

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



EDITION : 16

JUNE 2015

*St. Thomas
Mirror*



Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved in Christ Jesus,

We scared through the media that approximately 100 million people around the world are the victims of Christian persecution for the last five years. Christian persecution we hear in many different forms like verbal harassment, physical torture, confinement, isolation, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education, discrimination in employment, and even death which people are experiencing on a daily basis in many countries around the world. What's our role in dealing with this situation? 1 Corinthians 12:26 tells us that we are one body-when one member suffers, we all suffer. We are blessed in this country to have religious freedom, but our brethren in countries like Middle East, Syria, Egypt are suffering because of their faith in Christ.

The Bible calls us to be a light for the people in darkness. Psalm 82:3 says, "Stand up for those who are weak and for those whose fathers have died. See to it that those who are poor and those who are beaten down are treated fairly." As Christians, we are called to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ. Hebrews 13:3 says, "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."

What about the victims of these persecutions? Bible gives hope to the victims as mentioned in Sermon on Mount in Mathew Chapter 5, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you"

As Christians, we are reminded of how to treat our enemies in Bible. For example, in Romans chapter 12, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good". We have no easy answer to say why God lets His people suffer? There's always one assurance to his people that whatever the stormy situation we may be going through, our God is in control. He is able to give courage, peace and even joy to stand strong through the storm. It is important to know as Christians that we must spend time with God, to grow in Him, so we are prepared to stand strong in the face of persecution. Prayer is vital, let's keeps our brethren in our humble prayers, so that they may withstand these stormy situations with hope and courage and to be reminded that 'great is their reward in Heaven'.

May God bless us all.

Yours in Christ,

Johnson Achen

Dates to remember

06/07/2015 - Second Sunday after Pentecost

06/14/2015 - Third Sunday after Pentecost

06/21/2015 - Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

06/28/2015 - Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

06/29/2015 - Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Members celebrating birthday

Remani Varghese	- 6/3
Baby Daniel	- 6/4
Mathai Chacko	- 6/5
Sheetal Mathew	- 6/5
Bavan Vargese	- 6/6
Bennet Thomas	- 6/8
Neethu George	- 6/8
Rajan Varghese	- 6/8
Thomas Varghese	- 6/15
Merin Bixa Kanneth	- 6/17
Benny Job	- 6/18
Mariamamma Abraham	- 6/19
Jai Mehra	- 6/21
Ashley Abraham	- 6/26

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Members celebrating wedding anniversary

John Koshy and Siby Mathew	- 6/6
Sam G Mattammel and Shiney Sam	- 6/12

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

Worship Schedules

SERVICE

06/07/2015 – Sunday - Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
Old Testament Bible Reading Family :
Eapen Varghese Family
[Leviticus 19:1-8, II Samuel 5:1-10, Daniel 6:25-28]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 4:23-31, Ephesians 2:11-22]

06/14/2015 – Sunday - English

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
Old Testament Bible Reading :
Amy Abraham, Angeline Johny, Benjamin Thomas
[Genesis 42:18-25, Jeremiah 3:1-5, Daniel 3:21-23]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 13:26-39, Galatians 6:10-18]

06/21/2015 – Sunday - Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
O.T. Bible Reading Family:
George Daniel Family
[Deuteronomy 33:23-29, Psalms 15, Isaiah 65:8-12]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 6:1-7, I Corinthians 16:14-22]

06/28/2015 – Sunday - English

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
Old Testament Bible Reading:
Christina Abraham, Jacob Benny, Joel Johnson
[Exodus 23:14-19, Psalms 16, Isaiah 40:27-31]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 9:10-18, II Corinthians 5:14-20]

Men's Forum Announcements

06/07/2015 - Class - Isaac John
06/14/2015 - House Visit—No Class
06/21/2015 - Class - Varghese Kurian
06/28/2015 - Class - Fr. Johnson

MMVS Announcements

06/07/2015 - Bible Discussion
06/14/2015 - Bible Discussion
06/21/2015 - Bible Discussion
06/28/2015 - Bible Discussion

Drawings by our Sunday School Kids...



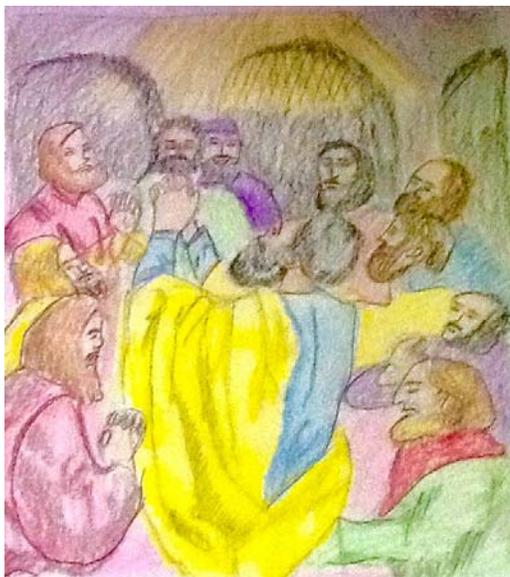
SUNDAY SCHOOL



Juan Johnson



SUNDAY SCHOOL

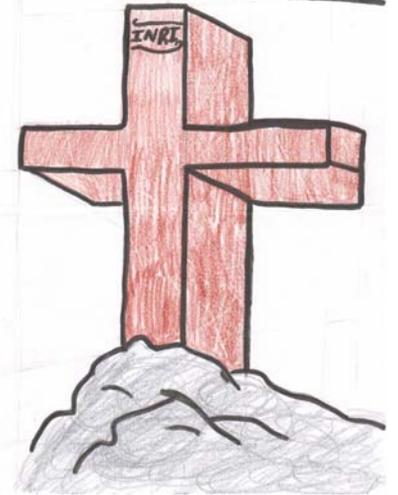


Joel Johnson

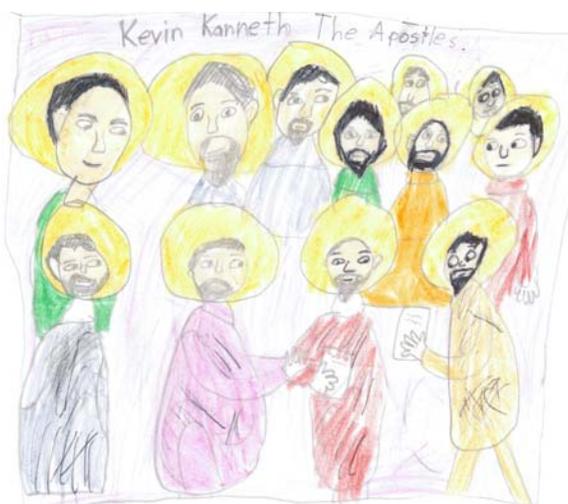


Melvin Lukose

THE HOLY CROSS



Sara Shibu



Kevin Kanneth



Merin Kanneth

Fast of the Apostles

Orthodox Christians from around the world observe five fasting seasons during the year. However, in America, the Fast of the Apostles is the least well known, but is among the oldest Christian traditions. It was first mentioned by St. Athanasius in the fourth century, and there are various other scriptures to its existence very early in the history of the Church, such as St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Leo the Great, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. The Fast of the Apostles came into practice in the Church through custom rather than law. For this reason there was no uniformity for a long time, either in its observance or its duration. However now a days, the rule is that the Fast of the Apostles starts on the second Monday after Pentecost, and ends on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. The duration of this fast varies, depending on the date of Easter.

The Fast of the Holy Apostles is not as strict as the Fasts of Pascha and the Nativity of Christ; rather it is more lenient in its duration and rules. The current rules of fasting, during the Apostles' Fast, were established first for the monks of the Monastery of the Kiev Caves by Metropolitan George of Kiev (1069-1072). These rules are still practiced today amongst most Orthodox Christians.

The Apostles' Fast is one that was actually engaged in by the Disciples of Christ following the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The apostles were people like we are. The Apostles did great work to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Church, as did their successors, the Bishops. The Apostles' Fast is therefore something which should be undertaken with an apostolic vision on our part.

For faithful Orthodox Christians, the Fast of the Apostles can be an occasion where one can reflect upon their lives and live by example of the Holy Apostles. The Fast is also an occasion to remember that in Christ, we have a unity that goes far beyond our personal opinions, likes, and dislikes. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that the Apostles themselves recognized this very early in their lives. The Apostles left behind their parents, their children, and their possessions in order to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to people who did not know Him. The Apostles are setting an example for us and what we should do in our daily lives as Christians. During the Fast of the Apostles we are reminded to pray for them all, and all the sacrifices they have endured during their lifetime.

At the conclusion of the Fast of Apostles, we celebrate Peter and Paul together on their feast day on Sunday. The icon of the Feast depicts the two men standing side-by-side, holding the Church together in their hands. This is a powerful symbol of the supernatural love for one another which is given by the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit we have agreement and new life, and we realize that God's very breath and energy dwells among us. For this reason, Orthodox Christians today can regard the Fast of the Apostles as one of the most important times of the year, a time where we can honor our Apostles, and a time where we can humble ourselves and pray for genuine love and unity in the Church around the world.

Kevin Manakkunnel

References:

myocn.net/what-is-the-fast-of-the-apostles/
www.antiochian.org/fast-holy-apostles