

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Greater Washington



St. Thomas Mirror



March

2014

The Great Lent starts



ENT
Prepare



Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved in Lord Jesus Christ,

I am so glad to serve as the Vicar of St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Greater Washington during this Golden Jubilee year 2014-2015. As the Vicar of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, I proudly present 'St. Thomas Mirror' in this Jubilee year 2014-2015 to our people to inculcate and conscientize the Word of God. It will enhance the relationship between members and help to think positively and creatively. Also we will become more responsible and preplanned to the Church activities and to the liturgy. The written communication has good value even after generations and centuries.

The month of March starts with Great Lent. The importance of this Fast is much evident from the name itself. This is observed to actively participate in the Resurrection of Christ through a life of passion and suffering. The Church prescribes the forty days of fast in 6 weeks which ends on Friday (Nalpatham Velly) before the Passion Week. But the Fast gets completed only with the Easter and therefore it is also called fifty days Lent (Anpathu Noimbu). The Monday, the beginning of the Great Lent, there is a special service called the service of reconciliation (Subukono) and the purpose of which is that the faithful enter into the season of Fasting having reconciled with all. This means that the Fast is holy and being holy it would become proper only if it is approached with preparation.

Great Lent is not for the sake of Lent itself, as fasting is not for the sake of fasting. Rather, these are means by which and for which the individual believer prepares himself to reach for, accept and attain the calling of his Savior. Therefore, the significance of Great Lent is highly appraised, not only by the monks who gradually increased the length of time of the Lent, but also by the lay people themselves. In the Orthodox Church, asceticism is not exclusively for the "professional" religious, but for each layperson as well, according to their strength. As such, Great Lent is a sacred Institute of the Church to serve the individual believer in participating as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. It provides each person an annual opportunity for self-examination and improving the standards of faith and morals in his Christian life. The deep intent of the believer during Great Lent is encapsulated in the words of Saint Paul: "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

To sum up, we should observe the Great Lent meaningfully as our Lord Jesus Christ exhorts in the Lenten season "Love one Another". May God bless you richly and abundantly, showering His choicest blessings in your life.

Yours in Christ

Fr. Johnson C. John Chirathalckal MSW, M. Phil., Ph. D.

Spiritual Organization Corner

MGOCSM Announcements

Class by:

March 2nd - Dr. Anu Mathew
March 9th - Mr. William Johns
March 16th - Mr. Shine Jacob
March 23rd - Mrs. Leemol Johnny
March 30th - Mrs. Nirmala Thomas

MMVS Announcements

Bible Class by:

March 2nd - Mr. Eapen Varghese
March 9th - Mr. Issac John
March 16th - Mrs. Jessy Johnson
March 23rd - Mrs. Shiji James
March 30th - Mrs. Preethi Bixa

Bala Balika Samajam Announcements

March 30th

Story Telling - Stacy Sam
Speech - Kevin Shibu
Solo Song - Melvin Lukose (Malayalam)
Solo Song - Sarah Thomas (English)
Bible Reading - Alina Varghese & Sarah Shibu

Men's Forum & Focus Announcements

Bible Class by:

March 2nd - Rev. Fr. Dr. Johnson C. John
March 9th - Mr. Eapen Varghese
March 16th - Mr. Eapen Varghese
March 23rd - Mr. Eapen Varghese
March 30th - Mr. Eapen Varghese

March 2014 Worship Schedules

SATURDAY

03/01/2014

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

- Evening Prayer
- Song Practice

03/08/2014

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

- Evening Prayer
- St. Mary's Intercession Prayer
- Song Practice

03/15/2014

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

- Evening Prayer
- Song Practice

03/22/2014

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

- Evening Prayer
- Song Practice

03/29/2014

Monthly Prayer Meeting
6:00 - 8:30 PM

Mr. Biju Lukose & Ansa Biju
4100 Swiss Stone Dr., Burtonsville, MD 20866
(H) 301-703-9942 , lukosebiju2009@gmail.com

SUNDAY

03/02/2014 - Malayalam Service

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. Baby Daniel
[Exodus 20:1-21 , Joel 2:12-20, Isaiah 58:5-14]

Epistle Reading: Steve Sam & Issac John
[Acts 11:19-26, Revelations 2:1-7, Colossians 3:1-17]

03/09/2014 - English Service

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading: Alka Jason, Annu Suresh &
Mariam Abraham

[Genesis 4:1:12, Isaiah 30:1-4, Daniel 3:14-25]

Epistle Reading: Kevin Shibu & Stephen Sam

[Acts 4:19-33, Romans 8:31-39]

03/16/2014 - Malayalam Service

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. Bavan Varghese
[Ezekiel 33:23-34:12, Exodus 4:10-17, II Kings 2:1-11,
Isaiah 5:20-25]

Epistle Reading: Alex Johnny & Alex Johnson

[Acts 5:12-16 19:8-12, Romans 5:1-11]

03/23/2014 - English Service

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading: Shareena Daniel, Neethu George &
Angeline Johny

[I Samuel 7:10-17, Numbers 17:1-8, Isaiah 56:1-7]

Epistle Reading: Steve Sam & Stephen Sam

[Acts 4:1-12, Romans 7:14-25]

03/30/2014 - Malayalam Service

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. Benny Job
[Genesis 9:1-7, Jeremiah 51:1-9, Isaiah 50:1-5]

Epistle Reading: Kevin Shibu & Alex Johnson

[I Peter 3:8-16, Romans 12:1-15]

Lenten Dates to remember

March-2: First Sunday of 50 days Lent
(Kothine Sunday - Pethrutha of the Great
Lent)

March-9: Memory of Forty Martyrs

March-9: Second Sunday of Fifty days Lent
(Lepers' Sunday)

March-16: Third Sunday of Fifty days Lent
(Palsy Sunday)

March-23: Fourth Sunday of Fifty days Lent
(Canaanite woman)

March-25: Annunciation to St. Mary

March-26: Fourth Wednesday of Fifty days
Lent (Mid Lent)

March-30: Fifth Sunday of Fifty days Lent
(Kpiptho/Crippled Woman)

Member's Corner

Know about our Fathers commemorated in the 5th Thubden

1. St. James: In Mark 6:3 we read, the brother of Jesus – son of Joseph in his first wife – the first Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem. He was not one among the 12 – still he is known as ‘Apostle’. He presided over the 1st Synod which is held in Jerusalem. (AD 50). (Acts 15) Even though Peter was present in that Synod it is James who presided the meeting and sent the decisions of the meeting to all the Churches. He celebrated the First Qurbana in Sehion Malika where our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, on Tuesday the 2nd day after Pentecost. He is the person who codified the first form of our Liturgy. He was a strict vegetarian. He wrote his epistle in AD 61. Jews stoned him to death in AD 63.

2. St. Ignatius: In Mt 18:2 we read, Jesus called a child, made him stand in front of them and said, “I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles”. This boy here mentioned, was later ordained as the third bishop of Antioch by Peter. He was called by the name Noorono (Agnimayan). In one of his visions he saw the heavenly angels praising the God antiphonally in 2 groups and he only introduced the same way in the churches’ praying antiphonally one group after another, and organized the orderly conduct of liturgical services. He established the Episcopal administration of the church. Under the persecution of Emperor Trojan, while he was brought to Rome as a captive, he wrote 7 letters to his people, on his way, to strengthen them in the true faith. These 7 epistles are now, the books of firm Orthodox faith of the Church. He met martyrdom, as prey to the lions under Trojan persecution in AD 110.

3. St. Clement of Rome: He belonged to the family of the Roman Emperor, but converted by the speeches of St. Peter and Paul and became a Christian. Later he became the 3rd Bishop of Rome. He was persecuted and killed by Emperor Trojan in AD 101.

4. St. Dionysius (Athene): In Act 17:34, we read about a Dionysius, thus – “some men joined Paul and believed among whom was Dionysius, a member of the Council. This Dionysius of Athens became a great scholar and later taught at the Alexandrian Theological School for 17 years and became the first bishop of Athens. He met martyrdom in 96 A.D.

5. St. Athanasius of Alexandria (297 – 373): In 297 he was born and in his early days he became a Christian. He was ordained as a deacon in AD 319 and became the secretary of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria. The famous theological treatise namely “De Incarnate” (about Incarnation) is written during that period. In 325 he attended the 1st ecumenical council, the synod of Nicea as a deacon with Bishop Alexander. But returned as the hero of Nicea, who formulated the 2nd stanza of the Nicene Creed about the Son, the 2nd person in Trinity. In the next year in 326 he became the Bishop of Alexandria when Bishop Alexander passed away. But his whole life was a period of fight with Arianism. He was exiled 5 times, and persecuted severely by the Roman Emperors. He died in 373.

6. St. Julius (Rome) 338 – 352: He was the Bishop of Rome. He was friend of Mar Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. He attended the provincial council of Sardica in 347. He wrote a liturgy and 2 Epistles. Died in 352 A.D

7. Capadocian Father (Basil of Gregory): St. Basil (329 – 379) The title ‘Basilius’ to the supreme head of our Church is derived from this great Father of the Church, St Basil the Great. This title had been established only in the 14th century. St. Basil was born as the son of Basil, a wealthy lawyer and Emmalia a devout Christian woman in Cappadocia in Asia Minor. His schooling was in Caesarea, the capital city of Cappadocia that was the center of ecclesiastical studies in Asia Minor. His classical study was under Libanius in Antioch. He had studied philosophy, astronomy and classics in Constantinople and at the University of Athens. Then he joined the University of Caesarea as a professor. His sister Macrina persuaded him to become a monk. So he visited Egypt, the home of monasticism. Then he retreated himself to the bank of Riris for solitary spiritual meditations, and self-discipline. He emphasized the importance of Christian love and charity. So he built a ‘hospital’ and a “home for the disabled and the poor’ attached to the monastery outside the old town of Caesarea. Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea ordained him as a priest in A.D 364. His ambition for quick reform was not accepted enthusiastically by everyone and so he retired for seclusion. St. Gregory joined him there. Both compiled the ‘Philocalia’, an anthology of Origen. At the instigation of Eusebius he returned from the isolation (28 March 364) at a very critical time when Julian the Emperor died and Valens who was an Arian became the co emperor of Constantinople. At this time he had good correspondence with Athanasius, the great Alexandrian saint. In AD 368 snowstorm, earthquake and drought affected Cappadocia. Basil helped the poor and encouraged the rich to do so. In 370, he was ordained as bishop to succeed Eusebius. He ordained his own brother Gregory of Nyssa and a friend Gregory of Naziansus. Both became shining stars of the Church. Emperor Valens sent Modestus and Demosthenes to persuade St. Basil into Arianism, but they failed. So he was arrested and banished. He died on January 1st 379 in exile. He is the author of many important publications. Greatest message of St. Basil is perfection in sanctity through ascetic devotion on a monastic formula.

To be continued.....