

# ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



## Galilee Division Class VI (English)

Sunday School Central Office  
Devalokom, Kottayam-4  
Ph: 2572890

---

**AN OSSAE PUBLICATION**

**Sunday School Padavali-6**

First Revised Edition December 2013

Copies 5,000

Price ₹ 50.00

## Preface

Education is a continuing and refreshing endeavour which attempts to train and equip kids and the young people for a spiritual, active and successful life; and hence it is an 'investment' for today and tomorrow. The myriad possibilities of education have encouraged religion, countries and ideologies to adapt it for furthering their objectives and long term aims. In the Christian tradition "Christian education' is a ministry of the Church.

Secular education programme in every situation and country has undergone enormous transformation through the years. More and more study and research is going into the philosophical base, content, techniques of teaching and learning, learners' participation, technique of evaluation etc. So it is only natural that 'revisions' happen from time to time.

"Christian Education", for which the Sunday School lays the foundation and prods nurture, is never intended to be a carbon copy of what happens in the world of secular education. Christian education has its unique aim and objectives, philosophy, ethics and vision. However, it is not irrelevant to learn from the relevant and successful 'techniques' available and adopted in the secular front. But we must be constantly careful, never to slip away from our firm Orthodox foundations!

It is highly commendable that the Orthodox Syrian Sundayschool Association has taken the bold step to completely revise the whole curriculum, trusting in God, who loves children. Every lesson and every detail is prepared after a pretty long stretch of study, discussion, correction and revisits by a team of people who have the interest and expertise to engage in this exacting and time-consuming exercise. Provisions are made to give proper guidelines and direction to teachers. All this study materials are being prepared in Malayalam and English simultaneously. The regional schools, especially, those outside India, shall adapt these basic materials to suit local situations, linguistic and cultural variances; and aptitudes of children but keeping the broad structure and basics intact.

These revised study materials are dedicated to the Church, with the fervent expectation that all those who love the Church, and our children who are dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, shall certainly welcome this venture.

Devalokom  
20-10-2012

**Yakob Mar Ireinius Metrapolitan**  
*President, OSSAE*

**Preparation of lessons**

Fr. Dr. O. Thomas

Fr. K.V. Thomas

Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew

Fr.Youhanon John

Fr.P.V.John

Fr. Thomas Varghese

Prof.Varghese Mathew

Prof. Cherian Thomas

Dr. Ipe Varghese

**Translated into English by**

Sri. George Joseph

## Introduction

We are living through a period of rapid changes. The educational sector reflects these changes to a great extent. Secular education is undergoing a lot of revisions and children are greatly influenced by secular education. Therefore Sunday School Curriculam also requires to be revised according to the new learning methods. The comprehensive revision of the curriculum is undertaken in the light of this reality.

We have no notion that just by implementing the secular methodology of learning, we can reform the character of our children. The fundamental principle there should be the teacher-student relationship modelled on the love between Christ and his disciples. The method of presentation followed in this book would help teachers and students alike in the transaction of the topics discussed.

This textbook comes as a product of the strenuous efforts of the Curriculum Revision Committee headed by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenius, President, OSSAE. The contributions of those who wrote various units are invaluable. This textbook, on its completion, owes much to all members of the curriculum committee, especially H.G. Mar Irenius, President OSSAE and executive editor Sam V. Daniel. Suggestions to improve this book are welcome.

Let me pray for this New Curriculum to inaugurate a new age of Spiritual Enlightenment in Sunday School education. Let me also place on record the gratitude to all those who worked for it. We are highly obliged to **Prof. Jose K. Philip** for preparing this English edition.

Devalokam  
01-11-2013

**Fr. Dr. O. Thomas**  
*Director General*

Dear students,

We are undertaking a comprehensive revision of the Sunday School Curriculum. Relevant changes have been brought about in the content and structure of the lessons. We are preparing a teachers' Handbook along with the textbook for students. We expect that this arrangement will be more helpful to teachers and students alike.

The period of learning from Pre-School to Class XII is divided into 5 stages

1. Bethlahem	Preschool class	Upto Age 5
2. Nazreth	Class I to III	Age 5-7
3. Galilee	Class IV to VII	Age 8-11
4. Jerusalem	Class VIII to X'	Age 12-14
5. Tabor	Class XI and XII	Age 15-16

This is the textbook for Class IV in the Nazareth category. Let us look into the structure of the lessons given in the textbook.

**1. Theme:** The central idea that should be sensitised through each lesson is given here. We should give special emphasis to this idea while transacting a lesson.

**2. Verse to be memorized:** A biblical verse related to the central theme of the lesson is given for memorizing. The teacher should read out this verse from the Holy Bible at the end of the class and the students should say it aloud several times. Prompt the students to learn the verse, including its reference, by heart.

**3. Learning Aids:** Take care to provide pictures and books, connected to the central theme as well as the Holy Bible in the classroom.

**4. Introduction:** This section helps in making the presentation of the lesson attractive and enjoyable. Simple questions, anecdotes connected with the life-experience of children and the things we see around are given here.

A simple and enjoyable introduction alone ensures easy learning further. Hence read and present the ideas given here with diligence.

**5. Reading Passage or text:** This is the content of the lesson. We have tried our best to make it student-centred. The ideas should be presented in a participatory manner. There should be good student involvement. The teacher should take the Holy Bible to class. He should readout the biblical passages. The descriptions made should have the quality of a narration. The students should be encouraged through interaction questions. When important ideas come let the students recite them in Chorus. Questions given in the 'Pause and reflect' section must be posed before the students. Song or hymns, picture stories, short plays etc. are given in the lesson.

The students should be made to sing songs and inact plas stores should be readout to them. There are separate units of or Prayer, Hymns of Worship, My Church, Good habits etc. The unit 'prayer' aims at making the students say prayers int he evening and in the morning regularly. Students should be encouraged to do that. Directions for doing so are given clearly in each lesson. The students should be encouraged accordingly.

**6. Let us think:** These are evaluation questions given to examine how for the students have grasped the ideas in the text. The teacher should ask these questions in the class. Space for writing the answers are also provided. Either teacher or parents can write answers for the students.

**7. Activities:** Most of the tasks given in the section are for enacting, drawing, physical action or narration. Take care to make children do these tasks. The number of lessons have been reduced. Hence we think that there will be ample time for these activities as well.

**8. Song or Hymns:** A song or hymn connected with the lesson is given here. The teacher should sing it aloud and the students should recite it in chorus. Many songs a quite simple and familiar. So the students can sing them easily. Songs of OVBS classes are also included. So most of the songs will be familiar to students. The teacher seek the help of others who have musical aptitude. It will be better if the teacher can supplement suitable actions while reciting the songs.

**9. Let us Pray:** A simple prayer connected with the theme of the lesson is given here. The teacher and the students can say this prayer in the class together. All should stand up and cross themselves before the prayer. The teacher can recite it aloud and the student can repeat the prayer.

**10. Our Decision:** An idea that can touch the students' mind like a decision and that can be implemented in their lives is given in this section. Make the students say aloud this concept.

**11. Further Reading:** Various biblical passages connected with the lesson are given for reading in the evening and in the morning of all days of a week. If the students are unable to read them on their own, elders should read it aloud for them. The biblical passages are arranged in such a manner that a student can read it from one Sunday evening till the next Sunday morning. Parents should encourage their words to read the prescribed passages along with the prayers at home. We hope that this practice will prompt regular family prayers and meditation of biblical verses.

The examination for Nazareth category is oral examination. Hence students should be encouraged to say the answers well in the class. The students should be enthusiastic in the class. The teachers should be able to create a student friendly atmosphere in the class.

The service rendered by our Sunday School teachers in imparting spiritual training to the growing generation and confirming them in right faith and right worship is invaluable. Full co-operation of all students and teachers is essential for the successful implementation of the New Curriculum. Since the new system is different to a great extent from the old, teachers should handle the new curriculum and methods of learning carefully and diligently. Be kind enough to let your valuable suggestions and encouragement known to us. Let there be abundant blessings of the benevolent God on this righteous endeavour of Sunday School teachers and other authorities for the sake of the Holy Church.

**Dr. Sam V. Daniel**

*Executive Editor*

## Contents

### **Unit 1: Bible Stories**

<i>Chapter 1: Institution of Holy Qurbana</i> .....	11
<i>Chapter 2: Prayer at Gethsemane</i> .....	16
<i>Chapter 3: The Trial of Our Lord</i> .....	19
<i>Chapter 4: The Crucifixion of our Lord</i> .....	23
<i>Chapter 5: Resurrection</i> .....	27
<i>Chapter 6: Ten Commandments</i> .....	31
<i>Chapter 7: Journey through the desert and the worship life of Israelites</i> .....	36
<i>Chapter 8: Joshua, the Successor to Moses</i> .....	41
<i>Chapter 9: The Jericho Wall Falls</i> .....	46
<i>Chapter 10: Dividing the Land of Canaan</i> .....	50

### **Unit 2: Prayer**

<i>Chapter 11: Psalm 51</i> .....	54
<i>Chapter 12: Psalm 91</i> .....	57
<i>Chapter 13: Psalm 121</i> .....	60

### **Unit 3: Liturgical Hymns**

<i>Chapter 14: The Vision of Isaiah</i> .....	63
<i>Chapter 15: Becoming Children of God</i> .....	67

**Unit 4: My Church**

*Chapter 16: Church and the Community in the Early Centuries* ..... 70

*Chapter 17: The churches founded by St Thomas*..... 74

**Unit 5: Holy Qurbana**

*Chapter 18: Holy Qurbana – Continuation of eternal worship* ..... 78

*Chapter 19: Bible Readings in Holy Qurbana* ..... 82

**Unit 6: The Basic Dogmas**

*Chapter 20: Role of sacraments in Spiritual Growth* ..... 86

*Chapter 21: Fruits of Holy Spirit and Spiritual Growth* ..... 91

**Unit 7: Introducing Great men**

*Chapter 22: St Anthoniose (St Antony of the Desert)* ..... 95

*Chapter 23: St Pakomiose*..... 98

**Unit 8: Good Habits**

*Chapter 24: Sacrifice – The Noblest Quality* ..... 101

*Chapter 25: Respect and Observe the Law* ..... 105

# Unit 1

## Bible Stories

### Chapter 1

## Institution of Holy Qurbana

(St Luke 22:7-30)

**The Message:** Our Lord, who came down to earth as man, instituted Holy Qurbana by giving His flesh and blood to disciples at the Upper Room, prior to His crucifixion. As such, we must be in fellowship with Holy Qurbana in our day to day life.

**Verse to be memorized:** “I tell you the truth, unless you can eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you can have no life in you.” (St John 6:53)

**Teaching aids:** A picture of the Last Supper, the Service Book of Holy Qurbana and a picture of the Holy Sanctuary

**Text acquaintance:** The Last Supper of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the Feast of Passover is a most crucial incident during his public service. We are all familiar with the painting ‘Last Supper’ by Da Vinci which hangs on the walls of most of our houses. Our Lord instituted Holy Qurbana for us during that night Judas betrayed him. And he gave us his flesh and blood. Then, as a noble model of humility, he washed the feet of his disciples.

### Introduction

Why did God come down to earth as man? What was the purpose? His purpose was to liberate the sinners. God sent His begotten son to us as a ‘sin offering’, for the emancipation of human beings who were fully immersed in sin, moving towards perdition and non – existence. And, Jesus was born as son of virgin in the lineage of King David. He accepted Baptism from John the Baptist at age thirty. He preached to and healed the sick among the people for three and half years. And now, as his

earthly sojourn was about to end, just before his death on the cross at Calvary, he gave his flesh and blood to us through the institution of Holy Qurbana. This was preceded by washing the feet of his disciples like a servant, teaching them and us lessons in humility. Today, we are going to learn the details of this important incident.

### The lesson

Do you remember the occasion when you received Holy Qurbana for the first time? No, because you were small babies at that time. When you were about three months old, your parents had carried you to the church. By accepting the first sacrament of 'Baptism', we all became members of the Christian Church. Along with this, we received Holy Qurbana also. Subsequently, we have been participating in the Service of Holy Qurbana every Sunday. Is it not interesting to learn how and when this very important sacrament was instituted?

It is the last part of our Lord's public ministry. The main festival of Israel, the feast of 'Passover' was round the corner. Right from the time of Moses, they have been observing this feast, also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to remember the great liberation from Egyptian slavery. Our Lord sent two of his disciples to make preparations for the Feast, according to Jewish tradition. They reached Jerusalem and a well arranged mansion was ready for them. It is believed that this was the house of evangelist Mark, which is also called Sehion. The disciples arranged the Passover feast there following Jewish religious tradition.

Teacher: Do you know why this Passover meal is called the 'Last Supper'?

In the evening, Jesus and his twelve disciples sat together to eat the 'Last supper', the Passover meal. While they were eating, Jesus gave them a warning – 'One among you will betray me'. On hearing this, they were shell shocked and felt too sad that they could not say anything. Not knowing who this deceiver was, they were perplexed and looked among themselves. Jesus gave enough indication that it would be Judas Iscariot. We must remember that we are always answerable to God for each of our deeds.

After the Passover meal, Jesus took the bread, blessed, broke and gave them, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body". Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me". Jesus gave them bread as his own body and wine, as his blood, symbol of the new covenant. He also taught them that he was the new Passover lamb. This sacrament commenced at the Sehion Mansion and got completed with the crucifixion at Calvary. The Holy Qurbana we celebrate today is the very same that was instituted by Jesus at the Sehion Mansion and

completed at the Calvary. Before, instituting the Holy Qurbana, our Lord washed the feet of his disciples. This noble act was an answer to a silent dispute among the disciples as to who was the greatest in the group!

Teacher: Who is washing the feet of the master? Yes, the slave. Here, Jesus takes on the role of a slave!

‘Perhaps, you have attended the feet washing service held on the Holy Tuesday afternoon, where a Metropolitan of the Church washes the feet of twelve people: a very moving moment for those who participate in this service. Through his action of washing his disciples’ feet, our Lord taught an unforgettable lesson that we are to serve others, even those who are below us or enemies and this alone makes us noble and Godly.

The word Qurbana originates from the Syrian word ‘Qurbano’. This means offering, sacrifice, offertory etc. Even before our Lord instituted Holy Qurbana at the Sehion Mansion, he had taught his disciples its purpose and importance. (Refer St John chapters 5 and 6). Our Church, therefore, attaches a lot of importance to celebrating and receiving Holy Qurbana. Holy Qurbana is considered as ‘Sacrament of Sacraments’, ‘medicine of immortality’, ‘Living Sacrifice’ etc. To experience the mystery of Holy Qurbana in its fullness, one must take part in it with complete faith and piety. St Paul has stated, “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). Holy Qurbana is blessing, peace, sacrifice and thanks giving; we must be careful to take part in it with proper preparation.

### Hymn

Savior has thus spoken-My body and blood  
Those who receive them-in them i reside  
By the faith so pure-he who receives Me  
And keep my command-is he not My friend  
Body be your food-blood be you-ur drink  
Those who accept them- I will dwell in thm  
Salvation of soul-that we may attain  
Sacred blood body- O Saviour You give  
By the bodyThin-seek we remedy  
Certainly attain-our eternal life  
Having eaten Thin- sanctified elements  
Do not sentence us-on Thy judgment day

## Let us pray

*Oh! Lord, the Word who has come down as man, we receive you through Holy Qurbana. Enable us to eat your body and drink your Holy blood with a pure conscience. May this serve to forgive our debts and sins and lead us to eternal life. Amen.*

## Resolution

**We shall participate in the Holy Qurbana and partake of it with full devotion and in humility.**

## To Think Over

1. On which Jewish festival, did our Lord institute Holy Qurbana?
2. Write down the words of institution of the Holy Qurbana.
3. What is the meaning of the term, Qurbana?
4. What are the adjectives our Church fathers have given to Holy Qurbana?
5. Is the Holy Qurbana we celebrate today a 'repetition' of what our Lord had instituted at the Sehion Mansion?
6. Is Holy Qurbana just a remembrance of an incident or an institution? If not, explain what it means.

## Activities

1. In chapter 14 of the Book of Genesis, we see a high priest making an offering in the presence of Abraham with bread and wine. Try to find out his name.
2. Have you ever participated in a feet washing service? Discuss what all things caught your attention there.
3. What is the warning St Paul gives to those who participate in Holy Qurbana carelessly? (1Corinthians 11:26)
4. Make an attempt to identify the twelve disciples by looking at a picture of the 'Last Supper'.
5. Find out the different words used to describe Holy Qurbana.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 12:1-11
Monday	St.Matthew 26:17-29	Exodus 12:21-28
Tuesday	St.Mark 14:12-25	Exodus 13:1-10
Wednesday	St.John 13:1-20	Leviticus 16:3-10
Thursday	St.John 6:26-40	Ezekiel 45:18-25
Friday	St.John 6:47-65	1 Corinthians 11:23-30
Saturday	Romans 12:1-8	Hebrews 10:19-25
Sunday	St.Luke 24:13-35	*

## Chapter 2

# Prayer at Gethsemane

(St Mathew 26: 36-56)

**Message:** Our Lord gathers strength through prayers, to face crucifixion, which is just a few hours away. This is a great example for those who pass through crisis situations. Total submission to the will of God is the essence of spirituality.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (St Mark 14:36)

**Teaching aids:** A picture of our Lord praying at Gethsemane, Hymns.

**Text Acquaintance:** The incidents we learn here are related to the great mental conflict our Lord experienced in the previous night of crucifixion; and the strength he received in fellowship with Father through prayer at Gethsemane.

### Introduction

Some of us have experienced moments of terrible fear and anxiety in our life once in a while. Your experiences can be shared with the class such as a major surgery of a very close relative, a road accident involving someone who is quite close to you, unexpected demise of friends or relatives and similar incidents. Events like these create tremors in our life. How do we face them? Here, the way our Lord faced such a situation, shows us the path to follow. He was sure that he was going to be crucified the very next day. That being the will of God, our Lord prays and gains strength and courage from God, the Father. We will try to understand the extreme agony undergone by Lord Jesus Christ during the hours prior to his crucifixion.

### The lesson

In the life of Jesus, the Gethsemane experience is perhaps the most moving and agonizing. Gethsemane is a garden close to the Mount of Olives. The meaning of the word Gethsemane is ‘oil press’. Do you remember the name of that garden where the first man Adam disobeyed God? Because of his disobedience, the humans

have been ‘tasting’ condemnation and death. Here, in another garden, Son of God subjects himself to obedience in its fullness so that we are blessed and that we are led towards eternal life. At the mount of Transfiguration, three disciples namely Peter, James and John were with Jesus to witness the glory of God; and now Jesus enters Gethsemane along with the very three disciples.

At Gethsemane, Jesus is seen to be sharing the feelings of his heart with these three disciples. He advised them to be awake and be vigilant. Jesus alone goes a little forward. He prayed to Father with a heavy heart. He fell on the ground and prayed, not once, but three times. St Luke records drops of blood tickling through the sweat glands. On coming back after the prayer, he found the three disciples sleeping. He admonished Peter who had assured that he would stand by his master in all his trying circumstances. Jesus warned them that those who fell asleep when they ought to be awake and praying are doomed to fail.

Our Lord prayed in deep sorrow and grief that the cup of tribulation should move away (Isaiah 51:17), but that was not to be. His prayerful submission to the will of God must be emulated by us.

After he finished his prayer, Jesus talked like a hero who had won a battle, ‘get up, we are going’. The power of prayer is immense. The secret behind the successful spiritual life of all our saintly fathers is nothing but their committed prayer habits. The more and more you pray, the more and more strength you earn. Let us memorize this saying in English: ‘more prayer, more power; less prayer, less power; no prayer, no power’.

Our Lord got himself strengthened through prayer, but those disciples failed at the crucial testing time as they could not remain awake and pray. Peter denied his master thrice, but repented and was forgiven. But Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus for money, instead of repenting, chose to commit suicide, where his money or his own abilities failed to protect and console him. Judas is a warning signal to those who deviate from true faith for worldly gains.

### Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an english hymn connected with this lesson

### Let us pray

*Oh! Lord Jesus, you were in great agony and grief on our behalf at Gethsemane; help us to emulate your prayer in our crisis. Show us your mercy that we too submit fully to the will of God when we are to drink the cup of affliction. Amen*

## Resolution

With the help of God, we will not fail in difficult situations.  
With Christ, we shall take crises into opportunities

### To Think over

1. What does the term 'Gethsemane' mean?
2. Who were those disciples who accompanied Jesus to Mount Tabor as well as to Gethsemane?
3. The ..... is willing, but the ..... is weak.

### Activities

1. Compare the experiences at the gardens of Eden and Gethsemane.
2. Have a discussion on this topic: While you pray, which is given importance? Will of God or our own interests.
3. Let your teacher share an experience of his having overcome a problem through prayer. You too come up with similar experiences you have come across in your life.
4. Jesus was praying at Gethsemane with a very heavy heart, but his disciples were in deep slumber. Is it proper to sleep during prayer time? Learn to exercise vigil while praying.
5. Let us meditate Jesus who was undergoing deadly pain for us.

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Mark 14:32-42
Monday	St.Luke 22:39-46	St.John 18:1-9
Tuesday	Psalm 1:1-11	St.Mark 10:35-45
Wednesday	St.John 12:27-36	Psalm 31:1-14
Thursday	Hebrews 5:1-10	Psalm 31:15-24
Friday	St.John 5:30-36	Psalm 43:1-5
Saturday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Isaiah 51:9-17
Sunday	Psalm 20:1-9	*

## Chapter 3

# The Trial of Our Lord

(St Mark 14: 53-65)

**Message:** Don't we engage in activities which cause pain to Jesus? Jesus is pained when we do evil. Instead, we must engage in good and virtuous deeds so that the name of Jesus is glorified.

**Verse to be memorized:** "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted." (Isaiah 53:4)

**Teaching aids:** Pictures of Jesus being tried.

### Text acquaintance

Our Lord underwent a whole lot of abuse and before crucifixion. He faced the unjust trials and manipulated allegations with patience. Pilate announced, 'here is that man'; let us try to meditate on the persecutions our dear Jesus suffered only for our sake, as described by the gospel writers.

### Introduction

Have you ever seen a court in session where an accused is undergoing a trial? There is always an advocate who argues for the accused. Our judicial system has a dictum that even if a thousand criminals are let free, an innocent should never be punished. But the trial of Jesus was one where law and justice were given the go by. The Jewish leaders forced a trial on Jesus, the symbol of justice and innocence personified. Surely, this happens to be the darkest episode in judicial history. Our Lord was subjected to severe harassment physically and mentally and he went through all such torture patiently for saving us from the slavery of sin and eternal punishment; he was slapped on his face by sinful men and was subjected to the most unjust judgment as if he was a proven criminal. And all this was for our sake.

## Text acquaintance

Jesus, who earned strength through his prayer at Gethsemane, was arrested by the Roman soldiers and the temple guards deputed by Jewish leadership. That traitor Judas showed them the way. Judas was quite familiar with the location because he had been there frequently with Jesus and other disciples. He kissed Jesus and thus the soldiers identified him. Jesus faced the situation calmly and with a gentle composure. Peter who could not pray with Jesus at Gethsemane took a sword and attacked a guard of the high priest cutting off his ear. This incident made Jesus teach a new lesson to Peter and others present there by healing the guard who was attacked and commented, “For all who draw the sword will die by the sword”.

The unjust trial of our Lord was carried out in four stages. Jesus was dragged before Annas, Caiaphas, Jewish ruling council and Pilate for carrying out their farce which they called a trial.

From Gethsemane, Jesus as a captive was produced before previous year’s high priest Annas. He, as the father in law of current year’s high priest Caiaphas was an elderly leader of the community and was highly respected. Caiaphas would have thought that his job could have been made easy had the sharp minded Annas succeeded in identifying some serious and punishable charges against Jesus. Annas raised two allegations against Jesus namely, one – Jesus had been organizing his disciples against the Roman government and, two – he was misleading the people. Jesus replied to these allegations with absolute confidence and courage that he was teaching the people in public and that those who have listened to him during his teachings may come forward to testify against him. This response irked the soldiers and they slapped him on his face. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas as he could not find any charges against Jesus as alleged. It was during the trial before Caiaphas that Peter denied Jesus thrice.

While Jesus was being tried before Caiaphas, experts in the law, and leaders of people were all present. Many false witnesses came forward to testify, but no concrete evidences were forthcoming. To the question of Caiaphas, “Are you then the Son of God,” Jesus replied, “You are right in saying I am”. He continued to tell them about the glory and power, Son of God was going to have in future. At this, they all came to the conclusion that the statement of Jesus was a clear case of blasphemy deserving death penalty. They started spitting on his face, beating him with their fists and slapping on his face.

In the morning, Jesus was tried before Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. This was a 72 member supreme body of Jews apart from the high priest, which was enjoying full authority of Jewish Law. To their questions, Jesus affirmatively answered that he was Messiah and Son of God. The council decided to award death penalty to

Jesus on charges of treason, claiming to be Son of God and for blasphemy. Then, he was sent to the Roman Governor Pilate as he alone had the power to impart a death penalty.

Pilate was Roman Governor for Judea from AD 26 to 36. His head quarters were at Caesarea. However, being the Passover festival season, to oversee law and order situation at Jerusalem, he was present at the palace here. St John describes in detail the various stages of Jesus being tried at the different locations of this palace (St John 18:28 – 19:26). Pilate utilized a chance to befriend Herod of Galilee by sending Jesus to him for his trial as recorded by St Luke. Pilate was quite convinced that Jesus was innocent and that he needed to be set free. Even Herod did not find anything wrong with Jesus. However, Pilate knew that he himself was not in the good books of Jewish community and therefore, it was safe to entrust them to take the final decision and save his position. There was a tradition among Jews to liberate a prisoner every year during the Passover festival and Pilate gave them a choice as to who should be freed this year; Jesus or Barabbas, the murderer? They shouted favoring Barabbas; but Pilate made one more attempt. The multitude gathered there threatened Pilate that they would lodge a complaint against him if he decided to set free Jesus who had moved against the emperor Caesar. With this, Pilate surrendered meekly as he was not ready for any step that might endanger his position of power. Thus, Pilate surrendered his better judgment and awarded death penalty to Jesus. ‘It was the day of preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour’ (St John 19:14). At the same time when the Passover lamb was to be slaughtered, the Lamb of God too was handed over for sacrifice.

The King of Kings was now thoroughly exhausted with blood drained out and with the physical torture. Who had beaten up our Lord? Only Jews and Romans? The late His Grace Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose sings,

“En Hastham thane thalli,  
Ennittum Snehichenne”

### Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an english hymn connected with this lesson

### Let us pray

*Oh my Lord, it was for us you accepted the judgment in silence; for our trespasses, you, the Judge of judges subjected your body to torture, and your face for slapping and in all these, we all see your divine love; Lord, make us love you always and live as per your will. Amen.*

## Resolution

I will live as the obedient child of my Lord who was obedient till the death on cross, only to save me

### To Think Over

1. Jesus was tried by two priests and two rulers. Name them.
2. ....betrayed Jesus; .....denied Jesus thrice, but repented.
3. What is the name the Head Quarters of Pilate at Jerusalem?
4. Find out the name of the guard whose ear was cut off by Peter (St John 18:10)

### Activities

1. Name of Pilate, who had awarded the death penalty of Jesus, is included in one our prayers. Which prayer? He knew the truth, yet he passed the judgment of death on the innocent. Discuss the possible reasons behind this.
2. During the time of Mosses, we see such a person in the Old Testament, who took a wrong decision like Pilate because of pressures from public. Who was that? Explain that incident.

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Matthew 26:47-56
Monday	St.Matthew 26:57-75	St.Matthew 27:1-10
Tuesday	St.Matthew 27:11-26	St.Luke 22:47-71
Wednesday	St.Luke 23:1-12	St.Luke 23:13-25
Thursday	St.John 18:12-27	St.John 18:28-40
Friday	St.John 19:1-16	Isaiah 50:1-9
Saturday	Isaiah 53:1-101	Corinthians 1:18-31
Sunday	Psalms 35:1-11	*

## Chapter 4

# The Crucifixion of our Lord

(St John 19: 17-42)

**Message:** Let us meditate on the cross and submit ourselves in sacrifice and perseverance to understand the redemption our Lord earned for us through the cross.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Who, being in very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2: 6-8).

**Teaching aids:** The Good Friday Service Book.

### Text acquaintance

The tribulations and sufferings of Jesus and his death on the cross are so moving and heartbreaking; we shall meditate those events with great reverence and devotion.

### Introduction

We participate in the day long Holy service at our church on Good Friday and try to assimilate the sufferings and agony of our Lord and experience for ourselves the pain of the cross. The last moments of Son of God on this earth were really grievous, but while undergoing such unbearable pain on the cross, Jesus was prayed for those who tortured him. This certainly is the real and divine model for all times.

### The lesson

The Roman Governor Pilate handed over Jesus to the soldiers for crucifying. Death by crucifixion during the Roman regime was a cruel mode of punishment, practiced by Romans for punishing slaves and those who rebelled against the empire. The soldiers started beating up and ridiculing Jesus. He was made to wear a cheap red colored cassock and a crown made of hard thorns pressed on his head. He was

made to hold a stick as if that was a scepter (symbol of kingly power) and was made a subject of mockery. They started spitting on his face in addition to severely beating up. But our Lord accepted all this in absolute silence. Jesus, who was quite tired after the lengthy trials at four different places as well as due to the cruel physical torture, was forced to carry the heavy cross on his shoulders, to Calvary. He was being beaten up continuously with leather belts on which lead balls were stuck, which made blood flow from all over the body. A virtually drained out Jesus slowly walked his way to Calvary carrying that heavy cross, his body drenched in blood. And while he fell down on the way out of sheer exhaustion, a person, Simon of Cyrene came that way and the soldiers forced him to carry the cross. A big crowd was following Jesus to Calvary. The women folk among them were crying aloud, but Jesus tried to console them.

They reached ‘the place of Skull’ outside the city walls of Jerusalem, which is called Golgotha in Aramaic and Calvary in Latin. On this hill, Jesus was crucified by midday. There was a practice of writing on the top of the cross the crime committed by the convict; it was written, ‘Jesus, of Nazareth, king of Jews’ in Hebrew, Latin and Greek languages. Two robbers were also crucified, one on his right and the other on his left. The Jewish priests and the teachers of law were still continuing to ridicule our Lord. Meanwhile, the one crucified on the left side of Jesus scoffed at him; the other one repented and came to inherit Paradise. See, how great and noble is our Lord listening to the prayers of sinners even as he himself was in deep agony on the cross and was about to die.

For the three hours, Jesus was suffering from unbearable pain on the cross. The seven statements of Jesus from the cross are the true enlightenment of love of God. Let us read those sayings.

1. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”.(St Luke 23: 34)
2. “I will tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”. (St Luke 23: 43)
3. He said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother”. (St John 19: 26,27)
4. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (St Matthew 27: 46)
5. “I am thirsty”. (St John 19: 28)
6. “It is finished”. (St John 19: 30)
7. “Father, into thy hands, I commit my spirit”. (St Luke 23: 46)

These verses of our Lord on the cross were overflowing with hope and courage.

During the time of crucifixion, many supernatural incidents took place such as earth quake, rocks splitting into pieces, tombs getting opened and the dead getting resurrected. Jesus accepted death on cross as the will of God. The guards present there including the Roman centurion testified openly that Jesus was truly the Son of God. With the crucifixion of Jesus, the whole Universe was saved. Cross is the flag of victory over Satan, sin and death. The cross has the central place in all our worships services.

Pilate got confirmation through the centurion that Jesus was dead. Next day (Saturday) was Sabbath and therefore the funeral was to take place in the evening itself. Joseph from Arimathea met Pilate and obtained permission for bringing down the body of Jesus and burying it. Joseph, a disciple of Jesus in private, buried Jesus according to Jewish rites in a tomb that was made for his own use. (St Matthew 27: 57-61). Nicodemus, another private disciple too was present along with Joseph. A big stone was placed at the mouth of the tomb to seal it. Mary of Magdalene and Mary, mother of Josses were also present and witnessed all these.

For our worship on Good Friday, all the incidents which took place through the trials to the funeral are systematically and devotionally laid down. We are to participate in this service from morning till evening with piety and repentance.

### Let us pray

*Oh Lord, you have, out of your eternal love suffered unbearable pain and died for us on the cross. We meditate on your sufferings. Let the love of cross show us the right way to live and die. Amen.*

### Resolution

**Jesus, we adore the Holy Cross; we meditate on your suffering on our behalf. Your love is boundless and amazing. Forgive our sins and sanctify our souls and bodies. We thank for the great redemption you have achieved for us.**

### To Think Over

1. Name the person who helped Jesus to carry the cross.
2. What was the writing on the cross? In which languages was this written?
3. What was the promise Jesus gave to the robber crucified on his right side? (St Luke 23: 43)

4. 'Golgotha', 'Calvary' – These words come from which languages? What are their meanings?
5. Which two private disciples of Jesus made arrangements of the funeral?

### Activities

1. Find out the expansion of 'I N R I'.
2. Memorize the seven verses on cross.
3. Sing the hymn of dialogues of the two robbers in the Good Friday service, first in your class and later in the Sunday School.
4. Examine whether the robber on the left side of Jesus' cross scoffed at Jesus and the one on the right side repented as per the Holy Bible.
5. During the Good Friday service, while bowing before the cross in reverence, there is a prayer "We adore the cross . . . ." Complete this.
6. Study the changes on the Golgotha that is erected at the middle of the church during mid lent to Easter day and have a discussion in the class.

### Hymn

Tune: en natha nin kripa nine

"Thy Grace brought thee down, O Lord,  
 Unto Thy servants, sinners,  
 Thy Church now doth cling to the  
 Wings of Thy Cross have mercy."

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.Matthew 27:27-44
Monday	St.Matthew 27:45-66	St.Mark 15:16-32
Tuesday	St.Mark 15:33-47	St.Luke 23:26-43
Wednesday	St.Luke 23:44-56	Psalms 22:1-21
Thursday	Hebrews 13:8-17	Leviticus. 4:1-7
Friday	Numbers. 19:1-10	Isaiah 1:1-12
Saturday	Psalms 35:1-17	1 Corinthians 4:12-19
Sunday	Psalms 69:1-25	*

## Chapter 5

# Resurrection

(St Luke 24: 1-12)

**Message:** Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis of Christian faith. We experience in our life, the hope of salvation conveyed to us by Resurrection of Jesus.

**Message:** “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” (St. Luke 24: 5,6)

**Teaching aids:** The Service Book of Holy Qurbana and the service book of Major Feasts.

### Text acquaintance

Have you understood what makes Jesus Christ unique from other religious leaders? Whereas the life of others came to an end with their death, Jesus overcame death and rose from the tomb. The resurrection, thus, is the glorified completion of the activities of our Lord who became incarnate as a human being.

### Introduction

Let us look at the incidents those took place following the death of Jesus on cross and the funeral. By order from Pilate, the tomb was sealed and soldiers were entrusted to guard it. The disciples returned disappointed and in deep anguish. This was a situation like “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered”. (Zechariah 13:7) The disciples were really perturbed whether it was the end of the road for them. But we do realize, “The light shines in darkness, but the darkness has not understood it” (St John 1: 5). After his death, our Lord went into the world of the dead and preached the gospel to all the dead beginning from Adam. (St Peter 3: 19, 4:6). The Orthodox churches believe this entry to Sheol and they observe Holy Saturday as a day to remember all the departed souls.

### The lesson

It was Sunday, the first day of the week. Early morning, Mary Magdalene and a few other women went to the tomb to apply perfume on the body of Jesus. It was

customary for Jewish women to apply perfume on dead bodies after burial. They were moving towards the tomb with great enthusiasm and unparalleled devotion to their dear master, but they were also a bit anxious how they would enter the tomb because they had seen the heavy stone with which the tomb was sealed on Friday. They were wondering as to who would remove the stone for them.

They were in for a surprise. The heavy stone at the tomb was already moved away! Yet another and more fascinating surprise was in store – at the mouth of the tomb, there was an angel in a pure white robe! The angel explained to them why the tomb was empty. “He is not here; he has risen.” The angel asked them to convey the glad news of Resurrection to the disciples. While they were moving out with fear and joy, Jesus appeared before them. He told them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me”. (St Mathew 28: 10)

Teacher: Who announced the birth of Jesus? Angels. O.K. Here too, the angel announces the news of Resurrection of the Lord.

Immediately on hearing that Jesus had risen, Peter and John rushed to the tomb. The young John reached there first, and saw the empty tomb and the clothe which was used to wrap the dead body, lying there. It was sure that nobody had removed the body from the tomb. Peter was the first to enter the empty tomb and became a witness to the resurrection. Later, Peter declared, “.....but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this” (Acts 3: 15). Books in the New Testament testify risen Jesus appearing to his disciples at many places several times. It was Mary Magdalene, to whom risen Jesus appeared first and who had the fortune to announce the good news to his disciples. How Jesus talked to Mary Magdalene is described in the hymn sung during the Easter procession in the Church.

Truly am I the gardener, Oh Mary,  
I only planted Paradise, the Great One!  
Oh, Mary am I life of all living things,  
I am the Resurrection and new life,  
I am who was killed; I was in the tomb,  
Touch me not for I, have not gone to my Father,  
With glory have I ascended from the tomb,  
Good news this, carry to my disciples.

Risen Christ allowed his presence occasionally to disciples for forty days. On the fortieth day, he blessed them on the Mount of Olives and commanded them to spread the Good News throughout the world and then ascended to Heaven. Ten days later, on the feast of Pentecost, Holy Spirit was sent to the disciples. And our Lord lives even today with us.

## Let us sing

God in glory - arose from the death, and gave life to  
Adam and all his - children  
Angels on high adored their Lord  
Earth was made bright  
And trembling stood wa - tchers then.

### Stop to think

What did the disciples who entered the empty Tomb understand? Don't you think it amazing that the angel himself announced the Resurrection of the Lord?

Had the death of Christ on cross ended with crucifixion, it would have been a failure. But Christ overcame death and rose as he had said earlier. Jesus resurrected on Sunday and therefore the Church assembles on Sunday instead of Saturday (as Jew do), and this continues till now. The empty tomb perhaps is the strongest evidence of the Resurrection. It was the power of Resurrection that strengthened the helpless disciples and equipped them for preaching the Good News. Resurrection is the central point of the faith of believers. Again, it is Christ's Resurrection that is the basis of our own resurrection and eternal life. "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8: 11)

### To think over

1. 'And if Christ has not been raised, our .....is useless and so is your ..... '(1 Corinthians 15: 14)
2. To whom did the Risen Christ appear first?
3. What would have been the reason why Peter and John rushed to the tomb?
4. On the 40<sup>th</sup> day of Resurrection, there happened a very important event. What was that? What is its significance?

### Activities

1. In the Orthodox tradition, we use the plain cross and not one with the image of a crucified Jesus. What must be the reason for this?

2. Go through the Service Book of Holy Qurbana and find out five hymns illustrating the great happiness and importance of Resurrection of Jesus.
3. The Declaration of Resurrection' is a very important part of the service on the Easter Day worship. Read it out in the class.
4. Sing together the hymn "Vismayasahithamkabarupilarnnu ....." in the class, all joining together.
5. Jesus went down to the Sheol and preached good news to the dead. What do you understand from this? Could the dead listen to him and be benefitted by it?

### Resolution

**Jesus died for my sake, and gave me freedom from sin and death.  
I shall live for Him, serving Him and His Church.**

### Let us pray

*Oh Jesus, you rose from the dead and thus ensured our resurrection at your second coming. Give us the wisdom and humility to seek, understand and be blessed by your Resurrection from the dead. Amen.*

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	St.John 20:1-18
Monday	St.John 20:19-31	St.John 21:1-14
Tuesday	St.Matthew 28:1-15	St.Mark 16:1-8
Wednesday	St.Mark 16:9-18	St.Luke 24:13-35
Thursday	St.Luke 24:44-53	1 Corinthians 15:3-19
Friday	Isaiah 60:1-15	Isaiah 61:1-11
Saturday	Acts 2:22-36	Romans 4:17-25
Sunday	Psalm 16:1-1	*

## Chapter 6

# Ten Commandments

(Exodus 20: 1-17)

**Message:** The Lord God gave commandments to His people, the Israelites, to help them live a righteous life as well as to enjoy the presence of God. It is for us to obey God's commandments always.

**Verse to be memorized:** "Now, if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession." (Exodus 19: 5)

**Teaching Aids:** The 'Ten Commandments' written as two big charts, pictures depicting the Commandments being handed over to Moses by God.

### Text acquaintance

We shall try to understand the wonderful experience in the life of Moses when he had been in the awful presence of God. The commandments given to mankind for the first time are to be obeyed and followed by us throughout our lives.

### Introduction

We have a police force and a judicial system in our country. Have you ever thought of the reasons as to why they are there? This is for ensuring justice and law and order. Neither the judicial system nor the police force can act on their own. They have to co ordinate their functioning within the Indian civil code and criminal procedure code. The Indian constitution oversees the effective implementation of these rules and regulations. In your secular schools, you would have learnt how these systems have developed over a period of history and got well established within the administrative framework. We shall try to to understand how such systems came into existence in Israel.

### The lesson

The Israel as community can be said to have had its origin with Abraham, father of faithful, being obedient to God's call. This is followed through the life

history of Isaac, Jacob and their descendents. We have already learnt how Joseph, the son of Jacob got elevated to top administrative position in Egypt. He saved his family from the acute famine and made them settle down in Egypt. They were there for a few generations, but later rulers of Egypt, the Pharaohs, conceived plans to subjugate them. As they were undergoing very cruel persecutions in Egypt, God chose Moses to liberate them from their slavery. Moses, forsaking all the palatial comforts, threw his lot with his people. His brother Aaron was there to help him. They appealed to the Pharaoh many times to set free the people, but the hard hearted Pharaoh did not yield. God sent down ten calamities to the land of Egypt. Ultimately, the Israelites moved out of Egypt, and proceeded to Canaan, the Promised Land. The content of the book of Exodus is the history of this great journey. This Hebrew community took 40 years to accomplish this. It was Moses who led the people. "For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel." (Deuteronomy 34: 12)

Moses led the people as leader, prophet and priest. It was through him that God gave the rules and regulations for the people of Israel. This is indeed, a true indication of the love and care of God for his people, who had been liberated from slavery.

In the third month of their exodus from Egypt, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses atop the Mount Sinai. Tradition says that these commandments were given on the fiftieth day of the day of liberation or Passover i.e. on the day of the feast of Pentecost. To witness the Glory of God, Moses purified the people for two days. On the third day, amidst thunder, lightning and sound of trumpets Moses climbed up the Mount Sinai. The people waited at the foot of the mountain. Moses faced God in the darkness of the cloud. Moses fasted for forty days on the mountain. God gave him the Ten Commandments, which form the center point of all moral practices. These commandments are recorded in Exodus 20: 1-17 and also in Deuteronomy 5: 6-21. Following are those commands God gave to His own people as the code of morality.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long.
6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

### **Stop and think**

How did God 'prepare' His people to receive the Ten Commandments? What does that show? That God is holy and the commandments are to be kept and that would make the people holy.

In the history of mankind, especially of Israel, the Ten Commandments are important moral codes. The first four among these indicate the relation of men towards God. Faith in 'one God' is insisted here and discarding of idolatry is affirmed. The remaining six commandments are for strengthening man's social relationships. When we respect and obey our parents, we are only keeping a commandment of God. In the New Testament, we read that Jesus Christ acknowledged the Ten Commandments and gave new interpretations for them. Based on Deuteronomy 6: 5 and Leviticus 19: 18, Christ gives the summary of Ten Commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind ..... Love your neighbor as yourself". All the Law and Prophets hang on these two commandments. (St Matthew 22: 37-40). The Old Testament Law has its base in the Ten Commandments. In the New Testament, we get the Old Testament Laws and Rules fulfilled through Jesus Christ. In this context, St John says, "For the law was given through Moses; Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (St John 1:17)

### **Stop to think**

What must have been God's intention in giving the Ten Commandments? What do we mean when we say Jesus re – interpreted the Ten Commandments?

While Moses was with God on Mount Sinai for forty days, the Israelites forgot their Lord God who liberated them from the slavery of Egypt. They chose to turn towards idolatry and forced Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. Moses as he came down from the mountain was terribly shocked to find his people worshipping a golden calf. He became very angry and threw away the stone plates on which the Ten

Commandments were engraved by God Himself. As atonement for the sin of the people, Moses burnt the golden calf, powdered it, mixed the powder in water and made the people drink it. Then Moses interceded before God to save his people from His wrath. God acceded to the intercession of Moses. The Covenant was renewed and God blessed them and continued to guide them in their onward journey to Canaan.

### To think over

1. What is the content of the book of Exodus?
2. Among the Ten Commandments, which one is accompanied with a promise?
3. Fill up the blanks: “For the law was given through .....; Grace and truth came through.....”
4. Explain Ten Commandments.

### Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an english hymn connected with this lesson

### Activities

1. Classify the Ten Commandments into two, like for e.g., the ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’
2. The history of Israelites’ exodus is recorded in detail as a sermon in the book of Acts. Name the chapter and also the preacher.
3. Read the book of Exodus 19: 16-18 and based on these verses, find out what were the incidents on Mount Sinai.

### Resolution

I will live as a child of God under all situations without getting diverted from the commandments of God.  
I shall be beware of the attractive temptations of the world.

## Let us pray

*Oh Lord, kindly guide us and show us the way to live according to your plans for us and following the commandments you have given us instead of getting attracted to the worldly comforts. Amen*

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 20:18-26
Monday	Deuteronomy 5:6-21	Exodus 19:1-13
Tuesday	Exodus 19:14-25	Exodus 21:1-19
Wednesday	Exodus 21:20-36	Exodus 23:1-17
Thursday	Exodus 23:18-33	Exodus 24:1-18
Friday	Exodus 31:18-32:14	Exodus 32:15-35
Saturday	St.Matthew 5:1-20	St.Matthew 5:21:48
Sunday	Romans 9:1-18	*

Chapter 7

## Journey through the desert and the worship life of Israelites

(Exodus 40: 1-16)

**Message:** God was in their midst during the journey of Israelites through the desert. They believed that God travelled with them in a tent. The cluster of clouds during day time and pillar of fire in the night were the indicators of the presence of God. Even today, to those who worship Him, God is close by with His helping hand.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Be holy, because I am holy”. (Leviticus 11: 45)

**Teaching aids:** A map of the exodus (a sort of diagrammatic representation showing the route).

### Text acquaintance:

The Israelites, having liberated from Egypt, reached the Promised Land of Canaan after a sojourn of 40 years through the desert. Imagine a large group of people numbering a few lakhs travelling on foot through the desert year after year aiming to end up at the Promised Land. In this lesson, we learn about their experiences, their responses to different happenings, the inimitable leadership of Moses, the care of God which was unparalleled and the like. We would also learn about their religious life.

### Introduction

You might have carried out journeys to distant places from your home or from the school. Just think about the preparations you make for such a trip. Before you commence the journey, you plan out in detail many aspects such as the places you intend to visit, time schedule, arrangement of convenient vehicles, places of rest on the way, need of food, finance for meeting the expenses, necessary clothing and so on. The group would be relatively small, each one knowing each other, and all

would be happy to carry out the trip with all the time for getting ready individually. Now what we see at the exodus from Egypt to Canaan is totally different; lakhs of people are commencing a journey with fear, with no time to properly prepare, taking all their possessions including their animal wealth too and starting in a hurry. The multitude of people includes aged ones, the sick, children and pregnant women. And the journey is through a desert and that too lasting a good 40 years (though, originally, this was to get completed within just 40 days or so). This was a fascinating exodus, where lots and lots of experiences of the care of God came up for us to learn.

### The lesson

The Israelites were liberated from Egyptian slavery by God through Moses. About six lakhs of men and their family members along with their assets including animal wealth started a great journey to the Promised Land on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of AbeeB month of Jewish calendar. They started their journey at night after observing the Passover. In all the Egyptian families, the first bourns were struck by Lord including those of animals and there were loud wailings everywhere. The houses of Israelites were spared wherever the blood of the lamb was applied on the top and sides of their doors. After 430 years of slavery, they commenced the journey with great enthusiasm and happiness of God's liberation under the leadership of Moses as well as the heads of tribes.

The route of their 'exodus' identified by Moses was note worthy. The shorter coastal path through which they could have reached the promised Canaan within a year was not chosen because God had other plans. The idea was to avoid the area of Philistines who were strong warriors. These Israelites during those days never had any experience of waging battles. They proceeded to south through the desert adjoining Red Sea. Moses was well experienced in theses sort of terrains, as he was wandering through similar areas as a shepherd of his father in law Jethro's flock.

The people who left Egypt were experiencing continuous providential care. They were protected from the extreme heat of the desert by the pillar of cloud and for light at night, the pillar of fire accompanied them throughout. We must believe that those who rely on God will be taken care through all calamities by the mysteries of God. Moses and the whole people were praising the Lord throughout their journey. Psalm 136 is one that illustrates God's care. They camped at Sukkoth and Edom, and then they were in for the big obstacle, the Red Sea right in front of them! And the Egyptian army following them was strikingly close! In this crisis, there was that wonderful interference from our Lord. God made a dry path in the middle of Red

Sea and the Israelites walked across safely, but the Egyptians almost caught up with them. And they too stepped into the dry path within the sea, but suddenly, the sea came back to its original state. The enemies got drowned and perished inside the Red Sea. Thus, the Israelites crossed Red Sea and walked along the border of Paran desert. But they faced another problem; there was no drinking water. At Mara, they had water, but the water was very bitter to taste. God answered Moses' prayer and the water turned sweet. Thereafter, at Eleem, they enjoyed pleasant atmosphere. They relaxed, people and animals, after sufficient rest, proceeded further.

Now, they had to confront fresh calamities as they entered Seen desert. They started murmuring against their Lord as they didn't sufficient food for all. They thought over the meat they enjoyed in Egypt and felt, it was a blunder leaving all those 'comforts'. But, here too they had their Lord taking care of them. They were provided with Manna from the skies (Exodus Ch. 16). When they cried for meat, Moses too got perplexed and worried. Moses went to the extent of asking God whether He could provide meat sufficient to feed this multitude (Book of Numbers 11: 21, 22). And now, God showered quails from the skies and satisfied them. After a month, they reached Rephidim and faced shortage of water once again. The people, started murmuring against their Lord and that place was called 'Massa' as they tested God and also 'Mareeba' as they quarreled there. Moses cried before God and as directed, beat the rock at Horeb, which then produced sufficient water. This followed by the attack from Amalekites and God saved them from this enemy. Moses constructed an alter there and called it "The Lord is my Banner" (Jehovah Nisei). Now, the family of Moses – wife Zipporah, sons Gershom and Eliezer – joined Jethro. Jethro witnessed, "Jehovah greater than all gods". The enviable task of leading the multitude of people was found quite manageable once Moses implemented the suggestions of Jethro.

**Worship of Israelites:** To ensure a systematic and disciplined worship, as directed by God, Moses made the Tabernacle, Ark of Testimony and the Tent of Meeting. Tabernacle is the small house where God came down and stayed. The Ark of Testimony is the chest where the stone tablets and the book of laws are kept. And the Tent of Meeting is where God and people meet together. As the representative of people, Moses used to enter this. The book of Exodus chapters 25 – 27 illustrates how this Holiest of Holies was to be made. Whenever Israelites settled down in the desert at night, the Tent used to be spread and when journey commenced, Levites used to carry it. The Tabernacle and the Tent of Meeting are considered the same, but described differently in different contexts.

Further, God gave the people a system for worship to live a holy life and defined the responsibilities of priests to give proper leadership to the people. Book of Leviticus, the third among the books of Moses contains these instructions. The book describes in detail different types of sacrifices and how they are to be offered. In worship, Levites are to play the key role and therefore their responsibilities are very important. The most common offerings are burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship offering, sin offering and guilt offering. The offering of Christ on the cross at Calvary turns out to be a completion of all the Old Testament offerings. We have learnt earlier that our Holy Qurbana is the observance and performance of that supreme offering of Christ on the cross. The book of Leviticus chapter 23 narrates the order of observing various festivals of Israel. These are their main festivals. (1) The festival of Passover is to remember how Israelites were saved from being struck off by Lord. This is also the feast of unleavened bread in relation to the exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. (2) Then there is the harvest festival or the festival of Pentecost falling at the beginning of harvest. (3) Then, they have the festival of tabernacle which is the festival to remember the Lord's protection during their sojourn through the desert. The Jews observe this festival with devotion even today along with their other festivals. (4) The festival of trumpets is a feast to express thanks and gratitude to our lord. (5) They also observe the festival of atonement of sins where the sins of people are atoned. In addition, two more festivals came up later namely the Purim (Book of Esther 9: 29 – 32) and the Feast of Dedication (St John 10: 23)

**Observance of Sabbath:** As commanded by Yahweh, the Israelites kept aside the seventh day of the week for God and used to observe that day exclusively for worship. There used to be specific commands as what to do and what not to do. On a Sabbath day, no worldly work was to be done, but the day has to be kept for prayers, devotion of book of Law and to attend synagogue worship. Which day we have kept aside is similar to the Sabbath of Jews?

Yes, it is the Sunday. But how do we spend this day?

On Sunday, we stay away from all sorts of worldly work and participate in church worship as well as Sunday school. We do not engage in playing on Sundays.

Our Lord as per His covenant promise protected His people in their journey through the desert. They were provided with those commandments so that they would lead a life of justice, truth and holiness; and they were given orders of worship too so that they could go on with a life of worship throughout. "Therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11: 45). This central theme of Old Testament is expected to be followed by us all always.

### To think over

1. 'There is no leader ever in Israel like Moses'. What are the main characteristics of the leadership style of Moses?
2. Narrate five incidents of providential care during the exodus through the desert.
3. Explain briefly those five important festivals of Israel including their background.
4. Try to screen the famous movie 'Ten Commandments' in the Sunday School using a projector or at least download the important scenes from internet and view from a lap top.

### Sing along

The journey through desert is too taxing,  
Every moment, adversities prop up;  
The pillar of cloud at day time, pillar of fire at night,  
Day by day, I am led in the true way.

### Let us pray

*Oh my Lord! The loving care you showed towards the Israelites leading them miraculously through the desert be with us too in our lives. Amen.*

### Resolution

I shall obey Lord and enjoy his loving presence always.

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Exodus 33:1-11
Monday	Exodus 33:12-23	Exodus 36:1-10
Tuesday	Exodus 37:1-16	Exodus 40:16-38
Wednesday	Leviticus 1:1-17	Psalm 78:1-28
Thursday	Psalm 78:29-51	Psalm 78:52-72
Friday	Leviticus 23:1-14	Leviticus 23:33-44
Saturday	Psalm 106:1-24	Psalm 106:25-48
Sunday	Hebrews 10:1-18	*

## Chapter 8

# Joshua, the Successor to Moses

(Deuteronomy 34: 1 – 12)

**Message:** God will raise those who are committed and dependant on God, to positions of leadership. God will find suitable persons capable enough to lead His people.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Be strong and courageous; do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord, Your God will be with you wherever you go”.  
(Joshua 1: 9)

### Text acquaintance

As desired by God, Moses liberated Israelites from their slavery in Egypt. He led them for forty years and took them to the Promised Land. Moses, the one beloved to God passed away at the doorstep to Canaan. He is known as one who was buried by God. A strong leadership was needed to lead the people of God further forward. Joshua, who learnt from Moses was well equipped, took over the mantle. What we are going to learn now is the eventful and continuous history under the leadership of Joshua.

### Introduction

Who is the President of our country now? Yes, you know him. But can you tell who will succeed him? Looks difficult to give an answer? Change of power from one hand to another sometimes creates unpleasant situations too. But in spiritual history, God chooses suitable persons and trains them. Elisha succeeding Elijah and Solomon succeeding David are all examples. Even in our Church, we choose the successor of the Catholicose in advance and call him Catholicose designate.

Moses, who was leading lakhs of Israelites, died at the land of Moab. The people mourned the death of their loving leader. They now needed a capable person who was committed to the will of God to go and occupy the Promised Land and establish the community there. But God had chosen Joshua for this role well in advance and

the way the mantle is handed over to him is noteworthy. This further gives us a message that the leaders should aim at the glory of God and welfare of people only.

### The lesson

The Ten Commandments were given to Israelites at Mount Sinai and then, the first ever censuses of Israelites were taken as desired by God. They found the number of soldiers aged above twenty years as six lakhs. After thirty eight years, a similar census was taken once again and the number remained almost the same. The reason why the population did not increase during these thirty eight years is that many of the people perished in thousands as they rebelled against God and perished in the wrath of God. The fourth book of Moses (Pentateuch) describes these in chapters 1 and 26 and this is the reason why this book has come to be known as the 'Book of Numbers'. Many incidents took place before their entry into Canaan. The murmuring and quarrelling of people continued; however, God continued to protect His people. Moses was standing between God and the people. Moses survived many challenges relying exclusively on God. There are many incidents narrated in the Book of Numbers such as the sin of Miriam (chapter 12), the quarrel of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (chapter 16), death of Aaron (chapter 20), the venomous snakes and bronze snake (chapter 21), Balaam and the donkey (chapter 22), the disobedience at Baal of Peor and the punishment (chapter 25) and so on. In chapter 33, the places where they used to stay during those forty years of journey is listed out and numbered. The Book of Numbers ends up with the description of the borders of Canaan, the Promised Land and the cities of refuge.

Just before the end of their forty years' exodus, they reached the plain land of Moab. Among those who commenced the exodus from Egypt, nobody survived barring Moses, Joshua and Caleb. Based on his memory, Moses talks to the new generation in detail. And this forms the content of the fifth book of Moses called the Book of Deuteronomy. This book is an abridgment of the sweetening words of God such as the recital of the sacred history, commandments from God, the rules and regulations to be observed at the Promised Land, the calling based on God's care to the people and last words of Moses. The last chapter of this book gives an account of the end of Moses.

Moses could not make his entry into the Promised Land. He climbed the Pisgah peak on Nebo Mountain and saw the whole area of Canaan to his satisfaction. And he died there. Can you explain why Moses could not enter the Promised Land? The Bible says that God Himself has buried Moses somewhere opposite the valley of Baal Peor. The Israelites wept and mourned 30 days for Moses. Moses carries many an adjective with him like, 'the liberator of Israel', 'the leader', 'the law giver' and the

‘moral advisor’. God repeatedly says about him, ‘My servant Moses’. Moses was so obedient and trustworthy. He suffered forty years with his people confronting different calamities. He took them in his stride with patience and led them to Canaan silently following the way of God. The very last verse of the Book of Deuteronomy records who Moses is; “For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.” (Deuteronomy 34: 12)

### **What do you think about the personality of Moses?**

Moses had, as commanded by God, ordained Joshua, son of Nun of the Ephraim clan as his successor (Deuteronomy 34:9). Joshua has been assigned the role of leading Israelites in their war against Amalekites earlier. We read in Exodus 33: 11 about this young man as one who was totally committed: “. . . . but his young assistant Joshua, son of Nun did not leave the tent”. Moses had assigned twelve men to spy on the land of Canaan of whom only Joshua and Caleb declared their faith in God without fearing adversities. After the death of Moses, Joshua took over the leadership of the whole Israel. Moses had the permission only to view the Promised Land from a distance, but Joshua had the call, as per God’s will, to occupy the Promised Land. God has been repeating to Joshua the very same advice He has been often giving to Moses: “Be strong and courageous”. Even in our own adversities, this verse will strengthen us: “Be strong and courageous”.

The Book of Joshua is one that links the five books of Moses to the subsequent history of Israel. The content focuses on taking control over Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and distributing the land to different clans and making them settle down at their specified assigned areas. Thus Joshua took over the mantle effectively from Moses. God strengthened him to lead the people. The people took a pledge that they would obey Joshua as they obeyed Moses.

The entry point to Canaan was a town called Jericho. Joshua sent two of his men to spy on this town, but the palace guards got the information and came down to arrest them. But a woman called Rahab saved them. We can see later when Jericho was defeated and taken over, Joshua took care to protect Rahab and her family.

The Israelites continued their journey and reached Shittim on the banks of Jordan. They were carrying with them the Ark of Testimony, the symbol of the presence of the Lord. Now, they were to cross Jordan. A miracle was in store for them similar to what they had at the crossing of Red sea by Moses. Joshua purified the people. The Levites walked in the front carrying the Ark of Testimony and the rest followed them. When the priests stepped into the river, flow of the water stopped. Water stood like an embankment, and the Levites stood firm in the middle of the

river till the whole people crossed over. Joshua took twelve stones from the place where the Ark of Testimony stood and erected them on the shore. Once the priests crossed over to the shore, Jordan came back to original state. Thus, the people realized Joshua as a man of God just as Moses was. On reaching Gilgal, Joshua submitted everyone to God and observed the Passover. They ate from the produce of the land, and with this, the supply of Manna ceased. In short, the exodus was completed and the Israelites reached the Promised Land.

### **To Think over**

1. What are the reasons for the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy getting these names?
2. Where did Moses die? Who buried Moses?
3. Deuteronomy is the last of the five books of Moses. Quote the last verse of this book.
4. Among those who started from Egypt, only two entered Canaan. Who are they?
5. Discuss three qualities you see in Joshua, the successor of Moses.

### **Activities**

1. There are certain incidents namely, the sin of Miriam, the quarrelling of Korah and followers, the bronze snake and Balaam and the donkey where there are many dramatic moments. Read the relevant Biblical passages and prepare 'poetic stories' or a skits and present them in the Sunday school general class.
2. Jesus has quoted certain verses from the Book of Deuteronomy as recorded in the Gospel according to St Matthew. With the help of a concordance New Testament, find out these verses.
3. "Be strong and courageous". This advice is one that is repeated quite often. Try to identify ten references those are reflections of this advice from the Books of Deuteronomy and Joshua.
4. 'Joshua, son of Nun' is a usage that is repeated quite often. Can you find out some other characters of the Bible where a name is linked with that of a person's father?

## Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an english hymn connected with this lesson

## Let us pray

*Oh God, please raise noble leaders like Moses and Joshua for our Church and community. Bless our leaders to lead us relying on God and with dedication. Amen.*

## Resolution

Whatever responsibilities are coming to me,  
I will carry out them according to God's will being strong and  
courageous following Moses and Joshua.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Deuteronomy 1: 1-22
Monday	Deuteronomy 1: 23-46	Deuteronomy 4: 1-25
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 4: 26-49	Deuteronomy 5: 1-21
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 6: 1-17	Deuteronomy 15: 1-15
Thursday	Deuteronomy 31: 1-19	Numbers 13: 21-33
Friday	Numbers 14: 1-12	Joshua 1: 1-18
Saturday	Psalms 136: 1-26	Acts 7: 20-34
Sunday	Acts 7: 35-45	*

## Chapter 9

# The Jericho Wall Falls

(Joshua 6: 12-20)

**Message:** Children of God can overcome any problem, howsoever big that may be. Our God will help implement good decisions taken after prayers.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.” (Psalm 16: 5, 6)

**Teaching Aids:** Download ‘Joshua and Jericho – Images’ from the internet and present them in the class.

### Text acquaintance

Joshua took over the leadership of the people of God. He was to confront a series of challenges. Joshua developed a habit of consulting God for everything he had to undertake; he received guidelines from God. Joshua’s biggest challenge was to capture the Jericho city. The city was protected by very strong walls, and was known as the walled city. To enter the city, those strong walls were to be destroyed. Now you are all impatient to understand the strategy employed to achieve this. Indeed, let us see how they did it.

### Introduction

You must have read about different kinds of ‘walls’ in history. The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Berlin wall which separated West Germany from East Germany is nonexistent now as the two blocks have joined together as one nation. The famous drama, ‘Mathilukal’ (which means walls) by Basheer was quite popular in Malayalam. In Bible, you have come across the enthusiasm shown by Nehemiah for constructing the walls of Jerusalem and how God made it possible for him. One of the most noteworthy incidents in the Old Testament is the destruction of Jericho walls. This was a shining achievement among all missions undertaken by Joshua.

## The lesson

The first step for Israelites to occupy the Promised Land was to overcome the city of Jericho. This was an old city protected by very strong walls. Joshua had a revelation before commencement of the battle (Joshua 5: 13-15). Yahweh's commander of army stood before Joshua with a sword stretched out. Joshua sought for instructions from Yahweh and he was told to remove the shoes from his feet as the place where he stood was Holy. Joshua followed the commands of God in letter and spirit which made him victorious in all the battles. The term 'Yahweh of the army' used by Jews in their worship is based on such events in their history.

People of Jericho came to know that Joshua had crossed Jordan and that he was about to attack them. They were terribly afraid at these and closed all the doors of the city. All the instructions from Yahweh were totally obeyed by Joshua and all Israelites. The priests walked ahead with seven trumpets. People followed them. The priests blew the trumpets and the people gave loud shouts. They circled the city once and returned. This was repeated for six days. On the seventh day, they circled the city seven times and the priests blew their trumpets followed by loud shouts from people. With this, the walls of Jericho, thought to be impenetrable, fell into pieces. The destruction of the walls of Jericho is considered as a great wonder that has never occurred before or after this. People entered the city and took possession of it. They struck the residents with their heavy hands. But, the family of Rahab, which saved the spies from Israelites, was taken care of and protected.

Israelites believed the fall of Jericho as a great miracle performed by the Lord. This was the beginning of many victories to follow. Joshua's leadership was accepted totally. He turned out to be a great hero of Israel. When we work relying on God absolutely, victory is ours always. In the absence of God we are a big zero. And there is a saying, "With God, You are a Hero; Without God, You are a Zero".

With the over confidence of their victory over Jericho, Israelites attacked the town 'Ai' without proper preparation and they were easily defeated. Many lost their lives. Joshua and the people, with great sorrow, cried before the Lord. God told them the reason why they failed in the battle against Ai. When they looted Jericho, they were instructed not to lay their hands on certain articles, but someone disobeyed this. The reason for their failure was revealed as their disobedience of Lord's orders. Joshua identified the culprit. It was Achan, son of Carmi of the Zerahites from the clan of Judah. He had hidden a beautiful robe, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels. Achan and his family were stoned to death in the valley of Achor. We must always remember that those sins committed by individuals would destroy the community also. Entertaining small sins too is a big sin. It is a great sin to love small sins.

When the sin was removed, God was happy. They got God's guidance to capture Ai. The battle was won. They built an altar to Yahweh and did burnt offering and fellowship offering. The priests blessed the people. They heard the books of Laws being read and worshipped God. Subsequently, they entered into a covenant with Gibeonites, which was not to God's liking. They had to wage battle against Amorite Kings for Gibeonites. It was in this war over the valley of Aijalon, Joshua made sun and moon stand still for a day. The sun did not set for one full day. "There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man." (Joshua 10: 14). We must understand that God's anointed men possess mysterious gifts.

This was followed by a series of battles. They set up their main camp at Gilgal to plan strategies. The Bible witnesses that God waged battles for Israelites. They defeated Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Hivites and Anakites and occupied their land. Chapter Twelve of the Book of Joshua gives a list of those 31 kings who were defeated by Israelites. However, tired with wars for seven years, peace descended on the land. Chapter 24 of Book of Joshua summarizes how Canaan was taken over and occupied.

### **To Think over**

1. Give a dramatic narration of the strategy employed by Joshua that resulted in the destruction of Jericho wall.
2. When Israelites defeated the city of Jericho, they saved one family. Whose family was it? This person has found a place in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Locate that particular verse and its importance from St Matthew chapter 1.
3. What was the reason for failure in the battle against Ai? How this problem was solved?
4. Read Joshua 10: 12-14 and discuss the great miracle at the valley of Aijalon.

### **Activities**

1. When Israelites were overcoming Jericho, how many times, the number seven is repeated? This number is a symbol of fullness and as such assumes significance in Church as well as in Bible. Find out ten examples for this.
2. Joshua had made sun and moon stand still. Now, there is another prophet who has made the sun dial of a time piece move backward, by his prayer. Who is this prophet? (Read 2 Kings chapter 10)

3. Find out the similarities and differences between Moses and Joshua and arrange them in a tabular form.

### Hymn

Sing Halleluiah to the Lord (2)

Sing Halleluiah (2)

Sing Halleluiah to the Lord

(a) Jesus has conquered sin and death

(b) Jesus is Lord of heaven and death

(c) Jesus is coming back again.

### Let us pray

*Oh Lord! who is trustworthy in promises, kindly make us good enough to receive your many holy gifts. We will obey your commands steadfastly. Amen.*

### Resolution

**We will not fall behind the attractions of this world; instead, like Joshua, we will hold on to God's commands and march forward.**

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Joshua 3:1-8
Monday	Joshua 3:9-17	Joshua 4:1-15
Tuesday	Joshua 4:16-24	Joshua 5:9-15
Wednesday	Joshua 6:1-11	Joshua 6:12-27
Thursday	Joshua 10:1-142	cmPm. 20:1-11
Friday	Isaiah 38:1-9	Joshua 10:38-43
Saturday	Joshua 11:1-15	Joshua 11:16-23
Sunday	Joshua 12:1-24	*

## Chapter 10

# Dividing the Land of Canaan

(Joshua 14: 1-5)

**Message:** God shall shower countless and immeasurable gifts upon those who believe in His promises.

**Verse to be memorized:** “But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”  
(Joshua 24: 15)

**Teaching aids:** A map illustrating the land allotted to different clans / tribes

### Text acquaintance:

The Israelites occupied the Promised Land, all for themselves, but after series of battles. Now, the envious task of dividing the Promised Land among the twelve clans, about 25 lakhs of people, equitably and justly had to be undertaken. Today’s lesson tells us how Joshua fulfilled this responsibility as directed by God.

### Introduction

Parents usually divide their wealth among their children. But it is not unusual that disputes occur in this exercise even if the family is very small. Israelites have taken possession of the whole of Canaan by uprooting those thirty one kings, the hitherto rulers of the land. Twelve clans and thousands of people! A proper and justifiable settlement for this multitude is a tough task, but Joshua has to accomplish it. Let us learn how Joshua managed this job, fully relying on God.

### The lesson

The Book of Joshua chapters 13 to 21 describes the division of the land. During the time of Moses himself, the land lying to the east of Jordan was assigned to two and a half tribes namely Ruben, Gad and half of Manasseh as they had so requested. But this was on a condition that the people of these two and a half tribes must move with their brothers and take part in all future battles actively for the sake of the fraternity. It is found that they did so and acted in total obedience to Joshua.

The exercise of dividing the land was carried out by Joshua, the priest Eliezer and the tribal heads. They put lots at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to fix the rights of each tribe. The heirs of Joseph namely Manasseh and Ephraim were treated as tribal heads and were assigned shares equivalent to others. Even though this division was being done tribe wise, it is seen in chapter 14 that a small portion is given to one individual. This is to Caleb, the trustworthy servant of Moses. Remember that among those who started the exodus from Egypt, only two, namely Joshua and Caleb could reach the Promised Land. It was only Joshua and Caleb, while spying on the Canaan submitted them to God in faith and encouraged the people to be courageous. Caleb stood with Joshua and fought all the battles and was given the Mountain of Hebron. Being confident and faithful in all assignments is very important. Once Mother Teresa said, "It is not being victorious, but being faithful is important".

Please look closely at the map where the tribes of Israel are identified. (This is an annexure to most Bible versions.) This map makes us understand as to how the division of land was done. The area where Bethlehem is located can be seen to be given to the tribe Judah. But the tribe of Levites is not to be seen anywhere in the map. Moses did not give any right to Levites. "But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had not given any inheritance; The Lord, the God of Israel is their inheritance, as he promised them" (Joshua 13:33). Joshua followed the instruction of Moses. Though they were not given the rights, they were given 48 towns and the grasslands surrounding them. These towns were given among all the twelve tribes. The purpose was to ensure that the study of the books of Law and priestly service are available to all tribes. When Aaron made the golden calf at Sinai, it was only Levites opposed it and stood apart. Moses had advised that Levites were not to take part in battles and that they should be given tithes. Wherever the people of God stayed, it was expected that the service of Levites were available for priestly services.

Among the 48 towns given to Levites, six were earmarked as cities of refuge as commanded by God. Three each on the east and west of Jordan were thus set apart. In case one kills another accidentally, he can stay in a city of refuge till the case is examined and decided. If it is proved during the examination that the murder indeed was an accident, he can continue to stay there. Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan were those cities of refuge. Remember, our God is just and always shows mercy and takes care of us.

It took seven years to annex the land of Canaan. Almost the same period was needed to divide the land among different tribes and make them settle down. The

land was assigned tribe wise and arrangements were made for their peaceful co existence. A system of worship too was formulated. In the present era, to fulfill a task of this magnitude could be achieved only by unprecedented hard work of great administrators and military force round the clock for a long time. Ultimately, Joshua, who spent his life fighting battles and shedding sweat for his people, standing close to God got aged and realized that his end was near. He summoned the whole Israel and reminded them of the blessings they had received from God during the past. And he warned them of the impending punishments in case they break their covenant with God.

Before his death, Joshua addressed the whole Israel at the valley of Shechem. He spoke to them at length recalling the history of the people of God right from the call of Abraham up to the annexure of Canaan. God has given us the land where we have not toiled, the towns we have not built, the wine yards and olive gardens we have not planted. If we were to continue in the God's plan of salvation, we must be obedient to God. Joshua asked the people would you serve the Lord faithfully. Or would you go after other gods? Here Joshua gave a clarion to call to them for a strong resolve. And he declared, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord". The entire multitude of people rededicated themselves by joining Joshua in his declaration and renewed their covenant with God. The Shechem pledge is one of the blessed moments in the history of Israel. A totally and fully content Joshua died at the age of 110. And the curtain falls down to a most crucial era of Israel.

### **To Think over**

1. Which are those tribes who were given inheritance during the time of Moses? What were the conditions they were to comply with?
2. What are the particularities of the rights of Levi tribe? What are the reasons for such specialties?
3. When the land was being divided among tribes, one individual was given a special right. Who was he? Why he was given such a special right?
4. What are cities of refuge? How many such cities were there? What were they?
5. What was the Shechem pledge? What was its importance?

## Activities

1. Manasseh and Ephraim, sons of Joseph were given equal rights as other tribes. Discuss what could be the reason for this. (Refer the history of Joseph in Egypt from Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33)
2. When the assets your families are to be divided in future, what would be your five priorities?
3. In our life this world, we strive hard for our rights and inheritance. Our Church reminds us about our rights in the most important Heavenly Canaan, in the funeral service. Find out this from the service book.
4. Arrange a service of a pledge in your class or Sunday School or even at the parish modeled on the Shechem pledge.

## Resolution

I and my family will certainly live loving and obeying our Lord.

## Let us pray

*Our loving God, we have been able to study the history of Israelites who were liberated from the slave house of Egypt and assigned rights in the Promised Land after a lengthy journey through the deserts. Kindly lead us through the desert journey of this life and bless us inherit Heavenly Canaan. Amen.*

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Joshua 13:15-33
Monday	Joshua 14:1-15	Joshua 18:1-10
Tuesday	Joshua 20:1-9	Deuteronomy 19:1-13
Wednesday	Joshua 21:1-12	Joshua 21:34-45
Thursday	Joshua 22:1-12	Joshua 22:13-20
Friday	Joshua 23:1-8	Joshua 23:9-16
Saturday	Joshua 24:1-10	Joshua 24:11-25
Sunday	Joshua 24:26-33	*

## Unit 2

# Prayer

### Chapter 11

## Psalm 51

**Purpose of this lesson:** To understand the meaning and purpose of Psalm 51

**Verse to be memorized:** “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51: 10)

**Teaching Aids:** The Holy Bible

### Introduction

We know that worship is central to Orthodox life. A lot of Psalms and other Bible portions are being used in Orthodox liturgy and prayers. Psalms consist of prayers, supplications and praises. These are written in an adulatory style. The Bible we use has 150 Psalms of which 73 are known in the name of King David, the sweet musician of Israel. We are now going to study the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm.

### Text acquaintance:

We know that worship is central to Orthodox life. A lot of Psalms and other Bible portions are being used in Orthodox liturgy and prayers. Psalms consist of prayers, supplications and praises. These are written in an adulatory style. The Bible we use has 150 Psalms of which 73 are known in the name of King David, the sweet musician of Israel. We are now going to study the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm.

### The lesson

You would be quite familiar with the recitation of Psalm 51 beginning, “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love . . . . .”. Not only that you have heard this, but you would have even recited it. Psalm 51 is known as ‘the

Psalm of repentance'. This is sung by David in repentance when the Prophet Nathan pointed out the sin committed by him. (2 Samuel 11, 12)

This Psalm has been part of the liturgy of Christian Church for many centuries. In our Church, all services and prayers commence with the recitation of Psalm 51. Thus this Psalm opens into worship with a sense of repentance. Our Lord taught His disciples that repentance is a precondition when we submit ourselves before God. (Recall the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee of St Luke 18: 9-14)

Now, we will try to understand the important thoughts contained in this Psalm.

1. **The Grace of God heals sin.** (verse 51:1) Our body often gets plagued by different deceases. Similarly, as our fathers have taught us, sin is a decease that affects spirit, body and mind. Our sins are erased by Grace and abundant mercy of God. It is God who can cleanse man from sin.
2. **All sins are against God.** (verse 51:4) "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight". Our actions which are against the will of God are called sin. Sin separates us from God. Whatever evil we do against our fellow beings or nature, is sin against God.
3. **We need a pure heart.** (verse 51:10) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". (St Matthew 5:8) The reference here is not the heart as an organ. In Biblical language, heart is taken as the center of human thinking and decision making.
4. **We need the continuous guidance from the Spirit.** (verse 51;10) We need help from Holy Spirit to live in goodness without being defiled by sin. "The Spirit helps us in our weakness" (Romans 8:26) When we are filled by Holy Spirit, we feel joyous and happy. Our tired bones will get strengthened. (51:8)
5. **God is the source of all wisdom.** (verse 51:6) The Psalmist is praying, "You teach me wisdom in the inmost place". All wisdom and knowledge come from God. God is the mystery that is not revealed by all the knowledge of the universe. To know God is the greatest of all knowledge.(Psalm 14:2, 53:2)
6. **God does not despise a broken and contrite heart.** (verse 51:17) Let any sinner submit before God with a broken heart; God will never hate him. When we go to pray or go to offer our sacrifices, we should go with repentance.

### Activities

1. Who among these Prophets made David realize his sin? (Samuel, Nathan, Isaiah)

2. Psalm 51 is a Psalm of ..... (repentance, mourning)
3. Which word is used for Psalm in Syrian language?
4. Why do we recite Psalm 51 at the commencement of our service and prayers?
5. Write a paragraph on the message of Psalm 51.

### Hymn

(Tune: Njan anvchunnen papathil)

Afraid am I for my sins  
 Garden joyous – that is kept for saints  
 Let my sins be no hurdle  
 For me to enter therein  
 Lift me from hell and save me  
 Let me dwell in – mansions at your will.

### Let us pray

*O merciful Lord, we submit before you and repent for our sins and confess them before you; give us the Holy Spirit for ever to live with a pure heart; kindly do not take away your grace from us. Amen.*

### Resolution

**When I recite Psalm 51 henceforth, I will concentrate on each word and meditate with a humble heart.**

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		Proverbs 10:1-12
Monday	St Matthew 5:43-48	St James 1:19-27
Tuesday	Ephesians 5:15-21	Psalm 103
Wednesday	Psalm 84	St Matthew 23:1-12
Thursday	Jonah 2:1-10	Acts 2:37-47
Friday	St Matthew 7:1-5	1 Timothy 6:11--16
Saturday	Isaiah 43:1-3	St. John 2:1-11

## Chapter 12

# Psalm 91

**Purpose of this lesson:** We shall try to understand the meaning of Psalm 91 which we use daily in our prayers every day.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Because he loves me”, says the Lord. “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name”. (Psalm 91: 14)

**The message:** The man, who is under the protection of God, is beyond persecution by anyone.

### Introduction

Does your family pray together in the evening? Do you recite Psalm 91 in your evening prayers? We will try to understand more about Psalm 91 today.

### The lesson

This Psalm is one which convinces a believer that he is always under the protection of God. In our prayers and liturgy, the recitation of this Psalm is done with great devotion. This Psalm declares beyond any doubt that no forces in this universe can overpower children of God. If we recite Psalm 91 daily, our confidence in the providential protection shall keep us going. Now, one of you may read out this Psalm aloud. (After the reading)

Let us try to understand the core message contained in the Psalm.

1. **We must always lead our life under the care and love of God.** Verse 2 of this Psalm calls upon us to live with God as our refuge and fortress, relying on him totally. The words Most High, Almighty, Omnipotent are all used to indicate the greatness of God.
2. **A faithful who relies on God has nothing to fear.** If we place our faith in God, we are relieved of all sorts of fears and anxieties. We do not have to bother about the enemy’s snare, deadly pestilence and terror of night, the

arrow that flies by day and the plague that destroys at midday, serpent, lion, cobra, python and other disasters or calamities. In other words, those men who depend on God need not be afraid of the forces of nature or temptations brought by Satan, the wild animals or deceitful motives of men because we are protected under His wings. Let us be confident that God always takes care of his people just like a bird protects its offspring by covering them under its feathers.

3. **One who depends on God is taken care of by the angels of God.** “For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” (91: 11,12)
4. **During the times of trouble, God keeps company with His children.** “I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him”. (91:15)
5. **“With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”**(91: 16) A healthy and long life was considered as a gift of God. We must acknowledge that whatever be our life span, it is a great gift from God.

Now that you have learned the message of Psalm 91, try to do the following activities.

### Activities

1. What is the main assurance that Psalm 91 provides to a believer?
2. Write down the message of Psalm 91 in five sentences.
3. Learn to sing the versified form of Psalm 91 from the service book of Holy Qurbana.

### Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an english hymn connected with this lesson

### Let us pray

*O God of the Most High, you are our refuge and fortress. Remove all the fears from us. Shower your Grace upon us that we may live fearlessly. Amen.*

## Resolution

From now onwards, I shall pray reciting Psalm 91  
carefully and with true faith, every day.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	Psalm 91
Monday	1 Thessalonians 3:1-5	St.Mark 4:35--41
Tuesday	Proverbs 2:1--12	St Matthew 5:1--12
Wednesday	St Luke 12:1-7	Psalm 27
Thursday	Hebrews 11:1--6	St.John-. 15:1-7
Friday	Psalm 53	Proverbs 3:1:12
Saturday	St Luke 11:5-13	St.James 5:13--20

## Chapter 13

# Psalm 121

**Purpose of this lesson:** 121-mw k|oÀ~\`nsâ AÀ°Xe-šsf a\~kn-em-;p-I.

**Verse to be memorized:** “My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:2)

### Introduction

This Psalm is used in our *Soothara* prayers along with Psalm 91. This prayer is one we do just before going to sleep. The word *Soothara* indicates prayer prior to sleeping. The meaning of the word *Soothara* is ‘vigil’ or ‘guard’. Through this prayer, we are soliciting the care and protection of God, before getting to sleep.

### The lesson

Psalm 121 is a pilgrimage hymn. The Bible describes it as a ‘Song of Ascent’. This was one of those Psalms the Jews used to sing while going up to the Jerusalem temple. As members of the Holy Church, we are all pilgrims looking up to heaven as we continue the journey of life. This Psalm is one that helps us to affirm our faith during this journey.

The Psalm begins saying that I lift my eyes up the hills and from where does help come to me. And the answer is ready that my help comes from the Lord who has made heaven and earth. This is the expression of deep faith in the protection of God, the creator of all. In our journey of life, God the creator guards us from our foot slipping. (121:3) Our God who watches us doesn’t sleep. He will neither slumber nor sleep. (121:4) His power takes care of us in the night as well as during day. (121:6) He keeps us away from all sort of harms and watch our life through. He shall keep coming and going safe. (121:8)

This Psalm helps us to think and meditate the manner in which our Lord takes care of us.

## Let us think over

1. What do you mean by a 'Song of Ascent'? 2. What is the meaning of the word *Soothara*? 3. Examine the ideas contained in Psalm 121.

**I lift up my eyes to the hills.** (121:1). All religions give importance to mountains. This idea was prevalent among Jews too. In the history of Israel, God revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai. We see the Prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel offering a sacrifice and fire coming down from heaven. In the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus Christ was given on a hill. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ was on another mountain and the Ascension of Jesus took place on the Mount of Olives. Thus lifting one's eyes to the hills is with the hope and expectation of the Grace of God descending on us. Likewise, on raising our eyes with hope, we expect help from God who has created the heaven and earth. Such hope is the essence of this Psalm.

**He will not let your foot slip.** (121:3). Our God is close to us and always give protection. He ensures that we do not land up in troubles or dangers. He is like a mother who moves with a child who is learning to walk.

**He will neither slumber nor sleep.** (121: 4). This is a verse which gives us courage to sleep soundly. Our God who watches us will neither slumber nor sleep. He takes care of us day and night.

**The Lord will watch over your coming and going.** (121: 8). This Psalm ends by saying "the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore". In our travels, God is with us, when we go out and come back home.

## Think again

The courage and hope expressed by King David in this Psalm is great. Likewise, do we have hope and courage in God?

## Hymn

'While my body silent lies  
May Thy power its vigil keep  
Let my breath like incense rise,  
T'ward Thy greatness in my sleep'

## Let us pray

*O Lord, do take care of us without our foot slipping and without any dangers. Help us to realize this so that we remain thankful to you always. Amen.*

### Activities

1. Learn Psalm 121 by heart.
2. Every day, before you get to sleep, recite this Psalm devotionally.
3. Find out other passages in the Psalms which reveals God's care for us.

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Romans 12:1--15	
Monday	Psalm 123	Deuteronomy 6:4-9
Tuesday	St Luke 18:1--8	Colossians 3:1--10
Wednesday	Psalm 119:129-136	Romans 8:26-30
Thursday	St Matthew 6:5--15	Proverbs 4:1-15
Friday	Philippians 4:4-7	St.Mark 10:46-52
Saturday	St Luke 9:28-36	Galatians 5:16-24

## Unit 3

# Liturgical Hymns

### Chapter 14

## The Vision of Isaiah

**Purpose of this lesson:** To learn the hymn, “Seraphim of Fiery line.....” which is sung when the Celebrant of Holy Qurbana performs the Fraction Ceremony of the Bread secretly

**Verse to be memorized:** “Here I am. Send me.” (Isaiah 6: 8)

### Introduction

During the celebration of Holy Qurbana, there are certain occasions when the Holy Sanctuary is closed. After commencing the Holy Qurbana in public, on the very first such occasion, the hymn “Hearken Gracious Lord.....” is sung and we meditate on certain incidents in the life of Christ. We had learnt about this earlier. This is a very important moment during the holy service as we remember the death and resurrection of Christ. But, we sing certain other hymns too here instead of “Hearken Gracious Lord.....” and one among them is “Seraphim of Fiery line.....” In this lesson, we shall learn this hymn and understand its context and meaning.

### Lesson proper

The Book of Isaiah chapter 6 narrates a vision Prophet Isaiah had. Let us read chapter 6 verses 1-3 from the Book of Isaiah.

(A student reads the portion)

It is this incident that we sing as a hymn. There are nine hosts of angels. Each host has separate assignments in Heaven.

Isaiah, in his vision, sees the legion of Seraphs. They are assigned to praise God continuously in heaven. They are always with God who shines with glory. These are explained here.

“Seraphim of Fiery line  
Saw Isaiah in the shrine  
Each six - winged, round the corner  
Ever serving God alone”

The hymn starts with a statement that Isaiah has seen the seraphs in the Holiest place. We know it pretty well that Holy Qurbana is a Heavenly worship. While participating in the Holy Qurbana, we have the feel that we are in Heaven. We meditate on God from whom all the glory emanates and we are to stand in the church with absolute reverence. The Syriac word Beskudisha means Holy place.

Seraphs are angels each having six wings. Isaiah saw them as shining like fire. The following lines describe how the Seraphs cover their face and body with wings.

“Covered each with two his face  
Lest he sees that Holy Grace  
Covered each with two his feet  
Lest they burn in Holy heat”

Not to see the emanating glory from God, they cover their face with two wings. To escape being burnt from the glory of God, they use two other wings to hide their legs (body).

“Flapping their other two wings  
They all shout and proclaim so  
Holy, Holy, Holy, Thou  
Holy art Thou Son of God”

They clap with the remaining two wings and sing in loud voice O Lord, you are holy, holy, holy. They praise and salute the ‘Son of God’.

“Holy art Thou Lord of Hosts  
Praise to Thee be, all our boast”

This last stanza of our hymn is glorifying the Lord Almighty as Cherubim glorifying God. In class 4, we have already learnt about Cherubim and how they glorify God. This too is a chant of glory continuously heard in Heaven.

## Stop and think

1. What is the name of that group of angels having six wings each?
2. Whose praise do they sing loudly?
3. Why do they cover their face and body?

The hymn is sung in the church incorporating halleluiah meaning ‘glory to God’, barekmor meaning bless us Lord and Kuriyelaison meaning Lord, have mercy on us, in between stanzas.

While this hymn is sung, we should meditate on the seraphs glorifying God in Heaven as also the death and resurrection of Christ which is being observed inside the Holy sanctuary at that time.

The revelation to Isaiah is a very important topic for devotion during the Holy Qurbana. Now let us read Isaiah 6:4-8 also. The vision of God and Heaven filled Isaiah with repentance and he cried out, “For I am a man of unclean lips”. Then a seraph took a live coal with tongs from the altar and touched his mouth. And the seraph told him, “Your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for”. This purification with the live coal taken from the altar symbolizes Holy Qurbana. Once he was absolved of his sin, Isaiah got transformed and submitted himself to the call of God saying, “Here I am, send me.” In a similar way, we too are transformed after taking part in the holy Qurbana.

## Activities

1. Read Isaiah 6: 1-10 carefully.
2. Find out the names of nine hosts of angels.
3. What are special about the Cherubim?
4. Don't you feel that the beauty and symmetry and fullness of this hymn gets lost if we stop singing after the verse “they all shout and proclaim so” just because the Holy sanctuary is ready to be opened? Discuss.

## Resolution

While we take part in worship, we will sing hymns, understanding their meaning and the importance.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Psalm 91:9-16	Isaiah 6:1-5
Monday	St.Matthew 18:15-20	Isaiah 6:6-10
Tuesday	St.Luke 1:11-20	Isaiah 6:11-13
Wednesday	Daniel 7:13-14	Acts 12:6-11
Thursday	Judges 13:2-7	St Matthew 13:24-30
Friday	Psalm 91:1-16	Daniel 10:7-12
Saturday	2 Samuel 24:10-17	Judah 1:17-23

## Chapter 15

# Becoming Children of God

**Purpose of this lesson:** To study the hymn “In Oblations and in Prayers” being sung just before the intercessional hymns called “Kukkulion” in the Holy Qurbana.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their life and imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7)

### Introduction

The following prayer has been used in our homes during our morning prayers daily.

“We shall remember our forefathers who when alive taught us true faith and helped us grow as children of God. In the Kingdom of God they are atoned by our Lord and are in fellowship with all our saints and righteous, praising God in all perfection. Oh Lord, have mercy on us.”

It is the poetic version this prayer, we sing during the Holy Qurbana beginning “In Oblation and in Prayers”. We will learn this hymn understanding its meaning.

### The lesson

Here is the hymn that we learn today

“In oblation and prayers  
Mention we our blest forbears  
Taught they us the truth to see  
Children of our God to be  
Christ’s atonement be their stay  
In God’s realm of endless day  
With the righteous and the just  
Praising God in perfect trust”.

We saw that this hymn in the Holy Qurbana is sung just before the Kukkulion. All the Kukkulions we sing in Holy Qurbana are intercessional prayers, where we remember the living and the departed. Here we beseech the intercessions of St Mary and saints and then pray for the departed priests and believers. In this prayer, we say that we remember all those who taught us the true faith when they were alive and then we express our hope that Son of God will take them along with the saints and the righteous in Heaven.

This hymn reminds us the need to pray for our departed souls. Then we start singing Kukkulions whence we are in communion with St Mary, the saints and the departed.

### **Let us stop a while and think**

What do you mean by Kukkulion? The meaning of the word Kukkulion is a 'cycle of prayers'. In the Orthodox liturgy, there are several Kukkulions in use. In each Kukkulion, there will be a verse from one of the Psalms, a prayer, a couple of hymns called Kolo and a final concluding prayer. Sometimes, Kukkulion is sung descriptively adding up Promion and Sedra. In our morning worship, when we recite Kukkulion in general, the hymn we are discussing in this lesson for the departed souls is used. This is one of such hymns which reveal the special feature of Orthodox liturgy. Here, stress is not for so many supplications. The only one supplication is that believers shall live in true faith. That is, "Oh Lord, have mercy on us and help us". We use the Syriac terminology, namely "Morio rahe me lain oo adarayin" in the above hymn.

### **Activities**

1. Locate this hymn in our Slebo and Kymto orders of liturgy.
2. Conduct a study comparing the different versions.
3. Make an attempt to learn the Syriac version of this hymn.
4. Find out the word used in place of 'righteous' and understand the meaning.

## Resolution

We will remember and pray for all our departed in all worship.  
We believe that they are alive and do pray for us.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Romans 8:12-17	Hebrews 13:1-9
Monday	Acts 28	2 Timothy 2:1-7
Tuesday	Romans 9:1-12	2 Peter 1:12-15
Wednesday	Hebrews 2:11-18	Hebrews 2:7-14
Thursday	Hebrews 11:1-6	2 Timothy 2:8-13
Friday	Hebrews 1:2-6	2 Timothy 2:22-26
Saturday	Proverbs 3:1-10	2 Timothy 4:1-8

## Unit 4

# My Church

### Chapter 16

## Church and the Community in the Early Centuries

**Purpose of this lesson:** In this lesson, we are trying to understand the circumstances under which the Church originated and started growing.

**Verse to be memorized:** “The spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor” (Isaiah 61: 1)

### Introduction

We do take certain preparations and precautions before planting some saplings in our courtyards. We take such precautions to ensure that the circumstances are conducive for the proper growth of the plants. For the growth and expansion of the Christian Church too, the socio religious scenario in the early centuries have been helpful. We are trying to understand these things in this lesson.

### The lesson

It would be beneficial to understand the social situation when God chose to become man. Let us examine them.

**The political scenario:** Jerusalem was under the control Roman Empire then. People of different languages, different religions and cultural variations were held together under one banner by Roman emperors. It was the administrative efficiency of Romans that there used to be mutual co operation and effective communication and transport facilities. All these stood to the advantage of the growth of early Christian Church.

**Intellectual scenario:** Roman Empire was then dominated by Greek language and culture. Christian Church came up with answers to many questions raised by

Greek philosophers and also with sensible interpretations to their intellectual arguments which were found beneficial to scholars. Church expanded fast as Greek language spread across the length and breadth of the Empire. It was quite helpful that the preaching of disciples as well as the gospels were in the Greek language.

**Religious Scenario:** During that time, blind and irrational belief was dominant in religions along with a cult of worshipping the emperor. The people worshipped unknown gods and goddesses. But many were attracted to Christianity because of the availability of specific answers to their thoughts like eternal life, life after death, resurrection and such other issues.

### **Stop a while and think**

1. How was the political climate helpful to the growth of Christian Church?
2. How was the Greek language helpful in the growth of the Church?
3. How did Christianity respond to superstitions and meaningless rituals?

### **Social situation**

Wealth was a very important social life. Values never had any significance. Truth, justice and morality were totally ignored. Fear of God and concern to fellow beings were simply absent in the community.

In such a situation, Christian Church which upheld virtues like truth, justice and morality was found a relief for many. The Christian philosophy was acceptable to intellectuals and ordinary people alike.

### **The Jewish background**

The Jews were under Roman rule. They were looking forward to the advent of a Messiah to save them from the foreign powers. The disciples showed the people that Jesus indeed was the Messiah. The uncompromising worship life of Jews including their synagogue prayers, faith in one God, sense of morality and regular reading of the Holy book were all helpful factors for the Christian Church to grow.

Thus, it is clear that the Greco – Roman influence as well as the Jewish culture served as fertile soil for the growth of early Church.

### To Think Over

1. What were the immoralities prevalent among the community during those early days?
2. How did the Church play a different role in the community?3. How come that the Jewish background was helpful in the growth of the Church?

### Activities

1. Prepare a table showing the Greek – Roman – Jewish influences in the Christian Church.
2. Find out the Biblical references illustrating Greek – Roman – Jewish traditions.
3. Find out a few names of Greek and Roman scholars of that time.
4. Work out a note briefing how would you work towards the growth of the Church in an area where different religious and cultural circumstances are prevailing.

### Hymn

Messiah rose from the dead  
Guards and watchers were ashamed  
Bride of Christ most holy Church  
Jubilant; worship her Lord

### Let us pray

*Oh God, just like you prepared the community for the coming of your begotten son and for the growth of the Church, prepare us too to receive your life giving words.*

### Resolution

**I will do my best to live according to the Gospel.**

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	tbmthÂ 2:28-32	Acts 2:1-13
Monday	Acts 9:26-31	Acts 2:14-21
Tuesday	Acts 9:32-43	Acts 2:37-47
Wednesday	Acts 10:24-33	Romans 16:1-16
Thursday	Acts 13:1-12	Romans 16:17-20
Friday	Acts 14:8-15	Acts 8:1-8
Saturday	Acts 14:19-28	Acts 8:14-24

## Chapter 17

# The churches founded by St Thomas

**Purpose of this lesson:** We are going to learn about the churches founded by St Thomas in South India (Malankara)

**Verse to be memorized:** “For the zeal of your house consumes me.” (Psalm 69: 9)

### Introduction

We have learnt in the previous class that St Thomas founded seven and a half churches in South India. Of these, our Church is in possession of two of these churches namely, Niranom church and Thiruvithamkodu ‘half’ church. We are learning about these churches founded by St Thomas in this lesson.

### The lesson

The seven and a half churches founded by St Thomas are Kodungalloor, Palayur, Paravoor, Gokkamangalam, Kollam, Niranom, Chayal and Thiruvithamkodu.

### Kodungalloor

This church, perhaps, can be called the ancestral church of Indian Christians. This place in history is also known as Muziriz, Mahodayapuram, Thiruvanchikkulam and Maliankara. Those who were here were converted by St Thomas. In the course of time, this church was taken away by sea.

### Palayur

Palayur is located between Guruvayur and Chavakkadu. Being an ancient commercial center, there was considerable Jewish presence here. It is believed that a Hindu temple was transformed as a Christian church here. May be because of this, the conservative Brahmins left this place and settled elsewhere. Consequently, this was also known as Shapakkadu, meaning ‘cursed land’, which over a period of time got changed as Chavakkadu.

### **Paravoor / Kottakkavu**

This was a commercial center and a port. Paravoor is a town on the lake side west of Aluva. Kottakkavu church is located close to this town. It is believed that St Thomas proceeded to Mylapore from here.

### **Gokkamangalam**

This place is located between Alappuzha and Thanneermukkam on the western coast of Lake Vembanadu. Many people were converted by St Thomas here and erected a cross. Maliyekkal Thomas Ramban who was ordained by St Thomas was entrusted with this responsibility. But enemies destructed the cross later and the church too was destroyed in due course.

### **Kollam**

This was the second commercial port of ancient Kerala. In the Ramban songs, it is stated that St Thomas arrived at Kollam from Kodungalloor accompanied by a disciple Kaeppa. This church too is believed to have been lost to sea in the course of time.

### **Niranom**

This again was a commercial center located close to the sea. St Thomas erected a cross here, but enemies pulled it out threw away to the nearby river. But the cross instead of sinking in the river travailed and settled at the banks a little away and the present church came up there. This church is being taken care of by our Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. What we see today at Niranom is the renovated church.

### **Nilakkal / Chayal**

St Thomas had established a church at this commercial center, but the same was annihilated later. The residents too migrated away, may be due to the threat from robbers or due to furies of nature. This would have made the area deserted and caused the destruction of the church. Anyhow, an ecumenical church has come here.

#### **Stop a while and think**

1. What is the peculiarity of the church ay Kodungalloor?
2. What information we do get from the Ramban song about the church at Kollam?
3. How the church at Niranom got established at its present location as we see today?

## Thiruvithamkodu

This is known as the ‘half church’ established by St Thomas. The church is located close to Kanyakumari. This small church under the possession of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church contains plenty of remains of the ancient church. The name ‘half church’ (Malayalam version is *arappally*) is attributed to the tradition that this was built with the help of a king (built by ‘*arachan*’) – May be half of a Hindu temple was converted as a church; another possibility; – half of a family became Christian and built a church.

Thus, we can sum up the common characteristics of churches established by St Thomas, like this.

- All these churches were established at main commercial centers.
- These places are located quite close to the sea.
- There was Jewish presence at all these centers.
- In all these places, considerable sections of the people were converted to Christian faith.
- Wherever believers resided, initially crosses were erected and gradually, they were transformed as churches.

### To Think over

1. To whom did St Thomas assigned the charge of Gokkamangalam church?
2. What was the reason for Palayur came to be known as Chavakkadu?
3. Name those churches established by St Thomas possessed by M O S C.
4. What are the common characteristics of churches established by St Thomas?
5. How can we explain the term “Half church”?

### Activities

1. How come that the Thiruvithamkodu church is called a ‘half church’? Explore more than one possibility.
2. Work out a project on ‘Churches of St Thomas’.
3. Pay a visit to the churches established by St Thomas.
4. Identify the names of the dioceses of our Church where the churches established by St Thomas and related places are located.
5. On a map of Kerala, mark the seven and a half churches.

## Hymn

Oh St Thomas, as in heaven,  
Keep we here thy memory;  
Hear us as we honor thee,  
Thy entreaties be our aid.

## Let us pray

*Oh Lord, like St Thomas who worked hard for building up your Church,  
enable us capable to work for the welfare of our Church. Amen.*

## Resolution

**I will strive hard for spreading gospel like St Thomas and work hard  
for the stability of our Church.**

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Acts 13:41-52	Ephesians 1:15-23
Monday	Acts 16:1-5	St.Mark 16:14-18
Tuesday	Acts 16:11-15	1 Corinthians 14:26-33
Wednesday	Acts 16:19-34	Acts 15:1-5
Thursday	Romans 4:9-13	Acts 9:26-43
Friday	Romans 4:14-20	Galatians 1:11-18
Saturday	Romans 5:1-13	Romans 14:14-23

## Unit 5

# Holy Qurbana

### Chapter 18

## Holy Qurbana – Continuation of eternal worship

**Purpose of this lesson:** To understand that Holy Qurbana is the continuation of our eternal worship.

**Verse to be memorized:** “For Christ did not enter a man made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered Heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.” (Hebrews 9: 24)

### Introduction

We believe that worship goes on before God every day, who is the creator of the whole universe, protector and the one who completes everything. God commanded Prophet Moses to set up everything in the manner similar to this worship, in the Tent of Meeting made by him. Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were all men of God to whom this heavenly worship was revealed.

### Eternal worship in New Testament

This heavenly worship is described in the Book of Revelation chapters 4 to 6. There, we see God the Father on the Heavenly Throne around which the slain Lamb is holding a scroll. Standing around this, there are 24 elders wearing crowns. They represent the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New Testament. We can see these elders removing their crown and prostrating before the Lamb in between because this is the Lamb of God bearing sin of the world. (St John 1: 29). As stated in Isaiah chapter 53, He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, but he was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53: 4-8). Those twenty four elders while prostrating before

Him sing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come”. (Revelation 4: 8). They also chant continuously, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” (Revelation 4: 11). Letter to Hebrews 9: 23-27 shows that the worship we conduct in earth is a shadow (or copy) of this Heavenly worship. In this continuous worship, the Bible teaches that the departed souls, the saints and the angels participate with us. (Revelation 6: 9, 7: 1-12).

## The Lesson

### Holy Qurbana, the continuance of eternal worship

In our Holy Qurbana also, all those who are in heaven and on earth are taking part, about which we remember through the hymns we sing. As an example, we are now going to study the hymn, ‘With Mary, virgin blest.....’. We will learn the meaning of this hymn in all its details by singing it carefully with total concentration.

1. ‘Nishtayil Ninneppeta...’

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing in praise along with the Holy virgin who gave birth to you in pure virginity.

2. ‘Munnam Ninnagamanam...’

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing with praise along with the good prophets who prophesied your coming quite earlier.

3. ‘Dandanapeedakaletta...’

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing with praise along with the martyrs and saints who suffered lifelong infirmities and penalties.

4. ‘Mahithanmar...’

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing with praise along with the Cappadocia fathers Baselios, the Great and Gregorioso of Nyssa who taught us true faith strongly.

5. ‘Parumala Mar Gregorioso...’

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing with praise along with the saints of Malankara namely, Parumala Mar Gregorioso and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius.

6. ‘Ujjwaladeepa ...’

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing with praise along with the five wise virgins who took lighted lamp with oil.

7. 'Vishwasathal parudeesa...'

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing with praise along with the thief on the right side who was promised to be in paradise by his faith accepting you at the last moment, though he had been committing mistakes in his past life.

8. 'Anavarathasthuthi...'

**Meaning:** Oh Lord, make us sing in praise along with the heavenly angels who are habituated in praising you continuously.

### **Our Participation in eternal worship**

Based on what are stated above, we shall understand certain basic things about Holy Qurbana, which are summed up below;

- \* In the Holy presence of Lord God Almighty, worship is taking place continuously without break.
- \* Our Holy Qurbana is an earthly shadow (or copy) of the eternal worship in Heaven.
- \* In this Heavenly worship, St Mary, Old Testament fathers, saints of New Testament Church, Holy angels and those departed souls who lived in Christ all participate.
- \* It is great privilege and blessing for us to have got the opportunity to participate in this Heavenly worship.

As such, if we participate in this Heavenly worship with repentance realizing like St Paul that we are wretched men, or like Isaiah, we are men of unclean lips, we will be blessed.

### **Activities**

1. Get acquainted with the hymn 'With Mary, virgin blest.....' from the service book of Holy Qurbana.
2. Let all children come to church on time for the morning worship so that all can sing this hymn together.
3. Who are the Cappadocia fathers? Though they are three, only two names are mentioned in this hymn. Discuss the reason for that.
4. In the hymn 'With Mary, virgin blest.....' two saints our Malankara Church are remembered. Write down their full names.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		St.Matthew 1:18-21
Monday	St.Luke 2:1-7	St.Matthew 1:22-25
Tuesday	St.Mark 14:12-25	Isaiah 7:10-17
Wednesday	St.Luke 22:7-13	St.Luke 22:14-23
Thursday	St.John 13:21-30	St.Luke 1:26-38
Friday	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	St.Luke 1:46-56
Saturday	St.Matthew 25:1-13	1 Corinthians 11:27-32

## Chapter 19

# Bible Readings in Holy Qurbana

**Purpose of this lesson:** To study about the Bible readings in Holy Qurbana and understand the arrangement of the Lectionary

**Verse to be memorized** “The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor.” (St Luke: 4: 18)

### Introduction

Bible reading is an important part of our Holy Qurbana. Unfortunately, most of us are not aware of the Biblical foundations of our worship. Apart from the Bible readings in worships, many prayers taken from the Book of Psalms are incorporated in our Canonical prayers, sacraments and service orders for different Feasts. In this lesson, we focus only on the Bible readings in the Holy Qurbana. Do you know the name of that Sunday on which our Church year commences? This Sunday is called Koodosh-Eetho. With the Feast of Koodosh-Eetho, our Church enters a new year. If October 30 or 31 happens to be a Sunday, that is Koodosh-Eetho, otherwise, it is on the first Sunday in November. Commencing from that Sunday, the Bible reading passages prescribed for the coming year are pre planned by the Church and this is called Lectionary.

### The Lectionary

According to Jewish tradition, commencement of Lectionary began at the time of Moses. They hold the view that the readings for their main feasts namely Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles were arranged with the Mosaic Laws. But the oldest Lectionary known today is the Jewish Lectionary worked out around 200 BC. In this, there are readings from the Books of Moses as well as from the Books of Prophets. Our Lord Jesus would have read from the Book of Isaiah from a scroll of this type. (Luke 4: 16-20)

Many scholars argue that in the history of Christian Church, the systematization of bible readings had been the book form of readings prescribed for worship. However, the earliest Lectionary of Christian Church is understood to be the one

worked out by Syrian Church Father Tatian which is called Diatessaron. This would have been introduced by mid second century AD. In this we have a gospel where the contents of the present four gospels are combined together. The life history of Jesus is illustrated in 55 paragraphs. You would have listened to the gospel readings on Good Friday where some repetition occurs. The view held by some pundits that these Good Friday readings are borrowed from the Diatessaron of Tatian, need not be dismissed altogether. Even then, the oldest known Syrian Lectionary is the one worked out by the monk Daniel of Edessa and his disciple and Bishop Benyamin in 411 AD. This is archived at the British Museum. There have been many modifications to this Lectionary in later years.

The Lectionary we use now has been arranged beginning from the Sunday of Koodosh-Eetho. Within this there are many seasons. For example, from the Sunday of Koodosh-Eetho to Christmas, preceding the feast of Christ's birth, there are eight Sundays. For all these Sundays, the Bible readings would relate to the preparations for the birth of Jesus. In these, we have annunciation to Zachariah, annunciation to Mary, meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, birth of John, revelation to Joseph and the genealogy of Jesus coming up one after the other following the Koodosh-Eetho Sunday and Hoodos-Eetho Sunday. After Christmas, we have the season of Epiphany. This is followed by the seasons of Big Lent, Pentecost, Sleeha and Sleebo. In each of these seasons, there are about eight Sundays. The Bible readings for each of these seasons are related to the theme of such seasons. Western churches have their Lectionary spread over three years (cycle ABC), but we have it for one year.

### **The Bible Readings in Holy Qurbana**

As indicated above, for each Sunday, we have a main topic of thought. The reading passages assigned from Old Testament and New Testament are related to this. All the three important readings from Bible are arranged at the beginning of the Holy Qurbana.

In earlier times, the three readings were followed by the sermon. This part of the Holy Qurbana is called the Liturgy of the Word. Non believers and catechumen were allowed to participate in the service only up to this. As such, this portion of the Holy Qurbana was also known as the Liturgy of catechumen, in the early Church. Now let us think about each of these readings from the Bible.

**1. Readings from Old Testament:** Usually, there are three passages to be read from Old Testament. Of these, the first one would be from the Books Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers or Deuteronomy) and the second would be from writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes etc.) Apart from these, readings from

Deuterocanonical books (Maccabeus, Tobith, Judith etc.) are also included. The third reading will usually be from the prophetic books. The Book of Isaiah is known as the 'Old Testament Gospel' and for this reason, most of the days the third reading is from the prophet Isaiah, who is introduced as 'from Isaiah, the glorious prophet'. As decided by our Holy Episcopal Synod, even those who are not entering the Holy Sanctuary can also read the Old Testament, including women.

**2. Readings from New Testament Epistles:** Shortly on commencement of Holy Qurbana, New Testament Epistles are read. On the north side of the opening to the Sanctuary, Acts or general epistles (James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Judah) are read. On the south side, portions from the epistles of St Paul, 14 in number, including the one to Hebrews are read.

**3. Readings from the Gospel:** Reading of the gospel during the Holy Qurbana is a very important occasion and only a priest or high priest has the right to read it. A deacon or an altar boy can never do it. Among the four gospels in the New Testament, the one matching the thought for that day prescribed in the Lectionary is read out. The term Evengelion is the Greek equivalent to Gospel. The other readings for that day, New Testament as well as Old Testament, would be matching with the thoughts of the Evengelion reading.

In short, let us understand that there is a theology behind the readings from Bible. For each day, the Lectionary is prepared based on these theological insights. The readings do not follow a random pattern, but are made to suit the significance of the day of worship. During the New Testament readings, the congregation remains standing, and candles will be held on either side when the gospel reading is done. The gospel contains the word of God. We must listen to the Bible readings with full concentration and meditate on them with the help of the sermon for that week delivered by the celebrant. This will certainly help us in our spiritual development.

### **Activities**

1. Try to get a Lectionary from your church and understand the contents.
2. Discuss the Bible portion read by our Lord at the synagogue in Nazareth
3. What do you understand by the term 'Liturgy of the word'?
4. Which is 'Gospel of the Old Testament'?
5. Prepare a list of the books which are read at the northern side of the door of the Holy Sanctuary.
6. How do you decide the day of Koodosh-Eetho?

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Psalm 116:12-19	St.John 13:1-10
Monday	St.John 6:26-31	St.John 13:12-17
Tuesday	St.John 6:32-40	St.John 13:18-30
Wednesday	St.John 6:41-46	St.John 13:31-38
Thursday	St.John 6:47-51	St.Luke 22:1-13
Friday	St.John 6:53-59	St.Luke 22:14-20
Saturday	Psalm 50:7-15, 23	St.Luke 22:24-32

## Unit 6

# The Basic Dogmas

### Chapter 20

## Role of sacraments in Spiritual Growth

**Purpose of this lesson:** To appreciate the fact that meaningful participation in the sacraments of the Church helps one to grow spiritually.

**Verse to be memorized:** “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” (St John 20: 23)

### The lesson

Last year we studied about the holy sacraments. Can you name the sacraments of the Church? The students shall share in the class what they know.

**What do we mean by spiritual growth?** In the human person, there are three components namely mind, body and spirit. There are people who consider that spirituality is related to the third component only among these. But, Orthodox spirituality does not think about such a differentiation. Good and evil exist in the human person. Growing in goodness by eradicating evil can be called spiritual growth. There was only one person in this world who possessed goodness alone and that was Jesus Christ. Though, there was temptation of evil, he could overcome all of them. St John witnesses that “in him there is no darkness at all”. (1 St John 1: 5). It is God’s will that everyone shall reach this state in life. We may not reach the fullness of that stage in our worldly life, but our aim shall never be less than that. Jesus has given us the direction: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”. (St Matthew 5: 48).

The transformation from evil to goodness is called ‘Theosis’ or ‘Deification’ in Orthodox theology. This is to share the nature of God. When we grow into the nature of God, we become ‘spiritual’.

**How do sacraments help in this growth?** We have seen that Sacraments are available in the Church. By analyzing the growth of a person from his birth, we can understand how the Church and sacraments help a person in his spiritual growth. A child is born into a family; the family contributes to the growth of the child. The contribution of Church and sacraments in one's spiritual growth is similar to this.

Here, Church is the great family. In this Church, we have the Triune God, Mother of God, Apostles, Saints as well as the departed souls and all those who are alive in body. Sacraments are rituals performed by all of them together as we have learnt earlier. For each believer to grow spiritually, they must be born again. This spiritual birth is similar to a physical birth. And this happens in baptism. For such a re birth, the baptismal font is the uterus, and Church is the mother. As the parents give food for their child's physical growth, Church gives spiritual food for the child's spiritual growth.

**How many sacraments are needed for one's spiritual growth?** Indeed, this is a quite meaningful question. The Roman Catholic Church has limited the number of sacraments to seven. In the first sixteen centuries, there was no such numbering. The Western reformist churches initiated by Martin Luther treated Baptism and Holy Eucharist alone as sacraments and discarded all others which were sacraments followed by ancient churches. Catholic Church fixed the number as seven in their Trent synod of sixteenth century. But Orthodox churches have not limited sacraments to a specific number. However, the seven sacraments finalized by Catholics are recognized by Orthodox churches too, which are Baptism, Holy Chrism (Mooron), Confession, Holy Qurbana, Marriage, Priesthood and Anointing the sick. Of these, Baptism, Mooron and Priesthood are not to be repeated. Priesthood is only to those who are specifically called for that. Marriage too is not to be repeated, but in certain specific circumstances, second marriage is allowed.

Apart from these, consecration of a church, consecration of Mooron, blessing of a house, are all considered as sacraments by Orthodox churches.

**Does each of these sacraments bring blessings to help spiritual growth?** Yes and that precisely is the reason for the need of different sacraments. We will now look at each one of them briefly.

- \* **Holy Baptism:** Baptism is the very first sacrament received by a faithful. Usually, this is done within very few months of the birth of a child. The child is not aware of its birth. The child doesn't know even the way it is fed with mother's breast milk. Just because the child is not aware of these, the physical growth of the child is not hampered. In a very similar way, even if the child is not aware, its baptism takes place and it is spiritually born again.

It is here that the process of Theosis commences. During baptism, the child discards Satan and accepts Messiah. The godfather or godmother, representing the Church takes this pledge for the child. The new life in Christ begins here.

- \* **Holy Mooron or Anointment of Holy Spirit:** This anointment is done along with baptism. It is through Holy Spirit, the child is born again. The specially purified and consecrated Mooron symbolizes anointment of Holy Spirit. When the child being baptized is anointed with Mooron, the Holy Spirit comes live in the child. Holy Spirit once received shall be renewed, but is not to be received again. That is the reason why a baptized person who discards the true faith and goes elsewhere is not re – baptized, if he returns. The Church teaches that it is enough that he confesses his wrong and repents. It is the Holy Spirit who transforms a born again child from evil to good.
- \* **Holy Confession:** One’s spiritual growth is similar to the physical growth of a child. But, spiritual growth is a never ending process. At best, we can say ‘growing to fullness’. The child which starts learning to walk falls quite often initially and in a similar manner, the believer too falls among the evils of this world. But he has to get up from such falls. For this, he has to repent about his wrong doings. He has to accept that he has erred. He has to confess his wrongs. Then, he should have full conviction that he has been absolved of his sins. It is for this, the Church has instituted the sacrament called Holy Confession.
- \* **Holy Qurbana:** The Orthodox Churches teach that Holy Qurbana is the sacrament that completes all other sacraments; it is the queen of all sacraments. The sacraments are accompanied with Holy Qurbana. Among all the food for spiritual growth, Holy Qurbana is the most important because through this we receive the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. There may not be another nutritious food better than this to transform us. “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” At the same time, it shall be remembered that unless one is not slowly transformed, receiving Holy Qurbana will end up as a routine exercise.
- \* **Priesthood:** The holy sacraments are performed by the Church. If so, we need ordained ministers to perform and administer them. If everyone in the Church becomes celebrants, the situation will resemble a country where all the citizens are coming up as rulers. Just similar to elected rulers for the governance of a country, there must be celebrants in a Church to perform the sacraments for the believers. Our Lord has shown us the way for this

too. He has chosen apostles and the Church has been choosing deacons, priests and bishops and training them and empowering them to be celebrants of sacraments. They make the believers grow spiritually. The clergy have the responsibility to look after the flock as the good shepherd Jesus has been doing.

- \* **Marriage:** The Book of Genesis tells us that family is a creation of God. (Genesis 1: 26, 2: 18). If a man and woman have to live life long as husband and wife and also as parents, they need God's Grace in abundance. This Grace is showered upon the couple through the sacrament of marriage.
- \* **Anointment of the Sick:** Our Lord has conferred the apostles and evangelists the specific grace of healing the sick. This grace is given to the Church as well. St James (5: 14-19) writes, "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the Church to pray over him and anoint with him with oil in the name of the Lord". Sickness denotes a disorder and imbalance in the mind or body or both. Also, sickness is a situation where people are most helpless. Under such conditions, healing is necessary and God does it in His Grace. Anointment of the sick results in healing for the body, mind and spirit. Sins are forgiven and disorders of the body are removed. This sacrament is not the 'extreme unction' to be performed just before death. But this sacrament is one for healing and absolution of sins.

In house blessing, consecration of a church and consecration of Mooron (Chrism) the Grace of Holy Spirit is being showered aplenty. Through the funeral service, the departed souls receive protection of the grace of God because, "he has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead". (Ruth 2: 20). The Orthodox Churches teach that the sacraments contribute to our healing, absolution from sin and continued spiritual growth.

### Activities

1. Try to understand more about the graces in different sacraments.
2. Share your personal experiences of having received graces through sacraments such as Holy Confession, Holy Qurbana, Anointment of the Sick and so on.
3. Identify certain benchmarks to ascertain whether the process of Theosis has commenced in you, like the willingness to love an unfriendly class mate.
4. Have a combined discussion to study the statement, 'Holy Qurbana is the queen of all sacraments' or 'Sacraments of Sacraments'.
5. Find out evidence to prove that child baptism is Biblical.

## Resolution

We shall try to study more about Sacraments and lead a sacramental life.

### Let us pray

*Holy Spirit, open our minds to understand the great meaning of the holy sacraments. Amen.*

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	St.John 14:1-7	1 Peter 4:1-6
Monday	St.John 14:8-13	1 Peter 4:7-11
Tuesday	St.John 14:14-24	1 Peter 4:12-15
Wednesday	Hebrews 11:1-6	1 Peter 4:17-19
Thursday	Hebrews 11:7-12	St James 2:14-26
Friday	St James 2:1-6	1 Peter 1:3-12
Saturday	St James 2:7-13	1 Peter 1:13-25

## Chapter 21

# Fruits of Holy Spirit and Spiritual Growth

**Purpose of this lesson:** The power of Holy Spirit reaches us through the sacraments. Let us find out how do the graces of Holy Spirit help in the spiritual growth of the faithful.

**Verse to be memorized:** “And now, these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

### The lesson

The Bible passages dealing with the operation of the Holy Spirit shall be referred to in the class. (John 14: 16, 16: 12-13, 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 13, Galatians 5: 22)

### How do we get to know the help we receive from Holy Spirit in spiritual growth?

In our previous lesson, we saw that Holy Spirit helps us to grow into Divinization or ‘Godlikeness’ through sacraments. Administration of the sacraments is not an individual act, but it involves the Church, i.e. the community of believers. Those who partake in the sacraments receive God’s unseen Grace. But each individual shall examine whether such a Grace does exist in him / her. The details are examined in this lesson.

### What are the signs of operation of the Holy Spirit?

Two perceptible signs are identified. (1) Different graces or gifts and (2) Fruits of Holy Spirit.

### What are graces or gifts?

This world has to be transformed to the likeness of God for which the faithful have to do their part. Towards this, Holy Spirit gives gifts to individuals who are prepared to receive them. These are not the same in all individuals. “There are

different kinds of gifts, but the same spirit. . . . . Now to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good”. Gift of healing, gift of prophecy and similar other gifts are given to different individuals as we see here. (1Corinthians 12: 4-31)

Graces or gifts may not be given to different individuals in the same measure and kind. They are bestowed to them so that everyone derives the benefits out of them. For example, one may get the gift of healing; but this is not to be used for selfish purposes or to earn name and fame. Such gifts are expected to be used for the benefit of others without fan fare and also without a desire for worldly profit. It shall be recalled that after performing miracles, our Lord strictly warned the beneficiaries not to tell others about them.

### **Worldly nature is transformed**

Though graces or gifts do not come to everyone in the same measure or kind, fruits of Spirit can come to everyone. With this, the worldly nature gets transformed. Desires of the flesh always stand related to death. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6: 23). Here the word death indicates not the physical death, but being removed from God’s Grace. Even when the body is alive, spiritual decay and death can happen. If we carry on our life in obedience to evil or Satan, certainly it is life controlled by desires of the flesh. St Paul teaches us about this: “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5: 19-21). When evil increases the acts of Holy Spirit are weakened. But, when Holy Spirit is active, worldly nature gets transformed to spiritual nature. St Paul says further: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.” (Galatians 5: 22). This can be considered as the criteria to find out whether an individual has grown spiritually or not. We can say that wherever these nine fruits are produced, Holy Spirit is active in that person. The faithful shall earn these fruits and gifts by taking part in the sacraments and prayers, observing lent and by fasting, and loving our neighbor as they love themselves.

The fruits of the Spirit are classified into three groups. This is done indicating our relation to God, to other human beings and to ourselves.

#### **1. Relation with God**

Through the relation with God, a believer reaches spiritual conditions of love, joy and peace. The Bible tells us, “God is Love” (1 St John 4: 9, 16). The eternal

nature of God is Love. Love unites everything and everybody. The late H G Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose taught that there must be a single religion of love in this universe.

Joy doesn't mean a sensual feeling of happiness derived from material objects. Instead it means that experience of being content and happy in God in spite of the abundance or shortage of material comforts or the experience of good and bad coming up one by one in one's life. Likewise, Holy Spirit gives peace to true devotees, which is not available in the material world.

## **2. The relation between men**

The true sign of spirituality is loving God and neighbor. We know that Jesus was fully God and fully man. As we grow in the likeness of Christ, the relation with men also will be set right. The relation with man grows deep and strong through patience, kindness and goodness. Our Lord has taught us to forgive our fellow beings seven times seventy and also to love our enemy. This is possible only if one possesses patience. Similarly, kindness that gives rise to empathy and sharing the sorrow of others, as well as extending a helping hand in their need, are all essentials of keeping good human relations.

## **3. Relation with self**

There are gifts of the Spirit which reveal an individual's spiritual condition in relation to one's self. Those who are humble always succeed in keeping good relations with others. The faithful shall be able to overcome evil temptations of Satan and will be able to exercise self control. They are to stay away from drinking and smoking and be controlled in food habits. Many fail to control their desires because they are not strengthened by Holy Spirit. We shall introspect our behavior in the light of these nine gifts to gauge our spiritual growth.

### **Activities**

1. How do you differentiate between gifts of Holy Spirit and fruits of Holy Spirit? What do we need more among the two for our spiritual growth?
2. Do you feel the gift or graces like healing shall be advertized? How do we evaluate the gift of healing we see in Television shows? Have a discussion on these.
3. What do you understand by the term 'worldly desires' or 'desires of the flesh'?

4. Arrange a role play in the class where nine students take up roles as the fruits of Spirit and let them come out with the peculiarities of different fruits as they understand.
5. Among all the gifts of Holy Spirit, which is the greatest? Have a discussion about this based on 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

### Resolution

**We shall try to live a life of Christian perfection and try to acquire the gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

### Prayer

*Come Holy Spirit, strengthen us in good life that we may love God and our neighbor. Amen.*

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Acts 8:14-18	St.John 14:12-17
Monday	St.John 15:23-27	St.John 14:25-28
Tuesday	St.John 16:7-15	St.John 16:7-15
Wednesday	Ephesians 1:1-7	Galatians 5:16-26
Thursday	Ephesians 1:15-23	Romans 8:12-17
Friday	Ephesians 6:1-9	Ephesians 1:7-14
Saturday	Ephesians 6:10-18	Acts 1:4-5

## Unit 7

# Introducing Great men

### Chapter 22

## St Anthoniose (St Antony of the Desert)

**The Message:** The Christian monks follow a life of abstinence, renunciation and self control. They renounce the world, their family and possessions. As ascetics, it is their attempt to follow the two commandments – Love of God and love of neighbor. St Antony is considered as the Father of monks or the first Christian Monk (Sanyasin) May his intercession be of refuge to us. Let us, in this lesson, try to understand more about Orthodox Monastic tradition.

**Verse to be memorized:** “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29)

### Text acquaintance

Monks are those who have accepted St Paul’s admonition (Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature: Romans 13: 14) and neglecting material comforts with all their temptations and live exclusively for Jesus Christ. Their contributions to the growth and stability of the Church, sustenance of faith, development of orders of worship and so on are quite substantial and invaluable.

### Introduction

Teacher: have you heard about Dayaras or Monasteries?

Students: Yes, teacher.

Teacher: Can you name some of the Dayaras?

Students: Yes, we will. Mount Tabor Dayara at Pathanapuram, Bethany Ashram at Ranni, Vallikkattu Dayara at Vakathanam, Pampadi Dayara.

Teacher: Right, we have many saintly fathers who have come up to the leadership of our Church from our monasteries. St Parumala Thirumeni, Pampadi Thirumeni, Geevarghese II Bava Thirumeni, Mathews II Bava Thirumeni, Didimos I Bava Thirumeni are all such saintly fathers. In this lesson we shall learn about St Anthoniose, who is considered as the one who instituted the monastic life in the Church.

### The lesson

Anthoniose was born at Keman, an Egyptian town, in 251 AD to Christian parents who were quite wealthy. But both his parents were called to heavenly abode before he completed 19 years of age. Anthoniose and his lone sister, inheriting large ancestral wealth continued to live at their parental house.

One day, Anthoniose while attending the church worship, listened to the gospel of the day which read, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, follow me." (Matthew 19: 21). This gospel passage was the narration of the incident where Jesus was talking to a rich man. It struck Anthoniose that Christ was talking to him direct. He, then, decided to obey what Jesus told him.

Anthoniose distributed all his wealth to the poor and the oppressed. But he took care to earmark part of it for his sister and entrusted her to a Christian family known to him. Thereafter, he proceeded, initially for 24 years, to Egyptian deserts to live as a monk and spent the time there in prayer and manual work. Whenever he planted a seedling, he used to recite Psalms, prayers and hymns. He renounced all worldly things and interests and led a life of prayer and meditation. The hard monastic life led by Anthoniose astonished the people and so, many people came to follow him and emulate him. St Antony visited his parent town twice. Once it was to encourage martyrs and to argue their cases in the courts of justice. His second home coming was at the age of 90 and this was to fight against the heresy propagated by Arius, and he stood behind the Nicene Creed strongly. Towards the end of his life, he came to be known all over the world and earned unprecedented acclaim. The number of those who followed him to the desert kept on increasing. Thus, St. Anthoniose came to be known as the 'Father of Monks' in the Christian Church.

### To Think over

1. What was the birth place of St Anthoniose?
2. In which year was he born?
3. When did his parent die?
4. Which Biblical verse inspired him to choose monastic life?
5. What did he do thereafter?
6. Which place was chosen by him for his monastic life?
7. How many years did he continue this monastic life?
8. How many times did he visit his parental town?
9. How is he known the world over?

### Activities

Try to visit some monasteries close to your place. Try to identify the names of those fathers of the Church who has taken the name Anthoniose.

### Let us pray

*Oh Father Anthoniose, you have left the world for the sake of our Lord and lived a life of monastic discipline in the desert; remember us in your prayers that we earn sufficient self control to defeat evil desires and ward off temptations. Amen.*

### Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Romans 12:1-15	Galatians 3:5-10
Monday	1 Peter 2:1-6	Galatians 3:11-22
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 2:13-15	Galatians 3:23-28
Wednesday	2 Thessalonians 3:1-5	Galatians 4:12-15
Thursday	Ephesians 5:1-6	Galatians 4:16-20
Friday	Ephesians 4:7-13	Galatians 1:3-14
Saturday	Ephesians 5:13-21	Galatians 1:15-23

## Chapter 23

# St Pakomiose

**The Message:** One's life becomes meaningful when he /she realizes God's will. St Pakomiose realized that God called him to enter monastic life and he did exactly that by throwing away the powerful military career he had. May the intercession of this saint help us understand what plans God has for each one of us. We shall, in this lesson, try to learn what these early Christian monks valued more than the worldly life.

**Verse to be memorized:** "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." (St John 17:16).

### Text acquaintance

To be successful in life, the characteristic called single – mindedness is an absolute necessity. To attain single – mindedness, one should practice unqualified self control. To attain self control, spiritual discipline such as fasting and contemplation are to be practiced. This is the principle of life for all. For our normal actions to succeed there should be an absolute concentration of mind and soul. It is a fact that the mind of a man is always wavering, and to bring it under control is really difficult. The ancient Indian sages had achieved the great divine power of releasing mind from the five senses by the chanting of the name of God. The sage Vatmeeki is a great example for this. The sage who was sitting in meditation for a long time didn't even know that he was covered by a termity. We have to try hard to be single minded so as to fully absorb what we learn. For this, it is necessary for us to practice the self discipline of our sages. This was the reason why students used to be called 'Brahmacharies' (celibates) during ancient times. St Pakomiose was a saintly monk who practiced this ascetic discipline and charity.

### Introduction

Teacher: Whom did we learn about in the last class?

Students: St.Anthoniose

Teacher: Right; we learnt about him in the previous lesson. You would remember we had mentioned about the monasteries of our Church. We also learned that St Anthoniose is considered as the father of Christian monks. But it is St Pakomiose who formulated monastic life as a systematic institution. We are going to learn about this saint in this lesson.

### **The lesson**

Pakomiose was born at Esna, a town in Egypt in 290 AD. His parents were non Christians and were also idol worshippers. During his youth, he was a soldier in the Roman Army. One day, he was sent to Ethiopia along with other soldiers. During this journey, they met many Christians in the rural areas. These people invited the soldiers to their houses and they washed their feet and fed them. Pakomiose was attracted by the hospitality of these Christians and was excited at their noble dealings. After the war, Pakomiose received baptism and became a Christian. He met a well known monk of that time called Palaemon and followed him.

Whenever a person came forward to join the monastery, Pakomiose used to examine his sincerity and commitment as well as the strength of his intention. Moreover, he used to test his disciples on their capacity to withstand worldly desires and temptations.

Pakomiose taught that to become a true monk, one should possess obedience, love of God, penury, celibacy, and piety. He gave importance to study of Bible and memorizing the Psalms and other Bible verses. He also taught the monks to read and write the Christian Creed of faith.

In AD 320, he set up a monastery on the banks of River Nile. He instituted certain common rules and regulations for monastic life. It was in this way the monasteries took shape and turned out to be the spiritual power houses of the Church. We do not know exactly when St Pakomiose died, but May 24 is observed as his day of remembrance.

#### **To Think over**

1. Which is the birth place of St Pakomiose?
2. In which year was he born?
3. Who were his parents?
4. What was his profession?
5. How was he attracted towards Christian life?
6. Who was responsible for Pakomiose to choose the monastic life?
7. What are the qualities of a true monastic life?

## Let us pray

*Our father St Pakomiose, pray for us that we are able to exercise sufficient self control to overcome worldly desires and sins, and grow in Christ likeness. Amen.*

## Resolution

**We shall practice self discipline and try to overcome the temptation of this world.**

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	Hebrews 11:17-20	Hebrews 12:1-9
Monday	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	Romans 12:1-10
Tuesday	Romans 6:1-8	St.John 17:20-23
Wednesday	St.Mark 2:13-28	1 Corinthians 15:20-28
Thursday	1 St.John 5:1-12	Ephesians 6:10-20
Friday	Ephesians 4:7-15	St.Mark 11:20-26
Saturday	Ephesians 2:8-9	St.Matthew 7:7-12

## Unit 8

# Good Habits

### Chapter 24

## Sacrifice – The Noblest Quality

**The Message:** Having got inspired by our Lord's sacrifice on the cross at Calvary, it should be the responsibility of we Christians to practice the spirit of sacrifice.

**Verse to be memorized:** "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." (Colossians 3:23)

### Introduction

Do we have the habit of helping others in difficulty? Let us prepare ourselves for a selfless life extending our hands of love to the needy. Let us be inspired to do so by the Holy Spirit.

### The lesson

How much of our time can we spend effectively for our Lord? God acts in this world through those who surrender their life to the will of God. In fact, God wants us to be His co workers. Are we prepared for this? If so, we must forsake selfishness and be ready to serve others. This is the beginning of a life of sacrifice.

We have heard people sacrificing their lives for noble causes. The greatest sacrifice is on the cross at Calvary. It is the sacrifice on the cross that saved humanity from perdition. He sacrificed His life for us. Let us recall the words of Jesus Christ here, "Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15: 13). We see the height of true love and sacrifice in Jesus Christ. Jesus knew his mission clearly which was to lay down his life for others. ". . . Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many." (Matthew 20: 28). It is this love that attracts people to Jesus. This love has

inspired many people. There are many disciples of Christ now in this world serving the oppressed and consoling the sick by forsaking their comforts for the sake of Jesus.

We learn several good things from nature. Birds and animals strive hard to take care of their offspring. Even by sacrificing their life, they ensure the survival their offspring out of any impending danger. But for those who sacrificed for the sake of others, this world would not have remained as we have it today.

Let us look at the lives of a few individuals who are great examples of sacrifice for the sake of others. Such great personalities are real sources of inspiration for all.

A Catholic nun was travelling in train from Darjeeling to Kolkata late in the night. It was in the year 1948, shortly after India got independence. She had heard about the lepers who were wandering around in the city of Kolkata. She had also heard about infants being abandoned in the streets of Kolkata. But that night the voice of Jesus pierced her heart like a lightning. "I will tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me". (Matthew 25: 40). The nun took a bold decision instantly. 'I will go to these slums and try to give a decent life to these orphans and the poor'. She implemented this resolve in letter and spirit. This nun is none other than Mother Teresa, who came to be known as the 'Mother of Destitutes' later. It was Christ's sacrifice on the cross that inspired Mother Teresa and thousands of such other servants of Christ to live for the poor and the neglected.

Dr Albert Schweitzer, a great scholar, philosopher, doctor, and musician abandoned all the worldly comforts and social standing and went to the unexplored interior forest areas of Africa to serve the uneducated and uncivilized tribal people. This great sacrifice made him known all over the world. And through him, many in Africa could come to know about Jesus.

Fr. Damien was yet another great soul who sacrificed his life for lepers. The teachings of Jesus got embedded in this young man very deeply, which made him sacrifice his life for the lepers in the Island of Molokkoi. His life is a great symbol of a life of sacrifice. He cherished a thought that he would carry out his service as an unknown man to this world. But against wishes, his name spread across the world far and wide. A news paper in Hawaii wrote about him in 1881, "Fr Damien, who set apart his life for lepers who were considered untouchable and unapproachable by all the people, is a great lover of humanity in the history mankind and the epitome of sacrifice to mankind". Fr Damien lived with lepers and died as a leper; serving the lepers, he laid down his life for them. He has been beatified by the Roman catholic Church.

In the Malankara Church, there were great Church fathers who led a life of service worth emulating. Let try to know more about some of them.

- \* **The late HG Pathrose Mar Osthathiose** moved among the marginalized segments of our society where many of the ‘untouchable’ people were suffering a lot not only out of poverty, but also because of neglect and contempt from the higher caste people. His Grace spent the whole of his life for the upliftment of such oppressed people and founded the Missionary society called ‘Sleeba Dasa Samooham’ (Servants of the Cross Society)
- \* All over India, there are many children born to parents suffering from leprosy as well as children of parents suffering from aids. Though these children have not been affected the dreaded decease, they were not welcome in the mainstream of the society. **The late Sabharatna HG Dr Geevarghese Mar Osthathiose** set up institutions at many places to look after these children which helped them to grow as healthy children and many have built up good career and are occupying responsible positions in society.
- \* **The late HG Mathews Mar Barnabas** was a model of humility and was serving among the sick and marginalized providing them assistance as well as working hard among youth for their spiritual growth.

These were three of our fathers among others who showed us how to live to the call of God sacrificing our time and talents, and even life for the poor and the suffering.

If we are living a life of comfort today, it must be born in mind that it would have not been possible had it not been for the hard work and sacrifice of many others. Our parents have made a lot of sacrifices on their part for our better future.

There can be sacrifice only if there is love. Love without sacrifice can never be true love. Love without sacrifice becomes weak.

God has given us talents which are to be used in His service. We should not expect some gain for us, but look forward to do something for God. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6: 33). “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in various forms.”(1 St Peter 4:10). We shall surrender before God all those gifts, talents, hopes and dreams so that he will enable us to put them for Godly purposes.

## Activities

1. Which is the greatest of all sacrifices in this world?
2. From world history, mention three examples of great sacrifices. Write down the names of those three individuals.
3. Try to look for a few other people who are examples of such sacrifices and make short notes on each of them.
4. Identify a few models of great sacrifices in Malankara Church.

## Let us pray

*Oh God, enable us to experience your love and do good for others sacrificing our self interest. Amen.*

## Resolution

**We shall use our God given talents for the glory of God and work in the Church to spread the message of Kingdom of God, and through such selfless service, please our Lord.**

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday		St.Matthew 19:27-29
Monday	Philippines 1:1-11	St.John 3:10-16
Tuesday	Hebrews 10:8-18	St.Luke 18:28-30
Wednesday	Romans 8:28--30	St.Luke 17:33-37
Thursday	Isaiah 55:9-13	1 St.John 3:16-18
Friday	Romans 8:37--39	Romans 12:1-5
Saturday	2 St.Peter 3:8-18	2 St.Peter 1:1-7

## Chapter 25

# Respect and Observe the Law

**The Message:** We need to observe the Laws given by God and laws of the land for the development of our families and society at large.

**Verse to be memorized:** “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men.” (1 St Peter 2:13)

### Introduction

We need to follow certain guidelines in this world where we live. In the absence of some sort of guidelines, our individual and social lives become miserable. It is the will of God that we shall lead disciplined lives. By enforcement of law, certain restrictions fall on everyone. Why should there be such laws? This lesson will make us realize the significance of laws and how beneficial they are for social welfare.

### The lesson

Very often we reach school before time and if so, what do we do there? Some of us spend the time playing whereas some others keep talking to friends. There are some others who may go to the school library and read some books or news papers. But when the bell rings indicating school time, everybody rushes to their class rooms. Why do we do so? We do so because that is the rule at the school. If we obey the school rules, our teachers will appreciate us. Laws maintain a general discipline, which is for the common good.

### The Law in the Bible

After creating man and placing him in the Garden of Eden, God gave man freedom of will. But there was one restriction: “.....But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2: 17). Man was created with freedom of will - to choose good or evil. But this restriction was imposed on him to make him understand that he had to depend on God for everything.

During the time of Moses, God gave Laws to His people for them to lead pure and disciplined lives. God provided people of Israel the Ten Commandments through Moses (Exodus 20: 1-17). Further, as and when the need arose, God used to pass on directives through His prophets. Later, Jesus interpreted these commandments in a simple way.

Peter one day came to Jesus and told him about the demand of tax collectors, but Jesus said, he being the Son of God was not bound to pay tax to the temple. However he said further to Peter, “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours” (Luke 17: 27). Here we see the one who is the creator of the universe, subjecting Himself to the law of the land.

Any community needs certain laws for its sustenance and existence. The community has the authority to implement it through a system formulated by it. Members of that community are bound to obey them and be subject to those laws.

### **Unwritten laws**

Nature is sustained by adherence to certain laws. The sun, moon, stars, water, stone, soil and all such objects are controlled by laws of nature. It is as per these laws we see water flowing only downwards, the earth moves around the sun and so on. These laws of nature form the basis for scientific laws and principles.

Compared to material objects, living objects are subject to certain other laws too. These laws can be called laws for living beings. It is a law of nature that pollination takes place in plants through butterflies. There are laws of ethics practiced among men. Such laws prompt men to desist from evil and live in goodness.

### **Written laws**

Human beings live as a community and as nations and therefore laws are necessary for protecting the rights of men, which is the responsibility of the nation. By birth, men are selfish and this prompts men to deny the rights of other men resulting in disorders in public life. If someone threatens the safety of life and property of fellow beings, that disturbs the harmony of the community. Under such circumstances, laws are necessary for keeping order and protecting the rights of men. And, these gave rise to written law.

## Why do we need laws?

All the laws are meant for the well being of the society. Those who walk on the road or drive vehicles shall obey the traffic rules. The rules are meant for the safety of road users. Law curtails evil; and can also breed the good.

To follow all laws of the land is obligatory. This is not to respect the nation alone but also to respect our fellow beings. Once we do everything as per our choice alone, we may be causing inconvenience and disturbance to others. Laws are formulated to protect the interests of all.

## Laws are to ensure justice

Justice makes sure that one gets what he / she deserves. When justice is denied to a person, law comes to his relief. The constitution of the country ensures that everyone gets his due of justice as fundamental right. To have a welfare nation, there must be a legal system in force for everyone to enjoy justice.

## Law enforcement departments

Even if men are aware of the law of land, there are tendencies to ignore law. This results in breaking of law in the society quite often. Under such situations, authorities need to act.

## Law given by God

All powers come from God (Romans 13: 1-3), but some powers may turn satanic too (Book of Revelation 13: 1). Our civil laws must be formulated in such a way that they are in line with God given laws. Always, remember that our obligation to God is the most important.

## Hymn

Teacher may help the student to sing an english hymn connected with this lesson

## Let us pray

*Oh Lord our creator, kindly take us through the path of truth and justice so that we live in line with your Laws. Amen.*

## Resolution

**We will obey the law of the land as well as show respect to them subjecting ourselves to God given laws throughout our lives.**

## Note

- \* Have you heard about the Right to Information Act (RIA) implemented in India? By this law, a citizen has the right to know everything that happens in the country except certain matters of confidentiality particularly related to the defense of the nation.
- \* Laws are meant for the welfare of people. God's commands too must be understood the same way. God gave the Ten Commandments to Israelites so that fear of God, love, love of fellow beings, justice, truthfulness and such virtues shall prevail. The Beatitudes in Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 1-11) can be said to be an explanation for the Ten Commandments. All laws are aimed at the good of the people. Laws are also for controlling evil. We have to appreciate the laws of the land as well as God given laws in this background. All laws are for good. Laws do not curtail our freedom. On the other hand, they are for protecting our freedom.

## Further Reading

Day	Morning	Evening
Sunday	*	1 St.Peter 5:1-11
Monday	1 St.Peter 2:13-17	Romans 13:1-7
Tuesday	Exodus 22:1-3	Romans 9:19-26
Wednesday	1 Corinthians-. 10:23-33	St.John 18:28-32
Thursday	1 Timothy 2:22-26	Romans 16:17-0
Friday	St.Matthew 5:43-48	Ephesians 4:25-32
Saturday	1 St.John 4:19-21	St.Matthew 5:21-26

