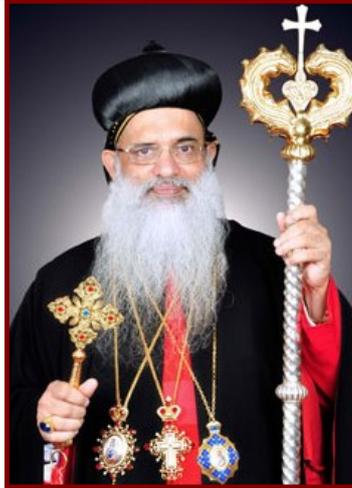


# PARUMALA PERUNNAL SUPPLEMENT

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX CONGREGATION, GROBLERSDAL UNIT, SOUTH AFRICA

November 2017



H.H. Baselios Marthoma Paulose II  
Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan



H.G. Mathews Mar Thimothios  
Diocesan Metropolitan



Fr. Stanly David James

## Message from our Vicar

In as much as many today may question the relevance of veneration of saints, there are some saints, whose memory shine through the ages. It is not their towering personality or charisma that is viewed in awe, rather their honest and sincere fear of God. The faithful lives they lived are a witness and a model of how we too must live our lives.

The Malankara Church has indeed been blessed to have one such person in the blessed late lamented Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, popularly known as Parumala Kochuthirumeni. History recalls how he was a model of humility, obedience and love from his childhood itself. Having vowed himself to a monastic discipline at a very young age, he pruned himself through abstinence, discipline, devotion, meditation, fasting and prayers to witness the mission of the Kingdom of God.

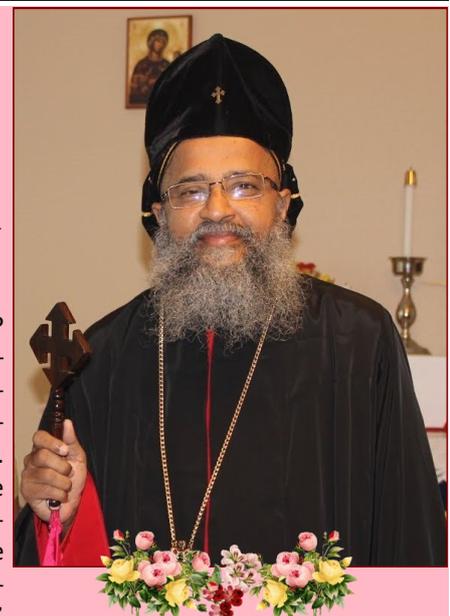
(on page 3)

## Go in peace our beloved Theophilos Thirumeni

*Everlasting be your memory, O our beloved Thirumeni, who are worthy of blessedness and eternal memory. Pray for us!*

Our beloved Zachariah Mar Theophilos, Metropolitan of the Malabar Diocese was called to the heavenly abode on Tuesday, October 24 at 3.40 pm Indian time. Funeral took place at Christa Shishya Ashram, Thadagam, Coimbatore on 26th October 2017.

His Grace, a member of Chengaroor Pally, was born on 16 September 1952 to Mr. MP Chandapillai and Mrs. Achamma Chandapillai, Manjanamkuzhiyil, Puthussery South Post, Kalloppa, Thiruvalla. He had his early education at M.G.D High School Puthusserry, and college education at Marthoma College, Thiruvalla. After taking his Bachelors Degree in Science from the University of Kerala, he joined Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam, for theological studies. After his Graduate Degree in Sacred Theology (GST) he joined the Bachelor of Divinity (BD) degree at the Senate of Serampore University. After taking his MTH from FFRRRC, Serampore, he completed research studies in "Bible and Holy Land Past and Present" at St George College, Jerusalem. The St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA, conferred on him a Degree of Doctor of Ministry in the faculty of Theology for his dissertation, 'Strengthening Prayer Life in Parishes'. His Grace received the order of Deaconate from His Grace Late Yuhanon Mar Severios Metropolitan in 1977.



(continues on page 2)

*Editorial*

In the book 'The Life You've Always Wanted', John Ortberg asks : "Am I spiritually inauthentic?" Let's repeat this question: Are we spiritually inauthentic? It's high time to ask this to ourselves.

As Christians we are supposed to be 'different' and follow a 'counter culture' (in a positive way).

During this first week of November we are celebrating the feast of the great saint of our Church. Throughout the life of St. Gregorios, even though it was only of five decades, Holy Father taught us to be an evergreen model of Christianity.

The effort behind this publication is to impart the life message of Parumala Thirumeni to our young generation. His great life is enough to inspire the lives of our young ones. St. Thomas Sunday School is proudly dedicating this publication to all of you.

Let me conclude with the remembrance of H.G. Zachariah Mar Theophilos, who was called to the heavenly abode last week. May the life of Theophilos thirumeni, a man with God's hands, ignite us to be more brighter in our 'way of life'.

May God bless.

1st Nov 2017

Tom Daniel



*"Prayer is the inspiration of childhood, the refuge of youth and peace during old age."*

*"Prayer helps education to cultivate truth, morality, faith, devotion and mutual respect among people."*

*"Be obedient in all your dealings. Identify the good and love it, throwaway laziness; be enthusiastic to do good things, day and night."*

*St. Gregorios of Parumala*

It was on June 15, 1848 that Kochu Ipeora (Geevarghese) was born in Mulanthuruthy Kerala. His parents were Kochu Mathai and Mariam who had three sons and two daughters. After the early days of education under Malpan (teacher) Geevarghese of Chathuruthy, Kochu Ipeora was ordained as deacon on September 14, 1859; he was only ten years old at that time.

One day Malpan became seriously ill with smallpox. Deacon Geevarghese was the only one who stayed and took care of him, while all others were sent home. On the eight day Malpan died and Deacon became ill. During this time he had a vision of St. Mary in his dream, descending to console him, and exhorting him to dedicate the rest of his life to the lord. He pledged: "He would". This was a heavenly vision that enabled him to become a humble servant of God. Very soon the deacon recovered.

At the age of 18, in 1865 he was ordained as a priest. H.G. Joseph Mar Dionysios raised him to the order of monks (Ramban) in 1872. The Patriarch of Antioch consecrated four metropolitans at Paravoor Church, Kerala in December 10, 1876. The youngest among them was Geevarghese Ramban and who was named Mar Gregorios. Because of his age(28) everybody called him "Kochu Thirumeni" (Youngest Bishop). Mar Gregorios was appointed the bishop of Niranam, Kerala. He started a monastery at Parumala, Kerala. Mar Gregorios was a man of God, who lived not according to the way of the flesh but

according to the law of God. He led a virtuous and strict life, like a monk, living on frugal diet enriched by prayer and fasting.

At Parumala Seminary he led an strict life. While staying at Parumala Seminary, Mar Gregorios taught Syriac to deacons. He used to rise at 4 am for prayer., and prayed seven times a day as taught by the Holy Fathers of the Church. He observed his own special fasts and people came from far and near to seek his blessings and paternal advices. In his own words "Prayer brings truth, religious faith, honesty and respect among the people." Mar Gregorios already had stomach ulcer and it became chronic in 1902. Treatments proved futile and slowly he became physically weaker and weaker. He became more sick when he returned from Veeyapuram Church after blessing a marriage. Even from the beginning of his illness he knew that he was in his last days. The news of illness spread all over Malankara. Although he grew weaker day by day, his face shone brighter and brighter.

It was on November 2, 1902, midnight he was ready to meet his heavenly father. He left his earthly abode and flew to eternity. In 1947, The Holy Episcopal synod of our Church canonized and proclaimed him a Saint of the Orthodox Church. He is the first canonized Christian saint from India, in the Oriental Orthodox tradition.

There are hundreds of instances that proved his Saintliness. Thousands of people receive favours and blessings through his intercession.

(from page 1)

Go in peace.....

On May 15, 1991, His Grace Late Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilos ordained him into the Priesthood. Metropolitan Theophilos is well known for his inseparable association with MGOCSM (Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement). On August 7, 2004 Fr. M.C. Cherian was elevated as Ramban with title Zachariahs by Basalios Mar Thoma Mathews II at Devalokam Catholicate Aramana Chapel. He was elected Bishop by the Malankara Christian Association held at Parumala Seminary on 10th June 2004 and subsequently, consecrated as a Bishop on March 5, 2005. On December 2, 2006, he was enthroned as Metropolitan of the Malabar diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

Metropolitan Theophilos served with faithfulness and devotion to God and His Church until the very last days of his short life despite the increased health issues he was facing lately.

May his memory be eternal as he rests among the just and the saints.



Azhippura - Small building where St. Gregorios lived at Parumala

**Reflection on the theme of OVBS 2017**

**Theme: "Do Good to one another" (1Thessalonians 5:15).**

'A good deed brightens a dark world'. Good deeds are very powerful. That's why almost every religion and culture values and rewards the good deeds. There are many benefits in doing good deeds.

Let's discuss the benefits of performing good deeds.

The first benefit is to help someone

According to Galatians 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith". When you do a good deed, of course you are helping someone. For instance if you help a homeless and hungry person, in addition to getting food, he also receives the message that he is important and worth helping. This good deed warms his heart as well as fills his stomach.

Second one is to help yourself

James 2:24. "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone".

Dodie smith said "noble deeds and hot baths are the best cures for depression". Helping others also gives you a new perspective and keeps you from focusing on yourself; you are reminded that you are not the only one in the world that has problems but there are many people out there whose problems are much bigger than yours.

Third benefit is to meet someone

Let me quote St Basil's words "A tree is known by its fruit, a man by his deeds". A good deed is never lost. He who sows courtesy reaps friendships and he who plans kindness gathers love. When we help others, we expand the number of our contacts, and hopefully get to know how people different kinds of people live. Our worldview is expanded, and our perspective changes.

Fourth is God's example

Doing good to others is a sign of love. God gave us his only son to save us. It is therefore a proper thing for us to follow his example and do good things for others. John 3:16 says "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Fifth is to improve the society

Jesus said we are the salt of the earth. Salt makes food to taste nice. We are also to be the salt of the world by doing good. When groups of people help each other, it is bound to help society as a whole.

Sixth is to teach by example

In addition, your good deeds may influence your children and other people in your community to follow suit and do the same. Without having a lecture, simply by doing, you influence and lead others by your example.

Finally make the world a better place

1 John 3:17. "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" You can lead by example in helping the world become a better place that values generosity and sharing.

Let's do good to others and be a right model to others.

**- Aneesha Mathew**



St. Gregorios at the age of 29



A photo on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1902

**St. Gregorios' Unshakable Faith in God**

Vettikkal Dayara was the nursery for the spiritual growth of Mar Gregorios. He was only 23 years old when he was professed as a priestmonk (Ramban). An incident during his stay at Vettikkal Dayara provides ample proof for his undaunted faith in God. Once a big swelling appeared on the back of Rambachan's body. Local medical men were of the view that the swelling could be painful and dangerous. This caused much fear and anguish in his disciples and servants. But Rambachan was not moved by it at all.

When his father came to

know about it, he got some Ayurvedic medicines prepared and sent it to Rambachan. Rambachan did not refuse it; he kept it in his room but never used it. The aide Cheriya who brought the medical potions lingered there for sometime and requested Rambachan to apply it to his back. But Rambachan pacified him and said: "Don't worry, this swelling occurred on its own, it will subside on its own;" The old man Cheriya quietly returned thinking that the swelling would disappear and it really happened. Thirumeni's faith in God could not be shaken.

**From page 1..... Message from our Vicar**

Parumala Thirumeni's holiness was revered by both the Christians and non-Christians of his time, who were deeply touched and impressed by his unassuming life and purity of conscience. What is exceptional about this saint is that he did not limit his life to the walls of prayer and meditation. Rather, he was a strong advocate of social reforms, who struggled tirelessly to uplift the poor and socially downtrodden in society during his days.

As a child, whenever I was asked what a prayer is or whenever I thought about it myself, the words of the blessed St. Gregorios of Parumala was what would come first to my mind. "Prayer is the inspiration of childhood, the refuge of youth and peace during old age." Indeed, back then, it truly was an inspiration. Today as I sit upon what may well be the last threshold of youth, I realize that it is indeed my refuge in all I would need. Again, I am inspired by his life witness that prayer will indeed be my peace in the years to come. May his prayers be a refuge for us all. ■

"Forgiveness is strength. It gives a person good name. It is the distinguishing feature of righteous people."

-Parumala Thirumeni

**For favours received**



A devotee

St. Thomas Orthodox Sunday School, Groblersdal



Glimpses from OVBS 2017

