

**St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church,  
Greater Washington**



EDITION : 12

FEBRUARY 2015

***St. Thomas  
Mirror***

**Great Lent Starts**



## Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved ones in Christ,

Church is inviting us into another Great Lenten season this month. As you all know, Great lent starts after 18 days of 'Three days lent' or what many people today call 'Jonah's fast'...actually it should be remembered as 'Nineveh's fast' instead because we don't just commemorate the fasting of Jonah in the belly of the fish, but we should also remember the repentance of the people of Nineveh. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh that they had 40 days until God would overthrow the city. The people repented in those 40 days after listening to Jonah and He spared the city. Great Lent is the longest and strictest fasting season of the liturgical year of the church. Eastern Orthodox Church calls her members to take this 50 days lent with utmost respect and purity. Mere act of giving up rich food is not 'fast'...it should be a fast of physical as well as spiritual aspect. In physical fasting, you give up rich foods to gain a sense of discipline. In the beginning days of the lent when you give up these rich foods, you may feel physically exhausted and tired. The purpose of this is to lead us in turn to a sense of inward brokenness which in turn will bring us, to the point where we appreciate our God's words 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15: 5). Feeling hungry will make you realize the real hunger of millions of poor and homeless in this world. Mere abstinence from food and drink does not complete the real meaning of this lent, instead it should be accompanied by prayer, repentance and acts of Christian mercy. While fasting from food, let us also fast from our worldly desires. One of the greatest church father St. John Chrysostom, says 'abstinence not only from food but from sins'. 'The fast', he insists, 'should be kept not by the mouth alone but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and all the members of the body': the eye must abstain from impure sights, the ear from malicious gossip, the hands from acts of injustice.

Beloved ones, I urge all of you to take part in this great spiritual journey through which we may gain the wisdom to liberate ourselves from dependence on the things of this world and let us concentrate on the things of His Kingdom. Let us use these 50 days as a preparatory season to enter into the feast of resurrection of our Christ through fasting, repentance and showing deeds of Christian mercy to our brethren.

I personally and officially express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Thomas Varughese ( Gigy) for his dedication & commitment for editing and publishing St Thomas Mirror for 2014. Also I warmly introduce and welcome Mr.Bixa Kurian as the editor for St Thomas Mirror 2015.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson C. John Chirathalackal

### Dates to remember

02/02/2015 - Entry of our Lord into the temple (Mayaltho)  
02/03/2015 - All Departed Holy Fathers  
02/08/2015 - All Departed Faithful  
02/16/2015 - Great Lent Starts

### Men's Forum & Focus Announcements

02/01/2015 - Bible Class - St. Mathew Chapter 26  
02/08/2015 - Bible Class - St. Mathew Chapter 27  
02/15/2015 - Prayer at the residence of John C. Thomas  
02/22/2015 - General Class - Shibu Varghese

### Martha Mariyam Samajam Announcements

02/01/2015 - Class - Jessy Johnson  
02/08/2015 - Class - Mini John  
02/15/2015 - Class - Jessy Johnson  
02/22/2015 - Class - Mini John

### G.R.O.W. 2015 One Day Conference

The G.R.O.W. (God Renewing Orthodox Women) 2015 annual conference will be held on April 18, 2015 from 8:30am – 4:00pm at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. The theme of this year's conference is In God We Trust, "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him" -Psalms 62:5. The main speaker is Ms. Katrina Bitar who is a graduate of St. Vladimir's Seminary and the director of the YES! Program for FOCUS North America. The conference will also include workshops conducted and led by clergy and there will also be an opportunity to visit the seminary bookstore.

The conference is open to all women ages 13 and up (high school, college, post grad, single, married and mothers). Online registration has started, please use the following link to register for the conference: <http://tiny.cc/GROW2015Conference>. Early online registration is \$10 and same day registration will be \$15. Transportation will be provided, please register immediately in order to help us in the planning process and to reserve your seat. There will be an additional fee for transportation. If you have any questions please reach out to Sharena Daniel [sdbaron08@gmail.com](mailto:sdbaron08@gmail.com).

See Page for the flyer.



### Members celebrating birthday

Mathew Chacko	2/4
Suresh Eapen	2/4
Lali Koshy	2/7
Renjith Thomas	2/7
Luke Benny	2/9
Tintu Abraham	2/12
Sneha Abraham	2/13
Bixa Kurian Kanneth	2/14
Shiney Sam	2/17
Bijoy Thomas	2/17
Varghese Abraham	2/18
Stephen Sam	2/19
Alka Jays	2/20
Anu Abraham	2/20
Joshua Thomas	2/24
Joel Abraham	2/24
Ryan Mathew	2/26
Samma Thomas	2/26
Sajjan George	2/26
Ryan George	2/27



### Members celebrating wedding anniversary

George Varghese and Samma Varghese	2/2
Rajan Varghese and Remani Varghese	2/27

## Worship Schedules

### SERVICE

#### 02/01/2015 – Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading family: Baby Daniel Family  
[ Numbers 20:23-29, Deuteronomy 34:1-8, Isaiah 65:13-20 ]  
Epistle Reading  
[ Acts 20:26-38, I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11]

#### 02/08/2015 – English

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading : Annu Suresh, Ashley Abraham & Aswin John  
[ Genesis 49:33-50:13, Ezekiel 34:1-14, Isaiah 38:10-20 ]  
Epistle Reading  
[ St. James 3:1-12, I Corinthians 15:20-28]

#### 02/15/2015 – Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading family: V.M. Joseph Family  
[ Exodus 20:1-21, Joel 2:12-20, Isaiah 58:5-14 ]  
Epistle Reading  
[ Acts 11:19-26, Colossians 3:1-17 ]

#### 02/22/2015 – English

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.  
O.T. Bible Reading : Avishai Jacob, Bijoy Thomas & Christina Abraham  
[ Genesis 7:6-24, II Kings 5:1-14, Isaiah 33:2-9 ]  
Epistle Reading  
[ Acts 9:22-31, Romans 3:27-4:5]

\*\*\*\* 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 \*\*\*\*

THE NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE OF THE  
MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH

**G.R.O.W.**

GOD RENEWING ORTHODOX WOMEN  
YOUNG WOMEN'S MINISTRY

IN  
GOD  
WE  
TRUST

*"For God alone my soul waits in silence,  
for my hope is from him" - Psalm 62:5*



Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at  
St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary  
575 Scarsdale Road  
Yonkers, NY 10707  
8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Main Speaker:

**Ms. Katrina Bitar**

Graduate, St. Vladimir's Seminary

Director, YES! Program, FOCUS North America

**Registration: \$10**

<http://tiny.cc/GROW2015Conference>

email: [GROWministries2012@gmail.com](mailto:GROWministries2012@gmail.com)