

News at St. Mary's– February 2007
Volume 7 Issue 2



St. Mary— Mother of God Pray for us

**St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church of Rockland
Suffern , New York 10901**

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Dearly beloved,

We are at the second week of the great lent. Most of us observe lent and try the best to pray regularly and concentrate on humanitarian activities. Lent is the time to exercise self control and obedience to God. In this issue of the news letter I am trying to write about good and evil thoughts.



The beginning of all sins starts with evil thoughts. Many physical abnormalities and illness originate from evil thoughts. Thoughts play an important role in the formation of images. Images are the visible forms of thinking. Imaginations, fantasies, and similar things evolve to concepts. These concepts get visible forms with words, pictures and other forms to communicate. The devil's aim is to lead men to sin. The demons constantly implant impure and shameful thoughts in our mind. Good thinking evolves through the grace of God. Our thoughts develop passions and desires. Devil takes its opportunity from the passions and desires. Unclean thoughts develop the passions of self-love, self indulgence, love of glory and love of possessions. "Out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander..." (Mt: 15:19)

The results of evil thoughts are truly terrible.

St. Paul instructs Timothy to be constantly watchful (2 Tim 4:5). Watchfulness is monitoring or guarding the thoughts. This means screening the thoughts and accept the good thoughts and be bold enough to reject the evil thoughts. Here we need the grace and mercy of the Holy Spirit to get the boldness to reject the evil thoughts. This is something we need to practice at this lent. The saints like Parumala Thirumeni and others had the ability to transform the evil thoughts to good thoughts. This is the next level of spirituality. We have to discipline our life through prayer, fasting, and self-control to reach this level. My dear friends, let us be watchful and try to be bold enough to reject the evil thoughts, and accept the good thoughts. Let us pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit to help us to be more watchful.

My prayers and best wishes

Raju Varghese Achen

03/1/2007

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MGOCSM Retreat 2007

Meril Pothen

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we are now in the Lenten season we must start thinking to ourselves, "what should we do different in this season than the rest of the year?" What differentiates Lent? The first thing most people think of it "giving up something." I myself, think of this first. While most older people tend to give up the typical meat, younger children are also participating in by abstaining from chocolate or candy. But, we must remember that this menial sacrifice is not what defines Lent. Lent, as eloquently presented by one of our younger members during this month's prayer meeting consists of three main points: fasting, prayer, and alms-giving. Please read the related article on this topic for more information on these three aspects.

Recently, three simultaneous Lenten retreats were held by MGOCSM in Port Chester, Long Island, and Philadelphia. These retreats consisted of typical music ministry and a guest speaker from neighboring seminaries. At the retreat St. Mary's MGOCSM members attended, the guest speaker was a notable and extremely intelligent Armenian priest. Although he spoke about many aspects of Lent, one point remained in the minds of most attendees, sin. According to this priest, many of us have an very simplistic outlook on sin. Sin, to most is, "doing what is bad." The Bible itself is filled with rules of what to do, and what not to do. If we look in books such as Deuteronomy or Exodus long lists of rules take up pages and pages. One of the most famous list of rules are the Ten Commandments. One of the ten commandments is "thou shall not murder." So, of course, it is a sin when one murders another person. But, this is not entirely what sin is. As defined by this speaker, sin is anything that prevents us from totally focusing on God. To explain this mind-boggling fact further and make it more understandable to the teenage minds at the retreat, the example of a iPod was used. An iPod, or other mp3 device, is a common amenity for most teens. Using an iPod is not a sin, but, excessive use may be. For example if one listens to their iPod 24/7 at work, school, while in church, etc, it does in fact interrupt our focus on God. Not only iPods but other technologies, routines, or daily actions can be technically considered sin.

During this Lenten season let us elevate our perception and definition of sin, and attempt to live by it. Try to spend more time in prayer, revelation, or bible study. Putting aside a mere 30 minutes a day for God can work wonders and what better time to do it than during Lent.

2007 HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Saturday	March	31	Retreat	10:00AM
			Confession	2:00 PM
			Evening Prayer	6:00 PM
Sunday	April	1	Palm Sunday	
			Holy Qurbana	8:15 AM
			Evening Prayer	6:00 PM
Monday	April	2	Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Tuesday	April	3	Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Wednesday	April	4	Pesaha	
			Pesaha Service	6:30 PM
Thursday	April	5	Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Friday	April	6	Good Friday Service	8:00 AM
			Evening Prayer	6:00 PM
Saturday	April	7	Holy Saturday	
			Holy Qurbana	10:00 AM
			Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Sunday	April	8	Easter	
			Holy Qurbana	8:00 AM

Making Lent meaningful to Children

Nevin Pothen

There are three important principles of Lent- *fasting, almsgiving and prayer.*

How might we apply these three principles to our children's life? What can we do to teach them to do penance for the love of Christ?

Fasting- Children should be encouraged to try to overcome some of their food aversions. Make sure they understand that this change should be from the heart. If it is done well, it will be a true penance which will have a lasting benefit.

Almsgiving - It is earning money for the poor. Children can earn money by doing certain simple household chores. They should be encouraged to share their earnings with those less fortunate than themselves.

Prayer- It is one of the most important principles of Lent. It is necessary to have an intimate relationship with God. Parents should encourage children and stress the importance of prayer in our daily lives.

Why do we celebrate Lent

If we were automobiles, Lent would be the time to change the oil and get a tune-up.

If we were gardens, Lent would be the time to fertilize soil and pull weeds.

If we were rugs, Lent would be the time to give ourselves a good vacuuming.

If we were batteries, Lent would be the time to recharge.

- We are people who, many times, have done wrong and need to repent; thus the need to "make a good confession."
- We are people who many times get carried away with selfishness and so need to start thinking of others; thus the need for "alms."
- We are people who often lose sight of purpose for which we were created by God. We need, therefore, to recover our sight. Thus the need for "prayer."

This is why we celebrate Lent.

PROPOSED CHURCH EVENTS SCHEDULE- 2007

•	Mid-Lent	Tuesday March	13
		Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM	
	വചനീയ പെരുമാൾ } Catholicate Day }	Sunday March	25
		Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM	
•	Retreat	Saturday March	31
		10:00 AM	
•	Palm Sunday	Sunday April	1
		Holy Qurbana 8:15 AM	
•	Pesaha	Wednesday April	4
		Pesaha Service 6:30 PM	
•	Good Friday	Friday April	6
		Service 8:00 AM	
•	Holy Saturday	Saturday April	7
		Holy Qurbana 10:00 AM	
•	Easter	Sunday April	8
		Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM	
•	Swargarohanam	Wednesday May	16
		Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM	
•	FUND RAISING PROGRAM	Saturday May 19th, 5.30 PM	
•	Family Trip	Fri & Sat June 29 & 30	
•	St. Thomas Day	Monday July 2	
		Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM	
•	Family Conference	Wed – Sat July 18-21	
•	Picnic	Saturday July 28	
•	OVBS	Fri – Sun August 3-5	
•	Perunal	Sat & Sun August 18&19	
•	Ettunombu	Sun – Sun September 2-9	
•	Convention	Fri & Sat September 7 & 8	
•	Sleeba Perunal	Thursday September 13	
		Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM	
•	Family Night	Saturday October 20	
•	St. Greegorious Parumala	Thursday November 1	
		Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM	
•	Christmas Carol	Sat & Sun December	
		1,2,8,9,15,16,22&23	
•	Christmas Social	Sunday December 23	
		After Service 1:00PM	
•	Christmas	Tuesday December 25	
		Christmas Service 8:00AM	

Monthly Prayer Meetings

February	Residence of Rev. Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese
March	Residence of Mr. Raju Zachariah
April	Residence of Mr. Jose Abraham

Wedding Anniversary

REMOVED FOR PRIVACY

BIRTHDAY LIST

REMOVED FOR PRIVACY

Congratulations!!

Our member, Philipose Philip was re-elected as Malankara Association Managing Committee Member for one more term. The election was held on March 3, 2007 at St George's Orthodox Church, New Rochelle, New York.

Moods & Melody 2007

May 19th, 2007

Tappan Zee High School,
OrangeBurg, NY

Let us sell as many tickets as possible to make this a grand success

Our Members at different levels of the Church

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Rev.Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese
Sabha Managing Committee Member
Mr. Philipose Philip
Sunday School Regional Inspector
Mr. Mathai Chacko
Men's Forum Regional Coordinator
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