



St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Inc.

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www.stthomasphiladelphia.org



April 2008

NEWSLETTER

Vol. XII No. 4



Vicar's Message:

WORKING HARD AS A COMMUNITY!

In the American context of community and family life, we have to gear up ourselves to be the best. We must be aware of our responsibilities as a community. A community is equal to many families put together. A family is many individuals put together. Each person thus becomes the most important entity to strengthen each community or family. In the same way each person could become means of strengthening or weakening a community. We have already seen in our past history how individuals played the wrong role resulting in the creating discord in communities and families. This is true of many organizations especially Malayalee parishes and organizations. When each person becomes aware of his or her role in the community, it becomes edifying. Often this awareness becomes dangerous because individuals are fond of their personal emotional factors rather than the community's emotional factors.

Working hard is the source of strength of a community. In a community work is divided and distributed in order to give participation for as many people as possible. When individuals put together their energy it becomes a great power source to achieve much greater things. Unfortunately hard work is not a common thing that we see in all. A good number of people are either lazy or negligent to the community needs and aspirations. Also, unfortunately, some leaders will take the wrong approach to the community imposing their own selfish ideas and aspirations with a view to exhibiting their arrogance. In all these cases, the ultimate victim of wrong approach of members or leaders is the community.

OUR LORD IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

**LET THE TRUTH OF RESURRECTION MAKES
CHRIST ALIVE IN OUR HEARTS.**

Hard work must go with selflessness. Once selfishness overrules people, they can create a mess out of the situation. Often personality clashes arise when personal interest stemming from selfishness becomes the guiding key. Individual clashes spread to families and families take it to the community. Thus the community becomes the victim of the consequence. It is not an easy task to overcome selfishness. Unfortunately all our trainings are amounting to selfishness. We teach that to our children, and they grow with that nature. Even spiritual organizations inculcate selfishness resulting in hatred towards other spiritual institutions. No Christian Church is an exemption to this.

Hard work also goes with commitment and dedication. In a way we call dedicated people as hardworking people. Commitment is the mental state of affairs in which a person takes a firm decision not to move from a decision or plan. Often commitment is geared towards selfish motives and thus dedication will not yield good results. Instead it creates an opportunity for people to exhibit their arrogance and pride. This is the negative type of hard work and commitment. True commitment should be God-driven so that a person sees the ultimate benefit of the community than one's personal interest.

In our own parish we have seen how hard work yields positive results. Even when many members were inactive or negligent a group of people stood alert to take care of various needs. I have seen the commitment of such people which is always praiseworthy.

Let us all work together to reach higher levels of achievement as a parish.

Lovingly, Fr. M. K. Kuriakose

Great Lent and Holy Week 2008 - A Report

The Great lent, which is the most important time of the year, started on February 4th this year. Evening Prayers were held at church everyday throughout the Lenten period. The OCYM initiated Faith Study Series to be conducted on all Saturdays during the Lenten period. Our Vicar, Fr. M. K. Kuriakose Achen, took classes on Holy Qurbana. Mid Lent was celebrated on February 27th. The Annual Lenten Parish Retreat was conducted on March 1st led by Rev. Fr. Paul T. Peter. The President of OCYM, H. G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Milithios visited our parish on March 8th. Faith Study Series was led by His Grace on the topic, "Cultural facets of the Cross". His Grace celebrated the Holy Qurbana the following day, which was also observed as the Catholicate Day.

Our diocesan bishop H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas was invited to lead the Holy Week services at our parish this year. His Grace accepted the invitation and joined us on March 15th. On March 16th, we celebrated Palm Sunday. During the Holy Week, prayers were conducted at church from 8 A.M to 8.30 P.M. Each evening prayer was followed by devotional addresses by Thirumeni. On Wednesday evening, the Passover was celebrated. The Feet Washing Ceremony was conducted on Thursday evening, which was a new experience to many faithful. March 21st was Good Friday. The service started at 9 A.M and was concluded by 4 P.M. MGOCSM, under the leadership of Dn. Geevarghese John, conducted all night prayer vigil on Good Friday. About 30 children took part in this vigil. The 30th day of the demise of H. G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios was on March 22nd, Holy Saturday. Holy Qurbana followed by the public meeting was conducted at St. Mary's Cathedral under the auspices of the Joint Orthodox Committee. March 21st was the Resurrection Sunday. The Church celebrated it with much joy, and the faithful greeted each other saying "Christ is Risen; Indeed He is Risen".

H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas was the chief celebrant on all worship sessions from Palm Sunday till the Resurrection. He was assisted by our Vicar, Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan and Rev. Dn. Siby Varghese (Bishop's Secretary). Rev. Fr. Paul Varkey also joined us during the important days.

Feet Washing Ceremony

The Feet Washing Ceremony conducted on Thursday, March 20th, was a rare and special occasion for many. Many were able to witness the service for the first time. The service started with the evening prayer. After the evening worship, Thirumeni, Priests, Deacons and the Alter Assistants entered the church as a procession with lighted candles. Thirumeni then explained the true message of the Feet Washing Ceremony. The humility showed by Christ is shown in the ceremony, which should be practiced by all the faithful in their daily lives. Twelve from the group of priests, deacons and altar assistants

were selected to represent the twelve disciples. They are as follows starting at the eldest: Rev. Fr. Mathai Corepiscopa, Rev. Fr. Babu Varghese (Shebaly), Rev. Fr. K. K. John, Rev. Fr. Roy George, Dn. Mani Markose, Dn. Geevarghese John, Mr. Daniel Varghese, Mr. Sajan Thomas, Mr. Shibu Thomas, Mr. Christopher Mathew, Mr. Jerin Juby and Mr. Anoop George. The Gospel was read by Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose while Thirumeni washed the feet of all. Other priests and deacons assisted Thirumeni. After washing everyone, Thirumeni's feet were washed, and he was lifted on his chair to finish the Gospel reading. The Bishop, Priests, Deacons and Altar Assistants went back as a procession with lighted candles, while the choir sang praises.

Rev. Fr. Oommen Corepiscopa, Rev. Fr. Johnson Corepiscopa, Dn. Daniel Yohannan, Dn. Abu George, Dn. Gregory Thomas and seminarians Mr. Vijay Thomas, Mr. Christopher Mathew attended the service.

H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas

The Holy Week was a period of grace for our parish to have our diocesan Metropolitan H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas as the chief celebrant of all the services. All services were very much spiritually reviving. Thirumeni and the parish members truly enjoyed the time. The conceptions many had about our dear Thirumeni has changed drastically during this week. Most of the times, the common people consider bishops as higher beings whom they are unable to reach. But, His Grace, an example of humility and love, changed all these conceptions during his time at our Church. The parish was able to recognize a loving father in Him. The kids considered him as a loving grand father.

His Grace's devotional messages were very touching for the faithful. Thirumeni's devotional messages are in the form of advices an experienced father is giving to his children. He come in to the midst of us, sits near us, and speaks slowly about our lives. Most of his messages were about transforming our lives in to a Godly way. The Holy Fathers teach to have an attentive heart to attain spiritual growth. Attentive hearts were needed for those who listen to Mar Barnabas also. In this century, unfortunately, people are attracted towards the outer expressions, voice, sounds etc. while listening to sermons. Those sermons of extreme expressions often initiate intellectual thinking, but seldom pierce in to ones hearts. Thirumeni never gave any importance on the external appearance, but his words truly touched the hearts of the faithful. While he preached about "The sins of omission and sins of commission" and about "the Christ who is carefully caring all the sheep", the hearts of the faithful were filled with repentance and joy.

The Church is definitely willing another occasion with His Grace. Let us all pray for the good health of our dear Thirumeni and for his continued service to our diocese and our Church.

Parish News

New Members:

Mr. Jose Ninan, wife Mrs. Mini Ninan, children Tinju and Joshua

Mr. Sajan Varghese wife Mrs. Reny Varghese

Mr. Ajimon Koshy, wife Mrs. Jessy Koshy and son Arpith
Welcome to the Parish Family.

New born:

Dr. Shibu and Mrs. Lincy Kuncheria have been blessed with a girl Keziah on March 14th.

Mr. Joe and Mrs. Judy Philip were blessed with a boy Nikhil on March 17th.

Mr. Saju and Mrs. Renee Mathew were blessed with a boy Thejus.

Congratulations to the parents.

Temple Entry:

Mr. Shibu and Mrs. Manju's daughter Chistia.

Obituary:

Mr. T.V. Varghese, father of Mrs. Rini Joseph, passed away in India. Mr. George Joseph and Mrs. Rini Joseph are currently in India. Please pray for this family.

Mr. V.J. Varghese, father of Mr. John Varghese, Mrs. Elsamma Koshy, and Mr. Philip Varghese, passed away in India. A special prayer meeting was held at Mr. Philip Varghese's house on March 29th led by Rev. A.J. Samuel Rembachan. Our Metropolitan, His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas, also joined at the end of the prayer. The family express their gratitude to all those who visited and consoled them in their difficult time.

Hearty condolence and prayers for these families.

World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer was held in our church on March 8th under the auspices of Ecumenical Fellowship of Indian Churches. This year's worship service was written by the women of Guyana and the theme was "**God's Wisdom provides New Understanding.**" Many of our young women actively participated in the world prayer service and our Church provided all the technical service for this event.

OCYM President's Visit

The President of OCYM, H. G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Milithios joined us on March 8th and 9th. On Saturday, March 8th, Thirumeni led the Faith Study Series on the topic "**Cultural Facets of the Cross**", the Theme 2008 of OCYM. His Grace celebrated the Holy Qurbana on Sunday, which was also celebrated as the Catholicate Day. The audio file of the class on Saturday is available on our website. Please contact the OCYM office bearers for copies, English or Malayalam, of the theme.

Parish cleaning on March 15th

Several of our Upkeep Committee members including MGOCSM and Sunday School volunteered to spend several hours to cleanup our church and its premises on Saturday March 15th in preparation for the Holy week. Because of your efforts our church and premises looks very neat. A few members have volunteered in changing the burned out bulbs inside the church on Sunday. A very heartfelt thank you to all of you.

30th Day Memorial Service

His Grace Dr Thomas Mar Makarios Thirumeni's 30th day memorial services and public meeting was held at St Mary's Cathedral on March 22nd under the auspices of Philadelphia Orthodox Fellowship. Our Vicar, Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose spoke on the behalf of our Church. Several of our members attended this function.

Basketball Team

Our women's Basketball team played in the Ascension Marthoma Church Tournament on March 29th at Downingtown. This is the first time our Church has a women's team. They have been practicing for last 2 months and have played very well. Mr. Rajesh Geevarghese and Mr. Robin Raju did a wonderful job to prepare our girls for this tournament.

Voter Registration

We had about 30 members registered to vote for the first time. This was in response to a registration drive to encourage more people to vote for the future of our country. Our Church members took on this initiative and added these new voters. This will definitely enable our voice to be heard in the community as we grow in numbers and there is a need to be involved in such activities. Thanks to Mr. Regi Mathai who sphere headed this drive in our church.

Special Request: Parking Lot

Our members should not block other cars while parked in our parking lot on Sundays as well as when there are other major events in the church. Many of the people have to leave the church early for work and other businesses and some times they find their cars blocked by other cars. Please be aware of this concern while parked in our parking lot. While parking in the streets please follow proper parking rules and do not create unnecessary blockage by double parking etc. We need to maintain a good relationship with our neighbors and we need your cooperation.



Birthdays in April

Name	Birthday
Mohan Samuel	4/1
Ninan Jose	4/1
Mariam Thomas	4/4
Lincy Kuncheriah	4/4
Lajy Raju	4/4
Raju C Samuel	4/4
Ricky Panicker	4/6
Nathan George Thomas	4/6
Koshy Daniel	4/7
Renju Padiyara	4/7
Philip T Varghese	4/8
Robin Varughese	4/10
Joel Koshy	4/10
Leelamma Vaidian	4/12
Raju T Chandy	4/13
Sheeba Thankachan	4/13
Reshma M Padiyara	4/14
Jacob Chacko	4/15
Ansamma Saju Paul	4/15
Achen Varghese	4/15
Mathew Philip Varghese	4/17
Arpith A Koshy	4/17
George Varghese	4/17
Jessy Jacob	4/18
Synu Varghese	4/18
Marykutty Joseph	4/18
Jacob M Zachariah	4/18
Jeremy B Mukadiyil	4/18
Suni Brown	4/19
Joshua Koshy	4/20
George Eapen	4/20
Aleyamma Varghese	4/20
Aleyamma Kuncheriah	4/21
Saramma Varghese	4/22
Jaisy A Thomas	4/25
Rajani T Rajan	4/27
Thomas G Kappil	4/28
Ajila S Koshy	4/28
Daisy Kurian	4/30
Mathew Varghese	4/30
Benji Varghese	4/30
Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan	4/30
Reuben Jacob Sam	4/30

We wish them all a Very Happy Birthday!



Wedding Anniversaries in April

Name	Anniversary Date
Mrs & Mr Raju C Samuel	4/3
Mrs & Mr Dr. Philip George	4/7
Mrs & Mr Thomas T Varghese	4/11
Mrs & Mr John P Eapen	4/11
Mrs & Mr Santosh V Mathew	4/21
Mrs & Mr Mathew George	4/24
Mrs & Mr Jose V Abraham	4/30
Mrs & Mr George Abraham	4/30

We wish them all a Very Happy Anniversary!

Prayer Meetings

A prayer meeting is scheduled at Mr. Koshy Daniel's house on April 19th.

Please contact **Mr. Jose K. John**, Prayer Meeting Coordinator (Tel#: 484.744.5541), to schedule Prayer Meeting in your home.

City-wide Cleanup

Our Church members responded to Mayor Nutter's call and signed up for a city wide cleanup on April 5th in the Algon Avenue area. About 30 members of our Church participated in this event and made it a great success. We started our cleanup around 9:30 am and finished around 2 pm. Our members felt very much satisfied to represent our Church as part of this community's effort and to show solidarity with fellow citizens. Definitely, this was an opportunity to give back to the community in a small way. Our efforts will not go unnoticed. There is a need for our community to get into the mainstream activities in which we live. Events like this and voter registration will help to bring us to the forefront of the community. This event was initiated by Mr. Oommen Kappil. The Managing committee thanks each member who took part in this event. The following members volunteered during the event. Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan, Mathew Samuel, Thomas George, Sajan Varghese, George Varghese, Mathew George, Mathew Thomas (Appu), Melissa Thomas, Cibu Joseph, Cijo Joseph, Anish Thomas, Koshy Daniel, Regi Mathai, Raju T. Chandy, V. C. George, George Abraham, Jose Ninan, Mathew George, Isaac Samuel, Joshua Samuel, Jaison Thomas, Josh Koshy, Abraham T. George, Shibu Baby, Santhosh Baby and Jerin Juby.

News from Spiritual Organizations

Sunday School News

The Sunday school children will be going on a trip on Saturday May 17th to St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Those who are interested to go, please contact Head Master, Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan. The cost will be \$15 for children and \$ 20 for adults.

Important dates: St Tikhon's Seminary trip on **May 17th**. Centralize exam for 12th grade on Sunday, **June 1st** at St John's Church.

Centralize exam for 5th, 8th and 10th on Sunday, **June 29th** at St Mary's Cathedral.

New website of American Diocese Sunday school association: www.indianorthodoxsundayschool.org

Couples' Forum

Please join the Couples Fellowship on every other Sunday's after refreshment. The next meeting is scheduled on April 6th. Mrs. Milly Philip will be presenting the topic "**Home Making Tips**". The Family Prayer Book that was ordered has arrived. For more information please contact coordinator Mr. Thomas George (Tel#: 215.518.4298).

Men's Forum

Men's Forum will be held every Sunday after refreshments. Currently they are following the **Divya Bhodhanam Series** by Rev. Joshua Achen. The format of this session includes prayer, songs, bible reading, teaching followed by discussions. For more information please contact Mr. N.V. Thomas (Tel# 215.552.9989).

Martha Mariam Samajam (MMS)

MMS meets alternate Sundays at the church auditorium after Holy Communion for prayer, bible study, learning songs and more. The next meeting will be on April 13th. For more details of their activities please contact Mrs. Achamma Kurian.

MGOCSM

The MGOCSM had an all night prayer vigil on Good Friday night at our church under the leadership of Rev. Dn. Geevarghese John. About 30 of our children took part of this vigil. It was spiritually enriching experience. The MGOCSM faith study series on "**Unveiling the Mysteries**" will continue on April 13th after Sunday school. The presentation will be led by Diyu Skariah. It is open to all. The next MGOCSM prayer fellowship will be on Friday April 11th from 7 PM at our Church. Rev. Dn. Geevarghese John will lead the fellowship.

Summer Camp: MGOCSM members, please look forward for a spectacular 3 night summer camp this

summer. The following are the tentative dates. July 31 to Aug 3 or Aug 7th to Aug 10th.

Contact secretary Miss. Divya Panicker for more details (Tel#: 267.992.9485).

OCYM

Faith Study sessions are held on all Saturday evenings after the Evening Prayer. On March 8th, the President of OCYM, H. G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Milithios led the class on the Theme 2008 of OCYM, "**Cultural Facets of the Cross**". The projects of the Media Cell of OCYM will be soon available for the public. OCYM meets on alternate Sundays after Holy Communion. Please contact Secretary Mr. Jerin Jubu for more information (Tel#: 215.478.1090).

Library News

The library hours are from 12PM to 1PM on Sundays. Members please return the books within two weeks. You must renew your books if you need more than two weeks. Our library has the newly published Orthodox Study Bible. Please take your time to check it out.

Website Information

Our church moved into a new venture of Video and Audio Ministry. We now have uploaded our Holy Qurbana, sermons, retreat and announcements on our website. Please check www.stthomasphiladelphia.org. Thanks to the Media Cell for this great achievement.

Upcoming Events

Bake Sale

OCYM is organizing a bake sale on Sunday April 13th. Delicious and healthy homely food will be served. Items are 'Appam and Curry'. Please join us in this fund raising event.

Faith Study Series

Faith Study Series organized by the OCYM will be continuing with the topic "**Holy Qurbana**" on Saturdays after Evening Worship. Notes are prepared and soft copies are available. Please email OCYM to get your copy and to add to our mailing list. Email address: youthleague@gmail.com or stthomasocym@gmail.com.

FOCUS

FOCUS, Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in the United States, is an organization intended for young adults, married and single, post-graduate students and professionals, from the ages of 23 and up. FOCUS meets at 7 pm on the First Thursday of every month at our church. Previous meeting was on April 3rd on the topic "**Pentecost**". Next meeting is on May 1st on the topic "**Sacrament of Marriage**". Please contact the co-coordinators, Rev. Dn. G. John (914.720.0136) and Mr. Aju Jacob (813.857.3507), for more info.

Sunday School Diocesan Level Assigned Competition for the Year 2008 Information

Up to 5 year old

Draw a picture of St. Mary with baby Jesus. Write one short sentence about baby Jesus.

6,7,8 and 9 years old

Draw a picture of Moses who received Ten Commandments. Write one short paragraph as a caption to the picture.

10, 11, 12 years old

The Lord called Samuel, and Samuel answered: *“Speak, for Thy servant hears”* (1 Samuel 3:10)

How would you respond to God?

(One page, double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman)

13, 14, 15 years old

How would you respond to social justice?

Write a brief essay in reflection to the story of Naboth’s Vineyard in 1 Kings Chapter 21.

(300 to 400 words, double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman)

16, 17, 18 years old

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches” Proverbs 22:1

How would you respond to this?

(400 to 500 words, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman)

The deadline is June 30 2008. Please mail all entries to

Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese

211 Beverly Road

Hawthorne

New York 10532

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church Building Complex

Rental Information

Facilities include:

- **Banquet hall that can accommodate up to 600 people**
 - **Party room for up to 150 people**
 - **Small rooms for business meetings**
 - **Large kitchens with amenities**
 - **Gymnasium**
 - **Convenient private parking**
- **Easy access to major highways**

For more information,

Please contact:

Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose: 201.681.1078

Mr. Rajan Padiyara: 215.880.8843

Mr. Mathew Samuel: 215.667.4200

Thank You All

The Great Lent, Holy Week and Easter once again witnessed the unity of the members of our parish. We worked together in everything, everyone being aware of the needs, contributed towards the Church, arranging the needs of the worship to make it heavenly, arranging refreshment especially during the Holy Week, maintaining the church building, up keeping the premises, and a lot more. Our unity and togetherness makes the people around us glorify our Lord.

During the month of March, at different occasions, many of our members have volunteered in bringing refreshments, lunch, dinner etc., for the special guests and the people. We thank all the families.

Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan, Mathew Samuel, Brown Varghese, Roy Chacko, Thomas George, Idiculla Thomas, Rajan Padiyara, Philip Varghese, N. V. Thomas, Varghese P. Abraham, Oommen Geevarghese, Oommen Kappil, Mathew George, Koshy Daniel, Panickal Y. Mathaikutty, Mathewkutty M. George, Prince John Puliprath, Alex Daniel, Philip John, Binny Cherian, M. M. Varghese, Thomas Skaria, George Eapen, Jose K. John, Koshy Daniel, Thomas Varghese, John Panicker, N. K. Mathew, Reji Mathai, Ninan Jose, Joseph Vakkayil, M. M. Varghese, Mathewkutty M. George, Thomas Vakkayil, Sam Kurisinmoottil, Raju C. Samuel, Mrs. C. P. Thomas, Saramma George, Reena, Jose V. Abraham, George Varghese, Jacob M. Zachariah, Benny Mathew, Cherian Philipose, Chacko P. Chacko, Philip T. Varghese, Santhosh Mathew, Jacob Zachariah, Shibu Baby, Santhosh Baby, Shibu Thomas, Jacob P. Abraham, M. M. Varghese, Raju T. Chandy, Kunjappy Koshy, Oommen George, M. M. Philip, Sosamma Raju, Thomas Vaidian, Achen Varghese, Ninan Chacko, Daniel Varghese, Mathew A. P. George and Oommen George.

The flowers used on Palm Sunday were donated by Rajan Padiyara, Thomas George and Oommen Geevarghese. Special flower bouquets were donated by a non-member Sajjan Varughese for our Easter Service.

We Thank You all for your solidarity.

Achen's Breakfast

Please contact Refreshment Committee Coordinator Mr. Roy Chacko (Tel#:215.327.1762) to host Achen's breakfast on Sundays.

Address Correction

If your family members' status, Tel # or mailing address has changed during the past year, please inform the Church office. We will have that information updated in our records accordingly.

Questions?

Any questions related to Bible and our Faith? Ask the newsletter team and we will answer it! A new section to answer questions and doubts on our beliefs and faith is Newsletter

starting from May Newsletter. Please give/send your questions to our Vicar, Secretary or Newsletter Editor.

Do You Have an Announcement?

Please submit your announcements or articles to the Editor Mr. Jerin Juby (e-mail: jerinjuby@gmail.com) or to the Secretary Mr. Mathew Samuel (e-mail: msamue2000@yahoo.com) on or before Sunday, April 27th.

Analog TV to shut down within a year

(Contributed by: Mr. Mohan Samuel)

February 17, 2009, would be the last day for full-power television stations to broadcast in analog. On this day the TV stations will stop broadcasting analog signals and switch over to digital, meaning consumers must either own a digital TV or a special converter box for analog TVs to receive broadcasts. Cable and satellite TV subscribers will not be affected.

Converter box for analog TVs will cost anywhere between \$60 and \$70. To prepare for the change, Congress has signed off a new \$1.5 million subsidy program aimed at making sure people continue to get their viewing needs met. Each household can apply for two \$40 coupons to help buy the converter boxes.

Where to find Converter Coupons:

Between January 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, households will be able to request coupons while supplies last in of the four ways: Online at www.dtv2009.gov; Call the 24-hour hotline 888-DTV-2009 (888-388-2009); Mail an application to: P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208; or Fax an application to: 877-DTV-4ME2 (877-388-4632)

Calendar of Events

April 12 th	Committee Meeting 9AM Evening Prayer/Faith Study Series 7PM
April 13 th	OCYM Bake Sale MGOCSM Bible Study – 1PM
April 19 th	Evening Prayer/FSS at Koshy Daniel's Residence
May 17 th	Sunday School St. Tikhon's Trip
May 31 st	OVBS Teacher Training Camp
June 1 st	Sunday School 12 th grade centralized exam
June 29 th	Sunday School 5 th , 8 th and 10 th exam
July 6 th	Church Perunnal
July 12 th	Church Picnic
July 16- 19 th	Family Conference
July 24-26 th	OVBS

Important Liturgical Days

April 5 th	Remembrance of Pampady Thirumeni
April 6 th	First Sunday after New Sunday
April 13 th	Second Sunday after New Sunday
April 20 th	Third Sunday after New Sunday
April 27 th	Fourth Sunday after New Sunday
May 1 st	Ascension of our Lord
May 4 th	Fifth Sunday after New Sunday

Editor's Views

Lighted, yet Dark!

Christ said, "You are the light of the world" and "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Mat 5: 14). Christians are called to lighten the world. While celebrating the most joyous time of the year, the Resurrection, which proclaims the victory of light over darkness, are we able to be the light of the world surrounding us? The mission fields of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church in India and in the US needs to be analyzed. Mar Theodosius Thirumeni once said that the trials and tribulations our Church is facing now are because we forgot the mission implanted by St. Thomas when he established the Church in Malankara. As witnesses of Christ, are we lightening the world by the light we received? As a parish, what can we do in spreading the Word, lightening the hearts of many in darkness, in and around us?

In John Chap 21, Christ asks Peter, "Do you love me?" three times. The question Jesus asked is a message to all Christians that what Jesus needs is not mere followers but those who love God truly and honestly. The commandment given by our Lord to Peter once he confesses his love is to feed His sheep. As we read the reply of Jesus during the temptations by Satan that man lives not by bread but from the words of God (Luke 4: 4). These words spiritually feed the faithful, and those who love God are asked to feed the sheep with the Word of God so that their spiritual hunger will be fulfilled. Proclaiming the good news is the commandment given by Christ to the disciples. This commandment to the disciples has to be followed by each and every one of us who claims to be Christians and who claims to love Lord.

The mission of the Church is to preach, teach and practice the Word of God. This mission is spread upon each member of the Church, thereby turning everyone to missionaries, to work on the areas each have been placed by the divine providence of our Lord. One does not need to go to the remote places of Africa or China to be a

missionary. Understanding the need of Word of God in and around our own lives, in the areas of our work, and in any place where we meet people who are away from the Lord, we should use the wisdom we have received from God. By preaching and practicing the Word of God, the people around us will praise our Father in heaven and will transform to accept God. Thus the light we have received will lighten others.

"Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." (Mat 5: 14). As lighted beings of the Church, are we able to lighten others, or are we hiding putting the light under a bowl? Are we able to radiate the light of Christ living in our hearts to others who are in darkness? Are we willing to take this as a mission? Will we be able to transform our Parish and our Church as the source of light to many in darkness? While proclaiming "Christ is Risen, Indeed He is Risen", this should be our focal point. The truth of Resurrection will be meaningful only when we transform ourselves to lighten others.

From the Desk of the Secretary

Dear Believers in Christ,

The ministry of Holy Spirit was clearly working in our Church. The variety of ministries in the Church under the power of the Holy Spirit enabled us to perform diversities of activities victoriously for the profit of all. All Glory be to the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

I take this opportunity to thank all the families who took time and effort to cook different kinds of dishes for the entire Passion Week as well as prepare special food for our beloved Thirumeni and took care of all his needs. I also thank all the volunteers who coordinated the daunting task of cleaning the church and its premises and preparing food for the entire congregation and guests from our sister Churches during the Feet washing ceremony. By God's grace and the prayers of the believers, the entire Passion Week was a spiritual and enriching experience. The presence of our beloved Thirumeni and his spiritual message made this year's Passion Week a truly blessed one. Let us all continue to uphold the spirit of sacrifice, hope and salvation in our lives throughout the year.

Parish Secretary
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