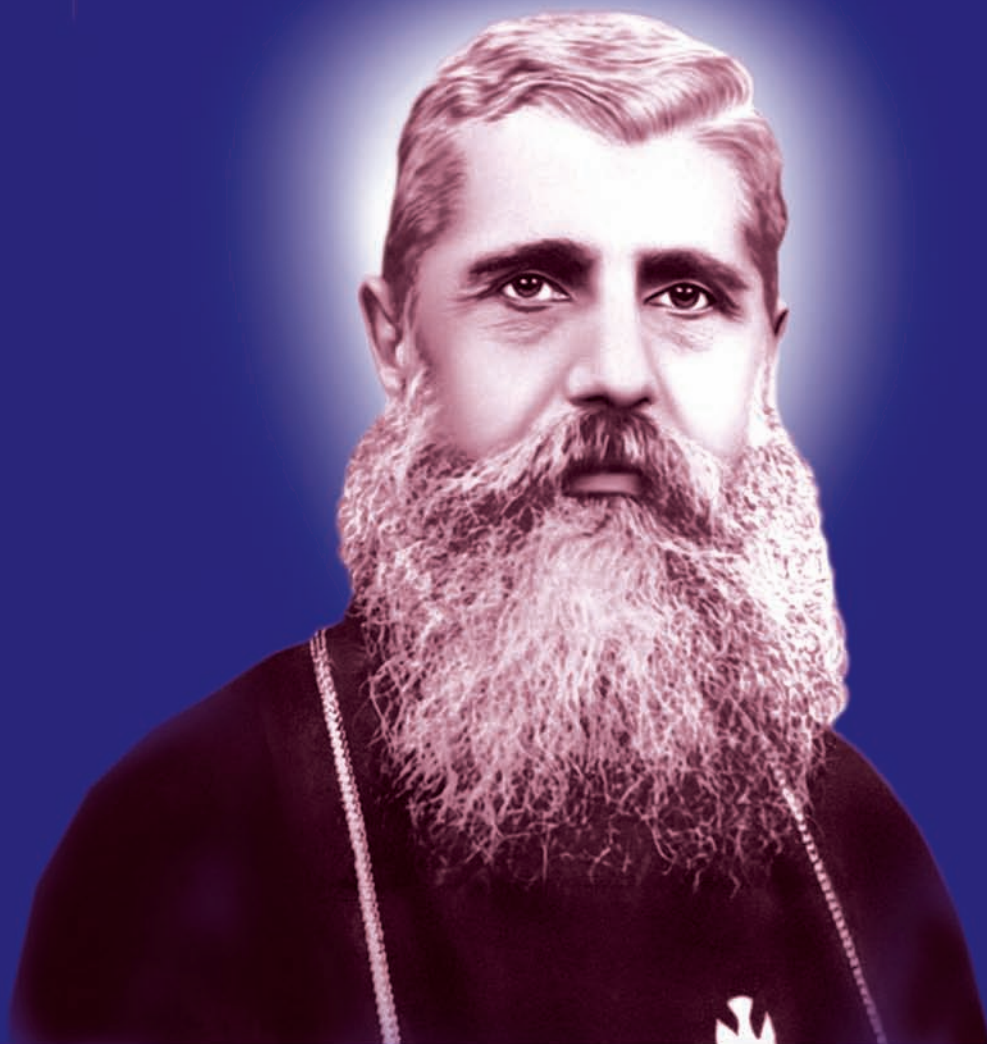


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Vol 66

July - August 2019

Nos 7 & 8



The Saint Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan
(1908 - 1945)

VOICE OF THE EAST



Youth Associations Secretaries and Council Members from various parishes at a blood donation camp arranged by the Women's Youth Association of Mar Mari Shleeha parish at Mar Timotheus School Hall, Kuriachira, Thrissur on 11 August 2019

Central Womens Youth Association has also arranged blood donation camp in Mar Mathai Shleeha parish, Marotichal on 14 July 2019. The camp was inaugurated by H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa. Many polititions, church leaders, doctors etc spoke at the inaugauation function.

VOICE OF THE EAST

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)

(Private Circulation only)

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Voice of the East

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Editorial

The Saint

September 29 is planned to be a significant milestone in the history of the Church of the East in India.

The decision to canonize Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan as a saint of our universal church along with Mar Yosip Khnanisho, Metropolitan of Iraq (1893–1977) has brought happiness to our people in India. The Indian Church will hold a public meeting to proclaim this momentous decree of the Holy Synod to all people of Thrissur irrespective of caste or creed.

Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan was a saint in the minds of the people who knew him in India since his arrival in Thrissur on 27 February 1908. By decree of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East in May 2018, this belief was formalised. And yet many people even in my state of Kerala do not know this news. Hence the Indian Church decided that we should have a public function where all people should know that he is an official saint of our universal Church.

It is true that Indian Church cannot claim Mar Abimalek Timotheus to be their Metropolitan only. It is true that Abimalek was consecrated as the Metropolitan of Malabar & India and he worked in India until his death in the land of his adoption.

Since Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan died on 30 April 1945 the present generation has not seen him. My memory of Mar Timotheus Metropolitan is deep due to the fact that my younger brother Abimalek who was born on 18 January 1942 and received his name because of the Metropolitan who baptized him in 1942, as one of four babies baptized in the Mar Aprem Church, Thrissur. That was the first baptism service in that church which was built and consecrated in February 1940. Had the baptism pond had been constructed along with the church in February 1940 I would have been among the first babies baptised in that church as my family was close to Mar Timotheus.

In the 1-2 month series of celebrations we are planning to invite all babies baptized by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan and all couples whose marriages were solemnized by Mar Abimalek Timotheus, for a get-together in the Metropolitan Palace in the High Road. The High Road itself was renamed “Mar Timotheus High Road” in honour of the saint by the Corporation of Trichur in 2009.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan

International News

32nd Annual Youth Conference Held in Central Valley, California, USA

The 32nd National Youth Conference of the Assyrian Church of the East Youth Association of America (ACEYA) took place in the Diocese of California, hosted by the Central Valley Parishes of Mar Zaia Cathedral, Mar Gewargis Parish, and Mar Addai Parish, from 10 July to 15 July 2019.

This youth conference had over 400 attendees from the three dioceses in the United States of America. In particular, this youth conference was blessed with the presence of His Holiness Mar Gewargis III Sliwa, Catholicos-Patriarch. It is noteworthy to mention that His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod; His Grace Mar Yosip Sargis, Bishop Emeritus; His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western USA and His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of the Eastern USA was also present along with many priests and deacons.

This year's youth conference's theme was "Keys to the Kingdom" (c.f. Matthew 13:11) which expounded upon the sacraments of the Holy Church. This youth conference's lectures included:

-Rev'd Chorbishop Gewargis Toma of Glenview, Illinois on the Holy Mysteries of Priesthood and Absolution;

-Rev'd Chorbishop Gewargis Bet-Rasho and Rev'd Fr Paulus Darmo on the Holy Mysteries of the Eucharist and Holy Leaven;

-Rev'd Fr Genard Lazar of Turlock, California on the Holy Mystery of Baptism;

-Rev'd Dcn Allen Youssefi and Rev'd Dcn Paul Gabriel on Clerical Vestments, Sacred Vessels, and the Holy Altar.

Due to the recent drug crisis throughout world, the National Executive Committee found it fit to host a panel discussion about drugs, mental health, and personal wellbeing during this conference. Panellists included experts in their respective fields of work and a testimony was given by an Assyrian brother who overcame the dark world of addiction.

Throughout the week, the youth engaged in other activities including, but not limited to: a dinner with His Holiness the Catholicos-Patriarch, celebration of the Holy Eucharist, prayer services, a question and answer session, sports games, Assyrian folklore dancing, and an all-day outing in San Francisco.

The National Executive Committee, presided by His Grace Bishop Mar Awa Royel, has announced that the 33rd annual National Youth Conference will take place in Chicago, Illinois.

London's Youth Meet with Mar Awraham Youkhanis

For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life, John 3:16

His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis along with Rev. Fr Tony Malham have today met with youths aged between 14-40 at St Mary's Cathedral in London. With nearly 200 youths in attendance, His Grace opened the meet with Our Lords Prayer. His Grace proceeded with a sermon which centered around Gods abundant love for mankind, the importance of love and forgiveness and how each one of us has the love of God in our hearts and we should always keep that in our minds in our treatment of each other.

Following this inspirational sermon, registration forms were handed out for each person to become an official youth member and receive updates about all future youth events.

In the coming months committees will be formed to fulfil a variety of tasks and implement programmes for all ages. Programmes will include Bible Studies, A school for anyone who wishes to study to be a Deacon, Assyrian language studies, Social Events, fundraisers and a monthly youth magazine.

We encourage ALL youth who want to serve and want to be part of this amazing extended family please support this wonderful movement. God bless everyone who attended today, spread the word!

Message of Congratulations from His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia to His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis

Beloved brother in Christ, His Grace, Mar Awraham Youkhanis, Bishop of Western Europe.

Greetings to the Lord Jesus Christ

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ, for he chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight in love" (Eph 1-3-4)

I am rejoiced to see our Lord Jesus Christ choosing a great and distinguished priest, with the grace given to him from the heights, devoting himself to serve the Church of the East.

In that holy hour of your Episcopal consecration, as the Holy Spirit was descending upon you, I thanked the Lord for that, and for His good divine will and His heavenly blessings, for setting me a witness to all your consecrations from deacon to bishop.

As you serve His holy Church in the heart of London and lead the diocese of Western Europe; which you will make it a spiritual lighthouse for the advancement of the blessed Assyrian Church of the East, as you have done in Sydney.

Dear Pastor, the good shepherd, I was a witness to you, as you discovered the depth of your priestly identity in serving the parishes in Australia and New Zealand. I was a witness as you ploughed in the vineyard of the Church of the East, not looking back, but forward, to prepare the fertile soil for the seeds of the heavenly sower. A man of prayer, sacrifice and devotion to the faith of the Church of the East.

I witnessed the manifestation of your love for the Church in Sydney, where you were always the eager to fulfil where the Lord has assigned you to serve the parish

Dear brother,

Your message and speech at the ceremony, which was held in honour of His Holiness the Patriarch Mar Gewargis III Sliwa, was wonderful, and even more so, you have been able to reflect the true depths of your thoughts, the splendour and originality of your spirit.

I am certain that the nobility of your morals, your humbleness and your approach resulting from listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, will touch the hearts of many of the sons and daughters of your diocese. Not only in Western Europe but throughout the world, and even those who may doubt your ability to make the Church better.

I thank you personally and on behalf of the dioceses of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon, for all that you have given us. Congratulations to you and your esteemed family, for your spiritual growth through divine grace.

May God fill you with His wisdom in dealing with the tasks which the Holy Spirit has led you to, and a righteous son of the Assyrian Church of the East, a leader of the diocese of Western Europe, a faithful witness of Christ in the world, and a light in the sky of the Church of the East and grant you with fruitful work.

I am very proud of you as a true brother born in our beloved diocese in Australia.

The Lord who has been with you from the beginning of your journey will continue to aid you to turn all the barren land to the fertile fields of the Assyrian Church of the East, as you lead your parish to the right avenue and fill you with every blessing and divine wisdom.

I pray to that the Lord, who has chosen you as a bishop of the Diocese of Western Europe, will keep you in good health and assist you for the success of your diocese.

May you continue to be a great blessing for the Church of the East.

Mar Meelis Zaia

Archbishop of the Assyrian Church of the East
Diocese of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon

Health Update - Bishop Joseph Mar Sargis

Bishop Mar Sargis of Baghdad who is retired and was living in Modesto, California underwent quadruple bypass surgery on 25 August 2019 in Modesto, California. He is the senior-most Episcopa of our Church. It is reported that the surgery was successful and that His Grace is recovering well.

Mar Sargis Yousip was formerly the Assyrian Church of the East's Bishop of Baghdad, Iraq. Born in 1950 in Baghdad, he was consecrated a bishop at the age of 17 by His Beatitude Mar Yosip Khnanisho on 2 March 1967 at the Mar Zaia Cathedral in Karradat Maryam, Baghdad. In 2002 the bishop left for the United States and has since been unable to return to his diocese. He currently resides at Modesto, California. After the unexpected death of bishop Mar Isho Sargis of Jelu in 1966 the young Joseph became the successor to Mar Isho Sargis, who was successor to Mar Zaia Sargis (died in 1951).

Bishop of Western Europe Meets with Prelates of the Syriac Orthodox Church

His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, the newly consecrated bishop along with Rev. Fr Tony Malham, has received the Syriac Orthodox Archbishop of the UK, His Eminence Mar Athanasius Toma Dakkama at the Episcopal Residence in Hanwell, near Ealing, London. UK.

His Eminence was joined by the Rev Fr. Aphram Ozan and presented His Grace with a gold pectoral cross.

His Grace would like to express his deepest gratitude for this most valuable gesture and for the respect bestowed upon him since his arrival in London by Archbishop Toma and clergy of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

Both His Grace and His Eminence recognise the importance of dialogue, cooperation and understanding between our churches and will continue to work in that spirit for the edification of the Holy Church of Christ.

Australian Prime Minister Meets with Heads of Churches

In an historic meeting in Sydney on Monday, Prime Minister Scott Morrison met with 21 leaders of major faith communities in Australia to discuss progress in the government's plans to introduce a Religious Discrimination Bill later this year. The Jewish, Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Assyrian and Melkite communities were among those represented at the meeting.

ECAJ co-CEO Peter Wertheim, who represented the Jewish community, hailed the meeting.



H.G. Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurating the Committee Office along with H.L. Mar Yohannan Episcopa and H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa for the public meeting to be held on September 29 to proclaim Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan as saint. Clergy, Trustees and many church members had participated in the inaugural function on 26 July 2019



On 15 August 2019 – Bishop Raphael Thattil of the Syro Malabar Church unveiling the logo in connection with the proclamation of Mar Timotheus Metropolitan as a saint. The proclamation will be done at the mega meeting to be held on 29 September 2019 in Chaldean Syrian School grounds, Thrissur



H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose presenting a photo and the new book of Saint Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan to Shri. Rahul Gandhi. L-to-R: Shri. V.S. David, H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Shri. Rahul Gandhi, Shri. Sajan Mampilly (Trustee) and Shri. Merej Timothy (Trustee)



H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan receives the Achutha Menon Society for Human Action "ASHA" Award from the Thrissur Mayor Shrimathi. Ajitha Vijayan on 16 September 2019 at the Thrissur Public Library



H. L. Dr. Mar Yohannan Episcopa and Fr Victor Kollanur at the 141st Birthday Celebration of Saint Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan at Mart Mariam Parish, UAE



Release of the book 'Brief History of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan' by Prof. P V Krishnan Nair at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, East Fort, Thrissur on 1 September 2019



His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, along with Rev. Fr Tony Malham receiving the Syriac Orthodox Archbishop of the UK, His Eminence Mar Athanasius Toma Dakkama at the Episcopal Residence in Hanwell, UK.



His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, Catholicos-Patriarch and Mar Paulus Benjamin after the blessing of the new Assyrian Community Centre and Centre in Skokie, Chicago on 17 August 2019

“There cannot be many other countries in the world in which the head of government can have a constructive conversation over one and a half hours with such a diverse range of faith community leaders on as sensitive a topic as religious freedom and discrimination,” he said.

“Each of us outlined what was of importance to our respective communities not only with regard to the proposed legislation but also in terms of Australia’s broader cultural attitudes with regard to religion”, Wertheim said.

“There was a large measure of agreement in the room about many of the principles that the government is grappling with in seeking a fair and workable balance between religious freedom and competing rights and freedoms. This sends a positive message to the world about how effectively Australia operates as a multi-faith and multicultural society”.

Wertheim emphasised that the government is still working on the draft legislation, and that there will likely be further consultations as the process unfolds. “We all welcomed the Prime Minister’s assurance that the government is ‘not rushing this’ and will continue to proceed in a measured and considered way.”

“The Prime Minister praised the role that religious belief has played in community building”, Wertheim said. “From the tenor of his comments and responses to our concerns, I felt reassured that the rights and freedoms of people of faith to practise and preach their beliefs, and the rights and freedoms of faith-based schools and institutions to operate in accordance with their ethos, will continue to be protected in accordance with international norms”.

Indian Archdiocese News

Achuta Menon Award

On 16th August 2019 the prestigious award in honour of the late Chief Minister of Kerala Mr. C Achuta Menon was presented to Mar Aprem Metropolitan by the Mayor of Thrissur Mrs. Ajitha Vijayan. The function was in the main hall of the Public Library of the Town Hall, Thrissur.

The hall was filled to capacity by the leaders of the community. The memento was presented by the Mayor and the ‘Prasasthi Pathram’ was presented by Advocate V.N. Narayan, President of the Achuta Menon Society for Human Action (ASHA). The Metropolitan in his reply speech thanked all those who made this decision to grant him this prestigious Award from the public of Thrissur, his hometown.

Donations for Canonisation Celebrations

Mar Aprem Metropolitan presided over the inauguration of coupon collection for the big day of celebration of the proclamation of the sainthood of Mar Abimalek Timotheus

Metropolitan on 29th September 2019. Mr. M.I. Pauly (former central Trustee) and Mr. Thomas Ambakaden (present Central Trustee) bought the first two coupons of Rs. 1 lakh (hundred thousand). Metropolitan stated that all people should share in this expense to make this event a memorable one. Mr. C.L. Tenny (present Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees) as well as Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose who is in charge of the Mar Aprem parish, spoke on the occasion requesting all members to contribute their big or small donations. Heads of all major denominations have been invited to be present on the stage to be specially erected in the grounds of the Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School started by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan in 1927.

Diary Notes of St. Mar Abimalek Timotheus

Professor V.G. Thampi, who was a Professor of Malayalam for 33 years in Sree Kerala Varma College Thrissur and now Dean of Language & Literature of the Shahardaya College of Advanced Studies in Kodakara has mentioned in a Preface to the Diary Notes translation that the Malayalam translation of the 1908-1918 diary of the late Metropolitan (translated from Syriac to Malayalam) is a noteworthy effort to understand the high qualities of a foreign Metropolitan who worked for nearly 37 years in our country. The diary notes show the positive high qualities and principles of this Metropolitan. In every aspect this translation from Syriac to Malayalam is a successful effort by the Metropolitan Mar Aprem who has written about 80 books. Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam granted their first Ph.D. in Syriac Language and Literature in 2002 to Mar Aprem. It is fitting that the publication of this Malayalam translation has appeared at the time of the declaring the sainthood of this Metropolitan to the public.

Episcopal Visit to UAE & Muscat

His Lordship Dr. Mar Yokhannan Yoseph who is in charge of the UAE parish and Muscat Mission has been visiting Sharja, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Muscat for a month from the first week of August to first week of September conducting Holy Qurbana on Fridays and visiting our families conducting prayer meetings.

Dr. Thomas Oommen MA., Ph.D.

Congratulations to a member of our Mar Qardagh parish, Chennai who passed viva voce for Ph.D. degree in History from Presidency College, Chennai. His thesis was about the history of our church in India. Thomas Oommen's mother is the first lady Ph.D. of our church in India.

Miss Chinna Chacko Chammanam took Ph.D. in the field of Education from California, USA in early 1950s. Dr. Chinna Chacko married Mr. Oommen who is a member of the Mar Thoma Church. But she remained in our church. Even in old age she along with her son Thomas Oommen and his family regularly attend our church in Chennai (formerly Madras).

Last year Dr. Thomas Oommen invited our Metropolitan to give a lecture about the history of our Assyrian Church of the East in India in the Presidency College in Chennai where he was finishing his research for Ph.D. degree.

As Dr. Thomas Oommen lives near the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore, Madras we pray that he will try to propagate our Church history to the people around the tomb of Saint Thomas, apostle of India. Our church needs lay people also to study the history of our church and defend it.

All congratulations to the new scholar in Church history Dr. Thomas Oommen.

Mr. Rahul Gandhi, M.P. Meets with Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose

The grandson of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi received the four member delegates from Trichur headed by Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose in his office in New Delhi and enquired about our church and the news that the sainthood public proclamation in Trichur near his tomb in Thrissur on 29th September 2019. Mr. Rahul Gandhi was recently elected to the Indian Parliament from Wayanad in Kerala state with an unbelievable majority.

Mr. Rahul Gandhi was informed that Saint Mar Abimalek Timotheus had received in the Metropolitan Palace his grandmother Mrs Indira Gandhi along with her father Jawaharlal Nehru and mother Kamala. His own father Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi had agreed to visit our Big Church in 1989 for the 175th anniversary of the Mart Mariam Big Church. Unfortunately he had to cancel that programme. Bishop Mar Awgin showed the quotation of writing of Jawaharlal Nehru in his **An Autobiography** about his visit to Bishop Mar Timotheus in 1931. At the end of the interview Mr. Rahul Gandhi expressed his desire to visit Trichur on 29 September 2019.

Postal Stamp Honouring Saint Mar Abimalek Timotheus

A postal stamp with the picture of Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan is going to be issued by the Postal Department with our collaboration. Only a few stamps are being published. It is a collector's item so it will be sold out as soon as it is issued. Those who are abroad must order your stamps soon to avoid disappointment.

Floods in India

Like last August, heavy rain has also impacted India this year. We are praying to stop the rain for a few days. This year people are prepared for the emergency handling of the flood situation. With the help of the government and voluntary agencies of all religions we have managed the Kerala region reasonably well.

A documentary on Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan is being prepared with the help of experts. Anybody interested to purchase a copy of this documentary film of 45 minutes can order it soon. We are preparing it in English as well as in Malayalam.

Sahrudayavethi Award to Dr Aby Paul

The prestigious ‘Sahrudayavethi Trichur’ Award was awarded to Dr. Aby Paul, Principal of our Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School on Sunday 25 August 2019. The cash amount of Rs. 10,000/- has been given to him along with the award. This is the second time a member of our Church has received the ‘Sahrudayavethi’ Award. The first award was for social services and given to Mrs. J.D. Mookan in 1994. The cash price was at that time Rs. 1000/- only. It shows that the Indian rupees have gone down in its value during the last 25 years. At the time of India’s independence in 1947 an Indian rupee was equivalent to one American Dollar. At present the Indian rupee’s value has gone down to 72 rupees equal to 1 American Dollar.

The Biography of Saint Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(1945- 1878)

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Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar inaugurating the Tomato garden in memory of Saint Mar Timotheus Metropolitan along with the three Indian prelates and the church members at the Marth Mariam Big Church, Thrissur on 21 July 2019



Mar Aprem Metropolitan presenting a sapling to a child at Mar Addai Sleeha Parish as part of a campaign to plant more trees. Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Fr. K.R. Inasu, Fr. M.D. Abi are pictured



Ordination of Deacon Sinto Jose Poonjokaran at Nellikunnu Mar Timotheus church on 3 August 2019 led by H.G. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and assisted by H.L. Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph and H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose