



The Stream

A monthly publication of the Diocese of South-West America

June - July 2013

Vol. 2 Issue 5

SPECIAL COMBINED SUMMER EDITION JUNE - JULY 2013



REGIONAL FAMILY AND YOUTH CONFERENCES 2013 Transforming the Diocese One Region at a Time

THEME:

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." I Cor. 12:12

****See details inside - p.4**



Annual Conference of Martha Mariam Samajam

The 5th Annual Conference of the Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam of the Diocese of South-West America of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is scheduled to be held from Friday, September 13, 2013 through Sunday, September 14, 2013 at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. This year's keynote speaker will be Rev. Fr. P.C. George, a renowned convention speaker and the Vicar of St. George Orthodox Church in Vancouver. This year's conference theme is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews chapter 12 verse 14 which states "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." Along with Rev. Fr. P. C. George, our Diocesan Metropolitan, His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius and Dr. Elizabeth Paul of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Los Angeles, CA will be leading some of the sessions. Please be sure to register for this conference once the registration process begins in August and do keep this conference in your prayers.

What's News this Month

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**Stay tuned
for Family
Conference
write-ups
and reviews
in next
month's
issue**

**PLC-
MGOCSM
National
Leadership
Camp was
successfully
held from
July 24-
July 27
at
Kutztown
University,
Pennsylvania**

**Look for
more info in
upcoming
issues**

Ecumenical Corner

Visit by Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan

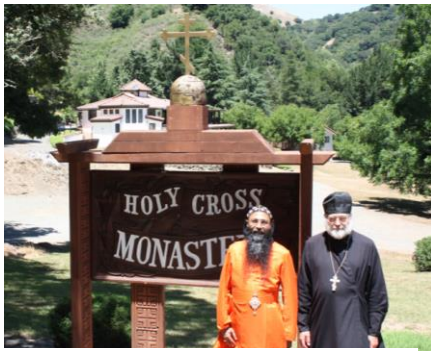
The Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, visited the Diocesan Center on Friday, June 7, 2013. The Mar Thoma Metropolitan was accompanied by Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa, Bishop of the North America - Europe Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church, Rev. Saju Mathew, Vicar, Immanuel Marthoma Church, Houston, and Rev. Jose C. Joseph Mathew, Vicar, Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmer's Branch. His Grace Dr. Zachariah Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of the Malabar Diocese and our diocesan Metropolitan His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius welcomed the



Mar Thoma Metropolitan to the Diocesan Center. Rev. Fr. Varughese Thomas (Diocesan Center Manager), Rev. Fr. Dr. V.C. Varghese (Vicar, St. Mary's Orthodox Church, San Antonio, Texas) and Rev. Fr. Paul T Varghese (Vicar, St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Edmonton, Canada) were also present.

Monastery Visit

Our Thirumeni was able to visit the Holy Cross Monastery in Castro Valley, California. This monastery, started in 1979, belongs to the Orthodox Church in America. The monks have done most of the work themselves, which has transformed the formally rustic rural property into a frontier of paradise. The Monks, through their own effort, have also built the buildings in the monastery, while the monastery strives to be self-sufficient day to day. Truly a monastic oasis.



Sooboro
Wednesday Prayer

Let us unite to pray for others!

Tele-Prayer Meeting in Malayalam

From 10:20am to 11:30am (CST) every Wednesday.

Bible reading, hymns, devotional message,
intercessory prayer for the needy & the sick.

Please send prayer requests to: sooboro@ds-wa.org

Phone #: (218) 632-0187

Access code: 3703#

Metropolitan's Column

Metropolitan's Column

My Beloved in Christ,

August 1-15, is the time of the *Soonoyo* Lent, which culminates with the Feast of the *Soonoyo* (transfer from this world to the next) of *Morth Maryam Yoldath Aloho* (St. Mary the God-bearer).

Before we delve into the thoughts about this Lent, it is pertinent to remind ourselves that this is not simply a fast but also a Lent. We fast on Wednesdays and Fridays but this two week period is considered as one of the five canonical Lenten periods of the Holy Church and should be observed by all members of the Holy Church, both the clergy and the laity.

There is a recent tendency of giving less importance to the canonical August 1-15 Lent and more importance to the uncanonical period of September 1-8, which the Roman Catholics have popularized especially in Kerala in order to remember the Nativity (birth) of St. Mary. We must remember that the Church generally always gives more importance to the feast of the departing of a saint rather than the feast of their birth. This is mainly why the period of September 1-8 is still not included in the Liturgical Calendar (*Panchangam*) of our Church while the August 1-15 *Soonoyo* Lent is still included. However, the shorter length of the time period from September 1-8, combined with the strong influence of the Roman Catholic church in Kerala toward this Feast of the Nativity of St. Mary has also caused our own churches both in and outside Kerala to compete with each other to make the September 1-8 Feast of St. Mary to be more lavish and prominent year after year.

This relatively recent trend elicits the question, "Why do we observe Lent in the first place?" The foundation for Lent is found in the Holy Scriptures. The Pharisees criticized the Apostles for not fasting, but Jesus said to them "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?" As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days" (St. Mark 2:19-20). This prophecy spoken by Christ Himself points to the period after the Ascension of our Lord when the Apostles gathered in prayer and fasting in preparation for their commission to preach the Gospel to the nations.

The intercession of St. Mary is very powerful and very real, as experienced by millions worldwide. By remembering her *Soonoyo* (transfer), may this canonical August 1-15 Lent be a time for us to reflect on the life of St. Mary the God-bearer as we seek to emulate her humility, courage and trust in God's plan for her life. Through her intercession may the Lord have mercy upon our blemishes and provide us a refuge and fortress from all kinds of evil, difficulties and tribulation.

Your shepherd in Christ,
Alexios Mar Eusebius

Regional Family and Youth Conferences 2013 - Concluded!

2013 Regional Family and Youth Conferences - A Summer of Blessings!!!

All the five Regional Family and Youth Conferences were a great blessing and success for our Diocese. The conference theme for this year was "One Body, Though Many Parts" (1 Corinthians 12:12). The Diocesan Metropolitan His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius and His Grace Dr. Yuhanon Mar Demetrius, Metropolitan of Delhi Diocese, were both present and lead each of the conferences. We would like to specifically thank those who contributed to each of the regional conferences:

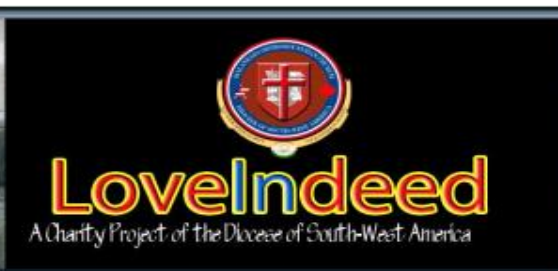
The **Northwest Region** Family & Youth Conference took place from Friday, June 28 to Sunday, June 30, 2013, at the Immaculate Heart Retreat Center, Spokane, WA. We would like to thank, in addition to the two Metropolitans, the main leaders who included Youth Leader Mr. Avram Hamdy of the St. George Coptic Orthodox Church in Seattle and other clergy and laity, and especially the conference committee under the leadership of Conference Convener Very Rev. Fr. Michael Hatcher, Cor Episcopa, Youth Conveners Ms. Sunita Victor and Ms. Meklet Yigezu, Conference Secretary Ms. Virginia Pike, Conference Treasurers Rev. Dn. Gabriel Pike and Ms. Dona Newman Gillmore and all others who helped.

The **South Region** Family & Youth Conference took place from Wednesday, July 3 to Saturday, July 6, 2013, at St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Houston. In addition to the two Metropolitans, we would like to thank the main leaders including Rev. Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew, Dean of Studies, Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, as well as Rev. Fr. James Cheriyan (Detroit), Mrs. Elizabeth Pike (Spokane, WA), Mrs. Achamma Philip (Austin) and other clergy and laity, and especially the conference committee under the leadership of Conference Convener Rev. Fr. Raju Daniel, Youth Convener Rev. Fr. Joel Mathew, and Joint Conveners Very Rev. Fr. Geevarghese Aroopala Cor Episcopa, Rev. Fr. Dr. C.O. Vargis, Rev. Fr. P.M. Cheriyan, Rev. Fr. Mammen Mathew, Rev. Fr. Joshua George and Rev. Fr. Jake Kurian, co-Secretaries Mr. Manoj Thomas and Mr. Rajan Joseph, and all others who helped.

The **Midwest Region** Family & Youth Conference took place from Wednesday, July 10 to Saturday, July 13, 2013, at the Shishewana Conference and Event Center, Shishewana, Indiana. We would like to thank, in addition to the two Metropolitans, the main leaders including His Grace Dr. Abraham Mar Seraphim, Metropolitan of Bangalore Diocese, and other clergy and laity, and especially the conference committee under the leadership of Conference Director Rev. Fr. Daniel George, Conference Convener Rev. Fr. Abraham (Abi) Chacko, Conference Coordinator Mrs. Sibyl Chacko, Conference Secretary Mr. Paul Jacob, Conference Treasurer Mr. Gibson Mammen, and all others who helped.

The **West Region** Family & Youth Conference (F&YC) took place from Thursday, July 18 to Sunday, July 21, 2013, at the Foothills Club, Phoenix, Arizona. In addition to the two Metropolitans, we would like to thank the main leaders including Rev. Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew, Dean of Studies, Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, Rev. Dn. Gabriel Pike, Mrs. Elizabeth Pike and other clergy and laity, and especially the conference committee under the leadership of Conference Convener Rev. Fr. Slomo Isac George, Conference Coordinator Mr. Rajan K. John, Youth Convener Rev. Dn. Samuel (Saju) Varghese, Youth Coordinator Mr. Rohit John Mathew, Conference Secretary Mr. Thomas Mathew, Conference Treasurer Mr. Jenu Mathew, and all others who helped.

The **Southeast Region** Family & Youth Conference took place from Friday, July 26 to Sunday, July 28, 2013, at the Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tampa, Florida. We would like to thank, in addition to the two Metropolitans, the main leaders including Rev. Dn. Abraham Philip, Mrs. Bijy Zachariah and other clergy and laity, and especially the conference committee under the leadership of Conference Convener Rev. Fr. George Paulose (813-838-1756), Joint Convener Ms. Sonia Kallarackal, Youth Conveners Ms. Sheena Mathew and Mr. Riju Thomas, Conference Secretary Mr. Cherian Abraham, Conference Treasurer Mr. Koshy Mammen and all others who helped.



From Around the Diocese



Houston Regional Sunday School Competitions

The second annual Houston Region Sunday School competition of the Diocese of South-West America was held at St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Cathedral, Houston, Texas on Saturday, April 20, 2013. His Grace Zachariah Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of the Malabar Diocese, led the opening prayer.

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Houston was awarded the ever-rolling trophy for first place and St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Austin was awarded the ever-rolling trophy for runner-up.



Asha Abraham Earns Academic Excellence

Asha Abraham, the daughter of Benny and Sally Abraham, is the 2012-2013 Hebron High School salutatorian. She has been involved in numerous extracurricular activities such as the City of Carrollton

Youth Task Force, Hebron A cappella Choir, Student Council, Circle of Friends, National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, Math Club, HOSA, Rays of Sunshine, DECA, and Music Club. She plans to attend Texas A&M University and major in Biology with a minor in Business. Asha is a member of St. Mary's Orthodox Valiyapalli in Dallas, TX. She is an active member of the MGOCSM and participates in various Church activities.



Rentu Regi Achieves Scholastic Excellence

Rentu Regi, the daughter of Regi Pakalomattom and Daisy Thomas, members of Dallas St. Thomas Orthodox Church, was awarded 2012-2013 Richland Collegiate High School Salutatorian title. Rentu has been involved in extracurricular activities and organizations such as the Phi Theta Kappa, Mu Alpha Theta, Richland Chess Club, and DUO (do unto others, a club that raises money for different causes). She plans to attend the University of Texas at Dallas and major in Biology.

MGOCSM DEVOTIONALS

<http://www.mgocsmamerica.com/devotionals>

MGOCSM North America releases weekly devotionals based on the Gospel readings for each week. These devotionals are written by the leaders of the Church - both clergy and lay leaders. This is a great way to revamp your week with self-reflection and in the word. Please subscribe and spread the word in your areas as well!

Slootho

Tuesday Prayer

Let us come together for fellowship and intercession!

Tele-Prayer Meeting in English

From 9:05 pm to 9:35 pm (CST) every Tuesday.

Soothoro prayer, Devotional message,

Intercessory prayer for the needy & the sick.

Please send prayer requests to: slootho@ds-wa.org

Phone # (218) 632-0187

Access code: 3703#

From Around the Diocese

MGOCSM Mission Trip: Tornado Relief in Moore, Oklahoma on June 14-16, 2013

In response to the tornadoes which devastated the city of Moore, Oklahoma, on May 21st and 31st, the MGOCSM of the Diocese of South-West America organized a weekend mission trip to the recovering city to assist in local relief efforts. Many cities in central Oklahoma were impacted by the Spring tornadoes, including Newcastle, Shawnee, South OKC, and El Reno; however, the damage in Moore was the most prominent overall as it resulted in 26 deaths, 300 injuries, and over 12,000 destroyed homes.

On June 14-15, almost thirty MGOCSM members gathered at the Serve Moore Volunteer Headquarters along with MGOCSM of North America General Secretary, Rev. Dn. Daniel Mathai. The team worked nine-hour shifts on both days, cleaning up the debris of former homes and meeting the residents who have lost so much. On Sunday, the volunteers gathered at St. Thomas Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City for Holy Qurbana to conclude the mission trip and pray for the recovering community before returning home.

Volunteer James Jacob from St. Mary's Church of India in Dallas recalls his experience, "I have only seen a tornado's destruction on TV before, but seeing the aftermath in person was no comparison. Things that were two stories high and people's personal possessions were a pile of rubbish. Everything was gone in an instant and I had the opportunity to see what was left. It helped me realize how blessed I am to have what I have and to be satisfied with all of it. In all, it was a great experience and I would be more than happy to help out again."

The South-West Diocese is grateful to all those who have willingly offered their time and prayers to people of Moore, Oklahoma. We would like to recognize the MGOCSM leaders, namely Ms. Clara Thomson (Vice President) and Mr. Ajith Joy (Service Coordinator) of Oklahoma for their outstanding work in researching and organizing the mission trip.



We encourage all MGOCSM units and church organizations to join in continued tornado relief efforts by volunteering for future mission trips, organizing a donation drive, and remembering our brothers and sisters in your prayers. The next mission trip will be on August 2-4. Please contact Ms. Clara Thomson for details (clarathomson@hotmail.com). Opportunities for sending donations can be found through Oklahoma Goodwill Stores (www.okgoodwill.org), Destiny Christian Center (www.destinychristian.com/tornado), and www.moore.recovers.org.

From Around the Diocese

ഭദ്രാസന ദിനാഘോഷം

അമേരിക്കൻ സൗത്ത്വെസ്റ്റ് ഭദ്രാസന ദിനാഘോഷം ഭദ്രാസനത്തിലെ വിവിധ ദേവാലയങ്ങളിൽ പ്രാർത്ഥനാപൂർവ്വം ആചരിച്ചു. എല്ലാവർഷവും ജൂൺമാസം ആദ്യത്തെ ഞായറാഴ്ച ഭദ്രാസന ദിനമായി ആഘോഷിക്കുന്നു. വിശുദ്ധ കുർബ്ബാനയ്ക്കുശേഷം ഭദ്രാസന ദിനാഘോഷത്തിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യത്തെപ്പറ്റിയും ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ വിവിധ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയും ഉദ്ബോധിപ്പിക്കുകയും ഭദ്രാസനത്തിനുവേണ്ടിയും പ്രവർത്തകർക്കുവേണ്ടിയും, പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടിയും പ്രത്യേക പ്രാർത്ഥനകളും നടത്തി. ഭദ്രാസനകേന്ദ്രത്തിൽ ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട മാമ്മൻ മാത്യു അച്ചൻ വിശുദ്ധ കുർബ്ബാന അർപ്പിച്ചു. അഭിവന്ദ്യ സഖരിയ മോർ തേയോഫിലോസ് തിരുമേനി ഭദ്രാസന ദിനാഘോഷത്തിന് നേതൃത്വം നൽകി.



Celebrating Priesthood Silver Jubilee



**Rev. Fr.
Thampan Varghese**
Vicar, St. George,
Dallas, TX



**Rev. Fr.
C.G. Thomas**
Vicar, St. Gregorios,
Dallas, TX

**MAY THE LORD GOD CONTINUE TO
BLESS YOUR MINISTRY IN HIS
VINEYARD**



Diocesan Day Celebrations at St. Mary's Dallas

Dallas St. Mary's Orthodox Valiyapalli celebrated 4th Annual Diocesan day on Sunday June 2nd immediately after the Holy Qurbana. His Grace Dr. Abraham Mar Seraphim (Diocesan Metropolitan, Bangalore Diocese) was the chief guest of the occasion.

From Around the Diocese

Detroit MGOCSM Learns about Saintly Living



On Friday, May 31st the Detroit MGOCSM held its monthly Bible Study at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Rochester Hills, Michigan. We were blessed to have Rev. Fr. Matthew Alexander, the Youth Minister of the Dallas Area MGOCSM, as our guest speaker. The theme of the bible study was "Living a Saintly Life, In Today's Society-A study on the life of H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas." Achen explained the history and legacy of Barnabas Thirumeni and the challenges he faced in America, and how through humility and prayer Thirumeni was able to defeat evil and

bring the American Diocese(s) to unparalleled heights. Achen also drew on how we as the next generation of the church, must not let our lives go to waste; we must be proactive in getting closer to God through Church and seizing every opportunity placed before us. The reason for this is because if we don't have our minds and thoughts focused on God, then we will surely fall into the pit of destruction, instead of the place of eternal salvation. Achen illustrated this example by using The Ladder of Divine Ascent Icon. The study concluded with Evening Prayer in English. Along with Mat Achen, Rev. Fr. Sunoj Oommen, Rev. Fr. James Cheriyan, and Rev. Dn. Shinto David were also present. We were also blessed to have Mr. Manoj Varghese, the Northeast American Diocese MGOCSM General Secretary present.

First Contribution to the New Diocesan Center Project



Lijin Hannah Raju and Juel Daniel Raju donated their first paycheck to the proposed New Diocesan Center Fund. Metropolitan His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius received the check as the first contribution towards the Project. Lijin and Juel are members of St. Mary's, Dallas and children of Rev. Fr. Raju Daniel (Vicar of St. Mary's, Dallas).



Update on H.G. Dr. Zachariah Mar Theophilos

Theophilos Thirumeni is currently staying at St Mary's Orthodox Cathedral, Dadar, Mumbai as he undergoes further treatment at the Tata Institute of Medical Sciences. The latest scans and biopsy results confirm that besides the evidence of cancer found during the check-up in America, all other organs and parts of the body have been found free from disease. Thirumeni will start his radiation treatment shortly. Please continue to pray for His Grace's speedy recovery.

From Around the Diocese



Chicago Area OVBS - Truly Humbling

The Chicago area Malankara Orthodox Churches held their fourth combined OVBS program during July 18 through 20, at the St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Elmhurst. About 150 students and 60 volunteers participated. The program started with a message from Eusebius Thirumeni addressing the theme "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (St. James, 4:10). Children enjoyed three fun filled days

of spiritual growth with lessons, music, arts and craft, theater, indoor and outdoor activities, and delicious food. On the final day, Holy Qurbana was celebrated with three co-celebrants, and the program concluded with a procession around the church followed by student presentations. By God's grace, it was a blessed event for all participants.



St. Gregorios Dallas Honors Graduates

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Dallas, Texas honored its 2013 Sunday School and High School Graduates on Sunday, July 14th 2013 after the Holy Qurbana. The eight honorees were as follows: Aishwaria Thomas, Alvin Mathew, Erin Philip, Geno Mani George, Gina George, Johncy George, Manu John, and Smithu George. Our Vicar, Rev. Fr. CG Thomas inaugurated the program and Sunday School Secretary Jithin Zachariah gave a motivational message. The program concluded with each of the graduates receiving a plaque, expressing the appreciation of the parish.

Each of these eight students has unique talents and has contributed to the growth of Sunday School and MGOCSM activities of the parish. There is no doubt that they will evolve to be the next generation of leaders in the Malankara Orthodox Church. St. Gregorios Orthodox Church Dallas takes great pride in these graduates and wishes them all the success in their professional and spiritual lives.

Dallas Regional OVBS

The Dallas Regional OVBS was held from July 11th – 13th at St. Mary's Church of India (COI) in Carrollton, Texas. The opening day program began with morning prayers and the traditional raising of the OVBS flag in the presence of Rev. Fr. CG Thomas from St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, the Dallas Area Youth Minister, Rev. Fr. Mat Alexander, and our Dallas Region Sunday School coordinator, Mr. Philip Thomas. We were blessed with the presence of various vicars from Dallas and outside areas throughout the three days. There was a total participation of 110 students from the six Dallas area Orthodox churches as well as from our sister parishes. During the OVBS, the students participated in bible studies, discussions on church and liturgical practices, sports activities and games. Most importantly, this was a time of fellowship and spiritual growth. We greatly appreciate the efforts of the 30+ youth volunteers who sacrificed their time to create a fun, loving, and enjoyable atmosphere for the OVBS participants. Additionally, we extend our appreciation to the Vicar and Managing Committee of St. Mary's COI Carrollton, Texas for the use of their beautiful facility and all their support during the OVBS.



Know our Parish

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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KNOW OUR PARISH

This section of our Diocesan Newsletter is designed to allow our readers to explore our geographically vast diocese at a glance.

Every month different parishes of the Diocese of South-West America diocese will be featured and given the opportunity to introduce itself to the Diocese and Church at large.

We ask that our parishes take this as an opportunity to showcase the best aspects of the parish, including but not limited to Spiritual Organizations, Parish activities, Programs and Church Facilities. This our opportunity to thank God for His faithfulness to our Diocese especially each of our Parishes.

The write up submitted should be about 1-2 typed pages and sent with 1-2 pictures that best represent the parish.

All materials should be sent to 'The Stream' email address

thestreamdswa@gmail.com

Mathews Mar Barnabas Scholarship: Deadline Extension

The deadline for the Mar Barnabas Scholarship has been extended to August 15, 2013, to accommodate applicants whose results will be released only by the end of July. Only high school graduates of the class of 2013 are eligible to apply for this scholarship. Please access the below link for more information.

<http://www.ds-wa.org/diocese-extended-mar-barnabas-scholarship-application-deadline-to-august-15-2013.html>