



GREGORIAN GAZETTE

SEPTEMBER 2006

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ISSUE VII



THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE EVER-VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

Fr. George Pulikkottil, D. Th.

“Hail Mary, full of grace, our Lord is with thee ([Luke 1:28](#)). Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, our Lord Jesus Christ ([Luke 1:42](#)). O Virgin Saint Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at all times, and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

The Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God (*Theotokos*), Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15 each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition and in the Greek *kimisis*) or "falling-asleep" of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the *Theotokos*.

The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He saw His mother and His disciple John and said to the Virgin Mary, "Woman, behold your son!" and to John, "Behold your mother!" ([John 19:25-27](#)). From that hour, the Apostle took care of the *Theotokos* in his own home. Along with the biblical reference in Acts 2:14 that confirms that the Virgin Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the tradition of the Church holds that she remained in the home of the Apostle John in Jerusalem, continuing a ministry in word and deed.

At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see her. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ himself descended and carried her soul into heaven.

Following her repose, her body was taken in procession and laid in a tomb

in Hama, Syria.

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Photographs in this edition of the Gazette courtesy of :

DLC– Jimmy Panicker & Sibyl Thomas

Family and Youth Conference– Elizabeth Varghese

MGOCSM Summer Conference– Arun Varghese & Manju Mathai

Apostolic Visit of His Holiness– Elizabeth Varghese

Gazette Staff and Board

Fr. M. K. Thomas

Fr. George Pulikkottil

Liju Paul (Malayalam Ed.)

Liju Varghese (English Ed.)

3. Sunday — Third Sunday after Shoonoyo

Reading — St. James 5:1-6, II Corinthians 10:1-7,
St. Matthew 17:22-27

10. Sunday — Fourth Sunday after Shoonoyo

Reading — I Peter 5:1-5, I Corinthians 3:16-23,
St. Matthew 5:38-48

14. Thursday — Festival of Holy Cross**16. Saturday – Women of Faith Meeting @ Christy
John’s 11AM-12.30PM****17. Sunday — First Sunday after Festival of Holy
Cross**

Reading - Acts. 11:2-10, Romans 2:28-3:8,
St. Luke 11:33-41

**23. Saturday — Memorial of Alvarez Mar Julius,
Metropolitan****24. Sunday — Second Sunday after Festival of Holy
Cross**

Reading - Acts. 5:17-32, I Corinthians 2:14-3:9,
St. Matthew 16:5-12

**28. Thursday — Memorial of Dr. Philipose Mar
Theopilos, Metropolitan****Planning Ahead**

October 21– OctoberFest @ Church 2-9Pm

November 4&5– Perunal @ Church

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? Please contact:

Julie Polachira-815.295.2469; jpolachira26@yahoo.com

Stacy Thomas-847.722.0446; stacy_thomas79@yahoo.com

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

Greetings to the faithful in Christ.
Grace to you, and peace from
God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14)

In all of Scripture, I would say, this is my favorite verse. It has touched me more than any other. So powerful are these Words, which are inspired by God, through the hands of the Apostle, that it has sustained me throughout my ministry. The Apostle Paul speaks to us, even today, in our modern world, of the mission and goal of every believing Christian. Your goal is to press toward the Cross of Christ, in suffering and in all joy, confident that we have assurance with Christ Jesus, remembering always that He is with you; for in the end you should look upward and receive, through grace and mercy, the prize of salvation in Christ Jesus.

Only a few weeks ago, I was with you, witnessing and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. During the conference, I received much strength and power from your prayers and love. For that I thank you. Indeed, I believe the demonic spirits were diligently at work since they knew the power of the Word of God that was to be preached, but the devil cannot stop the work of God; for God is great, and Christ has defeated Satan through the power of the Cross—*if God is for us, who then can be against us*. All in all, I saw your faithfulness, and how Christ was working in you. All of you are pressing toward the goal, carrying your crosses and witnessing in your struggles, and you will receive the prize of salvation, guarded that you continuously seek Christ in your life, and do His will. In doing so, seek Christ by faith and by doing His work, that is, as St. James says, faith without works is to no avail. Do the works that are pleasing to God, not to attain any merit, but that through your works others may see your faith. Then what is your faith: it is the Apostolic preaching, as according to Scripture, handed down by the Fathers, and lived out in the life of the Orthodox Church. Seek your faith and do your works in the context of the true faith and apostolic doctrine. This is the command of the Apostle Paul and my admonition.

I want to encourage all you in Christ Jesus, to trust in Him and to live by faith, doing the will of God. Pray for me as God shows me the next great work that He has prepared for me. As always, I am praying for you and your work there in Chicago.

In Christ,

Your fellow servant in the Lord,

Dn. Gheevarghese John



Looking Back at MGOCSM in Chicago-Philip Mathew, Seminarian

In New York, at least among deacons and seminarians, Chicago has a reputation rapidly developing area in our Diocese. On a number of occasions, stories were about its zealous, faithful young people, working under the leadership of pious and shepherds; stories about a place without much politics, stories about a united and thinking community of men and women. And my initial contacts with people from Chicago, at this year's Family Conference and before, positively impressed me. But being the kind of person who needs to see something for himself more often than not, I wasn't yet fully convinced, and I looked forward to my stay in Chicago not only to reconnect with new friends, but also to see what all the "hype" was about. With this combined sense of excitement and uncertainty, I began my participation in this year's Chicago Conference. I learned a lot from the presentations of Dn. Gheevarghese John, as well as the devotional addresses of the other clergy and seminarians. My participation in various small groups offered me the opportunity to learn from others and share from my own experience. But more than this, my experience with you all, both during the conference and in the week following, was spiritually uplifting. I got to see young people work and pray together, in spite of jurisdictional and factional issues which try to divide the Body of Christ. I saw how you welcomed strangers as brothers, even to the point of wishing them "Happy Birthday" every three hours or so in a very public way (and who can forget that silly game?). I saw the devotion of your shepherds, who would spare no effort to bring you closer to God, inspiring deacons and seminarians who, in whatever way ordained by God, wish to lay down their lives, like Christ, for His sheep. I saw the simple faith of men and women, uncomplicated by lesser concerns, however necessary: a faith that is rooted solely in Christ, a faith that saves and frees from fears and sufferings, from disease and death; a faith which embodies the saying of St. Makarios the Great: "If you knew Who is with you, you would not fear anything the world has to offer." And you *do* know. A story is told about the origins of the Orthodox Church in Russia. St. Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, sought a religion for himself and his people. He sent representatives to different lands to investigate Roman Catholicism, Islam, and Judaism, but he wasn't impressed with their reports. Finally, his emissaries returned from Constantinople, where they looked into Orthodoxy by visiting the Great Church and attending the Divine Liturgy. They told the prince "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men." Whether or not this is how it exactly happened, the story contains an important kernel of truth. Wherever Christian people are united with their leaders at the altar of the Lord, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (II Tim. 2.15), and breaking the Bread of Life (cf. Acts 2.42, Jn. 6.35), God dwells among them, in that moment and throughout their personal and communal lives. God dwells among you, and you have responded to His presence. This places a burden on you, not only to continue to respond as you have and are, but to witness, to teach, to share what has been given to you with those who do not have it or recognize it, in our Diocese and beyond. When I was with you, I felt certain that you would naturally do this, and so the feeling which arose in my heart is one that I'm sure resonates with you as you think of how God has blessed you and your community in Chicago; it is summed up in a prayer which the priest prays silently during the course of every Holy Qurbana: "We also, O Lord, Your weak and sinful servants, offer You thanksgiving, and acknowledge Your loving-kindness unto all and for

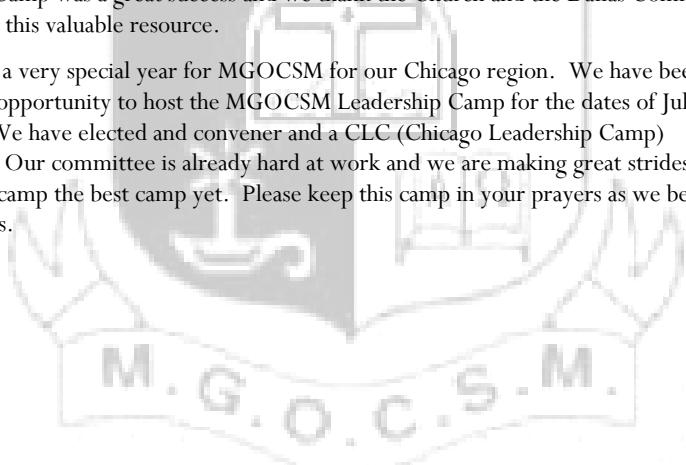
MGOCSM Leadership Camp 2006: Dallas, TX

Jimmy Panicker, Diocesan MGOCSM Council Member

Chicago MGOCSM participated in our Annual Diocese level MGOCSM Leadership Camp. This year it was held in Dallas, TX at Texas Christian University. Fifteen MGOCSM members from our church and sister churches in the Chicago area flew out to Dallas along with our Thomas Achen to learn and participate in this years Leadership Camp. The camp was from July 27th to July 30th and it focused around the theme "The Essence of Leadership is Servanthood", "For many are called, but few are chosen..." St. Matthew 22:14. There at the camp we learned important values on what it means to be called a Christian and to serve and not to be served. We were blessed with the honored main speakers, Bishop Youssef, from our sister Ecumenical Orthodox Church, and Dr. Carlton, renowned author of many Orthodox Spiritual books. These pillars of faith educated us on the ways our rich faith and desperate need to live prayerful lifestyle.

At the camp, leadership breakout sessions were designed to help us learn new and innovative leadership techniques. The main goal of these leadership camps is to develop current leaders of the church to great leaders of the church. The things we learn at these camps should be brought back to our home regional area to enhance our spiritual growth amongst our youth and our whole church. Developing a whole lifestyle of spirituality rather than living in simple day to day mechanics of our faith. Overall, the Dallas MGOCSM Camp was a great success and we thank the Church and the Dallas Committee for giving us this valuable resource.

Next year is a very special year for MGOCSM for our Chicago region. We have been granted the opportunity to host the MGOCSM Leadership Camp for the dates of July 26-29, 2007. We have elected and convened a CLC (Chicago Leadership Camp) committee. Our committee is already hard at work and we are making great strides in making this camp the best camp yet. Please keep this camp in your prayers as we begin our humble steps.



The Gregorian Gazette is looking for a columnist to write about current events around the world. If you are interested in at least writing one such article, please email info@gregoriangazette.com.

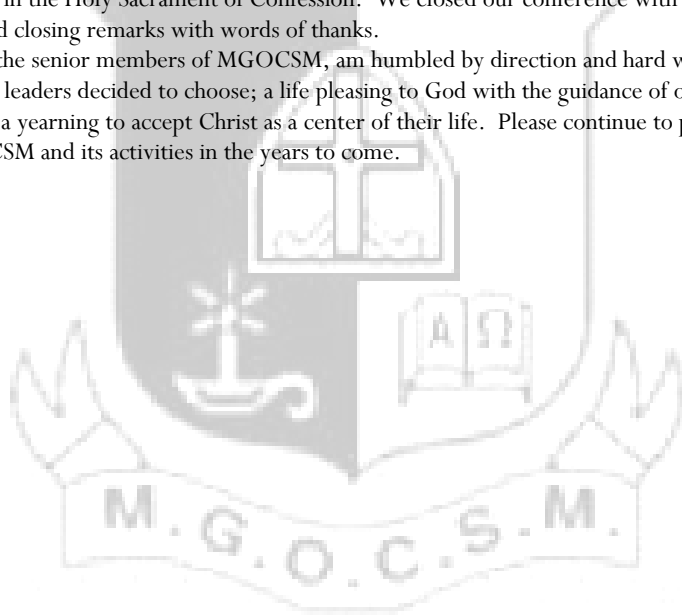
Regional Summer Conference 2006

Jimmy Panicker, Diocesan MGOCSM Council Member

This year we hosted our annual summer conference at Taylor University, Upland Indiana. Our theme for the conference mirrored out the theme for the year, 2 Chronicles 7:14. We felt it was appropriate that as the year prepared us to understand this verse it would only serve purposeful to blend everything into one culminated retreat. Indeed, it was truly a blessing for all those that came. Personally, I was amazed to see so many new young faces eager to learn about God. Deacon Gheevarghese John from Philadelphia was our main speaker and he spoke about the theme in detail. Semassen explained to us the meaning of being called 'God's people,' humbling ourselves in the presence of the Almighty and last but not least, to seek His face and to turn from the face of sin and temptation.

Many of the youth participated in skits, small group sessions, praise/worship, and team sport activities. These opportunities gave many of our young people a chance to express their faith in many ways. As the conference progressed we moved into a time of Confession and meditation. For some, it was a new experience but many of our youth participated in the Holy Sacrament of Confession. We closed our conference with the Holy Qurbana and closing remarks with words of thanks.

I, as one of the senior members of MGOCSM, am humbled by direction and hard work these young leaders decided to choose; a life pleasing to God with the guidance of our Church and a yearning to accept Christ as a center of their life. Please continue to pray for our MGOCSM and its activities in the years to come.

**MGOCSM PICNIC**

On Saturday, July 8, 2006 the Chicago MGOCSM held a picnic at Beren's Park in Elmhurst, IL. The picnic started off with a small group of people coming together to hear about what fellowship meant, share what they were thankful for, and pray for the event, each other, and MGOCSM. About 30-40 youth came out to spend time together playing sports, eating, and just catching up. The picnic was a great opportunity to relax in the middle of summer and enjoy each others company before the 2006 MGOCSM Summer Conference.

AMERICAN DIOCESE FAMILY & YOUTH CONFERENCE 2006

Sally Korah and Betty Gladstone

The 2006 Family and Youth Conference was held at Kerhonkson, New York from July 12th through 15th. The theme was "In the world, you will have tribulation but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (St. John 16: 33). Besides Diocesan Bishops, we were also blessed with the presence of Bava Thirumeni. The speakers at the conference were Fr. Paul N. Tarazi, Mr. Zachariah Mani and Mr. Tenny Thomas.

How can we be of good cheer? St Paul says "Love never fails." First of all, we have to be courageous and courage is linked to love and truth. Love is the ultimate courage to unite the broken. We have to have courage to forgive others. We have to be compassionate to be of good cheer. To overcome the trouble in the world, we are leaving you with 4 questions (discussed in the groups) to answer to yourself.

1. How can we be more merciful and compassionate within our homes?
2. How can we be more merciful and compassionate in the Church?
3. How can we be more merciful and compassionate at work place?
4. How can we be more merciful and compassionate in the Society?

42 persons made the 820 mile trip to New York to attend the conference. The fellowship during the bus journey, the organization of the conference, particularly the food and the stay were enjoyable. The most colorful and enjoyable part of the conference was the Holy Qurbana conducted on Saturday, July 15 led by HH Moran Mar Baselios Didymus I. We all had a wonderful trip and we actively participated in the conference as group leaders, youth representatives, devotional addressers, retreat leaders and sports competition winners. Our youth also presented well a skit with a touching message. We would like to thank Thomas Achen, George Achen and the Managing Committee for their guidance, encouragement and support.

Bava Thirumeni's First Apostolic Visit to Chicago

On Saturday July 15, His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Diduymus I arrived in Chicago to begin his first Apostolic visit after becoming the head of our Church. Accompanying him were Baranabas Thirumeni, Nicholovas Thirumeni, and Makarios Thirumeni. That Sunday, the four Orthodox parishes in Chicago gathered at Dominican University to take part in the Holy Qurbana, celebrated by His Holiness, and the Reception that followed. Over 1,000 people were present and were truly blessed by Bava Thirumeni's presence. Immediately following Holy Qurbana was lunch and the Reception. At the felicitation function following the Holy Qurbana, many representatives from other churches as well as political dignitaries expressed their gratitude and honor for being a part of such a historic event in our Church.

As part of the Apostolic visit to Chicago, His Holiness visited our parish on Wednesday, July 19. Over 300 people came to greet Thirumeni and to listen to his words. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who labored to make this a most memorable event. To the little kids who dressed up and made a candle-lit path, to the altar boys who beautifully sang the welcome song, and to the multitude who showed up in spite of the evening rush hour traffic. Please continue to pray for His Holiness as he continues to lead and guide the Church, as well as for all the bishops serving the Holy Church.

Sunday School Learning to Live the Life

held on Saturday, August 26 at church from 10AM-2PM was well attended. We teachers and parents, who came and made it a very enjoyable event for the start. The street block party was also on that day and it proved to be a blessing. The closed and children could play without fear of vehicles moving around. The parents' help with the organizing and cooking is appreciated. We thank George Achen for his spiritual blessing and guidance.

The new Academic year starts on Sunday September 3 at 8.45AM. Parents are requested to bring their children at 8.40AM. Around 90 students and 25 teachers are expected to participate in the program this year. Sunday, September 17, immediately after Holy Qurbana, the first Parents' Teachers' Meeting will be held. All parents are requested to attend.

The Charity Drive for 2005-2006 has reached \$1287.00 against a target of \$1500.00. We are hoping that the rest of the containers sent home with the students will be returned and thus we will reach our target.



Church Picnic: On Saturday, July 29, our church held its annual church picnic at John's Park in the North Area. It was a great time of fellowship for all those who attended and took part in the after George Achen led us in prayer, everyone enjoyed the delicious food prepared by Ms. Lizzy Koshy from 2-4PM. If you have any questions, please contact your deacon or member.

out, make sure and plan to attend next year's!

Divyabodhanam

Spiritual Organizations Meeting

The culminating seminar for the third book, Prathyasa Kiranangal (*Race of Hope*) by Rev. Dan O'Neil. Spiritual organizations Saturday, August 26 at church. Sunday August 27 at HQ. Around 25 representatives from various Youth Ministries, Managing Committee, Building Committee, Diocesan Council, Sunday School, MMVS, Gazette, Family Conference, Prayer Group, Library, O.V.S, MGOCSM, and Auditor attended this inaugural meeting. The meeting began with Marykutty Mathews, Mr. Paul Babu of George Achen, Thomas Achen stating that we are Christ. We have to touch the lives of others. We have to dedicate

ourselves and evaluate how we are doing. George Achen added that whatever we do should be for the glory of God. We are Christ in action. The major discussion centered on how to make the attendance of the HQ a more spiritual experience. Several suggestions that came up included that 1) no food is served on Sundays before 11.30AM, 2) No food or drink be allowed in the Church, 3)

Announcements to be given to the Secretary the prior day by 10PM, 4) Teenagers/Youth to be requested to stand in front. It was also discussed that a Yahoo group be set up for better

communication and coordination between all the Spiritual organizations and to maintain a common calendar to avoid overlapping and conflict. Abraham Panicker was designated as the Technical support person for this. It was also suggested that all special events' videos and photographs taken should be given to George Achen to support our outreach ministries. It was also suggested that as soon as a program is done, the responsible officials are to forward a report to the Gazette News editor and webmaster. The meeting requested that at least 2 HQ in a month should be conducted in English. The meeting ended with prayer and pizza.

People of the Bible Contd.

7. I am the first Christian martyr. I became known as a man "full of grace and power" whose speaking was inspired by the Spirit of God. I had to stand trial before the Jewish Council. I accused them of betraying and murdering their Messiah, they stoned me.
8. I was known for physical strength. Samson was born to aged parents. I was a Nazirite set apart for God's service and therefore did not cut my hair or drink alcohol. A Philistine woman named Delilah cut off my hair. But my hair, the secret of his strength, began to grow again.
9. I was anointed by Samuel to be the first king of Israel. When David gained fame as a warrior and I became jealous and tried to kill him.
10. I sat at Jesus' feet, listening to his teaching, while my sister, Martha, was "distracted with much serving." Jesus praised me for my devotion to him. When my brother Lazarus died, I wept at Jesus' feet and Jesus also wept. After Jesus raised Lazarus, I lavishly anointed Jesus' feet with ointment and dried them with my hair.
11. I was the cupbearer to the King Artaxerxes of Persia. Hearing of the ruined condition of Jerusalem, I prayed and then asked Artaxerxes to send him to Jerusalem as the governor.
12. I refused to go to Nineveh, although God told me to warn that city of God's anger. Instead, I went to sea and when a storm arose, I was thrown overboard. God sent a fish to save me. I went to Nineveh and warned the people of coming destruction. All the people promptly repented in the hope that God would spare the city.

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. Please submit with your name in the Gregorian Gazette Submissions box in the library.

Answers to Last Month's Quiz: 1. Abel; 2. Elijah; 3. Hosea; 4. Hagar; 5. Elizabeth; 6. Stephan

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

6. Tejus Mathew
6. James Geevarghese
10. Alex Oommen
11. Anand Poozhikunnel
14. Anandu Dileep
15. Jennifer Joseph



FROM FRONT PAGE Apostle Thomas arrived at Jerusalem only three days after her repose and desired to see her body, but the tomb was found to be empty! The bodily assumption of the *Theotokos* was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles. This great Feast of the Church teaches us a fundamental of our faith—the Resurrection of the body. In the case of the *Theotokos*, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. Like those who gathered around the body of the Virgin Mary, we gather around our departed loved ones and commend their souls into the hands of Christ. As we remember those who have reposed in the faith before us and have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come.

We also affirm through this Feast as we journey toward our heavenly abode that the Mother of God intercedes for us. Through Christ she has become the mother of all of the children of God, embracing us with divine love. So let us repeatedly say the awesome prayer ‘Hail Mary’ with the heavenly angelic groups, Elizabeth and all other holy Fathers, Mothers and believers of the Church. May her prayers be a fortress for the whole universe; “Hail Mary.....”

COME ONE, COME ALL!

Enjoy Festivities & Entertainment!

Fun & Games, Food & Delicacies, Drama & Fellowship!

OCTOBERFEST 2006

Where: St. Gregorios Church, Oak Park

When: October 21 Saturday 2PM to 9PM

Games and Fun activities conducted by the Youth of the Church

Sales of food -American and Kerala style

Drama in the evening presented by
St. Gregorios Arts Club, Oak Park.

Don't miss this opportunity to be part of these activities to raise funds for church charity drive 2006

To assist/volunteer, please contact Saji Korah
(630.832.7862) or e-mail skorah@sbcglobal.net

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