

# St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Greater Washington



## St. Thomas Mirror



**June**

**2014**

**Day of Pentecost**



## Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved ones in Christ Jesus,

The word 'Pentecost' comes from the Greek; it simply means 'fiftieth'. The Feast of Holy Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. It is celebrated each year on the fiftieth day after Easter and ten days after the Feast of the Ascension of Christ. In Acts 2:1-4, we are told that the Apostles of our Lord were gathered together in one place. Suddenly, a sound came from heaven like a rushing wind, filling the entire house where they were sitting. Then, tongues of fire appeared, and one sat upon each one of Apostles. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as directed by the Spirit.

What does Pentecost mean for you and me? It is the birth of the church, the birth of Christ in you and me and in all who call on his name. It is the day on which the first believers came alive in their faith, the day when the Rock upon which Christ planted his church began to support and uphold an incredible new life. The followers of Jesus are given the ability to speak the languages of all those who are assembled in the city and beyond. God grants that we might understand one another and that we might understand the good news in just the way we need to hear it.

The Spirit has been and is being poured out upon us. The gift of God is just below the surface in our minds and hearts. The promise of the Holy Spirit is for all people who receive the call to repentance. It's a New Day of Restoration! God is Restoring the Power of the Spirit to the Church! Let the Holy Spirit help you to Worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

It is with great sorrow that we heard the news of HH Baselios Marthoma Didymus I, affectionately known as Valiya Bava Thirumeni, passed on to His Heavenly abode On May 26th 2014 in Kerala. I express my deepest condolence on the demise of His Holiness and we can pray to God the Almighty to grant him repose and that his memory will be eternal.

Yours in His Service

Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson C. John Chirathalackal

### Food Roster

06/01/2014 - Issac K. John  
06/08/2014 - Rajan Varghese  
06/15/2014 - K. Yohannan  
06/22/2014 - Varghese Kurien  
06/29/2014 - George Varghese

### Future Dates to remember

- Church Picnic Saturday, July 26th  
10:00 AM – 4:30 PM .  
Black Hill Regional Park  
Shelter J  
20930 Lake Ridge Drive, Boyds,  
MD 20841
- OVBS August 14, 15 & 16. Venue  
our Church.

### Dates to remember

06/01/2014 - Sunday before Pentecost & Sunday of the Monks  
06/08/2014 - Pentecost, Fiftieth day after Easter & Sunday School Day  
06/15/2014 - First Sunday after Pentecost  
06/22/2014 - Second Sunday after Pentecost  
06/28/2014 - Monthly Prayer Meeting  
06/29/2014 - Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul

### \*\*\*\*\* Centralized Exams for Sunday School \*\*\*\*\*

12th Grade CE - 06/01/2014  
8th and 5th Grade CE - 06/29/2014  
TTC exam - 06/29/2014

\*\*\* Venue our Church

## June 2014 Worship Schedules

### SATURDAY

**06/07/2014**

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Evening Prayer & Song Practice

**06/14/2014**

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Evening Prayer & Song Practice

**06/21/2014**

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Evening Prayer & Song Practice

**06/28/2014**

Monthly Prayer Meeting

6:00 - 8:30 PM

Mr. T.P Johny & Leemol

502 Firestone Drive,

Silver Spring, MD 20905

(H) 301-421-9144

johny\_pathrose@msn.com , lemolljohny@yahoo.com

### SUNDAY

**06/01/2014 – Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. George V. Thomas  
[Leviticus 25:1-13, Joshua 1:5-9 & Isaiah 44:23-28]

Epistle Reading: Alex Johny & Ajesh John  
[Acts 21:7-9 & I Corinthians 7:1-2, 25-34 and 9:1-10]

**06/08/2014 – English**

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading : Jacob Benny, Teena & Nidhi  
[Numbers 11:16-35, I Samuel 10:9-12,  
& II Kings 2:14-17,12:1-27]

Epistle Reading: Steve Sam & Bennet Thomas  
[Acts 2:1-13 & Galatians 5:16-26]

#### *Pentecost Service (Malayalam)*

##### *Service of the First kneeling*

Genesis 11:1-9, II Kings 2:14-17,  
Acts 19:1-7 & I Corinthians 14:20-25  
St.John 14:1-17

##### *Service of the Second Kneeling*

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Joel 2:25-32,  
Acts 10:34-48, I Corinthians 12:12-27  
St.John 14:25-31

##### *Service of the Third Kneeling*

Judges 13:24-14:7, Ezekiel 47:1-12, Isaiah 47:1-1,  
Acts 2:1-21 & I Corinthians 14:20-33  
St.John 16:1-15

**06/15/2014 – Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. Eapen Varghese  
[Genesis 41:38-40, Exodus 12:31-40, Joshua 5:9-12 & Jeremiah  
29:10-16]

Epistle Reading: Kevin Shibu & Stephen Sam  
[Acts 17:10-15 & II & Corinthians 5:14-6:10]

**06/22/2014 – English**

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading : Alka, Shareena & Angeline  
[Leviticus 19:1-8, II Samuel 5:1-10 & Daniel 6:25-28]

Epistle Reading: Alex Johny & Alex Johnson  
[Acts 4:23-31 & Ephesians 2:11-22]

**06/29/2014– Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. George Daniel  
[Genesis 42:18-25, Jeremiah 3:1-5 & Daniel 3:21-23]

Epistle Reading: Bennet Thomas & Stephen Sam  
[Acts 13:26-39 & Galatians 6:10-18]

### MMVS Announcements

- 06/01/2014 - Bible study 1 Thessalonians 3 by  
Mrs. Susamma Johnson ( Kochamma)  
06/08/2014 - Mrs. Leemol Johny  
06/15/2014 - Bible study 1 Thessalonians 4 by  
Mrs. Mini John  
06/21/2014 - Mrs. Mini John  
06/29/2014 - Bible study 1 Thessalonians 1-4  
Revision Mrs. Leemol Johny

### Sunday School Final Exam Announcements

- 12th Grade CE - 06/01/2014  
8th and 5th Grade CE - 06/29/2014  
TTC exam - 06/29/2014  
All other Grades - 06/22/2014

### Bala Balika Samajam Announcements

**06/29/2014**

- Story Telling - Jonathan Varghese  
Speech - Alka Jays  
Solo Song - (English) Joshua Thomas  
Bible Reading - Akash Palathra and Melvin Lukose

### Men's Forum & Focus Announcements

#### Bible Class by:

- 06/01/2014 - Eapen Varghese  
06/08/2014 - Eapen Varghese  
06/15/2014 - Issac K. John  
06/22/2014 - Eapen Varghese  
06/29/2014 - Eapen Varghese

## Member's Corner

### *Our Worship and our Faith*

The celebration of Holy Liturgy-the sacrament of sacraments-is a unique event in the life of the Orthodox Church. The Holy Liturgy is the commemoration of our Lord's incarnation, ministry, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection and second coming based upon historical facts, and it connects with what is going on in the inward and heavenly sphere. This celebration helps the faithful to have experiences beyond time and space limitations and are assured of the call to deification-thesis. The liturgy is the time of celebration in which the faithful partake in the great events of the life of our Lord along with the company of great and many Saints. The liturgy is the time to receive blessing, peace, grace and to develop the spirit of sharing with others. Prayers and praises in the Holy Liturgy are used in both poems and prose, so that people can fully take part in the whole worship whole heartedly and in unison. The role of the congregation in the Holy Eucharist of the Malankara Orthodox Church is so vital, that we can say that, the whole church celebrates the Holy Eucharist under the leadership of the priest or bishop. According to the teachings of the church, we cannot have live without the Holy Eucharist. "Jesus said to them; I am telling you the truth; if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him to life on the last day." John 6:53-54)The Eucharist worship is one through which the worshipper attains deeper and richer state of experiencing Christ than what is obtained through any other form of worship

#### **Does your church practice "Open Communion?"**

In the strictest sense the Communion of the Orthodox Church is open to all repentant believers. That means we are glad to receive new members in the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox concept of "Communion" is totally holistic, and radically different from that of most other Christian groups. We do not separate the idea of "Holy Communion" from "Being in Communion," "Full Communion," "Inter-Communion" and total "Communion in the Faith."

In the Orthodox Church therefore, to receive Holy Communion, or any other Sacrament (Mystery), is taken to be a declaration of total commitment to the Orthodox Faith. While we warmly welcome visitors to our services, it is understood that only those communicant members of the Orthodox Church who are prepared by confession and fasting will approach the Holy Mysteries

#### **Holy Eucharist**

We believe that in a mysterious way the bread becomes the body and wine becomes the blood of our Lord. It was after blessing the bread and wine that our Lord said, "This is my body" and "This is my blood". Just as our Lord was perfect God and perfect man, without any change in the godhood and man-hood, after the blessing, the bread is, both bread and the body of our Lord. Also after blessing, the wine is both wine and blood of our Lord. Protestant churches say that the bread and wine are only the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord

Eastern churches give primary importance to worship. The heart beats of the church are manifested in worship. The Holy Eucharist is the crown of all other worships. It is performed 'in spirit and in truth' (John. 4:24).f) The term "Qurbana" is a derivated form of "Qurbono". Following the tradition of the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Church, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church uses the Syriac term "Ourbono" which means sacrifice or offering (that which is offered to God). Through the sacrifice of our Lord, we offer ourselves and the whole universe as a sacrifice to the heavenly Father.. This holy sacrifice was instituted and entrusted with His disciples, by our Lord. The church celebrates this holy sacrifice as the continuation of the sacrifice on Calvary. Man, made as little less than God and crowned with glory and honor, (Ps. 8:5) is basically a worshipping creature. The infirmities and gratitude of the creation, bring man to the creator. He stands with a humble heart, bowed head and eyes yearning for God's vision, before the Almighty God who is the Creator and Sustainer of all. Man often enjoys fellowship with God in silence also reminding us of the verse "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).



Passover was the memorial of the flight of the Israelites from Egypt. Moreover, the blood of the Passover lamb was smeared on the two door posts and lintel of the houses, to allow the inhabitants to escape from the plague of destruction (Ex. 12:13). The eternal sacrifice of our Lord marked the end of the bloody sacrifice. This was the end of the Jewish Passover and the beginning of the Christian Passover also. When "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29) was sacrificed, the new Passover was established. The bread used by our Lord for the institution of the Eucharist was leavened bread ("lahmo" - in Syriac and "artos" - in Greek). Hence the Orthodox Churches use leavened bread for Holy Eucharist from the very early days. There is a tradition that, a part of the dough used for making the bread was set apart and kept as leaven when the bread was made for the Last Supper. This leaven is mixed with the dough when the bread is made for the next Eucharist. This tradition is continued even today.

"Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19) was the command of our Lord who instituted Holy Eucharist. We read in the book of Acts, how Holy Eucharist was celebrated in the early church (Act. 2:42,46; 20:7). Orthodox Churches, unlike Protestant Churches, give great importance to Holy Eucharist. Holy Eucharist is celebrated on all Sundays, and other feast days except Good Friday. All the other sacraments are perfected by Holy Eucharist. eg. Baptism, Confession, Ordination, Marriage and Anointing of the sick. Also, consecration of the church and Holy Myron are perfected by Holy Eucharist. The church teaches that all who participate in the service should receive Holy Communion. The hymns and prayers in the Holy Eucharist bear witness to this. There is no teaching in the Orthodox Church that there need not be Holy Eucharist when there is none to receive Holy Communion. Administering the Ministry of the Word alone, instead of Holy Eucharist is against Orthodox tradition.

"In remembrance of me" Holy Eucharist is not a mere intellectual calling back to memory of something that happened in the past. It is the calling back to experience in the present tense that which happened in the past. Through worship, and participation in the body and blood of our Lord, we bring to our present experience, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His saving acts. We become one with our Lord in Holy Eucharist. The whole account of our Lord's incarnation is brought to remembrance in every Holy Eucharist. In a prayer of the preparatory service of the Holy Eucharist, it is said "we celebrate the memorial of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, and all His saving acts on our behalf, especially the annunciation by the angel, His glorious conception, His bodily birth, His baptism in the River Jordan, His fasting for forty days, His atoning passion, His crucifixion, His life-giving death, His burial in honor, His glorious resurrection, His ascension into heaven and His sitting on the right-hand side of the Father". (Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Mar Julius Press, Pampakuda - 1986,~Page - 272).

#### Reference:

St.Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church, London.



H.H. Baselios Marthoma Didymus I

H.H. Baselios Marthoma Didymus I, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, passed away at Parumala Hospital, Pathanamthitta, on Monday 26th 2014 following prolonged illness. He was 93. Valiya Bava Thirumeni was consecrated as bishop on August 24, 1966. He was the seventh Catholicos and also the 20th Malankara Metropolitan of the Church. The funeral took place on Wednesday 28th at 11.00 am in the Pathanapuram Mount Tabor Dayara under the priestly supervision of H.H. Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II.

Valiya Bava Thirumeni stepped down as the head of the Kerala-based Church in 2010 on the grounds of poor health, but continued to be the supreme spiritual head of the community. He was born to Ittyavira Thomas and Sosamma in Tiruvalla on October 29, 1921. He joined the Tabor Dayara in 1939 as the disciple of Thoma Mar Dionysius, Metropolitan of Niranam, where he completed his High School education. Valiya Bava Thirumeni completed his training for priesthood under the guidance of Thoma Mar Dionysius and Baselios Augen, Catholicos of the East. Geevarghese II, Catholicos of the East ordained him to the order of Korooyo on March 11, 1942, diaconate on May 22, 1947, and priesthood on January 25, 1950.

In addition to theological studies, he also took a Masters Degree in English literature and had taught in schools and colleges before raised as a Metropolitan of the church. He took over as the supreme head of the church in 2005 and was elevated as Catholicos of the East.

## ***Orthodox Spirituality***

### **Introduction**

Spirituality may be defined as the life in and with the Holy Spirit. It is an ascetic and pious struggle against sin through repentance, prayer, fasting and participation in the sacramental life of the Church. St. Paul Says: "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.... Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like..... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. And those who have are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16-25). Orthodoxy has preferred always to use the terms 'life in Christ', 'life in Spirit', 'the spiritual life', and the 'life in God' to describe the life of the Christian in union with God, regardless of the level of this life. See Galatians 3:28; 3:20; 2 Corinthians 4: 11; 1 Corinthians 7: 8; Romans 8: 15; Ephesians 3: 16-17; Colossians 3:3; John 14: 23; 1 John 3:24 etc.

### **What is Orthodox Spirituality and what is its Goal?**

Orthodox Spirituality presents the process of a Christian's progress on the road to perfection in Christ, by the cleansing of passions and the winning of the virtues, a process which takes place in a certain order. Spirituality describes the manner in which the Christians can go forward from the cleansing of one passion, to the cleansing of another, and the same to the acquiring of the different virtues. Thus a certain level of perfection is reached and culminates in love. This is a state that represents the cleansing of all passions and the winning of all the virtues. As man/woman climbs toward this peak, he/she simultaneously moves toward union with Christ and the knowledge of Him by experience, which also means his/her deification.

The goal of Orthodox Spirituality is the perfection of the believer by his/her union with God in Christ. But as God is unending, the goal of our union with Him, or our perfection, has no point from which we can no longer progress. So all the Eastern Fathers say that perfection is unlimited. Thus our perfection is not only the goal but also an unending process. In this process two great steps can be distinguished: first, the moving ahead toward perfection through purification from the passions and the acquiring of the virtues and secondly a life progressively moving ahead in the union with God. At this point, man's work is replaced by God's. Man contributes by opening himself up receptively to an ever-greater filling with the life of God.

In short, we may narrate the following features of Orthodox Spirituality:

The culminating state of the spiritual life is a union of the soul with God, lived or experienced.

This union is realized by the working of the Holy Spirit, but until it is reached, man is involved in a prolonged effort of purification

It takes place when man reaches the 'likeness of God'. It is at the same time knowledge and love.

Among other things, the effect of this union consists of a considerable intensification of spiritual energies in man, accompanied by all kinds of charisma.

The Orthodox uses the word 'deification' or participation in the divinity to characterize the union with God. It, however, does not mean that here there is a pantheistic identification of man with God. But it asserts with courage the possibility of a 'union' of man with God, of a direct 'vision' of Him, of a 'participation' in Him, through grace.

Reference:

Fr. Dr. M. John Panicker, Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam