

Melbourne Orthodox Cathedral Bulletin



MARCH 2023

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DIOCESAN METROPOLITAN'S MESSAGE



By the Grace of God
Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan
of the Diocese of Madras of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church



No: CER 003/2023

Greetings to you all in the name of Blessed Holy Trinity

It is a matter of greatest delight to me that our St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Cathedral, Melbourne is publishing a monthly news letter from February 2023 onwards.

I hope that this newsletter will keep a balance in church programs, theological articles, study materials, spiritual reflections and other relevant news. I would like to congratulate our Cathedral Vicar, Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese, Parish Managing Committee, Chief Editor of the News Letter, Editorial Board Members and the rest of all who toiled behind the scene.

May the invisible right hand of our Good Lord be with you all

Prayerfully

Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan

24.02.2023, From Madras Orthodox Bishop's House



VICAR'S DESK:

Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese



Dearly beloved in Jesus Christ,
The Great Lent reminds us of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ for saving humanity. God's fathomless love for humanity prompted Son of God to accept the disgraceful death at cross. Even while experiencing excruciating pain and disgrace, when the soldiers spat on him and struck him with a rod, He was focused on the journey towards a great goal. He had perfect peace on face when he breathed his last saying, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Crucifixion, burial and Resurrection were part of that journey. The resurrected Christ said to his disciples. "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). His sublime sacrifice shows us the way to provide peace to others by accepting pain.

Our life is filled with pains, miseries, joys and contentment. We should not forget ourselves in happiness or be overwhelmed by the pains. In fact, we should accept the cross to experience peace. Disgrace, whips and wounds are realities of life. We should remember that the resurrection is near. Jesus tells us, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Mk 8: 34)

Lent, Fasting and Reconciliation with fellow beings can strengthen us and provide us the light for our life's journey.

Let this lent be a journey towards peace and abundant blessings.

May God bless you all.
Yours loving,
AJI ACHEN

LITURGICAL CALENDAR - MAR 2023

1st Mar - Commemoration of Mar Anthrayos Bava

5th Mar - Third Sunday of Great Lent - Paralytic (Palsy Sunday).

9th Mar - Memory of Forty Martyrs of Sebastia. 132nd Commemoration of Ambattu Geevarghese Mar Coorilos Metropolitan (Angamaly Cheriya Pally).

11th Mar - Perunal of Forty Martyrs of Sebastia.

12th Mar - Fourth Sunday of Great Lent (Canaanite woman).

15th Mar - Mid Lent, Commemoration of King Abgar of Uraha.

18th Mar - 61st Commemoration of HG Paulose Mar Severios Metropolitan (Kunnamkulam Arthat Puthen Pally).

19th Mar - Fifth Sunday of Great Lent (Kpiptho/Crippled woman).

93rd Mar - Commemoration of HG Sleebe Mar Osthathios Metropolitan (Kunnamkulam Arthat Puthen Pally).

21st Mar - 138th Commemoration of Konattu Geevarghese Mar Julius Metropolitan (Pampakuda Valiyapally).

25th Mar - Annunciation to St. Mary, Vachanippu (Suboro), 295th Commemoration of Marthoma IV (Kandanadu Cathedral).

26th Mar - Sixth Sunday of Great Lent (Blind Man), Malankara Orthodox Church Day - Catholicate Day.

31st Mar - 40th day of Great lent / 40th Friday.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school academic year 2023 had a smooth start by the grace of God. It is pleasing to see students participating in Holy Qurbana and Sunday school with enthusiasm after the COVID-induced hiatus. Currently, we have 160 students attending Sunday school regularly from Kinder to grade 12. Yes, we have started Grade 12 Sunday school this year, led by Miss Jessie Cherian. We are encouraging everyone who is currently in university, who did not have the opportunity or time due to VCE study commitments to give Grade 12 Sunday school a go. It is a great opportunity to keep learning about our faith.

Our Sunday school children made our Cathedral proud by representing our Cathedral in STEFM solo song competitions. Congratulations to Ruha Mary Skaria, Ann Grace Philip, Irene Elsa Philip, Gracelin Elizabeth Joshy, and Aleena Thomas for winning prizes.

On 26th February, 45 students from Grade 5 and above participated in the written preliminary examination for His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II Bible Quiz - 2023. Out of that 32 students are selected to form 8 teams to compete in the Grade finale Bible Quiz to be conducted on 19th March after Holy Qurbana. Special thanks to Mrs. Anusha Chacko for organizing the preliminary examination. Sunday school also extends gratitude to prayer secretaries for encouraging students from their respective prayer groups to participate in the Bible Quiz program.

OCYM & MGOCSM

The SMIOC MGOCSM & OCYM championed the Lenten Vespers and Compline in English, with high attendance. The prayers are followed by a discussion on topics that arise out of lent, with the first session on temptation being led by Jessie Cheriyan, and the second session on Faith and Perseverance being led by Joel Jacob.

Team Youth also had a large presence at the East Asia MGOCSM & OCYM Games Night, conducted through Zoom. It allowed the youth to make friends across Australia and New Zealand through fun games and activities

On 26th February, Aji Achen inaugurated the prayer book mark produced by East Asia Region - MGOCSM & OCYM. He handed the first bookmark to SMIOC MGOCSM & OCYM member Alfy Alex.



COUPLES FELLOWSHIP

A Couples fellowship meeting was organised on Sunday, 26th February after the Holy Qurbana.

PRAYER GROUPS

- 05th Mar - Lenten Prayer - St. Thomas & St. Kuriakose - Res. of Mr. Biju Mathew, Doreen.
- 12th Mar - Lenten Prayer - St. Dionysios & St. Gregorios - Res. of Mr. Reji Cherian, Craigieburn.
- 19th Mar - Lenten Prayer - St. Thomas & St. Kuriakose - Res. of Mr. Subin Kochummen, Reservoir.
- 26th Mar - Lenten Prayer - St. Dionysios & St. Gregorios - Res. of Mr. Alex Kallapurackal, Hillside.

89TH COMMEMORATION OF ST DIONYSIUS OF VATTASSERIL

23rd February marked the 89th Commemoration of St Dionysius of Vattasseril (Vattasseril Thirumeni), who was a strong spiritual leader of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church.

SMIOC Melbourne celebrated the memorial Feast of Vattasseril Thirumeni on Sunday, 26th February after the Holy Qurbana, followed by a perambulation, Benediction, & tea fellowship,



MARTHA MARIAM SAMAJAM

Martha Mariam Samajam has organised a charity drive during this Great Lent season. A Charity collection box is placed at the St. Mary's shrine and the collected amount will be donated for a noble cause.

Martha Mariam samajam will be organising a Family Lenten Retreat on **Saturday, 4th March** at our church from 10AM to 12PM. The retreat will be led by Rev. Fr. Sujin Varghese Mappila, Vicar of St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church, Clayton.

The MMVS East Asia region is organising a virtual Lenten retreat on **Sunday, 5th March** via zoom from 7PM. This event is hosted by St George Indian Orthodox Church, Perth. The meeting will be presided by H.G Geevarghese Mar Philexinos, Metropolitan of Madras Diocese.

MMVS will also be organising a charity food sale on **Sunday, 12th March**.

VICAR'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTHOOD

Sunday, 26th March marked the 20th anniversary of our Vicar, Rev. Fr. Aji K. Varughese's Priesthood. Aji Achen was presented with a token of appreciation by the Cathedral's acolyte group, and was later greeted to a surprise celebration, marked by a cake cutting ceremony, at the rear of the Cathedral.



CHURCH BULLETIN INAUGURATION

The first monthly bulletin of SMIOC was inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese on Sunday, 5th Feb 2023. Achen published the softcopy and hardcopy of the February-2023 Bulletin.



STEFM INTERCHURCH COMPETITIONS

Solo Singing Competitions:

Juniors (Grade 3-5) English:

Intermediate (Grade 6-8) Malayalam:

Intermediate (Grade 6-8) English:

Seniors (Grade 9 - Age 22) English:

Ruha Mary Skaria secured **Second Place**

Ann Grace Philip secured **First Place**

Irene Elsa Philip secured **Second Place**

Ann Grace Philip secured **First Place**

Gracelin Elizabeth Joshy secured **First Place**

Aleena Thomas secured **Third Place**



Ruha Skaria



Ann Philip



Irene Philip



Gracelin Joshy



Aleena Thomas

Adults Quiz Competition:

SMIOC team secured **Third Place** in the interchurch Quiz competition.

Winning team members: Mrs. Ashly Thomas, Mrs. Jisha Lalu, Mrs. Reni Anil & Mrs. Leena Binil.



CHARITY

HG Zachariah Mar Dionysius Memorial Charity Fund is organizing a fundraiser for Vellore Snehabhavan Phase II building project. Snehabhavan, an Orthodox guidance center is a healthcare mission project under the Madras Diocese of the MOSC. Snehabhavan was introduced with a mission to provide Hospital navigation, Patient navigation, Low-cost serviced accommodation, and Spiritual guidance to patients and bystanders undergoing treatment at CMC Hospital Vellore. CMC Hospital, Vellore has constructed a new Super Specialty Hospital near Kannigapuram, which is approximately 12 km away from the present hospital. The Diocese of Madras has purchased 50 Cents of land near the new hospital campus for Snehabhavan Phase II. It has been proposed to construct a building which will accommodate 75 rooms, a Chapel, a Parsonage, a Bishop’s room, Office Rooms, and a Canteen. This is very much needed to cater to the needs of the growing patients and provide holistic care to them. Our Parish wishes to participate in the construction of Snehabhavan Phase II building project by sponsoring the construction of one room which cost approximately Rs.10,00,000 (~A\$18,500). We earnestly solicit your prayerful participation in this noble project which helps thousands of patients. Kindly direct your contributions to:

Account Name: Zachariah Mar Dionysius Memorial Charity Fund
 BSB No. 063-122, Account Number: 1052 0824

POEM - SEASONS OF THE LENT

Tis the season of Lent,
 come together to pray and repent.
 Kneel down with a broken heart and spirit
 Our father will heal and adhere to it.
 O father, strengthen us with your grace and power.
 For you are our fortress and tower.
 You quench our earthly thirst and appetite.
 Help us not to err and do what is right!

We remember the love you poured upon us from the cross.
 We follow you, only gain no loss.
 Purify and cleanse us Oh Messiah,
 We sing praises to you Jehovah Jireh.
 You have risen and defeated Satan,
 For your word is our baton
 Forever and ever! Amen.

by: Mrs. Dona Philip



PAINTING - BABY JESUS



by: Miss. Ruha Skaria, Grade 3



ARTICLE - LOVE OF JESUS!

John 15:12 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Being a Christian is a way of life! A quality to learn and uphold in our daily life! Can we make a commitment to ourselves, today and every morning after we wake up, that to promise to spread love, affection, and peace to the people and world around us?

This is easy to say, but hard to practice in today's world! Love is an experience different from the experience of being right. One important question we can ask ourselves is, "Do I love Jesus because Jesus is popular? Or do I still love Jesus if Jesus was unpopular".

Let's rewind 2000 years back, to Jerusalem, and imagine you were born at those times. No one knew Jesus as we know them right now. Instead, we would see a person who is prosecuted by law, who is shameful, to avoid, to condemn. Everything about Jesus was unpopular. Hundreds of people, or even thousands, like us, condemned Jesus for his way of life. What is the message from Jesus's way of life?

Who is the person that you are angry at now? Who is the person you hate? Who is the person you believe is following the wrongful path? Who is the person that you disagree with and who upsets you? That person is Jesus. Being a Christian is to learn to love that person just like you love Jesus.

How can I break my ego to love the person I condemn? Breaking our own ego is the hardest for us.

Jesus taught us how to break the ego. For a common man living today, Jesus's day-to-day life is of a man of failure! Jesus was not a hard-working person, Jesus didn't have a 9-5 job, and Jesus didn't have a family or raised-up kids. Jesus did lots of things that are not popular for his generation, but still magically transformed the whole world afterwards!

Have you experienced being wrong? Not being guilty, but accepting whole heartedly being wrong. That is the experience of breaking of ego. Love flows when we can accept we are wrong, when we can accept we do not know! When our ego melts, we start to experience the unfathomable love of Jesus!

by: Mr. Madhu Samuel



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 Cathedral Website: <https://www.stmarysioc.org.au/>
 Cathedral Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SMIOCMelbourn>
 MGOCSM & OCYM Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/smiocyouth/>
 MGOCSM & OCYM Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/smiocyouth/>

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GREAT LENT - 2023

ST MARYS INDIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, MELBOURNE

Mid-Lent

6:30 PM - Evening Prayer (Tue, 14 Mar)
7:00 PM - Holy Qurbana

Annunciation to St. Mary (Sat, 25 Mar)

8:00 AM - Morning Prayer
8:30 AM - Holy Qurbana

40th Day of Great Lent

6:30 PM - Evening Prayer (Thu, 30 Mar)
7:00 PM - Holy Qurbana

Lazarus' Saturday (01 Apr)

8:00 AM - Morning Prayer
8:30 AM - Holy Qurbana

Palm Sunday (Hosanna) (02 Apr)

7:30 AM - Morning Prayer
8:15 AM - Holy Qurbana & Palm Sunday service

Gospel Saturday (08 Apr)

8:00 AM - Morning prayer
8:30 AM - Holy Qurbana.



Easter Sunday

5:30 PM - Evening Prayer (on Sat, 08 Apr)
6:15 PM - Night Prayer
6:50 PM - Easter Service
8:00 PM - Holy Qurbana

Maundy Thursday (Pesaha)

6:30 PM - Evening Prayer (on Wed, 05 Apr)
7:15 PM - Holy Qurbana

Good Friday (07 Apr)

8:00 AM - Morning Prayer, Hourly Prayers & Good Friday service
8:30 PM onwards - Night Vigil

PALM
+
SUNDAY

Holy Week Prayer Timing: 7:00 PM - Evening prayer || 12:00PM - Noon Prayer || 6:30 AM - Morning Prayer.

