

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Greater Washington



EDITION : 17

JULY 2015

St. Thomas Mirror



Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved in Christ Jesus ,

As Christians, we are reminded in the Bible repeatedly that everything that we own comes from God: like the psalmist says in psalms 24:1 “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”. That means we can never claim anything as ‘mine or ours’ rather we should be grateful for what we have, which is a gift from God and we are to share our blessings with others. We are taught to give routinely to those in need. As mentioned in Mathew 19:21, Christians cannot decline Christ’s invitation “to go, sell what you have and give to the poor, then come and follow me”.

Leviticus 25 is an important chapter in Old Testament which ordains a Sabbath year, one in every seven and a jubilee year, one in every fifty (Lev. 25:8-17) which established Israel’s internal economy. This passage is much significant to our St.Thomas church, as we are celebrating our 50th year of existence in this DC area. What does this mean for us? It means that our Lord is the sovereign Lord over all time and nature. Socio-culturally, jubilee provided a socioeconomic equality among the people.

In this Jubilee year let’s be reminded that human beings are to be valued for what they are, not for what they have. We have to love the poor and serve those who are in need; above all the church is asked to respect human dignity. As Isaiah 61: 1-4 says “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Yes, we are called to continue the work which our Lord Jesus Christ has begun in this earth.

As planned as part of Golden Jubilee celebrations, let’s continue our charity projects as scheduled. Charity activities should never be taken as a burden, rather it should be considered as a vibrant expression of God’s love ‘agape’ or unconditional love. Proverbs 21:13 says, “Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered”. Let’s be generous in our acts of kindness for our brethren and make this Jubilee year, a year to continue our Christ’s mission.

May God bless us all!

Yours in Christ,

Johnson Achen

Dates to remember

07/05/2015 - Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
07/12/2015 - Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
07/19/2015 - Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
07/26/2015 - Ninth Sunday after Pentecost



Members celebrating birthday

- Milan Palathra : 7/1
- Shanthi Abraham : 7/2
- Anu Paul : 7/3
- Josephine George : 7/4
- Shine Jacob : 7/5
- Kieth Thomas : 7/6
- Ajesh John : 7/8
- Shiji James : 7/8
- Stacey Sam : 7/12
- John Koshy : 7/13
- Subha Mathew : 7/14
- Jaysen Skaria : 7/14
- Manoj Abraham : 7/16
- Jacob Varghese : 7/18
- George P. Thomas : 7/27
- Abraham Yohannan : 7/28



Members celebrating wedding anniversary

- T.P Johny & Leemol Johny : 7/1
- K Yohannan & Leelamma Yohannan : 7/5
- George Daniel & Aleyamma George : 7/6
- Binu Abraham & Anu Abraham : 7/15
- Issac John & Mini John : 7/17
- Biju Lukose & Ansa Lukose : 7/30

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

Men's Forum Announcements

- 07/05/2015 - Class - Varghese Kurian
- 07/12/2015 - Bible Class
- 07/19/2015 - Class - Isaac John
- 07/26/2015 - Class - Fr. Johnson

Worship Schedules

SERVICE

07/05/2015 – Sunday - Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
Old Testament Bible Reading Family :
George V. Thomas Family

[Exodus 30: 34-38, Psalms 20, Isaiah 14 : 22-27]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 1:15-20, I Corinthians 8:1-6]

07/12/2015 – Sunday - English

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
Old Testament Bible Reading :

Johann Thomas, Jonathan Varghese, Neethu George
[Leviticus 16:29-34, Hosea 5:1-5, Isaiah 57:15-19]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 4:32-37, Ephesians 2:11-22]

07/19/2015 – Sunday - Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
O.T. Bible Reading Family:

Isaac K. John Family
[Exodus 3 : 9-15, Jeremiah 7 : 21-25, Isaiah 52 : 1-6]
Epistle Reading
[I Peter 2:4-10, St.John 6:47-59]

07/26/2015 – Sunday - English

Morning Prayer 8:30 am - 9:30 am.
Old Testament Bible Reading:

Nidhi Mathew, Renu Thomas, Roshni Thomas
[Psalms 22:1-21, Proverbs 13:1-7, Isaiah 24:1-5]
Epistle Reading
[Acts 28:11-22, St.Luke 14:7-11]

MGOCSM Announcements

07/12/2015 - Bake Sale



MMVS Announcements

- 07/05/2015 - Bible Discussion
- 07/12/2015 - Bible Discussion
- 07/19/2015 - Bible Discussion
- 07/26/2015 - Bible Discussion

My Seminary Memories

Fr. Dr. Johnson C. John

When I was studied at OTS (1998-2002) two spiritual giants were there and the first one was late Malankara Malpan Very Rev. Fr. N. K. Koruthu. We everyone called him 'Malpanappachen'. He was a simple and a humble spiritual man, taught us the Ekkara (Eight Colors of Syriac Music). I was an average student in music however I was sitting always in front of Malpanappachen in the class and tried hard to learn the Syriac Music which helped very much in my liturgical life later. Malpanappachen was always teaching the natural ways of Spirituality and Rubric in Liturgy during the music classes based on 'Sacraments' and he was against the artificiality in liturgy. He taught us the meaning of sacraments during the music classes. For example, he taught what time we have to use and what time not to use the Syriac word "Lahaye Dal Olam Olmeen". His explanations of the rubric were very deep and were authentic. We cannot forget his smile, attitude, and loving nature towards the Seminarians and to others. He didn't say a word of arguments or criticism against others. He was a saint in my opinion.

The next one was LL Dr. Geevarughese Mar Osthathios, never missed his teaching at Seminary on Wednesdays. Even through his closest members of the Church or relatives died he did not interested to miss seminary classes on Wednesdays. He will go to the departed ones' home on Tuesday and will come to Seminary on Wednesday. Also he was leading the influential and thought provoking devotional message on Wednesday regularly or will participate and listen carefully at devotional messages of other seminary faculty members. He taught us the lessons of Christian ethics through his words and life. One day when LL Dr. Geevarughese Mar Osthathios was teaching at the class his movements become slow and steady. He could not speak. He was staring at us without any movement. Everyone was feared by that and no one knows how to deal it at that time. I had the kitchen store key because we were in charge of the mess of that month and I ran into the store and collected the sugar and mixed into the water and given to him very quickly. All faculty members came and checked his sugar level and it was extremely low and by the grace of God Thirumeni was saved the life. Malpanappachen had also the similar experiences numerous times of diabetics with extreme low level. Medical doctors were astonished how they were survived by these illnesses. Yes, only by the miracle and their prayerful life.

When we go to see LL Dr. Geevarughese Mar Osthathios asked us that what is today's main news of 'The Hindu' or 'Indian Express'. Thus he encouraged us to read the English news papers. He motivated me to study Ph. D and he was asked me, "do you need any financial help" and I answered, "no". Then he will ask to kneel in front and he will lay his hand on our head and will pray. It was a relief and spiritual blessings to us. I was raised to the order of sub-deacon by LL Geevarughese mar Osthathios in 2001. Many priests in our Church are blessed by these two spiritual leaders.

When I was studied at OTS, I did pencil drawing of Malapanachen, Mar Osthathios, Fr. Dr. K. M. George, Fr M.P. George etc. I think the greatest blessings in my life are the blessings of Malapanappachen and Mar Osthathios Thirumeni. When we studied all the teachers of the seminary were excellent and we are so grateful to all of them because they were authentic and knowledgeable in their subjects. Fr. Dr. K. M. George trained me the iconography under Indonesian iconographer Mr. Boris B. Sathyawan (a Christian convert from Muslim religion), and also I was published my first book about first deacon St. Stephen and it was introduced by LL Geevarughese mar Osthathios. I got opportunity to attend ECC (Ecumenical Christian Center) at Bangalore in 2002 and other ecumenical meetings in various areas of Kerala when I was a seminarian. I served as the coordinator to the prison ministry under Fr. Dr. John Thomas Karingattil and we did the volunteer work among teenagers at Thiruvanchoor Juvenile Home. It was a good experience to witness Christ among them.

LL Geevarughese Mar Ivanios gave this writer many books for research work based on Christian Iconography (Later I ordained as a priest by Mar Ivanios because Mar Osthathios was sick at that time). It helped me to complete my thesis on Iconography under the well known Theologian Fr. Dr. K M George. When Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople visited in 2000 my icons and paintings exhibited by the encouragement of Fr. Dr. KM George and Rev. Fr. Cherian Jacob, the Seminary 'Reesh' (Leader). It was inaugurated by HG Paulose Mar Milithios (HH Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II) and also HH Baselios MarThoma Mathews II also visited the exhibition and blessed me.

Continued...

I shared and received the best seminary student award 2002 in memory of Pathamuttam Pattasseril Cor-Episcopa along with Fr. Thomas P. Zachariah, Principal Secretary to His Holiness. When I was a second year student we were blessed to participate in the Holy Consecration of the Holy Chrism (Holy Mooron) by Baselios Mar Marthoma Mathews II Kottayam Devalokam Aramana Chapel on March 26th 1999.

Many priests got immense blessings through the continuous prayers from 'Lilyo' to 'Suthara' and got opportunities in learning from great scholars like LL Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, H.G. Dr. Mathews Mar Severios, Fr. Dr. K.J. Gabriel (H.G. Gabriel Mar Gregorios), Fr. Dr. T. J. Joshua, Fr. Dr. Baby Varughese, Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurien, Fr. Dr. T. I. Varughese, Fr. Dr. John Mathews (H.G. Yoohanon Mar Dimetraos), Fr. Dr. MO John, Rev. Dn. Abraham George Kallarackal, Fr. Dr. O. Thomas, Fr. John Panikker (H.G. Yoohanon Mar Dioscoros), Fr. Dr. Sabu Kuriakose (H.G. Zacharias Mar Aprem), Fr. Dr. Konattu, Fr. Dr. M.P. George, Fr. Dr. Karingattil, Fr. Jacob Mathew etc. We got skills to lead the ministry in a parish and in the Church and skills to develop administration and management. We trained in stewardship, in research work and in organizing events. Also we trained in reading, writing the journal, learning new ideas, developing sermon and in preaching. The important lesson studied from Pazhaya Seminary that how much we can sacrifice, suffer and survive will help us to lead a successful ministry in the community; and also it will be a spiritual blessing in our life. Nobody can steal it from us. We are so grateful to OTS, Pazhaya Seminary Chapel and to the Holy Church. May God bless us all abundantly and lead OTS successfully.

June Events...

Official Publication of
our church Newsletter
St. Thomas Mirror



North East American
Diocese Senior's Honor

