

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1009 UNRUH AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111

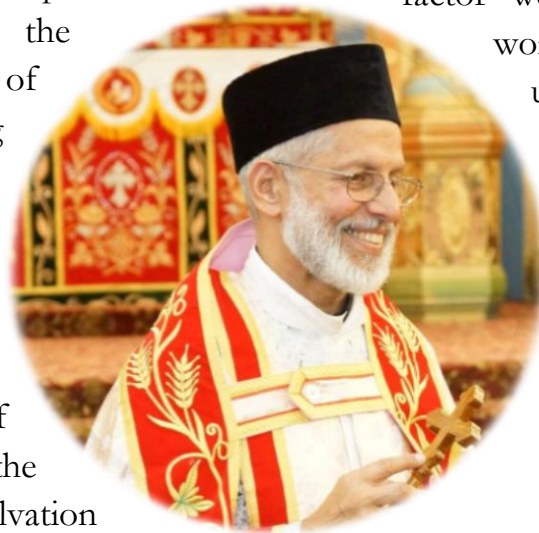
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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Vicar's Message

SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT

We have observed the festival of Pentecost in this month. Pentecost was the event called the birthday of the Christian Church. That day the Holy Spirit came over the group of 120 persons joined in prayer in the upper room of the residence of St. Mark. It was an amazing incident of changing the entire life of Church when the Apostles and the first believers experienced a special gift of speaking in tongues and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It gave them the courage to speak about the salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Even though they faced numerous oppositions and persecution the power of the Spirit was such that they were even willing to be martyrs for the sake of the faith. Later on St. Paul was converted and took up a huge missionary trip spreading the Good



News. He explained the work of the Holy Spirit much clearly to the people as we see throughout his epistles especially the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14 St. Paul says, “The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” This is an important factor we normally forget. Often, we wonder why people act strangely or uncontrollably or insensibly or indifferently! The simple reason is that they lack the power of the Spirit of discernment. St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 explains the functions of the Holy Spirit. He highlights 4 factors:

1. Gifts of the Holy Spirit was given by the grace of God: Jesus in Luke 11:13 says, “if you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give you Holy Spirit to those

who ask him!” This indicates that we need to keep praying to God to give the power of the Holy Spirit always. King David in his repentant prayer (Psalm 51) says, “take not your Holy Spirit from me”, “renew you steadfast Spirit in within me” etc. this indicates that the Holy Spirit that we received in the Holy Baptism and Holy Chrismation, we should keep alive in our life through incessant prayer. Only then the Spirit of discernment will become active in us.

2. One Spirit of Diverse Gifts: St. Paul underlines the fact that all gifts given to people are the gifts of God. Each person in a different way. But the source of the gifts is the Holy Spirit. People who trust in their own power, intelligence and wisdom think that they achieved these gifts on their own. In the present world, we cannot even say that the different talents are God-given. People believe that they made it all! Therefore, they think that they are in control of everything. This is most dangerous situation where no one thinks of the value of God’s gifts. This leads to snobbishness and pride, and leads to all kinds of evils in the community.

3. No gift is superior to others: St. Paul again affirms that the gifts of the Spirit are given to different people in different ways just to make life functional for all. Whether educated or uneducated, rich or poor, high caste or low caste, everyone is given some gifts which becomes beneficial to all. A rich man

cannot say that he does not need the help of a poor servant that prepares food for him. He will starve if his servant does not prepare food. Somehow all rich people think of themselves as superior to others exactly like some of the spiritual leaders think they are superior to others. That is why some of the so called ‘faith healers’ exploit the common people claiming superiority over others. St. Paul says that each person’s gift is ultimately unique for the sake of the community.

4. Purpose of the Gifts: St. Paul in verse 7 that everything is for the edification of the common. Here it meant that all gifts given to different members in the Church are for the edification of the entire Community which is the Church. When gifts are pooled it becomes a great power. Just imagine a joint cooking event which we have done in our parish many times. When we worked together, talents of different people were put together for the common benefit of all. Likewise, we all have several talents and gifts given by the Holy Spirit that we should use for the benefit of the common. One person spending all his money on his luxury is not justified. God has given things to all of us for our sustenance and for the edification of others. Several homeless people will find a home if we reduce our needs and share it with others.

That is why St. Paul says towards the end of the chapter “I will show you a greater gift which is superior to all other gifts, which LOVE. Then in chapter 13 he defines love in several verses. Here we see that when we have love the power of the Holy Spirit that gives various gifts to various people will be able to share them with

others that all will live without poverty or impoverishment. Do we have that Spirit of discernment?

God bless you!

Loving, 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 Achen 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
- Jobin Regi: 267.226.6366



Parish Highlights from April

April 5th- FOCUS with MGOCSM-Young Parents Date Night.

April 6th- Street Cleaning - About 20 volunteers helped removed close to 30 bags of debris and trash from the church property and surrounding streets



April 7th, 14th, and 21st- Holy Qurbana was celebrated with the presence of: Rev. Fr. K. K. John

April 7th - First Temple Entry of Amryn James, daughter of Jimmy James and Susmitha Thomas

April 14th - Ordination Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Sujit Thomas- Achen was ordained 12 years ago in 2012.

April 14th - OCYM Bake Sale

April 28th - Prayer Meeting was held at the residence of Rajan Padiyara



April 7th- Holy Qurbana was celebrated with the presence of visiting clergy: Rev Fr. Dr. M. P. George



Spiritual Organization Updates

Sunday School

- OVBS will be August 2nd and 3rd, from 9AM to 4PM. It will be held at our church. Registration is \$15, please register early.
- Last day for Sunday School Classes is Sunday, June 16th

Men's Form

- The Men's Forum has weekly meetings after the Holy Qurbana every Sunday.

MMVS

- MMVS has weekly meetings after the Holy Qurbana every Sunday

- MMVS has been conducting a raffle ticket sale, tickets are being sold for \$25 a piece.
- MMVS Annual Retreat will be June 13th - 15th. It will be held at the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton, PA. Registration is continuing.

Family and Youth Conference

- The conference will be July 10th - July 13th.

Middle School Fellowship

- Middle School Fellowship continues to meet on a monthly basis. Grades 5 - 7 are encouraged to attend.

OCYM

- OCYM annual Bake Sale was held Sunday, April 14th.
- OCYM has weekly meetings after the Holy Qurbana every Sunday

FOCUS

- FOCUS is planning a service event in September, more information to follow.
- FOCUS meets on a monthly basis.

MGOCSM

- MGOCSM meets on a monthly basis.

Karuna

- Karuna Charity issued financial support for 3 cancer patients in India. These patients demonstrated a need for financial support with written documentation from their parish priests.
- Karuna will be holding a Blood Drive in conjunction with the American Red Cross on May 19th.

GROW

- GROW is holding a special Wednesday night Zoom series for the Holy 50 Days. Diving into St. John Chrysostom's Homily of Fasting. This is held on Wednesday nights starting at 8:45 PM.

Housing Charity:

- Please continue to support our housing charity as our goal is to achieve \$40,000, to build 5 houses in Kerala for those who are needy.

General Announcements and Save the Dates

Annual Church Perunal Weekend

July 6th and 7th - Saturday and Sunday

Family and Youth Conference

Registration has started for this year's conference and will close April 15th. The conference will be **July 10th - July 13th**.

Karuna Blood Drive

Karuna is hosting a Biannual American Red Cross Blood Drive on Sunday, **May 19th from 9AM-2PM**. Registration has began, please see the link shared in the church's WhatsApp group for more information.

Family Night

Our first ever Family Night will be held on **Saturday, July 6th**. For more information, please contact our Program Coordinator, Sujith Thomas.

Annual Church Picnic

The picnic be held on Saturday, July 27th at Wilson Farm Park, the same location as last year. More information to follow. Any questions, please contact our Sports and Picnic Coordinator, Jestin Abraham.

Sight and Sound

OCYM is planning a trip to Sight and Sound Theater to see the show, Daniel, on Saturday, October 19th.

Housing Charity:

Please continue to support our housing charity as our goal is to achieve \$40,000, in order to build 5 houses in Kerala for those who are needy.

OVBS:

August 2nd and 3rd, Friday and Saturday at our Church from 9AM to 4PM. Please Register as soon as possible.

Member Announcements

Memorials

- ❖ **Geevarghese Mathai**, Father of John P. Mathai
- ❖ **John Cherian**, Brother of Valsamma Cherian
- ❖ **Annamma Varghese**, Aunt of Sathees Easow
- ❖ **Cherian Pandenpadavil**, Uncle of David Philip
- ❖ **Mabel James**, Mother of Renu Samuel
- ❖ **V. J. Thomas**, Uncle of John Varghese, Elsa Koshy, and Philip Varghese

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 needs 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.

Birth Announcements

- ❖ **Hailey Cherian**, born on April 4th to parents Merin and Gregory Cheriyan
- ❖ **Ezra Binu**, born on April 5th to parents Binu Thankachan and Ancy Binu

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.

MAY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. & Mrs. Sujith Mathew Thomas	May 3	Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Varghese	May 16
Mr. & Mrs. George T Charia	May 4	Mr. & Mrs. Georgy Thomas	May 20
Mr. & Mrs. John Thomas	May 4	Mr. & Mrs. Geo Vaidian	May 23
Mr. & Mrs. Joel G Panicker	May 4	Mr. & Mrs. Wilson Panicker	May 24
Mr. & Mrs. George Varughese	May 4	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M C.	May 26
Mr. & Mrs. Rev. Fr M K Kuriakose	May 5	Mr. & Mrs. Varghese Philip	May 26
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel P. George	May 8	Mr. & Mrs. Joel George Varghese	May 26
Mr. & Mrs. Dony Davy	May 12	Mr. & Mrs. Jobin Varghese	May 27
Mr. & Mrs. Kunjappy Koshy	May 14	Mr. & Mrs. Saji V Mathew	May 27
Mr. & Mrs. Oommen Mathai	May 14	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Skariah	May 28
Mr. & Mrs. Mathew Jacob	May 15		



MAY BIRTHDAYS

Mini Renji	May 1	Jasmin Ann Philip	May 8	David Philip	May 13
Karina Vattasseril	May 2	Jessy R Padiyara	May 8	Saji George	May 14
Saramma Yohannan	May 2	Mini Jose	May 8	Dhanya Anto Panicker	May 14
Aneeta Sara Rojin	May 3	Jino Jacob	May 9	Kristin Ann Julice	May 15
Mammen Varghese	May 3	Jaison Thomas	May 9	Mary Joseph	May 15
Mathukutty M. George	May 3	Ancy Jins	May 10	Prenin P. George	May 16
Joyes M George	May 3	Gigi Thomas	May 10	Lincy Ann Philip	May 16
Priya Asish	May 3	Marykutty George	May 10	Jibu Vergis	May 17
Sharath M Ninan	May 3	Sherly Alexander	May 10	Lygi Puthusseril Joy	May 17
Angel A Ninan	May 3	Renji Varghese	May 10	Aleyamma Daniel	May 17
Zachariah Thomas	May 4	Riohn V John	May 10	Tinju S Jose	May 18
Anu Susan Joseph	May 4	Joel Chacko	May 10	Gregory George	
Annamma Jacob	May 4	John Abraham	May 10	Abraham	May 18
Anija Lukose	May 4	Rajan Koshy	May 10	Thomas Skariah	May 18
Anila Jose	May 5	Nirmala Thomas	May 11	Reni Philip	May 19
Rachel Curian Koshy	May 5	Mathew Koshy	May 11	John P Mathai	May 20
Geo Vaidian	May 5	Chandini P. George	May 12	Sunil George	May 20
Mathew V Thomas	May 5	Anil George Panicker	May 12	Reena Mathai	May 20
Thomas Vaidyan		Thankamma John	May 12	T C Varghese	May 20
Mathew	May 5	Annamma Mathew	May 12	Abraham	
Gabriella Reynold	May 5	Ashna Babu	May 12	Koodathinalil	
Liz Pothen	May 6	Diya Daji	May 12	Varughese	May 20
Anoop T George	May 6	Jose V Abraham	May 12	Liziamma	
Joel John Varghese	May 6	Usha Jacob	May 13	Geevarghese	May 20
Ashley E Philip	May 7	Merlin Anie Alex	May 13	Annamma Mathew	May 21
Jicy Panicker	May 7	Shane Varughese		Ann Yohan George	May 21
Jane Sara Oommen	May 8	Thomas	May 13	Sosamma Benny	May 21

Jayce J Philip	May 22	Saramma Thankachan	May 25	Susan Joe	May 30
Daisymol Babu	May 22	Daniel Varghese	May 25	Varughese John	May 30
Molly Mathai	May 22	Moncy Philip	May 25	Ponnachen	
Sathees Easow	May 22	Job John	May 25	Geevarghese	May 30
Laly James	May 22	Jobin Jacob	May 26	Samuel George	May 30
Philip Mathai	May 23	Jiju George	May 26	Jessy Saji	May 30
Anish Thomas	May 23	Jeena Elsa Abraham	May 26	Sheena Vaidian	May 30
Renjusha Rajan	May 23	Nisha Alexander	May 26	Ponnamma Baby	May 30
Shawn Jacob	May 23	Lizy Sam		Ajan Achamma	
Suja Thomas	May 23	Kurisinmoottil	May 26	Thomas	May 30
Ninan Chacko	May 24	Joshua Ajo Raju	May 27	George G Mampallil	May 30
Mary Rajan	May 24	Micah V Panicker	May 27	Annamma Vaidian	May 30
Rev Fr Kunjukunju		Robin Philip	May 27	Alan T Ninan	May 30
John	May 24	Paul John	May 27	Kunjumole	
Linda Varghese	May 24	Anna Varghese	May 27	Thankachan	May 30
Anto G Panicker	May 25	Mariamamma		Nathan Philip	May 30
Annamma Thomson	May 25	Geevarghese	May 27	Biji Joseph	May 30
Varughese Pulickal	Chacko	Valsamma M Cheriyan	May 28	Rachel Varghese	May 30
	May 25	Chacko P Chacko	May 28	Isac P. George	May 30
Philip Varghese	May 25	Saji Varghese	May 28	Thomas Vakkayi	May 30
Susamma Thomas	May 25	Varghese Philip	May 28	Liza Oommen	May 31
Manju Shibu	May 25	Smitha Robin	May 28	Bini Thankachan	May 31
Anu Thomas	May 25	George Thadathil	May 28	Suja Koshy	May 31
Shibu Varghese	May 25	Boby George	May 28	Sijo P Mathai	May 31
Joji Thomas	May 25	Babu M Kunjandy	May 28	Shibu M Baby	May 31
Bindhu Alex	May 25	Sanju Varghese John	May 28	Reny Varughese	May 31
Sobha P. Biju	May 25	Mariamamma Skaria	May 30	Alexander P. Pathrose	May 31
Rinu John	May 25	Aleyamma Thomas	May 30		

Sunday School News

*Submitted by Steven Kurian, Principal
(Tel.: 267.450.6815, Email: stevekurian@gmail.com)*

Sunday School Classes will be held weekly beginning at 12 noon with General Session. The last day of Sunday School will be June 16th

2024 ASSIGNED COMPETITION WINNERS LIST

Group 1- Drawing

Emma Vergis

Rachel Thomas- GOLD

Group 2- Drawing

Annamaria Anooj

Lilly Mathai

Group 3- Drawing

Nathania George

Aaron Mathew

Alexa Geevarghese- GOLD

Saya Thomas- GOLD

Isaiah Anish-GOLD

Group 4- Drawing

Liya Alex

Group 5- Drawing

Tania Jossy

Anushka Abraham- GOLD

Group 5- Story Writing

Jonathan Cherian

Group 6- Essay

Emily Varghese

Olivia Alex

Gabriella Cherian

Hannah Varghese-GOLD

Group 7- Essay

Treena Jossy- GOLD

All ranked winners scored 85% and higher on their submissions

GOLD winners scored over 95%

One Year Bible Reading Schedule - May

Date	I	II	III
May 1	Deut. 18	Ecc. 10	Acts 9
May 2	Deut. 19	Ecc. 11	Acts 10
May 3	Deut. 20	Ecc. 12	Acts 11-12
May 4	Deut. 21	Song of Sol. 1	Acts 13
May 5	Deut. 22	Song of Sol. 2	Acts 14-15
May 6	Deut. 23	Song of Sol. 3	Acts 16-17
May 7	Deut. 24	Song of Sol. 4	Acts 18-19
May 8	Deut. 25	Song of Sol. 5	Acts 20
May 9	Deut. 26	Song of Sol. 6	Acts 21-22
May 10	Deut. 27	Song of Sol. 7	Acts 23-24
May 11	Deut. 28	Song of Sol. 8	Acts 25-26
May 12	Deut. 29	Isaiah 1	Acts 27
May 13	Deut. 30	Isaiah 2	Acts 28
May 14	Deut. 31	Isaiah 3-4	Col. 1
May 15	Deut. 32	Isaiah 5	Col. 2
May 16	Deut. 33-34	Isaiah 6	Col. 3-4
May 17	Joshua 1	Isaiah 7	1 Thess. 1-2
May 18	Joshua 2	Isaiah 8	1 Thess. 3-4
May 19	Joshua 3-4	Isaiah 9	1 Thess. 5
May 20	Joshua 5-6	Isaiah 10	2 Thess. 1-2
May 21	Joshua 7	Isaiah 11	2 Thess. 3
May 22	Joshua 8	Isaiah 12	1 Timothy 1-3
May 23	Joshua 9	Isaiah 13	1 Timothy 4-5
May 24	Joshua 10	Isaiah 14	1 Timothy 6
May 25	Joshua 11	Isaiah 15	2 Timothy 1
May 26	Joshua 12	Isaiah 16	2 Timothy 2
May 27	Joshua 13	Isaiah 17-18	2 Timothy 3-4
May 28	Joshua 14	Isaiah 19	Titus 1-3
May 29	Joshua 15	Isaiah 20-21	Phil. 1
May 30	Joshua 16	Isaiah 22	Hebrews 1-2
May 31	Joshua 17	Isaiah 23	Hebrews 3-5

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