

## **Brief biography of Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan**



**D**r. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan was born in the Maramon Palakunnath family which was the ancestral home of the father of the reformation of the Malankara Church, Abraham Malpan and the first four Metropolitans of the Mar Thoma Church. He was born on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1931 as the son of Mariamma and Thomas Lukose who was the son of Palakunnath Kadon Thomachen, elder brother of Titus II, Mar Thoma Metropolitan, and his childhood was in the context of a very noble tradition. After school education in Kozhencherry St. Thomas High School he graduated from Union Christian College Alwaye. Having dedicated himself to serving the Church he secured Bachelor of Divinity degree from United Theological College, Bangalore. He was ordained as Deacon on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1957 and Kasessa on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1957. He acquired Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees after higher education in Virginia Seminary, Oxford and Canterbury St. Augustine Colleges. He got ample opportunities to travel globally.

The Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam in its meeting in November 1974 selected him as Episcopa. He was ordained as Ramban along with Rev. V.T. Koshy at Trissur Mar Thoma Church on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1975. Joseph Ramban was ordained Joseph Mar Iraneus Episcopa on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1975 at Thiruvalla. He was instrumental in acquiring property in Delhi, Bombay and Madras to establish Church centres there. He gave leadership to procure land from the Government to establish churches outside Kerala in Delhi, Hyderabad and Vishakhapatnam. He took special care to register

South Travancore Agency for Rural Development (STARD) for the developmental activities of South Travancore.

As Vice-President and President of the National Council of Churches he gave good leadership. He led the joint protest marches at Thiruvananthapuram and Delhi against the denial of justice to Dalit Christians on the basis of religious faith. He served as the Board member, Vice-President and President of Christian Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA). He provided good leadership to provide relief to earth quake, flood victims and rehabilitation activities in Lathur of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal and during Tsunami in South India. He served also as the Trustee Board member of Ecumenical Church Loan Fund. He was the Executive Committee member and senior member of the presidium of Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). He worked as the Co-chairman of the Joint Committee of CCA and Asian Bishops Conference. During this period he served as member of the Peace Mission in the context of the tension in Nagaland, Manipur and East Timor. He attended the Lambeth Conference in England and the Anglican Consultant Committees held in South Africa and Hong Kong. He took part in the World Council of Churches (WCC) Assemblies in Canberra, Harare, Porto Aligræ and Busan in Korea. He attended and spoke as special invitee in the Conference of world religions held at UN General Assembly Hall organized by the UN General Secretary. The Mayors of California and New York Yonkers in the US have honoured him by presenting Awards of Honor.

He has worked as the President of the Governing Council of St. Thomas College, Kozhencherry, Christian College, Chengannur, Mar Thoma College, Thiruvalla, Mar Thoma College for Women, Perumbavoor. Mar Thoma College of Management and Technology (MBA College), Perumbavoor. Mar Thoma Schools Governing Board and Mar Thoma Teachers Training College, Edakkulam, Ranni.

His service to organise the Maramon Convention officially and unofficially in the past and at present is commendable. As a man of unique ability to lead, he pays special attention to the construction activities of the Church. In recognition of the distinguished leadership in various fields the Virginia Seminary of America honoured him with a Doctorate. Moreover a second doctorate was bestowed on him by the Serampore University on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007 taking into account His Grace's activities in the Church and society. A third Doctorate to honour him was awarded to him by

SHIATS (Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences) Deemed University (Formerly Allahabad Agriculture University) in recognition of his total contribution in the social field. He was consecrated as the Supreme Head of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2007.

In the words of Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan is noble in heredity, rich in self acquired abilities, well versed in relations, able and talented in construction work and blessed in leadership. During the past thirteen years as the head of the church His Grace has initiated many projects, among which the one to support patients suffering from cancer and other terminal illnesses namely 'Snehakaram', which means 'hand of love' spending 60 lakh Rupees every year for their support is remarkable. The Mar Thoma Church donated Rs. 35 lakhs to the Kerala Chief Minister's COVID-19 Distress Relief Fund in the particular interest of His Grace.

Shri Venkaiah Naidu, the Hon'ble Vice President of India was the chief guest of the function celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the priestly ordination of Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan on 30.04.2018. The 90<sup>th</sup> birthday (Navathy Janmadinam) of His Grace Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan was ceremoniously celebrated by the Church amidst restrictions related to COVID-19 pandemic on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2020. A thanksgiving Holy Communion service was celebrated by His Grace the Metropolitan at 8 AM at the Poolatheen chapel and followed by a felicitation meeting at the Sabha Auditorium at 11 AM. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi inaugurated the meeting through Video Conference. Distinguished personalities from across the society attended the function which was arranged as per COVID-19 protocol and brought Navathy greetings to His Grace.