



GREGORIAN GAZETTE



FEBRUARY 2006

VOL:IV

ISSUE II

The life-message of the late H.H. Mar Baselius Mathews II

What could be the life-message of our most beloved late Bava Thirumeni? In my view his life was a testament to the fact that **liturgical-life offers a holistic way of living.**

From a very young age he followed a liturgical lifestyle both in his home and parish. He used to say that he could not even remember a day in his life that he missed the canonical prayers and meditation. He used to wake early in the morning and, after his ablutions to clean his physical body, do the canonical prayers with prostrations, followed by a personal silent meditation. For all liturgically important occasions he celebrated the holy Qurbana in the morning with fasting and full preparations. On Wednesdays, Fridays and lent-seasons, he fasted at least until noon without even drinking water. Likewise, he conducted evening prayers, Bible study, spiritual reading and other spiritual exercises. This lifestyle, with all these strict principles, kept him cleansed in his spiritual entity, helped maintain his total body-fitness and gave him a radiant personality. Undoubtedly, one could notice the "grace and provisions" he received from the liturgical and highly sacrificial life he led in the Unceasing Power driving his success story.

In memory of His Holiness Moran Mar Basilius Mar Thoma

Mathews II, a special issue of the Gregorian Gazette will be released on February 12, 2006

with more details about his life and final days to his burial. What does it mean to lead a liturgical life style in a modern society? How far and how earnestly can one practice such a lifestyle in a society where we always lament that "I have no time"? I maintain that not only is such a lifestyle a possibility but important for us to lead a healthy life and necessary to elevate us to the spiritual potential of which we are each capable.

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Best wishes to Sibyl Thomas who has been selected as a delegate from our Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church of India to the World Council of Churches (WCC) 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil from February 14-24, 2006. This is a great honor for our Oak Park church and we are all proud of her achievements.

For more information on the WCC, please see page 6 for an article by Fr. Dr. K.M. George from our Theological Seminary in Kottayam.

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Divyabhodhanam

A one-day seminar, led by George Achen, was held on Saturday, January 28 2006 at St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Chicago. The seminar covered the first book of their studies, *In the Fullness of Time*, and was a blessing for all those who attended. Classes will resume this Sunday with the beginning of the second book, *People of God (Deva Jannam)*. Please contact Mr. Paul Babu or George Achen for more information.

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

Gazette Staff and Board

Fr. M. K. Thomas

Fr. George Pulikkottil

Liju Paul (Malayalam Ed.)

Liju Varghese (English Ed.)

5. Sunday— Fifth Sunday after Danaha

Reading— Acts. 9:10-21, II Corinthians 4:1-6, St. Mark 1:12-20

6. Monday— Three Day Lent begins

9. Thursday— Three Day Lent ends

11. Saturday— KFC Large Group Meeting @ Church 11AM-2PM

12. Sunday— Remembrance of all Departed Priests

Reading— Acts. 20:26-38, I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11,
St. Mathew 24:42-51

MMVS Monthly Meeting after Holy Qurbana

19. Sunday— Remembrance of all Faithful Departed

Reading— St. James 3:1-12, I Corinthians 15:20-28,
St. Luke 13:32-48

23. Thursday- Memorial of Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius

26. Sunday— Wedding at Cana

Reading— Acts. 11:19-26, Colossians 3:1-17, St. John 2:1-11

~~February Prayer Team Meeting date and time TBA~~
Planning Ahead

TBA- MGOCSM Lenten Retreat at Oak Park church in March

March 4- Monthly MGOCSM Prayer Meeting at residence of
Mr. Dinu & Mrs. Anu Skariah at 9PM

April 2- Speech competitions

April 23- Song Competitions

April 29- Divyabhodhanam Seminar

May 14- Bible Verse Competitions

June 22-25— Sunday School Camp 2006

June 25— Centralized Exams

August 3-6— MGOCSM Summer Conference

Prayer Requests—Please send your prayer requests to www.1church.org/prayerteam.htm. We will join you in bringing your requests before God. Questions or prayer requests contact:

Julie Polachira-815.295.2469; jpolachira26@yahoo.com

Stacy Thomas-847.722.0446; stacy_thomas79@yahoo.com

FROM PG. 1 Liturgical life is a style of living. Our prayers and meditations should not be something that we do to please God, church, parents or even our personal ego; rather it is something vital for your existence itself. It is the discipline you very much need to organize your basic living. Just think of an electronic device that you handle daily. To maintain such a device, you have to follow the instructions in the owner's manual. Complaining to the manufacturer without following the owner's manual will not be productive. The same holds for each one of us. If we do not keep our physical body clean and healthy, it will deteriorate. Complaining to God, after having failed to take good care of the body he gave us, will not yield any results. When I came to know that I am a diabetic, I started to cry out to God and asked Him why it happened to me. I knew the answer. It was very simple because I was not properly taking care of the physical body God gave me. I ate whatever I could, whenever I could! I did not exercise consistently and let my body deteriorate.

Following the lifestyle prescribed by the Fathers of the Orthodox Church, with its weekly and seasonal fasting, meditations and life principles, will give the practitioner a healthy body. This will also help us raise our level of spirituality and spiritual pursuits. Bava Thirumeni's life is an excellent example of this basic tenet of Orthodox lifestyle.

How do you make time? Consider this, if you do not find time to remain healthy, you will get time to be sick. Likewise, the answer is...if there is a will, we will find a way. For example, no matter how busy we are, we always make time to fill up our cars if the gas gets too low. A change of lifestyle is necessary. Instead of spending time on non-value adding activities such as watching TV, we need to be actively involved in our physical and spiritual daily exercise. We still need to eat, but we can be careful of what we eat, the amount we eat and the number of times we eat. At least twice a week, be a perfect vegetarian, eat only until you are half-full, be conscious of what you eat and drink, observe daily fasting for a twelve hour period (6 pm to 6 am preferably), observe the five Lenten seasons and so on. Perform the morning and evening prayers while standing properly and with prostration whenever it is suggested. Spend at least ten minutes in silent meditation in the morning and evening after the daily prayers and then plan your day. You will see that you are managing your time in a very productive way. It will make you both physically and spiritually happy. You may be free from saying ever again that "I have no time", because you will be keeping a rational schedule, properly structured to satisfy both your spiritual and physical needs.

This was the reason Bava Thirumeni was never busy, though he was really doing wonders. He was never tired, though he was active for more than eighteen hours a day. Can we try to live such a life, at least on a trial basis this Lenten season? Let us start with the Three-Day Fasting of Repentance starting February 6th. We can extend the trial further on February 26th with the beginning of the Great Fifty-Days Fast. You will then realize that what it means to be a resurrected and realized being in Christ our Lord.

Fr. George Pulikkottil

On January 28, Mr. Terry Thomas, 23, passed away. He was a member of the St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Atlanta. The MGOCSM and FOCUS groups have decided to honor Terry by creating a "TERRY THOMAS MEMORIAL FUND." The collection of this amount will continue until Monday, February 27, 2006. Anyone interested in donating, may send a check made payable to **MGOCSM-American Diocese Memo: Terry Thomas Memorial Fund** to Rev. Dn. Philip Mathews, 16 Garden Way, Howell, NY 07731.

Chicago Area Condolence Meeting

On Sunday, January 29, 2006, a large group condolence meeting in honor of the passing of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews II was held at our church from 5.00 pm to 7.30 pm. The program began in evening prayers especially remembering our former bava thirumeni, followed by the formal meeting. The master of ceremonies for the program was Daniel Achen and included messages from representatives from a number of churches and organizations in the Chicago area, including our Orthodox sister parishes, the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox church, the Syro-Malabar church, the Mar Thoma church, the CSI church, the Syro-Malankara church, the Council of Kerala Churches in Chicago, our American Diocese, the Malankara Orthodox Family Organization, the Sunday school and the Chicago MGOCSM. At this meeting a resolution of condolence was read and passed to be sent to Devalokam. Please especially remember His Holiness in your prayers during the 40 days of mourning (until March 7).

Also, after our church service, we held a short condolence meeting where Paul Achen and a few members of our congregation spoke about their experiences with our late Bava Thirumeni. A resolution of condolence was also presented on behalf of our church which will be sent to Devalokam.

In response to His Holiness' passing, Barnabas Thirumeni released this kalpana for the American Diocese.



The American Diocese
Of
The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Inc.
80-34 Commonwealth Blvd., Bellerose, NY 11426
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PRESIDENT
Mathews Mar Barnabas
Metropolitan

Zachariah Mar Nicholovos
Assistant Metropolitan



January 26, 2006

CK No: 1/2006

Blessings to the Vicars and members of all the parishes in the American Diocese.

Dearlly beloved:

We send this message to you with deep sorrow and great pain. We have received the sad news of the demise of our Bava Thirumeni His Holiness Baselius Marthoma Mathews II, the Catholicos of the East cum Malankara Metropolitan on Thursday, January 26, 2006 at 5:20 PM (Indian time) at the Devalokam Catholicate Aramana. His mortal remains will be entombed at the Shasthankotta Mount Horeb Ashram on Saturday, January 28, 2006 at 1:00 PM.

When Bava Thirumeni was an Achen, he was popularly known as Angel Achen and he attracted the hearts of thousands of Christians as well as non-Christians. Thirumeni became a bishop in 1952 and the Supreme Head of our Church in 1991. His Holiness served our Church meritoriously in varied ways. Thirumeni was well respected by religious and community leaders. Thirumeni was instrumental in the creation of several institutions, which served the community at large. Due to ill health, His Holiness graciously relieved his authorities to his successor, the current Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan on October 31, 2005. We, his children, will dearly miss the affectionate love and sacrificial devotion of His Holiness.

You are requested to show your love and affection to our Bava Thirumeni in a befitting way by conducting condolence meetings and sending condolence messages to our Church Headquarters as soon as possible. Please celebrate Holy Qurbana for His Holiness up to March 7, 2006, the fortieth day after the death of His Holiness.

May the blessings of God Almighty be showered upon us all.

mathewbarnabas
Mathews Barnabas Metropolitan

Our Father, who art in heaven.....

NOT YET THERE, BUT PRAYING HARD... TOGETHER

Fr. Dr. K.M. George

The large worship tent at the World Council of Churches (WCC) 9th Assembly will be a unique space and one of the main features of the Assembly life. Some 3,700 participants coming from churches from all over the world will gather twice a day under its white ceiling to celebrate their faith, hope and fellowship in Jesus Christ and to pray for greater unity.

The WCC Assembly, the largest and most representative gathering of Christian churches from across the globe, will be a praying assembly. Its theme is itself a prayer: "God, in your grace, transform the world." Its deliberations and discussions, its policies and programs will be shaped by the spirit of prayer to the triune God - the Creator, Sustainer and Savior of all. The worship tent in Porto Alegre will symbolize the declared goal of the WCC to be a space where churches call one another to visible unity in one faith and one loving communion to worship the triune mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And yet, the Christians who gather there will painfully recall that they remain divided for reasons of history, belief, cultural practices and institutional structures. All will be sadly aware that they cannot yet hold a common Eucharistic celebration or any sacramental worship or, even less, an "ecumenical liturgy". But this will not prevent them from expressing their fervent and prayerful hope for the unity in Christ their Savior, and affirming their common faith and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit who leads us into the truth.

As those gathered at the 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre come together in simple and joyful acts of prayer and song, some questions will be uppermost in their minds:

- What is it that prevents Christians from perfecting and celebrating our faith and communion in Christ our common Lord?
- What are the doctrinal and historical obstacles that keep our churches divided?
- What should we do now to witness to Christ crucified and risen as one united body of Christ?

In its search for answers to these questions, the Assembly will seek insight and inspirations from these times of prayer and worship together.

The beauty of diversity

The great diversity of cultures and spiritual traditions represented in the daily prayers will undoubtedly provoke amazement among those present for the first time at such a global event.

Diversity is God's gift to humanity, and the WCC Assembly and its worship are planned to bring out its beauty in many ways. Prayers and hymns, signs and symbols, rites and rituals drawn from various streams of Christian tradition will find their appropriate place in the worship life.

Yet, care will be taken not to mix them up in a way that masks the particular identity of a

FROM PG. 6 as far as possible, every tradition will be represented in its integrity. To this end, the Assembly Worship Committee has given much thought to the reflections of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. Following the recommendations of the Commission, the Assembly's prayer life has been organized as inter-confessional or confessional services.

Whereas inter-confessional common prayer in the mornings will draw on the liturgical resources of many confessions and traditions, the evening services will mostly be in the form of what the Special Commission describes as confessional common prayer, planned by a confessional family or tradition for the Assembly as a whole.

However, one confessional family can invite another to lead a confessional service jointly if they both are in a position that allows them to celebrate worship together. That would be the case, for instance, of the evening prayer prepared by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which has invited the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) to join in.

"By inviting our Reformed brothers and sisters to lead with us this evening prayer, prepared following a Lutheran liturgy, we wanted to give a tangible expression to our broader ecumenical witness and to our commitment to the ecumenical movement," says Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, LWF general secretary.

Repentance and Thanksgiving

The Assembly fellowship in prayer is conceived in a wide framework of repentance, celebration and sharing. The intercessory prayers in the daily worship will no doubt be a moving experience for many. True to the calling of the church, the Assembly will carry in its prayer the whole world with its pain and suffering, its hope and joy. This will be an act of spirituality, offering the whole creation back to its creator in repentance and in joyful thanksgiving, so that the world may be transformed.

Transformation of human persons, of sociopolitical structures, of our own churches and institutions in view of the Kingdom of God is central to the Assembly's theme and to the ecumenical movement. The Assembly will pray with one voice for the reign of God in the daily life of our world.

In many ways, the Assembly worship will be an anticipation of our hope in the essential unity of God's world in spite of the present divisions and divergences. The Christian unity to which the WCC member churches aspire is not for the sake of the Council or even the ecumenical movement, but for the unity of all humankind and of the creation.

Together, those present in Porto Alegre shall listen to the Word of God that recreates the world, and together, they shall offer themselves to the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms our lives.

* Fr Dr K.M. George served as moderator of the WCC program committee 1998-2006, and is principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kerala, India.

MGOCSM 1-Day Retreat

MGOCSM started off the New Year with its annual Chicago MGOCSM One-Day Winter Conference on January 21, 2006 at St. Gregorios Cathedral in Bellwood. Over 50 youth, accompanied by Aghens from all our churches in the Chicago Region, studied the theme of "Praying in the Holy Spirit" as taken from Acts 4:23-31. Rev. Dn. Gheevarghese John was the main speaker at the Conference.

Gheevarghese Chemachen noted that oftentimes the Holy Spirit is given less prominence when one thinks about God. He stressed the mistake in this type of thinking as he introduced the Holy Spirit to us from a scriptural point of view, from "the spirit of God swept over the face of the water" in Genesis 1:2 to Psalms 51:11 "and do not take your holy spirit from me" in the Old Testament to the many references in the New Testament, especially Christ's charge to His disciples in Matthew 28:19 to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This demonstrated the constant presence and recognition of the Holy Spirit throughout the Scriptures, with His position in the Trinity affirmed by Jesus Christ Himself. From this understanding, Gheevarghese Chemachen moved to discuss the function of the Holy Spirit in 1) Holy Baptism, 2) helping us in the process of being saved, 3) helping us understand Jesus Christ's mercy in the context of the Law and 4) witnessing Christ in our daily lives. Finally, he discussed the Holy Spirit's role in our lives as a Comforter and Helper, Counselor and Teacher and Healer. Gheevarghese Chemachen closed by reminding us that the Holy Spirit was instilled in us at our baptism and, with faith like a mustard seed, we can tap into the great power of the Holy Spirit within us to do great things in our lives. To do this, we must strive for perfection and start a life of continuous prayer within the Body of Christ, culminating weekly in the Holy Eucharist.

To strengthen this theme in our hearts, there were group activities, group discussion times and times for group prayer, which were all both enjoyable and effective. The day was truly a blessing and a benefit for all the youth from throughout our region who were able to attend this conference.

2005 Houston New Years' Retreat

This past New Years', a few members of our church youth made a trip to Houston, Texas to participate in the annual MGOCSM New Years' Retreat hosted by St. Thomas Church, Houston. Leju Yohannan, Jason Thomas, Justin Joy, and Steve Thomas made the trek to Texas for the retreat held from December 28th to January 1st, which featured speakers from a wide array of backgrounds. Assistant Metropolitan H.G. Zacharias Mar Nicholovos and Rev. Fr. Alexander J. Kurien were two of the speakers at the conference. The Very Rev. Fr. Michael Dahulich from St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Tenny Thomas from Columbia University, who are two speakers that are familiar to our own MGOCSM, were also featured at the retreat. This year's theme was coined after the well-known Gatorade advertisement: Is it in you? The theme was created based on Galatians 2:20 which reads, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." Those who attended learned that God has always been in them and will continue to be in them as they continue their walk with Christ. The retreat ended with Holy Qurbana on New Years' Day. Those who attended enjoyed a time of fellowship and fun with church clergy and MGOCSM members from around the country. – Steve Thomas

2005 OCF College Conference

On December 26, 2005, three members of the Chicago MGOCSM traveled to Antiochian Village in Bolivar, Pennsylvania to take part in the annual Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) College Conference. Held once a year, the OCF College Conference brings together Orthodox college students from all over the country in order to enrich their understanding about the faith as well as promote fellowship between students. Almost every orthodox archdiocese was represented in the Conference. Representing the Malankara Orthodox Church and our MGOCSM was Arun Varghese, Gibson Mammen and Neetha Mammottle. With more than 300 participants attending, this year's Conference was successful to say the least. The incredible organization of the program along with the various activities and amazing speakers made the college conference an event to be remembered.

"Abide in Me, and I in You" (John 15:4-5) was this year's theme and there was no better individual to elucidate this theme than the key speaker V. Rev. Thomas Hopko, dean of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Fr. Hopko gave three incredible sessions on how to incorporate the theme into our lives. He also gave one very detailed session on the Bible and its implications in the Orthodox Church. The 2005 college conference did more than just educate the participants on the theme. The event was a great opportunity to share friendships and knowledge with Orthodox students from all over the United States and I recommend all of our college students to participate in next year's OCF College Conference.
– Arun Varghese

MGOCSM NEWS CONTD. BACK PG.



Welcome the newly elected office bearers for the 2006 year:

1- Mrs. Annamma Kuriakose

2- Mrs. Lilly Varghese

Executive Members by ward:

The next meeting will be held on February 12 after the Holy Qurbana.

1- Sosamma Joseph

2- Lisy Koshy

3- Mariamma Thomas

4- Mini Jacob

Sunday School

Learning to Live the Life

were conducted on January 8, 2006.

Meeting was held on Jan 22 after Holy Qurbana. 60% of the meeting.

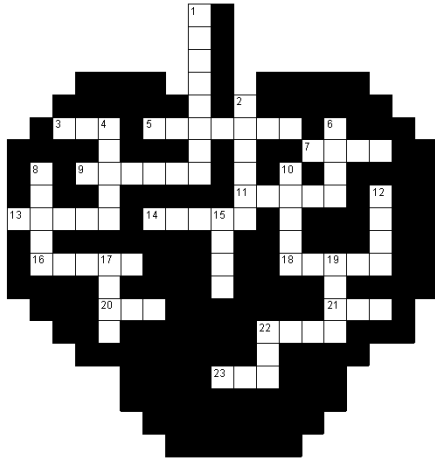
3. The monthly Sunday School Teachers Meeting for January was held on Saturday, January 28 at Church at 11.00AM. The topic of discussion was suicide. The Orthodox Church teaches us that life is a gift from God and that we have to preserve and protect this life. To help understand this better, we compared the situations of Judas and Jonah and considered the impact of social and psychological issues. In summary, our lives are God's, and we have no right to end them. We should do our best to maximize the use of the talents He has given us for His Will to be done on earth as long as we can.

4. Sunday School Camp, for Grades 2 thru 8, will be conducted at Conference Point Center near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin from June 22 thru 25. Dn. Aju Mathews & Dn. Gregory Varghese will lead the camp. There will be a meeting after church on February 5th to discuss the plans and distribute registration forms and fliers. Please contact coordinators Stacy Thomas, Sibyl Thomas or Arun Varghese for more information.

5. Parent Coordinators' meeting was held on Sunday, January 8 after the Holy Qurbana. The parent coordinators have decided to plan, with other parents in each class, programs to help the students develop closer relationships with their classmates outside of church.

6. The centralized exams will be held on Sunday, June 25 at Church at 1.00PM for grades 5, 8 and 10. Jerry Panicker will coordinate special review sessions with the teachers and students of each class to help prepare the students for the exams.

Creation



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| <p>Across</p> <p>3. God removed one of these from man to make woman</p> <p>5. Creatures</p> <p>7. What God used to water the Garden</p> <p>9. To make from nothing</p> <p>11. Our planet</p> <p>13. Healing type plants</p> <p>14. Eve was the first one</p> | <p>16. Little night lights</p> <p>18. Grew in the garden: one was of life; one was of the knowledge of good and evil</p> <p>20. The heavens</p> <p>21. First woman</p> <p>22. The lesser light that rules the night</p> <p>23. The greater light that rules the day</p> | <p>Down</p> <p>1. Another name for the Garden of Eden</p> <p>2. The _____ of Eden</p> <p>4. They fly in the air</p> <p>6. These swim in the seas</p> <p>8. These are sown to grow plants: fruits reproduce by these</p> | <p>10. Apples, oranges, and bananas</p> <p>12. God created our earth in 6 of these</p> <p>15. First man</p> <p>17. What God did on the 7th day</p> <p>19. Where God planted the first garden</p> <p>22. Adam was the first one</p> |
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Congratulations to January's prize winner: Cyatharine Alias

The correct answers to last month's puzzle: ACROSS-2) James, 4) Nathanael, 8) Andrew, 9) Didymus; DOWN-1) John, 2) Judas, 3) Mathew, 5) Lebbaeus, 6) Peter, 7) Philip

BIRTHDAY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1. Ina Abraham
1. Geoffrey George
1. Samuel Mathew
3. Basali Mathew
4. Reena Thomas
5. Jinu Alex



MGOCSM Council Meeting

The MGOCSM of the American Diocese held its first Council meeting for the new year from January 13-15th at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church in Garland, Texas (near Dallas). Diocesan Metropolitan and MGOCSM American Chapter President Mathews Mar Barnabas presided at the weekend meeting. MGOCSM council member James Panicker attended from our region.

The meeting was held to discuss future leadership camp dates and locations, a visit by His Holiness Didymos I, the Mission Trip 2006, the budget and expense report, area reports, reports by the Vice Presidents and National MGOCSM day. This year's MGOCSM Leadership Camp will be held from July 27th – 30th, 2006 at Texas Christian University in Dallas. As in previous years, we will be allowed a number of delegates from each of our Orthodox churches in Chicago to represent our region at the camp. The number of delegate spots from our church is yet to be finalized.

Chicago has been selected to host the Leadership Camp in 2007. I humbly ask that you keep that event in your prayers and hope that God will use Chicago as His example to the Diocese. Stay tuned for further information or contact James Panicker with questions.

James Panicker

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