



MA'ALTHO

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL DIGEST OF THE NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE



Apostolic Tradition

DIRECTOR: REV. FR. SHAWN THOMAS



Illustration by Sarah Daniel

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

As the Holy Church enters the season of Pentecost, we celebrate the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father as read in Acts 2. On that day, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and followers of Christ and anointed them to be the ones to grow His Holy Church. There are many explanations for the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is commonly translated as 'church.' One of the definitions of this word is "a gathering of citizens called out." While this definition does not encompass all that the word *ekklesia* means, it does give us a sense of our role as citizens or members of the Holy Church.

The Church is called by Christ, the Good Shepherd, to follow Him. This calling by God and the handing down of that 'calling' is the Apostolic tradition of the Church. When we say that we are the followers of Jesus Christ, we confess that we believe and practice what the Church has confessed for 2000 years. The Orthodox Church prides itself of its 'apostolic succession.' This succession, unfortunately, is often seen only in our historical connection to the apostles. However, as St. Irenaeus of Lyon teaches, apostolic succession is two-fold. We must have a historical connection to the apostles through our clergy and hierarchy, but we must also maintain the faith of the apostles. It is not simply sufficient to say we can trace our lineage to St. Thomas. Do we have the faith in Christ that St. Thomas had? Do we believe in the revelation of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Church, and do we desire to share that with those around us? Do we trust that the practices of the Church, such as fasting, regular communion, and almsgiving are given to us for our salvation? Ultimately, whom do we trust more, the Holy Bride of Christ or ourselves?

Through the Holy Spirit that we all received in baptism, we have been 'called out' to share Christ through the Church. As we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit, let us renew our commitment to the faith of the Apostles and our lives to the Holy Church, so that we may be a source of apostolic succession to our families and loved ones.

The Sunday School prays for its beloved Catholicose
His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II



IN THIS ISSUE

Peek into the Past... 3

Announcements... 5

Let the Verses Flow... 6

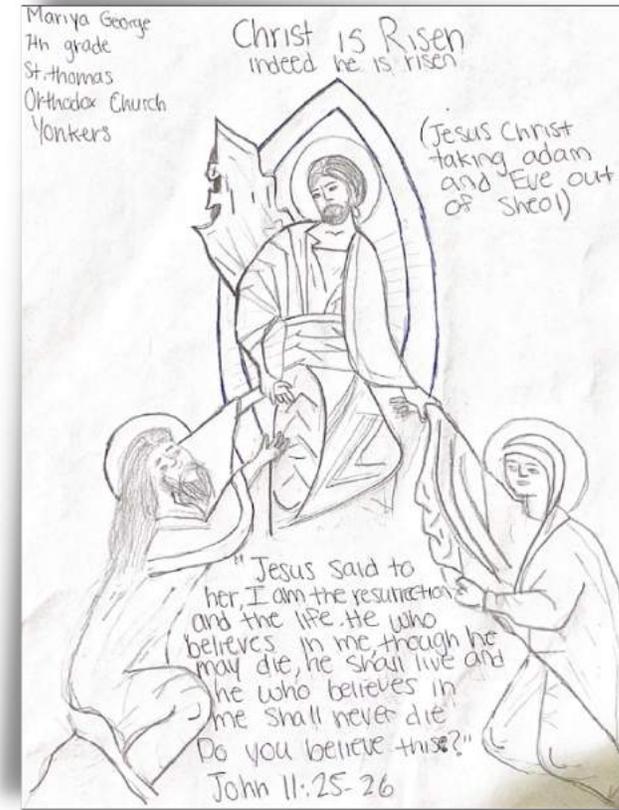
Story of the Quarter... 9

Word Search #1 Solution...20

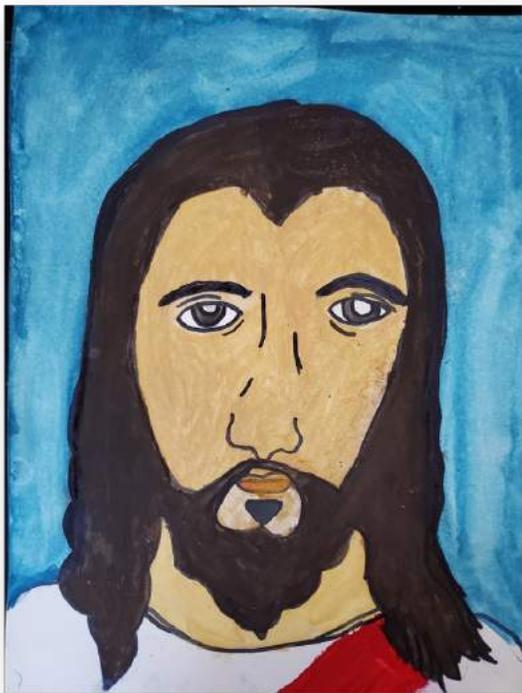
Teachers Speak... 22

This is a publication dedicated in memory of Very Rev. Thomas P. Mundukuzhy Cor-Episcopa of blessed memory – Sunday School director of the united diocese in North America for over 2 decades. "Present our growing children before the Lord", a direct quote from one of his homilies, was the message of Mundukuzhy Achen's life, reflected aptly in the title, Ma'altho (Dedication), representing our commitment to dedicate our children before the Lord. **MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL.** May the newsletter be an evergreen reminder of Mundukuzhy Achen's memory and what he stood for, inspiring us to continue dedicating our children before the Lord.

ICON OF RESURRECTION
MARIYA GEORGE, GRADE 7
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
YONKERS, NY



THE MESSIAH
ANGEL JOSHUA, GRADE 4
ST. STEPHEN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
LONG ISLAND, NY



DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH
RUBEN VARGHEESE, GRADE 6
ST. JOHN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
DREXEL HILL, PA



Illustration by Sarah Daniel

The Apostles established churches all around the world. Countries and cities started following and worshipping Christ as a result of their work. Like the mustard seed, the Churches started off small with very small number of members, but grew gigantic over time. The Kingdom of God awaits all of these generous souls, as they follow the steps of Christ our Lord.

When Jesus first started his ministry, He did not have many followers other than his beloved disciples. But then He started performing these AMAZING miracles, His believers grew, but so also His haters. After Christ resurrected from the dead, He gave His disciples a

mission that would take years to perfect, to preach His Word to the world. After the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they set out to accomplish their Lord's mission. As disciple after disciple landed in various countries, they began to preach and welcome believers into the Kingdom of God!

The Church carries a variety of traits. It can store memories and faith! For example, when I was in India for my sister's baptism, I thought the only thing that we would have to know about is worship. But you see, it also gave me memories because a baptism is like a milestone. It's to be celebrated! Usually when you think of Church, you think it's a building to go and worship God. Yet again, even that can bring memories because a new day is a new opportunity. It is impossible for days to repeat when you wake up with new goals and new conversations with God! So, the next time you go to Church, make sure you make the most of it!

EDITORIAL VOLUNTEERS

ILLUSTRATION
SARAH DANIEL, GRADE 7
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
TORONTO, CANADA



ILLUSTRATION
AVA MATHEW, GRADE 8
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
HARTFORD, CT



PAGE DESIGN
ALINA THARIAN, GRADE 11
ST. STEPHEN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
MIDLAND PARK, NJ



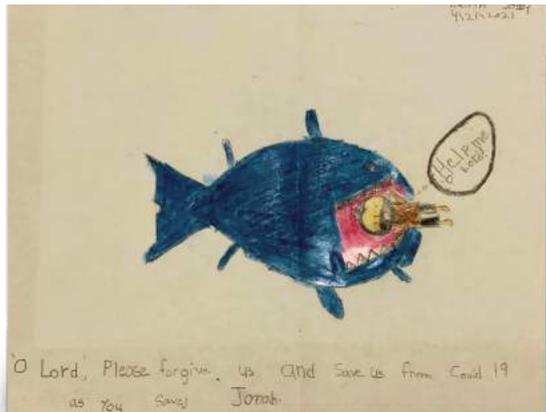
CHIEF DESIGN CONSULTANT
MARILYN CHERIAN
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
PHILADELPHIA, PA



EDITOR IN CHARGE
MATHEW SAMUEL
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
HARTFORD, CT

JONAH'S PRAYER

EVELYN ELIZABETH JOGGY, KG
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

GABRIEL GEORGE, GRADE 8
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



1. Did you know that people are now attending church and Sunday school more often? Earlier people did not attend church because of the weather or because they were too lazy to. Now that you can attend virtually there are no excuses why you cannot attend church.
2. Christianity is the largest religion in the world with over 2.4 billion people who are praising God and are good Christians with good faith.
3. Christianity has 10 commandments and God is the one who gave these rules to Moses as something for Christians to follow throughout their whole life, and if you break any you have officially sinned.
4. Sundays are holy days and they are meant for us to rest from work, school, games etc. It is a day for us to attend church and pray to God.
5. Did you know that Easter is one of the biggest Christian holidays? It is a day were we celebrate because Jesus has risen from the grave and has given us hope again.
6. Did you know that over 100 million bibles have been purchased each year. This shows that the word of God is spreading all over the globe and people are taking God seriously and want to learn more about God.
7. Jerusalem is recorded as the holiest city within Christian faith. Every year many Christians travel to Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is located there. Every year people travel there to visit the ancient places of Jesus.
8. Christianity teaches about both heaven and hell. Heaven is the place where all faithful Christians will live for eternity in happiness and peace with God, and hell is where the devil resides. You will go to hell if you sinned however if you pledge your life to God and the Church and refuse to sin you will be able to enter heaven where God will welcome you.
9. Most Christians pray every day even though it is not mandatory to thank God for everything he has given us. This shows our faith is strong and so is our loyalty to God because even though we don't have to pray every day we still take the initiative to do it.
10. You get baptized to get rid of your original sin. Every Christian should be baptized in order to cleanse your soul and become free of your original sin. Since the sin of Adam and Eve, the first people who ate from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, every human has inherited their sin. In Christianity, most babies get baptized after a short while, but it's also possible to get baptized later on in life. The priest will dip your head into holy water and follow the 4 steps of baptism, which are: Repent to God; Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; Be baptized; Receive the Holy Spirit.

Peek into the Past

Today we are used to having very structured assigned competitions in our Sunday School. Here is a glimpse into how it looked about 2 decades ago when these competitions were just beginning in our Sunday School. The following Announcement appeared in the "Little Herald" section of the Orthodox Herald – an online magazine for Church matters in those days.
(From 2002)

**DEADLINE FOR GENERAL COMPETITION IS ON MAY 31ST
2002**

MUNDUKUZH Y ACHEN
(Sunday School Director, American Diocese)

1. AGES 16 AND UP; ESSAY: Suppose you are the Headmaster/Headmistress of the Sunday school of your church. Describe the Sunday School that you would design. Discuss what real-world topics would supplement the current Sunday School curriculum. Discuss the responsibility, character and resources your Sunday school and its teachers should have. Describe how your Sunday School would promote the learning of the Word of God, and of sacramental life; what activities would be introduced, and how teachers would incorporate the importance of Sunday School in their lessons. What would you do to make parents more involved? (No number of words limit, but make it as short as possible)

....(more such details of other age groups)..

Send all entries to the Director
Very Rev. Thomas P. Mundukuzhy
126 Kennewyck Circle
Slingerlands, New York 12159
veryrevtpm@yahoo.com



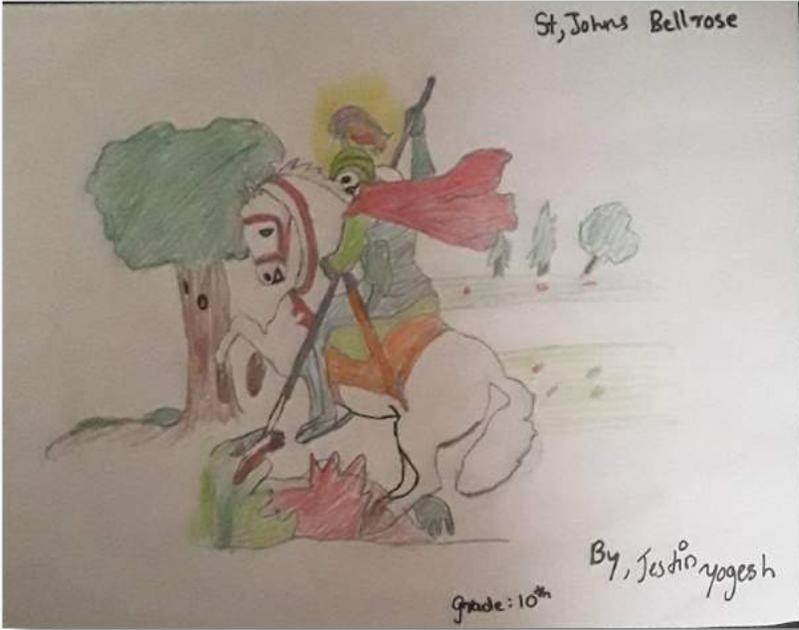
WORD CLOUD
BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF
ST. MARY'S MALANKARA
ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL,
HUNTINGDON VALLEY, PA



How do you feel when you enter the church?

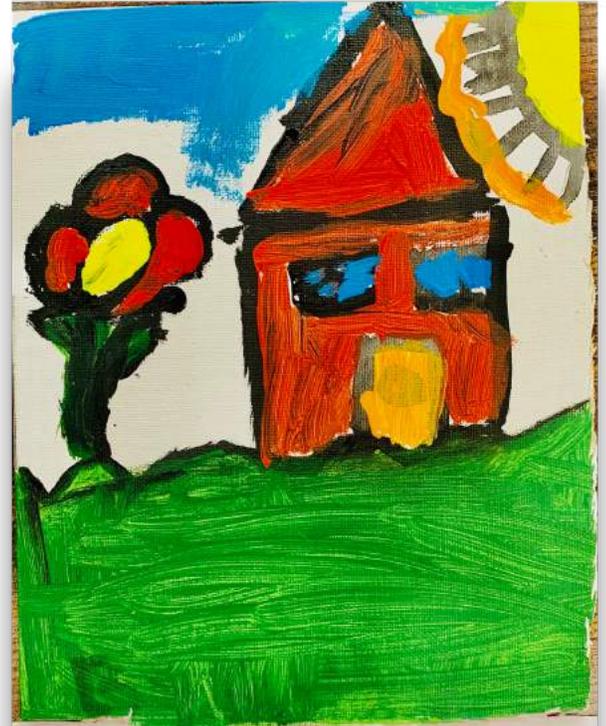
ST. GEORGE

JESTIN YOGESH, GRADE 10
ST JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLROSE, NY



WE WILL SERVE THE LORD

RUBY GEORGI, GRADE 3
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
LINDEN, NJ



"As For Me and My House, We
Will Serve the Lord!"
Joshua 24:15
RUBY GEORGI
GRADE: 3

ST. GEORGE

NOEL CHERIAN, GRADE 7
ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH,
UNRUH AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA



SCRIPTURAL INSIGHTS IN COLOR

AJIN YOHANNAN, GRADE 5
ST MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
WEST SAYVILLE, NY



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Assigned Competition

Drawing Exhibition

Drawing Exhibition to be held virtually on September 15, 2021. Students from all grades can participate. All submissions to be received by August 31, 2021. Topics and Guidelines have been shared with the Area Coordinators.

Issue 3 Deadline: Aug 15

Thank you for your continued support in Issue 2 of Ma'altho. Issue 3 is planned for release in September 2021.

Children, teachers and officials, please send in articles, drawings, poems for Issue 3 of Ma'altho by the deadline of August 15 Sunday. The theme chosen for the year is the *Holy Church* but your topics may vary based on what you want to speak about - however you are encouraged to send in materials relevant to Sunday School and the Church generally. Please send your picture in image format with the submission along with full name, grade\title and parish information.

Please adhere to the 300 word limit. Long articles maybe returned back without publishing. From the next issue, the number of pages maybe restricted with a view to sustain readability, so not all articles received may make it to the immediately current issue of the newsletter. If your entry is not published in the immediately current issue, you will be intimated about it and every attempt will be made to publish it in the subsequent issue, provided it adheres to the guidelines. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this endeavor to provide all with a viable platform for expression of ideas.

Please send all submissions to neadssnewsletter@gmail.com .

Please always copy your area coordinator in all your communications, so that the area coordinator can track the progress of your entry.

Correction Notice

In Volume 1, Issue 1 of Ma'altho, the name of the parish Mar Gregorios Orthodox Syrian Church of India, Staten Island, NY was erroneously referred to as St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Staten Island, NY. We regret the error.

Talent Competition

Sunday School Talent Competitions registration is closed as of 6/7. 36 Sunday schools have registered and additional information regarding the competitions will be sent to these Sunday schools.

OVBS 2021

All OVBS materials are now available for download on the Sunday school website.

Teachers' Training

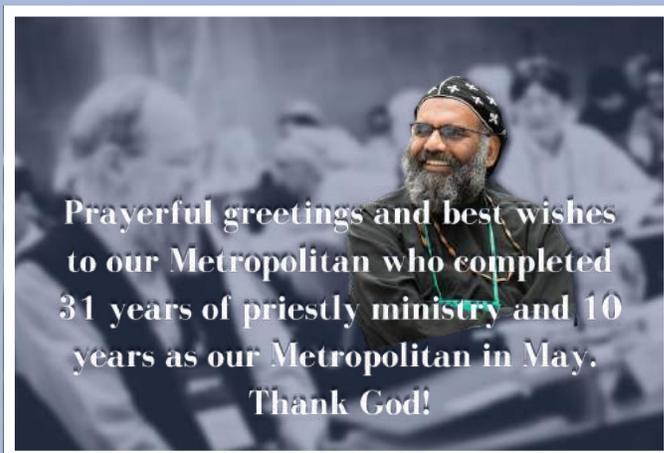
Diocese Teachers Training Virtual event coming in the Fall, 2021! Details to follow.

Centralized Exam

Diocesan Centralized Exams will be held for Grades 5, 8, 10 and 12 on July 11, 2021.

Logo Competition

The entries for the logo competition are being evaluated and will be presented to the board for final review.



GOD IS GREAT

ANGELINA JOB, GRADE 8
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



Only God has an everlasting love for everyone
Only God has the power to help people in need
He will never doubt you or push you away
He will always protect you from the danger of Satan

God is my shelter
And God is my strength
Never lose hope in God because
He will never leave your side

Always remember to pray to him
Even when things go wrong
God will guide you to do the right thing
And he will always be on your side

Let the Verses Flow

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

GREGORY JAISON, GRADE 5
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
LINDEN, NJ



The Lord is With Us at all times
He strengthens us and helps us
In Difficult situations and in Hard times
Have Faith and move mountains
The Lord will protect us when we need
He sacrificed himself for the forgiveness of our sins
The Lord is our savior and have Faith in him

Faith Should lead to love
The Lord says to love your enemies
pray for those who persecute you
Love everyone and forgive each other
We have to be righteous and just in our life
And be accepted in the Kingdom of God

The Lord will come back in his great glory
And he will separate the good from the evil
Have faith in him and be righteous in your life
And you will be protected by the Lord when he comes
Have hope in his second coming
and you will enter into his kingdom.

A LEAP OF FAITH

NOELLE VARGHESE, GRADE 9
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



I always think of God
His teachings, His words, and His miracles
I am told to pray, attend Church, and prepare for the Second Coming
But I feel as if I listen and act blindly
Just because I am told to do so

It is difficult to believe in God
If I do not feel His presence
Or if I do not feel a connection
I always hear of God and His almighty power
But I would like to experience it myself

Rather than just giving up on my thoughts
I tried searching for a sign
One that would prove His existence
One indicative of His majestic power
My mind wandered above and into the heavenly abode

The earth, one of God's most magnificent creations
The only planet able to sustain life
A sphere of perfect size and location
Situated at the perfect distance from the Sun
Inhabited with the necessary elements

Along is the moon not far from the earth
With the unfathomable ability to create undying waves
From the vast and boundless oceans
That hold the perfect amount of water
So that our planet contains both ocean and land

Many say this was all a lucky accident
They say that this was due to natural causes
That gravity and chaotic collisions
Were responsible for this meticulous masterpiece
That there was no higher being involved

Although I am still young and learning
I do not believe that this grand creation
Was due to a lucky accident
Rather I know it was master handiwork
And that is enough for me to take a *leap of faith*

THE UNSEEN POWER OF PRAYER

SHARATH THOMAS, GRADE 8
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



An endless source of power and light
Nothing holds back no fear in sight
God the king an almighty knight
Keeps us safe from the fearful night

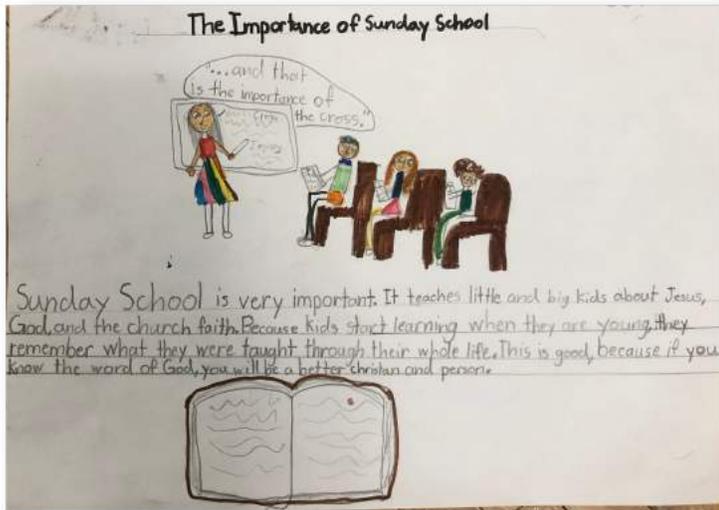
We who pray for hope and joy
The songs we sing every girl and boy
Dreams of a peaceful life to enjoy

The prayers we say and songs we sing
Connect us all by a golden string
The string pulls together in worshiping
It's an unseen power we will always bring



Illustration by Ava Mathew

IMPORTANCE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL
MELINA SARA JOSEPH , GRADE 2
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA



WHY THE CHURCH?
LEENA MATHAI , GRADE 9
ST.MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
WEST SAYVILLE, NY



Being an Orthodox teen during the 21st century, common questions which often arise include: Why the church? Why do you participate there? Why “waste” 6+ hours every Sunday there? Truthfully, for me, it comes down to 2 verses: "God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way"(Ephesians 1:22-23). And, “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ”(1 Corinthians 12:12).

These two verses show that the church is not just some “building” that we enter into. The pandemic made this even more evident. Even though we were not physically present, we were always prayed for upon the Holy Altar. It reminds us that we are always one united body. Our idea of the church evolved into more than a place we spend our time in. We no longer went simply out of a sense of obligation.

If this were an obligation, would we have been so excited to go to Bible Study virtually? Or long to go back to church and pray together?

The church is more than just a building we go to, it's the family we belong to. The family we are raised in and with. We endure the various struggles of life together. Even when our physical life comes to an end, we remain alive through prayer for each other. The Church is a family which God provides you and you are held accountable as their “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1). We choose the Church because it is our family. A united body with Jesus Christ as the head.

ANGEL
MIA DILEEP, GRADE 1
ST. GEORGE MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, FAIRLESS HILLS, PA



THE CHURCH
MELVIN BIJU , GRADE 9
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND



- The Church is my family.
- The Church is my safe zone.
- The Church is there when I feel lost.
- The Church is where I am freed from sin.
- The Church is God's house.
- The Church is my home.
- The Church is my family.
- The Church is where I was baptized.
- The Church is where I serve.
- The Church is where I learn.
- The Church is not just a house.
- The Church is God's house.
- The Church is my home.
- The Church is my family.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN
MIRIAM SUSAN PUNNOOSE , GRADE 5
ST. GEORGE MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, FAIRLESS HILLS, PA



Being a Christian is more than the practice of rituals of worship. It's about submitting yourself to God and serving him for the rest of your life. God brought each of us into this world with a purpose, our job is to find that purpose and do what God wants us to do. As children, it is important to develop a spiritual relationship with God early on. This will help us build strong faith in God throughout our lives. St Paul says "it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me". Like him who transformed his life from self-centered to fully Christ-centered, let us do the same and live in testimony that we are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH
JOSHUA THOMAS , GRADE 2
ST. MARY'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CATHEDRAL, HUNTINGDON VALLEY, PA



THE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY
NISHA NIBU , GRADE 9
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND



I wonder about the Holy Qurbana in Church
 I have all these questions and am ready for an eager search
 What makes a person a Christian?
 There seems to be no specific definition
 Why do these people pray?
 Why do this every day?
 I have an idea. I'll ask Achen!
 He must have the answers to my questions.

After the service, I walk up to him and ask
 Why is it that you do this task?
 What does it mean to be a Christian?
 Is it about following instructions?
 Does it mean to follow the 10 commandments?
 Does it leave you with spiritual attachment?
 Is it being the good soil from the parable of the sower seed?
 Is there more than reciting the Nicene creed?

How does one believe in Christ without being a witness?
 How will the Lord help me fight all kinds of wickedness?
 Why can't I love my enemies, it's like laughing with the devil
 Struggling with my faith and finding answers - it is not so simple
 Maybe just doing actions for the greater good
 Just as a Samaritan would?
 What motivates you to believe in God?
 Is there something that influences you from above and beyond?

He takes a breath and then gives a brief answer
 One that will make you think forever
 Believing the Holy Trinity
 One who follows God to infinity
 Jesus Christ defeated Death by His death and resurrection
 He shows His unconditional love and compassion
 This was done so our souls would soon rise with the Lord
 Those who believe in Christ will get the ultimate reward

"The primary lesson for life must be implanted in the soul from the earliest age. The primary lesson for children is to know the eternal God, the One who gives everlasting life."
 - St. Clement

NEWS BYTES FROM AROUND US



Story of the Quarter: Addressing the Contemporary



A few weeks ago, on April 17, the Sunday School of the Diocese of South West America organized a class on "An Orthodox Response to LGBTQ issues" led by by Dn. Stephen Muse who is a renowned scholar on ethical and social issues in the (Eastern) Orthodox Church, as part of their teachers' training. They invited the teachers of the NEAD as well. Several of our teachers and officials attended. Dn. Muse, honestly and courageously, provided a compassionate and compelling perspective of the Church in dealing with the very sensitive and very important issue of our times, suggesting options regarding how the Church could creatively manage these and learn continuously about different dimensions of the Truth by remaining humble and holding onto the love of Christ.

Contemporary issues that we and our children are likely to confront must be top of mind for our Sunday schools. Engaging in such training only helps us to be better prepared with the tools necessary to answer questions and guide our students in the right path. Furthermore, it helps us to learn what the Church teaches on these issues so that we ourselves are prepared. If we do not passionately seek answers for our children on these topics – they will soon find their own and they won't need us.

It is unusual in our Church to see such topics taken up for frank discussion. Kudos to the SW Diocese for the courage to keep abreast of such topics. Here is hoping that other dioceses also follow their lead. *For the fortitude, conviction and the clarity of vision it points to, this story is picked as our story of the quarter. View the recording of the event here: <https://youtu.be/v6n4yMtxZ28>*

Food Drive in Westchester County

ALICE VETTICHIRA
TEACHER, GRADE 11
CHARITY PROJECT COORDINATOR
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
YONKERS, NY



Charity is the highest form of love signifying the reciprocal love between God and man that is made manifest in unselfish love of one's fellow men. Exploring the true measure of our accomplishment in a few words is difficult. I will share with you few of the essential insights of our Food Drive during Great Lent 2021. The goal of this Food Drive for the Sunday School was to instill the importance of feeding the Hungry which is a Corporal work of Mercy, Love – which is a theological virtue, prayer and fasting as the chief aids to penitence. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, I was skeptical about the outcome of this project, but it turned to be a testimony that prayer does miracles.



We collected 36 boxes of nonperishable food compared to 6-8 boxes of food in the past. We worked in partnership with Feeding Westchester, which is a registered nonprofit organization, distributing millions of pounds of food across Westchester County through 300 community partners.

As we all have virtual classes, I was thinking of a video of this project for the students to enhance their memory. The students were given assignments of Biblical short stories, prayers, hymns, bible reading covering the major events of Great Lent Service which was done diligently by the students involving parents, grandparents and siblings. The video starts with our vicar's introduction. Pictures of our dedicated teachers who were not with us were included. It also recognizes the very first Sunday School Principal from 1976 and our present Principal. Adding the pictures of all our Sunday School teachers helps the students to know who is who. Including pictures of previous years charity and other Sunday School activity was an added grace. Although it was a very cold and windy day, several of the students came to deliver the food who will never forget to feed the hungry fellow men! Members of other spiritual organizations also joined us.



Our Curriculum is Changing

Thank you all for your support of the Sunday School ministries of our diocese. The strength of this ministry is rooted in the hard work and adaptability of our principals and teachers, whose passion for faith and genuine investment in our students' lives is admirable.

The Northeast Diocese has been regularly working on updating the Sunday School curriculum over the past decade to best serve our children. Mr. Korah Mani's passion and dedication to this initiative are commendable and inspirational. His decades of dedicated service to the improvement of the Sunday School ministry, first in the joint American Diocese and now, in the Northeast American Diocese, is truly incomparable. His tireless efforts paved the way for our current position. We thank God and pray for all the clergy and lay leaders who have labored for the Sunday School curriculum, whose efforts have uplifted and inspired generations of Church faithful.

Upholding the established student-focused approach, a detailed analysis of the curriculum based on feedback from priests, principals, and teachers from our parishes has revealed a need for restructuring the current curriculum. This shift offers new opportunities to target and address the unique challenges of our youth in North America directly within the curriculum structure. The blessings and collaboration of our Diocesan Metropolitan, H.G. Zachariah Mor Nicholovos, and H.G. Dr. Zacharias Mor Aprem, the Metropolitan of the Diocese of South-West America, with H.G. Dr. Gabriel Mor Gregorios and Rev. Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese, the President and Director of the Sunday School, respectively, were pivotal in establishing this initiative. These conversations resulted in the determination that the Northeast and South-West American dioceses will combine their efforts to create a curriculum that can be used by students in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia.

The scope, sequence, and outline of the new textbooks have been finalized. The joint team has prepared the learning outcomes of each topic and the grades in which they will be introduced, developed, and mastered. We will soon be reaching out to the vicars and principals to find dedicated Sunday School teachers who can assist in writing lessons for each grade. We are expediting this effort, intending to release the lessons as soon as possible. We aim to provide the students and teachers with quality materials, both relevant to modern times and upholding the beauty and Truth of the Orthodox Church.

We humbly ask for your support and prayers with this endeavor.

~Rev.Fr.Shawn Thomas
(Director)

The Child Speaks

THE ORTHODOX FAITH

JOANN LIZ THOMAS, GRADE 8
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH
TORONTO, CANADA



Our rituals are based on a firm, unwavering belief that has been nurtured and passed down over the centuries. Every Sunday we gather in prayer and under the guidance of the Chief Celebrant commemorate Christ's life events - Holy Conception, Birth, Death, Resurrection, and Ascertainment of our Lord's Second Coming. When we partake in the Holy Qurbana, we believe we are consuming our Savior's life-giving Body and Blood. This part of the Holy Qurbana depicted in the drawing, when the Reverend Priest celebrates the Veil (Shushefo/Shoshappa) Holy Spirit is invited to bless the Bread and Wine which is later given to the true believers. The act in itself is highly mystical, energizing, and consoling to the faith of the congregation.

KYMTHA

ELISHA S. GEORGE, GRADE 7
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
YONKERS, NY



Year after year, week after week, we hear the term, "Kymtha." What is Kymtha? Kymtha comes from the Syrian language meaning the return of Jesus to life, three days after the crucifixion. Otherwise, it is known as resurrection. The root of the word is from Latin which means "coming." This word is mainly used on Easter and the weeks approaching it, during our Great and Holy Fast. The word, Kymtha may be seen on prayerbooks which display the important prayers for the resurrection. The Kymtha offices may be used on special occasions like Easter depending on the liturgical calendar. In addition, the prayers are used on Easter all the way to the Sleeba season on this calendar. Overall, Kymtha represents the coming and resurrection of Christ as he sacrificed himself for all of mankind.

WHO IS LUCKY?

HANNAH PHILIP, GRADE 3
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX
CHURCH, TORONTO, CANADA



I would like to share something that I think of very often - Who is a lucky person? We would normally think that the luckiest people are those who have everything which we may not have like the rich and wealthy.

My grandma always told me that the luckiest person is the one who is able to taste and understand that God is good; 'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' (Psalm 34:8)

I would like to share two experiences in this regard. The first experience was when my little sister was born on February 15th 2020. My parents didn't take me and my brother to the hospital. We were really anxious and so my brother and I prayed every few minutes for my sister to be born without any problems. We were also praying for my grandparents to be able to travel, as there was going to be a travel ban due to Covid 19. God answered my prayers, giving me a healthy sister and by the time my mom was discharged, my grandparents also arrived from the USA.

My second experience was when my grandma was admitted in hospital after being tested positive for Covid 19. She was not able to breathe and her condition was getting worse day by day. She was later transferred to ICU with oxygen support. We started to recite the Lord's Prayer and Nicene Creed regularly and continuously for her speedy recovery. On Good Friday during the service (after the burial service of our Lord), we got the news that my grandma was going to be moved from ICU to the normal ward. She was finally showing positive signs of recovery and we were able to talk to her. From there she recovered so fast that we could not believe what was happening. She came home to us and now she is moving around the house like before. It was a true miracle.

Therefore, the luckiest person is the one whose prayers the Lord listens to. He listens to His children; all we need to do is to call onto Him.

JESUS LOVES

BINTA JOSHUA, GRADE 5
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH
TORONTO, CANADA



ARCHANGEL MIKHAEL

MIRIAM ANN ADAI , GRADE 5
MIKHAEL PAUL ADAI, GRADE 3
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH
FLORAL PARK, NY



Who is an angel? Angels are messengers of God.

The Orthodox Church teaches us that there is a heavenly hierarchy to the angels. All angels serve God to carry out His will and glorify Him. The wings of the angel signify their readiness to do God's will. In the holy altar, the altar assistants represent angels.

Angels have many duties. For example, angels sing praise to God. In Isaiah 6:1-5 we read about the vision that Isaiah had of angels singing praise to the Lord. Isaiah 6:3 says the angels sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Angels are heralds of good news. They reveal prophecies, knowledge, and understanding of God's will. Archangel Gabriel announced the good news to Zachariah the priest about the birth of John the Baptist, and also to St. Mary that she will bear a Son and His name will be Jesus.

In St. Luke 2: 8-14, we read that an angel announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds in the field - Suddenly, there was a multitude of angels praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" This is the famous greeting that we use every year on Christmas. An angel also stopped the wise men from returning to Herod.



Towards the end of His earthly life, when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane in severe mental agony regarding the events which were to happen, we see that angels came and ministered to Him. St. Luke 22:43 says, "Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him." This incident is recorded only in St. Luke's Gospel. After the resurrection of Christ, again we see that angels announced the good news of the resurrection of Christ to the women in the garden.

We are all familiar with Archangel Gabriel. Have you heard of Archangel Mikhael? Mikhael (or Michael) means "Who is Like God." References to Archangel Mikhael can be found in the Bible at Daniel 10:13, Daniel 12:1, Jude 1:9, and Revelation 12:7.

The book of Revelation describes a war which took place in heaven. Satan and his demons rebelled against God. Archangel Mikhael and his army of angels fought against Satan and his demons. The power of evil could not stand against the angels of God, and Satan fell with all his demons to the underworld, known as Hell. Hell is a place far away from God, where the evil spirits now abide. Those who are there are tormented by their own malice and the realization that they are powerless against God. They have become hardened in evil and use deceit to lead others away from God. The angels who remained faithful to God have lived with God ever since in unceasing love and joy.

There are other instances in the Bible where Archangel Mikhael stood up against evil forces and defended God. In St. Jude chapter 1 we read that Archangel Mikhael fought with the devil for the body of Moses. In St. Jude 1:9, the Archangel Mikhael says to the devil, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Archangel Mikhael is known as the defender of the faith because he stood up against Satan and his evil forces. When we see icons of Archangel Mikhael, we always see him standing with a sword in his hand. The sword signifies that no evil can enter the presence of God.

*"Scripture brought me to the Gate of Paradise,
and the mind stood in wonder as it entered."
— St. Ephrem the Syrian*

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

ASHER KALLOOR VARGHESE, GRADE 7
ST THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
YONKERS, NY



*"He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake". (Psalms 23: 2-3)*

The Lord is my shepherd
He leads me along,
He gives me His peace
And keeps me from wrong.

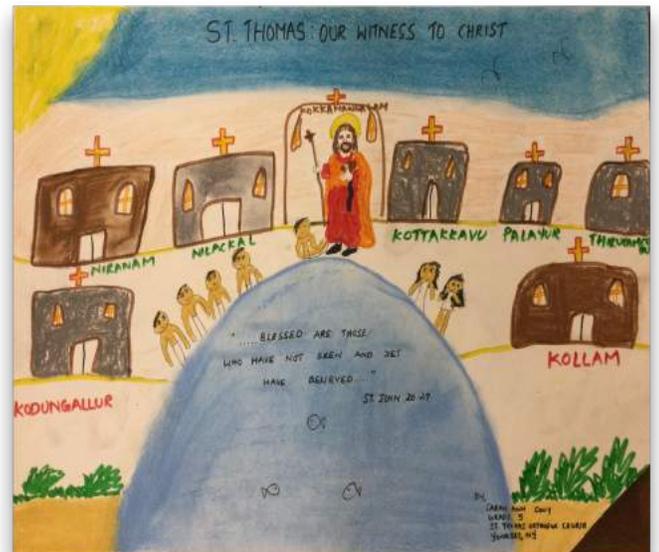
If in the dark valley
Of life I may be,
He's there to protect me
And give strength to me.

His arms will uphold me
Through the dangers and woes,
He'll lead me to victory
My future he knows.

I know I can trust Him
His word guides my way,
The glory of Him, I extol
And blossoms open in my soul!

ST. THOMAS OUR WITNESS TO CHRIST

SARAH ANN SONY, GRADE 3
ST THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
YONKERS, NY



BIRDS IN THE SKY

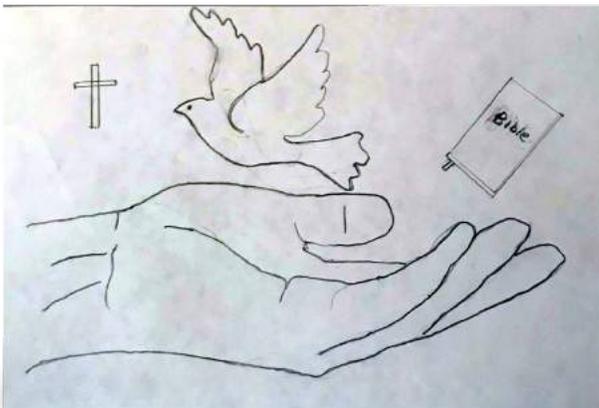
ELIZABETH CATHERINE CHEERAN, GRADE 5
ST MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
LINDEN, NJ



Look at the birds of the air: they
neither sow nor reap nor gather
into barns, and yet your heavenly
Father feeds them. Are you not of
more value than they?
Matthew 6:26

THE DOVE

SOLAMON SHAJI, GRADE 7
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



FAITH AND HOLY SPIRIT

RIAN THOMAS, GRADE 6
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY



Young children used to believe in fairy tales and Santa clauses based on the story and man created events. They are expecting magic and miracles from fairies and presents from Santa. If so, how much more we should believe and trust our God who does even more wonderful things for us every day.

Faith" is a common word but one with deep meaning. In general, it means complete trust or confidence in something. From a religious perspective, faith is a strong belief in God or a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. For a Christian, it is a belief in Jesus Christ and is given as a gift and command from God almighty. Christian faith is a true apostolic faith that one can acquire through understanding the glory and goodness of Lord Jesus Christ. As children, we are granted this faith through our forefathers. When we are born into Christianity through Baptism we are filled with the Holy Spirit and we affirm our faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ through our Godparents. Growing up, we must make this faith stronger through our deeds and thoughts. On the day of Pentecost, the apostles were given the Holy Spirit to establish their faith in the one true God. Then they were able to preach the Word of God around the world. With the power of the Holy Spirit and their faith in the Holy Trinity, they were able to continue the ministry that Jesus Christ started; healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, feeding the poor, and helping the needy.

Faith is a choice for many, but it is a necessity for being a Christian. Being an Orthodox Christian, our faith is based on the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified for us, and has risen from the dead. He ascended into heaven and will come again to join us in the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven. To live a Christian life, we need to grow in faith by reading and studying the Bible regularly, confessing our sins, and having a communion or fellowship with Lord Jesus Christ through prayers. By faith we believe that God will protect us and keep us from dangers. As we go through difficult experiences in life, our faith gets stronger. It is the Holy Spirit that enables us to strengthen our faith in the difficulties of life. The Holy Spirit is a divine force that keeps us out of danger and helps us to differentiate what is right and wrong. The Holy Spirit is one of the three in the Holy Trinity, one of the three godheads. We worship the Holy Spirit along with the Father and the Son because God is the Holy Trinity which is three in One, and One in three.

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is described as the dove, fire, wind, and the cloud. It is said that there are 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord, and fortitude. These gifts, granted to Christians at their baptism are like virtues: They enable the person to make proper decisions and be righteous. When we practice these virtues, we will be able to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit which are our righteous deeds as explained by St. Paul in his letter to Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In Sunday School, we learn how Jesus Christ practiced these virtues and fruits of the Holy Spirit in his life in the world. Also, we see how our Church leaders led our Church and kept their faith, all these years, by the strength of the Holy Spirit. As Sunday school children, we should understand and practice these gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our life. As a responsible young Christian, it is our responsibility to show the virtues of the Holy Spirit in our community to enable the growth of our Church and the Kingdom of God. With the blessings of the Holy Spirit, The Father Almighty enables us to grow in Christian faith which in turn gives us strength to fight against evil.

“Words are truly the image of the soul.”
— St. Basil the Great

CHRIST IS RISEN

MICHAEL GEORGE , GRADE 7
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
YONKERS, NY

Christ Is Risen!
Indeed he has risen!

A few weeks ago we were at Church or at home celebrating the most important festival of the Christian Faith. The resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord is the feast of all feasts. Our whole faith revolves around the resurrection. By Jesus' resurrection, he defeated death and proved that he has authority over everything. We believe through his resurrection we are granted eternal life. And before we celebrated Easter we participated in our Lord's passion. Because of holy week and the resurrection we could proudly stand here and participate in our Qurbana. Our whole Qurbana came from the new Passover/last supper. And on Good Friday our Lord died for the whole of mankind and saved us from sin. After the resurrection, we sing and participate in kymtha morning prayers until Pentecost. We should love our God more than anything else in the world. In one of the Gospel readings after Resurrection, Jesus asks Peter 3 times to 'agape me' - Agape meaning sacrificial love. We also commemorate St. George. Let us pray to him so our prayer may reach God almighty. Let us pray that God can help eradicate this virus and help all the medical field workers have success in their experiment to heal and get rid of the coronavirus.

MY LORD AND MY GOD

EMIL GEORGE SONY , GRADE 6
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
YONKERS, NY

Imagine just how different, our evolution and the traditions we are beholden to, would be if St. Thomas (meaning twin) did not arrive on our shores in Kerala. Crammed on a Roman trading ship Thomas made his voyage to India confident that God would guide him though uncertain of what would happen. He probably knew martyrdom awaited him, just for preaching Christ, but had no fear because he trusted that His Master and Lord, was in and with him. It was in Alexandria, Egypt, Thomas met Indians and decided to go to India as instructed by Christ to 'bear witness to me to the ends of the world'. He took the maritime spice route in 2 voyages carrying the Gospel beyond the Roman Empire, gaining India for Christ.

The 8 churches built by St Thomas Kodungallur, Kollam, Niranam, Nilackal, Kottakkavu, Kokkamangalam, Palayur and Thiruvamcodu and

the first Christian families are cradles of our faith. He was martyred in 72 AD at Mylapore. His earthly relics mostly rest in Ortona (Italy).

Our Lord appeared to the disciples with Thomas present, to make of him, a staunch unwavering witness to the reality of His resurrection, resulting in his pinnacle confession, inspired by the Holy Ghost, an adoration of the true Deity of Christ just as David in Psalms. As St. Thomas Christians we aspire to be overpowered with this sense of Jesus' Godly majesty and be able to declare with conviction that Christ is 'my Lord and God'.

The pandemic engulfing us is clear indication that earth and flesh will fail us, temptation will stall us, sin will stain us but the living God can be the strength of our life with St. Thomas like faith being at it's backbone and the guarding care of our faithful Creator.

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE WITHOUT SEEING"

JOSHUA THOMAS, GRADE 8
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ

“Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:26–29). When was the last time you questioned your faith in God? I can speak for many people when I say that I've doubted God before. Being committed to the Christian faith is hard, especially when we can't physically talk to God, and see God. As followers of Jesus, we should believe and trust in God even when we have doubt in our hearts.



Illustration by Ava Mathew

We resemble Thomas. Many of us require some type of proof, or reassurance in order to continue our faith in Christ. We ask ourselves questions like, Why is this happening to me? Or can God really hear my prayers? We say this without taking into account all the things

that God has done for us in the past, for example, providing us with an education system, a house to live in, having the ability to walk, and even being able to have a loving family. We end up forgetting God in the times of our success, and only turn to him when we feel that we need something from him. This keeps us at a distance from God and keeps us from fully experiencing the love that God has to offer.

Overall, many of us are lacking in faith, we require reassurance in order to continue our faith in Christ. Just like Jesus said, we should not disbelieve, but instead believe in him, for then ours is the Kingdom of Heaven. We should be grateful to God, in both our times of success and failures. We shouldn't be quick to doubt God, because he has a plan for everyone, including you.

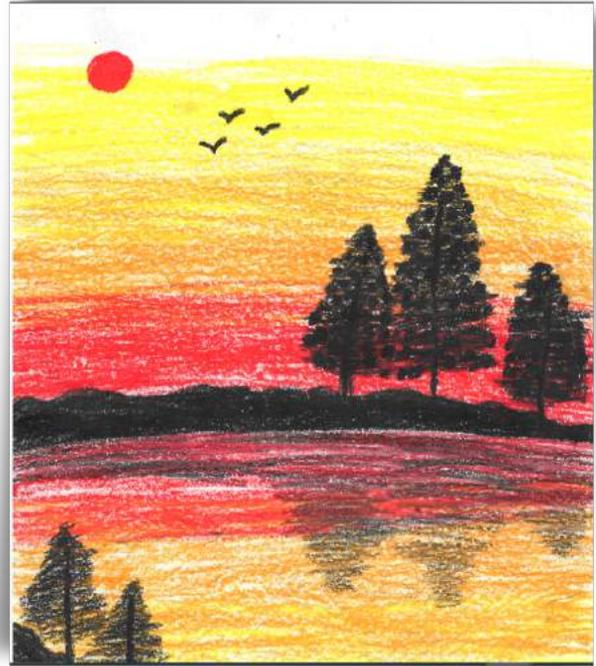
HOLY BIBLE

DANIELLA DEEBU , GRADE 6
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLROSE, NY



SCENARY

EVALANA CHACKO , GRADE 3
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF PHILADELPHIA, PA



GOD IS LOVE

EMMANUEL MATHEW PUNNOOSE , GRADE 3
ST. GEORGE MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH FAIRLESS HILLS, PA



MY CHURCH BUILDING

ETHAN THOMAS , GRADE 4
ST. GEORGE MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, FAIRLESS HILLS, PA



SUNDAY SCHOOL

GABRIELLA DEEBU , GRADE 3
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLROSE, NY



THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH
JADON KOSHY , GRADE 6
ST GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH
TORONTO, CANADA



Sacraments are visible actions through which God's grace are conveyed. Orthodox Church doesn't fix the number of sacraments. Any ritualistic action in the name of the Holy Trinity can be counted as sacrament. Drawing of the cross is an example. Here are a few:

Holy Baptism- The Holy Baptism is the first Sacrament done in our life. We are born again through baptism and become members of the family of God, the church. Holy Baptism initiates into the life of the Kingdom of God. In Baptism we reject Satan and accept Jesus Christ to be with us as our Lord and Saviour.

Holy Chrismation- This sacrament is also known as Confirmation. The priest gives the baptized the Seal of the Holy Spirit by anointing him/her with the Holy Oil of Chrism. Baptism and Chrismation go together, though they are two sacraments, they cannot be separated.

Holy Communion-The Holy Communion is the Queen of all

Sacraments. We receive the Body and Blood of Christ God through Holy Communion. Jesus established the Holy Communion that we may participate in His sacrifice and life-giving resurrection.

Holy Matrimony- In the sacrament of the Holy Matrimony, Man and Woman are united that they may live together as a family. St Paul compares the love between man and women as the love between Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride.

Holy Orders- Also known as Holy Priesthood, is a special vocation in the Church where we are called to dedicate our life to God. There are three common orders in Priesthood, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. These three play an important role for serving God.

Holy Confession- It is through the Sacrament of Holy Confession, we come before our Lord to confess our sins. We must have true repentance and humility when we confess our sins. We ask God to receive us as His Children and reunite us with the Kingdom of God.

Anointing of the Sick – It is the sacrament of healing of the sick by anointing with Holy Oil and simultaneously praying for the person. The sacrament also gives the sick person opportunity to repent to God. Repentance purifies the soul and heals from the spiritual illness. All the sacraments influence our personal relationship with God and to one another. The Holy Spirit works through the sacraments and leads us to Christ who unites us with the Father.

GOD IS WITH US EVERYWHERE

MEGAN THOMAS , GRADE 9
ST. GEORGE MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH
RIDGEFIELD, NJ



Illustration by Ava Mathew

Have you ever felt like you lacked friends? If you have, you probably wished to have more of them: people who care and spend time with you. Regardless, you're not alone--you're never alone. Though it may not feel like it, God is with us everywhere. From day to night and from home to school, he watches us daily. As faithful Christians, we know that one of the predominant ways to get closer with God and build a connection with him is by praying. When praying, you don't have to be at your local church. You could do it straight from home.

A way to pray at home is by finding a quiet area, closing your eyes, and talking to God. If you ever feel alone, interact with God. He'll listen to every word you say and guide you. After all, He is our Father. Don't let anything waver your commitment toward Him; He loves you a lot.

FOLDED HANDS

JEANA JINU , GRADE 7
ST GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH
TORONTO, CANADA

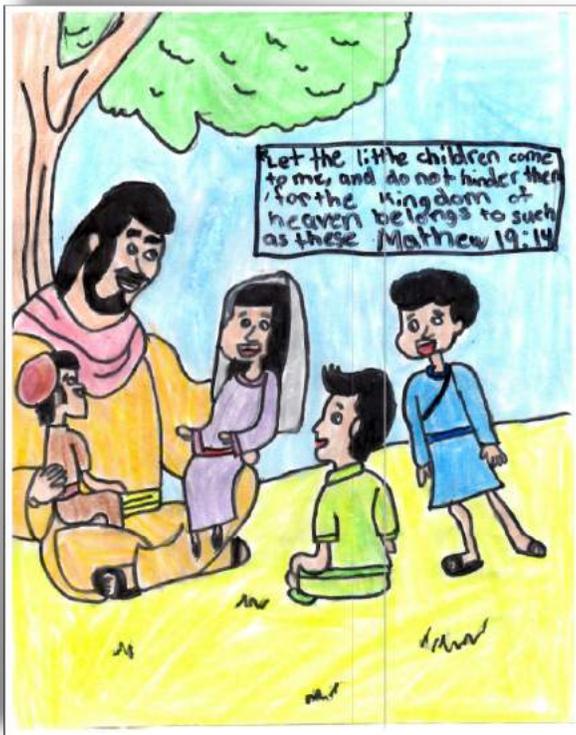


MOTHER WITH CHILD

KESIYA SARA YOGESH , GRADE 5
ST JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLROSE, NY



LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME
JOANN SHIBHU , GRADE 4
ST MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
LINDEN, NJ



JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
GABRIELLA MATHEW , GRADE 4
ST GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH,
STATEN ISLAND, NY




Jesus is the light of our world. We are surrounded by darkness and evil. We meet people who don't know God and live in darkness. They don't care or have compassion. They are filled with fear. We must look to the light, we must look for Jesus.

Jesus is looking for us!

Psalm 27:12
The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

“Fathers and mothers: Go and lead your child by the hand into the church.”
- St. John Chrysostom

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM: A BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

HANNAH S. NINAN , GRADE 10
ST JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLROSE, NY

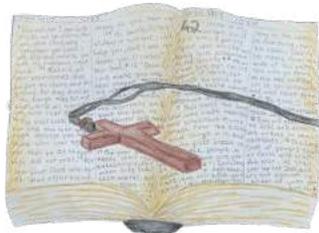


Illustration by Ava Mathew

What is knowledge and wisdom? Is it possible to have the knowledge and lack wisdom?

Knowledge is information and facts. Wisdom is the understanding of the facts and circumstances.

It is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. To apply knowledge to one's needs is wise.

St. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him".

Our generation acquires a great deal of knowledge, sometimes even more than we want. Knowledge is obtained, but not wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to recognize and judge if all aspects of knowledge are right and useful. It is the ability to apply the right knowledge in right place. Knowledge can make mistakes, but wisdom is not making the same mistake again.

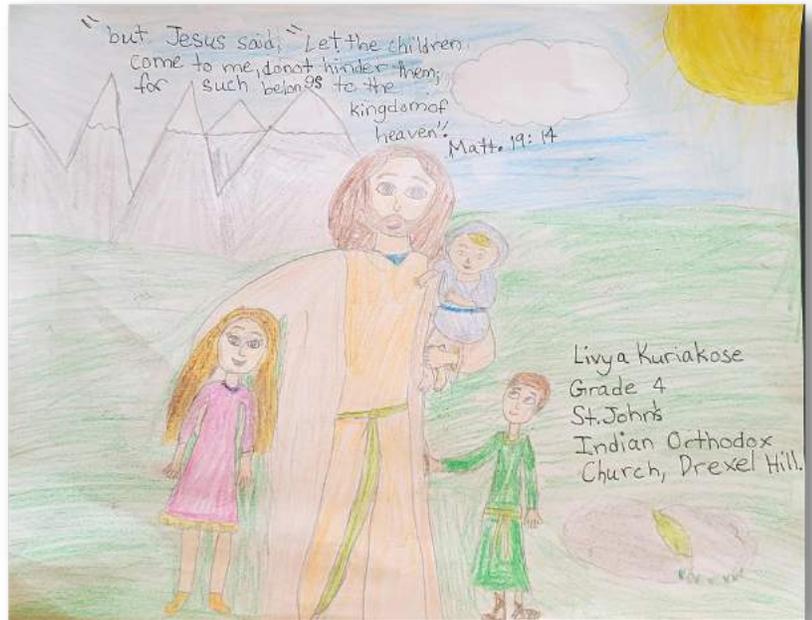
Never mistake knowledge, with wisdom; knowledge helps a living, but wisdom helps to make a life. "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"(Proverb 9: 10). Proverb 4: 5-6 summarizes 'Get wisdom, get insight, do not forsake her, and she will keep, love, and guard you'. Wisdom comes from the true relationship with God. Blessed is the one who seeks wisdom, wisdom is the key to unlock everlasting and eternal life. It is a gift from God. Godly wisdom helps us to make the right decisions. A wise person will be always humble, gentle, considerate, merciful, and sincere. God imparts wisdom to us when we live in Him. As a child of God, strive to acquire wisdom. When Solomon asked for wisdom, God granted him not only wisdom but riches, possessions, and honor. Ask for wisdom, and you shall get everything in life.

Luke 2:40 says, The child was filled with wisdom and grace was upon him.

"We may study as much as we will but we shall still not come to know the Lord unless we live according to His commandments, for the Lord is not made known through learning but by the Holy Spirit."
- St. Silouan the Athonite

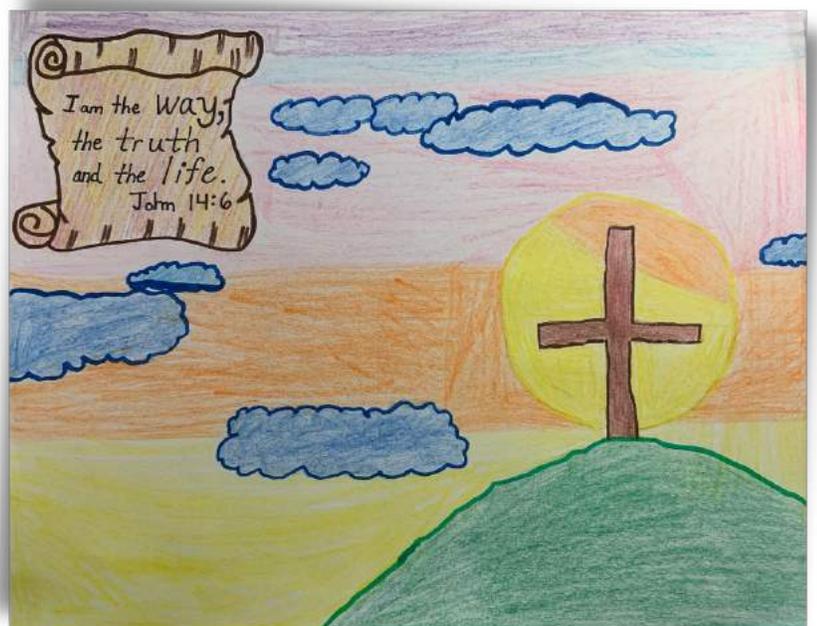
LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME

LIVYA KURIAKOSE , GRADE 4
ST JOHN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
DREXEL HILL, PA



I AM THE WAY

MAYA GEORGE , GRADE 5
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND



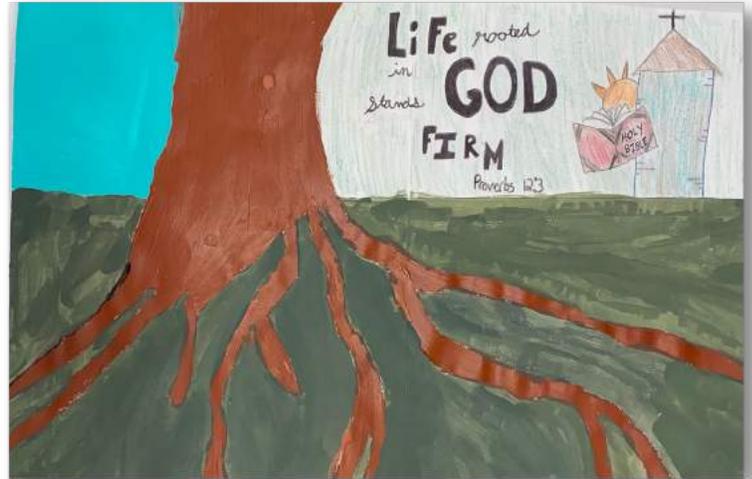
FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

RAYNA THOMAS, GRADE 5
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY



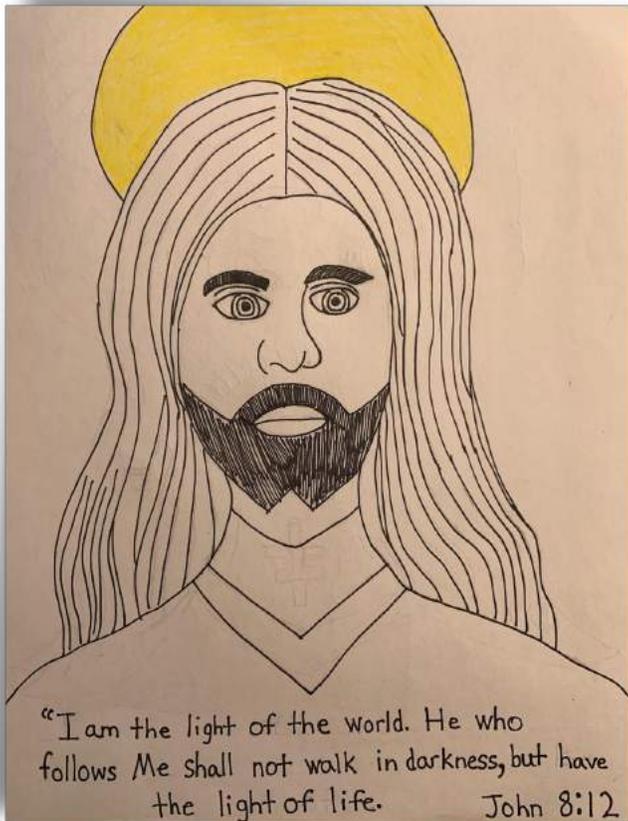
ROOTED IN GOD (ACRYLIC PAINTING)

JIA ANN MUCKADACKAL, GRADE 6
ST.MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
WEST SAYVILLE, NY



CHRIST

SERENA GEORGE, GRADE 3
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND



ST.GREGORIOS OF PARUMALA

JIAH THARIAN , GRADE 8
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



ST. STEPHEN

EVAN JOGGY VARGHESE, GRADE 3
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



DO UNTO OTHERS

SUSAN THOMAS, GRADE 4
ST. GEORGE MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, RIDGEFIELD, NJ



Illustration by Ava Mathew

1. Do to others as you would have them do to you is a bible verse from Luke 6:31. The definition of it is treat other people with the concern and kindness you would like them to show toward you.

2. An example of do to others as you would have them do to you is if you do good things that make people happy, one day other people will do good things that will make you happy.

3. God's way of do to others as you would have them do to you is do good to others and that good will come back to you. The world will be a better place if you do good. The kindness you do is like a circle. It will come back to you, and the people that did good to you, the good will come back to them. In this world all people would love to be treated fairly.

WALLS OF JERICO

JACOB. T. ALAN, GRADE 4
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



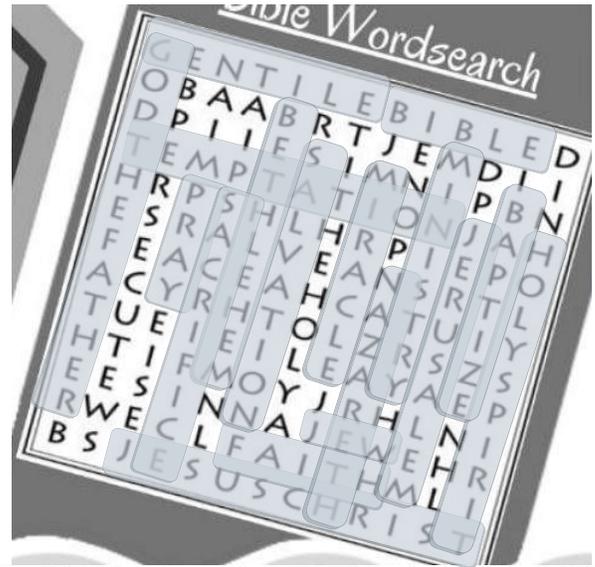
Oh Saint Stephen, First
Christian Martyr and deacon, please
guide us, help us and pray for us. You
died for Jesus and prayed to forgive
those who killed you. You were
stoned by people for spreading the
Good News. We are glad to have
your name for our church in Midland
Park, New Jersey. We will pray
for you especially December 26.
When you died - Message for believers:
We are one in Jesus!

“Young people must be made to distinguish between helpful and injurious knowledge, keeping clearly in mind the Christian's purpose in life. So, like an athlete or the musician, they must bend every energy to one task, the winning of the heavenly crown.”

-St. Basil the Great

BIRDS

ALEENA SHIBU , GRADE 12
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLROSE, NY



SOLUTION TO BIBLE WORDSEARCH IN GAMES N TRIVIA ISSUE 1

Death

Like a shadow in the moonlight
Like the whisper of the seas
Like the echoes of melody
Just beyond our reach
In the shadow of our sorrow
Past the whisper of goodbye
Love shines through eternity
A heartbeat from our eye.

APPLE OF YOUR EYE
JON ANTONY MUCKADACKAL , PRE-K
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
WEST SAYVILLE, NY



ALTAR BOY

ALEX THAMPI , GRADE 8
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH
MIDLAND PARK, NJ



Illustration by Sarah Daniel

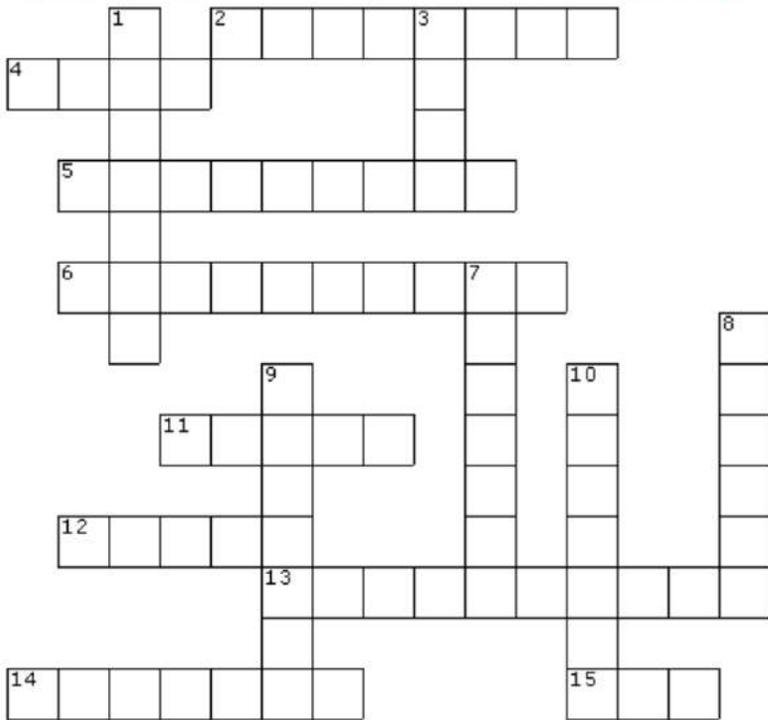
For as long as I could remember, I always wanted to enter the altar. I wanted to help achen, I wanted to read, and I dearly wanted to wear the kuppayam. My dream came true when I was 11 years old, and entered the altar.

On my first day as an altar boy, I realized that the altar was so much more than reading, and helping achen. You have to light candles, ring bells, fill the candles with oil, serve water to people during communion and so much more. The biggest change was being a role model for other children. You have to set an example for them so they will know what is right and what is wrong. Another aspect in the altar is how serious and respectful you have to be. I was the child who would talk during church and play with my friends. Being an altar boy made me realize how wrong that was, I learned the importance of church and always paid attention since. Being an altar boy also changes the way you behave outside of church. You become more respectful, you do not joke around as much, and you always try to behave well. The most unexpected change for me was that I developed a newfound love for going to church. I woke up early, took a bath, ironed my clothes, put them on, and woke up my family and told them it's time for church. I was always the child who felt in between about church, I did not love it, and I did not hate it. Now, as an altar boy, I can say that I love church without a doubt. In conclusion, entering the alter changed my view on life and church, and I now love church.

Bible Games & Trivia

Take a printout and play!

BIBLE CROSSWORD- GOD AND LOVE



ACROSS

2 Love your ___ as yourself

4 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a ___. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen

5 By this all men will know that you are my ___, if you love one another

6 A new command I give you: Love ___

11 For God so loved the ___ that he gave his one and only Son

12 Love the Lord your God with all your ___, soul, and mind

13 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the ___ be with you all

14 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ___ love those who love them.

15 ___ is love

DOWN

1 Love is ___, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud

3 And now these three remain:

faith, ___ and love. But the greatest of these is love

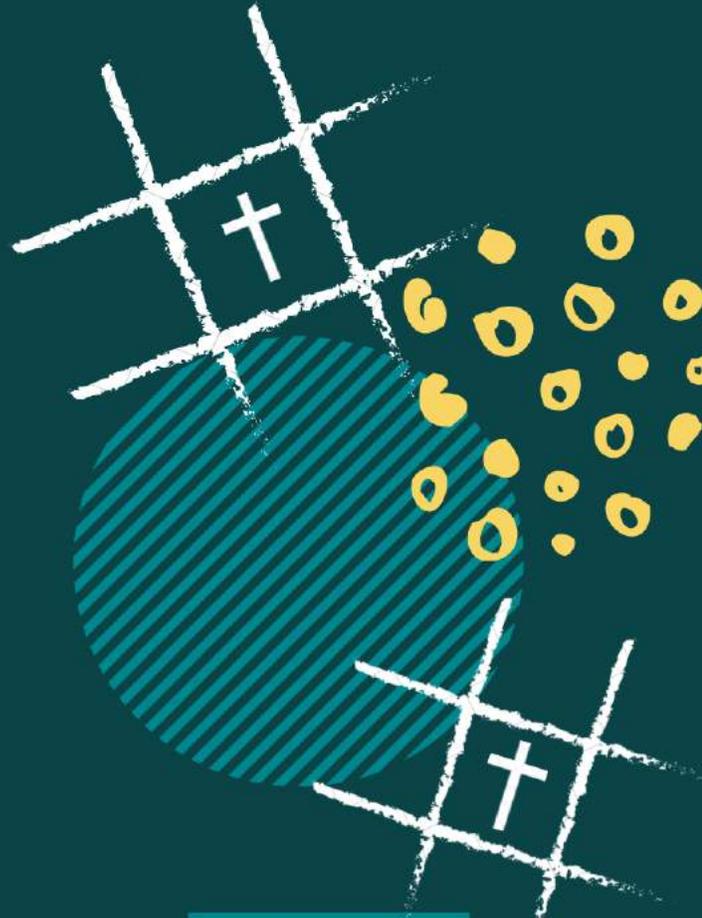
7 Love your ___ and pray for those who persecute you

8 Husbands, love your wives, just as ___ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy

9 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his ___

10 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain ___

Tic Tac Toe



Color Me!



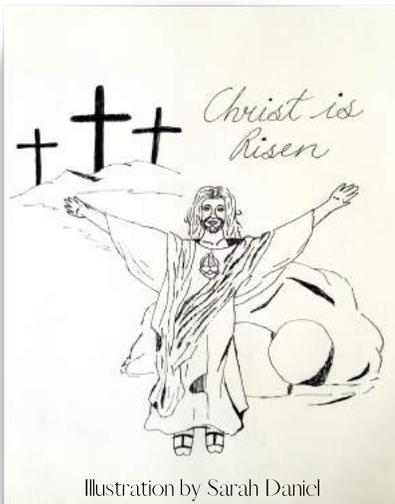
Page designed by Alina Tharian

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IN OUR DAILY LIFE

SARAH PAUL, TEACHER GRADE 8
ST. STEPHEN'S MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH,
MIDLAND PARK, NJ



The resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ has many implications in our daily life. The first and most important being the realization of sovereignty and immense power of God in this Universe. For a true believer the resurrection gives hope and confidence to face any critical issues in his journey of life. The never-ending list of issues including physical illnesses, financial troubles, pandemic situations, stress/anxiety, anything related to our daily life on this earth can be alleviated with the help of God if we have true faith. It strengthens the fact that no matter how hard the sufferings might be, there is always hope and refuge under the mighty wings of God.



Jesus shows how a prayerful life can be saved even from death by His own life as an example. By raising His Son from death, God promises us that we can also achieve eternal life if we believe in Christ (John 3:15-16). This is well-explained by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15 as well. Resurrection of Christ builds a strong foundation of faith in God for all human beings. Christians around the world realize the importance of true faith and pass it on to generations. Resurrection of Christ also proclaims

the victory of righteousness and divine power over the evil energies. Jesus teaches us that He is 'life', and death or darkness has no power over him.

God sent His own son, to cleanse us all from our deadly sins, and to make us realize the right path with a new Covenant full of unconditional love and light. Forgiveness of our sins is a promise from God (Acts 13:38-39) if we walk in Jesus's path loving and caring one another. We should remember the fact that God loves each one of us same exact way as He loved his only Son. We can thank God every day by praying and meditating His name and also by helping fellow human beings. This routine will prevent us from a sinful life. God's Holy Spirit within each one of us will guide us towards eternity, if we believe in Jesus and lead a meaningful life.

"Let everything take second place
to our care of our children" -
St. John Chrysostom

Officials' Corner



"Merely to hear the word of God saves no one and is instead a condemnation. After hearing, one must do."
~Blessed Theophylact

IGNORANCE TO ENLIGHTENMENT SHAWN MATHEW, TEACHER GRADE 8 ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH LINDEN, NJ



Stephen, being the first martyr, set events in motion for the early Church. The followers were scattered through Judea and Samaria. Can we uproot our entire lives for our faith? The immense level of faith was demonstrated through the early Church followers' lives. Like a boat pushing off from shore, Stephen's martyrdom and persecution of the Church allowed the message to be spread farther away.

We have recently seen racism, ignorance, and lack of empathy occur within our society. I imagine the early Church was probably persecuted in a similar fashion. Their belief in Jesus meant they would be treated unfairly and inhumanely. Initially, Saul leads the charge on this war and imprisonment of the early Church. It's astonishing to me that so many great leaders in the Bible have a similar path. Jonah, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, David, Moses, and more were not initially serving God, but then became the chosen vessel for God. Just as a thief comes in the night, the Lord will appear in our lives. Sometimes talents to serve God are hidden by distractions and life choices which are not our true purpose. God is slow to anger and abounding in love as said in Psalms.

Philip is called to preach in Samaria. Philip heals the sick, lame, and paralyzed. The Jews and Samaritans were united in their faith of Jesus Christ. In today's society, one's political beliefs overshadow one's spiritual faith. A person can be unfairly targeted by law enforcement due to color, however both parties might be Christian. How can there be inferiority if we are all equal? What if we saw each other as one blood, as brothers and sisters in Christ? In the kingdom of God, there is no racism, because we are all created equally by God.
(Acts Chapter 8 v1:13)