

A Journey back in time with



Paulose Achen

Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee – 25 years of priesthood

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- C.S. Paul -

Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee – 25 years of priesthood

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***This small Hosur St.Gregorios J S O Church congregation congratulates
Paulose Achen on his sacerdotal silver jubilee and wishes him all the
very best in life for the future.***

**Fr. Febin Poothara
Anian
Babu Thannivil
Bejoy
Benzy
Cherian
Daniel Biju
George Varkey
George Kutty (JK)
George Kuruvilla
Jees
Jelson
Jimmy
Jithu
John Chandapilla
Jose
Kunjumon
Kunjumon (Zuzuvadi)
Kuriakose
Kurian
Mamachan
Pradeesh
Paul. C.S
Philip Varghese
Raju Kuruvilla (ACA)
Raju .T.J
Robin
Subin
Saibin
Saimon Samuel
Saji Mathai
Saju Varghese
Santhosh (Varghese)
Wilson Kurian
Wilson Mathew**

A Journey Back In Time With Paulose Achen

On this joyous occasion when we commemorate the Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee – Twenty Five years of priesthood of our beloved Paulose Achen – Fr. M.U.Paulose Manglath, let us take a journey back in time in an attempt to recall some important phases of his life that helped to change the lives of many Syrian Orthodox Christians in Hosur.

The St. Gregorios Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church and Mission Centre complex would easily attract the attention of almost everyone who travels by the Bangalore - Hosur Highway. With its unique architectural design, it stands tall as a prominent landmark in the heart of Hosur. It is a testimonial in concrete to the person whose determination, willpower and dedication made it a reality.

It was fifteen years ago, that a group of believers, namely Mr. Saimon Samuel, Mr. Benzy Varghese, Mr. George Varkey, Mr. George Kutty and Mr. Jelson realized the need to have a fellowship among the Malankara Syrian Christians.

They took the initiative to explore the possibility of locating an Achen who would be willing to celebrate Holy Qurbana at-least once a month in Hosur.

Our Lord who knows the heart of every one, introduced Paulose Achen to them.

In spite of his hectic schedules, Achen who was already busy developing the Anagalapura Mission Centre near Bangalore, volunteered to celebrate the Holy Qurbana at Hosur.

It was on Danaha, 6th. January 2001, the day we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord, that our small congregation was also so to say, christened as St. Gregorios J S O Church.

Achen celebrated his first Holy Qurbana at Hosur on this day in a small rented shed that was a part of Blossom Matriculation School. This was a red letter day in the history of the Hosur church, as it marked the beginning of Achen's association with this small community.

All who attended this first service, still recall how every thing needed for the service were brought by bus from Bangalore and carried by hand to the Blossom School, as no conveyance was available.

So with this new beginning, the believers were able to attend the church service on all Sundays except for the first Sunday in a month.

Those who had migrated to Hosur before the early nineties had not dreamt even in their wildest dreams that they would ever partake in a Holy Qurbana at Hosur.

With the limited resources at Achen's disposal, he used to travel more than 120 KM on his two-wheeler to come to Hosur and get back to Anagalapura.

During those early days, the persons attending the Sunday Service were small in number and there was no one in Hosur who could assist Achan at the altar during the Church Service. But this did not in any way diminish Achen's enthusiasm. Instead, he just took upon himself the additional responsibility of bringing a small group from Bangalore.

When news about the 'Malayalam Service' spread, and attendance at the Sunday worship improved, the idea of constructing a Church in Hosur was born. No one including Paulose Achen knew exactly how the funds for this project could be mobilized. But, they had an unshakable belief that God will surely show them a way out.

A plot of land measuring 27 cents, abutting the National Highway, in Mookandapalli was purchased with contributions collected locally and the valuable support of individuals from Jacobite Churches in Bangalore,

The support and encouragement extended by His Grace Thomas Mar Thimothios - Metropolitan and Chairperson of the Bharth Jyothi Divine Trust - for this project cannot be.

expressed in words, and the members of Hosur Church will be grateful to him forever

On 14th September 2003, Thirumeni celebrated Holy Qurbana at Hosur and laid the foundation stone for construction of the Mission Centre complex at the newly acquired plot.

The initial building plan had only two floors, with the church on the top and ground floor to be used for Mission activities. Both were to function as an extension of the Mission Centre at Anagalapura.

Just when the construction was about to begin, a number of hindrances cropped up. First there was delay in getting the approvals, and then came the boundary dispute with the owner of the adjacent plot.

As these issues were being tackled, a major shock was in waiting. The soil test revealed that the site was actually a filled up agricultural pond and constructing a building on this site would require a 'pile' foundation. It was surely a challenge to find the extra money

The decision to go ahead with for the original proposal to construct a two-floor building itself had been taken purely on 'faith'. The situation then became so hopeless; that at one point it seemed that the project might have to be abandoned altogether.

Achen, after a lot of deliberation with the members of the Trust, got their concurrence to proceed with the construction with a major change in the building plan. It was decided to add one more floor to the building, and to house the Church on the second floor. He was confident that it was God who was going to bring the resources for the project.

The construction of the building got stretched to a full seven years, as the work could proceed only when there was an in-flow of funds. Achen must have literally spent sleepless nights for months on end, trying to figure out a solution and locate new and untapped sources to raise funds.

While the construction was still in progress, and a full-fledged church getting ready on the second floor, arrangements were made on the first floor of the building for conducting Service on Sundays.

On 31st. of December 2008, the long time dream of the Hosur congregation to worship at their own place was fulfilled.

It was indeed a memorable occasion for all, when, Fr. John Ipe celebrated the Holy Qurbana in the new building on New Year's Eve, ushering in a new era in the history of the Hosur Jacobite Church.

The history of our Hosur church is inseparably entwined with the life of Achen.. What he started as a small prayer group grew to the status of a full-fledged church. His vision to have a strong foothold in this region for expanding the activities of the church took a new dimension, when the building was dedicated by His Grace Thomas Mar Themotios on 28th. Nov. 2010,

This is no small achievement when we consider the fact, that he took up the challenge to implement a project of this scale with a clear knowledge that there were just a handful of Syrian Orthodox Christians in Hosur.

This was possible only due to his implicit faith that God would provide, and his complete dedication coupled with his untiring perseverance. He never allowed himself to be discouraged under any circumstances.

It will not be an exaggeration to place on record, that but for Achen's untiring efforts, this church in Hosur would perhaps have materialized in some uncertain future or may be never at all.

The extent of troubles he undertook for implementing this project is so immense, that it makes us wonder about his motivation for embarking on such a thankless job.

We will understand his personality better when we take a glimpse into his earlier days.

As the son of a poor farmer, he was born on the 16th. Dec.1959 as the fourth son to late M.V.Uthuppu and Mariamma at Karukadam, Kothamangalam

He grew up along with his five brothers and a sister. He had his primary education at the Govt. LP School Puthupady which was a two kilometer walk from his home. As there was no high school nearby, during his schooling from fifth to tenth standard, he had to walk for more than 8 km to Fr. J.M.H School and back.

Even as boy, he took keen interest in spiritual matters. Understanding this, his father's only brother Mr. 'Kureako', encouraged him to serve as an altar boy, and so while he was in his eighth standard, he was initiated to serve at the altar of their parish church St. Mary's Jacobite Church, Kararkunnam near Muvatupuzha on the 4th. May 1974. This day changed his life forever.

He attended the Sunday school and studied up to 8th.standard at St. Thomas Sunday school Kararkunnam under Marthoma Cheria Pally Kothamangalam. The inspiration he received from the atmosphere at the Sunday school was instrumental in developing his oratorical skill.

His spiritual Guru "Valiyya Ashan", who was the Sunday school Head Master recognized his talents and encouraged him in every way.

He also started learning Syriac under the guidance of Late Fr. Paulose Mappanikat, who was his Malayalam teacher at Fr. JMH School. While doing the pre-degree course at the MA College at Kothamangalam, he also took up responsibility as a teacher at the St. Mary's Sunday school.

His Uncle Mr. 'Kureako' who wanted his nephew to be ordained as priest, took up the matter with the Diocesan Metropolitan. So, while doing his second year pre-degree, he was ordained as deacon 'Koruyo' on 15th.July 1977 by the present Catholicose (H.G. Thomas Mar Diasiasius)

He continued his college education at the prestigious Mar. Athaneseous College where he completed his MA in Economics. Along with his studies, he found time to simultaneously serve as Head Master for two Sunday Schools. He then pursued his B.Ed degree in Teacher education at Peet Memorial Training College, Mavelikara.

He took up an employment at the Bible Society of India Kerala Auxiliary, and worked there for six years from 1986 to 1992, as an in-charge for distribution of Scriptures in Kerala.

Meanwhile, Mini, daughter of Fr. Abraham Thadathil, (who later became Cor-Episcopo) joined him as his life partner on 2nd. May 1988, and subsequently he was ordained as priest by Dr, Abraham Mar Saverios Metropolitan on the 25th.August 1988. Achen and Kochamma are blessed with two children Ruben and Maria.

In 1990 he was invited to Kuwait as a speaker and had the opportunity to address a number of gatherings. During his stay there, he was witness to the immense fear and sufferings of the people, due to the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

Later he had the privilege of meeting the Patriarch and visiting the holy places of Damascus and Syria

He left the Bible Society In 1992, and joined the Bishop's College Calcutta from where he successfully completed his BD studies.

His stay at Calcutta was an important turning point in his life. He was fortunate to meet Mother Teresa thrice. It was here he saw the real 'Mission' at work and was convinced that a Church without a "Mission" is no church at all.

He was given charge as Vicar of the St. Mary's J S O Cathedral, Bangalore where he served for three years from 1995 to 98. It was during this period that he initiated the construction of St. Ignatius J S O Church at K.R.Puram. He then served as vicar of the St. Mary's Cathedral, Sarjah from 1998 to 2000. During his tenure there, he visited the Holy Land.

In the year 2000, he was appointed as the administrator of the Anagalapura Mission Centre and from then on he has been a full time missionary.

With the support of Diocesan Metropolitan Thomas Mar Thimothios and members of the St.Mary's JSO Church, he purchased the land at Anagalpura and earnestly set to work for the development of a Mission Centre.

The words of Emil Bruner,"Church exists by its Mission as fire exists with its flame" became his philosophy. It is not surprising that when the decision to build a Church in Hosur was taken, it was clear in his mind that this church would be part of a Mission Centre.

His other initiatives include the "St. Mary's Snehalaya Opportunity School" for mentally Challenged Children, construction of the Bishop's suite at St. Mary's JSO Cathedral, Queens Road and the St. George High School at Anagalapura.

He was selected as a delegate of CMS Orthodox Mission Consultation at Moscow and attended the meeting held there during 2000 June/July.

In 2000 August he was invited to US as the main speaker at the Family Conference held at Pennsylvania University Campus along with the late Bishop Markose Mar Koorilos. There he spent four months and also got the opportunity to visit almost all places in the US.

He started another Mission Centre on Mysore Road near Bhimanakuppa in 2006. In June 2010, he started a Home for the under privileged children of Anagalpura at the Mission Centre. It now has 25 children under its care and all their needs such as education, accommodation, food and clothing are taken care.

He had also served for a short period as the secretary of the Archdiocese of Greater India and when the new Bangalore Diocese was formed, he became the first diocesan secretary.

At the Hosur Mission Centre, Achen started the Gregorian Montessori School and a Day Care Centre for small children of working parents and it has been successfully functioning on the ground floor of the building for more than two years.

The St. Mary's multi-faith prayer centre started by Achen at the Hosur Mission Centre has slowly started attracting local people and passersby to offer their prayers at this place.

The building construction for the Children's Home as part of the Hosur Mission Centre is in its final stage, and will be ready for inauguration shortly. Initially it is planned to support the education of 15 poor children by providing them with accommodation, food, clothing, books and healthcare

Taking up tough challenges has always been a way of life with Paulose Achan, and the days are not far when we are sure to witness even greater achievements by him.

Although we don't have the right words to express the love and gratitude we have for Achen, this small Hosur congregation congratulates him on his sacerdotal silver jubilee and prayerfully wishes him all the very best in life for the future.

We continue to pray for him and his family and ask our Lord to shower His unlimited blessings on Achen, and use him mightily as a source of strength, encouragement and a beacon of light to thousands of people who are in need, for a lot more years to come.

Fr. M.U.Paulose Mangalath

Administrator

- 🕒 *Anagalapura Mission Centre*
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This booklet *“A journey back in time with Paulose Achen”* is a tribute to a wonderful person – Fr.M.U.Paulose Mangalath. It attempts to sketch a brief *history* of the Hosur St.Gregorios J S O Church and take a glimpse into the life of Paulose Achen who created this *history*.



