



GREGORIAN GAZETTE

MARCH 2006

VOL:IV

ISSUE III

Reflections on the Lenten Season

As we all know, we are in the redemptive pilgrim journey of the Great Lent. Along with the Biblical readings and canonical prayers, read also the Lenten Messages of our Catholicos and Diocesan Metropolitan which are published in this edition of the Gregorian Gazette (pages 4 and 5). We are publishing the Bible readings for each day of the Lenten season to be distributed every week, as well. Though we are really busy, try to plan our schedules in such a way as to grow spiritually during the Lenten Season. Take this opportunity seriously, so that we will also walk in Christ like our forefathers did.

Three tips: Do the canonical prayers with full concentration and prostration, meditate on the Biblical readings every day, and try to lead a simple life. May God help us to grow spiritually during the Great Lent.

Thomas Achen and George Achen



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The delegation from the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church to the World Council of Churches (WCC) 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil from February 14-24, 2006, along with Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, the General Secretary of the WCC from the Methodist Church in Kenya.

In a special edition of the Gregorian Gazette to be released on March 12, 2006, Sibyl Thomas will share her experiences from this historic event.

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Women of Faith

Come to the first ever meeting of Women of Faith. It'll be a time of fellowship, fun, and eating!!! Learn what Women of Faith is and how we can all grow into women with a heart for God by studying God's Word!

When: Saturday, March 11, 2006 from 11AM-12PM

Where: Christy John's Place

6330 Lincoln Ave. #2B

Morton Grove, IL 60053

Cell: 630.750.2107 CALL IF YOU NEED RIDES!!

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

- 5. Sunday**– *Second Sunday of Great Lent (Leper)*
MMVS Monthly Meeting & Bible Study
 Reading– Acts 9: 22-31, Romans 3: 27- 4: 5, St. Luke 5: 12-16, 4: 40-41
- 11. Saturday**– **Women of Faith Meeting 11AM-12PM**
KFC Large Group Session @ Church 1-3PM
Sunday School Teachers Meeting @ Church 3.30PM
- 12. Sunday**– *Third Sunday of Great Lent (Paralytic)*
 Idali & Sambar MMVS Sale after Holy Qurbana
Youth Ministry Leaders Meeting after Holy Qurbana
 Reading– Acts. 5: 12-16; 19: 8-12, Romans 5: 1-11, St. Mark 2: 1-12
- 17. Friday**– Memorial of Paulose Mar Sevarios, Metropolitan (1910 - 1962)
- 18. Saturday**– **MGOCSM Annual Lenten Retreat @ Church**
9.30-3.30PM; Guest Speaker Dn. Aju Mathews
- 19. Sunday**– *Fourth Sunday of Great Lent (Canaanite Woman)*
Full Youth Meeting after Holy Qurbana
 Reading– Acts 4: 1-12, Romans 7: 14-25, St. Mathew 15: 21-31
- 22. Wednesday- Mid-Lent Service**
 7PM– Evening Prayer
 7.30PM– Holy Qurbana
 Reading– Acts. 15: 22-23, II Corinthians 9: 1-15, St. John 3: 13-21
 Memorial of Konatt Geevarghese Mar Julius, Metropolitan
- 26. Sunday**– *Fifth Sunday of Great Lent (Crippled Woman)*
MMVS Monthly Meeting and Bible Study
 Reading– I Peter 3: 8-16, Romans 12: 1-15, St. Luke 13: 10-17

Planning Ahead

- April 1**– Yuvajana Prasthanam Meeting
- April 2**– Speech Competitions
- April 8**– Church Retreat
- April 22**– Family Night
- April 23**– Song Competitions
 – MMVS Monthly Meeting & Bible Study
- April 29**– Divyabhodhanam Seminar
- May 14**– Bible Verse Competitions
- June 22-25**– Sunday School Camp 2006
- June 25**– Sunday School Centralized Exams
- July 21-22**– OVBS
- July 29**– Annual Church Picnic
- August 3-6**– MGOCSM Summer Conference

A devotional message from the Supreme Head of our Church, His Holiness
Baselios Marthoma Didymos I, the Catholicos of the East:

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E-mail-orthodox@md4.vsnl.net.in

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The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

Baselios Marthoma Didymos I
CATHOLICOS OF
THE APOSTOLIC THRONE OF
ST. THOMAS
AND MALANKARA METROPOLITAN



CATHOLICATE PALACE
KOTTAYAM - 686 036
KERALA, INDIA

No.33/2006

Blessings to all Our dearly Beloved Parish Vicars, Assistant Vicars, Parish Priests, members of the Managing Committee and all the members of the Parish.

Our dearly beloved in the Lord.

The Holy Lent of our Church for this liturgical year commences on 27th February, 2006. We therefore would, in love, exhort you, the children of the Church, to observe the Holy Lent with all sincerity, reverence and discipline.

We all recognize that there is great importance for fasting and Lenten observances in spiritual life. By this we don't mean a mere forsaking of food. Our mouths, tongues, eyes, ears, in fact all our senses must join in this observance. We must redirect our senses from worldly and sensual enjoyments towards God. We must find more time which should be spent in prayer, meditation and Bible reading. We must particularly pray and fast for enduring peace to reign in our Church. We all must endeavour, during this time to confess our sins before God in order to lead a holy life. We should distance from our mind, all that is evil, all wickedness, all jealousy, hatred and vindictiveness. We must forgive one another. At the same time we must share our food, our clothes and our wealth with those who are poor in our society. Only in this way will our prayers and fasts bear ample fruit.

Our dearly beloved Children, we ask you particularly to remember Us in your prayers as well as all our Church leaders. May God help every one to observe the Holy Lent with true holiness, to participate sincerely in the services of Holy week and genuinely experience the Resurrection of our Lord.

May the Grace and Blessings of the Almighty God abide in you for ever. And may the prayers of the Mother, our God the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Thomas the Apostle of India, our Holy Fathers Mar Gregorios, Mar Dionysius and all the Holy saints be a strong hold for us. Amen.

Our Father in Heaven.....

06 February 2006
Catholicate Aramana
Devalokam, Kottayam.

Lenten Season Prayers:

As prayer and fasting are critical to the Lenten period, our Achen would love to pray with (or for) you. Also, if anyone is available at noon or in the evening, our Achen will come to your house and join you in the daily liturgical prayers. Please feel free to contact Thomas Achen or George Achen at any time.

Please note that George Achen has a new cell phone number: **708.833.0337**. He will be available at all times at this number.

A devotional message from the Metropolitan of the American Diocese, His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas, and the Assistant Metropolitan, His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicolovos:



**The American Diocese
Of
The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Inc.**

80-34 Commonwealth Blvd., Bellerose, NY 11426
Phone: (718) 470 9844/ Fax: (718) 470 9219

PRESIDENT
Mathews Mar Barnabas
Metropolitan



Zachariah Mar Nicolovos
Assistant Metropolitan

February 14, 2006

CK 4/2006

Blessings to the Vicar, office bearers and members of all the parishes in the American Diocese

Dearly beloved,

We are going to observe the Great Lent as a preparation to die with our Lord and to get resurrected with Him. Let us therefore speak on the supreme importance of fasting and prayer. We are all under the dominion of sin to some extent at least and we have to go a long way to attain the perfection that is expected from us.

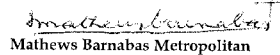
Some might think that a godly life is all that is important and that it is possible without fasting. Then the question arises, why our Lord fasted and prayed for forty days and said that His disciples would fast when the bridegroom is taken from them? (St.Matt. 9:15). Also we find that the disciples fasted. See Acts 13: 2-3. St. Paul refers to fasting when he said, "I pommel my body and subdue it lest after preaching to others, I myself should be disqualified" (I Cor. 9:27). All the saints including Parumala thirumeni grew spiritually through fasting and prayer.

In addition to fasting and public prayers, we must have private prayers also. Our Lord has said, "But when you pray, go into your inner room and shut the door and pray to the Father who is in secret and the Father who sees in secret, will reward you. He also said, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (St. Mk. 6:36).

May the Holy Spirit who drove our Lord to the wilderness to fast and pray (St.Matt. 4:1; St.Mk. 1:12; St. Lk. 4:1) help us to follow His example. May we admonish you to conduct retreats for elders and self-dedication services for children.

May the blessings and mercies of God Almighty be showered up on us all.


Zachariah Mar Nicolovos


Mathews Barnabas Metropolitan

Our Father who art in heaven...

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



a member of the 3rd grade class in our Sunday School. From the first semester of the class, he was selected to be included in

Essay on the Kingdom of Heaven – Joel Chacko

of Heaven means the assembly of God's own people. It is the place of those who know and obey the will of God. In the past, the Jews thought that they were the only selected people of the Kingdom of Heaven. But Jesus taught us that all those who obey and follow his teachings are part of the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, we can say that the church is the Kingdom of Heaven with Jesus as the King and His followers its members. The church contains people of different nationalities, languages, races and creeds. But there are no barriers among the members of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus explained about the Kingdom of Heaven through various parables. In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains that the seeds that fell in good soil produced manifold grain. In the same way, people who obey the Word of God and follow it will be blessed abundantly. In the parable of the seeds and weeds, Jesus says that believers and non-believers will continue to grow until the day of Judgment. Then, on that day, the believers will be chosen by God. In the parable of the net, Jesus tells us that the angels will keep the good people and throw the bad people in the fiery furnace, by the end of age. The parable of the mustard seed and the parable of yeast teach us that, however small we may be, God can bless humble people and transform them into the mighty Kingdom of Heaven.

As member of a spiritual family, we must put aside our self-centeredness and look for the interest of others. We need to love each other, be generous and hospitable, and honor one another through service. We need to comfort one another in times of need and be truthful and forgiving. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mathew 5:3). The poor in spirit are those who recognize the desperate need for God. Also we need to have child-like faith in God. Lastly, we need to pray for one another to live holy lives.

Congratulations to February's prize winner: Sherene Kurien!

Answers to last month's quiz: Across 3. Rib, 5. Animals, 7. Rain, 9. Create, 11. Earth, 13. Herbs, 14. Woman, 16. Stars, 18. Trees, 20. Sky, 21. Eve, 22. Moon, 23. Sun; Down 1. Paradise, 2. Garden, 4. Birds, 6. Fish, 8. Seeds, 10. Fruit, 12. Days, 15. Adam, 17. Rest, 19. Eden, 22. Man

Contest is open to Sunday School students only. If multiple submissions have the same number of correct answers, the prize winner will be selected at random.

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

A Guide to Lent and Easter for Young People

What is Lent All About?

Easter is when we celebrate the rising of Jesus after his death on the Cross. It is a great day: because of Easter, we don't have to be afraid, and we never have to be apart from God. But at one time, we *were* apart from God. We can learn about that time and about why Jesus died on the cross during a season called Lent.

What is Lent good for?

God has given us a great and comforting gift. ... Jesus Christ...But it's easy to forget what God has done for us. During Lent, many Christians try to stop filling up with junk food and TV and all these other things to make room for God again. If we clear away some of our comforts for a time, there will be more room for God.

Some ways to remember what God did

Decide with an adult what you can do to remember how much Jesus gave up for you. Try to give up something each week. You could have a dessert-free day, or a dessert-free week. How about a TV-free week? If you give up dessert, or videos, or anything that costs, you could take the money your family saves, and help someone who doesn't have a home or job. Can you think of other things you can give up for a few weeks? Fill up with something good: spend some time learning about the days before Jesus died. Read in your Bible about how Jesus was arrested and crucified. Imagine what it would have been like to be with him at that time.

How has the great gift of salvation changed your life or changed you during this Lent?

Write a short essay describing this time of fasting and praying and how it has brought you to a closer and more tight-knit relationship with the Lord.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

1. Dincy Poullose
1. Alex Jr.
5. Shane Jacob
5. Grace Geevarghese
5. Izabel Panicker
6. Ashley Oomen
7. Susan George



Sunday School
Learning to Live the Life

Coordinators' meeting was held on February 9 after the Holy Qurbana. Coordinators have decided to organize fun events for the students

It was heartening to note that the eighth graders met at the residence of their teacher, Susan George in Gurnee, and prepared cupcakes for a bake sale after Holy Qurbana. The bake sale raised \$115 towards the Sunday School charity drive. The students enjoyed the fellowship.

The next Teachers' Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 11, 2006 at church at 3.30PM. The topic of discussion will be "Lent, Fast and Meditation."

Sunday School Camp, for Grades 2 through 8, will be conducted at Conference Point Center near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin from June 22-25. Dn. Aju Mathews & Dn. Gregory Varghese will lead the camp. Please remember that **registration forms are due on Sunday, March 12, 2006**, so be sure to return the registration forms, with the registration fee, to the camp coordinators on time, as the forms will be critical to the planning for the camp.

Also, please note that there were some concerns with regard to housing for camp participants. To alleviate the concerns, we will no longer be staying in cabins, rather in one large house with bathroom and shower facilities inside it.

Please contact coordinators Stacy Thomas, Sibyl Thomas or Arun Varghese for more information.

On February 11, KFC Large Group meeting was held at church. The topic of discussion was the history of the Nicene Creed, with emphasis on the Apostle's Creed. Kids from 3rd grade through high school participated in the morning's activities. It was a blessing for all who attended. Please be sure to bring your children for the next session which will be held on March 11 from 1.30-3.30PM.

Divyabhodhanam

We have started our second book, *Deva Janam* (People of God), learning about lay ministry and the role of lay people in the ministry of Christ. The next meeting will be held on March 5 for Sunday group and March 7 for Tuesday group.

Please contact Mr. Paul Babu, Ms. Marykutty Mathews, or George Achen for more information.

If you have interest in sponsoring an edition of the Gregorian Gazette, please contact George Varghese at 847.691.9425 email us at info@gregoriangazette.com.

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