

## **The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Bombay Diocese**



### **Orthodox Church Center**

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The St. Thomas Christians trace their origin from St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. India at the time of the Christ's ministry was already famous for its ancient civilization, philosophy and culture. It is also had trade relations with the West Asian countries. When St. Thomas landed in Cranganore one of the important trade centre in the south he was received kindly by the enlightened rulers with whose patronage he formed the nucleus of an indigenous church in the first century. A.D.

However, this ancient church remained isolated without expansion to the others parts of the

country. It was recently that the people of the Land of palms began their Gregorian pursuit to various parts of India and abroad. Mumbai, a cosmopolitan city described as the commercial capital of India, attracted many of the enterprising people who gradually came and settled down here. From humble beginning they grew in to a community of high, social, cultural and economic standing.

For this the Diocese owes a great debt to the late, lamented Alexios Mar Theodosius of Bethany Ashram, Metropolitan of Quilon. Even though the parishes were not yet organized, Mar Theodosius was instrumental in starting the outside Kerala mission for which he trained a group of educated priests and appointed them to important cities in India and outside. His Grace Mar Athanasius succeeded him as Metropolitan of the outside Kerala Diocese. Later His Grace Mar Makarios was appointed as Bishop of Bombay Diocese which then included the Gulf countries and North America.

The Orthodox Syrian service was held for the first time in Mumbai, nearly a century ago by the late His Grace Mar Gregorios of Parumala the Saint of the Malankara Church. The need for a place of their own to worship was felt as early as 1940. Mumbai Parish was formed in year 1943 and it came to bear the fruit in 1951 when the late catholicose Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II, consecrated the St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian church in Dadar. Subsequently in many parts of Mumbai, parishes were formed and churches were built.

The Diocese of Mumbai was carved out of the outside Kerala diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in the year 1976. His grace Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios was the first Metropolitan with the headquarters as St. Mary's Church, Dadar. The diocese made rapid strides during the tenure His grace Late Lamented Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilus who took over from Mar Makarios who moved to then newly formed Diocese in the year 1979. Mar Theophilus initially established his headquarters near St. Gregorios Church, Chembur before moving out in the year 1988 to the present headquarters at the Orthodox Church Centre, Vashi, Navi Mumbai.

The present Metropolitan His Grace Geevarghese Mar Coorilos, took over the reins of the Bombay Diocese which had by now spread over the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, certain parts of Karnataka, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in the year 2002. Mar Coorilos had the good fortune of serving along with Mar Theophilus as the assistant Metropolitan of the diocese from 1991 onwards. Today the Diocese has grown to be a giant among the rest of the dioceses in many ways and more than 70 churches, schools, clinics, hostels etc are being efficiently managed by about 50 sincere and dedicated priests along with the lay representatives.

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