



MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH (INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH)

DIOCESE OF UK • EUROPE • AFRICA •
UK REGISTERED CHARITY : 1159302

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Blessings to all the Aichens, Managing Committee Members, Office Bearers, and the faithful of all the Parishes in the Diocese of UK Europe and Africa, in the name of the blessed Holy Trinity.

Beloved Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, and Dearly Loved Faithful,

As you are all aware, the Diocese is presently in an active and prayerful process of seeking a permanent property to serve as our Diocesan Headquarters. During the first round of this journey, I had the opportunity together with the Diocesan Secretary and other office bearers to travel across England and Ireland, meeting the faithful in more than thirty-five parishes of our Diocese.

I wish to begin by expressing my deep gratitude for the overwhelmingly positive, encouraging, and faith-filled response we received everywhere. Your readiness to listen, your questions rooted in responsibility, and above all, your willingness to support this common vision have strengthened our resolve and renewed our hope.

Vision for the Diocesan Property

During these parish visits, we have consistently shared a clear and prayerfully discerned vision: that the Diocesan Headquarters should serve as the administrative, spiritual, and pastoral heart of the Diocese. Rooted in our Orthodox identity, this centre is envisioned not merely as an office space, but as a place that enables coordinated diocesan functioning, while also nurturing prayer, study, hospitality, formation, and mission. This vision continues to guide every step of our search.

In practical terms, the Diocesan Property is envisioned to include the following core components:

1. Headquarters & Administrative Centre

A centralised space for diocesan administration, enabling the smooth and coordinated functioning of diocesan offices, departments, and official services.

2. Chapel / Spiritual Centre

A consecrated space for daily prayer, Holy Qurbana when appropriate, and quiet reflection affirming that all our administrative work flows from worship and spiritual life.

3. Meeting Hall for One-Day Conferences

A suitably equipped hall to host diocesan meetings, clergy gatherings, training programmes, seminars, and one-day conferences without recurring rental costs.

4. Retreat & Hospitality Facilities

Modest accommodation to host clergy, guests, resource persons, and retreat participants supporting spiritual renewal and fellowship.

5. Residential Space

Basic residential provision for visiting clergy, short-term stays connected with diocesan work, and essential on-site oversight.

6. Reception & Meeting Rooms

A welcoming reception area and smaller meeting rooms for consultations, pastoral conversations, and official appointments.

7. Library & Resource Centre

A theological and pastoral resource centre to support clergy, students, Sunday School teachers, and researchers, preserving and sharing the rich heritage of the Orthodox tradition.

8. Location & Connectivity

A location that is reasonably accessible, well connected by public transport, and suitable for the geographical spread of the Diocese.

9. Parking & External Areas

Adequate parking and safe external spaces to facilitate gatherings, accessibility, and orderly functioning of the facility.

10. Facility for Theological Student Aspirants

Provision current or future for supporting theological students and aspirants, encouraging vocations and nurturing the next generation of clergy and church leaders.

We recognise prayerfully that it may not always be possible to find a property in which all these needs are immediately available. Therefore, our search remains open to properties that allow conversion, adaptation, or phased development, while remaining faithful to this long-term vision.

This is not merely a building project, but a shared diocesan journey one that calls for prayer, patience, generosity, and collective responsibility, as we seek to establish a lasting centre for the life and mission of the Diocese.

Recent Development: Bromley Property

In December 2025, we identified a property in Bromley South, London, which importantly, including a chapel fulfilled almost the entirety of this vision. After much prayer and effort, we placed a bid for this property. Sadly, despite reaching an advanced stage, our bid was not successful, as another buyer offered a higher amount.

While this outcome was naturally disappointing, I wish to emphasise that this was not a setback without fruit.

A Significant and Encouraging Milestone

One of the most positive developments during this process was that, with the strong and committed support of our faithful, we were able to secure a mortgage offer of £750,000 from

one of the banks. This would not have been possible without the remarkable faith and generosity of nearly 200 of our faithful, who instituted standing orders to the Diocese specifically in support of this venture.

I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to each one of you. Your commitment stands as a powerful witness to shared responsibility and trust in Gods providence.

Continuing the Journey Together

The Property Committee and the Diocesan Council are jointly continuing the search, with renewed clarity and experience gained from this recent process. We must and we shall remain hopeful. At the same time, it has become increasingly clear that we may not readily find a single property that fulfils the entirety of our needs, including the presence of an existing chapel for worship. In this light, our discernment now also extends to identifying properties where there is realistic scope for conversion and thoughtful development, enabling us to shape the space in accordance with our liturgical and pastoral vision.

To be well-prepared for the next opportunity, we prayerfully recognise the need to strengthen our financial foundation further. For this reason, we humbly request the support of an additional 300 standing orders. I earnestly ask all our Aghens and office bearers to continue the campaign with the same intensity, pastoral sensitivity, and clarity of purpose, so that when the next suitable property arises, we will have the necessary and well-documented support to proceed confidently.

A Word of Pastoral Encouragement

I am conscious that the loss of this particular property may cause some to feel disheartened. I gently but firmly wish to assure you: your commitment has not been in vain. What you have offered so far has already borne tangible fruit, and it has positioned the Diocese far more strongly than before. Let us not allow temporary disappointment to weaken a vision that is larger, deeper, and firmly rooted in faith.

Looking to the Future: Mission and Vocation

The Diocese remains deeply committed to its future mission. I am particularly encouraged to see young people expressing interest in theological learning and discerning a call to the priestly vocation. This is a sign of life, hope, and continuity. I warmly encourage our young people to remain open to Gods call, to pursue theological formation seriously, and to consider offering their lives in service to the Church. The Diocese stands ready to accompany, guide, and nurture those whom God calls to His holy ministry.

Beloved in Christ, let us continue this journey together with patience, prayer, generosity, and hope trusting that God, who has brought us thus far, will also open the right door at the right time.

I ask for your continued prayers for this endeavour, and I assure you of my constant prayers for each one of you.

With paternal love and blessings,

+ Metropolitan Abraham Stephanos