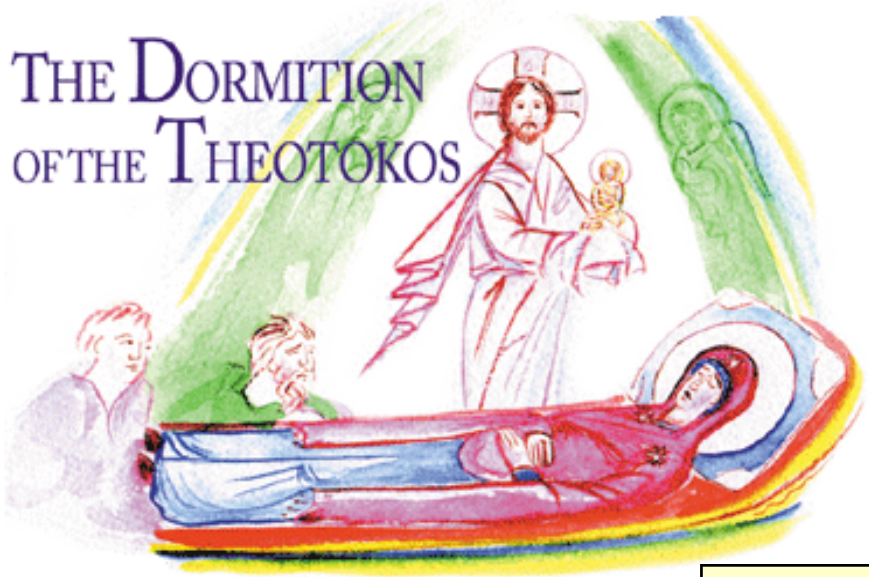




A St. Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church, Oak Park Publication
 VOLUME:IX ISSUE: VIII
 AUGUST 2010

GREGORIAN GAZETTE

THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS



Church Picnic

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Mar Gregorios Orthodox Church Center



OUTDOOR COMMITTEE MEETING AT ELGIN

Holy Qurbana was held at the Church Center on Saturday, August 7th to commemorate the Feast of the Transfiguration.

MMVS Report

The MMVS retreat was held on Saturday, July 10th. Shibu Achen spoke about the role of an Orthodox wife. The following are some of the points from the retreat:

1. Marriage is an icon (image) of the relationship between Jesus and the Church. Marriage is the simplest, most basic unity of the church. The Church is the bride of Christ. The relationship in a marriage between husband and wife is compared to the relationship between Christ and His church. (Ephesians 5: 22-33)
2. The role of the Wife is compared to the four distinctive marks of the church (One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church)

·The wife should be temperate and self- controlled. She requires maintaining equilibrium in her personality and being confidence in herself.

·Be Holy in her conduct. Be pure and without blemish so that she may be respected and honored. (Ephesians 5:27)

·Catholic means universal. A true wife is universally beloved. She gives her husband full confidence. In marriage, a wife should be able to love her husband in spite of all his weaknesses.

·Wives must receive and accept Christ in their own hearts and allow Him to become their teacher and thus lead them to love their husbands unconditionally. We learn to love others by reading, studying, and applying God's words in our hearts and life.

3. Responsibilities of a wife:

The wife should act as a transformation agent to her husband. We are to develop relationships of trust and confidence and respect our husbands so that there is the element of submission in everything we do. (Ephesians 5:22).

Our relationship with our spouses must emphasize the importance of love, consideration and respect. Power and control should not characterize a marriage relationship.

CONTD PG 12

Fr. M. K. Thomas

Fr. V.M. Shibu

Liju Paul

Liju Varghese

Elizabeth Varghese

Gladstone Mammen

George Panicker

Joe Varghese

Peter Varghese

George Varghese (Publisher)

EDITORIAL BOARD

1. Sunday — 15. Sunday – Dormition Fast**8. Sunday – 1st Sunday after the feast of Transfiguration**

St. James 4:7-5, Philippians 4:8-20, St. Matthew 21:28-32

General Body after Holy Qurbana

Divyabodhanam

15. Sunday – Dormition of St. Mary

Acts 1:12-14, 7:44-53, Hebrews 9:3-12, 2:14-18, St. Matthew 12:46-50

19. Thursday – Willowbrook Bible Study**22. Sunday – First Sunday after Ascension**

Ward 1 Prayer meeting at Stephen Residence (13288 Greenleaf Ct, Palos Heights, IL 60463) at 6.30 PM

1 John 2:22-29, Ephesians 6:10-17, St. Luke 6:39-45

28. Saturday – Sunday School Teachers meeting f at 9.30 am.**29. Sunday – Second Sunday after Ascension**

2 Peter 3:8-14, II Thessalonians 5:1-11, St. Luke 11:9-20

Our annual church picnic was held on Saturday, July 17th at John's Park Glenview. Thanks to all of the coordinators and to everyone who participated . It was a wonderful time for everyone who was there for the fun and fellowship





"BETHANYUDE PANIMALAR"

Alexios Mar Theodhosios Metropolitan was born in Niranam on August 28, 1888. At the age of 19, he was ordained into priesthood as Fr. Alexios. Catholicos Basalios Mar Geevarghese II consecrated him as Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodhosios on April 7, 1938.

Mar Theodhosios took an active role in the Church outside of Kerala, and represented the Malankara Church in International Inter-Church forums and projecting its image to western Churches. Until 1953 he was a member of Central Committee of WCC. His impact on the Diaspora, or the Church outside India, was notable. He went to Malayasia, Indonesia and Singapore around 1928 and interacted with a good number of Orthodox Syrian Christians. As a priest, he was the first Indian orthodox priest ever to visit UK.

Within India, Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodosius visited New Delhi to explore the feasibility of building an Orthodox Church in the National capital. During the second visit of Mar Theodosius in 1952, the congregation decided to take steps to construct a church of their own and Fr. K.C Thomas (who later became Metropolitan Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios) was appointed as the first resident Vicar of the parish in Delhi.

Among his accomplishments was working to begin the Bethany Ashram. Today Bethany is located on more than 250 Acres along with several monasteries, convents, schools and hospitals throughout Kerala.

Bishop Mar Theodosius, was an embodiment of goodness and spiritual values, H.G. followed the life-style of the "Great Sanyasis or sages" of ancient India. H.G left for his heavenly abode on August 6th 1965 and his mortal remains are interred in Bethany Ashram chapel.

REV.FR.IDICULLA.M.CHANDY, 91-4735-227428, idiculam2001@yahoo.co.in

VICAR ST.THOMAS BETHANY ORTHODOX CHURCH, Perunadu

(If you would like more information about the Ashramam and its activities email Achen at idiculam2001@yahoo.co.in. Achen also welcomes your comments about the article.)

Q1: Why are Bishops in the Orthodox Church called "His Grace"? Isn't this taking away from Christ?

A1: In 1 Timothy 1:9, St. Paul writes - "Our salvation and CALLING are based on His GRACE and love, not on anything we have done to merit God's favor." The Orthodox viewpoint is that our salvation does in fact depend on our response to God's grace and how we use it in our lives. We are co-workers with God in our salvation, per St. Paul (I Cor. 3:9; II Cor. 6: 1; Phil. 2:12-13). Even our calling as Christians is based on our synergy in responding to God's grace in our lives, since we are all sustained by His grace in every breath we take. Those who respond to this grace receive a calling to participate more fully in it, a calling which is based on their earlier responses. As a Church, we acknowledge that our Bishops have responded to His Grace, and through His Grace are the shepherds of Christ's Body on this earth. As with all things in the Orthodox Church, everything we do is always about Christ. It is also important to remember that, in the Orthodox Churches, all bishops, irrespective of their title or the size and importance of their diocese are identically equal in relation to their sacramental position. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, in the Orthodox Churches, none is higher or greater than the other and none rule over another.

Q2: How are the names of the Bishops chosen?

A2: This question was asked to H.G. Abraham Mar Seraphim during our Baitho Family Parish Conference. Thirumeni explained that before the consecration, the Holy Synod requests suggestions from the Bishop designates, the names that they desire to have. After prayer, reflection and discussion, the Episcopal Holy Synod decides the names of the new bishops. In the case of Seraphim Thirumeni and Yulios Thirumeni, both of them had given these names as their suggestions.

Q3: Why do we say "Catholic" in the Nicene Creed i.e., "we believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic church"?

A3: Orthodox Christians understand the word "catholic" to mean "whole, complete, lacking in nothing", and is not a reference to the Roman Catholic Church. All Orthodox Churches (Eastern and Oriental) as well as Roman Catholics refer to the united, one, holy, and apostolic Church that Christ had instituted after the Incarnation, and this Church is "whole, complete, and lacking in nothing."

If you would like to see your questions answered in the next issue of the Gazette, please email it to gregoriangazette@yahoo.com

Rejoice, highly favored ...

In Luke 1:26-38, we hear the Angel Gabriel exalting St. Mary with the words - "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

We celebrate this at the Feast of the Annunciation - St. Mary found favor in the Lord's eye, and she alone was chosen by God to bear the greatest of honors ... to be the mother of God. Jesus Christ was always divine and was begotten of the Father before all worlds (John 1:1-5, Genesis 1:1-3) and teachings that Christ was "created" or "born" on December 25th, or



became God after He was born from the Virgin was never Christian teaching. Rather, He became incarnate (i.e., took the form of a human) on that day through the Virgin Mary. Mother Mary is the Theotokos - the mother of God. In turn, she is our Mother as well as we are born again in Christ. This is why we pray -

"Hail Mary, full of Grace, Our Lord is with Thee ... Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, our Lord Jesus Christ"

But, why did God choose her and why is this important to us as Christians?

In Psalm 51 (50 in the Orthodox Study Bible), we know those characteristics that please God, and in St. Mary we see these qualities - purity, faithfulness, humility and love. These are characteristics that ALL of us should have as followers of Christ. From Scripture, Apostolic teaching and historic record we have ample evidence that these qualities were exemplified in Mother Mary. In other words, she is the model Christian.

But what is most important to remember is that St. Mary and all the saints of the Church are human - they were born, and died, a natural human death. She was not created differently than the rest of us, but rather what made her special was she chose a pure life and when

CONTD

FROM PG 6 she was chosen, she obediently and willingly accepted God's request – "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word". This is why the Church honors and venerates Mother Mary, and in particular there are special fasts before the Nativity (birth) and Dormition (death) of St. Mary. Our duty as Christians is to join with our brothers and sisters, both living and departed, in prayer and exaltation to God. A critical step is to have the humility to understand how Mother Mary became highly favored and transform ourselves to that highest level of favor in God's eyes. She is our mother and our role model, but only because she became one with Christ. Hence, we also pray -*"O Virgin Saint Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners, now and at all times and at the hour of our death"*

May the prayers of our Mother Mary bring for us intercession, and let her be our role model as we continue to transform into the perfect One, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



The new academic year of the Sunday School will start with a kick off and cook out on Saturday, August 28 at 11.00 am at Church. Prior to that, we plan to hold a Teachers Meeting on Sat Aug 28 at 9.30 am to prepare for the start of the next academic year. The actual classes for the new academic year will start on Sunday, September 12 in the morning at 8.45 am. Registrations for new students will start on Sun Aug 29. Please continue to keep the Sunday school program in your prayers. We hope everyone is enjoying the summer. As we observe the fast of the Dormition of St. Mary, let us seek St Mary's intercession and ask her to pray for us that our children may be empowered to grow in the love of God. May we all work together for the greater glory of God.



Congratulations to Gijo & Bincy Thomas who were joined in Holy Matrimony. May God bless them and their family life for years and years to come!

MGOCSM Summer Conference – Ashwin Jacob

Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

From July 29th to August 1st, 2010, MGOCSM held its annual summer conference to pray, study, and worship on this year's theme verse, Romans 5:3-5, on Hope. This year MGOCSM Chicago region was blessed to have Rev. Dn. Abey George from New York whose vibrant speech and engaging personality helped the students understand the idea of hope. He first took the students through the idea of suffering. He explained that there are three types of suffering: physical, emotional, and spiritual. He also explained that even though suffering exists in this world, Jesus Christ will walk with us to get through the suffering of this world. In the second session, Abey Chemachen continued about this idea of suffering and what we must do to conquer suffering. He gave us two advices. First, we must fill our body with goodness by using our spiritual tools like the holy sacraments, bible, and prayer. Second, we must stop looking at the future. As a society, we always think about our future and ignore the present. However, as Christians, we need to focus on the present with Christ. When we put our hopes into Christ, then we won't be worried about the future. In his final session, he taught

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FOCUS Update - by Roy Matthew

The FOCUS group has been going through the Bible studying the series of the "I am" statements of Christ. We've gone through numerous topics such as the bread of life, son of man and the gate. It's been a blessing to go into the scriptures and see how Jesus claimed himself to be God! Please come join us from now until the end of the year and join us as we unfold more "I am" statements from Christ and spend time in prayer and fellowship.

Charity event is set for Saturday, October 16th at 9am. More details to follow with *Feed My Starving Children*.

FROM PG 8 about transforming brokenness into wholeness. In this world full of suffering, Abey Chemachen taught us that we must use our spiritual qualities to get through suffering. When we use our spiritual qualities, not only do we get through the suffering of this world, but we also express our true love to God. As with every great summer conference, we also had a great time of fellowship and fun. From the mini Olympics games like spin-a-rooney to small group sessions, all the students had a chance to connect to one another. We were blessed to have time to just relax and grow connected to all our fellow brothers and sisters.

We came to this conference scared and unsure of the suffering of this world. Yet, we came back with a new sense of Hope. We came back with a willingness to put everything in front of his cross because when we put our Hope in Jesus Christ, we know he offers peace every day.



First Chicago Regional OVBS conducted at St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Oak Lawn:

By the grace of God, the first Chicago Regional OVBS was conducted at St Mary's Orthodox Church, Oak Lawn from Thursday, July 8, 2010 to Saturday, July 10, 2010 from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm. Around 100 children from the 4 Chicago land Churches - St Mary's Orthodox Church, Oak Lawn, St Thomas Orthodox Church, Chicago, St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Bellwood and St Gregorios Orthodox Church, Oak Park attended. About 50 volunteers from all the 4 churches worked together as Teachers, Coordinators, and Staff for games, arts and crafts, food, music, registration, audio visuals, awards, T-shirts and other activities under the leadership of Rev. Fr. M. K. Thomas, Rev. Fr. Daniel George, Rev. Fr. Ham Joseph, Rev. Fr. V. M. Shibu and Rev. Fr. Abi Chacko. The OVBS was a spiritually enriching program with plenty of learning, fun and good fellowship and it was a positive experience for the children who attended and the staff who led. The OVBS Theme "The Teacher is here and is calling for you" taken from St John 11: 28 was introduced by Abi Achen and Diju Semmassan led the Bible study. Apart from the teaching sessions, we had separate sessions for songs, quizzes and Arts and crafts. The children enjoyed the fun time with games and use of Moon bounce. Saturday began with Holy Qurbana in the morning. In the afternoon, each group Beginner, Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior presented a skit as part of the concluding session. The program ended with a slide show and distribution of certificates and music CD's. All the children and volunteers were excited to be presented with the specially designed OVBS T-shirts on Saturday. We hope and pray that this OVBS may lead us to more joint programs at the regional level.

We appreciate the initiative, leadership, sincere team work and dedicated efforts put forth by all (volunteers, students and parents) to make the OVBS a success. Each of the volunteer stepped forward to do what was required and moved forward to the next job on hand. Our special thanks to Diju Semmassan for being with us throughout the OVBS and leading the different programs. We also thank Binoy Semmassan for his leadership, initiative, support, encouragement and help and Mathew Koshy Achen for his guidance and direction. We are grateful to St Mary's Church (Abi Achen, Sibyl Kochamma, the Officials and the volunteers) who worked hard to prepare the facility for the conduct of the actual OVBS. May God bless all of us and continue to use us for His glory.

Kids' Korum

Questions of the Month

In February of 2009, seven individuals were consecrated as bishops in the Indian Orthodox Church at Puthupally, Kerala, India.

1. What are the names of the seven bishops?
2. Which dioceses do they currently serve in?

Please submit your answers on a separate sheet of paper to the Library in the Gregorian Gazette box. Contest is open to Sunday School students only. Congratulations to last month's winner, Gilbert Mammen!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8-01 Mathew, Tony

8-20 Thampi, Nathaniel

8-10 Skariah, Martin

8-25 Varghese, Alina

8-11 Ajit, Mehul

8-26 Thomas, Tomin

8-13 Thampi, Nicholas

8-27 Thomas, Alvin

8-16 Thomas, Joel

8-28 Varghese, Aryn

8-18 Antony, Alvin

8-31 John, Ajith



8-19 Paul, Justin

REGIONAL OVBS 2010 – ARTICLE ON PAGE 11



New Metropolitans and Diocese

H. H. The Catholicos appointed the new Metropolitans who were consecrated on 12th May 2010 at Mar Elia Cathedral, Kottayam, in the manner specified hereunder after due consultation with the Association Managing Committee convened on 03rd August 2010 and on the recommendation of the Holy Episcopal Synod met on 03rd August 2010 afternoon.

H. G. Zacharia Mar Aprem -	Adoor
H. G. Yuhanon Mar Thevedhoros -	Kottarakkara
H. G. Joshua Mar Nichodimos -	Ranny
H. G. Geevarghese Mar Yulios -	Ahemedabad
H. G. Yuhanon Mar Dimithrios-	Delhi (Asst.)
H. G. Abraham Mar Seraphim-	Bangalore
H. G. Yakob Mar Elias-	Brahmavar

WE REMEMBER

AUGUST 19—H. G. Joseph Mar Pachomios, Metropolitan of
Kandanadu Diocese at Mulakulam Karmelkunn

AUGUST 31—H. G. Mathews Mar Ivanios (Pampady)

AUGUST 6—H. G. Alexios Mar Theodosius

H. G. Yuhanon Mar Athanasious (Perunadu, Ranni) -

(see front cover page and article on page 4)

FROM PG 2 We are to follow our husbands in all circumstances except in turmoil Proverbs 21:9, 17:1. We are to act as a spokesperson for our husbands.

We thank all those who assisted and helped with food and other arrangements. Our next retreat will be on Saturday, September 11th. Please reserve the date. We look forward to all the ladies of our church attending.

Managing Committee Information

Our church web site is going through a thorough make over. We are planning to make our site more efficient and up to the latest standards. With this purpose, Managing Committee has appointed Mr. Jeny Koruth as the new web master. We welcome your suggestions and can be directed to Jeny at 847-675-6365 or e-mail jkoruth@gmail.com / jkoruth@yahoo.com.

Newly designed web site will be up and running very soon.--

Joson Jacob, Secretary, St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Oak Park, IL

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