



Rev Fr. Jose Daniel Paitel

To: The St. Peter's Syrian Orthodox Youth Association

Dearly beloved,

I am immensely glad about your new venture. It is not only a venture but also an adventure too. Be certain that the effort behind a publication is huge; and getting it read by the benefactors is very, very, very huge, i.e. 100x. I am so confident about your talents, and hope that you can win the goal tomorrow or day after tomorrow. Let your publication multiply the reading habit of our teenagers, younger parents and senior members of our community. This is the central point of making a creative impact in our community.

Wish you all success by hundred folds. My prayer follows.



**Upcoming event**

**October 6**

Sunday school regional competition

Submit all names for competition by Sept. 9

**A Child's Prayer**

by A Spiritual Youth

The Lord provides me with peace.

He strengthens me each day.

Through his blood, my sins were forgiven

Through tears, he showed me the way.

To the Lord I offer glory,

Praise, and homage too.

He is my Almighty Savior.

Thank You Lord, from me to you



**Seraphim?**

by Jingle Thomas

Our publication is named Seraphim, for those who cannot read the Anglican font in the center. You must be wondering what the name means. Seraphim are mentioned many times in Christian liturgy. Seraphim are six-winged angels who are considered the highest-ranking angels. They are the angelic choir in heaven. It is said that they continually cry out singing "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His Glory" (Isaiah 6:3). This chanting is referred to as the Trisagion. The Trisagion prayer is the prayer we start of with every Sunday morning or whenever we pray. If you are not familiar with the term, it is the name given to the prayer "Holy art thou, O God, Holy art thou, Almighty, Holy art thou immortal, Thou who was crucified for us, have mercy on us". An example of the Seraphim in the Bible is in Isaiah's vision "... I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and His train filled the sanctuary. Above Him stood the Seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew"(Isaiah 6:1-3). In naming this publication Seraphim, we want to give an opportunity to the younger generation to express their thoughts and feelings about God to everyone. Take the extra step, make the effort to take one step closer to God.



**Night Prayer**

By A Spiritual Youth

Lord, as I lay here, I know there is a chance that tomorrow may not come. So I come to you to ask you for forgiveness. Forgiveness for any sorrow I have caused You, my family, or friends. Although I have not always been a

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perfect sheep, you have always guided me back to the flock. Thank you for the courage you gave me when times were rough. So, now, if in case the new day doesn't arrive for me, I can go to sleep in peace knowing I spent the last day on Earth with you.



**EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT.  
THE MESSENGER IS HERE.**

### **TAKE THE PLUNGE: THE VBS STORY**

by Eldhose Thekkethottiyil

This year's VBS, as always, was an eventful one. The theme was "Take the Plunge, Make a Splash with Jesus" and every organized event reflected upon this theme. VBS was held over a period of three days where the following sub-themes were addressed such as obedience, worship, courage, faith, and service. Everyday, there were two teaching sessions, one craft session, and one group discussion session called Bibleland Bay. At the end of each day, water sports were conducted. The goal of every activity organized in this year's VBS was to increase the spirituality of children and promote interaction between children to exchange their ideas on the Christian faith.

VBS began with an opening ceremony conducted by Fr. Paul Parambath and Fr. Jose Daniel. Both of them gave inspiring messages to the children and pointed out the importance of the biblical passages they were going to encounter at their study sessions. The morning prayer of all the VBS days was followed by a song teaching session conducted by VBS volunteers. Songs were in English and Malayalam and often involved actions to go along with them. The participation of youth, Sunday school teachers and kids, parents, and many others made this year's VBS a success.

### *Wing of laughter*

(Taken from an online source. Contact publication board for more info.)

#### **Money Goes To Church**

A well-worn one dollar bill and a similarly distressed twenty dollar bill arrived at a Federal Reserve Bank to be retired. As they moved along the conveyor belt to be burned, they struck up a conversation.

The twenty dollar bill reminisced about its travels all over the county. "I've had a pretty good life," the twenty proclaimed. "Why I've been to Las Vegas and Atlantic City, the finest restaurants in New York, performances on Broadway, and even a cruise to the Caribbean."

"Wow!" said the one dollar bill. "You've really had an exciting life!"

"So tell me," says the twenty, "where have you been throughout your lifetime?"

The one dollar bill replies, "Oh, I've been to the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church .and St. Peter's Church in Philly..."

The twenty dollar bill interrupts, "**What's a church?**"



#### *The Army of the Lord*

A friend was in front of me coming out of church one day, and the preacher was standing at the door as he always is to shake hands. He grabbed my friend by the hand and pulled him aside. The Pastor said to him, "You need to join the Army of the Lord!"

My friend replied, "I'm already in the Army of the Lord, Pastor." Pastor questioned, "How come I don't see you except at Christmas and Easter?"

He whispered back, "**I'm in the secret service.**"



#### *Why Go to Church if I have God in My Heart?*

by Debbie Mathew

We all have a friend or family member that looks at the idea of gathering at a church in puzzlement. How can we explain our behavior to such people? It is true, God *is* in our hearts. This is what the Apostle Paul desired from us when he said: "I pray that according to the riches of His glory, He may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith as you are being rooted and grounded in love." (Ephesians 3:16-17). So then how do you abide with the continual presence of God in your heart? What fruits of the Spirits have you become aware of in yourself? Here I'll remind you: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Galatians 5:22-23). Do you have these feelings and no, they are not personal characteristics, they are gifts. A gift is that which we formerly did not possess, but which through spiritual growth has come into our life.

So why do we go to church? To listen to the sermon? But these days you can get that from a radio presenter. To pray? But you can pray everywhere at any time. Then, to make an offering? But these days there are numerous collections on the streets.

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of announcements? But you can get that from an acquaintance. To put up a candle? But you can put up a candle in front of the icons at home. And so, why do we go to church?

Why does His Word invite: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...and ye shall find rest for your souls." (St. Matthew 11:28). Thus, God calls us to Himself, so that he might present us with something. Learning - "Learn of Me"; Spirit - "Receive ye of My Spirit"; Love, peace, joy - "Abide in My love", "My peace I give unto you", "That my joy might remain in you." But Christ grants us something further, " Abide in me and I in you...Receive ye this, this is My blood, which I shed for you..."

And so we come to church, so that we might receive something therein. Therefore, to visit church is not an onerous obligation, but a wondrous privilege. We are granted the right to stand as participants in the Mystical Supper. We are granted the possibility of becoming partakers of the divine nature. God sought us and has found us. We simply need to go to church so we can be as close to God as we can. Church is the place where God approaches the people. If Christ presents us with the Cup of Communion through the royal gates, does it make sense for us to affirm that "I have God in my heart"? Therefore, if anyone ever looks at the idea of gathering at a church in puzzlement, you are now better equipped to explain our behavior to such people.

### ***The Faithful***

By Jingle Thomas

By faith I was born,  
Through faith I will grow,  
Through prayer and good deeds,  
Through trials and tribulations,  
Through love, loyalty, ascension and  
vision will I affirm my belief in Him.  
By faith I will stand till my last breath,  
To be born again as the faithful in  
heaven,  
To take my rightful place at the right  
hand of God.



### ***The Invitation Parable***

<http://www.rosebudchristianchurch.org/readingroom/inviteparable.html>

A woman came out of her house and saw 3 old men with long white beards sitting in front of her house. She did not recognize them. She said "I don't think I know you, but you look hungry... Please come in and have something to eat." "Is the man of the house home?", they asked. "No," she said. "He's out." "Then we cannot come in," they replied.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. He said, "Go tell them I am home and invite them in."

The woman went out and invited the men to come in. "We rarely go into a house together," they replied.

One of the old men explained: My name is "Love," his name is "Wealth" (pointing to one man), and his name is "Success" (pointing to the other man). Then he added, "Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home."

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. "How wonderful," he said!... "Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth... Let him come in and fill our home with wealth."  
His wife disagreed... "My dear, why don't we invite Success?"

Their daughter was listening from the other side of the room... She jumped in with her own suggestion: "Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home will then be filled with love."  
"Let us heed our daughters advice," said the husband to his wife... "Go out and invite Love to be our guest."

The woman went out and asked Love to please come into their house and be our guest." Love got up and started walking toward the house... The other 2 men also got up and followed him.

Surprised, the lady said: "I only invited Love... Why are Wealth and Success coming in too?"

The old men replied together: "If you had invited Wealth or Success the other two of us would have stayed outside... but since you invited Love, wherever he goes we usually go with him.

Always remember, Love first... if you want Wealth and Success to follow!

**Who have you invited into your home?**



### ***Moses and the burning bush.***

By Paul Parambath

### **WITH HIM IN DEATH**

By Eldhose Thekkethottiyil

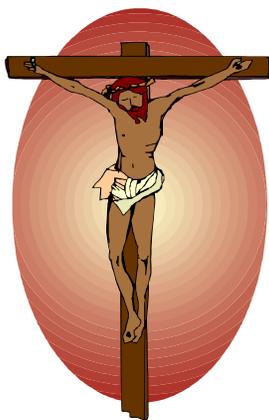
I feel great pain! I cannot move my body. No matter where I turn, no matter how hard I cry, the pain leaves me not. It is like a snake that does not let go until its prey is dead for sure.

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I can barely open my eyes for the sun falls straight on my face. Through its powerful rays it deprives me of my life, little by little. I am ready to fall on the ground. But the ruthless nails on my palms and feet will not let go until they have fulfilled the duty assigned to them to kill me. So, from three nails I hang on a cross that now drenches with my blood. Flowing down the cross, the blood from my body soothes me not but the dried, sand smeared stones lying on the ground. I think I have been cursed. Yes, cursed I am by all the people that I killed and stole from in my dark, sinful life. I see them laughing and rejoicing in front of me as I struggle to take a breath. They spit at me and throw stones at me. I lie helpless on the cross accepting my fate and awaiting the clutches of death. But somewhere in my dying soul, I feel that I do not deserve the grave suffering I am going through.

I grew up on the streets and never knew whom my parents were. The people around me showed no mercy to me. They treated me like a dog and would kick me away from their path if I blocked them. My need to survive forced me to steal. Everyday, as I stole more and more from people, I got better at it. Stealing for me was a form of revenge against the people who hurt me and the law that never delivered to me what it promised. Every time I stole, my contempt towards society increased and so did my arrogance. I quickly became the most sought after thief of the Roman soldiers. But pride always goes before a fall and I was captured and condemned to death. Burning with pain and a sense of failure I turn my head to my right to let the winds kiss my face. As I open my eyes with the slightest of relief, I see Jesus on the cross. I had heard about him and his mission on the streets. People referred to him as "The Messiah" and he had touched the hearts of people through his actions. Again, I feel that the law is unjust because it has led to the crucifixion of an innocent man who sought to spread the word of God through love and thereby change people's perception of the divine law. Jesus was trying to make a better society

by leading people towards God and thereby prevent the evolution of sinners like me. I had seen Jesus preach but never gave an ear to his teachings because I never believed in God. I believed only in myself and in what I did. But now I feel I should have listened to Jesus because if I had he would have cleansed me from sin, the same way he cleansed the leper and gave sight to the blind. These people believed in Jesus and were therefore able to see his miracles in their lives. Believing in him would have rescued me from the suffering that I am going through now.



The soldiers and people on the ground mock Jesus. They claim that if he is the Son of God let him rescue himself. Deep in my mind, an urge rises to shout at them to not mock him anymore because he has not done anything wrong to them. But Jesus responds by pleading God to forgive the people because he claims that they do not know what they are doing. Jesus is bleeding profusely from head to toe. He has lost his strength. And yet he does not lose his trust in the God he believes in. How is it possible for this man? Nowhere before in my life have I seen a man who sticks to his principles so firmly as Jesus. Even in the moments of death he is praying for his enemies. He truly is practicing what he preaches. There is surely a great goal he wishes to achieve through his death. I know not what it is but it through this goal that he will prove his greatness. My mind urges me to speak to him. But I feel ashamed of

having acknowledged his words in these last moments of my life. And then, the prisoner that hangs on the cross to the right of Jesus shouts at him to rescue us all. A force within me compels me to yell. I ask the prisoner if he does not fear God even at the time of his death. I turn to Jesus and I tell him to remember me when he ascends into his kingdom. I never expect a reply because I know the depth of my sins and my lack of purity to comprehend him in his wholeness. But Jesus baptizes me in his words on the cross when he says that I would be with him, from that night on, in paradise. I now know that he is the son of God because I believe in him. Even though death, in a few moments, will engulf me I have received the love that I longed for throughout my life and it is this love that I will live by after I die.

### *In the Footsteps...*



*Syrian Orthodox Teachings  
(taken from Queen of the Sacraments by Fr.  
K. Mani Rajan)  
Compiled by Jingle Thomas*

### **Do you know that the church building has five parts to it?**

#### **The Narthex**

It is the western-most part of the church. It is usually at a lower level from the rest of the church. In our church, it is the room that we enter into from the outside.

#### **The Nave**

It is the largest part of the church where the men and women gather for worship. Men are on one side and the women are on the other side. It symbolizes where the people of Israel gathered together while Moses went to

**to be continued on p. 5...**

Mt. Sinai. This part of the church is reserved for the faithful. Only COGs (Children of God) permitted entry here.

### The Kesthromo

It means "not risen from earth". It is the space between the nave and the Sanctuary. A railing and a step from the nave separate it. It is separated from the sanctuary by two or more steps. The Kesthromo is also where the prayer table and the Baptism fountain are located. At our church we do not have one, but this is where the deacons stand for morning prayer.

### The Sanctuary

The Syriac word for this is the Madhb'ho, meaning the holy place. It is located in the eastern part of the church, symbolizing paradise. The paradise is referred to in Ezekiel 43:1,2,4 as coming from the east. In heavenly paradise there are two things, the Tree of Life and the holy beings. In the Sanctuary, the Holy Cross represents the Tree of Life and the priests represent the Holy beings. The Holy place is also said to be glowing in fire. This is why the priests wear ceremonial shoes when they enter the Sanctuary. The altar, which is located in the center of the sanctuary, represent Christ's tomb and also it refers to Mount Golgotha (site where Christ was crucified). The altar symbolizes the home of the Holy trinity.

### The Baptistry

Located in the Kesthromo is used for Baptism. The Baptismal font is made of granite and has carvings on it. At baptism, we are cleansed of our original sin and receive the Holy spirit. We are made a part of the church. The baptismal font symbolizes two different things. It represents the Holy Virgin Mary because it gives a new life to us and we are made as brothers and sisters of Christ. The baptismal font also represents the Holy Sepulcher of our Lord. This is referred to in James 6:3,4.



### Publication Board Letter

As a part of St. Peter's Church and as members of the S.P.Y.C youth group, we are glad that our first venture into publishing a spiritual newsletter was accomplished. Through a lot of hard work and research, we have put together a newsletter that both the young and the mature readers will enjoy. We hope that the future editions are filled with creative works from both Sunday school and the youth in our church. We hope this newsletter is informative and serves as a closer understanding of our faith. This newsletter can be found on the church website ([www.Stpeterspalli.com](http://www.Stpeterspalli.com)) and a link will be provided on the youth blog site. We give thanks to all who submitted their works for the first edition of Seraphim.

### Publication Board

Jingle Thomas

Debbie Mathew

Eldhose Thekkethottiyil



**Seraphim in the Bible is in Isaiah's vision "... I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and His train filled the sanctuary. Above Him stood the Seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew"(Isaiah 6:1-3).**

Please ask us if you use any materials from this publication. E-mail: [spycpublication@gmail.com](mailto:spycpublication@gmail.com)