

## Presidential Address 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday December 2009

### Jose Alexander Kerala Catholic Association of the UK

My fellow Brothers and Sisters

On behalf of the KCA, we welcome our honourable Chief guests Rt.Rev John Armitage VG, Mr. Stephen Timms, Fr. Bob Hamllil, Fr. Daniel Kulangara, Councillors Lakmini Shah, Paul Sathianesan and all the community Leaders – Welcome you all.

I stood here 3 years ago and humbled by the task to serve for my community and it is with immense pleasure to stand here to speak to my community again. The Association is now celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I gratefully remember the hard work that has been put in by the various members of the past and the present. No doubt like every other Association, KCA too had the teething trouble. But Praise the Lord, the Association has grown from strength to strength over the years. As mentioned in our constitution, the Association was established in 1984 for the purpose of providing for its members the means of social intercourse, mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement and rational recreation. I still remember the initial days when there were serious discussions concerning the formation of our Association, 25 years ago.

The feasibility/necessity of having for our Community Association, originally suggested by Mr. Earnest Peter was approved in the first meeting of the founder members. “The address of our Association at the time of registration was 18 Campbell Road, East Ham which was the residential address of Mr. Earnest Peter, The Promoter”

The following are the founder members namely Late Mr. Richard Cruz, Dr. Albin, Mr. Roger Fernandez, Mr. John Thomas, Mr. Richard Fernandez, Late Mr. Joseph P. Kallada, Mr. S. Francis(Kalanilyam), Late Mr. Cyril Ambrose, Late Mr. Joseph Minattoor, Mr. Stanley E. Napoleon, Mr. Shajan Joseph and Mr. Earnest Peter. I should personally thank Mr. Roger Fernandez, Mr. Shajan Joseph and Late Mr. Joseph .P. Kallada who visited house to house to obtain the consent and approval in principle to go ahead with the formation of an Organisation (leaving aside the concept of raising the funeral fund for the members and their families in the event of any special necessity particularly, transportation of body for burial in Kerala).

The response from our Community was so overwhelming that when a Reception was accorded to the Former Bishop of Quilon, Rt. Rev. Joseph. G. Fernandez, in 1983 at the East Ham Church, the Hall was fully packed. I had then the great privilege of making a Welcome Speech to the distinguished gathering. Indeed I consider that particular Meeting as a formal inauguration of our Association. Thereafter a team consisting of Mr. John Thomas, Mr. Albin, Mr. Roger Fernandez and Mr. Cyril Ambrose headed by Mr. Earnest peter were entrusted with the task of preparing the constitution. And finally they succeeded in having our Organisation registered under Friendly Societies Act 1961.

The first President was Late Richard Cruz, the first Secretary was Dr. Albin who is currently in the USA and the first Treasurer was Roger Fernandez. On a number of occasions, the Association held its meetings at the residence of Mr. Fernandez before they were shifted to the Parish Church Hall at East Ham

My dear brothers and sisters, we are on the brink of a wonderful change, not only for the KCA but also for all of us. We need to engage with diverse Communities in the UK. We need to take into account their concerns and their aspirations and modify our strategy and strive to achieve our targets – of course in accordance with the objectives of our Association.

We have invested in young people and set up Kerala Sports Club who has won Newham Futsal Cup in 2008. The young adults are competing on a weekly basis in Newham. We will be concentrating and providing support for the women’s Forum and need more women and girls to come forward and join the Forum for a wider participation and active involvement.

We have religious faith in the Community and we nurture them. Faith has given us values and purpose in life, whatever be our political ideology. It is one of our main objectives on the agenda to organise Retreats, Malayalam Mass, and Annual pilgrimage to Aylesford priory and to Other Holy places.

We have been living in this country for many years and our children are born here and it goes without saying that our identity has to be well recognised in the society.

We are in regular contact with Rt. Rev. Monsignor John Armitage, Vicar General of Brentwood dioceses who is giving valuable guidance and support to our Community. We will stand by them, whenever there is a need.

You have elected me the President of the Association for three years and my Term ends in March 2010. We have already set the new standards in our Community. Our vision is different and community needs change. We cannot wait any longer. More multicultural, more multinational and more multilinguistic interaction- that is the future for the KCA. Our Community leaders have worked very hard with MAUK/SNGM to deliver the Family Fun Day on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009 for all the Communities in Newham.

There is a concern about crime are higher than on other issues like health, education or housing – and how the community feel about crime affects their daily lives and their willingness to help tackle the crime in the local area. I have the privilege to work with community support officers and the public want the basic right: the maintenance of order, the rule of law, the acknowledgment of the difference between right and wrong, a strong sense that when someone breaks the law they face appropriate consequences.

This is the journey we continue today.

We remain as a young community. But in the words of scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

I have never walked away from problems. I will get on with the job and I will finish the task. We celebrate Silver Jubilee with cheerful accomplishments. It has been a long road and we walked on well all along and now still “many miles to go”.

I hereby express my sincere sentiments of gratitude to the Chief Editor of the Souvenir, Mr. Earnest Peter Kandathil for his dedicated support for having completed this Souvenir in its present final shape. I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to you, and my anticipation of the brighter future we are creating together for the community.

Wish you Holly Christmas and Peaceful New Year  
God Bless You