FIRST PUBLISHER’S NOTE

It is with great pleasure that I present this *Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary* to the readers. The original of this book in Syriac language has been in the possession of one of the bishops of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church for an indeterminately long period of time. It was only translated into Malayalam less than a hundred years ago. Now for the first time, that Malayalam version has been meticulously rendered into English by Sarah Knight. So finally, here we have an opportunity to make this book accessible to the general readership worldwide by the commendable efforts of the translator.

In his Foreword to this book, Dr. Sebastian Brock, a foremost academic (University of Oxford) in matters relating to the Syrian Orthodox Church and known as the *Malfono dhe Malfono* (Teacher of Teachers), has identified and clarified the various sources that form the basis of this book. His words of commendation are the gems that adorn and crown this book.

The book is not aimed at teaching the faithful about the doctrinal position of the Syrian Orthodox Church regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is aimed to perpetuate the role and model of the Mother of God, her humility, dedication, piety and willingness to follow Jesus Christ in his salvific works. There are many elements in this book which are a reflection of the period in which this work was first produced and consequently it has to be read in the spirit of those times. Nevertheless, this book has influenced thousands of readers over the centuries and will continue to do so in the future.

I congratulate Dr. Sarah Knight for making this book available to the English-speaking generation. Resident in the UK, she
comes from the Illikalam family of Kumarakom, Kerala, where her late father Sri John Abraham is remembered as a stalwart defender of the Faith through his oratory and his writings. Her mother Elizabeth was also well-known through her dedicated service with the Martha Mariyam Vanitha Samajam (= Ladies’ Society of Lady Mary). She was beloved of all who knew her including myself as “Illikalathil Kochamma”, a lady who was pious and humble to the core of her personality, polite in her conversations, and one who extended warm hospitality to all, especially to the clergy. Translation of this book is a fitting contribution by their daughter in her devotion to the Faith and the traditions of her ancestors. I am happy to be associated with the publication of this book.

May the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary be ever with all those who read this book.

Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil
Director
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Cheeranchira
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