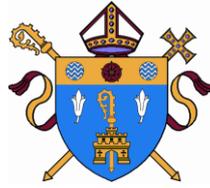


Bishop Campbell establishes two Personal Parishes for the Syro-Malabar Church in the Diocese of Lancaster



FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE:

It is understood to be the first time such Personal Parishes have been created for the Syro-Malabar faithful in Europe

PRESS RELEASE BEGINS:- Bishop Michael Campbell has, after consultation with the Diocesan Council of Priests, responded to the request (made in January 2015) of the Major-Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Cardinal George Alencherry and has, by canonical decree, **established two Personal Parishes** for the Syro-Malabar Church, effective from 23 March 2015, with Fr Mathew Jacob as Parish Priest.

Thought to be the first Personal Parishes for the Syro-Malabar Church in Europe, the two parishes, will make an invaluable contribution to Church life within the Diocese. The granting of the request by the Bishop is motivated by the need to have a spiritual care of souls and the unity of the Diocese with the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church.

The Personal Parish of Saint Alphonsa (*placed within the Preston Deanery of Our Lady and St Wilfrid*) will serve Syro-Malabar Catholics within the Preston area and now has exclusive use of St Ignatius Church and presbytery, Preston.

and

The Personal Parish of Saints Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Euphrasia, (*placed within the Blackpool Deanery of St Kentigern*) will serve Syro-Malabar Catholics in the rest of the Diocese and will continue to use the various parish churches and facilities around the Diocese that already extend hospitality.

Cause for great celebration

Members of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church throughout the Diocese are delighted by the news of the establishment of the Personal Parishes.

'We are very pleased and very grateful to the Bishop,' Father Mathew Jacob said. 'It is recognition by the Diocese of the place of the Syro-Malabar Church here.'

Fr Jacob said that the erection of the Personal Parishes provides a clear reference point and strong sense of identity and historical development of our people - particularly important in this time of rapid social and cultural change.

Fr Jacob said the Bishop's promulgation of the decrees, following the decision (of January 2015) of the Bishop to give St Ignatius church and presbytery for the use of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church signifies that the Syro-Malabar faithful are an important part of the Diocese and are 'here to stay'.

'What was the chaplaincy to the Syro-Malabar faithful in the Diocese was originally created in 2004 by Fr Jose Thaiparambil SJ and Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue and this was an important first step. The establishment of the Personal Parishes gives further recognition, security and stability to our people,' he said.

It hoped that at some point in the autumn there will be an Inaugural Mass for all these initiatives (in the Syro-Malabar rite) at St Ignatius church, Preston with both Cardinal Alencherry and Bishop Campbell. : - *ENDS*

Monday 20 April 2015