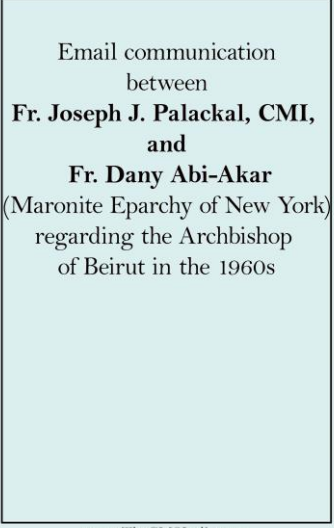


## CHRISTIAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

Email communication between Fr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI,  
and Fr. Dany Abi-Akar (Maronite Eparchy of New York)  
regarding the Archbishop of Beirut in the 1960s



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between  
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 and  
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 regarding the Archbishop  
 of Beirut in the 1960s

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Dear Fr. Dany,

I am Fr. Joseph Palackal, CMI, a Carmelite of Mary Immaculate, India, and a member in the Syro Malabar Church in Kerala. Currently, I am serving as parochial vicar at St. Margaret's Church in Middle Village, Queens, NY.

I have been studying the Syriac/Aramaic chants in Kerala, India, for the last 30 years. (See [www.aramaicProject.com](http://www.aramaicProject.com)) Currently, I am reworking my doctoral dissertation to publish as a book.

Recently, I came across a letter that one of the CMI priests wrote about the visit of Dr. Heinrich Husmann from Germany. He came to Kerala to study Syriac chants. Initially, Dr. Husmann went to the Archbishop in Beirut to seek help. The Archbishop directed him to go to the CMIs in Kerala. This was in the 1960s. I am including a translation of the letter below. What I need is the name of the Archbishop of Beirut in the early 1960s. Can you please help with your friends in the Diocese of Beirut?

Thank you, Fr. Dany, for your time and patience. Someday, I would like to visit you and attend the Aramaic Qurbana there in your parish. In return, I will be happy to sing Syriac chants from the Syro Malabar Church, Kerala.

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Dear Fr. Joseph

Thank you so much for reaching out to us. I will be glad to help you. I am attaching the list of the names of the bishops of Beirut. In 1960 Archbishop Ignace Ziade was in office. You are most welcome to visit us anytime you wish, we will be glad to concelebrate The Roman Catholic Mass and the Maronite Mass together. Please let me know if I can do anything else for you.

Ignace Mobarak (February 23, 1919 - January 20, 1952, withdrawn)

Ignace Ziadé (January 26, 1952 - April 4, 1986)

Khalil Abi-Nader (April 4, 1986 - June 8, 1996, withdrawn)

Paul Youssef Matar, (since June 8, 1996)

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## Fr. Amos letter in Carmela Sandesham

“J.M.J”

Dear Rev. Kochuchandiyacha,

Your letter of 4 April 1987 reached me on 8 April 1987. Thank you very much. Dr. Husmann, a musicology professor at the University Gottingen, one of the four old universities in Germany, is on a mission to get the sound of the Syriac songs of our Lord. He went to Beirut and met the Archbishop there. It is said that Syriac continues to be the colloquial language in two or three villages in Beirut. The Archbishop told Husmann: due to the coexistence of Arabic, Muslim, and Jewish people, many Muslim manners have come mingled with our Syriac language. Therefore, you will not get the pristine purity of the Syriac chants from us. The old melodies are sung only in Kerala. Dr. Husmann, you should go to Kerala and meet Very Rev. Maurus. He will make all the arrangements for your mission. Do not approach the diocesan priests. The diocesan priests always improvise the old melodies. Also, do not go to young priests. You will not get the pristine purity from them.

Dr. Husmann came to Ernakulam with the business card of Very Rev. Fr. Maurus. Rev. Fr. Maurus had gone to Bangalore. The first Councilor and us told Dr. Husmann to go to the Seminary at Aluva. He did not like it. We told him to go to our Novitiate House at Ampazhakkad. Then we told him to go to Dharmaram, where ten to three hundred people sing together. He did not like it either. Because youngsters, even if they are religious, improvise melodies. "Are there any elderly people?" Dr. Husmann asked. Here we have a priest, Amos. He is not one in favor of innovations. He listened to my singing; he liked it very much. He recorded all the songs of our Hudra, including services for the Nativity of our Lord and feasts of the Blessed Virgin in my voice on a tape recorder. He stayed with us for 35 days. By that time, Fr. Maurus arrived. This is what happened. I have listened to the community prayer of the diocesan priests at St. Berchman's; I have also listened at the minor Seminary in Ernakulam; also during the annual retreat at Thoppil. I did not find it devotional.

Please forgive me for the delay.

Fr. Amos, CMI

Humble broth

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## “J. M. J”

[1] refers to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. It was a popular practice among the Catholics in Kerala to start a letter with this form of dedication to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

[2] Bharatha Matha Ashram in the Palakkad district of Kerala, India, belongs to the Coimbatore Province of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. At the time of writing the letter, Fr. Amos was a member of this Ashram. The name “Bharatha Matha” (literally, “mother of India”) refers to Blessed Virgin Mary as the patroness of India to whom the Ashram is dedicated. Giving Sanskrit names to institutions and monasteries was prevalent among the Catholics in India, especially in the 1970s. During this period the movement toward inculturation of Christian faith was strong in the CMI congregation.

[3] “Kochu Chandy” (little Alexander) is an endearing way of addressing a close friend or male sibling whose name is Alexander. The suffix, “Acha,” refers to a priest.

[4] Fr. Maurus Valiyaparambil [1901-1983], was the Prior General of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate from 1953-1966.

[5] At that time, the CMI Prior General's House was at Ernakulam.

[6] Dharmaram College, the Major Seminary of the CMI congregation.

[7] The resident priests at the Prior General's House.

[8] St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary at Mangalapuzha, Alwaye.

[9] Dharmaram College (currently, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetham), the major seminary of the CMI congregation, in Bengaluru.

[10] Annual retreat of the priests of the Diocese of Thrissur.



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