

Head of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church dies at 74

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [August 11, 2021](#) issue



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Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, died on July 12 at the age of 74. He had been undergoing cancer treatment for the last two years.

Paulose was ordained as a priest in 1973 and consecrated as a bishop in 1985. He became the head of the MOSC, also known as the Indian Orthodox Church, in 2010 following the abdication of Baselios Marthoma Didymus I.

As a leader, Paulose was particularly interested in building relationships with other ethnic Orthodox churches, as well as with the Roman Catholic Church. He also championed women's participation in church life, giving them full voting rights in church parishes.

According to the World Council of Churches, Paulose also established the Parumala Cancer Centre in Kerala, a state in southwest India, which provides free cancer treatment for people with incomes below the poverty line.

"He was much loved for his unassuming and down-to-earth approach as a leader," wrote WCC acting general secretary Ioan Sauca in a statement. "His Holiness was accessible to and responded to people in their times of need."

According to tradition, the apostle Thomas founded the MOSC while in India in AD 52. In the late 17th century, leaders of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Antioch usurped control of the church, leading to its members being known as "Syrian Christians."

Today, the church has about 2.5 million members, mostly in Kerala.