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**BASRA & THE SOUTH CHALDEAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE**  
**The Virgin Mary Chaldean Cathedral**  
**Basra Centre**  
**1930-2019**



The cathedral today, it serves as a shelter for low-income families

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

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**[www.basrachaldean.org](http://www.basrachaldean.org)**

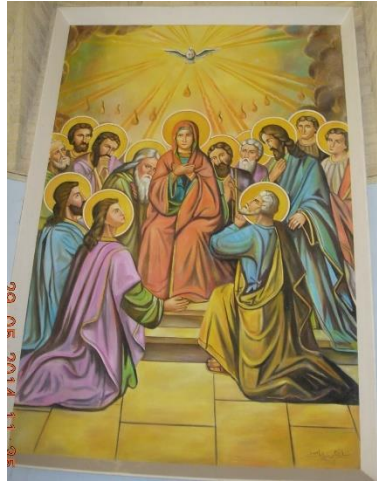
**2019**



## Dear reader:

The Basra Chaldean Archdiocese is happy to publish many newsletters about Basra churches, Christianity & old civilizations in Mesopotamia, plus other educational issues. All for free.

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## Virgin Mary

Our Lady, Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. She was betrothed to Joseph. She conceived Jesus through the Holy Spirit while still a virgin. She accompanied Joseph to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

At the end of her earthly life her body was raised directly into Heaven; this is known as the Assumption.

Mary has been venerated since early Christianity, and is considered by millions to be the most meritorious saint of the religion.

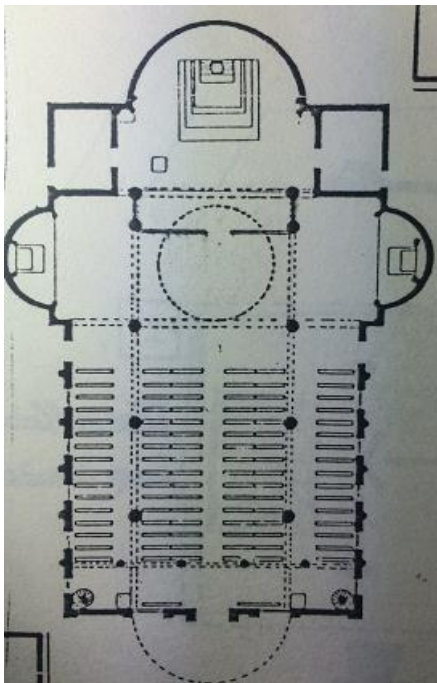
She have miraculously appeared to believers many times over the centuries. The Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic,

Anglican, and Lutheran churches believe that Mary, as mother of Jesus, is the Theotokos (Mother of God)

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### **The building of Mary the Virgin Church**

In 1907, work commenced on building a cathedral in Basra (*al- Qishla*) to replace the small church that already existed, the building was drawn up by Italians who were influenced by Gothic designs<sup>1</sup>. It was constructed as a Roman Cross (see the below design) and was twined with a church in Rome. The cathedral opened in 1934. It also acted as bishop's headquarters



from 1954 to 1971. When it closed down in 1981; the cathedral was converted into a refuge centre for penurious families with the help of Chaldean Association of Mercy<sup>2</sup>. The Chaldean nuns managed the *Al- Fayhaa* School which was built adjacent to the cathedral. Some 3877 children were baptised in this cathedral.

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<sup>1</sup> An European architecture which was very popular in Europe between 1150 and 1400.

<sup>2</sup> The Chaldean Association of Mercy was established in 1934 and still continues to serve the faithful in the Archbishopric.

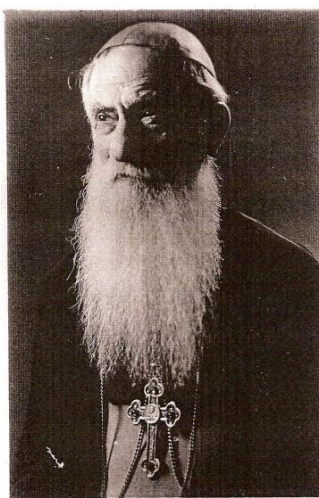
## **Bishop Hanna Nisan (1936)**

He was born in Dohuk on July 25, 1880. He was ordained priest on March 18, 1905 and served in the Diocese of Basra (Mar Toma Church until 1902 according to the Diocese records). He was ordained Archbishop for Sna in Iran on January 6, 1915. He served in Basra in 1919 and between 1934 to 1938. Some source mentions that he was a Bishop for Zakho in 1937. He died on October 30, 1956(50).



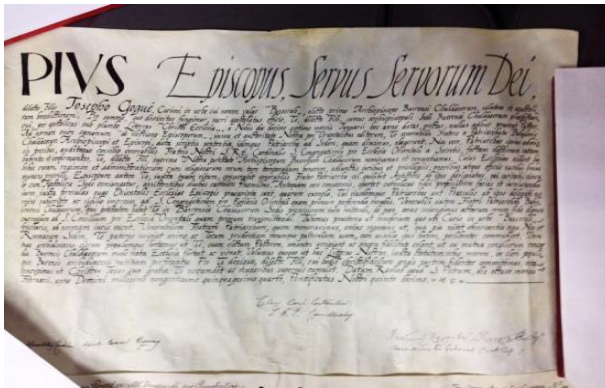
## **Bishop Yousif Gouge**

He was born on October 25, 1886 in Siirt. In 1904, he enrolled at Saint John seminary in Mosul and later, he left to study in Rome to specialise in philosophy. In 1912, he was ordained priest and he taught at the Chaldean Clerical seminary (Mosul). In 1923(or 1925 according to Al-Noor magazine), he was transferred to the Mar Toma Church in Basra. He established Babel Elementary School in Basra, but it closed down in 1948, because of Second World War. He also set up a printing House in Basra naming it the Eastern Print Press; he printed many books and collected many historical documents. He



established an orphanage in Basra by, with the help of some Basra notables, which housed 52 orphans. He continued to work at the orphanage for many years until the government took control of it. In 1952, he was ordained Bishop for the Chaldean Diocese of Basra and the South by patriarch Paulos Shiekho. He joined the Diocese on June 13, 1953. He died on January 15, 1971 and buried at This Cathedral in front of the Altar.

He was passionate about education and some his works are: The Aramaic Language, Selected Speeches by Patriarch Aphram II Rahmani some of his writings are: Selected liturgy, the Catholic Church and the freemasons, Devotion to Saint Joseph, Anbar Diocese, Selected Dialections( part one and part two)<sup>3</sup>.



Papal exoneration in 1954 decreeing the church of Mary the Virgin and changed into Cathedral

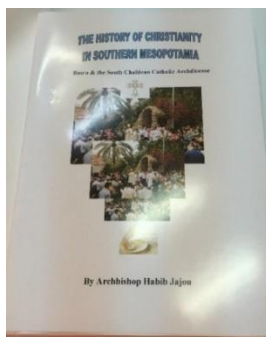
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<sup>3</sup> He prepared his burial place years before his death and he tried it by himself at the Chaldean Episcopo of Basra( church of the Virgin Mary),



For more information read the  
Archdiocese's Book: *The History of  
Christianity in southern Mesopotamia*

*Please pray to the Church in Iraq*



A view of the Cathedral



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