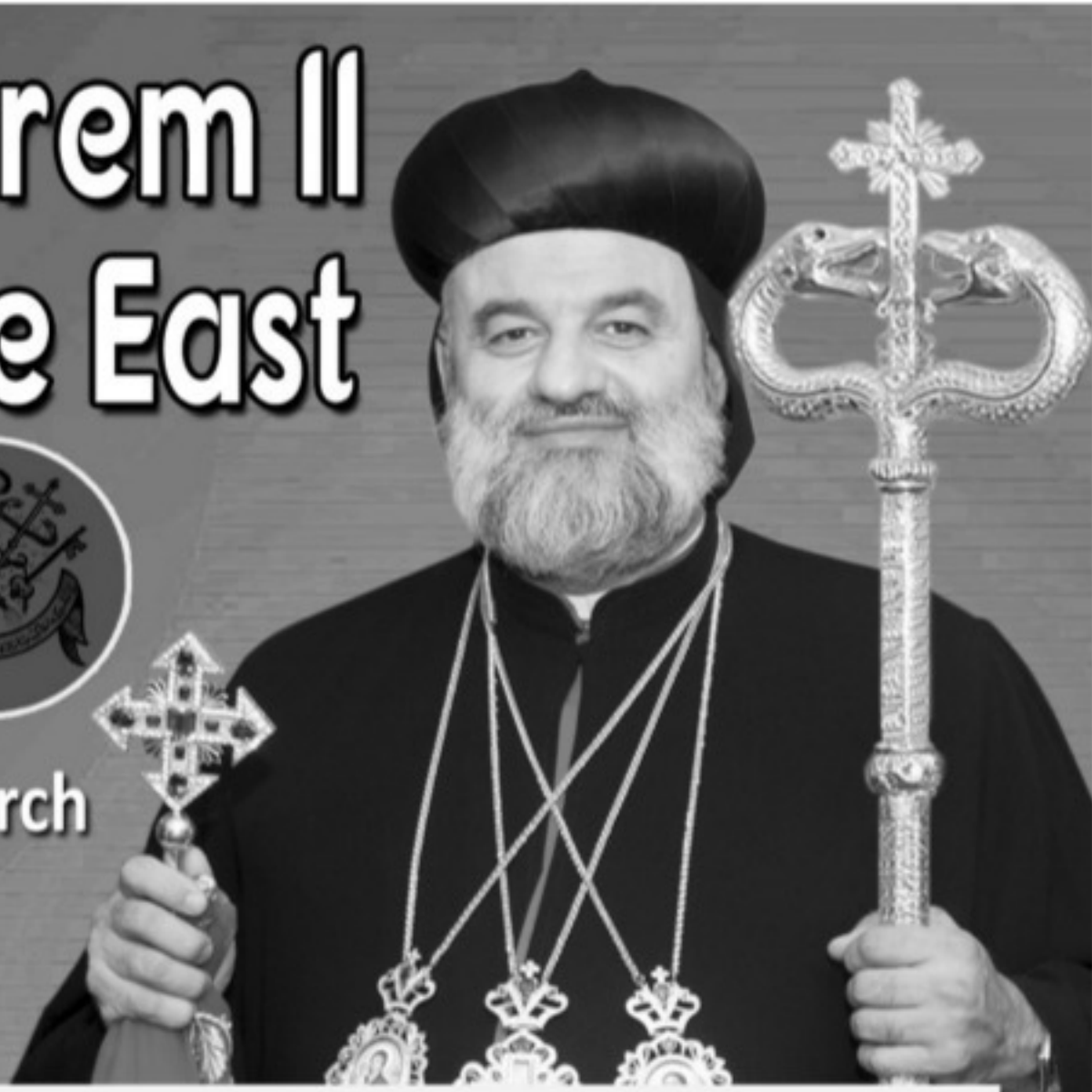


Welcome to India H.H. Ignatius Aphrem II The Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

The 123rd Patriarch of the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch & All The East, adorning the Throne of St. Peter and the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. Public Reception on behalf of The Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Christian Church on 8th February 2015 at 4.00 pm. at Nehru Stadium, Kottayam



We extend our humble and warmest welcome to H.H. Ignatius Aphrem II, the supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, who is the visible and blessed successor of the throne of St. Peter, to the Land of Malankara. The apostolic visit is the continuation of the link since the blessed ministry of our apostle St. Thomas. Jesus in his ministry exhorted the articulation of the faith of St. Peter in the following manner, "Blessed are

Arrive in Peace, Spiritual Shepherd!

» **Baselius Thomas I Catholicose**

you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, you are Peter (Kepha *Syr*) I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." (Mtt 16:17,18). Of course the church is built upon this faith of rock, proclaimed by Peter and H.H. is the true successor of the same faith and the church still keeps it with all veneration and piety. The church has undergone in great tribulations and ailments which we understand, as the part of the divine plan of course and even at present, H.H. is not exempted from this experience. The Church and its faithful, even with its structures and monasteries destroyed, the priests and Metropolitans abducted and killed along with thousands of devotees, stand with H.H. to strengthen his arms to fight against the atrocities of the world. At this juncture, I do remember the terrible Christian genocide which took place in Turkey, Syria, Armenia, exactly 100 years ago, in 1915

which reported the death toll of 3,00,000 people. We bow our heads and pray for the victims and their families and extend support to all the efforts of H.H. to uplift their hands to work against these inhuman deeds.

The posterity of the Church is safe in the hands of H.H. since H.H. has got wide range of pragmatic as well as theoretical knowledge from his studies of the Syrian Orthodox theology based on the Patristic tradition of the Church. Apart from this, H.H.'s experience as a Metropolitan in the United States of America and as a leader of the W.C.C. ensures and enchants his vision of ecumenism and Christian leadership. All these experiences will help H.H. to tackle the present day situation in a successful manner.

The Malankara Church has great hope and expectation in your Holiness. In 1970's, we lost everything but the church resurrected like a Sphinx bird and the church is now in the wake of progress.

The educated and dynamic youth is acting as a catalytic agent in the road of development. I believe that it is the duty of the Church to lead them to the forefront of the Church and its various organizations. I hope and pray that your Holiness's leadership will bring all these things to fruition and meet the challenges of the society in this modern era.

In my old age, I see a prosperous and a gorgeous future of the Church under the able leadership of your Holiness along with the co-operation of the young and adept metropolitans. I believe that the Church and its flock will witness great leap in the future. May I place my humble prayers for this noble cause.

I welcome warmly Your Holiness and the delegates to the land of Malankara, along with this I express my unreserved gratitude to everyone especially to the Government of Kerala and to all religious organizations.



H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II : A Scholar Shepherd for the New Age

The Syriac Orthodox Church has always had illustrious shepherds to lead the church. With Patriarchs like, H.H. Michael the Great, H.H. Aphrem I Barsoum, and more recently H.H. Zakka I Iwas, the lineage was adorned by scholars, visionaries, and great shepherds. H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, currently adorns the throne with his visionary leadership and vast scholarship.

Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II is the 123rd Patriarch of the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch & All The East, adorning the Throne of St. Peter and the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. His Holiness was chosen to lead the Holy Church in the Universal Synod held on Monday 31st March 2014 at Lebanon after the sad demise of blessed Patriarch H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas. His Holiness was enthroned as the supreme head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church during a divine ceremony presided over by Catholicose H.B. Aboon Mor Baselios Thomas I, assisted by all the Metropolitans of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. It was held at the St. Peter & St. Paul's Cathedral in the monastery of Mor

Aphrem in Ma'arat Sayyidnaya near Damascus, Syria on 29th May 2014, the feast and remembrance day of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

His Holiness was born in Kamishly, Syria (near the Syria - Turkey Border) on 3rd May 1965 as the youngest son of Mr. & Mrs. Issa Karim and named Aphrem Karim. He entered St. Ephrem's Theological Seminary in Atchaneh, Lebanon in 1977, following his primary schooling in Kamishly. In 1982, He served the Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo, Syria, for the next two years. During 1984 to 1988 Aphrem pursued his higher studies at the Coptic Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt, graduating with a Bachelor Degree of Divinity, and he took Doctor of Divinity Degree in 1994, following a defense of his doctoral thesis on The Symbolism of the cross in early Syriac Christianity.

In 1985, Aphrem Karim took the vows of monk (Rabban) On Sunday, January 28, 1996. His Holiness Patriarch Zakka I Iwas consecrated Rabban Aphrem as Metropo- litan, Mor Coorilos (Cyril) Aphrem Karim and appointed His Eminence as Patriarchal Vicar to the Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church for the Eastern United States. H.E. is fluent in both Classical and Vernacular Syriac (Turoyo) along with Arabic, French, and English.

H.E. Aphrem encouraged the American Foundation

» **Joseph Gregorios Metropolitan (Secretary, The Holy Synod)**

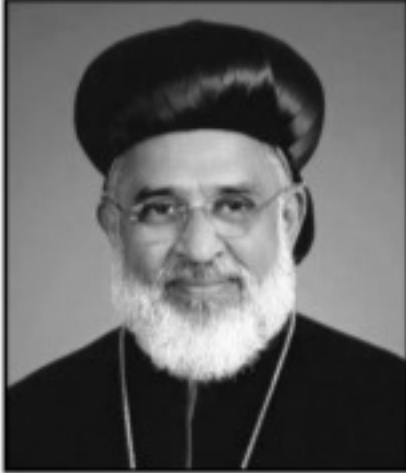
for Syriac Studies to publish several issues of a quarterly entitled "Syriac Studies", and helped in co-sponsoring a series of public lectures delivered by outstanding scholars on Syriac Theology, culture, history, and literature. He authored more than a dozen of books.

H.E. Aphrem has also established himself as an ecumenist and is very much concerned with Christian Unity. He has served on both the executive and central Committees of the World Council of Churches, attending the 1991 Canberra, Australia WCC General Assembly, the 1998 WCC General Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe and the 2006 Assembly of Porto Alegre, Brazil, as a member of the Syriac Orthodox delegation. Moreover, he has been an active member of the executive and governing boards of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and he has also served as a Vice- Chairman of the Standing Conference of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in America.

H.H. is endowed with the spiritual zeal and zest to lead this ancient Syriac church into the modern times. H.H. has been active among the old and the youth alike. May his scholarship, shepherding, and spirituality lead us through these challenging years and the years to come.

Sayfo : A tribute to the Syriac Martyrs

» **Thomas Themotheos Metropolitan Kottayam Diocese**



The year 2015 marks the centennial commemoration of Ottoman genocide against the Syriac Orthodox and other Christian minorities in Turkey. It is a sad reminder of how the Ottoman rulers with the help of Kurd tribesmen wiped out the entire Syriac orthodox population from one of its cradles systematically, from village to villages and monasteries to monasteries. It also serves as a guiding light to all the students of history, religion and ethnicity, to see how the Syriac Orthodox community struggled throughout these years under the Ottoman and Turkish rule.

The years of Sayfo (a Syriac word meaning "sword" or year of the Sword"), as the genocide is called in Syriac, are not just a collective suffering underwent by a minority community at a particular point of time in history. The backlashes of the intense suffering linger on even today into the community. Sadly, the survivors and victims still strive for an international recognition of these atrocities.

The Ottoman persecution is said to have begun in the 1890's and continued until the late 1930's. With the ascension of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1892, the Turkish authorities started attacking the religious minorities, as the sultan was not very well disposed towards them. Ottoman authorities, with the support of certain Kurdish tribesmen attacked the Syriacs, Armenians, and Greeks alike. Villages and monasteries of these ancient Christian communities were robbed and pillaged. More than 500,000 Syriac orthodox faithful were displaced or killed during the years of Sayfo. It is calculated that almost one third of the syriac population was killed during these struggles. The persecution continued even after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, with a military group called the Young Turks taking it as their duty to get rid off the minority Christians from Turkey.

However, on a larger note, these religious persecutions that began with sayfo continue even today in the middle east. Sayfo may have ended in the 1930's. However, its memories, backlashes, sufferings continue to haunt the community, which lay scattered around the world as diaspora, today. Besides, more and more members of the church are affected by these atrocities across Syria and Iraq. H.G. Mor Gregorios Yuhanna and H.G. Mor Boulos Yazigi were abducted almost two years ago. In their memory, the remembrance of Sayfo is renewed and rejuvenated.

Patriarchal Visit Committee Members

politan, Vice Chairman, V. Rev. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil, Convener, Chev. Bibby Abraham Kadavumbhagam, Joint Conveners, Chev. Moncy Vavachan, Chev. C.Y. Varghese, Refreshment Committee Chairman, Dr. Mathews Mor Ivanios Metropolitan, Vice Chairman, Fr. Sabu Parackal, Convener, Chev. T.T. Joy, Joint Conveners, Chev. Oommachan Vengadathu, K.M. Joy, Volunteers Committee Chairman, Mathews Mor Anthimos Metropolitan, Vice Chairman, Fr. Eldhose Kakkadan, Convener, Comd. Biju Cherakkunnathu, Joint Conveners, Sinol V. Sajju, Sunny Kanyattunirappu, Media Co-ordination Comd. P.T. Mathai Purapadathil, Chev. Varghese Pallickara, Proclamation Procession Chairman, Elias Mor Athanasios Metropolitan, Vice Chairman, Zakarias Mor Policarpouse Metropolitan, Working Chairman, Fr. Jacob Mechayal, General Conveners, Fr. P.V. John Punnamattom, Joint Conveners Dr. K.C. Rjan, Siby Kurian, Aji Theppala, Reji Varkey, Zacharia Mathew, Biju Zkaria, Biju Mathara, Jose Panchickal

Syrian Orthodox Patriarch and Malankara

» **Dr. Kuriakose Theophilos Metropolitan (Chairman, Publicity Committee)**

The term Patriarch is originated from two Greek words 'Pater' (Father) and 'arkho' (I rule). Patriarch, (Greek *patriarches* and latin *patriarcha*) usually means as the 'rule of the father' or 'father or chief of a race'. In the Christian tradition, already in the first half of the first millennium this term began to be used to address one of the highest ranking bishops in the Orthodoxy.

On account of many a persecution the Christian church had to leave Jerusalem. Antioch, the capital of then Syria, was a cosmopolitan City which happened to become a refuge for the persecuted Christians. Slowly it became the centre of Christianity. St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, first went to Antioch and established his throne in A.D 37 and became the first Patriarch of the See of Antioch. This paved the way for the Syrian Orthodox Church to inherit the apostolic succession of St. Peter. The throne of St. Peter in Antioch was succeeded by the Patriarchs of the Syrian Orthodox Church and His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II is the 123 successor of St. Peter. The other Syrian Orthodox Patriarchs visited India during the last 5 centuries are H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Ahatthulla (1653), Moran Mor Peter IV (1875), Moran Mor Abded Aloho (1909), Moran Mor Elias III (1931), Moran Mor Yakub III (1964), Moran Mor Zakka I (1982, 2000, 2004, 2008).

In A.D 325, in the ecumenical council of Nicaea, the whole Christian Church was brought under the Patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. West under Rome, Africa under Alexandria and the Church in Syria, Persia and the East were under Jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch. According to the tradition, Apostle St. Thomas came to India in the 1st century and brought Christianity. But in the second and third centuries Indian Christianity suffered a lot without proper leadership and clergy. In the 4th century a migrated group of Syrian Christians, including a bishop, from Edessa, who were under the Patriarch of Antioch, came to Kerala and the St. Thomas Christians of India were made under the hierarchy of the Patriarch of Antioch. Thereafter the Christians in Kerala began to be known as Syrian Christians. Between the 14th and the 16th century the Syrian Orthodox Church in India had to face some plights to maintain the contact with the Patriarch of Antioch because of some political and colonial pressures in India. But overcoming the hurdles the church has been blessed and guided by the hierarchy of the Patriarch of Antioch.



The Holy Apostolic Visit Itinerary

February 7 Saturday 9.00 AM. Arrival at Nedumabassery International Airport 11.00 AM. Reception at Patriarchal Centre, Puthencruz 4.30 PM. Holy Episcopal Synod at St. George Cathedral, Karingachira **8 Sunday**, 8.00 AM. Holy Mass, St. Mary's Cathedral, Manarcad 4.00 PM. Reception & Public Meeting at Kottayam Nehru Stadium **10 Tuesday**, 7.30 AM. Kottayam Syrian Orthodox Centre Chapel Consecration 5.30 PM. Consecration of the EAE Association Centre, Perumbavoor **11 Wednesday**, 8.00 AM. Holy Mass & Mooron Consecration St. Peter's Church, Peechanikkad **12 Thursday**, 9.00 AM. Holy Mass Rajadhi Raja St. Mary's Cathedral, Piravom 11.30 AM. Meeting of the Priests, Monks, & Nuns - Vettickal Seminary 3.30 PM. Church Managing Committee 6.30 PM. "Dukrono" of St. Sakralla Mor Baselios Mafriyono - Kandanad **13 Friday**, 7.00 AM. Holy Mass Marthoman Church - Kothamangalam 11.00 PM. Addressing Maramon Convention, Kozhenchery 4.00 PM. "Dukrono" of Moran Mor Ignatius Elias III at Manjinikkara **14 Saturday**, 8.00 AM. Holy Mass Mor Ignatius Dayara Manjinikkara 6.00 PM. Consecration of Malecruz Dayara **15 Sunday**, 8.30 AM. Holy Mass at Malecruz Dayara Church 2.30 PM. Public Meeting-Spiritual Organisation at Patriarchal Centre

Chairman, HB Baselius Thomas I Catholicose, Convener, Joseph Mor Gregorios Metropolitan, Joint Conveners, Priest Trustee V. Rev. Mathai Corepiscopa, Poovanthara, Lay Trustee Thambu George Thukalan, Lay Secretary George Mathew Thekkethalakkal, Programme Committee Chairman, Mathews Mor Aphrem Metropolitan, Vice Chairman, V. Rev. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Manalechira, Convener, Chev. Prof. M.A. Paulose, Joint Conveners, Chev. A.M. Rjau, Chev. Thomas Thottathil Finance Committee Chairman, Dr. Geevarghese Mor Coorilos Metropolitan, Vice Chairman, V. Rev. George Manthottam Corepiscopa, Convener, Chev. K.O. Elias, Joint Conveners, Comd. Shaji Choondayil, George Cheruthottukunnel, Reception Committee Chairman, Geevarghese Mor Athanasios Metropolitan, Vice Chairman, V. Rev. Baby Chamakala Corepiscopa, Convener, Comd. K.O. Thomas, Joint Conveners, Comd. K.J. Varkey, Chev. Sajju Pattalattu, Publicity Committee Chairman, Dr. Kuriakose Mor Theophilos Metro-