

# MAR AUGEN CATHOLICOS



Ethiopian Synod: Mar Augen Catholicos is being received at Addis Ababa by Patriarch Yakob III and Emperor Heyli Selassi in 1965.



**Historic Moments: H.H. Yacoob III, Installs H.H. Augen as Catholicose - 19**



**Mar Augen Catholicos with three Aramana Managers, Fr. T.C. Jacob, F  
T.G. Zacharia, Fr. K.V. Joseph and the Author K.V. Mammen - 1965.**



**Mar Augen Symposium at Kottayam. Fr. Abraham Konatt presents his  
paper. From left: N.M. Abraham, Joseph Mar Pacomiose, H.H. Baselius  
Marthoma Mathews I - 1976.**



HIS HOLINESS  
MORAN MAR BASELIUS AUGEN I,  
CATHOLICOSE  
(BIOGRAPHY)

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Translated by  
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(Life History - - Malayalam)

By  
K. V. Mammen,

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## STATEMENT

This book is a part of an attempt to have a look at the eventful life of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Augen I, Catholicose, and to judge His Holiness' unforgettable and unique services to the Church, impartially and to understand the way of the arrows originated with unsteadiness from some people of their own established interests. His Holiness was not willing to cause any harm for the Church where he was the supreme head for about 12 years, even though there were pressures from certain corners. His Holiness has entered the heavenly abode after handing over the steering of the Church to the mighty hands. His Holiness had suffered many sacrifices for about 50 years for the sake of peace, and when peace was re-established, he rejoiced too much and when some of the colleagues tried to spoil the peace His Holiness had suffered the pain too much.

This book is to record the uncontrollable reverence to, this Holy Father, who was immersed in the dependence of God and to the attitudes accepted by him which were as strong as the rocks. I am sure that I am not qualified enough to prepare the biography of the bright life of sacrifices of 90 years where as I was born when His Holiness was 45 years old. The reason behind this harsh attempt is the self confidence gained through my acquaintance with His Holiness started through the society of the servants of the Cross, Church weekly and Malayala Manorama for about last 25 years. Hope this book will also serve as a small guide for the one who may attempt in the future to write some thesis or history based on His Holiness' life and period of service

When I had visited Devalokam Catholicate palace, Rev.Fr.T.G. Zachariah had introduced me to His Holiness as 'Mammachen of Malayala Manorama'. I cannot forget the words from His Holiness " Manorama people are great. They only control the world affairs. May God bless you Mamachen". I am quite sure that His Holiness who had blessed me and my family will accept this book which is a humble present of word's garland for His Holiness' twelfth accession day.

I have tried to give the details of two unforgettable events in the life of His Holiness. The first one being the persecution he had suffered at Piravam and His Holiness' audience with His Holiness The Pope is the second event. The Piravam incident is very clear from the descriptions of the people linked with that incident. I do record my gratitude to them all.

My humble respects and reverence to His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Marthoma Mathews I, Catholicose, the present supreme head of the Indian



Orthodox Church for the kind willingness expressed to release this book. His Holiness was very happy with my attempt. Rev.Fr.C.S.Scariah, an honourable priest had served His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose with great awe-inspiring respects. He was the previous Head Master of Vadakara High School. He had provided me many authoritative, genuine and impartial information helpful for the preparation of this book. I do record my heartfelt thanks to him. Rev.Fr.Abraham Konatt, the blessed Malankara Malpan and one of the chief disciples of His Holiness The Augen Catholicose, kindly listened to the entire contents of the book first, before getting it printed and suggested certain corrections. Also he encouraged my sincere attempts by writing the profound preface of this book. I am deeply grateful to Rev.Fr. Abraham Konatt. Mr.N.M.Abraham, one of my respected senior colleagues, who always have tried to put good inspirations in me was kind enough to express the achievements and qualities of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose, along with Rev.Fr. C.S. Scariah and Rev.Fr. Abraham Konatt during the symposium conducted in connection with the release of the book. I do express my boundless humble thanks to him also.

I do not hide the fact that there are so many friends and well wishers in India and abroad who had congratulated this attempt. I do express my deep gratitude to one and all who had sent me money on the basis of pre-publication schemes. So also my gratitude is expressed to Mr.N.M.Joseph, proprietor of Nalathra Printers and his colleagues who got this book printed within a small time. I do humbly submit "His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I Catholicose" in front of the blessed memory of (the Late) His Grace Mukkancherril Pathrose Mar Osthathiose Metropolitan - my personal adorable High Priest, the founder president of the society of the servants of the Cross, and is also a colleague of Moran Mar Augen Catholicose, who is the modern St.Paul of Malankara Church in the missionary fields.

K.V. Mammen, Manorama.

Kottayam  
22.5.1976.

## ABOUT THE TRANSLATION.

When Mr.K.V.Mammen asked me to translate his noble work - the biography of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Augen I, Catholicose of the East, I was taking up the task as a privilege and a blessing. I do express my sincere gratitude to Mr.K.V.Mammen. I get thrilled when I look back to the lucky chances enough to go near His Holiness several times in my young age and the chances I got to learn about the pious and holy life through close watchings. I do believe this translation would enable many those who could not read Malayalam to gain more information about the saintly and unique life style of this Holy Father. I do express my heartfelt thanks to Mr.Geevarghese Koshy (Babu), Chairman of M.G.Koshy Muthalaly Memorial Educational Trust, Chathannoor, and Mrs. Leelamma Geevarghese, for the kind preparation of the type set of the English Version. So also my deep gratitude is expressed to one and all who have helped in a way or other for the publicatiuon of this book in English. May the prayers and intercessions of this Holy Father be a fort and protection for everyone especially who may go through this book.

Jose Kurian Puliyeril

Kollad, Kottayam-29  
14.11.1995.



## PREFACE

Eastern Orthodox Syrian Church was established by St.Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Lord Jesus Christ, with Edessa as the centre. In course of time the centre of the Church was moved to Selucia, Tigris and Mousul and there occurred a situation where there was no right heir to the throne by the end of the 19th century. By 1912 the eastern catholicate was re-established in Malankara which was a part of the previous centres. His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Augen I, is the fourth Catholicose enthroned on the catholicate throne after its re-establishment in Malankara. When we subject the Malankara Church History for our crucial study, we will come to know that the leaders of this Church in the positions of the Malankara Metropolitans or the Eastern Catholicoses were having either or the other problems in their terms of office and they had the Godly guidance and protection to keep this Church firm in the divine faith and order.

According to the general tradition, His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I Catholicose also had to face a problem. It was a question about the priesthood and throne of St.Thomas, the founder and first High Priest of Eastern Orthodox Syrian Church. So also there was a threat to the spiritual and worldly powers of the Eastern Catholicose which had been approved and ratified by the whole Christendom, in the Jerusalem synod in AD 231. His Holiness Mar Augen I Catholicose who was generally seemed in the outlook and ordinary dealing as most humble became very strong and a firm decision maker when the freedom, according to Christian tradition, of the Church under the control of His Holiness according to God's will, was questioned and His Holiness had to meet the problems face to face.

At certain occasions I have felt that the extreme humbleness in talks and dealings of His Holiness was mistaken as an easy way to overcome His Holiness by some leaders who initiated the present crisis in the Church. When His Holiness was elected as the Catholicose Designate in 1962, for the people who knew His Holiness closely it was quite unexpected as His Holiness was the owner of a simple and humble life without any sort of splendur, pomp or proudy. I do remember a word uttered by His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II, the predecessor of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I, as a joke. " His Grace Mar Themotheos Metropolitan is suitable of this post by all means. But the only problem is that he is more humble".



This extra humbleness shined in him might have been considered as a good chance by the people who wanted to implement their desires of power by force. By the Supreme court judgement of 1958, all cases were over and perfect peace was re-established in the Church. But not after a long time, His Holiness Moran Mar Yacub III, Patriarch had questioned the throne of St. Thomas, the salutation of the Catholicose as His Holiness and using red letters in the letter heads etc., in one of the letters. But when His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II, Catholicose of the East had replied firmly justifying all these reasons, the Patriarch had kept mum for a long time.

When His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose came to power, the extra humbleness inspired and certain traditions from the system followed by the previous Catholicose were removed. His Holiness followed the system of mentioning the throne of St. Thomas only in certain orders released officially as the Catholicose. Whenever His Holiness wrote letters, the letter heads were not used. His Holiness used to write 'humble servant' also along with the name. His Holiness had expressed this sort of natural humbleness when the Patriarch visited India in 1964 and when His Holiness visited Demascus etc. in 1965. When such humbleness were noticed they might have thought of using the sword against His Holiness which was taken back due to the resistance of His Holiness Moran Mar Geevarghese II, Catholicose, previously. This time the sword was thrown with great force with the heresy teaching that St. Thomas had no priesthood. But the sword sent for the second time not only did not do the designed and desired result but also had gone back to the place of origin. When the extreme humble person stood like a rock, the sword was more forcibly sent back to the original place.

I could not find anyone else who used to fast and pray so strictly even though all know that fasting and prayer are the weapons of a true Christian. All the timely prayers were conducted in it's time itself with strict order. During the lent times especially during 3 days and 50 days Lents he was taking a meal a day. At 3 p.m. he used to drink a glass of water after that time's prayers. And in the evening he would have a soft light food. During the Lents also His Holiness used to fast upto 3'o clock. In addition to the canonical Lents, His Holiness had several other personal Lents. He had strictly observed all these Lents until when the body became too weak due to old age. Even when there was no lent His Holiness used to take very simple food. That also with great limit. I have witnessed these qualities as myself was with His Holiness for a very long period.



His Holiness was a hard working and deeply interested person in reading especially the Theological subjects. Even in the midst of very busy schedules, His Holiness used to utilize the times available in between reading. His Holiness had studied English language upto 4th standard. So it was difficult for His Holiness to write and speak in English fluently. But His Holiness had an extra brilliant ability to read any English book and to grasp ideas from them easily. In Syriac language he was a great scholar, not only in India but also in the regions where it is a spoken language. I have never heard of any one of this century who could utilize Syriac language so easily and beautifully. After the time of Mar Gregorios Bar Abraya, His Holiness is a great syriac scholar. His Holiness had read and studied the theological texts in Syriac language available in India as well as abroad. So as a result His Holiness has written so many books and translated a lot of books from Syriac to Malayalam. Such books are the permanent treasure of this church.

My relation with His Holiness had started in my early childhood. In those days he was Augen Ramban. His relation with our family had started long before it. My beloved father was his spiritual guide and teacher from his young age. Within a short span of time he had acquired extraordinary ability in Syriac language as well as the matters of Church service. So he joined MD seminary for English education. He studied upto 4th standard there. Due to his interests and devotion to Syriac language and the dogmas of the Church, he wished to visit the Holy land. And when he was Dr. Mathai, he started to Palestine when he was only 20 years old. His aim was not only to visit the Holy land. He visited the important centres and studied the available religious and theological books. He willingly took discipleship from great Church fathers there and learnt what all he could in Syriac language and Theology. In both these subjects he became a veteran. In those days there were two claiming for the Patriarchal throne. These were Mar Abdel Misiha and Mar Abdullah. His Holiness had met them both separately and tried to understand their stand by watching them closely. His Holiness had stayed with them both. So also His Holiness had informed the impartial statements to the Church fathers in India then and there. His letters of those days are so famous. During his foreign stay, he reached a monastery in the name of St. Augen in 'Thurabdeen'. He stayed there for a few years and had a detailed study about St. Augen. Due to the great devoteness felt to the saint, he accepted the name Augen instead of his own name Mathai. From that monastery he became a monk and returned to home land in 1908 as Augen Ramban.



In the beginning he had a contact with my father for a short period. But when he returned from the middle east, he used to contact my father frequently. He used to visit and stay in Pampakuda Church and used to read the ancient books of Pampakuda library. He used to copy down many Syriac books, and also used to help my father in preparing the press copy of the books to be printed. In those days my father was contacting so many church leaders and prelates of the middle east churches. Augen Ramban used to help my father in those correspondences. In such occasions Augen Ramban used to take food from my family and he was considered one among the members of our family. I do remember with great respect that I was a very small boy and he used to take me with him and was pleased to advise me of many things. In those days he used to present me with certain attractive presents. Likewise from the childhood itself I have enjoyed a sort of paternal affection from him.

Even though my father Kora Mathan Malpan was a known great scholar of Syriac language and Theology, I could not undergo priestly training and education from him. I had a chance to learn a few initial chapters of Syriac language only from him. As and when I had completed the English education and was about to study Syriac, my father was called to eternal rest. When he was bedridden, he knew that he could not grant me Syriac education. So he requested His Grace Mar Thimothios, Metropolitan of Kandanad, to take the responsibility of teaching me. And suggested me to go with His Grace even forgetting my responsibilities towards the family. That is how I became a disciple of His Holiness. After the death of my father I stayed with His Grace who had to travel a lot for the needs of the diocese, as well as for so many other burdens, used to spend a little time for me daily. Usually he used to teach me during the journeys either in car or boat. I do remember with due reverence and affection to His Grace that what all knowledge I have at present in the Syriac language, Theology or church history whatever it may be I am indebted for them to His Grace.

The Patriarch had dismissed His Grace Vattassaril Mar Dionesius not much later than the return of His Grace as Augen Ramban after his studies and travels in the Holy land. From that time till 1942 when His Grace had accepted His Holiness Moran Mar Baselious Geevarghese II, unconditionally, while being the Diocean Metropolitan of Kandanad, His Grace was following a distinct nature where his opponents accused him of not having a firm opinion and his activities were against the traditions. For those who may watch from outside may seem this argument as meaningful.



But if one is examining with a close watch into his church activities, he could understand that His Grace had accepted a stand where he was truly cautious of the traditions of the Church and he had acted accordingly. And he has done according to the circumstances without moving from the entire aim. And if it is to be clearly understood, it is essential to look back to the events that took place in this church since about past 100 years.

Before a century, i.e. in 1876, the then Patriarch His Holiness Moran Mar Peter III had visited Malankara Church and introduced certain administrative systems through the Mulanthuruthy Synod and strengthened the relation of this Church with the Anthiocan throne. Then only His Holiness had returned to Syria. It was a time when there was no eastern Catholicose. His Holiness Mar Peter III Patriarch entered the Heavenly abode in 1894 and his successor was not elected unanimously. When the synod was convened to elect a new Patriarch the name of His Grace Coorilose Geevarghese, the care taker of the throne after the demise of Patriarch Peter III came first for consideration, as His Grace was a Church father of good reputation. Even though His Grace was pressured strongly, His Grace declined saying that His Grace was not eligible for such a high post. So it was compelled to suggest one more name. Instead of one, three names of His grace Dionesius Mar Abdal Misiha, Mar Gregorios Abdullah, Mar Dionesius Baneham came up. As Mar Abdallah had been the secretary of His Holiness for a long time and he was with His Holiness during the visit to India, all were expecting that Mar Abdallah would be elected. But when the election took place, Mar Abdel Masiha was elected with at least a small majority. Mar Abdallah got the second position only. Like wise Mar Abdal Masiha was enthroned as the Patriarch.

The recognition of Turkey Sultan which is known as 'Farman' was granted to His Holiness Mar Abdal Masiha Patriarch. In those days the farman was a must for the Patriarch to apply certain worldly powers in Turkey and its provinces. Immediately His Grace Mar Abdallah embraced Roman Catholic Church. There is a saying that due to some reason he had been a victim of the displeasure of the Turkey Government and to safeguard himself from the persecutions, he took refuge with French council acting as he was a member of Catholic Church. Let the facts and figures of these incidents be as it should be. In 1905 the farman of Abdal Misiha was withdrawn by Turkey government. Mar Abdallah Metropolitan came back from the Roman Church and celebrated the Holy Qurbana in Syrian Orthodox Church publicly. As the farman of the His Holiness Mar Abdal Masiha was withdrawn by the Turkey government they were in need of a person to the



post with government's approval and recognition. So the Synod was convened. His Grace Mar Abdallah was elected as the Patriarch unanimously. As soon as he was enthroned, the Farman was issued in his name. These matters could be understood from the "Edavaka Pathrika"(Parish bulletin) the chief organ of the church of those days.

Likewise there were two persons claiming for the throne of Patriarch at the same time, His Holiness Mar Abdal Masiah remained as the Patriarch who had lost the worldly powers and His Holiness Mar Abdallah as the Patriarch with the approval and recognition of the Government. But the Malankara Church understood or better say Malankara church was informed that His Holiness Mar Abdal Masiah Patriarch was removed from his position due to many reasons like poor administration, wrong ruling against the principles and teachings of the Church, drunkenness etc. by the H.Synod and Canonically His Holiness Mar Abdallah was elected by the H.Synod and enthroned as the Patriarch. So it was the understanding of Malankara Church that His Holiness Mar Abdallah was the only Patriarch of that time who was lawfully installed. From His Holiness only His Grace Vattasseril Mar Dionasius and His Grace Kochuparampil Mar Coorilose had accepted the Metropolitan position. Not much later His Holiness Moran Mar Abdalla Patriarch visited Malankara and His Holiness was honoured as the real Patriarch. Soon His Holiness dismissed His Grace Vattasseril Mar Dionesius. Soon the split came in the Church.

Moreover Rev.Dn.Augen (Later His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I) had visited the middle east countries when there were two Patriarchs at a time. So the Malankara Church came to know that Patriarch Mar Abdal Mishah's Farman was only withdrawn by the Turkey Government for some reason and the allegation that the H.Synod had replaced him was baseless because of the vast and vivid journeys, studies and contacts of Dn.Augen with both the Patriarchs. In those days the church there used to respect His Holiness Mar Abdel Masiah as the Patriarch considering his spiritual powers and His Holiness was exercising many spiritual activities as the head of the church as the Patriarch itself. His Holiness Mar Augen had greatly respected His Holiness Mar Abdal Masiah as the spiritual head and his authority from those days. It was a time when the Malankara Church which was under the eastern Catholicate canonically and traditionally had longed to get the Catholicate re-established in Malankara which had lost its existence in Persia. His Holiness Mar Augen had discussed this desire with both the Patriarchs. Many people are aware of the letters sent by Dn.Augen from



Syria in this regard. His Holiness Mar Augen easily understood that His Holiness Mar Abdal Mishah Patriarch was in favour of the re-establishment of the Catholicate and His Holiness Mar Abdallah was against the suggestion. In these circumstances only Very.Rev.Augen Ramban had returned to Malankara after his visit to Palestine.

By the time the split in Malankara became severe. His Grace Joseph Mar Dionesius had expired in 1909. So His Grace Geevarghese Mar Dionesius became the Malankara Metropolitan. Not much later His Holiness Moran Mar Abdallah Patriarch visited Malankara. There was unrest between the Patriarch and the Malankara Metropolitan due to many reasons. As a result the Patriarch dismissed the Metropolitan and the Patriarch went back in 1911.

When a good number of the people of Malankara and the Metropolitan himself was sure that the dismissal order was baseless and without reason, they thought of approaching the help of His Holiness Moran Mar Abdel Masiah Patriarch. So the attempts for the purpose had started. By the time there came a division in the Church by the name Bava's group (those who sided by the Patriarch) Kandanad, Ankamali and Kochi Dioceses almost totally and a good share of Kottayam Dioceses sided strongly with the Patriarch group. The Dioceses south of Kottayam were almost strongly siding the Metropolitan's group. In this division Very.Rev.Augen Remban also remained in the Patriarch group considering the geographical factors. At this time only His Holiness Moran Mar Abdel Masiah Patriarch had reached Malankara as a result of the attempts of His Grace Vattasseril Mar Dionesius and his followers in 1912. The Patriarch side did not accept His Holiness with the argument that His Holiness had lost his spiritual powers due to the withdrawal of Farman by the Turkey government. The people who sided the Metropolitan welcomed His Holiness Moran Mar Abdel Mishah Patriarch according to the instructions of the Hoodaya Canon(7:1). His Holiness cancelled the dismissal order against His Grace Vattasseril Mar Dionesius Metropolitan.

As desired here from the time of His Grace Joseph Mar Dionesius, the Patriarch co-operated the attempts to re-establish the Eastern Catholicate where there were no heirs, in Malankara. His Holiness lead the services to enthrone Murimattathil Paulos Mar Ivanios Metropolitan as the successor to the throne of Catholicate at Niranam.



Very Rev. Augen Ramban had gone to Niranam and had attended the services ignoring the splits because of his personal regards and respects towards His Holiness Moran Mar Abdal Misiha Patriarch and also due to his personal long felt desire of re-establishing the Catholicate in Malankara. Moreover His Grace Murimattathil Mar Ivanios Metropolitan was his father's spiritual guide and likewise Augen Ramban had great appreciation about the Catholicose designate. As Augen Ramban had to continue his future life in the northern dioceses it was a step out of limits. But he had continued in his native place as a supporter of Patriarchal group. By the time he had started many Christian spiritual activities in Kandanad and Ankamali Dioceses.

He had firstly started the evangelical works among the low caste people centralising the northern dioceses. He had given baptism for so many and they were given membership to the church. Then he started attempts to establish schools where education was far behind. He had done great services in the establishment of Piravom and Kolenchery High Schools. He had to remain staunch to the Patriarchal side to continue his missionary works in these areas where the group dominated. His Grace Pathrose Mar Osthathios Metropolitan, founder president of the Society of Servants of the Cross and all members of his family were on the side of the Metropolitan group from the very beginning. But for the sake of the success of His Grace's attempts of missionary works through the society of servants of the Cross among the people who were staunch in Patriarchal side, he had accepted the priesthood from the Patriarchal side only. His grace Mar Osthathios had done so only because of the advice of Very. Rev. Augen Ramban, a well-wisher and associate of the servants of the Cross.

As time passed forward, in 1927 Augen Ramban was nominated as the Metropolitan designate of Kandanad Diocese and was consecrated as a Metropolitan at Jerusalem with the name Augen Mar Thimothios by His Holiness Mar Elias III, Patriarch. This was very essential for the smooth running of the Kandanad Diocese which stood very loyal to the Patriarchal group. Soon after this His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos had conducted his administration of the Diocese efficiently as a Metropolitan of the Patriarchal group.

Even though His grace Mar Augen remained with the Patriarchal group after the deviation of 1912, he had a great inner feeling and faith that His Holiness Mar Abdel Masiah was the right Patriarch having the true spiritual rights, and the Catholicate re-established in Malankara was quite significant and



reasonable because of his personal knowledge of Church history and Theology especially from the knowledge he had gained through his vast travels in Palestine. So also His Grace had tried his best to teach these facts to the faithful so that their enmity may get lightened slowly. It was the top priority of His Grace's attempt after taking charge of the Diocese to re-establish peace in the Church. Many of His Grace's attempts are personally known to me as I was a companion of His Grace in those days. His Grace had conducted a large number of correspondence with His Holiness Mar Aprem I, Patriarch for this purpose. His Holiness Mar Aprem Patriarch had informed His Grace that Abdel Misiha Patriarch had lost all his spiritual powers. So the present Catholicose had to accept the ordination from a canonical Patriarch. That was what informed by Mar Aprem Patriarch and also informed his readiness to recognise the Catholicate in Malankara in that specific condition. Even though this suggestion was against his understanding and faith, His Grace Mar Augen went forward with the desire to have complete peace in the Church.

His Grace met His Holiness Moran Mar Geevarghese II, the then Catholicose several times and had consultations. As His Holiness also longed to have peace anyhow or other, finally agreed to move as desired by the Patriarch due to his self desire as well as the pressure of His Grace Mar Augen.

The reply of His Holiness is still echoing in my ears." Your Grace, I am sure that there is no shortage for my position. If I had a feeling like that I would not have worn this dress for the only sake of proudy. I am not a man of that type. But I am willing to sacrifice anything for the peace in the Church. If you all compel, I shall bow my head before anybody like Lord Jesus who bowed before St. John the Baptist. If somebody is there willing, let them put their hands above my head. If there is anything wrong in doing so, the sin will remain with the one who lays his hand. I will be free". As a result of this agreement, the arrangements were made for the Alwaye round table conference, the last but greater attempt of His Holiness. At the end of this, His Holiness was willing to accept ordination from His Grace Mar Athanasius at Thrikkunnath Seminary Alwaye. But due to certain technical reasons, that meeting did not take place. Sometimes it would have been a miraculous decision of God. Whatever it may be, His Grace got desperate and got back from the attempts for peace. In continuation to this His Grace Mar Augen started to be more close to the Metropolitan group and started to co-operate more openly with His Holiness Moran Mar Geevarghese II, Catholicose.



In the meantime, due to such activities, His Grace had acquired hatred and enmity of the leaders of the patriarchal group and especially the Patriarchal representative, His Grace Mar Julius Metropolitan. Due to their inspirations His Holiness the Patriarch started to send orders of criticism to His Grace Mar Augen. It was the time when the case was going on in the District Court. In that case the name of His Grace Mar Augen was included in the list of witness for the plaintiff. Likewise His Grace was examined by a commission at Moovattupuzha, Bishop's palace. During the examination and cross examination, His Grace told the truth according to his knowledge regarding the group which may be benefited by it. The statement of His Grace was generally harmful for the Patriarchal group. By this, their anger towards His Grace had increased too much; as ten times and even more. Then they started attempts to get His Grace dismissed by the Patriarch. At this problem stage only His Grace invited His Holiness Mar Geevarghese II, Catholicose to Moovattupuzha Church and accepted His Holiness publicly and embraced the group lead by the Catholicose. This reception was arranged on the basis of the resolution passed with the majority of the diocesan representatives of Kandanad Diocese on the same day. But it was an unfortunate truth that the support of the majority did not last long. Without much delay His Grace was suspended by the Patriarch. But with the support of a large number of priests and laymen, His Grace continued the administration of the Diocese loyally to the Catholicose. From that period till 1958 when the peace was re-established due to the supreme Court Judgment, His Grace suffered a lot of ill treatments and persecutions and the sufferings of His Grace during those sixteen years are numberless. The incidents of manhandling are also well known. Lastly by the Supreme Court Judgment, the peace was established in the Church in 1958. The Patriarchal group who till then abused His Holiness as an old man Punnose without any priesthood powers, all on a sudden agreed to accept him as His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II Catholicose of all the East, without any pre-conditions. The ordinary people who stood behind that leadership with eagerness who had listened and believed got astonished. So the peace and happiness remained in the Church for some time. The one who rejoiced more must be His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos Metropolitan, who longed for peace from his early childhood.

Even though peace was re-established in the Church, as far as His Grace Mar Augen is concerned, it took more time for him to enjoy the peace. Soon after the mutual recognition and the Malankara Association at Puthencavu, when the matter of handing over the dioceses to the Metropolitans of the former Patriarchal group came up, His Grace Mar Augen and His Grace



Paulose Philoxenos came together as heirs of Kandanad Diocese. Even though the Holy Episcopal Synod discussed so many ways to solve this situation and finally appointed them both as joint Metropolitans. They both had to share the administrative affairs of the Diocese. Sooner everyone felt that this suggestion was totally impractical. Then arose rift in between the two Metropolitans. The matter was brought before the Holy Episcopal Synod. In the meantime His Grace Paulose Mar Philoxenos had organised an "Antiochan Movement" with the help of certain unhappy extremists of the old Patriarchal group in northern and southern dioceses who accused publicly that the mutual recognising ceremony held at the Sanctuary of Orthodox Theological Seminary on 16 December 1958 was only a tactic for the advance of rift. It was a stand against the peace of the Church. There were moves from the Patriarch indirectly in favor of this move. But it is worthy to note that the Metropolitans who were devout to Patriarch previously did not favour the new move. Due to these reasons the Synod had to suspend His Grace Mar Philoxenos and to entrust the entire responsibility of the Diocese to His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos. So it caused the rift again in Kandanad Diocese. At this critical situation only His Grace Mar Augen initiated the works of the present Moovattupuzha Bishop's House. And he was able to complete the construction of the first floor disregarding the opposition from His Grace Mar Philoxenos. In 1962 His Grace Mar Augen was elected as the Catholicos-Designate as the successor of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II. Still His Grace continued to stay in Moovattupuzha Aramana as the Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese. His Grace lived there till 1964 when His Holiness Moran Mar Geevarghese II was called to eternal rest. After the demise of His Holiness, Mar Augen shifted his residence to Catholicate Palace at Kottayam, taking up the responsibilities of the Malankara Metropolitan as the elected successor. Without much delay His Holiness Moran Mar Yakub III Patriarch arrived as His Holiness was invited by the Malankara Episcopal Synod, to elevate His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos as the Catholicose. Even though the dissidents tried to deviate His Holiness from his mission, His Holiness was very strong for the cause honouring the mutual agreement of 1958 and sacred traditions of the Holy Church. So His Grace Mar Philoxenos had no other way than to associate with His Holiness and the mission. Likewise Mar Augen was elevated as the Catholicose of the East, by the then Patriarch recognised in accordance with the constitution of the Holy Church and in the assistance of all Metropolitans of Malankara irrespective of the groups, on 22nd May 1964 at Mar Elia Cathedral, Kottayam. Even though His Holiness Moran Mar Augen is the 4th Catholicose after the re-installation of Catholicate in India, it is significant to note that His Holiness is the first



catholicoe elevated to this position in an atmosphere of complete and entire peace of the church. We will come to the conclusion that the present position is so suitable for him when we will consider his previous history and activities.

It is a painful fact that the peace did not last long till the end of His Holiness. His Holiness or anyone of the authorities of the church under the control of His Holiness are not responsible for the rift which is still prevalent in the Church. Moreover His Holiness Moran Mar Augen was dealing with the Patriarch with more reverence and whole heartily than any one of his predecessors. And when things were going smoothly and not at all against the mutual agreements of 1958 and 1964, the Patriarch sent the infamous order No.203/70 without any reason. The only accusation in that order was using the letter head with "the throne of St.Thomas" while St.Thomas had no throne and even Priesthood in the version of the Patriarch. His Holiness was mentally tortured much with the thought that if he had withdrawn "the throne of St.Thomas", he would be also supporting the heresy against the priest hood of St.Thomas. Many leaders and well-wishers of His Holiness advised him to do so for the sake of the peace of the church. But His Holiness expressed his staunch faith in St.Thomas, the founder and patron saint of Indian Church. His Holiness was of the opinion that he never wanted to be the head of the Church if its founder was degraded. When we consider the real aim of order number 203/70, we understand that it was not just to hinder the usage of the throne, from the vast experiences thereafter. We do remember with due respect how much reasonable and honorable was the stand taken by His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose. Due to all these reasons, His Holiness had left this world to his heavenly abode with little mental strain but in the sight of children of St. Thomas, he has become much more venerable. And thus the blessed name of His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose is recorded in the Malankara Syrian Church History in golden letters.

It is a satisfactory matter that my young friend Mr. K.V. Mammen has come forward to write a condensed history of the eventful life of His Holiness much later than the demise of this Holy Father. Mr.Mammen, a member of the editorial board of Malayala Manorama is very actively participating in different types of activities of Malankara Orthodox Church even in the midst of his heavy official responsibilities. His dedicated services in orthodox youth movement and other student movement and similar spiritual organisations are really appreciable. He is rendering a very valuable service through his contributions towards the Malankara Sabha, Orthodox youth.

Church Weekly etc. which are the official publications of the Holy church. It is really glad to see him coming forward to write the biography of His Holiness in the midst of his different busiest activities. I do present this book to the public by congratulating him for completing its work in a short span of time and I do wish all the best for its publication. Let the intercession of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Augen I, Catholicose be a shelter for us always.

Konatt Abraham Malpan

Pampakkuda  
5.5.1976.



# **1 BIRTH OF A CONTROVERSIAL PERSON**

It is the strong traditionally known fact that St.Thomas had reached Cranganore, the western entrance of Kerala by AD 52 by sea and many of the inhabitants had embraced Christianity due to his evangelical work and a few churches were established. The secular feelings and the traditions of civilizations of Hindu rulers provided shelter for Christianity. But later when Christianity had to face persecutions many of the Mar Thoma Christians had left Cranganore and the nearby places.

A family called Thuruthy had settled in Vengola near Perumpavoor, when they had moved from Cranganore. This area was later known as Thuruthippilly. His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Augen I was born to Rev.Fr.Abraham Chettamkulangara of Thuruthy family and Annamma daughter of Mathew, Valiyal, Puthencruz, on 26th June 1884. Among Paily Abraham, Kuriakose and Uyakim, the four brothers of His Holiness, Abraham and Uyakim are still alive and they have settled in Kodanat and Malabar respectively. Dr.P.C.Kuriakose, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Cochin University is the son of Paily, Rev.Fr. Abraham, nephew of His Holiness is serving as the Headmaster of Mar Augen High School, Kodanad. Rev.Fr.Abraham, father of His Holiness had lead a righteous life. He was a Scholar of Syriac language. He was so particular about the seven times prayers without break and also in leading a systematic sacramental life. Parents of His Holiness had lived long and later only entered the heavenly abode.

His Holiness was baptised by His Grace Mar Ivanios Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese, who later became the 1st Catholicose of Malankara. His Holiness was named 'Mathai' by His Grace Mar Ivanios who was the teacher of Rev.Fr. Abraham. His Holiness had his primary education at Puthencruz while staying at his Mother's house. In the early childhood itself he had accepted the discipleship of Malankara Malpan (Religious Teacher) V.Rev. Konatt Mathen Cor-Episcopa and had the theological studies at the Pampakuda Seminary. In the meantime he was ordained as a Deacon by His Grace Kadavil Paulose Mar Athanasius Metropolitan. Rev.Dn. Mathai who had attained good influence in Malayalam and Syriac languages as well as in that art of orating joined M.D.Seminary High School, Kottayam for his English education.



In those days he had met Rev. Dn.Sleebea from Syria (who became His Grace Sleebea Mar Osthathios Metropolitan later). They both had visited almost all churches in Malankara together and Dn.Mathai had translated the speeches of Dn.Sleebea. Dn.Mathai had no plans to enter the Married life and to remain as a vicar of a church. Due to his strong and staunch affection to the Syriac language and Syrian church Dn. Mathai had gone to Syria with Dn.Sleebea in 1905 and had accepted ordination of full Deacon at St.Mathew's monastery in Assyria. He had travelled to Mardin and Thurabdeen where Syrians were living in large numbers. The journey through Mousul to these places were really troublesome. While staying in the oldest monastery of Mar Augen in Thurabdeen, he changed his own name and accepted the new name "Augen". He stayed a few days with the senior Patriarch His Holiness Moran Mar Abdel Massiha, whose recognition was withdrawn by Sultan of Turkey, at the monastery of Mar Abraham at Thurabdeen. Then he travelled to Mardeen and reached Kurkuma Dayara where His Holiness Moran Mar Abdulla Patriarch was living. There he stayed for about nine months and studied many precious and rare books in Syriac language. There he got the chance to meet Mar Elias III and Mar Aprem who were successors to the throne of Patriarch. The sufferings of Syrian Christians, under the rule of Sultan of Turkey, were noticed by Dn.Augen. So also he was able to visit so many places of historical importance. His Holiness Abdullah Patriarch elevated Dn.Augen as a monk (Ramban) at the monastery of St.Mark in Jerusalem in 1908. In Malankara it was not a practice to elevate someone as a Ramban before the ordination as a priest.

While staying at Thurabdeen, Very Rev.Augen Ramban had thought vigorously about the future of Malankara Church and with a far sighted vision, he had held correspondence with certain leaders in Malankara. Many of our people may be ignorant about the decisive influence of V.Rev.Augen Ramban in the re-establishment of Catholicate in Malankara. He only had provided the realistic and true information about His Holiness Mar Abdel Misiha Patriarch who was quite noble and pious and about His Holiness Mar Abdullah Patriarch who was more cunning than righteous. It was clearly mentioned in the letters and articles of Rev.Augen Ramban that His Holiness Abdullah Patriarch was not in favour and His Holiness Mar Abdel Massiha Patriarch was fully in favour of the re-establishment of the Catholicate.



When V.Rev.Augen Ramban came back to Malankara, he was ordained as a priest by His Grace Sleetba Mar Osthathios Metropolitan at Kottayam Church (Cheriyapally). V.Rev.Augen Ramban had travelled all over the churches in Kerala with His Holiness Abdulla Patriarch and His Grace Sleetba Mar Osthathios Metropolitan as their interpreter in 1909. Very.Rev.Augen Ramban had tried his level best to be impartial in between the two groups in the Malankara Church.

His Holiness Moran Mar Abdel Massiha Patriarch arrived Kerala in 1912 as and when His Holiness Abdulla Patriarch, who had attempted to occupy the secular powers in Malankara, had gone back. Considering the personal contacts with the Patriarch, Very.Rev.Augen Ramban had gone to Niraham and had an audience with the Holy Father. So also he attended the enthronement services of His Grace Murimattathil Mar Ivanios the teacher of his father, as the 1st Catholicos of Malankara. It is quite natural that the Patriarch group of that time felt ill feeling towards V.Rev.Augen Ramban. Even before this itself he had turned as a controversial person.

In those days very.Rev.Ramban had gone to Madras, as per the request of late K.K.Lukose Judge and in consideration of our members there, to conduct our services at Madras Anglican Church. That was the beginning of a service center in outside Kerala. The spirit of Mar Augen Catholicos must be rejoicing in the fast development of Madras Parish as the Head quarter of a Diocese of the Church.

## **2. GOSPEL & EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Very Rev. Augen Ramban who returned from Madras, the great city, accepted Vadagara Church and the surrounding places as the action fields of his gospel and educational activities and services. He succeeded in helping so many families to embrace Christianity while he roamed among the low class people, doing good through his gospel activities. Hundreds of converted Christians enjoyed the shelter and shade of the great tree - the church. We could say that the society of the servants of the Cross started by Rev.Dn.M.P. Peter, Mukkamcherril was the continuation of the works started by Very.Rev.Augen Ramban. It was no body else other than Very.Rev.Augen Ramban who supported and enabled the society of the servants of the Cross to cover the obstacles raised by the Government of Sir.C.P. and the high class Hindus who objected the conversion of low class people, considering their own interests. The society has described Very.Rev.Augen Ramban as the anchor of the society ship. When there were the two groups strong with their arguments in the Church, His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos Metropolitan had been the patron of the Society. It is a historical fact that his association with the society enabled it to achieve strong holds in the northern Dioceses. In the early years, the annual conferences of the society had been presided by His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos Metropolitan. In one of those annual conferences at Pallikkara, Mr. O.M.Chерian was the main speaker. So the representative of Patriarch objected His Grace Mar Thimotheos from attending and presiding the meeting. But he only presided the meeting. No body was able to hinder the flow of his deep concern for gospelisation. The services rendered by him while being the Episcopal Defense made him the blessed. There is no doubt about it.

He started an English Medium Middle School in 1918 after constructing a building in the grounds of the 'Cross' at Vadagara, with the strong feeling that English education is a must for the progress of the newly converted Christians (from the backward class) even though the locals had no interest in the purpose. It will be difficult for the present day generation to understand the troubles and pains suffered by Very.Rev.Augen Ramban for the construction of the first building and the two storied building raised later. See what is told by Rev.Fr.C.S.Scariah, the previous Head Master of the famous St.Johns High School, Vadagara.

Very.Rev.Augen Ramban reached Vadagara seeing the splendid Church there. The affection towards his classmates Rev.Fr. Mathai Tharayanil (He entered the heavenly abode at Jerusalem when he had gone there with



Very.Rev.Augen Ramban), Rev.Fr.Paulose Kuriankal, and Rev.Fr.Joseph Kuttippalackel had attracted him to the place. There were a large number of backward class people belonging to 'Pulaya' tribe. He started visiting their homes to preach the gospel with the co-operation of their landlords, with the strong feeling that it was a good field for gospelisation. More than 200 families as a whole accepted baptism. Cloths were distributed among them. Their Marriages and house warmings were solemnized by Very.Rev.Augen Ramban and the local priests. His Grace Pathros Mar Osthathios Metropolitan also started his functions. Now-a-days those families are living in very good standards. He had ignored the suggestion to have a separate church for the newly converted. As the 'old' Christians could not achieve freedom from the bondage of Liquor the 'New' Christians were also of the same experience. There are funny occurrences where old Christians had compelled new Christians to share their seats in the toddy shops where as the new Christians weren't willing to sit with the old with respect.

It was impossible for Very.Rev.Augen Ramban to sit idle other than engaging himself in new activities and fields. He selected the educational field. There was no English Schools in between Kottayam and Alwaye. It was a time when the Vadagara Parish had handed over the management of the Anglo Vernacular School at Koothattukulam to the State Government. An attempt of the locals to erect a Girls primary School under the Government Management had also failed. In these circumstances Very.Rev.Ramban had thought about the formation of an English School. Many who heard the suggestion were not pleased. But the optimism of Very.Rev.Ramban was many times stronger than the pessimism of others. He expressed his willingness to erect the school building if the required land was granted somewhere near the Church. All agreed to this proposal. He summoned a meeting of the parish representatives of Vadagara and surrounding places. They promised some of the required funds. Immediately arrangements were made for collection of funds from houses after houses. Very.Rev.Ramban accepted the very small amounts with great satisfaction. Rice, money and timber were collected from the people. In the accounts of receipts very small donations are seen as accounted.

I had met him again while his collection campaign was going on. When I had been to my mother's house for the mid summer vacation, I had met him with my maternal uncle Rev.Fr.Mathew. He enquired my opinion about the school project. I had given a pleasing opinion. I had never expected that I would become the Headmaster and the luck would favour myself and the School at a time. My intention was to join M.D.Seminary High School as per



the direction of my teacher Mr.K.V.Chacko. He told me that he did not receive any promising answers from anyone. I am always optimistic then and now. With the funds received from people belonging to the different faiths, the middle school building's construction was completed. Immediately the preparatory class was started. I was appointed as the Headmaster. But as I had lost a subject of my BA degree, I had gone back to S.P.G.College, Trichinappally. Mr.M.B.Ninan, Mattackel, Niranam was appointed here as the Headmaster. Rev.Fr. Thomas, Kokeril was appointed as the asst. Headmaster. There were more students than expected. As per the request of the parishioners, he agreed to be the Manager of the School. He had no desire for money, power, pomp and proudy. After giving instructions to Rev.Fr. Kokeril and Rev.Fr.Chalembil to carry on the necessary works, he had gone back to his native place.

I passed my B.A. examination. As my teacher and well wisher Mr. Chacko Master had ideas to leave the position of Headmaster of M.D.Seminary High School, Kottayam, and as my relatives had a disliking to send me to the south, I did not consider to join MD Seminary School. Luckily the plans to elevate the middle school as a High School became prevalent. Very.Rev.Ramban came again to the forefront. A meeting of the parishioners was convened. The parishes of the neighborhood also promised to co-operate. A small hilly area of beautiful seven acres, on Koothattukulam - Ernakulam main road was purchased for the purpose by the Parish. With the advance from the parish construction works of a two storied building in 'H' shape was started. Very.Rev.Ramban initiated the fund collection and collected money, rice and timber. And hence the construction works were completed. It took seven years. In this period only V.Rev.Ramban's willingness to physical strain, suffering natures, ability for collection of funds etc. were exhibited. The fifty days lent time was the time for collection. In those days all people would be there in their houses. Lent won't allow to accept food and receptions. Hence he could visit more houses saving a lot of time. He needed a light refreshment at 3'o clock after noon. Those who were moving around with him were permitted to take food as and when required. But it should not be a hindrance for his programme. When he would reach a house, he will notice a big tree and would approach it. The head of the family would say "Ramban, please don't take that. I will give the next one". Immediately the arrangements would be made for cutting into pieces and sending to saw mills. He used to approach all alike, the rich and poor. Those who were not able to send their wards to English Schools because of their inability to pay the fees were also approached. I once asked him why the poor were not ignored from the collection and why the tallest



and biggest trees were demanded from the well to do families. He answered "This is the psychology of collection. If you ask the biggest, then only you will get the small at least. From the poor only you will get comparatively bigger amounts". We all studied that what he told was absolutely correct. One day at 3 PM he broke the fast by taking tender coconut water. But he was totally exhausted due to the heat. He felt very tired. He told me to pray for him, by keeping my hand on his forehead. He said "I will die now, please keep your hand on my forehead and pray". I was worried. As we got the effective medicine from a house he got relief. If help was needed to load the timber in the carts, he was willing to do what he could. In those days the wheels of the carts used to struck on the roads. Very Rev.Ramban was usually the first person to pull the wheel from the mud. In those days the roads were not metalled. Rev.Fr.Kocheril will also join V.Rev.Ramban. I was not strong so I won't join them. He used to say that Rambans are not forbidden to toil. When the foundation pit was prepared Very.Rev.Ramban only started preparing the pit first.

He desired that things must go in the right way. He never longed for any sort of wealth, well being, fame and popularity. And finally it became a High School.

In the meantime he longed to have an Asram of his own. So he established the Zion Asram near Malayattoor and started staying there. The Church started with the Asram was a relief for the people who had settled there. Recently the church and Asram were renovated and Mar Augen High School was established. The author remembers the words of Late Rev.Fr.T.C.Jacob, Manager of Catholicate Aramana that His Holiness had helped the school construction with the contribution of a big amount. In addition to this, His Grace Augen Mar Thimotheos Metropolitan had a permanent role in the establishment of Piravom Seminary middle school and Kolenchery High School.

### **3. METROPOLITAN**

Very.Rev.Augen Ramban was consecrated as His Grace Thimothios Metropolitan by His Holiness Moran Mar Elias III Patriarch,(who was later buried at Manjanikkara) by the unanimous wish of Kandanad Diocese. The Consecration took place at the St.Marks Asram Church in 1927.

When Very.Rev.Augen Ramban had set apart to Syria for consecration, he was asked to execute a contract registered. It was mentioned in the contract that it was a must on the part of the Metropolitan candidates to execute the contract and it won't be a hindrance to act for the welfare of Malankara Church. This additional clause was an objection and delay for the Consecration. Patriarch got a cable message "Augen should be punished and returned". Incidentally he had to bargain and argue with Mar Aprem Severios (Later Patriarch) about the Catholicate. Rev.Fr. Chollenpil who was with Very.Rev.Augen Ramban prepared another agreement in English with the pleasure of the Patriarch. When His Grace Mar Augen returned to India, Mar Julius was insisting to register the agreement and His Grace did not take the request seriously. From that day Mar Julios was not in good terms with Mar Thimotheos.

As soon as His.Grace returned to Kerala, he started living at Piravom Seminary. Even though the Piravom Parish had donated 5 acres of land to build the Diocesan Head Quarters, it did not take place due to several reasons. The Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese who succeeded Mar Themothios sold the same land to Piravom Church itself recently. His Grace Mar Thimothios joined a chit fund at Cherai Bank to form a Diocesan Fund.

Again the attention of His Grace was diverted towards Moovattupuzha. He regained the land and small building at the prominent place at Moovattupuzha close to M.C.Road, originally purchased by His Grace Ivanios the first Metropolitan of Kandanad (Later His Holiness Mar Baselius Paulose I, Catholicose) from the unjust occupants and His Grace Mar Thimotheos started living there. His Grace did his best to convert the land as fertile and constructed the present Church there. It was the beginning of a worship centre for the Orthodox Syrian Christians. A few Deacons had come to Moovattupuzha and they had stayed there for some time. The names of His Grace Yoohanon Mar Severios (Cochin Diocese), His Grace Phlipose Mar Theophilos (Ankamali & Bombay Dioceses) and His Grace Abraham Mar Clemese (Knanaya Diocese) are worth mentioning.



There was an agricultural field of more than 300 acres in Chathamattom area, for Piravom Seminary (which was known as Metron Coup.) originally owned by Mar Coorilos who was the Diocesan Metropolitan for some time. Before the coming of Mar Augen as in charge of the Diocese, almost the whole area was under the occupation of many others. It was quite difficult to regain the land. Still he succeeded in getting 10 acres of land and started a Rubber Estate with the assistance and initiative of Rev.Fr.Skariah, Chemmankuzhy. But due to financial shortage enough care was not provided to the estate. Metropolitan had to suffer many struggles of financial and other matters due to the troubles in the Church.

His Grace longed much to erect a good building in the place of the old hut where he stayed at Moovattupuzha. He had tried for the purpose soon after the peace was re-established. But unfortunately the meeting convened for the purpose was adjourned. It was only because of the disagreement of the Metropolitan. He was pained much in the incident. He even thought of leaving everything aside and to lead a rest life in Kodanad Asram. When a few gave inspiration he felt happy. He visited the Dioceses in the south. He revisited the parishes and approached the well wishers for fund collection. He spent Rs.31,000/- and completed the construction of the first floor. He longed to see the completion of the second floor also. For this purpose His Grace authorised the Diocesan Metropolitan to make use of certain properties worth Rs.9,000/-. So also handed over an amount of Rs.3,000/-. When the Diocesan Metropolitan sold the estate he got Rs.26,000/- and from the sale of the plot at Piravom he got Rs.3,000/- From Chit Fund of Cherai Bank, His Grace was able to hand over another Rs.3,000/- as ready cash after H.G's incidental expenses. It is natural to keep an amount of pocket money. His Grace also could have reserved, but His Grace did not do it. When His Grace had settled at Kottayam also, His Grace had enquired about the construction of the second floor. When the second floor was completed His Grace reached there and enjoyed the sight. When the first floor was completed many people had suggested to erect a Marble plate with the inscription of the memory of the peace of 1958 and the building construction. But His Grace did not favour the suggestion saying that such praises were unnecessary. But Rev.Fr. Chemmankuzhy arranged the Marble plate with the following inscription:

" To the Glory of God and in Jubilant memory of the mutual acceptance of the Patriarchate and Catholicate on 16.,12.1958, during the blessed period of His Holiness the Patriarch of Antioch Moran Mar Ignatius Yakub III, and His Holiness The



Catholicose of the East Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II, this Metropolitan residence was erected by His Grace Mar Augen Themotheose Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese on the site earned by His Holiness Moran Mar Baseliose Paulose I, the 1st Catholicose of the East in India (installed in 1912 ( former His Grace Mar Ivanios Metropolitan) of happy memory of the Kandanad Diocese".

Moovattupuzha,  
15.8.1961.

The portraits of His Holiness first Catholicose and His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose were placed in the new building. When this book is written, those portraits and the Marble slab are not seen there. His Holiness Geevarghese II had thought that as in the case of ordinary individuals, His Grace Mar Thimotheos Metropolitan would also hesitate to move from Muvattupuzha when His Grace would be consecrated as a Catholicose as the Metropolitan residence was erected with His Grace 's efforts only. His Holiness had asked Rev.Fr. Chemmankuzhy to ask His Grace Mar Themotheos Metropolitan to move to Kottayam and stay in the Catholicate Palace after the time of His Holiness. Father conveyed message to His Grace "Father you don't know that I won't stick to something. I have longed to see things being done in the right way" was the reply from His Grace . His Grace had worked at several places and established so many institutions. But His Grace was never proud of those achievements or had shown extraordinary affection to those activities.

While His Grace was the Principal of Theological Seminary at Kottayam, he told once, "It is nice that I have come from Muvattupuzha. In a way it is good that the Members of Kandanad Diocese have forgotten me. Now my interests are with the translation of the manuscript books in Syriac which are beyond reach of the ordinary people. I have longed for this since long. Now only I got time and people to publish them". While assessing the value of literature, these books are of great importance and value. These books were written by Church fathers who were scholars and saints and the books are full of biblical verses and beautiful illustrations. They were translated to very good Malayalam literature. The services of His Grace in translating the precious books can't be ignored by anyone as all services are conducted in Malayalam language. The new Testament which was translated by Pampakuda Malpan was edited and published by His Grace . He has written books of independent nature in addition to the translations. The Holy



Synods, life after death, Truth of Church teachings etc. are his famous works. "The Hoothomo" of Holy Qurbana, the penkisa prayer for the memory of St. Thomas and St. George were translated as poetry itself and were published. As and when His Grace left Muvattupuzha it became a blessing for the entire Church. His Grace had emerged himself in several attempts to end the disputes in the church.

His Grace favoured the stand of His Grace Geevarghese Mar Dionesios (Vattasseril) in the peace conferences held in the presence of His Holiness Mar Elias Patriarch. His Grace Mar Dionesios had presented a formula of mutual recognition. Even after the demise of Patriarch, His Grace participated in many meetings with Palampadam advocate. At last His Grace organised the round table conference at Alwaye. It was His Grace's last attempt for peace. By this attempt His Grace was ignored away from the flock of Metropolitans of Patriarch's group. His Grace gave statements in the court for the right canon in favour of the group of Catholicos. V.Rev.Marasseril Itteera Malpan and Konatt Abraham Malpan also gave similar statements. His Grace gave the inspiration to bring out the real canon of 700 years old (manuscript of Syrian Origin) from Pampakuda.

In 1942 while His Grace was staying at Muvattupuzha, he accepted the leadership of His Holiness Moran Mar Beseleos Geevarghese II, Catholicose publicly and sang 'Oxyos' for His Holiness while a Diocesan general body was going on. Even though these were in perfect order and system, this resulted in the unrest of the Diocese. In almost all parishes both the groups became active and the cases also started.

Without much delay His Grace was appointed as the Principal of Kottayam Theological Seminary and he started staying there. When His Grace Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan of Thumpamon expired, His Grace Mar Augen took charge of the Diocese and started staying at Pathanamthitta. In 1953 His Grace participated the Metropolitan Consecration held at Kottayam when Mar Ivanios, Mar Athanasios, Mar Phillexenos, Mar Osthathios and Mar Coorilos were elevated as Metropolitans. When His Grace Daniel Mar Phillexenos took charge of Thumpamon Diocese, His Grace Mar Augen went back to Muvattupuzha. During those days only He was able to enjoy the happiness of peace for which His Grace had longed much. The verdict of the supreme court came in 1958 and His Holiness The Patriarch and His Holiness Catholicose recognised mutually and exchanged letters of mutual acceptance. His Grace enjoyed great relief for his mind. The administration of Kandanad Diocese was at a stand still. The attempts to

construct a Metropolitan residence were ignored till then and His Grace succeeded in implementing the plans for the construction under the leadership of Rev.Fr. Chemmankuzhy. In the mean time His Grace was admitted in Velloor CMC Hospital for an operation. While His Grace had come back to Muvattupuzha after the recovery, His Grace had been elected as the Catholicose Designate.



## 4. PIRAVOM PERSECUTION

The Piravom incident is a black chapter of in the biography of His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose as well as in the history of Malankara Orthodox Church. It is a black dark spot, which cannot be removed, as far as the famous Piravom parish is concerned. The culprits were ridiculed in the sight of the world because of their act in the pre-planned act of darkness. The wrath of God was showered upon them. The one who was manhandled shined like a jewel of the fire.

The following description is the sum and substance of the statements of the eye witnesses. This fact was collected from them personally as there is no real picture of this incident as a written record so far. It is expected that the manhandling of the anointed of the Lord God won't take place in future, whatever be the temptation for the cruel act. In 1942, it was on the Maundy Thursday after the acceptance of His Holiness Moran Mar Catholicose as the spiritual head by His Grace Mar Augen that His Grace was manhandled and ridiculed by his own people as what happened in the time of Lord Jesus Christ.

In those days the Metropolitan was living in the Piravom Seminary of Kandanad Diocese. His Grace was taking rest after the Maundy Thursday special services.

On that day there was a committee meeting at Piravom Church. When Rev.Dn.N.M.Thomas had taken two years leave from the post of Head Master of Piravom English Middle School, to resume the responsibilities of the Secretary of Syrian Students Conference, he had handed over the official responsibility of the School to the Asst. Head Master. But the Priest who was acting as the Manager of the School appointed another controversial person as the Head Master without consulting others. When this act was questioned in the Church Committee, the priest who was the manager said "when I went to the School there was no Head Master. So I have appointed another person." After questioning this act, the members of Catholicose side walked out. In the committee the Patriarch's side had enjoyed the majority. They had taken decisions of their choice and had dispersed.

When the rift had increased among the two divisions, some prominent persons of Piravom town who were followers of the Catholicose and some prominent members of Pazhoor - Kakkad area who were followers of Patriarch's side tried to direct the day to day affairs of the Church in the ways



they liked. The Vicar and the trustees of the Church were followers of the Patriarchal group. In this circumstance the followers of Catholicose group tried to bring His Grace Mar Thimothios Metropolitan to the Church. It is said that those people had explained the benefits of His Grace's visit to the Church. Two priests of the Catholicose side were also brought to the presence of His Grace. They were Rev.Fr.Mathai Alappatt and Rev. Fr. Thomas Erumappetty. Actually Rev.Fr. Mathai wanted to ask His Grace whether the visit was a must then and there. But as His Grace was noticed ready to move to the Church, Rev.Fr.Mathai did not tell his opinion.

The Master motors bus which had service at Piravom area reached the Seminary. Sunday School Children stood along both sides of the road with lighted candles. His Grace travelled in the bus. Even though simple but a pontifical reception. The priests of the dissident group also participated His Grace's "Luthiniya" and evening prayers.

The members of the Church committee who were supporters of Patriarch group and who had enjoyed majority did not participate the reception under the auspices of the prominent persons of Piravom town. They did not raise any objections too. But they held mutual consultations about His Grace's visit and tried to form up a public opinion against the visit.

The followers of Patriarchal group remained in the Church premises until His Grace had gone for taking rest. The organisers of the reception had requested them not to disperse from there. But they left the place. Rev.Fr.Mathai also had gone from there.

Rev.Fr.Thomas, Rev.Dns. and a few young men who arranged the reception remained in the Church. There was no disturbance for the quietness other than the cold breeze from the Muvattupuzha river which had touched leaves of the coconut trees softly. As it was the passion week so many faithful were there in meditation, both inside and outside the Church.

The supporters of those who disliked the entrance of His Grace to the Church which reminded the triumphant entry of Lord Jesus, went to Pazhoor and Kakkad areas and were attracting some rowdy type people by saying that "Robber entered the Church"

When there was no sort of rift in the diocesan administration, a young priest was ex-communicated by His Grace for his disobedience. Even though he had embraced Catholic Church, he gave leadership for the dissidents to express his anger towards His Grace. The organisers of the dissident group



brought the advice of the leader who was engaged in the toddy business. Toddy was brought to his house and was served among the rowdies. It is said that the priest who had embraced Catholic Church had followed the trouble makers upto the entrance of the Church with a turban. The people who came to "send out" His Grace had brought some sticks of the coffee plant from a house in Pazhoor. The coffee plant branches were strong and tender.

When the group reached the Church at mid night all had fallen asleep. They coiled the petrolmax lamp which was kept in the Church. The young priest and the Rev.Dns who were sleeping in front of His Grace 's room got up. The bed room was opened with great force. Somebody caught hold of His Grace 's shoulders and made him to get up. They questioned His Grace 's right to be there. They threatened His Grace 's life and asked to leave the place immediately. His Grace got ready to leave the place without any sort of resistance. And got out of the room even without his shoes. When the group showered abuses with words out of Dictionary, His Grace moved ahead slowly. There was enough moonlight to distinguish the persons known personally. A few members of the agitating group followed His Grace . A few others caught hold of the young priest and manhandled him. At last he had to runaway from there. The Rev.Dns who also were manhandled ran here and there as the place was not well known to them.

When His Grace was getting down the steps on the eastern side one person gave a blow on His Grace 's back with the stick of coffee plant. When His Grace turned back in great distress saw the guilty person and identified him. This truth was revealed by His Grace later. Mr.John Uchippillil who was sleeping in front of His Grace 's room said " I was sleeping in front of His Grace 's bedroom by keeping the shirt and towel as the pillow. His Grace had asked us to go back to our homes. But a few of us remained there. At midnight a group of agitating people came looking for His Grace with talks in high sound. Immediately I had tried to enter His Grace 's room and to lock it. But powerful push from outside made me fall down.

As my dress identified to theirs, they counted me one among them. In the meantime somebody got into the Church and rang the main bell. When many people from the surroundings had reached the church, the agitators were leading His Grace from the Church to the Piravom seminary by force. Their sound of abuses were heard".

Mr.M.U.Varkey, owner of the famous St.Mary's bankers at Piravom, son of Mr.Varkey Uthup (Kunjappan) ex-trusty of the parish, and brother of Mr.M.U. Abraham and Mr.M.U.Poulose said " when we heard the sound of



Church bell we ran to the Church. When we moved further we saw His Grace walking barefoot among about forty rowdies, and their dirty abuses were actually frightened. We hid ourselves from their sight and followed them upto the seminary without their notice. On the way to seminary they had thrown metal pieces against the house of ex-trusty Mr.Varkey Uthup Mankidiyil. When he explained these truths Mr.Varkey Uthup shed tears. He also remembered His Grace 's frequent advice "to Pray". When His Grace reached the seminary the trouble makers had dispersed.

Rev.Fr.Mathai, Alappatt who had reached 88 years of age told the author on 7th May 1976 " I was not happy in His Grace 's trip to the Church. When I reached Seminary to say "No", His Grace had made all arrangements for the trip. Then I had also joined him without raising an objection. I think there were about 200 people By 8 PM we have reached the Church. I had planned to bring His Grace back to the Seminary after the Prayers. When I had compelled, His Grace had agreed to do so. But we could not arrange a driver for the vehicle. Mr.Kuriakose the owner of Master Bus service informed that the bus was not starting even after long trials. By the time it was so late. As I was so tired and as my dress was completely wet due to the sweat, I thought of taking a bath and changing the dress. And for this and with intention of returning to the Church, I went home. His Grace had told "my beloved, you all go to your homes, I shall return to Seminary in the morning after the matins".

When I had reached home, I had a priest as guest. After the bath and supper I did not prepare the bed. And while I was talking with the guest, I went to sleep. At 5' o clock in the morning somebody told me the details of the unhappy incident in detail. When I rushed to the seminary I saw tears falling from the eyes of His Grace . I knelt down at His Grace 's feet. And soon Mr.Issac, Doctor of Local medicine was brought and he treated His Grace . "Is it a must to record all these" was the question from respected Father Mathai before explaining what he knew and what was there in his sharp memory. When I kissed his blessed hand and said farewell, he hopefully informed his desire and prayer to leave this world without much sufferings.

Even though His Grace got treatment of oil bath and massage for some days, he had severe pain all those days. The marks of two beatings with the coffee plant stick and manhandling were there on the handsome body which was covered with robes always. In the morning when people gathered to attend Good Friday's Service, they participated the pain of His Grace . There is still a rumour that the dissidents only wanted to send His Grace out



the Church with out any sort of disturbances but the liquor had forced them to act wildly.

His Grace conducted the Good Friday's long service while suffering the physical pains. In the sermon he did not mention about the persecution.

Within a few days a case was filed at Kottayam court with 31 plaintiffs. The police superintendent utilised his influence and all the plaintiffs were released on bail. It is understood that all had a feeling that such a case is not all a credit for the Church and hence the case was either withdrawn or weakened later.

Those who tried to manhandle and ridicule His Grace, the anointed of God, were punished immediately by God Almighty. The right punishment for the deserving at the right time is the peculiarity of this incident. It is a truth that the only son of the house at Pazhoor from where the coffee plant stick was prepared had fallen on the remaining piece of stick on the plant and had an injury on the belly and had expired immediately. The one who had beaten, had an unhealed wound on his body for years and years and was miraculously healed only after meeting His Grace with his family and begged the pardon. The priest who had embraced the Catholic church and the owner of the toddy shop had physically handicapped new born children. It is known that who had assembled the gathering and the people who had carried lanterns also got reasonable punishments. Later when His Grace used to visit Piravom Church, people used to beg His Grace's pardon for their own relative's foolishness. Once His Grace had declared publicly that he had no ill feeling towards the one who had manhandled him and he had no complaint about the incident. His Grace also had added that he had forgiven all culprits. It is known that a few had proudly told about the incident to His Grace Mar Athanasios of Alwaye and His Grace Mar Athanasios was not at all happy to listen the news. It is said that His Grace had told "those who have manhandled the anointed of Jehovah should not stand in my room - get out".

Being a devotee full of Christian virtues, His Grace Mar Augen was not at all happy to tell about the unhappy events to anyone or to maintain the rivalry to anyone. It is the historical fact that this incident has converted him as a Martyr of the Christian church. Since this incident, the Catholicose group used to conduct a silent procession from the Church to the Piravom Seminary on a day of the passion week, every year. The silent procession was stopped since the arrival of His Holiness The Patriarch to Malankara to elevate His Grace Mar Augen as the Catholicose and their visit to the

Church as His Holiness The Catholicose of the East and His Holiness The Patriarch of the east. On that day they both had held each others hand while stepping up the stairs to enter the Church.

Mr.Uthup Varkey, Mankidiyil is one of the prominent persons who felt very bad about the Piravom incident, renovated the Cross and the base on the way through which His Grace was made to walk. He spent Rs.25,000/- to keep the memory of His Grace . The newly built Cross and the base was sanctified and blessed by His Holiness Augen Catholicose. We could see the following writing. In memory of His Grace Mar Themothios (His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Augen I) Re-constructed by Uthup Varkey, Mankidiyil (St.Mary's Bankers, Piravom - 1970)



## 5. THRONE OF CATHOLICOSE IN MALANKARA

There were so many controversies about the Catholicate in Malankara, which is considered as the symbol of the Independence, progress etc. Even when there was no sort of disagreement in the church, certain leaders were advocating to His Holiness The Patriarch for the establishment of the Catholicate. Very Rev. Konatt Mathen Malpan who rendered able leadership for the old Patriarchal group was the Priest Trustee of the Church before the commencing of the rift. His letter to the Patriarch asking to establish Catholicate in India is a famous historical record. Resp. Malpan was strongly demanding the Patriarch with reasonable arguments to re-establish the Catholicate that existed in Tigris for centuries. After all these events only the rift came in the Church which was not wanted and expected by the ordinary members. The reference to the letter of Very Rev. Mathen Malpan was made to make it clear that the Malankara Church had not advocated for the Catholicate on the basis of the rift. Today all members of Malankara have to feel proud about the Catholicate about which the leaders of the Church irrespective of the group had a vision and the church as a whole had appreciated it much. Even if some or other had any sort of disagreement, that might have disappeared today as His Holiness The Patriarch had come to Kerala in 1964 and had Consecrated His Holiness Augen Catholicose as per the decision and co-operation of the Holy Malankara Episcopal Synod. In the Antiochan Syrian Church there happened to be two Patriarchs at a time and each one had excommunicated the other. These incidents are the modern events of the Church History. Many knew the fact that Very Rev. Augen Ramban who had stayed with His Holiness Abdel Massiah Patriarch and His Holiness Abdullah Patriarch for a long period and he knew them both very well, had stood for the establishment of the Catholicate. Very Rev. Augen Ramban had written to many leaders that senior Patriarch and the pious His Holiness Abdel Massiah Patriarch had favoured the re-establishment of the Catholicate in India. It is needless to mention specially that those letters had helped to a certain extent in inviting His Holiness Moran Mar Abdul Massiah Patriarch to Malankara. In 1912 His Grace Paulose Mar Ivanios Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese was consecrated as the 1st Catholicose of Malankara at Niranam Church. (Those who had objected this saying that it was a misappropriation, had given the name Paulose II, to His Grace Paulose Mar Philexenos Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese, when he was consecrated as the rebel Catholicose in 1975). The dissidents have agreed



that the establishment of Catholicate in Malankara is right by ignoring their arguments against it while Catholicate was re-established in 1912.

While His Holiness Mar Abdel Massiah had re-established the Catholicate, he had released approval orders to the effect that it would last long for ever.

In the speech soon after the re-establishment of Catholicate His Holiness stressed that Catholicate and Patriarch are equal in powers and His Holiness said like this:

" My blessed children, the service which took place here is so divine and important. This is an incident which your fathers had longed much to see, but they could not. The Malankara Orthodox Church was established by St.Thomas, one of the Apostles of Lord Jesus Christ. God has enabled today to re-establish the throne of St.Thomas here, so that the Apostolic ordination could be continued for ever. In future there is no need to send someone to Turkey to obtain ordination. The Catholicose enthroned today on the blessed throne of St.Thomas is the successor of the Catholicose who was there in Selucia. He is having the blessed name Moran Mar Baselios. Let him live long. Let there be mutual concern and consideration between you all and the Catholicose. Let the Malankara Church obtain more glory and progress through his leadership. You all should respect him and honour him as a Catholicose. You all must obey his instructions, love him and obtain Apostolic blessings from him. The Metropolitans of Malankara will have the right to enthrone one among them as the Catholicose after the period of present Catholicose. Let the Catholicate enable the Malankara Church to keep up its freedom. This is the basement of the freedom of the Church. Now I will tell the reason for the inspiration to re-establish the Catholicate in Malankara. I only know how difficult and dangerous was the journey from Turkey to this place and I have experienced them also. If insisted to suffer at much difficulties by the members of Malankara Orthodox Church always, it is unjust and not at all Christian spirit".



As mentioned in the speech of His Holiness The Patriarch, the 2nd and 3rd Catholicose of Malankara were enthroned by the Metropolitans of Malankara.

There was the final judgment for the cases of the Malankara Church on 12th September 1958, by the Supreme Court of India, and hence the Catholicose and the Patriarch accepted and recognised mutually on 16th December 1958 at old seminary, Kottayam. Actually this was the second recognition of Patriarch as far as the Catholicate is concerned. When Catholicose had written the mutual recognition he had written on the letter head showing "Catholicose on the Throne of St. Thomas" and it was an act of long vision. It is mentioned in the Supreme Court Judgment that the spiritual powers of the Patriarch over the Malankara church were deteriorating due to the enthronement of a Catholicose in Malankara.

## 6. 4TH CATHOLICOSE

As and when the third Catholicose His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II became ill due to old age, His Grace Augen Mar Themothios, senior Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese was elected as the Catholicose designate by the Malankara Association held at Niranam on 17th May 1962. On the same day when His Holiness The Catholicose said in his speech to congratulate His Grace Mar Themothios, that His Grace had excess humbleness, it became a famous talk later.

A small group of people who had no real Christian vision used to write to His Holiness The Patriarch, criticising the peace and the stand of His Holiness The Patriarch for the cause, after mutual reception and recognition and the re-establishment of peace. It is a unique incident in the history of the Malankara Church when His Holiness The Patriarch was invited to be the chief celebrant of enthronement of the 4th Catholicose according to the traditions and when His Holiness The Patriarch accepted the invitation of the Malankara Episcopal Synod. Chev.C.J.Kurian had written an article in Malayala Manorama dated 24th August 1962 about the contribution of His Holiness The Patriarch for the re-establishment of peace in Malankara. The article says:

"Now there is no need to hide that there were rumors regarding the arrival of His Holiness the Patriarch and many were worried over it. But it is clear that His Holiness had no doubt about the visit and its purpose. It is very clear from the statement of His Holiness at Kottayam on 20.5.1964. There was no hindrance for him to say boldly that he was going to enthrone the Catholicose in Malankara. His Holiness had visited Omallur Church where his predecessor and personal guide's holy remains are laid to rest and on 22nd May 1964, His Holiness enthroned His Grace Mar Augen Themotheos Metropolitan as the Catholicose of the East, as it was planned earlier. The statement of His Holiness the Patriarch are worthy to add in the history of Malankara Church in golden letters. His Holiness had expressed with his fatherly affection that he had enthroned the canonical Catholicose of the East with out any sort of suspicion and he had accepted all living and departed Metropolitans, priests and Deacons and the faithful of the Church. His Holiness had exhorted the faithful to work together unitedely as one ignoring all sorts of rifts and rivalries for the sake of he improvement of the mother church. All rifts and rivalries, as a result, disappeared from the minds of the



faithful as if mist may disappear in front of sun and they were united one another with brotherly and affectionate regards. This sort of feeling was experienced by many who attended the enthronement services. What was started in 1958 was completed in 1964".

And when His Holiness The Patriarch enthroned Mar Augen Themotheos Metropolitan as the Catholicose of the East on 22nd May 1964 at Mar Elia Cathedral, Kottayam, associated by the members of the Holy Episcopal Synods of Malankara and Anthioch, His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Augen I became the first Catholicose of Malankara approved by the members of Malankara, as a whole alike.

His Grace Mar Themotheos was a person who was much worried about the rifts and disputes in the Church from the time when he was a Ramban. He had longed for peace since long. When His Grace was in the Patriarch group, he had honoured the principles of Catholicose group and he had a soft corner towards the ideas of the opponent group. His Grace had later joined the Catholicose group openly not only because of his favour for its ideas, but also because of his prayer and longing to establish permanent peace in the Church. His Grace had joined the Catholicose group with the knowledge that his existence in the original stand would only enable him to gain personal benefits and achievements. His Grace's all good desires were cherished on the Gold Friday on which he was enthroned as the Catholicose of the East.

God only had selected and called His Grace to this top position. The selection was also extra ordinarily unexpected. His Grace had never longed for this position. As His Grace surrendered himself entirely to the mighty arms of God Almighty, His Grace got the long life and health to carry out the heavy burdens easily and successfully for 12 years. His Holiness Mar Augen had rendered strong and able leadership to the Church by crossing so many obstacles. As soon as His Holiness Augen Catholicose was enthroned, His Holiness the Patriarch said in his speech that a new chapter had been opened in the history of the Church and declared that the peace had become re-established. The memorable speech continues:

" As it is said that my beloved is like a rose flower among the thorns, the Holy Church is a rose among the thorns of the world. There had been pressures and persecutions against the Church from different corners. There were disputes among the members of the Church. Malankara Church had been a victim of disputes of different natures.

So I had to come to this place at this time. We must forget totally the period where we were in disputes and rifts. Many sacrifices were exercised by the Church to remove the rifts and differences of opinions. Hence the Church had been totally exhausted. Many people came forward and worked hard for the peace of the Church. His Holiness Moran Mar Elias Patriarch of Manjinnikara is one among them. His Holiness had come to this place to put an end to the disputes, but he did not get a chance to do accordingly. Or in other words God did not allow him to do so. Hence it was an unavoidable need to grant peace for the Church. As soon as I became the Patriarch I have thought about this need seriously and after a year of my enthronement I have sent an order to the effect, as many of you know. By this I had accepted the previous Catholicose.

So I was able to fix the foundation of the peace of the Church. So it is my duty to complete the peace. That is why, I have come to your midst from the far-away place. As we achieved complete freedom, our happiness has been complete. (Applause). Hence our happiness is beyond limitations.

Before we were able to elevate a Catholicose of the East for this Church, I do believe that by this good act the Church will progress tremendously. All those who had tried for the peace of the Church, through the enthronement of Catholicose, could rejoice well. All your fathers had longed to see this blessed day. They might be enjoying in spirits today. In this good activity all must enjoy well. Now I would like to make one thing clear.

Now I have not only elevated Mar Augen as the Catholicose, but also I have accepted all the Metropolitans and priests who were away from me. I have accepted all the Metropolitans and the priests as true priests and I do pray for all the laymen.

So in future you all must accept my message without any difference of opinion. As I have accepted, you also must accept. If you think that I am head of the Church, you must obey my words. As I enjoy in today's good deed, we do wish all the best of happiness and prosperity to the Catholicose of the East. May God bless Him. Let the Church prosper and rise up during his period. So also we do congratulate all the Metropolitans. All our Church members in Syria also do rejoice today. I have great pleasure to invite my brother His Holiness The



Catholicose and all their Graces the Metropolitans to Syria for a visit. They all must come there for the happiness of the entire church. May God bless us all. May God grant peace and prosperity to the Church. Let it be in the intercession of St. Mary, Mother of God, St. Thomas and others saints 'Amen'.

In the reply speech of His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose it was said "The Malankara Church will remember the act of the Patriarch who had joined the two fractions of the church. Even though the throne of St. Peter and the throne of St. Thomas are different, they are the one.

## 7. A PERIOD OF 12 YEARS

His Grace Augen Mar Themothios Metropolitan who was elected as the Catholicose Designate by the Malankara Association on 17th May 1962, took charge of the Malankara Metropolitan on the demise of the third Catholicose His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II on 3rd January 1964. His Grace had declared that he would stand for justice, truth and principles and would follow the good principles and footsteps of his predecessor during the funeral speech. His Grace followed and practiced what he had promised.

The Malankara Synod decided to invite His Holiness Moran Patriarch to participate the Catholicose elevation ceremony in accordance to the Hudaya canon, to remove the hurdles of perfect peace and to nourish the emotional unity of the Church. It is believed that the decision was entirely based on the sincere desire to have complete peace and unity because it seems that the Synod had considered the mutual recognition of 1958 and had ignored the fact that His Holiness The Catholicose was not invited for the Patriarchal elevation ceremony of the present Patriarch. In February 1964 it was confirmed that His Holiness The Patriarch and three other Bishops would participate the Catholicose elevation ceremony. Later it was understood that certain leaders of the Patriarchal side had attempted to create certain hurdles for the arrival of His Holiness The Patriarch and those attempts were not succeeded.

His Holiness The Patriarch and the delegation at the expense of the Malankara Church visited His Highness The President of India Dr. Radha Krishnan at New Delhi and participated in many receptions in Kerala. The members of the Church knew very lately that the Synod had agreed to leave the parishes in Kuwait etc. which were directly under the Catholicose, just to please His Holiness The Patriarch. It was agreed to make arrangements for meeting the spiritual needs of the rich Malayalees there. Events proved that the above agreements were not effective. The ceremony of elevation of Catholicose in association with the members of the Malankara Orthodox Synod was an event of great significance. But the action of some dissidents publishing the photo of the Patriarch and the delegation only participating the ceremony (they had cut the photos of the local bishops and were removed) was worse than that of pagans. Many people who had witnessed the ceremony are still living in northern and southern Kerala. Even if cameras could play tricks, the human eyes could not ignore the facts what were witnessed.



the elevation of the Catholicose, both the fractions of the Church were united together. The Catholicate became the sole property of the entire Church. The Catholicate re-established in Malankara in 1912 was not approved by His Holiness Abdullah Patriarch and his followers. The Catholicose and the followers had not approved the Patriarchs. All believed that this mutual disagreement was turned over for ever. The usage of 'We' and 'You' disappeared from the Church as there was Patriarch and Catholicose of cent percent recognition of the Church. The minority who had disagreement with the peace order of Patriarch of 1958, must have accepted the Catholicate when they have listened to the speech of the Patriarch.

You must hold the peace established in Malankara very firmly. That would be your precious present for me. Moreover you must lead a holy spiritual life. There won't be any use to the Church or for any body to say about or to make quarrel on the basis of the rifts existed in Malankara Church. If somebody is trying to create problems based on the pervious unpleasant incidents, they will have the destiny of the wife of Lot". This is a part of the speech of His Holiness at Kottayam Simhasana Church. When one turns back to the unhappy incidents of the past he would be prompted to go further to rifts and divisions. So the reminding of the wife of Lot was relevant. All a few raised their heads as the wife of Lot. And it is quite unfortunate.

His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose had to bear heavy responsibilities. His predecessors had to consider and respect the proposals and suggestions of one group only. But it was a Herculean task to win the confidence of two factions together which were well versed in different opinions. Some matters cannot be stressed. Certain truths cannot be expressed publicly. His Holiness The Catholicose who was reaching 80 years of age had to take the burden of going ahead cautiously in word and deed. We could say that the position of Catholicose was a mattress of thrones as far as he is concerned, as he had walked through the paths of thrones till then. His Holiness The Patriarch had left for his home town by wishing the progress in the creative fields of the Church and also permanent peace. So there was a peaceful atmosphere to open any creative activities in the Church. Even before taking the office of the Catholicose, the planning committee of the Church had started functioning with creative thoughts. The relationship with other monodox churches became solid and strong. In July 1963 His Grace Athanasius Mar Athanasius Metropolitan and His Grace Daniel Mar Malloxenos Metropolitan visited Moscow and other places and attended the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Metropolitan consecration of His Holiness



Alexis Patriarch, at the invitation of Russian Orthodox Church. The Church managing Committee decided to re-organise the Catholicate Central Office in the most modern way. An Episcopal council office was deputed for the execution of the day to day affairs in September 1963. Even though there were burdens and problems, the Church administration was quiet and systematic in the beginning years of His Holiness. Those who remained as two fractions started worshipping together. Certain priests dedicated Holy Communion in the Churches where they had not entered before. And the Church moved towards the emotional unity.

His Holiness deputed a Ruling Committee to implement the necessary constitutional amendments. Considering the progress of the church, it was decided on 20th November to ordain a few more Bishops. The Holy Synod elected His Grace Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Ankamaly as the President, Very Rev. Kaniyamparampil Kurian Cor-Episcopa as the Director General and Rev.Fr.K. David as the publication officer of the Sunday School Samajam.

In January 1965, His Holiness the Catholicos attended the synod of Eastern orthodox Churches at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with His Holiness the Patriarch, and visited the churches and places of Holy importance accepting the invitation of His Holiness The Patriarch. His Holiness Moran Mar Augen renewed his memories of young age. His Holiness the Patriarch presented a small share of the Holy relics of St. Thomas to His Holiness the Catholicos. When the Orthodox Theological seminary was elevated as a degree (B.D.) college with effect from 1st February 1965, His Holiness, who was the Principal of the Theological College earlier, enjoyed and rejoiced. The Church as a whole celebrated the Catholicate day as the symbol of church's solidarity, independence and peace. The Holy Episcopal Synod decided to implement timely changes in the rituals and services of Malankara Church. The necessary action steps were accepted to implement the preliminary works to establish a medical mission activities of the church. His Holiness the Catholicos announced that all recommendations of church planning commission were accepted in the joint meeting of the Synod, Managing Committee and the planning commission held at old seminary on 27th August 1965. The Managing Committee held on 5th October decided to convene the Malankara Association meeting on 28th December and to elect five Metropolitan candidates. The association elected Fr.N.A. Yohannan Malpan, Fr.K. Philipose, Fr.T.Paul Varghese, Fr.M.V.George, V.Rev.C.T. Thomas Ramban unanimously. Fr.T.S. Abraham was elected as the priest Trustee instead of Rev.Fr. Manalil Jacob who resigned from the post.



10th year jubilee of Orthodox Theological Seminary was celebrated by the 11th of December. In the inaugural functions His Holiness, one of the previous principals of the seminary, presided. H.E. The Kerala Governor Mr. A.P. Jain inaugurated the function. Later only His Holiness had gone to Ethiopia to attend the Synod there. The concession granted without denting the significance and importance of the lent, is one of the important improvements executed at the time of His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose. The Catholicose group who had disagreed with the lent reformation of His Holiness Aprem I Patriarch, approved the lent reformation only after the establishment of peace in the Church. Except the 3 day Lents, Passion week, Wednesdays and Fridays of 50 days lent people could use milk and by products and fish if so essential. This was the concession of the lent implemented.

At the end of March 1966, His Holiness declared that Mar Elia Chapel, Ettayam, will be the official cathedral of Catholicose in future. Mr. P.C. Abraham, Padinjarekkara was elected as the secretary of Malankara Association Managing Committee. Till then Mr. E.J. Joseph held this position rendering remarkable services.

Even though five metropolitan designates were elected, the decision to elevate three of them only as Metropolitans raised the objection all over the Church. His Holiness Mar Augen hesitated to take a firm stand against a few at the Synod. His Holiness could find an end to the civil cases in Manarcad and Cherai parishes. His Holiness had stayed at Manarcad for a week to see the peace. Due to his ill health, he could not find permanent peace at Kothupally and Kunnamkulam.

A pilgrim delegation under the leadership of V. Rev. Aprem Aboodi Ramban visited His Holiness The Patriarch and churches in Syria and Holy Land, as there was peace of high standard between Malankara and Antioch. His Holiness elevated His Grace Yuhanon Mar Saverios, His Grace Thomas Mar Thimotheos and His Grace Philipose Mar Theophilos as Metropolitans on 24th August 1966 at Kolenchery. His Holiness The Patriarch described about this consecration as the symbol of the development of the Church.

Immediately His Grace Yuhanon Mar Severios was given the charge of Antioch Diocese, His Grace Thomas Mar Thimotheos was given the charge of Malabar Diocese, and His Grace Philipose Mar Theophilos was given the charge of Ankamali Dioceses. The death of His Grace Mar Theodosius of Quilon Diocese on 6th August and His grace Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Ankamaly Diocese on 6th November doubled the sorrow of His Holiness Mar

Augen. But when by the end of 1967, the small church at Puthuppally was locked by Fr.Jesus and the key was handed over to Mr.P.C.Abraham and witnessed the establishment of peace at Puthupally enabled His Holiness to rejoice much. His Holiness conducted the preparation ceremony of Holy Mooron, a right of the Catholicose, at old seminary Kottayam on 21st December 1967.

When the physical strain and ill health of His Holiness increased, the Malankara Association was convened on 31st December 1970 at M.D.Seminary, Kottayam. When all the Metropolitans of the Church and the 3000 representatives of all churches in Malankara elected His Grace Dr.Mathews Mar Athanasios, a really suitable candidate for the post, as the Catholicose Designate, it was a great relief for His Holiness Moran Mar Augen in all respects.

His Holiness Moran Mar Augen had told in his inaugural speech that "all Metropolitans had assembled at Parumala seeking the intercession of St. Gregorios to find out God's will to elect a right successor to the Catholicose. All candidates except one declined their candidature with a sacrificial mind. If the last one also had declined, it would have created a problem. It is a matter of great joy and blessing. Praise be to God. " There is great pleasure to elect the Managing Committee also unanimously. We have great appreciation for their love towards the church and respect to the saints."

"You must save the Church and live with moral principles and ideal natures in front of others. You must move ahead in principles of the Church. If so your families, your country and the church will enter success. You are the protectors of the Church. Your honour and dishonor will be the honor and dishonour of the church. You must work together with love, affection and happiness and must bring glory to the church."

It was mentioned earlier that some dissidents were there with their own arguments with every step of progress. His Holiness has said several times that selfish thoughts and desires of a few were creating problems in the church. His Holiness being a lover of peace and quietness and a noble devotee, felt much mental pain. When the priesthood and the throne was questioned from certain corners of the church, His Holiness took a firm and strong position to defend the faith and truth. Hence he is admired by all as an efficient and strong Catholicose of the east. When once somebody hinted that Moran Mar Augen would be excommunicated by His Holiness The Patriarch, His Holiness Moran Mar Augen replied "He won't dare to



communicate St. Thomas even" It is a truth that Augen Catholicose was  
willing to accept a matrydom for the sake of the existance of the  
urch, when question in this regard arose.

## 8. PROGRESS AND HINDRANCES

The Church improved in several fields soon after the re-establishment of peace when His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose was on the throne. Kolencherry medical mission Hospital, Theological degree college, student centers, new colleges, High Schools and orphanages are the products of the peace in the Church.

But in certain areas like Ankamali Diocese, a few priests and laymen, who longed for leadership, tried to create dissident groups purposely and they had tried to squeeze the ordinary faithful in the name of the so called "Anthoican faith" which was not defined by any one till then. They were able to oppose and abuse the Diocesan Metropolitan through their ill statements and wrong propaganda. Even the mob was inspired to burn the car of the Metropolitan. The history will record that the leaders who were blind due to false proud had committed certain acts of worst mind for which the uttermost people may reluctant to act.

His Holiness the Catholicose had a firm belief that the peace of the church was spoiled by a group of selfish people. He longed God may excuse their ill treatments. The whole world could learn that His Holiness Mar Augen is a person who had suffered so many pains, sufferings and manhandling for the sake of peace and had accepted stabbing on the chest after the crucifixion, from the leaders of Ankamali.

His Holiness Augen Catholicose could reign the church as one even though there was division. The pervious Catholicoses were able to see peace from a distance as Moses witnessed Canan. Mar Augen Catholicose could render a tender touch at the peace of the Church. If the people who embraced Anglican Church and reformation ideas and like wise Marthoma Church had left the Holy Church at the time of Cheppad Mar Dionesius Metropolitan and Pulikkottil Mar Dionesius Metropolitan, the dissident groups were united at the time of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen and they became one and created a history. His Holiness was of the opinion that the boat which was progressing through the water of peace and those who hindered its progress by creating tides in the water will have to suffer wrath of God. The order of His Holiness Patriarch to the effect that St. Thomas had no priesthood and he was only an ordinary lay man (order number 203 of 1970) created an impression of adding poison to the milk for the infant, when even the Roman Catholic church also accept that St. Thomas is the Apostle of India.



the false teaching which is as good as a heresy caused much mental pain for His Holiness. He had great feeling of worry as the heresy originated from a Patriarch.

The false teaching enabled one and all at Malankara to learn more about St. Thomas and to be staunch in faith like St. Thomas. The 19th Centenary of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas was celebrated at Kottayam with the co-operation of the entire church. A great ocean of people assembled there. His Holiness Moran Mar Augen in his inaugural address said " St. Thomas was not only establishing a church in India far away from his mother country, but he was uplifting the position of Indian Christians by granting them priesthood with his own hand for which he was also empowered by Lord Jesus Christ by the blessed and honourable priesthood. Our happiness will overflow, and our piety will increase when we will honour this patron saint St. Thomas who enabled our Church to have the sacred faith and sacred priesthood much more than many of the western countries known as Christian centres and more than many of the eastern centres. St. Thomas is the base of our power, inspiration and faith."

In the same year when we observed the 19th centenary of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas, a few leaders of the Managing Committee who stood with the church for leadership for about 14 years, had gone out from the Managing Committee and even from the Church. They had raised the question of St. Thomas but their aim was to fight for leadership. The minority who staged a walk out from the managing committee were ignorant about the importance of the spiritual power of the committee or they were attracted to good inspirations of spiritual life. It was not necessary to educate the majority who could think and find facts that there is no significance in the walk out of the few who had no faith or no concern for the tradition of St. Thomas. There were debates and arguments in regard to the spiritual power of His Holiness The Patriarch over the Malankara church before the acceptance of Malankara church constitution. They never had touched the throne of St. Thomas. There are orders from Patriarchs which addresses the Catholicos on the throne of St. Thomas. It is a lesson from the experience of the Christian Church that ones who advocated for the false treatment which was not dreamt of till then, will have to repent. May God forgive one and all who tried to spoil the beauty of the church by applying and advocating the false teaching.



## 9. CATHOLICOSE - POPE CONVERSATION

His Holiness Pope Paul VI had reached Bombay to attend the Holy Congress in December 1964. Then only the long cherished desire of His Holiness the Pope to meet His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose the head of Indian Orthodox Church on the throne of St. Thomas was fulfilled. His Grace Philipose Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of Ankamali (the then Fr.K.Philopose) had made all sorts of arrangements. His Holiness the Catholicose reached Bombay ignoring his personal ill health at the age of 80, to fulfill the desire of His Holiness The Pope.

The audience between the two heads of churches took place on 3rd December 1964 at 9 AM. A specially arranged room in the palace of Bombay Arch Bishop and the first Cardinal of India, Valarian Gracious was the venue. On that morning the traffic to Bud house Cathedral was entirely under control of the traffic officials. His Holiness the Catholicose and Fr.K.Philopose who were taking rest at the residence of Mr.K.M.Philip reached Bud house Bishop's Palace at the right time in a beautiful car. Secretary to His Holiness The Pope, and Papal representative in India jointly received His Holiness the Catholicose with due reverence and was taken to the room of His Holiness the Pope on the second floor through the lift.

Unforgettable valuable moments. The embracement of the east and west. The joint mingling of the north and south poles. The glare and shining of the spiritual lights remained in the room. A thrilling experience for the witnesses who watched the audience of two heads of churches after long centuries. Both of them well known for their humbleness and simplicity remained on top of mountains of spiritual experiences. A reunion of brothers who were separated for long long years. A Ganges - Yamuna reunion of Christian spirituality based on meditation.

They embraced each other on left and right. His Holiness the Pope made His Holiness the Catholicose to share his sofa. The thrones of St. Thomas and St. Peter have joined together. There was no question of position, power or throne. A pleasant atmosphere of perfect love and mutual recognition.

His Holiness Moran Mar Augen informed that his trip to Bombay was only with the desire to meet His Holiness the Pope. The face of His Holiness the Pope shined like a full moon of Christian virtues and it look life as if it was travelling through high clouds of happiness and perfect satisfaction.



In that solemn atmosphere, it was seemed that the waves of Christian love were transmitted from the minds of both and that had created twinkling echoes of spiritual satisfaction in their hearts which were like guitar of an artist. His Holiness the Pope said that he would be happy only when His Holiness would reach Rome and stay there for a few days as one his greatest guests. Cardinal Gracious and Fr.K.Philipose were the only two persons to witness the talk of the hearts.

After a few minutes talk between the supreme heads of two churches, His Holiness the Pope allowed an audience with the then central Government Minister and prominent member of Indian Orthodox Church Mr.A.M.Thomas and Mr.V.M.Marangoli, the chief representative of Malayala Manorama at New Delhi. Mr.Marangoli presented that day's Manorama news paper which was actually decorated with different attractive pictures of His Holiness The Pope. With a pleasant smile at the news paper His Holiness The Pope passed it to the Cardinal. Visitors were introduced to His Holiness by Fr.K.Philipose.

Fr.K.Philipose read the message of His Holiness The Catholicose to His Holiness The Pope and submitted. In the message there were 433 words. The reply message of 470 words was read by His Holiness the Pope. In both the messages it was made clear that Indian Orthodox Church is an Apostolic Church. His Holiness The Pope expressed his desire to visit Kerala and to meet all Christians there. In the message it was said that His Holiness The Pope enjoyed the fact that India was lucky enough to listen the gospel when the European countries also had listened. Also it was mentioned that His Holiness the Pope was recognising His Holiness The Catholicose as well as the members of this ancient church at the same time. In the both messages, the hope and desire for a close contact on the basis of the apostolic faith is expressed. The high level meeting will ever and ever remain as the happiest hours of the church history.

**GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS THE CATHOLICOSE**  
**AUGEN I**  
**TO HIS HOLINESS THE POPE PAUL VI**

Holy Father in Christ,

We give glory to God, The Holy Trinity for His great mercy in making this meeting possible. This great land of India with its ancient history and tradition of great religious saints had extended its welcome to the Christian Church in the middle of the first century A.D. when St. Thomas one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ founded it. Through the centuries the Church has lived its life here as part of the life and history of India, for long it has been isolated from the main currents of Christian Church and its growth in the western world. However, it maintained its connection with Persia and the See of Antioch. At present Syrian Christians include Orthodox Syrians, Catholic Syrians, Anglican Syrians and Marthoma Syrians. In spite of all these influences and other vicissitudes it is a matter of profound gratefulness to God that we have kept the faith once delivered to the saints. The ancient Catholicate of the east was revived here at the beginning of this century and my humble self is the fourth occupant of the throne since its establishment in India in 1912.

The Orthodox Syrian Church has been viewing with keen interest, the deliberations of the second Vatican Council under the able leadership of Pope John of blessed memory and Your Holiness. We had sent observers to the Council in response to Your Holiness kind invitation. The Council has opened vistas of new hope and expectations in the minds of Christians all over the world about the union of the Christian Churches. *The Orthodox Church in India shares that hope and is united in prayer with Holiness in this great venture that the high priestly prayer of our Lord may be fulfilled in the way and time that the Holy Spirit wills.*

I may venture to express to Your Holiness that the new spirit that Your Holiness and Your saintly predecessor have brought in, will inaugurate a new relationship of cordiality between our Churches. There have been painful instances of groups changing from one faith to another often without theological or doctrinal grounds which I believe have not contributed to the best in Christian witness.



Despite of my old age and present conditions of health I did not want to miss this great privilege of meeting Your Holiness and exchange fraternal greetings with You on this historical occasion of the first visit to our land by the primate of the See of Rome. Let us join to praise God for all his blessings throughout the ages and to pray Him for His inestimable blessings and aidance in the years to come.

## GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS THE POPE PAUL VI TO HIS HOLINESS THE CATHOLICOS AUGEN I.

Your Holiness,

It is in a spirit of great joy that We greet you today. Our pilgrimage to the Congress which is meeting in this city of Bombay in order to renew Our devotion and fidelity to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ receives new inspiration from the knowledge that you also have been able to come here to meet with Us and exchange with Us a fraternal and Christian greeting.

How great a pleasure it would have been for Us to visit the state of Kerala and personally greet the flourishing Christian communities which are established there. Their traditions of Christian life and witness extend back to Apostolic times, and We rejoice in the fact that even as the message of love and reconciliation was being brought to Europe through Christ's Apostles, ambassadors of peace, it was also reaching out at the same time to embrace your own native land. It established deep roots, and from the beginning has contributed greatly to the spiritual and cultural life of India.

If the restricted nature of Our present pilgrimage makes it impossible for Us to make this visit at this time, We are comforted by the fact that, in the person of Your Holiness, We are able to salute the many thousands of Christians you represent. Even as We rejoice that so many Christians in this land glory in being heirs to the traditions of the Apostles, so also We face the reality that unhappily there do not exist the bonds of full communion among those whom the Lord calls to be of one heart and one soul (Act, 4.32). The pain which this causes also spurs Us on to strive humbly but confidently for the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ (Decr de Oecumenismo, n.24). Fidelity to the faith preached by the Apostles and the Fathers as well as loyalty to the Apostolic charge which the Lord has laid upon Us make us understand that the way to full communion is a difficult one which offers an opportunity to the genuine charity of all Christians and to their patience in striving to carry out the inscrutable decrees of God.

As we salute Your Holiness and, in your person, the venerable church of which you are the pastor, We wish to express our desire and determination that Catholics also full accept that opportunity.



God grant that the fraternal greeting we are exchanging now be the pledge of our common desire that, with the grace, of God and according to the ways in which He will determine, Catholics and Orthodox in India may one day arrive at that happy state which once characterized their apostolic forbears. So, the sacred writer tells us, "continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers" (Acts 2, 42).

## 10. ETHIOPIAN SYNOD

His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I, got the golden opportunity to attend the Synod of Heads of Eastern Orthodox Churches, as the head of Indian Orthodox Church in January 1965. The synod was convened in the interests of His Highness The Heyli Zelazi, Ruler of Ethiopia. His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius Yakub III, Patriarch of Antioch also had participated the Synod. His Grace Daniel Mar Philoxinos, Secretary of Malankara Episcopal Synod, His Grace Paulose Mar Philexinos, Rev. Fr. T.C. Jacob, Rev. Dr. V.C.Samuel and Rev.Dr.K.C. Joseph represented the Indian Orthodox Church. The late His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II had expressed the desire for convening such a broadminded conference for the first time.

The love, respect and reverence expressed by the ruler of Ethiopia as well as other participants of the Synod towards His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose who attended the Synod ignoring his old age is beyond explanation. This conference is a record in the history of the churches as long as all the Eastern Orthodox churches are free and independent for their administrative affairs. His Holiness The Catholicose got yet another chance to visit the church centres in Syria and the holy land as he was invited by His Holiness The Patriarch.

His Holiness the Catholicose and delegation had started the flight from Cochin on 11th January and reached Asmara in Ethiopia via-Bombay - Karachi and Aden. His Holiness and the delegation stayed in Government guest houses in Asmara on the day of arrival. The severe cold there had affected His Holiness and Fr.T.C.Jacob unfavourably. They continued their journey to a Addis Ababa the next day. In the same flight His Holiness The Patriarch, two Metropolitans and two Rambans from Syria were also there. Both the heads of each delegation as well as the members embraced each other.

When the flight landed at Addis Ababa the Ruler of Ethiopia, His Grace Aboona Mar Theophilos, acting Patriarch of Ethiopia and more than 15 Bishops were waiting to receive the visiting delegations. For the welcome speech of Aboona Mar Theophilos, His Holiness The Patriarch and His Holiness The Catholicose replied promptly. On that evening The Patriarch and His Holiness The Catholicose visited the Emperor of Ethiopia and had a talk. Emperor expressed satisfaction and surprise for the arrival of His



His Holiness The Catholicos who was 81 years old. By the presence of His Holiness Mar Augen, actually Indian Orthodox Church was honoured there.

The Conference started on 15th January. His Holiness The Patriarch of Antioch, Armenian Supreme Catholicos His Holiness Mar Vaskan, His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicos, Cilician Catholicos His Holiness Mar Korin and Aboona Theophilus sat on both sides of the Emperor on the stage. His Highness The Emperor had inaugurated the conference. His Holiness The Patriarch of Antioch and His Holiness Mar Vaskan Catholicos spoke on the occasion.

There was a difference of opinion about the representation of the Armenian Church. So there was no meetings in the same evening and also the next day. The meeting procedures were resumed on 18th and many important decisions in regard to the orthodox churches were taken. On 25th January His Highness The Catholicos and the Indian Delegation reached Cairo as guests of the Coptic Orthodox Church. His Holiness Patriarch had gone to Damascus from Cairo. The Indian delegation visited so many important centres and churches.

After two days visit His Holiness The Catholicos and the delegation went to Jerusalem. His Holiness Mar Augen got one more chance to visit the important pilgrim centres of Holy Land at his old age.

After visiting Beirut, Antioch - the Headquarters of His Holiness The Korin Catholicos, His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicos and delegation reached Damascus on 3rd February. A warm reception was granted to the Catholicos of the east by the Patriarch of the East.

His Holiness The Patriarch was curious to know about the high level of peace in Malankara and he enquired to all members of the delegation. Both the heads of the Churches occupied similar seats without any discrimination of the thrones and had a friendly talk.

His Holiness The Catholicos and delegation visited Hama, Aleppo, Latakia, Derik and Mosul.

## **11. HOLY RELICS OF ST. THOMAS**

When His Holiness The Catholicose and the delegation had reached Moosul by train with His Holiness The Patriarch and the delegation, Mar Severios Zaka, Metropolitan was waiting at the Railway Station to extend a warm reception and all of them were taken to Moosul Metropolitan Head Quarters as a procession.

The Church there is in the name of St. Thomas. When renovation works for the wall was carried out, the Holy relics of St. Thomas was regained. It was well kept in a Marble box. It was written in old Esthrangela language that it contained the Holy relics of the founder of Indian Church. When the Holy relics was regained, His Holiness The Patriarch considered it as a present for the re-established peace in Malankara Church and a witness of the saint's missionary works in India. The matter was informed by cable message by His Holiness The Patriarch.

In the beginning the Holy relics of St. Thomas was taken to Edessa. Those holy relics were dedicated in St. Thomas Church in Uraha in AD 394. The Holy Church decided to observe July 3 as the 'Dukarono' (feast) of St. Thomas. The history says that parts of the Holy relics were taken to different parts of the world. In due course of time Uraha became the tomb of St. Thomas as well as the Head Quarters of Eastern Catholicoses. As and when the Headquarters of the Catholicose were moved from one place to the other, they carried the Holy relics also with them.

His Holiness The Catholicose celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. Thomas Church Moosul. During the Holy Qurbana His Holiness The Patriarch reached there and took the Holy relics of St. Thomas from the place it was kept with much honour and reverence and kept on a specially decorated place in the Chancel. After the special prayers with incense, His Holiness the Patriarch made a small speech and presented the holy relics to His Holiness The Catholicose. His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose received the Holy relics with due respects and honour and expressed deep gratitude to His Holiness The Patriarch and His Grace Mar Zaka for their kind gesture. Then both their Holinesses, Metropolitan, Rambans, Priests and Deacons had a procession of praising and completed the Holy Qurbana. This Holy relics is kept in Kottayam Catholicate Palace Chapel; as a gift for the Church.



His Holiness The Catholicose and delegation visited Baghdad, Basra, Bahrain, Qatar and the Malankara Orthodox Congregations there. When His Holiness The Catholicose reached Cochin via Bombay, a warm reception was arranged by the Church as a whole in honour of the delegation as well as the holy relics of St. Thomas. The high degree of awe-inspiring expressions of the faithful are beyond words. His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose reached back his Palace on 9th March 1965.

## 12. ARGUMENT OF MODERN THRONE

Some dissidents accused that His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I, Catholicose had introduced the theory called throne of St. Thomas and they tried to cover the great mistakes of Patriarch through their false statements. This is the most unhappy incident of the Church history in this century. It is a fact that His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I had never invented a new throne and he did not create one also. As he was enthroned on the throne of St. Thomas, His Holiness bravely reigned the church and opposed all attacks which may hurt the glory of St. Thomas or the Church, bravely like a rock.

The St. Thomas tradition of Malankara Church is as old as 20 centuries. No one has recorded in the history that anybody else other than St. Thomas had established the Indian Church.

Malankara Church has got links with the Antiochan Church as old as 3 centuries only. In the mean time many Patriarchs have written letters to Malankara addressing the one on the throne of St. Thomas. These are the talking evidences of history. His Holiness Moran Mar Abdel Masiah had clearly said that he was elevating the Catholicose to the throne of St. Thomas in AD 1912 at Niranam. That meant that there was a throne of St. Thomas in existence. And if it was a new creation in 1912, then also His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose was innocent.

Aprem Aboodi Ramban who had reached Manjanikkara to serve the tomb there, was the first person to advocate the false teaching. He wrote an article to the effect in Syrian news and tried to create problems by throwing stones into the Malankara pond to make the water dirty. To establish that St. Peter only had a throne, they made St. Thomas an ordinary layman. The whole Christendom would consider the order No.203 of 1970 from Patriarch as a heresy. The official order was later interpreted as a private letter and they were committing mistakes over mistakes. We cannot justify the act of the Patriarch who had written in a book that St. Thomas had received the ordination with other Apostles in AD 28 and who had presented the Holy relics of St. Thomas for Malankara in AD 1965 with due respect and honour. What else to say, it was the misfortune of Malankara church. The copies of the order were passed to His Grace Paulose Mar philoxenose. His Grace Abraham Mar Clemis and Mr. Eapen Thomas Palampadam. There was a discussion in the working committee also. As the sum and substance of the Order was a heresy, nobody tried to publish it.



His Holiness Mar Augen Catholicose replied to the Patriarch. The news about the order was flashed from the above mentioned circle. When His Holiness Patriarch was adamant for the order and when he ordained Bishops and appointed a delegate without the information of the Synod in Malankara, attributed a qualification of a number one enemy of the Church. The hearty welcome and reception received by the Patriarch in Kerala in 1964 was so wonderful. No other Patriarch would get such a reception in future also.

As the responsibilities of the Malankara Metropolitan who is dealing with the worldly administration and the Catholicose who is dealing with the spiritual administration lies in one person, he has to act differently to execute his responsibilities. Malankara Association and the managing Committee are convened as being the Malankara Metropolitan. For that reason he need not use the Letter head of Catholicose. Such letter heads were used by His Holiness Augen Catholicose for some time as per the advice of some well wishers to help emotional unity. But in the later cases as there was certain problems His Holiness The Catholicose started using the Letter heads of Catholicose for all sorts of correspondences. The dissidents who got angry over it staged a walk out from the Managing Committee of August 1972.

The throne of St. Thomas was not questioned in the civil cases which had prolonged for years earlier. It is worthy to think that the Church had started to think about the throne when it completed 2000 years of existence. The throne of St. Thomas is traditional fact. Everybody knows that there is no basic principle in the arguments against the throne and the disputes.

Late) Mr. K.M.Churian, the previous chief editor of Malayala Manorama who had tried his level best for the peace in the church at the last days of his life is of the opinion that the dispute about the throne matter is due to misunderstanding. In the speech at Chengalam St. Thomas Church on 2nd July 1972, in connection with the 19th centenary celebration of St. Thomas's martyrdom he said "the throne of St. Thomas in Tigris is connected to the catholicate throne. That is what the history says. We had re-established the catholicate when the church had two groups and there was rivalry in between them. One of the groups had told that the establishment of catholicate in India was in continuation of the catholicate of Tigris and the same was the throne of St. Thomas. It was a golden opportunity in the Church history when the Patriarch as well as both the groups had recognised the Catholicate and when peace was re-established in the Church.

But when the eastern Catholicate was approved and recognised unanimously, the Patriarch had expressed a desire not to use the term "throne of St. Thomas on



the letter heads of the Catholicose as well as in the letters addressed to the Patriarch. As reason explained for such a request by the Patriarch was that two apostolic thrones for one church was not relevant and as a symbol of the entire Syrian church, Malanka Church should also consider the same throne of St. Peter as their own. In my opinion Malankara Church could have the throne of St. Thomas. Roman Catholic Church is a living example of a church having two thrones. They claim the thrones of St. Peter and St. Paul. The church is continuing as one.

Really the 12 Apostles of Lord Jesus are the common inheritance of the whole church. So also their thrones. All Christian churches may claim those apostles and their thrones. Throne is considered as a symbol of the apostolic position. So there is no reason to have rivalry on the basis of the thrones." In the jurisdiction the Catholicose there was no place for a delegate and as the Patriarch also has approved and accepted the constitution. He cannot authorise a delegate to discharge the duties assigned to him in the constitution. Mr.K.M. Cherian strongly stated these arguments. Why the Patriarch is reluctant to agree that the church in Syria and the Church in Malankara are two separate churches? There is no reason to disagree that the supreme head of the Church in Syria is the Patriarch and the Supreme head of the Church in Malankara is the Catholicose.

Kadavil Paul Ramban (now His Grace Kadavil Mar Athanasios), a scholar in history has written in his book "Syrian Church and its principles" that Malankara Orthodox church is not a part or branch of Antiochan Orthodox Church.

The reason for the latest troubles and rivalries is the "throne of St. Thomas" in the Letter head of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose. Is n't it?

His Holiness Abdel Masiha Patriarch had re-established the Catholicate in India in 1912. In his statement it was said "Beloved Mar Ivanios is appointed as Baselios Catholicose on the throne of St. Thomas." The throne came into existence in India in 1912. Even before that the Malankara Metropolitans had tried to use this name and certain Syrian powers had tried to oppose it. Second Catholicose Baselios Geevarghese I had used the letterhead stating "Catholicose of the Eastern Apostolic throne". It was printed both in English and Malayalam. Third Catholicose His Holiness Baselios Geevarghese II had started the orders with the letterhead "The Eastern Throne of St. Thomas". When in 1958, His Holiness The Catholicose wrote the order to accept Patriarch in accordance to the



Malankara Orthodox Church constitution, it was also written on the letter head "The throne of St. Thomas". When the enthronement of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose took place on 22nd May 1964, he had remembered the Throne and had told it in public. In these circumstances now one could say that the Throne of St. Thomas was a creation of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose.

### 13. END OF LIFE

Even though certain administrative problems had disturbed, generally His Holiness Moran Mar Augen Catholicose had a very peaceful end. He will also have a definite place in the time of saints who had completed the run, upheld the faith and longed for the crown of justice. His Holiness was cent percent happy and satisfied as the administration was handed over to the able and mighty hands. Physical strains due to the old age compelled him to look for a rest life. He was controlled by a feeling and thought that the church must improve and all matters concerned must be in good order and the members must depend upon the Grace of God. The thoughts about powers, rights etc. had never touched him. But he longed to resign from all responsibilities to have a peaceful rest life. But it seems that he had longed to consecrate enough Bishops for the Church and his own successor.

Rev.Fr.M.V.George, Rev.Fr.Paul Varghese, Rev.Fr.K.K.Punnose, Rev.Fr.K.C.Thomas and Rev. Fr.P.V.Joseph were elevated as Metropolitans designates by the Malankara Association held at Niranam on 2nd October 1974. The Consecration of these five priests as Bishops at Niranam on 16th February 1978 was the important event in the last days of His Holiness. His Holiness was taking rest at Peringanad Convent Chapel, Adoor. The author and Rev.Fr.T.G.Zachariah reached Adoor on 14th February to get an order from His Holiness The Catholicose regarding the consecration. His Holiness was in fear of an objection from Udupi court and so he asked "we should publish the news in paper tomorrow". When we informed that there won't be any problem he said "if Fr.Zakharia and Mamachen says so I shall sign the order". When the draft order was read His Holiness suggested a few corrections. The corrections were the proof that there was no harm for the memory power or brain of His Holiness. The order is as follows

" when Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is passing through the unique era, five of our prominent priests will be consecrated as Metropolitans today at the ancient Niranam Church founded by St.Thomas, for the growth and development of the Church. We have no doubt that these priests who have been elected in accordance with the constitution, canon, tradition and established rules and procedures, will shine in the church and they will make the Church shine."

As His Grace Thomas Mar Dionesius has expired there must be a shepherd for Niranam Diocese. One Metropolitan is to be the in outside Kerala



Diocese as His Grace Mathews Mar Athanasios has been elected as the Catholicose Designate. An Assistant is to be given to His Grace Mathews Mar Ivanios who has crossed 88 years. Moreover certain Dioceses are to be re-arranged for the convenient sake. On these circumstances 5 of our priests will be elevated for the sake of the bright future of the Church. We do not ignore the fact that the consecration had to be postponed due to certain dissident group's ill treatments.

The Malankara Association held at Niranam which was convened after the preparation of six months and at the expense of thousands of Rupees, had elected these priests. Some people had approached the courts to create problems and now the High Court has untied all knots. These instances reminds us all that God Almighty guides us and He will not forsake us.

Our Lord Jesus had selected his twelve apostles as the chief disciples and they were given the right of priest hood by his own touch. They had given the priesthood to their followers. And the continuity of priesthood was carried out from generations to generations. A faithful achieves the blessings through a high priest who is anointed by another. The western as well as the eastern church maintains a strong faith in this teaching. Moreover the high priest is a middle person in between God and man. A representative of man before God and a representative of God before man. The high priests have the responsibility of leading the faithful like the apostles in the same style of Lord Jesus. Lord Jesus had taught and advised. Like wise the Metropolitans must also do as they occupy the power from Lord Jesus who blessed his followers at the time of Ascension to heaven.

There will be significance and powers for the Metropolitans ordained in accordance with the constitution. In the Constitution it is said that " If one is to be consecrated as an Episcopal or a Metropolitan, he must be elected by the Malankara Association and the election must be rectified by the Malankara Episcopal Synod. And if these conditions are fulfilled, the Catholicose could consecrate him. And the newly consecrated must write an agreement to the Catholicose who is the Head of the Synod. And the Catholicose grants the newly consecrated the Sthathikon "paper of power" His Holiness The Catholicose declared that as these five prominent and able Metropolitans were consecrated, the church is benefited. During the lengthy service His Holiness was seemed quite healthy irrespective of his pretty old age. His Holiness handed over the Powers of the Catholicose as well as the Malankara Metropolitan to the Catholicose Designate after a consultation with the Synod members as well as the managing committee. His Holiness



created a new tradition and made himself an admirable model. The Church as a whole appreciated the noble deed of His Holiness.

On 27th October 1975, His Grace Dr. Mathews Mar Athanasius, The Catholicose Designate was enthroned as the 5th Catholicose of Malankara. As His Holiness Moran Mar Augen was ill, he could not attend the ceremonies. But when His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Mathews I, Catholicose visited His Holiness Moran Mar Augen, he blessed the newly enthroned by placing his hand on the successor's forehead. The boat of His Holiness Moran Mar Augen I which was not troubled by the storms and tides, was reaching fast to the destination. During his last days, His Holiness was admitted in Kangazha Hospital.

Moran Mar Augen Catholicose had not suffered much due to illness. The germs might have failed in the fight on His Holiness's body where flesh was less. His Holiness passed away from this troublesome world of hardships. It was a blessed and peaceful end. The world Christian Council, which was meeting at Nairobi, also offered respects for the memory of His Holiness. His Grace Philipose Mar Theophilos who was attending the WCC meeting could attend the funeral of the Holy Father.

In the presence of thousands of admirers and followers His Holiness was buried at Catholicate Palace Chapel, close to the tomb of His Holiness Moran Mar Geevarghese II Catholicose.

Let the intercession of His Holiness Moran Mar Baseliose Augen I Catholicose be a fort and protection for the Church as a whole.

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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

# MAR AUGEN CATHOLICOS

(The strong prelate behind the Catholicate)

But for the truthful and timely moves effected by Augen Ramban (later Augen Bava), the re-establishment of the throne of the Catholicos in Malankara would have remained merely a dream.

The real facts concerning the saintly Patriarch Abded Masiha were made known to the Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysius at the proper time by Augen Ramban from abroad. The Ramban gave witness from his own experience that the story about the Patriarch being insane was mere fiction fabricated in the background of the Trust Fund Suit. The Ramban pointed out that Patriarch Abdulla was opposed to the establishment of the Catholicate and the best way to achieve the aim of the Church was to invite Patriarch Abded Masiha., Augen Ramban also participated in the installation of the Catholicose in 1912, disregarding the protests of the northerners. The brave behaviour of Augen Ramban was instrumental in getting back the spiritual authority that was lost to the Malankara Church. This was the greatest achievement of the Malankara Church during this Century.

The English translation of the book "Mar Augen Catholica Bava" is being published in order to provide a good understanding of the modern church history to the members of the church who live outside Kerala and who are able to talk but unable to read or write the Malayalam language.

I am extremely thankfull to the leading members of the Malankara Orthodox Church in Kuwait who have helped me in meeting the printing expenses.

I am glad to record with all gratitude that Kollad Puliyeril Jose Kurien who made the good translation deserves the compliments of the coming generations. The prayers of Mar Augen Bava will certainly be a tower of strength to those who come to know him better and revere him.



**JOSE KURIEN**

**K.V. MAMMEN**  
Kottackal

Manganam  
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