



# MAR BARNABAS NEWSLETTER



# NEWSLETTER

ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH, CHERRY LANE, FLORAL PARK, NY

SUNDAY SCHOOL

03 ST GREGORIOS OF PARUMALA Bless Thomas

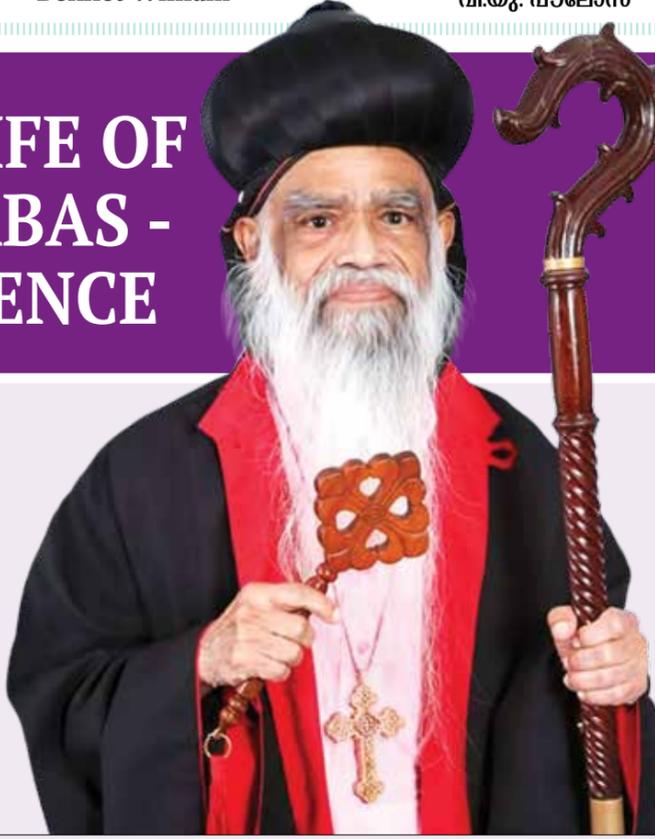
03 SAINTLY PAMPADY THIRUMENI Bennet William

04 "ആ മനുഷ്യൻ നീ തന്നെ" (2 ശമു. 12:7) വി.യു. പാലോസ്

08 11 COVID 19 PANDEMIC Various Articles about Covid-19

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## THE HOLY LIFE OF MAR BARNABAS - A REMINISCENCE



Dr. Alex Thomas

His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas was one of the most charismatic shepherds of the Malankara Orthodox Church. Indeed by his simple life, simple living, simple clothes, simple mode of transportation and simple wooden cross he was the epitome of simplicity and therefore a Simple Bishop.

Barnabas Thirumeni guided and led the American Diocese with diligence, dedication and devotion for 20 years from 1992 to 2011. During these years, Thirumeni secured an enduring place in the hearts of all the faithful of the church and also by his actions and decisions etched an indelible mark in the history of the American Diocese.

As a man of prayer and vigil he was kind, forgiving, encouraging, exhorting, consoling and compassionate and was the symbol of meekness and humility.

True to his name there are similarities between the Barnabas of the Bible and Barnabas

Thirumeni of the American Diocese. In Acts 4:36,37, we read, "And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

During the early stages of his ministry Thirumeni made a remarkable gift of his family estate for the church. He gave the entire portion of his property to the church. At every juncture of his life he used all the money he was given to be used for the church, the sick, the marginalized and the diocese.

'Barnabas' is defined as "Son of Encouragement," "Son of Consolation" or "Son of Exhortation." He had a God given gift for spotting and encouraging talented youngsters. Many youngsters who had a calling had opportunities to stay at the Aramana on Commonwealth Blvd with Thirumeni and were introduced to our faith and

practices by getting more training in the job and also getting a glimpse of true celibate life. This exposure laid the foundation for youngsters to decide on embarking on the pastoral and evangelistic ministry. The vision and encouragement from Barnabas Thirumeni helped point our youngsters in the right direction, which led them to many becoming young priests in our Diocese. We owe more to Barnabas Thirumeni than we often realize.

In the Holy Bible, Luke refers to Barnabas 23 times and Paul refers to Barnabas five times in his epistles. Luke sums up his character in Acts 11:24, "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." Luke then follows this ringing endorsement with a meaningful postscript: Wherever he went, "a great many people were added to the Lord."

Barnabas in the Bible was sent as a liaison to investigate the Gentile mission in Antioch, sent to Jerusalem with the famine relief (Acts 11:30), sent on the first evangelistic tour in the neighboring provinces (Acts 13:1-3), sent to represent

Contd... p.5



Barnabas Thirumeni with children who participated in an OVBS Summer Event in the year 1995

## FROM THE VICAR'S DESK



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I give all glory to God because the Cherry Lane Church has been able to release another edition of our Mar Barnabas Newsletter.

The year 2020 has proved to be a tremendously difficult time period for our parish. We experienced a high number of infections within our congregation and unfortunately, we lost two of our beloved members during this pandemic. As I continuously reminded our congregation, the Malayalee community in New York has been adversely affected by COVID-19 due to the high numbers of our people working in what are considered essential services, specifically those working in hospitals and transit related services. As a parish, although we are saddened by the tremendous loss of life, we are also proud of the role we played in keeping the economy of this country moving. Our people put their

lives at risk so that people could be cared for and transported safely. I offer my thanks and appreciation to all the essential workers who risked their lives for the sake of others - May God bless them!

Despite all the logistical challenges presented to us in the year 2020, our parish has continued to function effectively. Most of our spiritual organizations have increased in their ministerial activities using electronic communication and video sharing applications. This newsletter will take us through a year in which Cherry Lane Church responded to COVID-19 and hopefully through these articles we can help give the readers a sense of what the world was like in New York during the year 2020.

## മാർ ബർനബാസ് സൃജിവിതം സന്ദേശമാക്കിയ മുനിശ്രേഷ്ഠൻ

യുവഹൃദയങ്ങളെ സാധിനിക്കാൻ പ്രബോധനങ്ങളോ ഉപദേശങ്ങളോ ഫലപ്രദമായ ഉപാധികളല്ല. അവരെ ഹൃദയത്തോടടുപ്പിക്കാൻ പ്രായോഗികത നിറഞ്ഞ സമീപനമാണ് അഭികാമ്യം. ഭാഗ്യസ്ഥരെന്നാണവർ അഭി. മാത്യൂസ് മാർ ബർനബാസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത, അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ ചുമതലക്കാരനായി അയയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ടപ്പോൾ, പരക്കെ ഒരാൾക്കുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഇവിടെ വളർന്നു വരുന്ന, വിശിഷ്ട്യാ, യുവാക്കൾക്ക് തിരുമേനി പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുമോ? ഇവിടുത്തെ ചെറുപ്പക്കാരുടെ സംസ്കാരമറിഞ്ഞ് അവരോടു താദാത്മ്യം പ്രാപിച്ച് അവരെ സാധിനിക്കാൻ നാട്ടിൽ നിന്നും വന്ന ഈ നാടൻ വയോധികനു കഴിയുമോ? പരിഷ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ഉച്ചകോടിയിൽ വളരുന്ന കുഞ്ഞുകുഞ്ഞാടുകൾക്ക് അവരോടൊപ്പം ചേർന്നു നിൽക്കുന്ന പരിഷ്കാരികളെയല്ല ആവശ്യം. എന്നാൽ ഈ ആശങ്കകളെയെല്ലാം തകിടം മറിക്കുന്ന രീതിയിലാണ് കാര്യങ്ങൾ ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞത്.



വർഗീസ് പോത്താനിക്കാട്

ബർനബാസ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ ജീവിതം ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ ആകർഷിച്ചത് അമേരിക്കയിൽ ജനിച്ചു വളർന്ന യുവതലമുറയെ തന്നെയാണ്.

അതിന് മകുടോദാഹരണമാണ് ചരിത്രത്തിലാദ്യമായി ഇവിടെ അനേകം ചെറുപ്പക്കാർ, പൗരോഹിത്യജീവിതത്തിലേക്ക് കടന്നുവന്നത്. ഈ പ്രവണത ഒരു താൽക്കാലിക വികാര പ്രതിഫലനമല്ലായിരുന്നു എന്നതിന്റെ തെളിവാണ് ഇപ്പോഴും ചെറുപ്പക്കാർ ആ ദൈവവിളി കേൾക്കുന്നു എന്നുള്ളത്. ഇവരിൽ

എല്ലാവരും തന്നെ ഉന്നതവിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും ഉയർന്ന ജോലികളും ഉള്ളവരാണ് എന്ന് പ്രത്യേകം പ്രസ്താവ്യമാണ്. തിരുമേനിയുടെ ശിക്ഷണം ശിരസ്സാവഹിച്ച ഈ യുവപുരോഹിതന്മാർക്ക് ഇന്നും എടുത്തു കാണിക്കാനുള്ള അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ജീവിതവും ആ പുണ്യാത്മാവിന്റെ വചനങ്ങളുമാണ്. തിരുമേനിയുടെ ലളിതവും കളങ്കരഹിതവുമായ ജീവിതമാണ് അവരെ ഇത്രയധികം സാധിനിച്ചത്. അല്ലാതെ, ഏതെങ്കിലും തരത്തിലുള്ള പ്രലോഭനങ്ങളോ വാഗ്ദാനങ്ങളോ ആയിരുന്നില്ല.

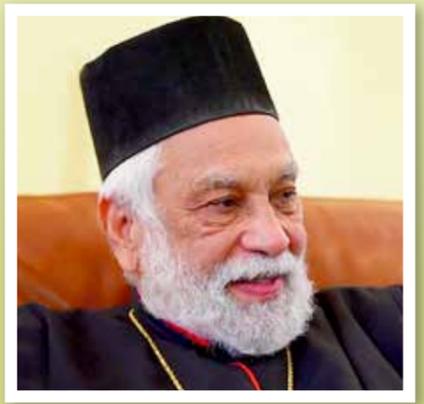
തിരുമേനിയുടെ ലാളിത്യമാർന്ന ജീവിതശൈലി അദ്ദേഹത്തെ ഒരു വേറിട്ട വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ ഉടമയാക്കി. ഒരിക്കൽ ഇൻഡ്യയുടെ രാഷ്ട്രപിതാവായ മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധി റെയിൽവേ സ്റ്റേഷനിൽ വണ്ടി കാത്തു നിൽക്കുമ്പോൾ ഒരു മാധ്യമപ്രവർത്തകൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ സമീപിച്ച് തന്റെ പത്രത്തിന് ഒരു അഭിമുഖം നൽകണമെന്ന് ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടു. ഈ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ ഭവ്യതയോടെ നിരസിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധി തീവണ്ടിക്കുള്ളിലേക്ക് പ്രവേശിച്ചു. മാധ്യമപ്രവർത്തകൻ പിൻമാറിയില്ല. വണ്ടി

ശേഷം പേജ് 12



## Best Compliments From

OUR FORMER VICAR AND SENIOR PRIEST OF THE NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE



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

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## EDITORIAL



The “Pandemic of the Century”, as one of our writers refers to COVID-19, has definitely reshaped our lives. We, Orthodox Christians, feel the shift in our spiritual journey because of the discontinuity in the weekly worship at our home parish. From what I experienced, I see a lot of opportunities and new purpose in the things we already do. Sunday school, OVBS and Holy Qurbana service were restructured to conform with social distancing rules. As a Sunday School teacher, I plan to use online instruction in conjunction with in-person classes in the future. MGOCSM came up with a book club idea during the pandemic. As a church community, we faced the Pandemic head on and did what we could to continually enrich each other spiritually.

Due to the pandemic, you will see a change in the Sunday School class pictures! Our teachers did a wonderful job switching to online classes in two weeks. Under the leadership of our Sunday School principal, Dr. Mini George, we transitioned smoothly with almost no difficulty. We were blessed to have Nicholovos Thirumeni attend one of the online General Sessions for Sunday School and talk to our kids.

### Strength and Confidence

Eleanor Roosevelt says, “You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.” Our Lord is our courage and strength. Many families suffered from COVID-19 including those at Cherry Lane Church. However, we continued to keep our faith strong in the Lord. Under the leadership of our Vicar, Gregory Achen, Cherry Lane Church remains a beacon of hope to many parishioners and other faithful.

As always, we dedicate this newsletter to our Barnabas Thirumeni, of blessed memory. His words of wisdom, prayers and blessings will always be with us. I want to thank all our Cherry Lane Church Members and Dr. Alex Thomas who contributed to this newsletter. May the life and words of Barnabas Thirumeni be a guiding light to our readers as we come to the end of a very tumultuous year.



**Mr. Peter Johnson**  
Chief Editor



Rev. Fr. Shawn Thomas releasing Mar Barnabas Newsletter - December 2019

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK:



**Dr. Mini George**  
Sunday School Principal

## Pandemic Year 2020

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, and through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” - Romans 15:4  
The key to Christian virtue lies in seeking the word of God and strengthening our hearts with it. Once we let God take our hand and lead us through this life, the world and its doings shall not weaken us. Even if we come face to face with challenges, peace and joy will find its way to us through our God. Our greatest treasure as Christians lies in the knowledge of this very fact. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every parent to pass this wisdom onto our children so that they too can find the presence and strength of the Lord in their lives. This fact cannot be stressed enough given this day and age. The society around us is turning malicious every single moment. Our children are growing in a world where their faith and practices are constantly being challenged. Religious instruction is no more an easy task for parents. Our responsibilities to our faith, ourselves and our children have doubled and we need to rise up to it.

The teachings at home and at the Church should complement one another to guide each child towards a complete life. The Sunday School finds its purpose in envisioning this wholesome development for every child within its care. A dedicated group of trained teachers who can prayerfully enlighten the minds of their students are the pillars of this ministry. Teachers share the responsibility with parents in guiding young minds towards the word of God and hope in Christ.

This year the COVID-19 pandemic hit us hard. It completely changed the social and spiritual aspects of our life. We faced its brunt in the months of March to May when our neighbourhood was suddenly in the clutches of this disease. It came like wildfire. Almost 75% of our church members fell sick and two of our dear members succumbed to the disease. We got news of the passing away of many people, both young and old, from our neighbouring churches as well. People everywhere are still striving to fight this battle. Our Church was completely closed for only one Sunday in March, on March 29. However, under the leadership of our young and vibrant Vicar Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese, we were able to celebrate the Holy Qurbana, following all pandemic guidelines, from April 5th onwards. Prioritising the spiritual well-being of his parish over his own physical health, our Vicar, with the assistance of a few altar boys held the Holy Qurbana which was live streamed for all the members of the Church. Achen stood up like Moses and led our congregation with much care and compassion. The will power and trust in God that Achen showed during this pan-

demic help us even now to keep our church open for Sunday worship with 25% of the members.

At present, our Sunday School has 62 students studying in Pre-K thru 12th Grade. We have 14 regular teachers and 10 substitute teachers. Unfortunately, the majority of our Sunday School activities were cancelled both at the Diocesan and Parish level this year. Centralized Exams, Competitions and Talent show were cancelled at the Diocesan level. We missed holding the Sunday School only for 2 Sundays, on March 29 and April 5. Thereafter our teachers have risen to the need of the hour and have started classes online. Attendance was taken, portions were finished and examinations were conducted online. In addition to the regular classes for each grade, general sessions were also conducted for all the students and teachers from 12:30-1:10 pm via zoom, during which Songs, Bible Verses and faith related topics were taught. Following Diocesan level guidelines and topics, Assigned Competitions and Talent Competitions were held at the Parish level via zoom.

is functioning well and serves both children and adults. Our Sunday School also took the initiative and sponsored three children from the orphanages in Kerala.

In my opinion, for every Christian, a crisis should be seen as an opportunity to learn and grow. God has given us the spirit of courage and love and not that of fear. We believe that nothing happens without His knowledge, and ultimately, He is in control. Even in the toughest times God gives us power, love, technology and self-discipline to succeed. This pandemic may seem bad now and these are bleak times, but we hope, pray and believe that once we cross the barrier we will experience many new possibilities for happiness and peace. Even though our children miss all the activities and church gatherings and are a little frustrated, they still hear the word of God virtually. They are worshipping God in the miniature churches that they have created in their liv-



Our Sunday School Group Picture 2019

A Combined Orthodox Vacation Bible School (OVBS) was also held virtually in summer, together with St. John's Orthodox Church, Bellerose. A total of 110 students from both of the Sunday Schools and the neighboring areas participated in the event. The Youth of our Church took the leadership in organizing this OVBS. The coordinators Ms. Meenu Chacko, Ms. Stalla Saimon and all the volunteers deserve a very special thanks for all the hard-work that they put in to make this OVBS a success. While we were able to transfer many of our engagements online, some others could not be done so. Our Sunday School Trip to Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center was cancelled. We were not able to complete our Charity Box collection and the Used-Clothes Drive that we had initiated at the beginning of the year. Our Sunday School Anniversary was held on December 8, 2019 on the memorial day of the Dukhrono of our beloved Mathews Mar Barnabas Metropolitan. Mar Barnabas Newsletter was also released on the same day. During the Christmas season last year, our children donated Christmas Gifts to the deserving children of Long Island through the Salvation Army. Our SS Library

ing rooms. They are repeatedly instructed to continue their morning and evening prayers and Bible readings at home and to participate in the Holy Qurbana that is live-streamed from our church on all Sundays and on Feast days.

I sincerely thank Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese (Vicar), Mr. Peter Johnson (Editor), this year's Editorial Board members and the financial sponsors for their initiative and hard work in producing this Newsletter.

Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni was very compassionate to the sick. Hospital visits were an important part of his ministry. Everyday he used to pray earnestly for the sick and the suffering. During this pandemic, when my neighborhood, which once used to be the neighborhood of Barnabas Thirumeni himself, was packed with COVID-19 patients, I remembered Thirumeni often in my prayers and requested his intercession. I realized that, even now, Thirumeni is in my mind as a spiritual father whom I could approach for comfort during times of crisis, just like when he was alive. May the precious memory of our Father in Christ, Mar Barnabas Thirumeni be eternal!

# SAINTLY PAMPADY THIRUMENI

(5 April 1885 – 5 April 1965)



**Bennet William**

**Even though** Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan, also known as Pampady Thirumeni is not yet a declared saint of the Malankara Orthodox Church, he is considered by many as a holy and divine person. He is also known as the Holy Hermit of Tabore Hill.

Pampady Thirumeni has shown Godly love to a large number of people around him. He was respected by all castes in Kerala for his great work. Thirumeni was born in the traditional Karinganamattom family in Pezhamattom near Pampady.

As the saint grew up, he was in very good terms with the poor and the low caste people and made really good friends with them.

Thirumeni lead a holy and prayerful life from his childhood, and when he was 14 years old he was ordained as a deacon at St. John's Church, Pampady. Thirumeni joined Old Seminary, Kottayam, for theological studies. During his seminary years, the deacon spent some time with Parumala Thirumeni.

On July 28, 1906 he was ordained as a priest and on the next day he was ordained as a Ramban. The Ramban started living at the Pampady Church.

Ramban wanted to detach himself from the worldly desires, so he bought the 12 acres of land which was offered to him by his teacher at a small price. Then Ramban dug a well and constructed a Dayara there. He had lots of visitors that came to his Dayara to receive his blessings. On February 16, 1929, Kuriakose Ramban was consecrated as a Bishop by His Holiness Basilio Geevarghese II Catholicos. Thirumeni was in charge of the Kottayam Diocese. Thirumeni was such a kind man that he considered caring for the people in need was equally important as praying. Whatever little he had, he gave it out to the poor people around him. He never bothered to store anything for the next day. He was so confident that God will provide, and miraculously God provided him enough for the daily survival.

One example of his kindness and mercy was shown when he gave food to a beggar afflicted with leprosy. As the leper was hesitant to come near, Thirumeni went to the gate and caught his hand and brought him inside the Dayara, seated him, gave food and followed him to bid him at the gate. The ultimate

act of kindness and the care for the sick that Thirumeni has shown was when he willingly took the initiative and visited an area in Kunnankulam, when the region was suffering from a deadly contagious epidemic. When Thirumeni arrived at Kunnankulam, a miraculous event occurred. Thirumeni raised the cross and prayed and did a procession through the roads and no more deaths occurred after his visit. I want to relate this to the current Corona Virus Pandemic. Even though we can't visit the people who are suffering from the Virus, we should at least pray for them and support them in whatever ways we can. As a true Christian, it's our responsibility.

Pampady Thirumeni passed away on April 5, 1965 and he was entombed at Pampady Dayara. His whole life and actions show how good of a person and saintly he was. He showed his same personality to the poor, wealthy, low class, high class, and all types of people in the society. Our Barnabas Thirumeni, after returning from America, spent his final days peacefully at Pampady Dayara. Let us all pray and ask the intercession of Pampady Thirumeni and also Barnabas Thirumeni during this Pandemic period and may their prayers protect us like a fortress. ■



# ST. PETER



**Mathew Nainan**

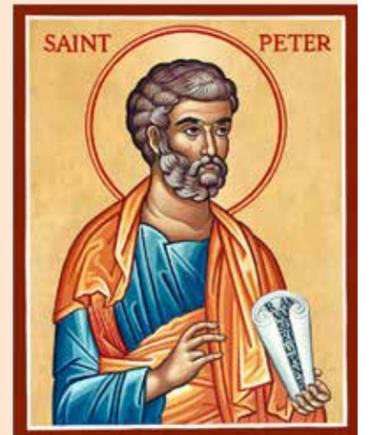
**St Peter** also called Simon Peter along with his brother Andrew was a fishermen. One day when they were fishing Jesus Christ came to them and said to them (Mathew 4:19): "come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". At once they left their fishing nets and followed Jesus. This shows Peter's faith, to throw away his livelihood and follow someone he just met. This also shows us the power of the words of Jesus Christ.

Peter and Andrew were the first 2 followers of Jesus. They along with the other disciples traveled with Jesus as he taught them about the kingdom of heaven. He also showed them miracles to illustrate how things that they believed to be impossible, were not impossible to God.

St Peter stands as a symbol of how even when we do the wrong thing we can be redeemed if we take the time and effort to repent. We can see this when St Peter denies Jesus by disowning him 3 times. Jesus predicts it and tells Peter (Matthew 26:34-36): "I tell you the truth, this very night before the rooster crows you will disown me three times." And of course Jesus was correct, but afterwards Peter is ashamed of himself (Mathew 26:75). "Then Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken: 'before the rooster crows you will disown me three times.' And he wept bitterly."

After the resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples several times. Once when Peter was fishing with Thomas and other disciples by the sea of Tiberias Jesus appeared to them. He invited them to have breakfast with Him and He spoke to them (John 21:15-19). After eating, Jesus spoke to Peter and asked him "Do you love Me" and he said, "Yes I love You. And Jesus told him "feed My lambs". Then Jesus asked him the same question a second time and told him "Take care of my sheep". Then Jesus asked him a third time "Peter, son of Jonah, do you

love me", and this hurt Peter because Jesus asked him three times if he truly loved Him. However, if we go by the the original Greek, Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him in a godly way but Peter responds to the first two questions that he loves Him as a brother. The third time Jesus asks him if he loves Him in a brotherly way and Peter realizes his mistake and redeemed himself and says "Lord You know all things; You know that I love



You". Then Jesus says to him "feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to show us how Peter would die and how his death would glorify God. And then Jesus said to Peter "follow me!".

Peter redeemed himself by spreading the word of God, and eventually dying for the glory of God. Peter's faith served as the rock on which Jesus would build His church. (Matthew 16:18-19) "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loosen will be loosened in heaven." ■

# ST. GREGORIOS OF PARUMALA



**Bless Thomas**

A deacon by age 10, a priest by 18 and a bishop at 28, our beloved Parumala Thirumeni also known as St. Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala was a very accomplished individual. He is our patron saint, a prophet who set the moral tone for his people. He had a deep rooted connection with the Holy Church and Christ starting at a very young age. Parumala Thirumeni was especially impressed by monastic principles and decided to dedicate his life to Christ by following the monastic traditions of St. Antony. Thirumeni lived in Vettickal Dayara for a portion of his life where he was able to live a life of abstinence, discipline and devotion through strictly practicing fasting, prayer and meditation. All of these sanctified his life. People became impressed by his great ascetic discipline and started to visit him from near and far to seek advice and guidance. His name and fame started to spread all around.

The most important things that led Parumala Thirumeni to sainthood and caused him to

be this popular were his dedication to prayer and leading a Christly life. In his own words he said, "Prayer brings truth, religious faith, honesty and respect among the people". Many in his time can testify their personal experience in being blessed by the prayers of Parumala Thirumeni. His prayer and faith were unwavering. That is why when we pray in his name and ask for his intercession, we receive divine grace. To this day, when we stand by Thirumeni's kapa at our church, we feel a Godly presence. Many enterprises built in Parumala Thirumeni's name have flourished and prospered.

Parumala Thirumeni was such an important person to us, not only because he was a leader and teacher, but also because he was a student himself. He learned the importance of prayer at a young age with his teacher Geevarghese Malpan. He learned a lot from this great teacher, even though their relationship was destined to be short lived. Just like our current situation, Thirumeni faced a deadly disease. In 1865, smallpox was spreading and becoming extremely dangerous. His teacher contracted the virus, and, while everyone else left, Thirumeni stayed and took care of Malpan. However, all treatments failed, and Geevarghese Malpan passed away. Within a couple of days, Thirumeni also contracted the virus. It

was said that he had contracted an extremely rare and dangerous strain. During all of this, Parumala Thirumeni didn't falter in his prayer even once. One day, when he was extremely ill, he had a vision from St. Mary. He saw her standing near him, assuring him he would be well soon and advised him to dedicate his life for God. Astonishingly, Thirumeni became well very soon and did as St. Mary directed him. This is the ultimate example for us now, to never falter in our prayer because God will answer us and



lead us in the right path. In all struggles our hope is God. Especially during this time of Corona Virus, we should fully turn our hearts and minds to God, so that He will help us and heal all the suffering in our world.

Another quote by Thirumeni is, "Prayer is the inspiration of childhood, the refuge of youth and peace during old age". He is right. Prayer is what brings us closer to God as children, helps us when we are struggling and gives us peace when we are old. Parumala Thirumeni taught us that prayer is the basis of our secular and spiritual lives. Due to Thirumeni's great teachings and leadership, to this day, people from around the world come to visit his holy tomb and the church at Parumala.

Mar Gregorios was the prophet of his time. He loved all people, especially the needy and the

poor. A saint is one who follows Christ and dedicates his life to Christ. Thirumeni attained sainthood because he faithfully followed his master, Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am going to end with an intercessory prayer to our patron saint Mar Gregorios of Parumala. "O, Blessed Parumala Thirumeni, please intercede before the throne of the Almighty God to fill our hearts with faith and love for the Holy Church which you manifested in your holy life, O Holy Father and Patron of the Church, be a physician to the weak in faith and the sick especially during these difficult times and be a support to the fallen, a defender to the defenseless, a strength to the weary in spirit and be our heavenly intercessor. Enable us to attain the true peace of life which is from God alone. In God's name we pray. Amen." ■

# "ആ മനുഷ്യൻ നീ തന്നെ" (2 ശമു. 12:7)



വി.യു. പാലോസ്

ലോകം ഇന്ന് പരിഭ്രാന്തിയുടെ നിഴലിലാണ്. എന്തു ചെയ്യണമെന്നറിയാതെ പകച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്നു. കോവിഡ്-19 എന്ന മാതൃക രോഗം ലോകത്തെ മുഴുവൻ ഗ്രസിച്ചിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ദിനംപ്രതി അനേകം മനുഷ്യ ജീവിതങ്ങൾ പൊലിഞ്ഞു പോയ്ക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഫലപ്രദമായ ഒരു മരുന്ന് നാളിതുവരെ പ്രയോഗത്തിലായിട്ടില്ല. ഈ മാതൃകയായ രോഗം മനുഷ്യസമൂഹത്തെ മുഴുവൻ ആശങ്കയിലാക്കിയിരിക്കുകയാണ്. എന്താണിതിനു പ്രതിവിധി? മാസ്ക് ധരിക്കുക, രോഗികളുമായി സമ്പർക്കം പുലർത്താതിരിക്കുക, വീടുകളിൽ നിന്നും പുറത്തിറങ്ങാതിരിക്കുക, അങ്ങനെ പല കാര്യങ്ങൾ.

ഇതിനൊരു മറുപുറമുണ്ട്. എത്രനാൾ ഇങ്ങനെ പുറത്തിറങ്ങാതിരിക്കും? കുലിപ്പണിയെടുത്തും കൃഷിപ്പണി എടുത്തും മറ്റും ജീവിക്കുകയാണിരിക്കുന്നവർ എന്തു ചെയ്യും? എല്ലാ മേഖലകളും സ്തംഭിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. കടകൾ അടഞ്ഞുകിടക്കുന്നു. വാഹനങ്ങൾ ഓടുന്നില്ല. വിദ്യാലയങ്ങൾ, ആരാധനാലയങ്ങൾ, ഓഫീസുകൾ അടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നു. എല്ലാ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളും അടഞ്ഞുകിടക്കുന്നു. മനുഷ്യൻ വീട്ടിൽ തന്നെ കുത്തിയിരിക്കുകയാണ്. അപ്പോഴാണ് മനുഷ്യൻ ചിന്തിച്ചു തുടങ്ങിയത്. എന്താണിതിനു കാരണം? പല സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലും പ്രകൃതിക്ഷോഭം, വെള്ളപ്പൊക്കം, ഉരുൾപൊട്ടൽ, മണ്ണിടിച്ചിൽ മുതലായവ നിമിത്തം ആയിരക്കണക്കിനു ജീവിതങ്ങൾ പൊലിഞ്ഞു പോയ്ക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇതിൽ നിന്നെല്ലാം പാഠം പഠിക്കേണ്ട മനുഷ്യൻ

ദൈവത്തെ മറന്നു ജീവിക്കുന്നു. ദിവസേന വാർത്താമാധ്യമങ്ങളിൽ കൂടി കേൾക്കുന്നതെന്താണ്? ജന്മം നൽകിയ പിതാവ് സ്വന്തം കുഞ്ഞിനെ പീഡിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. മക്കൾ മാതാപിതാക്കളെ കൊലചെയ്യുന്നു. കള്ളവും ചതിവും വഞ്ചനയും എങ്ങും നടമാടുന്നു. ധർമ്മികമായി ലോകം അധഃപതിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവീകസംസ്കൃതിയിൽ നിന്ന് മനുഷ്യൻ അകലുന്നതാണിതിനെല്ലാം കാരണം. വിശുദ്ധ ബൈബിളിൽ ആവർത്തനപുസ്തകം 28 ന്റെ 58-59 വാക്യങ്ങളിൽ ഇപ്രകാരം എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്നു 'ഈ പുസ്തകത്തിൽ എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ ന്യായപ്രമാണത്തിലെ സകല വചനങ്ങളും പ്രമാണങ്ങളും പ്രമാണിച്ചനുസരിച്ച് നടക്കാത്താൽ

യഹോവ നീന്റെ മേലും നീന്റെ സന്തതിയുടെ മേലും നീണ്ടു നിൽക്കുന്ന അപൂർവ്വമായ മഹാബാധകളും നീണ്ടുനിൽക്കുന്ന വല്ലാത്ത രോഗങ്ങളും വരുത്തും.'

ദൈവത്തെ മറന്നു ജീവിക്കുന്ന മനുഷ്യന് തക്ക സമയത്തുതന്നെ ശിക്ഷ ലഭിച്ചതായി വിശുദ്ധ ബൈബിളിൽ അനേകം സംഭവങ്ങൾ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. സോദോം, ഗൊമോറ എന്നീ നഗരങ്ങളിലെ ജനങ്ങൾ ദൈവത്തെ മറന്ന് കൊള്ളരുതാത്ത ജീവിതം നയിച്ചതിന്റെ ഫലമായി ആ രണ്ടു നഗരങ്ങളും നിശേഷം വെന്തുവെണ്ണിയി.

യഹോവയായ ദൈവം യിസ്രായേലിനു രാജാവായി അഭിഷേകം ചെയ്ത ദാവീദ് ഒരു വലിയ തെറ്റു ചെയ്തു. തന്റെ ഭടനായകനായിരുന്ന ഉരിയാവിന്റെ ഭാര്യയെ പരിഗ്രഹിക്കുകയും ഉരിയാവിനെ യുദ്ധമുൻനിരയിലേക്കയച്ച് കൊല്ലിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ദാവീദിന്റെ ഈ ഹീനപ്രവർത്തി യഹോവയ്ക്ക് അനിഷ്ടമായി. യഹോവ നാഥൻ പ്രവാചകനെ ദാവീദിന്റെ അടുക്കലേക്കയച്ചു. പ്രവാചകൻ ദാവീദിനോട് ഇപ്രകാരം പറയുന്നു ഒരു പട്ടണത്തിൽ രണ്ട് പുരുഷന്മാരുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഒരാൾ ധനവാനും മറ്റേയാൾ ദരിദ്രനുമായിരുന്നു. ധനവാന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ ഒരു വീരുന്നുകാരൻ വന്നു. ധനവാന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ ധാരാളം ആടുമാടുകൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നിട്ടും ദരിദ്രനായ മനുഷ്യൻ ഓമനിച്ചു വളർത്തിയ ഒരു പെണ്ണാടിനെ അയാൾ പിടിച്ചു

കൊണ്ടുപോയി വിരുന്നൊരുക്കി. ഇതു കേട്ട ദാവീദ് രാജാവ് കോപിഷ്ടനായി. ആ ദൃഷ്ടനെ പിടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു വരുവിൻ, അവൻ മരണയോഗ്യൻ തന്നെ. ഇതു കേട്ട നാഥൻ പറഞ്ഞു 'ആ മനുഷ്യൻ നീ തന്നെ' ദാവീദിന് ഉരിയാവിന്റെ ഭാര്യയിൽ ജനിച്ച കുഞ്ഞ് മരിച്ചുപോയി. ദാവീദ് കണ്ണീരോടെ ദൈവസന്നിധിയിൽ ക്ഷമിച്ചു. ദൈവം ക്ഷമിച്ചു എങ്കിലും യെരൂശലേം ദേവാലയം പണിയുന്നതിന് ദൈവം സമ്മതിച്ചില്ല.

മനുഷ്യൻ തന്റെ പാപജീവിതത്തിൽ നിന്ന് വിട്ടുകന്ന് ദൈവത്തോട് കണ്ണീരോടെ പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചാൽ ദൈവം നമ്മെ കൈവിടുകയില്ല. ഈ വലിയ മഹാമാരിയിൽ നിന്നും നാം രക്ഷപെടണമെങ്കിൽ ദൈവാശ്രയത്തിൽ കൂടി മാത്രമേ സാധിക്കുകയുള്ളൂ. എല്ലാ ആധുനിക സൗകര്യങ്ങളുമുള്ള പ്രത്യേക ഡിജിറ്റൽ സൗകര്യങ്ങൾ വരെയുള്ള ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ നാളിതുവരെ ഈ കോവിഡ്-19 നെ പ്രതിരോധിക്കാൻ പറ്റിയ മരുന്ന് ഉൽപ്പാദിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല എന്ന പരമാർത്ഥം മറന്നുകൂടാ. താമസിയൊരു ഇതിനൊരു ശാശ്വത പരിഹാരം ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്നു പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കാം. അതിനു സർവ്വശക്തനായ ദൈവം നമ്മെ സഹായിക്കട്ടെ എന്ന് ഉപവാസത്തോടും കണ്ണീരോടും കൂടെ നമുക്ക് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കാം.



## ദാഗ്യസ്ഥരണാർഹനായ അഭിവന്ദ്യ ജോസഫ് മാർ പക്കോമിയോസ് തിരുമേനി

കാറ്റുംകോളും തിരമാലകളും ആഞ്ഞടിച്ചു ആടിയുലഞ്ഞ സഭാനൗകയെ സുധീരം തുഴഞ്ഞ് കരപറ്റിക്കുവാൻ ധീരോദാത്തനേതൃത്വം നൽകിയ സഭാപിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട ധീരനശാലിയായിരുന്നു ജോസഫ് മാർ പക്കോമിയോസ് തിരുമേനി. മലങ്കര സഭയിൽ സഭാഭവനത്തിന്റെ മുൻമുഖ്യത്തിൽ സഭാഭവനം കയറി ചെല്ലാവുന്ന ചുരുക്കം പള്ളികൾ മാത്രമുള്ളപ്പോഴാണ് അദ്ദേഹം കണ്ടനാട് ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തയായി ചുമതലയേറ്റത്.

കണ്ടനാട് ഭദ്രാസനത്തിൽപ്പെട്ട മുളക്കുളം വടക്കേക്കരയിൽ പൂവത്തുകൽ വർക്കിയുടേയും അന്നമ്മയുടേയും പുത്രനായി 1926 ജൂൺ 19 ന് ജനിച്ചു. പിറവം സെന്റ് ജോസഫ്സ് ഹൈസ്കൂളിൽ സ്കൂൾ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം പൂർത്തിയാക്കി. പത്തനംതിട്ട കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ് കോളേജിൽ നിന്ന് ഇന്റർമീഡിയറ്റും എറണാകുളം സെന്റ് ആൽബർട്ട്, കോളേജിൽ നിന്ന് എം.എ.യും കരസ്ഥമാക്കി. ഇംഗ്ലണ്ടിലെ കാർഡിഫ് സെന്റ് മൈക്കിൾസ് കോളേജിൽ വേദസാഹിത്യത്തിൽ ഉപരിപഠനം നടത്തി. 1946 ഏപ്രിൽ 8ാം തീയതി പരിശുദ്ധ ഗീവറഗിസ്റ്റ് ദിതീയൻ കാതോലിക്കാ ബാവായിൽ നിന്ന് ശൈമാശുപട്ടവും 1952 ജൂൺ 22 ന് പരിശുദ്ധ ഔഗേൻ പ്രഥമൻ കാതോലിക്കാ ബാവായിൽ നിന്ന് വൈദികപട്ടവും സ്വീകരിച്ചു.

കൊച്ചി, എറണാകുളം, സിംഗപ്പൂർ, മലേഷ്യ, ലണ്ടൻ, പറന്തൽ, വയലത്തല എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിൽ വികാരിയായി സേവനമനുഷ്ഠിച്ചു. യുവജനപ്രസ്ഥാനം വൈസ് പ്രസിഡന്റ്, സുന്നഹദോസ് ഓഫീസ് സെക്രട്ടറി എന്നീ നിലകളിൽ പ്രവർത്തിച്ചു. 1974-ൽ നിരന്തര കൂടിയ മലങ്കര സുറിയാനി ക്രിസ്ത്യാനി അസോസിയേഷൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ മേൽപട്ട സ്ഥാനത്തേക്ക് തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തു. 1975

ഫെബ്രുവരി 15-ാം തീയതി പുത്തൻ കാവ് പള്ളിയിൽ വെച്ച് അഭിവന്ദ്യ ദാനിയേൽ മാർ പീലക്സീനോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ റമ്പാൻ സ്ഥാനം നൽകി. 1976 ഫെബ്രുവരി 16-ാം തീയതി നിരണം വലിയ പള്ളിയിൽ വെച്ച് പരിശുദ്ധ ഔഗേൻ പ്രഥമൻ കാതോലിക്കാ ബാവായുടെ മുഖ്യ കാർമ്മികത്വത്തിൽ ഇദ്ദേഹം ജോസഫ് മാർ പക്കോമിയോസ് എന്ന നാമധേയത്തിൽ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി വാഴിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. കോട്ടയം ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ സഹായ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി ചുമതല വഹിച്ചിരുന്ന അദ്ദേഹത്തെ 1976 ജൂലൈ 19 ന് കണ്ടനാട് ഭദ്രാസന മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി നിയമിച്ചു. അക്കാലത്ത് മിക്ക പള്ളികളിലും പ്രവേശനം അപ്രാപ്യമായിരുന്നു. ചുരുക്കം പള്ളികൾ മാത്രമാണ് സഭാഭവനത്തിന്റെ കുഞ്ഞൊഴുക്കിൽ പെടാതെ നിന്നിരുന്നത്. ഇതിനൊരു പരിഹാരമെന്നോണം പല സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലും കാതോലിക്കേറ്റ് സെന്ററുകൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ച് പരിശുദ്ധ ആരാധനയ്ക്കു സൗകര്യമൊരുക്കി.

പരിശുദ്ധ എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പൽ സുന്നഹദോസ് സെക്രട്ടറി, പരിശുദ്ധ കാതോലിക്കായുടേയും മലങ്കര മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുടേയും അസിസ്റ്റന്റ്, മലങ്കരസഭ വർക്കിംഗ് കമ്മിറ്റിയാംഗം, എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പൽ സുന്നഹദോസ് സ്റ്റാൻഡിംഗ് കമ്മിറ്റിയാംഗം, സഭാഭവന സ്കൂളുകളുടെ മാനേജർ, മലങ്കര സഭ ഫിനാൻസ് കമ്മിറ്റി ചെയർമാൻ, സഭാഭവന കോ-ഓപ്പറേറ്റീവ് ക്രെഡിറ്റ് സൊസൈറ്റി വൈസ് പ്രസിഡന്റ്, ഇന്റർ ചർച്ച് റിലേഷൻസ് കമ്മിറ്റിയാംഗം, ദിവ്യബോധനം വൈസ് പ്രസിഡന്റ്, തിയോളജിക്കൽ സെമിനാരി ഗവേണിംഗ് ബോർഡ് അംഗം, കോലഞ്ചേരി മെഡിക്കൽ മിഷൻ ഹോസ്പിറ്റൽ എക്സ് ഒഫീഷ്യോ വൈസ് പ്രസിഡന്റ് എന്നീ നിലകളിൽ സേവനമനുഷ്ഠിച്ചു കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. മലങ്കര സഭയിൽ എഴുപതുകളിൽ സഭാഭവനത്തിന്റെ അഗ്നി പർവ്വതം പൊട്ടിയൊഴുകിയ



സങ്കീർണ്ണങ്ങളായ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുടെ തിരമാലകൾ സഭാനൗകയുടെ നേരെ ആഞ്ഞടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നപ്പോൾ അക്ഷീണം തണ്ടുവലിച്ച് സഭാനൗകയെ രക്ഷാതുറമുഖത്തേക്കുവാൻ പരിശ്രമിച്ച മലങ്കര സഭാപിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ മുൻനിരയിൽ ദാഗ്യസ്ഥരണാർഹനായ ജോസഫ് മാർ പക്കോമിയോസ് തിരുമേനി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു.



പ്ലോൾ ഡൈര്യപൂർവ്വം കണ്ടനാടിന്റെ ഭരണസാരഥ്യം ഏറ്റെടുത്ത അഭിവന്ദ്യ പക്കോമിയോസ് തിരുമേനി സമാധാനത്തിന്റെയും സന്തോഷ സമൃദ്ധിയുടേയും പൂമെത്തയിലായിരുന്നു. 1976 ൽ കണ്ടനാടിന്റെ ഭരണസാരഥ്യം ഏറ്റെടുത്തപ്പോൾ

മുതൽ ഒന്നരദശാബ്ദക്കാലം ഭരണം നിർവ്വഹിച്ചത് പ്രശ്നങ്ങളുടെ ശരശയ്യിലായിരുന്നു. സുറിയാനി ഭാഷാ നിപുണനായിരുന്ന തിരുമേനിയുടെ ആരാധനകളിലുള്ള ആഴമായ അറിവും സമ്പന്നമായും സമർപ്പണവും ആരേയും ആകർഷിക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു. തികച്ചും അവിചാരിതമെന്നു പറയട്ടെ, 1991 ആഗസ്റ്റ് 19 ന് അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിരുമേനി ഹൃദയാഘാതം മൂലം കാലം ചെയ്തു. സ്വന്തം ഇടവകയായ മുളക്കുളം കർമ്മേൽക്കുന്നു പള്ളിയിൽ കബറടങ്ങി. എല്ലാ മാസവും 19-ാം തീയതി അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിരുമേനിയുടെ ഓർമ്മയ്ക്കായി കർമ്മേൽക്കുന്നു പള്ളിയിൽ വിശുദ്ധ കുർബ്ബാനയും കബറുകൾ ധൂപപ്രാർത്ഥനയും മൂടങ്ങാതെ നടത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. അഭിവന്ദ്യതിരുമേനിയുടെ സ്മരണ നിലനിൽക്കുവാൻ മുളക്കുളം കർമ്മേൽക്കുന്നു പള്ളിയുടെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിൽ ബഹുജനപങ്കാളിത്തത്തോടെ പിറവത്തു സ്ഥാപിതമായ ജോസഫ് മാർ പക്കോമിയോസ് മെഡിക്കൽ സെന്റർ (ജെ.എം.പി) എന്ന ആതുരലയം പിറവത്തിന്റെ തീലകക്കുറി എന്നോണം നല്ല നിലയിൽ പ്രവർത്തിച്ചുവരുന്നു. കർമ്മേൽക്കുന്നു പള്ളിയുടെ ഒരു കുതിശുപള്ളിയായ പരിശുദ്ധ പരമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ നാമത്തിൽ സ്ഥാപിതമായിരിക്കുന്ന കുതിശുപള്ളിയുടെ സ്ഥലം അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിരുമേനി സ്വന്തമായി വാങ്ങി പള്ളിക്ക് നൽകിയതാണ്. അഭിവന്ദ്യതിരുമേനിയുടെ സഹോദരപുത്രനായ ഫാദർ ജോസ് തോമസ് പൂവത്തുകൽ, കണ്ടനാട് ഭദ്രാസനത്തിലെ വൈദികനായി സേവനമനുഷ്ഠിച്ചുവരുന്നു.

മാർ പക്കോമിയോസ് തിരുമേനി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. സഭാഭരണത്തിന് ഊടും പാവും നൽകി പുതുകത്തിന്റെ അധ്യായങ്ങൾക്ക് തുടക്കം കുറിച്ച അഞ്ചാം കാതോലിക്ക പരിശുദ്ധ ബസേലിയോസ് മാർത്തോമ്മ മാത്യൂസ് പ്രഥമൻ ബാവാക്ക് താങ്ങും തണലുമായി പ്രവർത്തിച്ച അഭിവന്ദ്യപക്കോമിയോസ് തിരുമേനിയെ സഭയുടെ ആധുനിക ശില്പികളിൽ ഒരാളായി വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. അഭിവന്ദ്യതിരുമേനിയുടെ വ്യക്തിജീവിതം മറ്റുള്ളവർക്ക് എന്നും മാതൃകയായിരുന്നു. രോഗികളെ സന്ദർശിക്കുകയും പ്രയാസത്തിലിരിക്കുന്നവരെ സാന്ത്വനപ്പെടുത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നതിൽ അദ്ദേഹം സമയം കണ്ടെത്തിയിരുന്നു. എറണാകുളം സെന്റ് മേരീസ് പള്ളി വികാരിയായിരുന്ന കാലത്ത് അദ്ദേഹം എന്നും എറണാകുളം ജനറൽ ഹോസ്പിറ്റലിൽ പോകുകയും രോഗികളെ സന്ദർശിക്കുകയും അവർക്കുവേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക പതിവായിരുന്നു. സാഭാവികതയും ആത്മാർത്ഥതയും കൈമുതലായിരുന്ന തിരുമേനിയുടെ വ്യക്തിബന്ധങ്ങൾ വെറും ഉപരിപ്പുവമല്ലായിരുന്നു. അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിരുമേനിയുടെ ഓർമ്മദിനമായ ആഗസ്റ്റ് 19-ാം തീയതി, കബറടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്ന സ്വന്തം ഇടവകയായ മുളക്കുളം കർമ്മേൽക്കുന്നുപള്ളിയിൽ ആണ്ടുതോറും സമുചിതമായി ആഘോഷിച്ചുവരുന്നു. 18-ാം തീയതി വൈകിട്ട് സമീപപ്രദേശങ്ങളിലെ എല്ലാ ഇടവകകളിൽ നിന്നും കബറുകൾക്കുള്ള തീർത്ഥയാത്രയും നടത്തിവരുന്നു. കണ്ടനാട് ഭദ്രാസനാധിപൻ അഭിവന്ദ്യ ഡോക്ടർ മാത്യൂസ് മാർ സേവേറിയോസ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ ചുമതലയിലുള്ള ഈ ദേവാലയത്തിലെ ഇടവകാംഗങ്ങളും സമീപപ്രദേശത്തെ ജനങ്ങളും കബറുകൾ വന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ച് അനുഗ്രഹം പ്രാപിച്ചുപോരുന്നു.

# ARCHANGEL MIKHAEL



Miriam Ann Adai & Mikhael Paul Adai

Who is an angel? Angels are messengers of God.

The Orthodox Church teaches us that there is a heavenly hierarchy to the angels. All angels serve God to carry out His will and glorify Him. The wings of the angel signify their readiness to do God's will. In the holy altar, the altar assistants represent angels.

Angels have many duties. For example, angels sing praise to God. In Isaiah 6:1-5 we read about the vision that Isaiah had of angels singing praise to the Lord. Isaiah 6:3 says the angels sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Angels are heralds of good news. They reveal prophecies, knowledge, and understanding of God's will. Archangel Gabriel announced the good news to Zachariah the priest about the birth of John the Baptist, and also to St. Mary that she will bear a Son and His name will be Jesus.

In St. Luke 2: 8-14, we read that an angel announced the

birth of Christ to the shepherds in the field. Suddenly, there was a multitude of angels praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" This is the famous greeting that we use every year at Christmas. An angel also stopped the wise men from returning to King Herod.

Towards the end of His earthly life, when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane in severe mental agony regarding the events which were to happen, angels came and ministered to Him. St. Luke 22:43 says, "Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him." This incident is recorded only in St. Luke's Gospel. After the resurrection of Christ, again we see that angels announced the good news of the resurrection of Christ to the women in the garden. We are all familiar with Archangel Gabriel. Have you heard of Archangel Mikhael? Mikhael (or Michael) means "Who is Like God." References to Archangel Mikhael can be

found in the Bible in Daniel 10:13, Daniel 12:1, Jude 1:9, and Revelation 12:7.

The book of Revelation describes a war which took place in heaven. Satan and his demons rebelled against God. Archangel Mikhael and his army of angels fought against Satan and his demons. The power of evil could not stand against the angels of God, and Satan fell with all his demons to the underworld, known as Hell. Hell is a place far away from God, where the evil spirits now abide. Those who are



Archangel Mikhael is known as the defender of the faith because he stood up against Satan and his evil forces.

lived with God ever since in unceasing love and joy.

There are other instances in the Bible where Archangel Mikhael stood up against evil forces and defended God. In St. Jude chapter 1 we read that Archangel Mikhael fought against the devil for the body of Moses. In St. Jude 1:9, the Archangel Mikhael says to the devil, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Archangel Mikhael is known as the defender of the faith because he stood up against Satan and his evil forces. When we see icons of Archangel Mikhael, we always see him standing with a sword in his hand. The sword signifies that no evil can enter the presence of God.

there are tormented by their own malice and the realization that they are powerless against God. They have become hardened in evil and use deceit to lead others away from God. The angels who remained faithful to God have

## THE HOLY LIFE OF MAR BARNABAS - A REMINISCENCE

From p.1

Antioch at the council (Acts 15:2) and sent by the council to communicate its findings (Acts 15:22,24,30). He was the choice because he was a silent motivator who was firm and forthright when occasion required. Barnabas Thirumeni had these same great qualities and was loving and understanding even as he moved from Angamali to Kottayam to Idukki to the USA.

The parishioners of Thirumeni's first parish at Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India remember Thirumeni fondly as "Rev. Fr. K.K. Mathews;" an Achen who was a real shepherd with Christ-like qualities, who visited all their homes every year.

During the mornings he would attend classes at Osmania University in Hyderabad where he was enrolled in a Masters in Botany program and in the evening Thirumeni took it upon himself to visit the homes of his church members and other sick members to pray with them.

The Head of the Botany Department, Professor Qureshi, a Muslim, after many years, recalls how Fr. K.K. Mathews would go to him after class and talk to him extensively about one topic, Jesus. He recalls his conversations about selfless love and sacrificial love that made him think more and more.

He continued his hospital visits all through his life and in many instances he gave financial assistance to deserving patients and their families. During his days at the Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam, Kerala, India where he served as a warden and Professor, most evenings he would visit the hospitals and pray for the sick.

His selflessness was often never recognized, but during one instance when a well-wisher gave Thirumeni a business class ticket to travel to India from America, rather than keep it, Thirumeni insisted on changing it to economy class. He then gave the name and address of a sick person in India to whom the difference in the amount should be sent and travelled in economy class to India, that day.

Children were also very dear to his heart. He wanted the diocese to do everything possible



Barnabas Thirumeni blessing the members of the St. Basil Gospel Team

to build their faith, provide them resources and have an effective Sunday School in every church. With this goal in mind he wrote many small books such as A Devotional Study of the Kauma and Holy Baptism, How to Avoid and Get Rid of Stress, Rejoice in the Lord, Our Faith Based on the Holy Scriptures, The Sacrament of Holy Qurbana, The Sacrament of Holy Confession, Occasional Prayers, Abundant Life and Handbook for the Malankara Orthodox. In order to help the younger generation he put all efforts to publish Sunday School text books and workbooks for grades K-12 with the American educational system in mind. He was very instrumental in reading, correcting and giving suggestions for each book that was prepared to be published.

His earnestness and diligence was a source of inspiration to all members of the curriculum committee. He reminded us of St. Matthew 19:13-14 and exhorted everyone to use their knowledge and skills for the furtherance of the children of the diocese. Some of the advice Thirumeni would give the teachers was to be patient, honest and work hard for the common good of humanity. He reminded them to seek out the good in all people and to appreciate them always. At all times the emphasis was, "Do everything for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31.

I had the unique privilege and blessing to have been able to work closely with Thirumeni during this time. It was always Thirumeni's dream to publish and use Sunday School books for children grades K-12. I fondly remember waiting for Thirumeni to call me early many mornings, reminding me to pick up the corrected material for various books so we could meet all deadlines. Some days when I would get to the Aramana early, I could overhear Thirumeni busy pray-

ing downstairs in the chapel, praying by name for everybody. Throughout the time that I knew him, the conversations and insight I gained from Thirumeni were monumental in shaping and guiding me in life.

His love for the children of the diocese showed in his actions every year as Thirumeni did not miss a single OVBS, talent show program or even teacher's conference. His commitment and concern for posterity were evident in every action, thought, message or admonition. He was passionate about the future of our children in the American Diocese and wanted them to love God and willingly serve God. He asked the Sunday School teachers to become life long learners and good role models and impart and infuse into their students, life-long faith. He implored everyone to do their part to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever they were placed in life. For this purpose he encouraged establishing Gospel teams in churches. As a true shepherd and a real ambassador Thirumeni looked at every situation from the positive side and was glad when he saw the grace of God guide every decision. His motto was "Service to man is service to God." "Manava Seva E Madhava Seva." His life mission was based on "Simple living and high thinking."

For those of us who had a chance to see or interact with this great man of God it surely was a blessing. He left us a lasting legacy. Thirumeni is now at a place where there is no suffering, no pain, no sorrows, no distress, no tears but life everlasting. The most perfect and beautiful place we can possibly conceive, far more glorious than anything we can imagine.

Holy Father, may your memory be eternal!

### A Personal Kalpana sent by Mar. Barnabas to one of our Church members in August, 2000



എന്റെ ജന്മദിനത്തിന് സന്തോഷം അയച്ച മംഗളാശംസകിട്ടിയതിലുള്ള സന്തോഷവും നന്ദിയും അറിയിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവകൃപയാണ് എല്ലാ അവസരങ്ങളിലും നമ്മുടെ ഏക സങ്കേതം. പ്രത്യേകിച്ചു മെത്രാസനഭരണത്തിന് ദൈവകൃപ എനിക്കു വേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. എന്റെ കഴിവുകളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ബോധ്യവും ദൈവകൃപയുടെ ഉറപ്പും എനിക്ക് ആവശ്യമാണ്. "ഞാൻ ആകുന്നത് ദൈവത്തിന്റെ കൃപയാലാകുന്നു" (1 കൊറി. 15:10). "എന്നെ ശക്തനാക്കുന്നവൻ മുഖാന്തിരം ഞാൻ സകലത്തിനും മതിയാകുന്നു" (ഫിലി. 4:13) എന്നു വി. പൗലോസ് പറയുന്നു. എനിക്കുറിച്ചു ഓർക്കുന്ന അവസരങ്ങളിൽ എനിക്കുവേണ്ടി ഒരു വാക്ക് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കണമെന്ന് താല്പര്യപ്പെടുന്നു. "ആകയാൽ തിനാലും കുടിച്ചാലും എന്തുചെയ്താലും എല്ലാം ദൈവത്തിന്റെ മഹത്വത്തിനായി ചെയ്യുവിൻ" (1 കൊറി. 10:31) സന്തോഷത്തോടും പ്രാർത്ഥനയോടും നിർത്തട്ടെ.

# Feast Day Celebrations of St. Gregorios of Parumala

## 2020 at Cherry Lane Church

Perunaal celebrations in the midst of a raging pandemic is not an easy matter. However, the Cherry Lane Church can be proud of the fact that we celebrated this year's feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala, our Patron Saint in a modest but spiritually enriching manner under the pastoral leadership of our Vicar, Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese. The week-long celebrations started on Sunday, November 1, with Holy Qurbana followed by Flag Hoisting. Then there was Holy Qurbana in the middle of the week on Wednesday, Devotional Address via Zoom on Friday by Rev. Fr. Jijo K Joy of Chengannur Diocese after Evening Prayer, Holy Qurbana on Saturday, and Holy Qurbana again on Sunday. Since the Holy Qurbana associated with the Perunaal was extended over a week, almost all congregants got a chance to be physical participants of the Perunaal and receive blessings. For the few who could not attend physically, live-streaming was available.

On Saturday, the homily in the middle of the Holy Qurbana was given by Mr. Toby John, a third year Seminarian at St. Vladimir's Seminary. It may be noted that instead of the regular procession covering two blocks around the Church, a procession was held inside the Church on Saturday. A sumptuous individually packed meal was also served, for the congregants to eat at ease in their cars or homes. One of the highlights of the Perunaal this year was the spiritually uplifting devotional address via zoom as referred to above. A brief clip of the speech given by Rev. Fr. Jijo K Koshy is given elsewhere.

In relation to the Perunaal, it is worth mentioning about the Holy Relic of Parumala Thirumeni ('Kaappa' or Sacerdotal



### Feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala

St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church  
175 Cherrylane, Floral Park, NY 11001

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We cordially invite you to attend the annual "Perunal" and Feast Day of our patron Saint Gregorios of Parumala. We have arranged spiritually uplifting programs over the course of the week for the spiritual benefit of the community. Please come and join us and receive blessing and healing by the intercession of St. Gregorios of Parumala. May the prayers of our father, St. Gregorios, be a stronghold for us all!

Yours in our Lord,

Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese  
Vicar

PERUNAL SCHEDULE

#### Sunday Nov. 1st 2020

8:30 am : Morning prayer  
9:30 am : Holy Qurbana  
11:00 am : Flag Hoisting

#### Wednesday Nov. 4, 2020

6:30 pm : Evening Prayer  
7:00 pm : Holy Qurbana

#### Friday Nov. 6, 2020

6:30 pm : Evening prayer  
7:00 pm : Devotional Address via Zoom  
Rev. Fr. Jijo K. Joy  
Diocese Chengannur

#### Saturday Nov. 7, 2020

8:30 am : Morning prayer  
9:30 am : Holy Qurbana

#### Sunday Nov. 8, 2020

8:30 am : Morning Prayer  
9:30 am : Holy Qurbana

Vestment) that remains installed in the front of the Church. This Kaappa which was the only remaining relic of Parumala Thirumeni and which was being kept very reverently at St. Basil Dayara was handed over to our

then Vicar, Very Rev. Dr. P. S. Samuel Cor-Episcopus by His Grace Geevarghese Mar Evanos of Kottayam Diocese in August 2001. This Kaappa has become a focal point of pilgrimage for so many of the faithful.

## Nuggets of Perunaal 2020 Zoom-Speech



Rev. Fr. Jijo K. Joy

Without travelling thousands of miles in the midst of a Pandemic, a revered priest in India

was able to give an enlightening speech to the Cherry Lane Church Community on Friday, November 6, 2020 in connection with the Feast Day Celebrations of St. Gregorios of Parumala. It has been reported that this priest of the Chengannur Diocese went to his Church with his crew the day before, slept in the Church and got up early in the morning so that he could be part of our Evening Prayer here at Cherry Lane at 6:30 PM EST and then give a devotional address via zoom. We are very grateful to Achen. Also, thanks to the Pandemic, this kind of mass media communication is a welcome trend for the post-pandemic period as well!

The theme of his speech was that the Feast Day Celebrations of Parumala Thirumeni should transform our minds and purify our thoughts and bring us closer to God. References were made from the Old Testament Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua citing the change that occurred to the Israelites prior to their entering the land of Canaan. They vowed to Joshua that they would abide by the commandments of the Lord. The changes in their attitude and behavior can be summed up as follows:

Through the forty years of their journey in the wilderness, the Israelites were more focused on their rights than their responsibilities. They were at odds with Moses over what they were entitled to, like water and food. Because of their disbelief and quarrel, only two (Joshua and Caleb) from among the original people who came out of the slavery in Egypt could enter the land of Canaan. The others who could enter the promised land were all descendants of the original ones. And to traverse a distance equal to eleven days journey, it took them forty years! However, by the time they were about to enter the land of Canaan, a complete change happened in their lives. They surrendered themselves and became more conscious of their responsibilities and paid more attention to their spiritual and worship life. We also should transform our lives to be worthy citizens in the Kingdom of God.

The Israelites who were unfaithful before became faithful. They realized that they should be truthful to God. Approaching God is like approaching fire. The experience of our approaching God can either be like gold purified of impurities and sparkling when in fire, or like paper which get easily consumed in fire. If we take Godly matters lightly, the Godly fire can consume us. A case in point is taking the body and blood of Jesus Christ casually and without adequate preparation. At the same time, we should be heartened by the fact that spiritual fire coming from God can enlighten us and lead the way for us.

The Israelites who were previously selfish became unselfish. They found joy in sharing and caring for their neighbors. It's not a sin to be rich. We can see in the Old Testament that the Patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all blessed with a lot of wealth. We see that after his trials, God blessed Job with two times the riches he had before. However, it is a sin not to share our riches with others, especially with those in need.

Rev. Fr. Jijo K Joy thus emphasized the need for a transformation in our lives with our celebration of the feast day of Parumala Thirumeni who was a model of humility, caring, sharing and spirituality.



## Our Church Christmas Program 2019



# വളയൻചിറങ്ങര പള്ളി

എറണാകുളം ജില്ലയിൽ പെരുമ്പാവൂരിനടുത്ത് തിരുമേനി ജനിച്ചുവളർന്ന വീട്ടിൽനിന്ന് ഏകദേശം ഒന്നര മൈൽ ദൂരത്താണ് ഈ ദേവാലയം സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്നത്.

ഭാഗ്യസ്ഥരണാർഹനായ മാർ ബർന്നബാസ് കബറടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നത് വളയൻചിറങ്ങര സെന്റ് പീറ്റേഴ്സ് & സെന്റ് പോൾസ് ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് പള്ളിയിലാണ്. എറണാകുളം ജില്ലയിൽ പെരുമ്പാവൂരിനടുത്ത് തിരുമേനി ജനിച്ചുവളർന്ന വീട്ടിൽനിന്ന് ഏകദേശം ഒന്നര മൈൽ ദൂരത്താണ് ഈ ദേവാലയം സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്നത്. തിരുമേനിയുടെ അഭിഷേകപ്രകാരമാണ് ഈ ദേവാലയം തന്റെ അന്ത്യ വിശ്രമത്തിനുള്ള ഇടമായി തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തത്. താൻ വളരെയധികം സ്നേഹിക്കുകയും കരുതുകയും ചെയ്തിരുന്ന അമേരിക്കയിലെ ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് തന്റെ മരണശേഷം വന്നു സന്ദർശിക്കുന്നതിനും പരസ്പരം പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെടുന്നതിനും സൗകര്യപ്രദമായ സ്ഥലമായിരിക്കും വളയൻചിറങ്ങര. കാരണം, നെടുമ്പാശ്ശേരി എയർപോർട്ടിൽനിന്നും അധികം ദൂരത്തല്ലാത്ത ഈ ദേവാലയം നാട്ടിൽ വരുന്നവർക്ക് അധികം സഞ്ചരിക്കാതെ എത്തിച്ചേരാവുന്നതുമാണ് എന്നതു തന്നെ. ഇത് തിരുമേനി തന്നെ ആവർത്തിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ള കാര്യമായിരുന്നു.

മലങ്കര ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭാവിഭാഗത്തോട് വിശ്വാസവും കുറും പുലർത്തി ഉറച്ചുനിന്നിരുന്നു തിരുമേനിയുടെ കുടുംബം. പൗരാണികമായി സഭയിലെ രണ്ടുകക്ഷികളും ഒരുമിച്ച് ആരാധന നടത്തിയിരുന്ന തുരുത്തിപ്പി സെന്റ് തോമസ് (ചെറിയ പള്ളി) പള്ളിയിൽനിന്ന് ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് വിഭാഗത്തെ പുറത്താക്കുന്ന സാഹചര്യമുണ്ടായപ്പോഴാണ് പുതിയ പള്ളിവെച്ച് (വളയൻചിറങ്ങരപ്പള്ളി) തിരുമേനിയുടെ പെട്ടെന്ന് ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്ക് മാറേണ്ടിവന്നത്. വിഭാഗീയതയുടെ പേരിൽ വലിയ സ്വർദ്ധയുണ്ടായപ്പോഴും മറുകക്ഷിയിലുള്ളവർക്ക് തിരുമേനിയോട് വലിയ സ്നേഹവും ആദരവുമായിരുന്നു. അതിന്റെ മകുടോദാഹരണമാണ് പിന്നീടൊരിക്കൽ അവരുടെ തിരുമേനി ഉൾപ്പെടെ ഇടവകക്കാർ ഒന്നടങ്കം ബർന്നബാസ് തിരുമേനിയെ ക്ഷണിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുപോയി തുരുത്തിപ്പി ചെറിയ പള്ളിയിൽ വിശുദ്ധകുർബ്ബാന അർപ്പിക്കുവാൻ ഇടയാക്കിയത്.

വളയൻചിറങ്ങരയിൽ പുതിയ പള്ളി പണിയാനുള്ള സ്ഥലം വാങ്ങിയത് മുഖ്യമായും ഹൈന്ദവസമുദായക്കാർ പാർക്കുന്ന പ്രദേശത്താണ്.



സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ വെമ്പുന്ന മനസ്സോടെയാണ് ജനങ്ങൾ പ്രതികരിച്ചത്. തന്റെ ആത്മീയ ജൈത്രയാത്രയിൽ പോർപൊരുതി ഓട്ടം തികച്ചുവന്ന ആ ആത്മീയയാത്രാധാവിന് എത്രയും ഉചിതമായ ഒരു വരവേല്പാണ് ആ നാട്ടുകാർ നൽകിയത്.

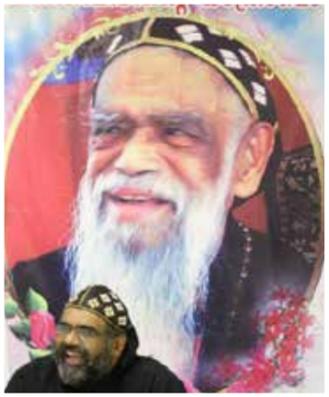
തിരുമേനി അന്ത്യവിശ്രമംകൊള്ളുന്ന വളയൻചിറങ്ങര ദേവാലയം ഒരു തീർത്ഥാടനകേന്ദ്രമായി മാറിക്കഴിഞ്ഞു. ഡിസംബർ 9 ന് നടക്കുന്ന തിരുമേനിയുടെ ദുഃഖരോന്യോടനുബന്ധിച്ചുള്ള പെരുമ്പള്ളിയിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കാൻ ദുരദേശത്തു നിന്നുപോലും പദയാത്രയായും മറ്റും അനേകർ എത്തിച്ചേരുന്നുണ്ട്. തിരുമേനിയുടെ കബറിടത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ചു തയ്യാറാക്കിയിട്ടുള്ള മുറിയിൽ തന്റെ തിരുവസ്ത്രങ്ങളും തിരുമേനി ഉപയോഗിച്ച മറ്റുചില വസ്തുക്കളും സൂക്ഷിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. അനേകവിശ്വാസികൾ ഇടദിവസങ്ങളിലും തിരുമേനിയുടെ കബറിടം സന്ദർശിച്ച് അനുഗ്രഹം പ്രാപിച്ചുവരുന്നു. തിരുമേനിയുടെ ദൈവസംസർഗ്ഗത്തിലുള്ള ചൈതന്യം വളയൻചിറങ്ങര പള്ളിയിലും പ്രദേശത്തും നിറഞ്ഞുതുളുമ്പുന്നു.

യതിനാൽ പള്ളി പണിയാനാണ് സ്ഥലം എന്നറിഞ്ഞ് ചിലർ എതിർപ്പുകൾ പ്രകടിപ്പിച്ചെങ്കിലും പിന്നീട് അവരൊന്നും മയപ്പെട്ടു. എന്നാൽ സെമിത്തേരി പാടില്ലെന്നായി. അതുകൊണ്ട് ഉയർന്ന ചുറ്റുമതിൽ കെട്ടി അതിനുള്ളിലാണ് സെമിത്തേരി ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയത്. കുറെ കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ, ആ ദേവാലയത്തിൽ കുടിവന ക്രൈസ്തവസമൂഹത്തിന്റെ ദൈവികദർശനവും സാഹോദര്യചിന്തയും തൊട്ടറിഞ്ഞ അവർതന്നെ ആ മതിൽ പൊളിച്ചു മാറ്റുവാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടു. ബർണാബാസ് തിരുമേനിയോട് ആ പ്രദേശത്തുകാരായ ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് ജാതിമതഭേദമെന്യേ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന സ്നേഹവും ആദരവും അളവറ്റതായിരുന്നു എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്. അതിന്റെ സാക്ഷ്യം ഏറ്റവും പ്രകടമായി കണ്ടത് തിരുമേനിയുടെ മരണാനന്തരം അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഭൗതികശരീരവുമായി അവിടെ എത്തിയപ്പോഴാണ്. പാതിരാ

കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടും വഴിയോരങ്ങളിലും പള്ളിയകണത്തിലും ദുഃഖാർത്ഥരായി തിങ്ങിനിന്ന ജനം തങ്ങൾക്കു പ്രിയപ്പെട്ടവനെ ഒരുനോക്കു കാണുന്നതിനായി ഓടിയടുത്തു. ഒരു ജനതയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടി പടപൊരുതി വീരമൃത്യുവരിച്ചുവന്ന ധീരജവാനെ



Pictures from the Banquet held on May 22, 2011 honoring Mathews Mar Barnabas, just before his return to Kerala. The chief guest was our Catholicose His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II



H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos before a blown out Poster of Mar Barnabas during his Parish Visit in 2018



Mar Barnabas with his Assistant H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos during a Church event in 2001 at the Old Aramana.

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

**Blessed are those who bring up children in the proper way; for they can lay a firm foundation for their future and the future of the world.**



Solomon the wise, says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6) Supreme importance is to be given to the training of the children, as their future depends on how they are brought up. The resurrected Lord asked St. Peter (as the representative of the apostolic band), "Tend my lambs" (St. John 21 :15). Hence it is the duty of the entire church to bring up children in the best way possible.

Great men, who contributed to the progress of mankind, were the products of excellent training that was provided to them during childhood years. At the same time people who caused so much harm to the society were the products of lack of proper training in their childhood years. If proper training is not provided in the young years of their lives, it may become almost impossible to change them in the adult years. Left to themselves, there is always the likelihood that children may spoil themselves and eventually become a headache to the society as a whole.

Prayer: O Lord help us to bring up children, to follow Your example, out of our love for You.

**Blessed are those who train people; for they can make their work continue without break.**

It is necessary to train people to continue the good works in every field. St. Paul gave Timothy, his disciple, the following instruction: "What you have heard from me before many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). For all-round and continued progress of mankind, there should be worthy successors. Our Lord trained twelve disciples to continue His work and they trained others in turn. This continuity of training is a must in all aspects of the society.

Prayer: O' Lord, help us to train able people to continue the good work everywhere along with our earnestness in fulfilling our duty.

## My Experience with COVID-19 as a Frontline Physician

There was so much to look forward to! Amy and I were expecting a baby boy in May. We were in the process of shopping for a home to start our family. We were both blessed with great jobs that we loved. The year 2020 was shaping up to be an amazing one for us. Then in an instant, everything changed and life as we knew it was never the same. Not just for us, but the entire world.

After news about COVID-19 broke, I went into work and came across an eerily quiet place. The once hectic environment of patients, families, doctors, and nurses turned into a ghost town. I did not realize that this was the calm before the storm. Everyone was covered from head to toe in personal protective equipment. It felt like I was walking into a scene from a bad horror movie. The only difference was that this was real life. Upon arriving at my first patient's room, a variety of emotions overcame me. I was fearful, anxious, and excited. I thought to myself "Could I die from this? Will I pass it to Amy? Will the baby be affected?" It was getting difficult to breathe in my N95 mask and full body gear. I looked through the window and saw a young woman, clearly distraught and isolated. I thought to myself, "What would Christ have done in this situation?" The answer was obvious. I realized that it was my duty, not only as a physician, but as a Christian to help my fellow man, even at the potential expense of my health. I walked in and supported the patient



**Dr. Jiju Mathew, MD**  
(Hospitalist)

as best as I could. I treated her to the best of my ability and she fortunately was able to go home in a few days. It was a truly rewarding experience and I had rediscovered my passion for medicine. As the days went on, more COVID-19 patients came in to the point that every patient in the hospital had COVID-19. Every single unit in this hospital was transitioned to a COVID-19 unit. The hospital had now transitioned into a war zone.

Not all the cases went as smoothly as my first patient. Another patient I encountered was severely ill upon arrival. She was immediately isolated and unfortunately our attempts to save her were futile. The family was not allowed to visit and it was heart wrenching to watch the patient pass without family support. I felt completely powerless in that situation and realized only God would be able to get us through this pandemic. After a long, physically and emotionally draining day, coming home was a welcome respite. However, coming home presented its own challenges as I had to develop a new routine. Upon entering our home, I would separate my clothes and immediately shower. I would spend the rest of the day quarantining in a separate room for fear of unknowingly passing on the infection to Amy and the baby. What was supposed to be

a joyous time celebrating our pregnancy became an isolating and depressing one. We also quarantined from all family and friends, primarily due to my constant exposure to the virus. The storms were raging around us and it was a time that we heavily relied on God to provide us strength. Going back to the hospital was nerve wracking. Patients were deteriorating without warning and it was difficult to treat a disease we have never seen. It became even more disheartening when multiple patients, both young and old, died daily. It was inspiring to see my colleagues band together and do our best to save our patients, while keeping worried families in the loop as they could not visit. As time went on, we became better at treating COVID-19 and were able to bring patients in seemingly hopeless situations back to their families. I finally started to feel more hopeful that we would be able to make it to the other side of this pandemic.

During this time, I became ill with COVID-19 and unfortunately passed it along to Amy. We were scared for our health, but most importantly, the baby's health. We prayed to God to heal us of our illness and protect the baby. Fortunately, our symptoms were mild and baby Jeremiah was born happy and healthy on May 22, 2020. Praise to God for showing us favor during this incredibly dark time in the world. We pray that He will continue to protect us as the pandemic is not over and we hope that this will provide humanity with an understanding of the glory of God's goodness.

## COVID 19 PANDEMIC

**"I keep the LORD always before me because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"**

Psalm 16:8



**Dr. Sibi Pappachan Mathew, DO**  
(Physician, Anesthesiologist)

September 6, 2020

I am writing this article to share my experience as a physician on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York. I am a Board-Certified Anesthesiologist with an additional Board Certification in the subspecialty of Pediatric Anesthesia. Anesthesiologists are physicians who play a vital role in a patient's perioperative medical care. We make decisions to protect and regulate critical life functions throughout the entire surgical experience. Anesthesiologists are also equipped with extensive education and training to evaluate, diagnose, treat and manage the entire spectrum of the patients' medical conditions, while treating potentially life-threatening complications that can happen suddenly during surgery. Since we are more experienced in airway management, we became the main physicians called to intubate during this COVID-19 pandemic.

When the pandemic first started early in March of this year, the process of handling and treating patients was still evolving. I vividly remember when my medical pager went off and I was called to quickly intubate a COVID patient in the Emergency Department. At that time, a small isolation room was set up where the

patient was being observed. No one wanted to enter the room during the intubation process. Being so close to the airway exposes us to a high degree of the viral load of COVID 19. In our profession, we strive to place the patient as first in priority as to their care and place ourselves as second in priority as to our own safety and care. But when this novel virus started and the cases started coming in, we had to remember to protect ourselves first before we ran in to treat the patients. This is because if we ended up being carriers of the COVID virus then there would be a shortage of medical professionals in place to help treat these patients during this pandemic. This new manner of thinking forced me to quickly assess situations and formulate plans to allow for patients to be intubated quickly with the least amount of exposure to the staff. Formulating a plan so quickly involved having a team approach, which included the respiratory therapist and a nurse in the room with me and another physician waiting outside if we needed help. Our medical staff were constantly running from room to room for COVID intubations, with the same procedure in place.

As the days went on, we treated quite a number of COVID patients throughout our hospital. At some points, we were the last people that these patients would see because their family members were not allowed to come into the hospital. During surgical procedures, we had

## Navigating our way through the Pandemic

In January 2020, as we entered the new year, little did we know that our lives and the world as we knew it, were about to change drastically. COVID-19 which started in a small city in China, was making its way around the globe and about to come and knock on our doorstep. Even by February, as we received news of the rising number of Covid-19 cases in China and parts of the world including the West Coast of America, I did not think that we as a parish would also soon be affected by this pandemic. Soon, New Yorkers started to feel the impact of this virus; and by Sunday, March 29th, our parish cancelled our church service and all activities of the spiritual organizations. One week later, with the permission of the Diocesan Metropolitan, our Achen and a handful of acolytes conducted the Holy Qurbana, and it was live-streamed to all our members.



**Kenz Paulose Adai**  
Secretary

The height of the pandemic in New York City coincided with the Great Lent and Holy Week. Despite the great risk, our Achen together with several acolytes conducted Holy Week services. Our parish shifted from conducting services with a fully packed church to just Achen and a few acolytes. During this transition, Mr. Jose Thomas, Mr. Mathew Mathen, Mr. Hanly Joseph, and Mr. Fenu Mohan were instrumental in setting up live-streaming; and worked hard behind the scenes to make sure that the services were broadcasted live without any interruption with good video

and audio quality. As a group of us became more knowledgeable with the details of live-streaming, many of our senior members became more adept at navigating YouTube, finding our church YouTube channel, and tuning into services.

Soon, our spiritual organizations started conducting their fellowship online. Sunday School started hosting general sessions on Sundays after service, and individual class teachers taught their class using various virtual platforms. By May, our church purchased a Zoom license, and MGOCSM, FOCUS, and the Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam started conducting regular meetings through Zoom under the leadership of our Achen.

In the summer as the city entered the different phases of re-opening, more members started coming to church. De-

spite the fact that we needed to keep our distance, it was great for us to start filling the church again. Seeing others in the church gave people the hope and memories of the pre-quarantine life that we all longed for. Gregory Achen also expressed his joy in celebrating Holy Qurbana with a congregation greater in attendance.

Like many Christians around the world, although the way we participate in services changed, our zeal for our faith did not diminish. Through technology, God allowed us to keep connected with each other and worship together. I think that in some ways the conveniences of attending service and spiritual organization meetings remotely, gave people more incentive to join and connect with their church family. Although our gatherings were marked by physical distance,

real connectivity among the members did not suffer. Gregory Achen was willing to accommodate all the spiritual organizations into his busy schedule and provide leadership during these difficult and uncertain times.

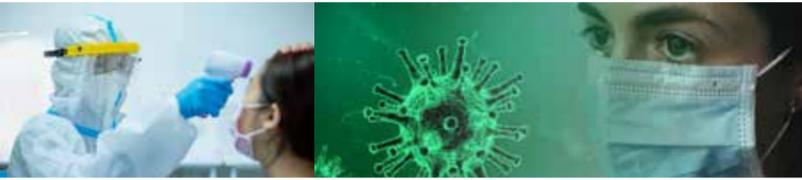
Unfortunately, during this period, we lost two dear and loving uncles of this parish. Our parish family was devastated not only by the loss, but also due to the situation not allowing us to physically join together to support the family members during the farewell services.

In conclusion, 2020 has clearly shown us that we do not know what lies ahead; but if we keep Christ in our hearts, He will guide us and will never leave us.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you." Isaiah 43:2



**2020 has clearly shown us that we do not know what lies ahead; but if we keep Christ in our hearts, He will guide us and will never leave us.**



**Manu Thomas**  
Nurse Manager

## THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE COVID CRISIS

**Like all new years** this, new year seemed pretty normal to me. Watching the ball drop, having fun with family and wishing everyone new year's wishes. 2019 was a little harsh for me personally because of my mother's health issues. So this new year brought a ray of relief. At least for some time. As days passed, the news media started to mention things about some sort of virus infection spreading in China. Really speaking I didn't think too much about it at that point because it was in China and it didn't seem too serious. But I was very mistaken. A lot of news channels were now talking about how the virus was spreading and how it got to Europe now. Fear slowly started to build inside of me but I was trying to shake it off believing it would never come to America.

By mid February everyone including myself was seriously worried about the virus. And around that time I got a message to my phone from one of my colleagues saying that the first case of Covid-19 in this area was admitted to Winthrop, my hospital. Reading that message I was in shock. My kids also started to show me news messages about this. Slowly friends from the ER started to tell me about the sickness, how people were suffering with it and how fast some people were deteriorating. The Medical ICU also slowly started getting filled

with Covid 19 patients. As the number of patients were increasing, everyone was getting panicked too. During the initial days everyone was confused about how to handle this problem. There were strange rules popping up at work almost daily such as if the patients aren't Covid positive, the health care workers weren't allowed to use a N95 mask or, in some cases, a regular surgical mask. Then, slowly everyone was allowed to use N95 masks, but they were forced to reuse it for 2 weeks. This added extra frustration and stress to everyone's mind. As a manager I didn't feel it was right, but I had to enforce the rules as a part of my job. Everyone was worried for their loved ones. The stress was easily visible on everybody's face. I felt all of the worries, but I was helpless which cast an extra burden on me. Covid 19 became a common topic of discussion in my home. My kids and my husband started to get instructions about proper hand washing and using hand sanitizer. Slowly they started to look at me as if I had four heads. I could even see the stress on their faces.

Initially Covid-19 patients were admitted to MICU and SICU. So I was in a fake comfort zone because the patients weren't in my unit yet. But that feeling didn't last long. The number of Covid 19 patients were increasing so fast that we opened our unit to take Covid 19 patients. The day we opened the unit we were getting patients one after another

from the Emergency Room, and their conditions were deteriorating so fast that we intubated almost 10 patients in a span of 5 hours. The ER was still calling us to give us admissions. Our unit is an open unit meaning that we have to wear all PPE including N95 mask at all times. That day we really realized how hard the fight was against Covid 19. I am extremely grateful to work with a group of people that were so dedicated even through all the hardships. They worked to their level best without much complaints.

Most of the patients that came to my unit were very emotional and very afraid. They held our hands and started to say they didn't want to die. We provided emotional support even when we knew the outcome. Many of those unfortunate individuals are not here with us today. But I am grateful to God that I was with them and made them feel like they weren't alone during their last moments of life. Even during the chaos I was able to hold hands and pray for some of them. The death rates were increasing very fast. There were days we had 10 deaths in a shift. The morgue wasn't able to hold the bodies anymore. The refrigerated trucks behind my hospital were packed with bodies. The day we first knew about it was one of the most emotional days for all of us. Rapid response and codes were very common. Hospitals

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to keep our personal protective equipment (PPE) on in the room, for hours, because no one could leave the room, once the patient entered. We felt extremely hot and uncomfortable, but we kept on going and diligently provided care for these patients. My colleagues and I were constantly exhausted after shifts at the hospital, but we kept coming back into the hospital to fulfill our duties to take care of these patients. I know that without the strength given to me by my Lord Jesus Christ I could not have endured the physical and mental rigors that came with what we had to do.

We are living in a time that we have never experienced before. In our field of Anesthesiology, we are used to dealing with a lot of trauma and are dealt with situations that most are not usually faced with, but we felt confident that we could help control these scenarios. Dealing with COVID-19 was vastly different in that there was nothing we could do to control the outcome. In addition, there seemed to be no end in sight as to when the COVID related cases would subside, because we were seeing more and more people dying from this virus. There are so many unknowns of this virus, including how it was spreading and to what extent it may affect each individual patient.

One of my major personal stressors that I had to face with was how do I come home and keep my family safe from contracting this virus. Many of my colleagues lived separately from their families so that if they were infected, they did not pass it on to those they loved. Not only am I a physician, I am a wife and mother to three young children. Our family made the decision to get through this whole situation together. I made sure, I took all the necessary precautions going into work and then coming home. There

was a whole decontamination routine that I took on to protect my family from possible exposure.

Throughout this whole process, my trust has always been in our Lord to guard us and protect us. At our Sunday School the children are taught a new Bible verse each week. The first Bible verse that my children learned at the St. Gregorios Church was "I keep the LORD always before me because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" Psalm 16:8. This was one of the many verses that has kept me going every day. The Holy Bible and prayer have given me that courage and strength to be able to provide care to the patients and to handle this COVID crisis. The strength God has given me has also helped me to be a positive source of encouragement to my colleagues around me. As of the date of this writing, there has not been a treatment found to protect people from the virus. We, as medical professionals, continue to be on guard for a 2nd wave that may occur.

Despite the lack of answers and solutions at this time, my faith continues to grow, and I know God will provide a solution. We are faced with so much uncertainty in this world but what is certain is the never-ending love that our Lord has for us. True fulfillment in our lives is only through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is our guiding light.

"Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness but will have the Light of life." (John 8:12)

## FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 This battle called life

**The first time** I heard about the Corona Virus was in Mid-February of this year. All I heard was that there was some deadly virus killing lots of people in Wuhan, China. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would personally have to fight against it or that New York would become an epicenter of this pandemic.

My name is Sherly Thomas and I am a Respiratory Therapist working at North Shore University Hospital for the past 29 years. It was both challenging and honorable to be working in the frontlines during these hard and difficult times. All around me I was witnessing horrifying deaths or miraculous healings, sometimes at the same moment. As all the ICU beds were filled, we had to open floors for COVID patients and constantly had to find more beds and ventilators to meet the demands of the time. There were same unforgettable incidents. An ICU nurse that I had worked with the week before



**Sherly Thomas**  
Respiratory Therapist

ended up coming in as one of my sickest patients. The very same night my own church member and best friend's husband had to get intubated and ended up passing away 50 days later. Every time I was assigned to that specific ICU, I would feel anxious and distraught but had the privilege of taking care of him. I would facetime his wife so they could spend the last days of his life connected to each other in some sort of way. It's really hard to see an individual struggle just to take a breath and maintain his oxygenation.

I remember the day that we intubated the greatest number of

patients' when not only did I see fear in the patients eyes but also uncertainty and distress in the healthcare workers as well. I also recollect the day we were about to intubate a patient and he asked to speak to his family. As we put his family on speaker so he can talk to them, they started crying uncontrollably and told him how much they missed him, loved him and wished to be with him during this most different time. He promised them that he was going to see them soon and he would be with them again. All of us around him couldn't help but feel our hearts go out to him as tears swelled in our eyes as we listened. Unfortunately, he never got to fulfill his promise and passed away due to complications related to COVID.

Going through this entire experience I wonder how I am still alive while thousands around me have passed away. It wasn't just because I washed my hands

till they were raw or because I wore PPEs. It was purely due to God's mercy and grace that I still stand to write my experience. The COVID experience reaffirmed that money, beauty and power are worthless if we cannot breathe to sustain our own life. Trying to save as many lives as possible I realized that humans have limitations. I have seen so many people die alone as their families could not be with them. Each and every morning as I stepped into work I would continuously recite Psalm 91 and remind myself that God will take

care of us and protect us as a mother bird cares for her young under her wings. The promise is that no evil will befall your tent because He keeps His angels charge over you in all your ways. As a health care provider not only was there a lot of mental and physical stress but there was always an uncertainty of not knowing if we were going to come out of this alive. But each and every day I remind myself that God is our Savior, healer, provider and protector and I am wearing the armor of God as I go through this battle called life. ■





# COVID 19 PANDEMIC

## THE PANDEMIC OF COVID-19 AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Pandemic of COVID-19 that is still spreading all over the world has brought about a new and strange normal with a new world order. Adequate social distancing and wearing facial coverings when in public places including worship centers and funeral events have become part of the new normal. This situation is likely to continue until an effective vaccine becomes widely available and even beyond, since an appreciable percentage of people are not willing to be vaccinated.

COVID-19 stands for Corona Virus Disease 2019 and it is caused by the strain of coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus-2). 'Corona' means 'crown' in Spanish and Corona viruses form a category of viruses that are so called because of their appearance – they are covered with crown-like spikes. Both humans and animals can be sickened by coronaviruses. It is believed that the current new strain of coronavirus likely originated in bats or pangolins and the disease spread to humans in Wuhan, a city in the province of Hubei in China towards the end of 2019. Soon it spread to different parts of the world including Europe and the USA. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. When a disease that people are not immune to, spreads across large regions, it is called a Pandemic.

Are pandemics rare? Not really! SARS of 2002-'03, Swine Flu, Ebola and Zika, all these happened in the 21st Century. The most devastating of all pandemics that we know of was the Flu Pandemic of 1918 which affected over 500 million people and killed over 50 million. The current one (COVID-19) is considered the second most devastating in that, it has as of now (October 8, 2020) affected more than 35 million people with the death toll over one million globally. USA has been affected the most, with 7.5 million cases and the number of deaths over 212,000. It is perplexing to note that with only a little over 4% of the world's population, USA has had more than 20% of the cases and more than 20% of the deaths in the world, in spite of the USA being the most advanced in terms of scientific, medical and economic development. Most experts attribute this anomaly to the utter failure of the political leadership. Just imagine the White House itself becoming a hot zone for COVID-19 after preaching and practicing disdain for mask-wearing and social distancing.

What makes COVID-19 unique, considering the other pandemics of recent memory, is that it is happening in the present time and we are living through it and it is showing no signs of abatement. USA, like many other nations, was totally unprepared. We have seen and are still seeing first-hand the tragedy playing out all over the world and in our own communities. We are



George M. Geevarghese

forced into self-isolations and mandatory quarantines and our life-styles in all walks of life, have been changed, for the foreseeable future. Also, it is expected that pandemics like COVID-19 are likely to become more frequent and devastating with growing population, urbanization and global travel.

### Effect of COVID-19 on Worship and Prayer Life

With COVID-19, along with other life-style changes, we have seen sea-changes in the way we worship. Christian Churches and other places of worship were closed for weeks and months. Even after they started opening, we are seeing limitations in terms of the number of people allowed and how we worship – with having to keep social distancing and having to wear face coverings! This has been an experience of a lifetime for all of us! After weeks of total closure, thanks to technology, God allowed us to have virtual participation in Church services and other Church ministries such as Sunday School, MGOCSM, Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam and the like. Many houses became little places of worship for household members only. But even that was impossible for some as one or more members of the household were infected with the Corona virus causing social distancing

and mask-wearing even within the household. Some had to worship and pray to God in total isolation.

### How Did Jesus Pray?

When we think about it, is our prayer in isolation any different from how Jesus Himself prayed during His earthly ministry? Jesus often prayed alone, leaving the commotion of the world to find a quiet place and pray to His Father in heaven. In fact, most of His prayers were in solitude. We know that in the Garden of Gethsemane, before His crucifixion, when He was in total agony, He left His disciples and went further away, fell on His face and prayed to His Father. (Matthew 26:36-44).

### How Shall We Worship and Pray?

During His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:6). Thus Jesus encouraged us to pray in secret in the silence of the inner chamber. At the same time, He also taught us to pray together as we see in St. Matthew 18:20 where He says, "For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Also, the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples, the prayer that is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer, the prayer that we recite so often, the prayer that starts with "Our Father Who art in Heaven" is framed as a prayer said by a gathering of individuals, although it can be prayed by an individual by himself/herself as well.

What do we learn from the early Church regarding Prayer and Worship? Acts 2:42 says, "And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." In other words, the faithful of the early Church paid attention to the following:

1. Following the Apostle's teaching
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread (Holy Qurbana) and
4. Prayers

So, in a situation where we cannot attend Church service in person as in the pandemics, which one(s) of the above four components of true discipleship do we miss? It is clear that the most glaring one is our inability to participate in the Holy Qurbana or partaking of the holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We may have to content ourselves with virtual participation only. Although one may think that we would miss Fellowship also, in fact, we do not because there is more to it than the social aspect. Fellowship also includes service activities which still can be involved in through creative ways, paying attention to social distancing and wearing face coverings and through virtual means. The best thing is that we can say our prayers anytime, anywhere; and God will listen. St. Paul exhorts us to pray constantly (1Thess 5:17). In fact, the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" is one that can be on our lips always as the ascetic fathers did. Or, what about at least a simple "Kurielaison"

which means "Lord, have mercy on me/us"?

During the persecution of Christians when they had to flee from one place to another at various points in history, particularly in the early Church and most recently in Syria, how do you think they kept up their faith and worshipped God? They must have prayed alone or in the company of one or two others without the corporate aspect that we have been used to. The point is that prayer of any type, as the situation warrants, is okay, as long as it draws us closer to God.

### Spirituality of Mask-Wearing

There have been attempts in some quarters of demeaning and mocking at the practice of mask-wearing and social distancing in public places during the pandemic. The consequences of such an attitude have been felt in the highest levels of the US government as well as all over the nation including some places of worship (Not Orthodox Churches!). Science, a result of the natural law of God, dictates that we practice precautionary and safety measures such as wearing masks and doing social distancing in public places. Doing so would not only protect ourselves but also others from possible transmission of virus particles. Studies have shown that virus particles can remain in the air for hours after an infected person without mask leaves an indoor area without adequate air ventilation.

An argument may be made that mask-wearing is an affront to God in that God created us in His own image and we should not be masking that image. However, most faith leaders would agree that such an argument is silly in that the image of God refers not to any physical characteristics but rather to the quality of God which is love and holiness. If anything, mask-wearing is spiritual in that we are masking our physicality, enabling us to focus more on our relationship with God. Sometimes, we are too concerned about the optics of looking unnatural in our masks, and also, there is the aspect of inconvenience. Our concern with optics is sometimes related to looking manly and strong and therefore runs counter to spirituality. But if the situation of mask-wearing and social distancing is what God has brought us to apparently because of our own failings, let God's will be done! Succumbing to the will of God is showing humility. Mask-wearing shows our love and respect for others as we are trying to protect them. Experts agree that if mask-wearing had been mandated early on, thousands of lives could have been saved and sufferings of thousands of families could have been averted. We are now at the crux of a new wave of infections. Let the warnings regarding mask-wearing, social distancing, washing our hands and the like be heeded to and our duties as good citizens of this world and the world to come be fulfilled, never forgetting to pray and to ask for God's mercy and grace at all times!



Thomas K. Abraham

Most of us experienced some kind of unexpected turbulence while traveling in an airplane, which caused panic and frustration. Even a smart pilot can't always avoid the turbulence and as passengers the only thing we can do is to fasten our seatbelts and hope for the best. The world is going through the same kind of turbulence because of this pandemic whereby many people have gotten sick or passed away, businesses shut down, jobs lost, families financially ruined and people isolated due to travel restrictions.

As in an airplane we worry about the outcome of this and often feel helpless. Disciples of Jesus were in a similar situation while traveling in a boat to the other side of the sea and got caught up in a storm, feared for their lives and sought help from Jesus. Since most of us are somehow affected by this

pandemic, let's think about how we can face this crisis with a Christian perspective.

First and foremost, we should trust in God who is our creator and who sustains us in this world. We should believe that nothing will happen to us without His knowledge. Science and other human achievements have limitations, while God is powerful and mighty and knows even the most minute things in our life. This is a time to turn to our loving God and ask for forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings as Prophet Jonah did when he was in the belly of the fish because of his disobedience to God's commandments. There is not a better time to thank our God as we go through this tough time, like Paul and Silas were praising and praying to God while in prison with an uncertain future.

As we transform our physical life for better health, we should do the same for our spiritual life.

As the prodigal son went back to his loving father, we should come out from the bondage of sin and transform ourselves to be better people spiritually. We should keep up our tradition and always remember how our forefathers survived similar situations. Our treasure is in heaven and when we focus on the kingdom of God we can thrive in any situation.

In this turbulent time we should show tolerance and compassion to others. This is not a time to blame someone or treat someone poorly for any reason. The life of Joseph in the Old Testament should be an example for us. When he went through tough situations he didn't blame God or others, but submitted everything to the will of God. Like Joseph, we should believe God has a plan for everything and submit ourselves to the will of Almighty God.

# Do Not Fear!

At the start of COVID-19, I became very anxious and started calling or texting everyone I knew. I was worried that people were not taking this matter seriously and was afraid of the outcome. To make matters worse, a young man in one of our churches passed away and this was followed by a few others. I too became ill even though initially I did not realize that it was COVID. Only when my sense of smell and taste disappeared did it dawn on me that I had COVID. Well, getting sick should not have been a big surprise as I was constantly in congregate settings whether at school, church or in the hospital. At home we started following all the guidelines and we quarantined for a very long time. I would urge my family members in India to be cautious and they were very skeptical in the beginning. Like many, they too felt that the virus would not wreak much havoc in warmer climates. That changed soon and my plans to go to India were squashed along with it. All was not doom and gloom. I was able to send gifts and

cake to my brother in Mumbai for his 50th Birthday and we had a surprise celebration for him via zoom. It was indeed a great pleasure to see the child-like happiness of my parents who had been practicing zoom meetings with the help of my sister in Dubai. We were all so proud of their ability to pray and participate in the online games. My brother was touched by the video we had put together so lovingly. All in all, it was a sweet family gathering. I had some pleasant surprises over the course of this time. Some of the aunties and a few friends in our church called to check on me and their act of kindness and thoughtfulness strengthened the bonds we had developed over the years. One of our church members to whom I have not spoken more than a few sentences in all these years brought medicine to my door and encouraged me to follow some home remedies that worked. Or was it her prayers for me that did the trick. At home our prayer routine improved and children learned to cook beyond the basics.



**Anney Johnson**

Now as we move along with this pandemic, it is reassuring to have some normalcy back in our lives. Though I miss going to church, it is at least open for us to take turns and worship together. I love being back in school as the School Nurse with most of the children attending in person. It is such unexplainable joy to see the twinkle in their eyes and their brave effort to keep the masks on their little faces. As we journey through this fall and winter, there is hope that spring will follow soon. Jesus the true light will guide us into a glorious future. Our hope is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. It is in the promise He has given us in Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will hold you up with my righteous right hand."

## THE PANDEMIC FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS

We are all a part of the current history - making Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Quarantine started on March 17th for me. It was a normal school day. I did my work and everyone was talking about just one thing in school, "When is the school going to close because of COVID -19?" And when I came home I got a call from school saying that school was closing because of Covid. The fear of the unknown was what all of us were faced with at that time. I started feeling a little anxious, and I decided to focus my anxiety on Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble". After that we started doing online classes. It was an experience! My entire family had to stay home because of this pandemic. My mom closed her

physical therapy office for a few weeks. And my dad had to work from home. We could not go to church, the store, or school. I could not go outside. So I was cooped up in the house with my family. It was a good experience because I bonded with my family more than ever. I found other ways to talk to friends. I did not like the fact that I could not serve at the altar in church. No, I hated that. I wanted to go to church so I could serve at the altar and see my friends and all the uncles and aunties. As the days went on, life and health took a whole new meaning. I kept hearing news about all the illness and death happening around me. It was heart wrenching to hear about all the people I knew who were either very sick or had already succumbed to the virus. Some days it was only



**Ashwin Joseph**

God's word that kept me going. "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." - Psalm 29:11  
Life seems to continue amidst this Pandemic. Thankfully, looking forward has been the way for a Christian. Faith will lead us all as a family, a community.  
Remember what St. Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

## Pandemic of the Century

2020, what an interesting year! This year had many health, economic, and social issues. In this article I am going to be telling you my experience during this year. Covid-19 more often known as the CoronaVirus has been the most important issue this year and is going to be my focal point. The main reason why this virus is so much different and more dangerous than other viruses is that there is no vaccine. We can wash our hands and that can kill it but once it gets in the body there is no actual treatment. At the very beginning of the year I heard of the CoronaVirus on the news for the first time. At school everyone was making fun

of it because they did not know the effect of it and they never thought it was going to hit the U.S. as hard as it did and it still is very dangerous. In the month of March we heard that school was closing for two weeks. All my fellow students were very excited because this was basically a break. We also had started to stay home on Sundays instead of going to church and attending Sunday School because of the Virus hitting New York the hardest out of all the states. New York was known as the epicenter of the Virus. I was upset that I couldn't attend Holy Qurbana and see my Cherry Lane family. It was very different watching the Holy



**Ethan Mathai**

Qurbana on TV and virtually attending Sunday School. Along with virtually attending Sunday School we had to virtually attend Secular School. Both of these were very different. It was going to take some time getting used to it. After those two weeks of break from school, we heard that we were not going back to school for good and instead we were to stay at home and do remote learning for the rest of the year.

# 'Jesus Wept'



**Jessin Thomaskutty**

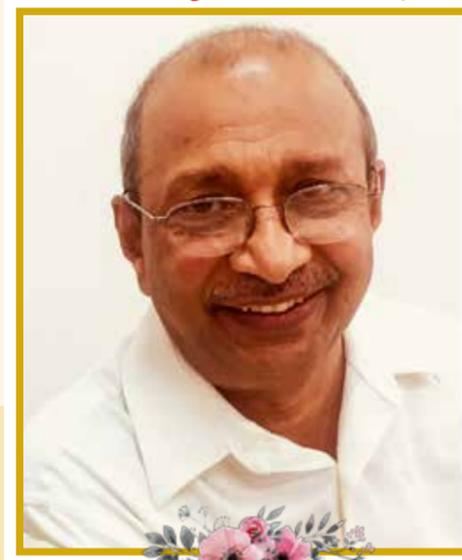
At morning, noon, evening, and night I too have felt those Feelings of sadness, loss, hope, worry, anxiety, surprise, fear, anger, jealousy, and anticipation.

There would be days, weeks, months, years, and seasons. What would you have done, by your name you say, and yet you do not believe. I am in such a loss to have known you, since I have seen you and yet you do not believe. If and when you call, I was, I will be, and have been there yet you do not believe. As I wait upon you to call, I was there, am here, waiting for you to call yet you do not believe. SO, along with you I weep.

### Reflection/Commentary:

The poem is God's expression of how He has always been there for us even though we might not realize how much He has already done things we might doubt but He in His human nature understands and has proven that we can face all these negative feelings and be victorious, just like how He has shown us through His sacrifice on the cross, He's got you.

## In loving memory of



### George Paulose Muthalathu

(Departed from us on May 05, 2020)

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Inserted by: *Sorrowing Family and Friends*

This made all my schoolmates very annoyed because we were not going to see each other and have fun with each other. In virtual school the teachers started to give us a lot of assignments at the beginning of the week and we had to finish them and turn them in by the end of the week. We mostly used Google Classroom for these assignments. Then my teachers would grade everything and send the assignments back to us with the grades. In the beginning I used to save all my work for the last day which I soon realized was really difficult. Then I started to divide the assignments and made a schedule which was easier. I would say it was easier than actually being at school but was not as useful, it was less fun. With being at home doing remote learning and my new routine, I started to forget what it was like before the pandemic. Then on Sundays we had to watch Holy Qurbana online instead of actually being physically present which was not the same. After that we had to go to

the Sunday School General Session via Zoom. This was not the same because if we were singing together, there was no synchronization. After that we had to go to our classes. My class was through Google Hangouts. But it was annoying that we could not see each other. Some of my relatives and family friends were infected with the CoronaVirus. I knew the very high risk with this Virus. I heard about their condition and that it was not a pleasant experience. With this Virus New York had to open many new temporary hospitals. Everyone helped each other out. Also throughout this time I had started to watch the news more because I wanted to see what was happening to the world. The Virus at the point of my writing had killed more than 150,000 people. One scary thing was that my mom was a front line worker and we were all worried that she was going to get the virus and that she could spread the virus so we had to be very careful when she came back

# Obedience is key to unlock the Gates of Heaven and the Kingdom of God



Kevin Kurian

We are all aware of the Covid-19 Pandemic. In one way or another, we were all affected by this virus. For some, they were infected and hospitalized. For some, the virus entered their body and put them in a feverish state, before releasing the body of its harmful leash. And then came those whose immune systems did not allow any symptoms to be manifested. When I was asked to write about this topic, I was at first saddened due to the fact that this topic brings despair to the hearts of many members within our parish alone. But, after some thought I came to the realization that if we don't reflect upon our past and dwell upon it then we will never learn to handle tough situations such as this. So, with a lot of courage I decided to bring my views and opinions to our annual newsletter.

Let's start with some of the changes that occurred within our pretty systematic lives. When it came to our homes, some of us,

especially our much respected and honored healthcare workers, had to leave their children to do a lot of their daily tasks alone, because they so deeply cared for their health and welfare. My parents personally were quarantining considering that they were both frontline essential healthcare workers. Outside of our home is something I briefly touched upon a few moments ago. Our jobs and educational institutions are huge sources of spread of this disease, and so to avoid infection by contact in these places, the enforcement of masks, and other safety measures are used. Next, is a very important one, our churches. For a span which lasted for a few months, our spiritual life may have lacked the fuel it usually received. This was due to the pandemic as well. But luckily the span of waiting came to an end with Holy Week which we celebrated according to the traditions and beliefs of our church.

But, of course like everything else it had to be limited to being hosted and attended to virtually. When reflecting upon the peak time of the virus in New York, the first word that comes to mind is fear. It was our fear of the damage of this virus that caused us to obey all the precautions given by the government. At the same time, if it had not been as serious as it has been then we may have ignored the laws set forth by our local and state governments. We are currently amidst a reopening phase of all the businesses in our area. We are reengaging in importing and exporting as well as engaging in fun activities with our friends and families as well. Our God is a loving God. From my view, this was all a test and a punishment all in one. It is a punishment because of all the evil and hatred that existed within the world prior to the virus. It was a test to see if we would obey and become true believers as members

## Our Church Members at Family & Youth Conference 2019 @ Kalahari Convention Centre, PA



## സ്വജീവിതം സന്ദേശമാക്കിയ മുനിശ്രേഷ്ഠൻ

പേജ് 1 തുടർച്ച

വിടാൻ ആരംഭിച്ചപ്പോൾ ആ പത്രപ്രവർത്തകൻ പ്ലാറ്റ്ഫോമിൽ നിന്ന് ഉറക്കെ വിളിച്ചു ചോദിച്ചു. സാർ, ജനങ്ങൾക്കുള്ള നിങ്ങളുടെ സന്ദേശം എന്താണ്? അപ്പോൾ ഗാന്ധിജി ഉച്ചത്തിൽ തന്നെ തിരികെ വിളിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞു 'എന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ് എന്റെ സന്ദേശം' ഈ മഹാത്മാവിന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ് ഭാരതീയജനതയുടെ മനസ്സാക്ഷിയെ തൊട്ടുണർത്തി, ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് സാമ്രാജ്യത്വത്തിനെതിരെ അഹിംസാ മാർഗ്ഗ സമരം നടത്തി രാജ്യത്തെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിലേക്ക് നയിക്കാൻ കാരണമായത്.

തികച്ചും ഒരു ഗാന്ധിയനായിരുന്ന ബർനബാസ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ മാതൃകാപരമായ എളിയ ജീവിത ശൈലിയാണ് തന്റെ ജനത്തിന് പാഠമായത്. യേശുക്രിസ്തു തന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ് നമുക്കു മാതൃകയായി കാട്ടിത്തന്നത്, തന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ് നമുക്കു മറുവിലയായി നൽകിയത്. ഓരോ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനിയും ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ പ്രതിപുരുഷനായി, തന്നെത്തന്നെ ലോകത്തിനു കാട്ടിക്കൊടുക്കുക, ഇതായിരിക്കണം ക്രിസ്തീയ ജീവിത ദൗത്യം എന്ന് തിരുമേനി പ്രബോധിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നു.

ലളിതജീവിതത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു പറയുമ്പോൾ, അമേരിക്കയിൽ സമൃദ്ധമായ വിഭവങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ട് നിറയ്ക്കപ്പെട്ട തീൻമേശയിൽ ഇരുന്ന് നാടൻ കഞ്ഞി കുടിക്കുന്ന ഒരു മഹാപുരോഹിതനെയാണ് ഓർമ്മവരുന്നത്.

ഒരിക്കൽ നാട്ടിൽ നിന്നും വന്ന സഹോദരിസഭയിലെ ഒരു ബിഷപ്പിന് ന്യൂയോർക്കിലെ ഒരു അമേരിക്കൻ റെസ്റ്റോറന്റിൽ വിരുന്നു സൽക്കാരം നൽകി. അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനമാണ് ആതിഥേയത്വം വഹിച്ചത്. സാമാന്യം വിഭവസമൃദ്ധമായ ഒരു വിരുന്നായിരുന്നു അത്.

പരിപാടികൾ തുടങ്ങുന്നതിനു മുമ്പ് സംഘാടകരിൽ ചിലർ തിരുമേനിയോട് എന്താണ് കഴിക്കാൻ വേണ്ടത് എന്ന് ആരാഞ്ഞു. തനിക്കു തന്റെ പതിവു കഞ്ഞി മതി എന്ന് അറിയിച്ചു. സ്വാഭാവികമാ

യും സംഘാടകർ അങ്കലാപ്പിലായി. റെസ്റ്റോറന്റിൽ കഞ്ഞി കിട്ടില്ലല്ലോ. എന്തുചെയ്യണമെന്നറിയാതെ നിന്നപ്പോൾ ഒരാൾ അടുത്തുള്ള നമ്മുടെ ഒന്നു രണ്ടു വീടുകളിൽ വിളിച്ച് പെട്ടെന്നു കഞ്ഞി തയ്യാറാക്കാൻ ആകുമോ എന്ന് അന്വേഷിച്ചു. ഏതായാലും സമയത്തു കഞ്ഞി എത്തി. വെയിറ്റർ തന്നെ മറ്റാരും അറിയാതെ റൈസ് സൂപ്പ് എന്ന പോലെ തിരുമേനിക്ക് മേശയിൽ വിളമ്പി.

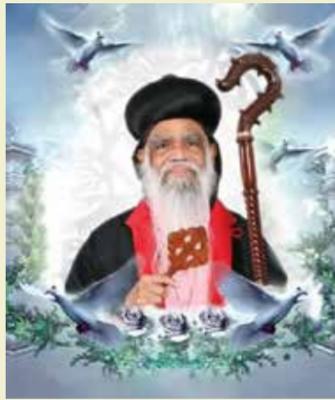
ഒരു പക്ഷേ ഇത്തരം കാര്യങ്ങൾ പിടിവാശിയായോ, ബാലിശമായോ ചിത്രീകരിക്കാം. എന്നാൽ നമുക്കറിയാം ഇതിലും ഒരു സന്ദേശമുണ്ട്. പ്രലോഭനങ്ങൾക്കും, സുഖലോലുപത്വത്തിനും വശംവദനാകാതെ സ്വയം നിയന്ത്രിക്കാൻ നമുക്കു കഴിയണം എന്നതാണ്. ഒഴുക്കിനെതിരെ നീന്തുന്നത് ശ്രമകരവും അശാന്തിതവുമാണ് എന്നാൽ ഉറച്ച ആത്മവിശ്വാസവും ലക്ഷ്യബോധവും മുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ പ്രതിബന്ധങ്ങളെല്ലാം തുണതുല്യമാക്കാമെന്ന് തിരുമേനി കണ്ടിരുന്നു.

“ഉന്നതന്മാരുമർച്ചക്കാത് അത്യന്തം താഴ്ന്നിടുന്നു ഹോ”

പദവികളും, അധികാരവും കൈവരിക്കുമ്പോൾ നാം കൂടുതൽ താഴ്മയുള്ളവരായി തീരണം. അത് സ്വന്ത ജീവിതം കൊണ്ട് തിരുമേനി സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തി. ചെറുതെങ്കിലും ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ രണ്ടുമൂന്നു കാര്യങ്ങൾ അദ്ദേഹം സ്വജീവിതത്തിലേക്കിലും പ്രായോഗികമാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചിരുന്നതായി ഓർക്കുന്നു.

സാധാരണ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തമാർ തങ്ങളുടെ പേര് എഴുതുമ്പോൾ, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് കല്പനകളിലും, എഴുത്തുകുത്തുകളിലും 'മാർ' എന്നു ചേർക്കാറുണ്ട് എന്നാൽ, ബർനബാസ് തിരുമേനി അതെഴുതാതെ 'മാത്യൂസ് ബർനബാസ്' എന്ന് മാത്രം എഴുതാൻ താല്പര്യപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നു.

മറ്റൊന്ന്, സ്വയം തിരുമേനിയെന്ന് പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തുകയും, വിളിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നത് ഉചിതമല്ല, അതുകൊണ്ട് തിരുമേനി സ്വയം പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തുമ്പോൾ പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് ഹോൺ വിളിക്കുന്ന അവസരത്തിൽ 'ഇതു ബർനബാസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താണ്' എന്നു മാത്രമാണ്



പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു.

ഇത്രയും എളിമ, പല സഹോദരങ്ങൾക്കും അത്ര രസിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല. പരോക്ഷമായി ചില വിമർശനങ്ങളൊക്കെ കേൾക്കാനിടയായിട്ടുണ്ട്. കേൾക്കുമ്പോൾ ലളിതമായി തോന്നുമെങ്കിലും ലളിത ജീവിതം നയിക്കുന്നത് അത്ര എളുപ്പമുള്ള കാര്യമല്ല. പലപ്പോഴും സാമ്രാജ്യത്വത്തിനും അനീതിക്കെതിരെയും ആയുധമില്ലാതെ പൊരുതുവാൻ ശക്തിയാർജ്ജിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള പല മഹാന്മാരും ലളിതജീവിതം നയിച്ചവരാണ്. കർത്താവിന്റെ മുന്നോട്ടുകൊണ്ടു ന്നാപകയോഹനാൻ അല്പവസ്ത്രധാരിയായി കാട്ടുതേനും വെട്ടുക്കിളിയും കഴിച്ച് ജീവിച്ചു ശക്തിയാർജ്ജിച്ച് ഹെരോദരാജാവിന്റെ അനീതിക്കെതിരെ ശബ്ദമുയർത്തിയവനാണ്.

മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധിയും മറ്റനേകരും ഈദ്യുജീവിതം ശക്തിമാർഗ്ഗമാക്കിയവരാണ്. മാർ ബർനബാസ് ലളിതമായ ഒരു ജീവിതരീതി പിൻപറ്റി കടന്നുപോയ ഒരു സന്യാസി മാത്രമായിരുന്നില്ല. തന്റെ നേതൃത്വപാടവവും ക്രാന്തദർശിത്വവും, സഹനശക്തിയുമെല്ലാം അദ്ദേഹത്തെ മികവുറ്റ ഒരു ഭരണാധികാരിയാക്കി. തന്റെ ചുമതലകൾ ഭംഗിയായി നിർവ്വഹിച്ച് അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനത്തിൽ സമാധാനം വീണ്ടെടുക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു എന്ന ചാരുതാർത്ഥ്യത്തോടെയാണ് അദ്ദേഹം കടന്നു പോയത്.

മാർ ബർനബാസ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ ഓർമ്മ നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ എന്നും ഉണർവുള്ള ദൈവീകസന്ദേശമായി പരിലസിക്കട്ടെ.

of the Body of Christ. I pray that this whole pandemic situation will end very soon in the future. I also pray that God hears our prayers and grants our wishes. I just would like to remind all of

you of a very important lesson I learned the hard way during this pandemic. Obedience is key to unlock the Gates of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. Thank You!

## THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE COVID CRISIS

From p. 9

opened new ICUs and each ICU was packed with lots of sick patients. There were teams to turn the patients as well as to take the dead bodies out of the unit. Slowly things started to shape up in an organized manner. Everybody had only one intention, and it was to save as many people as possible. All played their role to the best of their ability. They arranged supplies, kept the unit clean and provided emotional support to the lonely patients because none of the families were able to visit. When we are in an emotional crisis, God will arrange people to support us. That is what we saw during this crisis. People in the neighborhood showed up with thank you cards, food, etc, to boost our morale. Coworkers also started to cheer up each other.

During this pandemic I witnessed so many of God's miracles. A young man who was very badly affected by Covid 19 was in the SICU. People were sending me messages to pray for him. When I saw him the first time, I never thought he would survive. He was vented and on continuous hemodialysis, and there were machines to support his heart to pump. There were many medications infusing into him to keep his blood pressure and heart rate normal. But I still continued to pray for him along with other people hoping for a miracle. After spending almost 120 days, he got discharged, and now he is a fully functional individual as if nothing had happened to him. We saw so

many pass without anybody near, and some of them lost both their parents days apart. We had a husband and wife admitted to our unit with Covid. Before the husband passed, we made arrangements by placing their beds close to each other, so that they were able to hold hands and say their final goodbye. Their unlucky son stood near them with all of us, and we all prayed with them. That was one of the most emotional scenes which I will never forget in my life. We were able to learn a lot from this pandemic, and, at the same time, this gave us a lot of memories too. There are so many people still suffering with the complications of this virus. Many of them are still bed bound and need medical devices to keep them alive. When standing at their bedside with tearful eyes, I thank God that he is letting me see His miracles.

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4). In our lives, whenever we face a crisis, the invisible hand of God will lead us and comfort us. Through every struggle, prayer should be our weapon and our stronghold. Remember that through every obstacle in our life we are able to see God face to face. We don't see the wind, but we feel the wind; we hear the wind and we see the wind moving things only when it is blowing. In the same way, when there are ups and downs in our life, we are able to see, feel and hear God.

# FOCUS

Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in the United States



Rajini Thomas Mathai

discussion on Christianity in Kerala led by Gregory Achen.

In June, July, and August seminarian Roby Antony led Focus zoom discussions on the subjects of the Holy Spirit, Intercessory Prayers for the departed, and why Orthodox Christians face east during prayer. In October, Gregory Achen spoke about the church's view on abortion.

Even though we were unable to meet physically, God has shown us new ways to stay connected and pray together. These past few months have allowed us to reflect on our lives and how we can support those who are most vulnerable and impacted by this crisis. By continuing our FOCUS sessions via zoom we are able to reflect on God's presence and love. We learned that God shares in our sorrow and suffering and brings assurance of eternal life.

In the future when the COVID-19 pandemic is better controlled perhaps there will be an in person Focus meeting or church conference at the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center. Through God's grace we will overcome these challenging times.



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. 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 and fellowship.

FOCUS is led by Rev Fr Greg-

ory Varghese at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church (Cherry Lane).

The first FOCUS meeting /fellowship for this year was held at the parish on Feb. 16. Seminarian, Roby Antony spoke about the story of the Good Samaritan followed by a question/answer session. Little did we know that this would be the only in person event for 2020.

Due to Covid-19, FOCUS meetings/activities were canceled after March 2020.

In May we had one Focus zoom



## Pandemic of the Century

From p. 11

home. She was so afraid she did not even hug us.

When I first went back to church it was very pleasant because I was physically in the Holy Qurbana instead of being in front of the TV. The CoronaVirus is going to have many lasting effects. As school is transitioning

to a hybrid model in which we go to school half the days and stay home the other half and we start going back to church, we all know that we have to wear a mask, social distance by 6 feet, and wash our hands more frequently. Even though all of these tasks are annoying it is refreshing to know that they are

not only for our own good but for others as well.

During the summer my family and I usually go on vacations but with the virus here we could not go anywhere and had to stay home instead. Later on we started to go on road trips which were safer than traveling on a plane. We have canceled going to weddings and many other get-togethers. We also could not do many other tasks such as going out to eat because of the virus and its risks. One other let down was that my birthday was in the summer and I knew that we could not do anything for it but instead I had a virtual party which was more than enough. One of the biggest problems was that I could not see any of my friends or cousins so I had also started video calling them and talking and playing games online.

Throughout these months with all the issues in the world God was helping me get through it. He was helping me get used to everything, doing well in Secular and Sunday School, and helping everyone be safe from the virus. He helped us get through so far this year. One of the things I heard so far this year is that our main goal is to stay alive which means that we should do everything we can to keep ourselves safe from the virus and other threats. This also means that everything else revolves around that thought of being safe such as in school, church and other places and events.

## സെന്റ് പ്രിഗോറിയോസ് ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് ചർച്ച് ചെറിലെയിൻ മർത്ത മറിയം വനിതാസമാജം



ദൈവകൃപയാൽ ഈ ഇടവകയിൽ മർത്ത മറിയം വനിതാസമാജം എല്ലാ ഞായറാഴ്ചയും ഭംഗിയായി നടക്കുന്നതിൽ ദൈവത്തെ സ്തുതിക്കുന്നു. ഭദ്രാസന മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത അഭിവന്ദ്യ നികൊളാവോസ് തിരുമേനിയുടെ അനുഗ്രഹശംസകളോടെ ഇടവക വികാരി ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട ഗ്രിഗോറിയച്ചന്റെ മേൽനോട്ടത്തിൽ നടന്നുവരുന്നു.

വിശുദ്ധ കുർബാനാനന്തരം എല്ലാ സമാജാംഗങ്ങളും ഒന്നുചേർന്ന് ഗാനം ആലപിക്കുന്നു. പരിശുദ്ധ ദൈവമാതാവിനോടുള്ള പ്രാർത്ഥനയ്ക്കും പാട്ടിനുംശേഷം വിശുദ്ധ വേദവായനയും നടത്തുന്നു. പിന്നീട് ശ്രീമാൻമാരായ ചെറിയൻ വർഗീസ്, മാത്യു റ്റി. പാപ്പൻ എന്നിവർ വചനശുശ്രൂഷക്ക് നേതൃത്വം നൽകുന്നു. സമയാസമയങ്ങളിൽ ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട വികാരിയച്ചൻ ബൈബിൾ പഠനത്തിനുവേണ്ട മാർഗ്ഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ തന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. അതോടൊപ്പം തന്നെ രോഗികളും അവശത അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവരുമായ ആളുകളെ ഓർത്ത് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. ഇടവകയിലെ രോഗികളായവരുടെ ഭവനസന്ദർശനം നടത്തി അവിടെ യോഗം നടത്താറുണ്ട്. അതോടൊപ്പം തന്നെ സാമ്പത്തികമായി ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുന്നുവെക്കുന്നവർക്ക് വസ്ത്രങ്ങളും ധനസഹായവും നൽകാറുണ്ട്.

അഭിവന്ദ്യ ഇടവക മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുടെ കൽപനപ്രകാരം വിവിധ ദൈവാലയങ്ങളിൽ വച്ചു നടക്കുന്ന സെമിനാരിലും ധ്യാനങ്ങളിലും സെക്രട്ടറി ശ്രീമതി ശ്യാമള ഫിലിപ്പിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ സമാജാംഗങ്ങൾ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നു. 2019ൽ നടന്ന ഭദ്രാസന ബൈബിൾ കിസ് മത്സരത്തിൽ നമ്മുടെ സമാജം മൂന്നാം സ്ഥാനം കരസ്ഥമാക്കിയെന്നുള്ളത് വളരെ അഭിമാനപുരസ്കരം സ്മരിക്കുന്നു. മാക് ഡൊണാൾഡ് ഹൗസിലെ അന്തോവാസികൾക്ക് അവിടെച്ചെന്ന് ഭക്ഷണം പാകം ചെയ്തുകൊടുത്തു എന്നത് പ്രത്യേകം പ്രശംസനീയം തന്നെ. എട്ടു നോമ്പിലും മൂന്നുനോമ്പിലും പള്ളിയിൽ നടക്കുന്ന സന്ധ്യാപ്രാർത്ഥനയിലും കൺവൻഷനിലും സമാജാംഗങ്ങളുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ ഭക്ഷണം കൊടുത്തുവരുന്നു. 2020 ലെ ബൈബിൾ കിസ് മത്സരത്തിന് വേണ്ടിയുള്ള ക്ലാസുകൾക്ക് ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട സെമിനാരിയൻ ശ്രീമാൻ റോബി ആന്റണി നേതൃത്വം നൽകുകയുണ്ടായി.

ഈ ഇടവകയിലെ മർത്ത മറിയം വനിതാ സമാജത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കും ചുക്കാൻ പിടിക്കുന്ന സമാജം സെക്രട്ടറി ശ്രീമതി ശ്യാമള ഫിലിപ്പ്, ട്രഷറർ ശ്രീമതി ഷീല ജോസ്, ഡെലിഗേറ്റ് മെമ്പർ ശ്രീമതി ശോശാമ്മ എബ്രഹാം എന്നിവരുടെ ശക്തമായ നേതൃത്വത്തിലും ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട വികാരിയച്ചന്റെ മേൽനോട്ടത്തിലും, സമാജാംഗങ്ങളുടെ ഒത്തൊരുമിച്ചുള്ള സഹകരണത്തിലും, വിശുദ്ധ ദൈവമാതാവിന്റെ അനുഗ്രഹത്താലും ഈ സമാജം ഭംഗിയായി പ്രവർത്തിച്ചുവരുന്നു. ഈ മഹാമാരിയുടെ സമയത്തും മുടക്കം കുടാതെ എല്ലാ ശനിയാഴ്ചകളിലും വൈകിട്ട് സമാജാംഗങ്ങൾ ഓൺലൈൻ വഴിയായി സമ്മേളിച്ചു പ്രാർത്ഥനായോഗം നടത്തുന്നു.

- സമാജാംഗങ്ങൾ

## Talmeedo Men's Retreat



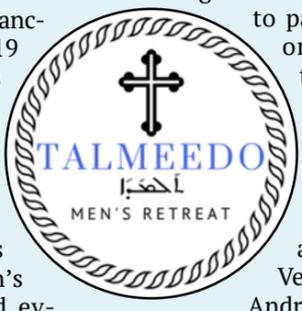
Roshan Mathai

This past summer, many of the young men of the Northeast American Diocese were able to participate in the third annual Talmeedo Men's Retreat. Talmeedo is Syriac for "Disciple" and the Talmeedo Ministry was started three years ago with the mission of "transforming young men into disciples of Christ". This retreat for young men of the diocese, ages 17+, typically takes place at Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton, PA.

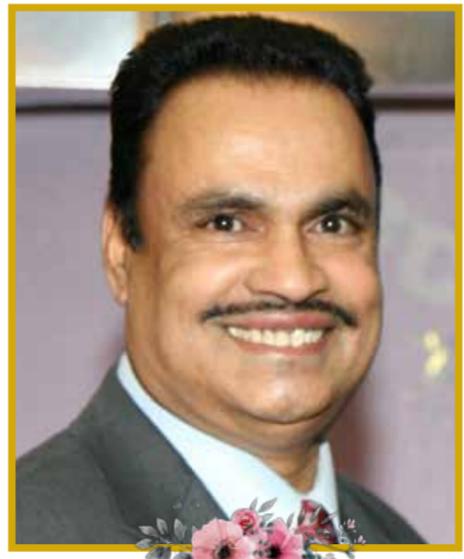
Given the circumstances of the COVID-19 Pandemic, this retreat was held virtually over the course of four days during the month of July. The Gamma Class of Talmeedo Men's Retreat gathered every Tuesday night in July for "Talmeedo Tuesday." Speaker sessions and discussions were held. This year Talmeedo was blessed to have three prominent speakers from across the nation including Rev. Fr. Jake Kurian from Texas, Rev. Fr. Saju Varghese from California, and Rev. Fr. Abey George from New York. Over the course of these four days around 150 partici-

pants were able to engage in meaningful discussions about the two paths to salvation: marriage and monasticism and engaged in fellowship as well. Although Talmeedo was not able to be held in person this year, the committee and participants were extremely grateful to have been able

to participate in this online retreat. By the grace of God, planning for Talmeedo 2021 has already begun and the committee is pleased to announce that the Very Rev. Archpriest Andrew Stephen Damick will be the main speaker, dwelling on the topic "The Unseen Warfare". Father Damick is a prolific speaker and author and is the Chief Content Officer of Ancient Faith Ministries. All young men of our Parish are encouraged to attend! For more information and updates about Talmeedo 2021 please fill out the interest form at [www.tinyurl.com/talmeedointerest](http://www.tinyurl.com/talmeedointerest).



*In loving memory of*



**George Varghese Chandanapally**  
(Departed from us on April 13, 2020)

"Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10).

*Inserted by: Sorrowing Family and Friends*

## 2020 G.R.O.W. Ministry Updates

Despite the challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the G.R.O.W. ministry was able to engage young women through a series of activities. Prior to the pandemic, the BQLI G.R.O.W. Roundtable held its Wonder Women Series on Courage and Humility on February 29, 2020 at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church in Valley Stream, NY. This was led by Rev Fr Shawn Poothicote Thomas. He focused on the women of the Bible, Deborah and Ruth, highlighting their characteristics of courage and humility.

Shortly after the height of the pandemic in New York State, on April 25, 2020, the GROW one day conference transitioned from an in-person to virtual conference. It was the first ever diocese level virtual conference. Approximately, 300 participants across the country participated, including members of the Southwest diocese. The conference theme was on Sarah vs. Hagar: lessons learned

and its impact on current relationships. The main speakers for the virtual conference were Rev. Fr. Vijay Thomas & Mrs. Bincy Thomas (Kochamma). Achen and Kochamma led an exploration of Hagar and Sarah's relationship to each other and God. It was an in-depth discussion regarding what we should emulate and avoid in our own relationships at home, work and especially at Church. In addition, three workshops were led by women lay leaders. All of the participants were broken into virtual breakout rooms based on their life stage: "What a Feeling" led by Mrs. Lynne Raju; "Peacemakers, a Practical Guide to Conflict Resolution," led by Mrs. Risha George and "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World," led by Mrs. Bindu Alexander. The women lay leaders led lively discussions in all three virtual breakout rooms.

In June 2020, there was a Mental Health Virtual Workshop on Depression and Suicide led by Mrs. Lijin Thomas (Kochamma). In the summer this was followed with a series of difficult



Amy Mathew

discussions on a topic that is usually avoided: sexual assaults in the church and larger community. The ministry addressed providing resources to victims, as well as a safe space for victims to speak up without fear and voice their concerns. In October 2020, GROW launched a book club, "R & R: Reading and Redeeming" over a series of zoom virtual sessions. The first book was "Putting Joy into Practice: Seven Ways to Lift Your Spirit From the Early Church," by Pheobe Farag Mikhail. The book club meetings began on October 13th and continued through November 2020.

Please stay tuned for more events!

## 30 Hour Fasting for Gregory Foundation 2020 (30 Hour Famine)



Susanna Abraham

By the grace of God, our MGOCSM was able to hold its annual 30-hour famine on the 7th and 8th of February. Our initiative this year was to raise money for the Gregory Foundation which is a charity started by our very own church members Rinu and Sonsy Rajan in memory of Baby Gregory Rajan. The Gregory Foundation aims to fund research and the development of new therapeutics and techniques to treat childhood cancer. Throughout our 30 hours we participated in acts of service, worship, and study. This year we were joined by the blessed presence of Seminarian Royce Mathew and Seminarian Roby Antony. Seminarian Royce Mathew led a spiritually enriching Bible study and participated in our events as well. In terms of service, we had made bracelets for the children admitted at St. Jude's Research Hospital. Our event was filled with many hours of worship. We are grateful for the seminarians who had led us through all the hours of prayer by the use of the Shehimo Book of Common Prayer. Through the help of Mrs. Sonsy Rajan we were able to have a call with one of the doctors who work at CMC Vellore Hospital in India. The Gregory Foundation is affiliated with CMC Vellore Hospital and some of the funds the MGOCSM raised will be provided for the

varying needs of the hospital such as cancer research and supporting cancer patients. Through our Zoom call with the doctor at CMC Vellore hospital we were enriched with knowledge of the procedures and cancer related events that take place. We were able to see, first-hand, how our donations facilitated the functions of the hospital. In addition to learning, we were able to relish in activities such as pictinary, trivia games such as kahoot and jeopardy, and a scavenger hunt. These activities allowed for the formation of stronger bonds within our youth and lasting memories. Furthermore, the MGOCSM would like to thank Gigi's Pizza and Cherry Valley Deli for donating food for our fellow members in order to break their 30 hour fast. Finally, the MGOCSM is delighted to report that through the help of our very own members and their various donors, we were able to raise \$1,663. Our 30 Hour Fasting for Gregory Foundation for the year 2020 was a success and we hope to continue the legacy of this event through the coming years.



Our Christmas Caroling Group 2019



## Our Sunday School Anniversary

Last year's Sunday School Anniversary was a memorable event! It was a very meaningful and joyous occasion for all the Sunday School students, teachers and parents. Also, it was the Anniversary of all the Spiritual Organizations of our Church. It was held on December 8th, 2019 on the Dukhrono memorial day of our beloved Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni. Also, Mar Barnabas Newsletter was released on the same day. The chief guest for the Anniversary was Rev. Fr. Shawn Thomas, our Sunday School Director. He gave a wonderful message for the anniversary. Achen talked about Barnabas Thirumeni's selfless service that was an example for giving to each other and to the community. He also talked about the holy and glorious life of Barnabas Thirumeni. There was also another guest this year. Her name is Mrs. Ligin Thomas (Kochamma), the wife of Shawn Achen (Director, Volunteers of America). She is also a Psychologist. Ligin Kochamma gave a wonderful message on the importance of serving each other. The Marth Mariam Samajam report was done by the Secretary, Mrs. Shyamala Philip. She talked about the Samajam conferences and activities that took place at different places in our Diocese. Mrs. Amy Mathew did the report about the G.R.O.W



Kesia Kurian

ministry and she talked about different meetings and camps conducted in different places. The Sunday School Group Song Team sang a song for which they won 1st Prize in the area level competitions. They did a wonderful job! There was one more special guest. His name is Mr. Korason Varghese. He is a well known writer and also was a previous Managing Committee Member of our Church. He talked about Mercy (കരുണം) based on 2 Samuel chapter 9. The MGOCSM Report was done by Susanna Abraham and Shelby Saimon. The report they did was really



good and impressive. The FOCUS report (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians) was done by Mrs. Rajini Mathai. The FOCUS is mainly for members who are 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 Sunday School report was done by our beloved Principal Dr. Mini George. Vote of thanks was done by our senior Sunday School Teacher, Mr. George M Geevarghese. Thereafter the Sunday School Prize distribution was done. Thanks to our own Vicar Gregory Achen for his guidance and support for all the spiritual organizations particularly Sunday School. This anniversary event would not have happened without Achen's support and the hard work of our principal. Dr. Mini George is such a wonderful principal. We are so thankful to have her as the Sunday School principal of our church. She spends so much of her valuable time for the success of our Sunday School children. Thank you! All in all, this year's Sunday School Anniversary was a blessing. Thanks again to all the people who participated in this very special event. Hope you enjoyed it! Being the Pandemic year, we may miss our Anniversary event this year. Stay home and stay safe!



## Sponsors / Best Compliments from

- Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese
- Mr. George. M. Geevarghese
- Mr. Varghese Pothanichad
- Mr. George P. Varughese
- Mr. Kenz Adai
- Mr. Peter Johnson
- Mrs. Rajini Thomas Mathai
- Mr. Shanly Joseph
- Ms. Meenu Chacko
- Mrs. Sonsy Rajan
- Mr. Thomas K. Abraham
- Ms. Stalla Saimon



# MGOCSM



## Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement

### Book Club

For the past few months, the MGOCSM has held a book club to help bring the youth of our church together and to cultivate spiritual growth in a nurturing environment. Starting on July 2nd, the MGOCSM has met together via Zoom to discuss a book named From the Holy Mountain by William Dalrymple, which was a book that Gregory Achen had read in seminary and highly recommended for us to read. Under the leadership of Achen, we discussed the takeaways from each chapter and its relevance to contemporary issues in the world. After reading



**Jeremiah Varghese**

The Spiritual Meadow written by John Moschos (a man who lived during the Golden Age of Christendom in the Middle East), Dalrymple became inspired to travel the same journey that this man embarked. The author narrates the pilgrimage that he took throughout the Middle Eastern

region to visit the last surviving shards of Christendom. The author begins his journey from a monastery in Mount Athos, the mountain which the book was named after, and travels to some of the most dangerous places in the world such as Syria, Lebanon, Israel, etc. Achen and the MGOCSM agree that there is not a better time to this book than now as it correlates to the events occurring in the world today, such as the conversion of the Hagia Sophia to a mosque and the Beirut explosion on August 4, 2020. Personally, this book has provided for me a thorough understanding of Christian persecution in the Middle East, as much of the book provides first account stories that no news channel or history book can provide. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn about Christianity in the Middle East and about the degree to which Christians in that region struggle.

### Service Event: Sandwich Making



**Shelby Saimon**

MGOCSM has three pillars: worship, study, and service. Our MGOCSM has been working on strengthening our service to the area and community. On January 25, 2020, 14 of our members assembled in church to make sandwiches to donate to a homeless shelter. We had our church members and a school friend of one of our members. The original plan was to donate to a homeless shelter, however, when we had gone to deliver the sandwiches the shelter was closed and we had a change of plans. After a lot of research, we found a shelter for domestic abuse women that would receive our sandwiches. The shelter was called Terena Williams Glory house homeless shelter in Jamaica. There were two houses, one for females and the other for males. We donated to the female house. The glory house is a unique program for men and women struggling with addiction, sickness and domestic abuse. They provide assistance and housing to their members through transitional

programs to reacclimate them back into society.

Prior to the event, we researched the best types of sandwiches to donate and we settled on three varieties. We made peanut butter and jelly, ham and cheese, and turkey and cheese sandwiches. We had stations to make each kind of sandwich and stations for packing the sandwiches. We individually wrapped each sandwich in its own plastic baggie with a note attached to the top. We color coded each type of sandwich and added a nice message about our trying to uplift whoever received the sandwich. The event was a great success and we hope to do more events such as this in the future.

### Virtual Fellowships

Over the past few months, the MGOCSM has been conducting virtual fellowships in order to provide some comfort and ease to our members during these unprecedented times. They were held every other Friday for the past 6 months and each session was about an hour in duration. Throughout our fellowships, we used outlets such as Kahoot, Codenames, and Jackbox games as group activities. Kahoot was an application that allowed us to create a trivia game in which individuals competed with each other to answer questions about the Bible and the Orthodox faith. Codenames is another game that was used throughout these fellowships and consisted of two teams that were assigned certain words that needed to be guessed in order to win. Jackbox was another outlet that allowed us to play games against one another which varied in general trivia questions and strategy games. In addition to this, the MGOCSM had several discussions with our Achen, Fr. Gregory Varghese about the current circumstances and how to cope with our changing world. These discussions often spoke about how the pandemic has accelerated the use of technology in our daily



**Hanna Abraham**

lives and how we should be wary about the amount of time technology consumes in our lives. These conversations gave us a chance to talk about our experiences and worries during this pandemic. These discussions allowed our members to have a much closer bond with one another and gave us a little sense of normalcy in these difficult times. Although we are limited in our resources due to the current pandemic, our fellowships can be improved through involving more speakers. They can initiate conversations about matters that are controversial and educate members on the church's stance on these topics. Furthermore, the MGOCSM can also create a space to talk about how other Christians are persecuted and the conditions of the Christians in the Middle East. All in all, these virtual fellowships were helpful because they provided a refuge in these troublesome times and reminded us to keep our faith in God.

## CHERRY LANE OVBS 2020

A global pandemic couldn't stop Cherry Lane from hosting their own OVBS!

Despite the challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Stalla Saimon and I, Meenu Chacko, were fortunate enough to host the Orthodox Vacation Bible School for our church virtually through Zoom this past summer. With the support and guidance of Gregory Achen, Dileep Achen, Dr. Mini George, Seminarian Roby Antony, and the youth of our church, we were able to host a successful Virtual OVBS! We followed the Theme and the guidelines posted on our Diocesan OVBS website.

The OVBS was divided into five sessions that were held on July 11th, July 12th, July 18th, and July 19th. The theme this year was taken from Galatians 3:28, "We are One in Christ." Approximately, 110 Sunday School students across our Church and St. John's Orthodox Church, Bellerose registered and participated in this event. Each session was two hours long that consisted of general sessions, lessons, arts and crafts,



**Meenu Chacko**

and games. Basic guidelines of what to expect, instruction materials, arts and crafts, and what is expected for each child were emailed to each student before the sessions.

All the students were broken up into five virtual breakout rooms based on their grade levels. For example, Group 1: Beginners were Pre-K and Kindergarteners who were led by Maryann Johnson, Joanne Johnson, Jisha Varughese, Megha Mathew and Arts and Crafts by Stalla Saimon. The first half of this session included lessons such as Daniel and Lions' Den, Joseph and his Brothers, and Zacchaeus. The

second half was arts and crafts, where students were shown an already done artwork by the arts and crafts leader and then were given time to replicate it. For example, Noah's Ark was one artwork that was given to the students, and a verse based on the artwork was taught to them such as Genesis 9:13, "I set my rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth." The students had until the next session to complete the artwork. The older groups such as Juniors, Intermediate, and Seniors during the second half of the sessions played Bible-based games such as Kahoot and Jeopardy.

For next year, let's hope and pray that we will have an in-person OVBS at Church level or area level. An online OVBS has its own limitations. In spite of the limitations, we were blessed to have a successful OVBS this year. Thanks be to God! A special 'Thank you' to Dr. Mini George, our Sunday School Principal and the current OVBS Director of our Diocese for coordinating this event.



Our Church Managing Committee Members 2020	
Name	Designation
Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese	Vicar/ President
Jose Thomas	Trustee
Mathew Mathen	Trustee
Kenz Adai	Secretary
Sonsy Rajan	Joint Secretary
John Thomas	MCM
Geevarghese Abraham	MCM
Simon Chacko	MCM
Abraham Abraham	MCM
Jijo Koshy	MCM
Ronny Antony	MCM
Joel Thomas	MCM
Sheela Jose	MCM
Lisa Rajan	MCM
Shanly Joseph	MCM



Sunday School General Session with HG Zacharia Mar Nicholovos during Parish Visit 2020



Sunday School General Session with our Vicar 2020



Nursery / Pre-K. Teachers - Megha Mathew, Stalla Saimon



KG Teacher - Maryann Johnson



Grade 1. Teachers - Lisha Varughese, Alina James



Grade 2. Teacher - Peter Johnson



Grade 3. Teacher - Syrila Saimon



Grade 4. Teacher - Julie Mathew



Grade 5. Teacher - Mini Thomas



Grade 6. Teacher - Jijo Koshy



Grade 7. Teacher - Raji George



Grade 8. Teachers - Rohitha Roy, Judy Mani



Grade 9. Teacher - Thomas K. Abraham



Grade 10. Teacher - Mini George



Grade 11. Teacher - Moncy Varghes



Grade 12. Teacher - George M. Geevarghese