

MARCH 13, 2022- ISSUE 1

STOCSS REFLECTIONS

A Magazine of the St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Toronto, Sunday School

REFLECTIONS

MESSAGE FROM VICAR

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (St. Matthew 19:14)

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

It is with a grateful heart and a sincere spirit, I thank God almighty for all the blessings He has bestowed upon our Parish, spiritual organizations and especially on our Sunday school. When we look back to the Parish's history, our Sunday school held a very important role in the bringing up of our children in the spiritual ways. We endured struggles to ensure Christian education for our children in the past, but the grace of God sustained us and brought us to here! Now it is wonderful to see that our Sunday school is releasing a bi-monthly magazine, named *STOCSS Reflections* to reflect the God given spiritual gifts and talents of our students. I am very happy to release the first edition of this series, virtually for our Congregation. I anticipate and hope that this will remain as a medium for our children to reflect their talents and all would read and encourage our children.

At this blessed occasion, I place on record my appreciation for the selfless work of all individuals that made this possible. Especially Sunday school Principal Mr. Justin Alex, the editorial board constituting: Br. Sanjay Mathew, Ms. Sheila Kurian, Mr. Sajan Mathew and Mr. Thomas Abraham. Special appreciation to Mr. Digno Justin for preparing a beautiful logo and to all the teachers and students who contributed articles for this first edition.

May Lord our God continue to shower His blessings upon our Sunday school.

In the service of our Lord,
Thomas George Achen

"Remember God in everything. Let no one grieve because of you. Never let go an opportunity to do something good. Only those things will remain with you till the end."

- Parumala Thirumeni

MESSAGE FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

It is my great pleasure to be a part of our newsletter/magazine (*Reflections*) project. We are taking a step in a new direction with *Reflections*. There has been a lot of thought and effort put into this and we are hoping it will be a great success.

The past two years have limited our students' ability to showcase their talents because of the pandemic situation which is still affecting us in many ways. The pandemic has prevented many opportunities for students to showcase their abilities and talents.

Reflections will allow our students to have a great platform in which they can share their talents as artists, poets, writers, etc. *Reflections* will act as a learning platform for everyone to access Church activities from our various spiritual organizations.

We have a great team working behind the scenes who helped with ideas, gathering articles and entries, editing, technical support, etc. I also want to express my gratitude to our Achen for his valuable support and guidance.

Please read and share your comments and suggestions.

With Prayers,

Justin Alex
Principal, STOC Sunday School

(647)-345-6362
sundayschool@stthomasosc.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2022

Liturgical Song Training

This year our Sunday School has started bi-weekly Liturgical Song Training sessions led by our Choir director Sujith Abraham along with Sneha Varghese. These sessions are aimed at training our students on the various hymns of our church to encourage active participation during our Liturgical Services. We thank our students for their engagement during these sessions and ask for your continued support for all upcoming sessions which will be advised via email closer to their planned dates.

Children's Forum

The Children's Forum provides an opportunity for our students to share their various musical and creative talents. Thus far, we have been able to gather for one forum this year with another planned within the next few months.

Newsletter/Magazine

STOCSS Reflections (St. Thomas Orthodox Church Sunday School *Reflections*), provides our students an opportunity to share their written and artistic talents. This newsletter/magazine is planned to be released on a bi-monthly basis and will include: Church related news, articles, drawings and video submissions from our students/teachers. The first release of *Reflections* will be on March 13th. We request your feedback and comments to improve future editions.

Lenten Retreats

This year we plan on conducting separate Lenten Retreats for the junior and senior students. As we journey through the Lenten Season, the retreat will provide the students an opportunity to understand and reflect on the meaning of the Great Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These retreats are planned for March 12 (Junior students) and March 19 (Senior students).

OVBS 2022

During the summer vacation, we plan to conduct the Orthodox Vacation Bible School (OVBS). Classes are planned for **July/August** with further information to be provided as we move closer to those dates.

*We thank our students and parents for their continued support of our various Sunday School Activities. If there are any questions or concerns regarding our weekly classes or above-mentioned activities, please reach out to your respective class teacher or email the Sunday School principal.

"The best inheritance parents can bestow upon their children is their own Spiritual devotion." - Saint Paisios the Athonite

MALANKARA SYRIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION



*Photo credits Gregorian TV

On Friday, February 25th, 2022, The Malankara Syrian Christian Association of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church assembled in Kolencherry, India to elect 7 priests to the Episcopate. Eligible voting members of the Malankara Church across the globe submitted their votes online selecting 7 amongst the finalized 11 priests. Only unmarried priests are permitted to become bishops as per early Church practice.

As announced by our Association President, The Catholicose and Malankara Metropolitan H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Matthews III, the following 7 priests were selected (as per photo above from L to R): Rev. Fr. Abraham Thomas, Rev. Fr. Vinod George, Rev. Fr. Dr. Reji Geevarghese, Very Rev. Fr. Kuchuparambil Geevarghese Ramban, Rev. Fr. Zachariah Ninan, Rev. Fr. Dr. P.C. Thomas, Rev. Fr. Dr. Varghese K. Joshua. Prior to their elevation to the episcopate, 6 of the 7 priests will need to be tonsured as Rambans (monks). Bishops are the successors of the Apostles who shepherd the Holy Church both Spiritually and Administratively. Bishops are able to consecrate Churches, ordain deacons and priests and oversee the parishes of their assigned diocese.

“Where the bishop is present, there is the Catholic Church.”
- St. Ignatius of Antioch

BUILDING COMMUNION WITH EACH OTHER - BR. SANJAY MATHEW

'Leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift' (St. Matthew 5:24).

This teaching by Christ is very familiar and easily repeated by many Christians. The Orthodox Church is not some institution, rather it is the life in Christ, with Christ and life of Christ in us – it is the body of Christ. St. Gregory of Nyssa asserts that it is important to belong to the Body of Christ in order to participate in the life of Christ. The Incarnation is not only an idea or a doctrine; it is above all an event which happened once in time but which possesses all the power of eternity, and this perpetual incarnation, a perfect, indissoluble union, yet without confusion, of the two natures, divine and human, makes the Church. In addition to this, the Church is also a life in the Holy Trinity, as Christ's own life is inseparable from that of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Yet the Church has been affected by a schism for the past 1500 years. Since 451 AD, the Orthodox Church was divided into Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches. The division was the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon where both parties could not agree upon a unified Christological definition. Though both Churches have attempted to reconcile with one another on several occasions, reconciliation or *koivwvía* (*koinonia*) has not been established. It is important to note that though there were serious disagreements from both sides (heads of both parties excommunicated each other), the heads of the Churches saw the importance of reconciliation - they saw the importance of unity within the body of Christ. After much study and discussion, it was reiterated by both factions that both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches have always been Orthodox and professed the same faith about Jesus Christ and His Church. The last such discussion happened in the latter half of the twentieth century, through the official meetings of the Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Currently, both Churches remain in schism as no further attempts at reconciliation have been made between both parties since 1993.

As the Malankara Church continues to grow in the West due to immigration, the Church has to reconsider serious discussion with the intent of building communion with the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the United States and Canada, many of our young college students who move away for their education have to attend Eastern Orthodox Churches. Since the Church is the body of Christ, it is their way of actively participating in the life in Christ. It is through Orthodox worship they can connect with Christ and have a life in Him. As such, in order to strengthen our Church and our faithful's relationship with Christ, it is important that we open discussion with the Eastern Orthodox Church for reconciliation. This official reconciliation and reinstatement of *koivwvía* is important so that the faithful of both Churches can participate in each other's sacraments including the Eucharistic celebration. The Eucharist is considered the Queen of all sacraments. In fact, it is by breaking the bread and the communion of prayer that believers preserve the Faith.

The Christian Church has a specific mission to bring all to dwell in the Church. Though we may be discouraged by such divisions, we need to remember that schisms and disagreements within the Church are not something new. We only need to look at Scripture where the leaders of the Church disagreed on whether circumcision was a requirement to become a Christian. The Apostles saw the importance of reconciliation. They knew that a schism in the Church is a hindrance to their divine mission for preaching the Gospel and evangelization. As such, they came to Jerusalem and convened a Council (Acts 15), in order for the Church to communicate its doctrines and tradition to her people. In fact, much of our doctrines such as the Nicene Creed are all the result of serious theological discussion.

As the leaders of the Church, we need to open up the discussion with our Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters and work towards formal reconciliation and communion which should be based on Christ's love and selfless sacrifice. Any theological discussion towards reconciliation has to begin with Christ and his role in our salvation. We need to use our common love for Christ and faith in Him in order to reconcile with one other. Even during the height of Christological controversy, the fathers of both sides of the Church recognized each other's Orthodoxy. Let us use our common Faith to reconcile with each other and work together to bring all to dwell in the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

¹Gregorios, Paulose Cosmic Man The Divine Presence (New Delhi: Sophia Publications), 10

²Bulgakov, Sergei, "The Orthodox Church," A Bulgakov Anthology (J.Pain and N. Zernov eds.) (Philadelphia 1976), 120

MIRACLES IN THE MODERN TIMES - RINCY JOHN

The famous story of the drowning man goes as such – the floodwaters kept rising, surrounding the man on all sides. Help came to him progressively in many forms: first, a man on a canoe, then people on a motorboat, and lastly, rescuers in a helicopter. He turned them all away while he waited for the Lord God Almighty, Himself, to come down and save him. When (predictably) he drowns and meets God in heaven, he asks Him why he wasn't delivered. To which God answered, "You fool! Who do you think sent the boats and the helicopter?!"

Do you see the hand of God working in this story?

Let's look at another example – this is a famous incident in the life of a German missionary, George Muller. One fine morning, the 300 orphans under Mr. Muller's care had no bread to eat, no milk to drink and there was no money to buy any food. Mr. Muller had full trust that God would provide, he just had to keep the faith and wait. The children got dressed for school and they all waited at the dining table with Mr. Muller praying and thanking God in advance for the food they would be eating. Soon enough, the knock on the door revealed a baker who could not sleep because "something" told him that the orphanage would be needing the bread (he baked three batches just for them, free of charge of course). And if that wasn't enough, the milkman came knocking. The wheel of his cart had broken down "right in front of the orphanage". By the time he would be able to fix the cart and reach the marketplace, the milk would spoil. Might as well let the kids have it (this is a story from the pre-Pasteurization era, when milk used to go bad in a short amount of time). The ten cans of milk were just enough for 300 children (not a can more).

We often experience/hear of similar stories in our daily life and chalk it up to luck or to coincidence, or as an accident, to mojo or to a myriad of other modern-day terms, but we generally do not see it for the miracle it is. "If it follows the laws of Physics/the natural world, it cannot be a miracle," is how the thinking goes. We expect God to show us miracles which involve at least one sea-parting, an illness disappearing, or food dropping from the heavens, just like in Biblical times. Anything within the natural world is not considered a miracle. A boat showing up to help a drowning man – "pure luck". The wheel of the milk cart falling off right in front of the orphanage – "just an accident". We tend to bind the Lord Almighty, Creator of heaven, earth, the entire universe, all of creation, with our paltry expectations, and thus blind ourselves to miracles happening around us daily – just like the Pharisees and Sadducees did, when they came to Jesus, asking for a miracle from God. (St. Matthew 16:1).

Can God perform the sea-parting, illness disappearing, food dropping from the heavens type of miracles? Of course He can and the Biblical stories are proof of it. However, does He go for the normal miracles that are well with the laws of the world? Of course He does. We have various examples of the miracles in the natural world in Job 38 – 42, when God addresses Job. The Lord transcends time, space, matter, and has instituted the laws of the world that we know of. Who are we to bind Him by our mere expectations?

So then, what is our role in these daily "normal" miracles? We might take the role of the drowning man or one of those 300 kids, receiving help just in time when we need it. For example, the internet might stop working late on a Saturday night, enabling you to sleep and get up on time for Church the next day. Or the few questions you studied the day before with a tired mind turned up on the exam.

Or we could be like the pilot of the helicopter or like the baker, used by God to perform miracles, all within the laws of this natural world. As Acts 20:35 says, "It's more blessed to give than receive." Helping an old lady cross the road would be a miracle for the old lady. Sharing your meal with someone you know is hungry would be a miracle for that person performed by God through you.

As we go through the Great Lent, may we thank and praise God when we are the recipients of His miracles, and not view ourselves as being merely "lucky". Also, let us keep our eyes open for the miracles that the Lord Almighty performs around us, praying that we may be an instrument in His Hands for the good of the world.

"Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father." -Colossians 3:17

THE BLESSING OF BEGINNING ALL OVER AGAIN – SHEILA KURIAN

When I was young, there was a popular saying: “It’s not quantity time, it’s quality time.” The advocates of this adage were trying to relieve people of the guilt that they were feeling because life had become so fast-paced that they did not have enough time for their children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, their neighbours... Even as a twelve year old, I knew that this was rubbish: you need a lot of quantity time *and* quality time to sustain and to grow any relationship.

The Great Lent is the Church’s annual season which invites each of us and all of us to slow down, to pace ourselves, to spend both quantity and quality time with God. Did you know that it takes the average person six weeks to form a habit? The Lenten season offers us this time for us to practise being in His presence, for us to ask God: How are You seeking to make me more like You? What practice do You want me to let go of? What habit of thought? What would You like me to begin, Lord, by and with and through Your grace?

Lent starts by asking us to work on restoring our relationships with God and with one another by embracing of the forgiveness of God, and by requesting and giving of forgiveness with one another. Why is this necessary? This act of asking God’s forgiveness and seeking the repairing and restoring of our relationships with one another is the corollary to the first and second Great Commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (St. Matthew 27:37-39) To love God, to love one another, we need to be in right, reconciled relationship.

So what is forgiveness? What does it mean? C. S. Lewis wrote, “To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.” Forgiveness does not mean finding an excuse for why I did what I did, or said, or thought. It means acknowledging that wrong was done, and asking for God to forgive me, “to create in me a pure heart, and renew a right spirit within me...” (Ps. 51:10) – to restore me to right relationship with Him. Did you know that the word atonement was created by a translator; it did not exist in English before the 16th century? It means at-one-ment at its very heart. Isn’t that a beautiful concept? Christ died for us so that we might be *at one* with God – and through this learn to be *at one* with one another.

How do we forgive? Forgiveness in and through Christ requires us to stop finding excuses for ourselves, to come before our God and confess that we have fallen astray. To fail to do this, to fail to seek forgiveness from God and from those around us, to fail to offer it to one who is asking, is to allow the cancer of our soul, sin itself, to spread. This cancer is evil and insidious. It is deadly. Only the Great Physician can heal of this pernicious malady. When we allow God to heal us, “...to restore unto me the joy of your salvation” (Ps. 51:12), we are ready to fulfil our true purpose: to love even as God first loved us (1st Epistle of St. John 4:19).

St. Paul knew the blessedness of admitting that one is a sinner: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the foremost” (1 Tim 1:15). This is affirmed in the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” G. K. Chesterton understood this. At the start of the twentieth century, *The Times of London* invited readers to address the following topic: “What’s wrong with the world?” The response was vast and varied, and blame was assigned to all sorts of forces, nations, and individuals. The shortest reply came from Chesterton. He wrote: ‘Dear Sir, I am. Yours, G. K. Chesterton’

It is this awareness of our own sinfulness, and the mercy that we have received from God that allows us to extend that forgiveness to our brother – even seventy times seven. It takes a humble spirit and contrite heart (Ps. 51: 17) to see one’s sins for what they are, and to remember and to be ever mindful of the great mercy and compassion which God has extended to you, to me, to us so as to recognize and to be enabled to offer the same to the one who asks it of us.

The journey of Lent is a difficult one. It asks us to sacrifice our pride, to confess our sins, to seek forgiveness from God, and from those whom we have wronged, and to offer forgiveness to anyone who asks it of us. This is the straight and narrow path which our Lord has asked us to walk. When we stumble (and we will stumble), we can only offer the prayer: “Lord, have mercy!” Our Lord asks us to reclaim our identity as the Father’s children, as Christians, first. It means that the other identities which the world would have us put first – those of nation, or political party, or race, or economic class – must not surpass our first call as Christ’s own. We were made to be image bearers. The question we must ask ourselves – whose (or what) image are we bearing? Our goal is to be like Christ. To put off the old Adam and to take on the New. As we enter into Lent, and put our feet to this path once more, let us offer our lives – our thoughts, words, and deeds – to God, and ask Him to show us how to be.

MEDITATION ON THE JESUS PRAYER - THOMAS ABRAHAM

The stillness of heart and inner silence have often been seen synonymous with one attaining inner peace. Prayer, the dogmas of the church, the acts of Christian service and compassion towards your brother are all aimed at attaining this hesychia (inner peace). Over the centuries the continued repetition of the phrase "Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me a sinner" (the Jesus Prayer) has been found beneficial in attaining this inner peace.

This prayer has been frequently repeated during both the times of common prayer as well during times of leisure. In between every breath this prayer can be internally uttered to express your knowledge of your continued sin and request for their remission. There are two parts that we remember during this prayer. We are first establishing our personal relationship with God by calling upon Christ our saviour. The second component of this prayer involves our personal confession of faith. We are calling on Christ our saviour and appealing for His mercy on us for our sins and transgressions.

This prayer is ancient in nature and the practice can be traced back several centuries. Traditionally the Orthodox church views this prayer in four components. The first two have already been discussed as we first call upon Jesus our Saviour and second appeal for His mercy for our sins. The third and fourth components of this prayer have been well followed within the desert communities. The third component involves continued repetition and the fourth involves the desire to attain direct understanding of God through the negation of external thought.

Regarding the third component, monks pray continuously and it is often said that the monk who only prays while standing for formal prayers is not truly praying. Desert Fathers continually repeated verses from the Psalms of King David or from other books in the Bible to have a continued remembrance of God throughout the day. This type of prayer became known as "monologic prayer" where manual work and inner prayer were completed simultaneously. "The hands at work, the mind and heart with God" is a perfect summary of the goal of monologic prayer as stated by Bishop Theophan.

Three aids have been used to help in our use of the Jesus Prayer. The first is through guidance of an elder or spiritual father/mother to support our spiritual growth. The second aid regards the prayer rope (similar to a rosary). It is to be used to help us from losing our concentration during our prayer rather than to keep track of the number of times the prayer has been uttered. The third aid regards our breathing pattern. St. Gregory the Theologian stated that we are to remember God more than we breathe meaning constant prayer is vital in our lives.

When one begins to utter this prayer, it is done aloud but we still will have outward distractions during this process. The more mature individual will begin to internalize this prayer and utter it with fewer outward distractions. Finally, one who has fully internalized this prayer utters it from his heart and removes all outwardly distractions in order for the whole body to utter, "Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me a sinner."

*Source: St. Thomas Orthodox Theological Seminary, Online Study: Introduction to Orthodox Spirituality, HG Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios

CATHOLICOI OF THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH



**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Paulose I (1912-1913)**



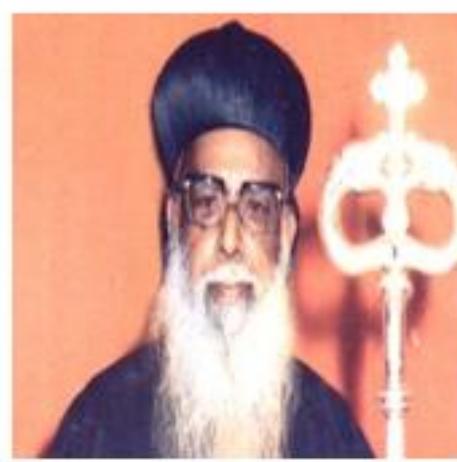
**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Geevarghese I (1925-1928)**



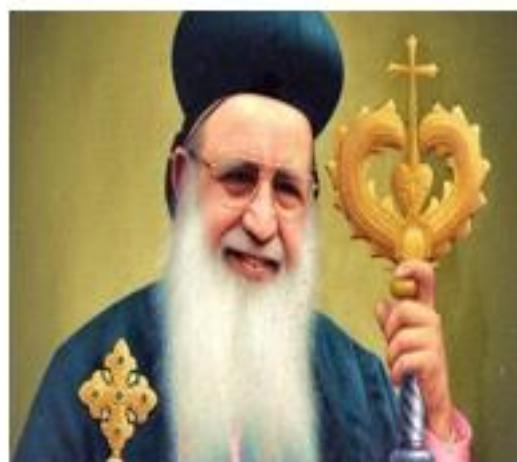
**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Geevarghese II (1929-1964)**



**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Augen I (1964-1975)**



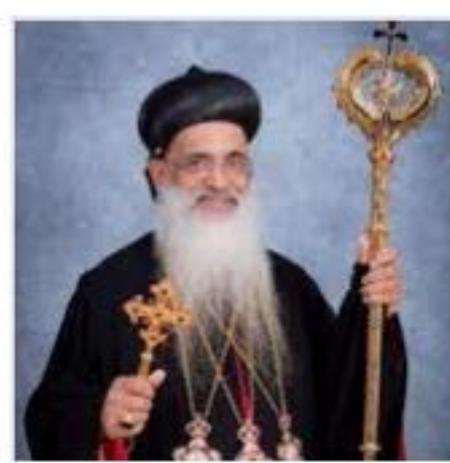
**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Marthoma Mathews I
(1975-1991)**



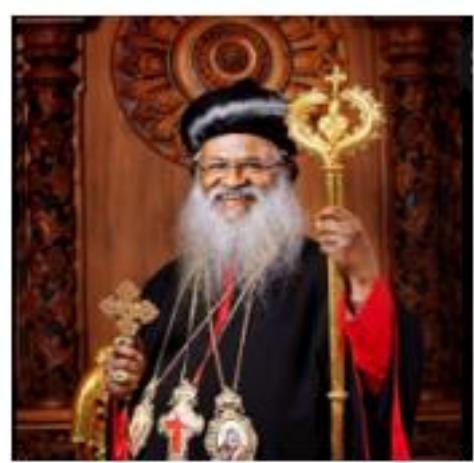
**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Marthoma Mathews II
(1991-2005)**



**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Marthoma Didymos I
(2005-2010)**



**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Marthoma Paulose II
(2010-2021)**



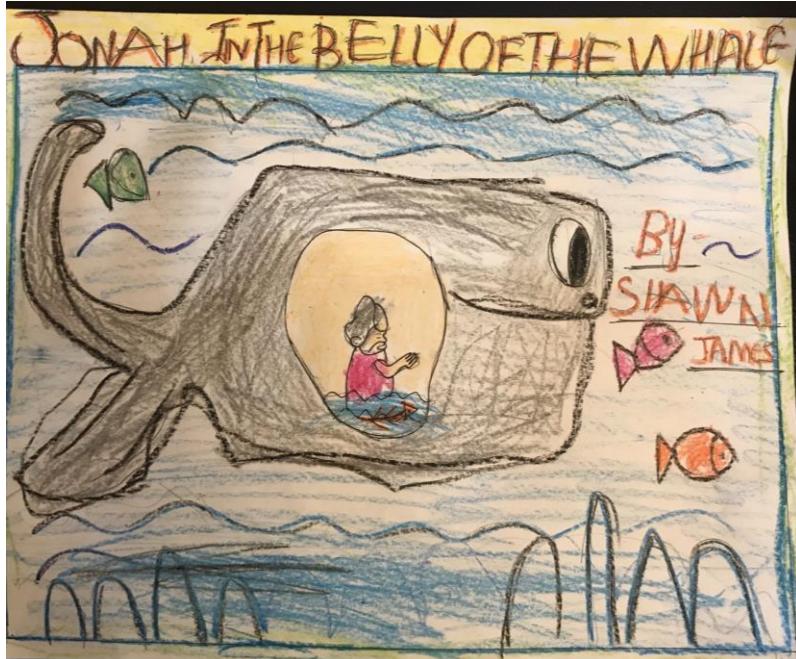
**H.H. Moran Mar Baselios
Marthoma Matthews III
(2021-Present)**

ART GALLERY

Artist: Vijith Vijo



Artist: Shaun Shynu



MEDIA GALLERY – CLICK [HERE](#) TO VIEW THE VIDEOS



Monasticism



Grade 8: Adley, Rejo, Vijith, Shaun and Megha

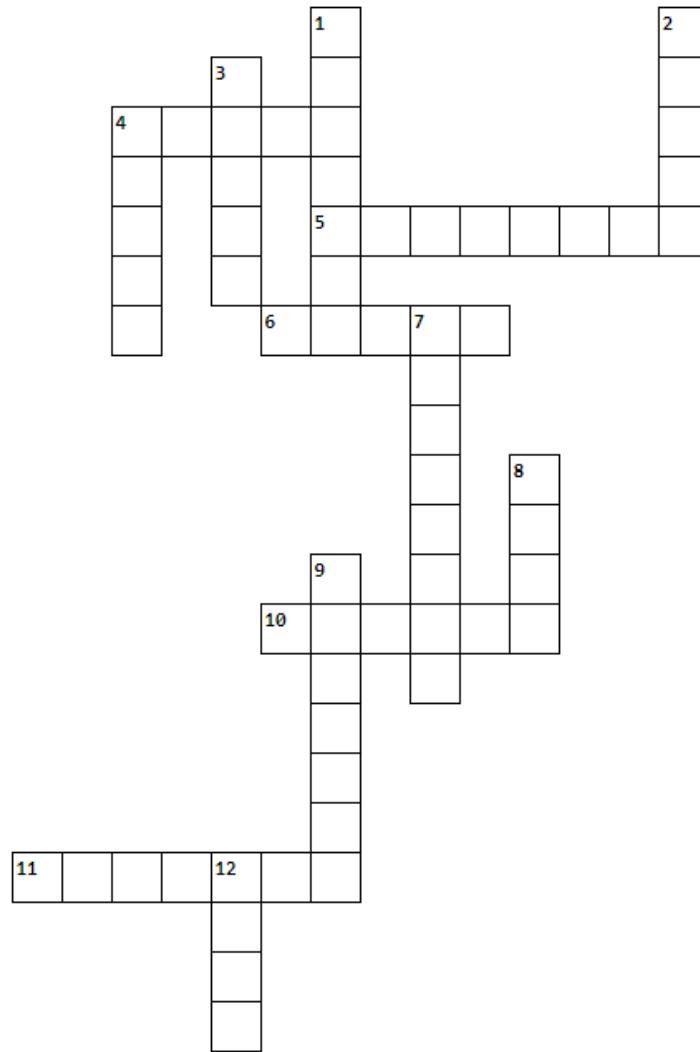
An artistic illustration of the Good Samaritan parable. It shows a man lying injured on the ground next to a road, a Samaritan in a green turban and white robes tending to his wounds, and a donkey nearby. In the background, there are trees and a distant landscape.

Analysis of the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Grade 11s

ACTIVITIES

Sunday School Newsletter



Across

- 4. received the 10 commandments from God
- 5. Jesus of _____ (Matthew 2:23)
- 6. The shepherd boy who defeated Goliath
- 10. the son of Jacob sold to Egypt
- 11. The first book in the bible

Down

- 1. "_____ to the Son of David" (Matthew 21:9)
- 2. spend three days in the belly of the whale
- 3. the Father of Esau and Jacob
- 4. Have_____ upon me O God (Psalms 51:1)
- 7. Meaning God with us (Matthew 1:22-23)
- 8. instructed to build an ark before the flood
- 9. The first 4 books of the New Testament
- 12. The first king of Israel

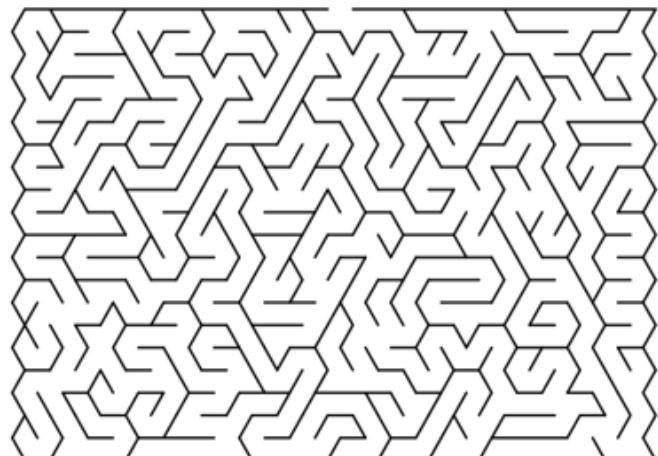
ACTIVITIES

Sunday School Newsletter



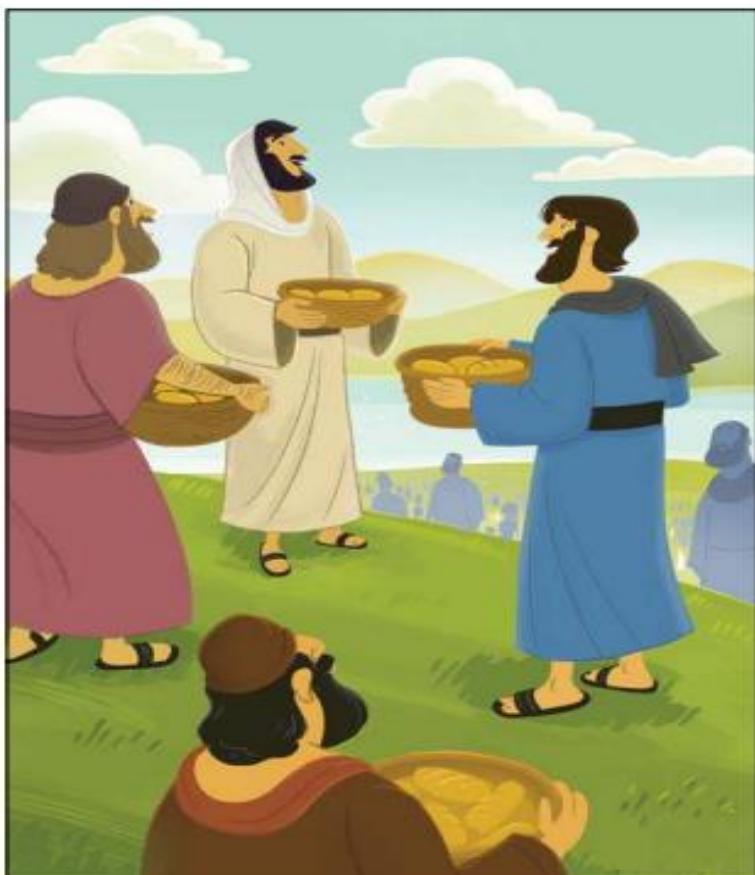
MIRACLE
JONAH
HOSANNA
PRAYER
FAST
PROPHET
GOSPEL
SPRING
APOSTLE
JESUS

Help the Children get to
Church through the maze



Spot the Differences in Jesus Fed the People

Compare the picture on the left with the picture on right. Circle the 12 things that are different.



REFLECTIONS FOR THE GREAT LENT

As we journey on this Lenten season together, let us pray for one another that we are blessed with the ability to attend to God's still small voice (1 King 19: 11-13). You are invited to read and to contemplate prayerfully the one or two of the quotations given below and to pray the prayer of St. Ephraim given at the end, as a Lenten exercise so that we may fulfil the Lord's new commandment.

"O God, relying on Your promise that You do not desire the death of the sinner but rather that he repent and live, I pray and beseech Your mercy. Forgive me the transgressions and sins that I have committed knowingly and unknowingly, willingly and unwillingly." – Prayer before Confession, Service Book of the Holy Qurbono

"God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy." – Pope Francis

"...Do not let the sun go down on your anger." Ephesians 4:26

"Do not allow the spark of discord and enmity to smoulder. The longer you wait, the more the enemy tries to cause confusion among you. Be watchful, so that he does not mock you. Humility destroys all of his schemes." - St. Macarius

"Let your mind fast from vain thoughts; let your memory fast from remembering evil; let your will fast from evil desire; let your eyes fast from bad sights: turn away your eyes that you may not see vanity; let your ears fast from vile songs and slanderous whispers; let your tongue fast from slander, condemnation, blasphemy, falsehood, deception, foul language and every idle and rotten word; let your hands fast from killing and from stealing another's goods; let your legs fast from going to evil deeds: Turn away from evil, and do good." - St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

"Lent offers a beautiful opportunity to discover the mystery of Christ within us. It is a gentle but also demanding time. It is a time of solitude but also community, it is a time of listening to the voice within, but also a time of paying attention to other people's needs. It is a time to continuously make the passage to new inner life as well as to life with those around us. -Father Henri Nouwen

"Fasting is like medicine. But like all medicines, though it be very profitable to the person who knows how to use it, it frequently becomes useless, and even harmful, in the hands of him who is unskillful in its use....

"Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. By what kind of works? If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see an enemy, be reconciled with him. If you see a friend gaining honour, do not be jealous of him. If you see a beautiful woman, pass her by. And let not only the mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all members of your bodies." – St. John Chrysostom

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:1

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?" Isaiah 58:6-7

"Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the sin, the sin that is left over without any excuse, after all allowances have been made, and seeing it in all its horror, dirt, meanness, and malice, and nevertheless being wholly reconciled to the man who has done it. That, and only that, is forgiveness, and that we can always have from God if we ask for it." – C. S. Lewis

"O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sin and not to judge my brother, for You are blessed from all ages to all ages. Amen" — St. Ephraim the Syrian

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you."
- St. John 13:34

IMPORTANT PRAYERS

PRAYER (Shudhamulla Baba....)

O Holy Father, guard us by Your Sacred Name, O Son of God, our Savior, protect us with Your victorious Cross †. O Holy Spirit, make us worthy temples of Your Holy habitation. O Lord, our God for ever shelter us under Your divine wings, at all times, forever. Amen

PRAYER (Anugrahangal Niranjirikunnavane...)

O Thou, full of mercy, renew Thy creation at the resurrection. O Lord, comfort and absolve our departed ones, who died with hope in Thee, and await Thy coming. O Lord, make them dwell in the bosom of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob. May the living and the departed together cry out, 'Blessed is He, who has come, and is to come, and give life to the dead.' Amen.

PRAYER (Moran Yeshu Meshiha)

O Jesus Christ, our Lord, close not the door of Thy mercy upon our faces. We confess, we are sinners; have mercy upon us. O Lord, Thy love for us didst make Thee to come down to us from Thy place. That by Thy, death, our death be abolished; Have mercy upon us. Amen.

PRAYER BEFORE RETIRING TO SLEEP (Karunayulla Deyvame...)

O Merciful God, the voice of our prayer knocks at Thy door; prevent not from Thy devotees the petitions of their needs. We call upon Thee, O God, to assist us in our infirmities. O Good one, hearken to the voice of our supplication, and grant our petitions in Thy mercy. Amen.

RESOURCES

Important Links:

- Indian Orthodox Sunday School Northeast American Diocese - <https://nesundayschool.org/>
 IOSS NE American Diocese Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/IOSS.NEAMERICANDIOCESE/>
 Ministry of Liturgical Resource Development - <https://www.youtube.com/c/LiturgicalResourceDevelopment/videos>
 Orthodox Terminology - <https://stgregorioscathedral.com/orthodox-terminology>

OUR JOURNEY TO THE EMPTY TOMB 2022			
	Sunday of the Departed Clergy (Hadbsabo d kohne)	<u>Gospel Reading:</u> Matthew 24:42-51	<u>How to Participate:</u> Remember the departed bishops, priests, and deacons who have taught you the faith, and pray for their souls during the Holy Qurbana. Take the time to thank your parish priests for all they do!
	Sunday of the Faithful Departed (Hadbsabo d anide)	Luke 12:32-49	Remember your dearly departed during the Holy Qurbana and pray for their souls. If possible, visit their graves and say a prayer for them!
	Sunday of the Wedding Feast at Cana (Qothine)	John 2:1-11	The Great Lent begins tomorrow with Shubqono (The Service of Reconciliation), so forgive and ask for forgiveness from your fellow neighbors.
	Sunday of the Leper (Garbo)	Luke 4:40-41, 5:12-16	Donate to the sick and the poor, whether it may be your time, your money, or both! Make time to serve your community and use the resources God has given you to help someone in need.
	Sunday of the Paralytic (Mshariyo)	Mark 2:1-12	Remember your friends in your prayers! Work on becoming a better friend for those you love by lending a listening ear and spreading kindness around you.
	Sunday of the Canaanite Woman (Knanayto)	Matthew 15:21-31	Set aside time to pray together as a family. Find ways to support and guide each other during this Lenten season!
	Mid-Lent & Commemoration of King Abgar (Pelge d sawmo rabo)	John 3:13-21, 7:14-15	The Golgotha will be placed in the midst of the church, so center your minds around the Cross and prepare your minds and bodies for Holy Week, which is quickly approaching!
	Sunday of the Bent Woman (Kfiftho)	Luke 13:10-17	Practice thanking God for every situation you face, whether it may be good or bad! Recognize His presence in your life and shift your thoughts up towards Him.
	Sunday of the Blind Man (Samiyo)	John 9:1-41	Exercise your spiritual muscles by meditating with the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!"
   		NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE OF THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH	