



GREGORIAN GAZETTE



Christ is Risen!

Indeed He is Risen!

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Easter Thoughts – Fr. Ninan V. George

The greatest event in Christian history is the Resurrection of our Lord. The greatest of miracles is the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the greatest of mysteries is the Resurrection. A single man who worked the shortest period of three and half years had created the highest sensation in the world. Beginning with a small community of 12 disciples, it took hardly three centuries to 'conquer the Roman Empire. It is interesting that the Roman Emperors were the most terrified by the inception of the new way life called Christianity. The Roman Emperors tried for three centuries to up root Christianity from its empire killing a few million Christians during that span of time. Finally the Roman Empire declared Christianity as its official religion .How did a single person conquers the entire Roman world in three centuries? It was simply the **power of the Resurrection.**

The Romans used to conquer by the power of the sword but Jesus conquered them by the power of His love. The people who believed in the way of Christ increased day by day throughout the Roman Empire. Finally when Constantine became the Emperor, he knew it is impossible to remove faith in Christ and in addition he had the vision of the sign of the cross on the Sun and converted. Indeed his mother was already a convert. Thus through the Edict of Milan in 313, Christians were given freedom. Christians today must remember the first three hundred years of his-

Church. "The blood of seed of the Church." It they truly believed in a Christians were ready they knew they will death. Even today we willing to die and kill the difference in the they did not kill or at- ded themselves to The Way.



tory of the martyr the martyrs became the was all simply because resurrected Lord. to be killed because join the Lord after can see many who are for the sake of faith but Early Church was that tack others but sub- attackers and showed

Fr. Ninan George
Liju Paul
Liju Varghese
Elizabeth Varghese

Gladstone Mammen
George Panicker
Joe Varghese
Peter Varghese

George Varghese (Publisher)

EDITORIAL BOARD

8. Sunday - Feast of the Resurrection

Acts 2:22-36, 1 Corinthians 15:1-19, St. Matthew 28:1-20

9. Monday - Memorial of HG Kuriakose Mar Gregorios**13. Friday - Feast of the Confessors****14. Saturday - KFC Fellowship**

DB-DOCE

15. Sunday - New Sunday

DB-DOCE

Sunday School Teachers' Meeting

1 Peter 2:19-25, 2 Timothy 2:1-13, St. John 20:19-31

18. Wednesday - Bible Study Willowbrook**20. Friday - Bible Study Skokie****21. Saturday - Sunday School Sports**

Ward 7 Prayer Meeting 6.30PM

22. Sunday - Second Sunday after Easter

MMVS Meeting

Ward 4 Prayer Meeting 6PM

Acts 4:8-21, Hebrews 3:1-13, St. John 21:15-19

23. Monday - Feast of St. George the Martyr**24. Tuesday - Prayer Teleconference 7.30PM****25. Wednesday - Feast of St. Mark****28. Saturday - WOW Ministry****29. Sunday - Third Sunday after Easter**

DB-POCE

Mar Gregorios Seniors Fellowship

MMVS Unit Competition

1 Peter 3:17-22, Hebrews 11:32-40, St. Luke 9:51-62

Ward 1 Prayer Meeting 6.30PM

On Saturday, March 17th, the Annual Lenten Retreat was held under the collective auspices of all the four Malankara Orthodox churches in the Chicago Metro region (St. Mary's, Oak Lawn; St. Thomas, Chicago; St. Gregorios, Bellwood and St. Gregorios Oak Park). A session for the English-speaking youngsters and adults was held at the St. Mary's Orthodox church in Oak Lawn, which was led by Rev. Fr. Christopher Mathew, the Youth Minister for the Chicago area. A second session for the Malayalam-speaking population was held at our church, which was led by our former vicar and the current Metropolitan of the Ahmedabad Diocese, our beloved H. G. Geevarghese Mor Yulios.

The retreat started with the Prayer of the Ninth Hour, followed by a welcome



speech by our vicar, Rev. Fr. Ninan V. George. In his speech, Thirumeni reminded us that 'Every day in our life is a day of observation of the Lent'. He led us into thinking about our life, its meaning and its different stages. When analyzing the meaning of life, we may initially think that we know a lot about our lives and how we can control it through our actions. But as life progresses and we grow in wisdom, we would reach a point where we re-

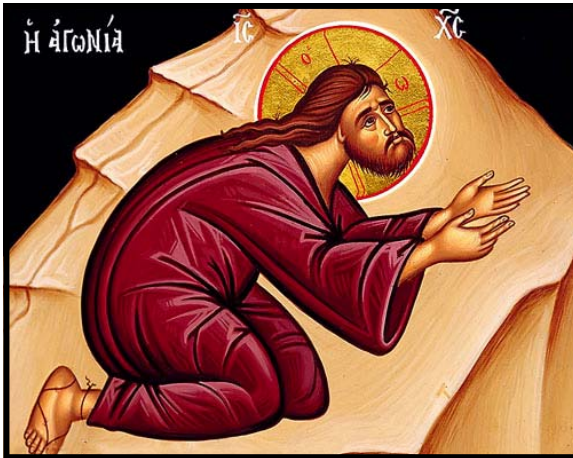
alize that we do not know as much as we thought we knew. That stage or that realization is the Paramount of Wisdom. Thirumeni compared the stages of human life to the stages in the life of a butterfly namely Embryo, Larva, Pupa and ultimately Imago or the full-fledged butterfly. Thirumeni also talked about the four different stages of Life as defined by the Hindu culture namely Brahmacharya (Celibate student), Grihastha (Married Family man), Vanaprastha (Hermit) and Sannyasa (Recluse) and illustrated them through the life of Moses. He also depicted the different ways in which God revealed Himself to Moses - first as the Fire in the brush, then as the Shadow of the clouds and finally as the "Luminous Darkness" on Mount Sinai, which Thirumeni also called **CONTD PG 5**



FROM PG 4 as the “Mountaintop Experience”. He also illustrated the life of St. Gregorios of Nyssa in detail.

Thirumeni concluded his speech with a call for us to have our own Mount Sinai in our lives where we can go away occasionally for having the intimate relationship with God like Moses used to, and to strive for achieving that Moutnain-top experience of “Luminous

Darkness.” Rev. Fr. Daniel George, the vicar of St. Gregorios, Bellwood gave the vote of thanks and Rev. Fr. Ham Joseph, the vicar of St. Thomas, Chicago offered the concluding prayer. The retreat ended with a Love Feast. About 120 faithful parishioners from all four churches participated in the retreat.



+ + +

ONE RELIGION OF LOVE OR SINGULARITY AND PLURALITY

(Globalization of Divine Love and
Personalization of Conviction and Religious Faiths)

Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios

1. *What are the differences between Divine Love and human faiths?*

'God is Love.' God is not faith or hope or conviction. Love is the essence of the compassionate God, while faith is a theological virtue, a gift of God. Divine Love has no boundaries, whereas faiths have boundaries. Love is eternal, uncreated, selfless and global, but faith is relative, personal, the capability of the image of God. Love is social but faith is personal. Love is global but faith is religious, ecclesial, sectarian.

2. *How do we know that God is Love?*

"Only through God can God be known." If God is God, He has to be infinite and no finite person can know God fully. Muslim Religion believes in the Revelation in the Holy Quran and it is its right to hold on to it. Hindus base their faith in Vedas and Upanishads, including the Bhagavad Gita. We must respect their human right also. Christian faith is in the Revelation, Incarnation in the person and work of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, the record of which is in the Holy Bible and the witness of the Church in the worship and tradition. All must respect the sovereignty of Allah that Islam believes. The sanatana claim of Hinduism is its right. The divine love that Jesus Christ revealed in His love manifested in the life, teachings, vicarious death and resurrection must also be respected by others. "God is Love" (9 Jn. 4:8, 16) is the same as "Allah the Compassionate" in the prologue of each Surah of the Holy Quran and Bhakti Mrag of Bhagavad Gita. Propagating the universality of each religion is also part and parcel of one's human right.

3. *Did Jesus Christ respect the faith of gentiles?*

He certainly did. Seeing the deep faith of the gentile centurion, Jesus said, "Truly I say unto you, I have not found such even in Israel" (St. Mt. 8:10). Again, He told the Gentile Canaanite woman, "O Woman, great is your faith! Be it done to you as you desire" and her daughter was healed instantly (St. Mt. 15:28).

4. *What is the criterion of God's Last Judgment?*

The one criterion recorded from the mouth of Jesus Christ in St. Mt. 25:31 - 46 is love in action and not membership in the church. Faith, Ministry and Sacraments are necessary for membership in the visible church, but the judgment of God is for all nations and not for members of the church alone.

5. *Why do you teach that Jehovah, Allah, Advaitic Brhama are the same as the Triune God of eternal love in eternal action of mutual, perichoretic sharing, blissful, agapaic love?*

No religion denies the fact that God is love or compassionate. The Hebrew word used in Dt. 6:4 translated as one Lord or Jehovah is 'ehad' which means 'compound or social unity' and not 'Yahed' which is the Hebrew word for 'solitary oneness'. Jehovah is a loving God who had compassion to the suffering, slavish Israelites in Egypt (Ex. 3:7). According to the prologue **CONTD PG 7**

FROM PG 6 of each Surah of the Holy Quran "Allah is compassionate and merciful." In Surah 35 we read "If Allah were to punish men for their wrong deeds, no living being will be left on earth" (Cf. 45). As God is eternally active and unchangeable He must be love and compassionate in His Social Being. The Sanskrit word advaita does not mean monistic or solitary God, but that Brahman is all-inclusive with no part of parcel or division. The Holy Triune God does not mean that there are three Gods, but one social God of Love transcending dualism of singularity and plurality in His Social Being. God did not grow into active love in creating the angels, matter and spirit or prakrithi and purusha and all things visible and invisible out of nothing (ex-nihilo). The unity and plurality in an ideal nuclear family may give us a faint insight into the mystery of Holy Trinity, though inadequate.

6. *Why should we grow from the faith in justification by faith alone (sola fidei) into salvation by grace alone (sola gratia)?*

Martin Luther wanted to counter - act justification by work of Roman Catholic Church of the middle ages and so he quoted St. Paul mainly and not the Gospels, without distinguishing that St. Paul himself has confessed that in 1 Cor. 7:6-9, he gives his own personal view and then in verse 10 he writes "To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from the husband." A biblical holistic view may be summarised as follows. "God's love or grace is the rain, tree is the faith and good works are the fruits. 'Faith alone' does not take Epistle of St. James or even St. Paul's many passages like 1 Cor.13 or Eph. 2:8-11, seriously. Further more, the faith of gentiles, which Christ honoured is ignored.

7. *If selfless, kenotic, sacrificial love is the criterion, how can I develop me and my family and nation without developing my neighbours?*

The question is very relevant, especially in the present, secular, selfish, capitalistic culture, which is more animalic than human, not to speak of divine. The three instincts of self, sex and herd, we have inherited from animals by evolution are our guiding motivation and so we are more selfish, sexually permissive and communal than loving, capable of sublimating our sex-instinct and communally grouped like the crows, doves, etc. The third millennium will see either the destruction of our planet by our hatred of neighbours, immorality and nuclear war or survive by love. "Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere." Selfish development is impossible with unselfish sharing. The call of the General Secretary to the Heads of 150 nations who attended the millennial summit in the U. N. Headquarters that each nation should eradicate its poverty by 2015 is impossible unless USA and other rich countries share their know - how, wealth, etc., to create job for the jobless in every nation. The outcome will be the fall of rich nations as that of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome and many other civilizations in history.

8. *If Capitalism falls as Communism did, what is the alternative?*

God is still on the throne. He is the Lord of History. When Feudalism rose and fell in the nineteenth century, the alternative was Capitalism **CONTD PG 10**

PHAT

On Saturday March 24th, the PHAT men held their monthly meeting at the residence of Ashwin and Shane Jacob. About 20 guys came out to learn more about our faith and to dwell together in fellowship. We delved into the second chapter of our new book, *Everywhere Present*, by Father Stephen Freeman. Chris Achen taught a message of living in communion with God, those around us, and our departed ones. Achen focused on three ways to achieve this communion: holiness, the sacraments, and love. When we live with this communion, we are able to break down the walls of secularism that push religion into a separate stage. We can then live in a one-story house with no separation between religion and the world, which is a prevalent theme within the book. After the message, we enjoyed delicious pasta, noodles, lasagna, and brownies. Not surprisingly, we ended off the blessed day by playing basketball with each other. We would like to thank the Jacob family for opening up their home to us and all our guys for coming out. As always, please continue to keep this ministry in your prayers.

WOW

WOW will be holding its next monthly meeting on Saturday, April 28th at the residence of Melvin & Merrin Thomas. We will be finishing our study of the book of Ruth, so please bring your notes and Bibles! WOW is also starting a prayer project to bring awareness to a project called Bombay Teen Challenge. Bombay Teen Challenge provides services such as shelters for children of women used in prostitution and street children, a home for AIDS orphans, homes for daughters of prostituted women, feeding programs, medical care, HIV/AIDS clinics, rescue of drug addicted "street boys," and homes for women who have been rescued from a life of enslavement to prostitution in the brothels. Each month we will pray specifically for one of their programs as well as for the fundraiser here in Chicago that will take place on June 23, 2012. In March, we kept the **Home for Girls** in our prayers. These are residential centers situated in Badlapur for vulnerable girls, orphans of women used in prostitution, abandoned in Mumbai's 'red light' district, offering care with integrated medical, educational, and social services. These 'safe houses' protect them from the dangers on the street, thus breaking the cycle of prostitution and preventing them from following their mothers' footsteps. This is a prayer initiative that we would like the whole church to be involved in. Please join us in praying that God continues to provide resources and volunteers to this organization, so they may continue to save these people from the streets and their addictions.

Divyabodhanam

Divvyabodhanam D.O.C.E class was held per schedule in the church basement on Sunday, 18th March after noon . It was an open forum. Yulios Thirumeni conducted the class (seminar). Majority of the DOCE students and some of the parishioners attended the seminar of the current study book *Apostola Prabodhanangal* by Rev. Fr. T.J. Joshua. Thirumeni explained this Pauline book beginning with the cultural context, St. Paul's relationship with Christ, and his relationship with other apostles & the Church. Thirumeni summarized the ecclesiology, sacramental theology and the eschatology which are explained in the book. Thirumeni also touched base on the relationship of the Church to the other religions, the role of women in the Church, importance of family and the relationship among family members including spousal & parent child communication. Thirumeni concluded the class explaining the importance of Christian Stewardship in the family, Church and towards the society as a whole. The class celebrated Yulios Thirumeni's anniversary in the new diocese with some sweet treats and dispersed after prayers at 5:30 pm. The next DOCE class is scheduled to be held on April 15th, 2012 at 1:30 pm



MGOCSM Chicago held its annual Good Friday Vigil at St Gregorios, Oak Park. Around forty people came out from all four parishes in the Chicago area, ranging from students to adults, to keep watch over the tomb of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are thankful to be able to come together once a year on this occasion and sincerely thank those involved in ensuring things ran smoothly. A special thanks to those who helped prepare dinner for everyone, too.

On behalf of Leadership Camp Detroit, we will soon be selling orthodox icon bracelets to anyone interested. Each bracelet, costing only \$5, has pictured saints that are relevant and well known to the Indian Orthodox Church. If you are interested in a bracelet, please contact council member Sara Mathew or email mgoesm.chicago@gmail.com

Please continue to pray for MGOCSM and all of its endeavors.

FROM PG 7 and its alternative was Communism, in the twentieth century. The twentyfirst century will see the fall of Capitalism as the previous century saw the rise and fall of Communism. The alternative is Welfare Economics of Amartya Sen. It teaches that the dictatorship of capitalist owners or of the toiling labouring proletarian class will not eradicate poverty of the world. He found out that poverty is due to lack of purchasing power of the people and not due to the lack of grains in the world. He teaches that money does not belong to the people who create it but to the whole of humanity. He invested the whole amount of Rupees fourty million in the bank, deducting the tax paid, to give education and medicine to the children who are illiterate and unhealthy.

Will Bill Gates give his billions of dollars to write off the debt of the poorest countries of the world? Welfare Economics is the synthesis of capitalistic freedom and communist social justice to create jobs, education, etc., for all.

9. *What is the role of the new theology of one Religion of Love for the third millennium?*

It recommends the human right to hold on to one's own faith or to change to another faith, but be united on the basis of sharing love without distinction or religion or caste or creed or colour. It advocates voluntary sharing for the needy to work hard, produce wealth for eradicating poverty of the whole world. We need a World Government taught by Amold J. Toynbee and other great thinkers of the world. Sabbath is for man and man not for the sabbath. Religion is not to fight between various faiths and religions, but it helps all of humanity to live as brothers and sisters under one Heavenly Father. Amartiya Sen also stands for an international economic order.

10. *What is your answer to the Christian claim that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world (St. Jn. 14:6; Acts. 4:12, etc.)?*

Those who have read my books like THEOLOGY OF A CLASSLESS SOCIETY and SHARING GOD AND A SHARING WORLD (published by CSS, Thiruvalla - 689 101, Kerala) know that my Christology is not low as of modern Protestantism, but is as high as the Biblical, Patristic Christology. I believe the Creedal claim that Jesus Christ is very God of Very God, of the same essence of God. The stress of my theology is that the essence of God is divine love (agape), as revealed by Jesus Himself. Hence, Christ is pre-existent Logos (Word) or sabda Brahma, without whom there is no salvation. Jesus Christ, God incarnate is the same as Logos Pre Incarnate and Post - Incarnate, without whom there is no other saviour. This is an all inclusive claim and not an exclusive superiority claim. Salvation through the visible Church or the invisible Church known only to God and in all religions and cultures are Christ's as He is God and Man, at the same time. After all, only God can know who is saved and who is not saved. The tree is known by the fruit of divine love, expressed in life and example. God Triune, is Sat, Chit, Anand (Satchidananda), Compassionate Allah, Eternal Love in eternal sharing.

Of course, such a claim is not to be enforced on anyone, but proclaimed only by those who have this holistic Christology (conviction).

The Life of Aleykutty Aunty:

Aleykutty aunty was a senior member of our Church who was with us from Evanston.



She was passionate about the Church and the spiritual life that we could develop through the sacraments and teachings that Church practices. She was a very active member who made every effort to regularly come to Church and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. She was a graduate of POCE Divyabodhanam – the first batch to graduate in US. She was a serious student who submitted all the assignments and very active in discussions. She loved to read and was a regular visitor to the Library.

What can we as Orthodox Christians learn from her life? Her devotion to Church and commitment in being consistent and regular participant in the sacraments witnessing the life of Christ to us. She was interested in the teachings of the Church and learning the faith and understanding the traditions that we practice. She was able to convert that desire into definite steps and made every effort to further study.

We are fortunate that in our Church opportunities exist to learn the faith of the Church and grow spiritually in its life. We have about 25 ministries functioning in our Church which cater to the different cross sections of our parish. Let us celebrate the life of Aleykutty Aunty by regularly participating in the sacramental life of the Church and making every effort to learn the teachings. May God bless the soul of Aunty and may her soul rest in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. On behalf of the Gazette and the Library, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family. We share the sorrow and grief of Aunty's family and pray that God may give them the strength and grace to overcome that. May God bless.

YOUTH MINISTER in CHICAGO

We congratulate Chris Achen on his becoming a father of a baby boy. Both Kochamma and the baby are doing well.

Rev Fr Christopher Mathew (Chris Achen), Youth Minister in the Chicago land area has been now with us a couple of months. Achen is providing leadership and guidance for the growing generation of our Churches teaching them the faith of the Church and leading them to Christ. He is working with our children, youth, young adults, couples and families and providing them the spiritual nourishment and counseling that they seek. He is able to relate to them and better understand their needs. He is working with them both at the Parish level and regional level. He is actively involved at our parish level with the Oak Park youth, both PHAT and WOW ministries, Sunday school and children's ministries. He is also moving towards rejuvenating the FOCUS members. He is also doing campus ministry and visiting college campuses where many of our kids reside besides serving MGOCSM at the regional level. Achen is with us at Oak Park twice a month celebrating Holy Qurbana and assisting our Achen in the parish ministry. Chris Achen is also motivating our acolytes and he was a great resource during Holy Week.

We ask that you continue to keep Achen, Kochamma and their son in your prayers, and extend him all cooperation, and support so that he may take care of the ministries that he serves better.

Let us pray and continue to work with him so that we may glorify God in all that we do!





Kids - Korner
Kids - Korner
Kids - Korner

*The Gregorian Gazette
 wishes you &
 your family a blessed
 Feast of the Resurrection of
 our Lord and
 Savior Jesus Christ!*

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

04/03 Abraham, Justin

04/04 Verghese, Jiyana

04/05 Panicker, Jeslin George

04/08 Mathew, Steve

04/08 Vargese, Lilia J.

04/10 George, Riya Sarah

04/11 Kurian, Shantra

04/11 Mulanthara, Melvin Jay

04/12 George, Gregory

04/12 Jacob, Krista

04/12 Joseph, Mathew

04/17 Panicker, Robin A

04/18 Kurian, Shawn

04/19 Stephen, Robin George

04/20 Markose, Nevin

04/26 George, Justin

04/29 Geevarghese, Gloria Susan

04/29 Varghese, Payton Alphonse

Happy Birthday
To You!

H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios**(1918 - 2012)**

His Grace Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios was a senior bishop of the Indian Orthodox Church. He was the metropolitan of the Niranam diocese from 1975-2007. He was a renowned theologian, orator and writer. He was born on 9th December, 1918 to Kochitty and Mariamma Kochitty of Mundavelil family in Mavelikara. He obtained his B.D from Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.A. from Drew University in

America and his S.T.M from Union Seminary, Bangalore. His Grace received the order of Korooyo (sub-deacon) from Metropolitan Augen Mar Timotheos on 9th August, 1947 and his priesthood from His Holiness Baselios Geevarghese II, Catholicos on 10th May, 1956. He was nominated to the post of Metropolitan by the Malankara Association which met at Niranam on October 2, 1974. Metropolitan Daniel Mar Philexinos ordained him as a Ramban at St. Mary's Cathedral Puthencavu. He was consecrated as a bishop by His Holiness Baselios Augen I, Catholicos of the East on 16th February, 1975 at Niranam Valiya Palli. He was appointed as the Metropolitan of the Niranam Diocese on 1st April, 1975. After running the good race for the Lord, Thirumeni left for his heavenly abode on 16th February, 2012. Thirumeni was the member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. He served as the Senior faculty member of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, President of the Mission Board of the Indian Orthodox Church and the Director of St. Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara. He was the founder of a number of charitable programs, mission centers and institutions including the Marriage Assistance Foundation, Sick Aid Foundation, Save A Heart Foundation, House Building Aid Fund, Mission Training Centre, M.G.D Ashram Balabhavan Karunagiri, St Pauls Asram Puthuppady, Haripad Mission Centre, Yacharam St.Gregorios Balagram, Bethanya Bhavan, St.George Balikagram Pune ,etc.

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