

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

# THE EPISTLE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION



October 2008





### MESSAGE FROM VICAR

*“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall ! ...And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. ” 1 Cor. 10: 12-13*

My dear sisters and brothers in the love of our Lord,

September reminds us, and it is now a memory in the minds of not only the Americans but of the people of the entire world, of a serious crisis. '9/11' has become an epitome with intense, painful and extensive implications. The 'response' to this 'crisis' has brought in more crises than possible solutions not only to a nation, but to human history too. And now when the nation observed its 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary, discussions focus on the alarming proportions of the 'economic crisis', that too with global implications. The New York Times reported the loss of jobs in September alone at 159,000, totaling to 760,000 in the past nine months. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the 'Katrina' and 'Rita' inflicted crisis and catastrophe, surging tides of 'Gustav' and 'Ike' worsened the already volatile conditions of thousands.

The Church also consistently faces crises in her existence of engaging the world with the mission which she is called for. The problems that the Church faces in India need to be seen in a broader picture of the total crisis within the nation and its socio-economic and political processes.

The Random House College Dictionary defines 'crisis' as "a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events is determined". The word crisis is a derivative of the Greek '*krino*' which has got implications of decisions and judgment. It points to a 'turning point' in terms of its long-term impacts. It is said that the Chinese word-symbol for 'crisis' is a combination of symbols for **danger** and **opportunity**. The glaring examples from human history, whether secular or religious are always instances of crises turned into opportunities.

The surge of adversities and troubles is a reality for any individual or nation. This is all the more true for a believer and follower of Jesus. The Bible extensively speaks about such people – from Abraham to Jesus and through the New Testament Church. **For a child of God situations of crisis are occasions to testify the genuineness of one's faith, one's stature and character, and the quality of one's commitment that proves true discipleship.** Crisis should bring out the power of hope. Most importantly, a person's (or any system's) **ability to learn** is determinative of the nature of the 'turning point' with reference to the future.

Extensive studies have taken place in terms of organizational preparedness and management strategies in the context of 'Katrina' and 'Rita'; the positive impacts of them are proved useful in the management of 'Gustav' and 'Ike' havocs to a very great extent. But lessons of 9/11 are yet to be learned so as to reflect on the safe and peaceful life of the people around the world as well as those of America. The President's statement itself points to the need of another \$87 bil-

lion for the troops to remain in Iraq the next year; and the rhetoric of 'war against terrorism' gains newer grounds ! The political climate and the compulsions of the nation are such that expectations for any reversals are distant, the least to expect in the context of an election! Dimitri Medvedev, the President of Russia commented "financial egoism" as the cause of the present crisis of America. Paul Krugman, the Princeton Professor and NYT columnist points to the crisis and the problem of leadership. Thomas L Friedman calls it a "credit crisis" and observes, "Our government is so broken that it can only work in response to a huge crisis. But now we've had a huge crisis, and the system still doesn't seem to work."

**Learning readiness** and **openness** in crisis that can address the otherwise hidden and ignored weaknesses of any person or organization, is very vital in contrary to the possible responses of targeting and fixing blames, and the denying of responsibility. This is very relevant in the case of families too.

Marriage and family life has been going through serious crises in the drastically changing social scenarios. Meaning and expectations of marriage are substantially changed. The sacramental nature of family, and the covenantal binding with one another and with God, is neglected in the pace of the materialistic and impersonalized social processes. Observing the Family Sunday (on Oct 19) and the planned coming together in retreat (on Oct 18) should be occasions of renewal and rededication for all of us. The Church is challenged to learn lessons from the Lord and from history, through the power of the Holy Spirit so that "witnessing to the ends of the world" becomes the goal of our existence. In that authentic process God transforms crises to opportunities. The call before us is to become disciples with openness and learning mind. The unfailing presence of God assuredly guides us through 'the valleys of the shadow of death'.

Let us be thankful to God for all the persons, organizations and structures that are becoming meaningful instruments in the hands of God.

May God bless us all,

Affectionately yours in the Lord,

Koshyachen

### QUOTE

"WHEN GOD IS GOING TO DO SOMETHING WONDERFUL, HE CHOOSES A DIFFICULTY. WHEN HE IS GOING TO DO SOMETHING VERY WONDERFUL, HE CHOOSES AN IMPOSSIBILITY!"

## *Youth Chaplain's Message*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

### **What Ammachee said to Appachan**



**“The truth is, I don’t even know who you are anymore. Let’s see some ID.”**

Who am I? Am I really the devout believer others think me to be? Am I really the troublemaker others purport me to be?

The truth of the matter is that many of us would be unable to offer a singular coherent answer to this question of identity. One reason being our identity has become increasingly relational. That is, based on the circumstance and person. So, we may express multiple identities completely dependent on the situation. As such, identity becomes something that is superfluous and focused on the external and visible. In the process the very core of our being gets lost or distorted. Perhaps this is why interest in Halloween has progressively increased. In that, it represents a central characteristic of our society – a life behind masks!

In the gospel according to St. John 1:-15-23, John is questioned about his identity by the Jews, priests and Levites. They ask him, “Who are you? Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet? Who are you?” He confidently responds, “He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me...the law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”. When asked about his identity, John has only to speak of Jesus Christ. He doesn’t discuss himself, his family or his background – he simply testifies of Christ! For him, his identity was insepa-

rable from his faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ. He realized that only in truly knowing Christ can one know themselves.

Essentially, in order to understand the true depth of our identity we have to rephrase the question and ask ourselves: Whose am I?? or Whose are we?? It is when our words, deeds and thoughts reflect the very image of God (Gen1:26,27) that we reveal His true and intended identity for our lives.

May we rediscover ourselves through our faith in Christ and remove the masks that distort the truth of our identity.

In Christ's Service,

Your brother,

Jaisen Achen

**972-495-5393**

**214-604-6678**

**revjathomas@yahoo.com**

## *Church Activities*

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL:**

Regular classes at 8.45am.

**Sunday, October 12** - Teacher's Meeting after Holy Qurbana

**Saturday, October 25** - Sunday School Southwest Regional Competition

- Hosted by Mar Thoma Church, Farmers Branch.

- 1st and 2nd place winners will represent St. Paul's in the respective categories

**Friday, October 31** - Hallelujah Night at 7:00 pm (Praise and worship)

### **SEVIKA SANGHAM:**

**Saturday, October 11** at 10 am - Bible Study at the residence of Mrs. & Mr. Joice & Phil Mathew, Sunnyvale, TX.

**Saturday, October 25** at 10 am - Bible Study at the residence of Mrs. & Mr. Omana & P.P. Cherian, Sunnyvale, TX.

### **YOUTH FELLOWSHIP:**

**Friday, October 17 through Sunday, October 19, 2008** - 2008 South West Regional Youth Fellowship Retreat at Huntsville, TX

**Fridays** at 7pm - Prayer Fellowship at the Church.

**Tuesdays** 7-8pm - Jr. and Sr. Men's and Women's Bible study will be held at the Church with Rev. Jaisen Thomas.

### **YUVAJANA SAKHYAM:**

**Sunday, October 12** at 6:30pm - Meeting at the residence of Mrs Ligi & Mr Babu.P. Simon, 700 Purple sage Dr, Mesquite, TX 75419 Ph:972-329-7004

### **PARISH MISSION:**

**Fridays, October 10, 17, 24, and 31** at 7pm - Bible Study/Prayer fellowships at the Church.

**Sundays** 9-9:30am - Intercessory Prayer

### **MALAYALAM CHOIR:**

**Sundays, October 12 & 26** - Practice sessions after Holy Qurbana.

### **ENGLISH CHOIR:**

**Saturday, October 11 & 25** at 10am - Practice Session at Church

### **SPECIAL PRAYER:**

**Fridays, October 3, 10, 17, and 24** from 9.30 to 11.30am - The residence of Mrs. & Mr. Jaisy & Raju George, 922 Dandelion Dr, Mesquite, TX.





*Lectionary Information*

**Sunday, October 5, 2008 - (Malayalam Service)**

Voluntary Evangelists' Day - Christian Witness in a secular society

**Lesson 1:** 2 Kings 5:1-14

**Epistle:** Acts 18:24-28

**Lesson 2:** Acts 11:19-30

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:13-16

**Sunday, October 12, 2008 - (English Service)**

Solidarity with physically and mentally challenged

**Lesson 1:** 2 Samuel 9:1-13

**Epistle:** 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

**Lesson 2:** 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

**Gospel:** Matthew 11:1-16

**Sunday, October 19, 2008 - (Malayalam Service)**

Christian Family Sunday: Family: God's gift

**Lesson 1:** Joshua 24:14-22

**Epistle:** Romans 16:1-16

**Lesson 2:** Galatians 6:1-10

**Gospel:** Matthew 2:13-22

**Sunday, October 26, 2008 - (English Service)**

Youth Sunday—Spirituality in the age of information technology

**Lesson 1:** 1 Samuel 17:32-50

**Epistle:** 1 Timothy 4:6-16

**Lesson 2:** Philippians 3:1-16

**Gospel:** Mark 10:17-31

**GENERAL PROGRAMS**

**10/04 – Church Picnic at Sunnyvale Park**

**10/05 – Parish Mission Day**

**10/18 – Family Retreat at Church**

**10/19 – Family Sunday**



## *Church Building Update*

As we know, there was a month delay in steel structures and our General Contractor working so hard to get this issue resolved as soon as possible. Right now we completed the parking lot entrances, fire sprinkler systems manifold and the stained glass design. The pews and audio/video committees are close to making their recommendation to Building Committee for final approval of contract. We appreciate our younger generation, organizations, and members for their leadership, prayers and support towards this noble project. Let us work together as a family so that our good Lord could work within us to glorify His mighty name.

## *Quiz Update*

Thanks to Mariam Chacko for completing the August quiz. She was the only one who gave any efforts to find all the books of the bible in the article. We appreciate your efforts.

As usual, I am looking for anyone willing to contribute toward submitting a quiz that can be added to the newsletter. Please email them to [jacobkab@hotmail.com](mailto:jacobkab@hotmail.com).

### **2008 SOUTH WEST REGIONAL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP RETREAT**

**HOST: IMMANUEL MAR THOMA CHURCH, HOUSTON**

**WHEN: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17 THROUGH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19**

**WHERE: FOREST GLEN RETREAT CENTER IN HUNTSVILLE, TX.**

**THEME: "COMMIT TO THE LORD WHATEVER YOU DO, AND YOUR PLANS WILL SUCCEED." -PROVERBS 16:3.**

**REGISTRATION FEE: \$80**

*Prayer Meetings*

**AGAPE**

**LEADER: MATHEW BABU**  
972-771-1058

**Saturday, October 25 @ 7:00pm**  
Residence of Mrs. & Mr. Chacko T. Oommen, Garland, TX

**EBENEZER**

**LEADER: ANNA JOHN (LIZY)**  
972-289-2675

**TBD**

**EMMANUEL**

**LEADER: MATHEW SAMUEL**  
972-494-5545

**TBD**

**MANNA**

**LEADER: P.P. CHERIAN**  
972-203-2018

**CANCELLED**

**SHALOM**

**LEADER: ABRAHAM KOSHY**  
972-681-7083

**TBD**

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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](mailto:Jacobkab@hotmail.com)

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**WE'RE ON THE  
WEB!**

**WWW.STPAULSMTC.ORG**

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