



In this edition of Deepam, we bring you photos from the past month, including Bava Thirumeni's visit to Houston, SRC2006, and Perunnal



Thanks to Paulose K. Mathai, Risha George, Jobi Mathew and Lila Varghese for their photographs

St. Thomas News

- The 2006 Church Festival (Perunnal) was held from Friday July 21 to Sunday July 23. H.G. Zachariah Mar Theophilos blessed Perunnal with his prayers and presence.
- The Bazaar was a huge success due to the hard work and commitment of each of the various organizations. The Managing Committee extends a sincere appreciation to those who donated their time and finances to make this a wonderful Perunnal.
- The Managing Committee is eager to hear your voice. If you have a problem or concern you may call or e-mail your Committee members. We will bring your concern to the meetings and discuss any resolutions.
- The parking lines in the church parking lot need to be repainted. If anyone is interested in undertaking this project, or can provide assistance, please contact our Treasurer, Mathew George or our Secretary, Manoj Thomas
- The church picnic is scheduled for September 16 at George Park. Please plan to be in attendance with your families. It will be a great opportunity for fellowship with each other, fun activities, and good food!

July Events Summaries

Bava Thirumeni's Visit

His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Didymos I, The Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, accompanied by His Grace Mar Barnabas, arrived in Houston on Saturday July 1. His Holiness was received at the airport by the Vicars and committee members of all three churches. Evening Prayer on Saturday was held at St. Stephen's Orthodox Church. Holy Qurbana was celebrated the next morning at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, with His Holiness as the chief celebrant.

His Holiness was received at St. Thomas by the entire church in a festive and celebratory fashion. After the reception of His Holiness, a public function in Bava Thirumeni's honor was held in the Church Hall. The function was attended by a number of local dignitaries such as the mayor of the city of Stafford and city council members from Stafford and Missouri City; proclamations of recognition and honor were issued by the cities of Stafford, Missouri City and Sugar Land. Holy Qurbana was then celebrated by His Grace Mathews Mar Barnabas in Bava Thirumeni's presence. Bava Thirumeni led the intercessory prayers to St. Thomas after the Holy Qurbana. Bava Thirumeni then left on Monday, July 3 and was seen off at the airport by the Vicar and Managing Committee members.

Perunnal

The Church Flag was hoisted for the 2006 Perunnal on Friday, July 21 by Rev. Fr. M.M. Zachariah, Vicar of the Denver Orthodox Church in Colorado. Achen also gave a sermon on the memory of St. Thomas after Evening Prayer. The Perunnal Bazaar, held on Saturday, July 22, was a great success with booths by all our church organizations and two booths by the Dallas St. Gregorios Church and the Oklahoma St. Thomas Church. More than 350 people attended the bazaar lunch provided by the Church with support from willing local sponsors. H.G. Zachariah Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of Malabar Diocese led evening prayers on Saturday. Thirumeni also led Holy Qurbana on Sunday, July 23 and gave the keynote sermon of the Perunnal. The festive Perunnal raasa with traditional chenda mela was led by Rev. Fr. M.M. Zachariah. The church served Perunnal lunch to approximately 650 people on Sunday.

Driving Directions to George Park

FROM THE SOUTH SIDE

Take Highway 59 South (past Sugar Land) to FM 762, go right on FM 762 till you come to Ave H / Jackson Street (Alt. 90) in Richmond, TX turn left go to Collins Road (by Polly Ryon Hospital) and turn right, stay on Collins Road till it dead-ends into George Park.

FROM THE NORTH SIDE

Take the Beltway to 59 South, go right (south) on 59 (past Sugar Land) to FM 762, turn right on FM 762 till you come to Ave H / Jackson Street (Alt. 90) in Richmond, TX turn left go to Collins Road (by Polly Ryon Hospital) and turn right, stay on Collins Road till it dead-ends into George Park.

FROM THE WEST SIDE

Take I-10 to Grand Parkway (99), go south till you come to Alt.90, take a right on Alt. 90, go till you come to Collins Road in Richmond, TX (by Polly Ryon Hospital), and take a right, stay on Collins Road till it dead-ends into George Park.

Sunday School

The new Sunday School year will begin Sunday, September 10, the weekend after Labor Day.

OCYM News

On July 15, OCYM conducted a prayer meeting led by Aroopala Achen. The topic was two-fold regarding Holy Qurbana and they are as follows:

- 1) Why is Qurbana called Divine (Holy) Mysteries? and
- 2) What are the benefits of participating in Holy Qurbana?

In addition, a discussion took place regarding the integration between post-MGOCSM members into OCYM. Several points were brought up as how to achieve harmony between members. As a starting point, it was agreed that OCYM would meet every Sunday after Holy Qurbana to have either a short bible study or a general meeting to discuss the future goals of the organization.

The OCYM "thattukada" fundraiser held during our Perunaal Bazaar Saturday, July 22 was a big success. Thanks to all the volunteers that made it possible.

A Talent Show is scheduled to be held on November 25, 2006 and is open to all members. More details to follow in the next newsletter, so stay tuned for further updates on how to sign up.

MGOCSM

The church t-shirts and Malayalam musical CDs, recorded by Fr. Titus John Thalavoor, that were sold at the Perunnal Bazaar are still on sale. Buy a church T-Shirt and get in the St. Thomas Spirit!

On August 11 we saw our monthly prayer meetings come back into full swing, with the latest one being held at Jisha and Jobin John's house. Many thanks to them for hosting, as well as to our beloved Aroopala Achen for giving us another incredible message.

On August 12, our MGOCSM and the chapters from St. Stephen and St. Gregorios came together to coordinate a Mid-Year Retreat, with guest speaker Rev. Dn. Binoy George. The retreat was insightful, and everyone had a great time being with the other Houston youth. The theme was "For I am Nothing Without Christ", taken from Acts 20:24.

As always, thanks to our Achens and parents for their full support in all that we do!

This year's Orthodox Sports Tournament was held August 4 and 5 at the Stafford HS and hosted by MGOCSM. The tournament was a great success, thanks to the help and prayers of our clergy and parents, as well as the dedication of Sajan Thomas, the tournament coordinator. Special thanks to Stafford City Councilman KO Mathew for his help in getting the facilities that helped make this such a memorable event.

Volleyball and basketball tournaments were held over the two days, with our very own St. Thomas boys going undefeated to bring the basketball trophy to our church - Congratulations!



His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Didymus I - Visit to Houston



Southern Region Conference 2005



*President: Very Rev. Geevarghis Aroopala Cor Episcopa
Chief Editor: Jobby Jacob
Managing Editor: Risha George
Associate Editor: Merly Thomas
Consulting Editor: Kuruvila Varughese*

*Editorial Committee: Prabha Abraham
Darlene George
Diana Mathai
Manoj Thomas
Linsy Varughese*