

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church Greater Washington



6TH
Anniversary - Est. 1965
Anniversary

13505 New Hampshire Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20904
www.st-thomas-orthodox-dc.org



Arlington

Cosmetic & Family Dentistry



1701 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 250-B, Arlington VA 22209

o o o o o o o o

JAYAMOLE
ZACHARIAH BDS, DDS



703 636 7878



703 888 0388



arlingtoncfd@gmail.com



ArlingtonCosmeticandFamilyDentistry.com

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH GREATER WASHINGTON



SUNDAY SERVICE

Morning Prayers : 8:30 AM

Sunday School : 12:00 - 1:00 PM

MP

o p m

OV

o p r



IC XC

St. Mary



St. Thomas



St. Gregorios of Parumala



St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius

LATE LAMENTED



HG Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios
First Diocesan Metropolitan
(1979 - 1993)



HG Mathews Mar Barnabas
Second Diocesan Metropolitan
(1993 - 2012)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Felicitations and Messages	10 - 29
Parish History	30 - 33
Diamond Jubilee Report	36 - 39
Article: Relevance of Religious Education in Children - Fr. Dr. M.S. Yuhanon Ramban	46 - 47
Junior Gallery	50, 66, 100
Article: വിശുദ്ധി നിറഞ്ഞ നവോത്ഥാന നായകൻ - Fr. Dr. John Thomas Karinjattil	51 - 53
Gallery: Church Construction	54
Article: Death and Life after Death - Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew	60-63
Gallery: Golden Jubilee Celebrations	64-67
Article: ഭയശൂന്യമായി സുവിഷ്കൃതമായി - Jessy Johnson	69
Article: Mary the Second Eve - Fr. Dr. Shaji P. John	76-77
Gallery: Diamond Jubilee Opening Ceremony	82-84
Article: How Important I am - Fr. Anish Isaac Mathew	85
Gallery: Church Picnic	91
Article: Who We Are? - Fr. Dr. Varghese M. Daniel	92-96
Article: Praise Praise Praise the Lord - Rebecca Cherian	103
Gallery: Overnight Camping 2024	104-105
The Transformative Encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman - Fr. Dr. Jacob Mathew	112-114
Gallery: Parish Life, Sunday School, and Senior Night 2018	115 - 119
Article: Elements of Prayer Fr. Sujit Thomas	120
Article: സംഭാഷണം - Jessy Johnson	121
Gallery: Jubilee Charity Projects	122-123
Gallery: Former Members Gathering	134-135
Gallery: Senior Night 2023	136
Gallery: Diamond Jubilee Closing Ceremony	137-141
Thank You Note - Sub-Editor	142



www.mosc.in
catholicos@mosc.in

Ph: 0481 - 2574323
2578500

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

BASELIOS MARTHOMA MATHEWS III
CATHOLICOS OF
THE APOSTOLIC THRONE OF
ST. THOMAS
AND MALANKARA METROPOLITAN



CATHOLICATE PALACE
KOTTAYAM - 686 004
KERALA, INDIA

July 31, 2024

Blessings in our Lord to the Parish Vicar, Managing Committee and all the faithful Members of Greater Washington St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church !

We are extremely happy to know that, St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church , Greater Washington in our North East American Diocese is celebrating the Diamond Jubilee , a remarkable milestone in its journey. We appreciate you all for the sacrifices and efforts you have made to preserve St. Thomas heritage and traditions during the past six decades, even in your busy life. Your resilience and devotion have played a pivotal role in not only building a physical sanctuary but, more importantly, in nurturing a spiritual haven for the faithful in this bustling metropolis.

As we reflect on the last 60 years, let us gratefully remember the Bishops, Priests, and faithful members who have contributed tirelessly to the foundation, growth and sustenance of this Lord's Temple. Their sacrifices, prayers, and labor have laid the foundation upon which the current generation stands today. The future of our Church lies in the hands of the generation that follows us. As we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee, let us remember to instill within them the values, teachings and legacy of St. Thomas heritage that have guided us. Encourage them to embrace their faith with fervor, to be steadfast in their commitment to the Church, and to carry forward the torch of spiritual enlightenment.

All milestones are occasions for evaluation and self-criticism beyond celebration. The 60th year (Diamond Jubilee) celebrations should be an opportunity to evaluate the parish's spiritual progress, compassion towards fellow beings and service to the society during the last 60 long years and prepare to aim for some noble goals. We wish all the best to the Diamond Jubilee Souvenir which is published as part of the 60th year celebrations. Appreciate those who are working for it. May God bless you all abundantly!

With Prayerful wishes!

Baselios Marthoma Mathews III





H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III
Catholicos of the
Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas and
Malankara Metropolitan



NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE OF THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
2158 ROUTE 106 NORTH • MUTTONTOWN, NEW YORK • 11791



By the Grace of God
METROPOLITAN ZACHARIAH MAR NICHOLOVOS

OL No. 30/2024

July 22, 2024

Blessings to our Vicar and faithful of Saint Thomas Indian Orthodox Church of Greater Washington!

Dearly beloved,

We take this opportunity to thank God for His blessings and mercies which has sustained the parish community for the past sixty years. We lift up in thanksgiving all of the esteemed priests who have served this parish over the past six decades, and remember our faithful who sacrificed much for the building up of this church community.

Any milestone we celebrate in the life of our parish, is an opportunity for us to truly reflect on how far God has brought US, and with a prayerful heart to discern how the Lord desires to use this body of believers in the years to come. We commend the hard work and labors of all of our faithful who toiled for the church in the past sixty years.

May these celebrations be a time to refill our lamps with the good oil from the Lord, so we hold this light high upon an lampstand for all to draw closer to the Lord.

Yours in our Lord,

Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos

Tel: (718) 470 9844

Email: Chancery@neamericandiocese.org • Website: www.neamericandiocese.org





H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos
Metropolitan of Northeast American Diocese



**MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA**

Urshlem, 3101 Hopkins Road, Beasley, TX 77417, USA
Office: (281) 403 0670 Fax: (281) 459 0814
Email: thomasmarivanios@gmail.com



Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios
Metropolitan



Email: metropolitan.dswa@gmail.com
Website: www.ds-wa.org

Blessings to the Vicar, Managing Committee members, and all the faithful of St. Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church, Washington!

Dearly beloved in Christ,

As we gather to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of our beloved parish, we reflect on the countless blessings and milestones we have achieved together over the past 60 years. This joyous occasion is a testament to the unwavering faith, dedication, and love that each member has contributed.

The Psalmist says "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1) underlines the essence of our faith and to recognize God's goodness to us over all these years. The Jubilee is a time to say thanks and also a time to acknowledge and appreciate the blessings we receive daily. We must understand and believe how kind He has been to all of us. The Church is the 'House of God' and defines the essential relationship between God and humans. We come each day to offer our sacrifices which is pleasing to the God who leads us through times of perils and sorrow and through times of joy and happiness. And as we praise God earnestly, God's Goodness, inherent in all creations, helps us move forward. The Godly goodness has blessed us throughout all these years, with our families, children, friends, and relatives. Let us always be steadfast in our faith, especially in these challenging times of uncertainty. Let us follow and reciprocate the faith of the Godly men like Abraham, David, Daniel, and also, the Apostles, and our Church Fathers who had devoted their lives to the glory of God and his works.

May this milestone inspire us to continue our journey with renewed faith and commitment, as we strive to be a beacon of God's love and grace in our community. Let us celebrate this momentous occasion with hearts full of gratitude and joy, looking forward to the many blessings yet to come. We also remember all our faithful clergy, both the living and the departed, who worked tirelessly and along with them the laity who strived hard to make this Church, the Kingdom of God on earth. We appreciate the sincere efforts of the Church in its outstanding values of mission and service to the poor and needy. Let the Church continue its mission in the world to its fullest glory.

Congratulations to all, and may God bless our parish abundantly in the years ahead. May the love of God the Father, the grace of the Only-Begotten Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Urshlem Aramana, Beasley
July 17, 2024

Metropolitan Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios

DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA





"BY THE GRACE OF GOD"

THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH THE ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF AHMEDABAD

By Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theophilos Metropolitan



Message

Glory and adoration to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, One True God!

Dearly beloved in Christ, sixty years is quite a long journey in our lives. St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Washington, D.C., has completed sixty years of witnessing Christ in the heart of the United States. I marvelously and reverently remember the past years when I was with you. Your love, kindness, generosity, and more continue to fill me with joy, even after these fourteen years. On the other hand, we solemnly recall the challenging times we faced during the construction of the church. I am profoundly thankful to God Almighty for His miraculous guidance throughout those years of recession.

Though we took lots of pain for the construction of the church, we find satisfaction in knowing that our church remains a monument on the banks of SH 650, bearing witness to and proclaiming the legacy of the Indian Orthodox Church. God has done great things for us, so let us rise up and praise the Lord for His wonderful works.

Again, my dearly beloved, it is easy to build a church building, but it is not easy to build a living church—ourselves—who witness the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Savior. It requires tremendous effort and patience in living out Christian principles. In this Jubilee year of our sixtieth anniversary, we should take time for introspection and examine our standing in the Christian life. Therefore, the Jubilee year must be a year of repentance and renewal.

May God bless you all. Yours in Christ.

St. Thomas Bishop House
Feast of the Dormition 2024

Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theophilos
Diocese of Ahmedabad

Page 1 of 1

Mob. : +91-9496591151 E-mail: geevarghesetheophilos@gmail.com
St. Thomas Bishop's House, Naroda-Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India-382330





The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

2158 ROUTE 106 • MUTTONTOWN • NEW YORK 11791



Dear Reverend Father K.O Chacko, beloved Parish Committee and cherished members of St. Thomas Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C.,

With profound joy and gratitude, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you all on the 60th anniversary of St. Thomas Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C. This milestone marks six decades of unwavering faith, dedication, and love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is truly a momentous occasion for your community.

The Psalmist writes, "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." (Psalm 126:3). Today, as we look back on the past sixty years, we see the great things the Lord has done for your parish. From humble beginnings, your church has grown into a vibrant spiritual home, a place where the faithful have gathered to worship, learn, and serve. The Lord's blessings are evident in the strong bonds of fellowship, the rich traditions upheld, and the lives transformed by the grace of God.

St. Basil the Great once said, "A church is truly the house of God when it is the home of love and unity." St. Thomas Orthodox Church has exemplified this truth through the love and unity that has bound your community together over the decades. Your church has been more than just a building; it has been a place where Christ's love is lived out daily, where the sacraments are celebrated with reverence, and where the teachings of our Holy Orthodox faith are passed on from generation to generation.

As you celebrate this significant milestone, it is also an opportunity to reflect on the mission that lies ahead. The work of the Church is never complete; it is a continuous journey of faith and service. I encourage you to carry forward the legacy of those who came before you, to continue to be a beacon of light in your community, and to deepen your commitment to Christ and His Church.

May this 60th anniversary inspire each of you to rededicate yourselves to the mission of St. Thomas Orthodox Church. Let us remember that our strength comes from the Lord, and that our true calling is to love and serve Him in all that we do.

On behalf of the Diocese, I offer my sincere thanks to the clergy, parish council, and every member of St. Thomas Orthodox Church for your dedication and hard work. May God continue to bless you abundantly, and may the years ahead be filled with even greater blessings and spiritual growth.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

In His Service

Fr. Varghese M Daniel, PhD
Diocesan Secretary

Telephone (718) 470 9844 • Fax (718) 470 9219
www.neamericandiocese.org • Chanceryt@neamericandiocese.org





Holy Episcopal Synod

MALANKARA METROPOLITANS

1653 - 1934



Marthoma I
(1653 - 1670)



Marthoma II
(1670 - 1686)



Marthoma III
(1686 - 1688)



Marthoma IV
(1688-1728)



Marthoma V
(1728 - 1765)



Marthoma VI
(1765 - 1808)



Marthoma VII
(1808 - 1809)



Marthoma VIII
(1809 - 1816)



Mar Dionysius II
(1815-1816)



Mar Dionysius III
(1818 - 1825)



Mar Dionysius IV
(1825 - 1852)



Mar Athanasius
(1852- 1863)

Mar Dionysius V
(Pulikottil)
(1865 - 1909)



Mar Dionysius VI
(Vattasseril)
(1865 - 1909)

CATHOLICOS OF THE EAST & MALANKARA METROPOLITANS



H.H. Baselios Paulos I
1st Catholicos (1912 - 1914)



H.H. Baselios Geevarghese I
2nd Catholicos (1925 - 1928)



H.H. Baselios Geevarghese II
3rd Catholicos (1929 - 1964)



H.H. Baselios Augen I
4th Catholicos (1964 - 1975)



H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews I
5th Catholicos (1975 - 1991)



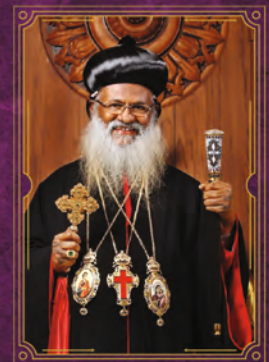
H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews II
6th Catholicos (1991 - 2005)



H.H. Baselios Marthoma Didymos I
7th Catholicos (2005 - 2010)



H.H. Baselios Marthoma Paulose II
8th Catholicos (2010 - 2021)



H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III
9th Catholicos (2021 - Present)



The State of Maryland



Governor of the State of Maryland, to

**ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
GREATER WASHINGTON
DIAMOND JUBILEE**, **Greetings:**

Be it Known: Because of your demonstration of high integrity and ability, meriting our great trust and respect, we are most pleased to award you the

Governor's Citation

*in appreciation of your outstanding services to the
citizens of this State*



Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland,
this 20th day of September
Two Thousand and twenty-four

[Signature]
Governor

[Signature]
Lt. Governor

[Signature]
Secretary of State





Jag Mohan
Minister (CA & Pers)



भारतीय राज दूतावास
वॉशिंग्टन, डी.सी.

EMBASSY OF INDIA
(CHANCERY)

2107 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
Tel: (202) 939-7000 * Fax: (202) 265-4351

(CONSULAR WING)
2536 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
Tel: (202) 939-9806 * Fax: (202) 387-6946

16 September 2024

MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church in Silver Spring (MD) on reaching the remarkable milestone of 60 years. This Diamond Jubilee is a testament to the enduring spirit and dedication of the congregation and the significant impact it has made on the community.

Since 1964, when it began services at Howard University Chapel, over the years the church has been a beacon of faith and resilience. By preserving its heritage and connecting with the wider community, the church has become a key source of social and spiritual support, especially for the Indian diaspora in the area.

As the St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church marks its 60th anniversary, we proudly reflect on the several lives it has touched and the strong connections it has built within the community. Guided by the ancient Indian principle of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*'—unity and interconnectedness—lets continue to celebrate the church's enduring legacy and its profound impact on people's lives around it. May the church continue to inspire many more, celebrating the bonds that link us to our cherished homeland. Congratulations on achieving this significant milestone of Diamond Jubilee celebration on Sept. 22, 2024.

Jai Hind,


(Jag Mohan)





CERTIFICATE OF SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION

PRESENTED TO

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church

IN RECOGNITION OF

Your Diamond Jubilee and sixty years of service to your Maryland community.
Congratulations and best wishes!

September 22, 2024

DATE


JAMIE RASKIN
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND





Congratulations

*St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church
Greater Washington*

August 22, 2024



As Mayor of Washington, DC, I am delighted to congratulate St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church Greater Washington on the occasion of the church's 60th Anniversary celebration.

Since its founding on Howard University's campus in 1964, St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church Greater Washington has been a source of encouragement, strength, and support for the metropolitan area's Indian Christian community.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, may you be inspired to even higher heights of achievement in service to the residents of the District of Columbia and beyond.

On behalf of the nearly 700,000 residents of Washington, DC, I offer heartfelt thanks for your devoted service and my best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration.

Muriel Bowser
Mayor, District of Columbia





GERALD E. CONNOLLY
11TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA
2265 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1492

FAIRFAX OFFICE:
10680 MAIN ST
SUITE 140
FAIRFAX, VA 22030

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SUBCOMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER, CYBERSECURITY,
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND
GOVERNMENT INNOVATION

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

INDO-PACIFIC

MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND CENTRAL ASIA

September 6, 2024

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church
13505 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Dear St. Thomas Community members,

I am writing to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church as you celebrate your Diamond Jubilee. Marking 60 years of dedication and service is a momentous occasion, and it is truly an honor to acknowledge your significant milestone.

Since your establishment in 1964, the St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church has been a beacon of faith, community, and cultural heritage in the Greater Washington area. Your unwavering commitment to fostering spiritual growth, nurturing community ties, and supporting charitable initiatives has made a profound impact on countless lives.

As you celebrate this remarkable achievement, I hope you take pride in the many accomplishments and the positive influence you have had over the past six decades. Your congregation's spirit of service and unity exemplifies the values we hold dear, and it is this very spirit that has strengthened and enriched the community. Congratulations on reaching this significant milestone. May the years ahead continue to bring you joy, growth, and inspiration as you continue your noble work. I look forward to witnessing the continued growth, progress, and inspirational contributions of the St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church.

Sincerely,

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress
11th District, Virginia



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER





H.H. Baselios Geevarghese I

Inserted by Suresh Eapen and Family





Message from Vicar

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

Glory be to God for His boundless grace and blessings as we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church of Greater Washington. This commemorative souvenir marks six decades of cherished memories and steadfast faith. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition. Your dedication and efforts are truly commendable.

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church holds a special place as 'the first Syrian Christian church' established in the capital of the United States. Founded in 1964 by the pioneering Malayali immigrants seeking the American dream, our church is named in honor of Saint Thomas, the Apostle to India. Over the years, it has grown from its humble beginnings into a vibrant center of communal worship and sacramental life, serving as a beacon of faith for our community.

In the early days, our worship took place in rental facilities but the vision and resolve of the community led to the acquisition of land and the construction of our own church. The new church was consecrated as a sacred space for future generations, embodying the boundless grace of God and stands as a testament to His love and provision.

Our church's story is one of resilient faith, sacrificial spirit, and collective effort. It is a living testament to the unwavering commitment of the faithful who have nurtured and sustained it's life over the years. This souvenir encapsulates the rich heritage of our church through precious writings from the Holy Fathers of the Malankara Orthodox Church, congratulatory messages from state leaders, greetings from clergy, and commemorative contributions from our beloved members. Additionally, it features photographs that have captured significant milestones in the journey of our parish.

The collaborative efforts behind this publication deserve our deepest appreciation. May Almighty God bless all those who have contributed to this endeavor, and may He grant them abundant heavenly blessings. We also extend our thanks to all those who supported us financially through advertisement sponsorships.

As you explore this souvenir, we invite you to participate sincerely in its celebration. Please forgive any imperfections, as this publication is a humble reflection of our shared history and faith.

May the intercession of Saint Thomas, the martyr who emulated the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, be with us and our land. As we reflect on the blessings that have accompanied the 25th, the 50th, and now the 60th anniversaries; let us glorify the immense grace and love of God that has sustained and guided us. All those partaking in the festivities have only one thing to glorify: the tremendous grace and blessings of God.

With great joy and humility, I present this souvenir to you, celebrating the grace of God and the enduring spirit of our community.

**Yours in Christ,
Reji Achen**





Editor's Message

My Lord and my God (John 20:28)

The St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church of Greater Washington is built in the name of St. Thomas, the patron saint of the Malankara Orthodox church. This year (2024), our church celebrates its sixtieth anniversary. For the past 60 years, our church, that has been established as part of the Malankara Orthodox church near the capital of the United States, has been a shining example to all its sister churches.

As the church celebrates its Diamond Jubilee, it would be a good time to ponder upon the biblical meaning and origin of the word "Jubilee". It is derived from the Hebrew word *Jobel* which means "ram's horn trumpet: referring to the ceremonial horn. As referenced in Leviticus Chapter 25, v 1-4, 8-10, the sound of the trumpet indicated the beginning of the jubilee year, occurring after every seventh sabbath year, thus every 50 years. The declaration of the jubilee indicated:

- Rest for the land
- Restitution of land
- Redemption of slaves

Published in this souvenir, which is released in honor of the Diamond Jubilee, are numerous wishes from renowned church fathers, bishops and other dignitaries. These include wishes from the Catholicos of the East (H. H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III), Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese (H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos), Dr. Varghese M. Daniel, Diocesan Secretary, Our former vicars, Ambassador of india, (Vinay Mohan Kwatra), Maryland governor (Wes Moore), Mayor of Washington D.C (Muriel Bowser) and several Congress men.

The Souvenir also features special messages from our church's ex-vicars, HG Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanious Metropolitan, HG. Dr. Gheevarghese Mar Theophilous Metropolitan, Fr. Dr.M.S. Yuhanon Ramban, each of whom have ascended ranks within the church, an honor most Malankara Churches cannot boast of. The souvenir also includes several articles from present and former Principles Kottayam Theological seminary and messages from our current vicar Fr. K.O. Chacko, Editorial notes and the message from sub editor, poems, drawings, articles from our Sunday School students, Church history, 60th anniversary reports, and a collection of photos from various milestones including church inauguration, Golden Jubilee, several advertisements from various members, photos of our church members, historical leaders of the church, departed priest and departed members.

At this time, we graciously acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Alex Johnson for beautifully designing the cover page of the souvenir. In addition, we thank our vicar Rev. Fr. K. O. Chacko for his immense support and guidance, without which this souvenir would not have been a reality. Above all, we thank our good Lord for his mercy, grace and abundant blessings.

Rajan Yohannan
Chief Editor





Trustee's Message

The opportunity to write on the historic occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of our parish is possible only with the immense Grace of God that has been showered on this parish for six decades.

I am grateful to God Almighty and every member of St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Gw, for allowing me to witness the growth of the financial strength of this parish since I came here in 1990. It has been a marvelous journey for members in the early days who managed to organize church activities with just a couple of hundred dollars to spare each year. Today we are blessed with assets valued at about two million dollars. From the days when members who were the early pillars had to make hard choices of either driving to church or taking public transport, by God's mercy today families of all ages attend several church programs frequently.

It's amazing to learn how, even with very few resources, our families have always cherished their faith and yearned to partake in the Holy Qurbana. The zeal continues to be nursed by subsequent families.

During my two years as your Treasurer, I have learned much about appreciating the sacrifices each of you makes and contributing regularly to making our church life a peaceful and joyous experience. We have been able to provide all the resources needed to fund our Sunday School, MGOCSM, MMVS, and other spiritual activities that are so fundamental to making it a living church.

With joy in my heart, I thank all our Catholicoi, Diocesan Metropolitans H.G. Thomas Mar Makarios, H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas, both of blessed memory, and H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos, who understood and guided our church's needs and helped us to move along smoothly during all the past decades.

While I thank God for all our past prayerful vicars who worked hard exceedingly and made personal sacrifices and bore costs to sustain our group, I also thank our Vicar Fr. Regi Chacko for his leadership in ushering a fresh chapter in our parish life since he took office. Thank you each of you for your continued support.

With Love and Prayers.

Susan Thomas
Treasurer





Secretary's Message

As we celebrate 60 years as a church community, I am filled with gratitude looking to our past and filled with hope looking to our future.

We have moved from community halls, to rental churches, to a beautiful building to call our own. The Diamond Jubilee activities this year have exemplified our parish's priorities and capabilities. We have given charitable acts through our time, effort, and monetary contributions. We have bonded in fellowship at picnics and overnight camps. We have honored those who worked tirelessly to build and nourish this parish - clergy and faithful, living and departed. We were even fortunate enough to begin and end the celebrations this year with inaugural visits of our former vicars who have become metropolitan bishops.

As a member of the committee, I saw firsthand the effort, time, and planning that went into these ministries and celebrations. It made me reflect on the decades of hard work by former members that we now reap. We recognize our Vicars who have provided guidance and spiritual nourishment. We recognize the service of all those who served in the church's committees - the managing committees, fundraising committees, building committees, and many more. We recognize those who have served and participated in the ministries of the church - The Men's Forum, MMVS, MGOCSM, and Sunday School. We recognize the priests, deacons, and acolytes who have assisted in six decades of liturgy.

Lastly, we recognize the prayers of the generations of our faithful who have undoubtedly carried this parish through good times and difficult times. I pray that we continue to carry the momentum of the last 60 years to continue to build the Malankara Orthodox faith in the United States and Greater Washington D.C. area.

With gratitude,
Aswin John
Secretary





ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH HISTORY AT DIAMOND JUBILEE



1960s

In the early 1960s members belonging to various Kerala Christian denominations, including the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church were an established congregation in the Washington DC area of Eastern USA. Their common places of worship at that time were local county-owned community centers and publicly available places such as the halls of Howard University in Washington DC.

The congregation found the initial formalization of its group with the arrival of Fr. K.C. Thomas[i] traveled by ship to the USA in 1962[ii] from Mumbai (Bombay) on a scholarship provided by Episcopal Bishop Scarfe to attend Nashotah House Seminary in Wisconsin. He then went to Virginia Theological Seminary in Richmond, VA in 1964 to pursue advanced studies. While in the seminary in Richmond, he also visited Howard University School of Divinity Chapel in Washington DC, where he met Dn. N.K. Cherian[iii] (later CorEpiscopa and present vicar St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Yonkers, NY), and other Kerala Christians. Fr. K.C. Thomas organized and helped the group conduct the first worship service in 1965, in the Malankara Indian Orthodox tradition at the St. George Syrian Orthodox Church in Washington DC[iv]. It is also evident from a letter by the congregation to the Zion Lutheran Church, Langley Park, MD while seeking a rental facility that the congregation existed before 1965.[v] During the subsequent years Dn. N.K. Cherian along with late Dn. Varghese Pattampady and others assisted as clergy.

1970s

While the church was struggling to organize itself during the early 1970s, late Fr. P.K. Geevarghese and late Fr. Yohannan Sankarathil (later CorEpiscopa and Vicar St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Long Island, NY) led the parish and conducted Holy Qurbana services. Subsequently late Fr. M.T. Kurian led the parish from 1973 until 1975, followed by the late Fr. T.M. Samuel of Mt. Tabor Dayara, Pathanapuram as organizing priests / Vicars from 1975 until 1978. Fr. C.M. Alexander (retired CorEpiscopa in Chennai, India) was appointed vicar from 1978 until 1992. Fr. Dr. C.K. Rajan (now vicar of St. Stephens Orthodox Church, Long Island) who was ordained by H.G. Late lamented Philipose Mar Theophilos at Howard University chapel, Washington DC on August 20, 1983, in the presence of H.G. Thomas Mar Makarios served the parish.

1990s

Having become a well-known Indian Orthodox group in America, in 1990, the parish hosted the American Diocese Family Conference in Washington DC. The conference attended by members from various parts of the USA, was led by the late lamented H.G. Thomas Mar Makarios and the late lamented H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios. This was the first major event undertaken by the parish.





ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH HISTORY AT DIAMOND JUBILEE

1990s

Silver Jubilee

The parish continued conducting Holy Qurbana and other spiritual traditions at frequent intervals for over two decades in the Washington DC area for 25 years. On July 22, 1990, the parish celebrated its silver jubilee anniversary while Fr. C.M. Alexander was vicar. Several felicitations for this occasion were received including ones from the Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, the White House, Washington, the Governor of Maryland, Mayor of the District of Columbia, and Mr. Paul S. Sarbanes, US Senator from Maryland[i]. The silver jubilee souvenir is placed in the parish records. The fact that the congregation conducted services from 1964 and later became a parish in 1965 is also evidenced in the editorial of the silver jubilee souvenir published on July 22, 1990, now archived in the parish records. Late Fr. K.M. Samuel was the vicar of the parish from 1992 to 1994 until he decided to move to Philadelphia. As such, the late Fr. Geevarghese Ninan (later CorEpiscopa) was appointed vicar from 1994 to 1998.

Dream of Building

The parish had now increased in membership and with many youths attending, a need to have a church building was felt. It was during the term of Fr. Geevarghese Ninan that the dream to build a church was conceived and as such a church building fund was established to achieve that goal. The fund started with an upfront contribution of \$5,000 from Mr. George P. Thomas.

In 1998, Fr. M.S. John (now Dr. Yuhanon Ramban, now in Idukki, Kerala) was appointed as the vicar, while he was attending St. Vladimir Seminary, NY for the PhD program. During that time, in 2001 the parish purchased property at 13505, New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring MD 20904 as the site for its first church building in Washington D.C. , which was identified by Mr. C.D. Varghese. The site for the future church building is located less than 15 miles from the US Capitol in Washington DC.

2000s

In 2001 Fr. P.C. Thomas (now H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan SouthWest America Diocese) was appointed vicar until 2006,. During this period parish membership increased further, and the spiritual energy and cooperation resulted in the planning for the building design and architecture. In 2002, our young member George Mathew (now Fr. George Mathew, Vicar, St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Charlotte, NC) was ordained as Quroyo, (Sub-Deacon)). The site development plan and building permitting work were started on 12/2005.

In 2006, Fr. Varghese K. Joshua (now H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan Ahmedabad Diocese) was appointed vicar until 2010. At this time, the late lamented H.H. Moran Mar Baslios Mar Thoma Didymos I, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan visited the church land, broke ground, blessed the cornerstone and prayed at the site on July 06, 2006.





ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH HISTORY AT DIAMOND JUBILEE

2000s

To start the construction process, the cornerstone was placed at the building site by Fr. Varghese Joshua on 11/08, 2007. The church building was completed on 10/30/2008 when we received the occupancy certificate. The church building project was led successfully by Shine Jacob with a capable project team. The church was consecrated on 11/14/2008 and 11/15/2008 by our Diocesan Metropolitan late lamented H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas Metropolitan, Northeast American Diocese, and in the presence of H.G. Zacharias Mar Nicholovos, Asst. Metropolitan, Northeast American Diocese, H.G. Yakoob Mar Irenaeus, Metropolitan, Chennai Diocese and H.G. Yuhanon Mar Miletheos, Metropolitan Trissur Diocese. Several priests, including past vicars, were present.

The new church building facility of 12,000 sq. ft. has permitted occupancy for over 1,117 persons. It has a multi-purpose hall for conducting events, a parsonage, and ample parking space built at an approximate cost of two million dollars. The hall enables us to host several community events such as The Northeast American Diocese Couples and Parent's Conference on June 13th, 2009, attended by over five hundred people from across the Diocese. Prof. Dr. M.P Mathai was the keynote speaker.

Catholicate Centenary

On Sunday September 23rd, 2012, the parish hosted the Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia area Catholicate Centenary celebrations. Late Fr. Andrew Daniel who was the vicar from 2010 to 2014 led the program for the five Washington DC area parishes of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The event was attended by Hon. U.S. Congressman Jamie Ben Raskin from Maryland 8th district.

Golden Jubilee

Fr. Johnson C. John was appointed vicar in 2014. The Golden Jubilee of the parish completing 50 years of existence was celebrated on September 28, 2014, in the presence of the Late lamented H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan. The plaque for the occasion is installed in the church building lobby. The event was attended by Mr. Isiah Leggett Montgomery County Executive, Maryland.

CAOFC

Fr. Reji Chacko was appointed vicar from 2017. The parish hosted the Capital Area Orthodox Family Conference, an organization formed by all local area Malankara Orthodox parishes for families to meet, to learn, worship and socialize as a community.

2024

Diamond Jubilee

The Diamond Jubilee of the parish, completing its 60th year is celebrated from April 28, 2024, inaugurated by H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan, and concluded on September 22, 2024, by Metropolitan H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theophilos, while Fr. Reji Chacko is vicar of the parish and is heading the programs.





ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH HISTORY AT DIAMOND JUBILEE



PARISH HISTORY

Presented by Diamond Jubilee Committee, April 28, 2024

Vicar and President: Fr. Reji Chacko

Board of Directors: George P. Thomas and Maria Chacko

Convenor: Isaac K. John, Jt. Convenor: Nirmala Thomas

Hon. Secretary: Aswin John, Hon Treasurer: Susan L. Thomas

Managing Committee: T.M. Chacko, Rajan Varghese, Eapen Varghese, Mini John

Jubilee Souvenir: Rajan Yohanan, Alex Johnson

References

- i Fr. K.C. Thomas was ordained as a priest of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in 1953 at Madras, India. Later Fr. K.C. Thomas was elevated to Metropolitan in 1975 as H.G. Thomas Mar Makarios, and subsequently enthroned to American Diocese on 7/14,1975.
- ii Sexagenary Celebrations Souvenir 1986, The Malankara Orthodox Church of India, Zachariah Oommen, MSc., M.Ed., Malankara Managing Committee,
- iii Nort East American Diocese, Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam 40th year celebrations souvenir 2022 publication page 30.
- iv St. Thomas Orthodox Church of India Washington. D.C. A Historical Perspective by Dr. Thomas John, Professor, University of District of Columbia, Washington DC, Member Board of Directors & the American Diocesan Council.
- v Letter dated January 26, 1965, by Dr. Thomas John, PhD to Rev. Piper Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Langley Park, MD 20783
- vi Contents from St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, July 22, 1990.





HIS GRACE THOMA MAR DIONYSIUS

of Blessed Memory (1887 – 1972)

Metropolitan - Niranam Diocese & Founder Superior - Mount Tabor Dayara, Pathanapuram, Kerala

Inserted by: George P. & Susan Thomas, Virginia



FORMER VICARS



H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar
Ivanios Metropolitan



H.G. Dr. Geevarghese
Mar Theophilos
Metropolitan



Very. Rev. Dr. M.S.
Yuhanon Ramban



Very Rev. Cherian
Neelankal Cor-Episcopa



Very. Rev. C.M. Alexander
Cor-Episcopa



Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson C.
John

HOME-GROWN CLERGY



Rev. Fr. Dr. C.K. Rajan



Rev. Fr. George C. Mathew



DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits (Psalm 103 1:2)

I have an abundance of joy and gratefulness for being a member of this holy church and being part of the Diamond Jubilee celebration Committee. I am grateful for this opportunity to present to you our Diamond Jubilee celebration report.

Diamond Jubilee committee:

The following members were selected from our Parish for the Diamond Jubilee committee: Mr. Isaac John, Mr. Ashwin John, Mrs. Susan Thomas, Mr. Eapen Varghese, Mrs. Mini John, Mr. Mathai Chacko , Mrs. Maria Chacko , Mr. Rajan Varughese, Mr. George P Thomas and Mrs. Nirmala Thomas, out of this list, Mr. Isaac John was appointed as the General Convenor and Mrs. Nirmala Thomas as the Joint-Convenor of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The committee started this celebration planning with our first meeting on February 18, 2024. During the brainstorming session, committee members presented wide-range of ideas for the Jubilee celebration and later grouped those ideas into categories like Opening Ceremony, a Souvenir for the event, Charity events that include Housing project in Kerala and other local charity events, connecting with the past members/ Outreach/ entertainment activities, and Closing Ceremony. It was decided that during the Opening ceremony, we will officially welcome and honor our past vicar Rev. Fr. Dr. P.C. Thomas who is now the newly ordained Bishop H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios of Southwest American Diocese and during the closing ceremony to officially welcome and honor our past vicar Rev. Fr. Dr.Varghese K. Joshua who is now the newly ordained Bishop H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of Ahmedabad Diocese and Assistant Metropolitan of Bombay diocese to our midst. The committee met often in person and remote to discuss and finalize jubilee activities.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees were appointed to further develop those ideas as initiatives for the Jubilee commemoration.

Reception committee :

Mr. Eapen Varghese, Mrs. Mini John, Mr. Mathai Chacko and Mr. Isaac John

Finance committee :

Mrs. Susan Thomas, Mr. Ashwin John and Mr. Isaac John

Program Committee:

Mrs. Nirmala Thomas, Mr. George P Thomas and Mr. Isaac John

Food Committee:

Mrs. Maria Chacko, Mr. Rajan Varughese and Mr. Isaac John

Souvenir Committee:

Mr. Rajan Yohannan and Mr. Alex Johnson

Fund Raising ;

To meet the expenses of the Jubilee charity project, the committee decided a mandatory collection of minimum \$ 250 per family that resulted in raising \$ 13,450. Also we received \$ 3,100 volunteer contributions towards Jubilee celebrations.

Jubilee Logo Design :

Our Sunday school students, Anjali Mathew and Merin Kanneth helped us with the initial sketch for the Diamond Jubilee logo design. The design symbolizes our church being in the palm of our Savior Jesus Christ, thanking Him for protecting our parish for the past 60 years.





DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

Diamond Jubilee Activities

Opening Ceremony :

On April 27th Saturday we officially welcomed our former vicar and the current Metropolitan of Southwest American Diocese, H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios to our church, followed by H.G leading the evening prayer and a light dinner reception. On 28th April, Sunday after the Holy Qurbana by Ivanios Thirumeni, we had our official Diamond Jubilee Inauguration ceremony and official welcome and felicitation to Thirumeni. The meeting was presided over by our Vicar Rev. Fr. K.O. Chacko. Mrs. Susan Thomas welcomed dignitaries and audience, and Mr. Isaac John introduced our 60 year Church History. Our vicar Rev.Fr. K.O Chacko gave the official presidential address, followed by the Inaugural address, lighting of lamp and Logo unveiling by beloved Ivanios Thirumeni. The meeting was edified by beautiful song performances by our young talent Elizabeth Ipe, Youth and MMVS members of the church. Mrs. Maria Chacko, Mrs. Mini John, Mr. Eapen Varghese, Ms. Sharena Daniel and Kevin Kanneth offered Felicitations representing the church's spiritual organizations and the meeting was concluded by Vote of Thanks given by Mr. Rajan Yohannan. The inaugural meeting and the day concluded with a delicious luncheon reception.

Charity projects :

House building project

In Christian theology, charity is one of the seven virtues and is considered the highest form of love. It's seen as a reciprocal love between God and humans, and a way to love others in an unselfish way. For the housing Charity project, the Diamond Jubilee committee unanimously selected a well deserving applicant, Mr. David Daniel of the five applications received from Rev.Fr. Rinju P. Koshy from Kerala. (I would like to point out a divine plan here, Mr. David Daniel was initially not selected from a list of candidates sent by Father Rinju Koshy from Kerala rather we selected 2 other candidates. However, due to issues with the land provided by the initially chosen candidates, Mr. Daniel was selected in the second round. He was a 62 year old father, reportedly with health problems, both husband and wife were daily wage earners, and he had two young daughters with an insecure house. The family was chosen for a house-building charity project, and the foundation stone for the house was laid. Mr. Daniel was very happy about the prospect of having a secure house for his family. Unfortunately, within a month, Mr. Daniel experienced a sudden ailment and passed away from this earth. His passing was peaceful knowing of a beautiful house of their own , and we believe it was part of a divine plan.) The house is in the construction phase, scheduled to be completed in the coming months with a budgeted building cost of Rs.6.5 lakhs. We are grateful to Rinju Achen for helping us with this house building charity project. At this time let's hope and pray, we will be given resources to build many more houses for the needy in the coming 60 years.

Visit to Missionaries of Charity Convent DC

"If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one" is a quote by Mother Teresa, that conveys the idea that every act of nourishment, no matter how small, is important.

As part of the charity initiatives, our MMVS members visited Missionaries of Charity Convent in 2800 Otis St NE in Washington DC on March 23rd Saturday and joyfully bought and served Chick Fil-A lunch for all the deserving residents of the convent and for sisters. We truly appreciate MMVS members for their service, Sisters really appreciated our kind act. Let's remind ourselves that everything we do has an impact.

MMVS is still planning many more local charity events during the Jubilee year. All other Spiritual organizations including Sunday School, MGOCSM, Men's forum are also planning to do local charity projects throughout the year. We have reached out to Shepherd's Table, a non-profit, community-based organization in Montgomery County that helps the homeless and needy. Volunteers are at the heart of the mission of Shepherd's Table, and it's noted to be a great place to volunteer and be of service to our fellow humans.





DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

Souvenir publication

Throughout the Bible, if you look, the Lord reminded His people to tell all generations of the Lord's amazing works. Part of what that means is, as a church, we must preserve the memory of how God has worked in our lives. The anniversary is a time to reflect on our past and to look for the future with a new vision. As part of the Diamond Jubilee celebration, the committee had unanimously approved the idea of a souvenir publication. Mr. Rajan Yohannan and Mr. Alex Johnson are diligently working hard to produce a beautiful souvenir in memory of our past 60 years. Their hard work and members' contribution for the project are gratefully appreciated.

Entertainment Activities

Good preaching, teaching, and outreach are imperative for every church. But so are the heart-to-heart relationships between the members of the church. Diamond jubilee celebration committee proposed and implemented two entertainment activities so far this year.

Church Picnic :

Church one day picnic was conducted on July 6th Saturday at Black Hill Regional Park in Boyds, Maryland. Meeting as a church family outdoors is an affirmation and celebration of God as creator of the world. Almost 100 members attended this year's church picnic and enjoyed food, laughter/ fun and games.

Overnight camp at Camp Misty Mount, Catoctin Park in Thurmont, Maryland

Church involving recreation cultivates the unity of God's people. Another highlight of this year's Diamond Jubilee celebration outdoor activities was our three days overnight camp at Camp Misty Mount, Catoctin Park in Thurmont, Maryland from August 15th to August 17th Saturday. Camp Misty Mount provided an action packed and spiritually focused traditional style camp experience, bringing back a lot of nostalgic memories of our 30-40 years back lifestyle. The three days were filled with lots of fun and fellowship. Every moment became an opportunity to build deeper connections, meaningful conversations and to enjoy God's wonderful creation. There is so much for all of us to celebrate in our lives and to give thanks to our God is so much a part of it. We thank God for that beautiful camp experience which ultimately made us stronger and closer together. We cooked, cleaned, ate, hiked, played and stayed together under one roof. Sincerely thanking everyone who worked behind the scenes to make this trip a memorable one.

Sight & Sound Theatre trip

Also as part of the Diamond Jubilee committee's entertainment program, we are planning a Sight & Sound Theatre trip on November 30th 2024 Saturday to watch Bible show 'Daniel' . Members are thrilled and excited for the day to come and have a fun filled trip.

Outreach Project:

Former member gathering and Dinner

As an outreach project, the committee decided to invite and honor former members of this parish from the past 60 years. Mr. Eapen Varghese and Mrs. Mini John took leadership in collecting names and reaching out to members who left our church for various reasons and settled in various states in the US. This event was conducted on September 7th Saturday. Meeting was presided by our Vicar Rev. Fr. K.O. Chacko and the main guest of honor for this event was H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos Metropolitan of Northeast American Diocese. Thirumeni in his official remarks appreciated our effort in gathering people who were part of this original church from its inception time. Program included a welcome speech by Mr. Isaac John, felicitation speeches by former members Mr. C.D Varghese, Mr. Abraham Joshua, Mr. George Varghese and a felicitation speech by our member Mr. George P. Thomas, meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Mr. Eapen Varghese. The evening was coordinated well and was blessed with a gathering of parishioners from DMV area and NY region, and all enjoyed a delicious fellowship meal with live cooking stations of traditional Kerala dishes.





DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

Closing Ceremony

Our Diamond Jubilee closing ceremony is happening this weekend of September 21st and 22nd 2024. The event started last evening when we officially welcomed our former vicar Rev. Fr. Dr. Varghese K Joshua, now H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of Ahmedabad and Asst Metropolitan of Bombay Diocese to our church followed by evening prayer and dinner. Today we are now in the midst of the closing ceremony presided by our vicar Rev. Fr. K. O. Chacko, official closing ceremony remarks by Theophilos Thirumeni and official welcome and felicitation to Thirumeni, Souvenir presentation, songs and felicitations.

Gratitude

Jubilee is a time of gratitude and celebration. I take this opportunity to thank everyone who worked selflessly for this successful diamond Jubilee celebration of our church. A special thanks to our vicar Rev. Fr. K. O. Chacko, managing committee, office bearers and volunteers and members of this church for your selfless contribution big or small towards this cause.

Conclusion

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." ~ John 8:12. As our diamond jubilee year, we reflect on the many ways our church has kindled the light of Christ in people's lives. Let's pray that God fill our hearts with the fragrance of his spirit and pray that His light shines through us so brightly that others are inspired to follow the light of Christ with us. We thank the Lord for the last 60 years, let's look for new experiences, new spiritual enlightenment, new joys to discover, new songs of praise to sing, this is a time of looking forward to a brighter future for our church.

May God bless us all!

Your Truly,

Mrs. Nirmala Thomas

Joint-Convenor of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations





Jubilee Office Bearers 2024



AMMINI CHACKO
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



REV. FR. K.O. CHACKO
VICAR



GEORGE P. THOMAS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



SUSAN THOMAS
TRUSTEE



ASWIN JOHN
SECRETARY



ISAAC JOHN
GENERAL CONVENER



NIRMALA THOMAS
JOINT CONVENER



RAJAN YOHANNAN
SOUVENIR EDITOR



ALEX JOHNSON
SOUVENIR SUB-EDITOR





MANAGING COMMITTEE 2024



60TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE



SOUVENIR COMMITTEE





Spiritual Organization Leaders

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Thomas Varghese
Former Principal



Gigi Mathew
Principal

MMVS



Mini John
Secretary



Kochumol Suresh
Treasurer



Nirmala Thomas
Diocesan Delegate

MEN'S FORUM



Eapen Varghese
Secretary



Bixa Kurian
ECKC Representative

MGOC SM



Kevin Kanneth
Area Representative



Benjamin Varghese
Council Member &
Sunday School Vice Principal



Alex Johnson
Youth Advisor





Rajan Varghese
Food Coordinator



Mathai Chacko
Maintenance



Aswin John
Rental Coordinator &
Diocesan Representative



Aji Abraham
Assistant Rental
Coordinator



George P. Thomas
Malankara Association
Representative



Thomas Varghese
Webmaster



Shibu Varghese
Asst. Webmaster



Acolytes





SUNDAY SCHOOL



MGOCSM





MEN'S FORUM



MARTH MARIAM VANITHA SAMAJAM (MMVS)



Relevance of Religious Education in Children

Fr. Dr. M.S. Yuhanon Ramban



Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it
Proverbs 22:6

"You are what you eat." We eat good food for the growth of our perishable body. It is more important to feed better food for the growth of our non-perishable spirit. Just as good food gives us a healthy body, religious education nurtures a healthy mind and spirit. "We are what we believe." The aim of our life is to grow into His likeness (Mt. 5:48). Our beliefs and values, discernment and, correct proper judgement, etc., comes from our moral standards. Meaningful religious education provides the best food for our soul to develop the best morals. Religious education should be an important part of Orthodox families and parishes. Faith in God is not innate nature but a learned state. It has to be developed through religious education, which should be initiated and sustained continuously by parents and religious communities throughout a person's life. Each person is like an athlete transferring the baton to another athlete to complete a relay race – each generation passing on the torch of faith to the next generation until the Last Day.

All animals, including humans, have the natural instinct to grow and mature physically. For example, when it hatches, a weaver bird's young one is born with the ability to fly out of the nest, catch prey and survive. It can fly, collect leaves and other material and weave a beautiful nest just like its parents. No training or learning is required. God has given it the natural ability to do what is required with the help of what we call "natural instinct".

The human brain can process information and make improvements at a higher level. If a person wants to build a house, he/ she has to learn quite a few architectural and construction methods. The beautiful feature of the human brain is that it can imagine, visualize and implement ideas. Therefore, a person can improve, hone and modify his/ her building skills! Children need education for their mental growth and maturity. Only human beings have the capacity for understanding and rationalization.

Many research studies show that the hormonal changes in a mother affects the baby in her womb. If the mother is sad or depressed, the infant becomes silent and inactive. When the mother is excited and happy, the infant becomes very active. For this reason, special care is given to pregnant women; they are provided with positive physical and emotional support. In Jewish culture, pregnant women and mothers are encouraged to do mathematical puzzles and learn music. Also, they are urged to read religious books and stories and are discouraged from watching violent movies. Positive activities are expected to create a positive impact on the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual health and development of the infant.

Several anthropological studies show the same results. It is important for pregnant women to understand that their thoughts and relationship to God have a very important effect on the child developing in the womb. It is in the womb that the seed of faith is sown in a child. By the time a child is 5-6 years old, she/he has already learned the basics of social behavior and fundamental spiritual values. It takes 18-20 years to acquire reasonable social skills, language proficiency, physical prowess and ability to adapt to the cultural and social behavioral patterns of the society she/he lives in; the individual will build on these skills to continue to grow until the end of life. Religious education enhances a child's thought process to become a better human being – Jesus being the ideal model.

Most of this religious behavior is learned by a child by imitating the parents, siblings and other adults around her/ him. The late lamented His Grace Paulose Mar Gregorius, a theologian of orthodoxy, wrote in his autobiography, My Faith in God and My Theology, "I learned from my mother, not from a priest or bishop." The home atmosphere is very important because the guidance and molding of a child's spiritual growth begins at home. As we all

know, the foundation determines the strength of the building. Similarly, if we give our children a sound spiritual foundation, they can face the challenges and turmoil that come their way in life boldly and positively.

It is written in the Holy Bible that children should be taught the TEN COMMANDMENTS and should be strictly trained to practice it. It is the responsibility of the father or the guardian to enforce it. If he fails to do so, the father is considered to be unfaithful to Yahve (Deuteronomy 6). Along with religious teaching the children were taught at least one manual skill such as tentmaking, farming and animal husbandry. It is against Judaism to eat without working for it.

According to them “religious teaching is not brainwashing” but helping children to understand and experience God in their daily life by transmitting the faith experiences of their parents and ancestors. They believe that Almighty God can save and protect them and that belief came from their experiences. They experienced a miraculous deliverance from slavery under Pharaoh and knew the power of God during their tough sojourn through the desert. Almighty God guided and protected them under the shadow of the pillar of cloud during the day and by the pillar of fire at night. They were fed manna and wild birds in the desert. Thus, they experienced the power of God firsthand. They reiterated their experiences to their younger generations and sanctified a day as the Feast of Passover. At the Passover feast, the youngest member of the family asks the oldest, “Why do we celebrate this feast?” Then the oldest male explains Yahve’s miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from slavery under Pharaoh. It is a beautiful way of educating young people in their faith.

In many ways, Orthodox churches are an extension of Judaism. The Orthodox faith is “Love your God and Love your neighbor. It is the Love of God that sent His Son to redeem us.” Parents should demonstrate their faith in God through daily practices such as family prayers, Bible study, commitment and eagerness to participate in community worship and partaking in the Holy Qurbana.

Orthodox Christians have additional means to impart religious education to their children. Besides reading and studying the Holy Bible at home, we have Sunday Schools, OVBS, Youth forum, MGOCSM, Divya Bodhanam, theology classes, conventions, retreats and many other faith resources. There are priests and bishops to lead and guide our children towards GOD through orthodoxy. It is essential to utilize these resources.

The Orthodox Church considers giving religious education to children as an individual as well as a communal responsibility. The godparents and parents take a solemn oath at the child’s baptism, on behalf of the child, that the child would be brought up in the true faith and follow Christ’s path. Our children are a precious gift from God. God entrusts parents and the community with the great responsibility of bringing them up correctly. God is the greatest wealth our children can inherit from us. There is no guarantee that education, money or any other materialistic wealth will help them in crisis. Conversely, a Bible verse taught by parents, will give them hope and faith in a difficult situation. They are reassured that the good shepherd will never forsake them.

We need to educate our children that orthodox Christianity is a way of life. Jesus Christ is our role model. Our Church life includes fast and feast, worship with lots of symbolism, sacraments, and so on. The meaning and correlation of these rituals to the Bible and theology, are to be taught to our children. Otherwise, worship will not be meaningful to them. It is not an easy task; without help from additional resources we cannot accomplish it successfully. We need to train our children to meditate on the prayers written by our church fathers in addition to memorizing them. It is a lifelong process without ceasing. Once they learn to meaningfully practice the faith, they won’t abandon it.

The relevance of religious education in children is that it makes them useful to themselves and others. People who meet them should see and experience our Lord Jesus in them.

May the Almighty bless you all.





DEPARTED CLERGY

*Christ Who is the
Lord of priests and the great High-Priest
Pardon, O Lord
Your priests who served Your mysteries*



LL H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar
Makarios (Founder)



Ver. Rev. T.M. Samuel
Ramban



Very Rev. G. Ninan
Cor-Episcopa



Very Rev. Dr. Yohannan
Sankarathil Cor-Episcopa



Rev. Fr. Varghese
Pattammady



Rev. Fr. Dr. Samuel K.
Mathew



Rev. Fr. M.T. Kurien



Rev. Fr. Andrew Daniel

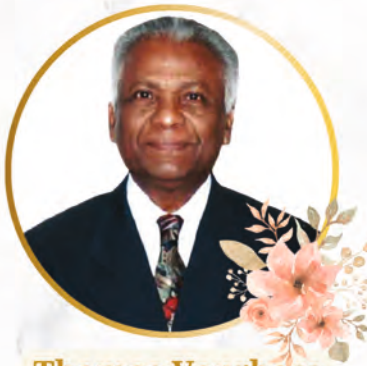


FAITHFUL DEPARTED

*May Your living voice awake
From the graves to Paradise
Your servants who slept in hope
And trusted in Your mercy*



John C. Thomas



Thomas Varghese



T.P. Varghese



Aleyamma Varghese



Jicin Rachel Koshy



Thomas Mukanamchery &
Kunjukunjamma Mathew



M.G. Joshua &
Elizabeth Joshua

The Junior Gallery



My Culture

By Nidhi Mathew

India, a place I have longed to live
My clothes, my taste, my life
can't reflect the ancestry that flows through me
The blood that runs through my veins
belongs to a country far away
across dazzling blue oceans and evergreen forests

A place I left years ago
Yet how far I may be
Its culture grows in me.
In the sweet lullabies sang by my mother
In the childhood bedtime stories of my father
The wisdom of my grandmother
The memories of my late grandfather
Through the queer words that rolls on my tongue
In my American accent I stutter and stop
Yet I proudly speak the language
Of the ones I left long ago.

I have treasured my short moments of India
I remember that cold droplets of rain
Soothing my hot sweaty body
The grass and gravel tickling my bare feet
Tiptoeing across the scorching hot roads
My efforts in vain; with tomato red toes
Dancing in bright colors of Holi
Mourning through Good Friday
Feasting during Onam, savoring every bit
Singing through Christmas.

I come back to a world
Hectic, misguiding, and confusing
It seem I have waken
From a faraway dream,

The truth, never will I be apure Indian
My American childhood influencing every decision
am a mix of two different cultures, a cross breed
Yet, I am proud of what I am.
The color of our skin is different
But the color of our blood is the same
Yet, identity does not come physically
It comes with the culture that abides in our soul.



വിശുദ്ധി നിറഞ്ഞ നവോത്ഥാന നായകൻ

Fr. Dr. John Thomas Karinjattil
Principal Orthodox Seminary Kottayam



വിശുദ്ധിയുടെ തേജസ്സായ പരുമല ഗീവർഗീസ് മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത (1848-1902) പകർന്നത് സാമൂഹികവും ആദ്ധ്യാത്മികവുമായ നവോത്ഥാന ദർശനങ്ങളാണ്. വ്യത്യസ്തമായി ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക ചൈതന്യം പ്രസരിതമാക്കിയ ആ പുണ്യ ജീവിതം 54 വർഷം മാത്രമായിരുന്നു. കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാംസ്കാരിക നവോത്ഥാന ചരിത്രത്തിൽ നിർണ്ണായക പങ്കാളിത്തം വഹിച്ച വിശുദ്ധി പകർന്ന നായകനായിരുന്നു പരുമല തിരുമേനി.

ജീവിച്ചിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ വിശുദ്ധ ജീവിതം മാതൃകയാക്കിയ പരുമല തിരുമേനി ജനഹൃദയങ്ങളിൽ ചിരപ്രതിഷ്ഠ നേടി. ജനിച്ചു വളർന്ന എറണാകുളം ജില്ലയിലെ മുളന്നൂരുത്തി മുതൽ തിരുവല്ലയ്ക്ക് സമീപമുള്ള പരുമല (1848-1877) വരെയുള്ള 29 വർഷം തപോനിഷ്ഠ ജീവിതത്താൽ ആത്മജ്ഞാനം നേടി. പൗരസ്ത്യ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മികത ജീവിതത്തിൽ സ്വാംശീകരിച്ചു കഠിനമായ ഉപവാസം, നിരന്തരമായ പ്രാർത്ഥന, ദീർഘമായ മൗനം, ഇന്ദ്രിയ സംയമനം, ധർമ്മാചരണം, ലളിത ജീവിതം എന്നിവയിലൂടെ തപോനിഷ്ഠമായ ജീവിതമായിരുന്നു പരുമല-തിരുമേനിയുടേത്.

പരുമല തിരുമേനി മധുര സ്വരത്തിൽ പാടുകയും ആരാധന നടത്തുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്നു. 'വിനയം, ക്ഷമാശീലം, കരുണ, ഔദാര്യം, നിഷ്കാപ്യം, സമഭാവന തുടങ്ങിയ മൂല്യങ്ങൾ പൂർണ്ണമായി പരുമല തിരുമേനിയിൽ പ്രകാശം പരത്തിയതായി 1902-ൽ പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ പ്രഥമ ജീവചരിത്ര കാരനായ എം.പി. വർക്കി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തി. താപസ ജീവിതത്താൽ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക തേജസ്സ് പകർന്ന മഹായോഗിയാണ് പരുമല തിരുമേനി.

പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ രണ്ടാം ഘട്ടം പരുമലയിൽ എത്തിയതു മുതൽ ഊർശ്വേം വരെയുള്ള (1877-1895) 18 വർഷമാണ്. കോട്ടയത്തിന് തെക്കുള്ള മുഴുവൻ പള്ളികളേയും നയിച്ച പരുമല തിരുമേനി, പരുമല കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ച് മലങ്കര മുഴുവൻ സഞ്ചരിച്ച് വിശ്വാസികൾക്ക് ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക പ്രബോധനവും സത്യവിശ്വാസ പാഠങ്ങളും പകർന്നു. എല്ലാ പള്ളികളിലേയും പണ പിരിവിന്റെ

മുഖ്യ ചുമതല ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നിനാൽ മലങ്കര സഭയിലെ മുഴുവൻ ഇടവകകളിലും ഒരു പരിധി വരെ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് അധികാരവും അവകാശവും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വിശ്വാസാചാരങ്ങളിൽ പൂർണ്ണ യാഥാസ്ഥിതികതയും സഭാ ഭരണ വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ ഉല്പതിഷ്ണുത്വവും പ്രകടമാക്കി.

ക്രൈസ്തവരുടെ പുണ്യ കേന്ദ്രമായ ഊർശ്വേം സന്ദർശിച്ച ശേഷമുള്ള ഏഴു വർഷമാണ് (1895-1902) പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഏറ്റവും പ്രകാശപൂർണ്ണമായ മൂന്നാം ഘട്ടം. എഴുത്തിലും ദർശനത്തിലും പ്രവർത്തനത്തിലും 'വിമോചന ദൗത്യം' ഉൾച്ചേർത്ത പരുമല തിരുമേനി കേരളത്തിലെ സാംസ്കാരിക നവോത്ഥാനത്തിന് ധീരനേതൃത്വം നൽകി.

ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, സഞ്ചാര സാഹിത്യം, ദലിത് വിമോചനം, ജീർണ്ണിച്ച സാമൂഹിക ആചാര-ക്രമങ്ങളുടെ പൊളിച്ചെഴുത്ത് എന്നിവയിൽ മുഖ്യ പങ്കാളിത്തം വഹിച്ച കർമ്മയോഗിയാണ് പരുമല തിരുമേനി. ജാതീയ ചിന്തകൾക്കും സാമൂഹിക വേർതിരിവുകൾക്കും അതീതമായ സമീപനം പങ്കിട്ട പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ നവോത്ഥാന ദർശനം വേണ്ടത്ര ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുവാൻ പൊതു സമൂഹത്തിന് കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല. സാമൂഹിക പരിഷ്കർത്താവ്, അജപാലകൻ, താപസവര്യൻ, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ പ്രവർത്തകൻ, സാഹിത്യകാരൻ, മനുഷ്യസ്നേഹി എന്നിങ്ങനെ നിരവധി വിശേഷണങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലും പരിശുദ്ധനായ പരുമല തിരുമേനി എന്ന നിലയിലാണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രശസ്തി ലോക വ്യാപകമായത്.

കേരളത്തിൽ സാമൂഹിക പരിവർത്തനത്തിന് തുടക്കമിട്ട ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം മലങ്കര സഭയിൽ ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തണമെന്ന് പരുമല തിരുമേനി ആഗ്രഹിച്ചു. ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ വഴി യഥാർത്ഥ ക്രിസ്തീയ തത്വങ്ങൾ വിദ്യാർത്ഥികളിൽ വേരൂന്നുമെന്നും അതിനാൽ ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് സ്കൂളുകൾ പലയിടങ്ങളിലും ഇനിയും സ്ഥാപിക്കണമെന്നും 1895-ൽ നടത്തിയ പരുമല പ്രസംഗത്തിൽ ആഹ്വാനം ചെയ്തു. ജാതിഭേദം കൂടാതെ എല്ലാവർക്കും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നൽകണമെന്ന പ്രബോധനം



തുടർ പ്രസംഗങ്ങളിലും എഴുത്തുകളിലും മുഴങ്ങി. തുമ്പമൺ, മുളന്തുരുത്തി, കുന്നംകുളം, നിരണം, തിരുവല്ല തുടങ്ങി വിവിധ സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ കേന്ദ്രങ്ങൾക്ക് പരുമല തിരുമേനി പ്രാരംഭമിട്ടു. ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിന്റെ ഉൾക്കാഴ്ച ഊർശ്വേം സന്ദർശനത്തിന് ശേഷമാണ് പരുമല തിരുമേനിയിൽ ശക്തിപ്പെടുന്നത്. ജാതീയ വേർതിരിവുകൾ ഇല്ലാതെ ഏവർക്കും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം എന്നതായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യം.

പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ മലയാള ഗദ്യ രചനകൾക്ക് അസാധാരണ വിശുദ്ധിയുണ്ട്. കൽപ്പനകൾ, ഡയറിക്കുറിപ്പുകൾ സ്വകാര്യ ലേഖനങ്ങൾ, ഇടയ ലേഖനങ്ങൾ, പ്രഭാഷണങ്ങൾ, എന്നിവയിൽ എല്ലാം പത്തൊമ്പതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ഉത്തരാർദ്ധത്തിലെ മലയാള ഗദ്യത്തിന്റെ മാതൃകകൾ കണ്ടെത്താം. മലയാളത്തിലെ പ്രഥമ ലക്ഷണയുക്ത സഞ്ചാര കൃതിയായ ഊർശ്വേം യാത്രാവിവരണം 1895-ൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചു. ഇതിലെ സ്വതന്ത്രവും ഉദാത്തവുമായ ഗദ്യ വ്യവഹാര ഭാഷയുടേയും പത്ര ഭാഷയുടേയും സമന്വൃത ശൈലിയാണ്. ആശയ സംവേദനത്തിൽ ലളിതവും ശുദ്ധവുമായ ഭാഷ അനിവാര്യമാണെന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കിയ പരുമല തിരുമേനി ആശയങ്ങളും വസ്തുതകളും നിരീക്ഷണങ്ങളും സൂക്ഷ്മതയോടെ അപഗ്രഥിച്ച് ഹൃദ്യമായ ഭാഷയിൽ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചു. ഇത് തെളിച്ചവും ലാളിത്യവുമുള്ള ഗദ്യരചനാ ശില്പമാണ്. മലയാള ഭാഷയുടെ വികാസ പരിണാമങ്ങൾ അന്വേഷിക്കുന്നവർക്ക് പരുമല മാർ ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസിന്റെ രചനകൾ അമൂല്യ-രേഖകളാണ്.

കേരളത്തിൽ ദലിത് വിമോചനം ആദ്യമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചത് പരുമല തിരുമേനിയാണ്. ഊർശ്വേമിൽ നിന്ന് തിരിച്ചെത്തി 1895-ൽ പരുമലയിൽ നടത്തിയ ഉജ്ജ്വലമായ 'ഭക്തവചനം' എന്ന പ്രഭാഷണം സാമൂഹിക നവോത്ഥാനത്തിനും ദലിത് വിമോചനത്തിനുമുള്ള ആഹ്വാനമാണ്. സമൂഹത്തിൽ ചവിട്ടിയരയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ട ജനതയുടെ ശക്തീകരണത്തിനുള്ള വിമോചന ദർശനമാണിത്. അവമാനവികരും അവകാശ രഹിതരും തിരസ്കൃതരുമായ ജനതയുടെ വിമോചനം യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാക്കണമെന്ന് പരുമല തിരുമേനി ആഗ്രഹിച്ചു. അതിനായി നിരവധി കർമ്മ പദ്ധതികൾ ആവിഷ്കരിച്ചു. സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം, സമത്വം, സഹോദര്യം എന്നിവയിൽ കേന്ദ്രീകൃതമായിരുന്നു അത്.

ദലിത് ജനതയ്ക്ക് സാമ്പത്തിക ഭദ്രത, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, സാമൂഹിക അംഗീകാരം എന്നിവ നൽകണമെന്ന് പരുമല തിരുമേനി നിഷ്കർഷിച്ചു. ജാതിവ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ ജീർണ്ണത ശക്തിപ്പെട്ട കാലത്ത് പരുമല തിരുമേനി ദലിത് ജനതയുടെ ഭവനങ്ങൾ സന്ദർശിക്കുകയും ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അവരുടെ തലയിൽ കൈവച്ച് പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചു. തിരസ്ക്കാരവും അവഹേളനവും അനുഭവിച്ച ദലിതർക്ക് അന്തസ്സും അംഗീകാരവും നൽകി സ്നേഹ സ്പർശം പകർന്നു. ജാതിഘടനയും ആചാരവും സൃഷ്ടിച്ച ജീർണ്ണതയെ അതിജീവിച്ച് സമൂഹത്തിലെ ദുർബല വിഭാഗങ്ങളെ ചേർത്തുപിടിക്കുവാൻ പരുമല തിരുമേനിക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞു. ജാതി ഭേദമെന്നു എല്ലാ മനുഷ്യരുടെയും അന്തസ്സ് ഉയർത്തുന്നതിനും അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നതിനും പരുമലതിരുമേനി നടത്തിയ പ്രഭാഷണങ്ങളും പരിശ്രമങ്ങളും കേരളചരിത്രത്തിലെ സുവർണ്ണ രേഖയാണ്. സമഭാവനയും സാഹോദര്യവും സമൂഹത്തിൽ ശക്തിപ്പെടണമെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചു.

കേരളത്തിൽ 1896-97 കാലത്ത് വരൾച്ചയും ക്ഷാമവും ഉണ്ടായപ്പോൾ പള്ളികളിൽ നിന്നും ഭവനങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും പരുമല തിരുമേനി പണം സമാഹരിച്ച് മൂലം തിരുനാൾ രാമവർമ്മ മഹാരാജാവിനെ ഏല്പിച്ചു. ജാതി ഭേദമെന്നു ഏവർക്കും സർക്കാർ ജോലി നൽകണമെന്ന ആവശ്യം ഉന്നയിച്ച് 1891 ൽ ആലപ്പുഴയിൽ കൗണ്ടർ മലയാളി മെമ്മോറിയൽ സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ അദ്ധ്യക്ഷത വഹിച്ചു. ശിശു വിവാഹത്തിനും സ്ത്രീധനത്തിനും ബാല വേലയ്ക്കും പരിസ്ഥിതി ചൂഷണത്തിനും എതിരെ നടത്തിയ പോരാട്ടങ്ങളും ചരിത്രത്തിൽ അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തേണ്ടവയാണ്. വിധവകളേയും സ്ത്രീകളേയും വ്യഭാഭേയും എല്ലായിടത്തും സംരക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടണമെന്നും പ്രബോധിപ്പിച്ചു.

പരുമല തിരുമേനിക്ക് സുവർണ്ണ സമീപനം പുലർത്തിയ സഭാംഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും ശക്തവും ബാഹ്യവുമായ നിരവധി എതിർപ്പുകൾ നേരിടേണ്ടിവന്നു. ഇതിനെതിരെ പരുമല തിരുമേനി എഴുതി: മറ്റുള്ളവരേക്കാൾ വലിയവൻ എത്ര ദരിദ്രനായാലും അവൻ വലിയവൻ എന്നോർക്കുക. ഈ ഓർമ്മ വച്ചുകൊണ്ട് എല്ലാവരേയും ബഹുമാനിക്കുകയും, ആരേയും നിന്ദിക്കാതിരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുവീൻ. എല്ലാവരേയും സ്നേഹിക്കണമെന്നും ആദരിക്കണമെന്നും ആഹ്വാനം ചെയ്ത പരുമല തിരുമേനി വ്യവസ്ഥയില്ലാതെ ഏവരേയും സ്നേഹിച്ചു.



ദലിത് വിമോചന ദർശനം ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന പരുമലയിലെ ഭക്തവചന പ്രഭാഷണം നടത്തിയ 1895-ൽ പരുമല തിരുമേനിക്ക് വയസ്സ് 47 ആണ്. സാമൂഹിക നവോത്ഥാന നായകരായി സാമൂഹിക ചരിത്രം രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയ ചട്ടമ്പി സ്വാമിക്ക് അന്ന് 42 ഉം ശ്രീനാരായണ ഗുരുവിന് 40 ഉം അയ്യങ്കാളിക്ക് 32 ഉം സഹോദരൻ അയ്യപ്പന് ആറും വയസ്സ് മാത്രം. ഇവരിൽ പലരും ദലിത് ദർശനങ്ങളുമായി എത്തിയത് പരുമല തിരുമേനിക്കു ശേഷം എത്രയോ വർഷങ്ങൾ കഴിഞ്ഞാണ്...! കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാമൂഹിക നവോത്ഥാനത്തിൽ പരുമല തിരുമേനി പങ്കിട്ടത് സമഗ്രമായ മനുഷ്യവിമോചനമാണ്. ജാതി ഭേദങ്ങൾക്ക് അതീതമായി തിരസ്കൃത ജനതയെ മുഖ്യധാരയിലേക്ക് ഉയർത്തണമെന്ന മാനവിക ദർശനത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ കർമ്മ പദ്ധതികൾ ആവിഷ്കരിച്ച് നടപ്പാക്കി.

മുളന്തുരുത്തിയിൽ നിന്നും പരുമലയിൽ എത്തി കേരളം മുഴുവൻ ഇടയ ശുശ്രൂഷ പകർന്ന പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ വ്രതവിശുദ്ധമായ ലളിത ജീവിതവും ആത്മീയ ദർശനവും സാമൂഹിക പ്രതിബദ്ധതയും വിശ്വാസ സമൂഹത്തിന് മാതൃകയാണ്. വിശാല കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിലൂടെ മനുഷ്യരെ മനസ്സിലാക്കിയ പരുമല തിരുമേനി പൊതു സമൂഹത്തെ കീഴ്പ്പെടുത്തിയത് തന്റെ സാമൂഹിക പ്രതിബദ്ധതയിലൂടെയും ജീവിത വിശുദ്ധിയിലൂടെയുമാണ്. പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ ലളിതവും സുതാര്യവുമായ ജീവിത വിശുദ്ധി ആഴമായ ദൈവ-മനുഷ്യ ബന്ധത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. പരുമലയിൽ എത്തുന്ന തീർത്ഥാടകർക്ക് പരുമല തിരുമേനി പങ്കിട്ട സാമൂഹിക കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകളും വിശുദ്ധിയുടെ ദർശനങ്ങളും കോവിഡാനന്തര കാലത്ത് ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുവാൻ കഴിയണം. വ്രതവിശുദ്ധിയിൽ ആത്മീയ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അഭ്യുന്നതിക്കായുള്ള പരുമല തീർത്ഥാടനം ഏവർക്കും ക്ഷേമാപ്തശ്രവ്യങ്ങൾ ലഭ്യമാകുവാൻ കൃപ നൽകട്ടെ. അദ്ദേഹം കമ്പറങ്ങിയ പരുമല സർവ്വരുടെയും തീർത്ഥാടന കേന്ദ്രമായ പുണ്യ ഭൂമിയായി വളർന്നു.

- മുളന്തുരുത്തിയിൽ 1848 ൽ ജനനം.
- വൈദികൻ, കോർ എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പ , റമ്പാൻ എന്നീ പദവികൾ ലഭിച്ചു.
- സുറിയാനി ഭാഷ. വേദശാസ്ത്രം, ആരാധനാക്രമം, നിയമം, ആചാര അനുഷ്ഠാനം എന്നിവയിൽ അതിവ പ്രാവീണ്യം നേടി.
- 1876 ൽ 28 വയസ്സിൽ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി.
- 1895 ൽ ഊർശ്ലേം യാത്രാ വിവരണം എഴുതി. ഇത് മലയാളത്തിലെ ആദ്യത്തെ അച്ചടിച്ച യാത്രാ വിവരണം എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്നു.
- 1902 നവംബർ രണ്ടിന് 54 മത്തെ വയസ്സിൽ അന്തരിച്ചു. പരുമല പള്ളിയുടെ സമീപം കബറടക്കി .
- 1947 നവംബർ രണ്ടിന് മലങ്കര സഭ പരിശുദ്ധനായി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചു.
- എല്ലാ വർഷവും നവംബർ 1, 2 തീയതികളിൽ ഓർമ്മ.
- 2022 പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ 120 മത് ഓർമ്മപ്പെരുന്നാൾ.





Church Construction



Peoples Choice Counseling & Health Services Inc

**Binu Abraham, MSW, M. Phil, LCWS-C,
LICSW, ACFSW, CCTT**

Services Offered

- Depression
- Anxiety
- PTSD
- Infidelity Recovery
- Anger Management
- ADHD
- Couples Therapy
- Internet Sexual Addiction
- Substance Use Disorders

More Info

www.pcc-hs.com

Email: binu@counsellor.com

6200 Baltimore Ave, Suite 300, Riverdale, Maryland 20737

Phone: 301-503-6623





**Best Compliments from
Aswin John and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Biju Mathew and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Biju Lukose and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Binu Abraham and Family**

Death and Life after Death

Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew, OTS Kottayam



We conclude the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by saying: "We look for the resurrection of the dead and the new life of the world to come". In the second paragraph of the same we affirm that Christ "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead". On every occasion of our public worship we conclude each prayer by seeking solace to the departed souls. We have to answer a series of questions related to our topic like the following: What is death? What happens at the moment of death? Where are the souls of the deceased? What will be the nature of the last judgement? What do we mean by heaven and earth? It may be a laborious work to answer these questions in detail. However, we will respond to these and similar questions on the basis of the Scripture, the writings of Early Christian Fathers and the liturgical texts of our Church.

Death as Separation of the Soul from the Body

In the narration about the creation of Adam in the book of Genesis we read: "Then the Lord God formed man, of dust drawn from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being" (Gen 2:7). There are two components in a human being when he/she is born; one is an earthly particle (the body) and the other is a divine particle (the soul). The latter gives "life" to the body. The same happened when the universe was created; The earth had "no form and it was void" until "the Spirit of God hovered over the waters" (Gen 1:1). That means, it is the spirit which gives life to the earthly structure. St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "the soul is created, born, made by God, a noetic and living being, which with the help and energy of God, transmits life to the body, as long as the unity of the soul and body is maintained" (On the Soul and Resurrection, ch. 6).

In the Baptism we acknowledge this reality and the consecration of the person with the Holy Spirit. In this regard St. Paul says: "Do you not know that you are God's temple, and that God's spirit abides within you?" (1 Cor 3:16; cf. 6:19). The Holy Spirit "reveals his presence in each one with a gift which is also a service", says Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:7). Different gifts of the spirit are mentioned by Paul in Rom 12:5-8 and 1 Cor 12:8-11. St. Paul asks us to live according to the spirit, who, sometimes, may stand against the whims and fancies of the body. The liberation of the body from the Law of sin and death happens in people who acknowledge the presence of spirit in him/ her (Rom 8:2). Bodily passions are bound to this world and the spiritual longings take us up to the heavenly sphere; "those who live according to the flesh devote their attention to the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit devote their attention to the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5-6). When the "flesh tends towards death, the Spirit aims at life" (Rom 8:7). It is a truth that the powers of death and life exist in each person from the moment

of his birth up to the moment of his last breath (Rom 8:12-14). Even after the baptism, when the Holy Spirit starts to work in us, the evil powers will try to capture the human being. Jesus said: "when an evil spirit goes out of a person, it wanders over dry wastelands looking for a place to rest. When it cannot find one, it says to itself; I will go back to my house from which I came. So it goes back and finds the house empty, clean and in order. Off it goes again to bring back with it this time seven spirits, more evil than itself" (Mtt 12:43-45). What happens in death is the separation of the body and soul; the body will merge to the earth and the spirit will exist again. "If Christ is within you, though your bodies are dead...the Spirit has life" (Rom 8:10). Jesus has promised that "whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life" and that Jesus "will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:40,44); those who eat the body of Jesus will have life (Jn 6:57).

Let us now turn to the condition of the soul just after the death. The reports of the death of the Patriarchs of the Old Testaments, namely, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, gives us the following information. The death of Abraham is reported: "Then at a good old age Abraham breathed his last, an old man after a full span of years and was gathered to his ancestors" (Gen 25:8). The narration about the death of Isaac is almost same: "Isaac breathed his last and was gathered to his people at a good old age" (Gen 35:29). Jacob gave some instructions to his children in the last moment and "he breathed his last and gathered to his people" (Gen 49:33). Out of the said passages we can conclude the following things:

- a) God gives a certain age to a person and at the end of that his death happens. The "good old age" of Abraham was 175 years whereas for Isaac it was 180 years and for Jacob 147 years.
- b) Death is the separation of the soul from the body. The body will be buried with reverence as per the custom of each land and the soul goes out of the body. Jacob in Egypt where his son Joseph was the minister. Therefore he got a marvellous burial; but his bones were taken away to Cannan as he commanded his sons (Gen 47:30; 50:13).
- c) The usage "he was gathered to his ancestors" is important regarding the fate of the soul. Abraham, who was driven out of his home land lived at a place where God sent him; he lived far away from his kith and kin. Therefore the usage "gathered to his ancestors" does not simply mean the burial at a place where his ancestors rested. Here a premonition of an immortal self in Abraham, the continuance of the personal being after death, that was not there in what 'his sons Isaac and Ishmael laid in the cave at Machpelah,' is evident. Abraham was experiencing the promise of God: "you shall go to your fathers in peace, and be buried at an old age" (Gen 15:15).



- Similar descriptions are said about Moses and Aaron too (Num 20:24). Our Fathers were joining the "cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1) and "the assembly of the just in heaven" (Heb 12:23).

In the answer to a question of the Sadducees regarding the condition of the soul Jesus affirms this reality by drawing our attention to the end of the said Fathers – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The question was raised by Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Jesus answered them: "Yes the dead will be raised, and even Moses showed it to be true in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; for he is God of the living and not of the dead; for to him all are alive" (Lk 20:37-38). Whenever Jesus mentions the name of God, he calls him "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". If the death of these Fathers was an end in itself, both Moses and Jesus could have mentioned the name of God along with the names of their contemporaries (God of X, Y and Z). Those who believe in God will join the community (cloud/assembly) of the believers where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the pioneers.

Struggle of the Soul during the last moments and just after the Death

Many people are eager to know what happens to the soul when it leaves the body which was its home for long. The Eastern Fathers developed a beautiful expression of this in their writing. They say that the soul at its departure from the body, as well as when it is preparing to leave, senses the presence of the demons who are supposed to be "the rulers of the sky". Jesus said in his Last Discourse; "the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me" (John 14, 30). St. Paul wrote – "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the ways of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2, 1-2).

The Fathers of the Church call these demons "customs demons" and the soul sees them with fear because it has to pass through their 'Customs- Houses' or 'Toll Houses'. In ancient days tax gatherers were divided into two classes: the 'publicans' and the 'tax collectors'. Tax collectors were unjust. Plato said that the tax collectors were oppressive, not so much when they collected duties from the visible imports, "but when in looking for what was hidden they meddles in other people's equipment and freight". They would lie in wait in narrow roads and seize passers-by, forcing them to give what they owed. It was very unpleasant and odious to the people of that time. St. Macarius of Egypt says expressively: "Like the tax collectors who sit in the narrow roads and seize the passers-by and the oppressed, so also the demons watch carefully and grab hold of souls. And when they pass out of the body, if they are not completely purified, they are not permitted to go up into the mansions of Heaven to meet their Master. They are driven down by the demons of the air".

Patriistic interpretation of Psalm seven is interesting in this regard. The concerned verse is: "O Lord my God, in you I put my trust; save me from all those who persecute me; and deliver me, lest they tear me like a lion and rip me to pieces, with no one to rescue me" (Psalm 7,1-2). About this passage St. Basil the Great says that the brave men who have struggled throughout their lives against the invisible enemy, towards the end of their lives

"will be searched by the ruler of the age" in order to hold them captive if they are found to have wounds or stigmata or imprints of sins. But if they are found uninjured and unstained, then "as they are invincible and free, Christ will give them rest". Another passage quoted by Fathers is from prophet Jeremiah's book: "There seemed to be a fire burning in my bones; I was wearied and could not endure, for I heard many mocking me on every side" (Jer.20, 9-10). Against these dark and devilish forces the faithful will be protected by God through his angels. The demons present "all the sins committed either deliberately or through ignorance from birth to this last hour". The angels bring up the good deeds which the soul of the particular person has done. Then the soul under judgement is in great fear. If the demons win, it hears the words: "Take away the ungodly soul that it may not see the glory of God".

Desert Father Abba Isaiah teaches that when a man's soul leaves his body, the angels travel with it. But then the powers of darkness also go out to meet it and to dominate it. At that moment the angels do not fight with the demons but they "wall the person round" with the good deeds that he has done. When the person has conquered the demons because of the good deeds which he has done in his life, then "the Angels will rejoice with him when they see him, freed from the powers of darkness". Antony the Great went into rapture in his cell and then saw himself go out of his body and walk in the air, obviously led by angels. Some bitter and terrible demons prevented them from ascending to heaven and sought a reason for several deeds. This view is attested by St. Ephrem the Syrian in one of his prayers: "When the fearful hosts come, when the divine takers-away command the soul to be translated from the body, when they draw us away by force and lead us away to the unavoidable judgement place- then seeing them, the poor man...comes all into a shaking as if from an earthquake, is all in trembling...The divine takers-away, taking the soul, ascend in the air where stand the chiefs, the authorities and world-rulers of the opposing powers. These are our accusers, the fearful publicans, registrars, tax-collectors; they meet it on the way, register, examine, and count out the sins and sins of the debts of this man- the sins of youth and old age, voluntary and involuntary, committed in deed, word and thought. Great is the fear here, great the trembling of the soul, indescribable the want which it suffers then from the incalculable multitudes of its enemies surrounding it there in myriads, slandering it so as not to allow it to ascend to heaven, to dwell in the light of the living, to enter the land of life. But the holy angels, taking the soul, lead it away" (quoted by Seraphim Rose, *The Soul After Death*, pp. 72-73).

The prayers of our Church during the funeral service acknowledge the things said above. In the fourth service of the burial we pray: "Lord accept his/her soul through the angels of peace who accompany him during his journey and place him in heavenly homes! Lord save him from the grip of the evil spirits! Set him away from that bondage of that enemy. Let him receive the soldiers who make a fort around those who do the will of God... Lord send him your assistance during his journey publicly ... Lord keep him safe from the cruel shelters of demons ... Lord be a fort, guard and companion for this soul until it reaches the blessed homes which are set apart for the believers of Your Holy Name". The prayer on the occasion of the

pouring of oil on the dead body seeks God's protection for the soul: "Lord, grant him/her through this oil which is poured on his/her body that he/she may become slippery and not be seized by the hostile armies and the camps of enemies who lie in ambush to fight against the souls of people. Lead him/her to the abodes of light and exultation with the saints. With joy and gladness, may he/she offer up glory to you" (The Funeral Liturgy, fourth service for men).

The Fathers advise us to live within the Church, with repentance, confessions and spiritual works that we live and die in the Church with the orthodox faith and the prayers of our Fathers, so that the ruler of darkness and the spirits of evil may not have power over us. It is believed that when a person's soul is about to leave the body, the memory of the sins which he has committed in his life comes back to him. According to St. John Chrysostom on the last day of a person's biological life "sins contort his soul", they stir up his soul. This refers to passions which "move up from below the heart". We know that there are passions of the body and passions of the soul. Ungratified passions produce intolerable pain and a suffocating condition. After leaving the body, the soul is light, without any bodily pain, and therefore it is easy and pleasant to proceed towards what attracts it, towards God. Soul can feel great sorrow and dreadful pain, but by means of the body and the passions it can take comfort and ease its pain. But when the soul leaves the body, "it is alone with its own passions and, in short, is always tormented by them". This is a real tragedy, for at this time, because there is no body either, it cannot feel even the slightest comfort. This is the reason for our prayer to St. Mary: "O Virgin St. Mary, pray for us sinners, now and always and at the hour of our death". The eighth century Father St. John of Damascene restructured this prayer to mean: "O Virgin, in the hour of my death rescue me from the hands of the demons, and the judgement, and the accusation, and the frightful testing, and the bitter toll houses, and the fierce prince, and the eternal condemnation, O Mother of God" (Eastern Orthodox Prayer on Friday Morning). St. Symeon the New Theologian says that the Christian has no benefit from the spiritual struggle which he is going through if the devil is not set ablaze by the Light of God. In the tradition of the Church, it is seen clearly that the demons have no mastery over the men of God.

Our Church asks us to observe 40 days of Lenten discipline when one of our family members die. Forty days is the period between the resurrection and ascension of Our Lord. The Israelites also lamented after the death of their relatives. This was for 30 days in the case of Moses and Aaron (Dtn 34:8; Num 20:29) whereas for Jacob the mourning was for 70 days (Gen 50: 1-3) because they had to embalm Jacob as per the Egyptian customs and practices. The soul of the dead needs the providence and protection of God in these days. That is why we conduct special prayers and Qurbanas for the diseased during the 40 days.

The Prayer for Souls which are Asleep

The Bible teaches us that the dead are asleep. St. Paul tells the Thessalonians: "We want you not to be mistaken about those who are already fallen asleep" (1Thes 4:13). When Jesus heard that Lazarus of Bethany, his best friend died, he said; "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep" (Jn 11:11). At the death of the daughter of the Jairus, the Synagogue official, Jesus asked; "Why all this

commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep" (Mk 5:39). Similarly, prophet Elijah prayed for the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:21-23; cf. 2Kgs 4:32ff.). All these people rose from death and lived for another period. Their "resuscitation to life" helped them restore their ordinary life and later on they died as other people. Their resurrection will happen on the Last Day.

The parable of the Richman and Lazarus gives us the teaching of Jesus about the condition of the souls after our death. There we read that after death of Lazarus "angels carried him to take place with Abraham" whereas the soul of the Richman was sent to hell (Lk 16:22-23). By reading the word "hell" some people may raise a question here: Was it the final judgement of

Lazarus and the Rich man? No, not at all. Fathers of the Church interpret this parable by saying

"Abraham's bosom" where Lazarus rests and "hell" where the Richman is placed are "two Ways of Life of the soul". There is a huge gap between the two too (Lk 16:23,26). The final judgement will happen only at the Second Coming of Christ. But during the intermediary period the souls will have a "foretaste" of their eternal place. St. Mark Eugenicus, a 15th century Byzantine teacher, says that the righteous and the sinners are in places proper to them. "The righteous live a comfortable and free life in heaven with the angels and God in the Paradise from which Adam fell, and the sinners are in Hades and live with affliction and inconsolable grief like those condemned to await the judge's decision. Neither the righteous nor the sinners obtain the Kingdom of Heaven or Hell completely" (Mark Eugenicus, On Purgatorial Fire, homily 2). We may have to distinguish between Paradise and the Kingdom of Heaven and between Hades and Hell. The righteous enter Paradise after their death and they await their entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven after the resurrection of their bodies. And the sinners enter Hades after death and will enter Hell after the resurrection of their bodies at the Second Coming of Christ. The faithful are waiting for this blissful existence of the soul whereas the ungodly has to fear about their life of torments. St. Paul tells the Philippians: "I desire greatly to leave this life and to be with Christ, which will be far better" (Phil 1:23). To the Corinthians, Paul says: "We know that when our earthly dwelling, our body here on earth, is destroyed, we may count on a building from God, a heavenly dwelling not built by human hands that lasts forever" (2 Cor 5:1).

Final Judgement and the Resurrection of the Dead

Most of the New Testament Books talk about the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the world (eschatology). However, St. Paul is explicit in this regard in his First Letter to the Thessalonians, the very first book of the New Testament: "For the Lord will himself come down from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet call of God. And those who have died in Christ will rise first; then we who are still alive will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we shall be with the Lord forever" (1Thes 4:16-17). Here Paul mentions three important happenings on the Last Day: a) Second Coming of Christ, b) Resurrection of the Dead, c) Uplifting of the people are still alive. After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ what he did first was "preaching the Gospel to the imprisoned souls" of Hades (1 Peter 3:18).

On the day of the commemoration of all departed souls on the Sunday just before the beginning of Great Lent we

read from 2 Maccabees, an inter-Testamental book of the Bible, interesting incident. Judas Maccabees found objects consecrated to the idols of Jamnia when he was trying to bury the bodies of some of his dead soldiers. He understood that this was the reason for their fall and defeat in the war. God revealed to him the sin covered by those soldiers. Then he took up a collection among the soldiers for a Sin Offering at the Temple of Jerusalem on behalf of the sinful dead ones. The Bible says: "If they did not believe that their fallen companions would rise again, then it would have been a useless and foolish thing to pray for them. But they firmly believed in a splendid reward for those who died as believers; therefore their concern was holy and in keeping with faith" (2 Maccabees 12:44-45). Jesus said in the Gospel according to St. John: "the hour is coming when all those lying in tombs will hear his voice and come out; those who have done good shall rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (Jn 5: 28-29). Whether there is anybody on this earth who is 100% eligible for Heaven or who is 100% evil to inherit the Hell is a question for debate. There may be a little goodness even in the worst sinner. That is why we pray for the dead ones. We know that all of us have to appear before "the tribunal of Christ for each one to receive what he deserves for his good or evil deeds in the present life" (2 Cor 5:10). But we believe in a God who is merciful even to the worst sinner; we believe that their souls are still alive just like the soul of the Richman who was put in Hades (Lk 16:24). The Richman's soul has conscience and memory and he thinks more about his brothers who are still alive. He does not want them experience the grief which he undergoes. In a sense, it is an intercession for his brothers. That means the dead one can pray for us who are alive just like we who are alive pray for the diseased. It is a two-way traffic. We pray for our departed ones and we seek the prayer of the saints for us. Some people may quote Psalm 115:17-18 to disprove the meaning of prayer for the departed ones. Actually this Psalm talks about the idols and idolaters and not about the departed souls. Idolaters are "dead" like the idols made by human hands; they don't see, hear, smell, walk etc.(Ps 115:8). But we are the living and we praise the Lord from today to eternity (Ps 115:18). In the Book of Revelation we read that when the fifth seal was opened John saw the souls of those who died for Christ's sake "under the altar" (in some translations "in the altar"; Rev 6:9). Jesus said about the departed as alive like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; "all are alive to Him" (Lk 20:38).

What will be the nature of the resurrected body? St. Paul discusses this aspect in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15: 35-55). For him the resurrection of Christ gives the promise and "advance" for our resurrection (1 Cor 15:12ff.). Just like life and green leaves sprout from a dry seed the decayed body can have "new life". Prophet Ezekiel speaks about the heap of dry bones. The Lord says; "I shall put sinews on you and make flesh grow on you; I shall cover you with skin and give you spirit that you may live; And you will know that I am the Lord" (Ez 37:6). In the Qurbana Thaksa of St. Matthew the Great (Mathai Royo) there is a beautiful prayer after the sixth diptych (thubden). It calls for God's mercy "to bring back the souls of the departed on their bodies". However, the resurrected body is "beyond time and space". Therefore the nature of the resurrected body may be different from our earthly body, which is subject to time and space. The resurrection narratives of Christ give us enough hint

to this aspect. The people who were acquainted with Christ for long could not identify him after the resurrection. We also may have a glorified body after the resurrection. St. Paul says: "He (Christ) will transform our lowly body, making it like his own body, radiant in glory, through the power which is his to subject everything to himself" (Phil 3:21). In 1 Corinthians St. Paul distinguishes not only between the earthly and heavenly bodies (1 Cor 15:42-44) but also between the bodies of animals and humans, who are the image of God (1Cor 15:39-41).

Let us hope for the best. Be vigilant and prayerful, because the Day of Judgement may be difficult for many. All the nations of the world will be brought before Christ and he will separate the sheep from the goats (Mtt 25:32-33); the upright will possess the Kingdom of Heaven (eternal life) and the evil will be put in eternal fire (Mtt 25:34-46). Let us hope for the "Garment of Glory" (1 Cor 15:53).

For Further Reading

- Clark-Soles, Jaima, Death and the Afterlife in the New Testament. London, 2004.
- Fortman, Edmund. Everlasting Life; Towards a Theology of Future Life. New York, 1986.
- Hallote, Rachel S. Death, Burial and Afterlife. Chicago, 2001.
- Hierotheos, Nafpaktos. Life After Death. Hellas, 1995.
- Kelsey, Morton. Afterlife: The Other side of Dying. New York, 1979.
- Osei-Bonsu, J. The Intermediate State in the New Testament. Scottish Journal of Theology, 44 (1991) 169-194.
- Rose, Seraphim. The Soul After Death. California, 2009.
- Prayer Texts: Shihimo Namaskaram, The Funeral Liturgy etc.



Golden Jubilee Celebrations









The Junior Gallery



ELIZABETH CHERIAN



SHANTHI ABRAHAM



SHEETHAL MATHEW



MERIN KANNETH

യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി Jessy Johnson



യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി നമുക്ക് എന്ത് കൊടുക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കും? ഇത്രനാളെത്തെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ സ്വന്തം ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചും ഉപവസിച്ചും നേടിയെടുത്തതല്ലാതെ നാം അങ്ങോട്ട് എന്ത് കൊടുത്തു?

ആ ഗലീല പുരുഷന്മാരെ പോലെ നാമും നോക്കി നില്ക്കുന്നതല്ലാതെ വാനമേഘങ്ങളിൽ എടുക്കപ്പെട്ടവനായ യേശു കോടാനുകോടി ദൂതന്മാരുമായി മദ്ധ്യകാശത്ത് തന്റെ പ്രിയപ്പെട്ടവരെ തന്നോട് ചേർക്കുവാനായി വരുമ്പോൾ നാമും എടുക്കപ്പെടുമോ?

ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പ്രതിഫലമായി സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഓരോ ആത്മാവും തന്റെ സൃഷ്ടാവിനോട് ചേരുവാൻ വാഞ്ചിക്കുമ്പോൾ അതിനു വസിക്കുവാനായി നൽകപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ജഡം അത്യന്തം അതിനെ ദൈവത്തിൽ നിന്ന് അകറ്റുന്നു. ആത്മാവ് ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പക്ഷത്തും ജഡം ഈ ലോകത്തിന്റെ ആധിപത്യത്തിലും ആണ്. എങ്ങനെ നമുക്ക് ഇതിൽനിന്നും ഒരു വിടുതൽ ലഭ്യമാകും?

യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി സർവ്വതും ത്യജിച്ച പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹായുടെ ജീവിതം തന്നെ ഒന്ന് ചിന്തിച്ചു നോക്കാം. പുതിയനിയമത്തിലെ നാല് സുവിശേഷങ്ങൾ കഴിഞ്ഞു അപ്പോസ്തോല പ്രവർത്തികളിൽ നാം ശ്ലീഹായെ കണ്ടുമുട്ടുകയാണ്. ബെന്യാമിൻ ഗോത്രത്തിലെ കീശിന്റെ മകനായ, ഗമാലിയേലിന്റെ അടുത്ത് വിദ്യ അഭ്യസിച്ച, ന്യായപ്രമാണവും കല്പനകളും അതേപടി അനുസരിച്ച് ഏറ്റവും ശുഷ്കാന്തിയോടെ, വിശ്വാസത്തോടെ ജീവിച്ച മനുഷ്യൻ. ദൈവദൂഷണം എന്ന് തനിക്ക് തോന്നിയ യാതൊന്നും വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചയില്ലാതെ നേരിട്ട ആൾ.

സ്തൈഹനോസിന്റെ രക്തസാക്ഷിത്വ സമയത്ത് എല്ലാത്തിനും സാക്ഷിയായി മുൻനിൽ നിന്നവൻ. യേശു ദൈവപുത്രൻ എന്ന് അതുവരെ വിശ്വസിക്കാത്തവൻ.

യേശുവിൽ വിശ്വസിച്ചവരെ ഏറ്റവും ക്രൂരമായി ഉപദ്രവിക്കുവാൻ കല്പന മേടിച്ചു നടന്ന ആൾ. ദമസ്ക്കസിൽ വെച്ച് “ശൗലേ ശൗലേ” എന്ന് പേരുചൊല്ലി വിളിച്ച ശബ്ദത്തിൽ അടിപതറിയ, യേശുവിന്റെ കണ്ണഞ്ചിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പ്രഭയിൽ അന്ധനായി തീർന്ന താൻ, സത്യവെളിച്ചം

എന്ത് എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കിയ നിമിഷം മുതൽ മരണം വരെ അത്യന്തം വിശ്വസ്ഥതയോടെ ദൈവരാജ്യത്തിന്റെ സുവിശേഷം അന്നോളം ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ലാത്ത വിജാതി-യർക്കും സൗജന്യമായി ലഭിക്കാൻ തക്കവണ്ണം ഒരു ഉപകരണമായി. യേശുവിനെ നേരിട്ട് കാണുവാനോ ശിഷ്യന്മാരെ പോലെ കൂടെ നടന്നു കേൾക്കുവാനോ ഒന്നും പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹായ്ക്ക് അവസരം ലഭിച്ചില്ല. എന്നാൽ കാണാതെ വിശ്വസിക്കാൻ തക്കവണ്ണം ഭാഗ്യം ലഭിച്ചു.

വിശ്രമം ഇല്ലാതെ അനേകരുടെ അടുക്കലേക്ക് രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ സുവിശേഷവുമായി അയക്കപ്പെട്ടു. യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി വിശുദ്ധിയുള്ള ജീവിതം എങ്ങനെ നയിക്കാമെന്നു കാണിച്ചുതന്നു. ഞാൻ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ അനുയായി ആയിരിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ നിങ്ങളും എന്റെ അനുയായികൾ ആയിരിപ്പിൻ എന്ന് ഇത്ര ധൈര്യത്തോടെ ആർക്കു പറയുവാൻ സാധിക്കും? അതാണ് വിളിച്ചവൻ വിശ്വസ്ഥൻ എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കി ഈ ലോകത്തിലെ സർവ്വ സുഖങ്ങളും ചപ്പും ചവറും എന്ന് എണ്ണി വരുവാനുള്ള ക്രിസ്തുവിനോടൊത്തുള്ള അനന്തമായ സ്വർഗീയ സന്തോഷത്തിന് ഓഹരി കിട്ടുവാനുള്ള ജീവിതം ലാക്കിലാക്കി വിശ്രമം കൂടാതെ ഓടി തന്റെ ഓട്ടം തികച്ചത്. യേശു വിളിച്ച വിളി പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹാ തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു. എന്നാൽ നാമോ, ഇഹലോക ജീവിതത്തിൽ നമ്മുടെ അന്തരാത്മാവിലേക്ക് ഒന്ന് സൂക്ഷിച്ചു നോക്കുക. തലയിൽ മുൾക്കിരീടം ചൂടിയ അവസാന രക്തഹരെയും നമുക്ക് വേണ്ടി ഒഴുക്കി നിൽക്കുന്ന യേശുവിന്റെ ആർദ്രമായ രണ്ടു കണ്ണുകൾക്ക് എന്താണ് നമ്മോട് പറയുവാൻ ഉള്ളത്?

കുഞ്ഞേ, ഈ പങ്കുപാടുകൾ നിനക്ക് വേണ്ടി ആയിരുന്നു എന്ന് മാത്രമാണ്. യേശുക്രിസ്തു നിത്യജീവൻ നമുക്ക് ലഭിപ്പാൻ സ്വന്തം ജീവനെ നമുക്കായി തന്നു. കൂട്ടുകാരനുവേണ്ടി സ്വന്തം ജീവൻ കൊടുക്കുന്നതിലപ്പുറം ഒരു സ്നേഹമുണ്ടോ എന്ന് യേശു പ്രവർത്തിയാൽ കാണിച്ചു തന്നു. യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി നമുക്കും വിതറാം, വാരി വിതറാം. അത് എങ്ങനെ എന്ന് അറിയുവാൻ മറ്റാരിലും അന്വേഷിക്കണ്ട. പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹായുടെ വിശ്വാസം, പ്രവർത്തി തന്നെ ധാരാളം. എല്ലാമഹത്വവും ദൈവത്തിന് അർപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട്, വീണ്ടും വരുന്ന യേശുവിന് സർവ്വതും സമർപ്പിക്കുന്നു.





BY ANISHA NINAN



OUR DAY EVENTS, LLC

WEDDING PLANNING SERVICE



"WE STRIVE TO
MAKE YOUR
DREAM
INTO A REALITY"

FROM OUR WIDE RANGING
PACKAGES AND PICK THE ONE
MOST SUITABLE FOR YOU,
THERE'S SOMETHING FOR
EVERYONE! MAKE THE MOST OF
YOUR WEDDING.

CONTACT US
713-715-9281
CONTACT@ITSOURDAYEVENTS.COM
WWW.ITSOURDAYEVENTS.COM



**Best Compliments from
Leela Varghese and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Bixa Kurian and Family**



**With Best Wishes on Parish Diamond Jubilee
Dr. Bijoy Vengasseril Thampi and Chanchal Rachel**



**Best Compliments from
Dr. Vinod Abraham and Family**



In loving memory of

Our beloved Kochappan

Fr. Varghese Pattammady

*The ones we love never go away.
They walk beside us even on this
day unseen, unheard, yet always
near, still loved & missed, and very
dear to us.*

Manoj, Litty, Sandra, Abel, Adriel



Entered into eternal rest on April 1st, 2010

**Inserted by
Manoj Pattamady and Family**



JOHN'S MATTRESS FRAME
"Save Big \$leep Better Since 1996"



MATTRESS Furniture SALE

2008 Veirs Mill Rd, Rockville MD
(240)305-7559 www.johnsmattres.us

Bedroom sets MATTRESS, sofa Factory Direct Sale
Twin \$99, Queen \$149

Premium MATTRESS : Sealy, Beautyrest, Gel Memory foam, Organic Latex Cotton mattress

Any Questions and for more details please visit or Call sleep consultant /store GM "Mr. John Pattammady"

F FINANCE
R DELIVERY
E SETUP
E FRAME
E PILLOWS

**Any Sale over \$799*



Best Compliments from
Manoj John Pattammady



Mary the Second Eve

Fr. Dr. Shaji P. John, OTS Kottayam



Awake, o my harp, your chords,
in praise of the Virgin Mary!
Lift up your voice and sing
the wonderful history of this Virgin,
the daughter of David,
who gave birth to the Life of the world!
St. Ephraim the Syrian

The story of Mary, the Mother of God, is veiled in mystery. The account of Mary in the New Testament is tantalizingly brief. Her complete life story is not written in the pages of the Bible, some of it is kept within the Tradition of the Church. In Holy Scripture, we first meet her as a young maiden, engaged to Joseph. She is one of the main characters in the first chapters of the Gospel of Luke and in the second chapter of the Gospel of John in the story of the wedding in Cana. Then, we find only a few sentences scattered throughout the later chapters of the Gospels. These few sentences place her in the company of the Apostles and among the group who followed our Lord during his earthly ministry. The Church has seen fit to hold within its Tradition a body of stories, prayers, services, and devotions to Mary. It is through this collection of prayers, stories, and services that we get a full picture of the Blessed Mother of God.

In the theology and piety of the Orthodox Church, a special place of honour is given to the Mother of God. There are many appellations given to the Mother of God by the church and the honour given to Mary is due to her relationship to Christ. The Virgin Mary is often called an Ark, for the Glory of God settled on her, just as the Glory of God descended on the Mercy Seat of the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:10-22). She is called Aaron's Rode because just as Aaron's rod sprouted miraculously in the Old Testament, so too, the holy mother has budded forth the Flower of Immortality, Christ our God (Num. 17:1-11). She is the Burning Bush. On Mt. Sinai, Moses saw the bush that

was burning but was not consumed. So too, Mary bore the fire of Divinity but was not consumed (Ex. 3:1-6). In the Old Testament Tabernacle, there were found in the Sanctuary golden candlesticks. St. Mary is the Candlestick which held the Light that illumines the world (Ex. 25:31-40). Another title used by the Church for Mother of God is the Golden Censer. Just as the censer holds a burning coal, so too, Mary held the Living Coal. In the Apocalypse, there stands an Angel before the Throne of God, swinging a censer, representing the prayers of the Saints rising up to God. This is also seen as a symbol of the Mother Mary, for it is her prayers that find special favour before her Son. In the Exodus, the Israelites were led out of Egypt by a Cloud of Light, symbolizing the presence of God in their midst. So too, St. Mary is a Cloud, bearing God within. In the book of Judges we read the account of the dew which appeared miraculously on Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:36-40). So too, the Dew Christ, appeared miraculously on the Living Fleece, the Virgin Mary.

There is no woman about whom the prophets prophesied, and about whom the Holy Bible cared, like the Virgin Mary. There are numerous symbols about her in the Old Testament. In the New Testament also, there are her biography, her praise, and the miracles. The Church calls St. Mary, "the mother of all the living", and "mother of the New Life." She is the supreme example of the cooperation between God and Man; for God, Who always respects human freedom, did not become incarnate without her free consent which, as Holy Scripture tells us,

was freely given: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word (Luke 1:38). Thus Mary is seen by the Church as the New Eve, as Christ is the New Adam, whose perfect obedience contrasted the disobedience of the First Mother, Eve, in Paradise.

Irenaeus is the first Church father to suggest explicitly (ca. 180) that Mary had a place in the preaching of the apostles. His account of the apostolic kerygma contains the following lines about Eve and Mary: "It was necessary ... that a virgin, by becoming the advocate of a virgin, should destroy the disobedience of a virgin by the obedience of a virgin." As Eve was seduced by the word of a fallen angel and so fled from God after disobeying His word, Mary in her turn was given the good news by the word of an angel, and bore God in obedience to his word. As Eve was seduced into disobedience to God, so Mary was persuaded into obedience to God; thus the Virgin Mary became the advocate of the virgin Eve. This excerpt from St. Irenaeus shows that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, is truly a new Eve, just as her son Jesus Christ is a new Adam.

Eve lost the meaning of her name "mother of every living" (Gen. 3:20) by her disobedience to God and she obtained only death for her children instead of life, and became the mother of the dead. Her daughter, St. Mary, took her place; for by her faith, obedience and humility she became, through the Holy Spirit, the mother of "Life." She offered to Adam's children the "Tree of life" to eat, and thereby live forever. Through the mystery of the divine Incarnation St. Mary became "the mother of the Head of the mystical body and also the Mother of its members. She received universal motherhood to all the believers. The holy Fathers of Church consider St. Mary's holy womb as the bridal chamber, the meeting place where the heavenly Bridegroom is united mystically with the Bride, i.e. the whole Church. There we accept Christ, her Son, as our Bridegroom and the Firstborn Brother; and we accept St. Mary, His mother, as our own mother.

How many are the glorifying expressions and the contemplations, which were cited about the Virgin. How full of praise are the surnames by which the Church calls her, and which are inspired by the Spirit of the Holy Bible. She is the mother of all of us, the lady of all of us, the pride of our kind, and the queen on the right side of the King. The Church calls St. Mary, "the mother of all the living", "mother of the New Life" and "the Second Eve."





**Best Wishes from
Thomaskutty, Susan, Keith, Nikita**





**Best Compliments from
George V Thomas and Family**





**Best Compliments from
Rev. Fr. K.O. Chacko and Family**



**Best Compliments from
George Varghese and Family**

Diamond Jubilee

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, DC
PRESENTS
**DIAMOND JUBILEE
CELEBRATIONS**
April 2019 - Sept 2024

60TH

Opening Ceremony







60th Anniversary Opening Ceremony



HOW IMPORTANT I AM...

Fr. Anish Issac Mathew, OTS Kottayam



Let the little children come to me: These words of Christ always give mesmerising memories of our childhood. A time when we were the centre of all the attraction, a period when one need not to bother of why, how and what. Time moves on and slowly we step into various roles and responsibilities. We amalgamate into era but at some point of time we still get in the misconception that we are too important.

In Indian philosophy the two terms simultaneously used regarding human nature are 'AHAM' i.e. Ego and 'VAHM' Misconception.

Both these terms may be expanded as:

Aham: "An understanding that a thing can only be done by me"

Vahm: "An understanding that a thing cannot be done without me"

In majority of time we are stuck between these two and over emphasis on any one will lead to distress, despair or depression. Importance to oneself may alienate us from the society. We may face situation where no one would be willing to extend a supportive hand. The world we are living today, is a very beautiful place to live in and we are on a nice journey called life. When we are living in the world we should not live for our self but spread the fragrance of love and care to all.

To give is the basic characteristic of nature. A tree does not taste its own fruit nor does river drink their own water. Similarly, humans the most beautiful and important of all the creation and we should learn to live and love. Love is the common factor which joints and keeps the world going.

In Sufism there are seven stages of love:

- Attraction
- Attachment
- Love
- Trust
- Worship
- Obsession
- Death

Humans need to regularly contemplate and elevate himself to the next level of love. Jesus Christ loved us so much that he gave his life for us. Any religion or no religion is imbedded around love. Unfortunately, the world today is trying to find peace through war, and term that as love. Many kill their own fellow beings and embarrass that as love for God.

The incomprehensible God would be laughing and weeping for the acts of its valuable creation. The hegemony of the ruling class and their megalomaniac approach towards power is disturbing the harmonious coexistence of humanity.

The first few words of the Nicene Creed "We believe in" the universe is such big a thing and far beyond our approach and consciousness and we as individuals are just like a tiny speck of dust, and still we live in a misconception that I am Too Important.

The life and teachings of church fathers are historical evidences that, we need not to prove that we are very important but only through love, knowledge and action the world will conclude that we are or where important.

The payer of St. Isaac of Nineveh "I am just like a dirt and your grace like the vast ocean, just like a small piece of dirt cannot malign the great ocean, may not my actions be a hindrance in the path of your Grace".

Our misconception of being too important, may not alienate us from the grace of God and let us contribute to live a life in harmony with ourselves, and the world around us.





**Best Compliments from
Isaac John and Family**



**Best Compliments from
K. Yohannan and Family**



In Loving Memory of
Iype Varghese and Aleyamma Varghese

**Chinnakutty Abraham and family, Johnson Varghese
and family, and Benny Varghese and family**



We do catering for all events

Birthday party

Wedding

Festivals

Church gatherings

Call Abraham

202.460.3795





**Best Compliments from
Johnson Alexander and Family**



Who We Are?: The Malankara Orthodox Church and its Growth in the American Soil

Fr. Dr. Varghese M. Daniel



Introduction

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (in other words, Orthodox Church of India), holds a rich historical legacy spanning more than 2000 years. Unambiguously, it is considered as one of the oldest Churches in the history of Christianity. The Gospel reached India even before it reached Europe. The historical evidence and the ancient traditions of the Church clearly prove that this Church is not a by-product of Western evangelism, rather it is an Apostolic Church established by St. Thomas, the Apostle of Christ in AD.52. Currently, the Church is administered by a Catholicos and comprises 30 dioceses along with 30 Metropolitans. It encompasses more than 1800 parishes, over 1900 priests, and numerous Mission centers, educational institutions, and Orphanages spread across the globe. Over the centuries, the Church's history has been intertwined with various influences, including the Persian Church, Portuguese colonization, cooperation with the British Church Missionary Society, and its association with the Antiochene Syrian Patriarchate. This article explores the journey of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church from its early days to its contemporary identity as a prominent member of the Oriental Orthodox family and its roots in the American soil.

Apostolic Origin

The Oral and written traditions of Malankara Christians affirm that St. Thomas the Apostle, arrived in AD 52, playing a pivotal role in disseminating the Gospel and laying the groundwork for Indian Christianity. Despite questions about the feasibility of traveling from Jerusalem to India during the time of Jesus and the Apostles, historical context supports its viability. Well-established trade routes between Western Asia and India existed even prior to Christianity's inception. These trade networks encompassed overland paths that extended to North India, and maritime routes connecting to the southern coasts. Notably, the Malabar Coast was renowned for its valuable spices, particularly Black Gold pepper and other spices. Among the

thriving trade hubs along this coast, the port city of Muziris stood out prominently. While direct, crystal clear historical documents are lacking, various sources provide evidence of St. Thomas' evangelization in India. The Doctrine of the Apostles, believed to have been composed during the second century AD, makes reference to St. Thomas' missionary activities in India. St. Ephraem (A.D. 330-378) also provides evidence of the Apostle's martyrdom in India, followed by the transportation of his remains to Edessa, a city in Upper Mesopotamia, now present-day Şanlıurfa, Turkey. Origen (A.D. 184- 253) and Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 315 to A.D. 340) assert that St. Thomas evangelized among the Parthians. A similar assertion is found in the 'Clementine Recognitions' thought to have originated around A.D. 210. The tomb of St. Thomas at Santhom Cathedral, Mylapore, Madras, is still a pilgrimage center for all Christians. Once more, during the 13th century, we encounter the presence of Marco Polo and Friar John of Monte Corvino at the tomb located in India. Although the specific name of the small town isn't specified, there's no substantial reason to question the likelihood that it was Mylapore. This town uniquely asserts its status as the initial burial site of St. Thomas.

Ancient Roots and the Persian Connection

The East Syrian Church had a distinctive relationship with the Indian Church starting possibly from the 4th century, through the arrival of Thomas of Cana. Cosmos who visited South India about the year 520 mentions in his Universal Christian Topography that he saw a Church of Malabar with a bishop residing at Kalyan who had been consecrated in Persia. While specific details are lacking, evidence from the 6th century suggests that Indian bishops were consecrated in Persia. In the 5th century, the Persian Church became prominent, its Catholicos in Seleucia also known as a Patriarch. In 486, the Church officially recognized Nestorius as a saint and Church Father. This decision sparked division, with some Persian Christians acknowledging

a Catholicos in Tagrit as their spiritual leader. This led to two lines of ecclesiastical leadership in Persia, one connected to Seleucia and the other to Antioch. Both divisions of the Persian Church tried to expand their connections with the Indian Church and conducted evangelism across various Eastern countries, including China.

In the 7th century, Patriarch Ishoyab III scolded a Persian Metropolitan for not aiding the Indian Church's priestly needs. The 7th-century Patriarch of Persia recognized the autonomy of the Indian Church, requiring only periodic letters of allegiance. By the 8th century, the Indian Church had a notable figure known as "The Metropolitan and the Gate of All India," possibly influenced by Islamic norms. In the 9th century, Patriarch Timothy of Persia relieved the Persian Metropolitan of his role in the Indian Church, taking over responsibility. During the same period, Persian bishops Prodh and Sabor visited Kerala and received royal grants. "Persian Crosses" from this era still exist in Kerala and Madras. A Vatican Syriac Codex from 1301 referred to this figure as "The Metropolitan of the Throne of St. Thomas, and of the whole Church of the Christians of India." In 1490, representatives from the Indian Church journeyed to the Nestorian Patriarch seeking bishops. While one delegate died enroute, the others successfully brought Mar Thoma and Mar John to India. Mar Thoma returned to the Patriarch, who then sent four more bishops. Mar Jacob, one of them, interacted with the Portuguese until his death in 1552. This historical account demonstrates the intricate interactions between the Syrian Churches and the Indian Church over the centuries, marked by ecclesiastical leadership, missionary endeavors, and encounters with external powers like the Portuguese.

The Portuguese colonizations and its Impact

The dawn of the 16th century marked a significant turning point in South India with the arrival of the Portuguese. This marked the initial juncture where the venerable St Thomas Christians began to experience the profound impact of the Portuguese colonial era, compounded by the intricate repercussions of Roman Catholicism. This led to its eventual subjugation under the dominion of Rome, orchestrated by the Portuguese through a sequence of strategic maneuvers.

Six calculated strategies were deployed to ensure the ultimate compliance of this church to Rome. 1. Bring St. Thomas Christians under the authoritative control of the Portuguese administration. 2. Latinization of Liturgy by the establishment of

two seminaries for clergy training. 3. The decisive severance of all ties between the Kerala Church and the East Syrian Church, enforced with rigor. 4. The entire congregation of the Thomas church was coerced into aligning with Rome through the medium of a representative assembly. 5. Involved the imposition of direct rule by the Roman Catholic regime through Latin Bishops. 6. Prohibit and persecute all the bishops from Eastern Churches. This simultaneous act entailed the obliteration of the invaluable indigenous heritage intrinsic to the St. Thomas Christians. On June 20, 1599 the Roman Catholic Archbishop Menezes with the help of local rulers, convened the historical Synod of Diamper (Udayamperoor) and thereafter started forcibly converting the Syrian churches as Latin, burned all the historical documents, and thereby terrified the Syrian Christians. The Malankara Church had to suffer servitude and indignities under the Roman Catholic bishops.

The Coonan Cross Oath (The first Opposition against the Colonization and its association)

The culmination of frustration among the St. Thomas Christians reached its zenith in 1653, during the event known as the 'Coonan Cross Oath'. This oath marked a significant revolt by the Nasranis against the dominant influence that the Portuguese had exerted over the Church of Nasranis, stemming from the perceived control established since the so-called Synod of Udaymperoor in 1599. This historic event transpired on 3rd January 1653 in Mattancherry, Cochin. During the Coonan Cross Oath, a mere 400 individuals out of the extensive Saint Thomas Christian community, totaling 300,000 members, aligned themselves with the Portuguese missionaries, specifically the Jesuits. As a direct consequence of this oath, a momentous outcome emerged: the establishment of an Independent Church led by the Arkkadiyokan, in defiance of the Portuguese influence. During this oath, the Archdeacon and a majority of the local Christians affirmed the autonomy of the Malankara Church.

Archdeacon becomes Bishop

The Coonan Cross oath infused profound courage within the St. Thomas Christians. This newfound resolve led to a significant development: on 22 May 1653, the Twelve Kathanaars of the Nasranis, driven by their conviction, undertook the consecration of the Arkkadiyokan as a Metropolitan Mar Thoma I at Edappalli. This pivotal moment also saw the



formation of a council, comprising four priests, to collectively steer their path forward. Later this ordination was confirmed by Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem of Antiochene Syrian Patriarchate in 1665. The Church continued to maintain an administratively independent community. From 1653 to 1816 Mar Thoma I to Mar Thoma VIII led the Church. A few bishops from Antiochian West Syriac Church visited the Church. By their influence, the Church completely adopted the West Syriac liturgical tradition. But their interference was minimal. Meanwhile, Mar Thoma VI accepted the title Mar Dionysius I.

Following the Coonan Cross oath, attempts by Portuguese missionaries at reconciliation with the Nasranis were thwarted, as the Archdeacon and leaders showed no interest in negotiations. But later under Sebastiani, the new bishop successfully gained the allegiance of 40 churches. By 1663, an additional 44 churches had come under Rome's authority, leaving only 32 with Arkkadiyokkan. Before the Portuguese left the country due to the Dutch attack, they consecrated Palliveetil Chandy Kathanaar (former council member of Mar Thoma I) as the Bishop of the Catholic faction of Thomas Christians and Vicar Apostolic of the Archdiocese of Angamali on 1st February 1663. This fraction is now known as Syro Malabar Catholic Church. So the first Colonization of Europeans was successful in creating a division among the St. Thomas Christians and establishing a group of Western Christianity in India.

British Church Missionary Society and Its Impact

By the end of the 18th century, British colonial forces dominated the region, and the Church cooperated with the British Church Missionary Society (CMS) in establishing education centers. However, this cooperation led to tensions and rifts within the Church. This eventually resulted in the establishment of a reformed protestant Church called Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the retention of traditional Orthodox practices.

The Title Malankara Metropolitan

In 1816, Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius (Dionysius II) ascended to the position of bishop and received an official endorsement known as the Royal Proclamation from the Travancore government, granting him the authority to serve as the Metropolitan of the community. Consequently, the leader of the Church became recognized as the Malankara Metropolitan. The evolution of the Malankara Metropolitan's role in the 19th

century stemmed from the foundation laid by the Mar Thoma Metrans. Notably, the power and influence of the Malankara Metropolitan surpassed that of the Archdeacons and Marthoma Metrans due to transformative political shifts brought about by the establishment of British rule in the region. Beginning in 1816, a series of distinguished individuals held the esteemed position of Malankara Metropolitan throughout the 19th century: From Dionysius II to Dionysius VI, Malankara Metropolitans exhibited substantial spiritual and secular authority. However, by the interference of the Antiochian Patriarch and British Royal court, another dispute emerged. The administration of Malankara Metropolitan Dionysius IV was questioned by Mar Athanasios, who claimed to be a bishop consecrated by the Antiochian Patriarch. Later, through the interference of the British Royal Court, Mar Athanasius became the Malankara Metropolitan. However, after the consecration of Dionysius V, he lost his position and the Royal Court approved Dionysius V as the Metropolitan of Malankara Church.

Mulanthuruthy Synod and Its Impact

In response to the challenges posed by the reformation and in a bid to support Mar Dionysius V against the reformist movement, the Church extended an invitation to the Patriarch to visit India. In 1875, Patriarch Peter II of Antioch journeyed to the region. However, rather than contributing to the reconciliation of the community's divisions, the Patriarch aimed to exploit the situation to consolidate his influence within the church. This was achieved through the curbing of the Malankara Metropolitan's authority.

Firmly aligning himself with Mar Dionysius, the Patriarch actively advocated for his position and influenced the convening of the Synod of Mulanthuruthy. Serving as the head of the synod, the Patriarch guided its deliberations and made certain determinations that endorsed his role within the Malankara Church. Following the synod, the Patriarch proceeded to reorganize the church into seven dioceses, wherein he consecrated six new bishops to oversee each of these dioceses. These strategic measures were aimed at diminishing the powers vested in the Malankara Metropolitan.

The Malankara Church, facing an urgent requirement for the Patriarch's assistance in countering the reformers, capitulated to every stipulation put forth by the Patriarch. The protracted



legal battles against the reformist faction culminated in the definitive ruling of the Travancore Royal Court in the year 1889. The verdict from the Royal Court yielded favorable outcomes for both the Patriarch and Mar Dionysius V, albeit in distinct dimensions. The court ruled in favor of granting the Patriarch spiritual supervisory powers over the Malankara Church, yet concurrently, it stipulated that the Patriarch lacked any temporal jurisdiction within the Church. Upon Mar Dionysius VI's assumption of the role of Malankara Metropolitan, after the death of Dionysius V in 1909, the Patriarch made a request for an official document from Mar Dionysius, attesting to unwavering loyalty to the Patriarch. However, Mar Dionysius vehemently declined to acquiesce to the Patriarch's requisition. Subsequently, on the 31st of May, 1911, the Patriarch issued an excommunication against Mar Dionysius VI. This act of excommunication resulted in substantial perplexities and divisions within the Malankara Church. This paved the way to the establishment of Catholicate in India.

Catholicate in India

To preserve autonomy, the Church established a Catholicate in India in AD 1912, with the assistance of the Canonical Senior Patriarch Abdedmessiah. The Patriarch arrived and chaired the sessions of the Episcopal Synod of the Malankara Church. By the decision of Synod, The Patriarch consecrated H G Thomas. Mar Ivanios Metropolitan as Catholicose of the East with the name Mar Baselios Paulose I. Following the consecration, the Patriarch released two official declarations, outlining the significance, privileges, powers, and responsibilities of the Catholicose. All the prerogatives and authorities held by the Patriarch as the head of the Church were now vested in the Catholicose as well. Following the passing of Catholicos Baselios Paulose I, the Bishops in Malankara, in conjunction with Mar Dionysius VI, undertook the consecration of Mar Philoxenos of Vakathanam as the second Catholicos, and he assumed the name Baselios Geevarghese I. After his demise in 1928, Mar Gregorios was chosen as his successor. On February 13, 1929, Mar Gregorios was consecrated by the Indian Bishops and assumed the title Baselios Geevarghese II. Mar Dionysius VI continued as Malankara Metropolitan until he died in 1934. The Church adopted a constitution in AD 1934, which was drafted mainly by Mar Dionysius VI. From 1934, by the decision of Malankara Association, the title Malankara Metropolitan was taken by the Catholicose and from that time

until today both titles vested on one person, who is known as the Supreme head of Malankara Orthodox Church. Current supreme head H H Baselios Marthoma Mathews III is the 9th Catholicose of the East in Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas.

However, there was a group of people entertained by the Abdulla Patriarch (the successor of Abdedmassiah) from the time of the establishment of Catholicate in India in 1912 and they continued their support to Patriarch. This led to many litigations in the Church. After the Supreme Court Verdict in 1958, there was peace for a short period of time by recognizing both Catholicose and Patriarch as equal authority, but at the same time no interference in their countries without an official invitation. Unfortunately, the thirst for power and money destroyed this peace and continues the disunity until today, even after the second Supreme Court Verdict on July 3rd 2017. The Verdict clearly says mainly 2 important aspects. 1. The Church has to be governed by the constitution of 1934. 2. There is only one supreme head and only one Church in Malankara, not two.

Malankara Church in the North American Soil

During the middle of the 20th century, a notable group of priests and members of the laity embarked on journeys to the United States with the goal of pursuing higher education and advanced training. Among them was His Grace Mathews Mar Coorilos Metropolitan, also known as the late H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews II. In 1963, Mar Coorilos spent a period of time at the Union Theological Seminary before eventually concluding his stay and returning to India in 1964. Throughout his presence in the United States, Mar Coorilos took on the periodic responsibility of officiating the Holy Qurbana.

Subsequently, a few priests from our Church began conducting the Holy Qurbana across various locations in the Northeastern United States. As time progressed, numerous other congregations emerged in both the North and South of the United States, as well as in Canada. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, His Grace Mathews Mar Athanasios, the Metropolitan overseeing areas outside of Kerala, took charge of the pastoral needs of these believers in the United States. From 1975 to 1978, this diocese operated under the direct supervision of the Bombay Diocese and its Metropolitan, His Grace Thomas Mar Makarios. On January 1, 1979, the American diocese was officially established, and it was led by His Grace



Thomas Mar Makarios (1979-2003) and later by His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas (2003- 2011). Currently, His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicholovos (2012-) serves as the diocesan Metropolitan for the Northeast. In 2010, for administrative purposes, the Diocese was split into two: Northeast and Southwest. In the Southwest, His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius (2009-2018) and His Grace Dr. Zachariah Mar Aprem (Assistant 2018-2023) served, and presently, His Grace Thomas Mar Ivanios (2023-) is at the helm of the diocese.

The tireless dedication of our priests, coupled with the hard work and generosity of the individuals of the Malankara Church in the United States, has cultivated the spirit of this Church on American soil. Their unwavering and unconditional love has not only resulted in the establishment of two dioceses on this soil, complete with their own headquarters and retreat centers, but also the establishment of over 100 parishes and several spiritual organizations. The guidance of more than 100 devoted priests and a few deacons has provided spiritual nourishment and guidance to the members of the Malankara Church, leading them toward growth and prosperity.

Malankara Church in 21st Century

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is a prominent member of the Oriental Orthodox family. Today, it is headed by the Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews III. The Church follows the ancient West Syrian Liturgical Rite and adheres to the faith established by the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, and Ephesus.

While the majority of its members reside in Kerala, the Church has parishes worldwide, and it maintains ecumenical relationships with various Christian denominations. Administratively, the Church is divided into 30 ecclesial units called dioceses, each headed by a Diocesan Bishop, and the Holy Synod, comprising the council of bishops (The Holy Synod), Managing Committee (elected administration body) and Malankara Association (the Parliament) is headed by the Holy Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan.

Conclusion

The history of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is a fascinating tapestry woven from a complex interplay of cultural, religious, and political forces. Stretching back to its origins, which can be traced to the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle, the Church has journeyed through time to become an

integral part of the vibrant Oriental Orthodox community. Throughout its evolution, the Church has navigated a terrain marked by challenges, schisms, and transformative reforms, all the while safeguarding its distinctive heritage and unwavering Orthodox traditions. Today, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church stands as a vibrant global entity, reaching far beyond its geographical roots. As the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church navigates the currents of the modern era, it remains a bridge between the ancient traditions of Orthodoxy and the challenges and opportunities of the present. Its history, marked by perseverance, adaptation, and a commitment to spiritual values, continues to inspire and guide its members while also enriching the diverse tapestry of global Christianity.



Books and Resources

- Brown, Leslic W, The Indian Christians of St Thomas: an account of the ancient Syrian Church of Malabar. Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Cheriyan, C V Orthodox Christianity in India: A History of the Malankara Orthodox Church AD 52-2002. Kottayam: Academic Publishers, 2003
- Farquhar, John Nicol. The Apostle Thomas in North India. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1926
- Firth, C B. An introduction to Indian church history. Delhi: ISPCK, 2005
- Joseph, Cheeran, 'The Indian Orthodox Church of St. Thomas, AD 52-2009. Kottayam : Mammen Kottackal Publishers, 2009
- Mingana, Alphonse. "'The Early Spread of Christianity in India.' Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 102 (1926): 435-514
- Mundadan, Mathias. Sixteenth century traditions of St. Thomas Christians. Bangalore: Dharmaram publications, 1970. 7, Mundadan, Mathias, Indian Christians: Search for identity and struggle for autonomy, Bangalore: Dharmaram publications, 1954
- Neill, Stephen A History of Christianity in India (2 volumes). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Samuel, VC. The Growing Church. Kottayam: Divyabodanam Publications, 1986.





**Best Compliments from
Manoj Abraham and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Mathai Chacko and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Monson Cherian and Family**



**Best Wishes from
The John Family**





**Best Wishes from
Rajan Varghese and Family**

The Junior Gallery



Reflection on Church

By Anjali Mathew



When I think about Sundays,
Only one thing encounters my mind,
Something so divine it goes beyond
comprehension,
If I miss it, I feel weak,
When I gain it, I am empowered,

I always look forward to see my big family,
Even upon thinking it brings joy to my face,
When I witness all of us together,
I feel love circulating in this huge building,
Together, all of us singing and praying to the trinity,

It is my sanctuary, my refuge,
A place that witness my highs and lows,
A comforting atmosphere surrounds me the
second I enter,
Bells and incense filling my senses,
A place if I lose, I lose apart of myself,

As our very own bride of Christ becomes 60,
A number so huge I can not fathom,
But upon reflection it starts to make sense,
As I see the people and the events that have grown
it this much,
I hope, oh I hope that maybe god will let me see my
church to grow another 60.



PRAISE PRAISE PRAISE THE LORD

Rebecca Cherian



In the bible, Job writes, "the Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord," (Job 1:21). I pray I never encounter the trials Job faced, but this reflects an aspect of my prayer life that God has been teaching me lately. It has helped further my walk with Him and improved my attitude to approaching life.

It is simple yet often overlooked: Praise.

What does it mean to give praise? It's simple, we thank God for all that He's given us and all that he WILL give us. Not just when good things happen, but in every moment. Elevation Worship sings, "As long as I'm breathing I've got a reason to praise the Lord!" I've always made it a point to pray in the morning, but when I started learning the importance of praise, I decided to devote the first part of each day to it. This helps me not only acknowledge that God has blessed me with another day, but also sets the tone for me to approach the day with a grateful heart. Although, it doesn't stop there; praise is continual. We should strive to thank God throughout our day. I encourage you all to implement this practice into your daily lives.

But what if we feel like there's nothing particularly good happening in our lives? What about the times we feel stuck or hurt? Praise Him regardless. Praise Him because he will get us through every hardship, praise Him because he has blessings in store for each of us, and praise Him because of his everlasting love and abundant mercy. I recently saw a video online of a woman explaining how when we praise God, particularly in song, His feet stomp, and when God stomps, mountains move. Let us remember that no matter what hardships we encounter, be it physical/emotional/mental, our praise is powerful, and our God is capable.

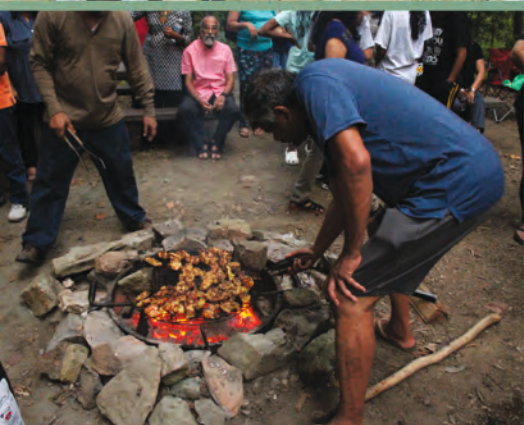
Praise isn't for us, but it can surely help remind us of the simple truth that God is Good, God is faithful, and God is bigger than any obstacle we could ever face.



Overnight Camping 2024

Camp Misty Mount







**Best Compliments from
Rajan Yohannan and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Rajesh Mathew and Family**



St. Gregorios of Parumala

Inserted by T.P. Johny and family



**Best Compliments from
T.P. Johny and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Sajan Mathew and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Saju Sam and Annie Abraham**



**Best Compliments from
Shibu Varghese and Family**

The Transformative Encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman: A Reflection on St. John 4:1-42

**Fr. Dr. Jacob Mathew
Orlando, Florida**



Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, as recorded in the Gospel of St. John (4:1-42), we witness an extraordinary dialogue that transcends and transforms the social, cultural, religious, and gender barriers. This story is significant for its theological depth and the profound lessons it offers on faith, spiritual transformation, Christian education, worship, inclusivity, and evangelism. At the heart of the encounter is the offering of "the living water," a symbol that incorporates spiritual rebirth and the invitation to eternal life from God Himself.

The Context of the Encounter

The setting of the encounter is Samaria, a region fraught with historical tensions among the Jews and Samaritans. Samaria is situated North of Judea, and the Jacob's Well is in Sychar, Samaria. Israel was one Kingdom until the reign of King Solomon. Immediately after King Solomon, around BC 930, Israel was divided into two Kingdoms, Judea and Samaria. Judea included the Holy City, Jerusalem, and the Judeans worshipped there. The Samaritans, considered by the Judeans as a mixed race, had the Jacob's Well as their center of worship. Therefore, severe societal divisions existed between these two kingdoms, which together are the twelve tribes of Israel. The Jews, who were the Judeans, considered the Samaritans as untouchables and excluded them socially. Yet, Jesus, a Jew, engages in a deep and meaningful conversation with a Samaritan woman on His way back from Galilee to Jerusalem. St. John dedicated an entire chapter to describe this event; therefore, it has significant spiritual, liturgic, and sacramental meanings. This act is substantial, as it underscores Jesus' radical inclusivity and his breaking down of boundaries that separated people based on ethnicity, gender, and social status while uniting them sacramentally, liturgically, and transformatively. The Samaritan woman, traditionally recognized as St. Photini in the Orthodox tradition, represents everyone who yearns for deeper spiritual fulfillment but may not

know where to find it. The name Photini means the luminous one or the enlightened one.

Jacob's Well and the Living Water

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman occurs at Jacob's Well. Although we don't read about Jacob's Well in the Old Testament, St. John maintains the legendary significance of this location for the Samaritans, connecting them to the Patriarch Jacob. In desert life, a well means sustenance and subsistence, a source of life in the desert. This well was the primary city center and worship place for these Samaritan people, where physical and spiritual thirst could be satisfied. Jesus, in offering the woman "living water," speaks of a gift far more significant than physical sustenance and a partial satisfaction of spiritual thirst. He takes this woman to the most substantial meaning of the correct worship, namely, the Orthodox worship. He promises water that will quench the genuine spiritual thirst and lead to eternal life (St. John 4:14). This living water is emblematic of the sacraments, especially baptism, which, in Orthodox theology, marks the initiation into a new life in Christ. Baptism is the wellspring of divine grace, continuously refreshing the soul and leading it toward eternal communion with God.

In Orthodox liturgical practice, water is the dynamic, life-giving element, and it symbolizes the means for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' offer of living water transforms the Samaritan woman's understanding of water from a literal interpretation to a spiritual quenching of thirst because God has set the stage for her conversion. The transformative power of this encounter is evident as the woman moves from skepticism to belief, obscurity to conviction, and from being a bard to an ultimate evangelist, the first female evangelist.

Symbolism of Thirst and the Human Condition

Thirst, physical and spiritual, is a central theme in this passage. Jesus tells the woman that the water He offers will become in her "a fountain of water

springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). This statement reveals the nature of divine grace—it is not static, but dynamic, constantly flowing, rejuvenating, and transforming the person who receives it.

The Samaritan woman is not a mere illiterate person. She enters a deep dialogue with Jesus and converses intellectually and is asking profound theological facts, which to some extent reminds the twelve-year-old Jesus talking with the Pharisees and Scribes. Here, the roles are reversed. Jesus is the Malphono, the teacher, and the Samaritan woman is the Thalmidtho, the disciple. Her questions were substantial and meaningful. She asks how Jesus, a Jew, could demand water from her, what was the meaning of true worship, where the proper place of worship shall be, and about the ultimate arrival of the Messiah. She covertly teases Jesus on His claim about the ability to give the water of life as He had no means to draw water from the well.

On the contrary, this dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman serves as a powerful metaphor for the human soul's thirst for God. Humanity, in its brokenness, often seeks to quench this thirst through various means—relationships, material possessions, fallacies, vanities, or false beliefs—but only the living water offered by Christ can truly satisfy. When Jesus enlightens the Samaritan woman, He ignites within her the genuine thirst for God, transforming her from a seeker to a source—a "Quelle" or fountain—for others. This conversation mirrors the transformative power of encountering Christ, where the once-thirsty individual becomes an apostle, sharing the ever-quenching water of Christ with others. The ordinary Samaritan woman was transformed into St. Photini, the female evangelist apostle.

Jesus' Revelation of Personal History

A pivotal moment in this encounter is when Jesus reveals the Samaritan woman's personal history, including her five marriages and current relationship (John 4:18). However, Jesus' knowledge of her life transcends mere facts. It is a profound demonstration of His divine insight and deep understanding of the human heart. While the Samaritan woman initially interprets Jesus' words literally, the Orthodox Christian tradition often interprets her relationships symbolically. Israel, in its covenant with Yahweh, is likened to a bride in various Old Testament texts like Isaiah (54: 5-8, 62: 4,5) Ezekiel (16: 8-30, 23) Jeremiah (2: 2, 3: 1-14, 31-34), and Hosea (1:2, 2: 2-7, 4:12).

The Samaritan woman's five marriages could be seen as symbolic of Israel's spiritual adultery—its worship of foreign gods and failure to remain faithful to Yahweh. More precisely, she had five husbands, meaning five different gods; her current god is not her god either. Such a lifestyle reflects her unfaithfulness. Jesus, therefore, does not address the woman's personal situation but points to a broader spiritual truth. He calls her to return to the true God, offering her a new life rooted in faithfulness. This moment also reflects Christ's approach to humanity: He knows us intimately, with all our faults and failures, yet invites us into a deeper, genuine relationship with Him.

Worship in Spirit and Truth

Another critical element of this passage is Jesus' teaching on worship. He tells the woman that "true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (St. John 4:23). This foundational principle in Orthodox theology emphasizes the importance of an inward, genuine connection with God. True worship is not only about external rituals or physical locations but about the state of the heart and soul. It transcends knowledge, embracing a metaphysical relationship with God in an unadulterated faith, where the individual is transformed by divine grace, theosis.

This idea is beautifully symbolized in the Orthodox practice of baptism, where the newly baptized wear a white garment, signifying their new, transformed life in Christ. Similarly, the Samaritan woman, now enlightened by her encounter with Jesus, is spiritually reborn. In Orthodox tradition, St. Photini—the name given to the Samaritan woman—is venerated as "the enlightened one" or "the brilliant one." Her transformation reflects the brilliance of the soul when it is united with Christ through true faith. Speaking practically, this is the reason why our forefathers used to wear white dresses to the Church. The white garment symbolizes the brilliance and enlightenment received at the sacrament of baptism. We lost this beautiful tradition on the course of our journey, and it must be regained, which will be a serious going back to the covenant.

Jesus' Declaration: I Am the Messiah

In a remarkable moment, Jesus reveals His identity to the Samaritan woman, telling her plainly, "I am the Messiah" (John 4:26). This declaration is a pivotal revelation in the Gospel, as it underscores the

divinity of Christ, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and the culmination of God's plan for the salvation of humanity. The woman's recognition of Jesus as more than a prophet marks her spiritual awakening and her realization of the significance of her encounter with Him.

The Woman as an Evangelist

One of the most powerful outcomes of this encounter is the Samaritan woman's transformation into an evangelist. After her conversation with Jesus, she returns to her village and tells the people about Him. Her testimony leads many to believe in Christ, not just because of her words, but because they, too, come to experience Him directly (John 4:39-42). This reflects a core tenet of Orthodox evangelism: true faith is not based solely on the words of others but on a personal, transformative encounter with Christ.

The woman's role as an evangelist is significant because it breaks down societal barriers. She was disregarded by the community when they said, "We believe not because of your words, but because they experienced the true Christ. She would not complain about it. This selfless servanthood to the Gospel is

her testimony, which reaches beyond the limitations of her gender and ethnicity, demonstrating that the message of Christ transcends all human divisions. This inclusivity is central to the Gospel's message and is a call to all believers to share the transformative power of Christ's love with others, regardless of their background.

Conclusion: The Power of Encountering Christ

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a profound narrative of inclusion, revelation, and transformation. It shows us that no one is beyond the reach of Christ's love and that true worship and faith are matters of the heart. This encounter invites every individual to enter a deeper personal relationship with Christ, receive the living water that only He can offer, become a source of life-giving water, and share that gift with others.

As the Samaritan woman's life was changed by her encounter with Jesus, so are we called to be transformed by our encounters with Him in the sacraments and our daily lives. In doing so, we become recipients of His grace and vessels through which His love flows to the world.





Parish Life









Sunday School & OVBS





Senior Night-2018



Elements of Prayer

Fr. Sujit Thomas

Asst. Vicar of St. Thomas Church, Philadelphia



We can pray to God with or without words. What type of words do we use? The type of words used in prayer can be categorized in different headings. The acronym A.C.T.S. is useful for us to remember four types of words or elements of prayer.

Adoration

Adoration is praising God for who God is and what He has done. The Lord's prayer begins with us praising the name of God. Halleluiah is a phrase that recurs in our prayers. Halleluiah is a Hebrew phrase that means "Praise the Lord". Many times, we praise God by recalling how majestic and incomprehensible God is to us. Other times, we praise God by recalling his awesome works like the creation of the universe and the work of salvation through Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The trisagion is a good example of a prayer of adoration (see Rev. 4:8). In our private prayers we can praise God for all the blessings He has given to us. (see Psalms 63:3-4; 95:3-5; Hebrews 13:15; Revelation 5:12)

Confession

Confession of our sinfulness and unworthiness is an essential element of prayer. Remember we learned yesterday that through prayer we enter into the presence of God. When we stand in the presence of the Holy One, we remember how sinful and unworthy we are. When the prophet Isaiah had a vision of God in His temple, the prophet confessed his sinfulness: "Woe to me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). Most of our liturgies (prayer services) begin with Psalm 51, a psalm of repentance. The Holy Qurbana includes many prayers of repentance including the inspiring Husoyo prayer. (see I John 1:4-9; Psalm 25:11; Jeremiah 31:34)

Thanksgiving

The verse that follows our theme verse says, "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess 5:18). We have to remember that everything we have is a gift from God. We need to thank God for the gift of salvation and for our personal blessings. The word "eucharist" is another term for Holy Qurbana and "eucharist" means "thanksgiving." In the Holy Qurbana we say, "This Qurbana is mercy, peace, sacrifice, and thanksgiving". Through the prayers of thanksgiving, we should adopt an attitude of gratitude.

Supplication

Supplication means requests. Traditionally when we think of prayer, we think of the requests we make to God. We might ask God for protection, forgiveness, healing, and other blessings. In our prayers, "bovoosos" are supplicatory prayers. The Syriac word "bovooso" means supplication. St Paul says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). Prayer for others (intercession) is a special type of supplication. (see also Ephesians 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1-4). The A.C.T.S acronym is useful to remember the different elements of prayer and also to form our own prayers in private and group settings.

Ref: See "Abba Father" by Rev Fr Baby Varghese, Unit I, Lesson 3 "Elements of Worship"





സംഭാഷണം എപ്പോഴും രണ്ടു വ്യക്തികൾ തമ്മിൽ ഉള്ളതാണല്ലോ? എന്നാൽ നമ്മിൽ ഉള്ള ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ആത്മാവും ദൈവവും തമ്മിൽ ഉള്ള സംഭാഷണം എപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും ശ്രവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

യേശു പിതാവാം ദൈവവുമായി എപ്പോഴും പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ കൂടെ സംഭാഷിച്ചു പോന്നിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ നമ്മുടെ ജഡിക മനുഷ്യന്റെ ഓരോ നീക്കങ്ങളും വളരെ ഭാരത്തോടെ വീക്ഷിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ആത്മീയ മനുഷ്യൻ നമ്മൾ ഏവരിലും ഒണ്ട്. ആത്മീയ വളർച്ചയിൽ പൂർണ്ണരാകുമ്പോഴേ നമുക്ക് അത് മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിയുകയുള്ളൂ.

നമ്മൾ ജീവിക്കുന്നത് ക്രൂപായുഗത്തിലാണ്. എന്താണ് ക്രൂപായുഗം? എല്ലാവർക്കും സൗജന്യമായി കൊടുക്കുന്ന, ജീവന്റെ ഉറവായായ ക്രിസ്തുവിങ്കൽ നിന്ന് ദാഹത്തോടെ വാഞ്ചിക്കുന്ന പരിശുദ്ധത്വത്വം എന്ന കാര്യസ്ഥനെ നിലനിർത്തുവാൻ ലഭിക്കുന്ന അവ-സരമാണ് അത്. മനസോ ഒരുക്കമുള്ളത്, ജഡമോ ബലഹീനം എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നത് എത്ര വാസ്തവം! ഒരു പടി ദൈവത്തോട് അടുക്കുമ്പോൾ അതിന്റെ ഇരട്ടിയായി അകറ്റിനിർത്തുന്ന ലൗകികചിന്തകൾ. ഇത് ആർക്ക് പ്രാപ്യമാണ്? സ്വന്തം ബുദ്ധികൊണ്ട് നോടാൻ സാധ്യമല്ല. നിനച്ചിരിക്കാത്ത സമയത്ത് കൃപ ലഭിച്ചവരേയും, കൃപക്കായി കാത്തിരുന്നു കണ്ണ് മങ്ങിയവരെയും നമുക്ക് വിശുദ്ധ വേദപുസ്തകത്തിൽ കാണുവാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്.

സൗജന്യമായി ലഭിക്കുന്നതാണ് കൃപ. എന്നാൽ അതിനായി നാം അത്യന്തം ആഗ്രഹിക്കണം. നമ്മെ കർത്താവിന്റെ കരങ്ങളിൽ ഏല്പിച്ചു കൊടുക്കണം. വല നന്നാക്കിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്ന മുക്കുവർക്കും, അത്തിയുടെ ചുവട്ടിൽ ന്യായപ്രമാണവും കല്പനകളും ധ്യാനിച്ച് ഇരുന്നവർക്കും, ചുറ്റും കല്ല് എറിയുവാനായി നിൽക്കുന്ന ആളുകളുടെ നടുവിൽ നിൽക്കുന്ന പാപിനിയായ സ്ത്രീക്കും, നട്ടുച്ചയ്ക്ക് വെള്ളം കോരുവനായി വന്നപ്പോൾ കിണറിന്റെ സമീപത്ത് തന്നെ കാത്തിരിക്കുന്ന യേശുവിൽ മശിഹായെ കണ്ട സ്ത്രീക്കും അത് സൗജന്യമായി കൊടുക്കുവാൻ കർത്താവിനു മനസ്സുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ, ഇതെല്ലാം വായിച്ചും കേട്ടും അറിഞ്ഞ നമുക്ക് ഈ കൃപ ലഭിക്കാതെ പോകുന്നത് എന്തുകൊണ്ട്? നമ്മുടെ ആഗ്രഹ കുറവ് തന്നെ! ലോകത്തിന്റെ മോഹങ്ങളാകുന്ന മുളളും പറക്കാതെയും നമ്മെ ഞെരുക്കി ആത്മീയമായി

വളരാൻ അനുവദിക്കുന്നില്ല. ലൌകിക സുഖങ്ങൾ നിർലോഭം തരുന്ന സാത്താൻ വിശാലമായ എന്ത് എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കിയ നിമിഷം മുതൽ മരണം വരെ അത്യന്തം വിശ്വസ്ഥതയോടെ ദൈവ-രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ സുവിശേഷം അന്നോളം- ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ലാത്ത വിജാതി-യർക്കും സൗജന്യമായി ലഭിക്കാൻ തക്കവണ്ണം ഒരു ഉപകരണമായി. യേശുവിനെ നേരിട്ട് കാണുവാനോ ശിഷ്യന്മാരെ പോലെ കൂടെ നടന്നു കേൾക്കുവാനോ ഒന്നും പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹായ്ക്ക് അവസരം ലഭിച്ചില്ല. എന്നാൽ കാണാതെ വിശ്വസിക്കാൻ തക്കവണ്ണം ഭാഗ്യം ലഭിച്ചു.

വിശ്രമം ഇല്ലാതെ അനേകരുടെ അടുക്കലേക്ക് രാജ്യത്തിന്റെ സുവിശേഷവുമായി അയക്കപ്പെട്ടു. യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി വിശുദ്ധിയുള്ള ജീവിതം എങ്ങനെ നയിക്കാമെന്നു കാണിച്ചുതന്നു. ഞാൻ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ അനുയായി ആയിരിക്കുന്നതുപോലെ നിങ്ങളും എന്റെ അനുയായികൾ ആയിരിപ്പിൻ എന്ന് ഇത്ര ധൈര്യത്തോടെ ആർക്കു പറയുവാൻ സാധിക്കും? അതാണ് വിളിച്ചവൻ വിശ്വസ്ഥൻ എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കി ഈ ലോകത്തിലെ സർവ്വ സുഖങ്ങളും ചപ്പും ചവറും എന്ന് എണ്ണി വരുവാനുള്ള. ക്രിസ്തുവിനോടൊത്തുള്ള അനന്തമായ സ്വർഗീയ സന്തോഷത്തിന് ഓഹരി കിട്ടുവാനുള്ള ജീവിതം ലാക്കിലാക്കി വിശ്രമം കൂടാതെ ഓടി തന്റെ ഓട്ടം തികച്ചത്. യേശു വിളിച്ച വിളി പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹാ തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു. എന്നാൽ നാമോ, ഇഹലോക ജീവിത-ത്തിൽ നമ്മുടെ അന്തരാത്മാവിലേക്ക് ഒന്ന് സൂക്ഷിച്ചു നോക്കുക. തലയിൽ മുൾക്കിരീടം ചൂടിയ അവസാന രക്തംവരെയും നമുക്ക് വേണ്ടി ഒഴുക്കി നിൽക്കുന്ന യേശുവിന്റെ ആർദ്രമായ രണ്ടു കണ്ണുകൾക്ക് എന്താണ് നമ്മോട് പറയുവാൻ ഉള്ളത്?

കുഞ്ഞേ, ഈ പങ്കുപാടുകൾ നിനക്ക് വേണ്ടി ആയിരുന്നു എന്ന് മാത്രമാണ്. യേശുക്രിസ്തു നിത്യജീവൻ നമുക്ക് ലഭിപ്പാൻ സ്വന്തം ജീവനെ നമുക്കായി തന്നു. കൂട്ടുകാരനുവേണ്ടി സ്വന്തം ജീവൻ കൊടുക്കുന്നതിലപ്പുറം ഒരു സ്നേഹമുണ്ടോ എന്ന് യേശു പ്രവർത്തിയാൽ കാണിച്ചു തന്നു. യേശുവിനായി സുവിശേഷത്തിനായി നമുക്കും വിതറാം, വാരി വിതറാം. അത് എങ്ങനെ എന്ന് അറിയുവാൻ മറ്റാരിലും അന്വേഷിക്കണ്ട. പൗലോസ് ശ്ലീഹായുടെ വിശ്വാസം, പ്രവർത്തി തന്നെ ധാരാളം. എല്ലാമഹത്വവും ദൈവത്തിന് അർപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട്, വീണ്ടും വരുന്ന യേശുവിന് സർവ്വതും സമർപ്പിക്കുന്നു.





Previous House



Jubilee Charity Projects







Best Compliments and Prayers

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working
for the Lord, not for human masters”

Colossians 3:23

Joleen Thomas

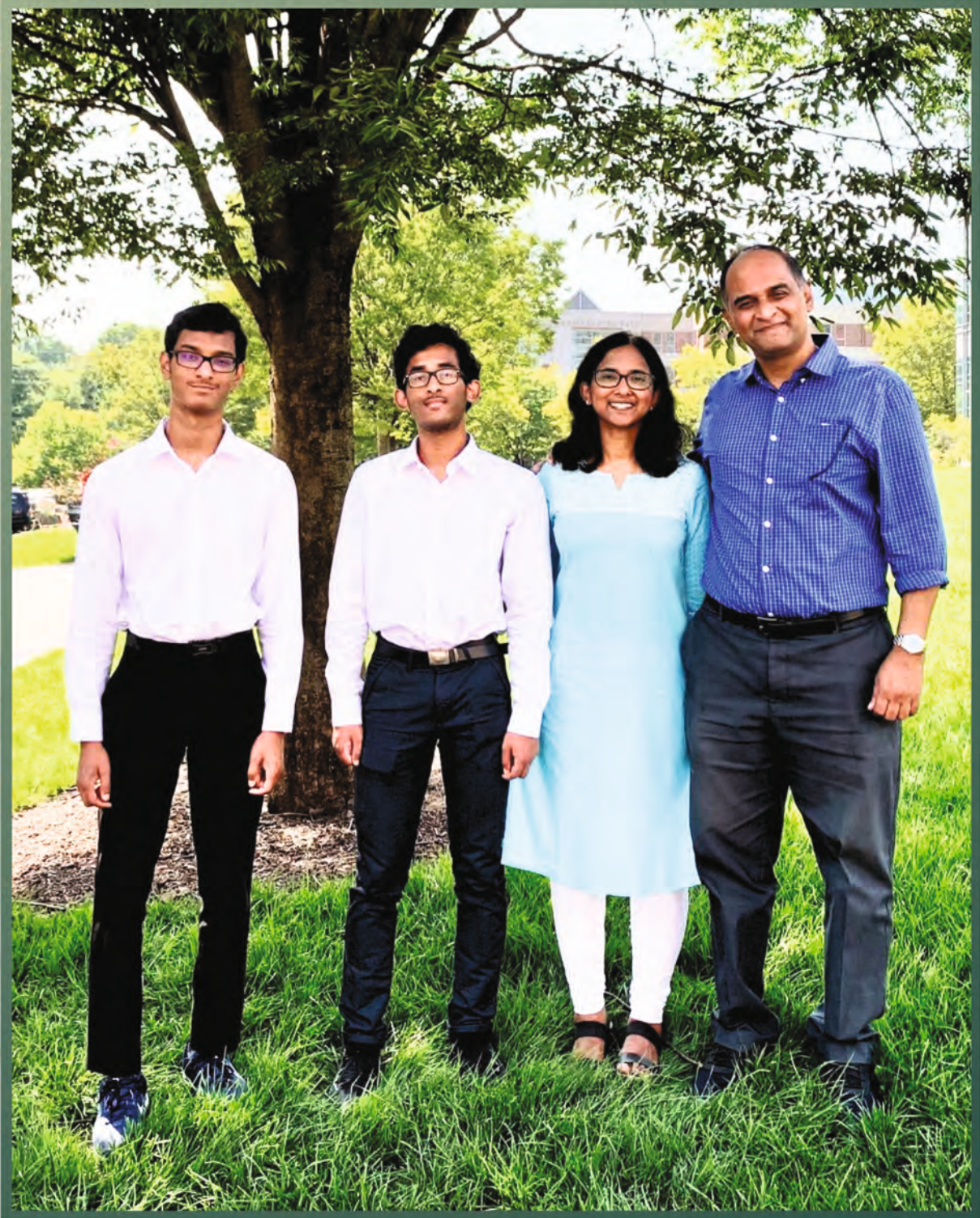
Instagram: jtworks



**Best Compliments from
Suresh Eapen and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Thomas Varughese and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Thomas Varghese and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Roy George and Family**



**Best Compliments from
Ninan Thomas and Family**



Best wishes for the parish Diamond Jubilee from
Sabin Zachariya, Praisemole Chacko,
Jonathan Sabin, Isabelle Sabin



Inserted by
John and Nair

Take Away & Catering
Hot & Delicious

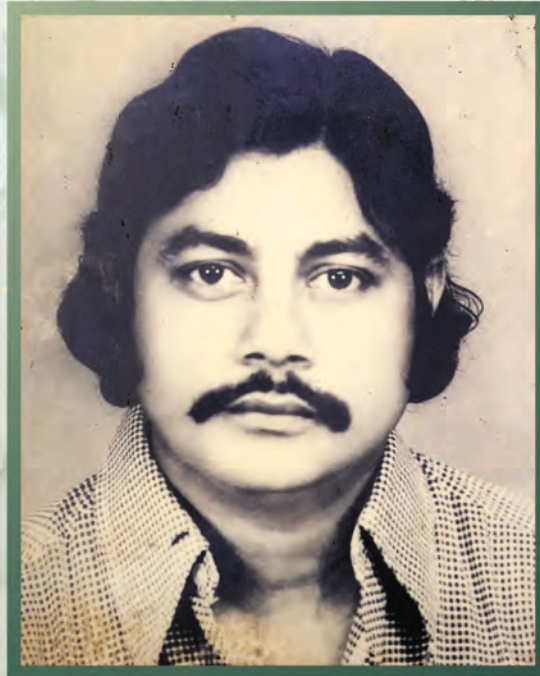
The Essence
By John & Nair

SPICE UP YOUR MOMENTS WITH FLAVORFUL TAKEAWAYS AND UNFORGETTABLE CATERING. WHERE TASTE MEETS EXCELLENCE!

☎ **+1 240 719 7187**
📞 **+1 240 541 0565**

📍 6338 MARLBORO PIKE.
DISTRICT HEIGHTS, MD 20747

129



In Loving Memory of
Mr. K.T Abraham (Kozhimattathil H) F/O Tintu
Abraham, DoB 1/6/1947, DoD 7/3//1980.

Marshoo Island

Escape into tranquillity at the stunning land of Munroe Island! Marshoo Island offers the perfect private getaway where nature meets serenity. Whether you're looking to unwind, rejuvenate, or simply enjoy the beauty of Kerala, Marshoo Island is your ultimate destination.

Contact Now

India - +91 62820 50002
 USA - +1 646 489 6520

Perugalam Rd,
 Munroe Island, Kollam
 Kerala 691502, India
marshooisland@gmail.com

Explore the Backwaters from
 Kollam with US

Marshoo Island
 unlimited tastes, lifelong memories, 100% natural

Inserted by
 Roy George





In Loving Memory of
K.J. Kurian & Aleyamma Kurian
Vakkayil, Vakathanam, Kottayam.



In Loving Memory of
C.V. Varghese
Cherikam Kuzhiyil, Mulanthuruthy, Ernakulam.

Inserted by
Varghese Kurian (Sabu), Giji Varghese
Jonathan & Jacob



**Best Compliments from
Jays Skaria, Jolly Jays, Alka Jays & Nibin Mohan**



MindPetal

Creative Minds. Innovative Solutions.

Mindpetal.com

1604 Spring Hill Road, Suite 100
Vienna, VA 22182

Service Offerings:

- AI/ ML
- IT Modernization
- DevSecOps/Agile
- Business Process Automation
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA)
- Low Code/ No Code Technology

For more information, contact:

John P. Hennigan

Vice President – Business Development

CDR, USCG (Ret.); MBA; PMP; MEP

John.Hennigan@mindpetal.com

(443) 775-0453

Company Information:

GSA Multiple Award Schedule:

GS-35F-0500W

CIO-SP3 SB: HHSN316201200089W,

Task Areas: 1, 5, 6, 7, 10

CIO-SP3 8(a): HHSN316201200089W,

Task Areas: 1, 5, 6, 7, 10

FAA eFAST: 693KA9-22-A-00047

DOL Case Management BPA

Primary NAICS Code: 541512

UEI: L875QGVDZC16

DUNS #: 830132879

CAGE Code: 5NR49

VerticalApps USDA BPA





Former Members Gathering





Former Members Reunion





Diamond Jubilee

Closing Ceremony











60th Anniversary Closing Ceremony





Sub-Editor's Message

Working on the 60th anniversary souvenir has been a deeply moving experience. It's been a privilege to gather the many contributions from our members, each one a thread in the rich tapestry of our church's story.

Collaborating with the various committees and witnessing firsthand the outpouring of love and dedication has been truly inspiring. This souvenir is a testament to the collective spirit of our community and the deep-rooted faith that has sustained us for 60 years. It's an honor to present these shared experiences and celebrate the individuals who have made our parish what it is today.

This Diamond Jubilee year has been a testament to the heart of our church. Through acts of charity, fellowship events like picnics and camps, and commemorative services honoring our clergy and faithful, both past and present, we have truly embodied the essence of community. We even had the unique blessing of welcoming back our former vicars, now metropolitan bishops, to share in our celebrations. This souvenir recognizes the vicars who have guided us and the ministries that have enriched our lives. We especially remember those faithful departed who labored tirelessly to build this church, whose legacy continues to inspire us.

As we reflect on the past 60 years, we see a clear pattern of growth, resilience, and unwavering faith. From those early days in rented spaces to the establishment of our own church home, our journey has been one of perseverance and dedication. This anniversary is not just a celebration of our past, but also a time to look ahead with hope and anticipation for what the future holds. May this publication serve as a reminder of our rich heritage and inspire us to continue building our faith in the Washington DC area and beyond.

ഏവർക്കും നമോവാകം

Thank you,
Alex Johnson
Sub-Editor





If God rewarded the righteous immediately, we
would soon be engaged in business, not godliness...

We would be pursuing not piety, but profit

-Clement Of Alexandria

best wishes for the diamond jubilee

nikoratechsconsultante



CENTER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Serving the Community Since 1993



Independence Freedom Choice



*For Individuals with intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities*

**Our CARF international accredited programs include: Vocational /
Supported Employment; Supported Living ; Community Integration;
Community Living for Children & Adults**

**Learn how you can volunteer or make a donation
Visit us online at : www.centerforsocialchange.org
6600 Amberton Dr, Elkridge 21075 Maryland
410-579-6789 or 1-800-269-0383 toll free**