



St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church Of Los Angeles

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Vicar's Desk



By Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker

What is Church?

It is the divine institution founded by Christ on the faith confessed by St. Peter. He said to them "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you Simon Bar Jona. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you are Peter and on this rock, I will build my church and the power of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you lose on earth shall be lost in heaven." (St. Mathew 16:15-19) Here Peter or Petros in Greek is masculine and rock or petra in Greek is feminine. Hence we can understand that it was on the faith confessed by Peter that the church was to be built ; even if it is argued that it was exclusively handed down to the Roman Catholic Church. Whatever that was given to Peter or the apostolic group, was handed down to the churches.

Church is the extension of the incarnation of our Lord and the uniformity in faith is essential among churches. A universal head is not a necessity.

(This reference is from His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas' Hand Book for the Malankara Orthodox)

Special Topic

What is Prayer?

Prayer is communication between a Father and His children. In one sense, that is all there is to it. When prayer seems difficult, and we feel unworthy of asking the Almighty Creator God to answer our seemingly mundane requests, we would do well to remember that Fathers want to talk with their children; and most parents will tell you that the communication is much more important than the topic.

With God, however, prayer is not limited by words, but it is a touching of our spirit, with the Holy Spirit of

God, that leads us into relationship with the Father. This means that we don't need to put into words, but can simply open our heartfelt thoughts and emotions to our Father God. But how can this be, you might ask? Why would God allow himself to be pestered by millions of prayer requests from us?

The answer is that prayer is a gift. God has given each and every one of us the opportunity to address him directly. Moreover, not only is prayer a gift in itself, but God answers prayers with further gifts. Jesus teaches *"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him"*. John writes in his epistle, *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."* As a child of God you are invited to come boldly before His throne.



We would do well to remember that the gift of prayer is given out of God's generosity, and not because we have earned it. Sinners as well as saints can pray. Because

the gift of prayer is a gift from the Almighty Creator, we come into prayer with reverence, and will often start with praise and thanksgiving, focusing on who God is. But because he is also our Father, we need not fear Him, but can know that God loves us with a greater depth and intensity than any human being is capable of.

Why should we pray? Prayer brings the power of God to bear on the situations that we are concerned about. Prayer is one of the ways that God is able to work in our lives and in the lives of others, and it opens new possibilities. So we can freely bring all of our concerns, our thoughts and desires, our hurts and our needs to Him, knowing that He is our loving Father, who wants to hear from us.

From Prayer Guide

Children's Corner

The Temptation of Jesus

After Jesus was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Jesus fasted during those forty days. That means he didn't eat anything during that time, and of course, at the end of the time he was very hungry.

Satan saw this as an opportunity to tempt him again. He said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Jesus answered, quoting from the book of Deuteronomy; "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'".

You will remember that when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they became hungry, and God fed them with special food called manna which fell from heaven. He showed them that they were dependent upon him for all their needs.

Next the devil took Jesus up on a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in just a moment. Then he told him that he had been given the authority to give those kingdoms to anyone he wished. Had he really been given that authority?

Remember, the devil is a liar. God rules in the kingdoms of men and it is He who gives power to the people He wants to have that power. Satan told Jesus that if he would worship him, he would give him all those kingdoms.



Jesus replied, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Again Jesus is quoting from

the writings of Moses in Deuteronomy.

Satan tries a third time. He brought Jesus to Jerusalem and took him up to the highest part of the temple and told him to jump off. He said that angels would come and lift him up so that he

wouldn't be hurt.

The devil even starts quoting scripture now. He quoted from Psalm 11, "For He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." (Satan left out the part about 'to keep you in all your ways'.)

Jesus answered him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'."

Satan gave up and left him, but he would return later when he thought he had an opportunity to get Jesus to sin. Of course, we know that he never succeeded.

After Satan left, angels came and helped Jesus. There were also other times in his life that angels came to help him.

Once when Jesus was talking about who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he called a little child to him and told the people that they must become as little children. He said, "I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

We are told by the writer of the book of Hebrews that there are 'ministering angels' who are sent to help those who are saved. What a comforting thought!

What does this story mean to me?

When Satan tried to get Jesus to do wrong, Jesus always answered him with scripture. In Matthew's account of the story, with each temptation, Jesus said, "It is written", and then he would quote the scripture.

You can study and memorize Bible words and "hide" them in your heart to keep from doing wrong. If you do this, you will always know how you should act in any situation. Think about how Jesus would act.

Memory Verse

***It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."
Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)***

From Children's Bible Story Collection

Blessing the Censer

The prayers for the blessing of the censer are proclamations of the faith in Trinity. The chains on the censer represent the Holy Trinity. The first chain stands for God the Father. The second and third chains represent the human and Godly nature of the son. The fourth chain represents the Holy Spirit.

The priest puts incense in the censer and grasps one of the chains and makes sign of cross over it and says: Holy is the Holy Father.



the Holy Son

And finally he grasps the last chain and says Holy is the Holy Spirit.

Grasping two more chains the priest proclaims: Holy is

words which share the root dox may seem quite unrelated, Orthodox Christians have always recognized their essential interconnection.



The first Greek word with the primary root dox is translated into English as glory. The Orthodox, in fact, claim to offer God glory (in worship) correctly. In order to be able

to worship God in spirit and truth, i.e. to offer Him correct and proper glory, one must understand Whom it is that is being worshipped. That brings us to the second Greek word with the primary root dox, i.e. the word translated into English as understanding, teaching, or doctrine

Therefore, Orthodox Christians are those who worship God properly and believe and proclaim correct doctrine about God. That is what Orthodox Christians claim about themselves. That is what the word orthodox means.

Taken from OrthodoxAnswers

What Does Orthodox mean?

Consider the following dictionary definitions of orthodox:

or•tho•dox adj.

1. Adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith, especially in religion.
2. Adhering to the Christian faith as expressed in the early Christian ecumenical creeds.
3. Of or relating to any of the churches or rites of the Eastern Orthodox Church.
4. Sound in opinion or doctrine, especially in religious doctrine; hence, holding the Christian faith; believing the doctrines taught in the Scriptures.
5. According or congruous with the doctrines of Scripture, the creed of a church, the decree of a council, or the like.

The etymology of the word shows that it derives from two Greek roots. The first, "Ortho" means correct, proper, or straight. The second root component of orthodox is "dox" which is actually a root shared by two different basic Greek words.

Though in English, the meanings of these two



Q: How can you make God laugh?

A: Tell Him your plans for the future.

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah - he was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A. Pharaoh's daughter - she went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he got married?

A. Ruth-less.

Editor: Spiritual organizations are encouraged to provide matter every edition, based on your monthly meeting topic. This way you are sharing with others your experience.

Schedules

Sunday Service:

Namaskaram : 9.00 am – 9.45 am
Holy Qurbana : 9.45 am onwards
English : 1st & 2nd Sunday
Malayalam : 3rd, 4th & 5th Sunday

Sunday School:

Every Sunday After the Church:

03/17/2006: LA Clippers Vs 76ers Basketball Game
03/05/2006: Social Work (Help the poor & needy)
03/25/2006: Confession Day

Church Events:

2006 Church Calendar and Lectionary can still be ordered. Members who have not received should approach Editor for their copy.

Feb 19th : Memorial of all departed Souls
Feb 26th : Potluck Lunch after the Service
Feb 27th: Great Lent Starts

Mar 22nd : Middle of Lent , Service at 6.00 PM
Mar 25th : Annunciation to St Mary

Members Announcement:



We are introducing this column from this edition onwards.

Ninu & Winson Baby of Norwalk is blessed with a baby boy Jeremy.

Seema & Saji Philipose of Cerritos, is blessed with a baby girl Sara.

Shiney & Johnson of Norwalk is blessed with baby girl Jenisha.

Proud Parents of the new born don't forget to email editor with the following information: Name of Parents: Name of baby, Gender.

If you are new to this place we like you to be in our family. Email editor with your name, family members residing with you, Contact address and phone.

Send mail to the editor at news@stthomasla.com

Prayer Corner

Prayer Group Meeting:

Regional Prayer is scheduled at the residence of Dr. Elizabeth and Abraham Varughese in Buena Park on Saturday, February 25th at 6pm.

Please schedule prayer meeting at your residence and support the spiritual growth of our community.

Young adult Prayer meeting is scheduled on 2nd Saturday of every month. Next meeting will be on March 11th at the residence of Dr. Sajini and Jacob George at Cerritos.

Stay tuned every Sunday after Church announcement for prayer meeting schedules.



Look upon us, O Lord, and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of thy brightness. Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom. All our desire is known unto thee, therefore perfect what thou Look upon us, O Lord, and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of thy brightness. Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom.

All our desire is known unto thee, therefore perfect what thou hast begun, and what thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer. We seek thy face, turn thy face unto us and show us thy glory. Then shall our longing be satisfied, and our peace shall be perfect.

(Augustine, 354 - 430)



**Have any Questions?
OR
Your Comments may be directed to
Editorial Board**

Email at news@stthomasla.com

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