

# Newsletter December 2007

## Message From Vicar

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Around this time, 2000 years ago Jesus Christ was born. His birth was a wonder to everybody who heard it. He is the King of kings but was One who was born in a manger. He is the creator of the whole world, yet He was born as a creature. Though He is without end, the Holy Spirit conceived Him in the womb of a virgin. He is the fire no one can approach yet the little girl took Him in her hands. He is the One Who nurtures the entire world and was breast fed by a virgin. It is very difficult to comprehend this mystery, so He is a wonder.

Have you seen this wonder Baby ever before? If no, join this pilgrimage. Our journey started on December first. We all are on the road to the manger in Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus, our Lord and Savior. During this journey we have to prepare ourselves to see the wonders of God. Our lent is a preparation for that journey. One may say that he or she for several years was part of this pilgrimage but has not seen the baby Jesus, the wonder. Don't worry; this happened to the wise men too. They went to Herod's palace first instead of the manger. Herod was a manifestation of worry and hatred through which Satan operated his works. But do you know whom we are visiting? We are going to visit the God of love. Herod cannot lead you to Baby Jesus. If you have hatred in your mind you cannot see the master of love. He loved us without seeking our unrighteousness. So, He is also asking the same from us.

I know anger is a serious problem in our life, in family, in work place as well as in church and where ever we deal with it. Most of the time we see others wrong doings. We may feel that the others are not doing the right thing and this can create anger in our minds. We may think it is right to do so. But hear from Abbot Macarius "If, wishing to correct another, you are moved to anger; you gratify your own passion. Do not lose yourself in order to save another".

Do you know anger is the greatest weapon in the hands of Satan? See an early Christian father's experience. "One of the brethren questioned Abbot Isidore, the elder of Scete, saying: Why is it that the demons are so grievously afraid of you? The elder replied: "From the moment I became a monk I have striven to prevent rising to my lips". If you have anger in your lips God will not accept your prayers. Hear the fruitlessness of our fasting and prayer from Abbot Hyperichius "It is better to eat meat and drink wine, than by detraction to devour the flesh of your brother". So do you want to be a child of God? Avoid anger from your lips.

Avoiding anger is not a simple thing, because it is a temptation of Satan. See how the desert fathers trained to control themselves to control their anger. Abbot Ammonas said that he had spent fourteen years in Scete praying to God day and night to be delivered from anger. Abbot Agatho carried a stone in his mouth for three years until he learned to be silent.

So, in this pilgrimage to visit our Lord baby Jesus, we should try to be away from anger and love our wife, children, parents, fellow workers and fellow believers in church. Surely you will see Baby Jesus in them.

(All quotes are taken from Thomas Merton's "The Wisdom of the Desert")

## Important Dates:

Dec. 1: 25 days fast begins

Dec. 2: Sunday of Mary's journey to Elizabeth

Dec. 3: 35<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day of Thoma Mar Dionysius: Pathanapuram Mount Tabore Dayara

Dec. 8: 32<sup>nd</sup> Memorial Day of H.H. Baselios Augen I Catholicos.

Dec. 9: Sunday of the birth of St. John the Baptist.

Dec. 13: 17<sup>th</sup> Memory of Daniel Mar Philoxinos : Mar Basil Dayara Pathanamthitta.

Dec. 16: Sunday of the Revelation to Joseph.

Dec. 17: 79<sup>th</sup> Memory of Baselios Geevargese I : Vallikkau Dayara, Vakathanam.

Dec. 18: St. Thomas pierced by a man in Mylapore.

Dec. 21: Martyrdom of St. Thomas.

Dec. 23: Sunday before Christmas.

Dec. 25: Christmas.

Dec. 26: Feast magnificence of St. Mary. 21<sup>st</sup> memory of Yacob Mar Policarpos. Koratty aramana.

Dec. 30: First Sunday after Christmas.

Dec. 31: New Year's Holy Qurbana.

## **Building Updates:**

As the construction is progressing the contractor has been able to complete the building footing and foundation work. Concrete was poured into the foundation. It was an interesting sight to watch all the large concrete trucks and boom pumps move around the site to accomplish this task. The temporary construction driveway was cut and bedded with stone. The lower level walls are being completed with CMU blocks and the scaffoldings have come up to work on the upper areas. The first door has been installed at the lower level. Installation of the first door is an important tradition in our culture and we thank God almighty in bringing us to this point and showing us the way that His house of worship will be built. The site contractor has completed the on-site water, sewer and storm water utilities. Depending on the weather work is expected to be continuous. In the next few weeks we have to make the final selection of the building roof color.

## **Christmas Carol:**

Caroling starts on December 2, 2007. We have around 50 houses to visit. Members have been requested to open their hearts and wallets to contribute generously keeping in mind our Church building fund shortage. Each member has been requested to contribute at least \$500 this time. It will end on Christmas day where we will sing after the Holy Qurbana for all, especially for members who were not able to meet the caroling schedule. Participation from all including children and parents is expected.

**Birthday:**

1. Rajan Yohannan
2. Angeline Johny
3. Shanu Eapen
4. Jacob Benny
5. Anu Mathew
6. Sara Varghese
7. Saji Mathai
8. Sheeba Chacko
9. Delin Varghese
10. Sheba Saji
11. Johnson Alexander
12. Della Varghese
13. Sam Thomas

**Wedding Anniversary:**

1. Johnson Alexander & Jessy Johnson
2. Paul C. Mathew & Aleamma