

Patriarchal Message

His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, the Supreme Head of the

Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

at

THE KNANAYA ARCHDIOCESE

CHINGAVANAM – OCTOBER 23, 2008

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One True God. Amen.

Your Beatitude, our beloved Brother-in-Christ, Catholicos Mor Baselios Thomas I, Your Eminences Mor Severios Kuriakose the Archbishop and Chief Metropolitan of the Knanaya Archdiocese and all our other beloved Metropolitans, Very Reverend Corepiscopos, Reverend Priests and Deacons, Respected Nuns and our beloved spiritual children:

We are very glad to visit you all once again. Our Knanaya Archdiocese has a unique place in our Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. In AD 345, as directed by the then Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, a group of Syrian Christians from and around Urhoi – that is, the present-day Urfa in Turkey – came and settled in Kerala under the leadership of Bishop Joseph of Urhoi and St. Knai Thoma. Though these immigrants remained as a particular community, they, and the native Christians of Kerala, continued as part of the one Syrian Orthodox Church in India under the Holy See of Antioch and All the East. The coming of the Syrian Christians from Urhoi – who are now known also as the Knanites – strengthened the relationship of the native Christians with the Holy See of Antioch. The Knanaya community is a living testimony of the very ancient relationship of the Syrian Church in India with the Holy See of Antioch.

The Knanaya community has contributed much for the welfare of our Holy Church in India. Very Rev. Itti Thomman Kathanar in the 17th century, Mr. E. M. Philip in the 19th century and the Late Lamented Chief Metropolitan of the East Mor Clemis Abraham in the 20th century, are a few of the eminent personalities from the Knanaya community who gave good leadership for our Holy Church in India in times of crises. In 1910, one of our predecessors-in-office, the late Patriarch Mor Abdulla II of blessed memory constituted the Knanaya community as a Diocese. And in 2007, considering the growth of the Diocese, we were pleased to grant it the status of an Archdiocese. We are happy to note that the Knanaya Archdiocese is making great progress under the able leadership of Their Eminences Mor Severios Kuriakose, Mor Gregorios Kuriakose, Mor Selvanos Ayub and Mor Ivanios Kuriakose.

Beloved in our Lord: God has indeed blessed you much through the ages. So, always be thankful to our Lord and God Jesus Christ and remain obedient to His commandments. Just as our Lord loves and blesses you, you should also love Him and one another and remain united. Continue to be true witnesses of our Lord by loving and respecting all. And never forget works of charity. Obey the canonical pastoral orders of your Metropolitans who labour in our Lord for your welfare. And, thus, the grace of our Lord shall always be with you. May God bless you all.

