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Vol 61

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Nos.11 & 12



H.H. Mar Dinkha IV responds to the address of H.H. Pope Francis at the Vatican on 2 October 2014. The Assyrian Church of the East delegation from right – left:

H.B. Mar Meelis Zaia AM, H.G. Mar Awa Royel, H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Archdeacon William Toma and Cor-epicopa George Toma

*Wish You a Happy Christmas and  
a Prosperous New Year*

## VOICE OF THE EAST





**NCCI People at centenary worship in Nagpur**



**Mr. Jacob Job, IPS, City Police Commissioner of Thrissur inaugurating the public meeting of 'Sunday School Day' on 7 December 2014**  
**L to R: H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa, H.G. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Mr. Jacob Job IPS, Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa and Sunday School Secretary Fr. Simon Emmatty**

**VOICE OF THE EAST**

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

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

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# Voice of the East

**Vol. 61**

**September - October 2014**

**Nos. 9 & 10**

## *Editorial*

### **Islamic State**

The sufferings of the Christians and other minorities in Iraq, Syria and throughout the Middle East are continuing. The Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation (ACERO) is actively working on the relief effort with support of communities in England, America, Australia, Canada and other places. ACERO has provided housing, water, food, and clothes and attempted to meet the educational needs of poor Assyrians who have lost their homes in Iraq and Syria.

The Church of the East in India has contributed 1 million Indian Rupees to the relief efforts with different parishes raising more than eight hundred thousand Indian Rupees and the rest being met by the Central Fund of the Church. 1 million Indian Rupees is not an extraordinary amount, totaling a little more than \$16,000 USD. This amount is small when compared to the great needs of our suffering brothers and sisters who have remained steadfast in their Christian faith in these times of terrible persecution.

Leaders and scholars of the Islamic faith have condemned the cruelty of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL/IS). Some terrorists from India are also trying to join the Islamic State. Despite widespread condemnations of the barbarity of IS and its supporters, the ruling powers in Iraq and Syria have not been able to enforce law and order in their nations to protect all citizens.

Let us pray and hope that peace will be restored in this world as the choirs of different churches will repeat this Christmas the angelic call:

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward men”.*

*“Tishbukhta l-Alaha bamrawmi wa-al’ara shlama o-sawra thawa lawnainasha b-khul iddan l-almin, Amen”.*

**Mar Aprem**

*International News*

PRESS RELEASE

**Visit of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV**

Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East

Rome 1 – 4 October 2014

His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, came to Rome from 1-4 October to meet His Holiness Pope Francis. His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV arrived with his delegation on Wednesday 1 October. On Wednesday evening a dinner was hosted by His Eminence Cardinal Koch in honour of the Patriarch. On Thursday morning 2 October, there was the private meeting of His Holiness Mar Dinkha with the Holy Father, followed by the meeting of the delegation with the Holy Father, comprising speeches, an exchange of gifts and a group photo.

On Thursday afternoon and Friday morning two meetings were held at the office of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The members of the delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East were His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon, His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod, His Grace Mar Yohannan Yousif, Auxiliary Bishop of India, Very Rev. Archdeacon William Toma and Very Rev. Cor-bishop George Toma.

The Catholic Church was represented by His Eminence Cardinal Koch (President, PCPCU); His Excellency Johan Bonny, Bishop of Antwerp, His Excellency Antoine Audo, Bishop of Aleppo of the Chaldeans, His Excellency Yousif Thomas Mirkis, O.P, Archbishop of Kirkuk of the Chaldeans, His Excellency Francis Kalabat, Bishop of Saint Thomas of the Chaldeans (Detroit, USA) and Rev. Gabriel Quicke (Official, PCPCU).

The meeting at the Pontifical Council commenced with a word of welcome by His Eminence Cardinal Koch and words of gratitude by the Patriarch. Bishop Johan Bonny gave a short presentation of the history of the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. The meeting reflected on the second phase of the dialogue dealing with the text on 'Sacramental life' with a view to ensuring its continuity and to preparing the signing of this document. There was also discussion on defining a methodology, and preparing an outline of the third phase of the dialogue on the nature and constitution of the Church. Both delegations want to continue along the path of dialogue and look forward to the next meeting.

✠ **K. MARDINKHA IV**

CATHOLICOS-PATRIARCH OF THE HOLY  
APOSTOLIC CATHOLIC ASSYRIAN  
CHURCH OF THE EAST

8908 BIRCH AVENUE  
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**Patriarchal epistle  
For the Holy feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ  
For the year 2014**

Our beloved brothers, noble prelates, our spiritual sons the elected priests and pure deacons: sons and daughters of the Holy Church and Assyrian national group and all our Christian brothers and sisters.

**Our Prayers and blessings you may receive**

Today, the Feast of the Holy Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ brought a great joy into every Christian home. Thus we should not forget the love and mercy of our heavenly father towards mankind. God as a gracious, righteous and just God is always concerned about keeping the work of His hand, the man whom He has created in His image and likeness pure and without blemish. He does not desire the lovely image He has created to be stained by sin. We are bound to pray and offer thanksgiving unto our heavenly father for His paternal love and mercy towards mankind by sending His only begotten Son unto the world in order to save human race from death and sin.

A great miracle took place in Bethlehem of Judea on the day of the Nativity of Jesus Chris. *"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"*" (Luke 2:8-14)

Let us too, along with the angles raise glory unto God on behalf of His love and kindness for sending peace upon earth. Today more than ever we are in need of the same divine peace to be sent into those countries which are extremely in need of peace so that their inhabitants will have hope to live peacefully. Christians in the Middle East in general and the sons and daughters of our Assyrian National group in particular are beseeching the Lord of peace, the merciful God, to make it possible for them to go back to their homes, villages and their cities and live in peace and without fear with their neighbors. Our Lord Jesus Christ says: *"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you;"* (John 14: 27) Now we have realized that our Lord has given us peace and good hope.



Let us believe on the day of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World. The Shepherds beheld a great host of heavenly beings along with the Angel praising God and saying: *"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men"*.

The source of Peace and hope is Jesus Christ. Therefore Let us not stay away from the Lord so that we will avoid being lost in this world. It is expected of us to be faithful obedient and safeguard His commandments. It is appropriate that we too should pray and say: *"Glory to God in the highest, for His gracious loving kindness towards Mankind, for sending His Son."* Christians all over the World are delighted on the day of the Feast of the Holy Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are all together, as members of one extended Christian family are celebrating in love the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and saying to all of you O Sons and daughters of the Holy Church and our Assyrian national group and to all the fellow Christians:

**The Fast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed to you all.**

As the glory of the Lord shone around the Shepherds on the day of the Nativity of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ after the same manner may it shine and enlighten the hearts and minds of all the world national groups and nations so that they can be able to live together upon the surface of this world in love and tranquility.

Christians of today more than ever are in need to have trust, love, peace and respect towards one another. The structure of our Christian faith must be erected upon a stable and strong foundation, because the lack of trust in one another is causing obstacles in the path of Ecclesial unity. Whenever there is a lack of faith no doubt there will be a lack of love, respect and obedience towards one another as well. Hence the division, hatred, anger and disrespect are originating. And the result of all the above mentioned will definitely be the cause of weakness and significant lose to us all ecclesiastically.

We pray and are beseeching God, the same peace which He has send by means of the heavenly hosts on the day of the Nativity of His Son Jesus Christ may bring all the Christians closer to one another. Jesus Christ established only one Church on earth, and He is the head and the guardian of it. Even though, today the Holy Church is divided and called by many different names, yet at the end we are all Christians. A Christian should not disrespect his fellow Christian regardless to his denominational belonging. Christians as brothers and sisters of one another in Christ must participate in joy and sadness of one another. Our lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to love one another. It is written: *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* (John15:12) If we Christians work together respectfully, in a humble spirit and pure heart, we will all equally rejoice in the love and peace of Christ.

Jesus Christ is not calling the buildings made of stones the Church but rather He means the congregation of those who have believed in Him. Jesus commissioned His Apostles saying: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Amen." (Matthew 28:19-20) Sacrament of the Holy Baptism is the spiritual mother who gave birth to all of us, as brothers and sisters members of one Christian house hold. Therefore we must love and support one another.

I urge all the sons and daughters of our Holy Church to be supportive of the prelates, priests who are in dire need of their help. Every single member of the Holy Church is responsible towards the Church. His responsibility is not merely to pay his/her tithe but rather the utmost and the most important obligation of a member of the Church are: maintaining the apostolic faith the Holy Church, keeping the cannon laws of the Holy Church and regularly attending the spiritual services and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and listening to the divine words of God preached by prelates, priests and deacons.

We ask you all: O sons and daughters of our Holy Church to participate in the classes of Messianic teaching which are offered in your parishes. Your younger children should be brought to the Sunday and Friday schools where they will be taught the prayers, basic faith and liturgical language. All your young sons and daughters must be encouraged to join the youth association of our Holy Church. It is expected of them to join the choir of the parish, attend the bible study programs and learn both reading and writing of the liturgical language. The children and the young people are the future of our Church. We acquire the Christian faith from hearing and listening to the divine words of God written in the Sacred Scriptures, read and preached by the prelates, priests and faithful preachers of the Church.

We ask you all, O, sons and daughters of our Holy Church and of our Assyrian national group in the country in which you are a resident or Citizens be faithful, and obedient to the constitution by laws of your country, and be obedient to the governmental authorities so that you may be respected and loved by officials of the Country of your residency and you will live in joy and peace with your neighbors.

As sons and daughters of the Assyrian Church of the east, keep your faith, liturgy and Apostolic Traditions of the Church with great care. In the country you may reside try to live a Christian life. Be proud that you are sons and daughters of Assyrian Church of the east. You should never be embarrassed or afraid that you are a Christian.

In conclusion we are again saying: The feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed to you all along with the new year of 2015. We pray the upcoming New Year will bring peace and tranquility in all corners of the world in general and in particular in the Middle Eastern countries in particular. We pray for the mutual understanding, peace and unity of the whole Christian Church. We pray for the good health and prosperity of all the sons and daughters of the Holy Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace and Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all forever and ever. Amen



*K. Mardinkha*

Written: in our Patriarchal  
Morton Grove  
10<sup>th</sup> of December 2014

Khanania Mardinkha IV  
by Grace Catholicos Patriarch  
the Assyrian Church of the East





**H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurating the Caroms Tournament conducted by the Central Youths Association in memory of late Bishop Poulose Mar Poulose.**



**Football team of Mar Yonan Parish, Thiroor who won the 1st prize in football shoot-out competition held by Mar Yonan Parish**





**H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa inaugurating the free medical camp conducted by the Men's Association in Mar Awgin Thuvana Church, Thrissur.**



## **VIDYA JYOTHI COLLEGE, PARAVATTANI**

**Plant a tree programme in Vidyajyothi College, Paravattani. Vicar of Mar Addai Shleeha Parish Fr. Antony Kaitharan M.A., B.D., and Principal Mrs. Ruby Sherdin Thomas are pictured in the middle**





Procession in connection with the Hallowing festival led by H.G. Mar Aprem Metropolitan along with H.L. Mar Yohannan Episcopa and H.L. Mar Awgin Episcopa in Mart Mariam Cathedral compound on 1 November 2014



The new black stone cross erected in front of the Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, East Fort, Thrissur





**Dr. Paul Chalakal of Goa is awarded the “Young Pedodontist Award” at the 36th Annual Conference of Indian Society of Pedodontics & Prevention Dentistry at Lucknow on 14 October 2014**



**The picture is in connection with the first Episcopal conference of bishops of the dioceses of the Assyrian Church of the East in the United States. L to R: His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod & President of CIRED, His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of the Western United States, The chair of the Episcopal conference and His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of the Diocese of the Eastern USA and President of ACERO USA**



## **U.S. Bishops Hold First Episcopal Conference**

The bishops of the dioceses of the Assyrian Church of the East in the United States held their first Episcopal conference from October 30th to the 31st, in San Diego, California. The conference, blessed by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch, was attended by: His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of the Western United States, the chair of the Episcopal conference, His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod & President of CIRED, and His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of the Diocese of the Eastern USA and President of ACERO USA. The bishops were also in San Diego to take part in the rite of the consecration of the altar of the Rabban Hermizd Parish, which took place after morning prayers on the First Sunday of the Hallowing of the Church, November 2, 2014. His Grace Mar Yosip Sargis, bishop emeritus, was also present for the consecration rite.

The meeting of the bishops' conference was held at the offices of St. Rabban Hermizd Parish in San Diego, and was hosted by His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis. The items on the agenda for discussion and implantation in the United States dioceses included, among others: formulating a single Sunday School curriculum for the dioceses in America, preparing a program for the canonical preparation of marriage and baptism in the Church, finalizing the Constitution of the Youth Association of the Church in the US and other Youth matters, pastoral issues in dealing with the married, separated and divorced, unifying the ecclesiastical calendar in the US, the preparation of catechetical materials, strengthening the Church's charitable ACERO foundation, and various liturgical matters. The Episcopal conference also called for a meeting and retreat of all the priests of the three dioceses in the US to take place in early November of 2015. These matters and the decisions of the bishops' conference will be communicated to the priests and clergy of each appropriate diocese at the next presbyteral council meeting of the diocese, respectively.

At the closing session, the bishops offered prayers to our suffering brothers and sisters in the Faith, in Iraq and Syria, and prayed the Lord's blessings and help upon our suffering People in those countries, and in the Middle East at large.

Thank you.

## **Address of the Church in Toronto, Canada**

Some Indians visiting Canada have requested the address of the Assyrian Church of the East in Toronto which is as follows:

**The Cathedral Church of Saint Mary**  
**161 Skyway Ave.**  
**Toronto, Ontario, Canada**  
**M9W 4Z5**

Parish Priests:

Archdeacon E. Audisho. Tel. (Res.) 905 - 913 2030

Rev. Yousif Sermez Tel (Res.) 905 - 286 - 1020

## *Indian Church News* **NCCI Centenary**

Bishop Dr. Taranath Sagar President of National Council of Churches in India at the Samvidhan Square addressed the gathering with the basic gospel virtue of Love, of loving your neighbour as yourself. He also urged people to continue to maintain the peace and harmony, for peace is another virtue of the Holy Spirit. He also said, Christians who are a minority in India, have contributed enormously in terms of Nation-Building. In spite of a long history of Christianity, Christians form today only 3.5% of the total population. In spite of this significantly tiny minority character, the Church in India made praiseworthy contributions towards Nation-building. Christians have been active in the fields of Education, Health care, Social development, charity and the secular polity of the country.

In the Education sector, what is impressive is that 70% of all schools are in rural areas, serving the poor, especially the dalits, the adivasis and other disadvantaged groups. Only a meager 15% of the Church institutions are in the cities and large towns. He also reminded that the Church gave a major importance to the education of women and takes pride in the empowerment of women. This has led to the enlightenment of Indian women belonging to all religions, castes, tribes and different religions in modern India. The historical contribution and breakthrough of the achievement of the Church in the field of education lies in the fact that it broke the monopoly of a single privileged caste and decentralized and democratised education. Education has made it possible for dalits and tribals not only to benefit by it but to have social mobility in life.

In the field of Social development, the Church in India has demonstrated the compassion of Christ to the Indian Society. Specific attention to the development of the poor and downtrodden was given due importance. In the tribal belt the liberation of the tribals from money-lender and landlords served as the first contribution of the Church.

In the sector of Relief, the Church has shifted from relief and charity to Institutional model of empowering and wholesome educational and health institutions. Focus on empowerment and self-reliance of the poor to remake their future by a cooperation and collective action for social transformation had been the plan.

Remembering Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, Bishop Dr. Sagar remarked about the Christian community's significant contribution to "secularism" in India. For nation building, the secular character and ethos of our polity is essential to shape and forge harmony and peace for all people of the country. The Church remains committed to secularity of the Constitution of the Republic. Secular character of the Republic is a positive force for peace and communal harmony in a pluri-cultural and multi-religious society that India is. A good number of priests serve such social institutions and social service societies across India. Practically all of them are professional qualified and give a very substantial contribution in the building up of the nation.

The church is like a leaven working in the Indian society. It does not seek publicity as she follows the biblical principle of 'left hand not knowing what the right hand does'.

In the evening, during the NCCI Centenary Finale Worship Service at the All Saints Cathedral, dignitaries from Christian Conference of Asia, Hong Kong Christian Council, National Council of Churches in Nepal, Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches and other partner ecumenical organisations brought Greetings to the National Council of Churches in India. Dr. Chris Ferguson from the World Communion of Reformed Churches, in his message to the gathering, said that "To be Ecumenical is to be Reformed". To bring our own Transformation is to bring Transformation in the world. He also said, NCCI Centenary Finale is just the beginning of the NCCI Centenary Theme "Integral Mission and Grassroots Ecumenism" for a future vision. He exhorted the NCCI to march ahead to struggle for Economic justice, especially for the Dalits, Tribals and other disadvantaged groups in India.



Greetings were received from dignitaries representing other Ecumenical bodies: Rev. Dr. Peniel Rufus Rajkumar (World Council of Churches), Rev. Dr. Augustine Jeyakumar (Lutheran World Federation), and Rev. Dr. K. B. Rokaya (Christian Conference of Asia).

Also, during the programme, NCCI's Commission Programme on Indian Disability Ecumenical Accompaniment (IDEA) and 'National Ecumenical Forum for Sexual Minorities' (NEFSM) were inaugurated and citations given by Bishop Dr. Taranath Sagar. He also released the NCCI 2015 Calendar.

The 3-day celebrations will continue in the form of Symposiums, Workshops, Missional Conversations, will deliberate upon the various burning issues of Church and Society. The programme is scheduled to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> at NCCI Campus, Civil Lines, Nagpur.

*Reported by: Ms. Sunita Gaikwad, NCCI Communications*

13 Million People; 30 Member Churches; 17 Regional Christian Councils; 17 All India Christian Organisations; 7 Related Agencies

## **Letter to Prime Minister**

***Below is the text of a letter written to Indian Prime Minister by Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, General Secretary of National Council of Churches in India.***

*December 2, 2014*

Honorable Prime Minister,

On behalf of the NCCI, I strongly urge you to take immediate measures to ensure that minority communities are not subject to attacks by fundamentalist communal groups. The Christian church in the country wants to see that democratic secularism in spirit and practice is strengthened by your government.

Instances of atrocities against Christian communities are on the rise in the country. Earlier in November, Catholic priests in the Bastar region in Chhattisgarh were told that all their schools were to install statues of Goddess Saraswati and they would not be allowed to be called "Father", the usual honorific, by the students, but would be called "Pracharya" and so on. In other districts of Chhattisgarh, village panchayats under political influence have passed regulations banning non-Hindu religious persons from organising prayers or opening places of worship in their territory. On 16th November 2014 a Mar Thoma Prayer House was attacked during Holy Communion Service at Kongalnagaram, Udumalpet, Tiruppur District, Tamil Nadu. On Sunday, 30th November 2014, two house churches in Annupur district of Madhya Pradesh were attacked. We are aghast that St. Sebastian Church in Dilshad Garden, East Delhi has been gutted by a fire set off by miscreants on 1st December 2014.

As a well-read person, you are certainly aware of the tremendous contribution made by Christians, in history and up to the present, towards nation building through education, health care, orphanages, old people's homes, counseling ministries, relief services provided during natural calamities, and the ongoing work for rehabilitation and development. The Church in India continues to be committed to the cause of dalits, tribal/adivasis, women, youth, children, the disabled, PLWA, mother earth - indeed all creation, particularly those who have been marginalized. We are committed to an India developed on the principles of justice and peace.

Therefore I once again urge you to bring in suitable measures to cultivate a culture of democratic secularism and an appropriate mechanism to ensure that it is implemented. In the meantime, judicial inquiries should be constituted to address all acts of religious fundamentalism and communalism against Christians and fellow minority communities in India.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad, *General Secretary, NCC India*

## **Sunday School Day**

A large and colourful rally of Sunday school children, teachers and parents came from Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church to Mart Mariam Cathedral as usual on Sunday 7 December 2014. All parishes in Kerala State participated in the event.

This five thousand member procession was very colourful and spiritually attractive with floats and tableaux with biblical themes. Mar Aprem Metropolitan could not recognize his younger brother Mr. Abimalek (baptized by the late Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan in 1942 as the first baby in the newly built baptism font in the Mar Aprem Church) who walked in the dress of a Metropolitan.

A public meeting was held after the procession and distribution of sweets presided over by Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan. Bishop Mar Yohannan and Bishop Mar Awgin addressed the gathering. The address of the Chief Guest Mr. Jacob Job, IPS, City Police Commissioner of Thrissur warned the parents to give parental guidance to their teenage children who are misguided by the internet.

He spoke with authority citing the incidents he witnessed while he was the modal officer of the cyber crime cell of the Kerala police in Trivandrum.

Mr. I.G. Joy, Chairman, Board of Central Trustees, Fr. Simon Emmatty, General Secretary of the Mar Aprem Sunday School also spoke. Prizes were distributed to the best performances of the different parishes in the appearance of the procession as well as the floats used by different parishes. In most parishes clergy had given good leadership in arranging this procession as well as designing the floats and tableaux with Christian themes. Angels and devils, shepherds and clergy added colour to this beautiful procession appreciated by the public of Thrissur city. The traffic police diverted the traffic of the city to make this procession the talk of the town.

## **Holy Qurbana in Mar Timotheus Nagar**

His Lordship Mar Awgin Kuriakose celebrated Holy Qurbana on 2 October in the specially constructed pavilion in Mar Timotheus Nagar in Mar Narsai Parish, Nadathara. The property was donated to the church by a well wisher. Vicar Fr. Thomas Thermadom and Assistant Vicar Deacon Chakunny Vithayathil assisted. About 80 people participated in this Holy Qurbana. In the previous years Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Mar Yohannan Episcopa had celebrated Holy Qurbana in this place. It is hoped a Chapel will be built here.

## **Plant a Tree**

As a part of our national programme to plant trees in all parts of India, the "My Tree Challenge" programme was inaugurated by Fr. Antony Kaitharan M.A., B.D., and President of the Vidyajyothi College. The Principal of the College Mrs. Ruby Sherdin Thomas and Mr. Joju Varghese, Secretary of the College Committee gave leadership to this programme. As many trees are cut down to make furniture and construct buildings, India is in great trouble if we do not plant trees urgently. To prevent global warming planting trees is a "must".

## **Mar Timotheus High School**

Mar Timotheus High School has been reconstructed at the cost of 35 million Rupees (more than half a million US dollars) in the same compound behind Mar Mari Sleeha Church, Kuriachira, Trichur. The School was started by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan and was raised to the status of a High School after the death of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan whose name was later given to this School. The present Corporate Manager of all our Church Schools Mr. I.G. Joy is working hard to get upgraded this High School as a Higher Secondary School like our Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School upgraded in 1998. Mr. Kunjalikutty, Minister of the Kerala Government has consented to inaugurate it on Monday 12 January 2015.



## **Young Pedodontist Award**

Dr. Paul Chalakkal M.D.S. was given the Young Pedodontist Award at a national conference held in Lucknow on October 14, 2014. He is an active member of our Mission Parish in Goa. His father Commander Paul Chalakkal has received Indian Navika Sena medal of the Indian Navy. His father Paul Thomas Chalakkal, Headmaster of the Chaldean Syrian High School had received National Award for the best High School teacher from the President of India.

Dr. Paul Chalakkal is now a lecturer in the Dental College and Hospital in Goa.

## **Football Shoot-Out**

Mar Yohannan Episcopa gave the first kick in the football shoot-out competition held by Mar Yonan Parish. The Mar Yonan Parish came first and Mar Thoma Shleeha Parish second in the competition.

## **Caroms Tournament**

Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurated the Caroms Tournament conducted by the Central Youths Association in memory of late Bishop Poullose Mar Poullose.

## **Free Medical Camp**

Mar Awgin Episcopa inaugurated the free medical camp conducted by the Men's Association in Mar Awgin Thuvana Church.

Free medical service is offered on the first Monday of every month between 10 and 11.30 a.m. after Holy Qurbana. Dr. Neil John Mannukadan (trained in Russia) and Dr. Shibu Ignatius will serve. On all Fridays from 10.00 to 12.00 noon Homeo Doctor Susan Jacob will serve. The same day from 4.00 to 6.00 p.m. Fr. Runo Varghese, trained Yoga Therapist (who is the Vicar of this parish) will be available. Please contact the Secretary P.J. Anto (mobile No. 9447420202) for further information.

## **Clergy Family Gathering**

This year's Annual Clergy Family Gathering was held in the Seminary, Church of the East on Wednesday 22 October 2014. More than 120 members from the families of our clergy participated. In the case of our Bishops and celibate priests, relatives joined this annual event. A priest of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church was the guest speaker.

## **YMCA – YWCA Week of Prayer**

Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurated this prayer week in YMCA, Kunnankulam on Sunday 9 November, 2014 and gave the concluding speech on Saturday 15 November in the YWCA, Trichur. The chief guest recalled that he has been speaking in the YMCA-YWCA prayer week for the past 51 years ever since he spoke in the YWCA in 1963. This year Rev Dr. Sister Jincy of our Church was the main speaker on the inaugural day at the YWCA. The members of our Church Mrs. Dr. Leela Raphael, Mrs. Shanta John, Architect Engineer Mr. Francis Chandy and others provided active leadership in the observation of this world event.

## **Holy Qurbana in Delhi & Goa**

Mar Aprem Metropolitan celebrated Holy Qurbana in our St. Stephen Church in Delhi on 23 November and in the mission parish in Goa on Monday 24 November after the CASA national board meeting in New Delhi.

## **Rev'd Fr. E.V. Antony**

Fr. Antony Varghese Eluvathingal (E.V. Antony) aged 45 passed away on December 10, 2014. He was Vicar of the St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam. He was a student in Baghdad, Iraq from December 2000 to April 2003 along with Fr. Joju Anto (now H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa).

Fr. E.V. Antony studied in the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church Seminary in Kerala for four years. He was a good organizer and a good preacher. He was active in ecumenical activities. His untimely death by heart attack was a loss to the Church and to his aged parents and family. He was a celibate priest. He had visited the Holy Land (Jerusalem, Bethlehem etc.) twice. His funeral was conducted by our two Episcopas and the clergy. The Metropolitan of the Jacobite Church in Malabar (who was a classmate of Fr. Antony at the Jacobite Seminary) came to Thrissur to attend the funeral and to offer his condolences. Fr. Antony was buried in the clergy section of the cemetery of Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, East Fort, Trichur.

### **Syrian Orthodox Patriarch to visit India**

Arrangements are being made for the visit of the new Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, H.H. Mor Ignatius Aphrem II to Kerala in February 2015. He has visited Kerala when he was the Metropolitan of America. The new Patriarch is a friend of our Church. Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis had gone from America to Syria to attend his consecration, representing H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. We welcome the visit of Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem and wish him every success.

### **Ramsha Prayers in Kottayam**

Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose led Ramsha (evening) prayers in Syriac on Wednesday before the Soobara (Advent) at the first day of the International Conference held at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary. Fr. Antony Kaitharan, Fr. Binu Joseph and Fr. Justin Neelankavil assisted. The choir of the seminary gave leadership for singing Awoon Dwasmayya, Lakhu Mara and Qaddisha Alaha. Mar Aprem Metropolitan spoke the next day in the ecumenical meeting with the Metropolitans of other Churches. The delegates appreciated our Ramsha prayers in Syriac.

### **Nestorian Cross in Pilar, Goa**

One of the oldest stone crosses in India is in the Museum of the seminary at Pilar, Goa. Mar Aprem Metropolitan visited this Cross erected in 600 A.D. This is similar to the Cross in Kottayam as well as Karunagala in Sri Lanka. Fr. Runo Varghese, Vicar of the Mission parish of Goa, the trustees of the parish Mr. P.V. Joseph and Engineer Williams Parapully accompanied the Metropolitan. Fr. Jos Costa, the famous church historian from Goa presented his books to the Metropolitan.

### **The Wide Gulf in the Gulf**

The above is the title of the new book on the Islamic State and the minorities of Iraq such as the Assyrians and the Yezidis etc being written by Rev'd. Dr. David Ananda Hart of England and Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan. Any publisher interested in publishing the very timely book can contact hgmaraprem@gmail.com.

### **Documentary on the Assyrians**

A student doing S.T.M. degree in Union Theological Seminary, New York City, has produced a documentary of about 20 minutes regarding the sad situation of the Assyrians today. Those who interested can contact Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan to arrange screenings in your communities. Email ID: hgmaraprem@gmail.com.

### **New Black Stone Cross**

A new black stone cross was erected in front of the Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, East Fort. The blessing was done after Holy Qurbana on Sunday 7 December 2014. The cost of the Cross was contributed by the members of this parish.





Fr. Antony Varghese Eluvathingal (E.V. Antony) aged 45 passed away on December 10, 2014.



Persian Cross erected in 600 AD exhibited in the museum in Pilar, Goa



4. Clergy Family Conference on 22 October 2014. Picture taken in front of the Church of the East Seminary. Metropolitan Dr. Mar Aprem along with Bishops Mar Yohannan and Mar Awgin are leading the procession during Ramsha Prayers on the eve of the Qudash Idtha festival in Thrissur on 1 November 2014.





After Holy Qurbana in New Delhi: Vicar Fr. Mohan Konikara is seated next to the Metropolitan. Mr. Shammi Jacob is seen behind the Metropolitan



After Holy Qurbana in Goa. L-R: Commander George Chalakal, Mr. M.I. Thomas, Fr. Runo Varghese, Mar Aprem Metropolitan, William Parappully and P.V. Joseph