

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ

Vol 62

Nov-Dec 2015

Nos.11 & 12



After the consecration of Mar Pathros Shleeha Church, Poochetti on 27 December 2015, separated from Mar Narsai Parish, Nadathara. Mar Aprem Metropolitan is seated in the middle, Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph on the right and Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose on the left

VOICE OF THE EAST



On Monday December 14, 2015 His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, Catholicos-Patriarch praying at the gravesite of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV



ACERO presents gifts to children in Northern Iraq

VOICE OF THE EAST

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)

(Private Circulation only)

November - December 2015

Patron : **His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem**

Metropolitan's Palace,

Trichur - 680 001, Kerala, India

Phone : 91487 - 2420978

Personal : 91487 - 2442166

Email : hgmaraprem@gmail.com

Website Links

Official: www.news.assyrianchurch.org

Archdiocese of India & UAE: www.churchoftheeastindia.org

Archdiocese of Australia & New Zealand: www.assyrianchurch.org.au

Diocese of California: www.acoecalifornia.org

Diocese of Europe: www.assyrianchurch-europe.org

Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation: www.theacero.org

Unofficial: www.nestorian.org

Contents

1. Editorial (*Peace on Earth*)
2. Patriarchal Christmas Epistle
3. Historical Note: 'Mar Gewargis'

International Church News

4. Updates from Chicago, Illinois
5. Chicago to Iraqi Kurdistan
6. Authenticity in Unity A Personal Reflection
7. Oriental Institute

Indian Church News

8. Press Release: Youth of Mar Gabriel Church, Mumbai
9. Mar Abraham (1567 -1597 A.D.)
10. Calendar - 2016

Voice of the East

Vol. 62

November-December 2015

Nos. 11 & 12

Editorial

Peace on Earth

The angelic choir sang the words 'Peace on earth' on the occasion of the birth of Jesus Christ'. It was in a manger in Bethlehem, a little town near Jerusalem. Not only did the shepherds in Bethlehem hear this angelic song; so did the wise men in Persia.

Even after 2000 years we cannot claim that there is peace on earth. It is becoming worse and worse year after year. Angels may not claim now that there is peace on earth. Not only in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, but especially Iraq, Syria and elsewhere there is great terrorism threatening the peaceful existence of people on this planet earth.

As long as oil is not dried up in the oil fields of Iraq there will continue to be religious and political instability. The ensuing terror means we now live in a frightened world. Let us pray that this year's Christmas season will try to ease the tension and save the world from a Third World War. Most thinking people can imagine the destruction that would come about if the situation is not controlled with immediate effect. Let us pray so that world leaders will forget their cold war and struggle for power and unite in the noble need to end terrorism in all corners of the world.

With a new leadership in the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East in the person of H.H. Mar Gewargis III Catholicos-Patriarch we the faithful believers all over the world pray that the year 2016 will be a blessed and prosperous year to all including the Assyrian ISIS captives of Hassaka and Syria.

As the new Patriarchate building for our church is being finalized in the heart of the city of Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government in North Iraq we pray for peace in that region. Our Church is the only church which has its universal headquarters in the region Iraqi Kurdistan, close to the land of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. May the Yahovah, who blessed our father Abraham, bless the members of this church which continues to shed its precious blood in its ancestral region. Amen.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan



from their homes and towns and their very own countries, and yet others from among us have been taken captive and killed, particularly in Syria. But yet in the midst of all of these gross crimes against our human race, God in His manifold mercy has been our help, and He has strengthened us to bear this temporal burden that we might fulfill our obligation of love towards God. In this spirit, we are graced to celebrate the holy fest of the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We pray to God the Father that He may guide us on the path of reconciliation and the unity of all the apostolic Churches, particularly the Eastern Churches, that they might live in love and respect one for the other, even as we have been commanded by Christ: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you..."* (John 15:12). In fulfilling this commandment, our love for God will be made manifest, and His holy name will be glorified among men.

In conclusion, we extend to all of you once again our prayers and best wishes for a happy Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a blessed New Year 2016. May you celebrate this holy feast with rejoicing and jubilation, with all of the members of your family.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit with all of us, forever and ever; Amen.

Given at Patriarchal Cell, Erbil, Iraq, on the Feast of the Nativity, 2015 A.D.

Gewargis III Sliwa

*By Grace: Catholicos-Patriarch
of the Assyrian Church of the East*



Historical Note: 'Mar Gewargis'

In the history of the Church of the East, only two Catholicos-Patriarchs have used the name of 'Mar Gewargis':

Mar Gewargis I from 661-680 (reigned 19 years)

Mar Gewargis II from 828-831 (reigned 3 years)

It is only after 1184 years that the 3rd Catholicos-Patriarch to use the name 'Mar Gewargis' was consecrated in Erbil, Iraq on 27 September 2015.

International News

Updates from Chicago, Illinois

On Monday December 14, 2015 His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, Catholicos-Patriarch visited Montrose Cemetery and prayed at the gravesite of His Holiness the Mar Dinkha IV of Blessed Memory. Bishop Mar Awa Royel, The Rev'd Fr Genard Lazar of California and others accompanied the Catholicos-Patriarch.

A dinner reception was held on 15 November 2015 in honour of the newly-consecrated Catholicos-Patriarch. His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern USA presided.

His Beatitude Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of India, His Grace Mar Sargis Yosip, Bishop Emeritus, His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western USA, His Grace Mar Emmanuel Yosip, Bishop of Canada and His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California were seated at the head-table along with the Catholicos-Patriarch. The famous Assyrian singer Linda George also performed. A large number of clergy including Archdeacon Aprim de Baz and Archdeacon Shlemon Heskial were present.

Cor-bishop Dr George Toma read out the Epistle of appreciation issued by the Catholicos-Patriarch in respect of the leadership which the senior Metropolitan Mar Aprem of India had given to the Church universal during six months following the sad demise of the H.H. Mar Dinkha IV.

Chicago to Iraqi Kurdistan

This travelogue is the 77th book which I am writing. In many cases in the past I write separate travelogues for separate trips. Between March and November 2015 I undertook four trips. I admit my human limitations owing to my old age. At 75 one does not count himself old. But others consider me old. The fact that I decided to combine four travelogues into one book is proof of my human physical weakness.

I was seriously considering ceasing to write these travelogues. I believe that my books are not meant to be a mere travelogue. Although I have mentioned many details like a writer of travelogues it is also meant to be the up to date historical data of the Assyrian Church of the East and her people, a race without a direction. Their hundreds-year old dream of an independent region in the Iraqi Kurdistan region or the Nineveh Plains of Mosul is sadly not becoming a reality.

The Assyrians use the Syriac word *Umtha* as a 'nation'. Now they use it to also mean race. It is a very controversial issue which cannot be solved easily. The League of Nations between the two World Wars (1914-18 and 1939-1945) had tried to solve this problem. In recent years U.S. politicians had given some hope for an autonomous district in North Iraq. Such attempts will continue. Unfortunately no strong leader has emerged from the several domestic and international organizations of the Assyrians.

In the year 2015 I made four trips, two to Chicago and two to Iraqi Kurdistan. During the trip to Chicago I also visited Toronto and Detroit. The first visit was to Chicago and the last trip too was to Chicago.

The visit to Chicago was in connection with the death of the Catholicos-Patriarch H.H. Mar Dinkha IV. During that trip, I had to go to Rochester, Minnesota, where the Patriarch was being treated at the famous Mayo Clinic. Going from Chicago to Minnesota was by airplane. But the return journey was by car after the Catholicos-Patriarch had breathed his last. It took between four and five hours to reach Chicago by car.

The first visit to Chicago in March - April 2015 witnessed the sad hours of the funeral of the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. It is the second time in the history of the Assyrian Church of the East that a Patriarch dies in the USA. The first occasion was the death of Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun on 6 November 1975 in San Jose, California. He was buried in California itself.

This time there were proposals to take the body of late Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV to Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan where he had already summoned a Holy Synod to meet in April. He had also agreed to shift the Patriarchate from the temporary headquarters in Chicago to Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. Finally it was decided to bury the body of H.H. Mar Dinkha IV in Montrose Cemetery in Chicago. We had buried Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon in the same cemetery in February 2010. I had come from India to attend the funeral and to speak at the meal after the burial.

The burial of the Patriarch was delayed due to the holy week and Easter. As bishops and dignitaries of various churches around the world were expected to attend the funeral we decided to keep the body in the funeral home. The body was brought to St Andrews Church on Tuesday after Easter and it was brought to St George Cathedral for the burial service. On the day itself, there was not much rush as restrictions were imposed inside the Cathedral as well as in the roads leading up to the Montrose Cemetery. All 14 prelates were present for the funeral.

The record trip of 2015 was to Erbil in Kurdistan in North Iraq. Last time when I went for the Holy Synod in 2008 the visa was issued by the Iraqi Government. This time I was pleasantly surprised to see that the visa was issued by the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil. Since Emirates Airways had stopped flying to Iraq including Erbil we could not fly direct from Dubai to Erbil. The Royal Jordanian Airline flight was from Dubai to Amman in Jordan and from there to Erbil.

The purpose of this trip was the Council of Prelates to elect the Catholicos-Patriarch. During this period we had sincerely attempted to unite the divided church especially the faction under H.H. Mar Addai II Catholicos-Patriarch of the Ancient Church of the East. A small committee consisting of three prelates from them as well as three from our side met in Chicago and made proposals. The condition was that H.H. Mar Addai II should retire prior to the electing the new Patriarch. H.H. Mar Addai II was not prepared to do so. However, we decided to wait until September giving a chance for their prelates to participate in our Holy Synod in electing the new Catholicos-Patriarch in the vacancy caused by the sad demise of H.H. Mar Dinkha IV.



Indian members after Qurbana in Toronto along with Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Bishop Dr. Mar Emmauel on 8 November 2015



Mar Aprem Metropolitan with Deacon Timothy (Indian) and family in Detroit on 14 November 2015. L to R: Anson, Deacon Timothy, Dr. Mrs. Anson with baby and Mrs Timothy



Vinu Erinjery and wife Geetha with their son Pilo in the lap of Mar Aprem Metropolitan in Chicago



Cardinal Mar Alenchery of Cochin, Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Mar Mathew Moolakat at the renovation ceremony of the tomb of Mar Abraham in Mar Hurmizd Church at Angamalee on 10th January 2016



Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan honouring P Kurina Raphael and Nisha Mary Thomas at the *Qudasheetha* Festival in Mart Mariam Big Church, Thrissur on 01.11.2015. Both have received Ph.D.



2015 Cosine Award of Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School is giving by Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan to Padmabhushan M T Vasudevan Nair on 30.12.2015 at the C.S.H.School Ground. L to R: Dr. Abi Paul (Principal of CSHSS), I G Joy (Chairman of Board of Central Trustees), H. L. Mar Awgin Kurikose Episcopa, Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Padmabhushan M. T. Vasudevan Nair, H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa and M. P. Surendran (Mathrubhumi News Paper)



Celebration of Christmas function in Trichur with Minister KC Joseph, Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Arch Bishop Andrews and Thrissur Mayor Mrs. Ajitha



Mar Aprem Metropolitan with the family of Dr. Sargon Bazi in Chicago.
L to R: Miss Linda George (famous Assyrian Singer), Prof. Dr. Sargon Bazi, John Bazi and Mrs. Odette Bazi (Sister of Linda). Photo taken by Katherine Bazi

The people who are ambitious to become popular by creating news reported that the Secretary of the Holy Synod was elected as Patriarch. The reporters did not know that the Secretary of the Holy Synod has not completed 40 years of age at that June. The minimum age of 40 for election as Catholicos-Patriarch is a canonical requirement. If he had been elected it would have created a headache for me to pontificate on whether the minimum age of 40 was required at the time of election or at the time of consecration. If it goes to civil courts one court may issue a decree stating that it is enough to have 40 years of age at the time of consecration which was scheduled for September 2015. An appeal court may decree the opposite.

The people in the legal profession should know that laws and by-laws can be interpreted by both ways. The fact remains that going to court has become very expensive. Money is a factor.

This visit to Iraqi Kurdistan was one of my short foreign trips. We went on June 1 and returned back on June 12, one day before my birthday.

The third trip in 2015 was again to Iraqi Kurdistan. This time Emirates had restored its flights to Iraqi Kurdistan so we could fly direct from Cochin to Dubai and the same day to Erbil direct. It was on Monday 14 September. Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose was with me and was a great help.

The trip of September - October 2015 was a significant one. It was my privilege to be the chief consecrator of the consecration service of the new head of the Assyrian Church of the East at Erbil. It was indeed an impressive service with heads of different denominations as well as the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, The Honourable Nechirvan Barzani. On Monday, after the consecration, September 28, 2015 the President of Kurdistan Regional Government, The Honourable Masoud Barzani himself came to the Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church hall to congratulate our new Catholicos-Patriarch, Mar Gewargis III Sliwa.

On Saturday, October 3 2015, the new Patriarch along with five prelates flew from Erbil to Baghdad on an Iraqi Airlines flight. We stayed in Baghdad in the Guest House of the Prime Minister of Iraq in the Green Zone in Baghdad. Holy Qurbana was in the Assyrian church in Baghdad and was celebrated by the Catholicos-Patriarch. Meetings were conducted meeting with Iraq's President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Parliament and many other dignitaries including the Representatives of the United Nations in Baghdad. On Wednesday we returned to Erbil leaving the Patriarch in Baghdad. On Thursday 8 October we flew from Erbil to Dubai. During our stay in the UAE, we visited Sir Baniyas Island along with 120 faithful of our church in Abu Dhabi. Holy Qurbana was celebrated at St Thomas Syrian Church in Sharjah by Bishop Mar Awa Royel.

The fourth trip of the year 2015 was to Canada and USA. I had planned to visit our people in Canada during the visit of 2012. But the consulate in Detroit had stopped issuing visas to Canada. Therefore I was asked to go to New York or Washington D.C. to apply for a visa. The postponed visit took place in November 2015. Bishop Mar Emmanuel Joseph of Canada was kind enough to arrange my visit. I stayed with him. He took me to all three parishes at Hamilton, London and Windsor as well as to his Cathedral in Toronto.

On Thursday November 12 we drove from the Bishopric in Toronto to the church in Windsor. After the Ramsha prayers, the priest of Detroit, USA Fr. Brikha and my Assyrian friend Sabah had come to pick me up to return to USA. The trip was less than one hour including the crossing of the immigration point at the border. There I stayed with my youngest sister Prabha's son Chicku (Chacko) Poothicote and his wife Smitha. I celebrated Holy Qurbana on November 15 at St Mary's Church near Detroit. After Holy Qurbana we drove from Detroit to Chicago for 5 hours and attended the reception dinner in honour of the new Patriarch. On Sunday November 22 I celebrated Holy Qurbana at St John's Church in Chicago, the English-speaking parish of the Assyrian Church of the East in Chicago. I returned to India on November 23, 2015.

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

[Continuation of Mar Awa Royel's article]

It is our most fervent desire to maintain this sacred inheritance in communion and dialogue with other Apostolic Churches, towards which end we have worked with sincerity and culminating in agreed statements on Christology. We have achieved such an agreed statement with the Church of Rome in 1994, namely the Common Christological Declaration. Common understandings of Christology will, we hope, lead to common understandings of the nature of terminologies that have in the past been occasion of strife. We hope then to come to an agreement on the precise nature and meaning of dogmatic definitions, such as the 2nd Council of Constantinople in 553 AD and the 3rd Council of Constantinople, whose meaning and authority have not yet been fully worked out for us. Our partners in this process are not only the Church of Rome and the Chaldean Catholic Church, but the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox (Miaphysite) Churches, which includes our ethnic brethren of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch. We see the joint statements on Christology as extremely important beginnings of this process to re-establish communion with all the local Apostolic Churches.

Unfortunately, joint Christological statements, very important as they are, do not comprehend the breadth of ecclesiological divergences still remaining between us and the Roman Catholic Church, which now has come to include in particular the role of the Bishop of Rome in the communion of the Church of Christ as a whole. While a "First Millennium" model of Papal Primacy may be seen as desirable from many points of view, the papacy itself is bound to see its own role as it came to be dogmatized in later developments.

4. Second Council of Lyon (1274); Bull "Unam Sanctam" of Pope Boniface VIII, (1302); Council of Ferrara & Florence (1437 and 1445); First Vatican Council (1870). We also note that the work of the Church of the East examining the vast amount of dogmatic development, especially in certain of these controversies has only begun. Is the Church of the East prepared to side with Rome against all Eastern Churches on the Procession of the Holy Spirit.

5. The Church of the East cannot sit in synod with deposed bishops, whose actions leading to the canonical act of deposition include declaring the Church of the East as uncanonical and fomenting a schism.

6. Reversus, 1867; Cum ecclesiastica disciplina, 1869; Quae in patriarchatu, 1872. After Vatican II, Maj. Abp. & Cardinal Josyf Slipyj of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, on April 2, 1977, consecrated Ivan Choma, Stepan Czmil and Lubomyr Husar as bishops, there are being nothing explicit to stop this in the Eastern Code of Canon Law at the time. These bishops were not recognized until February 22, 1996, 19 years later. We understand the code was changed to prohibit such a patriarchal actions in future.

For any Synod to meet, the bishops must already be in full communion, and further, they must be functioning under one canonical order and practice. Otherwise, how can a Synod even meet? If it is our own ancient canonical tradition that is to be followed by all in a united Church of the East, then will the Chaldean Catholic Church be prepared to replace the Roman Code and is Rome prepared to tolerate it? Further, if we agree to the present role and theology of the papacy according to the Roman Catholic Church, our ecumenical journey with all other Eastern Churches would cease, and we could only hope for unity with them through Rome.

Let us take an example from history, not because we wish to simply keep grudges, but to provide clarity. We speak of the abasement which occurred to the predecessor of His Beatitude Mar Louis Sako, namely Mar Yosip VI Audo (Chaldean patriarch 1847-1878), of thrice blessed memory. For the Church of the East to enter union, such diminution would have to be impossible, since it is a degradation both of the person and office of the patriarch as well as the canonical praxis and territory over which the patriarch presides. Today, however, in the Roman obedience, such diminution is now normalized. The Roman Catholic Church now has not only the dogmas about the papacy which Pius IX promulgated, but continues the practices which he established towards the hierarchies of the Eastern Catholic Churches.⁶ We would all far rather be martyred by those who do not confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord than to abolish our own ecclesiastical tradition by our own hands.

7. We hope that every question we have raised here can eventually be answered to the satisfaction of all, but we do not believe that it is possible to do so before we elect a successor to the late His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV (patriarch 1976-2015), of thrice-blessed memory. While we are grateful for Patriarch Mar Louis Sako's proposal and we do pray and hope for the day that such a proposal may be made by a Chaldean Catholic Patriarch who would be fully the "pater et caput" of his Church. Until that day, the Chaldean Catholic Church is administrated by the Roman Curia, under the non-Church of the East Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, and so we must await the proceedings of the proper dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, which is where official decisions are made. We trust that we will continue to seek earnestly to answer these questions and to journey towards the desired goal of the restored communion of the one, holy, apostolic and catholic Church of Christ, and we trust that we will always find in His Beatitude Mar Louis Sako a true partner in the mutual support and defense of our people in travail in the Middle East and abroad.

We know well and thank God for the earnest goodwill of the recent Roman Pontiffs, particularly John Paul II of blessed memory, Benedict XVI, and the current Pontiff, Francis, towards us, towards all the suffering Christians of the Middle East, and towards all the Eastern Churches. We further express our deep gratitude to His Beatitude Mar Louis Sako's words and humility in showing genuine Christian love and brotherhood. Our reflections here are not meant to dissuade the road to unity but reflect the many ways we may achieve a common purpose and common life

in Christ. Indeed, may we open ever more deep, honest, and charitable roads to a fraternal and sincere dialogue. Given the troubles we have faced together since we last were unified in 1552, perhaps a good starting point in such a dialogue would be a renewed study of our Sacred Tradition seeking out to understand the various points of theological and practical divergence that have emerged within our shared Church of the East Tradition. May we find our deepest roots in our oldest traditions, and come, as all true and apostolic Christians shall, to know ourselves as one in Christ, that in Him we may be one.

Oriental Institute

On the morning of Monday December 7, 2015 His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East paid an official visit to the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. The visit, prepared by Very Rev. Cor-bishop George Toma and Dr. Norman Solkha, was received by the president of the Institute, Prof. Gil Stein. His Holiness was accompanied by Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin, Cor-bishop Toma, Deacon Dadway Daniel and Dr. Solkha. Prof. Stein personally gave a tour of the Institute museum to the Patriarch, which is very rare. We are grateful to Dr. Stein for his presenting the tour to His Holiness.

Indian Archdiocese News

Press Release: Youth of Mar Gabriel Church, Mumbai Organise Free Distribution of New Clothes as Christmas Gifts

Mar Gabriel Church, youth organised a free distribution of new clothes as a Christmas gift on 19 December 2015 at 5pm at The League of Mercy (The Shelter), a home for the homeless in Mumbai. Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph offered special prayers for orphans and destitute children in this home. Youth Secretary, Geo George Kangappadan introduced about the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East, youth activities and about Bishop Mar Yohannan Yoseph.

Bishop also shared about Jesus' birth and love to the young children in this home. Youth member Jomon Simon and Master Joseph Abi Thekekara and Master Silas Shelly were the Santas in this function. Rev. Fr. Michael Puzhamalil handed over gifts to the girls in this home.

Mar Gabriel Church members sponsored new dresses, gifts, snacks and all the expenses of this Christmas activity. Large numbers of Mar Gabriel Church members were also present to support this Christmas function. Youth of the church are now really focused on the motto of the year for the youth "To share and care with the needy people of our society". Seeing the church members, the children were very happy and they thanked our church members for giving them such lovely dresses.

Superintendent of The League of Mercy thanked the organizers in a special way by saying that this is the first church which has conducted this type of Christmas programme in this home.

Mar Abraham (1567 -1597 A.D.)

Bishop Mar Abraham who died in Angamalee in 1597 is the last Persian bishop before the Synod of Diamper of 1599 A.D. held in Kerala by the Archbishop Alexio de Menezes of Goa. Bishop Mar Abraham was buried in the Saint Hurmizd Church he built in Angamalee.

On 10th January 2016 Cardinal Mar George Alenchery, head of the Syro Malabar Catholic Church, dedicated the renovated Mar Hurmizd church. Mar Severios of the Syrian Orthodox Jacobite Church spoke. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, senior Metropolitan of the Assyrian Church of the East, unveiled the plaque fixed near the renovated tomb of Bishop Mar Abraham.

St.Hurmizd Church in Angamalee built in 1577 by Bishop Mar Abraham is the only Church in India in the name of Rabban Hurmizd. In Latin some called it Abbot Hurmizd church. Abbot is the English translation of the Syriac word Rabban. Angamalee was the headquarters of the Syrian Christians struggling against the Portuguese ever since their arrival in Kerala. Bishop Mar Abraham had difficulties when he came to India.

After the consecration of the first catholic Chaldean Patriarch John Sulaqa by the Pope in Rome, the Persian bishops coming to India had problems. After the murder of Patriarch Sulaqa in 1555 A.D. his younger brother Mar Yosip Sulaqa came to India. Although he claimed that he was sent to India by the successor of Patriarch Sulaqa named Mar Abdisho IV (1555 -1567), the Portuguese authorities in India did not allow Mar Joseph Sulaqa to work in India. He was captured and sent to Lisbon in 1562. He managed to return to India in 1564 to be captured by the Portuguese for a second time and to Rome in 1568 for trial. While waiting for trial of his faith Mar Joseph Sulaqa died in Rome in 1569. His tomb is not yet discovered.

Mar Jacob was the Metropolitan of India from 1504 to 1552 A.D. Soon after the death of Mar Jacob in India, the Roman Catholics decided to split the Parachate in Mesopotamia. They invited a monk John Sulaqa and made him the first rival Patriarch.

In this time Bishop Mar Abraham came to India by Patriarch Mar Shimon Dinkha. This Mar Abraham was to India by 1556. The Portuguese stated that this Mar Abraham is “a heretic pretending to be a bishop from the Nestorian sect.” This Bishop Mar Abraham was sent to Rome. He was consecrated again and re- appointed as Metropolitan by Pope Pius IV and sent to India In 1564. Mar Abraham returned to Mesopotamia and reached Malabar a second time in 1568.

By 1570 Mar Abraham established his headquarters in Ankamaly. In 1577 (August 15) the foundation stone for the Rabban Hurmizd Church was laid. In 1583 Mar Abraham made this church his cathedral. On 20th October 1583 Mar Abraham held his first regional Synod. In January 1597 Mar Abraham died in Angamalee and was buried in the altar of the cathedral he built. It is known as Kizhakke Palli. Eastern Church. It is a few minutes from the Kochi international Airport and one hour's distance by car from the Mart Mariam cathedral in Thrissur which is the headquarters of the Assyrian Church in India usually known as the Chaldean Syrian Church, now under His Holiness Mar Gewargis III residing in Erbil, North Iraq.

Calendar - 2016

January

- 6. Epiphany
- 6. Mar Zaia
- 8. Memorial of Mart Mariam
- 8. Mar Yohannan Mamdhana
- 15. Pathros & Paulose
- 18-20 Ba'utha of Ninevites
- 21. Kubalthaibutha
- 22. Syriac, Greek Malpans
- 24. Mar Yonan
- 29. Mar Awa Catholicos
- 29. Mar Esthapanose Sahda

February

- 5. Friday of Departed (Anneede)
- 7. Lent Begins

March

- 2. Mid Lent
- 4. 40 Martyrs Crowned in Ghieda
- 13. Mar Michael, Friend of Angels
- 16. Mar Bennyamin Shimun, Martyr (1918)
- 18. Friday of Lazar
- 20. Oshana
- 24. Pis'ha of our Lord (Maundy Thursday)
- 25. Good Friday
- 25. Tidings to Mart Mariam from Angel Gabriel
- 26. Holy Saturday
- 27. Easter
- 28. Confessor's

April

- 3. New Sunday
- 11. Rabban Hurmizd
- 15. Mar Shimun Barsabbae
- 22. Mar Sargis, Mar Bachos
- 24. Memorial of Mar Gheevarghese
- 24. Mar Addai Shleeha

May

- 3. Shmoni & Children
- 5. Sulaqa (Ascension)
- 15. Pentecost
- 18 1st Holy Qurbana by Mar Yakob
- 20. Friday of gold

July

- 2. Mar B'hisho
- 3. St. Thomas Day
- 3. Nusardail & Memorial of 12 disciples
- 8. Mar Yakob of Nisibis
- 11. Mar Yosip Khananisho (d.1977)
- 15. Mar Kuriakose and Mother Yolethe
- 15. Mar Mari Shleeha
- 22. Mar Eyyob Hdayyavaya

August

- 1. Beginning of 15 Day Fast
- 2. Shmone and her Children
- 6. Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor
- 9. Mar Shimun Barsabbae
- 15. Death of Mart Mariam (Shunaya)
- 19. Mar Qardagh Sahda

September

- 1. Rabban Hurmizd
- 8. Birth of Mart Mariam
- 13. Festival of Cross
- 14. Mar Bhisho
- 18. Remembrance of Yonakhir & Hanna, Mother of Mart Mariam
- 19. Mar Shallitha
- 27. Consecration of H.H. Mar Gewargis III Sliwa

October

- 1. Mar Khananiya, who baptized St. Paul
- 14. Mar Elisa Prophet
- 16. Mar Moshe Nwiya
- 25. Mar Pithyon
- 28. 300 Saints of Shigar
- 30. Hallowing of the Church

November

- 1. Mar Gewargis Sahda
- 4. Mar Augin Thoovana
- 6. Day of Tithes
- 15. Memorial of All Saints
- 19. Mar Yaqob M'pasqa

December

- 1. Subara (Advent) Begins
- 2. Mar Gabriel of Karsa, Mar Abdisho Armaya
- 18. Mar Awa of Nineveh
- 22. Memorial of 12000 Martyrs
- 25. Christmas



Mar Aprem Metropolitan pictured with Assyrian youth visiting India from Australia - November 2015



Addison Mookan and Mar Aprem with his class mate T.P. Lazar in Chicago



His Holiness Mar Gewargis III Catholicos-Patriarch visiting the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago – 7 December 2015



Indian members of the Church after Holy Qurbana in St John Assyrian Church, Chicago – 22 November 2015. Vicar Fr. Antwan is standing next to Mar Aprem Metropolitan

L to R. Addison Mookan, Vin Erinchery with his wife and son Pilo, Mrs.Rhea & Sanil Mookan with their daughter Zivah, Dr.Asha Furlow, Dr.Sonia, Asha's daughter Sophie, Dr.Sonia's daughters (Brianna & Catherine), their father Dr.Saje Alex of Indianapolis.