



St. Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church, Oak Park Publication

VOLUME: X ISSUE: V

JUNE 11

GREGORIAN GAZETTE



Ascension - PG 2

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Sunday School - PG 5,10

Nuhro - PG 11

Ascension of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures teach that 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus, in miraculous fashion, physically ascended (was lifted off the ground and began floating upward) to return to the glory of His Father and sit down at his right hand. This was a visible event, witnessed by His disciples on Mt. Olivet outside of Jerusalem. Having finished the work the Father had sent Him to do, Jesus now triumphantly returns to the glory of His Father. This event, along with Christ's birth, crucifixion, and resurrection, is the one of the major events of His earthly ministry. To this day it is celebrated by many Christians 40 days after Easter

**Pentecost**

Excerpts from the article on Pentecost written by Metropolitan Dr.

Geevarghese Mar Yulios and posted at <http://>

www.neamericandiocese.org/feasts-memorials.11/pentecost.aspx

Just 50 days after the Glorious Resurrection and 10 days after the Victorious Ascension of our Lord, the Holy Spirit came upon the Holy Apostles and all those gathered there. (Acts of the Apostles: Chapter 2) We celebrate the arrival of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost, and the fulfillment of the Resurrection in the heart of man. Christ prophesied it Himself, and the fulfillment we hear in the Acts of the Apostles.

Usually, when we have a feast day, the primary reading will be from the Gospel, in terms of the content of the feast, but the event of Pentecost is described in the Acts. 'Acts of the Apostles' is the account of continuation of the history of Salvation and hence it is included in the New Testament giving next importance to the Gospel. The Ascension of our Lord, the descending of the Holy Spirit and indwelling in the Church, in the heart of each believers and the early history of the Church are described there. The book is hence also called the 'Work of the Holy Spirit.' The event of Pentecost is the link between Gospel and other part of the New Testament. It shows that the Church is the Church of Triune God; continuation of Creation, redemption in Christ and growing in Spirit.

Fr. Ninan George

Liju Paul

Liju Varghese

Elizabeth Varghese

Gladstone Mammen

George Panicker

Joe Varghese

Peter Varghese

CNTD P 4

George Varghese (Publisher)

EDITORIAL BOARD

5 . Sunday – Sunday before Pentecost

Managing Committee Meeting 1PM

Acts 21:7-9, 1 Corinthians 7:1-2,25 : 34, 9 : 1-10, St. John 17:13-26

9. Thursday to 11 Sunday–SS Nuhro Camp @ Conference Point Lake Geneva**12. Sunday – Pentecost (Fiftieth day after Easter), Sunday School Day**

Holy Qurbana

Acts 2: 1–13, Galatians 5 : 16 – 26, St. John 15: 1 – 14

Service of the First kneeling

Acts 19:1–7, I Corinthians 14: 20–25, St. John 14: 1–17

Service of the Second Kneeling

Acts 10: 34 – 48, I Corinthians 12: 12– 27, St. John 14: 25 – 31

Service of the Third Kneeling

Acts 2: 1–21, I Corinthians 14: 20– 33, St. John 16: 1 – 15

15. Wednesday – Bible Study (Willow brook)**16. Thursday – Apostle’s Fast begins****18. Saturday–19 Sunday– Youth Getaway Trip****19. Sunday – First Sunday after Pentecost**

MMVS Monthly Meeting after Holy Qurbana

Acts 17:10–15; , II Corinthians 5:4–6:10, St. John 6: 23–35

25. Saturday – MMVS Area Meeting (10 AM to 12:30 PM)**26. Sunday – Second Sunday after Pentecost**

Sunday School Centralized Exam

Senior Fellowship

Acts 4:23–31, Ephesians 2:11–22, St. Matthew 10: 5–15

29. Wednesday – H. Qurbana (St. Peter and St. Paul)

Looking Forward

July 9— Saturday

Church Picnic

July 21—23 Thursday to Saturday

Midwest Regional Family Conference

July 28–31 Thursday to Sunday

MGOCSM Leadership Camp (Baltimore)

FROM PG 2 The three phases of creation, redemption and indwelling are there from the start of the world itself. But these things revealed to humanity, as according to Christian Faith, in three definite phases, the Work of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the liturgical year of the Church, which is a depiction of the history of Salvation, these phases could be traced as follows: The start of first season begins with Sanctification of Church (Koothos Etho), the Redemption through the Incarnation of Christ- the second to fourth seasons- and the Indwelling of the Holy and Living Spirit- starts from the fifth season. This third and final phase starts on the day of the Feast of Pentecost. This could be the reason why the Fathers of the Church decided to use this wonderful occasion to demonstrate the Holy Trinity. To show and explain it so clearly and to become part of it they, filled with the Spirit of our Lord, designed it in three services of absolute meditation on the Holy Trinity. The history of Salvation is well presented in this canonical liturgy referring to each historical, prophetic and evangelistic writings from the Word of God; with high theological explanations, philosophical reasoning and contemplative meditation. One could see a finite expression of Eastern Orthodox liturgical worship on the Feast of Pentecost.

Sprinkling of water is considered in the Church as a symbolic expression of receiving the power of Holy Spirit. Christ said, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink," and He said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The Holy Spirit is available to us, if we thirst. Thirst for righteousness, thirst for Christ. Then, out of your belly truly shall flow rivers of living water. Think of the image, of what this means. Continual activity, continual purity because water purifies, especially flowing water. It scours the ground, and cleans, takes waste away, continually flowing and purifying and cleansing. This is what happens in the heart of man, but only if we thirst. We must thirst for that good water, the water that Christ also spoke of with the woman at the well. If you thirst, then indeed, you will have living water.

"As many as we have been baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ." This putting on is our action, our desire, our continual living in Christ. May it be that we would truly live as Christians. The Spirit makes it possible. It is all there for us. Abundant grace is present, and abundant grace is continually shed upon us. And we would have all of this grace if we thirsted.

CONTD PG 6

MMVS

Monthly meeting June 19th

Bible Study at Church June 25th 10am to 12.30pm.

Talent Competition was held on May 22nd . It was a blessed event with Young and Old singing praises to God.

Thank you all who participated in it and Congratulations to the Winners..

MMVS Talent Competition Results

Malayalam Solo Song: Group 1 (Age 40 and below)

1st- Reena Cherian

2nd- Eliza Verghese

Malayalam Solo Song: Group 2 (Age 41 and above)

1st- Shirley Panicker

2nd- Daisy Paulose

English Solo Song: Group 1 (Age 40 and above)

1st- Reena Cherian

2nd- Eliza Verghese

English Solo Song: Group 2 (Age 41 and above)

1st- Miriam Panicker

2nd- Shirley Panicker

Malayalam Elocution:

1st- Shirley Panicker and Susamma Kuriakose

2nd- Jainamma Alexander

English Elocution:

1st- Sheeba Eettickel

Group Song:

1st- Reena Cherian, Sheeja Thomas, Blessy Jose,

Elizabeth Alexander, and Reena Mathai

2nd- Eliza Verghese, Lisha Johnny, and Shinu Punoose

Quiz:

1st- Betty Gladstone

2nd- Susamma Kuriakose

Sunday School : At the Teachers Meeting held on May 07, the Bible study was on the topic "Our spiritual growth as Teachers" based on Luke 24: 13-35 (The walk to Emmaus) and was led by Liju Varghese.

This passage shows how Christ reveals Himself to the disciples and us through the breaking of the bread. Christ also reveals Himself to us through the scriptures. It is the same thing either before, 2000 years earlier or today. Witness comes only after experiencing. We as Teachers are witnessing Christ to the students and parents. Only when we know Christ, we can witness. We need to develop that experience – strive for our spiritual growth through preparation and daily prayer life. We have to know the Word and have Holy Communion. How do we experience Christ? - 1) St. John 4: 1-42 details the interaction of Jesus with the Samaritan Women at Jacobs well. The Samaritan woman believes and the whole village follows 2) St. Thomas touching and experiencing the Resurrected Christ (St. John 20: 24-29). Students see Christ thru their Teacher. In the first instance, students believe through us. Ultimately, they believe directly. Our endeavor should be to enable them to develop a relationship to Christ. TO PG10

FROM PG 4 When he sent His Holy Spirit upon mankind it was so that the things of Christ would be revealed to those who would be willing to listen, and they would become completely alive. Everything would be cleaned. The flood of the Holy Spirit comes only if we desire it. If, of our will, we desire to follow the things of God, then indeed the torrent of water will come. The torrent will flow and never end. Anything that is ungodly, that is in our way of the keeping of the commandments will be pushed away, removed and the living water will flow eternally out of our belly, out of every part of us.

Now, the Holy Spirit is also fire. Not just water, but also fire; now these are two things that in Nature do not exist together – one destroys the other. But according to God, these things can coexist. Fire burns away that which is trash, that which is unclean. Fire purifies. Fire softens. Fire warms. And we need the fire of the Holy Spirit to burn away impurity in our soul, and we need the warmth of the Holy Spirit to encourage us. He is called Comforter – He comforts with fire; He comforts by warming our hearts, by giving us that sure and certain hope that indeed we can be changed. And He is water, eternally giving us life, refreshment, invigorating us; a spring that never, ever ends. A drought will never come upon he who has the Spirit; fire and water in the soul of a Christian, each doing their part, each from the same Spirit.

The Holy Spirit abides in a Christian. Until the promise was given, the Holy Spirit did not live in men; all the things that were accomplished was by the Spirit outside. Even the prophets who spoke by the Spirit: the Spirit did not live in them. He inspired them, and they were still unable to accomplish perfection. But now the Comforter is given to us, and we can become perfected. Anything that is impure, anything that is temporal can all be changed, can become perfected, can become clean, and can become light, life. Today, when we celebrate the fulfillment of the Resurrection in man, the Lord has given us everything now we need.

He lived on the earth and showed us the way of life that is perfect; the way of life that leads to eternal life, to true happiness, no other kind of happiness is possible. Only by following the will of God, can we truly be happy. He showed us this. He showed us the way to live, of having priorities, to follow His commandments.

But even this is not enough. How many people live in the Resurrection? We still see sin, suffering, unbelief, sadness in the world. The Resurrection is for all men, but not all men are able to apprehend it, to clasp it to

their bosom. We need a Comforter, a Guide, and a Helper; that is the Holy Spirit. He is given so that we can live in the Resurrection; so we can apply the lessons the Lord has given us – and continues to give us on a moment by moment basis – of how to live, how to think, how to be, how to feel. All these lessons can be applied because the Comforter tells us in groaning that cannot be uttered. Most of what the Holy Spirit does for us we do not see, or feel, or even know, but he does enlighten, He does change, He does make us alive. May God bless us with His Holy Spirit so that we may be purified and cleansed and thus live a life without corruption. .

Valiya Thirumeni—Mathews Mar Barnabas

Fr. Paulose T. Peter, St. Mary's Church, White Plains, New York

Wednesday, May 25, 2011—The day dawned on Muttontown, New York, like any other day but the mood at the 'Aramana' of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in Muttontown was quite different. Despite the fact that it was a pleasant and sunny day, the mood was somber, gloomy, depressing and even melancholic. Many faithful have been streaming into the 'Aramana' all day. The simple reason: Valya Thirumeni is leaving for good. By the end of the day, he would head for JFK airport and many wanted to be physically present when that happens. One could see people forming small groups in the kitchen, in the living room, in the hallway, in the veranda, in the driveway and on the lawn talking about their favorite shepherd who has been a lamp and light to them in many ways over the years. There was no laughter anywhere but the feeling of pain and sadness was very much in the air. It was sad, sad indeed. The suitcases were already packed. Packing for him was easy for the Semmassens because a simple soul like him hardly had any personal possessions to take with him. He is in stark contrast to anyone else who would leave America for good with anything and everything ranging from cereals to dish washing liquid. The countdown to May 25th had begun about a month or so ago. "How many more days left?", he would ask daily. Even his participation in the Enthronement Service of his successor, HG Zachariah Mor Nicholovos, was cancelled just to ensure that he will be fit to travel. Finally, that moment of departure came at 8:45 pm. When he slowly emerged from his room assisted by two Semmassens on either side, he was leaving an 'Aramana' he had worked so hard to make it a reality. Yet, when he left that building never to return to it again, he did not cry but others certainly did. When he was about to enter the vehicle

in which Kochu Thirumeni would drive him to the airport, the faithful gathered around him like bees in a beehive to kiss his hand because everyone wanted to be blessed. Tears rolled down the cheeks of many at that parting moment, some choked with stuffy nose and some pretended in vain to hide their emotions. The emotion that swept the entire crowd said it loud and clear what Thirumeni was to the people of the diocese that he held so dear. Thirumeni was escorted in a long motorcade, reaching the airport at 9:40 pm.

Thirumeni had a deep sense of accomplishment and he firmly believed that he did achieve what he was set out to do. He was the good shepherd who led the Malankara Orthodox diocese in North America and turned it from rags to riches in a span of nineteen years. The smallest in stature among all the Metropolitans, His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas, lovingly nicknamed Valya Thirumeni, proved correct the age-old saying that 'best things come in small packages'. If it was Makkarios Thirumeni of blessed memory that sowed the seed of the Malankara Orthodox Church in North America, it was Barnabas Thirumeni who with his tender loving care weeded it out, watered and nurtured it. No doubt, he was indeed the driving force behind the building of an 'Aramana' for the Malankara Orthodox Church in America on a prime property of 2.81 acres of land in Muttontown, Long Island. Though his spirit remained young and high his fragile frame that encapsulated humility, simplicity, love, care and compassion for others, was getting weaker by the day.

He had a vision for our church in America and to achieve that goal he left no avenues unpursued and no stones unturned. Needless to say, he made the Malankara Orthodox church a big presence in this part of the world. The saga of his life and the legacy he leaves behind has made indelible marks on every aspect of our church life. During the tenure of his pastoral work, there was a proliferation of parishes and priests across the USA and Canada – about 98 parishes and more than a hundred priests in all. We are proud to say that more youngsters born and brought up in our church in this country have embraced priesthood than all other denominations together. He has proven dead wrong all those who, nineteen years ago,

put together. He has proven dead wrong all those who, nineteen years ago, may have laughed at the prospect of this old-fashioned Thirumeni accomplishing anything worthwhile for our church in this ultra modern city of New York that is often dubbed as the 'world's capital'. True, he had many hurdles to overcome but the secret of his success can be summed up in the words of David to the six footer Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty..." . A life of prayer, humility and simplicity - these were the powerful and formidable tools that aided him in accomplishing the goals. In all honesty and humility, I must bluntly admit that Thirumeni could have never impressed anyone either by the way he looked or by the way he dressed or even by the way he spoke. But, his life spoke volumes to anyone who crossed his path. Like the saying, "all roads lead to Rome", all his sermons led to one theme, love. In his sermons, he constantly hammered the theme of 'loving and growing to perfection'. He practiced what he preached and preached what he practiced. His saintly attributes earned for himself a huge commanding power that nobody could challenge any time at any place. His comments sometimes were publicly embarrassing but even so, all have learned to accept them without taking any offense because we knew fully well that keeping grudge against anyone was alien to his nature. He was a man of principles and convictions. He could not be swayed either by popular opinion or by affluence. To those whom he trusted, he gave his one hundred percent. Yes, on the one hand he was simple and unassuming but on the other, he was tough and will not let anyone mess with him in any way. He was not only a beautiful blend of simplicity, humility, love, care, and compassion but also toughness and convictions - all rolled into one.

Knowing his medical condition, Thirumeni was requested time and time again to travel in a higher class whenever he travelled to India to attend the Holy Synod or for any other reason. He refused and even got angry at those who approached him with such proposals. He was content and happy to travel in the lowest class in an air plane. But this one time and one time only, he agreed to travel first class on a one way trip across the Atlantic to Kerala. While waiting to board the plane in the first class lounge of Qatar Airways, I asked him whether there was anything at all he would miss upon leaving New York. His reply was instant. He said, "I will not miss anything. There are nice cars, beautiful buildings and all the luxuries one can dream of are here. But leaving New York will only be a gain for me". My curiosity roused, I asked him what that TO PG 12



ECUMENICAL CLERGY MEETING, MAR CH 8

We should also facilitate parents to understand and experience Christ. The major difficulty in understanding scripture is the right interpretation. We should develop the habit of reading the scripture at a young age, consistently and in a committed manner. Obedience and discipline are necessary. We should interpret questions through a life of participation in the sacraments, thus developing a life in the Church. Our liturgy and sacraments are saturated with references and quotations from the Bible. In the Holy Qurbana, first we have the Word and then the sacrament – Body and Blood. First the students believe what we say but ultimately they should come to believe on their own. Our plan should be to care for people who come regularly and are consistent. We should utilize our resources on the people who care and are concerned. May God bless us as we try to experience and witness Christ to our children and parents.

This academic year ends on June 5 with the holding of the Finals. Centralized exams are being conducted in grades 5, 8 and 10. Review classes will be held on Sundays June 19 and 26. The centralized exams along with the Teachers exams will be held on June 26 Sunday at 12.30 pm. The charity drive goal is \$1500 (500 to educate boy and girl and balance \$1000 to be used for funding the college education of students from our parish.) Susan George coordinated a bake sale with 8th grade students and their parents in May raising about \$1000. The 9th grade students under the leadership of their Teachers, Joe Varghese and Alex Oommen organized and conducted a one day conference on May 30 Monday. Besides our Saju Semmassan, Rev Fr. Fouad Saba of the Antiochian Orthodox Church led the main sessions. The theme of the conference was **Humility** taken from Mathew 18:4. We congratulate the 9th grade class and the Teachers for putting together such a good conference. It was a blessing for the over 50 children from grades 3 through Senior along with the post graduates who led, organized and participated.

We appreciate all the hard work, dedicated efforts and sincere cooperation of the students, Teachers and parents in working with their children in the Sunday school ministry, encouraging and teaching them. May God bless

K-DS-YOLOL i d s K o r n e r

NUHRO: Nuh'ro 2011 is finally here! Our annual 4 day

residential camp for children from Second through Eighth Grades is being organized from June 9 Thu to Sun June 12 at Conference Point, near Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. This year, we are blessed to have Dn. Saju Varghese and Seminarian Ceena Varghese as our main speakers actively assisted by Arun Varghese. The theme is **Minds Under Construction**, which follows up on the church theme, Developing the Mind of Christ. Philippians 2: 5 "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus"... This theme also fits well with the theme of the prior years. Year 1: Made in His image, Year 2 Be imitators of God, Year 3: Walk in His Love, Year 4: Chosen to bear fruit, Year 5: Taste and see

that the Lord is Good. First year we set the theological basis as image, likeness; second year went with imitating Christ as the means of achieving that likeness; third year, we went with the actual walk; the fourth year we went with the fruit of that walk and our expectation; 5th year we went more liturgical and mystical with a fellowship/Qurbana theme...

So, setting the development of the mind of Christ as a goal and thus providing them some building blocks to achieve that goal is the intention. The idea is to prepare the campers to respond to the stresses, pressures, and challenges of the world (even at these young ages) and enable them to develop the perspective to deal with it in a healthy manner. The entire team of NUHRO; Achens, Leaders, Counselors and Staff would be making an attempt to instill in the campers the principles and the perspective necessary to be self-sufficient to a certain degree. An aspect of this that would be particularly important to come out is the ethical -interpersonal dimension, which is vital for their successful growth. We understand that our children are a part and parcel of this sensitive land and the age in which we live. The other aspect that we plan to develop is the role of prayer, and in particular liturgical prayer for developing a clear vision and understanding of God and how to live fruitful Christian lives. Helping the campers further form their minds, consciousnesses and give them a goal that is a little more tangible and applicable is good. This may be a very practical scenario-oriented type of NUHRO in which we see all the many ways that developing the mind of Christ changes our lives. It is very biblical, liturgical, and practical.

The camp will encompass Life of the Church, Bible study, Theatre and Arts & Crafts. Besides numerous games, we have special surprises planned for all the students who attend! We humbly ask that you continue to keep this camp in your prayers. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Varghese, Basali Mathew, Ashwin Jacob, Reena Thomas or Cyatharine Alias. All of us are excited and look forward to our Sixth NUHRO.

gain would be. Without any hesitation he replied, " I will spend the rest of my life at a place where I can see the faces of the sick and the suffering and they can see me also. That is a net gain". These are his own words and I will not dare cook up something like that because Thirumeni is still around if anyone wants to crosscheck. A small person with a big heart, the fact that he takes pleasure in wiping the tears of the sick and the suffering is not secret. People like him are endangered species in this century.

Thirumeni has left a feeling of emptiness in our lives. He was such a visionary that wanted leave his dear diocese into the hands he has full confidence with. He had definite ideas as to who should succeed him to lead the North East American Diocese and he never kept his intentions under a shroud. He wished to pass the baton to his trusted Assistant for the past eight years and he made that wish known to those in higher echelon of our church verbally and in writing. Both Valya Thirumeni and Kochu Thirumeni should be credited for their strongly bonded relationship. While Valya Thirumeni has built a strong foundation for the diocese, he has also left big shoes for Kochu Thirumeni to fill. At the banquet arranged to honour him, he had this to say about Kochu Thirumeni in front of an audience comprised of high level dignitaries from other denominations and close to seven hundred people in attendance. "He (Kochu Thirumeni) is sincere and dedicated. The same love you have shown to me, you must give to him also". The confidence he had in his successor was unshakable and blatantly echoed in those words.

Valya Thirumeni is now on a well deserved retirement. He meant many things to many of us. We, the faithful of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in the United States and Canada, take our hats off to salute him. He has accomplished in just nineteen years what many would not have accomplished in a lifetime. We wish him a very peaceful retired life. He likes to be in the company of the sick and the suffering. God has granted him that wish, preparing for him a place at the Kolenchery Medical Mission Hospital where he will have the company of plenty of sick faces. Just seconds before he boarded the Qatar Airways flight that will take him on a one way trip to Kerala, he lifted his hand and waved (photo attached), giving us his unspoken but clearest parting message, "Peace be with you".

Goodbye, good shepherd. The legacy you leave behind in this diocese will live on

**Published By Rev. Dr. M. K. Thomas Library,
St. Gregorios Orthodox Church,
1125 N. Humphrey Ave, Oak Park, IL 60302
Tel: (708) 848.4120 Web: www.1church.org
For Private Circulation Only**