



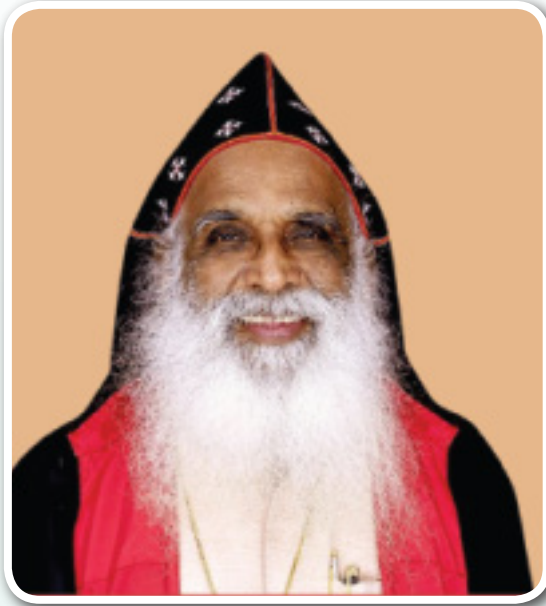
MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH - MUMBAI DIOCESE

Suvartha Pathrika

VOL. XI APRIL - JUNE 2020

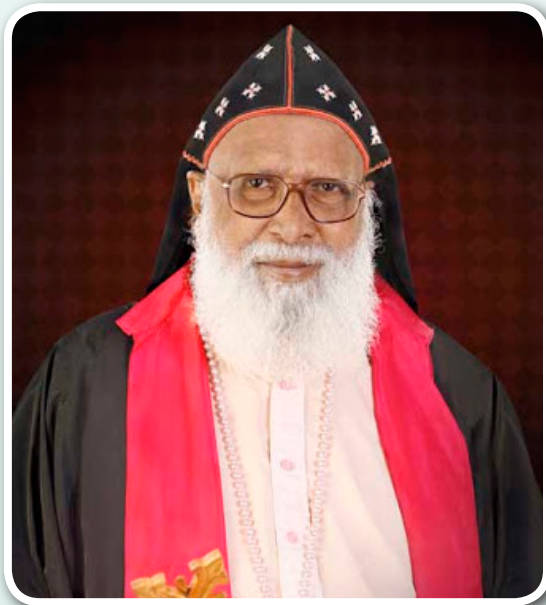


Faith in Time of Pandemic



90th Birthday - 'Navathy'

Wishes to Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan



Thank God for the Blessed '103 year

of Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan

Suvartha Pathrika

A Publication of Mumbai Diocese Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar

Vol. XI, 2020 APRIL - JUNE 2020

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From Diocesan Episcopa

Dear friends in Christ,

The last issue of the Suvatha Patrika was published in the month of January 2020. At that time no one would believe that the world was changing so drastically. I could only think about my transfer from Bombay to Kerala to take up the responsibilities of Ranny – Nilakkal diocese. The circular kalpana of the Metropolitan to that effect was issued and I was getting ready by packing my materials and booking my flight tickets for the travel on March 26, 2020. Suddenly on March 23rd there was an announcement that the Nation is going to observe lockdown on the same night, within a couple of hours in the context of COVID – 19. That shattered the whole dream. The people were also stranded, as they couldn't get back home where their dear ones are, in the distant villages and even other states of India. The initial 21 – day lock down was extended by another 19 days. And now for two more weeks. What will be the outcome after May 17th? The Corona virus has become the new normal.

We have had experiences of facing earthquakes, tsunamis and floods. These natural calamities affected only particular regions and the people there in. The land and the people could overcome all such calamities. But Corona virus which is an epidemic (greater than SARS) has lockdown different nations and has become a global disaster. Every person is now confined to one's own home and is learning the lesson of 'social distancing'. As the statistics show, more than 3.5 million people are infected globally. Almost 2,50,000 people are dead. The virus spreads easily if social distancing is not kept. This deadly virus has no vaccine now. The infected are treated with available medicines (HCQ) and a good number are put on ventilators, as they cannot breathe normally. In India, the use of masks, gloves, hand-sanitizers and disinfectants has not reached everyone in our society, though a good number have accepted it as a new normal.

Maharashtra has new 14 Red Zones, 16 Orange Zones, 6 Green Zones as on April 30, 2020.

The front line health workers are the most brave of people, who serve the infected, by risking their own lives; when they have to handle the patients for medical treatment where social distancing is not easy. They are asked to stay together in the hospital to carry out the medical service by shift duty. Then they are put in quarantine, when they are allowed to go home from the hospital. We admire them for their brave and selfless ministry. They face difficulties when proper P.PEs (Personal Protective Equipment) are lacking and when the hospital itself is not equipped with adequate facilities for a pandemic like Corona virus with ventilators, masks, testing kits, hospital beds and quarantine facilities. Out of the 42,670 active cases in India, 11,782 have been cured. Thanks to the good and earnest efforts of the Frontline medical team, that there are cases of people returning home after beating COVID – 19. Let us also urgently focus on the needs of those at the bottom of the

health care pyramid. After all they are carrying out the collective burden on their shoulders.

The World has changed for ever. Most industries are affected now in our society. By the time the lockdown is lifted, we enter into a new world. Everybody will have to wake up. Everyone has to re-invent oneself in the changed scenario. The following are some of the observations and lessons.

1. Health concerns are no longer personal. It is often asked, 'who sinned?' Jesus answers, 'neither this man or his parents' (St. Jn. 9:2, 3). Corona sickness is not a personal problem now. It has a social dimension. My health is dependent on the other and vice versa. We need to face it as a social concern. COVID – 19 is highly infectious. The percentage of positive cases is 4.5%. Its mortality rate is still around 3 %. Phobia makes the disease bigger. We need the cooperation and participation of all the people to contain the viral attack. Let us take time to wait upon the Lord to realize the work of God. I read in Chuck Swindoll's Daily Devotion where he speaks about the experiences of Job (Job 12): 'While I don't know why I am suffering like this, I can tell you that somehow and in some way the God of heaven, the silent God, the One who seems to be absent from my perspectives, is still in control.'
2. We all are living in an era of globalization. Every movement has pros and cons. Capitalism was considered as the nexus by which we can transform the whole world. That power is shattered. Corona has taken away the divide between the north and the south. The concept of developed nations and developing nations is taken away. The rich and the poor are all affected. Socialism is the new norm. In this context, the global community, gains prominence. Even the least or the last in the society has value. If the last one is affected, that

person can hold the whole world to a standstill. We need to consider Corona disease as our problem. We need to concern ourselves with the quality of lives everywhere. The young rich man who came to Jesus as we read in St. Lk. 18:18-24, was a practicing religious person. But he became sad and went away without inheriting eternal life because of his riches. Jesus also told us the parable of the rich fool (St. Lk. 12:13-21) who thought his abundance in harvest is good for many years. He became a fool because he didn't know that God can ask for his life that same night. This parable is asking us to be rich

toward God. (vs. 21) The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (St. Lk. 16:19-30) is telling us that the poor man lying at our gate is important and useful. We cannot ignore anyone. We are together in this world. And God loves us. We are making a transition and that needs to be real.

3. The lockdown has kept the people in their houses. Though some people are working from their homes, on line teaching and leadership has become the new norm. The members of the family are more or less living together now. It gives more time for the family

members to be together and it gives more warmth to our relationships. This will pave the way for the members to understand the significance of personal relationship. 'After a Telangana woman rode 1400 km on scooter to get her son back home, a Lucknow woman pulled off a similar feat by driving to Delhi through the lockdown to rescue her stranded sister. Swathi travelled over 1300 km for over 17 hours in a single day to bring back her younger sister, who was slipping into depression without food and basic essentials. Back with family, the two sisters have quarantined themselves'. (18 April 2020 Times of India) The bonding will be strengthened when one realizes that caring becomes a reality through sharing. Both the women above tell us that, taking care of the other is important. Family is the matrix

“ The World has changed for ever. Most industries are affected now in our society. By the time the lockdown is lifted, we enter into a new world. Everybody will have to wake up. Everyone has to re-invent oneself in the changed scenario. The following are some of the observations and lessons.

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of the human community. St. Paul in writing to the Church at Ephesus portrays Jesus as the bridegroom and Church as the bride and shows the significance of the mutual bond within the marriage. It is from this bond that we extend our relationship to the people outside our family. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament remind us to 'love your neighbour as yourself.' Jesus goes further in teaching us to love as Jesus has loved us. (St. Jn. 13:34)

4. The lock down has closed down religious centers as well. In our context, house churches have emerged. Since the travel is reduced, members have more time at home. Personal prayer and family prayers are made possible. Dr. Arthur C. Brooks, a Harvard Professor and Behavioural Scientist said: "Sit in meditation and prayer each day, read more sacred and psychological texts and set goals to understand life better when we emerge from this period." (Sunday Times, 19 April 2020) These days, we hear devotional messages, attend worship services by live streaming and families have set apart required time for family prayer. The House Churches thus formed, give the parents opportunities to assume the role of a pastor and give Christian nurturing to the children at home. Online Sunday School Classes and online V.B.S are now available. Digital world has become the new norm. Though we are using the social media, God is present in places where we congregate in His name. Though it is only a small number consisting of only members in the family, we are also part of the 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.'
5. Corporate responsibilities are more evident now. People are going through fear and anxiety. There are lots of stress among the members of the family when someone falls sick and face the need for hospitalization. Regular counselling is required for those who face emotional stress and are confused in their life. Mumbai Mirror on May 1, 2020 reported

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that a 29-year-old lady committed suicide in a Vile Parle flat due to frustration. She was staying alone when two of her friends left for their home towns before the lock down started. In times of pandemic everyone is feeling scared and anxious to different degrees. People try to contain their emotions. Instead, they need to be listened to. In times of disappointments and despair, the community is challenged to raise the 'tower of hope'. The COVID situation has made us conscious of not only health crisis but also an economic crisis. There is a possibility that in India, more deaths can happen due to hunger and malnutrition than the pandemic. We must ensure food for the needy and cash transfers for the unemployed. Dr. Arthur C Brooks says that the two main sources of anxiety among people are due to uncertainty and loneliness. The uncertainty is about the future. He recommends to meditate on the spiritual truth, "I do not know what the future will bring. But I do know that I am alive and well right now. I will not waste the gift of this day". He says the loneliness is normal. Instead of spending time on social media, he recommends to use technologies that involve face to face contact such as Zoom, Face Time and Skype. The resurrected Lord meets the disciples who were in fear, doubt and dispirited. He said, 'Peace be with you'. And to Thomas he said, 'Do not doubt, but believe.' (St. Jn. 20:26-29)

6. Covid-19 has taught us humans to love the nature. Now the skies are blue, rivers are clean and the birds sing louder than traffic. Humans have the responsibility of keeping the air and water clean and overcome the tendency to pollute them. When people remained at home, birds and animals have started coming back to our neighborhood. This planet belongs to them as well. House gardening is good for our physical exercise and keeping the earth fertile. Growing vegetables and fruit trees near our homes will help us to get fresh vegetables for our daily consumption. The corona pandemic and

Climate change are the two global crises. But both are to be remedied. Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuruvilla, in an article he wrote recently draws our attention to the Garden of Eden where we find a very intimate and harmonious relationship humans have with nature. He says that, as we overcome the corona virus, we shall re-establish our relationship with nature as well. Let us also remember that Jesus drew our attention to learn from the birds of the air and lilies in the field. (St. Mt. 6:25-33)

7. Godavari Kankoni, an 86 year old Pali Hill resident who came out of the hospital after 17 days said, "I used to be pessimistic and anxious, but I have changed.... Faith, not fear, helped us". Spirituality is not diminished. God is Spirit. 'Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' (St. Jn. 4:23) The Archbishop of Bombay, Oswald Cardinal Gracious celebrated Easter mass without the congregation. The mass and address was streamed live on YouTube. He said, "Never in your life or mine we have faced such unusual circumstances and I hope we never will again... Turn to God rather than push God to the periphery of existence... We have independence, science, technology and manmade laws over godliness and ethics. We may now rethink our priorities and values." Many people think that social distancing will be the new normal. It cannot be. People are not created to be socially distant. We are created to love and to have close-ness. Of course, all should be careful during the pandemic. But when it is safe, we will go back to our old, blessed ways. It was reported that when Wuhan re-opened after 76 days of lockdown and the medical team was leaving, the local residents waved flags with joy and gratitude.

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8. According to 2011 censuses there are 13 million households with about 64 million people located in city slums of India (17% or 1/3 of India's Population). A slum is defined as an area unsuited for human habitation. Dharavi in Mumbai covers an area of 2 square km with a population of more than a million. People live with neither regular water supply nor proper sanitation. How can social distance be practiced in such places? Ratan Tata said, "We do design for high-value housing and provide in the slums the residue. We should be ashamed because we have the image we want to project of ourselves and there is a part we want to hide. We are offended when people criticize it, but we have social responsibilities as architects and builders. The Corona issue is a wakeup call of what beholds us. What our concern is that it turns around and bites us." In crowded bazaars and slums, people cannot stay for long. Swaminathan S. A. Aiyer opines that an economic disaster induced by the lockdown may hurt more people. Hence, he suggests to lift the shutdown by adventuring to face the uncertain future. This exit strategy will influence both the economy and public health. Gal. 2:10 tells about James and Peter sending Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the Gentiles by saying, '...remember the poor...'. Let us not ignore them.

9. It is a happy news that the Union Home Ministry has allowed migrant workers and others stranded in different parts of the country to return home by road. Maharashtra has nearly 10.5 lakh stranded migrants and it will require 35,000 buses if 30 passengers can be allowed in a bus to keep social distancing. The expenses would come to Rs. 525 Cr. The State is expecting Centre to run special trains. People attempt to walk, and use bi-cycles but all are stopped on the way asking them to go to

shelter homes or back to their dwelling places. 'On April 22, more than 231 labourers were stopped at Kalyan when they were trying to head back to their villages in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. They said that the extension of the lockdown made life hard. They have no job and no money'. On April 25, Times of India reported that 12 manual labourers of Haryana crossed river Yamuna to enter the villages of U.P. They were caught and quarantined in Shamli. They need permission from the Collector, clearance that they are not infected and be willing to undergo 14 days of quarantine on arrival, if they want to travel. What happens if there are no food and water outlets on the way?

Based on a rumour that special trains will run, about 2,000 migrant workers gathered at Bandra station on April 14, 2020. They protested against the lockdown extension. Police had to disperse them. They are plumbers, electricians, construction labourers, embroidery workers, housekeeping workers, rag pickers and the like from the slums in Govandi, Andheri and Cuffe Parade. (Leave alone the women we come across through our ministry of Navjeevan). It is not the virus that they are worried about. Their main concern today is going to bed without food. The people in the unorganised sector have no money to buy regular medicines that they need. For them, it is not the case of feeding one mouth. They too have families and other dependents. Most of them are staring at abject poverty. Sri Syed K. Hussain, a hand embroiderer, aged 40, living in Govandi was earning Rs.500 every evening of the working day. He said after the lockdown, "it seems like we have two options: either die from corona or from hunger." Our God will not leave them to die. God is our eternal contemporary. I am certain that the risen Lord is with them even if they don't recognise it. St. Lk. 24:

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10. Mehboob Ali Chauhan, his son Sameer and brother Feroz-arrived in Mumbai from Rajasthan barely a few days before the country wide lockdown was declared on March 24. They hoped to earn in Mumbai, after losing everything they had for Mehboob's father's cancer treatment. Their father died. They managed to find shelter and work in Lohar Khata. But now they have no work and no money. Mehboob said, "My widowed mother, wife and daughter don't have much to survive on. We desperately want to return to them".

Rev. Vinod Victor has given a Bible Study to go along with this, where he discusses St. John 21 to tell us how the risen Jesus became meaningful in the lives of the 7 disciples who caught nothing, inspite of their hard work through the hours of the night. Jesus can make life meaningful.

11. COVID-19 outbreak made it clear that the elderly are more at risk. In a good number of homes, the aged parents are alone while their children have found jobs in foreign countries.

Now the NRI's are unable to fly down or count on relatives to support or help the elderly in their times of need. Think about a 71 year old person who is diabetic looking after his 92 year old mother all by himself as the cook has been denied access by the police. Old age homes with depleting supplies and fewer volunteers or staff turning up, are going through tough times. The inmates may have diabetes or hyper-tension. They may not get the service of medical practitioners or even medicines when they need them. It increases anxiety. This is true about our Mandirams as well. This year, we did not send any amount to the Mandirams during the Holy Week or Good Friday. Should we not send our contributions as early as possible? As Rabindranath Tagore said, 'There is a silver lining in every cloud'.

The Times of India, on April 7, 2020 carried the news that 93 year old Thomas and 88 year old Mariamma, who were treated in Kottayam Medical College Hospital for COVID-19, came out after a month long treatment in ICU and Isolation ward to celebrate Easter with their children.

12. Religious centers and social organizations have responded to the needs of the marginalised and vulnerable people around us during this ongoing lockdown. A 55 year old Karnataka man (Kannadiga) gave his savings for Haj amounting to Rs. 3 lakhs to distribute food and other essentials to the families in the villages. Christian churches reached out to the tribals, migrants and elderly people, rag-pickers, transgenders and the like. A

Railway official, responded to the call of C.M. and catered to 6,000 families by spending about Rs. 40 lakhs. 12 girls in Thane from the marginalized communities made use of the social media to feed the poor daily with 2 meals in the basti area. They also convinced the Municipal Authorities to spray disinfectant in the area housing 2,000 shantis. Apart from all these there are also community kitchens run by smaller groups, religious communities and NGO's. In a place like Bombay, the government must open community kitchens everywhere. We should ensure that no one goes without a square meal during these days of lockdown when there are thousands of people who have no work and no other means of livelihood. I do not know whether there are families among us who haven't opened their arms to reach out to the needy in the neighbourhood. Jesus Christ seeing the hungry in the desert, asked the disciples: You feed them! Mt. 14:16. We have a divine responsibility.

Let me conclude: Pandemics don't just disappear overnight. Virus-ridden cities refuse to easily calm down. There will be full of unemployed migrants who

have gone home penniless. How will they and their dependents survive? Farmers should be able to sell their harvest in the market for a reasonable price! Most small businesses have shut down. Other business firms are dwindling. Thousands are unemployed. How can life in slums be revived? Will they get better facilities? Can our

country be free from the next round of virus attack that may occur in winter? There are no ready-made answers. It is time for the government to take clear decisions that would help the people to come out of the present hurt. We need a good health care system. Certainly we will take time to recover. But the preparations must begin. We have more pharmaceutical companies than other countries. Our labs are competent to come up with a vaccine for corona virus. Swacch Bharat mission should

yield results. Fear, anxiety and complaint about bleak future are not what is required now. We should be planning pro-actively for the times ahead by taking the bull by the horns and doing whatever we can, wherever we are and with whatever we have. Let us respect the Corona Warriors and remember that like them we have a role now in the task of restorations, locally, nationally and globally. Let us stop worrying and start doing things for the global good and to glorify God. It is our corporate responsibility. God gave us adequate time to look up to God, deepen our faith and strengthen our hope. As Jesus said, 'We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.' (St. Jn. 9:14) 'Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.' (St. Mt. 7:21) Let us glorify God Through our lives knowing that God is in control of our present times.

Yours in Christ's ministry,

Mar Theodosius

May 04, 2020

From the Diocesan Secretary Desk



The whole world is a battleground now. We are all under a siege with the present swift increase of Covid-19 worldwide. Where we are headed now, no one knows. A thick dark cloud is covering the whole world and every nation. Suppressed by anxiety and fears, all are confined to their homes. Global lockdown is an economic disaster. Doctors and other medical personnel are on the frontline of this war, working overtime with alarming shortage of staff, medical equipment and by risking their own lives. There is no medicine or vaccine. Data and statistics of people getting sick and dying are rapidly increasing in numbers every minute. All what we can do is to have our faith in God.

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This crisis is an opportunity to start anew. the present complex calamity requires new solutions: “new wine in new skins” (Mk 2:22), new ways of living, new ways of working and new models of development. The risen Christ makes “all things new” (Rev 21:5). He sustains us in our vulnerability, guides us through darkness, and reconciles us with the source of life.

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The present Coronavirus is a tremendous challenge for the Church, for all people worldwide and for our Planetary Earth. This crisis is an opportunity to start anew. the present complex calamity requires new solutions: “new wine in new skins” (Mk 2:22), new ways of living, new ways of working and new models of development. The risen Christ makes “all things new” (Rev 21:5). He sustains us in our vulnerability, guides us through darkness, and reconciles us with the source of life. Coronavirus, a small micro-organism which has shaken the whole world to the core, has brought about unprecedented spiritual awakening in each one of us and inspires humanity to ask certain pertinent questions. Covid-19 has made us understand and realise that we cannot take time, opportunity and calling for granted. Nothing is in our hands; everything in this world is pro-tem. God works beyond our imagination and every opportunity can be the last. Let us break free of all our inhibitions and proclaim Him and Him alone to be the Lord and seek God’s mercy to renew ourselves.

I am happy that this issue of Suvatha Pathrika is based on theme ‘COVID-19’.

I give below some of the activities we had in our Diocese since the publication of the last issue of Suvatha.

1. Our Mumbai Diocesan Convention went on well by God’s Grace from January 23rd to 26th, 2020. The main speaker was Rev. Dr. Vinod Victor. The finale of Silver Jubilee Celebrations of our Navjeevan Centre took place on the afternoon of January 25. Our Metropolitan, The Most Rev. Dr. Josph Mar Thoma, blessed the Diocese with his presence and leadership on January 25 & 26.
2. The 125th Maramon Convention took place from Feb. 9th to 16th, 2020. As usual, we had a stall for our Diocese at the Maramon Sandbed. Our Diocesan Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius spoke at the Maramon Convention on the evening of Feb. 15 and celebrated Holy Qurbana at St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Kozhencherry on the morning of February 16, 2020.
3. Mission Mela was conducted as usual in different centres of your mission field during the months of February and March month.
Regional Clergy was held on March 3rd at St. Thomas Marthoma Church, Vasai.
4. The Diocesan Bishop celebrated the Holy Qurbana. Various meetings were held with the help of clergy and their spouses. Dr. Felix Machado, Arch Bishop of Vasai graced the occasion with his presence and blessings.

5. The Circular Kalpana No.364 of our Metropolitan informed the Diocese about the transfer of the present Diocesan Episcopa to Ranni Nillackal Diocese and elevating him as the Suffragan Metropolitan of the Church. The process is held up because of the Lockdown prevailing in our country.
6. Under the present scenario, Zoom Application was utilised to hold Centre wise clergy fellowship from April 20th onwards and Diocesan Clergy Fellowship on April 30th.
7. The Holy Week services from Palm Sunday to Easter were livestreamed so that everybody could participate in it.
8. As the worship places are remaining closed, lent prayers, Sandhya Namaskarams after Easter and Holy Qurbana services on Sundays are livestreamed from the Aramana Chapel. Devotional messages are transmitted by the Clergy of the Diocese for edification of our members, for spiritual nurturing during the days of the present lockdown.
9. All the Diocesan Level Conferences are postponed to future dates because of the present restrictions.
10. All our Churches in our Diocese are offering helping hands to the needy persons during this time of crisis by distributing food kits and opening Community Kitchens. This was also done to the needy persons in our mission fields. Masks were stitched in Kalyan West and Daund and gave about 8200 masks to government officials and hospitals.
11. Mr. Pradeep David who was working with the Diocese with his wife Shini for the last 13 years and as Mission Coordinator of Vidharbha region took Voluntary retirement. We thank them for their wonderful service in the Diocese and for the upliftment of the tribal people.
12. Mr. Blesson Varghese , the present Mission Coordinator of Thane region, is taking leave for his higher studies (MTh.) in UTC Bangalore.
13. Rev. Mathews George is also leaving for his higher studies at UTC Bangalore.
14. An accomodation of 2BHK was purchased for the stay of the Administrator of St. Thomas English Medium school, Vapi. It was blessed by the Diocesan Bishop in the presence of the clergy, laity and School representatives on March 17,2020.
15. The Solar installation of the St. Thomas English Medium school, Surat was inaugurated on the morning of March 17, 2020.
16. A musical programmme by the Clergy group of the Diocese called Adonai was conducted for raising funds for the Navjeevan Centre by a programme called Quo Vadis at the Mulund Christos Mar Thoma Church on March 7,2020. It was well attended.
17. The Foundation Stone for the development of Titwala Property was held on March 20,2020.

We all are going through an unsettling situation and COVID-19 is clearly impacting our personal and professional lives, and those that we love.

All are advised to take care stay positive and find time for prayerful fellowship.

Let us prepare ourselves for a new beginning.

With Prayerful Regards,
Rev. Gigy Thomas
Diocesan Secretary

Editorial Note



As we publish this issue of 'Suvatha,' it is important to highlight that the whole world is in the midst of a Pandemic crisis. Our beloved Diocesan Episcopa Theodosius Thirumeni, who is a visionary of 'Techno-Optimism,' gave his permission to publish this issue as an e-reading magazine.

We are all understandably concerned about health these days. Our lives, along with hundreds of millions of other people across the world, have been turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. A pandemic is the global outbreak of a disease.

What can we expect when a pandemic is exploding around us, with cases of the virus confirmed in every community all around the world? The Coronavirus pandemic is going to change the culture of politics in India. It may give rise to new categories and identities. The sense of identity never dies in human society. It only mutates like a virus and changes its form. Caste and religion continued to remain

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an influential mobilisational category in Indian politics since our independence. The pandemic has brutally exposed class differentiation. The difference of life conditions between the haves and have-nots, the house owner and the homeless, became starkly visible. Joblessness, homelessness, and economic incapacity have appeared as important indicators for determining the scale of vulnerability to the disease. When someone says, "The coronavirus does not discriminate, we are asking you to stay at home for your own safety," they should also grasp the reality of having to choose between life and food. The marginalised will always choose food. They are the ones who risk their lives to enter sewers, work as manual scavengers or suffer as bonded labourers to ward off the specter of hunger. When they enter the suffocating sewers, all they hope for is their next meal – if they manage to survive, that is. If not, they die.

We feel a sense of relief when we see the India that is visible, orderly and 'cultured.' But the India that is invisible is brutal. Here poverty and caste hatred continue to kill the Dalits. Even in this time of social isolation and lockdown, Tamil Nadu has witnessed caste-driven atrocities and murders. But they will go unquestioned and unnoticed by the police and the mainstream media because of the coronavirus.

Not just this virus, no epidemic or disaster can threaten the existence of Dalits to the extent that caste and poverty does. The biggest issue for Dalits is not the invisible virus, but the caste based hatred in the hearts of the Indians which is indeed visible. There is no protective gear or medicine which can save them from these threats. They have but one question – will death by coronavirus infection be more horrific than death caused by caste-motivated atrocity, "honour killing," or sexual violence?

The biological virus centered public health discourse is also visibly embedded with economic vulnerability. The voices of the subaltern and the poor as an economic category, may become more important in the debates of public health and politics in the future.

Due to the fear of infection, social distancing might become a long term strategy for human survival and it may gradually transform into a social mode of Indian life. It may enthuse a kind of social habit

among us to perceive otherness, making a shift from the level of caste to the level of the very 'biological body.' The social distance and 'untouchability' this time may not be only because of the notions of social impurity. It may become the case of untouchability at the horizontal level, from one body to another body, and not at the vertical level, between high caste and low caste. The pandemic is going to turn many of us from a 'caste public' to 'bio- public,' at least for some time.

As the response to the COVID-19 crisis stretches on, many have responded by saying that we are "all in this together." That is most definitely true. When the history of this moment is written, it will be the actions of communities, of neighbors and neighborhoods, that will be remembered as one of the true bright spots in an otherwise dark time. Yet, our being "together" is uniquely distinct. In order to overcome a virus that is at once killing citizens and ravaging the economy, we must keep our distance from one another. This war is being won from the inside of our homes, and our strategy for victory is to keep away from each other until it's safe to reconnect in person.

Blue skies, clean air, that's how the coronavirus lockdown is rejuvenating our environment. As coronavirus is rapidly spreading around the world, most people are still confined to their homes. The earth seems to have rejuvenated itself – smog has given way to blue skies, marine life is seeing increased activity, pollution levels have dropped, and animals as well as birds are moving about on their own accord. Let us prepare for a Responsible Reopening of the World.

One of the most frequent commands in the Scripture is "Do not fear!" Over and over again, God says to His people, "Do not fear! Do not be afraid!" The reason that God repeats these words so many times is that He knows that life in this imperfect world often creates fear for us, and He knows that we are fearful. He knows this, and He does not condemn us for our fear; rather, He encourages us, over and over again, to be of good courage, because He is with us even in the darkest of times.

These can and should be the days of renewed worship with rededication in service, care, friendship, work, and love. We must be understanding and compassionate to the strangers living amongst us, and we must love one another and be kind to one another as God in Christ has been merciful to us. (Ephesians 4:32-5:2)

To follow Christ is to be a people of hope. And our hope is not in vain, because it is rooted in the creator God of the universe, who has offered Himself lavishly on behalf of His children. He is worthy of our trust, and He can aid us in conquering our fears. "Be of good cheer," our Lord said, just before his own gruesome death on our behalf, "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Even as we face the uncertainty of the coronavirus as families and communities, let us remember God's most frequent command to humanity: "Be bold! Be strong! For the Lord your God is with you!."

With Prayers,

Rev. Dr. Issac G. Varghese

“

Blue skies, clean air, that's how the coronavirus lockdown is rejuvenating our environment. As coronavirus is rapidly spreading around the world

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BIBLE STUDY



Rev. Vinod Victor

THE INTERVENTIONS OF HOPE AND THE RESURRECTION NARRATIVES

Reading John 21:1-14 in a context of lock down

The Context in Which we Read the Text

Everyone is not in the same boat though the raging storm is the same. Thus said a poet about the struggles of the people in the context of the pandemic. Lock Down was construed as the best way to stop the community spread of the pandemic and people were confined to their homes for weeks together. This had far reaching impact on the lives of the individuals, families, communities and nations. While some saw it just as an extended vacation for the majority it was a tryst with survival. Many found their livelihood mechanisms being washed away from under their feet while several others found themselves stranded in the edges of existence as if in the dangerous curves of a mountain path. Some look forward with faith that the way out would come soon while some are very sceptical to the extent that this would alter the way we live our lives in a very drastic way. In the context of gloom where on the one side the poor are struggling for a piece of bread while on the other the stranded are looking at ways of somehow reaching home we read our scriptures through new eyes. The Quarantine time readings bring to us new insights that help us face

the challenges with grace and dignity, faith and hope.

The Struggles to Survive:

John 20 was about Jesus meeting with his disciples in their locked down situations, once when Thomas was not there and then after eight days when Thomas was there too. The disciples were realising more and more that they could no longer stay within the locked down situations. Peter and six other disciples were engaged in a conversation of their survival strategies. They had been pushed to the edges and therefore to address their basic food needs and primary economic needs they had to act and act fast. So Peter said- I am going fishing. The others did not dare to ask- is this not a profession we left behind when we decided to follow the Master but instead said- we are coming too. Their future is being redrawn after the lock down. What they envisaged with Jesus the Messiah is no longer going to be and they are now constrained to reimagine and re-image their future. The primary response is the need to survive and they go fishing.

The plans they built around the Jesus community



and kingdom aspirations were all falling apart and they could have even thought God is done with them. The existential angst that troubled their inner being is something words cannot properly depict. Their return to the sea was perhaps the only option they had.

Lock Down time alienated several people from their livelihoods and when the lifting of the lock down is being discussed albeit in a staggering manner the fact remains that several people cannot return to normal life for quite some time now. The economic slow down during the period has taken the zing out of their survival possibilities. Their venturing out would therefore be beyond an act of faith- it could be an act of desperation. The struggle to survive takes various forms.

The Familiar Terrains and the Empty Net Syndrome:

Peter and Andrew and John were fishermen who knew the terrains of the sea so well and they would have naturally expected that when they cast their nets they would get a catch that they were looking forward to. But that night they caught nothing. They were owners of boats and nets and had made a successful living until Jesus

invited them to follow him. During their time with Jesus too they were not far from the sea for the activities of Jesus happened in and around Galilee. The four drachma that they got for the payment of the taxes was also from fishing. They knew the sea well. But now the post-Jesus return to the sea finds themselves in a very different reality. A reality of Emptiness despite the best of collective effort all through the night.

This experience of the Empty Net is something several people are identifying themselves with today. With Malls and Schools closed life was affected for some but even small scale life not allowed several people were pushed beyond their capacities of sustenance. The local vendor and the

barber found it hard to survive. With churches locked down several who found their living around spaces of worship find the emptiness hard to digest. The migrant workers became jobless and were asked to stay in strict quarantine conditions though many of them were least vulnerable to primary contact. With all possibilities of livelihood affected the empty-net syndrome had various effects on the life of the people. The good news is that Jesus understands the depth of this emptiness much more than anyone for he was the epitome of

the kenotic self-emptying for the liberation of humanity.

The Christ Incognito who Comes By Intervening:

Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore but the disciples did not recognise him. They had been walking with him for some time now and in the previous days he had met them twice in the confines of their locked in situations but yet they would not have expected him to be there by the sea so much so they did not recognise him.

“ The migrant workers became jobless and were asked to stay in strict quarantine conditions though many of them were least vulnerable to primary contact. With all possibilities of livelihood affected the empty-net syndrome had various effects on the life of the people. ”

The new dawn and the Christ calling there-in is a powerful symbol of hope we must be drawing strength from at such a time as now. The night was over. The light of the new day was coming in and lo and behold Jesus was there waiting for them in the sea side. He did not want to leave them helpless and in emptiness. He comes near them.

The fact that several people ask the question- Where is God in all these struggles and pain, death and agonising sickness remains. Alongside is the faith affirmation that Jesus is near all those people who struggle and if only they recognised his presence in their midst they would have easily found strength to bear the pain they were going through.

The risen Christ is not an apathetic entity-one who would not understand the pain and pathos of the suffering people. He had borne it all and therefore could easily understand what physical and mental agony was and could identify with them. He saw the disciples struggling in the deep sea and he came by.

The Companionship in the Nothingness:

Friends, have'nt you any fish? Jesus asked them. No they replied.

Jesus did not point fingers at the disciples nor did he find fault for deserting him at the crucial juncture of the cross but instead with the same agape love he approaches them, address them as friends and children and address the core issue they were struggling with- not catching any fish. The disciples saw someone on the seaside addressing their agony and identifying with their pain and said No, we haven't been able to catch any fish.

This NO is reverberating all around us today. The question is simple- struggling in the deep sea all

along the night have you been able to find anything that would at least temporarily sustain you. NO.

Jesus being friends with the struggling people is a very comforting thought. What a friend we have in Jesus, so the lyricist wrote, All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

Here the key is that it not the people struggling calling out to God for help but God himself reaching out to them to help. That is the beauty of the Jesus way of intervention. It reaches out to the people in pain and need.

The Guidance in Direction when the sense of Direction is Lost:

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With every walk of life affected and international borders and borders within nations sealed life limping back to a new normalcy might take quite some time.

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“Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will get”, Jesus told the struggling disciples and they did not dare to resist. Peter could have easily said- well we know the sea well, do not advise us. They could have given up and said- we tried the whole night but want to quit now. However they did not do the same. They just obeyed what Jesus instructed them to do and cast their net on the right side.

One of the salient features of the lockdown has been the loss of the sense of time and sense of direction. It is all about today, yesterday, tomorrow and the other day. People locked in for around forty days have lost the sense of direction and when we read this instruction to cast the net on the right side of the river we find a divine intervention in restoring the sense of the right direction.

Obedience to divine intervention not at times realising that it comes from divine inspiration is yet another factor we need to take a close look.

Like a ship lost in the deep sea is the world around us today. The greatest of intelligence networks

failed to foresee the coming of the pandemic nor could it find ways of addressing the impact. The possibility of recurrence and mutation poses new threats. With every walk of life affected and international borders and borders within nations sealed life limping back to a new normalcy might take quite some time. Herein we can easily see a sense of loss of direction globally and locally despite the best of efforts by governments and health professionals. The One who can give directions comes in with new significance at such a time as this.

The Transformation of Emptiness to Wholeness

When they did they were unable to haul the net because of the catch. The intervention of Jesus at the right time had a very impactful influence in their life situation. They were grappling with the gloom of emptiness and Jesus transformed that into the joy of fullness, It was a great catch of over a 153 fishes and the disciples found it difficult to draw the net that they had to seek the help of others to draw it.

The possibilities of the Divine is limitless and boundless and that is the greatest hope in the midst of any crisis.

Emptiness has taken new forms in the lives of people. It is not their coffers and balances that are empty but their spiritual and mental resources of sustenance. The projection of over one in three people in the world being affected in terms of livelihood and a financial slow down worse than the great depression after the first world war paints a grim picture of emptiness that is in store but the fact the God is still in control points at the possibility of transforming emptiness into wholeness. The fish were in the sea indeed but somehow the fishermen in spite of their deep

knowledge of the sea failed to cast their nets where the shoal was. Jesus saw where the shoal of fish was and just directed them to cast their net there.

Pointers to where resources are. This is what the relief and rehabilitation model of intervention at such a time as this would call us to.

The Realisation of Nakedness

The disciple that Jesus loved realised it was the Lord and he told Peter that it was the Lord. When Peter recognised that it was the Lord, he grabbed his cloak since he realised that he was naked and jumped into the sea.

God encounters invariably comes with the recognition of the sense of nakedness. It happened when Adam and Eve tried to hide from God behind the tree and even here when Peter tries to jump into the sea and hide.

Struggles for survival often times lead us to fresh God encounters and that is the beauty of times like

this. When Peter realised that all his reserves has drained and his efforts to replenish them are not finding fruit he reached a point of no return and then comes the intervention of the Lord. The great catch in itself was miraculous and alongside comes the prompting from his friend- It is the Lord. It is a fresh theophany for Peter and his reflex response is trying to hide the shame of nakedness.

Of the many positives of the crisis times has been several people finding the divine afresh and encountering Christ in new ways and Peter and his friends did in this instance.

The Bread by the Beach

When they landed they found a fire of burning

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The projection of over one in three people in the world being affected in terms of livelihood and a financial slow down worse than the great depression after the first world war paints a grim picture of emptiness that is in store but the fact the God is still in control points at the possibility of transforming emptiness into wholeness.

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coal with some fish and some bread. The best way to reach out to the hungry person is giving him a meal. What the broken disciples were looking forward for was not a burning bush experience of the divine but some food to eat and what Jesus offers them is just the same.

The three symbols here is very significant. There is the fire or rather burning charcoal. There is the bread. Yes it was Jesus who said he is the Bread from heaven but what the disciples wanted first was bread for their hunger so that they could comprehend the bread from heaven. The fish (ichthus) was again a strong symbol associated with Christ which later took the connotation- Jesus Christ son of God Savior. Fish, Fire and Bread were intended far beyond than quenching their immediate hunger but was intended primarily to quench their hunger.

Most mission agencies in their quest to redefine mission in the changed times realised that the first step of intervention had to be reaching out with immediate relief which in most cases was food. It was only in the second phase they think about helping people return home and rebuild their lives.

The Affirmation of Dignity and Participative Justice

Bring some of the fish you have just caught. Simon Peter and his friends had a choice from about 153 fishes. We live in a world that is so much caught up in a charity paradigm but this instance is a powerful pointer at the participative and affirmative dignity paradigm that Jesus is drawing our attention to.

There are several community kitchens functional, governments and volunteers are busy distributing food packets. The needy are seen as mere objects and the ones who share gets the satisfaction of the benefactors. But here the Jesus model needs to be carefully looked into. He did not ask the disciples to come to the shore with their empty nets and offer them fish to eat for a meal. Jesus empowered

them to gain their confidence in their own skills by helping them to find resources with their traditional wisdom. Once they drew their nets to the shore he did not ask them to come and eat what he has kept for them but instead asked them to bring some fish that they had caught. It was a hospitality that involved all with the same level of acceptance of intrinsic worth.

The Invitation for Breakfast

“Come and Have Breakfast”, Jesus told his disciples. They did not dare to ask him who he was. They realised that it was Jesus. Jesus came took the bread and gave it to them and so did he with the fish. This breakfast was not just a one time meal. All of these disciples were soon to be apostles to go into the different parts of the world as the emissaries of the gospel of Life preaching about the Bread of Life and becoming Fishers of People.

Having said this the fact remains there are unfortunately several people in the world who through this period of lock down and quarantine did not share even a meal with a hungry soul. They found the easiest of excuse- we are locked in and this is a time of social distancing. We however have a Christ who invites all the broken and wandering souls- Come and Have breakfast.

Conclusion

The poem with which I began with also says- “Some of us who are well now may end up experiencing it, and some who believe they are infallible will be blown away if or when this hits someone so dear to them”, yet we sure will overcome this crisis too. When this too passes away and we return to re-read John 21 the four statements of Jesus would come back to us with ever so fresh meanings

Children do you have anything to eat

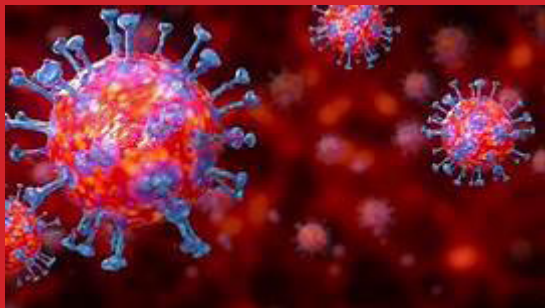
Cast your net on the right side and you shall get

Bring some of the fish you caught

Come and Have Breakfast

Rev. Vinod Victor
CSI Holy Trinity, Trivandrum

Suvartha Pathrika



COVID-19: The hard facts and what we can do about it

The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19 disease has killed over 2,30,000 people worldwide, including more than 61,000 in the U.S., since the outbreak first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December last year. Confirmed infections globally have topped 3.2 million, but the true numbers are believed to be much higher because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments. The virus is inflicting unprecedented social and economic pain on all countries and communities, with the poor and vulnerable the hardest hit. The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits has climbed past a staggering 30 million, a figure not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s, when joblessness peaked at 25%. Economies in Europe, where more than 1,30,000 people with the virus have died, have gone into an epic slide with lockdowns leading to closure of businesses and employees expressing fear of returning to work with large numbers of people still dying.

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However, experts caution that no one has an accurate picture of the pandemic in the country's remote rural villages and deep in slums. Even in normal times, accurately recording deaths in India can be a difficult task, where many poor people fall sick and die without entering a hospital or seeing a doctor.

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India appears so far to have been spared the devastation seen in New York, Milan and other hard-hit parts of the world, where hospitals have been overwhelmed by cases of coronavirus. One possible factor is that India imposed a lockdown on its 1.3 billion people on March 25, when there were just 606 confirmed cases and 10 deaths, and it has been rigidly enforced. The government says the number of infections could have reached 100,000 without the lockdown. On May 1, the government extended the world's biggest

coronavirus lockdown for two more weeks beyond May 4. Air travel and passenger trains have ground to a halt, schools and restaurants have been shut, large gatherings at places of worship have been prohibited and only the transport of essential goods has been allowed so far. The stringent restrictions have been credited with keeping confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus to about 37,000 cases as of May 1, with 1,200 deaths.

In a government rating system, India has been split into red zones with significant risk of spread of the infection, green zones with zero

cases or no confirmed cases in the past 21 days, and those in between as orange. This reflects a high concentration of cases in many urban areas such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad,

but very few or none in many rural areas of the country. However, experts caution that no one has an accurate picture of the pandemic in the country's remote rural villages and deep in slums. Even in normal times, accurately recording deaths in India can be a difficult task, where many poor people fall sick and die without entering a hospital or seeing a doctor. Just under half of the country's estimated 10 million annual deaths are not recorded. In addition, there are concerns that if the virus catches hold in a big way, India's health care system, which is poorly funded by international comparison, will be severely stretched.

Then again, the lockdown has had a crippling effect on many Indian livelihoods, caused misery for millions of workers in the country's vast informal sector, and dealt a major blow to Asia's third-biggest economy. Unemployment has shot up shockingly, from 8% at the beginning of March to 26% in mid-April, according to the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy. Nomura, an investment bank, has reduced its expectations for India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth from a limp 4.5% to a painful -0.5%. One estimate suggests that an extra 100 million people could fall below the World Bank's poverty line of \$3.20 a day. In particular, more than 140 million migrant workers, the backbone of the economy, have been left jobless overnight, prompting a huge exodus of people back to their villages, many on foot. Many face destitution, bereft of the right to live with dignity, and are forced to live in subhuman conditions. The rural migrant's average monthly earnings are just ₹10,000, but most of it is sent home to support families and ageing parents. Workers are now trapped in cities far away from their homes with all public transport suspended. They rely on daily food handouts to survive in tenements, where at least five people are packed into one small room. With economic activity at a

standstill, most of India's working poor have seen their incomes collapse to zero.

Economists and social activists warn that India is facing a severe humanitarian crisis, unless desperate workers are either permitted to start earning money again, or provided with substantive government relief to cope with the calamitous loss of income. Meeting this year's fiscal deficit target of 3.5 per cent of GDP already appears impossible given likely growth and revenue shortfalls, while the limited scope for fiscal measures leaves little space for stimulus. Analysts warn of the risk that India will face a downgrade of its sovereign rating if its public finances weaken.

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The United Nations warned in April that the world faced a “hunger pandemic”, with millions facing starvation. For people around the world dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, even sleep brings no relief.

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Abhijit Banerjee, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, warns that if millions of households slide into chronic hunger and indebtedness, they will be a drag on India's economy for years. Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey, co-founders of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, in a recent article, called for a creative and expanded Employment Guarantee Act as a human response to this pandemic. They said, “The privileged must understand that if they do not want

to be affected by impoverishment and insecurity that has afflicted these workers, a minimal level of livelihood security will have to be guaranteed to labour, farmers and workers in the informal sector. It is myopia of the worst sort to fight the spread of COVID-19 by wishing away a massive humanitarian crisis. The solution lies in assuring all Indians a measure of livelihood and income security.”

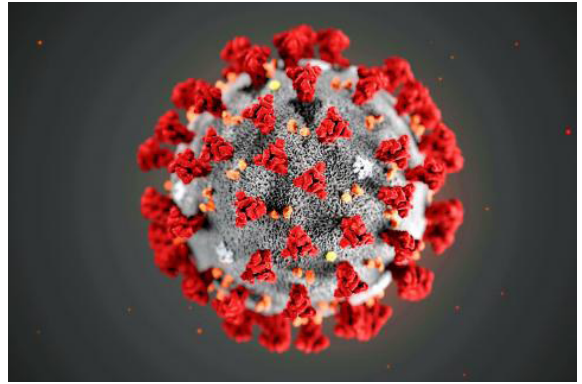
Indian workers — and those who depend on them — are not alone in their hardship. Shutdowns to control the deadly pathogen have sparked food riots in countries such as South Africa and fuelled protests elsewhere, including Lebanon.

The United Nations warned in April that the world faced a “hunger pandemic”, with millions facing starvation. For people around the world dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, even sleep brings no relief. The horrors of COVID-19, and the surreal and frightening ways it has upended daily life, are infecting dreams and exposing feelings of fear, loss, isolation and grief that transcend culture, language and national boundaries.

As Christians, we still have hope in Jesus Christ and, even more than this, have the opportunity to bring hope to others. As responsible Christians, we may do the following:

We must pray

- For protection over our families, neighbourhoods, cities and nations.
- For medical doctors and healthcare professionals treating the critically ill.
- For government authorities to make the right decisions to curb the spread of the virus.
- For speedy development of a vaccine or a cure to the virus.
- For good Samaritans to rise up to help those in need, like migrant labourers.
- We must contribute financially to help the poor.
- We should keep in touch with our family and friends, especially the elderly and anyone with underlying health conditions. Simply talking to them, giving words of reassurance and praying for them can help them feel less anxious.
- We should not spread fear and misinformation through unverified forwards on social media or WhatsApp. While forwarding a message, one should ask two questions: 1. Is it authentic and reported by a reliable news agency? And 2.
- We should constructively spend time. Many feel bored with the lockdown, but do not realise what a gift free time is in our busy lives. One can help with the housework, which would have increased without the availability of a domestic help, and perhaps learn new skills like cooking, baking or cleaning! Online courses can help people increase their knowledge. One can read e-books or audiobooks, or learn a new language. Remaining physically active is also recommended for not only physical health but also mental well-being.
- We can spend time reading the Word of God. But our goal should be not mere knowledge of the Word, but to be transformed by it. Just as the disciples, after breaking bread with the resurrected Christ following the journey to Emmaus, felt their “eyes were opened”, we should pray that our eyes be opened through the Holy Spirit as we read the Scriptures.
- We can introspect: This lockdown can and should shine a light on the priorities of our heart. What are the things that used to drive us before the pandemic? Was it a race for money, status, power? We may be faced with the



Will this help the people I am sending this to? Forwarding unverified information and fake news just creates more panic and uncertainty in an already difficult time. Instead, we can send encouraging messages.

reality that our health, family relationships, and relationship with God are worth more than our status in the eyes of others.

Michelle Obama, wife of former U.S. President Barack Obama, in a speech to teenage girls at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in North London in 2010, spoke about the importance of living in hope. She said: “You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world’s problems at once, but don’t ever underestimate the importance you can have, because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.”

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also emphasised on the need for world leaders to hold on to hope in a hopeless situation. In April, speaking at a two-day international meeting on climate change, Mr. Guterres said the pandemic has exposed fragile societies, but if governments work

together on common challenges, including global warming, it can be an opportunity to “rebuild our world for the better”. Mr. Guterres said the only effective response to the worldwide health emergency is “brave, visionary and collaborative leadership”. He said, “These are dark days, but they are not without hope. We have a rare and short window of opportunity to rebuild our world for the better. Let us use the pandemic recovery to provide a foundation for a safe, healthy, inclusive and more resilient world for all people.”

Change does not just start in a meeting with world leaders, it begins with each of us and in our hearts. Let us ask God to cleanse our hearts and help us to care for our neighbours in whatever small ways we can. Then perhaps one day,

we can look back at this pandemic as a difficult time that nonetheless helped us become better people and build a better society.

Vishal Mathew,
Editor, The Hindu

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You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world’s problems at once, but don’t ever underestimate the importance you can have, because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.

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Quo Vadis at the Mulund Christos Mar Thoma Church



A tribute to Late Very Rev. K E Oommen Achen

Mathew Varghese, Borivali, Immanuel

Chrisostom Thirumeni had celebrated his 102nd birthday in April, 2020, whose very life is a testimony and an encouragement to those in the Marthoma church and outside its fold. Several articles have been written about this great man of God, across social media. On 23rd May, 2020 he will be completing 67 years as a bishop to the Marthoma church, I felt it would be apt to write an article on him. Yet, the focus of this article is not solely on Thirumenni.

Someone once said, “behind every great man of God is a praying parent”. Same is the case with our Thirumeni, who himself has acknowledged several times, the prayers of his father that have made him the man of God that he is today. This article, therefore, although dedicated to our beloved Thirumeni, is a tribute to his father, the most respected very Rev. K. E Oommen achen, also called Kalamannil Achen.



Late Very Rev. K E Oommen (1881-1984)

My memory goes back to 1976 when I was a student of class VIII in S.C High School, Ranni and a member of the Pazhavangadikkara Immanuel MTC. (This parish which was formed in 1922 with 80 families and 6 prayer groups has today grown

into a church of 520 families and 2800 members. By the grace of God, this parish has played a vital role in nurturing many youngsters like me in the faith, and ensuring that they stay rooted in Christ. God willing, in the next two years, this parish will celebrate its centenary.

It all began in 1976 when the parish was celebrating its 54th parish day. The Chief Guest for this occasion was the then missionary bishop, Mar Chrisostom, exactly 2 years before he became Saffragan Metropolitan in May 1978. Just as the welcome speech was being addressed, the Chief Guest stood up followed by the congregation of 700 people. I was surprised. I wondered why the people stood up right in the middle of a program, when the Chief Guest was already on the dais. Most of all, why did the Chief Guest himself stand up? To my mind, nobody was above a bishop in the hierarchy of the church. I wondered who this could be, who claimed the respect of the bishop himself!

“Don’t you know? This is K.E. Oommen achen, the father of Chrisostom thirumeni,” was the immediate reply I got from someone sitting behind me in the choir. Achen, was quite old—95 years at that time and could barely walk, even with someone supporting his arm. Except few senior members, many were unaware of who this frail old man with shivering hands was. He was also invited for the parish day meeting, but reached late. On seeing his father entering the church from the main door, the Chief Guest (our 58 year old bishop, almost 6 feet tall) got up in respect of the old man. As a custom whenever the Chief Guest gets up, it became compulsory for the whole crowd to follow. It was on that day, the 13 year old me, learned the biggest lesson in my life—**Whatever**

position you reach in your life, even if you are worth billions, you cannot be greater than your Father! This universal lesson—of respecting elders, especially my father—I learned with no one having to teach me; by merely observing this father-son duo. Instead of sitting on the dais, on cushioned pompous chairs reserved for the guests of honor, Kalamannil Achen was humble enough to sit in one of the Choir benches—right next to me!



Rev. Philip Oommen before becoming a Bishop

Something about Kalamannil Achen:

Daniel 12:3 says, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever”.

Bio-data

Born- 21st Nov 1881

Ordained as Priest- 28th Jan 1921 at the age of 40

Died- 23rd May 1984 at the age of 102.5 years

Father: Adangaapurath Kalamannil Eapen

Mother: Mariamma

Wife: Karthikappalli Nadukkeveettil Sosamma

Education and initial occupation: Achen studied BA from Madras Christian College. He was Headmaster of Eraviperoor St. Johns School from 1911-1915. He studied Theology from UTC, Bangalore and was later posted as Divisional Secretary.



With Rev. Thomas Koshy Panachamoottil in Kuwait 2012

Very Rev K. E. Oommen was one of the first four graduates who accepted ordination together in the Mar Thoma Church. (The others were Rev. V. T. Chacko, Rev. George John and Very. Rev. V. P. Mammen). He was one of the Divisional Secretaries of the church till 1939. With his evangelical zeal and wise counsel he gave great support to Abraham Mar Thoma and later Metropolitans.

Served as Vicar at Kozhencherry, Maramon and Eraviperoor for a very long time.

Children: (1) Eapen Oommen (2) Mar Chrisostom (3) Dr. Jacob Oommen (4) Mary John (5) Susy Jacob

Achen was a gifted speaker, translator and a strong follower of reformation in the church. He has written many books out of which his Interpretation of the book of Romans is the most famous one. He worked hard for unity in the church and was one of the persons behind the stopping of the compulsory donations to the church. He encouraged, instead, that voluntary donation be made by members, as per their capacity and willingness. This was in

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During one of his messages, Sadhu Sunder Singh gave a call to the believers to dedicate their children for evangelism in North India. He quoted Luke 10:2 which says, **“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”** The very same night, Kalamannil Achen and his wife, Sosamma (who was 8 months pregnant that time) took a bold decision and a giant leap of faith, saying that if their soon to be born child is a boy, they would dedicate him for God’s work... The rest is history!

”

keeping with Christ’s own policy of giving—that God’s children give cheerfully, wholeheartedly and ungrudgingly.

Impact of Sadu Sunder Singh

Rewind to the Maramon Convention of Feb, 1918. Sadhu Sunder Singh (1889-1929) the renowned Indian, Christian missionary was one of the speakers. He spoke in Hindi, while Mr. M. O. Oommen (Chief Conservator of Travancore), helped with the translation. Sadhu Sunder Singh drew crowds greater than any previous conventions, so much so that before the end of the week, the pandal (covered area) had to be enlarged. Some estimate that at the final meeting, about 32,000 people gathered to hear his message. Among that crowd of thousands, sat Kalamannil

Achen and his wife. During one of his messages, Sadhu Sunder Singh gave a call to the believers to dedicate their children for evangelism in North India. He quoted Luke 10:2 which says, **“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”** The very same night, Kalamannil Achen and his wife, Sosamma (who was 8 months pregnant that time) took a bold decision and a giant leap of faith, saying that if their soon to be born child is a boy, they would dedicate him for God’s work... The rest is history!



On this special day, it would be good to remember this great life of love, simplicity and faith. We thank God for setting us, parents, an example in Kalamannil achen, who was bold enough to dedicate his son to a life of servitude to God. We also thank God, for setting us, children, an example in the life of our beloved Thirumeni, who gave up his personal ambitions to fulfill the will of both his earthly father and his heavenly Father.

Wishing all the best to Chrisostom Thirumeni. May you continue to be a blessing, not only to the Marthoma church, but to those far and wide!



POST MANDALAM STUDY

Dear all,

The Study Forum of the Mumbai Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church conducted a series of study sessions on the theme 'Renaissance and Reformation: Vision and Praxis', which was the theme of the Sabha Pratinidhi Mandalam 2019. The theme presented the origin and development of Mar Thoma Church and its history of reformation as a continuing process. This sincere effort to study the theme would have given us a renewed insight and Momentum.

We conducted four meetings in Pune Centre, Mumbai Region, Goa Centre and Gujarat Centre, respectively.

Pune Centre:

Pune Centre meeting was held on Saturday 26th October 2019, at St. Peter's Mar Thoma Church Pune at 10.00am. The meeting started with a song and introductory prayer by Rev. K. P. Thomas. Rev. C. John presided over the meeting. Rev. P. V. Shibu welcomed the guests and participants. The Achens, Mandalam and Diocesan Assembly members and other interested people from the Centre were present for the meeting. The study forum member Mr. Sunny John made an introductory remarks on study forum and its activities. Rev. Dr. Salomon K presented the theme in the session where 60 people attended. It was a very good session followed by an active discussion. Mrs. Mini Thomas (Mandalam Member) proposed vote of thanks to the group. The session ended at 1.00 pm with prayer and benediction by Rev. K.P.Johnson and followed by a fellowship lunch.

Mumbai Region:

The post mandalam study program of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Kalyan Centre was held on Saturday 14th of December at Mar Thoma Church, Thane at 11.30 am. The meeting started with a

song and an introductory prayer by Rev. Issac G Varghese.

Rev. Dr. Salomon K presented the theme where Rev. Gigy Thomas presided and Rev. George John and Dr. John Mathew (Sabha Council member) rendered their short deliberations on the topic. After a relevant discussion Mr. Sunny John proposed vote of thanks to the participants. The meeting ended with the prayer and Benediction followed by a fellowship lunch. There were 400 participants in the meeting because it was conducted as a continuation of Regional Sevika Sanghom meeting.

Goa Centre:

The Post Mandalam study program of Goa Centre was held on Sunday 05th of January, 2020 at Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Ponda at 4.30 pm. The meeting started with a song and prayer by Rev. Jinu Daniel. The meeting was presided over by Rev: Sheejo M Abraham. Rev. Dr. Salomon K presented the theme and continued the discussion for an extensive time. The meeting concluded with the prayer and benediction followed by the evening refreshments. There were 35 members from four parishes of Goa who attended the meeting.

Gujarat Centre:

The post mandalam study program of Gujarat Centre was held on Saturday 11th of January, 2020 at Mar Thoma Church, Fatehganj, Baroda at 9.30 am. The meeting started with a song and opening prayer by Rev. Saji Thomas. Rev. Anil Abraham presided over the meeting. Rev. Dr. Salomon K presented the theme. The group took enough time for group discussion which benefitted the group. The meeting winded up with the prayer and benediction. Rev: Anil Abraham, Rev. Saji Thomas, Rev. David V Titus, Rev. Robin K George, Rev. Niju Thomas, Rev. Geo K Mathews John and 35 other

members attended the meeting. Mrs. Dr. Bina Thomas (Diocesan Council member) welcomed the guests and participants where as Mr. Simon Mathew (Diocesan Council Member) Proposed vote of thanks. The meeting ended at 1.00 pm followed by fellowship lunch.

Conclusion

I acknowledge the able leadership and guidance of our Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius for coordinating and conducting

the studies in all the centres of our diocese. Here, I express sincere thanks to our beloved Thirumeni, Diocesan Secretary Rev. Gigy Thomas, Bishop's Secretary Rev. Joel Samuel Thomas, Mr. Sunny John and all committee members of the study forum. May God bless us all to continue His ministry meaningfully.

For the study forum

Rev. Dr. Salomon K.
Convenor

YOUTH MINISTRY

Chat with Chaplains

Noting the diarrhea of media content washing up at our digital shores (read, 'mobile phones') during this lockdown, the Game Changer Project (The Mar Thoma Youth Ministry, Mumbai) began an online discussion named Chat with Chaplains. The purpose is to engage our youngsters in meaningful discussions and prompt thought and reflection on important matters. The youth Chaplains Rev. Tom John, Rev. Nitin John Chacko and Rev. Mathews George host the programme. This online chat includes discussions, sharing, teaching, testimony, etc. in the format of an informal interview and is hosted on Instagram using it's 'live' feature. Instagram is a platform where most of the teens and youngsters hangout, ever since the popularity of Facebook waned among them years ago.

Episode #1 aired at 9 pm on April 2nd featuring the topic, *Marriage*. The discussion featured Rev. Tom John, who shared teachings on Christian marriage from a Mar Thoma Syrian Church perspective, and Rev. Nitin John Chacko who shared advice on the topic from pastoral experience. 180 devices logged it at various points.

Episode #2 aired at 9 pm on 22nd April featuring the topic, *Faith and Struggles at the Workplace*. Mr. Don John Thomas (Borivli IMTC/ St. Stephen's MTC, Bangalore) who is the Senior Director - Business Development (South India), Delhivery, shared his experiences and testimony. 140 devices logged in to participate in this session.

Episode #3 will be aired at 9 pm on 15th May featuring the topic 'Why believe in Jesus?' featuring Rev. Jijo Varghese as the guest. This episode will share insights on how to counter the popular arguments against faith in God and the christian worldview.

Every session ends with a live Q&A and many youngsters make use of this facility. The youth ministry seeks your prayers for our youngsters.

Rev. Mathews George & Rev. Tom John

INSTITUTION REPORTS:



From Navjeevan. Rev Manu Abraham opined: Covid-19 came with the infectious virus which threatened the life in Murbad campus. The inmates learned to live with restrictions. A

group of workers who were unable to go to their

villages were staying in the IT campus, supervised by the local Talatti and helped by Navjeevan. They were overjoyed when transportation was arranged for them to get back to their village. Lock down has taught Navjeevan to continue the precautionary measures within the campus, live a simpler life and generate income from the available land.

Navjeevan Centre Mumbai.

Report on Covid - 19 Relief Work

Red Light areas of Mumbai.

The nationwide lockdown has resulted in bringing the curtain down on Kamathipura the busiest red light area in Mumbai. Most of the sex workers are struggling to sustain themselves as well as their family back in the village. Navjeevan Centre has been involving in the relief works at Red Light Area. We have involved in Provision Packages distribution, financial support for those who are rehabilitated, telephonic counselling support. For Post lock down period, we have a plan to continue the provision support, nutrition support, Masks, Personal hygiene items and travelling assistance to the hometown. Still our child care centers are functional and trying to protect tiny tots from the infectious surroundings.



the Bhivandi, Kalyan, UlhasNagar, and Ambarnath areas. Arrangements have been made to avail provision and food for these of our communities. Provision kit distribution with the help of Net Working NGOs, Mar Thoma Parishes and other institutions are going on. Community Centres are actively involved in the training activities related to personal hygiene, social distancing etc.

Rag pickers Project



S i n c e
April 2020
Navjeevan
Centre is
involved in
the ministry
to the Rag
pickers. In

For post lockdown period we have planned to support the needy families with food and personal hygiene items and travelling assistance to reach their home town.

So far we were able to reach out 916 families/people.

Yours Sincerely
Rev. Jinu Eapen Kurien
Director

Suvartha Pathrika



Report Navodaya: COVID 19 is an epidemic worldwide. All people, irrespective of the National boundaries are in fear and anxiety about the deadly virus and the means by which people can overcome it. Hunger

is a social difficulty by which the unemployed are forced to look for food. Food kits are distributed to approximately 800 Transgender members. I could hear their joy and gratitude to our Diocese carrying out a caring ministry. Even when death is at the door step, the people who are observing the regulations of lockdown period are expecting a new world with eagerness and much hope.

Navodaya Centre Mumbai.

Navodaya Movement is a project of Mumbai Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church working for the upliftment of transgender community in Mumbai Region. Navodaya was able to stand with the transgender community for supporting them in the time of Coronavirus Pandemic. The subsequent lockdown affected day to day activities as well as their income sources of the Transgender community. Navodaya was also able



Youths members of Kalyan East MTC & Federal Bank Kalyan branch.



to share the burden of TG community and support them through distributing grocery Kits and providing Healthcare materials. In initial phase, Navodaya were able to distribute grocery kits to 280 TransGender members in Malad, Kalyan and Bhewandi area with the support of Malad MTC,

As the lockdown continued, Navodaya extended the second phase support by distributing 500 grocery Kits to the TransGender members in Vashi, Bandup, Turbe, Vikroli and Borivilli areas with the sponsorship of WIPRO.

Navodaya is receiving timely guidance and support from the Diocese of Mumbai and the Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa .

Rev. Shinoy Kunjappan
Director, Navodaya Movement

PANDEMIC RELIEF WORK

Report : Mission Fields



COVID 19 has effected the tribal people of Maharashtra with food scarcity; people who have ration cards and people without it. Govt was distributing only food grains and that too with a limited ration. The missionaries and evangelists of our Diocese could distribute food kits that last for a month to about 970 tribal families irrespective of caste, gender or creed. The tribals are happy when they got more provisions than simply food grains from the Diocese. They are also happy that there is more water level in the area when factories and industries are closed down. People have learned that the society can live in a simpler lifestyle and more close to the nature.

- Blessen M Varghese

1. Rev Shinoy Thomas is the missionary in the Palghar region. He distributed 48 food kits with the help of the Diocese. 40 food kits at Dolara with the help of Rev. Dr. Issac G Varghese of Dadar MTC and 46 food kits to the Dakhalya field in Shaura mission with the help of Rev. D. Sunil, St. Thomas MTC, Vasai Road. The members of the respective parishes organised the kits and the evangelists in the



respective areas helped the missionary to distribute the kits to the deserving ones.

2. Rev. Allan T Samuel is the regional missionary in the Thaner region. The grace of God strengthened the missionary and the mission coordinator Mr. Blessen M Varghese to distribute food kits to 593 homes.



1. Bhivandi Taluka - Bhooyachapada, Nagle, Pendripada, Koni, Kuhe, Dhamne, Rautepada, Bhelkadi, Thakurpada, Bamanpada and Balkumbh
2. Shahpur Taluka - Vihigaon, 2 Adiwasi padas of Dhakne, Tarichapada, Jarandi, Muslyachapada, Bhelpada, Wanganpada 2, Kalamgaon, Tokrepada, Sajivli, 2 padas at Shere, 2 padas at Ambarjee, Talawalli, Vishwasvadi.

The following villages were covered partially

1. Shahpur Taluka - 2 widows at Kasara, 1 widow at Palspada, Amballa, Wanganpada 1, Wanganpada 3, Gawlinagar, Thansit, Kharmbyachapada, Bhatsai



3. Vidarbha region

Rev. Christy Varghese is the missionary. The following parishes strengthened the mission in distributing 224 food kits to the deserving families. The areas such as Bothili, Bhejgaon, Kungada, Sakhra, Kothari, Shengaon, Parathwada and Warud. The evangelists in the respective areas helped the missionary to identify the deserving cases and also in distributing the kits.

4. Pune Raigad region

Rev. Noble Abraham is the missionary in Pune Raigad region. He could distribute food kits to 31 families in the Karjat mission with the help of Waghle Estate MTC. Community kitchen was arranged for 282 individuals and 14 migrant labourers in the Kamshet Mar Chrysostom Ashram. with the help of the Diocese. He provided food kits to the villagers nearby. He also arranged transportation to the migrant labourers to get back to their home village. In Daund mission 17 families are given food kits. More will be given in the coming days. Neral mission, deserving families were supported in procuring food kits. The tailoring unit in the mission field succeeded in tailoring 1000 masks for the use of the Govt. officials in Pune.



The sponsoring parishes like Dombivli MTC, Thane MTC, Kalyan West MTC, Malad MTC, Borivali MTC & Vikhroli MTC supported. In this worldwide Pandemic of Corona Virus, people of Indian origin from Singapore also

extended their helping hand.

The local government was helpful in giving permission for moving in 3 vehicles to the remote areas of tribal people.



Report : PUNE CENTRE



COVID 19 – virus, crossed every human boundaries and defence system, resulting in the starvation of the poor . The negative impact on human has a positive impact on nature. Distribution of ration by us influenced some landlords to care for the poor tenants in their Chawls. “GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS CHANGE OUR SITUATION, BUT HE USES OUR SITUATION TO CHANGE US”

Post COVID 19 situation is teaching us to Break the Chain and initiate the Change.

- Rev. Varghese Mathew, Pimpri

St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Nasik Road

- As part of the social responsibility towards the society during the darkest moment of covid 19, we took up the task of helping the marginalized and the underprivileged section of the society under the project Karuthal where the Nasik MTC youths volunteered to be part of this. We at the moment have undertaken the following relief measures:

- 1) Distributing 60-70 packets food packets daily.
- 2) Distributed grocery kits worth 1100/- each to 25 poor families.
- 3) Financial help to Kodala mission field to purchase medical kits to 50 families

The project is continuing. We will be carrying out the Karuthal project till the lock down is lifted.

Rev Saji Thomas

St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Pimpri-

Pimpri St. Thomas MTC, Distributed 100 kit to take care of a months need, for labourers and their families staying in a chawl, in Bhosari area, about 7 kms from Pimpri, hope to continue for the same family if situation continues. Also supporting medical needs within the parish and outside. Chain prayer on regular basis are arranged.

Rev. Varghese Mathew

St. Johns Mar Thoma Church, Khadki -

Khadki St. John's parish distributed Grocery kits for 25 families in Neral Mission. Responding to the needs of individuals/families on request.

Rev. C John

Nagpur Mar Thoma Church under the guidance of Rev. T. Johnson is looking after the needy members within the Parish fellowship including the medical assistance. The funeral expenses of a person was met through Ashraya mission of the Parish. Vishrantwadi Immanuel MTC with their vicar Rev. K. P Johnson served by taking care of the needy in the Parish and distributed essential items in the Kungada mission. Khadki St. Johns Mar Thoma Church under the leadership of Rev. John C. distributed grocery kits to 25 families in





Neral mission. Nashik Road St. Thomas headed by Rev. Saji Thomas distributed grocery kits to 25 families. Community kitchen is catering to 70 persons daily. Medical kits were given to 50 families in Khodala mission. Pimpri St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church along with their vicar Rev. Varghese Mathew supporting the needy families in the Parish and given 35 kits in chawl area. Rev. Shibu P.V with his parish members of Pune St. Peters worked it out in a way that: 7 families are getting monthly provision through come and dine project. Grocery kits were given to 40 families through an NGO. The Parishioners are taking care of the housemaids and other labourers by giving additional 1000 rupees along with the monthly salary. The Parish is expecting to serve around 300 people. The Daund mission is also supported in giving the grocery Kits.

Report : Gujrat Centre



COVID 19 has affected all sorts of people everywhere. It resulted in seeing more hungry people even within the neighbourhood. Lockdown has taught us to lead an austere life with simplicity and also extending hands to the needy persons by sharing our resources. We have to gear up for becoming a sensitive, caring Church in the post-Covid period.

- Rev. David V Titus

Baroda Bethel MTC, with Rev. David V. Titus as Vicar, identified the needy families in distributing



food kits. A survey is being made to find out jobless families in the neighborhood. The Jamnagar Mar Thoma Church through the Vicar Rev. Ansen Cherian distributed 135 food kits to the deserving



families. Gandhidham MTC along with their vicar Rev. Jestin K. Mathew distributed food kits not only to the deserving members in the Parish area but also catered to the rag pickers colony in Gandhidham. Valsad parish under the leadership of Rev. Saji Thomas 54 kits were distributed to deserving

families and with the help of the Diocese, 28 kits were distributed in Pipalpada Village. The Surat MTC with Rev. John K. distributed 30 kits in Surat and helped in procuring medicines for the needy. Ahmedabad MTC headed by Rev. Niju Thomas extended help to members in form of financial help and interest free loans to the deserving members within the Parish.

Gujarat MTVEA helped in providing food kits to Chinchily mission field.

Report : Navi Mumbai Centre



COVID – 19 applied sudden break to our hectic life and locked us in our homes. It's impact was severe on those who are daily wage earners, migrants and the poor. The life of the migrants became very miserable with no income, no food, and even the fear of death. God has given us an opportunity to introspect ourselves, our relationship with God, others and our ministry. We have to seek God's guidance to make us relevant in this challenging time through innovative intervention and approach.

Rev. Saji Thomas (Mumbai)

Mar Thoma Parish Chembur headed by Rev. Dr. John George helped the Parathwada Village in Vidarbha Mission by providing food kits. Efforts are being made to help school children in the neighborhood area.

St. Thomas MTC, Kharghar

Rev. Sajeev Koshy with his Parish members distributed 100 food kits to the needy families in



Kharghar Sector 8,9,10. The workers staying at the Church construction site are also provided with food materials. The Parish joined with Navodaya unit in the Diocese in distributing food kits to the Transgender members.

St. Paul's MTC, Vashi

The parish responded to the present Covid 19 situation by providing financial assistance and distributing food grain kits in and around Navi Mumbai area. The Parish responded to the request of Asst. Labour Commissioner, Mumbai and provided 50 food grain kits to some of the slum areas. They also responded to the request from Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation and distributed 250 kits by the Parish Volunteers in the presence of the govt officials. In the areas of Turbhe, Rabale and some families of cobbler community. The Parish also distributed through the volunteers 360 food kits to the needy people in the nearby slum area. Essential items including food grain were given to the needy families in the Shengaoon Mission Field and donated 5000 masks to Seven Hills Hospital, Marol, Mumbai. The Parish contributed to the relief fund of the NMMC



police commissioner and supported Santhwanam inmates with food materials. A financial help for 50,000/- was given to support the families of rag picking children and mothers of Navjeevan Children with the initiative of the Vicar, Rev Saji Thomas

Report : Kalyan Centre



Most of us are going through an unexpected dramatic experience of life. Our Parish formed a 'task force' to reach out to all members, particularly the vulnerable and the aged. Members volunteered to make 1600 masks, distributed food kits to the deserving in the neighbourhood and different areas of Navjeevan. Disaster management teams are to be formed on the parish and diocesan level. A corpus fund is to be created to support the livelihood of the people when they become helpless in crisis situation such as the present lockdown

1. **Thane MTC:** The Parish along with vicar Rev. Gigy Thomas involved in distributing 150 food kits to various areas of Thane and Titwala. Parish also extended medical help to the weaker sections of the society who had to pay medical bills. Special arrangements were made to reach out and attend to the senior citizens of the Parish by the area representatives.



2. **St. James MTC, Ulhasnagar:** The Parish headed by Rev. Varghese K Mathew involved in arranging community kitchen to the needy people in Vadolgaon, Ulhasnagar section 4



and 3 other places. The Parish was able to distribute about 1130 food packets.

3. **St. Johns Mar Thoma Church, Waghle Estate:** The Mar Thoma Parish in Waghle Estate distributed food kits to the deserving members in the Kadav Mission Karjat in the leadership of Rev. George John.

4. **St. Andrews MTC Kalyan East:** The youth members along with Rev. Anup Mathew helped Rev. Shinoy Kunjappan to distribute grocery kits to the Transgender members.

5. **Ebenezer MTC Dombivli:** The parishioners with the guidance of Rev. T. S John involved by granting financial help to the members of the Parish who were facing financial problems. The Parish also distributed food kits to the deserving members in Dhakhini Mission. They distributed 66 kits.

6. **Mar Thoma Church, Kalyan West:** Under the leadership of Rev. Binoy J Thomas and Rev. Shajan V. Mathew following activities took place in this Parish.

- I. They formed a task force with the name Covid-19 Saanthwanam by forming 11 clusters to reach out to 20 families by each cluster. Each cluster was further divided



into four groups so that a volunteer could attend to 5 families.

- II. They made 500 masks and distributed them to vendors, shops, watchmen, cleaning staff and elderly members. The Senior Youth Forum gave leadership to this and further made 1100 masks for Seven Hills Hospital, Mumbai.
- III. Distributed food kits for 40 families by the Edavaka Mission members to the Lone Talawali Mission, Pargah.
- IV. Distributed 250 food kits to the families of rag picker project by the Yuvajana Sakhyam members of the Parish.
- V. Groceries and other essentials to the extension home of Navjeevan in Kalyan.
- VI. Groceries and other essentials were distributed to the needy people in the neighborhood of the place of worship.



Report : Mumbai Centre



When storms like Covid-19 or natural calamity strikes, it is the weak and unprivileged ones that withers with lots to bear upon. By Gods grace, our members have responded to the needs of the hungry people around by volunteering to cook food and/or distributing food materials.

Two things influenced us: One, prayer and divine purpose ignited passion to serve and Two, what matters the most is 'We rather Me'.

Let's work among the needy for a cause, not for applause and live life to express, not to impress.

- Rev. Thomas Kurian

St. Stephen's MTC Marol with the help of Rev. Sanal P George distributed about 400 food kits to the deserving families and helped some of the parishioners in their financial crisis. St. Peters Mar Thoma Church, Goregaon with the guidance of Rev. Dr John Joseph has a Table in the Street ministry to feed the hungry. In the present lockdown context, a community kitchen is run in Goregaon area with the necessary permission from the



police and obtaining adequate passes. The food is prepared in the Church premises. Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Borivali distributed 126 kits in 20 villages of Bhoychapada mission field. They also distributed 300 food kits to Ganesh Patil nagar slum. This was done with the initiative of Rev. Abu Cherian, with the help of the parishioners and the presence of the local corporator and other dignitaries. St. Thomas MTC, Santacruz apart from financially helping the needy families of the Parish, masks and sanitizers are distributed to the people in the slum area near Kurar School. Arrangements



are also made to buy provisions and medicines to the senior citizens of the Parish. The initiative was done by Rev. Thomas K Jacob and Rev. Nitin John Chacko. St. Thomas MTC, Vasai along with Rev. D Sunil distributed 120 masks, 120 soaps and sanitizers to the people in the neighborhood. Around 200 food kits were distributed to the



deserving cases in the neighborhood. Food kitchen is supplying approx. 120 lunch packets in Vasai Road. Sunday School children are encouraged to make a lunch pack, identify a deserving person



and to give it with love and care. Grocery kits are distributed in Dakhpada mission and in Chulna Village.

Bethel MTC, Malad

The following programs were carried out till May 9, 2020



- 1 Distribution of 6000 food kits.
- 2 Running a community kitchen to serve 1000 food packets

- 3 Advocacy and awareness programmes were conducted
- 4 Deserving members within the Parish were also helped with finance and essentials

Rev. Thomas Kurian headed the drive. The necessary funds were collected from Church members and well wishers. Unnecessary publicity on social media was avoided. A voluntary squad



of 14 people were identified and given photo I'd issued by the community development officer. All the efforts were done with the permission of the Asst. Commissioner of MCGM and with the help of the Police Department. Adequate funds were collected from the members of the Parish and well wishers.

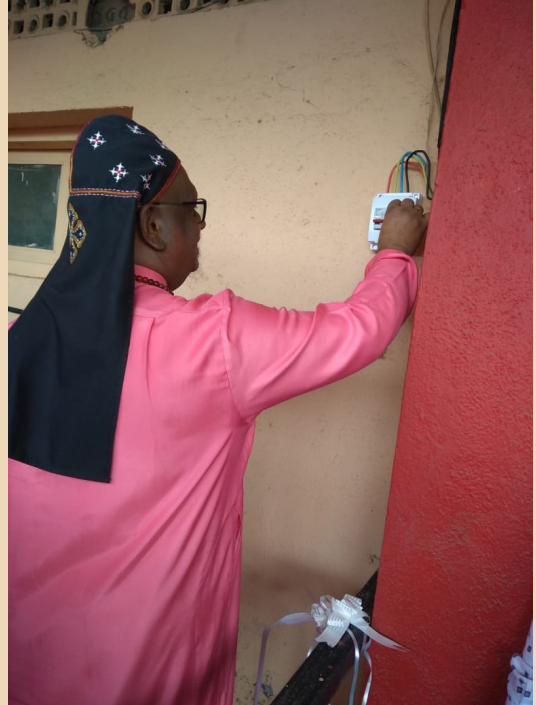
The Foundation Stone for the development of Titwala Property



Regional Clergy Conference at Vasai



Surat School Solar panel



Parsonage dedication, STEMS, Vapi



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