

**ST. THOMAS  
INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
1009 UNRUH AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111**



**NEWSLETTER**

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## VICAR'S MESSAGE

### A NEW BEGINNING

The month of October ends with a new beginning in the Church calendar with the name Koodosh Eetho followed by Hoodos Eetho both mean respectively sanctification and dedication. These two most important concepts are vital in Christian life. One addresses the idea of cleaning which indicate a situation of health. Cleaning is a basic human need in normal life. In a physical world cleanliness is a basic factor of good health. Even longevity of life is related to clean atmosphere such as clean body, clean air, clean home and so on. These rules are also applicable to mental and spiritual realm. Clean mind, clean behavior, clean dealings, clean spirituality etc. are key factors for good spiritual health. Human being is a psycho-somatic mechanism in which one cannot separate body from mind and spirit. Body is just a tool of the mind and spirit. They work in unison to balance health of a person. We can see people who are physically looking healthy but they may be mentally ill. Some people look both physically and mentally health but are sick in spirit.

When Jesus healed a paralytic, He first said to him, "your sins are forgiven" which was an indication that his physical health was connected with his spiritual health. Several passages in the New Testament clearly says how Jesus healed the people possessed by demons. Most of these were mental cases. The unclean spirit will distort human life and project the wrong kind of personality. We see people who look healthy outward but unhealthy inside creating problem in the community and the family.

Our Lord said, "blessed are those pure (clean) at heart for they will see God (Matthew 5:8). St. Paul in Hebrews 12:14 says, "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. There is an English saying, "cleanliness is closeness to Godliness". It is absolutely true that people clean at heart will be able to communicate with God. Many of the saints in the Holy Church were those who



kept the clean mind. People trusted them, adored them and listened to them.

On the same coin cleanliness or sanctity is precursor of dedication. Dedication has the simple meaning "being committed to" something. Dedication can be a general term used in the area of education, job, family, church and so on. But the spiritual term dedication is the power of the mind to stay in sanctity and firmness. Often cleaning is very easy but to stay clean is not easy. Jesus tells an example of an evil spirit that left a man's life. That man kept his life decorated and clean for some time but it was not dedicated to anyone. So when the evil spirit that left him came back as it did not find a place to live in, found the former dwelling place so well kept unoccupied. He brought seven other spirits and dwelt in that mind. The scripture says that the man's situation became seven time worse than the previous state. He did clean his life but he did not dedicate it to God. This can happen to us or may have happened to many of us. Every Sunday we clean our life but we are unable to dedicate it to God and so Satan will occupy our life very soon. Once we dedicate our life it will be sealed and there will be no room for evil to get in. In baptism we cast out the demon and accept Jesus but the continuity is our biggest problem. If we are successful in dedicating our life, it will lead us to a very strong and well founded life. Jesus again teaches us, "You be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt 5:28) May the Lord bless us to have our life sanctified and dedicated to God as we have a new beginning in the Church calendar.

Lovingly,  
Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

# Parish News

## November Wedding Anniversary

Mr. & Mrs. Santhosh M Baby	Nov 3	Mr. & Mrs. Jubee P Mathai	Nov 20
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Daniel	Nov 4	Mr. & Mrs. Toby Johns Fen	Nov 21
Mr. & Mrs. Panickal Y Mathaikutty	Nov 7	Mr. & Mrs. Philip John	Nov 24
Mr. & Mrs. Bibin P. Baby	Nov 8	Mr. & Mrs. Vakkayil Varghese Joseph	Nov 24
Mr. & Mrs. Alex T Raju	Nov 8	Mr. & Mrs. Anish Thomas	Nov 28
Mr. & Mrs. Saju John	Nov 8	Mr. & Mrs. Abraham John	Nov 28
Mr. & Mrs. Jibu Vergis	Nov 9	Mr. & Mrs. Kondoor Educula Chacko	Nov 28
Mr. & Mrs. John Polayil Abraham	Nov 11	Mr. & Mrs. Abraham K. George	Nov 29
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Yohannan	Nov 18		

## November Birthdays

Saji V Mathew	Nov 1	Varghese Varghese	Nov 14	Aji P Abraham	Nov 23
Rebu Roy	Nov 1	Rev. Fr. Geevarghese John	Nov 14	Bobin Mathew Thomas	Nov 23
Saju Mathew	Nov 2			Sonia Anna John	Nov 24
Thomas Varghese	Nov 2	Raphael Reynold	Nov 15	Aleyamma Joy	Nov 24
Mili Kanapilly Thomas	Nov 2	Geevarghese M Panicker	Nov 15	Annamma George	Nov 24
Jacob P Oommen	Nov 3			Mathew A.P George	Nov 25
Saiju Jubee	Nov 5	Abel V Mathew	Nov 15	Annamma Regi	Nov 25
Marygrace Pothen	Nov 6	Marykutty John	Nov 15	Thomas P Oommen	Nov 25
Amos Geo Vaidian	Nov 8	Beena Jacob Sam	Nov 16	Daniel P Bivin	Nov 25
Susy Jacob	Nov 8	Jonah Stephen	Nov 16	Jubee P Mathai	Nov 25
Leelamma Vergis	Nov 8	Yohannan Mathew	Nov 16	Rajan T Samuel	Nov 25
Joanna K Alex	Nov 8	Sheela K. Abraham	Nov 16	Ann Maria Sabu	Nov 26
Georgeyo Oommen	Nov 9	Joshua Mathew	Nov 18	Annamma Mathai	Nov 26
Jacob Mathew	Nov 9	Leni S Mampallil	Nov 18	Philip K Thomas	Nov 26
Lilly Elias	Nov 10	Omana Mathew	Nov 18	Christina E George	Nov 27
Elsamma Koshy	Nov 10	Kochukoshy P Oommen	Nov 19	Bivin V Pulivelil	Nov 27
Oommen Geevarghese	Nov 10			Elizabeth Jacob	Nov 27
John P Eapen	Nov 10	Issac Mathew	Nov 19	Bethenny John	Nov 27
Asish Mathew	Nov 11	Eapen V Kalathil	Nov 19	Susan George	Nov 27
Evelyn Panicker	Nov 12	Predeep Chacko	Nov 20	Angela Abraham	Nov 27
Anu Vergis	Nov 13	Abraham K. George	Nov 20	Mercy Panicker	Nov 28
Benny Mathew	Nov 13	Tony P. Biju	Nov 20	John Panicker	Nov 29
Johanna M. Mukadiyil	Nov 13	Salamma Varghese	Nov 20	Saju John	Nov 29
Suja Mathew	Nov 13	Neena A George	Nov 20	Elias K Issac	Nov 29
Anie Mathew	Nov 13	Manju Eldho	Nov 21	Vakkayil V Joseph	Nov 30
Anju John	Nov 14	Haya Saly Mathew	Nov 23		

## Sunday School News

*Submitted by Oommen Kappil, Principal  
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### Principal's Message

October was a hectic month with a lot of activities including the Area level and Diocesan level Talent Competitions. Yet earning the overall Championship was indeed a humbling and rewarding experience. Glory be to the Father Almighty who has entrusted us with His precious gifts, our children. Let us continue to uphold them in our prayers so that they can continue do their best by using their God-given talents.

### Talent Competitions-2016

#### Our Sunday School Wins Overall Championship Trophy at the Area Level

For the fifth year in a row, our Sunday School won the overall championship at the Area level Talent Competitions. This event was held on October 8th at St. Johns Indian Orthodox Church of Delaware Valley.

#### Our Sunday School Wins St. Gregorios Memorial Championship Trophy at the Diocesan Level

Our Sunday School won the overall Championship Trophy at the Diocesan Level Talent Competition held in our parish on October 29th. This year we were tied for the first place along with St. Mary's Church of Jackson Heights, NY. Our Sunday School had won previously in 2012, 2013 and 2015. The St. Gregorios Memorial Trophy was awarded based on the combined scores in Talent Competition, Assigned Competition and Centralized Examination. We congratulate all the winners, participants for their outstanding performances and wins. We thank our Achens, parents, teachers and parish members for encouraging and supporting our children.

Special thanks to Liz Pothen, Coordinator of Assigned Competitions, and Bishel Baby, Coordinator of Talent Competitions for their leadership and continuing commitment.

TALENT COMPETITION 2016-Diocesan Level Winners			
GROUP	COMPETITION	Rank	NAME
2	Malayalam Solo Song	1st	Grace Suja John
	Malayalam Solo Song	2nd	Rachel Ann Varghese
	English Solo Song	3rd	Emily Varghese
4	English Solo Song	3rd	Shane Thomas
5	Malayalam Solo Song	1st	Steffin Manoj
6	English Solo Song	2nd	Shanya Alex
	Malayalam Elocution	3rd	Lisa John
7	Malayalam Solo Song	2nd	Jeena Abraham
	English Solo Song	1st	Stacey George
	Malayalam Elocution	3rd	Jeena Abraham

### Talent Show Performance

One of the most anticipated performances at the Diocesan Level Talent Show held on Oct. 29th was the performance of our Sunday School children. Our Sunday School presented a stage show involving about 50 children. It was well received by the audience. Special thanks to Milly Philip (Coordinator of Talent Show), Kripaya Varghese, Tina Prince, Christina Thomas, Reshma Padiyara, Nissy Zachariah and an amazing team of volunteers for making it a memorable experience for the children.

### Hosting the Talent Competitions & Talent Show-Oct 29th

Hosting an all-day event involving over 700 guests is no easy task. But our church was able to pull it together so effectively, thanks to the remarkable teamwork of our parish members. With profound gratitude, I thank everyone who contributed to its success. Special thanks to a few people who were instrumental in making it possible: Samkutty John and Team (Refreshment Committee), Varghese P Abraham and Philip Varghese (Facility Management), Santhosh Baby, Rajan Padiyara, Binny Cherian & MGOCSM Members (Snack Sale to benefit patients of Parumala Cancer Center), Isaac George, Suja Abraham and Mercy Cherian (Reception and Lunch Coupon Sale), Sathees Easo, Regi Mathai, Tony Biju, Jacob Zachariah, Mathew George (Purchases). May God reward everyone for their selfless service.

Ecumenical Bible Kalolsav was held On Oct. 22 at Syro Malabar Church. Several students from our church participated in the event. They won 14 prizes in different categories including second place for Bible Quiz. Congratulations to all the winners. Special thanks go to Liz Pothen for coordinating the participation in this event.

2016 Sunday School Calendar

Event	Date	Venue	Coordinator
Class Exam Trophy distribution	Sunday, Nov. 6	Our Church	Santhosh Baby
Sunday School Anniversary	Sunday, Nov. 20	Our Church	Bishel Baby/Susan Mathew
Winter Clothing Drive/Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution	Sunday, Nov. 20	Our Church	Suja Abraham
Ecumenical Christmas Program	Saturday, Dec. 10	To be announced	Milly Philip
Christmas Craft Fair	Saturday, Dec. 17	Our Church	Reena Susan Mathews

## SAINT HIS GRACE PARUMALA THIRUMENI

Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose

Once again we are in the sacred memory of our Church's saint Parumala Thirumeni. Each year this sacred memory comes to us with a huge challenge. What is that challenge? Being an ordinary human being, how did he become a much venerable saint? Let me share three thoughts in connection with this challenge.

### 1. Simplicity in Life:

The simplicity of the life of Parumala Thirumeni is well known. His Grace's life style was that of an ordinary human being. Simplicity in its nice form! No luxury, no big talk, but quiet nature etc. Anyone could approach him any time. Remember what our Lord said about children, "the Kingdom of God is like that of these children." Jesus Christ expects the mind of a child in a saint. Children do not put the false face of a good person. A child does not boast itself. "Blessed are the meek". Today we can hardly find this nature in people. Often people want to express themselves as though they are better than others. We know we cannot make our own good certificate. Other

people should give us the certificate. For that we should humble ourselves. Jesus said, "The one who humbles himself will be exalted." These words of Christ were seen in practice in the life of our Lord. We should keep it in mind that we can do it as well. Maybe we may not be approved by many humans but God will indeed approve us. Maybe the approval will come after our life in this world. That is enough. Acceptance by the Lord is more desirable.

### 2. Continuous Prayer and Observance of Lent:

Parumala Thirumeni is known for his prayer and lent/fasting life. His Grace had only conducted the canonical prayers prescribed by the Orthodox Liturgical system. No much babbling, and loud prayers like some Pentecostal or charismatic groups do. He communicated with God through the normal prayers of the Church. The only difference was that His Grace did it sincerely and not as a formality. Those prayers connected His Grace with God. Every prayer of the Orthodox Church is likewise

able to connect us to God. Such prayers will indeed be answered. His Grace's prayers became solace to many people. It became part of their experience. Thus, today, for those who join the "pilgrimage trip" to Parumala became an experience to believers. True prayers will lead us to a great spiritual experience which is a lesson that we learn from the life witness of Parumala Thirumeni.

### 3. A Life Lived for Others:

This is the extreme level of saintliness. A saint never wants to live for him or her. We saw this in our Lord, St. Mary and all other saints. Most of the people are willing to live for others provided they are their own children or family members. Or they will live for their own comfort. In the eyes of the worldly humans, it is acceptable but not in the eyes of the Lord. Look at what happened to the man who came in search of eternal life. Jesus found that he was a good man but there was only a slight weakness that he had. The Lord said to him to sell his property, give to the poor and then follow Him. That rich man

went back dismayed and unable to acquire eternal life. Jesus Christ suggested the best way to that rich man. But the rich man wanted to enjoy his wealth himself and did not want to share with anyone. What he lost was eternal life.

It is in this matter that Parumala Thirumeni and Pampadi Thirumeni becomes examples for us. They never accumulated wealth for themselves. They shared with others what God gave them. And the multitude accepted them as saints. About how many of us the people will say this? We earn wealth and money for our comfort or for our children's comfort. Even when the children have enough, we still offer them more just because

they are own children. There is nothing wrong in giving to our children what they need. But we should not just think for our family alone. If we are truly devout Christians, we should not just obey the rules of the world that is caring only for one's own family. Such faith mentality is true hypocrisy.

Many people who are devotees of Parumala Thirumeni are those who don't care for the needy around them. One thing we see common in those devotees is that they want to get certain things in their life: heal their sickness, get a job, improve their family situation, have material prosperity, and so on. What kind of devotion is that? It is nothing but hypocrisy. If we are seeking

the intercession of Parumala Thirumeni, we should be able to instill in us some qualities of his life. We have millions of people taking part in the pilgrimage procession to Parumala. If those people had stopped their alcoholism, most of the liquor shops in Kerala would have been closed. If those people are willing to share at least the Tithe with others, the image of our Church would be different. I believe that our perunnals and spiritual observances should bring some change in us. I wish and pray that those who honestly celebrate the sacred memory of Parumala Thirumeni will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring some change in them.