said "suppression" of the Ernakulam-Angamaly

Archdiocese for Cardinal George Alencherry, Major Archbishop and head of the Syro-Malabar Church, would not be tolerated.

The row is centred on a decision by the Synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar

Church in August last year to follow a uniform way of celebrating the Mass. The uniform way involves the celebrant (priest) facing the congregation participating in the Mass for the first part of the Mass and then completing the Mass turning towards the altar.

'With the majority'

Church sources said Archbishop Kariyil had been perceived as supporting the view of the majority of the priests and the faithful, especially in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, for a celebration of the Mass with the priest facing the congregation throughout the ceremonies.

Cardinal George Alencherry has consistently supported a uniform celebration of the Mass as per the synodal decision.

Uniform Holy Mass row escalates. Vatican asks Kariyil to step down?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

THE CONTROVERSY over implementing uniform Holy Mass in the Syro-Malabar Church has taken a serious turn with the Vatican reportedly asking Metropolitan Vicar of Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese Mar Antony Kariyil to step down from the post.

Priests of the archdiocese, led by Mar Kariyil, have been opposing the uniform Holy Mass, defying the diktat by Cardinal Mar George Alencherry, the head of Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala.

According to sources, Kariyil was called by Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli — the Vatican's representative in India — last week to New Delhi and asked to resign. Though Kariyil has not disclosed the discussions that took place in the meeting, priests backing the metropolitan vicar accused



Mar Antony Kariyil

Apostolic Nuncio to reach Kochi today

It is learnt that Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli will arrive in Kochi on Tuesday to meet Mar Antony Kariyil

the Cardinal's supporters of publicising through social media that "the Vatican has sought his urgent resignation".

An official of the Syro-Malabar Church, however, told *TNIE* that they have not yet received any official communication in this regard.

Meanwhile, a section of priests of the archdiocese who oppose the uniform Holy Mass

held a protest meeting at archdiocese headquarters in Kochi on Monday. "Any move to reinstate Cardinal Alencherry as the archbishop of Ernakulam will be opposed strongly," said a resolution released by the group of priests.

Fr Jose Vailikodath, PRO of Athirupatha Samrakshana Samithi, a body of priests of the archdiocese, said: "Mar Kariyil visited the Nuncio last week but even after multiple requests, the metropolitan vicar has not disclosed the Vatican's communication."

Amid the controversy, both Mar Alencherry and Mar Kariyil attended the funeral services of Fr George Nereveetil, vicar of St George Church, Kudavechoor, held at St George Forane Church in Edappally on Monday. It is learnt that both the Cardinal and Mar Kariyil did not meet each other as the latter left early. ● More on P4

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should be scientifically made... and also sexual offences, the report stated.

Indian Express, 26/7/2022

Don't force Kariyil's resignation, say priests

CONTINUED FROM P3

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

THE resolution by the opposing group stated that they oppose the Vatican emissary forcefully demanding the resignation of the metropolitan vicar.

"The Archeparchy showed tremendous unity, Christian witness and progress during the tenure of Mar Kariyil compared to the past many years. He is a true pastor who knows the hearts and minds of his flock," said the resolution.

"We cannot accept any other administrators or vicars of the major archbishop to rule over us at this moment, replac-

ing Mar Antony Kariyil. Hence, we request the Holy See to be synodal in the approach to the priests and laity of the archdiocese and find a solution to the present impasse through fraternal dialogue in the Catholic spirit, and desist from demanding the forced resignation of Archbishop Mar Antony Kariyil from his office," said the resolution.



The Archeparchy showed tremendous unity, Christian witness and progress during the tenure of Mar Kariyil compared to the past many years

Resolution by priests



Secretary P. Praveen. ED sie- ducted in a case registered high court had quashed a re-
uths conducted the raids on under the money laundering report by the state crime branch

Times of India 26/7/2022

Priests pass resolution against move to remove Mar Kariyil

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The infighting within the Syro Malabar Church (SMC) further escalated on Sunday after reports surfaced that the Metropolitan Vicar of the



Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, **Mar Antony Kariyil** has been reportedly asked by the Vatican to step down from his post.

SYRO MALABAR CHURCH

Even though there has been no official confirmation on the move from the archdiocese or the Syro Malabar Church, well-placed sources with the archdiocese said that the Vatican emissary has conveyed this to Mar Kariyil during his latest Delhi visit and there would be a decision on the matter in a visit of the apostolic nuncio Leopoldo Girelli to the archdiocese, planned in the coming days.

The majority of priests of the archdiocese who are rebelling against the major archbishop of the SMC Cardinal George Alencherry, gathered at the archbishop's ho-

The Syro Malabar Church has denied receiving any formal letter from the Vatican

use in Ernakulam on Monday and passed a resolution on the matter.

"We oppose the Vatican emissary forcefully demanding the resignation of Archbishop Mar Antony Kariyil, the Metropolitan Vicar.. He is a prelate fully committed to Jesus, the Word of God, and the Roman Pontiff. He never violates any canon or civil laws. Any attempt to jeopardize his bishopric will prove detrimental to Catholic communion and harmony," the resolution passed on Monday said.

The priests, however, claimed that archbishop Kariyil was unwilling to share the exact nature of the Vatican move with them. "Even though Mar Kariyil hesitates to divulge anything about the latest move by the Vatican Nunciature even after multiple requests, it is highly publicized by some groups favouring Cardinal George Alencherry that the Vatican has demanded Mar Kariyil's urgent re-

signation or else he would be removed from the office. This move, if ever it is true, is totally unjust, inhuman, unchristian, and illegal," the resolution said.

The resolution was signed by nearly 200 priests, including Fr Kuriakose Mundadan (secretary presbyteral council) and Fr Jose Vailikodath (PRO-archdiocesan protection council).

The Church, however, has denied receiving any formal letter from the Vatican about the same. "We are yet to receive any formal letter about the said action and hence it is not right to comment on it now," said a source at St Thomas Mount, the church headquarters.

The archdiocese has been in the eye of the storm due to controversies over its denial to accept the Church's unified mass and due to the land-deal row.

In April, Pope Francis had sent a letter to the archdiocese inviting the faithful to adhere to the decision of the SMC synod concerning the form of celebration of the holy mass, prior to Easter 2022. Most parishes, however, continued to follow their old style of mass.

The Indian Express, 27/7/2022

Archdiocese priests' body terms it 'forced resignation'

CONTINUED FROM P1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

FR JOSE Vallikodath, PRO of Athirupatha Samrakshana Samithi, a body of priests of the archdiocese, said Archbishop Kariyil is not yet 74, which is considered the age of retirement. "Hence, what's happening is a forced resignation," he said. Sources said when the archbishop was called to Delhi, it was said that he was asked to step down. "But he didn't comply and returned," said another source. On Tuesday, the apostolic nuncio came down personally. "All these point towards the Vatican's stand," said the source.



According to the priests who were involved in the revolt against the implementation of the uniform Holy Mass, they would come out with a statement only after the decision is officially announced. The Ernakulam-Angamaly archbishop had been leading a revolt of priests in the archdiocese against Cardinal George Alencherry for the past one year. On Monday, around 200 priests, who back Mar Kariyil, had gathered at the Bishop's House in Kochi to pledge their solidarity to the archdiocese. The priests passed a resolution saying they would not accept Kariyil's removal as the head of the archdiocese. The resolution demanded the resignation of Cardinal Alencherry, who has been embroiled in the controversy over the sale of property belonging to the Church.



Asked to move to CMI ashram after resigning, says Mar Kariyil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kochi

IN a first, Archbishop Mar Antony Kariyil came out with an open letter on Wednesday explaining the circumstances leading to his resignation from the post of Metropolitan Vicar of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese.

The letter stated that during his meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio in Delhi on July 19, he was asked to resign and move to a CMI ashram outside the archdiocese.

The six-page-long letter by Kariyil said that it was the Pope's decision. The letter undersigned by Mar Kariyil was written under the designation 'Vicar Emeritus of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly'.

He added that the whole issue has taken a toll on his health, both physically and mentally and that he still has no complaints.

"The Nuncio asked me to submit the resignation letter within 24 hours. Since it was an important decision for both the archdiocese and me, I sought a week's time to respond. But it was rejected. The Nuncio told me that if I would not resign, then the

procedure to oust me would begin. Since, the letter which demanded my resignation had not cited any reasons, I returned after handing over a letter urging the Pope to let me know the reason for taking this decision," Mar Kariyil's letter says.

He says in the letter that the Nuncio later arrived at the bishops' house in Er-

nakulam on July 26 and demanded his resignation.

He further added in the letter that he could have ensured his position by issuing an order to implement the synodal decisions.

"I know that history would not be kind to me for abandoning the community of faithful who were entrusted to me at a time of crisis. However, my thought that if I do no resign, it would further weaken the archdiocese due to further actions led

me to become willing for resignation," said the letter.

Kariyil explains that when his resignation happened, a decision was awaited from Rome on both issues concerning the archdiocese, the restitution of losses incurred by the archdiocese due to the land deals and the unification of the style of holy mass.



I know that history would not be kind to me for abandoning the community of faithful who were entrusted to me at a time of crisis

Mar Antony Kariyil

the case again after two weeks. camps. The highest number Thrissur. amined the cause for the sur- restored the pit with GSB and to the PWD chief en

The Times of India, 04/08/2022

'Was asked to move to ashram outside archdiocese'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Archbishop Antony Kariyil wrote an open letter on Wednesday explaining the circumstances that led to his resignation from the post of Metropolitan Vi-

KARIYIL'S OPEN LETTER

car of Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese. The six-page letter was written under the letterhead of the archbishop with the designation, 'Vicar Emeritus of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam-Angamaly' and undersigned by Mar



File photo
Apostolic nuncio Leopoldo Girelli (L) with archbishop Antony Kariyil

Kariyil.
The letter states that when he met the apostolic nuncio in Delhi on July 19, he was given a letter

which stated that he had to resign and move to a CMI Ashram outside the archdiocese. The letter also stated that it was the Pope's decision.

"Nuncio asked me to submit the resignation letter within 24 hours. Since it was an important decision for the archdiocese and me, I requested a week's time. But it was rejected. Nuncio intimated me that if I wouldn't resign, then the procedure to oust would begin. Since the letter that demanded my resignation hadn't cited any reason, I returned after handing over a letter to the Pope to know the rea-

son to take an appropriate decision," he wrote.

In his letter, he said the nuncio later arrived at the bishops' house in Ernakulam on July 26 and demanded his resignation. Nuncio told him that the Pope was asking him to resign for the good of the Church and then he expressed his willingness to resign in writing due to his obedience to the Pope.

He wrote in his letter that he could have ensured his position by issuing an order to implement synodal decisions. "I know that history wouldn't be kind to me for abandoning the community of fa-

ithful who were entrusted to me at a time of crisis. My thought that if I did not resign it might further weaken the archdiocese - due to further actions - led me to give my resignation," he wrote.

He added that the whole issue has taken a toll on his health physically and mentally and that he had no complaints. He explained in the letter that when his resignation happened, a just decision was awaited from Rome on issues concerning the archdiocese, the restitution of losses incurred by the archdiocese due to the land deals and the new way of holy mass.

5/8/22

Priests firm on stand against uniform Mass

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

IN the presbyteral council meet of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese held on Thursday, the priests stood firm on their decision against implementing the uniform Holy Mass in churches. They also questioned the removal of Mar Kariyil and the non-implementation of the restitution recommended by the Vatican on controversial land deals.

Around 360 priests took part in the presbyterium called by Mar Andrews Thazhath, the new apostolic administrator of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese. The meeting was held at the St Mary's Cathedral Basilica Hall in Kochi.

"We took a clear stand that we will conduct the Mass only in the existing format of facing the faithful. The priests sought to implement the restitution recommended by



the Vatican in the controversial land deals involving the archdiocese. The priests also demanded to know the reason for ousting

Mar Kariyil without citing proper reasons," said Jose Vailikodath, the spokesperson for the Athirupatha Samrakshana Samithi, a body of priests of the archdiocese, in a statement.

Samithi statement also said that forcing Mar Kariyil to resign without issuing a show-cause notice as per the Canon Law was not even Christian, the move even affecting the image of Pope Francis. During the meeting, Mar Thazhath said he would notify the seniors regarding the decision of the priests on the uniform Holy Mass, while clarifying that the decision regarding the case of Mar Kariyil was taken from Rome.

Mar Thazhath's directive towards the appointment of an auxiliary bishop was unanimously rejected by the priests, the Samithi statement said. "First, let's sort out the issues of the archdiocese and then we can decide on other matters," said Fr Jose.

The Hindu, 5/8/22

Priests' meet rejects apostolic administrator's proposals

They reiterate stand on Mass celebration

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

A meeting of priests of the archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly here on Thursday under the aegis of Athiroopatha Samrakshana Samiti (forum for the protection of the archdiocese) has rejected the proposals of Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, who was recently appointed as the apostolic administrator of the archdiocese. Senior priest and member of the Samiti Father Jose Vailikodath said that the priests had expressed their resolve to continue with the fully congregation-facing Mass celebration.

The priests demanded that the restitution recommended by the Vatican in

connection with the controversial land deals in the archdiocese should be implemented. The priests also alleged that the former apostolic administrator of the archdiocese Archbishop Antony Kariyil was asked to step down without even being served a show-cause notice. The action is "un-Christian" and did not follow the Canon Law.

Archbishop Kariyil had requested the Synod of Bishops to appoint an auxiliary bishop for the archdiocese. That request had not been heard so far. However, there appears to be a hurry now in appointing an auxiliary bishop. This indicates "vested interests", the priests alleged. Laity forum Almaya Munnettam has commended the priests for apprising bishop Thazhathil of the stance of the archdiocese on the issue of celebration of Mass.

Times of India, 5/8/22

Priests refuse to follow new Holy Mass format

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: A meeting of the presbyterium, the college of priests of the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese, called by the new apostolic administrator **Mar Andrews Thazhath**



was held at the St Mary's Cathedral Basilica Hall in Ernakulam on Thursday. As many as 360 priests of the archdiocese took part in the meeting.

In a statement, Fr Jose Valilikodath, PRO of an independent group of priests in the archdiocese, said the priests took a clear stand that they will only conduct Holy Mass facing people, the existing format in the archdiocese.

He said that the priests demanded to know the reason

for forbidding Mar Antony Kariyil from staying in the archdiocese. Priests also demanded immediate implementation of restitution of losses that the archdiocese incurred in the controversial land deals, as recommended by the Vatican.

Priests said, in the statement, that it was not even Christian to force Mar Kariyil to resign without issuing a show cause notice as per the Canonical procedures first. The statement said that the move even affected the image of Pope Francis.

Priests said Mar Thazhath suggested that they name an auxiliary bishop, but they rejected it. They were of the opinion that the administrator should first resolve the existing issues at the archdiocese, the statement said.

Priests said that Mar Kari-

yl had requested the synod for an auxiliary bishop multiple times, but it was not entertained. They added that there would be vested interests for now wanting to appoint an auxiliary bishop.

Under the current circumstances, the priests also didn't celebrate the silver-gold jubilees of priests at the meeting, as earlier planned.

The statement said that Mar Thazhath agreed to intimate the higher authorities about the feelings expressed by the priests. Priests pointed out that the administrator said that Mar Kariyil's resignation was Rome's decision.

Laity and priests called for a mass gathering of the faithful at Kaloor stadium on Sunday in the backdrop of recent developments. Organisers said that thousands of would attend the gathering.

Priests, laity set to hold mass gathering

Situation In Ernakulam Angamaly Archdiocese Very Volatile: Event's Convenor

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The feud between Syro Malabar Church's official leadership and majority of priests and laity in the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese has further escalated as priests and laity announced a mass gathering near Kaloor Stadium as a show of strength on Sunday.

CHURCH DISPUTE

Named 'Vishwasa Samrakshana Mahasangamam', organisers are expecting thousands of laymen apart from priests and nuns at the gathering. The move is in the backdrop of former Met-



Sunday's mass gathering will also see protests against Mar Andrews Thazhath's appointment

ropolitan Vicar Mar Antony Kariyil's forced resignation and Thrissur archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath's appointment as apostolic administrator. Priests and laity had been resisting unification of the Holy Mass sty-

le in the Church when the apostolic administrator was appointed.

Laity activists said the event would primarily be a gathering of priests and laity who stand for Mass versus populum, the Mass style in which the celebrant faces people. It will also see protests against Mar Kariyil's forceful resignation and against the current apostolic administrator.

"It will also be a protest against the apostolic administrator sent by the Vatican. Most of us in this archdiocese believe that the mastermind behind the efforts to disintegrate this archdiocese was bishop Thazhath," said Shyju Antony, the event's programme convenor, at a news conferen-

ce in Kochi. He said the situation in the archdiocese is very volatile. "Mar Kariyil's open letter about the situation has sparked intense emotions among the faithful in the archdiocese," he added.

The news conference was attended by archdiocese pastoral council secretary PP Jerard and Kerala Catholic Youth Movement archdiocesan unit president Tijo Padayattil. Jerard said the gathering's primary aim would be continuation of Mass facing the people, which is going on in the archdiocese for 60 years. "No matter which administrator comes, no matter what kind of circulars are issued, priests and laity of this archdiocese would be here to pro-

tect Mass facing the people," he said, adding that their demand was to at least recognise this Mass style as a liturgical variant.

He said another major demand was implementation of restitution of losses incurred by the archdiocese in the controversial land deals. "Mar Kariyil was forced to resign. This was part of a drama staged by the nuncio, Oriental congregation and Syro Malabar synod... He was forced to stay outside the archdiocese's limits... This was an unprecedented move, and we need to know who is behind this," said Jerard.

Activists said they have no fear of repercussions and will go ahead with the protests.

Indian Express 6/8/22

Laity & priests to organise mass gathering on Sunday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

PROTESTING against the recent developments in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, the body representing priests and laity will organise a mass gathering on the Nehru Stadium premises at Kaloor on Sunday. Thousands of laymen, apart from the priests and nuns of the archdiocese, are expected to be attended the mass gathering named 'Vishwasa Samrakshana Mahasangamam', the laity representa-



tives told reporters at the Renewal Centre, Kaloor, on Friday.

The development comes in the backdrop of the forced resignation of Mar Antony Kariyil, the former Metropolitan Vicar of the archdiocese.

"We stand firm on the decision of not implementing the uniform Holy Mass. Also, we demand the apostolic administrator to implement the restitution recommended by the Vatican at the earliest," said Shyju Antony, programme

convenor. He said an open letter about the situation by Mar Kariyil, who is staying at an ashram in Chalakudy, has sparked intense emotions among the faithful.

"On Sunday, we will be organising the protest against the apostolic administrator who was sent here by the Vatican," he said.

The archdiocese's pastoral council secretary, P P Jerard, said: "Our demand is to recognise the mass facing people as a liturgical variant. We will fight for it. We don't fear the repercussions."

see an unprecedented bronze.

was actually happening.

Times of India 8/8/2022

Thousands take part in march, public gathering

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thousands of faithful in Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese of Syro Malabar Church on Sunday took out a march and participated in a public gathering in Kaloor, Kochi in support of their va-

FEUD IN CHURCH

rious demands. The church had on Saturday warned that the Vatican viewed the gathering as 'grave indiscipline'.

The unification of holy mass, the forced resignation of former metropolitan vicar Mar Antony Kariyil and the pending restitution of losses in land deals are the main contentious points. Over 50,000 members of vario-

R K Sreejith



Priests at the public gathering in Kochi on Sunday

us parishes — including priests, nuns and representatives — attended the event, the organisers said. Those who participated in the rally were holding placards in support of Mar Kariyil. The mass gathering passed a resolution saying the forced resignation of Mar Kariyil was a grave injustice. **P 3**

Protesting priests and laity put up show of strength

Recognize Mass Facing People As A Liturgical Variant, They Demand

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The feud in the Syro Malabar Church between the Church leadership and the priests and laity of the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese over how the mass is conducted spilled on to the streets on Sunday as thousands of faithful from various parishes of the archdiocese took out a march and held a public gathering at Kaloor in Kochi.

Organizers said that over 50,000 members of various parishes, most priests of the archdiocese, nuns and representatives from other dioceses attended the event at the Kaloor Jawaharlal Nehru International stadium.

ROW OVER MASS CELEBRATION

The main reasons which triggered the protest were the call to implement the uniform mass, the forced resignation of Mar Antony Kariyil, the former metropolitan



RK Sreejith

Close to 50,000 members of various parishes, and most priests of the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese attended the event in Kochi on Sunday

vicar of the archdiocese who supported the priests in opposing the uniform mass and the issue over the restitution of the losses incurred by the archdiocese in the controversial land deals.

Those who participated in the rally were holding placards hailing Mar Kariyil. In what seems to be an attempt to gather the attention of the Vatican, many placards were written in Italian. One placard

said, "Richiediamo giustizia e trasparenza" (loosely translated as "we demand justice and transparency") while another said that "Mar Kariyil E' IL Nostro Buon Pastore" ("Mar Kariyil is our good shepherd").

Addressing the gathering, monsignor Varghese Njاليyath declared that the priests in the archdiocese will only conduct the mass facing the people, as against

the uniform format in which a priest celebrates the mass facing the altar. He also said five enquiry committee reports had found some "faults" with the sale of the archdiocese's land.

"It has been three years since Rome said that this mistake needs to be corrected. The bishop synod did not execute it. Restitution of losses has not taken place in the past three years and this gathering declares that whoever sold our property and took the money, needs to return it," said Njاليyath. He added that four bishops who hailed from the archdiocese were moved out of the archdiocese's leadership in three years.

The gathering passed a resolution which said that a grave injustice has been done by forcing Mar Kariyil to resign. An oath was administered to the faithful which said that they will continue their fight until the mass facing the people is recognized as a liturgical variant of the Syro Malabar Church.

Indian Express, 8/8/2022

Thousands attend archdiocese 'faith protection rally'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kochi

AROUND 50,000 parishioners took part in the 'Viswasa Samrakshana Maha Sangamam' organised by the laity and priests of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese on Sunday. The parishioners took out a rally around the Kaloor stadium, lasting nearly two hours.

"Parishioners from around 320 parishes assembled. Nuns, priests and representatives of various dioceses took part,"



the organisers said.

The protest followed recent developments in the archdio-

Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese parishioners take part in the 'Maha Viswasa Sangamam' at Kaloor stadium |

A SANESH

cese including the resignation of Metropolitan Vicar Mar Antony Kariyil and the appoint-

ment of the new apostolic administrator.

The faithful held up placards extending support to Mar Kariyil and against the unification of the Holy Mass.

"Priests in the archdiocese will conduct mass facing the people. Five enquiry committee reports arrived at the same conclusion that there were faults in the sale of the archdiocese lands," said Monsignor Varghese Njaliyath during his presidential address.



Venting their ire: Thousands of people from across the State converged at the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium in Kochi on Sunday to participate in a mega convention of members of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church. The meet was held to protest against Archbishop Antony Kariyil being "forced" to resign and the Synod "imposing" the order of worship in churches. ■ THULASI KAKKAT (SEE ALSO PAGE 4)

Church meet calls for transparency

Over 50,000 faithful, priests attend

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI**

Over 50,000 faithful and priests from 320 parishes of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church turned up at the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium here on Sunday to attend a convention that sought transparency and accountability in the functioning of the archdiocese.

The faithful registered protest at Archbishop Antony Kariyil being "forced" to resign and the synod "imposing" the order of worship in churches under the archdiocese. The other demands included steps to recoup through restitution the huge sums of money that the archdiocese allegedly lost through a controversial land deal, and giving due prominence to the opinions of Church members and organisations.

Resolution

In a resolution passed at the convention, the faithful

termed the archdiocese their 'mother'. Any attempt to impose alien concepts and repressive measures would be fought tooth and nail. They reiterated their demand for transparency and their commitment to opposing at any cost attempts [by the synod] to derail the order of worship wherein the priest faced the congregation, that had been followed for the past many decades.

Pursue cases

Another demand is that the apostolic administrator continue pursuing the cases filed by the archdiocese before the supreme tribunal of the Vatican during the time of Archbishop Kariyil, and the inclusion of priests who have sound knowledge of canon laws to pursue the case.

The resolution warned that the faithful would not cooperate with the archdiocese if they were kept away from daily administrative matters.

SNEAK PEEK

CARNATIC MUSIC

Vocal by Madhuri Koushik (Bengaluru) & violin by K C Kurian (Kozhikode) | August 28, 5.30pm-6pm | Mulakkal Mandapam, Kilikkar Road, Kochi | Organized by Gosri Gana Sabha



PERFORMANCE ART



Nephatha's 18th Kutiyattam festival with complete performance over nine days of Vichinnankam Act 1 of Bhasa's Prathima Natakam | From August 27, 6pm | Nephatha Centre for Excellence in Koodiyattam, Aluva

WEBCAST



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Disney.Tom@timesgroup.com

Then I saw another angel come up from the East, holding the seal of the living God — Revelation 7:2

A debate is raging among Syro Malabar Catholics on how to worship. The discussion has often led to altercations and even street fights. The question which triggered the rare crisis in the Church, which boasts a Christian pedigree going back to the early centuries of the Common Era, was whether to celebrate the Eucharist facing the East or the altar (Ad Orientem) or 'towards the people' (Versus Populum). The priest and the worshippers face the same direction in the Ad Orientem mass as in a procession toward the Lord. In Versus Populum, the priest and worshippers look at each other and form a circle of the celebrating community.

The debate achieves significance as the bishops' Synod of Church managed to implement a new way of conducting Mass, the Uniform Mode, in 34 of the 35 dioceses in the Church. The synodal decision has the backing of the Vatican Dicastery for the Eastern Churches as well. The Synodal Mass or the Uniform Mass is a combination of both traditions. In the new format, the celebrant of the mass

ALTAR EGO

At the heart of the 'Uniform Mass' debate in the Syro Malabar Church is what worshippers want — the sacraments in all their mystery OR communion with the God in our midst? Truth is, they are not mutually exclusive

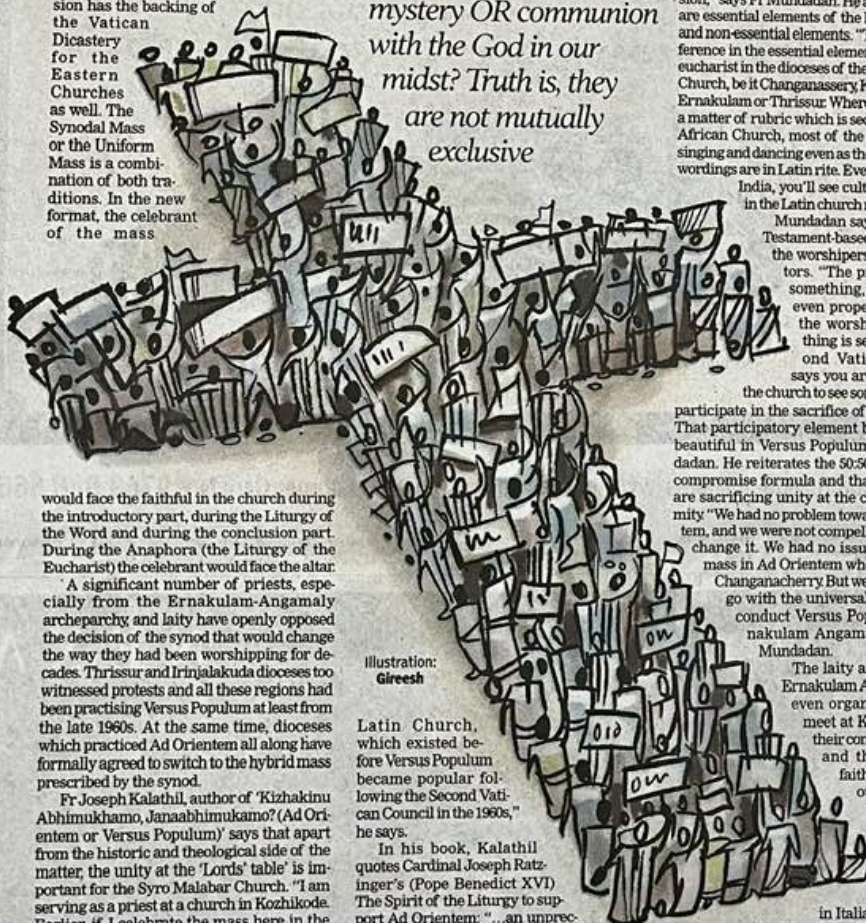


Illustration: Gireesh

would face the faithful in the church during the introductory part, during the Liturgy of the Word and during the conclusion part. During the Anaphora (the Liturgy of the Eucharist) the celebrant would face the altar. A significant number of priests, especially from the Ernakulam-Angamaly archeparchy, and laity have openly opposed the decision of the synod that would change the way they had been worshipping for decades. Thrissur and Irinjalakuda dioceses too witnessed protests and all these regions had been practising Versus Populum at least from the late 1960s. At the same time, dioceses which practiced Ad Orientem all along have formally agreed to switch to the hybrid mass prescribed by the synod.

Fr Joseph Kalathil, author of 'Kizhakinu Abhimukhamo, Janaabhimukhamo' (Ad Orientem or Versus Populum) says that apart from the historic and theological side of the matter, the unity at the 'Lords' table' is important for the Syro Malabar Church. "I am serving as a priest at a church in Kozhikode. Earlier, if I celebrate the mass here in the morning and go to Thrissur at noon, there would be another format there and at Kottayam, yet another format. There is no point in each diocese deciding their own liturgy and theology. Unification is a synod decision and that needs to be executed," says Fr Kalathil adding that features of both traditions are there in the Uniform Mass. Fr Kalathil says that just like there is a demand for Versus Populum in Ernakulam-Angamaly there are strong proponents of Ad Orientem in other dioceses. "One of the major allegations was that turning to the East is Chaldean (East Syriac Rite). What we need to understand is that Ad Orientem is also a tradition of the

Latin Church, which existed before Versus Populum became popular following the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s," he says.

In his book, Kalathil quotes Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's (Pope Benedict XVI) The Spirit of the Liturgy to support Ad Orientem: "...an unprecedented clericalization came on the scene. Now the priest — the 'presider', as they now prefer to call him — becomes the real point of reference for the whole liturgy. Everything depends on him. We have to see him, to respond to him, to be involved in what he is doing... Less and less is God in the picture. More and more important is what is done by human beings... The common turning towards the east was not a 'celebration toward the wall'; it did not mean that the priest 'had his back to the people'; the priest himself was not regarded as so important. For just as the congregation in the synagogue looked together toward Jerusalem, so in the

Christian liturgy the congregation looked together 'toward the Lord'." It is however pertinent to note that Cardinal Ratzinger also wrote: "Ought we really to be rearranging everything all over again? Nothing is more harmful to the liturgy than constant activism, even if it seems to be for the sake of genuine renewal."

Fr Kuriakose Mundadan, the presbyteral council secretary of Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese on the other hand says that the unified mass or the 50-50 formula has no theological foundation. "Versus Populum was a major change that came in the church following the Second Vatican Council. However, earlier in Eastern Churches and Latin Rite the mass was Ad Orientem. That too has a theology Ad Orientem is mystery oriented. The mood is that of the Old Testament. The New Testament reveals God in the human person, the theology of incarnation. He is Immanuel, he is among us. Jesus said to his disciples: where two or three are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them. Versus Populum has this Christological vision," says Fr Mundadan. He adds that there are essential elements of the holy eucharist and non-essential elements. "There is no difference in the essential elements of the holy eucharist in the dioceses of the Syro Malabar Church, be it Changanassery, Kanjirappally, Ernakulam or Thrissur. Where to face is only a matter of rubric which is secondary. In the African Church, most of the time they are singing and dancing even as the consecration wordings are in Latin rite. Even in Northern India, you'll see cultural elements in the Latin church mass," he said.

Mundadan says that an Old Testament-based mass makes the worshippers mere spectators. "The priest is doing something, and it is not even properly shown to the worshipper, everything is secret. The Second Vatican Council says you are not going to the church to see something but to participate in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That participatory element becomes most beautiful in Versus Populum," says Mundadan. He reiterates the 50-50 formula is a compromise formula and that the bishops are sacrificing unity at the cost of uniformity. "We had no problem towards Ad Orientem, and we were not compelling anyone to change it. We had no issue conducting mass in Ad Orientem when we went to Changanacherry. But we insist that we go with the universal Church and conduct Versus Populum at Ernakulam Angamaly," says Fr Mundadan.

The laity and priests of Ernakulam Angamaly had even organised a mega meet at Kochi to voice their concern recently, and thousands of faithful from various parishes of the archeparchy took part in the rally bearing placards even in Italian to gain the attention of the Vatican. Their main demand now is declaring Versus Populum as a Liturgical Variant so that the practice can be continued at least regionally.

With the priests and laity strongly resisting the unification at Ernakulam-Angamaly, it is now up to the Pope-appointed Apostolic Administrator Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath to resolve the crisis. He has also been asked to keep the Vatican dicastery regularly informed, through the apostolic nunciature, about the measures he takes in the archdiocese. The thirtieth synod of the Church which concluded on Thursday too has offered full support to Mar Thazhath.

h Archbishop's circular burnt

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Members of the Archdiocesan Movement for Transparency (AMT) burnt a copy of the circular issued on Friday by Mar Andrews Thazhath, the Apostolic Administrator of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, in front of the Bishop's House in Ernakulam on Saturday to register their protest.

The circular had reminded priests and laity of the archdiocese of communication sent by the Pope on the need to adhere to the unified mode of worship at all parishes under the Syro-Malabar Church.

The AMT, a combine of



Members of the Almaya Munnettam burning a circular in front of Bishop's House in Kochi on Saturday. THULASI KAKKAT

priests and lay people, had said that representatives of parish councils would meet at the Pastoral Orientation Centre here on Sunday to discuss the developments. "It appears that our views have not been con-

veyed properly to the Vatican," said AMT spokesperson Riju Kanjookaran on Saturday.

The AMT said representatives of various parishes would dump the circular in a public garbage bin on

Sunday soon after a meeting at the Renewal Centre at Kaloor. It will be followed by the burning of the circular in all churches on October 9.

Mr. Kanjookaran said lay people and a majority of priests were opposed to the implementation of the uniform Mass celebration. He claimed that the letter in which the Vatican had stood for a uniform Mass system was part of a personal letter received by Archbishop Thazhath. The meeting of lay people on Sunday will also discuss a circular proposed by the administrator of the archdiocese to be read out at parish churches on October 9.

Times of India, 02/10/22

Laity activists burn circular of Mar Thazath

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: A group of laity activists from the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese on Saturday burned a circular issued by the Vatican-appointed apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, which directed the implementation of the uniform style of Holy Mass prescribed by the Church's Synod. The copies of the circulars were set ablaze in front of the archbishop's house in Ernakulam.



Mar Thazath issued a circular on the uniform style of Holy Mass on Friday with a direction to read it out during the Sunday Mass on Oct 9

HOLY MASS ROW

The apostolic administrator Mar Andrews Thazath issued the circular late on Friday with a direction to read it out during the Sunday Mass on October 9. The circular quoted a recent letter from the Vatican dicastery for Eastern Churches and letters of Pope Francis to the Syro Malabar Church in July 2021 and the archdiocese in March 2022 to emphasize the need for implementing the uniform mass in the archdiocese.

Besides the direction to conduct uniform Holy Mass, the circular also directed the concerned parishes to file re-

quests for temporary dispensation if it was difficult to immediately implement the uniform mass. This temporary dispensation would be for providing awareness about the uniform mass. It also directed to make arrangements for bishops to conduct the Holy Mass in uniform style as they had to follow the synodal mass everywhere. Also, newly ordained priests must conduct their first Holy Mass in the uniform style, the circular stated.

Athiroopatha Samarakhana Samithi, an independent organization of the priests of the archdiocese, which met on Friday, announced

they are ignoring the circular, which could create unrest in the archdiocese. Fr Jose Vailikodath, the outfit's PRO, had said in a statement that they will never accept a mass other than the Versus Populum, the mass facing the people, which was being conducted in the archdiocese.

Meanwhile, Almaaya Munnettam, the group of laity activists that burnt the circular on Saturday, said a meeting of laity representatives from various parishes will be held at the Kaloore Renewal Centre on Sunday, and representatives would later deposit copies of the circular in public waste bins.

Members defy Archbishop, burn circular copies



Venting ire: Members of a parish of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese burn copies of a circular by Archbishop Andrews Thazhath on Sunday.

The Hindu Bureau KOCHI

Parish members of the Syro-Malabar archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly defied archdiocesan administrator Archbishop Andrews Thazhath once again on Sunday by either throwing into dustbins or publicly burning copies of his circular imposing a unified Mass system in the Syro-Malabar Church.

A communication from Almaya Munnettam, a combine of lay people in the archdiocese, which has continuously defied the demand by the synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church on the issue of unified Mass system, congratulated the parish members for their action.

The circular issued by the archbishop to be read out during the Sunday

Mass on October 9, did not have the backing of any canonical bodies, claimed Riju Kanjookkaran of the Munnettam, which has said the majority of the laity and priests wanted a fully congregation facing Mass system in the archdiocese, which is the largest administrative unit in the Syro-Malabar Church with about 1.5 million members.

Only at four of the places where Mass was celebrated on Sunday saw the archbishop's circular being read out, Mr. Kanjookkaran claimed.

Only at four of the places where Mass was celebrated on Sunday saw the archbishop's circular being read out, Mr. Kanjookkaran claimed.

There are 328 parishes where Mass was celebrated on Sunday.

Most parishes ignore Thazhath's circular

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: A circular issued by the metropolitan vicar of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese Mar Andrews Thazhath, which calls for the implementation of the uniform mode of Holy Mass, was not read out during the Sunday mass in most parishes. The Vatican-appointed administrator had issued the circular with a direction to the priests to read it out during the mass on October 9.

UNIFORM MODE OF HOLY MASS

Laity activists, who are opposing the unification, said that out of around 450 centres where Sunday mass was held in the archdiocese, the circular was read out in only four. They also said the laity protested the circular by burning copies in front of churches and depositing them in waste bins.

After issuing the circular last week, the Church also released a video of Mar Thazhath in which he called for implementing the uniform



Laity members burn copies of Mar Andrews Thazhath's circular in front of churches on Sunday

mass from October 9 onwards. He had said the Pope has repeatedly asked that all laity, religious and priests should obey the decision taken by the Synod on matters of the liturgy.

On October 2, the laity representatives from various parishes in the archdiocese had gathered at the Kaloore Renewal Centre and decided to ignore the circular. They had again vouched to not allow any other style of mass in the archdiocese other than *Versus Populum*, the mass in which the priest and laity face each other.

Apart from the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, all other dioceses in the Church have switched to the new format of Holy Mass.

The Hindu, 17/10/2022

Protest held in front of Archbishop's house

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

Members of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church made a resolution on Sunday during a token siege of the Archbishop's house in the city that they would support only fully congregation-facing Mass.

The token protest was held to make public the intention of the group of protesters to boycott archdiocesan administrator Archbishop Andrews Thazhath for what they claimed

was his failure to understand the stand taken by the members of the archdiocese on the uniform Mass issue and to convey the situation to Pope Francis, said a communication from Almaya Munnettam, a combine of lay people. Riju Kanjukkaran of Almaya Munnettam said the group wanted Archbishop Thazhath to resign. Fully congregation-facing Mass should be declared a liturgical variant in the archdiocese, he said, adding that the protest would be intensified in the coming days.

Priests condemn Archbishop Thazhath for 'turning archdiocese into police raj'

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

The community of priests in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church has roundly condemned apostolic administrator Archbishop Andrews Thazhath for turning "our mother", the archdiocese, into "police raj".

The priests said until their demands were met, the statutory payments from parishes would not be made to the archdiocese, and that the archdiocesan administrator and

his supporters would not be invited for any church-related ceremonies.

Father Jose Vailikodath, senior priest and public relations officer, said in a statement here on Tuesday that Pope Francis had said that shepherds of the Church should "smell like their sheep". However, the archdiocesan administrator was "running away in fear when he saw his sheep" and had summoned the police for protection. The statement from the community of priests also said that the imposition of the diktat of

the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church on uniform Mass should have been discussed in Canonical forums.

The demands raised by the priests include permission to Archbishop Antony Kariyil, former metropolitan vicar, to live within the archdiocesan boundaries; recognition and approval of fully congregation-facing Mass in the archdiocese as a liturgical variant; and complete restitution for losses suffered by the archdiocese in the 2017 land deals as recommended by the Vatican.

The priests have decided to boycott the archdiocesan administrator and his acolytes. The priests' council, comprising around 250 persons, also expressed the view that the archdiocesan administrator was unfit for his position. The priests said they would not participate in any function at the archdiocesan house, which is under police guard at present.

The statement said 377 priests from 16 forane churches had signed the resolutions passed on Tuesday.

Archbishop's House blockaded in protest against unified Mass

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

Priests of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church began an indefinite blockade of the Archbishop's House in Kochi on Monday demanding that efforts to impose the unified Mass system be abandoned.

The priests also said that any attempt to impose the system on the archdiocesan minor seminary should be rolled back.

Backing of parishes

The demand for abandoning the Synodal decision on unified Mass in the archdiocese and the blockade of the Archbishop's House in support of the demands have the backing of 320 archdiocesan parishes and 450 priests, claimed a

statement here.

However, a majority of parishioners and priests in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese are for a fully people-facing Mass and want the current form of the Mass to be accepted as a liturgical variant in the archdiocese. It has been alleged that the archdiocesan authorities have written to the vicar of the Basilica Cathedral of the archdiocese, rector, and officials at the minor seminary to follow the Synodal decision on the unified Mass system.

Those opposing the unified Mass have demanded that the letters be withdrawn immediately.

The priests have also demanded that the stand taken by a majority of parishioners and priests be properly conveyed to the Vatican.

Bishops' panel to hold talks with priests & laity today

Priests Intensify Protests For Regularizing Mass Facing The People

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: With the unification of the Holy Mass still to be implemented in the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese, the permanent Synod of the Syro Malabar Church on Thursday formed a committee of bishops to discuss the status of the issue with the representatives of priests and laity of the archdiocese.

UNIFICATION OF HOLY MASS ROW

The discussion will take place on Friday afternoon. Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakatt, Archbishop Joseph Pamplany and Bishop Jose Chittooparambil, CMI, are part of the committee, the Church said in a statement.

The Syro Malabar Church had envisaged the unification of the Holy Mass across the Church from November 28, 2021, the first day of the ongoing liturgical calendar. A year on, the archdiocesan priests and laity are still firmly resisting its implementation.

With the next liturgical ca-



Priests and laity have been conducting an agitation, Neethi Yagnam, at Archbishop's house in Ernakulam opposing the bids to implement unified Holy Mass in the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese

alendar of the Syro Malabar Church set to begin on Sunday, priests of the Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese had intensified the protests for regularising mass facing the people (Versus Populum) as the recognised form of Holy Mass in the archdiocese.

The priests, who are conducting 'Neethi Yagnam', a prayer meet by camping at the Ernakulam Archbishop's house since Monday, have planned to gather at St Mary's Cathedral Basilica here on Friday to conduct prayers, skip-

ping a meal. Almost all priests of the archdiocese are set to attend this gathering, sources said.

Athiroopatha Samrakshana Samithi, an independent organisation of priests, declared agitation at the Archbishop's house after Ernakulam Angamaly archdiocese apostolic administrator Mar Andrews Thazhath reportedly sent a letter to the vicar of the Basilica, announcing that he will conduct Holy Mass in the unified format on November 27 (Sunday), here.

Priests soon demanded the withdrawal of the letter, and a similar letter was sent to the rector of the Sacred Heart minor seminary, directing implementation of the unified mass.

The agitation at the Archbishop's house has been going on day and night, and priests have announced that they will not back down until the mass facing the people, the style of mass in which the celebrant and the laity face each other, is allowed as a liturgical variant in the archdiocese. At the same time, all other dioceses of the Syro Malabar church have already shifted to the new format.

Meanwhile, Syro Malabar Church said in the statement that a meeting of the permanent Synod, held on Thursday, assessed the current situation regarding the issue in the archdiocese. The statement said the Major Archbishop of the Church has called for special prayers in this backdrop in the next three days ahead of the beginning of the advent season, the first in the liturgical year, on Sunday.

Holy Mass row: Panel meets priests, laity

Kochi: The bishops' committee appointed by Syro-Malabar Church's permanent synod met priests and laity representatives of Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese on Friday to discuss unification of Holy Mass.

Sources said the discussions were a preliminary move, and the matter is likely to be discussed in detail during the next bishops' synod in January. Four priests and three laity representatives took part in the meeting with the three-member bishops' committee.

Addressing the media later, archdiocese's presbyteral council secretary Fr Kuriakose Mundadan said a decision can only be taken by the synod. "Bishops have promised that they will inform the permanent synod about the matter, which

would be later presented before Church synod," he said.

He said the bishops have finally shown willingness to listen to their concerns and it has opened a path for further talks.

Shaiju Antony, a laity representative, said the delegation expressed three demands: continuation of Holy Mass facing people, reinstatement of Archbishop Antony Kariyil and immediate restitution of losses incurred by archdiocese due to the controversial land deals.

He said since discussions have begun and an agreement to avoid further provocations was reached, they hope the apostolic administrator won't try to conduct mass in the unified format at Basilica Cathedral as announced earlier. The stir at Archbishop's house seeking a solution will continue. TNN



Row over Mass intensifies as archbishop denied entry

Activists Lock Church's Gates Even Before Mar Thazhath's Arrival

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: High drama prevailed at Ernakulam's St Mary's Cathedral Basilica early on Sunday morning as dissident activists of Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese, opposing Syro-Malabar Church's new uniform Mass, blocked Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath at the gates of the church. The administrator of Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese had arrived in the morning to celebrate Mass at the basilica.

The archbishop had informed the basilica's vicar about celebrating Mass in the uniform format at 6am this Sunday as it marked the beginning of the liturgical calendar. But, priests and laity opposed this move and had started an indefinite agitation within the bishop's house, seeking a withdrawal of this decision.

On Sunday, Mar Thazhath arrived at the gates around 5:30am. Laity activists, who had camped inside the church premises, raised 'go back' slogans when he arrived. The gate of the church was also locked, and the



Jipson Sikhera

Laity activists campaigning for Holy Mass facing people argue with those who support the Church's decision to conduct uniform Holy Mass at Ernakulam's St Mary's Cathedral Basilica on Sunday morning

archbishop's car couldn't enter the church.

Meanwhile, another group of laity activists who support the Church's decision to celebrate uniform Mass gathered outside the church gates, leading to a confrontation. By 6:15am, the archbishop returned to Thrissur. The Sunday Mass was then conducted in Versus Pulum (Mass facing the people) format.

A group of activists, who support the synod's decision, entered the premises of

the archbishop's house and vandalised the premises. However, police intervened and moved everyone out quickly. The situation remained tense till Sunday afternoon. Police entered the premises of the church by breaking open the locks at the gate and then locked the church as a preventive measure.

ACP (Central) Jayakumar Chandramohan, who reached the spot, told the media that police locked the church as a preventive mea-

sure and it was a temporary arrangement. If there is an assurance that further law and order issues will not happen after the matter is resolved through discussions with the involvement of district administration, then the key can be returned, he said.

PRO of the archdiocese Fr Martin Kallungal issued a statement that they have urged authorities not to take any action that can affect the religious ceremonies at the basilica or the day-to-day activities of the archbishop's house. Police also recorded the arrest of six persons under CrPC Section 151 (Arrest to prevent the commission of cognizable offences).

The issue pertains to the decision of Syro-Malabar Church synod in August last year to implement a unified style of holy Mass in the church from November 28, 2021, the first day of the previous liturgical calendar. A year later, Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese hasn't implemented this decision even as all other dioceses of the Church switched to the new format.

THE HINDU
Kerala

TheHindu, 28/11/22

Archbishop stopped from holding Mass, basilica shut after stand-off

Revenue dept. takes control of St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica under the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly after priests, laity opposed to the unified Mass reportedly lock gates from inside, blocking the apostolic administrator

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly had a tumultuous start to its Christmas preparations with the first Sunday of Advent 2022 witnessing a stand-off between two groups at the St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica in the district. The police shut down the basilica and the district administration will take a call on its reopening in due course.

On Sunday, Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, the apostolic administrator, arrived at the basilica at 6 a.m. to celebrate the unified Mass. However, a group of priests and lay persons opposed to the unified Mass reportedly locked the gates from inside, preventing the Archbishop from entering the basilica premises.

Another group in favour of the unified Mass tried to



The faithful staging a protest against the implementation of the unified Mass system in the Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, at St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica in Kochi on Sunday. H. VIBHU

make way for the archbishop to enter the Church, which triggered tensions.

2 held, released later

The police later intervened to remove those who had locked themselves inside the basilica compound. They also took two per-

sons into custody, but later released them. The police also seized some vehicles parked inside the compound.

A senior police officer said the basilica was now under the control of the district administration and that the Revenue Divisional

Officer (RDO) will decide when to reopen it.

The row in the archdiocese is centred on the way the Mass is celebrated. The unified system of Mass, ordered by the synod of the Syro-Malabar Church in August last year, involves the celebrant or the priest

facing the congregation or those participating for the first half of the Mass. He will then turn away from the congregation or turn towards the holy of holies for the second half of the ceremonies.

However, a large number of the nearly half-a-million members of the archdiocese and the vast majority of the priests are in favour of continuing with the present system of the celebrant facing the congregation for the full duration of the Mass. The group has vehemently opposed the synod diktat, the protest often spilling into the streets.

The latest stand-off between the groups was triggered by a circular from the archdiocesan administration, led by Mar Thazhath, that the basilica cathedral and the minor seminary in Kakkanad switch to the unified Mass from the first Sunday of the Advent.