



**ST. MARY'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF ROCKLAND, INC. NEW YORK**
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<http://www.stmarysrockland.org>
News Letter –January 2005

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Another New Year....

Once again we are lucky to see the New Year. We have received the baby born in Bethlehem who takes away the sins of the world. In the middle of the celebrations, the disaster was killing thousands of innocent people. We hear and see many people die in natural calamities, war and other different ways. Earthquake and related events affecting South Asia is the most recent on this list. I would like to express my deepest sympathies to those who have lost their loved ones in the catastrophe ravages south Asia, and especially to the people from Kerala. We have to extend our sincere prayers and helping hands to those who have affected by this massive tragedy, in whatever ways we can as individuals, families and as a Church.

Why these things happen? Why the innocent people die, and the most sinful people live and flourish? We can come up with all kinds of explanations and excuses. The bottom line is telling that we don't have much control on many things. Science and technology advanced and is advancing. Cloning, stem cell researches, safe sex, same sex and all different terminologies are getting popular. Humans assume that they can take the control from God, who has created and sustains the universe and everything thing on it. All these massive tragedies alert us that our life is very short and the end will come at any time. This feeling will bring us more closely to God and we will understand our limitations.

My dear friends, at this time of the New Year 2005, I wish all of you and your families a bright and prosperous New Year.

Today, the office bearers for 2005 are taking charge and those who served us for the 2004 are leaving from their current positions. I want to appreciate the hard work and dedication of the Treasurer, the Secretary, along with the managing committee and board of trustees. We welcome the administrative body for the year 2005. Our church is prospering and we have to thank God Almighty for all the blessings. I believe the prayers of St. Mary the Mother of God is with us.

Wish you all a happy New Year

Raju Varghese Achen

PARISH NEWS

Christmas Carol:

This year Christmas carol started on Dec. 4th and ended on Dec. 18th. As planned, only houses of our members were visited. This was the first time our Church used karaoke tracks for caroling. It took extra effort by the members to practice and to keep up with the timing of the music track. The efforts of the member paid-off as the songs came out to be very melodious. The caroling schedule for this year was as follows:

Saturday, Dec. 4th – Hawthorne, Piermont, Nanuet & Valley Cottage.

Sunday, Dec. 5th – Pomona, Haverstraw & Congers.

Saturday, Dec. 11th – New Jersey

Sunday, Dec. 12th – Spring Valley, Valley Cottage & New City.

Saturday, Dec. 18th – Newburgh, Spring Valley & Suffern

As previous years, this year's Christmas caroling was also a great success. We collected approx. \$15,000 in five days.

Special thanks to the Christmas carol coordinator Mr. Geevarghese Yohannan for his sincere efforts.

Special thanks also goes to our Vicar for his support and guidance, Mr. Mathai Chacko for taking the responsibility of driving the van everyday, Mr. Abraham Pothen for printing the song book, Mr. Thomas Kurian for arranging the van and Mr. Shibu Sreeba for customizing the karaoke tracks.

Thanks to all the members who participated in the caroling without whom this event could not have been possible.

Annual General Body Meeting:

The first phase of Annual General body meeting for the year 2004 was held on Dec. 5th to elect the office bearers for the year 2005. Following members were elected:

Secretary – George Thamaravellil

Treasurer – Samuel Daniel

Board of Trustees (till 2007) – Manchayil Roy & Mathai Thomas

Committee Members – Varghese Cherian, Chacko Paul, Geevarghese Kochugeevarghese, Varghese Abraham, Thomas Alex, John Abraham, Saju George

Ex-officio – Saji M. Pothen

Auditor – Mathai Chacko

Newsletter Editors – Philipose Phillip, George Thamaravellil

Prayer Meeting Coordinator – Jose Abraham

Congratulations! To all the newly elected office bearers.

Parish recognizes the service and dedications of all the outgoing office bearers.

MGOCSM:

MGOCSM meeting was held on Dec 19th to elect office bearers for the year 2005. The newly elected office bearers are:

Secretary – Linda Baby

Treasurer – Ponnu Varghese

Joint Secretary – Meril Pothen

Joint Treasurer – Roy Mathai

Parish appreciates the sincere efforts of all the outgoing MGOCSM office bearers.

Christmas Service:

Parish celebrated this year's x-mas with special Christmas day service. The service started at 8:00 am. Special "Thee-juvala" service was held to mark the day. The Christmas feast provided by the Church followed the service. After the lunch, everybody gathered in the Church for the Christmas entertainment programs. Our Sunday school kids presented a well organized nativity play and other programs. Vanitha Samajam presented Christmas carol songs. The male members also sang Christmas carol songs. This year's main attraction was a joyful Santa Claus. Santa Claus distributed candies to the kids. Everybody enjoyed the program and had a great time.

Thanks to the MGOCSM members who were behind the practice and preparation of Sunday school activities. Special thanks to Bindu Pappen, Binu Pappen, Sheeba Mathai, Chinnu Varghese and Liju Paul. Special thanks also to Sunday school Asst. headmistress Mrs. Viji Kurian for coordinating the Christmas program.

Visit to Westchester Medical Center:

To share the message and love of the Christmas, our MGOCSM members visited the Children's Psychiatric ward at Westchester Medical Center. Like last year, our youngsters sang Christmas carols and presented gifts to the not-so-fortunate kids. Our youngsters who were accompanied by our Achen and some adult members did a tremendous job of bringing Christmas joy into the hearts of these kids. Truly, this is the real spirit of the Christmas season.

Thanks to all the MGOCSM members and adult members who participated in this activity and made it a success. Special thanks to Chinnu Varghese and Jose Abraham for their efforts.

Coffee Hosts for December:

12/5/2004 – Thomas Varghese & Family, 12/12/2004 – Jose Abraham & Family, 12/19/2004 – Thomas K. George & Family, 12/26/2004 – Roy Chengannur & Family

Church Maintenance for December:

12/5/2004 – Varghese Ninan and Saji M. Pothen, 12/12/2004 – Saji K. Pothen and Alex Abraham, 12/19/2004 – Chacko Paul and Abraham Pothen, 12/26/2004 – John Muckadackkal and Simon Thermadam

Coffee Host For January

1/2/2005 – Philipose Philip & Family, 1/9/2005 – Open
1/16/2005 – John Phillips & Family, 1/23/2005 – Saji K. Pothen & Family, 1/30/2005 – Kurian Korah & Family

BIRTHDAYS IN JANUARY

1. 01/01- Jessy Jacob
2. 01/05- Annamma Thomas
3. 01/07- Princy Abraham
4. 01/11- Thomas Abraham
5. 01/11- Andrews Cherian
6. 01/11- Jayson P. Mangalathu
7. 01/14- Rachel George
8. 01/19- Ashley Abraham
9. 01/23- Shawn Mathew
10. 01/26- Betsy Thomas
11. 01/27- Justin Paul
12. 01/30- Lipsy Mathews
13. 01/30- Mathai Thengampallil
14. 01/31- Roy Mathai
15. 01/31- Smitha Mathai

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY IN JANUARY

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Elizabeth & Jeemon Varghese | -01/09 |
| 2. | Swapnamole & Joythis Jacob | -01/09 |
| 3. | Lipsy & Mathews P. John | -01/19 |
| 4. | Sosamma & Samuel Daniel | -01/23 |
| 5. | Sosamma & Jose Abraham | -01/23 |
| 7. | Jessy & James Jacob | -01/27 |
| 8. | Soosan & Varghese Cherian | -01/30 |
| 9. | Jolly & G. Kochugeevarghese | -01/31 |

Days Ahead

Jan. 1st	Circumcision of Jesus
Jan. 6th	Epiphany
Jan. 15th	Feast of St. Mary
Jan. 17th	Nineveh Fast Begins
Jan. 20th	Nineveh Fast Ends
Jan. 23rd	All Priests Day
Jan. 30th	All Souls Day

Reminder:

Please update the Telephone/Address directory posted on the notice board, if there is a change since the previous publication of the directory. Interested members are requested to add their names to the Coffee host list posted on the notice board.

Interested members are requested to add their names to the prayer list for the year 2005.

Church Website:

Church website is live. The web address is <http://www.stmarysrockland.org>. You can read newsletters, see church event photos, get directions and download updated church directory from the website.

For the sake of privacy, the church directory requires a user-id and password to access. The user-id is "stmarys" (without quotes) and the password is "rajuachen" (without quotes). Members are requested to visit the website. Any suggestions to improve the website are welcome. Please contact Secretary for further details.

Thank you for your support throughout the year. We wish you a prosperous and peaceful new year ahead. May God's blessings continue to shower upon this Church and its members.

Office bearers for the year 2004.

Dear Members

This is our last edition of the news letter for this term. It was a privilege for us to be the News letter Editors for the last two years. We think, we did the job the best we can. Special thanks to our Achen and Secretary, Mr. Saju George for the timely messages and the Parish news. Once again Thank you all for giving us this opportunity and God bless you all.

Abraham Pothen & Benny Kurian.

Vocation: Selection or Call?

By Meril Pothen

What is vocation? Vocation is defined as the life goal someone has. The topic here is, is that life goal a selection or a call? Our goal for life is a call from God. For example, God called Samuel while he was a boy and asked him to cater for the needs of the people of Israel. People often believe that getting a good education, securing a substantial job, building a large home, and living a luxurious life are our goals for life. Vocation is not a material gain, one does not select a life goal. One can choose a way of life or a particular job, but, vocation is always a call from God to his people. Now, what exactly is this call? In First Peter 2:21 it says, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." In verse 9 we read, But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called out of darkness into his marvelous light." We are all called to be the people of God. This is our primary goal. It is not a selection. But, we have the freedom to disobey this call. While we are the specially chosen people, we have the responsibility to live according to our call. We may select our avocation, our job goal, but our vocation to be like Christ is already given to us by God. We have different professions and many ways of making a living. We may be doctors, engineers, nurses and so on. But, this is secondary. Our life goal is how we use our professional life to proclaim the love of God. St. Peter reminds us that Jesus left us a certain mood in his life. He suffered for us and we should follow in his steps by suffering for others. This should be our life call. This way of life is not easy. But God will be with us as he was with Jesus when he suffered. God will bring the best out of our life when we suffer for others. This is why Jesus asked us to "love your neighbor as yourself". In order to love our neighbor sometimes we have to suffer. We may have to give up our reputation or our money to answer God's call. But, God will help us through the suffering to bring Glory to His Great Name.