



A St. Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church, Oak Park Publication

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SEPTEMBER 2010

GREGORIAN GAZETTE

September 14

Feast of the Cross



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MELODIES USA-2010

ഓസ്ട്രേലിയ, ന്യൂയോർക്ക്, സംഗീത സാഹചര്യം

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CHARACTERISTICS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY**TRINITARIAN:**

I believe in one God, the Father All mighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and **in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God**, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made. **I believe in the Holy Spirit**, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified ... " [Nicene Creed]

Look for more Characteristics of Christian Spirituality in the next issue of the Gazette!

**The Feast of the Cross**

Feast of the Cross is the commemoration of the finding of the cross of Christ by Empress Helen in the fourth century. The cross assumed special significance after its finding. The cross began to be venerated with reverence. Cross signifies Christ's presence. It established our inheritance. We have to see the reality behind the cross – the crucified Christ. During the Sacrament of Marriage, we sing that the cross is the

true sign of glory and the flag of victory and through the cross we are saved. Cross is a great positive sign. Our weakness when combined with the power of the cross becomes a great source of strength and releases great energy in the believer's minds. St Paul states that in Galatians 6:14 - May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹ Cross reflects the reality of all human beings and their lives. It gives us hope in the midst of our trials and sufferings. 2. The cross is a wonderful source of power to overcome any force of evil – our weaknesses, sickness, material desires, etc. If the cross is with us, it gives us strength and fortitude. Let us pray that the cross of Christ be the energizing factor to help us in our walk with the Lord. Let us always rejoice in the cross of our Lord.

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

- 12. Sunday — Fourth Sunday after the Ascension of St. Mary**
1 Peter 2:1-5, 1 Corinthians 3:16-23, St. Matthew 5:38-48
First day of Sunday School 8.45AM
- 14. Tuesday - Sleeba Perunnal (special service on Sunday)**
- 16. Thursday - 7.30PM Willow Brook Bible Study**
- 18. Saturday - 9AM Holy Qurbana @ Elgin**
Prayer Fellowship Ward 4
- 19. Sunday - First Sunday after the Feast of Holy Cross**
Acts 3:21- 26, I Corinthians 2:10-16, St. Mark 13
MMVS meeting & Divyabhodanam after Holy Qurbana
FOCUS Bible Study
Prayer Fellowship Ward 9
- 21. Tuesday - Divyabhodhanam @ 7PM**
- 25. Saturday - Melodies USA Program @ 6.30PM Evanston HS**
- 26. Sunday - Second Sunday after the Feast of Holy Cross**
Acts 5:17-32, I Corinthians 2:14-3:9, St. Matthew 16:5-12
Parent Teacher Conference
Leadership Training @ church
- Oct 2. Saturday -Chicago Regional Teachers Training**
- Oct 3. Sunday - Third Sunday after the Feast of Holy Cross**
Acts 7:2-5, Romans 8:1-11, St. Mark 2:23-28
Divyabodhanam
- Oct 8. Friday - Skokie Bible Study**
- Oct 9. Saturday - MMVS Retreat**
Ecumenical Youth Retreat @ Mar Thoma Church
Leadership Training @ church



“Love Christ, Hate Church”

Is Church relevant or necessary in today's modern and educated world?

A growing number of Christians think of Church as a man-invented organization that often emphasizes rigid rules and customs above the teachings of Jesus Christ. Many struggle in reconciling what they see and experience on Sundays with “their own values, theological reflection and intuition”.

To respond, one must first understand that early Christians **never differentiated between Christ and the Church**. One could never call themselves a follower of Christ without being a member of the Church. Even those who stubbornly refuse to look at ancient writings can find evidence of this unity of Christ and Church in Holy Scripture – to be a Christian meant to be part of a worshipping, liturgical community that shared a common Faith (e.g., Acts 2:42). From Ephesians 5:30 - “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”, and earlier in Ephesians 2:19-22 St. Paul teaches that we are “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” and makes the comparison to a spiritual building that “being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord”. We believe and profess regularly in the Nicene Creed that this is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Christ clearly identified Himself as One with this fellowship - in Acts 9:1-6, the resurrected Christ confronts Saul (who had been persecuting the early Church) on the road to Damascus with the words, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”. Later He emphasizes - “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”.

But, in order to understand the depth of this unity of Christ and Church, **we need to appreciate that this relationship is not in the manner of master and slave, but rather an icon of the Holy Trinity**. As H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios explained, the basis of our Christian theology is in the Holy Trinity.

Arguably, it is the misunderstanding of the Trinity that has created the confusion and questions we see today in these modern times. A possible explanation is the difficulty in accepting that, as created beings, we simply can never understand or explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity i.e., Father, Son and Holy Spirit being individual persons and yet one God.

In the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, “anyone who tries to describe the ineffable Light in language is truly a liar - not because he hates the truth, but because of the inadequacy of his description”. Although the Trinity is neither rational nor scientific, we know this is truth. As early as the Book of Genesis (verse 26) we see the Triune God i.e., “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness””. The prophet Moses was not having a senior moment, but rather had intentionally used the singular form

FROM PG 5 'God' in the same sentence as plural pronouns 'us' and 'our'.

This is the beautiful and mysterious relationship of unity that permeates throughout the Church - Christ and the Church are One, we (man and woman) are One with Christ, and we are One with the Church. As we read in Ephesians 5:32 - "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church". The word 'Sacrament' is another word for mystery, and it is the Sacramental life of the Church that transforms us to be like Him.

Therefore, instruction from the Church should not be understood in legal or ritualistic terms, but rather as guides from Christ to nurture and grow the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24) that is within us through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

As an example, fasting should not be understood as punishment or dietary restrictions. Rather, just as Christ had fasted for spiritual strength (Matthew 4:2), as His One Body we should gladly fast together to gain spiritually strength. Through the fellowship and indwelling of the One Spirit in each of us, our individual sacrifice mysteriously strengthens the whole Church and this manifests as increased prayer and charity. It is not coincidence that major Feasts such as Easter and Christmas are preceded with Lent.

And, if we take a second look we once again see the icon of the unity of the Trinity in this – although it was the Father who instructed the Son and sent forth the Holy Spirit, in no way did this diminish the One True Triune God. When the Church takes on the role of an instructor, in no way does our obedient response diminish the Trinitarian understanding that we are One Body.

Our practice of praying for the departed also stems from this understanding of One Body – as we know Christ is eternal, we therefore better understand that our unity in Him does not stop when we die. As an aside, this is why in Orthodox weddings we do not hear the couple consenting that marriage is until "death do us part" since Holy Marriage is the Sacrament that brings together man and woman as One in Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33) and death is never a separation from the Divine. Again, when we look at praying for the departed using the icon of the Holy Trinity, we see the aspect of eternal unity and therefore continue praying as if they are alive.

To summarize – "To say we love Christ, who is the Head of the Church, and at the same time reject His body is to deny the New Testament teaching" (Orthodox Study Bible , pg. 1604) .

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Q1: (submitted through Church suggestion box) Why does the Achen only give to the Holy Qurbana to the mouth rather than the Church member's hand? More people will take the Qurbana if people are given the option to take the bread as they prefer

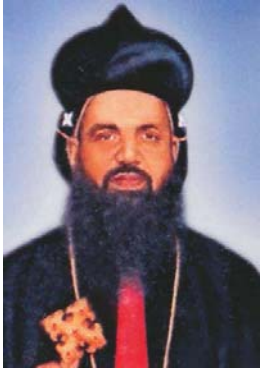
A1: The Holy Qurbana (a.k.a. Eucharist or Communion) is a Sacrament where those who are baptized in the Church eat the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. This is not symbolic, but the real Body and Blood of Christ. Isaiah's vision of heaven (Isaiah 6:1-7) is one that most closely resembles an Orthodox Liturgy, and verses 6 and 7 truly summarize the reverence that must be given i.e., "then one of the seraphim was sent to me. He had a live coal in his hand, which he took with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips. Your lawlessness is taken away and your sin is cleansed"". The practice in the West has become more casual towards this Holy Mystery, but in the East the reverence is still given and hence what we see on Sunday. After receiving the Body and Blood, we should be transformed and our very mouth that received the Mystery should then in turn only be used for the Word that is now within us. The point is not to give the Holy Qurbana to as many people as possible, but rather for as many people to transform and understand the true teaching and become One with Christ - we must change our thinking and habits to become like Him.



The new academic year of the Sunday School starts on Sunday, September 12 in the morning at 8.45

am. Registrations for new students are now going on. Please register all new students to enable us to plan for an efficient start. The kick off and cook out held on Aug 28 Sat was well attended. The neighborhood had a block party and that helped as we did not have to worry about traffic and the children could play. We thank and appreciate the graduating class (Senior class) for coordinating and organizing the program and activities and the parents for purchasing the food stuff, organizing the cooking and helping with the cleaning. It was a blessed experience for the Students, Parents and Teachers who attended.

We are scheduled to hold the first Parents Teachers Meeting on Sunday, September 26 after the Holy Qurbana. Mathew Koshy Achen, the Director of Sunday School, South West Diocese is scheduled to lead a Teachers Training and Workshop for Chicago Region on October 2, Saturday from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. Please reserve the date and time.



Youhanon Mar Athanasios Episcopa was born on the 21st of March 1928 to Varkey and Annamma of Chakkalaparambil Family in Kottayam. He attended CMS College where he worked as a lecturer in a college and resigned from there to join the Bethany Ashram. After joining, he was sent for higher studies in theology at Merphildil in England. He was ordained as priest in June of 1956 by H. G. Dr. Mathews Mar Athanasios.

Aboon Yuhanon (1965-1978) served as the superior of Bethany Asram. He was known as a great retreat father of the time. Baslios Mar Thoma I Mathews Catholicos of the East consecrated him as Youhanon Mar Athanasios at Pazhanji Church in May of 1978. Ordained with five others, he was the youngest bishop of the time. He became the assistant Metropolitan of the Kottayam Diocese.

He entered his eternal abode on October 2nd, 1980. Mar Athanasios Episcopa was laid to rest at Perunad, Bethany, as he was a member of the Ashram.

REV.FR.IDICULLA.M.CHANDY

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Please contact Achen if you would like more information.



Ward 9 Onam

On Monday, September 6th, the families of Ward 9 gathered together at the home of Peter & Lilly Varghese for their annual Onam celebration. Most of the ward members were able to come out and enjoy a time of fellowship, fun and delicious traditional Onam food. There were also friendly games of tug-of-war and musical chairs, enjoyed by both the parents and kids alike. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the lovely meal, to Peter and Lilly Varghese for opening up their home and to everyone who came out!

(see pictures to the right)

Divyabodhanam

Divyabodhanan students had our usual Sunday class on August 22nd with a surprise twist. The class celebrated Onam with full regalia for the first time for the class and (perhaps for the last time as a class as we are planning to graduate in 2011). We had all vegetarian food served on customary Banana leaves starting with parippu and ending with payasam. It was a real cooperative event both in literal and figurative meaning. All students pitched in cooking and bringing all 16 vegetables. The students, the teacher Shibu Achen and other church members served and sincerely participated and made it a great event. I thank all those who helped and participated in this Onam celebrations.

May God Bless You,

Marykutty Mathews— Coordinator



Ward 9 Onam



FROM PG 11 : 2)Thanksgiving (Eucharist) 3) Breaking of Bread 4) Remembrance and 5) Communion. Remember that the word for thanksgiving, “eucharista” became the name for the Liturgy, and the Greek word “Litourgia” meaning “work for the people” came to be the name for this sacrament. The Apostles did continue this practice and spread it throughout the early Churches. They continued in the truth that the center of Christian worship is to receive the Body and Blood of our savior.

Early Liturgy

It is apparent from early passages in the Bible that the Apostles did replicate the events of the Last Supper each time they gathered in Jesus’ name. The book of Acts and the Epistles (letters from the Apostles to the Churches) all show that they did this. The first Christians celebrated Divine Liturgy in the evenings, just as Jesus had. The services were simple, having a prayer service and an “Agape” (love) meal. The prayer service has Bible readings, narrations of Jesus’ teachings, prayers of thanks and the words Jesus told the Apostles “Take eat: this is my body. Drink of it all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant.” Everyone at each Liturgy would receive Holy Communion. It is plain from early writings that the meal was never thought to REPRESENT Christ, but was always thought of as being His actual Body and Blood. The early Church grew rapidly, and they soon began holding Liturgy in the morning and having the common meal in the evening. From the time of the Apostles to the 100’s, we don’t have a written record of exactly how Christians celebrated the Liturgy, but we do know they held it on Sunday morning and followed the 5 points of the Last Supper. Very early in this time a special prayer was added asking the Holy Spirit to bless the faithful and make the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus. Its important to remember the amount of persecution the early Christians had to go through.

MMVS monthly meeting was held on August 22nd and the discussion was on virtues of Godly women. We discussed two virtues of Godly women - 1) Godly women are loving and caring 2) they have the ability to discern. The two women we compared were Eve who talked to a fallen angle. She listened to this angle and did not question her action and Mary who talked to a godly angle and she questioned. But that was a question of discernment (Luke 1: 34). We as Godly women should have the ability to question our action with prayer and in humility. Love of a mother is unconditional. Colossians 3: 12-14 and 2 Peter: 11-15 does have further reference to certain virtues like compassion, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love.

A regional MMVS retreat was held on Saturday, September 4th at St. Mary’s Church with Dn. James Cheriyan from St. Tikhon’s Seminary as the main speaker. It was a great blessing for all who attended. Thanks to James Semassen for taking time to be with us and to the MMVS members of St. Mary’s for opening up their parish..

Kids' Corner

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy and us

Each week as Christians, the Divine Liturgy is the highlight of our lives. Does this sound silly?

Why do so many roll their eyes at the thought of attending Church Sunday morning? Perhaps we

do this by not understanding what the Liturgy is, where it came from and what it means.

The Liturgy is crucial to us because of the Sacrament of Holy Communion (Holy Eucharist). For Orthodox Christians Eucharist is absolutely necessary for salvation.

Where Divine Liturgy Comes From

For many Churches today Sunday worship is a modern celebration featuring loud music resembling a concert. Orthodox Divine Liturgy is very ancient, actually being modeled after the Last Supper.

The Last Supper had a special blessing and significant events:

Jesus blessed, gave thanks, broke bread and offered wine. He also commanded the disciples to repeat these activities. This is very different from the other suppers that the Apostles had with Him. If you look at this really hard, you'll see five things happening:

1. He blessed
2. He gave thanks
3. He broke bread and offered it with the cup
4. He commanded His Disciples to repeat what He did
5. He invited the Disciples to eat the bread as His Body, and the wine as His Blood.

These five things are the basic parts of our Divine Liturgy; 1) Blessing,

CONTD PG10

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9-03 John, Akash	9-15 Joseph, Jennifer	9-22 Mathew, Tina
9-06 Mathew, Tejus	9-15 Easo, Kailash	9-23 Panicker, Alex
9-06 Geevarghese, James	9-16 Mathew, Binta	9-26 Varghese, Renita
9-10 Isaac, Jibi	9-17 Chacko, Joel	9-27 Joseph, Nathan
9-10 Oommen, Alex	9-18 Koshy, Paul	9-29 Isaac, Jodi
9-11 Poozhikunnel, Anand	9-19 Jacob, Jisha	
9-14 Thomas, Anandu	9-22 Kurian, Prejil	
9-15 Skariah, Midhu	9-22 Varghese, Joju	



St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
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Saturday
Sept. 25, 2010
6:30 PM

GANAMELA

DANCE & MIMICS

Playback Singers

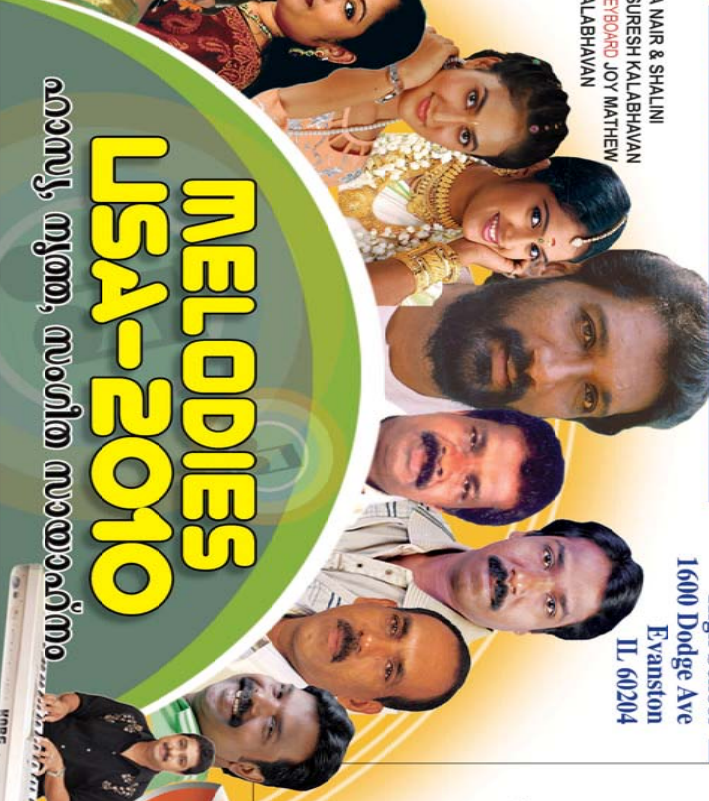
K.G. MARKOSE & MANEESHA

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High School
1600 Dodge Ave
Evanston
IL 60204

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MIMICS JAYAN KALABHAVAN, SURESH KALABHAVAN
COCHIN SOLO ORCHESTRA **KEYBOARD** JOY MATTHEW
SOUND ENGINEER VARGHESE KALABHAVAN
DIRECTOR ANTONY SOLO

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കൊച്ചൻ
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