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PROJECT



[AP 83 - Varghese Chiriyankandath, Sacristan and church musician. St. Joseph's Church, Pavaratty. Archdiocese of Thrissur, Kerala.](#)

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Call Number	AP 83
Part Number	Part I – Syro Malabar Church
Title	Varghese Chiriyankandath, Sacristan and church musician. St. Joseph's Church, Pavaratty. Archdiocese of Thrissur, Kerala.
Duration	40:28
Place of Recording	Mr. Varghese Chiriyankandath's residence
Date of Recording	8 August 2017.
YouTube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sw2pu8UEFko&t
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

Varghese Chiriyankandath, Sacristan and church musician. [St. Joseph's Church, Pavaratty](#). Archdiocese of Thrissur, Kerala.

This is a candid conversation with a church singer from the Syriac era, who served his parish church of [St. Joseph's at Pavaratty](#)., in the [Diocese of Thrissur](#), in Kerala. Due to the unusual circumstances, Shri Varghese started as a sacristan at the tender age of ten. Later, he also took the role of the Leader of Song in the church. The liturgy was in Syriac. He learned the songs and prayers without fully understanding the meaning of the text. Yet, Varghese developed a liking for the melodies and a sense of awe for the language of Jesus and the apostles. He continued to serve the parish for over half a century. Due to financial constraints, Varghese dropped out of school after fourth grade, but continued to absorb all kinds of knowledge from every available source. The interview shows his uncanny capacity for critical thinking. Varghese cherished one piece of advice that he received from his father, “Listen to the words the priests, but ignore their deeds.” In spite of his critical thinking about priests and church practices, Varghese professed unswerving loyalty to the clergy and the parish. At the age of 83, Varghese struggles to remember the hundreds of melodies that he learned in his youth. Yet, he is able to recite the Lord’s Prayer in Syriac, as well as, texts of several songs. Here we have examples of the vocalization of Syriac prayers by a layman. Varghese also sings a melody of the [Trisagion](#) (“[Qandisa alaha](#)”), which we heard only once before performed by an elderly priest in the Diocese of Kothamangalam. The melody of the Marian litany is new. Varghese mentions that monetary remuneration for serving the church was meager. Nonetheless, he has no complaints. Additionally, he feels that God blessed him and his family abundantly during the years of his ministry. Overall, this was an uplifting conversation for me.

Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI
New York
6 April 2018



Index

1. Favorite song, Mokshathin rajawe (Malayalam) ([4:30](#))
2. Favorite Syriac song: [M'haimaninan](#) (the Creed) [8:11](#)
3. A Different melody of [Qandisa alaha](#) ([10:28](#))
4. Melody of the Litany [Kuriyelaison](#) ([1:53](#))
5. How did you feel when the liturgy was translated into Malayalam? ([18:03](#))
6. Melody of “Nalla mathawe mariye,” Hymn in honor of the Blessed Virgin in Malayalam ([20:22](#))
7. Hymn in honor of St. Joseph in Malayalam, “Mama palakane” ([24:12](#))
8. Melodies of Puthen pana ([25:26](#))
9. Melody of [Sambah lesan](#), in Syriac ([20:07](#))
10. Melody of “[Kollan dasne](#)” ([29:57](#))
- 11 Critique of a funeral ritual ([32:28](#))
- 12 Critique of the starting time of Easter vigil service ([33:25](#))
13. Recites the Lord’s prayer and the anthem of the mysteries ([34:34](#))
14. A song in honor of the Blessed Sacrament in Malayalam, “Diwya karunyamea” ([36:43](#))

Related Videos

- [AP 22](#) - The [St. Jude Syro Malabar Church](#) choir in Northern Virginia, USA, learn "[Qandisa Alaaha](#) (Trisagion in Syriac) with incipits in Malayalam.
- [AP 22a](#) - The [St. Jude Syro Malabar Church](#) choir in Northern Virginia, USA, learn "[Qandisa Alaaha](#) (Trisagion in Syriac) with incipits in English.
- [AP 26](#) - Children's Choir at St. Mary's Church (aka Suriyanippally), Palluruthy, Kochi, Kerala, India, sing the Syriac and Malayalam versions of "[B'eda d'yawmaan](#)" (On this Festival Day), hymn to the Blessed Virgin.
- [AP 182](#) - Paily Vathappally on The Life of a Church Musician in the syriac era.
- [AP 192](#) - [Qandisa Alaha](#) and Covid-19. Syro Malabar children sing in Austin, Texas
- [AP 197](#) - Syriac chant to celebrate St. Thomas Day. Houston, Texas.
- [AP 251](#) - [Fr. Cyril Thayyil](#) in conversation with the Alangad Syriac Choir

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