

صوت المشرق

Vol 64 November - December 2017 Nos.11 & 12



Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia and Cardinal Kurt Koch
show the recent document on Sacraments to
Holiness Pope Francis in Vatican



*We wish you Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year - 2018*

VOICE OF THE EAST



After Holy Qurbana in Goa parish on Sunday 26th November 2017. Bishop Dr. Mar Yohannan seated in the middle, Vicar Fr. Jacks Chandy on the left and the Asst. Vicar Deacon Rajan V.L. on the right of Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph in connection with the Annual Day



Qurbana in Marth Shmoni Mission Parish, Hyderabad. Vicar Fr. Runo Varghese and Fr. Franklin Varghese are seated in the middle

VOICE OF THE EAST

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Voice of the East

Vol. 64

November - December 2017

Nos. 11 & 12

Editorial

Religious Diversity in Iraq

The World Council of Churches (WCC) executive committee meeting in Amman, Jordan from 17-23 November, 2017 issued a statement on recent developments in Iraq affecting the prospects for sustaining religious and social diversity, and the future of the nation and its peoples.

While the recapture of the Nineveh plains, Mosul and other areas removed the extremist 'Islamic State' from the region, it has come at a great and tragic cost in lives, destruction of property and infrastructure, and brings new challenges for restoration of the affected communities and for promoting social and religious cohesion in Iraq, the executive committee stated.

The WCC executive committee "calls on the political leadership of the federal government of Iraq and of the Kurdistan regional government to engage in dialogue and negotiations to resolve the current crisis, and to avoid any further conflict in a region that has known far too much violence and suffering."

The committee also "urges the Iraqi authorities to ensure that the homes and businesses of those displaced are restored to them, appeals to the international community to support urgently and generously the reconstruction of infrastructure and of communities."

The WCC body appeals "to the international community – particularly those countries involved in the 2003 invasion of Iraq – to support urgently and generously the reconstruction of infrastructure and of communities (including through psycho-social trauma healing programmes) and initiatives to promote social and religious cohesion in Iraq, including addressing the particular vulnerabilities of religious minority communities."

The international Christian communities should pray and work for peace in Iraq and in particular, the Nineveh Plains. As our Church of the East has moved its headquarters back to Iraq in 2015 the political peace in north Iraq under the present Kurdistan Regional Government based in Erbil is very important to our much-persecuted Church.

We pray that Kurdish and Iraqi forces work collaboratively in securing peace in Iraq and in rebuilding the nation post-ISIS. We pray also that Iraq's neighbours, namely Syria, Iran and Turkey solve tensions amongst each other.

May the celebration of the birth of Prince of Peace bring peace to the world.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan

PATRIARCHATE
of the
HOLY APOSTOLIC CATHOLIC
ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST
ERBIL - IRAQ



بطريركية
كنيسة المشرق الآشورية
اربيل - العراق

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Patriarchal Epistle for the Feast of the Holy Nativity 2017

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill..." Luke 2:14.

Our venerable brothers in the Holy Synod, the metropolitans and bishops; the reverend presbyters and the elect deacons, and the faithful sons and daughters of our holy Church:

A blessed Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ to you all!

The great and marvelous gift of God towards mankind is manifestly seen in the heavenly proclamation which the angel announced, when he visited the shepherds who were tending to their flocks close to the place wherein Jesus was born. The glory of the Lord shone upon them, and they became greatly afraid. The angel said unto them, *"Be not afraid, for I announce to you great joy that shall be for the whole world. For, today is born to you the Savior, who is Christ the Lord... And when the shepherds heard this heavenly annunciation, they made haste and came to Bethlehem and saw the Child, with Mary his mother, and they worshipped him. But Mary kept all of these words in her heart, and pondered upon them"* (see Luke 2:8-19).

This heavenly annunciation moves us, also, to say with those heavenly hosts:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill!"

We ought not to consider this holy day as other profane days, and neither to consider it a simple day of rest from our labors. Rather, when we read or this these words of the heavenly proclamation we ought to recall that the first obligation of man is to offer glory to God, even as the holy angels did. In addition, we must also remember that we must keep the word of God and ponder upon it in our hearts as the Holy and Blessed Mother did. Man must also promote peace upon earth, even as God has commanded. We must always sow the good seed in the field (which is the earth) which God has given us, that mankind might abide in peace upon it.

We pray to God the Father and beseech that just as His glory shone upon the shepherds at the Birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, in like manner may it shine upon the hearts and minds of mankind today. In this way man will be able to come up from the deep chasm of the ugly reality of wars, mass killings and destruction, in which man has fallen, particularly in the region of the Middle East. The destructive effects of this has been felt most by the Christians, who have suffered beyond measure and many of whom have fled the lands of their forefathers and have taken refuge in foreign lands. On this occasion, it is most fitting to recall the blessed and magnanimous role played by the faithful of our holy Church, in order to make lighten the burden and affliction of their brethren. May God in His manifold mercy repay them.

In conclusion, we reiterate our greeting of a blessed and glorious Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to all of you, as well as for the New Year 2018. We pray that the new year brings manifold blessings, peace and tranquility in all the regions of the world, and particularly in the countries of the Middle East. We also pray for the mutual understanding and rapprochement of all Christians, as well as good health and prosperity for all of our people.

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, 2017 A.D.


✙ **Gewargis III Sliwa**

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



**International Youth Conference
in Thrissur
from 20th to 23rd August 2018.**

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International News

**2nd Session of the Commission for Dialogue between
the Russian Orthodox Church and
the Assyrian Church of the East**

On October 23-26, 2017, 2nd session of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East took place in the city of Modesto, USA.

The delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate consisted of Bishop Kliment of Krasnoslobodsk and Temnikov, co-chair, and hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov) secretary for inter-Christian relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations. The Assyrian Church of the East was represented by His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and secretary of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, co-chair; Chorbishop George KanonToma, clergyman of the Assyrian St. Andrew church in Glenview, Illinois, USA; and priest Ephraim Alkhas, assistant to the Secretary of the Holy Synod.

A main aspect of the Commission's work is the coordination of inter-Christian cooperation in supporting the suffering Christians of Iraq and Syria, many of whom are members of the Assyrian Church of the East. The communiqué issued on the results of the session says:- "The Commission expressed profound concern over the situation of the cruelly persecuted Christians in the Middle East whose existence is endangered. The Assyrian Church highly appreciates the efforts made by the Russian Orthodox Church for rendering humanitarian aid to the religious minorities which find themselves in distressful situation. The sides intend to continue joint efforts".

Another aspect of the Commission's work is the academic contacts networking. There was noted the importance of the participation of representatives of the Assyrian Church of the East in the 4th international patristic conference on St. Ephrem the Syrian and his Spiritual Heritage held at the Ss Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute for Postgraduate Studies in Moscow last April. The Commission considered the importance of the development of student exchange and other kinds of cooperation in the spheres of academic studies and youth affairs.

The participants acknowledged the fact that a theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East is on the preliminary stage. In this regard there was noted the importance of the first informal consultation of representatives of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Patriarchate of Constantinople held in Chicago in February 2012 as a helpful basis for official dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. The Commission acknowledged that theological consultations between the Assyrian Church and the Russian Orthodox Church can also be helpful for achieving this goal. Concrete steps for such consultations were outlined also on the basis of the historical experience of bilateral relations in the beginning of the 20th century during the years of active work of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Urmia. Archimandrite Stephen (Salo) presented a report on the subject.

The results of the Commission's work will be presented to the Holy Synods of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East for approval.

The next session will take place in Russia in the autumn of 2018.

Presbyteral Ordination in the Diocese of California

On September 13, 2017, the Feast of the Holy Cross, His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California elevated Rev. Deacon John Piro to the ecclesiastical rank of presbyter at Mar Zaia Cathedral in Modesto, California. Rev. Fr. John will serve as an assistant priest at Mar Addai Parish in Turlock, California. Following the ordination, His Grace Mar Youhannan Yousip, Auxiliary Bishop of India, celebrated the Holy Mysteries and there was a fellowship meal in the Church Hall.

Biography of Rev. Qashisha John BadalPiro

Reverend Qashisha John BadalPiro was born on February 7, 1973 in the city of Turlock, CA. to his father Reverend Cor-Bishop Badal S. Piro, and BereshwaPiro. He is the youngest of 7 children. He began his ecclesiastical education in the Assyrian Church of the East in both Syriac language and liturgical service at the hands of his father beginning at the age of five years. This was instrumental in building a strong foundation in the Apostolic faith of the Church of the East, which is evident to this day.

At the age of 12 years, he was ordained a hypodyakna (subdeacon) for Mar Addai Parish and served both in his liturgical role, as well as the organist for both the Divine Liturgy and wedding ceremonies. At the age of 18 years, he was ordained a deacon for Mar Addai Parish, and has served in this capacity ever since, while continuing to further his ecclesiastical knowledge. He has been teaching both youth and adult Bible studies throughout this period, with most recently becoming the head of Christian Education at Mar Addai Parish. Rev. John was ordained to the sacred order of the priesthood on September 13, 2017, the Feast of the Holy Cross, by His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of the Diocese of California. The ordination took place at the cathedral church of Mar Zaia the Blessed in Modesto, California.

Rev. John completed his elementary and high school education in Turlock at a time when there were not many Assyrian children enrolled in the Turlock school district. This experience was foundational in developing strong ties to his Assyrian community and his love of his Assyrian culture and identity, which he continually demonstrates today via his involvement in community events centered on Assyrian heritage. He completed both his Bachelors of Science and Masters of Science degrees in Physiology from the University of California, Davis. And in 2004, he obtained his Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of California, San Francisco.

Fr. John BadalPiro is married to Dr. JesikaPiro, a professor at the University of the Pacific School of Pharmacy, and together they have been blessed with three beautiful daughters: Jordyn, Justine, and Jianna. Sh. John's family is also very active in Mar Addai Parish, in both the educational and community aspects of the parish and the Church. Fr. John is also a long-time practicing pharmacist and co-owner of Turlock's New Vision Pharmacy. This community pharmacy has really allowed him the opportunity to further serve his Assyrian community in regards to their healthcare needs, which he finds the most rewarding aspect of his professional career.

Lastly, Rev. John strongly believes in the education of our children and youth in the Christ-centered faith and liturgical services of the Church. He feels that through biblical study, with focus based on Apostolic Tradition of the Church, will better prepare the future generations of the Church for the growing challenges they will face in this world. Furthermore, the essential Orthodox prayer life of the Church can be reinforced in the younger generations to help them deal with the anti-Christian and secular onslaught they will encounter in our ever-changing world.



Bishop Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph after Holy Qurbana in California with Bishop Mar Awa Royal and clergy



Holy Qurbana in Mart Mariam parish in Sharjah.
Seated L to R: Fr. Santosh Immatty, Bishop Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Fr. Victor Kollanoor. Standing L to R: Deacon Enson Isaac, Fr. Sachin Timothy (Vicar) and Deacon Clinton Sobhan on 1, December 2017



Blessing of Vimala Study Centre in Mar Gewargis Church, Cheroor
on 5 November 2017



Vimala Study Centre in Mar Gewargis Church, Cheroor
on 5 November 2017



Mar Aprem Metropolitan seated with Vicar Fr. Charly and Asst. Vicar Deacon Nimson Varghese in Mart Mariam parish, Chalakudy on 3rd December 2017



Vicar of Mar Mari Sleeha parish, Kuriachira Fr. Shaji Raphael handing over donation to Mr. M R Timothy, of Mar Thoma Ashramam, Mulayam.



Indian pilgrims to the Holy land under the leadership of Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose in the last week of November 2017



Clergy family tour, Thrissur - 2017



His Grace Mar Benjamin Elya, Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand greeting His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church at St Yacoub Syriac Orthodox Church, Melbourne on 12 November 2017

Common Statement on Sacramental Life between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Signed in Rome

On Friday 24 November 2017 at midday, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.

The following was the Pope's address to those present:

Address of Pope Francis

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I extend a warm welcome to all of you. I thank you for your visit and Metropolitan Meelis Zaia for his kind words on your behalf. Through you I convey my fraternal greeting in the Lord to His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, recalling with joy our cordial meeting a year ago, which marked a further step on our journey towards deeper growth in mutual solidarity and communion.

Our meeting today offers us the opportunity to look with gratitude upon the progress made by the Joint Commission, established following the historic signing of the Common Christological Declaration here in Rome in 1994. After professing the same faith in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Commission planned two phases of dialogue: one on sacramental theology and one on the constitution of the Church. I join you in thanking the Lord for today's signing of the Joint Declaration which brings to a happy conclusion the phase regarding sacramental life. We can now look to the future with even greater confidence and I ask the Lord that your continuing work may help bring about that blessed and long-awaited day when we will have the joy of celebrating, at the same altar, our full communion in Christ's Church.

I would like to emphasize one aspect of the new Joint Declaration, where the sign of the cross is referred to as "an explicit symbol of unity among all sacramental celebrations". Some authors of the Assyrian Church of the East have included the sign of the cross among the sacred mysteries, convinced that every sacramental celebration depends precisely on the Pasch of the Lord's death and resurrection. This is a beautiful insight, because the Crucified and Risen One is our salvation and our life. Hope and peace come from his glorious cross, and from the cross flows the unity of the sacred mysteries we celebrate, as well as our own unity, for we were baptized into the same death and resurrection of the Lord (cf. Rom 6:4).

When we look at the cross, or make the sign of the cross, we are also invited to remember sacrifices endured in union with Jesus and to remain close to those who today bear a heavy cross upon their shoulders. The Assyrian Church of the East, along with other Churches and many of our brothers and sisters in the region, is afflicted by persecution, and is a witness to brutal acts of violence perpetrated in the name of fundamentalist extremism. Situations of such tragic suffering take root more easily in contexts of great poverty, injustice and social exclusion, largely caused by instability, often fuelled by external interests, and by conflicts that have also led in recent times to situations of dire need, giving rise to real cultural and spiritual deserts, within which it becomes easy to manipulate people and incite them to hatred. Such suffering has recently been exacerbated by the tragedy of the violent earthquake on the border between Iraq, the homeland of your Church, and Iran, where your communities have also long been established, as well as in Syria, Lebanon and India.

As a result, particularly during periods of greater suffering and deprivation, large numbers of the faithful have had to leave their lands and emigrate to other countries, thus increasing the diaspora community, with the many trials it faces. Arriving in some societies, émigrés encounter challenges stemming from an often difficult integration, and a marked secularization, which can hinder their efforts to preserve the spiritual riches of their traditions, and even prevent their witness of faith.

In all of this, the constant repetition of the sign of the cross is a reminder that the Lord of mercy never abandons his brothers and sisters, but embraces their wounds within his own. By making the sign of the cross we recall Christ's wounds, which the Resurrection did not eliminate but rather filled with light. So too the wounds of Christians, including those still open, become radiant when they are filled with the living presence of Jesus and his love, and thus become signs of Easter light in a world enveloped by so much darkness.

With these sentiments, both heartfelt and hope-filled, I invite you to keep journeying, trusting in the help of many of our brothers and sisters who gave their lives in following the Crucified Christ. They, who are already fully united in heaven, are the heralds and patrons of our visible communion on earth. Through their intercession, I also pray to the Lord that the Christians of your lands may continue to labour in peace and in full respect for all, in the patient work of reconstruction after so much devastation.

In the Syriac tradition, Christ on the cross is represented as the Good Physician and Medicine of life. I pray that He will completely heal our wounds of the past as well as the many wounds that continue to be caused by the havoc of violence and war. Dear brothers and sisters, let us continue together on the pilgrimage of reconciliation and peace, on which the Lord Himself has set us! With gratitude for your commitment, I invoke the Lord's blessing upon all of you, along with the loving protection of His Mother and ours. And I ask you, please, also to remember to pray for me.

**ADDRESS OF METROPOLITAN MAR MEELIS ZAIA, CO-CHAIR OF THE JOINT
COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
AND THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST**

*On the Occasion of the Signing of the 'Common Statement on Sacramental Life'
Rome; Friday, November 24, 2017*

His Holiness Francis, Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Roman Catholic Church:

"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever..." (Galatians 1:3-5)

It gives me great joy to address these words of greetings to Your Holiness in the name of His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, on this occasion of our joint signing of the *Common Statement on Sacramental Life* between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Catholic Church.

By the grace of God, we have herewith concluded the second stage of formal theological dialogue between our two Churches which began in 1994, after the momentous signing of the *Common Christological Declaration* signed by the late Pope John Paul II and Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, of thrice-blessed and holy memory. At that time, the first stage of dialogue was brought to a fruitful conclusion after some ten years of a fraternal and fruitful dialogue of love and understanding, which opened the door for the second phase of our theological conversation concerning the holy sacraments and the sacramental understanding of both of our Churches. Since 1994, our *Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue* has discussed in a prayerful, ecumenical and academic way the importance of the sacraments in the life of our two Churches. Both the similarities of our common apostolic tradition and divergent particularities of our two ecclesial understandings and praxis have been studied. We can now, there proclaim the importance of the holy sacraments in the life of the Church and her faithful, as means by which God consecrates His creation and sanctifies His children, in Christ.

Now, we begin our third stage of dialogue which deals with the 'Constitution of the Church.' We shall discuss in a prayerful spirit the ecclesiological understanding of our two Churches, among which is the important theological concept of 'communion' at its various levels in the life of the Church. We realize that this is a long road which is marked by frank theological discussions, diverging ecclesiologies and different points of departure. However, a fraternal, sincere and genuine dialogue in the spirit of Christian charity will aid our two Churches along this path. Obedient to the words and will of our Savior who prayed to the Father for the unity of his believers (cf. Jn 17:21), we embark upon this difficult path in a humble spirit which is open to the movements and boundless inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who continually sanctifies and guides those who profess Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God incarnate for our salvation. May we be open to the same Holy Spirit and prepare our hearts to listen to His will and His desire for us.

Our common dialogue of love and understanding will bear witness that we profess Christ and belong to Him alone. In the face of the present and on-going persecution of Christians in the Middle East, we are all the more called to give before the world a common witness to Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (cf. I Pet 2:9). Let us offer prayers together to the Father of mercies and God of all consolation that He might make His lasting peace to abound among all the peoples of this tormented region of the earth, Christian and non-Christian alike. May we pray for those who are persecuted for the sake of Christ's holy name, and still also for those who perpetrate this persecution that the saving light of Christ might shine upon them. All types of religious fundamentalism and extremism must be unequivocally condemned by the adherents of all religions, in the Middle East and wherever in the world religious persecution is to be found. The human conscience must not allow our fellow man to be persecuted or killed in the name of God, He who is the author of life and the conqueror of death through His Son, Christ Jesus.

We give thanks, therefore to the Triune God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—who has brought us together in Christ and has strengthened our dialogue and fraternal bonds of love in Him. We pray for Your Holiness' health and apostolic ministry as the Bishop of Rome and the Chief Shepherd of the Roman Catholic Church, while extending the prayers and fraternal sentiments of our Catholicos-Patriarch and all my brother bishops members of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East. May the Grace and peace of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ remain with Your Holiness always.

INDIAN ARCHDIOCESE NEWS

Qudash Edtha Festival

The Qudash Edtha (Hallowing of the Church) was celebrated on 5 November 2017 in a grand manner. This is the biggest festival in our church in Trichur for many years. The people of other Christian denominations as well as Hindus and Muslims came to the Mart Mariam Church premises to enjoy the illumination of the Church buildings, or to listen to the Metropolitan delivering the festival message from the high pulpit, one of the beautiful pulpits in Kerala. The small procession from the Cross Chapel to the Cathedral during *Ramsha* (evening) prayers was reported on in both the print and television media.

There were three days of Bible Convention. The public meeting on Sunday was presided over by Mar Aprem Metropolitan who distributed mementos to the Committee members who worked hard to make the English translation true to the Malayalam prayer book written in Malayalam 100 years ago. Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan born in Mar Bhisho village in Turkey learned the Malayalam language and published three important books namely: **Messianic Teachings, Prayer Book and Holy Church.**

Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa and Mr. M.A. Thomas (Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees) spoke on the occasion. Vicar of the Cathedral parish, Fr. Binu Joseph as well as parish kaikars and other members are congratulated for conducting such a parish festival in a grand manner.

United Church, Washington Support Group

A memorial service was held at the Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School on Friday 24 November 2017 in memory of Mrs. Gerda Picco, aged 89 who was in charge of collecting and sending money from the United Church to Chaldean Syrian School since 1993. This scholarship fund was started by Miss Theresa Verghese of Trichur working in the World Bank, Washington D.C. It is distributed to deserving students, both Christians and non-Christians. Dr. Jon Sanford and his wife Carol visited Trichur and promised to strengthen the Fund which Miss Theresia Verghese had started to help the poor students of the School.

Metropolitan Mar Aprem had preached in the United Church in Washington D.C. in 1993 and thanked Dr. Sanford and his colleagues in the United Church for their help. In the past years many poor students received a good education and better jobs. Presiding over the condolence meeting was the Metropolitan, Fr. David K. John (Manager), Principal Dr. Abey Paul, Headmistress Mrs Remy Chungath, and PTA Vice President who praised the good deeds of Mrs. Gerda Picco and others of the United Church in Washington, D.C.

Annual Sunday School Day Celebrated

The annual Sunday School Day was celebrated in a grand manner on Sunday 3 December with a colourful rally from Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church to the Cathedral Church. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presided over the public function. There were floats of biblical events. Sweets were distributed to 5000 persons who participated in the procession as usual.

Lady of Dolours Basilica

Mar Aprem Metropolitan was the chief guest on Monday 27 November 2017 at the annual festival function in the Syro-Malabar Basilica in Thrissur, which is the biggest church building in India. The members of this church were members of the Marth Mariam Cathedral in the days when Mar Elia Yohannan Mellus was the Metropolitan in Trichur from 1874 to

1882. Although a few began to join the Syro-Malabar rite since it was instituted by the Pope in 1887, the major number of people left the Mart Mariam Cathedral after the award of Mr.C.W.E. Cotton, the British Political Agent to the Travancore and Cochin states, deciding the possession of the Church to Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan in April 1925.

At present there is a cordial relation between these two churches as our great grandfathers worshipped in one church, the Marth Mariam Cathedral which was once known as the Lady of Dolours Church.

Youth Association Annual Sports Celebration

The Annual Sports festival conducted by the Central Youths Association was inaugurated by Mar Aprem Metropolitan on Sunday 26 November in the Chaldean Syrian School grounds. Several participated in this annual event named in memory of the late Poulouse Mar Poulouse Episcopa.

Annual Meeting of Church's Auxiliary for Social Action

The annual National Board meeting of the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) was held at the CASA office, New Delhi on 9 November. Mar Aprem Metropolitan who is the only living founding member of the CASA was present. He was felicitated by the Director and Chairman of the CASA, as he is in the Golden Jubilee year of his archiepiscopal consecration. The Director of CASA announced that they will reprint the history of CASA captioned *FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT: A Profile of CASA* written by Mar Aprem Metropolitan in 1979.

Bishop Mar Tony Neelankavil Consecrated in Thrissur

The Archdiocese of Thrissur of the Syro-Malabar Church has got a new Auxiliary bishop when Fr. Dr. Tony Neelankavil, Rector of the Major Seminary in Thrissur was consecrated a bishop on Saturday 18 November in Lourde Cathedral, Thrissur. The reception following the consecration service was attended by about 40 bishops and archbishops. During the reception meeting following the consecration Dr. Mar Yohannan Yosip Episcopa spoke about the new bishop who was his classmate during their school days.

During the same public meeting in the grounds of the Lourde Cathedral Archbishop Andrews Thazhath of Thrissur, Hon. Justice Kurien Thomas of the Supreme Court of India, Delhi, Hon. Minister Advocate Sunil Kumar of the Kerala Government, Mayor Mrs Ajitha Jayarajan of Thrissur presented bouquet of flowers to Mar Aprem Metropolitan congratulating him for being the first Bishop in Thrissur entering his 50th year of Episcopal service. The longest period of service so far was of late Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan who served the Church in Trichur for 37 years and 2 months (27 February 1908– 30 April 1945).

Bishop Mar Raphael Thattil Appointed

Dr. Raphael Thattil, the auxiliary Bishop of Trichur archdiocese was appointed as the first bishop of the Shamsabad Diocese of the Syro-Malabar Church. Shamsabad is near Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh in central India. He will be installed as the first bishop by Cardinal George Alenchery on 7 January 2018.

Calendar - 2018

January

- 3. Mar Zaia
- 5 Memorial of Mart Mariam
- 6. Epiphany
- 12. Memorial of Mar Yohannan Mamdhana
- 19. Memorial Pathros & Paulose
- 22-24 Ba'utha of Ninevites
- 25. Kubalthaibutha
- 26. Syriac, Greek Malpans
- 28. Mar Yonan

February

- 2. Mar Awa Catholicos
- 2. Mar Esthapanose Sahda
- 9. Friday of Departed (Anneedhe)
- 11. Lent Begins
- 16. 40 Martyrs Crowned in Ghieda

March

- 7. Mid Lent
- 16. Mar Benyamin Shimun, Martyr (1918)
- 18. Mar Michael, Friend of Angels
- 23. Friday of Lazar
- 25. Tidings to Mart Mariam
from Angel Gabriel
- 25. Oshana
- 29. Pis'ha of our Lord (Maundy Thursday)
- 30. Good Friday
- 31. Holy Saturday

April

- 1. Easter
- 2. Confessor's Day
- 8. New Sunday
- 15. Mar Shimun Barsabbae
- 16. Rabban Hurmizd
- 24. Memorial of Mar Gewarghis
- 27. Mar Sargis, Mar Bachos
- 29. Mar Addai Shleeha

May

- 3. Shmoni & Children
- 10. Sulaqa (Ascension)
- 20. Pentecost
- 23. 1st Holy Qurbana by Mar Yakob
- 25. Friday of gold

July

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

August

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

September

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

October

- 1. Mar khananiya, who baptized St. Paul
- 12. 300 Saints of Shigar
- 14. Mar Moshe Nwiya
- 15. Mar Pithyon

November

- 1. Mar Gewargis Sahda
- 4. Hallowing of the Church
- 11. Day of Tithes
- 15. Memorial of All Saints
- 19. Mar Yaqob M'pasqa
- 23. Mar Awgin Thoovana

December

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



Delegates who attended the Assyrian - Vatican dialogue committee on 21 to 24, November 2017 in Rome. Delegates of Vatican are on the left and the Assyrians are on the right



Holy Qurbana in Rome in November 2017. Seated left to right: Fr. Antony Kaitharan (studying in Rome), Bishop Dr. Mar Awa Royal, Bishop Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Arch Deacon Dr. William Toma, Cor-Episcopa Dr. George Toma



The flag off of Mar Aprem Sunday School rally by Fr. A C Antony and Fr. Sijo Johny at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana parish on 3 December 2017



A tableau in the Sunday School Rally. Mar Aprem parish won the first prize on December 3, 2017