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May - June 2013

Nos 5 & 6



After the ordination of Deacon A. V. Sheejan in Mar Mathai Shleeha Church, Marottichal on Sunday 2 June 2013. L to R: Deacon Praveen, Bishop Mar Awgin, Metropolitan Mar Aprem, Deacon Sheejan, Rev'd. E. V. Antony and Sister O. U. Jincy.

VOICE OF THE EAST



Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan calls on Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Mar Louis Raphael I Sako at the Chaldean Catholic bishopric in Sydney. Five Chaldean Catholic bishops are also seen



Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis of Arizona celebrating 40 years of his Episcopal consecration. Archdeacon Frederick, Cor-episcopa George Rasho and others are seen.

VOICE OF THE EAST

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)

(Private Circulation only)

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Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation: www.theacero.org

Unofficial: www.nestorian.org

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Voice of the East

Vol. 60

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Editorial

Christianity in Asia and Sri Lanka in 600 A.D.

The Assyrian missionaries who took the Gospel to the four corners of the earth never had the funds or targeted strategies of modern missionaries and evangelists. Yet they went to Xian in China in 635, to Anuradhapura, Ceylon around 600, to Sir Bani Yas Island near Abu Dhabi around 600, to Japan in 737, to Leh in Ladakh around 800 and to many other places throughout Asia.

Regrettably, many Christians are unfamiliar with the glorious and ancient history of Christianity in Asia. In much of Asia, and Central Asia in particular, ancient artifacts like Christian crosses and tombstones are buried under the ground and are awaiting excavation. Once these artifacts are found and studied we will be able to better understand the extent of the Church of the East's famous missionary enterprise.

- Anuradhapura Cross

The most important evidence of East Syrian ("Nestorian") presence in Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) is the "Nestorian Cross" engraved on a stone pillar; which was discovered in the early 20th century by Edward R. Ayrton (1882-1914), the then commissioner of archaeology in 1913 at the ancient citadel of Anuradhapura, the one-time capital of the first established Sinhalese Kingdom (377 BC-1017 AD). There should be another "Nestorian Cross" unearthed in Sigiriya some years ago, which gives space for speculation whether King Kaspaya (5th Century) and some Lanka kings had any contact with Persian Christians in Ceylon. This proves that there were Christians in Sri Lanka even during those very early times. The two crosses excavated in the Anuradhapura area in 1913 are identical with the cross at Thomas Mount near Madras, an early Christian centre in India.

- Bowl (Baptismal Font?)

The decorative baptismal font at the Vavuniya museum shows that Christians had lived in Anuradhapura during the very early times. A bowl used for religious cleansing can be found in a museum in Vavuniya, to the north of Anuradhapura. Persian Christians are supposed to have used it for baptisms.

Members of our Assyrian Church of the East have a duty to spread the news of these recent excavations and evidence to our sister churches in the Middle East as well as throughout the world. We should encourage further research in this historical field to better understand the past of our ancient church and its immense contribution as the greatest missionary church in Christian history.

Mar Aprem

International News

Two Bishops in Syria Kidnapped

Metropolitan Mor Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, archbishop of the Syriac Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo, and Boulos Yaziji, archbishop of the Greek Orthodox diocese of the same city, were abducted in April in Kafr Dael, 10 km from Aleppo, on the Turkish border. Their driver, a Syriac Orthodox deacon, was killed.

According to information from the Orthodox Church, the two prelates were negotiating the release of two priests, Fr Michel Kayyal (Armenian Catholic) and Fr Maher Mahfouz (Greek Orthodox), seized in February and still in the hands of kidnappers, even though a ransom was paid for their release.

Damascus pinned the kidnapping of two bishops on "terrorist groups". Some sources have blamed Chechen jihadists for the abduction. The Free Syrian Army (FSA), the main armed opposition force, accused instead Syrian troops.



For Immediate Release
23 April 2013

The Holy Synod of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, presided over by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch, wishes to express its deep sorrow and condemnation of the abduction of the Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo Mar Gregorios Youhanna Ibrahim and the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo Paul Yazigi ((Patriarchate of Antioch), the brother of His Beatitude Youhanna X Yazigi, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East.

We offer our prayers to the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the safe return of the two metropolitans, while condemning at the same time this treacherous act of cowardice and kidnapping, which goes against every religious principle and morals. We further offer our solicitude and fraternal prayers to His Holiness Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and His Beatitude Youhanna X Yazigi, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, the respective heads of the Churches to which these two abducted hierarchs belong. May the driver of the metropolitans, a deacon of the Church, rest in peace with all the martyrs of Christ; Amen.

We call upon the United Nations and the international community at large to do all that is within their power to see to the release and safe return of these two hierarchs. Finally, we pray for an end to the violence in Syrian, so that all the ethnic and religious components of that country may co-exist peacefully.

Issued from the Secretariat of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, this 23rd day of April, 2013.

By Grace,


✠ Mar Awa Royel
Secretary



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Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan and Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Mar Louis Raphael I Sako Meet in Sydney

A delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East, led by His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon has welcomed to Australia His Beatitude Mar Louis Raphael I Sako, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church.

At the commencement of the meeting His Beatitude extended the greetings of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch to the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch and noted the Catholicos-Patriarch's desire to strengthen the relationship between the two sister churches and to foster unity in Church of the East.

During the meeting the two parties discussed the ancient connection between the two churches which share a common faith, language, liturgy and ecclesial tradition.

Both parties stressed the need to confront the challenges facing Christians and their presence in the Middle East with one voice, and to pursue points of convergence as mandated by the Lord. Both the Metropolitan and Patriarch expressed their desire to bypass obstacles in pursuit of the achievement of the hopes and desires of the faithful of both churches, particularly in Iraq where a common determination for unity is shared.

His Beatitude the Metropolitan also briefed His Beatitude the Patriarch on the work of the Assyrian Church of the East's *Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Educational Development* in its long-standing and official dialogue with the Vatican.

The delegation accompanying His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia included:

- Rev'd Cor-bishop Ashoor Lazar
- Rev'd Gewargis Atto
- Rev'd Moshe Barkho
- Rev'd John Kushaba
- Rev'd Narsai Youkhanis
- Rev'd Ninos Elya

On Saturday 4 May 2013, His Beatitude had attended the consecration of the newly-constructed *Church of the Assumption of St Mary for Chaldean and Assyrian Catholics* in Fairfield, New South Wales, along with a wide number of ecumenical guests. The Metropolitan was accompanied by Rev'd Cor-bishop Ashoor Lazar at this auspicious occasion.

Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation Duhok Housing Project Update

Dearest Acero Supporter,

The below link shows work that has been going on at the apartments in Dohuk this week.

<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic,673216.0.html>

On behalf of the Acero Committee, we are most grateful for the help given by doctors, nurses and mobile medics to our people living in these apartments.

We also like to thank all those who are helping with their maintenance, in particular Mr. Odisho Dawood, our Acero member who continuously devotes much time for the benefits and well beings of the tenants, and to all Acero committee members.

Again, we are grateful for all of your kind support.

Kindest regards

Andy Darmoo

Secretary- on behalf of Acero committee

Bishop of Eastern USA Visits Oriental Institute at University of Chicago

On Saturday 13 April 2013, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago held an outreach session aimed at the Assyrian community of Illinois.

His Grace Mar Paulus Benyamin, Bishop of Chicago and the Diocese of Eastern United States was present representing His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East.

His Grace the Bishop was accompanied by the Very Reverend Archdeacon William Toma STD, Archdeacon of the Holy Synod.

The session was targeted at the Assyrian community residing in the Chicagoland area and was part of the Oriental Institute's wider efforts to reach out to as many people of Middle Eastern heritage as possible.

His Grace the Bishop presented to the Institute a bible signed by His Holiness the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East in recognition of the Institute's efforts towards maintaining Assyrian culture and heritage and as a symbol of the warm relations between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Institute.

July Patriarchal Tour of California – Programme

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch will visit California from July 5 to 23, 2013.

- **Friday July 5:** His Holiness will fly from Chicago to Los Angeles accompanied by Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin of Chicago
- **Sunday July 7:** Holy Qurbana at St Mary Church, Los Angeles
- **Tuesday July 9:** Proceeding to Modesto by car for the National Youth Conference of USA and Canada
- **Friday July 12:** Turlock
- **Sunday July 14:** Holy Qurbana at St Zaia Cathedral, Modesto (Memorial of Mar Yosip Khnanisho, the late Metropolitan of Iraq)
- **Tuesday July 16:** Modesto to San Jose
- **Tuesday July 23:** Flying from San Jose to Chicago

Letter from Mr. Benjamin M. Benjamin (Australia)

Wed, May 15, 2013

Voice of the East
Metropolitan Palace. Trichur, 680 001
Kerala, India

Dear Editor,

On pages 11 & 12 of Voice of the East, for the months March – April you wrote some comments under the title Volume II of “Church of the East in India: A Brief History.”

I would like to make the following corrections about what was published in the paragraph:

1. The first volume of the book covered the history of establishment of Christianity and the church in India, by the Apostle Thomas, till the beginning of the twentieth century.
2. The second volume covers the history of the church in India, since 1907 till 1966. The first part of volume II is about ordination of Metropolitan Mar Timotheus in Qudchanis, his travel to India, till his death in 1945.

While the second part of this volume covers the appointment of Metropolitan Mar Toma Darmo, his arrival and work in India till his excommunication by The Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimon on the 10 December 1964. The rest of the pages cover the events that followed the excommunication till 27/3/1966.

3. My role in publishing the book was typesetting and formatting the text of the manuscript on computer. The manuscript was written by Rabi Emanuel Shimoun. I wrote the forwards for both volumes, added footnotes in Assyrian, Arabic and English, also assisted in printing both volumes. I did not edit the manuscript, but I did replace some Arabic, Kurdish, Persian and Turkish words by Assyrian synonymous.

Benyamin M. Benyamin

*International News is
Continued in last page*



Mar Aprem planting a tree on World Environment Day on 5 June at the Metropolitan Palace. L to R: Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Trustee Board Vice Chairman M. I. Thomas, Rev'd. Jacks Chandy and others are seen.



President of the Indian Association of Sharjah Adv. V. A. Rahim presenting Akshara Mudhra Award of the Travancore Malayalee Council on Thursday 25 April 2013. Mr. Daies Idiculla, Secretary of the Travancore Malayalee Council is seen at the left of the picture.



UAE Chapter of the Alumni Association of the Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School, Thrissur. Seated: Abi Paul M.Sc., B.Ed., M.Phil (Principal of the Higher Secondary School), Rev'd. Sachin, Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Rev'd. Victor Kollanur, Mrs. Lilly Thomas.



Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Rev'd. Victor Kollanur leading Aneeda prayers for the late members of the Church on Friday 26 April 2013. Members of the UAE Parish are seen.



R to L: Sinto Jose (Deacon), Jinu Jose (Deacon), Delmin Davis (Hevpthyaqna), Thimothious Joy (Hevpthyaqna) are pictured just before the ordination on 15 June 2013 at Mart Mariam Cathedral



Bishop Mar Awa Royel pictured with Rev'd Narsai Youkhanis (Sydney), Rev'd Deacon Younan Michael (London) and Mr. David Tam (Director of the Jingjiao Fellowship in Hong Kong) at the 4th Salzburg International Conference on the Church of the East in China and Central Asia



Mar Aprem Metropolitan and the parish priests, Rev'd. Victor and Rev'd. Sachin are seen with the children of the UAE parish after Holy Qurbana in Sharjah on 26 April 2013 for the 8th Anniversary of the parish.



Mar Aprem Metropolitan with the congregation in Muscat, Oman on Friday 19, April 2013

Indian Archdiocese News

First Visit to Oman

It is surprising to me to think that I did not travel to Oman even after sixty foreign tours. I have never traveled by Oman Air. So it was the first time for me to travel by Oman Air. I asked Mr. John Varghese my travel Agent for the past two decades to make the necessary reservations. He carefully made arrangements for special meal for diabetic patients. If it was regular meal I will taste the pudding etc and will increase my blood sugar level before I reach the destination. I will have to inject a higher dose of insulin to bring down the level from 400 to 120.

My predecessor's predecessor Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan traveled from Basra to Bombay in February 1908 by ship and stopped in Muscat. He sent telegram to the church in Trichur about his arrival.

During my travel from Baghdad to Bombay in June 1977 the plane I traveled stopped in Muscat. We were not allowed to step out of the aircraft. We stayed inside about noon time when it was very hot. When the aircraft stopped running the air-condition system also stopped. The temperature outside the aircraft must have been much hotter.

Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, the Central Minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Morarji Desai (1977 to 79), was traveling in the first class close to the cockpit. An airhostess came with a bottle of wine to Minister Bahuguna and opened the bottle. But the Minister refused to accept the welcome drink as Prime Minister Morarji Desai, being a true Gandhian, was against the consumption of alcohol. He had given orders to the Indian embassies abroad not to serve alcohol in the dinner programmes hosted by the Indian embassies.

The airhostess moved to the economy class passengers with the unused bottle in a paper bag. She was secretly searching for somebody who may enjoy a good drink without any extra charge. She looked at me with a black beard with silk cassock and made her assessment that here was a VIP who would enjoy wine in private or public.

Her assessment was wrong. I told her that I do not drink alcohol. Immediately a lady sitting next to me asked the hostess to give it to her. I looked at this lady passenger who had told me that she was a good Christian. Getting clue from my look she hastened to tell me that it was not for her, it was for her husband who was an engineer in the Larsen & Toubro Company. She does not drink. I hear now that women, especially young women with modern outlook, have started to share the bad habit of their husbands. This modern trend is suicidal not only to the women but also to their children. One of the reasons for increasing divorce in India is alcoholism of both men and women.

I had planned to read some literature about the land and its people before going to any new country. But unfortunately there was no time to do so. I went to Oman as I traveled to many other countries not knowing how much Rupees is worth an Omani Rial. So far the British Pound was the expensive currencies in the countries I visited. A British Pound is about Rs. 80. The Euro and the mighty American Dollar is much less. But Omani real is Rs. 140. In the neighboring UAE it is less than one tenth of the Rial.

In India a return economy ticket to and fro to Muscat is about Rs. 19, 000 or about 140 Omani Rials by Muscat Air or Indigo. One can get a lot of information from www.omantourism.govt.om. Tourists usually buy Frankincense, incense burners, crafted daggers called Kanjars, Omani dates, silver Jewellery, carved wooden doors.

Arun Jacob Timothy Thalokaren in whose house I stayed wanted to buy a pair of shoes for me. He took me to a shoe shop and bought me a branded pair of shoes. The manufacturer is a British company. Later I boasted about it to my nephew Deepak M. Andrews who told me that my shoes were not made in England. It is made in India by the British Company. Many people do that in India as the labour is cheaper. Even materials for shoes like leather are cheaper in India. Now the Mercedes Benz cars are made in India instead of Germany.

Make time on your tour of this fascinating city where old and new are side by side. First stop the grand mosque built between 1995 and 2001. Outside it has lovely flower beds and water features, inside it has Swarovski chandeliers, and a huge carpet made out of pure Persian silk.

Some of the opinions expressed by tourist recorded in the internet are reproduced here:

Ladies beware; you must totally cover up otherwise you had to wait outside like I had to. Your arms and legs/ankles must be covered, and take something to cover your head. Unlike the fantastic mosque in Abu Dhabi which provides cover ups, so go prepared if you want to be allowed inside the grand mosque.

Don't get too long distracted by the room for the women (sorry ladies!) and go to the main building. The carpet, the chandeliers, the huge room as such and the colourful windows are amazing. Outside well worth to look at is the whole setting of the mosque and the adjacent buildings. There are on one side mosaic examples of the Arabic world. Of course they are new, but give an overview of the art of Arabic mosaics. Close by are the places to wash the feet and a book shop where we got free water, Omani coffee and dates.

It is not only for the beauty, the architecture and the profusion of marbles and decor. This place has a magic for any sensitive visitor and gives feeling of peace and consolation for the soul.

Dress shall be appropriate but every experienced traveller knows well that restrictions apply for visiting Muslim places and it is easy to comply with.

The visitor center is a special plus. Both ladies and men are attending and willing to answer any question about Islam in an appropriate, calm and clear way. No question seems to be too keen for them and the lady who discussed with my young girlfriend was charming sweet and clear in answering the most difficult questions. Beside the marvellous architecture (recent date of the work does not take anything to the value of the oeuvre in my opinion) the availability for answers and the multilingual books offered are a definite plus when visiting this special site.

Thank you Sultan Al Kaboos!

Lovely cornice to go for a walk. On one side you have the water with the docked cruise ships and on the other side you have the mountains and old houses and the old souk! Little restaurants are littered on the cornice. Food is cheap, but then so is the taste! Some restaurants are good.

Our Qurbana in Muscat was in a place called Ruwi in the Mar Thoma Church. The priests of the Mar Thoma Church were at the airport to receive me. Dennis Varghese Chiramal whose eldest daughter is studying in Christian Medical College, Vellore with the sponsorship of our church invited me to his house. Francy Chettupuzha had worked very hard for organizing this Mission parish in Muscat. With less than 38 families scattered in Oman it is not easy to maintain a parish priest. Still pressed for some young man in our church to come forward as deacon just to assist at the altar. Fortunately, Reji Tahzhatha, nephew of Lazar Thazhatha living in Skokie near our Patriarchate for many years agreed to be a deacon. I told him that his grandfather Thazhath Porinchu had garlanded late Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun in Trichur in December 1961. I reminded these historical events to challenge the young generation to have a zeal for the church of our fathers.

For our church it is not easy to have a fully paid priest. Only full time priests are given religious visa. Without religious visa I cannot conduct Holy Qurbana anywhere in Oman. Dubai, Sharjah etc are more liberal in their attitude to other religions. I was able to attend the first birth day of Esther daughter of Francy and Queency. I had dinner in the house of the grandson of late Fr. Antony Chitalan. He was happy when I told him that I was baptized by his grandfather in 1940. Fr. Chitalan died in 1952 and was buried behind the wall where Mar Abimalek Timotheus was buried on May 2, 1945.

Deepak M.Andrews, son of my elder brother Prof. Andrews Mookan, who is working in Muscat came for Holy Qurbana. Geral Davy P. is the treasurer of the parish. His wife is the niece of Fr.T.O.Ignatius whom I had ordained deacon nearly 45 years ago in Trichur.

She expressed a great desire to open Sunday school, although we have not priest resident in Oman. Other Christian denominations such as Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Mar Thoma Church, and Church of South India etc have full time priests. She said that she is willing to be a teacher in the Sunday school. Geral's mother is regular in my Bible classes on Fridays in Trichur. Fr. Thermadom's brother's daughter and her husband (nephew of late Qasha C. C Isaac) came to see me. Ovungal Lazar's son Elvis, wife and baby came. Pramod Joy Chitilapilly was happy to see me. Baiju, son of George Chakkalakal, my class mate gave me a sumptuous meal in his home. The problem is that I can not eat much owing to my obesity and diabetes.

Gordon Daniel, an Assyrian born in Iraq educated in England and doing business in Muscat now came to see me with his brother in law. But these Assyrians were very happy to talk with me. They belong to the old calendar. He was not in Muscat on Friday when I celebrated holy Qurbana. But when he returned home on Saturday they came for the supper with the Indians. Although my Indian friends cannot speak any Assyrian words I can manage with some words like *shlama*, *Baseema raba*, *alaha mbarakh* etc. My knowledge of spoken Assyrian is very poor. Still I am able to read services in *lishana athieqa* well and to work with old manuscripts.

Rev. Dr. Barry P. Dawson is the Chief Pastor in the Protestant Council recognized by the government of Oman. Those who are not Roman Catholics have to go through his office for religious visa etc. Rev. Dawson was not in his office on Sunday morning. As I had to leave Muscat for the UAE on Sunday noon we went their office 9 a.m. The second pastor in charge was kind enough to talk to us. He had been ordained in India by a Methodist Bishop Sagar who is now President of the National Council of Churches in India. I told him that our former church Trustee Mrs. Pearly Jos is now one of the three Vice Presidents of the National Council of Churches which is celebrating its centenary next year.

Jeevan TV which originated from Trichur covered the news of our Qurbana. Orthodox, Jacobite, Mar Thoma and CSI priests came to see me in different times. The Metropolitan who is in charge of the Indian Orthodox diocese of Muscat Mar Gevarghese Mor Julios came to see me. He is from Kunnamkulam from the famous Pulikotil family.

10th Visit to UAE

My first Holy Qurbana in UAE was on 22 April 2005. So this was the 8th anniversary of the parish. The first Holy Qurbana was in Jabal Ali in the Mar Thoma Church. I am glad the Assyrians had come under the leadership Mr. Zaia George, a Jilwaya. Now we are regularly conducting Holy Qurbana in Sharjah in the Chapel of the Anglican Church. We have to vacate it at 9.30 a.m. as the next group marches into the chapel for worship and singing.

I stayed in the house of Paul Chakola as usual. He has shifted into another apartment.

The Holy Qurbana on Friday was at Emirates National School as our regular chapel could not accommodate a group about 150 people. After the holy Qurbana we had the first meeting of the UAE chapter of the Alumni association of the Chaldean Syrian High School. Mr. Aby Paul the Principal had come to participate in it.

The Travancore Malayalee Council held a special meeting to honour me with the award of AKSHARA MUDRA for my achievement of publication of 73 books on Thursday prior to our Holy Qurbana. Our parish is grateful for the honour. Mr. Daies Idiculla the general Secretary of the Travncore Malayalee Council deserves the credit for the success of the award giving function in the Indian Association Hall. Several important people attended.

Pradeep Mookan, my nephew, the family of Linda Raju, family of Josmon Nellissery and some others came from Abu Dhabi to Sharjah to attend the Holy Qurbana.. From Dubai and Sharjah some members from the 2005 batch were there. Some are new. Frank John and wife Liza and daughter, Anil Emmatty, Blesson Antony with family, Tessy & Kurian Poovathingal, Ancy, Sunny Panakel, and several others attended Qurbana. Timothy Mookan who had to go to Trichur the day of the Qurbana came to see me one or two days earlier. Aju Thomas and family with their mother Mrs. Lilly Thomas were there. Abjith Parayil of the **Gloria News** was there.

This time our church and I got more publicity. The award of the Travancore Malayalee Council on Thursday was a cause for the publicity. Malayala Manorama had reported about my Qurbana. nTV - Voice of Kerala interviewed me on their channel for about an hour. After the conclusion the lady Reporter from Trivandrum revealed to me that she was warned by some that I would

lose my temper if she asked strong questions to me. Her testimony is that I was not an angry person. I always pray to God Almighty to grant me patience and wisdom even if I am provoked.

When I was interviewed another social worker Mrs Uma Preman was being interviewed in the same studio. She is from Trichur. The only Assyrian who attended Holy Qurbana was Engineer Mr. Zaia George whose grand father Mr. Pilathos was in my consecration ceremony in Mar Zaia cathedral in Karradat Mariam in Baghdad on 21 September 1968.

Rafeeq Memunda who is a writer of stories and articles in Malayalam language who took me in his car for interviews with the media. He is a small businessman from Kerala working in UAE for the past some years. Although Moslem by faith he wanted to keep in touch with me because of his interest in writing and social justice. We both agreed that alcoholism is a curse in Kerala community and should be eradicated from our midst.

Church of the East in China and Central Asia Conference Held in Salzburg

The 4th Salzburg International Conference on the Church of the East in China and Central Asia has been held in Salzburg, Austria between 7-11 June 2013.

The conference, held at the Hotel St. Virgil, brought together about 40 renowned scholars of the history and tradition of the Church of the East; including noted scholars Dr Mark Dickens, Dr David Wilmschurst, Dr Erica Hunter, Dr. J.C. Coakley and Professor Dietmar W. Winkler, amongst many others.

The Assyrian Church of the East was represented at the conference by His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod as well as the Rev'd Narsai Youkhanis of Sydney, Australia. Also in attendance were Mr David Tam (Director of the Jingjiao Fellowship of the Church of the East in Hong Kong) and the Rev'd Deacon Younan Michael of London, United Kingdom.

The sessions of the conference included 'Geography and Mission of the Church of the East', 'Transliteration of the Jingjiao Texts', 'The Church of the East in the Far East', 'Sources in Sogdian', 'The Church of the East in Central Asia', 'Theology of the Church of the East' and 'Jingjiao, Buddhism and Taoism'.

On Saturday June 8, His Grace Mar Awa Royel delivered the keynote 'Pro-Oriente Lecture' on the topic 'The Sacraments of the Church of the East' as part of the conference programme.



Central Trustees and Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph congratulate Mar Aprem Metropolitan on his birth day on 13 June 2013.



**Mar Aprem Metropolitan blessing the food for 15 thousand people on May 1st 2013 as memorial to the late prelates.
L to R: Joji, Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Fr. C D Pauly, Mar Awgin Kuriakose, E K Jose, Mathew Mampilly etc are seen.**



After the ordination of two deacons and two sub deacons on Saturday 15 June 2013 at Mart Mariam Cathedral in Thrissur. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Mar Yohannan Episcopa, Mar Awgin Episcopa and several clergy lead the service.

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