



[AP 189 - "MAR WALAH" for post-communion meditation. Dallas, Texas](#)

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Call Number	AP 189
Part Number	Part I – Syro Malabar Church
Title	"MAR WALAH" for post-communion meditation. Dallas, Texas
Duration	3:45
Place of Recording	Syro Malabar Church, Coppell, Dallas, Texas.
Date of Recording	16 February 2020.
Youtube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-KOGO0h16c
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

"MAR WALAH" for post-communion meditation. Dallas, Texas

“**Mar Walah**” (“*My Lord and my God* ;” *John 20:28*) is the most succinct profession of faith in Jesus Christ as both God and Man. It was **Thomas the Apostle** who first used the term, **ALAHA (God)**, to refer to Jesus. The word is more profound than *Misiha (Messiah)* that **St. Peter** used in answer to the question, “*But who do you say that I am?*” (*Mark 8:29*). Ironically, the most certain assertion of the divinity of Jesus came from the Apostle, who is often called as “**Doubting Thomas**”. **Mar Walah**, the simple, three-syllable phrase, maybe the first step toward introducing Syriac literacy among children. And it is an honor and a privilege for Christian children in India to start their Syriac lessons as well as catechetical training with a unique phrase that came from **Thomas the Apostle**, their father in faith.

Additionally, the expression contains an essential lesson in Syriac grammar that highlights the difference between the phonemic (written) and the phonetic (sound) versions of words in the Syriac language. For example, the Syriac word “**Mar**” is written as “*Mar(y)*,” with a silent yod at the end. This silent yod, however, changes the meaning considerably; the yod adds a first-person, possessive case to Mar, meaning “**My**” Lord.

“**Mar Walah**” could serve as the first lesson in catechesis, too. Children can experience the foundation of faith in Jesus as both God and Man. Such an experience may lead to the realization that faith is as intimate to them as their breath (“**Ruh/Ruha**”). The idea of a simple, singable, and celebratory melodic design for **Mar Walah** happened to me on Sunday, 22 September 2019 in the backyard of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church in Boston. I was a guest of the Parish for that weekend. My mission was to prepare the choir to sing the English version of Qurbana that I co-composed. The vicar asked me to teach Sunday school children as well as the parish choir before the 10.30 am Qurbana. It was a beautiful day with bright sunlight. After breakfast, I took a walk in the backyard of the church. Most of the birds had finished their morning prayer; some were still active in praising their creator. A soft wind caressed the grass on the ground and the leaves on the full-grown trees. Overall, it was a wonderful time of the Fall season. I was planning in my mind how to conduct the music training session. All of a sudden, out of the blue, the phrase “**Mar Walah**” in this melodic format came to my mind. I could not resist it. I sang it to myself and then to the trees around; the dancing leaves in the soothing wind nodded in appreciation. An hour later, I sang it to the children in the church. The children learned it easily and responded to me enthusiastically. We ended the homily by singing it again. I was pleased with the outcome.

The next weekend, I had the opportunity to celebrate the Qurbana for the Sunday School children at the St. Jude Syro Malabar Church in Northern Virginia (see [Aramaic Project-158](#)). At this time, I tried to add the Malayalam version of **Mar Walah**. The children and their parents enthusiastically responded. The Malayalam text fitted well into the melodic contours of the Syriac text. Overall, it turned out to be a celebratory experience.



On the weekend of Sunday 16 February 2020, I was invited to train the Sunday School choir at St. Alphonsa Syro Malabar Church at Coppell in Dallas, Texas. The choir and the **Sunday school children** learned Syriac chants to celebrate a **bilingual Qurbana** in English and Syriac. This gave me a perfect opportunity to introduce **Mar Walah** to a different community. We decided to use the song as a post-Communion meditation. What we see in the video is a recording of that event. It became clear that **Mar Walah** is the most appropriate prayer for thanks giving after Holy Communion. In Communion, Jesus grants us the privilege of physical intimacy that is similar to what He granted the **Apostle Thomas**, during the second appearance (John 20:27-29). I hope and pray that priests take a cue from this video and take this experiment to the next level.

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New York

7 May 2020

Keywords: [Mar Walah](#), Thomas the Apostle, Syro Malabar Church USA, Syriac chant, USA

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