

# The Anaphora of Mar Nestorius

## History and Theology

*Dr Sebastian Naduthadam*

### Introduction

The Liturgy of Mar Nestorius is the most solemn Anaphora in the East Syriac tradition. It is celebrated on five important feast days of this Church: Denha, Nativity of St John Baptist, Commemoration of the Greek Fathers, the Third day of the Rogation of Ninivites and Passover Feast.

This study is mainly concerned with the historical background of the Anaphora and its theological significance.

### I. Historical Background

The historical background of a prayer is clearer when it is traced back to its sources such as manuscripts and early edited books (Missals). Its relation to other Prayers of the time, especially in its own tradition, is also an important factor. So the first part of this study looks at (1) manuscript tradition and (2) the East Syrian identity of the Anaphora.

### 1. Manuscript Tradition

There are more than 50 manuscripts (MSS) that contain this Anaphora. The early edited missals such as Urmi text,<sup>1</sup> Kelaitha,<sup>2</sup> and Missal Chaldean<sup>3</sup> are also to be considered. The most ancient manuscript is the Mar Essaya text of the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>. The study of the early sources permits certain conclusions.

- 1) This Anaphora is well founded on a solid manuscript tradition.
- 2) The MSS anterior to 13 century (4 MSS) are of Hudra manuscripts (Liturgical prayers of the whole year)<sup>5</sup> This confirms the precedence of the Hudra with regards to other liturgical texts as Missals or Priest's rituals.
- 3) In all cases the Scribe has marked his name and the date of completion. So they are not anonymous.
- 4) What is most striking is that they had been copied for the use of a monastery or parish and not for studies. This shows the living tradition of