



MA'ALTHO

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL DIGEST OF THE NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE



The Eternal Church

DIRECTOR: REV. FR. SHAWN THOMAS



Illustration by Sarah Daniel

There is a common trope by many: “Pentecost is the birthday of the Holy Church.” We see this language in sermons and other places. However, when we pause to consider that statement, it is one that diminishes or devalues the eternal and salvific properties of the Church. In I Timothy 3, St Paul speaks to St Timothy regarding the qualifications or requirements for the priests and deacons of the Church. He finishes the chapter by explaining to Timothy that he is telling him these things so that he (and consequently, we) “may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.” If the Church is the pillar and bulwark of the truth, can it be simply assigned that this ‘truth’ began on a specific day in Jerusalem about 2000 years ago?

In fact, when we look at the prayers of the Holy Church, we see that the Church is an eternal being, one that has always been the Bride of Christ and the vessel through which we approach God.

In Malankara Orthodox tradition, the Feast of Pentecost is not merely a retelling of the Holy Spirit coming down on the followers of Christ in the upper room. Rather, the services are split into three parts – celebrating, glorifying, and recognizing the Triune God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The Church in Her wisdom points to us that this Trinity is who saves us, and that by being members of the Holy Church, we become one with the eternal Holy Trinity whom we worship.

The reason for this misunderstanding lies in the misunderstanding of salvation itself. For many of us, we have been taught that God made the world perfectly, and then Adam and Eve sinned, so the Father had to send His Son for our salvation. This linear understanding of salvation creates a situation in which Christ is a Plan B, where He is an afterthought of God’s great salvation plan. But the truth is for all eternity, God has always intended His Son to die for the salvation of the world. Thus, humanity was created for union with God, and through Christ’s passion, we participate in that union and become ‘new creatures’ in Christ through our baptism. Becoming something new does not mean to start over or to “have a fresh start,” as Fr. Stephen Freeman writes in *Glory to God for All Things*. Rather, as he explains, it is not a repair of the old but the creation of something new “according to the image of Him who created him” (Col 3:10). Thus, when we become a new creation through union in God which is only possible through Christ’s Passion, we enter into life of the Holy Trinity. Therefore, if those who are a part of this Body is the Church, then the Church must be not an earthly institution that began on a specific date, but one that participate in the eternity of God Himself.

The prayers of the Holy Church say as much. In the wedding hymn, “I, the Church, am the True Bride” or “Sabhyam Thiru Sabhayam” (which is, unfortunately, considerably shortened in most wedding services), the Holy Church, the Bride of Christ, is singing about her relationship with Jesus. She points out in the second and third stanzas that all of Creation rejoiced when Christ chose her to be His Bride, pointing to her presence at the time of Creation itself. Furthermore, she speaks about the bridal chamber that Christ prepared for her “in the heights,” pointing to their relationship that transcends time and space. Finally, the whole hymn is about the Church’s journey through the life of Christ as she searches for her Groom, whom she learns is crucified and rises from the dead before she finally finds Him. The hymn ends with Christ telling the Church to wait for the Holy Spirit! Thus, the Church must have existed before Pentecost, and exists for all eternity.

Since the Church is an eternal being, we can then understand the prayers of the Church which put us in the midst of every sacrament, every feast day, every event. That is why the Church always prays in the present, and we say things such as, “Today, Christ is born” on Christ’s Nativity, “Today, Christ is crucified” on Good Friday, and “Today, Christ is risen” on Resurrection Sunday. We, being in the Church, participate eternally in the life and salvation that Christ offers us. This is why the Church can say confidently things such as, “Moses and Aaron received - The priesthood which was passed down - It went to Zachariah - Then it was given to John - John then gave it to our Lord - Who ordained the apostles - And the apostles (*contd on Page 2*)

IN THIS ISSUE

The Child Speaks... 2

9th Catholicos ... 5

Announcements... 6

Let the Verses Flow... 7

Story of the Quarter... 12

Officials Speak... 15

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.

The Eternal Church

- Spread it throughout creation" (Qolo, Ququlion for the Departed Clergy). Since the Church is eternal, now all of creation and the saints, from the beginning of time till the fullness of time again participate in the life of the Holy Church.

As we wrap up the theme of 'The Holy Church' for Ma'altho this year, it is important to not just internalize all we have discussed as simply factual information. Rather, 'The Church' was chosen as a theme because of what St Cyprian of Carthage, a third century saint, teaches us, "No one can have God for his Father, who does not have the Church for his mother." The Church is our Mother, the source of nutrition, care, healing, and love for our lives. By participating in the life of the Church, we participate in Jesus Christ Himself, and become one with him. By participating in the life of the Church, we worship and celebrate God's goodness along with all those who have loved God from the beginning and for all time.

As we conclude 2021 and celebrate the birth of our Lord, let us thank God for betrothing the Holy Church. Let us thank Him for loving us so much that He took flesh and died for our sake. Let us thank God for the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church that serves Him and us so that we may all become more like the One who died for our sake and saved His Holy Bride.

Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!

The Child Speaks

ANNOINTING OF THE SICK
LEANNE KURIAN, GRADE 10
ST. STEPHEN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



Illustration by Ava Mathew

Anointing the sick is one of the seven major sacraments for an Orthodox Christian. Some Christians struggle to understand what anointing the sick is. This is a process that is conducted by a Priest to help the sick. There is a lot more history and steps that go into anointing the sick.

Anointing the sick is a way to provide physical and/or spiritual healing according to God's will. It offers necessary graces so that the person who is sick may receive healing. It pours out consolation and hope. It also provides an opportunity for the forgiveness of sins when the sick person is too ill to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. Many people wonder if they are able to get anointed. The Holy Church teaches that any member of the faithful can receive this sacrament when he or she is sick. The faithful can receive it several times in their lives.

A sick person is anointed by a priest(or bishop). The anointing is done on the forehead, the hands and other parts of the sick person. This is accompanied by the prayer of the Priest or Bishop who asks for the special grace of this sacrament.

There are three main parts. These include; prayer of faith, laying on of hands, and anointing with oil. The prayer of faith is when the Priest or Bishop anoints the sick person's forehead and hands with oil, usually in the form of a cross, saying "through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit." The laying on of hands is when the sick person is anointed on the hands, they are reminded that they must turn all their activity over to Christ. The laying on of hands by the priest comforts the sick person. It also symbolizes the power of God entering the sick person through meditation of the priest. Regarding the anointing with oil, the Bible says, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him bring in the priests of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man." (James 5:14)

The anointing of the sick has deep symbolic meaning. We believe that it uses human objects and actions as symbols to point something beyond themselves, such as God's grace. Also, oil symbolizes healing from illness, cleansing from sin and consecration to God.

In conclusion, anointing the sick is conducted by the priest. Anybody in the faith can be anointed. The three main parts include; prayer of faith, laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Anointing the sick helps the person providing physical, mental and spiritual healing.

EDITORIAL VOLUNTEERS

EDITING

ROSELYN KORUTHU, GRADE 11
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
STATEN ISLAND, NY



EDITING

ANGELA SUNIL, GRADE 12
ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
STATEN ISLAND, NY



EDITING

RIYA MATHEWS, GRADE 11
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX
CHURCH, TORONTO, CANADA



ILLUSTRATION

SARAH DANIEL, GRADE 8
ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX
CHURCH, TORONTO, CANADA



ILLUSTRATION

AVA MATHEW, GRADE 9
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX
CHURCH, HARTFORD, CT



PAGE DESIGN

ALINA THARIAN, GRADE 12
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

THREE APOSTLES OF JESUS
EVAN VARGHESE JOGGY, GRADE 4
ST. STEPHEN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



Illustration by Ava Mathew

Apostles are the people who saw Jesus and wrote about Jesus's teaching. They were the missionaries, wrote many books in the Bible, and healed people in the name of Jesus Christ. They were commissioned as messengers and sent out to share the good news of Jesus to people who had not heard about Jesus. Mainly The New Testament was written by the Apostles. I am going to tell more about three apostles.

1) I am a skillful writer and public speaker. I traveled to many places to spread the gospel. I wrote 13 books in the Bible. (Some people think that mainly seven books were written by St. Paul the Apostle.)

I struggled with pride at times having a hot temper. God sent me a thorn in my flesh to keep me humble.

I was sometimes called Paul. All the books are letters to different Churches in different places. The letters deal with some of the problems facing the Christian life and faith in the church he had established. Paul the Apostle was beheaded by the Roman Emperor Nero.

Please note: The Saul of Tarsus and King Saul are two different people. Don't forget that!

2) Jesus tells his mother, Woman, here is your son, and to his beloved disciple, Jesus said that here is your mother. Do you know which Apostle is this?

St. John the Apostle was the youngest Apostle of Jesus. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome and his brother was James. Their family had a background in fishing. John the Apostle wrote many New Testament books. We believe John had a natural death. Even though he had thrown into the boiling oil in Rome, he just felt the pain. John was the only Apostle who had not martyred.

The books he wrote are John, John 1,2, and 3 and Revelations

Please Note: John the Apostle and John the Baptist are two different people.

3) I was the first Apostle who did the miracle in Jesus's name. Jesus told me " Feed my lambs ...Tend my sheep. "Through this, Christ gave me the responsibility to build the Church and care for all its members.

Do you know which Apostle am I? St.Peter.

Saint Peter is also known as Simon and Cephas. Jesus renamed his name Peter, which means rock. Peter the Apostle was one of the first leaders of the early church. His brother is Andrew, who was a disciple of John the Baptist. Later on, both of them became followers of Jesus. They had a family business of fishing and partnership with John the Apostle's family. Peter recognized Jesus as Messiah and was with him from that time even though he did deny Jesus before His crucifixion. Peter was crucified like Jesus in Rome, but upside down on his request.

HOLY EUCHARIST
EDWIN SANJAY, GRADE 10
ST. STEPHEN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. Eucharist, also called Holy Communion or Lord's Supper, in Christianity, is a ritual commemoration of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine, the Lord Christ is contained, offered, and received. The word "Eucharist" means "Thanksgiving." The Eucharist is the central act of Christian worship and is practiced by most Christian churches in some form. The Holy Eucharist is partaking in the nature and life of Christ.



Illustration by Ava Mathew

The Eucharist is important because in it Christ associates the Church with himself and his Paschal Mystery. The Eucharist has formed a central rite of Christian worship. It is a memorial action in which, by eating bread and drinking wine, the church recalls what Jesus Christ was, said, and did. Holy Eucharist is a way Christians remember together what Jesus did for us and give thanks. Christ gives us His own body and blood in the Holy Eucharist: first, to be offered as a sacrifice commemorating and renewing for all time the sacrifice of the cross; second, to be received by the faithful in Holy Communion; third, to remain ever on our altars as the proof of His love for us, and to be worshiped by us. It symbolizes the new covenant given by God to his followers.

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist by taking the bread and blessing it. He then broke it and gave it to his apostles saying, "Take and eat; this is My body." Next, He took a cup of wine, blessed it and gave it to them saying, "All of you drink of this; for this is My blood of the new covenant which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins." Finally he said to his apostles the commission, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

There are different symbols of the Eucharist. Bread is a symbol of the Eucharist because it represents life. It is also a symbol because the breaking of the bread was performed by Jesus so now we accept the bread as the body of Jesus. Wine is a symbol of Eucharist because just like the bread it was shared at the Passover meal between Jesus and his Disciples. The wine is given to us as the blood of Jesus, wine also symbolizes joy. Fire/light is a symbol of the holy Eucharist because it represents God's purifying presence. Another reason it is used is because it represents the light of Christ. As Christians we are commissioned to keep this light shining through our whole life. Oil is a symbol because it means setting a person apart for a particular mission. So we as Christians are given a particular mission to be like Christ in the world today.

There are four rituals of the Holy Eucharist. The first is bringing gifts to the altar. It means bringing the bread, wine and water to the altar to be blessed. Second is the presenting of the bread which is when the Priest holds the bread up for all of us to see. The third is the breaking of the bread as it is when the bread is broken for everyone to have. The last one is participation, when everyone receives the bread.

The Holy Eucharist has different names. A few different names include the blessed sacrament because it is the most excellent of all sacraments, the Sacrament of the Altar because it is consecrated and received upon the altar and the Bread of life because it is the nourishment of one's soul. It can be called the Holy Communion when it is received by the faithful and the Holy Viaticum when it is received during a serious illness, or at the hour of death.

HOLY MATRIMONY

BLESSY KURIEN, GRADE 10

ST. STEPHEN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



Illustration by Sarah Daniel

There are seven major sacraments in our Church, namely, Holy Baptism, Holy Mooron, Holy Confession, Holy Eucharist, Holy Matrimony, Holy Priesthood, and, Anointing of the sick. Sacraments teach, strengthen, and express our faith. Holy Matrimony is when two people are bound in marriage in holiness and glory. They are united together as one, and they receive instructions from the Church for a happy marriage. Through this sacrament, Jesus gives them the strength and grace to live in the biblical meaning of marriage.

In most cases, a marriage ceremony takes place in a church, because marriage is a gift from God, and getting married in the presence of God is considered very important to the couple. It is the occasion when the couple declare a lifelong commitment in front of family, friends, and Christ. An Indian Orthodox marriage service is divided into 2 parts. The first part is the Blessing of the Rings, when the blessed rings are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by the officiating priest or bishop on each of the couple. The rings symbolize that a (spiritual) contract is sealed and placed on the bride and the groom by the priest; it means they both have married each other of their free will. Since a ring has no loose ends, it signifies the lifelong relationship expected from the couple.

The second part is the Blessing of the Crowns, when the priest or bishop crowns the couple. The Blessing of the Crowns signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit descending on the couple. The "Crowns" represent the crown of thorns placed upon the head of Jesus Christ; the crowns also symbolize the glory and the honor of God granted to the married couple.

Minnu or thali is tied around the bride's neck by the groom with a knot. It signifies the bond between them, to live together for life. The minnu has seven beads (muthu) in it to signify the seven sacraments of the Church. The 'manthrakodi' is draped over the bride's head, by the groom which signifies the act of welcoming the bride into the household of the groom. 'Manthra' means 'blessed', and 'kodi' means 'new clothes'. It is seen as an act of humility, chastity, and devotion to her partner in the marriage, as they are united by God. The groom takes on the responsibility to care for, and cherish his partner.

Eldho Nombu

Eldho Nombu or Fast of the Advent is one of the 5 Canonical Fasts of the Church. Beginning on December 1st, it ends with the Feast of Eldho (Nativity of the Lord) on December 25th. The holy fast is a time of preparation that the Church has set aside for the faithful to enter into the glorious Feast of Christmas in the most appropriate manner. For us, the greatest celebration of Christmas is not in the glitter of the holidays, the lights, the songs, the gifts or the sales in the shops, but the greatest celebration for us in this season is the Feast of Eldho which happens in the Holy Eucharist in the Church, and the Eldho Nombu helps us to prepare our body, mind and soul for this Feast, which celebrates the amazing love of God for mankind.

QUDOSH EATHO

MICHAEL GEORGE, GRADE 8

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
YONKERS, NY



Glory be to God on high.

As we all know, the Sunday of Qudosh Idto is the new year of the church. And on that Sunday the Gospel reading is very appropriately chosen. It is taken from St Mathew's Gospel 16 verses 13-23 and we learn that Peter reveals Jesus is the Son of the Living God. After Peter had revealed this Jesus replied to him "And I also tell you, Peter you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church" We also see in St John's Gospel Jesus gave Peter the name Cephas which means "a stone" It is very interesting knowing that Jesus established the whole church on the faith expressed by Peter. Peter also known as the Chief Apostle has an amazing privilege in which the whole of Christianity is being built on his word revealing that Jesus is the Son of the Living God and the Messiah. Later on, in the same Gospel reading, Jesus also calls Peter as Satan, and we know this was because he tried to stand in the way of Christ's suffering. Jesus turned around and said to Peter, "Get away from me Satan." On this new year in our church's liturgical calendar let us not allow Satan to enter us and instead become a rock on which we should build Jesus's church.

MY CHURCH

ASHLYN MATHEN, KG

ST. STEPHEN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



THE 9TH CATHOLICOS OF THE EAST IN MALANKARA

On Friday October 15, 2021, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III was enthroned as the Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan (the Supreme Head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India) His Holiness is the 92nd Primate on the Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas. His Holiness is also the 22nd Malankara Metropolitan.

Here is more info on Bava Thirumeni: <https://mosc.in/holysynod/his-holiness-baselios-marthoma-mathews-iii>

Bava Thirumeni was born in a very poor family. His father was a rubber tapper. His parents trained him in a disciplined prayer life. Thirumeni acknowledges that many people helped him in his studies. His perseverance and dedication resulted in excellent scores in his studies.

Mathews III Bava Thirumeni can read and write in several foreign languages. HH is a scholar, teacher and renowned theologian, and the first Catholicos of the Church with a Doctorate.



Probably because of his upbringing in poverty, Thirumeni has been able to relate amazingly to the cause of the afflicted. He has worked relentlessly for the upliftment of the poor, marginalized and women. As a bishop and Metropolitan of the Kandanad East Diocese for close to three decades, Thirumeni has been overseeing several homes and organizations to serve the needy.

The Church is in the midst of several great challenges in these times and so the faithful looks on with great hope and expectation at the new chief shepherd of the Church to lead the Church into the future.

As children of the Church, we from the Sunday School thank God for coming to the aid of the Church in filling the office of the Catholicate that was lying vacant for the last few months, and we enthusiastically welcome our new Catholica Bava Thirumeni with great joy.

(Editorial)

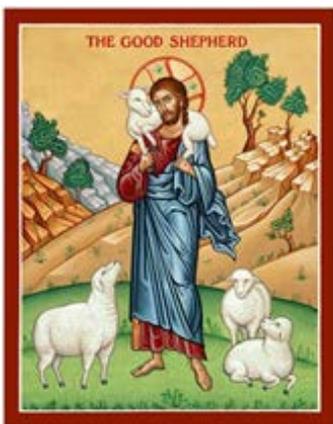
CHURCH ICONS

**JESTIN JOHN YOGESH, GRADE 11
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH,
BELLEROSE, NY**



Have you ever noticed the faithful walking up to icons, kissing them, lighting a candle in front of them? Are we worshipping those man-made images? In Orthodox churches, icons have a major role in faith. The icon derives its form from spiritual vision, spiritual understanding and deep spiritual content.

Icons are representations of sacred religious images, heavenly expressions of Christian faith, teaching and worship. The icons are usually painted by monks, and a whole discipline of fasting and prayer is required for painting an icon. Then they can see what they must paint based on what the Lord says to them. They are usually made on wood. Icons undergo certain rituals called the prayer of dedication and are anointed by the holy oil, thus they acquire the quality of the most holy object in the church. They are the witnesses of the presence of the Kingdom of God in us, and witnesses of our own presence in this Kingdom of the Church. Christ is truly man and as man, He is truly the "icon of the invisible God". In recent centuries, the icons in most Orthodox churches became very ornate and developed into a virtual wall, dividing the faithful from the holy altar rather than uniting them with it.



St. Luke painted a picture of virgin Mary in the AD 60s. Empress Frederick sent that picture to Bulgaria. In the second century, many more symbolic icons appeared such as icons representing Christ as a lamb bearing the cross or a Shepherd with sheep in His arms.

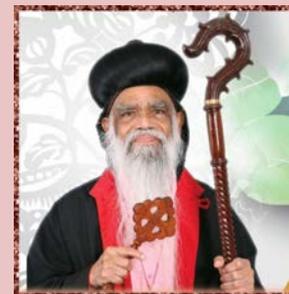
In the seventh century, miracles occurred that were associated with icons. An icon of Christ had drops of blood on the spot where a Jew had struck Him. Christians started showing great awe for icons in their worship. As a result, certain bishops decided to remove the icons and some of them were destroyed.

We may think keeping icons is against the second commandment which was meant to be against the worship of icons ("Do not kneel before it or worship it"). That this is not so is confirmed by God's commandment to Moses to make the images of two angels in the Ark of the Covenant. The Church does not worship the icons but places them in order to remind the believers of the holy people or events they represent. We give extreme reverence to the icons because the images in icons comprehend the situation or life of the person in it and thereby we can renew our life.

Icons are considered the windows to Heaven; they help us to focus on divine things. There are icons representing our Lord Jesus Christ, the virgin Mary, the saints, the Holy Trinity, angels and even spiritual events.



**LL HG Mathews Mar Barnabas Metropolitan
of blessed memory**



Our beloved shepherd, always missed.

Entered eternal rest: December 9, 2012

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Teachers' Training

A combined Teachers' Training session for teachers of the NE and SW Dioceses is planned for January 22, 2022. The topic for training will be 'Bloom's Taxonomy' which is the methodology used to develop the new Sunday School books. Please follow instructions in email and register by Jan 5.

MABARTHO 2021

Group Song Exhibition (MABARTHO 2021), a video compilation of Liturgical songs sung by children from parishes around the diocese, can be viewed here: <http://nesundayschool.org/4640-2/>

Volume 2 Issue1 Deadline: Feb 20

Thank you for your support for Ma'altho. The Diocesan newsletter completes its first Volume with this issue by the mercy of God.

Please send in articles, drawings, poems for Issue 1, Volume 2 by the deadline of Sunday, February 20, 2022. The theme chosen for the new year 2022 is the The Holy Eucharist 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 theme. Please send your picture in image format with the submission along with full name, grade\title and parish information. For drawings, please remember to send an appropriate title.

Send in answers to the Word Search questions to neadssnewsletter@gmail.com. All correct responses will be entered into a raffle draw with prizes for the winner.

Your comments and feedback are most appreciated. Please send them to neadssnewsletter@gmail.com

Please adhere to the 300 word limit. Long articles maybe returned back without publishing. The number of pages maybe restricted with a view to sustain readability, so not all articles received may make it to the next issue of the newsletter.

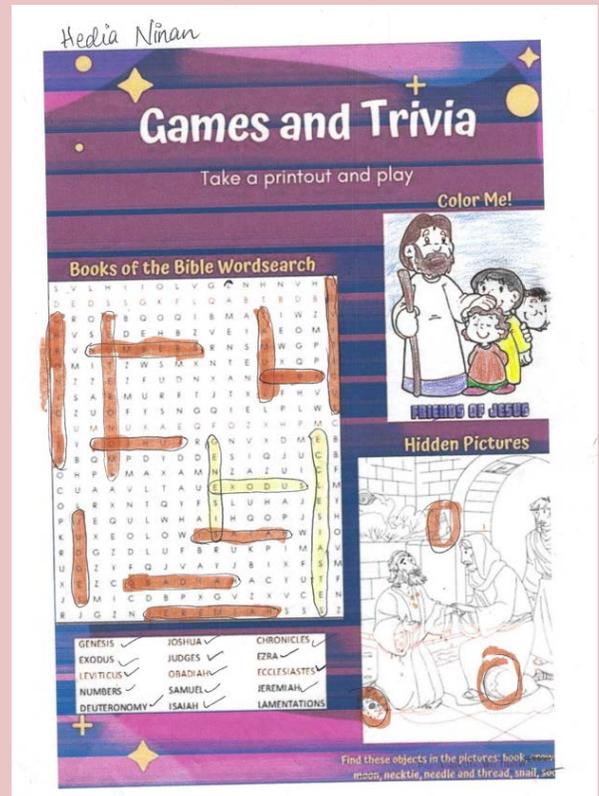
Please send all submissions to neadssnewsletter@gmail.com

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

Christmas Social 2021

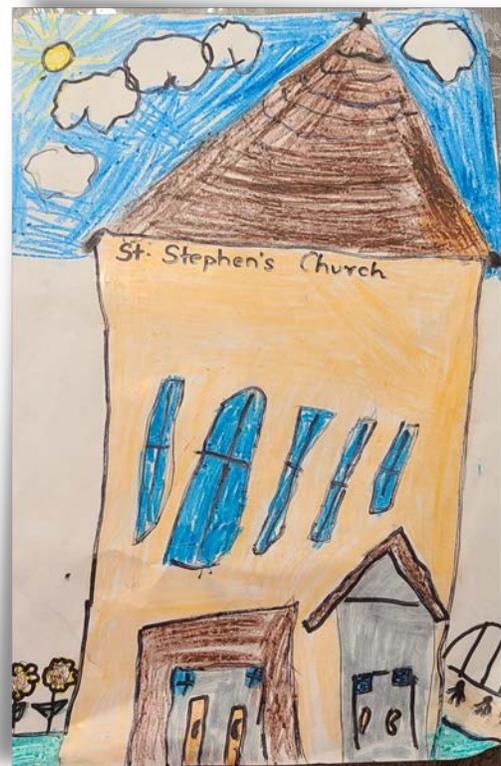
The Diocese celebrated its annual Sunday school Christmas social on Dec 11, presided over by the Diocesan Metropolitan HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos. Like in 2020, it was held online due to the pandemic. The amazing talents of the children were beautifully showcased. Online games and trivia made the program very entertaining. The Christmas message was delivered by Seminarian Sanjay Mathew from Toronto. Dr. Shiny Raju, the Talent Show Coordinator and her team put together a great show.

SOLUTION TO BIBLE WORDSEARCH IN GAMES N TRIVIA ISSUE 3



MY CHURCH

ANGELINA MATHEN, GRADE 2
ST. STEPHEN'S INDIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH, MIDLAND PARK, NJ



Let the Verses Flow

GOD LOVES YOU

MELVIN BIJU , GRADE 10

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



God loves you no matter who you are
No matter where you're from
No matter your race
No matter your height
No matter your wealth
God loves you
God loves everyone
God does not have favorites
God does not hate anyone
God loves you
And even when the world is against you
God will always love you

WHO WAS JESUS?

NISHA NIBU, GRADE 10

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



Jesus lived a life that was quite extraordinary
Brought into the world by the Holy Spirit through the Virgin Mary
Jesus was born in a little manger in Bethlehem
God's only Son saved us from mayhem

The mention of Jesus dated back to the Old Testament
Prophecies about the future Messiah, a significant element
Known for the selfless sacrifice that was fulfilling
Used parables that reveal a hidden meaning

He was Baptized by the prophet John the Baptist
With God's help he was able to pass the devil's test
One by one, Jesus chose His 12 disciples
Aware of all the future hard trails

His love that was so unconditional
Turned water into wine as His first miracle
Would always help the poor and oppressed
But not everyone was happy, which needed to be addressed

The officials despised Him and they made a final decision
As he took his last breath on the cross, he fought for our remission
If we ask for forgiveness like the penitent thief
You will enter the Kingdom of Heaven with relief

After three days He resurrected
By His body and blood, we are protected
Now as believers, we should live like Jesus Christ
A Man that turned a world of darkness into light

THE PROMISE OF CHRISTMAS

EMIL GEORGE SONY , GRADE 7

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
YONKERS, NY



Christmas is here, with its lights and promises of hope,
A time of love, peace and joy,
But, how though, did this day come to be?
Did the prophecies of yore come true?
Oh yes the birth of Christ, fulfills the promise of our
Redeemer's coming!

When Gabriel came to Mary, fair in her youth,
And said that she, would be the Mother of the Messiah,
How you ask, did she find such favor with God?
Chosen she was, for being the epitome of humility and
immovable faith,
And as the Lord's servant willingly accepted His will for her.

God had chosen Joseph to be a companion for Mary,
Afraid and hesitant he was at first,
Thus Gabriel appeared to Joseph as well,
Assuring him of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in Mary,
So Joseph the wood worker, married the Theotokos
obediently in faith.

Jesus, the Son of Almighty God was born in a lowly manger!
Amidst a bright star gracing the sinful sky, the birth of
Light to disrupt darkness,
Worshipped by mere shepherds as well as kingly wise men
with gifts fit for a Godly King,
Tis the season to celebrate the gift of Christ in our lives
instead of commodities we value,
Ready to embrace our Savior's indwelling in and amongst us!

GOD'S LOVE

MARIYA GEORGE, GRADE 8

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH,
YONKERS, NY



Blessed am I, I know this is true
It's such a great feeling that I never knew
God puts his arms around us
And lifts us to rest.

Gods love is so beautiful
He's always the best
No need to worry
When God's in control.

It is very clear
That God cares for us all
Through every trial we face,
The Lord is always near

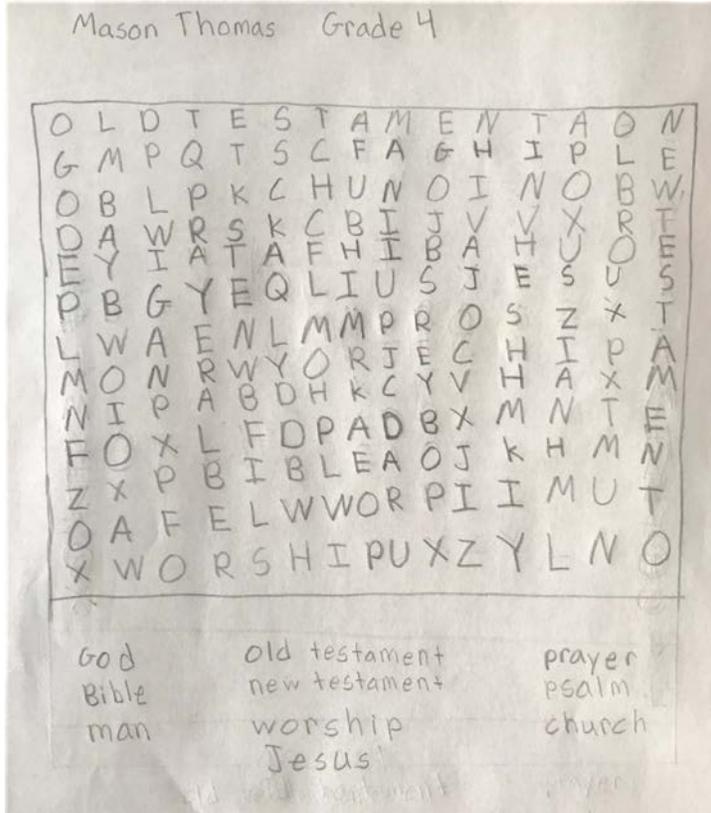
God be with us,
He is our light
In His presence
everything is bright

We are not in a race
For God loves us all
Rather wait and pray because we are all
Saved forever by His grace

WORD SEARCH

MASON THOMAS, GRADE 4

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



WORD SEARCH

NEVIN NIBU, GRADE 5

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



12 Disciples of Jesus

P T I M S S J T V W N T
 U L G I A O H H R E W H
 X P M M H J J A P M U H
 H O O N H Y X D P O V L
 N H S A D U J D S L C G
 T B M J E B Q A T O V T
 L H S J A S M E L H H S
 U W Z O A N W U K T J I
 C K C N W M D S I R A U
 V N E P E T E R D A M S
 P I L I H P F S E B E F
 U O Q M A T T H E W S E

Andrew	Bartholomew	James
James	John	Judas
Matthew	Peter	Philip
Simon	Thaddaeus	Thomas

FUN FACTS FROM THE BIBLE

HEDIA SABU NINAN, GRADE 7
ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH,
BELLOROSE, NY



1. According to the Bible, the longest-lived man is Methuselah (696 years). (Genesis 5:27)
2. Abraham remarried after Sarah died to Keturah and had 6 children with her. (Genesis 25:1, 1 Chronicles 1:33)
3. Enoch and Elijah are the two people who were taken up to heaven. (Gen 5:21-24), (2 Kings 2:11).
4. The animals that spoke in the Bible were the serpent and Ballam's ass. (Numbers 22:21-30, Genesis 3:1-5)
5. The longest verse in the Bible is Esther 8:9.
6. Ehud is the 1st left-handed person mentioned in the Bible. He was a judge who was sent by God to deliver Israelites from the Moabites. (Judges 3:12-4:1)
7. Jehoash, the youngest king in the Bible, started his reign at the age of 7 years. (2 Kings 12)
8. The prophet Nathan gave Solomon the name "Jedidah" which meant "Beloved of the Lord." (2 Samuel 12:25)

9. The bronze serpent raised by Moses is called the Nehushtan. (2 Kings 18:4-5)
10. The number of chapters in Isaiah is equal to the total number of books in the Bible (66).
11. The Bible never states that there were only three wise men. Most people assumed that there were three due to the number of gifts stated.
12. Philippians is seen as the happiest book of the Bible, yet it was written in prison.
13. The world's largest Bible weighs 1,094 pounds.
14. There are no physical descriptions of Jesus in the Bible.
15. There are a total of 188 women named in the Bible.

References-

1. NIV Bible
2. www.crosswalk.com
3. <https://www.learnreligions.com/>
4. <https://www.factretriever.com/bible-facts>
5. <https://www.charleston-hub.com>

Hedia Ninan and Hannah Ninan from St. John's Orthodox Church Bellerose, NY will be entered into a raffle draw held later for correctly answering the Trivia questions from Vol 1 Issue 3. Congratulations!!

WORD SEARCH

SERENA GEORGE, GRADE 4

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



A	J	D	A	E	T	Y	H	J	P	M	W	O	R	S	H	I	R
L	F	M	X	G	N	E	K	Z	O	I	Z	M	A	R	Y	O	G
E	O	Z	Y	O	C	A	B	J	Q	R	V	N	M	C	W	X	T
F	O	L	W	D	W	K	Q	S	T	A	G	H	J	I	N	T	E
J	O	Q	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	E	J	T	S	T	M
A	T	S	L	M	Q	F	R	E	I	H	G	O	M	T	U	V	P
Z	Y	X	I	T	A	B	W	S	J	K	L	B	G	E	A	W	L
N	Z	O	L	J	B	C	B	O	H	E	A	V	E	N	F	L	E
N	A	L	I	G	H	I	Z	O	O	I	J	K	P	Q	X	Y	A
C	L	Z	Y	J	X	T	A	S	L	O	P	A	L	M	T	O	V
R	J	V	E	F	L	N	Z	Y	A	D	N	U	S	M	L	A	P
O	U	S	R	T	S	U	Z	J	H	O	L	Y	S	P	I	R	T
S	U	L	Z	F	Q	R	N	A	Z	A	R	E	T	H	L	J	O
S	I	C	O	V	C	S	J	O	S	E	P	H	T	L	M	Q	J

1. Jesus 4. Mary 7. Bethlehem 10. Temple
 2. Heaven 5. God 8. Palm Sunday 11. Nazareth
 3. Holy Spirit 6. Joseph 9. Cross 12. Worship

In our busy day to day life, we often forget to be thankful for the simple things that we enjoy, but take for granted, such as food, clothing, health, shelter, job, family and friends. Thanksgiving Day gives us the opportunity to be grateful for what we have, and offer our support to people. Beyond being thankful for what we have, we need to consider those people around us who are in suffering. While getting together with friends and family, we need to refresh our memories by looking back to some beautiful moments of our life, and recreate new memories. It is that time of the year when people forget their differences in opinion and conflict, and partake in the celebration of unity, and of being thankful. Thanksgiving Day is a meaningful occasion that gives us an opportunity to spend time with family and friends, and be grateful to Almighty, in reflection of the good things we have in our life.

WORD SEARCH

JAXEN VARUGHESE, GRADE 4

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



B	I	B	L	E	T	Z	Q	R	R	T	J	E	R	G	Y	O	U	R	T
R	Q	W	E	E	Y	X	O	U	V	U	U	W	E	S	H	I	V	E	U
A	B	O	R	R	S	J	F	F	D	M	S	T	I	F	H	B	V	E	U
T	O	T	I	U	R	H	G	W	Z	A	Z	Z	I	K	U	S	V	V	N
A	C	A	S	T	C	Z	I	G	G	H	V	A	R	U	X	T	W	E	L
R	A	E	T	Q	C	O	N	W	N	A	D	F	I	H	U	T	L	O	Y
Y	J	U	H	N	J	L	T	H	E	R	Y	O	X	K	K	S	T	E	P
F	E	C	K	L	Y	D	H	H	H	B	E	L	I	E	V	E	P	E	G
Y	R	O	N	E	W	T	E	S	T	A	M	E	N	T	H	H	H	K	G
T	U	K	T	O	T	E	E	M	F	E	U	K	K	N	K	O	L	K	J
E	S	N	J	J	G	S	J	N	D	H	G	M	K	K	T	Q	Q	T	U
B	A	B	F	K	E	T	K	T	D	Q	F	H	O	I	T	Q	R	I	G
R	L	T	Y	Q	S	A	F	I	T	I	L	O	L	Y	U	L	M	R	H
T	E	H	Y	W	U	M	Y	O	A	G	C	Z	H	S	K	G	T	I	K
D	M	J	N	S	S	E	L	H	K	W	H	P	Z	L	I	Y	Y	P	I
J	M	N	E	K	U	N	O	Y	M	W	D	J	L	Z	S	B	T	S	N
K	F	O	T	O	Y	T	H	E	S	T	A	R	Y	E	K	N	R	Y	J
H	I	N	S	K	T	O	D	N	J	J	R	Y	R	U	S	K	I	L	T
U	Y	U	K	E	K	U	G	J	V	J	F	Y	A	K	S	I	A	O	R
I	U	T	U	U	S	U	L	E	K	I	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C

Word Bank:

- Bible
- Jesus
- Christmas
- Moses
- Ten Disciples
- Believe
- The Star
- Holy
- Jacob
- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Mary
- Jerusalem
- Holy Spirit
- Abraham

THANKSGIVING IN THE HOLY BIBLE

ASHER KALLOOR VARGHESE, GRADE 8

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH, YONKERS, NY



“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is He that made us, and we are His, we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him, bless His name! For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.” Psalm 100.(Psalm 99 in OSB)

Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday on which families come together to feast, and to give thanks to God for the blessings they are provided with, in their lives. We have to thank our Lord Jesus Christ for the privilege to serve Him with gladness and great joy. We thank Him that He is our God, and that He created us, the sheep of His pasture. We thank Him for His goodness, mercy and truth.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

ALYSSA SHAJI, GRADE 12

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



When thinking of the definition of a Christian, people tend to think of it as a word that describes someone that prays and reads the Bible every day. We affiliate the concept of going to Church and giving to the poor as a part of Christian duties. Undoubtedly, these are all aspects of a Christian's life; however, being a Christian goes beyond those duties. The hardest part of being a Christian is abiding by the rules of love, even in the midst of hatred and chaos.

The core principle of Christianity is to work towards serving the Lord and obtain this desire to seek out the true meaning of being a believer. A Christian is someone who is ready to instill a heart of love. Depending on the situation, providing someone with forgiveness is quite difficult. However, it is this action that sets apart a Christian from the rest. It is through the love of Jesus that we are given the strength to forgive and forget.

As a Christian, you have the responsibility of sharing the confidence that you feel in your faith to others. However, spreading the word of God is not as easy as it seems. Especially nowadays, people have various different opinions and beliefs. Learning to maneuver around these differences of opinions, and teaching the true meaning of the Scripture, will prove to be a difficult, yet rewarding task.

Taking on the title of a Christian is a very important role that comes with many tasks. Spreading the word to others and forgiving others are two important responsibilities that are handed to anyone willing to take on the challenge of being a Christian. Every day is a battle for Christians to face, and learning to grow a sense of motivation to protect the light of Christianity is important.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL GATHERING IN CHURCH

NOELLE VARGHESE, GRADE 10

MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



Attending Church on Sunday mornings and partaking in the Holy Qurbana may seem like a monotonous and fixed schedule that lacks significance. I've always believed that praying at home had the same effect as praying at Church. After all, I knew that God doesn't judge us for where we are when we call out to him; He always listens to us. Furthermore, I knew that God is omnipresent so I was assured that I could call on Him anywhere and at any time. However, I failed to understand the necessity of attending Church when I could just pray at home.

These thoughts had plagued my mind for quite a long time. However, after the first wave of COVID 19 caused Churches to close, I had an eye-opening realization. During the quarantine era of the pandemic, I continued practicing my daily prayers as usual. However, when I watched Qurbana virtually, I was shocked at the difference in feeling. I felt a major lack of connection and attentiveness during the service. I couldn't believe it, but at that point, I missed attending Church and actively participating in the Holy Qurbana with my Church family. It was then that I began to realize the significance of physical gathering in the Church.

The Church's physical gathering is a visible expression of its spiritual nature. These gatherings are crucial to strengthen our belief in God's promises. The lack of connection that I felt when I couldn't physically go to Church hindered my spiritual growth. Along with that, the Qurbana felt meaningless and dull through a screen and I missed singing the beautiful Church hymns in person. Although virtual prayer allows us to visually see the Holy Qurbana, it is virtually impossible for it to give us the same spiritual connection as physical gathering in Church.

Throughout the Bible, we can even see important events occur when the believers are physically gathered together, one of the most momentous, being the Holy Pentecost. When the Church was born on Pentecost, the unity of Spirit was expressed through public gatherings. In Acts 2:42-46 it states, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers... all who believed were together... continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." In this verse, the usage of the words, continually, together, and one accord, all demonstrate the idea of gathering together in Church as a community.

Realizing the importance of gathering in Church was a major revelation for me. I was ashamed of my prior thoughts and feelings of annoyance when faced with the idea of going to Church. I failed to understand how our Church and faith was built upon the physical gathering of believers. Now that I understand the importance of attending Church physically, I genuinely look forward to Sunday mornings where I can cultivate my relationship with God within the walls of the holy sanctuary.

IMPORTANT LINKS:

NE American Diocese Sunday School Website: <http://nesundayschool.org/>

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church: <http://mosc.in/>

NE American Diocese: <http://www.neamericandiocese.org/index.aspx>

Diocese of South West America: <http://www.ds-wa.org/>

Outside Kerala region OVBS: <http://ovbsokr.org/>

Online Resource site for Sunday School: <https://ossaebodhanam.org/>

"Thank you for giving our children a voice"
~ A Ma'altho Reader

CHRISTMAS TIME

AYDEN ABEY , GRADE 9

ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

PHILADELPHIA, PA



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

HANNAH S. NINAN , GRADE 11

ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

BELLEROSE, NY



BISHOP

BABY AJAY , TEACHER

ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

BELLEROSE, NY



THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

KEVIN MATHEW PRINCE, GRADE 6

ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

BELLEROSE, NY





Story of the Quarter: Bible Quiz - A Potent Tool To Learn the Scriptures



The Diocesan Bible Quiz competitions in the past have had moments of great tension due to the intense competition and rivalry among the teams. In the past there have been occasions of sharp arguments between teams and organizers in the aftermath of Bible Quiz events. So much so that there have been calls to even scrap the annual competition from many quarters.

However the value of the Bible Quiz event cannot be understated. This event that was originally added to the Diocesan competitions from the time of Mundukuzhy achen of blessed memory has served as a potent tool for students across the diocese to study the Holy Scriptures in depth every year. However the concern that this event was becoming too competitive of late was growing.

It was in this background, and in the context of the pandemic, that the Diocesan Bible Quiz was held online in 2021. The organizers implemented a masterstroke of a change in the format by adding three categories of prizes GOLD, SILVER and BRONZE with multiple winners in each category - instead of the traditional prize for the top 2. By doing this, the organizers eliminated the intense competition and related heartburn around the event, while at the same time retaining the motivation to keep up the learning of the Scriptures.

More than half of the parishes in the diocese participated in the Bible Quiz and there were 15 winning teams across the categories! This means a good amount of our students spent several weeks and months this year reading and learning the Gospel of St. John which can only bring untold blessings in their lives ahead. A complete report of the Bible Quiz is given by Mrs. Reny Biju the Talent Exhibitions Coordinator for the Diocese in the Officials' Corner.

For its innovative spirit, ability to change and its inherent value as a potent tool to learn the Holy Scriptures, the Bible Quiz event held in October has been chosen as the story of the quarter.

BIBLE QUIZ WINNERS

GOLD

- St. Thomas Orthodox Church (Yonkers, NY)
- St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church (Floral Park, NY)
- St. Baselios Malankara Orthodox Church (Elmont, NY)
- St. Mary's Orthodox Church (Jackson Heights, NY)
- St. Mary's Orthodox Church (Boston, MA)
- St. John's Indian Orthodox Church (Delaware Valley, PA)
- St. Mary's Orthodox Church (Philadelphia, PA)

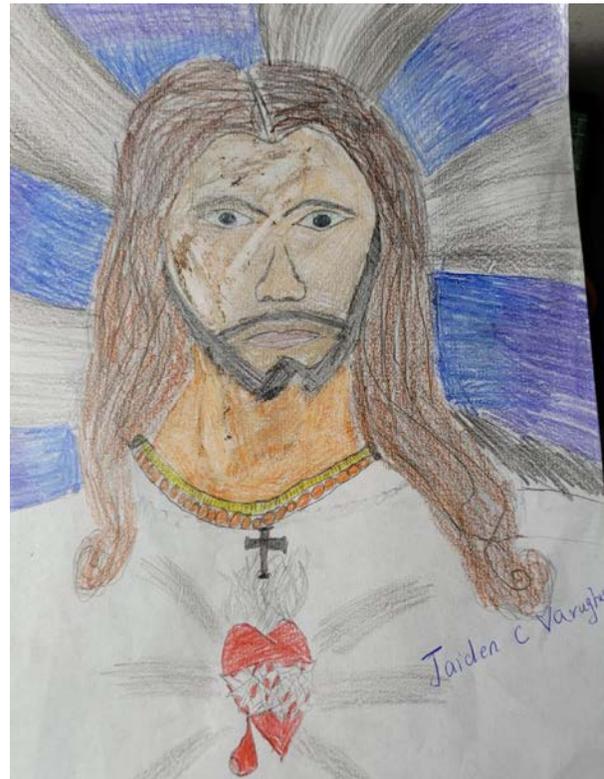
SILVER

- St. John's Malankara Orthodox Church (Orangeburg, NY)
- St. Mary's Orthodox Church (Linden, NJ)
- St. Gregorios Orthodox Church (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

BRONZE

- St. Mary's Orthodox Church (Staten Island, NY)
- St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church (Clifton, NJ)
- St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church (Hartford, CT)
- St. Mary's Indian Orthodox Church (Northern VA)
- St. Barnabas Indian Orthodox Mission (Gaithersburg, MD)

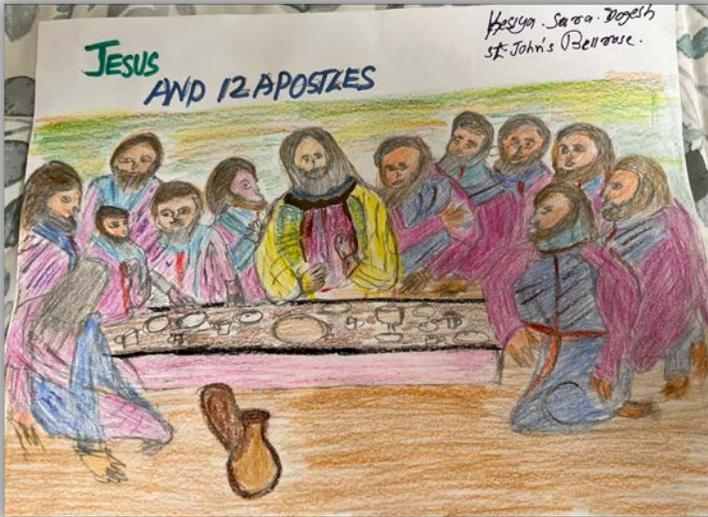
CHRIST OUR LORD
JAIDEN VARUGHESE , GRADE 7
MAR GREGORIOS ORTHODOX SYRIAN
CHURCH OF INDIA, STATEN ISLAND, NY



CHRIST IN PRAYER
KESIYA YOGESH , GRADE 6
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLEROSE, NY



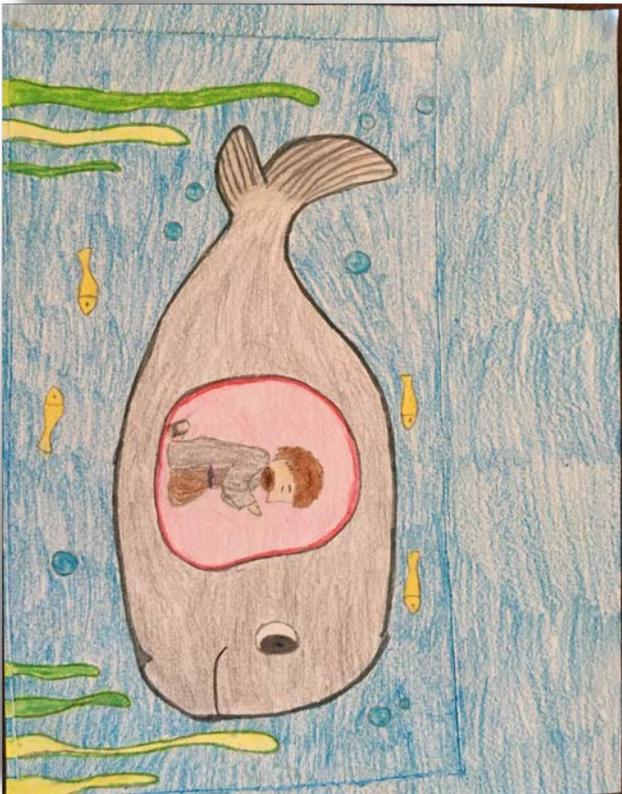
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
SARAH ANN SONY, GRADE 4
ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX
CHURCH, YONKERS, NY



JONAH AND THE WHALE
SERAPHINA THARIAN , GRADE 5
ST.MARY'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY



CROSS AND DOVE
IRENE ANN BIJI , GRADE 9
ST.THOMAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
HARTFORD, CT



GOD'S WORLD

**JUHI AJAY , GRADE 4
ST. JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
BELLEROSE, NY**



ADAM AND EVE

**ADAM KOSHY, PRE-K
ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX
CHURCH, RIDGEFIELD PARK, NJ**



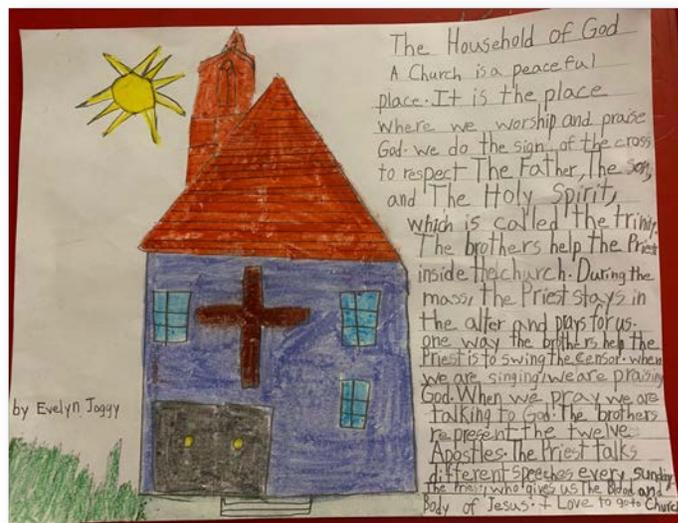
CHILDREN AROUND JESUS

**SAIRA KOSHY , GRADE 1
ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH
RIDGEFIELD PARK, NJ**



HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

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



"God is love and the Church has to reflect that nature. It is love that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts; without love, there is neither Church nor ministry. Failure to love lies at the root of the failure in the Church's ministry."

~ Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios



Illustration by Sarah Daniel

**RELATIONSHIP BRIDGE - FOLLOW THE CHILD
PREETHA KINGSVIEW, ASSOC. EXAM
COORDINATOR & PRINCIPAL, ST. MARY'S
ORTHODOX CHURCH, MAYNARD, MA**



In St. Mathew 18:1-3, Jesus Christ is asking us to become like children. Following children is often the last thing we think of as a parent, teacher, or adult. However, Jesus emphasizes the secret to the entry into the Kingdom of God lies in a keen and unbiased observation of children. Such observation leads to creating space and opportunities in daily lives to learn from children around us. The keyword is from them, not about them. Asking ourselves, how do children approach the unknown, act in faith, handle unpredictability or decide to make a choice? Children are naturally curious, open-minded, and sincerely wake up ready to learn from every minute of their day, ready to face the unknown, ready to mingle and go along with what adults and the world provides. Children are naturally brave and capable of meeting the unknown with spontaneous actions or words. The agility that adults lose over the years of experience and age, children are born to gain and strengthen as they grow. Being mindful of this relationship bridge that children offered, Jesus knew how to keep himself humble, solid, and deeply passionate in his faith.

In St. Mathew 19:14, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, do not hinder them for such is a kingdom of heaven." We see Jesus creating a space for children to coexist, and he is willing to guide them through faith and compassion. Jesus is clearly not expressing an opinion on children, simply blessing them and praying to strengthen the belief together with children. Jesus is modeling inclusion by creating a space for a minority group, in this case: children. According to Dr. Maria Montessori (1949), an Italian educator, physician, and scientist, the child is endowed with unknown powers to guide us to a radiant future. Montessori continues to explain if what we want is a new world, and then education must take as its aim the development of these hidden possibilities (*The Absorbent Mind*, p.4)." In St. Mark 10:15-16, Jesus solidifies the importance of learning from children again, so we allow ourselves to nurture the child within us and receive love and faith like children naturally do. So as teachers and parents, no matter how much we think our job is to teach and parent children, Jesus teaches us to create a pathway, a space to learn from children and allow children to be who they are meant to become. The reality is we are significantly behind in understanding the challenges of being born an American citizen while trying to live as a Malayalee and Orthodox Christian. Unless our pathway is a two-way relationship bridge, we are hindering the future and very existence of children in our Church. As leaders, can we build a community with viable accommodations to include children more within our Service and Faith? Isn't it a fact that the majority of the Bible teaches how we as adults should live while a few powerful quotes of Jesus give us so much depth and meaning of the world of opportunities our children have to offer?

Officials' Corner

**BIBLE QUIZ - 2021
RENY BIJU,
TALENT EXHIBITION COORDINATOR**



Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.
By the grace of God, Northeast American Diocese Sunday School board successfully conducted our first Online Bible Quiz on October 16, 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique challenge this year. The safety protocols and guidelines did not allow for any in-person events. As a result, all solo events for the Talent Competitions were suspended for 2021. However, it was decided that the Bible Quiz would be held virtually at the Diocese level and all Sunday schools within the Diocese would be invited to participate. The Gospel of St. John from the Orthodox Study Bible was selected as the book for the Bible Quiz. After a long and detailed evaluation of multiple tools, Quizizz was selected as the platform to conduct the quiz. This platform provided the flexibility to conduct the Quiz efficiently, record the results electronically with a focus on transparency and ease of use to the participants.

29 teams from the 55 plus churches within the Northeast American Diocese, participated in the online Bible Quiz. The teams worked hard and prepared very well. On October 16, the entire quiz with 25 questions was completed in record time of less than 45 minutes. The new tiered award structure was appreciated by all. Out of the 29 teams, we had **15 winning teams with 7 GOLD, 3 SILVER and 5 BRONZE awards.**

Special thanks to the 25 volunteers from different parishes who volunteered six Saturday mornings to get trained on the tool, the process and finally helped conduct the Quiz successfully. Our technical team consisted of NEAD SS Technical Lead **Kiran Prakash** of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Bensalem, PA along with **Mrs. Reena Susan Mathews, Ms. Nissi Zachariah and Ms. Rachel Melavila** from St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, Philadelphia (Unruh), PA. I am thankful to Sunday school Director Rev. Fr. Shawn Thomas, Sunday school Secretary Mrs. Aju Tharian and all the Diocesan Board members, area coordinators, vicars, Sunday school principals, parents, teachers and all children for your whole-hearted participation, support, and prayers. This would not have been possible without you!

I am grateful to the Quizmaster who spent countless hours to read the book, create the quiz questions, upload the questions into Quizizz, and evaluate the responses. Quoting the words of the Quizmaster **"It is so amazing to think that 29 teams across the diocese participated in the Bible but more than that, it brings me such joy to know that so many of our children dedicated their time and effort to study the Gospel according to St John in preparation for today. I pray that reading the Gospel to such depth gave them the same joy that it gave me as I prepared the quiz questions. I pray that it was a transformative experience and our children will be able to utilize this new knowledge and appreciation for Scripture, both in their lives and for the Kingdom."**

All for His Glory! Thank You!