

H O D O S



Department of Communications
Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa
Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Syrian Church



THE WAY

Monthly Newsletter of the Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa
of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2024



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Sunday School enters a new era with a new Syllabus

Embracing the dawning of a new era in the history of the Sunday School of the Diocese, the new syllabus was launched in January 2024 by Diocesan Metropolitan HE Abraham Mar Stephanos. This milestone is not merely a culmination of efforts but a new beginning, charting a course for faith-filled learning.

The entire curriculum, developed over the course of the past year is based upon the Sunday School curriculum meticulously developed by the Diocese of South West America under the guidance of its Metropolitans as well as a dedicated team of priests and lay persons. The Diocese is indebted to their leadership which has been a guiding light throughout this year-long journey of preparation and transition. Resoundingly, the Diocese also acknowledges the teachers of this Diocese for their adaptability and perseverance, ensuring a smooth transition to this new curriculum.

Apostle Paul's exhortation, "He must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it," (Titus 1:9 NRSV), echoes the mission of the Sunday School to steadfastly impart the truth of the Gospel, fostering a resilient and enlightened community of faith. As the Diocese moves forward in the spirit of Orthodox tradition, let us hope and pray that these textbooks serve not only as vessels of knowledge but also as lanterns lighting the path towards spiritual maturity and devotion.

New Syllabus available at:

<https://indianorthodoxuk.org/Sunday-school-books>

HODOS — The Way

"... so that if he found any belonging to **the Way**, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

(Acts 9:2 NRSV)

With all glory to the Triune God, we are proud to launch **HODOS** — the monthly newsletter on behalf of the Department of Communication of the Diocese.

The Monthly Newsletter will be published on the last Sunday of every month. The publication will be purely digital / online. This pilot edition published in January 2024 will serve as an outline to the work forward.

The Holy Bible uses the term *Hodos* (the way) (Acts 9:2) as an expression of faith that Jesus is the One way to be reconciled with God the father. Christ himself has proclaimed that He is *the Way*.

As children of *the way*, let us be able to use our talents for the glorification of the Kingdom of Heaven. We invite all to be part of this venture, which will serve as a means of a direct communication to all the faithful of the Diocese.

WE ARE THE CHURCH

Life of the Church

+ Abraham Mar Stephanos

In as much as we can take pride in the rich heritage and traditions that we have inherited through the centuries, we need to be reminded that the traditions of the Church are not static. They are dynamic and have evolved over the centuries. But even as we attempt to be inclusive of the socio-political and economic circumstances of the era that we live in, the one thing that will remain constant in the life of the Holy Church is the fact that we follow the Apostolic Faith. It is this very fact that in essence makes us an Apostolic Church.

Historically, we know that even in the New Testament times, there were seditions and deviances within the Holy Church. Indeed, they were quite common that we see historical records of the such issues being consistently addressed by the Fathers of the early Church.

Clement of Rome (CE 39-99), through his letter to the Church in Corinth addressed a severe division. In the prologue of the letter he reminds the faithful of the Church about who they are. Filtering out some of the phrases from the prologue would be sufficient enough to know the life and vocation of the Church.

1) The Church is sojourning and hence it is on the move. It is heading toward "what is unseen" (2 Cor 4:18). While it is a voyage that should aim at eternal life, the itinerant nature of the Church comes as a challenge for us in many ways. It comes with the demand that we should be mindful of the temporality of our journey and the permanence of our destination. This reminder would help to liberate ourselves if ever we get caught up with the battles of life.

b) The Faith of the Church should be fruitful of virtue. We are all aware that true Christian ethos embodies compassion. Indeed, we have all imprinted in our hearts the Fruit of the Spirit. But beyond that, do we put effort to ensure that our faith is filled with virtue. There should always be an abundance of Christian usefulness through the life of the Church and the witnessing of its faith.

c) The Church should be 'habitually hospitable'. It is not merely in select moments that we chose to be courteous and cordial. Especially, as we struggle to gel within a multicultural society, we should, as a Church, ensure that we are welcoming to one and all, and not just those of whom we have a need for. We need to open up our hearts to sense and see the lonely ones within the crowds. Let us strive to make that a routine habit.

d) The Church should be the 'elect of God'. We live in a day and age where faith and spirituality can be brutally criticized and evaluated. Mostly this is because we, as a Church, forget that we are the elect of God. Life's circumstances make us deviate from the path of theosis. As parts of the body of Christ, we need to reassure one another and constantly remind each other that we are indeed the elect of God—not through our words, but rather through our actions.

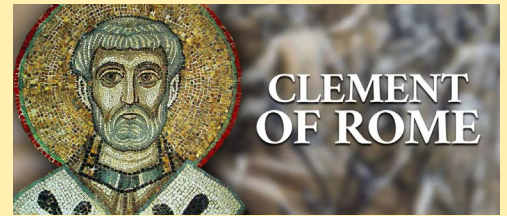
e) The Church should be sober and moderate in her godliness in Christ. As humans, we are all inherently susceptible to being assertive and judgemental. Although we have been sanctified through the Holy Baptism, the radiance of our holiness can diminish through our own prejudice. It is only when we glow with Christ's grace that we can be patient and encouraging of others.

As we continue on our path of spiritual growth, we are sure that our Apostolic Tradition will guide us to be discerning and lead us to sanctity. But let us also remind ourselves that we are on a journey towards eternal life. Let us be abundant in Christian usefulness, fruitful of virtue, habitually hospitable and worthy of the calling as the elect of God. With absolute conviction, let us be able to use these as checklists for our daily living.

Let us all together pray and ensure that the ministry of our Diocese would be pledged to be a true witness of the life of the Church.

+ Metropolitan Abraham Stephanos

(Excerpts from the reflections at the Clergy Annual Meeting, 18 January 2024)



... to the **Church of God sojourning** at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God...

... For who ever dwelt even for a short time among you, and did not find your **faith to be as fruitful of virtue** as it was firmly established? Who did not admire **the sobriety and moderation of your godliness in Christ**? Who did not proclaim the magnificence of your **habitual hospitality**? ...

... For ye did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, ... Ye enjoined young men to be of a sober and serious mind; ... to do all things with a blameless, becoming, and pure conscience, ... living in the rule of obedience, they should manage their household affairs becomingly, and be in every respect marked by discretion.

— Excerpts from Chapter 1, First Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians

Prayer Corner



We worship you, Christ our God, who are hidden and beyond comprehension, yet today You ascend to Jerusalem carried in the arms of Mary to make offerings according to the law. By a simple gesture You uphold heaven and earth and all that is in them, yet Simeon carries You in his feeble and aged arms. Accept then, O Lord of the universe, the offering of our incense and loosen from us all the entanglements of sin, that while we carry you in our hearts, by the celebration of Your manifold and divine and heavenly mysteries we may offer unceasing praise and thanksgiving, to You and to Your Father and to Your Holy Spirit, now and always and forever. Amen.

— Etro of the Evening Prayers of the Feast of the Entry of the Lord in the Temple



... for my eyes have seen your compassion...

THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE

In the liturgical calendar of the Holy Church, 2nd of February is celebrated as the Feast of the Entry of the Lord in the Temple. The traditional Syriac term used is *Ma'altho*, colloquially pronounced as *Maayaltho* in Malayalam. Certain western traditions including the Roman Catholic and Protestant also use other names such as the Meeting of our Lord and even the Purification of the Holy Virgin. Some traditions in the West also refer to this day as Candlemas owing to the custom of holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of this feast day since at least 450CE in Jerusalem.

According to Jewish customs, as per the Law of Moses, following the birth of a child, the mother was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty days (Lev 12:2-8). Thus, when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, Mary along with Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (Lk 2:22) and also to make the customary offering for purification. In Mary's case, this would have been a pair of doves or two young pigeons.

This Feast is particularly also noteworthy for the encounters with righteous and devout Simeon and the prophetess Anna. (Lk 2:25-38). The Gospel according to Luke records that the aged Simeon was waiting for the Consolation of Israel and that the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Hence, he came by the Spirit into the temple and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, Simeon took Him up in his arms and blessed God and sang a hymn that has gone down in the

annals of history as *Nunc Dimittis*: "Now let Your servant depart in peace, O Master" (Lk 2: 29-32). Luke further records that there was also in the Temple a Prophetess named Anna, who had been a widow for many years. Anna was about eighty-four years old and spent her time in the Temple worshiping with prayer and fasting. When she saw the Christ child she praised God and spoke of him to all who were awaiting the Messiah.

This whole event is commemorated on the 2nd of February as it is the fortieth day after the Nativity (25th of December). The 4th century (circa CE380) pilgrim Egeria in her letter *Itinerarium Egeriae* (Travels of Egeria) wrote about a feast of the Presentation in the Jerusalem Church. The festal celebrations included a procession to the Constantinian Church of the Resurrection, with a homily on Luke 2:22-39. The Feast was simply called the 40th day after Epiphany, indicating that the early church celebrated Jesus' birth on the Feast of Epiphany. It was only by the 6th century CE, after Emperor Justinian introduced the feast to the entire Eastern Roman empire in thanksgiving for the end to a great pestilence afflicting the city of Constantinople, that it began to be celebrated on the 40th day after Nativity – 2nd of February.

The Feast of the Presentation of our Lord is perhaps among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. There are recorded sermons on the Feast by several early Church fathers.

Liturgically, this Feast presents the One on whom we focus, Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of our race, the Hope of Salvation and the Light of the World, the light which no darkness can quench.

To the world, Christ Jesus is the projection of this light, of which God the Father is the source and root.

"In his feeble arms he carried the Son of God, and cried, 'O hope of Israel. The Light of all!'"

- From the Bo'utho of Mor Yakob at the first Qauma of the Night Prayers of the Feast of the Entry of the Lord in the Temple.

In the Holy Bible, we see the change from the Old to the New Testament - the old law becomes new. He who is the fulfilment of the mysteries is the Lord of both Covenants, Old and New. The Son of God, giver of the law, now himself fulfils the law, being carried in the arms of Simeon as a human child. The focal theme of the prayers and hymns of this feast can be seen in the words "You are the true hope sought by the world: to renew Adam's race that was corrupted by the Devil's treachery". By fulfilling the law, He sets free those who were shut away in bondage and wandering in error.

The celebration of this Moranaya (of the Lord) Feast calls us to self evaluation - As children of God, what are we able to present to the Temple of Christ today? Do we reflect upon the condition that we present our souls to Christ? Have we been able to bring about a true change and transformation within ourselves since we celebrated the Nativity forty days ago? We will only be able to get more clarity on our spiritual journey if we are able to focus on Christ. Through this festal celebration, let us be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let us be able to put ourselves in that joyous place where we too can sing like Simeon, "Let me depart in peace, for my eyes have seen Your compassion and Your holy Salvation".

- The Editor





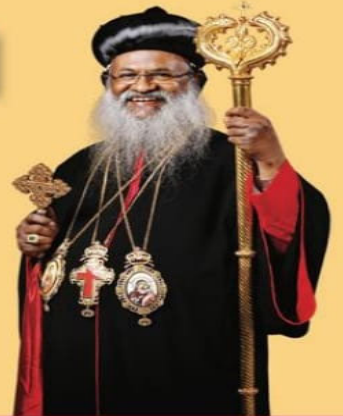
The Malankara Orthodox
Syrian Church

MARTHOMAN HERITAGE ASSEMBLY

2024 February 25, 2 PM
Kottayam, Kerala



St. Thomas
(Founder of the Malankara
Orthodox Syrian Church)

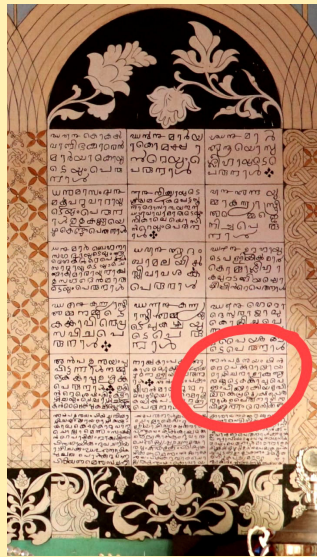


H H Baselios Marthoma Mathews III
The Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan
(The Supreme Head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church)

PETHURTHA

**A peculiar, yet unique tradition
Sunday 11 February 2024**

Pethurtha, a peculiar, yet unique tradition has existed in the Malankara Church since centuries. Historical evidences such as the Chathanoor panjansom suggest that such a tradition was practiced since at least the 1780s.



In Syriac etymology, 'fthurtho' is derived from the root word 'fthar' meaning to end or to look back. This signifies the intensifying of prayer as we leave our celebrations and the present way of life.

The 18 days in between the three day Fast of Nineveh and the Great Lent (pathinett-eda) is customarily considered as a period of non-abstinence. Pethurtha is celebrated at homes with feasting, *on the eve of the start of the Great lent. (Sunday 11 February evening)*

SHUBQONO — The Reconciliation Monday 12 February 2024



In as much as we nowadays tend to focus our 'Lenten rituals' on abstinence from particular types or quantities of food, it is essential to be reminded that Lent is more about how we abstain our hearts and minds from hypocrisy, jealousy and hatred.

The Orthodox tradition mandates that every faithful reconcile with each other before entering into the Lenten period. It is futile to keep our stomachs empty, while our minds are filled with hard feelings against our own brother, sister, father, mother, friend or other.

Let us settle all accounts. Let us take the first step in our Christian duty of brotherhood and let us love another. Then, let us begin our journey towards a Blessed Pascha.

The Service of Shubqono, which marks the doorway into the Lenten season, will be held *on 12 February 2024, the first Monday of the Great lent, at the end of the Third Hour Prayers.*

Diocesan Clergy Meeting and Ecumenical vespers for the week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Priests of the Diocese met at London, UK on Wednesday 18 January 2024 evening at the Indian YMCA Hall in London for the first Clergy Meeting of the year. Diocesan Metropolitan HE Abraham Mar Stephanos led the preparatory reflections for the clergy, which was followed by several discussions to plan the year ahead.

The Clergy meeting was followed by an Ecumenical Vespers for the week of prayer for Christian unity. During the prayers, Mrs. Elizabeth Joy (Director, Churches Together in England) delivered a homily on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The Vespers, which was also attended by clergy of sister Churches proved to be an opportunity to foster unity and strengthen bonds.



EnChristo Online Series

Monthly Online Series for Spiritual Growth

The monthly online series hosted by the Department of Communication of the Diocese relaunched on Sunday 21 January 2024.

The concept was originally developed over the pandemic times to engage the faithful of the Diocese during the days of lockdown. The relaunch aims to delve into themes including liturgical, theological, tradition, and history.

The January edition was held on Sunday 21 January 2024 (5pm GMT) on ZOOM commencing with evening prayers of the Three Day Fast followed by a meditation by HE Zachariah Mar Severios (Metropolitan, Diocese of Idukki).

The February edition will be held on Sunday 18 February 2024 at 5pm GMT on ZOOM.

Meeting ID : 5969306430 Passcode: enchristo

Evening Prayers and Devotion for GREAT LENT

to be led by OCYM

The youngsters of the Diocese continue to explore avenues to further indulge in prayers and learning. On behalf of the OCYM (Orthodox Christian Youth Movement), youth from various individual Parishes and Congregations across the Diocese will take leadership in leading the evening prayers during the Great Lent.

One representative from each Parish will deliver a devotional address every day. Over the previous years, OCYM units from across UK, Ireland, Europe and Africa have taken such leadership.

The Evening Prayers will be held on ZOOM at 8.30pm GMT every day.

Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches 22—26 January 2024, Rome



The 20th meeting of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place in Rome from January 22 to 26, 2024. Representatives from the Coptic Orthodox Church, Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church, the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church met with the representatives from the Catholic Church. On this occasion, a commemorative book *The Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. 20th Anniversary (2003-2023)* was presented by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, including all documents and reports of the Commission. The meeting concluded with the acknowledgement of “The dialogue of charity, the dialogue of truth and the dialogue of life: three inseparable ways to advance on the ecumenical journey.”

Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. 20th Anniversary (2003-2023) was presented by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, including all documents and reports of the Commission. The meeting concluded with the acknowledgement of “The dialogue of charity, the dialogue of truth and the dialogue of life: three inseparable ways to advance on the ecumenical journey.”



To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Commission, Study Visit of young priests and monks included those from the Antiochian, Armenian, Coptic and Malankara Orthodox Churches. In keeping with the theme “Aspects of Mariology: the Holy Virgin Mary in the Teaching and the Life of the Church”, papers presented included “Holy Virgin in the Oriental Orthodox Tradition, Conception, Annunciation, Dormition” by Metropolitans HE Dr. Yuhanon

Mar Diascoros and HE Dr. Yuhanon Mar Dimetrios. In addition to these discussions on the themes of the agenda, the members of the Commission deliberated on the methodology of the dialogue. The Joint Commission recommended that the 20th anniversary may be an opportunity for an evaluation of its documents and a reflection on its methodology in order to see possible improvements for the next steps of the dialogue. Metropolitan HE Abraham Mar Stephanos also joined the meetings of the Commission.

LAUSANNE ORTHODOX INITIATIVE (LOI) January 2024, UK



The Lausanne Orthodox initiative (LOI), an initiative that strives to provide a space and context for constructive reflections between Orthodox and Evangelical Christians met during the third week of January 2024. The Initiative aims mainly to work towards trust, understanding, shared spiritual growth, reconciliation and healing of wounds. The meetings were hosted and co-chaired by Anba Angaelos, the Coptic Orthodox Bishop of London. The meeting were attended by members and guests in person and online from around the world to plan initiatives over the coming three years which would include a young ecumenists mentoring programme, several goodwill visits, mission publications as well as an international consultation marking the 1700th year of the Holy Ecumenical Synod of Nicaea in 2025. HE Dr. Geevarghese Mar Yulios, Metropolitan of the Diocese of Kunnammkulam, a member of the Board attended the meetings.

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Diocese of UK - Europe - Africa






MALANKARA ORTHODOX SANGAMAM

• 2024 •



United Kingdom

25th May 2024
Leamington Rd, Ryton-on-Dunsmore,
Coventry CV8 3FL




Ireland

2nd June 2024
St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Co. Kildare, W23 NX63

- DAY FOR THE YOUTH AND CHILDREN TO PLEDGE THEIR FAITH
- TOGETHER TO SET THE MISSION FOR THE FUTURE (WITNESSING CHRIST)




Marth Mariam Vanitha Samajam
UK, Europe & Africa Diocese



FAITH & BIBLE STUDY


Wednesday 31st January 2024 @ 8.45pm



Lead by:
Rev. Fr. Nithin Prasad Koshy
Vicar, St. Gregorios IOC London

Topic: THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Following Every Month 4th
Wednesday after the
Madhyastha Pararthana



Meeting ID: 88423126704
Passcode: mmvsuk

Prayerfully invites everyone
MMVS Executive Committee

ST THOMAS' INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH LONDON
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
INVITES YOU TO

FAMILY GALA 2024

DANCE | SKITS | SONGS
SATURDAY

FEBRUARY
10
FROM 5PM

John F Kennedy Catholic School
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 2PH

To join in or participate in any of the events, kindly contact:
Sachin Roy - 07455 169946
Mathew Nebu - 07932461237

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
OCYM UK EUROPE AFRICA

OASSIS
Students Hospitality Platform

presents
Koironia
The Youth Fellowship



ST. GREGORIOS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
CRANFIELD ROAD, BROCKLEY LONDON SE4 1UF

FEBRUARY
10
2024

10 AM - 3 PM (SATURDAY)

Inviting all the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox
International Students in the UK

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. St. Matthew 5:16

Registration Fees : 5£

Nearest Train Station : Brockley 

For more details :
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 [ocym_ukueafr](#)

EVENTS AND CELEBRATION IN THE DIOCESE



Sunday School Syllabus release at Aberdeen St. Thomas IOC



**Parish Calendar Release
Dublin (Lucan) St. Marys IOC**



**Holy Qurbana celebrated
Rome St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Community**



**New Year Family Get-Together at
Poole St. Thomas IOC**



**Sunday School Opening Ceremony
Julianstown Co. Meath
St. George IOC**



**Patrons Day celebrations at
Colchester St. Stephens IOC**



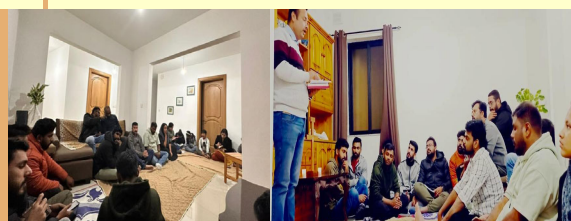
**Parish Day celebrations at
Waterford St. Gregorios IOC**



**Contribution to HH Catholicos
towards Sahodaran project
Germany St. Thomas IOC**



**Feast of Epiphany at Hanover and Feast of
St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen at
Berlin — Germany St. Thomas IOC**



**Three Day Fast Prayer Meeting
Malta St. Peter and St. Paul IOC**

EVENTS AND CELEBRATION IN THE DIOCESE



Patrons Day celebrations at Southamton Mar Baselios Gregorios IOC



Sunday School Syllabus Inauguration and Family Get-Together at Manchester St. George IOC



Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Exarch visits South Africa St. Thomas IOC

New Year celebrations Portsmouth St. George IOC

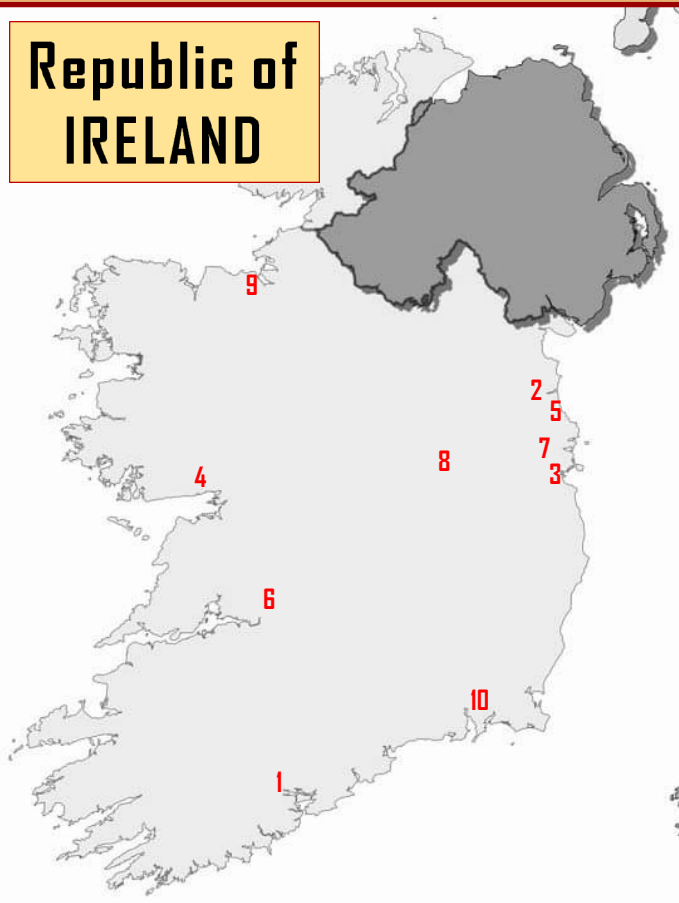


Parish Day celebrations Crawley Holy Trinity IOC

Sunday School academic year inauguration Colchester Holy Trinity IOC

Parishes and Congregations of the Diocese

Republic of IRELAND



EUROPE



AFRICA



Republic of IRELAND

1. Cork
2. Drogheda
3. Dublin
4. Galway
5. Julianstown (Meath)
6. Limerick
7. Lucan
8. Mullingar
9. Sligo
10. Waterford

EUROPE

1. Bielefeld
2. Bonn-Koln
3. Germany
4. Malta
5. Switzerland
6. Vienna (Austria)

AFRICA

1. Lagos (Nigeria)
2. South Africa

NOTE:

The Maps shown only include Parishes and Congregations of the Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa, as listed in the Diocesan Register. Several more communities also gather for Holy Qurbana at places such as Paris (France), Leuven (Belgium), Stockholm (Sweden), Rome (Italy), Poland, Tbilisi (Georgia) and Botswana.

DATES TO NOTE — FEBRUARY 2024

02 (Friday) -	Ma'alto (Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord) 56th Memorial of Pathros Mar Osthathios Metropolitan
03 (Saturday) -	Commemoration of Mar Bar Souma
04 (Sunday) -	Sunday of the Commemoration of all Faithful Departed
08 (Thursday) -	Commemoration of Mar Abo
09 (Friday) -	15th Memorial of Mathews Mar Epiphaneios Metropolitan
10 (Saturday) -	Koinonia — Youth Fellowship for International Students
11 (Sunday) -	First Sunday of Great Lent (Kothine—Cana) Pethurtha of Great Lent
12 (Monday) -	Great Lent Commences Shubqono—Service of Reconciliation
16 (Friday) -	12th Memorial of Geevarghese Mar Osthathios Metropolitan (Sabha Ratnam)
17 (Saturday) -	Marthoman Heritage Diocesan Seminar (on ZOOM—4pm GMT)
18 (Sunday) -	Second Sunday of Great Lent (Garbo—Leper) EnChristo Online Series (on ZOOM—5pm GMT)
23/24 (Fri/Sat) -	90th Feast of St. Dionysius—Sabha Bhasuran (Old Seminary Chapel)
24/25 (Sat/Sun) -	16th Memorial of Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan (Devalokam Chapel)
25 (Sunday) -	Third Sunday of Great Lent (Mshario—Paralytic) Marthoman Heritage Assembly (Kottayam)

2 Cor 4:18

... in search of 'what cannot be seen'...

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Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa
Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church

HODOS — The Way
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