



Communities of Prayer

Why do you come to SyroMalabar Qurbana? Is it for the Indian community? For your friends, or out of duty to your family? Or is it solely for the liturgy? All of these have a benefit; but none of these alone are enough to sustain a Christian community. The essential quality that binds a Christ-centered community is prayer. What is prayer? First and foremost, it is the avenue through which we communicate with God. However, prayer also forms the foundational experience of the Church, the people of God. It is in sharing with others this deeply personal experience that we are able to live in intimate and joyful community.

For some of us, prayer may seem strictly personal. While personal prayer is very important, it shouldn't come at the expense of the communal aspect of our faith. Jesus promised that "where two or three are gathered in my name there I am in their midst" (*Matt. 18:20*). Just as much as our relationship with God is a model for our human relationships, the healthy patterns we build in prayer-centered communities can transfer to our relationship with Christ. Because these small communities of prayer allow us to experience God's Love in the love we have for each other, they foster a sense of **true intimacy** that is born of **openness** and **vulnerability**. These elements are essential: not only for healthy relationships with our brothers and sisters, but particularly in how we respond to Christ.

Think of your community as a group of workout buddies. These friends challenge you to be persistent and consistent with your exercise. They'll comment on your form, and help with new techniques. Their presence may help motivate you to continue your fitness plan. As you spend time together, you may see more of each other's weaknesses. Instead of allowing this to separate you, this can become an area in which you challenge each other to persevere. This is similar to the development of strong communities of prayer. Praying with friends can challenge

you and help you maintain your prayer life. They'll help you pray when you don't want to, or when it's difficult. And just as shared struggles weight room help you bond, sharing the struggles and desires of life help to deepen and develop your friendships in the best way. And like a good workout plan, buddies can help you "make some gains;" these friendships can challenge us to become whom Christ has called us to be, and to strive for heavenly gains.

As we look at our church today, there are many things that may distract or discourage us as we strive to understand and grow in our faith, be it gossip, politics, or other negative experiences. However if we can push past those things and set prayer as our foundation truly becoming communities built on prayer, positive change is inevitable. We'll be able to see our fellow parishioners as brothers and sisters, instead of as stumbling blocks. We will be able to walk with each other through the joys and sorrows of life. We will be able to see the Church as it truly is: the Body of Christ. A Body of Love. Our parish family is there at the beginning, for births and baptisms. They are there at the end, for deaths and funerals. Let us pray that our parishes become families, built on prayer: a place where Christ's love and joy are shared freely.



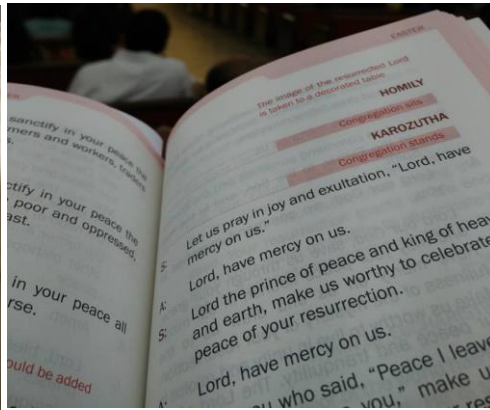
Syro Youth from Detroit extended an invitation to students at Wayne State University to join them for a "Qurbana on Campus" celebrated by Fr. Roy

Moolechalil. What a great way to expand our communities of prayer!

Holy Week Around the Diocese



Bishop Joy washed the feet of youth during this Pesaha Qurbana in St. Thomas Milpitas, CA



The St. Joseph's in Missouri City, TX celebrated their Easter vigil liturgy in the main Church in English, allowing many youth to fully participate in this celebration!



The whole community of the St. Thomas Parish in Bronx, NY came together in reverent prayer this Holy Week.

Suggested Activities of the Month

Youth, Young Adults + Older Adults

- A. If you are not already part of a prayer group, start or join one.
 - i) One good way to start is by trying different formats to figure out what's the best for your group (e.g. weekly novena, bible study, lectio divina, liturgy of the hours, praise and worship)
 - ii) Your group doesn't have to consist of only Indian or SyroMalabar friends! Invite people from work, school, clubs, etc. who you think may be interested in joining.
- B. Go to adoration with your spouse/significant other—the most important communities of prayer are within our homes and marriages.

Achans

- A. Consider practical ways in which your parish community can become more rooted in prayer – e.g. starting night vigil at your parish, increasing its frequency.
- B. Depending on your community demographics, slowly begin to introduce more English into liturgical celebrations either by having regular English Qurbanas or mixed English-Malayalam Qurbanas

Kaikkarans, Parish Council Members, and Other Parish Admins

- A. Form a subcommittee within your parish council to focus on Year of Youth and discuss what the long-term vision for your parish is from both youth and older adult perspectives (think 40 years instead of 2-5 years)

Contact Us!

