

# St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Greater Washington



EDITION : 7

SEPTEMBER 2014

## *St. Thomas Mirror*

### **GOLDEN JUBILEE INAUGURATION**



## Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved ones in Christ Jesus,

We are blessed to have the Supreme Head and Catholicose of the Holy Church and the Apostolic Successor to the Throne of St. Thomas **His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II 'Bava Thirumeni** to inaugurate the Jubilee along with our Diocesan Metropolitan **HG Zacharias Mar Nicholovas Thirumeni** on September 28th . I hope and pray that each and every one of you will prepare and participate in the Holy Qurbana and thereafter for the Public meeting. Let us thank Almighty God, for these fifty years of our existence, we have worshiped and witnessed as Blessed Community in Washington DC area.

**What is Jubilee?** In Judaism and Christianity, the concept of Jubilee is a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon. In the Biblical Book of Leviticus, a Jubilee year is mentioned to occur every fiftieth year, in which slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven and the mercies of God would be particularly manifested. It was a year of cancelling all debts and wrongs. Lev 25:10 'And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family'. If you read the entire chapter of Lev. 25 you will see all that is covered.

**It was a year of complete freedom from all debts and all the possessions returned to them.** In Isaiah , it is prophesied of Jesus that he would be our Jubilee (Isa 61:1-11). In Luke 4:18 – 21 we see that during Jesus' public ministry in Nazareth, He was given the scroll of prophet Isaiah to read in the Synagogue on a Sabbath day. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord'.

**The Holy Spirit is here to open blind eyes to the truth of the Word of God.** He preached the acceptable year of the Lord. When is the Acceptable year of the Lord? Now! Now we have Jubilee. Now we have the freedom! We just need to accept it and live in the freedom that Jesus has possessed for us, no longer in bondage to the world nor to the worldly system.

May the peace, love and joy of our Lord be with you all!

**Yours in Christ,**

Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson C. John Chirathalackal

### Men's Forum & Focus Announcements

09/14/2014 - Visiting the Sick  
09/21/2014 - General Class by K. Yohannan

### Food Roster

09/07//2014 - Onam celebration  
09/14/2014 - \*\*\*\*\* Please sign up  
09/21/2014 - Johnson T. Varghese  
09/28/2014 - Jubilee

### MMVS Announcements

09/07/14 - Song Practice by Mercy Thomas & Mini John  
09/14/14 - Bible study by Jessy Alexander  
09/21/14 - Song Practice by Mercy Thomas & Mini John

### Dates to remember

- Harvest festival and Onam celebration on 09/07/2014  
- The Festival of the Holy Cross on 09/14/2014  
- Jubilee Inauguration 09/28/2014.

# September 2014 Worship Schedules

## SATURDAY

**09/06/2014**

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Evening Prayer & Song Practice

**09/13/2014**

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Evening Prayer & Song Practice

**09/20/2014**

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Evening Prayer & Jubilee inauguration preparation

**09/27/2014**

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Evening Prayer & Jubilee inauguration preparation



## Members celebrating birthday in September

Melvin Lukose	9/1
Elizabeth Eldo	9/2
Avishai Jacob	9/4
Rohan George	9/5
Anand Abraham	9/7
Annu Suresh	9/9
Amy Abraham	9/10
K Yohannan	9/11
Sini Varghese	9/13
Robin Biju Lukose	9/13
Nitha Mary George	9/14
Susan Varghese	9/15
Devi Alphonsa George	9/15
Faith James	9/17
Hope James	9/17
Anju Johnson	9/18
Jobin Johnson	9/19
Reena Palathra	9/22
Roshny Thomas	9/22
Anish John	9/24
Denny Thomas	9/25
Gigi R. Mathew	9/25
Thomas Varghese	9/25
Alex Johnson	9/26
Preethy Kuriakose	9/27

## SUNDAY

**09/07/2014 – Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading family: Mathew C. Paul & Family  
[Exodus 3:1-6, 11-14, Job 1:1-5 & Isaiah 1:15-20]  
Epistle Reading: Kevin Shibu & Bennet Thomas  
[I Peter 2:1-5 & I Corinthians 3:16-23]

**09/14/2014 – English**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading : Roshini Thomas, Sneha Abraham & Avishai Jacob  
[Numbers 21:4-9, I Samuel 17:37-53 & Jeremiah 32:36-41]  
Epistle Reading: Alex Johnson & Steve Sam  
[Acts 13:26-39 & Galatians 2:17-3:14]

**09/21/2014 – Malayalam**

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading family: Oomman Koshy & Family  
[Psalms 34, Genesis 42:1-28 & Isaiah 1:10-20]  
Epistle Reading: Alex Johny & Stephen Sam  
[Acts 3:21-26 & I Corinthians 2:10-16]

**09/28/2014 – Special Malayalam Service**

7:45 am - 2:00 pm.  
O.T. Bible Reading  
[Genesis 42:9-17, I Kings 3:5-9, Great Wisdom 6:1-9, Isaiah 48:12-16]  
Epistle Reading  
[Acts 5:17-32 & I Corinthians 2:14-3:9]

\*\*\*\* If any of your family member's anniversary/ birthday falls on this month and doesn't see under birthday/ anniversary column; please login to our church website and update \*\*\*\*



## Members celebrating wedding anniversary in September

Shine Jacob & Neena Jacob	9/7
Thomas Varghese & Nirmala Thomas	9/9
Eapen Varghese & Jemini Eapen	9/11
Fr. Dr. Johnson John & Susamma Johnson	9/16
Benny Job & Reena Benny	9/20
James John & Shiji James	9/24

## Member's Corner

### Feast of the Holy Cross (Slibo)



Each year on September 14, Orthodox Church celebrates the “Feast of the Holy Cross” (Slibo) and this is one of the greatest feasts of the Church calendar year, and one which has an important historical background. The Church commemorates the discovery of the Holy Cross, the cross on which Christ was crucified. Queen Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine on this day that ordered the Cross to be dug from under the rubble of Golgotha in the year 326 A.D. According to tradition, three crosses were found on the spot. The three crosses were taken to a woman who was near death; when she touched the True Cross, she was healed, in another case, the body of a dead man was brought to the place where the three crosses were found and laid upon each cross and the True Cross restored the dead man to life and they assumed that the other two crosses were of the two thieves. Emperor Constantine in celebration of the discovery of the true cross, ordered the construction of churches at this site, those churches were dedicated on September 13 and 14 of AD 335, and shortly thereafter the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross began to be celebrated on September 14th.

Cross is the sign of victory, salvation and redemption of mankind. Through this cross, Jesus has won for us the victory over eternal death and He came to pay a debt that he did not owe, thus we owe certain responsibilities. Jesus said “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” To follow Christ we must take up His cross, follow Him and become obedient until death, even if it means death on the cross. We make the Sign of the Cross before prayer which helps to fix our minds and hearts to God ,during trials and temptations our strength and protection is the Sign of the Cross. At Baptism we are sealed with the Sign of the Cross, signifying the fullness of redemption of debts and sins and that we belong to Christ. Let us look to the cross frequently, and realize that when we make the Sign of the Cross we give our entire self to God - mind, body and spirit. Let's remember as we read in 1 Corinthians 1:18 - “The message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”.

**By Nirmala Thomas**



## Jubilee Message

As we are merely weeks away from celebrating the advent of the Golden Jubilee of our church, we must not forget those humble roots that we stand on. There isn't a greater time than this to remember those who dreamt of a glorious tomorrow and planted their footprints for the benefit of future generations; there isn't a greater time than this to recognize those who identified said footprints and laid out the path for all of us to follow; therefore, let us do just that. Now is also the perfect time to accept that not many of us can claim to be architects to the grandeur of this community. We are nothing but construction workers, building on a foundation that has long been built on by our forefathers. If we must promote any virtue during these times, it is the virtue of humility.

Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that Jubilee is more than an event that will arrive tomorrow and end the day after. Jubilee marks and honors the end of an era; consequently, Jubilee also celebrates the genesis of another. The true message of Jubilee holds much deeper meanings than we can perceive; one of the many mind-blowing meanings of Jubilee will be interpreted and explained further into this article. Let us shift our minds to the origins of Jubilee: completion of the "fiftieth year" held much more importance in the olden days than it does today. Jubilees have been honored with utmost sanctity in those times as their fulfillment were a direct commandment from the Lord to the His people. When God led the Israelites into the "Promised Land" of Canaan, Joshua, divided the land among all the families of Israel. For the sake of ensuring order among the budding community of Israelites, God gifted them with the Law of Jubilee. Almost all "Laws" of the Lord are thoroughly recorded in the book of Leviticus; the content is directed to teach an uncivilized population, namely the Israelites, the basics of holy living. The 'Law of the Jubilee' is recorded in Leviticus 25:8-13: "You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years. Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the Day of Atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the after growth, or harvest the unpruned vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces. In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property." Because all the land belongs to God, no Israelite was allowed to sell his land permanently. All land sales were temporary; these sales are more familiar to us as "leases". If the land was sold under any circumstance, the Israelite always got it back in the Year of the Jubilee. Lev. 25:23-28 explicitly conveys this extension to the Law of Jubilee: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land. If anyone of your kin falls into difficulty and sells a piece of property, then the next of kin shall come and redeem what the relative has sold...But if there are not sufficient means to recover it, what was sold shall remain with the purchaser until the year of jubilee; in the jubilee it shall be released, and the property shall be returned." At the Jubilee, the land would revert back to the original Israelite owner, and any remaining debts were to be cancelled. Apart from what is plainly stated in this passage, one can also discern that the "property" in question can only be redeemed by the owner himself or by a relative; friends, acquaintances, leaders etc. were exempt from this clause according to the 'Law of Jubilee.'

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The same held true if a man had to sell himself into slavery. Lev 25:47-55 states the clause for slaves: "If resident [strangers] among you prosper, and if any of your kin fall into difficulty with one of them and sell themselves to a [stranger], or to a branch of the [stranger's] family, after they have sold themselves they shall have the right of redemption; one of their brothers may redeem them, or their uncle or their uncle's son may redeem them, or anyone of their family who is of their own flesh may redeem them; or if they prosper they may redeem themselves. They shall compute with the purchaser the total from the year when they sold themselves to the [stranger] until the jubilee year... And if they have not been redeemed...they and their children with them shall go free in the jubilee year. For to Me the people of Israel are servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

One might wonder: what is the significance of a millennia old Law in our lives or even in the times of Jesus. Brethren, the previously explained Law of Jubilee is the law that Jesus came to perform so flawlessly! Just as Jesus fulfilled prophecy after prophecy according to His Father's command, He also observed the Law of Jubilee in the redemption of humanity. Kindly allow a further explanation: Jesus had to come as a "man" in order to be our "relative" which gave Him the right to redeem us according to the Law of Jubilee. Our "relative", Jesus, bought back all that was "sold" to Satan during the fall of humanity, that is, when Adam sinned. In order to have the right of redemption for all mankind, Jesus had to be less than a heavenly ruler or heavenly acquaintance; He had to be born of Mary, born of flesh and blood, as we read in Hebrews 2:11-17: "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family...Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people." We can see that Jesus had to be born of flesh and blood in order to have the lawful right of redemption of the whole world. He became our brother in order to redeem every man and his family, to give them their rightful inheritance which is eternal life in the "Promised Land", an inheritance that could never be taken away from anyone permanently. Jesus was born of flesh and blood in order to have the lawful right to redeem every person from the bondage of Satan, the bondage of sin, to buy them back with His own blood. All of these previous explanations are nothing but one branch to the timeless episodes known to us as Jubilees. Jubilees' significance in Christianity is not limited to a simple event that passes. As we delve deeper into the origins of Jubilee and its importance in our faith, as accounted by our church fathers, we can find numerous examples of Jubilee celebrations within the Bible itself; furthermore, theologians have given us plentiful affiliations between the faith we practice and the practice of Jubilee; finally, historians have even recorded countless time-stamps to the miraculous events of Jubilee. My brethren, this article's sole purpose is to help you realize that what we are looking forward to in the next few weeks, is not to be taken lightly. Whether it be the fiftieth fulfillment of the Israelite nation, or the fiftieth fulfillment of the Indian Orthodox community, Jubilee is no earthly matter. Jubilee is divine. Jubilee is spiritual. Thus, let us welcome this milestone in our Christendom with absolute humility, absolute fidelity, and last but not the least, absolute unity. May God bless us all.

**By Alex Johnson**

