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Provisions for the Syro-Malabar Church

The Holy Father Francis has adopted the following provisions for the Syro-Malabar Church:

- Erection of the eparchy of Shamshabad, India, and appointment of the first bishop;
- Erection of the eparchy of Hosur, India, and appointment of the first bishop;
- Extension of the boundaries of the eparchies of Ramanathapuram and Thuckalay.

Erection of the eparchy of Shamshabad, India, and appointment of the first bishop;

The Pope has erected the eparchy of Shamshabad, India, and appointed as first bishop H.E. Msgr. Raphael Thattil, currently auxiliary of Trichur, transferring him from the titular see of Buruni.

H.E. Msgr. Raphael Thattil

H.E. Msgr. Raphael Thattil was born on 21 April 1956 in Trichur. After his seminary formation in Vadavathoor, he received a doctorate in Oriental canon law from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. He is fluent in Malayalam and English, and knows Italian and German.

He received priestly ordination on 21 December 1980, and has held the following positions: assistant vicar in Aranattukara (1981), prefect of the minor seminary (1982), vice Chancellor of the eparchial Curia (1988), vice rector of the minor seminary (1991), director of the *Diocesan Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre* (1992-1995), chancellor and eparchial judge (1995-2000), first rector of the "Mary Matha" seminary (1998-2007), where he made an important contribution to the growth of the major seminary, and protosyncellus of the archieparchy of Trichur (2007-2010).

He was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI as titular bishop of Buruni and auxiliary of Trichur, and received episcopal ordination on 10 April 2010. Since 23 December he has been apostolic visitor for the Syro-Malabar faithful resident in India outside his own territory.

Information

The territory of the new eparchy is vast: it includes the entire country of India not already included in existing eparchies. The pastoral life of the territory is already quite organised thanks in particular to the ministry of the apostolic visitor, Msgr. Raphael Thattil, now the first bishop of Shamshabad. The Syro-Malabar communities are formed in their own traditions, especially with regard to the liturgy and catechesis. There are 88 priests working, both eparchial and religious.

The see of Shamshabad is located 50 km from Hyderabad, in the state of Telangana, where there are 500 Syro-Malabar families. Awaiting the completion of the Cathedral, the pro-Cathedral will be *Saint Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church*, Kukatpally, near Hyderabad. For the moment there will also be the Chancellery and the bishop's residence. The eparchy of Shamshabad will be under the patronage of Saint Thomas the Apostle and Saint John Paul II.

Erection of the eparchy of Hosur, India, and appointment of the first bishop:

The Pope has erected the eparchy of Hosur, India, and appointed as first bishop the Rev. Fr. Sebastian (Jobby) Pozholiparampil, currently syncellus (episcopal vicar) of the eparchy of Irinjalakuda.

Rev. Fr. Sebastian (Jobby) Pozholiparampil

The Rev. Fr. Sebastian (Jobby) Pozholiparampil, born on 1 September 1957 in Pullur, in the eparchy of Irinjalakuda, entered the minor seminary in Trichur. Following his studies at the *Saint Thomas Apostolic Seminary* in Kottayam, he was ordained a priest on 22 December 1982. He obtained a licentiate in theology (ecclesiology) from the Pontifical Saint Thomas Aquinas University in Rome. Aside from English and Malayalam, he knows Hindi, Italian and German.

He has held the following offices: pastor of various parishes, including the Cathedral of Irinjalakuda; procurator and then rector of the *Saint Paul's Minor Seminary*; director of the Charismatic Catholic Movement, Apostolate for the Bible and *Jesus Youth*; coordinator of the mission in Chennai; bursar and syncellus of the eparchy of Irinjalakuda.

Information

The eparchy of Hosur includes the northern part of Tamil Nadu state, where there are around 50,000 Syro-Malabar faithful in the city of Chennai and another 15,000 in the nearby cities of Chingleput, Dharmapuri, Vellore and Pondicherry. Their pastoral care is entrusted to 22 priests, from the eparchy of Irinjalakuda, and responsible for 44 pastoral centres. There are also 73 women religious working in the region, who manage eight schools and other pious works.

Despite the concentration of the Syro-Malabar faithful in Chennai, the new eparchy will have as its see the city of Hosur. The Cathedral and Chancellery will in any case be close to Chennai: *Saint Antony's Syro-Malabar Catholic Church* in Noothenchery and the *Saint Thomas Pastoral Centre* in Aynavaram.
