Representative of the Russian Church attends the enthronement of newly elected Primate of Assyrian Church of the East



On September 13, 2021, the enthronement of newly elected Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa III took place at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Ankawa, the Christian suburb of the Iraqi city of Erbil.

The new Primate was elected on September 8 at a special session of the Synod held in the residence of the Catholicoi-Patriarchs of Assyria in Erbil, the Kurdish autonomous region, Iraq. His predecessor, His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Gewargis III had announced his decision to retire due to health issues.

With a blessing of His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the Moscow Patriarchate was

represented at the enthronement events by the rector of the Beirut Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Philipp (Vasiltsev).

The Office of the Enthronement was led by diocesan bishops of the Assyrian Church of the East.

The divine service was attended by Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Archbishop Mitja Leskovar, representative of the Holy See in Iraq; representatives of Churches in the Middle East; as well as President Nechirwan Barzani of Iraqi Kurdistan; representatives of the Iraq's Cabinet of Ministers and Parliament; diplomats accredited in Erbil including O. V. Levin, Russian Federation Consul General in Erbil.

After the enthronement, Catholicos-Patriarch Awa III addressed himself to the congregation with words of greetings.

Archimandrite Philipp read out a congratulatory message from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent to Catholicos-Patriarch Awa III on the occasion of his enthronement.

A congratulatory message also came to Catholicos-Patriarch Awa III from Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations.

The representative of the Russian Orthodox Church presented the Patriarch-Catholicos with a decorated silver cross.

After the Office of Enthronement, His Holiness Mar Awa III celebrated his first Liturgy in his capacity of Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East.

After the service, there was a grand reception devoted to the enthronement of the Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Awa III.

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The elected Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Bishop Mar Awa (secular name David Royel) was born on July 4, 1975, in Chicago, to a family of Assyrian emigrants.

In 1992, he was ordained as deacon by Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.

In 1977, he graduated from the Loyola University in Chicago with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and in 1999, with the degree of Bachelor of Theology from the University of St. Mary in Mundelein, USA.

In 2001, he was granted the licentiate degree by the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Roma, and in 2007, he defended at the same institute the doctor’s dissertation.

In 2006, he was ordained as priest with elevation to the rank of chorbishop (corresponding with the rank of archpriest in the Russian Orthodox Church), and in 2008 he was elevated to the rank of archdeacon (corresponding to the rank of Protopresbyter).

In 2008, he was consecrated as bishop and appointed as ruling bishop of the diocese of California.

From 2015, he served as secretary of the Synod and chairman of the Commission for Inter-Church Relations and Development of Education of the Assyrian Church of the East; from 2016, he served as co-chairman of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.

He made several visits to Russia, including during the visit of Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV to the Russian Orthodox Church (May 26 - June 9, 2014) and for the sessions of the Bilateral Commission for Dialogue in Moscow (May 18-20, 2016) and Sankt-Petersburg (October 23-27).

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