

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1009 UNRUH AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111

Phone: (215) 342 1500 Fax: (215) 342 2700 [www.stthomasphiladelphia.org](http://www.stthomasphiladelphia.org)

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

VOLUME XXII ISSUE 9

### Vicar's Message

**“Jesus Christ being clearly portrayed as crucified before your eyes, who bewitched you?” Galatians 3:1**

September 14th brings us the memory of the Feast of the Holy Cross. The Protestant world has sparingly taken the symbol of the Holy Cross, especially the Pentecostals. All mainland Protestant Churches are using the Symbol in their worship as well. Somehow there has been a lot of misunderstanding among the Pentecostals about the Holy Cross. They interpret that the Orthodox Christians use the Holy Cross as “idol worship”. For that reason, they don't make the sign of the cross while praying. The Roman Catholic and all Orthodox Churches have the practice of ‘making the sign of the Holy Cross’ in worship or in daily life. An Orthodox believer will make the sign of the cross several times in a day apart from worship. What is the



significance of the symbol of the Holy Cross? Or what does it mean to us when St. Paul is questioning Galatians about the crucified Christ?

The Holy Cross was one of the most common means of heinous punishment to death for a criminal in the Roman world. Thousands of believers in Christ have suffered persecution during the first three centuries of the Christian era. The Cross became not just two pieces of wood put together but it became a concept. Jesus often mentioned, “Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy

of me” Matt. 10:38. In our own local slang ‘cross’ is used as a concept of suffering. Even those people who inflict suffering on others we call, “cross”. But the Christian concept of Christian tradition is the most significant and fundamental ideology of suffering for others. In Galatians 6:14 St. Paul says about his boasting on the cross of Christ. Cross and suffering are two interchangeable concepts that every Christian must understand clearly.

Why is cross a mandate for humans? Who wants to suffer? We live in a time in which almost all are seeking comfort, health, wealth, name, and fame. It is in this context that we the Christian community should rediscover the real meaning of cross and the fundamental Christian principles that the cross conveys. The Holy Cross brings the message:

1. Love without any conditions. Love even at hatred. Commands us to turn the other cheek. Love to the point of giving one’s life for his friend.
2. Suffer without complaints. Take suffering as a privilege. Suffer to make others happy and at peace. Suffer material losses, hatred, mocking, physical pain, and loss of comfort.

Suffer even to the point of death as the martyrs did.

3. Be Tolerant. In any given situation utmost tolerance giving respect to others regardless of their background, such as religion, faith, financial status, education, position, and so on. Even when the situation is unbearable, tolerance will stay unaffected. This also helps us forgive everyone unconditionally.

4. Love is giving/sharing, rather than receiving. Love is explicit only in giving than in receiving. It is sharing that impressed Jesus at the house of Zacchaeus to pronounce him as son of Abraham. It is this call that disappointed the rich young man who was clearly a perfect Law-abiding Jew who was told to sell all that he has and follow Jesus. It is this sharing that brought up the Early Church in unity and holiness.

The Cross is our tool to carve out the perfect life in Christ. Anyone who is out of the range of the meaning of the Cross can never please God. Let us reflect – what is the range of our understanding of the Cross?

Lovingly, Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

## PARISH NEWS – SEPTEMBER 2018

**Memorial of Mr. Alex Daniel:** Mr. Alex Daniel, a senior member of our parish passed away on Wednesday evening on August 29th after a prolonged illness. Mr. Alex Daniel and family moved to Texas about a month ago.

His service to our parish was exemplary, as a member of the Managing Committee several times and serving the parish at different capacities. We have lost a very good friend. His wife Susan Alex (Kunjumol), son Diboo, daughter Priya and families are in our prayers. May the Lord give him eternal memory and solace.

**St. Mary's Nativity Fast (Ettu Noimbu)-** September 1<sup>st</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>

**Kerala Flood Relief:** We are all aware of the devastating floods which have hit our home state of Kerala in the month of August. Per the kalpana of our Metropolitan, we have taken up a collection for the relief and recovery of the hardest hit regions. As of the end of August, we have raised \$21,000.00. Please see the Trustee if you would like to donate.

**School Supply Drive-** Ends September 2<sup>nd</sup>; All supplies collected will be given to the underprivileged kids in the area. Please bring any school supplies for donation including books, pencils, pens, markers, school bags etc. Donations will be collected in a box placed in the Church foyer.

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## August Parish Updates

**August 5<sup>th</sup>:** Our Karuna Charity along with our Sunday School conducted a yard sale. All proceeds were collected and will be distributed to cancer patients in need.

**August 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>:** AGNI: Middle School Summer Camp; Several of our children, ages 10-14 attended the camp held at the HTRC, along with our Assistant Vicar. A good time was had by all.

**August 18<sup>th</sup>:** Annual Church Picnic; Our annual picnic was attended by over 250 people at Tamanend Park in Bucks County. Our very capable volunteers grilled a barbecue feast for all. Members of all ages participated in the sports and games. Special thanks goes out to Mr. GM Panicker for planning the events.

**August 24<sup>th</sup>:** FOCUS Fellowship Game Night; Rev. Fr. Abey George led our Area FOCUS meeting which featured many fellowship-building games.

Time: 6-8:30PM

See attached flyer for more info.

### September 22<sup>nd</sup> - GROW Presents:

#### "The Waiting Room"

A free workshop hosted by G.R.O.W. Ministries for women of the Philadelphia Area.

We each go through periods of "waiting" in our lives, and the aim of this workshop is to help women cope with these times with grace, knowing that God is always near to those who call upon Him.

Registration fee: None. This is a free event! 😊

Venue: St. John's Indian Orthodox Church of Delaware Valley

Date: Saturday, September 22, 2018

Time: 10am-12pm

Speakers: Rev. Fr. Gheevarghese John & Mrs. Bessie Mathew

Refreshments will be provided.

Link to Register:

<https://bit.ly/2C9ORsZ>

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## September Events

### September 2<sup>nd</sup> -

**Sunday School Begins-** All students who need to be registered should see the Sunday School office.

**OCYM:** New Bible lessons are taught at OCYM meetings on Sundays. Acts of the Apostles will be taught with video class from next Sunday onward.

**September 9<sup>th</sup> - Church Level Talent Competition-** This is the first level of Talent Competition. Winners will go on to compete in the Area and then Diocesan Level Competitions.

**September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> – MOCF** will hold a Gospel Convention

Venue: St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church (Bensalem)

## SEPTEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Job John	1-Sep	Mr. & Mrs. Mathew Varghese	15-Sep
Mr. & Mrs. Rajesh Geevarghese	3-Sep	Mr. & Mrs. Anoop John	20-Sep
Mr. & Mrs. Binoy Varghese	7-Sep	Mr. & Mrs. Geevarghese M Panicker	21-Sep
Mr. & Mrs. Anoop George	10-Sep	Mr. & Mrs. George Varghese	27-Sep
Mr. & Mrs. Thankachan K Mathai	10-Sep	Mr. & Mrs. Anu Thomas	28-Sep
Mr. & Mrs. Babu M Kunjandy	12-Sep	Mr. & Mrs. Yohannan Mathew	30-Sep
Mr. & Mrs. Cherian Philipose	12-Sep		
Mr. & Mrs. Joy Jacob	13-Sep		
Mr. & Mrs. Abhilash John	13-Sep		
Mr. & Mrs. Thomaskutty Varghese	13-Sep		
Mr. & Mrs. Saju Paul	14-Sep		
Mr. & Mrs. Jacob K. Thekekkuttu	14-Sep		



## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Alvin Anil	1-Sep	Nivedh Philip	11-Sep	Ruth Hana Philipose	21-Sep
Suma Sunil	1-Sep	Jennifer Mariam Philip	11-Sep	Anu. Pulickal Varughese	22-Sep
Chinnamma Thomas	1-Sep	Brown Varghese	13-Sep	Ajin John Abraham	22-Sep
Susmitha Thomas	2-Sep			Eben P Mathai	22-Sep
Vivek K Paulose	2-Sep			Smitha Jacob	23-Sep
Carolyn Miriam Cherian	3-Sep			Sarah M Samuel	23-Sep
Jacob Kuruvilla	3-Sep			Alissa Jose	23-Sep
Panickal Y Mathaikutty	3-Sep	Sosamma Educula Chacko	15-Sep	Gitty George Abraham	25-Sep
Jacob Chacko	4-Sep	Jonathan B Varghese	15-Sep	Shinu Augustin	25-Sep
Elizabeth Thomas	4-Sep	Elsa Thomas	16-Sep	Jomy George	25-Sep
Joshua J Mathew	4-Sep	Kunjamma Thomas	16-Sep	Varghese Panicker	26-Sep
Alex T Raju	5-Sep	Annamma Geevarghese	17-Sep	Nicole Samuel	26-Sep
Simon Daniel Jaison	5-Sep	Saramma Varughese	17-Sep	Smitha Thomas	27-Sep
Liya Sara Aji	5-Sep	Jeff George	17-Sep	Linda Elsa Aji	28-Sep
Niju Mathew Cheriyan	6-Sep	Suja Mary Mathew	18-Sep	Shaji Thomas	28-Sep
Shinu P Thankachan	7-Sep	Sneha Jose	19-Sep	Smitha J Mathew	28-Sep
Raji Rajan	7-Sep	Jensil Varghese	20-Sep	Anoop Joseph George	28-Sep
Samkutty John	8-Sep	Jacob Zachariah	20-Sep	Christiana Rachel Shibu	28-Sep
Anoop George	8-Sep	Seraphina George	20-Sep	Jibin Vaidian	29-Sep
Varghese P Abraham	8-Sep	Joy Panicker Jr.	20-Sep	Julee P Saji	29-Sep
Isaac Varghese	9-Sep	Thomas C Thomas	21-Sep	Tacilin Linu Jacob	29-Sep
Hanah M. mathew	9-Sep	Nimitha Thomas	21-Sep	Achamma Kurian	29-Sep
Priya Mariam Saji	11-Sep	Sheril Susan Varghese	21-Sep	Binish George	30-Sep



## Sunday School News

*Submitted by Binny Cherian, Principal  
(Tel.: 914.708.7981, Email: cbinny@gmail.com)*

<b>St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church (STIOC) Sunday School Calendar for 2018</b>					
S.No.	Event	Venue	Date and Time	Coordinator/s	Registration Fee / Deadline
1	Sunday School Re-opens after the summer break	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Sep. 2 <sup>nd</sup> (Sun.)	Binny Cherian	
2	First Alphabet Writing	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Sep. 2nd (Sun.)	Renu Samuel	
3	Alternate Date for Centralized Exam (Grades - 5,8,10 & TTC)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	September 2nd (Sun.)	Binny Cherian	
4	Church Level Talent Competitions (incl. Bible Quiz)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Sep 9th Sun.	Susan David, Bishel Baby	
5	Area level Talent Competitions	St. Mary's Cathedral Church, Huntingdon Valley	Sep 29th Sat. 9am - 4 pm	Reny Biju, Rekha Philip	Sep. 16th, \$10 per participant (fully subsidized by STIOC)
6	Diocesan Talent Competitions (incl. Bible Quiz)	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Oct. 27th Sat.	Mr. Mathew Joseph	Reg. Deadline is Oct.13
7	Area Teachers Fellowship	St. Gregorios MOC, Bensalem	Nov 10th Sat. <b>Time TBD</b>	Annie Varghese, Susan David	
8	Craft fair and Movie night	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	Nov 17th Sat.	Susan Mathews	
9	Ecumenical Christmas Program (SS Event)	George Washington HS	TBD	Milly Philip	
10	Church, Christmas Social	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD		
11	Sunday school Anniversary	St. Thomas IOC, Unruh Ave.,	TBD		

**Please remember to pray for the Sunday school Children and Staff in your daily prayers.**



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"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes" Romans 1:16

**MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (MOCHF),  
PENNSYLVANIA**

## **GOSPEL CONVENTION**

***SATURDAY & SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 & 16, 2018***

**Speaker: Rev. Fr. Alex Brince Mathews**

(Vice President of Sunday Schools, Thumpamon Diocese)

**Saturday, September 15 6:00 - 8:30 PM Evening Prayer, Choir & Sermon**

**Sunday, September 16 6:00 - 8:30 PM Evening Prayer, Choir & Sermon**

**Venue: St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church**

4136 Hulmeville Rd, Bensalem, PA 19020

**For Information:**

Very Rev. K. Mathai Cor Episcopa (Chairman) (215) 526-4813, Very Rev. C. J. Johnson Cor Episcopa (917) 494-2154, Rev. Fr. Dr. Samuel K. Mathew (267) 994- 1748, Rev Fr. M. K. Kuriakose (201) 681-1078, Rev. Fr. K. K. John (215) 904-7398, Rev. Fr. Kuriakose (Siby) Varghese (267) 401-3732, Rev. Fr. Shibu Mathai Venad (312) 927-7045, Rev. Fr. Abu Varghese Peter (914) 806-4595, Rev. Fr. Gheevarghese John (914) 720-0136, Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas(Diocesan Secretary) (516)-754-0743, Rev: Fr. Eby Paulose (267) 916-0444 Rev. Dn. Daniel Yohannan (215) 840-7579, Philipose Cheriyan (Secretary) (215) 605-7310, John Panicker (Treasurer) (215)-605-5109

**Participating Churches:**

St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Cathedral, St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church, St. Mary's Orthodox Church of Philadelphia, St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church of Philadelphia (Mascher St.), St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church (Unruh Ave.), St. John's Indian Orthodox Church of Delaware Valley, St. George Malankara Orthodox Church, St. Luke Orthodox Mission Church