

St Thomas The Apostle
Chaldean Diocese of AUS & NZ



إبيارشيّة مار توماس الرسول الكلدانيّة
ففي أستراليا ونيوزلندا



Mar Sham'on Bar Sabba'e Liturgical Institute

Our Lady Guardian of Plants \Melbourne

Est. 2025

Introduction

From the very beginning, the Church has been keen to nurture her children through providing sound and proper foundations for the practice of faith and its doctrines. At the same time, she has been committed to teaching her members how to practice faith through rites and liturgies by establishing institutions, seminaries, and courses.

Today, the Chaldean Church in Australia also strives to renew its methods according to scientific data and modern educational approaches to ensure the success of its mission in delivering the Word of God in an age filled with challenges. This age often pulls people toward superficial happiness amid the abundance of information instantly accessible through technology, without effort or reflection.

The experience of the “New Evangelization,” especially after the approval of the outcomes of the **Eparchial Synod of the Chaldean Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle in Australia and New Zealand for the year 2025**, has provided a valuable opportunity to return to the roots of our faith and to re-examine the depths of our past — a past in which our forefathers in faith lived experiences, ideas, structures, and rites that can guide our steps today and every day, if only we open our minds to what they believed was important for our faith journey amid the challenges of our time.

What our forefathers experienced in the past is still alive in the present and will continue to be experienced by the generations to come. They handed it down to us through the expressions and cultural heritage of their own civilisations, and it is now our duty to understand, live, and communicate these same truths through present-day words and experiences so that future generations may benefit from them.

The tradition of the Church is alive — whether written in the Holy Scriptures, passed down orally, or preserved for us by the Fathers within the liturgical and ritual heritage. It carries within it all that elevates the Church, the praying community, to its rightful place within the relationship between God and humanity — the humanity that God chose from the beginning as His partner in creation and creativity, and which brings everything back to Him in praise and glorification.

The believer is one who works, searches, discovers, and then joyfully and gloriously offers what he has discovered to the Source of his existence: God!

Today, an institute will be established dedicated to studying the liturgy of an ancient Church, namely **our Chaldean Church of the East**. This marks the beginning of a journey requiring genuine commitment from its inception. Through the challenges, we will come to recognise how much we have to learn, realising our need to walk together in exploring the depths of truth.

Therefore, our mission will consist of guiding eager students toward the sources of this knowledge and providing necessary learning tools through a structured program over the course of **three years**.

The Liturgical Institute of the Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle

Under the patronage of His Excellency **Archbishop Mar Amel Shamon Nona**, the Archbishop of the Chaldean Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle, we have prepared this document for the establishment of an institute dedicated to the study of the **Chaldean Church's liturgy**.

Among the **general objectives** of this institute is to **revive and renew the spiritual life** of the faithful, to stand before the beautiful icon of our liturgy, to learn, to pray, and to help others pray and share in the grace of the Lord granted to the whole community. Through this, we aim to enrich our beloved eparchy with this unique and distinguished experience.

Objectives of the Institute

1. To teach the **principles of the Chaldean language**, especially to those who speak foreign languages.
2. To provide **liturgical formation** for altar servers (deacons) and for all those who wish to learn the Church's rites and the theology of the sacraments.
3. To **preserve the theological, spiritual, and liturgical heritage** of the Church of the East and transmit it into the culture of our new generations.
4. To **promote a scholarly and canonical understanding** in dealing with Church liturgies.

Core Subjects for Students of the Institute

First: Language (Code: L)

1. **(L1) Principles of the Chaldean Language:**
In the first year, after a placement test, students will be divided into two levels, beginners and advanced, according to their proficiency in the language.
2. **(L2) Grammar of the Chaldean Language:**
Introducing the grammatical rules that help students discover the richness and vastness of the Chaldean language.

3. **(L3) Modern or Spoken Chaldean (Sureth):**

Students will practice translating texts from the liturgical language into refined modern spoken Chaldean.

4. **(L4) Chaldean Literature:**

An introduction to major writers and literary works throughout the history of the Chaldean Church.

Second: Liturgical Formation (Code: LIT)

1. **(LIT1) Liturgical Introductions:**

A general exploration of the concept of liturgy to understand its main principles and symbols.

2. **(LIT2) The Liturgy of the Mass:**

A study of the church's arrangement (architecture and structure) and the components that make up the **Anaphora of Addai and Mari**.

3. **(LIT3) Liturgy in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches:**

A study of the importance of liturgies and their preservation within the family of Catholic rites, with reference to the main canons concerning the orders and their roles in the Church.

4. **(LIT4) History of the Chaldean Church of the East:**

A brief historical overview of the establishment and development of the Church of the East up to the present day.

5. **(LIT5) Stages in the Formation of the Chaldean Church's Liturgy:**

A study and understanding of the key stages, periods, and figures that contributed to the formation and development of the Chaldean rite.

6. **(LIT6) The Liturgical Year in the Chaldean Tradition:**

Students will learn about the concept of the liturgical year, the Church's feasts, commemorations of saints, and how to use the liturgical books according to these seasons.

7. **(LIT7) Theology and Canon Law of the Sacraments:**

An introduction to the theology of the sacraments in general, followed by a deeper study of how the sacraments are celebrated and by whom.

8. **(LIT8) The Divine Office (1) According to the Rite of the Church of the East:**

Study of the structure of the Morning Prayers (*Şlothā d-Şapra*) and their historical development, with reference to the monastic tradition and its role in determining prayer

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hours, distinguishing it from the cathedral tradition practiced in the Church.

9. **(LIT9) The Divine Office (2) According to the Rite of the Church of the East:**

Study of the structure of the Evening Prayers (*Ṣlotha d-Ramsha*) and their historical development, with reference to the monastic tradition and its role in determining prayer hours, distinguishing it from the cathedral tradition practiced in the Church.

10. **(LIT10) Liturgical Practice and Etiquette of Service:**

A corrective study of certain practices that have diverged from the norm, through reviewing the liturgies of Sundays and major feasts, understanding how they should be performed, and the moral and stylistic aspects of liturgical service.

Third: Music and Liturgical Hymns (Code: MUS)

1. **(MUS1) Introduction to Music:**

Learning the fundamental principles of music, selecting appropriate melodies, and practicing the performance of **Eastern maqamat** (musical modes) both theoretically and practically.

2. **(MUS2) Qale and Shoḥlapé (2):**

To preserve the musical heritage handed down by our ancestors, a skilled instructor in liturgical chant will teach the '**Onyatha** (hymns), **Madraše** (didactic hymns), and **Shoḥlapé** (supplications).

3. **(MUS3) Quriana and Epistle:**

Teaching the art of recitation and public reading in a clear style, as well as reading according to the appropriate chant.

Curriculum Overview

The Liturgical Institute opens its doors to all who wish to study the **theological, spiritual, and liturgical heritage** found in the pages of the liturgy of our ancient **Chaldean Church of the East**, for both men and women, starting from the age of sixteen.

Special priority will be given to **deacons and subdeacons serving at the altar**, as well as to **cantors and choir members** from all parishes within the eparchy.

Classes will be held in the classrooms of **Our Lady Guardian of Plants Chaldean Church in Melbourne**, every **Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**, consisting of **three academic hours**, each of **fifty minutes**.

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Students from other parishes in **Australia and New Zealand** may also apply, provided that they follow the lessons **online**.

The total hours have been distributed according to course modules based on a **twelve-hour system**.

The academic year will consist of **thirty-six weeks**, amounting to **108 academic hours per year**.

The total number of hours a student will complete over the **three-year** study period is **324 hours**.

We have distributed these hours among **seventeen essential subjects**, designed to provide sufficient knowledge to the students about the meaning of liturgy and its theological, spiritual, and canonical content.

The goal is to form a new generation that is **educated in the culture of the liturgy**, capable of serving the altar of the Lord with reverence and spiritual maturity.

The **languages of instruction** will be **Chaldean and English**, and lecturers are required to provide their written materials in both languages.

Institute Activities

In addition to the theoretical and practical subjects through which the institute enriches its students, the institute will also offer other activities, including:

1. **Spiritual Aspect:** Conducting prayer services, hymn evenings, and liturgical vigils.
2. **Cultural Aspect:** Reviewing and studying approved translations; translating some rites into English (e.g., the Ba'utha Prayer); reformatting and printing liturgies and rites; translating *Auniyatha Dqonqaya*, *Draziya*, *Shuraya*, and *Zomarya* into Syriac (Suryoyo) and English.

Administration

The institute's administration is appointed by His Excellency. A secretary is assigned to manage files, monitor lessons, attendance, and course materials.

Working Hours, Holidays, and Attendance

1. Registration begins at the start of the new academic year. Classes start on the first Tuesday of February and end at the end of November.
2. The institute observes official government holidays.
3. The institute closes only on major religious feast days.
4. Students must attend **at least 10 hours per subject**; otherwise, absence of two hours is considered unexcused, and the subject will be considered incomplete for that student.
5. Students may request leave of **up to two hours per subject**.

Grading System for Passing or Retaking a Subject

1. Students must successfully complete all required subjects.
2. The passing grade is **60**.
3. Students must retake the exam if they score below 60.

Registration and Fees

1. Students must provide all documents requested by the institute for registration.
2. Students must be at least **16 years old**.
3. Students pay a **non-refundable registration fee of 200 Australian dollars per year**.
4. Students are responsible for providing their own study materials, including books and stationery.

Graduation Report

One of the graduation requirements, which the student must agree upon with one of the institute's instructors, is the **Graduation Report**. The graduation report, whose structure will be determined at a later date, is mandatory for every student seeking to graduate from the institute.

Certificate

Students receive a **Graduation Certificate** from the institute after successfully completing all subjects along with the graduation report.

Ordinations

1. **First Stage:** Students who complete the first stage of the institute may request ordination from their parish priest. After consultation and evaluation of the candidate, a recommendation letter is submitted to His Excellency for the conferral of the **Reader Diaconate (Shamas Qari')**.
2. **Third Stage:** Students who complete the third stage of the institute and obtain the graduation certificate may request ordination from their parish priest. After consultation and evaluation of the candidate, a recommendation letter is submitted to His Excellency for the conferral of the **subdeaconate (Shamas Resaely)**.

Table 1: Distribution of Study Subjects According to Hours and Lecturers

Subject Code	Course Title	Study Hours	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	Course Lecturer
Lit 1	Liturgical Introductions	12	12	--	--	Fr. Thair Sheikh
Lit 2	Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the Chaldean Church's Liturgy	12	12	--	--	His Excellency Bishop Mar Amel Nona
Lit 3	Liturgy and Canon Law	12	12	--	--	Fr. Thair Sheikh
Lit 4	History of the Chaldean Church of the East	12	--	12	--	Mrs. Sanaa Yokhana
Lit 5	Stages in the Formation of the Liturgy	12	--	--	12	His Excellency Bishop Mar Amel Nona
Lit 6	The Liturgical Year	12	12	--	--	Fr. Salim Koka
Lit 7	Theology and Canon of the Sacraments	36	12	12	12	Fr. Thair Sheikh
Lit 8	Divine Office Prayer (Şapra / Morning)	12	--	12	--	His Excellency
Lit 9	Divine Office Prayer (Ramsha / Evening)	12	--	--	12	His Excellency
Lit 10	Pastoral Practice and Its Etiquette	12	--	--	12	Fr. Thair Sheikh

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L 1	Chaldean Language	24	24	--	--	Deacon Akram Al-Hozay, Deaconess Hanaa Al-Sheikh
L 2	Grammar	12	--	12	--	Deacon Samir Zory
L 3	Literature	12	--	--	12	Fr. Maher Korial
L 4	Translation	12	--	12	12	Deacon Samir Zory
Mus 1	Music and Eastern Modes	12	12	12	12	
Mus 2	Qaleh and Shuhlopah 1	12	--	12	12	Fr. Paul Menkna, Deacon Ghanem Konaya
Mus 3	Qaleh and Shuhlopah 2	12	--	12	12	Fr. Paul Menkna, Deacon Ghanem Konaya
Mus 4	Qeryana and Epistle	12	12	12	--	Fr. Paul Menkna, Deacon Ghanem Konaya

Faculty of Mar Shamo'n Bar Sabba'e Institute

1. His Excellency Bishop Mar Amel Nona
2. Father Maher Korial
3. Father Paul Mingana
4. Father Thair Sheikh
5. Father Salim Koka
6. Deacon Ghanem Kunaya
7. Deacon Samir Zori
8. Deacon Akram Al-Houzi
9. Deaconess Hanaa Al-Sheikh
10. Mrs. Senaa Yokhana

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