



GREGORIAN GAZETTE

NOVEMBER 2005

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Blessed New Year, Feast of our Patron Saint and Thanksgiving

George Achen

Dear faithful in Christ,

The coming month brings us a number of opportunities for celebration and self-reflection. On October 30th, we enter into the New Liturgical Year by celebrating the **Feast of Purification**. Let us wish a blessed New Year to all the children of God. November 2nd is the **Feast of our Patron Saint, Mar Gregorios of Parumala**. We celebrate it on Sunday, November 6th along with the **Feast of Rededication**. Let us dedicate ourselves like Saint Gregorios and other Saints of the Church and also pray for our brethren to lead a life of real dedication to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. At the end of November also comes **Thanksgiving Day**. Let us remember the days, years and centuries that God has provided us and led us. Let us give thanks to His most Holy Name.

Why do we the Orthodox start the New Year at an odd time? Or why do we not start on January 1st? Many such questions may arise at this juncture, so let me try to address them. The reason is simple: the Church starts the year with the birth of our Lord, and through each liturgical year we observe His Incarnation and redemptive work for humanity. We set apart eight Sundays before the Feast of the Salvific Birth of our Lord to prepare ourselves in a meaningful way.

The first Sunday is meant for a complete purification of the Church. Members of the Church should take the Holy Confession and purify themselves to enter the new liturgical year. The Church specially remembers the history of the and cosmic order. Since it is done for the wellbeing of prescribes readings from the Holy Bible and special aim to give unceasing thanks to the Creator. Obeying is the best way of giving thanks to Him according to the igation and dedication is the only way that one could e thanks.

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We all know about St. Gregorios of Parumala, the Saint, but do we truly appreciate his contributions as a person? Come to “St. Gregorios and Kerala Renaissance” on Saturday, November 5th for a discussion on Parumala Thirumeni’s impact as a humanitarian, reformer and writer, led by George Achen from 4-6PM before the evening Perunnal festivities.

Noteworthy Member Achievements

On Sunday, October 9th, Babu Yohannan participated in the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon. He was able to complete the 26.2 mile course in under 4 1/2 hours! Although it took many weeks of training, he said it was a very rewarding experience and may do it again. He added that the running in general has been very good for his health and would recommend that anyone with interest should make a little time to run during the week.

Congratulations on this noteworthy achievement!

Gazette Board
Fr. M. K. Thomas
Fr. George Pulikkottil
Liju Paul (Malayalam Ed.)
Liju Varghese (English Ed.)

- 2. Wednesday– Feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala** (Parumala Perunnal)
- 4. Friday–** 7.00PM KFC Leaders Training (All welcome to attend)
- 5. Saturday- The Annual Feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala**
4.00 - 6.00PM **Seminar: St. Gregorios and Kerala Renaissance**
7.00 - 7.40PM Evening Prayer
7.45 - 7.55PM Flag Hoisting
8.00 -9.00PM Convention
- 6. Sunday- The Annual Feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala**
8.30 - 9.30AM Morning Prayer
9.30 - 11.30AM Holy Qurbana
12.00 - 1.00PM Perunnal Luncheon
- Hoodoos Eetho** (Feast of Rededication of the Church)
Reading- Acts 7: 44-53, Hebrews 9: 1-14, St. John 10: 22-38
- 8. Tuesday-** Memorial of H. H. Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I
- 12. Saturday–** MGOCSM Co-ed Football Game
- 13. Sunday- Annunciation to Zechariah**
Reading - II Peter 1: 1-15, Ephesians 5: 21 - 6: 4, St. Luke 1: 5-25
- Feast of St. John Chrysostom**
Marthamariam Samajam Monthly Meeting
- 19. Saturday–** 11.00AM - 1.00PM KFC General Session
"Christmas as an Orthodox Christian"
- 20. Sunday- Annunciation to St. Mary**
Reading - I John 3: 2-17, Galatians: 4: 1-7, St. Luke 1: 26-38
- 24. Thursday-** Memorial of Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios
Metropolitan and Joseph Mar Dionysios II,
Pulikkottil
- Thanksgiving**
- 26. Saturday-** MGOCSM Basketball Tournament
- 27. Sunday- St. Mary's visit to Elizabeth**
Reading- I Peter 3: 1-7, I Timothy 2: 9-15, 3:11-13,
St. Luke 1: 39-56
- Marthamariam Samajam Bible Study**
MGOCSM Service Project
2.30PM - 7.30PM "Community Feast"
Soup Kitchen at the United Church of Rogers Park

Sunday School

Learning to Live the Life

School Teachers' One-Day Conference was held on 24th at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Oak Park. based on the theme "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalms 119:105). Fr. Raju Varghese, Director of Sunday Schools in the American Diocese, was the main speaker. He explained the mission of the Sunday school and the role of the teachers. Alex Alexander, Southern Regional Coordinator, spoke on the challenges of Sunday school teaching. Fr. Slomo George introduced the theme of the conference. Thomas Achen, in the closing session, remarked about seven aspects of teaching. 35 delegates representing Chicago and Detroit churches attended the conference. Leju Yohannan and Sheena Panicker led the music ministry. Jimmy Panicker conducted the business session. The conference coordinators were Julie Polachira and Jenny Polachira. The teachers who attended the conference stated that it was a blessed experience.

On Sunday, September 25th, Raju Varghese Achen conducted Sunday service. After service, the Sunday School awards for the 2004-2005 school year and competitions were distributed with Raju Varghese Achen as the guest presenter.

Monthly Teachers' Meeting for September was held on Friday, September 30th, 2005.



Divyabhodhanam

Divyabhodhanam classes got off to a great start on Sunday, October 23rd at 1.30PM. The class, led by George Achen, covered the beginning portions of the book *In the Fullness of Time* by Fr. T. J. Joshua. The topics covered included an introduction to the New Testament, the relationship between the Old and New Testament, the Bible canon and how the Bible evolved. The same class was repeated on Tuesday at October 25th at 7.30PM. This first book is expected to be completed by December.

For more information on these bi-weekly classes, please contact Marykutty Mathews or Paul Babu.

On Friday, October 21st, Chicago MGOCSM kicked-off the new year with the first Friday Night Sing post-Summer Conference 2005. This program was well attended and Liju Philip from St. Thomas Church introduced this year's theme through his reflections on Psalms 51. The focus for this year is Prayer and the theme comes from 2 Chronicles 7:14-15:

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

The goal of this year's activities is to deepen our personal prayer lives with our Lord, to worship and glorify the Father, to grow as a body of believers through the power of the Holy Spirit and to become one with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As part of this, there is a renewed focus this year on deepening the relationship between youths within their parishes and with their priests and church members. To do this, regional-level Friday Night Sings, one-day retreats, service projects and the summer conference will be supplemented with more parish-level programs, such as parish-level Bible studies, fun days and service projects. Through these church events, more youth will have an opportunity to take leadership roles and touch the lives of more of the youth throughout the Chicago region. Let us all pray that all this year's programs will be a blessing for our youth, have a great impact on our churches and bring glory to God.

October 22nd was MGOCSM National Service Day. The youth in our region participated in a Blood Drive that day, held at the Westchester Community Center in Westchester, Illinois.

Campus Visiting

On Monday, October 17th, George Achen paid a visit to our church youth attending universities in Chicago as a part of our church's Campus Ministry. Achen went to the city to see where our children study and live while they are away at school. Achen visited students attending Rush University, DePaul University and the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Achen visited the apartments of Jason Thomas, Steve Thomas, Charles Yohannan, Leju Yohannan, and Justin Joy. The night culminated with dinner at the apartment of Sherene Panicker. Students Alwin Joy, Ansu Issac, and Reena Mathew also joined in fellowship. All the students spent time with Achen talking about school and other things happening in their lives. Being able to have fellowship with Achen and other youth in our church is what the Campus Ministry is all about. Building a strong link between our church and our children is of the utmost importance when it comes to their spiritual journey with Christ.

The Gregorian Gazette needs your help! Volunteers to help with writing and publication are always welcome. We are particularly looking for an individual to fill the role of News Coordinator, if interested please email info@gregoriangazette.com. Thanks!

Below is a submission written in response to a 7th grade Sunday School assignment asking the students to be a reporter following Jesus around in the modern world....

A New Voice in Israel by Rekha George



Early in the morning, the colors of dawn had barely touched the horizon, and it was very peaceful.

I was assigned to follow the preacher from Nazareth. He always got up early to pray and meditate. We were by the lake. The sound of our footsteps and the rhythm of the waves endlessly beating the ancient shoreline had a soulful, hypnotic quality. His communion with the divine power he always talked about seemed palpable.

A scream came from behind us. We turned around. John came up to us, a stitch in his side, "There's been another suicide bomb attack!" he gasped.

Jesus and I rushed to the scene in the news van. Remnants of market stalls were smoking, and lying on the ashen ground. A crowd of people lingered around the center of the square. In the middle was what was left of the suicide bomber, a dead, black, scarred body.

Amongst the chaos of ambulances, police and religious Jews, Jesus remained composed. He moved among the wounded and distraught, quietly comforting them. I leaned forward to hear his words. He was blessing them in the name of Yahweh, asking them to believe in him, forgiving their sins and asking them to seek the Kingdom of God.

These were the statements that made him so controversial, using language alien to the policies of the state of Israel, speaking against retaliation and preemptive strikes against the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The police later asked Jesus to leave, thinking he would cause trouble. We retired to Simon Peter's home, where we found a woman kneeling on the ground, sobbing, stricken with grief. Jesus laid a hand on her trembling shoulder and comforted her with soothing words.

A crowd was collecting outside the door to listen to Jesus. A bearded man screamed, "We shall set fire to the home of this wretched woman and her scoundrel of a son!"

"Silence!" thundered Jesus, "Do you not know to love your neighbor as yourself?"

The restless crowd began to calm down. Jesus went on to talk about peace and love, forgiveness and mercy. The whole crowd was moved to tears by his eloquent yet simple speech. The people looked at him with shining eyes; even the hard heart of the bearded man was softened.

He went on to talk about recent natural disasters, floods, droughts, hurricanes and tsunamis and the great suffering they caused and how industrialization and technology have negatively impacted our environment. He told the crowd that the great inequality in the distribution of wealth among the nations was responsible for tremendous poverty, starvation, and disease in large parts of the globe and that was a terrible sin. A little girl ran to Jesus from within the crowd. The disciples tried to shoo her away, but Jesus admonished them. As he hoisted the little girl on his knee, she asked him, "Rabbi, what can I do to help change the world?" Jesus looked down, smiling, and lovingly answered, "Look for The Kingdom of God in everything you do, share your wealth with the people around you, and use your god-given talents for the glory of God."

Will our world ever be peaceful? Will we ever act like brothers and sisters? If we all had hearts as pure and loving as Jesus, maybe, we will.

Original articles from church members are always solicited, please submit your articles to info@gregoriangazette.com.

("Scrambled Help")

The way we show God's love is to help people in our family. Below are some ways you can help at home, but they are scrambled. Can you unscramble them? After you've unscrambled them, put a checkmark beside the things you do for your family. Can you add some other things?

Congratulations to October's prize winner: Kripa Poozhikunnel.

The correct answers to last month's quiz are: C, C, B, C, A, D, A, D

Please submit your answers to this month's Kids' Korner to the Library by November 13.

If multiple submissions have the same number of correct answers, the prize winner will be selected at random.

BIRTHDAYS

- 3. Janice Varghese
- 6. Sara Mathew
- 6. Stefan Jacob
- 6. Alex Gheevarghese
- 9. Priya Dileep
- 11. Sheeba Philip
- 11. Mark Molayal



FROM PAGE ONE

After being purified, we rededicate ourselves on the second Sunday of the year. The readings are taken from the books of Moses and the theme is the divine protection and guidance that our forefathers have received from above. To be with Him and to walk in His precepts, we need a complete dedication of our lives. That is why the Feast of Dedication comes directly after the Feast of Purification. No doubt, we, the members of the Indian Orthodox Church, are blessed that the Feast of remembrance of our great Saint Mar Gregorios of Parumala coincides with this time of dedication. He is a perfect model of dedicated being. Let us thank God for this Saint and let us also dedicate our lives.

After this initial fortnight and two important feasts of purification and rededication, we begin to meditate on the themes and incidents related to the birth of Christ. Hence, the third Sunday is the remembrance of the revelation to Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, of the birth of John, the forerunner of Christ. The fourth Sunday is the Feast of the Annunciation to Mary of the birth of our Lord; the fifth – meeting of Elizabeth with Mary, the mother of Christ; sixth – birth of John the Baptist; seventh – revelation to Joseph of the Incarnation of our Lord; and eighth – the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Let us give thanks to Him and glorify His Name. Let us rejoice in and with Him as a family, as a Church, as a nation and as a part of His blessed creation. May God bless us to observe all these great days and seasons in its perfect meaning and may we receive Him in our humble hearts and be transformed by His presence.

THIS ISSUE SPONSORED BY PETER VARGHESE FAMILY

**In Loving Memory of Mr. C. M. Pathrose (1923-1995) and
Maj. P. V. Samuel (1916-2002).**

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