



ST. MARY'S INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

(Pilgrim Centre), Ras-Al-Khaima, UAE



GREAT LENT AND THE SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

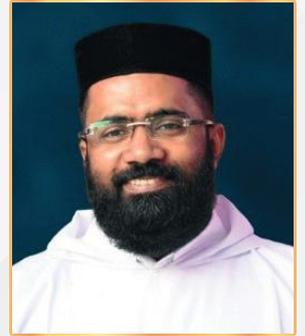
By:- Fr. Siby Thomas

(Asst. Vicar, St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Dubai)

Beloved ones in the Lord,

"With the great lent begins the spiritual toil, the victory against demons, the exercise of self-discipline, our frankness toward God.."

The period of Holy and Great Lent suspends the monotonous routine of our life; it is the ultimate time of spiritual struggle. This is a struggle where not only the body strains, but also the spirit. All of us can and must participate in this struggle, unequivocally. There is no space for spectators, but provides space for contenders. The judges of this struggle is the Lord, the establisher of good struggles of Faith, and spectators are the Saints, who have already taken part and excelled in these struggles and have received their winning wreaths and trophies. They stand to watch our own efforts, to admire our own accomplishments.



We entered this spiritual struggle from the moment we were baptized. It was then that we renounced Satan and his works and clothed ourselves with our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we promised to follow throughout our life. Selfishness and our attraction to life's vanity, in conjunction with the never-ending battle with the perishable pleasures and wonders of both the world and flesh, which engulf us into sin, as a result, we abandon our exercise in Christ and sink into the works of devil. It leads us astray from the source of life, Christ, until we are completely separated from Him. This is exactly what death is all about. Eternal, horrible, true death. Because as much as Christ is Life, true Life, eternal Life, that is exactly how much estrangement from Him is death, deprivation of Life, Joy and Light – total loss of everything.

Thus, the Church established the period of the Fast so that we are back on track and we may understand that we are contenders and athletes taking part with the grace of honor in the various sacred exercises: forgiveness of one another, fasting, prayer, charity, patience in sorrow and hardships of life, perseverance in pain, and the offering of brotherly love to one another. Fasting relieves the body from unneeded weight; it empowers prayer, humbles one's self, and opens up the gates of repentance. Physical "repentance" strains and exercises the body. It is a confession and prayer in which the body partakes as well. Charity sanctifies fasting and makes our prayer more agreeable to our Merciful God. Our act of forgiving all who have harmed and hurt us in any way, and our love for all, seal our genuineness as Christians.

The prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian: "Lord and Master of my life, do not give me a spirit of idleness, curiosity, lust of power and occupation with trivialities. Instead, give me, your servant, a spirit of prudence, humility, patience and love. Yes, Lord, make me able to see my own faults and not judge my brother, for you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen." In this prayer, we invoke Him, the Lord and Master of Life, and ask through Him to be delivered from the four main evil spirits, the four most hideous passions. We also ask to be endowed with the four principal good spirits, namely the four most important virtues.

Let us enter the holy struggle, The Great Lent. Let us begin, the good struggle of repentance and purification through fasting, self-restraint, forgiveness of one another, patience, acts of charity, prayer, and love. Let us struggle with the grace of honor like all the Saints -- with a yearning for Christ and spiritual "nobility," with humility but also with fervor.

A Message from Vicar

Leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. Mark 4:36–38



Throughout our lives, we can be assured that at some point we will encounter a storm. Not just a physical storm but a spiritual one. It may come in the form of a tragic event, a deep wound inflicted by another, the effects of our own sin or some other painful experience. And for many people, this will happen more than once.

When such a “storm” is encountered in life, it may seem as if Jesus is “asleep” and not readily available to help us through. When this happens, the message of the Gospel above is very helpful to prayerfully ponder.

As this Gospel passage continues, we read that the disciples, in a panic, woke up Jesus and said, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” Jesus got up, addressed the storm and said, “Quiet! Be still!” and all was calm. He then said to the disciples, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” The disciples were left in amazement and wonder.

The key is faith. When we face a storm in life, we must have faith. But what does that mean? It means that we must know, with a deep certitude, that Jesus is in fact always with us. We must know, with a deep certitude, that if we place all our trust and hope in Him, He will never abandon us. We must know, with a deep certitude, that every storm will ultimately pass, and that peace and calm will ensue.

Facing the storms in life with faith is transforming. And often Jesus appears to be asleep for a reason. The reason is that He wants us to trust. Too often we turn our eyes to the storm itself and allow fear and anxiety to dominate our lives. But every storm we encounter is an opportunity to trust Him on a new and deeper level. If life were always easy and consoling then we would have little reason to trust deeply. Therefore, every storm must be seen as an opportunity for tremendous grace as we place all our trust in Jesus, despite how things immediately appear.

Let us reflect upon how deep and sustaining our own faith in Christ truly is. Do we trust Him no matter what? Are we able to trust Him when all seems lost, when life is difficult and when confusion tempts us? Prepare, now, for the next such storm you may face and resolve to use that opportunity as a moment in which our faith is made manifest and becomes the stabilizing force of our life.

**In His Service
Your Loving
Joe achen.**

പള്ളിപരുന്നാൾ 2021



പുതുതായി തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ട OCYM Zonal,Unit ഭാരവാഹികൾക്ക് ആശംസകൾ

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ആദരാഞ്ജലികൾ

“ശരണത്താലെ നിൻകൃപയിൽ
മരണമടഞ്ഞൊരു ദാസരെ നിൻ
ജീവസ്വരമതുണർത്തമേ
കബറീനുദ്യാനത്തിനായ് “



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Church Worship Timing

- Friday** : 6.30 AM-Morning Prayer
7.00 AM-Holy Qurbana (Jazeera Church)
6.30 PM-Evening Prayer
7.00 PM-Holy Qurbana (Jazeera Church)
- Saturday** : 7.00 PM-Evening Prayer
7.30 PM-Holy Qurbana (Jazeera Church)

For More Info : 050 268 2681 / 050 370 3321 (Vicar)

എല്ലാം ദിവസവും പ്രഭാത പ്രാർത്ഥനയും സന്ധ്യാ നമസ്കാരം ജസ്റ്റീൻ പള്ളിയിൽ നടത്തപ്പെടുന്നു

വലിയ നോമ്പിൽ എല്ലാ ദിവസവും യാമ പ്രാർത്ഥനകൾ ജസ്റ്റീൻ ദൈവാലയത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുന്നതാണ്

NB- Church new Contact Number(landline) - 00971 7 236 4686



The New academic year of our Sunday school commenced from Friday 5th February 2021. We request all our parents to send their wards to Sunday school classes. We will continue the online classes till we get the permission from the higher authorities. Parents those who wish to send their wards to KG or any other classes may please contact the HM Koshy Varghese (0559505026) or Staff Secretary Mrs. Suni Varghese (0503727693) at the earliest.

Editorial

നമ്മുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ സ്വപ്നങ്ങളുടെയും സന്തോഷനിമിഷങ്ങളുടെയും മുകളിൽ കരിനിഴൽ വീഴ്ത്തിയ, ജീവിതത്തിൽ മറക്കാനാകാത്ത രീതിയിൽ ബന്ധിതരായി, നെടുവീർപ്പുകളുടെയും സ്വപ്നങ്ങളുടെയും ഒരു കറുത്ത അദ്ധ്യായത്തിന്റെ താളുകൾ പോലെ 2020 കടന്നുപോയി. അനേക ദുരന്തങ്ങൾ കണ്ട ഭൂമിയിലാണ് നാം ജീവിക്കുന്നത്. പേമാരിയും മഹാമാരിയും, അനവധി പ്രകൃതിക്ഷോഭങ്ങളും ഇതിനോടകം ഈ ഭൂമിയിൽ എത്രയോ ഏറെ നഷ്ടങ്ങളും ദുരന്തങ്ങളും വിതച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നിട്ടും ഇന്നും ഈ ഭൂമിയിൽ പുതിയ വിത്തുകൾ പൊട്ടിമുളയ്ക്കുന്നില്ലേ? ഏതു ദുരന്തത്തെയും നേരിടുവാനും അതിജീവിക്കുവാനും മനുഷ്യൻ സാധിക്കുന്നത് മനസ്സിൽ പ്രത്യേക കാത്തുസൂക്ഷിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് എന്ന് നാം തിരിച്ചറിയണം. എല്ലാ അന്ധകാരത്തിനുമൊടുവിൽ ഒരു പുത്തൻ സൂര്യോദയം ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്ന പ്രത്യേകം. ഈ കാലഘട്ടവും കടന്നുപോകുമെന്നുള്ള ഉത്തമവിശ്വാസം. ഈ പ്രതീക്ഷയാണ് നമ്മെ ഉയർത്തേഴുന്നേൽപ്പിക്കുന്നത്.

കർത്താവിന്റെ കല്ലറയിലേക്ക് ഓടിപ്പോയ സ്ത്രീകൾ വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച അവന്റെ മരണവും കബറടക്കവും നേരിൽ കണ്ടവരാണ് . എങ്കിലും ആഴ്ചയുടെ ആദ്യ ദിവസം അവർ അതിരാവിലെ ആ കല്ലറയിലേക്കു ഓടിപ്പോകുന്നത് പ്രതീക്ഷകളോടെ ആയിരുന്നു ഇതുപോലെ ഏതു മുറിവുകളിൽ നിന്നും സൗഖ്യം നൽകുന്ന പ്രത്യാശയുടെ ലോകത്തേക്ക് ധൈര്യപൂർവ്വം നമുക്ക് കാലെടുത്തു വെയ്ക്കാം. മടുപ്പ് തോന്നാതെ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിലൂടെയും, സഹജീവികളോടുള്ള കരുതലോടും കരുണയോടുകൂടിയും ഈ പുതിയവർഷത്തിൽ നമുക്ക് മുന്നേറാം .

മാവപ്പൂർബ്ബ

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