

St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church,
Greater Washington



St. Thomas Mirror



May

2014

Ascension of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



Vicar's Message

Dearly Beloved ones in Christ Jesus,

The ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven is recorded in Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:36-53, Acts 1:6-12, and 1 Timothy 3:16. In God's plan of salvation, Jesus Christ had been crucified for the sins of mankind, died, and rose from the dead. Following his resurrection, he appeared many times to his disciples. Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus called his 11 apostles together on the Mount of Olives, outside Jerusalem. Still not completely understanding that Christ's messianic mission had been spiritual and not political, the disciples asked Jesus if he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel. They were frustrated with Roman oppression and may have envisioned an overthrow of Rome. Jesus answered them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:7-8, NIV)

Then Jesus was taken up, and a cloud hid him from their sight. As the disciples were watching him ascend, two angels dressed in white robes stood beside them and asked why they were looking into the sky. The angels said: "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11, NIV). At that, the disciples walked back to Jerusalem to the upstairs room where they had been staying and held a prayer meeting. Points of Interest from the Ascension of Jesus Bible Story: In the Bible, a cloud is often the expression of God's power and glory, as in the book of Exodus, when a pillar of cloud guided the Jews in the desert. Earlier, Jesus had told the disciples that after he ascended, the Holy Spirit would come down upon them with power. At Pentecost, they received the Holy Spirit like tongues of fire. Today, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who gives wisdom and power to live the Christian life.

The command of Jesus to his followers was to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. The gospel first spread to the Jews, then to the Jewish/mixed race Samaritans, then to the Gentiles. Christians have a responsibility to spread the good news about Jesus to all who have not heard. Jesus' mission on earth had been accomplished. He returned to heaven, where he had come from. He took on a human body and will forever remain both God and man in his glorified state.

So I wish to conclude that the ascension and the last words of Christ Jesus demand us to do the second motto of the Holy Church i.e. Mission to the downtrodden, marginalized and to the poor.

Yours in Christ

Fr. Johnson C. John Chirathalckal MSW, M. Phil., Ph. D.

May 2014 Worship Schedules

SATURDAY

05/17/2014

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

-Evening Prayer

-Song Practice

05/24/2014

Monthly Prayer Meeting

6:00 - 8:30 PM

Mr. Joy C. Thomas & Jessy Joy

21108 Surrey Way, Sterling, VA 20164

(H) 703-450-1997, kjoythomas@yahoo.com

SUNDAY

05/04/2014 – Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. Thomas Varghese (Gigi)
[Exodus 14:26-31, Joshua 6:9-21, Great Wisdom 1:1-8]

Epistle Reading: Kevin Shibu & Stephen Sam
[Acts 13:26-39, Ephesians 6:10-20]

05/11/2014 – English

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading : Sunu Koshy, Amy Abraham & Renu Thomas

[Exodus 40:1-16, Joshua 2:1-6, Isaiah 49:13-21]
Epistle Reading: Alex Johnny & Bennet thomas
[Acts 4:8-21, Hebrews 3:1-13]

05/18/2014 – Malayalam

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading family: Mr. Bixa Kurian Kanneth
[Exodus 34:4-12, Micah 4:1-7, Zachariah 8:4-9]

Epistle Reading: Steve Sam & Alex Johnson
[I John 5:13-21, Hebrews 11:3-6]

05/25/2014 – English

Morning Prayer 8:30 - 9:30 am.

O.T. Bible Reading : Sneha Abraham, Anna Abraham & Avishai Jacob

[Deuteronomy 16:1-8, Joshua 8:30-35, Isaiah 54:1-8]
Epistle Reading: Kevin Shibu & Ajesh John
[I Peter 3:17-22, Hebrews 11:32-40]

MMVS Announcements

May 4th - Message by Dr. Reena

May 11th - Bible study

May 18th - Message by Kochamma

May 25th - Bible study

Bala Balika Samajam Announcements

May 25th

Story Telling - Hannah Thomas.

Speech - Bennet Thomas

Solo Song (Malayalam) - Sneha Abraham

Solo Song (English) - Ashley Thomas

Bible Reading - Johan Thomas & Justin Thomas

Men's Forum & Focus Announcements

Bible Class by:

May 4th - Eapen Varghese

May 11th - Eapen Varghese

May 18th - Eapen Varghese

May 25th - Eapen Varghese

Dates to remember

05/04 : First Sunday after New Sunday

05/11 : Second Sunday after New Sunday

05/18 : Third Sunday after New Sunday

05/24 : Monthly Prayer Meeting

05/25 : Fourth Sunday after New Sunday

05/29 : Ascension of our Lord (Thursday after the fourth Sunday following New Sunday)

Food Roster

05/04 - Suresh Varghese

05/11 - Binu Abraham

05/18 - T.M. Chacko

05/25 - T.P. Abraham

Member's Corner

Know about our Fathers commemorated in the 5th Thubden

..... Continued

16. Mar Yakob Burdana Bardesheus. Jacob was born in Thella, Alexandria as the son of an Alexandrian priest called Theophilus as the result of his parents' prayer and fasting for a son. His parents offered him for the service of God. As a result Jacob became a monk and after the death of his parents sold all his wealth and properties and gave it to the poor. He always wore a very thick cloth, that too torn and stitched here and there. So he was called by others Bardesheus which means "he who wears torn clothes". During those days the Emperor of Constantinople followed the Chalcedon heresy and the Queen Theodora was a staunch Orthodox believer. The Emperor imprisoned many of the Orthodox bishops and patriarchs including Anthimoss the Patriarch of Constantinople. At the same time Theodora helped those Holy Fathers in prison secretly. The church faced a very crucial period. One night the queen managed to bring Jacob Bardessus in the prison very secretly who was ordained there by three imprisoned Patriarchs as a bishop of Uraha in AD 541. There he toured far and wide in many places for the establishment of the Church. During these long journeys he ordained two Patriarchs, one for Antioch and another for Alexandria, 89 bishops 102027 priests and many deacons and sub deacons. The opponents nicknamed his followers as Jacobites after his name. The Roman Church, the Chalcedonian heretics persecuted the Holy Father in many ways with the help of the Emperor. He died in AD 578 in the Egyptian monastery of Romanos.

Four poets of the Church (Mar Aprem, Mar Jacob, Mar Isaac and Mar Balai)

17. Mar Aprem: He was born in Nizilion. For 38 years he lived in a monastery as a monk and for 10 years he was the Principal of the school of Edessa. He was all the time a deacon and a poet. He was one of the 318 Holy Fathers who attended the Ecumenical Synod of Nicea. His famous Bovoosa are in our prayers. We recite his poem every day when we go to bed. "Njangalkulla Karthave" or Karthave Krupa Chayyaname".

18. Mar Yucub: He was born in a village in Euphretes valley. He came out as a great scholar from the Theological school of Edessa. Became the bishop of Dasrag(519). He wrote so many church hymns, and a communion and Baptism service orders. He became the famous Church poet of the 5th century. He died in 526 A.D.

19. Mar Isaac: 365 – 466 (Omeed): Disciple of Mar Aprem: He was great monk, bishop, poet and author. Unfortunately, we didn't get any collection of his poems in our prayers.

20. Mar Balai: Arch Priest, Author and poet.

21. Mar Bar Sauma (Chief among mourners): Great Monk, Bishop and teacher. As a monk he followed strict asceticism with fasting and prayer. He himself founded a community of monks called 'mourners'. As the superior of the order, he is known as the 'Chief of mourners'.

22. Mar Simon Stylite: (Antioch 397 – 459) Stylite = Pillar Saint. He was a great monk who spent time on the top of a pillar for 18 long years. Esthono = Pillar. Desthuni = Saint on pillar. He died in 459.

23. Mar Abhai: (Village Ruksan in Mardin) After the death of his parents, he sold all his properties and joined the monastery. He gave out all his wealth to the poor. He became bishop of Nicea. He revolutionized the monastic order of life in the 5th century.

References:

St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Kollam

Sleeba and Kymtha Worship in the Holy Qurbana Book

In our Holy Qurbana book there are 2 sets of offices prescribed for the Sunday worship prior to the Holy Qurbana. One set of offices are under the heading Sleeba (Cross) and the other under the heading Kymtha (Resurrection).

Before learning when we use the Kymtha and Sleeba offices, it is important to understand the liturgical cycle of the Church. The liturgical cycle of the Church is divided into 6 seasons:

1. Feast of Sanctification (Qoodosh Etho) – Liturgical Year begins with the feast of sanctification. The Church has decided that the first Sunday that falls between October 30 and November 5 (inclusive) should be celebrated as the Feast of Sanctification.
2. Birth of Savior (Yeldho) – Christmas – December 25 (fixed date)
3. Sunday of Cana (Kothine Sunday) – Beginning of the Great Lent (variable date)
4. Kymtha (Resurrection) – Easter Sunday (variable date)
5. Pentecost (Penthicosthi)– Pentecost Sunday is 50 days after the Easter Sunday(variable date)
6. Cross (Sleeba) – Feast of Holy Cross – September 14 (fixed date)

Another term to be familiar with is “Penkeesa” or “Fenqitho”. Penkeesa is a breviary or a book of the prayers, hymns, psalms, and readings for the canonical hours during the feast days. You can see penkeesa prayers used during various feast days of the Church – Christmas, Easter (Kymtha),etc.

When are the Kymtha and Sleeba Offices Used:

The Kymtha offices are used on days that fall during the liturgical period beginning the Sunday of Resurrection (Easter) until the beginning of the feast of Holy Cross. The Sleeba (Cross) offices are used on days that fall during the liturgical period beginning the feast of Holy Cross until the Resurrection day. However, Sunday being a feast day, theme of resurrection, all Sundays throughout the year we could use the Kymtha Penkeesa. Also, the officiating bishop or priest, may choose to use the Sleeba office on feast days regardless of the liturgical cycle.

Another noteworthy point is that the office of Sleeba in the Holy Qurbana book is same as the common prayers (the Shimmo) prescribed for Wednesdays with some minor changes.

Suresh Varghese

References:

Malayalam Holy Qurbana book, M.O.C. Publications

http://malankaraorthodoxchurch.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=119&Itemid=244

Shimmo worship, M.O.C. Publications