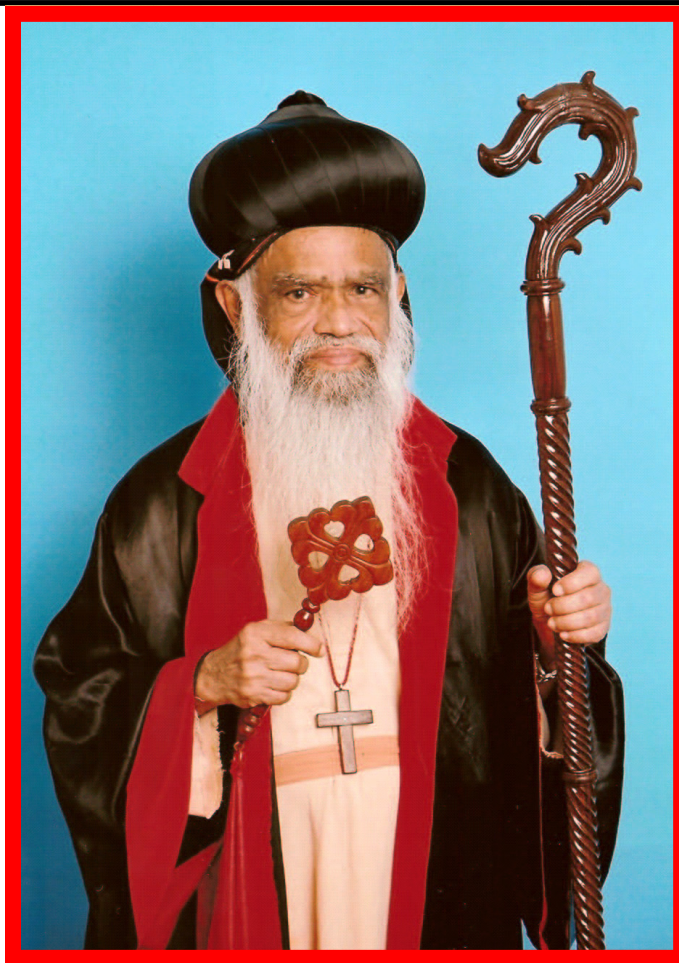


NEWS AT ST. MARY'S
JANUARY— MARCH 2011
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H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas
Our Valiya Thirumeni

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

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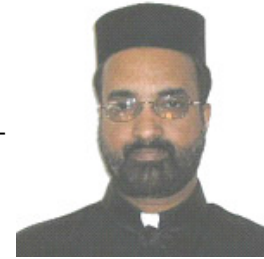
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Vicar's Message

Today is a very special day for the St. Mary's family. We are delighted to have H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni visiting our church after having handed over his responsibilities as the Diocesan Metropolitan to His beloved Zachariah Mar Nicholovos Metropolitan. Today, we have Mar Nicholovos Thirumeni coming to our church as the Diocesan Metropolitan; this event will make golden scripts in the history of St. Mary's Rockland.

St. Mary's Rockland is very much indebted to Mar Barnabas from the inception of this parish for His Grace's prayers, presence, and great leadership during times of great joy and even times of turbulences and tribulations. Barnabas Thirumeni has a great memory, Thirumeni knows everyone by name, and has visited almost every house on different occasions during moments of happiness and more often the times of grief and distress. Thirumeni is a great listener, and a source of advice and prayers on both personal and family matters. Thirumeni keeps all prayer requests in high regard, making sure to follow up with His children about whatever matter they may have approached His Grace with. Thirumeni is known to take on a task many, even clergy are hesitant to take on, visiting the sick. His Grace's presence has a healing effect all on its own. Thirumeni possesses many admirable qualities; the greatest among these are his humility and simplicity, material and worldly things have no impact on His Grace, which I believe are the direct result of His prayer life.

I have had the privilege of knowing Thirumeni since my days in Seminary. Thirumeni was serving as the Manager of the Corporate Schools and Colleges and at the time His Grace was also the Diocesan Metropolitan of the Idukki Diocese during which time I was staying at Devalokam Aramana



(Vicar's Message continuation)

working with the Sunday school, serving as the General Secretary of the Orthodox Vacation Bible School. Thirumeni was designated by H.H. Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I, to review and correct all OVBS materials. From 1980 to 1983, was when the first OVBS books were being developed during which I had the opportunity to work very closely with Barnabas Thirumeni. This connection continued until 1989, the year I came to the United States. In 1991, His Grace was appointed as the Metropolitan of the American Diocese, which made me very happy as I was very excited to have Thirumeni as my Diocesan Metropolitan. I remember the day in September 1997, Barnabas Thirumeni called me and asked me to work with the Sunday schools in the American Diocese. Thirumeni appointed me as the first Director of the OVBS, gave me all guidance to organize OVBS units and develop study materials, songs, and other materials. Under Thirumeni's leadership and all His Grace's support, these materials and song CDs became very popular, and used all over the world. Thirumeni continues to inspire me and all members of our church even now. His Grace was the driving force behind the recent revisions of the Sunday School textbooks for all twelve grades for the children of our Diocese. His Grace, worked with Mr. Korah Mani, the coordinator (from Philadelphia) to accomplish this task. Thirumeni's revision skills that are always precise and done very carefully are a great asset not only to the Sunday School but to our church.

My personal experiences with Thirumeni and his revisions were during the compilation of my dissertation while doing my Doctor of Ministry at St. Vladimir's Seminary. I had made sure to consult with Thirumeni throughout my dissertation; my professor, Dr. Rossi was well impressed with the suggestions from Barnabas Thirumeni. Thirumeni

(Vicar's Message continuation)

reviewed and corrected my thesis up to the final presentation. I was honored to have Thirumeni come to my graduation ceremony and had the privilege of having Thirumeni present my degree to me; I know I will never forget moments such as this one.

Thirumeni will do any possible things to help anyone in need. When Thirumeni was the Metropolitan of Idukki Diocese, there were many people whose relatives were employed in other states in India, the travel and ticket reservation was not very easy for them, they have to come to Kottayam to get the train tickets reserved. Thirumeni will ask them to give the money and reservation forms, he will bring it to my wife, she was working with the Railways at the Kottayam Railway Station at that time. Many occasions the reservation quota from Kottayam will finish, and she has to make arrangements to get the tickets from other stations. Thirumeni was concerned about each and every one; His Grace did anything possible to help anyone in any given situation.

His Grace's genuine concern about His flock is evident in all his interactions. The last time I saw Barnabas Thirumeni was on March 11th, when Kochuthirumeni had returned from India after His Grace's appointment as the Diocesan Metropolitan. The aramana was crowded with people from far and near who had come to welcome our Metropolitan. With everything going on and everyone around us, Thirumeni saw me and immediately asked about my house. This demonstrates this concern I had mentioned before and his ability to remember details pertaining to each individual, and making sure to ask them about it when he sees them despite time and place.

Thirumeni is very involved in the lives of the children here, always asking about their studies, and future plans. Similarly, Thirumeni wrote my

(continuation)

wife a letter of recommendation for her MBA, after which every time His Grace saw her, He would ask her about her classes, grades and all. His Grace continued to inquire about her studies until she visited and presented Thirumeni her Diploma; making His Grace very happy. My wife and children also share my feelings about Thirumeni, who has been a major part in all our life decisions. We love and thank you Thirumeni for all the love and care you have shown to us throughout the years. We are so grateful to have had His Grace be such an immense part of our lives.

In my ministry as a parish priest, it has been a pleasure, privilege, and honor to work under Thirumeni. During the most difficult of times Thirumeni was always present demonstrating great leadership, guidance, and prayers. Thirumeni likes to visit St. Mary's Rockland; His Grace knows all of us, even our little kids. We are blessed to have had His Grace conduct Passion Week, feet washing and great Easter day in our church in 2002. We were especially blessed to have Thirumeni for our convention last year; His Grace delivered a great and impactful message during the Lenten season in both English and Malayalam. We all will miss Thirumeni as His Grace leaves to India. We will continue praying for His Grace's long life and days of happiness and ask that His Grace continue praying for us. Along with Mar Barnabas Thirumeni, we all are excited to have Mar Nicholovos Thirumeni as our Diocesan Metropolitan. We request your prayers, guidance, and leadership in the coming years for our Diocese, parishes, families, and children.

Raju Varghese Achen

His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas



His name, Metropolitan His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas, fits him ever so perfectly, because of his fervor to propagate the Holy Gospel of the Lord. He went where others hesitated to go and puts his heart and soul to live his divine call. His austere and simple way of life always earned him immense respect from every one who meets him. He has only one shepherd. His humility is such that he never holds on to the high esteem of "Episcopacy". His needs are few and so, he is never a burden for the people whom he leads. He is extremely faithful in all financial

matters of the diocese and under his leadership the parishes of the Northeast American Diocese enjoy peace and steady progress.

Early Life

Mathukutty (childhood name) was born in Kallarackaparampil house at Vengola, to Kuruvilla & Mariamma of the Kidangethu Thombra Family, on August 9, 1924. He is the youngest one among four brothers and two sisters. His sister, Sister Mary, was one of the founding nuns of the Bethlehem Convent in Kizhakkambalam, near Alwaye.

His Grace's grandfather and uncle were Orthodox priests who were of good learning and leadership. Their earnestness to the service of the Church, and dedication to the Orthodox Christian way of life inspired the young Mathukutty. Aside from them, His Grace's mother also inspired and profoundly impacted him. She was very pious and devoted woman, who would do anything for the Church and Faith. Her uncompromising habit of fasting and love for the poor, made a deep impression in the mind of her son.

At the age of 7, Mathukutty decided to be a monk and give up eating meat and fish. He planned to join the Gethsemane Monastery in Piaradam, near Moovattupuzha, of which his uncle, Rev. Fr. K. P. Paulose, was one of the founding members. During the summer vacation while his peers would seek the pleasure of games and other recreation, both Mathukutty and his twin brother would stay in the Monastery following the monastic life.

Education

He was ordained as a Deacon in 1943, and as a Priest in 1951. He studied Biology at Madras Christian College and while he served the parish in Secunderabad he did his Masters in Botany in Osmania

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University. He began Theological studies under the guidance of his uncle Rev. Fr. K. P. Paulose. In 1949 he joined the Orthodox Theological Seminary as a special student and studied Syriac for two years. While he was the Vicar of the Calcutta parish, he studied in the Bishop's College, Calcutta and earned his B. D. degree from the Serampore University, as an external student.

Ordination

His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Gheevarghese II ordained him as a Deacon in 1943, at his home parish, St. Thomas Cheriapally, Thuruthipaly, Vengola. In 1951 Metropolitan Augen Mar Thimotheos (Later Catholicos), ordained him to the Holy Priesthood. It was in 1977, that the Malankara Association elected Rev. Fr. K. K. Mathews as a Metropolitan of the Church. On May 15, 1978 His Holiness Catholicos Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews I, Catholicos of the East, consecrated him as Metropolitan Mathews Mar Barnabas of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church.

Career

As a Deacon, he was a teacher at Kurppumpady M.G. M. High School in 1947. He taught there for two years and continued to teach for another two years at the MD Seminary High School, Kottayam, until he was ordained to priesthood. He also was a lecturer in the Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam for five years. During this period (1967-1972) he was the Resident Faculty Member at the Seminary and full-time Warden. He also cherished the years when he served as Chaplain in the Kolenchery Medical Mission Hospital from 1972-1978.

Episcopal Life

In the past, Metropolitan Mar Barnabas has been the Shepherd to Kottayam, Angamaly and Idukki Dioceses. Under His Grace's leadership in the newly formed Idukki Diocese, a Diocesan Center and Metropolitan's Residence were built. He led that Diocese efficiently and organized new parishes and visited the flock regularly. The Idukki Medical Mission at Nettithozhu is another significant achievement for the Church which was under His Grace's leadership.

Retirement

On January 18, 2011, His Holiness the Catholicos of the East And Malankara Metropolitan, Baselius Mar Thoma Paulose II, formally accepted His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas' request to be relieved from administrative responsibilities as Diocesan Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese.

BIRTHDAY LIST

Removed for sake of privacy

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

January

Removed for sake of privacy

February

Removed for sake of privacy

MARCH**BIRTHDAY LIST**

Removed for sake of privacy

Treasurer's Message

Let me thank God Almighty for the abundant blessings bestowed upon our church since its inception 12 years ago. The intercession of St. Mary, our Patron Saint has been the real strength of our church. With all of your support and help, the financial situation of our church is fine. As you know we have a mortgage to pay and other expenses. Mother nature was tough to us this year and we had to spend a good amount of money for snow removal.

We are planning a fund-raiser program for the end of May and I am requesting, in advance, your full support and prayers for the success of this program.

I also request you to pay the subscription early. Our Achen had requested us to change our "offertory" habits which we were following since we came to USA.

I am very sure that with your continued support and prayers, we will be able to become debt free in the near future.

Thank you,
Benny Kurian

Diocesan Metropolitan- H.G. Zacharia Mar Nicholovos

Metropolitan His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicholovos was born on August 13, 1959 in the famous Poothiyottu family at Mepral. His boyhood name was Cheryachen. He has three brothers and one sister.

He studies in different schools in Kerala until he finished his High school. The first two years of his college education was in Malabar Christian College. He received his BA (English) from the St. Joseph College,

Devagiri (Calicut University). He continued his studies in Theology at United Theological College, Bangalore and received a Bachelors of Divinity and a Masters of Theology.

His Grace Kuriakose Mar Coorilose ordained him Deacon on January 4th, 1986 and priest on May 16, 1990 at his home parish St. John's Church, Mepral. His Beatitude Mar Baselios Paulose II professed him as Ramban on August 5, 1993 at Moovattupuzha. His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius Zakka Iwas I, Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, consecrated him as Metropolitan on August 15, 1993.

Metropolitan Mar Nicholovos served as the Ecumenical Secretary of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church and taught as a professor at the Malankara Syrian Seminary at Mulanthuruthy. His ecumenical activities led him to serve as a member of the Syrian Orthodox - Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission. His Grace remains very active in the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious movements. Metropolitan Mar Nicholovos was appointed as the Assistant Metropolitan of the American (Northeast American) Diocese in 2002. On February 26th 2011, His Holiness Baselius Mar Thoma Paulose II appointed Metropolitan Mar Nicholovos as the Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese .

Church News

Martha Mariam Samajam:

The Martha Mariam Samajam election was held on Sunday, January 30, 2011, after the Holy Qurbana. The following members were unanimously elected:

Secretary: Lipsy Mathews
Treasurer: Soosan V. Cherian
Joint Secretary: Gladys John
Joint Treasurer: Elizabeth Saji

Central Committee Member: Betty Zacharia

Congratulations to the new Office-bearers!!

St. Mary's Youth League (SMYL)

The St. Mary's Youth League conducted its first ever social event on Friday, March 4, 2011 at the Pearl River Bowling. Approximately 20 young adults participated in this event. It was a great success. The members plan to meet every first Sunday after refreshments to discuss future events. Thanks to the coordinators: Binu Pappen, Chinnu Varghese, Liju Paul and Siju Philip.

Sunday School Corner:

Sunday School Day was celebrated on Sunday, March 6, 2011. Several programs were presented by the Sunday School children. Sunday School Principal Mrs. Viji Kurian presented the annual Sunday School report.

Prayer Meeting

Prayer meeting for the month of March was held at the residence of Abraham Pothan on Saturday, March 19. There was a great turnout from our church. H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni spoke at the prayer meeting. Thanks to Mr. Abraham Pothan and family for hosting the prayer meeting.

The following families have volunteered to host the church monthly prayer meeting. Please check the notice board for exact dates.

April	—
May	Mr. Jose Abraham
June	Mr. Joseph Thomas
July	Mr. Thomas George (Reji)
August	Mr. Benny Kurian
September	Mr. John Varghese (Saji)
October	Mr. Manoj John
November	Mr. Samuel Abraham
December	—

MGOCSM

MGOCSM unit of our Church conducted their election on Sunday, January 23, 2011. The follow members were elected to various offices for the year 2011:

Secretary: Michele Pothan; Joint Secretary: Michele George
Treasurer: Tiffany George ; Joint Treasurer: Prince Abraham
Area Representative: Annie Representative

MGOCSM Winter show was held on Saturday, February 5, many of our members attended the event.

Church Retreat

The annual Church Retreat will be held on April 1, 2, & 3 (Friday to Sunday). The retreat will be conducted by Rev. Fr. Geevarghese Valikkattil. Mark your calendars and make sure to attend the annual Church Retreat.

Nicholovos Thirumeni's Reception at the Airport

A grand reception was given to our Diocesan Metropolitan H.G. Zacharia Mar Nicholovos at JFK airport on March 11, 2011. Many of our church members participated in the great event. Valiya Thirumani, Mar Barnabas received Nicholovos Thirumani at the airport. Later a public meeting was held at the Aramana and was well attended.

Barnabas Thirumeni's Parsh Visit

H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni's parish visit and farewell will be held on Sunday, March 20, 2011. We wish Thirumani all the best and pray to God Almighty to bestow all blessings on Your Grace.

The Right to Vote for Women

The Holy Episcopal Synod has accepted the report of the commission appointed by the Holy Synod to report to the Holy Synod regarding the possibilities of granting voting right to women in Malankara Orthodox Church. The report will be available for publication only after the Rules Committee makes specific constitutional changes in this regard. The commission, Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Militos in his 11 page report has given, reasons for granting voting right to women in parish assembly on the basis of the teachings and approach of Jesus Christ, the Biblical passages, the opinion of the father of the Church, theological issues, position of other Orthodox Churches of the world, the suggestion of the Supreme court in its order in 1995 verdict on Church case, articles of human rights, practical issues etc. Through this, the Church will be addressing a major issue that has been in the Church for a long time and will be a milestone in the history of the Church. Though this will make the size of the parish general body larger, it will not add any number to parish managing committee, diocesan council, Malankara Association or Association Managing Committee.

St Mary's Church Events 2011

January 01	New Year	Holy Qurbana 8:30 AM
March 24	Annunciation to St.Mary	Holy Qurbana 6.30 PM
March 29	Mid Lent	Holy Qurbana 6.30 PM
April 1-3	Retreat & Confession	9:00AM-4:00PM
April 17	Palm Sunday-Hosanna Day	Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM
April 20	Maundy Thursday	Holy Qurbana 6.30 PM
April 22	Good Friday	Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM
April 23	Holy Saturday	Holy Qurbana 10:30AM
April 24	Easter	Holy Qurbana 8:00 AM
May	Youth Leadership & Spiritual Revival Seminar	
June 1	Ascension	Holy Qurbana 6.30 PM
June 19	Half Yearly General Body Meeting	
July 6-9	Diocesan Family Conference	
July 22-23	Family Trip	
August 5-7	OVBS	
August 15	Shunoyo Feast (Assumption of Mary)	
August 20-21	Church Perunnal & Annual Auction	
August 27	Church Picnic	
September 4-11	Ettunombu	
September 9-10	Convention	
September 17	Diocesan Teacher's Conference	
October 22	Family Night	
December 4	Annual General Body-Election of Office Bearers	
December 3, 10-11	Christmas Caroling	
December 17-18	Christmas Caroling	
December 25	Christmas	Service starts 8:00AM
December 31	New Years Service	Service starts 6:30PM

Mark your calendars and don't miss out on these important events!

Event Coordinators and Conveners for 2011

<u>Event</u>	<u>Coordinators</u>	<u>Convener</u>
Holy Week & Retreat	Kuriakose T. Chacko Robert Pathrose	Abraham Pothen
Picnic	Jyothis Jacob Sunu Koshy	Saji M. Pothen
Family Trip	Varghese Cherian Saju George	Jeemon Varghese
Perunnal	Alex Abraham Varghese Ninan	Chacko Paul
Convention	Ancy George Susan V. Cherian	Thomas George
Family Night	Rebecca S. Pothen Deepa Jacob Leena Paul	Joseph P. Thomas George Thamaravelil
Christmas Carol	Saju George Mathai Mathai	George Thamaravelil
Prayer Meeting	John V. Abraham Manoj John	John Jacob
Coffee Host	John Thankachen Jr. George Koshy	Jeemon Varghese John Jacob Mathai Thomas
St. Mary's Youth League	Siju Philip Binu Pappen Liju Paul Chinnu Varghese	Fr. Dr. Raju Varghese Philipose Philip Benny Kurian Susan Varghese
Men's Forum	Mathew P. John	
Fundraising Program		Mathai Chacko

**Congratulations to our Beloved Diocesan Metropolitan
H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos**



Newsletter

If you have any articles or suggestions that you would like to see in the Church newsletter, please send requests to betsythomas126@yahoo.com or adoor2@aol.com.