



The Stream

A Newsletter of the Diocese of South-West America

Conference Edition

July 2015
Vol.4 Issue 2



Family & Youth Conference 2015

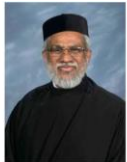
July 8 - July 11, 2015 InterContinental® Hotel, Dallas, Texas

“Today, Salvation has come to this house” - St. Luke 19:9



Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.” Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;”

-St Luke 19:1-9



What's News this Month

- Family Conference.....p. 1
- Metropolitan's Column.....p. 2-3
- Practical Prayer.....p.4
- MGOCSM.....p. 5
- Around the Diocese.....p. 6
- Know Our Parishp.7
- In Memoriam & Sponsors.....p.8

Do you have articles or news you would like to share in 'The Stream' newsletter? Would you like to share 'The Stream' with -your family and friends. Please e-mail us at thestreamdswa@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Veracity of Articles, News Reports, and Advertisements are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Metropolitan's Column


Metropolitan's Column - H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebius, Metropolitan

The Family Conference that we organize every year contributes significantly towards the spiritual development of the Malankara Orthodox faithful who have migrated to North America. This conference was organized in the beginning so meticulously every year under the leadership of some of the clergy on a regional level in the 1980s. Subsequently, it grew as a gathering of the faithful at the diocesan level under the leadership of His Grace Thomas Mar Makarios of Blessed Memory. Later, when Late Lamented His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas took charge of the diocese the conference was successfully organized both on the regional and diocesan levels.

The reorganization of the North American Diocese into two, in 2009, was a significant step forward in the growth of our Church. Just like all the other spiritual endeavors in the Diocese of South-West America, the Family Conference plays a critical role in the spiritual growth of the individual. After this Diocese was established with Houston as its centre, we were able to make some changes to the structure of the Family Conference. Keeping in mind the geographical spread of the Diocese and the logistical challenges in travel, the schedule was adjusted to conduct the Conference alternatively once every three years at the Diocesan-level, Regional level and local levels respectively, with the aim that all families in the Diocese were able to participate. In 2009 the Committee led by Rev. Fr. P.M. Cherian was successful in hosting the first Diocesan-level Family Conference at Houston. This first gathering of the faithful after the creation of the new Diocese was a wonderful success and it brought together the faithful, the entire clergy and myself, as the primate of the Diocese. As such, we were able to celebrate the official inauguration of the Diocese along with that.

The next Diocesan-level Family Conference was organized in Florida in 2012 by the committee led by Rev. Fr. George Daniel. In addition to the fact that the Conference was organized successfully as in previous years, the centennial celebration of the establishment of the Catholicate, which we consider the foundation stone of the 2000-year old Malankara Orthodox Church, added further meaning and occasion for joy.

And now in 2015, we are going to host the third Diocesan-level Family Conference. This mega-Conference, being held at the Intercontinental Hotel in Dallas, is being organized by a Committee under the co-ordination of Rev. Fr. Mat Alexander, one of the younger generation clergy of the Diocese, with Diocesan Council Member Mr. Elson Samuel as Secretary, Mr. Lijit Mathew as Treasurer and the whole-hearted leadership and efforts of the clergy from all our churches in the Dallas region. We look forward to the success of this Family Conference blessed by the presence of the Catholicos of The East and Malankara Metropolitan H.H. Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, His Grace Dr. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostamos, Bishop of the Diocese of Niranam, Rev. Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat, the Priest Trustee of the Malankara Orthodox Church and the Church's gifted Convention Speaker Rev. Fr. Varghese Varghese (Meenadom).

When one considers the social atmosphere in North America, the Family Conference rightfully deserves a lot of importance as a spiritual get-together. At a time when we are witnessing the weakening of family bonds with each passing generation, this conference being organized under the auspices of the Church becomes an invaluable necessity. The spreading of this disease that causes a lack of love in the family is failing familial bonds and relationships, causing the foundations of many families destabilized. This conference, to a certain extent, is able to rebuild bonds that have been destroyed in families that find themselves without direction or purpose. It is common in this modern world to witness the dismantling of husband-wife relationships that were bonded by God for the purpose of providing comfort to each other. I see it as an important mission of the Church to reinforce the foundation of the edict that "What God has joined together let no one separate." As we embrace the conveniences and access offered by social media to build relationships that are far, wide and global, we find it difficult to provide depth and sincerity to our closest and most important relationships. When one carefully observes, one is able to witness the helplessness and frustrations faced by children of Indian origin, as they grow up in Western countries under the influence of the prevailing local culture. The Family Conference was created and designed to seek a solution for this matter.

We need to realize that as the wheels of time journey on from decade to century and from century to millennia, the basic relationships that bind the family are to remain unchanged. This conference also facilitates the creation of bonds and social networks for the isolated Malayalee community that are living here in North America, distant from its original roots and

Metropolitan's Column

networks. Most importantly, this Conference assists the younger generation to meet others of their age from beyond their own parish, by interacting with, building lasting relationships and learning from others from the rest of the Diocese who face similar hurdles in their own lives and have even managed to overcome them. Knowing that one is not alone in the Malankara Orthodox Christian faith here in North America, and that there is the ongoing backing of a large community here, creates a sense of belonging through this coming-together of families from across North America. This conference is thus a once-in-three-years reunion of the children of the Malankara



Orthodox family. In this manner, this get-together of the children of the Malankara Orthodox family who are settled all over North America, is an opportunity to share our values in brotherhood, love and tradition and to realize that though we are seven seas away from our origins, we are not alone and that together, we belong, share values and have hope in the order of life and our customs.

In addition to learning and discussing the faith and traditions of this 2000-year old Church, discussion forums and interesting exercises in family bonds and the development of personal faith have been carefully designed, customized by specific age groups. The Conference will also focus on inspiring and challenging us to actively fight and be free from the malaise of alcoholism and drug abuse that is now viciously devouring the society we live in. The discussions will also identify effective means of finding freedom from excessive use and abuse of the internet and social media, again customized for different age groups. For those who are undergoing such addictions, this Conference also organizes opportunities for individual and family counseling sessions, in addition to programs for the physical and mental wellbeing and development.

For those feeling the effects and disappointments from stresses and pressures related to work and their professions, these four days will not only help reset one's outlook and energy, but also offer a chance to unwind and de-stress through opportunities to participate in and enjoy cultural and humorous entertainment programs. Another aspect about the Family Conference that continues to genuinely surprise us is the number of families that come back for it year after year – this is testament to the fact that the experiences gained and memories created here are truly valuable and that they continue to be encouraged by what they gain from the conference each year.

The presence of the primate of the Malankara Church, H.H. Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II, will generate belief and commitment amongst all of us who look forward to him for leadership and guidance. Despite his busy schedule, his wish to spend time with his children in North America, to understand our needs and pressures and to present them before the Lord, adds a new level of energy to the proceedings. The uniqueness of this year's Conference will also be the exhilarating speeches and classes by the Church's gifted Convention Speaker, Rev. Fr. Varghese Varghese, the former General Secretary of the Church's student association, the Mar Gregorios Youth Movement. Let's pray that the Family Conference this year, scheduled from Wednesday, 8th July to Saturday, 11th July 2015 at the Dallas Intercontinental Hotel, be an even more blessed one. We acknowledge and thank the Clergy and Committee Members who have worked tirelessly to make this event a big success. I pray and hope, in the name of the Lord, that everyone who attends this Family Conference receives blessings beyond my words. God bless us all.



This year, the Diocesan Center has started to grow its very own organic garden where various kinds of Kerala vegetables are being produced. In these pictures we see some of the first products that were grown in the garden. We hope to see this project expand and flourish!



URSHLEM ORGANIC GARDEN




LoveIndeed
 A Charity Project of the Diocese of South-West America



Practical Prayer

ARTIST : A Pattern For Private Prayer - Adapted by Rev. Fr. Dr. Abraham Oommen

1. Adoration

Our worship should start with Adoration : a deep appreciation of the reality of God and what he has done for us. This can be done in three ways- by calling to mind God's revelation in his Word, in the creation, and in our own personal lives. For meditation select any of the following or similar theophanic passages.-- Exodus 3:1-5;(The Burning bush) Isaiah 6:1-7; (The Temple) Genesis 28:10-17 (The ladder) Mathew 17:1-6 (The Transfiguration) **Prayer:** *Lord of the universe! How can I, a worthless speck of the earth, worship you as you deserve! Allow me to come before you as a dirty beggar approaching the king in his majesty . Oh! The most tremendous and fascinating mystery! I cannot comprehend your greatness using my senses, made by you! How awesome you are in your power and glory! I can never come near you in your holiness and transcendence! You are incomparable in justice and righteousness! Great is your love and care for me! Your kindness and forgiveness know no limits! Your faithfulness endures forever.*

2. Repentance

Awareness of God's presence leads to Repentance, as in the case of prophet Isaiah in the Temple, Moses before the burning bush or Adam and Eve when God came to see them after they sinned. We should examine our lives in relation to both God and human beings. Not only our actions, but also our attitudes should be put to test. It is necessary to confess sins of omission as well as sins of commission. Penitential Psalms, the parable of The Prodigal Son etc., can be helpful to bring in a contrite heart. Confess every thing that troubles your conscience. **Prayer:** *Father! I have sinned against you in thought word and deed. I am not worthy to be called your son. Accept me as a bond servant Though anointed by you as king and priest, I have now become a foul leper. As I have lost my wedding garment, how can I come for your banquet! Though created in your image, my self is turned into some thing devilish. Wash me thoroughly in your precious blood; I shall be whiter than snow.*

3.Thanksgiving

"The admission of our sins and failures should lead us to Thanks giving for the magnanimity of God in forgiving us and taking care of our welfare till that moment. Psalm 103 or similar texts can brought to mind. Specific incidents and things for giving thanks to God can be remembered. **Prayer:** *Thank you, Father, for your steadfast love for me that created me out of nothing and sustained me to this moment. Thank you for forgiving all my sins and taking care of all my needs. I am grateful to you for protecting me from all the dangers and illnesses of mind and body. Thank you for selecting me for the citizenship of your kingdom and for the life eternal. Help me to show my gratitude through a more faithful and committed life.*

4. Intercession

Now comes the time for Intercession: placing our dear ones and their needs before God. We should also place before God our common concerns. The order of things in prayer is:God-others-self. The greatest gift that we can give to others is to pray for them. James 5:15-18 will give the rationale and effectiveness of intercessory prayer. Our model should be our Lord Jesus Christ.(St. John 17) **Prayer:** *Son of God! Our heavenly mediator! Answer us as we pray for our dear ones. You love them, more than we do. Our concerns are yours too; let them be for the spread of your kingdom on earth.*

5. Self

Having placed the needs of others, we can now pray for our Selves, All the things in our personal life and work should be brought before God. Our Lord has taught us to pray for the daily bread i.e., each and every thing we want for the day. Prayer is not simply giving a list to God as if He does not know our needs. But to ask God for them is to acknowledge the source from whom we receive them. (James 1:7;Jeremiah 29:11) **Prayer:** *Lord! My creator and strength, you know what is good for me, even before my asking. Your plans for me are always for my good, though sometimes I fail to recognize them as such. I have placed my needs before you. If they are according to your will, you may give them to me. However, not my will, but your be done.*

6.Trust.

We can conclude our prayer by reaffirming our Trust in God, that all our prayers will definitely be answered by Him. Isaiah 40:28-31; Jeremiah 29:11; Psalm 37:5; Psalm 71; Matthew 5:7-11,,1Peter ,5::6-7 and similar portions will help to boost our trust in His providence. **Prayer:** *My Lord and my God! I commit my self to Thy loving care as a child into the arms of its mother.I take refuge under thy protective wings. The moment I become fully aware of your promises, all my worries and anxieties are wiped away. There is nothina which You and I toaether cannot handle. THE LORD'S PRAYER*

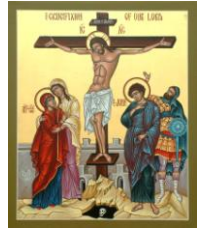
MGOCSM



The Chicago MGOCSM Lenten Retreat took place on Saturday, March 21 at the St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Elmhurst. The main speaker for the event was Rev. Fr. Dr. Bijesh Philip, principal of the St. Thomas

Orthodox Theological Seminary in Nagpur. The Retreat began with evening prayer followed by a devotional message about the Incarnation and how the Lenten season is a time to regain our lost identity in Christ. He ended his message by using the passage taken from St. Mark 5:1-20, which showed Christ helping the demon possessed man overcome his burden, indicating that Christ can also help us overcome our weaknesses.

The Detroit MGOCSM held its annual Lenten Retreat on Saturday March 21st at St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Warren, Michigan. The retreat was led by Mr. Jerry Idicula in the presence of Rev. Fr. Philip Sankarathil. The retreat started off with prayer followed by the



first session of the retreat which dealt with occurrences of spiritual combat in the Bible and the essentials in "fighting the war." The second session of the retreat focused further on the steps needed in order to be successful in combating problems that we may face in our spiritual and worldly lives. The retreat ended with meditation and chanting sessions, which gave students an opportunity to sit in silence and examine their lives especially during the Lenten season, followed by evening prayer.

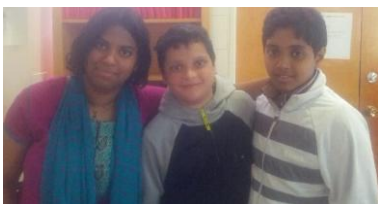


The Annual Dallas/Oklahoma Area Lenten Retreat was held at St. Mary's Orthodox Valiyapally, Dallas, on March 14, 2015. The theme for this year's retreat was "Homecoming" based on Joel 2:12. Our speaker, Rev. Dn. Arun Varghese, reminded us that regardless of the trials and tribulations we may conquer or succumb to, we can always call upon our Lord and He will greet us with open arms. The retreat ended with an amazing Icon workshop lead by Mr. Bijoy Thomas. The retreat was a success and a blessing for everyone that participated. All glory to God.

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church in Houston hosted its annual Lenten Retreat on Saturday, March 14 from 1:00pm-6:00pm. The theme of the retreat was "Return to the Lord" taken from Joel 2:12. The main speaker of the retreat was Dn. Daniel Dennis Mathai and was attended by over fifty people. The event began with the sixth-hour prayer and concluded with evening prayer and confession. Mr. David Babu



led a workshop session focused on the themes of Holy Week and the Liturgy. On March 22, 2015, St. Thomas Houston MGOCSM, in collaboration with Balika Bala Samajam, hosted the 2015 Hygiene Kit Service Project for IOCC, International Orthodox Christian Charity Organization, which will then be distributed overseas to countries that are need of the basic supplies we use every day. We also wanted to convey our condolences and prayers to Rev. Fr. Matthew Baker's family due to his passing, so we had tables set up to make cards and send to them. Altogether, it was blessed event that brought the older and younger students together in unity and fellowship while serving the needs of others.



The Seattle and Spokane MGOCSM was blessed to have Rev. Dn. Pradeep Hatcher as the main speaker for their Lenten Retreat, which took place from February 28 - March 1. Rev. Dn. Pradeep spoke to the MGOCSM referring to Joel 2:12-13 to relay his message that during this Lenten season we need to return to the Lord through fasting. Semmassan also taught the songs in the new Qurbana books. The Edmonton MGOCSM had their Lenten Retreat on March 20, and was blessed to have Mrs. Sara Johnson as the speaker. The Retreat revolved around the importance of Great Lent and confession. She emphasized with the youth on some of the fears some may have in confessing, but reinforced the notion that it is a blessed Sacrament and is an important act in seeking reconciliation. Every month Rev. Dn. Pradeep Hatcher holds a video conference for all the youth in the Northwest Region. In the month of March, the focus was on the importance of Great Lent and the traditions the Orthodox church follows.



Around the Diocese



The MMVS Midwest Regional Conference and Competition of the Diocese of South-West America came together at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Elmhurst on June 16, 2015. The event was led by our Diocesan Metropolitan and was attended the local by MMVS members of the Midwest parishes.



DIOCESE OF SOUTHWEST AMERICA
2015 URSHLEM SUMMER YOUTH CAMP
 JULY 12TH - 19TH, 2015



“MEN OF THE KINGDOM” - GENESIS 1: 26

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MAN, HUSBAND, FATHER, SON, BROTHER, FRIEND AND A LEADER

REGISTRATION FEE: **FREE** (Deadline June 15th, 2015)

WHERE: *Urshlem Diocesan Center, Beasley, TX*

WHO: *Young men who are entering 11th grade to college undergraduate seniors*

Immersing the youth in the Orthodox lifestyle by examining the roles that a man experiences in his life.
 Providing guidance for incoming college students and career counseling

Register online at bit.ly/DS-WASummer15
 For more information, contact your area representative or email: urshlemsummercamp@gmail.com

Orthodox Vacation Bible School 2015

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
 (Colossians 3:1-3)



**Children will enjoy lessons, singing, arts and crafts, outdoor activities, and fellowship.
 Please Contact your Sunday School Headmaster or local OVBS representative for more details**

There was a sense of joy in the church as everyone’s hands were staying busy. The little children stood in line with open bags and wide smiles, as the older students quickly filled the emptiness. On March 1st, St Gregorios Orthodox Church Sunday School and MGOCSM in Austin, Texas packaged 144 care packages for the homeless. Each pack contained various food and hygiene items. The project was administered in partnership with Caritas of Austin, a nonprofit organization that provides financial and emotional support for numerous people in poverty within Travis County. Their community development coordinator, Grace Alruz, worked hand in hand with the church to provide information and support behind the project. “A friend loves at all times” -Proverbs 17:17



Tele-Prayer Meeting in English

Slootho
 Tuesday Prayer
 Let us come together for
 fellowship and intercession!



From 9:05 pm to 9:35 pm (CST) every Tuesday.
 Soothoro prayer, Devotional message,
 Intercessory prayer for the needy & the sick.
 Please send prayer requests to: slootho@ds-wa.org
 Phone # (218) 632-0187
 Access code: 3703#



Know Our Parish

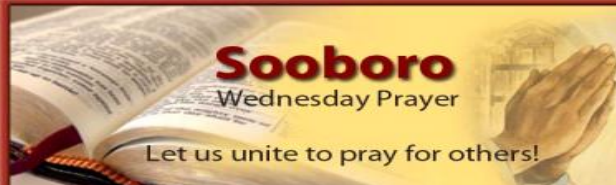


St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Valiyapally, Dallas
14133 Dennis Ln, Farmers Branch, TX 75234 www.stmarysdallas.org

St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Valiyapally, Dallas stands firm as the first parish of the Indian Orthodox Church in the Dallas / Fort Worth area. The origin of this parish is such that a handful of faithful members of our Church gathered together in a Dallas apartment in 1973 and shared their hopes and ambitions, as well as their desire to have a church service in their tradition and order. Small parish grew stronger day by day and one step at a time in its journey through the years to its present status due to God's providence and Mother Mary's perpetual intercession. Rev. Fr. Dr. C.O. Vargis served the parish as its first vicar in the early

70's. Then, Rev. Fr. Koshy P. John served as the vicar for over 5 years. The visit of H.H. Moran Basellus Mar Thoma Mathews I, along with H.G. Thomas Mar Thimothios and H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios, in 1979, was engraved with golden letters in the history of this parish. The late Rev. Fr. Zachariah Venattukalathil was appointed as vicar of the parish in 1980, and he led the parish with a new vision and a new light. In 1982, the faithful members made it possible to own a place of worship of its own at 5528 Forney Rd. in Dallas, and they worshipped there until 1989. In 1984 H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios appointed Rev. Fr. John Kunnathusseril as the Vicar of the Parish. As the membership grew steadily, the need for a larger facility became imminent and subsequently, the present facility in Farmers Branch was bought in the year 1989. The Christmas celebration of 1989 marked this commencement of worship in this new facility. There were two priests who served in the interim (2004 to 2005) — Rev. Fr. Reje Mathew and Assistant Vicar Rev. Fr. Mathews George. In July 2005, Rev. Fr. Thampan Varghese took over as our Vicar. He has led the church successfully from 2005 to 2012. During these years of laborious teamwork and planning that involved in the construction of a new church. God made him an instrument in His hands for this divine purpose. On December 29th, 2009, the old facility was demolished and we started preparing ground for the new elegant facility. The project was successfully completed on time. On February 18th, 2011, we obtained the temporary Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Farmers Branch and conducted the first Holy Qurbana on Sunday, February 20, 2011. Our new Church was consecrated on May 13th and 14th, 2011 by His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Marthoma Paulose II, the 91st Catholicos of the East & The Malankara Metropolitan. Include in the celebration were co celebrants His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius (Our Metropolitan), His Grace Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios, His Grace Abraham Mar Epiphanius and His Grace Joshua Mar Nicodimos. This event will be engraved in golden letters in the history of Indian Orthodox Church in America. On March 17th, 2012 His Holiness Moran Mar Baselius Mar Thoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan elevated St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Church, Farmers Branch, Texas to the status of Valiyapally" (Great Church). This is the first Valiyapally in the United States of America. In June 2012, the Metropolitan of the Southwest Diocese His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius a decided to rotate the priests of the Dallas parishes to match the system in India. With this new change, the priest from St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church of Dallas, Rev. Fr. Raju Daniel appointed as the new Vicar of St. Mary's Church and still serves as the Vicar today. There have been many changes and developments in the parish since the 1970s but one fact remains the same. St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Church was formed to serve the spiritual needs of the Malankara Orthodox community in the 1970s and still strives to serve the needs of the members of the Malankara Orthodox Church of Dallas today.






Sooboro
Wednesday Prayer

Let us unite to pray for others!

Tele-Prayer Meeting in Malayalam
 From 10:20am to 11:30am (CST) every Wednesday.
 Bible reading, hymns, devotional message,
 intercessory prayer for the needy & the sick.
 Please send prayer requests to: sooboro@ds-wa.org
 Phone #: (218) 632-0187
 Access code: 3703#



Thanks to our Sponsors

Editorial Board

President:

Alexios Mar Eusebius,
Metropolitan

Publisher:

Fr. Dr. Joy Pyngolil,
Diocesan Secretary

Managing Editor:

Charly Varughese

Chief Editor:

Fr. Abi Chacko

Associate Editor:

Fr. Shaun Mathew

Malayalam Section Editor:

Fr. Mathai P. Cheriyan

Distribution and PR

Fr. Johnson Punchakonam

Ecumenical News

Fr. Christopher Mathew

Faith and Religion

Fr. James Cheriyan

MMVS (MOMS)

Jessie Ninan

MGOCMS

Jason Abraham

Sub-Editors

George Panicker

George Varghese

Johnson Varghese

Diocese of

South-West America
3101 Hopkins Road
Beasley, TX 77417

PHONE

(281) 403-0670

FAX

(281) 459-0814

E-MAIL

dswadiocesanoffice@gmail.com



We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.ds-wa.org

CALL ME FOR A FREE, NO OBLIGATION QUOTE

Office: 972-313-3600

Cell : 469-684-0959

Fax : 972-313-3610



Baby Uthup, Agent

837 NORTH BELT LINE ROAD
IRVING, TX 75061

BUTHUP@FARMERSAGENT.COM



Call: 281-682-0623

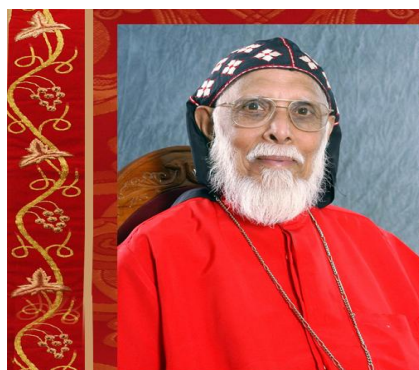


Residential
Commercial
Home Rental

Charly Varughese (Padanilam)
(Member of MLS, HAR, TAR & NAR)
Email: charlyvp@hotmail.com



Call me for Buying/Selling/Leasing residential & Commercial Properties in
Houston, Sugar Land, Katy, Missouri City, King Wood, Woodlands.



H.G. Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios

**REMEMBERING OUR
SPIRITUAL FATHERS**

"Let Your priests be
clothed with
righteousness,
And let Your saints
shout for joy.
For Your servant
David's sake,
Do not turn away the
face of Your Anointed."



H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas