

**NEWS AT ST. MARY'S- APRIL 2008**  
VOLUME 8-ISSUE 4

---



*St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church of Rockland*

66 Maple Avenue, Suffern, New York, 10901  
[www.stmarysrockland.org](http://www.stmarysrockland.org) (845)369-9620

**Editors** Mr. Jose Abraham Mr. Mathai Chacko

**Church Officials-2008**

**Vicar: Rev. Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese**

**Secretary: Mr. Mathai Chacko**

**Treasurer: Mr.P.K. Mathai**

**Joint Secretary: Mr. Thomas Alex**

**Joint Treasurer: Mr. Chacko Paul**

**Board of Trustees**

Mr. John Jacob, Mr. John V. Abraham

Mr. Saji M. Pothen-Mr. Saju George

Mr. Samuel Daniel - Mr. George Thamaravelil

**Managing Committee**

Mr. Abraham Pothen -Mr. Varghese Cherian

Mr. Jeemon Varghese-Mr. Thomas Alex

Mr. Jyothis Jacob-Mr. Manchayil T.Roy

Mr. G.Kochugeevarghese

**Auditor** : Mr. John Varghese

**Prayer Meeting Coordinator** : Mr. G.Kochugeevarghese

**Building Engineer**

Mr. Jyothis Jacob, Varghese Cherian

**Sunday School**

Mr. John Muckadackal: Headmaster

Mrs.Viji Kurian: Asst.Headmistress

**Martha Mariam Samajam**

Secretary: Mrs. Aleyamma Pappen

Treasurer: Mrs. Rachel Abraham

**MG.O.C.S.M**

Vice Precident: Mathai Chacko,

Secretary: Ms. Meghan Mathew, Treasurer: Nithin Mathai

Jt. Secretary: Arun Zachariah, Jt. Treasurer: Simi alex,

Area Representative : Ponnu Varghese & Amy Philip

**Music School**

Mrs. Viji Kurian

**Webmaster**

Mr. Saju George



Dearly beloved

This time of the year we are celebrating the feast of St. George, saint and martyr lived at the time of Emperor Diocletian. St. George was a soldier by profession. We commonly think that to become a saint, some one have to be a priest, bishop, a monk or some one with a religious order. He was confessing the faith in Jesus and became a martyr.

Any time we hear about St. George, the image comes in our mind is a brave young soldier slaying a dragon and saving the life of the princess. This story is famous all over the world. St. George is symbolic to some one who is brave enough to fight against the dragon. This fight is symbolic to the fight with evil. The dragon is a symbol to devil.

Christian life is a journey. We all are growing in the grace of God. We need the grace of God to fight with the devil. St. George was slaying the dragon with the ultimate faith in God. Every day we face the devil and we go through the temptations. If we have the ultimate faith even to give up our life for the sake of God, we will ultimately win the battle with the dragon. If we compromise our faith in God, we will fail with the dragon.

The feast of St. George is celebrated all around the world. We have churches dedicated in the name of St. George. Churches like Puthuppally and Chandanappally back in Kerala celebrate this festival in a very traditional way. Along with the thousands who attend the feast, we also can seek the mediation of St. George.

Raju Varghese Achen

## Parish News

### April Prayer Meeting

The monthly prayer meeting was held at the residence of Mr. John Jacob , Paramus, New Jersey on Saturday April 19th at 6.00 PM. Many of our members participated. Our Vicar Rev. Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese spoke on the occasion and led the prayer meeting . The children made various presentations. The meeting was a great blessing for the participants.

### May Prayer Meeting

The monthly prayer meeting for the month of May will be held on the 24t Saturday at 6.00 PM at the residence of Mr. George Koshy (Sudish). [Address: 26 Forest Drive, Suffern]. Every one please make plans to attend.

### New Born:

1. A baby girl was born to Gldys and John Thankachan Jr and named her Cleare.
2. A baby boy was born to Bindu and Anil Abraham and named him Noah

We welcome both of them and our congratulations to their parents.

### New Member:

We welcome the family of Mr & Mrs Beena and Gogi George and children Feby, & Christy and mother Mrs Saramma George as our new members.

## Diocesan News:

### Parents and Couples Conference

The Parents and Couple conference will be held on Saturday May 31, 2008 from 9.00 AM to 4 PM at the St George Orthodox Church, Portchester, New York All are invited to attend. Please contact MM Samajam Secretary Mrs.Aleyamma Pappen for more details.

### Family Conference:

The family and youth conference will be held from July 16 to 19. Please plan to attend. Registration form is available with the secretary Mr. Mathai Chacko.

**Sunday School News**

*Page 5*

**Centralized Examinations:**

Centralized Examinations for the 12th Grade will be held on June 1st Sunday. Other grades will have their examination on June 29th Sunday .

**Sunday School Web Site:**

A new web site has been launched for the American Diocese Sunday School Please check the web site [www.indianorthodoxsundayschool.org](http://www.indianorthodoxsundayschool.org) for up to date information of Sunday school examinations, competitions, OVBS, and other programs.

**Sunday School assigned competitions:**

American Diocese will be conducting Drawing and Essay competitions for Sunday school students as follows:

Up to 5 year old

Draw a picture of St. Mary with baby Jesus. Write one short sentence about baby Jesus.

6,7,8 and 9 years old

Draw a picture of Moses who received Ten Commandments. Write one short paragraph as a caption to the picture.

10, 11, 12 years old

The Lord called Samuel, and Samuel answered: "Speak, for Thy servant hears" (1 Samuel 3:10)

How would you respond to God?

(One page, double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman)

13, 14, 15 years old

How would you respond to social justice?

Write a brief essay in reflection to the story of Naboth's Vineyard in 1 Kings chapter 21.

(300 to 400 words, double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman)

16, 17, 18 years old

"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches" Proverbs 22:1

How would you respond to this?

(400 to 500 words, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman)

The deadline will be June 30 2008. Please mail all entries to

Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese

211 Beverly Road

Hawthorne

New York 10532

## How to Pray?

By HG Paulos Mar Gregorios

Prayer has to be learned. It is like swimming. When you are first thrown into the water, you may sink. You then may think that the law of gravity is final and cannot be changed. But there are other laws, like those of buoyancy and motion. The mere knowledge of these laws cannot teach you to swim. One jumps in and slowly, by repeated practice, acquires the skills of remaining afloat and of moving on the surface of or under the water. And some people are more skillful swimmers than others, because they have learned the rules and acquired the skills by constant practice.

The first rule in prayer, as in swimming, is *not to give up just because you do not succeed in the first three or four attempts*. Prayer is a spiritual skill to be acquired by constant practice.

The Second rule, again as in swimming, is to “let go”, to let the water support you, to be un-anxious and relaxed. In prayer also we have to let ourselves go, relax, trust in God to support you and teach you how to pray.

The third rule is to *keep up the practice, even if you do not feel like it, or enjoy it*. In the life of prayer, our inherent love of sensual pleasures and our selfish love of laziness and comfort will interfere to make us reluctant to keep up the practice, finding various excuses for not praying. There is no use saying “I don’t feel like praying” or “I do not get anything from it”. It will take years before you get the habit of prayer and really begin to enjoy it. One must strengthen the will to have control over the laziness of the body and the desires of the flesh if one is to make progress in the art and skill of prayer. There is nothing like regular practice which can teach you pray.

A fourth rule, closely connected with the third, is: *develop the discipline of prayer through fasting and self control*. Man does not become free and good like God until he learns to control his own inner drives and passions. Restraint of hunger, and thirst, of anger and jealousy, of sexual passion, of the desires for glory and flattery, of the desire for bodily excitement and for sensual stimulation, and of all inner turbulences which make us do things against our own free will, is a necessary preparation for prayer. As good athletes competing for the Olympic Games go through very rigorous self discipline in order to keep their body, muscles and nerves in good condition, so should the man of prayer keep his body, mind, and spirit in good condition and under conscious control.

A fifth rule is to *use our whole body and even material things in the service of prayer*. Prayer is an act of the whole man, body, soul and spirit – not simply an act of the mind. The body can participate in prayer through posture, speech, and acts: (Continued on next page)

A sixth rule is to *keep the balance between group prayer and personal prayer*. Man is not primarily an individual. It is as a member of the Body of Christ that he has any standing before God. Therefore it is important for us to come into the presence of God regularly as a community—as a family, as a youth group, as a local congregation. And a community is composed of all kinds of people, not all of them exactly like you. They have different tastes, different ways of praying, different habits of prayer. One has to join them even sometimes when he thinks that their way of worship is not what it should be. Without participating in community worship and making the necessary adjustments necessary for joining them, we cannot get rid of our selfishness and pride, and grow to be a real human being.

But community worship is not enough by itself. We need various levels of community with varying degrees of intensity of relationship. The youth group and the family are more intimate communities than the congregation. New forms can be used in these smaller groups which will be difficult or unfamiliar for the congregation as a whole.

In addition to these forms, however, some other forms of prayer should be mastered for personal use. The most effective and useful of these forms is called ejaculatory prayer. There are one sentence prayers which one can repeat as many times as necessary, no matter where or when. We can say them in our minds when we are waiting for a bus; when we are anxious about something; when we are facing temptation; when we feel bored and lonely, while we are lying in bed, comfortable and too lazy to get up; while going to bed and when sleep does not come immediately, and so on.

We can make up our own forms of prayer, for here the Church lays down no rules for personal prayers. Of these forms above, the first was a favorite with the monks, and is known as the "Jesus Prayer". They used to recite it thousands of times in a day as a sort of *Mantra*. In Mount Athos, the monks trained themselves to say this prayer along with every breath. They would say "Lord Jesus Christ," with every inhaling breath, hold the breath in the lungs for a few seconds and then exhale, saying "be merciful to me a sinner." The idea was that the prayer should become as incessant an action as breathing, that the Lord Jesus Christ should become established in our heart as a deity is in a temple, and that we should constantly be in an attitude of prayer and repentance.

These forms of personal prayer as well as others should be developed. Each child of God has a right to speak to God any time and at all times, using his or her own words. There are no Church rules for personal prayer. It is an act of our personal freedom, and therefore is all the more pleasing to God when we use our own personal intimate language. Personal prayer enriches group prayer; common prayer in the family, group or congregation enriches one's personal prayer; neither should be neglected. The two should balance each other. But the use of extemporary prayer is not to be encouraged in group worship. (Continued on Page 11)

Birthdays In April

Removed for Privacy Sake

Wedding Anniversary In April

Removed for Privacy Sake

---

**Bible Quiz Answers**

1. Elisha 2. Egypt 3. Simon the Sorcerer 4. Matthias
5. St. Thomas 6. Judas Iscariot 7. John 8. Cornelius
9. Peter, Andrew, James and John 10. Zechariah
11. Melchizedek 12. Joseph 13. death 14. Christ
15. Messiah 16. Diana (or Artemis) 17. Jesus 18. Jacob
19. Lo-Ruhamma 20. Nebucahadnezzar 21. Elijah

Birthdays In May

Removed for Privacy Sake

Wedding Anniversary In May

Removed for Privacy Sake

**Please contact the Secretary if there are any errors or omissions.**

Phone Res: 845-480-5630 Cell: 914-715-8337

**Bible Quiz**

1. What Prophet's word caused the Syrian soldiers to be struck blind?
2. What nation's army was destroyed in the Red Sea?
3. What magician came to be baptized by Philip?
4. Who succeeded Judas Iscariot as an apostle?
5. According to tradition which apostle was a missionary to India?
6. Who was the only one of the twelve apostles not from Galilee?
7. Who was called the beloved disciple?
8. What Roman official did Peter baptize?
9. Which of the apostles were fishermen?
10. What priest was the father of John the Baptist?
11. What priest in the bible is mentioned as having no mother or father?
12. What Hebrew married the daughter of an Egyptian Priest?
13. What was the penalty in Israel for disobeying a priest?
14. What New Testament word means "the anointed?"
15. What Old Testament word means "the anointed?"
16. Which goddess had a notorious temple at Ephesus?
17. Who was taken to the highest point of the Jerusalem temple?
18. Who slept on a stone pillow at Bethel and had a dream of a stairway to heaven?
19. What was Hosea told to name his daughter?
20. What king of Babylon, driven from his palace, lived in the wilderness and let his hair grow long and shaggy?
21. Who outran a team of horses? (see page 8 for ans)

**CHURCH EVENTS FOR 2008**

<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM</b>
<b>St Peter's &amp; St Paul's</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM</b>
<b>Family Conference</b>	<b>Wed – Sat</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>16-19</b>	
<b>Picnic</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>26</b>	
<b>OVBS</b>	<b>Fri – Sun</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>1-3</b>	
<b>Transfiguration</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Holy Qurbana 6:30 PM</b>
<b>Soonoyo/Perunal</b>	<b>Sat &amp; Sun</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>16&amp;17</b>	
<b>Family Trip</b>	<b>Fri &amp; Sat</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>22&amp;23</b>	
<b>Ettunombu</b>	<b>Mon–Mon</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>1-8</b>	
<b>Convention</b>	<b>Fri &amp; Sat</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>5 &amp; 6</b>	
<b>Sleeba Perunal</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM</b>
<b>Family Night</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>26</b>	
<b>St. Gregorios Parumala</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Holy Qurbana 8:45 AM</b>
<b>Christmas Carol</b>	<b>Sat &amp; Sun</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>6&amp;7, 13&amp;14, 20&amp;21</b>	
<b>Christmas</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Christmas Service 8:00AM</b>

**How To Pray? (Continued from Page 7)**

A seventh rule is that *prayer should be nourished by the reading of the scriptures and meditation*. One can discipline oneself to read a chapter of scripture every day. Read aloud or silently. Meditate on the meaning of the passage. Devotional books may be helpful, but may also obscure the meaning of the scripture. Do not worry about whether the reading of the scriptures gives a feeling of devotion or not. Feelings are deceptive. What we need to find out is the answer to the following question. "What was God saying to the people of that time through this passage? What does God say to me now?"

Systematic reading of the scriptures and memorizing some passages which touch us deeply will be found very helpful as life advances. We will be grateful to God in our middle age that we started read and memorizing when our minds were still impressionable.

All these rules are to help us to become a praying Christian. Only our own sustained and disciplined practice will make us perfect. But we have to remember one thing. Prayer can never be isolated from the common worship of the Eucharist and from the continuous, active, compassionate love for our fellowmen. Let us all pray: "Lord, Teach us to pray. Amen."

