



DIOCESAN YOUTH APOSTOLATE  
ST. THOMAS SYROMALABAR DIOCESE OF CHICAGO



**MISSION  
HIGHLIGHT**



**KEEPING UP WITH  
THE PALLIS**



**ENCOUNTER  
WITH CHRIST**



**SAINTS CORNER**



**YEAR OF CAMPUS  
MINISTRY**

# DYA NEWSLETTER

**DECEMBER 2023**



# Director's Corner



## Christmas Greetings

Dear friends,

The year 2023 has been a true blessing, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone for supporting and praying for the Apostolate. Special gratitude goes to the former directors, especially Fr. Paul Challisery and Fr. Kevin Mundackal, who dedicated significant effort to working with youth and forming disciples for the Syro Malabar Church Eparchy of Chicago. I'd also like to express my appreciation to National Team 6 for their devoted service to the Eparchy over the past two years. Your patience in navigating through three directors during your term is commendable. I feel privileged to have worked with each of you. My blessings for your continued support to the Eparchy and your respective parishes.

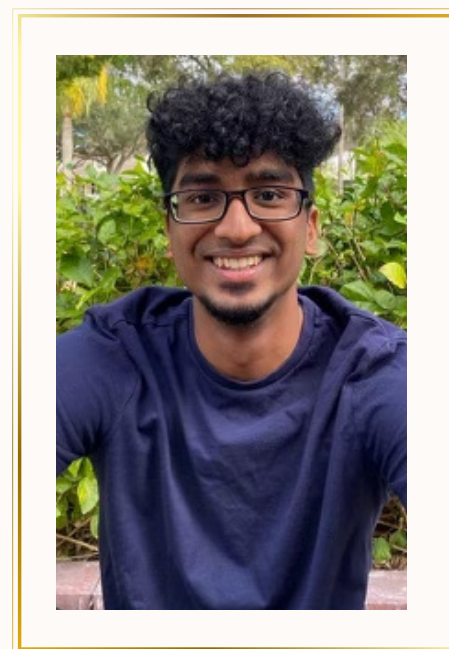
After celebrating the Birth of Christ, let us reflect on the profound significance of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, becoming flesh to bestow abundant life upon each of us. We turn to Mary, the Mother of our Redeemer, whose fiat brought forth our Savior. In the words of St. John, "the Word was God, the Word is God," and this truth endures forever. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is here to save, heal, embrace, and, above all, love each and every one of us, leading us back to our Heavenly Father.

On behalf of the Diocesan Youth Apostolate Family, we extend warm wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.

-Fr. Melvin Mangalath Paul, DYA Director

# Encounter with Christ

WRITTEN BY: JOEL KALLARACKAL  
ST. JOSEPH SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC  
CHURCH, TAMPA, FL



I've never described myself as "holy". I was always distracted during CCD. I hadn't given God as much time as I should have. Like most kids in the Syro-Malabar community, I came to church because I was forced to. As an ignorant child, I hadn't realized the beauty in church and God. It wasn't until college I began to realize the gifts that have been showered upon me.

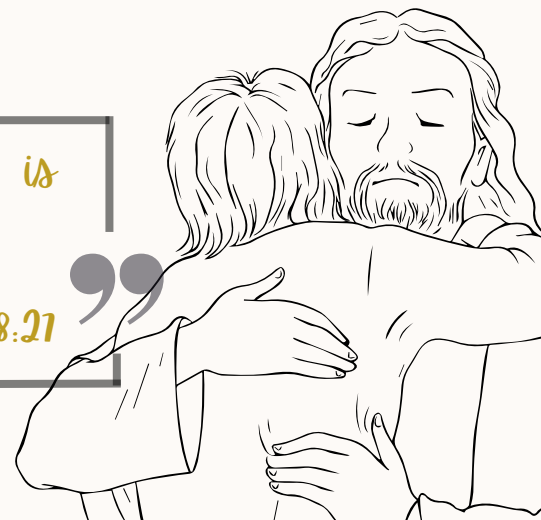
My encounter with Christ isn't some grand gesture that appeared to me out of the blue. It was a steady, yet continuous revelation that came in the form of my friendships. Over the past two years, I had the blessing to nurture my faith life with my best friends. I found these relationships dove deeper than the superficial ones that arose out of convenience. There's something beautiful in being able to grow together with your brothers in fellowship and discover the greatness of God. Our willingness to surrender ourselves to the will of God and share in the experience allowed us to open up about our struggles.

It was in these relationships I saw a reflection of the Lord's unconditional love for us – regardless of my imperfections, my faults, and my mistakes. It feels as though God knew I needed these friends to accompany me in my journey. As I reflect, I can't help but think how far I may have strayed from God if it weren't for the seemingly ordinary ways my friends have touched my life.

I still wouldn't describe myself as "holy", but I now realize my role in God's will. I have come to terms with the fact that my journey with God doesn't have a definite end, and I may not have all the answers to my questions and struggles. However, I can place my full faith in the Lord and trust that He will guide me as he has done in the past and ensure my plans align with His will.

“But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

~Luke 18:27





# TORCH 2023

The Southern region came together from December 26th to 29th at Palacios, Texas for our well awaited regional conference...TORCH 2023!

Not only did we get to encounter Christ but we got to meet people we truly connected with spiritually and culturally. We don't see this in our typical daily lives, so it was a memorable and inspiring way to bring our Mallu community from Texas cities closer to God. Praise and worship was one of the most beautiful yet emotional experiences. Being able to pray together as a family and sing as a whole during adoration was heartfelt and opened a perspective of God that I have never felt before.

We had many discussions and topics that not only enabled us to connect about our faith in a more modern way, but also helped us relate with other Syro-Malabar youth through our experiences, good and bad. It was a privilege to hear from speakers such as Brian Mundackal, Paul J. Kim, Johny Abraham and many more about topics such as Belonging, Syro-Malabar identity, Holiness, and Happiness. We also had a beautiful panel regarding future vocations which helped me begin to discern how I can devote my life to God. It was exciting to learn about the different speakers on the panel and how their vocations - whether priest, religious, or married - changed their lives and those around them.

Not only was TORCH spiritually enhancing, it was super fun! We had a hype dodgeball tournament with a gorgeous view of the lake, a live concert featuring Prodigyl and Annsbert, gingerbread house making and Dancing with the South - a line dancing event! These activities were something everyone looked forward to and rooted us in fellowship. TORCH was a life changing experience and I pray all the youth in our diocese experience something like this atleast once in their life!



-Jovitta Sabu  
St. Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Church  
Coppell, TX







# DYA Christmas 2023





# SEASON OF SERVICE 2023





# Mission Highlight



## ST. JUDE SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC MISSION

QURBANA CELEBRATED AT CHRIST THE REDEEMER CATHOLIC CHURCH, GRAND TERRACE, CA

Mission Director - Fr. Biju

Number of Families - 25

CCD Students - 40

# SAINTS CORNER

Written by: **Ashley Padayatil**

St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church, Philadelphia, PA

St. John the Apostle was born in the 1st century. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and was one of the first of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. John was called to be an Apostle by our Lord in the first year of His public ministry. He stood faithfully at the cross when the Savior made him guardian of his mother. When John was banished to the Greek Island of Patmos by the Roman authorities, he wrote the Book of Revelation. He is known to be the author of the Gospel of John and four other books: the three Epistles of John and the book of Revelation. The phrase, "The disciple whom Jesus loved," or "The Beloved Disciple" is used 5 times but not used in any other New Testament books. He is known as the Apostle of Charity, a virtue he learned from his Divine Master. He died in Ephesus after AD 98, where a stately church was erected over this tomb, which was converted into a Mosque.



**ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE  
PATRON SAINT OF  
LOVE, LOYALTY,  
FRIENDSHIPS, AND  
AUTHORS**

**FEAST DAY:  
DECEMBER 27**



# GOODBYE FROM NT6

As we come to the end of the NT 6 term, we would like to take a trip down memory lane and reflect on the progress and accomplishments of the diocese over the past two years. Our term began in January 2022, with our first in-person meeting in Houston. Since then we have organized many webinars, prayer calls, supported the success of conferences in five of our six regions, organized DYLG, attended Joy Pithave's installation, participated in ARISE 2022, attended World Youth Day 2023, started the Season of Service and various other small initiatives in between. No matter how much we did, none of this is possible without the support of our directors, Paul Acha, Kevin Acha and now Melvin Acha. We are so happy that we could serve the youth of our diocese. We are also so thankful to various individuals who have supported us in our various initiative whether it be behind the scenes help, speaking at these events, or providing guidance to us. Most importantly, we could not have done any of this without God's guidance.

Apart from all that we have done, no one would have guessed that 12 individuals from various parts of the country would become such great team members, but more importantly, such wonderful friends! National Team 6 is truly a family that each and every member cherishes. We all look forward to continuing to supporting the youth and our diocese even after the completion of our term. This term has been truly an adventure with many changes and events, but we can acknowledge that we have had great Achans, chechis, chettans and fellow peers who have helped us all grow in our faith and who we are as individuals in this world. Though it is sad to part ways and move on to this next season of our lives, we truly are blessed to have been able to be a part of this team and for all the experiences and memories we've made along the way. (Some of us might be back though!) NT7, we wish you the best and can't wait to see all that you do. We are praying for you!

# GUESS THE ACHAN

**JUNE 27-30**  
Summit 2024

**AUGUST 8-11**  
Emergence  
2024



The answer to last month was **Fr. Vinod Madathiparambil**

The winner is: **Allen Chirackel** from the St. Thomas SyroMalabar Catholic Forance Church, Philadelphia, PA!

Think you know this priest? The first person to guess correctly will receive a prize! Only one entry per person! **Scan the QR code below to submit an answer!**

1. This priest served in the Dallas Metro area
2. This priest was ordained in 1994
3. This priest's home parish is St. Michael's Church, Kavil, Kerala
4. This priest worked in the arts and drama ministry of his home diocese in Kerala



*Get connected!*



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[@SyroMalabarUSA](https://www.instagram.com/SyroMalabarUSA)



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**BLESSINGS FROM OUR BELOVED BISHOP AND CLERGY!**