



Melbourne Orthodox Cathedral Bulletin

MAY 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,

Being destitute is a problem faced by the modern man. Even amid plenty this feeling disturbs many. Many are getting orphaned in this world. It does not necessarily mean someone who lacks parental care. The state in which there is no one to give advice, assistance, help, discipline, and love is also destitution. If we don't have anyone to love or to be loved or to talk to, we can be considered orphans.

Jesus Christ's death orphaned his disciples. He seems to have considered this issue very seriously. He was a comrade to the destitute. He had no problem being the friend of the sinners and the tax collectors. He visited the house of Zacchaeus, whom everyone discarded. He became the savior to the woman caught in adultery by addressing her as 'daughter'. He became a 'good teacher' to his fishermen disciples. He provided them charcoal-baked bread when they arrived tired in the morning after a whole night of fishing. Even while dying on the cross He didn't forget to remove the destitution of his mother. This might have also removed the destitution of John. When it was time to leave His beloved disciples, he couldn't leave them as orphans. The message Lord Jesus gives his disciples, 'I will not leave you orphaned' (St. John 14:18) is for us also. He promises to send another Advocate – the Holy Spirit to be with them forever. They didn't feel orphaned after Pentecost. They sang songs in prison braving death.

No one should feel helpless and destitute. Jesus is with us providing succour and assistance. We need to open our inner eyes to realize that. Let the God enable us to do that.

May God bless you all.

Yours loving
AJI ACHEN





LITURGICAL CALENDAR

SEASON OF PENTECOST

May 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Comme of St. James the Apostle, Son fo Zebedee. Mem of St. Michael Sahada.	2	3 111th Mem of HH Baselios Paulose I Catholicose (Pampakuda Cheriya Palli)	
5 4th Sunday after New Sunday	6	7	8 Comme of St. John the Evangelist 259th Mem of Mar Thoma V (Niranam Valiya Palli)	9 Suloqo Ascension of our Lord	10 Feast of St. Simon the Zealot	
12 Sunday before Pentiqosti Sunday School Day	13	14	15 Feast of St. Mary for the crops. Mem. of St. Isaac of Ninave.	16 34th Mem of Youhanon Mar Severios Metropolitan	17	18
AWAITING HOLY SPIRIT						
19 Pentiqosti Feast of the Pentecost, 50th day after Easter.	20 Comme of the 4 Evangelist, All fathers of the 3 Ecumenical Synod	21	22	23	24 Golden Friday (Friday after Pentiqosti)	25
26 1st Sunday after Pentiqosti 10th Comme of HH. Baselios Marthoma Didymus I Catholicos (Mount Tabor Dayara, Pathana puram).	27	28	29	30	31	

Teacher Training: There will be a teacher training course organized by OSSAE EAR on 12th May 2024 at 4:30 pm, on "Psychological concepts in learning framework", by Dr. Jina Jose.

The Sunday School resumed back after the holidays on 14th April.

The Moran Mar Baselios Paulose II Bible Quiz

The Moran Mar Baselios Paulose II Bible Quiz competition finale was held on 21 April 2024 after Holy Qurbana. Congratulations to all the participants.

Thanking all the mentors for their dedication and hard work. Also, grateful to the Vicar and all the prayer secretaries for their support and guidance.

Below are the winners of the bible quiz:

	Mentors	Team Members	
Winners	Anju Isac Bindhu George	Irene Elsa Philip	St Gregorios
		Ann Philip	St Gregorios
		Eva Ajith	St Gregorios
		Lorraine Isac	St Gregorios
1st Runners up	Ashly Thomas Sona John	Jerin Jinu	St Kuriakose
		Abigail Thomas	St Kuriakose
		Aleena Thomas	St Kuriakose
		Ethan George	St Kuriakose
2nd Runners up	Aleyamma John Surya Thomas	Evlyn Mariam Cherian	St Thomas
		Sairah Varghese	St Thomas
		Shawn Nirmal	St Thomas
		Alexia Elza Alex	St Gregorios



Quiz in Action



MARTHA MARIYAM VANITHA SAMAJAM

Martha Mariyam Vanitha Samajam's monthly meeting was held on April 14th under the leadership of our Vicar Aji. K. Varughese Achen. Dr. Blesy John (Blesy Kochamma) delivered a message based on **2 Corinthians 12:9** where Paul speaks of a personal encounter with the lord where God communicated a powerful truth to him. The Lord reassured Paul that his Grace was sufficient for him, regardless of his challenges or weaknesses. Kochamma stresses the importance of holding on to this word of God when we face all challenges and difficulties in today's life.

Achen distributed the certificates to MMVS members who have completed the MMVS central exam. MMVS fundraising food sale was conducted on 21st April after Holy Qurbana and the team raised a substantial amount through this food sale.



SMIOC - Family Camp 2024 - OIKONOMIA

The Couples Fellowship orchestrated a Family Camp for the SMIOC Family, meticulously planned under the direction of Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese, with support from the Church Managing Committee. The camp took place at Bayview Adventure Park in Grantville. Around 70 members participated in the Camp.





Throughout the month of April, 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 3 April 2024 the youth participated in a debate on the topic 'is it necessary to have a community to grow in your faith?', facilitated by Sam Jacob. On 17 April 2024, guest speaker Rev. Fr. Ferdinand Pathrose spoke about Isaiah 60:1 'Arise, shine', reflecting on lessons learnt from the recent MGOCSM & OCYM East Asia Region camp.

ARISE - 2024

The MGOCSM & OCYM East Asia Region camp was held from 4th to 6th April at Weekaway Camp in Benloch. Approximately 50 youth from SMIOC attended the camp, joining over 200 youth and clergy from New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and interstate within Australia. The theme was 'Arise' based on Isiah 60:1, "Arise, shine for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you". The camp involved spiritual session led by resource persons, activities including laughing yoga, flying fox, giant maze, laser tag and canoeing, and a forum led by the resource persons.

Here are some reflections from our youth members:

This year's youth camp proved to be an enriching experience for all of us. The speeches provided by Father Abey George and His Grace. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Demetrios were particularly insightful.

We delved into the analogy of the church as a hospital, exploring how God's transformative power heals us. This journey was illuminated through the inspiring stories of Saint Mary of Egypt and Saint Moses the Ethiopian. Additionally, we explored our purpose and responsibilities as members of our church.

After these sessions, we engaged in various group activities that allowed us to enjoy the campsite and bond with one another. We participated in canoeing, flying fox, giant maze, capture the flag, and laser tag. These activities were only entertaining, but also fostered a sense of fellowship amongst the youth.

As I reflect on the camp, I am grateful for the valuable lessons that I learned and the new friendships that I made. The combination of insightful seminars and engaging activities created an experience that will undoubtedly leave a lasting mark on me.

Bennett Biju Mathew





Youth Camp was an amazing experience and really set the standard for the level of execution for youth conducted events. From the moment I set foot on the campsite, the welcoming faces of people I had never met before put my mind at ease. I knew this would be an experience that I would never forget and I am sure that many others shared this same feeling. The informative speeches on faith from Abey Achen and His Grace Dr. Yuhanon Mar Demetrios, who graciously shared their time, knowledge, and wisdom, allowed even me, as one of the younger attendees, to gain a fresh perspective and learn more about the sacred traditions and foundations of faith within our Malankara Orthodox Church.

The collaborative environment in which I found myself in at camp allowed me to create meaningful relationships with many other Indian Orthodox youth, which would not have been possible otherwise. From the people that we met in our cabins and activities groups, to the people we happen to sit beside during meal times, the conversations we had formed a bond that will never be broken. The variety of games and activities, including mini icebreaker games on the first night, canoeing, flying fox and capture the flag, brought us all closer together in the most enjoyable way possible. By the end of the camp, we were all sad to see each other go, as it felt as though we were parting ways childhood friend we'd just met.

The opportunity to worship and be in such a spiritual environment, surrounded by others who shared the same faith and ideals as me, and who had the desire to strengthen their relationship with God, was my biggest takeaway from the Arise 2024 Youth Camp. In a nutshell, this year's youth camp was an incredible event that allowed for the spiritual development of the Malankara Orthodox youth in the East Asia Region. It would not have been possible without the sheer determination and grit of the senior youth and church representatives, and for that I am confident to say that all the attendees are grateful.

I look forward to the next youth camp and cannot wait for the amazing experience it will be!

Leah Praveen

SMIOC Youth @ Arise Camp





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

Part 5

After the cruise our group had a dinner together on a roof top restaurant which had another amazing view of the Bosphorus and the shimmering lights of the city and its monuments. We returned to our hotel and was instructed to be ready by 7:30a.m for the drive around Tukey, 27000kms! Breakfast was open from 6:30a.m but our bags had to be ready and placed outside our rooms to be picked up by the hotel staff at 6:30a.m to be loaded on the bus.

The next stop was Gallipoli where we visited the ANZAC cove, the memorial, Lone Pine and the monument of Kamal Atatürk the founder of modern Turkey and an astute military combat leader. It was sad to visit the graves of Australian and New Zealander soldiers one as young as 17 years, many who fell to the bullets of the Turks who were waiting for these amateur soldiers landing at Gallipoli.



Dr. Bonny Varghese



ANZAC Memorial

We then drove to Troy (Troas as mentioned in the New Testament and present day Hissarlik) a city visited during St. Paul's 2nd and 3rd journeys. (Acts 16:9-10 & Acts 20:5). This is the legendary city of the Trojan horse and a thriving Aegean Sea port of those days and hence an important Roman city. Was founded in 310B.C by Alexander the Great's army general Alexandria Troas.

This was the town where St. Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia pleading him to visit his country and help them, (Acts16:8-10) and also where he performed the miracle of reviving Eutychus who dozed and fell down three floors while listening to St. Paul. (Acts20:7-12). It is here that he was joined by Timothy as they then set sail on his return after his 3rd missionary journey en route to Jerusalem and where he announced

JOURNEY...

to the people assembled there including the elders of Ephesus whom he had invited to come over to Troy that they would not see him again!(Acts20;25) and knelt down and prayed knowing the fate that waited him in Jerusalem.

Troy is a city that had been rebuilt eight times and as the archaeologist dug deeper they discovered this fact in the different layers they unearthed. The location of the city must have been so important that despite the earthquakes and destruction of the city that it was rebuilt repeatedly.

From Troy we visited Pergamon (Bergamon) a city which was the first Medical Centre (hospital) in the world dedicated to Askelpion the Greek God of Medicine. They had a vast establishment of trained physicians and assistants, providing care which bordered on psycho/physiotherapy and music therapy. There is a broad street running to the the hospital wards , the patients after being triaged at the entrance would be driven over to the consulting rooms in a horse driven chariot. There is a constant flowing spring water in this place which was touted to have medicinal properties. We were told that patients who only had a chance of survival would only be admitted, oh yes the stay and therapy was only for the affordable!



Askelpion



The next day we visited the ruins of Ephesus then a thriving sea port, and certainly this was one of the highlights of the trip realising that we are in one of the chapters in the New Testament. This seaport was visited by St. Paul on his return from the journey and onward during his 3rd mission and is from where he had

written the first letter to the Corinthian and famously wrote " If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal"(1Cor:13, 1). It is in the letter to the Ephesians he enumerates the fruits of the flesh and that of the Spirit. (Ephesians 5: 19-23). The letters to Phillipians, Galatians, and the Gospel and letters of St. John are also believed to have been drafted here. The third ecumenical Council in 431 A.D. was held in Ephesus. The first council was in Nicaea (modern-day city Iznik in Turkiy`a), in 325 A.D., and the second in Constantinople in 381 A.D. This highlights the importance of Turkey (Asia Minor) on the map of Christian History, not to mention that the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelations are all in the western part of Turkey. The first church was located at Ephesus, the first stop along the trade route, followed by Smyrna, now İzmir, then the great city of Pergamon, then Thyatira, wealthy Sardis, Philadelphia and finally Laodicea, near modern-day Denizli.

This also happens to be the place where St. John had spent a long time and a stone's throw from Ephesus in Selcuk is where he was buried. A huge Church (St. John's Basilica) was built over his tomb by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century.

Ephesus was a city seaport but since then has receded from the sea. The sea is 1.5 km from the ruins now. The city boasted one of the seven wonders of the Old World, the Temple of Artemis (Diana for the Romans). This temple was also made of marble, four times the dimensions of the Parthenon in Athens would have been so splendid both during the day and night. During the day the white marble would be glinting in the sun and at night the candles and fires made it visible far into the sea, kind of a Light House. The city also boasts one of the largest open-air theatres with the best acoustics and a seating capacity of 25,000. This indicates the population(approx.250,000) and popularity of this city in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The temple was alleged to have been destroyed for the last time by the Christians when Christianity became a dominant religion.

Demetrius initiated the crowds against St. Paul because they were losing their business of making silver idols of Artemis because of St. Paul's conversions. (Acts 19:23-27) It was here that St. Paul spoke fearlessly in the synagogue and the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8,9) and where he was able to heal many and put the fear of Jesus in the seven sons of Sceva the Jewish high priest. (Acts 19:15).

The city had the largest library (The Celsius Library) in the world even more collection than Alexandria which until then was the largest. The gates of Hercules, the sidewalks adorned by carvings of soldiers in battle, other depicting stories of the Roman gods, the shopping plaza etc showed the opulence of the city and how thriving it would have been in the days of St. Paul when he walked through the streets to and from the port. The city was under the Roman governor Lucinius when Mark Antony & Cleopatra paid a visit he was not sure of their intentions so to welcome and get into his good books he got the street to the harbour washed in red wine and that is how the term "Red Carpet" welcome originated!

St. Paul used the commerce and trading activity of Ephesus to his advantage spreading the Word and this became the centre of evangelization of "people from all over Asia" (Acts 19:10). It was here that he met Apollos of Alexandria who had a thorough knowledge of the scriptures (Acts 18:24) and also rebaptized the followers of John the Baptist with the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6).

On the mountains in the city of Izmir was another marvelous and sacred place of Christianity. The Christians lived in fear of persecution and they sought refuge in the hills away from the city. Several Christian families and holy women had already settled there, some in caves in the earth or in the rocks and some in fragile huts. They lived a quarter of an hour from each other to avoid being detected and rounded up together. The house of St. Mary where she is believed to have spent her last days was the only house made of stone and the sea can be seen from its backyard. It was a house made by St. John for Mother Mary after they fled Jerusalem once the Jews set Lazarus and his sisters adrift into the sea. It is said that after our Lord's Ascension Mary lived for three years on Mount Zion, for three years in Bethany, and for nine years in Ephesus three and half hours of walking distance from Ephesus to be precise. St. John had built the house on the western slope of the hill not far from Selcuk before he brought Mother Mary here.



PRAYER MEETINGS




- 05 May (St. Thomas) - No Prayer Meeting
- 12 May (St. Kuriakose) - Mr. Suneeth K Mathew, Wollert.
- 19 May (St. Dionysios) - No Prayer Meeting
- 26 May (St. Gregorios) - Mr. Gracious Markose John, Werribee

BALLARAT - St. Dionysius Indian Orthodox Congregation

Rev. Fr. Aji K Varughese celebrated the sacrament of Holy Qurbana at the St Alipius Parish Church on 12 April 2024.



STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

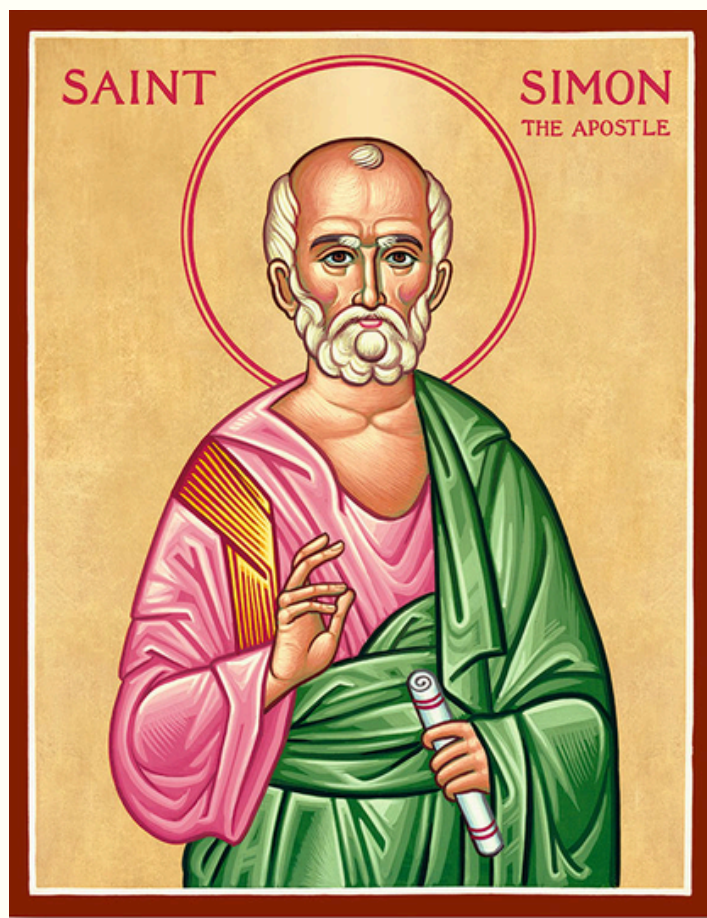
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Pentiqosti



St. Simon, the Zealot