

# ST MARY'S VOICE

**2020 FIRST EDITION  
JAN TO APR**

Vicar's Message  
Editorial

2019 Regional Sunday  
School competition  
winner's articles

Quartely Updates  
MMVS  
OCYM  
FOCUS  
MGOCSM

Biblical Crossword  
Puzzle

Did God create COVID 19 ?  
An analysis







**Managing Committee 2020**

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To my dear St Mary's parishioners,

*This is the first edition of St Mary's Voice 2020. I trust that everyone is safe in God's hands.*

*Many of us hoped for a fairly stable and reasonably predictable year of 2020. As we all know, this pandemic has the potential to be the worst obstacle that we will ever face. As we all feel vulnerable in these unprecedented times, we must remember to lean on God and cling on to His promise that we recite daily along with the psalmist "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you".*

*In this edition, we bring you encouraging articles and updates from all our spiritual organizations. St Mary's church winning the overall championship in any Dallas area competition is no longer a big piece of news. The Sunday school written competition held last year was no exception. This edition brings you the best talent of our church and allow parents and students to appreciate the winning articles. We hope that this will encourage more students to participate in these competitions in the future.*

*We have also included a crossword puzzle in this edition. The names of the winners of this puzzle will be published in the next edition of St Mary's voice. We would love to hear any feedback on this edition of St. Mary's Voice.*

*Stay Safe in our Lord.*

*In Christ*

*Biju Poulose*



**Subject:** (Offering of Cain and Abel) "Now in the process of time Cain brought a sacrifice to the Lord from the fruits of the ground. Abel also brought a sacrifice from the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. The Lord respected Abel and his offering." (Genesis 4:3-4 OSB)



**LANA JAMES**

**GROUP 2  
DRAWING**

**FIRST PRIZE**

**SUBJECT : OFFERING  
OF CAIN & ABEL**



**OLIVIA MATHEW**

**GROUP 4  
DRAWING**

**FIRST PRIZE**

**SUBJECT :-  
MARY AND MARTHA**





# ഇസ്തറും കൊറോണയും



Fr Rajesh John

ലോകത്തിനു മറക്കാൻ പറ്റാത്ത ഓർമ്മകൾ നൽകി ഒരു ഇസ്തറും കടന്നുപോയി. ഇസ്തർ സമാധാനത്തിന്റേയും സന്തോഷത്തിന്റേയും പ്രത്യാശയുടെയും പ്രതീക്ഷയുടെയും സന്ദേശമാണ് ലോകത്തിനു നൽകുന്നത്. ഭയന്ന് വിറച്ചു പുറത്തിറങ്ങാൻ കഴിയാതെ ഗുഹയിൽ അടച്ചിരുന്ന ശിഷ്യൻ മാർക്ക് കിട്ടിയ നവ വെളിച്ചമുണ്ട് ഉത്ഥിതനായ ക്രിസ്തു. ലോകത്തെ ഭയന്ന് പുറത്തിറങ്ങുവാൻ ഭയപ്പെട്ടവരുടെ അകത്തു കയറി അവരെ പുറത്തു കൊണ്ടുവന്നവനാണ് ക്രിസ്തു. ഗുഹയുടെ വാതിൽ ആരും തുറന്നുകൊടുക്കാതെ തന്നെ തുറന്നു അകത്തു കടന്നു ശിഷ്യൻ മാർ വെളിച്ചം കാണിച്ചു. ഗുഹക്കുള്ളിൽ രൂപപ്പെട്ട ക്രിസ്തു വെളിച്ചം മാറ്റിമറിച്ചതു അതിലെ ഇരുട്ട് മാത്രമല്ല ശിഷ്യൻ മാരുടെ ഉള്ളിലെ അന്ധകാരത്തെ കൂടി ആണ്.

ഗുഹയിൽ ശിഷ്യൻ മാർ അനുഭവിച്ച അതേ ദുരന്തത്തിൽ കൂടി ഇന്ന് ലോകം കടന്നു പോകുന്നു. കൊ റൊണാ വൈറ സു മൂലം ഭയന്ന് ഭവനത്തിന്റെ വാതിൽ കൊട്ടിയടച്ചു ജീവനെ നിലനിർത്താൻ ശ്രമിക്കുമ്പോൾ നിത്യജീവൻ നിലനിർത്താനായി ക്രിസ്തുവിനു വേണ്ടി നമ്മുടെ ഹൃദയ വാതിൽ തുറക്കാം. ശിഷ്യൻ മാർ ശ്രവിച്ച സമാധാനത്തിന്റെ ദൂതിനായി കാത്തോർക്കാം.

വെളിപാട് പുസ്തകം അഞ്ചാം അദ്ധ്യായത്തിൽ സിംഹാസനത്തിൽ ഇരിക്കുന്നവന്റെ വലതുകൈയിൽ വഹിച്ചിരുന്ന ജീവന്റെ പുസ്തകത്തെ കുറിച്ചു പ്രതിപാദിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. പുസ്തകം തുറക്കാനും അതിന്റെ മുദ്ര പൊട്ടിക്കുവാനും കഴിവുള്ളവൻ സ്വർഗ്ഗത്തിലോ ഭൂമിയിലോ ആരെങ്കിലും ഉണ്ടോ എന്ന് ചോദിക്കുന്ന ദൂതന്റെ ചോദ്യത്തിന് യോഗ്യത ഉള്ളവർ ആരുമില്ലെന്ന് തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു ശിഷ്യൻ വിലപിക്കുമ്പോൾ മൂപ്പൻ മാരിൽ ഒരാൾ വിളിച്ചുപറഞ്ഞു,

വെളിപ്പാടു 5:5 അപ്പോൾ മൂപ്പന്മാരിൽ ഒരുത്തൻ എന്നോട്: കരയേണ്ട; യെഹൂദാഗോത്രത്തിലെ സിംഹവും ദാവീദിന്റെ വേരുമായവൻ പുസ്തകവും അതിന്റെ ഏഴു മുദ്രയും തുറപ്പാൻ

തക്കവണ്ണം ജയം പ്രാപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നു പറഞ്ഞു.

5:6 ഞാൻ സിംഹാസനത്തിന്റേയും നാലു ജീവികളുടെയും നടുവിലും മൂപ്പന്മാരുടെ മദ്ധ്യത്തിലും ഒരു കുഞ്ഞാടു അറക്കപ്പെട്ടതുപോലെ നില്ക്കുന്നതു കണ്ടു: അതിന്നു ഏഴു കൊമ്പും സർവ്വഭൂമിയിലേക്കും

അയച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ഏഴു ദൈവാത്മാക്കൾ ആയ ഏഴു കണ്ണും ഉണ്ടു.

5:7 അവൻ വന്നു സിംഹാസനത്തിൽ ഇരിക്കുന്നവന്റെ വലകയ്യിൽനിന്നു പുസ്തകം വാങ്ങി.

5:8 വാങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ നാലുജീവികളും ഇരുപത്തുനാലു മൂപ്പന്മാരും ഓരോരുത്തൻ വീണയും വിശുദ്ധന്മാരുടെ പ്രാർത്ഥന എന്ന യുപവർഗ്ഗം നിറഞ്ഞ പൊൻകലശവും പിടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു കുഞ്ഞാടിന്റെ മുമ്പാകെ വീണു.

5:9 പുസ്തകം വാങ്ങുവാനും അതിന്റെ മുദ്ര പൊട്ടിപ്പാനും നീ യോഗ്യൻ; നീ അറക്കപ്പെട്ടു നിന്റെ രക്തംകൊണ്ടു സർവ്വഗോത്രത്തിലും ഭാഷയിലും വംശത്തിലും ജാതിയിലും നിന്നുള്ളവരെ ദൈവത്തിനായി വിലക്കു വാങ്ങി; എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞു. ഭാവിയിൽ സംഭവിക്കാൻ പോകുന്ന തിന്റെ മുന്നോടിയാണ് ക്രിസ്തു പൊട്ടിച്ച മുദ്ര.

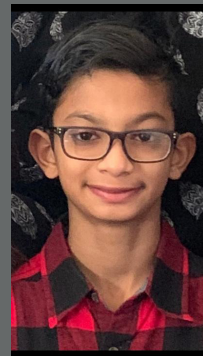
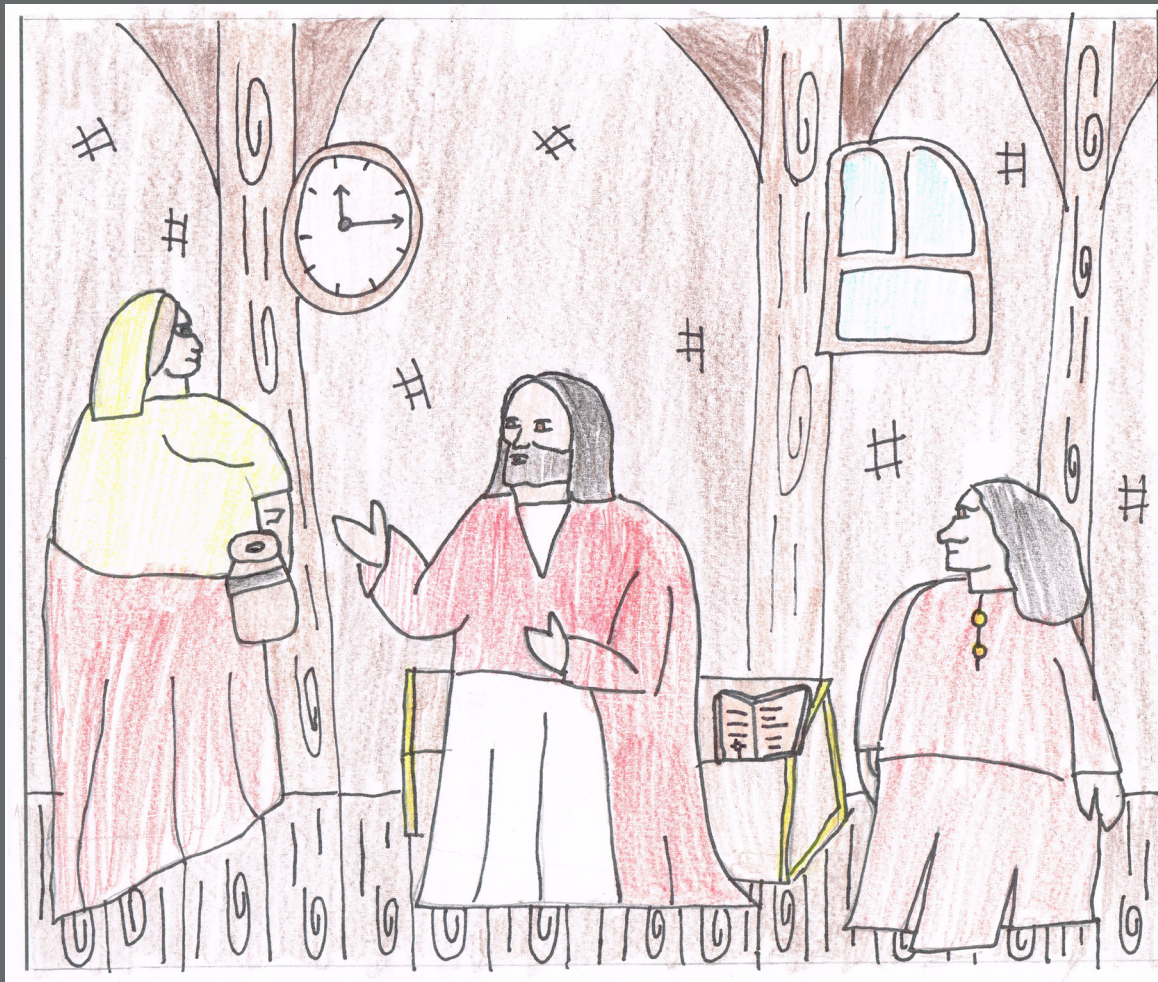
അവൻ പൊട്ടിച്ച മുദ്രയേത്?

അവൻ തകർത്ത മൂന്നു മുദ്രയിൽ ഒന്നാമത്തേത് കന്യക മറിയാമിന്റെ ഉദരം ആണ്. കന്യകാത്വം നഷ്ടപ്പെടാതെ തന്നെ കന്യകയുടെ ഉദരത്തിൽ കടന്നു, രണ്ടാമത്, അടക്കപ്പെട്ട കല്ലറയുടെ വാതിൽ ആരും തുറക്കാതെ തന്നെ പുറത്തു കടന്നു, മൂന്നാമത് ശിഷ്യൻ ഇരുന്ന ഗുഹയുടെ വാതിൽ ആണ്, അടക്കപ്പെട്ട വാതിൽ ആരും തുറക്കാതെ തുറന്നു അകത്തു കടന്നു. വേദപുസ്തകത്തിലെ അതിവലിയായ മൂന്നു രഹസ്യമാണ് ഇത്.

ഉയിർപ്പിനു ശേഷം പെന്റിക്കോസ്തി ദിനത്തിനായി നാം ഒരുങ്ങുകയാണ്. യെരൂശലേമിൽ കാത്തിരുന്ന ശിഷ്യൻ മാരുടെമേൽ പരിശുദ്ധാത്മാവു ആവശിച്ചപ്പോ കന്യകയുടെ ഉദരം

വിശുദ്ധമാക്കിയതു പോലെ നമ്മുടെ ഹൃദയം കൂടുതൽ വിശുദ്ധമാകുവാനും കല്ലറക്കുള്ളിലെ ഉരുട്ടി ന്റെ വാതില് തുറന്നു അതിനുള്ളിൽ വസിച്ചവരെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ വരുത്തിയപ്പോലെ പുതിയ വെളിച്ചം ദർശിക്കു വാ നും ഭയന്നിരുന്ന ശിഷ്യന്മാരുടെ ഭയത്തിന്റെ നടു ചുവർ തകർത്തു ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തിയപ്പോലെ രോഗത്തിന്റെ ഭീതിയും ലോകത്തിന്റെ കെണിയിലും പെട്ടവർക്ക് ആശ്വാസം ആകു വാൻ ദൈവം ഇടയാക്കട്ടെ.





**JOHNSON JOHN**

**GROUP 4 DRAWING  
FIRST PRIZE**

**SUBJECT :  
MARY AND MARTHA**



**JONAH THOMAS**

**GROUP 1 DRAWING  
FIRST PRIZE**

**SUBJECT: DANIEL IN THE  
LION'S DEN**

**Subject:** (Daniel in the Lion's Den) "After that, the king gave the command and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king said to Daniel, 'Your God whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.'" (Daniel 6:17 OSB)





**POEM**  
**HELP SAVE CHURCH**

Christ's coming was a wonder  
His teachings were wonder too  
His miracles were more wonder  
So as truth of His resurrection

He made ordinaries orators  
Rebellious ones great witnesses  
Revolutionized rude world in love  
Reiterated heartfelt worship

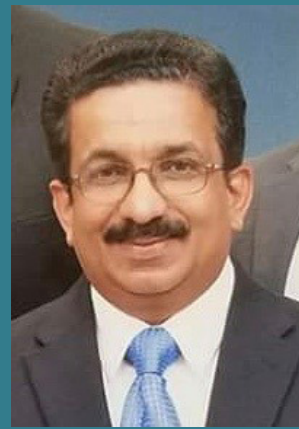
Church grew up in Holyspirit  
Prayer in spirit of simple peasants  
God's message reached all world  
Sun never sets land spread

Church soon swelled by wealth  
Born smart science and technology  
Asked proof for anything they found  
Than doubt of disciple Thomas

The doubt educated mankind  
To find answer of unknown truths  
Took science to know God! Not spirit  
As Jesus prayed long by alone

The doubt molded man liberals  
In luxury, wealth and wickedness  
The smart ones came out of church  
Taught God is far nearer to church

Church is falling to crack fissures  
Of mockery and humiliations of world  
Seek lovely God in spirit  
Like church of first century saints



**Ajith Thomas**





# FOCUS



**TOWN HALL**

1. FOCUS and MGOCSM presented Mat Achen with a Kaapa to congratulate him on his 10th year of priesthood and to thank him for his leadership and service.

2. FOCUS Town Hall: With Mat Achen's blessings, FOCUS held a town hall to plan spiritual, service and social activities for the year 2020. The town hall was a great forum for us to brainstorm ideas that help continue our mission of faith, fellowship and service in the Church and our community.

3. FOCUS Fellowship Meeting: On Feb 22nd, FOCUS held our first Fellowship meeting of the year. Mat Achen conducted evening prayer followed by a devotional message on Great Lent. The FOCUS family came together and had a great evening of prayer and fellowship.

4. FOCUS Women's Meeting: On March 1st, FOCUS Women's group met to discuss the book - "When you Pray: A practical guide to an Orthodox life of Prayer".

5. FOCUS Food Pantry Drive: "Carry each other's burdens and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). This was the theme for our Food Pantry Drive to help struggling families in the Dallas area during the COVID pandemic. Due to stay-at-home orders, many food pantries are running out of critical supplies that provide assistance to homeless and the needy among us. Due to the generous contributions from its members, St. Mary's FOCUS collected approximately \$1500 in donations that helped provide groceries and funds to CitySquare Food Pantry in Dallas and Minnie's Food Pantry in Plano.



**Fellowship Meeting**



**MAT ACHEN'S 10TH YEAR PRIESTHOOD CELEBRATION**



# Theosis in Orthodox Theology

**GROUP 7 ESSAY  
FIRST PRIZE**



**SHANNON SUNILMON  
GRADE 11**

St. Athanasius was one of the many saints that became live God to fulfill God's will. The saying "God became man, that man might become God", teaches Orthodox Christians to become like God and undergo the process of divinization. The quote is about theosis, God's love, and unity in Christ. Furthermore, theosis is the process of becoming like God. We are called to participate in his loving presence by becoming like him. St Peter describes it as, "Partaking in his divine nature". St. Peter explains how to be part of his nature by taking on God's characteristics and having a closer interaction with him through praise and worship.

We should also show our love for him by abiding by his law. God became man, so that we may have better intimacy with him. Man becoming God allows us to be in the likeness of our creator. In addition, God's love for us is infinite and above all. He assumed human nature and died for us to give us eternal life. He offered himself as a sacrifice, so that as human, he may be perfected through his sufferings. Christ endured hardship, so that we may learn and become like him. Our relationship with him is secured through the covenant. We must become like God to fulfill these promises. Through his sacrifice, covenant, and love we are called to be like Christ.

Moreover, the saying emphasizes the unity between Man and God. The challenge of becoming like God produces the outcome of being united in divinity. Man and God have the same divine nature when he becomes human, and the human becomes God. There are human origins in God as he created us in his image. This allows God to become human. Since God has created us in His likeness, he is able to become human. When we become like God, it allows us to receive salvation.

For Orthodox Christians, we are not going to be saved if we do not become like him. The word of God that saves us also brings humanity into existence. As the word is implanted in us, the word becomes flesh. This signifies God becoming human, and man becoming God.

All in all, St. Athanasius teaches Orthodox Christians to become like God, as he became like man. God has shown us his utmost love, our unity with him, and how to become like him. We should strive to be in the likeness of our creator to receive salvation.



# MGOCISM



On January 4, 2020, Dallas Area hosted the Mini Leadership Camp at St. Mary's COI.

The first service event of the year was a church cleaning, on January 11th. MGOCISM members organized the books in the pew, took down Christmas decorations, and made sure that our church looked clean for the new year.

On January 31st, we had a combined bible study with St. James with Rev. Fr. Binu Mathew Achen as the speaker. MGOCISM members learned about creation and had wonderful fellowship with St. James members.

On February 14th, we volunteered at Rays of Light. MGOCISM members watched over and played with handicapped children. The experience was inspiring and fun for many members.

Our next bible study was held on February 21st. MGOCISM members listened intently as Rev. Fr. Mat Alexander taught the story of Samson.

February 24th marked the beginning of the Great Lent and our Nightly Lenten prayer broadcasts. From Monday through Saturday, the MGOCISM committee broadcasted the daily Lenten Prayers.

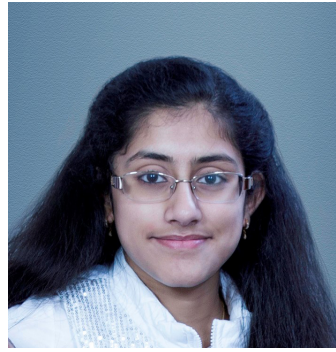




**ANNMARY JAYAN**

**GROUP 6 POETRY**

**FIRST PRIZE**



To reach the eye of a hurricane,  
Humbled you must be  
Beaten, battered, broken  
Drowning in a sea

Thrown into the depths,  
Hurled out of reach,  
Swimming with monsters,  
And demons, hell unleashed

Washed in wicked waters  
Plagued by an unforgiving leech,  
Rushed through raging riptides  
Avoiding sinners who preach

But when the waters settle  
When the sea goes dry,  
A blinding light unrivaled  
Entering the all-seeing-eye

A calming will is given,  
A peace like none before,  
A forgiveness that is unbidden  
The heaven of our Lord.



# MMVS

Since the first meeting held on January 20, 2020, MMVS as a whole accomplished many events. Beginning of this quarter, MMVS planned and organized a successful pothichor bake sale. Moreover, this year we exceeded our goals and made over 200 pothis. We appreciate all the church members who wholeheartedly supported this cause.

Furthermore, the MMVS team participated in the first regional meeting hosted by St. Paul's church on February 22 of 2020. After which the MMVS Regional secretary presided over the business meeting.

Additionally, the MMVS participated in 3-day fasting and prayer organized by the MMVS Dallas and Oklahoma regional area. Liquid fasting/ 1 meal fasting and prayer was led by Thampan Achen, which started from March 29, 6 pm until April 1st, 6 pm.

At the start of this year, MMVS planned many more events; however, due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, our goals for this quarter were cut short. We are hopeful for the future and thankful for a supportive church during this unprecedented time.







**NEHA THOMAS**

**GROUP 5 DRAWING  
FIRST PRIZE**

**SUBJECT : SERMON ON THE MOUNT**







**IRENE JACOB**  
**GROUP 6 POETRY**  
**FIRST PRIZE**

Silky heart-shaped petals the color of the moon  
Drifting through hurricanes to hurry to their doom  
Twisting, turning, leaping over unseeable mountains  
Until ethereal hands safely place them into clear blue fountains

Families of constellations wander an ash-filled sky  
Scintillating clouds of stars idly amble by  
Illuminating a glossy path across a darkened lake  
Guiding home a mother duck with ducklings in her wake

Roaring walls of treacherous wind whip oaks off their feet  
And calm to form a sweeping breeze that stills the blazing heat  
Dancing past homes, through hill and valley, its current growing mild.  
Easing a falling apple into the lap of an orphan child

A blackened doorway stands ahead  
Orbs of brilliant luster radiating from within  
And a pair of iridescent eyes, with molten stars for pupils  
Pierce my heart, sending chills flying over my skin

Inside is a swirl of heavy guilt and confusion  
Shattered dreams and debris, lie heavy in my heart  
He sorts through broken pieces of anger and rage  
Through the maze which is me, to find where I start

Although the pieces are sharp and broken, irreparably crushed  
to a pulp  
Undeniable surges of emotion remain, and a pool of liquid love  
Out of the dust of what once was, He forms the shape of a heart  
Perfect potter, creating a scarred, but sacred work of art

All-knowing one, one who fused the broken universe  
Gaze into tattered lives, and predict where healing will emerge  
Look down into a million moons, celestial bodies you made whole  
See my aching soul, know my stilling heart, and make these  
shattered fragments whole.



**REUBEN JACOB**  
**GROUP 5 POETRY**  
**FIRST PRIZE**

Spring and Summer and Autumns pass  
Leaves grow and they fall so fast  
I searched for you in the clouds afar  
In the ocean deep, in the shining stars

Oh, the trials, they were so long  
The wind slashed at me like a sword  
I couldn't hold on, I couldn't be strong  
But you said, "Be still and know I am Lord".

The world may come falling down  
In my tears, I may drown  
But when I turn to you I find  
A calm, sweet voice fills my mind

You mended the pieces of my broken heart  
You wiped the tears, healed my hurt  
You nourish me, wash my pain  
Like the drops of the first rain

Lord, I know how to deal with foes  
My life to be any challenges throw  
I shall not be afraid for I know you will hear  
My cries for help, my cries, and pleas

You will come, O Lord, to lift me higher  
You will heal all troubles and trials bitter  
O Lord, please attend to my pleas  
And I will always know you are with me.



# OCYM

1. The first prayer meeting for 2020 was conducted at the residence of Shinu and Merin.

2. OCYM Dallas region organized badminton tournament on 02/01. Our church won first prizes in all the 6 categories.

3. February payer meeting was held on 02/15 at the residence of Nibu and Bency.

4. Conducted pre-lent fasting prayer on 2/6 at our church. Repentance was the theme for the meditation.

5. Dallas OCYM donated 8 lakh rupees each to Mercy Home and Kalahandi development project in Jan-2020. Thanks to all members who contributed towards Kester show.



**Badminton Team**



**OCYM TREASURER RECEIVED BACK TO UNIT CHECK FOR \$1455.00 FROM DALLAS REGIONAL OCYM SECRETARY**

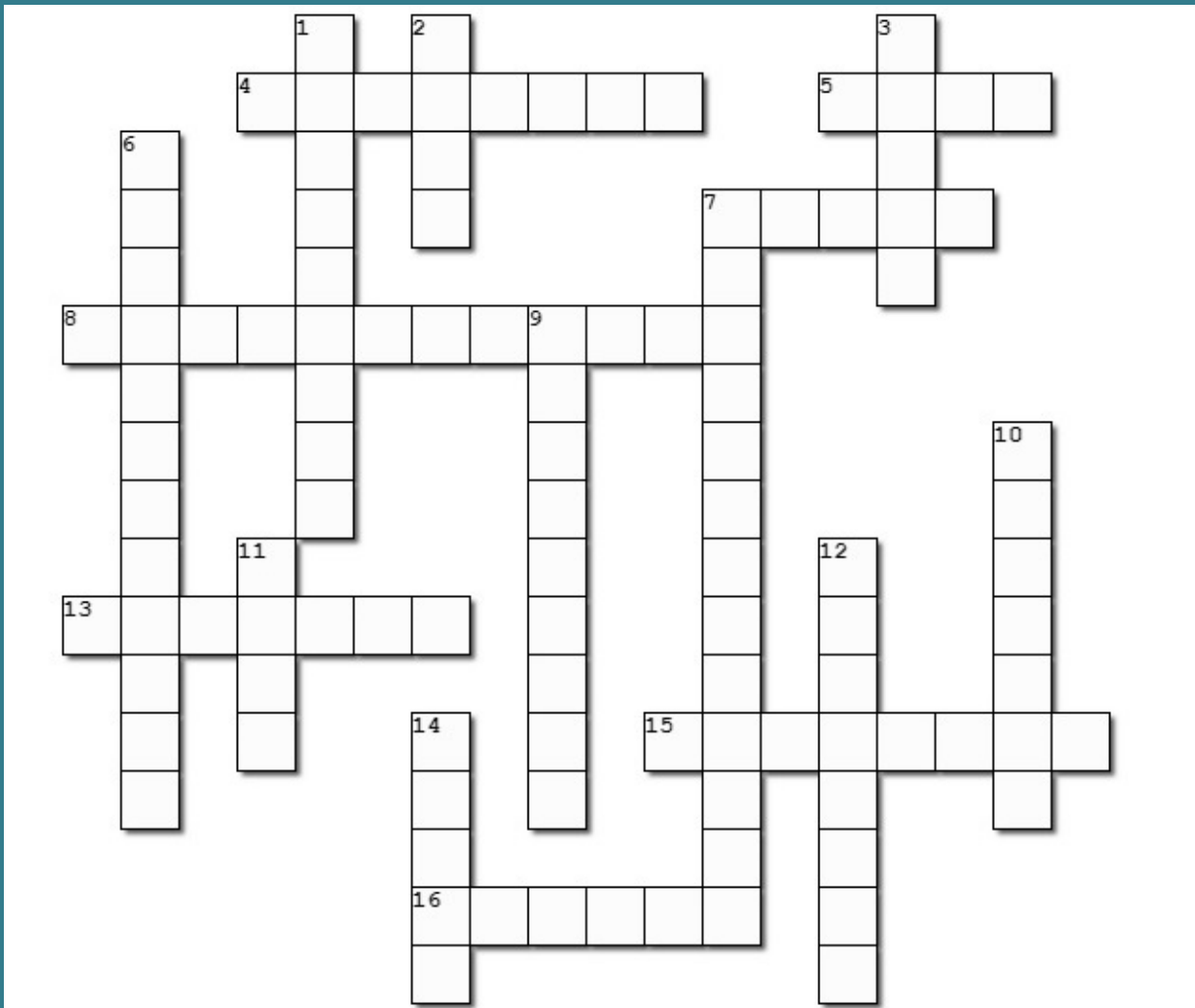


**Dallas OCYM donated 8 lakhs to support Mercy home**



# BIBLE CROSSWORD

send the answers to  
stmarysph@gmail.com



## Across

- 4. David's great friend
- 5. Mother of Jesus
- 7. He carried the cross of Christ
- 8. Sadducees rejected this doctrine
- 13. He was with Paul when he wrote  
The letter to Philemon
- 15. Joseph's master in Egypt
- 16. They sang "Worthy is the Lamb  
who was slain". Who sang?

## Down

- 1. According to the sermon on the mount, this is the  
place for you to pray
- 2. This first century saint was from the tribe of Benjamin
- 3. This priest anointed Solomon
- 6. This book says "Our dance is turned into mourning"
- 7. This book in the Bible does not mention the name of  
God
- 9. This was Paul's profession
- 10. The first century Christians were called the followers  
of \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. This covers a multitude of sins
- 12. Roman Catholics added this phrase to the creed  
later
- 14. This Old Testament character's name means laughter



# Did God Create COVID 19 ?

## An Analysis



**Biju Poulose**

**Editor**

Did God create covid 19?

The answer to this question seems very simple from a Biblical perspective. God made all that is. Hence, covid 19 is also a creation of God. We read in colossians 1:16, “by [jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him”. The bible unmistakably answers the question of who created covid-19.

We will be analyzing a much more difficult and related question of “Why did God allow this pandemic ?” Or “What is god’s intention in allowing this pandemic in our world?” These are three different aspects to this question.

### **1) Result of a fall.**

Coronavirus did not exist in the garden of eden, but exists today because of the great fall of human-kind. “When humans chose to sin, physical suffering resulted” (genesis 3:16–19). Also, “cursed is the ground” because of sin (v. 17). As a result, “the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (romans 8:22).

We read this fall in genesis 3:14. “So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” This verse suggests that biological decay started from the fall against which none is immune to. We live as fallen people on a fallen planet.

### **2)God’s Judgement**

Jesus taught us that not all suffering is the direct result of man’s sin. When Jesus was asked about the reason for a man’s blindness, He answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” (John 9:3)

At the same time, we see examples of God’s judgment on cities that turned away from Him. We may not know with certainty whether the Coronavirus is a direct judgment of God or not.



Amid this pandemic, we should be cognizant of the fact that even at the time of Moses, God has warned his people to stay away from the conditions that cause and spread diseases like this. The below article from Time magazine about the origin of viruses underline the wisdom behind strict Jewish dietary laws provided by Jehovah.

*As more and more data becomes available on the origins of the viruses affecting mankind, it is becoming increasingly obvious that most of the major virus infections of man have come about because of the careless handling of animals. HIV has been contracted from monkeys. The SARS virus has come to humans from civets, which are small cat-like mammals. The H1N1 virus emerged in pigs in Mexico and is a mix of other viruses. Interestingly, these animals were considered unclean in the time of Moses and would not have had enough contact with the humans who followed God's law to cause a pandemic.*

Source: Time, November 7, 2011, page 35.

### **3) God's intervention in the fallen world.**

We may find ourselves asking what is God's intention in allowing such viruses. Christian apologist C.S. Lewis answers this question as this "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

The Bible is full of stories where our spiritual fathers grew closer to the Lord by overcoming difficult circumstances through him.

Joseph learned humility through his enslavement. Peter learned to depend on God as a result of his betrayal of Jesus. Paul learned through his "thorn in the flesh" to "boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

These are days of uncertainty and anxiety, but this is also the time when we can demonstrate how our faith provides true assurance against worry and fear.

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body. . . . Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can anyone of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" Matthew 6:25-2