



**ST. MARY'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF ROCKLAND, INC. NEW YORK**  
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**News Letter –July 2004**

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Dearly beloved,

I would like to thank God Almighty for all the blessings. Our church is progressing in all different areas. We had a great Holy Week with the presence, prayers and blessings of our kochu Thirumeni, H. G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos.

We are blessed with a great church. Our spiritual organizations are flourishing and I want to recognize all the hard work of our people who put the things together. We did some construction works in the past years; our church is one of the most beautiful churches in the American Diocese. Each one of you has contributed money, time, and efforts in whatever the way you can. I really want to thank all families who take the responsibilities to clean our church and the premises every week. A few of you have done more things for the church, as I always say, whatever you do for the church will be rewarded and the reward will be from God.

The major events for this summer are the Picnic, Vacation Trip, Perunal, and Convention.

The dates for these events have been scheduled beforehand; we will make all efforts to keep the dates. Please continue praying for our church to keep the unity and trust between each one of us.

When we receive all these blessings, we are supposed to be more thankful to God. Prayer is the most important factor to receive the blessings. We have to take all efforts to have the family come together and pray at least one time a day. We have to take all efforts to family members to eat at least one meal a day together. We have to focus on our spiritual development as an individual and as a family. When these families come together the church becomes a community where the presence of God is visible. Dysfunctional families bring trouble to the church and to the community. The devil is a liar, the devil is the evil. We belong to God.

My Prayers and Best Wishes,

Raju Varghese Achen

## PARISH NEWS

### **Pentecost Sunday**

Church celebrated Pentecost Sunday on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Due to long service, the service started early at 8:00 am.

### **Prayer Meeting**

Monthly prayer meeting was held on June 26<sup>th</sup> at the residence of Mr. Roy Manchayil .

### **OVBS Training**

Our members and MGOCSM youngsters also participated in the OVBS training held on May 29<sup>th</sup> at Jackson Heights Church.

### **MGOCSM Raffle:**

All the parish members are reminded to take serious effort in selling the MGOCSM raffle tickets assigned to them. Since there are no other fund-raising programs this year, this is our only chance to collect some money for the Church.

### **Fathers Day**

Our parish celebrated Father's Day on June 20<sup>th</sup>. The MGOCSM youngsters surprised everybody by honoring fathers in the parish by presenting gifts to them. Parish acknowledges the efforts of the MGOCSM members especially those of Mr. Liju Paul in organizing this event.

### **Picnic**

Mr. Thomas Kurian and Mr. Jino Muckadackal were selected as the coordinators for this year's picnic. The Church picnic is scheduled for Saturday, July 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **OVBS**

Mrs. Lizy Philip and Mr. Geevarghese Yohannan were selected as coordinators for this year's OVBS. The OVBS 2004 is scheduled for July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Inventory And Yard Cleaning**

On Saturday June 26<sup>th</sup>, we did Church item inventory and yard cleaning. About 15-20 people participated in this effort. Special thanks to everybody who made time for this and came to help. Church also appreciates the effort of Mr. George Thamaravellil coordinating the inventory process.

### **Sunday School**

Sunday school conducted the Annual exam on June 27<sup>th</sup>. Special thanks to the Headmaster, Asst. Headmistress and all the Sunday schools teachers for taking effort in teaching kids through-out the last school year.

### **Graduation:**

- Congratulation to following Young Men graduating from High School:
- Jerry Jose, Justin Paul and Stephen Samuel
- Congratulations to all the other Children graduating from their respective grades.

**House Visit:**

Nanuet, New City and Spring Valley areas on Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. Piermont area on Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Congers and Valley Cottage areas on Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Coffee Hosts for July:**

7/4/2004 – Thomas Alex & Family  
7/11/2004 – Thomas Kurian & Family  
7/18/2004 – Raju Zachariah & Family  
7/25/2004 – Open

**Church Maintenance for June:**

6/6/2004 – George Thamaravellil and Mathew P. John  
6/13/2004 – Jacob T. Varkey and Jeemon Varghese  
6/20/2004 – Baby Varghese and Thomas Varghese  
6/27/2004 – Geevarghese Yohannan and Jacob Varghese

**Holy Matrimony:**

Congratulations to Dr. Abraham Thengampallil and Mrs. Stinsey Thengampallil who entered into the bonds of Holy Matrimony on June 12<sup>th</sup> at St. Demetrious Greek Orthodox Church, Merrick, NY.

We pray for their happy, prosperous and blessed married life.

**Donations:**

- Aleyamma Pappen and family donated some transliterated Holy Qurbana books and some Bibles for Martha Mariyam Samajam.
- Dr. Lisa Paul donated candle stand (brought from Vatican City).

**Family trip:**

We have decided to visit Cape Code and Martha Vineyard on Aug. 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The bus, hotel, ferry tickets has been booked and all the other arrangements have been completed. Mr. Chacko Paul and Mr. Abraham Pothen are the trip coordinators. Special thanks to the coordinators for their efforts in quick planning and organizing.

**Welcome:**

We welcome following family members to our parish:

- Mrs. Teena Muckadackal wife of Mr. Jino
- Family of Mr. Varghese M. Ninan.

**Church Directory Update:**

We are planning to publish updated Church directory soon. Please update your address/Phone number(s), if they have changed. The updated can be made to the directory posted on the notice board.

**BIRTHDAYS IN JULY**

***HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU***

1. 02- Mathew Thomas
2. 02- Jeramia James
3. 04- Mathai Chacko
4. 05- Abraham Pothen
5. 05- Simi Alex
6. 06- Saramma Thankachan
7. 11- Melanie Thomas
8. 14- Robin Mathai
9. 16- Lincy George
10. 18- Jomon Varkey
11. 18- Michele Pothen
12. 18- Achamma Thomas
13. 20- Abraham Thengampallil
14. 22- Leena Mathews\*
15. 23- Maeleena Madampil
16. 23- Sosamma Samuel
17. 24- Christal Kuriakose
18. 26- Liju Philip
19. 26- Raju Zachariah
20. 29- John Abraham
21. 29- Dn. Jacob Mathai
22. 31- Mathai Mathai

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARY IN JUNE**

1. Neeta & Dn. Jacob Mathai -07/01
2. Rebecca & Saji Pothen -07/03
3. Ruby & Samuel Abraham -07/15
4. Leelamma & Mathai Mathai -07/17
5. Rachel & John Abraham -07/26
6. Aleyamma & John Muckadackal -07/28

### **Reminder**

- Coffee host list for the year is available. Please fill up the vacant dates.
- *Please e-mail your articles to be published in our news letter To sajanpothen@yahoo.com or benny@starbeamsoft.com*

## **DIOCESEN NEWS**

### **Family & Youth Conference**

American Diocese Family & Youth conference is scheduled to conduct from Wednesday July 14th to Saturday July 17th at The University of Pittsburg Johnstown Pennsylvania. All are requested to make necessary arrangements to attend the Conference

### **Leadership Conference - Young Women Samajam-2004**

**New York: June 14, 2004:** The first leadership conference of the Young Women Samajam was held at St. George Orthodox church Staten Island, New York on Saturday May 29, 2004. Dr. Alex Thomas, professor of Columbia University, was the main speaker of the conference. His study class on "the role of young women in the church" was thought provoking. "The role and effect of woman in every one's life as mother, wife, and grand mother is extremely valuable. The woman who becomes the cornerstone in one's individual family life has to rise up and play an important role in the religious spheres. This is vital in leading the next generation in spiritual background" Dr. Alex pointed out. The Christian women in the bible should influence each and every one's life" he concluded.

### **Subin Thomas, Bronx Died In A Car Accident**

**Bronx, NY: June 23, 2004:** Subin Thomas, (16) an HS student, died in a car-accident on Wednesday afternoon. His car slid off the wet road into a pole, and the report says he died immediately. He was the son of Thomas John. Subin had just taken his last Regents exam and was heading home while the accident occurred. Subin was an MGOCSM member of St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Bronx, and frequently visited St. George Orthodox Church, Westchester (New Rochelle) as he had many family members in that parish. Subin was a good young man, who excelled in academics.

## **St. Thomas, Philadelphia Moves Into A Huge Building**

### **Philadelphia: June 15, 2004:**

A dream come true for the members of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Philadelphia and their vicar Fr. M .K. Kuriakose. As a miracle, by the end of 2004 St. Thomas parishioners of Philadelphia will be ready to consecrate their new church building that they bought.

The present complex has a sanctuary (main church) that can seat 535 persons. A hall adjacent to that can be opened up to increase the number of people that can attend the worship. The hall can take up to 1000 persons. The hall is with a stage, and adjacent commercial kitchen, convenient for any programs. In addition there is a regular kitchen and many sets of restrooms, a chapel that can accommodate about 100 persons, 13 large class rooms that can be rented out to a small school (currently a school is running there but they are moving out in July), bridal rooms, administrative offices, priest's office, a large library room, a large gymnasium (even basketball can be played) that can be used round the year etc. The total area is 40,000.00 square feet. All these years they had to meet in the homes of their members for all needs including Managing Committee meeting. The Church had to forgo many of their activities because of the lack of a facility in the past.

This property costs around 1.5 million including some minor repairs. Finally on June 1, 2004 they signed an "Agreement of Sale" for this property. On September 28 they will do the closing. Some remodeling plans that may take a few months and the consecration of the church may take place soon after.

I can witness to the fact that many of our members were blessed by their giving to their parish. People have learned to get more by giving more. A few people learned to give tithe" said vicar Fr. M. K. Kuriakose.

"On Easter Sunday this year our needs were presented to the members and on that day itself we raised approximately \$200,000.00. During the last seven years my people were giving generously. Many, though not all, kept their own personal and family needs aside to contribute to the parish. If we sell our 6 acres of land we will be able to purchase the property without any loan. We are praying for God's will on this." Fr. Kuriakose added.

## Fire Devastates Melbourne Indian Orthodox Church

**Melbourne June 12, 2004** : Fire has devastated Victoria's only Indian Orthodox Christian church building. Fire fighters were called to the blaze in the early hours of Sunday morning, as worshippers were preparing for their weekly Sunday mass. The church interior was burnt beyond repair. The altar, the religious icons of the church including the Holy Cross, Holy Books and several large paintings, were lost to the fire.

For the small Indian Orthodox Christian community in Melbourne the fire is a fierce body blow. The church had just completed a project to build a parish hall and parsonage, based on the financial commitments of its small membership. It had taken the community 15 years before the church building could be bought in 1994. The building had become a focal point for the Orthodox Indian Christian community. The church is a part of the Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Church, which hails its origin in AD 52 and was established by St. Thomas the disciple of Jesus Christ. Our members live in different parts of Victoria as far as Bendigo and Sale. They come every Sunday to attend the Holy Mass at this church.

Beyond its weekly services, the church has been running several fund-raising events to help the underprivileged both in India and in the local Australian community. Only recently had the church received a certificate of appreciation from CFA for the donation of heaters through an ABC Drive program initiative to provide warmth for the needy in the local community.

"It is a shocking news to me, it is unbelievable that such an incident has occurred. In this hard situation, May God Almighty bless us with his heavenly peace. I am very sure that by God's grace we will soon be able to renovate the church in the best way possible" said H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios, the Diocesan Metropolitan.

"We have very meagre means ourselves. But we have always felt that whatever we can do for the underprivileged in our local community, we must do, this is our duty as Christians to help our fellow neighbors, in every which way we can." said Fr. M.D. Varghese, the parish Vicar.

## CHURCH NEWS

### Four New Bishops And Priest Trustee Elected

**Parumala: June 10, 2004:** Four new Bishops for the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Priest Trustee have been elected at a meeting of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association held at Parumala in accordance with the 1934 constitution of the Church today.

Very Rev Yoohanon Ramban, Very Rev Augen Ramban, Rev. Dr. K. J. Gabriel, and Rev. Dr. M. C. Cherian are the priests who have been elected as the new Bishops and Fr. Dr. O. Thomas is the new Priest Trustee. All the newly-elected Bishops were from the official panel prepared by the managing committee of the Church.

### Malankara Association

**Parumala: June 10, 2004:** Malankara Metropolitan His Holiness Baselius Marthoma Mathews officially declared at 11.40pm Augen Ramban of Vallikkattu Dayara, Yoohanon Ramban of Karunnya Guidance center, Fr. Dr. K. J. Gabriel of Orthodox Seminary and Fr. Dr. M. C. Cherian MGOCSM General Secretary, elected as new Bishops...They were all from the official panel. Fr. Dr. O. Thomas is declared elected as the Priest Trustee. P. H. Kurien I.A.S was the retuning officer for the election

### Holy Synod Approves Association Election

**Kottayam: June 21, 2004:** The Holy Episcopal Synod of Malankara Orthodox Church held at Kottayam, approved the Malankara association election of 4 bishops and priest Trustee.

Holy Episcopal Synod approved Augen Ramban, Dr. Yoohanon Ramban, Fr. Dr. K. J. Gabriel and Fr. Dr. M. C. Cherian as bishops and Fr. Dr. O. Thomas as Priest Trustee. The special assembly of the Holy Episcopal Synod concluded on June 18 Friday.

Catholicos His Holiness Baselius Marthoma Mathews II, presided over the special Synod assembly held at Sophia Center, Kottayam. Catholicos Designate H. B. Thomas Mar Themothios and all the bishops of Malankara orthodox church attended the session.

## **Fr. Gabriel and Fr. M. C. Cherian To Be Rambans on August 7**

**Kottayam: June 20, 2004:** Newly elected bishops Fr. Gabriel And Fr. M. C. Cherian will be installed as rambans on Saturday, August 7, 2004 at Devalokam Catholicate Aramana Chapel in the middle of the Holy Eucharistic service. His Hilarity the Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews II will be the chief celebrant on the occasion. Metropolitan and Thousands of believers will attend the ceremony.

## **Metropolitan Elects: Consecration In 6 Months**

**Thiruvalla: June 11, 2004:** "The newly elected Metropolitan Augan Ramban, Dr. Yoohanon Ramban, Fr. Dr. K. J. Gabriel and Fr. Dr. M. C. Cherian by the Malankara Association at Parumala on 10 June will be consecrated in six months", Said Sabha secretary, Dr. Alexander Karakkal.

Talking to the media persons here today, Dr. Karakkal said that the managing committee and the Synod (July) of the Malankara Orthodox Church would approve the election of the new Metropolitan at their meetings to be held in a month's time.

Among the Metropolitan elects, Fr. Dr. K. J. Gabriel and FR. Dr. M. C. Cherian, would be installed as Rambans soon, prior to their consecration, as per the tradition of the Church. The elected metropolitans would be given training at various centres of the Malankara Orthodox Church, Karakkal said.

Dr. Karakkal also said that Fr. DR. O. Thomas who was elected as the new Priest Trustee with a massive support of 1,552 votes would assume charge soon.

