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Nos 7 & 8



Mar Aprem visiting the Patriarchate on 20 July 2011.
Left to Right: Fr. Khoshaba Buza, H. H. MARDINKHA IV,
Mar Aprem and Fr. Antwan Latchin.

VOICE OF THE EAST



Miss Akhina Mookan won the 21st annual
Miss India-Canada Pageant



Marel and Marlena Orah,
St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School
published their first book
"My Best Friend's Enemy is a Ghost"

VOICE OF THE EAST

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Voice of the East

Vol. 58

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Editorial

The Fifth Family

The Assyrian Church of the East is the oldest autocephalous Church in the eastern world. This fact is known to the scholars of all churches. Despite the glorious history of the Church of the East and the ongoing suffering of its faithful, one Eastern church in particular continues to object to the inclusion of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).

The MECC recognises only four families of churches; the Roman Catholic family, the Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox and the Protestant churches.

A rethinking of this four-family formulation is now made. The General Secretary Mgr. Piotr Mazurkiewicz of the Commission of the Bishops conference of the European Community writes, "The fifth family is one of the oldest and the most self contained of the Middle Eastern Churches". A conference has been called for 18 and 19 November 2011 in Kaslik, Lebanon to discuss the future of the Christians in the Middle East. Obviously the Assyrian Church of the East was invited.

By the eleventh century, the Assyrian Church of the East was the world's most far-reaching geographical church. She has a venerable history in spreading the gospel of Christ to the East of the Euphrates River and into the farthest reaches of Almighty God's creation. Many persecutions and misfortunes have however reduced the Church of the East to a fragment of its early numerical and geographical might.

The role played by the Assyrian Church of the East, erroneously called the 'Nestorian Church', cannot be denied or minimized. In his famous book, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, John Stewart calls the Assyrian Church of the East, a 'Church on Fire', referring to the expanse of its missionary enterprise. There is no doubt that the Church of the East should have a prominent place in the study of Christian history and mission.

Regrettably, little is known today amongst the wider public about the magnificent history of the Church. Indeed, many priests and bishops in other churches often ask me, "What is the origin of your church?" Our faithful must learn then to propagate the history and teachings of our forefathers.

It cannot be forgotten that where the history of our Church is well understood, namely amongst our sister churches in the Middle East, greater understanding and acceptance must abound. The acceptance of a 'Fifth Family' by the Commission of the Bishops Conference of the European Community is an important step in the direction towards this greater understanding and acceptance of our most ancient and holy Church.

Mar Aprem

Silver Jubilee Youth Conference

The 2011 Assyrian Church of the East Annual Youth Conference, hosted by St. Mary's Parish of Los Angeles, California has proudly celebrated its silver anniversary.

The conference, held from 29 June – 4 July at the Warner Center Marriott, hosted 300 youth members along with several priests from different parishes around the nation.

Attendees were honored with the presence of His Beatitude Dr. Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of Malabar and India; His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western USA; His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California; and Sister Dr. Jincy of India.

This year's conference theme was "Transformation", with the focus on Romans 12:2 – "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Leading the bible study sessions were Cor-episcopa Gewargis Toma of Chicago, Illinois; Rev. Genard Lazar of Sydney, Australia; Rev. Lawrence Namato of San Jose, California; and Deacon James Darmo of Los Angeles, California.

On Friday, His Beatitude Mar Aprem presented his speech on our churches of India, followed by Sister Dr. Jincy who presented her speech on the promotion of the vocation of monastic life in our church.

In the evening, St. Mary's youth hosted an elegant banquet dinner held at the Marriott Banquet Hall during which each youth participant was awarded a medal of honor along with two newly published books, one of which is written by His Grace Mar Awa Royel and titled *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, written to educate about the seven sacraments of our Church.

After a day-long trip to the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California on Saturday, the youth dedicated Sunday to numerous events.

Before commencing the Sunday morning Eucharistic Liturgy, the ordination of two Readers took place, one of whom was a youth conference participant, Robert Ishoo.

A goodbye picnic was held at Lake Balboa Park, followed by an evening of hors d'oeuvres by the pool, friendly games in the banquet hall and a closing prayer by Rev. Gewargis Rasho.

Youth conference is about building a strong and everlasting relationship with Jesus Christ. We hope that every youth member went home with a new spiritual outlook on life.

Patriarchal Apostolic Sojourn to Canada & Australia

July 27 – August 18 and

September 1 – October 10, 2011

Visit to Canada

- Leaving Chicago towards Toronto on Wednesday July 27, 2011.
- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated at Saint Mary's Cathedral in Toronto on the 1st Sunday of Summer, July 31, 2011.
- Leaving Toronto towards Windsor on Thursday, August 4, 2011.
- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated on Saturday August 6, 2011 on the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration at Saint Thomas Church in Windsor.
- Leaving Windsor on Saturday August 6, 2011 towards London, Ontario. The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Summer on August 7, 2011 in Saint Zaia Church in London.

- Leaving London, Ontario towards Hamilton on Wednesday August 10, 2011. The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated on the Third Sunday of Summer in the Saint Mari Church in Hamilton on August 14, 2011.
- Leaving Hamilton towards Toronto on Sunday August 14, 2011.
- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated for the Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Monday August 15, 2011 in Saint Mary Church in Toronto.
- Leaving Toronto towards Chicago on Thursday August 18, 2011.

Visit to Australia

H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch will conduct an Apostolic Sojourn to the Archdiocese of Australia at the invitation of H.B. Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan and Mr. Yokania Ezekiel, principal of the Assyrian Church School in Sydney.

- Leaving Chicago towards California on September 1, 2011.
- Leaving San Francisco towards Sydney on Monday September 5, 2011.
- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated in Rabban Hurmizd Cathedral on the First Sunday of Elijah on September 11, 2011.
- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated in Saint Mary's Church, Fairfield on the First Sunday of the Cross and Fourth Sunday of Elijah on September 18.
- Blessings and gifts will be presented to the graduates of the Mar Narsai Assyrian College on Wednesday September 21, 2011 at 7:00pm in Edessa Hall.
- Leaving Sydney towards Melbourne on Friday September 23, 2011.
- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Elijah in Melbourne on September 25, 2011.

- Leaving Melbourne towards Sydney on Monday September 26, 2011.

- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated on the Third Sunday of Elijah in Saint Hurmizd Cathedral on October 2, 2011.

- Leaving Sydney towards California on Wednesday October 5, 2011.

- The Mystery of the Holy Qurbana will be celebrated in Mar Yosip Khnanisho Church on the Second Sunday of the Cross on October 9, 2011.

- Leaving California towards Chicago on Monday October 10, 2011.

Christians reach broad consensus on appropriate missionary conduct

28 June 2011

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct”, a five-page document on the conduct of mission “according to gospel principles”, was released during a public presentation on Tuesday 28 June at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland.

The recommendations regarding respectful behaviour on the part of missionaries, evangelists and other witnesses when sharing the Christian faith were issued following a five-year series of consultations among the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID) of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

The three bodies include Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal and independent churches with a combined membership of some two billion people representing nearly 90 percent of the world's Christians.



**Dr. Catharin Maney, and husband
with Mar Aprem in Los Angeles**



**Mar Aprem with his nephew Pradeep
Mookken and wife Dr. Lizzymol**



**Mar Aprem baptizes Dylan, grandson of his eldest brother Dr. Jose Mookken
in San Diego assisted by the Vicar Fr.Yohannan Jebbar. Dylan's mother
Dr. Miki and Grandmother Mrs. Lalu Mookken look on.**



Three brothers with Mar Aprem in San Diego. L. to R.: Mr. Gupta, Dr. Jose Mookan, Mar Aprem and Mr. Addison Mookan.



Paul Chakola, Jijy, Diya and Wardu are receiving Mar Aprem at Dubai Airport along with Anil Emmatty, Blessen Antony and Chacko Konikara with his grandchild.



Linson Thettayil with wife and son are meeting Mar Aprem after Holy Qurbana in Yonkers, New York on 25 July 2011.



Mar Aprem with Kurian Cheeran's children in New Jersey



Mar Aprem in Youth Conference with Robert Khananisho in Los Angeles



**Mar Dinkha Bhavan Parsonage of
Mar Narsai Parish, Nadathara, India**



Bishop Mar Odisho Oraham visiting one of his Parishes in Europe

Miss Akhina Mooken Wins Miss India Canada

The Toronto-area girl defeated 15 contenders from across Canada to win the crown at the 21st annual Miss India-Canada Pageant here.

One of the major cultural events of the Indo-Canadian community across Canada, the annual beauty pageant draws a huge response as it features high-voltage musical performances, songs, catwalks and quizzing of the contestants.

Nineteen-year-old Akhina Mooken, who was finally crowned Miss India-Canada, will have a free trip to India, apart from various awards.

Bestowing the crown on her, event organizer Sanjay Agnihotri said Mooken will work with various social organizations in Canada and India.

After 21 years of this contest it is the first time a South Indian girl is winner. She is from Kerala, from Trichur from the Mooken family. Her father Dharmo Mooken is the second cousin of Mar Aprem Mooken, Metropolitan of India. Dharmo's maternal grandfather is late O.T. Inasu the only Athletha of the Church of the East in India. Akhina Mooken's only brother Akhil Mooken is a police officer in Toronto.

Photo is on cover page 2.

Assyrian Church Scholars Participate in Syriac Symposium

By Joseph Haweil (Melbourne)
www.news.assyrianchurch.com

Assyrian Church of the East scholars have participated in the 6th North American Syriac Symposium, convened at Duke University in USA.

Held between 26-29 June in North Carolina, the symposium saw more than 75 Syriac experts and scholars come together under the theme "Syriac Encounters".

Papers presented at the symposium examined the formation of communal identity, construction of tradition, language contact, and religious conversation within Syriac Christianity and between Syriac Christianity and other traditions.

His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada, and the Rev'd Sister Jincy Othottil Ulahannan of the Order of Marth Mariam Sisters, Kerala, India were participating representatives of the Assyrian Church of the East.

His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph of Canada presented a paper entitled Monastic Dress in a *Memra* attributed to John bar Penkâyc. His Grace holds two Masters degrees in Divinity and in Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. He is presently a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto.

The Rev'd Sister Jincy's paper was entitled Liturgical Theology of St. Mary in the East Syriac Perspective.

Sister Jincy holds Bachelor and Master of Commerce degrees from Calicut University. She also holds a Master of Syriac Language and Literature and a PhD in Syriac from Mahatma Gandhi University. Sr. Jincy is presently the Principal of the Chaldean Syrian College of the Assyrian Church of the East in East Fort, Thrissur.

Californian Capital Recognizes Assyrian Martyrs Day

By Joseph Haweil (Melbourne)
www.news.assyrianchurch.com

The City of Sacramento, capital of California, has passed a resolution recognising 7 August as Assyrian Martyrs Remembrance Day.

The resolution, officially passed on 26 July 2011, particularly noted the history of the Assyrian Genocide and its 2007 recognition by the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

In accepting the resolution from Sacramento City Council, His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California, thanked the City of Sacramento and noted the “past sufferings, persecutions [and] genocide committed against the Assyrians, Christians of Mesopotamia, the indigenous people of modern day Iraq.”

“In recent history the suffering of the Assyrian Christians began at the turn of the 20th century when during the First World War, the imperial Ottoman government carried out a systematic genocide of the Assyrians, the Armenians and the Pontic Greeks,” said His Grace.

“Later in 1933 the royal government of Iraq carried out the massacre of the Assyrians at Semele, in Northern Iraq.”

Concluding his remarks, the Bishop of California discussed the present persecution of Assyrians in the Middle East, observing, “still today, the Assyrian Christians of Iraq in particular and in the Middle East at large are persecuted and driven out of their ancestral homeland.”

Assyrian Martyrs Day is held worldwide on 7 August annually.

Shrine for Patriarchs and Bishops

A shrine for Assyrian Patriarchs and Bishops has been erected in Montrose Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois (with up to 15 spaces for future burials). This shrine is needed as Assyrians churches and Bishops are a reality in the USA. The shrine in Chicago states that it is erected ‘during the Patriarchate of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch.’ H.H. the late Mar Eshai Shimun, Catholicos Patriarch was buried in California in November 1975. Mar Narsai De Baz, late Metropolitan of Lebanon was buried in Chicago in February 2010.

This beautiful shrine, constructed in marble was dedicated by Dr. Norman Solhkhah and Dr. Edison Ishaya on Friday 29 July 2011.

Commemoration of Saint Yosip Khnanisho in Kirkuk

The youth association of St George Church in Kirkuk, Iraq have successfully drawn together

local youths through a three-part series of educational presentations.

The presentations, given over numerous weeks, covered various discussion topics, included dramatic plays of many genres and welcomed hymns and lectures offered by church members.

The third message in the series, held on the 14 July, coincided with the commemoration day of Saint Yosip Khnanisho according to the calendar of the Assyrian Church of the East.

A comedy drama was performed, followed by a program of cultural, scientific and religious lectures allowing constructive debates between two teams.

The fun-filled and educational day was described as an opportunity to gather the youth of the church from the dangerous streets of the city and into the loving and peaceful house of the Lord.

Bishop Mar Odisho Oraham in Jönköping

Parishioners of St Mary Church in Jönköping, Sweden have welcomed His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe.

On arriving, His Grace was warmly welcomed by Rev. Daniel Shimon along with many deacons and committee members of the parish.

His Grace consecrated the Eucharistic Liturgy at St Mary Church on 31 July, the commemoration date of the Feast of Nosarde’l (God’s Feast), which celebrates the Assyrian nation’s conversion and subsequent baptism into Christianity.

At the conclusion of the offering of Holy Qurbana, the parishioners fellowshiped in the church hall where they shared in an open breakfast in honor of His Grace’s visit.

In his keynote message, His Grace updated parishioners on the Eastern Churches meetings in Berlin.

During his visit to the southern Swedish city, His Grace visited many homes of parishioners before departing for the Episcopal See of Stockholm.

His Grace will visit many European parishes during an upcoming five-week sojourn.

LOS ANGELES TO DUBAI

via Chicago and New York

Mar Aprem Metropolitan

From Cochin to Los Angeles

On Monday 27th June 2011, I left Thrissur early in the morning and reached the international airport in Cochin in less than one hour. Flying from Cochin I reached Dubai Airport three hours later. Dubai's airport is very long and it is tiresome to go to the gate of departure to board the Los Angeles flight. Therefore I had requested for the wheelchair service. Therefore, the tedious nature of international travel is made a little more comfortable for the old and the sick.

There were other passengers who were trying to get into our three wheeler car. But the staff said, "We are paid by another company, we are helpless. We will lose our job if we show sympathy to other old passengers who are not listed with our company."

When we boarded the flight to Los Angeles we knew that it was going to be a long non-stop flight of over 15 hours. Upon reaching our destination I got the help of the wheel chair once again. Therefore without much waiting in the long queue for immigration we were wheeled through a short cut meant for diplomatic personnel as well as the ill.

When my wheel chair came out of the security area before all other passengers the priest of our parish Cor-episcopa George Rasho and Deacon Walter were waiting for me. I told them I am not sick. I just took advantage of my old age to get the services of the wheel chair. If all passengers above 71 request the wheel chair service it will be an increased burden upon the airlines.

Silver Jubilee of the Youth Conference

The Assyrian Youth Conference was a grand success. Cor-episcopa George Rasho, priest of the Los Angeles parish along with his wife Helen and four daughters were working day and night for the success of this big event. His eldest daughter Christine was the local in charge.

My presentation was about the modern Church of the East in India including statistics and the present plans of our church with help of the two young bishops Mar Yohannan Yoseph and Mar Awgin Kuriakose both living in Trichur and supervising 15 parishes each under the Archdiocese of India. Many people asked formal and informal questions about the Church in India. Some are well informed about the activities through the *Voice of the East* bi-monthly as well as the through the website www.churchoftheeastindia.org.

Rev. Dr. Sr. Jincy also gave a talk encouraging vocation among young people. She had attended the Youth Conference in San Jose two years earlier also. Last year Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose attended the conference. Sujo Jos, daughter of the priest in Madras Rev. Jos Konikara had attended the conference last year.

The 300 youth from our different parishes were happy to hear about our church in India and the many activities going on. As the Catholicos Patriarch did not come this year owing to his busy schedule I had the privilege of celebrating Holy Qurbana on July 3rd in St. Mary's Church. As the renovated church is not completed yet we consecrated the Holy Qurbana in the adjacent reception hall. Bishop Dr. Mar Awa Royel gave the homily and Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis helped me to do the 20 minutes of bending and kneeling during the liturgy. We three bishops gave the sacrament of Qurbana in three sections.

From the Indian Church Varghese, son of Vengassery Anthony Master came to attend the Holy Qurbana. Although there were cor-episcopas and priests and many deacons they could not stand in the altar due to lack of space. Six deacons and one cor-episcopa and three bishops conducted the service.

Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis ordained two sub deacons, one of whom was already a Reader. Many young people come forward to be deacons. Both these young deacons were already graduates. Most of the new deacons are educated; Deacon Rauman who attended Holy Qurbana in India on my 70th birthday is finishing his exams to become a Chartered Accountant. Although we refer to this qualification as CA, Americans call it CPA.

Deacon Pathrose DDS of San Jose is a dentist. He donated \$10,000 for the Youth Conference (four and a half lakh rupees - nearly half a million rupees). Of course dentists make a lot of money in America but a desire to donate is special gift from God. His wife showed her family Bible and asked me as well as Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis to write something in it for remembrance.

Visits to Indian Homes

I was able to visit Dr. Catharyn Mani, dentist daughter of Maney Paul as well as Dianne, daughter of Architect Chandy Francis.

In San Diego I stayed in the house of my younger brother Addison Mookken. I baptized Dylan, son of Dr. Miki, second daughter of my eldest brother Dr. Joe Mookken on Sunday 10 July in the newly consecrated Rabban Hurmizd Church in San Diego.

On Wednesday July 6th I was invited to have supper in the home of Rev. Ashur D. alKhouri,

priest of our parish in Orange County. I had visited Qasha's house in Beirut in 1962 before he was born. His uncle, Deacon Israel Khouri whom I later met as cor-episcopa in Australia, was my guide in 1962 in taking me to the church in Beirut as well as the house of a leader of the Assyrian community Mr. Avraham Aziz. Rev. Ashur's grandfather Rev. Pathrose Khoury of Tkhuma tribe was a well known person. He came to work in USA and died there.

That is why I decided to visit his home in Beirut when I was retuning after my studies in England on a World Council of Churches scholarship. Beirut was beautiful and prosperous in 1962. But when I visited Beirut as a guest of the late Mar Narsai Metropolitan in March 1998 the situation had changed from bad to worse. Even now the future is not bright for Christians.

I was happy to spend time with Qasha Ashur and his wife and three boys. All three boys are soccer players. One of the boys is named David after grand father; my father's name was also David (or Devassy in Malayalam dialect). So I felt at home in that family. Qasha Ashur is an engineer by profession. He is an architect. He was serving the Church as a deacon in an honorary capacity. But when the priest of the St. Paul's Parish in Orange County Rev. Gaby Brakhia died suddenly the parish was without a priest. Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis who has the charge of the three parishes in Southern California trained him as a priest and ordained him to the rank of a priest. Now Rev. Ashur is not only a builder of churches and buildings, but a builder of souls. He told me that he converted one Gupta from India and baptized him to Christianity by the name Peter.

Rev. Ashur has built a good relationship with the neighboring churches. It is interesting to note that these ecumenical friends include Bishop Serapion of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It is a historical fact that there was great enmity between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of

Constantinople during the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

Holy Qurbana and Baptism in San Diego

On Sunday 10 July I celebrated Holy Qurbana in the new Church in Green Valley in San Diego. The Church is only 3 miles from the house of Addison in Green Valley. It is on the main road and a good location with plenty of space for the parking of cars. The cost of this church was \$800,000. It was sold to us when a female African-American Protestant pastor died leaving a congregation which her children did not wish to continue serving. Therefore, the members joined other neighboring churches.

Our congregation is only 100 families. This church has more than sufficient space for our members. Our people are renovating it. There is enough room downstairs for a hall and class rooms for Sunday school.

On Saturday evening I had gone to that church and conducted evening prayer known as *Ramsha* in our Church. In addition to the parish priest Rev. Yokhanna Jebba, Rev. Pathrose was also there. Both these priests had left the Chaldean Catholic Church and joined our Church. Rev. Pathrose told me that he was a parish priest in Vienna and other places in Europe.

On Monday 11 July Addison drove me to the Los Angeles Airport from his home in Green Valley, San Diego. We planned to leave at 5.30 a.m. Then we decided it would be adequate to leave at 6.00 a.m. in order to reach the airport at 8.30 a.m. When we arrived at the airport we decided to check in at the kerb. Unfortunately we had no seat number assigned to me. So the man who checked the baggage said he would issue a boarding pass and I should proceed to the gate to get the seat assigned one hour prior to the departure of the flight.

In order to check in the one suitcase I had to pay \$25. The man who does the check in at the Kerb insisted that I should produce a credit card or debit card. I have never had credit cards in my life. Addison used his credit card. Thus the bag was checked in. Addison advised me to get a credit card before my next foreign trip. Nevertheless I have a hunch that credit cards will drag one into debts.

To O'Hare in Chicago

I flew to Chicago on 11 July. Kando Makko and Joe Jacob were waiting at the airport. "Are you not an *ihnaya*?" That question amused him. I remember that he told me some years ago that his father was the late Deacon Benjamin Jacob of Flint, Michigan. Deacon Benjamin Jacob was a cousin or uncle of Mar Thoma Darmo, former Metropolitan in India. The term '*ihnaye*' refers to individuals from Eyil village, which is close to the village of Mar Bhisho where the late Mar Abimalek Timotheus was born in 1878.

I stayed in the parsonage at the St. Mary Church in Roselle, near Chicago. Last year when Bishop Mar Awgin came for the Youth Conference he stayed in the same building. Since then nobody has been residing in that building. Therefore they had to repair the air conditioner upstairs.

Mr. Kando Makko and his wife Emily were taking good care of me. Mr. Kando is retired and has time to devote for the church. Emily had been a house wife all along and so had enough time for cooking. They wanted me to eat more. I told them that I would be sick if I ate more than what I was doing. My weight could hit a dangerous 80 kg i.e. 176 lbs.

It is not the stomach that decides. The brain should give a command to the stomach to stop eating when we are in the danger zone. Remember Proverbs 23, verse 2. No doubt daily

exercises like a one hour brisk walk in the morning will do wonders. I know it, but I do not strictly adhere to such a routine.

Rev. Khoshaba Buza, priest of this parish is staying in his own house. Some three years ago Cor-bishop Paulos and Rev. Dr. William Toma were staying in that house. Now both of them moved out closer to their parish churches. Cor-bishop Paulos is the Vicar of the St. George Cathedral and Rev. Dr. William Toma is the Vicar of St. Sargis Church which was the Cathedral until Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun moved his residence from Chicago to San Francisco around 1954.

I spent one day with my sister Prabha's son Chacko Cherian Poothicote whom we call Chiku. He is an IT specialist. His wife Smitha works for IBM. The other house I stayed in was that of Sanil, son of my younger brother Windsor. Sanil Mookan is an IT Manager in Tech Lighting Co. in Skokie. Sanil and his wife Mariya are active members of St. John Church in Chicago.

On Saturday 16 July Juliet Kasha and her son Ramsen came to St. Mary Church and took me to their home. I had stayed in that home when the late Bishop Poulos Mar Poulos and myself went to attend the Holy Synod in 1997.

On Sunday 17 July Sanil Mookan drove me to St. George Cathedral at H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Boulevard. The parish priest Cor-Bishop Paulos, Deacon Dadway and others assisted me. The Cathedral was almost full. Santhosh Nadakavukaren and his wife Sumathi were there. Both their children were baptized in this church. But they could not come this time as they were spending summer vacation with grandpa and grandma in Cochin. A new comer was Liejeo Joy, son of Mr. I.G. Joy, Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees in India.

We had breakfast in the hall after Holy Qurbana. Cor-episcopa announced that anybody wanting to give donation to the Indian Church could give it to the office and he would hand the total

amount to me. Thus they gave us \$2500. The latter, along with the \$500 which St. Mari Church, Yonkers presented me, was handed over to the Trustees for building the Assyrian Convent in Thrissur. The total cost of the first floor of the Assyrian Convent is 3 million Rupees or \$69,000. If a miracle happens we can complete the first floor which can accommodate eight nuns. Now we have only three nuns.

Two O'Clock and Twelve O'Clock

The Catholicos Patriarch was away visiting parishes in New York and New Britain when I reached Chicago. One day after His Holiness returned to Chicago his secretary Rev. Antwan Latchin telephoned to inform me that my appointment with the Patriarch is at two o'clock and lunch. I heard twelve o'clock and Rev. Khoshaba Buza drove me from St. Mary Church, Rosalle to Morton Grove. As there was an accident on the way there was some delay in traffic. I prayed to God to help us to reach the Patriarchate on time. Yes! We made it 2 minutes before twelve o'clock. We were ushered into the sitting room.

I noticed some delay there. Later I understood that I was expected there only at two o'clock. Then I understood that two o'clock twelve o'clock sounded very close. During our interview I was able to present a typed report from the time of the last Holy Synod in January 2010 to July 2011 to the Catholicos Patriarch. His Holiness blessed the plaque to be fixed on the building of Assyrian Convent for the Mart Mariam Sisters which is being built in Thrissur, India. I also submitted the reports of the two Episcopas under me, namely Mar Yohannan Yoseph and Mar Awgin Kuriakose.

His Holiness was happy to hear about the construction of the Mar Timotheus Metropolitan II Arcade which is a commercial complex. The rent from this building will be used entirely to

help old men in our Church who will need financial assistance for their living. This land was donated by the late C.J. Mathunny Master whose only son Jose had died young. I also reported about the progress we are making in the Seminary 10 kms from Thrissur in the 52 acre land donated by late Athletha O.T. Inasu. There is a Rubber Estate which will give income after two years.

O'Hare to JFK Airport in New York

On 20 July I went to New York and was received by John Thermadam at JFK airport. I stayed in his home which I had blessed in my previous trip a year earlier.

John Thermadam's father is the first cousin of late Mar Timotheus Metropolitan II who died on 6 August 2001. The next day we went to an Indian restaurant run by Samuel Pananchery. I had a good Indian meal in his restaurant.

On Friday I had breakfast in the house of Rev. George Sulaiman, our priest in Yonkers. Recently he had attained a master's degree in pastoral work. He is doing excellent work in that parish. He is keeping good contact with the family of Geevarghese Emmatty and Samuel Pananchery who are more frequent in attending this parish. Mr. Ivan Mirza is always encouraging Indian members to come and attend the Assyrian service.

On Sunday July 24 I baptized Alyssa, daughter of Miki, son of Geevarghese Emmatty of New Jersey after celebrating the Holy Qurbana in St. Mari Church in Yonkers, New York. I had done several baptisms for that family in New Delhi and New York.

I also had to baptize the twins (a boy and a girl) of Timmy Mookan whose grandfather was Thimothy Mookan, brother of M.O. Thomakutty, a famous leader of the Assyrian Church in India when I was a youngster. I re-

member when I first met the present Catholicos Patriarch in 1967 in Yonkers, New York (when the Patriarch was an Episcopa and I was a priest, both 44 years older now) he asked me "How is Mookan Thomakutty?"

On Saturday before baptism I had moved to the house of Jiju, niece of Geevarghese Emmatty. It was the first birthday of her second child. The celebration was in the Orthodox Church. Jiju's husband Rajan Cheeran is an advocate. Rajan's mother Elisa is the first cousin of Rev. Timothy Pananchery who was 95 years old when he died, creating a record for the longevity for our clergy in India. The record for longevity in our universal church is that of the grandfather of our present Catholicos Patriarch, Rev. Benyamin who lived up to 105.

Eighth Visit to UAE Parish

On Wednesday 27 July I reached Dubai Airport. I had celebrated Holy Qurbana in Dubai in April 2005 inaugurating the UAE Mart Mariam Parish. It was in the Mar Thoma Church in Jabal Ali. Later we rented a chapel in St. Martin's Anglican Church in Sharjah in Yarmook area where many other churches are situated. After the first Holy Qurbana I visited the parish on six other occasions. This therefore was the eight time I was visiting UAE to conduct Holy Qurbana. The previous visit was in March 2010.

The first baptism organized in Sharjah Parish was on 13 June 2008 along with my birthday celebration. Hanna Maria (Tressia) was baptized at Mart Mariam UAE Parish (daughter of Leans and Bindu Chakola) by Rev. Simon Emmatty and Rev. Victor Kollannur. That was the time when Deacon Sachin Timothy joined the parish of UAE as assistant Vicar and continues in that capacity, although he was promoted as full priest in India in January 2009.

One and a half years later, a second baptism took place in January 2010 when Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV came to UAE parish while returning from India after consecrating two

Indian bishops. This baby was that of Paul Varghese Chakola and Jiji.

On Friday 29 July I celebrated Holy Qurbana in Emirates National School; the same place as my previous visits. Our rented chapel in St. Martin's Church where we conduct Holy Qurbana every Friday can accommodate only 75 people.

We conducted baptism before the Holy Qurbana. Not only Indians but Assyrians also came to attend the services. I was happy to see Aprim Shapira, Zia George and his wife, Mr. Ward Zaia, Advocate Carman and Carman's mother could not come as she was sick. Mr Sada and others were also there. Mr. Francis from Baghdad was a new comer.

About 160 people were there. We had a meeting to celebrate my 70th birthday as this was my first visit since turning 70. I told them that I had celebrated even 71 years of life last June. Being a diabetic patient I do not like to eat cake. But why should I stop others from eating cake on my behalf?

In Dubai I stayed in the house of Paul Chakola like last time. His wife Jiji, daughter Diya and son Wardu enjoyed my company. Diya, only eleven year old, taught me something about Facebook on the computer. For her 11th birthday a few days later she wrote her wish on Facebook: 'I want to be a millionaire!' She designed the cover page of Forbes Magazine and pasted her picture on it. There is no limit to our dreams.

NEWS

Three Episcopas in Mar Thoma Church

Three new bishops were consecrated in Tiruvalla, Kerala on Saturday August 13 by Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan, head of the one million strong Mar Thoma Syrian Church, raising the number of prelates to 13.

Condolence

Our Condolences to the Badal, David and Yacoub Families who lost their children in Vernal Fall, Yosemite National Park, California in July 2011.

His Beatitude Mar George Alenchery

H.B. Mar George Alenchery was elected by the Holy Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church and was consecrated as the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church which has 3.6 million members. H.B. is also the Metropolitan of Ernakulam and Ankamaly. He is successor to late Cardinal Mar Varkey Vithayathil.

Assisi Day of Prayer, 2011

His Holiness Pope Benedict has invited His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV to attend the Assisi Day of Prayer in Italy on October 27 and 28. As His Holiness is busy with the Apostolic Sojourn to Australia in September and October, His Holiness deputed Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Bishop Mar Awa Royal and Rev. Dr. William Toma to represent the Assyrian Church of the East. The same delegation will be in Rome attending the International Congress on the Liturgy of the Apostles Mar Addai and Mar Mari.

Demise of the Mother of Mar Meelis Metropolitan

The *Voice of the East* offers condolence to His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon on the demise of his mother Maryam Zaia in August 2011 in California. The late Mar Abimalek Timotheus of Mar Bhisho, Metropolitan of India was her uncle. Praying for the repose of her soul and comfort for the bereaved family.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School

Twin students of St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School, Marel and Marlena Orah, have published their first book.

The book, entitled **My Best Friend's Enemy is a Ghost**, was originally drafted by the 11-year-old twins simply for amusement.

"I just wanted to write a book because we're usually bored at home, and we don't have Facebook like a lot of our friends, so we just started writing it and found that we enjoyed it," said Marel.



Mar Aprem Metropolitan with Choir Team after the Holy Mass
at Mar Gewargis Cathedral, Chicago on 18 July 2011



Mar Aprem with some Assyrians who had attended the Holy
Qurbana in Sharjah on 29 July 2011



Mar Aprem Metropolitan with U.A.E. Parish Members after the Holy Qurbana in Sharjah on 29 July 2011

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