



Melbourne Orthodox Cathedral Bulletin

OCTOBER 2023



1836 - 1923

Late Lamented H.G. ALVARES MAR JULIUS
Metropolitan of Goa, India & Ceylon

COMMEMORATING 100 YEARS

ST. MARY'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, MELBOURNE.

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VICAR'S DESK

Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese

Dearly beloved in Jesus Christ,

Individual and individuality are important in the teachings of the Church. The church expects its members to respect each other. When we practice that, we become refined individuals. Love cannot exist in a heart filled with violence.

The first murder mentioned in the Bible happened out of envy. The story of man's desire to end anything that blocks his way to achieve position and greatness begins there and continues still. The longing to become great by stamping on others has frozen the human conscience. Education aims to make us better humans but it can't take away unhealthy competition. In the highly competitive world, most often human feelings become the casualty. The parable of the Good Samaritan, in the present world, is regarded only as a story.

On the one side, we hear about physical violence and murder; on the other side, there is mental torture. Only a thoroughly vile individual can derive pleasure from causing the downfall of another. Those who spend their time and energy on raising baseless allegations about others will never experience happiness and peace of mind.

Mutual respect is necessary even in family relations. Lack of respect towards each other weakens relations. Mutual respect between the couple will set the children on the right path. The meeting of the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth mentioned in the Bible is an example of mutual respect and concern. When the mothers showed respect to each other the babies inside their wombs were also elated.

Though science has made revolutionary changes in the life of man, it couldn't reduce his narrow-mindedness and violent thoughts. We cannot change the nature of a wild beast by giving it a disguise.

"The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" (Gen.4:10). The innocent blood spilled on the soil cries out to heaven even today.

Let us wait for a generation devoid of enmity and vengeance. We can begin this in our families, and in our society.

May God bless you all.

Yours loving

AJI ACHEN





LITURGICAL CALENDAR

SEASON OF CROSS

October 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 3rd Sunday after Feast of the Holy Cross.	2 135th Memorial of Karottuveetil Shemavon Mar Dionysios	3 338th Memorial of St. Yeldo Mar Baselios	4	5	6	7
8 4th Sunday after Feast of the Holy Cross.	9	10	11	12 168th Memorial of Cheppad Philipose Mar Dionysios 43rd Memorial of Yuhanon Mar Athansios	13	14 Memorial of St. Athanasios of Alexandria
15 5th Sunday after Feast of the Holy Cross.	16	17	18 Memorial of St. Luke the Evangelist	19	20	21
22 6th Sunday after Feast of the Holy Cross.	23 Memorial of St. James the Apostle, Son of Alpheus	24 6th Memorial of Zachariah Mar Theophilos Metropolitan	25	26	27	28
29 7th Sunday after Feast of the Holy Cross.	30	31				





SUNDAY SCHOOL

OVBS 2023 was conducted from 21 - 24 September at the Cathedral. This year's theme was **"Obey your parents in the Lord, for it is right" Ephesians 6:1**. Hundred and forty students from kindergarten to year 10 attended the OVBS this year. By the grace of God after many years Sunday School was able to conduct OVBS at our Cathedral premises giving students and parents a safe and homely feeling. For the first time, SMIOC Sunday School hosted students from Geelong and Ballarat congregations giving them the spiritual support needed as they grow from infancy as a congregation.

Over four days students attended sessions conducted by internal and external resources based on the theme. The first three days were filled with classes, song sessions, arts and crafts, trips to nearby reserves, and playgrounds for games with lots of yummy food in between. On day 1, senior students had the opportunity to visit the Greek Orthodox Monastery at Northcote, broadening their knowledge about other Orthodox Christian communities. A closing ceremony was conducted after Holy Qurbana on the 24th with student performances, student reflections, and a procession exhibiting the joyfulness of OVBS.

Sunday school extends its gratitude to the leadership of Vicar Rev Fr Aji K Varughese. Sunday school is grateful to an army of support teachers and volunteers who helped out in various ways. We are also grateful for generous financial and food sponsors. Special commendations to this year's OVBS coordinators, Mrs. Bindu George, Mrs. Surya Thomas, and Miss. Shilpa George for making this year's OVBS a memorable experience for the students and the community alike.

Sunday School prays for and wishes all the success to this year's VCE students. This year VEC students are Alex Idichandy, Chris Paul Geo, Chris Varghese Shibu, Evelyn Jacob, Isaiah Binu Varkey, Laura Grace Lalu, Leanna Kochummen, Nathaniel Sunil, Rhea Jiju, Reeba lywan

OVBS - GLIMPSE - DAY 1



OVBS - GLIMPSE - DAY 2



OVBS - GLIMPSE - DAY 3



BALLARAT GEELONG STUDENTS PARTICIPATION - OVBS 2023



GREEK ORTHODOX MONASTERY VISIT



PRAYER MEETINGS

01 Oct	-	ST THOMAS	Residence of Mr. Ajai Oommen , Balwyn.
08 Oct	-	ST. KURIAKOSE	Residence of Mr. Aju Skaria , Mill Park
15 Oct	-	ST. DIONYSIOS	Residence of Mr. Jiss Joy , Craigeburn.
22 Oct	-	ST GREGORIOS	Residence of Mr. Joshy Mathew , Werribee

MARTHA MARIYAM VANITHA SAMAJAM



MMVS East Asia Region is conducting a Quiz competition based on The Catholic Epistles.

The Catholic Epistles are the books of James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude.

Link to register for the Quiz and other details as per poster.

Questions will be presented both in English and Malayalam.

OCYM & MGOCSM

Throughout the month of September, the youth have continued their fortnightly bible studies. On Wednesday nights, the session begins with vespers and compline, following with a mediation session led by a fellow youth member on a theme or portion from the bible. On 27 September 2023, Anakha Susan Panickar lead a session on the theme of hope.

On 29 September 2023, the youth conducted a hike to Werribee Gorge State Park, in which over 30 youth participated. The social activity was an enjoyable activity that worked to build community and fellowship within the youth. Following the hike, the group stopped by the All Nations Marian centre for prayer and reflection.





 *Werribee Gorge State Park*



 *All Nations Marian Centre*



SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERCESSION



Evan Abe Roney

The practice of intercessory prayer is a matter of profound significance in our Orthodox faith. This subject holds relevance for us as we recently celebrated the Dormition of St. Mary on August 15th and had just recently observed the 8-Day Lent in September. During this time, we remember the life and virtues of St. Mary, celebrating her transition from earthly life to her heavenly abode. In our Holy Qurbana, we also ask for intercession, namely with the Holy Virgin Mary, Saints, Clergy, and Faithful departed.

The Church commemorates the saints and seeks their intercession in the hymns of eucharistic devotion (Kukillion–Syriac). The hymn that immediately follows the elevation of the Holy Mysteries exhorts the congregation to remember our fathers, who taught us to be the children of God

(ദൈവസുതന്മാരായിടുവാൻ, ആയുഷ്കാലം പഠിപ്പിച്ച...). The congregation beseeches the Son of God to grant them rest with the righteous and the just in His eternal Kingdom. This is a time when we reflect on these saints' exceptional devotion and unwavering faith. Through their intercession, we seek to be closer to God and receive His grace and blessings.

What basis does intercessory prayer have in our faith?

Our reliance on the intercession of saints, and our prayer to God through their intercession is not a recent practice; it is a spiritual observance that has its roots in the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches since the 3rd century. When we discuss intercession, there are two facets, namely,

1. That we require this intercession for them with them
2. That we plead with God for them.

The term, "saints" or "called one" includes all the children of the church who are followers of Jesus Christ. By means of Baptism, every believer has the privilege to share this eternity within the Church, achieving a saintly life through devout prayer and spiritual discipline, however, our sinfulness and frailty cause us to fail to reach sainthood. Remember that Saint Paul addresses all the members of the individual churches as "Saints", purportedly the goal of our call on this Earth (he even calls the people of Corinth, saints, who had significant moral problems, "To the Church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" 1 Corinthians 1:2)! Because of this saintly status we have gained through Baptism, we are One Body of Christ, be it in fellowship with one another, or strengthening of each other in prayer.

How can we pray for the departed? Have they not left this earthly life?

Indeed, they have. But we must understand that death is the separation between the soul and the body (the physical body); it does not extinguish the soul. At death, the person enters into a state of rest. This is why we say such and such person fell asleep in the Lord. In John 11, we hear, ["Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he dies, yet shall he live. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die."] Consequently, we ought to recognize that those righteous souls and faithful believers who have transitioned from this earthly life are not lost to us; they dwell amongst us in a spiritual sense. In prayer and worship, the status of the body is not crucial. The body can be dead or alive, as long as you are spiritually alive, you will worship and bless the Lord forever. As members of the One Holy Apostolic Church, there is no distinction between the living and departed, as we are all in the love of our Father in Heaven.

Therefore, just as we offer our prayers and supplications for the living in this world; we extend our devotion to those who have departed. We seek their intercession, not as beings lost in the abyss of death, but as spiritual entities who continue to live in the divine presence. We, and they, are turned over to the Lord, the only mediator. Saint Paul reminds us in the Gospel written to the Romans, that those who walk in the newness of life do not receive death, but eternal life. This underscores the transformative power of faith in Christ, granting believers eternal life. When we pray for the departed who have embraced this new life through Christ, we acknowledge their continued spiritual existence and seek God's blessings upon them in a manner consistent with how past generations sought divine favor through righteous intercessors like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Our prayers for the departed align with God's divine order and can be effective in seeking His grace for these redeemed souls in the heavenly realm.

But isn't Jesus the sole mediator?

The argument here is rooted in Paul's letter to Timothy, where it says that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). However, it is essential to recognize that the act of praying for one another and encouraging others to pray is rooted in the exclusive mediation of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. In essence, we approach

God with the saints, seeking their intercession for our needs. [The position of the only mediator, Jesus Christ, is not given to a saint.] The Bible contains numerous instances of intercessory prayer, where individuals pray on behalf of others. James 5:16 tell us, ["Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed."] This demonstrates the biblical principle of intercession, wherein the faithful offer prayers for the well-being, healing, and spiritual needs of others.

Everything aligned with God's will concerning the saints and the departed is deemed pleasing and virtuous in the eyes of God. I must emphasise that such veneration does not elevate the saints to the status of divinity; they remain distinct from God. However, God has bestowed upon the saints and martyrs certain extraordinary capacities, enabling them to act as intercessors. God's angels and the spirits of the saints possess spiritual insight, allowing them to perceive earthly events. In this manner, the redeemed saints are akin to the angels, serving as conduits for the blessings of those who uphold righteousness. In this manner, those who welcome the righteous with righteousness partake in the rewards of righteousness through the proclamation of God's word.

As we embrace this sacred tradition in our Orthodox Faith, may our prayers be filled with sincerity and devotion, knowing that our loving Creator hears us. May the grace and blessings of our Lord be with us all on our journey of faith and prayer.

ART CORNER - SUNDAY SCHOOL

OSSAE
East Asia Region
OVBS POSTER COMPETITION

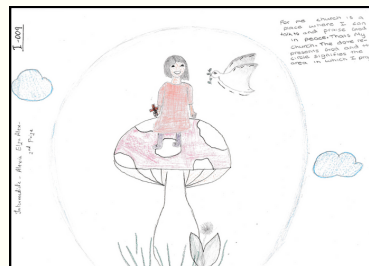
Category : Drawing and Painting
Class : Junior and Intermediate
Theme : "Jesus True Vine"

Congratulations
TO THE WINNER

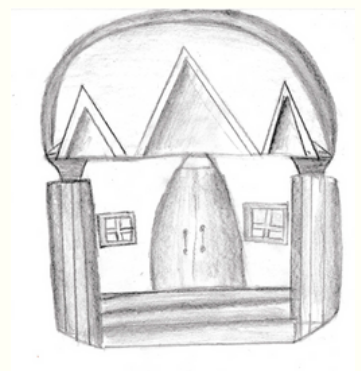
SHREYA SHINE
St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Cathedral
Coburg, Melbourne



Sheya Shine - Intermediate
Drawing - 1st Prize



Alexia Alex - Intermediate
Drawing - 2nd Prize



Shawn Nirmal - Intermediate
Drawing - 3rd Prize

MISSION OUTREACH SERVICES

BENDIGO

Rev. Fr. Aji K. Varughese celebrated the sacrament of the Holy Qurbano at the St Kilians Church, Bendigo, on Friday 29 September 2023. This has been a recommencement of the Qurbana after 40 Long years.

The church where we celebrated the Service has a history to itself. - The largest wooden church in Australia and one of the largest in the world. It has a lovely exterior and interior, though certainly not as grand as the cathedral nearby, its quaintness reflects its long history in the town. The church features a display of an early settler priest's chair, or what to me more resembles a tree stump dating to 1852.



STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

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In commemoration of the Saints



St. LUKE



St. JAMES, Son of Alphaeus