



[AP 221 - A Catechism Class on St. Ephrem the Syrian. Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar.](#)

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Call Number	AP 221
Part Number	Part I – Syro Malabar Church
Title	A Catechism Class on St. Ephrem the Syrian. Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar.
Duration	9:57
Place of Recording	Beth Aprem Nazrani Dayra, Kuravilangad, Kottayam Dt., Kerala, India.
Date of Recording	3 August 2014
Youtube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wtld96xfNfo
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

A Catechism Class on St. Ephrem the Syrian. Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar.

Note: The name of St. Ephrem, the pride and glory of Syriac Christianity, is not familiar enough to the Syro Malabar Catholics. We are indeed blessed to have a class on St. Ephrem's significance by an eminent scholar of Kerala, Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar. The theology of St. Ephrem should have been a chapter in the high school students' catechetical textbooks. This poet-saint who lived and taught and sang in the fourth century is still appealing to our era. St. Ephrem married theology to the sound and rhythm of Syriac poetry. He was very much like the rishis in India who composed Mahabharat in poetry. St. Ephrem, according to Koonammakkal Kathanar, was more prolific than the Indian rishis. Our Hindus in India have been smarter than the Christians in the matter of pedagogy of faith. Hindu stories and legends were transmitted not through formal classroom education but art and poetry. Children learned innumerable lines of poetry and mastered religious lessons through poems. St. Ephrem bequeathed a beautiful example that did not catch the attention of Syro Malabar Catholics. This video is a wake-up call. Theology is not an intellectual gymnastics but the oxygen for living, breathing lungs of faith. We hope that this video will inspire many people to rediscover St. Ephrem and tell themselves that it is all right to enjoy faith and that aesthetics and faith are complementary. "Sing to the Lord a new song" (Psalm 96:1).

We are immensely grateful to Jarly Mathew and Kuriachan J. Palackal for making this videotaped conversation happen. At present, the Kathanar is suffering from ill health and we do not know when he will regain the strength to talk as he did in this video. We can only pray, be grateful to God, and enjoy what we have.

[Joseph J. Palackal, CMI](#)

New York 8

December 2020.

(Feast of the Immaculate Conception)



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