Foreword

By Mor Dionysius Jean Kawak

What binds a community together is their history. Being an immigrant community constantly under the stress of assimilation versus preservation of one's culture, it is our common ancestry and their struggles that will bind us together. The immigration to the US came in various phases of oppression our faithful faced in their homelands. Starting in 1895, and again in 1915, Sayfo survivors went in search of lands with religious freedom. The waves of immigration continued with subsequent wars in the Middle East (Arab-Israeli wars, the Lebanese civil war, and the recent wars in Iraq and Syria). As the children of survivors of Sayfo, it is important for the current generation and the generations to come to read this book. It will give them an insight into the challenges a community faced as it struggled to establish itself and build a society. The community had their Syriac Orthodox faith in common and it is still the glue that holds us together.

Sadly, many communities that were established no longer exist. We hope that this book will shed light onto the issues immigrant communities face with our ongoing struggle of preserving our culture and heritage and yet be a

productive member of the American society in general. In addition, we hope that this book will help those who have lost touch with the church to reconnect and our faithful to understand where we came from in order to decide where we should go. It is for this reason that I asked Malphono George Kiraz to write a book on the history of the Suryoye in America. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him. It is hoped that future scholars will build upon this work, expand upon it by writing about the Suryoye immigrants in the current millennium.