

*Patriarchal Message*

***His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas***

***Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, the Supreme Head of the***

***Universal Syrian Orthodox Church***

*at*

***KUMARAKOM CHURCH***

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One True God. Amen.

Your Beatitude, our beloved Brother-in-Christ Catholicos Mor Baselios Thomas I, Your Eminences our Beloved Metropolitans, Very Rev. Corepiscopos and Rambachans, Reverend Priests and Deacons, Devoted Nuns and our beloved spiritual children.

We are very happy to be with you here today. This church in the name of St. John the Baptist has a very important place in the history of our Holy Syrian Orthodox Church in India. In the Nineteen Seventies, when the faith and the existence of our Holy Church in India were in question, this parish was in the forefront in defending the true apostolic faith and traditions of our

Holy Church under the leadership of one of the great Syriac scholars of India, the late Very Rev. Corepiscopo Punnoose Vaithara, your Vicar then. Just as St. John the Baptist bore witness to our Lord Jesus Christ without fear, you also stood firm in your faith and loyalty to our Holy Apostolic See of Antioch without any fear. And together with the late Chevalier Eapen Thomas of the blessed Palampadam family you gave good leadership to defend the apostolic faith and sacred traditions of our Holy Church against its enemies. Your strong faith gave great courage to others also to remain steadfast in the true faith. We appreciate your good faith and loyalty to our Holy See of Antioch and to us.

On this occasion, we exhort you with St. Paul the Apostle: **“Never lag in zeal, be fervent in the Spirit, serve the Lord.”** (Romans 12:11) Follow the good example of your Patron Saint St. John the Baptist who bore witness to our Lord Jesus, the Lord of Truth. Be true witnesses of our Lord Jesus. Abide in Him always

and He shall protect you from all evil. And may He  
bless you all.