

“Thou art Peter, upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”

MALANKARA ARCHDIOCESE OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF
ANTIOCHEAN TRUE FAITH

(UNDER THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST)



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December 10, 2010

Dear Faithful,

The Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in USA and Canada has grown tremendously in the last few decades. However, lately, some individuals with personal agendas have been making attempts to create problems in the Archdiocese by spreading false propaganda. Their intention appears to be of personal gain. They have gone to the extent of even questioning the hierarchical authority of His Holiness, the Patriarch Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas and His representative Mor Titus Yeldho, the Archbishop and Patriarchal Vicar in North America.

It has come to the notice of the "Association for the Protection of Antiochean True Faith" that these so called individuals have been circulating misleading information through the internet, lately, to confuse the faithful of the Archdiocese. In doing so, they are misusing the names of our Church fathers in Malankara and also the first Archbishop of this Archdiocese, the Late Lamented - Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel.

The peace loving members of this Archdiocese who love the Church and the Church fathers have already identified these irresponsible individuals who are trying to break up the Archdiocese. The Association for the Protection of Antiochean True Faith is committed to fight and defeat these evil forces to protect the Syrian Orthodox Faith that we inherited from our Early Church fathers through generations.

We are attaching here a Q & A section related to this matter and would like to continue the publication of this news letter. Our ultimate goal is to promote the spiritual growth of this Archdiocese and at the same time maintain peace and harmony among the faithful. With that in mind, let us all work as a Team and glorify His name.

For the Publication Committee,

Jacob P Korah
General Secretary

Q# 1: When did people from Malankara start to come together in the USA?

- In the 1970s, the Malankara Syrian Christians started growing in major cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Dallas etc. During this time the faithful established prayer groups.

Q# 2: Which was the first Church established in America and when was it?

- Our first church in America was Mar Gregorios Church in Staten Island, NY. It was started in 1975.

Q# 3: Who was the Diocesan Metropolitan at that time?

- The Late Lamented Archbishop Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel

Q# 4: How was the relationship between our faithful and Mor Athanasius during those days?

- Thirumeni loved the Malankara community and had a very harmonious relationship. Many of the respected Priests in USA were brought in by Mor Athanasius to meet the needs of the Malayalee people. However, few of these priests left the Holy Church and are now part of the so called Indian Orthodox group.

Q# 5: Who was the first Priest that Mor Athanasios brought for our Church in USA?

- Rev. Fr. John Jacob of Elappanal, Pampady (now H. G. Yuhanon Mor Philexinos Thirumeni) was the first Priest who was brought to the USA for the Mar Gregorios Church in Staten Island, New York.

Q# 6: After Mar Gregorios Church, Staten Island, which parish was established in the New York area?

- St. Mary's Church, in Manhattan, New York, was started by Rev. Fr. John Jacob. After him, the late Very Rev. George Kocheril was the vicar of that Parish. Many of the present parishes in the New York area were established as a result of the sudden increase in membership in St. Mary's Church as well as relocation of the members.

Q# 7: It is said that Rev. Fr. John Jacob (now H. G. Yuhanon Mor Philexinos) is the one who established several other parishes in the USA. Is that true?

- Yes. While he was the Vicar of the Mar Gregorios Church in Staten Island he started St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia, and other parishes in Chicago, Dallas and Houston. It was in 1978, St. Ignatius Church, Dallas and St. Mary's Church, Houston were started. Rev. Fr. Joseph C. Joseph (now Very Rev. Joseph C. Joseph Corepiscopos) was the vicar of those two parishes.

Q# 8: When was our American Archdiocese established and who was the 1st Metropolitan?

- The Late Lamented Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel helped and supported the Malankara Syrian Orthodox community in establishing new parishes. In addition to being the Metropolitan of the Syrian Churches, His Holiness, the Patriarch gave Mor Athanasius the additional responsibility of being in charge of the Malankara Parishes in America. At that time, there were only a very few Malankara parishes.

Q# 9: What was the circumstance that led the Malankara Parishes to separate from Mor Athanasius Thirumeni's administration?

- As mentioned earlier, a few new parishes were established soon after St. Mary's Church in Manhattan. The newly established parishes soon grew in membership. But then some Priests started problems. They, along with some faithful, did not like to continue under Mor Athanasius. It should be noted here that separate family conferences were conducted during this time. Mor Athanasius was very saddened by the actions of these Priests and members. Then came about a new idea that an independent Malayalee Diocese should be formed directly under His Holiness, the Patriarch. Meetings and discussions followed and finally a separate Archdiocese called the "Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America" came into existence.
- The reason for naming our Archdiocese as MALANKARA ARCHDIOCESE by His Holiness the Patriarch was NOTHING ELSE but to distinguish our Archdiocese from the other Syrian Archdiocese in USA under His Holiness.

Q# 10: When was the new Archdiocese formed?

- The new Archdiocese was formed on June 24, 1993 by His Holiness through the Apostolic Bull numbered E235/93.

Q# 11: Was a new Metropolitan elected?

- Yes. In a delegates meeting conducted at St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral, Teaneck, New Jersey on December 5, 1992, Rev. Fr. Cherian Poothicote was elected for the position of Archdiocesan Metropolitan from a list of four candidates.

Q# 12: By whom and when was the new Metropolitan consecrated?

- His Holiness the Patriarch consecrated Rev. Fr. Cherian Poothicote as Zacharias Mor Nicholovos on August 15, 1993.

Q# 13: Was the new Archdiocese formed directly under the Patriarch or under His Beatitude the Catholicose?

- The new Archdiocese was formed directly under the jurisdiction of His Holiness the Patriarch. There is no mention of His Beatitude the Catholicose anywhere in our constitution.

Q# 14: Is it stated in the constitution that the new Archdiocese is under the jurisdiction of His Holiness the Patriarch?

- Yes, it is clearly stated in the constitution. See the following...

Constitution page number 2, Preamble Paragraph 2:

"His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, established an independent Archdiocese directly under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch and All the East comprising of all the Malankara (India) parishes in North America and named it 'Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America'".

Again, page 3, Article II- Spiritual Head:

"His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, of the Holy Apostolic Throne of Saint Peter and his legitimate successor in office shall be the supreme Spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative head of this Archdiocese. Such spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative jurisdiction and authority cannot be changed, altered, modified or revoked. The Archbishop /Metropolitan, who is appointed by his Holiness to administer the spiritual and temporal affairs of this Archdiocese shall be under the direct jurisdiction and control of His Holiness the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East."

Q# 15: Was it a peaceful atmosphere in the Archdiocese during the time of Mor Nicholovos?

- The first one or two years were peaceful. However, problems started thereafter under the leadership of some priests. But then Mor Nicholovos joined the so called Indian Orthodox faction and he was excommunicated from our Holy Church. If he had continued, he might have been able to survive a little bit longer.

Q# 16: After Mor Nicholovos left, who was our Metropolitan?

- His Holiness the Patriarch temporarily appointed H. G. Mor Yulios Kuriakose , who was the Patriarchal Secretary to His Holiness, as the Metropolitan of this Archdiocese.

Q# 17: Who was the Metropolitan after H. G. Mor Yulios Kuriakose?

- His Holiness appointed H. G. Mathews Mor Ivanios as the Metropolitan.

Q# 18: Why was H. G. Mathews Mor Ivanios called back to Malankara?

- While serving as the Metropolitan of this Archdiocese, H. G. Mathews Mor Ivanios was also responsible for the Kandanadu Diocese in India (Malankara). During that time, there were several court cases and problems in the Kandanadu Diocese and the presence of H. G. Mor Ivanios was required in Kandanadu. Therefore, His Holiness relieved H. G. Mor Ivanios from the duties of our Archdiocese in North America and started the process of finding a full time Metropolitan for this Archdiocese. Please note, there was still a small group of our Priests and laymen creating headache to H.G. Mor Ivanios during the tenure of His Grace.

Q# 19: Was Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho elected by the Diocesan delegation?

- When His Holiness the Patriarch informed us through an Apostolic Bull that Very Rev. Yeldho Ramban (now Mor Theethose Yeldho Thirumeni) was going to be consecrated and appointed for the Archdiocese, the Diocesan Council requested His Holiness the Patriarch to give us the opportunity to elect our new Metropolitan. But, His Holiness directed us with the following:

“The procedures followed in our Church in India regarding the election and consecration of a Metropolitan is not applicable to that Archdiocese. We have mentioned this, when we established that Archdiocese, through our Bull No. E235/93 dated June 24, 1993, that “The new Archdiocese will be an independent Archdiocese directly under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch and All the East of our Syrian Orthodox Church”. We also have written in that Bull that “The proceedings of both the meetings (to elect a Metropolitan candidate) were irregular and the resolutions passed were erroneous”. Further in the certificate of incorporation of that Archdiocese which is also submitted in the Courts there clearly states that, The Archbishop is not elected but consecrated and appointed by His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Supreme Head of the Syrian Orthodox Church”. (No.E260/03 dated Dec 5, 2003)

Q# 20: Why haven't we decided a retirement age for our Priests?

- This was discussed at the last delegates meeting and a seven member committee was formed to further study the subject.

Q# 21: There is an allegation that His Beatitude the Catholicose or other Bishops were not invited for the Silver Jubilee Convention 2010. Is that true?

- No, it is not true. During the 2009 family conference, our Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho officially invited His Beatitude the Catholicose in person to the 2010 Silver Jubilee Convention. Again in February 2010, His Eminence met His Beatitude the Catholicose at the Puthencruz Patriarchal Center and invited His Beatitude. At the same time His Beatitude gave His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho, a blessings message to be placed in our Jubilee Souvenir, Malankara Deepam 2010 and another message for the newsletter published in conjunction with the Convention. Very Rev. Abraham Kadavil also spoke with His Beatitude and requested His Beatitude to consecrate his Parish in Maryland when His Beatitude comes for the Silver Jubilee Convention. All of this information was conveyed to all the Clergy at the Silver Jubilee Convention Clergy Meeting. Also, during the Silver Jubilee Convention Clergy Meeting, the Archdiocesan Secretary Rev. Fr. Varghese Manikat confirmed that he sent an official invitation to His Beatitude. Our Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho also personally invited the Malankara Synod Secretary H. G. Joseph Mor Gregorios at the Diocesan head quarters in Thiruvankulam, India and His Grace noted the invitation in his Calendar. But the fact is that, not only did they both keep themselves away from our Jubilee Convention, but also His Beatitude called back all the Bishops who were visiting our Archdiocese at that time from India. The Bishops of the Knanaya Diocese were also told not to attend the Convention, as we understand.

Q# 22: There is news that if Bishops from Malankara visit our Archdiocese, they will not be received. Is it true?

- This is absolutely a false allegation and a story made up by certain individuals. In the Bull dated Oct 12, 2010 from our Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho, it is clearly stated that we will still welcome and receive with full respect, His Beatitude the Catholicose and /or Bishops from Malankara, the same way they have been received in the past. There is absolutely no change. It may be noted here that H. G. Kuriakose Mor Theophilos, H. G. Abraham Mor Severios, H. G. Yuhanon Mor Milithios, and H. G. Thomas Mor Themothios visited this Archdiocese this year (2010) and they all have been given all the needed assistance from our Archbishop and the Archdiocesan Headquarters. In fact, Mor Severios Abraham came a second time and left very recently (November 1, 2010). Additionally, Mor Gregorios Joseph also visited our Parishes in Canada during September/October 2010. But the fact is that since this Archdiocese is directly under the jurisdiction of His Holiness the Patriarch, no one from Malankara (India) should interfere in the administration of our Archdiocese.

Q# 23: What is the process for the Bishops visiting from Malankara to the North American diocese?

- Any Bishop visiting another Diocese; informs the Archbishop of that Diocese and then only does the visiting Bishop make the necessary arrangements for the visit. For example, when the Archbishop from the North American Diocese plans a visit to Malankara (India), His Eminence notifies His Beatitude, the Catholicose and also notifies all the Bishops of the Dioceses that he is planning to visit during his visit to India. Since this Archdiocese is directly under the jurisdiction of the His Holiness the Patriarch; His Beatitude and the Bishops visiting from Malankara first receives the visiting permission

from His Holiness the Patriarch, and then they inform our Archbishop. We have learned from His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho that His Beatitude the Catholicose always follows this precedent.

Q# 24: It is being said that our Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho does not follow the faith and traditions of the Church. Is that true?

- The question is very childish and thoughtless. Ever since His Eminence took charge of the Archdiocese in January 2004, His Eminence has never deviated from the traditions and the faith of the Holy Church as well as his allegiance and obedience to the orders of His Holiness the Patriarch.

Q# 25: Is it true that our spiritual needs will not be met when we go to Kerala?

- The context of the question is not understood. The question only has validity if you leave the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church. We are all children of the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church.

Q# 26: There is an allegation that our Archdiocese has distanced from the Malankara (India) Synod. Is it true?

- No. There is no distancing. This is also a made up story by certain individuals. The Malankara (India) Synod and the working committee in India made the decision to divide our Archdiocese and conveyed this information through the news media. When the North American Diocese is within the direct jurisdiction of His Holiness the Patriarch, how can the Malankara (India) Synod and the working committee in India decide upon the affairs of this Diocese without the knowledge of its Archbishop His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho, the Archdiocesan Council, and the Diocesan Delegates? It doesn't make sense. Don't forget that the affairs of this Archdiocese are administered by the Archbishop and a Council that is elected by the delegates of the Archdiocese. It was unfortunate that such matters were discussed in the Malankara Synod and without the knowledge of our Archbishop or the elected Council. (For those that complained about seeing the title 'Catholicose of India' in the Archdiocesan Souvenir, we ask you to visit <http://www.malankaravision.com>, a website that was launched by His Beatitude and see the title used for His Beatitude. There are many other places with the similar reference.)

Q# 27: Didn't the Diocesan Council respond/react to the decisions made in Malankara?

- The Archdiocesan Council discussed the issues and suggested to respond to the decision via the news media. Our Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho expressed that this may aggravate the situation and our relationship with Malankara. Therefore, a delegation visited His Holiness the Patriarch and informed His Holiness on the happenings of the Archdiocese.

Q# 28: What is it that I hear that an Apostolic Bull from His Holiness the Patriarch was not read at the Churches?

➤ When the above mentioned news was received, the Archdiocesan Council had an emergency meeting. Extreme disappointment was expressed in the direct interference from Malankara (India) and it was decided to send a Delegation to His Holiness the Patriarch to convey the resolution made by both the Clergy and Delegates of our blessed Archdiocese. Due to the nearness of Holy Week, the Patriarchate granted us permission to discuss the matters following Easter. Upon hearing that the US delegation would be meeting with His Holiness; His Beatitude and H. G. Mor Gregorios Joseph quickly made a visit to Syria from India and obtained an Apostolic Bull that stated the Archdiocese has been divided and that more details concerning the division will be informed later. After receiving this information, our Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho contacted the Patriarchate to obtain the details and about the invitation from His Holiness to visit His Holiness. Since a delegation was invited by His Holiness, we were given the directive that further details can be decided after the meeting with the delegation. Once the delegation informed His Holiness of the decisions made at the Delegates and Clergy meetings in USA, it was decided by His Holiness to HOLD the Apostolic Bull dividing the Archdiocese. His Holiness directed His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho not to send out the Apostolic Bull regarding the division of the Archdiocese. Rather, a new Apostolic Bull from His Holiness the Patriarch was issued that stated that the final decision of any division of the Archdiocese in North America would be made by the Holy Synod in September 2010. Unfortunately before the delegation and His Eminence's returned to USA after visiting His Holiness the Patriarch, some person acquired from somewhere a copy of the 1st Bull which was put on HOLD and released it without any permission to the public with the Archdiocesan Headquarter's address on the envelope. This is the Bull that was not read in Churches.

Q# 29: There was a meeting held in New York under the name the "Malankara Jacobite Sangamam", what is it?

➤ The Holy Synod held in September 2010 at the Patriarchate decided NOT to divide the North American diocese and for our Archbishop His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho to continue as the Archbishop of the North American Diocese. This information was conveyed to all the faithful of the Archdiocese by the His Holiness, the Patriarch in an Apostolic Bull. Now, some respected clergy have started speaking against and held meetings against the Apostolic Bull from His Holiness the Patriarch. Hearing about this, His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho sent another Bull #74/10 on October 12, 2010 giving an explanation about the situation and it was conveyed clearly that if any individuals or groups act against the directions given by His Holiness the Patriarch, such actions will be considered as being against The Holy Church and His Holiness. The so called "Malankara Jacobite Sangamam" held on October 23, 2010 in New York is a forum that is in direct disobedience of the Bull of His Holiness the Patriarch and His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho. A few priests and about 30 laymen attended this meeting. Some of them attended the meeting without knowing the full story or understanding the situation.

Jacob P Korah

General Secretary

If you have any questions /comments, please feel free to reach us at:

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