



9 LESSONS FROM LIFE OF MAR BARNABAS
Fr Sujit T. Thomas

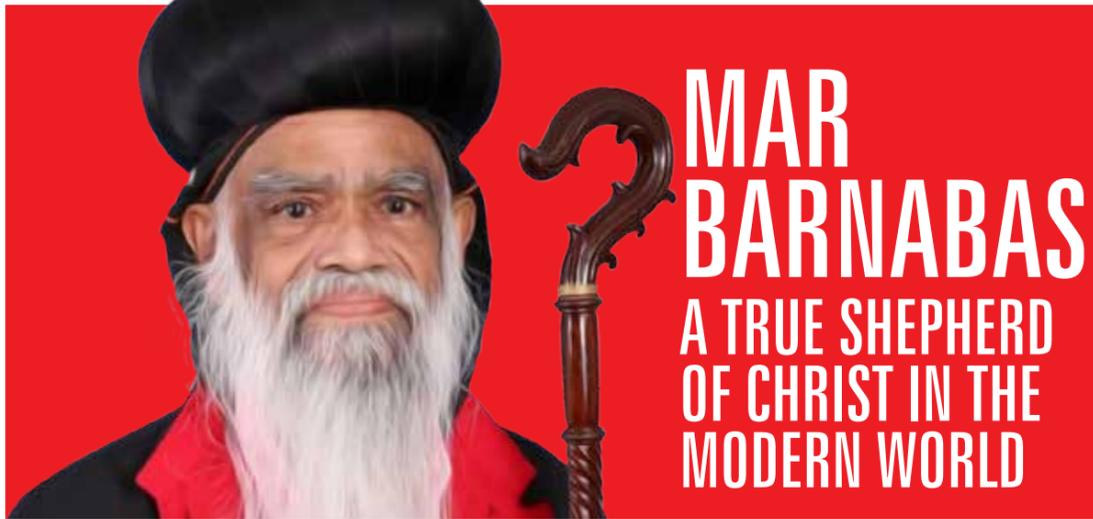
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Some time ago, I happened to look at a picture of His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas of blessed memory in our home and I asked my parents who this Thirumeni was. My parents told me that the picture was of Barnabas Thirumeni. I wondered if they had ever seen him – and I was quickly surprised to learn that Thirumeni was very close to both my dad and mom and their families. Thirumeni was even a professor and warden to both of my grandfathers while they were studying in the Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam, Kerala, India. Then I also learned that Thirumeni was very close to our Parish as well, and that it was his home parish while he was in New York. I was amazed to learn that this Thirumeni in the picture had such a close connection to so many people around me – so I decided to learn more about him. Here is some of what I learned.



Miriam Ann Adai

Augen Mar Thimotheos (the Late Catholicos) ordained Thirumeni to the Holy Priesthood. At that time, he was known as Rev. Fr. K.K. Mathews. On May 15, 1978 His Holiness Catholicos Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thomas Mathews I, Catholicos of the East, consecrated Rev. Fr. K.K. Mathews as Metropolitan Mathews Mar Barnabas of the Malankara Indian Orthodox Church.

After being ordained as a bishop, Thirumeni served as the Assistant Metropolitan of the Kottayam and Angamaly Dioceses and then as the Metropolitan of the Idukki Diocese, and finally as the Metropolitan of the American Diocese. As a Metropolitan, Thirumeni's accomplishments in the Idukki and American Dioceses are probably the most notable. When Thirumeni took charge of the Idukki Diocese in Kerala, it was one of the poorest Dioceses in our Church. But with his hard work and dedication, Thirumeni was able to transform the Diocese into a thriving one with many beautiful Churches. Thirumeni

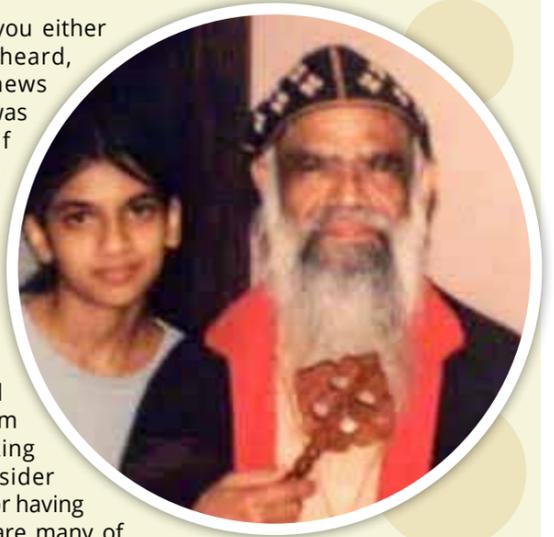
took charge of the American Diocese in 1992. During his time as the Metropolitan of the then united American Diocese, he visited the Churches and the homes of many people in all the States. Thirumeni gave great leadership, strengthened the spiritual organizations of the Church, and gave inspiration to the youth. The spiritual and moral influence he had on the youth is most evident when we look at the growing number of priests from the youth in America, almost all of them born and brought up in the USA. Thirumeni was also an author who wrote many books. The first one he wrote was a devotional study about the Holy Liturgy. Barnabas Thirumeni retired as the Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese in January 2011. He moved back to India later that year and stayed at the Pampady Dayara. On December 9, 2012 Thirumeni entered into eternal rest. He was entombed at St. Peter and St. Paul Orthodox Church in Valayanchirangara (Kerala, India) which was his home parish in India.

Barnabas Thirumeni lived a simple life. He did not give a lot of importance to worldly goods or luxuries. He wore simple clothes and a simple wooden cross. Thirumeni showed great compassion and love toward the sick and the suffering. The

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THE MOST CHRIST-LIKE: Mar Barnabas

As many of you either know, or have heard, His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas was a great man of short stature. His height belied his giant spirit and immense personality. It was amazing to see crowds go silent in reverence as he would walk into a room and start speaking to them. I consider myself blessed for having been able to share many of my life's important moments, including my marriage and my first confession, with Barnabas Thirumeni. However, the incident I'm about to share with you is a story I haven't told many people until now.



Jenny Varghese

As a nervous, awkward youngster, I attended one of our Diocesan Family and Youth Conferences without my parents. I'm really not sure what made me do this - I was so shy that I hardly even spoke to other kids at my own Church, and suddenly I was in a situation where I was surrounded by hundreds of strangers. One day at lunch, while looking for my chaperone, I saw Barnabas Thirumeni sitting at a table, surrounded by so many people demanding his attention for official matters. Somehow I worked up the nerve to walk over to that table, but unsure if he would recognize me without my parents there. I stood nearby for a minute, wondering what I should say, when he saw me. He immediately said "Jenny! Come over here and sit with me." I was elated - not only did he recognize me, but he wanted to talk to me! He blessed me, and then took my hands into his and asked "Why are your hands so cold?" He made me sit there with him, while speaking to so many people (many who gave me questionable looks, as if to ask "Who is this random girl?"), just to try and warm my hands up. I'm not sure that my hands really ever did get warm, but that moment truly warmed my heart. Imagine a person in such a high position, such as being a Bishop and a Diocesan Metropolitan of the Indian Orthodox Church, but being so humble as to give a child attention and comfort? This was one of many Christ-like aspects of Thirumeni, and it reminds me of the Lord in Judea:

"Some people brought their children to Jesus, so he could place his hands on them and pray for them. His disciples told the people to stop bothering him. But Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me, and don't try to stop them! People

who are like these children belong to God's kingdom.'" (St. Matthew 19:13-14)

For personal reasons, I frequented the Diocesan Aramana often as a child. I would see all kinds of people visiting at the same time - the sick, the irreputable, the needy. Barnabas Thirumeni made the time and effort to speak to all of them. Despite it being a busy place, a church, and a place of church business, I felt comfortable there. Thirumeni made sure to talk to me, and would not let me leave before giving me a banana or sugar-free candy. Compare this situation to the Holy Church - we are all kinds of people, in all walks of life. Young mothers, widows, men, thieves, kids who won't sit still, rich, poor - all of us, sinners - seeking God's help, and then leaving after receiving the ultimate food: the life-giving body and blood of Christ. As Barnabas Thirumeni displayed no bias in speaking to those who sought his help, we should not judge those who walk through the doors of the Church.

I think of my own children, and in a way I mourn for them because they will not grow up knowing Barnabas Thirumeni the way I did. I can surely say that he was the most Christ-like person I have met so far in life. It is up to us to follow his example and not only acknowledge, but nurture our children because the world and the Church are in their hands. One among them may grow up to follow in Thirumeni's footsteps and be another beaming light in this world - let us pray for that!

FROM THE VICAR'S DESK

Glory be to God.

It is with great joy that I can contribute a few words to the third "Mar Barnabas Newsletter" published by the young people of the St. Gregorios Church.

The new liturgical year of the Church also coincides with the feast day of our patron, St. Gregorios of Parumala. It is a time for us to reset and remind ourselves of our individual and collective Christian mission. Jesus asked his disciples "Who



do you say that I am?" and St. Peter correctly proclaims that Christ is the "Messiah, the Son of the Living God." Jesus proclaims that the Church will be built on the rock-solid faith and proclamation of Peter. The Church is built on faith and not on the merits, and worldly ambitions of human beings.

Our parish on Cherry Lane, although we may have imperfections and spatial limitations, continues to be a pilgrimage center for Christians in the New York area. This is

because our parish is built upon the faith of our people in Jesus Christ. Our church is built on the faith of the Holy Apostles. Our parish is built on the faith of Mar Barnabas - one of the foundational building blocks of our parish. Most importantly, Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of our parish. It's in my humble prayer that our church continues to transform from a mere building to a spiritual house that that will transform the lives of those that enter.

May the prayers of Mar Barnabas be a stronghold for us all.

Fr. Gregory Varghese
Vicar



EDITORIAL

I am pleased to present to you the Mar Barnabas Newsletter for 2019. This is our third year releasing this newsletter in memory of His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas. I thought to myself, "how many stories can we possibly have to share for every newsletter?". This year I realized how many untold stories there about Thirumeni that are waiting to be shared. Some who were unsure or unwilling to share their story found inspiration to share their story in the newsletter this year. I believe next year, for our 4th release, others will find the courage to share their story of how Thirumeni impacted their lives as well. I mentioned in the previous newsletter that Thirumeni's legacy is so strong that the younger generations, who never got the chance to meet him, are curious and interested in learning about Thirumeni. This was evident this year and we have one submission by one of our Sunday School students who interviewed her family to find out more about Thirumeni.



St. Gregorios Church, Cherry Lane is having a successful 2019. A lot of hard work and planning went into making events like the Church trip to the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center, MGOCSM retreats and the GROW ministry possible. Many of our youth played a significant role in making many of these events a success. As a Sunday School Teacher, I can see that our church has a bright, promising future. Our children continue to grow in the faith because of the strong foundation laid down by our Vicar, Sunday School Principal, teachers, and spiritual organizations.

Like the many endeavors our Church has taken on in 2019, this newsletter would not have been possible without the hard work of many people behind the scenes. I want to thank God for providing us with the resources to make this newsletter a reality. I would like to thank all our writers who put the time and effort to submit their articles. I would like to thank our Sunday School Principal, Mrs. Mini George, for giving me the opportunity to spearhead the process of putting this newsletter together. I would also like to thank George M. Geevarghese for assisting with screening and editing the articles. Lastly, I would like to offer my thanks to my fellow peers, Meenu Chacko and Stalla Saimon, for their strong support and their assistance with photography. I hope you enjoy reading this year's Newsletter and may these stories inspire you to become a voice in your Church community.

Peter Johnson
For the Editorial Board



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MAR BARNABAS A TRUE SHEPHERD OF CHRIST IN THE MODERN WORLD

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name "Barnabas" means 'son of consolation.' I learned that this name given to him was the most befitting name for his character. While he was an Achen, he worked as the Chaplain of Veloor Christian Medical College, Madras and Kolenchery Medical Mission Hospital. Thirumeni always visited the sick and offered his prayers, support and even financial assistance. I heard that he would stay in touch with those he visited. This care gave many people hope in their difficult times. My grandfather told me that even while he was teaching in the Seminary, Thirumeni would make time to go and visit and pray for the sick in the local hospital every evening.

I heard many interesting stories from my parents and grandparents

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK:

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

In today's world of violence and uncertainty, good parenting is not a cup of tea. The foundational principle of a well functioning and active Sunday School Ministry is to assist parents in this great task of moulding their children to become more Christ-like. This is what our beloved Barnabas Thirumeni wanted all children to be. The Sunday School teachers should be living witnesses of Christ and be role models to their students. They should teach them the importance of prayer and sacramental life. Parents should make sure that they have Bible readings and family prayers at home every morning and evening. At present, our Sunday School has 64 students studying in Pre-K to 12th Grade. We have 14 regular teachers and 10 substitute teachers. Many of our teachers have passed the Teacher's Training Certification (TTC) examination and are certified Sunday School teachers. The Sunday School is held every Sunday after worship from 12 noon to 1.30 pm. A general session is conducted for 30-45 minutes where songs, Bible verses and faith-related topics are taught. Exams are given to test Bible verse proficiency and Holy Qurbana studies. Cash awards are given to children who win the highest points in each group.



Children who won Diocesan level awards and trophies 2019

Every year is a stepping stone to help us rise higher in our glorification of God. This year 38 children from our Sunday School participated in the Area-level Combined Orthodox Vacation Bible School. Children from our Sunday School won so many prizes in the Area level and Diocesan level Competitions and excelled in Centralized Examinations. Our Sunday School won the Top seller Trophy for the Talent Show Tickets. Five 12th graders won their Diplomas this year, out of which two were Diocesan level rank holders. Mr. Justin Varghese won the 1st Rank in the TTC exam. I extend by gratefulness and applause, on behalf of our congregation, to all the parents and our dedicated Sunday School

about the times they spent with Thirumeni. My dad said that he often visited Thirumeni in his Aramana and that Thirumeni has also visited his childhood home many times. My dad told me how Thirumeni would always remind children, "do your best, your very best, little boys and girls, that is the wisest way." My mom also told me about the times that Thirumeni would come and stay with her family at their home in Florida. My mom told me a story of how she was fortunate to celebrate her birthday with Thirumeni one year when they were visiting her old parish in Edmonton, Canada. That year, August 9th fell on a Sunday. The church members

Box Collection for the needy in the society. Last year, the collection from this box was pooled together with the additional support of a few well wishers to sponsor 3 children (2 girls and a boy) of 2 different orphanages of our Church in Kerala. Another initiative is part of our Christmas celebrations. During the holiday season, our children bring and distribute gifts to the deserving children of the Long Island area through the Salvation Army. There is nothing more Christ-like than loving and caring for all and that is exactly what our initiatives embody.

Educational trips are a perfect platform for students to bond, not only with their peers but also with the teachers and adults who accompany them in a new spiritual environment. With this intention, our Sunday school arranged a 3-day spiritual trip to the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center (HTRC) and St. Tikhon's Seminary, PA. About 75 people, including children, under the leadership of our Vicar, Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese participated in this spiritual journey. On Sunday, the Holy Qurbana was celebrated at the HTRC by our Achen in the presence of a group of Seminarians. Children and adults alike enjoyed this trip. It was truly a blessing for all those who could be a part of it. A very special thanks to Meenu Chacko, Stalla Saimon and all the youngsters of our Church

Teachers for continuing efforts in the progress of this endeavour. In recent years, our Sunday School has begun a few remarkable



Children who won Area level prizes with their parents 2019

initiatives. We work hard to make these initiatives part of our Church's tradition. During the general session, children actively participate in a Charity

bought a huge cake for Thirumeni and another cake for my mom. Everybody sang Happy Birthday and they both cut their cakes together. My mom turned 9 years old that year - the same age I am today! She said that when they cut their cakes, Thirumeni said to her, "this is your favorite thing to eat and something that I cannot eat at all," and everyone laughed. Since that year Thirumeni sent my mom a letter on her birthday every year until he retired and went to India. My mom treasures the letters she received from Thirumeni. She said that she always felt blessed that such a great and important person, who had so many responsibilities, would take

who worked so hard to make this "Irutho" camp a great success.

Another great achievement this year was the opening of a new Sunday School Library. We bought books from St. Vladimer's Seminary, St. Tikhon's Seminary and St. Thomas Orthodox Seminary, Nagpur. Our plan is to mandate each Student to read minimum 5 books during a Sunday School year. Grade-appropriate books will be selected and distributed to the students in the class by their Sunday School teacher. In addition, every Sunday, during the general session, one student will speak for 5 minutes about a book she/he liked the most.

I sincerely thank Mr. Peter Johnson and this year's Newsletter Editorial Board for their initiative and hardwork in producing this Newsletter. Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni was a man of prayer and still a role model to many. Our Thirumeni led a humble and pious life, ignoring the power and popularity that he held and the richness of the culture in which he lived, and followed the path of the cross with utmost sincerity and dedication. For His Holiness the Sunday school was a place where children and youth are taught and shown that God loves them more than they can ever imagine, and that Jesus, their Savior and Lord is with them always. He strongly believed that the vision and vitality of the church of the future depends largely on the adequacy of the spiritual training our children are receiving today. May the intercession and prayers

of Barnabas Thirumeni be a guide and stronghold for us. Let us keep his words and his deeds close to our hearts in all our undertakings.

the time to write a letter to her for her birthday.

I was glad to learn more about Thirumeni's life and hear many stories from my grandparents and parents about him. I was blessed to see Thirumeni a couple of times before he moved back to India. However, I was a baby and I do not remember seeing him. I am happy to have some pictures. Even though many of us younger children in our Sunday School may not remember Thirumeni, it is important that we learn about Thirumeni from our parents and friends, so that we can truly keep his blessed memory alive. May the prayers of the holy Thirumeni be a blessing and stronghold for us all!



Dr. Mini George
Principal, St. Gregorios Church
Sunday School, New York



നീതിയുടെ പ്രഭാവലയത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുനിന്ന മാർ ബർണബാസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത



കോരസൺ

വ്യക്തിത്വം ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ വ്യക്തിയില്ല എന്നാണ് പ്രമാണം. ഇന്നത്തെ ലോകത്തിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ പ്രതിസന്ധിയും മതിയായ വ്യക്തികൾ ഇല്ല എന്ന സത്യമാണ്. ഒരു വ്യക്തി രൂപപ്പെടുന്നത് സ്വയം മായ ചില വിട്ടു വീഴ്ചയില്ലാ സമീപനം കൊണ്ട് മാത്രമല്ല, അത് ഒരു ദൈവിക നിമിത്തം കൂടിയായെന്ന് തന്റെ ജീവിതം കൊണ്ട് തെളിയിച്ചു. ഭാഗ്യസ്ഥനാകാനായ മാത്യൂസ് മാർ ബർണബാസ്.

വിളക്കുകൾ അങ്ങനെയാണ്. പ്രകാശത്തിനെതിരെയുള്ള വിളക്കിന്റെ ഭാഗം എല്ലാം ഇരുളുതന്നെയാണ്. ജനിച്ചുവീണ വിശ്വാസത്തിൽ വിശ്വസിക്കുക മാത്രമല്ല, അതിൽ ഒരു തിരിയായി എറിഞ്ഞു തീരുമ്പോഴും താൻ കൊളുത്തപ്പെട്ട വലിയ വിളക്കിലെ ഇരുളിനെപ്പറ്റിയും എണ്ണയുടെ കുറവിനെപ്പറ്റിയും തികച്ചും ബോധവാനായിരുന്നു തിരുമേനി. സ്വയം ബോധ്യപ്പെട്ട തിരിച്ചറിവുകൾ ഏതു മുഖത്തും നോക്കി പറയാനും, അതിനുവേണ്ടി വീരോടെ പൊരുതാനും അദ്ദേഹം മടിച്ചില്ല. തനിക്കു ബോധിക്കാത്ത കാര്യങ്ങൾ ആരെയും നോവിക്കാതെ പറയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞില്ലായിരിക്കാം, അതിനുള്ള സുഖിപ്പിക്കുന്ന രാഷ്ട്രീയ തന്ത്രം അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് പരിചിതമല്ലായിരിക്കാം, എന്നാലും കാലം കടന്നുപോകുമ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ആ പ്രതികരണങ്ങൾ പ്രവാചക സന്ദേശങ്ങളായി ശത്രുക്കൾക്കു പോലും തോന്നി തുടങ്ങി.

അതുകൊണ്ടു ഒക്കെയാവാം ഒരു ഈയാംപാറ്റ പോലെ ആ പ്രകാശവലയത്തിൽ അങ്ങനെ പറന്നു നിൽക്കാൻ കൊതിയായിരുന്നു.

വൃത്തിയും ശുദ്ധിയും പുറത്തല്ല കാട്ടേണ്ടത് എന്ന് ആകാരം കൊണ്ട് തന്നെ സംഭാഷിച്ചു. അമേരിക്കയുടെ നിലവാരത്തിന് ഒക്കാത്ത പരക്കനും ഒതുക്കമില്ലാത്തതുമായ പ്രകൃതം ആയിട്ടുകൂടി അമേരിക്കയിൽ ജനിച്ചു വളർന്ന അനേകം ചെറുപ്പക്കാരുടെ മനസ്സ് കവരാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിനായി. നൂറുണ്ടിയ സന്ദേശങ്ങളിലൂടെ, താൻ കടഞ്ഞെടുത്ത ആത്മീയ അമൃത് പകരാനായി. ആ ആത്മാവ് അമേരിക്കയുടെ സഭാ തടാകത്തിനുമേൽ ഇന്നും പരിവർത്തിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു.

സന്യാസിക്കുവേണ്ട വൃതനിഷ്ഠകൾ പറയുമ്പോൾ പലപ്പോഴും അനുകരിക്കാൻ പറ്റാത്ത പാതകൾ അദ്ദേഹം തുറന്നിട്ടു. ഓരോ ജീവശ്വാസത്തിലും ദൈവ കല്പിതമായ താളം അദ്ദേഹം കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിച്ചു. നിരന്തരം ഒരു വിഷയത്തെ കുറിച്ചും മാത്രം ചിന്തിക്കുകയും പറയുകയും ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ ലോകത്തിന്റെ മറ്റു കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകൾ ഇല്ലാതാവില്ലെ എന്നു സംശയിച്ചു നല്ലൊരു സാമൂഹ്യ വിഷയം പറയുന്ന പുസ്തകം ഞാൻ വായിക്കാൻ കൊടുത്തു. 'ബർണബാസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത, കോരസൺ ജോലി കഴിഞ്ഞു ഇതുവഴി വരണം' എന്ന ഒരു മെസ്സേജ് അതിരാവിലെ തന്നെ കിട്ടി. ഈ പുസ്തകം എന്റെ ചിന്തകൾക്ക് നേരെ വിപരീതമാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ടു ഈ ലേഖനം ഒന്ന് വായിച്ചാട്ടെ, എന്ന് ഒരു ശിക്ഷ കൂ

റേ വേസ്റ്റ് പേപ്പറുകളിൽ കുത്തിനിറച്ചു മാർജിനിലും നിറഞ്ഞുനിന്നു എഴുത്തുകൾ, പിന്നെ പേപ്പർ തീർന്നപ്പോൾ ഊണു മേശയുടെ മുകളിൽ വിരിച്ചിരുന്ന പത്രത്തിന്റെ ചെറിയ മാർജിനുകളുമായി ലേഖനം നീണ്ടു. ഞാൻ ഊണു മേശയുടെ ഒരു കസേരയിൽ ഇരുന്നു വായിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങി. മുഖം രണ്ടു കൈകളിലും താങ്ങിപ്പിടിച്ചു ഇമവെട്ടാതെ എന്റെ നേരെ അടുത്ത കസേരയിൽ തിരുമേനിയും ഇരുപ്പുറപ്പിച്ചു. തിരുമേനിയുടെ തുറിച്ചുള്ള നോട്ടവും നിശബ്ദതയും എനിക്ക് ആകെ പരിഭ്രമമായി. വിഷയം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കാൻ പറ്റുന്നില്ലെന്നും പിടികിട്ടുന്നുമില്ല. വായിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞു ഒരു ചർച്ചക്ക് തയ്യാറായാണ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ ഇരിപ്പ്.

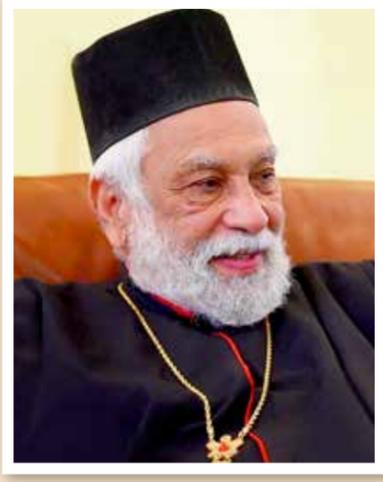
വിടാൻ ഭാവമില്ല എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കിയുള്ള ഇരിപ്പു കണ്ടു ഞാൻ ഒരു തരത്തിൽ അത് വായിച്ചു തീർത്തു. വായിക്കാൻ സാധിക്കാത്ത ഭാഗം വായിച്ചുതരാനും തിരുമേനിയുടെ മുഴുവൻ വായിച്ചു തീർന്നു തിരുമേനിയുടെ മുഖത്തേക്ക് നോക്കി, അപ്പോഴും അതേ ഇരിപ്പു, വെട്ടി നിരപ്പാക്കാത്ത നീണ്ടു നരച്ച കൺപിലികൾക്കിടയിലൂടെ ഇരുട്ടിൽ തിളങ്ങിനിന്ന മിഴികൾ ഭയപ്പെടുത്തി. എന്നാൽ അപ്പോഴേക്കും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മുഖത്തു ഉരച്ച കിരണങ്ങളുടെ തുടിപ്പ് മാറിമാറി വന്നുനിറഞ്ഞു. 'എങ്ങനെയാണ്?' ഏറെ നേരത്തെ നിശബ്ദതയ്ക്കു ശേഷം വന്നു പതിച്ച സ്വരം ആയിരുന്നതിനാൽ ഇടിവെട്ടും കൊള്ളിയാനും ഒന്നിച്ചു പതിച്ചുതുപോലെ ഞാൻ പതറി. 'സൃഷ്ടികൾ അതിവിസ്മയമാർന്നു' എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ 'ഗംഭീരമായിരിക്കുന്നു ചിന്തകൾ' എന്നു ഒരു ഞക്കത്തോടെ പറഞ്ഞു.

'ഞാൻ എഴുതിയതുകൊണ്ടു പറയല്ല, വേറാരും ഇങ്ങനെ എഴു

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Best compliments from

OUR FORMER VICAR AND SENIOR PRIEST OF THE NORTH EAST AMERICAN DIOCESE



Our beloved achen Very Rev Fr. Dr. P.S. Samuel Chor Episcopos

EXCERPTS FROM BARNABAS THIRUMENI'S BOOK, "WHO ARE THE BLESSED?"



Ashwin Joseph



Blessed are those who mourn for their sins and for the suffering of the world; for they shall be comforted.

Our Lord said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted". (St. Matthew 5:4) It is the realization that we have pained the heart of God that leads to repentance, which means a change of heart. Most of us cannot even dream of paining the heart of our mothers who love us utmost. Then, how much more sorrowful we should be in paining the heart of our Lord, as He loves us more than any mother? (Isaiah 49:15). God is calling us to repentance. "Yet even now," says the Lord, "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your hearts and not your clothing, Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relents from punishing" (Joel 2:12,13). The difficulty with many of us is that we don't realize the mistakes in us, as we tend to find excuses and justify all that we do. Real heart searching self-examination should reveal our selfishness. At the same time, too much weeping is bad. We must rejoice in the Lord after receiving forgiveness of sins. St. Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always" again I say, "Rejoice" (Phillipians 4:4). It may be noted here that laughing is conducted by some as an action therapy to bring down blood pressure.

Prayer: Create in us a clean heart, O God, and put a new right spirit in us (Psalm 51:10)

Blessed are those who forgive and forget; for they shall receive peace to the full.

To forgive is our duty before God. St. Paul says, "Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (Colossians 3:13). "See that none of you repay evil for evil, but always seek to do good

to one another and to all." (1 Thessalonians 5:15). This is the only way to have peace of mind. The person who does not forgive is like the man who keeps his wounds unhealed. He continues to suffer mentally. He will not get proper sleep. This may lead to physical ailments also. He forgets that the real way to make people love is by forgiving them. Moreover, it is our duty to forgive others as God forgives us.

Prayer: Helps us O Lord, to identify ourselves with those who hurt us, and forgive them whole-heartedly

Blessed are those who take care to note even the small improvements in others and compliment them; for they can thereby encourage them to do better and win their love.

Our Lord appreciated the apostles even in small things, though they had the weaknesses of ordinary people. On the eve of his death, He said, "You are those who have continued with me in my trials". (St. Luke 22:28) Generally speaking, we appreciate and encourage people who have achieved great things. But we fail to note the small improvements people make through their hard work. If only someone appreciates and encourages them, they will work harder and achieve greater success. If there is real love, we will try to encourage people and make them aware of their own high potential and do their best, instead of comparing them with others who are on a higher level.

Prayer: O Lord, help us to take an interest in the lives of others and encourage them to do their best.

ST. MARY, A TRUE SERVANT OF GOD



Thomas K Abraham

The life and testimony of St. Mary, should be a model and an encouragement for each one of us. She became the second heaven, when she bore our Creator in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit and when the power of Almighty overshadowed her. By obeying the word of God and through her humility, St.Mary became the Theotokos. The world received the savior who came to crush the power of satan. Through her obedience she became the mother of all believers who hear and do the Will of God. While suffering on the cross, Jesus told his disciple, St.John, who was a representative of the Church, to take care of his mother. The church always gives proper respect to St.Mary, considers her as ever virgin and prays for her intercession.

Let us examine how St.Mary became highly favored by God. Through her own words, which the evangelist St.Luke recorded in St.Luke 1:46 onwards, we get a glimpse of St.Mary's life. In this song, St.Mary says "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior". At an early age she was separated from her parents. She was raised by priests in the holy temple and at the age of fourteen engaged to an older man. St.Mary had an uncertain future, nevertheless she trusted the Almighty God and submitted her life to the will of God. This unwavering faith of St.Mary should be an example for all of us.

She sings, "For He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant". God was pleased by the humble spirit of St.Mary and her perseverance. The same humility can be seen in the life of her son Jesus, where



He tied down a rope around his waist, bent down and washed the feet of His disciples. Holy Church fathers praised the humility of Mary by singing "for no one was ever so humble as Mary, and none was ever so exalted as she was".

St. Mary understood the holiness of Almighty God,when she sings "For the Mighty One has done great things for me, holy is His name." When we realize the holiness of God and fear Him, we will resist the temptation to commit sins and try to live a holy life. She lived a simple and innocent life, the Almighty God found the right candidate in her, to send his only begotten son. As we sing in Holy Qurbana "Like a fertile earth,the womb of Mary received Me".

She praises the God who is merciful as she sings " His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation." When we

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GREGORY FOUNDATION UPDATE



Somy Rajan
Founder, The Gregory Foundation for Cancer Research

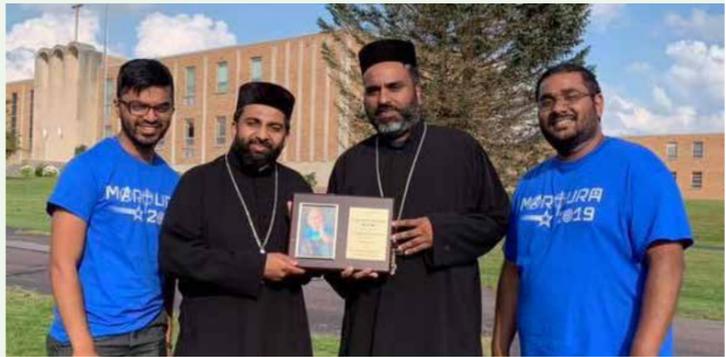
Following the tragic loss, the family of Gregory Rajan founded The Gregory Foundation for Cancer Research. The Foundation strives to create a lasting legacy for precious Gregory by supporting cancer research.



like animals and one in three died along the way.

While I read the story of Peter Claver, I was reminded of the number of patients diagnosed with cancer. The situation is similar in many ways to the 17th century as described above. Patients keep coming, most are diagnosed with terrible oncologic conditions, terrified and wanting and looking for survival. In spite of the technological and therapeutic advancement, cancer continues to wreak havoc in families all around the world. We have lost 11 million years of children due to mortality and complications that children experience from cancer. About 400,000 childhood cancers are diagnosed each year and 140,000 children die. Survival rates in lower and middle income countries are very stark, where it is as low as 20%.

Last year, I told you that at the Gregory Foundation, our focus will be on two things: (1) To support oncology research and (2) To create access to medicine programs for children in lower and middle income countries. We have been working towards these two objectives. During the past year, we have developed relationships, evaluated research and supported many researchers and institutions in the US. We



continue to evaluate research and we will continue to do so through diligence prior to supporting specific research programs. On our access to medicine objective, our platform is now fully functional in India. We have begun enrolling patients who are unable to access high impact medicine. We are now working with Tata Memorial Hospital in Calcutta, which is a tertiary hospital that treats about 650 patients. Among the 650 patients, we have placed systems and processes to identify children who are below poverty measures. Currently, we are partnering with Novartis India and Roche India to help support those children enrolled in our platform.

Finally, we have been able to help Kids shouldn't get cancer foundation with legislative actions that they are currently pursuing. We have helped draft a Bill that is

currently before the United States Congress which will allocate more than 100 million dollars for pediatric cancer research through NIH. We have been able to support them and have helped them gather bipartisan support for the bill.

We will continue to work on all these initiatives. Finding solutions for cancer will take each and everyone of our efforts. It is a complex problem and therefore, requires complex approaches and solutions.

It is my prayer and hope that this Foundation will be able to seek out and help the people who are affected by Cancer just as Peter Claver. It will only do well for us and our generations to come.

Personally and more importantly, how I would like to remember my Gregory and his short life here on this side of the shore.

inhabitants that arrived there were slaves. It is said that so many people arrived as slaves, all of them starved, and were packed



Our Gregory continues to live and he continues to create a positive impact in our lives every day. As you can imagine, there is not an hour, or a day that we don't think of him, remember his smile, his life and the love he shared with us. And, as for us, it continues to be difficult. However, the work that we have begun in his memory provides some comfort. In many ways, he continues to live on through what we do at the Foundation named after him.

This Summer while we were preparing for the Summer trip, I read about Peter Claver. Peter Claver lived in early 17th century, was from Colombia and was deeply impacted by the slavery and dehumanization that happened in his days. Peter Claver travelled to Cartagena and knew that many of the

നീതിയുടെ പ്രഭാവലയത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുനിന്ന മാർ ബർണബാസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത

from page 03

തി എന്ന് എനിക്ക് തോന്നുന്നില്ല. തിരുമേനി തന്നെ സ്വന്തം എഴുത്തിനെപ്പറ്റി പറയുകയാണ്. ശരീരത്തിന്റെ വിളക്ക് കണ്ണാകുന്നു. കണ്ണ് ചൊവ്വുള്ളതെങ്കിൽ നിന്റെ ശരീരം മുഴുവൻ പ്രകാശിതമായിരിക്കും (മത്തായി 7:22) പ്രകാശവും ഇരുളിനെപ്പറ്റിയും ഉള്ള വിശകലനമായിരുന്നു അതിൽ. പിന്നെ അതിന്റെ ഓരോ പോയിന്റുകളും വിശദമാക്കുകയാണ്. നിഷ്കളങ്കമായ ആ മുഖത്തു നോക്കി ഞാൻ വെറുതേ നോക്കിയിരുന്നു. മിറാഡി ചെല്ലത്തിൽനിന്നു കുട്ടികൾക്ക് കൊടുക്കണം എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു "എടുക്കൂ എടുക്കൂ" എന്ന് നിർബന്ധിച്ചു തന്നിരുന്ന മിറാഡി കയ്യിൽ പിടിച്ചു പടവുകൾ ഇറങ്ങുമ്പോൾ എന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ സമ്മാനിച്ച സ്നേഹ വസന്തം വാക്കുകൾക്ക് അതിതമായിരുന്നു. ഒരു എഴുത്തുകാരൻ എങ്ങനെ ചിന്തിക്കണം എങ്ങനെ എഴുതണം എന്നൊക്കെയുള്ള ആദിപാത്തിന്റെ നിർവൃതിയിൽ ഞാൻ അങ്ങനെ മയങ്ങിപ്പോയി.

മറ്റൊരു ദിവസം പുലർന്നത് കൃത്യം രാവിലെ അഞ്ചുമണിക്ക് തിരുമേനിയുടെ ടെലിഫോൺ കോൾ ആയിരുന്നു. "ജോലി കഴിഞ്ഞു ഇതുവഴി വരണം". ഉടൻ ഫോൺ കട്ട് ചെയ്തു. ഭദ്രാസന കോൺഫറൻസ് സംബന്ധിച്ച ഒരു പത്ര വാർത്തയിൽ അൽപ്പം അതിശയോക്തി കലർന്നിരുന്നു. അത് ഒഴിവാക്കണം എന്ന് പറയാനാണ് വിളിച്ചത്. അതി ഭാവുകതയും അതിശയോക്തിയും പൊങ്ങച്ചവും തിരുമേനിക്ക് പൊറുക്കാനാവാത്ത പാതകമായിരുന്നു.

അത്യാവശ്യം കാര്യങ്ങൾ മാത്രം പറയുക, പറയുന്നതിന് നൂറു ശതമാനവും വില കൊടുക്കുക, ഒക്കെ കൃത്യവും യുക്തവും ആയിരിക്കണം. ജോലി കഴിഞ്ഞു വന്നാൽ മതി ഞാൻ കാത്തിരിക്കാം എന്ന് പറയുന്നത് വഴി സാധാരണ വിശ്വാസിയുടെ പ്രായോഗിക ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ പ്രാരംഭങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചു തികച്ചും ബോധവാനായിരുന്നു തിരുമേനി. അവർക്ക് വലിയ വിലകൽപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു എന്ന് പറയുന്നതാണ് ശരി. ആളുകൾ

അവധിയെടുത്തു മീറ്റിങ്ങുകളിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കാൻ നിർബന്ധിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഏതു സമയവും ആർക്കും അപ്പോയന്റ് മെന്റുകൾ ഇല്ലാതെ കടന്നു വരാനുള്ള സാതത്ര്യവും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഒക്കെ ഒരു തുറന്ന പുസ്തകം പോലെ ആളുകളുടെ ഇടയിൽ അവർക്കൊപ്പം നില്ക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്നു എന്നതാണ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ മഹത്വം.

സ്നേഹം എന്നതായിരുന്നു തിരുമേനിയുടെ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട പ്രസംഗ വിഷയം. "തോൽക്കാനും പഠിക്കണം" എന്ന വിഷയത്തെപ്പറ്റിയും പരിവർത്തനാത്മകമായ പ്രസംഗം അദ്ദേഹത്തിൽ നിന്നും കേട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. വീട്ടിൽ നടന്ന ഒരു പ്രർത്ഥന യോഗത്തിൽ തിരുമേനി അധ്യക്ഷനായിരുന്നു. എൻറെ മകൾ മുട്ടിലിഴഞ്ഞു നടക്കുന്ന പ്രായമാണ്, പാട്ടുകേട്ടു അവൾ തിരുമേനിയുടെ അടുത്ത് ഇഴഞ്ഞു ചെന്ന് അറിയാതെ കൈ അടിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. തിരുമേനിക്ക് അത് വളരെ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടു, പ്രാർത്ഥനകൾ ആളുകൾ പാട്ടുപാടുമ്പോൾ തിരുമേനിയും കുട്ടിയും കൈ അടിച്ചു സന്തോഷത്തോടെ പാടി രസിക്കുന്നതു ഇന്നും ഓർമ്മയിൽ തങ്ങി നിൽക്കുന്നു. ചെറുകുട്ടികളോടും എത്ര പ്രായം കുടിയവരോടും രോഗികളോടും, മറ്റു മതവിശ്വാസികളോടും ഒക്കെ ചേർന്ന് നിന്നു ദൈവത്തെ മഹത്വപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത് അത്ഭുതത്തോടെ നോക്കി നിന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. തനിക്കു ആരോഗ്യം ഉള്ള സമയമെല്ലാം കടന്നു ചെല്ലാവുന്ന രോഗികളുടെ സാമീപ്യം ഒരു നിഷ്ഠ പോലെ കൊണ്ടുപോയി. കൂടെ പ്രാർഥിക്കുന്നവർ ഏതു വിശ്വാസക്കാരായിരുന്നാലും, അവർ അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ശാന്തതയും സാന്ത്വപതിയും ഞാൻ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

ഓരോ പള്ളിയിലെയും വൈദികർ നടത്തുന്ന പ്രസംഗങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് ചോദിച്ചറിയാനും തിരുമേനി ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിരുന്നു. അമേരിക്കയിലെ വൈദികർ മലയാളത്തിൽ മാത്രം പ്രസംഗിക്കുന്നതിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് വലിയ പ്രയാസമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. "ഞാൻ ഇവിടെ ജനിക്കുകയായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ ഈ പള്ളികളിൽ പോകില്ലായിരുന്നു, മലയാള ഭാഷ

മനസ്സിലാക്കാത്ത ഈ കുട്ടികൾക്ക് മുന്നിൽ എത്ര മലയാള സാഹിത്യം പറഞ്ഞാലും പ്രയോജനമുണ്ടാകുമോ? അൽപ്പം തയ്യാറായാൽ ഏതു വൈദികനും ഇത് ചെയ്യാവുന്നതേയുള്ളൂ". തിരുമേനി വേദനയോടെ പറയുമ്പോൾ അമേരിക്കയിലെ പുതിയ തലമുറയെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള ആശങ്ക കണ്ണുകളിൽ നിഴലിച്ചിരുന്നു.

ഒരു ദിവസം തിരുമേനിയെ കാണാൻ ചെന്നപ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹം പുറത്തു നടക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. കോരസൺ, എനിക്ക് നിങ്ങളൊക്കെ താമസിക്കുന്നപോലുള്ള ഒരു വീട് മതി, വലിയ കെട്ടിടത്തിൽ എനിക്ക് താമസിക്കാനാവില്ല, എന്റെ കൈപിടിച്ച അത് പറയുമ്പോൾ ആളുകളുടെ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളും തന്റെ താല്പര്യങ്ങളും തമ്മിലുള്ള ആത്മസംഘർഷം ഉള്ളിരുന്നു വന്നിരുന്നു. കീൻസിലെ ബെൽറോസിലുള്ള ആ ചെറിയ വീടാണ് ഏറെനാൾ അരമനയായി ഉപയോഗിച്ചത്. തിരക്കുള്ള വഴികൾ ചുറ്റിനിന്ന, ഏതാണ്ട് എല്ലാ സമയവും തുറന്നുകിടന്ന, ആ കെട്ടിടത്തിനു വലം വെയ്ക്കുകയായിരുന്നു തിരുമേനിയുടെ പതിവ് വ്യായാമം. സമൂഹത്തിലെ വലിയ ആളുകൾ ഒക്കെ തിരുമേനിയെ സന്ദർശിച്ചിരുന്നതിനാൽ ഒരു വലിയ അരമന കെട്ടിടം വാങ്ങണം എന്ന് ഞങ്ങൾ നിരന്തരം ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നു. അങ്ങനെ കമ്മറ്റി തീരുമാനപ്രകാരം കുറെ ദിവസങ്ങൾ അവധിയെടുത്തു ഓരോ കെട്ടിടങ്ങൾ കാണിക്കാനായി തിരുമേനിയെയും കൊണ്ട് പോകുമായിരുന്നു. ഒന്നും തിരുമേനിക്ക് തൃപ്തിയില്ലാതെ പോയി. അതിൽ അൽപ്പം നിരസം എനിക്കുണ്ട് എന്ന് തിരുമേനിക്ക് തോന്നിക്കാണണം.

വർഗീസ് പോത്താനിക്കാടും, കോര. കെ. കോരയും, ഞാനും ചേർന്നാണ് തിരുമേനിയെ മട്ടൻടൂണിലുള്ള കെട്ടിടം കാണിക്കാൻ പോയത്. അന്നും ഞങ്ങൾ ജോലി കഴിഞ്ഞു തിരുമേനിയോടൊപ്പം സന്ധ്യ പ്രാർത്ഥനയും കഴിഞ്ഞാണ് കൊണ്ടുപോയത്. അപ്പോഴേക്കും വലിയ ഇരുട്ടായി, ആകെ ചെറിയ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ ആ കെട്ടിടം കൃത്യമായി കാണാൻ സാധിച്ചില്ല, തിരുമേനി സദാ സമയവും താഴേക്ക് നോക്കി

ST. MARY, A TRUE SERVANT OF GOD

from page 03

examine the life of St.Mary, we could see she tried to imitate this heavenly character and helped other human beings. She travelled to Elizabeth's house and took care of her for almost three months when Elizabeth was pregnant with John the Baptist. When she found out that they didn't have enough wine at the wedding house at Cana, Mary asks Jesus for help.

For Mary, the way that God has dealt with His people in the past is a clue to how God is going to deal with her life. She has a thankful heart towards the

Almighty God, as she remembers the Lord has surprised His people with grace. St.Mary believed that the promise that God made to Abraham was fulfilled due to the birth of Jesus Christ.

This beautiful song of St.Mary is a replica of her life, where we see a humble, obedient, trustworthy, poor in spirit and loyal servant of God. Because of these traits God granted her fullness of grace and overshadowing of power. The blessed life of St.Mary is always a model and motivation for fellow believers.

തന്നെയിരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം മുറിയിൽ കയറി, "പ്രാർഥിക്കാം", ഒന്നും കാണാൻ നിൽക്കാതെ "നമുക്ക് പോകാം" എന്ന് തിരക്ക് കൂട്ടി. പതിവ് പരിപാടികൾ പോലെ ഈ പരിപാടിയും പൊളിഞ്ഞു എന്ന് ഞങ്ങൾ കണക്കുകൂട്ടി. തിരികെ വരുന്ന വഴി തിരുമേനി ഒന്നും സംസാരിച്ചില്ല. ഞങ്ങളും നിശ്ശബ്ദരായിരുന്നു.

വർഗീസ് പോത്താനിക്കാട് വിളിക്കുന്നു, തിരുമേനി രാവിലെ വിളിച്ചു ഒരു ചെക്ക് തന്നു. നിങ്ങൾ പോയി കോൺട്രാക്ട് എഴുതിക്കൊള്ളൂ എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു. അന്നും ജോലി കഴിഞ്ഞു ഞങ്ങൾ അറ്റോർണിയുടെ ഓഫീസിൽ പോയി വേണ്ട കോൺട്രാക്ട് പേപ്പറുകൾ തയ്യാറാക്കി അഡ്വാൻസ് തുകയും നൽകി. തിരികെ വന്നു തിരുമേനിയുടെ കാൽപാദങ്ങളിൽ തൊട്ടു. അപ്പോൾ കൈ മുത്താനല്ലായിരുന്നു ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് തോന്നിയത്. പിന്നെ ഓരോ ഘട്ടങ്ങളിലും തിരുമേനി ഒരു എതിർപ്പും പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കാതെ എല്ലാത്തിനും മുന്നിൽ തന്നെ നിന്നു. അത് തനിക്കു വേണ്ടിയല്ല, ജനങ്ങളുടെ ആഗ്രഹത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയുള്ള ത്യാഗമാണെന്നു ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് തിരിച്ചറിയാമായിരുന്നു. പലപ്പോഴും ജനങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കാതെ അവരുടെ തലയിൽ വമ്പൻ പദ്ധതികൾ അടിച്ചേൽപ്പിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് ഇടയവേല പാളുന്നത് എന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിവുള്ള വലിയ മനുഷ്യൻ.

'നിമിഷങ്ങൾ.. നിമിഷങ്ങൾ..'

എന്നുതടങ്ങുന്ന ഗാന ശകലം പാടി നടക്കുന്ന തിരുമേനിയെ കാണാനുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. തന്റെ നിയോഗത്തിന്റെ അതിരുകളിൽ സ്പർശിക്കാൻ എന്ന് നല്ല ബോധം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു അപ്പോഴേക്കും. തനിക്കു കിട്ടിയ പണത്തിൽ ഒന്നും എടുക്കാതെ ഒക്കെ പിൻഗാമിയുടെ കരങ്ങളിൽ ഏൽപ്പിച്ചു നാട്ടിലേക്കു തിരികെ പോകുന്ന ദിവസം. യാത്രയയക്കാൻ ഒട്ടേറെപ്പേർ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അപ്പോഴേക്കും അരമന ഒരു വലിയ സൗധം ആയി മാറ്റപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നു.

തിരുമേനി പതുവുപോലെ ഉച്ചയറക്കം, പ്രാർത്ഥനകൾ ഒക്കെ കഴിഞ്ഞു ഏയർപോർട്ടിൽ പോകാൻ തയ്യാറായി. വലിയ വികാര വിക്ഷോഭം ഒന്നും പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കാതെ കാറിലേക്ക് കയറി, ആരോ സീറ്റ് ബെൽറ്റ് ഇട്ടു കൊടുത്തു. പതുക്കെ കാർ മുകളിലേക്ക് കയറി റോഡിൽ പ്രവേശിച്ചു. നിറഞ്ഞ കണ്ണുകളോടെ അവിടെ യാത്ര അയക്കാൻ എത്തിയവരോട് കൈ വീശി യാത്ര പറയാനോ മിനക്കെട്ടില്ല. തന്നെ ഏൽപ്പിച്ച ധൗത്യം തിരുമാമ മഹത്വത്തിനായി ചെയ്തു, വേല തികച്ചു, കർഷകൻ വയലിൽ നിന്നു മടങ്ങുന്നപോലെ പോയി.അവിടെ കൂടി നിന്നവരുടെ നെടുവീർപ്പുകൾ പെരുവെള്ളത്തിന്റെ ഇരമ്പൽ പോലെ അരമനക്കു ചുറ്റും പരിവർത്തിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. അത് ഇന്നും അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്നു.



Anney Johnson

UPON THIS ROCK

Simon Peter, the apostle whom I admire and revere the most, often comes across as a wavering, unlettered and impulsive person who denied our Lord three times so that he could save himself. This incident has cast a cloud on his magnificent profession of faith when he said that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter's denial of Jesus is remembered almost as an enormous unforgivable sin that it overshadows his redemption and ultimately even his horrific death on the cross. Every time we read the passage of Peter's denial, we get emotional and think that it was the cruelest act any human being could have done. However, Simon Peter is first

among the apostles to be called The Rock on which Christ, who is the chief cornerstone, will continue to build His church. All the other disciples were encouraged by the bold declaration made by Peter and the stewardship bestowed on him by Jesus. They all transformed into precious rocks upon which Christ could build the early church. The life of Peter as a youngster would not have been an easy one. It was one of the most difficult times in history to be a Jew. He had witnessed many rebellions against Rome ending in disaster. [Acts 5: 37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.] Yet as a zealous

youth growing up in the times, he was probably stirred to fight for the glory of God and Israel. He would have been a young boy of thirteen who went to Jerusalem to offer his first sacrifice, where he could have witnessed violent killings and crucifixions. In the Bible we see Peter initially as a common man who had the task of supporting his family by braving the storms on the Sea of Galilee and in his personal life. He was a strong and dependable man who was faithful in all his relationships. He took care of his mother in law even after the death of his wife. These were familiar grounds for Peter, but the promised glory of Israel and the coming of The Messiah were distant. He might have even had a slight disdain towards

the self proclaimed messiahs based on his past experiences and would have feared for the lives of his impressionable younger brethren. He was probably filled with trepidation at the arrival of John the Baptist on the scene. It was again a time of great political unrest in the history of Israel. He saw the truth in John's preaching but feared that he would meet the same fate as Judas of Galilee many years ago. He knew that the Jews were divided, and the priests were following the Roman practices. He understood that the nation needed a Messiah who would lead them back to God and he was searching for answers just as any other devout Jew. Everything changed when Peter met Jesus and looked into His eyes and heard His voice. His fear melted away as he realized that Jesus was unlike the other revolutionaries. Being near Jesus affirmed what he had heard about Him from John The Baptist. [John 1:36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"]. Instead of fear, he had a warm reassurance. He gave up the life and trade he knew and followed Jesus. Jesus saw that Peter was a strong,

bold, loving and dependable person on whom his family and friends looked up to. [John 1:42 "Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, " You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas".] He called him Cephas which means rock. True to his name, Peter followed Jesus to His trial to stand beside Jesus. Then came the most dramatic and painful experience in the life of Saint Peter. His old fears returned and he denied knowing Jesus. But as Jesus looked at him, Peter met His gaze and became repentant. He realised that the fear of death was his weakness. He must have been saddened by his failure and yet went back to his familiar job of fishing and providing for his family. Peter's love for God and Jesus was reflected in his life as he boldly preached about Jesus. He went on to prove his devotion through his martyrdom. He embraced what he feared the most; the painful and excruciating death on a cross. When Jesus said His famous words about Peter, He gave him and us a promise. On him [Peter] Christ, who is himself the cornerstone will keep building His church. ■



Benett William

REFLECTIONS ON THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

This year's Talent Festival held under the auspices of the Sunday School of the Northeast American Diocese had a Quiz program on the book of Ezekiel. Interestingly, the Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam also had the same topic for their Quiz program this year. Being a participant this year in the Quiz program of the Sunday School at the Diocesan Level, along with Kevin Kurian and Jensen Varghese, I had the opportunity to study the book thoroughly well and I really enjoyed the task.

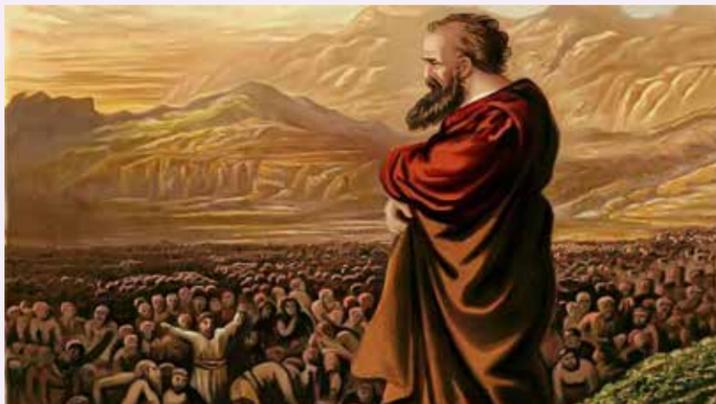
The author of the book of Ezekiel is Ezekiel himself. The book starts off with his visions of God as he was by the River Chebar among the exiles from Jerusalem. He was of a priestly family and he was one of those exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC. And, there, he received his call to become a prophet and to be a watchman over Israel. He is told to warn them of their sinful nature. Israel breaks the covenant with God, and forsakes Him by worshipping idols. The bad news God gives Ezekiel is that nobody will listen to him. God sends King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to lay siege on Israel. Israel is completely destroyed; people get killed by the sword, some held captive, and others scattered across the nations. They were shown no mercy. Israel, along with its neighboring nations, was destroyed. God sent Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Egypt because the Pharaoh of Egypt was cruel. The Pharaoh is compared to a dragon. God did not like Pharaoh's arrogance in stating that he made the Nile River. Tyre was demolished as well because the King of Tyre thought he was as wise as God.

The Philistines and Ammon were demolished.

Even though God laid siege to His own people (Israel), He still had a plan for them. God says that He will transform their hearts and put a new spirit in the people. He promises that He will return to them the land of Israel.

God takes Ezekiel to a valley full of dry bones. The bones represented the house of Israel. God resurrected them and the bones came back to life. He transformed their hearts, and

portion of this book was when God asked Ezekiel to cook food using human dung. When Ezekiel protested, he was told to use cow dung. This interested me because God expected Ezekiel to do his job and He wanted him to experience hardships the same way Israel was going to experience. This shows God's fairness. Also, more than any other prophet, Ezekiel was used to act out God's prophetic visions in a personal way as a symbolic gesture for the exiles of Israel.



put a new spirit in them. God also leads the people into His ways.

The ending chapters of the book portrays God showing Ezekiel the new temple of Israel. He sets a date for Israel to celebrate the feast of Passover. The outer gate of the sanctuary which faces East is to remain shut permanently (Ezekiel 44:2) which is considered as a prophesy regarding the ever-virginity of St. Mary, the Mother of God. Portions of the new temple stood for the different tribes of Israel. These indicate how God became the kind Shepherd who saved His people.

A couple of revealing parts for me in this book was when God tells the story of Israel's origin and ancestors, and the story of the two prostitutes, Oholah and Oholibah. I learned that Israel's origin and birth was in the land of the Canaanites. An interesting

The last part that interested me was when God made judgements against the shepherds of Israel. God says, " You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. (Ezekiel 34:3.) This verse was interesting not only due to its content regarding the admonishing of the leaders of Israel but also due to the diction used.

We can see that the central theme of this book is compassion and forgiveness. God forgives Israel. He guides them back to His ways. We should never worship anything or anyone but God who created heaven and earth. The book of Ezekiel teaches us that we must honor God's name and magnify His glory. We should continue to praise God and follow His ways.

My Family Trip to ROME



Hannah Rajan

About a year ago, I visited Italy with my family. Of the many places we visited in Italy, Rome was my most favorite one. In Rome, we visited many Churches and Cathedrals. The first day, we visited the catacombs. The catacombs are underground tombs in the outskirts of the city, where the early Christians were buried. The early Christians, fearing persecution, hid in the catacombs and prayed there. We saw relics and tombs of many saints. After the catacombs, we visited the Church that was built where Saint Paul was beheaded. At the Church, the spot where he

where St. Paul walked and learning about St. Paul's life in Rome. St. Paul was born in Tarsus, Turkey. He spent about two years in Rome in prison from 60 to 62 AD. We were able to see the prison where St. Paul was held. St. Paul wrote several letters to his disciples and Churches while he was in the prison. Fourteen letters of St. Paul are given in the Holy Bible, of which some were from this prison in Rome. St. Timothy used to visit St. Paul while in prison and he transported those letters for St. Paul. The place where St. Paul was held was very close to the Old Roman Military Quarters. We saw remnants of places where Roman soldiers had lived. It was a huge area with small hills and valleys. The elaborate Roman architecture in those places were incredible. We also went to Vatican City, the headquarters of Pope, the head of the Roman Catholic Church. The museum at the Vatican is really a sight to see. My sister and I were able to learn of the Early Christian life from the museum. The paintings were magnificent and depicted different events of that time. We purchased headphones



was martyred is still preserved. When St. Paul was beheaded, his head is said to have bounced over to three places and water fountains sprung up out of the earth in those spots. We were able to see those water spots and pray at the Church.

My favorite time visiting Rome was walking through the places

that described each and every painting and its significance. It was very useful. We spent one whole day at the Vatican. Another day we went to visit the Cathedral where the relics of St. Thomas are preserved. The finger of St. Thomas that he used to touch Christ's hands after the

Agni Middle School Camp



During the summer of this year, I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the Agni Middle School Camp once again. It was held at the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center, Dalton, Pennsylvania. As the lone Sunday School student participant from Long Island last year, it was of immense joy for me to see many more kids come forth and participate in the Camp this year. In fact, we had a whole bus load of kids from Long Island, besides many others from different parts of the Diocese! Reverend Father Sujith Thomas once again did an excellent job of coordinating this event with the help of an amazing Committee that included our very own Lisa Rajan and Issac Rajan or as I call them Lisa Chechi and Isaac Achachen.

The activities that were held during the three days of this camp included, speaker sessions, devotionals, prayers at designated hours and the like, besides sports and other social activities. The speakers did an excellent job of presenting their respective topics and conveying their messages. The Agni Middle school camp was truly a blessing in my life. I learned a countless number of things and I was able to get closer to God as I was enlightened by this event. In other words, my spirituality and moral values got a boost through my participation in the Camp. It is not an overstatement to say that I simply became a better person through my interaction with others and through the interactive teachings of our clergy as well as our elders. Last year, at first, I was reluctant to go to the camp because nobody from our Church was going. But

I finally decided to go and I am so glad that I did because these camps have made a permanent impact on my life.

Although the majority of Sunday School students that participated were from Philadelphia and its suburbs, I hope and pray that this article will spark interest in the hearts of the students and parents of our Parish in particular and our Area in general and help improve our participation in future years in terms of quantity and quality. When our



Northeastern American Diocese has such a tremendous resource such as the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center (HTRC) why should we not take advantage of it by making the maximum use of it? HTRC holds so many events yearound, not just pertaining to Sunday School students, but also pertaining to adults, women, adolescents, college students, et cetera.

At this year's Camp, the speakers focused on many different topics varying from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Sacraments of the Church, to the Importance of certain Feast Days, to the significance and meaning of particular liturgical



Kevin Kurian

hymns and readings used on those occasions. Often, we fly past these special days and services without paying enough attention to the readings and hymns and their relationship to our everyday lives. With the help of Priests, Seminarians, and our elders, we the attendees of the Agni Camp were able to perceive the purpose behind such extended and complex ceremonies involved not just in the seven Sacraments, but also during liturgical occasions such as the Holy Week, Christmas, Easter and the like.

This Agni Camp has sparked a fire in me that I hope will burn forever. And I hope and pray that others of my age will also have such fire sparked in them through participation in such Camps. By the way, for those who may not know, the word 'Agni' is a term in Sanskrit and in some other Indian languages like Malayalam and it means 'fire'. Besides gaining liturgical knowledge and understanding, this Camp helped me gain a certain measure of spiritual guidance and maturity that I otherwise would not have gained. I am thankful to God for the same.



A SPEECH BY FIONA JOHN II AND JEWEL JOHN II DURING THE CATHOLICATE DAY CELEBRATION 2019

ക്രൈസ്തവ കേരളത്തിന്റെ വന്ദനം തിരുനാമത്തിന് മഹത്വം ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കട്ടെ.

ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ഏറ്റവും പ്രിയപ്പെട്ട ഗ്രിഗറി അച്ഛൻ, വേദിയിലും സദസ്സിലും ഇരിക്കുന്ന വിശിഷ്ടവ്യക്തികളെ, മലങ്കരസഭാ മക്കളെ, കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ് എന്ന വിഷയത്തെ കുറിച്ച് സംസാരിക്കുക എന്നതാണ് എൻ്റെ ദൗത്യം.



Fiona John II & Jewel John II

കർത്താവ് യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ തിരുവിലാവിൽ സ്വർഗ്ഗത്തിലേക്ക് എൻ്റെ കർത്താവും എൻ്റെ ദൈവവുമേ" എന്ന് സത്യവിശ്വാസപ്രഖ്യാപനം നടത്തിയ വി: മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹാ, അള 52 ൽ മലങ്കരയിൽനിന്നും തിരിച്ചെത്തിയ ക്രൈസ്തവ സുവിശേഷത്തിൻ്റെ അടങ്ങാത്ത അന്തർദാഹങ്ങളാകുന്ന ശിലകളെ ആർഷഭാരത സംസ്കാരത്തിൽ രൂപവും ഭാവവും നൽകി തൻ്റെ ജീവൻ കൊടുത്ത് വളർത്തിയെടുത്തതാണ് ഭാരതത്തിൻ്റെ സ്വന്തം മലങ്കര സഭ.

തിരുമേനിയായ രചിക്കപ്പെട്ടതാണ് മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ മാഗ്നാകാർട്ട എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്ന മലങ്കരസഭ ഭരണഘടന.

മലങ്കരസഭ ഒരു വ്യവസ്ഥാപനം ആണ്, അത് വെറുതെ കിട്ടിയ തല്ല. വി:തോമാശ്ലീഹായാൽ നട്ട പരിശുദ്ധ പിതാക്കന്മാരാൽ നന്നായി ദൈവത്താൽ വളർത്തപ്പെട്ട ലോകം മുഴുവൻ ശാഖകളുള്ള പരിശുദ്ധ സഭയാണ് എൻ്റെ സഭ, മലങ്കര ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭ.

സാമൂതിരിയുടെ മുൻപിൽ തല കുനിക്കാതെയും റോമാ അധികാരത്തിൻ കീഴിൽ വീണ് പോകാതെയും മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ സാമന്തത്വത്തിനു വേണ്ടി മലങ്കര നസ്രാണികൾ നില കൊണ്ടു. സന്തതിയുള്ള കാലംവരെ റോമാ വിശ്വാസം സ്വീകരിക്കുകയോ മാർപാപ്പയുടെ അധികാരത്തിനു വിധേയരാവുകയോ ഇല്ലെന്ന് പ്രതിജ്ഞ ചെയ്തു. ഇതാണ് പ്രസിദ്ധമായ 1653 ലെ കുനൻ കുരിശു സത്യം. ശ്രേഷ്ഠ ആധിപത്യത്തിൻ കീഴിൽ അകപ്പെട്ടുപോകുമായിരുന്ന മലങ്കരസഭയെ സംരക്ഷിച്ച് രണ്ടാം കുനൻകുരിശുസത്യമെന്ന 1912-ലെ മലങ്കര സഭയുടെ സാമന്തത്വത്തിൻ്റെയും സ്വയം ശീർഷകത്തിൻ്റെയും പ്രതീകമായ കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ് സ്ഥാപനം പൂർണ്ണമായത് 1934 ൽ കോട്ടയത്ത് വെച്ച് മലങ്കര അസോസിയേഷൻ പാസാക്കിയ മലങ്കരസഭ ഭരണഘടനയിലൂടെയാണ്. പ: വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ മാർ ദിവനാസിയോസ്

മലങ്കര സഭ സർവ്വസാമന്തമാണ്. കാതോലിക്കാ ദിനാചരണം എന്ന് പറയുന്നത് അതിൻ്റെ സാമന്തത്വത്തെയും തനിമയെയും അതിൻ്റെ ദേശീയതയെയും ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്ന സന്ദേശം തലമുറ തലമുറ കൈമാറുന്ന അടയാളമാണ്. മലങ്കര സഭയെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം മലങ്കര നസ്രാണികളെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം പകരം വയ്ക്കരുതെന്ന് എൻ്റെ പിതാക്കന്മാർ എന്ന് പഠിപ്പിച്ച എൻ്റെ ആത്മാഭിമാനത്തിൻ്റെ സത്താണ് എനിക്ക് കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ്. രക്തംകൊണ്ട് മലങ്കര നസ്രാണി രചിച്ച അവൻ്റെ പിതൃത്വ ബോധമാണ് എനിക്ക് കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ്. മാർത്തോമ്മൻ പൈതൃകത്തിൻ്റെ ആത്മാഭിമാന ബോധമാണ് എനിക്ക് കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ്.

പരിശുദ്ധ മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹായുടെ സിംഹാസനം നീണാൾ വാഴട്ടെ! ജയ് ജയ് കാതോലിക്കോസ്!

Congratulations Jophiel

On behalf of our parish, we would like to Congratulate Jophiel Phillips on his Promotion to Major in the United States Air Force! Jophiel also received The Bronze Star with Valor and Purple Heart. The promotion ceremony was held at St. Francis Preparatory High School, where gave a message about courage and perseverance. Gregory Achen was able to attend the ceremony and speak a few words as well. We want to thank Jophiel for his service to our country. May God bless him and continue to work through him in protecting our people overseas. Below are a few pictures taken during the ceremony.



My Family Trip to ROME

from page 05

Resurrection is preserved in the Cathedral. Also in the Cathedral, we saw the wooden Cross which was used for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We also saw the linen that was used to wrap the body of Christ. It was a great experience.

On the last day in Rome, we went to see the Coliseum. The Coliseum was where the Early Christians were martyred for their faith. On the orders of the Roman Emperor, the Christians who refused to renounce their faith were fed to vicious animals like hungry lions. The martyrs are those who chose death over denouncing their faith in Christ. Today there stands a

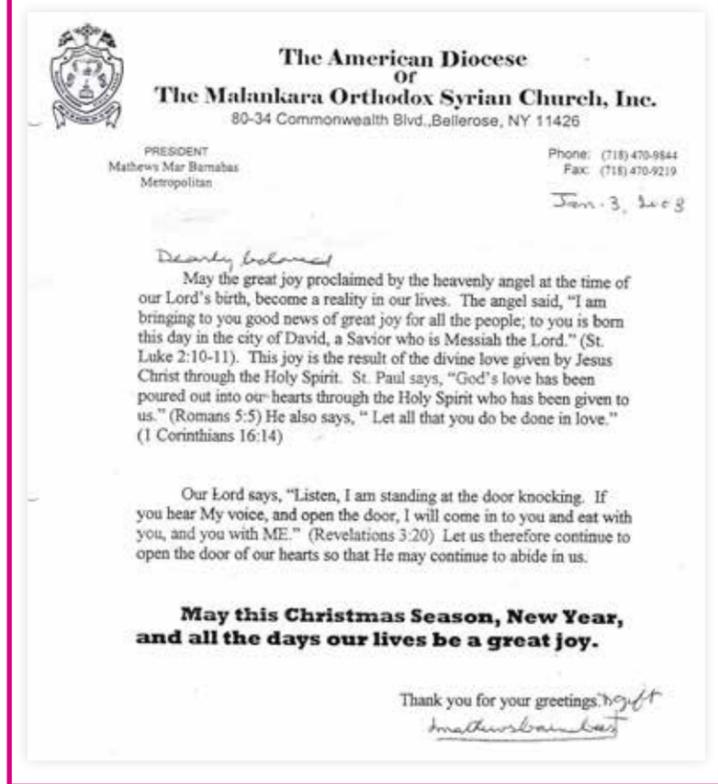


huge cross at the coliseum, signifying the sacrifice of the early Christians. I love the city of Rome, and I would love to go back to visit again. Glory be to God for the faith and sacrifice of the early Christians!

WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE
A Joyous, Blessed Christmas!

Included below is a letter from Thirumeni to one of our Church members during the Christmas/New Year season of 2002-2003

Library ARTICLE



FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCE (FYC) 2019



Abigail Rajan

The Family and Youth Conference 2019 was a very fun experience. By the afternoon and evening of the first day (Wednesday), adults and children from all of the Churches in the Diocese came to Kalahari Resorts and Waterparks. There were participants from Churches in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and several other States as also from Churches in Canada.

The views from our rooms were beautiful. I could see the trees, mist and pastel lights coming from the waterpark. The weather was warm and misty. The first day there was a procession for which people from different areas wore different colors. The color for the Queens-Long Island-Brooklyn Area was yellow and therefore we wore yellow. The procession was followed by an Inaugural Ceremony. After the ceremony, there was a Talent Show for performances by Churches. Participants from our Church (Saint Gregorios Orthodox Church, Cherry Lane) sang a Coptic song about the Theotokos, that is, Saint Mary, the Mother of God. Overall, the performances by various

Churches have been very lively and enjoyable.

The next day (Thursday) there was midnight prayer early in the morning followed by morning prayer. After prayers, we had breakfast. For breakfast, there was a variety of options to choose from and the food tasted really good. Next, there were classes according to the age levels of the participants. I and the rest of the children stayed in classes with activities that helped us learn and keep us entertained. There was a break in between classes when kids could go to get snacks. In the classes, we learned lessons from the Bible and about God. The adults had discussion about spiritual questions and listened to talks by priests and other guest speakers.

The morning class sessions were followed by noon prayer and lunch. After lunch, we went to our classes and the adults had a wide array of discussion groups to choose from. In the classes, we learned and practiced songs which we were to perform on the last day of the FYC. After the classes ended, we had leisure time for about two hours. Then we had evening prayer followed by dinner. After that, we went back to our rooms to rest. Some of the children went outside to roast marshmallows and chat by the bonfire. I made a lot of friends at the bonfire. We finally went to bed around midnight.

The third day (Friday) we followed

the same morning schedule as on the second day. I enjoyed coming together as a community for prayer, food and fellowship. We got to see Thirumeni and we asked him some questions. During our break, we were able to practice our songs. After lunch, we went back to class and played games and did fun art projects like writing what we were thankful for on a rock with paint. After our class ended, we were able to go to the waterpark. There were many waterslides. There were high waterslides and low waterslides, scary water slides and calming ones, slow ones and fast ones, group ones and solo ones. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the waterpark. After the waterpark, there was evening prayer then dinner. Then it was time for bed. The next morning (Saturday), there was Holy Qurbana. The chief celebrant was our own Thirumeni, His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicholovos. After Holy Qurbana, there was breakfast. We were then separated into our classes. After practicing our songs once more, we went to the main hall to perform in front of the adults.

Everyone was very sad to leave after making so many new friends. The Family And Youth Conference was incredible, and a great, fun and spiritual experience. I am looking forward to the next year's conference to learn, meet and have fun with friends and family!



Ten Sayings from ST. GREGORIOS OF PARUMALA

- Prayer is the inspiration of childhood, the refuge of youth and peace during old age.
- Prayer helps education to cultivate truth, morality, faith, devotion and mutual respect among people.
- He who prays to God everyday would never be without truth, morality, faith and devotion, and would never turn against his master or society.
- When we pray with a heart full of devotion, God accepts it and we receive blessings in return.
- Prayer is, in many ways, the golden chain that binds this world to the feet of God.
- Pray earnestly to God during day and night. Such prayer is the best way to remove the darkness and fatigue in us; and also the means to attain salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven. Put your faith in God and pray to Him.
- Even after knowing God, if man does not raise his hands in prayer for himself and for the sake of his people, how can we say man is better than animals.
- Remember God in everything. Let no one grieve because of you. Never let go an opportunity to do something good. Only those things will remain with you till the end.
- Be rich in the love of man and love of God. Brothers should never cheat each other. When you move away from unity you are sure to move away from God.
- Never be proud, pride is followed by fall. Humility is followed by greatness.



FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCE 2019 AT KALAHARI RESORT



Samantha Nainan

When I laid my eyes on the colorful walls of the Kalahari Resort, my blood filled with excitement. I had never been to a Family and Youth Conference before, so I didn't know what to expect. I assumed the trip would be dull and exhausting, but staring at the safari skyscraper I knew I was in for a good time. The schedule was able to balance fun, spiritual rejuvenation and education. The days were filled with a huge assortment of programs. This ranged from song performances, to mental health talks. And when we weren't at the conference events, the hotel provided many fun activities to keep us occupied, the most popular being their amazing water park, with its incredible fun tube rides and pools. If you didn't see me in the conference rooms, you could bet I was screaming for my life bolting down the barreling baboon or relaxing at the lazy river.

The retreat started off with a bang with many Churches performing, including ours. We sang a beautiful Coptic song about Mother Mary.

One of the best parts of the trip was the MGOCSM. Each MGOCSM session taught us something new. We got to learn about Jesus' descent into Sheol through symbolism on a famous iconography. We also got to talk to the Achans about selfless love or agape. This is the highest form of love and it is the love between God and man. We talked about how we could practice Godly love (agape) in our lives. We also discussed pride in

our accomplishments, how we should always be thankful to God first and then only to others including our parents. While I would always pray to God for good grades and easy exams, sometimes I forget to thank Him when things work out. These talks provided us with opportunities and encouragement to debate with each other and ask questions, which could be harder to do in the formal atmosphere of the Church.

Other optional sessions that stood out to me were the ones on various topics like environmentalism and global warming to depression and autism. I went to the latter one. We had professionals who worked at counseling centers to talk to us about depression and autism. Depression has been a rising cause of death among teens and a rising concern in our Churches. One of the priests there confessed that he was having difficulty speaking to members of his Church who could be struggling. He didn't know how to talk to people who struggle with mental health. This is why talks like this are so necessary since they help inform and educate people of the struggles people are going through.

Another major aspect of the Family and Youth Conference was getting to meet all the different people. I got to meet members from Churches across the Diocese and I found myself getting closer to my friends here at Cherry Lane. I only see my Church friends at Church, but going down waterslides, learning about our icons and eating way more than we should've at the buffets were all parts of an invaluable experience that brought us all together, and made me feel a part of the Cherry Lane Church Family.

FOCUS MINISTRY - AN UPDATE



Rajani Mathai

The FOCUS (Fellowship Of Orthodox Christians In The United States) ministry began in 2005 with the blessing and support of Metropolitan His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas of blessed memory. This spiritual organization has local chapters all over The United States and parts of Canada. Members include adults age 23 and over who are either single or married couples coming together for spiritual growth through Bible Study, discussion, community service, counseling and fellowship.

The FOCUS chapter at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church (Cherry Lane) is led by

Reverend Father Gregory Varghese. This year, FOCUS activities have been based on five objectives of the ministry. In March 2019, Gregory Achen led a discussion at our church on the FOCUS objective of

learning tools to cultivate healthy relationships within families. In May 2019, Reverend Deacon Amal Punnoose led a discussion held at a parishioner's home on the objective of continuous education regarding the faith and practices of the Orthodox Church. In September 2019, Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese led a discussion at another parishioner's home on the spiritual direction and guidance for a healthy Orthodox Christian lifestyle. In November 2019, members have been invited to attend a Diocesan level conference on marriage led by Rev. Fr. Charles Joanides at St. Stephen's Orthodox

Church in Midland Park, NJ. The conference theme is on the objective of empowerment of couples and potential couples for a Christ centered marriage.

For December 2019, a community service event has been organized to spotlight the last FOCUS ministry objective of serving the Church and local communities for the transformation at large. On December 13, members will prepare sandwiches for the homeless and the less fortunate.

Looking to the future, the ministry will have to address various challenges that young adults, couples and families are experiencing in the United States. This will require support from both clergy and lay members of the Church to work together in unity and dedication. We ask for your continued support and prayers for this vital ministry.

THE "IRUTHO" PARISH RETREAT AT HTRC & VISIT OF ST. TIKHON'S SEMINARY

Life can be symbolized as a garden, yielding fruits of memorable life experiences and personal growth. When not tended carefully, a garden can be unproductive, tainted with the impurities of weeds, bad weather, disease, and the like. Similarly, in life, we must all tend our own spiritual gardens carefully. Christ teaches us in St. Matthew 25:13, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming".

'Irutho' is Syriac and it is defined as being alert and vigilant. By the grace of God, our Parish held our first ever "Irutho" Parish Retreat at the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center (HTRC) from October 11th to October 13th of this year, thanks to the leadership of Meenu Chacko and Stalla Saimon, as inspired by Dr. Mini George, Sunday School Principal and the Reverend Father Gregory Varghese, Parish Vicar. This successful retreat was attended by over seventy members as we held "vigil" separating ourselves from our busy lives to the serenity of HTRC.

Amongst our busy schedules, finding time for Christ has risen as a conflict for many of us. 'Irutho' was an ideal retreat to help disconnect from social media and to reconnect with God. Isolating ourselves over a weekend at HTRC was a relaxing experience while enjoying the crisp autumn breeze and the array of colorful trees. The retreat was held with speaker sessions, recreational activities, hourly prayers and Holy Quarbana on Sunday morning.

We bonded over a bonfire and a sky-lit fireworks on Friday night as we started our path towards



Hanna Abraham & Merin Mathew

standing vigil with the symbol of light. Our MGOCSM youth prepared a barbecue on Saturday alongside many meals made by HTRC's chef. Our Church members fully experienced the beauty of HTRC through a tour led by Santosh Mathai and Lisa Rajan. The views of the hike were breathtaking, captivating the beauty of fall. Especially mentionable was the beauty and serenity of the large Lilly Pond around which lay the hike trail that we travelled.

Many speaker sessions were held specific to each group. Sunday school students were ecstatic as they were playing with friends, enjoying arts and crafts, and singing songs. Children enjoyed the suncatchers they made and also wrote beautiful songs on why they love HTRC. Fourth grader Hannah Rajan says, "I loved the trip, my favorite part was the pretty views". MGOCSM speaker sessions were led by third year Seminarian, Royce Mathew and second year Seminarian Roby Antony. Students were enlightened on the meaning behind vigilance through the stories of Shadrach, Messach and Abednego, iconography, and Q&A sessions. Eleventh grader, Jubin Mathew comments, "I really liked the camp - my favorite part about it was the beautiful area around the Center building, the hike we took, and the speaker sessions". FOCUS sessions were led by third year seminarian, Royce Mathew and second year seminarian Roby Antony. Rajini Mathai said, "The Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center is a perfect place for a retreat and get away from everyday life. We enjoyed walking along the grounds, admiring the scenery, enjoying the tranquility, and strengthening relationships with our fellow parishioners

and Greg Achen." Adult sessions were held by Mathew Pappen and Dr. Mini George regarding the importance of prayer, thanksgiving and vigilance. George Geevarghese states, "The Irutho experience was very invigorating in that it enriched the faculties of body, spirit and soul of most participants. The Youth were amazing as they revealed their devotion and organizational skills."

Hourly prayers were led by our own Gregory Achen, third year seminarian Royce Mathew, second year seminarian Shojal Abraham, and second year seminarian Roby Antony. We participated in the sacrament of Holy Qurbana on Sunday officiated by Gregory Achen with seminarians Joshua Varghese, Melvin Mathai, Royce Mathew, Roby Antony and Pradeep Chacko. We were vigilant as we participated in Lilio every night.

After Holy Qurbana on Sunday, we took a trip to St. Tikhon's seminary where Roby Antony led a tour of the Seminary and its Chapel and book store. The Chapel was beautifully adorned with icons on all four walls and included a room full of relics of saints in the Eastern Orthodox Church. We visited many peaceful areas, among them one containing a well with holy water used during Pentecost. A breathing-taking sight at St. Tikhon's was Jesus on a wooden cross carved by a monk. We were blessed to also see the Malankara Chapel at the seminary which was a room that contained a mini altar and icons of our many saints such as Parumala Thirumeni, Vattasseril Thirumeni, St. John Chrysostom, St. Peter, and St. Paul.

By the grace of God, Irutho was a blessed experience. Our Church community was able to rekindle our connection with God. Although the drive was long and exhausting, the experience was worth the trip. HTRC set the stage for a memorable experience for all age groups through the well-organized speaker sessions, recreational activities, and prayers. Let us all continue to be watchful and vigilant through our busy schedules.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TRIP TO HTRC



2019 G.R.O.W. MINISTRY UPDATES



Amy Mathew

a biblical scholar holding several degrees in theology, including a Master of Theology from the Harvard Divinity School, was the guest speaker of the camp. Under a sound foundation in Orthodox theology, Dr. Constantinou explored the theme of our identity in Christ and what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God. She also led an afternoon session regarding a handful of female saints: St. Sophia, St. Maina, St. Katherine, St. Monica, St. Helen, The Righteous Hannah, St. Nonna, St. Emmelia and St. Anthrousa. The stories of these saints were encouraging because they remained steadfast in their faith in God regardless of the trials and tribulations they faced. The camp was filled with activities including multiple breakout sessions exploring the theme, controversial issues that women face on a daily basis and self-reflection.

During the camp's banquet dinner, we were honored to welcome the family members of the late Ashley Samuel - Mr. Benjamin Samuel, Mrs. Mini George and Mr. Jonathan Samuel, from St. Mary's Orthodox Church of Boston, Massachusetts. Ashley Samuel was only 16 years old when she passed away during a mission trip to India. She was a regular attendee of G.R.O.W. Ministry events. During the banquet dinner, the Samuel family inaugurated the Ashley Samuel Scholarship Program, dedicated in her memory. The scholarship would be awarded to a female

high school senior entering an accredited university/college, with a spirit of service and who has strived to make an impact in the community.

The G.R.O.W. Brooklyn-Queens-Long Island (BQLI) Committee has been very active on a local level with a host of activities on a quarterly basis. Earlier this year, the BQLI Committee hosted a service event in memory of Ashley Samuel. Volunteers made sandwiches and packed food for the less fortunate and homeless. Another notable activity of this year from the BQLI Committee is the Wonder Women faith series. The faith series began earlier this year with a focus on Strong Women of the Bible and Women Saints. Lessons were learned of them and parallels to the everyday lives of women were discussed. The first part of the series was hosted at St. Thomas Orthodox Church (Levittown, NY), with Rev Fr. Abey George leading a focused study on St. Mary. In September 2019, St. Gregorios Orthodox (Cherry Lane) Church hosted the second part, with Lijin Thomas as the main speaker. She led a focused study on St. Esther and St. Helen. The focused study was followed by an interactive breakout session on how the stories of the female saints relate to our everyday lives, along with an arts and crafts activity.

Please take advantage of all that this ministry has to offer and stay tuned for more events!

Since the inception of the G.R.O.W. Ministry of the Northeast American Diocese, the young women's ministry has flourished into one of the diocese's most vibrant ministries for women and girls ages 13 years and up. Eight years ago, the ministry began due to a rising need for an avenue to help young women in their daily lives, while maintaining a strong foundation in their identity in Christ and educating them about their Orthodox faith was essential. Within these eight years, there were seven 1-day conferences and two overnight camps. Also, we had a variety of activities that were accomplished this year.

In August 2019, the G.R.O.W. Ministry held its second overnight Daughters of the King of the North East (DKNE) Camp at the Holy Transfiguration Center in Dalton, Pennsylvania. The theme of this year's overnight camp was "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" taken from Psalm 139:14, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, I know that full well." Dr. Eugenia Constantinou,

NORTHEASTERN LEADERSHIP CAMP (NELC) OF MGOCSM



Joanne Johnson

other, whether it be listening to the keynote speaker, Rev. Fr. John Teji Abraham's speeches to being active during field day or during the social hour.

This year's theme, 'Becoming Stewards of Faith' is taken from 1 Peter 4:10. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." While each event and activity focused on this theme, we were challenged on how we can and should use our God-given talents to serve others, the church, and for the glory of God. During the three days at this camp, I was able to grasp the different aspects of what it is to be a leader and how each one of us has a role to play. Each one of us has a calling unique to him/her. To be a steward or leader doesn't mean that one has to do everything or be someone big. One can be a leader just by doing small things like teaching kids at Sunday School, cleaning the church or picking up trash. One can be a leader by being a role model for peers as well as the younger children. One can be a leader by being confident and following Christ and His teachings.

Every year two delegates from our Church (St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church, Cherry Lane) are chosen to attend the annual Northeastern Leadership Camp (NELC). This year Benn Thomas and I were lucky enough to be the two. The camp was held at the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center (HTRC) in Dalton, Pennsylvania from July 24th to July 27th, 2019. Going to this leadership camp, gave me the opportunity to learn more about my faith and the knowledge on how to use my talents to be of help to the younger generation and the community as a whole. This leadership camp not only taught me the skills of becoming a better leader in the Orthodox Christian community, but also the chance to meet new people who shared the same faith.

One of the many things I learned at NELC was how much time, effort, and communication go into creating an overnight event. I was really amazed at how everything throughout each day's activities went so smoothly. There was not a moment when any of the campers were left to do nothing. We were always kept on our feet, having to do one thing or the

Going to this camp was really the best choice I made. This camp not only gave me new knowledge and spiritual experience, but also new friends that I long to meet again. It is an experience that no one would want to miss!

WHY IS PRAYER IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE? GIVE EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE

(Note: This is the topic of Sunday School Essay Competition 2019 for which Angella Ninan won a Prize at the Area Level)



Angella Ninan

over me and shielding me from harm. If we look at the life of Jesus, we can see that prayer was a fundamental part of how he approached each day and every decision, retreating faithfully to spend time with His Father. Clearly prayer was important to Jesus—it was His lifeline and His connection to the Heavenly Father. It equipped him for the battles He was about to face. And it revealed to Him God's desires and direction. If the goal of a Christian is to become more like Jesus, that process should include imitating His actions and living out His words. As I pray, I will become more like Jesus, and I will find that prayer changes me.

Prayer helps me become one with

the Father and have the kind of relationship Jesus had with Him. When I come into His presence in prayer, all pretense is gone. There is no longer any reason to hide anything because He sees all and knows all. Prayer humbles me because when I spend time with him, I realize how powerful and capable God is. When I find forgiveness through prayer, God softens my heart and allows me to even forgive others. When I understand that God's grace is freely given to all His sons and daughters, I recognize that no one is more or less deserving of God's love than me. It transforms my heart and my actions, allowing me to reveal God's generous love towards others.

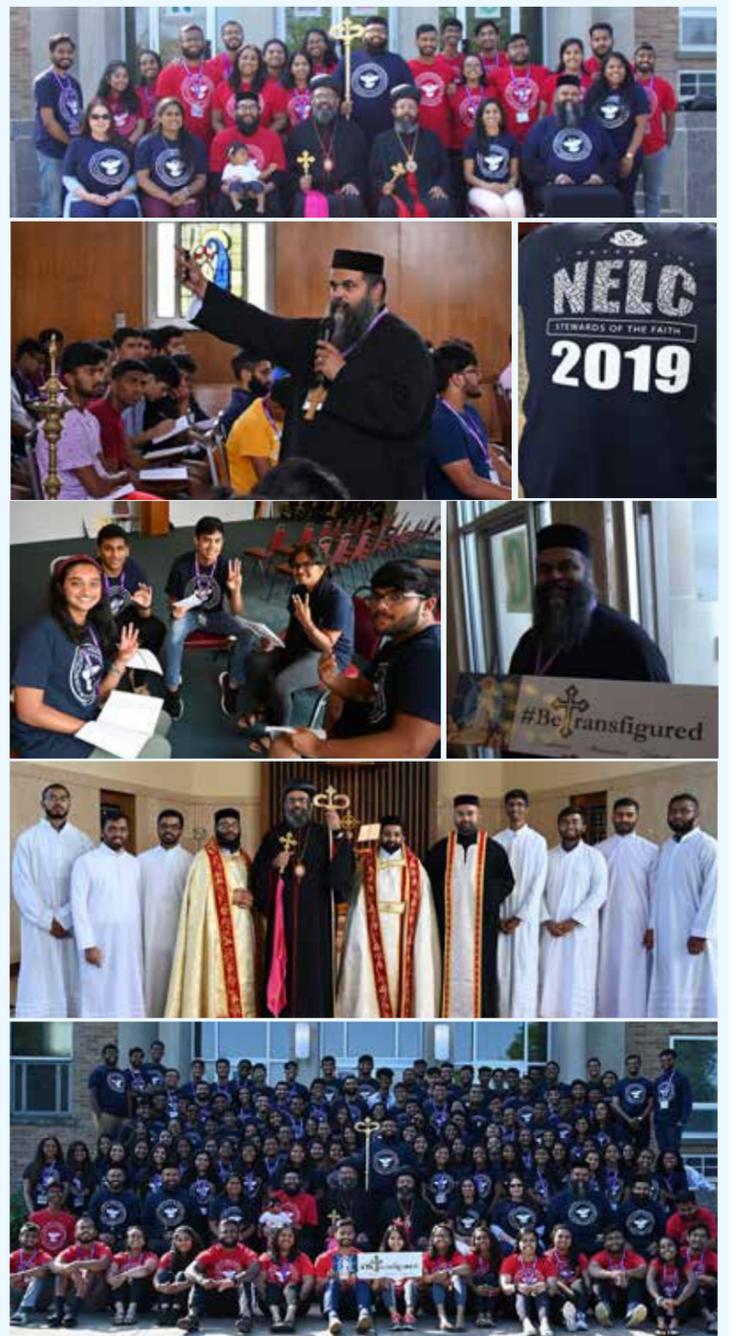
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Prayer is very important in my spiritual life because it is an act of obedience, a solution for any problems I face in my day-to-day life. It opens up a way for God to communicate with me. Prayer is simply a conversation with God, it is how I get to know Him. Furthermore, prayer helps me attain a strong sense of protection, I can feel that my creator is watching

TEN SAYINGS FROM ST. GREGORIOS OF PARUMALA



1. Prayer is the inspiration of childhood, the refuge of youth and peace during old age.
2. Prayer helps education to cultivate truth, morality, faith, devotion and mutual respect among people.
3. He who prays to God everyday would never be without truth, morality, faith and devotion, and would never turn against his master or society.
4. When we pray with a heart full of devotion, God accepts it and we receive blessings in return.
5. Prayer is, in many ways, the golden chain that binds this world to the feet of God.
6. Pray earnestly to God during day and night. Such prayer is the best way to remove the darkness and fatigue in us; and also the means to attain salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven. Put your faith in God and pray to Him.
7. Even after knowing God, if man does not raise his hands in prayer for himself and for the sake of his people, how can we say man is better than animals.
8. Remember God in everything. Let no one grieve because of you. Never let go an opportunity to do something good. Only those things will remain with you till the end.
9. Be rich in the love of man and love of God. Brothers should never cheat each other. When you move away from unity you are sure to move away from God.
10. Never be proud, pride is followed by fall. Humility is followed by greatness.





Jensen Varghese

ESSAY (GROUP 5):

1 TIMOTHY 6:10

In our day and age we cannot live without money. Money is necessary to meet our daily needs. One can argue that money makes the world go around. Although money can seem to make one happy, there are also very negative consequences. It is this love for money that can lead us astray from God. St. Paul advises us in 1 Timothy 6:10 which says "For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." As a result, we must adhere to the words of St. Paul and aim for the treasures and riches bestowed upon us in Heaven.

Firstly, we can learn from this verse that money initially isn't evil, rather it is the love of money. St. Paul says this to remind us that God's creation of money is not at fault, instead it is us humans. St. Paul is aware of the fact that we are all so fixated on procuring money and the pleasures we can receive through it, that we never seem to care what sin we commit to attain it. We see in the Bible that Ananias and Sapphira were willing to lie to not only the Apostles, but also to God just to have some money to themselves. We see them sell their land and keep a portion of the earnings, even when the Apostles granted them sufficiency for their needs by God's grace. However, St. Peter sought through their lie and said "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you

have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3 to 4). It is because of our greediness and desire for money that our world consists of murders, robberies, gangs, and war. We must look to His Grace Matthews Mar Barnabas as an example. He has committed selfless acts throughout his whole life, even when it was his birthday for he gave gifts to others, instead of receiving gifts. Instead of trying to hoard money, we must share it with others through charities and the like. We must be able to permit money or luxuries that have some sort of value for if it has no meaning to us, the donation was pointless. In St. Mark 12:42 to 44 we read "And a poor widow came, and put two copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living.'" Therefore, we must not use our time on this world to become attached to money, but to God.

Furthermore, in the second part of the verse we read "it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." St. Paul's words here are directed towards those who have been defeated by their greediness and gave in to the temptation. Our greed for money can cause us to be selfish in the way of how we will only care about receiving more and more. For "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money; nor he who loves the wealth, with gain; this also is vanity" (Ecclesiastes chapter 5 verse 10). In the end we are leaving our hearts empty for we have valued the love of money more than the love of our family or the people close to us. It was because of this sinful act of loving money that Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross. Before Christ was

crucified, He was betrayed by one of his own disciples, Judas, in exchange for money. Judas made a deal with the Pharisees that involved Judas revealing the identity of Christ for thirty pieces of silver (St. Matthew chapter 26 verses 14 to 16). However, Judas had killed himself out of remorse after treasuring his love for money over his love for Christ. Similarly, in St. Matthew chapter 19 verses 16 to 24 we read about the rich man who could not enter the Kingdom of God because of his avarice. Expanding upon this, St. Basil the Great reminds us that this rich man was focused on obtaining eternal life, even though he was completely bound to the enjoyment of his present life. Additionally, St. Basil says "Thus, those who love their neighbor as themselves possess nothing more than their neighbor; yet surely, you seem to have great possessions! How else could this be, but that you preferred your own enjoyment and pleasure to the consolation of many? For the more you abound in wealth, the more you lack in love."

Moreover, the final decision lies with us. We should not let our love for luxuries grow to the point where that love influences our every thought and action. For instance, you're in a store shopping and browsing for things that you might be interested in. Finally something really catches your eye. You're excited about it, you hold it, and you now want it. Only one final hurdle remains: the price. You reach for the price tag and the numbers come in to focus. The price is way more than you thought, more than you can afford, and more than you need to spend on such an item. Even with all these clues telling you that it is too expensive and unnecessary to buy, you still stand there asking yourself "Is it worth it?" People may tend to think that when this question is

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ESSAY COMPETITION 2019



Jeremiah Varghese

1 Peter 3:15 but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

Once I got into an argument concerning religion with one of my friends. I responded with harsh words and I spoke without tact. However, St. Peter shows us that this is not an appropriate response for a Christian disciple. 1 Peter 3:15 states, "But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence." Although challenges may arise in leading a life in Christian discipleship, it is our obligation to overcome those challenges in order to defend the faith and be showered with the fruits that it will yield.

When examining the original context in which the verse was written in, we find that the Greek word for "make a defense" is apologia. This is not related to the English word "apology," where one expresses regret or remorse. Rather, the term means a justification, or an "answer back". Nevertheless, there are numerous examples of Church fathers who have "answered back" to defend the faith. We can look back to St. Athanasius who defended the faith against the heresy of Arius or St. Cyril, the "pillar of faith", who defended against the heresy of Nestorius. In addition, St. Peter emphasizes the significance of the method in which we defend the faith. We must present it with gentleness and reverence.

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As said in Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one." Christians are not called on to condemn those who are inquisitive of our hopefulness. Nor are we to be vindictive, vengeful, or insulting to those who disagree. Rather, we should explain our faith without harshness or dismissiveness.

Unfortunately, many challenges arise as we embark on the pathway to Christian discipleship. In our daily lives, we find it arduous to prioritize Christ over all other aspects of our lives. We become so blinded and consumed by the riches of the world that we fail to follow Christ. However, Jesus declared, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (St. Luke 9:23). Another challenge of Christian discipleship is following the teachings of Christ. Often times we tend to go astray from the teachings of Jesus and indulge in sin. Still, we must remind ourselves that we must be obedient children and doers of the word of God. St. John 8:31-32 states, "Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'" The final challenge of Christian discipleship is spreading the good news of the Gospel. This doesn't necessarily mean that we have to travel the world to spread the Gospel. We can spread the Gospel in other ways like modeling and representing the true qualities of a Christian which are found in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is essential that we eliminate any challenges that poses as an obstacle to our endeavor to Christian discipleship.

Finally, after overcoming all the challenges of Christian

WHY IS PRAYER IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE? GIVE EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE

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Jesus taught the world to pray in five ways. Jesus' routine was prayer. Firstly, we should pray with faith (Matthew 9:20-22). In the Bible, when the crowd was surrounding Jesus, the woman who was bleeding for 12 years had faith that touching Jesus' robe would heal her. Consequently, she was indeed saved. Secondly, we should pray with penance and fasting (Acts 9: 17-19). Saul was fasting and praying due to the fact that he had lost his sight upon seeing God. God heard his prayer and sent Ananias to pray on his behalf and allow his vision to be restored. Here, Jesus reminds us that when we pray while asking forgiveness for our past sins, that prayer is very effective. Thirdly, we should pray with tears in our eyes as that prayer has a specific and special strength. When baby animals cry out their parents come running. When a human child cries out their parents come running. In the same way, when a person

cries out in prayer, God answers our cries. The shortest verse in the Bible says "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) in front of the tomb of Lazarus. As a result of this tearful prayer, a man was raised from the clutches of death. Fourthly, we should pray in a consistent manner. In the parable of the unjust judge and widow, the judge vindicated the widow due to her repetitive pleas for help (Luke 18:1-8). Similarly, God vindicates those who consistently comes to Him in prayer. It's common for most people, even Orthodox Christians, to come to God when only occasionally or when they are experiencing difficulties in their life. But, consistently coming to God through times of both comfort and difficulty is what truly allows for us to successfully communicate with God. Fifth and finally, we should pray with humbleness. We should recognize our insignificance against the vastness of God's glory and power.

If we are able to capture that humility and convey it in our prayers, God will listen and give us what we need. This sentiment is perfectly captured in the Bible where it says, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

We are so busy in our lives with all the technological advancements like cell phones, TV, and video games. These devices take so much of human's attention that it's hard for them to come to God in prayer. But we should make it a priority to spend time talking to God in prayer because He aligns our will with His, and as such a relationship is developed. Nevertheless, the act of praying should not be taken for granted when it is done. Instead, we should take great care in seeing to it that praying is conducted in the proper manner. We should be able to pray with faith, with penance, with emotions and tears, with consistence, and with humility. Only then will we experience peace in our lives.

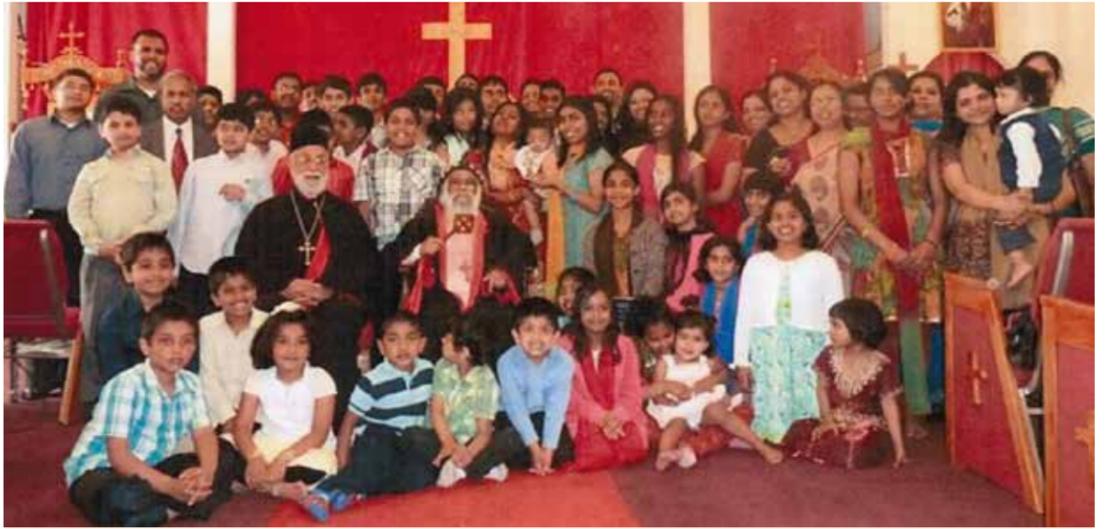


ESSAY (GROUP 5):
1 TIMOTHY 6:10

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asked, it is asking if it is worth it to spend the money on the item. However, this question is not asking if it is worth it to spend all that money, rather it is asking if it is worth it to buy something that provides momentary joy and turn away from something that provides everlasting joy. Without doubt you will say no that it is not worth it, when put in to those words. Disappointedly, most people do not realize this when they buy the item, causing them to fall in to the devil's hands and thus going astray from God. We read in St. Matthew chapter 6, verse 24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

As Christians, we face countless temptations and hardships in our journey to the Kingdom of God, but these difficulties should not tear down our faith towards Christ, instead it should make us even more rooted in our faith. In order to do so we must first develop traits of humility and endurance, so that we don't allow money or any luxuries to consume us. Also, we must have intimate relationships with family, friends, and most importantly God, so that our hearts are filled with everlasting love and happiness, rather than the finite love received through money and riches. We may be able to buy new clothes, a brand new car, or even the nicest luxuries with great amounts of money, but as content as we may be with all of this, we will never be more joyous once we receive the rewards provided by God in Heaven.



His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas final parish visit.
Picture taken with our sunday school children on May 8, 2011

ESSAY COMPETITION 2019

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discipleship, we are rewarded by Christ for our deeds. Jesus promises generous rewards for all who live as his disciples. First, we will never have to fear condemnation (Romans 8:1). Next, the Holy Spirit will always help us.

Romans 8:27 states, "And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Nevertheless, we receive strength to have victory over hardships and struggles in this world (Romans 8:37-39) and lastly, we will have the gift of eternal life

(John 6:47). As a result, we are expected as Christians to seek a life in discipleship so that we may be showered with blessings and God's love.

In today's world, we find it difficult to adapt our lifestyles to follow Jesus Christ. However, we must remind ourselves about the necessity of Christian discipleship and its rewards. Jesus tells us in the Gospel of St. Matthew, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (St. Matthew 19:29). Therefore, we must abandon our worldly lifestyle and pursue a lifestyle in Christ in order to achieve Christian discipleship and ultimately inherit eternal life.



Church Choir - Senior members



Church Choir - Junior members



Marth Mariam Samajam - Trophy



FOCUS Group Picture



SUNDAY SCHOOL TRIP TO HTRC



ST. GREGORIOS CHURCH, CHERRY LANE - SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUP



Nursery, Pre-K & Kindergarten
Teachers: Maryann Johnson, Lovina John & Richu Panicker



Grade 1
Teachers: Lisha Varughese, Shanly Joseph



Grade 2
Teacher: Peter Johnson



Grade 3
Teachers: Syrila Saimon & Stalla Saimon



Grade 4
Teacher: V. U. Paulose



Grade 5
Teacher: Mini Thomas



Grade 6
Teacher: Jijo Koshy



Grade 7
Teacher: Alana James



Grade 8
Teacher: Rohitha Roy & Judy Mani



Grade 9
Teacher: Thomas K. Abraham



Grade 10
Teacher: Rany Adai



Grade 11
Teacher: Moncy Varghes



Grade 12
Teacher: George M. Geevarghese