



**CATHOLIC
HOME
MISSIONS**

Refugees Find a Home for Faith



A wedding celebrated in the Chaldean Church with the crowning of the bride and groom.

There are currently ten parishes and six missions in California, Arizona, Nevada, and Texas, but the diocese covers the 19 westernmost states of the country. Catholic Home Missions (CHM) funds many of its programs.

St. Peter the Apostle is the second Chaldean Catholic eparchy or diocese in the United States after the Diocese of St. Thomas in Detroit. The Chaldean Catholic Church is one of several Eastern Catholic Churches that enjoy the same dignity, rights, and obligations as the Latin Church. Eastern Catholic Churches have

By Beth Griffin

When we think of worship in the vernacular, in the language of the people, we generally imagine English or Spanish or Tagalog or any of the familiar modern tongues brought to these shores by generations of Catholic immigrants. So it may come as a surprise to learn that one of the newest, most expansive, and fastest-growing dioceses in the country celebrates the liturgy in Aramaic, one of the world's most ancient languages.

The language Jesus spoke is very much alive in the Chaldean Catholic Diocese of St. Peter the Apostle. The diocese was established in 2002 to serve a torrent of people fleeing violence and persecution in Iraq and Iran. Bishop Sarhad Jammo is its first leader.



Chaldean Scout group at an annual summer program.

distinctive liturgical and legal systems that reflect the national or ethnic character of their region of origin. Chaldeans are descendants of the ancient Babylonians and are the primary Christian group in Iraq.

According to Fr. Andrew Younan, rector of the St. Thomas diocesan seminary of Mar Abba the Great in San Diego, an early wave

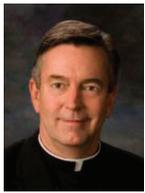
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Neighbors

SPRING 2015

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Friends,

For the Eastern Catholic Church, an eparchy is most similar to a diocese and is also in full communion with Rome. The Chaldean

Catholic Diocese of St. Peter the Apostle is an Eastern Church that is still relatively new, but growing quickly! Founded in 2002, this diocese now serves ten parishes and six missions in four different states.

In this issue, read about how Bishop Sarhad Jammo works to serve the members of his flock, many of whom are refugees fleeing the violence and persecution in Iran and Iraq. Fr. Andrew Younan also explains how the Church is continuing to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life in order to minister to their many members. This diocese has found creative ways to use technology in order to reach out to its members all over the world.

Funds from a Catholic Home Missions grant have been used to help support formation for their seminarians and religious community as well as their media outreach, aiding this young diocese as it faces its many challenges.

Thanks to Catholics like you, who are willing to give each year, Catholic Home Missions is giving \$9 million in grants to dioceses here in the United States that struggle to meet basic pastoral needs. We are able to help because you so generously support the Catholic Home Missions Appeal.

This collection will soon be taken up in most dioceses in the United States. Through your generosity, many dioceses will receive the support they need to continue their ministries and promote an encounter with Christ for their people. Thank you for joining me in supporting and promoting this collection.

I ask that God bless you and your families as you lead your lives in faith. Together, let us continue to strengthen the Church at home.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Peter F. Christensen
Diocese of Boise

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of Chaldean immigrants settled successfully in the Detroit area 40-50 years ago. The community grew to more than 200,000 people, the largest Chaldean group outside Iraq. A smaller group settled in San Diego and Phoenix. In 2007, more than 2,000 former members of the Assyrian Church of the East joined St. Peter the Apostle.

More than half of the world's 900,000 Chaldean Catholics now live outside Iraq, Fr. Younan says. "Chaldean refugees by the thousands" have sought to immigrate lately, because so few people are willing to tolerate the dangerous situation in Iraq and Iran, which is exacerbated by the rise of the Islamic State, he says. The new diocese started with 40,000 people and now includes more than 65,000, many of whom are recent refugees.

"The Church is central to everything we do. Historically, the parish was central to the village, and the priest was the go-to person. It carries over, and here the Church is the first place they come," Fr. Younan says.

"We do everything we can for the refugees, from housing and jobs to helping them get government assistance. Poverty is something the Church is expected to address, as well," he adds.



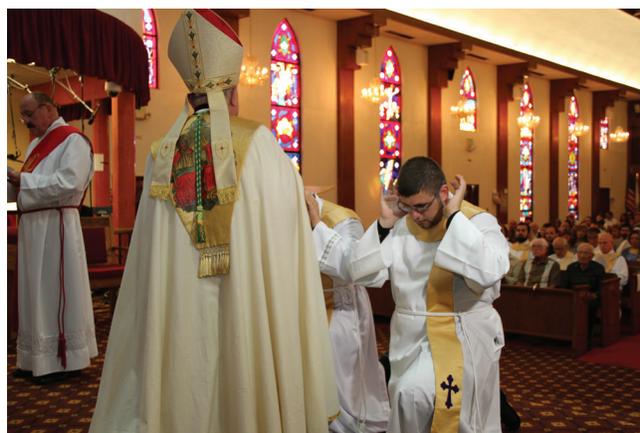
The Workers of the Vineyard, a community of women religious formed by Bishop Sarhad Jammo.

The young diocese devotes much of its resources to serving the newcomers. It relies on Catholic Home Missions for critical help with communications, evangelization, seminary education, and formation of women religious.

In its short existence, St. Peter the Apostle has cast a wide net. From a base in southern California, Kaldu Television and two Kaldaya websites reach Chaldean Catholics in their homeland and the countries to which they have fled. Fr. Younan says the Internet outreach was started by Bishop Jammo shortly after the diocese was established.

"People are scattered, and many are far from their families. Through our websites, they can be connected to the whole Chaldean Church," Fr. Younan says. "The websites give our community everywhere in the world comfort, guidance, spiritual food, and social togetherness."

The television station broadcasts live celebrations of the Chaldean Mass and other liturgical prayers, as well as lectures, social community gatherings, and other events. The media center includes a modest publishing operation



The diaconal ordination of Deacons Royal Hannosh and David Stephen in 2014.

DID YOU KNOW?



Child being baptized in the Chaldean Church.



The rite of the Divine Liturgy as celebrated in the Chaldean Church.

that enables the diocese to produce its own liturgical booklets and catechetical materials in Aramaic, English, and Arabic.

Six women religious of the Workers of the Vineyard congregation run the websites and the media center and have developed a catechetical series for Chaldean Catholic liturgy and practices.

“Liturgy is a big part of how we come to understand Christ,” Fr. Younan says. “We incorporate liturgical texts into catechetical books. Our liturgy is a jewel.”

CHM funds help support the sisters and enable hundreds of children to participate in Catechism and First Holy Communion preparation classes.

The 16 priests of the diocese wear multiple hats, and their efforts are spread thin, but reinforcements are on the way. Ten deacons were ordained last year, and Fr. Younan says there are ten men in the seminary. “Proportionally, it’s a great blessing, but an expensive one,” he laughs.

He says the students are mostly American-born Californians. All have some knowledge of Aramaic, the primary language of the liturgy, some are more fluent than others, and about half speak it at home. Classes are taught in English and Aramaic.

Fr. Younan, the seminary rector, says there must be a secret to the robust vocations, “but I don’t know it! We try to be as faithful and dedicated to Christ as we can, and they come. Young men and women see us work to the bone,

and it’s magnetic,” he says. “We praise God and thank God for it—and he takes care of it.”

“God has worked through Catholic Home Missions,” Fr. Younan says. “Nothing we do is luxurious. We are following the command of Christ to preach the Gospel and provide workers for the vineyard. CHM is one of the ways God has allowed us to continue to do his work.”

CHM funds help support seminarians, who take part of their training at John Paul the Great Catholic University in Escondido, California.

Reflecting on the challenge of financing a new and rapidly growing diocese, Bishop Jammo says, “This diocese, having received most of its faithful as immigrants and refugees, could not immediately provide for diocesan needs. That is why the support of Catholic Home Missions at this critical period was important for establishing the fundamentally needed institutions in the diocese.”

He concludes, “The grant money has been pivotal for the major diocesan projects. As a new diocese, we needed this additional brotherly support to build the basic new institutions so that our community will be acquainted with them and grow up in supporting them.”

- The Chaldean Catholic Diocese of St. Peter the Apostle was established in 2002 and covers the 19 westernmost states of the United States.
- Eastern Catholics are in full communion with Rome. Roman Catholics may receive the sacraments in Eastern Catholic Churches, when needed.
- Eparchies and archeparchies in the Eastern Catholic Church are akin to dioceses and archdioceses in the Latin Church.
- The diocese has ten parishes and six missions in California, Arizona, Nevada, and Texas.
- Its 65,000 parishioners are served by sixteen priests, ten deacons, and five women religious. There are ten seminarians preparing for the priesthood, four of whom will be ordained in 2015.
- In 2005, after a lengthy discernment process, a former bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East joined the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Diocese of St. Peter the Apostle. He was accompanied by 3 priests, more than 14 deacons, and 2,000 parishioners.
- Chaldean Catholics use Aramaic, English, and Arabic. People who speak Aramaic can generally read Arabic, and refugees whose first language is Arabic generally learn Aramaic to participate in the community and the liturgy.
- Bishop Jammo was elected by the Chaldean Synod in 2002. Pope John Paul II named him the first bishop of the new diocese.
- Married clergy immigrated with and serve Chaldean Catholics in the diocese, but the seminary is restricted to single men.
- Catholic Home Missions supports approximately 13% of the budget of the Chaldean Catholic Diocese of St. Peter the Apostle.
- For a sample of the beautiful liturgy and prayers, visit Kaldu.tv.



Strengthening the Church at Home

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READ ABOUT THE RAPIDLY growing Chaldean Catholic Diocese of St. Peter the Apostle, an Eastern Church working to create a home of faith for refugees.



Your generosity to the Catholic Home Missions Appeal supports essential ministries in poor dioceses across the United States and its territories.

THANK YOU for being part of our efforts to strengthen the Church at home.

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