



Melbourne Orthodox Cathedral Bulletin

APRIL 2024



ST. MARY'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, MELBOURNE.

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VICAR'S DESK

Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese

Dearly beloved in Jesus Christ,

We are blessed with the peace and joy of another Easter. 50 days long Lenten prayers and fasting helped to brighten up the godliness in us. Let that be the leading light for us, our family and the larger society. After bestowing the heavenly light, the disciples were sent to different parts of the world to spread this.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. (Isaiah 60:1)

The Lord is exhorting us to spread the divine light we received through this verse.

The confidence we gain from lighting up our surroundings will strengthen us to venture farther. The prayer, "Oh! Lord please rise up in me" gets answered in the verse "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Not knowing the source within, the musk deer roams around in search of the fragrance.

"If you want to shine like a sun, first burn like a sun." says Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

We have a long journey ahead. I hope and pray that the light we received through Lent will enable us to provide light for our fellow beings. I wish you all the peace and blessings of Easter.

May God bless you all.

Yours loving
AJI ACHEN



SEASON OF RESURRECTION

April 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 59th Mem of Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan (Pampady Dayara)	6
HEVORO WEEK						
7 New Sunday Faith declaration Sunday 216th Mem of Valiya Mar Dionysius Metropolitan.	8	9	10	11	12 11th Mem of Geevarghese Mar Ivanios (Njaliakuzhi Dayara)	13
14 1st Sunday after New Sunday 338th Mem of Marthoma II Niranam Valiya Palli.	15	16 202nd Mem of Mar Thoma VIII (Puthencavu Cathedral)	17 73rd Mem of Geevarghese Mar Philexinos - 'Catholicate RatnaDeepam'	18	19	20
21 2nd Sunday after New Sunday	22 336th Mem of Mar Thoma III (Kadambanad St. Thomas Cathedral)	23 Comme of St. George the Great Martyr	24	25 Comme of St. Mark the Evangelist	26	27 353th Mem of Mar Gregorios Abdul Jaleel Metropolitan (Vadakan Paravur Church)
28 3rd Sunday after New Sunday	29	30				

St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Cathedral
Melbourne

EASTER wishes

*Christ is Risen....
....Indeed he is Risen!!!*

REV. PETER THOMAS RAMBACHAN - A FLASHBACK

Rev. Peter Thomas Rambachan, a strong advocate for peace and love, is visiting Melbourne, Australia for the first time. He is always eager to share his experiences. Hailing from the town of Pampady, Rambachan is deeply connected to the Orthodox faith as a monk at St. Thomas Mt. Tabor Dayara in Pathanapuram. After many years as a professor at St. Stephen's College in Pathnapuram, he has now retired. He is currently serving as a respected priest at a church in Pathanapuram Dayara Campus for the past 11 years.

At this point in his life, Rambachan believes that the current era is more vibrant than his earlier years. He emphasizes the importance of staying active, especially as one grows older.

He fondly recalls his first trip to the Andaman Islands and his memory about the dates was so clear that he quickly said, it was 23 April 1983. Not knowing much about the Andamans even not realizing then that he had to stay by himself he willingly agreed to the order of the Metropolitan. But soon after he reached there the idea to prepare meals for himself along with all the daily chores was a surprise. But that never deterred the unwavering spirit and there he helped establish the first church and build the parsonage slowly and gradually paving the way for the future generations to be coming in Andamans. A place of their own for all the Orthodox Faith believers to praise and worship God.

To this date, his connection with the Andamans remains strong and he also leads the Ex-Andamans Fellowship group consisting of all the retired members as its President. The group has a meetup every year.

Continuing to talk about his travel tales he mentions that his passion for travel has led him to go to many places around the world including the United States, UK, and most of the Gulf countries. He has also traveled across various states in India and various districts in Kerala. When he details this, he could quickly come with a memory flash of visiting the Idukki dam when it was still under construction during the early 1970s and even before the dam was filled up – The way it was constructed including its tunnels.

Isaiah 66:1 – The Lord said, 'The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.'

With this, Rambachan believes that traveling across the earth signifies one could see the presence of the Lord wherever you would go. So, the more places you visit the more you get to be connected with the Lord. This simple example reiterates the connection of dear Rambachan with the Lord. A coconut has a coconut tree in it and the mango seed has a mango tree in it – But we only see this when we get to see it grow. Likewise, Man has God in him and we can only see the beauty of the world when we see different places and meet different people.

The peace in life he greatly owes to meeting new people and visiting new places. Rambachan has a keen understanding of people. He can discern much about someone just by looking at their face and speaking with them, a skill he's honed through his travels.

His journey to priesthood was influenced by his early years. Named Thomas at baptism by the then priest, he feels his journey began there. Being in connection with the church, nurtured his thoughts and he became a priest later in life. The priest also taught him Syriac as he grew up and he got well versed with it. The language he mastered at that time led him to be the only person knowing Syriac around and he was appointed as a teacher to teach the language. His second wish was to be a teacher. He strongly believes that this was some kind of vision the priest had for him. In his life journey, he now is fully satisfied that God has led him to achieve above and beyond what he had wished for since his childhood days.

In Australia, Rambachan noticed the strong bonds among people, especially in their spiritual and family lives. He finds a sense of belonging in Melbourne's people and its warm hospitality.

Rambachan's perspective on peace and love reflects a profound understanding of spirituality and interconnectedness. By focusing on the goodness in others and experiencing love in every encounter, he cultivates a sense of peace within himself. He recognizes that life's journey may include challenges such as illness, unhappiness, or aging, but maintaining a positive outlook transcends these difficulties.

Central to Rambachan's philosophy is the idea of loving all creations on Earth as an expression of God's will. He believes that spreading love and care fosters a reciprocal relationship with the divine, leading to greater spiritual fulfillment. Rambachan emphasizes that individuals have the power to create their heaven or hell through the purity of their hearts and the sharing of love.

The concept of purity, encompassing various aspects of life such as home, self, food, speech, and mind, is significant in Rambachan's teachings. By nurturing purity in these areas, individuals can draw closer to God and experience inner peace.

Overall, Rambachan's message emphasizes the importance of love, compassion, and purity in fostering spiritual growth and achieving inner harmony. His teachings encourage individuals to live with happiness, joy, and a deep sense of connection to all beings on Earth.

In conclusion, Rev. Peter Thomas Rambachan's trip to Melbourne reflects his lifelong commitment to spreading peace and love. Through his work as a priest and his travels, he demonstrates the importance of understanding and connecting with others.

A Glimpse of Rambachan's visit to MELBOURNE

Welcome to Melbourne



Palm Sunday - 2024



Pesaha - 2024



Good Friday - 2024



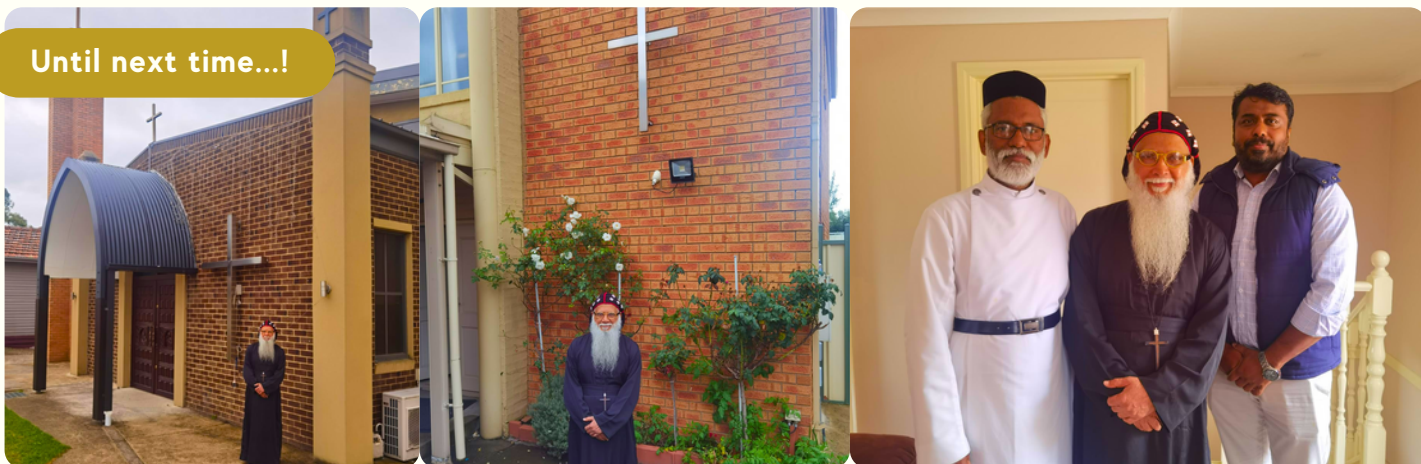
Easter - 2024



Geelong - Holy Qurbana



Until next time...!



The Moran Mar Baselios Paulose II Bible Quiz

The Moran Mar Baselios Paulose II Bible Quiz competition finale will be held on 21 April 2024 after Holy Qurbana. The final quiz will be based on the entire Gospel of St Luke.

Based on the preliminary exam conducted on 17 March after the Holy Qurbana below is the shortlisted list of students with the respective teams and members:

Group 1	Dona Aju Jinny Romy	Reuben Dennis	St Dionysios
		Elyna Binil	St Dionysios
		Davina Mathew	St Kuriakose
		John Romy	St Kuriakose
Group 2	Bindhu George Anju Isac	Irene Elsa Philip	St Gregorios
		Ann Grace Philip	St Gregorios
		Eva Ajith	St Gregorios
		Loraine Isac	St Gregorios
Group 3	Ashly Thomas Sona John	Jerrin Ginu	St Kuriakose
		Abigail Thomas	St Kuriakose
		Aleena Thomas	St Kuriakose
		Ethan George	St Kuriakose
Group 4	Surya Thomas Aleyamma John	Evlyn Mariam Cherian	St Thomas
		Sairah Varghese	St Thomas
		Shawn Nirmal	St Thomas
		Alexia Elza Alex	St Gregorios

MARTHA MARIYAM VANITHA SAMAJAM

Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam's first meeting of 2024 was held on the 10th March under the leadership of our Vicar, Rev. Fr. Aji K. Varughese. Mrs Sarah John delivered an inspirational speech based on parenting. Parenting is the act and attitude of unconditional love. She shared her thoughts on parenting based on her experiences as a mother and teacher. She mentioned 5 key tips for parenting which include 'modelling behaviour', 'spend time with your children', 'communicating and listening in a non-judgemental way', 'boundary setting, family rules/routines' and 'laying foundation for a Christian life and helping children embed this into their daily lives'. Aji Achen also added some useful thoughts regarding parenting.

Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam Lenten charity food sale was conducted on 17th March 2024 after Holy Qurbana. The team was able to raise a substantial amount through this food sale.





Throughout the month of March, the youth have continued their fortnightly Midweek Meditations. The session begins with vespers and compline in English, following with a mediation session led by a fellow youth member on a theme or portion from the bible.

On 6 March 2024, guest speaker George Varghese led the session. On 20 March 2024, Joshua Anil and Alvin Jacob led a session on 'Sacrifice'

On 29 March, SMIOC Youth led the annual Good Friday Night Vigil. There were approximately 35 participants, who meditated throughout the evening following the Ramsho, Soutoro and Lilyo prayers, by reading through the 150 chapters of Psalms. The vigil concluded shortly after midnight.

JOURNEY THROUGH ST.PAUL'S FOOTSTEPS (A SERIES)

Part 4

Looking over the city of Corinth is the Acrocorinth a monolithic rock which has a fortress with a secure water supply and a fertile valley below. This was the site of the Temple of Aphrodite which was later converted to church and then a mosque during the Ottoman rule. It overlooks the Corinth canal and was a bastion of defence against land attack onto the Pannelopesse.

We had a tour guide who took us to a restaurant for lunch serving local Greek cuisine and it was one of the most enjoyable meals and topped it with a large bunch of fresh grapes from his farm which was unforgettable. Must say, the fruits of this land has a very special taste, unlike what we get in Australia.

We spend a week in Greece and flew into Santorini as a getaway. It is one of the many beautiful Greek islands dotting the Aegean Sea and famous for the picturesque blue dome Churches. There are 555 churches on this tiny island which has 20,000 dwellings and 15,000 local inhabitants. Many families build churches as a vow for their success. The tourists outnumber the locals more than 5:1 and even bigger ratio when large cruise ships dock in their port. The story of white washing the walls white started with the outbreak of cholera in 1930s and later there was an order by the Military Junta in leader Georgios in late 1960s to establish a national fervour because these are the colours of the Greek flag. We were lucky to live for 3 nights in a traditional Greek house in Oia with curved roof and a balcony upstairs which we had to climb into, but once on the top it was magnificent with the unblocked sights stretching into the Aegean Sea and could witness the Ships on their way to the docks in Fira , the Sunset straight ahead and the blue domes of Oia to our left. The Greeks are very friendly people and have similar family values like us. We were able to grab a Indian lunch during our visit to Fira the capital of this island.



Dr. Bonny Varghese



Santorini

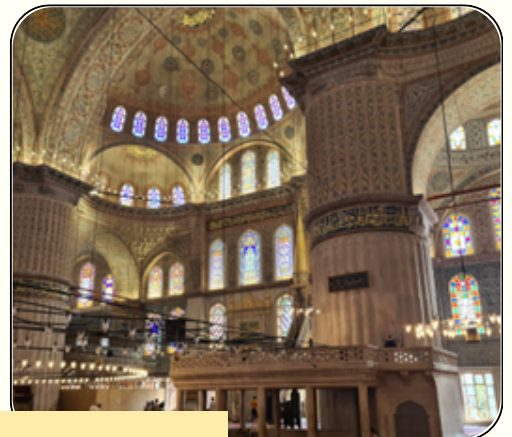
We took a flight out of Santorini to Athens and a connection flight into Istanbul. Considering that Athens and Ephesus in Turkey are along the same latitude I am sure that St. Paul would have thought it silly to travel from Athens into Istanbul instead. We had a tour starting/ending in Istanbul and hence made the flight. We were collected from the airport and dropped to our Hotel in the city. Istanbul (Constantinople) is the most vibrant city of Turkiye and holds one fifth of the country's population undoubtedly because it can provide

JOURNEY...

livelihood to its people. Istanbul (Constantinople) is the most vibrant city of Turkiye and holds one fifth of the country's population undoubtedly because it can provide livelihood to its people. Despite having such a large population the city is maintained very well and has a good transport network. Istiqlal Street is the Chapel Street of the city and has a very impressive night life and is a shopper's paradise. The city centre Taksim Square was a 10minute walk from our hotel and the Saudi Embassy where Jamal Khashoggi met his end was in a lane down from our hotel!

Emperor Constantine the Roman Emperor established this city as the capital of the Roman Empire in 330B.C due to its unique location straddling Europe and Asia and the Bosphorus Strait connecting the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea (or as the Turks would say , the Sea of Marmara). It remained the capital of the Byzantine empire even after the decay of the western Roman empire. With such a rich history and legacy undoubtedly we expected great sites and sounds and we were not disappointed. The structures are so huge and magnificent and unforgettable.

We were first taken to the Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Camii Mosque). It is a huge mosque built by the Ottoman King Ahmet-I in 1616. It has 6 minarets and huge dome interior decorated with blue Iznik tiles. It is a replica of the masterpiece of Hagia Sophia -3 an engineering marvel built during the reign of Emperor Justinian -I in 537A.D. The first Hagia Sophia Church(Church of Holy Wisdom) was built in 404A.D had wooden roof and was burned down during the riots of Constantinople and rebuilt in 415 but met a similar fate. The present day Hagia Sophia was built by Isidoros (architect) and geometrician Anthemios and consecrated as a church on Dec 27, 537A.D. Emperor Justinian is reported to have said , " My Lord, thank you for giving me the chance to create such a worshipping place". It took six years to build this marvel which has a central dome 107ft in diameter and held at a height of 180 feet by 4 large arches and 4 pendentives and is an engineering marvel. The dome appears as if it is held by strings suspended from the sky. The interiors were said to have 30 million gold tiles and had a marble floor design for an effect of a flowing water. Items were imported from all Roman empire lands 104 columns form the temple of Artemis in Ephesus and other items from Syria and Anatolia (eastern Turkey). There were 6 winged Angels on the walls the faces of which are covered now and the walls and roofs had mosaics and paintings in gold much of which is lost but for the remnant painting of Jesus and Mary , the Roman emperor Justinian bowing down to Jesus feet . This is now covered during the muslim worship timings of the mosque. The Cathedral of Hagia Sophia was the largest church in the world until the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome must have been so resplendent and opulent in its times but got desecrated by the advancing armies and the muslim invaders. It was converted to a Mosque during the Arab conquest and then a museum by Kamal Ataturk the founder of modern Turkey and now again as a mosque by the vitriolic current president Erdogan.



Hagia Sophia

The Hippodrome not far from the Blue mosque precinct was the arena where the chariot races and other sporting activities were held and viewed by the Roman emperors. It has an obelisk brought over from Alexandria Egypt and Serpent column of copper. At one time it was dotted with statues of Gods, emperors, animals and heroes. It also had the statue of Romulus, Remus and the she wolf Lupa. This is now a large long walkway and would go unnoticed if we were not informed about its history by the guide. There are several hundreds of underground cisterns that lie beneath the city of Istanbul of which the Basilica Cistern is the largest. It is 143m long 65m wide and can hold 17.5 million gallons of water. It had several aqueducts connected to it streaming in water and showed the importance of the city of Constantinople for the Roman empire. The cistern was used to supply water to the city even during the Ottoman rule but was forgotten to history but people living over it drew water for their needs through an opening in their floor! In 1987 it was restored and made open to the public for viewing. We need to descend 52 steps to reach the base of this cistern which is supported by 12 rows of 28 columns, each 9 metres high and 5 meter apart. Many movies including James Bond's "From Russia with love" was filmed there. It holds the statues of head of Medusa and other sculptures, many of which have been stolen since.



Basilica Cistern



We visited the Topkapi palace an early Ottoman Sultan Palace which was stupendous. Saw the Sirkeci station the eastern terminus of the famous Orient Express:- Paris to Istanbul. We then had a sunset cruise down the Bosphorus and got a breathtaking view of Istanbul and its splendour, the Hagia Sophia, the Blue mosque, the Venetian tower, the Topkapi and Dolmabahce Palaces and sailed under the suspension bridges spanning the Bosphorus. There are 3 such bridges that connect the Europe and Asian segments of Istanbul. The third bridge was opened in April 2022. All these bridges have six lane freeways. The cruise took us to Princess Islands which was the place where the aspiring and unreliable royal family members of the Sultan would be exiled to or else exterminated. It had all facilities befitting the royalty but no freedom to visit the mainland!

The people of Turkey are not as friendly like the Greeks and appear more suspicious. Perhaps it is an attitude that has been developed due to the rising inflation and politico-religious stance. But nevertheless there is so much to see around and a culture which may be very different to our liking but yet very rich. It is but natural that the pressures of daily life and burden of restrictions would be displayed in the attitude of the people.

PRAYER MEETINGS

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 07 April | (St. Thomas) | - Mr. Ashish Oommen, Blackburn |
| 14 April | (St. Kuriakose) | - Mr. Ginu Mathew, Wollert. |
| 21 April | (St. Dionysios) | - Mr. Varghese Chacko, Craigeburn |

GEELONG - St. George Indian Orthodox Congregation

Rev. Peter Thomas Rambachan and Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese celebrated the sacrament of Holy Qurbana at Wesley Uniting Church, Geelong on 31 March 2024.



CONDOLENCES

SMIOC Family extends its heartfelt condolences to the grieving families.



Mr. Samuel John (Sam)
S/o Mr. E. S. John and Mrs. Alice John
Date: 20/Mar/2024



Mr. Andrews Paily (94)
F/o Mrs. Lucy Cheriyan
(W/o Mr. Geevarghese Cheriyan)
Date: 28/Mar/2024



Mrs. Mariamma Chacko (76)
M/o Mr. Jacob Ninan (Dan)
Date: 01/Apr/2024

ST. MARYS INDIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL - MELBOURNE
Family Camp - 2024

Dates: 25 - 27 April 2024
At Bayview Adventure Camp - Grantville

CAMP FIRE (Stylized text)

CAMPING (Stylized text)

Indoor & Outdoor activities!

Table Tennis
Volleyball
Soccer
Hiking
Farm Animals

Sunset watch
Hiking
Swimming
Fun Games
Frisbee etc.

FUN
GAMES
ENTERTAINMENT
FOOD
FRIENDS

Location: 200 Grantville-Glen Alvie Rd Grantville, Victoria 3984



STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

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Resurrection of the Christ



St. George, the Martyr