



THE HORIZON

December 2022

VOL 20 | ISSUE 1

ST. MARY'S SYRO - MALANKARA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



FROM THE Father's Heart



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

I am pleased to offer heartfelt good wishes for a coming blessed Christmas and prosperous New Year 2023 to you all. Let us praise our loving God for His blessings upon our Church and on our Community here in Melbourne. May Baby Jesus, Grant Peace and Harmony to our Church and the whole world.

The most consoling and encouraging message of Christmas is the angelic message, "Do not be afraid." This is a phrase that occurs 88 times in the Bible and is mostly spoken by God to His people. This phrase is repeated so often that this short phrase has been called a distillation of the whole Bible. The Lord said it to Abraham before cutting a covenant with him: "Don't be afraid." Angel Gabriel said it to Daniel when he was frightened by a terrifying vision: "Don't be afraid." The angel said it to Zechariah, future father of John the Baptist. Angel Gabriel said it to Mary, who was troubled at the news she received. An angel said it to shepherds startled by the Christmas glory that shone round them. Jesus repeatedly said it to his disciples, culminating in his resurrected appearance when he came to his grieving, fearful friends and spoke the words, "Don't be afraid." Mary Magdalene heard this same command when she was in the garden searching for Jesus in the empty tomb. So, on this Christmas day, perhaps this command is the very one God would give to us today: **"Don't be afraid."**

Since it is found all over the Bible as words spoken by God, we can trust them. All of us have fears: fears for the safety of our families, fears of our own health and life, fears about possible accidents, illnesses, violent home intrusion, fears about our jobs. We are afraid of the health of a loved one that seems to be slipping away. We are all afraid to lose what we do have. We are still afraid that what we do have, may not be enough in the end. On a global level, are afraid of terrorist attacks, nuclear warfare, religious persecution, global warming and so many other natural disasters. Christmas reminds us that if we fear God with reverential fear prompted by love, we don't have to fear anything else in the world. We don't have to fear people & things that can only hurt us in this life. No one can take away who we are in Christ. No one can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus!

Why we should not be afraid?

The essence of Christmas message is that we need not be afraid because of three main reasons. Firstly, We have a divine Saviour to save us from our sins and grant us eternal life with Him. Secondly We have an Immanuel God who lives with us and within us as our source of strength and guidance.

Thirdly We have a love-sharing God who wanted to share His love with us by becoming one of us and sharing our fears, temptations, pains and suffering.

We should not be afraid because we have Saviour God. Jesus, the Incarnation of God as man, came to save us from the bondage of sin. The Hindu Scriptures describe ten incarnations of God. The purpose of these incarnations is stated in their Holy Scripture, Bagavath Geetha or Song of God. "God incarnates to restore righteousness in the world whenever there is a large-scale erosion of moral values." But the Christian Scriptures teach that there was only one Incarnation of God, and its purpose is stated in John 3: 16: "God so loved the world that he sent His only Son so that ever one who believes in Him may not die, but have eternal life." We celebrate that Incarnation today as good news because we have a Divine Saviour. As our Saviour, Jesus atoned for our sins and liberated us from slavery to sin by his suffering, death and resurrection. Every Christmas reminds us that we still need this Saviour to be reborn in our hearts and to live there, for we need him every day through Eucharist to free us from our evil habits, addictions, baseless fears and unjust, impure and uncharitable tendencies. Hence, Christmas challenges us to accept Jesus as our Lord God and personal Saviour and to surrender our sinful lives to him, allowing him to rule our lives.

We should not be afraid because we have an Immanuel God living with us and within us. Christmas is the feast of the Emmanuel because God in the New Testament is God-with-us, Emmanuel, who continues to live with us in all the events of our lives as announced by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary. The Creator of this vast and wondrous universe entered our history on this night and became human for us. What this means, of course, is that God does not intend to destroy us but to redeem and restore us to be the people he created us to be. The Christmas story tells us that there is a way out of our sinfulness and hopelessness, because God is with us. We are not alone. There is a mighty God within us to strengthen us in our weaknesses and temptations. As Emmanuel, Jesus lives in the Sacraments (especially in the Holy Eucharist), in the Holy Bible, in the praying community and in each believer, with the Holy Spirit who is transforming us daily into the "Temples of the Holy Spirit." Hence, each Christmas reminds us that we are bearers of God with the missionary duty of conveying Jesus to others around us by loving others as Jesus did, through sacrificial, humble and committed service. Sharing with others Jesus, the Emmanuel living within us, is the best Christmas gift we can give to, or receive from, others.

We should not be afraid because we have a God who wanted to share His love with us by becoming one of us and sharing our fears, temptations pains, and suffering. Jesus, as our Saviour, brought the "good news" that our God is a loving, forgiving, merciful, saving and rewarding God and not a judging, cruel and punishing God. Jesus demonstrated by his life and teaching how God, our heavenly Father, loves us, forgives us, provides for us and rewards us. All his miracles were signs of this Divine Love. Jesus' final demonstration of God's love for us was his death on the cross to atone for our sins and to make us children of God. It means that God accepts each of us just as we are. Each Christmas reminds us that sharing love with others is our Christian duty, and every time we do that, Jesus is reborn in our lives. Let us face this question, "What is our gain if Jesus is born in thousands of cribs all over the world and He is not born in my heart?". Hence, let us free ourselves from all our fears by allowing Jesus to be reborn in our hearts and lives, not only during Christmas, but every day, so that he may radiate the light of his presence from within us as sharing and selfless love, expressed in compassionate words and deeds, unconditional forgiveness, the spirit of humble service and overflowing generosity. Pope Francis once during Christmas urged the congregation of about 2,000 people to "value the little things in life", adding: "On this night of love, may we have only one fear: that of offending God's love, hurting him by despising the poor with our indifference." As Christmas is the celebration of this great divine love, Let us love each other and witness Christ wherever we go. Do not be afraid about this world. But afraid to hurt God and offend His Love. May Child Jesus bring His SMILE through our poor faces to everyone in this World.

May God Bless you all and our Church as well.

Adv. Fr. Philip Mathew Vettikatt
Chaplain

Our Holy Communion



From second half of 2021, under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Stephen Kulathumkarott, a few of our children had been preparing for the reception of their first Holy Communion. On 16th Jan 2022, seven catechism students received First Holy Communion. This was for the first time in our community a few children received the Holy communion together, which was a blessed event. This was followed by another event where we had two more of our children received Holy Communion. On behalf of the community, we congratulate Emelin Shiju, Eva Judin, Hazel Regi George, Faith Regi George, Jaden V Vattasseril, Sarah Sunil, Mathew Sunil, Ryan Tobin , Tania Tobin and their parents. We also would like to thank Rev. Dr. Stephen for his tireless effort in preparing the kids for the First Holy Communion.

Send off

REV. DR. STEPHEN KULATHUMKAROTT

After serving our community for nine long years Rev. Dr. Stephen Kulathumkarott handed over the chaplaincy of Melbourne Malankara community to Fr. Philip Mathew Vettikatt earlier this year. After his last Holy mass as the chaplain of Melbourne community on 13th Feb 2022, the committee organised a farewell meeting to Rev. Dr. Stephen where the community recognized and thanked him for all his efforts and expressed our deep gratitude for all his guidance throughout the years which resulted in the community's growth.

While the event would be remembered as the celebration of Stephenachan's long and fruitful journey with Melbourne community , it was also a display of the strength of the relationship he had with the Melbourne community and their solidarity towards him.



WELCOMING OUR NEW CHAPLAIN REV. FR. PHILIP Mathew VETTIKATT



As promised, His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos graciously appointed a resident Chaplain for Melbourne Malankara Community, and Rev. Fr. Philip Mathew Vettikatt assumed office from March 2022. Fr. Philip arrived in Melbourne on 1st March 2022, and our community under the guidance of Fr. Stephen extended a very warm welcome to Fr. Philip and Achan celebrated his first Holy Mass in Melbourne on 20th March 2022. This would be viewed as a landmark event in the history of Malankara Catholic community in Melbourne and no doubt, arrival of this young and vibrant priest will propel the growth of our community in this region at a much faster pace. Welcome again Philippacha..!!



PREPERATION & CELEBRATION

Holy Week

We prepared to enter into the Holy week with a one-day programme -**Fast and feast with Jesus 2022** - held at St Christopher's Catholic Church parish hall, Syndal, which was a blessed gathering and a new experience for us. Fr Philip organized talks, games, prayer, Holy mass, food and fellowship into the program very creatively and reminded that fun, nature and faith need not be separated,





but can co-exist.

Our Holy week services were held at St Joseph’s Catholic Church Elsternwick.

The Palm Sunday services were held on 10th April 2022 and Catechism students brought flowers to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem by singing Hosanna. Maundy Thursday services were on 14th April 2022. All our families brought in offerings from home which was blessed and shared among the faithful after the services. We started the Good Friday services at 9:00 AM on 2nd April and concluded around 2:30 PM. Following our tradition, kanji was served after the Good Friday services.



Easter services started on the Saturday evening at 5:00 PM and concluded at 9:00 PM. Around 80 members attended the celebrations and we concluded with a grand dinner.



OUR SHIFT TO A NEW PREMISES



Our parishioners unanimously decided to move to Holy Saviour Catholic Church Glen Waverley, for our Sunday Holy Mass as this is the parish currently been assigned to Fr. Philip. We officially moved to the new parish 24th April 2022. We as a community is always grateful to Fr Varghese Kattikatt for letting us use St. Joseph's Catholic Church Elsternwick for our gathering, and without his help and support it would have been difficult for us to grow over the years as a community. On 26th June 2022, we planned and celebrated our Holy Mass at St Joseph's Catholic Church Elsternwick and organized a small farewell meeting after the Holy Mass to show our gratitude towards the help and support done to us by Fr Varghese. Fr Philip handed over a memento to Fr Varghese as a token of respect from our community.

ST. GEORGE & MAR IVANIOS DAY CELEBRATIONS

Though we had to reschedule the original dates for St. George Day celebrations due to another Covid wave & outbreak, the community celebrated St. George Day along with the 69th Mar Ivanios Day on 10th July 2022 . We followed that with customary Padayatra to mark our respects and solidarity to Mar Ivanios walk of his life which started 92 years back. It was another blessed day for the community in true spirit and shared a wonderful meal before parting in the evening for the week.



ELECTION & SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMITTEE



On 10th July, Pothuyogam elected a committee for the new fiscal with Regi George as the trustee and Judin George as the Secretary and they sworn into the office on 31st July 2022. We now have a 11 members strong committee to build our church to new heights under Philip Achan's Leadership. We wish all the best to the new committee.



Onam Fest 2022



The Melbourne Malankara Onam Fest 2022 was celebrated on 11th September 2022 at Holy Saviour Catholic Church, Vermont-Glen Waverley.



The day started with the Holy Qurbana celebrated by our beloved Rev Father Philip Mathew Vettikatt. After mass, the Onam committee, headed by Mr. Rejo George, organised cultural events and other celebrations.

The pookalam arrangement - attappo was beautifully laid out by the mathrusamajam members. The event's emcee, Mrs. Rintu Rejo, gave a history and explanation of the significance of Onam and led the days festivities. Mahabali accompanied by pukikali, dancing to the beats of udukku and thakil was welcomed with great joy.



Mahabali bestowed his blessings on the entire Malankara community.





An enchanting and elegant thiruvathirakali was performed by the mathrusamajam members. Group dance performance by the junior girls, solo cultural dance by Sara Sunil, Desi dance performance by brother sister duo of Ryan and Tania Tobin, melodic song by Ann Anoop and kids' energy packed group dance, brought the children to centre stage. A delicious traditional onasadhya balancing the six fundamental flavours of sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent was arranged for the entire community. The onasadhya was followed by games for children and couples. Tug of war (vadam vali) was organised for men and women between different prayer groups. The men's champions were the Mar Ivanios prayer group, and the women's victors were the St. George prayer group. The day ended on a high note of community bonding and togetherness.



MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION

We celebrated Mother's day where the community thanked all the mothers of our parish and passed on gifts after the Holy Mass as a mark of our love & respect for their efforts in building our families and community.



PRACTISE FOR HOLY QURBANA IN ENGLISH

Fr. Philip Matthew Vettikatt has initiated an endeavour to conduct Qurbana in English in an effort to inspire our young generation to engage more in the Malankara liturgy. English Qurbana books have been distributed to all families. Father Philip leads practise sessions after Holy Qurbana.

SOME INTERESTING & NOTEWORTHY CHANGES

Active involvement of prayer groups: Its decided that Prayer groups will take turn and take leadership in setting up the Altar before the start of Holy mass and serve the dinner towards the end of the holy mass. This is already proved helping in timely start of the Holy mass and helps families to have a relaxed time with the community rather than thinking about commitments at home they would otherwise.

HOLY ROSARY MONTH

Catholics traditionally observe October as the Holy Rosary Month. The month of October is dedicated to the Rosary primarily because the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated October 7. This celebration includes devotional activities honouring the Blessed Mother, such as holding prayer vigils, novenas, and recitation of the Holy Rosary in parish communities. Online Holy Rosary lead by catechism children was conducted daily during October by the Malankara community. Fr. Philip's special guidance and leadership made the initiative a great success.

8 NOMBU & INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

The Melbourne Malankara Catholic Community celebrated the feast of Nativity of Mother Mary from 1st - 8th of Sept 2022. Members of the mathrusamajham organized Marian reflections during this time under the guidance of Fr. Philip. They shared their thoughts on different topics during these 8 days. Online holy rosary was also conducted for the 8 days.

RECENT BAPTISMS IN OUR COMMUNITY



Evelyn Sarah George
Baptised on 23rd April 2022



Raelyn Elizabeth Biby
Baptised on 21st May 2022



Kristine Maria Pothen
Baptised on 3rd Sept. 2022

NEW BISHOPS FOR THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH



On Friday 15th of July 2022, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church was blessed with 2 new bishops. Most Rev. Dr. Mathews Mar Polycarpus and Most Rev. Dr. Antony Mar Silvanos were consecrated by Major Archbishop Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos in a blessed ceremony attended by hundreds of believers and other social & religious leaders at St Mary's cathedral, Pattom on July 15 2022.

KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR NEW BISHOPS



Most Rev. Dr. Antony Mar Silvanos, was born on July 18, 1961 and hails from the Kadamankulam parish of the Archdiocese of Tiruvalla. He was ordained priest on Dec 30, 1987 and served for Tiruvalla Archdiocese in multiple parishes as vicar. He was also the Vicar General of Archdiocese of Tiruvalla and served as professor St. Mary's Malankara Seminary. Before his enthronement, he served as the Executive Director of the Suvisesa Sangam of Syro Malankara Catholic Church. He is now appointed as the Bishop of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church.



Most Rev. Dr. Mathews Mar Polycarpus, was born on November 11, 1955 and hails from the Puthur parish of the Diocese of Mavelikkara. He was ordained priest on December 18, 1982. He has held various positions as Principal of Mar Ivanios College, Member of the French and Latin Language Board of Studies and Academic Council in the University of Kerala. He has served as the Vicar of more than 35 mission parishes. At the time of his enthronement, he was serving as the Proto- Syncellus of the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum. He is now appointed as the Auxiliary Bishop of the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum.

Receiving Rev. Fr. Daniel Poovannathil our community:



Well known Bible preacher Rev. Fr. Daniel Poovannathil, was in Melbourne on a mission and during his visit he made it a point he caught up with our community by visiting us on 20th of November 2022. He was received by the community whole heartedly and he celebrated the Holy Mass for Malankara community. During the sermon, as always, Daniel Achan re-emphasized, Holy Scripture is the ultimate solution for all challenges in human life and can re-ignite your lives and take it to new heights.

CONTACT DETAILS

Adv. Fr Philip Mathew Vettikatt
(Chaplain)

Mob.: +61 40 50 80 300
Email: frphilipbty@gmail.com

Address

St. Patrick's Presbitory
1 Cathedral PL, East Melbourne
VIC 3002

OFFICE BEARERS

Kaikkaran	Regi George
Secretary	Judin George
Catechism	Rini Joel
MCYM	Shaji Varghese
Mathru Samajam	Sushin Anoop
Liturgy	Sunil Mathaikutty
Choir	Raiju Panicker
PRO	Ciby Abraham
Prayer Group	Tobin Thomas
Online Programs	Neenu Amith
Cultural Events	Rejo George

EDITOR'S DESK

Nibu Varghee V.
Shibin P. Varghese
Pothen Mathew

Email:
syromalankaracatholicmelbourne@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW?

The Season of Yaldo-Denho starts on the Sunday before Christmas. Yaldo is the Syriac word for 'Birth' and Denho for the Baptism of our Lord

Wishes and Prayers

Feast Day of
Adv. Fr Philip Mathew Vettikatt
on 14th November
Priestly Ordination anniversary of
Fr STEPHEN KULATHUMKAROTT
on 28th December



New Bundle of Joy...!!

Thiago Jo Thomas



Birthdays

Sushin P Kurian	5th Nov	Raphael S. Mathew	13th Jan
Vinu Thomas Kakkanattu	6th Nov	Aryan T. Abraham	19th Jan
Merlin Shiju	7th Nov	Cimi Shibin	19th Jan
Allen Joy	8th Nov	Alex Thomas	21st Jan
Nia Ajit	9th Nov	Jaden Varghese V.	22nd Jan
Maryann Stanley	9th Nov	Binoj John	23rd Jan
Hazel Regi George	14th Nov	Jitin Cherian	24th Jan
Tania Treesa Tobin	15th Nov	Amit K. James	25th Jan
Johan Mathew	19th Nov	Isaiah R. George	25th Jan
Ethan Rejo George	21st Nov	George Varghese	28th Jan
Amala Thomas	22nd Nov	Jyju Jossey	31st Jan
Aann Panicker	22nd Nov	Joel Singh	1st Feb
Annie Mohan	23rd Nov	Prince Philips	2nd Feb
Shanty Jyju	25th Nov	Aaron Panicker	4th Feb
Tinkumon Skaria	25th Nov	Issac D. Allen	5th Feb
Sabu Mannil	25th Nov	Shibin P. Varghese	6th Feb
Gloria Manuel	25th Nov	Suby V. Abraham	6th Feb
Ciby Abraham	7th Dec	Febin M. Sunil	8th Feb
Jake Skaria Cherian	7th Dec	Raiju Panicker	8th Feb
Alfie Manjesh	13th Dec	Rev. Dr. Stephen K.	9th Feb
Sarah Biju	14th Dec	George Abraham	16th Feb
Steve Varghese V.	14th Dec	Dr. Jojy Thomas	20th Feb
Sony Tonson	18th Dec	Alannah Judin	20th Feb
Alyssa Ann Pramod	19th Dec	Joachim J. Philip	21st Feb
Nia Tobin	21st Dec	Mini Shaji	22nd Feb
Praise Christiano Varghese	23rd Dec	Akhila Thomas	28th Feb
Ann Cicilia Anoop	29th Dec		
Clare Stanly Devasia	10th Jan		

Wedding Anniversaries

Biju Kalathil & Neeta	9th Nov	Biby Samuel and Lisa	9th Jan
Vinu Thomas K. & Shilpa	12th Nov	Jinu John and Alphonsa	11th Jan
Amith James & Neenu	14th Nov	Shaji Varghese and Mini	16th Jan
Rejo R. George & Rintu	17th Nov	Regi George and Suby	19th Jan
Ajit Abraham & Anumol	20th Nov	Jojy Thomas and Jeny	23rd Jan
Dilip Jo Thomas	28th Dec	Joel Singh & Rini	6th Feb
Raiju Panicker & Soji	1st Jan	Sabu Mannil & Johncu	8th Feb

Sad Demise: 21/01/2022

LISIAMMA VARGHESE

Retd. BSNL AGM
Puliankeezhe, Kottayam
(Mother of Shibin Varghese)

