

**St. Joseph's Syro-Malankara Catholic Mission of British Columbia,  
Vancouver**



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**Annual Report - 2019**

**Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.**

It is with immense gratitude and satisfaction that I am here to present the Annual report for the Syro-Malankara mission at Vancouver, British Columbia on behalf of the parish committee for the year 2019.

If the years 2016 and 2017 were all about establishing the mission and 2018 was a year of expanding our roots into the community, 2019 could very well be a year of settling down and connecting with the larger catholic communities especially with Archdiocese of Vancouver. With the Almighty's grace, the year has been an extremely fulfilling and we believe that this year has allowed our young mission to stand on its feet.

**Farewell to Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew and appointment of the new priest for the mission**

Due to commitments to his Ministry, Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew had to leave to take up another mission at Montreal. The mission members organized a farewell befitting the contributions of Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew to the community on 08th June and he promised to help keep the religious life moving for the members. The prayers of the members were answered when Rev. Fr. John (Daiju) Kuriakose was appointed as the new priest for the mission by His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Stephanos, Bishop of the Eparchy of St Mary, Queen of Peace, USA & Canada on 05th September 2019. The new priest was welcomed with much fanfare on 14th September and celebrated the Holy Mass at Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church. Several guests including priests from nearby mission attended the holy mass and the day ended with a Feast for all. The new priest also has the additional responsibility as the Asst. Pastor at the Immaculate Conception Church in Delta.

In view of his appointment and the connect that has been established with Archdioceses of Vancouver, the community has been provided access to a place to celebrate holy mass on a regular basis. Based on the agreement, guided by the Vicar, the community has faith formation classes at 06:00 PM followed by the Holy Mass on every Saturday at the Immaculate Conception Church, Delta. The committee would like to thank His Grace and Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew for all their guidance and help in this regard. The committee also takes this opportunity to welcome Rev. Fr. Daiju Kuriakose to our midst.

**First Parish Committee for the mission**

On 15th December 2018, the 'Pothuyogam' (Annual General Body) chose the following individuals to form the first committee for the mission:-

- Mr. Benny Rajan, as Secretary
- Mrs. Nidhisha Rajan, as Treasurer
- Mr. Wilson George as Parish Council member
- Mr. John Varughese
- Mr. Thomas Mathews

The committee members officially took oath on 09th March in presence of the Vicar and have had regular meetings to discuss on the various topics related to the functioning of the mission.

The following individuals continue to lead the other activities at the church -

- Faith formation - Mrs. Leena Jacob
- MCA and Prayer Meeting - Mr. Jacob John
- MCCL - Mrs. Becky Jose
- Mathrusangham - Mrs. Susan Thomas
- Youth Apostolate / M CYM - Ms. Nidhisha Rajan / Mr. Joel Jacob

### **Faith Formation Classes for Kids and Young Adults**

The mission is always very devoted about having a vibrant faith formation class for kids and youth. We are blessed to have 15 students and 4 teachers in the current year. The following is the structure of the classes: All children aged 4 and above were welcomed to join us in catechism. The students were divided into classes based on their age and below are the snapshot of the same:-

<b>Head Mistress: Mrs. Leena Varghese</b>		
<b>Class</b>	<b>Teacher in charge</b>	<b>No. of students</b>
KG & 1	Mr. Jacob John	3
4	Mr. Benny Rajan	3
6	Ms. Leena Varghese	1
8	Mr. Joel Jacob	3
10	Mr. Joel Jacob	1
11	Ms. Susan Thomas	2
12	Ms. Leena Varghese	2
<b>Substitute Teachers: Ms. Siji Teny and Ms. Betsy Mathew</b>		

Classes are held every Saturday prior to the Holy Mass. We start our catechism class with an assembly of singing and Psalms reading. Faith formation academic year 2019-20 was started on 21st September 2019. During this year, the mid-term exams were conducted on 12th January and Final exams on 18th May. Mr. Joshua Jacob and Ms. Erin Mathew were declared as toppers in their respective classes in the Dioceses during the mid-term exams. This shows the rigor in which the children pursue their classes. The committee would like to thank all the kids, parents and teachers in driving this very important activity for the community.

### **Vacation Bible Classes for the Kids**

The mission as a first attempt conducted the Vacation Bible Classes for the kids over the weekends from 13th July till 03rd August. Mrs. Leena Varghese along with Mrs. Susan planned and conducted the classes. We were also blessed to have Rev. Fr. Dr. Varghese Madathikunnath who, conducted special sessions during this Occasion. The classes ended with a bible quizzes for the kids along with a picnic at Bear Lake Park on 03rd August.

### **Malankara Catholic Children League**

Mrs. Becky Jose was selected to lead the activities of the MCCL. The organization intends to contribute to the spiritual development of the kids under the age of 14. The following members continue to be office bearers-

- President - Master Benett George Wilson
- Vice President - Ms. Erin Mathew

During the year, the unit conducted an Essay Writing Competition and an extempore speech competition on relevant topics for the kids.

### **Youth Apostolate aka MCYM unit**

Mrs. Nidisha Rajan and Mr. Joel Jacob lead a set of dynamic individuals as part of the MCYM community. After having conducted the Christmas Card sale last year, the unit organized three church picnics at different locations during the years and also organized an outing for the kids at PNE. The unit also celebrated Mother's day at the mission. The unit plans to conduct more activities that contribute to community around them next year.

### **Family Apostolate and House blessings**

Mr. Jacob John coordinates regular once in a monthly family prayers on all the houses of the mission members. The Prayer meetings are held on the second Friday of every month at 7.00 PM in one of the parishioners' home. We start the prayer meeting with group worship with singing, readings from Psalms and New Testament, reflection and message by Vicar followed by spontaneous prayer and evening prayers. Rev. Fr. John Kuriakose has also initiated house visits on his arrival to continue the practice of house blessing from last year.

### **Mother's Forum aka Mathrusangam**

Mrs. Susan Thomas and Mrs. Siji Teny leads the mother's forum at the mission. After the successful bake sale, the group organized 'Lelam' as part of the Church feast celebrations and the group has been instrumental in providing delicious food during various occasions at the mission.

### **04th Western Family Conference conducted at Edmonton**

The 04th Western Canada Syro-Malankara Catholic Family conference was organized by St. Mary's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Edmonton. The theme for this year's conference was 'Grace Filling Families. 38 members of the mission travelled across Canada on a 15 hour road trip to participate at the conference in Edmonton. The members were well received by the Edmonton community, gathered a lot of insights from His Grace and other priests in the western Canada Syro-Malankara community.

The mission under the leadership of Mr. Wilson George also bagged the trophy for the First ever Soccer tournament organized by the Syro-Malankara community in Canada. The mission members also performed programs at the cultural show. The participation and dedication of the mission members were appreciated by one and all at the conference. The committee would like to thank to all who participated in this.

### **Holy Week and Christmas Celebrations at the mission**

Hosannah was celebrated with all the festivity at the St. Michael's Anglican Church by the mission members and Way of the cross was organized by MCA team during the lent season. Easter was celebrated with much fanfare by the community by having special prayers and Holy Mass celebrated by the Vicar on 20th April.

The community planned and executed Carol Service this year at all the homes of the parish members. The community also celebrated Christmas Holy Mass with all the liturgical rigor on 23<sup>rd</sup> December and also had a larger gathering of all the members to thank the lord for the all the blessings on 29<sup>th</sup> Dec.

### **Mission Anniversary Celebrations**

The church feast as decided last year was celebrated with a lot of fanfare on 04th May. Holy Mass was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew along with a procession by all the mission members. Special cultural fest was organized by the kids and adults in the mission followed by a feast. The committee would like to thank Rev. Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil, Vicar at St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Church, Rev. Fr. Paul Illickcal and Rev Fr. Paul T Varghese, Vicar of St. Gregorios Orthodox Church for being part of the festivities.

### **Priest visits to the mission**

The mission had the privilege of welcoming Rev. Fr. Josy Chirayath, Vicar of St. Mary's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Rev. Fr. Varghese (Baby) Madathikunnath, Vicar of St. Jude's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Calgary and Rev. Fr. Saji G Mukkotu, Vicar of St. Jude's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Philadelphia on 19th January, 03rd February and 19th February respectively. We would like to thank for all the concern shown towards the mission and agreeing to be part of our journey.

### **Sad Demises from our midst**

- On 24th January, father of Mr. Peeush Thomas, Mr. M S Thomas passed away back in Kerala. We all remember the dedication that his dad had towards the Syro-Malankara community while here and back in Kerala. We are all saddened by the sudden departure of the soul and offer our condolences to Mr Peeush Thomas and family.
- On 02nd February, Sister of Mrs. Beena Wilson passed away back in Kerala. We are all saddened by the sudden departure of the soul and offer our condolences to Mrs. Beena Wilson and family.

### **Newborns and New Members at the community**

- Mr. Rejimon Joseph and Mrs. Jilu Rejimon were blessed with a daughter, Ms. Hannah Joseph on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
- Mr. Benny Rajan and Mrs. Betsy Mathew were blessed with a daughter, Ms. Benna Rose Benny on 08th February.
- A number of new members joined the mission community during this year. The committee would like to welcome Mr. Clemon Alex, Mr. Jomon Eswarankudiyil. Mr. Sheffy Gregory Francis Families of Mr. Roy and Mr. Christin to the community.

With the addition of these members during the period, the count of parish members have risen to 60 including 15 children and youth.

### **Focus for the next year**

With all the providence that the Almighty has provided to the community during the year, the mission committee aspires -

- To have more external visibility among the community
- To expand the mission by bringing more Malankarites in the region to the community
- To conduct activities that can effectively contribute to the financial status
- To finalize the registration process and ability to issue tax receipts

We thank God for all His blessings and mercies on this community and pray that His abounding mercies may continue in the years to come on all our members. Our gratitude is also to our past vicar Rev Fr. Regi Mathew, Rev. Fr. Varghese Madathikunnath (acting Vicar) and to the new Vicar Rev. Fr. John (Daiju) Kuriakose for their excellent vision, guidance and support during the year.