

News at St. Mary's– February 2008
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St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church of Rockland

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Dearly beloved,

We all are shocked with the news of the sudden demise of our respected Makarios Thirumeni. H. G. Thomas Mar Makarios, the Senior Metropolitan of the American Diocese Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios (82,) was involved in a serious road traffic accident on January 5 on his way to Newcastle airport and was admitted in Newcastle General Hospital in critical condition. The funeral will be held at the specially constructed tomb at Catholicate palace, Devalokam, Kottayam. India.



Mar Makarios was appointed as the new bishop of the newly formed Bombay Diocese in 1976. Thirumeni was appointed as the Metropolitan of the American Diocese in 1979. In 1992, His Grace was appointed as the Metropolitan of the newly formed diocese of Canada, U.K and Europe. With profound grief and sorrow, St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church of Rockland, and every one connected with this church express our heartfelt condolences to our beloved good shepherd.

Thirumeni was criticized by many for many reasons. The following incident reflects another side of Thirumeni's life. This happened in 1988. From Devalokam Aramana, I had to go to Trivandrum Air Port to pick Thirumeni because of a declared 'Bundh' by one of the political parties in Kerala. There were no taxis and they allowed only private cars to be used for emergency situations. Thirumeni was so happy to see me at the airport. I had informed Thirumeni that the travel to Kottayam would be a little problem because of the strike. I was driving the car, and Thirumeni was sitting at the front passenger seat. When we reached Pettah, a few miles from the Airport, the strikers stopped the car and a large number of strikers came to attack us. They asked me to get out of the car, since I was driving, and they want Thirumeni to get out of the car. Thirumeni told me in a lower voice to stay inside the car, and Thirumeni pulled the glass down from the Passenger side and was talking to them. Within a few seconds, the strikers changed their mind and let us go. His Grace can deal with any one in any given situation.

Thirumeni was telling all funny things on our way to Kottayam. Strikers stopped us in many places and Thirumeni was talking to them and they all let us go. Thirumeni did not let me stop any where and I was insisting on to stop at Chengannur Bethel Aramana, and Thirumeni told me to continue driving. When we reached Thiruvalla, Thirumeni told me to pull the car towards the T.B. TB was open and we had our lunch, as we finish our lunch, one of the waiters came to Thirumeni and he was explaining to Thirumeni about what he did with the money Thirumeni had given last time. I was so surprised that Thirumeni gave him money to build the roof and finish up the building. As we continued out trip to Kottayam, Thirumeni told me that His Grace helped him to build a house. (Continue on page 5)

Parish News

Sunday School Anniversary

Sunday School Anniversary was held on February 3rd Sunday after Holy Qurbana. The presentations made by Each Class was enjoyed by every one. Awards were given out to winners of different competitions.

General Body Meeting

The General Body met on February 10th Sunday and approved the Reports and Accounts for 2007 and also the Events and Budget for 2008. The following Co-ordinators were selected

Refreshments	Jyothis Jacob , Jeemon Varghese
Picnic	Samuel Daniel, Simon Therumadam
Perunal	Samuel Abraham
Convention	John Muckadackal
Family Trip	Thomas K George
Family Night	Philipose Philip, Thomas Mathew
Christmas Carole	John Varghese, Mathai Mathai
Choir & Liturgy	John Muckadackal, Thomas K George
Charity & Memorial Fund	John Muckadackal, Roy Manchayil
Arts School	Mrs Viji Kurian

Monthly Prayer Meeting

Prayer meeting for the month of February was held on the 23rd at the residence of Mr. Mathai Chacko. Our vicar Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese and Mr. Varghese Geevarghese gave messages. Our children actively participated and made presentations.

During the prayer meeting special prayers were conducted for the beloved Makarios Thirumeni who passed away that morning at New Castle hospital near London.

It was a blessing for many of our families who attended.

Mid Lent Services

Holy Qurbana was conducted on February 26 to observe the mid lent. Many of our members attended.

Annual Retreat

The annual retreat will be held on March 8th Saturday from 2 PM. Fr. Peter Paulose, Vicar of St Mary's White Plains will lead the retreat. There will be confession and evening prayer after the retreat. All are requested to attend

HIS GRACE DR THOMAS MAR AKARIOS LEFT FOR HEVENLY ABODE

His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios, Metropolitan of the Canada, U.K. and Europe diocese of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, passed away on February 23rd Saturday. He was 81. Mar Makarios, who was seriously injured in a car accident outside London on January 5, was admitted to Newcastle General Hospital and was on life support system ever since. He succumbed to his injuries at 5.42 AM. (EST) on Saturday, according to the Catholicate office. His body will be interred in a specially built crypt at the Catholicate Aramana Chapel at Devalokam. He was born on May 26, 1926, as the son



of Mr Chacko and Mrs. Mariamma Kuttikandathil in Kerala. He completed his early theological studies from the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. He was ordained as a deacon in February 23, 1951 and as a priest in 1952 and started service in New Delhi as the first priest of the newly formed parish there. He was consecrated as Bishop in 1975 and was made the Head of the newly formed Bombay diocese of the Orthodox Church. Four years later, he was appointed head of the newly formed American Diocese and instrumental for its formation and growth until he was made the Metropolitan of the new diocese of Canada and Europe in 1992. Up on hearing the news our Church paid homage to His Grace and held special prayers on Saturday at the prayer meeting and on Sunday During the Holy Qurbana. Members of St Mary's Rockland express our deepest and heartfelt condolence and pray God almighty to grant eternal rest and peace in heaven to our beloved Makarios Thirumeni.

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I just mentioned this incident, because there are people who criticize Thirumeni for silly things and I am sure many of them never knew who Makarios Thirumeni was? Thirumeni was very bold and did not care much about what other people say. As Thirumeni took charge of the Canada, U.K Europe Diocese, we still continued our connections, and Thirumeni was a great father, a good friend and a well wisher to me. Thirumeni, we will never forget your sermons with the timely humor. We miss you Thirumeni, we believe Your Grace will be rejoicing at right hand of Jesus the good shepherd.

Raju Varghese Achen

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02/27/08

Birthdays : February

Removed for the sake of privacy

Wedding Anniversary : February

Removed for the sake of privacy

Bible Quiz Answers:

1. He created the sun, the moon and stars 2. 50 chapter 3.
A dove 4. The lilies of the field 5. 3 days and nights 6.
Gabriel 7. Jezebel 8. Mount of Olives 9. The head of
John the Baptist 10. Deuteronomy 11 . Michael 12.
Noah's Ark 13. Cedar Wood 14. The fruit of the tree of
knowledge of good and evil 15. Mount Sinai

CHURCH EVENTS SCHEDULE FOR 2008

New Year	Tuesday	January 1	Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM
3 Day Lent Ends	Wednesday	January 16	Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM
Mid-Lent	Tuesday	February 26	Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM
Catholicate Day	Sunday	March 9	Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM
40 th Day Lent	Thursday	March 13	Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM
Retreat	Saturday	March 8	2.00 PM
Palm Sunday	Sunday	March 16	Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM
Pesaha	Wednesday	March 19	Pesaha Service 6:45 PM
Good Friday	Friday	March 21	Good Fri Service 8 AM
Holy Saturday	Saturday	March 22	Holy Qurbana 10 AM
Easter/Annunciation	Sunday	March 23	Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM
Swargarohanam	Wednesday	April 30	Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM
Pentecost	Sunday	May 11	Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM
St Peter's & St Paul's	Sunday	June 29	Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM
Family Conference	Wed – Sat	July 16-19	
Picnic	Saturday	July 26	
OVBS	Fri – Sun	August 1-3	
Transfiguration	Tuesday	August 5	Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM
Soonoyo/Perunal	Sat & Sun	August 16&17	
Family Trip	Fri & Sat	August 22&23	
Ettunombu	Mon–Mon	September 1-8	
Convention	Fri & Sat	September 5 &6	
Sleeba Perunal	Sunday	September 14	Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM
Family Night	Sunday	October 26	
St. Gregorious Parumala	Sunday	November 2	Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM
Christmas Carol	Sat & Sun	December 6&7, 13&14, 20&21	
Christmas	Thursday	December 25	Christmas Service 8:00AM

ANNUAL RETREAT

ON SATURDAY MARCH 8, 2008 AT 2.00 P.M.

RETREAT LEADER **FR. PETER PAULOSE**

ALL ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE RETREAT

Sermon by Princy Abraham

Today's bible reading is taken from St. Matthew Chapter 15 Verses 21 to 31, which explains two remarkable stories...

No 1. A Gentile Women Shows her Faith and

No 2. Jesus Heals Great Multitudes

Let's begin by discussing the first passage.

In the first extract the Canaanite woman becomes an illustration of faith. As a result of her devotion she became one of the early Gentiles to enter the kingdom. There are only two individuals whose faith JESUS pronounced to be "Great." The Canaanite woman in our story and the centurion in Matthew chapter 8 verse 10. They both were Gentiles. The story of the Canaanite woman is placed immediately after a discussion of purity in the gospels of both Matthew and Mark.

After a confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus and his disciples went into the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon. These cities are the two key Phoenician cities. The word "Canaanite" does not refer to one specific ethnic group, but a mixture of different sets living in the land of Canaan. Because of its seaports and corresponding trade the Canaanite Empire became a dominant power in the third millennium B.C. However the Canaanites were also thoroughly pagan and corrupt. In the Old Testament there is conflict between the kings of Israel and the Canaanites. Their presence in the land was a strong threat to the purity of Israel's religion and morality.

So then...why did Jesus go to this province? It appears that Jesus withdrew for a time, both to let the conflict settle a bit, and to turn attention to Gentiles in this act. The timing is extremely significant--the Jewish leaders were rejecting Him, and the Gentile woman who hardly knew Him was seeking compassion.

Soon after He arrived at this location a woman came crying out to Jesus saying, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." She is well aware of the ancient rivalry between the Jews and the Canaanites. Her words open these old wounds.

It is the setting and her words that prompt the disciples, and then Jesus, to respond the way they do. At first Jesus was silent, to see if she would persevere--and she did, following Him down the street crying out. The disciples not acknowledging the connotation of this lady said, "Send her away."

Jesus answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The woman exclaimed, "Lord, help me!" But Christ answered and said "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." What this means is that the Jews are the "Children" and the

The Canaanite women not hurt by Jesus' words, responds "True Lord yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Jesus expresses with emotion "O women, how great is your faith! Let it be unto you as you desire." Jesus heals her daughter without even being in the daughter's presence.

The woman's answer is marvelous: even the "Dogs" eat the crumbs that the children drop. The word dogs here refers to small dogs, perhaps children's pets that are harmless and somewhat helpless. She recognizes that the Messiah came to Israel first but all who believe can follow and be with Christ. She wants the mercy of God, His general saving grace. She is no threat in her request for grace that is freely given to the Gentiles. Besides, she will take what the Jews do not want. This is the attitude played out again and again in Paul's missionary journey when he turned to Gentiles because the Jews did not want their Messiah, but the Gentiles did.

What Jesus is doing is typical of the way He dealt with people--He would put "Stumbling blocks," in their way to see if they had faith to step over them. For example, when someone called Him "Good," He said, "Why are you calling me good, there is no one good but God." How they responded to that would show what they thought of Him. He was not denying that He was good, or God.

Jesus wanted the disciples and the woman to understand fully that His ministry in the brief time He had on earth was very focused. He was the Son of David, the Messiah. His apostles even viewed the woman as too low in rank to be worth Jesus' time. Jesus tested the woman's faith in order to bring home a truth to His apostles and his people: That Jesus came to redeem everyone and that Jesus does not discriminate.

In the second passage

Jesus heals great multitudes Jesus moves to the west side of the Sea of Galilee. This area is also Gentile territory. After He went to a mountain and sat down an immense crowd came and surrounded Him. In this assembly there were people who couldn't speak, walk, see as well as people who were missing body parts. They laid down at Jesus' feet and He restored them to health. Their eyes widened and their jaws dropped at what they witnessed.... The mute...speaking ,The lame... walking , The blind... seeing, And the maimed...made whole They then glorified the God of Israel ..Jesus performs miracles and does exalted things. We have to constantly trust that He can and that He will. He wants us to join Him in His Kingdom, but we have to demonstrate to Him our faith. In John chapter 1 verse 12 it says, "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

The 3 principles we should grasp through these 2 Bible stories are as fol-

1. Jesus will test you through peculiar ways but it is our duty to persevere. The women had no resentment, no anger after Jesus called her a dog. She instead accepted it and kept trying.

2. We must be humble when approaching our Lord and God.

The Canaanite women and the multitude that accompanied Jesus on the mountain were not prideful. They did not boast to Jesus, instead they came with pure hearts, ready to consent Jesus as their Savior.

3. Jesus rewards those who have unimaginable faith.

Jesus rewarded the women's faith by healing her daughter that instant. Jesus healed those in Galilee while they sat at his feet. Our faith must be like that of the Canaanite women, like that of Abraham in the Old Testament when he was going to sacrifice his son Isaac. Faith is received regardless of ethnicity or social status. Jesus honors the faith that seeks mercy.

So during this lent season keep Matthew chapter 7 verses 7 in mind: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you." Remember extraordinary faith will by no means go unseen. Thank You

Bible Quiz:

1. According to Genesis, on the seventh day God rested. What did he do on the fourth day?
2. How many Chapters are there in the Old Testament Book of Genesis?
3. What kind of bird did Noah release second time from the Ark after the rains abated?
4. To what was Jesus referring when he said: 'I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'?
5. How long was Jonah said to have spent in the belly of I the whale?
6. What was the name of the angel sent by God to Mary to tell her she was to be the mother of Jesus?
7. Who was the villainous female in the Old Testament who was eaten by dogs?
8. Which hill marks the traditional site of the Ascension?
9. What did Salome receive as a reward from Herod for her dancing?
10. Name the fifth book in the Old Testament.
11. What was the name of the archangel referred to in the Book of Daniel as the guardian angel of Israel?
12. What was it, according to Genesis that was constructed out of Gopher wood?
13. With which wood is King Solomon said to have paneled 'from floor to rafter' the interior of his temple at Jerusalem?
14. In the Garden of Eden story, what were Adam and Eve forbidden to eat?
15. Where, according to the Book of Exodus, did God appear to Moses and give him the Ten Commandments?

2008 Retreat & Holy Week Schedule

Saturday	March	8	Retreat	2.00 PM
			Confession	4.00 PM
			Evening Prayer	6.00 PM
Saturday	March	15	Evening Prayer	6.00 PM
Palm Sunday	March	16	Holy Qurbana	8:00 AM
			Evening Prayer	6.00 PM
Monday	March	17	Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Tuesday	March	18	Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Wednesday	March	19	Pesaha Service	6:30 PM
Thursday	March	20	Evening Prayer	6:30 PM
Good Friday	March	21	Good Fri Service	8:00 AM
			Evening Prayer	6.00 PM
			Vigil	ALL NIGHT
Holy Saturday	March	22	Holy Qurbana	10:00 AM
Easter/Annunciation	March	23	Holy Qurbana	8:00 AM

Holy Week Coordinator: Mr. John Jacob

 We invite articles, poems etc. to publish in the news letter. Please e-mail to:
 josenirappil@yahoo.com or lionmathai@yahoo.com. Thank You.

Our Members at different levels of the Church

American Diocese S.S Director

Rev. Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese

Sabha Managing Committee Member

Mr. Philipose Philip

Men's Forum Regional Director & Family Conference Souvenir Editor

Mr. Abraham Pothan

M M Samajam Central Committee Member

Mrs. Saramma Abraham

Family Conference Committee Member

Mrs. Viji Kurian



**Members of St Mary's Rockland express our deepest and heartfelt
condolence and mourn the death of our beloved Makarios Thirumeni.**