

# صوت الشرق

Vol. 57

July –August 2010

Nos. 7 & 8



**H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch  
with Mar Gewargis Sliwa Metropolitan (IRAQ),  
Mar Awa Royel (California),  
Mar Awgin Kuriakose (India) and  
clergy in Chicago Youth Conference.**

## VOICE OF THE EAST

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(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)  
July – August 2010  
(Private Circulation only)

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# VOICE OF THE EAST

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## Editorial

### **New Bishop for Iran**

We are happy to know that the Assyrian Church of the East is going to have a new bishop in Iran. The last Episcopal consecration in Iran was on 11 February 1962 when His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun, Catholicos Patriarch was returning from India. After 48 years and six months we are having the next bishop to be consecrated by Patriarch Mar Shimun's successor H. H. Mar Dinkha IV, present Catholicos Patriarch,

Although Bishop Mar Dinkha became Catholicos Patriarch on 17 October 1976 we had to wait for God's own time to find a suitable celibate priest from Iran itself to be raised to the rank of an Episcopa .The Church in Iran waited nearly 34 years to find a candidate to be bishop in Iran in succession to the worthy and God chosen, Mar Dinkha.

After the last consecration of February 1962, Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan of blessed memory (died July 1977) who had groomed Khanania and made him a priest and sent him from Iraq to Iran in 1957, composed a poem in Aramaic on 14 April 1962. Let me quote from the English translation made by Fr. P.K.Varghese of Trichur.

“Our Saviour Lord Christ who descended from heaven in magnificence and dressed human body with the power of the spirit from the daughter of blessed David, God heed to your servant whose name is Dinkha make him light and salt, And save him from the troublemaker, the wicked adversary to be meek and calm and guide and famous so that he shall tender the flock leisurely in unity, in love cheerfully.

And when your majesty is being celebrated coming from the highest in glory Show him the path and the way which lead towards the place of rest and resurrect. And quicken all children of the dust with your grace. God is blessed for ever; let his holy name be praised for ever and ever. Let your festival be blessed.”

I wish cor episcopa Gewargis Benyamin all the best as he will be consecrated as Episcopa of Iran by H. H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch in our Cathedral at Teheran on the festival of Cross on 13 September 2010. Metropolitan Mar Gewargis Sliwa of Iraq, who ordained Gewargis Benyamin as cor episcopa last year in Iran, will assist the Catholicos Patriarch along with four or five episcopas.

Mar Aprem, India.

# Assyrian Annual Youth Conference: Chicago 2010

Ms. Sujo Jos, Chennai

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Conference of Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East was held at Chicago, hosted by the Illinois Diocese, from the 30<sup>th</sup> of June to the 04<sup>th</sup> of July 2010. The core theme of the conference was "Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" Matthew 5:16. Around 320 youths from the four Dioceses of North America and from the Archdiocese of Australia and New Zealand and also from the Archdiocese of India participated in the conference. Key speakers of the conference were His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of Diocese of California, His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Bishop of the Archdiocese of India, Cor-Bishop Gewargis Toma, Rev. Gewargis Bet-Rasho, Rev. Genard Lazar, Rev. William Toma, Rev. Amir.

The conference solemnly commenced with a prayer by His Grace Mar Awa Royel. Rev. Paulos Benjamin extended a warm welcome to all the youth participants accompanied with a Welcome dinner, Assyrian music and dance by the youth. The youths were divided into 6 different age groups and each group was taken through 6 sessions giving insights into various topics like how to hear and comprehend God's voice and God's Word, the role of saints in our church, the relevance of baptism, the importance and the biblical references for the style of dressing etc.

His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose briefed about the origin of the Assyrian churches in India right from the time of St. Thomas and also gave a good insight into the ongoing activities in the different parishes in India. Shamasha Shayne from the Archdiocese of Australia delivered an inspiring life testimony capturing the hearts and minds of all the youths. It was a great source of inspiration to the youths to make an unconditional surrender to Christ in order to live the life to its fullest.

Every day of the conference began and ended with a worship service at the St. Andrews church. All the youths were blessed by the various seminars, workshops and lectures made by the Bishops and the priests. The youths were privileged and were blessed to participate in a

breakfast with His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. In the message to the youth, His Holiness stressed on the importance of preserving our ancient Assyrian language and culture. Further, His Holiness also exhorted the parents to instill Christian faith in the hearts of their children and also emphasized the responsibility of the parents to bring up their children in the Assyrian faith and belief. In memory of the 2010 Annual youth conference, His Holiness awarded medals to all the youth participants. His Beatitude Mar Gewargis Sliwa from the Arch-diocese of Iraq and Russia was also present for the conference rendered his blessings upon all the youth participants.

His Holiness celebrated Holy Qurbana at the St. George's church on Sunday the 04<sup>th</sup> of July during which Sub-Deacon Paul Gabriel was ordained and raised to the position of a Deacon. It was indeed an encouragement to all the youths to serve the Lord and to remain in His service all through their lives.

The conference was also a great time of enjoyment and fun to all the youths as they were involved in sports, party & dinner and a picnic on the final day.

Photo sessions were organized for the youths along with His Holiness, The Bishops and all the parish priests present for the conference. The chaperons from different parishes remained a guiding light to the younger generation all through the conference. The untiring sincere efforts and hard work of the Youth organizing committee was amazing and appreciable.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Conference was an overall exciting experience of spiritual growth, getting to know our brothers and sisters in Christ from various parishes and different parts of the world. It was indeed remarkable moments of sharing & caring for one another and growing together in the love & fellowship of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Conference is planned to be held in the year 2011 at Los Angeles, California involving many more participants from the Archdiocese of Australia, India and Iraq.

**Chicago Via Abu Dhabi** is ready for distribution. Those interested can send an email to [aprem.mar@gmail.com](mailto:aprem.mar@gmail.com). The Foreword written by Mrs. Leela Alex, Orlando, Florida is reproduced below. The book has 104 pages including 16 pages of colour photos.

### Foreword

The 70<sup>th</sup> book authored by Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan is a travelogue of his visit to Chicago, New York, Abu Dhabi & Sharjah in February - March 2010. The trip was of an ecclesiastical nature, assisting the Catholicos Patriarch, the Supreme Head of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East in the burial service of Mar Narsai de Baz, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria and Europe. The burial service was in the Assyrian Cathedral of St. George (Mar Gewargis) in Chicago.

The author has written 27 travelogues during the past three decades. Through these travelogues Mar Aprem has written a great deal about different countries of the world such as Australia, USA, England, Russia, Brazil, and Europe. He has visited the U.S. more than twenty times. His observation of historic events as well as present situations about several nations and churches are informative and enjoyable. These books supplement information which readers do not get from textbooks in Church History etc.

Paramakkil Thoma Kathanar wrote the first travelogue in the Malayalam language before the end of the 18th century. It was called *Varthmanapusthakam*. It was the narration of his journey to Portugal and Rome to get his companion Dr. Joseph Kariatil Malpan to be consecrated Bishop for the Indian Syrian Christians. This Malayalam travelogue has been translated into English in Rome. The Saint of Parumala, Mar Gregorius, wrote a travelogue in Malayalam called *Oruslim yatra*, about his pilgrimage to Jerusalem etc. in 1895 AD. Mar Aprem also wrote a travelogue in Malayalam about his journey to Jerusalem and Rome in 1985, for which late Cardinal Joseph Parekkatil of Cochin wrote the foreword.

Many eminent men like Prof. Sukumar Azhikode, Metropolitan Philipose Mar Chrysostem, Vice Chancellors, Ambassadors, officials belonging to IAS and IPS have written the Foreword to the books of Mar Aprem in the past.

I know Mar Aprem well. I am four years older than him. I am the second and he is the fourth in our family of ten siblings. Since his nursery school days he has been a brilliant student. We all noticed his leadership qualities since his school days. I have been living with my husband in the United States for the past 46 years. Yet I tried to keep in contact with him whenever he visited the States. The author is not only a spiritual head of an ancient Christian community based in Thrissur, but also a speaker in several secular and sacred gatherings in Kerala and abroad.

His comments on both religious and secular matters are very insightful and appropriate. He quotes from the current newspapers and comment on them. Many of us are concerned about the security of Indians going abroad for studies or employment. It is undoubtedly an attractive place for students and job seekers. At the same time what about the security? The author does

not pronounce the last word on certain issues. Still he draws our attention to these issues and events in an engaging manner:

The readers get a lot of fascinating information from this book about the early history of many nations he has visited. The information on Assyrians is also very relevant. Some of them are political refugees from Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Lebanon. The author knows the Assyrian community quite well. He had visited Iraq in 1962 during the regime of Abdul Karim Kassim. He was made bishop and later archbishop in Baghdad in September 1968 during the presidency of Al Bekr. He had visited the Assyrians in Iraq when Saddam Hussein was Vice President and later President in Iraq.

Through e-mails Mar Aprem keeps in touch with a large circle of friends globally. He researches the internet for more information and to be kept updated on many matters. Due to his busy schedule, he does not get time to go to a Public Library and read more books. But the internet helps him to some extent. I do not know whether he spends more time on writing than reading. He says that he has written 70 books and it is impossible for him to remember even the titles of his own books. Now he says, "I am a perfect 70. I have written 70 books and my age is 70 and my weight is now reduced to 70 Kilograms." In that way it is easy to remember. Although people say that he has a perfect memory he has begun to realize that he lost that claim as he has completed 70 years of age.

Mrs. Leela Alex M.A., Orlando, Florida, USA .

.....to be continued.

## **Grace Child Care Centre in Sydney**

**H. B. Mar Meelis Zaia A.M. inaugurated Grace Child Care Centre in Sydney, Australia on 27 June 2010.**



## **Assyrian Church of the East Participates in National Council of Churches in Australia Forum**

Between the 9th and 13th of July, the National Council of Churches in Australia held its 7th National Forum in Canberra. The NCCA comprises 19 member churches of different Christian denominations, including the Catholic, Oriental and Eastern Orthodox and Protestant traditions. The ecumenical body was first inaugurated in its present form, in 1994. The NCCA works in collaboration with state ecumenical councils, is an associate of the World Council of Churches and a member of the Christian Conference of Asia. The Assyrian Church of the East has been an active participant in the NCCA since its inception in 1994. The delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East to the 7th National Forum in Canberra, representing His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, was led by Rev. John Kushaba, Priest of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Sydney, and included Deacon Daniel Kochou and Mr. Joseph Haweil.

The National Forum, held triennially, provides an opportunity for the heads of the NCCA's member churches and designated representatives to come together and explore and build upon the spirit of the ecumenical movement. The Forum evaluates the progress of the NCCA's Commissions and Networks and provides recommendations for their future directions. Daily worship and bible study sessions are also held.

During the 6th National Forum of the NCCA, held in 2007 at Queensland's Alexandra Headlands, the Assyrian Church of the East delegation was invited to deliver a presentation on the situation of Iraq's Assyrian Christians, their persecution and the subsequent concerns of the Assyrian Church of the East in relation to their treatment. The 2007 Forum unanimously accepted a motion moved by the Assyrian Church of the East (and seconded by the Roman

Catholic Church, in consultation with the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia) expressing its concern on the treatment of Assyrian Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq. The motion, in addition to requesting the prayers of member churches for Iraq's religious minorities, also encouraged member churches "to do whatever is in their power to urge Australian governments and other governments to assist refugees, particularly Christians who have been singled out for persecution in the Middle East, by providing financial assistance and granting humanitarian and other visas."

The NCCA subsequently issued two media releases standing in solidarity with Iraq's Assyrian Christians. Former Secretary General of the NCCA, the Rev'd John Henderson stated in 2008 that "We are distressed to hear of the suffering of Christians in Iraq, and the deliberate and targeted attacks which they are experiencing. We continue to ask the Australian government to take this situation into account in its consideration of support for Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan, resettlement plans for Iraqi refugees once the country finds peace, and support for repatriation when it is safe to return." It is noteworthy that the NCCA had also issued a press release in 2003 concerning Assyrian Christians in Iraq which prayed that "the Assyrian Church of the East will endure this trial experience and return to its roots as the largest missionary force in the world."

The Assyrian Church of the East continues to support the work of the NCCA in furthering Christian understanding and the ecumenical spirit and endeavours work with the NCCA in future Forums and forthcoming initiatives.



**Mr. Joseph Haweil, Mar Thoma priest from Kerala, Qasha Kushaba and a layman from the Indian Orthodox Church from Kerala.**

### **Assyrian Church of the East Delegation visits Washington D.C.**

In response to an invitation from the Westminster Group of Washington D.C. and Barnabas Aid USA, a delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East visited the U.S. capitol from July 10-15, 2010. The Westminster Group had hosted a delegation of the ‘Council of Iraqi Christian Leaders’ to meet with various senators, congressmen and the State Department in Washington.

The Iraqi delegation was headed by Archbishop Avak Asadourian, the Primate of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Iraq and the General Secretary of the Council; His Beatitude Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Metropolitan of Iraq & Russia for the Assyrian Church of the East; Rev. Joseph Al Sakka of the Presbyterian Church in Iraq. Accompanying the Iraqi delegation were other prelates from the U.S., namely: H.G. Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod (appointed by His Holiness

Mar Dinkha IV to attend the meetings); Metropolitan Mor Cyril Aphram Karim, Syrian Orthodox Bishop of the Diocese of USA; Bishop Yousif Habash of the Syrian Catholic Church, Diocese of USA & Canada; and Mons. Emmanuel Shalita of the Chaldean Catholic Church (Detroit). Other Assyrian social and political activists from Chicago, Illinois and London (UK) were also present.

Some of the highlights of the delegation’s visit included a service at the Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C. on Sunday, July 11. On Monday, July 12th the delegation visited the Catholic Bishop’s Conference of the US in order to apprise them of the condition of the Christians in Iraq. Later in the evening, the Iraqi Ambassador to the US had invited the delegation to supper. On Tuesday, July 13th the delegation visited a number of US congressmen in order to apprise them of the status of the

Christians of Iraq, which include the Assyrians, Armenians, Syriacs, etc.

Among the congressmen consulted were Anna Esho of California and members of her caucus. On Wednesday, July 14th the delegation and other attendees met with Mr. Michael Corbin, the Assistant -Deputy Secretary of State. During the hour-long meeting, Mr. Corbin was further apprised by the delegation of the present state of Christians in Iraq, and what indispensable steps would contribute to their preservation, and

to the promotion of stability and peace in the country as a whole; other minority groups such as the Mandeans, Yezidis and Bahai were also represented at this important meeting. The same afternoon, and on the following day, more congressmen were briefed by members of the delegation as to the status and condition of the Christians. Follow-up meetings will be prepared in order to ensure that necessary contacts are continued and that concrete steps as discussed in the various meetings will be carried forth.



The four Bishops in the centre of the photo from Left to Right are Bishop Mar Awa Royel of the Assyrian Church in California, Archbishop Mar Gewargis Sliwa of the Assyrian Church in Iraq, Armenian Archbishop Avak Assadourian of Iraq and Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphram Karim

## **Congratulations to Sister Jincy**

Rev. Dr. Sister Jincy M.Com., M.A., Ph.D is first young lady to join an order of nuns in our Church in India in recent centuries. In 1996 Sister Olga Noel became the first nun of our church in Baghdad. So in the universal Assyrian Church of the East Sister Jincy was second. But Sister Olga joined the Roman Catholic Church in USA and works as a nun in Boston archdiocese now.

Sister Jincy is the first nun to earn a Master degree in Commerce and later another Master degree in Syriac. Now she has passed Ph.D. in Syriac from the same University known as Mahatma Gandhi University, the only University in India which offers M.A.and Ph.D. degree courses. SEERI is the Post Graduate Centre of the Mahatma Gandhi University.



From the fifth century onwards, this Church has been separated from – and ostracized by – other Churches because of her Christological terminologies (two ܩܢܘܡܶܐ ‘*qnome*’, two ܟܢܶܝܢܶܐ ‘*kyane*’ and one ܦܪܫܘܦܶܐ ‘*parsopa*’) and her reference to Mary as ܡܪܝܡܶܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܶܐ ‘*Christotokos*’ instead of ܡܪܝܡܶܐ ܡܬܘܟܶܘܫܶܐ ‘*Theotokos*’. The Church of the East did not develop any systematic theology or doctrine and therefore, it has not introduced any Mariology, *per se*. The theology of this Church is to be found in her liturgy. As any other Oriental Church, the Church of the East dedicates all Wednesdays to Mary and in every prayer of the Liturgy of Hours the Church of the East praises Mary and supplicates God’s blessings through her. In the prayers for the season of Annunciation and Nativity, in particular, the East Syriac tradition exalts her in a special way. The present Dissertation does not analyse the prayers of this season, as these prayers were already analysed in a previous study. The present study focuses on the prayers which commemorate Mary on the first or second (if there are two Fridays between Nativity and Epiphany) Friday after the Nativity of our Lord. I may present a brief sketch of the thesis giving a short summary of each chapter.

There are three books in which the ancient manuscripts present the complete East Syrian Divine office, viz, *Hudra* (ܩܝܘܡܶܐ = Cycle), *Beth Gazza* (ܩܝܘܡܶܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܓܘܙܶܐ = treasury), and *Kaškol* (ܕܘܫܘܟܶܐ = contain all). The rather lengthy general introduction provides the development of the liturgy of the divine office and that sets the context and frame-work of the study. The Church praises Mary immediately after the feast of the Nativity of our Lord because she gave birth to Christ the Saviour. It is the most important commemoration among the three commemorations of the Virgin Mary in the liturgical year of the Church of the East. The present study is centered on this commemoration.

The first chapter of the thesis draws attention to the significance of the sixteenth-century manuscript copied at Alkaya in 1598 (Tcr. 27 = A) as the base of the present study and makes reference to its contents. There is also the discussion of two more manuscripts of the *Hudra* such as Tcr. 29, dated 1681 (written at Alqoš) (B) and Vat. Syr. 83, dated 1538 (C) containing the prayers of Liturgical hours. According to the introduction given by Mar Thoma in the printed *Hudra* from Thrissur, the mss A and B are used as the foundation for its composition in 1960–62. This relation had not previously been at all clear, and through this study we can understand this matter. At the end of this chapter the differences between the prayers for the commemoration of Mary in manuscript Tcr 27 (A) and the printed *Hudra* (Darmo), which contains the text of the Liturgy of the Hours for the entire year are discussed. Of particular interest is the discovery that Mar Darmo completely omitted the Office of Suba‘a, present in the manuscripts, for this commemoration. And the hymns ܩܘܡܶܐ of Mar Narsai (Hymns on Nativity of our Lord) and two ܩܝܘܡܶܐ of St Ephrem are omitted in the printed text.

In the second chapter I have edited and gave a critical apparatus of the manuscript texts of the commemoration of the blessed Mart Maryam. For this I used *Hudra* Manuscript Tcr. 27 as the basis (A) and other manuscripts such as Tcr. 29 (B) and Vatican Syriac 83 (C) were used for the critical apparatus. For the critical edition, I followed the method of Herman G.B. Teule as expounded in the *Gregory Bar Hebraeus Ethicon Memra I* (CSCO 535; Syr. 219) and provided the text of ms A as it is, including all of its errors. In the cases where I preferred the reading of the other mss, I indicated this with *lege* or *sic*. The more notable variant readings are also indicated in the footnotes. As to the grammatical punctuation of the text, I have followed that of ms A, indicating with a period not only the end of sentences and paragraphs, but also that of clauses, sub-clauses etc. But in the ܩܘܡܶܐ (mainly from the hymns of Mar Narsai) prayers I gave the punctuation mark as found in McLeod, Frederick G., *Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the*

*Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension*, Patrologia Orientalis 40, Turnhout: Brepols: Paris, 1979. A variant marked by a number alone indicates that it affects only the immediately preceding word. A variant marked by a number at the end and at the beginning by \* or † or ‡, indicates that the variant applies to the words so enclosed. I have subdivided the whole prayer into different sections according to the Liturgy of Hours

The third chapter gives the translation of the prayers for the commemoration of Mart Maryam from the *Hudra* Manuscript A. The translation is intended to be a literal one. However, I did it without following the Syriac original so closely that the English text would not become incomprehensible. I gave a more free translation, using techniques such as reversing the order of certain parts of sentences and replacing an active voice with a passive construction, when necessary. Before the translation of the text I gave the list of technical terms and their meanings which are used in this prayer. The ms page number is given in the translation, and titles of each prayer are given with the Syriac name in bold italic character, with the meaning in brackets. All rubrics are in italics. In the 'onyata the beginning verses from the psalms and other books of the Bible are also in bold italics. The Bible references and the references from the writings of St. Ephrem and Narsai are given in the footnotes. Clarifications are given in the footnotes. I have divided the stanzas of the ܩܠܐ ܕܫܗܪܐ of St. Ephrem as seen in the *Hymns on Nativity* (CSCO 186, Syr. 82) and in T. J. Lamy, *Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones*, Tomus II, Mechiline 1886.

Chapter four provides the analysis of the structure, prayers and textual features of the liturgy of Hours for the commemoration of Blessed Virgin Mary. The structure and the explanations of the prayers on various times such as ܩܠܐ ܕܪܡܫܐ (*Slota d-Ramša*) or Vespers, ܩܠܐ ܕܫܒܐ (*Suba 'a*) or Compline, which corresponds to the *Sutoro* (lit. protection) of the West Syriac Church, the ܩܠܐ ܕܠܝܢܐ (*lota d-Lelya,S*), or Prayer of Night, the ܩܠܐ ܕܫܗܪܐ (*Qala d-Šahra*) or Hymns of Vigil, the ܩܠܐ ܕܫܦܪܐ (*Slota d-Šapra*) or Prayer of Morning and the Eucharistic proper on this special commemoration are discussed.

The next chapter is a study of the main Mariological themes based on the titles and names attributed to Mary in these commemoration prayers. Themes such as Mary's divine motherhood, her virginity, Old Testament prophecy, her relationship to the Church and to the Eucharist, and the contrasted typology with Eve are discussed in this chapter. Here I have made use of the writings of the early Syriac Fathers such as Aphrahat, Ephrem and Narsai and Jacob of Serug and the liturgical tradition of West Syriac Church. One of the main features of early Syriac writings is the ample use of images presenting the mystery of Christ in symbolic language. In the Syriac world, the Church Fathers used typological exegesis for Biblical interpretation. Paradoxes are also used for showing the incomprehensibility of the mystery of the salvific action of our Lord (e.g., 'the Great one who became small', 'the rich one who became poor' (cf. 2 Cor 8:9) and 'the hidden one who revealed himself'). The prayers of the commemoration of Mary depict her as the Mother of Christ and at the same time as a virgin. The divine motherhood of Mary is explained through the images of the New Heaven, the Castle of the King and the Temple of God. Her virginity is compared to the unploughed land, and it is seen as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Her virginal conception is described as the fruit that is produced when her ears received the Word of God. Mary is one who co-operated with God in the work of salvation. Therefore, she is viewed by the members of the Church as their refuge, strong fortress and harbour. The prayers, illustrating the many attributes of the Blessed Virgin Mary, excel in presenting the East Syriac understanding of Mary's position in the Church.

The sixth chapter describes how the liturgical appropriation of the prayers commemorating Mary contributes to the development, in the East Syriac theological tradition, of Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, eschatology, ecclesiology, and Mariology. Mariology is not an independent or free-standing element in the rich tradition of the Eastern Christian Churches. It is not treated in itself. Rather, Mariology—doctrine and devotion—is an essential element of Christian theology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. This section specifically deals with the theological implications of the liturgical prayer for the Commemoration of the Virgin Mary.

For the Church of the East, the corollary of venerating Mary ‘within the limits of orthodoxy’ is that no matter how or when she is venerated through her devotions and memorials, the Virgin Mother is never elevated above her Son, or even equated with Him (1 Tim 2:5-6). The liturgy of the Church venerates Mary in terms like ‘Handmaid of the Father’, ‘Mother of the Son’, and ‘Temple of the Holy Spirit’ (Lk 1:30-35, 38). Mary is the mother of Christ, God the Son, and not the mother of God the Father. From the fifth century onwards, the Church of the East faced Christological controversies and misunderstandings about the terms of *Christotokos* and *Theotokos* for Mary. However, this situation of misunderstanding has been overcome with the signing of the ‘Common Christological Declaration’ between the Church of the East and the Catholic Church in 1994. The present study helps us to understand the sound Mariology of the Church of the East which is in fact in agreement with the Mariology of the other Oriental Churches and the Roman Church.

From this study, we can say that the Church of the East venerates Mary without using the term *Theotokos*, but with other terms that display the same level of honour. Moreover, this Church celebrates Mary not only as the mother of Christ, but also as the mother of the mystical body of Christ—the Church. As such, she is also the mother of the believers.

Besides this presented thesis, there had been no other previous scientific or systematic edition, translation, or analysis of the prayers of the commemoration of Mary. The study of the feast of Mary undertaken in this thesis thus contributes to a significant advance in the field of Syriac Studies and creates the opportunity for further research and study.

June 29, 2010  
Kottayam

Jincy O.U.  
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## His Holiness Apostolic Visit to Yonkers, NY

July 31st, 2010



“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation” (Isaiah 52:7). Mar Mari Parish in Yonkers, New York was privileged by the apostolic visit with the

Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, His Holiness, Mar Dinkha IV. This from July 13th through until July 25th. On Tuesday, July 13, 2010, after completing a successful visit to the New Britain Parish, Cor- epicopa GeorgeHaron, Fr. Jim Crowley and the St. Thomas’ Parish Executive Committee escorted His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, accompanied by Shamsha Charbel Isaac from Chicago, to a

warm welcome by Fr. Gewargis Sulaiman, along with the members of the Mar Mari Parish Executive Committee, and Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Multari.

Later that evening, His Holiness was the official guest of our parish priest, Fr. Gewargis Sulaiman, and his family for a dinner that they had prepared in His honor.

During his 7 day stay in Yonkers, His Holiness Mar Dinkha along with Fr. Sulaiman and Shamasha Charbel, and a few members of the

Nancy and Ralph Multari, Ivan & Nina Mirza, Joseph & Sima Shommonnejad, Marline Eskandar, Dr. Donny George, and Genia and Irene Lazari.

On Saturday July 17th, a meeting with Fr. Sulaiman and the Mar Mari Parish Executive Committee members was called to order by His Holiness. His Holiness expressed his satisfaction and praised everyone, including the parishioners, for their continuous support to their church. His Holiness also evoked the necessity of Sunday



**H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch with Fr. Gewargis Sulaiman, wife and three children in Yonkers, New York in July 2010.**

Mar Mari Parish Executive Committee were guests at the home of many members. Here are the names of the parishioners who invited His Holiness to their homes in hope of receiving his blessings and to elate their families' spirituality:

school, youth society, and church choir in church to teach the proper following of our faith, and to preserve our Assyrian heritage. Fr. Sulaiman, the president, and all members of the Executive Committee collectively shared the

same concerns with His Holiness. His Holiness strongly insisted that we ought to remain committed to our church by helping each other to establish all these activities in our church.

On the same day, the Mar Mari Parish Executive Committee and the Ladies Committee collaboratively had hosted a grand testimonial dinner in honor of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. This memorable event was held on Saturday, July 17, 2010 in the Church Hall. His Holiness was escorted into the hall by Fr. Sulaiman, and the members of the Executive Committee where the church choir welcomed him with (SLOOTAKH AWOON), the traditional rhyme of welcoming Church Fathers. After the traditional welcome, Joseph Sulaiman presented a beautiful bouquet of flowers to the Holy Father on behalf of the sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church in Yonkers.

Following dinner, Kasi addressed the parish with a speech on our church today, as well as the importance of parishioners, and parents in particular, to bring their children to church and to teach them the Assyrian language, and to support a church bible study program. This was stressed as an essential obligation, of each and every one of us for the survival and future for our church. On behalf of the Mar Mari Executive Committee, Ladies Auxiliary, and all church members, His Holiness presented a plaque of recognition to one of our dedicated members for the past 40 years, Mr. Lova Atini. Lova & his family will relocate to CA, where I am sure he will continue to support, and be an active member of the Assyrian Church there. Then His Holiness ended his speech in prayer.

On Sunday, July 18, 2010, His Holiness Mar Dinkha assisted by Rev. Gewargis Sulaiman,

Shamasha Charbel, Shamasha Michael from New Britain, and our two beloved Shamashe Joseph and John, celebrated Qurbana Qaddisha (Holy Offer). The Mar Mari Church was full to its maximum capacity. His Holiness words in the sermon that he delivered from the pulpit were spiritually encouraging and profoundly motivational to all listeners. About 200 people joined together for this memorable event.

ankawa.com

## **Russian Orthodox clergy participate in conference of Russian compatriots living in China**

The 4th Conference of Russian Compatriots in China took place on May 4-5, 2010, in Harbin under the theme 'Russian Historical Heritage in China: Problems of Study, Preservation and Popularization in the Light of the 65th Anniversary of the Great Victory'. It was attended by representatives from all the regions in China as well as Russian Orthodox clergy including Archpriest Dionisy Pozdnyayev, rector of Sts Peter and Paul's Church in Hong Kong, and Rev. Sergiy Voronin, rector of the Orthodox Community of the Dormition at the Russian embassy.

The program of the conference provides for a visit to the Church of the Protecting Veil in Harbin and the Orthodox cemetery there.

*DECR Communication Service*

## **Orthodox women seek "theology of healing"**

The need for a "theology of healing" was the central theme of a recent international encounter between Orthodox women and Christians of both sexes from other traditions.

Female leadership in the life of the church—be it in the area of worship, education, administration or social care—should not be “understood as seeking power and prestige but as a deeper commitment to love and service that responds to the sacrificing love of Christ” stated the women and men who took part in the 8-12 July meeting at the St Vlash Theological Academy in Albania.

The participants suggested seeing the women’s commitment as a “healing to all suffering people, particularly the abused, the violated, the victims of poverty and other marginalized people among which women and children are the most vulnerable and highest numbers”.

A theology of healing rests on the fact that “healing is a gift from the incarnate, crucified and risen Lord to all creation”. This healing “is expressed in a concrete way daily according to the needs of the social context in which the Christian communities struggle”.

## **A new diocese in US for the Syro Malankara Church**

The Catholic Church has welcomed the Vatican establishing a diocese for the Syro-Malankara Church in the United States with an official calling it the beginning of a “new era.”

The Vatican established an apostolic exarchate for the Oriental-rite Syro-Malankara Church in the United States on July 14.

Bishop - designate Thomas Naickamparampil, who was appointed to head the new diocese, is also to take care of members in Canada and Europe.

## **Persecution in Pakistan**

“Great dismay” at the shooting and killing of two young Christians in Faisalabad on 19 July was expressed by the World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit in letters to Pakistan’s president and its prime minister.

Pastor Rashid Emmanuel and his brother Sajid Emmanuel were shot dead on court premises by unidentified gunmen when they were taken there by police to face a charge of blasphemy against Islam.

In his letters, Tveit appealed to the Pakistani authorities “to ensure immediate and necessary actions to bring to justice those who are responsible” for the murders.

He also reiterated the concern that the “misuse of the Blasphemy Law in Pakistan has led to physical violence, damage, destruction of properties and loss of life”, and called on the Pakistani leaders “to initiate measures towards the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws and to secure the rights and dignity of all individuals in Pakistan society”.

## **NEWS**

### **Mar Awgin visited UAE and Chicago**

Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa visited UAE parish on 25<sup>th</sup> of June and celebrated Holy Qurbana, on his way to Chicago to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> annual youth conference of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian church of the east. UAE parish Vicar, Fr. Victor Kollannur and Asst. vicar Fr. Sachin Timothy along with all parishioners gave a warm reception to His Lordship on his first Episcopal visit and a public meeting was also organized.

Mar Awgin reached Chicago on 26<sup>th</sup> of June and celebrated Holy Qurbana on 27<sup>th</sup> at the St. Mary’s church, Roselle, Chicago. He participated in the annual youth conference from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2010 at St. Andrews church, Milwaukee, and delivered a presentation on the history of the church of the east in India. Mar Awgin and Sujo Jos, the youth delegate from India, visited

His Holiness at his patriarchate, Illinois. Also visited the tomb and paid tributes to H B Late Mar Narsai De Baz in Montrose cemetery.

Further he visited H G Mar Aprim Khamis Episcopa and his diocese of Arizona and celebrated Holy Qurbana and the commemoration of Mar Yosip Khnanisho on 11<sup>th</sup> July at St. Peter's Cathedral Church at Phoenix. Also he visited H G Dr. Mar Awa Royel and his Diocese of California and celebrated Holy Qurbana on 18<sup>th</sup> July at Mar Zaia Cathedral, Modesto. Then visited Mar Addai church, Turlock where late Mar Toma Dharmo elevated to the rank of Metropolitan, and participated in the 16<sup>th</sup> annual graduation ceremony for the year 2009 – 2010 and delivered a message to new graduates. Also visited Mar Narsai Church at San Francisco, established in 1958, which was the Cathedral Church of Late Mar Ishai Simon Patriarch. Then visited the Berkley University and Graduate Theological Union Library from where our Late Mar Paulose Episcopa obtained his PhD. On the way back to Chicago visited an Indian family of Mr. Paul J Ollukaren at West Palm Beach, Florida. Later H L. Celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. Andrews church, Milwaukee, Chicago on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July and reached safe back in India on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan visited our church in Lebanon during July 2010. He is back in Australia.

Arch Deacon Emanuel Baito Youkhanna is visiting India from Sep 5 to 11.

Bishop Odisho Oraham of Sweden visited London in July 2010.

SEERI CONFERENCE. World Syriac Conference will be held in SEERI, Kottayam on 8 to 16 September.

## **Corbishop Philipose David**

Sunday, August 1st, Corbishop Philipose David, a priest of Mar Narsai Parish in Dohuk, North Iraq celebrated the Holy Qurbana in Mar Mari Church, Yonkers, New York.

Corbishop Pilipose is graduate student from the seminary in Iraq in 1975. He is the teacher who inspired Rev. Gewargis Sulaiman of Yonkers Church to become a priest. He is also his uncle.

## **World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)**

On 18 June, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) will merge with the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). The new ecumenical body will group 227 member churches representing 80 million Christians in 108 countries. 'The coming into being of the World Communion of Reformed Churches will be a historic moment for the churches of the Reformed family and for the church of Christ everywhere'.

## **70 th Celebration of Mar Aprem Metropolitan**

The Church in India is celebrating the 70 birthday of Mar Aprem Metropolitan who completed 70 years of age on 13 June 2010. The Catholicos of the Jacobite Syrian Church H.B. Baselius Mor Thomas I, The Catholicos Designate of the Indian Orthodox Church H.B. Poulouse Mar Milethios, The Metropolitan Emeritus of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church Philipose Mar Chrysostom, Syro Malabar Catholic Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, Archdeacon Emmanuel Youhanna, and Government VIPs are speaking at the meeting.

## **Cardinal Walter Kasper retires**

Cardinal Walter Kasper aged 77, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Vatican has retired from the service after serving 11 years in the Secretariat. He was a Bishop in Germany before moving to Vatican. Although retired from active service the Cardinals have voting rights in Vatican Council until the age of 80.

## First woman seminary professor teaches Bible

India's first Catholic woman to become a fulltime seminary professor says she would work to present the Bible in "a new and meaningful" way.

Assumption Sister Rekha Chennattu was appointed professor of Sacred Scripture in Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth (JDV), a major Indian seminary based in Pune, western India.

Her appointment was confirmed mid-June by the Congregation for Catholic Education with the approval of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Sister Chennattu, 46, told ucanews.com that she was "excited" about the prospect of "preparing ambassadors for Christ."

Source: [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com)



**Assumption Sister Rekha Chennattu has been appointed professor of Sacred Scripture in Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, a major Indian seminary.**



**Mr. Eisho Edwin Shlemon aged 22, a young member of Assyrian Community, was killed in a road car accident in London on Monday 26th July 2010.**

## Bishop Andreas Abouna of Baghdad dies



BAGHDAD, Iraq, JULY 27, 2010 (Zenit.org).- Auxiliary Bishop Andreas Abouna of Baghdad died today in Erbil. He was 67 and suffering from kidney failure.

Cardinal Emmanuel III Delly, archbishop of Baghdad, presided today at the funeral in Ankawa.

Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil described his brother bishop as a pastor who was "always smiling, even in very difficult situations," Aid to the Church in Need reported.

Andreas Abouna was born March 23, 1943, in Bedar, Iraq. He joined the seminary at age 14 and was ordained a priest in 1966. After working in the Diocese of Basra, he was assigned to a church in Baghdad where he would serve for 20 years.

During his priestly life, he would also serve 11 years as the director of the Chaldean and Syrian-Catholic mission in England.

Pope John Paul II sent him back to his native Iraq by appointing him auxiliary bishop of Baghdad in 2002, shortly before Saddam Hussein was overthrown.

His episcopal ministry was thus marked by the violence that has beset Iraq.

Archbishop Louis Sako of Kirkuk told Aid to the Church in Need that "Bishop Abouna was a very good and humble man, very open-minded. He really took care of each one of his priests and he always worked for the unity of the Church. I hope he can pray for us from heaven."

<http://www.catholic.net/index.php?option=zenit&id=30004>



**St. Gabriel parish, Thane, Bombay on 11 July 2010. Mar Aprem metropolitan and Vicar Fr. Jacks Chandy after Holy Qurbana. The photo with women were taken as a separate due to lack of space in the church, which is a combined two apartments in the ground floor of the multistoried building. Mar Aprem recalled that it will be 50 years next year when he first visited Bombay as a young deacon met a few members in Bombay who supported him in gradually building up a parish. The parishioners celebrated 70 years.**





**Youth Conference in Chicago Left to Right. Mar Awgin Kuriakose, H.H. Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV & Ms. Suja Jose from Madras, India**



**The monument in Edensor Park which is 5 minutes from St. Hurmizd Cathedral. Also about 5 minutes from Mar Meelis' house. This memorial Statue is dedicated on 7 August 2010 by Mar Meelis Metropolitan in memory of the Victims of the Assyrian genocide (SEYFO) in World War I (1914 - 18) and simile massacre in August 1933.**