

Vatican Prefect for Eastern Churches thanks Bishop Campbell for providing Preston's Cathedral for Syro-Malabars in Britain

4 October 2016



Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, the Vatican's Prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, has written to Bishop Michael Campbell (the letter is overleaf) to personally thank him and the Diocese of Lancaster for providing the new Syro-Malabar Eparchy for Great Britain with their new cathedral church of St Alphonsa – formerly St Ignatius' Church, Preston.

The letter (dated 15 September 2016) from the Cardinal comes just before the weekend's momentous and historic episcopal ordination of Mar Joseph Srampickal - the new Eparch (Bishop) - for the Syro-Malabars in Great Britain at Deepdale (Preston North End's Football stadium) and the dedication of the new Cathedral itself in central Preston.

The Rt Rev Michael G Campbell OSA, Bishop of Lancaster said:

"I am absolutely delighted that our Holy Father Pope Francis established the new Eparchy for the Syro-Malabar Faithful in Great Britain on 28 July so as to provide the necessary Church leadership, stability and strength for the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church to bear witness to Jesus Christ in these lands going forward. We stand by and pray for Bishop-Elect Mar Joseph Srampickal and his clergy and people in the days, months and years ahead."

The Bishop continued:

"I am aware that, as the Eparchy begins its infancy, it will require the continued support of the Diocese and indeed all the Catholic dioceses of England, Wales and Scotland and surely this will be forthcoming in so many ways. For us in Lancaster, we are so pleased to have been able to provide the new Eparchy with its new beautiful Cathedral church - St Alphonsa – **Preston's first - and only - Cathedral.**"



CONGREGATIO
PRO ECCLESIIS ORIENTALIBUS

Prot. N. 219/2016

September 15, 2016

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Your Excellency,

As it will not be possible for me to attend the episcopal ordination of Bishop-elect Joseph Benny Mathew Srampickal on 9 October next, I will not have the opportunity to thank you personally for the gracious assistance that you have provided to the Syro-Malabar Church in this matter. I write, therefore, to express my profound gratitude to Your Excellency for your exemplary pastoral concern, not only for the sheep entrusted to you, but also for those that have come from pastures faraway.

It is thanks to your initiative and to the generous offer of the Church of St. Ignatius in Preston that it has been possible for the Eparchy of Great Britain of the Syro-Malabars to become a concrete reality. The new bishop will have a worthy Chancery and the handsome Cathedral of St. Alphonsa, from which to carry out his ministry.

Your Excellency, I am confident that this new Eparchy will prove a blessing not only to the Syro-Malabar Catholics resident in Great Britain but also to the rest of the Catholic Church and to society as a whole. May God reward you for your farsighted decision and for all the other ways in which you build up the Kingdom of Christ.

With my respectful regards and prayerful best wishes, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Leonardo Card. Sandri
Prefect

✠ Cyril Vasil', S.J.
Archbishop Secretary

4 October 2016