



## BELIEVERS EASTERN CHURCH

World Church Headquarters, St Thomas Community  
Thiruvalla - 689 103, Kerala, India

### SHEPHERD'S LETTER

March-May 2026

#### To My Beloved Shepherds and all the Faithful of the Holy Church

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.  
✠ Amen.

I remember our spiritual father of blessed memory, Metropolitan Athanasius Yohan I, often telling us, “Think Church”, all the time. What he was saying is that the only lasting reality we can build on this earth is the Church.

Beloved children, *you* are the Church — the living Body of Christ. Remember that the local parish church you belong to is not merely an institution or organization. It is a Eucharistic community gathered around the Bishop and the Priest, united in the Holy Spirit, nourished by the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments). It is in the parish that we continue to encounter Christ, grow in God’s nature, and are motivated to actively live out the gospel in word and deed.

That is why our vision for our Church in 2026 is: *‘Building Up the Parish: Faith, Life, and Service.’* Let me briefly explain the three aspects of the vision and how we can practically apply it in our life together as a parish.

#### 1) FAITH

Imagine that the local parish church is like a large tree. Faith is the root of a tree, which holds the tree firmly and give it nourishment. In the same way, Holy Faith is the foundation of the Holy Church and our Christian life.

- a) Holy Faith is not someone’s personal opinion. Rather, it is the faith handed down to us by the Apostles, affirmed by the early Church Fathers, and preserved through the life of the Holy Church. This Gospel and this Faith remain authentic only when they are held exactly as they were delivered by the holy Apostles. As St. Paul writes in Galatians 1:8, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” This reminds us of the seriousness and depth of the Holy Faith we are called to live by and faithfully preserve.
- b) In 1 Timothy 3:15–16, the Holy Church is described as the “pillar and foundation of the truth.” In this passage, the Church is portrayed as God’s household, entrusted with holding up, guarding, and supporting the truth of the Gospel. The following verse highlights the

“mystery of godliness” — Jesus Christ revealed in the flesh — as the truth that the Holy Church proclaims and preserves. This signifies the Church’s responsibility to preserve the Christian Faith in its purity, unadulterated and without distortion.

- c) St. Paul reminds St. Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5 of the “sincere faith that dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.” In the same way, we must ensure that this Holy Faith lives within our homes and is faithfully handed down to the next generation.

## 2) LIFE

Life is the tree itself — the trunk, branches, and leaves that are visible to all. The life of a parish is seen in the way we live our faith each day, including both the spiritual and temporal aspects of our life in the world.

- a) At the centre of this life is the faithful celebration of the Divine Liturgy. As a parish community, we gather week after week around the Holy Altar, drawing strength and nourishment from Christ. We follow the liturgical calendar of the Church, observing the Fasts and Feasts with devotion and unity. In this way, the Holy Sacraments become deeply integrated into parish life, forming the very heart of our worship of the Holy Trinity.
- b) This life must also be lived within our homes. Our families should become small churches, where prayer is a natural part of daily life. We must establish regular rhythms of prayer within our homes: morning and evening prayers reading of the Holy Scriptures quiet moments of reflection before God.
- c) Our Christian life must also be visible in the communities where we live: in the schools and colleges we attend in the workplaces where we serve in the words we speak in the relationships we maintain and in the way we conduct ourselves. In all these things our lives must reflect Christ, for often our life speaks more powerfully than our words.

## 3) SERVICE

Service is the fruit of the tree; it is the visible result of our faith and spiritual life. A Christian is one who lives out the faith through action.

- a) At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, we are blessed and sent forth to serve God in *word* and *deed*. This is our vocation and calling - to reach out to our neighbours, our communities, and the society around us. The early Church Fathers often described this as the “*liturgy after the liturgy*.”
- b) As children of God, we are called to actively live out the Gospel through works of charity and compassion, such as: caring for the poor and the widows educating and supporting underprivileged children showing kindness and mercy to those in need being responsible stewards of God’s creation.

During this season of Great Lent, and beyond, let the vision ‘*Building Up the Parish: Faith, Life, and Service*’ offers us a clear path forward. And this vision will bear fruit when all of us – the Bishops, the Priests and Faithful together embrace it with dedication and perseverance.

Soon, we will celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos, followed by Palm Sunday. After that, we will enter the most sacred time of the year — Holy Week — journeying with our Lord through His Passion and culminating in His glorious Resurrection on Pascha(Easter).

My beloved children, I hold each of you in my prayers during these sacred days of fasting, walking this Lenten journey with you and encouraging you to actively live out all that I have shared as your spiritual father. Please remember this weak and sinful servant also in your regular prayers before the throne of God for His mercy and grace.

May the Holy Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit grant you wisdom to discern His will, strength to obey His commandments, and love to reflect His mercy. And may the intercessions of all the Saints and the Holy Theotokos be the protection for us before the throne of God now and always. ✠ Amen.

With paternal love and prayers,



✠ Moran Mor Samuel Theophilus  
Metropolitan

**Date :** 13 March 2026

**Place :** World Church Headquarters

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**P.S:** Please make sure this is translated into all regional languages and read in all parishes for the encouragement of the faithful.