



A St. Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church, Oak Park Publication

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11

GREGORIAN GAZETTE



The Feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle

“My Lord and My God”

~ St. John 20:28

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Dear Brothers and Sisters - greetings in the name of Lord Jesus.

Wish you all a blessed feast day of our Patron saint., St. Thomas .

There are people who question the relevance of celebrating the feast of St. Thomas on July 3rd. For the Persian Church it might have been a celebration of the reception of the relics of St. Thomas from India and dedication of it there. However the Indian church need not lose any opportunity to remember the apostle who was instrumental in laying the foundation of our Church. On July 3rd we can proclaim that in spite of any strong mortal remains of the Apostle in India, we cherish a powerful memory of St. Thomas tradition in our Church. May his prayers be a fortress for us all.



St Thomas the Apostle

The Apostle Thomas was born in the Galileian city of Pansada and was a fisherman. Hearing the good tidings of Jesus Christ, he left all and followed after him.

According to Holy Scripture, the holy Apostle Thomas did not believe the reports of the other disciples about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). On the eighth day after the Resurrection, the Lord appeared to the Apostle Thomas and showed him His wounds. "My Lord and my God," the Apostle cried out (John 20:28). "Thomas, being

once weaker in faith than the other apostles," says St John Chrysostom, "toiled through the grace of God more bravely, more zealously and tirelessly than them all, so that he went preaching over nearly all the earth, not fearing to proclaim the Word of God to savage nations." Some icons depicting this event are inscribed "The Doubting Thomas." This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, "The Touching of Thomas." In Slavonic, it says, "The Belief of Thomas." When St Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts. According to Church Tradition, the holy Apostle Thomas founded Christian churches in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Ethiopia and India. Church Tradition also indicates that Apostle Thomas baptized the Magi. Preaching the Gospel earned him a martyr's death. For having converted the wife and son of the prefect of the Indian city of Meliapur, the holy apostle was locked up in prison, suffered torture, and finally, pierced with five spears, he departed to the Lord. Part of the relics of the holy Apostle Thomas are in India, in Hungary and on Mt. Athos. Source: http://orthodoxwiki.org/Apostle_Thomas

Fr. Ninan George

Liju Paul

Liju Varghese

Elizabeth Varghese

Gladstone Mammen

George Panicker

Joe Varghese

Peter Varghese

George Varghese (Publisher)

EDITORIAL BOARD

3. Sunday – Feast of St. Thomas

Managing Committee Meeting 1PM

Acts 13:26–39, Galatians 6:10–18, St. John 6:35–46

6. Wednesday – Willowbrook Bible Study 7.30PM**9. Saturday – Church Picnic @ John's Park, Glenview 10AM–3PM**

Ward 2 Prayer Meeting 6.30PM

10. Sunday – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Acts 6:1–7, 1 Corinthians 16:14–22, St. Luke 10:1–6

14. Thursday–15. Friday – Regional OVBS @ St. Mary's, Oak Lawn:

9.30AM–5PM on Thursday & 9.30AM–7.30PM on Saturday

16. Saturday – FOCUS Bible Study**17. Sunday – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

MMVS Monthly Meeting after Holy Qurbana

Acts 9:10–18, 2 Corinthians 5:14–20, St. Luke 9:10–17

20. Wednesday–23. Saturday – Midwest Regional Family Conference**24. Sunday – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**

Senior Fellowship 12.45PM

Acts 1:15–20, 1 Corinthians 8:1–6, St. Matthew 15:32–39

28. Thursday–31. Saturday – MGOCSM Leadership Camp (Baltimore, MD)**31. Sunday – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**

Half-yearly General Body meeting after Holy Qurbana

Acts 4:32–37, Ephesians 2:11–22, St. Mark 3:20–30

Planning Ahead

August 4-7 - MGOCSM Summer Conference

August 15 - Dormition of the Theotokos

August 20 - KFC

August 27 - Sunday School Cookout

Divyabhodanam - The class of 2011 of the Divyabhodhanam - Proficiency in Orthodox Christian Education (POCE) convocation ceremony was held on Saturday, July 2 at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Oak Park. HG Dr Geevarghese Mor Yulios was the keynote speaker and guest and gave the commencement message. We were also blessed with the presence of Rev Dr Jacob Thekeparambil (well known Syriac scholar) of SIRI, Kottayam. 21 students graduated. The class that started in 2005 completed the 10 books in around 300 sessions spread through the six years of study. We congratulate all the graduates for their dedication and hard work. Photograph and further details will follow in the next issue.

Orthodox Saints commemorated in July

St. Kuriakose and St. Yulitti - July 15

Mor Kuriakose Sahada (also called Sahado; meaning 'martyr') is an infant martyr of unmatched glory. He received martyrdom at the tender age of three, along with his devout mother Yulithy, in the year 303 AD. The mother and son were said to have fallen into the hands of the persecutors of Seleucia. Yulithy refused to answer their questions or deny her faith at her trial before the Governor of Seleucia. Enraged at her defiance, the Governor began questioning the child. A prefect tried to save the child, but the child answered all their promises and threats alike, saying "I am a Christian". He did so until in a rage, the Governor dashed the little child's head on the steps of the tribunal, killing the child instantly. His mother, in her tortures leading to crucifixion, thanked Heaven for her child's glorious martyrdom.



Holy Glorious Prophet Elias (Elijah) (9th c. BC) - July 20

Read his marvelous story in the Holy Scriptures, 1 and 2 Kings. At his birth, his father Sabah saw angels of God surrounding the Prophet, clothing him in fire and feeding him flames. At the end of his years on earth, he was carried bodily to heaven by a flaming chariot; with Enoch (Gen. 5:24) he is one of the two ever to be taken bodily to heaven without first dying and being raised. He and Moses appeared standing with Christ at the Transfiguration

on Mt Tabor. His name means 'The Lord is God'.

CONTD PG 8

WOW - WOW Ministry held our last meeting on June 25th at Susan George's residence in Arlington Heights. This month, we had the pleasure of Dn. Saju Varghese's company as we took a break from our usual Bible study and hosted a game night instead. As the night went on, we had a long and intense game of Taboo, as well as some delicious food and a lovely time together. Next month, we will resume our study of Scripture. Look out for updates about the time and location and encourage your WOW sisters to partake in this experience as well!



MGOCSM - Want somewhere to go this summer? Somewhere to relax and be free of this world? Look no further than this year's MGOCSM Summer Conference!! This will give you the opportunity to put the missing pieces to your spiritual life back together. The hardships we face in life may have caused us to be lost or broken. But now is

the time to let God find you and get RESTORED!!!

Join us and get blessed with the presence of this year's speaker, Fr. Stephen Powley. Fr. Powley is a retired chaplain of ADX Maximum Security Prison and a parish priest. He has been a prison Chaplain since January 1985 and has served in every security



level from minimum to maximum. He is a priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese and serves the Orthodox Churches of Southern Colorado as needed. God has blessed us with an amazing resource and it is up to us to make the best of it. As always, there will be lots of FUN fellowships with your brothers and sisters in Christ that you haven't seen in awhile! So what are you waiting for? SIGN UP NOW!!!! Contact your church representatives - Roshen Samuel, Reena Thomas and Basali Mathew - and submit your forms and money ASAP! Please continue to pray for the speaker, participants and all leaders—that it may be an immense blessing for everyone!

Midwest Regional Conference - The first ever Midwest Regional Conference is right around the corner! The conference will be held at the Shipshewana Town Center in Shipshewana, IN. The speakers for the conference will be His Grace Yuhannon Mar Diascoros, Metropolitan of the Diocese of Chennai, as well as Fr. Aju Mathews from New Jersey and Mr. Tenny Thomas from New York. This will be the first time that the parishes of the Midwest Region will be coming together and promises to be a great blessing. Please contact your parish representatives if you're interested in coming or donating!

Ecumenical Family Night - George Panicker

There was a huge crowd for this year's Ecumenical Family Night. The donations collected from this event are distributed to one member church through a lotto system to build a home for a homeless family in Kerala. \$3000 will be given in 3 installments for the construction of the home. The recipient for this year was St. Mary's Knanaya Catholic Church and the previous year it was St. Mark C.S.I Church, Park Ridge. George Panicker, Reena Cherian and Kripa Poozhikunnel sang classical and a group song representing our church for the family night.

The event was very blessed and an entertaining evening with food and fun.



FOCUS - On Saturday, June 25th, FOCUS had a Bible Study led by Dn. Saju Varghese. They began their new study of the book of Philippians, looking at themes and verses that St. Paul wrote with such conviction. The next Bible study is scheduled to be held on Saturday, July 16th. Please contact Jim Panicker for more information.

MMVS - This month's meeting will be held on Sunday, July 17th after the Holy Qurbana. The MOMs area talent competition will be on that same Sunday, July 17th, at 3PM at St. Thomas Church (3735 N. Narangansett Avenue, Chicago). Please contact Beena Poozhikunnel for any additional information. On behalf of the Gregorian Gazette, good luck to all participants in the talent show from Oak Park Church!! :

Church Picnic 2011

Saturday, July 9th from 10AM to 4PM

John's Park

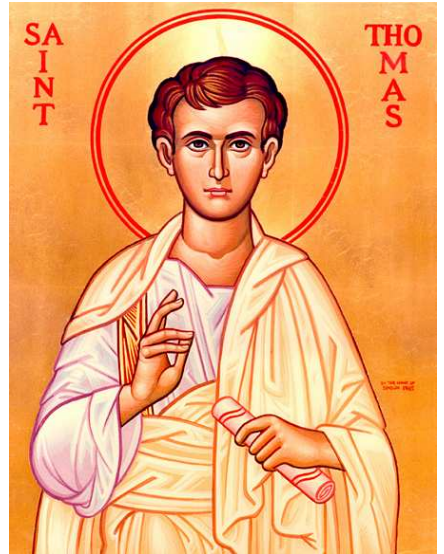
2101 Central Road, Glenview IL



Kids' Corner

St. Thomas Trivia

1. St Thomas the Apostle has also been referred to as _____ Thomas.
2. St Thomas came to India in which year?
3. Where can St Thomas' relics be found?
4. What is the declaration that St Thomas made after seeing the Resurrected Lord?
5. According to the article on page two, St Thomas founded churches in five countries. Name the five countries.
6. In which song of the Kukkliion do we often remember St Thomas and ask for his prayers?



Please submit all answers on a separate sheet. Good luck!

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Jaden George | 26. Ria Varghese |
| 4. Isabel Thomas | 30. Gilbert Mammen |
| 13. Priya John | 30. Allen Tharaken |
| 20. Leah George | |
| 23. Ashwin Jacob | |
| 23. Sherene Kurian | |
| 24. Shane Jacob | |
| 25. Elizabeth Varghese | |

Happy Birthday
To You!



St. Simeon the Stylite - July 27th

The Monk Simeon the Stylite was born in the Cappadocian village of Sisan in the Christian family of Susotian and Martha. At 13 years of age he began to tend his father's flock of sheep. To this his first obedience he concerned himself attentively and with love. One time, having heard in church the Gospel commands of the Beatitudes, he was struck by their profundity. Not trusting to his own immature judgment, he turned therefore with his questions to an experienced elder. The elder readily explained to the lad the meaning of what he had heard and it

strengthened in him finally the resolve to follow the Gospel path. Instead of heading homewards, Simeon set off to the nearest monastery and, after tears of entreaty, he was accepted after a week into the number of the brethren. When Simeon became age 18, he took monastic vows and devoted himself to feats of the strictest abstinence and of unceasing prayer. His zealotness -- beyond strength for the other monastic brethren -- so alarmed the hegumen (abbot) that he suggested to the monk that he either moderate his ascetic deeds or leave the monastery. The Monk Simeon thereupon withdrew from the monastery and settled himself by day upon a very high column, where he was able to carry out his austere vows unhindered. After some time, Angels appeared in a dream vision to the hegumen, which commanded him to bring back Simeon to the monastery. The monk however did not long remain at the monastery. After a short while he settled into a stony cave, situated not far from the village of Galanissa, and he dwelt there for three years, all the while perfecting himself in monastic feats. One time, he decided to spent the entire Forty-day Great Lent without food and drink. With the help of God, the monk endured this strict fast. From that time he always completely refrained during the entire period of the Great Lent even from bread and water -- twenty days he prayed while standing, and twenty days while sitting -- so as not to permit the corporeal powers to relax. A whole crowd of people began to throng to the place of his efforts, wanting to receive healing from sickness and to hear a word of Christian edification. Shunning worldly glory and striving again to find his lost solitude, the monk chose a yet unknown mode of asceticism. He went up a pillar 4 meters in height and settled upon it in a little cell, devoting himself to intense prayer and fasting. Reports about the Monk Simeon reached the highest church hierarchy and the imperial court. The Antioch Patriarch Domninos II ((441-448) visited the monk, made Divine Liturgy on the pillar and communed the ascetic with the Holy Mysteries. Fathers pursuing asceticism in the wilderness all heard about the Monk Simeon, who had chosen such a difficult form of ascetic striving. Wanting to test the new ascetic and determine whether his extreme ascetic feats were pleasing to God, they dispatched messengers to him, who in the name of these desert fathers were to bid the Monk Simeon to come down from the pillar. In the case of disobedience they were to forcibly drag him to the ground. But if he offered obedience, they were entrusted in the name of the desert fathers to bless his continued ascetic deeds. The monk displayed complete obedience and deep Christian humility.

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Tel: (708) 848.4120 Web: www.1church.org**