



# St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church Of Los Angeles

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## Vicar's Desk



By Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker

### A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY (TWELVE STEPS)

#### Step 1

As we begin to accept the reality of our condition, we naturally reach out to others for answers.

We feel like timid spiritual beginners and wonder why the quality of life we are seeking has escaped us. Friends may tell us "Read your bible or pray about it. Some may suggest please talk with our minister .No matter how many outside sources we seek, there will be no relief for us until we, by ourselves, in our minds and hearts, acknowledge our powerlessness. Then and only then, will we begin to see that step one is the beginning of a way out.

The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 1 Cor. 8.2

Step one is an ongoing commitment. We must remember that our damaging traits, habits and behaviors are a part of us. They are unconscious reactions to the stresses of life. We must watch our behavior for the appearance of destructive tendencies. As we notice self-defeating behaviors and reactions surface, we can admit our powerlessness and seek God's help. God will then open new courses of action for us.

#### Questions

1. We think that life is working when we rely on our old survival techniques. How has this blocked you from seeing your real problems?
2. In what area of your life do you experience the strongest need to be in control?
3. What are the results of your self-defeating habits?

*To be continued.....*

## Special Topic

### Raise Children to Love Themselves

How to raise children to love themselves, others, God, and to be responsible persons?

Within the blanket of God's Grace, the development of the child is the crossroads of:

- External effects from environment and place.

- Cultural traditions and expectations from parents
  - Each parent's particular approach
  - Nature of the child
- Self-image or self-esteem insurance – is an important concept.

#### The ABCs of Image Insurance:

- A – Acceptance and affirmation.  
Acknowledge them and to support them (participate)
- B – Belonging: Family and community
- C – Competence: Good self image =  
"I am capable – I can do it"

Parents should be very active in promoting each of these three areas.

#### Five Insurance Principles for Self Esteem

1. Don't take misbehavior personally  
Children always misbehave – its natural and not your fault and not to spite you.
2. All behavior have a purpose  
Look through a child's eyes whenever you can
3. Love your children no matter what
4. Parents don't "Own" their kids  
Parents are like a bow and the children are arrows, God is the archer.  
Our job is to remain steady and let God place the arrow where he wants it to be.
5. The tail does not wag the dog  
Focus on the needs of the greater group/family and clarify each other's role and responsibilities. Use loving authority. Integrate kids needs into the greater set of needs.



By STMOC Young Adult Group

# Children's Corner

## Peter Confesses Jesus



Jesus was teaching in the region of Caesarea Philippi (ses uh REE uh, fih LIP eye). This was one of the most beautiful places in the country with trees, flowers, and sparkling streams of water. On this particular day, as he frequently did, he went off by

himself to pray.

His disciples found him and he asked them, "Who do men say that I am?"

There were many different ideas about Jesus. Some people thought that John the Baptist or Elijah had come back from the dead in the person of Jesus. Some thought that maybe Jeremiah or another one of the prophets had come back to earth.

But Jesus wanted his disciples to say what they thought about him.

Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." How could Peter be so sure about this? Jesus gives us the answer.

He called Peter's name, Simon Bar-Jonah, or Simon son of Jonah. Jesus said the fact that Peter knew who he was, had come as a divine revelation. God Himself had told Peter.

Jesus told Peter that He was going to build His church, and no force of Satan would ever be able to overcome it. His people would be triumphant and win over evil.

Peter was going to have the "keys" of the kingdom. He would tell people the things that pleased God and the things that were displeasing to God. He was going to be God's spokesman and people would have to obey the teachings of God that Peter preached. Jesus told Peter, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Then Jesus told them that they must keep his true identity a secret for a while longer. He would have to suffer and die and be raised again.

Peter didn't want to even think about Jesus dying, and one day he said to him, "Lord, this shall not happen to You!"

But Jesus knew that Satan was trying to harm Him through the words of Peter, and He said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan."

About a week later Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain. He was transformed (transfigured) or changed in front of their eyes. He was shining as bright as the sun. This was further proof to them that Jesus really was the Son of God!

### What does this story mean to me?

When Peter believed that Jesus was God's son, he said it to others, and it made a big change in his life. God could now use him as He wanted. Not that Peter was perfect. He wasn't. We even remember that one night he even said he didn't know Jesus. But he later was very sorry for saying that.

When we confess Jesus with our lives and show others that we love Him, God can use us for His purposes. Look for opportunities, and God will show you ways and times that you can tell others about your faith in Jesus. You too, can confess him as Peter did and cause many to believe.

### Memory Verse

*Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

### Mathew 16:16 (NKJV)

## From Children's Bible Story Collection Lesson 44

### How do we currently ensure that our children are affirmed and accepted as who they are?

- We remember to avoid direct comparisons between our children and others.
- Ephesians 6:4 was also mentioned.
- Tell our children that we love them every day, that they are "magnificent/special"
- When dealing with negative behavior, label the behavior itself as the problem not the child. (Hate the sin not the sinner)
- Acknowledge them/legitimize their world.
- Build them up. Apply many more words of praise than criticism.
- Be active/"hands on"



### From Group Discussion of STMOC Young Adult Group.

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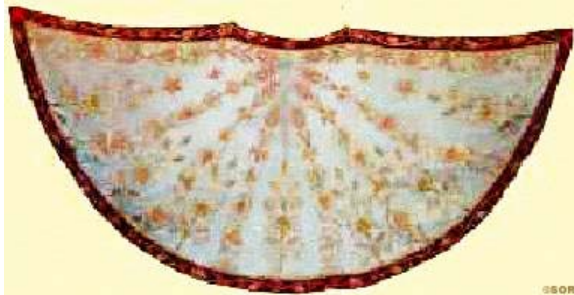
## Informational about Orthodoxy

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### PHAYNO

The priest puts on the **phayno**, a cope during Holy Qurbana, which symbolizes Aaron's robe of many colors and the Savior's seamless robe.



The celebrant signs the cross over it thrice reciting Psalm 132:9-10: *Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness and Thy righteous with glory. For Thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.* Then he puts it on reciting Psalm 132:9: *Clothe Thy priests with salvation and Thy saints with glory.*



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## Prayer in Busy Lives

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Many of us struggle to bring God into the busyness of our lives. Our busy schedule can squeeze out our prayer time, and when we do pray, we may find it difficult to bring our activities to God as prayer topics. We might think that God can't possibly be interested in our work life, or in our housework, or our leisure time. Yet the God, who is the Lord of all of our lives, is interested in **everything** we do.

Brother Lawrence was a seventeenth century French monk who knew God's presence at all times. His writings, borne out of experience of the



bustle of a monastery kitchen, have much to teach us today. *"God is everywhere, in all places, and there is no spot where we cannot draw near to Him, and hear Him speaking in*

*our heart."* His central teaching is that we need to practice being aware of God's presence. *"Whoever practices God's presence will soon become spiritual."* *"How can we be with Him, unless our thoughts are with Him? How can He be in our thoughts unless we form a holy habit of abiding in His presence, there asking for the grace we need each moment of our life?"* Paul writes to the Ephesians: "Pray all the time, asking for what you need." (Eph 6:18)

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**From Prayer Guide**  
[prayerguide.org.uk/alone.htm](http://prayerguide.org.uk/alone.htm)

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## HUMOR



**Q.** What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden?

**A.** Your mother ate us out of house and home.

**Q.** The ark was built in 3 stories, and the top story had a window to let light in, but how did they get light to the bottom 2 stories?

**A.** They used floodlights.

**Q.** Who is the greatest baby-sitter mentioned in the Bible?

**A.** David - he rocked Goliath to sleep.

**Q.** What do they call pastors in Germany?

**A.** German Shepherds.

## Schedules

### Sunday Service:

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

### Sunday School:

Every Sunday After the Church:

03/25/2006: Confession Day  
04/09/2006 - 04/16/2006 Easter Break.

### Church Events:

2006 Church Directory is ready for distribution.  
All members are requested to approach  
Secretary/Editor for a copy.

Wed., Mar 22<sup>nd</sup> : Middle of Lent, Service at  
6 PM

Sat., Mar 25<sup>th</sup> : Annunciation to St Mary

Apr 9<sup>th</sup> : Palm Sunday (Potluck)

Apr 16<sup>th</sup> : Easter Sunday (Potluck)

Passion week Schedule will be available on the  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of April.

## Prayer Corner

### Prayer Group Meeting:

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

Zonal Prayer meeting will be held at the residence  
of Mrs. & Mr. Winson B Varughese, Norwalk on  
March 25<sup>th</sup> 2006 at 6.00 PM.

Zonal Prayer meeting will be held at the residence  
of Mrs. & Mr. Jacob Mathew, Culver City on April  
8<sup>th</sup> 2006 at 6.00 PM.

Young Adult meeting will be held on May 13<sup>th</sup> at  
the residence of Fr. Yohannan Panicker at 5.30  
PM.

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



*"Trust in the Lord with  
all thine heart; and lean  
not unto thine own  
understanding. In all  
thy ways acknowledge  
him, and he shall direct  
thy paths."*

**Proverbs 3:5 & 6**



**Have any Questions?**

**OR**

**Comments may be directed to the Editorial Board**

Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker  
Dr. Sheba George, Mr. Thomas Phillip,  
Mr. John P. Varughese, Mr. Mathew Varughese,  
Mr. Jijo Koshy and Mr. Gigi Kurian