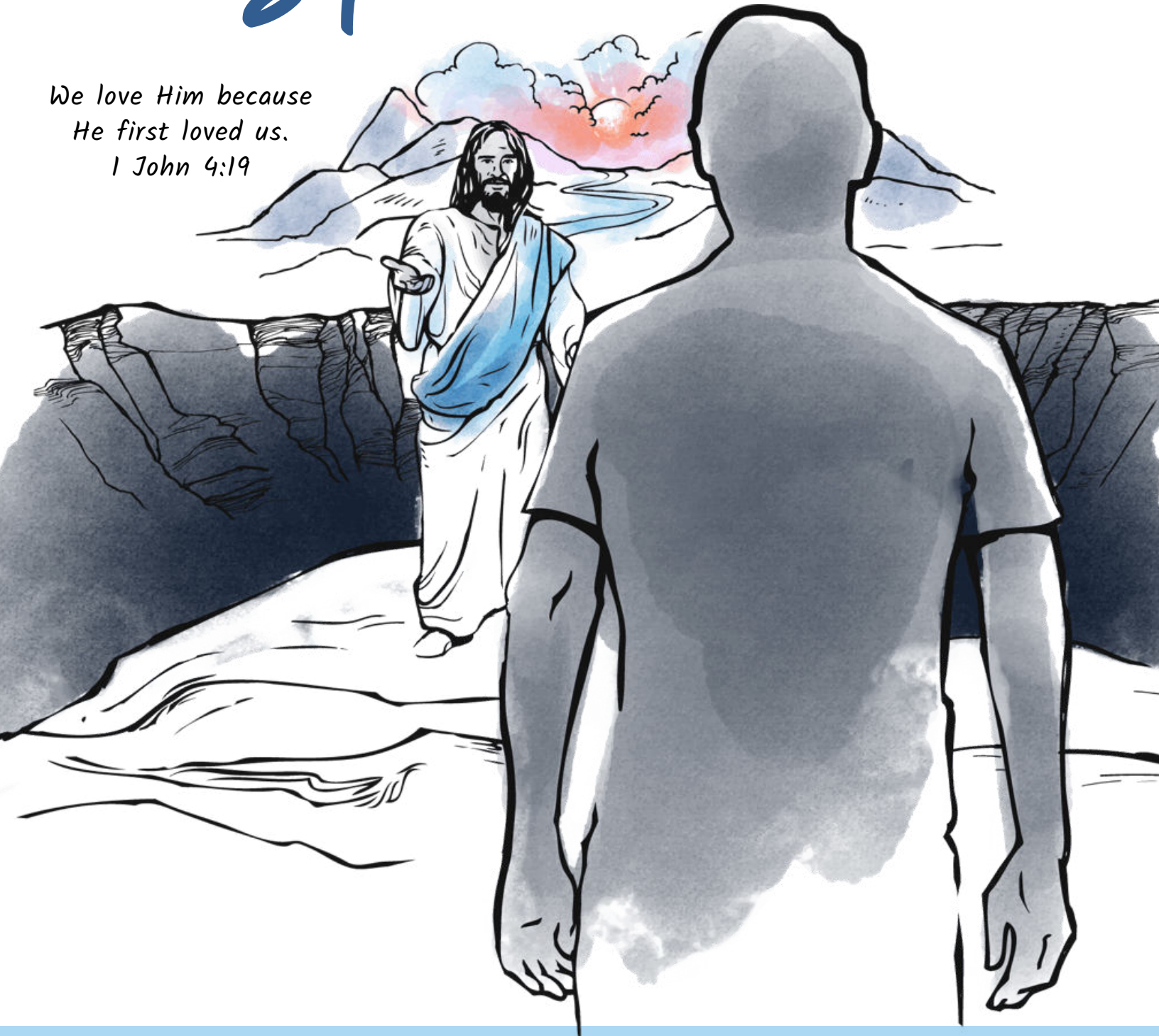


The *Stream* Newsletter

*We love Him because
He first loved us.
1 John 4:19*



Journey

through this issue

02

Thirumeni's Message

His Grace Thomas Mar Ivanios

03 - 04

Praying for the Departed

Rev. Fr. Shawn Thomas, SS Vice Director of Midwest- Detroit

05 - 06

Principal Profiles

Regional Coordinator and Principals of the South Region, Dallas

07 - 15

CWE

Children's work from South Region, Dallas

16 - 17

Curriculum Corner

Understanding the Talmido Curriculum

18 - 26

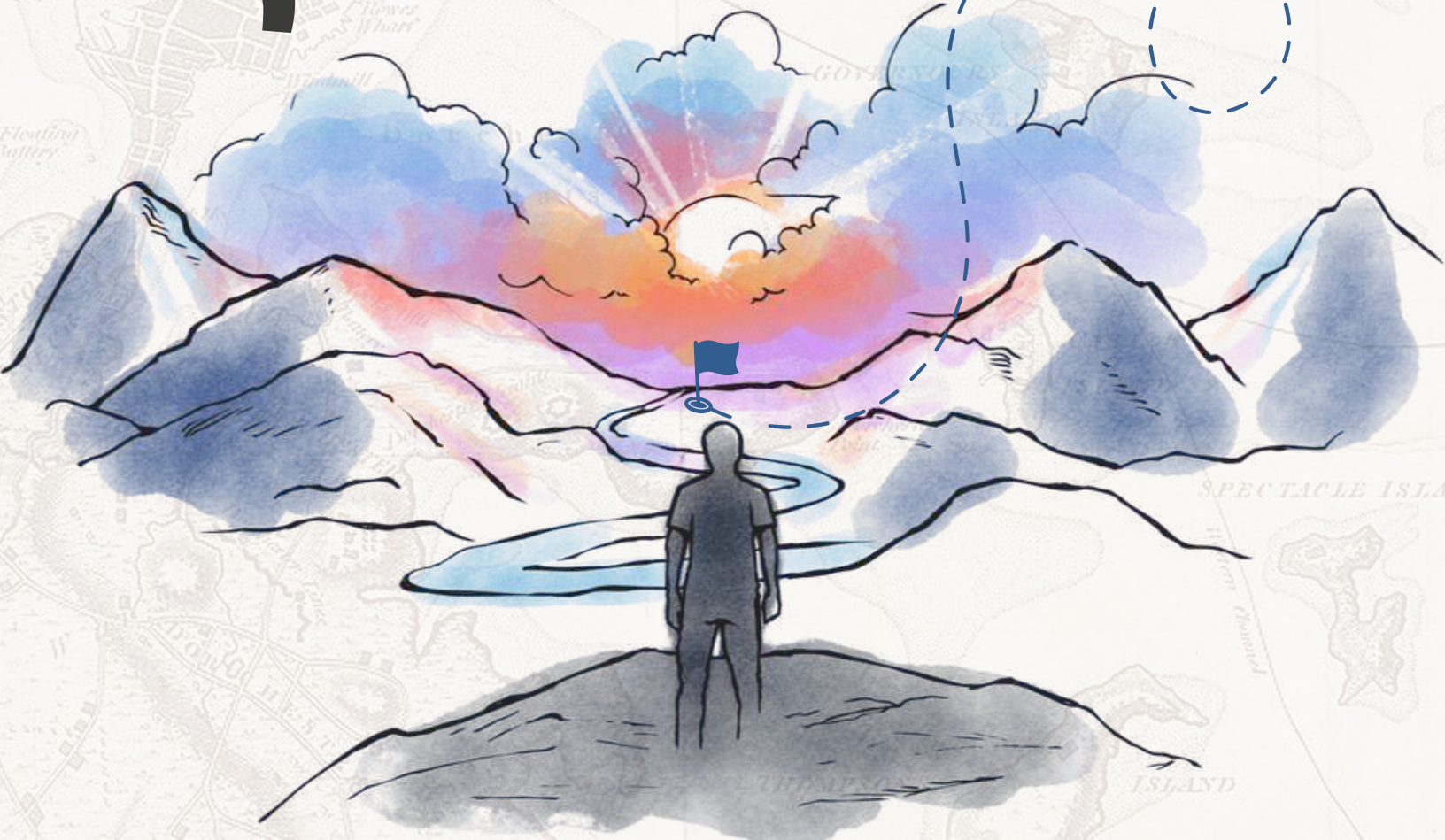
Sunday School Scene

Sunday School events around the diocese

27

Upcoming Events

What's next?





Special Lenten Menu

Food That Does not Perish



Metropolitan Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios

Our Dearly Beloved Children,

The time of fasting and feasting is near! As we approach the Great Lent that commences on February 12, the entire Church rejoices. The journey of lent finds its culmination in the joyous celebration of Easter Sunday, and its message in certainty, the victory of life over death. But this journey like any other trip or expedition requires preparation and homework. This preparation is not only for the body but also, more importantly, for the soul. On this Great Lent, I would require, my beloved children and the parents, to focus on two vital features of spirituality. In practice, it consists of, prayer, and fasting. Both of these together can make one's life more meaningful and closer at heart with Jesus Christ.

Christ established the link with his Father through prayer. As it is written in Hebrews 5:7. "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him [Father] who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence." Thus likewise, He also exhorts us to "watch and pray" (Mathew 26:41). One important aspect of prayer is to use our 'heart' rather than our mind and physical body. The heart has a superior liturgical role that functions as an altar inside the sanctuary of the Church constituted by the body. That is why the holy father Shemoun Taybuthaeh (the Graceful) gives us a significant message, "Prayer in which the body does not toil using the heart, and the heart using the mind, together with the intellect and the intelligence all gathered together in deep-felt groaning, but where instead prayer is just allowed to float across the heart, such prayer you should realize is just a 'miscarriage,' for while you are praying if your mind is drawing you away to some other business that you are going to see after praying, in such a case you have not yet managed to pray in a unified manner." This is a powerful message implying to pray properly. Our acts of worship require our sincerity and faithfulness. Let us not try to fool ourselves or the God whom we worship. If we make our hearts and minds as one, then the fruit of prayer is received too. Thus, my beloved children you shall learn to pray genuinely at all times.

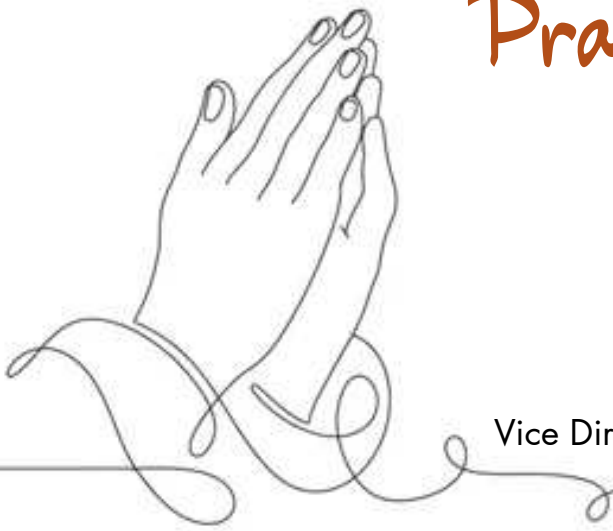
While prayer is the first step to godliness, fasting is the prolific human aspect of purification and sanctification. It is the central feature that quells all our bodily and spiritual desires. Fasting, as our church fathers teach, is the "cure for the first ulcer of the fall due to disobedience to the first commandment, 'You shall not eat from this tree (Gen 2:17)." Christ the celestial Adam practiced fasting and became victorious what the terrestrial Adam failed to do so. Christ took up the combat of Adam by fasting and defeated Satan.

Moses fasted for forty days at Mount Sinai and became shining and perfect. Elijah the illustrious prophet too fasted forty days and received the great revelation. The city of Nineveh fasted for forty days and received salvation. Ezekiel laid himself down on one side for forty days on account of the offenses of the sons of his people. Finally, the fasting of our Lord is itself a teacher on how proper it is to remain in endurance even when temptation would meet it. Listen! my children carefully, to the words of the Holy Jacob of Sarug, when he says how Moses teaches us that the elders of Israel when they were invited to Mount Sinai for a banquet without bread and wine, there burst out a more delightful food and drink as it is written, "They beheld God and they ate and they drank," (Exodus 24:11) so that it is very clear that, in this world, there is nourishment and joy without food and water, and that fasting nourishes the soul when it gazes at the Lord far more than a royal table with many delicious dishes. We would not require food and water but only God. And in this Great Lent let us nourish our hearts and minds with God and not with the food that perishes.

We wish you all a blessed Great Lent and that the power and riches of prayer and fasting help and guide you to Christ on the Resurrection day.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of the Only-Begotten Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Praying for the Departed



Fr. Shawn Thomas

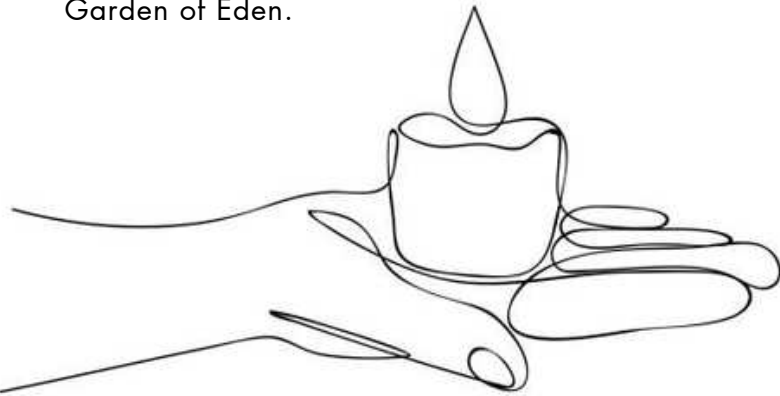
St. Thomas

Detroit, MI

Vice Director, Midwest Region, Detroit

Christ is risen! This is a greeting that we use when we see other people during the Paschal period, which are the 50 days after the Resurrection of the Lord. But why do we say this? What does it mean for us that Christ is risen? And, specifically, what does it mean for the faithful departed who have already left this world?

The Resurrection of Christ is the single most important event in human history. For all of history, our lives, our existence is given meaning by Christ's resurrection. St Paul strongly rebukes those who doubt the resurrection in I Corinthians 15 by saying, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is from which our entire faith and the Church stems from. It is for this reason that St. Ephrem the Syrian refers to the Cross at the Tree of Life that was hidden in the Garden of Eden.



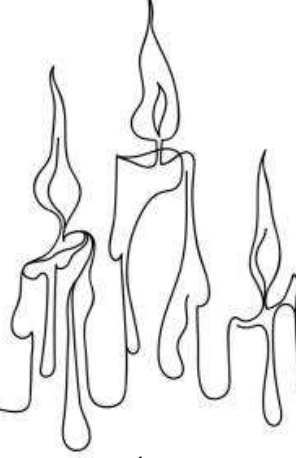
Since the Resurrection is the source from which our faith starts, then everything in Christianity begins and ends with the Passion of the Lord. This also includes prayers for the departed. In the Holy Church, we rarely refer to those who have died as dead. Instead, in the prayers of the Church, the dead are known as the departed, those who have left this world for another, or they are known as asleep, in reference to how Christ describes the young girl who had passed away in the Gospels. Either way, this description is actually, and most importantly, a reference to the Resurrection of Christ.

When Jesus died, He being both man and God, entered into death for our sake. As St Gregory of Nazianzus wrote, "What is not assumed is not redeemed." The Word of God had to take on all of humanity, all our temptations, all of our struggles, and he overcame it all. But the final enemy was death, and if He did not also take on death, then none of what he did would be worth it. Death, the final enemy, was destroyed through Christ's death. Because God, who is Life, entered death, death could no longer hold it in its shackles, and the Word of God destroyed its hold over humanity through His glorious Resurrection.

By destroying Death, we now have hope that our earthly deaths are not the end of our stories. Rather, in many ways, they are only the beginning. In Nicene Creed, we reflect St Paul's statements in I Corinthians 15 by professing that we believe in the resurrection of the dead. This is only even possible because those who have died, especially those who have died in Christ have hope that they can live in eternity with Him.

Continued...

Praying for the Departed



Fr. Shawn Thomas



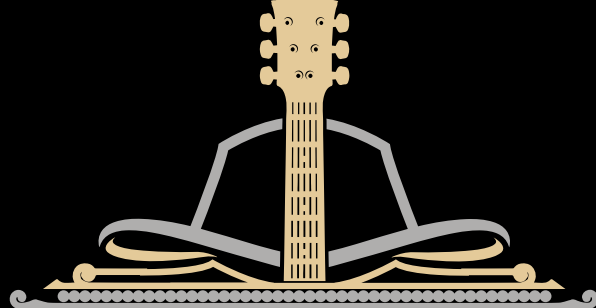
This destruction of death is also the reason that we pray for our departed loved ones. Many people, even some Christians, say that praying for the dead is useless and even harmful. But this is simply not true. We see in 2 Maccabees 12 that Judas Maccabeus, a priest and the leader of the Jewish revolts against the Greeks, offered prayers for those who died in battle and for his soldiers who had sinned by turning to idolatry. It says in verse 45 that “he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.” This shows us that this ancient Jewish community believed in the resurrection of the dead and in a Judgment post-death.

Therefore, Judas, as the priest and leader of the community, felt that it was his responsibility to pray for the forgiveness of the sins of those who had died in battle and those who had fallen away from God. Our prayers and, especially, the prayers of righteous men and women have an effect on God, who exists outside of time and space. We can look to 2 more Scriptural examples to prove this. In the book of Exodus, when Moses returns from the top of Mt Sinai with the Law, he finds that the Israelites have begun worshipping a golden calf. God is enraged at this sight and is filled with such an immense anger that Moses begins to worry that God will consume them in his wrath. But Moses, being a righteous man before God, intercedes on their behalf, begging God to show mercy on them and asking Him to remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were faithful to Him. Because of Moses’ prayer and because of the righteousness of the 3 patriarchs, it says in Exodus 32:14, “And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people.”

Finally, in the book of Tobit, when the Archangel Raphael reveals his identity to Tobit and Tobias, he says to them in Tobit 12:12, “when you and your daughter-in-law Sarah prayed, I brought your prayer before the Holy One; and when you buried the dead, I was likewise present with you.” The Archangel tells Tobit and Tobias that he was present with them when they buried their dead and that he personally delivered their prayers before the Almighty God, once again showing that those outside of our temporal life can hear our prayers and bring them before God.

But again, none of this matters or is possible without the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What makes it possible for us to pray for our departed, ultimately, is not some metaphysical hypothesis or state, but the love of Christ. The Word of God took flesh for one reason, and that was to die, so that He could defeat the final enemy and give eternal life to all of humanity. Only pure, sacrificial love could do such a thing, and only God could do it. Thus, now as Christians, that thing that binds us all together is the same that gave us salvation in the first place – the love of our Lord and God. And this is why St Paul says in one of his strongest statements of all his letters, “For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39). If absolutely can nothing separate us from the love of God, then nothing can separate us from our loved ones who we are eternally connected to us through the love of Jesus Christ.

Our relationships with our loved ones, especially those who have died, are defined through our love for Christ. It is now Christ who connects us to each other. As a result, we have an obligation to pray for those who we are connected to through Jesus. And this connection doesn’t simply go away when somebody passes away. It remains the same because the love of God remains the same yesterday, today, and forever.



DALLAS REGION



Bobby Mathew

St George
Irving, TX
Principal for 5 years

The best thing about serving as a Sunday School principal is the opportunity to foster a supportive and nurturing environment where students can grow spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally. My vision for Sunday School revolves around creating a vibrant community that promotes inclusivity, empowering students to explore their faith and cultivate a strong sense of compassion and service towards others. I envision the Sunday school teachers to have a very close personal relationship with each child by which they can empower their relationship with God. Ultimately, I aim to inspire a love for learning and a deep connection to their faith that will guide them throughout their lives.

Jiji Abraham

St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Farmers Branch
Dallas, TX

8 + years as Regional Coordinator

"I do it for the children."



Principal Profiles

Reena John

St. Thomas
Dallas, TX
Principal for 3 years

My vision for our Sunday School is to bring the children closer together for one common purpose: to glorify God!

It has been wonderful to see relationships form amongst the children especially once we started again in-person since Covid.



Paul Paret

St. Thomas
Denver, Colorado
Principal for 1 year



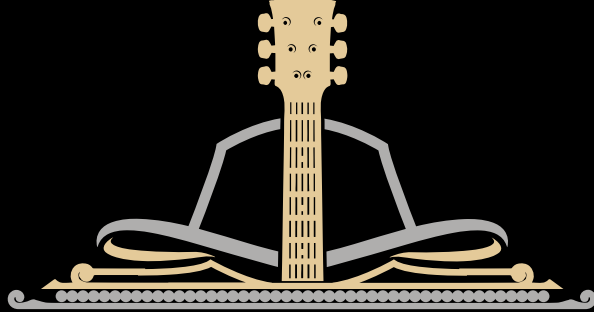
Johncy George

St. Gregorios
Garland, TX
Principal for 2 years

The best thing about serving as SS principal is being able to witness the children's growth in the Orthodox Faith



DALLAS, TEXAS



DALLAS REGION



Sudhin Chandy Varghese

St. Mary's
Dallas, TX
Principal for 2 years

Before becoming Principal, I was teaching Sunday School to 6th graders. My home parish is St. Peter Orthodox Church, Pariyaram, Kottayam, India. Looking back on my time as Principal and a Sunday School teacher, I believe the true measure of success is in how we inspire and guide the next generation. My aim has always been to lead by example, creating a legacy of education, faith, and community service. We're not just teaching students; we're nurturing future leaders, thinkers, and believers. It's a responsibility I cherish deeply.

Jiju John

St. Mary's Valiyapally
Farmers Branch, Dallas, TX

My goal is to foster a deep connection to God among the children in our faith. I aim to create a space where they feel encouraged to ask questions and delve into the orthodox teachings as the authentic expression of worship. It's important to instill in them moral values that align with our faith. By providing a nurturing environment, we can support their spiritual journey and facilitate their growth in faith.



Gibson Mammen

St. James
Dallas, TX
Principal for 2 years

The best thing about Sunday School is seeing the joy in the kids' faces.



Smitha Kurian

St. Thomas
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Principal for 7 years

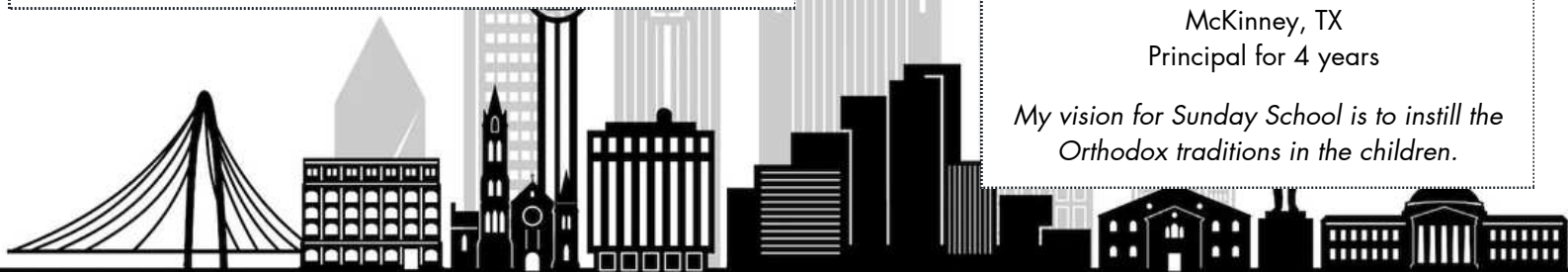
My vision is to help our children see the application of the Word of God in their own lives. I want to instill in them the habit of reading the Word of God daily and worshipping regularly. I love it when students who have graduated from our Sunday School come back to visit and tell us how we've made an impact on them!



George Samuel

St. Paul
McKinney, TX
Principal for 4 years

My vision for Sunday School is to instill the Orthodox traditions in the children.



DALLAS, TEXAS



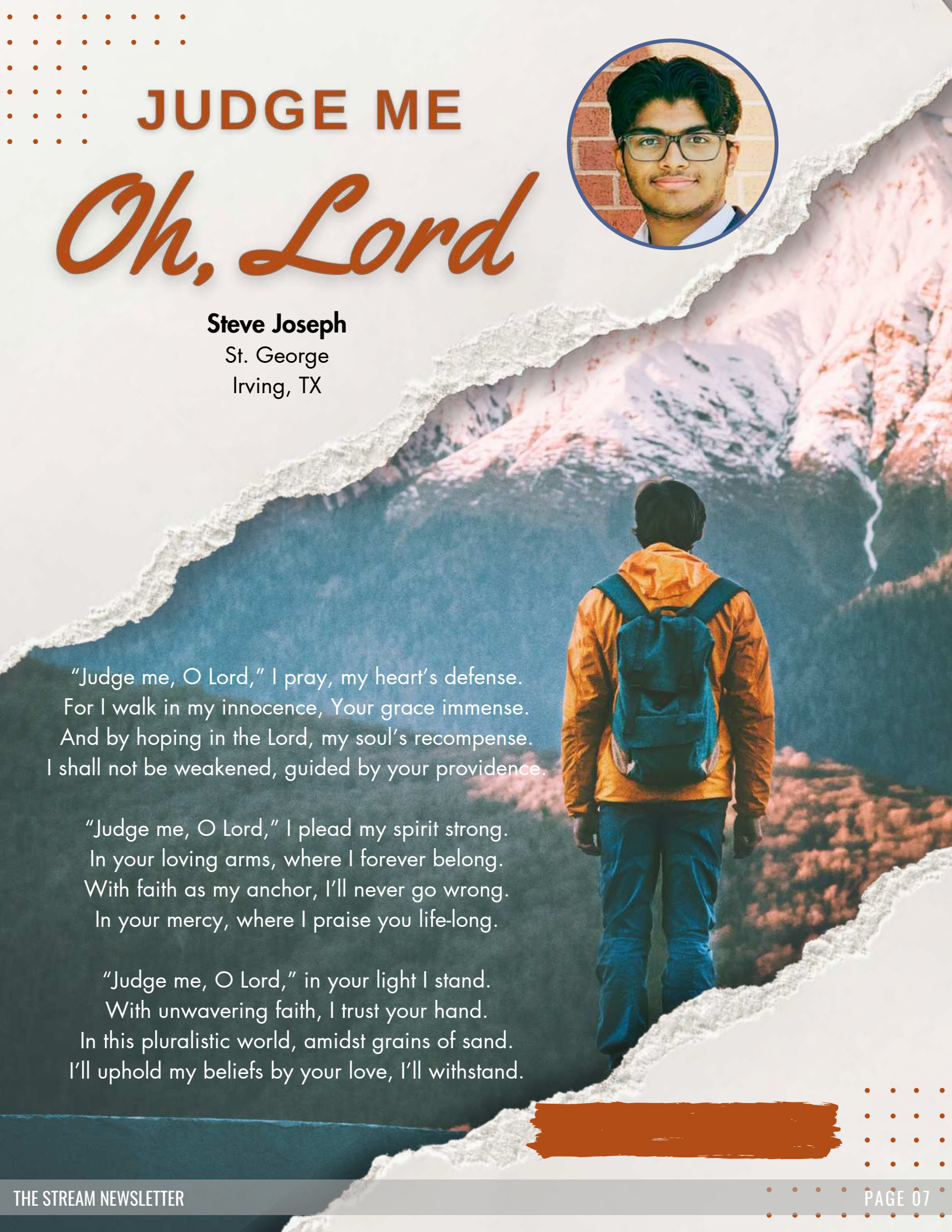
JUDGE ME

Oh, Lord



Steve Joseph

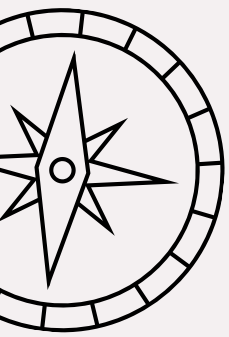
St. George
Irving, TX



"Judge me, O Lord," I pray, my heart's defense.
For I walk in my innocence, Your grace immense.
And by hoping in the Lord, my soul's recompense.
I shall not be weakened, guided by your providence.

"Judge me, O Lord," I plead my spirit strong.
In your loving arms, where I forever belong.
With faith as my anchor, I'll never go wrong.
In your mercy, where I praise you life-long.

"Judge me, O Lord," in your light I stand.
With unwavering faith, I trust your hand.
In this pluralistic world, amidst grains of sand.
I'll uphold my beliefs by your love, I'll withstand.



Where will Your Journey Take You?



Joanna Koduvath
St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX

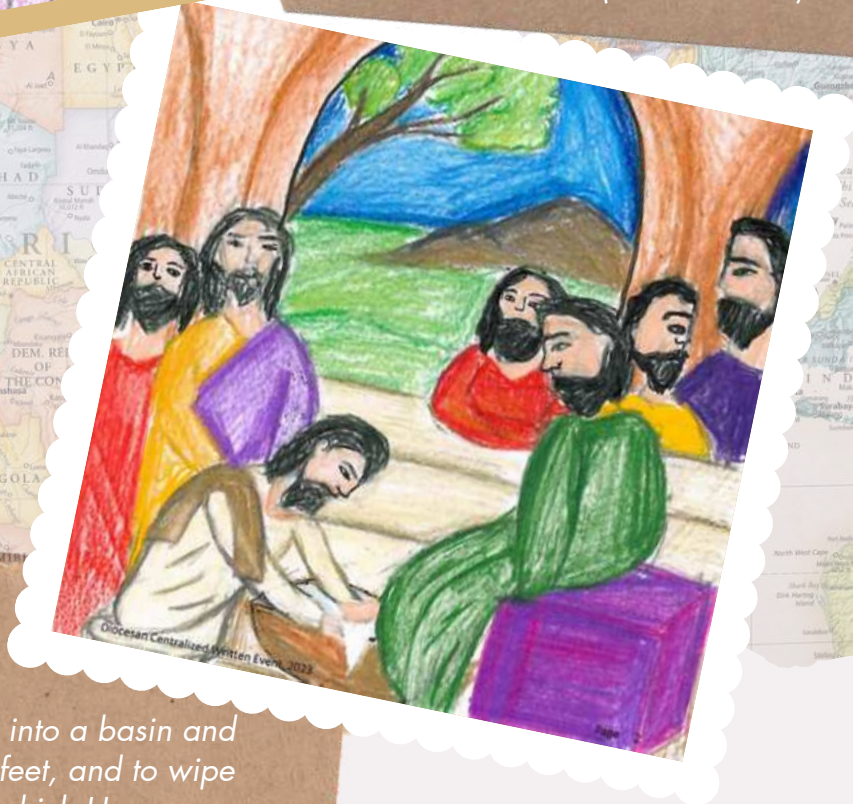


*"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."
(St. Luke 10:40)*

Let's go!



Neha Thomas
St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX



*"After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."
(St. John 13:5)*



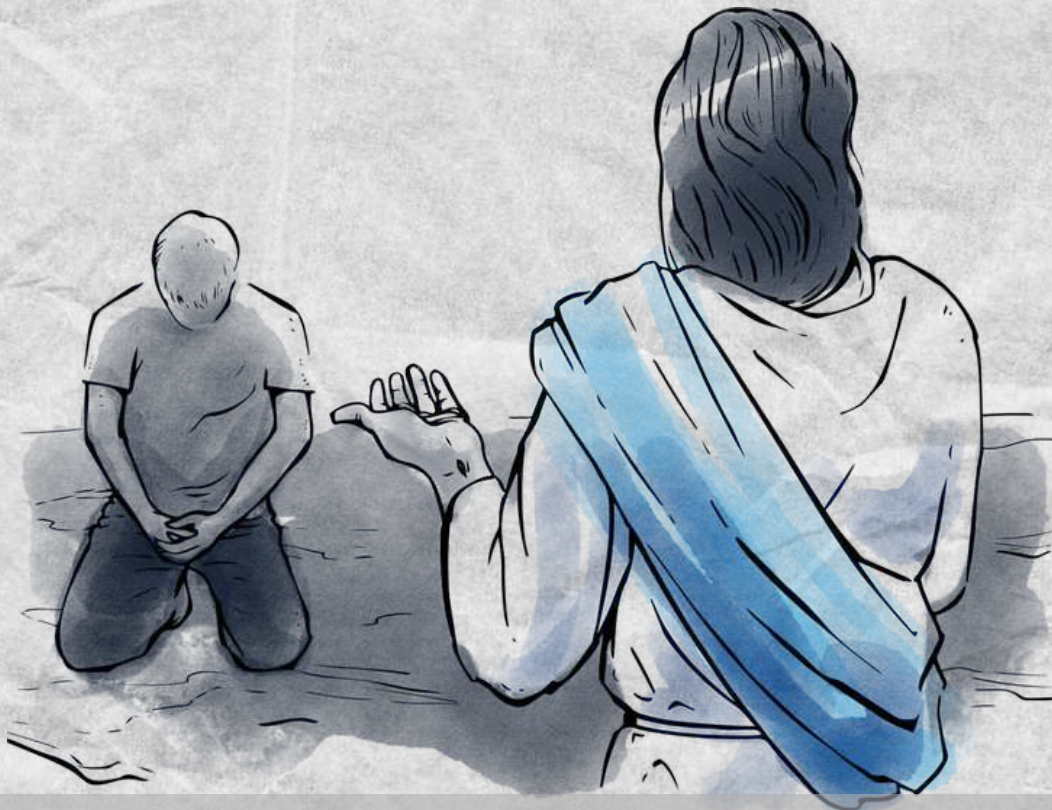
You Know Me

Niya Thomas

St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX

*"O Lord you test me and know me" I pray
In the light of your wisdom, I find my way
Through trials and tribulations, your love does gleam
In the depths of my heart, you know every dream*

*You see every thought, every fear, every delight
In your presence, I find solace in the darkest of nights
With your knowing touch, my spirit takes flight
In your loving embrace, all is made right.*



Blessed are those...

Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
Their steps are guided by His word.
Their paths are lit with His great light,
Their hearts are filled with delight.

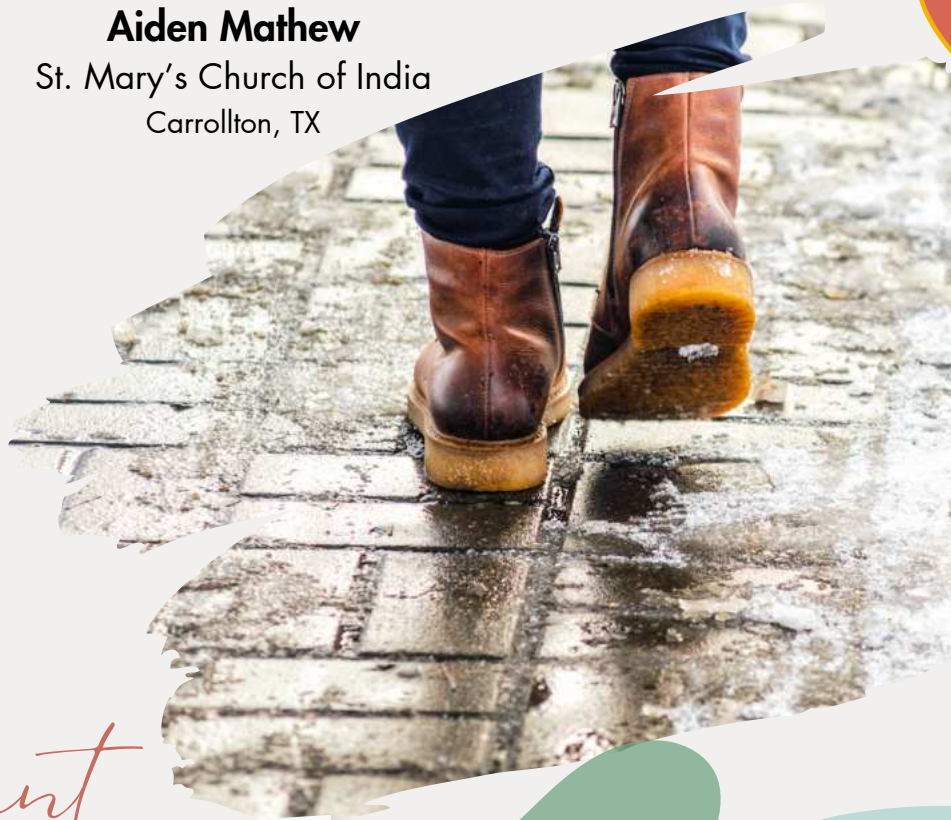
Their days are marked with peace & grace,
Their lives are filled with His embrace.
In His love they find their strength,
In His mercy they find their length.

So let us follow their footsteps,
and seek to fear the Lord, as they do.
For in His fear we find our way,
and in His love we find our stay.

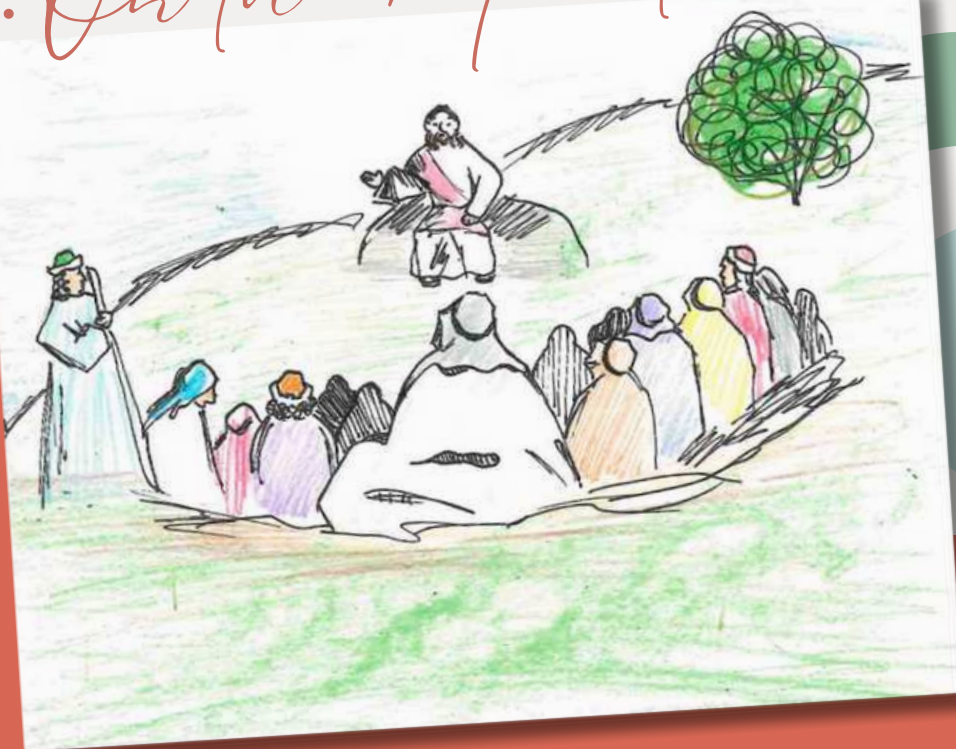


Aiden Mathew

St. Mary's Church of India
Carrollton, TX



On the Mount



Isabelle Abraham

St. Gregorios
Garland, TX

*"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying."
(St. Matthew 5:1-2 OSB)*

What
will we see?

God's Promise
to Noah



Nivin Thomas
St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX



Daniel in the
Lion's Den



Amelia George
St. Paul
McKinney, TX



Hear Me

Thus far I did come,
Burdened with my pain,
Nor could I find relief,
From my grief within.



Diya Arun
St. Paul's
McKinney, TX

He heard my voice,
By grace my grief was severed,
Now my burden falls.
From my back forever.

The shadow of a wooden cross,
A rising Son displayed.
In that place and on that day,
An ancient debt was paid.

Love deep and wide and full and free,
Love precious and apart.
Love stained with crimson hues and tears,
Has entered human *hearts.*



Reuben Jacob
St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX

The Psalmist

Judge me, O Lord, the psalmist did implore
As I walk in innocence forever more
With steadfast hope in you, I firmly stand
Guided by your loving gracious hand

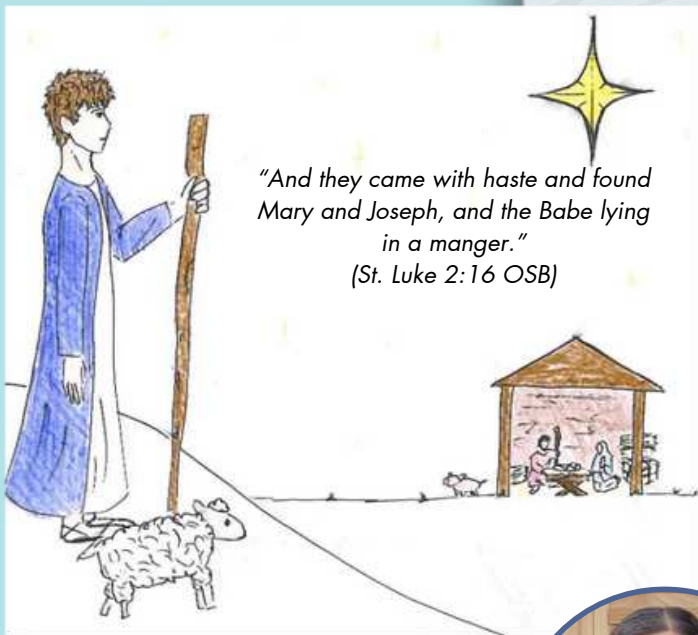
In this world of trials, amidst its stride
I seek your guidance O source of life
With each step I take, I trust in your way
For in your presence, darkness turn to day

With hearts unwavering, we shall not wane
Your strength O Lord shall banish every pain
In innocence, we find our refuge sure
In your embrace, our spirits rest secure

Though storms may rage and trials may abound
In your love, sweet solace is found
No weakness shall consume our fervent soul
For in your grace, we find our heart made whole

Judge me O Lord, we call upon your name
For in your mercy, we are not the same
In innocence we find our truest worth
As we walk with you upon this sacred earth

With hope in you our spirits shall not tire
For your love, our hearts shall catch on fire
So judge me O Lord, we humbly pray
Guide us, protect us, lead us every day



Olivia Mathew
St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX

offerings of Cain and Abel



Angela Gabriel
St. Mary's Church of India
Carrollton, TX



BIBLE QUIZ WINNERS



Ashlyn Mathew

Group 2

St. Mary's Church of India
Carrollton, TX



Samuel Abraham

Group 3

St. Paul
McKinney, TX



Joshua Bobby

Group 4

St. George
Irving, TX



Esther Mathew

Group 4

St. Paul
McKinney, TX



Jayden Joseph

Group 5

St. Mary's, Valiyapally
Dallas, TX



Naomi Liz Mathew

Group 5

St. Paul
McKinney, TX



Anvia Oommen

Group 6

St. Paul
McKinney, TX



Sarah George

Group 7

St. Gregorios
Garland, TX

CURRICULUM

CORNER

OCTOBER
EDITION

WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW?

Sunday School teachers share our Faith with the children in our class to help them grow towards Christ. He is the focus of all our efforts and the source of strength for all our struggles.

The best model of the classroom is found in the Gospel of Luke, when the disciples St. Luke and St. Cleopas were walking away from Jerusalem after the death of our Lord on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). The risen Christ joined them on their journey but hid His True Self from their eyes, and He listened as they retold the events of what happened.

What are you discussing?



The prompt from Christ began the dialogue - "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" (v17). After listening to what they had witnessed and understood, He then explained "what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (v27).

This simple dialogue gives insight to the simple model at the heart of our teaching approach. We literally see Christ meeting His disciples where they were, and then prompting them to share what they understood before teaching.



CURRICULUM CORNER

WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW?



Tell your partner three things you know about...

Of course we are not born with Divine Knowledge! Therefore our planning and preparation is crucial for a successful engagement with our children in our classroom. But “teaching” is truly an engagement to hear from our children what they’ve understood and then respond by sharing our Faith.

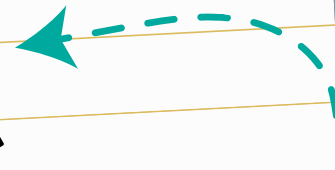
What’s most profound is that it was during the breaking of the bread (v30) that the disciples truly understood!

For Orthodox Christians, it is fully understood and believed that this is the Holy Qurbana, where Christ unveils and gives Himself to us. If our children have their hearts burning for Christ (v32) such as the disciples during their walk on the road to Emmaus, they will see Christ during Holy Qurbana.

Even in secular education, it is a well known fact that rote memorization and written examinations are not effective ways to teach and assess. This is even more the case in Sunday School when our goal is to bring our children closer to Christ through Holy Qurbana and the life of the Church. Interactive engagements and utilizing other more effective measures will excite our children, and we must trust that God will do the rest!

Recommended Reflection: “Exams? Examining St. Euphrosynos”
by Elissa Bjeletich (“Raising Saints” podcast)

www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/raisingsaints/exams_examining_st._euphrosynos



EXHIBITION

Christo Kizhakkedathu

10th Grade

St. Mary's

Calgary, Alberta, CANADA

In Sunday school, we are exploring the significance of the Theotokos, the God-bearer, and how her unwavering obedience to God has played a pivotal role in our salvation from sin. Through her obedience, she serves as a bridge connecting us to God, illustrating the profound connection between humanity and the divine.



The image is meant to be a representation of the burning bush. It is more of an abstract representation than a realistic one to invoke more feeling and emotion on the viewer.

Diya Roy
12th Grade
St. Mary's Valiyapally
Dallas, TX



LIFE IS ART



TASTE & SEE



Jacob Malaickal

6th Grade

St. Mary's Valiyapally

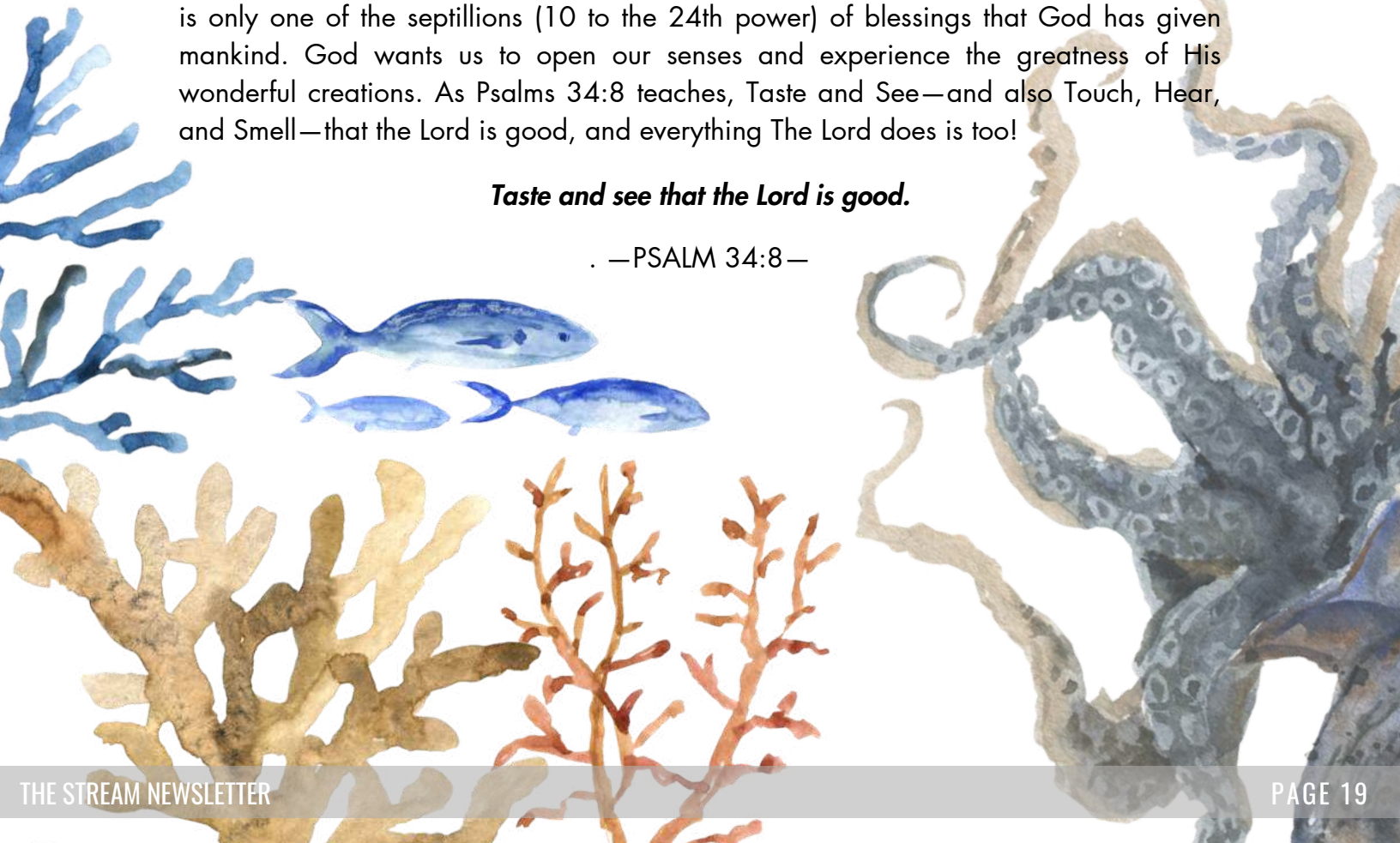
Dallas, TX

Taste, a funny word really. Every living thing tastes with their tongues. Or at least mostly. God created way more interesting animals than us humans. For example... an octopus tastes stuff with the suckers on its tentacles. Flies on the other hand, taste with their lips like us... but they take it a bit further and also taste food with their own feet! Butterflies and bees also taste with feet... but there is one that tops them all! It is called... a worm! An earthworm to be specific. It has taste buds all over the body and it crawls through the dirt. Most of us don't know the taste of dirt... MOST of us.. I'm looking at you, you know... 🙄🙄.

Anyways! All of these taste buds that we have are all part of God's plan for us. This sense of taste can help protect us by telling us if something is rotten or is plain bad. But God also gave us this to taste the wonderfulness of good food too! Right now, this very second.. I want you to pull up a picture of one of your favorite foods in your mind. That is only one of the septillions (10 to the 24th power) of blessings that God has given mankind. God wants us to open our senses and experience the greatness of His wonderful creations. As Psalms 34:8 teaches, Taste and See—and also Touch, Hear, and Smell—that the Lord is good, and everything The Lord does is too!

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

. —PSALM 34:8—



Church Consecration

Nathan Robson

6th Grade

St. Mary's
San Antonio, TX

St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church, San Antonio, Texas, was consecrated on Dec. 29th and 30, 2023 by H.G Dr Thomas Mar Ivanios, the Metropolitan of the South-West America Diocese with the assistance of our Vicar Sakhariah Ramban and other clergymen. The consecration was a significant milestone for our church.

As we reflect on our consecration, it reminds us of the very first temple that Solomon built. The Bible shows us that God's sovereign plan was to establish and build a church and bless many different people. When we look at the first Temple, we see Solomon's dedication of the Temple which was the model for the consecration of churches. 1 Kings 8:63 says Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the LORD: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So, the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the LORD. As Solomon dedicated the temple, he wished all the people would fully commit themselves to God's commands, and in 1 Kings 8:61 "And may your hearts be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time".

Consecration means 'to set apart or to renew.' As the Church is sanctified, we need to renew ourselves from within. Today we do not offer animal sacrifices, but our worship is the true offering. In Ezra chapter 6, we see the second temple is dedicated by Zerubbabel. Ezra 6:16 says the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the exiles— celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. As we consecrated our Church there is so much happiness, sense of belonging, and pride. Finally, 2 Chronicles 7:16 says, I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

As we enter our Church, may we remember the sovereign Lord is ever present with us. Jesus consecrated his life as a model for us, and we can too. Even as a child, he valued time spent in the temple. He immersed himself in the things of the Lord. He spent time with the Father. He knew that His mission was to do God's will. We should learn from this. We do not have to change the world by ourselves, but we need to be a part of the change. We should take responsibility for ourselves and make sure we are living a life consecrated to the Lord. We repent our sins, trust God, and live a Godly life.



December 2023



FEATURE FILM!

**ST. STEPHEN CHURCH SCHOOL
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

TALENT

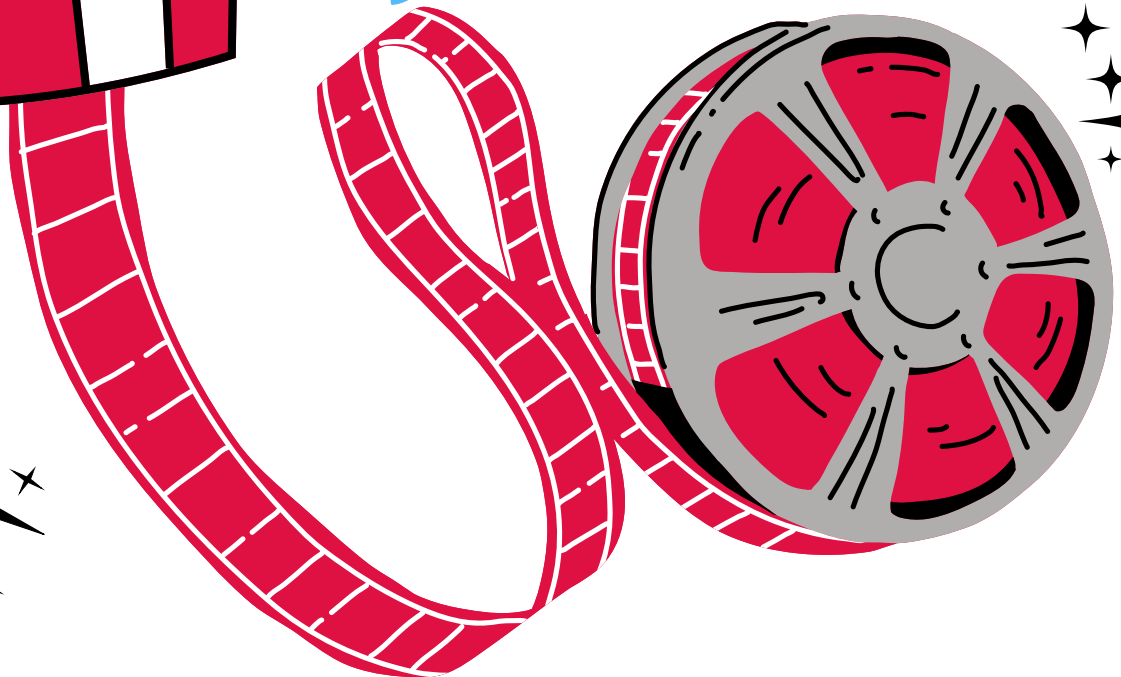
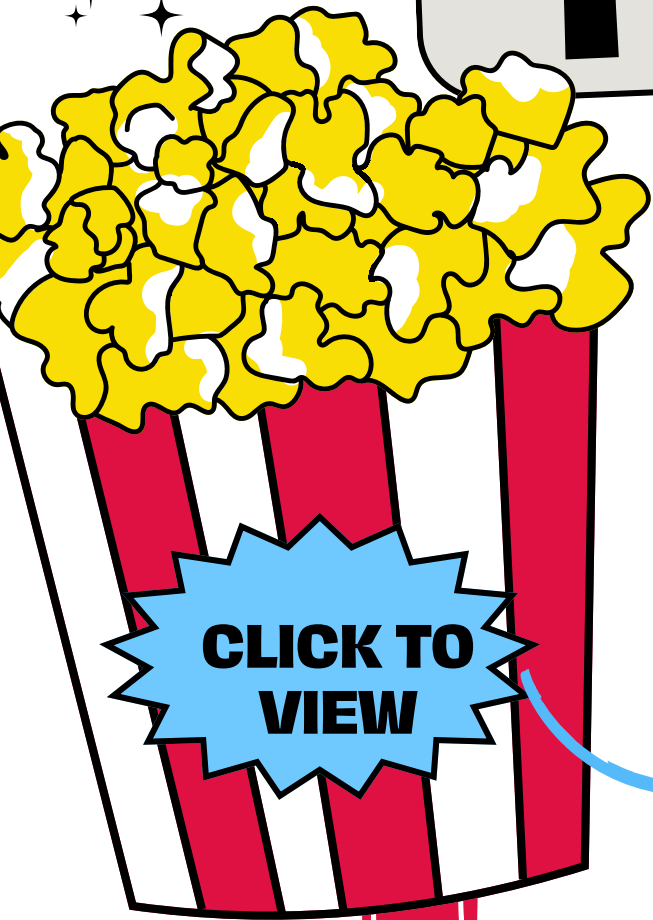
Night

Dazzling performances and vibrant energy filled the air at our church's Talent Night! Our talented children showcased a spectrum of creativity, making memories that will last a lifetime. A heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who made this magical evening possible.

#ChurchSchoolTalent #UnleashingCreativity
#GratefulVolunteers

**CLICK TO
VIEW**

St. Stephen Church School Talent Night



Sunday School Day

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church
Edmonton, Canada



December 2023



Binny Achen with Sunday School Teachers



December 2023

Christmas carols by
Sunday School children of
St. Gregorios, Edmonton.



Departed Priests Sunday

Allen Varghese

12th Grade
St. Gregorios
Austin, TX



Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit one true God Amen!

Respected Achen, dear parents and my dear brothers and sisters in Christ. We are blessed with two Sundays in between the 3 days lent and 50 days lent. As we approach the great lent, these two Sundays are dedicated to the reminiscence of our departed people. Therefore this Sunday we remember all our Spiritual Fathers who guide us in our spiritual journey. St. Paul reminds us "Remember your leaders, ('those who have gone before you') who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." (Heb.13.7). Lent, fasting and prayer are the source of energy for our spiritual fathers and they have revealed that the same will motivate and inspire us in fulfilling and accomplishing a complete journey of life.

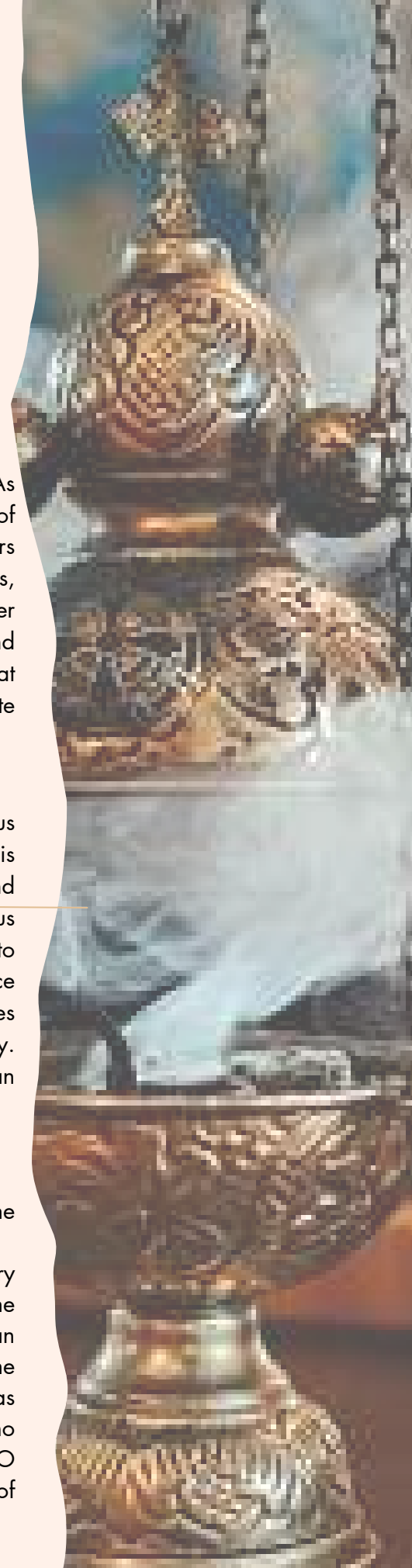
Gospel reading: St. Mathew. 24:42-51

This Gospel passage is the part of eschatological discourse (Second coming of Jesus Christ - Mt. 24 and 25) and it enlightens us on the characteristics and signs of His second coming. All the three Gospel readings of this Sunday (Evening, Morning and Qurbana) and the Pauline Epistle (I Thes. 4.11-5.11) reflects the teachings of Jesus pertaining to the second coming of Jesus Christ. These readings not only present to us the nature and conduct of a right servant of the Lord, but also play high relevance in remembering the day of our departed priests. This particular passage associates us to a servant who has been put in charge of the house while the master is away. We sing this unique passage in most of the Sundays in our liturgy (Yejamanavarumannerathu...). Two pertinent points to be noted here are:

1. Status of the Steward

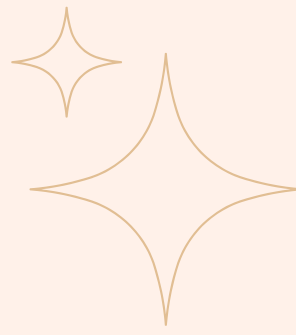
"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?" (Vs.45)

According to modern medicine, consumption of proper food at a proper time is very significant, thereby assuring us of good health and mental supremacy. Hence the steward, who provides the appropriate food at the right time, has a vital role in an individual's life. The Steward must also be acquainted with the condition of the individual (pertaining to any imminent illnesses or ailments). Priests are called as Stewards to administrate the mysteries and offer spiritual food for the individual, who needs it at the right time. That's why we sing, Thannejamaanan thandivareha... (O priest come in peace who by his right hand divides and gives to the holy mysteries of his master so that they may have life.)



Departed Priests Sunday continued...

Allen Varghese
12th Grade
St.Gregorios
Austin, TX

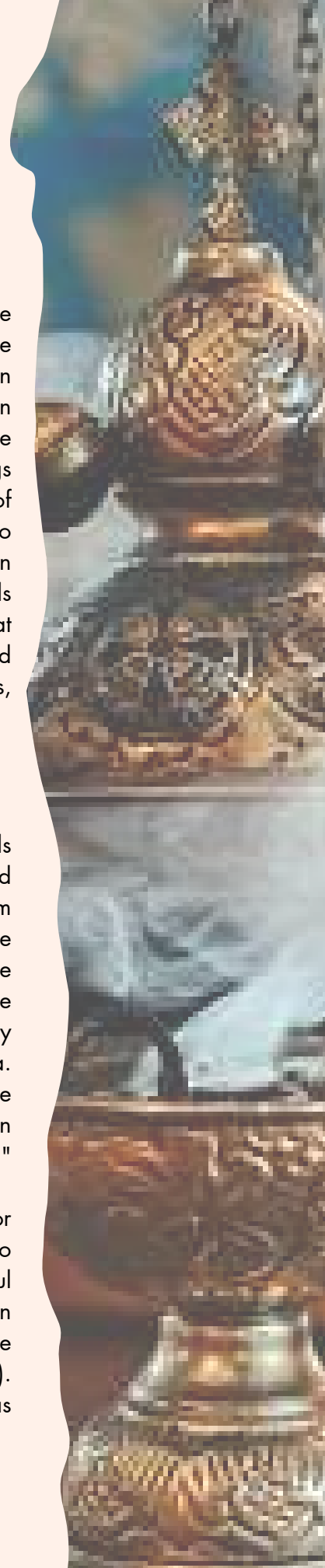


It is essential for the steward to be inquisitive and to have a clear understanding of the spiritual condition of the individual, who are being placed under their care and also to be accessible to deliver the spiritual food. Trust and vigilance formulates the qualities of an eminent Steward. We could clearly distinguish these qualities in the stewardship in Abraham's servant (Eliezer? Gen.24:10) and Elisha's steward, Gehazi (2 Kings.5.20). One who was an example of trust and the other, one of mistrust. In the Old Testament readings (Numbers 20:23-29 and Deuteronomy 34.1-8, Deu.32.50) we also read the stories of Moses and Aaron. In spite of being great stewards of the Lord, their mistrust was taken into account by the Lord, which in turn prohibited them to enjoy the promise of the Lord. Often in our life, we may have been the recipient of these various admirable services of stewards (priests). However, very often we forget the service of our priests who have inspired us at different ages of our life. The priests and bishops who served in our Church, who blessed our marriage, who baptized us, who did the funeral services for our beloved ones, undoubtedly deserve to be remembered in our daily prayers.

2. State of the Steward

When we reflect upon the stewardship, it is important to consider the state of the stewards as well. Many people are feeble in the presence of food. If they fail to acquire the food which they like and to their liking, they are infuriated towards the steward. Some of them are indifferent and show restrictions, others tolerant, and many others swear by the stewards. This is also true in the spiritual atmosphere. Few years ago, a priest noticed one of his parishioners being drunk and abusive to others on the street. The following day, the same parishioner came to the Church seeking Holy Qurbana. The priest courageously mentioned to him, that he needed to seek confession before receiving the Holy Qurbana. Not only did the parishioner refuse confession, but instead started an allegation against the priest and even succeeded in expelling the priest from the parish. But the priest believed in the central verse of the Bible "It is better take refuge in the Lord than to trust in human" (Ps.118.8)

We, in general, expect stewards to always remain cheerful; irrespective of their mental or physical agony. We always assume stewards to be jovial and good-humored and fail to understand them, regardless of the fact that his child or wife may be ailing with a dreadful disease or they may be enduring an agonizing situation. When we remember our priests on this Sunday, we need to understand these Lord's stewards and their diligent services, before we turn into being their hurtful critics. Today's epistle also emphasizes this (Acts.20.28-38). Let us remember the services of all our Lord's stewards and pray for them to be present as faithful stewards in the second coming of Jesus Christ.





SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY



St. Thomas
Dallas, Texas



Find joy in the Journey.



Psalm 34:11

"Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord."



NINEVEH LENT

Abel Abraham

6th Grade
St. Gregorios
Austin, TX



Abel giving a speech to the church about the Nineveh Lent

Upcoming Events

MARCH

16th - Diploma Orientation #1

For senior grade, teachers, and parents for the 12th grade diploma exam to preview the diploma exam plan and outline. Virtual session @ 3:00 PM, CST
[Click here to join!](#)

16th - Lenten Family Altar Challenge

Children are encourage to build a family altar and enter a chance to win a signed icon from Ivanios Thirumeni! [Click here to enter!](#)

APRIL

1st - Diploma and TTC Registration Begins

April 1 - May 17, 2024

