

1. Simeon of Jerusalem, the Martyr

(BC 14? – AD 106)

Mor Simeon was the second Bishop of Jerusalem. He was appointed the successor to Mor Yacoub (d. AD 62) the first bishop, saint, disciple and martyr (Wace & Piercy, 1999). He was the son of Cleophas called Alphaï. It is recorded that his mother, Mariam (John 19: 25) was at the foot of the cross at Calvary. He was older than Jesus by eight or nine years. He was present along with the disciples and St. Mary at the house of Markose awaiting the Holy Spirit (The Acts 2: 1-2).

The Christians in Jerusalem fled to the banks of the River Jordan under the leadership of Simeon before the enemies encompassed the city. They settled down in the small town Balla (Pella?) near Bisan (Abdul Ahad, 1948).

Those who conquered Jerusalem in AD 70, destroyed the temple, murdered six lakhs people and the rest of the Jews were taken as slaves. Simeon returned to Jerusalem after the persecution and got himself engaged in the service of the Church.

Even though the Church flourished greatly during his time, two heresies were widely prevalent:

Nazareans and Ebionites. The former considered Christ as a great prophet and an ordinary man whose biological parents were Joseph and Mary. Meanwhile, the Ebionites spread many superstitions and sanctioned divorce.

Vespasian and Domitian ordered the execution of all who were of the race of David but Mor Simeon eluded them. Later when Emperor Trajan renewed the edict for execution, Mor Simeon was caught, bound and condemned to be crucified. It is believed that Mor Simeon was one hundred and twenty years old when he was martyred.

The Syrian Church commemorates Mor Simeon who had been the bishop of Jerusalem for forty-three years on 27 April. Some historians have recorded his feast day as 18 February.

2. St. Serapion, the Patriarch of Antioch

(? – AD 211)

Serapion was the ninth Patriarch of Antioch and an ecclesiastical writer. He was an eminent theologian of the times. Jerome and Eusebius of Caesarea have eulogized his theological writings.

Eusebius mentions three of his books in the Church history (Wace & Piercy, 1999; Quasten, n.d.) – (1) A private letter addressed to Caricus and Pontius against Montanism [Montanism- was an apocalyptic movement in the latter half of the second century which proclaimed that the heavenly Jerusalem would soon descend near Pepuza in Phrygia (Cross & Livingstone, 1997)], (2) the letter sent to Domnius against Jewish will-worship. (Domnius had given up Christianity at the time of persecution) (3) An article addressed to the believers in Rhossus, Syria against the Docetic Gospel wrongly attributed to St. Peter. (Docetism, considered the humanity and suffering of Christ as apparent rather than real. “If Christ suffered he was not God; if He was God he did not suffer.” Docetists are mentioned in 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7- “denying that Christ has come in the flesh” (Malaty, 2005).

Serapion also acted against the influence of Gnostics in Osroene and consecrated Palut as the metropolitan of Edessa. Gnosticism- a teaching about the distinction between 'creator God' and the supreme remote and unknowable divine being (Cross & Livingstone, 1997).

In his history of the patriarchs, Metropolitan Dolabani of Mardin has recorded that Persian Christians were under the jurisdiction of the patriarchs of Antioch. A catholicate was allowed in Persia in the fifth century considering the feud between Rome and Persia. Those coming from Persia to Antioch (which was under the Roman Empire) to get ordained were considered spies and were assassinated. Moreover, the journey was tedious in those days. When the political situation changed the office of catholicate in Persia was abolished in 1860 as per the decision of the universal synod.

3. St. Malke

(AD 222 – 315)

Malke was born to a wealthy family in Qulezmo in AD 222. Her parents were Yuhanon and Rafkha, sister of St. Augen. Yuhanon and Rafkha were childless for long years. Shufny their first child was dumb. After three years, they were blessed with a son. When the speechless Shufny was asked to name her brother, she uttered the name Malke for the first time.

When he was five years old, he was tutored by Samuel on the precepts of Christian belief. He was an excellent student. When he was sixteen, he wanted to become an ascetic. However, his parents wanted him to take a wife; but he left home with his friend Elisha in AD 245 to Mount Izlo and entered monastic life.

There he stayed in the dayaro of his uncle Mor Augen. He and his friend stayed there for four years and then went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The following three years were spent in Egypt. They proceeded to Nisibis where Mor Yacoub (d. AD 338) ordained them priests (Roberts & Donalson, 1956).

As he preferred a life of solitude, he went to

Arkah, a village in Turkey. Once he saw a group of boys playing. A young boy had climbed up a fig tree and was scared by an evil spirit at the foot of the tree (Astrasis). Malke's prayer drove away the spirit. He constructed a dayaro on the location where God exiled the devil. The people of the village came in hordes to assist in the construction. Another miracle attributed to him is the curing of Emperor Constantine with his intercessory prayers.

Malke was aware that his death was near. He blessed the people thus, "My beloved people, always be merciful and dedicate yourselves to prayer and fasting. Let truth, love and peace adorn all your lives. Fight evil with good." He passed away on a Thursday, 14 April AD 315. The Syrian Orthodox Church commemorates him on 21 April (www.soc-wus.org).

4. St. Febronia, the Martyr

(AD 284? – 304?)

Febronia is believed to have suffered persecution and became a martyr during the reign of Emperor Diocletian (AD 284 – 305). The biography of Febronia was made available by Thomais (in Syriac Thaumasia), a nun of her convent. Febronia of Nisibis is also known as Febronia of Sebapte.

Febronia was born in Ouryana in Mesopotamia in AD 284. She grew up from the age of two in a convent, in Sivapolis in Assyria region, where her aunt, Bryene was an abbess. There were fifty nuns in the convent who ate only one meal a day at dinner. Febronia was an extremely beautiful girl and the abbess gave her a harsher life by providing food only once in two days.

Everyone spoke highly of her learning, beauty, humility and gentleness. She had never met a man and neither had a man ever seen her (Harvey, 1990). Hieria, a pagan, the widow of a senator came to the convent to visit her. She wanted to give up her heathen way of life and learn the path of salvation. Bryene said, "I do not allow Febronia to have association with laywomen. Nevertheless,

I will consider your eagerness, tears and love for God and allow you to meet her wearing a nun's clothing". When Bryene introduced Hieria to her, the latter on seeing the monastic habit fell down at her feet (it was the custom of the day to greet another nun likewise).

After they had greeted one another, Febronia read various passages from the Bible. The whole night was spent in reading the Holy Book and by morning Hieria's soul was so filled with sorrow and compunction that she groaned and sighed before leaving the convent. Febronia asked Thomais, "Who is this strange sister who has never before listened to the word of God?" When Febronia was ill Hieria nursed her until she regained health. She was also present at the scene of the martyrdom of Febronia.

During this time Selenos, Lysimachus and Primus, the military generals of Emperor Diocletian arrived at Nisibis. They compelled all Christians to offer sacrifice to idols and threatened to murder those who defied the orders. Soon all the Christians in town, including the clergy and monks left their homes and fled. Febronia when she heard of their plans said, "I have offered myself to Christ. Therefore, I will not resort to flight. Let whatever God wills take place."

Prokla who had been brought up along with Febronia hugged her before taking leave of her, "Farewell, Febronia. Pray for me". Febronia tried to stop her by her appeal, "Fear God, Prokla. Do not

leave me. I am still unwell. What happens if I should die? Our Abbess, Bryene and Thomais cannot carry me to the grave alone. Stay with us to help them.” But an unconcerned Prokla left them.

The convent was emptied of sisters. Bryene went into the prayer room and groaned in grief. Thomais sat with her trying to console her, “God will effect a way out of affliction and temptation. Who has had faith in God and regretted it? Those who have persevered in Him are never abandoned. Bryene agreed with her but her concern was for Febronia,” What am I to do with Febronia? Where can I hide her to keep her safe? How can I watch if she is taken captive by the barbarians?” Thomais replied, “Have you forgotten what I told you? He who can raise the dead can certainly strengthen Febronia and save her.”

When they reached her bedside Bryene was more grief stricken. Febronia told them, “Just pray for me.” Thomais said, “If the tyrants arrive they will arrest and kill both of us who are old. They will try to seduce you seeing you are young and beautiful. Do not pay attention to their promises and do not lose the rewards of your past spiritual life. Remember the crown of success of all those who fought and were martyred.”

The next morning there was an uproar with shouting. Selenos and Lysimachus had taken control of the city and the soldiers had seized a large number of Christians and thrown them into

prisons. Some pagans informed them about the convent. As soon as they entered, they seized Bryene and drew their swords. Thereupon Febronia threw herself at the soldier's feet, "I plead you in the name of God, kill me first so that I need not see my mistress' death."

When the Commander Primus arrived, he ordered the soldiers out of the convent. He then asked them, "Where are the other nuns? Why didn't you also escape?" He informed Lysimachus, "All the women living in the convent have fled. There are only two old women and one young girl. Had she not been poor and wretched she would have made a suitable wife for you." Lysimachus replied, "I will never harm a woman who is a nun." (He had some sympathy for Christians, as his mother was also a Christian).

Selenos was informed of this matter and he soon arrived there and dragged Febronia out of the convent. Bryene and Thomais requested the soldiers to allow them to speak to her and to follow her. They were ordered to bring only the young girl but they acceded to their supplication and allowed them some time. "My daughter Febronia, remember the Heavenly Father watches over your trail. Hosts of angels are awaiting you with the crown of victory. Let me hear the good news that "Febronia has met her end and is reckoned amongst the martyrs of Christ." With these words of prayer, she sent her on her way. Thomais put on a laywoman's clothing

to follow and to watch Febronia's ordeal.

Selenos wanted her to recognize Lysimachus as her husband. She was not to be influenced by threats or coaxing and answered their questions boldly and strongly. He was exceedingly angry and ordered the soldiers to tear off her clothes. She had to stand there undressed, an object of shame. She was then subjected to the most brutal persecutions, like using iron nails on her body, squeezing her on wheels, cutting off her tongue and beating down her teeth. Later all her limbs were severed one by one. Hieria who was present there cried aloud, "Are you not satisfied by the terrible torments you have brought upon the girl?" She was also tied up and brought before the judge but was not publically tortured. Febronia was then beheaded.

Lysimachus was distressed and issued orders to guard her dismembered body. Very soon, Selenos met with death and Lysimachus exclaimed, "Great is Febronia's God." He arranged for her burial. Her mutilated body was carried to the convent for burial. Lysimachus and Primus accepted Christianity and got themselves baptized.

According to the commands of the metropolitan of Nisbis, it was decided to shift her relics to another place prepared for it. When her coffin was opened there was an earthquake, which made them put off the plan and only one of her teeth was transferred (Brock & Harvey, 1998). Her martyrdom is believed to have happened in AD 304 (Aphrem I, 2000).

In AD 363, her relics were shifted to Constantinople. She has become the patron of divine blessings for those who intercede on her behalf. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates her feast on 25 June.

5. Mina, the Martyr

(AD 285 – 309?)

Mina was born in AD 285 in the town Nakiyos in Egypt (Abdul Ahad, 1948). His father Eudoxius was the Governor and his mother was Euphemia. They had no children for a long time.

Euphemia went to a church in Attrib on the feast day of the Virgin Mary and sought with tears her intercession (to Jesus) to grant her a child. She received the response 'Amen'. Mina was born after that. Later he had a brother and a sister.

His father died when Mina was eleven years old and their mother died three years later. Mina led a Christian way of life observing lent and offering prayers. He joined the Roman army and was given a high rank due to his father's reputation. He went with the troops to Algeria to render his patriotic service to the nation. Emperor Diocletian at this time ordered everyone to give up the Christian belief and to torture those who did not worship idols. Mina decided to resign his job in the army and to surrender his life to his Lord, Jesus.

Mina sold all his property and became an ascetic. He saw in a vision the portals of heaven opened

and all martyrs being adorned with glorious crowns. Following that, he heard a voice granting him three crowns - - (1) for celibacy, (2) for asceticism and (3) for martyrdom.

Mina was offered many gifts to abjure a life dedicated to Jesus. When he refused to comply with their demand and reaffirmed his faith in Jesus an order was soon issued to decapitate him. This event is recorded to have happened in AD 303 (Abdul Ahad, 1948; Aphrem, 2000). After the execution, his dead body was set to fire for three days and nights but it remained unharmed. His sister bribed the soldiers and managed to get his body released and she embarked on a ship heading towards Alexandria along with her brother's body. A sea monster entered the ship, which scared the passengers and the crew. Fire emanating from the saint's body chased the monster off.

As the ship neared the port of Alexandria, a huge crowd including the Patriarch of Alexandria had gathered to welcome the saint's remains. With great reverence, they sheathed his body in expensive clothes.

When the period of persecution drew to an end, Mor Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, following a divine instruction, loaded St. Nina's body on a camel's back to be taken out of the town. The camel was not led by anyone as directed by the angel. People followed the camel. They heard a sound on reaching Lake Bayad in the district of

Marriot, "The Lord wishes Mina's body to be interred here." Thereupon they performed his burial there itself.

Many years passed and when Alexandria was besieged, the Governor secretly took St. Mina's body with him. Through the saint's intercession, he won the war. He wished to carry the body back to Alexandria. The camel, which carried the body of the saint, knelt at his burial place near Lake Bayad. It refused to move in spite of being beaten. They transferred the body to another camel's back but they could not continue the journey. Finally, they had to bury him in the same place.

After a lapse of many years, a shepherd happened to locate the burial place of St. Mina quite accidentally. One of his sheep was afflicted by mangy, a skin disease. That sheep rolled on the soil after dipping itself in water. It was miraculously cured. Thenceforth the shepherd worked a cure by applying the muddied soil of that particular place on the sick sheep. This story spread quickly over many places.

Upon hearing the story of the miracle the Emperor of Constantinople sent his daughter, who was suffering from leprosy there. She too applied the muddied soil from that area upon her diseased body. At night, she heard a voice telling her 'Get up early in the morning and dig this place. You will find my body there.' She informed her father she was healed of the dreaded disease. He constructed a

church there. During the reign of Roman Emperors Arcadius and Honorus, a large city was built around this area, which later came to be called Mariut. The Syrian Church celebrates the feast of St. Mina on 9 June.

6. St. Macarius of Egypt

(c. AD 300 – 390)

Macarius was born in the village Kemet of North Egypt around 300 AD. He was known by different titles like 'Macarius, the Great', 'Macarius, the Egyptian', and 'Macarius, the Elder' (Britannica, 1988, Vol. 7; Chediath, 2006). Information about him is found in Rufinus' Translation of the *Historica Monachorum* and *Lusaic History* by Palledius (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

Once a wicked woman who became pregnant accused Macarius of having defiled her and people dragged him along the streets (Moothedan, 2001). He did not defend his innocence. At the time of her delivery, she had prolonged labor. She had a dream in which God told her she could not deliver unless she confessed the name of the man who really violated her. She was thus compelled to disclose the identity and Macarius was freed from the accusation. People praised and glorified him.

He dwelt in a desert in Scete/Skete, Wadi-el-Natrum. When he was thirty, in AD 340 he was ordained a priest (Cayre, 1935; Britannica, 1988). He was blessed with the power of prophecy and healing. He was known as the patriarch of

monasticism. He was well known like the Antonius of Egypt. He had visited Antonius many times (Cayre, 1935; Britannica, 1988). He was very popular among the hermits of South Egypt. He lived the life of a hermit for sixty years.

Bisop Lucius of Alexandria banished Macarius to an island in the River Nile as he fought against the heretical teachings of Arius. Later he returned to Egypt and lived there until his death in AD 390.

Historians have made many references to his letter to his brothers 'To the Friends of God'. Another renowned work is '*Fifty spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius, the Egyptian*' by A. J. Mason, 1921. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his feast on 19 January and 30 May.

7. St. Anastasia

(? – AD 303)

Anastasia was a Roman lady of noble descent. She was a disciple of St. Chrosogonus (Cross & Livingstone, 1997). When Emperor Valerian ascended the throne of Rome, he gave orders to kill christians and to convert the people to worshippers of Jove (Kuriakose, 1986).

Anastasia who wanted to follow the Christian belief and practices joined a nunnery run by an abbess, named Sophia who could raise her in fervent faith. The Minister of the Emperor who came to know about her seeking shelter in the convent commanded her to be brought before him (Kuriakose, 1986). Sophia gave her courage and advised her to suffer for Christ and to sacrifice even her life for Him. The Minister told her to give up her faith and tempted her by offering money and position if she would worship Jove. However, Anastasia remained unshaken in her faith.

Anastasia was imprisoned. She went on singing hymns praising God in her captivity. The enraged Minister subjected her to fierce and endless torture. Her tongue was chopped off. Sirilos, a young man, who witnessed this atrocity offered her water when

she requested it. From then on, she was a victim of a chain of persecutions. A burning torch was put on her body which was already inflicted with wounds, her teeth were hammered down and nails were plucked off.

They accused Anastasia of vilifying their Gods as lifeless and made of stone, wood and bronze. Soon she and Sirilus, the youth who offered her water were put to death by the orders of the emperor. Some historians say the place of murder was Sirmium in Pannonia (Cross & Livingstone, 1997) whereas some others say her martyrdom occurred on the Palmaruola Island in the Tyrrhene Sea (Smith & Piercy, 1999).

St. Gennadius (AD 458 -71) transferred the relics of the saint to Constantinople and it was interred in the church established by Greogrius of Nazians (AD 329-389). Her memory is celebrated on 29 October by the Syriac Orthodox Church.

8. St. Marina of Antioch

(AD– AD 304?)

Marina or Margret celebrated as a saint was martyred during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian (AD 284 – 305). She was born in Pisidia on the border of Antioch and the River Orenthos. She lost her mother when she was five years old. Dasius, her father who was an idolater gave her into the care of a nursemaid who raised her on Christian faith. Learning about it her father disowned her (White, 1991) and drove her out of the house. Marina was well brought up as a chaste person with a fine character as her caretaker was a just and pure woman.

She read the biographies of martyrs and about their deep faith. She realized how their faith in Christ transformed ordinary people into martyrs. She was also aware of the persecution they suffered under kings and other administrators. She had a zealous desire to become a saint. One day when Marina and her foster mother had gone out Alupharnus sent some soldiers to arrest the Christians. When they approached her Marina prayed, “O! God, have mercy on me. Please do not allow my spirit to be sullied by those who defy God. Bless me to

remain fearless in the True Faith. Free me as a bird saved from a hunter and a fish saved from a net and strengthen me to answer them boldly.” The soldiers informed their master about her.

She engaged Alupharnus over a long and active discussion on God, the Creator of the heaven and the earth. He tried to persuade her to marry him with the offer to make her the queen if she followed his advice. Seeing that she would not renounce her faith he turned to threats of persecution. Marina replied, “I believe the merciful God will strengthen me. You have power only over my body but you cannot touch my spirit. I will be in the company of the wise virgins who awaited the arrival of the bridegroom. I will have a share in their faith.”

As she refused to accept his conditions, she was subjected to the most brutal maltreatment. She continued praying, “O! God, those who await you are never ashamed. Show me your path. Walk me in your way of truth. I confess your name. Shower your blessings upon me.” Hot wires were applied on her body and she was raked with iron combs. Still she refused to yield seeking the help of her Divine Father, “O! Lord, do not separate yourself from me. You are my strength. Relieve my life from the hands of the strong dog.”

Soon after, she was imprisoned. A bright light engulfed her at night when she was praying. All her lacerations were healed by the power of God. The authorities were astounded to see her healed

body the next day morning. They decided to burn her at the stake. As the soldiers got ready to carry out the orders, she went on praying. There was an earthquake and a voice was heard saying, "You are blessed. You will receive the crown of chastity." Amazed at the sight, those who were present glorified the True God. They were all beheaded and they too attained martyrdom.

Marina was taken out of the city precincts as she proved to be a threat to their gods and idols. She prayed and sought intercession for all those who were facing trials. It is believed that she was beheaded on 2 December. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates her feast on 20 June. Some churches celebrate the event on 2 December as well.

9. Didimos, the blind

(c. AD 309 – 395)

Didimos who lived in the fourth century was a revered Christian scholar and an intellectual spiritual leader of the theological seminary in Alexandria. He was born in AD 309/314? (Wace & Piercy, 1999). Even though he became blind at the age of four, he was a studious and intelligent student. His disciple Rufinus has witnessed to the fact that he used to pray in his youth not for physical eyesight but that his inner eyes should open to illuminate his heart. Despite his impaired vision, he studied with ardour and made a sincere effort to learn by heart the word of God to which he listened.

Didimos was a bachelor layman who knew the entire Bible by heart. He had deep knowledge in Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Maths and Music. Mor Athanasius (AD 295 – 373) appointed him the Head of the theological school in Alexandria (Wace & Piercy, 1999). Here blind children were given wooden blocks on which the alphabets were engraved. This can be considered as the precursor to the Braille alphabets discovered by Louis Braille (AD 1809 – 1852).

St. Antonios (d. AD 356), Palladius (d. AD 431), St. Jerome (d. AD 420) and Rufinus (d. AD 410) were eminent disciples of Didimos. Once he admitted woefully to Antonios about his loss of eyesight to which Antonios replied, “A scholar like you should not lament over the lack of physical sight which is shared by ants, flies and human beings. You should rejoice you have spiritual eyesight that can see the glories of Heaven like the saints and apostles do”(Wace & Piercy, 1999).

St. Jerome referred to him as not blind but as a seer. Jerome spent some days with Didimos in AD 386 to unravel some difficult passages of the Scripture.

Didimos had prophetic gift. He had a vision about the death of Julian who was persecuting the Church. Some historians refer to Didimos as being strongly influenced by Origen and adopting the controversial ideas propagated by him.

Libyanos remarked about Didimos, “It is impossible to be ignorant about Didimos who poured out his knowledge day and night in Alexandria.” He was one of the principal opponents of Arianism (Aphrem I, 2000). The Trinitarian doctrine showing the unity in the Trinity expounded by Didimos was more explicit than that of Athanasius (Chapman, 1908).He could do that because he combined the theological terms used by Athanasius (d. 373), St. Baselius (d.379), and Gregory of Nazians (d. 390).

Didimos’ treatise on the Holy Spirit is preserved

in a Latin translation by St. Jerome. He always referred to St. Mary as 'the mother of God'. He concluded his writings by glorifying the Trinity and seeking the intercession of saints (Wace & Piercy, 1999).

10. St. Epiphanius of Egypt

(AD 315 ? – AD 402/3)

Epiphanius was born in Besanduk village near Elethropolis, Palestine. Besanduk is in the neighbourhood of Gaza. It is inferred that his birth was somewhere around AD 315 (Cayre, 1936; Wace & Piercy, 1999).

While very young, Epiphanius followed a monastic life in Egypt. He was attracted to the ascetic life that followed the model and advice of St. Hilarion. He founded a dayaro near Besanduk when he was in his twenties and stayed there for thirty years (Cayre, 1936). Luthicos, the Metropolitan of Elethropolis ordained him a priest (Wace & Piercy, 1999). He gained the ability to speak five languages; Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic and Latin. St. Jerome called him 'a pentaglot' on account of this (Cayre, 1936).

He was a close associate of Patriarch St. Paulinos of Antioch who took a stern stand against the heresies of Arius and protected the Nicaea Creed. He was consecrated Metropolitan of Constantia (the ancient Salamis in Cyprus) as he was renowned for his saintly life and erudition. He served as the Metropolitan of Salamis for thirty

six years from AD 367 to AD 402/3. During this period many monasteries came up in the island of Constantia. Monks from Palestine and Eleuthropolis frequented these monasteries. In his letter (against all heresies) to the believers in Arabia he clearly asserted his belief in 'The virgin mother of God'.

Priests and many others in Pamphilia sought his help to resist and defeat the heresies of Arius. Even though he did not attend the Synod convened at Constantinople in AD 381, the declaration of the decisions taken in that Synod was a verbatim declaration of the Creed that existed in the church of Salamis (Wace & Piercy, 1999).

Towards the end of AD 382 he worked in close association with St. Jerome and Paulinos of Antioch. The spiritual inspiration of St. Jerome motivated a rich lady, Paula, to distribute her wealth among the poor and the sick. Epiphanius encouraged her to take up the monastic life. She went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in AD 383 and stayed in an abbey of Epiphanius for ten days.

St. Jerome visited Epiphanius on his way to Bethlehem. He was accompanied by many priests to whom Epiphanius was introduced as 'the father of all episcopos and the remnant of ancient moral principles.'

Epiphanius described Origen as 'the forefather of Arius' heresies'. In AD 394 he hastened to Palestine on hearing that Origenism had reared its head there (the reasoning that the second and

third persons in the Trinity were less than God, the Father). He could singularly refute and counter the heresies.

Epiphanius spoke vehemently against Origen in the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem. Metropolitan John who was a sympathizer of Origen expressed his disagreement with Epiphanius through an Arch Deacon. Following that Epiphanius discontinued his association with this Metropolitan. Jerome of Bethlehem and Rufinus of Mt. Olive, two eminent persons who were friends parted ways in the light of this argument. Jerome supported Epiphanius and Rufinus took sides with Metropolitan John (Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1958). Jerome's brother Paulinos was ordained a priest by Epiphanius in order to cater to the spiritual needs of the monks of Bethlehem (Cayre, 1936; Wace & Piercy, 1999). The appointment of a priest in an area under the authority of a Metropolitan was a transgression of Canonical laws, argued John. He approached many Metropolitans for the settlement of this issue. The arguments that ensued found no fruitful compromise.

In AD 402 Epiphanius travelled to Constantinople and argued against the heresies of Origen and he could successfully outwit him. He was considered a saint during his lifetime. Many people used to gather and wait patiently for hours to listen to his speeches (Wace & Piercy, 1999).

Among his literary compositions 'Ancorates'

written in AD 374 and 'Panarion' in AD 377 are very important. 'Ankorates' was composed when the believers in Pamphila asked for the teachings of the Church on the Trinity and the Holy Ghost. The book served as an anchor to stabilize those who wavered under the influence of Arius and other heretics (Cayre, 1936). Its hundred and twenty one sections deal with belief in the Trinity, the Humanity of Christ and Resurrection (Wace & Pirecy, 1999).

'Panarion', considered as a 'Medicine Chest' was presented as an antidote for those bitten by the serpent of heresy (Cayre, 1936). It lists eighty heretical teachings (from the time of Adam) and quotes many basic records (Wace & Piercy, 1999). Origen is listed as a heretic in Panarion.

Epiphanius stressed the importance of the Church in his teachings. "The Church alone, he says, has received the content of tradition, and it is in her teaching and decision that the faithful finds the truth." He teaches thus, "the Church is built upon the foundation of the unshaken faith of the rock, St.Peter.' His feast is celebrated on two dates by the Syrian Church, 13 March and 12 May.

11. Deacon Habib of Urhoy, the Martyr (? – AD 320)

Habib (Abibus) was born in Telzeba, a village in Edessa (Wace & Piercy, 1999). Details about his life are known from the books 'The acts of the Martyr Habib' written by Mor Theophilus and 'Homily on Habib' written by Mor Yacoub of Sarug (AD 451 – 521).

Gurias, the ascetic and his friend Samona were two victims of the cruel persecutions during the reigns of Emperor Diocletian (AD 284 – 305) and Emperor Maximian (AD 305 – 311). These two saints were put through endless torments and were beheaded (AD 299 – 306). Deacon Habib was the next saint to be martyred after them.

Deacon Habib preached the Gospel secretly in villages and churches. Wherever he ministered, he strengthened many by faith. Lysanias, the Governor of Edessa came to know about the missionary work of Habib. He released an order on 13 June AD 313 to hack to death by sword those who disobeyed the commands of Emperor Licinius (AD 311 – 324) and those who refused to offer sacrifices to their God,

Zeus. The initial order did not mention punishment for those who disobeyed the royal commands, as there were numerous Christians in Edessa. Soon severe punishments were imposed on those who disregarded the royal commands.

When rigorous punishments started to be implemented Deacon Habib was visiting Zeugma, fifty miles across the river edifying people about their faith and stabilizing them in it (Redington, 1994; Wace & Piercy, 1999). As he was unavailable, his mother and some villagers were arrested and incarcerated. The unfortunate turn of events set him thinking, "I will find myself in great shame if I hide and others are crowned with martyrdom due to it." Hereupon he presented himself before Theotecna (Theotaenus), an aide of the Governor and proclaimed, "I am Habib of Telzeba whom you search."

The officer desired to save Habib and said, "If so let nobody know that you have approached me. Continue to live in the same place until the heat of the persecution is over. Do not be anxious over the villagers. They will stay in the prison for some days but none will harm them. They will be released, as the Emperor has not commanded anything alarming against them. On the contrary, if you don't act accordingly you will not escape death by fire. I will be clear of your blood."

Habib persisted in surrendering. He said he was not at all perturbed about his family members and

villagers but of his own salvation. He was distressed as he was not present there when the search party came for him. He wanted to be taken to the governor immediately. The exasperated governor spoke to him like this “He who has shown disrespect and scoffed at me does not deserve any mercy. There is no need to hasten his death. Let bitter torment be inflicted on him which will deter others from fleeing.” He then asked Habib, “Where do you come from? What is your name? Who are you?”

Habib answered him calmly but the Governor was still enraged and said, “You are impudent in posing as a Deacon, disobeying the orders of the Emperor and refusing to offer sacrifices to Zeus.” To which he replied, “We are Christians. We do not worship manmade idols. If I had insulted Zeus how much more would those who used chisel and hammer on him have insulted him?” The Governor threatened to scourge him and to throw him to fire if he refused to worship Zeus. The unshaken Habib responded that he had anticipated those sufferings prior to making his appearance before the Governor.

He had to undergo brutal tortures. They insisted upon him offering sacrifices to the Roman Gods. Habib maintained those who do that were cursed. He was again tortured on Friday 2 September (Ilool). He reiterated he had never worshipped any other gods and he would never do it. He expected to receive the glorious crown woven for the persecuted martyrs. The Governor’s next question was, “If you

have no problem worshipping and honouring a man why should you refuse to respect and adore Zeus?" Habib corrected him to say, "I do not worship a man but the incarnated God." Consequently, his mouth was strapped and it was decreed to burn him in slow and lingering fire to increase his torment. He was soon taken out through the west fort built by Abslama, son of King Abgar of Edessa.

Undaunted, his dying prayer was, "Christ, my Lord, I will not run away from this tribulation for thine is this world and the world to come. Will I not be spared from the last judgment? As I burn in this fire, I will be redeemed from the undying fire. O! Glorious Son of the adorable Father, receive my spirit unto your presence through the Holy Spirit." The assembled crowd sighed and requested, "Pray to our Lord for us, for peace among His people and to restore the churches which are overthrown."

The evil perpetrators dug a hole and tied him to a stake within it. Habib reminded them, "I will not stir from here. Therefore, there is no need to tie me up. You can burn me." They arranged logs of wood around his body and set him aflame. His soul flew heavenward. His mother and relatives found his dead body unscathed when the fire burned down. The believers applied fragrant oil on his body and covered it in white cloth. He was laid to rest in a tomb next to the tombs of martyrs Gurias and Samona in Baith Allah Cucla hill. This event is believed to have happened on 2 September AD 320.

Mor Yacoub of Sarug has described the burning of Habib in his homily. "Habib the martyr adorned by flames called me from his pyre. I do not know if I can number him with Hanania. Who is more glorious Assariya or Habib? Habib fought against the sword and fire. His love was warmer than that of fire. Hence, he was not scared. Habib taught us to embrace death not fearing fire or sword."

Habib the martyr was light itself. This light lit up Edessa, the town of the believers. His affectionate mother was not grief stricken. She was happy. Instead of mourning him, she gladly accompanied him clad in white to the stakes.

The Syrian Orthodox Church remembers the martyrs Gurias and Samona on the feast day of deacon Habib (2 September). Their intercession is requested by believers to settle the disagreements and problems of marital life.

12. Flavian I, the Patriarch of Antioch (AD 320? – 404)

Flavian was born in an affluent family in about AD 320 in Antioch. As his father died very early in his childhood he had to look after the immense family property by himself. Still he did not fall into worldly temptations or vices. His palatial residence was a shelter for the sick and the suffering.

Flavian spent a life of solitude with Diodorus, later bishop of Tarsus. Both of them stood firmly against the heresies of Arius. Their followers divided themselves into two groups standing around the tombs of martyrs and reestablished the antiphonal singing practice introduced by Ignatius Bava (Wace & Piercy, 1999).

Patriarch Moran Meletius ordained Flavian a priest in AD 361. Emperor Valens a strong supporter of Arius settled down in Antioch in AD 370. Until his death in AD 378, he persecuted the believers of the True Faith.

On the death of Patriarch Meletius, Flavian was chosen to succeed him. The rulers in Rome and Egypt refused to acknowledge him as the Patriarch.

Through the intervention of Ivarios ‘the Gold Tongued’ (John Chrysostom) soon after his installation as the Patriarch of Constantinople in AD 398 and the influence of Emperor Theodosius, Patriarch Flavian was universally acknowledged.

The Syrian Orthodox Church commemorates Moran Flavian who became the twenty-sixth patriarch of Antioch (AD 381 – 404) on 14 November. The feast is also celebrated on 26/27 September.

13. Mor Shalito

(AD 320? – 415?)

Mor Shalito was a hermit in the monastery of Mor Paccomius. He was interested in reading biographies of saints and studied in detail the scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments. He was in charge of the monastery for five years. His rendition of songs was excellent and his humility was a model worthy to be emulated.

His first miracle occurred regarding a man possessed of a demon. Shalito drove out the demon in the name of Christ. Other hermits were jealous of his activities and so he left the monastery of Mor Paccomius and lived in another monastery for ten years. He led a life of solitude inhabiting mountains and caves.

He could overcome many temptations by the strength provided by the Holy Spirit due to his prayers and vigil. Shalito strongly resisted the heresy of Arius. He recognized the error of Arius through a vision. The vision enlightened him thus, “the heresy of Arius is darkness; it will be wiped off by the light which is the Orthodoxy of the Church. Lord Jesus will enable the victory over heresy. It will be destroyed like paper thrown into fire. The

True Faith will conquer and destroy all heretical teachings and deceptions.”

He also had a vision about Mor Augen. Mor Shelito left to live with his brothers after receiving this vision. ‘We will receive a great signal. A man, who is blessed like the apostles who were sanctified by God and filled with the Holy Spirit, will lead us. You will be like the apostles of Jesus. You will travel eastward to spread the Gospel. You will sow the seeds of the word of God in the fields of human minds. You shall uproot the teachings of Arius and rectify his errors.’

His vision proved right when Mor Augen joined Mor Shalito and his brothers. Together they worked in the vineyards of Christ propagating the True Faith. They visited Nisbis in Mesopotamia under the leadership of Mor Augen.

Three years later the epidemic, plague, hit Shar’oto village. Many people died and Mor Augen asked Mor Shalito to pray for the city and to drive away the angel of Death. The village was soon free of plague, which had taken the lives of one thousand two hundred and three people. They returned to Mt. Izla soon after relief was effected.

Once a snake bit him while he was sleeping. He killed the snake on the spot and spoke thus, “O, Serpent! Don’t you know that God has given us power and authority to crush snakes and scorpions and to exorcise evil spirits? None of your evil tactics will work with us.” Though it was a venomous

snake, the poison did not affect him.

Mor Yacoub of Nisibis (d. AD 338) before his consecration as a Bishop accompanied Mor Augen and Mor Shalito to Botan region in Qardu Mountains. They constructed a church in Zariklo where there was a temple (Zorababel) of heathens.

On another occasion when these three saints were resting in a mountainous valley they chanced upon a dragon (a huge serpent with wings) attacking a child and killing it. Mor Shalito raised the child to life making the villagers very happy. There was great rejoicing over the risen child and celebrations went on for three days.

He returned once again to Mt. Izla. From the dayaro there, he started on a long missionary journey to Mt. Sobo near Beth Zabady. He walked across the River Tigris as St. Peter, the disciple did. On the mountain, he had to endure a harsh winter with heavy snow fall. The area was engulfed in darkness making it impossible to see the sun or the moon for many months. He left for Maranashaf village and could evict evil spirits dwelling there. He also converted many a Kurdu to Christian faith. He could also raise a man from death in the village Farzoon (Arslan, 2005).

Mor Shalito baptized many as well. When he arrived in the village Moelo, he came to know about the death of Mor Augen. He himself departed for the heavenly abode in his ninety fifth year. A dayaro was constructed where his remains were interred. It is

called dayaro of Mor Shalito. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his feast on 15 November (Translated from *Saints Syriaques* by Rev. Dn. John Anderson, student of St. Ephrem's Seminary, Ma'arat Saidnaya, Syria in January 2010).

14. Mor Acacias of Aleppo

(AD 326? – 436?)

There are three important Church Prelates with the name Acacias. Of these, the Metropolitan of Beroea in Syria, the modern Aleppo, is dealt with here.

He was born in Syria. He joined the monastery of Asterius in Antioch at a very young age. He played a major role in the fight against the heresies of Arius (Wace & Piercy, 1999). Julianus Sabas, an anchorite (whose cave was in Osrhoene) came to Antioch to propagate the True Faith mainly due to the great efforts of Acacias.

Patriarch Moran Milithios consecrated him Metropolitan of Beroea in AD 378. He never changed his austere monastic way of life even after the consecration. He led a simple and pure life worthy of emulation. Acacias took part in the synod at Constantinople in AD 381.

Mor Acacias played a prominent part in the ascension of Moran Flavian as the Patriarch of Antioch in AD 381 after the passing away of Patriarch Moran Milithios (AD 360 - 381). The newly consecrated Patriarch Moran Flavian (AD

381 – 404) could establish good relationship with Metropolitans of Rome, Alexandria and Egypt due to the enthusiastic endeavours of Mor Acacias.

Mor Acacias was once a good friend of Mor Ivanios, the gold-tongued (AD 347- -407). They were later estranged due to some unknown reasons and Mor Ivanios was banished in AD 403.

Mor Acacias was known as the lover of peace during the period of Nestorianism (Nestorius taught that the human and divine natures remained unaltered and distinct in their union within Jesus, son of God, one person with two natures and St. Mary is the mother of Christ and not of God).

Mor Acacias could not participate in the Synod at Ephesus in AD 431 due to his advanced age. Paulose of Amesa represented him there. Moran Yuhanon, the Patriarch of Antioch (John I, AD 428 – 442), convened a synod at Aleppo, which witnessed constructive results of efforts for peace.

Mor Acacias died in AD 436 when he was around hundred and ten years old. The Syrian Orthodox Church commemorates him on 20 July.

15. St. Zeno

(? - ?)

The venerable Zeno was born in the city of Pontus into a rich family (Theodoret, 1990; Smith & Wace, 1887). He was the neighbour of Mor Basalius, the Great of Caesarea.

Zeno served at the court of Emperor Valence (AD 328 – 378, co-emperor from AD 364). So it is inferred he must have lived in the last part of the fourth century or the first half of the fifth century. Theodoretus (Theodoretus, the bishop of Cyrus) is recorded to have visited him. Tillemont claims that Theodoretus' period was from AD 393 to AD 453. Meanwhile some others say Zeno died during the reign of Emperor Leo (AD 457 – AD 458).

After the death of Emperor Valence he left the army and settled for a monastic life and many people assert Mor Basalius had a hand in this transformation. He lived in a cave near Antioch observing a rigid ascetic life. In his cell he had neither bed nor fireplace. He lived without the comfort of basic amenities like a lamp, an oven, vessels or bottles. The ascetic wore old rags, strapless slippers and consumed only bread and

water. The visit of Theodoretus is described as a happy event. He went to church every Sunday and received the Holy Mysteries. He ate only once in two days. The bread was supplied to him by an acquaintance. He had to make a tedious journey to bring water from a far away well.

Zeno led this solitary ascetic life for forty years. He was immersed in reading holy books. He had not completely given up his family property as his siblings were underaged. Later he entrusted his share of wealth to Patriarch Alexander of Antioch (AD 412 – 417) whom he considered as his divine caretaker.

Zeno escaped the persecution and murder let loose by Isaurian. What happened to his later life is not clearly known. The feast of the ascetic Zeno is celebrated on 22 November by the Syrian Church.

16. Arnobius

(? - AD 330?)

No one else other than Jerome has referred to Arnobius. Even what is cited in Jerome's Chronicle is meager (Roberts & Donaldson, 1956). It happened so may be because he was an idolater turned Christian.

Arnobius was born in the town Sicca Veneria situated on the north-west border Numidia in Carthage. During the period of persecution from AD 303 to 313 Arnobius was a distinguished rhetorician at Sicca in Africa (Roberts & Donaldson, 1956; Wace & Piercy, 1999).

Sicca Veneria was a centre of licentiousness of the goddess of lust. Many Phoenicians worshipped the goddess of lust. Many who had an excess exultation for lust and sex and who were an embarrassment to the Corinthians lived there. Women whose parents were poor sacrificed their chastity in the temple devoted to this goddess and procured dowry for their weddings.

These kinds of evil practices, superstitions and depraved customs prepared Arnobius to accept Christianity. He himself described his

transformation, "O! Blindness, I used to worship idols fashioned by hammers seared in furnace. Now the noble Lord leads me into the path of truth. I realise the truth of the matter now." He has reported somewhere else, "Once I was lost due to my errors, now I am a true Christian."

Arnobius used to be an avid idolater. Nevertheless, he was touched deeply by martyrdom resulting through the edict of Nicomedia. He visited a church in Sicca. People who had known about his previous activities were scared of him. He was not acceptable even to the metropolitan because Arnobius had always stood against Christ. Later on Arnobius was baptized and according to the reports of Trithemius, Arnobius was ordained a priest as well (Wace & Piercy, 1999).

Even though he accepted Christianity very late, he and Constantine did their best to wipe out idol worship after receiving the Christian faith. Of God he spoke in the noblest language of adoration, "The First Cause, foundation of all, One who is not born, Omnipresent, Incorporeal, Eternal, shrouded in light, ineffable." His concept of Christ ran like this, ... the only path to the Light and salvation only for those who follow him."

In his writings to the idol worshippers, he never quoted the Gospel, as they did not approve of it. Instead, he presented the essence of Gospel truths through logical reasoning. It showed that he had studied deeply the word of God. He could always

present these divine thoughts with clarity and power. His books, on scrutiny, reveal that they were written during the period between AD 297 and 305. Historians have reached the assumption that he must have lost his life during the period of Roman persecution (d. c. AD 330).

17. Mor Ossyo

(? – AD 377)

Ossyo's parents were Fanitheros and Gurgunia both famous and staunch believers in Christ. He was born in the town Farya, Rome. His father was brother to King Thevodosius of Sakadasysus.

Fanitheros and Gurgunia were childless but they believed fervently a child would be born to them and that was Ossyo. The Syriac meaning of the word Ossyo is 'doctor'. He studied in the school of Mor Yuhanon at Hamdan. His parents desired him to marry the Governor's daughter (Hasiba?) Arunia when he was of marriageable age. He had other plans as he had decided to give up worldly comforts to follow the divine path. Soon he proceeded to Jerusalem.

He visited the church of Nativity and other holy places in Jerusalem and obtained priestly habit after five months. He went to Mt. Sinai and arrived at a place where ten priests were staying. He did not stay with them but continued his journey to Kafra desert on the hillside. There he met Mor Deemeth, became his disciple and trained under him for fourteen years. He continued his stay with his master until his death.

Mor Ossyo became well known through his prayer life, asceticism and fasting. He did missionary work in Homs, Syria. More than thousand idolaters gave up their religion to follow him. Ossiyo could cure Bibindar, the King of Persia, who was infected during the outbreak of an epidemic. He travelled to the interiors of Antioch and protected people from the attack of wild animals. He healed many sick people in Nicomedia. When he returned to Antioch from Nicomedia, he realized his end was near. He called his students to his deathbed and said, "Children, I am going. As long as you live on this earth, do not deviate from the path I have taught you. Be careful not to fall into faulty ways. Continue worshipping God. Always tread the path of virtue and purity. This world and everything in it are mere shadows."

He also prayed for himself and the world. He passed away on a Thursday in the month of October in AD 377. There are many churches in Aleppo and other places in his name. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his feast on 1 October. In Aleppo, the feast is celebrated on 15 October. (Translated by Sri. Ashraf H.S.A., T.K.M.H.S.S., Karikodu, Kollam from an Arabic book).

18. Moran Meletius, the Patriarch of Antioch

(? – AD 381)

Moran Mor Meletius who was the patriarch of Antioch was born of wealthy and aristocratic parents belonging to Melitene in Lesser/Minor Armenia (Douglas, 1978).

Meletius who had been the friend of Acacius of Caesarea was the metropolitan of Sebastea. He later ascended the throne of Antioch as its patriarch (AD 360).

Patriarch Mor Meletius had selected John Chrysostom, ‘the Gold Tongued’ (AD 347 – 407) for missionary work, sent him for theological studies and ordained him a full Deacon in AD 381 (Douglas, 1978).

Meletius arrived in Antioch at a difficult time when Eudoxius (AD 360) was transferred to Constantinople. Eudoxius was a supporter of Arius and Mor Osthathios (d. 380?), Mor Paulinos (d. 380?), and Mor Athanasius (d. 373) of Sebastea championed the cause of Mor Meletius. The definition regarding ‘the substance of the Son’ in the Nicaea Creed was the topic of contention. Mor

Meletius defined the Son as of the same substance as the Father; “three persons are conceived in the mind, but we speak as if addressing one.” This explanation led to arguments and even physical assaults (Smith & Wace, 1882).

Mor Baselios (AD 330 – 379) supported Mor Meletius over this issue (Cross & Livingstone, 1997). The divisions which followed led to the banishment of Mor Meletius. Emperor Valens banished him twice from the country (AD 365 -366, 371 – 78).

In November AD 361, when Constantius died and Emperor Julian ascended the throne as the next emperor Mor Meletius returned to Antioch. Those who had accepted the Nicaea Creed came to a consensus and rejected heresies like Arianism, Sabellianism and Macedonism.

Emperor Theodosius respected Mor Meletius most reverentially. Mor Meletius presided over the synod of Constantinople (AD 381). To the great grief of every one, he passed away on one of the days while the Council was sitting (Smith & Wace, 1882; Malaty, 2005). The funeral speech of Mor Gregorios of Niza (AD 335 – 394) and the elegant panegyric by Mor Ivanios, the Gold-tongued (AD 347 - 407) are brilliant testimonies for his virtuous life.

His mortal remains were taken to Antioch to be interred near the tomb of Babylus (d. AD 250). The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his feast on 12 February.

19. Mor Yuhanon, the Arabian

(AD 391 – 486)

Mor Yuhanon was born in the village Hirtha in the Kashkar region. His father, Abraham, who belonged to the Buquila family was well known in that area.

His education started at the age of seven. He was interested in monasticism from the age of fifteen. Once at the church in Hirtha he had a vision about trisagion. He also saw punishment meted out to sinners on the Day of the Judgment and the list of names of the Just. An angel asked him, "Where do you want your name to be?" he answered, "With the virtuous." The angel advised him, "You must become a monk." On his enquiry how that could be made possible the angel told him, "A group of saints will pass your way after two days. You must join them." Yuhanon shared this divine experience with Mor Coorilos of Hirtha. The Bishop advised him to wait for two days to ascertain the veracity of the vision. After saying this the Bishop retired to the church to carry on with his prayers.

As Mor Coorilos was engaged in praying, he saw a light emanating from the cross. He saw a vision. He saw a lamp and heard a voice announcing that Mor Augen had sent seventy-two disciples to wipe

off the darkness of the world. The next morning he summoned Yuhanon and asked him to wait for one more night. Yuhanon had another vision that night of three elderly people. One person appeared more luminary. He heard a voice asking him to go to Mt. Sinai. Yuhanon after discussing his vision with the Bishop shared his feelings with his parents whom he had invited. They were anxious over his decision to become a monk but gradually accepted it.

Yuhanon started out on his journey from the village and like prophet Habakuk arrived at Singar. The village headman questioned him about the purpose of his visit. As Yuhanon made no answer, he was imprisoned. That night an angel appeared before him and asked him to go to the house of Augen. He arrived at Augen's Ashram weary after two days.

Pallus, the abbot of the monastery asked, "Why have you come here?" He was too tired to respond. Pallus reported the matter to Andrews, another monk who had foreseen this matter by divine grace. Yuhanon was given monastic habit. Yuhanon who was filled with divine blessing was a model for other monks.

Once Yuhanon was sent to the village Marre to buy wine for the Holy Qurbano. On arriving there, he gave away the money meant for the purchase of wine to a poor man. As he had no money, he filled the barrels with water and returned. He reported the matter to the abbot. On inspection, they found

to their surprise that the water had miraculously turned into wine.

On another occasion, he with the brother monks went to buy grain from the village near the Mor Augen Dayaro. Three thieves attacked them on the way and bound Yuhanon with ropes. They released him when he cried for mercy. He prayed for their return to the right path shedding their vicious lives. They had a change of heart and became monks.

Another miracle attributed to him is about walking on water. When he arrived at the village Tamonon, a monk invited him to join his monastery. When they reached the banks of the river Tigris, they found a Persian ship anchored there. They refused the monks permission to board the ship and harassed them as well. Then Yuhanon and the brother monk walked over the River Tigris to reach the other side.

When he returned to the dayaro Yuhanon obtained permission from the Abbot to lead a solitary life on the eastern side of the dayaro. The Gospel of John was his only possession. He came to the dayaro only to attend Sunday mass and to partake in the feast celebration of saints. He succeeded as the next Abbot after the death of the then Abbot.

Many miracles happened due to his intercession. He could oust an evil spirit with his prayers from a man possessed who was brought before him from Nisibis. Many childless couples were blessed with

children, plants bloomed, even the war between the Persians and the Romans ended and the plague that ravaged many in Marre village could be wiped off through his intercession.

Mor Yuhanon confessed to the monk Semoovan “My death is near. My body should be buried in Mor Augen Dayaro.” He who had been a monk for thirty-three years and an abbot for forty- two years passed away in his ninety fifth year.

20. Mor Theophilos, the Patriarch of Alexandria

(? – AD 412)

Mor Theophilos, the Patriarch of Alexandria was consecrated in July AD 385 as the successor of Mor Thimotheos. Mor Theophilos was the uncle of Mor Coorilos (AD 412 - AD 444) who was consecrated the next Patriarch of Alexandria after him (Wace & Piercy, 1999; Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

Mor Theophilos who had been the head of the Egyptian Church from AD 385 – AD 412 for twenty-seven years had been a powerful influence in all matters related to the Church and the nation. Some people have described his procedures as rigid and indiscreet. As these allegations were raised by his enemies it was impossible to confirm whether they were just or honest (Quasten, 1960). Three important events were the basis of these allegations. These are - - (1) Stringent action against idol worshippers (AD 391), (2) Counter arguments against Origen (AD 399- 401) and (3) The banishment of 'Gold tongued Ivanios' (St. John Chrysostom AD 403).

The northwestern provinces of Egypt were

strongholds of idolaters. With the permission of Emperor Theodosius (AD 391), the temple of Serapis and other temples were destroyed (Quasten, 1960; Cross & Livingstone, 1974). The statues of Serapis made of various metals and encrusted with precious stones were split to pieces (A superstition prevailed that if anyone approached the idol of Serapis there would be earthquakes). Many mice fled from inside the idol (Wace & Piercy, 1999). The counter reaction was persecution and murder of many Christians. Intense fights were waged in many parts of the country.

Theophilos rejected Origen's claim that the kingdom of Christ would end. In a synod, which met in Alexandria in AD 399/400 he condemned Origen. As Origen was denounced a heretic, many monks and prelates in Egypt were agitated. Criticisms and reactions were delivered in vituperative language. Many monasteries were attacked after this division.

The ascetics who supported Origen had to flee and take shelter in Constantinople. Nearly fifty of them approached Mor Ivanios (St. John Chrysostom) and requested help. He offered them shelter in the areas adjacent to the church of Anasthasia until he could find a solution after writing to Mor Theophilos. This action invited the ire of Theophilos who had elevated Mor Ivanios to the rank of a bishop (on 26 February AD 398). May be this contributed to making the situation more complex.

The matter was presented to Emperor Arkadius' consideration. The ascetics requested Queen Eudoxia to bring Mor Theophilos to Constantinople for a trial. He arrived late at Constantinople on a Thursday (in June AD 403). The council which had been in session in Oak on the borders of Chalcedon decided to dismiss Mor Ivanios.

Mor Theophilos passed away on 15 October AD 412. In accordance with the custom of Alexandrian patriarchs he had issued twenty six Easter Bulls many of which are theologically enriched. His feast is celebrated on 18 October by the Syrian Orthodox Church.

21. Mor Balai, Metropolitan

(? – AD 448?)

There are very few historical records about Mor Balai, the Metropolitan of Balsh. It is conjectured that either he had been the disciple of Mor Aphrem (d. 373) or he had been tutored by one of his disciples. He was a Corepiscopo of Aleppo church. He was the noblest companion of Metropolitan Acacius, of Aleppo Congregation. When Mor Acacius died in AD 432 Mor Balai composed five *madrasso* eulogizing Acacius. According to the description of Patriarch Mor Barsusan (d. 1073) Mor Balai was the metropolitan of Balsh (today known as Maskanal) a town situated to the east of Aleppo (Aphrem, 2000).

Mor Balai who is remembered in the fifth diptych is believed to have died in the fifth decade of the fifth century. The basis of this deduction is that his name is not found in the list of those who attended the Synods in AD 449 and AD 451 (Aphrem, 2000). The Bovooutho and songs composed by him are part of the liturgy and sacraments of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

22. Mor Thimotheos of Alexandria

(? – AD 477)

Thimotheos was a priest serving under Mor Dioscorus (d. 454) of Alexandria. Both of them were exiled to Libya as they did not support the decisions of the Chalcedon Synod of AD 451.

Thimotheos could return to Alexandria in January d. 457 after the death of Emperor Marcian. Later he was consecrated the Metropolitan of Alexandria. Protherius, the successor of Dioscorus, who was consecrated as the bishop of Alexandria by the supporters of the Chalcedon Synod, was murdered. Mor Thimotheos administered the affairs of Alexandria during these calamitous times. He issued an edict insisting on non-cooperation with the metropolitans and priests who accepted the decisions of the Chalcedon Synod.

Mor Thimotheos was determined that there should not be any contact with Nestor who argued in support of the two natures of Christ. He sent some priests and prelates to Emperor Leo with the message that by the grace of God the churches and dayaras in Alexandria were run in peace and that their Patriarch stood firmly for the Nicea Creed. He would neither change nor supplement anything to

it. He also affirmed that the Alexandrian Church did not recognise the Synod of Chalcedon.

From the lead of some evidences, it can be seen that Mor Thimotheos requested Emperor Leo to withdraw the recognition accorded to the Synod of Chalcedon and to convene a fresh synod. The people and social leaders of Alexandria wanted Mor Thimotheos to continue as the metropolitan. Emperor Leo forwarded the above-mentioned petition to the metropolitans of Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome and to fifty-five priests and three prelates (one among them was Semavoon, the stylite d. 459) to solicit their opinions. However, their responses were not favourable to Mor Thimotheos.

Emperor Leo authorised the military Commander Stilas in AD 460 to dismiss Mor Thimotheos from the Church and to elect a new metropolitan. Following this order Mor Thimotheos with his brother Anatalios was first banished to Gangar and later to Marsuhea, a coastal village, as disputes erupted in the Church again (Wace & Piercy, 1999).

When Emperor Zeno ascended the throne in AD 475 he invited Mor Thimotheos to Constantinople. His followers welcomed him enthusiastically shouting, 'the one who comes in the name of Christ is blessed.' As Patriarch Acacius closed all churches to prevent his entry he offered the Holy Qurbono in the houses of certain believers.

Mor Thimotheos also endorsed and repeated

the faith of Mor Yuhanon of Antioch (d. 442) and Mor Coorilos of Alexandria (d. 444) that the word consubstantial with God took flesh and lived among us. On his way to Alexandria from Constantinople, he visited the congregation at Ephesus and declared that the condition according to canon twenty-eight formulated in the Synod of Chalcedon, that the Church of Ephesus should be subjected to the church of Constantinople, was invalid. He returned to Alexandria. But before long, he died in AD 477. The memory of this saint is celebrated on 10 June by the Syrian Orthodox Church.

23. Isaac Malpan

(? - AD 491?)

Isaac was a priest born in Edessa and settled down in Antioch (Modern Antakya, Turkey) (Aphrem I, 2000). Zenobius, the teacher of Isaac was the disciple of Ephrem, the Syrian. The chronicles of Edessa record that he had been the Abbot of a dayaro in Gabala, Phoenicia (Smith & Wace, 1882).

Some historians have committed an error by identifying Isaac Malpan with Isaac of Amid. They have wrongly recorded that Isaac Malpan was born in Amid, (modern Erzurum, Turkey) Mesopotamia and died in AD 460 (Smith & Wace, 1882; Cayre, 1935). Patriarch Aphrem I has distinguished between Isaac Malpan & Isaac of Amid and pointed out that the mistake was committed by some eastern writers. The assumption is that the period of Isaac of Amid was from AD 363 to AD 418.

The claim of eastern writers that Isaac Malpan died in AD 460 cannot be right because it is confirmed that Isaac of Amid stayed with Ephrem, the Syrian in AD 363 when he was around twenty years old. Then his year of birth must be AD 343. Even if it is accepted for argument's sake that

he died in AD 460, he would have lived till one hundred and seventeen years. There is no mention of such an old priest in any record. Moreover the description of Yacoub, the historian of Edessa, is more acceptable among the conflicting evidences.

Isaac Malpan was a blessed writer like Mor Aphrem. Some historians have described him as 'Isaac the Great'. Mor Yacoub, the historian of Edessa, qualified him as a priest, a *malpan* (teacher, doctor) and a poet. He was present at the Synod at Ephesus in AD 431(Aphrem I, 2000). During the period of Patriarch Peter (Peter the Fuller) he travelled to Antioch (Cayre, 1935).

He is the author of a wealth of theological literature. Of his works only two hundred books were published (Cayre, 1935). Some of them are books written refuting the arguments of Nestor and Yuthicos. He has written on various topics; like the devastation of Antioch by an earth quake as an elegy (Smith & Wace, 1882; Aphrem I, 2000), about ascetic life, veneration of relics, observing the holy days, the inevitability of infant baptism to ward off evil and Satan's powerlessness to test man without divine sanction. He advocates that when priests order repentance they should not expel any one from the church but only prescribe physical penitence. His memory is celebrated on 14 October by the Syrian Orthodox Church.

24. Mor Yuhanon of Ephesus

(AD 507 – 587)

Mor Yuhanon was a famous historian, evangelist and an industrious man of the sixth century. He was born in Agel, a province of Amid, Turkey in AD 507. He was at the threshold of death at the young age of two due to a serious disease. He was brought back to life by the intercessory prayers of Mor Marun, a pillar ascetic in the dayaro of Ara Rabta.

Yuhanon became an inmate of the above-mentioned dayaro at the age of four and remained there until he was fifteen. During this time, Marun died and he shifted his stay to the dayaro of John, the Iberian, north of Amid, Turkey. He studied Holy Scriptures and practised spiritual life.

Mor Yuhanon, the bishop of Tella ordained him a Deacon in AD 529. He accepted monastic life following his ordination (Aphrem I, 2000). The monks when attacked had to flee and they were scattered in many places. They were allowed to return to the dayaro in AD 530. Yuhanon visited many dayaros, conversing with the most virtuous ascetics, learning from them and recording their chronicles. He travelled to Antioch in AD 532, to Egypt in AD 534 and to Constantinople in AD 535.

He could provide information about the persecution let loose by Ephraim of Amid and the cruel tyrant Abraham Bar Kili.

Deacon Yuhanon travelled to Constantinople, Mesopotamia etc (AD 540 – 541). Emperor Justinian who had great faith in him sent him to Asia Minor, Caria, Phrygia and Lydia to preach to the heathens. In AD 558, Mor Yacoub Burdona ordained him the Metropolitan of Ephesus (Cross & Livingstone, 1974; Aphrem I, 2000). His sincere evangelization for twenty-nine years converted nearly eighty thousand people to Christianity. He founded ninety-two churches and ten dayaros. In his efforts he was assisted by Ditrus who he consecrated the Metropolitan of Caria.

After the death of Mor Theodosius in AD 566, Mor Yuhanon became the supreme authority of the Church of Constantinople. Justin II started persecuting the Church from AD 571 onwards. Mor Yuhanon was imprisoned as a part of the trials against Christians and he was banished to an island for forty months. He has made detailed records about Paul of Aphrodisias, Stephen, the metropolitan of Cyprus and Elisha who were banished along with him and about the sufferings and tribulations they endured in prison (Wace & Piercy, 1999). He was arrested, released and banished twice again before his death in AD 587.

Mor Yuhanon was an ecclesiastical historian who has written the history of the Church in three

volumes. This history was published in various languages. '*Lives of Eastern Saints*', translated by E. W. Brooks was republished in 2003. He included biographical sketches of fifty-eight contemporary monks in that volume.

25. Semuvoon Quqai

(? – AD 514)

Semuvoon was a deacon in Geshir O Kishir, in the province of Antioch near the village, Harim. He was engaged in making clay pottery. The Syrian word *quqai* means one who makes clay pots. Hence he was known by the pseudonym, quqai.

As he was moulding clay he sang melodious songs. Some of these songs were written down by the monks in the Abbey at Harim and they were presented before Mor Yacoub of Sarug (AD 451 – 521). Mor Yacoub encouraged his talent in person and prompted him to continue his song compositions.

His songs translated to Greek were shown to Patriarch Mor Severius of Antioch (AD 459 – 538). The Holy Father asked Semuvoon to continue with his compositions.

He led a simple life and he was a scholar. His friends also helped him in composing songs. We learn about Semuvoon Quqai from the historical records of Mor Yacoub, the Metropolitan of Edessa (AD 640 – 708) (Aphrem I, 2000). Birth of Christ, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, St. Mary, other

saints, prophets etc formed the content of his songs. Seven of his songs about the incarnation of Jesus are preserved in the British Museum (De Lacy O Leary, 2000).

26. Mor Gregorios Dodho

(AD 530- 609)

Dodho was born in Sidos, a village in Iraq. His parents Simon and Helen were wealthy and well known for their strong faith. They were childless for a long time. Their faith led them to a monastery in Mt. Tabriz, Iraq. They stayed with the abbot Mor David spending their days and nights in prayers. Dodho was born to them in AD 530 because of their fervent prayers.

Mor David baptized him and they returned to their native place, Sidos. The villagers named the little boy Dodho according to the Christian tradition. He attended school in the village and grew up as a clever and good student.

Dodho's parents wanted to arrange a marriage for him but he was against the idea, as he wanted to dedicate himself fully to Jesus. He carried the Bible always with him, read and meditated upon it. After the death of his parents, he distributed all their earnings and wealth among the poor. He followed literally, what Jesus had taught. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

Dodho went to Mor David's monastery. He

observed rigorous penance. He desired to serve God leading a virtuous life. On mount Tabriz, he lived a solitary life for twelve years. The Abbot saw in a dream that Dodho's life was in danger and set out in search of him. He was brought back to the monastery severely ill.

After regaining his health, he visited the Holy land. On his return journey, he visited a village seven kilometers from Azakh in the northeast direction, a place infested with thieves. Dodho called upon his uncle and forty hermits and stayed with them. With everyone's cooperation, he could construct a church there. The village soon became a beautiful place to live.

When the metropolitan of Tigris died in AD 589, the Patriarch Peter III (AD 581 – 591) nominated Dodho as his successor. Even though he tried to evade it he had to accept the position and was consecrated under the name Mor Gregorius. As a Metropolitan, he ordained one thousand three hundred Priests and one thousand seven hundred Deacons. Mor Gregorius Dodho passed away in AD 609. His burial service conducted at Tigris Cathedral was attended by an enormous crowd of believers and one thousand eight hundred priests.

Mor Issahac, a relative of Mor Dodho transferred his relics from Tigris to Thurabdin in AD 629 and it was interred at Basibrin, Turkey. A church was constructed over his tomb. His memory is celebrated by the Syrian Orthodox Church on 20 May.

27. St. Anthimos, The Patriarch

(? – 541)

The first two decades of the sixth century witnessed the rivalry between the Syrians and the Nestorians. When the activities of the Syrians were concentrated on the western parts of Syria those of the Nestorians were on the eastern parts. While scholars in Greek and Syriac languages were scarce among Nestorians, articles on faith by Syriac scholars abounded. Their faith spread up to Persia in the east and Episcopo Simon (Simon d. AD 540) of Beth Arsham near Tigris was one of those who worked hard to protect the True faith (Aphrem I, 2000).

When the Persians annexed Syria, they offered protection to the Nestorians. Emperor Caesar Justin persecuted the Syrians and issued an order in AD 523 to banish all those who were not Nestorians (O'Leary, 2002, pp. 119-120). This edict was not valid in Egypt.

Emperor Justin appointed his nephew Justinian as the co-emperor due to his advanced age. After his death in AD 527, Justinian I ascended as the next emperor.

Justinian's queen Theodora was a Monophysite. During his reign Yacoub Burdona and his companion monk Sergius, came to Constantinople. Besides them Mor Saverius, the Patriarch of Antioch (AD 459 – AD 538) and Mor Anthimos gave leadership for the protection of the True Faith. Though the intervention of Queen Theodora provided temporary solace, it was a period of dire persecution (O' Leary, 2002).

Anthimos ascended the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople with the support of queen Theodora. Pope Agapitus arrived in Constantinople in AD 536, exiled Anthimos, and recognised Mennas as the Patriarch. A synod was convened immediately which condemned Anthimos, Saverius of Antioch, Peter of Aphem and ascetic Sonorus and published a declaration endorsing the same. An order was issued to exile all monophysites and to confiscate their books.

In response to the above-mentioned developments, Queen Theodora and Harith Ibn Jabala, a Christian Sheik convened a meeting of all prelates who believed in the doctrine of One nature of Christ. Patriarch Mor Saverius of Antioch, Patriarch Theodosius of Alexandria, Patriarch Anthimos of Constantinople, Peter of Aphem, Constantia of Lavodosya and many other metropolitans attended the meeting. Subsequently Mor Yacoub Burdono (AD 541/42) was consecrated a metropolitan. The following three decades saw

tireless efforts by Yacoub Burdono (d. AD 578) to promote the cause. Mor Anthimos worked diligently at a time of turmoil to prevent the Syrian Church vanishing from the world. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his feast on 20 July.

28. St. John of Damascus

(AD 675/76 – 749/50)

The source of information for the life of John of Damascus became available only in the tenth century through Patriarch John of Jerusalem. John was born in a wealthy Christian family in Damascus (Smith & Wace, 1882; Cayre, 1940). His father was in charge of the financial affairs (Collecting taxes from the Christians) of the Caliphate court of Caliph Abdul Malek (685 – 705) and represented Christians in the Royal Court (White, 1991). His father was known by the Arabic name, 'Al – Mansur'. Later the son also came to be known by the same name (Smith & Wace, 1882).

He was baptized immediately after his birth. His tutor was a Sicilian monk, Kosmos. The Christians in Syria enjoyed some freedom as they were paying taxes. John also held a high office in the Government (Vizier) during the reign of Caliph Yazid II (AD 719 – 723) at the beginning of the eighth century (Smith & Wace, 1882). But he gave up the comfortable court life and left his home around AD 715 and migrated to Jerusalem to become an inmate of St. Sebas Dayaro as he was attracted by the simplicity and austerity of monastic life

(Bihlmeyer & Tuchle, 1963). He became a monk in about AD 726 (White, 1991) and he was ordained a priest by Patriarch John V in c. AD 730 (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

There was a great dispute over iconoclasm, a movement seeking to prohibit the veneration of idols in churches from AD 717 - 843 (Gr. eikonoklastes-image-breaker, iconoclastic controversy). St. Epiphanius of Salamis (AD 315 – 403) vehemently objected to the use of pictures and images in the church (Douglas, 1978).

Making the images of Christ, St. Mary and other martyrs were idolatry. Christ never asked for that. The Bible has prohibited the worship of idols. St. Epiphanius wrote to Emperor Theodosius on this subject, “Royal power should be wielded to prevent the use of idols in churches. All the existing idols should be removed and no new ones should be allowed to be made.” He wrote in his will “God’s image should be borne in the heart. Images should not be kept in churches” (Chediath, 2006).

Images and idols were widely prevalent in churches from AD 400 to 600. Emperor Leo III in AD 725/26 issued an edict banning the making and worshipping of idols and their exhibition in public places (Smith & Wace, 1882). Gregory II & III of Rome declared the prohibitory orders as heretical (Douglas, 1978). John was in Palestine as a delegate of Patriarch John when the controversies and protests spread havoc.

Fr. John undertook a spirited defence of the holy images since the scriptures prohibited only the use of idols. His letters can be condensed in this manner. "It is impossible and impious to picture God but not Christ, the virgin, the saints and those angels who have appeared in human form. It is permitted to do so; idols alone are prohibited in the scriptures. The advantages of images and their veneration are many. They teach and recall the divine gifts, they nourish piety, they are also canals of grace, a kind of medium between their prototype and the faithful, even possessing a certain instrumentality in the granting of graces from high" (Cayre, 1940, pp. 328 - 329).

John was well known as a humble and obedient priest. His respect and devotion towards the Church, St. Mary and other saints were commendable. When Leo, the Isaurian, the Emperor of Constantinople started persecuting the venerators of idols, John protested strongly against it. The Emperor vented his anger by ordering John's right hand to be cut off. He prayed fervently to Virgin Mary for the restitution of his hand and thereupon the legend goes that his hand was miraculously restored (Smith & Wace, 1882; Hoever, 1989).

Some prayers used on Sundays and feast days were written by St. John when he was a priest. Songs sung in eight tones were composed by Yacoub of Edessa, Andrew of Tigris, John of Damascus and Kosmos (Aphrem I, 2000). It is

believed that John died in AD 750. The writings of John Phocas of the twelfth century show that he was buried in a tomb next to the tomb of St. Sebas (the monastery of St. Sebas is situated ten miles away from Jerusalem in the south eastern direction). Later his relics were transferred to Constantinople (Smith & Wace, 1882). John the priest's feast is celebrated on 4 December. He is also commemorated on 6 May and 29 November.

29. Moran Kyriakos, the Patriarch of Antioch

(? - AD 817)

Moran Kyriakos/Cyriacus born and raised in Tikrit, Iraq is well known among the Antiochian Patriarchs. He had his education at al Raqqa Dayaro and joined the dayaro after his studies. A model monastic and a theologian he ascended the throne of Antioch in AD 793 (Aphrem I, 2000).

The venerable father was an expert in Canon laws. We can see the many interpretations and explanations of various canonic laws given by him while examining the Hoodaya canon developed by Bar Ebraya (AD 1226 – 1286). Some priests and laymen protested against his strictures and broke away from his determined methods in enforcing laws and regulations. St. Kyriakos believed that laws and traditions should be practised diligently.

Michael Rabo, the Patriarch (AD 1126 – 1199) spoke of him thus –St. Kyriakos’ *‘Divine Providence’* is a notable book, which testifies his deep knowledge of the Holy Bible and the writings of the Church scholars. The seventy-two canons established by him and the pledge of allegiance

to be taken by the priests before their ordination are well known. His eulogy of Patriarch St. Severius (AD 459 -538), in the book '*Vineyard of the Beloved*', and the composition for the Sunday commemorating the priests who have departed from us, deserve special mention.

During the synod held at Kennisra (AD 797 – 98) his endeavours to reconcile Phantasiast / Julianist (a Christian sect that denied the reality of Christ's body) and to persuade them to join the mother Church did not bear fruit.

St. Kyriakos administered the Holy See for twenty-four years (AD 793 – 817) during which time he ordained eighty-six Prelates for the Church. He departed for the heavenly abode on 16 August (AD 817) at Mosul and was entombed at Tikrit, Iraq. The Syrian Orthodox Church commemorates him on 16 April.

30. Mor Ivanios Hidayathulla Bava

(AD? – 1694)

Mor Ivanios Bava hails from Bakkudaïda, the native village of Mor Baselios Bava entombed in Cheriyaipally Kothamangalam. His father's name was Shammo. He offered himself for missionary work at Mor Bahnam Sahada Dayaro in 1661 and became an inmate. During this time, he accompanied Mor Baselios Yeldho Maphriano to Malankara to offer protection to Syrian Christians. He was deputed to help the venerable father in administrative matters. Abdul Jaleel Bava (AD 1665) arrived in Malankara after the '*Koonan Kurissu Satyam*' (the oath at Mattancherry, Cochin) and defended the Holy Faith.

After the demise of the Bava in 1683, the then Arch Deacon, Thoma II sent a petition to Patriarch Abded Mishih I through a merchant, Joseph. The petitioner praised the ardour of Mor Gregorius Bava who tried to free the Syrians from Latin servitude and described the slew of persecutions employed by the Latins to compel the Syrians to join their fold after the death of his predecessor. The petition made an appeal to send a metropolitan and four efficient *malphono* (teachers) to Malankara for the

protection of the believers. A deputation started out from the patriarchal presence for this purpose.

H.H. the Patriarch was upset about the problems faced by the believers in Malankara. He conducted the consecration of holy chrism and discussed the grave situation in Malankara with all episcopos. Maphriano of the east, Mor Baselios Yeldho Bava on realizing the lamentable situation in Malankara expressed his willingness to relinquish his administrative powers and to go to Malankara to take care of the shepherdless folk. Mor Ivanios was consecrated an episcopo and was sent along with Yeldho Bava for his assistance. He traversed a route via Basra in 1685 along with his brother Juma of Mor Mathai Dayaro, Ramban Jocko of Mor Bahanan Dayaro, Ramban Mathai and Episcopo Mor Ivanios Hidayathulla . Fearing the Portuguese rulers, they travelled incognito and after a laborious sojourn across difficult terrains like forests and mountains, they arrived at Kothamangalam. They started as a company of five. But historical records show that only Yeldho Bava, Mor Ivanios and Mathai Ramban arrived here safely.

The Maphrian who arrived thus in Malankara raised Mor Ivanios to the order of a metropolitan on 14 in the month of *Elool* (September) on the day of the feast of the Holy Cross. The saintly Maphriano breathed his last at Cheriya Pally thirteen days after his arrival on 19th *Elool* and was laid to rest at Cheryapally on 20th *Elool*. Mor Ivanios Bava had

to take up the entire apostolic work of protecting the true faith in Malankara. He constructed new churches and renovated many old ones with the money he had brought with him. He also trained the priests to be scholars in the use of Syriac language and in the laws of the Church and to impart spiritual advice.

He wrote books and spoke vehemently and directly against the prohibited customs and new ideas introduced by Alexis Menzes, a Latin. He convened a synod at Chengannor church in 1686 to protest against the reformatory ideas decided upon in the Udayamperur Synod in 1599. Many priests and laymen from the southern churches participated in the Synod. After detailed discussions, there was reading of books of prelates and malpans and citing of the canons of the universal and native synods. Mor Ivanios issued an edict, which affirmed that the faith, customs and rituals of the Syrian Church from the time of the disciples had been true and blameless. The Romans in the past eighty years had forcefully introduced alien principles. He exhorted the believers to observe lent as per the norms of the Syrian Church and to celebrate the Holy Qurbano using the leavened bread.

A youth from Pakalomattom family was given priestly education and was ordained a deacon, a priest and then an episcopo under the name Mor Thoma III in 1687. When he died on 9 *Medam* 1688 Mor Ivanios ordained Mor Thoma IV to take up the spiritual authority.

Mor Ivanios continued his hard work for the progress of the Church. The foes of the true faith could not appreciate his work and they looked for an opportunity to put an end to his life. The Bava on knowing about this evil plot spent many a night atop trees (Aphrem Paulose, 1964). Though, he lived only for nine years in Malankara his service and contributions to the Church are glorious. The Holy Father died on 3 *Chingam* 1694 at Mulanthuruthy church and he was entombed on the south side of the 'Madbaho'. His tomb has been henceforth known as 'Thekke Kabarunkal Bava' (the bishop at the south tomb). His feast is celebrated on 3 *Chingam* every year.

31. Mor Ivanios Yuhanon

(? – 1794)

Mor Ivanios Yuhanon was born in Mosul, Iraq. The Patriarch, Ignatius Shakaralla ordained him a ramban at Saffran Dayaro and he was ordained a priest in 1724. Patriarch Geevarghese III sent him to Malankara along with Maphriyono Shakaralla in 1749. Mor Baselios Shakaralla Maphriyono consecrated him an episcopo at Kandanad church on 30 *Medam* 1752. He was to discharge his apostolic and administrative duties from Pallikkara church but as it was an important center of Mor Thoman VI, the natives caused him a lot of trouble. The Maphriyono had trained and inspired him to suffer and tolerate all tribulations and hence he could endure all the difficulties and continue his life there. When he fell ill, the Maphriyono sent him to Cochin and after his recuperation, he was appointed at Kandanad. After the demise of the Maphriyono, he assisted Mor Gregorios Yuhanon in administrative matters.

His brother Abraham arrived from Mosul in 1769 to take him back to their native place. He refused to accompany him as he wished to restore peace in the congregation. He wanted to advise Mor Thoma VI

and bring him back to the Church and to ordain him and he could achieve that after concerted efforts. After the demise of Mor Gregorius, ecclesiastical duties were rendered with the co-operation of Mor Divanasios I. Together they could resolve problems related to a fake ramban, Abraham Kattumangad who had appropriated the Episcopal powers. They filed a petition against him before the Rajas of Cochin and Travancore. The royal court transferred the case to the Dutch company. Their twelve judges examined the case and passed the verdict against Abraham Ramban. Mor Gregorius had not ordained him. He had merely seized the crosier and the Episcopal vestments of Gregorius Bava. As soon as the verdict was passed, he rushed to the Latin Bishop at Varapuzha who was a friend but he was followed and caught at Ponjikkara (Rajan, 2007).

Four soldiers presented him before the Divan who ordered him to be taken to Mor Deevannasios and Mor Ivanios. Hence, he was brought to Kandanad where they were residing. On a Sunday at the church in the presence of all believers and priests, they questioned him. The bishops were seated at one side of the table placed before the altar. The interrogation was carried out before lighted candles, with the Book of Gospels and a Cross placed on the table. Abraham Ramban confessed to committing sins. They asked him to remove and place his Episcopal vestments, cross, crosier and mitre on the table and to repeat the following prayer and to request for mercy. He consented and repeated

the prayer, 'I have sinned against Heaven and God and not worthy to be called your son. Make me one of your hired servants in your house.' He stayed at Kandanad for three months and when his health was impaired, he requested permission to leave for treatment. On receiving permission, he proceeded to Anjoor (Thozhiyoor) in Malabar under the jurisdiction of the Dutch and again proclaimed himself an episcopo. The illegal Episcopal order of the Anjoor congregation started thus.

Mor Ivanios continued his Episcopal and related activities along with Mor Deeavannasios I until his death on 7 *Medam* (*Nisson*) 1794 and he was entombed in the Old Syrian church at Chengannoor.

32. St. Mor Coorilos Yuyakkim

(AD 1818 – 1874)

Mor Coorilos Yuyakkim was born in 1818 in the village Habab in Thurabdin, Turkey. His father's name was Malki Bar Israel. He had five brothers Elia, Israel, Mordokkai, Skaria, Gabriel and two sisters Satha and Hedna.

He rendered his spiritual duties with great enthusiasm even at a young age. He learned Syriac language and Theology under the tutorship of Mor Severios. In 1845 Ramban Yuyakkim was consecrated a Metropolitan under the name Mor Coorilos by Patriarch St. Elias II (1838 – 1847).

During this period, English missionaries tried to prevail on Bishop Mor Deevannasios of Chappad to make alterations in the rituals and practices of Malankara Syrian Church. They wanted to remove the prayers for the faithful departed, and intercession to St. Mary and other saints from the Holy *Qurbano Thakso*. Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta gave leadership to this movement (Curian, 1982). Malpan Abraham Palakunnel of Maramon co-operated with the foreign missionaries and became their spokesperson.

A meeting of the two sides was convened with the help of Chappad Mor Deevannasios on 5 *Makaram* 1836 at Mavelikkara and a contract was accepted. This is known as 'the Mavelikkara Padiyola'. The Padiyola declared that the Syrian Christians of Kerala were directly under the ecclesiastical administration of the Patriarch of Antioch. The holy spiritual leaders of the church formulated the prayers and the rituals of the Church and no modifications can be made in them without the sanction of the Patriarch (Aphrem Paulose, 1964).

Mor Deevannasios informed Patriarch Ignatius II when the English missionaries violated the contract. Rev. Philipose Kassisa Edavazhikkal also supported him on this issue.

Deacon Mathews, son of Mathachan Palakunnath, a native of Maramon, was sent to the Patriarch who was stationed at Mardin, Turkey under the guise of carrying a request from the people. He was endowed priestly position and was consecrated Bishop with the title Mor Athanasius on 2 February 1842. (He was the initiator of the Marthoma Church).

Mathews Athanasios who was not consecrated legally started working with the reformers. On hearing about the complaints against him, the Patriarch sent Mor Coorilos to Malankara. He arrived along with his brother Israel in Cochin on 26 *Chingam* 1846. A team of believers under the

leadership of Mor Deevannasios received them. Mor Coorilos listened to the charges against Mathews Athanasios and as he was convinced about the veracity of the issue, published the excommunication Bull the Patriarch had entrusted to Mor Coorilos.

After his ban, Mor Athanasios sought refuge with the Protestants. With their assistance and influence, he cajoled the Raja of Travancore to issue a declaration on 9 June that he was the legally consecrated Metropolitan. The British Resident upon his influence published an ordinance prohibiting the entry of foreign metropolitans to Travancore & Cochin. Mor Coorilos was compelled to leave Kottayam and to go to Cochin on 8 January 1849 (Aphrem Paulose, 1964). He stayed at Fort Cochin and constructed a church there.

When Patriarch St. Ignatius Yacub II (1847 – 1871) came to know about the turn of events, he sent Mor Athanasius Stephanos to Malankara. He arrived at Cochin in 1849 February. Even after his arrival, the state of affairs remained the same. Mor Athanasius then went to London via Calcutta on 1 September 1852 and filed a petition in the Court of Directors of the East India Company. The prohibition order was cancelled in 1857 and as the travel ban on foreign metropolitans was lifted, Mor Coorilos could travel freely in Malankara. He discharged his services by thwarting the efforts of the Reformists, constructing new churches and

thereby protecting the True Faith.

The prayer book printed at Kottayam Seminary Press by Mor Athanasius had not included the prayer 'Hail Mary.....' Mor Coorilos sent Joseph Kathanar, Pulikkottil to Calicut to print 2000 copies of the original prayer book for distribution. Bava who was a scholar in medical science and Mathematics could cure many sick people. He was an expert in Syriac and Arabic languages and he mastered Malayalam during his twenty-eight years' stay in Malankara.

Coorilos Bava spent many years in Mulanthuthy Church which is known as the Jerusalem of Malankara. He ordained Deacon Geevarghese Cheruthurthil, a priest (1865) and later a corepiscopo. He also ordained Paulose Kochuparambil of the same parish, a deacon (Mor Coorilos Paulose Panampady, d.1917). Bishop Mor Geevarghese Chathurthil (d.1902) and Mor Coorilos Kochuparambil got inspiration for spiritual growth from the venerable Coorilos Bava.

After his laudable service in Malanakara for twenty-eight years, he died on 2 September 1874 and he was buried on the northern side of Mor Thoman Church, Mulanthuruthy. According to Bull No. E214/08 (dated 10-10-2008) he was proclaimed a saint. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his feast on 2 September.

33. Moran Theophilos, the Patriarch of Antioch

(AD? – 182?)

Theophilos was born in Mesopotamia. He studied prophetic books in order to question the Christian faith, which led him later on to embrace Christianity.

Theophilos was a clever Apologist. The discourse on faith, a theological perspective written to Autolytus to highlight the superiority of Christianity over other religions is very famous (Wace & Piercy, 1999; Douglas, 1978). It presented the chronological history of the Old Testament before Autolytus (a non-Christian friend who was a true searcher of Truth). The logical arguments dealing with Incarnation and The Trinity are noteworthy.

Moran Theophilos endeavored hard to resist the heresy of Marcion and to sustain the people in the True Faith. Marcion (AD 80 – 160) had always rejected the old Testament Books. He alleged that there were many discrepancies in the Old and New Testament Books. According to him, only St. Paul was the true apostle. He argued that the twelve apostles went along the wrong direction, as they

became more Judaic. Another of his argument was that there were two gods - - (1) the God of the Old Testament, the Creator and the giver of laws and justice and (2) the God of the New Testament – the Father of Jesus and the source of salvation and mercy (Ferguson, Wright & Packer, 1988; Douglas, 1978). He has contributed to different departments of Christian literature, like Polemics, Exegetics and Apologetics.

Eusebius and Jerome have made many references to his writings (Wace & Piercy, 1999; Malaty, 2005). The most important among them are -- (1) *The Apology for the Christian faith addressed to Autolycus*, (2) *The letter written against the heretical teachings of Hermogenes*, (3) *the letter against Marcion* and (4) *Catechetical writings*.

Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of Moran Theophilus (AD 169 – 182) the seventh Patriarch of Antioch on 17 October.

34. Mor Yulios Geevarghese

(AD 1829 – 1884)

Mor Yulios, the first metropolitan of Thumbamon diocese, was born in Konat family, Pambakuda as the son of Konat Mathen and Kunjilachar in 1829. He who was a great scholar in Syriac language and Theology was one among the six Metropolitans consecrated by H.H. St. Peter, the patriarch.

After his ordination at a young age, he came under the tutorship of his own ancestors Abraham malpan, Konat and Yohanan malpan, Konat for theological studies. After being ordained a kassiso, he taught the seminary students at Pambakuda church, the headquarters of his priestly ancestors. Mor Gregoroius Chathuruthil, the bishop, interred at Parumala was his student. He helped Mor Deevanasios Joseph Pulikkottil, the then Malankara Metropolitan, in his correspondence in Syriac as he was a scholar in that language.

Patriarch Peter IV arrived in Kerala in AD 1875 and came to Arthat church, Kunnamkulam. Mor Yulios was elevated to the rank of a ramban on 17 June 1875 at Chiralayam church by the Holy Father. He accompanied His Holiness as his interpreter until his return.

A printing press in Syriac language in Kerala was first started by him. In 1876 he was consecrated a Metropolitan along with Kadavil Paulose Ramban, (Mor Athanasius) at North Paravoor church. He accepted the selection to the metropolitan rank rather reluctantly. Until the arrival of the Patriarch in Pambakuda, he was immersed in literary activities like teaching the Deacons Syriac and translating rare books of the language. After being appointed the first Metropolitan of Thumbamon diocese he visited the churches in the diocese and discharged essential administrative duties, but most of his time was spent in learning Syriac staying at Pambakuda church. After the return of the Patriarch, he helped Joseph Mor Deevanasios in the conduct of litigations. He presented many books from his collection in the court and presented himself as a witness in Canon law.

When he was trying to establish one more printing press the Patriarch arrived in Kerala. The Bava encouraged him and sent him to a press run by European missionaries at Cochin in order to obtain necessary training. This happened when he was a Ramban. He visited the press many times, stayed there and gathered information through direct experience. In AD 1879, 'Kerala Deepam Press' started functioning in the church building of Pambakuda church. Some spiritual books like *Qurbano Thakso*, *Aneeda*, etc. were printed there. Bishop Mor Deevanasios and other Bishops supported him in his efforts.

Mor Yulios did not have a long life to carry on the good work. While visiting some churches in his diocese he fell ill and returned to Pambakuda. Though he recuperated after treatment and rest, he fell ill again. Mor Yulios passed away on 21 March 1884 in his fifty-fifth year. He was entombed in Pambakuda church.

His nephew Konat Mathen malpan bought new equipments to extend the activities of the press. The press was named 'Mor Yulios Press' in his memory.

35. Mor Deevannasios Semuvoon, Karavattuveetil

(AD 1832 – 1886)

Mor Deevannasios Semuvoon the first Metropolitan of Cochin was born in 1832 to religious parents belonging to Karavattuveetil family in the parish of Martha Mariam church, Kandanad. His parents gave him the name of the noble ascetic, Semuvoon Desthuna.

He was ordained a Deacon at Kandanad church by Mor Deevannasios Philipose IV, the Malankara Metropolitan, a Priest by metropolitan Mor Mathews Athanasius, Palakunnath and a Corepiscopo by Mor Coorilos Yuyakkim upon the orders of the Patriarch of Antioch.

Semuvoon Corepiscopo had deep faith and led a life of constant prayers and an austere monastic life. Everyone held him in high respect due to these noble qualities. Those were turbulent times for Malankara Church. Under the leadership of Mathews Athanasius, Palakunnath reformation movements were set in motion and the Malankara Church was tossed about in this heavy storm of discord. Semuvoon Corepiscopo was the chief

among the many priests who gave strong and steady leadership without being staggered by conflicts.

In the Synod convened at Mulanthuruthy (1876 June 27-30) under the presidentship of Patriarch Ignatius peter III (IV) Corepiscopo Semuvoon was selected to the church managing committee. He was elevated to the rank of a Ramban by the Patriarch on 5 September 1876 (24 Chingam 1052) at Mulanthurthy. Fr. Paulose Kochuparambil, Thozhupadan (later Mor Coorilos) and Corepiscopo Yacoub, Chalapurathu also were ordained Rambans along with him. Respected Ramban Semuvoon was appointed as Epithropo of the Patriarch and as the Superior of Vettikal dayaro.

The Synod presided over by the Patriarch decided to divide Malankara into various dioceses and to consecrate Bishops for the same. Semuvoon Ramban was appointed in charge of the Cochin diocese comprising the Arthat church and the nearby churches up to Cochin. According to the orders of the Patriarch Semuvoon Ramban and Paulose Ramban, Murimattathil were to be elevated to the rank of Metropolitans and they presented themselves at the District Registrar office, Kunnathunad, Perumbavoor on 26 March 1877 (15 *Meenam* 1052) to register the oath of allegiance (*Salmoosa*) to the Patriarch. Both of them were committee members of the managing committee of the Malankara association.

On Thursday 17 May 1877, the day of the Ascension of our Lord, Semuvoon Ramban was consecrated a Bishop at St. Lazarus church, Chiralayam, Kunnankulam, under the name Mor Deevanasios Semuvoon by H. H. the Patriarch Peter III, the supreme head of the Syrian Orthodox Church. He was given charge of St. Peter's church in Cochin Fort and other churches in the diocese. Mor Ivanios Paulose, Murimattathil was also consecrated along with him for the Kandanad diocese. Four Bishops who were consecrated earlier served as co-celebrants in the ceremony of their consecration along with the Patriarch.

Mor Deevanasios could not carry out the administration of the Cochin diocese satisfactorily as he fell sick and was rendered incapable due to rheumatism. He died on 2 October 1886 on a Saturday. The funeral service was led by Mor Geevarghese Gregorius (Chathuruthil) and Mor Ivanios Paulose. He was interred at St. Paul's & St. Peter's Jacobite Syrian church, Kadugamangalam on 3 October.

36. Mor Athanasius Paulose Kadavil

(1833 – 1907)

Paulose was born to Kooran Avira Varkey and Anna Vattaparambath of North Paravur on 19 *Vrichikam* 1833 (M. E. 1008). As a young person, he was pious, of good character and was loved by all. When he was thirteen he was ordained a Korooyo by Mor Deevannasios, Cheppad on 10 *Kumbham* 1846 (M.E. 1021) at Cheriya Pally, Kottayam. His tutors were Abraham Kathanar, Earalil, N. Paravur; Mathai Kathanar, Parackal, Angamali, and David Kathanar, Areekkal, Akaparambu (Chakkara Akathuttu). He received the order of '*Mshamshono*' from the delegate of Antioch, St. Mor Coorilos Yuyakkim at Chalissery church in 1847 (M. E. 1022). He was the translator of Yuyakkim Bava, which enabled him to acquire a deep knowledge in Syriac. Later he could translate many Old Testament books from Syriac (the Book of Thubeed, Pslams, the Wisdom of Solomon and Maccabi).

Mor Coorilos ordained him a Kassiso on 6 *Makaram* 1854 (M.E. 1029). He offered the first Holy Qurbono in his own parish church, North Paravur. Instead of taking up (?) the administration of the church, he engaged himself in teaching the

deacons. He also served as Malpan in the Old Seminary, Kottayam.

The efficiency and scholarship of Paulose Malpan was well known in Malankara. Youseph Mor Coorilos (Alathur) of Malabar Independent Church appealed to him directly and through emissaries to be his successor but Paulose Kassiso had denied this offer always.

When Patriarch Peter IV visited Malankara in 1875, Paulose Malphono accompanied him on his visits. In 1876, the Patriarch convened the Association of Syrian Christians and initiated a democratic set up for administration. Due to the re-organization of the Church into dioceses, the Patriarch consecrated six new metropolitans and Paulose Malpan was one among them.

On 15 *Mithunam* 1875 (M.E. 1051) the Patriarch consecrated him a Ramban and on 21 *Vrichikom* 1876 (M.E. 1052) a Metropolitan in his own parish church at North Parvur under the name Mor Athanasius. The Patriarch had a special interest in him and accorded him a distinct status as the representative of the Patriarch in Malankara in his *Stathikon* (order of appointment).

As the Church regained the Old Seminary at Kottayam through a court order in 1889, the Metropolitan stayed there discharging the administrative duties and supervising the education of the deacons. The reform efforts of Palakunnath Mathews Athanasius led to the closing down of Manarcad Thazhathe Pally and he stayed

at Manarcad church to give guidance for the construction of Karotte church. He also took the lead in constructing churches at Kallungathara, Kumarakam and Veliyanad.

According to the direction of the Patriarch, Mor Paulose was a co-celebrant in the consecration ceremonies of Fr. Alwaris who joined the Syrian Church deserting the (Goa) Catholic Church on 29 July 1889 and the American priest Fr. Reni Vilathy on 29 May 1892 (M. E. 1067). The former was consecrated at the Old Seminary under the name Mor Yulios and the latter at Ceylon under the name Mor Thimotheus.

After the passing away of Mor Coorilos Ambbat of Angamali diocese, Mor Paulose had to undertake the charge of the diocese. Mor Paulose designed and constructed the '*Kudish Kudishin*' (altar canopy) of many churches including that of Cheriya Pally, Kothamangalam.

Mor Paulose completed the construction work of Thrikunnath Seminary at Alwaye started by Mor Coorilos. He also registered a will giving away his share of the family property of the renowned and rich Kadavil (Kooran) family to his own parish church at North Paravur and to Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye.

Mor Athanasius Paulose passed away on 20 *Thulam* 1907 and his remains were interred at Thrikkunnath Seminary. The Syrian Orthodox Church celebrates his anniversary on 2 November.

37. Mor Deevannasios Joseph Pulikkotil (1833 – 1909)

Joseph was born on 7 December 1833 (M. E. 1008 *Vrichikom* 24) in the Pulikkottil family. His father was Kurien and mother Thanda. He was ordained a deacon at the age of thirteen at Cheriya Pally, Kothamangalam by Mor Deevannasios Cheppad and a priest at the age of twenty at Chalissery church (c. AD 1852) by Mor Coorilos Yuyakkim.

The reformative ideas of protestant missionaries had spread in the Church and a crisis erupted during this time. Palakunnath Abraham Malpan, a spokesperson of the new movement had sent his nephew Deacon Mathews to Antioch under the pretence that the people had selected him as a Prelate. He could convince the Patriarch who consecrated him a metropolitan under the name Mor Athanasius. On his return to Malankara, with the support of the British rulers, he acquired the rank of the Malankara Metropolitan through a royal declaration.

Even though he had attained the new

ecclesiastical status using the influence of those in power, he did not try to spread the reformatory ideas or bring about any changes in the practices and rituals of the Church. Instead, he helped them and paved the way for the smooth conduct of their activities.

In order to rectify the lamentable situation Edavazhikkal Philipose Kassiso proposed Pulikkotil Joseph Kathanar to the rank of metropolitan. Coorilos Yuyakkim sent many letters to H. H. the Patriarch for the same purpose. Finally, Joseph Kathanar started his journey to Antioch on 27 *Khumbam* M.E. 1038.

Patriarch Ignatius Yacub II (1847-1871) ordained him a Metropolitan under the name Mor Deevannasios in 1865 at a church in Amid, Turkey. When he returned, he tried to thwart the activities of the reformers and to recover the lost properties of the Malankara Church. His efforts to restrain the reformers were in vain, as they enjoyed the support of the rulers.

Mor Deevannasios Joseph appraised Patriarch Peter III (IV) about the dire situation in Malankara and the attitude of the British authorities. The Patriarch visited the British king and explained the situation. The king was convinced and subsequently the royal declaration of Mor Athanasios was withdrawn. Peter III arrived in Malankara in 1875 and summoned a meeting at Mulanthuruthy in 1876 in order to arrange the temporal matters of the

Church. As per the decision of the historical synod, the Malankara Church was divided into seven new dioceses for administrative convenience. In addition, metropolitans were ordained for each diocese.

Pulikkottil Thirumeni concentrated on the general affairs and took a strong stand on various issues. He had to file new cases to retrieve the lost Church property from the reformists. The verdicts from the sub court and royal court were in favour of the Bishop and he could regain the seminary and other property belonging to the Church. The administration could be conducted smoothly as the famous churches like Kottayam Cheriya Pally, and Arthat church were regained.

During the tenure of Mor Deevannasios, many schools including the well-known M. D. Seminary School (1892) started functioning. The number of churches increased from one hundred and seventy five to two hundred and eighty two. Theological seminaries were established in Kottayam, Pambakkuda, and Parumala. Many journals like '*Edavaka Pathrika*', '*Njananikshepam*', and '*Suriyani Sabha Suvisheshakan*' were published along with books dealing with the Church and its affairs. The Jacobite Syrian Missionary Association was formed for missionary activities. A church in Trivandrum and a dayaro in Vettical were also set up.

The Jubilee of Thirumeni's priestly ordination

was held at Kottayam in 1901. Sri. E. M. Philip Edavazhikkal acted as his trusted associate. The passing away of Chathuruthil Thirumeni on 2 November 1902 who he considered his successor and of Mor Athanasius Paulose of Angamali and Kottayam dioceses on 2 November 1907, left Mor Deevannasios in great sorrow. Following the deaths of these two metropolitans, the Patriarch Abded Aloho II consecrated two bishops Mor Coorilos Paulose, Kochuparambil and Vattasseril Thirumeni in 1908 at the Dayaro of St. Mark in Jerusalem.

By 1909, Deevannasios Thirumeni, after serving the Church through turbulent days for four and a half decades, became bedridden due to rheumatic problems. He died on 28 *Mithunam* M.E 1084 (11 July 1909) in his seventy sixth year. Many eminent people, the Maharajas, the Viceroy, and the British Resident sent condolence messages. Mor Osthathios, the delegate of Antioch, offered the Holy Qurbano before his burial on the northern side of the Old Seminary Chapel. The Syrian Orthodox Church commemorates him on 11 July.

38. Mor Coorilos Geevarghese, Ambatt

(1834? – 1891)

Geevarghese (Korath) was born in M.E. 1010 (AD 1834?) as the third son of Ittimathu and Elikutty of Ambatt Vadakkan family of Akaparambu (Angamali) parish. During the conquest of Tippu Sultan, this family migrated from Arthat and settled down at Poikkattusery. His maternal grandfather, Korath, Mazhuvancherry Parambath, Ayyampally was a judge in the old Cochi region. His desire was to become a priest like his father's brother, Yacoub (Chacko) Ambatt.

After learning the vernacular, he learned Syriac language and litany from Rev. Fr. Yacoub Kooran Karavattuveetil and Rev. Fr. Ittimathu, Parackal. He was also an expert in Theology, Maths and Architecture.

Mor Yuyakkim Coorilos ordained him a Deacon and after his ordination, as Priest he served in his own parish. He was consecrated a Ramban by Patriarch Ignatius Peter III at Mulanthuruthy church on 27 June 1876 (15 *Mithunam* 1057) on a Tuesday along with two other Rambans. When

the Patriarch decided to divide the Malankara Church into dioceses and to consecrate Bishops for the same, Geevarghese Ramban, Ambatt was designated the Angamali diocese.

Geevarghese Ramban was consecrated a Bishop under the name Mor Coorilos Geevarghese on 10 December 1876 (28 *Vrichikam*) at Mor Thoman church, North Paravoor. He was entrusted authority over St. Mary's church Angamali and other churches around it. Mor Geevraghse Gregorius was consecrated along with him for Niranam diocese. The bishops consecrated the previous Sunday (3 December) Mor Geevarghese Yulios, Konat (Thumbamon) and Mor Paulose Athanasios, Kadavil (Kottayam) were co-celebrants along with the Patriarch in this consecration.

When Semuvoon Deevannasios, Karavattu-veetil and Mor Ivanios Paulose (Kandanad) were consecrated on 17 May 1877 at Chiralayam church, Kunnamkulam, Mor Geevarghese Coorilos, Ambatt also served as a co-celebrant.

Ambattu Thirumeni has done much valuable services for the Church. He constructed many churches and ordained many priests. He stayed in various churches at Kothamangalam, Kuruppampady and Rakkad. With the emergence of the reformists the bishop visited many churches and did his best to retain the priests and believers in the True faith.

He bought the land where Trikunnath Seminary

is situated for making it the head quarters of the Angamali diocese. The most memorable and valued institution for the Church and the diocese is the St. Mary's seminary church, Thrikunnath, the construction of which started in 1889 (?) (M. E. 1055). The first Holy Qurbano was celebrated there on 2 March 1899 (18 *Kumbham*). He made use of contributions from Angamali, Akaparambu churches and provided money from his own pocket for its completion.

While on a visit to Pambakuda church Mor Coorilos Geevarghese fell ill and returned to Akaparambu church. He realized his end was near and retired to Cheria pally, Angamali where he constructed a tomb on the northern side. He passed away on a Sunday in his fifty- sixth year on 8 March 1891 (24 *Kumbham* 1066) and was interred in the tomb which had been prepared by him.

39. St. Mor Coorilos Paulose

(AD 1850 – 1917)

Paulose was born on 4 December to Thozhupadan Varkey and Anna, daughter of Thoppil Skaria, a priest.

Paulose learned Syriac under the tutorship of Rev. Geevarghese Malpan, Pallathittayil and Rev. Fr. Geevarghese Koonapillil. Mor Coorilos Yuyakkim ordained him a deacon in 1860 and in December 1866 Bishop Mathews Athanasius, Palakunnath, ordained him a priest. He offered the first Holy Qurbano on 7 January 1867 at St. Martha Mariam Church, Kandanad.

When there was a dispute about the validity of the ordination of Mathews Athanasius, a meeting of the representatives of churches was convened at Parumala Church and according to the decision of the committee Bishop Mor Deevannasius Joseph, Pulikkotil reordained him a priest on 2 *Kanni*, 1873. Subsequently he was appointed the vicar of Mulanthuruthy Church.

During this period Geevarghese Ramban, Chathuruthil was leading a dayaro life at Vettikal Kurisupalli. Rev. Paulose was also interested in

dayaro life and thus a companionship developed between them, which he favoured a lot. It was during his tenure as vicar of Mulanthuruthy Church that Patriarch Peter IV visited Malankara in 1875. Rev. Paulose as well as Chathuruthil Ramban participated in the synod at Mulamthuruthy in June 1876 and the consecration of the Holy Chrism in August.

Thozupadan Paulose Kathanar was elevated to the rank of a Ramban by Patriarch Peter III on 5 September 1876. Along with him, Semavoon Kori, Karavattu, Kandanad and Yacaub Kori, Chalappuram, Mulanthuruthy parish were also elevated as Rambans. Rev. Paulose Ramban could not stay for long in Vettical with Chathuruthil Geevarghese Ramban as the latter was soon consecrated a Bishop under the name Gregorius (entombed at Parumala) on 10 December 1876 by Patriarch Peter III.

Rev. Paulose Ramban was entrusted with the responsibility of the Old Seminary in 1894 by Mor Deevannasius, the Malankara Metropolitan. Very soon, he started the construction of the Old Seminary chapel. In 1895, Chathuruthil Thirumeni wished to make a journey to Jerusalem for which preparations were made under the leadership of Deacon Sleeba (Later Mor Osthateos Sleeba, Delegate of the Holy See of Antioch) who had been staying at Puthenpally, Kottayam and the Old Seminary from 1881 onwards. Thozupadan

Paulose Ramban also accompanied Chathuruthil Thirumeni to the Holy Land.

Rev. Paulose Ramban was busy completing the work of a mess hall at the Old Seminary and the chapel after his return from Jerusalem in May 1895. He could publish '*Malankara Edvakappathrika*' simultaneous with his responsibility as the Seminary Manager.

He was delegated the construction of a church in Trivandrum and could complete the same in one year. This is the St. George church seen in Trivandrum today. His next endeavour was to start a school in Piravom in 1903.

In spite of holding and discharging various duties for the church, he never distanced himself from prayer, fasting and meditation. His missionary zeal enabled him to baptise more than two hundred people from other religions. Paulose Ramban took the initiative to construct St. Thomas Chapel for the newly converted Christians in Manarcad, Ariparambu and Amayanur, Kottayam at a time when untouchability and caste ostracism were prevalent in society. He himself came forward to carry out the religious needs of the newcomers to the Church.

A meeting of the representatives of the Church convened by Mor Joseph Deevannasios on 27 February 1908, selected Rev. Paulose Ramban and Vattaseril Geevarghese Ramban as candidates for the post of bishops. An eleven-member team

including these two rambans started their journey to Jerusalem on 25 April 1908. They arrived on 26 May at the presence of Patriarch Abded Alaho II (Abbdul Masiha who had been deposed was alive then. It is claimed that in 1912 Abdul Masiha was invited to re-establish the Catholicate).

On Sunday 31 May 1908, Patriarch Abded Alloho consecrated both Paulose Ramban and Vattaseril Geevarghese Ramban as metropolitans under the names Coorilos and Deevannasius respectively. Mor Osthathios Sleeba Bava (the delegate of Antioch, entombed at Kunnamkulam Simhasana Church) and Mor Ivanios Elias Bava (Patriarch Moran Elias III, entombed at Manjanikkara) were co-celebrants of this metropolitan consecration.

The newly consecrated bishops along with Osthathios Bava, the delegate of Antioch, arrived in Malankara on 17 July 1908. They were given a royal reception by the Church.

Mor Deevannasios Joseph died on 11 July 1909 and Mor Geevarghese Deevannasius, Vattaseril ascended as the Malankara Metropolitan with the blessings and permission of H.H. the Patriarch of Antioch. The consecration ceremony was conducted at the Old Seminary with Mor Osthatheos as the main celebrant and Mor Ivanios Murimattom and the newly consecrated Mor Coorilos Paulose as co-celebrants (Mor Osthathios Sleeba Bava's preference was for Mor Coorilos to become the Malankara Metropolitan).

Patriarch Abded Aloho II arrived at Bombay on 24 September 1909 to visit Malankara. He came to Kottayam after paying his respects to Sree Moolam Thirunal, the King of Travancore. He asked the two newly ordained bishops to submit the legal agreement as per prior assent. Mor Coorilos did accordingly on 29 *Chingam* 1910 whereas Bishop Vattaseril refused to hand over the agreement, which was followed, by division, allegations, and counter allegations.

Patriarch Abded Aloho II on 31 May 1911 issued an order from the Old Seminary excommunicating Mor Deevannasius Vattaseril due to the aforementioned event. Malankara association was convened under the presidentship of the Patriarch in Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye on 30 August 1911 and Mor Coorlios was elected as the next Malankara Metropolitan. Disputes and quarrels became daily occurrences in the Seminary. Mor Coorilos left the Old Seminary for Attamangalam church, Kumarakom. The rest of his days were spent at Panampady church and Piravom church.

The final Bull issued by him on 2 Thulam 1917 from Panampady church was heart touching. He was ill, his condition worsened from the first week of December 1917. Mor Athanasius (d. 1953), Mor Osthathios Bava, the delegate of Antioch (d. 1930), and Mor Savarios Edavazhikkal (d. 1927) reached Panampady church and conducted the necessary last rites and prayers.

Mor Coorilos, who had fought the good fight, completed his race and protected the faith, passed away on 14 December 1917. The next day the Holy Qurbano was offered on three altars with Mor Athanasius as the main celebrant and he was entombed on the north side adjacent to the altar of St. Mary's church. Mor Osthathios delivered the funeral speech. According to Bull No. E215/08 (dated 10-10-2008) he was declared a saint and his feast is celebrated on 14 December.

40. Ramban Kuriakose, Vanchithattil

(AD 1883 – 1967)

Kurien (Kuriakose) was fourth among the six children born of Chacko Mathu, Malekkal, Kiliroor (Panampady) and Achamma. After completing his academic studies he joined Bishop's College, Calcutta to pursue theological studies as his passion was to serve as a priest.

Mor Coorilos Paulose ordained him a *Korooyo* on 11 September 1911. He was ordained a Priest soon after. Mor Athanasius Paulose, Always elevated Fr. M. Kuriakose, Vanchithattil to the rank of a Ramban on (6 Chingam) 19 August 1934. (Rev. Fr. M. I. Paulose, Mulayirikkal also received the rank of a Ramban on the same day. Later Mor Sevarius of Cochin diocese).

Vanchithattil Ramban played a significant role in the services of the Church from the time he was ordained a priest. He assisted Valiya Thirumeni of Always in the planning and formation of Malankara Sunday School Association (M. S. S. A.) in 1920.

Rev. Fr. Kuriakose was the main architect in founding the spiritual organisation of the Syrians, 'Religious Movement of the Ancient Syrians - R. M. A. S.' in 1930. During the Malankara visit of Patriarch

Ignatius Elias III, Fr. Kuriakose accompanied him most of the time.

He played a pivotal role in the formation of 'The Brotherhood of St. Antony's – B. S. A. & the St. Mary's Sisterhood – S.M.S.'.

Fifteen acres of land in Piramadam and ten acres of land in Kizhakkamablam for B.S. A. & S.M. S. respectively were donated for the throne of Antioch. The land was hence registered in the names of these spiritual organisations so that it will be used only for the intended purpose and function under the sanction and authority of the Patriarch.

Very Rev. Ramban Vanchithattil stayed at Manjikkara dayaro from the time of its inception. Some time in between, he stayed at Piramadam and Panampady. From 1962 until his demise, he lived at Panampady. His final days were difficult even for his carers as he suffered from old age problems, failing memory and the severity of the monastic life had taken its toll on him.

Kuriakose Ramban has authored many ecclesiastical books pertaining to church service. In most of them, the author is mentioned only in initials 'Fr. M. K.'. The available books under the authorship of this Syriac expert are '*The Holy Church & Faith*', '*Monastic Life*', '*St. Mary*', '*St. Peter, the Chief of Apostles*', and '*St. Antony*'.

Vanchithattil Ramban who should be remembered with gratitude by the Malankara congregation died

on 14 December 1967 and he was laid to rest at St. Mary's church, Panampady.

41. Mor Osthatheos Thomas

(1904 – 2000)

Thomas was born on 5 June 1904 to Mathai, Panthalamakkil, Sitharkuzhi (Pachilakkat) Puthenpurayil and Annamma. He spent his childhood at his native place Puthuveli itself. His primary education was at Puthuveli Primary School. He studied at St. Mary's School Kuravilangad until seventh standard and attended M. G. M. High School, Thiruvalla after that. As a student, he exhibited his talents in oratory, acting and composing poems. Even in sports, he could make his mark.

He received the order of Korooyo from Malankara Metropolitan St. Coorilos Paulose, Kochuparambil (Panampady) at the age of nine. Before Middle School, he joined Pambakuda seminary for a three-year course in theology. He was the disciple of Rev. Ramban Geevarghese Kochuparambil and Rev. Malpan Konat Mathen and Metropolitan Mor Thimotheus Augen.

Before his ordination as a priest in 1930, he had passed his intermediate course from C.M.S. College, Kottayam and graduated from S.B.

College, Chenganacherry. Following the advice of the delegate of Antioch, Mor Yulios Elias Bava, he offered his services at St. Mathias church, Madras. On his return to his native place, he took his B.T. degree from Maharajas Training College, Trivandrum. He was appointed as the head master at St. Stephen's church School, Keeramabara. He taught five years in Vadakara High School and served in the same school for eleven years as the head master. The T.T.C. School in Vadakara was established mainly due to his efforts. During this period, the Thirumeni published many short poems.

After retiring from Vadakara High School in his sixtieth year, he helped Chevalier T. Thomas to start an English Medium High school at Perambur, Chennai. He rendered his service there as a teacher and vice-principal.

The Malankara Synod selected him as a Metropolitan when he was seventy-one. Moran Mor Ignatius Yacub III, the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East consecrated him a Metropolitan under the name Mor Osthatheos on 12 June 1975.

From 1975 to 1982, he was the assistant Metropolitan of Kandanad, and Kottayam dioceses. He was appointed as the Metropolitan of Cochin during the first visit of Patriarch Moran Ignatius Zakka Iwas I to Malankara in 1982. When Mor Osthatheos took up the administrative rein of Cochin diocese at the age of seventy-eight, it had no headquarters or institutions of its own. He implemented many development programmes

on a regular basis. Initially his stay was at Karingachira church but gradually 'Kymtha' Chapel at Thiruvankulam was developed as the diocesan headquarters. His interest in teaching prompted him to start an English Medium High School, 'The Gregorian Academy'.

The Holy See honoured Mor Osthathéos by bestowing on him the title 'Snugrod Haimmonutho' (the protector of faith). He was deputed to help H.B. the Catholicos, as he was unwell. He also did a commendable service as the chairman of the litigation committee of the church.

He retired from administrative duties of the diocese after entrusting the work with his successor Mor Gregorius Joseph. The humble, enlightened and peace-loving Thirumeni entered eternal rest on 28 July 2000 when he completed ninety-six years. He was entombed at 'Kymtha' Seminary Cathedral, Thiruvankulam on 30 June. His death anniversary is celebrated on 28 July.

42. Mor Severios Paulose

(1910 - 1962)

Paulose was born on 6 November 1910 as the son of Ittoop (Kunjittoop), Mulayirikkal of Valiya Pally, Cherai and Elachi, Vallathukaran, Nedumbassery. He was affectionately called Kunju at home. He had two brothers, Yacoub and Varghese. Yacoub was the son by his father's first marriage. Paulose used to stammer in his childhood. He started talking as well as walking only by the age of three (Mor Severios Smaranika, 1962).

He attended school only when he was eleven years old and for the next three years, he learned Syriac from Varghese Kathanar, Murimattom, the parish priest of Ayyampilly church. When he was fourteen, he joined Rama Varma Union School, Cherai to pursue English education.

'Valiya Thirumeni' of Alwaye ordained him a deacon at St. George church Arakkunnam in 1926. He continued his High School education thereafter and passed school final examination in 1929. He shifted his stay to Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye as per the orders of Valiya Thirumeni. Deacon Geevarghese Vayaliparambil and Deacon Paulose Mulayirikkal were classmates at the Seminary.

He improved his knowledge in Syriac under the tutorship of Malpan M. T. Ittira. Valiya Thirumeni ordained him a Kassiso in 1930.

Father Paulose was an expert in the rendition of Syriac songs and transcribing Syriac books. He could also assist the junior deacons in their studies. Fr. M.I. Paulose, Mulayirikkal and Fr. M. Kuriakose, Vanchithattil were elevated to the order of Rambans by Mor Athanasius Paulose at Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye on 19 August 1934 (*Chingam* 6).

Rev. Paulose Ramban shifted his stay to Koratty in 1939 and constructed 'Sinai Ashram' in the name of 'Mor Kuriakose Sahado'. The Syrian Christians in Mambra used to go to Thabor church in Peechanikad to participate in the Holy Eucharist until then. A church as well as a church building came up during his five years stay at Koratty.

The general body meeting of the diocese of Cochin convened as per the Bull No. 30/1944 of 'Valiya Thirumeni' Alwaye in Karingachira church on 10 May 1944 (*Medam* 27) nominated Rev. Paulose Ramban to the office of the Metropolitan. Even though there were some impediments for the same the Patriarch Moran Mor Aphrem I consecrated him under the name Mor Severios and Geevarghese Kathanar, Vayaliparambil under the name Mor Gregorius at the Simhasana church, Homs, Syria on 4 August 1946. Rev. Ramban Abdul Ahad (later Patriarch Moran yacub III) who had

been staying at Manjanikkara also accompanied them back to his native place.

It was 'Valiya Thirumeni' of Alwaye, the spiritual mentor of Paulose Ramban, who endeavored to lift him to the rank of the Metropolitan. For sixty years from 1886 to 1946 (at the demise of Mor Deevannasios Shemuvoon), the Cochin diocese was under the administration of Malankara metropolitans. Hence, the diocese had no assets or institutions of its own. The diocese had rejuvenation from the time Mor Severios took up the reins of diocesan administration.

On 28 February 1951, 'Valiya Thirumeni' laid the foundation stone of Sion Seminary at Koratty and the construction work started. At the inauguration on 17 April 1958, the speech delivered by Mor Severios was remarkable. "On this occasion we remember with gratitude the sacred memory of H. H. Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem I, who raised us to this position. As he has departed from us forever, he cannot share our happiness, offer felicitation or issue a Bull of blessing on this happy day. How can I express my deep sorrow at this great loss? The only consolation is that his spiritual presence is here with us."

Mor Paulose could acquaint himself with many in Malankara due to his stay and training with 'Valiya Thirumeni' at Alwaye. He could also establish a strong friendship with the delegate of Antioch, Mor Yulios Elias Bava. Following the peace accord

signed in 1958, an attempt was made to transfer St. Mary's Syrian Simhasana church, Arthat, which was directly under the administration of the Patriarch of Antioch, to the Cochin diocese. This triggered off many problems in Kunnamkulam.

Mor Severios arrived on a Wednesday 14 March 1962 at Kunnamkulam by night to conduct the *Dukrono* festival (March 19) of Mor Ostahathios Bava. In the context of litigations going on in court, many priests and lay people helped him in his efforts against the object of foundation of the church. From 1959 onwards, Mor Yulios Elias Bava, the delegate of Antioch, was not allowed to enter the Simhasana church. Mor Severios walked two furlongs to Arthat Valiya Pally on a Friday evening on 16 March 1962. He experienced chest pain on the way and returned to Simhasana church on Saturday 17 March. The chest pain aggravated after lunch and he succumbed to it.

His assistants stated his desire to be buried in Koratty Seminary. Many assumed if he was buried in the Simhasana church, it would enhance and support the reasons for bringing the Simhasana church under the diocese of Cochin. On the strength of this argument, his mortal remains were interred on the south side of the church. His death anniversary is on 17 March.

43. Mor Athanasius Paulose II, Kadavil (1915 – 1991)

Paulose was born on 15 *Mithunam* 1915 (27-06-1915) as the son of Kunjannam (D/o Thatholil Itteechen, Kulangara) and Kadavil Kurien Paulose, the son of Varkey, the elder brother of Kadavil Mor Athanasius Paulose the first metropolitan of Angamali diocese. Paulose completed his school education from St. Paul's Primary School and Government English Medium School North Paravoor.

After graduating from U.C. College, Alwaye, he took his postgraduate degree in Philosophy from Madras Christian College (AD 1941) and another Postgraduate degree in Political Science from Columbia University, U.S.A.(1950). His doctoral studies were completed at the Kerala University in (1966) and he secured D.D. (1974) and D.Litt degrees from Sweden.

He was ordained *Korooyo* in 1938 by Mor Yulios Bava, a *kassiso* in 1944 by St. Athanasius Paulose Valiya Thirumeni, Alwaye and a ramban on 24 *Chingam* 1947 by Mor Yulios Bava at Thrikunnath

Seminary, Aluva.

He served as Malpan of Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye for some years. His service as a writer, orator and meditation *guru* was remarkable. The Ramban, an expert in Syriac language has written many classic books in English and Malayalam. He translated the prayers, and *Qurbono Thakso* from Syriac and rendered the *Qurbono* songs from Syriac tunes into English. He had also learnt other languages like Arabic, Bengali and French. He has composed more than thirty books in Malayalam, English and Syriac of which some are 'Bible and India', '*Ennathe Vidhyarthikal*', '*Randu Vrudhanmmar*' '*Acharya Sahai*', '*Shushrushka Sahai*', *Four Jacobite Liturgies, Meaning and Interpretation of the Eucharist of the Syrian Church, The Orthodox Syrian Church: Its religion and philosophy* (Ph.D. Thesis), *Five Years in the Central Jail, Sheema Yatra, Njan Kanda India, England and America* etc. A versatile personality, drawing was another of his amusements. He has occupied responsible positions like the President of the Evangelical Association of the East (EAE), Administrator etc.

During the uncertain times in Malankara in the seventies on the request of the EAE, the Patriarch decided to consecrate Rev. Paul Ramban who was serving as the mission director, a missionary Metropolitan. The Patriarch Ignatius Yacub III consecrated him under the same name of his

ancestor, Mor Athanasius on 2 September 1973.

He was selected as the assistant Metropolitan of Niranam, Quilon, Thumbamon dioceses when Mor Deevannasios Michael (d. 1956) was unwell. Mor Athanasius was the first metropolitan to be consecrated during the problematic years of the Church. He executed a bold leadership in the Church and EAE from 1973 onwards. After his seventieth birthday in 1985, he retired from administrative affairs of the Church and led a life of rest at Cheriya Vappalasey Ignatius church. He was entombed in the same church at his death on 6 March 1991. His death anniversary is celebrated on 7 March.

44. Mor Theophilus Thomas

(1919 – 1992)

He was born on 1 November 1919 as the fourth son of Mamachan (Kochukunju) Moothedath and Rebecca. He studied at Kallooppa and Kumband Govt. Schools.

When M. P. Thomas Kathanar, Mookkencheril (later Patros Mor Osthathos) the founder of 'Sleebadasa' social institution arrived at Kumbanad for missionary work, Thomas worked in association with him.

He joined Pambakuda seminary after high school education and learned Syriac language under the tutorship of Malpan Abraham Konatt. Baselios Geevarghese II ordained him a deacon in 1942. Mor Thimotheus Augen ordained him a priest in 1946. He rendered his service at many churches thereafter and joined Jabalpur Theological College.

When he was the vicar in Bangalore church in 1964, a grand welcome was accorded to the Patriarch Moran Yacub III. He also served as a vicar in Calcutta and Kuwait. He had an opportunity to visit the Holy Land and to be the guest of the Patriarch along with Mor Athanasius Mathews in 1966. At this

time, the Orthodox Managing Committee declared that it was severing its connection from the Holy See of Antioch. Thomas Achan protested against this decision and issued a press release. Augen Bava proscribed him because of this move.

Thomas Achan came to Mepral, discussed the problems with Mor Coorilos, and returned to the Jacobite Syrian Church. He was ordained a Corepiscopo in 1974 at Mepral Church by metropolitans Dr. Mor Athanasius Paulose Kadavil, Mor Gregorius Geevarghese and Mor Coorilos Kuriakose. He then functioned as the Diocese Secretary, member of the managing committee and member of the working committee. He could establish parishes at Bombay, Bhopal, Nagpur and Jabalpur. H.B. the Catholicos appointed him as the Vicar General of outside Kerala dioceses. Soon after the appointment, he visited all these dioceses along with H. B. Mor Baselius Paulose II. They visited the then Indian President Sanjeev Reddi, Indira Gandhi, central ministers and Governors. They could also plan the inception of a parish in Delhi. H. B. the Catholicos ordained him a ramban at Manjanikkara in February 1978.

H.B. the Catholicos Paulose II elevated Thomas Ramban who had made notable contributions to the Church as a Metropolitan at St. Simon's Church, Velloor on 19 April 1979. Along with him, Mor Thimotheus Yacoub and Mor Ivanios Philipose were also consecrated Metropolitans. Serving as a

Metropolitan outside Kerala with his headquarters at Delhi, Mor Theophilus Thomas was instrumental in bringing up many parishes and congregations for the Church. Many parishes that were lost to the Church could thus be recompensed.

He was the member and later the executive member of N.C.C.'s commission on faith and order. He served as the President of the Jacobite Youth association for a long period, framed a constitution for its activities, and developed it to its present status.

When MSOT Seminary at Vettical was under construction in Mulanthuruthy, Mor Theophilus Thomas donated a good amount towards its construction and contributed his collection of books to the seminary library. He shifted his stay to the Seminary and henceforth the office for outside Kerala dioceses and headquarters functioned at the Vettical seminary. A cardiac patient, the Thirumeni breathed his last at Trivandrum on 12 January 1992. His remains are interred at Mor Aphrem Chapel in Vettical Seminary. The Syrian Orthodox Church observes his anniversary on 12 January.

45. Mor Milithios Barnaba, Homs

(1922 – 2004)

The baptismal name of Mor Milithios Barnaba was George. He was born as the son of Rev. Fr. Joseph and Le Ari at Idil in modern Turkey in 1922.

After his primary education at Azek, he joined St. Thomas School, Mosul, Iraq. He was ordained a *Korooyo* in 1938 by the metropolitan of Mosul, Mor Athanasius Tooma Qwasil. In 1939, he joined St. Ephrem seminary, Sahale, Lebanon. After his ordination as '*Yaufodayakino*', he started being known as Barnaba.

The Patriarch Mor Aphrem Barsaum (1933-1957) appointed Deacon Barnaba as a teacher in the seminary when it was shifted to Mosul in 1945. He was the head of the seminary for two years. He accepted the dayaro habit from Mor Athanasius at Mor Mathai dayaro, Mosul in 1945.

He was appointed as the second Secretary to the Patriarch Aphrem I in August 1947. He was ordained a Priest in 1950 by the Patriarch Aphrem I at Soonoro (Girdle) church, Homs. Following that in 1951, he was appointed as the first Secretary to the Patriarch.

Barnaba was chosen as the patriarchal vicar of Egypt in 1955. Patriarch Aphrem I consecrated him a Metropolitan under the name Mor Milithios Barnaba at Soonoro cathedral, Homs on 7 April 1957. When the patriarchal headquarters was shifted to Damascus, Syria in 1959 he was given charge of the diocese of Homs and Hama.

Mor Milithios established an orphanage in 1963. Patriarch Ignatius Zaka I presented him the honorific medal in the name of Ignatius Noorono on 18 March 1983. He was involved in a car accident and led a life of rest from 1997 onwards. Mor Milithos passed away on a Thursday 18 November 2004. He was entombed near the tomb of Patriarch Aphrem I on 22 November on the north side of the Soonoro cathedral, Homs. The Syrian Orthodox Church commemorates him on 18 November.

46. Mor Ivanios Philipose

(AD 1924 – 1988)

Philipose was born on 24 May 1924 of Chacko Cherian and Sosamma of the famous Parapallil family in Pampady, Velloor. He did his higher studies in Mar Ivanios College, Trivandrum and S. B. College, Changanacherry. After obtaining his degree from St. Joseph's Training College, Mannanam, he served as a teacher for many years. He was an active member of the Evangelical Association of the East and worked in the forefront while establishing P. E. M. High School at Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam.

He was ordained a Deacon in 1949 by Mor Michael Deevannasios and a Priest in 1953 by Mor Cleemis Abraham. He was the General Secretary of Mor Gregorius Students' association in 1952 and represented the Jacobite Church in the international youth conference held at Kottayam in 1953. He was appointed the Secretary of the Kottayam diocese in 1954 and the General Secretary of the Malankara Syrian Christian league in the same year.

In 1959, Fr. Philipose was selected as the Vice-President of Antiochian Movement and served as the committee member of Evangelical Association

of the East for many years. In 1964, he was the Secretary of the Association of priests of Kottayam diocese. He established St. Mary's Mission Hospital, Kurichy and was its director until his consecration as a Bishop. On 2 September 1973, a committee was formed with Rev. Fr. Philipose as its President at St. Mary's Puthenpally, Kurichy, to frame the initial administrative structure of the youth association. While serving as the President of the youth association the International youth meeting held at St. Mary's church, Manarcad was a great success.

He was the Headmaster of P. E. M. High School, Thiruvanjoor, St. Thomas High School, Kelakam and St. Mary's High School, Kandanad. He also served as the vicar of St. Thomas church, Velloor, St. Thomas church, Kelakam and Puthenpally, Kurichy. As the founder President of the youth association, the youth remember him most reverentially.

He was consecrated a Ramban in 1978 at Puthenpally, Kurichy by Metropolitan Mor Yacoub Yulios. He was elevated to the rank of a Metropolitan by the Catholicos H. B. Baselios Paulose II on 19 April 1978 at St. Simon's church, Velloor. Mor Yacoub Thimotheos (Thrikothamangalam) and Mor Thomas Theophilus (Vettical Seminary, Mulanthuruthy) were also consecrated on the same occasion. Mor Ivanios Philipose participated in the patriarchal enthronement of Moran Zakka I in 1980.

Mor Ivanios Philipose took up responsible positions for the Church. He was the diocese Bishop of Idukki and later of the diocese outside Kerala with Bangalore as the headquarters (South region). In 1982 when he took up charge as the assistant Metropolitan of Kandanad diocese, Piravam seminary was his headquarters. He became a diabetic patient and took two years of rest while he was engaged in this work. Mor Ivanios Philipose passed away in his sixty fourth year on 8 May 1988. He was entombed in St. Thomas Jacobite Syrian church, Velloor, Kottayam.

47. Mor Polycarpus Geevarghese

(1933 – 2011)

Geevarghese, the fifth son of Mathew Philipose, Pallivadekethil, Chennithala and Elyamma was born on 5 April 1933. He completed his studies from Primary School, Elavumood and S. N. High School, Mannar (*Paurasthya Suvishesha Samajam*, 1994).

He survived a fatal attack of typhoid in 1948. He joined Evangelical Association of the East (*Paurasthya Suvishesha Samajam*) in 1955 and lived at Perumbavoor. Mor Yulios Elias, the delegate of Antioch, ordained him a *Korooyo* in 1956. Following that, he joined Manjinikkara dayaro and studied Theology and Syriac under the tutorship of Very Rev. Yacoub Ramban, Madappat and Rev. Moosha Salama ramban.

In 1957, Yulios Elias Bava ordained him a priest. He served Kottumala and Kozhichal churches in Kasargod from 1957 to 1959 and established a church at Pakkanikkad. He also served at Cheerady church, South Karnataka in 1959. According to the interest of Very Rev. George Kureekkal Corepiscopo, the Mission Director of Hanover he went to Hanover in 1961, joined Karmala Balika College, and secured B. A. (Hons).

Fr. Geevarghese was interested in politics and became a member of the Congress party in 1970. He was the District vice-president of the Congress party in Karnataka. Along with political activities, he carried on his ecclesiastical duties and established St. Antony's High School in Hanover and Cheeradi High School of Karnataka.

H. B. Baselios Paulose II elevated him to the rank of the Corepiscopo in 1978. He established St. George High School in Nellyyadi in 1978, which was upgraded to a Junior College in 1985.

He took up the responsibility as the administrator of the Evangelical Association of the East (EAE) in 1985. Upon the resignation of Mor Athanasius Paulose in 1986, Geevarghese Corepiscopo was nominated as the next Metropolitan. Patriarch H. H. Ignatius Zakka I consecrated him under the name Mor Polycarpus as the Metropolitan of EAE which is directly under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch and has its own constitution.

In 2006 Mor Chrisostomos Markose was consecrated and appointed by the Patriarch as the assistant metropolitan as Mor Polycarpus could not carry out his duties as the administrator of EAE due to health reasons

The bishop who had been leading a life of rest died due to cardiac problems on 6 March 2011. He was buried on 9 March at St. Antony's Syrian Cathedral, Jeppu, Mangalore. Mor Polycarpus is commemorated on 6 March.

48. Mor Yulios Kuriakose

(AD 1933 – 2011)

Kuirakose, the youngest son of Varkey, Kochupurackal, Veliyanad and Elyamma was born on 6 July 1933. His brothers were Chacko, Varghese and Mathew. His school education was completed at Govt. L. P. School, Veliyanad; N. S. U. P. School, Ramankari; Leo XIII High School Aleppey; St. Joseph's High School, Pulikunnu and M. G. M. High School, Thiruvalla. The intermediate studies were done at S. B. College, Changanacherry.

Kuriakose belonged to St. Stephen's Knanaya church, Veliyanad. He joined Manjinikkara dayaro as a student at the age of twenty-two. The delegate of the Holy see of Antioch, Mor Yulios Elias ordained him a Deacon in February 1955. His theological studies were completed under the tutorship of Very Rev. Yacoub Ramban, Madappad and Rev. Masha Salama Ramban. On 21 September 1958, Mor Yulios Elias ordained him a Priest at Manjinikkara dayaro. (The priest Rev. C. M. Thomas who was ordained along with him is the present Catholicos H. B. Baselios Thomas I).

He assisted Mor Yulios Bava in various capacities after his ordination as a Deacon and a Priest. After his ordination in 1958, he served as a vicar in Thumbamon and Perumpally churches and in a church of St. Antony's association, Mangalore.

Mor Yulios Elias Bava appointed Rev. Fr. Kuriakose as the vicar of St. Mary's Simhasana church, Arthat, Kunnankulam in 1960. He offered the most creditable service to the church until 1984. He has played a crucial role in stabilising St. Mary's Simhasana (thronal) church and in the conduct of church litigations.

Rev. Fr. Kuriakose was appointed as the First Secretary to the Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas from 1984 to 2004. During this period, he visited many foreign lands along with the Patriarch. He was consecrated a Ramban by the Patriarch at St. George Cathedral, Damascus on 22 December 1990. His consecration as a Metropolitan under the name Mor Yulios was done at St. Peter's & St. Paul's Cathedral, Marath Saidnaya, Damascus on 27 September 1998.

His skill in the use of Syriac language enabled him to translate many Syriac books to Malayalam. He learnt the practice of Syrian rites of worship directly from Mor Yulios Elias Bava and it inspired many to follow the Syrian tradition.

Indo American University of Humanistic Studies, Florida, U. S. A. conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity & Sacred Philosophy.

Diondra University of Italy honoured the Bishop by bestowing on him the degree of Doctor of Theology. Thirumeni who was a member of the St. Gregorius Simhasana church, Cherumkulam, Mannarghat, Palakkad underwent cardiac surgery twice, once in Germany and later in Kerala. From 2007, he was also under treatment for Parkinson's disease.

In 2010, he entrusted his administrative duties to Mor Athanasius Geevargis. He visited the Patriarch in 2010 January for the last time and bid him farewell. Mor Yulios Kuriakose led a life of rest during the final stages of his life in Gethsemane dayaro, PIRAMADAM. He arrived at Manjanikkara dayaro on 8 April 2011 and participated in the Holy Qurbano and noon prayers on Saturday, 9 April. As he was resting in the afternoon, he suffered a heart attack and succumbed to it by 4 p.m.

His mortal remains were entombed on the western side of the tomb of his mentor and teacher, Mor Yulios Elias at Manjanikkara dayaro cathedral on 11 April 2011.

49. Mor Coorilos Kuriakose

(1935 – 1995)

Mor Coorilos was born on 1 May 1935 to Cherian George, Mepral Puthikot Payikandathil and Annamma. He pursued his education in St. Thomas Middle School, Viyapuram; M.G.M. High School, Thiruvalla; U.C. College, Alwaye and C. M. S. College Kottayam.

Mor Gregorios Geevarghese, Metropolitan of Angamali, Niranam and Thumbamon dioceses ordained him a Korooyo on 8 May 1956 at St. Johns Valiya Pally, Mepral. He completed theological studies under the tutelage of Rev. Ramban Yacoub Madapatt. Malankara Malpan Kurien Kaniamparambil was also his mentor.

Arch Bishop Mor Athanasius Yeshu Samuel of America and Canada ordained him '*Yaufodayakino*' in 1961 at Attamangalam Church, Kumarakom. Mor Philexinos (later H.B. Catholicos Mor Baselios Paulose II) ordained him a *Kassiso* on 2 February 1962 at Piramadom Dayaro.

During his tenure as the vicar in Valiya Pally, Mepral the committee meetings of Quilon, Niranam and Thumbamon churches elected him

as a candidate for the order of a metropolitan. Subsequently, Patriarch Ignatius Yacub III consecrated him a metropolitan under the name Mor Coorilos on 21 July 1974 at St. George Cathedral, Damascus.

He, who had a lead role in the conduct of Church litigations, was a diabetic patient. The tireless lifestyle took its toll on Thirumeni. The Church cannot forget two decades of meritorious service rendered by him. He established institutions like Mor Deevanasios Michael ITC, Adoor; Adichanelloor School; Delegate Mor Julius U. P. School, Vilavoorakonam, and St. Mary's Snehasadanam. He made many arrangements for the convenience of the pilgrims to Manjanikkara. He constructed a Kurisumthotty at Aranmula and made arrangements for food for the pilgrims to Manjinikkara.

Mor Coorilos had been the President of the Sunday School Association for a decade. He died on 21 March 1995 in the midst of the busy activity of constructing the diocesan head quarters and chapel at Adoor. He received the honor 'M'sbrono Nasiho' (the exemplary missionary) from the Holy See of Antioch.

Mor Coorilos who led a simple life had his residence in a small building near Valiya Pally, Mepreal. His death anniversary is celebrated on 21 March.

50. Mor Coorilos Markose

(AD 1946 – 2005)

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