

# ܡܠܚܥܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

Vol 59

May - June 2012

Nos 5 & 6



The *14<sup>th</sup>* Holy Synod in Chicago in May-June, 2012.

*Seated in the front row:*

*Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis, Mar Aprem Metropolitan,*

*H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos patriarch,*

*Mar Gewarges Metropolitan, Mar Meelis Metropolitan.*

*Standing L to R: Mar Narsai Benjamin, Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Mar Aprim Khamis, Mar Yokhannan Yoseph, Mar Odisho Oraham, Mar Awa Royel, Mar Paulus Benjamin.*

# VOICE OF THE EAST





**Mar Aprem Metropolitan with Archdeacon Dr. William Toma of Mar Sargis Church, Chicago on 17 June 2012.**



**After Holy Qurbana in Mar Sargis Church on 17 June 2012. Mar Aprem pictured with his niece Dr. Asha and her husband Paul Furlow and their children Sophie and William. Mar Aprem's nephew Sanil Mookan is on the right. On the left is Mar Aprem's nephew Chacko Cherian and wife Smitha.**

## **VOICE OF THE EAST**

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)

(Private Circulation only)

May - June 2012

Patron : **His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem**

Metropolitan's Palace,

Trichur - 680 001, Kerala, India

Phone : 91487 - 2420978

Personal : 91487 - 2442166

Email : hgmaraprem@gmail.com

### ***Website Links***

**Official:** [www.news.assyrianchurch.org](http://www.news.assyrianchurch.org)

**Archdiocese of India & UAE:** [www.churchoftheeastindia.org](http://www.churchoftheeastindia.org)

**Archdiocese of Australia & New Zealand:** [www.assyrianchurch.org.au](http://www.assyrianchurch.org.au)

**Diocese of California:** [www.acoecalifornia.org](http://www.acoecalifornia.org)

**Diocese of Europe:** [www.assyrianchurch-europe.org](http://www.assyrianchurch-europe.org)

**Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation:** [www.theacero.org](http://www.theacero.org)

**Unofficial:** [www.nestorian.org](http://www.nestorian.org)

### ***Contents***

1. Editorial (14<sup>th</sup> Holy Synod Convened in Chicago)
2. Press Release Regarding 14<sup>th</sup> Holy Synod
3. Pope Benedict XVI congratulates H.H. Mar Dinkha IV

### ***International News***

4. H.G. Mar Emmanuel Joseph Visits Alberta, Canada
5. ACERO Launches Relief Effort for Krasnodar Flood Victims
6. Catholicos-Patriarch Receives Director of 'Jingjiao Fellowship'
7. Interview with H.G. Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California (Continued)
8. Chicago, Dallas and Detroit: A Brief Travelogue of April 2012 by  
Mar Aprem Metropolitan
9. Syriac Symposium to be Held in Malta, 16-21 July 2012

### ***Indian Archdiocese News***

10. Visit to the Nestorian Monastery Ruins on Sir Bani Yas Island (Near Abu Dhabi)
11. Ordination in Mar Addai Shleeha Church, Paravattani, Thrissur

Colour photos in pages 7, 8, 9, 10 and cover pages 1, 2, 3, 4

\*\*\*\*\*



# Voice of the East

Vol. 59

May - June 2012

Nos. 5 & 6

## Editorial

### The 14<sup>th</sup> Holy Synod Convened in Chicago

The 14<sup>th</sup> Holy Synod of the pontificate of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, was convened in Chicago from Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. A detailed Press Release has been issued from the Secretariat of the Holy Synod and it is reproduced below.

This is the first time that 13 prelates were present in a modern Holy Synod of the universal church. 15 prelates were expected. However, the Bishop of Syria could not attend due to turmoil in his country and the Bishop of Nuhadra (Dohuk, Iraq) faced visa issues. The last Holy Synod held in India in January 2010 had only 11 prelates, as the late Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon was sick and Bishop Mar Joseph Sargis was unable to attend.

Out of the 14 Holy Synods held universally, this is the 8<sup>th</sup> Holy Synod that was held in the city of Chicago. Within the city, the Holy Synod has met in different venues including the Patriarchate in Morton Grove, St George Cathedral in Tuhy, St Mary Church in Roselle and now in St Andrews Church in Glenview.

This Holy Synod was held successfully with the cooperation of all people concerned. Prelates learnt of developments in diocese around the world. Some reports from the different diocese included the names of priests, churches and activities in individual parishes.

Prelates also learned about the active work of the *Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Educational Development* (CIRED) in the field of publishing and scholarly studies. It is also noteworthy that the *Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation* (ACERO) is doing wonderful and much needed relief work with faithful around the world.

Another highpoint in the activities surrounding the Holy Synod was the concluding banquet function where more than 1400 faithful were in attendance. His Eminence Francis Cardinal George spoke of Assyrian-Vatican relations as well as the Mundelein Seminary in Chicago which has already trained two bishops and the archdeacon of the Synod. We hope to continue theological training for our young students in such institutions until we have our own institutions of higher theological training.

We learnt of the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul to commence direct and official dialogue with our church. We also took steps to resume the Vatican-Assyrian dialogue.

All prelates decided to work for the renewal and restoration of the Church of the East's historic missions to China. The church is rightly proud of our ancient forefathers who went to China, Japan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Central Asia to preach the Gospel. It is our ardent prayer that we shall once again become the great missionary church of yesteryear.

Mar Aprem

## **PRESS RELEASE REGARDING THE 14TH HOLY SYNOD**

*For Immediate Release*

7 July 2012

The 14th Holy Synod of the pontificate of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East was convened from 25 May to 1 June 2012 in Chicago, Illinois (USA) at St. Andrew's Church, under the presidency of His Holiness the Patriarch. The prelates who met in Synod, presided over by the Catholicos Patriarch, were the following:

1. His Beatitude Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of India;
2. His Beatitude Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq and Russia;
3. His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand & Lebanon;
4. His Grace Mar Yosip Sargis, Bishop;
5. His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis; Bishop of Western USA;
6. His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada;
7. His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe;
8. His Grace Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod;
9. His Grace Mar Yohannan Joseph, Bishop of India;
10. His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Bishop of India;
11. His Grace Mar Narsai Benyamin, Bishop of Iran;
12. His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of Eastern USA.

His Grace Mar Aprim Athneil, Bishop of Syria, and His Grace Mar Iskhaq Yosip the Bishop of Nuhadra (Dohuk) and Russia were not able to attend the Holy Synod due to the situation in the Middle East. The Very Reverend Archdeacon William Toma was the recording secretary of the acts and minutes of the Holy Synod.

The Holy Synod discussed many facets of life of the Assyrian Church of the East today, and enacted a number of disciplinary canons that are of an internal nature only and are to be discussed with the clergy exclusively.

However, the acts of the Holy Synod included the election and elevation of the Very Reverend Archdeacon Paulus Benjamin, formerly rector of St. George Cathedral in Chicago, Illinois, to the sublime rank of the episcopacy for the Diocese of Eastern USA; the new bishop was given the ecclesiastical title 'Mar Paulus'.

The Holy Synod, first and foremost, offers its prayers and supplications to Almighty God on behalf of the dioceses and parishes of the Assyrian Church of the East living in the Middle East today. The Synod continues to pray and offer its spiritual solicitude with the Assyrian communities in both Iraq our ancestral homeland, and Syria. Prayers were offered for the stability of both countries, and for the welfare and safety of the citizens.

The Holy Synod also discussed many issues with regard to the relationship of the Assyrian Church of the East with other apostolic Churches, and in particular its ecumenical relationships. The Synod believes that in order for our common witness in the Lord Jesus Christ might be a most credible and vibrant one, close ties and the fostering of fraternal love and collaboration is necessary among the Churches who count the blessed apostles of our Lord as their founders.

The Holy Synod further discussed the matter of many historical churches and monasteries of the Assyrian Church of the East in Turkey, in particular southeastern Turkey and the Hakkari region. In these lands, our ancient ancestors lived and worshipped, and the continued permanence of these historic houses of worship gives witness to centuries old existence of the Assyrian Church of the East in that part of the Middle East. It is also noted by the Secretariat of the Holy Synod that a cordial and warm colloquium on a private level took place between His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, and H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, at the patriarchal residence in Morton Grove, Illinois, on Tuesday, May 22, 2012.

The Foreign Minister paid a courtesy call to His Holiness the Patriarch, who apprised the diplomat of the condition of these historical churches and monasteries in Turkey and of their great value, both historically and religiously, not only to the Turkish Republic but to civilization in that region of the world at large. The Foreign Minister vowed to all that he could with regard to the preservation of these churches and also extended an invitation to His Holiness to visit Turkey.

During the course of the Holy Synod, a lengthy discussion also took place about the prospects of a viable and sustainable mission of the Assyrian Church of the East to China. Since it is a historically undeniable fact that the first Christian Church to reach the esteemed Chinese people were missionaries of the Assyrian Church of the East, in as early as 635 AD, there has been a renewed interest both on the Mainland and in Hong Kong to restore the Church in China once more, historically known as the *Jingjiao*. A visitor from Hong Kong, Mr. David Tam, who heads the 'Jingjiao Fellowship' based on the island, met with His Holiness the Patriarch in a private audience and expressed the desire of the Fellowship to re-establish the Assyrian Church of the East in China once more. Discussions took place about sending missionary clergy to begin an official faith community both in Hong Kong and on the Mainland, and about the possibility of training Chinese faithful in the faith and liturgy of the Church of the East. An invitation was extended by the Jingjiao Fellowship to His Holiness to visit both Hong Kong and the Mainland.

The Holy Synod further discussed many disciplinary matters governing the daily life of the Church and the ordained clergy. It was stressed by the fathers of the Holy Synod that the clergy of the Assyrian Church of the East, both priests, deacons and the lower clergy, ought not to neglect their own liturgical services on Sunday, commemorations and feast days, and to participate in the liturgical services of other jurisdictions or other Churches. Since the ordained clergy have the obligation before God and the Church to serve faithfully and spiritually their own faithful, it is not acceptable to leave the churches on the appointed liturgical days and participate in services elsewhere. The respective prelate of each diocese has the duty see to it that the clergy diligently observe this directive.

In conclusion, the Holy Synod also observed the Golden Jubilee of the episcopal consecration of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch. On February 11, 2012, His Holiness completed the fiftieth anniversary of his consecration to the episcopate, which took place on February 11, 1962 by the late His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Catholicos Patriarch, at St. George Cathedral in Tehran, Iran. On May 27, 2012, the Golden Jubilee was auspiciously celebrated by the Diocese of Eastern USA in Chicago, Illinois at a banquet function attended by over 1400 faithful, along with numerous dignitaries, among them His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Chicago.

All the Prelates of the Assyrian Church of the East felicitated His Holiness during the Holy Synod on this auspicious occasion, and pray to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the continued well being of His Holiness and for many more years to come to guide and shepherd the holy Church.

*Given this 7th day of June, 2012 A.D., from the Secretariat of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East.*

By Grace, Mar Awa Royel, *Secretary*



*To His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV  
Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East*

The Golden Jubilee of the episcopal consecration of Your Holiness, which has culminated in your distinguished ministry as Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, offers me the opportunity to extend my congratulations and prayerful good wishes to you.

I thank the Lord for the many blessings he has bestowed on the Assyrian Church of the East through your ministry, and I am grateful for your commitment to promoting constructive dialogue, fruitful cooperation and growing friendship between our Churches. I recall your presence at the funeral of John Paul II and, previously, your 1994 visit to Rome to sign a Common Declaration on Christology. The subsequent Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East has borne many fruits. I renew the hope which I expressed during your visit to Rome in June 2007, that "the fruitful labour which the Commission has accomplished over the years can continue, while never losing sight of the



ultimate goal of our common journey towards the re-establishment of full communion”.

I wish also to reiterate my solidarity with the Christian communities in Iraq and throughout the Middle East, praying that effective forms of common witness to the Gospel and pastoral collaboration in the service of peace, reconciliation and unity may be deepened between the Catholic and Assyrian faithful.

Your Holiness, on this significant anniversary, I pray that the love of God the Father may enfold you, the wisdom of the Son enlighten you and the fire of the Holy Spirit continue to inspire you.

With sentiments of respect, I extend to Your Holiness a fraternal embrace in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

From the Vatican, 21 May 2012



## **H.G. Mar Emmanuel Joseph Visits Alberta, Canada**

His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada, has reinforced the Church's efforts towards persecuted Christians around the world, during an Episcopal visit to the city of Edmonton in Alberta, Canada and offered Holy Eucharist at the local parish on Sunday 9 January.

Outlining the financial, political and daily disadvantages of Christians living in the homeland, His Grace was met with reactions of support and comfort from the Church's faithful.

A formal interview was conducted by local Salim Elijah. Questions included: "Is the Church the backbone of the Christian body of all ethnic groups, especially those with residency in Iraq?" and "What is the Church's view on the activities of terrorism taking place in Iraq?"

His Grace answered accordingly, and stated that the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East and its people are the indigenous of Iraq, which is both historically and factually true.

The Church has been the longest acting body of support for our people in need throughout the ages, both financially and spiritually, said His Grace, who pointed to the continuous work of the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization (ACERO).

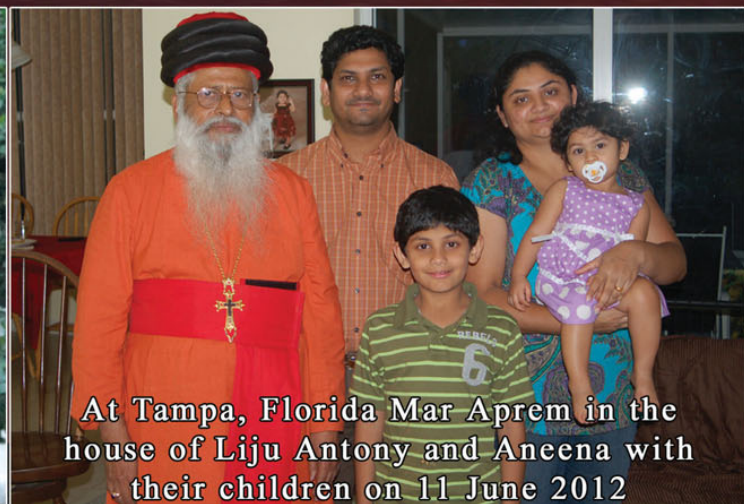




Catholicos Patriarch Receives Director of 'Jingjiao' Fellowship



Dr. Tinto Tony received Medical Degree from Tblisi, Georgia



At Tampa, Florida Mar Aprem in the house of Liju Antony and Aneena with their children on 11 June 2012





Ordination of Reverend Addai Daniel at Urmia, Iran by His Grace  
Mar Narsai Benjamin, Bishop of Iran



His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada  
with others in Alberta, Canada





**Linda and Raju with with two sons Alan and Anly along with Linda's Sister Linla and her husband Glyco with Mar Aprem**



**Dr. Sonia Daniel (daughter of late Fr. T P Daniel) with her husband Dr. Santosh along with Mar Aprem Metropolitan in front of the Grant Mosque in Abu Dhabi on 20 June 2012**





After ordination of Deacon Cyril Antony, Nimson Varghese and Clinton Sobhan by Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan in Mar Addai Shleeha Church Thrissur on July 3rd 2012,. Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Clergymen and Sisters are seen in the picture



Mar Aprem Metropolitan Pictured at the Sir Bani Yas Island Monastery Site on 21 June 2012 along with Mar Yohannan Episcopa and Mr. John Mc Night Manager of this project

## **ACERO Launches Relief Effort for Krasnodar Flood Victims**

The Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation (ACERO) has issued an urgent call to faithful of the Holy Church and of all compassionate individuals worldwide to support a major campaign to provide urgently needed aid to Assyrians affected by massive recent flooding in Krasnodar, Russia.

According to recent reports, flooding in the Krasnodar region of Russia has to date left 171 people dead with more than 25,000 people having lost part or all of their belongings.

The flooding has had a particular impact on the town of Krymsk, Krasnodar where more than 2000 Assyrians reside.

Amongst the dead are 5 Assyrians including 2 children. Additionally, more than 140 Assyrian houses have been either partially or completely destroyed.

ACERO is appealing for assistance to help the families affected by the disaster which is expected to have an ongoing impact in the region.

Financial assistance is urgently needed to provide direct aid to Assyrians in the region.

This assistance will help in the relief effort on the ground and will support in the provision of food aid, shelter, clothing and other items as the situation develops. ACERO is coordinating with Rev'd Patros Polous, parish priest in Krasnodar and with other community leaders.

ACERO and the Assyrian Church of the East call upon faithful to lend a hand of support that urgently needed aid may reach those most affected by the flooding.

Donations can be made simply and securely through ACERO's website using PayPal at the following link:

*<http://www.theacero.org/donate.php>*

Receipts will be issued by ACERO via e-mail.

Alternatively donations can be made through all Assyrian Church of the East parishes worldwide with a note that the funds should go to the ACERO relief effort for victims of the Krasnodar floods.

Source: *<http://news.assyrianchurch.org/2012/07/15>*

*[acero-launches-relief-effort-for-krasnodar-flood-victims/3930](#)*

## **Catholicos-Patriarch Receives Director of 'Jingjiao Fellowship'**

On the morning of Monday, June 4, 2012, His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, received in audience at the patriarchate Mr. David Tam, director of the Hong Kong based 'Jingjiao Fellowship.' Also in attendance of the audience were: Their Graces Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California, President of CIRED and Secretary of the Holy Synod; Mar Paulus Benjamin, the newly consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern USA;

Mar Narsai Benyamin, Bishop of the Diocese of Iran; and the Very Rev. Archdeacon William Toma, parish priest of Mar Sargis parish in Chicago and Archdeacon of the Holy Synod.

Mr. Tam apprised His Holiness of the efforts and progress made by the 'Jingjiao Fellowship,' which for over a year now has promoted awareness of the Assyrian Church of the East and her mission to the esteemed Chinese People. The fellowship is gradually growing into not only groups of Christian faithful who would like to re-discover their ancient Christian Chinese heritage, but also scholars from both Hong Kong and the Mainland who presently study and write about the Jingjiao, their faith and evangelistic efforts in the past. Mr. Tam presented His Holiness the Patriarch with a finely-bound copy of the first ever Chinese translation of the Qurbana Qaddisha (Holy Eucharistic Liturgy) according to the eucharistic prayer of Mar Addai & Mar Mari. This first Chinese translation is taken directly from the sacerdotal manual of the late Qasha Yosip Kelaita (1928 Mosul edition). Mr. Tam is presently working on a simpler edition for the use of the faithful in the pews. Other gifts representing the Chinese culture were presented to His Holiness.

His Holiness the Patriarch thanked Mr. Tam for his own personal efforts in directing and beginning the 'Jingjiao Fellowship,' and expressed the Assyrian Church of the East's desire to re-establish the link between herself and the Chinese people. The Patriarch and the director also spoke about practical efforts in beginning and sustaining an official mission of the Church to China and in training clergy and missionaries of the Assyrian Church of the East and from China respectively in order to bring about a hoped-for re-establishment of the Church in Hong Kong and the Mainland. Further efforts, already in place, are the translations of the theological writings of Mar Narsai of Nisibis (d. 502) and Mar Theodoros (d. 428) into Chinese; this project is being carried by the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, an inter-Church scholarly forum based in Hong Kong.

His Holiness further referred this matter to the office of CIRED, and plans are being put in place for further work in Hong Kong late this year. His Holiness was filled with joy at this visit and expressed his desire that this evangelistic work begin as soon as possible. At the end of the audience, the Patriarch presented Mr. Tam with a silver 'Nestorian Monument' Cross and a photo of the Holy Synod, and concluded by imparting his apostolic blessing to the whole Jingjiao Fellowship.

It is worthy to note that the first efforts at evangelization by the Assyrian Church of the East took place in 635 AD, when the prelate by the name of 'Alopen' first arrived in China of the Tang Dynasty. After three years of personally studying the Scriptures and religious documents outlining the faith of the Church of the East, translated into Chinese, the Emperor Tang issued an imperial edict allowing for the propagation of the faith of the Church of the East all throughout the empire.

*Courtesy: [www.news.assyrianchurch.org](http://www.news.assyrianchurch.org)*



## **Interview with H.G. Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California**

(Continued from March-April issue)

**ACN: Is there anything else you'd like to add about the book or the sacraments of the Church?**

H.G.: Finally, I would like to thank all those who have supported the writing of this humble 'labor of love' *Mysteries of the Kingdom*. First and foremost, His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV for his support and encouragement to put everything in writing and in book form. I would also like to thank George Zia of *MediusCorp.* (San Jose, California) for having printed a little over 3,000 copies now, *pro bono*. I would also like to thank Rev. Fr. Genard Lazar for handling the distribution and Rev. Fr. Lawrance Namato for creating the cover and back designs, as well as the end-material (apparatus). I would also like to thank my brother bishops in supporting the distribution of this catechism in their dioceses, especially in the English-speaking countries. In closing, it was my joy to have had this conversation regarding *Mysteries of the Kingdom* with the staff and audience of *news. assyrianchurch.org*; may the Lord bless you and may you continue your noble task of informing our faithful of the daily activities of their Church!

### **About His Grace Mar Awa Royel**

A native Chicagoan, His Grace graduated with a Bachelor of Sacred Theology from the University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois in 1999. He later undertook postgraduate theological studies in Rome graduating with a Licentiate of Sacred Theology (2001) and a Doctorate of Sacred Theology (2007) from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, specialising in Eastern Liturgy. His Grace was consecrated to the episcopacy at Mar Zaia Cathedral, Modesto, California in November 2008.

His Grace Mar Awa is the Secretary of the Holy Synod and President of Church's Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Education Development (CIRED). He also represents the Assyrian Church of the East as a member of the *Forum Syriacum* (Pro Oriente Foundation, Vienna) and has been active in a wide variety of international symposia to date.

***Mysteries of the Kingdom: The Sacraments of the Assyrian Church of the East, by His Grace Mar Awa Royel, has been distributed to many of the major parishes and centers of the Assyrian Church of the East. To purchase a copy, check with your diocese or at your local parish. Alternatively, the book is available to order from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).***

Courtesy: [www.news.assyrianchurch.org](http://www.news.assyrianchurch.org)

## **Chicago, Dallas Detroit & Florida**

**A Brief Travelogue of May - June 2012  
by Mar Aprem Metropolitan**

### **Dallas**

Dr. Anand Mangalam's son David Paul was baptized after the Holy Qurbana in the Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas. As there is no regular parish for our church in Dallas, the Holy Qurbana is

conducted occasionally there. Deacon Raumin Benjamin who is an accountant from California is giving leadership for conducting service there. A priest is sent from Phoenix, Arizona to conduct services. Archdeacon Frederick came to assist me in the Holy Qurbana and baptism.

My niece Mrs. Maya (Anne) Jacob took leadership to contact the Indians. Mathew Chakola and his mother Valsa were there. Mrs. Sindhu Thottan was there, although her family had gone to Thrissur. Anson, son of Deacon N.A. Timothy lives in Dallas. But he could not come for Qurbana as he was to travel to another city in connection with his work. I had prayed in the home of Dencil Johnson Chammanam, a tennis coach from Thrissur who lives in Dallas.

I visited and prayed in the home of Donald Daniel, younger brother of Deacon Daniel Daniel. Donald is a businessman who is a good reader of Assyrian books. Donald told me that we can now read a lot of rare books on our church by downloading from Google. His brilliant three sons were there. His wife Neena prepared a sumptuous breakfast for me and Maya.

## **Detroit**

On Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012 I left Dallas by 5.30 pm and reached Detroit Fort Worth Airport by 9 p.m. Rev'd Ameer, Vicar of St. Mary's Assyrian Church, Deacon Rowel and the youth were there to receive me at the airport. I was meeting Rev'd Ameer for the first time. He had studied in Babel College, Baghdad along with our two Indian priests Rev'd Joju Anto and Rev'd E.V. Antony.

Rev'd Ameer took me to Ryan Restaurant near our church (14<sup>th</sup> mile) in Warren, Michigan. I was there in 2006 when the new church was being completed. Rev'd Benjamin Benjamin was our parish priest in this church at that time. Now he is transferred to the parish in Windsor.

Deacon Rowel was in this parish when I came to the parish. I could not forget his reflex because I told him last time that 'you had the name of the late Patriarch Mar Rowel Shimon' who died in 1903 A.D. I understand that there is no royalty in the name of Bishop Mar Awa Royal of California. The "Royal" his family is using as their surname is the English or American rendering of the Assyrian 'Rowel'.

Since some of the committee members knew that I am a writer, they were asking me about the availability of the books I have written. I told them that I do not advertise my books on *amazon.com* because the cost of the price goes up. Some three or four years ago one Indian bought my small book for Rs.15/- (that is one third of a dollar), and advertised it for \$105 on *amazon.com*. I do not expect any financial profit by writing books. But at the same time I do not want somebody to exploit me by selling my books at high prices. What my readers should do is to write or email me and order my books without any middleman. Then I will be happy that the efforts I had gone to to give a lot of detail about our church through my travelogues will be rewarded.

Ryan Restaurant is a place where Assyrian food is available. It also provides income for the church. In 2006 when I visited, Deacon Rowel and Deacon Laurence Namato were running this restaurant. Now Deacon Laurence was promoted a priest and is serving our church in San Jose. He is a computer engineer. He runs the unofficial website *www.nestorian.org*. It has a lot of useful information about our church. I had the privilege of writing an article on the Church of the East in India for that website. During my last visit to Detroit Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and I were guests in his sprawling mansion for breakfast.

## **Florida**

On 10 June 2012 I flew from Detroit to Tampa. The flight to Tampa was through Fort Lauderdale. When we reached Fort Lauderdale it was announced that the connecting flight was delayed. So I waited for nearly two hours. I telephoned Liju, son of my classmate M.F. Antony, son of late Rev'd Francis Mangalam to tell him that my connecting flight was delayed. He said, 'I knew it as I am checking it on the internet'.

At Tampa I went for a walk to the park along with Aneena, wife of Liju, who is the daughter of Rev'd. Lazar Madathumpadi. Children, Joshua and Eva came with us. On the same day we had some guests for supper in their home. One was Catherine, my second cousin and her husband James.

Dr. Lonappen Chackola, his wife Merleena and son Paul came to see me. Merleena is from Bogotá. Dr. Lonappen was my neighbor in Thrissur in my young days. That night Lijo drove me to Orlando to the house of my sister Leela and husband Prof. Alexander Alex. They took me to a good restaurant for dinner. The restaurant people are friendly and the staff sang 'Happy Birthday' when they came with cake at the end of dinner. Rajan Varghese and his wife Sheela were staying in their house. They had bought a nice house near my sister's. Next day we visited the house of Kunjumon whose mother-in-law was leaving for Bangalore to attend the funeral of her brother Sebastian who died at the age of 40. Nobody can predict at what age one dies.

On Friday I flew to Fort Lauderdale and stayed with Dr. Francis Chandy and his wife Joicy. I had conducted their wedding some 36 years ago. They have two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth who went to India to earn MBBS degree and returned to US to practice medicine after doing their residency in USA.

On Saturday 16 June we drove to Miami and Palm Beach and went to visit Paul Ollukkaran, living in West Palm Beach. Although his wife Nimmy was in India, Paul and his second son Michael prepared a good lunch for us. I also plucked and ate *Chambakka*, a fruit I had not seen in America. I had conducted house baptism of Michael in Boston in 1995. Since then Paul Ollukkarn family moved to Palm Beach.

In the flight they gave cheese and crispy crackers from NABISCO, called 100 cal. The cover says 'best when used by 27 August. But my appetite finished it in 5 minutes'.

## **Return from USA**

On 18 June I said good bye to Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in his modest residence in Morton Grove. Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin was there in addition to Mrs. Christina Wilson and her sister Mrs. Tina Joseph. Rev'd Antwan Lachin reminded me about the plan he had discussed with Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose concerning a project involving our youth in stitching pillow covers etc. and marketing them in our churches in USA.

Cor-episcopa Dr. George Toma who had accompanied H.H. Mar Dinkha IV in his apostolic visit to India in January 2000, came there to take me to O'Hare International Airport. Mr. Edmund who was driving the car took my email address to give to somebody who wants to donate some money to the orphanage in Thrissur.

The reporting time at the airport for international flights is three hours prior to departure. Therefore we reached the airport by 5.15 p.m. for the flight of 8.30 p.m. Thus we checked in even before



5.30 p.m. I was one of the first ones to check in. This time there was no difficulty to get through the security. Of course I had to take off the slippers.

## **Syriac Symposium to be Held in Malta, 16-21 July 2012**

The Committee of the Syriac Symposium and the Christian Arabic Conference, the Department of Oriental Studies (University of Malta), in collaboration with the Faculty of Theology (University of Malta) announce *the XIth Symposium Syriacum* (16-18 July 2012) and *IXth Christian Arabic Studies' Conference* (19-21 July 2012) to be held at the University of Malta, Valletta, Malta.

*Organising Committee:*

Dr Shafiq Abouzayd (Oriental Institute – University of Oxford): [shafiq.abouzayd@orinst.ox.ac.uk](mailto:shafiq.abouzayd@orinst.ox.ac.uk) and:

Dr Martin R. Zammit (**Department of Oriental Studies** – University of Malta): [martin.r.zammit@um.edu.mt](mailto:martin.r.zammit@um.edu.mt)

*Venue:* Old University Building, St Pauls Street, ALLETTA – MALTA

Rev'd Dr. Sister Jincy Othottil from our church in India is presenting a paper at this Symposium. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India had presented papers at Symposium Syriacum in Germany (1980), In Holland (1984), in Belgium (1988), in Cambridge, England (1992) and in Sydney, Australia (2000). This Syriac Symposium started in 1972 and meets once in four years (year of Olympic Games) and brings together scholars from all over the world.

### ***Indian Archdiocese News***

## **Visit to the Nestorian Monastery Ruins on Sir Bani Yas Island (Near Abu Dhabi)**

Mar Aprem Metropolitan visited the Sir Bani Yas Island monastery on 21 June 2012 along with Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph and Church members in UAE.

The Monastery in Sir Bani Yas Island is believed to be the major monastery of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Gulf region in the period of 600 to 750 A.D. Mar Aprem, a church historian, thinks that the recent excavations at the island are an exciting discovery. A lot more is to be excavated in that region. The excavators claim that this island has a history of 7500 years. Unfortunately, there is no information of the recent period since the monks abandoned the monastery in 750 A.D. There are some palm trees which indicates that about 100 years ago some people began to live there.

The British team which excavated [the site] expects to return to the site for further excavations. The Indian Embassy in UAE arranged with the Tourism Development Department in Abu Dhabi at the direction of Sri. S.M. Krishna, the External Affairs Minister of India. Thanks also to Mr. P.C. Chacko, the Lok Sabha member from Thrissur.

## **Ordination in Mar Addai Shleeha Church, Thrissur**

On July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012 an ordination service was conducted in Mar Addai Shleeha Church, Paravattani, Thrissur. Deacon Cyril Antony was ordained as priest (Qashisha), Nimson Varghese as Deacon and Clinton Sobhan as Sub-Deacon. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa and Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa conducted the service. Nearly one thousand members of the Church of the East in India were present on this blessed occasion. Rev'd Cyril Antony has completed six years of theological learning in Thrissur and Bangalore.



Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph are greeted by Advocate Y.A. Rahim, President of the Sharjah Indian Association, at the Sharjah Islamic Heritage Museum on 22 June 2012.



Mar Aprem visits Sharjah Islamic Heritage Museum on 22 June 2012 with Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Fr. Victor Kollanur, Fr. Sachin Timothy, Mr. Daies Idiculla and office bearers of the Travancore Malayalee Council. Head of the Museum is in the Middle.



*The prelates who attended the Holy Synod of the  
Assyrian Church of the East in Chicago  
on 25 May – 1 June 2012*



Left to Right: Mar Narsai Benyamin (Iran), Mar Awgin Kuriakose (India), Mar Emmanuel Joseph (Canada), Mar Aprim Khamis (Arizona), Mar Joseph Sargis of Iraq living in Modesto, California, Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan (India), H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch, (Chicago), Mar Gewargis Sliwa Metropolitan (Iraq), Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan (Sydney, Australia), Mar Odisho Oraham (Sweden), Dr. Mar Awa Royel, (California) Mar Yohannan Yoseph (India), Mar Paulus Benjamin(Chicago).