



GREGORIAN GAZETTE

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Mor Thoma Baselios Didymos I—George Achen

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Oak Park would like to express joy and give thanks to God as the Church enters into a new era in her history with the enthronement of her new Supreme Head, His Holiness Mor Thoma Baselios Didymos I. We wish our Father, the successor of Saint Thomas, all spiritual wisdom, health, long life and God's providence to lead the Church to many more spiritual attainments and higher divine goals.

His Holiness started his service to the Church as a monk when he was a teenager. He was called to the monastic life by the late Metropolitan Mar Dionysius of Niranam. He went through a rigorous monastic life that tuned his body through hard work, his mind through intense discipline and his spirit through spiritual exercise. Mor Baselios Didymos I is an exemplification of eastern monastic life. CONTD PAGE 2

Bava Enthronement: A Closer View—Saju Varghese

Greetings in Christ!

On the morning of October 31st, 2005, I had the blessing of traveling with Fr. Sabu Kuriakose, lecturer and registrar of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, as well as Principal Secretary to the new Bava Thirumeni. We left from the OTS at 5:30am and arrived in time for Morning Prayer by 6:30am.

When the curtain was unveiled, sixteen fully vested bishops and three garbed priests in the madhbaha were revealed to the participating faithful. It was both beautiful and awe-full, as the bishops lined the sides of the altar, two of the vested priests were Thomas Mar Makarios celebrated the Holy Qurbana joined in the madhbaha by Mar Osthathios, Mar Timotheos, Mar Ivanios, Mar Eusebios, Mar Epiphanos, Mar Miltiheos (Kunnamkulam), Mar Pachomios, Mar Clemis, Mar Coorilos, Mar Severios, Mar Athanasios (Chengannur), Mar

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(FROM PAGE 1) Mor Didymos is not just a monk who is enamored with some ascetic practices of monasticism. He is endowed with erudition which he derived from his long career as a student of theology, mathematics and English literature. Prior to his consecration to the episcopate, he had been a professional educator holding various positions in the academia. He was a mathematics instructor for many years and a high school headmaster for more than a decade. After receiving his post graduate degree in English literature, he held his lectureship in English literature when St. Stephen's college of Pathanapuram came into existence. His Holiness is also rightly credited with musical skills.

The new Shepherd has many challenges in front of him. The most important challenge he has to face is the spiritual crisis that debilitates the mission of the Church. The spiritual aridity being experienced within all the ranks of the Church from top to bottom should be of primary concern for our new Bava. We hope he will mobilize all his energies and efforts to rejuvenate this old Church with new spiritual vitality and vigor.

The second challenge that confronts the Church is our relationship with the Patriarch of Antioch and his supporters in Malankara. We urge our new Shepherd to initiate negotiations leading to the autocephaly and autonomy of the Church of Malankara and to cordial relationship with the Patriarchate of Antioch. We hope he will take adequate steps to deal with this crisis and close this chapter in the history of our church. Let us all continue to pray that God blesses Bava and the Church. (obligation to the Indian Orthodox

Herald)

ബസ്സേലിയോസ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ ദിദിമോസ് ഒന്നാമൻ - ഉത്തമ സന്യാസി.

Very Rev: Rmban Elias Koshy, Mount Tabor Dayara, Pathanapuram, Kerala

1921 ഒക്ടോബർ മാസം 29-ാം തീയതി തിരുവല്ല നെടുമ്പ്രം മുളമുട്ടിൽ ഇട്ടിയവിരാ തോമസിന്റേയും മാവേലിക്കര ചിറമേൽ ശോശാമ്മയുടേയുംനാലാമത്തെ പുത്രനായി സി.ടി. തോമസ് ജനിച്ചു. 18-ാമത്തെ വയസ്സിൽ പത്തനാപുരം താബോർ ദയറായിൽ, കാലം ചെയ്ത അഭിവന്ദ്യ മാർ തോമ്മാ ദിവനാസ്യോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തയുടെ ശിക്ഷണത്തിൽ സന്യാസനം ആരംഭിച്ചു. വന്ദ്യ സി.എം. തോമസ് റമ്പാച്ചൻ ഓക്സ്ഫോർഡിലേയും കൗളി ആശ്രമത്തിലേയും അദ്ധ്യയനവും, =രിശീലനവും കഴിഞ്ഞ് മാവേലിക്കരയിൽ തിരിച്ചെത്തിയപ്പോൾ മാതൃഇടവക ഒരു സ്വീകരണം നൽകുകയുണ്ടായി. വി.കുർബാന മദ്ധ്യേ അഞ്ചാം തുബ്ദേൻ വായിച്ച ബാലനെ ബ:റമ്പാച്ചൻ =പുത്ര്യേകം ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചു. വി. കുർബാന കഴിഞ്ഞ് ഈ ബാലനെക്കുറിച്ച് അന്വേഷിച്ചു മനസ്സിലാക്കി =ിതാവിനെ വരുത്തി. "ഇവനെ ഞാൻ ദയറായിലേക്കു കൊണ്ടുപോകയാണ്." പിതാവിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണസതതോടുകൂടി സി.ടി. തോമസിനെ പത്തനാപുരം താബോർ ദയറായിൽ (=വേശിപ്പിച്ചു. പരികൃഷ്ടമായ ആശ്രമജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ബാല്യം =ഓങ്ങൾ ഗുരുവിൽ നിന്നും സ്വായത്തമാക്കി. അന്നത്തെ ആശ്രമജീവിതം =ട്ടിണിയുടേയും കഠിനാദ്ധ്വാനത്തിന്റേയും നാളുകൾ ആയിരുന്നു. ഏഴു നേരത്തെ (=ാർത്ഥന, വേദവായന, ധ്യാനം, മൗനം, വ്രതനിയമങ്ങളായ അനുസരണം, ദാരിദ്ര്യം, ബ്രഹ്മചര്യം, ആരാധന, മുടങ്ങാതെയുള്ള കുമ്പസാരം, നോമ്പ്, ഉപവാസം, ജാഗരണം മുതലായവയെല്ലാകൃത്യമായും, സന്തോഷത്തോടെയും തന്റെ ജീവിതചര്യകളിൽ സ്ഥാനം =ിടിച്ചു. സാമ്പത്തിക =രാധീനത നല്ലതുപോലെ അനുഭവിച്ചു. എല്ലാം ദൈവ തൃക്കരങ്ങളിൽ സമർപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് സന്യാസജീവിതത്തിൽ =രിശോഭിച്ചു.

ഉന്നതവിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന് സാമ്പത്തിക പരാധീനതകൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും സുപ്പീരിയർ തിരുമേനി ആശ്രമാംഗങ്ങളെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനയച്ചു. 1942 മാർച്ച് 11ന് കോറുയോ ആയും, 1947 മെയ് 22ന് പൂർണ്ണശൈശവനായും. 1950 ജനുവരി 25ന് കശ്മീനാ പട്ടം പഗീവറുഗീസ് ദിതീയൻ ബാവായിൽ നിന്നും സ്വീകരിച്ചു.

വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം കഴിഞ്ഞു തിരിച്ചെത്തിയ ബ:സി.ടി തോമസച്ചനെ തൃശ്ശിനാപ്പള്ളിയിലുള്ള പൈതൃക ഹൈസ്കൂൾ ഹെഡ്മാസ്റ്റർ ആയി മാനേജർ തിരുമേനി നിയമിച്ചു. 1959 -ൽ

(FROM PAGE 1) in charge of the marvahasas (fans), and the third priest (Fr. O. Thomas) took the dubhakutti (censer). H.G. Thomas Mar Makarios celebrated the Holy Qurbana joined in the madhbaha by Mar Osthathios, Mar Timotheos, Mar Ivanios, Mar Eusebios, Mar Epiphanos, Mar Miltiheos (Kunnamkulam), Mar Pachomios, Mar Clemis, Mar Coorilos, Mar Severios, Mar Athanasios (Chengannur), Mar Miltiheos (Trissur), Mar Ireneus, Mar Theophilos and Mar Gregorios.

The Holy Qurbana was an awesome experience led by the strong spiritual presence of our bishops, combined with the overwhelming sensory experience of the bishops in their beautiful and splendid liturgical vestments, enhanced by the rows of black-robed deacons on the right-hand side of the church who stood at the foot of the madhbaha, who were complemented magnificently by the rows of the seminarians wearing white on the left-hand side, standing at the foot of the madhbaha. In addition to the spiritual leadership of the bishops and the overpowering visual dimension of the Holy Qurbana, the strength and discipline of the seminarians who chanted and led responses coupled with the full participation of the faithful, who in very short notice arrived from churches all over Kerala, made this Holy Qurbana a particularly unique experience.

As all of the Holy Mysteries that are supposed to take place during the Holy Qurbana (i.e. baptism, ordination, marriage) the service of the Blessing of the Catholicos also took place following the intercessory prayers of the saints (Nayavan Panapole...). While there were, naturally, differences from normal liturgical services of the Church (as different services incorporate various unique aspects), the Blessing Service followed the same basic structure of any of the Church's liturgies (i.e. included a Promion/Sedra, Ethro, both Epistle Readings, and a Gospel Reading). Since I cannot go over the entire service (due to obvious lack of expertise and knowledge) I will share some of my personal moments and reflections that stood out from the day:

- 1) **Bishops Reading Epistles:** The Universal Epistle was read by H.G. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios and the Pauline Epistle was read by H.G. Paulos Mar Milithios. I am not sure why I listed this as a top moment, but there was something very humbling about both thirumenis in their full vestments reading what normally an un-ordained acolyte will read. It was refreshing by my account.

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പ്രകാശിപ്പിച്ചു. കോളേജിൽ എം.എ യ്ക്ക് അയച്ചു പഠിപ്പിച്ചു. എല്ലാ പരീക്ഷകളിലും ഉന്നതില വാരം പുലർത്തി വിജയിച്ചു തിരിച്ചുവന്നപ്പോൾ പത്തനാപുരത്തെ ബുഹത്തായ ഹൈസ്കൂളിന്റെ ഹെഡ്മാസ്റ്റർ ആയും, ആശ്രമത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാന ചുമതലക്കാരനായും സുപ്പീരിയർ തിരുമേനി നിയമിച്ചു. 1964 -ൽ പത്തനാപുരത്തു കോളേജ് അനുവദിച്ചു കിട്ടിയപ്പോൾ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് ഡിപ്പാർട്ട്മെന്റ് മേധാവിയായി.

1965 മെയ് 16ന് പ: ഔഗേൻ ബാവായിൽ നിന്നും റമ്പാൻ സ്ഥാനം സ്വീകരിച്ചു. ഈ @രിച്ച ഉത്തരവാദിത്വങ്ങൾക്കിടയിലും തന്റെ ആശ്രമനിഷ്ഠകൾക്ക് യാതൊരു വിഘ്നവും വരുത്താതെ അതിൽ കൂടുതൽ താല്പ്യപര്യവും ആത്മാർത്ഥതയും പുലർത്തിയിരുന്നു. തന്നിൽ നിക്ഷിപ്തമായിരുന്ന എല്ലാ ഔദ്യോഗിക ചുമതലകളും വളരെ @ംഗിയായി നിർവ്വഹിച്ചു. 1965 ഡിസംബർ 25 ി എം.ഡി. സെമിനാരിയിൽ കൂടിയ മലങ്കര അസ്സോസിയേഷൻ മറ്റു നാലു പേരോടു കൂടി ബ: സി.ടി. തോമസ് റമ്പാച്ചനേയും മേഠപ്പട്ട സ്ഥാനത്തേക്ക് തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തു. 1966 ഓഗസ്റ്റ് 24ന് കോലഞ്ചേരി സെന്റ്. പീറ്റേഴ്സ് ആന്റ് സെന്റ് പോൾസ് ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് പള്ളിയിൽ വച്ച് പ: ഔഗേൻ ബാവ, തീമോത്തിയോസ് എന്ന പേരിൽ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തയായി അഭിഷേകം ചെയ്തു. 1966 നവംബർ 11ന് കൂടിയേറ്റ @ദ്രാസനമായ മലബാറിന്റെ അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തയായി ചാർജെടുത്തു. യാതൊന്നും കൈമുതലില്ലാതെ, താമസ സൗകര്യമില്ലാതെ, യാത്രാ സൗകര്യമില്ലാതെ അദ്ദേഹം തന്റെ കൃത്യനിർവഹണത്തിലേക്കു പ്രവേശിച്ചു. കോഴിക്കോട്ടെ നടക്കാവു പള്ളിയുടെ ചരിപ്പുമുറി അരമനയാക്കി, വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളുടെ ഹോസ്റ്റലിൽ നിന്നും @ക്ഷണം കഴിച്ച്, ട്രെയിനിൽ ബസിലും യാത്ര ചെയ്ത് @ദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ കോണുകളിലും എത്തി തന്റെ അജഗണങ്ങളുടെ ആത്മീയ ദിഷ്ടതികൾ നടത്തിക്കൊടുത്തിരുന്നു.

തന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥനാ ജീവിതവും ആശ്രമനിഷ്ഠകളും അണുകീട തെറ്റിക്കാതെ അദ്ധ്വാനിച്ചതിന്റെ ഫലമായി മലബാർ @ദ്രാസനം അഭിവൃദ്ധിയുടെ പാതയിൽ പുരോഗമിച്ചു. 41 വർഷത്തെ അശ്രാന്ത പരിശ്രമം കൊണ്ട് മലബാർ @ദ്രാസനം മറ്റു @ദ്രാസനങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം ഉയർന്നു വന്നു. അനുസരണവും, അച്ഛകളും ഉള്ള ഒരു പറ്റം വൈദികരും ഇടവക ജനങ്ങളും അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിരുമേനിയുടെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്ക് ശക്തി പകർന്നതോടുകൂടി @ദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ പുരോഗതി ത്വരിതപ്പെട്ടു. 1968 ഫെബ്രുവരി 2ന് തന്റെ മുൻഗാമി അഭിവന്ദ്യ പത്രോസ് മാർ സെന്താത്തിയോസ് തിരുമേനി കാലം ചെയ്തതിനെ തുടർന്ന് മലബാർ @ദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തയായി അവരോധിക്കപ്പെട്ടു.

@ക്തി സാന്ദ്രവും, സംഗീതാത്മകവുമായ തിരുമേനിയുടെ ആരാധനകളിൽ സംബന്ധിക്കുന്നവർക്ക് അവാച്യമായ സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ ആനന്ദം ലഭിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. തിരുമേനിയുടെ പ്രാർത്ഥനയും നോമ്പും ജാഗരണവും കുമ്പിടലും രഹസ്യപ്രാർത്ഥനകളും സന്യാസനത്തിന്റെ പരമ കാഷ്ഠയിൽ എത്തിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. രാത്രിയാമങ്ങളിൽ തനിയെ തന്റെ സ്വർഗീയപിതാവുമായി സംസർഗം ചെയ്യുന്ന അനുഭവം തന്റെ ശ്രേഷ്ഠ ഗുരുവിൽ നിന്നും ആവാഹിച്ചെടുത്തിട്ടുള്ളത് ഇന്നും അ@ംഗം തുടരുന്നു. ഇതിനെല്ലാം ഉപരി തന്നെ താലോലിച്ചു വളർത്തി തന്നെക്കാൾ ശ്രേഷ്ഠനാക്കിത്തീർത്ത വലിയ തിരുമേനിയോടുള്ള ഗുരു@ക്തി ആരെയും അതിശയിപ്പിക്കും. പത്തനാപുരത്തും, മലബാറിലും യാതനകളിലും, പ്രയാസങ്ങളിലും തളരാതെ താങ്ങി നിർത്തിയത് തന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥനാജീവിതവും അചഞ്ചലമായ ദൈവ@ക്തിയും, വിശ്വാസവും പ:സ@യോടുള്ള കൂറും, സ്നേഹവും, പിതാക്കന്മാരോടുള്ള അനുസരണവും വിനയവും അദ്ദേഹത്തെ പ:സ@യുടെ പരമാദ്ധ്യക്ഷനായി ഉയർത്തി. @ാരതസന്യാസനത്തിന്റെ മുഖമുദ്രയായ "Simple living and high thinking" ഈ പിതാവിൽ സ്വാർത്ഥകമാണ്. 1972 മുതൽ താബോർ ആശ്രമത്തിന്റെ സുപ്പീരിയറായി ഇന്നുവരെ തുടരുന്ന പ. പിതാവിന്റെ @രണകാലത്ത് ആശ്രമത്തിനും, മഠത്തിനും, ബന്ധസ്ഥാപനങ്ങൾക്കും ഉണ്ടായ പുരോഗതി അവർണ്ണനീയമാണ്. തന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥന ജീവിതത്തിലും, സ്നേഹവലയത്തിലും ആശ്രമാംഗങ്ങളെ ഒന്നിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുപോകുവാൻ പ. പിതാവിന് സാധിക്കുന്നു.

2005 ഒക്ടോബർ 31ന് പരുമലയിൽ വച്ച് മലങ്കര ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സ@യുടെ ഏഴാമത്തെ കാത്തോലിക്ക പ. ബസേലിയോസ് മാർത്തോമ്മാ ദീദിമോസ് ഒന്നാമൻ സ്ഥാനാരോഹണം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടു. പ. പിതാവിന് ആയുരാരോഗ്യങ്ങളും, പ്രവർത്തനശേഷിയും, കർമ്മകുശലതയും ഉയരത്തിൽ നിന്നും സ@യുടെ നാഥൻ അനവരതം ചൊരിഞ്ഞു കൊടുക്കണമേ എന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥന എല്ലാ അജഗണങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും ഉയരും എന്നുള്ളതിനും

(FROM PAGE 3)service (due to obvious lack of expertise and knowledge) I will share some of my personal moments and reflections that stood out from the day.

1) **Bishops Reading Epistles:** The Universal Epistle was read by H.G. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios and the Pauline Epistle was read by H.G. Paulos Mar Milithios. I am not sure why I listed this as a top moment, but there was something very humbling about both thirumenis in their full vestments reading what normally an un-ordained acolyte will read. It was refreshing by my account.

2) **Face-to-Face:** There is a point in the service where all the bishops face the Catholicos candidate, in this case, Mar Timotheos. At this time, certain prayers are prayed by the eldest bishop (Mar Osthathios) over him. It stuck out in my mind as great symbolism and imagery, one almost of a confrontation (without the negative connotation) as his equals faced him. It was a moment when the Catholicos-to-be looked at those who selected him, those who trusted him, those who would willingly and humbly submit to his leadership. Before the Holy Qurbana began there was a great complement to this image as the bishops prostrated themselves in front of Mar Timotheos. The image of the bishops bowing fully, some who at their age could barely make it to their knees, was a very powerful symbolic component of the Service. It was a moment that helped me to develop a picture of the Church's understanding of humbleness, authority, and obedience. These bishops, regardless of what they had done for the Church, how long they had been working, serving, no matter what positions they held, or criticisms they had received, no matter what their situations, were submitting themselves to the one that they as a collegial body chose to be first among equals. That process and choice of submission was manifested in a very physical manner through the act of prostration. Equally as significant was that Mar Timotheos, while facing his equals, joined them by kneeling before them. The final image was sixteen bishops on their knees, with fifteen all facing one. I understood from the Service that the Catholicos does not rule over the Church as an unquestioned dictator, but rather leads her with humility and obedience under the consent and authority that the Church (represented here by the collegial body of bishops) authorizes and blesses him with. Most of us only see one side of this balance though, however, the role of humility, obedience, and service in the life of the bishop is clear in the symbolic positioning and prayers throughout this liturgy.

3) **The Laying on of Hands:** At this point there was some disorder in the Service as the bishops circled Mar Timotheos and placed their right hands on his head as the marvahasas were shaking, small bells were rung, and the large bell tolled. Prayers invoking the Holy Spirit to solemnize and commune were prayed, along with the official pronouncement of the name of the new Catholicos, Parishudha (His Holiness) Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Didymus Prethamen (1st). From the outside we could see nothing except the backs of the bishops' vestments. There were no faces, no individuals, but somehow order in this disorder, unity in the confusion, and when it was over the church and liturgy had moved from a spirit of humility and preparation to one of excitement and rejoicing.

4) **AXIOS!:** Axios! He is worthy! Axios! His Holiness, the Catholicos, Baselios Marthoma Didymus Prethamen was seated in his bishop's throne and was received and welcomed by all the assembled bishops, priests, deacons, and laypersons as the head of the Malankara Orthodox Church with chants and shouts of their approval. Sets of prayers and introduction of the new Catholicos to the assembled were followed by three chants of "Axios!" led by the clergy three times and responded to by the people three times. Each

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5) **THE Moment:** In a day blessed by God, guided by the Holy Spirit, and appropriately presided over and participated in by God's people, the most beautiful, appropriate, and fitting conclusion to the day's activities occurred nearing the conclusion of the Service. This defining moment added even more to the fervor, mystique and joy of the day took place unexpectedly and left everyone unprepared and quite surprised in a great way. As the presentation of the Staff (vadi) of the Catholicos was about to be made to Didymus Prethamen Bava, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews Didyan (2nd) Bava arrived and appeared seemingly out of nowhere in the altar. There was quietness; or rather a buzz as Mathews Didyan Bava could be seen amidst all the vested bishops. That buzz soon erupted into a frenzy (at least as frenzied as a church can get). For example, to this point in the day, which began over two hours ago, I had been generally unchallenged for my front row, unimpeded view and full access positioning to the Service, but within seconds I was quickly rushed, pushed, moved aside from all sides by people who wanted to catch a glimpse, people who wanted just one clear picture of Valiya Bava. It was very much madness as people scrambled trying to edge their cameras for positioning, arms, heads, bodies everywhere pushing farther and farther forward until eventually I was pushed to the second step of the madhbaha and attempting to take pictures in the space between a professional cameraman's head and his camera, which he held high above his head. Granted, I would rather not have been taking pictures at all and enjoy the moment a little more, but I knew I would regret it later on.

Nonetheless, the atmosphere swelled in some confusion, but general happiness as Valiya Bava presented his staff (the Catholicos' staff) to his successor, Didymus Prethamen Bava then held that staff triumphantly and high to show it to the entire church. It was most fitting that Mathews Didyan Bava was able to hand over his staff, the symbol of his

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(FROM PAGE 6) Nonetheless, the atmosphere swelled in some confusion, but general happiness as Valiya Bava presented his staff (the Catholicos' staff) to his successor, Didymus Prathamam Bava then held that staff triumphantly and high to show it to the entire church. It was most fitting that Mathews Didyan Bava was able to hand over his staff, the symbol of his authority, to his successor.

The absence of Valiya Bava throughout the Holy Qurbana and the Blessing had been noticeable and the void was felt by everyone, which was dramatically evident when the already intense atmosphere of Parumala Pally was raised to a new level upon his arrival. His absence had been the only shadow on a very blessed day, but no one expected Valiya Bava to be present with his health in continual decline, so the surprising arrival of Valiya Bava blessed and completed all of the celebrations and further magnified (quite dramatically) the significance of the day for the Church.

6) **Valiya Bava:** Following the service of the Blessing of the Catholicos, and after Holy Qurbana had been given, Didymus Prethamen Bava censed Parumala Thirumeni's grave. This was followed by the reception of both Mathews Didyan Bava and Didymus Prethamen Bava by the Church as the sacramental services were over. The Church includes specific chants to receive bishops, as well as chants seeking their blessings, that under the leadership of the seminarians, were led and participated in beautifully. It was during the participation in this service that I was left with a particularly vivid image of Mathews Didyan Bava. As the chant called on him to bless the congregation, he began to beat his chest and shake his head, as though unworthy to do so. What was particularly telling, and maybe subtle, was the grace that exuded from him as this was going on. From when he sat in his chair in the madhbaha, to when he beat his chest, to when he sang, to when he blessed, his actions were simply graceful. I cannot describe it, but, this man, Mathews Didyan Bava, was and is transformed by God. This transformation is evident in his face, the wrinkles, the pain with which he lives, the sicknesses that afflict him and the smile that everyone knows, everyone loves, and everyone still experiences on his face. Even in his weak state now, the glow of God's light surrounds his face even though he may not always be entirely conscious of what is going on around him or sharp in his thinking or judgments. The point that became startlingly evident to me in all of this was this: God is truly the one who glorifies. God is the one who makes the holy, holy. God is the one who fills His servants with the grace that shines, just as He filled Mathews Didyan Bava with such grace, such overflowing grace that clearly transcends his own human frailties.

7) **The Greeting:** In a most sincere and extemporaneous gesture of love and mutual respect, Mathews Didyan Bava, the first to greet the newly blessed Didymus Prethamen Bava, placed the flower wreath on Didymus Bava's neck, Valiya Bava embraced Didymus Bava in his arms and kissed him three times. This moment was rivaled only by the return of three kisses from Didymus Bava to the cheeks of Valiya Bava. I do believe that when I looked upon the congregation there were tears all around, from the clergy to the lay, and smiles on everyone's face. The unplanned loving exchange (which caught even Didymus Bava off guard) was particularly refreshing and special for me to have witnessed.

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 These were many other moments, some far more subtle, that I could have mentioned, but
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There were many other moments, some far more subtle, that I could have mentioned, but I hope that by covering the points that I have, you have gained an insight and appreciation into what went on that day as well as some of my thoughts as I was witnessing and participating in this awe-some and blessed day. I also hope that you continue to pray for the Church and those called and chosen to lead her. Please pray for H.H. Baselios Marthoma Didyan Bava, who I was unable to see when I went to visit recently due to his most recent struggle against the chicken pox. Also, please pray for H.H. Baselios Marthoma Didymus Prethamen Bava, as he continues to be received around Kerala that he continue to receive strength and wisdom to lead the Church in his time as Catholicos, and also that God protect his health as he has already approached 85 years of age. Please continue to pray.

Finally, if I could leave you with audio, I would. Alas, I shall do my best to capture the moment. This final moment took place after the final blessing of the Parumala Perunnal (which took place two days after the Blessing). Mar Osthathios took the microphone from Didymus Bava and proudly (in a child-like and giddy manner) presented him to the sea of thousands that looked upwards towards the balcony that the bishops stood and blessed from and called to the people...

Mar Osthathios: Three cheers for His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Didymus the First!
Hip! Hip!

People: Hooray!

Mar Osthathios: Hip! Hip!

People: Hooray!

Mar Osthathios: Hip! Hip!

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