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Deacon Sanu Simon & Fr. Nimson Varghese along with H.G. Dr.Mar Aprem Metropolitan and H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa after the ordination at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, Thrissur on 27 September 2020.

VOICE OF THE EAST



Ordination of Reverend Father Ramen Youkhanis and Father Shlemon Dinkha by His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia AM Metropolitan on Sunday 6 September 2020.



Ordination of Edward Yaco, Joseph Kamber, Phillip Yousip and Andrew Yousip at Evanshire Gardens by His Grace Mar Awa Royel on Monday, 17 August 2020

VOICE OF THE EAST

(A socio-Religious bi-monthly)

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Voice of the East

Vol. 67 July-August & September-October 2020 Nos. 7-8, & 9-10

Editorial

Ordinations

On 27 September 2020 there were ordinations of a deacon and a priest in Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, Thrissur, Kerala, India. People outside India will ask why only one deacon and one priest. Why not more? The answer is simple. We require deacons to have at least a university degree in theology.

We need our clergy to be educated. Because many lay people, with whom our clergy have to work, are educated. If we insist on educational requirement then only we will get experts from the laity.

If we insist on such education from our clergy they will be able to lead our laity. May be get more educated people to become clergy.

5th Anniversary of H H Mar Gewargis III Sliwa Catholicos Patriarch

Our Patriarch H. H. Mar Gewargis III Sliwa celebrated his 5th anniversary of the Patriarchal consecration which was on 27th September. After the death of the Late Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV I am the senior most Metropolitan. I got the rare opportunity to lead our Universal Church for 6 months as Patriarchal Vicar and the main celebrant of the Patriarchal consecration. I wish His Holiness a good health to lead our Church in the coming years especially in this Covid 19 Pandemic situation.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan

Ordination by H.G. Mar Awa Royel

On Monday, 17 August 2020 at Evanshire Gardens His Grace Mar Awa Royel celebrated the ordinations of Edward Yaco and Joseph Kamber to Sub-Deacons and Phillip Yousip and Andrew Yousip to Readers along with the Commemoration of Saint Mary the Blessed Virgin. The Apostolic Laying-On of Hands by His Grace Mar Awa Royel was followed by Holy Raza Qadisha and followed by a commemoration meal outside. May God bless and watch over His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Cor-Bishop Auchana Kanoun, these young men and their parents.

May the prayers of Saint Mary the Blessed Virgin be a high wall of protection for these Sub-Deacons and readers and their families.

International News



Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East | ܩܪܕܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

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14 August 2020

Brothers and Sisters, Members of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Assyrian Nation,

We wish to advise that the Assyrian Support Committee in Lebanon is an important and active branch of the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization - Australia. Its work is known to and supported by many charitable bodies from around the world. Its young members work with great care and consideration to deliver relief to our community in Lebanon; especially during these difficult times which the nation of Lebanon is experiencing.

Therefore, we value every support you give to the Assyrian Support Committee and pray that our Lord bless you for your assistance and protects the Lebanese people from every suffering.

You may offer your assistance at this location:

<https://assyriansupport.com/beirut-explosion-emergency-response/>

In Christ,

Mar Meelis Zaia AM

Archbishop

Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia Ordains Priests for Sydney Parishes

On Sunday 6 September, His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia AM Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon elevated two deacons to the ranking of priesthood to serve Sydney's Saint Hurmizd's Cathedral and St Mary's Church, Reverend Father Ramen Youkhanis and Father Shlemon Dinkha (formerly Riyadh), respectively.

The ordination was celebrated by the Metropolitan with the participation of His Grace Mar Benjamin Elya, Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand and His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, Bishop of Western Europe.

During the service, the Metropolitan also announced that Revered Chor-bishop Fr. Ashoor Lazar would be elevated to Archdeacon (the highest ranking of non-episcopal priesthood in the Assyrian Church of the East) for the Archdiocese in the new year, subject to the easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. His Eminence also conveyed his warm wishes and immense thanks to Reverend Father Kivarkis Atto who has reached the age of retirement. Fr Atto has been the parish priest of St Mary's Church since 1995 and has worked tirelessly for the parish and its members.

The newly appointed and ordained priests will lead Sydney's St Hurmizd's Cathedral and St Mary's Church parishes and serve the Assyrian Church of the East community in Sydney into the future.

Reverend Deacon Riyadh Dinkha's Biography

Rev Dn. Riyadh was born in Baghdad, Iraq on the 14th day of September 1979 to parents the Late Shlemon Dinkha and Ms Mariam Qashow. He migrated to New Zealand in 2000, and settled in Australia with his family in 2013. Rev. Dn. Riyadh spent his childhood immersed in church services in Iraq and continued to do so after taking on rank in the Holy Church. Throughout his time living in Sydney, he has served as one of the Deacons to the Cathedral with commitment and diligence to all of its services, in addition to leading adult bible studies for parishioners. Rev. Dn. Riyadh is a registered architect and builder. After the ordination, Dn Riyadh will be based at St Mary's Church, Smithfield.

Ordinations

Ordained a Sub-deacon by His Holiness Mar Gewargis III Sliwa (then Metropolitan) on the Palm Sunday, 31st day of March 1996 at St George's Church, Dora, Iraq.

Ordained a Deacon by His Holiness Mar Gewargis III Sliwa (then Metropolitan) on the 15th day of December 1996 at St George's Church, Dora, Iraq.

Studies

Graduated Nebuchadnezzar High School (Baghdad, Iraq) in 1997.

Graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Auckland (New Zealand) in 2004.

Graduated with a Masters of Engineering Studies (Construction Management) from the University of Auckland (New Zealand) in 2012.

Graduated with a Masters of Theological Studies from the Australian Catholic University in 2020.

Deacon Ramen Youkhanis' Biography

Rev Dn Ramen was born in Basra, Iraq on the 20th day of December 1989 to parents Dr David and Mrs Moren Youkhanis. The family migrated to Australia in 1995 and settled in Sydney. Rev Dn Ramen's childhood was spent within the church programs and ministries. After taking on ranking in the Holy Church, he got involved with the youth and children's ministries, ACERO Australia responsibilities and general Archdiocese commitments as the Secretary to the Archbishop. Dn Ramen registered with the Australian Counselling Association and took on the role of College Counsellor at St Narsai Assyrian Christian College since 2014. After the ordination, Dn Ramen will be based at St Hurmizd's Cathedral, Greenfield Park.

Ordinations

Ordained a Lector by His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia AM on the Commemoration of Mar Yosip Khnanisho, 8th day of July 2007 at St Hurmizd's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia.

Ordained a Sub-deacon & Deacon by His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia AM on the Hallowing of the Church, 1st day of November 2009 at St Hurmizd's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia.

Studies

Graduated Higher School Certificate (HSC) from St. Johns Park High School in 2007.

Graduated with a Bachelor of Medical Science from the University of Technology Sydney in 2011.

Graduated with a Masters of Psychological Studies from the University of Western Sydney in 2014.

Graduated with a Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies from the Australian Catholic University in 2015.

Graduated with a Masters of Theological Studies from the Australian Catholic University in 2020.

Ordination of Fr. Nimson Varghese & Deacon Sanu Simon

On 27 September 2020 H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa ordained Fr. Nimson Varghese and Deacon Sanu Simon at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, Thrissur.

Fr. Nimson Varghese, son of Manuel Varghese Anthikkat and Alice J. Mini, daughter of Joseph Shemmasan of Puthurkara, was born on April 18, 1994. His permanent residence was in Ernakulam and later the family moved to Thrissur.

He completed his primary education at St. Clare's Convent L.P School and CMS Higher Secondary School. After the 10th class he joined the Church Seminary at Tiroor.

He studied Syriac under the tutelage of Fr. P.K. Raphael, and Fr. Antony Kaitaran. During the same period, he completed his Plus Two studies at CMS Higher Secondary School. On July 3, 2012 (on St. Thomas' Day) he received his ordination as *Karoya*, *Hivpadyakkana* and *Shammasha*, at Mar Addai Sleeha Church, Paravattani. The *Karoya* and *Hivpadyakkana* titles were received from H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakkose Episcopa and *Shammasha* from H.L. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa.

He continued his seminary studies and graduated in philosophy from Sri. Kerala Varma College in 2015. In 2016 he joined the Marthoma Syrian Theological Seminary, Kottayam for BD studies which was completed in 2020.

Since 2012 he serves as Assistant Vicar of various parishes of the Church: Mar Jacob M'paska Church, Peechi. Mar Aprem Church, Chelakottukara. Mar Audhiso Church, Kottayam. Marth Mariam Church, Chalakudy.

On 27 September 2020 at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, he received his ordination as *Qasha* from H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa.

Dea. Sanu Simon was born on December 5, 2000, as son of Simon E.P., and son of Beena Simon.

He completed his primary education at Mercy Convent LP school, Peechi and St Thomas College Higher Secondary School. After the 10th class he joined the Church Seminary at Tiroor.

He studied Syriac under the tutelage of Fr Justin Neelankavil and Fr. Antony Kaitharan. He got training in preaching and basic knowledge in the New Testament under Qasha B.O. Timothy and Qasha Cyril Antony. During the same period, he completed his Plus Two.

On 27 September 2020 he received his ordination as *Karoya*, *Hivpadyakkana* and *Shammasha* at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church, East Fort, Thrissur. The *Karoya* and *Hivpadyakkana* and *Shemasha* ranks were received from H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa.

Indian Archdiocese News

COVID-19 Funeral Arrangements of the Church of the East in India

H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan declared that in the event of a Covid infected death in the Church the funeral service should be conducted with all due respect under the direction of the Parish Vicars in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Central and State Governments.

According to the Government's Covid-19 directive, if there is limited space for burial and other obstacles, the body can be cremated after all burial services and the remains can be buried in the grave as per the decision of the Holy Synod of our Church.

The burial should be in accordance with the rituals of the Church, the faith of the community and giving comfort and showing due respect to the feelings of the families of the deceased.

The Metropolitan also reminded Church members to abstain from unnecessary fears and anxiousness related to Covid infected deaths.

Agriculture Should Be A Part of Life: H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa

H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose inaugurated the project of distribution of plant seeds kit for families of the Church of the East. H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa said that the first lesson should be taught to the children on how to make farming as an integral part of their lives.

Under the initiative of the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East Men's Association and in collaboration with the Department of Agricultural Development and Welfare, the seed project for farming vegetable for the Onam festival were distributed by Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa to Mr. Francis, Secretary of the Men's Association branch, Mar Geevarghese Sahda Parish, Cheroor.

Men's Association President Rev Fr. Jos Vengassary presided over the meeting. The General Secretary Mr. Anto D. Ollukaran declared in the meeting that from those who are given these seed packets ten successful farmers will be selected and awarded later. Adv. Baby P. Antony, Anson K Davies, Babu Thazhekkadan and Eham Emmati spoke at the meeting. 1000 families of the Church of the East have received this Vegetable seed kit.



Youth's Association of Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Parish Distributes one-time meals to 100 hungry people as part of the social commitment in connection with the International Youth Day



H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose inaugurates a project involving distribution of plant seeds kit for families of the Church of the East.



H G Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan releases a book titled 'A Guide to Qurbana' for the Holy Qurbana in English at Metropolitan Palace, Thrissur.



H. L. Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa inaugurates the procession led to the Church of Holy Cross near the Marth Mariam Cathedral by handing over the candle to the Vicar of the Marth Mariam Cathedral Fr. Cyril Antony in connection with the Festival of Holy Cross (*Sleeva Thirunaal*) celebrated on 12, 13 September 2020.



The Minister for the Local Self Government Mr. A C Moideen receiving the cheque of Rs.2,00,000/- from His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan as the donation to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund by Marth Mariam Big Church, Thrissur.



Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presents the first 'Dabrana Rabba Award' of Men's Association of the Church of the East State Agriculture to Advocate VS Sunilkumar, Minister for Agricultural Development and Agrarian Welfare.



Press meet held at Metropolitan Palace, Thrissur under H. G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan in connection with the first commemoration of St. Mar Abimalek Thimotheus Metropolitan.

Festival of Holy Cross (*Sleeva Thirunaal*) at Marth Mariam Cathedral

The Feast of the Holy Cross was celebrated at Marth Mariam Big Church, Thrissur on 12, 13 September 2020.

As part of the Feast, Holy Qurbana was celebrated in English for the youth in the morning of Saturday 12, followed by the *Ramsa* prayer at 5:30 in the evening, followed by a procession to the Church of the Cross. The procession was inaugurated by His Lordship Dr. Yohannan Mar Yoseph Episcopa by handing over the candles to the Vicar, Fr. Cyril Antony.

Holy Qurbana was celebrated at 7:30am on Sunday, 13 September led by H.L. Dr. Mar Yohannan Joseph Episcopa. All the ceremonies were conducted in compliance with the Covid norms prescribed by the government.

The ceremony was telecasted live on Chaldean Media's YouTube channel and Marth Mariam Big Church's Facebook page.

Vicar Father Cyril Antony, Assistant Vicars Father Sijo Johnny and Deacon V.V. Joseph, Parish Kaikars Mr. Raju Immatti and Mr. I.G Joy attended.

The Vicar of Marth Mariam Church Fr. Cyril said that this festival started in connection with the discovery of the Cross on September 13, AD 320 by Queen Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine but the reverence of the Holy Cross existed in the Church since first century.

The Church of the East believes that the Holy Cross will lead people to the glorious light of God and save them from all persecution in life.

The Cross of the Lord is the source of all blessings. It is the cause of all gifts. Through this Cross believers find strength in weakness, glory in shame, and life in death.

It is on this Cross that the Son of God, who incarnated as man according to God's plan, voluntarily sacrificed in order to save mankind from sin, reconcile them to God, give them eternal life, and make them God's children.

He also said that it is on this Cross that the love offering of Jesus is completed. This Holy Cross is also the altar on which our atoning sacrifice is offered. The crucifixion of the Lord is a challenge. The challenge to love. The challenge of becoming a true Christian is to repent in true love of God and thereby to complete surrender. Fr. Cyril concluded wishing all the greetings of Holy Cross Feast.

A Guide to the English Holy Qurbana

H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan released a book titled 'A Guide to Qurbana'. This book is a guide for believers attending the English Qurbana. This book can be purchased from the Marth Mariam Big Church office. In the morning of Saturday 12 September, 2020 Holy Qurbana in English was celebrated in the Marth Mariam Big Church in connection with the Fest of Holy Cross for the youth. Vicar of Marth Mariam Cathedral announced that the English Holy Qurbana will be held in every 2nd Saturdays of the month and faithful can participate via Marth Mariam Big Church's Face book page.

May 1st Community Feast

The Church of the East in India conducts a community feast on the 1 May in memory of the late prelates of the Indian Archdiocese for the past several years under the initiative of Marth Mariam Big Church in Thrissur. Many people regardless of their religious adherence attend this feast regularly.

This year His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and His Lordship Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa celebrated Holy Qurbana at Marth Mariam Cathedral, Thrissur at 7am. This was followed by the *Anneethe* service at the tombs of the prelates. This year the 1st of May is the first day of commemoration of St. Mar Abimalek Timotheus after the declaration that he is a Saint of the Church.

Mar Abimalek Timotheus was canonized in 2018 at the Synod held at the church Patriarchal See in Erbil, Iraq. He passed away on April 30, 1945 at the Metropolitan Palace, High Road, Thrissur, India.

Following the canonization of St. Mar Abimalek Timotheus, the first community feast on May 1 of this year could not be held due to the Covid pandemic. However, Dr. Mar Aprem had said that this year the ceremonies would be held exclusively without public participation. Believers were provided with the facility of viewing the services live online. As the community feast is cancelled, the amount set aside for the same has been handed over to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. H. G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan handed over the cheque of Rs. 2 Lakhs (200,000) to the Minister for the Local Self Government Mr. A.C. Moideen. The Vicar of Marth Mariam Big Church Fr. Binu K Joseph, Dy. Collector Shri M. B. Girish and the Convener of the Public Feast Shri Charles Chittilapilly participated in the meeting.

On the same day, as the part of the social commitment, 75 people donated blood at the Annual Blood Donation Camp conducted by the Marth Mariam Big Church this year to the India Medical Association Blood Bank, Ramavarmapuram, Thrissur.

Archdiocesan Awards

(1)Rev. Fr. Lazar Madathumpadi is selected for the 'Award of Fr. David Mannukadan'. This award is given to the priest who has done his house visits regularly and had given prominence for the house visits in the respective parishes.

(2)Rev. Fr. Jacks Chandy is selected for the 'Clergy Award' endowed by H.B. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan.

(3)This year's Endowment for Rs.40,000/-, sponsored by Mini Mathew Mannukadan, is given to Fr. Denny Thalokaran who is the father of the M.B.B.S. student sponsored by the Church to the Christian Medical College, Vellore. Hope more people may get these annual awards in the future.

Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan Golden Jubilee Housing Scheme

The Mar Aprem Metropolitan Golden Jubilee Housing Scheme is a grand project conceived by Marth Mariam Big Church, Thrissur to provide shelter to those who lost their homes during the flood which occurred in Kerala in 2018. The General Body of Marth Mariam Big Church decided to buy 20 cents of land on Koottala hill near Venginissery, Thrissur and construct 10 houses. The place was later renamed as 'St. Mar Timotheus Nagar'. It was officially inaugurated on the occasion of 2018 *Qudash Etha Thirunal* in the presence of His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan, by Hon'ble Minister Sri AC Moideen and District Panchayath President Mrs Mary Thomas.

His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan and other Episcopas gave their support for the project. It took about a year and a half to complete the construction and hand over to the beneficiaries. In one block there are six and in the second there are four houses. The construction cost is around Rs.2 Crore. The list was prepared by an expert committee

headed by Marth Mariam Cathedral Vicar Father Binu Joseph. The handing over of the keys to these houses took place on June 13 in a simple ceremony held in the Marth Mariam Cathedral on the eightieth birthday of H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan. The meeting started with the prayers of Assistant Vicar Sijo Johnny. Vicar Fr. Binu Joseph welcomed the gathering and Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees C.L. Tenny distributed grocery kits to the beneficiaries. The construction committee cancelled the public meeting in the context of Covid 19.

A committee headed by Vicar Father Binu Joseph, Assistant Vicar Father Sijo Johnny, Shri I.G. Joy and Shri Raju Immatti took the helm of the construction work. This great charitable work under the auspices of the Marth Mariam Cathedral, Thrissur will be remembered forever in the history of the Church.

His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan handed over the keys of the houses to the beneficiaries. Mr. Sojan P. John, General Secretary, Youths Association, conveyed his greetings. Mr. I. G. Joy detailed the project. Mr. Raju Emmatty proposed the vote of thanks.

Because of the fast spread of Covid 19 infection, Sleeva Thirunal was celebrated on September 12 and 13 without much fanfare. Prior to this, the flag-hoisting ceremony was held on the morning of Sunday, September 6, after Holy Qurbana celebrated by H.L. Mar Awgin Episcopa. The *Ramsa* Prayer was conducted on September 12 at 5:30 pm and the Holy Qurbana on the 13th at 7.30 am in the presence of H. L. Dr. Mar Yohannan Episcopa in Marth Mariam Cathedral.

All ceremonies met the Covid-19 standards prescribed by the Government. The ceremony was telecasted live through Chaldean Media's YouTube channel and Marth Mariam Big Church Facebook page.

The ceremonies were led by the Vicar of Marth Mariam Cathedral Fr. Cyril Anthony, Assistant Vicars Father Sijo Johnny & Deacon VV Joseph, Kaikars Mr. Raju Immatti and Mr. I G Joy.

Mar Timotheus Fellowship

The 19th death anniversary of His Grace Mar Timotheus II, Metropolitan of Malabar and India, who was consecrated by His Holiness Maran Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, the 119th Catholicos-Patriarch of the Church of the East, was observed on 6 August 2020.

It was on 6 August 2001, the *Gilyana* festival day, that our beloved Metropolitan left us for His heavenly abode. For a long 30 years His Grace lead the Indian Church all along spreading the divine message of unity and harmony among the two divisions. His Grace was a vibrant icon of faith and devotion. His Grace also consecrated His Holiness Maran Mar Dinkha IV, as Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East in 1976. His Grace presided over the Episcopal Council during the initial two years after unification of the Church in India (1995 - 1997) and later His Grace served as Patriarchal Delegate in India.

Members of "Mar Timotheus Metropolitan Memorial Fellowship" under the leadership of His Lordship Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa, on that day, laid the reverential wreath at His Grace's tomb, which is near Marth Mariyam Big church, Trichur, Kerala, India.

International Youth Day

Mission Quarters Division Councilor Mr. George Chandy officially inaugurated the International Youth Day celebrations on 10 August 2020, led by Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Parish Youth Association. On the first day of the program, Fr. Franklin Varghese took a

class on the topic of mental health care in the Covid era. Participants also had the opportunity to ask the questions about the topic. On the second day, the Youth Association was able to provide one-time meals to 100 hungry people as part of its social commitment. As part of this, on the third day, educational tools were distributed to the children of the Marthoma Ashram in Mulayam.

At the same time, mobile phones were handed over to two children who did not have access to online learning facilities. The mobile phones were sponsored by Mr. Kevin. The Vicar, Fr. Jacks Chandy informed the gratitude to the sponsors. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan inaugurated the closing ceremony of the International Youth Day. The closing day began with condolences to the victims of Covid-19. H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa Inaugurated the “Drishti Eye Donation Firm”. Then after 100 people signed the eye donation consent form. Parish Vicar Fr. Jacks Chandy presided over the meeting.

Board of Central Trustees Chairman Mr. Tenny C L, Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church Trustees Mr. Varghese J Ollukaran & Mr. Babu Konikara, Central Youths Association Secretary Mr. Sojan P John, Central Women’s Youth Association General Secretary Mrs. Shinu Powell, Parish Youths Association Secretary Dr. Manoj Paul and Assistant Secretary Mr. Joffin John, were present at the meeting.

‘Dabrana Rabba’ Award

Chaldean Syrian Church of the East Men’s Association Announces ‘Dabrana Rabba’ award for Development in Agriculture. State Minister for Agricultural Development and Agrarian Welfare Adv. VS Sunilkumar received the award. The award was given in recognition of the minister’s work towards the agrarian revolution and agrarian self-sufficiency in a manner never seen before in the state. In English, the meaning of this Syriac word ‘Dabrana Rabba’ is ‘The Great Farmer’. The General Secretary Mr. Anto D Ollukaran told the media that this language is used by the Assyrian Church of the East. H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presented the ‘Dabrana Rabba’ award to Minister V S Sunilkumar and wrapped him with shawl as a mark of respect at the agricultural conference held at the Metropolitan Palace.

Advocate V S Sunilkumar said that although the Churches are now more interested in agriculture, the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East is a religious community that has always been very interested in agriculture. He also said that the crises should be turned into opportunities.

The farmers are relieved by buying vegetables from them at 10 per cent more than the market price and selling at 30 per cent less Minister said. The Minister inaugurated the ‘Dabrana Rabba’ function by handing over a grow bag to Mr. Eham Immati (Secretary of Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Church Men’s Association, East Fort), and Rev. Cyril Antony (Vicar of Marth Mariam Big Church, for planting coconut saplings at Mar Abimalek Timotheus Nagar, Venginisseri).

On the occasion, 600 grow bags, 150 high breed coconut seedlings, drumstick seedlings, curry seedlings, vegetable seedlings and vegetable seed kits were distributed at subsidized rates from Krishi Bhavan.

H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presided over the function. Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa delivered the blessing speech. Shri Narendran BR, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture, spoke on agricultural development. Men’s Association President Rev. Fr. Jose Vengassery welcomed the gathering and the Vote of Thanks by Mr. Anto D Ollukaran, General Secretary of Men’s Association.

Responding to False News – Consecrations

Monthly Thoughts of His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan
(from *Paurasthya Nadham* Malayalam Magazine)

This is to correct the news given by a priest on the internet. It is an allegation that a priest wrote on his own. The priest has written that it was the late Mar Paulose Episcopa, myself and some of the bishops of Iraq consecrated Mar Addai II as Patriarch. But the fact is that at the time of the consecration of Mar Addai in Baghdad, I was in India and Mar Paulose was in America. In 1968, Mar Addai (then Bishop) and myself consecrated Mar Thoma Darmo as Patriarch. After that, Mar Paulose Episcopa went to America and I returned to India. Hence there is no need to say that this claim is wrong. This fact is published in my Ph.D. thesis. The Malayalam translation of this thesis has also been published. The priest claimed that I consecrated three Patriarchs namely, Mar Thoma Darmo, Mar Addai II, and the present Patriarch Mar Gewargis III Sliwa. The second of these is incorrect. Mar Addai II was consecrated by Mar Narsai and Mar Thoma Gewargis, prelates of the Old Calendar faction at that time in Iraq. Historical facts should be reported correctly. The Indian prelates were not present at the consecration of Patriarch Mar Addai. Therefore, please be cautious while sharing this.

With the announcement that His Holiness Mar Gewargis II Sliwa, Catholicos-Patriarch will resign from his position, I may lead the consecration of a new Catholicos-Patriarch should I be able to attend a future consecration.

Of the consecrators of Mar Addai II (current Catholicos-Patriarch of the Ancient Church of the East), Metropolitan Mar Thoma Gewargis is alive and living in Canada and Mar Narsai (former Bishop of Kirkuk, Iraq), passed away.

Alappuzha Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church permits to cremate and bury the ashes of COVID victims, Churches in Kerala relax their funeral norms

Courtesy:
Malayala Manorama Newspaper
July 29, 2020

The Latin Catholic Diocese of Alappuzha implemented a historic decision. The first covid death burial in the Diocese of Alappuzha was held at St. Augustine Church Cemetery, Mararikulam by the Priests and the Task Force of Diocese of Alappuzha.

After the Latin Catholic diocese of Alappuzha in Kerala made the historic decision of cremating and burying the ashes of its believers who died of COVID -19 infection, many churches across the state have decided to take steps against the unfounded fears of their community on burial of the COVID infected.

The Syro-Malabar Church and Church of South India have come forward to assure believers that members of the church will be given a befitting funeral even if he/she die of the highly contagious infection.

The bodies of two COVID victims from the Alappuzha diocese were cremated and the ashes were buried in two parish cemeteries on Tuesday.

The decision was taken in view of the problems faced by the requirement of “in deep burial” of bodies as per COVID guidelines in coastal areas.

In the past, cremation was permitted in many churches. However, bodies were usually cremated outside and the burial ceremony would take place in the church.

This is the first time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Kerala that permission is granted for both cremation and burial in a diocesan cemetery.

Mariamamma (85), wife of Thekkethaikkal Thomas of Kattoor in Alappuzha, was laid to rest at Kattoor St Michael's Church Cemetery with a funeral ceremony after cremation. Similarly, the body of Thressiamma (Achamma - 62), the wife of Sebastian of Kanassery in Ward 14 of Mararikulam North Panchayat, was first cremated at the St Augustine's Church cemetery and then the ashes were buried.

The decision was taken by Bishop Dr James Anamparambil after a meeting of diocese members on Tuesday. Diocesan PRO Fr Xavier Kudiyaamssery said that this procedure will be followed in all COVID deaths.

Vatican Allows Cremation

Alappuzha: The Vatican issued a press release in 2015 stating that cremation would be permitted for Catholics who prefer it.

The Church practices and promotes burials. However, it is not opposed to cremation and cremating a body was not against the faith, Cardinal Gerhard Mueller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith clarified.

In 1983, the Church made it clear in the Canon law that those who wish to be cremated should not be denied funeral services. This was also made clear in the 1990 Canon law for the Eastern Churches also.

Cremation does not go against the Roman Catholic belief that the dying person will be resurrected at the Last Judgment.

After cremation, the ashes should be kept in a cemetery or church or in a specially prepared place.

The ash should not be scattered in the air, land or water. It should also not be shared between family members or kept in mementos or lockets. Syro Malabar Prelate also stressed the importance of ensuring proper service for the dead who are cremated.

Syro-Malabar Church

Ministers and believers should ensure that there are no deficiencies or shortcomings in the funeral services of those who die of COVID infection. Syro-Malabar Church Major Archbishop Cardinal Mar George Alenchery ordered that those who are responsible for the funeral service should also make all necessary arrangements for the burial. The unfounded fear and inhuman treatment in the funeral of those died due to Corona virus infection is painful. The tendency to protest against the burial of COVID infected victims and exploiting it for political gains is not desirable.

The Cardinal reminded that the people ought to be human in their approach to the Covid infected and not succumb to baseless fear, but should adopt proper preventive measures against COVID infection.

CSI Church

Kottayam: CSI Madhya (Central) Kerala Diocese Bishop Thomas K Oommen said that its members who die due to COVID-19 infection will be buried in the church cemetery depending on prevailing local circumstances and as per the COVID protocol.

In his opinion, as the whole world struggles against COVID infection, people's representatives and politicians should join hands to fight against the disease setting away their grievances.

The name of the church has been unnecessarily dragged in connection with a COVID death in at Chungam, Kottayam. He said the elderly Pentecostal believer had nothing to do with the CSI Church.

This scandal was heavily discussed even in social media. Church officials raised their protests. The bishop said that strong legal action will be taken against those who indulge in such activities.



The first historic cremation service held at Roman Catholic (Latin Rite) St. Augustine's Church, Cemetery, Mararikulam under the leadership of prelates and Task Force of Diocese of Alappuzha



H. L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose lays flowers at the tomb of His Grace Mar Timotheus II in connection with the 19th death anniversary of His Grace organised by the Mar Thimotheus Fellowship Members on 6 August 2020



After the ordination of Fr. Nimson Varghese & Deacon Sanu Simon by H.L. Mar Awgin
Kuriakose Episcopa at Mar Yohannan Mamdhana Parish on 27 September 2020