



DIOCESAN YOUTH APOSTOLATE
ST. THOMAS SYROMALABAR DIOCESE OF CHICAGO



**MISSION
HIGHLIGHT**



SEEK 2024



**ENCOUNTER
WITH CHRIST**



SAINTS CORNER



**YEAR OF CAMPUS
MINISTRY**

DYA NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024



Director's Corner



The New National Team

Dear friends,

I would like to start the new year by introducing the new National Team for the next two years. This is the seventh national team selected for the Diocesan Youth Apostolate by Bishop Joy Alappat with recommendation usually from the Director. The members of the team are Alina Thopurathu (Boston, MA), Alex Padayatil (Philadelphia, PA), Anjana Thomas (Houston, TX), Brigid Jacob (Detroit, MI), Bettina Shaju (Baltimore, MD), Cristo Gigi (Coral Springs, FL), Jonathan Cyriac (Chicago, IL), Lisna Ookken (Atlanta, GA), Maria Ananickal (Phoenix, AZ), Nimmy Roy (Paterson, NJ), Nithin Thomas (Austin, TX), Shawn Chacko (Orange, CA), and George Ajit (San Francisco, CA).

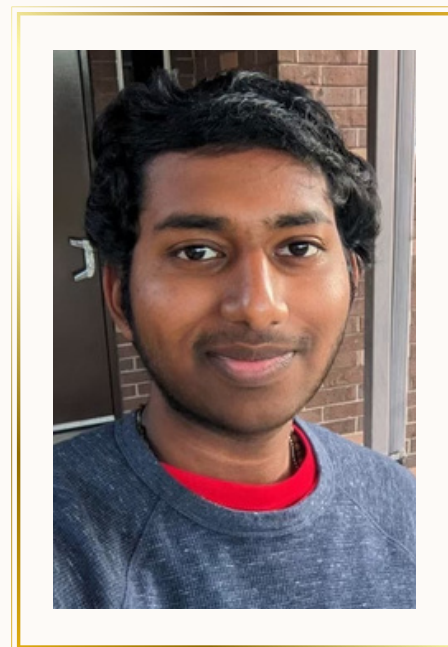
The decree that was issued on January 1st, 2024 which states that the team will serve the youth of our Eparchy according to the Charter of DYA and under the guidance and direction of the Diocesan Director and National Team of DYA. National team members will also serve in collaboration with other Youth Apostolates, organizations, movements, and ministries existing in the Catholic Church of the United States and elsewhere. The new team is to be commissioned like the apostles to “be with him, preach the gospel and to cast our demons.” The command Christ gives us applies to us all Apostles (which means to be sent out) that this world needs. I pray and hope we go out with the zeal of the Apostles and Saints to each young people all across the country.

May the intercession of our Blessed Mother, and St. Thomas the Apostle, our father in faith and the patron of our diocese be with us all.

-Fr. Melvin Mangalath Paul, DYA Director

Encounter with Christ

WRITTEN BY: ERWIN MANOJ
PUTHOOR
ST. JOSEPH SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC
FORANCE CHURCH, HOUSTON, TX



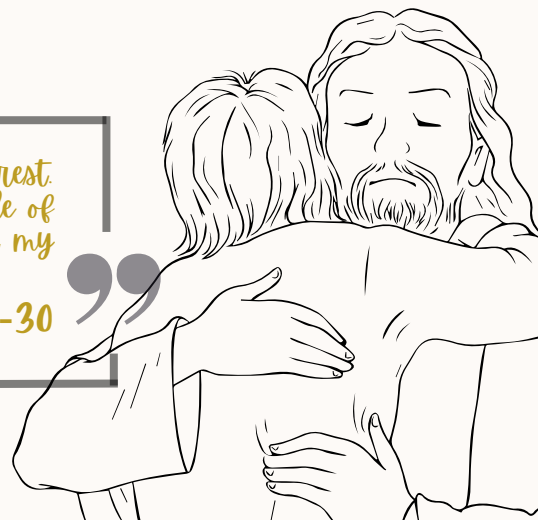
Who's gonna help me move the dresser?

Last year, around Christmas time, the season of Annunciation if you're a nerd [like me], I was trying to rearrange my room. The bed was a little big, I wanted my icon corner to be facing the east, which was impossible, but the worst part was that my dresser was too tall and heavy to be placed anywhere that made any sense. Alas, I finally had a solution, I was just gonna put it in a different room and forget about it. That week, I went to college prayer at Johnny and Mel's place. The theme of our gathering, very appropriately, was preparing a room for Christ in our hearts, or at least that's what I remember. Johnny encouraged us to close our eyes and ask God how we should prepare ourselves for Jesus, who was going to be born in our hearts.

When I closed my eyes, all I could think about was rearranging my room. I could clearly visualize how I would move everything around, right until I came to my dresser. It was too heavy, and I couldn't possibly do it by myself. [Now, if you're smart, you know where this is going... Good job! But I didn't.] "That wasn't enough time!" I exclaimed, but apparently that was just me being slow and distracted. As people started sharing, however, it slowly dawned on me: my room is an analogy to the room of my heart, and my large, heavy (and wooden) dresser are my sins. I can't carry my cross all by myself, I can't deal with my sins without His help. Jesus was asking me to let Him help me...

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."*

~Matthew 11:28-30



SEEK 2024



Truth be told, I didn't really know anything about what I was getting into with SEEK. I just went because I knew a lot of the people from my school that were going. Everyone I knew that had gone in years prior had said they all loved the experience. That, when combined with our campus missionaries heavily promoting fundraising a full ride, made me decide to bite the bullet and sign up. I absolutely loved it, and would highly recommend it to any college student with free time on their hands during the winter break.

I think the first thing which set SEEK apart for me was just how many talks there were. Each day, there were usually around 4-6 talks all happening at the same time slot, with multiple time slots throughout the day. In some ways, that was really frustrating- I remember one day there were four talks that all sounded really good, but they all occupied the same time slot, so I ultimately could only go to one. Still, I liked how that turned SEEK into a "build-your-own-retreat" experience: If you had an interest in mind, that was something you were able to do. I think that helped fit SEEK to what I wanted to grow in and understand.

Speaking of the talks, they were fantastic! I got to listen to so many talks on plenty of different, relevant topics-Praying the Mass, Marian Theology, social teachings of the Church, living the Christian life, evangelization- the list goes on. I'm not normally a note-taker, but I left each talk with pages of notes that I still use to guide me forward. (All the talks are available for free on seekreplay.com, go watch them!)

Above all else, I think one of the most beautiful parts of SEEK was seeing how on-fire the youth of the US are for Christ. It's easy to feel like Christianity is dying out in America: Most people I've met who were raised Christian (of any denomination) no longer practice for whatever reason. This, to me, was living proof that wasn't the case. I met so many people at random and got to have great conversations about their stories, where they were at, and what they were looking forward to. When reflecting on this experience, I couldn't help but think of the patron saint of SEEK24-St. José Sánchez del Río- and his final, perhaps most famous words: ¡Viva Cristo Rey!

-Joe Mukkatt
Mar Thoma Sleeha Cathedral, Chicago, IL



On behalf of the youth of the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago, we extend our prayers and best wishes to Major Archbishop Mar Raphael Thattil! Major Archbishop Raphael during his visits to the parishes of our diocese has shown a special love towards the youth of our parishes and missions. There is a viral video that is being shared where Major Archbishop Raphael engages in a spontaneous snowball fight in Chicago! We are so excited that Mar Raphael has a heart for the Syro Malabar migrants outside of Kerala and we look forward to your leadership. May God bless you as you begin your ministry, Mar Raphael!

Mission Highlight



**HOLY FAMILY SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLIC MISSION
QURBANA CELEBRATED AT CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH, SEATTLE (BELLEVUE), WA**

Mission Director - Fr. James Joseph

Number of Families - 92

CCD Students - 144



DID YOU KNOW?

There are more Major Archbishops in the world other than just in the Syro Malabar Church.

According to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (Eastern Catholic Church Law), Eastern Catholic Churches are self governing churches. There are four types of self-governing churches (ranked from highest to lowest in precedence): Patriarchal, Major Archiepiscopal, Metropolitan, and sui iuris (self governing). A Major Archiepiscopal Church is led by a Major Archbishop, with a synod of bishops. The synod of bishops is the highest authority within an Eastern Catholic Church, in communion with the Pope. There are four Eastern Catholic major Archiepiscopal churches in the world: Ukrainian, Syro Malabar, Syro Malankara, and Romanian-Greek.

GUESS THE ACHAN

JUNE 27-30
Summit 2024



The answer to our final Guess the Achan was **Fr. Johnsty Thachara**

The winner is: **Josh Jom** from the St. Thomas SyroMalabar Catholic Forance Church, Philadelphia, PA!

Get connected!



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AUGUST 8-11
Emergence
2024

BLESSINGS FROM OUR BELOVED BISHOP AND CLERGY!

Published by Fr. Melvin Paul (Director of DYA) and the Diocesan Youth Apostolate National Team
St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago