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ARTICLES NEEDED!

If you would like to submit any articles in English or Malayalam,
please send it to: Jacobkab@hotmail.com

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St. Paul's Mar Thoma Church
2425 Gus Thomasson Rd.
Mesquite, TX 75150

THE EPISTLE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION



February 2010





MESSAGE FROM VICAR

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

The great 50 days lent begins on 14th February to meditate upon death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Resurrection of Christ is the basic faith of the church and the beginning of the worship year. Through resurrection Jesus got victory over sin and death. It was beginning of a new era. Lent is the preparation for the festival of resurrection. It is the celebration of life. The word “lent” came from the English word “Lencten” (lengthen) which means “makes lengthy.” It denotes the spring season which comes between winter and summer and the day time is more lengthy during this season. In Latin language, Lent mean “forty.” In German language, “lent” means “fasting time.” 40 days of lent started first in the Church of Alexandria to remember the 40 days fasting of Jesus and it was approved by Nicean council in 325 AD. In 7th century fours Sundays were exclude from the lent period and added four days starting on previous Wednesday. Thus the western churches got the tradition of “ash Wednesday.” The Eastern Syrian churches excluded Sundays and Saturdays from lent period because Sundays are days of resurrection and Saturdays are preparatory days for resurrection. Then the lent period was decreased to 30 days. To fix the lent as 40 days, they added ten more days to meditate upon death and resurrection of Jesus. Thus the lent period became seven weeks including Sundays and Saturdays. The date of Easter changes every year because the Eastern churches calculate the date of Easter as the Sunday after the full moon coming after 21st March of every year.

The three main pillars of Lent are i) fasting ii) prayer and iii) alms giving and Jesus taught about these (Mat 6:1-18). All religions have traditions of lent. For Israelites, lent was a symbol of repentance before God in the midst of crisis. When the people of Israel went into exile in Babylon, they were not able to offer sacrifice in Jerusalem temple and fasting became a regular practice for the redemption of sin. Later it became a ritual without having inner experience. The prophets warned against the ritualism of lent and taught about the real lent that God wants them to do (Isa 58:5-7; Micah 6:6-8). Righteousness, compassion towards the needy and humbleness before God were emphasized. Jesus also taught to have a secret inner experience with God instead of hypocrisy of ritualism (Mat 23).

Let the 50 days of lent of this year be a time of repentance, renewal, and re-dedication before God. Let Christ strengthen us to have victory over sin and the powers of death in our life. Meditation of the word of God, prayer and fellowship will help us for our sanctification. Let us prepare ourselves these days to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. May God bless us to become a blessing for others.

Yours in Christ’s Service,
Noble Achen
revnobleap@yahoo.com

<i>Prayer Meetings</i>	
TBD	<u>AGAPE</u> LEADER: JOHN OOMMEN
TBD	<u>EBENEZER</u> LEADER: JOHN K. MATHEW
TBD	<u>EMMANUEL</u> LEADER: GEORGE MAMMEN
TBD	<u>MANNA</u> LEADER: ANNIE THOMAS
TBD	<u>SHALOM</u> LEADER: ABRAHAM KOSHY

Important Days

February 14, 2010—50 Days Lent
 February 14-21, 2010—115th Maramon Convention

Laity Duties

	Worship Service Assistant	1st Lesson	2nd Lesson	Prayer
Feb 7 <i>Shalom</i>				
Feb 14 <i>Agape</i>				
Feb 21 <i>Ebenezer</i>				
Feb 28 <i>Emmanuel</i>				

Question 7: How should we understand the creation story?

Some questions arise when we interpret creation story in a literal way:

- i) How can light be formed before creating the sun? (Gen 1:3)
- ii) Is it right to say that day and night were formed before creating the sun? (Gen 1:5)
- iii) Is it true to say that the earth was created before sun? (Gen 1:10)
- iv) Can the plants survive without sun? (Gen 1:12)
- v) What is the water above the firmament? (Gen 1:7)
- vi) Does the moon shines itself? (Gen 1:16)
- vii) Is it contradictory to say that God created human beings by his words (Gen 1:26) and by his hands (Gen 2:7)?
- viii) From where did Can get his wife if Adam and Eve were the first human beings? (Gen 4:16)
- ix) Why doesn't the snakes speak today? (Gen 3:1)
- x) God created everything in six days (Gen 2:1. Is it the same as 24 hour days?

The above questions remind us the danger in using creation story for scientific purpose. The first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis speak about pre-historical period where as the history of Israel starts with the call of Abraham (Gen 12). The writing about the prehistoric period was an attempt of the writers to relate the history of Israel with the first human beings and with the creator God. For this purpose, they collected the stories and myths prevailed among the people. They used symbols and stories to communicate creation truths. The creation stories were written not to say how and when every thing came to being, but it was written to say why everything was created. Creation story is intended to give answers to the following questions:

- i) Who created everything? God created everything.
- ii) What was God's purpose in creation? God wants his creation to have fellowship with God and with each other.
- iii) What is the greatness of human beings? Human beings are stewards of God's creation and they are created in God's image and likeness.
- iv) How the time, space, and seasons came out? It is God who designed evything in the universe.
- v) How human beings became sinners? It is due to their disobedience to God.
- vi) How can we be saved from sin? It is through breaking the head of satan by the son of man. (Gen 3:15)

Question 8: How can the Bible and the science be complementary to each other?

When we understand Bible and science in their depth, we can see that there is not much conflict between them. In fact they are complementary to each other. The Law of Evolution does not negate necessarily God's role in creation. Science is the human quest to find out how God created everything. In 1996, Pope John Paul II said: "Man's physical evolution is now an established fact compatible with the catholic doctrine, but the immortal soul arises in each person by a process of divine infusion."

The following points are important:

- i) The intention of the writers of the book of Genesis was to establish the belief in on God (monotheism) while other religions had tradition of belief in many Gods (polytheism).

Lectioary/Worship Information

Abraham lived in the context of polytheism and he was called to believe in one God Yahweh. This one God is creator, sustainer and redeemer of everything.

ii) The names “Adam” and “Eve” means “human” and “life” respectively. It means that God created the first human beings and life came from God. The name “Adam” was used as singular as well as plural (Gen 5:2). Since God created the human beings, only God knows how the first man was like. Science cannot explain all mysteries of this universe, because human knowledge has limitations. Science is the gift of God to know the mysteries of God’s creation.

ii) Serpent is a symbol of sin which means anger, disobedience, selfishness, jealousy, and enmity. Sin means human beings fell down from God’s purpose. Through Jesus Christ, we can be saved from sin. This is the main theme of the Bible.

iv) In creation story (Gen 1) we can see a gradual process of evolution. The creation starts from the simplest species and goes on to more complex species till human beings, the crown of creation. Human beings are still under process of evolution as St. Paul says that man evolves into a spiritual body after death (1 Cor 15:44).

v) God created everything within six days. It does not mean they are 24 hour long days. One day of God may be thousands or millions of human years (Psa. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8)

As the conclusion, we can say that the universe came into being based on the laws of science decreed of God. Human beings evolved based on the laws of evolution that again was designed by God. There is no conflict between science and religious faith. Human understanding about God as well as the scientific knowledge about the universe is not perfect. We are still growing in our knowledge. IN our journey to find out the truth, religion and science are God’s gifts for human beings. So they should be complementary to each other.

Next Issue: Study about sin, salvation, and kingdom of God.

Sunday, February 7, 2010 - (Holy Qurbana - English) Healing Ministry Sunday: Holistic Healing that Jesus Gives	
Lesson 1: 2 Kings 5:1-14	Epistle: James 5:13-19
Lesson 2: Acts 3:1-10	Gospel: Mark 7:31-37
Sunday, February 14, 2010 - (Holy Qurbana - Malayalam) Beginning of great lent: Redemption and Transformation of Creation	
Lesson 1: Exodus 15:22-27	Epistle: Ephesians 4:17-24
Lesson 2: Romans 12:1-8	Gospel: John 2:1-11
Sunday, February 21, 2010 - (Holy Qurbana - English) 2 nd Sunday in Lent: Jesus who Recognizes the Untouchables	
Lesson 1: 2 Kings 20:1-11	Epistle: Acts 5:12-16
Lesson 2: 1 John 2:1-17	Gospel: Mark 1:40-45
Sunday, February 28, 2010 - (Holy Qurbana - Malayalam) Fellowship and Liberation through Christ	
Lesson 1: 1 Samuel 18:1-20	Epistle: Philemon 8-22
Lesson 2: Acts 8:14-22	Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

BIRTHDAYS

1-Feb	Gracy Abraham	Mesquite	28-Feb	Jennifer John	Sunnyvale
1-Feb	Nicole Sam	Rockwall			
1-Feb	Ligit Mathew	Mesquite			
4-Feb	George P.C.	Mesquite			
4-Feb	Sydni Rebecca Philip	Rockwall			
11-Feb	Ritz Thomas	Mesquite			
14-Feb	Edison K. John	Garland			
14-Feb	Sibu Joseph	Garland			
15-Feb	Thomas Mathew	Mesquite			
17-Feb	Simon P . P	Garland			
18-Feb	Johnkutty Mathai	Mesquite			
21-Feb	Joy Thomas	Plano			
21-Feb	Mini Mammen	Mesquite			
22-Feb	Abraham Chacko	Garland			
23-Feb	Raju Mathew	Rowlett			
23-Feb	James Joy Thomas	Plano			
25-Feb	Abhiyah Pallath	Garland			
26-Feb	John K . Mathew	Mesquite			
26-Feb	Maya Thomas Easo	Mesquite			
27-Feb	Cheryl Babu	Rockwall			

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

4-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Easow Chacko	Garland
6-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Chacko T Oommen	Garland
6-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Babu P. Simon	Mesquite
13-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Ajit Cherian	Garland
14-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Mathew P . Samuel	Garland
22-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Ashish Thomas	Garland
23-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Thomas K. J	Mesquite
25-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Thomas Mathew	Garland
28-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Joseph Varghese A.	Garland
28-Feb	Mrs. & Mr. Geevarghese Mathew	Garland

Newly Elected Office Bearers of Our Organizations

Parish Mission

Vice President—*Mathew Samuel*
 Secretary—*Chacko T. Oommen*
 Treasurer—*Rajankunju Chirayil*

Youth Fellowship

Vice President—*Stanley Varughese*
 Secretary—*Teena Abraham*
 Joint Secretary—*Hanna John*
 Treasurer—*Patrick Maruthmmotil*
 Account—*Ribu Thomas*
 Bible Study Coordinator—*Crystal Rajan*
 Retreat Coordinator—*Justin Mathew*
 Community Service—*Jennie Mathew and Charles Babu*
 Tutoring Coordinator—*Alvin John*
 Historians—*Joshua Mathew and Kripa Thomas*
 Executive Committee Representative—*Mathew Thomas*
 Advisors—*Jacob Abraham and Jojoy Koshy*
 Regional Representative—*Jeffrey John*
 Regional Secretary—*Stanley Samuel*

Sunday School

Superintendent—*Joseph Koshy*
 Secretary—*Kezia Cherian*
 Joint Secretary—*Patrick Maruthmmotil*
 Treasurer—*Janet Philip*
 VBS Coordinators—*Princey Varghese and Jennie Mathew*
 Outreach Coordinator—*Justin Mathew*

Youth Chaplain's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,



Happy Saint Valentine's!

How do we understand love? True love? What is the truth about love? What is the purpose of love?

The depth of love is beyond comprehension yet, the expression of love is comprehensible to all. It is the powerful force that unites and reconciles humanity to each other and God. In a world misdirected and corrupted by lust, love remains the beacon to truth and hope. Therefore, let us delve into a more concise understanding as to the love of which Christ instructs all humanity.

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you..." (St. Luke 6:27)

"Love the Lord your God with all you heart and with all you soul and with all your mind... Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (St. Matt.37-40)

In study of the Scripture, we may observe that Jesus Christ in fact *commands* that we love! It conveys too, that love is possible and present in all people. As such, this suggests that our love for others must flow from our conscious obedience to the words of God. **Must I then love someone I don't want to?** YES! That is, the obedient faithful, the true believer must deny himself in order to love others. It is the understanding that love is not our option to share with the select few but, the limitless expression of the divine through all to all. Therefore, let us not understand love as a matter of choice but, as a matter of obedience to God!

It is often our human tendency to "label" people. We consider some our friends, others our acquaintances, neighbors and still others enemies. Thus, we create and establish boundaries that divide and destroy, rather than unify and build. Therein, the command to love is the radical mission to discern *all as one*. That is,

love tears down the mental, social boundaries that enslave us and allows us to experience the truth and reality of oneness in God's creation. So, as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are ONE let us be ONE through the love that challenges us to move beyond the "labels" and fellowship with the least, the lost and those who would never expect as much.

Through his life and death, St. Valentine, priest and martyr, remained obedient to the command to love God in his love for all people. For he understood, in Christ there is no death for it is through Love that death is vanquished! Will you be HIS valentine or the world's?!

May we be receptive to the true love of God and obedient in the commission of His love!

Your Brother in Christ,

Jaisen Achen

972-495-5393

214-604-6678

Church Organizational Activities

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Regular classes at 8.45am.

SEVIKA SANGHAM:

TBD

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP:

Tuesdays - Bible Study with Rev. Jaisen Thomas

Thursdays - Prayer Call

Fridays - Prayer Fellowship -

YUVAJANA SAKHYAM:

TBD

PARISH MISSION:

Fridays at 7pm - Bible Study/Prayer fellowships at the Church.

Sundays at 9-9:30am - Intercessory Prayer

CHOIR:

Sundays - Practice sessions after Holy Qurbana.

SPECIAL PRAYER:

Fridays from 9.30 to 11.30am - The residence of Mrs. & Mr. Jaisy & Raju George, 922 Dandelion Dr, Mesquite, TX.