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**His Holiness Mardinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East officially opening St. Mary's Retirement Village in Fairfield, New South Wales.**

**The Hon. Chris Bowen M.P., Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, bishop of Canada are also pictured.**

## VOICE OF THE EAST





Baptism of Nikhil Mookan, son of Timmy Mookan in Mar Mari Church, Yonkers, New York. The newly baptized baby is in the hands of grandmother Mrs. Lulu. Seen next to her is Timothy Mookan, one of the founding members of our UAE Mar Mariam Parish based in Sharjah.



His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand & Lebanon speaks at the Patriarchal Meet organized by Sydney's St. George Parish, Ss. Peter and Paul Parish and the Youth Association of Sydney on 27 September 2011.

## VOICE OF THE EAST

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)  
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# Voice of the East

Vol. 58

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Nos. 9 & 10

## Editorial

### 35<sup>th</sup> Consecration Anniversary

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV was consecrated as Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East on 17 October 1976 in St. Barnabas Church, Ealing, London. The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration was celebrated on Sunday 16 October 2011 in Ealing, London. The Eucharistic Liturgy was consecrated on the same day by Mar Aprem Metropolitan at St. Mary's Church in Hanwell and was attended by a large gathering of faithful, overflowing the capacity of the Church. The Assyrian congregation in the Ealing-Hanwell area was particularly happy to participate in this joyous celebration.

In the anniversary commemoration held at *Assyrian House* in Ealing Mar Aprem Metropolitan spoke noting that it was appropriate that he should be in London for the celebration considering the important involvement of the Indian church in the 1976 consecration. His Beatitude the late Mar Timotheus, Metropolitan of Malabar and All India, was the chief consecrator of the Catholicos Patriarch in Ealing 35 years ago.

Mar Aprem recalled that it was exactly 50 years ago that he himself came to Ealing while he was a student at St Boniface College, Warminster on a World Council of Churches scholarship. At that time, although there was no priest or parish of the Assyrian Church of the East in England, he conducted an Assyrian evening prayer service (or *ramsha* prayers) in the St. Barnabas Anglican Church in Ealing. Several Assyrians including Deacon Baslieel and Rabi Aprim Kellaitha and his wife Hanna (aunt of the former Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun) were present. The same Anglican church became the venue of the Patriarchal consecration about 15 years later.

Furthermore, Mar Aprem recalled that in 1968 he had spoken at a reception accorded to the young 32-year-old bishop of Iran in Yonkers, New York where he predicted that the universal church would look forward to Bishop Mar Khanania Dinkha becoming the next Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East. At the time there were no boys in the Mar Shimun patriarchal family which had ruled the Church of the East for about 500 years. This prophetic prediction became a reality only 8 years after Mar Aprem's speech.

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV has ruled the Church for a long period; 35 years. His predecessor, His Holiness the late Mar Eshai Shimun had served the church for 53 long years from 1920 to 1973. Although His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV is 76 years old, age does not deter him from wisely and actively governing the church with a youthful enthusiasm. The latter was visible during the recent Patriarchal Sojourn to Australia.

May Almighty God grant long, healthy, peaceful and prosperous years to our Catholicos Patriarch; that he may continue leading our ancient and hallowed church for many years to come. Amen.

Mar Aprem

## **Orthodox leaders assess Christian presence in the Middle East**

**At the invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, leaders from five historic centers of Christianity in the eastern Mediterranean region met in early September to discuss matters of regional and global concern. In addition to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Orthodox churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Cyprus were represented.**

Chief among issues under discussion were the path toward peace in the Middle East and the situation of minority Christian communities during a time of turmoil. Other important topics included the preservation of the earth's endangered eco-systems and possibilities for fostering inter-religious dialogue.

The meeting adopted a proposal for "an encounter of religious leaders in the region, where a form of Mediterranean Charter would be drafted and proclaimed". The purpose of the charter would be to address environmental concerns and "contribute to the peaceful coexistence and cooperation among religions in this region today".

(3 September 2011)

## **WCC Executive Committee**

The WCC Executive Committee opened its bi-annual meetings Monday 12 September in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with a series of welcomes from local church leaders and poignant and detailed presentations on the regional humanitarian crisis in Somalia and neighbouring countries.

Recognizing that the influence of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has brought Christians closer together, Abune Paulos, patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, welcomed the Executive Committee by saying the WCC "must continue and endure for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ".

"We pray that God may bless you all with his abundance of gifts during your stay here," Paulos said.

"I can assure you that we will continue to uphold you in our prayers," Rev. Dr Idosa Wakseyoum, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Lutheran) said in his opening remarks.

"We are the body of Christ and each one of us is a part of it," Wakseyoum said.

Both churches are members of the WCC fellowship of 349 churches around the world. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is a founding member of the WCC, and Paulos is the WCC president representing the Oriental Orthodox churches.

## **Mar Sawa Church in Northern Iraq**

(Shamasha Samir Bakos)

Mar Sawa Church is located in the Assyrian village of Ain'none, Northern Iraqi and is about 2 hours away from Duhok (Nohadra). The church is approximately 820 years old. This church was destroyed by Saddam Hussein in 1987. Mar Sawa Church was re-opened on Saturday 10, 2011 by His Grace Mar Ishaq Yosip, Bishop of Northern Iraq and Russia. Mar Ishaq was born in this village.

## **Bishop Mar Odisho Oraham attends consecration of a new Bishop in Sweden**

His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe, has attended the consecration of the new Bishop of Gothenburg for the Church of Sweden, the nation's largest Christian church.

Among the Swedish Church's bishops and many foreign guests, His Grace was accompanied by Rev. Isaac, parish priest of St George Parish in Enechubenk, and Deacon Youil Yako.

The ordination of Bishop Per Eckerdal took place at 11am on 4 September in Uppsala Cathedral, about 100km from the bishopric in Stockholm.

The Archbishop of Uppsala Anders Wejryd conducted the ceremony, offering the Divine Liturgy and welcoming all guests and attendees.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, His Grace congratulated the newly ordained bishop on behalf of the Assyrian Church of the East and His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch

## **Graduates Preserve Ancient language in Iraq**

The Assyrian Church of the East in North Iraq, along with the General Cultural Arts and Syriac Association, has held a ceremony for graduates of Syriac language studies.

Following a two-month teaching period at St. John the Baptist Parish, nine classes of varied age and education level reached their graduation.

The ceremony, which took place on Sunday 4 September, commenced with an opening speech delivered by Deacon Dumara Kanon followed by a keynote address by course director Rev. Ninos Esha, who thanked the participants for their hard work throughout the semesters.

Director of the General Cultural Arts and Syriac Association, Dr. Saadi Al-Maleh, spoke on behalf of the Association, congratulating the graduates and praising their efforts. He also thanked all those responsible for putting together a successful Syriac language course.

Dr. Saadi encouraged future students to enroll in the course and lead the way to preserving our ancient language and culture.

Students presented poems, speeches and songs in the Syriac language along with other presentations.

The graduation ceremony was also attended by parish priest of the Assyrian Church in Ankawa, Rev. Simon Georgis David, and parish priest of St. George Church in Arbil, Rev. Esha David, who both took part in awarding certificates and gifts to each student.

Before the ceremony's conclusion, Rev. Simon presented a special gift to Dr. Saadi for his support and aid throughout the years.

## **Christians in danger in Syria**

An influential Syrian sheikh has issued an implicit threat to the country's Christians, saying that all those who oppose the revolution will be "torn apart, chopped up and fed to the dogs".

Sheikh Adnan al Aroor, who is in exile in Saudi Arabia, has become a key motivating figure of the Syrian uprising; through his speeches broadcast on the Islamic satellite channel al-Safa, which is widely watched in Syria. Al Aroor often urges people to continue demonstrating until President Bashar al-Assad's regime is brought down.

In one of his sermons, he explains that Syrians can be divided into three groups. The first comprises people who are for the revolution and against Assad. He said that when the president falls, the winners will look with favour on this group. The second group consists of people who are neither for nor against the revolution and can therefore expect no privileges from the new regime. The third group opposes the revolution and backs Assad. Al Aroor said that the meat of these people will be "torn apart, chopped up and fed to the dogs".

This threat is likely to be interpreted as applying to Syrian Christians because they are assumed to be supporting the government, having been well-treated and afforded a considerable amount of religious freedom under President Assad's regime.

Christians, who comprise around ten per cent of the population, have mostly stayed away from the protests despite pressure to join the uprising. They are fearful of what may replace the government as Islamists gain increasing influence over the demonstrations, which were originally concerned with political and economic change.

A number of Christians have been killed and, in some cities, such as Homs, they are afraid to leave their homes. A senior church leader in the area told Barnabas Fund that heavy gunfire had been preventing both church leaders and worshippers from coming to church. According to reports, some church buildings have been burned down, indicating growing anti-Christian hostility.

Al Aroor is seen as a moderate Sunni cleric who supports democratic reforms and stresses the importance of peaceful rebellion against the Assad regime. But his threat to opponents of the revolution may betray a more sinister and violent agenda.

Some fear that for Christians a post-Assad Syria could deteriorate like post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. Saddam, like Assad, restrained the influence of militant Islamists, but after his fall they were free to wreak havoc on the Christian community; hundreds of thousands of Christians were consequently forced to flee the violence, many going to Syria.

*Barnabas Fund*

## **Clergy needs exercise, says priest**

Health of religious in China 'has become cause for concern'.

Unhealthy lifestyles make mainland clergy vulnerable to non-communicable diseases, which a UN meeting determined earlier this week to be the leading health threat for Chinese people.

Father Joseph, a doctor in northern China, said that mainland clergy are most vulnerable to cardiovascular disease and diabetes, which represent two of the leading non-communicable diseases, along with cancer and chronic respiratory illnesses.

The main problem, Father Joseph explained, was that priests do not get enough exercise.

"Some priests have little sense of evangelization. After the daily Mass, they go straight to their computers. By and by, even a healthy body cannot stand it."

Father Joseph said that diets have improved but without proper exercise, priests could develop high blood pressure and other adverse health conditions that contribute to cardiovascular disease.

The health of the clergy and religious in China has become a source of concern since the deaths of a young bishop and bishop candidate, both in their 40s, earlier this year.

Father Paulus Gan, who says he exercises regularly, said other clergy and nuns "seldom do exercises because they are busy, unaccustomed to it or are already sick and cannot do so."

Chinese Minister of Health Chen Zhu told the UN General Assembly in New York Sept 20 that more than 260 million Chinese suffer from non-communicable diseases, responsible for about 85 percent of all deaths in the country.

*Source: ucanews.com*

## **His Holiness Opens St. Mary Village, Sydney**

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, has officially opened the retirement village erected at the rear of St. Mary Church in Sydney's western suburbs.

The old-age housing project, on Polding Street, Smithfield, was established after long preparations and endurance.

The complex mainly accommodates elderly members of the Assyrian community who are in the stages of retirement and need a quiet, newly built and local living atmosphere.

The official opening commenced in St. Mary Church Hall where guests speakers and retirees shared in a meal.

Present alongside His Holiness were: His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon; His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada; the Honourable Chris Bowen MP, Federal Minister for Immigration and Citizenship; Mr. Guy Zangari, Member for Fairfield, New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Cr. Anwar Khoshaba OAM, Deputy Mayor of Fairfield, representatives of the Department of Housing, banking institutions and many other guests.

His Holiness opened the program with the Lord's prayer, which was followed by the keynote address presented by His Beatitude Mar Meelis in the English language. In his speech, he expressed the hard and tireless work of the church, its members and committees in bringing this dream into reality.

The purpose of the retirement village was to provide a better means of living for the retired members of the community, said His Beatitude,

who thanked the guests of honour personally for all their input in accomplishing the project.

On behalf of the residents of the village, Mr. Kushaba spoke on the benefits of the accommodation and offered thanksgiving to the church for giving elderly parishioners the means of living so close to the church and the community.

Chris Bowen, who opened his speech with a greeting in the Assyrian language, expressed his happiness in seeing the project complete and with the blessings of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV among prelates.

He also praised His Beatitude Mar Meelis for all the accomplished works for his church and community. Mr Bowen said the last time he had visited the village he was wearing boots and a helmet, however, now he is standing moments away from the opening of the village. He wished a peaceful life for all the residents and the entire Assyrian Community for they have faced many hardships in their migration to these peaceful countries.

His Holiness along with the prelates, clergy and honoured guests then cut the ceremonial ribbon to open the village, and a plague was revealed stating the opening's date with the leader of the church, His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV and His Beatitude Mar Meelis.

Afterwards, His Holiness toured some homes of the residents where he inspected the living quality of the village. His Beatitude Mar Meelis explained many aspects of the village.

The village offers many services to the residents, from medical to cleaning, and meets all their basic necessities. It provides a supportive atmosphere to assist residents in all aspects of their lives. Besides their physical needs, they are also spiritually supported seeing as the church is within close walking distance and all ministries are only a few minutes away.

*Source: [www.assyrianchurchnews.com](http://www.assyrianchurchnews.com)*





Photo taken at the official commencement of new School of Edessa at St. George Parish in Jaramana, Damascus on 27th September 2011.



His Grace Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada, was the guest of honour at the offering of the Holy Eucharistic attended for the last time by (MNAC) inaugural graduating class.



Photo taken during an official dinner held at Edessa Reception Centre on the evening of 18 September in Sydney, Australia. Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia is seated to the right and Bishop Mar Emmanuel Joseph is to the left of the Patriarch.









Mar Aprem Metropolitan (Middle),  
Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa (Right) &  
Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa(Left)  
during the consecration



Opening ceremony for consecration of the  
renovated Mar Bhisho Church, Puthur by  
Mar Aprem Metropolitan.



Photo of renovated Mar Bhisho Church in Puthur, India  
on 25.09.2011





His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Pictured with Church Choir After the Eucharistic Liturgy in Melbourne - 25 September 2011.



Photo taken at Holy Feast of the Cross by His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe at St. Stephen the Martyr Church on 13 September, in the presence of parish priest Rev. Allan Odisho.



His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western America after ordination with two new deacons and one sub-deacon in St. Paul Parish in Anaheim, California.

## **Damascus Parish Celebrates Anniversary**

St. George Parish in Damascus, Syria has celebrated the four year anniversary of their parish priest, Rev. Toma Asitivo.

The joyous event was attended by Rev. Archdeacon Toma Oraham, deacons, committee members, choir members, ACERO representatives and faithful of the parish in Damascus, Syria.

Also present were teachers, staff and students of the School of Edessa, which is run by St. George Parish.

*Source: [www.assyrianchurchnews.com](http://www.assyrianchurchnews.com)*

## **His Holiness Applauds Sydney's Youth Association, St. George Mission and Ss. Peter and Paul Parish**

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, has spoken on the importance of working as one body in Christ, during a Patriarchal Meet organized by St. George Parish, Ss. Peter and Paul Parish and the Youth Association of Sydney.

The event, held on the evening of 27 September at Edessa Reception, was also attended by His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon, His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada, parish priests Rev. Younan Dawod of St. George Mission and Rev. John Kushaba of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, as well as Rev. Narsai Youkhanis, Chaplain of the Assyrian Schools and Youth Association.

*Source: [www.assyrianchurchnews.com](http://www.assyrianchurchnews.com)*

## **His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham Chairs 3 Day Progress Meetings**

His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe, has been warmly welcomed by parishioners of Khovda, Sweden while visiting to officiate a conference of all European parishes.

His Grace offered the Holy Eucharist on the occasion of the Holy Feast of the Cross at St. Stephen the Martyr Church on 13 September, in the presence of parish priest Rev. Allan Odishio.

His Grace spoke about the importance of the Cross to the Christian life, signifying the meaning of the signing of the cross.

At the conclusion of the service, the parish organised a breakfast honouring the visit of His Grace to the city.

Celebrating the commemoration of St. Sawa, His Grace visited St. Sawa Church in Tebro on 14 September and offered the Holy Eucharist.

While there, His Grace led three ordinations for the parish of St. Sawa, elevating a deacon, Sliwa Sliwa, along with two readers.

In honour of their patron saint, the parish organised a remembrance (*dukhrana*) where the clergyman and parishioners shared a meal together.

On his return from Tebro on 15 September, the three-day meetings of European parishes commenced with His Grace acting as chairman and officially opening the program with the Lord's Prayer.

*Source: [www.assyrianchurchnews.com](http://www.assyrianchurchnews.com)*

## **His Holiness Highlights Unity Within Nation**

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East has urged global Assyrian communities and associations to strive toward unity, during an official dinner which allowed faithful to share in a meal with the head of the Church on his sojourn to Sydney, Australia.

The dinner, held at Edessa Reception Centre on the evening of 18 September, was attended by His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon, His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada, Cor-Bishop Ashoor Lazar, all parish priests of the diocese, deacons, committees and many faithful.

Poems by many members of the community, hymns by the church choirs and DVD presentations were presented in honour of His Holiness and accompanying prelates.

In his keynote address, His Holiness stressed the importance of upholding our language, heritage and traditions.

Even though the church will not be involved in politics, said His Holiness, it is our nationalistic right as Assyrians to desire unity and peace between all our nationalistic associations.

*Source: [www.assyrianchurchnews.com](http://www.assyrianchurchnews.com)*

## **School of Edessa Expands**

The School of Edessa at St. George Parish in Jaramana, Damascus, has opened a new branch in the neighboring city of Barzeh.

The new school officially commenced on 27 September, and teaches a similar program to its sister school in Jaramana.

Studies in the Assyrian language and Christian faith will be covered at the school, which holds classes on Tuesday and Fridays from 4pm to 6pm.

St. George Parish is thankful to St. Abraham Roman Catholic Church for allowing the school to utilize their facilities.

## **H.G. Mar Emmanuel Honoured at MNAC**

His Grace Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada, was the guest of honour at the offering of the Holy Eucharistic attended for the last time by Mar Narsai Assyrian College's (MNAC) inaugural graduating class.

The Eucharistic Liturgy, held on 21 September at St. Hurmizd Cathedral, was consecrated by Rev. Priest Narsai Youkhanis, school chaplain of the Assyrian Schools.

His Grace Mar Emmanuel was warmly welcomed to the special event by Year 12 students who begin their high school certification examinations in mid-October and hope to go on to tertiary studies next year.

His Grace Mar Emmanuel is currently accompanying His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East on his sojourn to Australia, with the purpose of attending the MNAC's first graduation ceremony which was held on the evening of 21 September.

At the conclusion of the offering, students returned to their temporary school building at the Assyrian Australian Social Centre where Year 11 students had organised a celebratory breakfast for the graduating class.

Students shared photos, laughter and tears in celebration of completing their high school education.

His Grace Mar Emmanuel was accompanied by Rev. Younan Dawod, parish priest of St. George mission and Rev. Narsai.

*Source: [www.assyrianchurchnews.com](http://www.assyrianchurchnews.com)*



## **Deacons and Sub-Deacon Ordained for Anaheim, USA**

His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western America, has ordained two new deacons and one sub-deacon to serve at St. Paul Parish in Anaheim, California. His Grace laid his blessed right hand on Youra Levy and Michael Yousef, raising them to the rank of deacon, while John Elkhoury was ordained sub-deacon.

The ceremony, which took place on 13 September, was conducted in the presence of Cor-Bishop Gewargis Bet-Rasho and Rev. Ashur Elkhoury, parish priest of St. Paul Parish.

Deacon Youra and Sub-Deacon John have been long-time members of St. Paul Parish. Deacon Michael joined St. Paul Parish in January of 2010 and has been a member of the St. Paul Parish Church Committee since May 2010. All three studied under the guidance of Rev. Ashur.

Following the ordination, the parish celebrated of the Holy Qurbana on a blessed day which also commemorated the Feast of the Holy Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **Mar Bhisho Church: Puthur – India**

His Beatitude Dr. Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of Malabar and India has consecrated the newly renovated Mar Bhisho Church in Puthur, India. The consecration ceremony and the offering of the Holy Qurbana were conducted with the assistance of the two Bishops of India, Mar Yohannan Yoseph and Mar Awgin Kuriakose along with several priests and deacons. The functions of the day began at 8 a.m. and ended at 1.30 noon. A large number of faithful took part.

There are only 100 families in this rural parish. The church was built by Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan more than half a century ago. Since the parish grew with families from the Orthodox and Jacobite churches joining it as well as some families from other parishes of our church moving to this area, a need was felt to pull down the existing church building and build a bigger church in its place. His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV had visited this church in January 2000 and had inaugurated 12 free houses for the poor in this parish.

This church was built in the name of Mar Bhisho as the beloved former Metropolitan of India, the late Mar Abimalek Timotheus was born in Bhisho village in 1878. This is the only church by the name of Mar Bhisho in India. This church is situated in a rubber plantation of about 20 acres of land. We believe that this parish will progress when the zoo of Thrissur is planted in the forest land opposite to the church. This area will develop as a tourism centre in the near future.

The new church cost about 10 million rupees. 2 million rupees of this amount was donated by the poor parishioners through their labour and service to the church. The parish collected a further 6 million rupees and borrowed 2 million from the Indian church's *Central Fund*. Rev'd. C.D. Pauly, the Vicar and Deacon Rajan Vattakuzhy the engineer-cum-contractor were given special gifts for their contribution to the construction of such a beautiful church.

Mr. M.P. Vincent, Member of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, was the chief guest during the public meeting held after the consecration service and Holy Qurbana.

This is the second costly church constructed in the Archdiocese, after the renovation of the Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church four years ago costing 16 million rupees.

## **His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV Visits Melbourne**

Joseph Haweil  
7 October 2011

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East has advised caution of being distant from Christ while reigniting pride for the ancient Church, during a four-day visit to the city of Melbourne.

Accompanying His Holiness on his sojourn were His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon and His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada.

His Holiness was the guest of honour at the 'Assyrian Youth Meet' function held on 25 September at Ishtar Reception Center. The event brought together young Assyrians in Melbourne who are active in various ministries of the church, including the church choir, youth association and the long-running St. George Assyrian Language School, which presently caters to more than 120 students. The 'Youth Meet' was organised and presented entirely by the youth of the church.

His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM commenced the formal addresses at the function by reflecting on the challenges faced by the church in drawing and keeping young faithful within its fold.

"The church", said His Beatitude, "attempts to gather [young faithful] on the foundation of Christian faith and Christian morality; that they [young faithful] can be close as a community to both their church and nation."

He continued, "Today, young people are drawn to social activities rather than spiritual ones but this does not mean though that they do not have love for spirituality or to be close to God."

His Beatitude stressed that every parish's youth association plays a vital role in the life of the church, noting that after the establishment of a parish, the next group to be instituted is the youth association.

During his patriarchal address to the assembled youth, His Holiness gave an overview of the history of the Assyrian Church of the East and touched in particular on the history of the early church including the importance of understanding that the term 'Nestorian', which is still used in western texts, is a damaging misnomer, applied to the church misguidedly.

"We should have pride in being the sons and daughters of an Apostolic church whose missionaries reached as far as India, Afghanistan, China and Siberia amongst other distant regions and whose faithful once numbered more than 80 million adherents," said His Holiness.

His Holiness also cautioned the young faithful to be cautious of new-age movements and religious groups that reject the apostolicity, doctrines, sacraments and canons of the Holy Church.

"The Church of the East is not built on the dollar, on money, it is built on faith. We desire our people to be faithful members of the church. We have often said that we would much rather our churches be filled with faithful on Sundays, than the church having vast wealth. You the faithful are the treasury and wealth of the church," said the Catholicos Patriarch.

In closing the blessed occasion, all youth in attendance were given an opportunity to personally receive the blessings of the Catholicos Patriarch.

On Sunday 26 September, the Eucharistic Liturgy according to the ancient Anaphora of Addai and Mari was consecrated by His Holiness at Ishtar Reception Center due to the small size of the existing St. George Church in Reservoir. More than 800 faithful of the church gathered to receive the precious body and blood of Christ our Lord from the blessed hands of His Holiness.

In the evening, a dinner was held in honour of His Holiness at Ishtar Reception Center. The capacity attendance enjoyed a program of hymns and folkloric performances and had the valuable opportunity to hear the fatherly wisdom and guidance imparted by His Holiness.

During his patriarchal address, His Holiness gave an overview of the present position of the church today and enhanced attempts to establish parishes and provide pastoral care to faithful both in the Middle East and in the diaspora. This includes addressing the humanitarian needs of Assyrian refugees in Syria and Lebanon and the requirement for ongoing support of embattled faithful suffering the burdens of persecution in Iraq.

Within the latter context, His Holiness spoke passionately about the plight of Assyrian Christians in Iraq and noted that as the indigenous people of the country, they should be afforded all civil, religious, linguistic, cultural and political rights.

While affirming the policy of the Assyrian Church of the East to remain outside political affairs, His Holiness expressed his desire to see all Assyrian political groups in Iraq work closer together for the benefit of the Assyrian Nation and the establishment of an administrative region in which Assyrians and other minorities may govern and protect themselves from any form of violence or persecution.

Throughout the visit, His Holiness took time in an inordinately busy schedule to personally meet with sons and daughters of the Holy Church in Melbourne.

His Holiness invoked the blessings of Almighty God on the faithful and expressed his desire to return to Melbourne after the construction of St. Odisho Church, which upon completion in the near future shall be the second parish of the Assyrian Church of the East in Melbourne.

[news.assyrianchurch.com](http://news.assyrianchurch.com)

## **Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose Visits Delhi Parish**

Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose was afforded a warm welcome by parishioners and well-wishers on the occasion of his visit to St. Stephen Parish in Delhi.

Faithful welcomed His Lordship from the boundary of the Delhi Mar Thoma Diocesan Center. The Vicar, Rev'd. Mohan Konikkara and Rev'd. O.A. Abimalek received him by offering a candle. Then the candles were lit by the parish members who joined a candle procession. After entering the church, His Lordship consecrated the Holy Qurbana.

Following the Eucharistic Liturgy, His Lordship Mar Awgin was felicitated in a public meeting held at the parish. The programme commenced with a hymn performed by Miss. Marina Jobaie. The Bishop was welcomed by Rev'd. O.A. Abimalek and followed by Rev'd. Mohan Konikkara who felicitated His Lordship with the presidential address.

The other members who felicitated His Lordship were parish trustee Dr. Chacko George, former parish trustee Mr. Shammi Jacob (Manager, South Indian Bank) and Mr. Tony James (Manager, State Bank of Travancore). His Lordship blessed and thanked the members and well-wishers and also thanked the Mar Thoma Diocesan authorities for their support.

A memento was presented to His Lordship on the occasion. The Vote of Thanks was given by Parish Trustee, Dr. Henry Jose C, (General Manager (Sales), Kasuya GPP Auto Products Pvt. Ltd.). Lunch was also served as part of the programme.



## **H.B. Mar Aprem Metropolitan Visits London**

His Beatitude Dr. Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of Malabar and All India and the United Arab Emirates have paid a visit to the United Kingdom.

The Metropolitan was received at Heathrow Airport on 10 October by the Rev'd Archdeacon Younan Youel, Rev'd Tony Malham (parish priest of the London congregation) along with Rev'd Ishmael Tamras (parish priest of the Belgium congregation), family of the Metropolitan along with church deacons and faithful.

On 15 October, His Beatitude visited and conducted prayer in the home of Blesson Emmatty, eldest son of I.G. Joy, current Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees of the Church of the East in India. Also present were the family of Dr. Dany Ollukaren and Timy.

On Sunday 16 October, His Beatitude consecrated the Eucharistic Liturgy at St. Mary Church in Hanwell, London. Morning (or *sapra*) prayers were conducted before the Liturgy. Assisting the Metropolitan were the Rev'd Archdeacon Younan Youel, Rev'd Tony Malham, Deacon Havel Michael, Deacon Bawai d' Matran (cousin of His Holiness the late Mar Eshai Shimun, Catholicos Patriarch) and other deacons. A large congregation of the Assyrian Church of the East's faithful along with several Indians living and working in London and Brussels were present to receive the Holy Qurbana.

Following the morning service, His Beatitude was guest of honour at a function held at Ealing's *Assyrian House*, celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV as Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East. The program included hymns and speeches in honour of the important occasion.

On Monday 17 October His Beatitude and Rev'd Tony Malham were guests at a reception given by the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association (AECA). Rev'd Dr. William Taylor, Committee Chairman of the AECA was present to welcome His Beatitude. Other guests included the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic and representatives of the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Serbian, Indian and Ethiopian Orthodox churches.

His Beatitude shall depart London on 20 October en route to Wiesbaden, Germany where he will also consecrate the Eucharistic Liturgy. Following a brief sojourn in Germany, the Metropolitan shall depart for Rome to participate in the International Congress on the Anaphora of Addai and Mari as well as other official ecumenical functions in Rome.

## **Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph's visit in U.A.E. parish**

While returning from the Holy Land H.L. did visit Mart Mariam Parish, U.A.E. Mr. John Emmanuel and Mr. Blesson Antony were receiving him at Dubai Airport and stayed with Mr. John Emmanuel.

H.L. celebrated Holy Qurbana with the assistance of Fr. Victor Kollannoor at Sharjah on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

H.L. inaugurated the Celebration of Onam, the festival of Kerala by lighting the auspicious lamp along with Vicar, Trustees and Council members.

H.L. congratulated the Parish and wished all a Prosperous year ahead and also exhorted members to keep the Unity and Enthusiasm in all future endeavors also. His return to Kerala was on 11<sup>th</sup> October.



H.G. Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe, pictured with Swedish church leaders and a newly consecrated Swedish bishop.



Photo of St. George Parish in Damascus, Syria in connection with the celebration of four year anniversary of their Parish Priest, Rev. Thoma Asitivo.





Left – right: Timy, Jack Chandy, Archdeacon Yonan Youel, Mrs. Lovely Blesson, Mrs. Susheela George (Sister of Mar Aprem), Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Rev'd. Tony Malham, Deacon Havel Michael, Children, Jerome Blesson, Joel George, Son of Anish Chandy, Leeba Blesson, Olivia (Daughter of Dr. Dany), Amelia George. Behind Mar Aprem is Joshua Anish Chandy carried by the mother Mrs. Nytha Chandy.

Photo taken with Mar Aprem  
after Holy QurbAna in London on 13 October 2011



Photo taken at the reception to Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa  
by the St. Stephen Parish, Delhi.