

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022

VOLUME XXVI ISSUE 7

Vicar's Message

St. Thomas' Uniqueness

We have imbibed the tradition of celebrating the memory of St. Thomas in July from the Edessan Church. No matter what the tradition is, it is important for me that I honor this great saint, apostle and my own father.

The Indian Church owes everything to St. Thomas.

Three factors make St. Thomas unique to us.

1. St. Thomas is the Founder of my Church: It is a matter of deep sentiments to me that my own Father, the founder of my own Church, the one who started the branch of the Body of Christ in Indian soil is my own pride and love. No one needs to tell me the importance of my father! I am so deeply connected to my father that he is by default a matter of memory to me. If anyone would try to convince me for the sake of some political gain that St. Thomas is not as important in comparison with another apostle, I would avoid an argument with that person because my conviction cannot be a matter to argue with someone else. Who would argue against the adversary who denies somebody's father? Only if someone is not sure about it.

In the case of St. Thomas, I can say St. Thomas is my father without any doubt. I



should know well who my father is. To argue to establish my father's fatherhood is foolishness. It is for this reason that I personally refused to honor the Antiochian Patriarch HH Jacob III, who in his Kalpana #203/1970 referred to St. Thomas as "not an Apostle because he was absent when Jesus gave Holy Spirit to all other Apostles." All other occasions of Jesus giving the authority to the Apostles and even the Pentecost was forgotten by the Patriarch! The Patriarch's misguided political statement was only to impose his power over the Indian Church. The result of such satanic statements found its impact on the Indian Orthodox Church: an irreparable division happened. Many scholars, spiritually minded and politically powerful people in that group, declaring allegiance to the Patriarch never showed any courage to speak against the Patriarch and dissociate themselves from him and his authority. They did not care for the fact that St. Thomas is

their own father who begat them in Christ. Even to this day the group showing allegiance to the Patriarch or the Patriarchs who were enthroned on the Antiochian See after HH Jacob III were unwilling to disown the Patriarch's unwarranted comment. I am sure St. Thomas is not the loser but those who disown him will be. We can only feel pity on those who disown his/her own father!

2. St. Thomas' Model is Unique: The very fact of leaving the Middle East to come to a place where his language was not known well, to travel that distance, to gather courage to preach Christ in an alien world where Christ is unheard of, and so on, St. Thomas stands out. No other apostle took that adventure. The greatest missionary apostle Paul did not face this much adversity. In addition, his mission was fulfilled the way the Lord desired, "not to be served but to serve and give his life as ransom". His death became a model to all Christians. Not just willing to forsake one's family, wealth, power, etc. but the very life itself make St. Thomas the perfect model. This is what is needed now. The Indian Church will succeed spiritually only if that Church will be ready to forsake everything including its life for Christ. There is no other model necessary.
3. St. Thomas' Mission is My Mission: To take up the mission that St. Thomas left behind is

to be taken by us. Nowadays we just give some money to some mission work or the mission board of the Church and sit quiet. The mission that St. Thomas had left for us is to witness the Lord in a world where the Lord is not known well. For those of us who live in America, this is relevant. America is known to the rest of the world as a Christian country but the majority of the Americans do not know Christ intimately or empirically. America is a secular country and a good majority of people are nominal Christians; and so, Christ is not witnessed here. Instead, day after day, the secular world is rejecting even prayers that existed in several institutions in America. Last week, a baseball coach was punished for saying prayer with his team! To bear witness to Christ is not a joke. By simply having the word "Christian" with the name of any Church will not make them Christians; they should bear witness to Christ. We are challenged now in our witness to Christ. Our inspiration is St. Thomas.

I hope and pray that the uniqueness of our patron Saint will challenge us today to live as true Christians.

Lovingly,

Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, Vicar

COVID-19 and Support System

Financial Assistance to Members

If any of our members need any assistance with food, medicine, transportation, shopping, or any other needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they may contact our Achens or the Secretary. They will coordinate help. Our MC members, along with other volunteers will be available to provide any possible help.

We are all in this together.

Contact:

- Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose: 201.681.1078
- Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas: 516.754.0743
- Binu Mathew: 267.893.9571



Parish Highlights from June

Karuna Bake Sale Conducted on June 5th:

Karuna charity organized a Bake Sale to raise money to support cancer patients. Karuna volunteers express their gratitude for all who supported this initiative to help those in need.

Gospel Convention:

As part of our Church Perunnal, a Gospel Convention was done virtually.

- Thursday (June 30th) Rev. Fr. Dr. O. Thomas
- Friday (July 1st) Rev. Fr. Varghese Varghese

Diocesan Assembly News:

Our diocese held its annual Diocesan Assembly meeting at Sts Baselios Gregorios Church in N. Plainfield, NJ on June 25th. Representing our parish, our Vicar and the elected delegates (Abraham K. Varughese, Binny Cherian, and Oommen Kappil) attended the meeting.

The meeting agenda included Annual GB, accounts and annual report, Budget for 2022-23 and Election of the new Diocesan Council.

Two significant decisions came out of the Assembly:

1. Clergy Salary: Minimum salary of clergy was increased by \$800 per month. There will be an

annual cost of living increase of 2% in subsequent years.

2. Diocese will appoint a full time Youth Minister to lead the Campus Ministry.

Diocesan Council Election:

Diocesan Council consists of two priests and four laymen who are elected by the Diocesan Assembly, along with the Diocesan Secretary. The election was held on June 25th. The following members were elected to the Council for the next five years (2022-27):

- Rev. Fr. Shibu Venad Mathai, Vicar of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Bensalem PA
- Rev. Fr. Vijay Thomas, Vicar of Sts. Baselios & Gregorios Orthodox Church, N. Plainfield, NJ
- Diocesan Secretary - Rev. Dr. Varghese Daniel, Vicar of St. Mary's Cathedral, Bronx, NY
- Shane Oommen, member of St. Andrew Orthodox Church, Long Island, NY
- Bijou Thomas, member of St. John's Orthodox Church Orangeburg, NY
- Joby John, member of St. Stephen's Orthodox Church, Midland Park, NJ
- Oommen Kappil, member of St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Philadelphia, PA

Spiritual Organization Updates

Men's Forum

Men's Forum meets every Sunday. The meetings will be held in person immediately after the HQ at our church. Christian songs, Bible reading, prayer, and preaching the word of God are included in the meeting. Our achen are also sharing valuable messages at their convenient timings. For anyone who

wants to join the meeting, please contact Lukose Mathew, Secretary (267.467.4993), Vakkayil Joseph, Treasurer (267.205.7986), or Thomas Daniel, Prayer Coordinator (267.303.1898).

OCYM

OCYM meets every Sunday after Holy Qurbana. Our achens answer various questions from our members regarding Faith,

theology, and other general topics. Please contact Joel Manoj for more information.

Upcoming Events

Karuna Blood Drive Rescheduled to July 10th:

The semi-annual blood drive under Karuna has been re-scheduled from June 5 to July 10 at our church, from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm. A sign-up station is set up in the parish hall on Sundays. You can also sign up using the following:

Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/5n9JzDWTvGKjPdNZ6>

Red Cross Website:

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>

Church Picnic:

Our church picnic is scheduled for August 20th at Wilson Park, 500 Lee Rd, Wayne, PA 19087.

MMVS:

1. **MMVS Day August 21st:**

The month of August will be observed as MMVS month, and all parishes shall observe August 21st as MMVS Day. Philadelphia area will be hosting a food drive for the homeless until the month of August. There is a box kept in front of the Sanctuary to collect the food items. Please support this initiative.

2. **MMVS 40th Year Celebration** will be held on October 1, 2022, Saturday at our church. MMVS members who have been members since or before 1982 will be honored at the celebration. Please give your name to MMVS Secretary before May 15, 2022.
3. **MMVS 40th Year Celebration Charity Fundraising Raffle** will be held on October 1, 2022.

- **First Prize** – IPHONE
- **Second Prize** - APPLE WATCH
- Tickets are \$40

Parish Calendar

Date	Event
July 1-3	St. Thomas Day Celebration
July 10	Blood Donation Drive by Karuna Charities
July 29-31	OVBS-Virtual
Aug. 20	Church picnic
Aug. 21	MMVS Day
Oct 1	MMVS 40 th year celebration at our church

Member Announcements

Life Events Announcements

Do you have a special day that you would like to announce, like a milestone wedding anniversary (25th, 50th etc.) or a birthday (50th, 60th, 70th, 80th etc.)? If you would like to, please inform the Secretary in advance. Please remember that even though our parish database includes birthday and wedding day, it doesn't include the year of birth or marriage. Unless you notify the Secretary or Clergy, they wouldn't know milestone events.

Death Announcements

❖ **Mr. PV Varghese (95)**, father of Mr. George Varghese passed away in India. Funeral took place on Tuesday, June 14th, in his home parish, in India.

On behalf of the parish, we express our deepest condolences to the bereaving families. Let us pray for the departed souls and for the bereaving families. May our heavenly Father grant peace and comfort that surpasses human wisdom and understanding.

Memorial Prayer List


As you know, members can submit names of departed loved ones that need to be included on the Memorial Prayer List. You probably have given the names of your departed ones in the past. However, please note that our church doesn't have a system to save such names with dates or automatically track and decide on which Sunday the name should be included on the prayer list. You need to enter the name on the Memorial Prayer list kept in the church office. Note: We do have a master list of departed faithful that we keep for remembering them on the Sunday of the departed faithful, which is a week before the Holy Lent begins. This list has names only no dates.

JULY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Manoj Mathew	1-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Philip K Thomas	12-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Mohan Samuel	1-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Sathees Easow	13-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Mathew	1-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Alex Pothen	16-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Mathew	1-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Binu K. Mathew	17-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Renjy Vattasseril	3-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Jacob P Sam	20-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Jestin K. Abraham	3-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Nebu Daniel	20-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Isac P. George	4-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Samkutty John	21-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Vaidian	4-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Sajan Varughese	22-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Matt P. Geevarghese	4-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Shaji Thomas	23-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Cherian Varghese	5-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas	25-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Rev. Fr. Geevarghese John	5-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Anu Pulickal Varughese	27-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Sunil George	5-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Varughese M M.	28-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Kochukoshy P Oommen	6-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Anish Mathew	28-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas George	6-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Sanju John	28-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. John Varghese	7-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Joby George	29-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Mathew	8-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Goldy Mathew	29-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Oommen V Kappil	9-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Chacko P Chacko	30-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Raju T Chandy	10-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Reji Joshua Varughese	30-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. Reynold Educula	12-Jul	Mr. & Mrs. Benny Mathew	31-Jul
Mr. & Mrs. John P Mathai	12-Jul		



JULY BIRTHDAYS

Mohan Samuel	1-Jul	Leah Mariam Thomas	11-Jul	Aleyamma Rajan	22-Jul
Rachel Bincy Nebu	1-Jul	Noah Mathew Alexander	12-Jul	Nathan Gregor Niju	23-Jul
Meenu Ann Mathews	1-Jul	Noah Mathew Alexander	12-Jul	Sujith Mathew Thomas	23-Jul
Joy Jacob	2-Jul	Felix Ronnie	12-Jul	Alvin Shibu Mathew	23-Jul
Abrielle James	3-Jul	Reji Joshua Varughese	13-Jul	Joanne Samuel	24-Jul
Hanna Marie Raju	4-Jul	Thomas Koshy	13-Jul	Angela S Panicker	24-Jul
Sosa Philip	6-Jul	Regi Mathai	14-Jul	Julian Raju Geevarghese	24-Jul
Joel George Varghese	7-Jul	Messina Ann Abraham	14-Jul	Reshma Brown	25-Jul
Geevarghese K John	7-Jul	Rev. Fr M K Kuriakose	15-Jul	Remya Brown	25-Jul
Suvarna Varghese	8-Jul	Prasad George	15-Jul	Cynthia Vattasseril	25-Jul
Zane Cheeran Rijon	8-Jul			Lijin Joyes	26-Jul
Zephaniah Varghese George	8-Jul	Jacob George	15-Jul	Reeja Saji	26-Jul
Mathew P Cherian	8-Jul	Achamma Thomas	15-Jul	Mariamamma Joseph	28-Jul
Rachel Thomas	8-Jul	Merrin Abraham	16-Jul	Thankachan K Mathai	29-Jul
Jancy Joy	8-Jul	Emil John Sam	16-Jul	Chinnu Reba Mathews	29-Jul
Beena R John	9-Jul	Jeremiah Goldy Mathew	16-Jul	Thomas Vaidian	30-Jul
Manoj Thomas	9-Jul	Reuben Liju	19-Jul	Sobin Benny	30-Jul
Abigail M Alexander	10-Jul	Beena Thomas	19-Jul	Alvin Panicker	30-Jul
Saramma Thomas	10-Jul	Joseph M C.	20-Jul	Jaxen Daniel Jacob	30-Jul
Mathew N K.	10-Jul	Dana Job	21-Jul	Thomaskutty Varghese	30-Jul
Ryan Liju	10-Jul	Josslyn Susan Johnes	22-Jul	Amelia Annie Paul	30-Jul
Annamma Chacko	10-Jul	Charly Mathai	22-Jul	Thomas George	31-Jul
Sabu Abraham	10-Jul			Suja Elizabeth George	31-Jul
Sylvia S Renji	10-Jul				

Sunday School News

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

- Diocesan Quiz competition will be held on October 15th. Please reach out to Deepa Kochamma for additional details.
- OVBS 2022 will be held virtually on July 29, 30, and 31. Please reach out to Deepa Kochamma, Mrs. Susan David, or Mrs. Mercy Cherian, if you are able to volunteer this year. Please register even if you are available to help even for one day.

One Year Bible Reading Schedule – July

Date	I	II	III
July 1	1 Samuel 13	Isaiah 56-57	Rev. 21-22
July 2	1 Samuel 14	Isaiah 58	Matt. 1-2
July 3	1 Samuel 15	Isaiah 59	Matt. 3-4
July 4	1 Samuel 16	Isaiah 60	Matt. 5
July 5	1 Samuel 17	Isaiah 61	Matt. 6
July 6	1 Samuel 18	Isaiah 62	Matt. 7
July 7	1 Samuel 19	Isaiah 63	Matt. 8
July 8	1 Samuel 20	Isaiah 64	Matt. 9
July 9	1 Samuel 21-22	Isaiah 65	Matt. 10
July 10	1 Samuel 23	Isaiah 66	Matt. 11
July 11	1 Samuel 24	Jer. 1	Matt. 12
July 12	1 Samuel 25	Jer. 2	Matt. 13
July 13	1 Samuel 26-27	Jer. 3	Matt. 14
July 14	1 Samuel 28	Jer. 4	Matt. 15
July 15	1 Samuel 29-30	Jer. 5	Matt. 16
July 16	1 Samuel 31	Jer. 6	Matt. 17

Date	I	II	III
July 17	2 Samuel 1	Jer. 7	Matt. 18
July 18	2 Samuel 2	Jer. 8	Matt. 19
July 19	2 Samuel 3	Jer. 9	Matt. 20
July 20	2 Samuel 4-5	Jer. 10	Matt. 21
July 21	2 Samuel 6	Jer. 11	Matt. 22
July 22	2 Samuel 7	Jer. 12	Matt. 23
July 23	2 Samuel 8-9	Jer. 13	Matt. 24
July 24	2 Samuel 10	Jer. 14	Matt. 25
July 25	2 Samuel 11	Jer. 15	Matt. 26
July 26	2 Samuel 12	Jer. 16	Matt. 27
July 27	2 Samuel 13	Jer. 17	Matt. 28
July 28	2 Samuel 14	Jer. 18	Romans 1-2
July 29	2 Samuel 15	Jer. 19	Romans 3-4
July 30	2 Samuel 16	Jer. 20	Romans 5-6
July 31	2 Samuel 17	Jer. 21	Romans 7-8

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