

# REMEMBERING H. G. DR. THOMAS MAR MAKARIOS METROPOLITAN

## A Brief Biography

### *H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan,*



son of Mr. Chacko and Mrs. Mariamma Kuttikandathil, was born on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1926. In 1942, he became a school teacher. Thirumeni became a theology student at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, was ordained as a deacon on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1951, and as a priest on Sept., 1952 by His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese II. He came to New Delhi, the capital city of India, and organized congregations in North

Indian cities. He became the first vicar of Orthodox Church in New Delhi.

Thomas Achen was diagnosed with brain tumor and was miraculously cured by the grace of God. It was during the time of the litigation of the Church that Mar Makarios showed his ingenuity as leader and scholar in Church History. He helped the lawyers of the church understand the history, traditions and Canons of the Church. This was instrumental in seeking a historic verdict by the Supreme Court of India in favor of the Church in 1958. Mar Makarios has studied in various religious institutions in England, Germany, Switzerland and France. He has been in the U.S since 1963 and earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Nashota House in Wisconsin, a Master's of Sacred Theology from Virginia Theological Seminary, and a Doctorate in Theology from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. He returned to India and worked as a professor of Church History at Orthodox Theological Seminary in India.

“May those feet that cleanly trod,  
Keeping pure thy holy place,  
Tread the courts of paradise  
And with angels ever abide”

In 1975, Mar Makarios was consecrated as a Metropolitan by His Holiness Catholicos Augen I. In the same year the Catholicos appointed Mar Makarios the first metropolitan of Diocese of Bombay. In 1979 Mar Makarios was installed as the first metropolitan of the Diocese of America.

Since 1985, Mar Makarios has been teaching religion at Alma College in Michigan. The college remembered HG: “At Alma College, Bishop Makarios was a teacher, friend and advisor to hundreds of students, faculty and staff members. His flowing red robes made him a well-recognized and distinguished presence on campus.” In recognition of Mar Makarios' achievements and contributions to society, the college awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity in 1990.

In 1994 Mar Makarios was appointed as the first metropolitan of the newly created diocese of Canada, UK and Europe. HG was on the annual visit to the parishes in London and UK while the tragic accident happened, and later on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, his soul departed from the earthly body to sing and praise our Lord God “Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy art thou Almighty” along with the angels in the heaven. May his prayers be a refuge to us all.

*(Biography compiled from different sources)*

### **H. G. Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan:**

#### **A Blessed Memory**

*(Submitted by Oommen Kappil)*

Our Diocese is indebted to Makarios Thirumeni, as HG was the first Metropolitan of the diocese, who nurtured it during the challenging times of its infancy. Moreover, Makarios Thirumeni was the greatest Ambassador of our Church here in the US. In ecumenical circles and among the Kerala community in particular, he stood tall, as a spoke-person for our Church, and as a symbol of what a Bishop should be.

HG was a great communicator. His oratory was highly exceptional. He was one of the greatest story tellers of our times. HG had a commendable sense of humor. What's more significant was his unique ability to make jokes at the spur-of-the-moment. His jokes made the listeners think about his topic of speech.

HG valued the traditions and prayers. A few years ago, one of my friends, an Achen told me, “HG used to visit our theological seminary while I was a student. When he visits, he will lead our noon prayers and evening prayers. Even after living in America for so many years, he still

can say all the prayers and sing all the songs without the help of any book.” HG was a great teacher and a scholar in Church history.

One of the greatest assets of HG was his unique ability to communicate with youngsters. Children loved interacting with him. HG made them comfortable to open up their mind to share their hopes and concerns. HG was a humble person. It’s noteworthy that during his speeches he often said, “Friends, let me tell you....” A Bishop addressing others as ‘friend’ was a sign of unprecedented humility.

He was a loving spiritual father to our parish. During the last two years, HG accepted our invitation three times, first for the consecration of our parish, then on the first death anniversary of our member Mr. M. P. Paulose, and most recently for the ordination of Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan. I always cherished the opportunity to listen to him, like a lot of others. When HG spoke to children, reminding them to listen to their parents (“Your mother knows best.”), we could feel the love of a caring father in his words. Later, when HG wrote in our Guest Register, we never guessed that it was HG’s last words about our parish.



*Mar Makarios at our Church Consecration*

It’s my personal feeling that our Church didn’t attempt or succeed in making use of HG’s strengths. HG was a Professor of Alma College in Michigan, and was highly effective in communicating with youngsters. This reminds me of one personal disappointment. After HG’s last visit, Regi Mathai suggested inviting HG for a session with our youth. It was like music to my ears. In the next Managing Committee, it was decided to invite Thirumeni in August before school opens, to lead an orientation session for college-bound students and senior class students in the Philadelphia area. Unfortunately, we could not conduct it as HG was not available in August of last year.

It’s always a spiritual, happy and relaxing experience to be with you and worshipping with you. God continue to bless you and your work for the glory of His name. Congratulations to Fr. Kuriakose and all the members of St. Thomas Parish, Philadelphia.  
-Thomas Mar Makarios (Signed)  
April 22, 2007

We lost a spiritual father, great teacher and a progressive leader. But we can rejoice in the fact that HG is in paradise to intercede for us. Let his words of wisdom guide each one of us. May his memory be eternal.

### **Where did the Brain Tumor Go?** **The story of miraculous healing**

(By Mathew Samuel, NY)

I heard the following incident from H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios while the bishop was speaking to the youth in Austin, Texas Church on April 3, 2004. There may be some errors in the message, since I am writing from memory. One purpose of me writing this message is to point out that physical healing does happen in our church (Indian Orthodox Church), though we do not publicize it as much as some other Christian Brethren.

Thomas Achen was organizing an international conference in New Delhi, India sometime in the 1950s. Many important delegates from the WCC (World Council of Churches) were present. One day Thomas Achen felt that one side of his face had become numb. He felt weak, and ill. His eyelids were drooping. He had double vision. He was examined by a doctor from Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore (South India). The doctor was concerned and asked for some reports. The medical reports confirmed that Thomas Achen had a brain tumor.

The doctor called Achen and told him that he was diagnosed to have brain tumor. He showed Achen the reports and showed him exactly where the tumor was. He told Achen, "You can come to Vellore and undergo an operation. But I need to tell you the risks involved - 1) You may die on the operating table 2) You may become disabled 3) If you do not undergo the operation, you may have another 6 months at the most to live. Now you choose what you want to do. If you choose to have the operation, contact me in Vellore and we will have it all set up."

It was a very difficult choice for Thomas Achen. He finally made up his mind to go and have the operation and take the risk. At about this time, an American couple who were delegates at the conference and who were pleased by the service of Thomas Achen at the conference offered him a scholarship to come and study in the United States. Thomas Achen said he was interested in the offer; and made plans to go to Vellore for the treatment.

Thomas Achen went to his home in Ayroor in Kerala (South India), and made his parents aware of his situation - that he had a brain tumor, and that he was planning to have an operation in Vellore, that there was a big chance that he may not come back from Vellore alive. He told them, that in that situation, they should bury him in Vellore, and not bother to bring his body back to his hometown, to save the expenses.



He met the then Catholicose and told him of his situation that, soon Bava might have to find a replacement for him in Delhi. Bava prayed for him, and told him - "Go into the chapel and tell God your situation. If He wants your service here, you will not die, and if He wants you with Him there, you will go away from us". So Thomas Achen went into the chapel and prayed.

He took the train to Vellore, and met the priest at Vellore. He told the Achen there about his situation and prepared a place for his burial there in Vellore. The next day, he got up; he did not feel any of the symptoms he felt earlier, like the drooping eyelids, numbness, double vision etc. Achen remembered an old saying that when you are closer to death, every thing suddenly feels calm and normal! He was terrified and he hurried to the hospital where he had already made an appointment. The nurse came to examine him. She looked at him and asked -"Where are the drooping eyelids?" "Do you feel numb in the face?" "Do you see double?" Achen could only reply "No!" to all her queries.

"The church needs to change - Just like the 4th century church was not exactly a carbon copy of the 1st Century church, so also the 21st Century church cannot be an exact carbon copy of the 1st century church or the 20th century church. Change is not a threat. Change is Growth and growth is change. The church needs to continuously adapt to the new society."  
**Mar Makarios**

The perplexed nurse ran out and came back with the doctor who examined him in Delhi. After examinations, the doctor asked "Where is your brain tumor?" "I don't know" replied Thomas Achen! For two months, the doctors did several tests on Achen.

Then one day, 18 of the doctors in Vellore, came into his room. The doctor who examined him in Delhi said, "There are some things which the Medical Profession does not understand. This is one of those things. I saw the brain tumor in your head in Delhi. Now I don't see it!"

Later Thomas Achen contacted the American couple and took the scholarship and came to the States. He believes that it was the prayers of many people that healed him from his brain tumor.

The Thomas Achen was later ordained as a Bishop of Indian Orthodox Church. He is now known as H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan. He is the first Metropolitan of the American Diocese of the Indian Orthodox Church.

*(Published with permission from the author)*

"Love others, your church 'inspite of them, not 'because of' somethings in them. You should not love anyone 'because of' something, but rather you should love 'inspite of' everything, that is true love." Mar Makarios

### **St. Dionysius Vattaseril and Mar Makarios**

St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Vattaseril was a pearl of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. His grace had to face many troubles and obstacles in fighting for the Independence of the True Church established by St. Thomas in Malankara from the foreign powers.

H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan was an excellent historian, and had served a very important role in the church cases, following his hero St. Dionysius. He helped the lawyers of the church understand the history, traditions and Canons of the Church. This was instrumental in seeking a historic verdict by the Supreme Court of India in favor of the Church in 1958.

It is not just a coincidence that the departing of both these Fathers occurred on the same day. St. Dionysius departed from this world on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1934. Mar Makarios entered his ordained life as a deacon on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1951. HG departed from this world on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

***Both Fathers will be interceding to our Lord and our God for us and our Church and for the whole world. Let their prayers be a refuge to us.***

\*\*\*\*\*