



On Saturday, March 12, 2022, His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch, received His Excellency Mar Mikhael Najeeb OP, the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul and Aqra, and the Director of the Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux (CNMO).



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VOICE OF THE EAST

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Voice of the East

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Editorial

Scattered Assyrians

As I write this editorial I have a picture in my mind of the entire Assyrian community scattered all over the world. Although our Church of the East is not strong enough to attract the attention of the world around us it is our responsibility to make our presence felt at least where we are scattered now and to spread the Gospel to the whole world. It is true that we are a minority community in the places we are found today. At the same time we should never forget that our forefathers who took Gospel to China, Japan and much of Asia from the early centuries also put the responsibility on the shoulders of the present generation to continue their mission. We are all proud of our forefathers we have “to rise and shine and give God the glory” for our great missionary Church.

Some people have a misconception that our Church belongs only to the Assyrians. Our glorious past proclaims that we were a great missionary Church that first carried the Gospel of Christ to China and Japan. In terms of numbers, even in the countries where we now live, the number of faithful is very small. We should not be disappointed with the small number of our church today. We should act as a missionary Church, as in the past. The church is for all people.

The present generation should learn the history of our forefathers who took Gospel to the farthest reaches of the world. We have a brilliant past. But owing to internal divisions and tribal considerations we may have lost touch with the responsibility that our history imposes on us.

Women and young people in the church should not be marginalized. Women in the church should pay attention not only to make “*dolma*”, but to witness about our Church wherever we are scattered. We have many talented people. We must lead them to be an active community. We should not have any inferiority complex as we are in small numbers. We should be proud of our community. Our youngsters should come forward to share our great faith with our neighbours where we are living now. Instead of our rights and claims, we should think more of our responsibility today wherever we are scattered.

People in various professions should witness our faith as our forefathers did by re-earning the title of “missionary Church”. While God may have brought us to strange lands, we must convert that asylum as an opportunity to witness our faith, no matter what job we are occupying now in the land of the captivity.

May God Almighty open our eyes to look around and witness our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan

International News

Catholicos-Patriarch Receives Mar Mikhael Najeeb OP

On Saturday, March 12, 2022, His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch, received in audience His Excellency Mar Mikhael Najeeb OP, the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul and Aqra, and the Director of the Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux (CNMO).

In the meeting, His Holiness and Archbishop Najeeb discussed the situation of the diocese of Mosul and Aqra, and emphasized the importance of digitizing the ancient Syriac manuscripts to preserve the history and the identity of the Church and the people of Iraq

In attendance at the audience was His Grace Mar Abris Youkhanna, Bishop of Kirkuk, Diana, and Patriarchal Auxiliary.

Rev. Fr. Yatroon Yonan and Youth of Diana

On Thursday, March 11, 2022, His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch, received in audience Rev. Fr. Yatroon Yonan and a group of youth from St. George the Martyr Church - Diana.

In attendance at the audience were His Grace Mar Abris Youkhanan, Bishop of Kirkuk, Diana and Patriarchal Auxiliary, and Rev. Fr. Martin Nabil.

His Holiness of the Patriarch Mar Awa the Third, Patriarch of the Church of the East of the World, Fr. Yetroon Yunan and a number of members of the Martyr Church of Mar Kiorkis in Diana on Friday, March 10, 2020.

The meeting was attended by Niaafa Bishop Mar Abris Yukhana, Bishop of Kirkuk, Diana, Assistant Patr Martin Nabil.

Dr. Khanzad Ahmed, Secretary General of the High Council for Women and Development

On Tuesday, March 10, 2022, His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch, received in audience Dr. Khanzad Ahmed, Secretary General of the High Council for Women and Development.

Dr. Khanzad thanked His Holiness for attending the ceremony arranged by the respected council celebrating the International Women's Day on March 8, in Erbil.

In attendance at the audience were His Grace Mar Abris Youkhanan, Bishop of Kirkuk, Diana and Patriarchal Auxiliary, Rev. Fr. Eshay Dawood, and Mr. Khalid Jamal, General Director of Christian Affairs in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

News from ACERO: Armenia Appeal (Phase 2): Mart Maryam Church Furniture & Utilities

March 26th, 2022

The renovation and restoration of the ancient Mart Mariam Church in Arzni, Armenia began in early 2020. Today we can delightfully report that after celebrating Christmas midnight mass in 2021 under the newly restored roof of the church, parishioners will now enjoy comfortable seating and heating after pews and gas and electric were installed.

In 2021, the residents of Arzni were able, for the first time in many many years, to celebrate Christmas midnight mass as a result of your generosity. This in itself was a tremendous achievement.

Our Armenia Appeal has been met with the most incredible response by our donors, partners and clergy on the ACERO Board of Trustees. For this, we are eternally grateful. Please continue to support the Appeal which will culminate in Phase 3 of a building of a large community centre in Dvin.

In 2019, we launched ACERO's Armenia Appeal, a three-phase building, educational and spiritual development project for the Assyrian community in Armenia.

Phase 1 was completed with the grand opening of the Marganita Kindergarten in September 2019, a pre-school educating 200 children and a building that is now a base for youth activities for the Assyrian community in Dvin.

News from ACERO: Christmas in Turkey Gifts and Food Parcels for 349 Families

December 29th, 2021

ACERO has always kept its donors informed on the dire situation facing our displaced families living in Turkey. A situation worsened by the pandemic.

On behalf of the ACERO Board of Trustees, we say a huge thank you to all our donors for your continued support which has meant that for the blessed season of the birth of our Lord, ACERO was able to bring some joy to these families.

A Christmas programme, sponsored by ACERO, included a liturgical service, the giving of Christmas presents to 110 children and the distribution of food vouchers and food parcels for 349 families – all of which were organised beautifully by our committee on the ground; Mr. Saad Jibrail and his wonderful team of volunteers.

We take this opportunity to thank Archbishop Ramzi Garmou and Rev Fr Ramzi Diril for offering prayers and conducting services for these families in the Tokat province.

Please keep our brothers and sisters in Turkey in your prayers and continue to help us to reach each person in need by visiting our [Donate](#) page.

News from ACERO: Mart Maryam Church Arzni, Armenia, Christmas Service

December 25th, 2021

The results of ACERO's Armenia Appeal continue to come to fruition.

We give thanks and praise to our Lord and Saviour that for the first time in many years the Assyrian Church of the East community in Arzni have celebrated Christmas Eve (midnight mass) liturgical services in their newly restored church. The pictures below were taken last night where men, women and children gathered to celebrate Christ's birth.

Qasha Nikademus Yukhanaev has conducted Holy Eucharist on the Feast of the Nativity at the ancient Church.

ACERO cannot express its gratitude to all who have responded to our Armenia Appeal.

We thank the Board of Trustees who have spearheaded and been pivotal in bringing these projects to life; Their Graces Mar Afram Athneil, Mar Paulus Benjamin, Cor-Bishop William Toma, Shamasha Dadway Daniel, Mr Fredoun Benjamin and Mr Andy Darmoo.

Also our invaluable donors without whom none of this would be possible, your support continues to produce the most wonderful results. These pictures have truly filled all our hearts with joy.

As you may see from the pictures the church still need pews and the altar needs to be built. To donate toward these items visit our [Donate](#) page.

Merry Christmas from Armenia!!!

Monthly Thoughts of H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan

(Translated from Malayalam Magazine - March 2022)

Hyder Ali Shihab Thangal

Hyder Ali Shihab's demise happened while writing these monthly thoughts. I had gone to the Paanegadu headquarters to preach for the ordination of him or his predecessor. We read in the newspapers that he was a great man. Some Christians think that only Christians are



Patriarchal Administrator H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa inaugurates the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam.



H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presides over the general meeting held on the occasion of the feast day of Mar Joseph Church, Kunnankulam.





The Festival of Anneedhe in various Thrissur parishes



The Festival of Anneedhe in various Thrissur parishes



H.H. Mar Awa III, laying the foundation stone for the new Patriarchal Basilica of the Holy Apostles in Erbil - February 2022



H.L. Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa laying the foundation stone for the 2nd Church of the East parish in Bangalore, India - 1 March 2022

good. We must understand that it is not right. In all religions there are good and bad ones. We must be able to respect and love them all. We should write good things about people of other religions.

Church Elections

Elections are being held for Church Councils and Trustees. We must pray to choose the right people. We should try to select those who will do good service for the Church. Elections are being held peacefully in many parishes. But in some parishes group games are held. We fail to bring many good people to the responsibility of our church. Some people are not interested in Church activities. Choose only those who are qualified and try to succeed.

Death of Patriarch Mar Addai

We received recent news of the death of His Holiness Mar Addai II, Patriarch of the Ancient Church of the East. As bishops, Bishop Addai and I lived in the same room for a month after we became bishops.

My consecration as an Episcopa was on September 21, 1968. The next day, Mar Addai was ordained Bishop by Metropolitan Marthoma Dharmo. I was assigned to teach all the essential prayers to Bishop Mar Addai, who had never studied in a seminary. I made many attempts to get him to work with Late H H Mar Dinkha IV, but to no avail. After the death of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in March 2015 at the Mayo Clinic in the United States, efforts were made for unity. The Synod of Assyrian Church of the East extended the election of the Patriarchate, considering the possibility for the unity.

Unity was not achieved even after the postponed elections. At this time is an opportunity. The Ancient Church of the East have not appointed a successor to the Patriarch Mar Addai. We have an opportunity for the bishops of both parties to come together. All the bishops of both the parties should meet immediately before an election. In any case, efforts should be made to reach a consensus before appointing a successor to Mar Addai Patriarch.

Chaldaya Convention 2022

The 31st Chaldaya Convention will be held as usual from April 6 to 10, 2022, in the courtyard of the East Fort Church. More people should come here as there are more concessions under the control of Covid 19. The word of God is celebrated by the priests of various sister Churches as well as our Church. Choir groups from various parishes are singing these days. On Oshana Sunday, the closing day, also holds community meetings of various organisations from 4pm to 6pm. Buses have been arranged to reach more people to attend the Convention. On the closing day, as usual, there will be a prize giving for the Bible Quiz. I request you all to pray for the success of the 31st Chaldaya Convention - 2022.

News from the Archdiocese of India

Festival of Anneedhe

Festival of Anneedhe was celebrated in the Church on Friday 25 February 2022. The Church Fathers have decided to observe the Anneedhe (Prayer for the Dead) on the last Friday of the month of Dinha, and the Friday before the Great Lent. On Thursday, the 24th there were special prayer services and a procession to the cemetery.

The feast was celebrated for three days at the Mar Yohanan Mamdana Church, East Fort (Feb 24-26) to avoid the hustle and bustle of Covid-19. During these three days there was a public Anneedhe service at the cemetery. The Holy Qurbana was offered on Monday the 25th under the patronage of HL Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa, Patriarchal Administrator. Many believers commemorated their ancestors during these three days as participants in the Holy Qurbana and the Anneedhe service.

Second Church in Bangalore

The foundation stone of the new church in Bangalore was laid on March 1, 2022 by His Lordship Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa, Patriarchal Administrator. Bangalore is the IT capital of India. Many families in our Church have professionally settled here. At present there are about 80 families in Bangalore Parish. In addition, there are many bachelors who stay here with the purpose of work and study. Our Church members living in Bangalore are increasing every year.

In addition, due to the spread of our Church members in various parts of Bangalore, many people have to travel 35km to reach the present church. Due to the limited space of the existing church and the long journey, a new church was required and by the grace of God we were able to purchase land for a second church in Sarjapura, Hubli, Bangalore.

Bangalore Urban Anekal MLA Shri B Siva Annahuskur, Panchayat Chairman Shri Pappanna and Panchayat Member Shri Ramesh were present in the function.

Church Trustee Chairman Shri Tenny C L, Church Trustee members Shri James Ookan, Shri Paul Parapookara, and Shri Joshi Antony, Parish Vicar Father Lijo Raphael, Deacon Babu K Varghese, Kaikaran Shri Anish Chandy and Shri Jijo Sunny and Parish Central Representative Shiju Jacob were present.

More than 75 parishioners witnessed this divine moment. This is the first church in the name of St. Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan. The new church will be known as St. Mar Timotheus. On this occasion, we request the prayers and assistance of all of you for the smooth construction of the new church.

Peace Meeting for Ukraine

The Youth Association of Mar Narsai Church, Nadathara organized a peace meeting for Ukraine with the song “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Parishioners lit candles and offered prayers for peace between Russia and Ukraine. Parish Vicar Rev. Father Runo Varghese delivered the message of peace.

Cemetery of Marth Mariam Church, Chalakudy

HL Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa, Patriarchal Administrator officiated the blessing of the parish cemetery at Marth Mariam Church Chalakudy. Rev. Fr. Lazar Madathumpady, Rev. Fr. Sanoop, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Mr. Tenny CL, other members of the Board of Central Trustees, members of the Church Council, and members of the Church were present.

Annual Get Together of the Women’s Youth Association – India

As a closure of one year activities of Women Youth Association Central Committee, Church of the East an annual get together was coordinated on 12th March 2022 at Chaldean Centre, Thrissur. The programme commenced with cultural programmes by Women Youth Association members of all the parishes of Chaldean Syrian Church of the East.

As a part of the fund raising programme for education plan undertaken by Women’s Youth Association a Lucky Draw Coupon was circulated by the Central Committee among all parishes. The lucky draw was conducted on the same day and the winners were declared in the august presence of Priests from different parishes.

The official inauguration was regulated towards the latter half of the day. The inauguration endorsed the presence of eminent personalities from different walks of life. H G Dr Mar Aprem Metropolitan presided over the ceremony. H L Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa, Patriarchal Administrator inaugurated the ceremony.

Adding glory to the ceremony we had Special invitees IPS Director General Dr. B. Sandhya, Director General, Kerala Fire and Rescue Services Padmashri Dr. Sosamma Iype, ISRO Scientist Mrs. Jishy Samuel, Deputy Mayor Mrs. Rajsree Gopan, Sri Tenny C. L., Chairman of the Board of Central Trustees felicitated the gathering. Rev. Fr. Sijo Johny President of Youths’ Association felicitated the gathering. Rev. Sr. Dr. Jincy Othottil, President Women Youths’ Association welcomed the gathering. Mrs. Elizabeth Jacob, General Secretary of Women Youths’ Association gave introduction to the programme. Mrs. Neethu Linto read the report of the associations’ activities. Propagating the message of love, peace, harmony and Universal brotherhood we had Candle Light Ceremony by dignitaries of the day.

Dr. B Sandhya IPS quoted that real happiness lies in equal division of work between men and Women and ensuring equal distribution of duties between men and Women. On other hand Mrs. Jishy Samuel portrayed Women in the Bible, specifically from the old testament in the present scenario. Padmashree Dr. Sossama Iype urged all to keep striving hard without getting tired. Deputy Mayor Mrs. Rajasree Gopan motivated Women to be in the forefront to lead the society.

Winners of different programmes conducted by Women Youths' Association Central Committee throughout the year were awarded during the ceremony.

Recipients of different types of records were also honoured during the session. Mrs. Poncy Saji, Joint Secretary proposed vote of thanks towards the concluding segment of the programme.

Holy Priesthood (*Syameedha*)

(Riju Mannukadan)

Holy Priesthood, it is a tradition that has been practiced from generation to generation since the time of the disciples of Jesus Christ. The priesthood originated from the Jewish tradition and the copy of the Old Testament Scriptures. It is a fact that those who have seen and accepted the priestly ministry of the Church many times are still alive today.

It is noteworthy that the seven holy sacraments of the Church, 1. Priesthood, 2. *Mamoditha* (Baptism), 3. Anointing oil or (*Karnna*), 4. The Holy Qurbana, 5. Forgiveness or (*Husaya*), 6. Holy Yeast (*Malkia*), 7. Life-giving Cross Mark, receives only the priests at a time. *Syameedha* or priesthood Ordination is attained in coordination with seven sacraments except two sacraments the Holy Anointing oil and the Holy Baptism.

At the ordination service to be held in the Bangalore church on Sunday 3 April 2022, one of the two personalities, Sri John Thomson, Son of Thomson Vattakuzhy, will be elevated to the rank of Deacon and Sri Aron Emmauel, Son of Chiriyankandath Mani Emmanuel will be ordained to the rank of Heevpadyakna. This is the third ordination service conducted by H L Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa. The first was held on September 27, 2020 at Mar Yohannan Mamdana Church, East Fort. The second service was held on November 21, 2021 at Puthur Mar Beesho Church. The third will be held on April 3, 2022 at Mar Timotheus Church, Bangalore. The giver and the receiver are equally important in this ministry, which is actually carried out by the descending of the Holy Spirit.

This ordination begins with the Lord's prayer and continues with the prayer hymn of the Episcopa as follows:

“With our Lord and God, may your divine power be fulfilled through these weak hands of mine. By the grace of your Lordship, may you confirm this spiritual ministry for the good of the priesthood through my weak intercession. Almighty Father, Son and Ruhadkudsha, the giver of spiritual gifts ... “

This is how the Blessed Apostolic Exhortation says at the end of the order of this service:

“May the Messiah, who devoted himself to the service of God, lead you and me to perfection for the service of righteousness.”

It is the believers who must fully understand this and pray repeatedly. This is because it is the believers who must receive the forgiveness of sins and the related reproofs and admonitions from those who have received the priesthood through ministry. The only way to enter the priesthood is through this ministry. It is the clergy themselves who must achieve the wonder of effectiveness. What good is a believer if he does not pray for the clergy? Everything is God’s will. The *Thaksa* of these priestly services in the Church was written by our Forefathers. This *Thaksa* was written centuries ago by Mar Kuprianos (the Metropolitan of Nsivin), Maran Mar Isoya (the Catholicos Patriarch), and the spiritual poet Mar Israel. This *Thaksa* has been translated from Syriac to Malayalam and is currently in use.

The Platinum Jubilee of St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam

Platinum Jubilee celebrations began at 7.30am on March 27, 2022 at St. Thomas Church, Ernakulam with the offering of the Holy Eucharist by the Patriarchal Administrator, His Lordship Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa.

Mr. Francis Chandy, the Kaikaran of the parish, welcomed the gathering at 10.30am presided over by the parish priest Rev Fr Michael Valluvanra. His Lordship Mar Awgin Kuriakose officiated and formally inaugurated the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Honourable MLA Sri T J Vinod inaugurated the funding for the 75 Dialysis patients. The prize distribution of *Koopan* has been inaugurated by Division Councilor Sri Manu Jacob.

Shri Shibu and Shri Robish Kaipulli, who oversaw the construction of the renovated church, complimented at this function. Mr. Solax, who completed 20 years of Parish Clerk work in the parish has also been congratulated. Dr. Lilin Francis and the students who have excelled in various examinations from the parish were also congratulated. Assistant Vicar Deacon Lijo Johnson offered greetings. After the thanksgiving of Mr. O. A. Thomas everyone returned to their homes after lunch.

Feast of Mar Joseph Church, Kunnamkulam

The feast of Mar Joseph Church, Kunnamkulam was celebrated on 20 February 2022. His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan officiated the Holy Qurbana and the ensuing public meeting. The Thirunal procession was conducted by Rev. Fr. Sunny S. Koola. The newly ordained Reverend Fr. Jinu Jose and Reverend Fr. Delmin Davis were given a reception. Senior citizens of the parish were honored. His Grace Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan presented the prizes to the award winning Sunday School students.

Goa Mission Parish

H G Dr. Mar Aprem Metropolitan
(Patriarchal Delegate)

I am delighted to know that the Goa mission parish is publishing a souvenir to mark its 10th Anniversary. It was in November 2012, I had the privilege to celebrate a Holy Qurbana in Goa for the first time. As a matter of fact the name of Goa had been in my mind a place of persecution of our forefathers who had come from the Middle East to India to serve our Church in Trichur.

At present we have only a small number of our Church members in Goa. Still Goa has a historical significance in the history of our Church. Since my childhood I had heard the name of the Roman Catholic Arch-bishop Aleixo de Menezes of Goa who had come to Kerala to preside over the unfortunate Synod of Diamper of A.D.1599 which was held at Udayamperoor hence also known as *Udayamperoor Sunhados* (Synod). In those days I never wanted to go to Goa and never stopped there on my way or return to Mumbai for touring mission Qurbana.

In fact, we do not have enough members in Goa to form a parish, although we established parishes in Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Madras and Coimbatore, out of Kerala, I never anticipated a touring mission parish in Goa.

Even in my imagination I never thought of forming a mission parish in Goa. My mind is full of sad memories of Goa by reading the history of our forefathers. Even the 'Varthamanappusthakam', the first Malayalam travelogue, written by Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar (1736–1799) had strongly influenced my mind about the terrible persecutions our forefathers had undergone in the days of the Synod of Diamper in June 1599, where the precious prayer books of our forefathers in Syriac language were burnt by Archbishop Menezes.

Goa is a place of unpleasant memories. The valuable manuscripts of our prayer books were lost by the cruelties of the Portuguese at Diamper in A.D. 1599.

The NSC Net work indicates that the Varthamanappusthakam was widely read in Malabar. During the troubled times between 1861 and 1865 it was proposed to read a chapter of Varthamanappusthakam, every Sunday after the Holy Qurbana in Catholic Church. Three Carmelite vicars, in a synod held at Verapoly in 1862, condemned the Varthamanappusthakam.

Tippu Sultan's invasion caused Paremmakkal to shift his residence and administration of the Church to Vadayar near Palai in 1790. He moved to Ramapuram towards the end of his life and administered the Church from there. He died at Ramapuram on March 20th 1799.



Parishioners lit candles and offered prayers for peace between Russia and Ukraine. Youth Association of Mar Narsai Church, Nadathara organized the peace meeting for Ukraine with the song "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men". Parish Vicar Rev. Father Runo Varghese delivered the message of peace.



After the consecration of the cemetery of Chalakudy Marth Mariam Church by H L Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa assisted by Rev. Fr. Lazar Madathumpady



On Tuesday, March 10, 2022, His Holiness Mar Awa III, Catholicos-Patriarch, receives Dr. Khanzad Ahmed, Secretary General of the High Council for Women and Development. In attendance at the audience were His Grace Mar Abris Youkhanan, Bishop of Kirkuk, Diana and Patriarchal Auxiliary, Rev. Fr. Eshay Dawood, and Mr. Khalid Jamal, General Director of Christian Affairs in the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government



Assyrians celebrate the Midnight Christmas service in the renovated Mart Mariam Church in Arzni – December 2021