

HODOS



Department of Communications
Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa
Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Syrian Church



The Malankara
ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

THE WAY

Monthly Newsletter of the Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa
of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

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Catholicos Baselios Mathews III emphasizes 'need for unity'

With greater vision and a focus on every possibility for reconciliation, Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos HH Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews III has once again emphasized the need for unity.



Speaking to the faithful at Perumbavoor Bethel Suloko Orthodox Church he exhorted that anyone can commit faults or can have shortcomings and people might go through emotional experiences based on different time periods, but we should realize them all and get ready to stand for peace, happiness and unity of the Church. He added that is how lasting peace could be brought in the Church and the only way that the Church could grow. "When we stand together, we become a formidable force and grow into a great Church. We will then be able to correctly execute the Christian missions that were assigned by St. Thomas in India." He emphasized that this ethos is precisely what the 1934 Constitution of the Malankara Church embodies.

The Supreme Court of India earlier put out the order that the Jacobite faction should hand over six Churches to the Orthodox Church, namely Mazhuvannoor St. Thomas, Odakali St. Marys, Pulinthanam St. Johns, Cherukunnam St. Thomas, Mangalam Dam St. Marys and Erukkumchira St. Mary.

HODOS – The Way

"And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her." - St. Luke 1:58 -

Zachariah and Elizabeth, were an honest faithful God-fearing couple. Yet, they had to face the scorn of Jewish society as they had no children. But the sweetest bit of this story is that when they finally are blessed by the Almighty, all around them – their neighbours and relatives – gather together to 'rejoice with her'.

If we truly reflect on society today, we may be disappointed to see that seldom do we tend to rejoice with others anymore. In the struggles of our own daily lives, we tend to lose out on the depth of our social connections. We usually talk about being empathetic and sharing in the sorrows of others. That is our Christian duty towards one another. But the rejoicing bit – that is a test of our character.

Are we truly able to be happy for others? Can we unselfishly and wholeheartedly rejoice with those around us? Or in the deepest parts of our hearts, do we secretly hold an ounce of jealousy and grudge? As we move forward to receive the birth of our Saviour in our hearts, let us ensure that our celebrations are sanctified. Let us truly and selflessly rejoice in the achievements and victories that others have been blessed with. That indeed, is the way to holistic joy.

- The Editor

HOLISTIC FASTING

Bernice James

For the Malankara Orthodox faithful, the Nativity Fast is a special time, set apart, to help us to slow down and prepare our hearts to receive Christ. Being one of the five Canonical Fasting periods, this fast commences on the 1st of December and concludes with the celebration of the feast of the Nativity of our Lord on 25th December.

Nativity is a time of preparation, preparing us to receive Christ. Holistically, the birth of Christ should be in our hearts and minds. As weak mortal humans, it is quite obvious that we need a lot of time to rid ourselves of our worldly concerns and realign our hearts and minds towards the Kingdom of Heaven. During the Nativity Fast, the Holy Church exhorts us to strengthen and intensify our spiritual lives so as to ensure that our souls and bodies are ready to celebrate the Incarnation. As is the case for all other fasting periods, we are instructed to do this through fasting, prayer, confession and charity. This strengthened attention given to *preparing for His coming* enables us to ensure that we have done what we can to make a "fit dwelling place for our Lord" in our hearts and lives.

Unfortunately, this particular season is different from other fasting periods as there is a greater challenge from a secular perspective owing to the very busy end-of-year schedules and events. It is easy to get caught up in the multitude of commercial seasonal offerings during this time of year that we can easily lose sight of the fundamental task, which is to prepare for the coming Lord! It is important for us to prepare ahead of time to help ensure we reach our goals for how we want to spend this Nativity season.

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

Fasting in itself, should not be considered as a means of pleasing God. It should also not be considered as a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us. We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together. Fasting is neither irrelevant, nor obsolete, and is certainly not something for someone else.



By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer whilst encompassing Christ's compassion to all around us. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us. For many, that controlling factor may be food. But that is not the entirety. While fasting from food is a start in our physical being, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Fasting is not merely a glorified diet plan. It is about allowing our heart to break. It is this path of inner knowledge of God that is the proper context of fasting. If we fast but do not forgive our enemies – our fasting is of no use. If we fast and do not find it drawing us into humility – our fasting is of no use. If our fasting does not make us yet more keenly aware of the fact that we are sinful and responsible to all then it is of no benefit. If our fasting does not unite us with the life of God – which is meek and lowly – then it is again of no benefit.

The Nativity Fast anticipates a joyful event. It may be described as an expectant fast in the wonder and mystery of the coming of Our Savior. Yet, it is a time of reserved joy in which practices of fasting and almsgiving are still encouraged. Abstinence or fasting is a spiritual discipline, an invitation and a response. It is our "yes" to being open to welcoming Christ.

When Jesus warns about hypocritical fasting (Mtt 6:16), he does not say "IF you fast..." but rather specifically says "WHEN you fast..." Fasting is indeed an absolute way of worship for the faithful Christian. May our fasting be pure so as to purify our bodies and souls so that we are worthy to receive the Almighty in our hearts.

DIE TO LIVE

Jacob Muringayil, London

Die to live! Can one die to live? It is totally an unfathomable affair for a worldly mind and since we live in the world, for us too despite being Christians. Can Christians die then to live? Yes but, we need to learn about the different types of death beforehand.

There are two types of death (Revelations 20:6). The first is the bodily death which happens for all creatures at one point along the journey of life on earth and the second is the Spiritual death (the eternal death) which is for humans who were created in God's Image and Likeness but only for those humans who reject the only Saviour - Jesus Christ - by their earthly life.

Jesus says : Fear not those who can kill your body (first part of St. Mathew 10:28).

It means, the death in the body is not very significant for a Christian but, what is more worrying is the death in the Soul (latter part of St Mathew 10:28). These two deaths really exist; no matter however hard we try, we will all die in our body one day and for the ones who live for the body and its passions, that death means the end of the world however, for the ones who live for Christ, it is not so worrying because, they rejoice in living in Spirit but not in body and body, for them, is just an earthen vessel needed to glorify God Almighty by renouncing its passions and therefore, they happily renounce own bodily pleasures which are the by-products of sin, to please their Lord out of their love for HIM.

Renouncing bodily pleasure means renouncing sin. Renouncing sin means no longer living for sins. Not

living for sins means dead to sins because, sins cannot find any place to work with or in them any longer. When dead to sins, we nurture our Soul and Spirit. Nurturing the Soul and Spirit means living for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So, die to live means die to the world and to the sins so that to live for Christ.

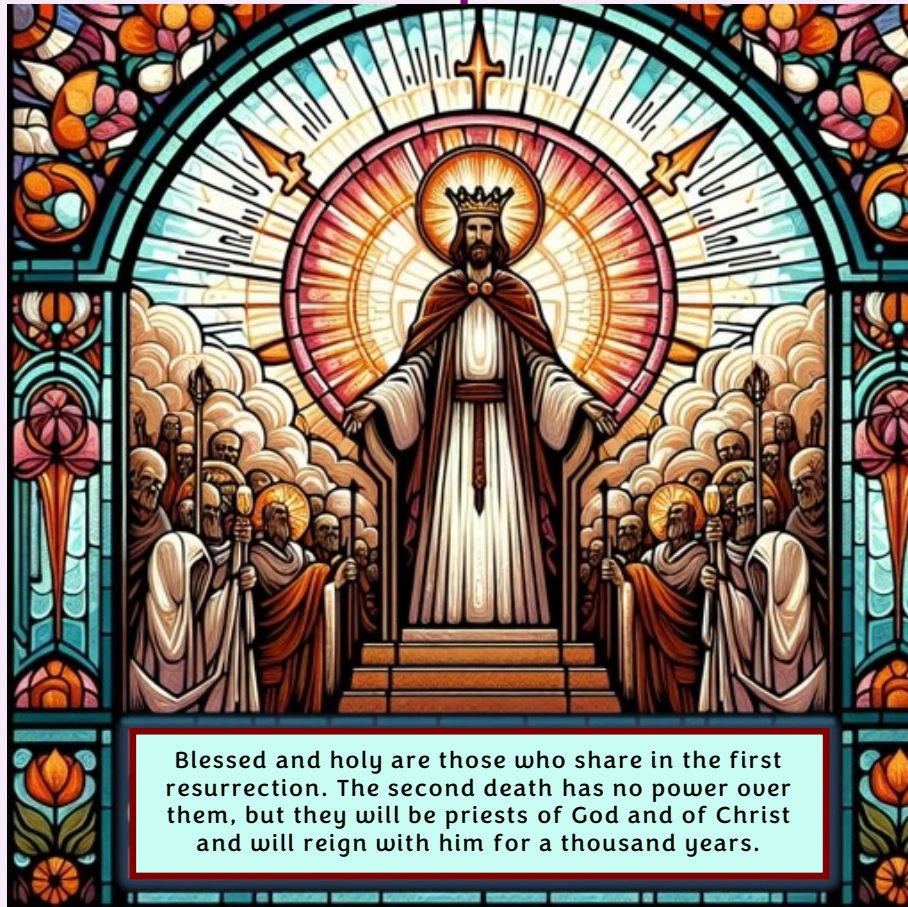
In St John 12:24 Jesus says "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit".

Here the death of the seed is a must to bring forth fruits as Christ teaches and if it does not die, no fruit comes out of it. The seed is dying to give a new life and fruits. It is dying itself to what it was previously and the symbol of its new life

is the fruit it brings forth and fruit is the sign which declares to the world that the plant/tree is very much alive. If there is no fruit, the tree is dead in itself though its leaves may still be green.

The same applies to us Christians, if we bear fruits of virtue, it is a sign that we truly live in Christ and if we do not, we are dead to Christ even if our body flourishes. If we die to sins, we will bring forth Spiritual fruits in abundance which means we live in Christ forever. If we live for sins, we will die to Christ as we will be detached from Christ forever.

Therefore, Christians can die (to sins) to live (for Christ) instead of living (for sins) to die for ever. Let us die to live when we prepare for the precious birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.



Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

First Consecrated Church in Ireland dedicated to Sts. Kuriakose and Yulithi

A historic milestone for the Diocese took place on 22,23 November 2024 as the Church in Tiperrary, Ireland was consecrated and dedicated to the name of patron Saints Kuriakose and Yulithy his mother. The Consecration Service was led by Secretary of the Holy Episcopal Synod and Metropolitan of the Diocese of Niranam His Eminence Dr. Yuhanon Mar Chrysostamos along with Diocesan Metropolitan His Eminence Abraham Mar Stephanos. Several priests, including Diocesan Secretary Fr. Varghese Mathew participated in the services. The Harmony Choir from Cork, under the leadership of Fr. Eldo P. Varghese, enriched the service with hymns. Parish Vicar Fr. Mathew K. Mathew, along with Trustee Mr. Binu N. Thomas, Secretary Mrs. Siby Thomas, and conveners Mr. Pradeep Chacko and Mr. Abraham Varghese, played pivotal roles in organizing the event. Faithful from across Ireland gathered to witness and partake in the sacred occasion.



Sunday School Annual Conference (Irish Region) held at Waterford

The 2024 OSSAE Ireland Zone Annual Conference for Students and Teachers was held on Monday 28 October 2024 hosted by the St. Gregorios IOC Waterford. The theme for the Conference was based on 1 Peter 1:4 "Living in the Light of our Eternal Inheritance".

Metropolitan HE Abraham Mar Stephanos, who inaugurated the event, encouraged all by reminding that even if truth gives us problems at times, it will come the greatest blessings. Following the Plenary Session, break-out sessions were held for teachers and students over ages 10 and under ages 10.

The event concluded with cultural events including choral singing, a dance by the Lucan St. Marys Sunday School, skit by Dublin St. Thomas Sunday School and the Catholicate Mangala Gaanam by the students and teachers of the Waterford St Gregorios Sunday School. OSSAE Diocesan Vice President Fr. Anoop Malayil Abraham gave leadership for the event along with Waterford IOC Vicar Fr Anu George.



MESTHOOSO Choir Competition held at Leicester

The third edition of the Mesthooso Choir Competition hosted by the Leicester St. George Indian Orthodox Church, held as a tribute to memory of former Metropolitan Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios was held at Leicester on 30 November 2024. The event was inaugurated by Diocesan Metropolitan HE Abraham Mar Stephanos and was attended by Rt. Revd. Saju Muthalaly (Bishop of Loughborough, Church of England). Fr. Josen John (Vicar, St. George IOC Leicester) along with Committee members gave leadership in organising the grand event.

St. George IOC Manchester won the first place while St. Dionysious IOC Northampton won second and St. Stephens IOC Colchester was awarded third positions. St Peter's & St Paul's IOC East Kent came fourth, while St. Stephens IOC Birmingham and St. Behanans IOC Hereford came fifth. The Best Attire award was given to St. George IOC City of London and the Rising Youngsters was awarded to St Paul's and St Peter's East Kent.





Lueven (Belgium) St. James the Apostle Indian Orthodox Congregation hosts Catholic group from Geel



St. Thomas IOC Hemel Hempstead and St. George IOC City of London participate in Ecumenical Prayer Service held at St. Yeghiche Armenian Church South Kensington



Fr. Mobin Varghese (St. Gregorios IOC Southend-on-Sea) leads worship and talk session at Southend High School for Boys



Indian Ambassador to Ireland HE Akhilesh Mishra welcomes representatives from the Dublin St. Thomas IOC



St George Prayer Group initiated at St. Lukes IOC North Yorkshire



GLOW Children's Conference South Africa St. Thomas IOC



OVBS Mansfield St. Marys IOC



OVBS Stoke-on-Trent St. John the Baptist IOC



OVBS Woking St. Stephens IOC



OVBS Preston St. George IOC



OVBS Newcastle St. Thomas IOC



DATES TO NOTE — DECEMBER 2024

- 01** (Sunday) - Sunday commemorating St. Mary's visit to Elizabeth
25 Day Fast commences
- 03** (Tuesday) - 52nd Memorial of Metropolitan Thoma Mar Dionysius (Pathanapuram)
- 06** (Friday) - Commemoration of St. Nicholas Bishop of Myra (Christmas Father)
- 08** (Sunday) - Sunday commemorating the birth of St. John The Baptist
49th Memorial of Catholicos HH Baselios Augen I (Catholicate Aramana)
- 09** (Monday) - 12th Memorial of Metropolitan Mathews Mar Barnabas (Valayanchirangara)
- 10** (Tuesday) - Commemoration of St. Behanan and his sister Sarah
Commemoration of Philexinos of Mabugh
- 13** (Friday) - 34th Memorial of Metropolitan Daniel Mar Philexinos (Basil Aramana)
- 14** (Saturday) - 107th Memorial of Metropolitan Paulose Mar Coorilos (Pampady)
- 15** (Sunday) - Sunday of the Revelation to Joseph
- 17** (Tuesday) - 96th Memorial of Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese I (Vallikkattu Dayara)
- 18** (Wednesday) - Commemoration of St. Thomas the Apostle (The day he was stabbed)
- 20** (Friday) - Commemoration of St. Ignatius Nurno (The fiery one)
- 21** (Saturday) - Martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle of India
- 22** (Sunday) - Sunday before the Feast of Nativity
- 25** (Wednesday) - Feast of Nativity (Yeldo Perunnal / Christmas)
- 26** (Thursday) - Feast of Glorification of St. Mary the Mother of God
- 27** (Friday) - Feast of Holy Infants (Innocents)
- 29** (Sunday) - 1st Sunday after the Feast of Nativity



THE HOLY INNOCENTS
INDIAN ORTHODOX PILGRIMAGE CHURCH
SOUTH WALES




**ശിശുസഹനമാരുടെ
ഓർമ്മപരുന്നൾ**

2024 ഡിസംബർ 26,27 (വ്യാഴം,വെള്ളി)

സന്ധ്യ നമസ്കാരം
വിശുദ്ധ മുന്നിന്ദേൽ കുർബ്ബാന
(പ്രദക്ഷിണം
നേർച്ച)

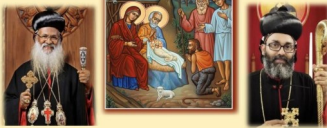
യൂറോപ്പ്, യൂറോപ്പ്, ആഫ്രിക്ക ഭദ്രാസനത്തിലെ
പ്രഥമ തീർത്ഥാടന ദേവാലയം




MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF UK EUROPE AND AFRICA
MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH PRAYER GROUP ASSOCIATION (MOCPA)

**WEEK OF EVENING PRAYER
& BIBLE STUDY**

From 02 December - 06 December 2024
Theme: Witnessing Christ in the Family
(Psalm 128: 1-4)



Offering our deepest condolences
and heartfelt prayers
that the Almighty receive her
in heavenly glories.



Ponnamma Pappachan (79)
Kuzhiyath - Adoor
Mother of Dr. Ajay Mathew (Canterbury)



DIOCESE OF UK EUROPE AND AFRICA
MAZMURO SCHOOL OF LITURGICAL MUSIC
(Affiliated to Sruti School of Liturgical Music, Kottayam)

COURSE OUTLINE

-  SHEEMA NAMASKARAM SANDHYA & SOOTHARA
-  PERUNAL SHUSHROOSHAKRAMAM
-  KOODASHA KRAMAM
-  FUNERAL SERVICES

Classes Commencing in January 2025
mazmuro@indianorthodoxuk.org



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