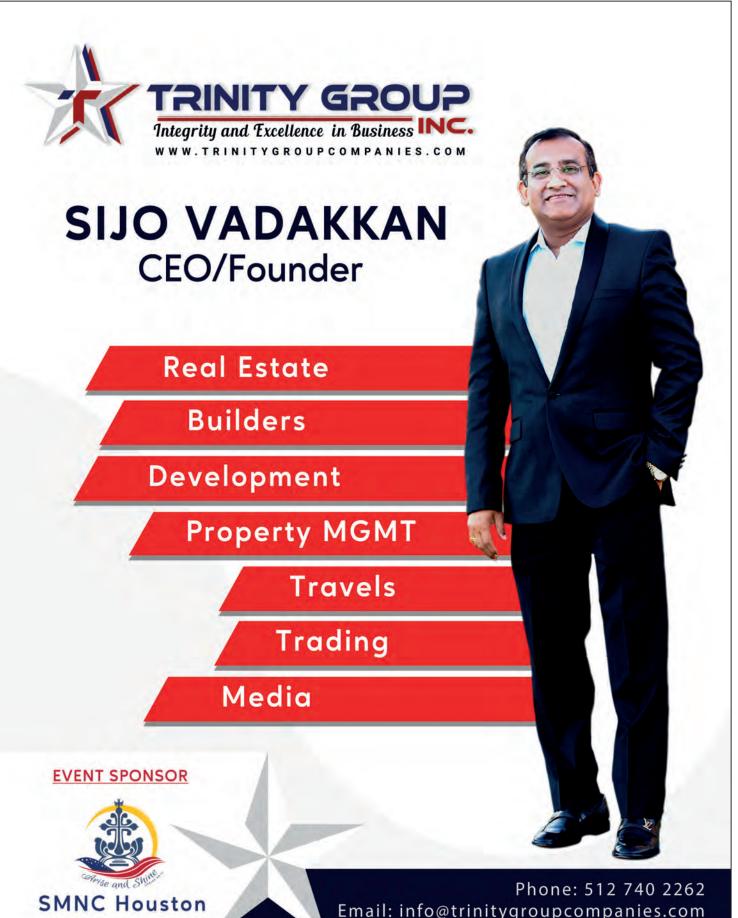




NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSTON 2019 Souvenir

Arise and Shine (1500)



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# SYRO MALABAR NATIONAL CONVENTION HOUSTON ST. THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

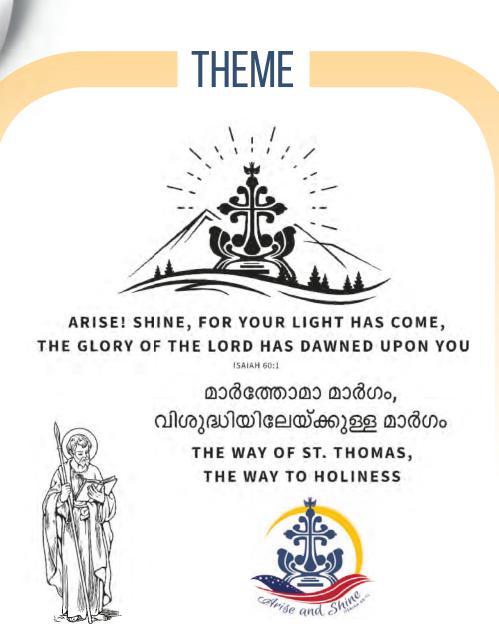
#### INTRODUCTION

On March 13, 2001, Saint John Paul II established the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago. Mar Jacob Angadiath was appointed as the first bishop of the diocese and received his episcopal consecration on July 1, 2001 during the Syro Malabar Convention. Subsequently, Pope Francis appointed Mar Joy Alappatt as the auxiliary bishop of the diocese on July 24, 2014. It is heartening to look back and realize that over the last eighteen years, our diocese has grown in strength and numbers to over 40 parishes and 40 missions across the United States.

SMNC 2019 at Houston was the seventh Syro Malabar National Convention of the diocese. It aimed to bring together St. Thomas Syrian Christians from all over the United States to reflect on our past, discuss our present and envision our future. This event was a great success with wide range of sessions and events, to promote the understanding and practice of our liturgy, faith and culture of our community. Indeed, the convention has significantly helped to provide a deeper understanding of our Syrian Christian heritage that we received from St. Thomas the Apostle, and to examine ways and means by which we can continue our faith journey in the years to come here in United States. The Convention provided a unique opportunity for our members to extend their network beyond own parishes and local communities through various events and interactive discussions.

The organizing committee of this Convention would like to express our sincere appreciation for your active participation and contributions that were made during this Convention. It was a one of its kind memorable event for all of us.

**His Holiness Pope Francis** 



For the 2019 Syro Malabar National Convention in Houston, we carefully knit together the Logo to incorporate the past, present and future realities of the Syro Malabar Catholic faith in the United States.

The St. Thomas Cross stands central, boldly declaring the roots of our faith in Kerala. It embodies the journey of Mar Thoma Nazranis from the Land of the Lotus, to the diverse soils in which we are planted. The Cross stands firm on the American Flag, representing the soil of our present reality, where we have been grafted to live and sow the seeds of Mar Thoma Margam. Above the Flag and the Cross, rises the Sun, calling to mind the theme of our convention "Arise & Shine" (Isaiah 60:1).

Through this Logo, we hope to communicate our deep pride in our Catholic heritage, a love of the land we now call our home and our calling to rise up to evangelize. This would be following in the footsteps of St. Thomas who did the same for our ancestors on the verdant Malabar Coastlands.

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Mar George Cardinal Alencherry Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Catholic Church



My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with immense joy that I welcome all the families, priests, and the religious of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago attending the National Convention being planned from August 1-4, 2019 at the Hilton Americas Hotel and George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. On this very auspicious occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to both the laity and the religious of the Diocese of Chicago for their collaborative efforts in planning this convention. In addition, I am deeply appreciative of the able leadership of the Vicar of St. Joseph Catholic Forane Parish in Houston and the parishioners' dedication to hosting this convention in their city.

It is heartening to know that over four thousand Syro Malabar parishioners are expected to participate in this convention. I extend my warmest greetings to all of you who have come from across the United States of America to participate for more than three days in all of the organized programs.

With over 80 parishes and missions currently within the Diocese of Chicago, this convention is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on and be grateful for all the blessings that God has showered on us. This is also a fitting occasion to celebrate our success in building strong, faith-filled Syro Malabar parish communities across the United States of America.

An occasion like this should be more than a celebration or a venue of entertainment. It should be a time for mature reflection on the nature of our contribution to the Church in the United States. The world is looking for guidance especially at a time when technological advances are drawing people away from the values of the Gospel. The Syro Malabar Church should become a vehicle for strengthening the faith not only of the faithful who belong to our Church but also of other Christians in the country. The laity has a significant role in shaping the future of the Church. I am reminded of the following words of Cardinal Newman which are relevant in our times too: "I want a laity... who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand,... who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it... I want an intelligent, wellinstructed laity." Holy Father, Pope St. John Paul II speaks in the same vein in his Post synodal exhortation called *Chrstifideles Laici:* "The Church encourages the lay faithful to live our their belonging to the particular Church while at the same time assuming an ever increasing 'Catholic Spirit.'"

Conventions and gatherings of the faithful should become occasions for spiritual growth, intellectual vitality and evangelical zeal. The young generation should feel that the Church is with them, walking beside them and offering them the comfort of hope, peace, and joy that the Risen Lord wants them to experience.

In fitting with the theme of the convention: "Way of Thomas, Way to Holiness, Arise and Shine," let us rededicate ourselves and our families to be beacons of Christian faith amongst our local parish communities and beyond. I wish and pray that your dedicated, faith-filled efforts will help spread Christ's message of selfless love and fellowship in this great country, now and in the years to come. May God bless you all!

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**George Cardinal Alencherry** Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church





Mar Jacob Angadiath Bishop of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago



Dear Very Rev. Neduvelichalumkal and Parishioners,

Glory to God in the highest! Amen.

I am glad to write this note to the organizers and participants of the 7th Syro Malabar National Convention to be held in Houston, Texas on August 1-4, 2019. This convention has a special significance because it has been a long time since our last convention. Hence, it is my hope that this convention will not take so long to convene.

The purpose of the Syro Malabar Convention is to gather all the faithful from the parishes/missions of our Church. Since our diocese extends throughout the United States of America, it is very important for us to gather publicly, celebrate the Divine Liturgy, preach the Word of God, share the cultural talents of our children and youth, and participate in educational formation through lectures and breakout sessions for discussion at all levels and in the presence of our dignitaries. The participants will always cherish this Convention experience. The Convention Committee can be proud of the wonderful gathering of our faithful and all the work that they have put into making this convention a reality.

"Arise and Shine" is the theme of our reflection. This prayer will enable us to "follow the path of St. Thomas" and lead us to holiness. Ultimately, every celebration, gathering, or event is intended to seek holiness and thus be united with Jesus. Communion with the People leads to communion with the Lord.

Active participation of our children and youth in this convention is very important. It is our hope and prayer that our next generation will be able to take on the responsibility of building our future community from what they have learned through these conventions. Let us encourage our children to be more visible in our community events and take on the responsibilities of building our Church.

I take this occasion to thank our Auxiliary Bishop Joy Alappatt (the General Convener), Very Rev. Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal (the Convener), Mr. Alexander Kudakkachira (the Chairman), members of the various committees, sponsors, and all the participants for all their hard work put into organizing the programs. Let us also be grateful to all those who have been praying for the success of this convention and to all those who supported this convention in one way or another.

My prayerful wishes for the Souvenir Committee Members in publishing this souvenir and for the timely participation of the convention registrants.

Yours sincerely in the Lord,

#### Mar Jacob Angadiath

Bishop St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago



Mar Joy Alappatt Auxillary Bishop of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The 7th National Convention of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago that will take place in Houston from August 1-4 at the Hilton Americas Hotel. This will be a significant event in the history of the Diocese. I am very grateful and appreciative to the St. Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Forane Parish for hosting the convention in Houston. I am excited to meet more than four thousand Syro Malabar members from around the country in the faith-filled city of Houston.

It was a long-cherished ambition of the Syro Malabar people who migrated to America to have a diocese for fostering their ancient faith and traditions inherited through the Christ experience of St. Thomas the Apostle. The conventions held in previous years have helped in building and strengthening this particular Church community to grow in this country. It is a fact that the Syro Malabar people have enormous pride and enthusiasm about the history and the traditions of their faith, especially after the inception of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese in Chicago. The faithful take real benefits from this Church today by being involved with the worship services, community fellowship, and catechism classes conducted in parishes and missions.

"The Way of Thomas, the Way to Holiness" is the theme we have adopted for reflection during this convention. It is very fitting in our context to go to our roots and discover where we are now. It is time for us to recollect how we can "Arise and Shine" in this country. May this convention impart to you the spirit of our forefathers who have strenuously worked to keep our faith and share it with us. This convention is a fitting time for us to ignite the spirit of Apostolic fervor and strengthen the enthusiasm within our community to advance in our faith journey.

May God bless you all,

Mar Joy Alappatt Auxiliary Bishop St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago



**Rev. Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal** Vicar, St. Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Forane Church, Houston



Dear Convention Participants,

This year, with the support and guidance of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese, St. Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Forane Church of Houston is hosting the 7th Syro Malabar National Convention. It is a great honor for me as the Convener of this spiritual gathering to officially welcome all participants to this important event in our diocesan history.

On March 13, 2001, Pope Saint John Paul II established the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago and Mar Jacob Angadiath was appointed as the first bishop of the diocese. Subsequently, Pope Francis appointed Mar Joy Alappatt at the Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese on July 24, 2014. Over the last 15 years, our diocese has grown in strength and number to over 40 parishes and 40 missions across the United States.

The Syro Malabar National Convention (SMNC) aims to gather St. Thomas Christians from all over North America to reflect on our past, discuss our present, and envision our future. This year's SMNC is a stay-in event with a wide range of sessions, activities, and cultural programs. SMNC also seeks to provide a deeper understanding of our heritage received from St. Thomas the Apostle, and to examine the ways in which we can improve our journey going forward.

I am hopeful that this convention will provide a unique opportunity for members of the Syro Malabar community to extend their connections beyond their own parishes and cities through networking events, social events, and interactive discussion panels. We invite you to make the most of this convention and get to know your Church and community in a deeper way.

God Bless,

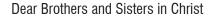
#### Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal

Vicar, St. Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Forane Church, Houston Convener of the 2019 Syro Malabar National Convention



#### Fr. Paul Chalissery

Diocesan Director, Youth & Family Apostolate Office for Vocations & Seminary Formation Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago



It gives all of us great joy and greater pride to be here in Houston, Texas for the 7th Syro Malabar National Convention. 18 years of enormous growth and blessings for our Diocese....! It is the abundant grace of God, and our prayerful sacrifices and hard work under the amazing and humble shepherding of our beloved Bishops Mar Jacob Angadiath and Mar Joy Alapatt. There are many success stories that can be adorned as golden feathers for our faith community; and yet, it is a time for us to appraise our past and present, and to plan for the future. This National Convention will provide a unique opportunity for us to get to know each other and pray together for our pressing needs, challenges and opportunities.

As St. John Paul II exhorted, we are living in a time where 'the culture of death' is celebrated! (Evangelium Vitae). Technology and science is misused even to the extent of distorting creation and denying God! The world around us is increasingly forcing us to be self-centered consumers, and the result being broken relationships, shattered families, orphaned and addicted children! Many of today's youngsters prefer to live as non-religious, unmarried free birds, having no commitments.

As our initial migrant generation is becoming older, it is high time that we empower our youth and young adults to take charge. They are our future! In his apostolic exhortation on Youth, Vocation and Discernment, Holy Father Pope Francis addressed the youth of the World "Christ is alive, and He wants you to be alive!" (Christus Vivit,1). Through the various interactive youth sessions in this convention, and through the ongoing programs of Diocesan Youth and Family Apostolates, let us all 'Arise and Shine' to pass on the torch of our unique Syro Malabar Faith to future generations!

May God richly bless us all.

**Fr. Paul Chalissery** Youth Convener Syro Malabar National Convention Houston 2019 Clestage



#### Alexander Kudakkachira Chairman, 2019 Syro Malabar National Convention



Dear Diocesan Families,

It is a great honor and privilege for me to be the Chairman of the 2019 Syro Malabar National Convention held in the Hilton Americas Hotel and George R. Brown Convention Center in the great city of Houston. On behalf of the SMNC executive committee, I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all of you who have come from near and far to take part in this auspicious occasion.

This convention provides a unique opportunity to foster our unity, strengthen our fellowship, and cherish our liturgical and spiritual richness empowered by our Syro Malabar Catholic faith and morals.

With over 40 parishes and more than 40 missions, we have seen tremendous growth in our community from coast to coast. The hard work of generations of priests and you, the Syro Malabar community, have made all of this possible. The purpose of our convention is to continue to strengthen our engagement in the community and help facilitate the integration of our youth and new generation into leadership positions in our Church and society.

The success of our community depends on our vision, attitude, and collaborative networking opportunities. Collaboration can provide entrepreneurs with a support system to assist in starting new and successful businesses as well as provide a venue to instruct our future leaders in civil society with moral and ethical values.

The theme of the convention is "Way of Thomas, Way to Holiness, Arise and Shine." Based on the theme, it is important to review our current living situation and recognize the adverse effects of the faithless and heartless secularism present in our society. Furthermore, we are called to reform our perspectives and norms in view of a bright future for our children, youth, and families. We all need to arise and shine above and beyond.

I applaud all those who worked hard to make the convention a great success. Your efforts and team work help spread the message of God's love and boundless mercy to individuals throughout our community.

Thank you and God bless you all,

#### Alexander Kudakkachira Chairman

Syro Malabar National Convention Houston 2019



**Dr. Paul Joseph Palakapilly** Secretary, Syro Malabar National Convention Houston 2019

Dear Syro Malabar Family:

The 7th Syro Malabar National Convention in Houston was a huge success due to the active participation of communities from all Parishes and Missions of our St. Thomas Diocese of Chicago. I was honored and privileged to serve as the Secretary of this Convention. I considered my role as a "calling" to facilitate our Diocese in bringing together Syro Malabar families spread all over this country. The planning for the Convention started first with Diocesan collaboration and then setting up teams to tackle every aspect of the Convention. An awesome group of many including the Diocesan Curia, Executive Committee, National Committee, Sub Committees and general volunteers worked together as one team to achieve our objective.

Selecting the perfect combination of facilities which included Hilton Americas, George R. Brown Convention Center & Marriott Marquis proved crucial to accommodate almost 4000 participants. Early registration kickoffs at subsidized rates were successfully conducted at many Churches within our Diocese. The feedback from the community and survey results from youth and young adults were analyzed to meticulously plan the various events. The Convention started and ended with the Holy Qurbana, the cornerstone of our faith. Programs during the days covered many cultural, social and spiritual aspects of our community. One of the highlights of this Convention was the use of technology including Slido which was a huge hit because of the instant feedback from audiences attending the programs. Youth and young adults of our community stepped forward to create content and manage digital media showcased during the Convention. Media coverage by various news channels and live streaming of programs by Shalom TV broadcasted this convention to Syro Malabar families around the world.

The participants at the Convention sensed an awakening especially among the young adult attendees who are the future torch bearers of this Diocese. The Syro Malabar community in this country is changing from an immigrant to a next generation community. Panel and Speaker sessions during the Convention identified areas of improvement that will help transform our community in the coming years. Family Apostolate of our Diocese has embraced "SyroMatch", an event at the convention, as a new initiative for families with young adults searching for partners to get married.

Let us embrace the theme of this convention and arise as a community in this country with the faith received from our Apostle St. Thomas. Shine out as beacons of hope and lead the way out of darkness for your light has come. Work together, grow, flourish and be holy because the glory of God is shining on you.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Dr. Paul Joseph Palakapilly** Secretary Syro Malabar National Convention Houston 2019 clessage



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#### **M.K. Michael** Chairman, Souvenir Committee



Dear Diocesan Family,

It is with great delight that we, the Souvenir Committee present this Souvenir to all participants and sponsors of the 7th Syro Malabar National Convention of the Diocese of Chicago that was hosted by St. Joseph Forane Parish in Houston from 1 August - 4 August 2019. This Souvenir is conceived as a memento and covers highlights of key program events, history and profiles of sponsoring parishes and missions as well as literary contributions from parishioners across the diocese.

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the over 4000 attendees who came from far and near to participate in the Convention and make it a great success. Indeed, this convention has been an occasion for the Syro Malabar faithful from across the diocese to get to know each other and to establish friendships, but also an occasion for our families including the young generation to discuss current challenges and opportunities and envision an aspirational future of networked communities spread across the length and breadth of America.

I appreciate the collaborative efforts of the Souvenir, Event Management, Finance and Executive Committees for publication of the Souvenir. I place on record the committee efforts of the Souvenir Committee members comprising of Jose Uthirakulathu, Chacko Kallukuzhy, Hendry Kunthara, Babu Thomas, Babu Chacko, Jose Vallavanatt and Mrs. Jansi Jose to effectively manage the various activities involved in developing, structuring and collating contents to ensure timely publication of this Souvenir.

Kind regards,

#### M.K. Michael

Chairman, Souvenir Committee Syro Malabar National Convention Houston 2019



# CONVENTION REFLECTIONS



AN ODE TO THE HEARTS AND MINDS BEHIND SMNC 2019

When I received a call from Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal on April 29th, 2018 with an invitation to join the executive committee of the 7th Syro Malabar National Convention, little did I know what I was getting myself into. As the Event Coordinator for the 2019 Syro Malabar National Convention, I wanted to provide the community a detailed look at the events that led up to the 4-day convention in August. From the hard work and commitment of nearly 100 volunteer leaders who spent 1.5 years and contributed approximately 60,000 hours towards convention planning and preparation to the nearly 300 volunteers who worked tirelessly during the convention itself, we were able to build both a memorable and sophisticated experience for all participants.

As an executive leader in the energy industry, I have been a part of decisions that affect the lives of tens of thousands of people and I believe that my experience helming projects of this nature is what led me to be considered for this role. However, coordinating this project has been both the most challenging yet also the most fulfilling task I have undertaken. Even though, at the time, I did not fully understand the responsibilities of my role, I openly embraced the opportunity because I wanted to influence the next phase of growth for the Syro Malabar Church in this country. I left India when I was 21 years old and having spent the last 19 years here, I feel proud to call myself an American with an Indian heritage rather than simply identifying myself as just an Indian. As most of our youth and young adults feel the same, I envisioned this convention as an opportunity to create dialogues and discourses around the topic of the inter-generational cultural division in the American Syro Malabar community.

#### **The Planning Phase**

Qonvention Relication

The first Executive Committee meeting was on May 2nd, 2018 and while Fr. Kurian had assembled a very strong, enthusiastic, and capable team, it was clear that none of us had any experience in organizing an event of this magnitude. However, by the grace of God and collaboration from all, we established our objectives for the convention:

- We wanted to maximize participation from across the diocese.
- We wanted a family-oriented conference, no separate conferences for youth and adults. We coined the phrase – "One Convention, One Family."
- The programs for the convention should be planned to accommodate everyone.
- The programs should address 4 areas: spiritual needs, social and domestic challenges faced by families, networking opportunities and entertainment reflecting our cultural roots.

After this meeting, I was given the task to develop the program framework and overall execution strategy. While I was driving home from that meeting, I started to reflect on my experiences during the Dallas and Miami conventions. I was asking myself as to why I did or did not attend certain events and what was to be learned from the past conventions. The realization that I did not know any of the past convention leadership team, let alone the fact that I did not have a network within the Syro Malabar community outside of my close-knit friends in Houston

who happen to go to St. Joseph's, also daunted on me at that time. How could I understand the pulse of our community and what they are really demanding in terms of content without a broad network?

My immediate focus was to establish a connection with our youth coordinators and utilize their networks through DYA and STAFF to launch polls to understand the pulse of the community. Two polls were launched with a participation of close to 700 people across the US; the results validated our four-legged stool strategy. The polling was also a marketing tool that gave potential participants a sense of involvement by being part of the planning process.

The results of the poll also made us realize that we have diverse demographics of people and we must address their needs individually throughout the convention. We debated at large and concluded that the demographics be broadly classified into – i) Juniors, ii) High Schoolers, iii) College Students, iv) Young Adults, v) Young Families, vi) Adults and vii) Seniors, with some overlap. We then decided that we would create a program structure that could cater to each of these demographics to promote attendance at the convention. This is how the idea of parallel tracks occurring simultaneously in multiple rooms for each demographic came to fruition. This allowed everyone the option to choose the events that were relevant to them. However, this idea was highly complex to execute and took a while to be fully supported unanimously by the leadership.

While I was focused on program building, we also had to select the rest of the leadership team, fix the date for the convention and select the right venue. There was a lot of discussion on selecting the right leaders for the approximately 30 committees we had for SMNC 2019. Looking back at the main and extended leadership team, Fr. Kurian and his advisors chose the right group of people. It was not just about who was most capable of doing the job, it was about who could work together as a team and who could unite the team members.

Based on the preliminary convention feedback, we estimated the attendance would be roughly 3,000 individuals requiring a facility that could provide approximately 800 rooms and have an auditorium that could accommodate +3,000 people for common events. In addition, we also decided to cater food for the participants to increase flexibility and reduce expenses for participants while they were in Houston. For the venue, several creative ideas including leasing a cruise ship was considered – but this idea was dropped because of the lack of an auditorium to celebrate Holy Qurbana. After an extensive search, it was identified that only two facilities in Houston had the capability to handle 3,000 people and have the auditorium and convention space to accommodate all of the programs - the Marriott Marguis and the Hilton Americas.

Once the accommodation was decided, we began to focus on the food. The saying in our meetings was - "If we get food and accommodation right; then everything else will fall into place." Food and accommodation expenses were approximately 60% of the USD 1.6 million convention budget. The task force led by Joseph Manakalathil, Prince Jacob and James Viruthakulangara was meticulous and committed towards their goal of providing a gastronomical experience for the participants. The bidding process and criteria for the award of the contract was transparent and this led to a relatively easy decision towards short listing the right contractor. Considering the value of the contract and the risk involved, the intricate and professional approach that Joseph Manakalathil took in the bidding process and bid evaluation is something that we should all consider as a best practice going forward towards evaluating any contracts in the future. The first major decision that brought everyone together to the "One Convention, One Family" idea was regarding the Holy Qurbana. There was a strong desire among youth about the need for separate Holy Qurbana every day – one in English and one in Malayalam simultaneously happening at two locations. However, leadership took the position that even though we have cultural differences, we are one family and we should celebrate our the Holy Qurbana together. The conversation was about the need for the younger generation to have an appreciation for Holy Qurbana in Malayalam and to understand their parents' traditions while the adults show willingness to be part of the new norm and cultural shift happening towards the future. A decision was finally made to have Holy Qurbana every day and to have opening Holy Qurbana in

Malayalam, followed by Holy Qurbana in English for the next two days and wrap up the convention with Malayalam Holy Qurbana on the last day. This decision truly set the tone for "One Convention, One Family" and every subsequent decision regarding the convention program planning. This also eliminated the idea of having a youth hall for youth programs and specific 'youth' Holy Qurbana.

Several kick-offs to promote early registration were held around the diocese. Some locations had very encouraging results while others had some very discouraging outcomes. We realized that those who had attended previous conventions were enthusiastic about coming to SMNC 2019. but those who had not been to a convention were asking the question quite openly – "Why should we come for this convention?" I remember one night, Paul Joseph, Sunil Kurian, Kavitha Joseph, Tharun Mathai, Mithul Kandathiparambil, Sonia Kurian and I sat down and brainstormed to find answers. The thoughts circled around being part of the bigger Syro Malabar family celebrating our faith and culture as well as community building. Several examples of having Syro Malabar roots becoming triggers for long lasting relationships with strangers were reflected upon. We also realized that this is an opportunity for Syro Malabar Christians in the US to come together and share how we overcome our individual spiritual, societal and professional challenges and learn from one another. It was also identified as an opportunity for the participants to connect with a broader community that shares common spiritual and cultural background and will serve as a platform to facilitate impactful and consequential personal and/or professional relationships. We decided to create a marketing narrative around this theme and make our pitches during convention kickoffs in parishes intertwined with our personal stories where our common faith as Syro Malabar Christians have been defining moments in relationships and/or life experiences. I remember my own reflection at the Coppell Church regarding my personal experience coming to the US as an immigrant student and how the Svro Malabar community of Houston became my home away from home to the extent that many have become family to me now. This was a pivotal moment for me as I was now also challenged to create a program framework that would inspire families to dedicate time and money to this convention. The mission was clear - create an unforgettable experience for the participants and help them connect with the Marthoma Margam; the union of our culture and faith.

With this new inspiration, I started tweaking the program again resulting to the creation of an outside Networking Mixer for Young Professionals. Additionally, we started to brainstorm what our community was missing, and concluded that we had plenty of retreats and spiritual talks, but rarely a forum to address the challenges in our family and society from an intellectual and transparent standpoint. As a result, we decided to add topics that would discuss sexuality (beyond the conventional Theology of the Body talk), divorce, mental illness, divisive-ness in our society, etc... to be discussed openly so that we could create support groups.

#### Right Time, Right Place • Building the Team

With the program framework nearly at 75%, Paul Chettan and I were invited to visit Chicago to present it to the Curia. This is when I got introduced to "Dr. Manoj". I was informed that he was instrumental in framing the theme and that he would be heavily involved in shaping the program. To get to know him, I set up a call on my drive back from Dallas to Houston after visiting family. 20 minutes into the conversation, I had to pull over as my heart started panicking with the notion that we may not get along. Our conversation was focused on when the confessions were, when the adoration would start and which bishops and speakers from India were coming. There was minimal discussion about the social and entertainment aspects of the convention. I concluded that Dr. Manoj was thinking with his heart, followed with prayerful discernment, while I was taking the logical and practical approach. We spoke for a good 90 minutes and from where I stood, we couldn't see eye to eye at all. But he insisted on saying – "Anish, we are thinking the very same" – even though, at the time, I had my reservations if we truly were aligned. Little did I know then that this man had a vision; the same as I had, and together, we would create a robust and thoughtful program for SMNC 2019. It all became clear when we sat down with the Curia on December 7th, 2018 and started talking about the various programs – Dr. Manoj, Paul Chettan and

Fr. Johnykutty Puleessery were the vocal supporters for the outside networking event and masquerade ball. They were pragmatists and understood the pulse of our community. I realized that Dr. Manoj is a man of prayer and very practical when it comes to understanding the inter-generational challenges we face. His vision was to ensure that there was a spiritual element in everything that we did, and he challenged me to find ways to incorporate the theme of the convention into every event we planned. I left the meeting in Chicago with renewed energy and new-found confidence that Dr. Manoj and I were on the same page about how to make the convention a success.

Around this time, I also met a new personality – he insisted on knowing more and more about the convention and wanted to help. I had no idea what scope to give to him and what he was capable of. While I was visiting Dallas to spend some time with my cousin, he self-invited himself to my cousin's house and we got to spend some quality time getting to know each other. I have to give him credit for his persistence and love for this Church. If not for his persistence, I don't know how I would have fulfilled my responsibilities during this convention and as a bonus, I gained a brother. George came with experience and exposure from previous conventions and similar events organized by the diocese along with the lessons for improvement. I have often wondered whether he ever slept, especially considering the fact that his wife Dawnia had a newborn right around the time of convention on top of their 3 and 6 year olds. Dawnia, bless her heart for allowing George to spend so much time on so many late night four-way conference calls with Tharun, Mithul and I working on convention related issues.

From then on, I had a team of visionaries working on the program (Dr. Manoj, Dr. Paul Joseph, George Nellikunnel, Sonia Kurian and Kavitha Joseph). Charting parallel programs between 27 venues was not an easy task. Several variables needed to be considered and balanced; timing, proximity to the next event location for the demographics, facility capabilities and technical support, speakers for each topic, were just a few to mention. Sonia's and Kavitha's exposure in DYA leadership was instrumental in selecting our English speakers as well as the concert talent. Four more months of hard work and the final program was ready; we got the approval from the executive committee and Curia. Then came the challenge of communicating the program to the participants. We decided that we needed speaker bios and content briefs in order to provide people the context on what the topics were and why they would be motivated to attend. Little did we know at the time how complicated of a task it was to create the content and lay it out effectively into a program brochure. Thanks to Mithul's creative skills, Tharun's leadership and support and accommodation from the Souvenir Committee, we delivered the final product. I still remember those weeks where Rajeev Achan and Kurian Achan left Church around 11 pm, only to return at 8:00 am the next day while Mithul, Tharun and I were still in the trustee's office working on the brochure.

#### **Creating the Experience**

Now that the program brochure was off to the printer, my focus shifted towards creating a unique participant experience. Often conventions turn out to be monotonous speeches and this time we wanted to change that and wanted to provide audience engagement for the speaker so that he/she could gauge the speaker's pulse and adapt the session in real-time. The idea of "Sli.do" and limiting the talks to 20 minutes followed by 15 minutes of Q&A was a direct result of this. In addition, we started thinking about preparing the audience for each talk; the thinking was that, it's not fair to send a speaker in front of a fresh audience coming into the hall after a coffee or a friendly chat without priming them for the gravity of the topic and to listen to the message with full attentiveness. This is where the idea of "Scene Setters" and introducing speakers with a personal reflection came about. Scene setters were either bible stories or real-world/personal stories that were related to the topic. The ambition to get the audience raw with personal stories truly created a challenge for the events team. The challenge was to identify the right person to introduce the speaker; someone who could truly personify the topic with experience or role modelling. Dr. Manoj and Kavitha Joseph played a key role in identifying the right person for speaker introduction from among the participants. The vision for this came to life and I felt personally moved when Tony Manakal introduced Jithin George, the speaker for mental health. It was truly a raw moment and an inspiration

for many to be open and be vulnerable and to share their personal challenges to the right people in our community for help and to build a support network.

From the very beginning itself, I identified some events to be high risk towards execution including the Masquerade Ball, outside Networking Event, Dodgeball, Procession and the Cultural Program. A lot of attention and discernment went into selecting the leads for these events and looking back, without the right leadership, these events would not have been successful. Liza George, together with Ashley Joseph and Mereena Manakal, provided the vision and structure for the Masquerade Ball (attended by approx. 900 people) and the outside Networking Event (attended by approx. 300 people) made these huge successes. The Socials team, led by Liza for the youth and young adults, and by Basil Palackapilly for Adults and Seniors, was a new way for breaking ice the very first day of the convention and helped people mingle together. It is to be noted that the Masquerade ball was a charity ball and the event raised substantial contributions towards the cause of Domestic Abuse Awareness and Prevention as well as Mental Health Awareness.

Organizing a Dodgeball tournament and delivering it within a stipulated time frame of 3 hours was no easy task. With approximately 250 participants, Christina Joseph aka. Krissy delivered it with her team and had a flash mob dance as the cherry on top. The Procession was always a challenge and we added more complexity to it by making it at 7:30 AM. Despite these challenges and the early time, the participation of over 3,000 people exceeded our wildest expectations. Sajini Thekkel and Jeetom Kadambatt delivered what we once thought nearly impossible. I still remember our earlier discussions and debates about the need for the procession and almost finalizing a plan to have a procession inside the hotel. But as we thought more about it, we decided to demonstrate our faith publicly through the streets of Downtown Houston. This decision was only finalized at the very end and many thanks to Tharun who took the initiative to jump through several hoops to get the permits for road closures and processions at the 11th hour. The first time Vinoth Joseph presented his plans for the cultural program, I was sure – he was the right man for the job. He was structured and organized with great communication skills that ensured his message and vision was properly transmitted to the recipients across various parishes. This skill was very important when it came to choosing parish cultural programs that needed to fit within a certain time window and integrating their content on the video wall. His leadership and teamwork resulted in a cultural show that lasted approximately three hours that displayed talents from across the diocese represented by thirteen individual parishes.

The main focus of our convention was on the spiritual and cultural aspects of our community. For that reason, prime focus was given to Holy Qurbana and the liturgy around it. The Liturgy team led by Shoji Thomas, Adoration team led by Felix Jacob, Decoration team led by Salby Vincent and the Choir teams led by Kavitha Joseph, Daniel Chakkaramakkil and Sijo Jose under the guidance of Fr. Kurian and Fr. Rajeev, worked hard and prayerfully in delivering the unique spiritual experience that the participants felt during the convention. One of the many inspirational stories was the prayerful fasting the team did while building the altar.

From the very beginning of the planning, there was a vision to have an opening program that would be different than anything that had been attempted before. The idea was to have a program that connected our spiritual and cultural journey from the view of an immigrant family; incorporating the talents of St. Joseph's parishioners among all demographics. Fancymol Pallathumadom's leadership was instrumental in delivering this along with the vision, storytelling skills and orchestration of Fr. Shaji Thumpechirayil. It was a challenging undertaking to orchestrate a program that was performed by nearly 350 participants of various ages that was spread into seven groups. Add on the complexity of simultaneous performance on three stages and the need of voice-over dialogue. This was truly an undertaking of epic proportions in terms of creativity, technological challenges and leadership. Fr. Shaji lived and breathed this program for several months and seamlessly stitched it together. We overcame the challenges of power cuts in India where the digital content for the program was integrated and it was only the day of the program, we had the final version edited and ready. I still fondly remember the last week

leading up to the convention where Shaji Achan was awake with us all night working on the integration of digital content. This was a true testimony for how God used the leadership and organizing team for the convention in delivering his plans for the convention.

Handling the registration and collecting the fees from in excess of 1,500 unique registrations that accounted for nearly 4,500 participants was a daunting challenge. The Registration team, under the leadership of Sunil Kurian and supported by Biju Mathew, executed an amazing job. Even with the challenges of having in excess of 50% registrations coming in as paper registrations without full details of the individual registrants, the team executed the vision with near perfection. As the program structure evolved and events got added, we realized that we needed a registration option including the ability to collect fees for special events (Outside networking event, Masquerade Ball, Dodgeball etc). Incorporating that into the registration system along with verification that the registrants to the events were actual convention registrants, was another task done well and a testament to the collaboration between team leaders.

The leadership was always on a listening mode and that made us dream about new ways to deliver value to the participants. There it was; SyroMatch – a new project answering the requests from the participants. The leadership provided by Sunil Kurian, Basil Palakapilly, Molly Nellikunnel, Pilomina Albert, Siby Pothen, Tom & Cissy Kunthara, Paul Joseph, Babu Mathew, Alexander K.C, Joseph Manakalathil and Fr. Paul Challiserry was instrumental towards delivering this product on the 11th hour. If not for Sunil Kurian's tech savviness and readiness to say 'Yes' and his can-do attitude, this project would not have been successful.

One of the many success stories of this convention was the relatively high participation ( $\sim$ 25%) for the convention from the local parish (St. Joseph). This was a direct result of the leadership of Jose Kandathiparambil and his team. Another success story is that of arranging transportation to and from two different airports for approximately 2,000 visitors. The Transportation committee under the leadership of Gigi Olickal and Joji Jose executed this seamlessly with a relatively low budget.

Another important task was related to providing a proper audio and visual experience to the participants. I cannot comment enough on the due diligence, work and planning the team led by George Kurian and Jerril Pulliyil did. I found it fascinating how God used people. Jerril was an executive committee member and resigned his position after a few months because of the time commitment constraints he had, to later being pulled into the Stage, Light and Sound Committee by Georgekutty Uncle. Looking back at it, it was as if God was saving his energy for a much bigger task. Their leadership ensured digital, audio and video support in approximately 8 stages simultaneously at any given time. Meticulous planning, commitment towards success, ownership mentality, great communication and collaboration was the mantra that led to this success. They spent hours together every day planning for weeks leading up to the convention.

While my focus was on creating an experience for the youth, young adults, adults and seniors, there was a team of individuals working towards creating a special experience for the little ones. The team under the leadership of Sr. Agnes, supported by Soji Tom and Sabeena Roncy, was focused on creating the experience of a lifetime for our kids from Pre-K thru Grade 8. When it came to the little ones, we identified the risks very early on itself and the key risk was the security element as we were not in an exclusive location with full control of the premises. The safety and security of our little ones was our absolute priority along with giving them an experience of fun and formation. I especially commend this team and those who supported them in managing and engaging nearly 500 kids with zero incidents.

An event of this magnitude could not be executed without the help of strong-willed boots on the ground during the day of. That's exactly what the function of our Reception and Hospitality committee led by Varghese Kalluvettamkuzhiyil, Hotel Accommodation committee led by Mathai Thomas, Controls & Compliance committee led

by John Palakkamattom, General Volunteers by Saji Simon, Security management by Sujith Thomas and the Crisis Management committee led by Jose Manakalathil served. Boy, did they have their hands full or what! The expediency in decision making, ability to understand risk and their pragmatic solution-oriented approach they brought through their leadership was the only reason why we were able to manage the challenges we faced related to the hotel check-in on day one. There was a willingness to accept responsibility and communicate openly when needed, which helped the team to focus on the solution. This approach helped us towards resolving a major interface glitch that could have derailed the entire convention plans and schedule within an acceptable time frame.

As mentioned earlier, nearly 75% of the participants were external to the Houston parish, while close to 60% of the participants came from out of state. This is a testament to the excellent marketing efforts spearheaded by Sunny Tom, Tharun Mathai and Mithul Kandathiparambil. I must also mention the commitment of our bishops, especially Bishop Joy Alappatt, who visited almost every single parish with committee members during the kick-offs.

#### How We Made it Happen

An endeavor of this magnitude would not be successful without a proper foundation and executive leadership. From the very beginning, the financial challenges towards execution of this event was identified as a key risk. Our budget of USD 1.6 Million initially had a deficit of nearly USD 600,000 which was a true fundraising challenge to the finance committee chair and his leadership team but Bose Kurian, Babu Vennalil, John Babu and Biju George stepped up to the plate. With the support of Babu Chacko and Jacob Joseph in selling raffles, and George Panicker in managing accounts, this team raised the money in the form of business and individual sponsorships. Eventually, this teams' collaborative work and planning ensured a deficit-free event, and this was the robust foundation that facilitated the delivery of an event of this magnitude. The executive leadership provided by Chairman Alexander Kudackkachira, supported by Vice Chairmen Babu Mathew and Joseph Manakalathil, was extremely important in ensuring the integrity of the theme for this convention. They guided the relatively younger blood with lesser experience to focus in line whenever our imaginations went wild. Whenever there were conflicts, they always helped us focus and keep our eye on the prize. It was not about individual wins, rather the focus was always on a team win delivering the "One Convention, One Family" vision.

No good plan comes to fruition without checks and balances and proper follow-up. Paul Joseph as the secretary was instrumental in guiding the discussions and following up on actions. He had a firm understanding of the overall program, schedule towards the convention date, decisions to be made and the follow-up needed. Coming from a professional background, it was easy for me to work with him, and together we were able to guide the leadership and the immense talent of our team to chip the Himalayan task in front of us one tiny pebble at a time. Paul Chettan was always a voice of reason and has a solution-oriented mind. In many ways, he was my older brother and mentor throughout this journey and inspired me to rise above the occasion and constantly search within me the humility to look at the big picture towards answering a special call.

An amazing feat of this convention was the digital reach we had. Only towards the very end we realized that people were watching the Shalom live stream and were engaging in Q&A's through Sli.do. We identified that people were participating from all over the US as well as from Australia, Canada and India. This is a testament to the new reality and impact of digital media and tools, and our need to embrace them more holistically. I want to especially thank Joseph Varghese of Shalom World USA for making this a reality.

One of the key challenges in putting together a program with parallel streams where participants can move between rooms based on their topic of interest was the need to maintain discipline on time. This led to the idea of creating a micro-schedule with such detail so that I as the event coordinator could have visibility on what was taking place in each of the venues within a 5-minute accurate window. This was that final moment where the events committee was formed. The vision was clear, the schedule was laid out and now it was about execution. We needed people with project management, attention to detail and time management experience. This is where my team under the leadership of Jose Mathew and Lizzy Sojan as Room Manager leads, Melissa Tom as speaker coordinator with her speaker spiders making sure that speakers were where they should be at any given time with their sli.do tech support, as well as speaker introducers checking in with Room Managers truly excelled. And how can I forget Sibil Mathew for being my right hand and Chief Sli.do Officer (CSO) in executing this vision of participant experience. Sibil's organizational skills, agility in thinking and sense of humor were instrumental in creating participant engagement through Sli.do during sessions. In addition she was a dependable leader to whom I could delegate key tasks when it came to crisis management from a program execution standpoint.

My relationship with George evolved over time and his contributions to the convention planning and execution were invaluable. He made time and prioritized convention related tasks that made significant impacts towards planning and execution. His contributions included support for editing the brochure, provided digital content for the video wall and reflections video, support with project management of the reflections video with Zeno, provided technical and SME for lighting/sound for the main stage, designed the lighting plot used for the main hall stage lighting along with its technical schematic, edited the program schedule with Dr. Manoj and I. provided the initial framework for Pro-Presenter files used for managing and creating the video wall content, overall coordination of the program execution in the main hall, technical support for the masquerade ball, liaison between the AV Vendor and SMNC team, planning and support for the video wall and execution along with recruitment of Jerin and Delix. In short: he acted as a deputy Event Coordinator and was probably the only person who had full visibility of all the events, programs, the vision and the execution strategy and could execute the convention in my absence. I have to especially recognize his family for rallying around him and supporting him when he made the choice to stay back and continue executing the programs after day 2 when he got the news that his 2 month old was in the ICU fighting a critical allergy. Gianna to me is a miracle child and it took her another two more weeks of hospitalization and several months to fully recover. For George and family, this convention was a labor of love and a praverful sacrifice. This is just one of the many stories where volunteers made personal sacrifices for making SMNC 2019 an unforgettable experience for the participants. They answered their call to serve His kingdom with a praverful mind and personal sacrifices. I am grateful that SMNC2019 turned out to be the reason for us meeting one another and call each other brothers.

I want to dedicate this last section to a special group of people whom I call "THE GLUE", because they were the team that assisted in merging the various work streams of event planning and held it together like glue. Four weeks prior to the convention, the panic mode hit me. We had a vision and ambition about the experience we wanted to provide the participants, but it was all a plan. We spent money on a massive video wall and the best audio equipment, but we didn't have any content. I struggled to find time to sleep and started to pull on every leadership skill that I had learned in order to lead from the front without panicking and with a steady hand. God had plans, and miraculously my schedule opened because of a project delay at work and I was able to take time off from work for 4 weeks leading up to the convention. It happened that Tharun Mathai was also in a similar situation and Mithul was on his summer break. Then there was little Thommen and Josh (Thomas Palakapilly and Josh Palakapilly) who were also on their summer breaks. The next four weeks were work camps being shifted from one house to another (for a while it was at my home and then it was at Mithul's). Our schedule had no start or end time; it was all about getting things done. 100% of the digital content that was shown during the convention was the production of this team and note that Thommen was only 14, Josh 19 and Mithul 21. I fondly call them "CLP, A fully owned subsidiary of 902 Holdings LLC". At that point, we started getting help from young adults around the diocese and we started dividing up the content creation between those various helping hands. I must mention Joe & Jesinta George as well as Zeno Padinjattekara for their contribution and leadership

in editing and selecting the scene setter videos. Three days prior to the convention, our youth and young adult leaders from all over the country started trickling into Houston. They showed up with their heart in their hands and with willingness to work. Mithul's house turned out to be the war room for our operations. At any time, we had nearly 20 people working on various projects on 6-8 different computers. For the team, there was no difference between day and night. Prior to this, I was very frustrated at DYA and STAFF members as they did not take an active role in the convention planning and execution mode when asked. But looking back at it, I realize that God had His plan. He wanted us to

create the whole blueprint so that this team could execute it effectively. Finally, on Tuesday before the convention, the remainder of the team also showed up and I realized one thing -I had my complete events team. To name them – Anu Pulickan, Delix Alex, Christy Sunny, Reny Pereira, Marlene Pullorkunnel, Jaison Kalampanayil, Joseph Abraham, Elizabeth Amala Abraham, Jerin Thenavan, Svlvia Thenavan, Sandesh Mathew, Alex Sabu, Zeno Padinjattekara. Together with George Nellikunnel, Mithul Kandathiparambil, Tharun Mathai, Thomas Palakapilly, Joshua Palakapilly, Viney Varghese, Jeswin Manakalathil, Tharun Mathai, Melissa Tomy, Sibil Mathew, Sonia Kurian and Kavitha Joseph – I call them "THE GLUE". They created the experience from a content and creativity standpoint, seamlessly executing the vision we had on participant experience as well as time management. Kudos to these young leaders. Among them, I want to especially recognize Zeno Padinjattekkara for creating the reflections video; a true labor of love which depicted how the idea of this convention was conceived and how it was planned and eventually the highlights of its delivery. Another set of special names worth mentioning are Jerin Thenayan and Delix Alex. These young men single handedly operated the main stage video wall for all four days. I wish we had more people to provide back-up for them and it was unfortunate that we couldn not. Their back-ups were their lovely wives Sylvia Thenayan and Sherinrose Alex. They literally held them together through the stresses of managing a complex audio-visual system that had dynamic content that was switching frequently through a rigorous micro schedule.

To wrap this up, this convention allowed me to truly experience God and I believe that it was the same for everyone who had the privilege to work towards organizing and executing this event, as well as those who attended. This was a visual exhibition of what we can do together as a team and how capable our young leaders are under the guidance of our older generation. This was a coming together of a new wave in our diocese and it will be a shame if we don't ride this wave to the heights it can take us. God has a plan for us and we simply have to say yes to it and hold onto His hands. This convention showed that we can find a balance between the old and the new and that we can assimilate to the American culture with an "Indo-American" view by leaning forward. When you reflect; delivering an event of this magnitude with volunteers (including leadership) who have neither prior experience in organizing an event of this magnitude, nor the familiarity of working together with their respective teams is a remarkable achievement - a testament that this was truly God's will. This was also the result of Vision, Teamwork and Intentional Leadership. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this vision, team and the privilege to lead by becoming an instrument in His hands; which I consider to be a once in a lifetime experience. Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam

Special Thanks to Sibil Mathew, George Nellikunnel & Heetal Patel for spending countless hours editing this article.



Dr. Abraham Mathew Program Architect



# DAWNING OF THE GLORY THAT SHINES OUT

#### A reflection on the Convention Theme & Major Takeaways

The 2019 Syro Malabar convention was one of a kind. In contradistinction to the prior conventions, the young adult demographic made up more than fifty percent of the attendees and there was a concerted effort made to address the issues facing our diocese today. It was my pleasure and honor to be involved in the Convention, from the very beginning, as the "Theme Architect," a title I found conferred onto me. Overall, I was quite pleased with what the Lord did in and through Convention, despite our own misgivings and I wanted to take the time to pen a glimpse of how the events rolled out and the thought process behind it.

Towards the end of 2018, Mar Joy Alapatt, our auxiliary bishop, called and sought help with putting together some ideas for the convention. There were two thematic phrases he talked about, "Arise, Shine out" and "The way of Mar Thoma, the way to Holiness." The first was taken from Isaiah 60 and the latter was inspired by Gaudete et Exsultate, the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, "on the call to holiness in today's world." In Mar Joy's vision, the convention had to focus on the family and the Church. "Well, shouldn't be too bad" I thought, and offered to work around my busy schedule, and finish the project in a few days. Little did I know what I was getting into at that time!

For starters, I got a preliminary outline of how the events might flow within the framework of the scheduled time, starting on Thursday evening and ending by noon on Sunday. The scripture verse of Isaiah 60:1 was divided into four separate themes for each day- Day 1: Arise!, Day 2: Shine out, Day 3: "Your light has come" and, Day 4: "The glory of the LORD has dawned upon you." The days were arranged to have practical sessions in the afternoon focused on families. I was almost wrapped up with the assignment that the Bishop gave me, and was only short of a few more topic suggestions for some practical sessions. To figure out these sessions, I spent several hours in reflection, wondering what God might be intending to accomplish through this convention. It became increasingly clear that He wanted this gathering to be a true gathering with God, in the here and now, rather than a namesake gathering for the intent of checking off a box. While reflecting on current issues, ideas came up regarding recent conversations with priests, parents and the next generation; several topics related to inter generational dialogue appeared to take priority and were included into the sessions. The bishops were very happy with the outline provided. I was done and made a note in my mind that I had to book time off from work because vacation has to be planned six months or more in advance in my field of work as a medical surgeon and professor. I felt a bit of excitement deep within, thinking of the convention gathering.

Little did I know that with the next meeting planned in Chicago, along with the convention secretary and event coordinator, that I was going to plunge into a "convention vortex." The meeting was called by the diocese to move forward with the convention planning, specifically with regard to its content. Anish Simon, the event coordinator, totally unknown to me, called me in preparation for the meeting and we discussed a macroscopic view of the convention landscape. The exact details of that conversation escape my memory, but we struck a chord on several lines. We needed a real, not a namesake gathering, the content had to be relevant to those who would attend, sessions should be interactive, and our intention should not be to make this into a retreat.

He proposed a balance between the spiritual and social element, though in my mind it was difficult to separate the two. There is no spiritual life and a separate social life. It is at once both! As we continued the discussion, we were definitely on the same page, if not very close. The more I listened to Anish, the more I got a sense that the gravitational power of the convention vortex had something to do with the whirlpool he was creating. It appeared that he had an agenda; an agenda to do what was right, what made sense, what helped the Church and its people and very little to none of anything else. Plus he was simply determined to accomplish it. I had to step up my game and be willing to stretch way more, right away! There appeared to be no other option. I thought I would be done with the convention preparation after the Chicago meeting once I delivered my ideas. Sure enough, after the first meeting, I came back with more to do on my plate. The ideas proposed had to be developed from its skeleton to have flesh and life. Data had to be collected and the pulse of the people who would be attending had to be determined. The youth team had already engaged some resources for the English preferring crowd, but additional resources needed to be identified and engaged. A keynote speaker had to be found.

Six months down the road, all that had happened feels like a trance. The convention is over in some sense, but not in some other ways. We are in November as this article is scribbled and I am only beginning to land on the normal terrain from someplace else, where there was more of a divine cloud consuming us and we were rocketting at high speed. It all began after the Chicago meeting. The DYA leaders were engaged and a survey was sent out to the registrants. The inquiry was about what issues they wanted to discuss and learn about. What were their challenges? Registration had begun to come in and 50% of the registrations were in before 6 months! That was a plus. All the responses were collated and the domains looked at.

What the people wanted and what was outlined in the preliminary program definitely connected. I found myself dwelling on the theme and the topics consuming all my free time. First on my mind was identifying what challenges the Church, specifically the Syro Malabar Church in the US faced. Five things stood out:

- An Identity crisis: a bunch of laity that identifies the "Syro Malabar" Church as a "Malayalam" Church.
- A lack of coherent vision about the purpose of a Syro Malabar Church in the US.
- A Church in general and those responsible for formation struggling to connect with an increasing volume of the second generation.
- Faithful congregation stunted with the unending allegations of abuse and scandal in the US and in India.
- A lack of sense of belonging to the diocese among the laity and a lack of oneness among the priests.
   The development of the theme followed under these domains as noted below.

How do we tackle the "Syro Malabar" identity crisis? The issue is that of a pseudo identity. Many understand and are proud of being Syro Malabar, but mistakenly think of this identity as one of language and culture. To them, the oriental essence of our worship and the monastic spirituality that we follow are not evident, but they behold the Indian (rather the Malayalee) nature of the Church and identify with it fully. The result is that some parishes spend much of their energy for socio-cultural activities. "Socio-Cultural" refers to the "culture of the parents" or the "Kerala culture" to which many of the second generation do not or cannot connect with. Further, they look at it as irrelevant to their faith and spirituality. The perception becomes that you have to be more "Malayalee" to be Syro Malabar. A logical debate to engage the audience was beyond the scope of a two day meeting. Instead, we presented a collection of videos depicting the multi-lingual presence of the Church before the Holy Qurbana with his Beatitude, the head and father of our Church, deemed the prime time of the convention. The video showcased Holy Qurbana celebrated in Syriac, Malayalam, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Urdu, German, French, English and in sign language. One visually understood that our Church and rite transcended the limits of language. In order to clarify the purpose of our existence and what we should focus on, we used an audience engagement strategy. One of the unique features of the convention was the use of sli.do. This software was purchased for the event with the specific intention of engaging the people in real time. We asked a few reflective questions and polled the audience for their responses.

- What will be the state of the US Syro Malabar Church in 50 years?
  - A fully alive Church Oriental in worship, Indian in origin, American in culture and catholic in faith will exist, yearning to evangelize the nations
  - A fully alive Church Oriental in worship, Indian in culture and Catholic in faith will exist.
  - A status quo Church maintained by new migrants, primarily Indian in culture will be found (if migration continues)
  - Chances are the current establishment will die and our children will be absorbed into the Latin Church.
- What is the primary purpose of our Syro Malabar Diocese in the US?
  - To assimilate new Syro Malabar migrants into this country and provide them a welcoming home when they arrive here
  - To recreate the Syro Malabar Church experience of Kerala and promote Malayalee customs and traditions
  - To impart what was handed over to us through generations to our children so that a community of worship in the Syro Malabar tradition is permanently established.
  - Proclaim the Gospel and evangelize the un-Christianized and baptize them into the Syro Malabar Church
- Most of our talent and funds of the Church at present is used for what among the above options?

The responses to the above made it abundantly clear that our primary purpose was to establish a thriving Church of oriental worship that belongs to those of Indo-American culture, that our priorities are not in the right order and that we spent enormous resources for preserving culture at the expense of the mission to impart faith to the next generation and proclaim the gospel in the peripheries.

Next we had to address the challenges to connect with the next generation. Many noted that there is a gap in between. In preparation for this session, several youth, young adults and adults were polled randomly and asked where exactly is this cultural gap? In addition, video interviews of many were recorded responding to the following questions. How is the Syro Malabar Church doing in terms of connecting with the next generation? Where can we improve? Did you benefit from your catechism classes? What should the Church focus on for the future?

One thing was evident. Though people talk about the inter generational gap, what this gap consists of was not obvious to most. The language gap was readily identified by all. Other points noted were expectations about careers, marriage and treatment of younger adults. Additional areas where the gap existed included the vision on how to practice faith and be spiritual, prejudice of race, expectations about clothes and ear piercings, the manner in which one spends leisurely time and vacation, vision of activities that should happen in Church and during perunnals, kinds of movies, television shows and news one might want to watch, games you play or watch, how night curfews are implemented, how expectations for girls differ from that of boys, Indian food vs. American, the use of alcohol and the approach to mental health. A panel discussion was orchestrated to bring out a few of these aspects. The panelists were asked to respond to the questions spontaneously and honestly. No questions were given in advance so as to enable spontaneous and organic discussion. The panel

was made to represent the Church, a parent from India, a parent from the US, a second generation parent and a young adult. The discussions were well received and appeared to benefit many based on the feedback. Another issue of evolving viewpoints and highly relevant to the current generation that had to be addressed was about sexual orientation and identity. Separate and interactive sessions in English and Malayalam were planned to specifically address these issues.

The sense of paralysis felt by the abuse scandals was specifically addressed. Given the magnitude of the challenges the allegations of abuse and lack of discipline posed, this issue was made the subject of the keynote talk to be delivered on the third day, themed "Your light has come.. Lord let me see." We had hoped for Bishop Barron of Los Angeles to address us initially and then it was Cardinal Tagle of the Phillipines, followed by Cardinal Dolan! In the end, it was Bishop William Wack of Tallahassee-Pensacola who was introduced to us as a genuine person and great role model by our own deacon, Timmy Pulickal. Bishop Wack was ordained a bishop right in the middle of the sex abuse scandal and I was sure he had to deal with it within. This young bishop was tasked with helping us see through the fog of allegations; drawing on how he was seeing through it. "Is this the biggest crisis the Catholic Church has faced? How did and through whom did the Church survive prior crises?" These ideas were tied with the prayer, "Lord let me see" because for sure, there is the Light that has come and dwelled among us! Along with this it was important to make known that the spirit of the Church was not that of gloom and doom despite all the negative propaganda. For this, several ordinary people who are living extraordinary lives were identified and their booming enthusiasm for the gospel and the people of God was showcased. Additionally, actress Christina Monhini Srinivasan gave her testimony of how she found the light and converted to Roman Catholicism.

Syro Malabar conventions of the past never specifically addressed our priests. They needed to be motivated and brought on the same page to effectively move the diocesan organization. The struggle often for them is to choose between two good options or to select one of the two viewpoints with its pros and cons. These are conflicts faced by any leader, often dealt with effectively in secular organizations. We were lucky to get connected to Mr. Mathew Jacob, a well accomplished resource for leadership development for many major companies. As the Presbyterium was scheduled to be just before the convention, a session on leadership and conflict resolution was planned during that along with a second one during the convention. The desire was to have practical hands-on sessions instead of theoretical discourses.

The convention in general was arranged with a focus on the Holy Qurbana with the liturgy taking the prime time in the morning. Adoration, rosary and confession were available from the early morning. The afternoon sessions were of practical issues that ran in 5 streams geared to preteens, teens, college students, young adults and adults. From 5 pm to 7 pm was a time for spiritual reflection or praise night leading into adoration. After dinner were the socio-cultural activities. A separate event for the young adults was arranged in the setting of a business dinner, to allow for further networking. A talk on balancing career and family was delivered inside this event organized at a venue held outside the convention.

The convention, it was hoped, would energize the entire diocese and its organs. The official and unofficial lay organizations were heavily involved and given a platform to come together. The DYA and STAFF were helpful and were challenged to rise to the demands of the convention. Members of Jesus youth, a canonically recognized lay association, were tapped as resources behind and on the stage. The SMCC, a recognized lay association in the diocese, gathered as a group. The 4life and family apostolate team maintained stalls that were well visited.

The general tone of the content was to be practical, down to earth and engaging. The availability of Sli.do, an online platform for live engagement, was very effective. Every session was started and concluded with

carefully selected questions, polls or moderated discussions. The audience could ask questions amid a session which were then collated and made available to the speaker immediately or at the end of the session, such that these were addressed effectively.

In retrospect, the convention appears to have accomplished several of its goals. Team Houston was able to put what was good for the convention and the diocese as a top priority in their decision making. The role of an event coordinator who wanted to deliver a top class experience for the attendees paid its dividends. There was no interference from different sources as to what the content of the convention had to be. The theme architect was enabled to prayerfully listen to the surveys, discern and develop the theme, topics and content of each session overseen by the bishops and in consultation with convention leadership. Each speaker was given a specific task and key talking points that outlined the vision behind the sessions. The speakers clearly understood the task and scope of their session and time expectations to abide by.

What could have been better? Engaging the diocesan infrastructure better from the get go is something we need to do in the future and should be the primary task of the organizing team. This has to be facilitated by the diocese beyond just convention ticket sales kick-offs. Every parish should have a convention team whose input should be collected. All priests should be consulted and engaged. The theme and the content should be developed by a small team of 2 or 3 without pressure from the outside as was done this year. Our enthusiasm to deliver as much as possible, made the schedule very busy. While the engagement of the youth was the best in the convention, they appeared to still be distracted despite many events purely geared to them. Getting the right audience to the convention, strategic presence with the youth and engagement at a grassroots level will help improve this further.

This convention was not envisioned to be an end in itself, but as something to foster more discussions on several topics, discussions which would be continued to our parishes, missions and their wards. Future conventions should use the capabilities of newer technologies to engage the diocese at relevant points of the events as it happens, allow for remote interaction and participation (ex. during catechism classes diocese wide) such that a tangible integration of the diocese, its thinking and experience is accomplished. And it is time to begin that preparation now!





# THE EVOLUTION OF SYRO MALABAR CONVENTIONS

Competition Releation

Since 1999, Syro Malabar conventions have taken place in many cities with the goal of building a fellowship of communities across the diocese while nurturing spiritual growth and development. The nature of the conventions over the years has evolved to the growing demands of diocese as it blossomed from its infancy. For many, the conventions in 1999 (Philadelphia, PA), 2000 (Chicago, IL) and 2003 (Edison, NJ) were instrumental in realizing the significance of a Syro Malabar community in North America and its potential impact on the next generation. For people who grew up in the US, the Syro Malabar Qurbana was celebrated on few occasions based on where people grew up so the awareness of the richness of our rite was not readily apparent until after the diocese was instituted. The conventions in the early years help sow the seeds of curiosity and community by bringing people together who would probably not have met otherwise. Though the goal of the conventions was to foster a balance of spiritual growth and social development, the emphasis in the beginning leaned more towards the social. Events tended to gear around mixers, cultural programs, outing activities and processions. This was a general trend until 2012 (Atlanta, GA) where for the first time, a separate youth track was created to handle sessions pertaining to learning more about Syro traditions, growing up in the faith in the context of American culture, etc.. It was also an opportunity for the youth to take leadership in their own aspects of the convention regarding the planning of their events and resources. The convention in Atlanta was a pivotal moment when the young adults and youth of the diocese realized the conventions and gatherings should be more than just social events, but avenues to engage in spiritual discussions, learning and active participation in diocesan affairs. Since there were several challenges in 2012 regarding availability of resources, coordination logistics, finances and certain levels of required autonomy, the young lay faithful decided with the guidance of Bishop Angadiath to start regional youth based conferences for the next several years around the country.

Conferences such as SYNC, Source, Torch and MAC provided an environment to focus on the needs of the regional parishes and foster stronger community bonding and involvement. It gave participants a tangible context of the meaning of growing up in a Syro Malabar family by starting at the roots of individual parishes and their role within the larger perspective of the diocese. These conferences addressed needs on a personal level because they were limited in size and scope; allowing for a deeper spiritual experience and encounter with the beauty of our Tradition. Strong leaders and team initiatives were the fruits of these conferences which set the stage for greater involvement by young adults and youth at both the parish and diocesan levels. The period of time between the 2012 (Atlanta, GA) to 2019 (Houston, TX) conventions was a period of growth, reflection and maturity in the diocese. In 2019, the time came to host another convention the likes of which was never executed before.

The convention in Houston was the largest convention held with over 3,000 participants. The sheer size of the convention presented challenges that required a taskforce of capable individuals to implement. For the first time, the diocese and hosting parish decided to let the leadership of the convention be driven by young adults for their creativity and professional skills. It was a risky endeavor, but yielded superior results due to the complex nature of the events planned, sophisticated technological utilizations, project management and team efforts of creative minds working together. Though the team did not entirely consist of youth of young adults

per say, the overall mindset was open and willing to explore new paradigms in the evolution of the experience of the convention. It was definitely a memorable experience for those that attended, but the momentum needs to continue. The experiences, planning and collaborative efforts of those working countless hours behind the convention in Houston demonstrated the true power and potential of the lay faithful. As a community, we have a tremendous responsibility to carry our faith traditions to the next generation amidst the social tides of secularism and indifference. The conventions and conferences have brought our community together and have revealed new possibilities of what we can do if we work together. It is for us to decide how this momentum will carry on and the form it will manifest in the years to come.





ജോസഫ് മാർട്ടിൻ വിലങ്ങോലിൽ മീഡിയ കോർഡിനേറ്റർ

### സീറോമലബാർ കൺവെൻഷൻ: ഒരു എത്തിനോട്ടം

യുവത്വത്തിലേക്ക് പ്രവേശിച്ച അമേരിക്കയിലെ സീറോ മലബാർ സഭയുടെ ചരിത്രത്തിൽ തങ്കലിപികളിൽ എഴു തിച്ചേർക്കേണ്ട നേട്ടമാണ് 'നാഷണൽ കൺവെൻഷൻ 2019.' പങ്കെടുത്ത അൽമായൻ എന്നതിനുപരി ഒരു മാ ധ്യമപ്രവർത്തകന്റെ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടിലൂടെ നാഷണൽ കൺവെൻഷൻ 2019 വിലയിരുത്തുന്നു ജോസഫ് മാർട്ടിൻ വിലങ്ങോലിൽ.

#### യൂത്ത്ഫുൾ, ഫ്രൂട്ട്ഫുൾ ആൻഡ് 'സംതിംഗ് സ്പെഷൽ 2019'

ചരിത്രം രചിച്ച കൺവെൻഷൻ! ഏഴു വർഷത്തെ ഇടവേളയ്ക്കുശേഷം സമ്മേളിച്ച, 18–ാം പിറന്നാളിലെത്തിയ ചിക്കാഗോ സീറോ മലബാർ രൂപതയുടെ യുവത്വം മുഴുവൻ നിറഞ്ഞുനിന്ന 'സീറോ മലബാർ കൺവെൻഷൻ 2019' നെ ഒറ്റ വാക്യത്തിൽ ഇപ്രകാരം വിലയിരുത്താം: 'യൂത്ത്ഫുൾ ഫ്രൂട്ട്ഫുൾ!' ഇതിനുമുമ്പ് സമ്മേളിച്ച കൺ വെൻഷനുകളിൽ പങ്കെടുത്തവർക്കെല്ലാം ഇത്തവണത്തെ 'സംതിംഗ് സ്പെഷൽ' സ്വഭാവം എളുപ്പം മനസ്സിലാ കും. ഉദ്ഘാടന പ്രസംഗത്തിൽ കർദ്ദിനാൾ മാർ ആലഞ്ചേരി ആദ്യം എടുത്തു പറഞ്ഞതും ഇക്കാര്യം തന്നെയാ യിരുന്നല്ലോ.

ഇതുവരെ നടന്ന ഇതര കൺവെൻഷനുകളുമായി താരതമ്യം ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ ദൈവീക സ്പർശമുള്ള കൺ വെൻഷൻ എന്നാണ് ഇത്തവണത്തെ കൂടിച്ചേരലിനെ മാർ ആലഞ്ചേരി വിശേഷിപ്പിച്ചത്. അത് കേവലം മു ഖസ്തുതിയോ ഔപചാരികതയോ ആയിരുന്നില്ലെന്ന് വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്ന കാര്യപരിപാടികൾക്കാണ് പിന്നീടുള്ള ദിനങ്ങളിൽ സെന്റ് ജോസഫ് നഗരി എന്ന് നാമകരണം ചെയ്ത ഹിൽട്ടൺ അമേരിക്കാസ് ഹോട്ടൽ സമുച്ചയം സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിച്ചത്.

ബൃഹത്തായ പങ്കാളിത്തവും കൂട്ടായ്മയുമാണ് സീറോമലബാർ സഭയുടെ ഈ സമ്മേളനത്തിന്റെ പ്രത്യേകത യായി കർദിനാൾ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടിയത്. ഇതിനുമുമ്പുള്ള പല കൺവെൻഷനുകളിലും പങ്കെടുത്ത അനുഭവത്തിൽ എനിക്കും അനുഭവപ്പെട്ട പ്രത്യേകതയും അതുതന്നെയാണ് . അഞ്ച് ദിനങ്ങളിൽ 13 വേദികളിലായി 45–ൽപരം പ്രോഗ്രാമുകൾ സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചു എന്നതിനപ്പുറം അവയെല്ലാം വിശ്വാസവളർച്ചയ്ക്ക് ദിശാബോധം പകരുന്നതായി രുന്നു എന്നതും ശ്രദ്ധേയമായിരുന്നു.

ഇന്ത്യയെക്കാൾ പല മടങ്ങ് വലുപ്പമുള്ള യു.എസിന്റെ എല്ലാ റീജണുകളിൽ നിന്നുമുള്ള വിപുലമായ പങ്കാളി ത്തം, പ്രൊഫഷണലിസത്തോടെയുള്ള സംഘാടക മികവ്, ആഘോഷം, വിനോദം എന്നതിനെക്കാൾ ഉപരി ആത്മീയ പോഷണത്തിന് ഉപകരിക്കുന്ന സെഷനുകളുടെ ബാഹുല്യം, ഓരോ പ്രായക്കാർക്കും ഇണങ്ങുംവി ധം ക്രമീകരിച്ച പ്രോഗ്രാമുകൾ, ഇന്ത്യയിൽ നിന്നും വിദേശത്തുനിന്നുമുള്ള പ്രഗത്ഭ വാഗ്മികളുടെ ക്ലാസുകൾ... ഇവയെല്ലാം ചേർന്നുവന്ന കൺവെൻഷനും ഇതുതന്നെയാകും.

യുവജന സാന്നിധ്യവും എടുത്തുപറയേണ്ടതുതന്നെ. അമേരിക്കയിലെ സീറോ മലബാർ സഭയുടെ ഭാവി ശോ ഭനമാണെന്ന് വ്യക്തമാക്കാൻ ഇതിൽപ്പരം തെളിവുവേണ്ട. സംഘാടകരിലെ യുവജന പ്രാതിനിധ്യവും ശ്രദ്ധി ക്കപ്പെട്ടു. അൽമായ നേതൃതലത്തിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്ന തലമുറ മാറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ പ്രകടമായിരുന്നു. മുതിർന്ന വർക്കൊപ്പം യുവജനങ്ങൾ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്നു എന്ന ശൈലിയിൽനിന്ന് വ്യത്യസ്ഥമായി, യുവജനങ്ങൾക്കൊപ്പം മുതിർന്നവർ പങ്കെടുക്കുന്ന അനുഭവമാണ് ഇത്തവണ ദൃശ്യമായത്.

Qomention Pellection

ഇത്തവണത്തെ ആതിഥേയരായ ഹുസ്റ്റൺ സെന്റ് ജോസഫ് ഇടവകയ്ക്കും സംഘാ ടക സമിതിക്കും അഭിമാനിക്കാൻ ഏറെയുള്ള കൺവെൻഷൻ കൂടിയാണിത്. ചിക്കാ ഗോ സീറോ മലബാർ ബിഷപ്പ് മാർ ജേക്കബ് അങ്ങാടിയത്ത് രക്ഷാധികാരിയും സഹായമെത്രാൻ മാർ ജോയ് ആലപ്പാട്ട് ജനറൽ കൺവീനറും ഫൊറോന വികാരി ഫാ.കുര്യൻ നെടുവേലിചാലുങ്കൽ കോ കൺവീനറും അലക്സാണ്ടർ കുടക്കച്ചിറ കൺ വെൻഷൻ ചെയർമാനുമായ സംഘാടകസമിതിയുടെ മേൽനോട്ടത്തിൽ 40 ൽപ്പരം വരു ന്ന കമ്മിറ്റികൾക്കും ഉപകമ്മിറ്റികൾക്കുമാണ് ഇതിന്റെ ക്രെഡിറ്റ്.

വിവിധ നഗരങ്ങളിലായി വ്യാപിച്ചുകിടക്കുന്ന 46 സീറോ മലബാർ ഇടവകകളിൽ നിന്നും 40 മിഷനുകളിൽ നിന്നും നാലായിരത്തിൽപ്പരം പേരാണ് കൺവെൻഷനിൽ നേരിട്ട് പങ്കെടുത്തത്. എന്നാൽ അതിനെക്കാളേറെ സഭാംഗങ്ങൾക്ക്, അമേരിക്കയ്ക്ക് പുറത്തുള്ളവർക്കുവരെ കൺവെൺഷനിലെ സുപ്രധാന സെഷനുകൾക്ക് സാക്ഷിയാകാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു എന്നതും ഇത്തവണത്തെ കൺവെൻഷന്റെ നേട്ടമാണ്. മാർത്തോമ്മാ മാർഗ്ഗം വി ശുദ്ധിയിലേക്കുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗം; ഉണർന്നു പ്രശോഭിക്കുക എന്ന ആപ്തവാക്യവുമായി സംഗമിച്ച കൺവെൻഷൻ വിവിധ പ്ലാറ്റ്ഫോമുകളിലൂടെ തത്സമയം ലോകമെങ്ങും എത്തിച്ച ശാലോം ടി.വി.യും, ഫ്ളവർ ടി.വിയും അഭി നന്ദനം അർഹിക്കുന്നു.

സീറോ മലബാർ കൺവെൻഷനുകൾക്ക് അമേരിക്കയിൽ തുടക്കം കുറിച്ചിട്ട് രണ്ട് പതിറ്റാണ്ട് പൂർത്തിയാകുന്ന വർഷമായിരുന്നല്ലോ 2019. രൂപതാ സംവിധാനം നിലവിൽ വരുന്നതിന് ഒരു വർഷം മുമ്പ് 1999 ൽ ഫിലാഡൽഫി യയാണ് പ്രഥമ കൺവെൻഷന് ആതിഥേയത്വം വഹിച്ചത്. ചിക്കാഗോ (2001), ന്യൂജ്സി (2003), ഡാളസ് (2005), മയാമി (2007), അറ്റ്ലാന്റാ (2012) എന്നിവയാണ് കൺവെൻഷന് ആതിഥേയത്വം വഹിച്ച ഇതര സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ. അടുത്ത കൺവെൻഷൻ വേദിയെക്കുറിച്ചോ തിയതിയെക്കുറിച്ചോ തീരുമാനമായിട്ടില്ലെങ്കിലും അടുത്ത കൺ വെൻഷൻ ഇത്തവണത്തെക്കാൾ സവിശേഷമാകും. അതിന് കാരണം മറ്റൊന്നുമല്ല. 'കൺവെൻഷൻ 2019' ന്റെ മഹാവിജയംതന്നെ.





**Soji Tom** Program Coordinator (Kinder Age Kids)



# KINDER KIDS' PARTY WITH JESUS

#### **Reflection on the Program for Kinder Age Kids Stream**

Our little kids (from 4-6 years old) had a grand time at the Syro Malabar National Convention with their own session at the Hilton Americas. The sessions were arranged for Friday and Saturday from 11 am-7 pm. Age-specific activities including songs, crafts, stories and play sessions were organized for the kids. All these fun activities were centered around our Christian faith and ensured that the children got to know more about Jesus and our precious Syro Malabar traditions.

The themes for both days were chosen based on those for SMNC 2019. The activities were planned accordingly to reinforce the themes. On Friday, they learned how they can become lights of the world in their daily lives by modeling the life of Jesus, our beacon light (Arise & Shine... your light Has come). On Saturday, they learned about St. Thomas and our Syro Malabar Church (The Way of St. Thomas... The Way to Holiness). Fun-filled activities combined with prayer were thoroughly enjoyed by the Kinder kids. In addition to all of these activities, the kids had some fun time with our Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt. It was a unique experience for them to see the Bishop came down to their level as he sang and played with them. The kids received a special blessing from the Bishop.

The presence of the coordinators of Angel's Army was one of the highlights of the sessions. Special gratitude is extended to Christina Thomas, Teena Jacob and Sunitha Thomas along with our local volunteers Manju John and Rani Wilson for their sincere efforts to make this convention a memorable one for the Kinder Kids.

At the end of the sessions, the children were happy to take home all their art works and a scrap book, which included their group picture, to help remind them of the fun times that they had at SMNC 2019.





**Sister Agnes Maria MSMI** Program Coordinator (Elementary School)



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## FUN WITH JESUS IN HOUSTON Reflection on the Program for Elementary School Stream

The Syro Malabar National Convention 2019 was an event for more than just families and young adults. The young elementary school children also had a chance to take part in this convention and to spend their time fostering new friendships while gaining a deeper understanding of our heritage and their Syro Malabar faith. Over 100 young children spend two days with Sister Agnes Maria MSMI and her team. The children enjoyed their time playing games and getting to know each other. They also learned about various subjects including saints and the importance of St. Thomas to our faith, How to lead a holy life by reflecting on the convention theme "The way of St. Thomas, The way of Holiness', How can be a light of the world by our life and call for vocation.

Various guest speakers came to give the children a different perspective of their faith and to show them the importance of being a Syro Malabar catholic in America. They also had entertaining arts and crafts sessions where they completed projects to take home as a memory from the convention days. The children were visited by the Archbishop and Bishops who stressed the importance of such gatherings. At the end of the two fun filled days, the children took home some important messages and self-made scrapbooks to remember their time in Houston.

'If we don't teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to.' This weekend, learning about the Syro Malabar faith and cultivating friendships with new people is vital to our growing community. As our children grow, they need a strong foundation on which they can stand firm facing the challenges of this changing world. This weekend helped towards teaching them the importance of their faith as part of building that strong foundation.





#### Sabeena Roncy George Program Coordinator (Middle School)

## UNIQUE CALL FOR HIGHER PURPOSE

Belledion on Anguni

#### **Reflection on the Program for Middle School Stream**

The Syro Malabar National Convention 2019, brought joy and splendor to Houston town, and the zeal was very evident among youth and juniors. Apart from being part of various programs in the opening ceremony, procession and cultural program, the Syro Kids were able to engage in vibrant sessions and activities.

The Middle Schoolers had a dedicated stream on Friday and Saturday with very dynamic speakers. After a spectacular procession and soul filling Holy Qurbana on Friday, they started off with convention theme - "Arise, Shine, Your light has come". Mr John Paul Kasperowicz engaged them with music and games to identify their call to be the light of the world. Scrap booking and games during break was also really fun. The afternoon session, was on a well known teenage issue - "Obeying parents - made easy", which helped them to relate to their core. They came up with many questions about pressure from parents and community on academic success, spiritual uprightness etc, and even questioned parent's hypocritical standards. The team was able to answer their questions well.

The session on "Rising above pressure" by Patty Schneir was very helpful for the teenagers to address their day to day struggles of defending vs. compromising their beliefs and values. Sr. Jocelyn on "Why do I need to go to Malayalam Church" helped them to understand their uniqueness and call to be a Syro Malabar Catholic in America. A relatively hectic schedule of Friday ended with a beautiful time of Praise and Worship leading to adoration, where kids able to reflect and assimilate what they heard throughout the day.

Saturday was also very eventful. The session on "Relationship with God", by John Paul, helped kids to make some positive changes in setting their priorities. They also had a very interactive session with Bishop Angadiath and Cardinal Alencherry during their surprise visit to the Kids stream.

Afternoon with Ms. Jackie on "Teenage issues" and Mr. Paul Kim, with his cool Karaoke Beatboxing, while talking on "social media" were well received. Refocusing them back to their 'unique call for a higher purpose' was topped off with a time of silence and adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

The dedicated team of speakers, volunteers and coordinators, with songs, games, activities and relevant discussions on teenage specific topics were the highlights of the program.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



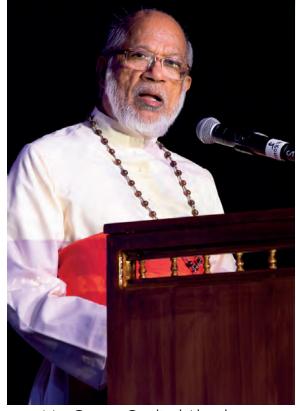


An Inauguration program fit for the national convention was presided by Mar Jacob Angadiath and inaugurated by his Beatitude Cardinal George Alencherry.



**Dignitaries on Stage:** Giby Parackal (Mega Show Sponsor, PSG Group), Francise P. V (Raffle Sponsor, Joy Allukkas Group), Austin Lakayil (Youth Member Pastrol Council - Diocese of Chicago), Adv. Biju Parayannilam (President, AKCC), Retd. Justice Kurian Joseph (Supreme Court of India), Mar. Jose Kalluvelil (Bishop, Eparchy of Canada), Mar. Joseph Pamplany (Auxillary Bishop, Archdiocese of Thalassery), Mar Joy Alappatt (Auxillary Bishop, Diocese of Chicago), Mar Jacob Angadiath (Bishop, Diocese of Chicago), Mar George Cardinal Alencherry (Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church), Mar Thomas Tharayil (Aluxillary Bishop, Archdiocese of Changanacherry), Judge K. P George (Fort Bend County), Mayor Sylvester Turner (Houston), Mr. Alexander Kudakkachira (Chariman, SMNC2019), Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal (Convener, Vicar St. Joseph Syro Malabar Church - Houston), Fr. Rajeev Valiyaveettil (Joint Convener, Asst. Vicar St. Joseph Syro Malabar Church - Houston), Sijo Vadakkan (Event Sponsor, Trinity Group)





Mar George Cardinal Alencherry Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church



Mar Jacob Angadiath Bishop, Diocese of Chicago



Mar Joy Alappatt Auxillary Bishop, Diocese of Chicago



Mar Jose Kalluvelil Bishop, Eparchy of Canada



Mar Joseph Pamplany Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Thalassery



Mar Thomas Tharayil Aluxillary Bishop, Archdiocese of Changanacherry



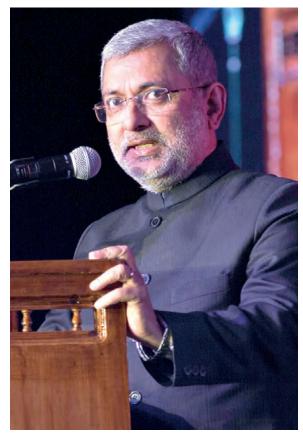
Mar William Wack Bishop of Pensacola- Tallahassee Diocese



Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal (Convener, SMNC-2019)



Sylvester Turner Honorable Mayor, City of Houston



Retd. Justice Kurian Joseph Supreme Court of India



Mr. Alexander Kudakkachira Convention Chairman



Judge K. P George Fort Bend County



Adv. Biju Parayannilam President, AKCC



Dr. Paul Joseph Convention Secretary



Anish Simon Event Coordinator



Holy Qurbana was celebrated in Malayalam on the first and last day of the convention while the 2nd and 3rd day's Holy Qurbana was in English. The main Celebrant for Thursday was Mar Jacob Angadiath, followed by His Beatitude Cardinal George Alenchery on Friday, and Mar Joy Alappatt on Saturday. On Sunday, the thanksgiving and closing Holy Qurbana was celebrated by Mar Jose Kalluvelil. Cardinal addressed the Syro Malabar Church of US. He expressed his admiration of the progress we have made, especially about the presence of a large percentage of youth and exhorted the Church to think in line with the teachings of Church and not to lose focus despite what happens around us. Our families and their values has to be a light that shines out.

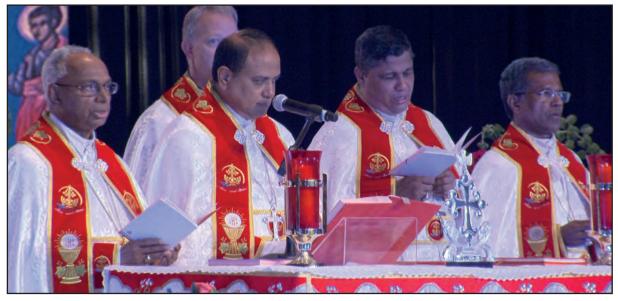


















Choir,



Individuals from across the diocese came together to use their musical talent to assist in the celebration of Holy Qurbana. Both choirs, Malayalam and English, incorporated traditional prayers, songs (including those in Syriac) which gave the liturgical worship a noble form. The mystery of the Liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, was more openly shown. The unity of hearts was more profoundly achieved by the union of voices, minds were more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the of the Holy Qurbana. Their voices and music edified the Holy Qurbana and engaged the community to immerse fully into the Eucharistic celebration.













St. Joseph Parish, Houston



A visual treat orchestrated by Fr. Shaji Thumpechirayil, incorporated the talent of approximately 400 individuals from St. Joseph Syro Malabar Parish, Houston. The program took the convention attendees on a journey reflecting on our faith and culture as St. Thomas Christians through the eyes of an immigrant family relating to the struggles they face and choices they need to make while living in America.









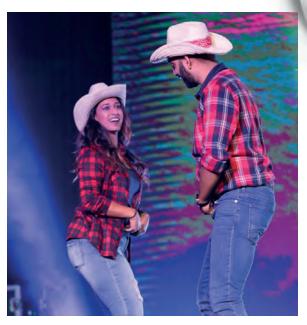


























Nearly 3,500 people from all over America lined up in the streets of Houston to proclaim the Mar Thoma Margam and our cultural traditions. It was an exuberant celebration of our cultural identity with colorful floats, banners, individuals dressed as saints, chendamelam etc. The first place for procession was awarded to the Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral, Chicago. Second place was awarded to St. Mary's Church, Long Island followed by St. Thomas Forane Church, Dallas in third place.



St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston



Phocephion





St. Alphonsa Forane Church, Atlanta



St. Alphonsa Church, Austin



St. Alphonsa Church, Baltimore



St. Thomas Church, Boston



St. Thomas Forane Church, Bronx



Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral, Chicago



St. Thomas Church, Connecticut



St. Alphonsa Church, Coppell



Our Lady of Health Church, Coral Springs



St. Thomas Forane Church, Dallas



St. Thomas Church, Detroit



St. Alphonsa Church, Los Angeles



St Mary's Church, Long Island



Lourdes Matha Church, North Carolina





St. George Church, Patterson



St. Mary's Church, Pearland



St. Thomas Church, Philadelphia



Holy Family Church, Phoenix



Infant Jesus Church, Sacramento



St. Thomas Church, San Antonio



St. Thomas Church, San Francisco



St. Thomas Forane Church, Santa Ana



St. Thomas Forane Church, Somerset



St. Joseph Church, Tampa



St. Mary's Catholic Mission, Washington



1st Place - Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral, Chicago



2nd Place - St. Mary's Church, Long Island



3rd Place - St. Thomas Forane Church, Dallas



A visual treat displaying our culture and faith in the form of art that lasted 3 hours. The cultural programs were elaborate productions that include music, skit, dance, lights, video wall display etc. There were individual productions from 13 parishes during this 3 hours of high quality entertainment.

## Chicago



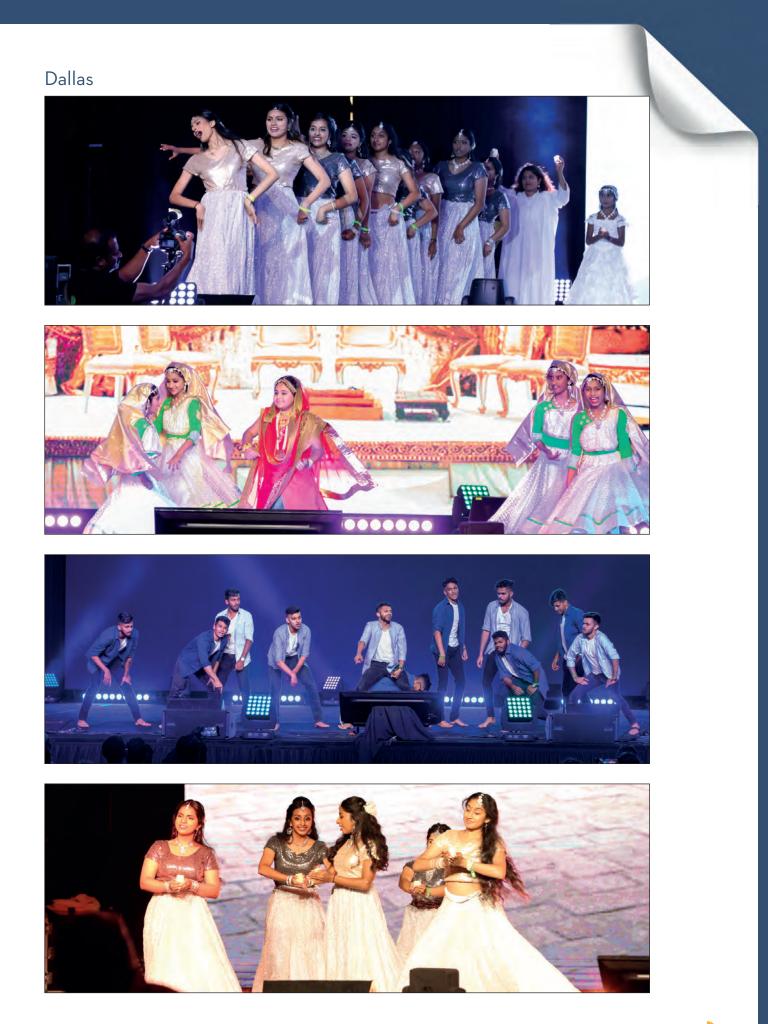












## Somerset









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## Philadelphia





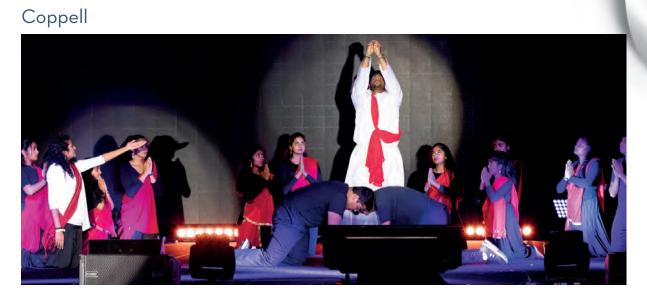


















# San Francisco



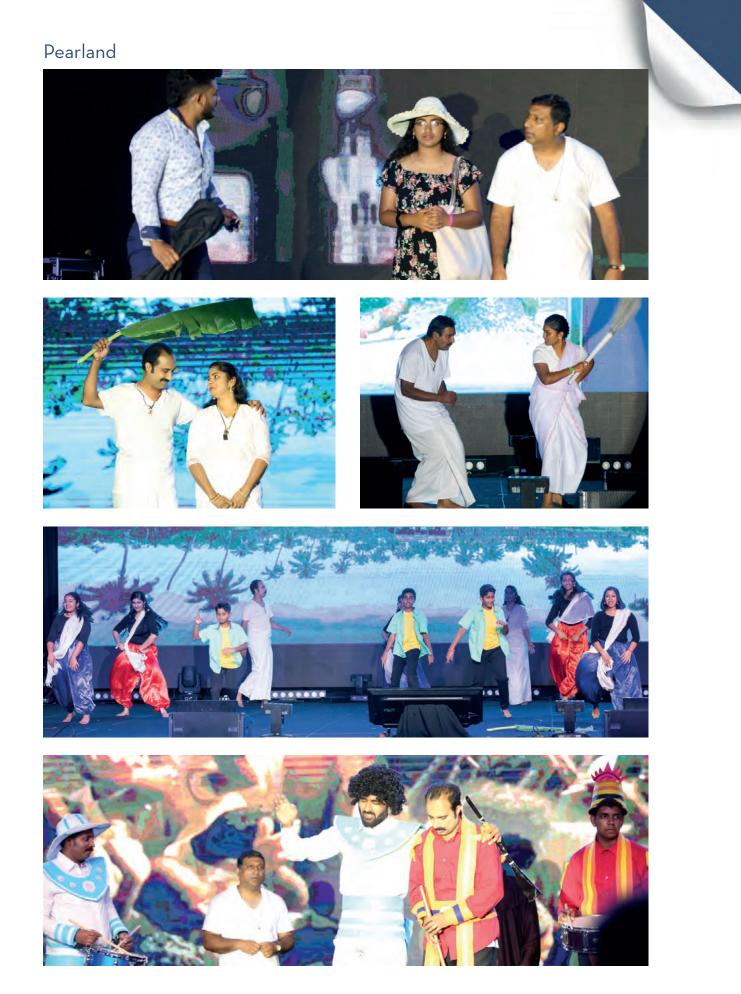
Baltimore







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### Patterson

















# "THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE?"

#### MAR GEORGE CARDINAL ALENCHERRY

Cardinal Alencherry noted that his vision of the Syro Malabar Church in US is to be "Catholic in faith, Oriental in worship and Indo-American in culture". The youth need to be cognizant of the needs of the elders and vice versa.

# "FEELING BURDENED? THE PRESSURES ON THE MODERN FAMILY"

#### MAR THOMAS THARAYIL

A well liked session where Mar Tharayil in his characteristic simplicity and clarity shed light on the stressors of modern life. Our faith in the risen Lord is our strength in the face of any challenge. Setting proper goals and taking the gaze of material wealth will make life easier. The reflection of ordinary families, especially mothers from the past who took on often unimaginable challenges purely strengthened by their faith was inspiring.

# LORD, I WANT TO SEE

Once again Mar Tharayil captured the audience and enlightened them to see and solidify our faith as handed over to us through St. Thomas. What do we give to the Church if we really see and understand our Lord? The life of our fathers who gave it all to the Church pushes us to step up our game.





### "THE JOURNEY FROM BROKEN PLATES TO EQUALLY YOKED"

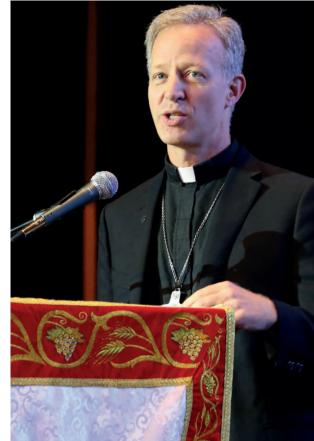
#### JUSTICE KURIAN JOSEPH

Justice Joseph addressed parents specifically with regard to struggles in marriage and family life as one gets into the middle and older age.

"YOUR LIGHT HAS COME"

#### KEYNOTE ADDRESS BISHOP WILLIAM WACK

As an ordained bishop right in the midst of scandals rocking the Church, his excellency pointed to a glorious Church in which we need to trust, for whom the head is Jesus Christ. He pointed out that this is not be the first challenge that the catholic Church have faced and She can not loose her deposit of faith nor zeal for it.





# "HOW DO I FIND THE ONE?"

#### **TRENT HORN**

Trent horn discussed the process for a Catholic to discern one's spouse.

### "MALE & FEMALE HE CREATED THEM: THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE"

Trent Horn dove into the Catholic understanding of the gender crisis and how it has impacted the youth, the culture and the family today. Trent discussed the Catholic understanding of human identity and personhood, and the authentic freedom it provides for every person.

# "MALE & FEMALE HE CREATED THEM": THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE"

#### MAR JOSEPH PAMPLANY

The redefinition of marriage and idea of gender fluidity has to be examined according to the truth revealed by Jesus through his Church. Bishop Pamplany called for the greater understanding of those identifying as homosexuals by being compassionate to them as persons created in God's image, despite not agreeing with their life-style.





### "THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES: REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE"

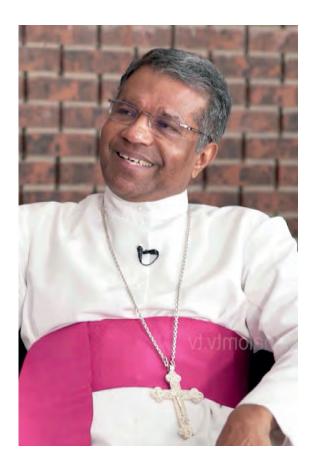
#### **JAISY JOSEPH, PHD**

Jaisy Joseph, proposed that we as a migrant church must change our "wandering" to "journeying". She challenged the church to face reality, feel our youth and to respond to their needs. Many of the youth felt ignored, hurt and wounded in the past. She reflected on the glorified wounds of Christ which no longer hurt despite being present and has become salvific. Jaisy exhorted that we need to focus on our future and know where we are journeying.

# "FORMING A PEOPLE OF WORSHIP"

#### MAR JOSEPH KALLUVELIL

Bishop Joseph Kalluvelil discussed the mission and role of parents and catechism teachers in forming a Christian community and he highlighted the importance of the roles they play helping the church in accomplish her mission.





### "LOSING THE Spark in your Marriage?"

#### FR. DANIEL POOVANNATHIL

Fr. Daniel reflected on the marital life to the core life of the divine and that of the Eucharist. It was through very simple examples that he challegned couples to keep their marriage seated in heavenly realms to maintain its vibrancy.

# "THE PARENT'S GUIDE TO Homeschooling"

#### DR. ANNILYN PURAYIDOM & LOVELY ABRAHAM

The options for alternative methods of education of children were discussed with a focus on homeschooling. Dr. Annilyn and Lovely outlined the challenges and benefits of home schooling and resources available for it.







### "WHY DO WE NEED FAITH, WHEN WE HAVE SCIENCE"

#### FR. BENOY PICHALAKKATTU

In this session, Fr. Benoy explored typical faith questions faced by teens in our contemporary society, and how to address these from the twin dimensions of science and religion.

### "STRAIGHT TALK TO SPOUSES "

#### **PATTY SCHNEIER**

In this session, Patty dove into the beauty of the sacrament of marriage. The session engaged the audience in looking at the gifts and challenges of living out a Christian marriage within the world today and challenged them to live out the call to holiness within their everyday life.





### "AVOIDING Catastrophes in Marriage"

#### **JACKIE FRANCOIS ANGEL**

Couples were alerted to recognize signs of stress even before they build pressure and lead to catastrophic explosions in family life.

### THE FEMININE GENIUS

Jackie empowered the women in Church and unfolded the unique beauty, dignity and roles that they have been entrusted with, not only in the Church, but in the society as a whole. The session dove into how to draw out the Feminine Genius as St. John Paul II described it, and how to become leaders and saints where you are planted.

### "SOMEBODY TO LEAN ON: THE MANY FACETS OF MENTAL HEALTH & MENTAL ILLNESS"

#### JITHIN GEORGE MA, LMHC

In this session, Jithin provided a space for individuals to be able to learn and discuss what mental health is and how it can impact not only an individual but also those around him/her. The conversation was centered around looking within our own cultural context and the different ways we can continue to educate ourselves and the community around us.





### "NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP): WAITING ON GOD'S TIME"

#### SHERIN ALEXANDER

In this session, Sherin gave the audience received an education on how to love responsibly with a focus on Natural Family Planning (NFP). Sherin provided resources throughout to provide a greater clarity of these accepted methods recommended by the Catholic Church.

# "I HAVE SEEN THE LIGHT"

#### THE TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINA MOHINI SRINIVASAN

The story of a non-Christian actress' encounter of the Jesus Christ was one of great inspiration. Christina Mohini used the symbol of the "Lion of Judah" which was pictured in the background during her session displaying the majesty of the Lord she encountered. The challenge given to the audience by Christina was to live up to the faith that we claim to uphold.





# "Gen Z guide to "Adulting"

#### PAUL J. KIM

Paul Kim provided a space for those preparing for college on how to go about creating new relationships, balancing family, social life and extracurricular pursuits, while at the same time trying to be a faithful Catholic

# "HOW DOES MUSIC CONTRIBUTE TO THE HOLY QURBANA?"

#### FR. JOSEPH PALACKAL

This session provided an opportunity to learn from the very person who composed music for Holy Qurbana in English. The vision of liturgical music, its origin and purpose were discussed.



# Fr. Rajeev now that you are a priest what keep motivates you go day by day?



#### ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY LIFE

This session highlighted the lives and determination of very ordinary people to do extraordinary things with high impact in their local church and community. Brian Mundackal, Lissy Sojan, Fr. Rajeev, Dr. Jaisy Joseph and Jacob Chacko were highlighted from a long list of candidates who strive to live the Mar Thoma Margam.

#### SPIRITUALLY SYRO MALABAR, SOCIALLY NOT LIVE SESSION WITH BISHOPS & JUSTICE KURIAN JOSEPH

A panel including youth, young adult (Dr. Judy Thomas), a parent from the US who imigrated from India (Dr. Paul Joseph) were interviewed on stage together with Mar Joseph Pamplany, Mar Thomas Tharayil and Justice Kurian Joseph by Dr. Abraham Mathew. The discussion that followed threw light into the so called "gap" between the youngsters and the adults. The discussions tried to define these gaps and issues around it. The barriers today in the Church that holds back young adults from coming back to Church after college was also discussed and "judgement" from the community was identified as a key issue. It was an eye opening to many to understand how the thought and perception of the coming generation differs from that of the last. This session had great feed back in having enabled many to better engage the youth.



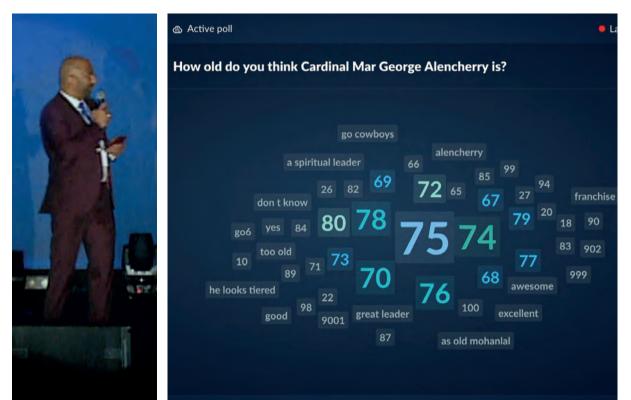


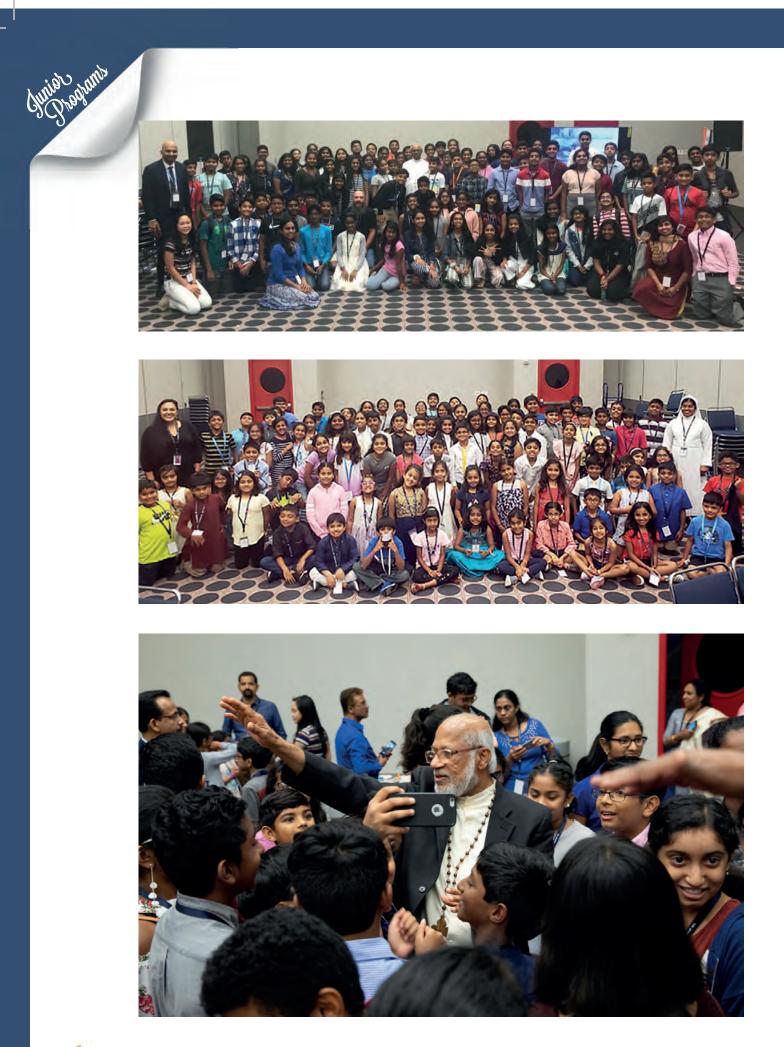
#### YES, WE FOUND OUR PARTNER, AND HERE'S HOW WE DID IT!

Another panel session extracted from its members - the steps of discernment towards choosing their partner, what mistakes were made and corrected and how one even ended in an annulment due to lack of due process and discernment. Terms like "special friend", "boy/girl friend", "date", "fiance" and levels of relationship as understood by the youth and adults were discussed.

### Slido Interactions

"One of the novalties of SMNC 2019 was the use of technology in making sessions engaging and interactive. Participants engaging through Sli.do"



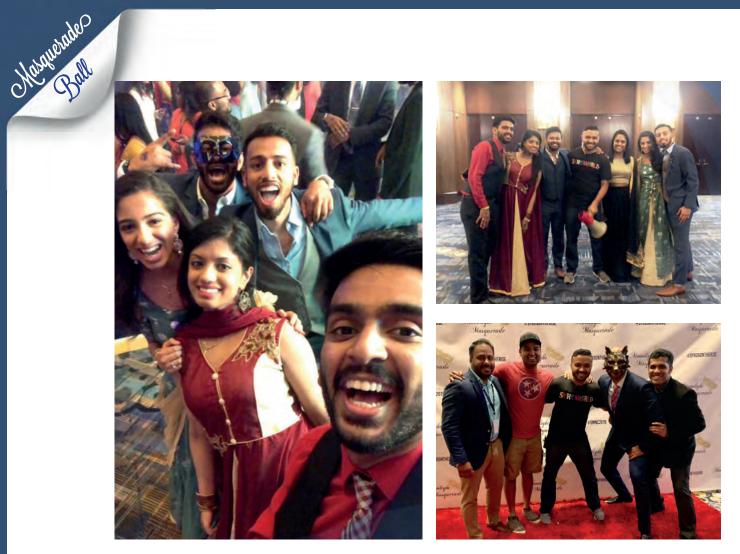








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A social event for 18+ years crowd attended by nearly 900 participants. DJ, Dance, Masks and the whole 9 yards. The Syro Young Adults showed up in style to have fun and danced the night away!







Man.... did the kids have fun! The excitement for this event was palpable. The cherry on top was the Flash Mob dance-off.











A praise and worship session followed by eucharistic adoration led by John Angotti for the youth and young adult. The cover for the event was PRODIGYL - Houston's own Daniel Chakkramakkil





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#### LET'S JAM! - HECTOR LEWIS

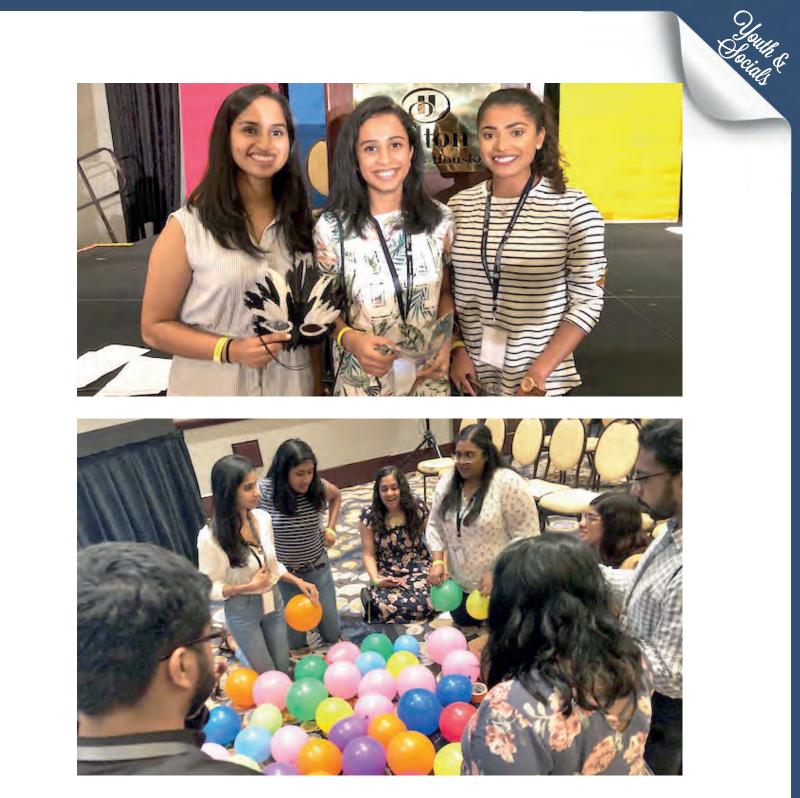
An intimate gathering where participants brought their instruments and jammed old and new praise and worship songs with Hector Lewis. The event was more or less like a walk through memory lane. Those who attended would never forget Bishop Angadiath singing a classic Malayalam devotional song "daiva sneham varnichidan."



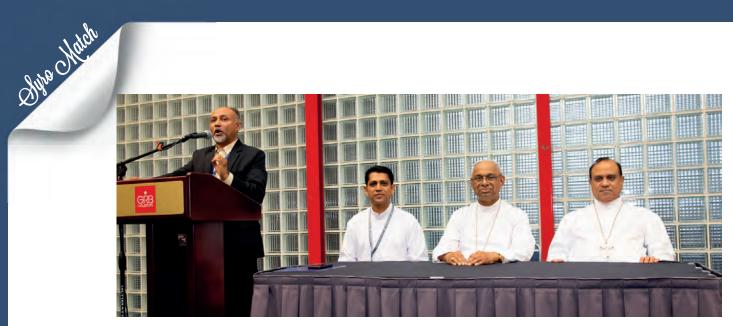


After opening ceremony on the first day of the convention, various ice breakers were organized to help participants mingle and break ice so that they can networking during the next 3 days. These activities were heavily attended and lasted untill midnight building new friendships and relationships.









SYROMATCH : In response to popular demand, we launched Syro Match for parents during SMNC 2019. This was a networking event for parents (only) who are seeking appropriate matches for their children. The event was a grand success and well participated. The diocese now have taken the decision to continue this platform for broader engagement across the Diocese of Chicago.







The 7th Syro Malabar Convention with participation of nearly 4,500 people conducted after a hiatus of 7 year since the last convention needed a fit for purpose venue that also matches its grandeur. The convention facilities that combined Hilton Americas, Mariott Marquis and George R Brown Convention Center made an impression on the participants.







Another unique aspect of this convention was that our Youth and Young adults operated the FOH (Front of the House) including operation of the video wall.

SMCC Summit



### Food & Hospitality Team

The men and women who fed nearly 4,500 people for four days.



Transportation



Transportation services between convention venue and Houston airports were provided for participants by the Transportation committee headed by Gigi Olickal

### Leadership Recognition



The Leadership that spent nearly 60,000 hours shaping SMNC 2019 over 1.5 years.

### Past Chairmen Recognition



Alexander Kudakkachira (Chairman SMNC 2019) on stage with Chairmen of previous conventions. From the left - Dr. James Kurichi, (SMNC 1999 - Philadelphia), Mr. Thomas John Mappilassery (SMNC 2003 - New Jersey), Mr. Abraham Augusthy (SMNC 2012 - Atlanta), Dr. Joseph Kakkanattu (SMNC 2007 -Florida), Mr. Alexander Kudakkachira (SMNC 2019 - Houston).

Two Past Convention Chairmen who are not in the group picture: Late Dr. Oommen Joseph Asariparambil, Chairman SMNC 2001 Chicago Mr. George Angadicheril, Chairman SMNC 2005 Dallas, TX Recognition

Placeson pilon

Special recognition was given to laity who have been instrumental towards the growth of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago.



Dr. James Kurichy & Family, Philadelphia



Philip & Jessy Kavalam, Dallas



Adv. Biju Parayannilam



**Souvenir Draft Pre-Release:** "Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, Patron of SMNC2019 pre-released a draft of the Convention Souvenir on Sunday 4 August 2019 by handing over a copy to Bishop Mar Jose Kalluvelil of Syro Malabar Eparchy of Mississauga, Canada in the presence of Souvenir Committee"



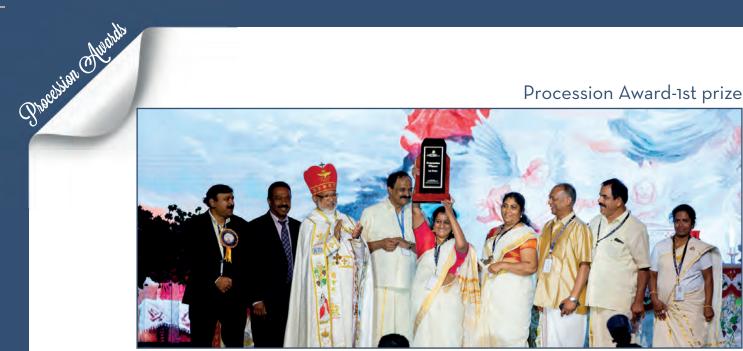
BOOK RELEASE : During convention; Mar Jacob Angadiath presented the work by Mrs. Annie (Molly) Nellikunnel titled "The Significance of Syro Malabar Church in North America" to His Beatitude Cardinal George Alancherry. The content of this book was the thesis work of Mrs. Nellikunnel during her masters in Theology from Alpha Institute and published by the Catechetical Department of the Diocese of Chicago.

#### 50th Wedding Anniversary



Couples who have completed 50+ years of Holy Matrimony were recognized with plaques and ponnadas.





Mar Thoma Sleeha Syro Malabar Cathedral, Chicago

Procession Award-2nd prize



St. Mary's Syro Malabar Church, Long Island

Procession Award-3rd prize



St. Thomas Syro Malabar Forane Church, Dallas



Sijo Vadakkan-Trinity Group Texas

Raffle Sponsor



Joy Alukkas Jewellers

Mega Show Sponsor



Giby Parackal-PSG Group of Companies



Alexander Kudakkachira-Chemplast Inc

Platinum Sponsors



Anish Simon- Individual Level & Mahesh/Rajan-Daawat Catering - Madras Pavallion



Recognition of Platinum Sponsor Dilip Varghese Recognition by Mar Joy Alappatt.



Biju A. Mathew - Growing Star Tutoring | Fancimol Pallathumadom - Cherished Events Bose Kurian & Infused Performing Arts | Sunil Kurian - Onsight Solutions



Raffle Draw with Mar Bishop Angadiath, Raffle sponsor Joy Alukkas Jewellers and Finance Committee Chair Mr. Bose Kurian and team.



Fr. Wilson Kandankary handing over the car keys to the raffle prize winner, Mr. Henry Thomas of St. Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Church, Baltimore.



Convention Registration Kickoff at St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston TX.



Convention Registration Kickoff at Pearland, TX.



Convention Registration Kickoff at San Francisco.



Convention Registration Kickoff at Austin, TX.



Convention Registration Kickoff at McAllen, TX.





A post Convention Appreciation function was held on November 24, 2019 at St. Joseph Forane Catholic Church. Holy Qurbana was celebrated by Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath and Mar Joy Alappatt along with Rev. Fathers. Johnykutty Puleessery, George Maliekal, Paul Chalissery, Kurian Neduvelichalumkal and Rajeev Valiyaveettil.



Mar Joy Alappatt sharing words of gratitude at the appreciation function that was attended by over 250 committee members and convention volunteers.



The church choir members who sang during the Holy Qurbana and at the appreciation function.



# PODDO PODDO ORGANIZING COMMITTEES

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee was chaired by Mr. Alexander Kudakkachira and its members are listed below. This committee was responsible for the overall strategy, planning and execution of the convention.



MAR GEORGE CARDINAL ALENCHERRY **GRAND PATRON** 



MAR JACOB ANGADIATH PATRON



MAR JOY ALAPPATT **GENERAL CONVENER** 



FR. KURIAN NEDUVELICHALUMKAL CONVENER



MR. ALEXANDER KUDAKKACHIRA **CHAIRMAN** 



FR. RAJEEV VALIYAVEETTIL JOINT CONVENER



FR. PAUL CHALISSERY YOUTH CONVENER



MR. BABU MATHEW **VICE CHAIRMAN** 



MR. JOSEPH MANAKALATHIL **VICE CHAIRMAN** 



DR. PAUL JOSEPH SECRETARY



MRS. LISSY SOJAN JOINT-SECRETARY



MR. BOSE KURIAN [NATIONAL CHAIR]



**MR. PRINCE JACOB** JOINT-SECRETARY



MR. BABU VENNALIL FINANCE



**MR. TOM KUNTHARA** JOINT-SECRETARY



**EVENT COORDINATOR** 



FINANCE



MR. BIJU GEORGE FINANCE



MR. JOHN BABU, CPA FINANCE



MR. SUNIL KURIAN [NATIONAL CHAIR] **REGISTRATION & IT** 



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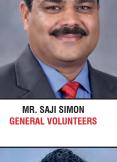
MR. JEETOM KADAMBAT PROCESSION



MRS. SAJINI THEKKEL PROCESSION



MR. SUNNY TOM **MARKETING & MEDIA** 





MR. THARUN MATHAI **SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL CONTENT** 



MR. MITHUL KANDATHIPARAMPIL **SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL CONTENT** 



MS. MELISSA TOM YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR



MRS. ASHLEY JOSEPH YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR

MS. SONIA KURIAN

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR



MS. CHRISTINA JOSEPH YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR



MR. JOSE KANDATHIPARAMPIL **EX-OFFICIO MEMBER** (TRUSTEE)



MS. KAVITHA JOSEPH YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR



MR. JOJI JOSE **EX-OFFICIO MEMBER** (TRUSTEE)

#### National Committee

The National Committee was chaired by the Convention Convener Mar Joy Alappatt and consisted of members representing the Diocesan Curia, Forane Vicars and regional laity representatives. The primary function of this committee was to ensure integration and participation of all parishes and missions across the Diocese of Chicago



PATRON



MAR JOY ALAPPATTU GENERAL CONVENER





NEDUVELICHALUMKAL CONVENER

MR. PAUL JOSEPH SECRETARY



REV. FR. THOMAS MULAVANAL VICAR GENERAL



MR. BOSE KURIAN NTL. COORDINATOR FOR FINANCE



REV. FR. JOHNYKUTTY GEORGE PULEESSERY CHANCELLOR



MR. SUNIL KURIAN NTL. COORDINATOR FOR REGISTRATION



REV. FR. GEORGE MALIEKAL PROCURATOR



MR. BABU MATHEW

VICE CHAIRMAN

MR. ANISH SIMON EVENT COORDINATOR



REV. FR. PAUL CHALISSERY YOUTH CONVENER



MR. JOSEPH MANAKALATHIL VICE CHAIRMAN



Rev. Fr. Thomas Kadukappilly Vicar general



REV. FR. GEORGE DANAVELLIL CCD DIRECTOR





REV. FR. JOS Kandathikudy Bronx, Ny



SOMERSET, NJ



REV. FR. VINOD MADATHIPARAMBIL PHILADELPHIA, PA



REV. FR. MATHEW ELAYADATHAMADAM ATLANTA, GA



Statement Statement

REV. FR. JOHN THOMAS THACHARA MIAMI, FL







MR. TOM PERUMPAIL NEW JERSEY



Mr. Paul Thomas Dallas, TX



Not Pictured:

MR. SUNNY TOM MARKETING & MEDIA



REV. FR. MATHEWS K. MUNJANATHU SANTA ANA, CA



REV. FR. GEORGE ELAMBASSERY DALLAS, TX



REV. FR. JOHN MELEPURAM FLORIDA







MR. SUNNY VALLIKALAM

CHICAGO

MR. ABRAHAM AUGUSTHY ATLANTA

SR. AGNES MARIA MSMI HOUSTON, TX











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MR. CIGIL PALACKALODY SMCC PRESIDENT MS. LALY KALAPURACKA L LADIES REPRESENTATIVE

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MR. SHOLY KUMBLIVELLIL NEW YORK

# **Committee Coordinators**



MR. FELIX JACOB Adoration & Prayer



MR. ANTONY CHERU Awards



MR. DANIEL Chakkaramakkil English Choir



MR. SIJO JOSE Malayalam Choir



MR. JOHN PALAKKAMATTOM Control & Compliance



MR. GEORGE PANICKER CONVENTION ACCOUNTANT



MR. VINOTH JOSEPH Cultural Programs





MR. GEORGE NELLIKUNNEL EVENT ARCHITECT



MR. SUJITH THOMAS Facilities



MR. JAMES VIRUTHAKULANGARA Food



MR. JOSEPH MARTIN Vilangolil Media Liason



MR. MATHAI THOMAS Hotel accommodation



DR. ANUP KUDAKKASSERIL Medical team



SR. AGNES MSMI GRADE 2 - GRADE 5



LITURGY





MRS. FANCIMOL Pallathumadom **OPENING CEREMONY** 



DR. ABRAHAM MATHEW **PROGRAM ARCHITECT** 



MR. BABU CHACKO **RAFFLE SALES** 



MR. VARGHESE Kalluvettamkuzhiyil **RECEPTION & HOSPITALITY** 



**BIJU MATHEW** REGISTRATION



MR. JOSE MATHEW SEMINARS & DISCUSSIONS



MR. BASIL J. PALAKAPILLY NETWORKING EVENT: ADULTS & SENIORS



MRS. LIZA JOSEPH Social events : youth & young adults

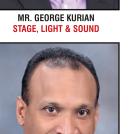


MR. M.K. MICHAEL SOUVENIR



MR. JACOB JOSEPH Sponsor Liaison





MR. SUNIL KURIAN



MR. GIGI OLICKAL TRANSPORTATION



MR. JOSE KANDATHIPARAMPIL HOME PARISH MARKETING



MR. SUNNY TOM **MARKETING & MEDIA** 



**REGISTRATION & IT** 

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#### **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee was chaired by Mr. Bose Kurian and included the members listed below. The three core functions included Convention Budget Management, Sponsorship Management and Raffle Management. The committee liaised with each of the regional coordinators at parish level to execute these functions as well as coordinated with the accountant to finalize and close the books subsequent to the close of the convention. This committee executed its functions in a very professional and effective manner, and achieved net positive financial outcomes for the convention



Bose Kurian National Chair



Abraham Thomas



Albert Jacob



John Babu CPA



Jacob Joseph



Joy kompanthadathil



Babu Vennalil



Babu Chacko



Mathew Paimpaly



Biju George



Mathukutty Kariampally

#### Souvenir Committee

The Souvenir Committee was chaired by M.K. Michael and the team is pictured below. The primary responsibilities of this committee included developing and collating contents that capture the planning and execution of the Convention and subsequently print and publish the Souvenir. Responsibilities also included supporting the convention executive and finance committees in maximizing sponsor advertisements to raise funds for the conduct of the convention. Other responsibilities included provision of a Digital version of the souvenir for uploading to the Convention and Diocesan websites as well as distributing a hard copy of the Souvenir to all convention registrants and sponsors.



**Members left to right:** Mr. Chacko Kallukuzhy, Mr. Babu Thomas, Mr. Jose Vallavanatt; Mrs. Jansi Jose, Mr. Jose Uthirakulathu, Mr. M.K. Michael (Souvenir Committee Chair), Mr. Hendry Kunthara, and Mr. Babu Chacko



# **Registration & IT**

The Registration & IT committee was chaired by Mr. Sunil Kurian and included members listed below. The primary responsibility was to manage the registration of convention attendees and process payments. Other responsibilities included effectively coordinating with the accommodation, reception and transportation committees to manage the interfaces and meet the accommodation and transportation needs of convention registrants, sponsors and dignitaries.



Sunil Kurian National Chair



Hendry Kunthara



Joy Malayil



Saji Simon



Sajini Thekkel



Biju Mathew



Vinoy Kurian



Marina Mathew



#### **Event Management**

Event Management Committee was chaired by Mr. Anish Simon (Event Coordinator) and the various members of this committe that worked collaboratively under his leadership are listed below. The duties of this committee included oversight of all the events during the four days of the convention. A key objective of this committee was seamless execution of the program agenda, stage management, resource personnel management and time management. The members of this committee served as event managers and stage managers for various venues (16 different stages) collaborating with Seminars & Discussions committee to ensure the timely and smooth conduct of various events as well as management of speakers and resource personnel (36 personnel) during the convention.



Anish Simon Event Coordinator



George Nellikunnel



Jesinta George



Thomas Palakapilly



Dr Abraham Mathew

Christy Sunny

Jeswin Joseph

Tony Manakal



Tharun Mathai

Delix Alex

Joe George

Viney Varghese



Dr. Paul Joseph Palakapilly



Jerin Thenayan





Zeno Padinjattekara

Joshua Palakapilly





Mithul Kandathiparambil



Kavitha Goseph



Sibil Mathew



Ashley Joseph



Christina Joseph



Melissa Tom



Sonia Kurian

#### Marketing, Media & Photography

The Marketing Media & Photography Committee was chaired by Mr. Sunny Tom and included the members listed below. The primary function was to ensure enough media coverage for the convention through various news outlets (both print and television). The committee was also responsible for printing banners and brochures to support kickoffs inorder to maximize registration from various parishes. Another responsibility of this committee was archiving various events during the convention through photographs and videos. In addition, live streaming of the convention through Shalom was implemented due to the efforts of this committee.



Sunny Tom Coordinator



George Paul



Joseph Martin

#### **Social Media and Digital Content**

The Social Media and Digital Content Committee was co-chaired by Mr. Tharun Mathai & Mr. Mithul Kandathiparambil. The primary function of this committee was social media marketing and content creation for video wall. All the videos and graphics projected on the video wall as well as scene setters and reflection video was the production of this committee. In addition, this committee was also responsible for organizing and designing the program brochure that was distributed to the participants that detailed the overall program schedule, speaker biography and facility map.



Tharun Mathai (Coordinator)



Jestina George



Mithul Kandathiparambil (Coordinator)







Thomas Palakapilly



George Nellikunnel



Zeno Padinjattekara



Anjana Thomas



Sonia Kurian



Joshua Palakapilly

Kavitha Joseph

Ashley Joseph



Jerril Varghese









Anita George

Geo Roncy

Not Pictured: Blijo Puthenpurayil | Alex Sabu | Alsha Alexander | Kirthy Kunthara Maryn Kunthara | Reeny Pereira | Nigil Valikodath | Chrissy Joseph | Aljo Abraham | Jaison Kalampanayil



#### Social Events for Youth & Young Adults

The Social Events Committee for Youth and Young Adults was chaired by Mrs. Liza Joseph. This committee had the expansive scope of planning and executing several social events for youth and young adults. The events organized by this committee include seperate networking mixers for middle school, high school and college age participants during the first day of convention, Dodge Ball Tournament, Moon Light Masquerade Ball and "Off The Clock" - Outside Networking Mixer for Young Professionals at Chapman & Kirby.



Liza Joseph Coordinator



Christina Joseph





Kavitha Joseph

Melissa tom



Ashley Joseph



Angela Baby



Blessina Babu



Sonia Kurian



Anjali James



Geordie Daniel



Tharun Mathai



Anjaly Joshy



Jamie Joseph



Anish Simon



Mithul Kandathiparambil



Sibil Mathew



Tanya Nelikkattil



Tessy Kadavil



Tina Joseph



Aleena Mathew



Anjana Thomas



Nason Kallukuzhy



Stacy Chacko

Not Pictured: Alsha Alexander Alvin George Judy Thomas Mareena Manackal Austin Thomas Tiffany Antony

#### Procession

The Procession committee included members listed below. There were two sub-committees, one led by Jeetom Kadambat for the Home Parish and the second sub-committee led by Mrs. Sajini Thekkel for coordinating with all other parishes. The primary responsibility was to coordinate and ensure maximum participation (from diocesan parishes in addition to home parish) for the procession that was held on Friday morning, August 2nd . In addition, this committee also arranged for judging the parishes that participated in the procession to award the top three churches.



Jeetom Kadambat Coordinator



Sajini Thekkel Coordinator



Abraham Thomas



Anuja Jose





Augustine Michael



Bency Olickan



Beneeja Cheru



Celin Babu



Daiju Muttath



Deena Rajesh



Dimple Joseph



Dolly James



Greeshma Jose



Jini Mathew



Julie Jose



Ligy Varkey



Manju John



Jose Mathew



Mini Vetticadan



Nisha John



Preeti Joseph



Prema Kurian



Rashmi Santosh



Reena Saju



Rose Joseph



Saji Simon



Salby Vincent



-

Santhosh Cherian



Shanty Shibu



Simon Chittlapilly



Sobia Roshan



Sani Enchackal



Suja cheeramkuzhy



Sunil Vazhappilly



Susan Salby



Teresa Raju



Tresa Thomas



Twinkle Joseph



Wilson Cheru



Antony Cheru

Not Pictured: Asha Gigi | Judith Saju | Maria Tom | Jose Thomas | Joseph Madapam

# **Adoration & Prayer**

The Adoration & Prayer committee was chaired by Mr. Felix Jacob and consisted of members listed below. This committee ensured continuous presence of at least one person with the blessed sacrament for the entire duration of the Convention as well coordinating the activities of leaders and faithful during daily morning and evening prayer sessions.











Bincy Joji



Darly Joseph



Alphonse Mathukutty



Joe Thekkanath







Mercy Babu Vennalil



Mercy Johnson



Molamma Benny









Rejeela Jacob



Rejeena Thundiyil

Resmi Biju



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Shyju Joseph



Smitha Raphael



Susan Mundattuchundayil



Toby Sebastian



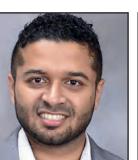
Not Pictured: Asha Chirakandathil Augus Paul Thomas Cherian

#### Decoration

The Decoration Committee was chaired by Mr. Salby Vincent and consisted of members listed below. The primary function of this committee involved coordination of the decoration activities of the convention including main venue and other halls with banners, hoardings etc. It also included arrangement of altar (including design and fabrication of Bema, lectern etc) and setting up of sponsor booths outside convention main hall.



Salby Vincent Coordiator



Jeril Pulliyil



Prema Kurain



Cisy Kunthara

# **English Choir**

The activities of the English Choir were effectively coordinated by Daniel Chakkramakkil and Kavitha Joseph and consisted of the members listed below. This committee was responsible for Choir services during Holy Qurbana in English held on the 2nd and 3rd of August (Friday and Saturday).



Daniel Chakkramakkil Coordinator



Kavitha Joseph Coordinator



Diana Chakkramakkil



Geo Roncy



Angel John



Kelsey Kurian



Kelvin Kurian



Naveen Sunny



Jesinta George



Jibie Mathew



Joe George

Not Pictured: Amala Abraham | Amaris Abraham | Christy Thomas | Cyril Simon | Gisele George | Jeswin Gloria | Jevin James | Jewel Sunny | | Jocelyn Joseph | Joel Adimathra | Johny Abraham | Julia Adimathra | Rosie Abraham | Sebastian Sebastian

#### Malayalam Choir

The Malayalam Choir was chaired by Mr. Sijo Jose and the members listed below. The responsibility of this group included recruiting and establishing to for Holy Qurbana in Malayalam celebrated during the Convention. One of the key tasks involved recruiting members from other participating parishes and missions. This committee also worked closely with the Liturgy Committee and ensured that songs were pre-approved by the Diocesan Curia.



Sijo Jose Coordinator













Jojo Thundiyil



Joshua Jose

Rani Hector

Sindhu Joy



Liby George

Rejani George

**Chorus Peter** 



Paul Joseph



Scaria Chennadu







Delphi Jose



Sobia Roshan

Not Pictured: Manoj Thomas | Merin George | Vincent Valiaveettil



#### **Cultural Program**

The Cultural Program Committee was chaired by Mr. Vinoth Joseph and consisted of members listed below. This committee was responsible for coordinating and selecting cultural programs from parishes other than the host parish. This committee successfully coordinated the cultural program presented by 13 parishes from across the diocese on Friday, August 2nd.



Vinoth Joseph Coordinator



Antony Cheru



Biju Antony



Joe Thekkeneth



Jojo Thundyil



Benny Kuriakose



Rashmi Santhosh



Reshmi Biju



Sijo Jose



Polson Vattathara

Not Pictured: George Varkey Jaine George

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# Facilities

The primary responsibility was to ensure timely support for the proper functioning of the various services to be delivered to participants at the convention.



Mr. Sujith Thomas Coordinator



Augustine Michael



Joji Jose



Jomy Sujith



Joseph Thottassery



Justin Sujith





Joseph Dominic



Shajee Jose



Thomas Mathai

Not Pictured: Joni Joseph



Wilson Cheru



Savio Mathew

#### Food

The Food Committee was chaired by Mr. James Viruthikulangara and its members are listed below. The primary responsibility included arranging food and beverages for over 4000 convention participants for all four days of the convention starting with Thursday snacks and coffee until Sunday Breakfast.



James Viruthakulangara Coordinator



Jose Manakalathil



Prince Jacob



Bobby Joseph



Abraham Punchathalakal



Jessy James



Jessy Sam



Chacko Joseph



Lissy Sojan



Mathew Joseph



Moly Jacob



Jose Valluvanatt



Augustine Michael



Saly Thomas Arackal



Santhosh Cherian



Philip Sebastian



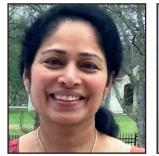
Thomas Arackal



Vinoy Kurian



Mathew Paimpalil



Valsa Alexander



Not Pictured: Sali Mathew

# Hotel & Accommodation

The Hotel & Accommodation Committee was chaired by Mr. Mathai Thomas and included the members listed below. This committee was responsible to ensure hotel accommodation was secured for all convention registrants, dignitaries and sponsor representatives.



Mathai Thomas Coordinator



Jeetom Kadambatt



Prince Jacob



Jose Kandathiparambil



Sunil Kurian



Jose Uthirakulathu

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The Juniors Programs Committee was chaired by Rev. Sr. Agnes Maria MSMI and its members are listed below. This committee organized its programs un-der three streams catering to Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle school age children. Program for the Middle School Stream was led by Mrs. Sabeena Roncy George, while the Elementary School Student's Stream was led by Sr. Agnes Maria MSMI, and the Kindergarten stream was led by Mrs. Soji Tom.



Sr. Agnes Maria MSMI Coordinator & Lead-Elementary Stream



Soji Tom Lead-Kindergarten Stream



Mrs. Sabeena Roncy George Lead-Middle School Stream



Baneeja Cheru Antony



Rani Cheru



Manju John







Newshia Augustine

Not Pictured: Ani Gonzalez |Christina Thomas |Clement Say Gianna Say |John Paul Kasperowicz | Natasha Theliachery | Sunitha Thomas | Teena Jacob

#### Liturgy

The Liturgy Committee was chaired by Mr. Shoji Thomas and was comprised of members listed below. The primary responsibility of this committee was to take care of all liturgical arrangements for the Holy Qurbana which included preparing a booklet which included both in English and Malayalam. This committee was also responsible for altar decorations and coordinating altar servers, lectors, communion stations and managing the main hall along with event team. The committee also worked closely with Rev. Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal and Rev. Fr. Rajeev Valiyaveettil to ensure everything went smoothly.



Shoji Thomas Coordinator



Roncy George



Sam Kurian



Bett Mundattuchundayil



Tomy Chacko

Not Pictured: Sr. Betsy Sr. Emilyn



#### Medical

The Medical Committee was chaired by Dr. Anup Kudakkasseril and included the members listed below. Responsible for a manned medical booth throughout the duration of the convention including provision of first aid and first responder support as needed



Dr. Anup Kudakkasseril Coordinator



Cindu Kunthara



Deepthi James



**Dolly James** 



Dr. Mini Michael



Lissy Sojan



Marykutty Babu



Molly Paul

Sabeena Roncy George



Nurzy Roy

Saji Paul



Reetha Joseph





Sanila Enchackal



Jessy Sam

Not Pictured: Annie Augustine | Deepa Joseph | Job Netticattel | Jolly Joy Julie Binu | Julie Jose | Rosamma Augustine | Sali Mathew Shabu Mathew Vandanamthadathil | Sheena Nampimadom

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#### **Reception and Hospitality**

The Reception & Hospitality Committee was chaired by Mr. Varghese Kalluvettamkuzhy and the members are listed below. This committee's responsibility included managing the registration desks at the main Convention Venue/Hotel. This committee was also responsible for the organizing and distributing welcome package that were distributed to convention registrants on the first day of the Convention. The committee was responsible to maintain presence at the Hospitality Desk at all times during the course of the convention.



Varghese Kalluvettamkuzhyil Coordinator



Anuja Jose



Babu Chacko



Baneeja Cheru





Cisy Kunthara



James Varikad



Benny Kuriakose

Giji Olickal

Jessy Manakalathil



Toms Chirayil



Jollyamma Binu







Beena Mathew



Hendry Kunthara







Kunjumol Prince

Pious Pious



Manju John

Regy Thomas



Manoj Joseph (Manu)





Jose Uthirakulathu





Thomas Arackal



Vinoth Joseph



Tom Cheeramkuzhy

Wilford Stephen



Tom Kunthara

Celine Ouseph



Gladys Savio



Valsa Alexander

Not Pictured: Augustin Adattukunnel|Dolly Varghese|Jini Mathew Mercy Dcunha|Thomas Abraham|Tresa Joseph|

#### **Seminars & Discussions**

This committee was co-chaired by Mrs. Lissy Sojan and Mr. Jose Mathew and its members are listed below. The committee members acted as venue managers and were responsible for timely execution of the sessions by coordinating with the Event Managers from Event Team. They were also responsible for providing digital, sound and Visual support for the speakers in coordination with the Light & Sound Committee.



Lissy Sojan Coordinator



Jose Mathew Coordinator



Blessina Babu



**Clement Kurian** 



**Dimple Joseph** 



Jessy Sam



Preeti Joseph

Toms Chirayil



Sibil Mathew



Tom Cheeramkuzhy

Not Pictured: George Varkey

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# Networking : Adults & Seniors

The Adult Networking Committee was chaired by Mr. Basil Palakapilly and included the members listed below. The responsibility of this committee included conducting networking mixers for adults and seniors at the convention including Syro Match.



Basil Palakapilly Coordinator



Leju Palakapilly



Raina Sunil



Regy Thomas



Annie Nellikkunnel



## Stage, Light & Sound

The Stage, Light & Sound Committee was chaired by Mr. George Kurian and its members are listed below. The primary responsibilities of this committee included design as well as execution of following scopes - Stages, Video Wall, Projectors, Light and Sound for Main Stage and all other venues.



George Kurian Coordinator







Jeril Puliyil



Jeetom Kadambatt



**Binumon Thomas** 



### **Transportation**

The Transportation Committee was chaired by Mr. Gigi Olickal and its members are listed below. The primary functions of this committee include arrangement of transportation of participants, sponsors and speakers/dignitaries from IAH and Hobby airports (to and from the convention venue) on the first and last days of the convention. In addition, this committee was responsible to organize parking arrangements near the convention venue.



Gigi Olickal Coordinator



Joji Jose



Shebi George



Sojan George



Thomson Chakramackal



Tony Joseph

Not Pictured: George John | George Kolacheril

### Security

The Security Committee was chaired by Mr. Bose Kurian the members are listed below. The committee was responsible for developing the strategy and execution of security and discipline for the convention. THe priorities include but not limited to ensuring safety and security of kids and juniors in GRB including locking down the area, as needed. The committee's responsibilities also include coordination with the Hilton Hotel and GRB as well as the registration committee on ID and tagging.



Bose Kurian Coordinator







Babu Vennalil

### Awards

The Awards committee was chaired by Mr. Antony Cheru and had the following members. The primary role of this committee involved setting up and procuring momentos and palques including those for Diocesan Awards, Procession, Dodge Ball, Sponsor Recognition. In addition, they were responsible for coordinating the raffle draw as well as the award ceremony during the evening of August 3rd.



Antony Cheru Coordinator



Saji Simon



Babu Chacko



Benny Kuriakose



Resmy Biju



Augustine Michael





Not Pictured: Rosamma Augustine



Joseph Valluvanatt



## **General Volunteers**

This committee was chaired by Saji Simon and had the following members. The primary role was to co-opt members to other committees per need basis to ensure smooth conduct of the Convention.



Saji Simon | Coordinator



Jessy Jacob



Molly Paul



Saly Thomas Arackal







Babu Chacko



Joseph Dominic



Philomina Pious



Shajee Jose



Betzy Jojo Puthenpurayil



Mary Tottasseril



Sojan Augustine



Thomas Arackal

Not Pictured: Annie Augustine | Annie Parekkattil Francis Nampimadom | Jancy Paul John Chacko | John Thomman Jose Joseph | Leelamma Thomman



Biju Thomas



Marykutty Babu



Bridget Thomas



Fatty Joshy



### **Opening Ceremony**

This committee was chaired by Mrs. Fancimol Pallathummadom and comprised of members as listed below. Primary responsibility was to conduct the opening ceremony cultural program from home parish (St Joseph Forane Church, Houston) that was held on the opening day of the convention (Thursday 1st August'19). Rev. Fr. Shaji Thumpechirayil served within this committee in the role of Chief Architect of the cultural program.



Fancimol Pallathumadom Coordinator



Fr. Shaji Thumpechirayil Chief Architect







Ashley Joseph



Biju Antony



Anita Aickareth



Sijo Jose



Baneeja Cheru



Treesamol Joy



Jessy James

# Home Parish Marketing

The Home Parish Marketing Committee was chaired by Mr. Jose Kandathip-arambil and its members are listed below. The primary function of this committee was to ensure maximum participation from Home Parish (St Joseph Forane Church) including sponsorship and raffle.



Jose Kandathiparampil Coordinator



Alexander Kudakachira



Babu Chacko



Bobby Joseph



Bose Kurian



Chacko Kallukuzhy



Jacob Joseph



Jainamma Jose



James Francis



Jeetom Kadambatt



John Babu



Joji Jose





Babu Mathew



Hendry Kunthara



Jose Manakalathil



Biju Mathew



Paul Joseph



Prema Kurian



James Viruthikulangara



Roncy George



Saji Simon





Prince Jacob



Jose Uthirakulathu



Mathukutty Kariampilly



Salby Vincent



-





Shebi George



Thomson Chackaramakal



Dany George





Tom Kunthara



Sunil Kurian



Varghese Palathara



Joseph Devassia



Savio Mathew



Sunny Tom



Vinzi Edward

Not Pictured: Binu Kurian | | Emil Simon | Regi Joseph | Swapna Mathew



# S NOLDE ENGLISH ARTICLES



# SYRO MALABAR CHURCH: A BRIEF HISTORY

### Apostolic Origin

Syro Malabar Church, together with other Churches of St Thomas tradition in India, traces its origin to St Thomas, 'the apostle of India' who evangelized India in the period between 42 and 72 AD during his two missionary journeys in India. The ancient period of her history can rightly be called 'the apostolic period' of the Syro Malabar Church. Apostle St Thomas laid a strong foundation to this Church. The recent archaeological researches done in and around Muziris/Kodungalloor and the studies regarding the coins of king Gondophorus, discovered from Afghanistan and Pakistan, prove many facts of history which were formerly part of tradition or belief. The beliefs of our ancestors handed over to us as traditions are not fictions, but historical facts, but often shrouded with other narrations, as their intentions were not exactly to hand over the historical facts.

### Persian Contact

After the visit of the Alexandrian scholar Pantenus, in India in189, the Indian Church began maintaining conscious contact with the Church of the East in the Persian Empire and getting bishops sent by the Seleucian or Chaldean patriarch throughout the medieval period. In the seventh century this dependence took on a measure of structural independence when the Nestorian patriarch granted the metropolitan (archbishop) in India freedom from the jurisdiction of the Persian metropolitan of Rew-ardshir. The granting of metropolitan status to the Indian Church was the acceptance of her autonomy. The community of St Thomas Christians maintained ever fainter but never quite extinguished loyalties to the Persian Church, remaining 'Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and oriental in worship'. When the Indian Church followed the Chaldean liturgy the customs, practices, rites and ceremonies were all Indian. So the Indian Church in the medieval period was a separate church but dependent on the Chaldean patriarch.

### Western Contact

In the modern period, from 16th to 19th centuries St Thomas Christians were under the Portuguese Padroado and Roman Propaganda Fide jurisdictions. During this time, the oriental nature, Syriac liturgy, Indian customs and practices all underwent changes especially due to the legislations of the Synod of Diamper of 1599. The consequent so called 'Coonan Cross Oath' of 1653 against the Portuguese ecclesiastical authorities resulted in the division of the one-fold St Thomas Christians into different factions in subsequent centuries. Those who remained loyal to the Roman Church were called 'Syro Malabar' Church and the rest accepted the Antiochian jurisdiction in the 19th century. A small faction of the Orthodox Syrian Malankara Church became Catholic in 1930 and were called 'Syro-Malankara' Church.

Three and a half century-long western contact has changed the Church of St Thomas Christians a lot. Until the beginning of 16th century this Church was fully Indian dependent on the Persian Church with sporadic contact with the western Christianity. But the divisions happened in this one-fold St Thomas Christianity during this period of western contact is regrettable. The loss of autonomy, All-India jurisdiction and metropolitan status

were other sad effects. Granting of separate Vicariates towards the end of the 19th century was the first step towards its autonomy. Appointment of native bishops, and then a hierarchy also furthered its autonomy.

### Becomes autonomous and global

The real modern period of Syro Malabar Church begins towards the end of the nineteenth century with the separation of Syrians from the Latin by the establishment of the vicariates of Trichur and Kottayam with the apostolic letter *Quod iam pridem* of 20 May 1887 of Pope Leo XIII. This new beginning is strengthened with the appointment of native bishops in the Syro Malabar vicariates of Trichur, Changanacherry and Ernakulam in 1896 with the apostolic letter *Quae rei sacrae*. The establishment of Latin hierarchy in 1887 and the Syro Malabar hierarchy with the apostolic constitution *Romani Pontifices* of 21 December 1923 by Pope Pius XI gave impetus to the growth of Christianity in India. The hierarchy of Syro Malabar Church was not constituted in the manner of an Eastern hierarchy with a common head (patriarch, catholicos or major archbishop) and a synod of bishops. The erection of an indigenous hierarchy contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Syro Malabar Church. Soon a second ecclesiastical province and different dioceses were granted by Rome. From 1962 onwards mission regions and dioceses started functioning. With the establishment of the Syro Malabar Ordinariate of Chanda on 31 March 1962 the Syro Malabar Church began erecting vicariates, exarcates or diocese in the mission areas in North or Central India.

On 16 December 1992 St John Paul II constituted this Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church. The apostolic origin, possession of a venerable spiritual patrimony and the steady growth of the church, as is seen in the papal document, are the reasons for recognizing its higher status. The present major archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alencherry is the third major archbishop after Mar Antony Padiyara and Mar Varkey Vithayathil. The two vicariates (Kottayam and Trichur) which they received in 1887 have become today 35 diocese (plus two apostolic visitations). The two vicariates that were confined in Kerala between Pampa and Bharatapuzha rivers, has today expanded to all other parts of India, USA, Australia, Great Britain and Canada. What is now needed is universal jurisdiction –the possibility of multiple jurisdiction- so that the major archbishop can exercise power over Syro Malabar faithful all over the world.

The Syro Malabar Church which is one among the 23 Catholic Churches of Christendom, is the most active, living and rapidly growing Eastern church which can be rightly called 'eastern' as it is eastern both liturgically and geographically. Today it has 63 bishops (including 17 *emiriti*), 4545 diocesan priests, 3499 religious priests, 5484 men religious, 32453 women religious, 1225 Major seminarians (in 17 Major seminaries) and 5054422 faithful. With 4 Saints, 2 Blesseds, 3 Venerables and 13 Servants of God, the Syro Malbar church is heading all other Oriental Churches in Christian life, parish activities, youth ministry, vocations to religious life, conducting ecclesiastical, charitable, health and educational institutions, publications and involvement in social activities. But it has steps still to climb, to a patriarchal structure, to attain jurisdiction over her faithful all over the world, to plan new vistas for mission work. Her unique liturgical heritage, particular canonical discipline, long standing tradition, apostolicity etc justify this claim.

Dr. Fr. James Puliurumpil belongs to Palai Diocese, Kerala. He is a Resident Professor of Church History at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary Vadavathoor, Kottayam, and a visiting professor at different Catholic Faculties. He has authored 19 books on history. The recent works are: Classic India: Western Accounts Before Christ (2017), Syro Malabar Church Towards Patriarchate (2017), Jurisdiction of the Syro Malabar Church (2018), Acts of Thomas: A Theological Source for St. Thomas Christians (2019) and Glimpses of Syro Malabar History (2019).



# PASTORAL CARE FOR COUPLES CIVILLY MARRIED OR LIVING TOGETHER

I was born and brought up in Kerala, India, and raised in the Syro Malabar rite. The culture in the United States is very different from ours. Growing up everyone attended Mass on Sunday and we went to church to learn our faith in catechism classes. To enter religious life or get married everyone must graduate from a 12th grade catechism class and engaged couples attend marriage preparation courses lasting an entire week. Unlike here in Western Church where the majority of couples are living together before marriage, cohabitation is very seldom among the faithful in Syro Malabar Church. Having been in the Western world and especially in U.S. for the last fourteen years, I've known many wonderful people who approached the Church to get married and I honor their resolve, especially when they don't have everything in order as they approach the Church.

In the preparation document for the Synod on the Family (Lineamenta #40) the Church asks us to consider "... elements in the lives of these couples (cohabiting outside of marriage) that can foster greater openness to the gospel of marriage" and urges us to have, "...sensitivity to the positive aspects" of these couples' relationship. This means there is also a need to approach each couple on a case by case basis so that we can meet them where they are and take them further in their relationship with Jesus. This is why good pastoral care is the key to serving these couples well.

It will help us here to reflect on the meaning of the phrase "pastoral care." The Greek word 'poimen' in metaphorical terms refers to spiritual leaders as "shepherds". Christ is depicted as the "good shepherd" (Jn. 10:11; Heb. 13:20; I Pet. 2:25) to his people. Pastoral care offered by a true shepherd then is a relationship of faith. There is a rich meaning to the biblical words used to describe faith. The Hebrew and Greek words for faith might be better translated as "personal loyalty" or "personal commitment." With these insights we can define pastoral care as a work to help develop in the faithful a greater personal commitment to Jesus Christ and the new life that He calls each of us to live.

Throughout the history of the Church misuse of power and money, child abuse and many other scandals have scattered the sheep; often paving the way to extreme ignorance of faith. Lack of commitment to the faith increases the incidences of divorce, abuse, abortion, cohabitation, marriage outside the church, and many other failings in relation to family life.

When this happens, people depend on themselves to interpret marriage and family life, instead of being guided by Catholic teaching. Many have lost faith fully or partially in certain areas of Catholic teaching. We all know, once trust is broken it is not easy to rebuild, but it can be done. Now, "pastoral care" for me is to rebuild the trust missing in so many people's relationship with God and His Church and marriage preparation is a great opportunity for this.

Good things are happening in our time. In the last three decades our popes have helped us understand the

"Good Shepherd" and his relationship with the "sheep" through their teachings and life example. Marriage preparation in our diocese reflects Catholic doctrine and helps couples to consider the important role that faith plays in a happy and holy marriage. Here at USA we are blessed with a great diocese and two great pastors as our bishops. Bishop Jacob Angadiathu and Bishop Joy Alappattu. And their leadership with the help of priests in the diocese I do see an awesome awareness happening here in our diocese. In my own experience each year I continue to get better at walking with the engaged, regardless of their situation.

There is a beautiful example in the Gospel of Luke (24:15-35). The story of two disciples going to Emmaus, they were "looking sad" (v. 18) because they thought Jesus died and was gone. Now, "Jesus himself drew near and went with them." Jesus drew near while they were absorbed in their talk and sadness not knowing He was already walking with them. This "walking with God" is a beautiful theme from the Old Testament exemplified in Isaiah 52.12 where He is said "to walk ahead" of his people to lead them back to Canaan after exile.

We can expect people "to walk with God". But the scripture also helps us understand it's more important for the "shepherd to walk with his people" like Jesus walking with His disciples on the road to Emmaus. Like the two disciples, there are many who are being carried away with the misunderstanding of false teachings, poverty, fear, abuses, and ignorance; the role of the shepherd is to walk with them patiently and guide them to reconciliation with God and the Church by experiencing His mercy in the Sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist. This is what Pope Francis encourages us to do when he speaks of the Church as a "field hospital." The responsibility of the Shepherd is to "walk with" the sheep and empower them with true knowledge as faith improves. In this fast moving "postmodern" culture, keeping up with the "sheep" isn't easy for a shepherd. In this context, I think the Syro Malabar convention is an opportunity for all of us to listen to each other and learn more about the difficult situations so many of us face. All the while knowing that the essential characteristics of Christian marriage: unity, fidelity, indissolubility, fruitfulness never change because they define true Christian marriage.

Fr. Sunoj Thomas, O.S.B. is Pastor at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Kansas City, MO. And also, the Mission Director of St. Therese Syro Malabar Mission Kansas City, MO. And give classes at various Seminaries and classes for the youth.



# PARENTING IN THE 21ST CENTURY- STRUGGLES AND POSSIBILITIES

Parenting in the 21st century is way different than it was a century ago. I remember how my parents and grandparents talked about their childhood, when they would be hanging out with their community and extended family, on their own, attending to different things. In fact, the village helped raise children back then. But today? The culture and situations have changed dramatically. Today, safety itself is a main concern. There is so much violence, drugs, sexual immorality, child trafficking, child predators, the list goes on. Society has degraded very much so, morally. If we don't pro-actively fight back, I cannot envision what the next generation will hold.

New and ever-increasing technology has hijacked the culture. We cannot imagine a world without technology. There are lots of good results of technology. I am extremely grateful for GPS, without which I don't know what I would have done! But at the same time, there are issues associated with technology- in fact, pretty serious issues that we simply shouldn't close our eyes to. Today, parents have to be way much more vigilant than a century ago, in raising their children. But most of the time, the opposite is happening, when kids are handed their own smart-phones even in lower elementary school! Despite numerous studies that reinforce the negative effects of screen time on young minds, it is a shame that most parents don't realize what they are doing to their children. Not only does increased screen time lead to obesity, sleep deprivation, physical ailments, eye strain, it also leads to lack of social skills and self-confidence, poor school performance, attention disorders, procrastination, aggressiveness, and violence. Social media use in kids and teens has its own whole set of problems, including anxiety, depression, and increased rates of suicide. These devices when handed over without proper parental restrictions, can lead to even worse outcomes. It is startling to know that an overwhelmingly high percentage of kids are exposed to porn even by the age of 12. The end result of all this screen time is a disconnectedness, and passive approach to life, where good character is at the back-burner, and kids are hardly motivated to rise beyond 'barely making it through'. It is very tempting to offer a device as a babysitting tool, but we should pause and think for a second before we do so. What are we really doing, and what message are we conveying? We need to break the pattern of lazy kids who don't care about anything around them, but only their screens; and empower them by having them physically and mentally engaged with the needs in the family.

The family should be a safe haven for the children. But today, increasing number of parents are driven to make more and more money, so they pursue overtime work, and their presence at home dwindles. As a substitute, they resort to providing them more and more 'gifts' to make up for their absence. In a culture where parents are very disconnected, and possibly don't even see each other because they are working back to back, it is hard for kids to feel secure and safe, and connected, and they have more chance of resorting to other things that may make them 'feel' more secure, like drugs or porn or other 'friends'. Also, just pushing them to more and more academics without really providing for them a solid moral support in a loving environment, is of no good. Instead it can backfire, leading to higher rates of depression and suicide. What children need is the presence of parents and their emotional connection. Students can never substitute for this. The overall primary motivator of a child's success is how involved and present the parents are in the life of their children.

We think that providing children with everything they need and never allowing them to fail, will keep them happy. The contrary is true. Giving kids everything they need or ask for, will negatively affect their life. We need to exert discretion at what we give them and inform them the reason why we deny certain things. God does not give us everything we ask for, but only what will end up good for us- for our souls. When we give in to every small request that they put, thinking we are doing a great favor by making them happy in doing so, we are only spoiling them, causing them to be entitled, and allowing them to get away with their manipulations.

Parents must step up and be parents, and exert their parental authority over their children. Children (as well as parents) need to know that the authority of parents over children comes from God, and that they are bound to obey. We parents should be involved in the daily lives of our children. We need to foster strong and positive relationships. We should know what they do, where they hang out, who their friends are. We need to know their needs and be able to mentor/ disciple them. We as parents should give a primary focus on developing godly character in our children. Even more than academics, this should be our primary focus. We ought to instill a strong work ethic, early on. Children should be involved in day to day family life. They should be entrusted chores around the house. By entrusting chores, not only are they learning very important life-skills, but also being good stewards of God's creation and gifts, as well as grateful citizens. On the other hand, we should also not hover over them like a helicopter, micromanaging their every move. We need to set the boundaries, yet allow them to have freedom within those boundaries. They have to fall within those boundaries, get up on their own, and learn from their failures. We have to allow this, instead of protecting them out of situations. We ought to aim to bring up well-adjusted kids, who can bounce right back after failing.

Parents are primary educators of children, as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We need to claim control over our children and not delegate this important duty to others. We should be present for our kids. Our priority should be our family. I think some practical solutions to fight back today's culture are:

- 1) Be intentionally involved in the needs of the children, being present not only physically, but mentally.
- 2) Greatly limiting the use of screen time, and instead encouraging kids to keep mentally and physically active.
- 3) Delaying social media use until early adulthood.
- Creating a safe haven in the family, where kids actually feel safe- by modeling love, mercy and forgiveness.
- 5) Establishing a strong work ethic, and a culture of giving in your best.
- 6) Having children involved in the household responsibilities, by giving them chores.
- 7) Giving emphasis to developing godly character and good virtues- integrity, honesty, compassion, diligence, gratitude, attentiveness. Good character trumps academics.

God has placed a very important task at our hands- to bring each of our family members to heaven. We should not slack in this important duty. Parenting is hard work. Only a family that is rooted in faith can effectively minister to their kids. Let's pray to God to give us the grace and wisdom to perform this most important duty he has entrusted us. If we don't proactively fight back, we can lose our children and the next generation. "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." (Romans 12:2) "But if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and he will be given it" (James 1:5)

May God Bless!

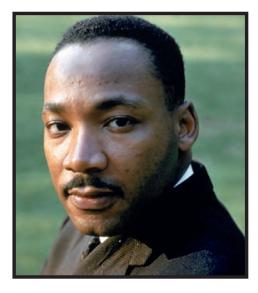


**Joel Kattady** St. Thomas Forane Church, Dallas

# REFLECTIONS FROM MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S: "THE DRUM MAJOR INSTINCT"

It's easy to forget that after all Martin Luther King Jr. did for the Civil Rights Movement, he was a pastor too. But his righteous actions for social justice and civil change are a natural outgrowth of the messages he preached, as seen in "The Drum Major Instinct." On February 4, 1968—the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "The Drum Major Instinct" sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church at Atlanta, Georgia. In this sermon, he acknowl-edges the fact that many people desire recognition; they desire to be the first. He calls this desire the "drum major instinct." But he proposes an alternative kind of ambition one can achieve through a life of service that could serve as a path for the growing Syro Malabar community in the United State. The central message of the sermon is that pride is the strongest human desire. After all, pride was what caused humanity to fall away from God at the Garden of Eden. Rather than fight against this natural human desire, King advises channeling it into a force for good. Being proud is not in and of it itself an evil desire, so long as one finds pride for the right reasons. King tells his parish to take pride in working for the betterment of others. Everyone can at least do that. No matter what job you have, what race you are, or what religion you belong to, everyone can work for the betterment of humankind.

One of King's admirable qualities is his refusal to demonize his opponents. Much like Lincoln before him, who said that Southern slave holders were good people stuck in an evil institution, King does not lampoon his opponents. Instead he empathizes with them, and is filled more with pity for their sins than wrath at their injustice. He calls his parish to be greater, and to prevent this desire from corrupting them completely, as it has done to so many already. King wants his congregation to take the noble path, instead of meeting violence with violence, understanding that if one trades an eye for an eye, the whole world will go blind. But perhaps the passage that struck closest to home was when King mentioned our own pride in the form of closed communities. Every closed community is like a private club, with the massive temptation for members of the community to think of themselves as better than the average person.



Whether that is true or not, it is more of a burden than a privilege. If gold rusts, what shall iron do? Perhaps we are called to be greater, but that means we are called to be lights to the entire world. Placed upon us is the responsibility to make an impact wherever we go, and to guide those around us towards Christ by our example: to act as servants to the world around us.

Mahatma Gandhi, King's predecessor once said, "In order to find oneself, one must lose oneself first in the service of others." King follows this message, teaching that one must be proud of one's identity, but one's identity must be found by serving their fellow man. This is indeed a motto that each and every one of us can live by to make our community, our country and the world at large a much better place for generations to come.



**Aby Abraham** St.Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church, San Francisco

# ENTERING CHRIST'S PASSION AND RESURRECTION AS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLICS

"My soul is sorrowful even to death" [Mathew 26:38]. Keep these words of Jesus in mind. Growing up, I had many doubts about Christianity, especially as I entered my teenage years. I would always ask questions, and for the most part, I found sufficient answers. However, there was one facet of the Christian narrative that bothered me for years without solace.

Why in the world is it such a big deal that Jesus was crucified and killed for the whole world? I mean, of course, I believed it was an honorable act, but why was he given more credit than anyone else who died for someone whom they love? Do many soldiers not do the same? Do many parents and spouses



not do the same? Even some of the followers of Christ himself suffered worse deaths than he did. Why was his death such a big deal? Sure, it was God dying, but if he knew that this is what it would take to save the world, then many regular good people would have done the same. In fact, wasn't it all for show when he could have just saved us with the snap of his fingers? These are the thoughts I struggled with for a long time, and I'm sure many people have thought the same. Little did I know at the time that the suffering he experienced in his soul was such that anyone would beg to be replaced on that cross because it was the worst of physical pain. Anyone who has experienced deep pain in the soul knows what I am talking about. Any parent who sees the tears of his/her child knows the piercing sword of the soul is unmatched by any physical blade. Anyone who has ever lost a loved one knows that he or she would take a million bullets just to have one more word with the soul of his or her beloved. Anyone who has been crushed by the pressures of our modern era experiences the doubt of one's own value.

This is what made the death of our Lord so eternally significant. He took into his own soulful heart the deepest pains of every single human who had ever come before him, walked with him, and those yet to come. We experience compassion, which means to suffer with him, while he truly suffered for our pains even deeper than we ourselves have suffered. He was in so much pain that the stress popped his blood vessels and he began to sweat his precious blood. This was not mere physical pain. This was not a mere fear of losing his life. This was the pain of taking the daggers of sin to the human heart since time immemorial. This was the pain of drinking

the chalice of death that was to be our punishment. His soul was sorrowful even unto death. He entered the very prison of our hearts, trapped in the shackles of our sin, and died in them a sorrowful death. In doing so, he gazed into each of our hearts and reminded us of who we are. In doing so, he healed the wounds of misunderstanding, of betrayal and of the lies telling us that we're not enough. In doing so, the shackles were broken, and we were freed. Freed by the wounded heart of Jesus Christ. We must remember especially, as Syro Malabar Catholics, that this was not the end. Out of this sorrowful death came his resurrection. What were Jesus's first words when he came to the disciples after his resurrection? With his wounds held out, he said to them, "Peace be with you" [John 20:19]. There are two things to take from this: one is the proclamation and the other is the still-present wounds. First examine those words of Jesus that have the power to affect reality.

The same way God's Word has the power to create the world and to change simple bread and wine into his body and blood; the same way he can say, "Talitha Koum!" [Mark 5:41] "Little girl get up!" and she gets up is the same way his proclamation of peace affects us if we only allow it to. Keeping in mind Saint Thomas's relationship with Christ, his doubt was not so much in the scientific impossibility of resurrection, but rather he could not bear another heartbreak after the crucifixion killed his only hope. Sound like anything that has ever happened in your life? Out of this fear he decided to stride very carefully. He saw the change in the disciples, and this encouraged him to at least stay with them for the following week. I'm sure he struggled very much with the silent, mysterious nature of God but decided to stay in the fellowship of the disciples in whom he noticed something different. When Jesus finally came to him once again, his wounds were exposed, as he proclaimed, "Peace be with you" [John 20:26]. Thomas joyfully proclaimed, "My Lord and My God!" [John 20:28]. His words were a proclamation of a fulfilled hope.

Christ revealed to him that nothing could ever separate us from the only thing that truly matters, the peace of God's love. As he called Thomas to touch his wounds, we must also do so, recognizing the truth that God did not come to erase our wounds but rather to transform them and bring them into his very being. I have read an article which talks about what Thomas's dilemma really might have been in relation to us: He couldn't believe that God loved him as dearly as he claimed. Yet, like St. Thomas, if we can trust just enough to consider it, perhaps we'll unexpectedly be drawn into this love. Moving forward in our lives, as Syro Malabar Catholics, we can at least follow the example of our father in faith and consider how much God loves us.



**Caroline James** St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston

# THE ONION THEORY-WHY WE SHOULD NOT JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Mother Teresa once said, if you judge people, you will have no time to love them. Humans are fascinating and complex beings and the universal truth behind each and every person you meet is that, they all have an underlying story behind them. Their inane curiosity from childhood, moments of self-doubt from their teen years, and the beliefs that get inculcated in them during their growing up years, all end up becoming part of their DNA. The happy and the not so happy experiences from their adulthood, their accomplishments and their trials & tribulations mould them and shape them into the person they become.

Like an onion, an individual is made up of multiple dimensions and layers. This is what I call The Onion Theory. As we unpeel each layer, there may be a lot more that we can learn about a person including what constitutes their core. But as human beings, our natural predisposition on meeting someone is to become judgmental and form an impression about them immediately. We form these impressions based on their social status, their relationship status, their beliefs, their opinions on various subjects, their demeanor, how they talk and conduct themselves and more often than not on their outward appearance. We also tend to have preconceived notions about them solely based on the experiences that our mind is conditioned to believe. So, we end up observing, forming opinions and passing judgements.

The bible verses from Matthew 7:3 reads "Why do you see a speck of sawdust in your brothers' eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? We often pay no heed in examining our own conscience, reflecting on the course correction we require and instead put others through our judgement scanner. We draw conclusions about others often unaware of the storms they have weathered or the battles they have fought to be where they are. We all may have a cross to carry at some point in our life but let's not become barriers, adding on more bricks to the psychological walls people tend to build around themselves. Instead let's work towards being nonjudgmental and supportive of each other through life's unpaved paths.

As true Christians let's be that light that spreads its brightness and radiates a warmth so bright that it reaches even the darkest corners of a heart that is afraid of being vulnerable. Let's pass less judgments and spread more love; Be a hope in someone's life; Be a listening ear for those who haven't been heard in a while; Be compassionate and be a healer; Let's be the reason behind someone's smile!

# SYRO MALABAR YOUTH: THE FUTURE OF THE DIOCESE

The future is a topic that is constantly discussed whether it be the future of technology, medicine, art, music, or religion. However, the future of the Syro Malabar diocese in America is rarely discussed. To consider the future of the diocese, it is important to understand the history and the current state of the diocese. In 2001, the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago was inaugurated making it the first Syro Malabar diocese to be established outside of India.

It is imperative to consider why the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago was originally created. Initially, as I explored the answer to this question. I did not consider the possibility that faith and culture might be the reasons for the formation of the diocese. There are numerous Latin Catholic churches in the United States where Syro Malabar Catholics can go to worship. Indeed Latin Catholics and Syro Malabar Catholics share the same faith and because of this, there was not a faith-related reason for the formation of the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago. In 2001, when the diocese was created, there were cultural groups where Malayalees could gather to celebrate their unique traditions. This meant there was no cultural need for the Syro Malabar Church in the United States. If the Svro Malabar diocese in America was not formed due to faith or cultural needs then why was the diocese created? While I searched for an answer to this question, I came upon Dr. Placid J. Podipara's description of Thomas Christians which completely changed the trajectory of this paper. Dr. Podipara states that "Thomas Christians are Indian in culture, Christian in religion, and Oriental in worship" (Joseph 9). This definition led me to the revelation that to be a Syro Malabar Catholic it required the synergy of culture, religion, and worship. The Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago was formed because Syro Malabar Catholics in America desired a community where they could celebrate their Malayalee culture and Catholic faith while worshiping in the rite they were familiar with. As these Syro Catholics worshiped together they slowly formed close-knit communities that were based on the foundation of their identity-faith, culture, spirituality-which lead to the formation of the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago.

Currently, the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago is suffering from internal conflict between the first and second generation Malayalee-American Syro Malabar Catholics. Jaisy Joseph best summarizes this conflict as the first generation "uses the community as a bastion of cultural preservation" meanwhile the second generation struggles "from a disconnection with the past heritage and the simultaneous inability to fully assimilate into the US" (Joseph 61). Both the first and second-generation Syro Malabar Catholics need to see Syro Malabar parishes as more than a place for cultural-social gatherings. They must see these parishes as a place of worship too while striving to have a deeper understanding of the Syro Malabar rite. Currently, Syro Malabar parishes across the diocese are doing an excellent job of trying to make the youth feel as though they are part of the parish by organizing youth group activities, however, once these young Syro Malabar Catholics leave for college, they rarely come back to their Syro Malabar parishes and when they do return they often feel like outsiders. Syro Malabar parishes need to encourage their youth to visit the parish while they are at college and do a better job of reintegrating the youth who return from college into parish life. Parishes should start including youth in parish council and pastoral roles, such as helping to organize perunnals. This would help youth reconnect with

the parish while simultaneously equipping the youth with the skills and experience that they will need to help run the parish.

The future of the Syro Malabar diocese in America is dependent on the second and third generations of Malayalee-American Syro Malabar Catholics. According to the Second Vatican Council, it is the duty of every Catholic to "retain his own rite wherever he is, must cherish it, observe it to the best of his ability." Every Syro Malabar Catholic in America needs to acknowledge this responsibility and do what is necessary to help the Syro Malabar rite thrive in this foreign soil. The youth of the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago have recognized that in order for them to best carry this task out the Syro Malabar rite must evolve to be relevant to the current and future generations of Syro Malabar Catholics. The Syro youth of America advocated for an English Qurbana, so that the youth could better understand the Syro Malabar rite. The Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago should make it a priority that every youth self-identifies as a Syro Malabar Catholic to ensure the continuation of the diocese. Once the Syro Malabar rite becomes an integral part of a person's identity, they are more likely to recognize their duty, as stated by the Second Vatican Council, to continue celebrating this rite for the greater universal Catholic Church.

The Syro Malabar church differs from other rites due to its unique pillars of faith, culture and spirituality. The Syro Malabar diocese should incorporate lessons on some of the symbolism, significance, and meaning of the Qurbana into its faith formation classes to aid the youth in developing a deeper understanding of the Syro Malabar rite. This will help the youth form a stronger connection to the Syro Malabar rite and may inspire them to pursue religious life. For the diocese to continue, it needs to foster local priests, such as Kevin Achan and Rajeev Achan, who are second-generation Malayalee-American Syro Malabar Catholics, who can relate to the struggles that the youth of our diocese face and inspire them to play an active role.

Ultimately, whether the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago will either continue to flourish or cease to exist depends on the decisions and actions of today's Syro Malabar youth, in conjunction with the first-generation. For the Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago to thrive in America, it is essential that the diocese must continue to evolve to satisfy the spiritual and cultural needs of the parishioners while developing a greater sense of solidarity within the diocese. This includes the education of first-generation parents to accept the dual identity of the second-generation as Malayalee-Americans and the second generation to confront the numerous modern-day challenges that await them. Aspects of American cultural values should be included in the diocese so that the second-generation of Malayalee-American Syro Malabar Catholics can see a reflection of their own values within the diocese. However, these changes alone will not promote the growth of our diocese unless the youth self-identify as Syro Malabar Catholics and that the youth ensures that the diocese maintains a balance between the Catholic faith, Malayalee culture, and Syrian rite.

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Blessina Caroline Babu St Joseph Forane Church, Houston

# LITTLE FLOWER MISSION LEAGUE: THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

Little Flower Mission League first began under the name Cherupushpa Mission League, which was founded in India in 1947. Mission League was inspired by the words of his Holiness Pope Leo XIII, "The salvation of India is in her sons" Mr. P.C. Abraham, Kochchettan, took these words to heart and began one of the largest laity missions in Bharanjanam, India. Inspired by the special intentions of Sister Agnes, Bett Uncle, James Uncle, and their missionary spirit, LFML was then established at St. Joseph Syro Malabar Church in 2009. Coincidently, this was also the year that I first came to the St. Joseph parish and received my Holy Communion. Like most 4th graders, I was used to looking at my parents as models for my faith, but it was a little harder for me since I was born in Saudi Arabia. Coming to the Houston Parish and learning more about my faith opened my eyes to how beautiful Catholicism was, but what truly made me grow in not only my spirituality, but also my love for Christ, is Little Flower Mission League.

The Mission Leagu motto is charity, sacrifice, service, and suffering. These are virtues all missionary leaders' practice, just as St. Teresa of Little Flower did. How can such big virtues be practiced by little kids? As a child, which I still do daily as a college student, I said invocations praising God at every occasion. This is when I truly understood the meaning of doing all things through Christ. These small actions that I was taught helped me grow. Now, as an animator for Mission League, I can share my experiences to our new little missionaries.

Little Flower Mission League is one of the largest organizations at St. Joseph and is one of the most beloved. It is where many of our young kids build a stronger foundation in their faith and grow as leaders. LFML is an organization not only made for the children, but also led by the children. This was done to cultivate young minds to become the future leaders of our church. One of my fondest memories in Mission League was being asking by Sister Agnes what I wanted to be when I grew up. With a childlike joy I responded proudly, "I want to be a Saint and spread the news of God." Still now, I have this desire instilled within me, due to the values that I have learned from LFML. Today, we have about 150 little missionaries in our LFML program at St. Joseph and we continue to grow every year. On October 1st, St. Teresa's fest day, we inaugurate new members who have this same desire to undertake the missionary work of Jesus Christ.

Little Flower Mission League has stood the test of time and has traveled from India to our St. Joseph parish, but it couldn't have been done without the help of many. I'm very thankful for the Syro Malabar Chicago Diocese for allowing such a beautiful organization to be established now in America. Little Flower Mission League was an opportunity for me and several others to grow in their love for Christ and the church. I hope that every Syro Malabar church will be inspired to begin a Mission League in their own parishes with the help of our patron saint, St. Teresa of Little Flower.

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Jansi Mary Jose St Joseph Forane Church, Houston

# THE SILENT POWER

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.' (Luke 1:35) Who is the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit so powerful? Why must any importance be given to the Holy Spirit in my life? The Holy Spirit has been a great power throughout the Bible, more so evidently in the New Testament – right from the immaculate conception, Jesus birth, through His baptism, it was the Holy Spirit who was guiding and helping Jesus carry out His Father's Mission. When the apostles went out spreading the Word, the Holy Spirit worked through them and gave them power to do things they would never be able to accomplish on their own

### The third person in the trinity

The power of the Holy Spirit is the power of God. With the completion of the Father's will, in His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, Jesus cleared the way for the third person in the Trinity. The Holy Spirit or The Paraclete as Jesus names Him, is not an essence or a force, but a personality having God's essence "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one". 1John 5:7 They work in tandem as seen in many passages in the scriptures Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:13-17) – voice of the Father, Son baptized, Spirit descending like a dove. Salvation (1Pet 1:2)-chosen by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, sprinkled with Jesus' blood. Sanctification (2 Cor 13:14) – grace of the Lord Jesus, love of God, fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

### The Holy Spirit gives me power

The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples, to bear witness to Jesus in places and in ways beyond human imagination. The disciples dispersed to very distant lands and, in many places, first underwent resistance and hostility which they would never have overcome with just human strength. The power given by the Holy Spirit gives us strength to endure hardships and overcome difficulties in every walk of life. All we must do is ask.

### The Holy Spirit is my Helper

The Holy Spirit gives us the power and guidance to say and do the right things at the right time. "..do not worry about what you are going to say or how you will say it, when the time comes, you will be given what you will say" (Mathew 10:19). Every day when we ask the Holy Spirit for help and guidance in our thoughts, words and actions, we end up saying things which in retrospective prove to be most aptly said. And that no doubt is the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

### The Holy Spirit intercedes for me and helps me pray

The Holy Spirit pleads with God for us and God who sees into our hearts knows what the thought of the Spirit

is. (Romans 8:26-27) The Holy Spirit guides us to pray for the interviewers before appearing for an interview, to pray for the doctor when going into a surgery, to pray for all the people listening when going for a presentation, to pray for a future partner and the family even if we do not know who it might be. The Holy Spirit prepares them and us to have the best impact.

### The Holy Spirit keeps me from falling into sin

"Let the Spirit direct your lives and you will not satisfy the desires of the human nature" (Galatians 5:16). The Paraclete has ownership of us, and the power to guide us through our daily lives. Holy Father Pope Francis shared in His reflection at the chapel Domus Sanctae Marthae that the Paraclete accompanies us throughout our lives. The word Paraclete, he explained means 'the one who is beside me, to support me' so that I do not fall into temptations in both good times and bad times. Usually we pray when things do not go well, but not otherwise. We must pray to the Holy Spirit for humility when things go well, to reiterate to oneself that it is not my ability or power but the silent power of the Holy Spirit in me that helped me with the achievement.

### The Holy Spirit prepares situations and people

The Holy Spirit is always working to pave the path for the chosen people of God. There are multiple instances in the Bible which tells us how through the power of the Holy Spirit God changes situations and people. In our day today, life it might be a difficult spouse or coworker or a jealous friend, but the Bible talks about God changing many peoples across the nations. The Spirit worked through the angels to get the shepherds to visit Jesus and the Magi in the East to follow the star to Jesus.

There are instances in our lives when we pray for something for a long time and finally when it happens, it does so, in all its perfection. All the while the Holy Spirit was hard at work to fulfil our hearts desire in accordance with the power and understandings of God the Father.

### How do I seek the Holy Spirit?

All we must do is ask Jesus to guide us and be submissive to His will. Jesus will give the Holy Spirit, and we will be transformed into His soldiers, and will be directed towards what is best for us according to His plans. For this to be an ongoing activity, we must pray every day to be filled with the Spirit. "May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in Him, so that your hope may continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit" Romans 15:13

With all my grattude to my parents who have instilled in me the importance of faith and prayer which I realized most when I flew out of their secure nest.

Jansi Mary Jose is a software engineer and a mom of three wonderful kids. She is an active member of St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston.

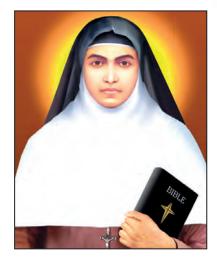


Rev. Dr. Jacob Kattackal

# ST. ALPHONSA'S FUNERAL PROCESSION: AN EYE-WITNESS TESTIMONY

Myself, with my classmates, witnessed the Funeral Procession of Saint. Alphonsa, on July 29th 1946. Looking through the window of our school – St Mary's Boys High School Bharanaganam—I clearly saw the emaciated, holy face of Alphonsamma; and I still hold in my mind a vivid picture of her face. I was then studying in the IV Form, equivalent to the present day 9th Grade of High School.

'Sir, There is a funeral procession moving towards the cemetery. Shall we watch it for a few moments'?: asked one of my classmates. 'If you don't make noise, just for a few minutes, you may look through the window' - replied the class teacher, with a bit of hesitation. Mr P .C. Chacko, Poovathummoottil, who was teaching us then Malayalam Grammar. Then an-



other companion of mine, Jacob Pamplany added: 'It looks like the funeral procession of a Reverend Sister, a Nun; because the Sisters themselves are carrying the dead body of the Sister in the coffin'. Myself, my close friend, Jacob Pamplany and few others stood on the window sill, and looked at the procession for about 3 minutes. I still clearly remember the vivid face of Sister Alphonsa-emaciated, peaceful and holy. Sisters themselves had been carrying the coffin with the mortal body. There were a total of about fifty persons-five priest, about thirty Religious Sisters of the Bharanaganam Clarist Convent; and some thirty lay people; of course, Alphonsamma's dear father was among the lay people. And the funeral was on 29th July of the year 1946. Remember, Alphonsamma passed to Heaven on 28th July 1946.

### **Prophetic Sermon of Fr. Romulus**

Rev. Romulus CMI (late), standing in front of the mortal body of Alphonsamma declared: 'I know this Alphonsamma in and out. If only the world knew well this holy Sister who lies here motionless, there would have been here today a great crowd consisting of Church dignitaries such as Cardinals, Bishops; Politicians and so on to celebrate her funeral.' "This proclamation of the funeral preacher was realized on November 9th 2008, when the Pala Diocese- to which Alphonsamma belonged--made a superb diocesan celebration of Saint. Alphonsa, in continuation of her canonization in Rome on October 12th 2008.

### We Two, the First Candle Lighters

The following day afternoon—30th July 1946—me and my dear friend Jacob Pamplany, went down the Boarding School verandah near by, to eat our lunch. Scarcely had we eaten our lunch, when Babu Chetten, the cook, approached us, school boys, saying: 'Good boys! Would you do me a favour?—Yesterday morning, a holy Sister, Kanayasthri, is buried in our Cemetery Chapel over there. Please buy small candles for this one chakram—of the value of one rupee today—from that shop across the road, and light them at the tomb of the deceased Sister, buried there in the Cemetery'.

With our youthful vigour and enthusiasm, me and my dear friend Jacob ran to the cemetery, about eight hundred feet away. But alas! On reaching the cemetery, what do we see? A tightly locked cemetery! Impossible for anyone to get in. Me and Jacob walked around the cemetery—ten-foot wall around; we reached the eastern side of the cemetery; there the wall is 10 feet high. We two dare-devils, stood on the eastern side, and decided to climb the cemetery wall by mutual help—by push and pull --we succeeded; we ran to the tomb or kabaridam

The tomb was marked out by two short benches , and a small lit candle and some flowers. We lighted our two small candles, and came out of the cemetery, using the earlier push and full technique! We were inside the class room after the noon interval.

### **Growing crowd at the Tomb**

On the following day (30th July) on, we the Boys School Students, used to watch long lines of the girls from the Girls High School across the road, proceeding to the cemetery (tomb) of the late Sister Alphonsamma. Saint Alphonsa, while alive, used to help many Girls School students to procure good results in their exams; so these students had the conviction that their dear Alphonsamma would help them now also from Heaven. Thereafter, day by day, lots of people were flocking to the tomb of Alphonsamma to ask for many blessings, and to thank for the numerous miraculous favours they already have received. Soon there were public meetings and media reports--all proclaiming the extraordinary holiness and miraculous intercessory power of the holy 'Little Flower Kerala.' And before long, permission was granted from Vatican to start officially the Beatification – Canonization processes of Sister Alphonsa

And in due course, on the solemn occasion of the official visit of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II, Alphonsamma was authoritatively proclaimed BEATA or Blessed together with the Chavra Achen, at Kottayam on the 8th February 1986, and I was one of the two thousand odd Catholic priest con-celebrating with the Holy Father in the Beatification Qurbana. February 8th 1986—what an unbearable hot day it was! The Holy Pope John Paul II was really tired after the Beatification.

### **Canonization in Rome**

In due course, all canonical processes completed, Alphonsamma, together with four other saints from the Universal Church was solemnly canonized Saint of the Universal Church on October 12th 2008 by the then Pope Benedict XVI (Now he is retired and resting.) I was really happy to attend the Popes' Canonization Qurbana, rather close to him in the Vatican Square.

God Blesses us all.....Saint Alphonsa, pray for us all.

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# **BE INSPIRED BY GREAT WOMEN FROM THE BIBLE**

### **From the New Testament**

\*Mary\* did not stand out in any way. She quietly followed the Jewish traditions in a working-class family One day Angel Gabriel came to her and told her that she would bear the son of the Most High. **Be a Mary, humble and submissive.** You don't have to be great for God to use you, you just need to obey

It is said of both \*Elizabeth\* and Zacharias that they were 'righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless'. For years they had both prayed and longed for a child; though the prospect of natural childbearing was past, God was able to do the impossible and Elizabeth was blessed with John the Baptist.Be an Elizabeth, never doubt what God can do. Miracles do happen.

Speculations are that Jesus delivered \*Mary Magdalene\* from seven demons early on in His ministry. She was privileged to be one of the three persons present at the crucifixion, prepared Jesus' body for burial and was the first person to speak to Jesus after Resurrection. Be a Mary Magdalene, never let your mistakes and judgments of other people stop you from experiencing true joy in Jesus.

\*Lydia's\* story is in Acts chapter 16:9-15. Apostle Paul and Luke met Lydia and some other women at a riverbank prayer (instead of some devout men they expected). She and her household were converted and was baptized. Her house became the gathering place (first house church) for believers. Be a Lydia, let your homes be open, let your hands be generous, let your hearts be big enough to help anyone in need. Joy is greatest when shared.

**\*Dorcas**\* (or Tabitha, in Aramaic) was committed to giving alms to the poor continually. She made clothes and gave it to the widows around. One day she fell ill and died. Her body was bathed and groomed as per the customs and placed in the upper room. The widows summoned Peter he knelt beside her and prayed. Then, he said "Tabitha, arise." Dorcas opened her eyes and sat up. Be a Dorcas, use your talents, however small it may seem to bring a smile on someone's face. You'll never know how much it can mean to someone.









### From the Old Testament

\*Esther\* was an orphan who became the queen and got her own book in the Bible. A Jewish man Mordecai offended a high court official named Haman, who decided to kill all the Jews in the Persian empire. Queen Esther pleaded with the king at the two banquets she hosted, and Haman's evil plan was revealed for which he was hanged.

Be an Esther, bold and courageous enough to stand for the truth, to voice your opinion and fight for the good of others, even when it means to sacrifice ourselves. If God has put you in a position, it is for a purpose. Never be afraid to heed to that inner voice.

Young \*Ruth's\* husband and her mother-in-law Naomi's husband had died. Though Naomi persuaded Ruth to go back to her village, she stayed back knowing that Naomi may not be taken care of. Finally, Ruth married a wealthy farmer who took care of them. She is the great grandmother of King David and has her own book in the Bible. Be a Ruth, loyal in all your relationships, walk the extra mile and don't quit when things get tough. Someday, you'll see why it was all worth the effort.

\*Hannah\* went to the tabernacle and prayed. She asked God for a son, promised to dedicate him to the Lord, and vowed to never cut his hair and give him to the Lord. The Lord answered her prayer. Hannah named the boy Samuel because she requested him from the Lord (Samuel means God has heard). Be a Hannah, never cease to pray. It will never be in vain.

\*Abigail\* was married to a drunken abuser who refused to feed David and his troops. She realized David's troops could kill them and hosted a banquet for David and his men, spoke to them apologizing for her husband. Abigail's example points to the importance of the words chosen when speaking in tense situations. Harsh, loud words may become the catalyst to unnecessary anger. In contrast we see how calm, carefully calculated words can lead to a peaceful parting or solution. "A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Be an Abigail, remember how each decision can turn your life around for good or bad. Be wise

**\*Sarah**\* the wife of Abraham was forced to leave her home and go to unknown places. The one great grief of Abraham and Sarah was that through their long life together they had no children. To a Hebrew woman, barrenness was looked upon as a gnawing grief, and sometimes regarded as a sign of divine disfavor. The Lord blessed her at the age of 90. Lastly, be a Sarah, Trust & believe. All is possible with God











**Anjali James** St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston

# I SAW JESUS TODAY

I saw Jesus today, On the holy alter as humble, wheat bread

With five loaves and two fish, More than five thousands he fed.

In a priest hearing confession, Christ died for human redemption.

In an innocent child, giggling with joy, Innocence of Christ, Nazareth's little boy.

In a forgiving mother, who weeps inside, For our infinite amount of sins, Jesus died.

In a quiet boy, reading the Holy word, Thousands upon thousands, the Messiah cured.

In the fish that swim, his light I see; Jesus, light of the world, I look up to thee. In a red rose, I remember his blood that shed through, On the cross of salvation, his love was ever true.

In a butterfly, freely fluttering away, The freedom by his salvation I enjoy every day.

In a teacher who corrects my mistakes, God sent his son for only our sake

I saw Jesus today, in many different ways But of my utmost view, I saw him in my heart, today.

About the author: Anjali James won first prize in IPTF poetry writing competition and is a member of St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston.



# MAR THOMA MARGAM: OUR FATHER IS CALLING

My Lord, My God How merciful you have been To grant us such a father So fearless, fierce, and relentless in his ways

"Let us also go to die with him" A blazing, overwhelming, searing flame Would not let him rest His strong heart ablaze, in his love for you

This father left his home To find his children thousands of miles away Flames of love licked at the souls of his children They arose and followed his trail The children cultivated the fire Each generation fueling a larger flame They grew brave and stubborn for Christ They spread Christ's truth and love Like their Father

The children called themselves The Mar Thoma Nasranis Mingling a beautiful, ancient culture And a rich, religious heritage To create something truly extraordinary

The generations to come left their home But never let go of this extraordinary gift Building communities of stronger flames Spreading love, truth, and light In each new land

The Father smiles from above Beaming with pride Praising you, Lord, for leading his children To a family of love, strength and unity Held together by the Mar Thoma Margam

Children of the Mar Thoma Margam! The Father calls us now to celebrate It is time now to join hands To reflect on our past and celebrate the present To plan towards a future full of hope

It is time now to join together and answer the question - Who are we? We are the Children Of our Fearless Father St. Thomas We follow our Father's footsteps

We gather as a family, a beam of hope In a world of darkness





Dr. Anup Kudakkasseril Mrs. Lissy Sojan Dr. Mini Michael St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston

# **REFLECTIONS ON CHARITY**

Charity comes from the French word Chrité and means, "Generosity and Giving; and Providing for those in need". From a biblical perspective, Charity is considered a higher form of love, signifying the reciprocal love between God and Man, that is manifested in one's unselfish love towards fellow beings. Charity is considered among the noblest of all virtues, as enunciated in 1 Corinthians 13:13 "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity".

In India, historically, the concept of giving for Charity, otherwise known as "Daana" goes back to the Vedic period to around 1500 B.C., with the Rig Veda devoting an entire chapter to "Daana" and "Dakshina". Nish-kama Karma, also termed as Karma Yoga, is essentially acting or doing one's duties in life without desire or expectation of reward, a sort of continuous and incessant sacrifice of action to the Supreme Lord leading to Moksha or eternal redemption.

In fact, Nishkama Karma is action done without thought of personal gain and is exemplified in the countless acts of charitable activities undertaken by various Christian charitable and relief organizations operating amongst underprivileged societies and war-torn communities across the globe. Noteworthy examples of Nishkama Karma are those undertaken by Saint Theresa and the multitude of religious and lay people working for the Congregation of Sisters of Charity. Another example is the social reformation activities spearheaded by Mahatma Ghandhi to improve the living standards of the Harijans and uplift the socially deprived sections of the Indian Society.

In our midst, very recently, the concept of charity was put into action by a team of like-minded people from the Houston St Joseph Syro Malabar Forane Parish. Initially a small team got together in early 2019 and took a leap of faith and hope in envisioning and starting the St Joseph Medical Charity Clinic with the vision of reaching out to all the uninsured families residing in Fort Bend County. This clinic now successfully operates once a month at the St Joseph Syro Malabar Church in Houston, TX. Texas is home to the largest uninsured population in the country. Syro Malabar Community in Houston has one of the largest concentrations of medical professionals amongst Syro Malabar parishes in the U.S.. The charity clinic is an effort to leverage the medicals skills and expertise of our people to provide quality medical care for the most needy and vulnerable in our society. The support has been overwhelming not only from the medical community in volunteering on a monthly basis in various capacities to conduct the clinic, but also from the church and the parish community at large. The words of Jesus, "When you did this for them; you really did this for me", resonates in the minds of all the volunteers in the St. Joseph Medical Charity clinic.



Jessica Mary Michael St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston

# AN INQUIRY INTO THE SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM

My mother handed me a dusty picture of the reception after my Baptism. In the candid photograph, the main celebrant was placing the sign of the cross on my chubby face as my mother held me. Other than the thoughtful nature of the celebrant's blessing, what truly stood out to me was the joy seen in the faces of my parents and the guests that had gathered in our small apartment at the time. That seemingly insignificant picture emphasized the integral aspect of community within Baptism. Out of curiosity, I had chosen to interview my mother



about her reasons for choosing to baptize me as an infant. The answers I ultimately received were reassuring and taught me more about the cultural aspect and symbolism behind the sacrament of Baptism.

My mother's main reasons for choosing to baptize me as an infant were to gift me with the opportunity of formally becoming a member of the Mystical Body of Christ and to equip me with a "sacrament-based upbringing." As a cultural practice, Baptism has largely become an essential milestone and tradition in the lives of many Catholic families like mine. Although my Baptism did not call my parents to radically change the way they approached the world, my father and mother recognized this formative event as a declaration of their "responsibility to raise [me] as a Catholic." As soon as the first grade rolled around, my parents made sure to enroll me in CCE classes at our local Syro Malabar Catholic Church. Although I may have initially despised having to attend CCE classes and masses that would last for more than an hour, I have grown to appreciate the rich cultural traditions that characterize the special community of believers at my local parish. Consequently, I owe this newfound appreciation to my parents who respectably encouraged me not to stray from this unique community.

Upon inquiring about my mother's favorite parts of my Baptism, she revealed that the most memorable moment at my initiation into the Church was when the celebrant poured holy water on my head and handed the baptismal candle to my godparents. My mother conveyed her appreciation for the symbolic nature of these rituals. For her, the holy water represented my purification from sin. Moreover, the candle given to my godparents symbolized my call "to be a light of Christ in the world." However, various passages of Scripture, such as the "Parting of the Red Sea" and "Noah's Ark," note that water does not only take on a cleansing role but also acts as a foundational, lifegiving, protective, and barrier-breaking agent of establishing community. In a similar way, the candlelight passed on to new members of the Church can also represent the transition from death to new life in Christ and the burning passion of religious faith. Therefore, the multifaceted interpretations of symbols in Baptism reveal numerous opportunities to encounter God's grace in a personal way.

Through this inquiry into the cultural aspect and symbolic nature of Baptism, I discovered that we are ultimately cleansed from our Original and personal sins by the power of sacramental water. As new members of the Church, we are also given a new life with Christ through the community of believers. Joined in the Mystical Body of Christ, we are gifted with the challenge of living up to Christ's standards as Priest, Prophet, and King. In doing so, it becomes our mission to live out our passion for the benefit of others by fostering holiness, bearing the truth of the Gospel, and directing others to God.

About the author: Jessica Mary Michael is a Junior at St. Agnes Academy and a member of St. Joseph Forane Church, Houston.



# NALAYALAM ARTICLES



**റ്റോബി സെബാസ്റ്റ്വർ** സെസ്റ്റ് ജോസഫ് ഫൊറോന ചർച്ച്, ഹൂസ്റ്റൺ

### ദൈവവചനവും പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളും

യോഹ 11:16 "ദീദിമോസ് എന്ന തോമസ് അപ്പോൾ മറ്റു ശിഷ്യന്മാരോട് പറഞ്ഞു. അവനോടൊപ്പം മരിക്കാൻ നമുക്കും പോകാം". അപ്പസ്തോലനായ തോമാ ശ്ലീഹായുടെ, കർത്താവായ യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിനോടുള്ള തീഷ് ണത വെളിവാക്കപ്പെട്ട വചനമാണല്ലോ ഇത്. ഈ തീഷ്ണതയാണ് തോമാശ്ലീഹായെ ഭാരതത്തിലെത്തിച്ചതെന്ന് സഭയുടെ പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങൾ സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. തോമാശ്ലീഹായിലൂടെ പകർന്നുകിട്ടിയ പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളും വി ശ്വാസതീഷ്ണതയും തലമുറകളിലൂടെ കാത്തു സൂക്ഷിക്കുക എന്നത് ഓരോ സീറോ മലബാർ വിശ്വാസിയുടെ യും വ്യക്തിപരമായ ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം കൂടിയാണ്.

യോഹ 1:1–3 "ആദിയിൽ വചനമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു; വചനം ദൈവത്തോടുകൂടെയായിരുന്നു. അവൻ ആദിയിൽ ദൈവത്തോടുകൂടെയായിരുന്നു. സമസ്തവും അവനിലൂടെ ഉണ്ടായി; ഒന്നും അവനെ കൂടാതെ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല." യോഹ 1:14 "വചനം മാംസമായി നമ്മുടെയിടയിൽ വസിച്ചു. അവന്റെ മഹത്വം നമ്മൾ ദർശിച്ചു – കൃപയും സത്യവും നിറഞ്ഞതും പിതാവിന്റെ ഏകജാതന്റേതുമായ മഹത്വം." വചനം മാംസമായി അവതരിച്ച നമ്മുടെ കർത്താവായ യേശു ക്രിസ്തു, അവന്റെ ശിഷ്യനായി, അവനോടൊപ്പം വസിച്ചിരുന്ന തോമാശ്ലീഹാ; അവതരിച്ച വചനത്തിന്റെ സാക്ഷിയായി മാറിയ തോമാശ്ലീഹാ; ശ്ലീഹായുടെ തീഷ്ണതയ്ക്ക് മാറ്റു കൂടുന്നത് വചനത്തിന് സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിച്ചു എന്നതിലൂടെയാണ്. അവതരിച്ച വചനമായ യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിനെയാണ് തോമാശ്ലീഹാ ഭാര തത്തിലുടനീളം പ്രഘോഷിച്ചത്. അതിനാൽ തന്നെ ഓരോ നസ്രാണി ക്രിസ്ത്യാനിയുടെയും പാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ അലിഞ്ഞു ചേർന്നിരിക്കുന്ന ഒഴിച്ചുകൂടാനാവാത്ത ഒരു ഘടകമാണ് വചനം പ്രഘോഷിക്കുക അഥവാ വചനം തന്നെയായ കർത്താവായ യേശുവിനെ പ്രഘോഷിക്കുക എന്നത്; അതോടൊപ്പം ശ്ലീഹായ്ക്കുണ്ടായ, സഹന ങ്ങളും, പീഡനങ്ങളും രക്തസാക്ഷിത്വവും ഓരോ മാർതോമ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനിയുടെയും പാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ അഭിമാന സ്തംഭങ്ങളുമാണ്. കർത്താവായ യേശുവിനെ, ദൈവവചനത്തെ തുടർന്ന് പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നില്ലായെങ്കിൽ, തോമാശ്ലീഹായിലൂടെ പകർന്നുകിട്ടിയ പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളോട് യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ നമുക്ക് കൂറ് പുലർത്താനാകില്ല. ദൈവ നിവേശിതമായ വചനങ്ങളെ പ്രഘോഷിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് മനുഷ്യ നിർമ്മിതമായ പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളോട് കൂട്ടിച്ചേർ ക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് സഭയുടെ പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങൾ ശക്തി പ്രാപിക്കുന്നത്. യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ ഇത്തരം വചന പ്രഘോഷണ ങ്ങളിലൂടെയാണ് നാം വിശുദ്ധീകരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതും. യോഹ 15:3 "ഞാൻ നിങ്ങളോടു പറഞ്ഞ വചനം നിമിത്തം നിങ്ങൾ ശുദ്ധിയുള്ളവരായിരിക്കുന്നു." അതിനാൽ തന്നെ, തോമാശ്ലീഹായിലൂടെ വിശുദ്ധിയിലേക്ക് വളരുന്ന തിനും വചനം തന്നെയായ കർത്താവായ യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിനെ പ്രഘോഷിക്കുന്നത് വളരെ അതൃന്താപേക്ഷി തമാണ്.

തിരുവചനം ഇപ്രകാരം സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. 1 കൊറി 9:16 "ഞാൻ സുവിശേഷം പ്രസംഗിക്കുന്നില്ലെങ്കിൽ എനിക്കു ദുരിതം!" അമേരിക്കയിലെ സീറോ മലബാർ സഭാ സമൂഹത്തിൽ നിന്നും ധാരാളം വചന പ്രഘോ ഷകൻ വരേണ്ടിയത് നമ്മുടെ വിശ്വാസ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ നിലനിൽപ്പിന് അത്യാവശ്യഘടകമാണ് എന്ന് ഈ വചനത്തിലൂടെ വെളിപ്പെടുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ യുവജനങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം നമ്മൾ ഓരോരുത്തരും തന്നെ ഭാഷയുടെയും പ്രായത്തിന്റെയും വ്യത്യാസമില്ലാതെ ദൈവ വചനം മനനം ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടും, വചനത്തിന് സാക്ഷ്യം വഹി ച്ചും, വചനം പ്രഘോഷിക്കുന്നതിന് നമ്മുടെ സമയം കുറച്ച് മാറ്റിവെച്ച് തോമാശ്ലീഹായിലൂടെ നമ്മുക്ക് ലഭിച്ച പാരമ്പര്യത്തോട് നീതി പുലർത്തേണ്ടതാണ്. റോമ 10:9 "ആകയാൽ, യേശു കർത്താവാണ് എന്ന് അധരം കൊ ണ്ട് ഏറ്റുപറയുകയും ദൈവം അവനെ മരിച്ചവരിൽ നിന്ന് ഉയർപ്പിച്ചു എന്നു ഹൃദയത്തിൽ വിശ്വസിക്കുകയും ചെയ്താൽ നീ രക്ഷപ്രാപിക്കും." വചനത്തെ പ്രഘോഷിക്കുന്നതിലൂടെ യേശു കർത്താവാണെന്ന് നാം ഏറ്റു പറയുകയും നമ്മുടെ കൗദാശിക ജീവിതത്തിലൂടെ നമുക്ക് ലഭിക്കുന്ന കൃപാവരങ്ങളെ ഉജ്ജലിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടും, നമ്മൾ ആയിരിക്കുന്ന സമൂഹത്തിൽ നമ്മുടെ കർത്താവും നമ്മുടെ കർത്താവും രക്ഷിതാവുമായ യേശുക്രിസ് തുവിന് സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിക്കുവാൻ നമുക്ക് സാധിക്കുന്നു. വിശുദ്ധ ബൈബിൾ വെളിപ്പെടുത്തപ്പെട്ട വചനത്തിന്റെ അച്ചടിച്ച ലിഖിത രൂപം മാത്രമാണെന്ന് നമുക്ക് അറിവുള്ളതാണല്ലോ. നമുക്ക് വിശുദ്ധ ബൈബിൾ ലഭ്യമായി തുടങ്ങിയത് എന്നു മുതലാ ണ്? അതിനു മുൻപ് എങ്ങനെ ആയിരുന്നു വചന പ്രഘോഷണം നടത്തിയിരുന്നത്? അതുകൊണ്ട് നമ്മുടെ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ എവിടെയാണ് ബൈബിളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള വചന പ്രഘോഷണങ്ങൾ നടത്തി യിട്ടുള്ളത്? എന്നൊക്കെ വാദിക്കുന്നവരുമുണ്ടാകാം. ഒരു കാര്യം നമുക്ക് ഉറപ്പുള്ളതാണ് ആദിയിൽ വച നമുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വചനം ദൈവത്തോടു കൂടി ആയിരുന്നു. വചനം ദൈവമായിരുന്നു. വചനംമാംസം ധരിച്ചു നമ്മുടെ ഇടയിൽ വസിച്ചു. ആ വചനം നമ്മുടെ കർത്താവും രക്ഷിതാവുമായ യേശു ക്രിസ്തു തന്നെ ആയി രുന്നു. എവിടെ എല്ലാം കർത്താവായ യേശു പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുവോ അവിടെയെല്ലാം ദൈവവചനമാണ് പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നത്. മറിച്ചും അങ്ങനെ തന്നെ. നമുക്ക് പാരമ്പര്യമായി ലഭിച്ച ക്രിസ്തുമാർഗ്ഗത്തിലൂടെ യുള്ള വിശ്വാസം തലമുറകളായി കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടത് യേശുവിനെയും അവന്റെ വചനത്തെയും പ്രഘോ ഷിക്കപ്പെട്ടതുകൊണ്ടാണ്.

കാലത്തിനനുസരിച്ച് മാറുന്ന എല്ലാ സാങ്കേതിക പരിജ്ഞാനവും നമ്മൾ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നു. സാമൂഹ്യമാധ്യമങ്ങ ളിലും മറ്റും നമ്മൾ അഗ്രഗണ്യരാണ് എന്നാൽ വാമൊഴിയിലൂടെ തലമുറകളായി പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന ഒെ വവചനം, അച്ചടിച്ച ലിഖിത രൂപത്തിൽ ആയപ്പോൾ, കർത്താവിന്റെ ഗ്രന്ഥചുരുളുകൾ – വിശുദ്ധ ബൈബിൾ ആയി രൂപാന്തരപ്പെട്ടപ്പോൾ, അഥുമാത്രം സ്വീകരിക്കുവാൻ നമ്മുടെ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ പേരിൽ നമ്മുക്ക് മടിയാ ണ്. യോഹ 15:22 "ഞാൻ വന്ന് അവരോടു സംസാരിച്ചിരുന്നില്ലെങ്കിൽ അവർക്കു പാപം ഉണ്ടാകുമായിരുന്നില്ല. എന്നാൽ ഇപ്പോൾ അവരുടെ പാപത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് അവർക്ക് ഒഴിവുകഴിവില്ല." അച്ചടിച്ച ലിഖിത രൂപത്തിൽ സം ക്ഷിപ്തമായിരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവവചനം ബൈബിളിന്റെ രൂപത്തിൽ കാലത്തിന്റെ തികവിൽ നമ്മുക്ക് ലഭ്യമായിരി ക്കുന്നു. ഇനി നമ്മുക്ക് ഒഴികഴിവില്ല. വചനം പ്രഘോഷിക്കുക.. കർത്താവായ യേശുവിനെ അധരംകൊണ്ട് മനു ഷ്യരുടെ മുൻപിൽ ഏറ്റു പറഞ്ഞ് ഉദ്ഘോഷിക്കുക...

വചനം പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ തെറ്റായി വ്യാഖാനിക്കപ്പെടും എന്ന മുൻവിധിയോടുകൂടി പലപ്പോഴും യേ ശുവിനെ പ്രഘോഷിക്കാൻ കിട്ടുന്ന അവസരങ്ങൾ ഇല്ലാതാക്കുകയാണ് നാം ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ഇത് ആരുടെ ഇം ഗിതമാണ്?... ഈ നിലപാട് മൂലം നാം ആരുടെ ഹിതമാണ് നിറവേറ്റുന്നത്?... നാം വിവേചിച്ചറിയണം... നമു ക്കെല്ലാവർക്കുമറിയാം ഒരേ വചനം തന്നെ പല രീതിയിൽവ്യാഖ്യാനിക്കപ്പെടുവാൻ സാധിക്കും. മരുഭൂമിയിൽ പരീക്ഷണസമയത്ത് യേശുവിനെ സങ്കീർത്തനം 91 വചന ഭാഗം ഉദ്ധരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണ് പിശാച് പരീക്ഷിച്ചത്. വചനം പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ സഭയോട് ചേർന്ന് നിന്ന് കൊണ്ട് കർത്താവായ യേശുവിനെയാണ് യഥാർ ത്ഥത്തിൽ പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതെങ്കിൽ അതിലെ വ്യാഖ്യാനത്തെ നാം ഭയപ്പെടേണ്ട കാര്യമില്ല. അല്ലാതെ, വചനം വ്യാഖ്യാനം ചെയ്യുന്നത് ശരിയായിരിക്കില്ല എന്ന മുൻവിധിയോടുകൂടി വചന പ്രഘോഷണത്തെ അപ്പാ ടെ തള്ളിക്കളയുന്നതും അവഗണിക്കുന്നതും വചനത്തെ ധൈര്യപൂർവ്വം പ്രഘോഷിച്ച മാർതോമായുടെ പാര മ്പര്യമല്ല. വചന വ്യാഖ്യാനത്തിനുള്ള വരം നൽകുന്നത് – ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവാണ്. (1 കൊറി 12:20) വചനം പ്രഘോഷിക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ ആ വൃക്തിയിലൂടെ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവ് നമ്മോട് സംസാരി ക്കും. കാരണം യേശു കർത്താവാണെന്ന് അധരം കൊണ്ട് ഏറ്റു പറയുവാൻ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവ് മുഖേനയല്ലാ തെ ആർക്കും സാധിക്കുകയില്ല (1 കൊറി 12:3). ഇതേ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവ് തന്നെ നമുക്കും വിവേചന ശക്തി നൽകുന്നു. തിരുസഭയുടെ പഠനങ്ങളോട് ചേർന്നുനിന്നുകൊണ്ട്, യേശുവിനെ ഉദ്ഘോഷിക്കുകയും അവി ടുത്തെ വചനങ്ങൾ പ്രഘോഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ, അത്തരം വചനപ്രഘോഷണങ്ങളെ നിയന്ത്രിക്കാനും, വിലക്കേർപ്പെടുത്താനും, തടയാനും ആർക്കും സാധിക്കുകയില്ല... തോമാശ്ലീഹായിലൂടെ ലഭിച്ച പാരമ്പര്യമാണ് യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ നമ്മുക്കുള്ളതെങ്കിൽ!

ഏശയ്യ 34:16 "കർത്താവിന്റെ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ കണ്ടുപിടിച്ചു വായിക്കുക. ഇവയിലൊന്നും കാണാതിരിക്കു കയില്ല. ഒന്നിനും ഇണയില്ലാതിരിക്കുകയില്ല. എന്തെന്നാൽ, കർത്താവിന്റെ അധരങ്ങൾ കല്പിക്കുകയും അവി ടുത്തെ ആത്മാവ് അവയെ ഒരുമിച്ചുകൂട്ടുകയും ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നു." കർത്താവ് തന്നെ നമ്മുക്ക് നൽകിയിരി ക്കുന്ന ഒരു നിർദ്ദേശമാണിത്. കർത്താവിന്റെ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ നിന്നും കണ്ടുപിടിച്ചു വായിക്കുക. ഒരു വാകൃത്തിന് യോജിക്കുന്ന ഇണ വചനം ലഭിക്കുന്നത് വിശുദ്ധ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ തന്നെ മറ്റൊരു ഭാഗത്ത് നിന്നായിരിക്കും. ഇതാ ണ് വചന പ്രഘോഷണങ്ങളിലും മറ്റുംഉപയോഗിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു രീതി. ഇതിനെതിരായ അഭിപ്രായ ങ്ങളുമുണ്ട്. വചനഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ പലഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നായി വചനങ്ങൾ ഉദ്ധരിക്കരുതെന്നാണ് അങ്ങനെയുള്ള വാദഗതികൾ . യാതൊരു അടിസ്ഥാനവുമില്ലാത്ത ഇത്തരം വാദഗതികളെ ദൈവ വചനത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ തന്നെ നമുക്ക് തള്ളിക്കളയാം. 2 മക്കബായർ 15:9 "നിയമത്തിൽ നിന്നും പ്രവാചന്മാരിൽനിന്നും വാകൃങ്ങൾ ഉദ്ധരിച്ച് അവൻ അവർക്കു ധൈര്യം പകർന്നു….." ജീവിത ത്തിലെ വിവിധങ്ങളായ ആത്മീയ സങ്കീർണതകളിൽപെട്ട് ഉഴലുന്ന നമ്മുടെ സഹോദരങ്ങൾക്ക് ദൈവവചനങ്ങൾ ഉദ്ധരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് അവർക്ക് കർത്താവായ യേശുവിനെ കാണിച്ചുകൊടുത്ത് അവ നിലുള്ള വിശ്വാസത്തിലേക്ക് അവരെ നയിക്കുന്ന ഒരു നവ സുവിശേഷവൽക്കരണത്തിന്റെ വക്താക്കളാ യി നമുക്ക് മാറാം.

നമ്മുടെ ഭവനങ്ങളിൽ അതിവിശിഷ്ടമായും സംപൂജ്യമായും വിശുദ്ധഗ്രന്ഥം സൂക്ഷിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. അതോ ടൊപ്പം, എല്ലാ കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾക്കും, കുട്ടികൾക്കുൾപ്പെടെ വ്യക്തിപരമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കത്തക്ക വിധത്തിൽ ഒരു ബൈബിൾ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുക എന്നത് തികച്ചും സ്വീകാര്യമായ ഒരു നിർദ്ദേശമാണ്. നിയമാവർത്തനം 6:6–9 "ഞാനിന്നു കൽപിക്കുന്ന ഈ വചനങ്ങൾ നിങ്ങളുടെ ഹൃദയത്തിലുണ്ടായിരിക്കണം. ജാഗരൂകതയോടെ അവ നിങ്ങളുടെ മക്കളെ പഠിപ്പിക്കണം; വീട്ടിലായിരിക്കുമ്പോഴും യാത്ര ചെയ്യുമ്പോഴും കിടക്കുമ്പോഴും എഴു ന്നേൽക്കുമ്പോഴും അവയെപ്പറ്റി സംസാരിക്കണം. അവ കൈയ്യിൽ ഒരടയാളമായും നെറ്റിത്തടത്തിൽ പട്ടമായും അണിയണം. അവ നിങ്ങളുടെ വീടിന്റെ കട്ടിളക്കാലിന്മേലും പിടിവാതിലിൻമേലും എഴുതണം." ജോലിക്ക് പേ ാകുമ്പോഴും, ദേവാലത്തിൽ വരുമ്പോഴും നാം വ്യാപരിക്കുന്ന മറ്റ് സമസ്ത മേഖലകളിലും കൈയ്യിൽ അടയാ ളമായി ഒരു വചനഗ്രന്ഥം കരുതേണ്ടത്, നവ സുവിശേഷവൽക്കരണത്തിനുള്ള 🛛 ഫലപ്രദമായഒരു രീതിയായി, മേൽപറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവവചനത്തിന്റെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ നമുക്ക് സ്വീകരിക്കാം. അതുപോലെ തന്നെ, പല ഭാഷകളിൽ വിവർത്തനം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന വിശുദ്ധ ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളും, യേശു നാമത്തിന്റെ ശക്തിയെക്കുറി ച്ച് പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്ന ലഘു പുസ്തകങ്ങളും, മാസികകളും നമ്മുടെ ചുറ്റും വിവിധ ഭാഷകൾ സംസാരിക്കുന്ന ജനതകളിലും ജയിലുകളിലും മറ്റും കഴിയുന്ന അനേകരിൽ എത്തിച്ചുകൊടുത്തും, നമ്മുടെ ഭവനങ്ങളിലും വാഹനങ്ങളിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടെ യേശുവിന്റെ നാമത്തെ പ്രഘോഷിക്കുന്ന സ്റ്റിക്കറുകളും മറ്റും പതിച്ചുകൊണ്ട്, അത് വായിക്കാനിടയാകുന്ന അനേകരെ അവരുടെ അധരങ്ങളിലൂടെ യേശു നാമത്തെ ഏറ്റു പറയുവാൻ പ്രേരണ നൽകാം. ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിന്റെ നവ സുവിശേഷവൽക്കരണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ പങ്കുചേർന്നുകൊണ്ട് തോമാ ശ്ലീഹായിലൂടെ ലഭിച്ച പാരമ്പര്യങ്ങളെ ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിച്ച് അമേരിക്കൻ ജനതകളുടെ മധ്യേ നമുക്ക് സധൈര്യം മുന്നേറാം!

(മുകളിൽ പറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവരാജ്യത്തിന്റെ ഇത്തരം ശുശ്രൂഷകൾ അപ്രായോഗികമാണെന്നോ, അതിശയോക്തിപരമാണെന്നോ കരുതരുത്. എന്തെന്നാൽ, ഹൂസ്റ്റൺ സെന്റ് ജോസഫ് സീറോ മലബാർ ഫൊറോന ഇടവക ദേവാലയത്തിൽ അനേകം ദൈവമക്കൾ യേശു ക്രിസ്തുവിനെ രക്ഷിതാവും കർത്താവുമായി സ്വീകരിച്ച്, അധരം കൊണ്ട് ഏറ്റുപറഞ്ഞ്, നവ സുവിശേഷവൽക്കരണത്തിന്റെ ഇത്തരം ദൈവരാജ്യശുശ്രൂഷകളിൽ ഏർപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നതായി കാണുവാൻ സാധിക്കും)





ഡോളി <mark>& ജെയിംസ് വടക്കേക്കര</mark> സെന്റ് ജോസഫ് ഫൊറോന ചർച്ച്, ഹൂസ്റ്റൺ

## എനിക്ക് നിന്നെക്കുറിച്ച് ഒരു പദ്ധതിയുണ്ട്

"ഈശോ വസിക്കും കുടുംബം" അത് ഞങ്ങളുടെ രണ്ടുപേരുടെയും സ്വപ്നമായിരുന്നു. എല്ലാ സൗഭാഗ്യങ്ങൾ ക്കും അപ്പുറത്ത് കുടുംബത്തിൽ ദൈവീക ചൈതന്യം നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കണം, മക്കളെ ദൈവത്തെ അറിയുന്ന വിശുദ്ധരായി വളർത്തണം. ഇതൊക്കെ വിവാഹജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യ നാളുകളിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ സ്വപ്നം കണ്ടിരു ന്നു. അതിനായി ഞങ്ങളുടെ കുടുംബത്തെ തിരുകുടുംബത്തിന് സമർപ്പിച്ച് ജപമാല ചൊല്ലി ഞങ്ങൾ നിത്യവും പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചിരുന്നു.

വിപരീതമായചുറ്റുപാടുകൾആണ് ഞങ്ങൾക്കുണ്ടായിരുന്നത്. വിവാഹം കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾമുതൽ 10 വർഷത്തെ ഞങ്ങ ളുടെ ജീവിതം സൗദി അറേബ്യ എന്ന രാജ്യത്തായിരുന്നു. അവിടെ ക്രിസ്തീയ ദേവാലയങ്ങൾ ഇല്ല, കുർബ്ബാന അർ പ്പണമോ, ആരാധനയോ ഇല്ല. കുട്ടികൾക്ക് വേദോപദേശക്ലാസുകളോ വിശ്വാസപരിശീലനങ്ങളോ ഇല്ല. അടച്ചുപൂട്ടി സീൽ ചെയ്ത ഇരുളടഞ്ഞ മുറികളിൽ ആരും കാണാതെ കുറച്ചുപേർ ഒന്നിച്ചുകൂടി ശബ്ദം കുറച്ച് രഹസ്യമായി പ്രാ ർത്ഥിക്കും. ദൈവീക ശക്തി ആർജ്ജിക്കുവാൻ ഞങ്ങൾക്കു കിട്ടിയിരുന്ന ഏകമാർഗ്ഗം അതായിരുന്നു. ആ മണ ലാരണ്യത്തിൽ ക്രിസ്തീയ ദേവാലയങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്നോ അവിടെ മക്കളെ ക്രിസ്തീയ വിശ്വാസത്തിൽ വളർ ത്താമെന്നോ ചിന്തിക്കുവാൻ പോലും ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ആകുമായിരുന്നില്ല. എന്നാലും ഞങ്ങൾ ദൈവത്തിൽ അടി യുറച്ചു വിശ്വസിച്ചു. നമുക്ക് നന്മക്കായി ഉള്ളത് തക്ക സമയത്ത് അവിടുന്ന് തരും എന്ന് മനസിൽ ഞങ്ങൾ കുറിച്ചുവച്ചു.

ഇസഹാക്കിനേയും കൊണ്ട് മലകയറിപ്പോയ അബ്രാഹത്തിന്റെ വിശ്വാസം ഞങ്ങളും ആർജ്ജിച്ചെടുത്തു. മോറിയ മലയുടെ മുകളിൽ എത്തിയപ്പോൾ ഇസഹാക്ക് ചോദിച്ചു: "നമ്മുടെ കൈയ്യിൽ തീയും വിറകുമുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ ബലിയർപ്പിക്കാനുള്ള ആട്ടിൻകുട്ടി എവിടെ?" അബ്രാഹത്തിന്റെ മറുപടി നമ്മെയൊക്കെ അതിശ യിപ്പിക്കുന്നതായിരുന്നു. "തക്കസമയത്ത് കർത്താവു തരും." പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കാൻ ഒന്നുമില്ലാതിരുന്ന സമയത്തും അബ്രാഹം വിശ്വസിച്ചു. കർത്താവ് വഴി കാട്ടിത്തരും. അത് ജീവിതത്തിൽ പ്രാവർത്തികമാക്കണമെന്ന് ഞങ്ങ ളും ഉറപ്പിച്ചു. നമ്മുടെ മക്കളെ കത്തോലിക്കാ വിശ്വാസം കൊടുത്ത് വളർത്താനും കുടുംബം ക്രിസ്തീയ മൂല്യ ങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ട് നിറയ്ക്കാനുമുള്ള ഞങ്ങളുടെ ആഗ്രഹത്തെ ദൈവം മാനിക്കും, അവിടുന്ന് വഴി നടത്തും എന്ന് ഞങ്ങൾ തന്നെ ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഹൃദയങ്ങളെ പഠിപ്പിച്ചു.

വളരെ അവിചാരിതമായിരുന്നു അമേരിക്കയിലേക്കുള്ള ഞങ്ങളുടെ യാത്ര. ഞങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം അതിനായി പ്രയത് നിച്ചവരിൽ പലരും വിസ നിർത്തിയതിനാൽ കടന്നുവരാൻ കഴിയാതെ നിന്നപ്പോൾ വളരെ അത്ഭുതകരമായി ദൈവം ഞങ്ങളെ അമേരിക്കയിലെത്തിച്ചു. ഹ്യൂസ്റ്റൺ എന്ന നഗരത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് കേട്ടറിവ് പോലും ഇല്ലാതിരുന്ന ഞങ്ങൾ ഹ്യൂസ്റ്റണിൽ എത്തി. ദൈവം തന്റെ പദ്ധതികൾ എത്ര മനോഹരമായി വിഭാവനം ചെയ്യുന്നു എന്ന തിന്റെ ഉത്തമ ഉദാഹരണം പോലെ. പുതുതായി തുടങ്ങിയ സെന്റ് ജോസഫ്സ് സീറോ മലബാർ കാത്തലിക് ചർച്ചിന്റെ അംഗങ്ങളായി മാറുവാൻ ദൈവം ഞങ്ങളെ അനുവദിച്ചു. ക്രിസ്തീയ മൂല്യങ്ങൾക്ക് 100 ശതമാനം പരിഗണന നൽകി ക്രിസ്തു സ്നേഹത്തിലും വിശ്വാസത്തിലും ഒരുമിച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്ന ഒരു കൂട്ടം കുടുംബ ങേളോടൊപ്പം ദൈവം ഞങ്ങളേയും ചേർത്തുനിർത്തി. എന്നും വിശുദ്ധബലിയിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കാം, മക്കളെ വേ ദപാഠം പഠിപ്പിക്കാം. വിവിധ ഭക്ത സംഘടനകൾ, ആത്മീയവളർച്ചയ്ക്കുതകുന്ന ധ്യാനങ്ങൾ, പ്രഭാഷണങ്ങൾ എല്ലാറ്റിനും ഉപരിയായി എല്ലാ ദിവസവും മുഴുവൻ സമയം നീണ്ടുനിൽക്കുന്ന ദിവ്യകാരുണ്യ ആരാധന. ഈ ശോയോടൊപ്പം എത്ര സമയം വേണമെങ്കിലും ചെലവഴിക്കാം. കൗദാശിക ജീവിതം അനുദിനം ആസ്ഥദിക്കാം. ഇതിനുമപ്പുറം എന്ത് അനുഗ്രഹമാണ് ഞങ്ങളുടെ കുടുംബത്തിലേയ്ക്കും, മക്കളുടെ ആത്മീയ വളർച്ചയിലേ ക്കും ഈശോ വർഷിക്കേണ്ടത്!

ഞങ്ങൾ, കാനാൻ ദേശത്തേയ്ക്ക് വന്നെത്തിയ ഇസ്രായേൽ ജനത്തെപ്പോലെ അനുഗ്രഹീതമായ ഒരു



സീറോ മലബാർ സഭയെ അമേരിക്കൻ മണ്ണിൽ എത്തിക്കുന്നതിന് പിന്നിൽ പ്രവർത്തിച്ച എല്ലാ നല്ല മനസ്സുകൾക്കും ഒരായിരം നന്ദി. ദൈവത്തി ന്റെ ആലയം ഈ മണ്ണിലെത്തുന്ന ഓരോ മലയാ ളി കുടുംബത്തിനും അനുഗ്രഹിക്കപ്പെട്ട ജീവിതം നയിക്കുവാൻ വഴികാട്ടിയായി തീരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങളെ പ്പോലെ ഗൾഫിൽ നിന്നും ലോകത്തിന്റെ വിവിധ ഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും കടന്നുവരുന്ന എത്രയെത്ര കുടുംബങ്ങൾക്ക് സീറോ മലബാർ സഭയുടെ ദേ വാലയങ്ങൾ ദൈവത്തെ തൊട്ടറിയാനുള്ള വേദി യായി മാറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. എല്ലാ മഹത്വവും ദൈവത്തിന് അർപ്പിക്കുന്നു.





പ്രപഞ്ച സത്യത്തിൻ സൂക്തങ്ങൾ ആത്മീയ നദിയായ് എന്നിലേക്കൊഴുകി എന്നുണ്ണിതൻ സാമീപ്യം ഞാനറിഞ്ഞു ആ ആത്മീയ ചൈതന്യത്തിൽ ആത്മഹർഷപുളകിതയായി ഞാൻ **–** 

ആരോടു ഞാൻ ചൊല്ലുമെൻ ഗദ്ഗദം എന്ന് നിനച്ചിരിക്കവേ ആകസ്മികം വിസ്മയം എന്നിലെ ആത്മീയ നയനങ്ങൾ മിഴി തുറന്നു അശ്രുകണങ്ങൾ ധാരയായ് ഒഴുകി

ദേശദേശാന്തരം പാറുന്ന ദേശാടനക്കിളികളോട് ഞാൻ ഉരചെയ്തു കണ്ടുവോ എന്നുടെ ഉണ്ണിയെ പോകുവാൻ പരതുവാൻ ഇനിയും എത്രയോ ദൂരം നിന്നുടെ രൂപവും ഭാവവും ഇന്നെനിക്കന്യമോ

എവിടെ നീ ഉണ്ണീ എന്നുടെ പൊന്നുണ്ണി ഏഴുവർണ്ണങ്ങളാൽ വിരിയുമീ മഴവില്ലിന്നപ്പുറമോ പെയ്തു വീഴുന്നൊരീ മഴനീർത്തുള്ളികൾക്കൊപ്പമോ അതോ സപ്തഗിരികൾക്കപ്പുറമെവിടെയോ

അഴലിന്റെ ഇരുൾ വന്നു മൂടിയൊരു മിഴികൾ ചിമ്മി ഞാൻ ജന്മാന്തരങ്ങളായ് നിന്നെ തേടുന്നു ഇന്നിന്റെ വഴികളോ എനിക്കന്യം നാളത്തെ പുലരിയും പ്രദോഷവും ഇനിയുമെത്രയോ അകലെ

ഇന്നിന്റെ കാണാവഴികളിൽ എനിക്കന്യമാം വീഥിയിൽ ചരിക്കുമൊരു കേവലം സഞ്ചാരി ഞാൻ കാലചക്രം ദ്രുതഗതിയിൽ ചലിക്കുന്നു ഇന്ന് ഞാൻ ജരാനരകളാൽ അലംകൃതമായൊരു പടുമരം

മഞ്ഞുപെയ്തൊരാരാത്രിയിൽ നിന്നെ തേടിയ മൂന്ന് രാജാക്കന്മാർക്കൊപ്പം വെൺ ശോഭവിതറുമീ താരകങ്ങൾ സാക്ഷിയായ് ഞാൻ തുടരുന്നു ഏകാന്തമീ എന്നുടെ സമീക്ഷ

ദേവാലയ തിരുനാളിൽ കൂടിയ ജനസഞ്ചയത്തിൻ നടുവിലെവിടെയോ കൈവിട്ടുപോയോരുണ്ണിയെ തേടുന്ന തനയതൻ വ്യഥയാൽ നിനക്കായുണ്ണീ തിരയുവതെൻ മനവും

## ആത്മാവിന്റെ സമീക്ഷ

ം സെസ്റ്റ് അൽഫോൻസാ ചർച്ച്, അറ്റ്ലാന്റ

സുമി വെങ്ങിണിക്കൽ



**മോളി മാത്യു** സെൻ്റ് ജോസഫ് ഫൊറോന ചർച്ച്, ഹൂസ്റ്റൺ

## വിടരാൻ കൊതിക്കുന്ന ഗർഭപാത്രങ്ങൾ:പരി. അമ്മയുടെ സന്നിധിയിലേക്ക്

പ്രകൃതി രമണീയമായ ഈ സുന്ദര ലോകത്തിൽ നമുക്ക് ഒന്നു കണ്ണോടിച്ചു നോക്കാം. വിശാലമായ പച്ചപുൽ ത്തകിടി മെത്തവിരിച്ചതുപോലെ പ്രശാന്തതയിൽ നിവർന്നു കിടക്കുന്നു. ഇടയ്ക്കിടയ്ക്ക് നല്ല ഭംഗിയുള്ള പല നിറങ്ങളിലുള്ള കൊച്ചു കൊച്ചു ചെടികൾ എല്ലാം പുഷ്പിച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്നു. അങ്ങിങ്ങായി ഉയർന്നു നിൽക്കുന്ന ഒരുപാട് ഫലവൃക്ഷങ്ങൾ പൂത്തുലഞ്ഞു കായ്കളുമായി നിൽക്കുന്നു. അങ്ങ് മരച്ചില്ലകൾക്കിടയിൽ ഒളിച്ചുക ളിക്കുന്ന അണ്ണാൻ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾ, കൃത്രിമ തടാകത്തിന്റെ അരികിൽ കൂടി നിരനിരയായി നടന്നു നീങ്ങുന്ന താറാവ് കൂട്ടങ്ങൾ ഇളം കാറ്റിനോടൊത്തു പാറിപ്പറക്കുന്ന പൂമ്പാറ്റക്കൂട്ടവും അതിനു താളം വയ്ക്കുന്ന പക്ഷിക ളുടെ ചെറുശബ്ദങ്ങളും, വെള്ളത്തിലുള്ള മീൻ കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളും വിടർന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന താമരയും ഇതെല്ലാം ഉച്ചത്തിൽ വിളിച്ചുപറയുന്ന സത്യമെന്താണ്? തലമുറകളിലേയ്ക്കു പകർന്നുകൊടുക്കുന്ന ജീവന്റെ കഥയാണ്. അമ്മയെന്ന പദത്തിന്റെ മൂല്യമാണ്.

കത്തോലിക്കാ വിശ്വാസികളായ നാം മെയ്മാസം പരിശുദ്ധ അമ്മയുടെ വണക്കമാസമായി ആചരിക്കുന്നു. മെ യ് രണ്ടാമത്തെ ഞായറാഴ്ച ലോകമെമ്പാടും മദേഴ്സ് ഡേ ആയി വലിയ ആർഭാടപൂർവ്വം ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നു. ഓരോ മദേഴ്സ് ഡേ ആഘോഷങ്ങളിലും നാം മറന്നുപോകുന്ന ചില സത്യങ്ങൾ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിക്കാനാണ് ഞാൻ ഈ വരികൾ എഴുതുന്നത 'അമ്മ' എന്ന വലിയ പദത്തിന് യോഗ്യരാകാൻ ഭാഗ്യം ലഭിച്ച എല്ലാ അമ്മമാരും ഏറെ സന്തോഷത്തോടെയും അഭിമാനപൂർവവും മദേഴ്സ് ഡേ ആഘോഷിക്കും. മക്കളും മരുമക്കളും ഭർത്താ വും വാങ്ങിക്കൊടുത്ത ഗ്രീറ്റിംഗ് കാർഡും ബലൂണുകളും, ഫ്ളവേഴ്സും സമ്മാനക്കൂട്ടുമായി ആശംസകൾ സ്വീ കരിക്കുമ്പോൾ നമ്മുടെ ചുറ്റുപാടും വിവാഹജീവിതത്തിൽ അമ്മയാകാൻ ഭാഗ്യം ലഭിക്കാതെ ഏകാന്ത ജീവിത ത്തിൽ മനം നൊന്തുകരയുന്ന ചിലരെയെങ്കിലും കണ്ടിട്ടില്ല എന്ന് നമുക്ക് അഭിനയിക്കാൻ കഴിയുന്നതെങ്ങനെ? അവരുടെ ഏങ്ങലുകൾ കേട്ടില്ലെന്നു പറയുവാൻ കഴിയുമോ?

സങ്കീർത്തനം 127:3ൽ പറയുന്നതുപോലെ "കർത്താവിന്റെ ദാനമാണ് മക്കൾ, ഉദരഫലം ഒരു സമ്മാനവും." വിവാഹജീവിതത്തിന്റെ സമ്മാനമായ ഒരു കുഞ്ഞിനുവേണ്ടി– വിടരാൻ കൊതിക്കുന്ന ഗർഭപാത്രവുമായി കാ ത്തിരിക്കുന്ന ഏറെ അമ്മമാർ നമുക്ക് ചുറ്റുമുണ്ട്. ഇവർക്കുവേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കേണ്ടത് നമ്മുടെ പ്രത്യേകിച്ചും അമ്മയാകാൻ ഭാഗ്യം ലഭിച്ച നാം ഓരോരുത്തരുടേയും കടമയാണ്. അമ്മമാർ നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടത് അല്ലെങ്കിൽ മരി ച്ചുപോയവരുടേയും കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങൾക്കുണ്ടാകുന്ന മനോവേദനകളും നാം ഓർക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. പരിശുദ്ധ അമ്മയു ടെ വിമല ഹൃദയത്തിലേക്ക് ഇവരെ സമർപ്പിക്കാം. ഇതു വായിക്കുന്ന ഓരോ കുടുംബവും ഓരോ ദമ്പതികളെ മനസ്സിൽ ചേർത്തുപിടിച്ചു അവർക്കുവേണ്ടി ഉപവസിച്ചുപ്രാർത്ഥിക്കാം. വരുന്ന സെപ്റ്റംബർ എട്ടുനോമ്പ് ഇവർ ക്കായി സമർപ്പിക്കാം. പരിശുദ്ധ അമ്മയുടെ ശക്തമായ മാധ്യസ്ഥം വഴി ഈ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മ യുഗത്തിൽ സഭയോ ടൊത്തുചേർന്നു കൈകൾകോർത്തു നീങ്ങാം. സഭയുടെ അടിത്തൂണുകളാകാൻ ആത്മാഭിഷേകമുള്ള കുഞ്ഞു മക്കളെ ഏറ്റുവാങ്ങാം. അടുത്ത മദേഴ്സ് ഡേയിൽ പുത്തൻ പ്രതീക്ഷകളുമായി പുത്തൻ അമ്മമാർ ഉണരെട്ടെ. ■



സണ്ണി കുറ്റിയാനി സെന്റ് ജോസഫ് ഫൊറോന ചർച്ച്, ഹൂസ്റ്റൺ

ഏറുവാനൊരു ഗോപുരം നിറവേറുവാനൊരു നാഡിയും വാഴുവാൻ നിര നേർക്കുനേർ വഴി കാട്ടുവാൻ നിര വാനിലും

നാമ കേതുവിലാർന്നിറങ്ങുമി ലോല ഹൃദയ തമസ്സിലും

ഏറ്റു വാങ്ങു നിരന്തരം

ദൈവ കൃപകളി കൂപ്പുകൈകളിൽ

ഏറിയാലൊരു നാൾക്കു പോലും കരുതായ കേവല ജീവിതം അപരനൊരു തുണയാകുകിൽ അതിന്നനുഭവം അതിലേറെയാം 🗖

ജീവിതം





**ബാബു തെക്കേക്കര** സെന്റ് ജോസഫ് ഫൊറോന ചർച്ച്, ഹൂസ്റ്റൺ

## കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ

കൃഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ മരണവാർത്ത നന്ദിനി ഓപ്പോളാണു വിളിച്ചറിയച്ചത്. പതിവുപോലെ ഓഫീസിലെ തിരക്കിൽ നിന്നു രക്ഷപെട്ട്, നിരത്തിലെ പൊടിയും പുകയും ശ്വസിച്ച് പരിക്ഷീണിതനായി മുറിയിലെത്തുമ്പോൾ പടി ഞ്ഞാറു കുങ്കുമച്ചായം വിതറിയെറിഞ്ഞു സൂര്യൻ മറയുവാൻ തുടങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. എന്തുകൊണ്ടോ പതിവില്ലാതെ മനസ്സിന് ഒരു വിങ്ങലനുഭവപ്പെട്ടു. നിർവ്വചിക്കാനാവാത്തഒരു ത്രാസം. ഒന്നിനും ഒരു ഉന്മേഷം തോന്നിയില്ല.

പാന്റും ഷർട്ടും ഊരി കസേരയിലേക്കെറിഞ്ഞ് ലുങ്കിയുടുത്ത് ഒരു സിഗരറ്റു കൊളുത്തി കട്ടിലിലമർന്നു കിട ന്നു. സിഗരറ്റിന്റെ വെളുത്ത പുക വളയങ്ങളായി മച്ചിലേക്ക് ഉയർന്നു പൊങ്ങി ശൂന്യതയിൽ ലയിച്ചില്ലാതാകു ന്നത് ഒരു ശിശുവിന്റെ കതൂഹലത്തോടെ നോക്കി കിടന്നു. ആ കിടപ്പിൽ മനസ്സിന്റെ കെട്ടുകളഴിഞ്ഞു. തളർന്ന ജീവന്റെ സൂക്ഷ്മതാരകളിലൂടെ ഏതോ ശാന്തിമന്ത്രത്തിന്റെ പാട്ടെന്നോ ചൊല്ലിക്കടന്നു പോയ നാമസങ്കീർത്ത നങ്ങളുടെ ഈരടികൾ ഒഴുകി കടന്നു പോയി.

എത്ര നേരം അങ്ങനെ കിടന്നു എന്നറിയില്ല. നിർത്താതെ അടിച്ച ഫോണിന്റെ ബല്ലുകൾ മനസ്സിന്റെ ഇരുൾ ത്താരകളിൽ ഗ്രുഹാതുരത്വത്തിന്റെ അമ്പലമണികളായി മുഴങ്ങി. പൊടി പിടിച്ച പഴയ ഓർമ്മകളിലൂടെ ഞെട്ടി പ്പിടഞ്ഞെഴുന്നേറ്റു. മങ്ങിയ ഇരുട്ട് മുറിയിൽ മഞ്ഞിന്റെ പാട പരത്തിയിരുന്നു. സ്ഥലകാലബോധം വീണ്ടുകി ട്ടുവാൻ കുറെ സമയം വേണ്ടി വന്നു. വിറക്കുന്ന കൈകളോടെ അപ്പോഴും നിർത്താതെ അടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്ന ഫോണിന്റെ റിസീവറെടുത്ത് ചെവിയിൽ വച്ചു. എന്തു പറയണമെന്നോർത്ത് പകക്കുമ്പോൾ അങ്ങേ തലക്കൽ നന്ദിനി ഓപ്പോളുടെ കനത്ത ശബ്ദം.

"നീയ്യവിടെ എന്തു ചെയ്യുകയാണു രമേശാ. എത്ര നേരമായി ഞാൻ ഫോൺ ചെയ്യുന്നു. നിനക്കൊന്ന് ഫോ ണെടുത്തു കൂടെ?"

നന്ദിനി ഓപ്പോൾ എപ്പോഴുമെങ്ങിനെയാണു. പരിഭവങ്ങളുടെ കെട്ടുകളഴിച്ചുകൊണ്ടേ സംസാരം തുടങ്ങൂ. "ഇവിടെ അച്ചനു തീരെ സുഖമില്ല. വീണ്ടും ആ പഴയ അസുഖം തന്നെ. അടുത്തുള്ള കണാരൻ വൈദ്യരെ കാണിച്ചു. കുറച്ചു മരുന്നു തന്നു. പട്ടണത്തിൽ ഏതെങ്കിലും നല്ല ആശുപത്രിയിൽ കൊണ്ടുപോകാൻ പറ ഞ്ഞു. അതിനു എന്റെ കയ്യിൽ എവിടെയാ പൈസ. രഘുവേട്ടൻ അയച്ചുതരുന്നന പണം ഒന്നിനും തികയില്ല. സാധനങ്ങൾക്കൊക്കെ എന്താ വില. പോരാത്തതിനു കുട്ടികളുടെ പഠനചിലവ് വേറെയും…. നീയെന്താ രമേ ശാ ഒന്നും മിണ്ടാത്തത്?"അപ്പോഴും തല പെരുക്കുന്നതുപോലെ. മുകളിൽ വയസ്സൻ പങ്ക ആസ്മാ രോഗി യായ കിളവന്റെ ശ്വാസം വലിപോലെ വിഷമിച്ച് കറങ്ങുന്നു. വേനൽച്ചൂടിന്റെ മൃഗതൃക്ഷ്ണ ശമിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല.

"ഓപ്പോൾ പറഞ്ഞോളു. ഞാൻ കേൾക്കുന്നുണ്ട്." ജാള്യതയോടെ മറുപടി പറഞ്ഞു.

നന്ദിനി ഓപ്പോൾ പിന്നെയും എന്തൊക്കെയോ പറഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. താൻ കേൾക്കുവാൻ താല്പര്യമി ല്ലാത്ത നാട്ടിലെ വിശേഷങ്ങൾ. ഗൾഫുകാരൻ റഷീദ് വലിയ മാളിക പണിതത്, കരോട്ടെ ഗോപാലപ്പണിക്കർ വയലു വാങ്ങിയത്, അങ്ങനെ പലതും. അവനൊന്നും മിണ്ടിയില്ല. അവസാനം ഫോൺ വക്കുമ്പോൾ ഓ പ്പോൾ പറഞ്ഞു;

"നീയ്യറിഞ്ഞോ രമേശാ, വടക്കേലെ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ ദിവസം മരിച്ചു. പാവം, ബന്ധുക്കളാരും ഇല്ലാത്ത തുകൊണ്ട് വകേലേതോ ഒരു ചെക്കൻ കർമ്മങ്ങൾ നടത്തുകയായിരുന്നു. ബലിച്ചോറു കൊത്തിത്തിന്നാൻ കാക്കകൾ വന്നില്ലത്രെ. പാവം, ആത്മാവിനു ഗതി കിട്ടീട്ടുണ്ടാവില്ല." അങ്ങേത്തലക്കൽ നന്ദിനി ഓപ്പോൾ ഫോൺ വച്ചിട്ടും റിസീവർ കയ്യിൽ പിടിച്ച് കനത്തു വരുന്ന ഇരുട്ടിലേക്കു നോക്കി രമേശൻ ഏറെ നേരം ഇരു ന്നു. അജ്ഞാതമായ ഏതോ ദു:ഖത്തിന്റെ കനലുകൾ ഒരു നെരിപ്പോടായി അവന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ എരിയുവാൻ തുടങ്ങി. ഗതി കിട്ടാതെ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ ആത്മാവ് അവനു ചുറ്റും വട്ടമിട്ടു പറക്കുന്നതുപോലെ തോന്നി. മറ്റൊരു സിഗരറ്റു കൊളുത്തി ഇരുട്ടിൽ ജനലിന്റെ തുരുമ്പിച്ച അഴികളിൽ കൈകളൂന്നി രമേശൻ താഴെ പതഞ്ഞൊഴുകുന്ന പുഴയിലേക്കു നോക്കി വെറുതെ നിന്നു. ഗതകാലസ്മരണക ളുടെ തള്ളലിൽ അവന്റെ ഹൃദയം വിങ്ങി.

രമേശന്റെ യൗവ്വനത്തിന്റെ പിരിയാത്ത ഓർമ്മയായി കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ എന്നും നിറഞ്ഞു നിന്നു. പട്ടാളത്തിൽ നിന്നും പിരിഞ്ഞു നാട്ടിൻപുറത്തു താമസമാക്കിയ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ എപ്പോഴാണു തന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അശാ ന്ത യാത്രകളിൽ സഹയാത്രികനായതെന്ന് രമേശൻ പലപ്പോഴും അതിശയപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. പുഴവക്കത്ത് മാനം മുട്ടെ പന്തലിച്ചു നിന്ന മാവും പ്ലാവും പാഴ്മരങ്ങളും നിറഞ്ഞ ഒരു തൊടിയുടെ മദ്ധ്യത്തിലായിരുന്നു കൃഷ് ണേട്ടന്റെ വീട്. സസ്യങ്ങളുടെ പുതപ്പിട്ട തൊടികളിൽ എപ്പോഴും കുളിർമയായിരുന്നു. പുഴയോരത്തെ വെളി നിലങ്ങളിൽ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ പച്ചക്കറികൃഷി നടത്തി. അതികമാരോടും മിണ്ടാതെ ഒരു സ്വാത്തികന്റെ നിസ്സംഗ തയോടെ, അസംഖ്യം നിഷ്ടകളിലൂടെ പച്ചക്കറികളെ പരിചരിച്ച് കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ തന്റെ അശാന്ത ദിനപതങ്ങളെ അഞ്താതമായ ഏതോ ദേവാനുഭവമാക്കി ത്തീർക്കുകയായിരുന്നെന്ന് രമേശനു പലപ്പോഴും തോന്നിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.

നഗരത്തിലെ കലാലയത്തിൽ നിന്നു പഠനം പൂർത്തിയാക്കി രമേശൻ നാട്ടിൽ തിരിച്ചെത്തിയ കാലം. പിന്നീട് അനന്തമായ തൊഴിലന്വേഷണത്തിന്റെ മടുപ്പിക്കുന്ന ആവർത്തന വിരസതയിൽ രമേശൻ ആണ്ടു. ജോലികൾ ക്കുള്ള അപേക്ഷകൾ അയച്ച് ഓരോ ദിവസവും മറുപടികൾക്കു വേണ്ടിയുള്ള കാത്തിരുപ്പായി. എന്നാൽ ഒരിക്കലും അതു വന്നില്ല. കാത്തിരുപ്പുകൾ നിരാശയിലേക്ക് നീങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ പരിചിത വ്യർത്ത തകൾക്കപ്പുറം അകലങ്ങളിലേക്കു നീളുന്ന ചവിട്ടടിപ്പാതകളിലൂടെ എവിടെയൊക്കെയോ രമേശൻ അലഞ്ഞു നടന്നു. വെള്ളം വറ്റിയ പുഴയുടെ തെളിമണൽപ്പരപ്പുകളിലൂടെ, എലികൾ മാളം മെനഞ്ഞ, ഇരുവശത്തും കാട്ടുപൊന്തകൾ ഇരുൾ വിരിച്ച ഇടവഴികളിലൂടെ, കാവിനു പിന്നിൽ അകലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് നീണ്ടു പോകുന്ന വന്ധ്യത നിറഞ്ഞ മൊട്ടക്കുന്നുകളുടെ വിജനസ്തലികളിലൂടെ രമേശൻ തന്റെ നടത്തം തുടർന്നു.

പുഴയ്ക്കു ചേരേകിടക്കുന്ന ശിവക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ പിന്നിലെ സർപ്പക്കാവിന്റെ വനസ്തലികളിൽ മിക്കപ്പോഴും തന്റെ ജാഗ്രൽസ്വപ്നങ്ങളിൽ കോട്ടകൾ കെട്ടി അവൻ മയങ്ങി. അവന്റെ തലക്കു മുകളിൽ പടർന്നു പന്തലിച്ച മരച്ചില്ലകളിൽ പക്ഷികൾ കുറുകുകയും പതിഞ്ഞ സ്വരത്തിൽ കലമ്പൽ കൂട്ടുകയും ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. കാവിനു പുറത്ത് വെളിമ്പറമ്പുകളിൽ വെയിലിന്റെ മൃഗതൃഷ്ണ മുടിയഴിഞ്ഞാടുമ്പോൾ ഇലഞ്ഞിയും പാല യും പൂത്തു നിന്ന കാവിനുള്ളിലെ സുഖശീതളിമ രമേശനു ദേവാനുഭവമായിരുന്നു. തന്റേതു മാത്രമായ ആ ലോകത്തിരുന്ന് അവൻ സുമഗന്ധങ്ങളുടെ അവസാനമില്ലാത്ത കിനാവുകൾ കണ്ടു. ഒരിക്കൽ അത്തരമൊരു മയക്കത്തിൽ ആരോ ചുമലിൽ തട്ടി വിളിക്കുന്നതറിഞ്ഞു. "എണീക്കു രമേശാ."

പതിഞ്ഞ ആ മൃദുസ്വരം കാതുകളിൽ വന്നലച്ചപ്പോൾ രമേശൻ തന്നെതന്നെ മറന്നു കളയുകയും മറ്റേതോ കാലത്തിന്റെ ധ്വനികളിൽ കാവിലെ പരദേവതകൾ തന്നോട് സംസാരിക്കുന്നതായി അവനു തോന്നുകയും ചെ യ്തു. ഒരു മായിക വിഭ്രാന്തിയുടെ സുഖകരമായ ആലസ്യത്തോടെ കണ്ണുകൾ തുറന്ന രമേശൻ മോഷണത്തി നിടയിൽ പിടിക്കപ്പെട്ട ചോരന്റെ ജാള്യതയോടെ പിടഞ്ഞെണീറ്റു. മുന്നിൽ അജ്ഞാതദു:ഖത്തിന്റെ കണ്ണുന ീർത്തുള്ളികൾ ഒളിഞ്ഞു കിടന്നു. അകലെ മേടുകൾക്കു മീതെ വെയിൽ ചാഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. കാവിലെ കനത്ത നിഴലുകൾക്കപ്പുറം സായാഹ്നം ശാന്തവും പ്രസന്നവുമായിരുന്നു. നേരം താണിട്ടും ഉഷ്ണം ശമിച്ചിരുന്നില്ല. മരച്ചില്ലകളിലൂടെ കിഴക്കൻ കാറ്റ് ദൈവസാന്ദ്രതയോടെ കടന്നുപോയി. കൃഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ പിന്നാലെ കാവിലെ കനത്ത, ഇരുണ്ട നിഴലുകളിൽ നിന്നും പുറത്തെ തെളിഞ്ഞ അപരാഹ്നത്തിലേക്ക് നടക്കുമ്പോൾ അവരറിയാ തെ ജന്മാന്തരങ്ങളിലൂടെ കൈമാറപ്പെട്ട പുതിയൊരു ബന്ധം ഉടലെടുക്കപ്പെടുകയായിരുന്നു.

പിന്നീട് നാളുകളോളം ഗ്രാമത്തിന്റെ സായാഹ്നങ്ങൾ ഒരു സാധനപോലെ അമ്പഹം അവർ പങ്കിട്ടു. നീർച്ചാ ലായി അസ്തമയത്തിലൂടെ അജ്ഞാതങ്ങളിലേക്ക് ഒഴുകുന്ന പുഴയുടെ മണൽത്തടങ്ങളിലൂടെ അവർ നടന്നു. ഒരിക്കൽ അവനൊറ്റക്ക് അലഞ്ഞ കുണ്ടും കുഴിയും കല്ലും മേടും നിറഞ്ഞ വഴിത്താരകളിലൂടെ കൃഷ്ണേ ട്ടന്റെ സാത്വികസംഭാഷണങ്ങൾ തന്റെ ഉൾനിലങ്ങളിൽ നിറച്ച് ഒരു സാധകന്റെ വിധേയത്വത്തോടെ അവൻ നടന്നു. അത്തരമൊരു സായാഹ്നഞ്ചാരത്തിനിടയിലാണു കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ തന്റെ മനസ്സിന്റെ നൊമ്പരങ്ങളുടെ ഉള്ളൊഴിച്ചത്. വർഷങ്ങൾക്കു മുമ്പു വടക്കെ ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ഒരു പട്ടാള ക്യാമ്പിൽവച്ചുണ്ടായ അപകടത്തിൽ കൃ ഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ ഭാര്യയും മകനും കൊല്ലപ്പെട്ട കഥനം സ്രവണങ്ങൾക്കുമപ്പുറത്തുള്ള മൗനദു:ഖത്തിൽ രമേശൻ ഏറ്റു വാങ്ങി. വൃദ്ധനും നിരാശനുമായ ആ മനുഷ്യനു വേണ്ടി നിശ്ശബ്ദമായ ഒരു നിലവിളി കൊള്ളിയാൻ പോലെ അവന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിന്റെ ആഴങ്ങളിലൂടെ കടന്നു പോയി.

"രമേശാ, എന്റെ ഉണ്ണി ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ ഇപ്പോൾ നിന്റെ പ്രായം കണ്ടേനെ." അതു പറയു മ്പോൾ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ കണ്ണുകളിൽ കാലങ്ങളുടെ വേദന നിറഞ്ഞു തുളുമ്പി. പുത്രകാമേഷ്ടിയിലൂ ടെ പുനർജനി തേടുന്ന സുകൃതശാലിയായി അയാൾ മാറി. ഒരായുഷ്ക്കാലത്തിന്റെ പഴക്കം ചെന്ന സ്വ ച്ചമായ കർമ്മയോഗങ്ങളുടെ അറിവുകൾ ഒരു സഹസ്രനാമ സങ്കീർത്തനത്തിന്റെ നിർമ്മതലയോടെ അവന്റെ ഉൾനിലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് ഊർന്നിറങ്ങി. മലകൾക്കപ്പുറം സൂര്യൻ മറയുകയായിരുന്നു. കിഴക്കൻ കാറ്റിൽ ഇളകി യാടുന്ന കരിമ്പനപ്പെട്ടകൾക്കു മീതെ അസ്തമയത്തിന്റെ ചുവന്ന വെയിൽ വർണ്ണസാന്ദ്രമായി. ദൂരെ ചക്രവാള ത്തിനപ്പുറം പക്ഷികൾ അസ്തമയത്തിലേക്ക് പറന്നു. കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ തിരിഞ്ഞ് പിന്നിലേക്ക്, അകലങ്ങളിലേക്ക് കാതോർത്തു. പട്ടകളുടെ ഇരമ്പലിന്റെ ശ്രുതിഭേദങ്ങളിൽ ഉണ്ണിയും അവന്റെ അമ്മയും കൃഷ്ണേട്ടനു സാന്ത്വ നമോതി അവരോട് സംസാരിക്കുന്നതായി രമേശനു തോന്നി. ആ സാന്ത്വനത്തിന്റെ ശുദ്ധസങ്കല്പം ഏറ്റു വാ ങ്ങിയ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ ഇന്ദ്രിയഭാരങ്ങളില്ലാതെ തൃപ്തനായി നടന്നു. അപ്പോൾ സന്ധ്യയുടെ ഇളം ചൂടിൽ അസ് തമയത്തിനപ്പുറം മറ്റൊരു പരമമണ്ടലത്തിൽ നക്ഷത്രങ്ങൾ വിടരുന്നത് കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ കാണുകയായിരുന്നു.

വർഷങ്ങൾ കടന്നുപോയി. ഒരു സാധന പോലെ നാളുകളായി തുടർന്നുപോന്ന സായാഹ്നസഞ്ചാരങ്ങൾക്കവ ധി കൊടുത്ത് രമേശൻ ജോലി തേടി സഹസ്രം നാഴിക അകലെയുള്ള നഗരത്തിലേക്ക് വണ്ടി കയറി. യാത്ര യാക്കുവാൻ സ്റ്റേഷനിൽ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ മാത്രമേ വന്നിരുന്നുള്ളു. വണ്ടി വരുവോളം പ്ലാറ്റ്ഫോമിന്റെ അറ്റത്ത് പടർന്നു നിന്ന ആൽമരച്ചുവട്ടിലെ ബെഞ്ചിൽ നിശബ്ദരായി അവരിരുന്നു. പറയുവാനാഗ്രഹിച്ച വാക്കുകൾ പുറത്തു വരാതെ അവരുടെ തൊണ്ടയിൽ കുടുങ്ങി. എന്തിന്റെയൊക്കെയോ നിറവ്. കൃഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ മുഖമത്ര യും സ്നേഹവും ദു:ഖവും നിറഞ്ഞു നിന്നു. പുകയെ പിറകോട്ട് ഊതി മാറ്റി ഒരു ഇരമ്പലോടെ വണ്ടി പ്ലാറ്റ് ഫോമിൽ വന്നു നിന്നു. നിശബ്ദമായി കൃഷ്ണേട്ടനോട് വിട വാങ്ങി രമേശൻ വണ്ടിയിൽ കയറി ഒഴിഞ്ഞ ഒരു സീറ്റിലിരുന്നു. ഇരുമ്പഴികൾക്കിടയിലൂടെ കൈനീട്ടി കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ രമേശന്റെ കൈപ്പടത്തിൽ മുറുകെ പിടിച്ചു. പിന്നീട് രമേശന്റെ കണ്ണികളിൽ നോക്കി തന്നോടെന്നപോലെ പറഞ്ഞു; "ഞാൻ മരിക്കുമ്പോൾ വാക്കരിയി ടാൻ എനിക്കൊരു പുത്രനില്ലല്ലോ."

അയാളുടെ വാക്കുകൾ ഉച്ചസ്ഥായിയിലുള്ള നിശബ്ദമായ ഒരു നിലവിളിയായി അവന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ വി ങ്ങി. വണ്ടി ഇളകുമ്പോൾ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ കണ്ണുകൾ തുടക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. വണ്ടിയുടെ വേഗത വർദ്ധിച്ചപ്പോൾ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ അനങ്ങാതെ പിറകോട്ട് ചലിച്ച് അവസാനം പുഴയുടെ തിരിവിൽ അപ്രതൃക്ഷമായി. രമേശന്റെ കണ്ണുകൾ അവനറിയാതെ നിറഞ്ഞൊഴുകി. കൃഷ്ണേട്ടൻ മരിച്ചു. താനും കൃഷ്ണേട്ടനും പങ്കിട്ട നിരവധി സായാഹ്നയാത്രകളുടെ ഓർമ്മകൾ കാലങ്ങളുടെ അകലം കാരണം അവന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ നിന്നും മറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. പക്ഷേ ഇപ്പോൾ കുറ്റബോധത്തോടെ രമേശൻ ഓർത്തു. താനെപ്പോഴാണു കൃഷ്ണേട്ടനെ മറന്നത്. കാതങ്ങൾ ക്കെലെ ചിതയിലെരിഞ്ഞ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടന്റെ ആത്മാവ് നക്ഷത്രങ്ങൾ ക്കപ്പുറത്തുള്ള ശൂന്യതയിലേക്ക് തിരിച്ചു പോകാൻ മുക്തി തേടി തനിക്കു ചുറ്റും വട്ടമിട്ടു പറക്കുന്നതായി രമേശനു തോന്നി. പാടില്ല. തന്റെ തർപ്പണങ്ങ ളിലൂടെ കൃഷ്ണേട്ടനെ കര കയറ്റണം.

രാത്രി ഏറെ ചെന്നിരുന്നു. രമേശൻ താഴെ നിലാവിൽ കുളിച്ച് നിദ്രയിലാണ്ട നിരത്തിലേക്കിറങ്ങി. നിരത്ത് ശൂന്യവും മൂകവുമായിരുന്നു. എങ്ങോട്ടെന്നില്ലാതെ അവൻ നടന്നു. ദൂരെ നദിയിൽ നിന്നും കുളിർമയുള്ള തണുത്ത കാറ്റു വീശി. തലക്കു മുകളിൽ ചന്ദ്രനും നക്ഷത്രങ്ങളും അവനൊപ്പം മുന്നോട്ടു നടന്നു. നടന്നു നട ന്ന് കാലുകൾ കുഴഞ്ഞു. അന്തമില്ലാത്ത യാത്ര എത്തിപ്പെട്ടത് നഗരത്തിനു പുറത്ത് ശാന്തമായി അകലങ്ങളിലേ ക്ക് ഒഴുകുന്ന നദിക്കരയിലെ ദൂർഗ്ഗാ ദേവീക്ഷേത്രത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ. ശ്രീകോവിലിനു മുന്നിൽ സന്ധ്യക്ക് ഭക്തർ കൊളുത്തിയ ആരതികൾ അണഞ്ഞു തുടങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. ദേവിക്കു മുന്നിലെ എണ്ണയും പായലും കൂടിക്കലർന്ന തെന്നുന്ന പടവുകളിലൂടെ രമേശൻ നദിയിലേക്കിറങ്ങി. ചൂടും തണുപ്പുമില്ലാതെ മന്ദമായി ഒഴുകുന്ന അരക്കൊ പ്പം വെള്ളത്തിൽ അവൻ നിന്നു. ചെറുപ്പത്തിൽ മുത്തശ്ശി ചൊല്ലിത്തന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥനാമന്ത്രങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിൽ ധ്യാ നിച്ച് കൈകളിൽ കോരിയ ഉദകത്തിലൂടെ അവൻ തർപ്പണം ചെയ്തു.

അപ്പോൾ തെളിഞ്ഞ ആകാശത്ത് അനന്ത കോടി നക്ഷത്രങ്ങളുടെ സ്പടികസോപാനങ്ങൾ കയറി ശൂന്യതയി ലേക്കു മറയുന്ന കൃഷ്ണേട്ടനെ കണ്ട് രമേശൻ കൃതാർത്ഥനായി.



<mark>ജാസ്മിൻ സജോ</mark> സെന്റ് തോമസ് ഫൊറോന ചർച്ച്, സാന്താ ആന, കാലിഫോർണിയ

## നിന്നെക്കുറിച്ച്...

ഉരുകുന്ന സത്യത്തിൻ ചൂടുകാറ്റടിച്ചിട്ട് ജീവിതം കത്തിക്കരിഞ്ഞ നേരം വേരറ്റു കാറ്റിൽ പറന്നു ഞാൻ ഇവിടെയീ മണ്ണിൽ നിലം പതിച്ചു.

> പുത്തൻ പ്രതീക്ഷകൾ പേറിനടന്നു ഞാൻ നിറമുള്ള സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾ നെഞ്ചിലേറ്റി തറവാടു വിട്ടിങ്ങുയാത്രയായി പിന്നെ, കടലു കടന്നു പ്രവാസിയായി.

തൊട്ടാൽ പൊടിയുന്ന, കുമ്മായം പൂശിയ വീടിന്റെ ചുമരുകൾ മാഞ്ഞുപോയി, തെക്കിനിക്കോലായിലൊറ്റയ്ക്കു നിൽക്കുന്ന വാടാത്ത മുല്ലയും ഓർമ്മയായി.

> പായൽ പിടിച്ച കിണറ്റിൻ കരയിലായ് കറിവേപ്പ് മരമൊന്നു നിന്നിരുന്നു കാറ്റിൽ കുണുങ്ങിച്ചിരിച്ചു തലയാട്ടി തണലായ് തലോടലായ് നിന്നിരുന്നു.

അന്നുപ്രവാസിതൻ വേഷമണിഞ്ഞു ഞാൻ സന്ധ്യയ്ക്ക് യാത്ര പറഞ്ഞ നേരം, നാടിന്റെ ഓർമ്മയായ് ഒരു കുഞ്ഞുകറിവേപ്പ് കൂടെ കരുതുവാൻ ഞാൻ കൊതിച്ചു.

എന്നുടെ തോളത്ത് പറ്റിക്കിടക്കുന്ന പൈതലെ നോക്കിയെന്നമ്മ ചൊല്ലി നാടിന്റെ മണമുള്ള നേരുള്ള, നെറിവുള്ള കറിവേപ്പ് പോലിവൻ മാറിടട്ടെ.

എന്റെ മടിത്തട്ടിലൊരു കുഞ്ഞുകറിവേപ്പിൻ തൈപോലെ പറ്റി നീ ചേർന്നു നിന്നു. ഒട്ടും പരിചിതമല്ലാത്ത ഈ മണ്ണിൽ പ്രാർത്ഥനയോടെ ഞാൻ നട്ടുനിന്നെ

> ഉണരുക മകനെ നീ വേരുകൾ പാകുക ഉയരത്തിലേയ്ക്ക് വളർന്നീടുക. കാലങ്ങളൊക്കെ പ്രതികൂലമാകുന്ന കാലത്ത് ഉള്ളം തകരാതിരിക്കുക.

രുചിയില്ലാക്കറികളിൽ രുചിയായി മാറുക മണമായ് പടരുക, ഗുണമായ് മാറുക ഒരു കറിവേപ്പില പോലവേ നിന്നെയും എറിയുന്ന നേരത്ത് നോവാതിരിക്കുക.



(സമർപ്പണം: ഇടവകകളിലെ ഇളം തലമുറയ്ക്ക്)

അവസാനമൊരുവാക്ക് പറയാതെ പിരിയുമ്പോൾ ഒരു കുഞ്ഞു ചെടിയെ നീ ബാക്കി വെച്ചീടുമോ? രുചിയില്ലാക്കറികളിൽ രുചിയായ് മാറുവാൻ മണമായ് പടരുവാൻ ഗുണമായ് മാറുവാൻ.....

ഇലകൾ തളിരുകൾ കൂമ്പുകൾ പോലുമേ നുള്ളിയെടുക്കുമ്പോൾ നോവാതിരിക്കുക അപരനായ് അവസാന ഇലയും പൊഴിയ്ക്കുക പൊട്ടിത്തളിർക്കുവാൻ വെട്ടേറ്റു വാങ്ങുക.

കൂട്ടത്തിൽ പിറകെ നടക്കും പഥികന്റെ കൂട്ടായ് വെളിച്ചമായ് ജീവനായ് മാറുക സത്യവും നീതിയും നിലവിളിച്ചീടുമ്പോൾ റാന്തലുമേന്തി നീ തേടിയിറങ്ങുക.

സ്വപ്നം കരിഞ്ഞു ചിറകു തളരുന്ന പക്ഷികൾ തന്നുടെ കൂടെ നടക്കുക ഉയിരായി മാറുക, ഊർജ്ജമായ് തീരുക പതറാതെ ഉയരത്തിലേയ്ക്ക് പറക്കുക



<mark>ഷെവലിയർ ബെന്നി പുന്നത്തറ</mark> ഷാലോം കോഴിക്കോട്

## വളർച്ചയിലേയ്ക്കു കുതിക്കുന്ന സീറോമലബാർ സമൂഹം

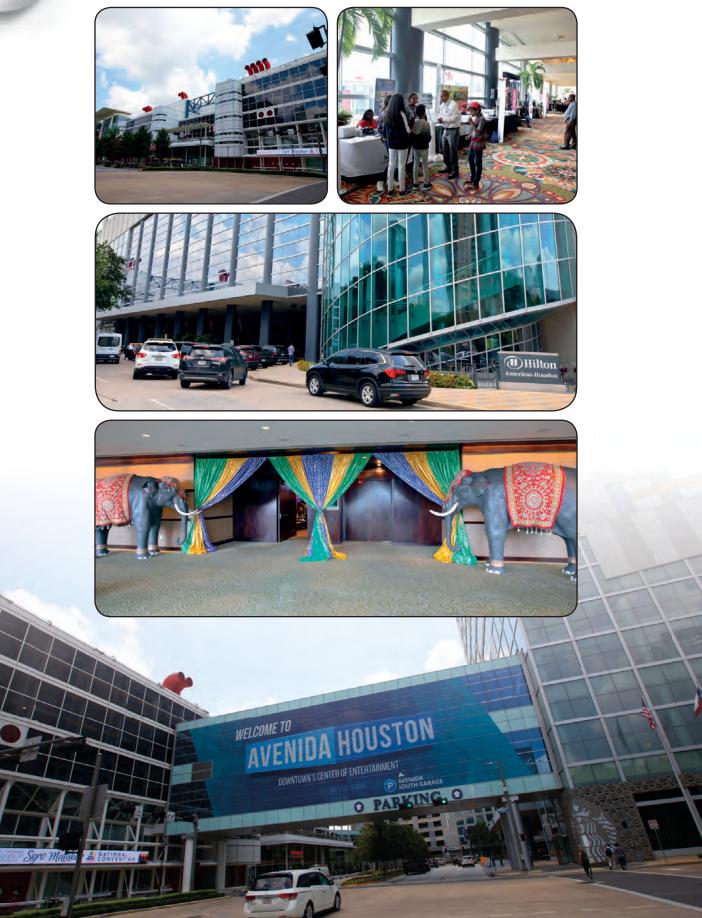
ചിക്കാഗോ രൂപത ജന്മാകൊണ്ട നാളുകളിലാണ് ഞാനാദ്യമായ് യു.എസ്സിൽ എത്തിയത്. ഇവിടെ ധാരാളം ദൈ വാലയങ്ങളുള്ളപ്പോൾ എന്തിനാണ് നമുക്കുവേണ്ടി മാത്രം പള്ളികൾ. നമ്മുടെ എല്ലാ ആത്മീയാവശ്യങ്ങളും ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പള്ളികളിൽ നിറവേറ്റപ്പെടുന്നതിനാൽ വേറൊരു രൂപതയുടെ പ്രസക്തി എന്താണ്? തുടങ്ങിയ ചോദ്യ ങ്ങളൊക്കെ പലരിൽ നിന്നും കേൾക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. എന്നാൽ അധികനാൾ കാത്തിരിക്കാതെതന്നെ ആ ചോദ്യ ങ്ങളെല്ലാം വിസ്മൃതമായി. ഒരു രാജ്യത്ത് പരസ്പരം ബന്ധമില്ലാതെ ചിതറിക്കിടന്ന ജനങ്ങൾ ഇടവകകളായി രൂപതാ സംവിധാനത്തിൻ കീഴിൽ ഒരുമിച്ചു ചേർക്കപ്പെട്ടതിന്റെ സത്ഫലം അത്ഭുതാവഹമായിരുന്നു എന്നതു തന്നെ അതിനു കാരണം.

പല സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലും ചെല്ലുമ്പോൾ ഒരു കൊച്ചുകേരളത്തിന്റെ പ്രതീതി..... തോമാശ്ലീഹായും വിശുദ്ധരായ അൽ ഫോൻസാമ്മയും ചാവറയച്ചനുമൊക്കെ ഈ രാജ്യത്ത് മഹത്വീകൃതരായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. പാശ്ചാത്യസം സ്കാരത്തിന്റെ ജീർണ്ണതയിൽ നമ്മുടെ കുടുംബസംസ്കാരം നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടുപോകാതിരിക്കാൻ ഇടവകകളുടെ പ്രവർത്തനം വളരെയധികം സഹായിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. പരിമിതികളും വെല്ലുവിളികളും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നിട്ടും ദൈവത്തി ന്റെ പരിപാലന ചിക്കാഗോ സീറോ മലബാർ രൂപതയെ മുന്നോട്ടു നയിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. അമേരിക്കയിലെ സീറോ മലബാർ സഭാസമൂഹത്തിന്റെ വളർച്ചയിൽ നിർണ്ണായക പങ്ക് വഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് കൃത്യമായ ഇടവേളക ളിൽ സമ്മേളിക്കുന്ന സീറോ മലബാർ നാഷണൽ കൺവെൻഷനുകൾ. കേരളത്തിലെ വിവിധ രൂപതകളിലെ ഭിന്നമായ ആചാരരീതികൾ അനുഷ്ഠിക്കുന്ന സഭാമക്കളെ അണിചേർക്കുന്ന ഇന്ത്യയുടെ അഞ്ചിരട്ടി ഭൂവിസ് തൃതിയുള്ള ചിക്കാഗോ രൂപത മറ്റൊരു കൂടിവരവിന്റെ നാളിലാണിപ്പോൾ. മാർത്തോമ്മാ മാർഗ്ഗം വിശുദ്ധിയി ലേക്കുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗം; ഉണർന്നു പ്രശോഭിക്കുക; എന്നീ വിഷയങ്ങളിലൂന്നി സമ്മേളിക്കുന്ന ഏഴാമത് നാഷണൽ കൺവെൻഷൻ വളർച്ചയിലേക്ക് കുതിക്കുന്ന അമേരിക്കയിലെ സീറോ മലബാർ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ മുന്നേറ്റത്തിന് കൂടുതൽ കരുത്തുപകരും.

ശാലോമിന്റെ എല്ലാവിധ ആശംസകളും നിങ്ങളെ സ്നേഹപൂർവ്വം അറിയിക്കുന്നു. സർവ്വശക്തനായ ദൈവം നമ്മെ ഓരോരുത്തരെയും അനുഗ്രഹിക്കട്ടെ.







# SPONSOR PARISHES & MISSIONS

## MAR THOMA SLEEHA SYRO MALABAR CATHEDRAL, BELLWOOD, IL



Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral is the Diocesan Cathedral of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago. With a vibrant community consisting of more than 1200 families, this parish exuberates faith, enthusiasm and love.

Transitioning from the days in 1970s where the Holy Mass was offered in Chicago once in a while, to the vibrant community of 1200 families was a long journey. The first ever Syro Malabar Ministry outside India was inaugurated by Late Joseph Cardinal Bernadine on August 25, 1985. The community soon grew in numbers and in 1988 on September 10, it was named as a mission with the blessing of Mar



Vicar: Rev. Fr. Thomas Kadukapillil



Asst.Vicar: Rev.Fr.Kevin Mundackal

Joseph Pallikaparambil. On July 1, 2001, then vicar Rev. Jacob Angadiath was consecrated and installed as the first Bishop of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago. Late Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil blessed the newly constructed Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral on July 5, 2008. The cathedral which is the denomination's first ecclesiastical seat outside India was built with stunning architectural perfection under the leadership of Fr. Antony Thundathil. On September 27, 2014, then vicar Rev. Joy Alappat was consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop.

From small beginnings, the church grew and today stands as a united and strong cathedral community. This was made possible by the prayerful leadership of our pastors over the years from Rev.Dr. Antony Kurialacherry to current vicar Fr. Thomas Kadukappillil. The dedicated laity who prayerfully spends their time, resources and energy under these dynamic spiritual leaders is the strength of this high-spirited community. Appointment of Fr. Kevin Mundackal as our Asst. Pastor has truly invigorated the youth of our church. Cathedral also retained the services of Sr. Marykutty Nellickal, CMC and Sr. Linda Moolechalil.

CCD, Malayalam school and cultural academy function very efficiently with large number of student enrollments. Different organizations and movements including Vincent DePaul Society, CML, SMCC, Jesus Youth, CYM, SMYO, Women's Forum, and Senior Forum are very dynamic in fostering education, culture, charity and piety. The Cathedral now has an extension at Our Lady of Brook Catholic church in Northbrook, a north suburb of Chicago, where Holy Mass and CCD classes are held every Sunday. Feasts of the saints are celebrated with great reverence. Prayer meetings are held monthly in all 14 wards and the church picnics and gatherings strengthen their bond.

Many initiatives have been taken over the years to draw the faithful close to the Lord and his infinite mercy. Annual Family Renewal Convention, Retreats for adults and children, night vigils, daily adoration, telephone rosary prayers, 33 days of Morning Glory retreats, pilgrimages to Holy places including Holy land and educational sessions are to name the few that are intended to bestow the faithful with the blessings and knowledge. A two-year Diploma in Theology study for the lay people in collaboration with the Vadavathoor Pontifical Oriental Institute has also started. The parishioners are proud to be part of this spiritual community and thankful to the Lord for blessing them with opportunities to practice faith and guiding them in this land **Compiled and Edited by Mr.Thomas Purathur and Ms Beena Vallikalam** 

## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, DETROIT, MI



The Syro Malabar Catholic Community in Detroit was started by a few Malayalee Catholic families in September 1980 under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Pullukattu. Initially 22 families gathered at St. Patrick Parish on 58 Parsons Street, Detroit, Michigan. The families selected an executive committee with Dr. Joseph Pullukatt, Presidetn; Mr. Chacko Kalarickal, Vice President; Mr. Augusty Parapuram, Treasurer; Mr. Jose Vengalil, Secretary; Mr. Paul Dolfus, Mr. Tony Erinjeri and Mr. Thomas Karthanal as joint secretaries.

Our growth was from St. Thomas Indian Catholic Association in 1980 to St. Thomas India Catholic Mission in 1994 and to St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church-Detroit in 2007. This transition was achieved because we were blessed with



Vicar Rev. Fr. T. A Nicholas

priests, members and leaders who worked tirelessly for the growth of our church. Our community, St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church-Detroit, was inaugurated as a new parish on Saturday, July 14, 2007, by His Beatitude Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, then Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church and His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath, Bishop of Syro Malabr Catholic Diocese of Chicago.

The primary asset of our church is the selfless, sincere and hard-working members who are driven by a common goal, rooted in Christian values with faith. Currently, we have about 229 registered members. Our parish is grateful for the selfless services of all the previous vicars, namely Fr. Dr. Joseph Nagaroor (1988-1993), Fr. John Melepuram (1994-1999), Fr. Joy Chakian (1999-2005), Fr. Varghese Naickamparambil (2005-2010), Fr. George Elambasseril (2010-2015), Fr. Roy Moolechalil (2015-2018). Our Current pastor is Fr. T.A. Nicholas SDB- Salesian Congregation of Sacred Heart province of Bangalore.

We are continuing our mission to fulfil the spiritual and social needs of our community by offering regular Qurbana in both Malayalam and English, conducting CCD classes, administering Sacraments, Retreats and solemn Celebration of the Church Feasts.

Compiled and Edited by: Mr. Sebastian Kallumkal, Trustee

## ST ALPHONSA SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, ATLANTA, GA

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2015 to 2019		New Church Building project plan finalized, Capital Campaign started, Building and Finance Committee formed, Ground Breaking and Founda- tion laid, Site Development completed, Construction Contract signed, Building Structure in progress, Expected to be completed in December 2019
2014	May	Elevated to a Forane Church by Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath
2012	Dec.	Fr. Mathew Elayadathamadam appointed as Vicar
2012	July	Hosted 6th Syro Malabar Diocese National Convention at Atlanta
2010	March	Purchased additional six Acres of neighboring Land with a house
2007	Nov.	Fr. Johny Puthiaparambil appointed as Vicar
2006	Dece.17	Inauguration of the Church Building and official declaration of the Parish by Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath
2006	May	Ground Breaking Ceremony
2005	Sept.	Fr. Kurian Thomas Karickal appointed as the Mission Director
2005	June	Building Site Plans approved by the County
2004	June	Fr. Joseph Kuzhupil appointed as full time mission Director
2004	July	Blessing of the Foundation by Mar Jacob Angadiath
2003	Dece.	First Parish Council of the Mission and Various sub committees Estab- lished. Transition of Kerala Catholic Association to Blessed Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Mission
2003	Sept.	Blessed Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Mission Established, Corner Stone Laid for the Future Church by Bishop Jacob Angadiath
2003	July	Bought Six Acres of Land at Loganville for Future Church
2003	March	building Committee formed to Buy or Build a Facility.
1992 to 2003		Malayalam Mass and Kerala Caholic Association Activities continued
1992		Syro Malabar Malayalam Mass Started by Fr. Joseph Mullakkara, Kerala Catholic Association Formed



Vicar. Rev. Fr. Mathew Elayadathamadam

Saint Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Church was established as a parish under St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago in December 17, 2006. "The blessing of the Church and the establishment of a parish in 2006, the formation of the Syro Malabar Catholic Mission, the appointment of a full time director and the purchase of Six Acres of land to build the church in 2003, the beginning of Malayalam mass and organization of the Kerala Catholic Association of Atlanta in 1992 are some of the major milestones in the history of the parish" The History and Evolution of a Vibrant Syro Malabar Community in Atlanta, Georgia St. Alphonsa Syro Malabar Forane Catholic Church, 4561 Rosebud Road, Loganville, GA 30052 Major Milestones

Trustees: Jimmy Isaac, George Varghese Elamplakat, Shani Vezhakad, Sandesh Mathew

## ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC MISSION OF NASHVILLE, TN



Founded on Nov 8, 2009, we are the first Syro Malabar community in the United States and the second in the entire world to be named after St. Teresa of Calcutta, a saint of our time and our land. We celebrate our annual feast usually on the Saturday which is closest to the 5th of September every year.

Our mission as a community is: "Carrying the flame of Faith and Tradition in life and worship across the world". We as a Syro Malabar community in the United States love and live this motto in our life to the best of our God given ability in this country.

Director: Rev. Fr. Tomy Puliyanampattayil, MSFS | Associate Director: Rev. Fr. Noble Amabalathuruthel, MSFS

## Best Compliments From \_\_\_\_\_

## ST JOSEPH'S SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, TAMPA, FL

Beginning as a Mission in 2008, we were elevated to a Parish on May 7, 2011. With the influx of Syro Malabar Catholics from Kerala into Tampa Bay in the 1970's, the desire to have a Syro Malabar Church of our own grew wings and after few catholic associations were formed (MCACF, KCACF), we graduated to being a mission and later on in 2011 acquired our own church, SJSMCC of Tampa.

Before the Mission was formed, the Holy Qurbana was celebrated once a month. But few ministries like the choir had already been formed and annual picnics, talent competitions, etc. were conducted. Once we became a Mission, regular weekly masses were celebrated and other ministries like Eucharistic min-



Vicar Rev. Fr. Rijo Cheerakathil

istry, Religious Education for children, Men's & Women's forum began their activities. Soon we became a full fledged parish under the leadership of our first Vicar, Rev. Fr. George Maliekal,

**Parish Ministries:** Angels Army, Syro Tweens, Men's & Women's Forum, Adult & Youth Choir, PTA, Eucharistic ministers, Sacristans, Word Power, Feeding the neighbors, St. Vincent de Paul society, Charismatic prayer group, Youth ministry, family units etc.

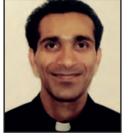
We are proud to acknowledge that one religious' sister, Rev. Sr. Elizabeth, serving in India in the congregation of Sisters of Destitute (SD) and one priest, Rev. Fr. Rajeev Valiyaveettil, serving in the St. Thomas Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago are from our parish.

## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH, BRONX, NY





Vicar Rev. Fr. Jos Kandathikudy



Asst Vicar Rev Fr Royson Menolickal

A Syro Malabar Church, in NY, was the most important dream and desire of the Synod in 1994. For that, the leaders of the Church appointed Rev. Fr. Jos Kandathikudy to go to NY. However, due to a delay in the sponsor letter, Mar Antony Padiyara sent Fr. Kandathikudy to Chicago as per personal direction of Apostolic administrator Mar Abraham Kattumana. On September 27, 1999, at the request of Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, Fr. Kandathikudy took residence in ST. Antony's in Nanuet, NY (assigned by Cardinal Edward Eagan) and in New Milford Ascension Church in Bergen County, NJ (assigned by Archbishop Theodore McCarrick of Newark).

St. Valentine's Church, part of the Archdiocese of New York, was allotted to the Syro Malabar Community by His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan. On March 24, 2002, His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath inaugurated the Church and Bronx became the third Parish of this new diocese. Mar Jacob Angadiath, after renaming the Church to St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church and declaring it a Parish appointed Fr. Jos Kandathikudy its first Vicar. Over the years, we have grown into a strong parish community able to practice and spread our Faith, Heritage, and Liturgical Traditions along with our morals and values.

St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Parish in Bronx was elevated to Forane status on June 1, 2014. We currently have 709 registered families spanning across five counties - Manhattan, Bronx, Westchester, Orange and Putnam. With support and generous contributions, from our parishioners, the parish has made great strides over the past 17 years. The parish has a number of thriving groups and associations, like, Bronx Soldiers, Jesus Youth, Catholic Women's Association (CWA), Society of Franciscan Order (SFO), Society of St. Vincent De Paul (SVDP), Mission League (CML), Syro Malabar Catholic Congress (SMCC) and Syro girls. In addition, every parishioner belongs to one of the seven wards with Bible classes conducted in all wards - a staple for faith formation within the church.

Over the years the parishioners of STSMCC Bronx, have been fortunate to come together for many events and occasions. To highlight a few – 10th Anniversary (2012), Elevation to Forane status 2014), Fr. Xavier Khan Vattayil Bible Convention and Charismatic Retreat (2017), Ordination of Fr. Kevin Mundackal (2018)

# ST. MARY'S SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, LONG ISLAND, NY



2003	There were three different communities – (Floral Park, Elmont and Brooklyn) - in New York, during the 1980s and 1990s. It continued until 2003.		
2004	A Common Parish with Fr. Anto Karot as its first Vicar on January 4, 2004 and St. Thomas the Apostle Chapel, West Hempstead as its common center of celebrations.		
2009	On January 31, 2009 Fr. Ligory Johnson Philips was appointed as the new Vicar.		
2014	In July 2014, the community bought the current church building at 926 Round Swamp Road in Old Bethpage, NY		
2015	Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath consecrated the new refurbished Syro Malabar Church on March 28, 2015.		
2017	On February 4, 2017 Fr. John Melepuram was appointed as the new Vicar. The Parish has 490 Registered Families and 200+ non-registered Syro Malabar Families in and around the Parish. This is a full-fledged Syro Malabar Parish, having all regular activities and ministries. We are in the process of constructing a Multi-purpose Hall.		
Our CCD	School is having 280 Students and 45 Teachers		

Our CCD School is having 280 Students and 45 Teachers.



## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, BOSTON, MA

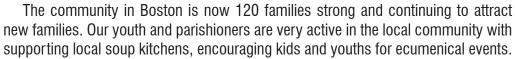


The St. Thomas Syro Malabar church in Boston, was formed by families connected through faith. His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath, Bishop of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago, officiated the inauguration of the mission in Boston on June 12, 2004.

2004 was also when we started the CCD programs for our kids as well as setup 9 Family units to meet up regularly for prayer meetings. We also started having Baptism and First Holy Communion for our children. As the community grew, the needs and additional ministries were also initiated. The Youth Ministry, the Choir Ministry as well as a chapter of Jesus Youth and Syro

Malabar Catholic Congress was also started.

A growing community also needed a place to call home. This was made possible with the active support of the Archdiocese of Boston which offered one of their suppressed churches for our use. Our current church was blessed again on 19 July 2008. In 2009, we began to extend our mission beyond Boston, Massachusetts by holding monthly masses in Nashua, New Hampshire at St. Joseph Church and at LaSallate Shrine, Attleboro for Rhode Island Families.





Vicar : Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier Pullukattu

Best Compliments From \_

## ST. THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC MISSION, HARTFORD, CT

We are a vibrant and welcoming faith community residing in the Hartford, CT area. Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago recognized it as one of its Mission Church in 2001 and appointed Fr. Thomas Puthiyidom as its first mission director and he started celebrating Mass once a month at the Church of Saint Helena in West Hartford. In May 2011 Fr. Joseph Naduvilekutt was appointed as the full time director and he began celebrating Mass on all Sundays and started CCD. The mission continued its growth and journey with Fr. Francis Nambiaparambil from August 2013 to December 2014. Fr. Joseph Pullikattil was appointed as the Mission Director in February 2015.

We have 75 registered families in 7 family prayer units. They gather in their respective wards for prayer meetings 3 times a year and celebrate the feast of their patron saint at parish level. Every year we organize a number of special events such



Mission Director: Rev Fr. Joseph Pullikattil

as the main parish feast, Mass and Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent, Holy Week liturgies, Annual retreat, Bible Quiz for CCD students, 10 days Rosary in October and First Friday Mass and Adoration. Besides liturgical services, there are many socio-cultural activities like Onam, Christmas & New Year program, Annual Picnic etc., organized by the parishioners. About 65 students participate in the faith formation program. We also have a charity fund, Helping Angels" to support the people who are experiencing serious challenges in their lives.

To pursue its dream of acquiring a Church of its own our community formed a purchasing committee in 2019 to raise funds to purchase the Church of Saint Helena in West Hartford of the Archdiocese of Hartford. We pray for God's blessings in abundance upon our community on this project.

30 Echo Ln, West Hartford, CT 06107 | www.Syro Malabarct.org

# OUR LADY OF HEALTH SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH, CORAL SPRINGS, FL

We are a parish community of Syro Malabar Catholic faithful, started in 1984 with six families. The original community was registered in 1986 as ICA (India Catholic Association) as a mission within the Archdiocese of Miami with 60 families and Reverend Father James Parappally as the Mission Director. In 2002 this Association had more than 300 Indian families from ass over South Florida

Under the leadership of Fr. James Parappally and the hard work of the Building Committee, a Baptist church in Coral Springs was purchased in July of 2002 and was renamed as VelamkanniMatha (Our



Lady of Health) Church. However, the church was still being used on rent by the same Baptist community, and the Catholic community was using the church to offer Masses on a monthly basis, and later on every Sunday, either in Syro Malabar or Latin Rite.

On December 6, 2003, this community was elevated as an independent Syro Malabar Parish and Reverend Father John Melepuram was appointed as its first Pastor with 94 registered families. The Baptist community relocated in February 2004 and the Church was given to the Syro Malabar community with full occupancy. The renovations began to shape it as a Catholic sanctuary including an Altar and a Bema. The final blessing took place on May 30, 2004, with the presence of the Archbishop



Vicar Rev. Fr. Johnsty Thachara

of Miami His Excellency John Favalora and the Syro Malabar Bishop of Chicago His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath. Today, we are a full-fledged Syro Malabar Parish with daily Qurbana in both malayalam and English, Sunday CCD program for Pre-K to high school, adult and youth choirs, ICA, SMCC, Mathrusangam, society of St. Vincent DePaul, Youth, altar servers ministry, Mission League, etc. This parish is the only Syro Malabar Parish in North America which has a convent with four active SABS sisters ministering to the community Currently, We have 400 registered families and some unregistered families as well. Our parish extends from Miami Dade to West Palm Counties, spanning 120 miles. So, we have branched our families into 12 family units, each of which comes together for monthly meetings. We also have monthly fellowship gatherings for the youth. We celebrate our parish feast on September 8th in honor of Our Lady of Health, as well as a feast in honor of the first saint of India, St. Alphonsa, on the last Sunday of every July.

We, as a parish community, are joyful and thankful to the Lord for sustaining us and giving us a sanctuary to worship Him who is the Giver of all things

A Church, that at the very first sight, reminds you of your Svro Malabar roots. A community that is united in the liturgical formation of their Mother Church. A parish that in many senses, is the "Tharavadu" for many other faithful communities. That is St. Thomas the Apostle Syro Malabar Catholic Forane Dallas Church. in Garland, Texas. The St. Thomas Community, in many ways, is blessed to be the





pioneer and role model of faith formation for the migrant Syro Malabar faithful. It is the first ever Syro Malabar Parish outside India. All these began from the desire and passion of a group of faithful who were settled around Dallas in the late 1970's. The Indian Catholic community came together to bring Rev. Fr. Joseph Kallidanthyil to celebrate the Holy Qurbana for them once in a month.

The founding members then formed a fraternity of like-minded people to approach the Bishop of Dallas and Syro Malabar hierarchy in Kerala to explore the possibility of obtaining a priest to meet the spiritual needs of the people. In response Fr. Jacob Angadiath a priest from the Eparchy of Pala, who went on to become our first Bishop, was sent to this community in 1984. Under the efforts of Fr. Jacob who



Forane Vicar Very. Rev. Fr. George Elambasseril,

served as the spiritual leader here for almost 15 years St. Thomas Indian Catholic Community was formed accommodating all the Kerala Catholic migrants in the area.

In 1990 the community came together and purchased an existing Baptist Church and renovated it 1992 to the liturgical traditions of Syro Malabar Church. On July 25th, 1992 Mar Joseph Powathil, then Archbishop of Changanacherry Arch Eparchy consecrated the newly remodeled church. This church of ours also became the very first Syro Malabar Church outside India to be procured exclusively with the contribution of the faithful. With the help of Fr. Zacharias and Fr. Sebastian, various committees that worked tirelessly and with the prayers and support of the whole community the beautiful new church you see today was completed by the end of 2011.

Over the years, under the guidance and leadership of Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, Fr. John Meleppuram, Fr. Zacharias Thottuvelil, Fr. Sebastian Kaniampadickal, Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal and our Parish Priest now Fr. George Elamabsseril, our community grew in faith, worship and love. Our Parish supports many ministries including CCD, Mathru Jyothi, Vincent De Paul, Mission League, Prayer Ministry, Senior Ministry, Young Men Ministry, Young Women Ministry, Youth Ministry, Safe Environment, Bible Study Ministry, Pastrol Council, Theology of Body, Choir/Youth Choir Ministry, SMCC Ministry and Eucharistic Ministry. The Church community is currently focused on building an activity center namely San Thome Life Center, envisioned to cater the needs of youth and young adults.

# ST. ALPHONSA SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, COPPEL, TX



St Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Church, one of the largest in the Texas region with 500+ children attending the CCD classes every Sunday, had its humble beginnings in the year 2007 with monthly Holy Eucharist as an outstation of St. Thomas Church Garland. Initially, the Holy Eucharist was celebrated at St. Anne's Church, Coppell, by Fr. Zacharias Thottuvelil. Later in September 2008, the Eucharistic celebrations relocated to Christ our Savior Lutheran Church located at 140 S. Heartz Rd, Coppell. The Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago approved this as the Syro Malabar Catholic Mission DFW and appointed Fr. Saji Chakkittmuriyil as the first Director. After being elevated to the status of a mission, the community moved to a larger leased facility in Farmers branch, Texas. Eventually, in 2009, the community was blessed to have its own Church located at 200 S. Heartz Road, Coppell.



Vicar Rev. Fr Jacob Christy Parambukattil

St. Alphonsa Church Coppell, was temporarily blessed by the then Director, Rev.Fr. Saji Chakkittamuriyil, on Oct. 12, 2009, which coincided with the canonization of St. Alphonsa – our patroness. In the month of March 2010, the mission was erected as a Parish and the Church was consecrated by His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath, the Bishop of Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago. Rev.Fr. Varghese Naikkamparampil was appointed as the first Vicar of the parish.. Rev. Fr. Mathew Sasseril was the vicar of this parish from July 2011 until September 2012. Rev. Fr. Johnsty Thachara took the helm of this growing community in October 2012. The Church was renovated and re-dedicated in the year 2014 by His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church. The community that is united and determined to provide great service to the faithful is currently led by Rev. Fr. Jacob Christy Parambukattil since February 2019.

## ST ALPHONSA SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, AUSTIN, TX



It was as early as in 2001 December 29, when the first Holy Mass in the Syro Malabar Rite was celebrated in Austin, by Fr. Paul Pudussery CSC at a house in Pflugerville, the history of the Syro Malabar Community in Austin, Texas started. The very next year, Malayalam Mass began to be celebrated once in a month at Do-

lores Catholic Church, Austin. All the important events like Christmas, Easter, Onam and Parish Picnics were celebrated with enthusiasm. In 2004, Fr. Prince Kuruvila took over as the spiritual director of this growing community. On 2008 December 7, The St. Alphonsa Catholic Mission Austin was officially established by Bishop Jacob Angadiath. In 2010 December, we started celebrating Holy Mass twice a month. In 2011, Fr. Jose Varickamackal was appointed as the mission director. In the same year, the location of worship was moved to Our Lady of Maronite Catholic Church Austin. In 2012 September, CCD Classes started. The number of families grew up to 58 and Holy Mass stared to be celebrated on every Sunday. In July 2013 Fr. Dominic Perunilam was appointed as the first full time director of the Mission. In 2014 May, we moved to St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church Pfulgerville for a short term, at the same time searching for a permanent location. We bought The Divine Mercy Prayer Group's Retreat Center in Austin, Bishop Jacob Angadiath blessed and dedicated the new church on November 8, 2014 and declared it as the 34th Parish of our Diocese. Fr. Dominic Perunilam was appointed as the first vicar of the parish. A used mobile school of 8500 square feet, donated by St. Helens Catholic Church Georgetown was brought into our property and set up for CCD classes and social hours. This St, Mary's Parish Center was blessed and set up for the use on March 25, 2018.

As of now, we have 120 registered families with 120 CCD Students and 30 teachers. Our four family units have regular prayer meetings. Two Adult Choirs and one Children Choir lead the music ministry in our parish. SAYA is our active Youth group. The Women's group is also very active. We are planning to add an English Mass to the regular Malayalam Mass on Sundays, besides the weekly Masses on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.



**Vicar:** Rev. Fr. Dominic Perunilam

Trustees



Manesh Antony



Mathew Lawrence

## ST JOSEPHS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH, HOUSTON, TX





Vicar: Rev Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal



Asst. Vicar: Rev. Fr. Rajeev Valiyaveetil

The Syro Malabar Catholics in Houston, Texas formed the St. Thomas Kerala Catholic Community to formalize their commitment to each other and the faith. The community eventually purchased 1622 Staffordshire St., Stafford City and created the St. Thomas Community Center, where Qurbana and catechism were conducted for many years. The Center was dedicated on October 1, 1995 and few priests from different part of Texas offered Holy Qurbana for the community. In 1999, Rev. Fr. Antony Nirappel was delegated from India to serve the Syro Malabar Catholics in Houston. After Fr. Antony returned to India, Rev. Fr. Ligory Johnson Philip took in charge in April 2001 and served as a full-time mission priest. In 2002, upon founding of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese under the leadership of Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, the mission successfully purchased the property at 211 Present Street, Missouri City. After renovation, St. Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Church was consecrated on Oct. 18, 2003 and Fr. Ligory Johnson Philips Kattikaran was appointed as the First Vicar of the newly named parish. Under his leadership, the church saw a tremendous growth.

In 2009 Rev. Fr. Jacob Christy Parambukattil became the vicar and he helped to introduce and standardize the Syro Malbar Liturgy in English, for the upcoming generations of Syro Malabar Catholics. Fr. Christy was followed by Fr. Zacharias Thottuvelil in 2013 & assistant vicar Fr. Wilson Antony Kandankery. It was during this time that St. Joseph was elevated to the status of a Forane Catholic Church under the Syro Malabar Chicago Diocese. Fr. Zacharias was followed by Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal in 2015, and Assistant vicars Fr. Stephen Kanipallil, Fr. Siby Sebastian and Fr. Rajeev Valiyaveetil

As the community grew in number and a need arose, new missions were established for the Syro Malabar Catholics in the Pearland, Clearlake, and North Houston areas of Texas, in 2011. The mission in Pearland eventually grew into its own parish- St Mary's Syro Malabar Catholic Church in Pearland, St. Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Forane parish, currently has more than 650 families.

Multiple ministries and initiatives have grown under the umbrella of the parish. St. Joseph's Continuing Christian Education Program has around 650 registered students. Other ministries and initiatives include the Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) for young children, the St. Joseph Young Adult League (S.J.Y.A.L.) for youth, S.T.A.F.F. for the Young Adults/Young Professionals, the San Jose Ladies forum, SMCC, Ave Maria and Ward Prayer Groups, Jesus Youth, St. Joseph Charity Clinic, the Altar Servers guild, Trustees/ Kaikarans, Parish and Pastoral Councils.

## ST MARY'S SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, PEARLAND, TX

"The Mighty One has great things done for me", said Blessed Virgin Mary, and this is true of St. Mary's Syro Malabar Catholic Church Pearland, Texas. With sixty families recognized as a Holy Mass Center on November 10, 2010 by H.E. Mar Jacob Angadiath, we grew fast under God's mighty hands as a Parish. Rev Fr Christy Prambukattil as the Pastor



of St Joseph Syro Malabar Catholic Church Houston realized the spiritual need of the faithful for a separate facility around Pearland region with the three existing prayer groups namely Pearland, Clearlake and Pasadena. Later in June 30, 2011 in the General Body meeting Shadow Creek, Sunrise, and Ashley Pointe were created. The Holy Mass Centre was raised to the level of St. Mary's Syro Malabar Catholic Mission Pearland on 11/06/2011. The Holy Qurbana and CCD programs were conducted in rented facilities around.



Vicar: Fr Ruban J Thannickal

For the purpose of the construction of the Church 9.60 acres of land was purchased in Pearland near O' Day road in 2012. There after a building committee was constituted and initiated remote preparations for construction with George Kanyakonil and later Shaji Thomas as coordinators. Sibi Mundackal and Siby Jacob were selected as trustees for the first time in

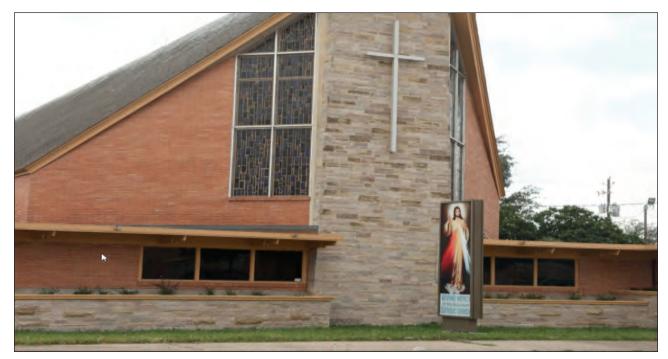
the year 2013-2014, and fundraising programs like car raffle for a new church building progressed. Rev Fr Zacharias Thottuvelil took charge as the Vicar in 2014 and there was a new life for the Mission and developmental activities progressed under his able leadership. Siby Jacob, Jacob Thomas, Tennyson Mathew and Jimy Kumbattu were selected as trustees for the year 2015-16. Mar Jacob Angadiath laid the foundation stone for the church building in Pearland when Rev Fr Wilson Antony was Associate Vicar on April 11, 2015. Rev Fr Kurian Neduvelichalumkal became the Vicar in June 2015 and gave effective leadership for the construction works and church building was completed soon. His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath in the presence of Auxiliary Bishop Mar Joy Alappat consecrated the church and created the Parish on May 29, 2016. Rev Fr Antony Xavier Pullukattu was appointed as the first full time Vicar on June 26, 2016 who materialized the dream of purchasing a Rectory near the church in the same year. Abhilash Francis, James Gregory, Fleming George and Tony Philip took charge as trustees for the year 2017-2018. Rev Fr Ruban J Thannickal was appointed as the Vicar in February 05, 2017. Sibi Mundackal, Sunny Kalathoor, Joshy Varghese and Sunny Joseph took charge as trustees for the year 2019-2020.

St Mary's Syro Malabar Church, Pearland, has 139 registered families, 236 CCE children and a committed and active team of CCE Teachers, with Philip George as the coordinator. The parents, youth and the children have various activities to grow in faith including sports and games. In 2017 we conducted Inter Parish Talent Festival (IPTF-2017) for Texas and Oklahoma region.

Pious Organizations like SMCC, Ladies' Forum, Youth, Mission League, and Altar Boys' Association are very active in the parish. The presence and support of MSMI Sisters especially Sr Agnes Maria is very helpful in our faith formation. There are seven Prayer Groups in the Parish and each group gather in a house to pray once in every month. Apart from prayer various activities like, Christmas, Onam, Birthday and wedding anniversary celebrations make prayer groups livelier.

Holy Qurbana as the center of Christian life is celebrated from Tuesday through Sunday and it is made very active and solemn by the support from English and Malayalam choir. On every First and Second Fridays and on all the Saturdays there is one-hour adoration. Opportunity for confession is arranged everyday before and after the Holy Qurbana. The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ is growing each day in faith and unity under the strong providence of God and maternal care of Blessed Virgin Mary, the Patroness of our Parish.

## DIVINE MERCY SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, EDINBURG, TX



Divine Mercy Syro Malabar Catholic Church in Edinburg was declared the 25th Parish of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago in 2011. 2005 and 2006 marked an influx of immigrants from India to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. During this period, around 20 Syro Malabar Catholic families migrated in this region from various parts of the USA and India. They periodically attended the ecumenical prayer meeting of the Malayalees of the place. Soon, the Valley Indian Catholic Prayer Group was formed and began their own gatherings in individual homes. In 2006, Monsignor Luis Brum, the vicar of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in McAllen, provided the Church facilities for Holy Qurbana and CCD classes for the children.



Vicar: Rev. Fr. Mathew Punchayil

Reverend Father Cyriac John from the Diocese of Corpus Christi helped the community by periodically celebrating the Holy Qurbana. The Community was declared a Mission on April 15th, 2007, and Father Cyriac was appointed Pastor of the Mission. On December 20th, 2007, the community purchased a property and converted it into a temporary church. Sunday Holy Mass began to be celebrated on a regular basis in this house. While we were planning to build a church here, a Presbyterian Church and facilities became available for purchase, we bought it in 2011.

Most Reverend Bishop Jacob Angadiath consecrated this church and declared this church community a Parish on May 15h, 2011. Father Cyriac was appointed the first Pastor of this new Parish. Weekend and days of obligation masses were celebrated and regular CCD was conducted on Sundays. The church facilities were repaired and made usable for CCD classes. A small temporary stage was built on a small cemented open space, and some rooms were furnished for a guest room.

On June 2nd, 2013, Reverend Father Raphael Ambadan was appointed as the first resident Pastor. During his tenure, a beautiful lawn, a gathering place, and a parish hall with a gym was built. On Feb 4th, 2016, Reverend Fr. Wilson Antony took charge as the second resident Pastor. On May 15th, 2016, we celebrated the completion of five years as a Parish Community. During Fr. Wilson's tenure, the Divine Mercy Community built a Rectory, and it was blessed by Reverend Bishop Jacob Angadiath on Feb 11th, 2018. The strength of our Parish Community is the 76 families and its 220 members. The Parish's success lies solely on God's blessings for the unity, dedication, and generosity of the members.

Compiled and Edited by Mr. Joseph Biju

. Best Compliments From \_\_\_\_\_

## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, PA



#### Parish Time-line 1983-2019

- 1983 Establishment of Indian Catholic Mission
- 1999 First Syro Malabar Catholic Convention
- 2003 Rev. Fr. Jacob Christy Assumes charge as Mission Director
- 2005 Consecration and dedication of St. Thomas Parish
- 2006 | First Anniversary Souvenir
- 2009 Rev. Fr. John Melepuram Assumes charge as Vicar
- 2012 Parish History and Family photo souvenir
- 2013 Rev. Fr. augustine Palackaparambil assumes charge as Vicar
- 2014 Parish purchases Rectory
- 2014 Rev. Fr. Johnykutty Pulessery assumes charge as Vicar
- 2014 Parish elevated as a Forane church
- 2017 Rev. Fr. Vinod Madathiparambil assumes charge as Vicar
- 2017 | Consecration of the newly renovated Church
- 2018 Shrine of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph
- 2018 Parish picture Directory published
- 2019 Roof Replacement Project



Vicar Rev. Fr. Vinod Madathiparambil

#### **Parish Highlights**

- Two parish Missions
- Twelve Family units and four hundred plus Families
- Holy Qurbana in Malayalam and English on Sunday
- Holy Qurbana and Novenas on weekdays
- More than 250 students in CCD
   Parish Feast Dukhrana
- Thirunnal in July
- Six parish Organizations
   Rosary month celebration and
- candlelit procession
- Marian Consecration
- Lumen vitae-Haiti Mission





Binu Paul



Saji Sebastian



Paulachan.K.Vareed



George.V. George

## ST. ALPHONSA SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD



The community of 50 families in Baltimore and surrounding areas was raised as a Mission on April 15, 2004. His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath appointed Rev. Dr. George Kallampally as the first Director of Syro Malabar Catholic Mission of Baltimore. Rev. Dr. George Kallampally provided spiritual guidance and leadership through November 2005. Prior to becoming a Mission, Rev. Fr. Mathew Mainankerry provided spiritual guidance and leadership for the Syro Malabar Catholic faithful in and around Baltimore.



Vicar Rev Fr. Wilson Antony Kandenkary

The appointment of Fr. James Nirappel, in December 2005, as the Mission Director was a turning point for the Syro Malabar faithful in Baltimore. Under his leadership and guidance the mission started Holy Qurbana on Sundays and Sunday School classes

for children were started. The community met regularly at St. Gabriel Catholic Church, which was rented for weekly Sunday Holy Qurbana, Sunday School and other spiritual needs. In September 2013, the community purchased a church building, a rectory and 3.5 acres of land in Halethorpe, MD. The consecration and dedication of the church building was held on July 26, 2014 by His Excellency Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath; and was proclaimed as the 33rd parish within the Diocese. Rev. Fr. James Nirappel was the first Vicar.

On February 2016, Rev. Fr. James Nirappel was transferred to St. Thomas Syro Malabar Forane Church, Santa Ana, California as its Vicar. Rev. Fr. Johunus Cheruniath V.C. was assigned as the temporary Vicar through April 16, 2016. Rev. Fr. Seby Chittilappilly was appointed as the Vicar on April 17, 2016. After Rev. Fr. Seby Chittilappilly went back to his home Diocese in India on February 2019, Rev. Fr. Wilson Antony Kandenkary was appointed as the Vicar on February 3, 2019.

On June 29, 2019 Melvin Paul Mangalath of the parish was ordained as a Deacon and, God willing, will be ordained as a priest on May 30, 2020. At present, there are more than 140 registered families in the parish. Parish currently have daily Holy Qurbana, English and Malyalam Holy Qurbana on Sundays, including Adoration; conducts and convened several retreats, spiritual renewal seminars; organizations/ministries for youth and women, Jesus youth, adult choir, Angels choir and Cherupushpa Mission League for children. Parish presently conducts a vibrant Adult Catechism with more than 45 adults as part of a two-year Did ache Diploma Course. The Sunday School currently have classes from Pre-K through 12th grade with more than 120 children and a Malayalam School with more than 50 children

Compiled and Edited by Rev. Fr. Wilson Antony & Mr. Tison Thomas

## ST JUDE SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, HAMMONTON, NJ



South Jersey Indian Catholic Community was established in December 1999 with thirty-five Kerala Catholic Christian families living in the southern New Jersey. In the initial days, the community members gathered for Holy Mass, once in a month at a local church. Until June 2011, Rev. Fr. Joseph Panthackal VC led the community as spiritual director. In addition to the monthly Holy Masses, the community celebrated Christmas with Caroling, Easter and the Feast of St. Thomas, arranged pilgrimage to Holy shrines as well as picnic trips a couple of times during the year, summer Picnic and monthly family gatherings of Little Flower Mission League (LFML), in which children and parents would spend time for prayers, Bible study, Malayalam study etc. Jesus



Vicar: Rev Fr.Stephen Kannippillil

Youth prayer group for youth and adult's prayer groups were also active in the community, which organized weekly prayer gatherings at one of the member houses. During this time the community was greatly blessed with the presence and ministry of Rev. Fr. Jose Manjakkunnel, who also led the community as spiritual director for a year during 2003-2004.

In June 2011, Rev. Fr. John Melepuram was appointed as the Spiritual Director of South Jersey Indian Catholic Community and on October 03, 2011, the community was declared as St. Jude Indian Catholic Mission of South Jersey. The Mission grew very quickly with Holy Qurbana, CCD, and Malayalam school every Sunday. The traditional events such as Thirunal, Christmas and Easter Celebrations, Caroling and Picnic continued with more participation. LFML and Jesus Youth played even stronger roles in nurturing the faith and fellowship of the community. Vanakkamasam in May, Rosary in October and the 'Way of the Cross' during Lent season and the monthly night vigil, showed the depth of the community's faith and traditions.

The purchase of the church and rectory property was completed on March 28, 2016 and on June 18, 2016, the renovated church was consecrated. On the same day the mission was raised to the status of a parish and Rev. Fr. John Melepuram was appointed as the vicar. In February2017 Rev. Fr. Stephen Kanippillil,

MCBS was appointed as the new vicar. Our parish has been thriving under the strong leadership of Fr. Stephen with additional initiatives such as weekdays Holy Qurbana, monthly Holy Qurbana in English for youth and children, special youth mass, youth choir, youth participation in parish council and CCD program, altar serving program for children, first Friday night vigil, St. Jude Novena on Fridays, 13 hour Eucharistic adoration etc...

Compiled and edited by Josemon Abraham



## ST JUDE SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, NORTH VIRGINIA, VA



St Jude Syro Malabar Catholic Church of Northern Virginia is the largest Syro Malabar community in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. capital region and more than 200 families belong to this parish. The long-term desire of having a very "own dream church" of the community has been fulfilled recently by procuring a new Church facility and Parish Center in Lafayette Center Drive, Chantilly which is only 3 miles from Washington Dulles (IAD) International Airport. The new Church facility with 23,000 square feet area which includes Church with beautiful altar, meeting hall, youth hall, Blessed Mother's grotto, music room, catechism classes, and office rooms have been consecrated on February 16, 2019 by Mar Jacob Angadiath, Hon. Bishop of St



Vicar Rev. Fr. Justin Puthuserry

Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago. With the consecration, Hon. Bishop declared the formation of a new Parish and appointment of Rev. Fr. Justin Puthussery as the new Vicar.

It was in 2006 Syro Malabar church started celebrating Holy Qurbana in their own rite and Malayalam language once a month in the Northern Virginia area. Weekly Holy Qurbana and Catechism classes for children have been started in July 2010. Rev. Fr. Mathew Punchayil, Director of the Greater Washington Syro Malabar Mission had been leading the community during that period. St Jude Syro Malabar Catholic Mission of Northern Virginia was raised as an independent Mission in July 2011, and Rev. Fr. Joseph Elampara was appointed as the first Mission Director. In April 2012, Rev. Fr. TijoMullakara was appointed as the full-time Director for St. Jude Syro Malabar Mission and he served for more than 3 years for the community. Rev. Fr. Justin Puthussery has been serving and leading the community from September 2015.

St Jude parish has regular Catechism Classes, Malayalam Classes, Kids and Adults Music Ministry, Women's Group, Youth Group, Legion of Mary, and Knights of Columbus. It is a vibrant and growing community with more than 180 children attending the Catechism classes every Sunday.

## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH, SANTA ANA, CA



In 1993, a charismatic retreat conducted by Rev. Fr. Mathw Naikomparapil and team made a dramatic change to the spirituality of Southern California Catholic Malayalee communities. They were inspired to conduct prayer meetings on a regular basis and initiated charitable efforts to support the needy and the poor.

In May 1998, few Malayalee Catholics from this region organized an official group to promote Christian values and religious education to their children and especially to have Holy Qurbana in their own language. This small community started a formal parish under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Jacob Kattackal at St. Martin De Pores Church at Yoruba Linda, California on April 8, 2001. The venue shifted to a small chapel at St.



Vicar: Fr. Mathews Munjanattu

Catherine military academy in Anaheim later on Easter Sunday of 2001 Through August of 2002.

As our Malayalee Catholic community in Orange County grew rapidly, one of the greatest desires of this community was to have their own church to conduct services. Their prayers were answered in August 2002, the first Qurban in Malayalam was celebrated at this new Fullerton church. On September 15, 2002, the first St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Church in California was solemnly blessed by our new bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath. This was one of the first organized parishes of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago.

As the number of families grew, a larger church was needed and the community came together to buy the present church in Santa Ana, California by mid August 2006. Bishop Todd Brown, of the Orange Catholic diocese, encouraged and supported us with love and the financial assistance. It was a big blessing for our growing Syro Malabar community. The church building was later repaired and refurbished with new altar.

In May 2014, our church was elevated to the status of Forane church in the diocese. Currently we have 125 registered families and has may religious organizations like St. Vincent De Paul Society, Syro Malabar Catholic Congress of North America (SMCC), Legion of Mary, Franciscan Third order, Cherupushpa Mission League, Music Ministry and a growing & vibrant Youth group.

We are extremely grateful to all our former Vicars Rev. Dr. Jacob Kattackal, Fr. Augustine Palackaparampil, Fr. Emmanuel Madukkakuzhi and Fr. James Nirappel who served this community with selfless compassion and spiritual leadership. We are also blessed to have Fr. Mathews Munjanattu as our current vicar. We are proud of our two seminarians Br. Joby Joseph and Br. Joshua Abraham studying for the priesthood... As one of the most vibrant parishes in the diocese, the Santa Ana Forane Church is looking forward to a spirit filled successful future serving The Lord and the diocese of Chicago!

5021 16th St, Santa Ana, CA 92703 www.stthomasSyro Malabarca.org Phone: 714 530 2900

## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH SAN FRANCISCO, CA



The seeds of St. Thomas Syro Malabar church (SFO) were sown back in 2001 when Fr. Jimmy Thottapally celebrated Syro Malabar rite Holy Qurbana for a small group of 20 families. As the community grew stronger, on September 2, 2007, Bishop Mar. Jacob Angadiath elevated us to a mission and appointed Rev. Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal as our first full-time Mission Director. Since then, the mission has been growing by leaps and bounds.

By the grace of our Almighty God, we bought our Church property in 2009. Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath consecrated our church and elevated us to a parish on December 19, 2009. By this time, we had 308 parish households and 931 members. Soon

we started weekday Holy Qurbana, first Friday Adoration, ward prayer meetings, annual retreats, Ettu Nompu, Stations of the cross on Fridays during Lent and youth retreats to name a few. Various ministries were established to help run the church functions smoothly. In addition to the ministries that focus on the formation and spiritual growth of our parishioners, our church has special ministries that do outreach programs to help the less fortunate brothers and sisters in the San Francisco Bay Area as well as in India.

In this year of 2019, we will be celebrating our 10th Anniversary with yearlong programs under the guidance of our current Vicar Rev. Fr. George Ettuparayil. In the span of 10 years as a parish we have grown to 613 active parish households and 1,812 active members. As a special 10th Anniversary gift, Our Lord has graced with us our own rectory.

During the past 10 years, our Faith formation program steadily progressed. We currently have 325 students and 40 Teachers. When we bought the Church property back in 2009, we took over a pre-school. Our School is honored to become the first catholic school under St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago. From a dilapidated condition back then, it has transformed to be a beautiful, efficient,

thriving and profitable school, running at maximum capacity most of the time.

We thank God for guiding us under the able leadership of Fr. Jimmy Thottapally (Founding Director : 2001 – 2007), Fr. Kurian Neduvelichalumkal (Vicar: Aug 2007 – Dec. 2013), Fr. Sebastian Kaniampadickal (Vicar : Dec 2013 - Jul 2014), Fr. Roy Jacob Kalayil (Vicar Jul 2014 - Jul 2015), Fr. Mathews K Munjanath (Vicar : Aug 2015 - Jul 2018) and Fr. George Ettuparayil (Vicar: Jul 2018 - Current)



**Compiled and Edited By:Paul Cyriac Ackarakalam** 



Vicar: Rev Fr. George Ettuparayil

## INFANT JESUS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, SACRAMENTO, CA



Sacramento, named for Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, is the capital of California and America's most diverse and fastest growing city. The presence of Syro Malabar community in Sacramento region began in the year 1988-89, as some of them moved from San Francisco, Bay

Area to Sacramento, in search of better opportunities. As the community grew gradually in its strength, the members relied on the unconditional services rendered by Keralite priests working in the diocese of Sacramento, for their spiritual needs. The bishop of the local diocese took initiative to recognize the ardent faith and ethnic background of the Indian Catholic Community. By the year 2005, the community noticed a drastic growth in the presence of its members, in and around the greater Sacramento region. In the year 2009, Infant Jesus Mission was officially inaugurated by His Excellency Mar Jacob Angadiath, Bishop of Chicago diocese. Fr. Kurian Naduvelichalumkal, of St. Thomas Syro Malabar Church, Milpitas, was appointed as its first director.

Searching for a facility to hold regular services in Syro Malabar rite, the diocese of Sacramento was gracious to let us use St. Peter's church facility. In December 2010, Fr. Johnykutty Pulissery was appointed as its first resident director of the Mission. With his vast pastoral experience, he began to form the community in faith and greater unity. With the intention of having a Church of our own, Fr. Johnykutty, with the help of trustees, parish council and building committee, started various fundraising programs and initiatives. On 8th February 2014, the Mission received Fr. Sibi Kurian VC, as its new director. As the community grew in number, the need for a Church became inevitable and he continued the efforts to find a church of our own. Towards the end of 2016, Fr. Sibi Kurian with a team met the bishop of Sacramento seeking financial assistance who then showed willingness to offer St. Peter's Church for a value, our community could afford.

Thus 2nd December 2017, became a memorable day in the history of Syro Malabar community of Sacramento, rededicating St. Peter's Church to Infant Jesus Syro Malabar Catholic Church, in the presence of Bishops, priests, guests, benefactors and parishioners. On this auspicious day, His Excellency, Mar Jacob Angadiath declared Infant Jesus Syro Malabar Catholic Church, the 43 rd full-fledged parish of Syro Malabar diocese of Chicago.

In July 2018, the parish welcomed Fr. Jobi Joseph Chelakunnel MCBS, as its new vicar. Under his spiritual guidance and directives, the community is growing in all dimensions. We have currently 110 registered families and about 150 children attending catechism classes.

Compiled and edited by Mr. Tom Pazhanilam

6200 McMahon Dr., Sacramento, CA 95824

## HOLY FAMILY SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, PHOENIX, AZ



Holy Family Syro Malabar Catholic Church, as we see today, is the outcome of the selfless service of a few devoted priests and the determination of the faithful. Scattered all over Arizona, the Malayalee Catholics in Phoenix were not organized until 2005.. Initially they started a prayer group consisting of 10 families under the spiritual direction of Fr.Augustine Kattady.In 2005-2006 there was an influx of Syro Malabar Catholics to Phoenix and the leaders began to think of the options for Malayalam Holy Mass. With the gracious permission from the Bishop of Phoenix, Fr Andrew Kollonoor celebrated holy Mass in Syro Malabar rite once a month at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Phoenix. Fr. Joseph Pottamel too served the community for a short period.



Vicar: Rev Fr James Nirappel

Meanwhile, there raised a great demand from the community to make regular arrangements for the celebration of Holy mass and sacraments in the traditional Syro Malabar liturgy. In 2007 Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, approved the community as Holy Family Syro Malabar Catholic Mission affiliated to the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago. Fr.Mathew Plathottom was appointed as the first director in charge of the community. His efforts in building up the Syro Malabar community in Phoenix were extremely remarkable. Convincing the members the relevance of Syro Malabar liturgy, he initiated catechism classes for children and setup a building fund for the construction of a new church. In November 2008 Chicago bishop appointed Fr.Mathew Munjanatt as the full time director of the Mission. As a fruit of his efforts. our own church was consecrated by Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, on November 2, 2013.On completion of the successful mission of building a vibrant catholic community, Fr. Munjanattu handed over the spiritual lantern to Rev Fr. George Etttuparayil (Sonyachen) in August 2015. On July 12th 2018 Rev Fr. James Nirappel took charge of vicar. Ever since his office as the vicar, Fr. James Nirappel is guiding us

Our Sunday school is one of the best in Chicago Diocese, incorporating faith formation and cultural values. Various Catholic movements like Mission League, Thirubalasakhyam, Christeen, Jesus Youth, St.Vincent De Paul Society, and MathruVedi, are very dynamic in the parish. The worth mentioning theme is that all our social and charitable activities are focused on the spiritual wellbeing of the people. We dedicate our prayerful sacrifices and hard work to our next generations. We greatly appreciate the immense love and support from the Diocese of Chicago and Diocese of Phoenix to flourish our catholic community in Arizona.

## ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH, SOMERSET, NJ



St. Thomas Syr Malabr Catholic Forane Church in Somerset originated as a mission organized by 15 families in April 2000. Fr. Philip Vadakkekkara and Fr. Thomas Perunil-



April 2000 | 15 Families | Miltown, NJ



January 2004 | 50 Families | East Millstone, NJ



July 2015 | 240 Families | Somerset, NJ

adakkekkara and Fr. Thomas Perunilam were the founding priests of this mission. From the humble beginnings in year 2000, with a monthly holy mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Milltown, the community moved to a rental church in East Millstone in Jan 2004 and started



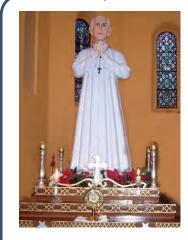
Fr. Ligory Philips Kattiakaran

weekly holy mass, becoming the first parish in New Jersey. In 2006, the small parish community of 50 families came together, pooled their resources and purchased the East Millstone Church and rectory buildings. The parish was officially consecrated in December 2006.

Fr. Thomas Kadukappilly became the first Vicar of the new Parish. In 2014, the church was elevated to Forane status. Having outgrown their small church, the community decided to build a larger one in the adjacent town of Somerset. The land was purchased in 2010. After 5 Years of tireless efforts, we moved to the present church on July 2015. Today, under the guidance of Fr. Ligory Kattiakaran we are a community of 240 registered families including around 350 children in the faith formation program, a St. Jude chapel with first Class Relic, recreation facility with indoor basketball court, a vibrant CML, an active SVDP and enthusiastic Youth, Marian Mothers & Joseph Fathers groups.

Church recycling projects, Master's in Theology program and several other well -organized programs by pious organizations. In 2018, the church was blessed, to host the Sacrament of Priestly Ordination of Fr. Kevin Mundackal, the first priest from our diocese (established in 2001)

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## BL. KUNJACHAN SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC MISSION Staten Island, Ny

The Syro Malabar families on Staten Island began to gather for monthly Malayalam masses under the spiritual leadership of late Rev. Fr. Seraphin Paramby CST in December 1987, and they began to function as a mission community in January 2007 when Rev. Fr. Joy Alappatt became the director. Regular Sunday mass is celebrated at 4:30 PM at St. Joseph's Church, 463 Tompkins Ave, Staten Island.



Rev Fr. Soju Thekkineth Mission director

Monthly Syro Malabar Mass started	– Dec 1987	<ul> <li>Parish Feast started</li> </ul>	– Oct 2008
Reception for Mar Varkey Vithayathil	–May 1998	• Ecumenical Celebration hosted	– Dec 2009
<ul> <li>Mission established</li> </ul>	– May 2002	<ul> <li>Family Units established</li> </ul>	– Apr 2010
<ul> <li>Regular Sunday Mass started</li> </ul>	– Apr 2007	<ul> <li>Northeast Regional SMCC</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Mission Committee established</li> </ul>	– July 2007	Family Conference hosted	– Oct 2010
Bulletin started	– July 2007	<ul> <li>Send-off for Fr. Joy Alappatt</li> </ul>	– Aug 2011
<ul> <li>Sunday School started</li> </ul>	– Sept 2007	<ul> <li>Reception for</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Heavenly Patron named</li> </ul>	– Dec 2007	Mar Joy Alappatt	– Oct 2014
Dedication of Bl. Kunjachan statue	– Sept 2008	Church Relocation	– Aug 2015

#### **Compiled and Edited By: Tom V. Thomas**





#### **MAP OF PARISHES & MISSIONS** ST. THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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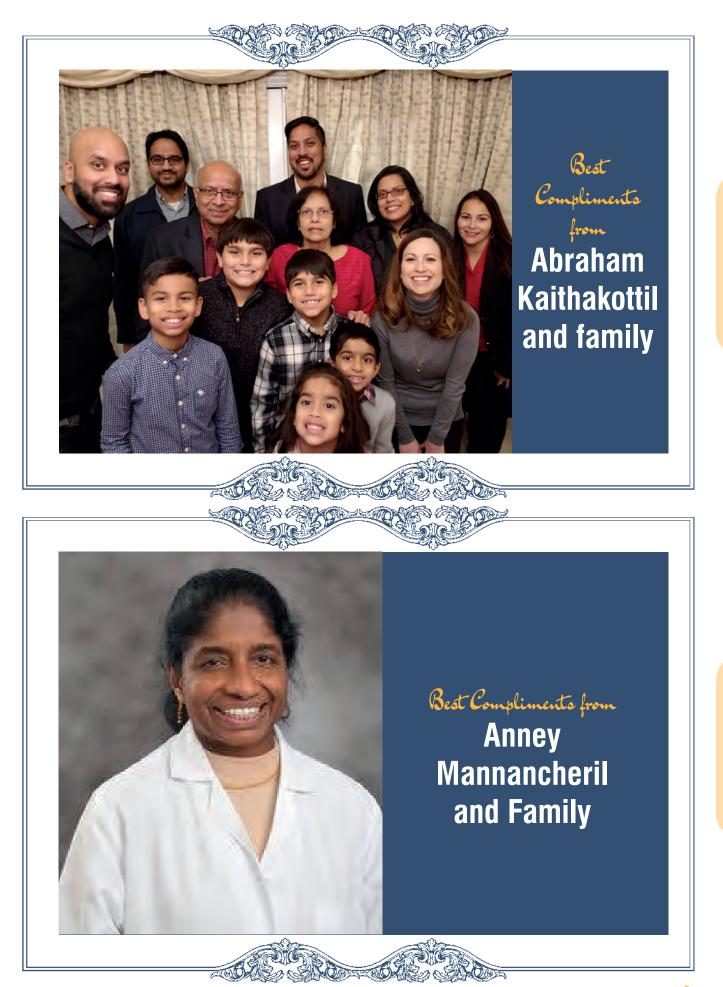
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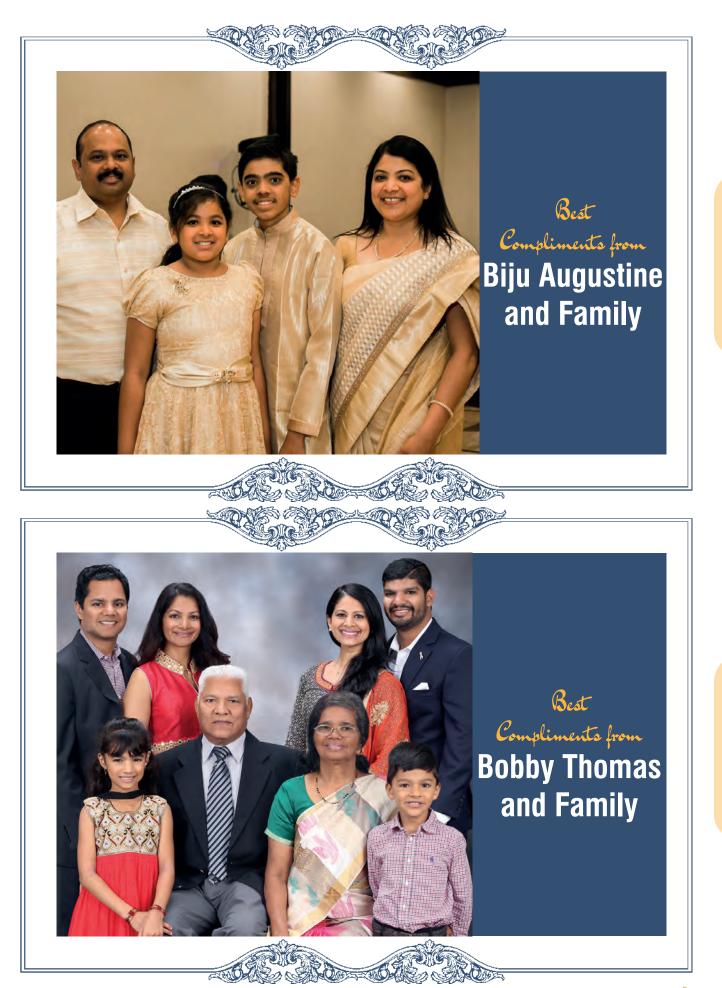
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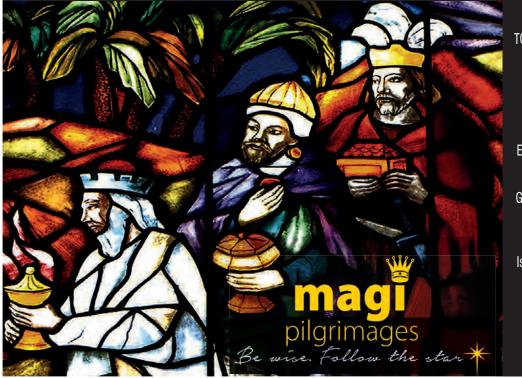
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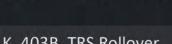
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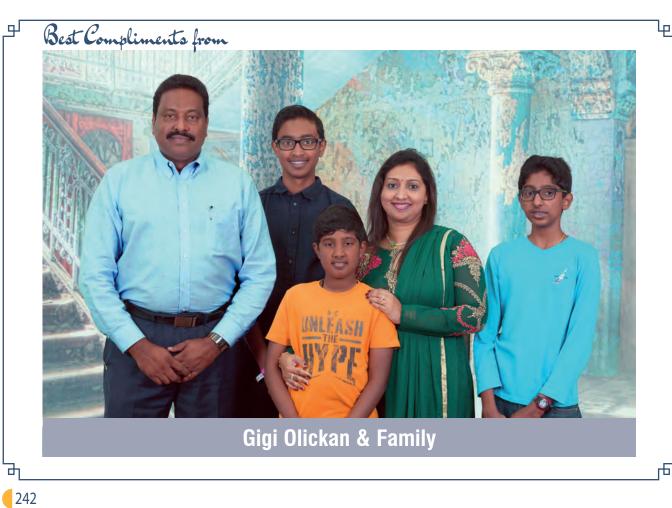
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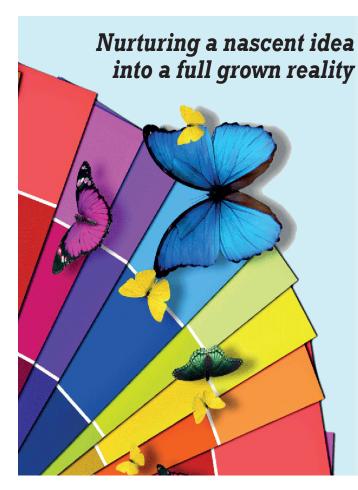


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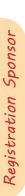
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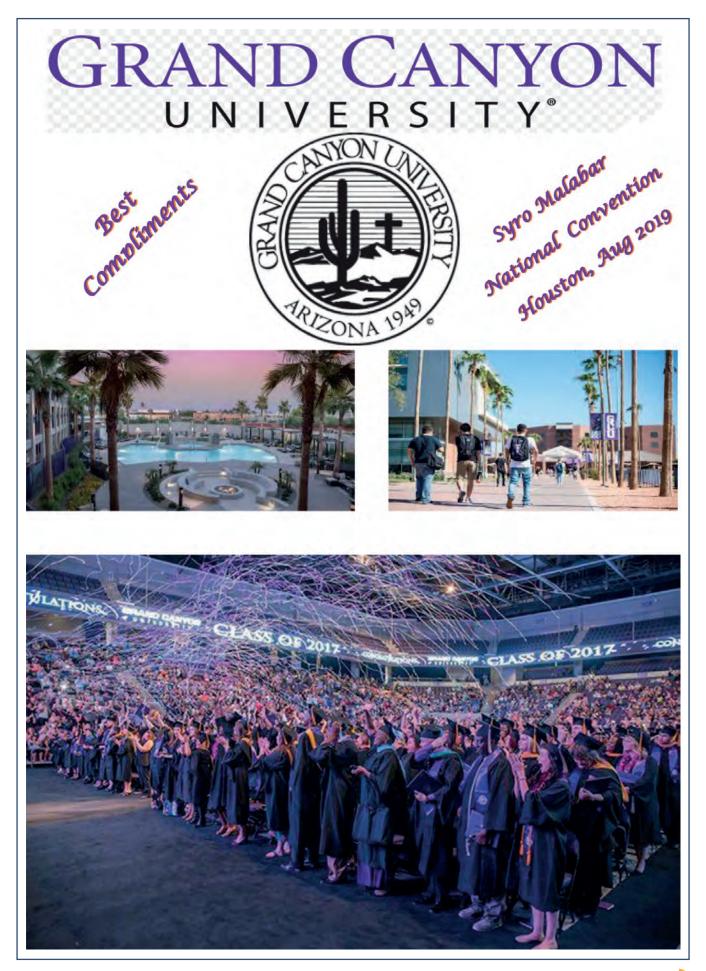


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പൂതിയൊരു വീട് വാങ്ങിക്കുക, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് ഒരു വീടു നിർമിക്കുക എന്നത് ജീവിതത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട തീരുമാനങ്ങളിലൊന്നാണ്. പണി തീർന്നു കിടക്കുന്ന ഒരു വീട് വാങ്ങുകയോ, പുതിയൊരു വീട് ഏതെങ്കിലും കമ്യൂണിറ്റിയിൽ നിർമിക്കുയോ ചെയ്യാൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുമ്പോൾ ശ്രദ്ധ പൂലർത്തേണ്ട പല കാര്യങ്ങളുമുണ്ട്. ഒരു ഹോം ബിൽഡറെ എങ്ങിനെ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കണം എന്നത് സ്വവധാനമായ കാര്യമാണ്. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ ഏറെ വൈദഗ്ഡ്യമുള്ള എന്നെപ്പോലുള്ളവർക്ക് നിങ്ങളെ ഏറെ സഹായിക്കാനാകും. ഒരു വീട് എന്ന നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്വപ്നം യാഥാർഥ്യമാക്കാൻ ഹൂസ്റ്റണിൽ അമ്പതിലധികം ബിൽഡർമാരുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ, നിങ്ങൾക്ക് യോജിച്ച ബിൽഡർ എതെന്ന് എങ്ങിനെ കണ്ടുപിടിക്കാം എന്നതിലേക്ക് ചില 'ടിപ്സ്' പങ്കുവയ്ക്കാൻ ആഗ്രഹി ക്കൂകയാണ്.

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ന്നങ്ങൾ ഒരു ഉപ്പെടന്റെ പ്രോഹാഷനന്ന വസ്സ്പ്രാം പ്രത്യായ് മനസിൽ വയ്ക്കേണ്ട മറ്റൊരു പ്രധാന കാര്യം ഇതൊരു ടീം വർക്കാണ് എന്നതാണ്. ബിൽഡറും നിങ്ങളും മാത്രമുള്ള ടീമല്ല ഇത്. റിയലറ്റർ, ആർക്കിടെക്ട്, ഡിസൈനർ, കൺസ്ട്രക്ഷൻ ടീം എന്നിവരൊക്കെ ഇക്കുട്ടത്തിൽ വരും. 'നമ്മൾ' എന്ന ചിന്തയിൽ ആരോഗ്യപരമായ ഒരു ബന്ധം ടീമിലുള്ളവരുമായി വളർത്തിയെടുക്കുന്നത് ഉചിതമാണ്. വീടിന്റെ ഓരോ കാര്യത്തിലും ഇടപെടൽ നടത്താൻ നിങ്ങൾ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ടോ? എല്ലാ ചെറിയ കാര്യങ്ങളും ബിൽഡർ നിങ്ങളെ അറിയിച്ചിരിക്കണമെന്ന് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നുണ്ടോ? എങ്കിൽ വളച്ചു കെട്ടില്ലാതെ നേരിട്ട് ഇക്കാര്യങ്ങൾ അവരെ ബോധ്യപ്പെടുത്തുക

#### എന്താണ് വേണ്ടതെന്ന് കൃത്യമായി മുൻകൂട്ടി അറിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുക

എന്താണ് വേണ്ടതെന്ന് കൃത്യമായി മൂൻകൂട്ടി അറിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുക നിർമാണം പൂർത്തിയാക്കിയ വീട് വാങ്ങിക്കാനോ, പൂതിയ വീട് നിർമിക്കാനോ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുമ്പോൾ നിങ്ങളുടെ മനസിൽ വീടിനെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള കാഴ്ചപ്പാട് എന്താണെന്ന് കൃത്യമായി രൂപപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കണം. മികച്ച ഒരു വീടാണോ, നല്ല നൈബർഹൂഡാണോ, ഏതെങ്കിലും പ്രത്യേക വസ്തുക്കൾ ഉയോഗിച്ചു നിർമിച്ച വീടാണോ നിങ്ങൽ തേടുന്നത് എന്നതൊക്കെ പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട കാര്യമാണ്. ഇക്കാരുത്തിൽ വൃക്തത ഉണ്ടെപ്കിൽ നിങ്ങൾക്ക് യോജിച്ച വീട് കണ്ടെത്തുക കൂടുതൽ എളുപ്പമാകും. പുതിയെരാമു വീട് നിർമിക്കാനാണെങ്കിൽ ബിൽഡർമായുള്ള ഇടപെടലുകൾ വളരെ എളുപ്പമാക്കം. മത്തിൽ വേണ്ട കാര്യങ്ങൾ എണ്താക്കെയാണെന്ന് മൂൻകൂട്ടി കൃത്യമായ ധാരണയുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ബിൽഡർമായുള്ള ഇടപെടലുകൾ വളരെ എളുപ്പമാകും.

#### എല്ലാ കാര്യത്തിനും രേഖയുണ്ടാക്കുക

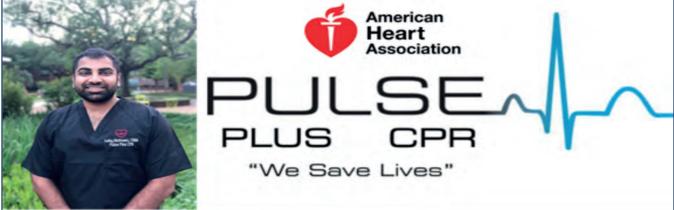
പ്പൂതിയ വീട് നിർമിക്കുന്നതിനോ, വീടു വാങ്ങുന്നതിനോ മൂമ്പ് ബിൽഡറുമായി സംസാരിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ എല്ലാ കാര്യങ്ങളും വൃക്തമായി എഴുതി വാങ്ങുക എന്നത് പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട കാര്യമാണ്. പ്രധാന തീരുമാനങ്ങളും വാഗദാനങ്ങളും സംബന്ധിച്ച് വരുന്ന ഇ മെയിലുകളും, കത്തുകളും സൂക്ഷിച്ചു വയ്ക്കണം. ഇത് പൊല്ലാപ്പാണെന്നു തോന്നാമെങ്കിലും പിന്നീട് എന്തെങ്കിലും തെറ്റിദ്ധാരണ ഉടലെടുത്താൽ ഇവ സഹായകമായി മാവാ 00010

#### എന്നെ വിശ്വസിക്കുക

എന്നെ വിശ്വസിക്കുക ഒരു പീടു വാങ്ങാൻ നിങ്ങൾ തീരുമാനമെടുക്കുമ്പോൾ റിയലറ്ററെ തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്നത് മനഃപൂർവം തന്നെയാണ്. നിങ്ങൾ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന നൈബർഹുഡിൽ പുതിയ പീട് നിർമിക്കാനാണെങ്കിലും, പണി പൂർത്തിയായ പീട് വാങ്ങാനാണെങ്കിലും എന്റെ ടീമിന് നിങ്ങളുടെ സ്വപ്നം അതിവേഗം പൂണിയിക്കാൻ കഴിയും, ആർക്കിടെക്റ്റൂമായി ആശയ വിനിമയം നടത്തി നിങ്ങളുടെ മനസിലുള്ള സ്വപ്ന ഭവനം യാഥാർഥ്യമാക്കുമ്പോൾ വീടിന്റെ നിർമാണ തുടക്കം മുതൽ നിങ്ങളുടെ കൺമുന്നിലാവും അത് ഉയരുക. ഈ മേഖലയിൽ വർഷങ്ങളായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നതു കൊണ്ട് വിവിധ ബിൽഡർമാർ പൂലർത്തുന്ന ബിൽഡിംഗ് ഗൈഡ്ലൈൻസ് ഉൾപ്പെടെയുള്ള എല്ലാ കാര്യങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയും ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് വുക്കമായ അറിവുണ്ട്. അതുകൊണ്ടു തന്നെ നിങ്ങൾക്ക് യോജിച്ച ബിൽഡറെ കണ്ടെത്താൻ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് എളുപ്പാ കഴിയും. എതു തന്തെിലുള്ളതാണെങ്കിലും പൂതിയൊരു വീട് എന്നത് ആരിലും ഏറെ താൽപരും ജനിപ്പിക്കുന്ന കാര്യമാണ്. മുകളിൽ പഠഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങൾ ഹൃദയത്തിൽ സൂക്ഷിക്കുക – സ്വന്തം വീട് എന്ന സ്വപ്നത്തിലേക്ക് കടക്കുമ്പോൾ ഏറ്റവും മികച്ച തീരുമാനമെടുക്കാൻ അത് നിങ്ങളെ സഹായിക്കും.







## Selby Koduvathara Mathew, CRNA CPR, ACLS, & PALS Instructor 832 409 PLUS (7587) pulsepluscpr@gamil.com

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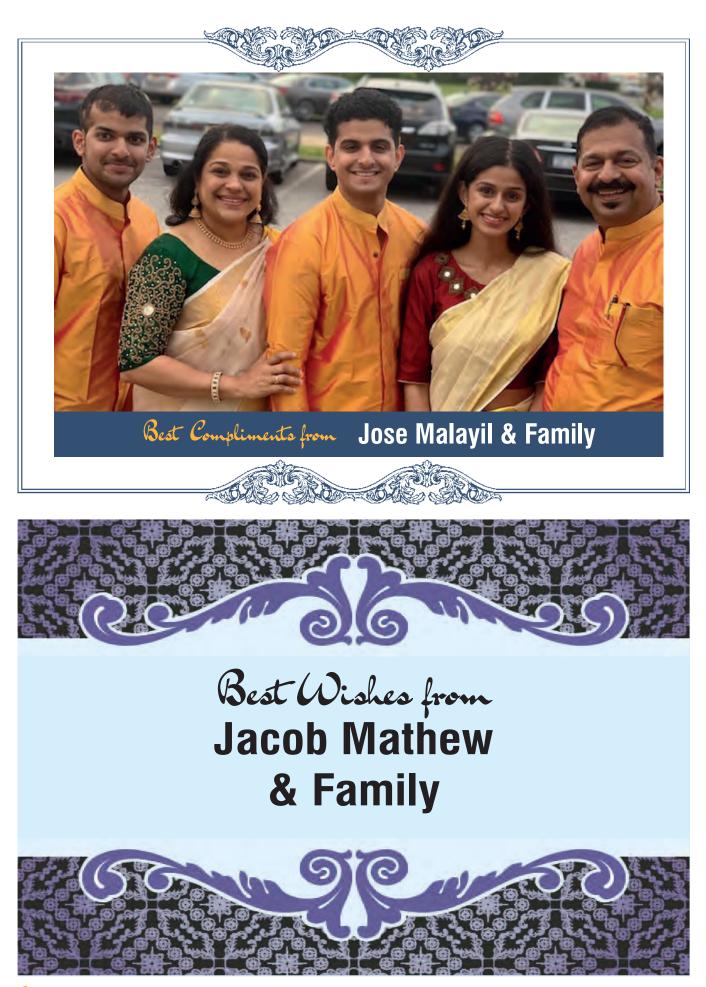




For Accommodation: Near by Hotel Comfort Inn, Plant City, FL. (Less than One mile) Near by Airport : Tampa International





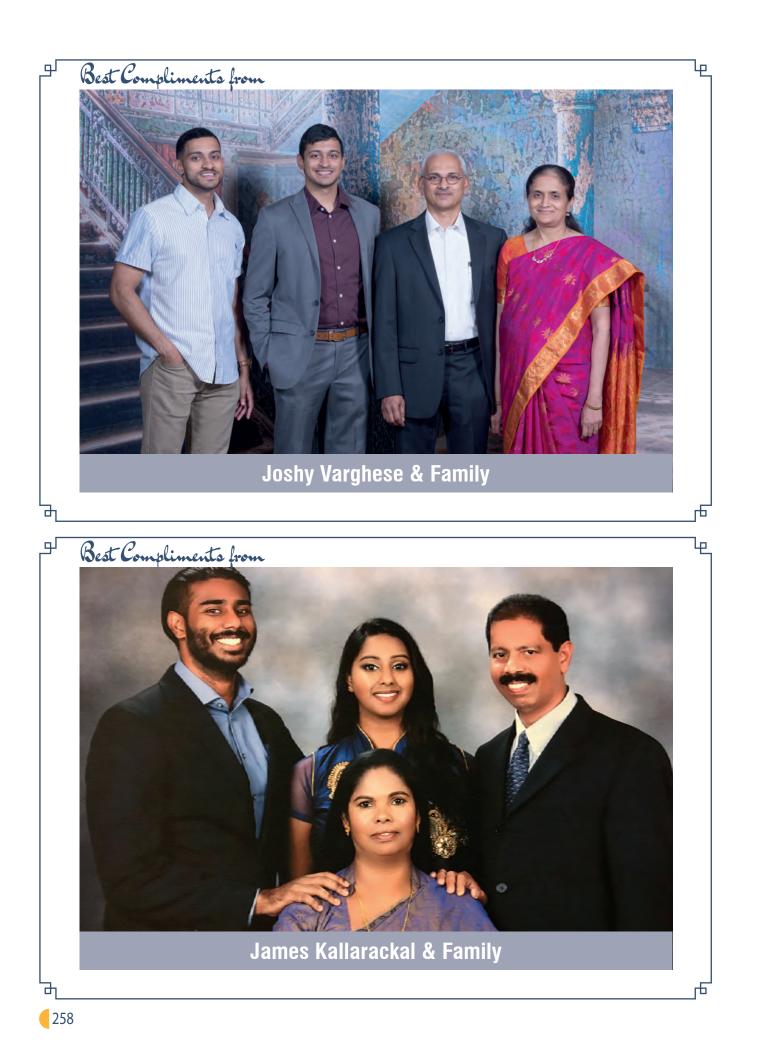


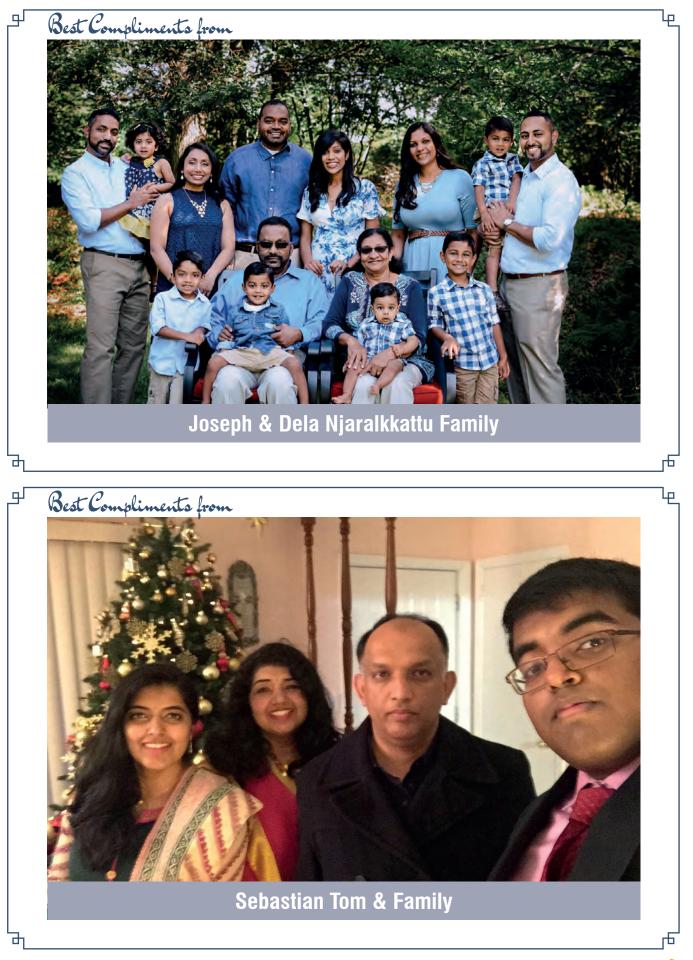


# Best Wishes from Jomon John & Family



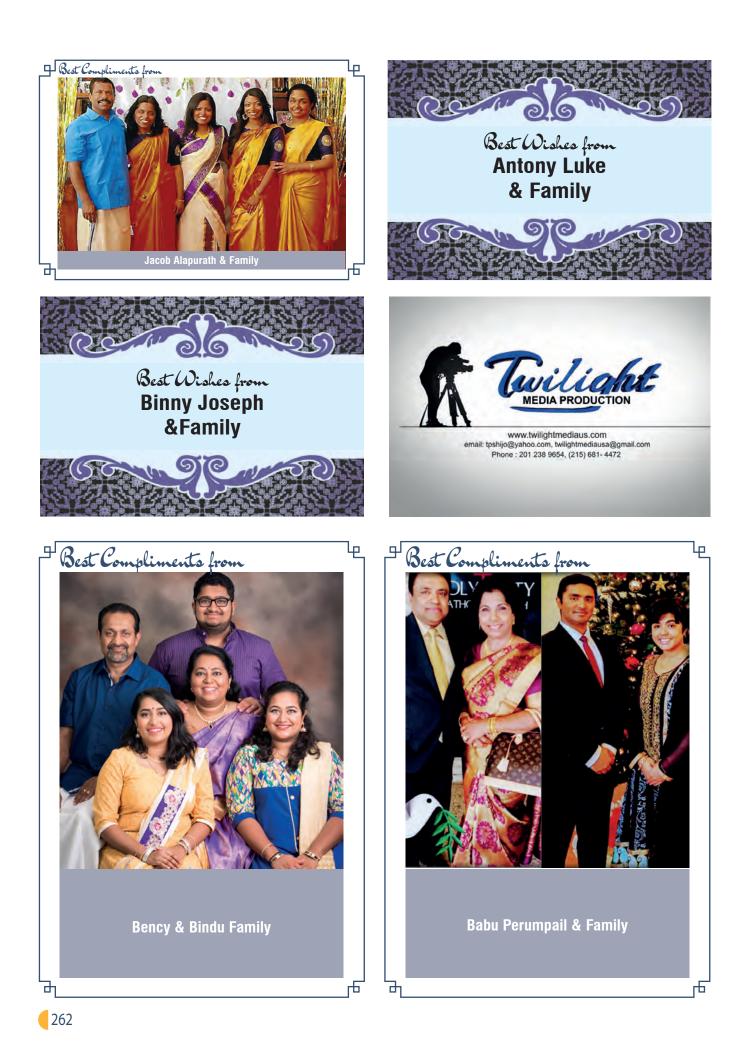


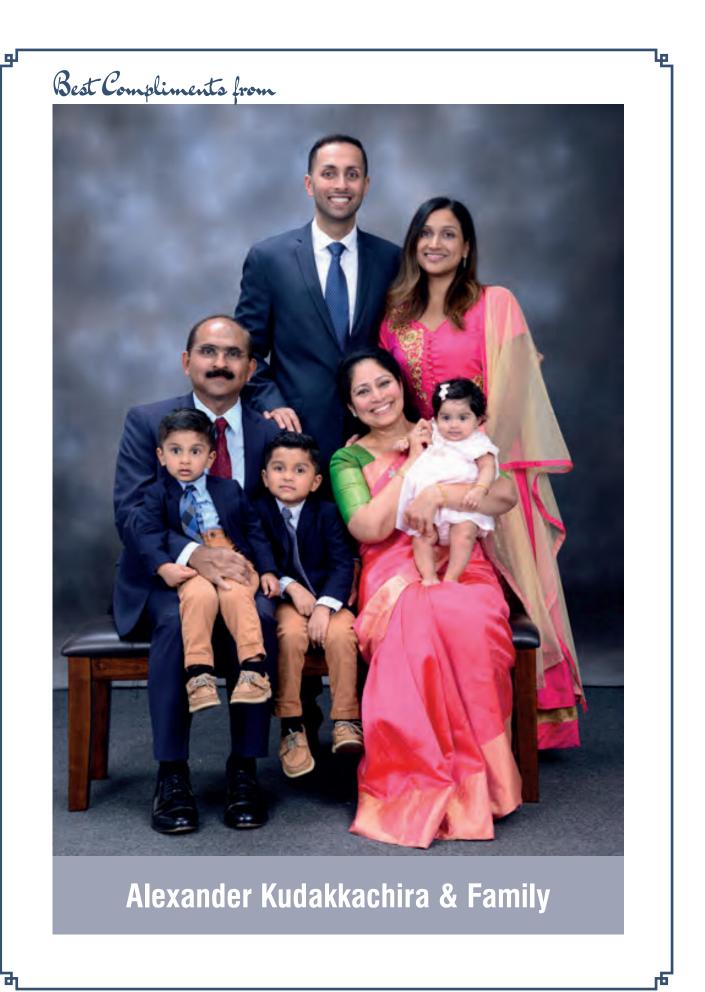


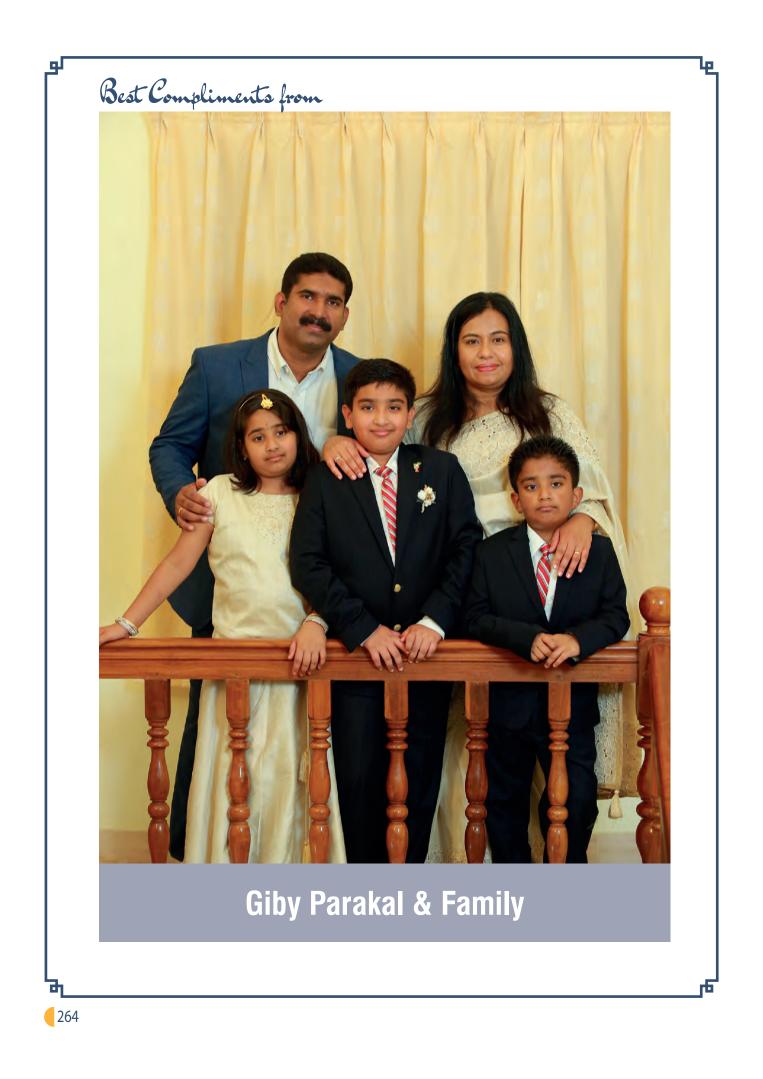














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# CONVENTION PROGRAM SCHEDULE

# DAY 1

# THURSDAY, AUGUST 1st

"THEY WI		ARISE AGLE'S WINGS; TH WILL WALK AND N ISAIAH 40:31	EY WILL RUN AND NC OT BE FAINT."	OT GROW
2:30 PM		SNACKS + CO 2:30 PM - 4 GRB GRAND BALL	1:00 PM	ALL
3:45 PM		VISHUDHA 3:45 HILTON LANIER GR	РМ	ALL
5:30 PM		DINN 5:30 pm - <sup>-</sup> Grb grand bal	7:30 PM	ALL
6:45 PM	<b>ARISE: INAUGURAL CEREMONY</b> 6:45 PM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM Inauguration ceremony followed by a taste of Texan hospitality. Exuberant talent under the direction of Fr. Thumbechirayil. Cannot be missed!			
10:00 PM		SOCIAL N 10:00		
	HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM	HILTON BOA A/B/C YA	HILTON BOA D/E/F	HILTON 335 YH
	Socialize! Enjoy the activities, greet old friends, make new ones, and have fun!			
11:45 PM		<b>CONCLUDIN</b> 11:45 ALL RO A short Night Prayer in th	PM OMS	ALL
Common Events	ALL   Adults 🔺   Cou	LEGEND ples C   Young Ad	ults YA   College YC	High School 附

# DAY 2

# FRIDAY, AUGUST 2ND

## SHINE OUT

"BE A LIGHT ON A LAMP STAND."

MATTHEW 5:16

		ſ
6:00 AM	<b>BREAKFAST</b> 6:00 AM - 8:00 AM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C Eat quick, procession will start at 7:15 AM sharp!	D
	ROSARY & ADORATION WITH JUSTICE KURIAN JOSEPH 6:00 AM HILTON 335 Rosary, reflection, and adoration with Justice Kurian Joseph.	
	CONFESSION 6:00 AM - 6:45 AM HILTON 328 & HILTON 329	D
7:15 AM	<b>PROCESSION</b> 7:15 AM GRB TO HILTON A nostalgic celebration of culture welcoming the Father and Head of our Syro Malabar church and the other dignitaries attending our convention with magnificent displays of art and tradition.	
9:00 AM	HOLY QURBANA 9:00 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM	
10:45 AM	ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY LIFE 10:45 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM These ordinary people and their extra-ordinary lives are truly the "Light on the Lamp Stand for the Nations." Let's find out what motivated them to make the choices they did and why they choose to live out their lives so radically different from the "norm" that surrounds them.	D
11:45 AM	<b>THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE</b> <b>CARDINAL MAR GEORGE ALENCHERRY</b> I1:45 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM An interactive session, designed to engage everyone and help create a vision for the future of the Syro Malabar church in the US. We will be discussing various issues, including how to negotiate inter-generational perspectives. This session will conclude with a keynote from his Eminence Cardinal Mar George Alencherry, who will share his vision, as a spiritual father, for our community and Diocese.	
Common Events	LEGEND ALL   Adults A   Couples C   Young Adults VA   College VC   High School V	
SPECIAL SESSIONS FOR KIDS (PRE-K - 8TH GRADE AFTER HOLY QURBANA) PRE-K - 1ST GRADE: HILTON 327   2ND GRADE - 4TH GRADE: GRB 332 B/E   5TH GRADE - 8TH GRADE: GRB 332 A/D PARENTS TO PICK-UP KIDS AFTER 7PM FROM RESPECTIVE ROOMS		

12:00 PM	<b>LUNCH</b> 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C Remember: there are parallel sessions over lunch time as noted below.			
	CHOOSE ONE IF PLANNING TO ATTEND WITH LUNCH			
	PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER 60 GEORGE KOTTUKAPALLY 12:30 PM GRB 332F George Kottukapally speaks as a Syro Malabar Catholic living in the US about aging gracefully and shares practical insights on tackling the golden years. Join this session to learn about new initiatives in the diocese for seniors and join in the conversation by contributing your ideas as well.	THE PARENT'S GUIDE TO HOMESCHOOLING DR. ANNILYN PURAYIDOM & LOVELY ABRAHAM 12:30 PM GRB 332C Thinking about homeschooling or other alternative education strategies? Never heard of any at all? Come learn about alternative education strategies, such as homeschooling, and their benefits and challenges. Our two speakers, both mothers oo eight children, share their own adventures in homeschooling and the tips and tricks they've gathered along the way.		
	DYA/STAFF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS ACCOSS THE DIOCESS L2: 30 PM GRB 310 Join the leaders from the Diocesan Youth Apostolate and St. Thomas Adult Faith Formation to gather and reflect on the future initiatives of the diocese. Join us as we build from the experience of past leaders and shape the path towards new innovations and ideas that will engage young people across the country and within their own individual patients & missions.	SHEPHERDING A DIVIDED FLOCK: TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP MATHEW JACOB I to PM - 2:45 PM GR 322 This is a golden opportunity for leadership training from a professional leadership coach and mentor. This session is for our priests and other leaders in the parish who are looking fo the best ways to utilize their talents and strengths to bring their parishes into full bloom. We guarantee you will not only get to refresh your leadership and consensus building skills, but you will also pick up some handy new skills. PRIEST/		
1:30 PM	PARALLEL SESSIO	NS (SELECT ONE)		
	THE PRESSURES ON THE MODERN FAMILY MAR THOMAS THARAYIL         1:30 PM         HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS D/E/F         Mar Tharayil, an expert in mental health & illness, takes a closer look at the issues facing the modern family, including new relationship dynamics, increasing divorce rates, and the rapidly changing socio-cultural fabric. Come listen to a Bishop's per- spective and broad experience with the issues faced by today's families, how to best grapple with these challenges, and how to become better equipped to face them head-on.         MALAYALAM       A       C	JACKIE FRANCOIS ANGEL 1:30 PM HILTON 335 A session that will empower women in the church and unfold the unique beauty, dignity and roles that they have been entrusted with, not only in the Church, but in society as a whole. We will dive into how to draw out the Feminine Geniu as St. Pope John Paul II described it, and how to become leaders and saints where you are planted. ENGLISH		
	HOW DO I FIND "THE ONE"? TRENT HORN 1:30 PM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM A discussion of discerning and looking at the Catholic approach to finding a partner. How do you discern the right relationship? How do you find the middle ground between nonegotiables and settling? Come join us for this session with Catholic apologist, Trent Horn, as we delve into these questions and more! The interactive session this afternoon at 4:15 complements this talk. YA YC YH	TRUE LOVEHOW WILL I KNOW? PATTY SCHME 1:30 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C Is there a difference between infatuation and true love? Is every attraction I feel true love? This is a session geared towards teens, helping them to understand attraction, love at first sight, and keeping relationships holy. We will explore how the path to true, healthy, loving relationships is learning the natural inner movements of your own emotions, and how to discern and master them first, in order to know how to love others rightly. #KnowYourselfToLoveYourself		
	FIAT: DISCERNING THE LORD'S CALL FR. KEVIN MUNDACKAL 1:30 PM HITON 328 Have you felt your heart draw to surrendering your life to the Lord in a radical way? Have you ever felt a call to draw closer to Christ and his Church in a deep and intimate way? Have you ever wondered what it might be like to surf while wearing a Friar's robe or an Achan's loha? If you have at any point thought of, or wanted to explore what the religious life or the life of priesthood is about, now is the time to find out more! This session is for men.	FIAT: DISCERNING THE LORD'S CALL SR. JOCELYN EDATHIL SIC, MD, PHD 1:30 PM HILTON 329 Have you felt your heart drawn to surrendering your life to th Lord in a radical way? Have you ever felt a call to draw close to Christ as his beloved and bride? Have you ever wondered what it might be like to be the spouse of the perfect man and bridegroom? If you have at any point thought of, or wanted to explore what the religious or consecrated single life is about now is the time to find out more! This session is for women.		
	LEGEND			

2:45 PM	PARALLEL SESSIONS (SELECT ONE)			
	SPIRITUALLY SYRO MALABAR, SOCIALLY NOT LIVE WITH BISHOPS & JUSTICE KURIAN JOSEPH 2:45 PM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM Let's get to the bottom of these issues. In this session, we want to bring about an honest intergenerational dialogue between Young Adults, Parents, and our Church leadership- including Cardinal Mar Alencherry, Bishop Mar Pamplany, Bishop Mar Tharayil and Justice Kurian Joseph. Migrant communities like ours face several unique issues, but its members have little to no prior experience in facing them. This engaging session will help us seek out solutions. All participants are expected to attend this session and the one to follow in this room unless you choose a smaller parallel session.	WHY DO WE NEED FAITH, WHEN WE HAVE SCIENCE? B. BINOY PICHALLAKKATTU 2:45 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C "Did Adam and Eve have belly buttons?" and other faith questions are explored in this session. Teens can enjoy this session and clear their doubts about faith and its relationship to science. If you are not in this session, you will attend the intergenerational dialogue in the Lanier Ballroom.		
4:00 PM	PARALLEL SESSIC	ONS (SELECT ONE)		
	YES, WE FOUND OUR PARTNER, AND HERE'S HOW WE DID IT! INFORMAL PANEL SESSION 4:00 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C Join us to hear some real stories and discussion around find- ing your spouse! This session includes the first-hand experi- ences of how our surprise speakers found their better halves, and lessons for youth and their parents on how to handle the various practical issues that arise, related to finding their soulmate. This will be a heavily interactive session, with our Bishops and dignitaries.	NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP): WAITING ON GOD'S TIME SHERIN ALEXANDER 4:00 PM GRB 310 This session will be focused on understanding natural family planning and how it contributes to remaining open to life. Bring all your questions, Sherin is a PA, and can certainly handle it! This is usually a packed session; so first come, first serve.		
	AVOIDING CATASTROPHES IN MARRIAGE JACKET FRANCOLS ANGLEL 4:00 PM HILTON 335 Noticing the first signs of tension in your relationship can save you a world of hurt and save the relationship from you and you a	HOW DOES MUSIC CONTRIBUTE TO THE HOLY QURBANA? ER. JOSEPH PALACKAL 4:00 PM GRB 322 Learn more about the theory and practice of liturgical music from the man who arranged the music for our current Holy Qurbana. This session will be focused towards choir members and musicians.		
	SNACKS + COFFEE/TEA 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C			
5:15 PM	PARALLEL SESSIONS (SELECT ONE)			
	LOSING THE SPARK I FR. DANIEL PC 5:15 HILTON BALLROOM ( The Church has seen spousal love to be a mirror of the e or old, and is always bearing new life. In this session, w relationship that never gets boring and explore how t Let us step up our game! Fr. Danie	<b>DOVANNATHIL</b> <b>PM</b> DF AMERICAS A/B/C eternal love of the Trinitya love that never grows tired re will walk through a biblical reflection of the spousal to grow deeper in love, in your marriage, at any age.		
	CONCERT: JOHN ANGOTTI (JAMM)			
	Come sing, pray, and join with the band to thund	S PM RAND BALLROOM der the heavens with music and rejoicing. Led by /Songwriter John Angotti.		
Common Events	LEGEND	dults 🛛 A   College 🚾   High School 🖙		

7:00 PM	DINNER 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C		
	CHOOSE ONE IF PLANNING TO ATTEND WITH DINNER		
	SYROMATCH: SPECIAL NETWORKING FOR PARENTS 7:15 PM GRB 310 This is a networking event for parents who are seeking appropriate matches for their children. Pre-registration is mandatory. PRE-REGISTERED PARENTS ONLY	G.A.L.S. DINNER 7:15 PM GRB 332C 6 years ago, the online group G.A.L.S. (Growing and Loving Sisters) was created with the intention of building each oth up strong as women, and most importantly, as sisters in Christ. Let's share a meal and discuss what it means to be young woman at various stages of our life in the Syro Malabar church.	
	CIVIL LEADERSHIP AND SOCIOPOLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ABIN KURIAKOSE T:15 PM GRB 322 A highly recommended session for those interested in social and political engagement within their local/national realities. Let's come together to become a community fully engaged in this country's civic life.	THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FINANCE MANAGEMENT & SAVINGS DR. ABRAHAM MATHEW 7:15 PM GRB 332F The ABCs of finance management. This session will help yo understand, in layman's terms, IRAs, 401Ks, 529 programs etc. This session is non-commercial and is not paid for or sponsored by any biased entity. If you do not yet have a retirement account, you must attend.	
8:15 PM	PARALLEL SESSIONS (SELECT ONE)		
	<b>CULTURAL PROGRAM</b> 8:15 PM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM A showcase of the many talents from across the diocese.		
	<b>MASQUERADE BALL</b> 9:00 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS D/E/F Moonlight Masquerade Ball - A magical night of music and dancing exclusively for +18 to 40 years benefitting local charities which will be present. Indian formal for ladies, black-tie optional. And, of course, the best mask you can find!		
	Social committee reserves the right to grant entry to the		
FINAL EVENT OF THE DAY	<b>CONCLUDII</b> ALL R( A short Night Prayer in t	OOMS	
EVENT OF THE DAY	ALL R	DOMS he room that you are in.	

I

DAY 3

# SATURDAY, AUGUST 3RD

## YOUR LIGHT HAS COME

## "THE PEOPLE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT."

MATTHEW 4:16

6:00 AM	6:00 AM	KFAST - 8:00 AM ALLROOM A/B/C
	6:00 HILTON BALLROOM	DEDITATION O AM OF AMERICAS A/B/C tion with Paul E. Thomas.
	ROSARY & A 6:00 HILTO Rosary and adoration wit	AM N 335
	CONFE 6:00 AM - HILTON 328 &	6:45 AM
7:30 AM	<b>CHRISTINA 'MOH</b> 7:30 HILTON LANIER G The compelling story of ho	) AM RAND BALLROOM
8:00 AM	HOLY QU 8:00 Hilton Lanier Gi	АМ
10:00 AM	<b>"YOUR LIGHT HAS COM</b> <b>BISHOP WIL</b> 10:00 HILTON LANIER G Have you felt in recent times that the church is Has our light shone in the darkness o Bishop Wack's address as he u the darkness tha	LIAM WACK DAM RAND BALLROOM s beginning to crumble or is losing its ground? f our times? Listen to the charismatic
11:30 AM	"MALE & FEMALE HE CREATED THEM": THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE MAR JOSEPH PAMPLANY 11:30 AM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C MALAYALAM Imagine a day when your child takes you to court, b Shocked? This hotly debated topic is making its way into curriculums as well. Trent Horn (English session) and B ravel the Catholic understanding of human identity and	ONS (SELECT ONE) "MALE & FEMALE HE CREATED THEM": THE CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE TRENT HORN 11:30 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM ENGLISH ALL eccause you assigned them the wrong gender at birth! o not just universities and medical institutions but school ishop Mar Pamplany (Malayalam session) will help us un- jersonhood, and the authentic freedom it gifts to every choose your session.
Common Events	LEGEND	lults 🛯   College 🚾   High School 🎹

12:30 PM	LUNCH 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C Remember: there are parallel sessions over lunch time as noted below.		
	CHOOSE ONE IF PLANNING TO ATTEND WITH LUNCH		
	FORMING A PEOPLE OF WORSHIP MAR JOSEPH KALLUVELIL 12:45 PM GRB 332C A session over lunch for catechism teachers and those interested in the ministry of catechesis. We will be discussing the mission and role of parents and Catechism teachers in forming a Christian community. Come, find out if you're doing it right, and how you could be helping the church accomplish her mission.	L.E.A.D.: LEADERSHIP, EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT MATHEW JACOB 12:45 PM GRB 322 Learn more about corporate leadership development and building a successful career from an international leadership & talent coach. A can't-miss session for those starting off and building careers in the corporate world!	
	OUR HEARTS ARE RESTLESS: ADDICTIONS, RECOVERY, AND HEALING JITHIN GEORGE MA, LMHC 12:45 PM GRB 332F How can one recognize those struggling with addictions and help them on the road to recovery and healing? Come and learn how to support the healing journey of our suffering brothers and sisters.	SMCC MEETING 12:45 PM GRB 310 Where are we going? - SMCC Meeting with Mar Jacob Angadiath and Mar Joy Alappatt. SMCC NATIONAL COMMITTEE	
1:45 PM	PARALLEL SESSIO	NS (SELECT ONE)	
	SMCC SU 1:45 PM - 3		
	GRB 3 "When, where, and how do I su		
	"LORD, I WANT TO SEE" MAR THOMAS THARAYLL 2:00 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C Mar Tharayil takes you on a journey, to see the Light that has come through the eyes of St. Thomas. Can the message preached by our beloved Apostle centuries ago on the Malabar coast still be relevant today in the American context? Open the eyes of your heart, arise, and see the future of our church. MALAYALAN	WHY SHOULD I BE CATHOLIC? TRENT HORN 2:00 PM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM Do we need religion, if we can live good lives? Why pick Catholicism out of the plethora of religions out there? What is Catholicism? And why do Catholics believe what they believe? Come join us as we delve into these questions and more! ENGLISH	
	STRAIGHT TALK TO SPOUSES PATTY SCHNEIER 2:00 PM HILTON 335 How can you live out the Catholic faith as a married couple in today's world? Is it even possible to answer this call, without adding to your already full plate? In this session, we dive into understanding the essentials of the Catholic family life and its mission as the church and married saints have understood and lived it. #RelationshipGoalsForReal	GEN Z GUIDE TO "ADULTING" PAUL J. KIM 2:00 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS D/E/F How does one make good friends? Is it humanly possible to balance school, family, a social life, extracurriculars, relationships, and be a faithful Catholic? Will I ever pay off my student loans? Will I be a sleepless zombie forever? Paul J. Kim provides insight into preparing for college as a Catholic and much more. PS: He probably can't really help you with that last question though (but we recommend lots of coffee? #HangInThere)	
3:00 PM	PARALLEL SESSIONS (SELECT ONE)		
	DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT 3:00 PM - 6:45 PM GRB 3RD FLOOR GYM Throw, catch, or get out of the way. Dare to Dodge! Pre-registration mandatory to play.		
	THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES: REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE D. JAISY A. JOSEPH 3:15 PM HILTON 335 In India, we are considered American and in America we are considered Indian. This lack of belonging haunts us in every stage of life. What does it mean, then, to make this Church our home? As American-born faithful, how do we create a space for our voice? Let's discuss possible solutions to real issues that we face! This session will energize anyone who attends and dares to visualize a glorious future for our church.	SOMEBODY TO LEAN ON: THE MANY FACETS OF BEDRAL HEALTH & MENTAL ILLNESS JITHIN GEORGE MA, LANCE 3:12 PM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM This session, Jithin George throws light on how to identify mental illnesses and how to approach mental health issues, especially within the unique context of our community. Join us to learn how to build up those in our families or commu- nities who might be struggling with mental health issues and need someone to lean on. Together we can help build the road to health and wellbeing.	
	<b>THE QURBANA EXPLAINED</b> <b>J.15 PM</b> HITON 328 Key Parts of our Qurbana Explained - Ever wondered why we celebrate our liturgy differently from the Roman Catholic church? Do you have questions about the Holy Qurbana? In this session, one of our newly ordained priests, Fr. Rajeev Valiyaveettil, will dissect and explain our Holy Qurbana and its inque beauty & significance within the universal Catholic Church.	SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT: A GUIDE TO RAISING TEENS DR. ABRAHAM MATHEW 3:15 PM HITON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS D/E/F O you can be veryday to a brewing rebellion? Whatever happened to that sweet little child who listened to everything you said? Come and learn how to tame your teens and building lasting friendships with them. Dr. Mathew will be sharing practical insights, from his first-hand experience of being a father of 8 kids (and 5 teens so far!)	

3:00 PM	PARALLEL SESSIONS (SELECT ONE)			
(CONT'D)	FOLLOW ME: ANSWERING THE CALL TO LEADERSHIP MATHEW JACOB 3:15 PM HILTON 329 As we envision the future of our church for the next decade, leadership roles can be great places for providing service and stewardship to your parish/diocesan community. Mathew Jacob, a professional executive coach, will help you identify your strengths and improve your skills.	THE JOURNEY FROM BROKEN PLATES TO EQUALLY YOKED JUSTICE KURIAN JOSEPH 3:15 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C Disagreements within the family and between couples is perfectly natural. In this session, Justice Kurian Joseph helps us learn how Divine Grace can help couples to handle conflicts, address their differences, and journey towards becoming the helpmates God has called spouses to be. MALAYALAM		
4:00 PM	SNACKS + 4:00 PM - GRB GRAND BAL	5:00 PM		
4:15 PM	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SUMMIT MAR JOSEPH KALLUVELIL 4:15 PM HILTON 328 St. Vincent de Paul society meeting with Mar Joseph Kalluvelil.			
4:45 PM	PARALLEL SESSIO	ONS (SELECT ONE)		
	YOUR LIGHT HAS COME R. DANIEL POOVANNATHIL 4:45 PM HITON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS A/B/C Your light has come! "This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:12). Attend this session with Fr. Daniel to be empowered by the hope and peace that the Lord brings into the darkness and confusion of our lives. Join us here to drink deeply from the wellspring that is Christ, and to be amazed by the unending goodness of the Lord. MALAYALAM	<b>PROVE IT, GODAND HE DID!</b> <b>PATTY SCHNEIER</b> 4:45 PM HILTON BALLROOM OF AMERICAS D/E/F A journey of discovery, repentance, and renewal. Patty shares the story of her challenge to God—and His daily response. The results were life-changing!		
7:00 PM		1 DINNER		
	7:00 PM - 9:00 PM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C			
	Dress to impress; business casual at minimum.			
	CHOOSE ONE IF PLANNING TO ATTEND WITH DINNER			
	SYROMATCH:	"OFF THE CLOCK"		
	SPECIAL NETWORKING FOR PARENTS 7:15 PM GRB 310 This is a networking event for parents who are seeking appropriate matches for their children. Pre-registration is mandatory. PRE-REGISTERED PARENTS	PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING DINNER 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM EVENT PLACE: CHAPMAN & KIRBY Dinner & Networking. Insights into balancing your professional and personal life by Mr. Mathew Jacob. Business Casual attire mandatory. LIMITED SEATS & RESTRICTED TO PRE-REGISTERED MEMBERS 23 AND ABOVE REGISTRATION IS \$30 PER PERSON. YA C		
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# SUNDAY, AUGUST 4TH

## THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS SHINING ON YOU

## "AND THE CITY HAS NO NEED FOR SUN OR MOON TO SHINE ON IT, BECAUSE THE

GLORY OF GOD ILLUMINATES THE CITY, AND THE LAMB IS ITS LAMP."

**REVELATIONS 21:23** 

6:00 AM	BREAKFAST 6:00 AM - 8:00 AM GRB GRAND BALLROOM A/B/C	ALL
6:15 AM	<b>TRAVELERS' QURBANA</b> 6:15 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM Early Travelers' Qurbana in case you have to catch an earlier flight.	ALL
7:30 AM	<b>SAPRA</b> 7:30 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM Morning Liturgy of the hours: Prayer with the entire church.	ALL
8:00 AM	VISHUDHA QURBANA 8:00 AM HILTON LANIER GRAND BALLROOM	ALL
11:00 AM	FAREWELL & CHECK OUT	

## **KIDS & JUNIOR EVENTS**

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE 2<sup>ND</sup> TO 5<sup>TH</sup>

#### PRE-K TO GRADE 1

**ACTIVITY** 11:00 AM

STORYTELLING - ARISE & SHINE 11:30 AM

> LUNCH BREAK 12:30 PM

> > ACTIVITY 1:30 PM

TALK - WAY OF ST. THOMAS WAY OF HOLINESS 2:00 PM

> MOVIE/VIDEO 2:30 PM

SNACK BREAK 3:00 PM

GAME: SIMON SAYS 3:30 PM

STORYTELLING: HISTORY OF ST. THOMAS 4:00 PM

BEING WITH JESUS AND SAINTS 5:30 PM

> ACTIVITIES 6:00 PM

PARENT PICK UP 7:00 PM

PRE-K TO GRADE 1

ACTIVITY

11:00 AM

STORYTELLING

11:30 AM

LUNCH BREAK 12:30 PM

> ACTIVITY 1:30 PM

STORYTELLING

2:00 PM

**DIVINE MERCY** 

2:45 PM

SMALL TALK

3:00 PM

SNACKS & ACTIVITIES

3:30 PM

ACTION SONG

4:30 PM

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

5:00 PM

PARENT PICK UP

7:00 PM

ICE BREAKER 11:00 AM

ARISE & SHINE - SR. AGNES 11:30 AM

> LUNCH BREAK 12:30 PM

> > ACTIVITY 1:15 PM

WAY OF ST. THOMAS, WAY OF HOLINESS - SR. JOCELYN 1:45 PM

> ACTIVITY 2:30 PM

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD -JOHN PAUL 3:15 PM

SNACK AND ACTIVITIES 4:00 PM

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE -JOHN PAUL 5:00 PM

> ADORATION 5:45 PM

GROUP ACTIVITY 6:15 PM

PARENT PICK UP 7:00 PM

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup>

#### GRADE 2<sup>ND</sup> TO 5<sup>TH</sup>

ICE BREAKER 11:00 AM

HOW TO DEAL, WHEN BEING COMPARED WITH OTHERS – ANI GONZALEZ 11:30 AM

> LUNCH BREAK 12:30 PM

WALKING WITH GOD - JOHN PAUL 2:00 PM

PLAYING WITH GOD - JOHN PAUL 3:15 PM

> SNACK AND ACTIVITIES 4:00 PM

EXCERISING WITH GOD - JOHN PAUL 5:00 PM

> ADORATION 5:45 PM

ACTIVITY 6:15 PM

PARENT PICK UP 7:00 PM **GRADE 6<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup>** 

ICE BREAKER 11:00 AM

ARISE & SHINE - JOHN PAUL 11:30 AM

> LUNCH BREAK 12:30 PM

SCRAPBOOKING 1:00 PM

OBEYING PARENTS MADE EASY - JOHN PAUL 1:45 PM

> BREAK 2:45 PM

RISE ABOVE THE PRESSURE -PATTY SCHINER 3:15 PM

> SNACKS & ACTIVITES 4:00 PM

WHY DO WE NEED TO GO TO MALAYALAM CHURCH - SR. JOCELYN 5:00 PM

> GROUP ACTIVITY 6:00 PM

PARENT PICK UP 7:00 PM

#### **GRADE 6<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup>**

ICE BREAKER 11:00 AM

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD/ WHAT KEEPS US FROM PUTTING GOD FIRST - JOHN PAUL 11:30 AM

> LUNCH BREAK 12:30 PM

FINISH SCRAPBOOKING 1:15 PM

WELCOME TO TEEN-AGE - JACKIE FRANCOIS ANGEL 2:00 PM

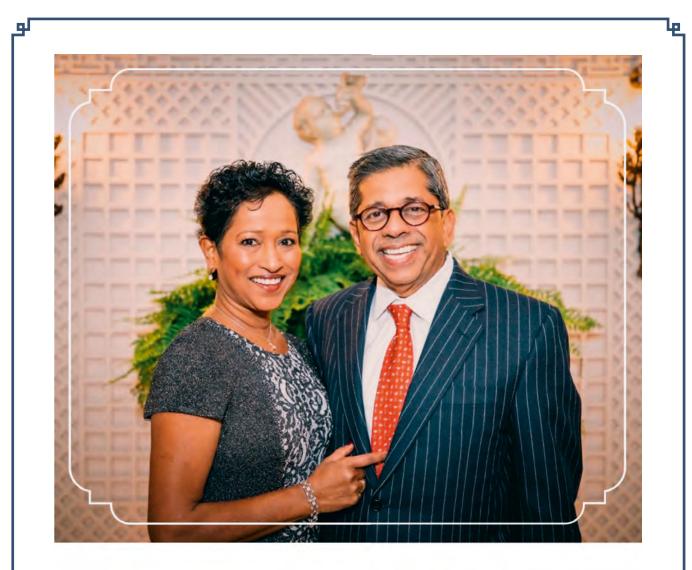
DOUBLE TAP TO LIKE THIS TALK -PAUL J. KIM 3:15 PM

> SNACKS & ACTIVITIES 4:00 PM

MEANT TO LIVE FOR MORE - PAUL J. KIM 5:00 PM

PRAISE & WORSHIP/ADORATION - PAUL J. KIM 6:15 PM

> PARENT PICK UP 7:00 PM



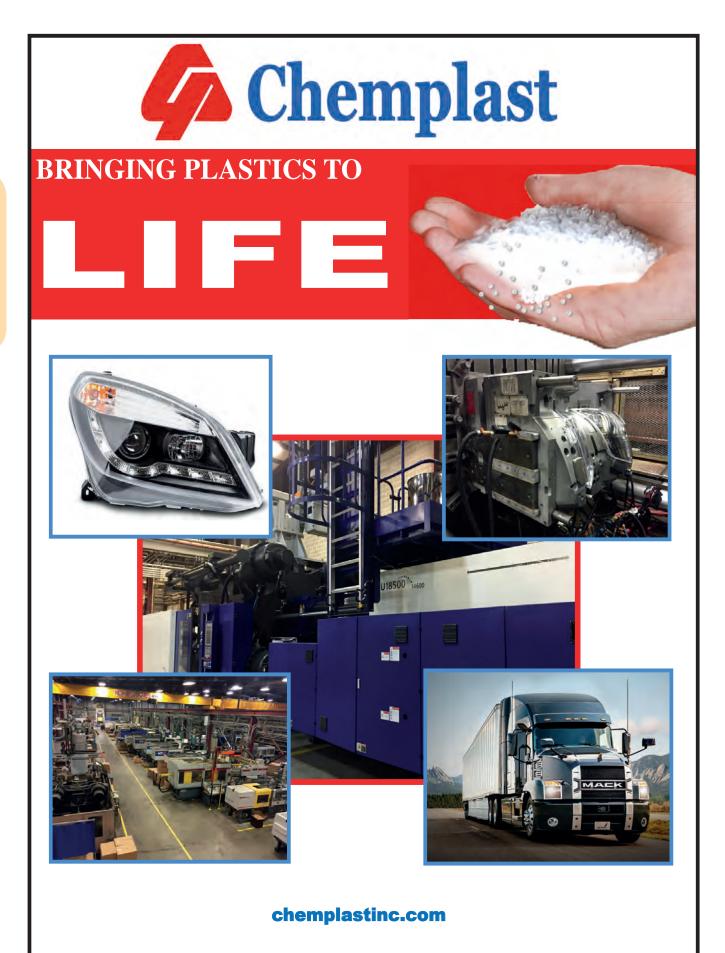
## **BEST COMPLIMENTS**

FROM

MR. VARGHESE GEORGE & DR. SHEILA MALIEKEL



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