



# St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church Of Los Angeles

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Editor: Gigi Kurian Volume No.: 0606 Issue No: 14 Edition: June-July 2006



## Vicar's Desk:

### STEP FOUR- SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Step four begins the growth steps of our journey. Here, we examine our behavior and expand our understanding of ourselves. The adventure of self-discovery begins with step four and continues through step seven. During these next four steps, we will prepare a personal inventory, discuss it with others in the program and invite God to remove our shortcomings. Being totally honest in preparing our inventory is vital to the self-discovery that forms the foundation of our recovery. It allows us to remove obstacles that have prevented us from knowing ourselves and truthfully acknowledging our deepest feelings about life.

Step four helps us get in touch with our "shadow" that part of us that we have hidden away for so long- long repressed nature. In the process of making our inventory, we will develop and broaden our understanding of our behavior. We will see that our "shadow" is an integral part of our nature and must be accepted by us. This part of our nature hides our resentments, fears and other repressed feelings. As we begin to see ourselves, we will learn to accept our whole character-the good and the bad. This acceptance will free us to discover survival behaviors that began in childhood. In the context of our turbulent early years, these behaviors were lifesaving.

Denial is a key survival skill that we learned early in childhood. It stunted our emotional growth by keeping us in a make-believe world. Our shame and guilt caused us to be silent, rather than to be honest and face the fear of being ridiculed by others. This withdrawal hindered us from developing into a mature person.

*Step 4 to be continued.....*

**---- Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker**

## Special Topic

### What to Pray for?

Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to pray about our concerns. But our Father God wants to hear about them - Paul writes to the Ephesians *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."* In this section, we offer some thoughts on how to pray for various different topics:

- Praying for healing*
- Praying for national and international concerns*
- Praying for the church*
- Praying for others known to us*
- Praying for ourselves*
- Praying for leaders*
- Praying for mission*



If you have particular needs for prayer, you might like to ask others to pray for you in these concerns. Whilst it's good to be able to ask God for these needs, it's also good to be able to share them with other Christians who can pray for you.

### Prayer for Healing:

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke in particular relate many occasions on which Jesus healed those who were ill. Praying for the sick is one of the most common prayer topics for Christians today, yet many are confused as to how to pray for those who are sick, and why their prayers may not appear to be answered. We can't fully answer these questions, but we offer some thoughts and pointers which may help.

*Continued on page 4.....*

## Parenting Discussion

### Important Reminders about Discipline:

**Stay calm** and do not get carried away when your child misbehaves. Avoid yelling and screaming, since this can teach your child that it is all right to lose control if you don't get your way. If you feel like things are escalating too much, then take a break until you can regain your composure.

Avoid too much **criticism**. Make sure your child understands that it is the misbehavior that you are unhappy with and that you will always love him/her.

**Avoid too much praise**. You don't need to be continuously praising your child, especially for routine activities, because it will make your comments less effective.

Don't focus on **negatives** all of the time, especially when offering positive reinforcement. It is much better to say 'I like that you put all of your clothes away,' instead of saying 'I like that, for once, you finally got around to putting your clothes away without my asking.'

**Avoid physical punishment**. Spanking has never been shown to be more effective than other forms of punishment and will make your child more aggressive and angry.

Remember to give **rewards and praise** for good behavior.

Understand the difference between rewards and **bribes**. A reward is something your child receives after he has done something, while a bribe is given beforehand, to try and motivate your child to do what you want. Bribes should be avoided.

### **Be a good role model.**

Most importantly, provide your child with a **safe environment** in which he/she feels secure and loved.

*-- Summary experts from Young Adults Group discussions*



# Children's Corner

## Peter and Dorcas

Dorcas, a word which means "gazelle", was sometimes called Tabitha. She was a very kind person who spent her time caring for the widows of Joppa.

God has always been mindful of the widows and people who are poor. In Bible times, when a woman's husband died, she had no way to make a living. (This condition even still exists in some parts of the world today.)

The law in those times stated that if a widow's husband had owned land, it went to the oldest son, and if the son didn't take care of his mother, she had nowhere to turn for help. If there was no son, she still lost her property and could only get it back if a relative of her husband married her.

God had instructed the Jews to care for the poor. They could not harvest the edges of their fields, but had to leave the grain for the poor people to "glean" or pick up. Neither could the owner go over the field a second time to pick up grain that had fallen. It was to be left for the poor.

Every third year the tithe, or one tenth of the crop, was given to the poor, and every seventh year all debts were canceled so that people could get a fresh start and begin again free of the debt of owing money.

In the New Testament, James writes that one of the marks of pure religion is that a person will take care of the widows and orphans. Those who care for the poor receive God's approval, and those who do not are displeasing to him.

Dorcas lived in Joppa, a seaport town. (See picture below.) She was a loving person who showed kindness to others and especially to the poor. She made coats for the widows so they would have something to keep them warm in the winter.

One day she became ill and died. Her friends were so sad and upset. Their dear friend was gone.

They had heard that Peter had been performing miracles of healing sick people. At this time no apostle had raised anyone from the dead, but Dorcas' friends believed that Peter could do even that, so they sent two men to Lydda, a nearby town where Peter was staying.

Peter went back to Joppa with the men, and when he got there, he was led to an upper room where her friends had laid Dorcas. The room was filled with widows who were crying and showing one another the coats and other clothing which Dorcas had made for them while she was alive. Each stitch showed her faithfulness and the love she had for them.

Peter told them all to leave the room. Then he got down on his knees and prayed, asking God to bring life back into her still body. He said to her, "Tabitha, get up."

She opened her eyes and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and she stood up.

He called for the people to come back into the room, and there they saw their friend, alive again. What joy they felt!

The news spread quickly through the town of Joppa. Dorcas is alive again! Because of the miracle many people believed in the Lord.



The Sea Port City of Joppa

### What does this story mean to me?

If you have a house in which to live, clothes to wear, and food for every meal, you are rich compared to many people in the world. If we have these things and we have more than enough, we need to share with those who are less fortunate.

We need to look for ways to help the poor, especially those families who have lost the Father of the family. There are many ways to do this.

You may personally know someone who has needs, and you can share with them.

There are organizations and homes for orphans that need our help. Sometimes churches ask for food or other items for orphans' homes. You can go with your family to the store to buy these things for them. Be willing to share. You will feel good and others will benefit



### Memory Verse

**He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.**

Proverbs 19:17 (NIV)

**From Children Bible Lesson**

[www.gardenofpraise.com/bibleles.htm#early](http://www.gardenofpraise.com/bibleles.htm#early)

# Church Column



**Sunday School Association** is the students wing of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The Orthodox Church from the very beginning took utmost care in educating the Children the Values of Christian life, the contents of the Bible and the Church history. The "Koonenkurish Sathyam" in 1653 was a turning point. It emphasized the need for Catechism and Scriptural studies. During the 1765-1808 period, the study of sacraments and prayers were also included in the lessons. This was the beginning of the Sunday school in the Church. The Sunday School Samajam started functioning in 1931 with the appointment of Puthencavu Geevarghese Mar Philexinos as its President and Fr.K.David as the General Secretary. On 15 October 1964 it got its present form as "Orthodox Sunday School Association of the East" (OSSAE). Sunday School units are operating in the Orthodox Churches in and outside Kerala and also overseas.

**Address:**

Sunday School Office,  
Catholicate Aramana,  
Devalokam, Kottayam.  
Phone : +91-481-257-2890

[Under the auspices of the Sunday School Association, the Orthodox Vacation Bible School was started \(OVBS\) in 1960.](#)

**ALL INFORMATION FROM DEVALOKAM ARAMANA, KOTTAYAM**  
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A young lad was visiting a church for the first time, checking all the announcements and posters along the walls. When he came to a group of pictures of men in uniform, he asked a nearby usher, "Who are all those men in the pictures?" The usher replied, "Why, those are our boys who died in the service." Dumbfounded, the youngster asked, "Was that the morning service or evening service?"

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A preacher phoned the city's newspaper. "Thank you very much," said he, "for the error you made when you announced my sermon topic for last Sunday. The topic I sent you was 'What Jesus Saw in a Publican.' You printed it as 'What Jesus Saw in a Republican' I had the biggest crowd of the year!"

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A man: God, how much is a million dollars to you?  
God: It is but a penny.  
A man: God, how long is a million years to you?  
God: It is but a second.  
A man: God, could you please give me a penny?  
God: Sure, just a second.

.....

A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?" asked the clerk. "Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" said the woman. "Well, give me 50 Catholic and 50 Baptist ones."

from  
[The Christian Humor Hotline!](#)

## Orthodox Center



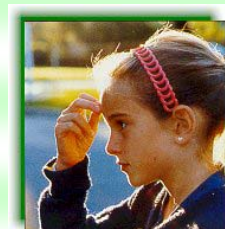
*"Prayer is the air of the Soul and so the power of the Church"*

Apostolic Slogan Declared by  
**HH Moran Mar Baselios  
Marthoma Didymus I**

### **The Significance of the sign of the Cross.**

We make the sign of the cross by touching the forehead first, then to the chest to remember that our Lord came down from heaven to earth for our salvation and then moving from the left shoulder to the right shoulder to remember that we children of the left by our sins are turned to the children of the right by the death of our Savior on the cross.

We make the sign with the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand joined together. We should bow our body and to make the sign we say "Crucified for us" and also at the time of remembrance of the death of our Lord in the Nicene Creed.



## What to Pray for?

*Continued from Page 1.....*

First, it is good to keep on persistently praying for the healing of someone who is close to you, and who you love dearly. Even when it seems that prayer is the only hope that is left, do keep on praying. Equally, when some are close to death and are suffering, the prayer can turn to a prayer for peace and a merciful end to the suffering. Again, this is a reflection of our deep heartfelt concern for the sick person.

Second, be specific, and do pray for the range of issues connected with the illness. You may not only want to pray for the healing of the particular problem, but for the sick person's inner strength to cope with their illness, for a quality of rest or sleep which would aid the recovery, for concerns that are causing anxiety, for other family members and so on.

The next point relates to the means that God may use to heal. Most Christians believe that God uses the skills he has given to doctors and nurses to bring about healing. Many also believe that God has the power to bring miraculous healing without the use of the medical profession. Human experience suggests that the majority of healing is through the medical profession, but this should deny neither the hand of God in it, nor the corresponding influence that prayer can have in medical healing. God has given skills to individuals, and has equipped the human mind with the creativity to discover more about ourselves and how to look after our bodies.

### **Prayer for the World:**

One of the issues is, knowing what to pray for, since there are so many topics dominating the headlines. Rather than flip from topic to topic, it is probably better to focus a little more on the needs of a particular situation.

Remember too, the needs of your country, your town and your neighborhood.

**From Prayer Guide**

[prayerguide.org.uk/alone.htm](http://prayerguide.org.uk/alone.htm)

## 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 Holy Qurbana

July 1<sup>st</sup> : Summer Fun event – Movie Day

July 9<sup>th</sup> : Sunday School Celebration & Competition after the Holy Qurbana

## Church Events:

Stay tuned for church events every Sunday during the announcements after the Holy Qurbana.

July 2<sup>nd</sup> : Church Anniversary [Perunal]

Potluck after Qurbana (**Zone II**).

July 15<sup>th</sup> : Church Picnic 10:AM to 4:30 PM

### **Important Reminder:**

**Please ensure that you have fully paid the Semi-Annual Church dues by June 30<sup>th</sup>**



## Prayer Corner

### Church Activities:

The Young Adults meeting will be held at the residence of Mrs. Jenny and Mr. Thomas Philip at Cerritos on Saturday July 8<sup>th</sup> @ 6.30 PM.

The Martha Mariam Samajam meeting will be held at Church on Sunday July 9<sup>th</sup> after the Holy Qurbana.

## Meanings of Words Often Used in Church

<b>Bathraihun mena</b>	<b>: For ever in the two</b>
<b>Oolam ol meenamen</b>	<b>worlds Amen</b>
<b>Barekmor</b>	<b>: Bless me O Lord</b>
<b>Beskudissa</b>	<b>: Place of Holiness</b>
<b>Bovooso</b>	<b>: Songs of intercession</b>
<b>Bro</b>	<b>: Son</b>



**Have any Questions?  
OR**

**Your Comments may be directed to  
Editorial and Communication Board**

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