



A St. Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church, Oak Park Publication

VOLUME:X

ISSUE: XI

DECEMBER 2011

GREGORIAN GAZETTE



*The Gazette Team wishes its readers a blessed
Christmas and prosperous new year...*

May God bless you!

2012 Church Office Bearers - PG 2

News & Notes - PG 9

Calendar - PG 3

MMVS Office Bearers - PG 10

HG Job Mar Philoxenos 4-7

Kids' Korner - PG 11

Sunday School - PG 8

Photo Gallery - PG 12

President/ Vicar:	Rev. Fr. Ninan V. George
Treasurer:	Mr. Gladstone Mammen
Secretary:	Mr. Justin Joy

Committee Members

Ward-1: Chicago, Homewood, Michigan, Oak Park, Palos Heights, Indiana	Mrs. Betty Gladstone
Ward-2: Skokie East	Mr. Abraham Mathew
Ward-3: Glenview, Morton Gove, Niles, Skokie West	Mr. .Rajan Panicker
Ward-4: Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Carpentersville, Elgin, Hoffman Estates, Lake Zurich, Streamwood, Schaumburg	Mr. Antony Varghese
Ward-5: Des Plaines, Mount Prospect	Mr. Joy Mathai
Ward-6: Addison, Bloomingdale, Carol Stream, Elmhurst, Villa Park	Mr. Chacko Abraham
Ward-7: Aurora, Naperville, Plainfield, Warrenville, Wheaton, Sterling	Mr. Abraham Panicker
Ward-8: Bolingbrook, Darien, Downers Grove, Hinsdale, Lisle, Westmont, Willow Brook, Woodridge	Mr. Issac Mathew
Ward-9: Green Oaks, Gurnee, Lake Villa, Wadsworth, Waukegan, Wisconsin	Mr. George Varghese
Youth Member-1:	Mr. Alex Oommen
Youth Member-2:	Mr. Melvin Thomas
Ex-Officio:	Mr. T. Y. Thankachan
Auditor :	Mr. Peter Varghese
Representatives for Malankara Syrian Christian Association	
1. Mr. Vazhayil Thomas 2. Mr. Chacko Abraham	
Representatives for South-West diocese Assembly	
1. Mr. George Panicker 2. Mr. K..P. Yohannan	

CONTD PG 3

Fr. Ninan George
Liju Paul
Liju Varghese
Elizabeth Varghese

Gladstone Mammen
George Panicker
Joe Varghese
Peter Varghese

George Varghese (Publisher)

EDITORIAL BOARD

11. Sunday - Annunciation to St. Joseph*1 Peter 2:11-17, Galatians 1:11-24, St. Matthew 1:18-25***18. Sunday - Sunday before Christmas***Acts 3:16-26, Romans 4:13-25, St. Luke 3:23-38***24. Saturday - Annual Family Night****25. Sunday - Feast of Nativity***1 John 1:1-10, Galatians 3:23-4:7, St. Matthew 2:1-12***PLANNING AHEAD**

1 January Sunday- New Years Divine Liturgy

6. January Friday - Danaha (Theophany)

30. January Monday - Three day lent starts

20. February Monday- Great Lent starts

FROM PG 2

Prayer meeting coordinator: Mrs. Thankamma Pothen

Vision Committee members (Newly elected)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Jijo Varghese | 2. Mr. Chandy Thomas |
| 3. Mr Mohan Panicker | 4. Peter Varghese |
| 5. Mr Babukutty Pothen | 6. Mr. Melvin Thomas (youth member) |

Houston: The Diocese of South West America announces the formation of a new merit scholarship for talented High school students from the diocese. The Scholarship will be known as Mar Barnabas Educational Scholarship. His Grace Mathew Mar Barnabas was the former metropolitan of the American diocese and the Diocesan council decided to keep the name of the former Metropolitan for the educational Scholarship to honor his dedication and services to the diocese.

The award amount will be \$1000 dollars and will be given to the highest scoring student from each of the five regions of the diocese. Only Students who passed 10th grade Sunday School are eligible to apply. Diocesan Metropolitan His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius inaugurated the Scholarship fund by receiving the first donation from council member Rev. Fr. Dr. Joy Pyngolil during the small function held at the diocesan center.

A Christmas Message—Late HG Job Mar Philoxenos

The celebration of the birth of Christ is observed the world over with fervor and gaiety, marked by giving gifts, sharing food and singing Carols. The merry celebration often buries deep the real message of Christmas. Many are under the impression that the drunken revelry and all those things associated with are all that make what Christmas is. Christmas is Christ's Mass i.e. Christ's sacrifice.

The birth of Christ has nothing to do with the pomp and show of the present day Xmas celebrations. Christmas brings to our mind the supreme sacrifice of God, an action on the part of God to liberate Man from the clutches of sin, to give him freedom, to restore the peace and happiness mankind lost when it alienated itself from God. God created Adam and Eve for

being in communion with God. But when they committed sin, they got separated from God. God became sad. God, as we know, is both just and love. Theologically speaking, there was strife of attributes in God between the God who wanted to punish the man on the one side and the God who wanted to love the man on the other side. Both the attributes were at war in Him. This strife was settled by the decision of God to send His only begotten son to crucifixion. The reward of sin is death. God's Son accepts death for the sake of the entire humanity. God here exhibits His love by sending His son to save the Humanity. Both Justice and love of God are found expression on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus Christ, the Son of God thus emptied Himself and

become a Man in order that He may make man divine. This made the Man to be restored to peace, happiness and the eternal bliss. It is these series of events which are to be remembered on Christmas. For Jesus Christ, the birth in the Manger and the life in the Earth and the death on the Cross were painful, though he enjoyed everything as He was fulfilling the will of His Holy Father.

So Christmas brought back man his freedom. There is thus reason for the people to be happy; for they are liberated from the slavery of sin. But, remember this freedom has been brought to us through His sacrifice. Without remembering this sense of sacrifice, the celebration of Christmas is meaningless. Real freedom is achieved and enjoyed through sacrifice only.

FROM PG4 Jesus Christ brought freedom to man through His self sacrifice. Today, the world is tormented by problems generated by the selfish motives of people. There is no meaning for values. The values mankind built over centuries of struggle has come to a naught by the mad pursuits of man for materialistic pleasure. The prevailing principle is Social Darwinism. The more money you have, the stronger you are. It is to this world, the birth of Jesus Christ conveys the message of self effacing sacrifice. The present modes of celebration of Christmas often miss this point.

May the celebration of Christmas bring to our mind the sacrifice of Jesus for the sake of mankind. May we also be reminded by the message that future of mankind is only through the sacrifice each individual makes for his brethren.

May the message of Joy through sacrifice inspire all of us to sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of humanity and the greater glory of God.

Guidelines For Pious Living By Late HG Job Mar Philoxenos

There is in the heart of all of us a yearning longing for doing things that would please God. We fail often to do that as the worldly thoughts and passions encompass us. As a result, what we lose is the inner peace and tranquility that is given to those who are in communion with God. Regular practice is needed to keep off the evil and stay in communion with God. Given below are some practical suggestions that would help us to reach this goal. These guidelines for pious living are modified from the writings of one of the great Fathers of Christendom:

1. Force yourself to get up early and at a definite time. Take seven hours sleep maximum as a general rule, unless you are unusually fatigued. As soon as you wake up, direct your thoughts to God and piously cross yourself, thinking of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sake of our salvation. Get up from your bed at once and get dressed. While dressing, remember that you are in the presence of the Lord and your guardian angel. Then start your morning prayers immediately. Make a firm resolution to do everything for the Lord and to receive everything from His Fatherly Hand. Meditate in this way: maybe this is the last day of my life, then does everything the way you .CONT PG6

(FROM PG5)would-if you were preparing to come before the Justice of God.

2. After your prayers, start your work. Let your deeds and actions be for the glory of God. Remember that God sees you everywhere, sees all your actions, feelings, thoughts and desires, and will generously reward you for all your good deeds. Do not begin anything without praying to God because the things we do or say without prayer later prove to be either sinful or harmful. Entrust your success to God's Grace. Fulfill all that is difficult for you as though it were a penance for your sin in the spirit of obedience and humbleness. Repeat brief prayers, especially the "Jesus Prayer", while you are working. If your work is being accomplished with success, as your hearts desires - thank the Lord; if without success - then remembers that this too God allows, and He works everything for good.

3. If you wish for a spiritually peaceful life, give yourself to God. Always and in everything think of God and His holy love for us sinners. In everything, try to fulfill God's will and to please God alone. Do not care to be respected and loved by people. Keep a vigilant watch over your feelings, thoughts and motions of your heart and your passions. Give consideration to nothing trivial where your personal salvation is concerned. In everything ask yourselves: In this case what would Jesus Christ have thought, said, or done? Be meek and humble, be silent and endure by the example of Jesus. He will not lay a cross upon you, which you are not able to carry. He Himself will help you carry your cross. Do not expect to acquire any one virtue without any sorrow and pains of the soul. Beg God to give you grace to fulfill your responsibilities in the best way possible. Obey His holy commandments - even though they may seem difficult for you. Do not dwell in idleness even for a short time, but always remain in labor and be occupied. Do everything in the name of Jesus Christ and in this way all your actions will be deeds of piety.

4. Flee even the smallest of sins, because the one, who does not commit the smallest sin, certainly will not commit greater and deeper ones. If you do not want to be bothered by evil thoughts, then humbly (CONT PG7)

Perunnal
Area
Convention
Pictures



FROM PG6 -receive all sufferings of soul and body. Every thought which withdraws you further away from God, especially filthy thoughts of the flesh, banish from your heart, as quickly as possible, as you would cast away from your clothes a spark of fire. Amidst temptations, do not be troubled. He, who gives you the circumstance of a battle, will also give you strength for victory. Let your spirit be at rest.

5. **Trust in God.** Pray to God that He takes from you everything that feeds your self-love, even though it may be very bitter for you. Wish to live and die for God alone, and to belong to Him entirely. If you have food and clothing, be content with it by the example of Jesus Who became impoverished for our sake.

6. **Never argue and do not depend or excuse yourselves too much.** Do not say anything against your superiors or your neighbors without need or obligation. Be sincere and simple in heart. With love, accept directions, admonitions, and being exposed by others, even though you may be wise. Do not detest or be envious or exceedingly stern in word and deeds. What you do not wish for yourselves, do not do unto others and

Regional Meeting (Midwest – Chicago) of Sunday school Teachers was held on Sunday November 13, 2011, 3 -7PM, at St. Thomas Orthodox Church. Rev Dn Sujit Thomas led the Bible study based on 1 Kingdoms (1 Samuel) Ch. 1-3 and reviewed the role of a Sunday school Teacher through the life of Eli the priest and the training of Samuel the prophet:

1. To spend time in Gods house (3:3): Samuel was asleep in the temple. We as Sunday school teachers have to teach our children about the sacredness of the temple of God. We have to share with the children the beauty of being with the Lord. Through our life, children should understand that we like Church, being in Church and spending time in Church. Psalm 27: 4 states that the one thing I ask from the Lord is that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.
2. To discern Gods voice (call): How much do the children know God? Even though Samuel had submitted to God, Samuel had not yet known God (3:7). Therefore, Eli had to tell Samuel that it is God who was calling. As Teachers, we have to help the children listen to God's voice- to discern His voice. Our job as Teachers is to understand Godly qualities in the child and then promote that. In this age of technology and multiple interests, we have to give priority to spiritual life- importance to mind and body. Only when we know God in the depth of our being, we can transfer and teach. We have to assist the child to tune in to Gods voice.
3. To surrender to Gods will: Samuel told Eli everything. A Teacher should have deep relationship with his students. He should learn to love deeply and respond – this will help the child to open up. The child should be able to tell the Teacher everything that is going on in his /her life. Teacher has to teach the child to submit to God. We have to teach the children to take one step at a time – beginning steps. So Eli was like a Sunday School teacher to Samuel – he taught Samuel to spend time in God's house, to discern God's voice (call) and to surrender to God's call. These are qualities that Sunday School teachers should emulate. We face an awesome responsibility of molding the spirit – we need to form a rapport or deep relationship with students so that we can help them grow spiritually.

We thank Sujit Semassen for leading the Bible Study. We appreciate Abi Achen and Sibyl Kochamma for being present at the meeting and acting as resource persons as well as Beena Korah for her session on teaching techniques. We also appreciate John Simon, Midwest (Chicago) Region Coordinator and Principal of St. Thomas Orthodox Church Sunday school for coordinating and organizing the conference and St. Thomas Orthodox Church for hosting the event.

Youth Thanksgiving Dinner

On Friday, November 25th, the annual Oak Park Youth Thanksgiving dinner was celebrated at the home of Cyatharine and Basil Alias. Around 60 members of the youth attended. We were blessed with the presence of Abi Achen and Sibyl Kochamma. Once everyone got settled in and had snacks, Abi Achen gave a message on Thanksgiving. Afterwards, we prayed and enjoyed the feast. We hope everyone had a blessed experience and will join us again next year. We thank the Alias family for opening up their home and hosting the event.



KFC held its final meeting for the year on Saturday, November 19th at church. We had about 25 kids attend this event. The meeting revolved around the past topics of the year that supported our church's theme for the year: Developing a Mind of Christ. Throughout the year, we covered topics such as Developing a Mind of Christ through our actions, Sacraments, Saints, and Holy Qurbana. The children played review games, won some surprise prizes and even had original KFC for lunch! It was a great time of fellowship and fun for all who attended. We thank all the

Condolence Message:

Mr. Samuel Thomas (68 yrs), the father of Meena Chacko (father-in-law of Shajan and grandfather of Joel and Sharon) passed away in the Lord on November 30 in Madras. Funeral was held on December 1, Thursday at Madras. Shajan and Meena have returned back after attending the funeral. Please continue to keep the family in your prayers so that God gives them comfort and strength during this difficult time.

Office Bearers –2012

Secretary -Mrs. Meena Chacko

Joint Secretary - Mrs. Marykutty Mathews

Treasurer - Mrs. Thankamma Pothan

Committee Members

Ward 1 - Dr. Betty Gladstone

Ward 2 - Mrs. Solly Koruth

Ward 3 - Mrs. Lissy Koshy

Ward 4 - Mrs. Mini Jacob

Ward 5 - Mrs. Sheeja Thomas

Ward 6 - Mrs. Susamma Kuriakose

Ward 7 - Mrs. Leelamma Polachira

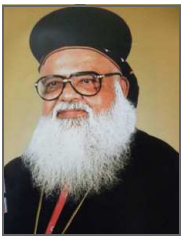
Ward 8 - Dr. Chinnamma Thomas

Ward 9 - Mrs. Leelamma Yohannan

FROM PG7 what you wish others to do to you, do it first unto them. Be gentle, modest, careful, wise, blind and deaf, according to the situation. Remember that Jesus is present among those with whom you are and among those with whom you speak. Say nothing without thought. Bear it firmly in mind that time is short and that man must give and account of every idle word that he speak. Listen more than speak; in verbosity you will not escape sin. Beg God to give you blessing to be silent and to speak at the right time. Do not be curious about gossips; it diverts the spirit. Try to do good to everyone, not thinking whether it will or will not be appreciated. If one does not obey you the first time, do not force him through debate; make use of the good yourself, which he has lost, because meekness will bring you great profit.

(Rest of the article will appear in the next issue of Gazette)

HG Job Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan (Delhi Diocese) entered into the eternal rest on Nov 20 Sunday. Let us keep His Grace in our continued prayers as well as seek his prayers to God Almighty.



Kids - Korner

Kids - Korner

Christmas Trivia

1. Why is Christmas celebrated on December 25th?
2. Where did Santa Clause come from?
3. For those Orthodox Christians using the old calendar, when is Christmas celebrated?
4. Why do Christians hang up a star in front of their homes around Christmas time? What does that represent?
5. What is the icon pictured below representing and who is depicted in the icon?



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/01 Liju, Sumith

12/09 Mathew, Tobin J

12/02 Varghese, Maria Anabel

12/15 Varghese, Shawny

12/03 Mani, Jaison

12/16 Mathew, John

12/04 Vannilam, Robin Thomas

12/16 Thomas, Teffy K

12/05 Jacob, Josh

12/18 Korah, Cassy Mary

12/06 Kalarical, Daniel

12/19 Mathew, Roshan Thomas

12/09 Babu, David Varghese

12/24 Mathew, Chris

Happy Birthday
To You!



HG Joshua Mar Nicodemus, Metropolitan of Nilackal Diocese was with us on Sunday, November 20 for the Holy Qurbana and was the chief celebrant. We appreciate His Grace for being with us and leading us in the Divine Liturgy and for blessing us with his presence and message. Please keep His Grace and his ministry in your prayers.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING 2012



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