

# صوت المشرق

Vol 66 November - December 2019 Nos.11 & 12



Prelates of the Indian Archdiocese with Catholicos-Patriarch. L to R: H. L. Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa, Patriarch H.H. Mar Gewargis III Sliwa, H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa

## VOICE OF THE EAST



ber 2019 • Budapest



**His Holiness the Catholicos-Patriarch addresses the 2nd International Conference on Christian Persecution held from November 26-28 in Budapest, Hungary.**



**His Holiness Maran Mar Gewargis III Sliwa pictured with international religious and political leaders including Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at the 2nd International Conference on Christian Persecution in Budapest, Hungary.**

**VOICE OF THE EAST**

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)

(Private Circulation only)

November-December 2019

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](http://www.news.assyrianchurch.org)

**Archdiocese of India & UAE:** [www.churchoftheeastindia.org](http://www.churchoftheeastindia.org)

**Archdiocese of Australia & New Zealand:** [www.assyrianchurch.org.au](http://www.assyrianchurch.org.au)

**Diocese of California:** [www.acoecalifornia.org](http://www.acoecalifornia.org)

**Diocese of Europe:** [www.assyrianchurch-europe.org](http://www.assyrianchurch-europe.org)

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

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

***Contents***

1. Christmas and Music (Editorial)

***International Church News***

2. Patriarchal Christmas message
3. Sixth Pro Oriente Colloquium Syriacum
4. Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
5. Fourth Bi-Lateral Dialogue Meeting of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church

***Indian Archdiocese News***

6. Holy Qurbana in England
7. Holy Qurbana in Qatar
8. Choir Meet in Trichur
9. Holy Qurbana in Sharjah
10. Gospel Convention at Mar Aprem Church
11. Buon Natale
12. Mens Association Christmas
13. Calendar 2020

# Voice of the East

**Vol. 66**

**November - December 2019**

**Nos. 11 & 12**

## **Editorial**

### **Christmas and Music**

Celebrations prior to Christmas are full of musical activities in many countries. In the Indian Church these activities include general meetings and study classes on church history, social justice and youth activities. Such activities are arranged by organizations under the umbrella of the Church.

The Mahila Samajam, Woman's Youth, Men's Association and Youth's Association arrange several activities in addition to the traditional activities connected with the season.

Christmas songs are heard at various functions in our Churches. Guest speakers of reputation are among the guests of these functions. We also participate in the ecumenical activities of the combined activities of the Church.

In the city of Thrissur, our Church is the second largest Christian community; Roman Catholics being the largest community. The other denominations such as the Indian Orthodox Church, Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Church of South India etc. are only in the third, fourth, or fifth position by numerical strength. But outside Thrissur city these denominations are much bigger than our Church. Nevertheless, our Church is well known in and around Thrissur. Our public processions and meetings have already found a place in the hearts of people from all walks of life in Thrissur.

On the first Sunday of December the Mar Aprem Sunday School committee arranged a huge procession from Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church to the Marth Mariam Cathedral. It was well attended. 4000 people walked in this procession and were presented with sweets upon their arrival in the Metropolitan Palace next to Marth Mariam Cathedral. The procession was a great attraction in the city. Members of the Church were joined by a huge crowd of people from different religions who stopped and watched this colourful procession. Thousands of people dressed up as Christmas Pappas (Santa Claus) and were seen wandering in the city.

The public news papers published Christmas messages from the various heads of Churches such as the Syro-Malabar Church, Indian Orthodox Syrian Church, Jacobite Syrian Church, Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Church of South India, Independent Syrian Church etc. which are active in the Trichur area. Although all the Christian denominations working in Trichur do not make the majority of the local population, the newspapers and television broadcast Christian programmes in this Christmas season.

We seek to make the Christmas season a period of festivity not only for the Christian community but also for our neighbours who are Hindus, Muslims and others. Such an approach seeks to secure communal harmony. Fanatics are present in all religions. I pray ceaselessly for communal harmony and peaceful co-existence of people of all faiths.

**Mar Aprem Metropolitan**





## **Sixth Pro Oriente Colloquium Syriacum**

His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod, represented the Assyrian Church of the East at the Sixth Colloquium Syriacum, held under the aegis of the Pro Oriente Ecumenical Foundation at the Pallottihaus in Vienna, from November 25-28, 2019.

The theme of this year's Colloquium Syriacum was titled: "With Hope Towards the Future: Living Together and Common Witness of the Syriac Tradition." His Grace presented a paper on Wednesday, November 27, 2019, with the title: "The Common Challenges and Opportunities of the Syriac Churches in North America, with Special Attention to the Assyrian Church of the East." The bishop's presentation outlined the history of the Assyrian Church's role and activities in the ecumenical movement since 1964, and traced the immigration of the Assyrian faithful to North America—with special attention to the United States—from the countries of the Middle East. The pastoral, ecclesiastical and ethnic challenges of the faithful as a result of being transplanted to the Diaspora were studied and presented in an in-depth manner, followed by discussions and questions from the attendees on the same theme.

On Tuesday evening, November 26, 2019, His Grace partook in a public panel discussion sponsored by Pro Oriente and held at the Schottenstift in Vienna, titled: "Endangered Living Christian Heritage: Future Perspectives for Syro-Aramaic Christianity Between Emigration and Assimilation." Representatives of the various Syriac-speaking Churches attending the Colloquium were also present at the public function to present talks and partake in the panel discussion.

On Thursday afternoon, November 28, His Grace partook in the meetings of the 12th Forum Syriacum, which is comprised of the official representatives of the various Churches of the Syriac tradition represented at the Pro Oriente Ecumenical Foundation. On Friday, November 29, 2019, His Grace Mar Awa was invited to partake in a one day international symposium held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, titled: "Medieval Turfan—An Oasis for Christianity? Looking Back, Looking Ahead." The convener of this important conference was Dr. Chiara Barbati of the Institute of Iranian Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. His Grace read a congratulatory letter sent by His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Gewargis III Sliwa, offering his best wishes and prayers. Then, His Grace Mar Awa presented his reflections on the importance of the Turfan monastic community in Central Asia as one of the most important missionary outposts of the Assyrian Church of the East. It is worth noting that His Grace has been a consultant to the Turfan Project since 2009. The specialized international symposium was organized by the Institute of Iranian Studies, in partnership with the Pro Oriente Ecumenical Foundation.

It is noteworthy that this year's Colloquium coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Pro Oriente Foundation's Syriac Dialogue, which began in 1994 and lasted until 2003. His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Gewargis III Sliwa of the Assyrian Church of the East sent a letter of felicitation to the President of Pro Oriente, Dr. Alfons M. Kloss. Special thanks to Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. Winkler of the University of Salzburg for organizing the Colloquium and its various public activities. The Assyrian Church of the East has been a member of the Syriac Dialogue since its founding in 1994, and now in the Colloquium Syriacum since 2009. Also representing the Assyrian Church of the East at Pro Oriente is the Very Rev. Archdeacon William Toma of Chicago, who could not attend this year's Colloquium.

## **Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East**

Rome, November 22, 2019

A plenary session of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East took place from 21–22 November 2019 at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome. This fourth session continues the third phase of the dialogue which is considering the mystery of the Church as understood in both traditions. The Commission is co-chaired by His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon, and the Most Reverend Johan Bonny, Bishop of Antwerp.

On Thursday, 21 November 2019, the Most Reverend Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, welcomed the members of the Joint Commission to the annual meeting.

The Joint Commission continued its work on the third phase of the dialogue on issues of ecclesiology which had been approved in 2017. This phase is reflecting on the nature and mission of the Church, the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the constitution of the Church. The members of the Commission gratefully recalled the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Joint Commission concurrently with the Common Christological Declaration signed by Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV on 11 November 1994.

The members presented six papers on the images of the Church found in both traditions, each having developed complementary understandings of the mystery of the Church, including the Body of Christ, the Shepherd and his flock, the Mother, the Ark of salvation, the Bride and bridegroom, the gathering of faithful and the spiritual hospital. The dialogue offers the opportunity to learn of each other's history, theology, canon law, liturgy and spirituality. While our patristic and theological patrimony is different, the biblical foundations are held in common, along with the priesthood and apostolic succession. The task of the third phase of the dialogue is one of understanding how to receive distinctive formulations on the mystery of the Church from each other.

The members of the Joint Commission also informally received reports on the situation of Christians in the Middle East, which is increasingly difficult. The members prayed for their brothers and sisters in the cradle of Christianity and resolved to make the situation better known in their home dioceses.

The members of the Commission joined Cardinal Kurt Koch and officials of the Pontifical Council at an Ecumenical Prayer commemorating the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification held at the Abbey of Sant' Anselmo. They were also graciously invited to dinner by the Benedictine community. The Commission will re-convene in Rome in November 2020.

The Assyrian delegation includes His Grace Mar Aprim Athneil, Bishop of Syria, His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California, His Grace Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Auxiliary Bishop of India, Archdeacon William Toma and Corbishop George Toma. The Catholic delegation includes the Most Reverend Antoine Audo, SJ, Bishop of Aleppo for the Chaldeans, the Most Reverend Francis Kalabat, Bishop of Saint Thomas for the Chaldeans, the Very Reverend Thomas A. Baima, Provost of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Professor Dr. Theresia Hainthaler, Honorary Professor of Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology, and the Reverend Father Hyacinthe Destivelle, OP, Official of the Pontifical Council. Bishop Athneil, Bishop Kalabat and Archdeacon Toma were not able to attend. Also present for the sessions as an observer was the Reverend Father Jijimon Puthuveettilkalam, SJ, from the *Collegio Internazionale del Gesù*.

## **Fourth Bi-Lateral Dialogue Meeting of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church**

The fourth meeting of the official Bi-Lateral Commission for Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church met in Thrissur, Kerala from 13 to 16 November, 2019. The meetings were held under the auspices of the Archdiocese of India in Thrissur, hosted by His Beatitude Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of India for the Assyrian Church of the East.

The participants in the bi-lateral dialogue meeting from the Assyrian Church of the East were the following: His Grace Bishop Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and the Secretary of the Holy Synod (co-chair); Very Rev. Cor-bishop Gewargis Toma, Diocese of Eastern USA (member); Rev. Fr. Ephraim Alkhas, Diocese of California (co-secretary); Rev. Deacon Roland Bidjamov, Diocese of Nohadra and Russia (member).

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church were the following:

-His Grace Bishop Kliment of Krasnoslobodsk and Temnikov (co-chair);  
- Very Rev. Hieromonk Stefan Igumnov, Secretary for Inter-Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's 'Department of External Church Relations' (member);  
- Very Rev. Hegumen Stefan Sado (member, absent) and Mr. Sergei Alferov (co-secretary).

On the Commission's first full working day held on Wednesday, November 13th, the Commission was formally welcomed by His Beatitude Metropolitan Mar Aprem, the head of the Archdiocese of India. Then, the Commission reviewed the past three bi-lateral meetings and the results of these past three sessions of dialogue. The following areas of collaboration between the two Churches were further discussed, with recommendations to the respective authorities of both Churches:

- 1) continued academic collaboration in the form of sending students to the theological institutions of each Church;
- 2) continued collaboration in the form of international and local conferences highlighting the theological patrimony and identity of each Church;
- 3) Putting into effect coordinated efforts of a humanitarian nature in regards to the situation of the Christians of the Middle East;
- 4) a unified voice confronting issues of Christian morality and the challenges to moral norms of the Church;
- 5) Discussions about shared participation in Church youth conferences, particularly on a global and regional level;
- 6) the prospects of setting up a formal consultation which will be tasked with identifying the theological issues which both Churches share in common, and which are unique to each Church.





**H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan lighting the lamp at the inauguration ceremony of the "Daiva Dasakam" at Sharjah Cricket Stadium on 29 November 2019. Agricultural Minister Mr. V.S. Sunil Kumar and other religious leaders are on the stage with Mar Aprem Metropolitan**



**Men's Association of the Church of the East in India celebrating Christmas at the Government Old People's Home at Rama Varma Puram, Trichur on 26 December 2019.**





**Prelates and the clergy with Catholicos-Patriarch H.H. Mar Gewargis III Silwa at the Metropolitan Palace, Thrissur on the occasion of the proclamation of the Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan's sainthood on 29 September 2019.**



**H.G Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurating the Mar Aprem Sunday School Rally at Mar Yohannan Mamdhanan Church, Thrissur on 1 December 2019**





**H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presenting a memento to Dr. Yuhanon Mar Militius Metropolitan at the one-day convention held by the Men's Association on 8 December 2019 at Mar Aprem Church, Chelakottukara, Thrissur.**



**H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan releasing the documentary related to the life of St. Mar Abimalek Metropolitan at Chaldean Syrian Centre, Thrissur on Sunday 17 November 2019**





H.G Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan participating in the Buon Natale 2019 with many political and religious leaders in Thrissur on 27 December 2019.



H.G Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presides over the Choir Meet 2019 conducted by the Marth Mariam Cathedral, Thrissur on 26 December 2019

On the Commission's second full working day, the participants were given the chance to visit the various institutions of the Assyrian Church of the East, Archdiocese of India, accompanied by His Grace Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose. In the morning, the members of the Commission were formally received at the Marth Mariam Cathedral in Thrissur. They were given an overview of the complex, which houses the main church for the archdiocese, an archdiocesan museum (opened in 2018), the burial chapel of the hierarchs of the Church of the East in India, and particularly a visit and prayer at the tomb of the newly canonized saint of the Church of the East, Mar Abimalek Timotheus, who served as metropolitan of the Indian Church from 1908 to 1945. St. Mar Timotheus was canonized by His Holiness Mar Gewargis III, Sliwa, Catholicos-Patriarch, at a formal function held by the Church of the East in Thrissur, on September 29, 2019. The vicar of the cathedral parish, Rev. Fr. Binu Joseph, received a generous donation in the amount of \$10,000 from ACERO-USA (Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization) towards a project which will provide homes for ten poor families. This complex will be built on land purchased by the Church of the East in India, and by donations from the Church as well as generous donors and benefactors.

Then, the participants visited the second main church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist in East Fort. This church was founded in 1910 by St. Mar Timotheus, and has been recently renovated and enlarged. The members of the Commission were given a formal reception at the 'Chaldean Syrian Higher Secondary School,' one of the major institutions of learning of the archdiocese, which serves over 1,000 students and is known in the State of Kerala for its academic achievements. The Commission was then formally received by the staff and clerical students of the Seminary of the Church of the East in Thiroor, which was founded in 1956 on a 52-acre cashew plantation, donated at the time by Athleeta Inasu. The seminary is a large complex and at present there are five full-time students (three deacons and two brothers) who live and study at the seminary, as well as in secular institutions in order to obtain their bachelor's degree. The seminary was recently renovated, to include a chapel of the Cross and an extensive animal farm and rubber tree plantation. The Commission members were received for lunch at the seminary and accorded a very warm hospitality.

Afterwards, the Commission was given a tour of the 'Mar Timotheus Charitable Hospital,' which was inaugurated by the late Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in 1990. This charitable hospital serves the poor and needy of the township, and it is noteworthy that the doctors who are members of the Church of the East in India volunteer their time to serve at the hospital. The administration of the hospital noted its heartfelt thanks to ACERO-USA for its extensive financial support of the hospital's needs and projects, including the purchase of three much-needed dialysis machines, dental-surgical equipment, among other projects. The members of the Commission were then taken to visit the 'Dr. Sandosham Memorial Old People's Home,' behind the hospital. This institution houses thirty elderly residents, which included members and non-members of the Church of the East. Finally, the Commission paid an extensive visit to the 'Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage' in Kalathode. This orphanage is one of two orphanages operated by the Church in India, and is a co-ed institution serving some 60 children. After a warm reception by the orphanage administration and staff, the Commission members interacted with the children, who sang two devotional songs for their guests. Then, His Grace Bishop Kliment addressed the group and informed them of the reason for their visit. It is noteworthy, that the children of the orphanage are a mix of Christians and non-Christians, and it was founded by Mrs.J.D.Mookken, the late mother of His Beatitude Mar Aprem metropolitan in 1961, in memory of the metropolitan Mar Abimalek Timotheus.

In conclusion of their working days, the Commission thanked His Beatitude Mar Aprem, Bishop Mar Awgin and the rest of the clergy and staff of the various institutions of the archdiocese for a memorable visit and for their warm hospitality. The Russian members of the Commission were particularly impressed with the Church's many social and educational activities in and around Thrissur, without distinction of religion. The Commission fixed the meeting of the upcoming fifth Bi-Lateral Dialogue Commission meeting to take place in the Diocese of His Grace Bishop Kliment of Krasnoslobodsk (Russian Federation), in September 2020

The official communiqué issued by the Commission is as follows:

***Fourth Session of the Commission for Bilateral Dialogue  
Between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East***

**Thrissur (Kerala State, Republic of India), 13–15 November, 2019**

***Joint Communiqué***

From November 13 to November 15, 2019 with the blessings of His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Gewargis III and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, the fourth session of the Commission for Bilateral Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East took place in Thrissur, Kerala State, and Republic of India. The meeting concluded in the agreement and adoption of the present communiqué.

Having analyzed the results of the Commission labors over the past year, the meeting participants noted with satisfaction the achievements and outlined further prospects for fruitful cooperation, namely, in the framework of the implementation of joint initiatives in the academic and humanitarian fields, as well as through youth contacts and the implementation of joint initiatives in the media sphere.

The Commission appreciates the current study program of Rev. Priest Addai Daniel, who began studying at the Moscow Theological Academy in 2018 as the first student of the Assyrian Church of the East studying at an institution of the Russian Orthodox Church. He is not only successful in his studies, but also takes initiative in building bridges and understanding between the two Churches. One of his initiatives was a joint pilgrimage to Iran of Priest Addai and a Russian Orthodox colleague from Moscow Theological Academy from 25 July to 10 August, 2019. During this pilgrimage they visited ancient Assyrian churches in the cities and villages of Urmia, Tehran, and Tabriz as well as local libraries where they studied valuable Syriac manuscripts. The trip included meetings with His Grace Mar Narsai (Benjamin), Bishop of Iran as well as local clergy and believers.

In this regard, the Commission confirms its intention to assist in admitting 1-2 new Assyrian students to the higher educational institutions of the Moscow Patriarchate in the near academic year 2020–2021. The Commission hopes to have a student from the Assyrian community in Russia as well as one from the global Assyrian Church of the East.

The practice of inviting Assyrian delegates to participate in different theological and pastoral conferences of the Russian Orthodox Church shall be continued. In the future, it is planned to send appropriate invitations to Russian delegates also, including to the educational institutions of the Assyrian Church of the East in India and Australia. An important event in this direction was our second colloquium, organized on November 14, 2019 in the Theological



Seminary of Thrissur, which focused on the history, modern life and services of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Commission recognizes the importance of organizing regular theological consultations in order to determine the range of relevant issues in the relationship between the two Churches. Among these issues are both theological (scientific) topics as well as pastoral (practical and moral) concerns.

The Commission agreed to organize a second Summer Institute to take place during 2021. Additionally, the Commission proposes a new initiative in the framework of our dialogue to be comprised of exchange and collaboration of youth delegations. In this regard, the Russian side intends to invite a group of Assyrian youth to take part in the next International Youth Congress of the Russian Orthodox Church in the summer of 2020. In its turn, the Assyrian Church confirms its readiness to receive several Russian representatives at the first International Youth Congress of the Assyrian Church of the East, also planned for July 2020, in Erbil (KRG), Iraq.

The Commission welcomes the ongoing development of inter-Christian interaction with the aim of providing humanitarian assistance to the Christian communities of Iraq and Syria, and the implementation of specialized projects to restore desecrated shrines and destroyed social infrastructure in these countries. Recognizing the leading role of the Working Group for the Aid to the Population of Syria of the Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations under the President of the Russian Federation in this good endeavor, an intention was declared to work out future forms of constructive cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian community of Iraq, including contacts through the ACERO. The valuable consultations received following the visit of the delegation of the Council of Christian Churches of Iraq to Russia, including His Grace Mar Abris Youkhanna, Bishop of Erbil (November 21-28, 2018) will also contribute to this. The same applies to the meaningful meeting of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk with His Grace Mar Ishaq Yousip, Bishop of Nohadra, Mosul and the CIS countries (Moscow, June, 20, 2019).

The Commission highlighted two areas of profound concern in the life of Christianity in the East. First is the anti-Christian violence that threatens the lives of many clergy and believers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Secondly, is the deterioration of unity and Christian solidarity caused by the sad situation in Ukraine and subsequent events as a commission, we call for furtherance of good will in response to these tragic situations. We continue to pray for the violent tragedy befalling Christians of the Middle East, Iraq and Syrian particular.

The parties warmly thank personally His Eminence Mar Aprem Mookan, Metropolitan of India and the whole local community of the Assyrian Church of the East for the cordial hospitality extended.

The results of this fourth Commission's session will be presented to the Holy Synods of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church for their consideration and final approval.

*News from the Indian Archdiocese*

## **Holy Qurbana in England**

Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa celebrated Holy Qurbana at St Mary's Assyrian Church of the East, Hanwell, London on Sunday 1 December 2019. His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, Bishop of Western Europe and Rev'd Fr. Tony Malham, parish priest, assisted. Two Indian families living in England attended the Holy Qurbana. They are Mr. Blesson Joy (son of the former Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees in India) and Mrs. Susheela George (sister of Mar Aprem Metropolitan) and her son Varghese George & family. It was suggested that we should start an English Holy Qurbana once in a month in our church to attract Indians and others who do not know how to speak the Assyrian language.

## **Holy Qurbana in Qatar**

Holy Qurbana in the Marthoma Church in Doha was conducted by Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose on Friday 1 November, 2019 on his way to participate in the consecration of Fr. Isaac as the bishop of Baghdad. As there is no priest or deacon working in Qatar Rev. Fr. Lazar Madathumpady, Vicar of Mar Quriakose Sahda Church, Kallur, Trichur District flew from India to assist in this service. About 30 people were present. Let us pray that one of our male members should come forward to become a deacon so that we can arrange Holy Qurbana in Doha when a bishop travels to Erbil or to U.K. or USA via Qatar. Any of the Assyrians who travel via Qatar or to Qatar may be in touch with Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose or me so that we can welcome our Assyrian brethren to worship with our Indian brethren. We are grateful to our Mar Thoma Syrian church Metropolitan Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma who has instructed his church authorities in Doha to permit the facilities of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church for our Church to conduct our Holy Qurbana.

## **Choir Meet in Trichur**

In the evening after Christmas Qurbana and dinner a healthy competition of the various choirs took place in front of the Mart Mariam Cathedral. This was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Choir Meet. This year onwards we invited Christmas choirs of other Churches including Catholics and Protestants who were given an opportunity to compete at this Choir Meet.

Fr. Thomas Chakalmattom CMI who was given a Fellowship by Trinity College in London this year was a chief guest. Mr. Alfonse, Music Director was a guest speaker. Fr. Binu Joseph, Vicar of the Cathedral thanked all who made this Choir Meet a memorable one not only for our Church, but also for many music lovers in and around Thrissur.

## **Holy Qurbana in Sharjah**

Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan celebrated Holy Qurbana on Friday 29 November at our U.A.E. Marth Mariam parish in Sharjah near Dubai. Members of our church working in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, etc. attended the service. As we do not have a Church of our own we have rented a chapel belonging to the Anglican Church from 7 a.m. to 9.15 a.m. every Friday on a yearly basis for the last 14 years.

The Metropolitan who founded this parish 14 years ago doing the first Holy Qurbana in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Jabal Ali expressed thanks to the faithful members who are regular in attending Holy Qurbana every Friday. He participated in the Sports Day of the parish.

This short trip was sponsored by the committee to inaugurate the '*DaivaDasakam*' universal prayer song already translated to 105 languages in the famous Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan was invited to Sharjah by the committee on this famous prayer song. The Aramaic (Syriac) translation starting with the words “*Oh AlahaNatharLan*” has already become viral in some social media. Mar Aprem was requested by the committee because he is the first one to earn a Ph.D. degree in Syriac(Aramaic) language from any Indian University. Mahatma Gandhi is the only University in India which offers M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in this language of Jesus Christ. The third person to receive Ph.D. in India in Syriac was again from our Church being Sister Jincy Othottil. Mar Aprem was assisted by Sister Jincy in translating this prayer song written by a famous Hindu Sanyasi namely Sree Narayana Guru of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This prayer song is given below in Malayalam script, Aramaic translation is given in Aramaic script in the second column and the Aramaic translation is transliterated into Malayalam script in the third. Anybody interested can write to the Metropolitan at email: hgmaraprem@gmail.com

## **Gospel Convention at Mar Aprem Church**

Dr. Yuhanon Mar Militius Metropolitan said that the parents should be periodically concerned about the future of their children in the times of loss of emotional maturity. He was delivering the keynote address at the one-day intercession ceremony held by the Men's Association of the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East at the Mar Aprem Church, Chelakottukara, Thrissur. He further stated that the principle of achieving one's own interests should not be denied the justice of others.

A major choir, lead by Mr. Inasu Jacob, Chairman of the Board of Trustees during 2004 – 2007, performed at the function.

Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurated the function. National President Rev. Fr. Jose Vengassery, Parish President Rev. Fr. Davis Thalokaran, General Secretary, Mr. Anto D. Ollukaran and Secretary Aby Thazhatha spoke on the occasion.

## ***BuonNatale***

Since 2014 the *BuonNatale* observed in Trichur has become the biggest attraction to many churches in and around Trichur. Mar Andrews Thazhath, the Syro Malabar Archbishop of Trichur in co-operation with the Honourable Mayor of Trichur as the Co-Patron has been improving the quality of celebration with the co-operation of all religious people of Trichur. The *BuonNatale* (Italian for Merry Christmas) has also found a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the number of Christmas Pappas. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan co-operates with the Archbishop and the Mayor of Trichur in the successful Christmas celebration making it an event of the city by people of all faiths and financial statuses.

## **Mens Association Christmas**

The Mens Association, the organization of men above 45 years made a visit to the Government Old People's Home at Rama Varma Puram, Trichur on 23 December. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, patron of the Mens Association and committee members donated a lunch with the inmates of this Home. Mr. Anto D Ollukaren, General Secretary of the Mens Association made a speech thanking the government authorities for allowing our Mens Association to express our love and concern for the aged people in our community who are abandoned by their relatives.

The next session is planned to be organized and take place during the Fall of 2020 in Saransk, Metropolia of Mordovia, Moscow Patriarchate. As this will be the fifth and jubilee meeting of the Commission, it is planned to schedule a Joint Conference, a concert of Assyrian and Russian ecclesiastical music, and a photo exhibition on the development of the close relationship formed in dialogue between the Russian Orthodox and Assyrian Church of the East (focusing on the recent period of the late 1990s to today).

15 November 2019



**Calendar - 2020**

**January**

01. Mar Zaia Thoovana  
03. Memorial of Mart Mariam  
06. Epiphany  
10. Memorial of Mar Yohannan Mamdhana  
17. Memorial of Pathros & Paulose  
17. Memorial of 4 Evangelists  
24. Mar Esthapanose Sahda  
31. Greek Malpans

**February**

3-5 Ba'utha of Ninevites  
06. Kubalthaibutha  
07. Syriac Malpans  
09. Mar Yonan  
14. Mar Awa Catholicos  
21. Friday of Departed  
23. Lent Begins

**March**

06. 40 Martyrs Crowned in Ghieda  
09. Mar Michael, Friend of Angels  
16. Mar Bennyamin Shimun, Martyr (1918)  
18. Mid Lent  
29. Tidings to Mart Mariam from Angel Gabriel

**April**

03. Friday of Lazar  
05. Oshana  
09. Pis'ha of our Lord (Maundy Thursday)  
10. Good Friday  
11. Holy Saturday  
12. Easter  
15. Mar Shimun Bar Sabbae  
17. Confessor's Day  
19. New Sunday  
24. Memorial of Mar Gewargis  
27. Rabban Hurmizd

**May**

01. Memorial of St. Mar Abimalek  
Timotheus (d.1945)  
08. Mar Sargis, Mar Bachos  
10. Mar Addai Shleeha  
19. Shmoni & Children  
21. Sulaqa (Ascension)  
31. Pentecost

**June**

03. 1st Holy Qurbana by Mar Yakob  
05. Friday of gold

**July**

2. Mar B'hisho  
3. St. Thomas Day  
12. Memorial of St. Mar Yosip  
Khananisho (d.1977)  
15. Mar Kuriakose and Mother Yolethe  
17. Memorial of 72 Apostles  
19. Nusardail & Memorial of 12 disciples  
24. Mar Yakob of Nisibis  
31. Mar Mari Shleeha

**August**

01. Beginning of 15 Day Fast  
06. Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor  
16. Mar Eyyob Hdayyavaya  
15. Death of Mart Mariam (Shunaya)  
21. Shmone and her Children  
28. Mar Shimun Barsabbae

**September**

01. Rabban Hurmizd  
04. Mar Qardagh Sahda  
08. Birth of Mart Mariam  
13. Festival of Cross  
14. Mar Bhisho  
18. Remembrance of Yonakhir & his wife Hanna,  
Mother of Marth Mariam  
19. Mar Shallitha  
27. Consecration of H. H. Mar Gewrgis III Sliwa

**October**

01. Mar khananiya, who baptised St. Paul  
02. Mar Elia Prophet  
12. Three Hundred Saints of Shigar  
15. Mar Pithyon  
25. Mar Moshe Nwiya

**November**

01. Hallowing of the Church  
02. Mar Gewargis Sahda  
08. Day of Tithes  
15. Memorial of All Saints  
19. Mar Yaqob M'pasqa  
20. Mar Augin Thoovana

**December**

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



**His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod, representing the Assyrian Church of the East at the Sixth Colloquium Syriacum at the Palottihaus in Vienna in November 2019**



**U.A.E. Parish members with Mar Aprem Metropolitan after the Holy Qurbana celebrated on Friday 29 November 2019**





**Members of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East including His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan and The Most Reverend Bishop Johan Bonny along with the other members of the Commission on Thursday, 21 November 2019 at Rome.**



**Members of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church delegations at the 4th official meeting of the Bi-Lateral Commission for Dialogue in Thrissur, Kerala in November, 2019.**