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Mar Awa Royel

The Pearl of Great Price:
The Anaphora of the Apostles Mar Addai &
Mar Mari as an Ecclesial and Cultural Identifier
of the Assyrian Church of the East¹

Introduction

It gives me great joy to be present today and address this assembly in conjunction with the opening of the academic year of the Orientale, my own *alma mater*, particularly with the presence of His Beatitude Mar Louis Raphaël I Sako, Patriarch of Babylon for the Chaldean Catholics. Without a doubt one of the greatest and highly-prized liturgical treasurers of the whole of the Christian East is the ancient anaphora of the Church of the East known as the 'Anaphora of the Holy Apostles,' or the 'Anaphora of Ss. Addai & Mari, who discipled the East.' It has been the object of study, both on a liturgiological and theological basis, almost without rival.² Recently, the esteemed Pontifical Oriental Institute, in conjunction with the Pontifical Gregorian University, offered us the precious opportunity to revisit the study of this ancient anaphora in its proper theological and hortological context.³ Aptly described by C. Giraudo as the 'Gem of the East' (*la gemma dell'oriente*),⁴ the Anaphora of Addai & Mari constitutes the most precious liturgical heritage possessed by the Assyrian Church of the East.

¹ Text of the conference held at the PIO on Saturday, 26 October 2013.

² For some more recent studies on this anaphora, see: A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford 1992); B. D. Spinks, *Prayers from the East* (Washington D.C. 1993).

³ I refer here specifically to the international congress jointly sponsored by the Pontifical Oriental Institute and the Pontifical Gregorian University, held in Rome from 25 to 26 October 2011 and titled "The Genesis of the Anaphoral Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari." The proceedings of this international congress were published by C. Giraudo (editor), *The Anaphoral Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari. Acts of the International Liturgy Congress; Rome, 25-26 October 2011*, OCA 294, Rome 2013.

⁴ C. Giraudo, "Un congresso 'eucaristico' all'Università Gregoriana promosso dal Pontificio Istituto Orientale," in Idem, *The Anaphoral Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari*, 14.

Shared in common with our brethren of the Chaldean Catholic and Syro-Malabar Catholic Churches (though the latter have effected changes to the original *textus receptus* of the anaphora by the introduction of not a few 'latinisms' down through the centuries), the Anaphora of Addai & Mari is *the* liturgical, theological and cultural identifier of the Church of the East. Though it is primarily an euchological text, it nonetheless acts as a cultural identifier (I would venture to propose) for the rich history of the Assyrian Church of the East. I would like to share my thoughts on this important point with you today.

The present tumultuous and catastrophic situation in the Middle East, in particular with respect to the effects of the rise of fundamentalist Islam upon the various Christian Churches, has become the focal point not only of the politician and the historian, but — ironically enough — that of the theologian and the liturgiologist as well. Having this as our underlying premise, I will presume to speak about the effects of the today's situation in the East in regards to its impact on the present life-situation and future prospects of the Church, in particular the Assyrian Church of the East. I will also touch upon ecumenical matters and the importance of the role of this 'Gem of the East.'

1. *The Ancient Mesopotamian Cultural Antecedents of the Assyrian Church of the East*

The rite of the Church of the East — variously named 'Persian,' 'Nestorian,' 'East Syrian' and 'Chaldean' — is one that has basically developed in almost near-total isolation from the influences of Hellenistic culture found in the Roman West.⁵ It can even be "considered to be a product of a fusion

⁵ The terms 'East Syrian' and 'Persian' — along with the misnomer 'Nestorian' — have been used in referring to the rite of the Church of the East, and are terms that have been coined and utilized by modern liturgiologists. The term 'Persian' denotes more the ancient rite of the Church of Persia (i.e., the Church of the East) before the suppression of all liturgical usages in Persia effected at the synod of 410 under the Catholicos Isaac and just before the christological controversies of the early fifth century. Since the term 'Nestorian' is doctrinal rather than liturgical — and a highly polemical nomenclature — it should be absolutely avoided when discussing liturgical matters. The term 'East Syrian' denotes more the language of this Church rather than the ethnic constitution of the majority of its adherents, namely the eastern dialect of Syriac. However, this term, too, has been used to refer to this rite by modern liturgiology, and it should properly be used to denote the solidification of the rite which took place around the middle of the seventh century, which catalyst were the reforms of Patriarch Išō'yahb III (ca 648/9-658/659), who fixed the basic structure of the rites and offices. The term 'Chaldean Rite' has been applied and utilized by Catholic scholars of the West, properly speaking only after the 16th century; cf. C. Korolevsky, *Living Languages in Catholic Worship: An Historical Inquiry*, D. Attwater, English translation, (London 1957)

of Judeo-Christianity with the Assyro-Babylonian and Iranian cultures.”⁶ Its language has always been Syriac (the Edessene dialect of Mesopotamian Aramaic), unlike the Antiochene rite, the first stages of which were seemingly Greek.⁷ Within the confines of the Persian Empire, in which the rite of the Church of the East grew, there were two important cultural and religious elements that proved to be the crucible for the formation of this rite.

The ancient antecedent of the rite of the Church of the East goes back to the cultural roots of the Semitic peoples of Mesopotamia, namely, the Sumerian and Assyro-Babylonian peoples. They were known (along with the Egyptians) for possessing a developed form of ‘ceremonious formalism’ in their religious rites. The earliest compilation of Sumerian religious literature goes back to at least 2000 BC. The Sumerians possessed an ‘elaborately organized liturgy,’ that was basically founded upon what one might dub today as ‘magic,’ or “the organized attempt on the part of the people to establish communication with their gods, whether with a view to coaxing, coercing or respectfully and reverently supplicating them.”⁸

The religious ethos and liturgical prayer of the Sumerians — no matter how primitive — was bequeathed to the successive empires of the Assyrians and Babylonians. According to S. Mercer, “The Sumerian liturgical prayers were handed on to the Babylonians and Assyrians in the Sumerian tongue, which was used as a sacred liturgical language, and so became the authoritative means of communicating with the gods.”⁹

The remnant of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian Empires of Semitic stock — who were to be distinguished from the Arian Persians of the Zoroastrian religion — were able to accept the new religion of Christianity

5. In my opinion, however, this term should be used only when referring to the rite of the Chaldean Catholic Church and her form of worship (highly latinized) after the latter half of the 16th century. To use this term in reference to the rite of the Church of the East in a holistic sense is quite misleading and historically erroneous. However, this has unfortunately been the tendency most especially among the liturgiologists of the 20th century, especially those of the ‘Matean School’ of liturgiology.

⁶ W. F. Macomber, “A History of the Chaldean Mass,” *Worship* 51 (1977) 107.

⁷ Korolevsky, *Living Languages*, 8. C. Korolevsky notes that the eastern Syriac speech was “... dubbed Chaldean in Europe, although it is no more than related to the ancient speech of Chaldea.”

⁸ See: S. A. B. Mercer, *The Ethiopic Liturgy: Its Sources, Development, and Present Form* (London - Milwaukee 1915; reprinted New York 1970) 18. For the intimate relationship between magic and Sumerian liturgical prayers, see: S. Langdon, *Babylonian Liturgies*, Paris 1913.

⁹ Mercer, *The Ethiopic Liturgy*, 18. Mercer further asserts that: “There are extant many Babylonian and Assyrian reliefs which depict the very forms of worship, especially in reference to sacrifices, which became more stereotyped in a liturgical way as the centuries passed.”

not only on account of the lack of their own temporal power under the Persians, but because of their Semitic thought and theological categories as well.¹⁰ Further, even though the religion of the ancient Assyro-Babylonians did not remain *as such* at the time of the first apostolic evangelization of these Semitic peoples in Mesopotamia¹¹ during the first Christian era, nevertheless various traces and relics of the ancient religion and religious ethos were preserved in the daily religious life of the people, as well as in the calendar and their computation of time.

Secondly, the fact that Jewish communities existed in Mesopotamia and within the confines of the Persian Empire since at least the time of the Babylonian Captivity (590-539 BC) proved to favor the implanting and nurturing of the Christian religion, on account of its particularly Aramaic-language background and the religious categories akin to those of the Jews living in Mesopotamia. We know that, contrary to popular opinion, the liturgy of the Holy City was almost certainly celebrated in Aramaic rather than Greek; the Church of the Persian Empire also employed Aramaic, though in its Syriac dialect.¹² According to G. Rouwhorst, it is highly likely that among the earliest converts to Christianity in the sphere of the Syriac-speaking Churches were those of Jewish stock. This also helps to explain the numerous Jewish liturgical elements — albeit in a ‘baptized’ form — in the Syriac rites in general, and the rite of the Church of the East in particular. These Jewish converts to Christianity were still attached to their older practices and hence most probably imported them

¹⁰ W. F. Macomber, “A Theory on the Origins of the Syrian, Maronite and Chaldean Rites” *OCP* 39 (1973) 107-108. The term ‘Chaldean’ will be used throughout this study to refer to the Church which follows the East Syrian rite (though Latinized in many respects) and is in full-communication with the Roman see. The term was first used by the Latin ecclesiastical authorities during the Council of Florence when in 1445 those members of the Church of the East (styled with the misnomer ‘Nestorians’) on the island of Cyprus, along with and under their metropolitan Timothy of Tarsus, entered into full-communication with Rome; cf. Macomber, “Chaldean Mass,” 108. This same nomenclature would be used for the portion of the Church of the East that sought full-communication with the Roman see in 1552 under John Sulaqa, the abbot of the monastery of Rabban Hurmizd at Alqoš, and the bishops of Azerbaijan, Salamas and Arbel; cf. J. Habbi, “La signification de l’union chaldéenne de Mar Sulaqa avec Rome en 1553,” *OS* 11 (1966) 99-132; 199-230; Macomber, “Chaldean Mass,” 114.

¹¹ The region of Mesopotamia in general, and the provinces of Assyria and Babylon in particular, was referred to *Āsūrestān* during the Sassanid period of Persian rule, i.e. from 226 to 651 AD.

¹² Cf. J. A. Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, vol. I (French translation), (Paris 1951) 68-69. However, Jungmann notes that: “La messe syro-orientale présente, dans ses plus anciens documents, quelque trace d’une période d’influence grecque, vite terminée par suite de l’isolement de cette chrétienté.”

in their new-found faith with the appropriate theological adaptations.¹³

2. *The Adoption of Christianity by the Ancient Assyro-Babylonians of Mesopotamia*

It is not so easy a task to trace the origins and early history of the adoption and spread of the Christian faith among the Assyrians; the primary sources are few and written sources are of a much later date. However, the oral tradition is solid and without question, in this regard. Generally, the opinion of scholars is divided into two categories. The first opinion, since the appearance of F. C. Burkitt's *Early Eastern Christianity* in 1904, proposes that "... Jews must have played a substantial role in the Christianization of a city like Edessa and more generally in the areas east of Antioch where Syriac was spoken, beside Greek or otherwise."¹⁴ Some of these scholars propose that the Syriac-speaking Christians were evangelized by missionaries from Jerusalem-Palestine itself.¹⁵

The other scholarly opinion looks toward Antioch as the origin of its own evangelization. These scholars: "... assume that the Christian belief reached Mesopotamia and neighbouring areas inside and outside the Roman Empire alongside the main trade routes to the east which passed by the Syrian metropolis Antioch. More or less in conformity with this view, they consider the earliest Syriac-speaking¹⁶ Churches to be deeply influenced by the strongly Hellenized Church of Antioch."¹⁷

Most probably, however, the profusion of Christianity in Mesopotamia in the late first to early second century AD also brought about the evangelization of the Semitic peoples of Adiabene (modern-day Erbil).¹⁸ The message of the Gospel also spread to the Syriac-speaking inhabitants of Edessa¹⁹ through the preaching of Mar Addai, one of the Seventy-Two

¹³ Cf. Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions in Early Syriac Christianity," VC 51 (1997) 84-85.

¹⁴ Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions," 72.

¹⁵ Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions," 72.

¹⁶ The use of the term 'Syriac' in this context and throughout this paper is simply for conventional and scholarly purposes, and does not at all purport to define the peoples using this ancient language as their mother tongue, i.e. the Assyrians, Chaldeans, etc.

¹⁷ Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions," 73.

¹⁸ Cf. J.-M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'Église en Iraq* (CSCO 310 / Subs. 36, Louvain 1970) 41-43.

¹⁹ With regard to the establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the issue of the 'Abgar tradition' see: S. P. Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in H. A. Attridge & G. Hata (editors), *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism* (Detroit 1992) 212-234. According to J. B. Segal, the establishment of Christianity in Edessa took place in two phases: first, from Nisibis

apostles of the Lord (held by the tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East to have been a disciple of St. Thomas, one of the Twelve) and from there to Nisibis and to the Persian capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon through the preaching of Mar Mari, the disciple of Addai by the late first century AD.²⁰ At that time, Edessa was the stronghold of the Syriac tongue and of Semitic culture.²¹

Other scholars, however, assert that the evangelization of the Churches of Mesopotamia and Persia was actually effected by missionaries, not from Edessa, but rather from Antioch itself. This also paved the way for the Antiochene influence on the liturgy, or more correctly *liturgies*, of the Syriac-speaking Christian East on the frontier of the Roman Empire.²² One of the main witnesses of this position is the *Letter of the Western Fathers* given to the bishops of the Church of the East through the agency of Mar Mārūthā of Maipherqat (modern-day Mayfarqin), which allowed the bishops of the Church within the Persian Empire to elect and install their own primate at Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In addition, we read in the synodical tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East of the involvement of the ‘western fathers’ in matters of confirming the primacy of the Bishop-Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in relation to the other bishops of the East; this may be seen particularly in the cases of the catholicos Mar Pāpā, Mar Isaac, Mar

and the East in the first century AD, and then from Christian Antioch in the West in the late second century; J. B. Segal, “When did Christianity Come to Edessa?” in B. C. Bloomfield (editor), *Middle East Studies and Libraries* (London 1980) 179-191.

²⁰ Cf. J.-M. Fiey, *Histoire de l’Église en Iraq*, 41-44; Macomber, “The Vicissitudes of the Patriarchate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon from the Beginning to the Present Day,” *Diakonia* 9 (1974) 35-55; J. M. Kochuparampil, *The Mystery of the Eucharist. Syriac Critical Text, Translation and Studies of the Chapter ‘On the Mysteries of the Body and Blood’ from The Causes of the Seven Mysteries of the Church by Patriarch Timothy II (1318-1332)*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, PIO, (Rome 2000) 84. See the *vita* of Mari in: J.-B. Abbeloos (Latin translation with Syriac text), *Acta Sancti Maris Assyriae, Babyloniae ac Persidis saeculo I° Apostoli*, Leipzig 1885. For the English translation, see A. Harrak (English translation and introduction), *The Acts of Mār Mārī the Apostle* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 11) Atlanta 2005.

²¹ In speaking about the Syriac-speaking Christians of Edessa, I.-H. Dalmais states: “... qui semblent avoir reçu très tôt leur physionomie caractéristique dans l’Église d’Edesse, puissant foyer intellectuel et spirituel de langue syriaque et de culture sémitique;” I.-H. Dalmais, *Les Liturgies d’Orient* (Paris 1980) 46.

²² L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution. A Study of the Latin Liturgy up to the Time of Charlemagne*, fourth English edition, M. L. McClure, English translation (London 1912) 69. With regard to the influence of Antioch on the Syriac-East, L. Duchesne notes that “it is somewhat difficult to differentiate here between Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon.” Antiochene influence on the liturgy of Constantinople can also be traced to the fact that the first bishops of the royal city, up to and including the period that Nestorius remained as archbishop there (428-431), were all of Antiochene origin. It is this important fact that leads L. Duchesne to conclude that the Constantinopolitan liturgy “reproduces all essential features of the Syrian liturgy;” see Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, 71.

Yahb'ālāhā and Mar Dādīšō.²³ However, what can be said with any degree of certainty guaranteed by documentary evidence is that Christianity was established in the independent kingdom of Edessa no later than the late-second century of the Christian era.

3. *Ss. Addai & Mari the Apostles of the East — the Apostolic Pair as 'Ecclesial Identifiers'*

In the liturgical tradition of the Church of the East, from time immemorial, the founding apostles of the East are professed to be Mar Addai & Mar Mari, along with St. Thomas one of the Twelve — these are known as the “Disciplers of the East.” Being disciples of our Lord from the company of the Seventy-Two (see Luke 10:1, 17), the two are always paired together in the ecclesial memory and liturgical praxis of the Church of the East.

The historical sources substantiating the historicity of these two apostles of Mesopotamia of a salient nature are numerous; we shall look at but a few of them. According to the witness of the *Chronicle of Seert*, we see that Mani the founder and prophet of Manicheanism had named a few of his own disciples after Thomas, Addai and Mari.²⁴ In the *Doctrina Addaei* (the ‘Teaching of Addai’),²⁵ we have the oral tradition of the apostolic work of Addai at Edessa recounted in written form. Similarly, the *Acta Sancti Maris*²⁶ traces the missionary activity of Mari the disciple of Addai at Edessa, Nisibis, Arbel (modern-day Erbil) and finally Seleucia-Ctesiphon — the primatial see of the Church of the East.

In his *Book of the Bee*, Šlemōn the metropolitan of Prāth Maišān (modern-day Basrah) gives the biographies of both these apostles in Chapter 48 of his treatise (‘On the missions of the apostles, and concerning the places of each and every one of them, and concerning their deaths’):

Addai was from [the city of] Panis, and he preached at Edessa and in Mesopotamia in the days of King Abgar. He built churches at Edessa, and after Ab-

²³ Cf. J.-B. Chabot, editor and French translation, *Synodicon Orientale, ou Recueil des synodes nestoriens* (Paris 1902; reprinted Piscataway, New Jersey 2010) 18ff Syriac text/ 253ff French translation.

²⁴ See A. Scher (editor & French translation), *Histoire nestorienne inédite (Chronique de Séert)*, Part I/1 (PO 17 [4.3], Paris 1908) 227. For a recent study of the historical context of the *Chronicle*, see: P. Wood, *The Chronicle of Seert. Christian Historical Imagination in Late Antique Iraq*, Oxford 2013.

²⁵ See the original Syriac text in: G. Phillips, *The Doctrine of Addai, the Apostle. Now first edited in a complete form in the original Syriac, with an English translation and notes*, London 1876.

²⁶ J.-B. Abbeloos, “Acta Sancti Maris,” *AB* 4 (1885) 43-138. See the fresh English translation with notes in: A. Harrak, *The Acts of Mār Māri the Apostle*.

gar died he was killed by Herod the son of Abgar close to the citadel of Ageel. His body was later taken and they took him to Rome, and there are those who say that [his body] was placed in Edessa.²⁷

Šlemōn of Basrah then mentions Aggai in succession to Addai (a disciple of Addai himself), followed by Taddai (Thaddaeus), who followed Aggai and who was also martyred at the hands of ‘Herod’ the son of King Abgar. Interestingly, no mention is made concerning Mari in this chain of succession. He is mentioned, however, a bit later in Chapter 51 immediately after Addai in the list of catholicoi of the East who succeeded the apostles Addai & Mari. Šlemōn of Basrah mentions at this point that Mari was buried at Dayr Qunni (90 kilometers south of modern-day Baghdad), which is in line with the long-standing tradition of the *vita* of Mar Mari.²⁸

According to the canonical tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East, the *Nomocanon* of Mar ‘Abdišō’ of Nisibis (Book 2, Section 9, Chapter 1) reiterates the importance and foundational role of the apostles Addai and Mari for the Church of Mesopotamia. Concerning the primatial see established by Mari he states:

The fifth of the sees is Babylon, the same which is in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Its throne was established because of the number of the three Apostles who were the disciples of its dominion, Thomas, I say, of the Indians and Chinese; and Bartholomew, who was Nathaniel, of the Arameans; and Addai of the Seventy, the teacher of Aggai and Mari, and of Mesopotamia, I say, and all Persia.²⁹

The tradition embodied in the *Acts of Mar Mari the Apostle* indicates that after a great many people of Mesopotamia (i.e. Upper Syria) were evangelized by the apostle Addai (found in the *Doctrina Addaei*) who labored in Edessa, the peoples of the territories surrounding Assyria and Babylon (from which the author of the *Acts* hailed) were evangelized by Mari.³⁰ The

²⁷ See the Syriac text in: E. A. W. Budge (editor & English translation), *The Book of the Bee* (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Semitic Series II/1: Oxford 1886) 123. The translation is that of the present author.

²⁸ Budge, *Book of the Bee*, 131. See also: Harrak, *The Acts of Mār Māri the Apostle*, 77.

²⁹ See M. J. Birnie (English translation), *The Nomocanon of Mar Abdisho of Nisibis in English*, pro manuscripta (Seattle, no date) 130. Mar ‘Abdišō’ names the patriarchate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon as ‘Babylon,’ noting that the pentarchy was set up according to the five great cities of the ancient world. Babylon, he goes on to say “... is a metropolis, indeed the mother of cities, and therefore was the head of the kingdom of the Assyrians, as the first-born of the prophets made known,” in reference to Genesis 10:10-11. The name of St. Mari is not mentioned, however, in the other major canonical collection of the Church of the East known as the *Synodicon Orientale*.

³⁰ Harrak, *The Acts of Mār Māri the Apostle*, 11.

evangelistic footsteps of Mar Mari are traced by the author of the *Acts* as he leaves Edessa, and heads to Nisibis, Arzon, Qardu, Beth Zabdai, Betha 'Arabaye, Arbel and Athor (i.e. Adiabene), following the River Tigris all the way down to Seleucia near Ctesiphon.³¹ The evangelistic enterprise of the apostle-saint, therefore, takes on a cultural significance as well, as we see clearly in the *Acts*. The history of the Christianization of the ancient people of Mesopotamia and of the Assyria-Babylonia of Strabo's day is outlined in the history of the same apostle-saint who is both an ecclesiastical and cultural identifier of the Church of the East.

4. *Addai & Mari as an 'Eucharistic Identifier' — An Historical Excursus*

The rite of the Church of the East is markedly Semitic in its underlying character, and its adherents — the so-called 'Nestorians' — "... have preserved a number of Jewish liturgical traditions that elsewhere have fallen into oblivion."³² The only literary relic of the ancient form and elements of the Church of the East rite is the anaphora attributed to SS. Addai & Mari, 'who discipled the East,' styled alternately the 'Anaphora of the Apostles.'³³ This attribution seems to link two localities rather than two personages. Addai is believed to have taught at Edessa as we saw, at whose hands she received Christianity, and Mari was sent by him to preach the Gospel deep into the confines of the Persia Empire, namely at the twin royal cities of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. This anaphora betrays its Semitic character and un-

³¹ Harrak, *The Acts of Mār Māri the Apostle*, 17-43. In the *Geographica* XVI of Strabo (c. 25 AD), we read this concerning the description of the Assyrian territory at the time: "The country of the Assyrians borders on Persis and Susiana. This name is given to Babylonia and to much of the country all round, which latter, in part, is also called Aturia, in which are Ninus, Apolloniatis, the Elymaei, the Paraetacae, the Chalonitis in the neighbourhood of Mt. Zagrus, the plains in the neighbourhood of Ninus, and also Dolomenê and Calachenê and Chazenê and Adiabênê, and the tribes of Mesopotamia in the neighbourhood of the Gordyaeans, and the Mygdonians in the neighbourhood of Nisibis, as far as the Zeugma of the Euphrates, as also much of the country on the far side of the Euphrates, which is occupied by Arabians, and those people who in a special sense of the term are called by the men of to-day Syrians, who extend as far as the Cilicians and the Phoenicians and the Judaeans and the sea that is opposite the Aegyptian Sea and the Gulf of Issus." See Strabo, *The Geography*, H. L. Jones (English translation), (Loeb Classical Library 241, Harvard 1932) VII, 239.

³² Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions," 88.

³³ For a history of the controversy surrounding the anaphora of Addai & Mari see: R. J. Galvin, "Addai and Mari Revisited: The State of the Question," *Dunwoodie Review* 10 (1970) 3-31; cf. A. Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts* (Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity 21, Washington D.C. 1981) 240-241.

doubtedly was originally composed in Aramaic or Syriac.³⁴ It may justly be considered *the* anaphora of the Christians of Edessa — which included Jewish converts who conversed in the Syriac tongue.³⁵

Another important aspect of Addai & Mari is the affinity to its twin-anaphora, the Maronite ‘Third Anaphora of Peter the Apostle,’ commonly referred to as *Šarrar* on account of its *incipit*.³⁶ The other common epithet of Addai & Mari is ‘the Anaphora of the (Blessed) Apostles’ (ܐܢܦܘܪܐ ܕܐܦܘܫܬܐܝܢ ܒܘܨܬܐܝܢ), referred to as such in the earlier manuscripts of both *Šarrar* and Addai & Mari.³⁷ The separation of these two twin-anaphorae (most likely stemming from one and the same source, if not the same text!) probably took place as a direct result of the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) — the decisive turning point for the Syriac-speaking Churches. In fact, A. Gelston has opined that the common core of these two anaphorae is representative of Aramaic-Speaking Christianity before the Ephesene council, and that the original title was indeed, simply, the ‘Anaphora of the Apostles.’³⁸

The fathers of the Church of the East who were both instructors at and alumni of the famed School of Nisibis would not only have observed this ancient anaphora with great diligence, but the results of the Ephesene Council would have provided the theological catalyst to appropriate the anaphora alongside theological divides. The so-called ‘Nestorians’ (for our purposes, the fathers of the Church of the East) referred to the anaphora not so much in terms of the Twelve Apostles, but in terms which would

³⁴ Kochuparampil, *Mystery of the Eucharist*, 85; B. Spinks, “The Quest for the ‘Original Form’ of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari,” in Idem, *Prayers from the East* (Washington D.C. 1993) 1-19. Cf. W. F. Macomber, “The Ancient Form of the Anaphora of the Apostles,” in N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews & R. W. Thompson (eds.), *East of Byzantium, Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Dumbarton Oaks Symposium 10, Washington D.C. 1982) 73-78. According to William Macomber, this anaphora was composed sometime in the third or early-fourth centuries before the outbreak of the Trinitarian controversy which convoked the second ecumenical council in 381. See also R. Murray, “The Characteristics of the Earliest Syriac Christianity,” in N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews & R. W. Thompson (eds.), *East of Byzantium, Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Dumbarton Oaks Papers 1980, Washington D.C. 1982) 3-16.

³⁵ Cf. P. Vazheparampil, “The Anaphoral Celebration in the Letter of Catholicos Iso Yahb I (581-595),” *OKS* 44 (1995) 309.

³⁶ For more on the relationship between these two anaphorae see: B. Spinks, *Addai and Mari – The Anaphora of the Apostles: A Text for Students* (Grove Liturgical Studies 24, Nottingham 1980) 14-23. See also: W. F. Macomber, “The Maronite and Chaldean Versions of the Anaphora of the Apostles,” *OCP* 37 (1971) 55-84. According to Macomber, the Sanctus and epiclesis of the two versions of the anaphora are almost identical and, therefore, antedate the synod of Isaac in 410 which stabilizes the uniformity of the rite of Persia with that of the ‘West.’

³⁷ Rouwhorst, “Jewish Liturgical Traditions,” 79.

³⁸ A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford 1992) 22-23.

act as a clear and unequivocal identifier — the apostolic pair Mar Addai & Mar Mari. Practically all subsequent titles of the anaphora came to be stated in the liturgical formularies as “The Anaphora of the Blessed Apostles Mar Addai & Mar Mari, who discipled the East” (ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܝܕܐܝ ܕܡܪܝ). Who better to be the standard-bearers of the Persian Church’s theological position vis-à-vis Ephesus than the founding apostles Addai & Mari? In turn, the Chalcedonian Syriac-speakers who eventually fled Antioch and took refuge in the mountains of Lebanon, our Maronite brethren, began to refer to this ancient anaphora as that of ‘St. Peter’ the chief of the apostles. After all, in the tradition of the Church universal, Peter was believed to have sojourned in Antioch for seven years before his martyrdom in 64/67 AD, and this would give the Chalcedonian Syriac-speakers of Antioch the theological and ecclesiastical legitimacy for not only adhering to a strictly diaphysite/Chalcedonian orthodoxy but for having left their ecclesial home — Antioch. Although it is not the scope of this presentation to delineate the scholarly opinion concerning the development of this anaphora throughout its history,³⁹ suffice it to say that the Eucharistic prayer of Addai & Mari (the oldest in use today in all of Christendom!) is a living theological and cultural identifier for that Church which developed outside of the *limes* of the Roman Empire (that is, within the *limes* of the Persian Empire), namely, the Church of the East.

³⁹ According to such scholars as G. Dix, the Anaphora of Addai & Mari should be assigned a date of the late second or early third century. In fact, he dates both the anaphora contained in Hippolytus’ *Traditio Apostolica* and that of Addai & Mari to shortly after 200 AD. Dix is of the opinion that Addai & Mari is “obviously more archaic in form and feeling than that of Hippolytus, which is thoroughly Hellenistic;” see T. Mannoorampampil, “The Origin and Development of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana,” in T. Vellilamthadam, et al. (editors), *Ecclesial Identity of the Thomas Christians* (Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India 87, Kottayam 1985) 192. B. Botte is of the opinion that it originated in the third century, and F. Probst opines that this anaphora must have been known to Ephrem the Syrian, whose writings seem to indicate “reminiscences” of this liturgy. In any case, the general opinion of scholars is that the anaphora of Addai & Mari should be dated at least to the second century AD, and they equally notice the similarities in structure of this eucharistic prayer to the *Didache*; T. Mannoorampampil, “Origin of the Qurbana,” 193. However, still other scholars argue for a later date of the anaphora’s composition. A. Raes seems to hold that the anaphora was composed sometime in the fifth century, agreeing with the thesis of B. Botte that the epiclesis did not form part of the *Urtext* of the anaphora and that the Institution Narrative was actually missing and formerly existed in the prayer; see Cf. A. Raes, *An Explanation of the Syro-Malabarese Holy Mass* (Changanacherry 1957) 33 and *passim*. On a different note, B. Jones argues that three extant anaphorae of the Assyrian Church are none other than different versions of the anaphora of Nestorius; see B. H. Jones, “The History of the Nestorian Liturgies,” *Anglican Theological Review* 46 (1964) 168-169.

5. *Ss. Addai & Mari as 'Liturgical Identifiers' of the Church of the East*

The names of Mar Addai & Mar Mari permeate not only the historical, canonical and cultural spirit of the Church of the East, but are particularly celebrated and observed in the liturgy of this Church. The principle of *lex orandi statuat legem credendi* is clearly operative with regard to the Eucharistic prayer of these twin apostles of the East. This is seen in the title of the anaphora ascribed to these two founding apostles, as well as in the office for the baking of the Eucharistic bread. When the priest signs the dough to be baked for the Eucharistic consecration, he prays thus while signing the dough with the Holy Leaven: "This dough is signed and consecrated with the ancient and holy leaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given and handed down from our holy fathers Mar Addai, Mar Mari and Mar Thomas the apostles, who discipled (this) Eastern region; in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."⁴⁰

Interestingly, however, the two saints are commemorated separately in the sanctoral cycle of the Church of the East: Mar Addai on the Fifth Sunday of the Resurrection, and Mar Mari on the Second Friday of Summer. Naturally, the primacy is given to Mar Addai who was the founding apostle of the Christian faith at Edessa — the foundational antecedent of the Church of the East. Their position in the liturgical tradition of the Assyrian Church, therefore, is indispensable, for they are considered *liturgical identifiers* of this tradition, bar none. In fact, in the prayers just cited (and many others in the breviary), they are even named before St. Thomas the Apostle, who is generally credited with having sent them to Edessa in the first place! The reason could possibly be that in the early history of Edessene Christianity, it was the tomb of these two apostles that was closest to the memory and living tradition of the people who accepted their preaching — Mar Addai being buried in the church which he had built at Edessa and Mar Mari at Dayr Qunni, near Seleucia-Ctesiphon. St. Thomas, meanwhile, was buried in the southern coast of India and was quite a ways away. Later of course, according to tradition, the body of St. Thomas was brought back to Edessa by merchants from Syria (Mesopotamia) travelling to the land of the Mali sometime in 230-250 AD; hence, the commemoration of St. Thomas on July 3 — the day his relics reached Edessa. The late fourth-century Iberian pilgrim-nun Egeria claims to have

⁴⁰ For the Syriac text, see: J. E. Y. Kelaita (editor), *The Liturgy of the Church of the East* (Mosul 1928) 162. For further discussion on the use of the Malkā, or Holy Leaven, see my article: Mar Awa Royel, "The Sacrament of the Holy Leaven (Malkā) in the Assyrian Church of the East," in C. Giraudo, *The Anaphoral Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari*, 363-386.

seen those very relics at Edessa, shown to her by the none other than the bishop of the city.⁴¹

6. *Ecumenical Perspectives*

The importance of the names ‘Mar Addai & Mar Mari’ for the Church of the East goes beyond the simplicity of nomenclature. As demonstrated above, they are indispensable and extremely important ecclesial, liturgical and also cultural identifiers of the Assyrian Church of the East, the tradition of which is shared in common with the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Catholic Churches. The names of these two apostles from the blessed band of the Seventy-Two connect cities and traditions — both of a foundational nature for the Church of the East. The memory of these two apostle-saints and in particular the anaphora which bears their name was observed two years ago by the joint efforts of the Pontifical Oriental Institute and the Pontifical Gregorian University in honor of the tenth anniversary of the Roman document promulgated on October 26, 2001 by the late Pope John Paul II of blessed memory,⁴² which involved the collaboration of not less than three Roman dicasteries — namely, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (headed by the then-Cardinal Prefect Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.⁴³

For its part, the Roman document, titled *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*, recognized the validity of the ancient anaphora of Ss. Addai & Mari notwithstanding the fact that it does not contain an Institution Narrative *ad litteram*, but it does so by means of a *quasi-embolism*. This document was then formally communicated to the patriarchs of both tradi-

⁴¹ J. Wilkinson (editor and English translation), *Egeria's Travels. Newly Translated with Supporting Documents and Notes* (Warminster, England 1999) 132. It is noted in the famed *Chronicle of Edessa* (also referred to as the *Chronica Minora*) that the relics of St. Thomas were translated into his own large church in August of 394. Previously, the relics of the apostle had rested in the martyrium which Egeria had visited.

⁴² Published in the *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 26, 2001, 7.

⁴³ The document was approved by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on January 17, 2001, but was not actually promulgated until October 26 of the same year. For a most-informative article on the background of this document and its theological import, see: R. F. Taft, “Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, Promulgated on 26 October 2001,” in *Bulletin of the Centro Pro Unione* 63 (Spring, 2002) 15-26; cf. R. F. Taft, “The 2001 Vatican Addai and Mari Decision in Retrospect: Reflections of a Protagonist,” in C. Giraudo (editor), *The Anaphoral Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari*, 317-334.

tions (namely His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrians and the late His Beatitude Mar Raphaël I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldeans) in a letter from Cardinal Walter Kasper, the then-Cardinal President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, dated July 20, 2001.

According to Cardinal Kasper, subsequent to the meetings of the 'Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East' which began to discuss the matter of the sacraments of both Churches, a request was made to consider the pastoral issue of admission to the Eucharist by faithful of both the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church in cases of special pastoral need. Since the groundwork was already prepared with the 1994 *Common Christological Declaration*, signed by both Pope John Paul II and Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, the dialogue now began to look more practically at the issue of a mutual recognition of each Church's sacraments and sacramental practices. The impetus was the concrete pastoral context experienced in the daily life of both Churches; Cardinal Kasper proposed: "Indeed, a real pastoral necessity exists in several regions, where faithful of the Chaldean Church and of the Assyrian Church of the East cannot approach a minister of their own Church to receive the sacraments."⁴⁴ This pastoral necessity was prompted by the wave of immigration from the historical homeland of these Churches to the diaspora, which already began in 1991 with the first military intervention in Iraq by western coalition forces, including but not limited to the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia.⁴⁵ Today, some 22 years after the fact, the great majority of adherents of both the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church live in the diaspora, which begs the issue of the increasingly difficult task of preserving the presence and existence of their particular faith in the historical homeland.

The *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist* carried both a theological and pastoral significance. With regard to the former, it was a big step taken by the Roman Catholic Church that re-examined (dare I say 're-defined') its very understanding of Eucharistic consecration. The classical understanding of the Institution Narrative (the *Verba Domini*) as being the consecratory principle of the anaphora was replaced with the understand-

⁴⁴ Walter Cardinal Kasper, Letter to His Holiness Khananya Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, 20 July 2001.

⁴⁵ This first military intervention in Iraq was known as the First Gulf War, code-named 'Operation Desert Storm,' lasting from August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991. The second intervention backed by coalition forces was known as the Iraq War of 2003, code-named 'Operation Iraqi Freedom,' which lasted from March 19 to May 1, 2003.

ing of the *entire* anaphora taken as an *integral whole* as being consecratory of the Eucharistic elements of Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Cardinal Kasper summarized the ‘theological problem’ from the Catholic side in this manner:

The principal issue for the Catholic Church in agreeing [to] this request, related to the question of the validity of [the] Eucharist celebrated with the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, one of the three Anaphoras traditionally used by the Assyrian Church of the East. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari is notable because, from time immemorial, it has been used without a recitation of the Institution Narrative. As the Catholic Church considers the words of the Eucharistic Institution a constitutive and therefore indispensable part of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer, a long and careful study was undertaken of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, from a historical, liturgical and theological perspective, at the end of which the *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith* on January 17th, 2001 concluded that this Anaphora can be considered valid. H.H. Pope John Paul II has approved this decision.⁴⁶

This theological shift and understanding of Eucharistic consecration still continues to be reviewed, examined and studied in Roman Catholic theological circles; of course, this is the nature of the lengthy process of *reception* in the Church. Let us remember that it was the ancient (and unassuming) anaphora of Ss. Addai & Mari that was the impetus and catalyst for this important development in Western Eucharistic theology. In this regard, the ecumenical import of the Roman document recognizing its validity cannot be overstated, and is certainly — I would propose — a direct fruit of the *Common Christological Declaration* of 1994, signed between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church.

However, the valid question posed at this juncture could be stated thus: If the anaphora of Addai and Mari is recognized as being completely valid notwithstanding the fact that it does not contain an Institution Narrative, would it not be opportune and fitting to invite the sister Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Catholic Churches to restore the Eucharistic Prayer of Mar Addai and Mar Mari used by them to its original text? Does not the history of the Church clearly indicate that both these Churches celebrated this ancient anaphora in the spirit and liturgical practice of their forefathers from time immemorial prior to their union with the see of Rome?⁴⁷ Would

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Cf. P. Pallath, “The Vicissitudes of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari Among the St. Thomas Christians of the Syro-Malabar Church,” in C. Giraudo (editor), *The Anaphoral Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari*, 183 and 187. With regard to the initial reforms of the Chaldeans subsequent to their union with the see of Rome, see: G. Beltrami, *La Chiesa caldea nel secolo dell’Unione* (Rome 1933) 140-145.

it not be in keeping with the spirit of the *Guidelines* that, in light of an ongoing and genuine dialogue amongst our Churches, such a move by these two *sui juris* Churches to go back to the *textus receptus* of this most ancient anaphora as found in the historical liturgical formularies and as it is still preserved and celebrated by the Assyrian Church of the East without change is warranted and indeed requisite for a true rapprochement?⁴⁸ These are questions posed to the respective hierarchies of both the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Churches which must be taken seriously into consideration and reflected upon within a synodal context, especially in regards to their ramifications for the ecumenical discourse with the Assyrian Church of the East.

The afore-mentioned is logical and valid in light of the many Roman documents on the liturgy promulgated in order to encourage the Eastern Catholic Churches to rediscover and recover their ancient liturgical patrimony, particularly in light of the long-standing witness of the non-Catholic Eastern Churches. Already in course of the Second Vatican Council, the decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* ('Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite') promulgated by the late Pope Paul VI explicitly on November 21, 1964, emphatically calls the Eastern Catholic Churches to be faithful to their ancient patrimonies: "The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special duty of promoting the unity of all Christians, especially Eastern Christians, in accordance with the principles of the decree, 'About Ecumenism,' of this Sacred Council, by prayer in the first place, and by the example of their lives, *by religious fidelity to the ancient Eastern traditions*, by a greater knowledge of each other, by collaboration and a brotherly regard for objects and feelings."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ In its Holy Synod meeting of January 2010 (in Thrissur, Kerala, India), the Assyrian Church of the East repealed a former decision of 1978 that had allowed priests who were used to reciting the Words of Institution in the anaphora of Addai and Mari to continue to do so. Naturally, this older generation of priests was used to utilizing the Chaldean missals, especially the 1901 Mosul edition, as was the case with the use of the Chaldean Hudra of 1886 by the Assyrian clergy until the Assyrian edition came out in 1960-62. However, the standard and homogenously-utilized missal for the Assyrians is the 1928 edition of Kelaita, which indeed preserves the 'received text' of the anaphora of Addai and Mari. The present 'reformed' Chaldean liturgy continues to retain the inserted Institution Narrative, and has attempted to 'correct' grammatical and structural 'errors' in this ancient anaphora. Among these 'corrections' are the total deletion of the ancient diaconal exhortative litanies during and after the Pax, the re-wording of the Post-Sanctus silent prayer (*gehantha*), the insertion of the Institution Narrative right after the Intercessions and just before the Epiclesis and the Anamnesis. Such a reconstruction of this ancient anaphora, on whatever grounds, is unacceptable to the Assyrian Church of the East.

⁴⁹ Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (November 21, 1964) 24. Emphasis is that of the author. Cf. Congregation for

Further, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches in its *Instructions for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* of 1996 to the Oriental Churches places great emphasis on the ecumenical aspects of the liturgy of the Eastern Catholic Churches and any reform effected by them. The *Instructions* states: “In every effort of liturgical renewal, therefore, the practice of the Orthodox brethren should be taken into account, knowing it, respecting it and distancing from it as little as possible so as not to increase the existing separation, but rather intensifying efforts in view of eventual adaptations, maturing and working together...” To date, the Assyrian Church of the East has yet to see such an ecumenical approach to liturgical renewal on the part of the Chaldean Catholic Church’s hierarchy.⁵⁰

Secondly, the *Guidelines* examined the multifarious needs of a pastoral nature which both the members of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church have found themselves in, and unfortunately continue to experience in the Middle East up to this very day. The continued wave of sectarian violence in that region of the world, particularly in Iraq, Syria and Egypt, accompanied by the emergence of an uncontrollable and destructive Islamic fundamentalism have proven detrimental to the fate of the faithful of both these Churches — and indeed for Christianity in the East as a whole. Kidnappings, beheadings, murder, violence and the destruction of Christian houses of worship continue to be the daily experience of the flock of Christ in the East. Indeed, their vocation has truly become one of *martyria* — a witness to the Gospel of Christ sealed with their lives and the blood of their necks. This witness is not detached from the Church’s past, but confirms it in a parallel manner.

The anaphora of Mar Addai & Mar Mari continues to be an inseparable element of the Assyrian Church of the East’s apostolic witness of yesteryear and that of today. It has served to be a symbol and ‘identifier’ of this Church’s rich ecclesial, cultural and liturgical identity. What’s more, it holds a prime place of importance for ecumenical and inter-Church considerations and relationships. In addition to the Assyrian Church of the East, two other Churches (in full communion with the see of Rome)—

the Eastern Churches, *Instructions for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* (Kottayam 1996) 21.

⁵⁰ I refer to the reform of the Chaldean liturgy approved by the Chaldean Synod on November 12, 2005 and recognized by the Holy See on February 18, 2006; see the reformed text of the Anaphora of Addai & Mari at: <http://www.kaldu.org/joomla/index.php/liturgy/the-reformed-chaldean-mass/550>. One of the features of this reformed liturgy is that the anaphora is recited aloud by the priest, thus doing away with the ancient practice of the *disciplina arcani* in reference to the anaphora, which is still observed by the Assyrian Church of the East to this day.

namely the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Catholic Churches — claim this anaphora in their liturgical life. Through the vicissitudes of history, however, a number of changes to the *textus receptus* of the anaphora have been effected by them. Our challenge today, especially in the face of the stark reality of the systematic persecution of Christianity in the Middle East, calls us all to rediscover the inestimable value of this most ancient Eucharistic Prayer. For the latter two Churches, the challenge entails a ‘recovery’ of the authentic patrimony of the Church of the East, and a further purging of all Latinisms that have crept into the ancient liturgy of the rite of the Church of the East observed by them. This is an indispensable requisite for a genuine and long-lasting *rapprochement* among them. This road is a difficult one indeed, albeit one that the Churches of Christ are called to make their own and to seriously work towards in order to bring to fulfillment and to concretely realize the Lord’s desire for unity expressed in the high-priestly prayer of Christ Jesus, our great High-Priest and *Qurbana*.

SUMMARY

The ancient anaphora of the apostles Mar Addai & Mar Mari is the most precious apostolic relic of the Assyrian Church of the East. By means of its complex history and rich theological import, it acts as an ecclesial, cultural and liturgical identifier of this same Church. The theological import and beauty of this most ancient anaphora has already been studied in an ample fashion, and recently the PIO and the PUG have celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Roman Document *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East* (26 October 2001) in October of 2011. This document is a breakthrough in both Eucharistic theology and in ecumenical relations in that, although the Eucharistic Prayer of Addai & Mari does not and never contained the *Verba Domini*, it is a valid anaphora and an ancient living witness to the faith and Eucharistic praxis of the apostles. These apostles, in particular Ss. Addai & Mari, are foundational for the Assyrian Church of the East. Their history is not simply theological, but their names act as ‘identifiers’ of the form of Christianity observed and believed by the Assyrian Church of the East. Their names connect important cities of the first evangelistic enterprise of the apostles of Christ, namely Ss. Addai & Mari of the Seventy-Two. This anaphora, handed down and faithfully kept by the Assyrian Church of the East, identifies the ancient peoples of this tradition — the Assyrians — and has acted as a liturgical and cultural identifier of this Church since its inception in the first century of the Christian era. Today, this anaphora also bears an ecumenical import which is presently and dynamically engaged in conversation with our Sister Churches. This ecumenical aspect carries pastoral issues as well, brought upon the adherents of this Church due to the present religious conflict in the Middle East. The Assyrian Church continues to see movement towards the diaspora, leaving the historic homelands of this faith community more and more vacant. This poses questions of pastoral needs and necessities which are addressed by the 2001 *Guidelines*, which in turn were prompted by this most ancient anaphora of Christendom still utilized to this very day — the ‘Anaphora of the blessed Apostles Mar Addai & Mar Mari, who disciple the East.’

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