



3 MAR BARNABAS - A 'GIANT BISHOP' OF MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH

ലോകത്തുവെള്ളിയിൽ മനസ്സുവെച്ചൊത്ത സഭയ്ക്കു മാതൃക - മാർ ബർനബാസ് ഒന്നുസ്മരണം

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MARTURA

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HIS GRACE MAR BARNABAS

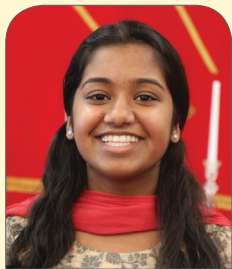
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SUNDAY SCHOOL INITIATIVES

ONE MAN FOUR DIOCESES FIVE FEET



Susanna Abraham



Merin Mathew

Although Thirumeni was a person of small stature, he left a giant's imprint upon the Indian Orthodox Church.

His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas was an exemplary individual who can never be erased from our memory. Thirumeni's impact still echoes throughout the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. His steadfast love and humility continue to reside in the hearts of many. Even while carrying out the responsibilities of an entire Diocese, Thirumeni never failed to pay attention to the needs of the society at large. His Grace faced many afflictions upon his arrival in America but continued to persevere in his faith in God. As an epitome of simplicity and moderation, Barnabas Thirumeni was a person of little need, who never wanted to be a burden on others and he lived his life to the fullest in a simple manner.

Childhood and Early Life

On a brisk morning, a chosen disciple of God was born to Koralla and Mariamma on 9th August 1924. Little did they know that this child, whom they named Mathukutty, would go on to engrave a huge mark on the Malankara Orthodox Church. As a child, he was deeply rooted in the Orthodox faith. Young Mathukutty was driven in the right path with the influence of his grandfather and uncle, who were priests in the Indian Orthodox Church. In addition to this, Mathukutty's mother and sister were ardent devotees of the Christian faith and they geared him towards a spiritu-

al life. Even from a young age it was evident that he was resolute in dedicating his life to God as he aspired to become a monk at a tender age of seven. While most children of his age would opt for games and other enjoyable activities, young Mathukutty's desire was to stay in the arms of God at a monastery. His uncle, the Reverend Father K. P. Paulose became his mentor and guided him towards a monastic life.

After completing High School and the Intermediate Course of Study, Mathukutty attained a BSc Degree from Madras Christian College. Subsequently, he obtained a Masters Degree in Botany, securing a first class. He was a bright student and exemplified his desire for education while following an ascetic life.

Priesthood

Through his desire to become a monk right from a young age, it is obvious that he was a chosen disciple of God. At the age of nineteen, Thirumeni was ordained a deacon at St. Thomas Church, Thuruthi, Kerala by the then Catholicos, His Holiness Baselios Geevarghese II. After that, he spent most of his time in the seminary studying Syriac for two years. Also, he was fortunate to be a teacher at the M.G.M High School, Thiruvalla, which was originally established by Parumala Thirumeni out of his passion for education. As a deacon, he

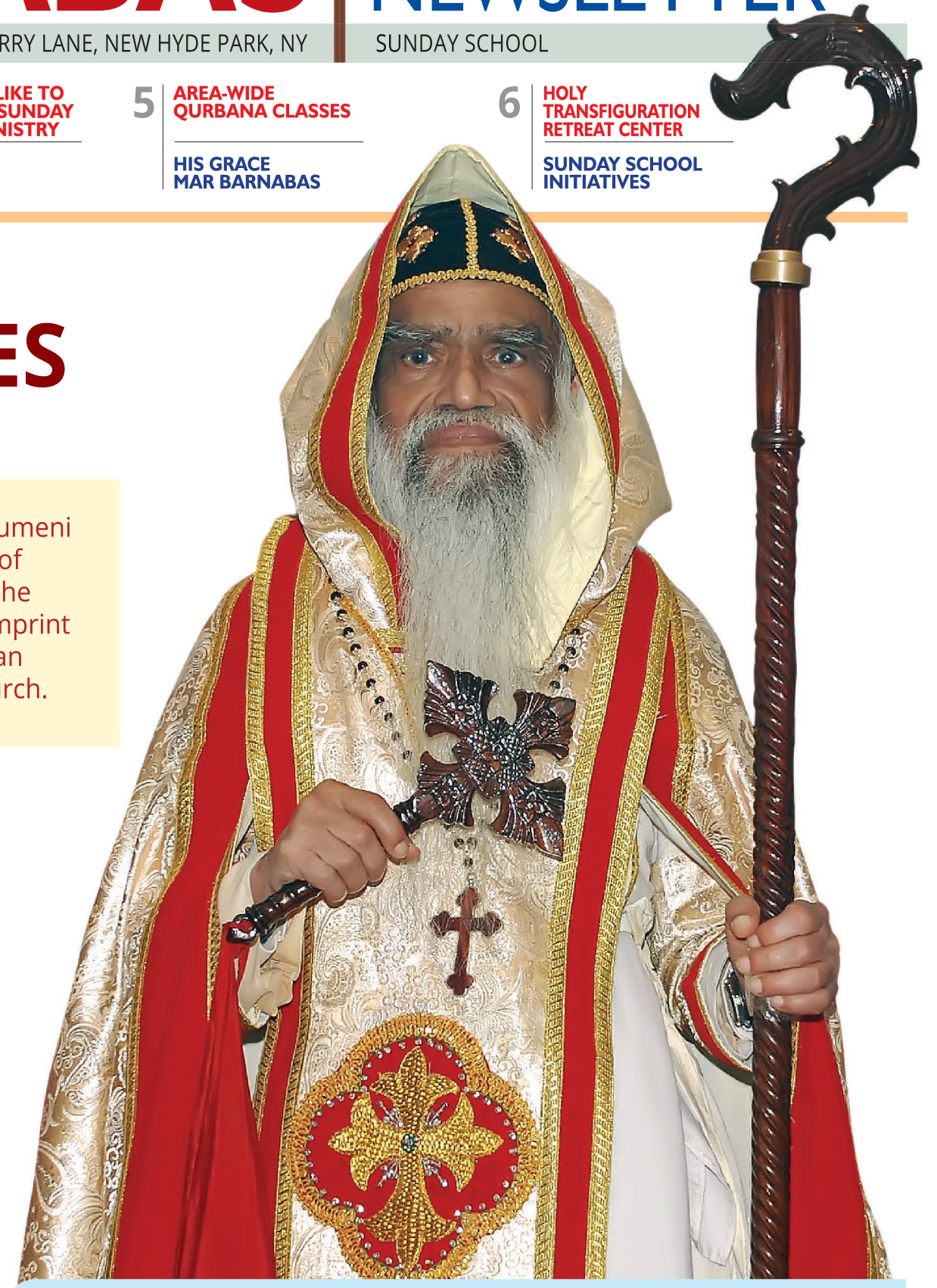
also taught at the MD Seminary High School, Kottayam.

At the age of 26, Thirumeni was ordained a priest and given the name Rev. Fr. K.K Mathews by Metropolitan Augen Mar Thimotheos. During part of his life as a priest, he taught at the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam. On 15th May 1978 at St. Mary's Church, Pazhanji,

His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews I consecrated Rev. Fr. K.K Mathews as a bishop. After His Grace became a bishop, his first assignment was as Assistant Metropolitan of Angamaly Diocese. Then His Grace became the Assistant Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese. Following the creation of Idukki Diocese, His Grace was enthroned as its first

Metropolitan. The geography of Idukki Diocese was one of rugged terrain and most of the families were poor. However, His Grace was able to mobilize the faithful for their betterment and for the establishment of a Diocesan Center. Thirumeni's grace and spirituality were recognized and upheld by all who came in contact with

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Even when taking care of an entire diocese, Thirumeni never failed to carry out the needs of society. Upon reaching America, Thirumeni faced many afflictions but continued to persevere in his faith towards God. Barnabas Thirumeni was a person of little needs, he never wanted to burden others yet, he lived his life to the fullest in a simple manner.



Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese Parish Vicar

I am overjoyed that our parish has taken up this effort to release a newsletter in honor of the late, great pastor of our Diocese, H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas. After all, our

parish started in Barnabas Thirumeni's house and with his blessings we have flourished into a large, vibrant and influential parish in the Northeast American Diocese.

Barnabas Thirumeni is remembered for his simplicity, prayer life and pastoral concern for the Malankara Orthodox faithful in North America. His homilies were repetitive and simple, and it is for that reason we still remember many of the stories, bible verses and sayings he used.

Thirumeni always added a very personal touch to his ministry. He was known to send personal, handwritten letters on birthdays and would even send

monetary gifts to his clergy on his own birthday. He was also very accessible - one could visit the Aramana at any moment and speak to him. If Thirumeni heard of someone sick or in the hospital, there was a sense of urgency in Thirumeni's eyes that he must immediately see or visit that person - even in the middle of the night.

I am blessed to be one of Thirumeni's disciples. I hope to share more memories of Thiru-



meni in publications like this in the future.

May the memory of our beloved Barnabas Thirumeni be eternal.



## EDITORIAL

Often times in history, people have the honor of witnessing some of the greatest leaders during their respective times- leaders who can motivate you to achieve things that you thought weren't possible. For our lifetime that person was His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas, the Bishop with a Wooden Cross.

This newsletter was created by a group of individuals who had the honor and privilege to experience the works of Barnabas Thirumeni first hand, an experience that many will say have changed their life forever. As young members of the St. Gregorios Cherry Lane Church, we would walk into church on a typical Sunday expecting to see our Vicar conduct the sacrament of Holy Qurbana. However, more often than not we would witness Barnabas Thirumeni leading the morning prayers and preparing himself to conduct the service. We were blessed to interact and learn from him as he molded us into the adults that we are today. Thirumeni always wanted the best from us. "We must try to be perfect, just as our Father in Heaven is perfect", was a common saying from the mouth of Thirumeni. He pushed us to attain perfection in every aspect of life including church, school and extra-curricular activities. Thirumeni showed us that every opportunity is an opportunity to spread love and the works of God through our actions, something that we keep in mind to this very day. We hope to maintain his legacy, dedication to the church and fervor to God through the commission of this, the Mar Barnabas Newsletter.

Within the first few minutes of meeting Thirumeni one could tell that he was special. How was it that a man with only two sets of vestments, a strict code of rules and a fierce personality able to inspire the youth in America? It was a task accomplished by no ordinary individual, but instead a man clearly blessed by God. Thirumeni's simple lifestyle and his "practice what you preach" leadership is what involved so many young adults into the church. It's through his motivation and guidance that the youth is what we are today.

In every aspect of our modern church, from the discipline of the altar servers to the inclusion of girls in the service or even the various programs of the diocese, one can see the imprint of Barnabas Thirumeni. He showed us the true meaning of leadership by leading a God-driven life, just as Christ had taught us.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of the Mar Barnabas Newsletter we thank you for supporting our endeavor to make sure that the legacy of His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas will be etched in the history of the Malankara Orthodox Church. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and we ask you to keep both us and our beloved Barnabas Thirumeni in your prayers.

Yours in our Lord,

Editorial Board

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## ONE MAN, FOUR DIOCESES FIVE FEET

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him. In the year 1992, His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas came to America initially to assist His Holiness the Catholicos with the shepherding of a troubled American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Church. Soon, His Grace became the full-fledged Metropolitan of the American Diocese. Even though this was a huge responsibility and rather challenging because of the vastness of the geographical area and the troubling situations in several of the parishes, Thirumeni greeted this opportunity with open hands. His Grace served the Diocese with dignity and grace. When in 2009, the American Diocese got divided into the Northeast and Southwest Dioceses, Barnabas Thirumeni took charge of leading his flock of the Northeast. His Grace accepted and excelled at whatever work was assigned to him.

### Simplicity of Thirumeni

Thirumeni's signature characteristic was his simplicity. Even though he was given control over several dioceses, His Grace was never egoistic and led a humble life. Whenever we picture Barnabas Thirumeni, we think of the same 'kaapa' that he always wore. Thirumeni only had two vestments in his life. When he became a Metropolitan, he chose

## FROM PRINCIPAL'S DESK



**Dr. Mini George**  
Principal, St. Gregorios Church  
Sunday School, New York

The publication of this Newsletter in memory of our beloved Barnabas Thirumeni has been our dream for a long time. I really appreciate the Sunday School and the MGOCSM children of

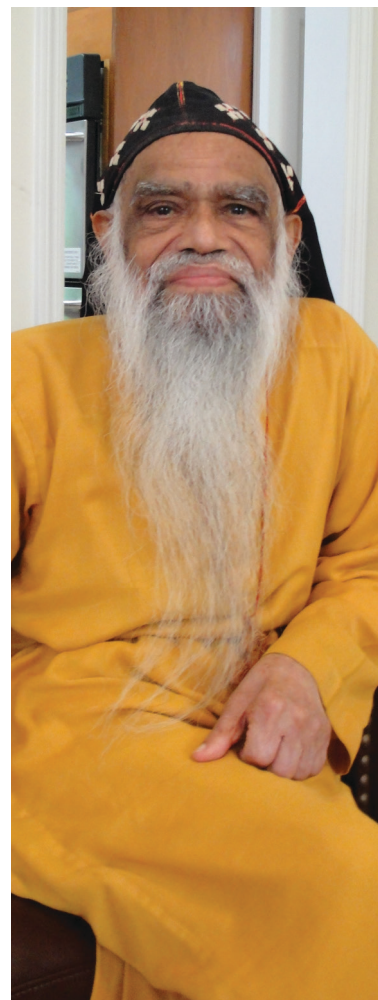
our church for their dedication and meticulous work. The late lamented Mathews Mar Barnabas Thirumeni was indeed a blessing not only to our Parish, but also for the entire American Diocese wherein he served for more than 19 years as the Diocesan Metropolitan. The immense knowledge and wisdom that he possessed will be cherished by generations to come through the many enduring and scholarly books that His Grace has authored, both in English and Malayalam.

Thirumeni was a true shepherd of this Diocese. It is clear to all that he loved his flock and was willing to sacrifice both time and energy for everyone's needs, both big and small. He was rightfully called the "Golden Bishop with a Wooden Cross" as his pure love, humility and simple living called many to his side much like how sheep flock around their shepherd. His prayer life was di-

vine and powerful and I consider myself fortunate for having witnessed some of the miracles that have come about through the blessed mediation of his intercessory prayers. I strongly believe that he is still guiding this Diocese through his prayers and meditations.

When His Grace was alive, he used to repeatedly emphasize one particular Bible verse in almost all his sermons— St. Mathew 5:48- "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". Let us take this to hearts as pearls of wisdom that will guide us to become perfect in the eyes of God. Thirumeni's compassion towards the sick, his Christian virtues and pious living should be the beacon of light and study topic for our children. Let the intercession of our beloved Barnabas Thirumeni be a stronghold for all of us in the days and years to come.

not to carry a golden cross or a golden staff and instead favored a wooden staff and cross. Thus as a man of humility and simplicity, his love for God drove him away from earthly possessions, especially wealth. Thirumeni gave away donations he received as 'Kaimuthu' to the needs of the Diocese, to charity projects and to new parishes that required money for church building projects and the like. Our own parish has been a beneficiary of his magnanimity. As an example of his large heartedness and simplicity, it may be mentioned that once when his car was stolen, he didn't show much stress but simply said that the person who stole his car was probably more in need of a car than himself (His Grace, how-



ever, reports in his Autobiography that he was able to get back most of the cost of the car from the Insurance Company). Clearly, Thirumeni exhibited his humility by living in simplicity. Thirumeni, in his sermons often used to quote the Bible verse, "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." There is no doubt that His Grace has endeavored to live by this principle. We all should reflect on and try to abide by this

principle as good Orthodox Christians and as the beloved flock of the shepherd who strived to live by this teaching.

### The Legacy of Barnabas Thirumeni

Although Thirumeni was a person of small stature, he left a giant's imprint upon the Indian Orthodox Church. Even though His Grace upheld the huge responsibility of shepherding the flock of different dioceses, he was also interested and active in social and secular matters. As mentioned earlier, while being the Metropolitan of the Idukki Diocese, he was successful in getting a new Diocesan Center constructed at Kunkiripetty and in establishing a Health Centre at Nettithozhu. His Grace has served as the President of Akhila Malankara Marth Mariam Samajam, Balika Samajam, and Malankara Sabha Masika. Thirumeni supported the movement for the abandonment of liquor, as he believed it would contribute towards the betterment of society. Thirumeni played a very significant role in the spread of Indian Orthodoxy in America and Canada being the first Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese. Thirumeni has written about twenty five books in both English and Malayalam including an autobiography in 2011. In America, even while His Grace faced many harsh disputes, he put his unquestioning faith in the goodness of God. Barnabas Thirumeni left the US in 2011 to return to his native place of Kerala. He had handed over the responsibility of the Northeast American Diocese to His Grace Zacharia Mar Nicholovos saying, "In the US there are plenty of most modern residential buildings and a number of posh cars and traveling facilities. Still I long to go back to my native place, where I intend to mingle with the sick and the debilitated, who may need my service and care." Barnabas Thirumeni left this world on 9th December 2012 touching many lives and having an everlasting impact on the Northeast and Southwest American Dioceses. Even though His Grace has gone behind the curtain, his legacy and impact on the American Diocese would continue to live on. Barnabas Thirumeni was a vital part

of the American Diocese. He led the Diocese for almost nineteen years and remained strong by the grace of God during times of trials and tribulations. His impact on the Diocese has been rich and varied as he encouraged the youth and he always listened to what they had to say. He was resolved on including girls and women in church activities and encouraging them for leadership roles. He made sure that the Old Testament Readings were done by both boys and girls. He also built a Diocesan Center in Muttontown, New York by purchasing about three acres of land. Due to the construction of this Aramana in 2009 and many other blessed events, Thirumeni remembered this period as a time of "God's wonderful mercy and care."

### Thirumeni's Impact on Cherry Lane Church

Prior to the building of the Diocesan Center in Muttontown, Thirumeni had bought a house at Bellerose soon after his arrival in America in 1992. This was being used as the Diocesan Center which was not only Thirumeni's home, but also a place of worship for the early members of St. Gregorios Church, Cherry Lane. In the 1990's, before we moved to the current location, twenty two families used to gather in the basement of the Aramana for worship services. Besides the basement, His Grace allowed also the use of other areas of the Aramana for Sunday School and other activities. Thus Barnabas Thirumeni played a key role in the upbringing of our Parish from the very beginning. The new Church building was consecrated by His Grace in November 2001. His love and affection has been felt by many members of the Cherry Lane Church. St. Gregorios Cherry Lane Church will forever be thankful to His Grace and above all to God for a spiritual father who guided and assisted our parish during a difficult time in its history.

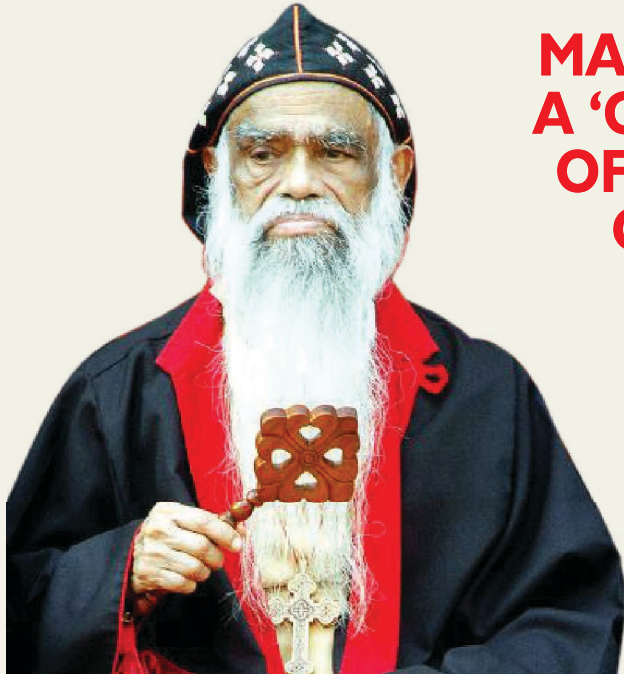
In conclusion, it is worth quoting what Barnabas Thirumeni once said, "Time passes away. But the works of God continue to abide." Likewise, even while His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas remains behind the veil, his legacy and his cherished memories in our hearts will continue to live on.



Mar Barnabas with our current Bava H.H. Baselios Marthoma Paulose II



Mar Barnabas with our present Diocesan Metropolitan H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos



# MAR BARNABAS - A 'GIANT BISHOP' OF MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH



George M Geevarghese Sunday School Teacher

It was in 1992 at a time of grave difficulties in the American Diocese that His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas of blessed memory arrived in America to take over the reins of the Diocese. He was sent by the Holy Synod of the Malankara Orthodox Church. It should be mentioned that several other Bishops were considered for the position but they all refused because of the gravity of the problems they would be facing. His Grace Mar Barnabas says in his Autobiography in Malayalam titled 'Deivathinte Krupa' ('God's Grace') published in 2011 that "eventually when the decision came to send me, I did not refuse" (p.49). I am sure that His Grace took the mission as a challenge and was confident that God's grace would be with him. Looking back, anyone can see that it was the right decision that the Holy Synod had made and that it was definitely guided by the Holy Spirit. The supreme Head of the Church at that time was His Holiness Baselios Mathews II, the Catholicos. Under the guidance of Mar Barnabas, the problems that existed in several parishes of the Diocese were resolved one by one. Our own parish, namely, St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church, Cherry Lane, is a result of the resolution of the problems of the time. Also, our Parish bears witness to the love and care afforded to us by His Grace in accommodating us to offer our Sunday Services and to have our Sunday School at the Diocesan Center of the time at Bellerose, NY before we eventually moved to the current Church building in 2001. Under the stewardship of His Grace Mar Barnabas, besides the resolution of apparently intractable problems, the Diocese saw immense progress in various areas, particularly in

the growth of the church ministries such as Sunday School, Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement (MGOCSM), Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam and the like. In a worldly sense, His Grace may or may not have been a great administrator. In any case, it was evident that God worked through him, the Diocesan Council and others assigned to work with him. In other words, God's grace was evidently at work in him. But God's grace would work only in those who would allow it to work in them. Mar Barnabas was a case in point. He allowed God's grace to work in him through his obedience to the will of God. He was not a perfect man and he never claimed to be one. However, there were several sterling qualities in him, some of which are mentioned below. The most important quality in him was his simple life-style exemplified through his frugal food habits, attire, living quarters and travel habits. While he was a priest in India, his major means of transportation was a bicycle, public bus or third class in train. Once when he was offered a first class train ticket, he accepted the money but travelled in third class and offered the difference in price as a donation to the Church of which he was the Vicar. He is also known to travel in economy class when flying. As a Metropolitan, we are accustomed to seeing him use only a wooden staff and a wooden cross whereas almost all other Bishops are known to use golden ones. In his above-mentioned Autobiography, he speaks of how it was the result of a deliberative decision that he made even as he was ordained as a Bishop. He is known to have owned only two sets of vestments. Throughout his life, Mar Barnabas is known to have been honest, faithful to principles and work ethics, compassionate and

spreading the message of love. Almost all his sermons and speeches are centered on the theme of unconditional LOVE. As soon as he heard of someone being sick, he would be at his/her sick bed to offer prayers and genuine compassion. Keeping good relationships with everyone he came in contact with, was a hallmark of his character. He had a special corner in his heart for youngsters. Just to bring up one case, he used to write letters to my daughter when she was studying for medicine in Hungary, offering his support and prayers. He is also known to have been in regular contact with several others especially through letters during their birth days and other important occasions. Of course, he was strict with Altar servers and used to chastise them when he found any problems with their performance or behavior during worship services. In spite of this or may be because of it, he has earned wide acclaim and respect among the youngsters. Isn't it the work of God's unimaginable grace that so many orthodox youths who were born and brought up in America have chosen to become Seminary students and Priests under Mar Barnabas' pastoral leadership of the Diocese? Speaking of relationships, His Grace is known to have maintained cordial relationships with priests and laypeople of other Christian denominations as well as Non-Christians. He had always made it a point to be impartial and to reduce tensions through good role modelling. He is known to have been sent to take care of Parishes and Dioceses that were plagued with problems. He and his opinions were valued and honored by his peer bishops and even the supreme head of the Church, the Catholicos. When he was work-

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# ലോകമമ്പങ്ങളിൽ മനസ്സുവെയ്ക്കാത്ത സഭയ്ക്കു മാനസൻ

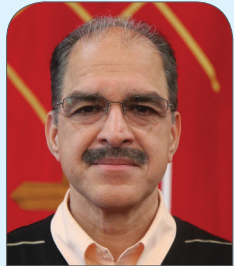
## - മാർ ബർന്നബാസ് ഒരനുസ്മരണം

മലങ്കര ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭാ ചരിത്രത്തിൽ പ്രഥമഗണനീയരായ പിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ നിരയിൽ സ്ഥാനം പിടിച്ച ഒരു വന്ദ്യപിതാവായിരുന്നു ഭാഗ്യസ്ഥനായ മാത്യൂസ് മാർ ബർന്നബാസ് മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ. നടന്നുനീങ്ങിയ വഴികളിലെല്ലാം വലിയവനെന്നോ ചെറിയവനെന്നോ ജാതിമതഭേദമില്ലാതെ മനുഷ്യഹൃദയങ്ങളെ സ്पर्ശിച്ച മുനിശ്രേഷ്ഠനായിരുന്നു ആ പിതാവ്. തന്റെ മഹത്വത്തിന്റെ വ്യത്യസ്തത തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളത് വ്യക്തികളുടെ സാക്ഷ്യത്തിലൂടെയാണ്. തിരുമേനിയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ളവർക്കും അറിഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ളവർക്കും പറയാനുള്ളത് വ്യക്തിഗതമായ അനുഭവമാണ്, ഔദ്യോഗികതകളും ഔദ്യോഗികതകളും ഒട്ടും ഇല്ലാത്ത തികഞ്ഞ മാനുഷികബന്ധം.

അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനങ്ങളിലുള്ള, ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് വിശ്വാസികൾക്കും അല്ലാത്തവർക്കും തിരുമേനി സുപരിചിതനും, സാധാരണക്കാരുടെ സന്തത സഹചാരിയുമായിരുന്നു. ന്യൂയോർക്കിലെ ചെറിയെലിൻ സെന്റ് ഗ്രീഗോറിയോസ് പള്ളി മാർ ബർന്നബാസിന്റെ ആസ്ഥാനകേന്ദ്രമായിരുന്നു എന്നു പറയുന്നതിൽ തെറ്റില്ല. മറിച്ചു പ്രസ്താവിക്കുന്നതും തെറ്റല്ല. അഭിവന്ദ്യ തിരുമേനിയുടെ അരമന ചെറിയെലിൻ പള്ളിക്കാർക്ക് ആസ്ഥാനവും അടിസ്ഥാനവും ആയിരുന്നു എന്ന് സാരം. പെരുമ്പാവൂർ തോമ്പ്രാ കല്ലറയ്ക്കൽ പറമ്പിൽ കെ.വി. കോരൂളയുടെയും മറിയമ്മയുടെയും ഇരട്ട പുത്രന്മാരിലൊരാളായി 1924 ഓഗസ്റ്റ് മാസം 9 ന് ജനിച്ച മാത്യൂക്കുട്ടി നന്നേ ചെറുപ്പത്തിൽ തന്നെ തന്റെ സഞ്ചാരവിധി തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്തു. അത് കുരിശിന്റെ വഴിയായിരുന്നു എന്നതുതന്നെ തന്റെ ജീവിതലക്ഷ്യത്തിന് ഉറപ്പും ഉത്തേജനവും നൽകി. 1943ൽ പരിശുദ്ധ ബസേലിയോസ് ഗീവറുഗീസ് ദിതീയൻ ബാവായിൽനിന്നും കോറുയോപട്ടം സ്വീകരിച്ച് 1951ൽ വൈദികനായി. 1978-ൽ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്തായായി. തന്റെ ആത്മീയ ശുശ്രൂഷ 2012 ഡിസംബർ 9 വരെ അഭംഗ്യരം തുടർന്നു സംതൃപ്തിയോടെ ദൈവസന്നിധിയിലേക്ക്, മനസ്സോടെ മടങ്ങി. ഒരു പരിശുദ്ധന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിന് ഇത്രയധികം അടുത്ത് സാക്ഷ്യം വഹിക്കാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ സമൂഹം ചരിത്രത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായിതീരും എന്നതിന് സംശയം വേണ്ട.

ബർന്നബാസ് തിരുമേനിയുമായുള്ള ഈ ലേഖകന്റെ അടുപ്പം വളരെ വർഷങ്ങൾ പഴക്കമുള്ളതാണ്. തിരുമേനി 1992-ൽ അമേരിക്കയിൽ എത്തി ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ ചുമതല ഏറ്റെടുക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പുതന്നെ തിരുമേനിയെ അടുത്തറിയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്നു എന്നുള്ള ഓർമ്മതന്നെ കുളിർമ നൽകുന്നതാണ്. ഈയുള്ളവന്റെ വിവാഹ ശുശ്രൂഷക്ക് പ്രധാന കാർമ്മികത്വം വഹിച്ചു അനുഗ്രഹിച്ചത് അഭി. തിരുമേനിയായിരുന്നു എന്ന് കൂടി പ്രസ്താവിക്കുവാൻ സന്തോഷമുണ്ട്.

തിരുമേനി അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ ചുമതലക്കാരനായി



Varghese Pothanicaud

ഉത്തരവാദിത്വം ഏറ്റെടുക്കാൻ ഇടയായത് തികച്ചും ദൈവനിശ്ചയം മാത്രം. അനേകം പ്രഗത്ഭരായ മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താമാർ സഭയ്ക്കുണ്ടായിരുന്ന കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ, അത്രക്കൊന്നും പ്രഗത്ഭരായും തെളിയിക്കാനോ മറ്റുള്ളവരെ പ്രീണിപ്പിക്കുവാനോ ശ്രമിക്കാതെ, അല്ലെങ്കിൽ വശമില്ലാത്ത, തികച്ചും സാധാരണക്കാരനായ, തിരുമേനിയെ തെരഞ്ഞെടുത്തത് അവിശ്വസനീയമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ, ആർക്കും തീർക്കാൻ പറ്റാത്തവിധം പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ സങ്കീർണ്ണമാക്കിയിരുന്ന അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനം, മാർ ബർന്നബാസിന്റെ നിസാർത്ഥവും പ്രാർത്ഥനാപൂർവ്വവുമായ പരിശ്രമത്താൽ, മലങ്കര സഭയ്ക്കും മാതൃകയാകത്തക്കവിധം മാറ്റിവളർത്തിയെടുത്തു എന്നുള്ളത് തന്നിൽ നിറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്ന ദൈവികത്വം ഒന്നുകൊണ്ടു മാത്രമാണ്. ഉപവാസവും പ്രാർത്ഥനയും സഹനത്തുമായിരുന്നു തിരുമേനിയുടെ മുഖ്യ ആയുധം.

ബർന്നബാസ് തിരുമേനി അമേരിക്കൻ ഭദ്രാസനത്തിന്റെ ചുമതലയേറ്റ സമയം മുതൽ തന്റെ ഔദ്യോഗിക സേവനത്തിൽ നിന്ന് വിരമിച്ച നാൾ വരെയും തിരുമേനിയോടൊപ്പം ഔദ്യോഗികമായും അനുദ്യോഗികമായും പല തുറകളിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുവാനും പല കാര്യങ്ങളിലും തിരുമേനിയുടെ ശിക്ഷണം കൈവരിച്ചു വളരെ ഭംഗിയായി ചുമതലകൾ നിറവേറ്റുവാനും, ഈ ലേഖകൻ കഴിഞ്ഞു.

കാപട്യമില്ലാത്ത മഹാപുരോഹിതൻ എന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കപ്പെട്ട മാർ ബർന്നബാസ്, 'താൻ രഹസ്യത്തിൽ ചെയ്യുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങളും ദൈവസന്നിധിയിൽ വെളിപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു' എന്ന് ഉറച്ചു വിശ്വസിച്ചിരുന്ന സാത്വികനായിരുന്നു. അപ്രിയസത്യങ്ങൾ അപ്രീതിയുണ്ടാക്കുമെന്ന ആശങ്ക കൂടാതെ, തന്റെ അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളിലും, പ്രവർത്തിയിലും തികഞ്ഞ സുതാര്യത പുലർത്തുന്നതിന് തിരുമേനിക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. വളരെയേറെ ഉയർന്ന ജീവിതസൗകര്യങ്ങളുള്ള അമേരിക്കയിൽ ഒരു സന്യാസിക്ക് ഉചിതമായ ലളിതജീവിതം നയിച്ചു വലിയ കാര്യങ്ങൾ നിവൃത്തിക്കുവാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞ ഈ പിതാവ് ലോകമമ്പങ്ങളിൽ മനസ്സുവെയ്ക്കാതെ, സഭയ്ക്കു ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ മാഹാത്മ്യം തലമുറയ്ക്ക് മാതൃകയാക്കി ഉയർത്തിക്കാട്ടിയ ഒരു വലിയ മനസ്സിന്റെ ഉടമയായിരുന്നു.

ഈ നീതിമാന്റെ ഓർമ്മ വാഴ്വിനായി തീരട്ടെയെന്ന് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കാം.



## Changes I like to see in our Sunday School Ministry



**Kristen John**

**Topic: As a young adult raised in Orthodox faith, what changes would you like to see in our Sunday school ministry?**

The Sunday School is one of the pertinent instrumentalities through which the Church teaches its youth Bible truths and traditions—"the sword of the Spirit"—to encourage them to choose holy and Christian lives. As a senior in the Sunday School, I propose changes in three facets of the ministry to better prepare our youth to practice Orthodox Christianity in the real world.

Firstly, the eighth-grade curriculum ought to be changed in order to integrate lessons explaining the process and deeper meaning behind the sacrament of Holy Qurbana. It is usually after the eighth-grade that the young boys of our Church begin to serve in the altar; these boys, thus, gain a greater understanding of the

mysteries of our Qurbana, while the girls are left at a disadvantage, unable to truly appreciate the religious significance of the service. By introducing in-depth, detailed lessons on the symbolism in the different facets of the Qurbana (the ringing of bells, the priest's waving of hands, etc.), this curriculum can help our youth fully appreciate the beauty and intricacies of the Holy Qurbana before entering high school, where their faith will be challenged unceasingly. Our own Sunday School Principal recently began teaching such material in our general session, which is a great step in the right direction, and has inspired me to advocate for an updated eighth-grade curriculum. It is written in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he shall not depart from it"; therefore, it is the duty of the Sunday School to teach its youth the tenets and traditions of the Orthodox faith so that they may remain true to their faith throughout their lives, having understood the significance of the sacrament upon which the new covenant, the basis of our faith, is built.

The twelfth-grade curriculum should be altered to focus on the challenges these youth will face in the coming months

as they set off for college; specifically, the curriculum should prepare our youth to defend the Orthodox faith from outside persecution. According to Revered Father Peloubet, in a letter to the University of Chicago Press, our youth need to be provided with a solid understanding of Orthodoxy, lest they face unanticipated questions to which they do not know the answers, resulting in the fall of their temples of faith and hope, built upon the sand rather than rock. Furthermore, it is stated in Titus 1:9, "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he might be able to instruct in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it." In order to defend our faith, our youth must first understand it; this is taught throughout their years at Sunday School, but must be reinforced and reviewed in the final year. For instance, if a classmate asks an Orthodox youth to explain how God and science can coexist without disproving each other, he/she must be prepared to respond: my God is the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Triune (three-in-one and one-in-three in the Holy Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) creator of the universe; science cannot prove or disprove God for he is above the scope of our basic human un-

An essay that won diocesan level prize from our Sunday school

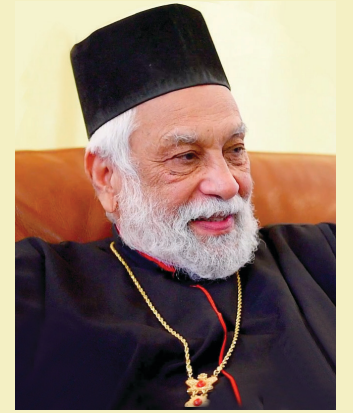
derstanding; science is simply a means, granted to us by God, to understand the physical matters of the world around us. It is only if we teach our youth to believe and defend our faith that we fulfill God's wishes as stated in 2 Corinthians 10:5, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

The support and mentorship provided to our youth through the Sunday School from pre-kindergarten until twelfth-grade ought to be extended to the college students. These college students should be requested to meet with, or call, if they are away, a parish vicar, deacon, or Sunday School teacher once a month, and then perhaps twice a month during more stressful seasons, such as finals. Currently, after graduating Sunday School, these youths feel at a loss without a connection to their parish community anymore; this kind of religious loneliness is detrimental to our college youth who were accustomed to the familiar spiritual guidance and fellowship of the Church every Sunday through Sunday School. These students should not feel alone, should not feel detached from the Church, and should not feel as though they do not have a spiritual mentor as they face the real world for the first time. The recent uptick in suicide rates among college-age students across the country has made it glaringly evident that our youth need a stronger support system within the Church. It is

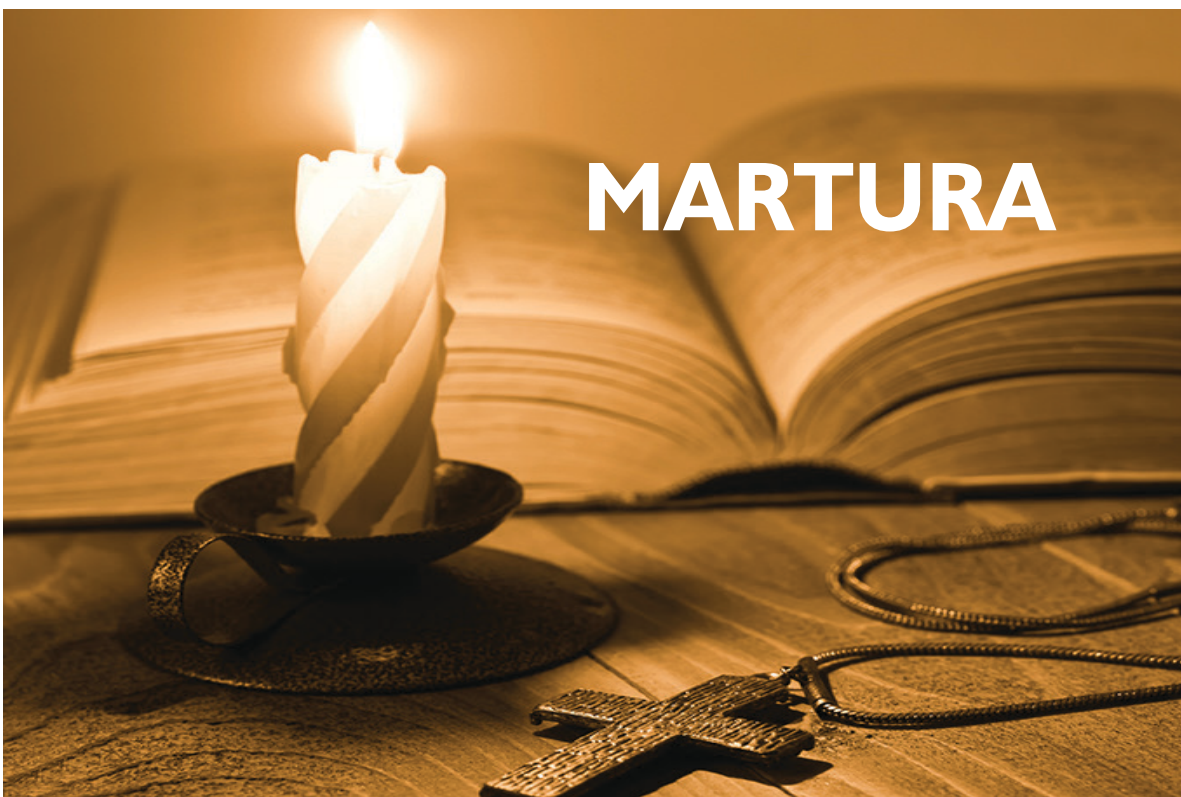
written in Proverbs 27:23, "Know well the condition of your flocks and pay attention to your herds." College students need the spiritual guidance and emotional support from a spiritual figure of authority so that they voice their feelings and questions in a supportive, Christian environment, thus strengthening their ties to the Church and God. This kind of counseling and prayerful support will help our college youth transition into a new chapter of their lives while maintaining the close relationship with God and the parish that they had as Sunday School students.

The reorganization of the aforementioned three facets of the Sunday School is a plan that is undoubtedly full of challenges; however, if executed effectively, these changes have the potential to reinvigorate the youth, the parish, and eventually, the diocese.

Best Compliments from  
Our former vicar and  
senior priest of the  
North East American  
Diocese



Our beloved achen  
**Very Rev. Fr. Dr. P.S. Samuel**  
Chor Episcopos



For the past two years, the MGOCSM was able to create an area wide summer camp for all of our members. Martura was started by a group of our representatives of our MGOCSM for kids in middle and high school during their vacation time. Mr. Robin Monichen, the area representative of the BQLI area played an important part in making this summer camp possible. He worked along with Mr. Bivin George to create an outstanding camp. Many people across our

area gave tremendous help to put together this camp.

The first Martura event took place in 2015, at St. George Orthodox Church Westchester on August 7 and August 8. The guest speaker for this event was Rev. Fr. Aju Philip Mathews. The MGOCSM members were assigned a Bible Verse to study upon: Acts 26:16. "But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and

of the things which I will yet reveal to you" (Acts 26:16 NKJV). Aju achen provided us with a very important message on how we, as Christians, have to carry out our message and our words.

The MGOCSM members engaged in classroom activities, discussing with their teachers on how we can be true witnesses of God. After everyone had a chance to be with their teachers, they were able to engage in fun games to help build our bond and to get to know each other with

other members of the MGOCSM. Abel Ninan, member of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Cherry Lane, had a very optimistic time at Martura. "It was an amazing event that allowed all MGOCSM members to connect with each other in a religious manner while still being able to enjoy fun activities". Over the two days, all MGOCSM members continued to learn about being a witness of God. The core team provided an amazing support to help assist in and carry out all the activities and games. At the end of the 2015 Martura Summer Camp, all MGOCSM members were satisfied and wanted this summer camp to keep continuing in the future.

By the grace of God, MGOCSM was able to start up another Martura Summer Camp at St. Gregorious Orthodox Church, Valley Stream in 2016. It took place on August 12 and August 13. The guest speakers were Sem. Bobby Varghese and Dn. Levon Asdourian. After almost a year of waiting, all MGOCSM members were excited to get started at Martura once again. The Bible Verse that was assigned to the MGOCSM members was Hebrews 12:1-2. "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is



**Megha Mathew**

set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2, NKJV). Sem. Bobby Varghese and Dn. Levon Asdourian both took their time to explain the verse and tell us the inside meaning behind it. They both gave very interesting speech, concerning the verse. After the speech, MGOCSM members were split into groups to look deeper into the verse and how we can use it in our daily life. Over the past two days, everyone engaged in fun activities, concerning the theme of the summer camp after class was over.

MGOCSM continues to look for more opportunities to have more Martura summer camps. By having conferences such as these, the MGOCSM of our area can grow together in both fellowship and spirituality.

## “How has Barnabas Thirumeni impacted your life and your ministry?”



H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas, our late lamented Father in Christ, continues to be a beacon in my life. When I say, that “His Grace continues to guide my life, I would like to specify that Thirumeni’s teachings not only guide my life as a priest but also as a human being who is, as Thirumeni would remind us, created in the image of God. Thirumeni preached the Gospel of Christ with love and sincerity. His Grace’s love and concern for even the smallest aspects of a person’s life, is a great shepherding archetype for many of us who are Thirumeni’s students and children in Christ. May Thirumeni’s memory be an eternal blessing to us all!

**-Rev. Fr. Abraham (Philemon) Philip**



H.G Mathews Mar Barnabas is known to be a healing presence for the sick and the suffering. No matter how tired he was, he would make a conscious effort to offer prayers at the bedside of the sick and offer words of healing for those who are suffering. Often time we are short of words especially when someone loses their loved ones or when unexpected suffering falls upon a person. Regardless of the circumstance, Thirumeni would be present and offer words of comfort and healing. He has taught me that no matter how painful the suffering of another maybe, we as Christians should not shy away from them but learn to become a presence of Christ by sharing in the pain and suffering of others. In this sense, Thirumeni was a true imitator of Christ!

**-Rev. Fr. Abraham (Abey) George**



The name Barnabas means “son of consolation.” Indeed, the Late Lamented Barnabas Thirumeni was a person of consolation. Although his exterior sometimes showed an angry demeanor, on the inside he was gentle and kind. As a newly ordained Deacon I started Way of the Cross Ministries, which had four Bible fellowships and many other ministries. I went to Barnabas Thirumeni for his blessing to start the ministry. During my visit he encouraged me and gave me the courage I needed to move forward with WOTCM. He then laid his hands on me and blessed me. That blessing is still with me today.

**-Rev. Fr. Gheevarghese John**

*Responses assembled by Roshan Mathai*



### MAR BARNABAS - A ‘GIANT BISHOP’ OF MALANKARA ORTHODOX CHURCH

From page 3

ing as professor at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, he was working as Warden also and he is known to have been a strict disciplinarian. At the same time, he cared for the students’ well-being and earned their respect and admiration.

The name ‘Barnabas’ means ‘Son of Encouragement’ or ‘Son of Exhortation.’ As if to live up to meaning of his name, Mar Barnabas was truly an instructional and encouraging figure. He has written at least 21 instructional books and several more articles regarding the faith and practices of the Church and on social and ethical issues. Whenever he was presented with Sunday School textbooks and Test materials or any other print matters for his review, he is known to have spent hours and days correcting and editing them. His reviews and editing showed

his deliberative style and thirst for perfection.

Barnabas Thirumeni was relatively small in physical stature. But from all that we know of him, he was a spiritual giant when it came to his strength of character and Christian faith and practices. Biblical scholarship was natural to him in that he was fluent in quoting verses and their references with so much ease and fluidity. “Barnabas Thirumeni’s successor, the current Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese, H.G. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos, whom he loved and was confident to entrust the reins of the Diocese with, calls him “Valia Thirumeni” not only because of his seniority but also because of the strength of his character and the realization of God’s Grace abundantly working in him. May his memory remain eternal!



Newsletter Editorial Board 2017



Alwin Babilson

## AREA-WIDE QURBANA CLASSES

The BQLI MGOCSM group came with an idea to start a Qurbana class in order for the youth to know the deeper meaning of our weekly service. By the grace of God, the MGOCSM was able to have Rev. Fr. Aju Philip Mathews to teach us about the holy mysteries. The classes

took place at St. Basil Orthodox Church on February 5, March 5, April 2 and May 7 of 2017. Each MGOCSM members were provided with an outline for the whole Qurbana of the coming date and a notebook to take notes in. Aju Achen was able to provide a lot of valuable information about the

Holy Qurbana. He made this class very entertaining and taught certain rules and criteria for participating in the Holy Qurbana. The class quickly grew support and interest from the area while all those in attendance learned a new aspect of the Qurbana with each class. Justin Varghese, mem-

ber of the St. Gregorious Orthodox Church, Cherry Lane, had a few interesting words to say about the Qurbana classes, “This class really opened my eyes to what really goes on at the Altar. Although I am an Altar server, and we’re supposed to know majority of the actions happening at the Altar, some information that Aju Achen said allowed me to connect what we believe as an Orthodox Christian to what we do during Holy Qurbana. I believe this Qurbana class really benefitted a lot of people because it gives us an understanding of what is going on every Sunday.” After each class, members were provided with light refreshments. The Holy Qurbana class truly came out to be a success due to the hard work of Mr. Robin Monichan and other members of the BQLI area. They provided the backbone to this class and without it, it would have collapsed. The MGOCSM continues to look for more opportunities to have classes like this in the future.

### His Grace Mar Barnabas



Jonah Koshy

Barnabas Thirumeni was born on August 9, 1924. In 1951, he was ordained as a Priest. On May 15, 1978, he was ordained as a Bishop. Thirumeni was appointed to the American Diocese in 1993. Barnabas Thirumeni inspired young men in the Diocese to join the ordained ministry. I am very lucky that I got to meet him. He conducted my parents’ wedding in 2008 and I was blessed to be baptized by him on November 20, 2010. “The Golden Bishop with the wooden cross” entered into eternal rest on December 9, 2012.

Given below is a famous selection from “Christian Love” written by His Grace Mar Barnabas:

We are created in the image of God. “So God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). Not only Christians but all human beings are created in the image of God. “God is love” (1 John 4:16). Hence all human beings have the potential to grow to perfection in love. Jesus Christ has manifested what real love is and He has commanded us to love one another as He has loved us (St. John 15:12). This is Christian love.

Christian love has mainly four aspects: (1) Self-sacrifice (2) Whole-hearted Forgiveness (3) Supreme Respect and (4) Implicit Obedience. When we have this kind of love, we will inherit heaven.



Barnabas Thirumeni with Cherry Lane Church Sunday School

## HOLY TRANSFIGURATION RETREAT CENTER



Benn Thomas



Abel Ninan

The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church has grown stronger in both faith and in numbers. Over 3,000 families are members of the Northeast American Diocese and the diocese continues to grow. Ministries in the church, such as the Sunday School, M.G.O.C.S.M., Marth Mariam Samajam, G.R.O.W., etc., have grown as well and hold events to promote the Indian Orthodox faith amongst the youth of the church and the community as a whole. As these ministries have evolved, it became more and more difficult to hold events because of a lack of suitable center or campuses. After a 3-year search, His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicholovos and the Diocesan Assembly found a property in the Fatima Renewal Center. It was the perfect location, and with the support of the whole Diocese, Nicholovos Thirumeni went ahead and purchased the property. It was named the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center.

The purchase of the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center has been one of the most prolific achievements in the history of the Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Despite the fact that the movement to purchase this property required the coordinated effort of several dozen individuals that included the head of the Malankara Orthodox Church, His Grace Moran Mar Baselious Mar Thoma Paulose II, our leaders

were able to make this dream a reality for the church. The financial undertaking required to purchase this property was also quite a massive endeavor. However, in spite of these obstacles, each parish in our diocese heartily donated a significant sum of money that was ultimately pooled together so that the diocese could obtain this beautiful property.

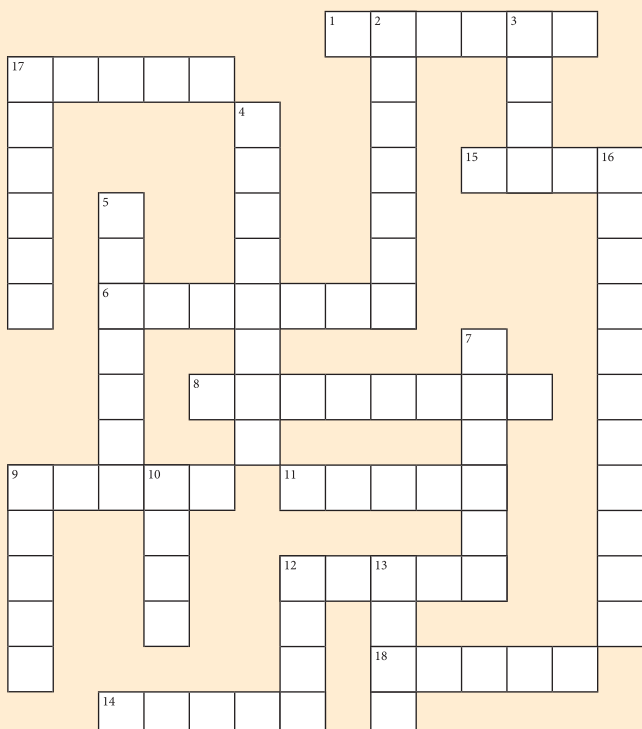
Stretching all the way from the regions of Canada down to the state of South Carolina, the Northeast American Diocese has expanded quite a lot since being founded in America. Nevertheless, although expansion outwards isn't of utmost importance within the church as of right now, the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center has provided the diocese and all its members an unprecedented opportunity to expand within itself. Moreover, it has provided a location where our entire diocese could get together as one and come closer to God. Sitting on over 300 acres of land and boasting a library, chapel, conference rooms, classrooms, offices and residential facilities, the Retreat Center has the capability of being used for all occasions as a central hub for education, liturgical services, and fellowship. Any group of individuals from our church, whether it be the Sunday School, MGOCSM, FOCUS, Martha Mariam Samajam, clergy, or any others, can use the Retreat Center as convenient yet spiritual meeting-ground. Although the main features of the center are

located within the main building, there are several other features that will be added to the center in the coming years. These features include: memorial tombs, a monastic community, a cemetery, a theological Seminary, a wedding hall, a retirement community, and a catechetical school. All of these features ultimately indicate one important conclusion: though our church has made a great leap with the purchase of this center, we still have quite a long journey to go to in order to make this Retreat Center a prospering feature in the diocese.

Although this purchase was quite a recent development in the history of the Northeast American Diocese, the idea of obtaining a central location for our church in America has been an idea that came from our late Metropolitan His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas. It was Barnabas Thirumeni that always wished for our diocese to continuously expand as time went forward - if not outward then inward. In concept, the retreat center that exist today as a part of our church was originally his very own brainchild. The fact that the retreat center even exists today owes all its thanks to one of the aspirations of a great leader in the Malankara Orthodox Church. As the church progresses in its endeavors and wishes that revolve around the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center, we pray that Barnabas Thirumeni constantly extends his love, support, and prayers for the future of this Retreat Center. ■



## BIBLE CROSSWORD

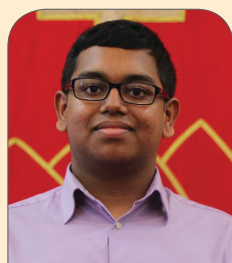


### ACROSS

- The first person that passed by the wounded man in the parable of the Good Samaritan
- "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." is taken from chapter 5 verse 48 of which biblical book
- Name that means "son of encouragement"
- Father of David
- Husband of Zipporah
- Brother of Moses
- The first bird that Noah sent from the ark after the rains stopped
- King who had a wicked wife named Jezebel
- The harlot that housed the two spies in Jericho.
- Father of Abraham

### DOWN

- The symbol God showed as a promise to Noah
- Biological son of Adam (hint: not Abel or Cain)
- Friend of David
- Fourth book of the Pentateuch
- Husband of Delilah
- First of the 12 Apostles to become a martyr
- First king of Israel
- Last word in the bible
- Biblical book named after a woman
- One of 12 apostles who was called Nathaniel and was introduced to Jesus by Philip
- Wife of Jacob



Justin Varghese

## SUNDAY SCHOOL INITIATIVES



Sunday School is a ministry of the Malankara Orthodox Church that allows the youth of the church to participate, grow and learn about Jesus. Sunday School prepares them to become involved in the church by encouraging the children to take more responsibilities as the future leaders of the church. It teaches children the tools needed to lead a faithful life while offering a chance to connect with children from different areas by having various events that connects one area to another. A great example of this are the speech and song competitions. These competitions not only help children speak and sing about God but also helps the youth interact with each other, whether it be through conversing about important issues that Christians face or about their school life. The Sunday School organization offers children the chance to do charity, compete, and display their commitment to the church.

Every Sunday, after service there is Sunday School for children from Pre-K to 12th grade. Before individual classes, there is a general session where the children gather to learn songs and bible verses. The headmaster stands in the front and leads the children in songs and teaches new songs for them to learn. There are also weekly bible verses that the students learn and memorize to recite the following week in front of the church during general session. In addition to this they learn more parts of the bible and can win prizes for their knowledge. Students from all grades are encouraged to participate and are rewarded for trying. Recently, short lessons on the Qurbana service are taught to all the children. This helps them understand the meaning behind the service. The children then disperse into smaller classes and learn the approved curriculum for their respective grade level. They are given quarterly exams to test their knowledge. At the end of the school year, the 5th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders are given a centralized exam that mimics a state test and is created and approved by the Sunday School organization. The curriculum teaches the children about God, their faith, and instills a God-fearing

mentality in them for being Syrian Orthodox Christians.

The Sunday School also provides their children with tips and lifelong lessons. A great example of this is when the Sunday School Headmaster urges the children to participate in events in and out of church by performing skits or even songs and speeches. This gives the kids more experience to perform in large crowds. The headmaster also teaches bible verses or passages and the significance it can have on their futures and daily lives. Sunday School also helps children communicate with not only children their age but also students older and younger than them. This helps them overcome the possible future struggle of communicating with people of different ages. The Sunday School also has a charity tin in which children are advised to donate at least a quarter every Sunday for poor starving children. This practice will help foster a behavior of helping out the needy in the children and will also help them realize how much people struggle. The Sunday School children recently took a trip to a nursing home to give out food along with gifts to the residents. The experience helped the students realize that when they get older they should continue to help the elderly and the sick. The Sunday School has conducted all these events and lessons not just to teach or give but to also show the children how to lead faithful lives.

The Sunday School is often thought of as a small establishment that just demonstrates the works of God and the Bible. However it should be considered as a place that provides their children with more opportunities to meet new people, boost their confidence, test their knowledge, and show their talents. Sunday School helps the children become aware of all the things that can stray them away from their beliefs. It teaches children incorporate Jesus into their everyday lives. It also explains the problems many Christians around the world are having and helps the children become more active in church matters. It creates special memories that can never be lost and definitely holds a special place in the hearts of all the children. ■



Hanna Abraham



Shelby Saimon



*"We all love Barnabas Thirumeni so much."*

Sunday School Grades KG & Pre- K (2017-18) Students with Gregory Achen and the Teachers Mrs. Lovina John, Mrs. Raji George and Miss. Maryanne Johnson.



*Barnabas Thirumeni was a very noble and Godly Father in our church. He performed many miracles. He is a beloved model for us all.*

Sunday School Grade 1 Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Mrs. Suja John



*Barnabas Thirumeni was the first Metropolitan of the North-east American Diocese. He was born on Aug 9, 1924. He became a priest in 1951 and became a Thrumeni in 1977. We all love Barnabas Thirumeni.*

Sunday School Grade II Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher |Mr. Peter Johnson



*We love how Barnabas Thirumeni cared about the Children and devoted his life to teach us the faith. We are trying to follow the footsteps of Thirumeni every day.*

Sunday School Grade III Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Miss. Stella Saimon



*"We all love Barnabas Thirumeni"*

Sunday School Grade IV Students (2017-18) with Achen and Teacher Mrs. Julie Mathew



*"Barnabas Thirumeni was the Bishop of the Northeast American Diocese. Thirumeni Visited our church many times and offered Holy Qurbana."*

Sunday School Grade V Students (2017-18) with Achen and Teacher Miss Judy Mani



*Barnabas Thirumeni was the Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese, his life was an inspirational story for all. Barnabas Thirumeni was humble and showed empathy toward others. This can be shown when an incident occurred during the time he was in India. A person stole his car and his reaction toward this incident was very unique. He stayed calm and said, the person who took the car needed it more than I. Thirumeni's life is a never ending legacy, which is an inspiration to all.*

Sunday School Grade VI Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Mr. Shanly Joseph



*Barnabas Thirumeni was a humble Bishop who cared deeply for the Church and all the Children. We love Barnabas Thrumeni*

Sunday School Grade VII Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Mrs. Rajini Mathai



*Barnabas Thirumeni touched the hearts of everyone he met. He taught us to be perfect like the heavenly Father. His legacy will live on for generations and generations.*

Sunday School Grade VIII Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Miss. Rohitha Roy

*"I remember Mar Barnabas as a man of God who lived a simple life on this earth. He lived a life that was acceptable to both God and man. He always used to tell people to live a good life, without sin and to help other people. He didn't love money, power or other material wealth. He always lived for the betterment of the Church. His life is a moral for all of us."*

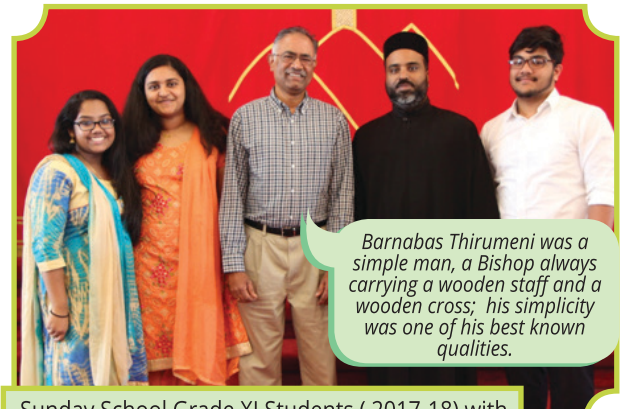


Sunday School Grade IX student (2017-18) with Achen and Teacher Mr. Thomas K. Abraham



*"Barnabas Thirumeni has been a great inspiration for us all through his simple life style and his sermons of unconditional love."*

Sunday School Grade X Students (2017-18) with Achen and Teacher Mr. George M. Geevarghese



*Barnabas Thirumeni was a simple man, a Bishop always carrying a wooden staff and a wooden cross; his simplicity was one of his best known qualities.*

Sunday School Grade XI Students (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Mr. Moncy Varghes



*In this contemporary world, Barnabas Thirumeni exhibited the ideals of Orthodox Christianity that many find difficult to observe. Thirumeni was a true example of simplicity as well as being a spiritual giant.*

Sunday school Grade 12 (2017-18) with Gregory Achen and Teacher Mr. Roby Antony



Sunday School Group Picture 2017-18 (St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Cherry Lane) with Vicar Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese, Teachers and Students.

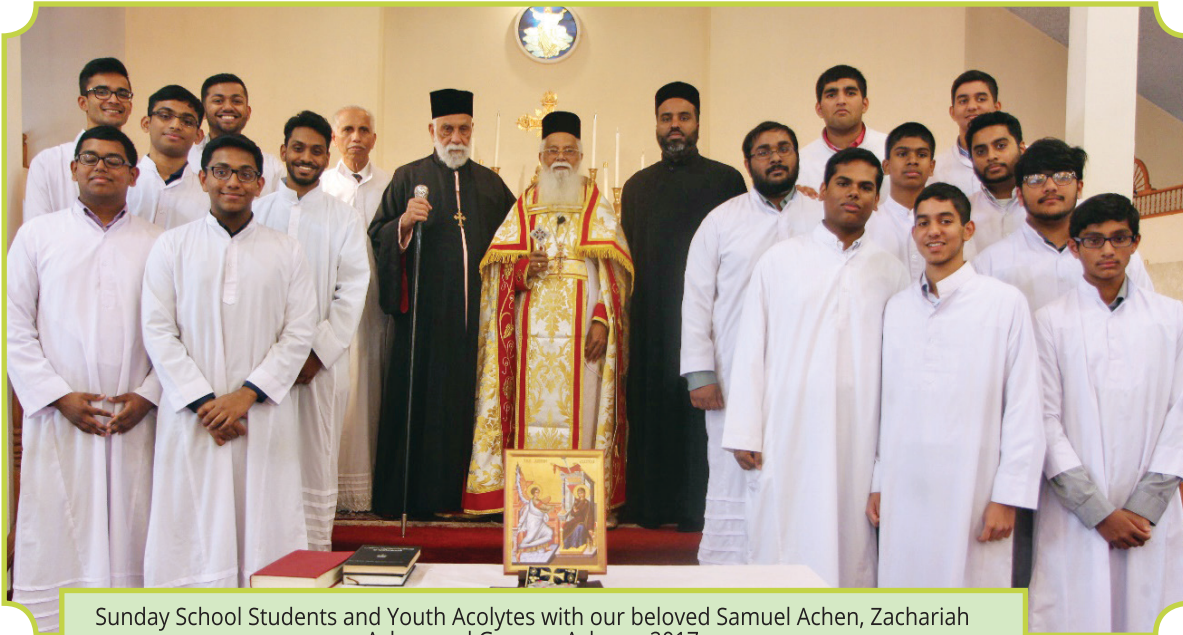
*Best Compliments from*  
**Rev. Fr. Gregory Varghese & Family**

*Best Compliments from*  
**Mr. Oommen P. Abraham & Family**

*Best Compliments from*  
**An Anonymous Well Wisher and Family**



Sunday School and MGOCSM students and their Leaders with Achens, 2017



Sunday School Students and Youth Acolytes with our beloved Samuel Achen, Zachariah Achen and Gregory Achen - 2017



Sunday School Children during Catholicate Day Celebrations 2017



Our Sunday School children and Volunteers at the Area Level Orthodox Vacation Bible School 2017



St. Gregorios Church Senior Choir- 2017

*Barnabas Thirumeni loved our Church and the Church Choir. His Grace taught us songs and corrected us many times but never got upset with us. May his memory remain eternal!*



Congratulations to our Graduates 2017

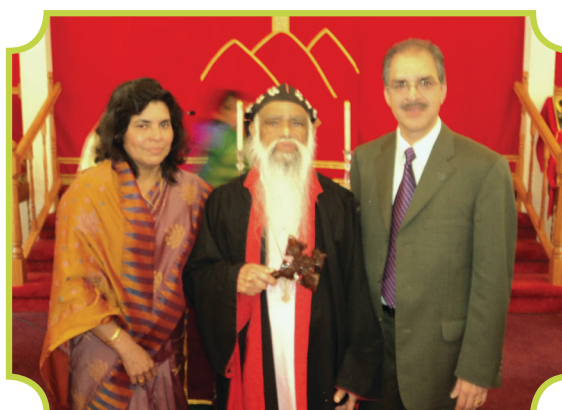


Martha Mariam Samajam Members with Samuel Achen

*Best Compliments from*



George P Varughese and Family



Varghese Pothanicaad and Family



Jijo Koshy and Family

*Barnabas Thirumeni is still a blessing in our lives. We can never forget his love for us. He always quoted, Matthew 5:48- "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." A perfect man in every way! We pray that our beloved Barnabas Thirumeni will continue to intercede for us, and his memory be eternal!!!*