Friday, March 23, 2018 is marked as another historical day for the Holy Church in Malankara. The Supreme Head of the Malankara Orthodox Church, H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Marthomma Pulose II, along with dozens of selected Priests (Kashisho), Full Deacons (Shamshono) and Sub-Deacons (Yevpadyokono), who prepared themselves in fasting and prayers, conducted the Consecration of the Holy Oil (Holy Chrism – Myeron), with the help of all the Metropolitans of our Holy Church and numerous experts in preparing this invaluable, precious oil.

The Holy Ceremony (Mooron Koodasha) was held at Devalokam Aramana Chapel, at the Head Quarters of Malankara Orthodox Church. Besides His Holiness, all the Metropolitans of the Malankara Orthodox Church participated in the service, assisted by 12 specially deputed Priests, 12 Full Deacons, and 12 Sub Deacons. Being one of the greatest spiritual moments in the history of the church, it was celebrated on the 40th Friday of the Great Lent, after observing 40 days of fasting and prayers. Several thousands of the faithful also participated and witnessed the Holy Service.
‘Kymtho’ Perfection of salvation

‘Kymtho’ or the Gospel of Resurrection is the zenith in the salvation history. It is this fundamental basis of creation which perhaps fulfills the mission of our lord in its fullest sense “I have come to give life and life in its fullest (Jn 10.10)”’. The significance of Easter especially in this era marked by paradoxes is significant in terms of aligning and reorienting oneself on lines with the uniqueness with which every creation is manifested in this creation.

The Syriac word kymtho is derived from the root ‘kom’ meaning ‘to stand upright’. The aspect of ‘kymtho’ thus would imply rendering human beings the grace to stand upright in the presence of the grand weaver reckoning with their true self and reality. This is a paradigm shift over and above the mere understanding of an event of resurrection to the privilege that this event renders to the fallen human race in order to facilitate a merciful stand in the community of the faithful. To be able stand upright in a world marred with oppression, discrimination and violence needs the divine intervention of the creator in order to induce a hope and instil courage in the mankind to tread the redemptive course that the creator had envisioned through his glorious resurrection. Kymtho thus promises the fruit of redemption and humanisation of the fallen human race which would be the only means of achieving theosis. To become like God, can only be fulfilled when humanity is perfected in the human race. A world dominated by the Darwinian thought of the survival of the fittest and identity crisis that the majority population faces is hence under scanner in the light of the resurrection that promises life in its fullness to the entire created cosmos. Therefore, the joy of resurrection is beyond an observance to an ‘experience, a responsibility and an achievement’.

May the grace of the joyous celebration of the cross on Calvary and the radiance of the Risen Lord strengthen each one of us on our journey through the wilderness.

Met. Dr. Zacharias Aprem

March 28, 2018
Beloved in Christ,

As you read this edition of our magazine, I am sure that you might be preparing yourselves for a glorious Passion Week and celebration for the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. From ancient times and over the span of history, the celebration of Resurrection of our Lord has been considered the jewel of the Church year.

At this blessed junction, let me take this opportunity to thank all our readers for their prayers and support shown for this humble endeavor. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Editorial Board to place on record our heart felt appreciation and gratitude to H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebius for his contribution to this Diocesan Magazine. It has been Thirumeni’s vision for a magazine catering especially to the English speaking generation, being blessed by insightful thoughts and showcasing the developments of the Diocese. The enormous feedback from our readers show the level of enthusiasm and interest generated within our members for reading this magazine. At this juncture we welcome our Diocesan Assistant Metropolitan, H.G. Dr. Zacharias Mar Aprem as the President of the editorial board. As the editorial board engage in integrating new ideas, to make our magazine more interesting and appealing, I am sure that under the able guidance of our Thirumeni, we will be able to gain new heights and our magazine will be a source of wisdom for many.

Wishing you all a Blessed Easter.

Happy Reading!

Fr Thomas Mathai, San Francisco
Chief Editor
The Mar Barnabas Educational Award is established by the Diocese of South-West America in the Blessed Memory of our previous Metropolitan, His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas, to honor and recognize the children of our Diocese, who graduate each year from Grade 12, with academic excellence. The selection is based on the outstanding academic merit in Grade Twelve along with active participation in Sunday school and other activities of the church, sincere desire to serve the church and the community, as well as the demonstration of good character and a clear vision of personal academic future.

This year we had more than usual number of applicants. All the applicants’ academic achievements and church involvements were excellent, making the selection a difficult task. We are proud of all the applicants and congratulate all of them for their excellent academic achievements and faithfulness to the Holy Church. We pray and wish them all the best and success in their chosen academic and career path.

The Assistant Metropolitan of the Diocese of South-West America, H.G. Zacharias Mar Aprem announced the names of the 2017 Award winners though the Kalpana No. 10/ 2018 on January 5, 2018. Here are the winners from each region of our Diocese.

**First Place: SE Region**

**Steven Philip Joseph**

St. Gregorios orthodox Church of India, South Florida

Enrolled at: North Carolina State University, Majoring in Chemical Engineering

**First Place: MW Region**

**Kevin Varghese**

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Kansas City, Missouri

Enrolled at: The University of Missouri, Kansas City, in the Six Year Medical Program

**First Place: South Region**

**Joshua Johnson**

St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Austin, TX

Enrolled at: University of Texas at Austin

**First Place: NW Region**

**Rebecca George**

St. Mary’s Malankara Orthodox Church, Calgary, Canada

Enrolled at: The University of Calgary in Health Sciences Honours Program

**Second Place: NW Region**

**Cephen Binny Kuruvilla**

St. Mary’s Malankara Orthodox Church, Calgary, Canada

Enrolled at: The Mount Royal University, Calgary, AB, Canada In Bachelor of Health Sciences

**Second Place: MW Region**

**Thomas Simon**

St. Thomas Orthodox Church of India, Chicago, IL

Enrolled at: The Northwestern University in the Biomedical Engineering program

**Second Place: South Region**

**Mathew Geevarghese**

St. Mary’s Orthodox Valiyapally, Farmers Branch, TX

Enrolled at: The University of Texas, Dallas Bachelor of Science in Biology, Pre-Medical Track.

**Second Place: SE Region**

**Philip Varghese**

Ambattu St. Thomas Malankara Orth. Church Pompano Beach, FL

Enrolled at: The University of Florida Majoring in Biology

**Second Place: MW Region**

**Sherin Sajan Philip**

St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church, Houston, TX

Enrolled at: The University of Houston In Accounting and Finance

**Second Place: South Region**

**Isaac John**

St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Houston, TX

Enrolled at: The University of Houston In Mechanical Engineering

**Third place: SE Region**

**Sheba Ann Mathew**

St. Mary’s Orthodox Church, Roswell (Atlanta), GA

Enrolled at: The University of Georgia Majoring in Health Promotion with a Pre-Med track

**Third Place: SE Region**

**Shani Mary Abraham**

St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church, Tampa, FL

Enrolled at: University of Central Florida In Biomedical Sciences (Pre-Med) minor ing Legal Studies

**Third Place: MW Region**

**Rebecca John**

St. Thomas Malankara Orth. Church Pompano Beach, FL

Enrolled at: The University of Florida Majoring in Biology

**Third Place: South Region**

**Bethany Zachariah**

St. James Orthodox Mission Church, Dallas, TX

Enrolled at: The University of Texas at Dallas In the Davidson Management Honors program and in the Collegium V Honors program

**Third Place: South Region**

**Isaac John**

St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Houston, TX

Enrolled at: The University of Houston In Mechanical Engineering

**Third Place: SE Region**

**Sheba Ann Mathew**

St. Mary’s Orthodox Church, Roswell (Atlanta), GA

Enrolled at: The University of Georgia Majoring in Health Promotion with a Pre-Med track

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Enrolled at: University of Central Florida In Biomedical Sciences (Pre-Med) minor ing Legal Studies

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**Rebecca John**

St. Thomas Malankara Orth. Church Pompano Beach, FL

Enrolled at: The University of Florida Majoring in Biology

Once again, congratulations to all the winners of the Award. Best wishes for their successful academic endeavors. May the Almighty God guide them through out their campus life and grant them the wisdom to be good citizens and to serve the church and the community at large.

For the Award Committee

George Geevarughese
The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the oppressed. To bind up the broken hearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives, And release to the prisoners (Isaiah 61: 1)

The significance of the Holy Chrism / Myeron

(Metropolitan Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios, Kochi Diocese)

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the oppressed. To bind up the broken hearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives, And release to the prisoners (Isaiah 61: 1)

This definition and interpretation by the Lord himself, of the Lord’s incarnation, consecration and assignment, reveals much about the “assignment” of all those who are “anointed.”

The consecration of the Holy Myeron (Chrism), which is going to take place at Devalokam Catholicate Chapel, is significant for a lot of reasons. This is the tenth occasion this Holy consecration is taking place in Malankara. The first two were done by Syrian Patriarchs (Peter III & Abdalla). Myeron is among the sacraments (mysteries) of the Church. It is reckoned as the sanctifying and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Hence the preparation and consecration of this Holy Oil is extremely significant event for the Church.

In the Old Testament, kings and prophets are seen “consecrated” with holy oil.

Jesus is the “Messiah”, meaning the “The Anointed.”

The most Holy Oil is used only in the Holy Baptism (consecration of baptismal water, making the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptizand, and anointing the baptizand.) and in the church consecration (anointing the foundation stone, anointing the altar/altars, and anointing the doors and windows of the new church building)

Preparation
It is a two-pronged process:
1. Spiritual preparation of the celebrants and those engaged in the actual preparation, and
2. The physical preparation of the holy oil to be consecrated

Actually, the whole body of the Church has to prepare itself for this highly significant event; just as the Israelites were commanded by Yahweh, through Moses, to sanctify themselves, while Moses was preparing himself to ascend the mountain and receive the Ten Commandments. It is really edifying and curious for us to recall an incident at the time of H.H. Baselios Geevarghese II

Bava Thirumeni was preparing for the Consecration of the Holy Chrism during the Great Lent, staying at Devalokam Aramana. One of those days, Puthenkavil Mar Philoxenos passed away at Marathankode, Kunnamkulam. The mortal remains were brought to Devalokam, on the way to Puthenkavu, for the funeral and the interment. The deceased thirumeni was consecrated by Bava, and was dear to him. When the mortal remains reached Devalokam, Bava Thirumeni got into the vehicle, and kissed the body of his spiritual son. Bava was in tears. But Bava Thirumeni did not attend the funeral at Puthenkavu, for he was preparing himself for the consecration of the Holy Chrism; during those forty days, Bava did not go out of Devalokam! Such was the significance given to the great event.

This is just an aside!

Preparation of the Holy Chrism
It takes several days to prepare the Holy Oil. It contains the following nine spices, along with olive oil, which forms the base of the preparation. Exodus 30: 22 -33 gives a description of the preparation of the Anointing oil. It was made with liquid myrrh, sweet-smelling cinnamon, aromatic cane and cassia;

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The “The Church & wellness” Seminar was held on Saturday, April 7th, as per the brochure given here. Besides the Leaders listed in the brochure, Fr. Raju M. Daniel, Fr. Thampan Varghese, Fr. Christopher Mathew and Fr. Mat Alexander also lead the sessions and provided leadership. Over 200 people actively participated in the Seminar. Coffee, Snacks and Lunch were served to the participants. The seminar was very successful and beneficial to those who participated.

The Department of Counselling Services of the Diocese, extend their heartfelt thanks to the hosting Parish and all the volunteers served to make this event successful.
and of course, olive oil. It was the holy anointing oil.

A similar arrangement is prescribed for the preparation of the holy incense is seen in Exodus 30: 34-38.

This Old Testament exhortation is a pointer and symbol of the Holy Chrism, consecrated in the Church. Of course, other Churches have their own individual schemes for the preparation of the Holy Chrism. Our Church follows the Antiochan schemata.

Now, the following ingredients are used in the preparation of the Holy Myeron:

A. Olive oil

B. Spices:
1. Storax (‘njerias’)
2. Jadamanchi (an ayurvedic medicinal plant, the stalks of which looks like the tail of a squirrel)
3. Cinnamon
4. Clove
5. Nutmeg
6. Saffron flower (from Kashmir)
7. Ginger
8. Pepper
9. Balsam-Peru (from Egypt, which has the colour of pure honey)

These ingredients are used in their fixed proportions.

*Details:*

Jadamanchi, clove, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Ginger and Pepper are powdered in a machine, and sieved. This powder is dissolved in olive oil, kept in a large vessel. The saffron flower, which has been dissolved in water, and boiled, is kept ready. The oil mixed with spices is poured into large glass jars; and the liquid saffron flower is divided into equal parts and poured into the mixture in the jars.

An adequately large vessel (made of copper) is placed on a large oven and 3/4th of it is filled with water. An iron road is placed at the rim; and the glass jar with the ingredients is hung into the vessel containing water. The glass jar is covered with coir sting so that it will not touch the bottom or sides of the water-vessel. The glass jars should be kept open; the mouth of the jar shall always be above water. Each glass jar shall have a different oven. The water is boiled. It takes three hours for the spices to be melt and get dissolved in the olive oil. When the water level in the copper vessel goes down, equally hot water is added (not cold water).

After three hours of heating, the fire is reduced; and molten storax is added to the hot mix in the jar. The whole thing is heated for another one full hour; then the oven is switched off. Then the mix is allowed to cool. The bottle shall not be taken out when it is hot, wait for it to be completely cold. When the bottle is taken outside, it is shaken for everything to be joined well. It is then poured into another vessel; and left for
a day or two, for the ingredients to settle down. Then the clean oil is collected bottles, for consecration.

There is an alternate way of preparing the holy oil:

A mix of the entire spices is poured into the olive oil in a pretty large vessel, placed on the oven, and prepared like it is done in the preparation of ayurvedic medicated oils. The mix has to be continuously stirred, till it is ready. This method may be resorted to when the Myeron has to be prepared in a large quantity. However, when the first method is used the mix gets uniform heat at every place. Normally, the former method is usually resorted to.

Consecration

Divine meaning and interpretation:

The holy oil prepared with incenses, denote the human nature taken by the Son of God, from the Mother of God, by the Holy Spirit. Balsam, which is mixed with the prepared oil, signifies the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. This mystic mixing is the symbol of the Incarnation. The consecration of the Holy Chrism is the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Divine-Manhood of Christ. When the Holy Chrism is applied in the sacraments of the Church, the recipient is endowed with the graces from the divine manhood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

The long Service of the Consecration of the Holy Chrism are in two parts, which together would take five hours, and that will be followed by the Holy Qurbana.

1. The bottles containing the holy oil, and balsam oil are kept at the northern side of the Altar behind a curtain, hidden from public view.
2. After the morning prayer, the celebrants put on their vestments; and make three choirs (gooda), one behind the other.
3. After prayers and hymns, the first procession starts from the Madbaha. A Metropolitan will go around the church or verandha, with the censor, thus sanctifying the way for the later procession of the Holy Chrism.
4. The procession returns to the Madbaha, and prayers continue.
5. After the Old Testament readings, the Catholicos enters the covered place where the holy oil is kept, along with two other Metropolitans; and pours the Balsam into the jars containing the holy oil. This signifies the Divine nature being joined to the human nature.
6. This is followed by the procession of the Holy Chrism. The Catholicos carries the jar containing Holy Myeron under the Bathraseel (the long oorara above the kappa) and enters a “moving” “Kubsa” (a cabin covered on all four sides (one side shall have a door). In front of the kubs the two lines of six sub-deacons stand with lighted candles. Twelve full deacons stand around the kubsa with marvahasas, covering it. Around them, twelve priests stand with censors. Four Rambans (monks) carry the kubsa. The procession moves along the path earlier consecrated at the time of the first procession. There are
prayers and hymns at every door.

7. The procession of the Holy Chrism returns to the Altar. The vessels are placed on the altar and covered with Sossapha.

8. The second part begins. Twelve sub-deacons with candles, twelve full deacons with Marvahasas, and twelve priests with censors stand around the altar; and prayers and hymns continue.

9. At the end the Holy chrism is consecrated with the invocation of the Holy Spirit; this is followed by the exaltation of the Holy Chrism. (Haud- maalakhe...)

10. Then the chief celebrant comes down and sits on a throne at the Beema, with the bottle of Holy Chrism in his hands; and there is a formal reading of praise and thanksgiving to the Catholicos.

11. Finally the Catholicos blesses the congregation with the Holy Chrism. This is followed by the Holy Qurbana.

True to the prophecy, those who are anointed have the God –given assignment to proclaim the “good News” to the poor, and set the ‘prisoners’ free!

May the great blessings from the consecration of the Holy Myeron be upon the whole Church! “May it lead to the furtherance of unity and sanctification of the Holly Church!”

Note: Our heartfelt thanks to His Grace Irenaios Thirumeni, who made time in his very busy schedule, to write this very informative article for our Diocesan Publication “STREAM”, upon our request with a very short notice.

The Editorial Board
Holy week services around the Diocese
Holy week services around the Diocese

Feet Washing Ceremony