



REV. BIJU YOHANNAN



Asst. Vicar's Message to the Parish

Dear Parishioners,

**Greeting to all the Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ,**

As we welcome the month of July, we thank God for the blessings of summer, a season of rest, renewal, fellowship and growth. We also observe the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, whose faith inspires us, and celebrate the 250th Independence Day of the United States, praying for peace, unity, justice, and God's continued blessings upon our nation.

July 5 Sunday - Tithe Offering: Sharing God's Gift with Joy - Luke 16:19-31

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus reminds us through the story of the rich man and Lazarus that the blessings we receive are meant to be shared with compassion and generosity. Our tithe offering is a joyful response to God's abundant love and a practical way of caring for those in need. Every gift, whether large or small, supports the mission of the Church, strengthens our parish community, and extends hope to those who are struggling. When we give with grateful hearts, we acknowledge that everything we have is a gift from God. Let us not overlook the needs of our brothers and sisters, and also become faithful stewards of God's blessings. May our offerings reflect our trust in the Lord and our commitment to building a caring and Christ-centered community. Together, let us share God's gifts with joy and love.

July 12 Sunday - Clergy Sunday: Ordained Ministry - Called to Be a Sacrifice -Matthew 20:20-28

On this Clergy Sunday, we give thanks to God for the gift of ordained ministry and the faithful service of our priests and bishops who shepherd us in our faith journey. In Matthew 20:20-28, Jesus teaches that true greatness is found not in power or privilege, but in humble service. He reminds His disciples that He came "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." Every priest is called to reflect this self-giving love by offering his life in service to God and His people. Their ministry involves sacrifice, prayer, compassion, and faithful dedication, often carried out quietly and generously. As a parish community, let us pray for our clergy, encourage them in their mission, and support them with gratitude and love. May their example inspire all of us to serve one another with humility, generosity, and Christ-like love.

July 19 Sunday - Edification of the Church through Theological Education - Matthew 13:16-23

In Matthew 13:16-23, Jesus teaches that those who hear God's Word, understand it, and bear fruit are truly blessed. Theological education plays a vital role in helping believers grow in faith, deepen their understanding of Scripture, and become faithful disciples of Christ. It equips clergy and laity alike to teach the Gospel with wisdom, serve the Church with confidence, and respond to the challenges of today's world with biblical insight. As we invest in theological learning, we strengthen the foundation of our faith and build a Church that is rooted in God's truth and committed to His mission. Let us encourage a love for learning God's Word and support those preparing for ministry and leadership. May our hearts be like the good soil that receives the seed of God's Word, producing an abundant harvest for His glory and the edification of His Church.

July 26 Sunday - Marriage: Celebration of Unity and Partnership - Matthew 19:4-6

In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus reminds us that God created man and woman to become "one flesh," united in a sacred covenant of love and faithfulness. Marriage is God's gift, calling husbands and wives to live in mutual love, respect, and lifelong partnership. It is a relationship built on trust, sacrifice, forgiveness, and shared commitment to God's will. As couples journey together through life's joys and challenges, they become living witnesses of Christ's love for His Church.

Today, let us celebrate the gift of marriage and pray for all married couples, that they may remain steadfast in their promises and grow stronger in faith and love. May families be strengthened through unity, prayer, and mutual care, creating homes where Christ is honored and future generations are nurtured in His truth. "What God has joined together, let no one separate."

May the month of July be a time of blessing for you and your families.

Rev. Biju Yohannan

The Assistant Vicar of Chicago Mar Thoma Church

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