



## MEDIA STATEMENT

Pope Francis extends the Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne

The Holy Father Pope Francis extends the Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Saint Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne to include New Zealand and all the countries of Oceania. The Decree (Prot. No 145/2020) to this effect was signed on 29 March 2021 by Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

This decision is due to the increasing number of Syro-Malabar faithful in these countries and the need to reach out to them for their pastoral and spiritual needs. This decision will enhance the Syro-Malabar spiritual heritage, liturgical and ecclesial traditions handed down by St. Thomas the Apostle and his successors.

Now the territory of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy includes, in addition to Australia and New Zealand, all the countries of Oceania.

This decree specifies that the extension of the jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy enables better pastoral vigilance to be given to all Syro-Malabar faithful in the extended territory. It gives an opportunity that opens new horizons to our Syro-Malabar sisters and brothers, in New Zealand and the Islands of Oceania. It is also an expression of the recognition by the Apostolic See and the Episcopal Conferences of the Oceania countries that the Syro-Malabar Church is now becoming more global, through migration.

Accordingly, by decree of Pope Francis, all Syro-Malabar faithful in these countries have been placed under the jurisdiction of Bishop Bosco Puthur, who thus becomes the first Syro-Malabar Eparch of Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania.

Along with the clergy and laity of the Eparchy, Bishop Bosco Puthur, while thanking God, wishes to express our deep gratitude to Holy Father Pope Francis, to Cardinal Leonardo Sandri and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, His Beatitude Cardinal George Alencherry, the Major Archbishop and the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church, the Episcopal Conferences and the Apostolic Nuncios of Australia and New Zealand.

This decision by Pope Francis offers both a mission and a challenge to all the sons and daughters of St. Thomas the Apostle throughout this region to bear witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the oriental spiritual, liturgical and ecclesial tradition of the Syro-Malabar heritage with a renewed vigor.

Further information on the official ceremonies will be announced in due time.



Msgr Francis Kolencherry  
Vicar General  
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