



The Stream

A monthly publication of the Diocese of South-West America

Sept 2012
Vol. 01 Issue 03

Bava Thirumeni celebrates 67th birthday

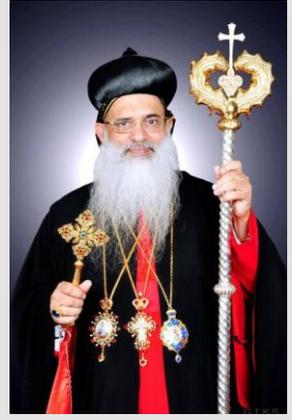
The Sacredness of Marriage

Alexios Mar Eusebius

We live in a world of sea change, and the human tendency is to experiment anything new that may appear as the norm. In recent times, much discussion and debate has taken place regarding abortion, contraception, same sex marriage, and much more. President Obama's favorable attitude towards same sex marriage has stirred a hornets' nest in the United States. In a newly emerging moral context, our faith is challenged and many are confused as how to conduct their lives.....cont'd - pg 3



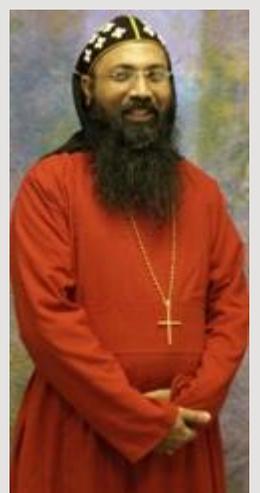
Above: An icon depicting the Wedding at Cana, the site of Christ's first miracle



MAY THE LORD GRANT YOUR HOLINESS MANY MORE YEARS



Happy 48th Birthday to our dear Thirumeni



MAY THE LORD SHOWER HIS CHOICEST BLESSINGS ON YOU

Memory Eternal



His Holiness Abune Paulose, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Church falls asleep in the Lord. Malankara Orthodox Delegation sent to offer prayers and condolences ...Read more on page 2

What's News this Month

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SAVE THE DATE

Regional Family Conferences 2013

The preparations for the Regional Family Conferences to be held in 2013 have begun. The committees for the various regions have been formed and the following clergy were elected as regional conveners

- North West Region:** V. Rev. Fr. Michael Hatcher Chor Episcopa
- South Region:** Rev. Fr. Raju M. Daniel
- Midwest Region:** Rev. Fr. Daniel George
- West Region:** Rev. Fr. Slomo Isaac George
- South East Region:** Rev. Fr. George Paulose

The dates for the regional conferences were decided and are as follows:

- North West Region:** June 28-July 1, 2013
- South Region:** July 4-7, 2013
- Midwest Region:** July 10-14, 2013
- West Region:** July 17-21, 2013
- South East Region:** July 25-28, 2013

H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Demetrios, Metropolitan of the Diocese of Delhi will be the main speaker at these conferences.

Ecumenical Corner

Ethiopian Patriarch Laid to Rest

On August 23, 2012, The Late Patriarch of Ethiopia was laid to rest at the Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Over two hundred thousand faithful came to the Cathedral to pay their last respects to their Spiritual Father. Delegations from sister Orthodox Churches, and different ecumenical bodies took part in the funeral rites. The MOSC delegation consisted of three of our Metropolitans and two Priests: HG Dr Mathews Mar Severios, Secretary of the Holy Synod; HG Dr Gabriel Mar Gregorios, Head of Ecumenical Relations; HG Dr Yuhanon Mar Diascoros (former Professor and Registrar at the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's Seminary in Addis Ababa); Rev Fr Jose Thomas Poovathumkal and Rev Fr Jossy Jacob. In addition to sharing the Orthodox faith, the Malankara Church and the Ethiopian Church have had a strong relationship since the time that L.L. Paulose Mar Gregorios served as a personal aide and advisor to His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia back in the 1950s, and building ties between our seminaries.

- Fr. Christopher Mathew



Marthoma Delegation Visit to Houston Aramana

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Diocesan Bishop of the Mar Thoma Church's Diocese of North America and Europe paid a goodwill visit to the Diocesan Center in Houston. Thirumeni was accompanied by the Mar Thoma Church's Vicars in Houston, Rev. Zachariah John, Rev. A.T. Thomas and Youth Chaplain Rev. Roy Thomas. HG Mar Eusebius exchanged gifts with Mar Theodosius and the Aramana was able to give the visiting clergy a good reception. This visit cements the already excellent existing relationship between the two churches.



Ecumenical Council Meeting

Chicago: The monthly meeting of the Ecumenical Council of Kerala Churches, Chicago was hosted at the new Elmhurst property of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Chicago, on September 11, 2012. The meeting was attended by the clergy and lay representatives of the area 17 Kerala Christian parishes, and our 4 local Orthodox parishes were well represented. At the meeting a special 9/11 memorial prayer was done to commemorate and remember the victims of the 9/11 attacks. The meeting ended with a traditional Onam meal for dinner.



Left: the icon of Christian Unity in the Orthodox Tradition shows the Apostles Peter and Paul embracing each other - a sign of the early Church overcoming its differences and affirming its diversity




The Sacredness of Marriage - cont'd from pg 1



The cry to legalize same sex marriage in several states is increasing; in fact, in many states it has already been declared legal. With the upcoming presidential election, political parties are being challenged to take a stance so that people can decide which party to align with. It is in this context that we have to consider what is the attitude of the faithful towards the issue of same sex marriage? Although this is not a deep study based on the cultural and social aspects of North America, I hope to express my concerns regarding this crucial issue by examining the Biblical perspective of this matter.

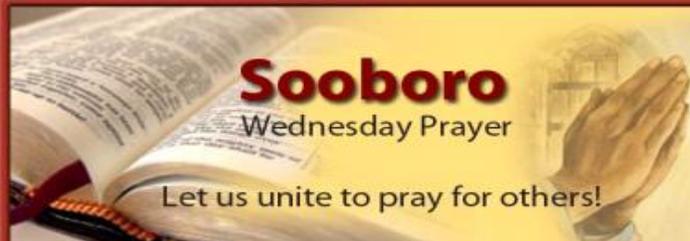
First, the Old Testament is very clear as to the origin of two sexes in humankind with God creating us as either male or female. In the creation account as recorded in the book of Genesis 2:7 we read, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being." However, God found that it was not good for man to live alone and chose to make a helper comparable to him (Genesis 2:18). We further read that the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh, used the rib from man to make into a woman, and brought her back to the man (Genesis 2:21-22). In response to this the man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). The chapter concludes with the basic understanding of Christian marriage that is repeated throughout the Sacrament of Holy Marimony: "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). It is through this union of a male and female that God calls humankind to participate in the procreative process that would fulfill His commission to also "be fruitful and multiply." Thus, in light of the creation account we can see that:

- 1) Both man and woman are the creation of God and procreation is a blessing given to both man and woman by God Himself.
- 2) Woman is a creation out of man by God in order to make his life complete. Therefore, woman was created as a suitable helper



(partner) to man. Essentially, this details that either man alone or woman alone is not a completed creation. In other words, the diversity of gender is a divinely ordered reality.

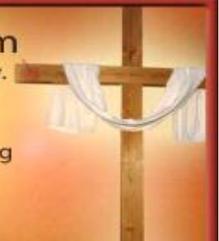
- 3) The Old Testament view of marriage was developed in light of the creation narrative. It is clear throughout the Old Testament that marriage between a man and a woman was considered the divinely ordered way of cohabitation and the accepted way of receiving conjugal rights. Sexual union outside of this blessed union was viewed as adultery and severe punishment was laid upon those who were unwilling to follow this divine plan. We read in the book of Leviticus, "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be



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#



Metropolitan's Column

For Indians who reside in the United States, this time of year brings us two important holidays. The first Monday of September is always observed as Labor Day. Though often referred as the unofficial end of summer, its true meaning goes much deeper. It is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. Essentially, it celebrates the contribution of American workers and serves as a national tribute to them for strengthening the prosperity and well-being of the country.

While America observes Labor Day, Keralites across the world celebrate their National Festival, Onam. The festival recalls the past history of India specifically a period when there was much peace and prosperity. The King Mahabali who is remembered during Onam was a honorable king who established justice, equality, and maintained peace during his reign. All of these national celebrations had the concept of a Golden Age and simply urge us to live a life according to its true message. Let us be reminded of the glory that is due unto our God and join together in laboring to establish peace, justice, and equality in our society.

Your Shepherd in Christ,
Alexios Mar Eusebius, Metropolitan

upon them" (20:13).

When we look to the New Testament, we see two streams of views regarding marriage as revealed to us by Christ Himself and the Apostle Paul. First, Jesus Christ expressed His views regarding marriage while dealing with the issue of divorce. Though the primary issue at hand was divorce, Christ emphasized the inseparability of marriage between man and

woman. Some Pharisees asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" (St. Matthew 19:3). Jesus replied to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate" (St. Matthew 19:4-6). The marriage which is referred to is defined as a relationship between a male and a female. It is important that Jesus refers back to the Genesis account of creation and God's plan for humankind in his answer to the perennial question about divorce. From His response one thing is made very clear to us: a marriage of same sex is out of context in Jesus' teaching on the matter.

St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians also details some principles regarding marriage and sex. For St. Paul, marriage is one way of living whereby the husband and wife meet their sexual needs (1 Corinthians 7). He also understood marriage as a kind of mutual giving to the extent that the wife has the authority over the body of the husband and vice versa. His view about marriage is again made clear in Ephesians 5:22-33 where he urges the husband and wife to love each other just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her. By using the analogy of Christ and the Church as husband and wife, St. Paul accentuates the great commitment involved in marriage. Essentially, marriage as revealed to us by the Spirit and understood by St. Paul is a relationship between a man and woman.

For St. Paul, sexual relation outside the context of marriage is a sin. He enlists a variety of people having sexual behavior that is not viewed in marriage (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; cf. 5:11-13) and categorizes them into three categories of perverted sex. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators

[Gk: paramours], nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [Gk: catamites], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [Gk: sodomites] nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Eternal salvation is the whole goal of our earthly life. It is a goal that requires a constant striving, for it is not easy to be a Christian. The influence of our society makes it extremely hard, but I hope and pray our faithful will live and respond to the pressures of society on same sex marriage with the teachings of Scripture as understood by the Holy Church.

- Alexios Mar Eusebius, Metropolitan

Slootho

Tuesday Prayer

Let us come together for
fellowship and intercession!

Tele-Prayer Meeting in English

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

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MGOCSM Round-up



Detroit MGOCSM - "NOVO: Revive Yourself"

Detroit MGOCSM is moving forward into a new chapter of its ministry this fall. Leadership Camp Detroit 2012 set the tone for this new chapter. With the theme "Alter Your Perception", now adopted by many of the MGOCSM members, Detroit is aiming to bring a revival to the area. The Back To School Conference was held August 31-September 3, 2012. The theme for this conference was "Novo: Revive Yourself". The main speaker was Detroit Youth Minister, Fr. James Cheriyan. In addition, campus ministry has begun once again this school year. At these campus ministry meetings, James Achen strives to bring Orthodoxy to the college life and encourage students to be active in their faith during the school year. It has been a great blessing to also welcome members of the local Coptic Orthodox church to these meetings. Lastly, council member elections were conducted in September - the newly elected Detroit Council Member for 2013-2014 is Shannon Mathew. In upcoming months, Detroit MGOCSM hopes to involve several new members in its projects and bring a true revival to the area.

MGOCSM Eastern Region- 'Qudosh Idto' Conference

The members of MGOCSM mainly from Florida and Georgia gathered during Labor Day weekend for a time of fellowship and worship. In attendance were 76 MGOCSM youth from the Southeast region. They converged at a camp Fruitland Park, FL.. To help guide the retreat was Father Daoud Tawadrous from St. Anthony Coptic Orthodox Church as well as the keynote speaker - Father Alexander Kurien from Washington D.C. Other regional parish priests present at the retreat were Father George Daniel and Father George Paulose. The MGOCSM conveners were Sonia Kallarakal of Tampa, Florida and Joseph Joy of Atlanta, GA.

The theme was taken from the verses from Job 8:8-9, "For inquire about the former generation and search among the race of our fathers; For we are of yesterday and know nothing...". The hope and purpose of the camp was to enable the youth to reflect on the history of the church through looking at the faith of "The Revivers" (church fathers) giving them a strong appreciation for their heritage and propelling them to a productive future in the church.

It was a blessing to have Father Alexander Kurien celebrate the Holy Liturgy Qoodosh 'Idtho means "sanctification", and that is exactly what happened to all who were touched by God during this retreat. We were sanctified by the power and presence of the One Triune God.



Dallas MGOCSM : Team Christ 2012



The 9th annual Team Christ Camp hosted by the Dallas area MGOCSM was held on Labor Day Weekend 2012 at Camp El Har in Dallas, Texas. The theme for the camp was "The Time is Now" which is taken from Romans 13:11 which says "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the time for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."

The camp's keynote speaker was Reverend Father Vijay Abraham Thomas, the MGOCSM General Secretary. Also in attendance were Dallas Area Youth Minister Rev. Fr. Mat Alexander, Rev. Dn. Shaun Mathew, and Bincy Alexander Thomas Kochamma. Campers that were in attendance were from the Dallas area as well as Houston.

The camp lasted three days and there was a full schedule full of many items that kept the campers busy and engaged in the camp. The main activity that the groups did was an obstacle course that encouraged

teamwork in order to accomplish the tasks given to them. Saturday night was the camp's retreat time in which Holy Confession, counseling, chanting, and Bible reading were all offered. Holy Qurbana was celebrated on Sunday by Rev Fr. Vijay Thomas and assisted by Rev. Fr. Mat Alexander.

Next year will be the 10 year anniversary of Team Christ and the area seeks to make this a big conference that reunites all the campers from the past Team Christ Camps as well as bring in new campers. More information on the tenth annual Team Christ will be released in the near future.

From Around the Diocese and the Church

MAY GOD GRANT OUR SHEPHERD MANY YEARS...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR THIRUMENI

September 5th is the birthday of our diocesan metropolitan, H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebius. Across the diocese many areas have had celebrations to commemorate this special day in our bishop’s life. The parishes of St. Thomas M.O.C, Denver, St. Mary's M.O.C., Houston, St. Thomas Cathedral, Houston, St. Mary's M.O.C, Calgary, St. Gregorios M.O.C., Edmonton celebrated with thirumeni during His Grace's visits to their parishes. At the diocesan center on Sept. 5 the local clergy and Wednesday prayer fellowship celebrated Thirumeni's birthday as well. May God bless Thirumeni’s ministry and may God grant him many years.



The winners of the Southern Regional Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam talent competition held at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Austin on August 25th, 2012 along with General Secretary and Regional Secretary.



OVBS held at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Austin TX from August 17th through 19th

“സ്നേഹത്തലിയിൽ ഈ സായാഹ്നം” പദ്ധതി



ദേവലോകം: മലങ്കര ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭയുടെ മാനവ ശക്തികരണ വിഭാഗത്തിന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ 2012 ഒക്ടോബർ, നവംബർ, ഡിസംബർ മാസങ്ങളിൽ ‘വ്യഭജനസംരക്ഷണവും സാന്ത്വനശുശ്രൂഷയും’ ലക്ഷ്യമിട്ടുകൊണ്ട് നടത്തുന്ന ‘സ്നേഹത്തലിയിൽ ഈ സായാഹ്നം’ എന്ന ത്രൈമാസ ബോധവൽക്കരണ കർമ്മപരിപാടി നടത്തപ്പെടും. ഈ പദ്ധതിയിൽ സന്നദ്ധസേവനം ചെയ്യുവാൻ താല്പര്യവും വൈദഗ്ദ്ധ്യവും ഉള്ളവർ കേന്ദ്ര ഓഫീസുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെടേണ്ടതാണ്. ഫോൺ നമ്പർ 0481 2572800,9496155461 ഈമെയിൽ hmr@mosc.in

Edmonton Church – Silver Jubilee Celebration



St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada celebrated its 25th anniversary of acquiring the church building which is the first church ever acquired by an Indian church in Canada. The celebration started with evening prayer on Saturday and Holy Qurbana on Sunday morning by H.G Alexios Mar Eusebius . The silver jubilee celebration meeting and cultural program was held at Festival Place , Sherwood Park followed by dinner on September 9,2012. H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebius was the chief guest, and the founding vicar Rev. Fr. George John(South Florida) was the guest of honor. The founding members of the church were honored during the meeting, and presented with Plaque and Ponnada by Thirumeni. The priests and members from other Malayalee churches in Edmonton area participated in

the function. Along with Thirumeni, vicar Fr. Dr. Paul T. Varghese, Fr. George John, Mr. George Geevarughese (Diocesan council member & founding member), Rev. Rajan Koshy (Trinity Marthoma Church), Mr. Mathew Vergis spoke on the occasion. Mr. Gejo Jacob(Secretary) welcomed the guests, and Mr. John Thomas (Trustee) delivered vote of thanks.

The contributions of the previous vicars of SGOC, Rev. Fr. Daniel Pullelil, Rev Fr. George Daniel, V. Rev. Ramban Lazarus Cor Episcopos, and Rev. Fr. Philipose Philip were appreciated during the meeting. The highlight of the evening was the extravagant cultural program presented by the children, youth, young adults, and founding members of the church. The program concluded with magic show by our vicar Fr. Dr. Paul T. Varghese (well known as “magic Paul” by his peers in Kottayam Theological Seminary).

The event was coordinated by Mr. Binu P. Mathew with the help of dedicated volunteers. On behalf of the church and the managing committee Mr. Binu P. Mathew expressed his heartfelt thanks to all those who worked very hard to make this event a grand success. We thank Thirumeni, and Fr. George John for their esteemed presence.

Know Our Parish

St. Mary's Malankara Orthodox Church, Calgary, AB, Canada

(www.moccalgary.org)



It is the yearning of every immigrant, who moves to a new country to continue their faith and traditions in their new homeland. Malankara Orthodox Christians began immigration to Canada as early as the 1960s and 70s and settled down in different provinces. A good number of them settled in Edmonton, Calgary and other parts of Alberta.

In the 80s, the Malankara Orthodox Christians in Edmonton, the capital city of Alberta, were able to establish a church in the name of the first canonized saint of Malankara Orthodox Church, St. Gregorios of Parumala. The Calgary community, inspired by the establishment of the parish in Edmonton, organized more frequent prayer meetings at their homes in our tradition as time permitted. These spiritual gatherings progressed to occasional Holy Qurbana led by Clergy from Edmonton and other parishes in North America.

This arrangement continued till 2000 when the Diocesan Bishop H.G Makarios, at the request of the community, directed the Edmonton Parish priest Rev. Fr. Lazarus to begin work towards establishing a dedicated congregation in Calgary. On St. Thomas Day, December 21st 2002 the Calgary congregation was blessed to be elevated to a full-fledged parish in the name of St. Mary by the Diocesan Metropolitan. The occasion was graced by the presence of Clergy and laity

from Edmonton and other local congregation including Ethiopian and Orthodox Church in America (OCA)

The Parish continued to have monthly Holy Qurbana led by Fr. Lazarus and followed by Fr. Philipose Philipose from Edmonton. It officially came under the South West Diocese of North America in 2009 during the re-organization of Malankara Orthodox Dioceses. The parish which started off with about 10 families has now around 45 families attending the Church, with more and more immigrants having moved to Calgary in the past few years.

The continual growth over the last decade warranted the need for a dedicated Spiritual father to nourish the life of the Parish. The Diocesan Bishop H.G Alexios Mar Eusebius appointed Fr. Binny M. Kuruville as a full time resident priest from August 15, 2010 to fulfill this role. The Parish is now blessed to have regular weekly Holy Qurbana service at a rented Church building with the last service of the month in English. Spiritual organizations continue to actively encourage and strengthen the participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Children and adults very actively participate in Sunday school, MGOCSM, Balika Bala Samajam and Morth Mariam Samajam respectively.

As the church keeps growing and to become firmly rooted in Calgary as an Orthodox Christian community accessible to all, the parish earnestly looks forward with prayers to owning a permanent place of worship.

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