

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

Annual Report - 2018

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



It is with immense gratitude and satisfaction that I am here to present the Annual report for the Syro-Malankara mission at Vancouver, British Columbia on behalf of the mission development committee for the year 2018.

If the years 2016 and 2017 were all about establishing the mission, 2018 was an year of expanding our roots into the community through both spiritual and non-spiritual means. With the Almighty's grace, the year has been an extremely fulfilling and we believe that this year has allowed our young mission to find its feet on the ground.

Mission Development Committee and Co-ordinators

On October 2017 - a mission development committee was selected with the following set of members to guide the activities of the community. The following set of people were selected as members of this committee -

- Mr. Peeush Thomas, as Secretary (till September)
- Mr. Thomas K M, as Treasurer
- Mr. John Varghese
- Mr. Jacob John
- Mr. Leena Jacob
- Mr. Siju Mathew
- Mr. Wilson George
- Mr. Benny Rajan, as Secretary (*from September till date)

On 25th August, the committee selected the following members to coordinate the activities of the various organizations for the community -

- Faith formation - Mrs. Leena Jacob
- Liturgy - Mrs. Susan Thomas
- MCA and Prayer Meeting - Mr. Jacob John
- MCCL - Mrs. Becky Jose
- Mathrusangham - Mrs. Siji Teny
- Youth Apostolate MCYM - Mr. Benny Rajan

A place to worship and regular Holy Mass for the community

Based on the directions of the development committee, it was agreed to look for a place for conducting the Holy Mass and other activities of the community. With the help Rev. Fr. Paul Illickal and Vicar Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew the community was able to enter into an agreement to rent a space in St. Michael Anglican church, Delta on February 25th. It was also decided at the General body that holy mass will be celebrated on every week on Saturday instead of the alternate weeks prior.

Faith Formation Classes for Kids and Young Adults

Mission development committee was always insistent on having a vibrant faith formation classes for the kids and young adults in the community. On 03rd March, Rev. Fr Paul Illickal inaugurated a temporary classes for the kids and young adults. The focus on these classes was to dwell into the liturgy of the church, prayer songs and history of our church. Four members were chosen as the initial set of teachers. An orientation and impact session was conducted for the teachers and kids by the Vicar. The faith formation year at the church was officially inaugurated on 1st September 2018 at 3.30pm. It was formally inaugurated by the Vicar and was attended by mission development committee, parish members, and the children.

All children aged and above were welcomed to join the catechism classes. The students were divided into classes based on their age. The community is blessed to have have 15 students and 9 teachers in the current year. Below is the snapshot of the class structure along with Teachers in charge -

Head Mistress: Mrs. Leena Varghese		
Class	Teacher in charge	No. of students
KG & grade 2	Ms. Betsy Mathew	4
3	Ms. Bibily Thomas	2
5	Ms. Becky Jose	1
7	Ms. Nidhisha Rajan	3
9	Mr. Joel Jacob	1
10	Ms. Leena Varghese	2
11	Ms. Susan Thomas	2
Substitute Teachers: Ms. Dency Mammen, Ms. Siji Teny and Mr. Thomas K M		

The catechism classes are held every Saturday from 3.30 pm to 5.00 pm. We start our catechism class with assembly that is group worship time with singing, Psalms reading, Holy Father and Hail Mary followed by classes. During this year, one catechism teachers meeting was held on September 2, 2018. This was held to decide the catechism routine, activities and to plan for the academic year 2018-19

Malankara Catholic Children League

Mrs. Becky Jose was selected to lead the activities of the MCCL and Ms. Nidhisha Rajan will be assisting her on the same. The organization intends to contribute to the spiritual development of the kids under the age of 14. The following members were selected as office bearers for the year -

- President - Master Benett George Wilson
- Vice President - Ms. Erin Mathew
- Secretary - Master Joshua Jacob
- Jt. Secretary - Master Abi Thannimoottil Teny and Ms. Stephy Wilson
- Perfects - Ms. Sona Siji Teny, Master Jane Jacob and Master Isaiah Varghese

On 27th Oct the unit conducted, an Elocution Competition on the Topic 'How to deal with temptation as a Christian and also conducted an essay writing completion on the topic - 'who influenced you the most?'

Youth Apostolate aka MCYM unit

Under the guidance, support and motivation of our Vicar a unit of the MCYM was set up in the mission. On Oct 6th, MCYM members got together and conducted the first meeting where, we elected the president and secretary for the unit where, Mrs. Nidisha Rajan was elected as president and Mr. Joel Jacob John as secretary. The Vicar talked about the mission, vision and motto of MCYM. He gave a brief talk on the patron saint of MCYM, St. Francis of Assisi and discussed about mcym responsibilities, duties of a catholic youth.

The unit was officially inaugurated on Oct 13th, after the holy qurbana where Rev Fr. Regi, our vicar; Nidisha Rajan, MCYM president; Benny Rajan, Church Secretary lighted candle, sang the MCYM anthem and took the pledge to inaugurate the unit. MCYM members also decorated the church and altar to celebrate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi with all the parishioners.

The unit conducted a Christmas Card sale on 10th Nov and funds from the same would be used for their activities in the future. MCYM coordinated the Secret Santa on X'mas eve after midnight mass where Gifts were exchanged among the families to share the joy of Christmas.

Family Apostolate and House blessings

Mr. Jacob John was appointed as the prayer coordinator for St. Joseph's Syro Malankara Catholic mission of British Columbia by Vicar. Under his guidance, prayer meetings were

restarted on 17th August 2018 at his house. It was attended by Vicar Rev Fr. Regi Mathew and about 20 parish members. Prayer meetings are held on second Friday of every month at 7.00 PM in one of the parishioners home. We start the prayer meeting with group worship with singing, readings from Psalms and New Testament, reflection and message by Vicar followed by spontaneous prayer and sandhya prarthana. We have had one prayer every month this year.

The family apostolate also initiated the annual blessings of residences of all the members during the year. On 19th May, Rev. Fr. Regi Mathew performed the blessings at all the houses of the members.

Mother's Forum aka Mathrusangam

On 15th Sep, a meeting of the members of the mathrusangam was conducted by the coordinator Siji and elected the following members to lead the unit in the mission

- President - Mrs. Susan Thomas
- Secretary - Mrs. Siji Teny

A Bake sale was conducted by the unit on 01st Dec to raise funds for the various activities of the group and the group also organizes the food on various occasions at the mission.

03rd Western Family Conference conducted by the mission

The 03rd Western Canada Syro-Malankara Catholic Family Conference was held at Vancouver, British Columbia from 30th June to 01st July 2018 - the conference brought together Malankarites from various churches in the region such as Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Seattle, USA.

The conference was made memorable by the presence of His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Stephanos, Bishop of the Eparchy of St Mary, Queen of Peace, USA & Canada with his first visit to the region. His Excellency inaugurated the conference and vowed the audience with his session which focused on the theme of the conference - JEHOVAH JIREH. His Excellency also led the celebratory holy mass and delivered a special message to all the participants in the conference.

Rev. Dr. Gigi Philip, Coordinator of Canada region and Pastor at St. Mary's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Toronto was gracious enough to travel across the continent to be with all the participants and delivered an exhilarating session with his thoughts on the conference theme.

The conference would not have been possible without the support of parishioners from Edmonton and Calgary and the guidance of Rev. Fr. Thomas Puthuparambil, Hospital Chaplain of St. Joseph's Basilica, Edmonton, Rev. Fr. Daiju Kuriakose, Pastor of St. Jude Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Calgary, Rev. Fr. Jossy Chirayathu, Pastor of St. Mary's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Edmonton. Rev. Fr. Thomas Puthuparambil and Rev. Fr.

Daiju Kuriakose deserve all of the kudos as it is their vision that triggered the conduct of Family conference in the region.

The conference was also well received among the other Kerala Christian communities in the region - Rev. Fr. Dr. Paul T Varghese, Vicar of St. George Orthodox Church, Vancouver, Rev. Fr. Thomas Kalariparambil, Vicar of St. Alphonsa Syro-Malabar Roman Catholic Parish, Surrey and Rev. Fr. Paul Illickal graced the occasion with their presence.

Holy Week and Christmas Celebrations at the mission

Holy week was celebrated with all its festivities in the newly rented space and Easter was celebrated with much fanfare by the community.

Christmas celebrations at the mission was made memorable by the midnight mass and the Carol service that were attended by the both youth and adults in the community

Mar Ivanios Day, Feast of Patron Saint and Nativity of Mother Mary

On 14th July, Mar Ivanios Day was celebrated at the mission with a talk by Rev, Fr. Regi Mathew on the significance of the life of Mar Ivanios to Malankarites and a presentation was given by Mr. Joel Jacob on the Servant of God. This was followed by a Nercha by the members of the community.

The mission also celebrated the feast of the patron saint, St. Joseph on 17th March and Nativity of Mother Mary on 08th September 2018.

Mission Anniversary Celebrations

The mission had an humble beginning in the month of October in 2016. The anniversary of the mission was celebrated with a Holy Mass and dinner on 13th October this year. It was decided that on May 01st, the day of the feast of the Patron Saint, St. Joseph will be celebrated as the anniversary day of the mission.

Community Reach Out

Group of 10 members from the parish visited the Seattle area and conducted the first Syro-Malankara holy mass for the sister community on 29th April. We would like to thank all who helped in coordinating this effort in reaching out and wish the Malankara community in Seattle all the very best for their future endeavors.

Flood Relief Collection

The year 2018, saw a massive flood cause havoc at our state back in India. On the family prayer meeting held on 17th August, it was decided to cancel the Onam celebrations for the year and a flood relief fund was started. The community contributed to the flood relief supports by contributing to the fund and also to other Kerala communities in the region.

Sad Demises from our midst

On July 18th, father of Mrs. Susan's father passed away at Trivandrum. We are all saddened by the sudden departure of the soul and offer our condolences.

Newborns and New Members at the community

- Mr. Christin Jacob George was blessed with a son, Jacob George Christin, on 27th May 2018.
- Mr. Peeush Thomas was blessed with a son, Nevin Sam Thomas on 23rd July 2018 and his baptism was conducted at the church on 08th Sep 2018.

With the addition of four new families during the period, the count of parish members have risen to 50 including 15 children and youth. We would like to welcome all the new members once again to the community.

Focus for the next year

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

- To work more closely with Archdiocese of Vancouver
- To have more external visibility among the community
- To expand the mission by bringing more Malankarites in the region to the community
- To conduct activities that can effectively contribute to the financial status
- To start the registration process

We thank God for all His blessings and mercies on this community and pray that His abounding mercies may continue in the years to come on all our members. Our gratitude is also to our vicar Rev Fr. Regi Mathew and mission development committee members for their excellent vision, guidance and support.