

## *The Reverend Martin Lane writes ...*



Dear Friends,

What a journey it has been! It is good to be home after an exciting time in Kerala, South India and Jerusalem. There are many stories and experiences to share and I will do so—probably with the help of PowerPoint—in due course...



*Parish confirmation in St Thomas Nedungadappally*

clearly a much later building, architecturally interesting, but not inspirational given the events associated with it. This got me thinking—a rare moment, indeed, some might argue!

One of the most memorable things about my sabbatical leave has been the opportunity to appreciate the working of that same spirit of Pentecost in the lives of others—in very different contexts from our own. All too often we can become too parochial and forget the global dimension of our faith—a faith which has been spread abroad through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Those scriptural events associated with the Cenacle could not, and cannot, be contained—and a good job too!

For example I was impressed by the young people in Kerala, seeking ordination, who as part of the discernment process spend a year leading worship and providing pastoral care, as parish workers, before going to theological college to study. Then there were the seventy or so candidates from one parish



*The Cenacle—Mount Zion—Jerusalem*

confirmed by their bishop—some of whom gave their testimonies before the enormous congregation that would fill any cathedral. This is a parish smaller than our own—where 550 families are on the parish role and worship week by week. There was richness of spirit to be found in the midst of their worldly poverty and a generosity which was inestimable. Ironically we could learn much today from a church founded by an 18th century missionary from England almost exactly 200 years ago; they are currently preparing for their bicentennial celebrations in 2016.

In addition there was the quarterly meeting of church leaders in St Thomas—Nilackal—in the Kerala hills. There was a tangible sense of the Church universal being together, and whilst acknowledging differences, there was a more pressing zeal for discerning how Christians could work together, to be a proactive voice in a multi-faith society like India, where Christians make up just 2½ percent of the



*St Thomas Nilackal—Kerala*

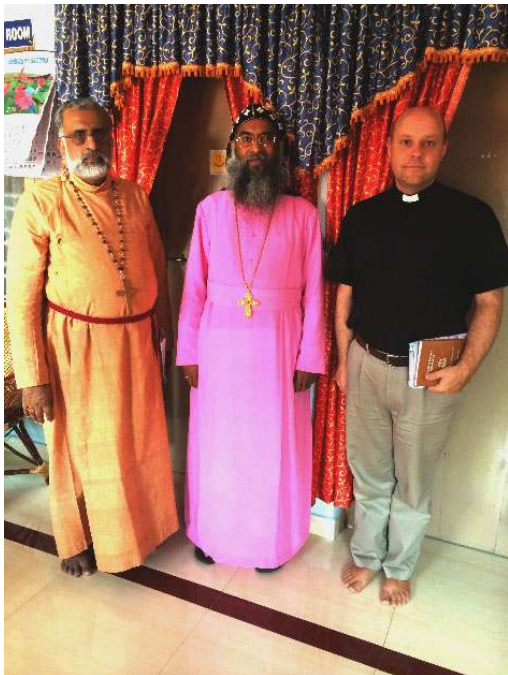
population. It was a privilege to be at the meeting of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox leaders in Nilackal and to subsequently be formally welcomed by the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church along with the Anglican Bishop, Thomas Oommen, who was my host in Kottayam.

The generosity of spirit and hospitality shown to me both in Kerala and Jerusalem has been memorable. Such gifts are, in themselves, the outpouring of the Spirit. It has been a joy to meet other Christians and to share our common faith and love of the Lord, both in fellowship, study and worship.

So as we celebrate Pentecost let us give thanks for the working of the Holy Spirit in our own lives and let us pray that we may respond with gifts worthy of it. Finally I would like to thank all those who have made my sabbatical possible—I promise to try not to go on about it too much!

In thanksgiving,

**Martin**



*Bishop Thomas with  
HG Dr Joshua Mar Nicodimos and Martin Lane*