

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

“THAT ALL MAY BE ONE” (St. John 17:21)

AMALA VOICE 2026 • AUGUST

MALANKARA SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

CIRCULAR ON FAITH FORMATION DAY 2026

To the Reverend Priests, the Religious, Catechists, Parents, and Dear Children,

Greetings to you all in the name of the Triune God!

As the Church prepares herself for the Re-union Centenary with special emphasis on the Liturgical Year, I wish to remind our Priests, Religious, Catechists, Parents, and Dear Children of the vital significance of the Catechetical Ministry—an indispensable constituent of the Liturgy—in union with the Apostolic See of His Beatitude the Major Archbishop-Catholicos and the Holy Episcopal Synod.

The Church executes this missionary mandate by incorporating the living and eternal message of Our Lord:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

(St. Matthew 28:19–20)

Humanity is called to seek God by utilizing the talents and goodness bestowed upon man by God, to know, love, and serve Him, and to be transformed into disciples of Christ. Reason and faith are mutually complementary. While reason devoid of faith leads to pride and to the loss of the holistic integrity of life, faith devoid of reason leads to blindness and error. Therefore, rational and coherent catechesis is imperative.

Catechesis is not restricted merely to the acquisition of knowledge. It enables the faithful to stand firm for Jesus, to love His Church, to bear witness to Christ in their life situations, and to live in accordance with moral decisions made in faith. In summary, the worship offered in the Church ought to equip the faithful to live morally in the world. Receiving the grace imparted through divine liturgy, everyone must be enabled to grow spiritually and enrich both the Church and society as good disciples of Christ.

I. Divine Revelation: The Foundation of the Church’s Catechetical Mission

The foundation of our faith is Divine Revelation. Its substance comprises the revelation granted by God the Father through Jesus Christ in the fullness of time, and the continuous teaching of truth maintained by the Holy Spirit through the Church. The authoritative testimonies of this revelation regarding God, humanity, and salvation are preserved in the Holy Bible, the teachings of the Church Fathers, and the official magisterium of the Church. Faith formation (catechetical training) is a paramount ministry of the Church which, alongside liturgical life, lays a firm foundation for the faith formation of God’s children by imparting these truths of faith in accordance with their age and maturity.

The Holy Bible is the inspired and authoritative witness to God’s saving revelation. *“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”* (Hebrews 1:1–2). The fullness of this revelation is accessible to us in the Holy Word and in the teachings of the Church. Our catechetical textbooks systematically present the Sacred Scriptures, Liturgy, Sacraments, Sacramentals, Catechism of the Church, Church History, and Moral Life. Priests, Religious, Teachers, and Parents must act in this comprehensive catechetical ministry with clear understanding and unwavering commitment.

The objective of catechesis is to enable children to know and bear witness to Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amidst contemporary challenges such as atheism, superstition, the erosion of moral values, and materialism, the truths of faith must be transmitted through methods that are engaging, relevant, and effective for the new generation. For this purpose, the possibilities of modern technologies and pedagogical methods should be utilized prudently, and Diocesan Catechetical Directorates must provide active leadership.

Special attention is required to ensure that the fundamental truths of faith are deeply rooted in the hearts of children. They must be equipped to give clear responses to queries regarding the faith of our Church. To achieve this, regular reading of Sacred Scripture, Bible study, memorization of key verses, and family prayer must be encouraged in the domestic church—the home—which is the primary school of catechesis. Every day, prior to family prayer, Scripture should be read, and its message briefly shared among family members. Catechetical lessons serve to nourish and support this primary formation. Everyone must fulfill this duty with diligent care so as to nurture generations in the love of the Church and in conscious awareness of faith.

II. The Relevance of Faith Formation in the Era of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We live today in an era of rapid technological advancement. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an integral part of daily life, significantly influencing human thought, learning, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships across all domains, including education, healthcare, communication, finance, and religious life. In this context, the principal question facing the Church is:

“How does faith formation remain relevant in the era of AI?”

• Faith Formation: Safeguarding Human Dignity

In the Church’s teachings on AI, Pope Leo XIV particularly emphasizes the dignity of the human person. Although machines can simulate human intelligence, they possess neither conscience, compassion, nor moral responsibility. Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Faith formation fosters an awareness of this divine dignity in man and instills the conviction that true human worth lies not in achievements or efficiency, but in the love of God.

• Guiding Towards the Search for Truth

Children and youth today are growing up in a world where answers are obtained instantly. However, technology cannot provide adequate answers to fundamental questions such as: *Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? What is truth? What does the Creator desire of me? What happens after death?* Faith formation must lead the younger generation beyond quick answers to a deeper search for truth and discerning reflection.

• The Journey from Knowledge to Holiness

The objective of faith formation is not merely to produce knowledgeable Christians, but to form holy disciples. Although AI makes life easier, it cannot be a substitute for eternal salvation. Prayer, sacrifice, grace, repentance, and love are indispensable for a holy life. As Saint Augustine observed, “*Our heart is restless until it rests in You.*” Technology cannot quench this inherent thirst of the human heart. Therefore, the Church calls us to face AI not with fear, but with wisdom and courage. Faith formation must be rooted in the Word, foster moral consciousness and spiritual maturity, and help evaluate technology prudently. AI can neither replace human beings nor substitute for the soul and divine grace. Thus, the deployment of technology should serve to form a community of disciples rooted in Christ. Even as AI transforms the world, machines can never replace the human soul, conscience, or divine grace. Consequently, the relevance of faith formation in this AI era does not diminish; rather, it becomes all the more essential. The mission of the Church today and forever is to form human beings who discern the truth, live in love, persevere in faith, and walk humbly with God.

Beloved ones, we must sincerely perform this noble ministry of receiving and imparting the Lord. We ought to prioritize the values to be formed in our children, as well as their convictions regarding the love of Jesus and love for the Church, rather than focusing on our own limitations. We are called, like Saint Paul, to undergo the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in our children. Let us accept this mission by offering ourselves alongside the Blessed Mother, saying, “Behold, here I am.” I convey my gratitude and prayers to all.

May God bless you all.

† Thomas Mar Koorilos Metropolitan

Chairman, Synod Commission for Faith Formation
& Archbishop of Tiruvalla,
Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

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N.B. This Circular shall be read during the Holy Qurbano on Sunday, 2 August 2026—Faith Formation Day—in all our churches and mission centres, or communicated to our faithful in every manner possible.