

## IN MEMORIAM

# MAR RAPHAEL BIDAVID (1922-2003)

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- [1] On the morning of July 7, 2003, Mar Raphael Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Church passed away in Beirut, Lebanon. The 81-year old Patriarch had been suffering for a few months from an acute health problem. The news of his death was first announced to the Syriac studies community two days later during the opening session of the North American Syriac Symposium in Princeton, NJ. The gathered scholars recalled Mar Raphael's various scholarly contributions.
- [2] Raphael Yousif Warda was born on April 17, 1922 in Mosul, Iraq. His parents enrolled him at the very young age of 11 in the Chaldean seminary. Shortly thereafter, in 1936, he was sent to Rome where he studied for 10 years. He was ordained a priest in 1944 and received his doctorate in 1946. The following year Fr. Raphael went back to Iraq where he served as a priest in the Chaldean Church. In 1957, he was consecrated bishop for the Amadia district, and in 1966 he was transferred to Beirut, Lebanon.
- [3] On May 21, 1989, Mar Raphael succeeded Mar Paulos Chekho II to the Patriarchate of the Chaldean Church, and received the Pallium from Pope John Paul II on November 9 of the same year. Mar Raphael was instrumental in the ecumenical movement, especially with relations with the Assyrian Church of the East. During his Patriarchate, he established Babylon College which became an instrumental educational institution for the Chaldean Church.
- [4] Mar Raphael has been succeeded by Mar Emmanuel Delly at a Synod of the Chaldean bishops in the Vatican on December 2-3, 2003.