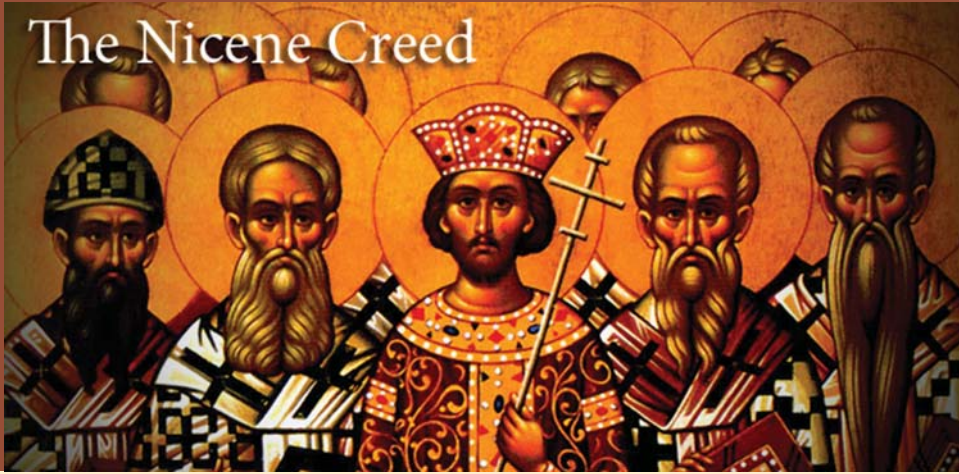


The Nicene Creed



We believe in one true God (Rom. 3:29-31, 1 Cor. 8:4-6, Eph. 4:6, Heb. 11:6)

The Father Almighty (1 Cor. 8:6, Rev. 1:8)

Maker of heaven and earth (Gen. Ch. 1&2, Ex. 20:11)

and of all things visible and invisible (Jer. 32:17. Col. 1:16)

And in the one Lord (Acts 10:36) Jesus (Matt. 1:21) Christ (John 4:25-26),

the only-begotten Son of God (John 1:14),

begotten of the Father before all worlds (1 John 4:9),

Light of Light, very God of very God (John 1:4, 5:18, 12:35-37, 1 John 1:5-7),

begotten, not made (John 8:58),

being of the same substance with the Father (John 10:30);

and by whom all things were made (John 1:3);

+ who for us men and for our salvation (Mat 1:21) came down from heaven (John 3:31),

+ and was incarnate of the Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God (Luke 2:6),

by the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35), and became man (John 1:14);

+ and was crucified for us (Mark. 15:25) in the days of Pontius Pilate (Matt. 27:22-26);

and suffered, and died, and was buried (Matt 27:50-60);

And the third day rose again (Matt 28:6) according to His will (1 Cor. 15:4),

and ascended into heaven (Luke 24:51), and sat on the right side of the Father (Mark 16:19);

and shall come again in His great glory (Matt. 25:31),

to judge both the quick and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1);

whose kingdom shall have no end (Luke 1:33);

And in the one living Holy Spirit (John 14:26),

the life-giving Lord of all (Is. 6:8, Acts 28:25, Rom. 8:2, 2 Cor. 3:6, 17&18),

who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26):

and who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified (Rev. 4:8),

who spoke by the Prophets and Apostles (2 Peter 1:21);

And in the One (John 10:16), Holy (Eph 5:26,27, 2 Peter 2:5&9),

Catholic (Rom. 10:18 "Catholic" means universal or comprehensive, as well as "relating to the ancient undivided Christian church") and Apostolic (Eph. 2:20) Church;

and we acknowledge one Baptism (Eph. 4:5) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38),

and look forward to the resurrection of the dead (Rom 6:5),

and the new life in the world to come (Mat. 25:34., Rev. 21:1-7). Amen.



St. Mary the Mother of God

Among all the saints of the Church, St. Mary occupies a preeminent position. This prominence is the consequence of her role as the Mother of God (Theotokos), a title that was underscored by the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) and firmly establishing it in the spirituality of the Church. St. Mary thus appears not only as the person who was favored to bear the Son of God, but because of her acquiescence to God's offer, she represents the pinnacle of synergy, the process by which human beings cooperate with God for the advancement of the salvific plan. Thus, she represents the reversal of the fatal fall of Eve in the Garden of Eden, and so is also given the designation "the second Eve."

In the iconographic tradition of the Church, St. Mary is usually presented as holding in her arms the child Jesus. Similarly, in the hymns which focus on St. Mary, she is asked to intercede to her Son, affirming the biblical principle that there is only one Mediator between God the Father and humankind. The Church teaches that there is only one person, Jesus Christ, who has been exempt from the taint of humankind's sin. The Orthodox Church neither believe in the immaculate conception of St. Mary, nor her special mediatory role alongside Jesus Christ in the salvation of humankind.

"For, behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Lk. 1:48).



St. Thomas the Apostle

St. Thomas was one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. He was also called Didymos, which mean 'twin' because of the paired fingers of his hand. The Bible portrays him as a man of bravery and of strong attachment to his Teacher. Jesus made the revelation that 'I'm the way, the truth and the life' (St. John 14:6) as an answer to a question of St. Thomas.

After resurrection, when Jesus appeared before his apostles, St. Thomas was not present there. When his colleagues told him later that they saw Jesus, he was reluctant to believe that. He declared that "unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it" (St. John 20:26). It was his earnest desire to see his resurrected Master. Jesus granted this wish with an appearance again before the group in which St. Thomas was also present. Jesus invited him to put his fingers on his wounds and get convinced. In the ecstasy of that moment, St. Thomas addressed Jesus "My Lord and My God" – a basic creed of Christian faith. The tradition is that when St. Thomas put his paired fingers in Jesus' wounds those paired fingers got separated and that the other apostles kissed his hand, which touched the resurrected Jesus Christ. The Christian practice of kissing the hands of bishops and priests originated from this.

Christianity in India was founded by Saint Thomas the Apostle, during his ministry from 52 AD – 72 AD.

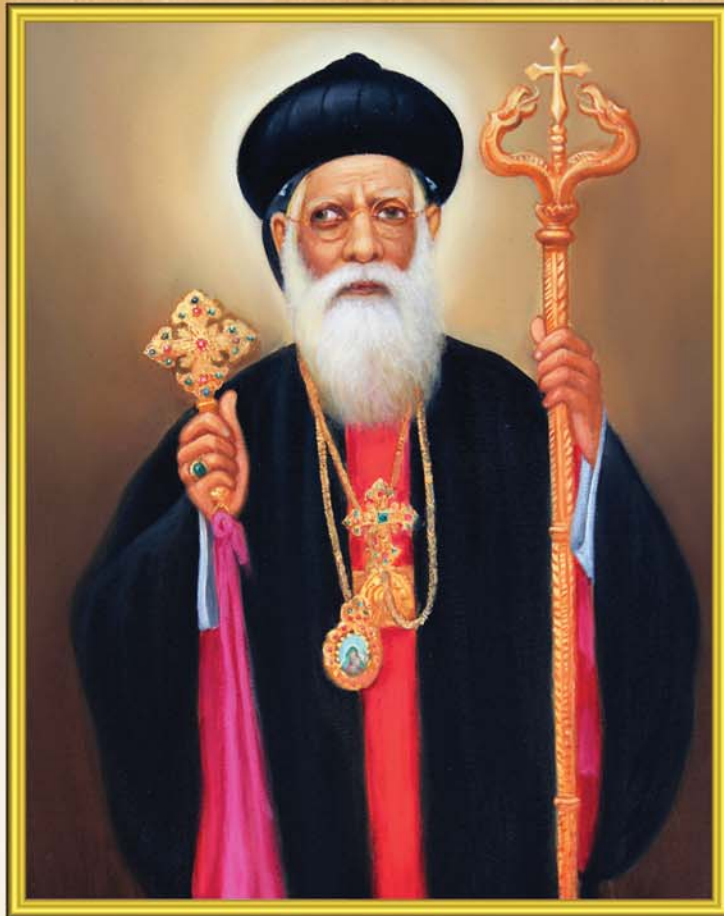


Saint Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala

Saint Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala is popularly known as 'Parumala Thirumeni'. Mar Gregorios was born on 15th June 1848 in the Chathuruthy family at Mulamthuruthy in Kerala. He was given the baptismal name 'Geevarghese'. He was ordained as a reader-deacon (Korooyo) on 14th Sept. 1858 at the age of ten and full deacon, priest and co-episcopa within few months in 1865. Mar Gregorios was only 28 years when he was made a bishop. Mar Gregorios took charge of the Niranam Diocese and started staying at Parumala. Mar Gregorios engaged in a threefold activity of tireless service for the church: Diocesan administration, Ministerial formation of deacons, Missionary witness of the church through inner spiritual and theological consolidation, along with evangelical reaching out.

Mar Gregorios believed that the church should engage in educational activity especially to facilitate primary education and English teaching without discriminating gender or religion. Accordingly he started schools at various places in Kerala. The missionary task of the Church was also evinced by his out-reach programme to the socially down trodden communities. He also organized evangelical awakening programme for non-Christians at various places under the leadership of the Seminary students.

Mar Gregorios had health issues and treatments proved futile and slowly became physically weaker and weaker. He left the earthly abode on 2nd November 1902. The many testimonies to the saintly intercession of Mar Gregorios made Parumala Church and the tomb a centre of pilgrimage. In 1947 Mar Gregorios of blessed memory was declared a saint by the Holy Church.



St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Vattasseril

St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius was born on 31st October 1858 in the Vattasseril family of Mallappally in Kerala. In 1876, while still a high school student, he was ordained as a sub deacon by H. H. Peter III. In 1879 Dn. Geevarghese was ordained as a full deacon and in 1880 he was ordained as a priest by St. Gregorios of Parumala.

In recognition of his incredible expertise in Syriac and theology he was designated as Malankara Malpan. He edited and published the order of Church worship to be used by the ordinary faithful for meaningful participation in worship and also authored the "Doctrines of the Church". In 1903, he was tonsured as Ramban (monk) and in 1908 consecrated as H. G. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Metropolitan.

In 1909 he became the Malankara Metropolitan and led the Church until he left this earthly abode on 23rd February 1934.

Mar Dionysius is popularly known as Malankara Sabha Bhasuran (The Great Luminary of Malankara Orthodox Church). He shined like a bright light for the Church during her dark and tumultuous times and possessed the vision to bring the Church triumphantly from the bonds of foreign oppression.

The unique and historic contribution of Mar Dionysius is the establishment of Catholicate in Malankara in 1912 and the formation of a Church constitution in 1934. The Catholicate is the symbol of self-identity and independence of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

On 23rd February, 2003 he was declared saint by the Holy Church.

Our Church in New Zealand became the 1st Church in the Madras diocese and 2nd in the entire Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church to be dedicated in his blessed memory.

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under the Holy Apostolic See of St. Thomas and the Catholicate of the East
of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India

OFFICE BEARERS

PARISH MANAGING COMMITTEE (2014-15)

President & Vicar	: Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai Pulickal
Trustee (Kaikkaran)	: E. Mathew Jacob
Secretary	: Oommen Philips
Committee Members	: Jilo Jose, K. Beno Samuel, Sajan Uthup Saji Pappen, Shirli John Varghese
Auditor	: Isaac Cherian

Malankara Suriyani Christiani Association member: Chacko Thomas

Sunday School

Head Master: John Varghese, Teachers: Annamma Philip, Animole Sajan, Asha Alex, Reena Biji, Bibi Mary Sabu, Bobby Thomas, Sajan Uthup, Sherli John, Sneha Varghese, Steffy Beno.

Youth Movement & MGOCSM

Secretary: Kevin Santosh

Women's league

Secretary: Bibi Mary Sabu, Treasurer: Lizy Samuel

Prayer Group

Secretary: Chacko Thomas

Event Co-ordinator

Navin Paul

Dionysius Young Couple Association

Secretary: Pratheesh Kurien

CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE

General Convener: John Varghese

Conveners:

Advisory	: K.N. Varughese, Oommen Philips	Publicity & Souvenir	: Manoj Philip, Sunil Abraham
Finance	: Saji Pappen, Isaac Cherian	Project Managers	: Saji Mathew, Isaac Cherian
Technical	: Saji Mathew, Philip Ayyamplackal	Project Coordinator	: Saji Pappen

CONSECRATION COMMITTEE

General Convener: Philip Ayyamplackal

Reception & Program

Convener: K. Beno Samuel, Members : Aivy Kurien, Anita Saju, Biji Mathew, Bobby Thomas, Cibi Mathai, Denoy John, Jean Santosh, Jim Jacob, Lizy Samuel, Molly Varghese, Nicky Bobby, Pratheesh Kurien, Reena Biji, Sajan Uthup, Saju K Simon, Sen Cherian Thomas, Thomson Chacko, Renjith Paul.

Consecration Service

Convener: Chacko Thomas, Members: Aby Varghese, Alwyn Raj, Annamma Thomas, Annie Rajan, Georgy Mattackal, Georgin Raju, Joby Joseph, Kevin Santhosh, Lathish mon Thankachen, Liji Jilo, Lini Thomas, Manju Issac, Rajan Mathew, Raju Varghese, Ryan Jacob, Rohith Vibu, Santosh John, Shalu Anna Babu, Sijo Mathews, Sudhin Rajan.

Souvenir

Convener: Manoj Philip, Chief Editor: K.N. Varughese, Members: Annamma Philip, David Thankachen

Food, Hygiene & Decorations

Convener: Bibi Mary Sabu, Members: Animole Sajan, Annamma Philip, Asha Alex, Babu.M.K, Bibin Bose, Biju Mathew, Bincy Jacob, Bincy Navin, Cicil Renjith, David Thankachen, Jim Jacob, Leena Saju, Liji Raju, Lizy Samuel, Manju Saji, Mini Thankachen, Molly Varghese, Sabu Skaria, Simi Alwin, Simmi Georgy, Teena Biju, Tessy Biju, Vava Jacob, Renjith Paul.

Transportation & Logistics

Convener: Ashok Varghese, Members: Alex Mathew, Alwyn Raj, Georgy Mattackal, Isaac Cherian, Jilo Jose, K.N. Varughese, Raju Varghese, Santosh John, Sen Cherian Thomas.

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The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

BASELIOS MARTHOMA DIDYMUS I
VALIYA BAVA



CATHOLICATE PALACE
KOTTAYAM-686 038
KERALA, INDIA

October 19, 2013



Apostolic blessings and hearty greetings to the Vicar, the members of the Managing Committee and all our beloved people in St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church, Auckland, New Zealand!

Beloved in our Lord,

We are happy to know about the consecration of the newly constructed Church. Let us praise God the Almighty for His blessings. We are aware of the progress you have made in the Parish and the good work being done there for the society. I congratulate the vicar and all the members of the Church for their loving and sincere co-operation in maintaining the activities as well as the administration of the Parish in a high standard. As you know 'Church is the dwelling place of God', likewise we also to be. We should realise and experience that presence by continuous prayer and meditation. On this solemn occasion, we exhort all of you to be active in the worship of the Church and in the Spiritual Organisations.

May the love of God the Father and the grace of God the Son, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with you always.

With all best wishes, love and prayers.

Baselios Marthoma Didymus I

Note: His Holiness Didymus I, Valiya Bava (Catholicos Emeritus) entered eternal rest on 26th May 2014.

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The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

BASELIOS MARTHOMA PAULOSE II
CATHOLICOS OF
THE APOSTOLIC THRONE OF
ST. THOMAS
AND MALANKARA METROPOLITAN



CATHOLICATE PALACE
KOTTAYAM-686 038
KERALA, INDIA

October 19, 2013



Apostolic blessings and hearty greetings to the Vicar, the members of the Managing Committee and all our beloved people in St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church, Auckland, New Zealand!

It is with profound delight that we hear about the dedication of the newly constructed church building of that parish. The growth of that parish in these years is indeed an imitable example. We exhort our people to keep the Church holy, unblemished and sacrosanct as the Church embodies the presence of God. Let no one defile or desecrate the church by words or by deeds. We do pray for the edification and well being of all our beloved people there. Heaven's choicest blessings be showered on all our beloved ones there who directly or indirectly contributed to or associated with the construction of the church building. We wish all success for the souvenir being published on this solemn occasion.

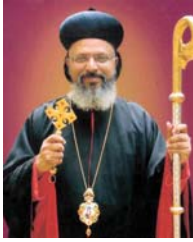
With blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in the Malankara script. The signature is stylized and includes a small cross at the end.

Baselios Marthoma Paulose II

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

DIOCESE OF MADRAS



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Metropolitan

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RCM 70/2013

Blessings to the Vicar, Managing Committee Members, Members of the Editorial Board and all our faithful in our Auckland St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church.

Dearly Beloved,

Greetings to you in the name of the Triune Lord.

We are extremely happy to know that Our Auckland St. Dionysius Parish is publishing a Souvenir in connection with the Consecration of that Parish. This is the second Parish in Our Church and the first in Our Diocese to be christened after the great Saint Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius.

The Early Church forsook everything and followed the Lord. They took up their crosses daily and followed him to the ends of the Earth, because it was their motivation and desire. They were not, stay at home, play it safe, go to church once a week Christians. They had a deep passion and commitment to the Lord and felt absolutely united to their brethren in heart soul, and body. They were one and worked together as one without conflict and without competition. This is how the early church progressed so fast. They had love for each other and they had great LOVE for the Lord.

At this juncture we remember the hard work and the never ending enthusiasm of the Parishioners in cooperation with the Vicar which made this possible. We hope and sincerely pray that this Parish and its Parishioners will lead a Spiritual life, as it was in the early Church and share the Divine Love.

May God Bless You All.

Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros Metropolitan
6th November, 2013 From Madras Orthodox Bishop's House.



OOMMEN CHANDY
CHIEF MINISTER
KERALA

12/12/2014



Message

I am glad to know that the St Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church, Auckland, New Zealand would be dedicating its building in February 2015 and that a souvenir would be released to commemorate this joyous occasion.

I hope that the St Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church, Auckland, through its interventions in the society would build solid foundations of brotherhood, illuminate the path of righteousness and spread the fragrance of sublime happiness.

My prayers and warm felicitations to all associated with the church on this joyous occasion

OOMMEN CHANDY

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भारतीय हाई कमिश्नर
वैलिंग्टन, न्यूजीलैन्ड
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF INDIA
Wellington, New Zealand



180 Molesworth Street
P.O. Box 4045
Wellington, New Zealand

No.WEL/HC12013

6th December, 2013



Message

I congratulate the St. Dionysius Indian orthodox church in Auckland at its initiative to bring spiritual solace to the members of the Indian community in New Zealand. That despite the vast geographical distance, our accomplished community in this country is actively adhering to the spiritual and cultural values and principles of universal peace and well-being which India epitomizes, is commendable. I wish the members of the St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church in Auckland all success in their endeavours!

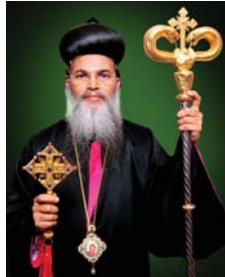
(Ravi Thapar)

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

COCHIN DIOCESE

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Metropolitan

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October 24, 2013

Glory be to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is God's will that the name of St. Dionysius be extolled to the end of the earth. The New Zealand parish is the second one to be dedicated to the saint, canonized in 2003. It is with a sense of gratefulness to God and genuine pride that one keeps the glorious memory of Vattasseril Thirumeni, who suffered like a living martyr for the sake of the independent development of the Malankara Orthodox Church.

I am thankful to God that I had the opportunity to be associated with the New Zealand Saint Dionysius parish from the inception. I congratulate the Vicar and the members of the parish for accomplishing this great institution- a new church- the first ever parish in New Zealand. I and my Diocese of Kochi join you in this joyous occasion of the consecration of the new church to praise the Name of the God.

Greetings to all from the Diocese of Kochi

Dr.Yakob Mar Irenaios Metropolitan

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

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Dr. Zachariah Mar Theophilos

5 February 2015



Blessings to the vicar and members of St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church in Auckland, New Zealand.

I appreciate your dedication and devotion for the construction of a Church for God. I still remember your love and affection towards me while I was with you all in Auckland for the blessings of the new property purchased for the church and the foundation stone laying ceremony.

Wish you all the blessings and prayers for the Consecration and the dedication of the Church.

With blessings and prayers

Dr. Zachariah Mar Theophilos

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT OF THE EAST

Yuhanon Mar Policarpus Metropolitan
President, Orthodox Youth Centre
St. Thomas Bhavan
Old Seminary Road, Kottayam-686001



P.B.No.61
Thrikkunnathu Seminary, Aluva-683101
Tel: 0484-2624339, Fax: 0484-2622339
e-mail: marpolicarpus@yahoo.com



01-03-2015,
ALUV A

Blessings to you all in the precious name of the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, one Triune God, for ever and ever, Amen.

In the book of Genesis we read of Abraham moving from Haran to Bethel; Bethel to Hebron and so on. We also read of Abraham building an altar and offering sacrifice unto the Lord, whenever he moved into a new place.

It is a matter of great pride to the Orthodox Community that whenever few members of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church come together in a new land, they start dreaming of a Church of their own. Under the able leadership of the Vicar, with the support of the Managing Committee members the whole Orthodox community in New Zealand has joined hands in the materialization of their dream - a House of Worship of their own in New Zealand.

I pray to Lord Almighty that this Church be a refuge to many, serving all as the House of worship, a place of serene atmosphere, a place to spend your quiet time, a place to share your joy and a place to unburden your sorrows. Let the unity and fellowship that you have developed, strengthen you up more to stay united in His Service and for the glorification of His Kingdom.

May God bless you all

Yuhanon Mar Policarpus
Metropolitan, Ankamaly Diocese
President, OCYM



The Anglican Bishop of Auckland

THE RIGHT REVEREND ROSS BAY

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6 January 2014

Dear Father Biju

I extend warm Christian greetings on the occasion of the opening and consecration of your new church building.

The Anglican Diocese of Auckland was glad to have been able to extend the hospitality of St Alban's Church in Balmoral for the past ten years until you have come to this point. We rejoice with you in the opportunity which God has given you to now have a place of worship that can truly feel your own.

We pray God's rich blessing on the future of the life of your congregation. May you know the presence of God's Spirit renewing your life in Christ, and enabling you to be part of the Mission of God to your community in this City of Auckland.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ 

Bishop



IN CELEBRATION OF THE NEW ST DIONYSIUS CHURCH

The Rt Rev'd Richard Randerson
Former Dean of Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral
and Assistant Bishop of Auckland

It is a great privilege to be invited to write this article for the Souvenir to be published at the time of the opening of the new St Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church in Henderson.

I well remember the warm relationship I had as Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral with Fr Varghese Philip Idichandy during his time as Vicar of St Dionysius. We enjoyed good conversation together, and were pleased he was able to find accommodation for a period in the rather humble old building that was part of the cathedral precinct.

Our first cathedral, St Mary's, dating back to the 1880s, was also a venue for worship for the St Dionysius congregation at various times in 2004 and 2005. It was a very moving experience to see the great array of shoes in the entrance foyer, reminding me of God's word to Moses: "take off your shoes for the place on which you are standing is holy ground". We Anglicans generally leave our shoes on but hopefully the same sense of 'holy ground' is present.

Since its beginnings in Auckland in 2003, the Indian Orthodox congregation has spread to include Hamilton, Wellington, Palmerston North and Christchurch. This is a great encouragement and a sign of the important role the church plays for its members and in the wider community. For Indian Orthodox people to be welcomed in New Zealand is a great thing, and to find worshipping congregations here they can join is an added blessing.

As part of the Madras Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India, St Dionysius church plays an important part in helping its members maintain links with the homeland, as well as continuing the heritage and values of their faith and cultural roots. It is encouraging to see the involvement of children and young people, and the groups for prayer and for women as part of the overall pattern of worship and spiritual nourishment.

For us as Anglicans our relationship with the Orthodox Churches has always been a warm one. We share the same emphasis on rich liturgical worship, and the sense of the loving mystery of God which surrounds and upholds each one of us. But migration patterns to New Zealand have meant that only a small number of orthodox church members have reached our shores. Thus it is a great blessing now that with the growth of the Indian Orthodox community among us we can enjoy the fellowship we share in Jesus Christ, and also have our cultural awareness expanded by the growing multi-cultural nature of New Zealand.

The building and opening of the new St Dionysius Church in Henderson is a significant moment in the life of your congregation, and an amazing achievement after only ten years in Auckland. To Fr Biju Mathew, and to all the Indian orthodox congregations throughout New Zealand, I extend my blessing and warm good wishes for the occasion and for the future. May God continue to be with you and deepen your faith and love for one another and all people.



ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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M: +(61) 411 867 070



Dear Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai Pulickal & all the faithful members of St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church,

Greetings from St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Cathedral Sydney, Australia.

I am very happy to hear the glad news of the completion and consecration of St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church Auckland, New Zealand. I congratulate Biju Achen, members of the church building committee and parishioners on your success in completing the church building with limited resources. I also take this opportunity to remember with gratitude the senior members of the parish for all their hard work and dedication.

It is an answer to the prayers and dreams of many and the result of the dedicated sincere efforts of all those who have directed their valuable resources in the form of time, energy, ideas, money and much more towards the buying of the plot, the planning and the building of the church.

May this event be a reminder to continue the sanctification process, not only in the place of worship but as a process in our daily life.

I wish & pray for all success of the consecration and for the continuing ministry of St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church Auckland, aiming to realise the Kingdom of God in this earth.

Fr. Thomas Varghese
Vicar
St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Cathedral
Sydney, Australia

16 Jan 2015



Anglican Church of St Alban the Martyr

443 Dominion Road Balmoral

Auckland

An Anglican Church in the Catholic Tradition



The Anglican Church of Saint Alban the Martyr in Balmoral is delighted to give prayerful support to the congregation of St.Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church as their new church is dedicated to the Glory of God and their Patron Saint Dionysius.

The St.Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church has been located at St Alban's for a number of years and have held worship services in the church and hall with numerous ecumenical events, which we have immensely enjoyed sharing. The Shrine to Saint Dionysius has been located in our church and we look forward to a liturgy of relocation when the time comes for it to be placed in its permanent home within the newly consecrated church.

On behalf of the Parish of Saint Alban the Martyr and all of those who have been and now are associated with St.Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church, may I offer you every good wish and all blessings in your new spiritual home and offer welcome and hospitality to every one of you at any time in the future when you come to visit us here in Balmoral.

To the greater Glory of God and the advance of the Gospel of Christ,

Father Philip Sallis

Parish Priest

Anglican Church of St. Alban the Martyr

Balmoral, Auckland

11 November 2013



Vicar's Message

Fr. Biju Mathai Pulickal

‘The LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’.
(Psalm 118:23)

I am immensely grateful to God Almighty for the privilege given to me in serving as vicar of this parish during the past four years. I thank God Almighty for His mighty work of leading and blessing us throughout our journey as a parish, especially at the time of the consecration of our own building.

This is an occasion to thank God for His love, care, guidance and mercy showered upon us during the past decade. We give all honour and glory to Him for strengthening us to carry out our responsibilities in building the first Indian Orthodox Church in New Zealand.

Church consecration is joyous one time event in the history of a congregation. Souvenir will be the sweet memorial of that historic occasion.

This Souvenir will be a beautiful memento about the St.Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church and its members that each one of us should feel honored to preserve for generations to come.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Managing committee members for their leadership, the building committee and all spiritual organizations for their active involvement, and to all parishioners for their valuable support and contribution to the completion of this awesome project. At this time particularly thank the team behind the souvenir project, Mr. K N Varghese, Mr. Philip Ayyamplackal and Mr. Manoj Philip, without their effort this souvenir would not have been possible at this scale. Their relentless efforts, meticulous research and sincere commitment made all the difference. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of each member in the souvenir committee for their untiring work and dedication, I particularly wish to thank all our advertisers, sponsors, friends, families and well wishers who contributed money, time and effort to make this project a success.

I hope that as we continue to grow as a church and gratefully worship in our new sanctuary, we will remember the grace and mercies of the Almighty that has followed us through every step of the way. May the name of the Lord be glorified through the generations that will worship here.

May I remind you that if our Church has to remain alive and vibrant in the coming centuries, we should bring our youth and children into the spiritual fold and ensure their involvement and participation in the activities of the Church. We must guide them, inspire them, channel their energies and talents towards spiritual activities, and groom them to confront all adversities in true faith. We also have a responsibility to the community around us, be examples of Christ’s love, and be spiritually filled to proclaim the Good News of Salvation.

As I bid farewell, I pray that this new temple of the Lord be a place of praise and peace, joy and jubilation, besides caring and sharing. Let us rededicate our lives to the glorification of His kingdom!!

My wife, Teena, children Diya and Dan will ‘miss this beautiful place of worship, a pause to our journey at the threshold of Canaan...’ – a place of stability and peace. We will always remember this church and all its members in our prayers and request your continuous prayers for us.

May the good Lord bless you all for your dedication and commitment for this blessed church. May the parish as it ‘outgrows’ be outgoing in being a living witness of the Lord Jesus in the declaration of our founder Apostle St. Thomas, “My Lord and My God!!!” Let the growing generation enjoy full and meaningful participation in the life of the parish by serving the community at large!

With Agape
Bijuachen

EDITORIAL

K.N. Varughese
Chief Editor



It is indeed one of the greatest pleasures in life to bring out this Souvenir. This commemorates the biggest blessing, we as a community ever had in New Zealand, our new home.

When we look back, a few of us had yearned for a Holy Qurbana, at the beginning of the last decade. We had tears of joy, when this dream came true, about twelve years ago. We realised later, that the heavens also rejoiced with us, when we gradually experienced abundant blessings, beyond our wildest wishes. We were able to bring a full time priest from India, within a few months.

Now we have a beautiful church, constructed and dedicated in a plot of our own. Our strength, in numbers was insignificant and monetarily negligible; it reminds us the young boy David of old, in the valley of Elah. The obstacles we had to overcome in our journey over the years, especially during the construction project, were formidable and to the size of Goliath. The passage through the valley was tough and overwhelming, but we overcame; not by our merits, but by His Grace.

The feast of Consecration and Dedication sanctified us; our man made structure too. It was an occasion of thanks giving. The timing also was special. The week started with Aaneedhe Sunday, when we remembered all our ancestors, who walked in the faith. The weeks that followed were the beginning of Holy Lent and then the commemoration week for our patron Saint, who is "wonder- worker" for us, through powerful intercessions.

All writers in this souvenir had done it for us cheerfully; we thank them. We thank the advertisers for all the support. Impressions, the printers at Kottayam, and its proprietor Sunil C. Jacob deserve special mention for all their input towards this souvenir. Our gratitude goes to all those who worked for this church project, applying their heart and minds to it, and to those who supported from outside, be it with sound advice, finances or prayers.

When we look forward, we see a lot of opportunities to serve the community, first by worshipping in Spirit and Truth, and then by taking the service to the wider community, by being solace to all those who are in need. May the "amazing grace" that followed us this far, abide with us, guiding, helping and strengthening us, to face the challenges on the new journey ahead!

14 February 2015





കരുണക്കടലിന്റെ തീരം

സവേർ



“രാത്രി കടൽതീരം ഒരു കൈവിളക്കു മായി ഒരു മനുഷ്യൻ നില്പുണ്ട്. നിനക്ക് തോന്നുന്നുണ്ടോ അയാൾക്ക് അധികദൂരം കടൽ കാണാമെന്ന്! ഒരുപക്ഷേ, ഒട്ടുംതന്നെ ഉണ്ടാവില്ല. തിരകൾപോലും പൂർണ്ണമായും കണ്ണിൽ പെടില്ല. എന്നാൽ അയാൾക്കറിവുണ്ട് തന്റെ മുമ്പിൽ ഒരു കടലാണ് ഉള്ളതെന്ന്. അത് ഏറെ വിശാലമാണെന്നും ഒറ്റനോട്ടത്തിൽ ഗ്രാഹ്യമല്ലെന്നും. ഒരു മനുഷ്യൻ ദൈവത്തെ അറിയുന്നതും ഇപ്രകാരമാണ്. ദൈവത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള നമ്മുടെ അറിവിനെ സംബന്ധിച്ചും ഇത് സത്യമാണ്”.

(നവീന ദൈവശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞനായ ശിമയോൻ:- 10-ാം നൂറ്റാണ്ട്)

* എത്ര സുന്ദരമായിട്ടാണ് സത്യം അവതരിപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. എത്ര ലളിതമായിട്ടാണ്; എന്നാൽ ഒട്ടും അർത്ഥശൂന്യമാകാതെ...

* പള്ളി ഒരു വിളക്കാണ്. ശരിക്കും ഒരു ദേവാലയമുണ്ടാവുക എന്നാൽ മലമേൽ വയ്ക്കുന്ന കത്തിച്ച ഒരു വിളക്കുപോലെ തന്നെയാണ്. വിളക്ക് കാഴ്ച നല്കുന്നു.

ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ആലയം അവന്റെ മഹത്തവത്തെ കാട്ടിത്തരുന്നു. ആകാശം അവന്റെ മഹത്തവത്തെ വർണ്ണിക്കുന്നതു പോലെ...

ആകാശവിതാനം അവന്റെ കൈവേലയെ പ്രസിദ്ധമാക്കുന്നതു പോലെ...

പകൽ പകലിന് വാക്കു പൊഴിക്കുന്നതു പോലെ...

രാത്രി രാത്രിക്ക് അറിവ് പകരുന്നതു പോലെ...

ഭാഷണമില്ലാതെ...

വാക്കുകളില്ലാതെ...

ഒരു ശബ്ദവും ഉയർത്താതെ...

* ഒരു വിളക്ക് എപ്പോഴും അങ്ങനെയാണ്. ചുടും വെളിച്ചവും പകർന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കും. ലോകത്തിന്റെ വെളിച്ചമാകുന്നവരൊക്കെ എക്കാലവും അങ്ങനെതന്നെയാണ്. നമുക്കിടയിൽ ഇത്തിരി വെളിച്ചക്കുറവുണ്ടോ സവേ! നാമെന്തെ ഇങ്ങനെ പരസ്പരം മത്സരിക്കുന്നു. ഉൾവെളിച്ചത്തോടെയുള്ള കൃത്യങ്ങളാണത്രേ സുകൃതങ്ങൾ! സുകൃതക്ഷയത്തിന്റെ തെളിവുകളാണ് ചുറ്റും. ഹൃദയപൂർവ്വം പുഞ്ചിരിക്കാൻ മറന്നിടത്തുതന്നെ തുടങ്ങാം. ആത്മാർത്ഥമായൊരു വാക്ക് നാവിൽ മുളയ്ക്കാത്തതും നന്ദിപ്രകടനങ്ങൾ ഉള്ളിൽ തട്ടാത്തതും കണ്ണുകളിൽ കരുണവഹിയതും കേൾക്കുവാൻ ക്ഷമയറ്റതും പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുവാൻ മടിയോന്നുന്നതും ഇങ്ങനെ എത്രയധികം എനിക്ക് മാത്രം കുമ്പസാരിക്കാനുണ്ട്.

നമ്മുടെ സഹവാസത്തിൽ വെളിച്ചം നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടതിന് ഇനിയും ധികം കാരണങ്ങൾ തേടേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലോ!

ദൈവമേ, ഈ വെളിച്ചം തിരികെപ്പിടിക്കുന്നതിനാവണമെന്തെങ്ങൾ ദൈവാലയത്തിൽ വരുന്നത്. ദൈവമേ, നീ വെളിച്ചമാകുന്നു. നിന്നിൽ ഇരുട്ട് ഒട്ടുംതന്നെയില്ല എന്നുള്ളത് നിന്നോടു കേട്ട് ഞങ്ങളോട് അറിയിച്ച ശ്ലീഹന്മാരെ ഞങ്ങൾ കേൾക്കുന്നു. ഉള്ളിൽ ഭയം തിങ്ങുന്നു.

തിരുമുന്മാരെ ലജ്ജ കൂടാതെ മുഖപ്രസന്നതയോടെ നില്പാൻ എങ്ങനെ കഴിയും? ആദമിൽനിന്നു പഠിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട് മറഞ്ഞിരിക്കാനും പ്രചരണവേഷം കെട്ടാനുമുള്ള കഴിവുകൾ! പറുദീസാ നഷ്ടമല്ലാതെ മറ്റൊരു ഫലം?

ഉള്ളിൽ പ്രതീക്ഷ ഉണരുന്നു.

ചരിത്രം തിരുത്തിയവരെ ഓർക്കുമ്പോൾ! ഒരു സ്നേഹിതനെ പ്പോലെ ദൈവത്തോടൊപ്പം നടന്ന ചിലരെയോർക്കുമ്പോൾ! ദൈവത്തിന്റെ സ്നേഹിതന്മാരെല്ലാം അവൻ നല്കിയ സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾക്ക് പിന്നാലെ പോയവരാണ്. സ്വന്ത ഇഷ്ടങ്ങൾക്ക് അവധി നല്കിയവർ. മരണത്തോളം അനുസരണത്തോടെ അവർ നിന്നു. അവരുടെ മുക്തമാനസം അത്രമേൽ സ്വസ്ഥമായിരുന്നുവെന്ന് പറയാനാവില്ല. ആന്തരികക്ഷോഭങ്ങളുടെ കടൽ വിളുമ്പുകളിൽ എത്രയോ തവണ പാദം പുഴയിലാഴ്ന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. മഹാവ്യഥകളുടെ നിരന്തരധനികൾ ഓരോ വലിച്ചു കൂടയലിലും അവരിൽനിന്നു യർന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഉൾപ്പൊരാട്ടങ്ങളുടെ വിജനതകളിൽ എത്രവട്ടം അവരുടെ അകമിളകിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഓരോ തവണയും തട്ടി വീണതും ചാടി പ്പിടിച്ചതും മുൾച്ചെടികളിൽതന്നെ. നീറ്റലൊടുങ്ങുന്നില്ല അകവും പുറവും. എന്നിട്ടും ദൈവത്തിന്റെ കൂട്ട് വിടാൻ മാത്രം മനസ്സ് വരുന്നില്ല. കഷ്ടതയിലും സങ്കടത്തിലും പട്ടിണിയിലും ആപത്തിലും നഗ്നതയിലും വാളിലും ഒന്നും! ദൈവമാണ് കൂടെകിൾ പിന്നെ നിന്റെ വഴിയിൽ ഒരു ഓശാന ശേഷിക്കുന്നില്ല. ദൈവം മാത്രം മനുഷ്യപുത്രന് കൂട്ടാവുന്ന ഇടമാണ് ഗർഭമേന. ഇവിടെ ഉറങ്ങി പ്പോയാൽ നിനക്ക് നഷ്ടമാവുന്നത് ദൈവത്തെയാണ്. ഉണർന്നിരുന്നാലോ അതിലുമേറെ അപകടമാണ്. കാരണം, നിന്റെ കൂട്ടിന് പിന്നെ തമ്പുരാൻ മാത്രമേയുള്ളൂ!

ഈ ദേവാലയത്തിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ ഉണർവോടെയിരിക്കും നിശ്ചയം. ഈ വിളക്ക് കൈയിലുള്ളപ്പോൾ, ഈ പള്ളിയുടെ ഉള്ളിൽ നില്ക്കുമ്പോൾ വിജ്ഞാനിയായ ശലോമോന്റെ മൊഴികൾ മാത്രമേ ഏറ്റുപാടാനുള്ളൂ.

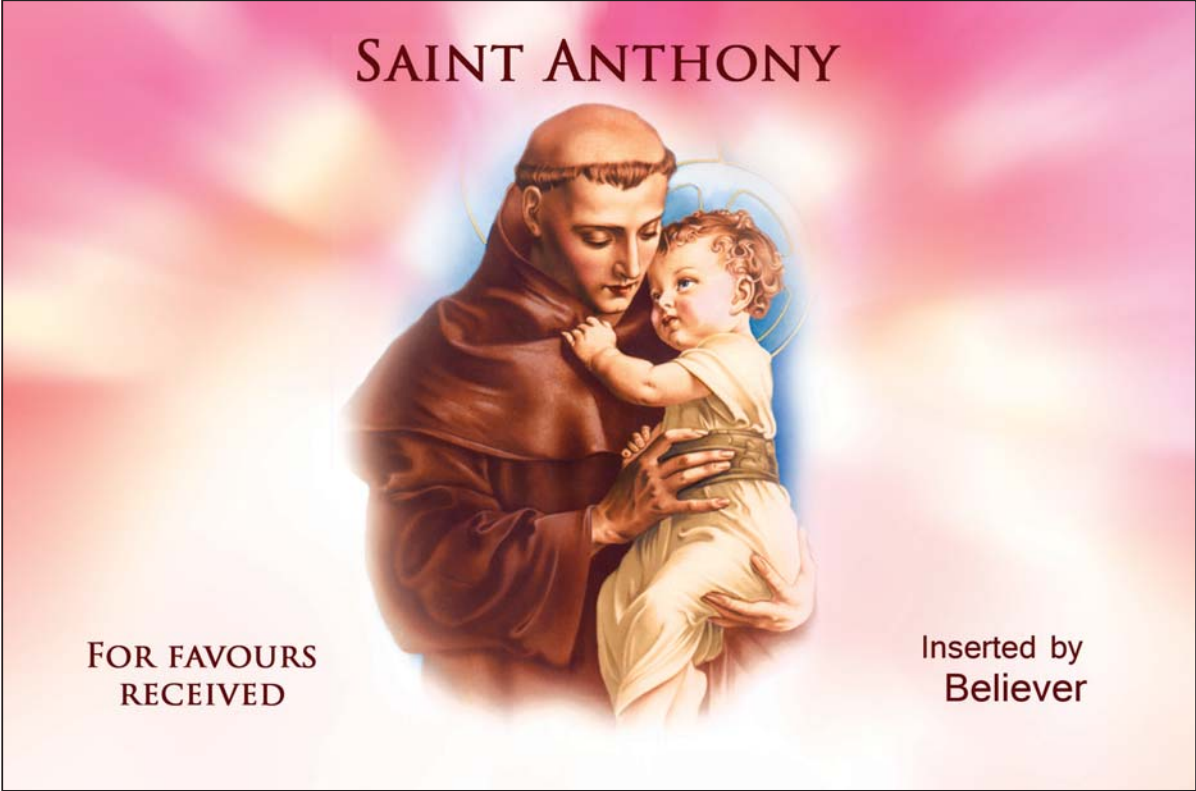
“എന്നാൽ ദൈവം യഥാർത്ഥമായി

ഭൂമിയിൽ വസിക്കുമോ? സർഗ്ഗത്തിലും സർഗ്ഗാധി സർഗ്ഗത്തിലും നീ അടങ്ങുകയില്ലല്ലോ; പിന്നെ ഞാൻ പണിതിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ ആലയത്തിൽ അടങ്ങുന്നതെങ്ങനെ? ... അടിയൻ ഈ സ്ഥലത്ത് വെച്ച് കഴിക്കുന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥന കേൾക്കേണ്ടതിന് നിന്റെ നാമം ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുമെന്ന് നീ അരുളിച്ചെയ്ത സ്ഥലമായ ഈ ആലയത്തിലേക്ക് തൃക്കൺ പാർത്തരുളേണമെ. ഈ സ്ഥലത്ത് വെച്ച് പ്രാർത്ഥിപ്പാൻ ഇരിക്കുന്ന അടിയന്റെയും നിന്റെ ജനമായ യിസ്രായേലിന്റെയും യാചന കേൾക്കേണമെ. നിന്റെ വാസസ്ഥലമായ സർഗ്ഗത്തിൽ കേൾക്കേണമെ; കേട്ട് ക്ഷമിക്കേണമെ” (1 രാജാ. 8:27-30)

ഇല്ല തമ്പുരാണേ, ചിപ്പിയിൽ വെള്ളം നിറച്ചിട്ട് ഇത് കടലാണെന്ന് ഞങ്ങളും പറയില്ല. പൂവിന്റെ ചിത്രം വരച്ചിട്ട് സുഗന്ധം നല്കാനും ഞങ്ങൾക്കാവില്ല. നിന്റെ കൃപ ഞങ്ങൾക്കു മതി.
* പള്ളി ഒരു തീരമാണ്. ഒരു കരുണക്കടലിന്റെ തീരം. ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ തൊട്ടടുത്ത് വറ്റാത്ത കരുണയുടെ കടലുണ്ട് എന്ന

അറിവ് മതിയല്ലോ നമ്മെ ധൈര്യപ്പെടുത്തുവാൻ! ക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളെല്ലാം ക്ഷതത്തിൽനിന്ന് ത്രാണനം (സംരക്ഷണം) ചെയ്തിക്കുന്നവയാണല്ലോ. ആത്മശരീര മനസ്സുകളുടെ മുറിവുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന ഇടം. പ്രളയകാലത്ത് നോഹയുടെ പെട്ടകം ഉറയ്ക്കാൻ ദൈവം ഒരു ഉന്നത പർവ്വതത്തെ കരുതിയിരുന്നു. നോഹയുടെ നീതിയുള്ള നിലപാടുകൾക്ക് ദൈവം നല്കിയ ഉറപ്പിന്റെ അടയാളം. അബ്രഹാം പിതാവാകട്ടെ മകനെക്കൊളും അധികം സ്നേഹിച്ചത് മോറിയാ മലയിലേക്കുള്ള കാൽവെപ്പുകളെയാണ്. ദൈവാനുസരണത്തിന്റെ കൊടുമുടിയാണ്. അവിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെയും അസവിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെയും അല്പവിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെയും കാളക്കൂട്ടിയെ തച്ചുകൊണ്ട് പോന്ന ധൈര്യം മോശ ആർജ്ജിച്ചത് സീനായ് മലയിൽനിന്നാണ്. ഏലിയാവിന്റെ കർമ്മേൽ സത്യസന്ധതയുടെ ആളിക്കത്തലാണ്.
ഈ പള്ളിയെ ഞങ്ങൾ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നു. ഈ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ കാണുന്നു. ഈ മലമേൽ ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഭവനങ്ങൾ പണിയുന്നു. ഉവ്വ്, ഇവിടെ ഇരിക്കുന്നത് ഏറെ നല്ലത്. കുരികിലിന്റെ വീടും മീവൽപക്ഷിയുടെ കുടും പോലെ... ദൃഷ്ടന്മാരുടെ കുടാരങ്ങളിൽ പാർക്കുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ ഞങ്ങളുടെ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ആലയത്തിൽ വാതിൽകാവൽക്കാരായിരിക്കുന്നത് ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ഏറെ ഇഷ്ടമാകുന്നു.

Humbleness and forgiveness remains in those minds, which would be willing to accept any sort of sufferings for the sake of truth and justice.



GOD DESIGNS HIS OWN HOUSE

A House of Prayer

Rev. Fr. Alexander J. Kurien
Deputy Administrator,
Office of U.S. Government-Wide Policy
United States Government,
Washington D.C.

"Mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house."

2 Chronicles 7:15,16



"Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the Lord." David called it "a palace for the Lord God." Built on a divine pattern, virtually every aspect of the temple had prophetic meaning. 2 Chronicles 2:4 states, "Now I am about to build a temple for the Name of the Lord

my God and to dedicate it to him for burning fragrant incense before him, for setting out the consecrated bread regularly, and for making burnt offerings every morning and evening and on the Sabbaths, at the New Moons and at the appointed festivals of the Lord our God. This is a lasting ordinance for Israel."

After the dedication of a Church, very often the priests and the members forget these conversations between our Lord God and King Solomon. God granted Solomon's prayer and said, "Now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." But God warned, "If ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them, "everything would come to nothing."

2 Chronicles 7 continues of the Lord God's appearance to King Solomon and assurance to him of His presence and the renewal of the covenant with Israel. The temple and its dedication pleased the Lord. God then encouraged Solomon by the promise that if His judgment (by drought, locusts, or a plague) should fall on the nation for their sin, they need only turn to the Lord in earnest humility and repentance and

they would find forgiveness and restoration. This promise, in answer to Solomon's prayer, was given because God's presence among His people Israel is eternal, focused particularly on the temple. The covenant theme comes through clearly in the Lord's declaration that if Solomon would obey Him he could be assured of God's reciprocal blessing in the perpetuation of his dynastic rule. Conversely, if Solomon and the nation should fall away from the Lord and serve other gods they would be exiled and their magnificent temple destroyed. This does not suggest that the Davidic Covenant is conditional from God's standpoint. He had said it would be forever. But Solomon's enjoyment of it would depend on his obedience to God. Later Solomon did worship other gods, as did many of his successors, so the nation was exiled to Babylon and the temple destroyed. Everyone who would witness the desolation of the land and the temple would know that it was a mark of God's judgment on His people because of their sin.

Israel experienced a great revival at the dedication of the temple. The context was a time of confessing hidden sins and turning to God. God blessed His people with His presence. It was a costly dedication because Solomon sacrificed 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. The king and the people took God seriously that day and the people worshipped for a week. God promised the people that day: "I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice." 2 Chronicles 7:14 - "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Best Wishes

for leading the way in building

the first Indian Orthodox Church in New Zealand

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The people of Israel were the people of God. They had entered into a covenant with Him. How much more you and I are His people because we have entered into a new covenant with Him through the blood of the covenant of Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter said, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Again he said, "But you are chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light . . . (1 Peter 2: 9). We are God's peculiar possession bought with His precious blood. We are called by His name - Christians. We are His unique possession, and we have new responsibilities:

Humbling Ourselves Before God - Humility is ultimately a choice we make, when we choose to see and acknowledge God for who He is and for who He has made us to be. Humility allows us to see that the world does not revolve around us, and that our feelings are not always the correct or important ones. God invites us to humble ourselves if we are serious about receiving from Him. Repentance and humility are linked, for as we confess our sin, as we seek more of Him and more of His holiness in our lives, we are reminded of who He is and who we are. Humility leads to a reminder of our need to be forgiven, that we can never earn or deserve our own salvation, and thus we should worship Him and do His will alone.

Being Humble Like Christ - As believers, we are called to be humble, for we are not God, and because in front of the cross, each of us is equally loved and cherished, and thus there is no reason to be proud or arrogant. In John 13, by washing the disciple's feet, Jesus provides us with a powerful and compelling example of how to be humble. Jesus wrapped a towel around His waist and washed their feet, doing the menial and humble task only a slave would

normally do. Jesus tells them, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." The disciples were shocked by His demonstration of humility. Humility is the opposite of selfishness. We are to care about the wellbeing and the needs of others. We are to love our neighbor as we do ourselves. As Jesus has intentionally chosen humility, so must we,

"Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

for humility leads to new life in Him.

Cultivating a Lifestyle of Humility - Humility is to become a way of life for us, as we learn to live, to love and to be like Jesus Christ, as His faithful disciples. Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 5:5-7, "all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time." We are to humble ourselves, knowing that God will honor us for doing so. Paul echoes this in Ephesians 4:2-3, "Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Humility and patience then go together for only as we choose humility do we gain the grace to be patient, and to be gracious in love. Learn to listen; be willing to admit shortcomings; learn that life is not about you, be aware of others.

Abraham Lincoln said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." God promises faithfully to hear the prayers of His people." Who else in the world guarantees to care and intervene? Abandon all others, but seek the Lord! May God be pleased to call your New Church a house of prayer and say, "I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place as a house of prayer."



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THE POWER OF PRAYER

**In the Name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit,
One God Amen**

Fr. Bishoy Mekhaiel



Firstly congratulations to the Indian Orthodox congregation, for the consecration of the newly built church in the name of St. Dionysius. This church was built with the prayers of all the saints, clergy and congregation, as it is written "I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1)

The Coptic Orthodox community is very happy for our brothers and sisters of the Indian Orthodox community, as this is the second Oriental Orthodox Church built in Auckland New Zealand. We pray that the Lord will let His people be in blessing, thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand, doing His will.

There are many things happening in the world today, things that make us joyful and things that break our hearts.

What we see in Egypt has shocked the entire world and in particular has devastated the entire Coptic community. Yet amongst all of this darkness and injustice St. Paul the apostle comforts us by saying, 'We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-always car-

rying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh." (2 Corinthians 4:8-11)

They may destroy our church buildings and our homes but they will never shake our faith and our love for Our Lord. St. Paul says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

In the Old Testament we see how God protects His people. Moses stretches out His hand in front of the Red Sea and asks God to intervene or else His people will perish. The sea is on one side and Pharaoh and his army are closing in. Then Moses says to the people of Israel, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today.. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." (Exodus 14:13,14)

Prayer is our greatest and most powerful weapon that pierces the heart of God if practiced in humility. Our Lord Jesus Christ says "And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing you will receive" (Matt. 21:22). Our beloved Saviour, we ask of you in faithful prayer today, that you bless all the Christians in the world, protect your people and bless Your churches. St. Paul says, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men." (1 Timothy 2:1).

He also says, "Be anxious for nothing, but In everything by prayer and supplications with thanks giving let your request be known to God" (Philippianes 4:6).



The desert fathers lived this true life of prayer in every minute of every day. It is what strengthened them in their daily struggles against the evil one. I wish to share some of their words on prayer with you as they have much meaning for us today.

Saint John Climacus says, "Prayer is by nature a dialogue between man and God. It unites the soul with its Creator and reconciles the two. Its effect is to hold the world together." Yes this is the power of prayer; it holds the world together. If all of our eyes are gazing towards God in humble prayer, God sees us and hears our prayer and we see each other through God's caring and loving eyes and hence we will learn to love each other through the love that God loved us with, a love that showed amazing sacrifice on the cross in order to grant us eternal life with Him.

St. Ephraim the Syrian says, "Virtues are formed by prayer. Prayer preserves temperance, suppresses anger, restrains pride and envy, draws down the Holy Spirit into the soul and raises man to heaven,"

We do not want our prayers to be words merely uttered from our lips as they have little power if they don't come from the heart. Our prayers need to be turned into a way of life, a life that is holy, a life that is righteous and a life that is circumspect. Only then can we through prayer be transfigured and become all flame. Prayer indeed purifies the soul from all its evil desires just as gold is purified when put in the fire.

More of the sayings of this great ascetic:

"Fervent prayer and meditation burn up the passions and evil thoughts like a consuming fire. It gives wings to the soul, it creates a spiritual mind whose ministry before God is not by the lips but by the spirit."

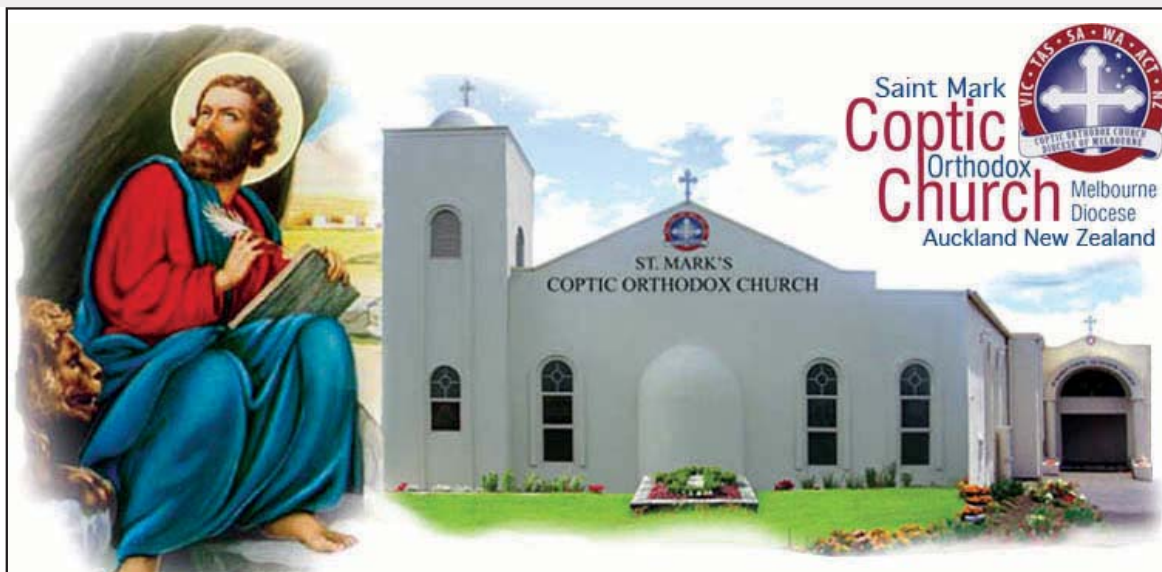
St. John Climacus takes us to a higher level of prayer by saying, "Intelligent silence is the mother of prayer."

This is the type of silence we all need now in order to give a chance for God to speak to us and to grant us His divine comfort and to show us the way forward. I want to end with a story from our Coptic history that shows us the power of fervent prayer.

In the 10th Century the Coptic Orthodox Church under the leadership of Pope Abraam (62nd Pope of Alexandria) was placed under severe pressure by the Islamic ruler Mo-Ezz El-Din El Fatemi. He ordered the patriarch to fulfil the verse that says that if you have faith as small as a mustard seed that you can move mountains. So he ordered him to find someone amongst his people to move the Mokattam mountain or else he would exterminate all of the Christians with the sword. The patriarch headed immediately for the Church of the Virgin Mary, famously known as the Hanging Church that exists till this day and called upon his clergy and people to fast and pray for three days. After spending the three days in total abstinence and fasting and fervent prayers, Saint Mary the Mother of God appeared to him on the dawn of the third day and told him not to be afraid and that the Lord is with him and will lift this tribulations from him and the people of God. It was fulfilled through a righteous man called Simon who was a tanner.

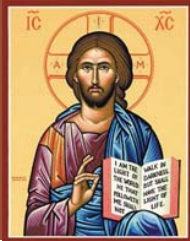
Our history is not archaic but alive and is being renewed in every generation. Our history books are full of stories of courageous men, women, children and priests who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of Christ the King.

May God bestow His peace on Egypt, India and on all its citizens and protect the persecuted Christians from all evil and hatred targeted towards them. May He bless His churches and protect them. Glory be to God forever Amen.



A Brief History of the Eastern Star of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

Oommen Philips
Parish Secretary



INTRODUCTION

The Christian Church in India, traces its origin to the arrival of St Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Lord Jesus Christ, to the Malabar Coast in 52 AD. The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is the section of St Thomas Christians in India that comes under the Catholicate of the East, based at Devalokam, Kottayam, Kerala, India.

FORMATION

The dawn of the new millennium witnessed many of our Church members migrating to New Zealand. We started as a prayer group in March 2001 with a few families, in Auckland. Gradually the group grew in numbers and desired to become a worshipping community.

On 15th February 2003, a meeting of about 30 families was convened at the Salvation Army hall at 218 Mt. Albert Rd, Sandringham, Auckland, where a committee was formed for the purpose of organising community worship. This congregation met frequently during the Great Lent evenings.

Metropolitan Dr Yakob Mar Irenaios of Madras Diocese, under whose jurisdiction the Far East Pacific region falls, heard about this congregation and the desire for conducting Holy Eucharist. As per His Grace's instructions Rev. Fr. M.D.Varghese, Vicar of St.Mary's Cathedral, Melbourne visited Auckland and celebrated the first Holy Eucharist of our Church in New Zealand. This was on 29th March 2003, at the St.Albans Anglican Church, Balmoral, Auckland. As per the suggestion of the Metropolitan, the congregation chose the name of St Dionysius (Vattasseril) as its patron saint.

OUR PATRON SAINT

Saint Geevarghese Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril, was the Malankara Metropolitan of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Indian Orthodox Church). "Malankara Sabha Bhasuran' (The Great Luminary of the Indian Orthodox Church), is a title bestowed on him in recognition of his contribution to the Church. He was a dedicated and devoted man of prayer worth his call; full of determination and dynamism.

He was a good orator well aware of the importance of vitality and moral persuasiveness of words. He avoided spiritual hypocrisy and arrogance throughout his life. Prayers and fasting were the pillars of his spiritual foundation. In spite of his busy life, he was able to focus on the study of Holy Bible every day and found time for private prayers. Many recognised that he was a living saint among them.

CHURCH SERVICE IN THE EARLY YEARS

At the congregation's request, Rev. Fr. Dr. Joseph Zachariah from Chennai came to conduct the Holy Week service in April 2003 with the consent of the Diocesan Metropolitan. The services were held at the St. Chad's Anglican Church, Sandringham.

On 9th April 2003, Mar Irenaios sent a kalpana (encyclical) declaring the congregation as a parish and a Parish Managing Committee was appointed. Thus the St Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church (SDIOC), came into being and is the first parish in Chennai Diocese to be named after St.Dionysius, the illuminator of the church. On 7th May 2003, the SDIOC was incorporated in New Zealand.

H.G. Dr. Abraham Mar Severios, who was then Bishop for Ankamally Diocese, en route to the US, visited New Zealand from 15/5/2003 to 30/5/2003. H.G celebrated Holy Eucharist twice in Auckland. During this visit, the city of Hamilton had our first Holy Eucharist celebration on May 25, 2003 at the St.Luke's Church, Melville, Hamilton. H.G. also visited community members in Wellington and addressed an ecumenical prayer meeting.

Our mentor and Diocesan Metropolitan His Grace Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios came on his first visit from 9/8/2003 to 15/8/2003. His Grace conducted Holy Eucharist on Sunday and on the Feast of Dormition of the Holy Theotokos. Four boys were ordained to serve at the altar. The Metropolitan initiated the formation of the spiritual organisations such as Sunday School, Prayer Group, Youth Movement and Martha Mariam Samajam. John Varghese was appointed as Sunday school Headmaster. Mar Irenaios also launched a website for the parish; which was developed by Mr Cherry Cherian. His Grace visited every household of the parishioners and exhorted to search for eligible members to enrol in the parish.

In the absence of a resident Vicar, the Vicars of our Churches in Melbourne & Sydney were instructed to conduct occasional services in Auckland. Accordingly, Vicar of our Sydney St.Thomas Cathedral, Rev. Fr. Thomas Varghese also celebrated Holy Qurbana in Auckland on August 23, 2003.

Later Rev. Fr. T.G. John took charge as the first resident vicar from 26th Sept 2003 in Auckland. Fr. John conducted regular church services and revamped the spiritual organisations. P.J. John was appointed as Prayer Group secretary, Ashok Varghese as Youth

Co-ordinator and Annie Shiju Mathew as Martha Mariam Samajam Secretary. Fr. John conducted the first Holy Eucharist in Wellington on Nov. 22, 2003.

During the second visit of the diocesan Metropolitan in November 2003, His Grace expressed the desire for a permanent place of worship. Our membership was growing and temporary set up for every service was a hard task. The Parish general body reviewed the parish accounts during the visit. The Metropolitan also visited our parishioners in Wellington & Palmerston North.

Rev. Fr. T.G. John was on visit visa and left in early February 2004. Rev. Fr. Varghese Vaalayil, assistant Vicar of our St. Mary's Cathedral in KL, Malaysia, conducted the first parish Feast of St Dionysius later in the month at St. Chad's, Sandringham. In April 2004, Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa, Vicar of our St. Mary's Cathedral in KL, came to lead our Holy week services; these were held at the St Mary's church, Parnell.

Mar Irenaios came on a third visit in April 2004; this visit was used for building up relationship between members within and for developing contacts with other church leaders.

Rev. Fr. Varghese Philip Idichandy arrived and took charge as vicar on May 22, 2014. From then on we had regular church services on Sundays and the regular functioning of the spiritual organisations. During his term which lasted three years, several families were added to the church. But venues were difficult to get for regular worship. The parish became more aware for a permanent place of worship. Rev. Fr. Idichandy's tenure also kick-started the public fund raising events beginning with a Food festival, which eventually turned out to be an annual event for fundraising in the years ahead.

A RARE INCIDENT

One day during that difficult period for us, Mother Wendy who was in charge of the St. Alban's church, had a vision of St. Dionysius. It was Mother Wendy who permitted us to have our first Holy Eucharist at the St. Alban's Church. She used to attend our services sometimes. In her vision, St. Dionysius told her that his people didn't have a place to worship and requested her to accommodate them in her church. He also said that the present membership in her Church would grow. St. Alban's had only a dozen or less members for years. A few days later, she saw the emergence of new members at her church and suddenly recollected the vision she had few days ago. She then summoned our parish P.R.O and narrated the vision. She suggested replacing an existing shrine they had inside the St. Alban's Church and agreed to call it the Shrine of St. Dionysius. The vision she had and the outcome was informed to our parishioners and they were overjoyed to have a shrine dedicated in the name of their patron saint; especially in one of the oldest churches in Auckland. The shrine was dedicated accordingly and regular intercession prayers started at this place.

Consequently, towards the end of the tenure of Fr. Idichandy, with the generous donation of one of our members, the Auckland Car Club hall at 44 Stoddard Road, Mount Roskill was leased for a year to conduct

our services on Sundays. Also there was a proposal to develop it to a community centre to fulfil the social objectives of our church.

Rev. Fr. Idichandy completed his tenure in June 2007 and the new incumbent Rev. Fr. Shinu K Thomas took charge in June 2007.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

The need for a permanent place for worship was felt from the first year of parish formation. A building committee was formed during the tenure of the first resident vicar on Nov. 09, 2003 and the committee did some initial studies regarding possibilities and generated awareness among members for a permanent place for worship.

In the initial years of our formation, many a plots and buildings were shortlisted but we were not successful to materialise a deal due to the major reason – finance.

Fundraising events like Onam Feasts, Easter Feasts, English & Hindi dramas, Chocolate sales, Sausage Sizzle etc. were conducted. There are many of our members who toiled for the success of these events; their efforts and contribution is greatly acknowledged. We donated a part of all public fund raising proceeds to various NZ charity organisations.

The parish General Body presided by Rev. Fr. Shinu Thomas on May 11, 2008 revamped the building committee with new members. As per the standing instruction from the diocesan metropolitan - one individual one position-, Mr John Varghese relinquished his position as Headmaster and was appointed as Building Committee convener. This building committee finally managed to purchase a plot at 55 Keeling road, Henderson on Feb 12, 2009 with a mortgage from the ANZ bank.

During this time our parent Church ordained seven new bishops and our Diocesan Metropolitan Dr. Mar Irenaios moved to the Diocese of Kochi. Young Bishop Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros was our new Diocesan Metropolitan. Dr. Mar Diascoros on his maiden visit to NZ visited the newly purchased plot and conducted special prayers along with the parishioners on Dec. 6, 2009. The foundation stone for the new Church was also blessed on the occasion.

Finance was again an issue and the mortgage was a hurdle to start construction activities. Without a balanced income it was not feasible to obtain bank loans for construction activities. In the meantime, the resource consent application was submitted in July 2010 and the same was granted in September 2010. Various options to setup a basic hall to conduct services were discussed but all remained in paper.

Rev. Fr. Shinu K Thomas completed his tenure and left for India on March 11, 2011 and the new Vicar Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai Pulickal took charge on March 29, 2011.

'Prayers can move mountains' was the message conveyed by the new Vicar and that is what exactly happened. Special prayers were conducted at every single church service in Auckland from the beginning of his term. There was increased vigour to start construction of the church building.

The parishioners volunteered to cut down the trees as per the directives of an arborist and the land was ready to start construction activities by May 23, 2011.

The building committee was further expanded with specific assignments such as Advisory, Technical, Finance & Publicity etc. A core committee was formed comprising of the Parish Managing Committee & Building committee members. The core committee decided to first repay the existing bank loan and then pursue a new loan for the building project.

Meanwhile, a review of the building plan for which we obtained consent, resulted in the inclusion of a parsonage on a mezzanine floor inside the church building above the office & kitchen block and also allow more open space on the frontage along with a portico. Accordingly the plans were redrawn and submitted for council approval.

The bank loan for the land acquisition was paid off and a new loan was obtained for church construction from Presbyterian Savings and Investments Ltd.

It was during this time H.G. Zachariah Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan for Malabar diocese visited us en route to Australia. Through God's will, His Grace was bestowed with the distinguished honor of laying the foundation stone of our Church building on Nov. 12, 2012. We express our sincere gratitude to His Grace for laying the foundation of our Church.

There were several other hurdles such as budgetary constraints & quote evaluations to overcome. We decided to plan the construction in two or three stages depending on the funds. The first stage was the completion of the physical structure including the basic amenities. 2nd stage comprised of furnishing the altar area and interiors and finally in the 3rd stage the exterior including the portico and facade as per the 3D image of the fully finished church approved by the core-committee.

Quotations were obtained for the first stage work. The appointment of the architects and builders were based on the lowest bidder. Finally, the much awaited construction activities started on Feb. 6, 2013, Stage-1 was scheduled to complete by end of October 2013. Unfortunately, the builders had problems one after another and the deadline extended. The obstacles went on tormenting us and the work had to stop after a few months. The scheduled consecration date of Feb 6 & 7, 2014 had to be postponed.

When there was no end date at sight, a new builder (Mr Thomas Philip of Philip Timbers Ltd) was assigned with the responsibility in May 2014. Simultaneously it was decided to find the possibility of completing part of the Stage 2 & 3 works. Thankfully the new builders could complete most of the major works by October 2014.

Meanwhile, we had issues with the venue where we were conducting our Sunday services and had no other option but to start using our new Church building, by setting up a make-shift altar, before consecration. With the permission of the Diocesan Metropolitan, the new church building was used for our service for the first time on the Feast day of St.Gregorios of Parumala on Nov. 2, 2014 with great emotions.

The new dates for the consecration was finalised and conducted on Feb 13 & 14, 2015. A separate report on the consecration is given in page 107 in this souvenir.

SERVICE VENUES

Besides St. Alban's - Balmoral, St. Chad's - Sandringham and St. Mary's - Parnell we had conducted services at Holy Trinity Cathedral - Parnell, RSA Hall Balmoral, Auckland Car Club - Mt Roskill, Seventh-day Adventist Church -Royal Oak, Roskill Youth Zone - Sandringham. Some venues had been used repeatedly and St. Albans church had been accommodating us whenever we had difficulty for a venue.

SPIRITUAL ORGANISATIONS

The Sunday school had been functioning regularly from October 2003. Apart from the Sunday classes, there used to be OVBS every year and kids camp occasionally.

Bala-Samajam for Children, MGOCSM for Students and OCYM for youth, Prayer Groups & Martha Mariam Samajam have been functioning. These organisations help the children and youth to develop their presentation skills and nourish them in their spiritual growth.

The MGOCSM & OCYM also conduct youth programmes and help with fundraising events. The Prayer Group & Martha Mariam Samajam conduct meetings where the members study Bible and discuss relevant topics and matters for spiritual nourishment. They also take the lead in the charity activities of the church.

The Choir group assists at the services at the church and also performs upon invitation at gatherings hosted by other sister churches and social organisations with the approval of the Parish Managing Committee.

There is also presence of St.Dionysius Orthodox Forum (SDOF), Auckland Chapter and Akhila Malankara Orthodox Shishrusha Sangam (AMOSS). A new initiative by our present Vicar for the young couples, Dionysius Young Couple Association (DYCA) has been functioning since 2013.

OTHER MATTERS/EVENTS

- The first youth camp was organised in January 2005 at the Motu Moana Campsite in Auckland. Cor Episcopa Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa was the dean for the camp. During this visit he also conducted the first Holy Eucharist for our faithful in Palmerston North.
- An annual event named Pentecost Eve Musical Feast was launched on the eve of 2008 Pentecost day. This event brings together several churches from different cultures to magnify God in their respective languages.
- The Fifth anniversary of the parish formation, named Pentum Glorium was celebrated on June 2, 2008 at the Kelston Girls' High School auditorium. Honourable minister Chris Carter and the Indian High Commissioner K. P. Earnest were chief guests. The parish members entertained the gathering with cultural programmes. A souvenir also was released at the meeting.
- The Holy Week Service for 2010 was led by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios. There was the ritual of washing of feet on Maundy Thursday which was conducted for the first time in our Church in Auckland.



Thank you
For all the favours
received
Inserted by
Believer

- The parish had the privilege to preserve the old manuscript diary of its Patron Saint Dionysius. The preservation work was carried out by a world renowned preserver in Auckland. The preservation process is expected to add another 500 years of added shelf life to this Holy Relic. This is currently under the safe custody of Mar Irenaios at the Bishop's house, till archives are set up at the Old Seminary, Kottayam for safe custody of such treasures.
- The congregations in Hamilton & Wellington have become independent parishes in the name of St.Gregorios and Mar Dionysius respectively.

VISITORS

Besides the Metropolitans and priests mentioned earlier, following dignitaries also visited us during the last 12 years.

- Late Archbishop Aghan Baliozian of the Armenian Orthodox Church
- Very Rev. Lazarus Ramban Cor Episcopa (Toronto)
- Rev. Fr. M. K. Kurian (Chennai)
- Rev. Fr. Philip Kuruvilla (Nagpur)
- Rev. Fr. Johnson Thomas (New Jersey)
- Mr. Mons Joseph (Hon. Minister of Kerala for PWD)
- Rev. Fr. M. C. George Meenchira (Kottayam)
- Rev. Fr. Abey M Chacko (Chennai)
- Rev. Fr. Abin Abraham (Kandanad East)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Over the years, from inception, we had been helped by several people. We owe gratitude to:

- Our Diocesan Metropolitans and Vicars who led us since our formation.
- Mother Wendy who provided the venue for our first church service at St Alban's Balmoral. Helped us to obtain St.Chad's, Sandringham to conduct our services. Prayed for us and delivered several devotional addresses. Gave us the opportunity to set up a shrine at the St Alban's.
- Rt. Revd Richard Randerson (Retd.) gave us permission to use the iconic St Mary's Church and the Holy Trinity Cathedral at Parnell for conducting our services. Most remarkably, when our infant parish was faced with toddler issues, it was the magnanimity of Bishop Randerson who provided us with accommodation facilities for our new celibate Vicar at the prestigious cathedral complex for a period of three years. He was kind enough in inviting our church and giving our priest an opportunity at the all religions memorial event conducted at the Holy Trinity Cathedral for the people who passed away during the 2004 Tsunami, a function attended by the PM and the Governor General.
- Rev. Fr. Bishoy Mekhail, Vicar of St.Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Auckland (our first contact in the Oriental Orthodox community in Auckland; A well-wisher and adviser always).
- Dn. Aayad Salim Yousef from the Syriac Orthodox Church (provided suggestions for church formation

and registration, delivered devotional address at prayer meetings, participated along with his priest Aboona Moosa for our first Holy Eucharist)

- Fr. George Ihsan Bosauder, of Auckland Mission of St George under, The Greek Orthodox Church; Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East, who is a well-wisher and supporter.
 - Jacob Mathew (Jojo, Malaysia) - God wonderfully suits men to the work he designs them for. The Spirit of the Lord knows how to fit men for the occasions and Jojo was one such for us.
 - T.M. Mathai (Reji) of Neema Builders, Pathanamthitta who has voluntarily drawn many preliminary architectural plans and designed various 3D images for our Church. He has utilized the talents and creative abilities by conceptualizing this Godly abode.
 - To all the Parishioners and well-wishers who helped us with their prayers and in many other ways like various voluntary work, fundraising events, sponsors of events, donations etc.
 - To the Parish & Building committee members who served during various periods.
- May Lord Almighty reward you all for what you have done to glorify His name.

VICARS WHO LED US

- Rev. Fr. M.D.Varghese
- Rev. Fr. T.G. John
- Rev. Fr. Varghese Philip Idichandy
- Rev. Fr. Shinu K Thomas
- Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai Pulickal

HON. TRUSTEES & SECRETARIES

- M/s K. N. Varghese, E. M. Jacob, K. Beno Samuel & Baby Kuriakose served as Trustees and
- M/s Philip Ayyamplackal, Oommen Philips & Santosh John as Secretaries over various periods.

CONCLUSION

Twelve years is not a big period for a parish in a Church which records a history of 2000 years. The God who has led the Israelites' wilderness journey between the Exodus and their entry into the Promised Land has led us all this while and will guide us until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ's second coming.

May our Church fulfil its purpose as stated in Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

May our faithful hold steadfast to the teaching of St.James who exhorts in his epistle, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." ●

VICARS WHO LED US



Rev. Fr. Dr. M.D.Varghese
March 2003 to September 2003 &
Feb 2004 to May 2004



Very Rev. Fr. T.G. John Cor- Episcopa
Sept 2003 to February 2004



Rev. Fr. Varghese Philip Idichandy
May 2004 to June 2007



Rev. Fr. Shinu K Thomas
June 2007 to March 2011



Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai Pulickal from March 2011 to April 2015

Vicar's family



Rev.Fr. Biju Mathai, Teena Biju, Diyamol & Danmon



Parish Members



Parish Managing Committee (2013-14)

Sitting from left: Sabu Skaria, Oommen Philips, Fr. Biju Mathai, E.M.Jacob, K. Beno Samuel
 Standing from left: Saji Pappen, Saji Mathew, Sajan Uthup



Parish Managing Committee (2014-15) with Diocesan Metropolitan

Sitting from left: Oommen Philips, Fr. Biju Mathai, H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros, E.M.Jacob, Shirli John Varghese
 Standing from left: K. Beno Samuel, Jilo Jose, Saji Pappen, Sajan Uthup



Building Committee

Sitting from left: Philip Ayyamplackal, E.M.Jacob, Fr.Biju Mathai, John Varghese, Saji Mathew
 Standing from left: Isaac Cherian, K.N. Varughese, Oommen Philips, K.Beno Samuel, Saji Pappen



Core Committee with Diocesan Metropolitan

Sitting from left: Oommen (Saji) Philips, Fr.Biju Mathai, H.G Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros, E.M.Jacob, Shirli John Varghese
 Standing from left -first row: K.N. Varughese, K.Beno Samuel, Philip Ayyamplackal, Saji Pappen, Isaac Cherian, John Varghese
 Standing from left -last row: Sajan Uthup, Manoj Philip, Saji Mathew, Jilo Jose

CONSECRATION COMMITTEE CONVENERS



Philip Ayyamplackal
 Consecration Committee
 General Convener



K. Beno Samuel
 Reception & Program



Chacko Thomas
 Consecration Service



Manoj Philip
 Souvenir



Bibi Mary Sabu,
 Food, Hygiene & Decorations



Ashok Varghese
 Transportation & Logistics

Spiritual Organizations



Sunday School



MGOCSM



Prayer Meeting



Altar Assistants with Bishops and Priests on Consecration Day



Women's League (Mortha Mariam Samajam)



Dionysius Young Couple Association (DYCA)



Saint Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Vattasseril is a rare spiritual phenomenon, the like of which is neither seeable nor foreseeable in the history of the Indian Church of St. Thomas. The hardships he confronted throughout his reign as the Primate of the Malankara Church, the cross he bore all alone, going up the Golgotha of the safe stature of the church almost every day, the legal 'battles' he fought for the Church, the victories he won, the laurels which he merited - all these together constitute a 'brilliance' in the whole history of Nazranis. At the same time, he faithfully kept his devotions, with tears rolling down his cheeks in the

set the Malankara Church free from the unjustified domination of the Syrian head. He did it to the utmost, traversing the slippery and often dangerous quicksands, which bore the stamp of treachery. The Sabha Bhasuran, the Illuminator of the Church, never faulted nor faltered in his God given mission. But one thing is sure and amazing — he never uttered a word denigrating any one, even the Syrian Church head, who tried to cow him down by hook or by crook. The rest is history. He won the day, after a long day's labour and waits in Paradise to wear the Crown from his Lord, which he rightly deserves!

Sri. C. K. Kochukoshy IAS, a senior retired civil servant, has written a well-researched and inspiring biography of St Dionysius. The biographer, like child Ignatius in the lap of Jesus, was blessed to sit in the

A RARE MIX OF HOLINESS AND HEROISM

Metropolitan Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios



dead of night, as he knelt down to pour his heart and soul before the Lord, whom he perceived in secret.

Those were times when some people in Malankara were seized with the "Antiochiane Spring". This resulted in a split in the rank and file of the faithful. Patriarch Peter III, the first Syrian Church head to visit Malankara had earlier made the innocent Nazrani to repeat a strain which had not even an iota of historical basis and veracity — 'that Malankara, from time immemorial was ruled by the Syrian Church head! This fallacy was repeated unashamedly by a few; and that had resulted in the split which later was caused by the brazen and uncanonical misdeeds of Patriarch Abdulla of Syria. The damage done to the Indian Church by the unlawful, indefensible and crazy acts of this 'servant of God', shall ever remain as a black chapter in the entire history of Christendom'.

Saint Dionysius was ordained by God with an assigned task — to play the role of Moses of old, and

lap of Vattasseril Thirumeni, who is his great uncle, when the former was a small kid. Though he keeps the standard and decorum of a bureaucrat, it never emits an air of 'still dryness'; instead, the descriptions 'flow' like a clean spring, which is clear enough to expose its floor; and flowing incessantly with a grandeur and regal splendour. The author never for once tries to twist details of history and is honest and unbiased to the core.'

Speaking in literary terms, it is hardly an easy task to portray a unique personality, who was a spiritual giant, a genius and an able and conscientious administrator, a visionary and a champion of ecumenism - all rolled into one - through the pages of a book, however much the author is capable. But, it must be said to the credit of Sri Kochukoshy that he has done a marvellous job. The book is not merely an appreciation of the life and contributions of St. Dionysius; but actually, it is a true mirror held against the social

and church history of the St. Thomas Christians of the times. The book is so absorbing, that once you start perusing its pages, you will always feel like finishing it at one sitting! The author had tremendously succeeded in bringing to the fore the myriad facets of Vattasseril Thirumeni, especially his personal prayer life. Manalil Yakob Kathanar, who was the secretary to Vattasseril Thirumeni for long, tells us that Thirumeni never wanted his spiritual journey to be known by any one. He never liked any body to know that he was emerging as a spiritual warrior through the years, following the example of his Guru and Mentor, Parumala Thirumeni. The spiritual exercises which he undertook were all in private; and as days passed by, he was getting all lighted up with a brilliance of the "Uncreated Light" of Mount Tabor. St.Gregorios of Parumala was his example for everything; and he held his Guru as a jewel in his heart.

Come what may, Mar Dionysius would never deflect from Truth, Honesty and Dharma, but he will not allow any 'invading force' to cause any damage to the Independence and autocephaly of his Church. This he had taken to his heart as a God given assignment. He wouldn't mind, if It comes to his losing his position

or even life for the sake of maintaining the independence and dignity of his Mother Church. The Institution of the Catholicate of the East was established as an icon and undying symbol of the historic stature of this ancient Church. Some people misunderstood this stance as arrogance; but keeping one's household safe from thieves and burglars and occupation forces is the duty of the leader; otherwise, it would certainly amount to dereliction of the assigned 'responsibility'. Those who have tried to persecute and oppose the Sabha Bhasuran would realize one day that this gem of a Thirumeni was not arrogant, but a disciplined and saintly soldier of Christ!"

Sri. C. K. Kochukoshy deserves all accolades for writing this biography first in Malayalam; and now for translating it into English, so that there is going to be a wider readership for this book par excellence. By writing this book the author has done yeoman service to the Malankara Orthodox Church, by highlighting the virtues of this beloved saint at a time when a few self seekers have renewed their efforts to manhandle the dignity of the Church. May God, whom St. Dionysius worshipped and suffered for, give the light of Truth to all who are interested in the history of the Church of St Thomas in India!



Congratulations and prayers for your every blessing

Mother Wendy Cranston

*Day and night, may your eyes watch over this temple.
over this place in which you have promised to put your name.
Listen to the prayer which your servant offers in this place.
Listen to the entreaties of your servant and of your people Israel:
whenever they pray in this place, listen from the place where you
reside in heaven: and when you hear, forgive. (2 Ch. 6:20,21)*



About twelve years ago, early in 2003, two gentlemen came to visit me. They had been part of a prayer group since 2001, now they wished to go further, to ask if it were possible for them, their families and their compatriots to use our Church for their worship.

I remember thinking that I hoped, were I in Kerala, that someone would help me to find a place where I might worship according to my own customs and traditions. Only a few weeks after this meeting, the Revd Fr. M. D. Varghese celebrated their first Holy Qurbana at St. Alban's Church. There I witnessed beauty and mystery, but also experienced a deep sense of familiarity in this worship. For me the pattern of the service, the beauty of the chanting, and the clouds of incense, opened the doors of heaven. Of course, whenever we pray, we enter into the Divine Presence and share the reflection of glory which is eternal and precious. Equally, sometimes we are more aware of this reflection than at other times.

The life of their church progressed rapidly, in May of the same year the gathering became a Parish. The fledgling community was named after the blessed Saint Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius.

In ancient times when Greek Cities founded a colony they sent with their émigrés a pot of Holy fire lit from the Sacred Hearth of their home town. We see an echo of this in the Olympic flame, we see it also in the procession of a Parish from one place of worship to another. This is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible reality - no traveller leaves home without that inner flame, some sense of who they are and of all that is precious to them. In a way, of course, this happens to everyone, whether they have 'left home' or not, for that inner sanctuary is not sim-

ply a bunch of memories, but rather a set of aspirations, and a search to incarnate all that is special and worthy in our heritage into our everyday way of life. It is a guide to all our conscious decisions, the voice of our Lord in our inner ear. My visitors were carrying with them the light of their faith, and in many ways they were bringing us that lamp of faith, enlightening us in the truths passed down from an Apostle whose unique vision sharpened and broadened the legacy of our own. They also added another strand to the story of salvation which began thousands of years ago when Abraham left his homeland and travelled to Canaan. The gift of hospitality contains its own gift of joy, and the growth of mutual understanding is, though sometimes difficult, always enriching.

The Bible holds within its pages insights into the meaning of our own story, and shows us how to understand the spiritual lessons in the story of the growth of this small prayer group into the community we see today, as we celebrate their great achievement. Remember that when the Patriarch Jacob and his sons were threatened by famine and left Canaan for Egypt all those centuries ago, there was no question in their minds that they would need certain things from home, things and behaviour despite the famine, there was much that was precious and needful that they could, and did, take with them: Prayer in the evening, the company of those they loved, their sheep. Later, for those who left Egypt to return to the Promised Land there was much to carry with them. True, they ate their last meal standing, with few possessions, but there were now memories, some of them of painful servitude, of the loss of their new born sons, but also the knowledge of the wonderful things the Lord had done for them and in them. Miriam's dancing after the crossing of the Red Sea was an act of joy and worship, it is one of the most

ancient hymns preserved for us from the past. These histories show us parallels to the humble beginnings that led to the first Holy Qurbana in New Zealand. At the very least they show us how even the works of a small prayer group, can be understood in the light of that astonishing love and holiness which belongs in the Spiritual journey of a life time of faith and hope.

What was happening then, and what happens to us, is that gradually our sanctuaries and our treasures become part of our inner lives, they become portable. Easier to carry even than a book, the treasures of our faith come with us wherever we go, and we learn to know them more deeply and keenly as we move through the desert of wilderness. As the Psalmist prays. 'Blessed are those who, going through the Vale of Misery make of it a well.' Gradually we learn that God himself comes with us, closer than memory, closer, even, than breath itself. But this portable faith demands outward and visible expression, a place of worship, a place to celebrate our shared history and our shared calling. This God who cries out within us is the Wisdom who cries out in the streets, and the God who asks us to Love one another. This is the God of whom King Solomon exclaimed - 'You who cannot be contained by heaven and earth - will You live in this little building we have made?

God's answer is, of course, both yes and no. The pillars of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night become an internal sense of direction, but also the memory of shared experience in troubling times: of hope in difficulty, and healing love, and of shared faith and work. Our friends have become companions, and our shared history is precious. The Tent of the Presence and the Ark of the Covenant, teach us to pray and to desire to build a special place where we may meet with our God, and speak with Him as one speaks with a friend. Yes, the whole earth speaks of Him, even if sometimes it seems that all around us speak in a foreign tongue. Certainly we can -and perhaps wish to - worship in open fields, and in streets, and in our own gardens - but this 'prayer without ceasing' grows quicker when it is focused by regular worship and informed by regular teaching, as well as by the times when we can turn aside, away from mundane events to attend to the holiness of God. Perhaps we grow even more swiftly when the going is hard, and the togetherness is a challenge. To eat together becomes sacred at home as we absorb the meaning of the sacred gifts shared in the sacred home of God, in the sharing of 'the good gift, the gift of joy. Every celebration of God's presence tends to reveal God's presence also in our mundane lives, and the more

we invite Him in and turn to him, the more our lives begin to incarnate our Spiritual understanding.

So, now, you have built the Lord God a house. The wandering Aramean, the strangers in a strange land have carried holiness with them, the tent of meeting and the gift of land has at last been granted a strong foundation and a noble purpose. The people of Saint Dionysius have a home of their own. Such hard work you have done, and such joy it has brought you! As the dancing of King David echoed the dancing of Miriam, so does your joy and your procession wind at last, not to the end of the story, but perhaps to the end of the first part of this story. In this land you now belong, and on this land you have a right to put your foot. You have the right to speak your mind and your own truth: and on the day of dedication, and in the consecration of this new church and community centre I fully expect the cloud of glory to come down upon you all and that the love and joy of this beginning will be a source of tenderness and thankfulness that will last throughout the whole life of all those who are its witnesses.

In the book of the Chronicles we read that the Priests of the temple had all purified themselves, whatever their function, and that they were so overwhelmed they could barely speak. But King Solomon the wise uttered a prayer which becomes a pattern for the Priest who stands between the altar and the door, praying for his flock. As we turn to the East of our spiritual homeland to pray, and as we turn to the hearth of our Church and Community to open our minds and our hearts to each other and to our God, so does God turn His eyes upon us, and when we pray, He hears us, wherever we may be. Even so does our Lord Christ lift up his intercession to the Father, and fills heaven with His love of us, and even so does the Holy and Perfect Spirit fill, not our church alone, but every single one of us with the love which is God himself. One might read through the prayer of Holy King Solomon, and pray for all ones family and friends, ones Bishops and Priests, and never come to an end of the thoughts that overwhelm and fulfil all at once.

Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place.

Now therefore arise. O LORD God, into thy resting place. thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests. O LORD God, be clothed with salvation. and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. (2 Ch 6:40,41) ●



THE FLAME OF FAITH OF THE FAR EAST

St. Dionysius Orthodox Congregation
New Zealand

Very Rev. Fr. T. G. John Cor-Episcopa
Thengumtharayil



The Holy Gospel was brought in and caused the birth of Christianity in India by establishing the Church of Malankara by St. Thomas the apostle of Christ in AD 52. The Church was destined to grow fast and today flourishes beyond many geographies. The Malankara Church occupies an enviable rank in the array of World Churches. It is with a sense of gratitude to the Almighty and esteem on our Church that we witness Shrines, Prayer halls, Churches and parishes of the Church of Malankara prosper in America, Europe, Africa, Australia and the Far East. Everywhere the faithful are being governed and administered by an absolute hierarchy in a democratic and systematic framework.

The descendants of the Church of Malankara made their presence in New Zealand long back. There was a lacuna of able leadership in the early days of its existence. Naturally they were constrained to move with the Evangelicals for their spiritual rituals. Later the religious fervor and prayerful wishes of our brethren along with the unparalleled vision of Yakob Mar Irenaios, the Metropolitan of Madras climaxed into the formation of the first parish of the Church of Malankara in New Zealand.

I was fortunate enough to get authorized by H.H Marthoma Mathews II, the Catholicos of the East and Yakob Mar Irenaios to steer the ship as the first resident Vicar of the new Indian Orthodox Church in New Zealand. Though we were in minor league initially the enthusiasm of our devotees enabled me to commence services of our Church in Auckland centered around the Anglican Parish Church. Soon we could also em-

bark our services in the capital city of Wellington with the strong support of the Caldean Church.

From the very beginning we could also initiate the formation of all the spiritual organization and fellowships of the Malankara Church namely Sunday school, Marthamariam Samajam, Prayer group, Youth Movement, Bala Samajam etc. I am proud to recall that all the dear Children of Our Church cooperated wholeheartedly and nurtured strong fraternity and solidarity with the Orthodox stream. The participation by the faithful had been extremely noteworthy and much more meritorious in celebrating the feasts of St. Mary and solemnizing the anniversaries of Saints and our blessed patriarchs. We have been nurturing and praying fervently since the inception of our community for having a permanent dwelling for our Divine Lord in New Zealand. I am extremely delighted to appreciate the valiant efforts of our accomplished devotees. You have conceived and caused the realization of our long cherished dream- a worthy abode to our Lord in the name of St. Dionysius of Vattasseril.

Congratulations to all my beloved children.

I am sure you will be sincere in your words and deeds to foster the spirit of Orthodoxy in your children and initiate them to be the strong Ambassadors of our Church. Let this House of Prayer and worship to the Almighty – St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Church be the Flame of our Faith in the Far East. Our progress should not be hampered by any sort of conflicts or petty disputes. We have to ensure our commitment to our heritage especially when we are against many odds, moving with the East and confronting the West.

Family is the cornerstone of our spiritual superstructure. A loyal spiritual family ensures our destiny. Our

Lord Jesus should undoubtedly be the master of our families and fraternities. My beloveds, by divine providence, I was lucky enough to be a humble contributor to your great endeavor. I am glad to recall and retain the golden moments with you all. You are all in my prayers and services. The cooperation and regards that were bestowed on me by my sweet lings over there still lingers in my memories'.

Your prayers and cooperation are highly invited and appreciated as I have been assigned to be in

charge as Managing Director of an old age home for clergy, "Mar Thoma Mathews I Vaideeka Sadanam". The aged, hapless and sick clergy are offered love and care and medical assistance at this home.

Let me leave by tendering you all and the Parish to our Lord through St. Thomas, the apostle, Mar Gregorios of Parumala and Mar Dionysius. GOD BLESS YOU.

(Rev. Fr. T. G. John was our first Resident Vicar from Sept 2003 till February 2004)



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IDENTITY CRISIS (?) OF THE INDIAN ORTHODOX DIASPORA

Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurian

(Principal, Orthodox Theological Seminary,
Kottayam, Kerala)



Introduction

Agrowing awareness of religious plurality as a global context and a growing consciousness of identities as an existential issue are typical of our times. "The flow of people, with their religious identities from the South to the North and from North to

the South; the resurgence of religion in conservative forms; increasing instances of violence in the name of religion; the proliferation of new religious movements, and other factors-all have contributed to an awareness of religious plurality as a global context".¹ Growing consciousness of identities has both positive and negative implications to inter-religious and inter-cultural relationship on the one hand and to the intra-religious and intra-cultural contexts on the other hand. Our discussion in this brief paper is limited to the question of identity in an intra-cultural context, particularly the diaspora context of Indian Orthodox Christians.

The term 'Diaspora'

The Greek term diaspora literally means dispersion. In history this term has a technical connotation to the state of the dispersed Jews in various lands due to the foreign invasions of Palestine. It was used particularly to the state of affairs of the Jews during the Babylonian exile in 6th century B.C. In later history, this term has a wider connotation to all states of human migration in lands different from the original

motherland. In this sense, there is the use of such phrases like 'Malankara Orthodox Diaspora; even to refer to the settlement of Malayalee Orthodox Christians in India itself outside the State of Kerala. Generally the phrase, 'Indian Orthodox Diaspora' refers to the settlements of Malayalee Orthodox Christians outside India.

Identity-issue

The issue of identity can have variegated phases. Obviously, within the context of a wider identity there can be issues of identities. For example, in a national situation of a distinctive Indian cultural identity, there are varieties of racial, linguistic, religious and regional identities; in a small State like Kerala, the northern Kerala is much different from central and southern Kerala with regard to the cultural identities. Therefore, 'identity' issue is not exclusively a diaspora issue. But in diaspora situations the identity-issue becomes crucial as an intra-community issue with implications to the inter-relationship of generations.

Let us take the particular identity issue of Indian Orthodox Christians in a diaspora context. At the outset itself it can be argued that the 'identity' issue is only a transitional or temporary issue for the first or second generation of the migrants only, because the new generations would naturally take the diaspora context as their 'homeland' context. But at the same time a counter-argument can be made that, in history, identity issue remained permanent and crucial for generations in the case of many communities including the Jews.

The fact of attaining citizenship or permission for longer stay in a new land can not erase the mark of an "Indian" Identity for the Indians and their subsequent generations. This identity consciousness, basically inborn, need not be identified with a nostalgic longing for a 'return' to the mother-land; neither it is an uneasy or unpleasant 'diaspora'-consciousness. This identity consciousness, on the other hand, would be part of a self-esteem and confidence "to sing a song" (in one's own tongue) to the Lord in a foreign land" (Ps. 137:4)

For the Indian Orthodox Diaspora, the Identity-challenge has two main facets viz, the Indian Identity and the Syrian Christian Identity. In order to clarify certain issues related to the above facets of Identity-challenge, we may depend mainly on a remarkable study-survey conducted by Rev. Fr. Philip Kurivilla ².

Indian Identity

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at a consensus-definition on 'Indian Identity'. However, the fact of an ancient culture mainly built on multi-religious foundations, the long cherished values of family solidarity, the beauty of unity in diversity and the general reverence to an ecological order etc. are considered to be central (although not exclusive) to the Indian Identity. Moreover, Indian Identity is not an Identity confined to ethnic and national elements and therefore it is much different from Israelite or Palestinian Identities. A genuine Indian Identity as evidenced in history is always open to and inclusive of all authentic expressions of human life, whether ancient or modern, whether eastern or western.

An Indian Orthodox youth-cross-section of the diaspora, in a survey, welcomed the cherishing of Indian Identity so long as it promoted (not hindered) "universal brotherhood of man".³ It is a fact observed universally that, those Indian communities which live in other countries have always contributed to the welfare and social harmony of respective countries rather than using identity as a tool for parochialism or exclusive claims. In brief, the Indian Identity of the Indian Orthodox diaspora is a necessary quality of their life handed over to them by generations as a quality for meaningful integration in a pluralistic situation and its key is the principle of self-sacrifice (tyaga).

Syrian Christian Identity

In the survey referred already, a good number of Indian Orthodox youth of the diaspora responded that "it is essential for the future of the Malankara Orthodox

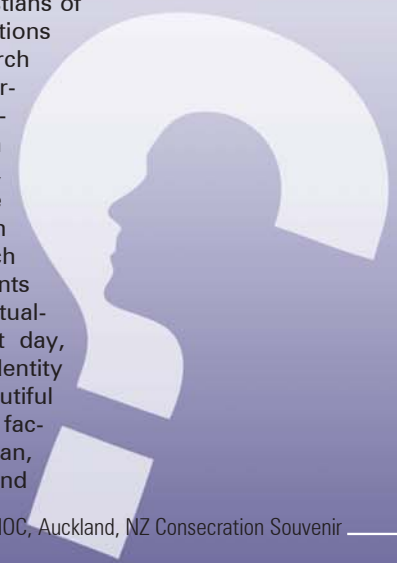
A genuine Indian Identity as evidenced in history is always open to and inclusive of all authentic expressions of human life, whether ancient or modern, whether eastern or western.

Syrian Church in India to preserve the 'Syrian Christian linguistic and Cultural 'identity'.⁴ Though it can be interpreted that the above opinion was about the MOSC in India (not outside India), the spirit of the question and of the survey is obviously regarding the entire Malankara Orthodox Christians all over the world. Along with the issue of "Indian Identity", therefore, the issue of a Syrian Christian identity is also important.

The Syrian Christians of India who are also known as 'St. Thomas Christians', are indigenous Christians of India who trace their history and development to the preaching of St. Thomas, the apostle. They have a unique history and culture associated with their friendly and 'witnessing' co-existence with vast majority of non-Christians for centuries.

Therefore, they manifest the gospel that has incarnated in an ancient culture and continued to cherish vitality from the first century itself, despite many painful experiences of "invasions" by foreign Christians. This is something of which Syrian Christians can be proud of, especially in a situation dominated by western Christianity that has lost either the gospel or the culture and even both.

The "Syrian" element of Syrian Christians is nothing racial; nor does it denote a migration of a group of Syrian ancestors (of course, a small section of the Syrian Christians claim such a history). The 'Syrian' adjective is mainly to show the influence of Syrian-liturgical and spiritual tradition on the indigenous Christians of India. Early connections of the Indian Church with the Church in Persia brought to it elements of East-Syrian spirituality and later, the connection (since 17th century.) with the Church of Antioch brought to it elements of West-Syrian spirituality. But the present day, 'Syrian-Christian' Identity is shaped by a beautiful integration of three factors viz. the east-Syrian, the west-Syrian and



the indigenous (known as "Thoma Marga"). Such a Christian tradition, manifests to the world a significant dimension of the early Christianity that has been sharing the salient features of the undivided Church by remaining outside the theological disputes in the Roman empire. Thus, the typical "Thoma Marga" or the Syrian Christian way of life can claim a unique model among the present mono-cultural western Church-models.

The Syrian Christians of the diaspora in general love to keep "Malayalam" as a link-language and this too is a sign of the Syrian-Christian identity. In the above mentioned survey among Syrian Christian youth of diaspora, there were two questions directly related to this: 1. "Do you think it is the duty of the MOSC to ensure that its Children in the Diaspora learn to Speak/read/write Malayalam?" 2. "Do you think it is essential for the future of the MOSC in India to retain Malayalam as its link language?" To the first question, it is significant to note that, among the 355 responses, 274 answered 'yes'. To the second question, among the 357 responses, 264 answered 'yes'⁵. One of the main conclusions of the above mentioned study may also be cited here: "The study also finds that most youth in the MOSC seem to feel that the Eucharist in any language other than Malayalam is 'less than complete'.⁶

Conclusion

The above observations are not final. But they are presented here to provoke some useful studies and discussions in the field. Perhaps, the Indian Orthodox youth in the diaspora situation outside India can debate whether there is an identity-'crisis' at all, and whether the phrase 'diaspora' itself is justified. However the present writer feels that the Indian identity as well as the Syrian Christian identity can be qualitatively contributing to the future-generations of the diaspora. These identities need not propagate, 'isolationism' 'introvertedness', 'inherited-racism', or 'mis-guided' thoughts of 'pedigree', rather, they can substantially witness to the world an ancient and dynamic Christian-heritage, that is holistic and sustainable.

Foot notes

- (1) Author's paper at the Faith and Order Assembly, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, August 2004: "Being Christian Neighbours in the Context of Religious Plurality" (Faith and Order at the Crossroads), W.C.C., 2005, p. 334
- (2) Identity and Integration of the Orthodox Church in India- Diaspora Youth- A Vision beyond Malankara, ISPCK, Delhi, 2000, pp. xxxiv + 141.
- (3) Ibid. qn. No. 19. p. 132
- (4) Ibid. question no. 23, p. 133
- (5) Ibid qns.11 and 12. p. 131
- (6) Ibid. p 98.

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Imparting God's life through visible means and signs is the gist of sacraments. Ultimate aim of all sacraments is the purification and deification of humans. In other words the purpose is salvation. Acts of creation and incarnation are the foundations of sacraments. This universe

Divine institution, visible signs and invisible grace are the constituent elements of a sacrament. All major sacraments have been instituted by Christ directly or through his disciples. So we can easily trace the history of the development of all important sacraments to the early Christian community.

Ancient Christians never limited the number of sacraments to seven. Protestant movement in the sixteenth century AD confined the number to two- Baptism and

Sacraments for Sanctification and Fullness of Life

Rev. Fr. Dr. Bijesh Philip
Principal, Orthodox Theological Seminary
Nagpur, Maharashtra



with its complexity, connectivity, and beauty is revealing the majesty and magnanimity of God who is otherwise invisible and transcendent. Incarnation was a unique revelation and communication of God's love through a visible and tangible human life in history. The sacraments can be considered as a continuation of this Christ event. Sacraments like baptism, Eucharist, Holy unction etc. give an experience of the Triune God to the recipients for "being partakers of divine nature." (II Peter 1:5). Thus invisible grace is imparted through visible means for the fulfillment of believers.

The word sacrament comes from the Latin word sacramentum which is equivalent to the Greek mysterion. The English word mystery is from mysterion. The Syriac equivalent is rozo which means mystery as well as 'type'. In Malayalam the east Syriac word 'Kudasa' is used widely to indicate sacrament which means that which is holy or that which sanctifies. According to the ancient Christian tradition the salvation inaugurated by Christ event especially the incarnation is a Divine mystery. The scripture has used this concept on many occasions (Col. 1:26-27; Romans. 16:24-26; Mk.4:11). It is noticeable that all major sacraments or kudasakal are originally connected to the mystery of salvation in Christ and they are aiming at the sanctification and divinization of humans.

Eucharist. As a response to this, the Roman Catholic Church in seventeenth century declared seven sacraments as the authentic ones. But the Orthodox Christian Churches follow the ancient tradition of the flexibility regarding the number of sacraments. There are Orthodox teachers who think of monastic Profession, the blessing of waters at Epiphany, the funeral service, the consecration of a Church, the Icon, which is not only an image of the divine world but also its real presence on earth, the life and relics of saints, the minor sanctifications of water, bread, oil, fruits, homes, fields, vehicles etc. as sacraments. Since there are many occasions when matter is used to mediate or visible sign is employed to mediate Divine life, it is not easy to limit the number of sacraments. However Baptism, Chrismation, The Eucharist, Confession, Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony, The Anointing of the Sick have a special and very significant place in the list of sacraments.

The Orthodox do not think of the sacraments as magic rods to bring about miraculous changes to the spectators. Prayerful preparation through repentance and participation in the sacraments by the faithful and beneficiaries are important.

Moses had a unique experience of God in a burning bush. Mediation of Divine life through the sacra-

ments is like this burning bush experience. The grace mediated thus purify, stimulate and fulfill the grace or divine potential deposited by God in human creation itself. By touching Christ and being touched by Christ the participants of the sacraments become Christ like. They grow towards the perfection of love or radical commitment to the will of God as we see in Christ. So the partakers of the sacraments slowly become sacraments to sanctify the world around them. This is the missiological aspect of the sacraments. Each sacrament can be considered as a call to work for the salvation, peace and justice of the world. The Church as a whole is supposed to be a sacrament. The Church has been obliged to communicate the experience of the Triune God and to serve as an agent of holiness, peace and justice in history. The world as a whole and everything in creation serve as a burning bush to convey the transcendent. But the fallen world and the secularized mind fail to experience the Invisible in the visible. Purification of the inner eyes through the sacraments will ultimately help us to experience the sacredness of the whole world including humans. So the sacraments can lead to the restoration of the sacramental nature of the world, lost in modern times due to the European Enlightenment movement of 18th and 19th century.

It is essential to overcome the temptation to misuse religions as well as to sideline the rich heritage of religions. In this context we attempt a re-reading of the meaning of Holy Baptism and the enrichment with the life giving Spirit in this volume. The Spirit is empowering. The Holy Spirit in the ancient Christian tradition is the Spirit of perfection and thus baptism is an initiation into the process of progressing towards perfection.

Baptism is primarily meant to restore and renew the creation to its original beauty and sanctity. Ancient Christian wisdom describes this idea by depicting baptism as a re-entry in to paradise which was lost to the fallen man. As the Syriac scholar Dr. Sebastian Brock rightly says, "St. Ephrem and the Syriac fathers, like their Greek contemporaries, have a great deal to say about the significance of baptism, but the essential of it all is that baptism is the re-entry, for each individual Christian who is baptized, in to Paradise. It effects for her or for him the transformation, by means of the Holy Spirit, of fallen creation into its pristine paradisaical state. In other words, the newborn Christian is raised to a plane where, provided he allows the Spirit to do so, the Holy Spirit will bring about the sanctification of the material world around him."(Studies in Syriac Spirituality. Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore:2008, p.52). It is significant that these

fathers present baptismal water as womb which facilitates the renewal of creation through new birth. It must be noted that the crossing of the Red Sea and of the River Jordan and entry into the Promised Land are seen by the ancient Christian teachers as types of baptism.

Baptism serves as an ordination to those who join Jesus Christ. The baptism of Jesus Christ was a moment of divine commissioning to the ministry of the Kingdom of God. Even if John the Baptist was a celebrant in that service, actually God the Father and the Holy Spirit were affirming and appointing Jesus Christ for that mission. So, the whole Trinity takes initiative for the transformation of the world. Likewise in the baptism of each one, the whole Trinity affirms, advocates and appoints the baptismal candidate for

Holy Qurbana is basically a deep expression of human gratitude. The eucharist, another word for Holy Qurbana means literally thanksgiving. It is noticeable that most of the prayers in the Holy Qurbana end with the words "we give thanks to Thee and to Thine only begotten son and to Thy Holy Spirit now and forever and ever".

a mission to bring the new light of holiness, justice and peace to the world. It is noticeable that Jesus starts His mission primarily after his anointment with the Holy Spirit in baptism. Early Christians had a strong conviction that the reception of the Holy Spirit was for empowering them for such a mission as a continuation of that of Jesus. Anointing in the olden period especially in the Jewish tradition was part of appointing a person to be a king/queen or priest or prophet. In the ancient Christian tradition anointing especially in Baptism indicates the reception of the Holy Spirit for self fulfillment and a ministry. Thus all the members of the Church have been ordained for a ministry to be a presence of Jesus to renew the communities and to transform the world in tune with the Divine expectations.

It is the ardent desire of God that everything in creation especially humans created in his own image to grow toward the fullness of life. It was a Divine wish fulfillment that the church was formed as a mother to ensure such a fullness for many. Those who are initiated into Christ are supported by her nourishing food and drinks like the Bible, Holy Worship, lives of the saints etc.

The west Syrian liturgy which is used in the worship of Malankara Orthodox Church is closely connected to the worship of the ancient Christian community. Jewish temple worship, synagogue worship, Bible and local cultures of the church in each country has influenced the formation of liturgy.

Mar Gregorios Abdul Jaleel



Pray for us
Inserted by Well wishers

Holy Qurbana has mainly three parts: Thuyobo or preparatory prayers, public worship and post communion service. The first and the last are done in secret. Public worship comprises of instruction of the word, words of institution of the Qurbana, fraction of the holy elements, invocation to the Holy Spirit, procession to the West, and communion and dismissal. 'Public' is used not only to distinguish this part from thuyobo and post communion but also to distinguish this corporate worship from personal and family prayers.

Holy Qurbana is basically a deep expression of human gratitude. The eucharist, another word for Holy Qurbana means literally thanksgiving. It is noticeable that most of the prayers in the Holy Qurbana end with the words "we give thanks to Thee and to Thine only begotten son and to Thy Holy Spirit now and forever and ever", and most of the hymns are filled with praises and thanks to God. On behalf of the whole world we raise our hearts with full of gratitude to God for his wonderful creation, the salvation He prepared for us, the Divine providence for the ever growing life and the glorious inheritance prepared for us. Bread and wine, the products of human labor and also their means of sustenance and growth represent our very life itself and these are offered to God as our own life offering as an expression of thanks. Including our life everything we enjoy is a gift to us. (I Cor. 4:7). Personal experience of specific Divine intervention may further support and substantiate the thanksgiving in worship. When I was recovered from severe and long ordeal of Dengue fever and accompanied infections in 2013, gratitude to God was multiplied in my heart. After a few months' gap when I attended the Holy Qurbana for the first time, the Biblical image which came to my mind was the thanks giving dinner party given to Jesus by the family of Lazarus after his resurrection. (St. John 12) While Mary and Martha were serving Jesus, Lazarus was dining with Jesus. I felt that I was sitting beside Jesus having dining fellowship.

Holy Qurbana is the declaration of the faith of the church. Not only in the Nicene Creed but throughout the worship, the Church is declaring the foundational faith. The parishioners come together to confess their convictions about the things invisible. It is an alarming fact because of the too bright light of materialism today vision of the transcendent source of life is dim to the modern civilization. According to the secularized mind, the only reality is that which can be experienced. Based on the revelations, the Church is fully convinced about the fact that there is a spiritual world behind this visible and tangible universe. The worship is a declaration of our faith in the triune God who fashioned this world out of nothing, who took initiative for its salvation, who leads us to perfection. Worship is also the community's strong declaration that Jesus Christ is our Lord and God. In history great

personalities like Gandhiji, Mother Theresa and Sachin Tendulkar who shine like stars appear occasionally. While appreciating their achievements and unique contributions and glorifying them, we are not ready to give worship to them. In spite of the severe persecution, the early Christians in the Roman Empire refused to give worship to the emperors and idols and they worshipped Jesus Christ as their Lord and God because they experienced the fullness of life only in Him. Orthodox Christian community in twenty first century is also in continuity with the faith and tradition of the Christians of antiquity. It is by being steadfast to these foundations of faith that we try to be open to the people belonging to other religions and ideologies.

Holy Qurbana is the celebration of the fellowship of the Church. The Church is supposed to be a sign and sacrament of the kingdom of God of which fellowship is one of the greatest marks. Members of the Church gather together at the visible church of each locality to form the unity of the church which is foundational to the worship. According to the teaching of the Lord, reconciliation with the fellow humans is an essential pre-requirement for being united with God through worship (St. Mathew 5:23, 24). By going out of our egoistic comfort zones and reaching out to other members that we celebrate the joy of harmony and discipleship of our Lord who taught us to be the children of God by being peacemakers (Mt. 5:10) and to love one another as He has loved us (St. John 15:12). Early Christians used to think that participation of members with the feeling of hatred in mind would defile the Holy Qurbana.

Holy Qurbana is specifically our communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. There are four steps in our union with the Lord in the Holy Qurbana: By listening to the celebrative reading of the Gospel which contains the life and teaching of Jesus, by experiencing the whole life of Jesus including the second coming as reenacted in the Holy Qurbana, by raising our hearts and minds to Him, and by receiving the body and blood of Christ. So communion at the end of the Holy Qurbana is the culmination of our union with Christ, the source of our liberation and deification. In fact we come to the worship to meet and experience Jesus as Jesus was experienced two thousand years back in Palestine by his disciples and many others. When Christ's life is reenacted He who has promised to be present to those who gather in His name is present in the Holy Worship. The chief celebrant during the service exhorts us to raise our hearts to up above where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. This spiritual and mental union becomes easier for those who practice daily such communion through ejaculatory prayers like Jesus prayer. All attempts to be united with Christ is to become like Christ in thinking, desiring and acting. ●

Blessing of foundation stone - His Grace Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros - 6 December 2009



Tree cutting - 23 May 2011



Foundation pit digging - 10 November 2012



Foundation stone laying by His Grace Dr. Zachariah Mar Theophilos - 12 November 2012



Fr. Biju Mathai (Vicar), Fr. Bishoy Mekhaiel (Coptic Orthodox Church), Fr. Ghebre Berhan Fisseha (Eritrean Orthodox Church) and Fr. George Bosauder (Antiochian [Greek] Orthodox Church) assisted Mar Theophilos during the ceremony.

Construction work starts on 11 March 2013



Construction Stage 1





Cross Installation on 9 March 2014
Service led by Vicar Fr. Biju Mathai



Construction Stage 2



His Grace Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros visit on 15 June 2014



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റവ. ഫാ. ഡോ. ജോർജ്ജ് കോശി



SDIOC, Auckland, NZ Consecration Souvenir



“ധർമ്മ സംസ്ഥാപനാർത്ഥമായ സംഭവമായി യുഗേ യുഗേ” എന്നുള്ള ഭഗവദ്ഗീതാ വചന സുധ സുപ്രസിദ്ധമാണ്. ധർമ്മ പുനഃസ്ഥാപനത്തിന് ഈശ്വരൻ യുഗങ്ങൾതോറും അവതരിക്കുന്നു എന്നർത്ഥം. പൗരസ്ത്യ ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭയുടെ നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ പുനഃസ്ഥാപനത്തിന് ആധുനിക മലങ്കര സഭാ നേതൃത്വ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ട ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക ജ്യോതിസ്സായിരുന്നു വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനി. ജഡമെടുത്ത വചനത്തെ വചനങ്ങളുടെ വരികളിലാക്കിയ വിശുദ്ധ യോഹന്നാൻ ശ്ലീഹ, വചനത്തിന് വഴി തെളിക്കുവാൻ വന്ന സ്നാനപത്രോഹനാനെക്കുറിച്ച് സാക്ഷിച്ചു: “ദൈവം അയച്ചിട്ടു ഒരു മനുഷ്യൻ വന്നു. അവൻ യോഹന്നാൻ എന്നു പേര്”. മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ സമകാല സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യാനുഭവത്തിനും അനുഗ്രഹത്തിനും തിരി തെളിക്കുവാനും ആതിരി അണ്ഡാതെ ആളിക്കത്തുന്ന തീപ്പന്തമായി പടരു നതിന് എണ്ണയും വെണ്ണയും പകരുവാനും ദൈവം നിയോഗിച്ച നിയമിച്ച മഹാപുരോഹിത ശ്രേഷ്ഠനാണ് സഭാഭാസുരനായ മലങ്കരയുടെ പരി. ഗീവർഗീസ് മാർ ദിവനാബ്ബേസസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത.

ആഗോളമുള്ള ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭകളുടെ ആധുനിക കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ചരിത്രം കഠിന പീഡനങ്ങളുടെ കടന്ന കഥകൾകൊണ്ടു നിന്നമണിഞ്ഞതാണ്. മുസ്ലീം മുളളാകളുടെ മുമ്പിൽ മുട്ടുമടക്കി, നാവടക്കി, നമശിരസ്കരായി കഷ്ടിച്ചു കഴിയേണ്ട ഗതിയും ഗതികേടാണ് ഒട്ടനവധി ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭകളുടെ ഗതസമകാലാനുഭവങ്ങൾ. അന്ത്യോച്ഛ്യാ, ഈഗുപ്തായ സഭകൾ അവയിൽ ചിലതു മാത്രം. അർമ്മീനിയ, റുമേനിയ, റഷ്യ ആദിയായ അനേകം ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭകൾ കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഉരുക്കുമുഷ്ടിക്കു മുമ്പിൽ “മൃതന സമാനം” അടുത്ത നാൾവരെ അമർന്നു കഴിയേണ്ടിവന്നു. ഈ സഭകളെല്ലാം സമ്മർദ്ദവും സംഘട്ടനവും അനുഭവിച്ചത് സ്വദേശീയരായ വിജാതീയരിൽനിന്നും വിരുദ്ധ പ്രത്യയശാസ്ത്രക്കാരിൽനിന്നുമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ അതിഥിയേയും അഗതിയേയും ആദരവോടെ സ്വീകരിക്കണമെന്നുള്ള പൗരസ്ത്യ ക്രൈസ്തവ പാരമ്പര്യവും ആർഷഭാരത സംസ്കാരവും സ്വന്തം സത്തയിലും സംസ്കൃതിയിലും അലിഞ്ഞു ചേർന്ന മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ ആധുനിക നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ മാത്രമല്ല ആരംഭം മുതലുള്ള നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളിലെ അനുഭവം ഏറെ ഭിന്നവും ദുഃഖകലുഷിതവുമാണ്. ഈ സഭയെ ദ്രോഹിച്ചതും ദേഹോപദ്രവം ഏല്പിച്ചതും സ്വദേശീയരായ വിജാതീയരായിരുന്നില്ല; മറിച്ച്, വിദേശികളായ സ്വജാതീയരായിരുന്നു. അതിന്റെ അവശിഷ്ടമാണല്ലോ മാർത്തോമ്മാ സഭയ്ക്ക് ജന്മംകൊടുത്ത നവീകരണസഭാസ്ഥാപകൻ പാലക്കുന്നത്ത് മാത്യൂസ് മാർ അത്താനാസ്യോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്ത ശിരസ്സു നമിച്ച് ശിര

Saint Geevarghese Mar Gregorios
(Parumala Thirumeni)



Pray for us
Inserted by Well wishers

Saint Geevarghese Mar Dionysius
(Vattasseril Thirumeni)



Pray for us
Inserted by Well wishers

സ്റ്റിലിനീഞ്ഞ അന്ത്യോഖ്യാ ബന്ധം. ക്രൈസ്തവ സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെയും സാഹോദര്യത്തിന്റെയും സ്ഥാനം വിലക്കും ഉടക്കും മുടക്കും കവർന്നെടുത്ത ആ ബന്ധത്തിന്റെ ബന്ധനങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും മലങ്കര സഭയെ വിമുക്തമാക്കി സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ വാഗ്ദത്തഭൂമിയിലേക്കു നയിക്കുകയെന്നുള്ളതായിരുന്നു തിരുമേനിക്കു ലഭിച്ച ദൈവിക ദൗത്യം. ആയതിന് ആവശ്യവും അനുയോജ്യവുമായ കരങ്ങളും വരങ്ങളും ആത്മശക്തിയും ആജ്ഞാശക്തിയും സഭാനാഥൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് പകരുകയും ചെയ്തു..

രണ്ടു സഹസ്രാബ്ദത്തോളം പഴക്കമുള്ള മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ ചരിത്രത്തിലെ രണ്ടു സംഭവങ്ങൾ നിർണ്ണായകങ്ങളായ നാഴികക്കല്ലുകളാണ്. അവയിൽ ആദ്യത്തേതു മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹായുടെ സന്ദർശനവും സഭാസ്ഥാപനവും ആയിരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ പിന്നത്തേതു കാതോലിക്കേറ്റിന്റെ സ്ഥാപനമാണ്. സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ശ്രീകോവിലായിരുന്ന ഭാരതത്തിൽ അപ്പോസ്തോലികതനുമുതൽ തന്നെയുള്ള സഭ സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. സഭാനാഥനോടുള്ള വിധേയത്വത്തിലും സഹശിഷ്യന്മാരോടുള്ള സഹവർത്തിത്വത്തിലും സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ട സഭ. എന്നാൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ ശക്തിയും ശ്രേഷ്ഠതയും നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടു നഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയും ഇരുണ്ട കാലഘട്ടങ്ങളിലൂടെ സഭ കടന്നുപോകേണ്ടി വന്നു. അന്ധകാരാവൃതമായ ആ അവസ്ഥയ്ക്കു അന്തിമമായി വിരാമമിട്ട സംഭവമായിരുന്നു 1912-ൽ നടന്ന കാതോലിക്കേറ്റിന്റെ പുനഃസ്ഥാപനം. വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനിയുടെ സമൃദ്ധമായ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ സഭയുടെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം സഹലമായ കർമ്മകാണ്ഡമായി പരിണമിച്ചു.

മലങ്കര സഭയുടെ ആധുനികകാലാനുഭവം സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെയും സ്വയംപര്യാപ്തതയുടേതുമായ ആരംഭകാലാനുഭവത്തിന് അടുത്തെത്തിക്കുവാൻ തിരുമേനിക്കു അനുഭവിക്കേണ്ടിവന്ന കഠിന യാതനകൾക്കും കഷ്ടനഷ്ടങ്ങൾക്കും പരിഹാസപീഡനങ്ങൾക്കും വിണ്ണും പിന്നെ പഴയ സെമിനാരിയുടെ മണ്ണും മുകസാക്ഷിയാണ്. സഭയുടെ സ്വതന്ത്രമായ നിലനില്പിനുവേണ്ടി ശക്തിയോടെ ശബ്ദമുയർത്തുകയും ആ ശബ്ദം ശരീരമെടുത്ത സനാതനസത്യമായി തീരുന്നതിന് സജീവിതം സമർപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ നാമം ആ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ നന്മകളും നേട്ടങ്ങളും അമൃതപോലെ ആവാഹിക്കുന്ന നമുക്ക് ഉൾപുളകത്തോടു മാത്രമേ അനുസ്മരിക്കാനാവൂ. ആ അനുഗ്രഹാനുഭവത്തിന്റെ ഗിരിശൃംഗങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന് ഇന്നു നാം 1912-ലേക്ക് തിരിഞ്ഞു നോക്കുമ്പോൾ അപര്യാപ്തതയുടെ തരികളും അനാവശ്യ ബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ തൊട്ടാൽ പൊള്ളുന്ന ബന്ധങ്ങളും കണ്ടെത്താവുന്നതും പക്ഷേ, അന്നത്തെ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളും സമ്മർദ്ദങ്ങളും അവഗണിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാവരുത് അവയെ വീക്ഷിക്കുന്നത്. അപ്പോഴാണ് ആ മഹാജ്യോതിസ്സിന്റെ തേജസ്സിനു മുമ്പിൽ, ഭാസുരതാരത്തിന്റെ സ്മരണയ്ക്കു മുമ്പിൽ നമ്രശരീരസ്കരായി നിന്നുപോകുന്നത്.

സംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ശ്രീകോവിലായിരുന്ന ഭാരതത്തിൽ അപ്പോസ്തോലികതനുമുതൽ തന്നെയുള്ള സഭ സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. സഭാനാഥനോടുള്ള വിധേയത്വത്തിലും സഹശിഷ്യന്മാരോടുള്ള സഹവർത്തിത്വത്തിലും സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ട സഭ. എന്നാൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ ശക്തിയും ശ്രേഷ്ഠതയും നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടു നഷ്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയും ഇരുണ്ട കാലഘട്ടങ്ങളിലൂടെ സഭ കടന്നുപോകേണ്ടി വന്നു.

പൗരസ്ത്യ ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭയുടെ നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നതിനും അതു സംരക്ഷിക്കുന്നതിനും ദിവ്യവും ധീരവുമായ നേതൃത്വം നല്കിയ പരിശുദ്ധ പിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ അനുസ്മരണ ദിനങ്ങൾക്കു പോലുമുണ്ട് അസാധാരണതയുടെ അസാമാന്യമായ ചാരുതയും സവിശേഷതയും. ഫെബ്രുവരിയിലാണ് സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ പുനഃസ്ഥാപനശില്പിയായ സഭാഭാസുരന്റെ സ്മരണദിനമെങ്കിൽ ആ ദീപശില ഏറ്റുവാങ്ങി അതിശോഭയോടും അതീവശക്തിയോടും പ്രകാശിപ്പിച്ച പരിശുദ്ധ ഗീവർഗീസ് ദിതീയൻ ബാവായുടെ ഓർമ്മ പുതുവർഷപുലരിയായ ജനുവരി മാസത്തിലാണല്ലോ. സഭയുടെ നിലനില്പിനെതിരെ മണലാരണ്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന് ഉയർന്നു പൊങ്ങിയ ഉഷ്ണക്കാറ്റുകളെയും അവയ്ക്കു ചാരെ നിന്ന് ചാമരം വീശിയ അനുചരന്മാരുടെയും (ഒപ്പം ചാരന്മാരുടെയും) വികൃതികളും കൃത്യതികളും ചായക്കോപ്പയിലെ കൊടുങ്കാറ്റാക്കി മാറ്റി സഭയെ ധീരതയോടും തീഷ്ണതയോടും നയിച്ച പരിശുദ്ധ ഔഗേൻ പ്രഥമൻ ബാവായുടെ സ്മരണപ്പെരുന്നാൾ തൊട്ടുപിന്നാലെയുള്ള ഡിസംബർ മാസം 8-ാം തീയതി. ആകാശത്തു സൂര്യൻ ഉദിക്കുന്നിടത്തോളം നാൾ, കടലിൽ തിരകൾ അടിക്കുന്നിടത്തോളം കാലം, സഭാ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിന്റെ സുവർണ്ണ കനൽ സുശോഭയോടെ കത്തിയെരിഞ്ഞു പ്രകാശിക്കുന്നതിന് ആവശ്യമായ ആശയും ആവേശവും വരും തലമുറകളിലേക്ക് പകരുന്നതിനു പ്രേരണയേകി

യതോടൊപ്പം “സഭയുടെ ഭിത്തിയെ ബലവത്താക്കി ശിലമേൽ നിർത്തി”, “അജപാലകനായി ഉലകം വീട്ട്” പരി. മാർത്തോമ്മാ മാത്യൂസ് പ്രഥമൻ ബാവായുടെ ഓർമ്മപ്പെരുന്നാൾ നവംബർ മാസത്തിൽ അതേ തീയതിയിലുമാണല്ലോ. ജനുവരി മാസത്തിൽ തന്നെയാണ് പരി. മാത്യൂസ് ദ്വിതീയൻ ബാവായുടെ ഓർമ്മയും. അങ്ങനെ നവംബർ, ഡിസംബർ, ജനുവരി, ഫെബ്രുവരി മാസങ്ങൾ സഭാസാരഥികളായിരുന്ന പരിശുദ്ധ പിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ ഓർമ്മപ്പെരുന്നാളുകളോടൊപ്പം മലങ്കര സഭയുടെ ഇന്നത്തെ സൗഭാഗ്യാവസ്ഥയെ ആഹ്ലാദഭരിതരായി അനുസ്മരിക്കുവാനുള്ള വേളയുംകൂടിയാണ്. മലങ്കരയുടെ ഒന്നാമത്തെ കാതോലിക്കാ പൗലോസ് പ്രഥമൻ ബാവായുടെ ഓർമ്മ മെയ് മാസത്തിലും തുടർന്ന് ആസ്ഥാനത്ത് നിയോഗിക്കപ്പെട്ട പരിശുദ്ധ ഗീവർഗീസ് പ്രഥമൻ ബാവായുടെ ഓർമ്മ ഡിസംബർ മാസത്തിലുമാണെന്നുള്ളത് ഇവിടെ കുറിക്കുന്നു.

മൺതരികളെ മഹാമേരുകളാക്കാൻ കഴിവുള്ളവർ നേതൃത്വസ്ഥാനത്ത് എത്തും. മഹാമേരുകളെ മൺതരികളാക്കി ഒരുക്കുവാൻ കഴിവുള്ളവരും തലപൊക്കിയെന്നു വരും. പ്രഥമ ഗണത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ ഉയർച്ച വ്യക്തിഗത വളർച്ചയായി മാറില്ല. മറിച്ച് സമൂഹത്തിന് നേട്ടങ്ങളുടെ കോട്ടകൾ കെട്ടി ഉയർത്തുന്നതിനുള്ള

അവസരമാണ്. രണ്ടാമത്തെ കുട്ടരുടെ ഉയർച്ച സ്വാർത്ഥ സ്ഥാപന സ്ഥാപിത സാമ്രാജ്യ സംരക്ഷണത്തിനേ സഹായിക്കുകയുള്ളൂ. വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനി തന്റെ തോളിനു താഴെ നിൽക്കാനുള്ള തലയെടുപ്പും താലന്തുകളുമുള്ള സ്വശിഷ്യന്മാരുൾപ്പെടെയുള്ളവരെ സ്വന്തം തോളിൽ കയറ്റി നിർത്തി തന്നെക്കാൾ ഉയരവും ഉയിരും മുളുവരാക്കിത്തീർത്തു. “ഞാനോ കുറയണം അവനോ വളരണം” എന്നു ജീവിതവ്രതമുണ്ടായിരുന്ന സ്നാപകയോഹന്നാന്റെ അതിവിരളമായ ഒരു ആധുനിക പതിപ്പായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം. പക്ഷേ, അക്കരെ നിൽക്കേണ്ടവർ ഇക്കരെ വന്ന് മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ ശിരസ്സിനു മേൽ വാമനാവതാരമാകാനുള്ള പരിശ്രമത്തെ ഈ നസ്രാണി സിംഹം എതിർത്തു. അകന്നു നിൽക്കേണ്ടവർ അകത്തു കയറി അനാവശ്യാവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കും അവകാശങ്ങൾക്കുംവേണ്ടി ഒച്ചവെച്ചപ്പോൾ ആ വിറയുള്ള വിരലുകൾ അനക്കിയതേയുള്ളൂ. അവർ ചെന്നു പതിച്ചത് കരയ്ക്കും തിരകൾക്കും അപ്പുറമുള്ള മണൽപ്പുറങ്ങളിലാണ്. സ്നേഹത്തിലധിഷ്ഠിതമായ സഹവർത്തിത്വം അധികാരാവകാശങ്ങളുടെ ധിക്കാരമായി മാറ്റാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചവരുടെ മേൽ ആ ദൃഷ്ടികൾ ചെന്നു പതിച്ചപ്പോൾ അവരുടെ മലങ്കരസഭയിലുള്ള സ്ഥാനം ‘Vanishing Point’ എന്ന വലിയൊരു വട്ടപൂജ്യമായി ഭവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

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Ashok, Bindhu and Ann Mol

അനുകൂലവും പ്രതികൂലവുമായ കോടതിവിധികളോടുള്ള വലിയ തിരുമേനിയുടെ പ്രതികരണം ആ വ്യക്തിത്വത്തിന്റെ വൈശിഷ്ട്യത്തിലേക്ക് വെളിച്ചം വീശുന്നു. കോടതിവിധി അനുകൂലമായപ്പോൾ പൊട്ടിക്കരയുകയും അവ പ്രതികൂലമായപ്പോൾ പൂഞ്ചിരിക്കുകയുമാണ് അദ്ദേഹം ചെയ്തത്. വിജയിച്ചപ്പോൾ കരയുവാൻ കാരണം സ്വന്തം സഭയുടെ നിലയും നിലനില്പുമറിയാതെ എതിർത്തു നിൽക്കുന്ന സഭാമക്കളെ ഓർത്തു മാത്രം. പ്രതികൂലമായ വിധികളെ പൊട്ടിച്ചിരിയോടെ അഭിമുഖീകരിച്ചതു പരാജയങ്ങളുടെ പടുകുഴിയിൽ പതിച്ചാലും സത്യം ജയിക്കുമെന്നുള്ള സാനതനസത്യത്തിലുള്ള സമ്പൂർണ്ണ വിശ്വാസംകൊണ്ടും.

“എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പാ എവിടെയോ അവിടെ സഭ” ഉണ്ടെന്നാണല്ലോ അപ്പോസ്തോലിക പിതാവായ തീക്കടുത്ത ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസിന്റെ തിരുമൊഴി. മഹാപുരോഹിതൻ സഭയാണ്, സഭയുടെ, ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ജീവപ്രതീകമാണ്. അവ്യണ്ണമുള്ള സമൂഹനത സംഘാത സ്ഥാനികളായതുകൊണ്ടാണ് അവർ ഒറ്റയ്ക്കും ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ടും കഴിയാത്തതും കഴിയരുതാത്തതും. സ്വകാര്യവും തൻകാര്യവും അവർക്കു കാണരുതാത്തതും. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെയല്ലേ, അവർ സ്വയം “നാം” എന്നു പറയാൻ മറക്കാത്തതും മരന്നാൽ നാം പൊറുക്കാത്തതും! അല്ലെങ്കിൽതന്നെ, കൂട്ടരേയും കൂടും

ബത്തേയും വിട്ടു കുരിശെടുത്തു കർത്താവിന്റെയുടെ കുടിയവരും സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ രഹസ്യങ്ങളുടെ പരിചാരകരുമായവർക്കു എന്തു ഭൗതിക രഹസ്യം! വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനിയുടെ ഏറ്റവും വലിയ ശ്രേഷ്ഠതകളിലൊന്നായി അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സെക്രട്ടറിയും മലങ്കര സഭയിലെ വൈദികശ്രേഷ്ഠരിൽ പ്രധാനിയുമായിരുന്ന വന്ദ്യ മണലിലച്ചനിൽ (ഫാ. ജേക്കബ് മണലിൽ) നിന്ന് ഒട്ടനവധി വട്ടം കേട്ടിട്ടുള്ളത് ഈ ഗുണവിശേഷമായിരുന്നു. ഭൗമികരഹസ്യങ്ങളില്ലാത്ത സ്വർഗ്ഗീയരഹസ്യങ്ങളുടെ മഹാപുരോഹിതശ്രേഷ്ഠൻ. ആർ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ സന്ദർശിക്കുമ്പോഴും, അച്ചനോ അയ്മേനിയോ, ആണോ പെണ്ണോ, സാധാരണക്കാരനാകട്ടെ സമൂഹത്തിലെയോ സഭയിലെയോ സമൂഹനതസ്ഥാനിയാകട്ടെ ആരായാലും തന്റെ അടുക്കൽ മറ്റൊരാളുടെ കൂടെ, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് തന്റെ സെക്രട്ടറിമാരിൽ ഒരാൾ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കണമെന്ന് തിരുമേനിക്കു നിർബന്ധമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. പകലിരവുകളിൽ പ്രാർത്ഥനാധ്യാനത്തിനായി മുട്ടുകുത്തുന്നതു മാത്രമാണ് ആരും അറിയരുതെന്ന് ആഗ്രഹിച്ച് രഹസ്യമായി ചെയ്തിരുന്നത്. പത്തു പേർ കാണത്തക്കവണ്ണമുള്ള പരസ്യപ്രാർത്ഥനക്കാരായ പരീശപരിശുദ്ധന്മാരിൽനിന്ന് എത്രയോ കാതം അകലെ നിൽക്കുന്നു ഈ ഭക്തനായ പരിശുദ്ധൻ. മാത്രമല്ല, തനിക്കു ലഭിച്ച കൈമുത്തും കാണിക്കുകളും



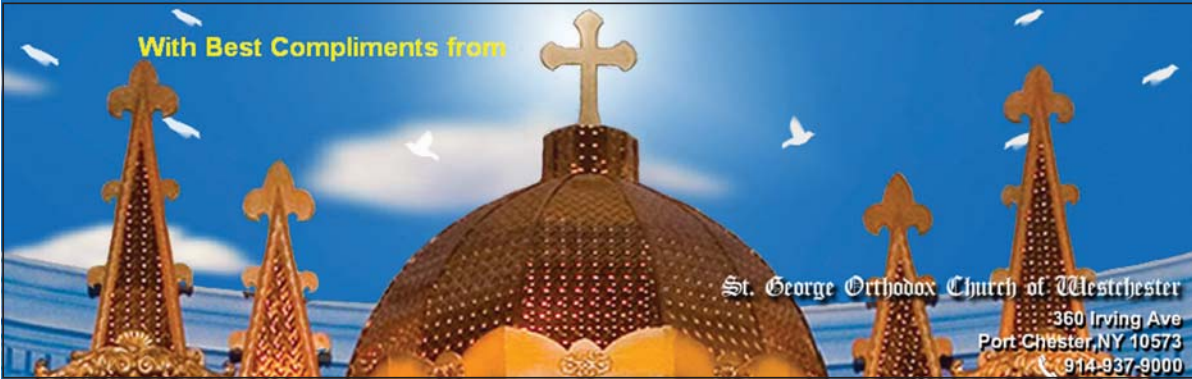
സഭയ്ക്ക് ലഭിച്ചതാണെന്നുള്ള സുബോധമുണ്ടായിരുന്ന തുകൊണ്ട് അവയുടെ വരവിലും വിനിയോഗത്തിലും അതീവം ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചു. കാണിക്കയുടെയും കൈമുത്തിന്റെയും കണക്കുകൾ അതീവ രഹസ്യമായ കമ്പസാരരഹസ്യത്തിന്റെ “അതിവിശുദ്ധി”യോടെ സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നവർ കാണുമായിരിക്കും. ആഗോളമുള്ള ക്രൈസ്തവ സഭകളിലെ ഇടയശേഷിയിൽ ചുരുക്കം പേരുടെയെങ്കിലും കണക്കില്ലാത്ത കൈമുത്തുകളുടെയും മറ്റും പുഴുവും തുരുമ്പും അരിക്കുന്ന കഥകളും കാര്യങ്ങളും പുറത്തുവരുന്നത് കാലംചെയ്തുകഴിയുമ്പോഴാണെന്നുള്ളത് ഒരു ആധുനിക പ്രതിഭാസമാണ്. ഏതായാലും വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനി, വട്ടക്കുന്നേൽ തിരുമേനി ആദിയായ പിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ പാരമ്പര്യമുള്ള മലങ്കരസഭയ്ക്ക് ആ അനുഭവം അനുഭവിക്കേണ്ടിവരികയില്ലെന്ന് ആശിക്കുന്നു. കൂട്ടത്തിൽ പറയട്ടെ, വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനിയുടെ പല സ്വഭാവശേഷിതകളും വട്ടക്കുന്നേൽ തിരുമേനിയുടെ സ്വഭാവത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായിരുന്നു.

അമേരിക്കയിൽ അടിമകൾക്ക് വിമോചനമേകിയ പ്രസിഡണ്ട് ഏബ്രഹാം ലിങ്കണോട് ഒരു കറുത്ത വർഗ്ഗക്കാരി പറഞ്ഞു: “സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യ പുലരിയിലേക്ക് ഞങ്ങളെ നയിച്ച അങ്ങയുടെ കല്ലറയിൽ ആയിരമായിരം മാലാഖമാർ നൃത്തം ചെയ്യും”. ആധുനിക മലങ്കര സഭയുടെ വിമോചനത്തിനു വഴിതുറന്ന മലങ്കരസഭാ ഭാസുരന്റെ കബറിടത്തിൽ ആയിരക്കണക്കിനു മാലാഖമാർ ആനന്ദനൃത്തം ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ടെന്നുള്ളതിന് സംശയമില്ല. മാലാഖമാർ നൃത്തംചെയ്യുന്ന ആ കബറിടത്തിനും പാവനസ്ഥരണയ്ക്കും ഒരുകാലത്തെ മലങ്കരസഭാംഗങ്ങളുടെ നിലവൃക്തമാക്കാൻ ഒരു ആധുനിക മലയാള കവയിത്രിയുടെ (റോസ് മേരി) വാക്കുകൾ കടംവാങ്ങി കുറിക്കുന്നു:

“നിന്റെ കൃഷിമാടത്തിലേക്കുള്ള വഴിയും ഞാൻ മറന്നുപോയി. കല്ലറകൾക്കു മീതെ, കാട്ടുപൂല്ലുകൾ ആർത്തുകയറി, ശിലാലിഖിതങ്ങളെ മായ്ച്ചുകളഞ്ഞു”. പക്ഷേ, അതുപഴയ കഥ. ഇന്നു മലങ്കരസഭയിൽ ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ മഹാപുരോഹിത സാന്നിധ്യമുള്ള ഓർമ്മപ്പെരുന്നാൾ തിരുമേനിയുടേതായി മാറിയിരിക്കുന്നു. അതിനു സഭാസന്ദേഹികൾ കടപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നത് ഭാഗ്യസ്ഥരണാർഹനായ പരി. മാർത്തോമ്മാ മാത്യൂസ് പ്രഥമൻ ബാവായോടാണ്. അദ്ദേഹം സഭയുടെ പരമാദ്ധ്യക്ഷനായതിനു ശേഷമാണല്ലോ പരിശുദ്ധ സുന്നഹദോസിന്റെ ഒരാഴ്ച നീളുന്ന സമ്മേളനം വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനിയുടെ പെരുന്നാളിനോടനുബന്ധിച്ചു ആരംഭിച്ചത്. ആ ആശയം അദ്ദേഹത്തെ അറിയിച്ചത് അഭിവന്ദ്യ തോമസ് മാർ മക്കാരിയോസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ ആയിരുന്നുവെന്നുള്ളത് അനേകർക്കും അജ്ഞാതമായതുകൊണ്ട് ഇവിടെ ആദരപൂർവ്വം അനുസ്മരിക്കുന്നു.

സെറാനൂർ കോളജ് പ്രൊഫസർ ആയിരുന്ന ദിവ്യ. ശ്രീ. സി. ഇ. ഏബ്രഹാം കശ്ശീശ (സി. എസ്. ഐ) എഴുതിയതും 1935-ൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചതുമായ “സഭാചരിത്ര സംഗ്രഹം” എന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ (പുറം 279) ഇപ്രകാരം രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. “ഈ ജ്ഞിതവ്യക്തിയെപ്പോലെ അഗാധമായ ബുദ്ധിശക്തി, ദൈവഭക്തി, വേദശാസ്ത്രപാണ്ഡിത്യം, വീക്ഷണശക്തി, വിപദദൈവ്യം, ജീവിതനൈർമ്മല്യം എന്നിവ ഒരാളിൽ ഏകോപിപ്പിച്ച് പ്രശോഭിച്ചിരുന്ന മേൽപട്ടക്കാരുടെ സംഖ്യ മലങ്കരസഭയുടെ ഇതുപര്യന്തമുള്ള ചരിത്രത്തിൽ തുലോം ചുരുക്കമത്രേ”. സഭാഭാസുരസ്ഥരണ സഭാംഗങ്ങൾക്കു ശക്തിയുടെ സമൃദ്ധി പ്രദാനം ചെയ്തട്ടെ; ആ സ്ഥരണയുടെ കിരണങ്ങൾ ആചന്ദ്രതാരം സഭയെ പ്രകാശമാനമാക്കട്ടെ. ●

Just as faith without work is dead, action which does not arise from good conscience and faith is also dead.





'Church' is the holy place where one feels the presence of God. Church consecration is the process of encompassing God's presence in a place through special invocatory prayers. God who was pleased with the sacrifices of our forefathers commanded Moses to build a tent which would signify

His presence among Israelites. God also asked Solomon to build a temple for Him. These instances foretell God's intention of establishing a permanent altar through the sacrifice of His only begotten son. The eternal love of God manifested in the sacrifice at Calvary, bestows peace and blessings on all. It is beyond our comprehension to imagine the omnipresent and the Lord of all universes to dwell in an abode built by us. When Mary lived a life of purity, the saviour of the world incarnated through her. God descends into our sacrifices when we offer them with total purity by repenting for our sins and shortcomings. The glow which emanates from our heart engulfs the Church, thereby signifying God's presence there. Our body is the temple of God enlivened by His soul and the prayers and fragrance of frankincense which emanates from the Church imparts blessings to our soul. When the unlimited God limits himself, His presence does not get limited but we are made aware of His unlimited possibilities and we come to the realization of His presence in everything. When the Church is filled with God's presence, the angels, arch-angels, saints and all our forefathers sing praises and worship the God almighty, together with all living beings.

When God wishes to build an abode for Him he specifically selects the people who will fulfill His wish, manifesting God's plan for each one of us. The place chosen for the above would have been predestined for its construction. We read in 1 Chronicles 21:25 that the Lord commanded David to set an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, which points to the fact that the particular field was earmarked by the Lord for building the temple at Jerusalem, through events spanning across ages. Some places were made holy by saints who have lived and journeyed through those places leaving their heavenly aura behind, manifesting the will of God to build a house for the Lord. These Churches proclaim the heritage on which our worship is rooted and the forms of construction must proclaim the presence of God. It must be remembered that God commanded Moses and Solomon to build the temple following specific instructions to signify His presence among Israelites. The arches and other icons in a Church are meant to proclaim the glory of God.

The utensils and things that we use in our Churches for worship have close semblance and connection



"THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE BEARING GOD'S IMAGE"

Rev. Fr. Varghese P. Idichandy
Bangalore

to those items that were used in the Old and New Testaments and they also remind us the forefathers who led us on our faith. The twelve candles represent the twelve disciples and the seventy two rings of the incense burner represent the seventy two chosen people sent out by Jesus to spread the good news. We use a liturgical order in which we remember mainly the last supper of Jesus in Holy Qurbana. The prayers and hymns that precede the Holy Qurbana which were composed by our forefathers and which evolved through their intense prayerful and meditative life, prepares us for this great event. Through the participation in the Holy Qurbana, we partake in the life and death of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ and thereby transform us to the position of children of God. The godliness in the hymns and prayers together with the fragrance of the incense transports our worship into a heavenly plane thereby reenacting and internalizing the heavenly worship experienced by the disciples. When we repeat the words of the hymns and prayers, we experience a heavenly sacredness. The burning of the incense symbolizes the sweet fragrance that our soul will start emitting when all our actions and thoughts are aligned with that of our Lord God.

"This is the day the Lord made; Let us greatly rejoice
and be glad there in"

Psalm 118:24



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We will feel the presence of God in a Church only when we approach it with pure thoughts and with pure hearts. In the war with the Philistines, Israelites brought the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord into the battle field so that they could have victory over their enemies. However, the Israelites did not experience victory but were defeated in the war and the Ark of the Covenant was snatched away from them. The Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant of God, and brought it to the house of Dagon, and placed it beside the Dagon. When they approached the temple the next day, they found that Dagon had fallen with his face down before the Ark of the Lord thus revealing the presence of God. From this we can surmise that if we approach God without purity, we cannot stand in his presence or experience His grace. His grace will start descending on us in plenty when we rise in purity.

The Church is the place where God has called us to be present and where God wants us to observe certain rituals. In Exodus we read that God asked Moses to remove the footwear from his feet since the place on which he was standing was holy. We continue to follow this practice when we enter the Church in order to internalize the experience of our forefathers.

When we become instruments in the hands of God, we can experience the unlimited creative possibilities that open before us. We also wonder at the immense possibilities that fructify through us and realize that it is God who is working through us. When God prompts us to walk in the path of goodness and we cooperate with Him, we can experience great miracles happening in our lives. He will unveil before us great visions which only His chosen ones can see and experience. When we grow spiritually, we are imbued with the spiritual wisdom and come to value the spiritual glow in people around us rather than their worldly wealth. The aim of worship is to ignite the heavenly spark in us to transform us to the supreme awareness of God.

When we come in the presence of God we must be aware of our shortcomings. Through repentance of our sins during worship, the spiritual glow of our soul will start to increase. Eastern worship encompasses the whole creation. It reins our sense organs and focuses our body, mind and spirit to the heavenly worship. Churches are not built for God, but are places which enable the heavenly spirit within us to praise and worship God. We also stand along with the angels to give praise and thanks to God. While worshipping our consciousness and our thoughts must get

lifted up to heavens. Real prayer happens when our human needs decrease and our soul gets filled with the heavenly joy. When our bodies get merged in the heavenly bliss, we become part of the heavenly worship. When our internal glow increases, what we perceive with the eye of our soul may not be visible to others. The experiences of all who partake in worship may not be the same but depending on their mental states, each will have different experience from the same worship. We will also be standing along with the saints and our souls get fully illumined by the heavenly glow.

Let the divine touch of God emanate from Church and encompass the whole of New Zealand enabling many to partake in the heavenly worship. Let the heavenly fragrance that arises from here fill our heart with eternal joy.

The construction of this Church, like oasis in the midst of a desert, fulfills God's purpose of establishing truth and justice and prevents darkness from engulfing us. The service in the Church prompts us to be like mother Mary who lived a life of purity exemplifying the ideals for which Jesus stood for. Like the Israelites, who during their exile in the desert built tents where they experienced the presence of God and worshipped him; let our devotion and piety transform our worship to the heavenly worship in Jerusalem. This Church is the gift for those who undertook the arduous journey as nothing happens by chance. When we falter in our steps, the God who gave us strength to move forward will guide us in our journey of hope. May this Church, built in the name of the Malankara Sab-

habhasuran be the place of blessings to many. May the divine touch of God emanate from Church and encompass the whole of New Zealand enabling many to partake in the heavenly worship. May the heavenly fragrance that arises from here fill our heart with eternal joy.

We must not lose the zeal that we had during the construction of church. This must continue unabated forever and this zeal must be part of our life. Only then we will be able to pass on the purity of our deeds to our children. Anyone who has made even a small contribution towards building this temple of our Lord, thereby enriching and making a mark in their life, will be blessed. May our heavenly father shower his blessings to all those who participated in this worship or pass through its precincts in future. May the peace and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all those who have toiled for its construction. May this Church, which we have built for our Lord, be filled with His grace and I conclude with the fond memories that I carry with me of the short stint I worked with you. May God bless you all.

(Rev. Fr. Varghese P. Idichandy, was our Vicar from June 2004 to May 2007)



‘ജീവിക്കാനുള്ള ഒരു ഉപകരണമാണ് വീട് എന്ന് ഭവനത്തെ നിർവചിച്ചത് ലോക പ്രശസ്ത ഫ്രഞ്ച് വാസ്തുശില്പിയായ ലെ കർബുസിയാ ആണ്. ഈ മാനദണ്ഡമനുസരിച്ച് വി. കുർബാന അർപ്പിക്കാനുള്ള ഒരു ഉപകരണമാണ് പള്ളി.

ഈ ലേഖകന്റെ അതീവ പരിമിതമായ ജ്ഞാനമനുസരിച്ച് പൗരസ്ത്യ-പാശ്ചാത്യ വേദശാസ്ത്രങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായ ഒരു ദർശനവൈജാത്യമുണ്ട്. അതനുസരിച്ച് പാശ്ചാത്യ വേദശാസ്ത്രം കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ കുരിശുമരണത്തിലാണ്. മറിച്ച് പൗരസ്ത്യ വേദശാസ്ത്രമാകട്ടെ ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേൽപ്പിലും അതിനാലാണ് ഉയർപ്പ് പെരുന്നാളിന് സഭാപാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ സമാനതയില്ലാത്ത അത്യുന്നത സ്ഥാനം ഉള്ളത്. ‘ലോകത്തിൽ ഏറ്റവും മധ്യം പാശ്ചാത്യവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭ’ എന്ന ദുഷ്പേരുവഹിക്കുന്ന മലങ്കരസഭയിൽ ഇനിത് പ്രയോഗത്തിലില്ലെങ്കിലും ആരാധനാ വൽസ

എന്നാൽ പൗരസ്ത്യ ദർശനത്തിൽ വി. കുർബാന ഒരു ‘ഏകാംഗപ്രക്രിയ’ അല്ല. അത് സ്ഥലാതീതവും കാലാതീതവും ആണ്. ദൃശ്യസഭയും അദൃശ്യസഭയും അതിൽ സജീവ പങ്കാളിത്വം വഹിക്കുന്നു. ആദാം മുതലുള്ള സർവമനുജകുലവും ഇതിൽ ഭാഗഭാക്കാണ്. സർവലോകത്തിനുംവേണ്ടി അവരോടൊപ്പംനിന്ന് മുഖ്യ കാർമ്മികൻ വി. ബലി അർപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ദൃശ്യസഭയുടെ സാന്നിധ്യമില്ലാതെ വി. കുർബാന ഇല്ല. അതിനാലാണ്. കാർമ്മികൻ, പരികർമ്മി, സഭ ഇവയെ പ്രതിനിധീകരിച്ച് കുറഞ്ഞത് മൂന്ന്പേർ വി. കുർബാന അർപ്പിക്കാൻ അത്യന്താപേക്ഷിതമാണെന്ന് പൗരസ്ത്യ പാരമ്പര്യം അനുശാസിക്കുന്നത്.

അവിടെയും അവസാനിക്കുന്നില്ല. വി. കുർബാനയിൽ അദൃശ്യ സഭയുടെ അനുപേക്ഷണീയ സാന്നിധ്യവുമുണ്ട്. സ്വർഗീയ മാലാഖമാരുടെ ലെഗിയോനുകളും സഹദേന്മാരും കാദീശന്മാരും, വാങ്ങിപ്പോയ പൂർവികരും അവിടെ സന്നിഹിതരാകുന്നു. മറുബാസാകൾ മാലാഖമാരെയും 72 അറിയിപ്പുകാരെയും ദൃശ്യവൽക്കരിക്കുന്നു. ധൂപക്കുറ്റി ദൈവമാതാവ്, 12 ശ്ലീഹന്മാർ, ആദാംമുതൽ ഇതഃപര്യന്തമുള്ള തലമുറകൾ എന്നിവരേയും. പള്ളി

...ദൈവസുതർനാം ആയിടുവാൻ...

ഡോ. എം. കുര്യൻ തോമസ്



രവും കുദാശകളും പ്രാർത്ഥനകളും എല്ലാം സഭാപരമായി ക്രമീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റ ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചാണ്. അതിനാലാണ് പൗരസ്ത്യ സഭകളിൽ ക്രൂശിതരുപങ്ങളേക്കാൾ ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റ ക്രിസ്തുവിന് വി. മദ്ബഹാ ചിത്രീകരണത്തിൽ മുൻതൂക്കം ലഭിച്ചതും. എട്ടാം ദിവസം മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹായ്ക്കു പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുന്ന ക്രിസ്തുവിനേയും ഉയർത്തെഴുന്നേറ്റ ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ ഗണത്തിലാണ് പൗരസ്ത്യ പവിത്രകലാസങ്കേതം ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നത്.

വി. കുർബാനയേക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിലും വർത്തമാനകാല സാഹചര്യത്തിലേക്കിലും ഈ പൗരസ്ത്യ-പാശ്ചാത്യ ദർശനവൈജാത്യമുണ്ട്. ലളിതമായ പാശ്ചാത്യ വേദശാസ്ത്രപ്രകാരം വി. കുർബാന, വൈദികൻ അർപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സ്വകാര്യ സംരംഭം മാത്രമാണ്. ജനം അതിൽ വെറും കാഴ്ചക്കാര്മാത്രം അതിനാലാണ് ‘കുർബാന കാണുക’ എന്ന പ്രയോഗം റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കർ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നത്.

യുടെ മദ്ധ്യത്തിലെ സ്ഥലം കിഴക്കു-പടിഞ്ഞാറ് ഒഴിച്ചിടുന്നത് വാങ്ങിപ്പോയവർക്കു വേണ്ടിയാണെന്നാണ് വിശ്വാസം.

പുരാതന ക്രൈസ്തവ പാരമ്പര്യമനുസരിച്ച് എല്ലാ പള്ളിയും ഓരോ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥ പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ നാമത്തിലാണ് സ്ഥാപിക്കുന്നത്. അതുകൊണ്ട് മറ്റു പരിശുദ്ധന്മാർക്ക് അവിടെ പ്രസക്തിയില്ല എന്നല്ല. സത്യവിശ്വാസികൾക്ക് ഇഹത്തിലും പരത്തിലും പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ സംസർഗ്ഗം അത്യന്താപേക്ഷിതമാണ്. ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് ക്രിസ്ത്യനുകളുടെ ശവസംസ്കാര ശൃശൃഷ്ടിയിൽ തൈലം ഒഴിക്കുമ്പോൾ ‘...പ്രയത്നങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വിശ്രമത്തിനും, യുദ്ധങ്ങളിൽനിന്നുള്ള സമാധാനത്തിനും, പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരോടുകൂടിയുള്ള ആനന്ദത്തിനും വേണ്ടി ഈ തൈലം ഒഴിക്കപ്പെടുന്നു...’ എന്നാണ് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നത്. അതുതന്നെ ഇഹപരലോകങ്ങളിലെ പരിശുദ്ധ സംസർഗ്ഗം അത്യന്തം ശ്രേഷ്ഠമായ ഒരവസ്ഥയാണെന്നു വ്യക്തമാകുന്നു.

ഡോ. പൗലൂസ് മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥതയെ ഇപ്രകാരം വിശദീകരിക്കുന്നു. ‘...

നമ്മുടെ സഭയിൽ സംഭവിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള വൻകാര്യങ്ങളെല്ലാം തന്നെ നമ്മുടെ ബുദ്ധിശക്തികൊണ്ടോ ഭരണവൈഭവം കൊണ്ടോ ആണെന്നു നമുക്ക് അവകാശപ്പെടാൻ നിവൃത്തിയില്ല. നമ്മുടെ നിലനില്പിനുതന്നെയും പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥത ഈടുറ്റ സഹായമാണ്. അവർ എല്ലായ്പ്പോഴും നമുക്കുവേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ശാരീരിക പരാധീനതകൾക്ക് അവർ വശംവദരല്ല. ബലഹീനരായ നാം കുറെ സമയം അടുപ്പിച്ചു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുമ്പോഴേക്കും ക്ഷീണിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ കടന്നുപോയവർ നിരന്തരം പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. അവരുടെ ആത്മവർദ്ധന പ്രാർത്ഥനയിലാണ്. ആകയാൽ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നതിന് അവർക്കുള്ള കഴിവ്, ജീവിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നവരുടേതിനേക്കാൾ വളരെ മടങ്ങു കൂടുതലാണ്. 'രക്തസാക്ഷികളായ സഹദേന്മാരെപ്പറ്റി പരാമർശിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഫാ. ഡോ. ബേബി വർഗീസ്, '...സഹദേന്മാരോട് നാം പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയല്ല, അവരോട് നമുക്കു വേണ്ടി ദൈവത്തോട് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുവാൻ വിനയപൂരസരം അപേക്ഷിക്കുകയാണ്. യാഗപീഠത്തിന്റെ കീഴിൽ ദൈവത്തോട് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്ന സഹദേന്മാരുടെ സമൂഹം (വെളി. 6:9-11), അവരുടെ സഭയിലെ അംഗങ്ങളായ ജീവനുള്ളവർക്കുവേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയില്ലെന്ന് ചിന്തിക്കുന്നത് വെളിപാട് പൂസ്തകം നൽകുന്ന ചിത്രത്തിന് എതിരാണ്' എന്നു വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു. ഇതെല്ലാം പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ സംസർഗ്ഗത്തിന്റെ അനിവാര്യതയാണ് ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുന്നത്.

ദൃശ്യപ്രതീകങ്ങളും ചിത്രങ്ങളും ദ്വിമാന രൂപങ്ങൾ (Two dimensional images) പോലും പുരാതന സഭകൾക്ക് വർജ്ജ്യമല്ലായിരുന്നു. ചിത്രങ്ങൾക്കോ പ്രതീകങ്ങൾക്കോ ദിവ്യപരിവേഷം നൽകുകയല്ല, മറിച്ച്, അവയിലൂടെ അതത് പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരേയും അവരുടെ പിതാവായ ദൈവത്തെത്തന്നെയും ദർശിക്കുകയാണ്. ബലഹീനനായ മനുഷ്യന് പരിമിതികളുണ്ട് എന്ന് വി. പിതാക്കന്മാർക്ക് അറിയാമായിരുന്നു. അതിനാലാണ് ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് ഉയർന്ന ദൈവസാന്നിധ്യബോധമുണ്ടാകാൻ ബൈസന്റൈൻ, കോപ്റ്റിക് എത്യോപ്യൻ, അർമേനിയൻ ദേവാലയങ്ങൾ പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ ചിത്രങ്ങൾകൊണ്ട് നിറച്ചത്. അന്ത്യോപ്യൻ സുറിയാനി സഭയുടെ പള്ളികളിലെ ചിത്രങ്ങളും, മലങ്കരയിലെ പഴയപള്ളികളിലെ മദ്ബഹാ ചിത്രീകരണങ്ങളും ഇതേ ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടുകൂടിയതാണ്.

ഈ വിഷയത്തിൽ വ്യക്തമായ ഒരു ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് കാഴ്ചപ്പാട് ഡോ. പൗലസ് മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. '...വചനം എന്നു പറയുമ്പോൾ അക്ഷരങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന വാക്കുകൾ മാത്രമാകണമെന്നില്ല... സഭാവിശ്വാസസംബന്ധമായും ആരാധനാജീവിത സംബന്ധമായും ഉള്ള കാര്യങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ ജനങ്ങളെ പഠിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് പ്രസംഗം കൊണ്ടുമാത്രം സാധ്യമല്ല. ദേവാലയത്തിന്റെ ശില്പം, അതിലുള്ള ചിത്രങ്ങൾ, മറ്റു ചിഹ്ന രൂപങ്ങൾ, സംഗീതം എന്നിവ വചനം പോലെതന്നെ കാര്യക്ഷമമായ അദ്ധ്യയന മാദ്ധ്യമങ്ങളാണ്.' ഇതിനപ്പുറം ഈ വിഷയത്തിൽ ഒരു വിശദീകരണം ആവശ്യമില്ല.

റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കാ സഭയിൽനിന്നും വിഭിന്നമായി അന്ത്യേന പ്രവർത്തികൾ ചെയ്യുക എന്നതു മാത്രമല്ല ഒരാളെ പരിശുദ്ധനായി കണക്കാക്കുന്നതിന് ഓർത്ത

ഡോക്സ് സഭകൾ മാനദണ്ഡമായെടുക്കുന്നത്. മറിച്ച് സഭയ്ക്കു നൽകിയ സവിശേഷ സംഭാവനകളാണ്. വേദശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞരും, സംഗീതജ്ഞരും, നിയമ നിർമ്മാതാക്കളും, സത്യവിശ്വാസം നിലനിർത്തിയവരും ഒക്കെ ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് പരിശുദ്ധരാണ്. എന്തിനേറെ!, വി. ത്രിത്വത്തിന്റെ വിഖ്യാതമായ ഐക്കൺ വരച്ച ആന്ദ്രൂബ്ബെൻ എന്ന സന്യാസിയെ 1988-ൽ റഷ്യൻ ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭ പരിശുദ്ധനായി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചു.



പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ ജീവിത സംഭവങ്ങൾതന്നെ കാലാതീതങ്ങളായ പ്രവചനങ്ങളാണ്. പലപ്പോഴും അവ പ്രസക്തമാകുന്നത് സഹസ്രാബ്ദങ്ങൾക്ക് ശേഷമാകും. ഉദാഹരണത്തിന് കർത്താവിന്റെ മുന്നോടിയായ വി. യോഹന്നാൻ സ്നാപകനെ യെടുക്കാം. ദൈവപുത്രനെ ഉദരത്തിൽ വഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് വി. കന്യക മറിയം യോഹന്നാൻ സ്നാപകന്റെ മാതാവായ ഏലിശുബായെ ഗർഭാവസ്ഥയിൽ സന്ദർശിച്ചു ഉപചാരമർപ്പിച്ചപ്പോൾ 'ഏലിസബേത്തിന്റെ ഉദരത്തിൽ പ്രജ സന്തോഷിച്ചു തുള്ളി' (ലൂക്കോ. 1. 41 പശീത്താ). ഇന്ന് കടുത്ത സാമൂഹ്യ പ്രശ്നമായി മാറിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഭൂണഹത്യ, കൊലപാതകമാണെന്ന വ്യക്തമായ സന്ദേശമാണ് ഇതിലുള്ളത്. ഇത് പ്രസക്തമായത് ഇക്കാലത്തുമാത്രവും. അതേപോലെ ഇതര പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടേയും ജീവിതവും സന്ദേശവും പ്രസക്തമാകുന്നത് ഒരുപക്ഷേ നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകൾക്ക് ശേഷമാകാം.

സഭ ഔദ്യോഗികമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടുമാത്രമല്ല ഒരാൾ പരിശുദ്ധനാകുന്നത്. ആദിമകാല പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരെയും ഔദ്യോഗികമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. എന്നുമാത്രമല്ല, ഇന്നും റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്ക, റഷ്യൻ, മലങ്കര സഭകൾക്കു മാത്രമാണ് പരിശുദ്ധ പ്രഖ്യാപനത്തിന് വ്യക്തമായ നടപടിചട്ടം ഉള്ളത്. എന്തു പ്രഖ്യാപനം നടത്തിയാലും ജനങ്ങളുടെ അംഗീകാരമാണ് പ്രധാനം. ഔദ്യോഗിക പ്രഖ്യാപനം എന്നത് ഒരു സാങ്കേതികത്വം മാത്രമാണ്. അത് ഒരാളുടെ പരിശുദ്ധപദവിയെ ദുരുപയോഗം ചെയ്യുകയോ കച്ചവടച്ചരക്കാക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യുന്നത് തടയാനുള്ള ഒരു നടപടി കൂടിയാണ്. ഇതുവരെ പരിശുദ്ധനായി ഔദ്യോഗിക പ്രഖ്യാപനം നടത്താത്ത പ. പാമ്പാടി തിരുമേനിയുടെ നാമത്തിൽ കുറഞ്ഞത് നാലു ത്രോണോസുകൾ ഇതുവരെ പൂർണ്ണ കൂദാശ നടത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. കാരണം ജനം പരിശുദ്ധനായി അദ്ദേഹത്തെ അംഗീകരിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞു. അതിലാർക്കും തർക്കവുമില്ല.

ഏതു പരിശുദ്ധന്റെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥതയിൽ പള്ളി സ്ഥാപിച്ചാലും എല്ലാ പള്ളിയിലേയും വി. മദ്ബഹാ അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായി തമ്പുരാനെപ്പറ്റിയുടെ നാമത്തിലാണ് പ്രതിഷ്ഠിക്കുക. വി. ദൈവമാതാവിന് സഭയിലുള്ള അദിതീയ സ്ഥാനമാണ് ഇതിനു കാരണം. 'കൃപനിറഞ്ഞവളെ നിനക്കു സമാധാനം. ...' എന്നാദിയായ ഗബ്രിയേൽ മാലാഖായുടെ സംബോധനയിൽ വി. കന്യക മറിയമിന്റെ ജീവിതവും മഹത്വവും മുഴുവൻ അടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നു.



ദൈവ പുത്രനെ തന്റെ ഉദരത്തിൽ വഹിച്ചവൾ എന്ന കാഴ്ചപ്പാടും ഈ പ്രതിഷ്ഠയ്ക്കു പിന്നിലുണ്ട്. ഏലിശുബാ, ‘...എന്റെ കർത്താവിന്റെ അമ്മ...’ എന്നു വി. മറിയാമിനെ സംബോധന ചെയ്തതും ഇതോടൊപ്പം കണക്കിലെടുക്കണം. തന്മൂലം നെപ്പൊറ്റയുടെ ‘... ഇപ്പോൾ മുതൽ സർവ്വതലമുറകളും എന്നെ ഭാഗ്യവതി എന്നു കീർത്തിക്കും.’

എന്ന പ്രവചനമാണ് ഇത്തരം പ്രതിഷ്ഠകളിലൂടെ തലമുറകളായി നിറവേറ്റപ്പെടുന്നത്. സഭാ പഞ്ചാംഗത്തിൽ ജൂൺ 15-ന് ‘ദൈവമാതാവിന്റെ നാമത്തിൽ ആദ്യം പള്ളി പണിതതിന്റെ പെരുന്നാൾ’ എന്നൊരു വിശേഷദിനം തന്നെയുണ്ട്.

ഉയർത്തപ്പെട്ടുനേറ്റ ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ കാണാതെ വിശ്വസിക്കില്ല എന്നു ശഠിച്ചതിനാൽ ‘സംശയാലുവായ തോമസ്’ എന്ന് മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹാ വിശേഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്. യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തിൽ ‘എന്റെ കർത്താവും എന്റെ ദൈവവുമേ’ എന്ന പരമമായ വിശ്വാസസത്യം പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ച അദ്ദേഹം ‘സുദൂരനായ തോമസ്’ എന്ന വിശേഷണത്തിനാണ് കൂടുതൽ അർഹൻ. ഇന്ത്യയെ ആത്മാവിൽ ജനിപ്പിച്ച പിതാവാണ് മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹാ. നസ്രാണികൾ ഈ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടോടെ തങ്ങൾ മാർത്തോമ്മായുടെ പിൻമുറക്കാരാണെന്ന് അഭിമാനിച്ചിരുന്നു. പോർട്ടുഗീസ് പൂർവകാലത്ത് ‘...അവർ സെന്റ് തോമസിനെ ക്രിസ്തുവിനു സമമായി കാണുന്നു’ എന്ന് കേരളം സന്ദർശിച്ച വിദേശ സഞ്ചാരികളെക്കൊണ്ട് പറയിക്കത്തക്കവിധം അത്ര അഗാധമായിരുന്നു നസ്രാണികളുടെ തോമാവബോധം. അതിൽ തെറ്റൊന്നുമില്ല. കാരണം ‘നിങ്ങൾക്ക് പിതാക്കന്മാർ ഏറെയില്ലല്ലോ.’ (1. കോരി. 4. 15 പശീത്താ) ബൈസന്റൈൻ സഭകൾ ഈസ്റ്ററിന് ശേഷം വരുന്ന പുതുഞായറാഴ്ചയെ ഈ മഹാ വിശ്വാസപ്രഖ്യാപനത്തെ അനുസ്മരിച്ച് ‘തോമസ് സൺഡേ’ എന്ന പേരിലാണ് ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നത്.



പോർട്ടുഗീസ് പൂർവകാലത്ത് കർക്കിടം 3 (പുതിയ കണക്കിൽ ജൂലൈ 3) ആയിരുന്നു മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹായുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ ആയി നസ്രാണികൾ ആഘോഷിച്ചിരുന്നത്. ‘...കർക്കിടകത്തിൽ തോമ്മായുടെ ഉൽസവം പ്രധാനം എന്ന് ഡോ. ഹെർമ്മൻ ഗുണ്ടർട്ട് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.

പോർട്ടുഗീസ് സുകാർ ഇത് റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കാ പാരമ്പര്യമനുസരിച്ച്

ഡിസംബർ 21-ലേയ്ക്കു മാറ്റി. റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കാ സഭ 1969-ൽ തിരുന്നാൾ വി. ജറോം സൂചിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്ന ജൂലൈ 3-ലേയ്ക്കു മാറ്റി. എന്നാൽ ഓൾഡ് കത്തോലിക്കരും

ആംഗ്ലിക്കൻ സഭയും ഇന്നും ഡിസംബർ 21-ാണ് മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹായുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ ആയി പരിഗണിക്കുന്നത്. ബൈസന്റൈൻ സഭകൾ ജൂലിയൻ കലണ്ടർപ്രകാരം ഒക്ടോബർ 6-നും ഗ്രിഗോറിയൻ കലണ്ടറനുസരിച്ച് ഒക്ടോബർ 19-നും ആണ് മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹായുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നത്.

മലങ്കരയിൽ ഇന്ന് ജൂലൈ 3, ഡിസംബർ 21 എന്നീ രണ്ടു തീയതികളിലും മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹായുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. തന്മൂലം നെപ്പൊറ്റയുടെ ജനുവരി, മെയ്, ഓഗസ്റ്റ് മാസങ്ങളിൽ പെരുന്നാൾ സഭ കൽപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള സ്ഥിതിക്ക് മലങ്കരയുടെ ആത്മീയ പിതാവായ മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹായുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ പ്രതിവർഷം രണ്ടോ മൂന്നോ തവണ ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നതിൽ അസാധാര്യമായിട്ടില്ല. കാരണം, ‘...സുവിശേഷം മൂലം യേശുമശിഹായിൽ നിങ്ങളെ ജനിപ്പിച്ചത് ഞാനാണ്.’ (1. കോരി. 4. 15 പശീത്താ)

പുരാതന കാലം മുതൽ ‘ശ്ലീഹന്മാരിൽ മുമ്പന്മാരായ ഉന്നതപ്പെട്ട മാർ പത്രോസിന്റേയും മാർ പൗലൂസിന്റേയും’ ഓർമ്മ സംയുക്തമായി ജൂൺ 29-നാണ് ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നത്. അത് അവരുടെ രക്തസാക്ഷിത്വ ദിനമാണോ തിരുശേഷിപ്പുകൾ പുനഃസ്ഥാപിച്ച ദിനമാണോ എന്ന കാര്യത്തിൽ ചരിത്രകാരന്മാരിൽ ഏകാഭിപ്രായമില്ല. എന്തായാലും മലങ്കരസഭയ്ക്ക് ജൂൺ 29 മാറാനായ പെരുന്നാളാണ്.



ശ്ലീഹന്മാരിൽ മുമ്പന്മാരായ മാർ പത്രോസിന്റേയും, അപ്പോസ്തോലന്മാരുടെ ഗണത്തിലേയ്ക്ക് അക്കാലപ്രജ പോലെ അവസാനം കടന്നുവന്ന മാർ പൗലൂസിന്റേയും ഓർമ്മ ഒരുമിച്ച് ആചരിക്കുവാൻ ക്രമീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് ആലോചനാമ്യതമാണ്. സഭാധ്യക്ഷന്മാർക്ക് വലിപ്പച്ചെറുപ്പമില്ല എന്നതിന് സഭാപിതാക്കന്മാർ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയ സൂചകമായി ഇതിനെ കണക്കാക്കാം. മാർ പത്രോസിന്റേയും മാർ പൗലൂസിന്റേയും ഓർമ്മ ‘ആൽഫയും ഒമേഗയും’ എന്നു പറയുന്നതുപോലെ ആദ്യാന്ത്യ സൂചകമാണെന്നും, അത് സർവ്വ ശ്ലീഹന്മാരേയും ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തി പറയുന്നതാണെന്നും ഒരു രസകരമായ വാദം ഉണ്ട്. അങ്ങനെയാണെങ്കിലും തെറ്റൊന്നുമില്ല. കാരണം അവരൊക്കെ സ്വയം ‘ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ കൂട്ടുമുപ്പൻ’ എന്നാണ് അഭിമാനിച്ചിരുന്നത്. അവരുടെ പ്രവർത്തനമൊന്നും സ്വയം പുകഴ്ചയ്ക്ക് ആയിരുന്നില്ലതാനും.

പ. സഭ തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത് പ. ശ്ലീഹന്മാർ പട്ടംകെട്ടിയ ഏഴു ശെമ്മാശന്മാരിൽപ്പെട്ടവനാണ് മാർ സ്തേഫാനോസ്. ക്രിസ്തുമാർഗ്ഗത്തിലെ ആദ്യത്തെ രക്തസാക്ഷി ആയി ആണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തെ കണക്കാക്കുന്നത്. ഡോ. പൗലൂസ് മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് ‘...പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരെ ആദരിക്കുകയും അവരുടെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥതയിൽ അഭയപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്ക എന്നത് ആദിമസഭയിൽ, വി. സ്തേപ്പാനോസിന്റേ രക്തസാക്ഷിത്വത്തോടു കൂടിത്തന്നെ ആരംഭി



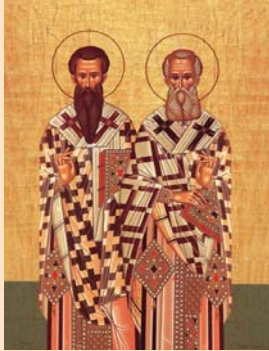
ച്ചതാണ്. വി. സ്തേപ്പാനോസിന്റെ ആത്മാവിനെ സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ കർത്താവായ യേശു പിതാവായ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ വലത്തുഭാഗത്തു നിൽക്കുന്നതായിട്ടാണ് കണ്ടത്. സ്തേപ്പാനോസിന്റെ പ്രാർത്ഥന കർത്താവിന്റെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥതയോടു സംയോജിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുകയാണുണ്ടായത്. സ്തേപ്പാനോസിന്റെ മൃതശരീരം ഭക്തിപൂർവ്വം അടക്കം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടു ... എന്നിങ്ങനെ മാർ സ്തേഫാനോസിനെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. വേദപുസ്തകത്തിലെ ഇതര ഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ പിതാവിന്റെ വലത്തുഭാഗത്ത് ഇരിക്കുന്നതായി വർണ്ണിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള പുത്രൻ തമ്പുരാൻ അവിടെ നിൽക്കുന്നതായി ആണ് തന്റെ അന്ത്യ നിമിഷത്തിൽ മാർ സ്തേഫാനോസ് ദർശിക്കുന്നത്. തന്റെ രക്തസാക്ഷിയുടെ ആത്മാവിനെ സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ പുത്രൻ തമ്പുരാൻ തന്റെ സിംഹാസനത്തിൽ നിന്നും എഴുന്നേറ്റുനിന്നു എന്നാണ് പ. ഗീവർഗീസ് ദിതീയൻ ബാവായ ഇതിനു നൽകിയ വ്യാഖ്യാനം.



അന്ത്യോഖ്യയിലെ മൂന്നാമത്തെ സഭാമുഖ്യനായിരുന്നു മാർ ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസ്. സുറിയാനിപാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ 'അഗ്നിമയനായ ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസ്' (മാർ ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസ് നൂറോനോ) എന്നാണ് അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഗ്രീക്കിൽ ദൈവത്താൽ വഹിക്കപ്പെട്ടവൻ എന്നും, ദൈവത്തെ വഹിച്ചവൻ എന്നും അർത്ഥമുള്ള 'തെയോഫോറസ്' എന്നാണ് ഇദ്ദേഹം പാശ്ചാത്യ ലോകത്ത് അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. യേശുക്രിസ്തു കൈകളിലേന്തിയ ശിശുവാണ് (മത്താ. 18.2, മർക്കോ. 9. 36) ഇദ്ദേഹം എന്നൊരു പാരമ്പര്യം ഉണ്ട്. അന്ത്യോഖ്യയിൽ നിന്നും ബന്ധനസ്ഥനാക്കി റോമിൽ കൊണ്ടുചെന്ന് സിംഹക്കുട്ടിലെറിഞ്ഞ് വധിച്ചു. ഇദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സപ്തലേഖനങ്ങൾ ആദിമ സഭാക്രമീകരണത്തിന് നൽകിയ വിലപ്പെട്ട സംഭാവനകളാണ്. പ്രതിവർഷം ഡിസംബർ 20-ന് ആണ് ഇദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഓർമ്മ കൊണ്ടാടുന്നത്. ഇന്ന് അന്ത്യോഖ്യാ പാത്രിയർക്കീസുമാരുടെ സ്ഥാനനാമം മാർ ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസ് എന്നാണ്.

കൈസറിയായിലെ മെത്രാനായിരുന്ന മാർ ബസേലിയോസ്, സഹോദരൻ നിസായിലെ മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ്, സുഹൃത്തായ നാസിയൻസിലെ മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് എന്നിവർ പൊതുവായി കപ്പദോക്യൻ പിതാക്കന്മാർ എന്നാണ് അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. മാർ ബസേലിയോസിന്റെ മുത്ത സഹോദരിയും, സഹോദരന്മാരുടെ വിശ്വാസ മാർഗ്ഗദർശിനിയുമായ വി. മക്സിമയേയും കൂടി ചേർത്തെങ്കിലെ കപ്പദോക്യൻ പിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ ഗണം പൂർണ്ണമാവൂ.

സഭാപാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ അതുല്യമായ ഉന്നതസ്ഥാനമാണ് കപ്പദോക്യൻ പിതാക്കന്മാർക്കുള്ളത്.



സന്യാസപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിലും വേദശാസ്ത്ര ചിന്തയിലും സഭാഭരണരംഗത്തും തന്റെ പ്രാഗൽഭ്യം തെളിയിച്ച മാർ ബസേലിയോസ് 'വലിയ മാർ ബസേലിയോസ്' എന്നാണ് അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഇന്ന് ഇന്ത്യയിലെ പൗരസ്ത്യ കാതോലിക്കാരുടെ സ്ഥാനനാമം മാർ ബസേലിയോസ് എന്നാണ്. അത്യുജ്ജ്വല വാഗ്മിയും വേദശാസ്ത്ര പണ്ഡിതനുമായ നാസിയൻസിലെ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് 'ദൈവശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞനായ മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ്' എന്നാണ് അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. ഇദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിലാണ് ക്രിസ്തുവർഷം 381-ലെ കൂസ്തന്തീനോസ് പോലീസ് സുന്നഹദോസ് കൂടിയത്. 'നിസായുടെ നക്ഷത്രം' എന്നാണ് മാർ ബസേലിയോസിന്റെ സഹോദരനായ നിസായിലെ മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. യോഗാത്മക ചൈതന്യത്തിന്റെ മുർത്തഭാവമായിരുന്നു നല്ലൊരു വേദശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞൻ കൂടിയായിരുന്ന ഇദ്ദേഹം. ജനുവരി 1-നാണ് ഇവരുടെ ഓർമ്മ സംയുക്തമായി സഭ ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നത്.



നാലാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽത്തന്നെ സഭയുടെ മിന്നും താരകമായി മാറിയ സഹദായാണ് കേവലം മൂന്നു വയസുമാത്രം പ്രായമുണ്ടായിരുന്ന മാർ കുറിയാക്കോസ്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ അമ്മയായ യൂലിത്തിയേയാണ് ആദ്യം പീഡകർ പിടികൂടിയത്. മൂന്നു വയസുള്ള ഒരു പൈതൽ സമർത്ഥിക്കുന്നതാണ് സത്യ ദൈവം എന്ന അവരുടെ വാദം അംഗീകരിച്ച

നാടുവാഴി തിരഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ അതിനു ലഭിച്ചത് അവരുടെ മകനുമായ മാർ കുറിയാക്കോസിനെയാണ്. ന്യായാധിപനോട് യുക്തിയുക്തമായി വാദപ്രതിവാദം നടത്തിയ മാർ കുറിയാക്കോസിന്റെ അന്തിമവാദം കേൾക്കാൻ പുത്രൻ തമ്പുരാൻ മാലാഖമാരുടെ ഗണങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം നേരിട്ട് എഴുന്നള്ളി. 'നിനക്കു ആവശ്യമുള്ളത് സകലവും ചോദിച്ചുകൊൾക' എന്നു കല്പിച്ചു. അതിനു മറുപടിയായി ആ മൂന്നു വയസുകാരൻ നടത്തിയ ഒരു പ്രാർത്ഥനയുണ്ട്. '...എന്റെ ഓർമ്മ കഴിക്കുകയും ഞാൻ സാക്ഷിമരണം അനുഭവിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള സ്ഥലത്തു ഈ രാത്രി മുഴുവൻ ജാഗരണം ചെയ്യുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നവൻ സ്വർഗത്തിൽ നല്ല പ്രതിഫലം നീ കൊടുക്കേണമേ. അവന്റെ ഭവനത്തെ നിന്റെ കൃപയാൽ നീ വാഴ്ത്തേണമേ. നിന്റെ നാമത്തിൽ സഹദേന്മാരുടെ ഭവനം പണിയുന്ന എല്ലാവന്റേയും സ്ഥലത്തു മനുഷ്യരിലും മൃഗങ്ങളിലുമുള്ള വസന്തയുണ്ടാകരുതേ.

**“Congratulations to the SDIOC team
for the successful completion of your
church project”**

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22



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മൂന്നാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന ഗീവർഗീസ് എന്ന റോമൻ പടയാളി ക്രൈസ്തവ സഭയിലെ മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദാ എന്ന പരിശുദ്ധനായ ചരിത്രം പ്രസിദ്ധമാണ്. ബൈസന്റൈൻ രാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദാ പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ നിരയിൽ പ്രമുഖസ്ഥാനം അലങ്കരിക്കുന്നു. റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കാ സഭ ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ പട്ടിക

യിൽ മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദായുടെ സ്ഥാനം താഴേക്കിറക്കിയെങ്കിലും കേരളത്തിലെ റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കരുടെ മനസ്സിൽ അദ്ദേഹം മുൻനിരയിൽത്തന്നെയാണ്. ഇന്നും പ്രൊട്ടസ്റ്റന്റ് രാജ്യമായ ഇംഗ്ലണ്ടിന്റെ കാവൽപിതാവാണ് മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദാ. അവരുടെ നാണയമായ സ്വർണ്ണ പവനിൽ ഇന്നും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ചിത്രം ആലേഖനം ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. അതിന് കുതിരപ്പവൻ എന്ന പേര് മലയാളികളുടെ ഇടയിൽ ലഭിച്ചതു തന്നെ കുതിരപ്പുറത്തിരിക്കുന്ന സഹദായുടെ ചിത്രത്തിൽ നിന്നാണ്. കൂടാതെ റഷ്യ, ജോർജിയ തുടങ്ങിയ രാജ്യങ്ങളുടേയും കാവൽ പുരുഷനാണ് മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദാ. നസ്രാണിക്ക് ‘പുണ്യാളച്ചനും’ പൗരസ്ത്യ സുറിയാനി സഭാ പഞ്ചാംഗപ്രകാരം മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദായുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ മേടം 24-ലും മറ്റു സഭകൾക്ക് മേടം 23-മായിരുന്നു എന്നത് ഒരു പ്രശ്നമായി. പത്തൊമ്പതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടുവരെ ഈ പ്രശ്നം നിലനിന്നിരുന്നു. തൽക്കാലം രണ്ടു ദിവസവും പെരുന്നാളായി ആഘോഷിച്ചാണ് പതിനെട്ടും പത്തൊമ്പതും നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളിൽ നസ്രാണികൾ പ്രശ്നം പരിഹരിച്ചത്. 1876-നു ശേഷം പെരുന്നാൾ പാശ്ചാത്യ സുറിയാനി രീതിയിൽ മേടം 23-നു മാത്രമായി.

മലയാളികളെല്ലാം പുണ്യാളച്ചനെ പാമ്പുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുത്തിയാണ് കാണുന്നത്. പാമ്പുകളിൽ നിന്നും ക്ഷുദ്ര ജീവികളിൽ നിന്നുമുള്ള സംരക്ഷണം തേടിയാണ് പതിനായിരങ്ങൾ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥതയിലെത്തുന്നത്. ഇത് തികച്ചും ഒരു മലയാളി സങ്കല്പമാണ്. കാരണം ഐതിഹ്യങ്ങളിലെങ്ങും മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദായെ പാമ്പുമായി ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നില്ല. ലോകത്ത് മറ്റൊരിടത്തും അത്തരമൊരു വിശ്വാസവുമില്ല. എന്തിന് കേരളത്തിലുപയോഗിക്കുന്ന ചിത്രങ്ങളിലും രൂപങ്ങളിലുംപോലും ഐതിഹ്യപ്രകാരമുള്ള വ്യാളിയെയാണ് കാണുന്നത്. അവിടെയും പാമ്പില്ല. മലയാളികളുടെ പൊതുവായ ഒരു പുരാതന സ്വഭാവമാണ് സർപ്പഭയം. നമ്പൂതിരിമതം സർപ്പകാവുകളും സർപ്പക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളുമുണ്ടാക്കി സർപ്പ

ങ്ങളെ കുടിയിരുത്തി ആരാധിച്ചാണ് സർപ്പഭയത്തിൽ നിന്നും സർപ്പദോഷത്തിൽ നിന്നും രക്ഷ നേടിയത്. നസ്രാണിക്ക് അങ്ങനെയൊരാറായന മതപരമായി സാധ്യമായിരുന്നില്ല. അവർ നേരെ മറുവശത്തേക്കു പോയി സർപ്പത്തെ ഒതുക്കാൻ പറ്റിയ ഒരു പരിശുദ്ധനെ കണ്ടെത്തി. സർപ്പങ്ങളിൽ കെങ്കേമനായ വ്യാളിയെ വധിച്ച മാർ ഗീവർഗീസ് സഹദാ അങ്ങനെ ക്രൈസ്തവതത്വങ്ങൾക്ക് അനുസൃതമായിത്തന്നെ നസ്രാണിയുടെ സർപ്പഭയം അകറ്റാനുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗമായി.



ക്രിസ്തുവർഷം നാലാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ പേർഷ്യയിൽ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന ഒരു രാജകുമാരനായിരുന്നു മാർ ബഹനാം. അദ്ദേഹത്തെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള പാരമ്പര്യം ഇപ്രകാരം സംഗ്രഹിക്കാം. പേർഷ്യയിലെ രാജാവായിരുന്ന സെൻഹറിബിന്റെ പുത്രനായിരുന്നു ബഹനാം. അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു കൃഷ്ണരോഗിണിയായ സാറ എന്നൊരു സഹോദരി

ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അനേക ചികിത്സകൾ ചെയ്തിട്ടും സാറായുടെ അസുഖം ഭേദമായില്ല. ഇവർ അഗ്യാരാധകരായ സൊറാസ്ട്രിയൻ മതത്തിൽപ്പെട്ടവരായിരുന്നു. അങ്ങനെയിരിക്കെ ഒരിക്കൽ ബഹനാം വനത്തിൽ വേട്ടയാടവേ ദയറായക്കാരനായ മാർ മത്തായിയുടെ വാസസ്ഥലത്തു ചെന്നു. അവിടെവെച്ച് അത്ഭുതപ്രവർത്തകനായ മാർ മത്തായിയുമായി പരിചയപ്പെടുകയും അദ്ദേഹത്തിൽ നിന്നു ക്രിസ്തീയ വിശ്വാസം സ്വീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. തുടർന്ന് മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെ അപേക്ഷപ്രകാരം മാർ മത്തായി സഹോദരി സാറായെ സുമെപ്പടുത്തി. തുടർന്ന് സാറായും മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെ അംഗരക്ഷകരായ നാല്പതു പടയാളികളും ക്രിസ്തുമതം സ്വീകരിച്ചു.

മക്കളുടെ മതത്യാഗത്തിൽ ക്ഷുഭിതനായ ബഹനാമിന്റെ പിതാവ് ബഹനാമിനെയും സാറായേയും നാല്പതു പടയാളികളെയും വധിച്ചു. തുടർന്ന് രാജാവ് കഠിന രോഗപീഡകളാൽ വലഞ്ഞു. ചികിത്സകൊണ്ട് ഭേദമാകാതെവന്ന ഈ രോഗം ബഹനാമിനെയും കൂട്ടരെയും വധിച്ച സ്ഥലത്തുചെന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചാൽ ശമിക്കുമെന്ന് ദർശനമുണ്ടായി. രാജാവ് അവിടെപ്പോയി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും രോഗശമനം ലഭിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. തുടർന്ന് അദ്ദേഹവും കുടുംബവും ക്രിസ്തുമതം സ്വീകരിക്കുകയും മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെ കബറിടവും ഗുരുവായ മാർ മത്തായിയുടെ ദയറായും പണിയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. മാർ മത്തായിയുടെ കാലശേഷം പിൻഗാമിയായ മാർ ഇസ്സഹാക്കാണ് ഈ ദയറാ പണിയിച്ചത്.

‘പിശാശുക്കളെ ഓടിക്കുന്ന സഹദാ’ എന്ന നിലയിലാണ് മലങ്കരയിൽ മാർ ബഹനാം സഹദാ അറിയപ്പെടുന്നത്. ദുഷ്ടാത്മാക്കളുടെ പീഡയിൽനിന്നും ബന്ധനത്തിൽനിന്നും മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥത മോചനം നൽകുമെന്ന് അനുഭവസ്ഥർ സാക്ഷിക്കുന്നു. പഴയ കണക്കിന് ധനു 10 ആണ് മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെയും മർത്ത സാറായുടേയും സഹചരരായ 40 സഹദേന്മാരുടേയും


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24-08-1975



T.V. Joseph
& Mariamma Joseph

33rd Wedding Anniversary
3-5-1981



P. G. Varghese
& Annamma

ഓർമ്മ. കലണ്ടർ പരിഷ്കരണത്തിൽ ഇത് ഡിസംബർ 10 ആയി. എന്നാൽ മലങ്കരയിലെ ചില പള്ളികളിൽ ഇന്നും പഴയകണക്കിന് ധനു 10-ന് സമമായ ഡിസംബർ 23-നാണ് മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെ പെരുന്നാൾ ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നത്.

മലങ്കര നസ്രാണികൾക്കുമാത്രം അവകാശപ്പെട്ട പരിശുദ്ധമായമാണ് മാർ സാബോർ, മാർ അഫ്രോത്ത് എന്നിവർ. കൊല്ലവർഷം ഒന്നാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ പ്രാരംഭത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിലെത്തിയ ബാഗ്ദാദിലെ മഹാനായ തീമോത്തി കാതോലിക്ക അയച്ച പേർഷ്യൻ മിഷിനറി മെത്രാന്മാരാണ് കേരളത്തിൽ ഇന്ന് 'കാദീശന്മാർ' എന്നറിയപ്പെടുന്ന മാർ സാബോറും മാർ അഫ്രോത്തും. ക്രിസ്തുവർഷം 841-ൽ 'തരിസാപ്പാള്ളിച്ചെപ്പേട്' വാങ്ങിയ മരുവാൻ സബ്രിശോയുമായ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടാണ് ഇവരേക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പാരമ്പര്യം തന്റെ കേരള പഴമയിൽ ഡോ. ഹെർമ്മൻ ഗുണ്ടർട്ട് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയ നസ്രാണി പാരമ്പര്യം താഴെ പറയും വിധമാണ്.



'...കൊല്ലം ഒന്നു (ക്രി. 825) ശബോർ, അബോസ്സ ഇങ്ങനെ രണ്ടു മുപ്പന്മാരും തവരിശു എന്ന കച്ചവടക്കാരന്റെ കൂടവന്നു എന്നു നസ്രാണികൾ ചൊല്ലുന്ന പാരമ്പര്യം. ഇവർ അന്നു നെസ്തോര്യ സഭകൾക്ക് അച്ചനായി വാഴുന്ന തിമൊതയൻ (ക്രി. 770 - 820) പലദിക്കിലും സുവിശേഷം അറിയിപ്പാൻ അയച്ചവരുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ ഉള്ളതായിരി

ക്കും. ഇതിനും കാലനിർണ്ണയം ഇല്ല. അവർ വന്ന സമയം ചിലർ മേൽപറഞ്ഞ കൊല്ലത്തിൽ 100 സംവൽസരം ചേർത്തു പറയുന്നു. ഇരുവരും വന്നിറങ്ങി കൊല്ലത്തു രാജാവിനെ കണ്ടു അവന്റെ സമ്മതം വരുത്തി ആകൃണനടത്തോളം വിശ്വാസികൾക്കു ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തി പള്ളികളെ എടുപ്പിച്ചു. ഉദയമ്പേരൂർ മുതലായ നാടുകളിൽ നായന്മാരെ മറ്റും സഭയിൽ ചേർത്തുകൊള്ളുകയും ചെയ്തു. വേണാട്ടിൽ ഒക്കെയും സത്യവേദം അറിയിപ്പാനും മനസ്സുള്ളവരെ ഒക്കെ സ്നാനം ചെയ്യിപ്പാനും അവർക്ക് രാജകൽപ്പന ആയപ്രകാരം പറയുന്നു. അവർ മരിച്ചുപോയതിന്റെ ശേഷം ചെയ്ത ഉപകാരങ്ങൾ മറക്കാതെ ഇരിക്കാൻ പള്ളികൾക്ക് ഇരുവരുടെ നാമവും ഇട്ടു. ...'

1498-ൽ റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കർ കേരളത്തിൽ കാൽ കുത്തുമ്പോൾ മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹാ കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ നസ്രാണികളുടെ ഇടയിൽ എറ്റവും ആദരണീയരായ പരിശുദ്ധർ മാർ സാബോർ, മാർ അഫ്രോത്ത് എന്നിവരായിരുന്നു. 1559-ലെ ക്രൈസ്തവമായ ഉദയംപേരൂർ സുന്നഹദോസ് ഇവർ ഇരുവരെയും വേദവിപരീതികളായി തള്ളി. ഇവരുടെ നാമത്തിലുള്ള പള്ളികൾ എല്ലാ പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടേയും - പൗരസ്ത്യ സുറിയാനിയിൽ 'കന്ദീശന്മാർ' - പേരിലേയ്ക്കു മാറ്റി. ഇതുകൊണ്ടൊന്നും അവരോടുള്ള നസ്രാണിയുടെ ആദരവ് അവസാനിക്കില്ല എന്നു ബോധ്യമായ റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കർ, ഇവർക്കു പകരം തങ്ങളുടെ യൂറോപ്യൻ ഇരട്ട പരിശുദ്ധരായ ഗർവാ

സീസ്, പ്രൊത്തോസിസ് എന്നിവരെ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചു. മാർ സാബോർ, മാർ അഫ്രോത്ത് എന്നിവരുടെ പെരുന്നാളായ മേടം 29-നു പകരം ലത്തീൻ പഞ്ചാംഗ പ്രകാരം സർവ പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടേയും ഓർമ്മയായ വൃശികം 1 പെരുന്നാളായി ആഘോഷിക്കണമെന്നു ഉദയംപേരൂർ സുന്നഹദോസ് കല്പിച്ചു. 1653-ലെ കുനൻ കുരിശു സത്യത്തിനുശേഷം ഇവ 'കാദീശാ പള്ളികൾ' എന്ന പേരിൽത്തന്നെ തുടർന്നും അറിയപ്പെട്ടെങ്കിലും അവ സകല പരിശുദ്ധന്മാർക്കു പകരം വീണ്ടും മാർ സാബോർ, മാർ അഫ്രോത്ത് എന്നിവരുടെ നാമത്തിലായി ഇന്നു പരിഗണിക്കപ്പെട്ടുവരുന്നു. അകപ്പറമ്പ് പള്ളിയാകട്ടെ, പുരാതനമായ മാർ സാബോർ, മാർ അഫ്രോത്ത് എന്ന നാമം തന്നെ പുനഃസ്ഥാപിച്ചു. 1663-നു ശേഷം റോമൻ കത്തോലിക്കർ കൈവശപ്പെടുത്തിയ ഉദയംപേരൂർ അടക്കമുള്ള പള്ളികൾ 'കന്ദീശാ' പള്ളികൾ എന്ന പേരിൽ ഇന്നും അറിയപ്പെടുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഇന്നു മലങ്കര സഭയുടെ പഞ്ചാംഗത്തിൽ പുതിയ കണക്കിനു ഏപ്രിൽ 29-നു തന്നെയാണ് മാർ സാബോർ, മാർ അഫ്രോത്ത് എന്നിവരുടെ പെരുന്നാൾ ചേർത്തുവരുന്നത്.

1653-ൽ ചരിത്രപ്രസിദ്ധമായ കുനൻ കുരിശു സത്യത്തിലൂടെ നസ്രാണികൾ റോമാനുകും വലിച്ചെറിഞ്ഞു. സത്യവിശ്വാസം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കുവാനായി ജാതിക്കു കത്തനാരായ തോമ്മാ അർക്കദിയക്കോനെ മാർത്തോമ്മാ മെത്രാനായി വാഴിച്ചു. ഈ മേല്പട്ട വാഴ്ചയുടെ ക്രമരഹിത്യം തീർക്കാൻ ഒരു മെത്രാന്റെ സാന്നിധ്യത്തിനായി എല്ലാ പൗരസ്ത്യ സിംഹാസനങ്ങളുമായും നസ്രാണികൾ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടു. അതിൻപ്രകാരം 1665-ൽ കേരളത്തിലെത്തിയ മേല്പട്ടക്കാരനാണ് യേറൂശലേമിലെ സുറിയാനി പാത്രിയർക്കീസ് മാർ ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് അബ്ദൽ ജലീദ്. അദ്ദേഹത്തെപ്പറ്റി യാക്കൂബ് ത്രിതീയൻ പാത്രിയർക്കീസ് നൽകുന്ന വിവരണം ഇപ്രകാരമാണ്.



'...ഗ്രിഗോറിയോസ് അബ്ദൽ ജലീൽ മുസലിൽ ജനിച്ചു. തന്റെ കാലത്തിലെ സഭാ പിതാക്കന്മാരിൽ ഏറ്റവും പ്രാമുഖ്യമുള്ളവനായിരുന്നു ഇദ്ദേഹം. ശൈമോൻ പാത്രിയർക്കീസ് ഇദ്ദേഹത്തെ ആമീദിന്റെ (ഡയർബക്കർ) മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തയായി, തിമാത്തിയോസ് എന്ന പേരിൽ വാഴിച്ച കാലം ചെയ്ത് ഈസാനുവായ്യിർ (Isa Nuwayyir)

മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായിക്ക് പിൻഗാമിയായിക്കി. പത്തുവർഷത്തിനുശേഷം യെറൂശലേം സിംഹാസനത്തിലേക്ക് ഇദ്ദേഹത്തെ സ്ഥലം മാറ്റി. 1665 ൽ അബ്ദൽ മിശിഹാ ഒന്നാമൻ (1662- 1686) മലബാറിലേയ്ക്ക് അയച്ചു. ശൈശ്വക തീർപ്പണതയോടുകൂടി തന്റെ ഭദ്രാസനത്തെ ഇദ്ദേഹം നയിച്ചു. സ്തുത്യർഹമായ നേട്ടങ്ങളോടുകൂടിയ ഫലപ്രദമായ ജീവിതം നയിച്ച ശേഷം 1671 ഏപ്രിൽ 14-ാം തീയതി തന്റെ നാമന്റെ സന്നിധിയിലേക്ക് യാത്രയായി. പറവൂർ പള്ളിയിൽ കബറടക്കി. എല്ലാവിധ ബഹുമതികളോടുകൂടെ ഇദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഓർമ്മ ആണ്ടുതോറും കൊണ്ടാടുന്നു. ...'

മലയാള ഭാഷയിലെ ആദ്യ ചരിത്രഗ്രന്ഥമായ നിരണം ഗ്രന്ഥവരി ഇതിന്റെ ബാക്കി ഭാഗം നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്. ‘... മിശിഹാക്കാലം 1665 ചെന്ന കൊല്ലം 849 ഒരശ്ശെമിന്റെ അഞ്ചാമത്തെ പാത്രീയാർക്കീസ മാർ ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസ മെത്രാപോലീത്താ വന്നു. വലു മാർത്തോമാ മെത്രാനെ ലോകരുകുടി വാഴിച്ച പന്ത്രണ്ടാം സംവത്സരം ആക കൊണ്ടു ഇദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കൈകളാലെ മാർത്തോമാൻ മെത്രാനെ അപ്പസ്കോപ്പാ ആയിട്ടു വാഴ്ചയും തികച്ചു. ...മിശിഹാക്കാലം 1671 ചെന്ന കൊല്ലം 846 മാണ്ടു മേടമാസം 14 നു മാർ ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസ കാലംചെയ്തു പട്ടമനപ്പറ വൂര പള്ളിയിൽ അടങ്ങി. ...’

മാർ ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസ് അബ്ദൽ ജലീദിനെ സഭ പരിശുദ്ധനായി പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. പക്ഷേ ചക്കുപള്ളത്തെ ഇടുകി ഭദ്രാസന അരമന ചാപ്പൽ അടക്കം അനേക ദേവാലയങ്ങൾ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ നാമത്തിൽ സ്ഥാപിതമായിട്ടുണ്ട്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യം മലങ്കരയിൽ സത്യവിശ്വാസം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിച്ച് നിലനിർത്തുവാൻ അനുപേക്ഷണീയമായിരുന്നു എന്ന വസ്തുത മാത്രം മതി, ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് പാരമ്പര്യമനുസരിച്ച് അദ്ദേഹത്തെ പരിശുദ്ധനായി പരിഗണിക്കുവാൻ.



ഏതാണ്ട് സമാനമായ പശ്ചാത്തലമാണ് മാർ ബസേലിയോസ് യൽദോ മന്ദ്രിയാനായുടെ കാര്യത്തിലുമുള്ളത്. 1665-ൽ മാർ ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസ് അബ്ദൽ ജലീദ് മലങ്കരയുടെ മേല്പട്ട സ്ഥാനം ക്രമീകരിച്ചിട്ടും പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ അവസാനിച്ചില്ല. ഈ സാഹചര്യത്തിലാണ് മലങ്കരയുടെ അഭ്യർത്ഥന മാനിച്ച് അന്ത്യോഖ്യയുടെ

പ. ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസ് അബ്ദൽ മ്ശീഹാ പ്രഥമൻ പാത്രീയാർക്കീസ്, പ. യൽദോ ബസേലിയോസ് മന്ദ്രിയാനായെ കേരളത്തിലേയ്ക്കയച്ചത്. കാരക്കേശിലെ ബാക്കുദായാദാ ഗ്രാമത്തിൽ ജനിച്ച ഇദ്ദേഹം മാർ ബഹനാമിന്റെ ദയറായിലെ സന്യാസിയാണ്. 1663-ൽ മന്ദ്രിയാനാ സ്ഥാനത്തേയ്ക്ക് ഉയർത്തപ്പെട്ടു. 1664-ൽ കേരളത്തിലേയ്ക്കു പുറപ്പെട്ടു. ഇടവഴിക്കൽ പീലിപ്പോസ് കത്തനാർ 1815-ൽ എഴുതിയ വിവരണപ്രകാരം ‘... മേൽപറഞ്ഞ ആണ്ടു (1685) കന്നിമാസത്തിങ്കൽ യൽദായെന്നു പേരുള്ള മാർ ബസ്സെല്ലൊസ മപ്പറിയാനാ ആകുന്ന കാതോലിക്കായും നിനുവയെന്ന പട്ടണത്തിന്റെ മേല്പട്ടക്കാരനായിരുന്ന ഹാദായാ എന്നു കുഡുംബപേരുള്ള മാർ യിവാനീസ അപ്പിസ്കോപ്പായും ഒരുമിച്ചു കൊതമങ്ങലത്തു വന്നു ചെരുകയുംചെയ്തു. അബ്ദമശീഹായെന്ന പെരുള്ള മാർ ഇഗ്നാത്തിയോസ പാത്രീയാർക്കീസിന്റെ കല്പനയാലെ ആയിരുന്നു ഈ ബാവാനാരുവന്നത്. ഈ ബസ്സെല്ലൊസ 13 ദിവസം ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നു കന്നിമാസം 19-നു കാലംചെയ്തു കൊതമങ്ങലത്തു ചെറിയപള്ളിയിൽ അടക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.’

കേരളത്തിൽ കേവലം 13 ദിവസംമാത്രം ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന മാർ ബസേലിയോസ് യൽദോ മന്ദ്രിയാനാ മലങ്കര സഭയ്ക്ക് ശാരീരികമായി ഒന്നും ചെയ്തില്ല എന്നത്

യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാണ്. പക്ഷേ അത് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സംഭാവനകളെ നിസാരവൽക്കരിക്കുന്നില്ല. ‘...നഗരത്തിനൊരു കോട്ടകണക്കിന്സായേലിൽ സ്ഥാപിച്ചാൻ യൗസേപ്പിന സ്ഥികൾ മൂശാ...’ എന്ന് ശ്മീഹാ നമസ്കാരത്തിലെ പരാമർശനം പോലെ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ തിരുശേഷിപ്പുകൾ മലങ്കരയിൽ സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്നു എന്നതുമാത്രമല്ല ഇതിനു കാരണം. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സഹചരനായിരുന്ന മാർ ഈവാനിയോസ് ഹദിയുള്ള എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പ 1686-ൽ ചെങ്ങന്നൂരിൽ വിളിച്ചുകൂട്ടിയ സുന്നഹദോസാണ് നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകൾക്കു ശേഷം മലങ്കരയിൽ സത്യവിശ്വാസം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിച്ചത്. 1947 നവംബർ 2-ന് പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനിയോടൊപ്പം ഇദ്ദേഹത്തേയും പരിശുദ്ധനായി മലങ്കരസഭ പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ചു. ഒക്ടോബർ 3-നാണ് ഇദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഓർമ്മപ്പെരുന്നാൾ.

‘ബാല്യത്തിൽത്തന്നെ ദൈവത്തിനുവേണ്ടി സ്വയമർപ്പിച്ചു’ ജീവിച്ച പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരാരും സഭാധ്യക്ഷസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലേയ്ക്ക് സ്വയം കടന്നുവന്നവരല്ല. ‘സഭയുടെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്കും കെട്ടുപണിക്കുമായി ‘അവരെ പരിശുദ്ധ റൂഹാ സഭയിലൂടെ കണ്ടെത്തി അതാത് സ്ഥാനങ്ങളിലാക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. ദാവീദ് രാജാവിനെ വാഴിക്കുവാൻ യഹോവാ ശമുവേൽ പ്രവാചകനോട് ‘...കൊമ്പിൽ തൈലം നിറച്ചു പുറപ്പെടുക: ഞാൻ നിന്നെ ബേൽലേഹേമ്യനായ ഇശ്ശായിയുടെ അടുക്കൽ അയയ്ക്കും: അവന്റെ മക്കളിൽ ഞാൻ ഒരു രാജാവിനെ കണ്ടിട്ടുണ്ട് ...’ (1 ശമു 16.13 പശീത്താ) എന്നു കല്പിച്ചതുപോലെ കണ്ടെത്തി അഭിഷേകം ചെയ്ത് സ്ഥാനത്തിരുത്തിയവരാണ് പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനി, പ. വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനി, പ. പാമ്പാടി തിരുമേനി എന്നിവർ. തനിക്ക് മേല്പട്ടസ്ഥാനം നൽകാതിരിക്കാൻ ഒളിച്ചോടിയ ദൈവശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞനായ നാസിയൻസിലെ മാർ ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസിനെപ്പോലെ അത്തരം സ്ഥാനങ്ങൾ സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ അവർ വിമുഖരുമായിരുന്നു. പക്ഷേ ‘സഭയും പരിശുദ്ധ റൂഹായും വിളിച്ചപ്പോൾ’ അവരെല്ലാം അനുസരണയോടെ വഴങ്ങിയെന്നു മാത്രം.



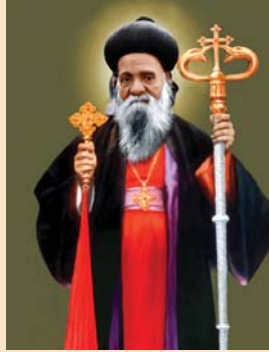
പാലക്കുന്നത്ത് മാർ മാത്യൂസ് അത്താനാസ്യോസിൽ നിന്നും കത്തനാരൂപട്ടവും യുയാക്കീം മാർ കുറിലോസിൽനിന്നും കോർ-എപ്പിസ്കോപ്പാ സ്ഥാനവും സ്വീകരിച്ച മുളത്തുരുത്തി പള്ളിയിലെ ഇടവകപ്പട്ടക്കാരനായി ഒതുങ്ങിക്കൂടിയിരുന്ന ചാത്തുരുത്തി ഗീവറുഗീസ് കോറിയിൽ ഭാവിയിലെ ‘പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനി’യെ ദർശിച്ചത് പുലിക്കോട്ടിൽ മാർ ജോസഫ് ദീവന്നാസ്യോസ് അഞ്ചാമനാണ്. അദ്ദേഹത്തെ റമ്പാനാക്കി വെട്ടിക്കൽ ദയാറാ സ്ഥാപിച്ചതും പിന്നീട് അദ്ദേഹം മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ ആയ ശേഷം അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് മലങ്കര മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ ആക്കിയതും ഈ ദർശനത്തിന്റെ ഫലമാണ്. സഭാധ്യക്ഷന്റെ കണക്കുകൂട്ടൽ പിഴച്ചില്ല. പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനി പ്രാർത്ഥനാ മനുഷ്യനും മികച്ച സഭാ ഭരണകർത്താവുമായി തിളങ്ങി. ഇന്നു നസ്രാണികളുടെ സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥനും.



ഇതേപോലെ പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനി വഴി പ. റൂഹായുടെ കണ്ടെത്തലായിരുന്നു പ. വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ തിരുമേനി. വൈദിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനായി തന്റെ അടുത്തെത്തിയ ശാരീരിക ബലഹീനതയുള്ള മല്ലപ്പള്ളിക്കാരൻ ഗീവർഗീസ് ശൈമ്മാശനിൽ ധിഷ്ണാണാശാലിയായ ഒരു പണ്ഡിതനെ കണ്ടെത്തിയത് അദ്ദേഹമാണ്. പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനി ശൈമ്മാ

ശനെ പഠിപ്പിച്ച് പരുമല സെമിനാരിക്കായി പട്ടംകൊടുത്ത് അവിടെ മല്പാനാക്കി. തുടർന്ന് സഭാവിജ്ഞാനീയ പാണ്ഡിത്യത്തിനുള്ള അത്യുന്നത ബഹുമതിയായ 'മലങ്കര മല്പാൻ' സ്ഥാനവും ലഭിച്ച ഗീവർഗീസ് കത്തനാരുടെ ബഹുമുഖപ്രതിഭ മാർ ജോസഫ് ദീവന്നാസ്യോസ് അമ്മൊമന്റെ ശ്രദ്ധയിൽപ്പെട്ടതോടെ വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ മല്പാൻ മലങ്കരയുടെ പൊതുഭരണ രംഗത്തേക്ക് നിയോഗിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. സഭയ്ക്കാവശ്യമുള്ള മനുഷ്യ വിഭവശേഷി കണ്ടെത്തുന്നതിൽ അതീവ പ്രഗൽഭ്യമുള്ള മാർ ദീവന്നാസ്യോസ് അമ്മൊമൻ, തനിക്കുശേഷം നസ്രാണിയെ വാഗ്ദത്ത കനാനിലേക്ക് നയിക്കാൻ കരുത്തും ബുദ്ധിയുമുള്ള പിൻഗാമിയെ മലങ്കര മല്പാൻ വട്ടശ്ശേരിൽ ഗീവർഗീസ് കത്തനാരിൽ കണ്ടെത്തി മാർ ദീവന്നാസ്യോസ് ആറാമനായി വാഴിച്ച് മലങ്കര മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായ്ക്കടുത്ത പ. മാർത്തോമ്മാശ്ലീഹായുടെ സിംഹാസനത്തിലിരുത്തി സഭയെ ഏൽപ്പിച്ചുകൊടുത്തു. 'മരണനിഴൽ താഴ്വരയിലൂടെ' കാൽനൂറ്റാണ്ടുകാലം നസ്രാണികളെ നയിച്ച് ഉറപ്പുള്ള അടിസ്ഥാനമിട്ട ശേഷമാണ് 1934-ൽ ഇതര 'പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരോടുകൂടിയുള്ള ആനന്ദത്തിനു വേണ്ടി' ഈ മഹാപരിശുദ്ധൻ വാങ്ങിപ്പോയത്.

പാമ്പാടി പള്ളിമുറ്റത്തെ ചാണകം വാരിമാറ്റുന്നതായി താൻ കണ്ട കുറിയാക്കോസ് എന്ന ഗ്രാമീണ ബാലനെ കർത്താവിന്റെ മുന്തിരിത്തോപ്പിലെ ശുശ്രൂഷകനായി വിളിച്ചുപ്പിച്ചത് കടവിൽ മാർ അത്താനാസ്യോസ് ആയിരുന്നു. റമ്പാനായി പ്രാർത്ഥനയും ഉപവാസവുമായി പൊത്തമ്പുറംകുന്നിലെ പർണ്ണശാലയിൽ ഒരുങ്ങി കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്ന ഈ താപസനിൽ ഒരു യോഗിയെ വി. സഭ ദർശിച്ചു. അങ്ങിനയാണ് പ. പരുമല തിരുമേനിയുടെ 'ആത്മീയ പിൻഗാമിയായി' അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ വടിയും മുടിയും ശ്ലീബായും 'ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസ്' എന്ന സ്ഥാനനാമവും നൽകി പാമ്പാടി കുറിയാക്കോസ് റമ്പാനെ 1929-ൽ



മെല്പട്ട സ്ഥാനത്തേക്കുയർത്തിയത്. സഭയുടെ കണക്കുകൂട്ടൽ തെറ്റിയില്ല സജീവിതകാലത്തുതന്നെ പ. പാമ്പാടി തിരുമേനി താൻ 'വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ട വിളിക്കു യോഗ്യനാണെന്നു' തെളിയിച്ചു.

സഭയുടെ സമ്മർദ്ദവും സാഹചര്യങ്ങളുടെ അനിവാര്യതയുമൂലം അത്യുന്നത മഹാപുരോഹിത സ്ഥാനം സ്വീകരിക്കുകയും 'അററോന്റെ തളിർത്ത വടി പിടിക്കുകയും' ചെയ്തവരാണ് മലങ്കരയിലെ ബസേലിയോസ് കാതോലിക്കാമാർ. ഒഴിവാക്കപ്പെടുക അസാധ്യമായപ്പോഴാണ് അവർ പ. മാർത്തോമ്മാ ശ്ലീഹായുടെ പരിശുദ്ധ പൗരസ്ത്യ സിംഹാസനത്തിൽ ആരൂഢരായത്. '... അങ്ങി ഈ സ്ഥാനം സ്വീകരിച്ചില്ലങ്കിൽ അതു ഈ സഭയോടു ചെയ്യുന്ന ഏറ്റവും വലിയ ദ്രോഹമായിരിക്കും...' എന്ന മലങ്കര മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായുടെ നിർബന്ധപൂർവ്വമായ അപേക്ഷ മൂലം മാത്രമാണ് മലങ്കരയിലെ ഒന്നാം കാതോലിക്കാ അവസാനം സ്ഥാനമേൽക്കാൻ തലകുനിച്ചത്. ചരിത്രം പരിശോധിച്ചാൽ പിന്നീടും ഇതിനുസമാനമായ ചിത്രങ്ങളാണ് ലഭിക്കുക. അതാത് കാലത്തിന് അനുയോജ്യരായ അത്യുന്നത മഹാപുരോഹിതരെ എഴുന്നേൽപ്പിച്ച് സ്ഥാനം ഏൽപ്പിച്ചുകൊടുക്കുന്ന പതിവ് മലങ്കരയിൽ ഇന്നും തുടരുന്നു.

ഓക്ലണ്ട് സെന്റ് ദീവന്നാസ്യോസ് ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് പള്ളി കുദാശ ചെയ്യപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ 'സാക്ഷികളുടെ വലിയോരു സമൂഹമാണ്' ചുറ്റും നിൽക്കുന്നത്. അവരിൽ തമ്പുരാനെ പറ്റുമമ്മയുമണ്ട്, പ. ശ്ലീഹന്മാരുണ്ട്, രക്തസാക്ഷികളുണ്ട്, പീഡിതരുണ്ട്, ത്യാഗികളുണ്ട്, പണ്ഡിതരുണ്ട്, ഭരണതന്ത്രജ്ഞരുണ്ട്, ശിശുക്കളുണ്ട്, മാതാക്കളുണ്ട്, സഹോദരീ-സഹോദരങ്ങളുണ്ട്, പടയാളികളുണ്ട്, വൈദികരുണ്ട്, സഭാധ്യക്ഷരുണ്ട്. ദേവാലയങ്ങൾക്കുള്ളിലെ ഇവരുടെ യെല്ലാം ദൃശ്യപ്രതീകങ്ങൾ അവരുടെ നാഥനിലേക്ക് - ഉയർന്ന ദൈവസാന്നിധ്യ ബോധത്തിലേക്കാണ് - നയിക്കേണ്ടത്. ദൈവമാതാവിന്റേയും പരിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടേയും മദ്ധ്യസ്ഥതയും, വാങ്ങിപ്പോയവരുടെ സംസർഗവും നിരാകരിക്കുന്നവരാണ് തിരുശേഷിപ്പുകളേയും ദൃശ്യപ്രതീകങ്ങളേയും തിരസ്ക്കരിക്കുന്നത്. ഇത് സത്യവിശ്വാസത്തിനു വിരുദ്ധമാണ്. വിശിഷ്ട്യാ, പരിശുദ്ധരേയും ദൃശ്യപ്രതീകങ്ങളേയും ഒരു നൂറ്റാണ്ടുമുൻ തള്ളിപ്പറഞ്ഞ കേരളത്തിലെ ചില പ്രൊട്ടസ്റ്റന്റ് സഭകൾ അവയൊക്കെ പുനഃരാശിരണം ചെയ്യാൻ തുടങ്ങിയ വർത്തമാനകാലത്ത്.





'Whom Shall I send?'

E.S. John
Melbourne, Australia



The reciprocal but irrevocable and inexplicable complementing role functions that are explicitly and implicitly manifested in God's love towards His crown creation, that is created in His own image and likeness, exemplify man and woman as the giver and the recipient as the agents of God propagating the

human species and both together adore the Creator and worship in all the days of their life. Thus worship is an inevitable part of the created order, as there is great and small in His Kingdom that tries to please the One who gives him/her the breath of life. The fallen Adam was taught how to worship his Creator who clothed him with the first slaughtered sheep's garment for worship and hiding his nakedness and for reminding his progeny to continue worshipping the Life-giver, who appeared as an Incarnate Lamb to bruise the head of the serpent.

Music, incense and colour vibrate the soul to glorify the Lord in Spirit, the reason for man to worship God with these inevitable ingredients in our devotional supplications. Adam collected gold, myrrh and frankincense and waited patiently to offer the Holy one with these gifts which the magi from the East offered Him after 4,000 years. Therefore, worship is the lifeblood of the created order. One who doesn't worship God will automatically worship Satan, as soul and body of man becoming mature or degenerate only by praising the Creator or His enemy, the reason for spinning the garment of incorruption or making it a black out by the intrinsic light or by the lust of the flesh.

"Many will go to and fro and knowledge shall increase", Daniel 12:4. The Industrial Revolution and 2 World Wars uprooted and made the global population as nomadic refugees who either helped in consolidating the global foundation of the 4th Iron empire of Communist Marxism which also inherited the brutal ferocities of the previous 3 empires that prophet Daniel saw in his visions, which also indirectly paved the way for spreading the gospel messages through spilling the blood of martyrs or wading through sufferings in various dimensions of different denominational churches. It paved the way for the St. Thomas Malankara church to spread its branches in different continents of the globe.

The first Malankara Orthodox church formed in Melbourne by a handful of members in the East radiated its light from Melbourne to the other parts of Australia and beyond its boundaries. Though less in number, the devout members of New Zealand dedicated their life for a noble ambition of starting a parish in Auckland and purchasing a piece of land by the previous Vicar instilled the fire of building a parish building. The Malankara Orthodox Diaspora, similar to the Jewish Diaspora of His first coming that identifies with the Pharisaical hypocrisy and Sadducees' commercialization that made a den of robbers is also the agonizing picture of today.

The tongues of Babylon that confused the builders of Babel tower reflect in our temple communities now. The clash of animal magnetism, that finds its expression through individualism, finds its way out as conflicts, rivalry and strife in families and religious venues, is an evil product of the modern religiosity that diluted and polluted the chaste faith. Old and elegant churches that speak volumes of history

are demolished for the construction of the towers of Babel, with citadels and ramparts, small side towers with sky scrapers, together with small concrete designs resembling like the monuments of weird modern 'abstract' art that betray God who showed the form to Moses on Sinai, Hebrew 8:5,... 'The Holy Temple is the manifested fullness of the image and glory of the Most Holy One', the assumed traditional Gothic church designs, due to the competition between churches and religions by collecting money by squeezing the vulnerable and the marginalized ones who work in the Middle East deserts and snowfields of temperate and torrid zones with heaving and fretting, forcing many to leave our church for many such material reasons. The structural chaos or deficiency in the building of Parumala church after the demolition of the old church is a classical example. Also ponder over for how long the revolving earth can carry the heavy burdens of the weight of such global concrete forests. This fossil money culture that toppled our faith and traditions is not a concern for the hierarchy that derives support from the white-sepulchral players in the church.

The pioneers, who sacrificed for the accomplishment of their vision of tomorrow, will be ousted as soon as the parish that started with tears and sweats takes its root in the foreign lands, though the miscreants have been waiting from the beginning whether the parish would survive from its teething problems, so that they can stamp their authority upon the parish community. This sort of fake democracy that cut the tap root of the new plants has done irreparable damage to the very foundation of the church in our global communities. One who has total commitment and apostolic faith should be at the nerve centre of the church, not the ones who encourage mechanical spirituality and worship in intellect that is triggered by mechanical, electrical and software appliances.

There is no room for us here to ponder over the pagan religiosity that slowly corrupted and decayed the Orthodox worship by importing mainly the choir and its musical paraphernalia that is played by teen-aged girls or the youth who haven't learnt the art and skills of music in making everything 'full of sound and fury that signifying nothing, the sound pollutions that delete the Orthodox spirituality, with the help of musical instruments and group tenor voices, and even when the celebrant reading our meaningful prayers- Sedra, Promiyons etc which were written by highly elated spiritual Fathers- and the disallowed Religious Convention charismatic songs at the time of 'kaimuth', has wiped away the spiritual ethos is a thing to be lamented upon. The worshipers are blindfolded and hijacked by the choir mesmerism and the mute worshippers are only getting a feeling of pop music melody. The celebrant, who doesn't get the support of the hierarchy or an inexperienced one among the immature laity youth, has no say in any of the innovations and renovations because he somehow tries to

survive three years by the support of the sentimental youngsters and womenfolk that are in the workforce. They take this training in our midst and divorce the mother church, as they are going to be the part and parcel of future charismatic churches. The teenage girls who use, microphones are the vibrant protagonists in leading this orchestra, except the one male who uses the microphone, while all other Altar Assistants, in white-clad clothing, who are the aspirants of future vicars in our parishes all across the globe gossiping and laughing during the matins prayers and liturgy times in the Holy Sanctuary. There are many other plays with in the play that I don't like to mention here.

Taking the role of MC members from each prayer group is a torpedo that ended up in allowing the misfits that do not know anything about our faith and Church history and tradition, but only proved as a naked satellite system for the clergy in running the parish with their own whims and fancies. There are many such evil tendencies that crept into church, making the church becoming an autocratic citadel of the clergy and its cronies. There is no democracy, but only the regimented rule of militancy of the minority that rule over the church everywhere.

All new Churches are built by the 'two penny of the widow', but the unnecessary extensions and renovations and new cement structures are done by begging and advocating the commercial cosmetics of fund raising, Luke 21:1-9. "....how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings- mega sacramental celebrationsdays will come when there are not left one stone upon another that will not throw down...." As we are heading towards these fiery days of cataclysm, I am writing with heartfelt pain and agony because Solomon built the Temple with the menial laborers of gentiles and charging high taxes, which paved the dynamiting of the Israel community by Solomon also importing idol worship and marrying the foreign wives and adopting many such concubines and their alien customs. Money and affluence that make a stereotyped and sophisticated religiosity of flamboyant and superficial Christian is the destroyer of today's spirituality. This mad race of building huge mansions for God should come to an end; otherwise the fate of Jerusalem Temple will wipe us out as happened in the days of Nebuchadnezzar around B.C. 700 and Roman Caesar in 70 A.D. Many, many Western churches are either demolished or built casinos and big business places or used them for various and notorious trading and sports venues. These church buildings and dwelling mansions may turn out either as our burial places or the property of the antichrist, who shall rule us with his iron rod and claws, any time.

The church and the parishes can survive only if it cherishes the values of the apostolic faith that requires no affluence and wealth and unnecessary rat races.

"Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you
with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that
your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Psalms 103:1-5



with prayers
Philip Ayyamplackal & family

However, we struggle to mix clay and iron together, according to the vision of Daniel on the basis of the statue, the church is surely to be swallowed up by the Iron Empire which make forests of concrete buildings with iron and cement and the church emulating the secular system blindly, is going to eventuate.

These new parishes that acquiring a building is out of the two penny of the widow and from the sweats and tears of few devoted ones is becoming in the constellation of the Eastern most Star of the Star of the East, the Far East Diocese, though Singapore and Malaysian parishes have been there before the birth of these parishes. To found the 2nd parish under the patronage of a saint who sacrificed the Metropolitan's whole life for the church is a standing testimony

of the saint's sainthood by throwing a duel against Satan. Hope and pray that no structural Colosseum may build in the future Far East Diocese.

I think the Auckland Orthodox community's achievement of constructing the first Indian Orthodox Church in New Zealand is a great milestone and service for the Church and the parish for the budding and coming generations. "Whom shall I sent" for His mission in New Zealand, Isaiah 6:8, is a question to all, but the answer is from a handful of people who listened and obeyed at the ripe time.

My sincere prayers and best wishes for the Star of the East from where Christ comes again to gather the faithful for the Bridal chamber feast.

(E.S. John, is one of the pioneer members of our Church in Australia)

Those who remember the power of our Lord, and the gifts he has give to his saints, and treat their relics with devotion, shall receive from God blessings and healing for their illness and other infirmities.

With compliments from



St. Alban the Martyr

443 Dominion Road
Auckland, New Zealand



Role of the Sunday School

towards a meaningful ministry to the Children

Rev. M. K. Biju

Vicar, St. Thomas Marthoma Syrian Church,
Auckland



These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up". (Deuteronomy 6:6 -7)

These were the words spoken by Moses, to the people of Israel. Centuries have passed but the significance of these words still remain. These words tell us about the importance that we should assign regarding nurturing of our children and ways by which nurturing should take place. The future of the Church lies in the hands of children. In a society, a church or home where the child has no role to play, the ability or chances to contribute to the growth of the church or the society or family is really bleak. But if the church has to play meaningfully in the lives of the children, it is very important to know the problems the child faces today and the context in which the child is growing.

a. Lack of social relationship.

This is one of the problems the child today faces. There are various reasons to it. Because of the set up of our nuclear family, often the children have only their siblings to relate with them. Secondly, the time that the children spend at home is limited because

often quality time is at school or at tuition centers. Even if there is time spending at home majority of the children prefer to watch TV programs. Another major factor that has resulted to this problem is the fragmentation of family ties today. The quality of family relationship at one's home is directly proportional to the overall development of one's character, talent and personality. All these factors in one way or the other paves way for the lack of the development of social relationship in the life of the child.

b. Lack of role models to follow.

What are the role models that we have in the society and that influence the life of a child. If we ask a child, it will be either a film star or a cricketer or a beauty queen. These are the kind of people who have not contributed anything creatively for the betterment of the society or of the people. The emphasis today is on the acquisition of money by any means, earning fame and grabbing power and it is this value that is injected by majority of the people into the child of today.

c. The influence of mass media.

The present day technology has really revolutionized our world. Though there are lot of blessing in the technological advancement that has been made, it is the children who are affected the most. The values that they hold to, the kind of dress they wear and the pastime they indulge in are all influenced by the mass media especially the cable television and internet. As

a result of all this, even the moral values that we once held as sacred are also thrown to the winds.

d. Teaching methodology that is irrelevant.

Sunday schools are agents imparting Christian education. Often Sunday schools degenerate into schools of telling stories found in the Bible without emphasizing as to how these stories need to be related to life. Thus for many of the children Bible is another story book and has nothing to do with one's life. The message of the Bible has to be made relevant to the present day context. In fact the methodology and the tools that are used to teach the children in the Sunday school has never been improvised nor even improved. The problem is sometimes compounded by lethargic attitude of the teachers in using new teaching methods and the lack of commitment.

Sunday school has an important role towards a meaningful ministry among children. Following are some of my suggestions.

A. To give awareness to parents about their responsibility towards their children.

It is often considered by the parents that the spiritual nurture of the children is totally in the hands of the church. Without the parents discharging their responsibilities, the ministry done by the Sunday school may go in vain. The parents need to be trained in knowing and dealing with the problems that the children face, and all these things could happen only when the parish and the Sunday school take an active part and also organize meaningful activities like the family enrichment programmes for the parents of the Sunday school children. A regular interaction in

the church between the Sunday school and the parents could also be encouraged.

B. Participation of the children in the worship services.

One of the problems affecting the church is the non-participation of the children in the worship service. The parents are also not bothered sometimes with regards to the absence of the children in the worship service. We need to seriously consider ways to help the children attend the worship service and also make the worship service meaningful to them. The parents also need to be concretized with regards to this fact. One of the problems that may arise later is that if the child does not regularly participate in the worship services, the tendency to skip the worship service may continue even after completing Sunday school curriculum.

C. To organize activities that will empower the children.

The children of today seem to have lost all the initiative to freely think, express and also to develop their hidden potentials. This is basically because they are never made to think in that way or in other words they are always made to be dependent on others. It is important that the Sunday school should take leadership in organizing activities for the children so that they can come out of the dormant state to where they can utilize the God given talents and potentials both for their personal growth and for betterment of others. This article is only a small attempt to highlight the dire need to concentrate more on the ministry to the children by the Sunday school so that we can proudly and boldly say that the next generation is nurtured in true Christian faith and in the living faith of our forefathers. So let us arise and toil so that we can build up the next generation. ●

The aim of Holy Cross is humbleness and forgiveness.

In loving memory of



Mathai Joshua



P.C. John



Thankachan P.M.

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TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION: A THREAT TO PERSONALITY ENRICHMENT

Rev. Fr. Varghese M. Daniel PhD

Research Fellow,
Yale University and the Vicar of
St. Johns Church, NY



"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything." (1 Cor.6.12)

Few months ago, as I was lecturing a class, I asked the college students if they would be able to survive without their cell phones for two days. Within a matter of

seconds, the general response was that they would rather survive without food than losing the privilege of using their phones and social network communications via Facebook.

Many recent researches demonstrate that technology addiction has undoubtedly become a global epidemic; highly predominant in both the developed and the developing world. This psychological syndrome affects not only children, but people of all ages and from all walks of life. Cell phones, computers, laptops, tablets, video games, internet, social and visual media networks and their increasing prevalence have impacted human life radically in the last few decades. Digital technology and computers have worked their way into more areas of life, from communications and finance to social interaction. Definitely these technologies have accelerated and enhanced human life and brought about tremendous changes in the fields of communication, science, medicine, education, social life, industry and so on. However various studies demonstrate that addiction towards these technologies is intoxicating and have caused negative effects in today's world, particularly on human health and communication.

FREE BIRD...BUT ALWAYS IN CHAIN

Abraham Lincoln, the one who prohibited slavery in America stated "freedom is the last, best hope of the

earth." Indeed, technologies proffer the freedom of information, expression and socialization. However, when we lose our freedom to choose, we become chained to slavery. So said, technology also has its own way of extending its chain to fasten someone's time, mobility, thinking, creativity and growth and ultimately losing one's own, freedom and independence. Techno-addiction is also an addiction to a way of perceiving, experiencing, and thinking. This addiction leads to physical, mental and spiritual captivity. It can also cripple one's ability to maintain a healthy social life and obstruct the proper development of the faculties of human mind. According to St. Paul, not all things are evil, but he conjures us to be the master over all the things around us. Our Lord has also proclaimed to us, that we need to have only One Master (St. Matth: 23.8).

IN PROXIMITY...BUT TOWARDS SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Technology brings proximity to many things removing delay in space and time. However, a continuous and ongoing temptation towards a particular activity throughout a major time of the lifespan strongly influences one's life and behavior. As such, we see how an uncontrolled obsession with updating Facebook statuses, sending Tweets, playing social media games, internet browsing and chatting are now scrupulously leading to neuropsychological disorder. This disorder disregards life term goals and builds a barrier of indifference towards society, plunging into a world of stillness and solitude. However, that does not mean all the above mentioned actions are destructive, rather they can be beneficial if applied in moderation; thereby subjugating its power on the human mind.

CONNECTED...BUT YET DISCONNECTED

"To be connected" is the most popular slogan of social networks. Indeed it helps people to connect, net-

work and maintain relationships with families, relatives, friends and colleagues; but at the same time an obsession with the social media, undoubtedly creates a barrier in connecting with the real world. All of our valuable time cannot be spent on cultivating relationships through a technological medium. Real relationships can be affected when you don't spend true, quality time with those that mean the most to you. Imagine a daughter sending text/email to her mother, while living under the same roof. While this might seem like a stretch, it is easy for certain individuals to get completely absorbed in a virtual world. As one gets engrossed with web-based chatting, connecting with people living in different corners of the global village; most times they fail to interconnect with the ones at home, who share the same roof. Close relationships such as one's own spouse, children, parents

and siblings, are disregarded and taken for granted. In other words, "connected with the far and disconnected with the near" seems to be the newly adopted slogan for people highly dependent on technology. In recent statistics, it was reported that more than a third of Divorce Petitions comprises of the word Facebook and 80% of attorneys in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers revealed that they used Facebook as significant evidence in their divorce litigation cases.

Indeed there is positive aspect that technologies help those who are shy to express their ideas and voice, without embarrassment or fear. However technology addiction also provides refuge for introvert personalities.

IN A SOCIAL WORLD...BUT SLEAZY SOCIAL SKILLS

Unambiguously, technologies have hastened the socialization process. Right from infant technology assists in knowing and acquiring knowledge on different cultures, languages and understanding global communities. Internet, TV and digital world introduces the society and the global village. They allow people to communicate each other with a true friendship. Sometimes it permits to tell whatever they want and hide behind a faceless mask. Indeed there is positive aspect that technologies help those who are shy to express their ideas and voice, without embarrassment or fear. However technology addiction also provides refuge for introvert personalities. They nurture their anxiety and shyness, which keep them away from face to face interaction, which is a crucial means of communication. The lack of interpersonal communication skills threatens many relationships between parents and children, between spouses, siblings, neighbors, colleagues and classmates. Ex-

HILARIOUS ...BUT PERILOUS TOO

pression of emotions and response to the feelings of others are unavoidable in the social world, but are not measurable when we employ only technology for communication.

As the saying goes, "There are four things one cannot recover; a thrown stone, words once expressed, occasions that were missed and time spent". In this digital age, I think we need to consider including a fifth element as well and that is - information sent through a digital media. It is an inclination, a preference and descriptive to send messages, digital images and videos to update one's personal information. However, we must contemplate the fact that once we post certain details/pictures on any network, it cannot be retrieved, along with the risk that such information can be stored by anyone and by any public or private

agency. Such a risk is prone to damage someone's life dreadfully, even though the action had no intention of hurting anyone. Lawyers, employers and other agencies rummage around to weigh up their clients. Hence we need to understand that it is not always entertaining as we connect into the digital world. Technology addiction may damage

our circumspection and profound thinking; which at times tends to be misplaced, when using digital communicative systems.

DESIRABLE... BUT DEPLORABLE TOO

At one time, in the midst of the Holy Qurbana, as the priest proclaimed "May our minds, thoughts and hearts be lifted up above, where God the father is seated", a music "why this Kolavary Kolavary de... was heard echoing abruptly. This was the ringtone of one of the parish members, who had carelessly forgotten to switch their phone on to a silent mode. As a result, the worship service was disrupted, thereby distracting the entire congregation. At another occurrence, a person was seen continuously texting, while attending a Metropolitan's retreat. This kind of disruption has become a persistent pattern everywhere today - in Churches, work places and educational settings. It is norm that is commonly seen not only among the common public, but also among the clergies, bishops and high officials. They are unwilling to think how they would feel if this had happened when they were in the speaker's position. These days, during times of emergencies, people are more interested in taking pictures of the terrible happenings, than saving people's lives that are hurt and affected in disastrous situations. News Media report this kind of inhuman behavior from around the world. Is this desirable or deplorable? Accessibility to the world and wide range of information are desirable. Cell phone, tablets and other digital media do facilitate accessibility without time and space. It does help

people to respond quickly, but at the same time facilitates hasty decisions. The appropriate use of certain electronic devices, such as large screen monitors for larger audiences during a worship service, unquestionably enhances the participation of the congregation. However the impulse to check emails, update social statuses, send text messages or attend trivial phone calls during a time of worship and reverence, is an uncalled for deviation and a so-called technology addiction.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

- Spiritual exercise (abstinence from the devices for certain days, meditation).
- Set up life goals and prioritize daily responsibilities.
- Make a timetable and limit the use of devices.
- Trust in God and in your will power and take a pledge that nothing can enslave you.
- Be aware and accountable of the circumstances

CONCLUSION

“When we flourish fully, the gardener will say my planting effort was not a waste” (Mat.15.1ff). We are designated as the crown and steward of God’s creation (Gen.1.26). Each individual is created with different talents and called for a special purpose in this world. That purpose should be explored by nurturing our God given talents and working towards ac-

complishing our goals of life. Technologies can be integrated to achieve this particular purpose, but without losing our very own individualities, identities and personal characteristics due to over-indulgence in them.

Are you addicted to the technology? (Main signs and symptoms)

- Compulsive need to be online or have access to technology devices.
- Schizophrenia (scared to face people), loneliness and depression.
- Temptation to use some sort of technological device during any spare time.
- Developing the habit of relaxing and eating dinners in front of a media.
- Increasing amounts of time spent on computer/ games and internet activities.
- Uncontrolled behavior, in the absence of a device.
- Withdrawing from outside activities, communities.
- Poor performance at school or work due to gaming / chatting.
- Feeling restless when not engaged in the activity.
- Telling lies to use computer or other devices.
- Neglecting family and friends for technology.
- Inability to leave a game in order to attend to daily tasks.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Physical changes, such as obesity, loss of eye sight, backaches, headaches etc.



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On behalf of
The Aisling Community of Saint Ita and Saint Fillan
And the Fellowship of the Holy Theotokos



We give thanks to God always for you
because of
the grace of God that was give you in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 1:4)

Health hazards due to radiation from mobile towers & mobile phones

Dr Omana Mammen

(HOD, R&D, SIST, Retd Engr (ISRO),
Trivandrum)



“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him”. Romans 8:28. The presence of two mobile towers within 40 meters of my residence, a real menace, is becoming a blessing as I can reach out to many with the real truth and a helping hand. I

entered this field of research out of necessity for better health.

I am convinced about the fact that radiations from mobile towers and mobile phones are harmful to the human body and the environment. But mobile industry makes us believe that there is no problem! 99.9% of doctors are not aware of it. Multidisciplinary research is needed to find out more.

Mobile phone technology has revolutionized the telecommunication scenario all around the world. Now a days mobile phone has become one of the basic needs of life. Mobile communication uses Electromagnetic Radiation waves in 800 Mhz to 2.4Ghz band and mobile towers are part of the technology. These towers are now present in everyone’s horizon of view even in thickly populated areas and schools. Since human senses do not directly respond to EM waves we are not conscious that we are drenched in them. However it is borne out by scientific research that mobile phones towers are hazardous to health of human beings, plants and animals. Towers emit 10000 times the radiation of a mobile phone. The problem is severe as a tower emits all the time and many service providers use the same tower.

We had a series of infections since Jan 2012, in spite of a healthy life style, using plenty of fruits and vege-

tables from our home garden. I have read that microwave radiations are harmful and started reading more on it. The study revealed that the frequent problems can be due to reduction in immunity level caused by continuous radiation from mobile towers. We got annoyed due to sleep disorder similar to jet lag, with sleepless nights and sleepy days. Increase in BP was also seen. My four year old granddaughter had digestive problems, fever etc. Dryness in the eye, jointpain etc. were there even before the infections.

Problems reported in literature as biological effects of radiation are: Sleeping disorder, Joint pain, Dryness of eyes, Memory related problems, Fertility problems, cancer, reduction in immunity level and possibility of infections, diseases and quality of life. We are bio-electrical systems. Each individual is unique (body mass, current health ailments, medications, allergies, age, immune system sensitivity, genetic predisposition etc). So all are not affected equally by the radiations. Problems like headache, fatigue, sleep disorder etc disappear as the source of radiation is removed. Chronic diseases like B.P., cardiac problems, diabetics, memory problems, cancer etc gets triggered as the immunity level comes down due to radiation.

International standards exist in erecting Mobile Phone Towers and the standards also have guidelines for acceptable power levels. Distance from residences, schools etc are specified separately. India has adopted ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) standards. Mobile phone base stations with 4G towers are worse in their ability to affect than 3G, 2G etc. The frequency range is up to 2.3Ghz and power density limit 10 watt/m²., whereas the biological safe limit is 100 microwatts/m².

Radiation density is inversely proportional to the square of distance from antenna. In US the safe distance is 500 meter. In India, only Himachal Pradesh has specified the distance as 100 meters away from homes. Kerala does not have any specification on distance.

Measurement is the only way to find out radiation density at a place. The value can be the effect of all the towers nearby. A good radiation meter SRM 3000 used by industry costs Rs fifteen lakhs. A low cost radiation meter Detex 189 has LED indication only, but gives an indication whether the area is safe or not. We made measurements with a precision meter from VSSC. The effect of wifi, Laptop, microwave oven etc. were also studied.

Inferences from measurement at my residence

Our homes are not safe because of wifi, laptops with wifi enabled, cordless phones, wireless toys, mobile phones, microwave oven etc. Their contribution can be even greater than due to tower! Radiation from tower increases with altitude and the first floor rooms facing the tower showed 10 times higher value than ground floor rooms. The terrace showed 100 times increase. The radiation density reduces with distance from the tower. Concrete walls block radiation to a limited extent. Trees absorb radiation. The measured

To reduce radiation within the house, wifi and cordless phone were replaced with wired connections, disabled wifi in laptops and decided not to use blue tooth, wireless toys and microwave oven. We also decided to avoid high radiation areas like the terrace. We grew more plants like plantain, Jathi etc. as they absorb radiation and block radiation.

values were much more than the safe value, but less than standards.

I was certain that our bodies are affected by microwave radiations. It was difficult to convince even my family members, but they supported me. I felt helpless on what to do. The Lord wants us to keep trusting Him even when nothing seems to work. Such occasions are opportunities for the Lord to teach us to trust Him as well as empower us to face discouraging

situations Psalm 121 and Isaiah 43:2 were my constant prayers and Jesus answered my prayers.

Myself and my husband, both Electronic engineers with rich experience in VSSC, decided to eliminate all radiation sources within the house. We also wanted to inform others of our findings and solve/ reduce the problem. So we gave a complaint to the Human rights commission.

Eliminate radiation sources within the house

To reduce radiation within the house, wifi and cordless phone were replaced with wired connections, disabled wifi in laptops and decided not to use blue tooth, wireless toys and microwave oven. We also decided to avoid high radiation areas like the terrace. We grew more plants like plantain, Jathi etc. as they absorb radiation and block radiation.

Reduce radiation level to safe value by shielding techniques

Shielding is a technique to reduce the effect of radiation. Paint, film, cloth etc. are items available for importing. We tried shielding the house, with locally available materials. We tried different ways.

We were successful in shielding windows with stainless steel mesh with 1.5mm holes, used for mosquito proofing. Radiation density in rooms did not reach safe level because of radiation penetrating through walls. As the wall was at the back side, we used chicken mesh of 12 mm hole size to shield walls. holes \ll wavelength of radiation.

$V = f \lambda = 3 \times 10^8 \text{ m/sec. } \lambda = 10 \text{ cm so hole size } \ll 10 \text{ cm.}$

This is cost effective compared to the imported paint, cloth and film options for shielding.

Food, exercise, healthy practices and medicines

Walking barefoot effectively grounds the radiation absorbed by the body. We try to increase immunity level by healthy foods that are high in natural antioxidants (Avial with organically grown vegetables, goosberry with honey). We took ayurvedic treatment for dryness in the eyes and flashes in the eyes and homeopathy for joint pains.

Result

Our sleep pattern became normal and we get sound sleep. We feel healthier. Sleep disorder and dryness in eye reappear when I spend a few hours outside home or keep mobile phone within a meter.

After shielding, the signal received for a call gets reduced. Then the mobile phone boosts the signal level and establishes communication with the tower at a higher level. It is better to go out and make the call. Even if communication is carried out at a higher level, it is better from health point of view as the call time is small in 24 hour day.

Human Rights Commission considered the petition and took necessary actions. The concerned were given orders to bring down the radiation levels to safe value. The tower operator in turn has given a petition that they follow the existing norms in the country!

I could find out many problems in the system which make the people living near towers helpless. With the existing norms, no case against the industry can win.

Protection from cell phone radiation

Problem from tower may not be a problem to most people. Mobile phone is to be used with great care to safeguard health of the user. Get phones with less SAR value. Do not allow children to use a cell phone for calling. Even when it is not used, it is continuously communicating with the nearby tower and hence radiating.

Make phone calls that are absolutely necessary and use speaker phone as much as possible. Put your phone near the ear only after two seconds of accepting a call. Avoid carrying your phone directly on your body. Use your phone only on conditions of optimum reception. The signal strength is boosted up automatically and you get more radiation. Do not use phone in a moving vehicle or in a vehicle. Do not keep the phone in the bed room at night.

Make sure your immune system is in good shape Eat organic food. Drink clean water. Get regular exercise. Use non toxic cleaners in your home and body.

Effect on environment

Coconut trees after a certain height gets affected as the leaves are at the top only. The leaves are crippled and the trees die. Three coconut trees in our backyard were cut three years back. Now one in our backyard and one in neighbors plot are with burnt leaves. These are in one sector and there are healthy trees nearby. Jathi trees also seems to be affected as the seeds fall down without becoming ripe. As the trees have leaves from the bottom, trees survive.

Conclusions

Tower is an open microwave oven. Microwave radiations from mobile towers are harmful to human health. There are short term effects and long term effects. All are not equally susceptible to radiations. But most people will be affected after many years of continuous exposure. Temperature rise, increase in the incidence of cancer, reduction in immunity and resultant infectious diseases, premature aging, decrease in birds and bees are the result of the microwave radiations.

Let me thank God Almighty who protected me and guided me in my trials and enabled me to find out solutions and to be alive with reasonably good health. Getting some useful websites, giving insight to the problem and affordable solutions, all I consider as God's help. Jesus is alive, is in control of all situations and is the only way to the kingdom of God. ●

Whatever be the sufferings and misfortunes, they will be blessings for the children of God because the Son of God is on the right hand side of the Father, showering blessings upon us. We all are His brethren. He is always making intercession for us to God the Father.

Zad I. Jabbour A.P.S

Artist Painter & Sculptor

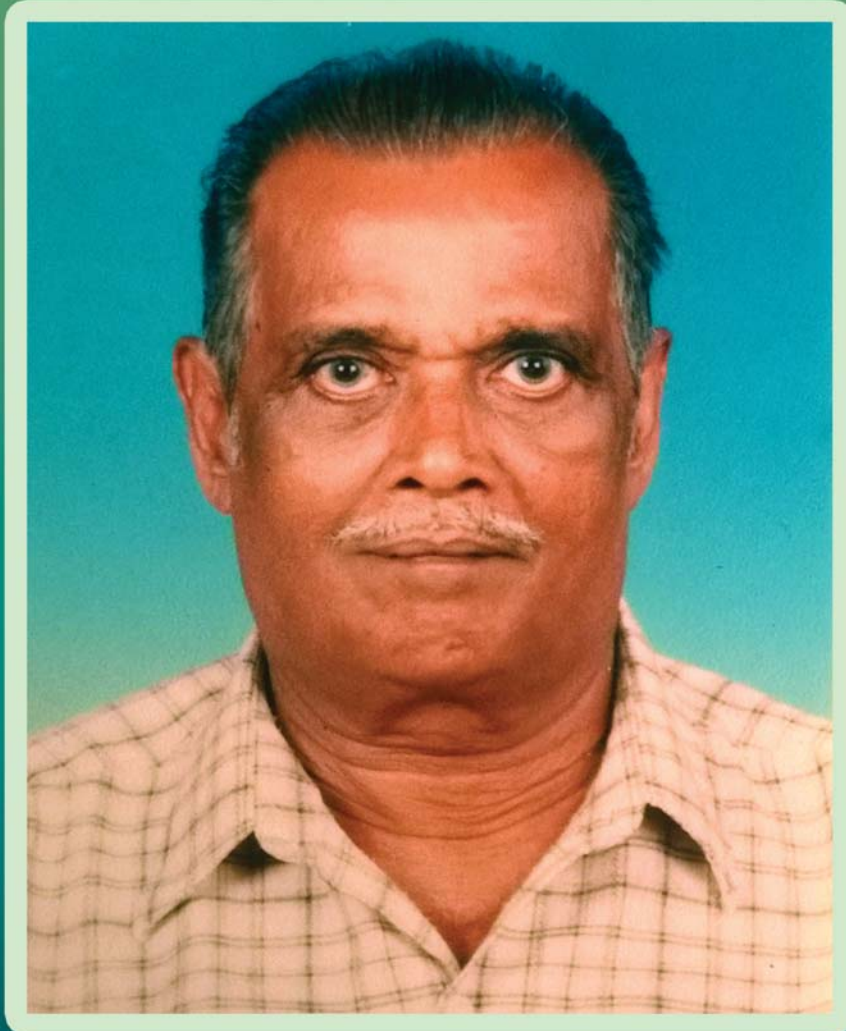
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Is the Church Important?

Fr George Dn, Bosauder



To be able to answer the question "Is the Church Important" we have to define the Church. St Ignatius wrote "the Bishop among his people is the Church!"

St Paul wrote in his Epistle to the (KJV Version) Romans 16: ³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:...also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house. ... ²⁵ Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶ But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith...

Of thrice blessed memory His Holiness Ignatius the Fourth, Past Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, in the opening paragraph of patriarchal decree wrote:

"The Rites in general and the Sacraments in particular are the highway of the grace of God, a purifying and sanctifying way which leads man to the great mystery and grants him strength upon strength and grace upon grace to be renewed and to be seen as an 'image' of his Creator. He becomes a 'child' not from flesh and blood but from God.

Faithful preservation of the full purity of the rites is a duty for all faithful believers: clergy and laity. This purity becomes an event in the depth of the soul of mankind. It transforms it and implants in it the grace which accompanies it: acting perpetually in it and attracting every blessing and enlightening and sanctifying.

The Church is the Body of the living and life-giving Christ. It embraces believers by the Holy Spirit who acts within it. "And I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you forever." John 14:16.

The Sacraments are sacred actions performed by the Church with the empowering of the Holy Spirit. In these she offers to the believers the grace of the

Holy Spirit with tangible signs to sanctify them and make them true children of God in an incomparable worship. In that worship the Holy Spirit draws people to Himself and to the Church, His Body, so that they grow in Grace and stature, becoming perfect persons, "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ... a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Ephesians. 4:13; 5:27".

When the faithful seek the Holy Sacraments they are seeking inter-effect of the Holy Spirit to their human soul.

Baptism is the door through which we enter the life of Jesus Christ. In baptism man puts on Jesus and takes off the old man. He dies to sin and guilt and is renewed in sanctity and innocence. It is not he himself who lives, but Christ who lives in him. (Gal.2:20.)

Holy Myrrh (Chrismation): The Sacrament of Holy Myrrh is only offered to the Baptised. It is effected by anointing them with Holy Myrrh in which anointing they are given the seal of the Holy Spirit. They are blessed by His Holy Gifts. These gifts cause the new life received in Baptism to grow and direct it to full perfection.

The Eucharist is the completion of sacramental entry into Church membership. To belong completely to the Body of Christ which is the Church. The sacra-

ments of Baptism, Holy Myrrh (Chrismation) and Eucharist are the Sacraments by means of which man enters the Church of Christ.

Repentance and Holy Communion: The precious Body and Blood of the Lord are the food of the one who has been baptised in the Name of the Trinity and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Repentance and Confession: The Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection from the dead when He appeared to his disciples and said to them: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you..."

Confession takes place in the Church Sin separates man from God, from himself and also from the Church. For this reason the act of reconciliation resulting from repentance should be accomplished also within the body of the Church. This act of reconciliation is not just an individual act performed by the faithful on his own behalf but it is, like other sacraments, an act performed in the body of the Church as represented by the Priest.

Ordination: The Lord Jesus Christ Himself chose the Apostles first who were assisted by bishops and elders and deacons. Afterwards these became their successors; they are called by the Church as shepherds and priests. He gave to them alone (without the others) the power to perform the sacraments,

to pastor souls, to teach the faithful and to confirm the Church as the Body of Christ. Lk. 6:13; 22:19. Matt. 18:18; 28:18-20. Mk.16:15. In.15:16; 20:21-23. Apostolic succession of the priesthood: The Divine Grace granted through the sacrament of Priesthood is the same one given by the Lord Jesus to His Disciples. The Disciples and their successors ordained priests and bishops in the Churches (Acts 14:23) with the same divine power taken from the Lord Jesus. "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son." Acts 20:28.

Marriage: From the beginning God Himself instituted the sacrament of matrimony for: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth""

Holy Unction is a divine sacrament. It is given to the faithful through the anointing of their bodies with oil. They receive a divine grace to heal their illnesses of

The Divine Grace granted through the sacrament of Priesthood is the same one given by the Lord Jesus to His Disciples.

body and soul. "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." James 5:13-15.

From the above we can say that the Church is where the bishop is with his people; meeting as the body of Jesus Christ, preaching his word to everyone, united in prayer and purpose in performing holy sacraments and services that the Lord provided for the salvation of mankind. While this general definition covers some aspect of the Church

it is important to note that the sacramental life of the Church requires sacramental space, ordained clergy and sacramental vessels.

By having a consecrated church we can perform these sacraments in accordance with the tradition received from Christ through the Apostles. Therefore: The church – bishop, clergy, people, and building- is important. ●



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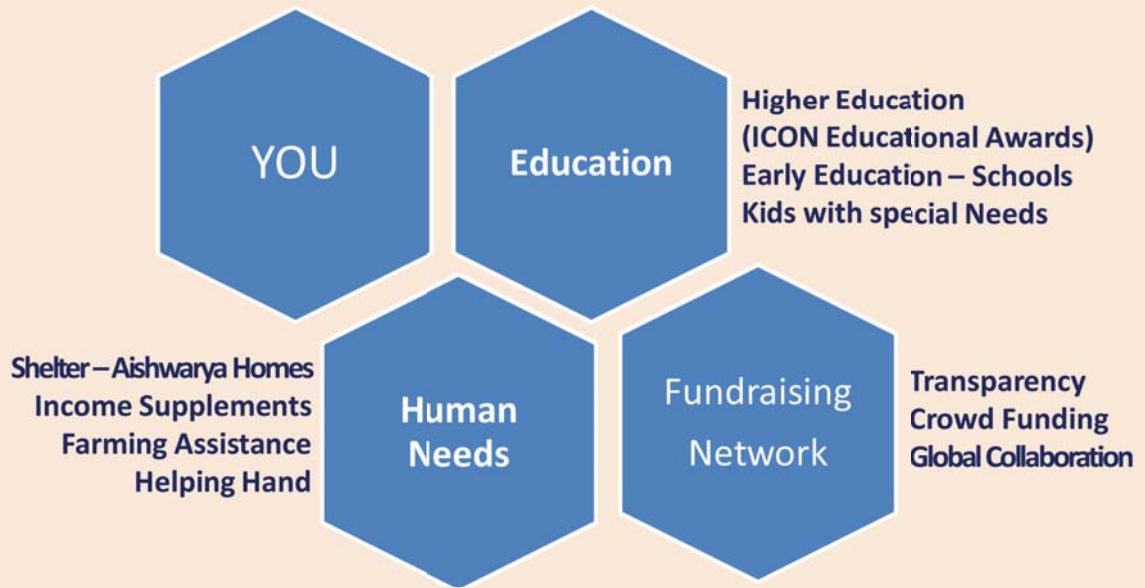
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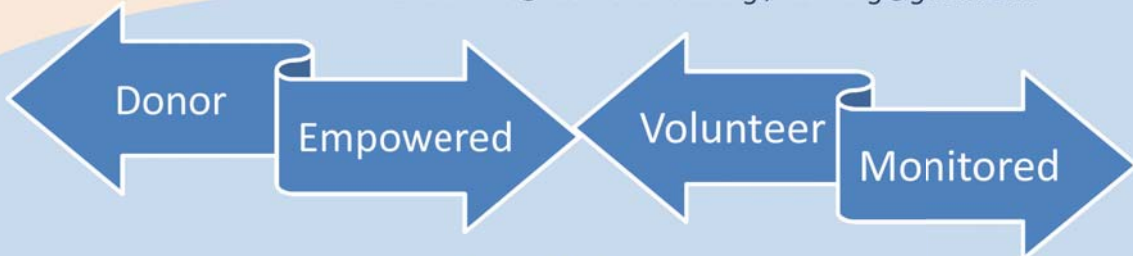


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Happiness is a mental or emotional feeling that you have when you are positive or feeling pleasant. Happiness is something that everyone wants to experience. Apparently everything that we do in life is aimed towards being happy. Happy people tend to live better lives than unhappy people. They live longer and healthier

and even have better relationships. It is something that a lot of people hunger for, but why?

We truly know that we are happy when we are satisfied with everything in our lives, when nothing is missing and also when nothing goes wrong. But life is not like this; if so only for a small period of time. In Job 14:1 we read, "We are all born weak and helpless. All lead the same short, troubled life."

So, what are some of the things that make us happy? One thing that a lot of people say that makes them happy is money. Being rich and wealthy, to be able to buy anything you want. For example a lot of people say that they would be happy if they could just win the lottery. There was a study about this on a number of people who won the lottery who all returned to the same level of happiness before winning the lottery. Another situation was when a rich group of people were interviewed, they said they felt empty..... Something was missing. According to a you-tube video I saw called "Bubzbeauty"; Lindy Tsang says that "Happiness isn't dependent on getting what you want".

If happiness is not getting what you always want, then it's got to be about giving things to other people. One thing that you could give to others that won't just make you happy, but also everyone else is love. Showing love could be by donating your blood, money to charities or

HAPPINESS

Soumya Sunil
Melbourne

by donating your old clothes to people who may need them. In the Bible, St. John the Baptist said "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise". Even simple things like smiling or waving to somebody is an act of love. By showing love to other people, it ignites a spark within us that makes us feel happy. Love creates joy within us.

Have you ever wondered why sometimes bad things happen to the happiest people, the most innocent and good people? Like when a tornado killed 24 people in a school in Oklahoma in May 2013, or the bush fire which killed 374 people and left over 2000 people with heat related injuries in Australia which happened in 2009. Have you won-

dered may be why God would let this happen? Why would he let disastrous things happen to his own people?

Part of the answer to these questions can be found in the Book of Job. The book of Job basically talks about how there was a meeting in heaven and how Satan wanted to challenge God and torment Job to see if Job would still love God and be his servant. God said that Job was his righteous servant but he let Satan do it. Satan did many horrible things to Job, but no matter how much Satan tormented Job; Job never gave up and kept his faith. But who caused all these bad things to happen to Job? The book of Job clearly states that it was Satan. God had allowed Satan to test Job.

Now let's take a look at Luke chapter 13. It's an incident when Jesus is teaching on repentance.

Luke 13:1 says: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices."

This verse is telling us about how Pilate was torturing Jews and the people come to Jesus to ask him why does God allow that to happen?

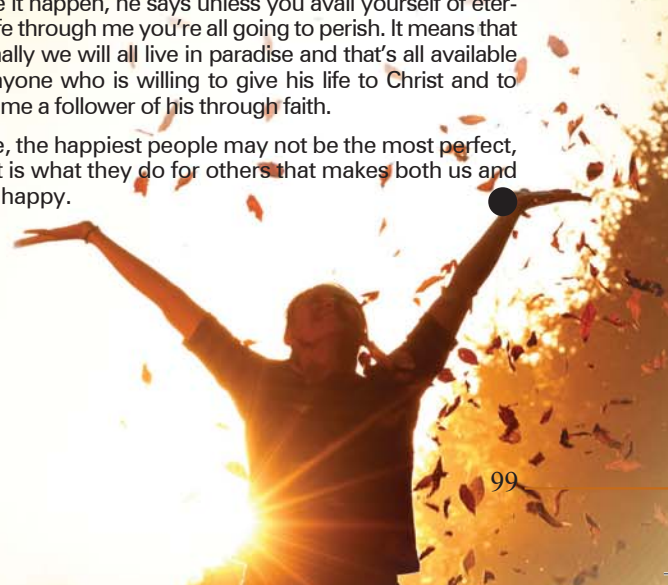
Then Luke 13:2 says: "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all Galileans, because they suffered such things."

Jesus is asking the people whether these people who were tormented by Pilate were sinners.

In Luke 13:3 Jesus then says: "I tell you nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

In other words what Jesus is trying to teach is that we live in a world that is full of sin and disorder and bad things do happen to ordinary people. You can't say that bad things happen to good people because no-body is good, everyone has sinned nobody is conceded "good" because we all find it hard to live up to expectation of God. But on the other hand bad things do happen to people who we think to seem are innocent under our eyes. But the bottom line that Jesus is trying to tell us is to try not to link disaster with blame that bad things happen because someone has done something bad to make it happen, he says unless you avail yourself of eternal life through me you're all going to perish. It means that eternally we will all live in paradise and that's all available to anyone who is willing to give his life to Christ and to become a follower of his through faith.

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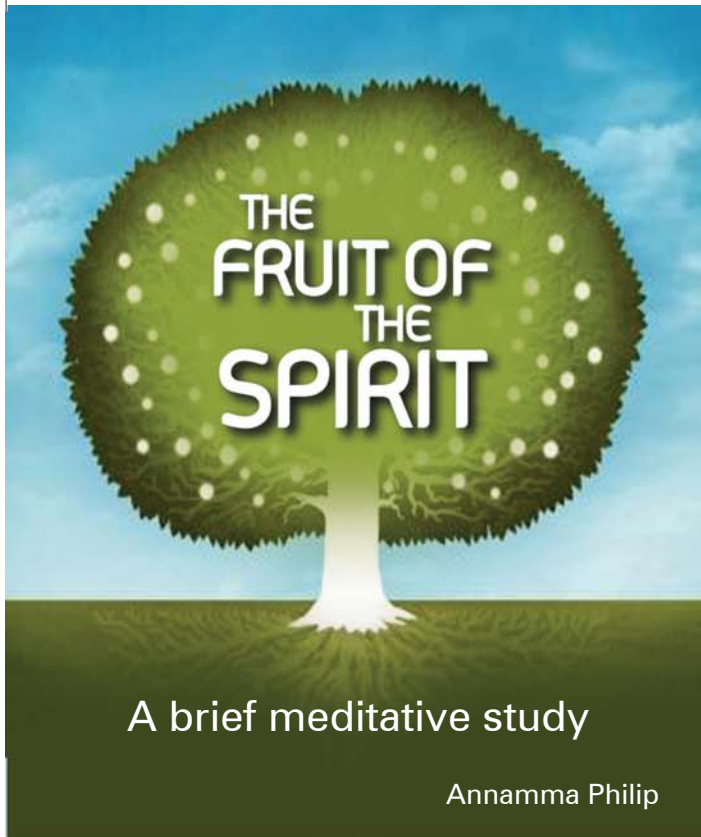
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INTRODUCTION

The fruit of the Spirit is a single fruit with nine inevitable ingredients. It combines all the commandments of God, in simple and achievable goals. It defines a true Christian personality. God is the only tree, when carefully budded with, a believer can bear the fruit. The careful budding is not only the one time baptism, but also an unceasing transparent fellowship with God. (John 15: 5). A fruit bearing Christian is a servant of God and helps to build the Kingdom of God on earth.

Today we are busy making a living and expanding our barns. We often forget the promised eternal true life with our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian churches around the world seem green with thick and healthy leaves! But will our Lord find the fruit of the spirit?

"The fruit of the spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL."

Galatians 5:22-23.

LOVE

(sacrifice of self)

The core of Christian faith has been built on the word of God which says

- "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." - John 3:16

God wants us to have steadfast LOVE to one another. St. Paul's poetic explanation of love in 1 Corinthians 13 is well known. By practising Godly love (AGAPE), we conduct God's love and serve the Lord. The love for Father Almighty God made Jesus to love all unto His Death. The love for their master made the Apostles and the early church suffer persecution willingly. We fail to love when things go contrary to what we expect. We are frail in spirit and we are tempted to sin.

Our Lord has commanded, "that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15.12).

- "The earth is full of His steadfast love." - Psalms 33:5 "
- "The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children." Psalms 103: 17

If we are sincere in love, we will be compelled to forgive others thereby obtaining the grace to be

forgiven. This is impossible without God. It is the love of God which should work in us. It is this abiding love of God, that we enjoy today in our daily life. The love in the fruit of the spirit is that which loves everyone, no matter what the situation or outcome may be. Love even the unlovable enemy! All powers one may have amounts to nothing, if lacking in love.

JOY

(the sacrifice of praise)

We often misunderstand that joy is the happiness that we experience when our dreams come true or while celebrating an event. But, the Joy mentioned in the fruit of the spirit is the state of mind which gives all praise to God, who is the source of our happiness. Only God can give us that joy.

- "The joy of the Lord is your strength." - Nehemiah 8:10
- "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" - 1 Peter 1:8

David had great joy in praising the Lord at all times – both in times of happiness and sorrow. Joy is praising God for everything; when He blesses and when He chastens. Paul and Silas, even when imprisoned after being beaten up, were praying and singing Hymns to God.

- "In The world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." -John 16:33
- A true Christian has to suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12) and need to count it as joy (James 1:2)

God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and the most trustworthy helper. Our faithful fathers always rejoiced in the Lord. Our joy is the hope for eternal life.

PEACE

(sacrifice of trust)

We perceive Peace as a state of mind when everything is favourable to us, or the absence of conflicts.

- "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." - John 14:27
- "Blessed are the peace makers; for they shall be called sons of God." Matthew 5:9

Being at peace is a state of mind where we are not afraid or anxious about anything in the world; like Prophet Daniel in the lion's den, like the young trio in the fire, like our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peace is a state of calmness in tribulations as we trust in the Lord. Peace is the outcome of complete confidence in God.

- "Great peace has those who love Your law: And nothing causes them to stumble." - Psalms 119:165
- "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."- Isaiah 26:3

We must have our peace in Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who has paid a great price for our Salvation! He, Himself became a ransom for us. Peace is reconciliation with all human beings and all creations and with God. Peace is an acceptance without complaint, of every situation which God brings in. It is a comfort of fearlessness by experiencing the abiding presence of Immanuel. Peace is serenity which God offers to a faithful servant of God. We derive it by learning and following the word of God and by trying to seek more about Jesus and His righteousness. Jesus is the King of peace and we need to be in union with Him.

PATIENCE

(Doing nothing when tempted to get angry or to do revenge)

Patience is waiting on Christ for judgement and forgiving our trespassers. Patience is settling with anyone who disagrees with us, for the sake of Christ.

Patience kept Jesus silent when Pilate and the High priests of Jerusalem questioned and scourged Him. It was patience which made Jesus and St. Stephan pray for their enemies before they died. Patience made Abraham to reconcile with Lot. Patience is the lubricating oil when relationship between two people strains! It is a key to open harmony in relationships. Patience encourages forgiveness and tolerance.

- "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and complete."- James 1:2-4

God will help us in our weakness, if we have patience. Obedience to the word of God is better than sacrifice. Patience is submitting all anger, hatred and guilt on to God and have faith in His fellowship and leave every judgment to God.

KINDNESS

(The desire for a Godly action)

Kindness is caring for anyone, anywhere, whenever needed; the act of being aware of other people's helplessness, being empathetic and helping unconditionally. It was Mother Mary's kindness which led to the first miracle of Jesus at Cana. Kindness is the ability to love someone more than what they deserve.

- "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." - Ephesians 4:32

The Shunammite woman built a special room for Elisha, the prophet. Kindness of Jesus was evident in His eyes towards the sinners and the suffering people. Kindness is God's grace abiding in our heart ready for action.



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GOODNESS

(Doing gracefully without expecting reward)

Goodness is one's quality to be on tip-toe all the time to do good under all circumstances. Abraham rushed to rescue Lot from captivity and this act of kindness was rewarded with the visit of Melchizedek, the king of Salem and the priest of God, most high; who was foreshadowing the Messiah.

- "Not returning evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this that you may inherit a blessing."
- 1 Peter 3:9

Rebecca was engaged on the basis of the goodness she showed to a stranger. So was Rahab's family spared from destruction. Goodness is making the right choices for all in God's standard and always honoring others.

FAITHFULNESS

(Always being obedient to God)

Faithfulness is doing the will of God even when the outcomes may seem unfavorable. It involves triumph over the passions for positions and wealth, lethargy, impulsiveness, procrastinations, rationalization, apathy and rebellion. Abraham obeyed God even when he was asked to sacrifice his son of promise, Isaac. When God confirmed the faith in Abraham, He stopped Abraham from killing His son.

- "And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide." - Genesis 22:14

Jesus was always faithful to God the Father unto His death. Faithfulness also means complete loyalty to others as well as to God. It enables the establishment of God's righteousness in all circumstances. David was faithful to Saul and spared the latter's soul. Jonathan was faithful to David. Prophet Elisha was faithful to his master Elijah and never could he separate from his master.

Faithfulness is very fragile when Satan tempts us. Adam and Eve's faithfulness failed when the snake tempted them. Apostle Peter betrayed the Son of God, when temptations of survival came. David fell from his throne of righteousness when the temptation of lust came. Judas betrayed Jesus when shekels shined in his mind.

God is always faithful to us in all His promises. Unceasing prayers with a broken and contrite heart will help us maintain our faithfulness to God.

GENTLENESS

(Being humble in the sight of the Lord)

Gentleness means meekness and accepting the supreme authority of God over us. Gentleness is leaving all our battles in the hands of the Lord. Gentleness of Jesus gave Him the ultimate victory over the power of darkness. The level of gentleness shown by Jesus and Mother Mary is matchless. Gentleness assures victory over evil and leads to eternal glory.

- "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile in return, when he suffered he did not threaten, but committed himself to Him, who judges righteously"
- 1 Peter 2:23

Hannah showed gentleness when Peninnah annoyed her continuously for not having children. Hannah only kept on praying silently in grief.

SELF CONTROL

(Armour against the obstacles that separates us from God)

Self-Control is the sum total of all Christian discipline. It is the solid foundation for all kinds of spiritual gifts. Prayer is the path way to self control. Temptations and desires are the two weapons devil uses against believers. Prayer helps us to discern God's will for us and He provides us the armour of self-control. Joseph could seek God's will and His righteousness when the unfaithful wife of Potiphar tempted him. Sapphira and Ananias could not show self control over the temptation to hide some of the wealth they had vowed to God.

- "Knowledge of God gives self control. Self control gives perseverance and perseverance produces Godliness." - 2 Peter 1:6
- "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for the necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers."
- Ephesians 4:29

Lack of self-control in Moses caused Lord's displeasure for striking the rock at Meribah.

CONCLUSION

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the only spiritual gift one cannot fake. Only God can help us with this fruit bearing on a continual fellowship with Him. Fruit of the Holy Spirit is the confidence of walking with God in complete obedience.

With the consecration of our new Church, may our souls and minds get rejuvenated to bear the Fruit of the Spirit. May we find solace to our minds and comfort for our bodies by loving Jesus and keeping his commandments.



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ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം
 ഇതിഹാ-സശുദ്ധൻ മോർ ദിവനാസ്യോസ് മാദ്ധ്യസ്ഥമരുളുമിടം -
 ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം

മലയാങ്കരയുടെ മണിമുത്തുകളെ ചേർത്തു കോർത്തൊരിടം
 തലമുറ തലമുറ നേർ സ്തുതി പാടാൻ
 പടുത്തുയർത്തിയിടം - ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം

സർഗ്ഗം ഭൂമിയെ മുത്തമിടും ധര നിർവൃതി പുകുമിടം
 നീല വാനിൽ വർണ്ണമുകിലുകൾ നൃത്തമാടുമിടം (2)
 ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം

അലകടലംബരമാക്കിവാഴും ചെറിയൊരു ഭൂ ഭാഗം
 ഹരിത വിരിയിൽ അജഗണമന്നം തേടും പുണ്യമിടം (2)
 ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം

ഭൂവിലാഭ്യം പുലരി വിടരും പുണ്യമാർന്നൊരിടം
 തിരുബലിക്കായ് ഉലകിലാഭ്യം വിരിയൊരുക്കുമിടം (2)
 ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം

ഒരുദശാബ്ദം ബഹുശതം സ്തുതിക്കരുൾ ലഭിച്ചൊരിടം
 അരുമനാഥൻ അറിഞ്ഞു നൽകിയൊരായുസ്സിൻ പുണ്യം (2)
 ഇവിടം പുണ്യസ്ഥലം... This is the Holy place

येहे पावन जगा - ऐतिहासिक संत दीवन्नासियोस हिमायत
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Jesus

Shradha Rachel Sabu

Jesus is loving and kind,
 He is like the workers on the field,
 who gathers and binds.
 He loves and cares for those in the world,
 who are shunned by others,
 He is one with the Spirit and the Father.
 He suffered and gave up his life for us,
 but we still live in sin and lust.
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 His love is bigger than the crater,
 Jesus is our Saviour and our shepherd;
 we are His sheep and His herd.





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REPORT OF CONSECRATION CEREMONY

Introduction

"Yes, the sparrow has found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young a place near your altars, Lord Almighty, my King, and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you." Psalm 84:3-4

These words uplift us with confidence and assure that our desires will be satisfied if they are set upon Him. Creatures which do not understand what the altar means, may build beside it, and those which have no notion of who the God is to whom the house is sacred, are yet cared for by Him.

Our faithful in New Zealand especially in Auckland are a blessed generation who could partake in building this Church for the generations. A rare opportunity God has assigned to the chosen!

The church premises were very busy from mid January when dedicated members came to assist artisans to finish construction, landscaping, and cleaning activities. The premises were adorned with planting of trees including Cedar, Fig, Olive among others. As the day drew nearer, the labour and labourers went on increasing. Day by day, the church and premises looked more and more beautiful with an aesthetic combination of new painting, decorations, icons, illuminations and impressive flora.

Arrival of Dignitaries

- H.G. Yuhanon Mar Polycarpus (Ankamaly) arrived on 06/02/15 at 1.15am.
- H.G. Dr.Yakob Mar Irenaios (Kochi), Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa (KL) and Rev. Fr. V.P. Idichandy (Bangalore) arrived on 11/02/15 at 1.00am.
- H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros (Chennai) and Rev. Fr. Shinu K. Thomas (Melbourne) arrived on 12/02/15 at 1.00am.
- Rev. Fr. Thomas Varghese (Sydney) arrived on 13/02/15 at 1.00pm.

Dignitaries from sister churches who participated were Anglican Bishop (Retd.) Richard Randerson, Mother Wendy, Rev. Paul from Anglican Church - Massey, Rev. Fr. Aprem Pithyou of Assyrian Church, Wellington and Rev. Fr. Bishop Mekhaiel from Coptic Orthodox Church, Auckland.

The faithful community and well-wishers came from all parts of the country and even from neighbouring Australia. Apart from the parishioners in Auckland there were numerous faithful from other IOC parishes and congregations from Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington and Christchurch. There were several attendees from the Oriental Orthodox family viz. the Coptic, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Syriac and from sister churches Catholics, MarThoma Syrians and Anglicans.

Ceremony

The much-awaited Consecration was conducted on Feb. 13 & 14, 2015.

On Friday Feb. 13, 2015, the parishioners started arriving from morning helping for the final preparation of the ceremony commencing in the evening. By 5.30pm almost all members and a large gathering of invitees had arrived. People assembled at 53 Keeling road, from where all dignitaries were taken to the church in a colourful, traditional ceremonial procession led by the ornamental cross, Holy Bible, Catholicate flag, decorative umbrellas and an adorned moving tent under which the Bishops moved in the background of chanting of welcoming hymns. When the procession arrived inside the premises, all the Bishops together hoisted the Catholicate Flag. This was followed with the ribbon cutting ceremony at the main entrance of the church which was performed at the hands of H.G. Dr.Yakob Mar Irenaios. At the centre of the church, the bishops and priests lighted the ceremonial oil lamp and the congregation sang the Malayalam version of the hymn, "By thy light, we see the light..." . Thereafter the bishops and priests entered the holy sanctuary and conducted Kukulion followed by Evening prayer.

Before commencing the consecration service, the building committee convener John Varghese and Project Co-ordinator Saji Pappen handed over the keys of the church to the presiding bishop Mar Irenaios, representing the Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan (as a symbol of surrendering the ownership to the Holy Mother Church and the Holy Catholicate). The handing over then progressed in the following order: from Mar Irenaios to Mar Diascoros, the Diocesan Metropolitan, then to Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai, the vicar and finally to Mr. E.Mathew Jacob, the parish Trustee.

Mar Irenaios then briefed the gathering, about the first part of the Consecration which mainly comprised of the stone laying inside the Holy Altar followed with veneration of the Cross. Mar Diascoros was the chief celebrant for this service. This part of the ceremony was over by 9.00pm and dinner was served for all the participants thereafter which was organised by the Martha Mariam Samajam members.

On Saturday Feb. 14, 2015, the morning prayers started at 6.00am. After the psalms and the first post-incense hymn, the bishops and priests entered the sanctuary to re-commence the consecration rituals. All the three bishops and four priests got adorned with ceremonial vestments. The Sanctuary curtain was unveiled for the service. Mar Irenaios then briefed the gathering about the second part of the



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consecration, which comprised of the Sacrament of Holy Myrh (Chrism) and marking the altars, walls, doors, windows, baptism pond with Holy Myrh and installation of the Holy Cross on the Altars.

The congregation participated with hymns and repeated slow chanting of prayers "kyriealaison". "Lord have Mercy" and the song, "Honour and Glory for the Trinity one in essence, Lord make Peace in Thy Church and advancement forever" aired around. The three altars, the tabilithas (moveable altars), baptism pond, the sanctuary and the church building were sanctified and anointed with the Holy Chrism. This part of the sacrament lasted about three hours. Thereafter the Holy Relics of St. Gregorios and St. Dionysius, were installed in a cabinet on either side of the pillars at the entrance of the Holy Sanctuary.

The morning prayers were resumed and followed by the Holy Tri Mass (Holy Eucharist on three altars with separate celebrants). Mar Irenaios celebrated the Mass on the main altar dedicated in the name of the Patron Saint of the Church St.Dionysius, Mar Polycarpus on the north side altar dedicated in the name of St.Mary and Mar Diascoros on the south side altar dedicated in the name of St.Thomas. Almost all of the participants received Holy Communion during this blessed occasion. The service ended at 10.45am.

After serving light snacks all gathered at the foyer of the Church to unveil the plaque commemorating the major events of the church building from blessing of the land till consecration. The plaque was unveiled by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios in the presence of the dignitaries and faithful.

The local Maori troupe then performed powhiri a traditional ritual to welcome everyone.

This was followed with a public meeting inside the church to celebrate the completion of the great consecration event. After the prayer hymn by the church choir, our Vicar Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai, welcomed the gathering. The diocesan Bishop Mar Diascoros presided over the meeting. In the presidential address His Grace appreciated the work done by the Parishioners and exhorted the local M.P with a request to take initiation in renaming Keeling Road in which our church is situated to St.Dionysius Road which was cheered with great applause.

Mar Irenaios gave the inaugural address, in which His Grace extolled the services rendered to the parish since its inception, especially by Mother Wendy, Bishop Randerson, Fr. Bishoy, Fr. Aprem and Fr. Bosauder. He also acknowledged the contribution of the parishioners in general especially the founding members.

Felicitations were given by Bishop Randerson, Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Espiscopa, Fr. Bishoy, Fr. Thomas Varghese, Fr. Shinu K Thomas, Fr. V. P. Idichandy, Mr. Phil Twyford (local MP), Mr. Sunny Jacob (St. Peter's J.S.O.C.C), Mr. Alex Varghese (St.

Gregorios IOC, Hamilton), Dr. George Mathew (Mar Dionysius IOC, Wellington) and Mr. Philip Kuruvilla (MarThoma Church). Fr. Bishoy in his message said the Church in Keeling Road may turn out to be a place for 'kneeling' to find solace from Almighty.

All speakers unanimously acknowledged the miraculous achievement of the church completion by the small community in Auckland and the effectiveness of the intercession of the patron saint of the parish. "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

The report of the church building project was read by John Varghese. The church choir rendered melodious hymns in between speeches. The Eritrean Orthodox Choir also performed a ceremonial hymn for the occasion.

Mar Diascoros released the consecration souvenir by giving the prototype copy to Very Rev. Philip Cor Episcopa. The respected Achen, while receiving the copy said that he was receiving it on behalf of his parishioner Mr. Jacob Mathew (Jojo), who is a well-wisher and benefactor of our Church. It was announced, the distribution of copies to the public will be made later by including the report and photos of consecration.

The parish then presented Mementos to the visiting dignitaries. The vicar received gifts for the parish sent by other parishes such as St. Peter's J.S.O.C.C., St. Mark's Coptic O.C, Eritrean Orthodox, St. Mary's (KL), St. Mary's (Melbourne) and St. Thomas (Sydney). The parish trustee Mr. Mathew Jacob proposed vote of thanks. After the National Anthems of India and New Zealand, the meeting ended with prayer and final benediction. Philip Ayyamplackal and K. Beno Samuel served as Masters of Ceremony.

There was sumptuous lunch for everyone when the meeting ended at 3.00pm.

On Kothino Sunday Feb. 15, there was Tri Mass again led by Mar Diascoros; co-celebrated by Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa and Fr. V.P. Idichandy. After the service, Mar Diascoros distributed the inaugural Hagia Sophia award and prizes to Sunday School Children Stephan Skaria and Merlin Babu (Juniors) and Sara Philip and Shradha Sabu (Seniors) who got first and second positions respectively. This was followed by distribution of mementoes to all families of the parish, and to all parish managing committee and building committee members. The Metropolitan expressed the happiness for the completion of the church project and went on with further instructions, such as maintaining cleanliness, welcoming new members, presentation of the project account etc. Mar Diascoros presided over a specially convened joint meeting of Building and managing committees after the service. Lunch was served to all on Sunday too.

On Monday Feb. 16, evening, there was Great Lent prayer in the church. Mar Irenaios, Mar Diascoros, Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa, Rev. Fr. Idichandy and Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai were present to lead the prayer. There was the Subkono (reconciliation) service after the prayer. Both the Metropolitans during their parting speeches exhorted all to maintain the cleanliness in the church; no food to be served inside the church, not even to infants! They emphasised the need for special care to keep clean the sanctuary and the adjacent rooms. The Vicar expressed the gratitude and the joy of the parish for the presence of the Metropolitans during the consecration event.

During this eventful week in the parish, two young boys were initiated into the Holy Sanctuary to serve at the altar. Little children had their first writing of alphabet by the visiting Bishops. Earlier, Mar Polycarpus had celebrated Holy Eucharist at Wellington on Sunday Feb. 9, and Mar Irenaios celebrated Holy Eucharist at Hamilton on Sunday Feb. 15.

Departure of Dignitaries

Mar Polycarpus, Rev. Fr. Thomas Varghese and Rev. Fr. Shinu Thomas left immediately after the public

meeting on Feb. 14; they were to lead church services next morning in Australia. Mar Diascoros left to Australia on Feb. 17 at 6.00 am. Mar Irenaios and Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa also left on Feb. 17 by the 2.30pm flight to KL. Rev. Fr. Idichandy left on Feb. 19 by the 2.30pm flight to KL.

Our Vicar and office bearers of the parish were at the airport for all the relevant arrivals and departures.

When the curtain fell on the consecration and related events, the parishioners and well wishers had a great collection of memories to cherish in the years to come. This writer also joins them in glorifying the merciful Lord for all the blessings throughout the years and during this great event.

As this building has now been set apart as Holy for the purposes of worshipping God, we have a higher responsibility to hold steadfast to our commitment to maintain it that way. In the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, it is exhorted, "Preserve this holy house until the end of the world. May you pray and labor for this until the end of time."

Blessed be the Name of the Lord henceforth and forevermore. ●



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CONSECRATION PART I





CONSECRATION PART II







PUBLIC MEETING



Unveiling the plaque by H.G. Dr.Yakob Mar Irenaios



Mar Polycarpus, Mar Irenaios, Mr. Phil Twyford & Mar Diascoros



Powhiri (or pohiri, a traditional ritual) to welcome everyone



Hongi with the tangata whenua



The dignitaries on the dais



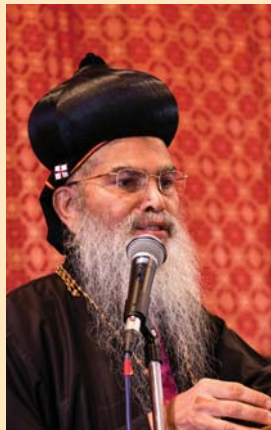
Audience



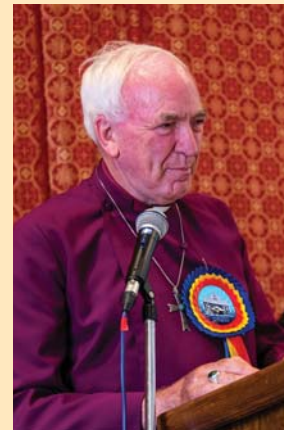
Welcome speech
Rev. Fr. Biju Mathai



Presidential Address
H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros



Inaugural Address
H.G. Dr.Yakob Mar Irenaios



Felicitation
Bishop Richard Randerson

Felicitations



Mr. Phil Twyford (local MP)



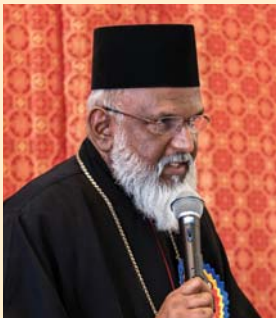
Rev. Fr. Bishoy Mekhaiel



Rev. Fr. V.P. Idichandy



Rev. Fr. Shinu K Thomas



Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa



Rev. Fr. Thomas Varghese



Mr Sunny Jacob (St Peter's J.S.O.C.C)



Mr Philip Kuruvilla (MarThoma Church)



Mr Alex Varghese
(St.Gregorios IOC, Hamilton)



Dr. George Mathew
(Mar Dionysius IOC, Wellington)



Building Project Report - John Varghese

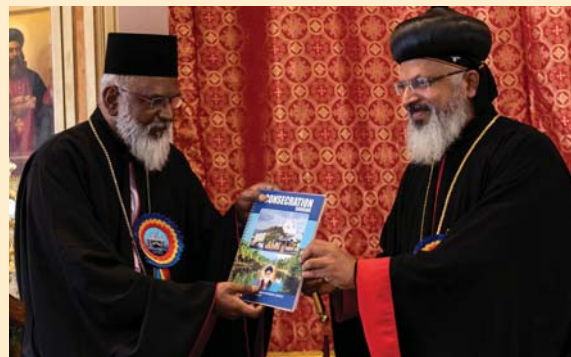


Memento Distribution - Oommen Philips

Releasing Consecration Souvenir



Release of Consecration Souvenir



Handing over the first copy by Mar Diascoros to
Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa



Eritrean Orthodox Church



SDIOC Choir



Audience



SDIOC Choir – children



Audience



Vote of Thanks - E.Mathew Jacob



Refreshment



Lunch

MEMENTOS TO DIGNITARIES



Mar Irenaios receiving from Saji Pappen



Mar Diascoros receiving from K N Varughese

Mar Diascoros presenting to



Fr. Biju Mathai (Vicar)



Bishop Richard Randerson



Mr. Phil Twyford - M.P (Te Atatu)

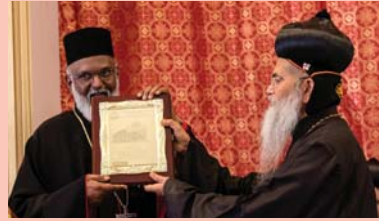
Mar Irenaios presenting to



Fr. V.P. Idichandy



Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa



Cor Episcopa receiving on behalf of Jacob Mathew (Jojo)

Mar Diascoros presenting to



Mother Wendy



Fr. Aprem Pithyou



Mr. Thomas Philip (Builder)



Eritrean Orthodox Church



Fr. Bishoy Mekhaiel
(Coptic Orthodox)



Mr. Philip Kuruville
Marthoma Church



Mr. Baby Kuriakose
St. Peter's JSOCC

MEMENTOS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS



E.Mathew Jacob



Oommen Philips



John Varghese



Saji Mathew



Kavil Varughese



K. Beno Samuel



Isaac Cheriyan



Manoj Philip



Saji Pappen



for Sajan Uthup



Sherli John



Philip Ayyamplackal



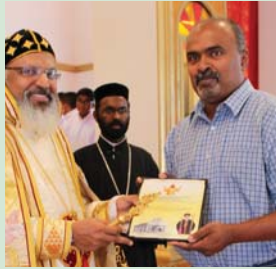
Sabu Skaria



Jilo Jose

MEMENTOS TO WELL WISHERS







Holy cross is the aim of humbleness and forgiveness. Obedience to others in all their words is not the right humbleness and forgiveness. Holy cross is the readiness to suffer for justice and truth. Humbleness and forgiveness remains in those minds, which would be willing to accept any sort of sufferings for the sake of truth and justice.

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Auckland, New Zealand Inc.

Service Timings:

Sundays : 8.00am - Morning Prayer & Holy Eucharist
 followed with Sunday school, Students, Youth & Women's Ministry
 Wednesdays : 7.00pm – Intercession Prayer
 Saturdays : 6.30pm – Evening prayer & Holy Confession

ALL MESSIANIC FEASTS ARE OBSERVED AS PER THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR

The following non-messianic feasts are observed on the days mentioned below
 or on the subsequent Sunday

January						
						
St. Basil & St. Gregory 1	HH Geevarghese II 3	St. John the Baptist 7	St. Stephen 8	HH Mathews II 26		
February	April	May				
						
St. Dionysius Vattasseril (PARISH FEAST) 23	St. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios 5	Mar Abdul Jaleel Bava 27	St. Afroth & St. Sabor (Kadeeshens) 29	HH Paulose I 2	St. George The Martyr 6	
May	June	July	August	October		
						
HH Didymos I 26	St. Peter & St. Paul 29	St. Thomas 3	St. Kuriakose & St. Yulithy 15	St. Mary the Holy Theotokos 15	St. Yeldho Mar Baselios 3	
November	December					
						
St. Gregorios Parumala 2	HH Mathews I 8	HH Augen I 8	St. Bahanam & St. Sara 10	HH Geevarghese I 17	St. Ignatios Noorono 20	St. Thomas 21