On September 20, 1958: Fr. C.M. Thomas (H.B. Mor Baselios Thomas I) was ordained ‘Kassisso’ by Mor Yulius Elias, Metropolitan & Patriarchal Delegate at the Manjanikkara Dayro along with the ordination of Rev. Fr. K.V. Kuriakose (Mor Julius Kuriakose Metropolitan).

The Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee celebrations of His Beatitude was held at the St. Mary’s Syrian Orthodox Church, West Nyack, New York, USA on September 19, 2007 with the esteemed presence of His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho, Archbishop of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America along with the Clergy Members and Syrian Orthodox Faithful of the New York Metropolitan Area. Pictures below!
Catholicos Aboon Mor Baselios Thomas I, the spiritual head of the Syrian Christians of India, was born in the Cheruvillil family of Vadayambadi, Puthencuriz to Mathai and Kunjamma on 22nd July 1929. Early part of his life was full of sufferings. Though he belonged to an aristocratic family, by the time he was born the family had seen bad days. As a child he had frequent bouts of illness which affected his education. His mother used to take the young boy frequently to the nearby Malecuriz Dayro where the relics of late Patriarch St. Ignatius Elias III and Saint Gregorios Geevarghese (Parumala Thirumeni) had been interred. One night, as his mother prayed with the young boy on her lap, she had a vision which prompted her to dedicate the boy to the service of the church. Within days, the boy's illness was entirely cured. God was with him, guiding him and shaping him.

His priestly formation was under the guidance of Mor Philoxenos Paulose (late Catholicos Mor Baselios Paulose II) who ordained him 'Korooyo' in 1952 and 'Shamshono' at Kadamattom Church in 1957. In September 1958, C M Thomas was ordained 'Kassisso' (full priest) by Mor Yulius Elias at the Majanikkara Dayro. In 1959 he was appointed as the vicar of St.Peter's church, Puthencuriz. Later he served the churches at Vellathooval, Keezhumuri, Fort Cochin, Valamboor, Calcutta and Thrissur. For a period of seven years from 1967, he was the organizing secretary of
Kolenchery Medical Mission Hospital. He also served as the Chief organizer of the North Indian mission at Bhilai in 1970's and as the secretary of the ‘Pourasthaya Suvishesha Samajam’ in 1974. He was well known as a great revivalist preacher and was also recognized as an excellent organizer.

In January 1974, Fr. C M Thomas was elected to the episcopate by the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Christian Association convened at the Karingachira St. George Church and was consecrated Metropolitan with the title 'Mor Dionysius' by H.H. Mor Ignatius Ya`qub III on 24th February 1974 at Damascus, Syria. He was entrusted with the charge of Angamali diocese, the largest of all the Syrian Orthodox dioceses which has a membership of more than half a million. The untiring efforts of Mor Dionysius in those days had helped a lot to revive the confidence of not merely the faithful of the diocese, but the entire Malankara Church.

Metropolitans Mor Dionysius, Mor Gregorios Geevarghese (late) and Mor Koorilos Kuriakose (late) together were a great support to the (late) Catholicos Aboo Mor Baselios Paulose II, the then Chief of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church. As the Metropolitan of Angamali Mor Dionysius had successfully initiated many welfare programs and also reorganized the diocesan administration. In 1978 Mor Baselios Medical Mission Hospital at Kothamangalam was started under his patron-ship.
Catholicose – Designate

Following the demise of Mor Baselios Paulose II in 1996, Mor Gregorios Geevarghese (Perumpally Thirumeni) became the President of the Episcopal Synod of the Church in India. After the passing away of Mor Gregorios Geevarghese in February 1999, Mor Dionysius assumed the Presidency of the Malankara Church Synod. On 27th December 2000, His Excellency was chosen as the Catholicos-designate by the Holy Episcopal Synod. The Church delegates meeting held at Puthencuriz on the same day, unanimously approved this decision. H.H the Patriarch, however, waited for two more years in expectation of a peaceful settlement to the longstanding dispute between the two factions of Malankara Church. But as it became clearer that the chances for reconciliation is remote because of the insincerity on the part of the opposite faction; a crucial convention was convened at Puthencuriz, Kerala on 6th July 2002 in which delegates from all the parishes participated and they approved a new constitution for the effective administration of the Indian Church, with the consent of the supreme head, the Patriarch of Antioch & all the East. H.E. Mor Dionysius Thomas was elected as the Catholicos and the Metropolitan Trustee of the Jacobite Syrian Christian Church at this historic Church Association. The election was later ratified by the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church on 22nd July 2002.

Catholicose - Enthronement

On Friday the 26th July 2002, His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas the Patriarch of Antioch & all the East, consecrated the 73-year old Mor Dionysius Thomas as the CATHOLICOS with the title 'BASELIOS THOMAS I' at a solemn function held at the St. Peter & St. Paul Cathedral in Mor Ephrem Monastery, Ma`arat Sayyidnaya, near...
Damascus. Thus, fulfilling the wishes of multitude of faithful, the Malankara Church received a Catholicos after a gap of six years (Catholicos Mor Baselios Paulose II died in 1996). In the Syrian Orthodox Church hierarchy, the Catholicos is second in rank to the supreme spiritual head, the Patriarch of Antioch.

Fourteen Syrian Orthodox Bishops, from India, Syria, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Turkey and Australia attended the enthronement ceremony as the co-celebrants. Thirty five Rambans, many Nuns of the Church and lay people were also present on the occasion to participate in the historical ceremony. Representatives from Government of Syria & India attended the consecration ceremony as special guests. Besides the three Metropolitans who were the co-celebrants, the Church in India was represented by Very Rev Eraalil Geevarghese Ramban (Kerala), Rev. Fr. Prince Mookkanottil (Vicar Mor Ignatius Syrian Orthodox Church Dubai), Rev. Fr. Eldho Vallya Parambil (Vicar St. George Abu Dhabi), Rev. Fr. Kurian Maliyil (Vicar Sharjah), Rev. Fr. Mathews (Muscat) and Rev. Fr. Varghese Maikkulangara (Kerala). The consecration ceremony started with the celebration of Holy Qurbono at 8 AM by His Holiness the Patriarch, followed by enthronement ceremony, signing of 'SUSTHATHIKON' (Agreement) and 'OKSIOS' (Rising and Declaration). The ceremonial Services ended with the completion of the Holy Qurbono by the newly consecrated Catholicos.

**His Beatitude The Catholicos Aboon Mor Baselios Thomas I submitting the ‘SALMUSA’ to the supreme head of the Holy Church, His Holiness Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, the Patriarch of Antioch & all the East**

Metropolitans who were the co-celebrants of the Catholicos enthronement:

- H.G Julius Yeshu ‘Çiček (Central Europe)
- H.G Philoxenos Matta Semavun
- H.G. Theophelos George Saliba (Lebanon)
- H.G Timotheos Samuel Aktas (Tur’abdin)
H.G. Philoxenos Yusuf Cetin (Istanbul)
H.G. Osthatheos Matta Rohum (Jezira & Euphrates)
H.G. Gregorios Joseph (Kochi)
H.G. Dioscoros Benyamin Atas (Sweden)
H.G. Severios Malke Mourad (Jerusalem & Jordan)
H.G. Dionysius Isa Gurbuz (Germany)
H.G. Julius Kuriakose (1st Secretary to the Patriarch and the Patriarchal Vicar for Indian affairs)
H.G. Silwanos Petrus al-Ni’me (Homs and Hama)
H.G. Ivanios Mathews (Kandanadu and USA)
H.G. Ivanios Paulos Al-Souky (Damascus)

After the enthronement ceremony a reception was given to the Catholicos His Beatitude Mor Baselios Thomas the First. During the speech delivered on the occasion, His Holiness emphasized the commitment of the Holy See to the Church in India. Replying to the congratulatory messages, His Beatitude the Catholicos Aboon Mor Baselios Thomas I reiterated that he like his predecessors, will always take great care in the continuance of the faith and traditions of the Syrian Church.

Catholicate Office

The Catholicate office of His Beatitude Baselios Thomas I functions at the Patriarchal centre in Puthencuriz near Kochi, which is also the headquarters of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. His Beatitude resides at Mor Ignatius Seminary at Kothamangalam.
Important Dates of H.B. Aboon Mor Baselios Thomas I -

Date of Birth: 22nd July 1929

Ordained ‘Korooyo’ & ‘Shamshono’ by Catholicose Mor Baselios Paulose I: 1957

Ordained ‘Kassisso’ by Mor Yulius Elias (Patriarchal delegate): September 20, 1958

Ordained Metropolitan by Patriarch Ignatius Yakoob III: February 24, 1974

Elected President of Holy Episcopal Synod of Malankara: February 23, 1999

Chosen as the Catholicose-designate: December 27, 2000

Malankara Church accepting the new constitution: July 6, 2002

Consecrated as CATHOLICOSE: July 26, 2002

Source: syrianchurch.org