

Katechein

ST. THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Little Flower Mission League (LFML)

Read about the LFML spiritual diary, Diocesan support group and zonal leaders.

[See Pages 4, 5, 6 for details](#)

Safe Environment for our Students

What to keep in mind as we initiate summer activities for young children and start student registration for next year?

[See Page 8 for details](#)

How to Engage the students during summer

- Vacation Bible School
- Faith in Action (Community Charity Activities)

[See Pages 14 and 15 for some helpful suggestions](#)



MESSAGE FROM BISHOP JACOB ANGADIATH

My dear teachers, parents, and children:

Glory to God in the Highest! Amen.

Several national surveys among the Catholics have alarmingly concluded that majority of the Catholics do not believe the “real presence” of Jesus in the Eucharist. Most people, sadly, believes that the Holy Eucharist, is just a “memorial”. Indeed, the true center of the Holy Qurbana, and the whole of Christian life, is the Eucharist.

For next three years (2022, 2023 and 2024) the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has called for a Eucharistic Revival. From June 19, 2022 – June 11, 2023, the focus will be on bishops, priests, religious, lay leaders within the diocese to respond to the Lord’s personal invitation and equips them to share this love with the faithful through Eucharistic conferences, adoration, and other events. I ask all the Sunday School teachers along with the priests to foster Eucharistic devotion at the parish and mission level, strengthening our liturgical life through faithful celebration of the Holy Qurbana, Eucharistic Adoration and processions, teaching, training, retreats, preaching, etc.

I invite all teachers to take part in this Eucharistic Renewal for our Church by following three things. First, I invite all the teachers to read the 9th grade Syro-Malabar Sunday School textbook, which discusses Holy Eucharist. Second, educate our children about the “real presence” of Jesus in the Eucharist. That Jesus is present, “Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity” in the Eucharist. The diocese has prepared few short videos, which will be sent later this Summer to all parishes. Third, encourage each class to spend at least half an hour a Sunday, instead of the Sunday School class that day in Adoration. The teacher should explain to the children and teach them about the “real presence” and then bring them for adoration in front of our Lord.

Revival is not a step-by-step plan or a series of meetings; it is a grassroots call and a challenge for every Catholic across the United States to rekindle the fire of love and devotion for the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. Let us all join the Catholics across the United States, healed, converted, formed, and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.

Sincerely in Jesus

Mar Jacob Angadiath
Bishop

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" **(2 Cor 13:14)**

We recently celebrated the birthday of the Church, and we are currently in the season commemorating the early formation of the Church led by the apostles who were renewed by the Holy Spirit on the day of the Pentecost. Although our catechetical program is in recess for summer vacation, this is hardly a time to lose the momentum in children's faith formation activities. Let us remember that faith formation is a constant, lifelong activity and does not stop at the boundaries of academic years and summer vacations. Let us equip them to continue their formation during the summer months and to feel energized with what the Holy Spirit has done in their lives throughout the past academic year, through all of you.

Many parishes are organizing Vacation Bible School (VBS) during the summer break. I want to applaud you for continuing the faith formation activities even during the summer vacation.

Two feast days are coming up in July that are very significant for our Syro Malabar church - Dukhrana, feast of our patron St. Thomas **(July 3rd)** and the feast of St. Alphonsa, first saint of the Syro Malabar Church **(July 28th)**. With early planning, we could involve our students in these celebrations as well and expose them to the significance of these events to our Mother Church.

I want to draw your attention to the message from our Bishop (on page 1) about Eucharistic Renewal of our Church. As members of the Catechetical Ministry, we have an important role to play in this revival. I encourage all of you to follow the three items that Bishop has laid out to rekindle the fire of love for the Eucharistic Heart within us and to impart this love to others.

We have completed another challenging academic year, which had its share of twists and turns as we all navigated through the fluctuations of the pandemic incidences. I appreciate the effort of all catechists who contributed to the faith formation activities in this year. On behalf of our Bishop and the Catechetical Department, let me thank you all for your selfless service to our next generation, through this ministry.

Congratulations to the Dei Verbum Bible Quiz organizers, winners and all the participants! The interest you have shown in learning the Word of God and preparing for the competition is admirable.

We trust that these quarterly Katechein newsletters are useful to you. We would like to hear your feedback and suggestions for new content in upcoming editions.

Happy Feast of Dukarana!

May the Blessing of Almighty be with you and your family!!

Fr. Dr. George Danavelil

Chief Editor



Katechein

A Quarterly Catechetical E- Journal

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EDITORIAL BOARD



Congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS TO REV. FR. JOEL PIUS, NEWLY ORDAINED PRIEST OF OUR DIOCESE!



His priestly ordination was held at St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Georgia on May 28, 2022.

He is the 6th priest from the second generation of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago.

Fr. Joel's favorite Bible verse:

John 6:68 – "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Fr. Joel Pius is a contributor to the e-journal. We are all very happy for you, Fr. Joel!

LITTLE FLOWER MISSION LEAGUE – DIOCESAN SUPPORT GROUP

This year, the Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) or the Little Flower Mission League (LFML), has been very active in our diocese. During 2021-2022 academic year, Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath appointed Rev. Dr. George Danavelil as the Director and Rev. Sr. Agnes Maria, MSMI, as the Joint Director of LFML. Under their leadership, a diocesan support group was organized. Due to this leadership, approximately 50 parishes/missions currently have an LFML unit organized at their parish/mission. The department appreciate this diocesan leadership team for their tremendous efforts and hard work. Following are the members.

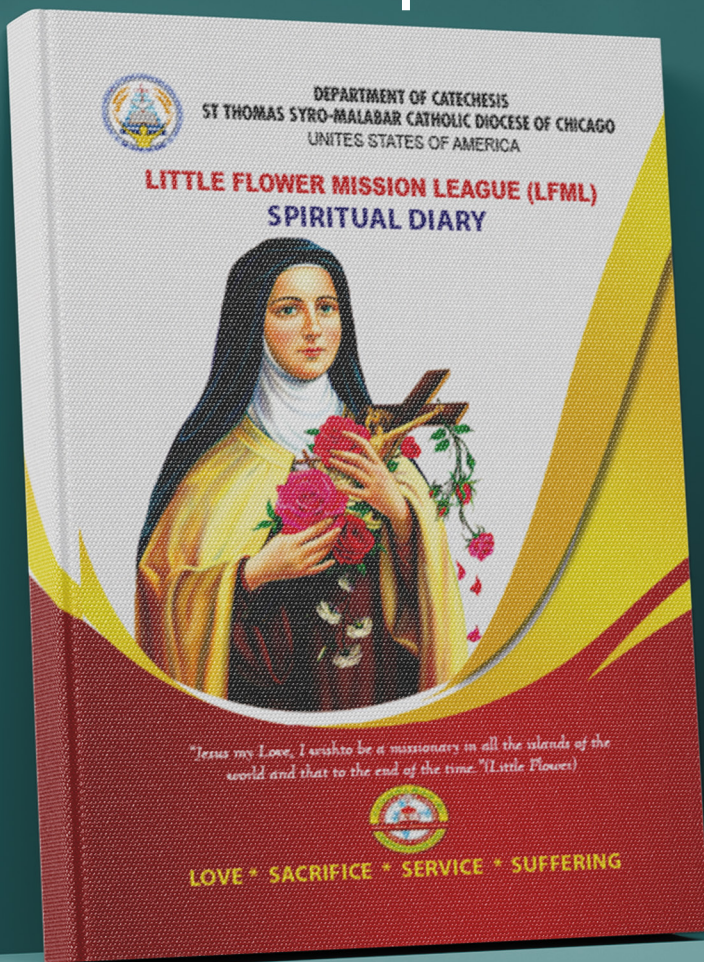


1	Fr. George Danavelil, Director, LFML	Director, Department of Faith Formation
2	Sr. Agnes Maria MSMI, Joint Director, LFML	St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Pearland, TX
3	Fr. Bins Chethalil	Vicar, Christ the King Knanaya Catholic Church, Carteret, NJ
4	Fr. Dels Kattupalath	Vicar, St. Jude Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, South Jersey, NJ
5	Mr. Cijoy Cyriac	Christ the King Knanaya Catholic Church, Carteret, NJ
6	Mr. Jimmichan Mulavana	St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Los Angeles, CA
7	Mrs. Sophia Mathew	St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Somerset, NJ
8	Mr. Tison Thomas	St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Baltimore, MD

LFML SPIRITUAL DIARY

The diocese has drafted a new LFML Spiritual Diary to be used within each LFML unit. This will be available for Academic year, 2022. The cost of one diary is \$3.

A link to request the spiritual diary will be sent to all the, Vicars/Mission Directors, LFML Zonal Leaders, and Sunday School Principals later.



LFML ZONAL LEADERS AND DIOCESAN LIAISONS FOR 2021-2022

Congratulations to those who volunteered to assist with the development and growth of LFML in every parish/mission within our diocese. Each Zone has a general organizer and two organizers to assist with the LFML Zonal activities. The following volunteers are appointed for the academic year ending August 2022. Thanks for coordinating and providing leadership at the Zonal level. Congratulations!

Zone	General Organizer	Organizer(s)	Diocesan Liaison
MIDWEST ZONE (Parishes/Missions under the Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral, Bellwood, IL)	Mrs. Divya Akkarapetty (St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Mission, Columbus, OH)	(1) Mrs. Meera Rohit (St. Chavara Syro-Malabar Catholic Mission, Cincinnati, OH) (2) Ms. Faith Puthenpurackal (Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral, Bellwood, IL)	Sr. Agnes Maria MSMI (Joint Director, LFML)
EAST ZONE (Parishes/Missions under the Forane Churches of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church Philadelphia, PA & St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Somerset, NJ)	Mrs. Saji Sebastian (St. George Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Patterson, NJ)	(1) Mrs. Jasmine Antony (St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Long Island, NY) (2) Mr. Binu Sebastian (St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Baltimore, MD)	Mrs. Sophia Mathew (Diocesan Core Group Member)
SOUTHEAST ZONE (Parishes/Missions under the Forane Churches of St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Atlanta, GA & Our Lady of Health Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Coral Springs, FL)	Mrs. Sonia Benoy (St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Charlotte, NC)	(1) Mrs. Anu Jacob (St. Mother Theresa Mission Church, Nashville, TN) (2) Mrs. Dixie Shanu (Our Lady of Health Syro-Malabar Forane Catholic Church, Orlando, FL)	Mr. Tison Thomas (Diocesan Core Group Member)
WEST ZONE (Parishes/Missions under the Forane Church of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Santa Ana, CA)	Mr. Bineesh Urumese (St. Teresa of Calcutta Syro-Malabar Catholic Mission, Livermore, CA)	(1) Mrs. Sheji Irumpan (St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, San Francisco, CA) (2) Mrs. Priyanka Mary Christine (Holy Family Mission, Seattle, WA)	Mr. Jimmichan Mulavana (Diocesan Core Group Member)
SOUTHWEST ZONE (Parishes/Missions under the Forane Churches of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Forane Church, Garland, TX & St. Joseph's Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Houston, TX)	Mrs. Shilpa Joshy (Holy Family Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, OK)	(1) Mr. Joshy Joseph (St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Church, Pearland, TX) (2) Ms. Ann Tomy (St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Coppell, TX)	Sr. Agnes Maria MSMI (Joint Director, LFML)
KNANAYA REGION (All parishes/missions under the Knanaya Forane Churches)	Mr. Cijoy Cyriac (Christ the King Knanaya Church, Carteret, NJ)	(1) Mrs. Suja Ethithara (St. Mary's Knanaya Catholic Forane Church, Chicago, IL) (2) Sr. Sandra, SVM (Sacred Heart Knanaya Forane Catholic Church, Tampa, FL)	Mr. Cijoy Cyriac (Diocesan Core Group Member)

2021-22 MANDATORY SESSIONS FOR NEW TEACHERS – THANK YOU

A mandatory session for new Sunday School teachers in our diocese was held from December 2021 through January 2022. These five sessions provided an overview of Syro-Malabar textbooks, effective teaching methods, Holy Qurbana, teaching resources, etc.

More than 650 teachers registered for these trainings. The Department of Faith Formation appreciates the presenters and the participants.

Following were the sessions and the presenters:

THANK YOU to all presenters (pictured here)



Topic	Speaker/Resource Person	Date Conducted
Rediscovering the Bible	Rev. Thomas Pulickal	December 04, 2021
Learning to Lead Discussions in your Classrooms	Mr. Taylor Schroll	December 11, 2021
A study on the Syro-Malabar Catechetical Textbook Series	Rev. Dr. George Danavelil	December 18, 2021
Making Faith Formation interesting for our kids	Rev. Sr. Deanna Therese Love Ms. Sharon Thomas	January 15, 2022
The Intertwining of Holy Qurbana and Faith Formation	Rev. Fr. Melvin Mangalath	January 22, 2022

***Safe Environment for our Children and Youth
Message from the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth
St Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago***



SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ST THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Another summer is here, and the children are out of school to enjoy a summer vacation. The children have completed another school year and are getting ready for the next level in their respective academic institutions. An immense appreciation goes to the parish priests, DREs, and the catechists for their affection and the care for our precious children.

We have introduced a well-structured safety training program for our children. Several parishes have adapted and implemented the “Empowering God’s Children” program. The goal is to prepare our children to become powerful to deal with unpleasant situations and protect themselves wisely.

As we have already started the student registration for the next academic year, the schools may also be occupied with soliciting new volunteers for the school. We must ensure the completion of the background check and preliminary safety training for all volunteers before starting the service. This process should take place before the orientation session. The background check should be one of the qualifying criteria for attending the orientation session. Activities like creating a Virtus account and applying for background checks are

possible at any time and can be done in the privacy of anyone’s home.

Remarkably, the parishes are initiating summer activities for young children. Please note that seniors planning activities outside the curriculum of the Sunday School should follow the guidelines established by the diocese to protect the children. The authorities of the parish and the parents should be aware of such programs, and parents’ consent forms should be signed and documented as applicable.

As we prepare for the annual audit by an agency authorized by the USCCB, we request the local site admins take time to clean up the database so that the data reported at annual collection will match the data found in the database. We will be sending out the data collection forms in the second week of July. The audit period is from July 1, 2021, thru June 30, 2022. We will appreciate the timely return of the completed data forms.

The Office for the Protection of Children and Young People team members wish you all God’s protection and a safe and fun-filled summer. God bless.

From Thomas Moolayil, Executive Director



ENGAGING FAITH FORMATION - LINKS

RESOURCES DISCUSSED IN
SUMMER LEARNING SEMINAR
'MAKING FAITH FORMATION
INTERESTING FOR OUR KIDS'.



PRAYER VIDEO RESOURCES

[The Pope Video](#)
[Manna Media: Scripture](#)
[Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network: Apostleship of Prayer](#)
[Saint of the Day](#)

OTHER VIDEO RESOURCES

[Rome Reports: News from the Vatican](#)
[Formed](#)
[Ascension Presents](#)
[Word on Fire](#)

CATECHETICAL RESOURCES

[Catholic Answers](#)
[Made this Way: Prepare Kids to Face Today's Tough Moral Issues](#)
[Theology of the Body](#)
[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

[Rubber Band Cup Stack Challenge](#)
[Marshmallow Spaghetti Tower Challenge](#)
[Water Suspension Magic Trick](#)

GAMIFICATION RESOURCES

[Kahoot](#)
[Jeopardy Labs](#)
[Quizlet](#)
[Blooket](#)
[Quizizz](#)

MEDITATION RESOURCES

[Pope Francis' Catechesis on Meditation](#)
[Explanation of Catholic Mindfulness](#)
[Headspace](#)
[Hallow Catholic App](#)
[USCCB: Meditation & Lectio Divina](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ⇒ **KAHOOT** (<https://kahoot.com/>) for the chapter 9, Grade 6
<https://create.kahoot.it/details/grade-6-chapter-9-jesus-who-taught-us-forgiveness/4ef9b49e-2ff3-4feb-a990-11a7dd011fcc>
- ⇒ **Link for Paper Cross lesson** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaxfBeDnsyg>
- ⇒ **Bible Quiz - JEOPARDY! Game** <http://youthdownloads.com/games/jeopardy-powerpoint-template>
- ⇒ **CCC Online Book:** [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)
- ⇒ [Catholic Lesson Plans](#)
- ⇒ [Catholic Resources](#)
- ⇒ [FREE Catholic Lesson Plans](#)
- ⇒ [catholicmom](#)
- ⇒ [Sophia Institute for Teachers](#)
- ⇒ [Lesson Planning](#)
- ⇒ [Catholic Icing — Catholic Crafts and More for Kids](#)
- ⇒ [Lesson Plans for National Vocation Awareness Week \(Grades K8-\)](#)
- ⇒ **Discerning Priesthood, Being a Priest Today**
- ⇒ [Discernment guide](#)
- ⇒ Life Teen: [LifeTeen.com for Catholic Youth | Leading Teens Closer to Christ](#)

CHERUPUSHPA MISSION LEAGUE

ST ALPHONSA SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC CHURCH, COPPELL

Reception Prayer. CCD Coordinators and Joint Directors of LFML Ambili Jagan and Shijo Joseph also joined to congratulate the newly initiated Little Flower Mission League members.

The very first Little Flower Mission League Meeting of St Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Church, Coppell was held on the same day. All the new members were presented with



With the grace of the Lord Almighty and the support and guidance of the Diocesan Joint Director of LFML Sr Agnes Maria MSMI, the Little Flower Mission League was inaugurated at St Alphonsa Syro Malabar Catholic Church, Coppell TX on March 27, 2022. The parish community is extremely happy to kickstart the league on this Platinum Jubilee year of Mission League.

Parish Vicar and Parish Level LFML Director, Fr Jacob Christy Parambukattil presided over the inaugural procession. The parish youth choir beautifully sang the Mission League Anthem as the inaugural procession walked into the church holding the LFML banner and the portrait of St. Therese of Lisieux, the heavenly patron of the Mission League, followed by the LFML flag.

Fr Jacob Christy and visiting priest Fr Augustine Chennathu received the newly initiated Mission League members at the altar and the parish community joined in the Mission League

their member badges by the LFML animators - Rosemary Alapatt and Ann Tomy. During the first meeting, the members were educated on the aim of the Mission League and the motto of Love, Sacrifice, Service, and Suffering. The members were introduced to the daily LFML prayer and the spiritual



diary. Parish Level LFML student representatives were selected to lead the members in the missionary activities and to foster the mission spirit among the student community. The members have since then been divided into groups of 7 members each. There are 8 groups so far in the parish and we are looking forward to adding more new members. Going forward, the group members will be leading the Divine Mercy Chaplet Prayer before the Sunday English Mass and the First Friday Adorations in the parish. Many exciting and fun projects and activities are in planning to foster the missionary spirit among the LFML members.



EPARCHIAL CATECHETICAL COUNCIL MEETING: THURSDAY, JULY 14-15, 2022

The Eparchial Catechetical Council will be meeting in person at the Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral from 5:00 p.m. Thursday, July 14, 2022, to 2:30 p.m. Friday, July 15, 2022. The Eparchial Catechetical Council is a consultative body and is an important body within the Diocese. Its members are appointed by the bishop. Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath, Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt, Most Rev. Thomas Kadukappally, Most Rev. Thomas Mulavanal, Rev. Dr. George Danavelil, Rev. Fr. Joseph Mathew Adoppillil, Rev. Fr. Kevin Mundackal, Mr. Kevin Joseph, Mrs. Annie Nellikunnel, Rev. Sr. Agnes Maria, Mr. Luke Edamana, Mr. Saji Poothrukayil, and Mr. Tison Thomas are the members of the council.

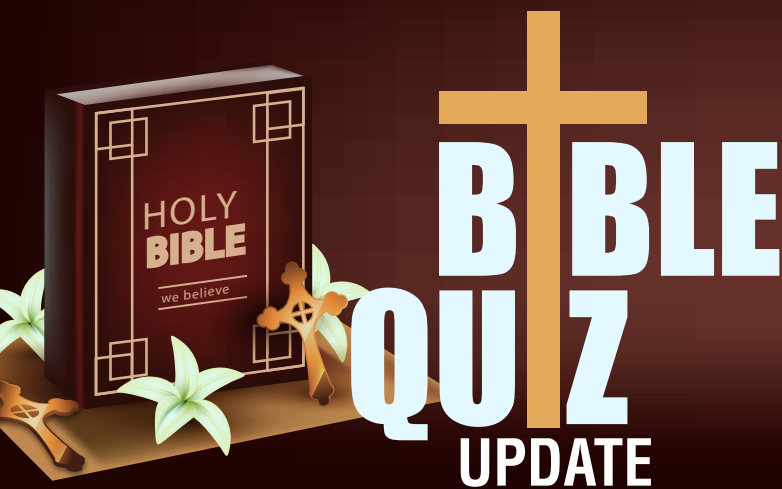


ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S MEETING: SATURDAY, JULY 16, 2022

The diocesan annual Sunday School Principal's meeting will be held virtually from 11:00 p.m. CST through 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 16, 2022. Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath and Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt will be participating. Rev. Dr. George Danavelil, Director of the Department of Faith Formation will provide updates, any new requirements, and actions. The diocesan Safe Environment team will give their updates. Principals will also get an opportunity to ask questions or clarify any concerns.

Please ensure the principal or his or her designee attends this meeting. If the principal has any specific agenda item, kindly send it to Tison Thomas, Eparchial Catechetical Council Secretary at tisonthomas395@gmail.com.

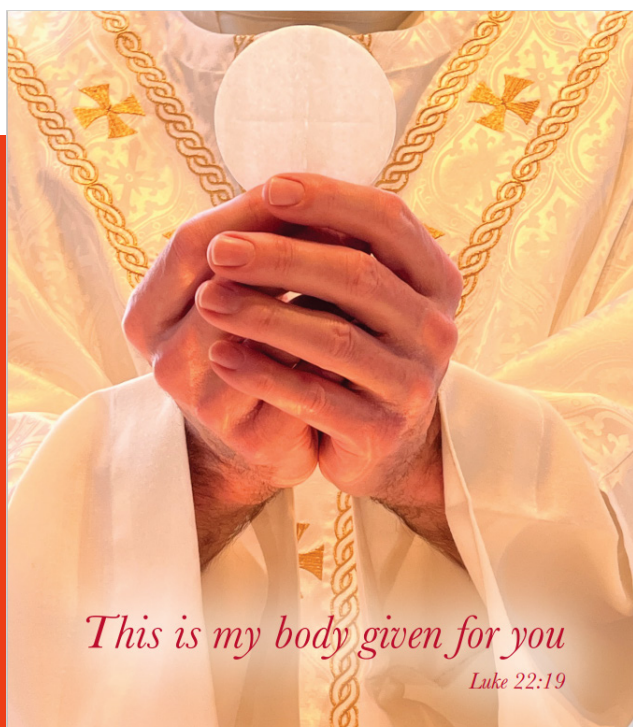
DEI VERBUM



This year, Dei Verbum Bible Quiz was a grand success. The department extends a warm appreciation and gratitude to the entire diocesan Dei Verbum Bible Quiz Team that coordinated the three phases of the training with approximately 5000 participants. Thanks to the leadership of

Rev. Fr. Mathew Kurian Munjanattu, Mr. Francis Thomas, Mr. Nixon Philip, and the entire team that worked behind the scenes. May God bless you abundantly for this most important activity.

The Dei Verbum Bible Quiz Finale will be held virtually on Saturday, July 16, 2022, from 5:00 p.m. CST to 6:00 p.m. CST. During the finale, the 2022 winners will be honored. A link to join the virtual meeting will be shared later. The department encourages the Sunday School Principals, Bible Quiz coordinators, winners, and their parents to attend the finale. Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath and Bishop Mar Joy Alappatt will be attending.



This is my body given for you

Luke 22:19



CATECHETICAL SUNDAY | September 18, 2022
UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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CATECHETICAL SUNDAY: SEPTEMBER 18, 2022

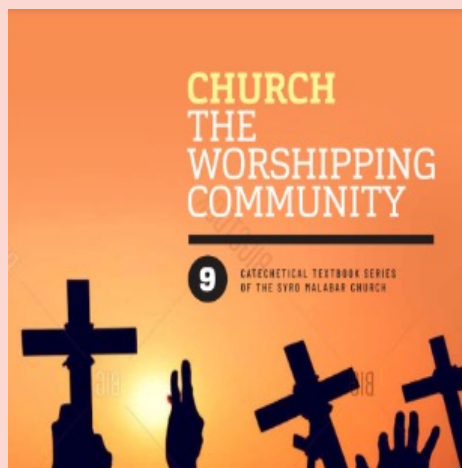
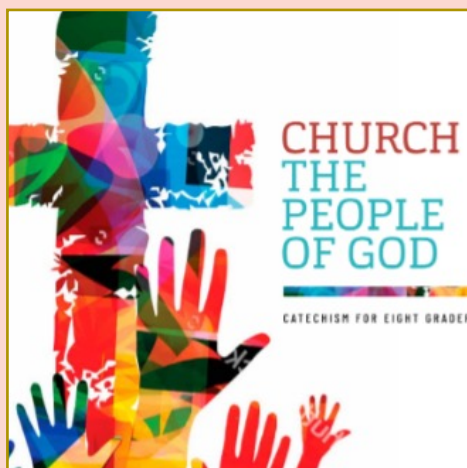
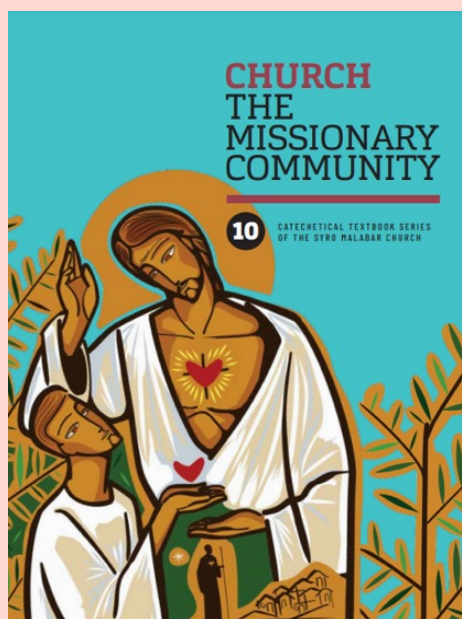
Catechetical Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the role that each person plays, by virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel.

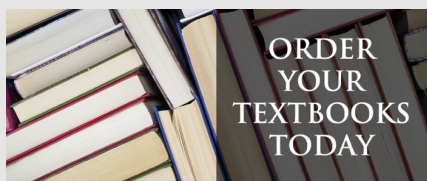
This year, the Church will celebrate Catechetical Sunday on September 18, 2022, and the theme is: "This is my body given for you". Those who the parish community has designated to serve as catechists will be called forth to be commissioned for their ministry. This day is set apart by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to educate and acknowledge the importance of faith formation. It's also a special occasion to appreciate all the Sunday School teachers; for participating in the faith formation efforts within our parishes/missions.

TEXTBOOK REVISIONS

The eighth grade, ninth grade and tenth grade textbooks were revised with new formatting, look and feel. Without changing the Syro-Malabar Synod approved contents, under the leadership and guidance of Rev. Dr. George Danavelil, added additional activities that complement the already approved contents, including questions and activities from the YouCat. Under the guidance of Rev. Dr. George Danavelil, the textbook revision workgroup revised the language, including spelling and grammar based on U.S. English. Bible Verses were rewritten based on the New American Bible. For the year 2022, the department is planning to revise grade 5, 6, and 7 textbooks.

The pictures included here are the covers of Grade 8, 9 and 10 textbooks.





TEXTBOOK ORDERS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-23

The Department of Faith Formation is requesting parishes/missions to submit their textbook orders for Sunday School Textbooks for the next academic year.

[The order form is at Textbooks Order Form](#)

Please note that this year, the 10th-grade textbook is revised. The 8th and 9th grade textbooks were revised in the previous years. The address listed in the google registration form is where the books will be shipped.

Books will be shipped by the end of August.

EPARCHIAL CATECHETICAL QUESTION BOARD

The eparchial catechetical question board assist the department with the development and distribution of the first and second semester questionnaires for grades 1 through 12. The commitment, dedication and hard work of the question board members are much appreciated. Thank you!

Books will be shipped by the end of August.

THE QUESTION BOARD MEMBERS ARE:



Mr. Luke Edamana

Chair, Mar Thoma Sleeha
Cathedral, Chicago, IL

Mrs. Anju Sebastian

Secretary, St. Alphonsa
Syro-Malabar Forance
Catholic Church, Atlanta, GA



**Mrs. Preethy
Thomas**

St. Thomas Syro Malabar
Catholic Church, San
Francisco, CA



Mrs. Roshen Binoy

St. Thomas Syro Malabar
Catholic Church, Somerset,
NJ



SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CATECHISM STUDENTS

ORGANIZE THE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

celebrations in July. We celebrate the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, our father in faith on July 3rd and St. Alphonsa on July 28th. Feasts always present a good opportunity for parents and teachers to catechize their children. Simply combine a celebration with an explanation of the significance of that day. With the feast of St. Thomas arises an opportunity to teach children about the importance of evangelization and prayer for the Gift of Faith. St. Alphonsa led a quiet life. Her life reminds us that holiness isn't a distant concept for the future, but it is something we need to choose now. So, be creative in making connections and have fun with this part of planning your feast day celebrations!



VBS is a faith formation process for children. The purpose is to involve them in the activities that will give them the opportunity to learn about God. It is an easy way to get kids involved in the church. It is usually a week-long event, with sessions lasting a few hours or more each day. The formats followed can vary. VBS is like a camp, with fun and very interactive learning. They usually have a creative theme and include Bible stories, songs, crafts, games, snacks, and more. You may want to call it a "Vacation Bible Camp". Catholic publishers sell VBS kits, which generally include a curriculum, music, and supporting items to get you started. VBS does not need to be complex, expensive, or work-intensive to be fun and successful. Start with something that is doable for you and have fun with your kids!

The most obvious reason for offering VBS is that it is an effective way to form kids in our catholic faith. The interactive learning environment and fun factor not only offer kids a great experience, but they drive home core faith values and facilitate learning. The catchy songs and daily themes stick in their minds, and everything they do during the day reinforces those themes.



FAITH IN ACTION

Faith must be followed with actions that are consistent with what we believe. Just having faith is not enough. Having the ability to believe is not enough. James tells us that faith without corresponding actions is lifeless and dead. In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:17). Mercy, charity, and love all have a place in our daily life. One must live rather than merely profess faith. One must be a church rather than just attend one. Actions are needed to bring faith to life.

TEN PRACTICAL WAYS TO PUT FAITH INTO ACTION

As we strive to teach kids how to live out the Gospel, serving is a great way to invite them to share Christ's sacrificial love with others. It will help children to live out their faith in practical ways. You can select an idea below or create your own project.



1. Serve Breakfast: Have students cook and sell lunch to church members after a Sunday service to raise money for a charity or mission trip. They'll learn a lot about working together!

2. Host a Car Wash: Set aside a Saturday morning in your church parking lot to raise money for a good cause.

3. Plan a Beautification Project: Take an afternoon this summer, preferable before the feast days in July to plant flowers and remove weeds from your church grounds. Go a step further by setting up a community garden on church property and donating the produce to a local food bank.

4. Donate Supplies: Pack backpacks with school supplies and donate them to schools in your area. This event can be as small or as large as you can imagine.

5. Talent Show: Organize a show for a local nursing home or retirement community. Afterward, set aside time for students to talk to residents and spend quality time with them.

6. Pack a Meal: Organize a morning to pack lunches or blessing bags and deliver them to homeless shelters in your city. Pair this with a donation drive for hygiene items to make an even bigger difference.

7. Spread Cheer: Create holiday or get-well-soon cards for pediatric patients at your local children's hospital.

8. Make a Meal at the Local Soup Kitchen: Contact a local soup kitchen and offer to prepare a meal. Find out what to cook, ask for food donations from people in the Church, and gather at the Church or Soup Kitchen to prepare the meal.

9. Closet Cleaning: Go through the closets to collect items in good condition that they would be willing to give to people in



need. Give it to a local service organization that distributes clothing to people.

10. Mission Trip: Organize a mission trip for your senior students. Varieties of mission trips are available through Catholic groups/organizations.

As we walk together in this journey of life, service Projects help children to develop problem solving skills, social cooperation and to practice the values of courtesy, respect, kindness, and giving. In turn this provides a rewarding leadership experience for young people, and a good example on how to follow God's footsteps. Community service is the giving of ourselves to help others and one of the most powerful ways to show youth their faith in action.



USEFUL RESOURCES FOR CATECHISTS

1. EUCHARISTIC JOURNAL 1 - LANCIANO

[The Miracle of Lancia](#)

The Miracle of Lancia is a Eucharistic miracle which is believed to have occurred in the 8th century in the city of Lancia, Italy. According to tradition, a monk who had doubts about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist found, when he said the words of consecration at Mass, that the bread and wine changed into real flesh and blood.



We must never forget that when we participate in Holy Qurbana, we witness a miracle and we share in the divine life of our savior. You may use this as a teaching video to bring this realization to our students.

2. BISHOP BARRON – FOLLOWING JESUS COMES FIRST

[Bishop Barron on the Demand of True Discipleship](#)

There is something of a 'be all, end all' quality about Jesus. As he says, "Whoever is not with me is against me".

Bishop Barron explains that for a true disciple, following Jesus is more important than the highest of worldly values. Scouring away all the attachments we have, is a requisite for our discipleship.



3. FR. DANIEL'S MESSAGE TO THE CATECHISTS

[What is the purpose of Catechism and what should the Catechists do?](#)

For those who can understand Malayalam, this is a powerful message from Fr. Daniel Poovanathil about how to teach Catechism.

How to measure the success of the Catechetical ministry? Has the intimacy of students with Christ increased at the end of the year? Knowledge from the textbook will remain as dry statements if there is no 'work of the Spirit'

4. WANT TO LEARN ABOUT OUR SAINTS?

[This animated video tells the story of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, patron saint for Catholic youth and teenagers.](#)



Saint Aloysius Gonzaga was an Italian aristocrat in 16th century, who became a member of the Society of Jesus, much to the displeasure of his father. He served in a hospital during the plague of 1587 in Milan, and died from it at the age of 23, after receiving the last rites from St. Robert Bellarmine.

"It is better to be the child of God than the king of the whole world" is a famous quote attributed to St. Aloysius.