

# മലയാളം ഭാഷാ മാസിക

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July-August 2015

Nos.7 & 8



H.H. Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the Indian Orthodox Church inaugurates a ceremony marking the conclusion of year-long celebrations for the Bicentenary (200th Year) of Mart Mariam Valiapally (Cathedral) in Thrissur on 23 August 2015

# VOICE OF THE EAST





**H. G. Mar Paulus Benjamin, H.B. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph, and H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose pictured with the clergy in front of the Metropolitan Palace, Thrissur**



**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin visits Thrissur Seminary with students along with prelates, clergy and the Board of Central Trustees at the time of Onam festival**

**VOICE OF THE EAST**

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***Contents***

1. Editorial (Election of Catholicos-Patriarch)
2. Authenticity in Unity

***International Church News***

3. Profiles of Prelates
4. Mar Yabhallaha III
5. Delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East Visits Russia and Armenia
6. Australia and New Zealand's Youth Associations

***Indian Church News***

7. 200th Year Celebration
08. Visit of the Bishop of Eastern USA
09. St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam
10. Planting Lakshmi Tharu
11. Scholarship Students Camp
12. ACERO Donation
13. H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Assyrian Convent
14. Reception in the United Arab Emirates

# Voice of the East

**Vol. 62**

**July-August 2015**

**Nos. 7 & 8**

## *Editorial*

### **Election of Catholicos-Patriarch**

When the late lamented Catholicos-Patriarch passed away on March 26, 2015 the faithful of the Assyrian Church of the East all over the world began to pray for a worthy successor. It is not an easy exercise to choose the proper person to occupy this highest post in the church. According to the tradition of the Church of the East it is the duty and privileged responsibility of the prelates of the church to elect a worthy candidate and to consecrate and install him in the throne of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

For six hundred years from the 15<sup>th</sup> century until the last consecration in October 1976 the consecration of the Catholicos-Patriarch was done via hereditary succession in the Mar Shimun family. Mar Dinkha IV was consecrated in Ealing near London, England on 17 October 1976. Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of Malabar & India was the Chief Consecrator, as the senior-most Metropolitan Mar Yosip Khananisho was not well enough to travel outside of Iraq owing to his old age. Mar Khananisho Metropolitan was the consecrator of Mar Eshai Shimun as Catholicos-Patriarch in 1920 in Baghdad.

Mar Eshai Shimun was 12 and Mar Dinkha was 41 when they were consecrated in 1920 and 1976 respectively. Mar Eshai Shimun ruled the Church for 54 years (from age 12 to 66) and Mar Dinkha IV ruled the church for 39 and half years (from the age of 41 to 79 and a half). There was a gap of 3 years from 1974 to 76 with the senior-most Metropolitan of Iraq in charge during that period. A committee of three Bishops assisted the Metropolitan in the affairs of the church.

The election of October 1976 in England presided over by Mar Timotheus Metropolitan of India was smooth. There was only one candidate proposed. He was unanimously elected. Out of the three active Bishops assisting the old Mar Khananaisho Metropolitan in ruling the church only Bishop Mar Dinkha had reached the age of 40. The second Bishop Mar Narsai De Baz was only 36 and Bishop Mar Aprim Khamis was only 34.

At this election only one Bishop, Mar Narsai Benyamin of Iran, is below the minimum age of 40. All the rest, 3 Metropolitans and 10 Bishops have completed 40 years of age. Our church has one Metropolitan and two Bishops holding Ph.D. degrees. Nearly all prelates of the church hold other degrees of higher learning in various disciplines.

Let us pray that the meeting of the Council of Prelates commencing on September 16<sup>th</sup> in Northern Iraq will prayerfully elect a suitable successor to the holy and auspicious See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon and that he will be consecrated peacefully on September 27<sup>th</sup> in Erbil, Northern Iraq.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan



*International Church News*

**Authenticity in Unity**  
**A Personal Reflection on Present-Day Questions**  
**Concerning the Unity of the Church of the East**  
**Bishop Mar Awa Royel, *Diocese of California***

***[CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE]***

Of course, the Church of the East is not, in her core, separate nor separatist, and forever isolated from the greater communion of the Ancient Churches, but seeks true and honest reconciliation with all sincere Apostolic Christians. However, this must be according to the most ancient and Apostolic of models, and never subjecting a more ancient tradition to the modern circumstances of the West.

The Bishop of Rome holds the senior-most dignity (ᾠᾗᾗᾗᾗᾗᾗ) of any apostolic see according to canonical interpretation as presently ordered and as established already in the early ecumenical councils, yet we can see how even this precedence has not permitted it to rule over the other ancient Churches. In the ideal model of Christian unity, which we hold firm along with our Eastern and Oriental brethren, Rome would hold the chief seat of any ecumenical council and act as arbiter of disputes between autocephalous Churches, were it not for the fact that it continues to demand total jurisdiction over its fellow Churches and thus abrogates this ideal system. Indeed, we and all Eastern Christians long for that great day to come in which we may all sit as brethren without the politics of division and partake of one Eucharist of the one Christ. Such unity can only be had through the preservation and respect of the sovereignty of the ruling hierarch in his eparchy (‘&\*) preserved in his full and absolute ordinary jurisdiction, as well as the recognition of the legitimacy of the local Holy Synods and the authority of the Patriarchs who preside over them.

The identity of the Church of the East, though intimately tied in the last centuries to the Assyrian and Indian people, was originally the Mother Church of all true and right-believing Christians residing east of the historical lines of the Roman Empire. Whether by living communities or the archeological evidence of Her presence, the witness of the Church of the East is found from the many artifacts of our Church uncovered in China and other parts of the Far East to the brightly-adorned communities in India, and from the suffering martyrdom of our people in the Middle East to our emergent diasporal parishes in the New World. Since the arrival to the United States of the late Catholicos-Patriarch H.H. Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII (patriarch 1920-1975) of blessed memory, we have used the additional adjective “Assyrian” in the Church’s nomenclature, but this in no way abrogates the living witness of our multi-ethnic and all-encompassing tradition as presently found and maintained in the true Church of the East. We invite all ethnic Assyrians and Chaldeans, divided from us on account of schism and political machinations in the Middle East, to join in one Church, one living and continuing body of Christ, as the Church of the East. This

requires no pope or bridled patriarch to accomplish, for you are all free in Christ Jesus to return to your birthright and inheritance. The Holy Spirit, by the voice of the Holy Synod of the Church of the East, appoints for you as father in Christ, the “Great Metropolitan of Seleucia-Ctesiphon” and Catholicos-Patriarch of All the East.

*To be continued in next issue.....*

## **Profiles of Prelates**

There is a lack of information about the prelates of our church. Since we have only 14 prelates it would be easier for our church members to know the details of our prelates. We should pray for them. We should co-operate with them to produce the best results making use of their education and experience. Listed below is according to the seniority of their consecration and not according to their age.

### **1. H.B. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan B.D., M. Th, S.T.M., D. Th., Ph.D. (Syriac)**

Born on 13 June 1940 in Trichur, India as George Davis Mookan; Ordained Deacon 25 June 1961 and promoted as Priest on 13 June 1965. Educated in India, England and USA. Consecrated Bishop on 21 September 1968. Consecrated Metropolitan on 29 September 1968 at Mar Zaia Cathedral, Baghdad, Iraq. Patriarchal Vicar since 26 March 2015.

### **2. H.B. Mar Gewargis Sliwa Metropolitan of Iraq & Russia**

Born on 23 November 1941 in Habbania, Iraq; Ordained Deacon on 13 April 1980. Consecrated Metropolitan of Iraq on 14 June 1981 in Chicago, USA by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV when he was an English teacher in Chicago. The Archdiocese of Iraq was without a Metropolitan after the death of His Beatitude Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan in July 1977.

### **3. H.B. Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon**

Born on 5 August 1956 in Iraq; Ordained Deacon in 1973 and promoted as Priest on 28 March 1981 at San Jose, California, USA. Consecrated Bishop in 1984 and appointed as the Bishop of Australia. Recognizing his many contributions to the Assyrian community in Australia he received the prestigious *Order of Australia* from the Queen of England. Promoted as Metropolitan of Australia and New Zealand on 7 December 2008 at a service conducted by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch at St Hurmizd Cathedral in Sydney, Australia. After the death of Mar Narsai De Baz Metropolitan the Archdiocese of Lebanon was added to the jurisdiction of Mar Meelis Zaia Metropolitan.

### **4. H.G. Mar Sargis Yosip, Bishop Emeritus (Former Bishop of Baghdad); Now in California, USA**

Born on 10 April 1950 at Kirkuk; Consecrated Bishop in Baghdad by Mar Yosip Khnanishu Metropolitan on 19 February 1967. Living in USA since 2004. Senior-most Bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East.

### **5. H.G. Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Arizona and Western USA**

Born in Habbaniya, Iraq on 7 January 1943; Ordained Deacon 2 March 1973 and consecrated Bishop of Basra by Mar Yosip Khnanishu Metropolitan on 2 March 1973. In 1976 he was appointed Bishop of USA and Canada. Since 1999 he is the Bishop of Arizona and Western USA, living in Phoenix.

**6. H.G. Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe**

Born on 12 July 1961 in Baghdad, Iraq; Ordained Deacon in 1983 in Sydney, Australia. Studied in Trinity College, Bristol, England for B.A. in Theology. Priest in Sydney from 1986. Consecrated Bishop by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV on 24 July 1994. Bishop of Europe with headquarters in Sweden. Geographical area of his diocese includes England, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Italy, Greece etc.

**7. H.G. Dr. Mar Emmanuel Joseph M.A., Ph.D., Bishop of Canada**

Born on 24 November 1958 in Baghdad; Ordained Deacon on 1 March 198 and Priest on 11 November 1984. Ordained Cor-bishop and Archdeacon on 27 May 1990. Consecrated Bishop by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV in Chicago on 3 June 1990 and appointed Bishop for the Diocese of Canada. Awarded Ph.D. in Syriac Studies by the University of Toronto on 28 May 2015 for his thesis **“The Book of Resh Melle by Yohannan Bar Pinkaye; An Introduction to the text and study of its literary genres”**. Resides in Toronto.

**8. H.G. Mar Afram Athneil, Bishop of Syria**

Born on 8 December 1963 in Baghdad; Ordained Deacon on 18 October 1992 and Priest on 8 November 1992. Consecrated by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV on 11 October 1999 as Bishop of Syria in Hassake, Syria. Before becoming a Bishop he went to Chicago and studied for Masters degree at St Mary of the Lake University along with David Royel (now Bishop) and William Toma (now Archdeacon). Resides in Hassaka.

**9. H.G. Mar Isaac Yousif, Bishop of Nuhadra & Russia**

Born on 31 May 1959; Ordained Deacon on 25 November 1979. Ordained Priest on 14 September 1990 for Nineveh Church. Worked in Russia for some years and was consecrated on 24 October 1999 by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV as Bishop of Nuhadra (Dohuk), North Iraq and Russia. Resides in Dohuk.

**10. H.G. Dr. Mar Awa Royel S.T.B., Ph.D., Bishop of California, Secretary of the Holy Synod, Chairman of CIRED**

Born on 1 July 1975 in Chicago; Ordained Deacon on 1 January 1992 and Priest on 1 June 1999. After earning Masters Degree from the St Mary of the Lake University in Chicago went to Rome and obtained Ph.D. Consecrated Bishop on 30 November 2008 in USA by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV.

**11. H.G. Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Bishop in India**

Born on 14 November 1966; Ordained Deacon on 16 April 1989 by Bishop Poulouse Mar Poulouse in Trichur, India; Priest on 11 April 1999 by Mar Aprem Metropolitan. Made Archdeacon 14 January 2010 in Trichur by Mar Aprem Metropolitan. Consecrated Bishop by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV on 17 January 2010 in Trichur, India. Studied in India B.Com, B.D. M.A. (Syriac). Studied Syriac in Baghdad from December 2010 to March 2013. Submitted thesis for Ph.D. degree in Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam through SEERI, Kottayam in May 2015.

**12. H.G. Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Bishop in India**

Born 25 January 1974; Joined Seminary of the Church of the East in 1989. Ordained Deacon on 21 May 1996 by Mar Aprem Metropolitan (first ordination after the unity of the two groups in

India in November 1995). After B.A. studied for B.D. in the Gurukul Lutheran Seminary in Madras and M.Th. degree in the Dharmaram College, Bangalore. Studied for Ph.D. in Biblical Studies in Dharmaram College as well as in the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Not completed. Promoted Priest on 11 April 1999, Archdeacon on 14 January 2010 and Bishop on 17 January 2010 along with Mar Yohannan Yoseph in the consecration service conducted by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV and assisted by eleven prelates.

### **13. H.G Mar Narsai Benyamin, Bishop of Iran**

Born in Iran in 1979; Name at time of episcopal consecration was Cor-bishop Gewargis Benyamin. Consecrated Bishop on 13 September 2010 by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV assisted by six prelates in Tehran. First Episcopal consecration in the Church of the East after the death of Mar Narsai de Baz Metropolitan of Lebanon. Since the murder of Bishop Mar Dinkha in 1914, this was just the second Episcopal consecration in Iran. The first one was on 11 February 1962 on which date Mar Dinkha was made Bishop in Tehran by Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII who was murdered in November 1975. That seat became vacant when Bishop Mar Dinkha was consecrated as Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.

### **14. H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of Eastern USA**

Born on 24 June 1968 in the village of Qala (Urmia), Iran: Educated in Iran and went to Rome for higher studies. Ordained Deacon on 24 June 1984 at St George Cathedral, Tehran. In 1993 passed B.A. degree in Social Communication from the University of Tehran. For the next two years he served the military of Iran. In 1996 H.H. Mar Dinkha IV sent him to Rome for theological studies. He took S.T.B. in Philosophy and in Theology in 2001. He continued Licentiate in Theology in the field of Canon Law and some courses for doctorate in the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome till 2007. He had been made Priest on September 13, 2001 at St George Cathedral, Chicago by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV and Cor-bishop on 20 March, 2011 by Bishop Mar Awa Royel of California at the directive of H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. Consecrated Bishop in Chicago in June 2012 by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. The last Bishop consecrated by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. Resides in Chicago.

### **Prelates – According to Age**

1.	Mar Aprem, Metropolitan	75
2.	Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Metropolitan	73 (74 in November)
3.	Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop	72
4.	Mar Sargis Yosip, Bishop	65
5.	Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan	59
6.	Mar Emmanuel Yosip, Bishop	56 (57 in November)
7.	Mar Isaac Yousif, Bishop	56
8.	Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop	54
9.	Mar Afram Athneil, Bishop	52
10.	Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Bishop	48 (49 in November)
11.	Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop	47
12.	Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Bishop	41
13.	Mar Awa Royel, Bishop	40
14.	Mar Narsai Benjamin, Bishop	36





**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin, H.B. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Fr. T.O. Ignatius pictured with the committee members and inmates of the MarTimotheus Memorial Orphanage. Kalathode, Trichur on 22 August 2015**



**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin presenting a plant, locally known as Laksmi Tharu, to Mr. Mathew Mampilly, the convener of the bicentenary celebration of the Mart Mariam Cathedral Trichur on Sunday 23rd August 2015.**

**H.B. Dr. Mar Aprem, Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose and Fr. Justin Neelankavil are seen in the picture**





**H.B. Dr. Mar Aprem speaking in connection with the Annual Day of St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam, Cochin on Sunday 16 August 2015**



**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin visits the 'H H Mar Dinkha Assyrian Convent' building (under construction) along with H.B. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, I. G. Joy (Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees), Shaji Vadakan, Sr. Dr. Jincy Othotil, Sr. Annie T Y, Sr. T Y Susy and other Church Members.**





**Pictured when Mar Awa Royel Visited Russia and Armenia on Tuesday, July 21, 2015.**



**Pictured at the time of 2015 youth conference of Australia and New Zealand held in Auckland, New Zealand on Wednesday the 1st July.**





**Installation of the new Xray machine in Mar Thimotheus Memorial Hospital donated by ACERO - Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin of Chicago is seen**



**Zivah Mariyam Mookan, daughter of Sanil Mookan with H.H. Mar Dinkha IV (Photo taken in March 2014 at Chicago)**

## Mar Yabhallaha III

For 36 years Mar Yabhallaha III ruled the Church of the East. He served the Church between two famous Patriarchs; Mar Dinkha I and Mar Timotheus II. Mar Yaballaha ruled the church when the famous Metropolitan Mar Abdisho Bar Barikha (author of the famous book *Marganeetha*) carried out his many literary activities of codifying the Canon Law of our church in 1291 A.D. which is known as **Nomo Canon**. The Chinese Metropolitan was 36 years old when he was elected Patriarch.

**Mar Aprem Metropolitan:** “Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV used to tell me that there was Chinese man as Patriarch of our church and successor of Mar Dinkha I. He was not sure when another non-Assyrian bishop would be elected Catholicos-Patriarch in our church. About a century after the death of this Chinese Patriarch the hereditary system of Patriarchs and bishops became a practice in our church. The Patriarchate remained in the Mar Shimun family which ended with the murder of Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII on 6 November 1975.

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**Yahballaha III** (1245–November 13, 1317), known in earlier years as **Rabban Marcos** or **Markos**, was Patriarch of the Church of the East from 1281 to 1317. As a young man, he engaged in a remarkable journey, which began as an ascetic monk’s pilgrimage from China to Jerusalem, led him to the Patriarch position in Baghdad, and brought him to recommend his former teacher and traveling companion, the monk Rabban Bar Sauma, to become the first Asian ambassador to Europe.

**Biography:** Markos was born near Beijing (Khanbaliq, or Taitu), but his ethnic ancestry is not entirely clear. According to the *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* of Bar-Hebraeus he was of Turkic Uyghur descent. He was also referred to as ‘Yahballaha the Turk’ in the colophon to an East Syrian manuscript of 1301 AD. On the other hand, the *History of Mar Yahballaha III* names the place of his birth as Koshang, thus perhaps suggesting that he was an Ongud from the Christian tribe’s homeland in Inner Mongolia near Shanxi.

He was consecrated as a monk, and became a student of Rabban Bar Sauma, another Uyghur or Ongud monk. In the mid-13th century, they decided to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Mongol Khan Arghun wanted Yahballaha to incite the Pope into another Crusade. Due to military conflict in Syria, they never arrived at their destination, but did meet with the church leaders in the Mongol Ilkhanate, in Baghdad. There, the Patriarch Mar Denha I sent the two monks on a mission to the court of the Mongol Khan Abaqa, to obtain confirmation for Mar Denha’s title. Along the way, Markos was appointed Metropolitan Bishop of China. The monks then intended to return to China, but their departure was again delayed by armed conflict. When the Patriarch died, the bishops elected Markos as the new Patriarch in 1281, and he took the name Yahballaha III (“God Gave Him”). It was extremely rare for an outsider to become patriarch, and Bar Hebraeus claims that Markos was elected because of his supposed influence with the Mongols. In the event, hopes that Yahballaha III might be able to influence Mongol policy were disappointed.

Yahballaha held contacts with the Byzantine Empire and with Latin Christendom. In 1287, when Abaqa’s son and successor Arghun Khan sought an ambassador for an important mission to

Europe, Yaballaha recommended his former teacher Rabban Bar Sauma, who held the position of Visitor-General. Arghun agreed, and Bar Sauma made a historic journey through Europe, meeting with the Pope and many monarchs, and bringing gifts, letters, and European ambassadors on his return. Via Rabban Sauma, Yahballaha received a ring from the Pope's finger, and a papal bull which recognized Yahballaha as the patriarch of all the eastern Christians.

In May 1304, Yahballaha made profession of the Catholic faith in a letter addressed to Pope Benedict XI. But the union was refuted by the synod of bishops of the Church of the East in spite of the leadership of Yahballaha.

In 1310 Yahballaha tried unsuccessfully to prevent the massacre of Christians in Erbil by a Muslim mob. This failure discouraged him, and he retired to Maragheh, the capital of the Mongol Ilkhanate.

Eventually he died, tortured and killed by a Muslim mob during a persecution.

Preceded by  
**Denha I**  
(1265–1281)

Mar Jaballaah III  
**Catholicus-  
Patriarch of the  
East**  
1281–1317

Succeeded by  
**Timothy II**  
(1318–1332)

## **Delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East Visits Russia and Armenia**

His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California, Secretary of the Holy Synod and President of CIRED led an ecumenical visit to Russia and Armenia. The Very Rev. Archdeacon William Toma and Very Rev. Cor-bishop George Toma were prevented from attending, as planned, by travel difficulties. The delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East visited the Assyrian community in Moscow and the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate (DECR) on Tuesday, July 21, 2015. His Grace Mar Awa was received by Very Rev. Cor-bishop Samano Odisho (Rector of Holy Virgin Mary Church, Moscow) together with the local Assyrian Church of the East community and a representative of the DECR.

His Grace, together with Cor-Bishop Samano Odisho, visited the DECR where they were received by Very Rev. Archimandrite Philaret (Secretary), Hieromonk Stephan, and Mr. Sergei Alferov of the DECR. Meeting on July 21, 2015, the delegation of the Church of the East met with members of the DECR in discussion of bilateral dialogue. This meeting was a direct result of the historic visit of the late His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, of blessed memory, to His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, in May-June of 2014. The Assyrian Church of the East community is a growing and vibrant element in the Russian Federation, and both the Russian and Assyrian



Churches continue to extend fraternal and ecumenical relations in mutual support of the spiritual well-being of the Assyrian Christians, particularly in the Middle East. In the evening of Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, HG Mar Awa was received by His Eminence Archbishop Yesdras of the Armenian Apostolic Archdiocese of Russia, at the archdiocesan center in Moscow. Accompanied by local Assyrian clergy, the bishop was warmly received at the Armenian archdiocese and was given a tour of the complex of the archdiocesan center.

On Wednesday, July 22nd HG Mar Awa traveled to the Republic of Armenia and was received by the local priest, Rev. Fr. Nikademus Yukhaney together with Assyrians of the villages of Arzni, Dugon and visiting Assyrians from abroad. After visiting with the faithful, the bishop made a pastoral visit to the village of Arzni on Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, and was received by the faithful at the village church of St. Mary in the same village, as well as by the Assyrian Association of the area.

On Friday morning, HG Mar Awa was received at the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate at Etchmiadzin. He was accompanied by the Assyrian Church of the East priest Rev. Nikademus, and two Assyrian faithful Mr. Pavel Saidov and Mr. Elias Yalda. The bishop was received by the Very Rev. Vartabed Shahe Ananian, who is head of the Etchmiadzin Catholicosate's department of ecumenical relations, and assistant to His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians. The talk was very cordial and matters of collaboration and ecumenical exchange between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Armenian Apostolic Church were discussed in depth. After the colloquium, HG Mar Awa was given a tour of the patriarchal compound of holy Etchmiadzin, in particular the seminary, new library and conference center, and the patriarchal cathedral (with a visit to the treasury of the cathedral).

On Friday, July 24th, HG Mar Awa was officially received at the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts "Matenadaran". His Grace was accompanied at the Institute by Dr. Vahan Ter-Ghevondian, the head of academic research. A thorough tour of the institute was given, which included viewing the Armenian manuscripts and rare printed books exhibition. His Grace was also given a private viewing of the collection of Syriac manuscripts at the same institute.

On Saturday, July 25th the bishop visited the village of Dugon, and was received at the Assyrian Church of the East parish of St. Thomas the Apostle by the parish priest, deacons and faithful, along with Rev. Fr. Isaac Tamras who had come in from Erbil, and spent the day with the faithful of the village. On Sunday, July 26th His Grace celebrated Holy Qurbana at the church of St. Thomas in Dugon and further visited with the Assyrian village in the same faithful.

## **Australia and New Zealand's Youth Associations #ServeHim at the Auckland's 3rd Archdiocesan Youth Conference**

Youth Associations of the Archdiocese met in Auckland, New Zealand on Wednesday the 1st July. His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM Metropolitan, Rev'd Fr Narsai Youkhanis (Sydney), Rev'd Fr Ninos Elya (Sydney), Rev'd Fr Antwan Mikhail (Melbourne), Syriac Scholar Prof Rifat Ebied (Sydney) and members of the youth from Sydney, Melbourne and Wellington were welcomed by the Auckland Youth Committee, parish priest Rev'd Fr Toma Kanoun and the Church committee. The clergymen and conference speakers and attendees checked into Auckland Mercure Hotel in the heart of the city.

The 2015 youth conference officially began with a warm and traditional welcome by a Maori entertaining group performing the Haka in honour of the guests followed by prayers in St Mary's

Church Manurewa led by His Beatitude. Following the prayers, welcoming speeches were presented in Mar Narsai DeBaz Hall (rear of the Church) by MC Deacon Oliver Sliwa, Rev'd Fr Narsai Youkhanis Youth Chaplain, Rev'd Fr Toma Kanon Parish Priest and His Beatitude Mar Meelis.

The second day of the conference comprised of seminars at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) where Rev'd Mark Beale of the Anglican Church spoke about Serving God in Body and Spirit, Rev'd Fr Narsai Youkhanis spoke about Women and their Role in the Service of the Church, Rev'd Fr Ninos Elya spoke about The Service of the Priesthood and Rev'd Fr Antwan Mikhail spoke on the Characters of the Bible Whom Served. Preceding the seminars at AUT, the youth rested and met for dinner at Denny's Diner in Auckland City where they shared a meal American style.

The third day of the conference comprised of three lectures held at St Mary's Assyrian Church. Ms Nineveh Yakou spoke on the Ancient Assyrians and their service to the One God, Rev'd Fr Toma Kanon spoke about how a family unit serves God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Prof Rifat Ebied spoke about the service our Syriac gift can have for our faith and Church. At the conclusion of the third day, the youth met for dinner at La Porchetta Restaurant in Auckland City Italian style. The youth decided to act on the theme of the conference, #Serve Him and took to the streets of Auckland City to feed the homeless people.

The fourth day was set aside for sightseeing and fellowship. The entire congregation (clergymen and youth members) took a boat to Rangitoto Island and hiked up to the top for lunch and an inspirational Biblical Reflection offered by Deacon Morris Dawood (Melbourne). Deacon Morris read from a verse in proverbs that allowed the youth to comprehend how His creation serve Him. After arriving back to the shore of Auckland, the youth rested well and prepared themselves for a fine dining experience at the Sky Tower's Orbit 360 Revolving Restaurant.

The dining experience was sensational as it gave the youth the opportunity to be dazzled by Auckland's beauty by a sky view. The observational deck preceded the dinner whereby the youth overlooked the city and photos were taken in remembrance of such an experience with the Archbishop.

The final day comprised of the offering of the Holy Eucharist in St Mary's Church by His Beatitude Mar Meelis. The Church was filled with young faces that motivated the local parishioners and made them feel young again. In His Beatitude's sermon, he urged Auckland's parishioners to support their youth and allow them to get involved in such events that draws our youth closer at a national and international level.

The closing ceremony took place after the Holy Eucharist once again in Mar Narsai DeBaz Hall whereby talks of thanksgiving and farewell speeches offered by Rev'd Fr Toma Kanon, Rev'd Fr Narsai Youkhanis, Prof Rifat Ebeid and His Beatitude. His Beatitude gave a strong talk to the youth in facing this world we live in and its challenges. He spoke about the different gifts the youth have and how it all comes together to give a beautiful holistic picture of our Church that is 'vibrant and strong' as stated by Prof Rifat in his thanksgiving speech.

Aside from speeches, a poem was presented by 5 year old Marganita Lachen (daughter of Deacon Rofael Lachen) in preserving our language and faith. Also, the hymn 'Showasar B' Tishreen' (17th October) was performed by musicians Rev'd Fr Narsai, Ashur Varde, Natalie Lazar and Benjamin Yalda in honour of the Late Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV of blessed memory.

To end the conference, His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia announced the location of the next youth conference to be held in Beirut, Lebanon along with a short trip to Erbil, Iraq as it will be the Patriarchal Diocese of the Assyrian Church of the East as of September this year.

Upon the conclusion of the speeches and performances, the youth were handed medallions and greeted personally by His Beatitude. The youth farewelled one another in the hope of meeting once again for another great youth conference in Beirut.

*Indian Church News*

## **200<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration**

The celebration marking the conclusion of the 200 years of the existence of the Mart Mariyam Valiapally (Big Church) ended on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2015. The original function was to take place in March 2015. But owing to the unexpected demise of the Catholicos-Patriarch on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in USA and the funeral in Chicago in April everything was postponed in India.

The Catholicos of the Indian Orthodox Syrian Church, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Paulose II inaugurated the function. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presided. Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of Eastern USA was the Chief Guest. The bishops of our Indian Archdiocese brought greetings. The Archbishop of Syro-Malabar Church Mar Andrews Thazhath delivered the Keynote Address. A project to help poor women of our church to start their own businesses with micro-loans from the church was inaugurated.

There was a musical programme for two hours after the public meeting with the famous of Stephen Devassia.

## **Visit of the Bishop of Eastern USA**

His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin of the Diocese of Eastern USA visited Trichur, India from 21 to 26 August, 2015. It was his first visit to India. During the six-day tour of the Indian Archdiocese he visited several churches, schools, orphanages, our hospital, Mar Dinkha IV Assyrian Convent etc. He was received in the Onam Festival community lunch given by the Hindu Temples Committee as well as the Press Club Onam celebrations. He enjoyed the busy programmes except the heat.

He stayed in the Metropolitan's Palace in the guest room where Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII had stayed in December 1961 and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV had stayed in January 2000 and in January 2010. This historic Palace was visited by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with his wife Kamala and daughter Indira (later Prime Minister of India).

The Bishop also visited our Seminary where Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV had visited in January 2000 and planted a coconut tree which is yielding many coconuts now. Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin studied in Rome for eleven years and expressed his happiness at the library and property of the seminary which has the potential to be an international Seminary for our Church universal.

## **St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam**

The Annual Day of St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam, Cochin was celebrated on Sunday 16 August. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Mar Awgin Kuriakose celebrated Holy Qurbana in the morning. In the public meeting presided over the Metropolitan all spoke about the good spirit of co-operation after the arrival of the present Vicar Fr. Franklyn Varghese. B.A., B.D. M.Sc, M.Phil. The Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees also spoke. It is hoped that after the loans taken for the Shopping Complex are paid to the Bank and to Central Trustees within four years, this parish will be self sufficient financially.

## **Planting Lakshmi Tharu**

The Men's Association under the leadership of Fr. Sunny Koola has started a campaign to plant a special plant locally known as Lakshmi Tharu. The leaves of this tree taken for two weeks will help us to prevent cancer. Many people are dying of cancer. A person weighing 70 kilogram (156



pounds) should take 21 leaves from this tree (three leaves per each kg of his or her weight) and boil it in water and drink. Next day you can pour more water and boil and use it and throw away the used leaves. You should pluck fresh leaves for 15 days. If you take it for 15 days a year it will develop immunity and good resistance against cancer in our body. This tree will produce oxygen around the tree. Mar Aprem Metropolitan who inaugurated this scheme expressed his hope that we should dedicate ourselves to propagate the benefits of this tree in our country.

## **Scholarship Students Camp**

On 24 and 25 August a two day Camp was held for the students of our church who are studying with the scholarships of the Women's Youth Fellowship under Rev. Dr. Sr. Jincy in the Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage, Kalathode, Trichur. Mar Aprem Metropolitan opened the Camp with a speech on Romans 12:21. Fr. Justin Neelankavil, Dr. Sijo and Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose led classes. Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin made the concluding speech translated by the Metropolitan. The leaders joined the campers for the Onam Festival special lunch.

## **ACERO Donation**

A donation of Rs. 48.3 lakhs or 4.83 million was received by Mar Timotheus Charitable Hospital from the *Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation* (ACERO) via the International Secretary Mr. Andy Darmoo of U.K. in three installments. When we heard that Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin of Chicago who is also Chairman of ACERO – USA was coming to India in connection with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mart Mariam Church we invited him to inaugurate the new machines donated by ACERO. We are grateful to the bishop Mar Paulos Benjamin for his willingness to find time in the busy schedule.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan stated that this donation is in memory of H.H. Mar Dinkha IV who had inaugurated this charitable hospital in January 1991.

## **H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Assyrian Convent**

Mar Paulus Benjamin visited the H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Assyrian Convent on 22 May 2015. Although the Indian Church had begun a sisterhood in 1999 we did not have money to construct a convent for sisters. Now we have started construction and hope to have a home for the Nuns. We hope that it will be completed soon. The Church of the East in India only has three nuns at present. We pray that the construction of this permanent headquarters for the sisters will encourage other young women to devote their lives to this vocation.

## **Reception in the United Arab Emirates**

Mart Mariam Parish in UAE based in Sharjah is preparing to give a reception to the three Indian prelates and three Assyrian prelates of the Church after the election and consecration of the new Catholicos-Patriarch in Erbil. The prelates are expected in Dubai by the evening of 8 October. On 9 October, the Holy Qurbana of our community will be at the Mar Thoma Church in Sharjah. They had also allowed our Church to make use of their facility in January 2010 when the late Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV was returning after the 13th Holy Synod held in India.



**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin pictured with H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph and H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose when they visited the goat farm in the Seminary, Thrissur**



**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin presenting the *Mapra* of Late H.H. Mar Dinkha IV to H.B. Mar Aprem Metropolitan on the stage of the conclusion ceremony of the 200 years of existence of the Mart Mariyam Big Church, Thrissur**





**H.G Mar Paulus Benjamin pictured with the Indian prelates and the Board of Central Trustees in front of the Metropolitan Palace, Thrissur**



**H.G. Mar Paulus Benjamin and the two Indian Episcopos along with the office staff of the Board of Central Trustees, Thrissur**