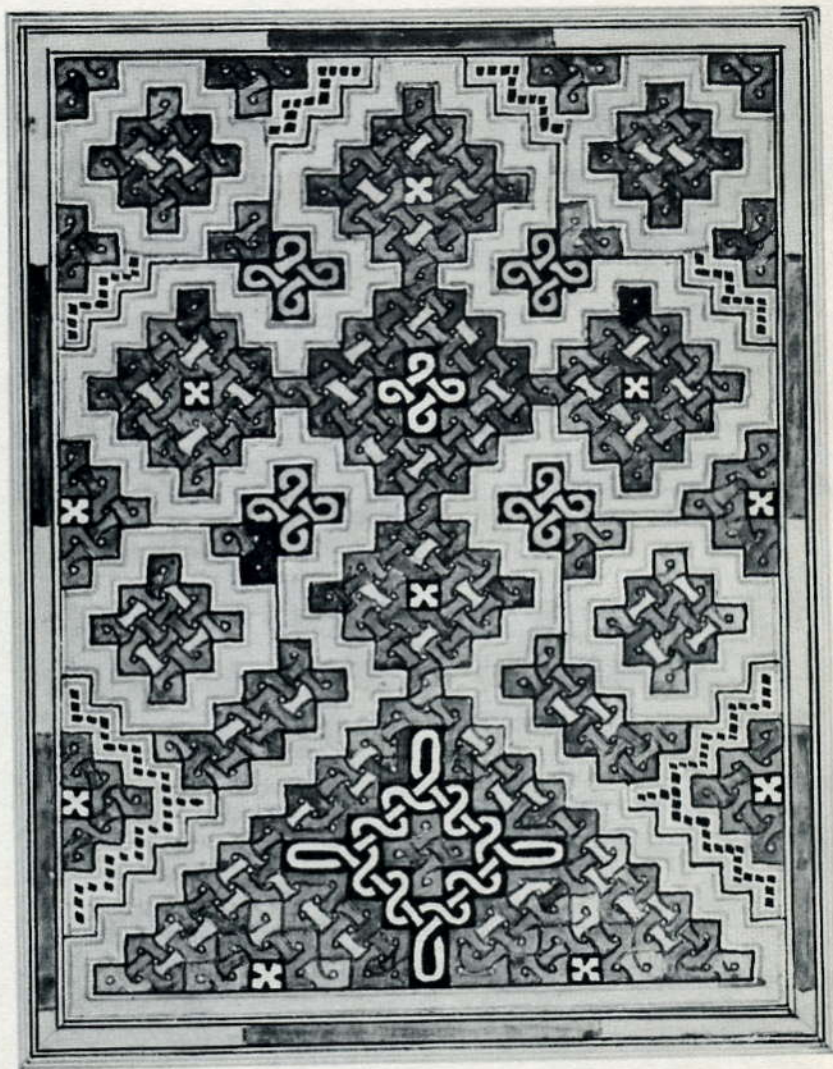




Rules collected from
the Synhados (Canonical Law)
of the
Church of the East
&
Patriarchal Decrees



Traditional Manuscript Illuminated Cross of the Church of the East

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PUBLISHED BY

THE HOLY APOSTOLIC AND CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE EAST



Cross surmounting the Church of the East Monument in China erected eighth century A.D. to commemorate the fifth centenary of that mission.

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P R E F A C E

Because of the many irregularities which had taken place in the various parishes of the Church of the East in the United States of America prior to our visit to this country and which had led to strife and division among the clergy and the faithful, We, by virtue of the authority granted us by Maran Eshoo M'shikha as the successors to Shimun Keepa (Simon the Stone, or St. Peter) head of the Apostles (Matthew 16. 19-20) and which authority has been adhered to and confirmed by the Holy Synods of the Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, several years ago we decreed certain rules and regulations for the benefit of the Church of the East in the United States. These rules and regulations are wholly concerned with the manner of administration of Church properties and funds, and are based upon the Synods of the Holy Church, making allowance for the vastly changed conditions, whether cultural, economic, or political, under which the Church of the East today lives in these United States.

The Constitution of the United States of America has granted religion a considerable measure of freedom in making its own rules and regulations so long as these rules and regulations do not conflict with that Constitution. This portion of the Church of the East, with its nearly twenty centuries of unequalled Christian history of trials and tribulations, is indeed fortunate to be living today under this system of government.

These rules which were originally written in Aramaic (Syriac) and from which they have been translated into the English language for the benefit of the younger generation of Assyrian Americans who are unable to read Syriac or to understand it fully, have not been added to or detracted from except certain rules that have been added in the English translation stating in fuller detail the authority granted the Parish Committee and the manner of its administering these various funds. These additions are equally applicable to the Syriac edition of the rules.

In conclusion, we must say, that the application of these rules, whose sole purpose is to eliminate misunderstanding between the members of the Church, and to make it impossible for men without conscience, bent after their own interests, to the detriment of the Holy Church, to interpret church rules as it suits their own motives or otherwise to mislead the faithful; depends wholly upon the faithfulness of the children (members) of the Church, whether clergy or laity, but especially on the former, namely, the priests, who are bound by their sacred ordination to carry out the rules of the Church with all faithfulness, and if necessary to suffer in the execution of their duty, and thereby be an example to the flock committed to their charge, knowing full well that any act of unfaithfulness places them under the anathemas of the Holy Synods. Likewise, the deacons by virtue of their orders, are committed to support the parish priest in the execution of his sacred duties. Therefore, if these rules are maintained by each and all according to the measure of his call, then we have no doubt that these rules will bring abundant blessing to the Church in this country and it will be shining example to the Church of the East universally.

Written in our Patriarchal Cell, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII,
San Francisco, Calif. First Sun- By Grace,
day in Lent, in the year 1960 Catholicos Patriarch of
to Our Lord. the East.

From The Patriarchal Cell Of The Church Of The East

Prayers & Blessings Receive

To our Beloved Children in Christ members of the Church of the East who live in the blessed land of the United States of America, may peace and tranquility reign at all times.

Rules selected from the Synhadus, namely the Canonical Law of the Church. 1. Concerning the Patriarch and his authority. 2. Concerning the Church and its form of administration. 3. Commands from the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun.

From the Synod of Mar Dadishu the Catholicos (424 A.D.).

In the name of God we hereby decreed, that the Easterns (Clergy and laity of the Church of the East) are forbidden to bring complaints against their Patriarch even before the Western Patriarchs, but any question which cannot be settled before him (related to the Patriarch himself) shall be reserved to the judgment of Christ. We decreed and confirmed this covenant which is indissoluble and can never be nullified, for we have sealed it in the name of Holy Trinity. And in the Word of the Trinity no man has the right to call a council against the Patriarch, nor to create controversies and schisms, nor to write letters of blame and accusations against him as some persons did against the Patriarchs that preceded him, neither to send heads (statements) of accusations directed to other countries as they did against Mar Papa the Catholicos; nor to creep secretly (literally to carry rumours and gossip) into houses, as to speak evil against him, and under no circumstances may a man say that the Catholicos of the East can be judged by those under him or by Patriarchs like himself. He will be the judge of all those under him and his own judgment will be reserved to Christ, He that chose him, and placed him at the head of his Church. For it so pleased His Eternal Lordship (lit. His Divine Authority) that with the headship of His Church should His Lordship (Patriarch) be entrusted and honoured with authority over all. From this day hence whomsoever is lower (in rank) than the Catholicos is his disciple and is subject and obligated unto him, and can be judged (tried) by the Catholicos, and his decision must gladly be carried out. All of us Bishops (present) and all that come after us, we adhere while afar, and we approve while near of all that Your Fatherhood (Patriarch) may do, and of all the Fathers (Patriarchs) that may come after you and hold thy See.

