

**Decrees of the First Holy Synod of the
Assyrian Church of the East, Convoked by
His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch**

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Synod of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East convened under the presidency of His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch of the East, from 14-15 September 2021, in the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Baptist in the city of Ankawa, the Province of Erbil, (Kurdistan Regional Government), Iraq. Prelates present in the Holy Synod are as follows:

1. His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon
2. His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of the Western USA
3. His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada
4. His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Scandinavia and Germany
5. His Grace Mar Afram Athneil, Bishop of Syria
6. His Grace Mar Isaac Yousif, Bishop of Nohadra and the Russian Federation
7. His Grace Mar Yohannan Yoseph, Bishop of India
8. His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose, Bishop of India
9. His Grace Mar Narsai Benyamin, Bishop of Iran
10. His Grace Mar Paulus Benjamin, Bishop of the Eastern USA
11. His Grace Mar Abris Youkhannan, Bishop of Erbil and Patriarchal Auxiliary
12. His Grace Mar Benyamin Elya, Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand
13. His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, Bishop of Western Europe
14. His Grace Mar Elia Isaac, Bishop of Baghdad, Ukraine and Georgia.

Introduction

Placing its hope in the divine succor of God the Father, and the grace of the Only Begotten Son, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who operates in all things according to His Holy will, the first Holy Synod convened under the presidency of the father of fathers, His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, who sits on the Apostolic See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, who occupies the Apostolic throne and is the heir of the Apostolic preaching of the Blessed Apostles, St. Thomas of the Twelve, and Ss. Addai and Mari from the Seventy-Two, who are known as the Disciples of the East, and are the holy founders of this Holy Church of the East and her tradition.

The Holy Synod, before all, offers its thanksgiving to God, the Father, for the gathering of all the prelates for the election and consecration of His Grace Mar Awa Royel, the Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod, to the supreme rank of Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East and for the convocation of the first Holy Synod under the presidency

of the father of fathers, His Holiness the Patriarch. All of the members of the Holy Synod, as one body, are praying for the overall condition of those living in the Middle East and are beseeching the Lord God to protect all of children of our Holy Church and Assyrian nation, and the children of the Archdiocese of India, without any harm.

The Holy Synod offers its gratitude to His Beatitude Mar Aprem Mookan, the Metropolitan of India, who participated in this Synod via writing as he was unable to physically join the sessions due to reasons of health. The Holy Synod prays for a blessed life and continuous two-fold health of body and soul for the Metropolitan of India.

The Holy Synod offers its gratitude to the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil, Iraq, for all of the support in the meeting of the Holy Synod. Also, the Holy Synod offers its gratitude to all the sister Churches, who participated in the celebration of the consecration of the new patriarch.

This first Holy Synod deliberated on urgent matters regarding the administration of the Holy Church. If the Lord wills, there have been other concerns that have been left for future sessions of the Holy Synod.

The Decrees of the Holy Synod:-

- I. The Holy Synod affirmed that the capital city of Erbil will henceforth be the Patriarchal Diocese.
- II. His Grace Mar Abrams Youkhannan is assigned as the bishop of Kirkuk & Diana, and Patriarchal Auxiliary until the next meeting of the Holy Synod in 2022.
- III. The Holy Synod decreed the establishment of a Patriarchal Advisory Committee to offer counsel to His Holiness. The members of this committee are:
 - a. His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, who has been granted the title of *Patriarchal Vicar* and is also the head of the committee;
 - b. His Grace Bishop Mar Emmanuel Joseph;
 - c. His Grace Bishop Mar Afram Athneil;
 - d. His Grace Bishop Mar Narsai Benyamin;
 - e. His Grace Bishop Mar Paulus Benjamin.
- IV. The Holy Synod assigned His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, the Bishop of Western Europe, as the Chairman of the Patriarchal Commission for Youth Affairs.
- V. The Holy Synod decreed on filling the vacancies in various commissions of the Church, and His Holiness the Patriarch will appoint candidates to fill the open positions in due course.
- VI. The Holy Synod decreed that the Diocese of California will temporarily be under the authority of the Patriarchal See until a new bishop is named for this diocese.

VII. Synodal Decree concerning the Archdiocese of India:

- a. Regarding His Beatitude Mar Aprem Mookan: The Holy Synod assigned Mar Aprem Mookan as the *Patriarchal Delegate to India*, retaining the dignity of metropolitan. His Beatitude will remain the Metropolitan's Palace, and the Church will continue the support and financial obligations carried out thus far.
- b. Regarding His Grace Mar Yohannan Yoseph: His Grace Mar Yohannan Yoseph, due to reasons of his health, has been given by the Holy Synod a medical leave-of-absence from all episcopal duties, in the Archdiocese of India and all countries under the authority of the named archdiocese, until the next meeting of the Holy Synod. His Grace shall retain the episcopal dignity and shall move to the Mar Timotheus Bishop's Palace. The Central Trustees Committee shall pay for all of His Grace's medical expenses from the past, current, and future, and will provide all that is necessary to maintain his livelihood without reserve or inquiry. His Grace and all priests will withdrawal all the lawsuits and complaints against the Central Trustees Committee or any of entities of the Church. By the same token, the Central Trustees Committee will immediately publish an apology in the Church magazine and retract any statements against His Grace Mar Yohannan. Further, His Grace will hand over to the metropolitan any and all financial accounting and funds of all institutions that were under his care.
- c. Regarding His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose: The Holy Synod grants His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose the title of *Patriarchal Administrator of the Archdiocese of India*, and is given all ecclesiastical and legal duties, privileges and responsibilities of the Metropolitan. His Grace is herewith given full authority and jurisdiction over all churches, clergy, and ecclesiastical institutions of the Archdiocese of India and the parishes under its archdiocesan authority, including the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf countries. His Beatitude Mar Aprem Mookan will give full legal delegation (power of attorney) to His Grace Mar Awgin Kuriakose, and Mar Awgin will move into the Metropolitan Palace at the earliest.

Here conclude the decrees of the Holy Synod.

*For the affirmation of the above, we hereon affix our
signatures:-*

†Awa III

By Grace: Catholicos-Patriarch

+Aprem Mookan
Patriarchal Delegate to India

+Joseph Meelis Zaia Metropolitan
*of Australia, New Zealand, and
Lebanon & Patriarchal Vicar*

+Aprim Khamis
Bishop of the Western USA

+Emmanuel Joseph
Bishop of Canada

+Odisho Oraham
Bishop of Scandinavia and Germany

+Aprim Athneil
Bishop of Syria

+Iskhaq Yosip
*Bishop of Dohuk & the Russian
Federation*

+Yohannan Yoseph
Bishop of India

+Awgin Kuriakose
Patriarchal Administrator of India

+Narsai Benyamin
Bishop of Iran

+Paulus Benjamin
Bishop of the Eastern USA

+Abrs Youkhanan
*Bishop of Kirkuk and Diana &
Patriarchal Auxiliary*

+Benyamin Elya
Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand

+Awraham Youkhanis
Bishop of Western Europe

+Elia Isaac
*Bishop of Baghdad, Ukraine, and
Georgia*