

LENT: TIME FOR TRANSFORMATION

Dearly beloved in Christ,

One of the characteristic features of our age is 'speed'. Speed in transportation, communication, calculations, cooking, construction, destruction and there is hardly any segment of human life untouched by it. Speed helps us to cover long distances and large volumes in shorter time but it seriously damages the quality of relationships and enjoyments leading to diminishing meaning of life. Lent demands a reduction in our speed to match with our design. When our speed becomes compatible to the creator's design, our vision will gain greater clarity and our ears will capture the minute voices around us. We will be able to read the signs of the time and understand the will of our creator. Our denial of comforts or the diligent observance of rituals is not the end rather they are means to the end of fulfilling the will of God. In this exercise, the son of God who **emptied** himself (Phil. 2) and **surrendered** totally to the will of God (Luke 22:39 – 46) is our model. Lent invites us to think of our reckless rat race for money, fame and positions that largely ends up in fatigue, loneliness, disappointment, relationship breakups, addictions and burnouts. It challenges us to slow down our pace in order to listen to the voice of God and patiently work with God to produce the fruits of the spirit from the seed that God had sown in us.

Rev. Sonu S. Varghese, our Assistant Vicar and youth chaplain is completing his term in our parish in April and he will assume charge of two churches in Texas as vicar in the month of May. As a parish we owe a lot to Achen for his contributions especially to our younger population. As family we are indebted to Achen for his sincere love, help and support extended to us from the time of our arrival in Chicago. His assistance helped me a lot in fulfilling my duty as vicar. From April 2016 our fellowship made a significant leap with the arrival of Sherin Kochamma. We do cherish the memories of the good times we spent together and wish Achen and Kochamma blessed ministry in Texas.

In God's great providence a Sunday school was started in Wisconsin in the month of December 2016. Trusting on God's grace, our area 12 prayer group is venturing for a monthly worship service in that state. God willing, the first Mar Thoma Qurbana will take place in Wisconsin on the Palm Sunday (9th April, 5 p.m.) at the Unity Lutheran Church, 4600 Pilgrim Rd. Brookfield, WI 53005. The openness and benevolence of Pastor Jim Alquist, vicar of that parish needs special mention. Let us uphold all these activities in our prayers and help and encourage our members in Wisconsin in whatever way possible.

For the last two years our building committee was working hard to get various permits for our new construction project and they are almost be done with it. It is our hope to begin the project in the first week of May and complete it by November. Now it is time for the members to act. I sincerely appreciate those who have already paid their dues and earnestly urge all others to make a plan to pay off your dues within the next five months. More than the money we give, I request everyone to sincerely pray for this project that ultimately God's name will be glorified,

In Christ's Service

Rev. Abraham Scaria