

ST. THOMAS ORTHODOX SUNDAY SCHOOL, SOUTH AFRICA

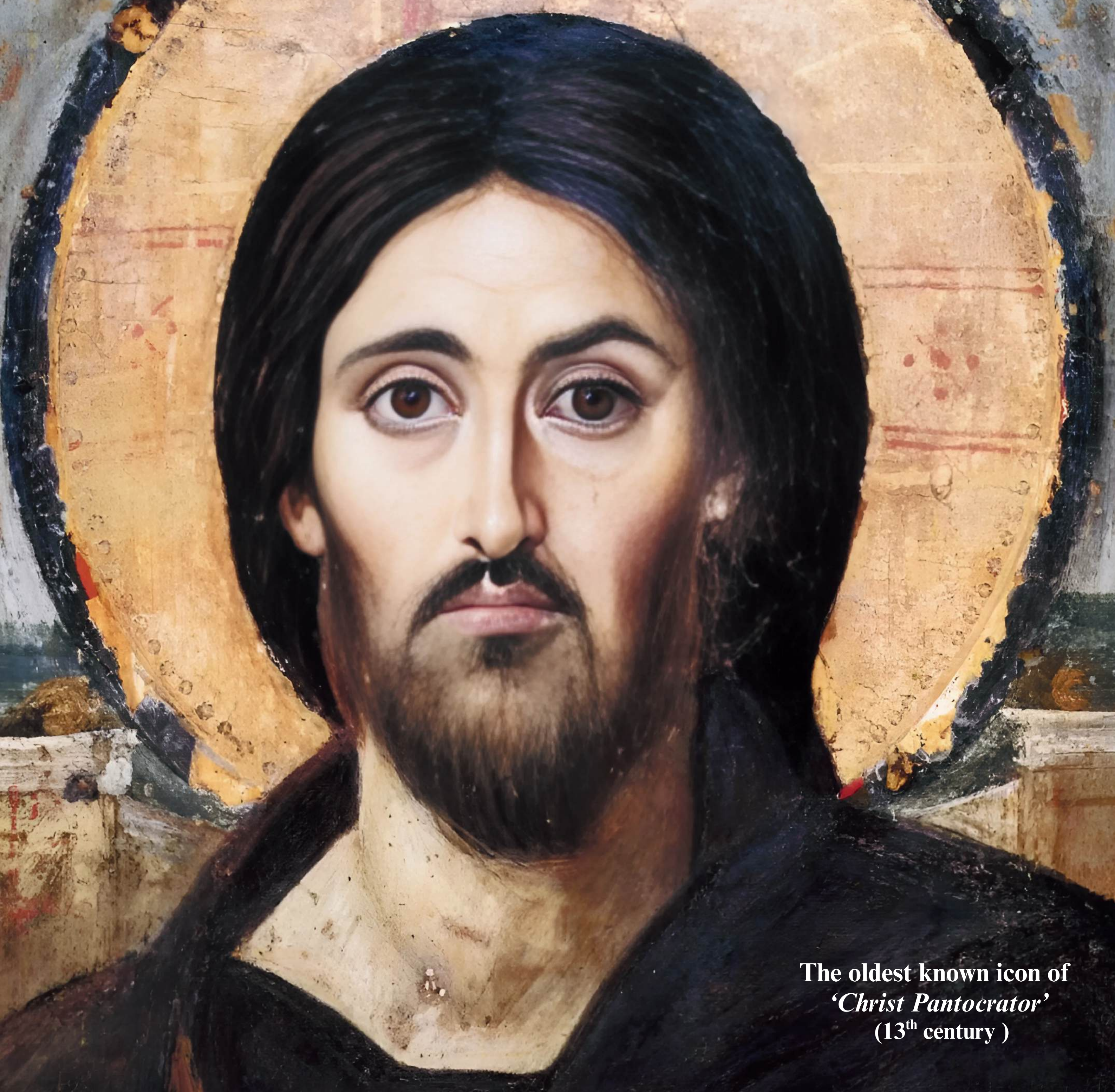
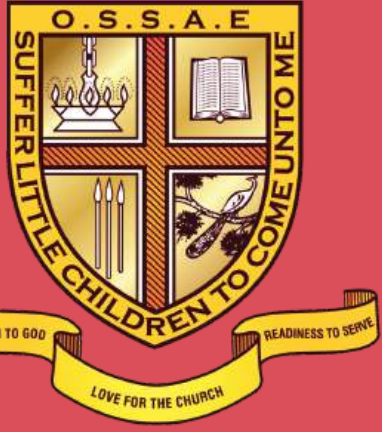
JUNE 2025

VOLUME 1

# KERYGMA

THE PROCLAMATION

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



The oldest known icon of  
*'Christ Pantocrator'*  
(13<sup>th</sup> century)

ST. THOMAS INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, SOUTH AFRICA  
DIOCESE OF UK-EUROPE & AFRICA  
MALANKARA (INDIAN) ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH



**MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH**(INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH)

**DIOCESE OF UK • EUROPE • AFRICA •**  
UK REGISTERED CHARITY : 1139302

**+METROPOLITAN ABRAHAM MAR STEPHANOS**

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**No. E-128/AMS/2025**

**15 June 2025**

**Blessings to the Vicar, Sunday School Teachers, Students, and Parents of the St. Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, South Africa in the name of the blessed Holy Trinity:**

**Dearly beloved in Christ,**

It brings me immense joy to address you all through this letter, which serves both as a word of introduction and a note of appreciation for the Newsletter of the Sunday School of your parish. This initiative is not merely a publication—it is a testimony to the living faith of our children and the loving labour of those who shape their spiritual journey.

At the heart of every vibrant Church community lies the unwavering commitment to pass on the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). In this sacred task, the Sunday School becomes not just a classroom, but a sacred space where hearts are formed, minds are renewed, and young souls are drawn to the life of the Church. I extend my sincere appreciation to each Sunday School Teacher for your dedication, patience, and sacrificial love. Your ministry is vital in shaping the next generation in the faith and tradition of our Holy Church.

To the dear students, I commend your eagerness to learn and grow in Christ. May your journey in Sunday School be one that deepens your love for the Lord, His Church, and His people. And to the parents, your support and example remain the first and most enduring source of spiritual formation for your children—thank you for walking with them in this sacred journey.

The words of St. Paul in Romans 12:2 remind us: *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

This transformation - ἀνακρίνωσις (anakainósis), a renewal of the heart and mind - is the very purpose of our Christian formation. It is in this spirit that I pray your Sunday School will continue to nourish and renew the hearts of our children in godliness, wisdom, and Orthodox faithfulness.

I also take this moment to thank the Vicar, Office Bearers, and the entire Parish community for your unwavering support in nurturing the spiritual life of our children. May your united efforts bear much fruit in the Kingdom of God.

May the Lord, who called the little children to Himself, continue to bless your efforts, deepen your faith, and guide you in all that you do for His glory.

With prayers and blessings,

**+ Metropolitan Abraham Stephanos**

IN SEARCH OF  
'WHAT CANNOT  
BE SEEN'  
2 COR. 4:18



**H.E. Abraham Mar Stephanos**  
(Metropolitan of UK-Europe and Africa)

## **Message From our Vicar**



Dearly beloved children in Christ,

I am delighted to address all of you through this inaugural edition of KERYGMA, the first-ever newsletter published by our parish's Sunday school. KERYGMA is a Greek word first attested in Homer's Iliad. The New Testament, which is written in Koine Greek, the lingua franca of the ancient Near East during that period, adopts this term new depth. While kerygma originally meant "proclamation" in a general and worldly sense, in the New Testament it refers to the proclamation of the Good News or the Gospel

Indeed, the Holy Gospel is the proclamation of God's salvific plan revealed through Our Lord Jesus Christ. This proclamation was entrusted to the holy apostles, who, in turn, passed it on to their disciples and followers, from whom it spread onward. That mission of proclamation continues to this day.

Let me also draw your attention to two related Greek words: KERYX, which means 'herald,' and KERUSSO, which means 'to proclaim.' The former is a noun, and the latter a verb, and the three terms are interrelated. St. John the Baptist was the official herald (keryx) of Jesus Christ, appointed by God Almighty. The holy apostles were likewise heralds of the Holy Gospel, faithfully announcing the proclamation Our Lord Jesus Christ to the four corners of the earth.

As we are journeying through the blessed days of the Apostles' Fast, let us remember the twelve holy apostles, including St. Paul, the great evangelist, let us seek their intercession. I believe that whatever we write, speak, or do on the basis of Holy Scripture and for the sake of Jesus Christ constitutes KERYGMA, the proclamation of the Good News. In that spirit, this newsletter serves as a small but meaningful platform for KERYGMA, a means to propagate the Word of God in manifold presentations.

Yes, our children are humbly proclaiming the Good News of the Holy Scripture through their writings, drawings, short stories, word puzzles, etc.. I deeply appreciate our head teacher, all the teachers, technical supporters, and especially our children, for bringing to fruition the publication of this online newsletter. May God bless us all.

**Fr. Jobin Mammen Cherian**  
**Vicar**

## **Message from our Head Teacher**

Greetings to you all!

With hearts full of gratitude and joy, let me welcome you to the very first edition of *Kerygma*, our Sunday School newsletter. We give all glory to Almighty God for the wonderful opportunity to begin this new initiative. It is by His grace and divine timing that this vision has come to life.

This marks the beginning of a new journey for our Sunday School, where our children can share their talents in writing and express their faith through words. Through this newsletter, we aim to provide a space where young hearts and minds can shine - sharing reflections, stories, poems, and prayers that reflect their growing relationship with God.

We warmly invite all children, parents and parishioners to celebrate with us as we continue to nurture creativity and faith in every edition of *Kerygma*.

A heartfelt thank you to all the children and teachers who supported this new initiative through your prayers and your beautiful writings. Your efforts have made this first edition truly meaningful.

We hope this newsletter will be a meaningful and inspiring experience for all. May it open a new window into the joy of reading, reflection, and growing in faith.

Anchored in Christ.

**Tom Daniel**  
**(Head Teacher)**



**Legendary figures of the Holy Bible**

**Abraham**



Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are collectively known as Abrahamic religions because all three faiths regard Abraham as a patriarch of central importance. Abraham is especially noted for his profound faithfulness to God Almighty. For this reason, God himself called Abraham the "father (or ancestor) of a multitude of nations."

In the Book of Genesis, we see God calling Abraham to his vocation in chapter 12, verse 1:

"Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.'"

Without question, hesitation, or doubt, Abraham set out on his journey, placing his full trust in God. And God provided for him throughout his travels. Furthermore, wherever Abraham sojourned, he never neglected to build a place of worship for God. Abraham kept God before him, and this is why he built altars to the God in whom he trusted.

Let us be like Abraham, faithful and trusting in God.

**- DILSHA PHILIP**

**God's Love**



God's love is big,  
God's love is strong  
It holds me close  
All day long

When I feel scared  
Or all alone.  
God's love will lead  
Me safely home.

He made the stars,  
The moon and the sea.  
But still, he cares  
For little me!

So, I will smile  
And say a prayer  
Thank you, God,  
For your love and care

**- AMADIA SUSAN ANISH**

**Jesus Prayer - A powerful weapon**

Children are the greatest gifts of God. Every human being has to pass through the period of childhood. Experiences may vary depending upon several factors like parenting, social status as well as financial capacity. All these hurdles can be overcome with ease, only if God's presence is experienced with gratitude. If God is in the midst of the family, children will grow with confidence and enthusiasm.



To receive Gods' Blessings, we need to pray unceasingly. Practice of continuous prayer were taught by early church fathers and monks in monasteries. The heavenly grace and charisma can be seen on them. They don't use any artificial things or techniques to attain these. They are continuously in prayer, even during daily activities and work. One such prayer is Jesus Prayer. There are multiple versions of this prayer, however the most widely used is as follows:

***"Lord Jesus Christ, Son Of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."***

The power of this prayer is immense, by which we can overcome all challenges we are being faced with. This prayer is not to receive any earthly gifts, but to receive His Mercy, Grace and Blessings at all times. Start practicing the Jesus Prayer today and you will see the transformation in your life.

**- K. J. KOSHY ( TEACHER GR.5)**

**YOLUFE 2024**

**(TALENT CONTEST TOPPERS)**



**JOSHUA JACOB  
( SUB - JUNIOR )**



**ANORA SARAH ALEXANDER  
( JUNIOR )**

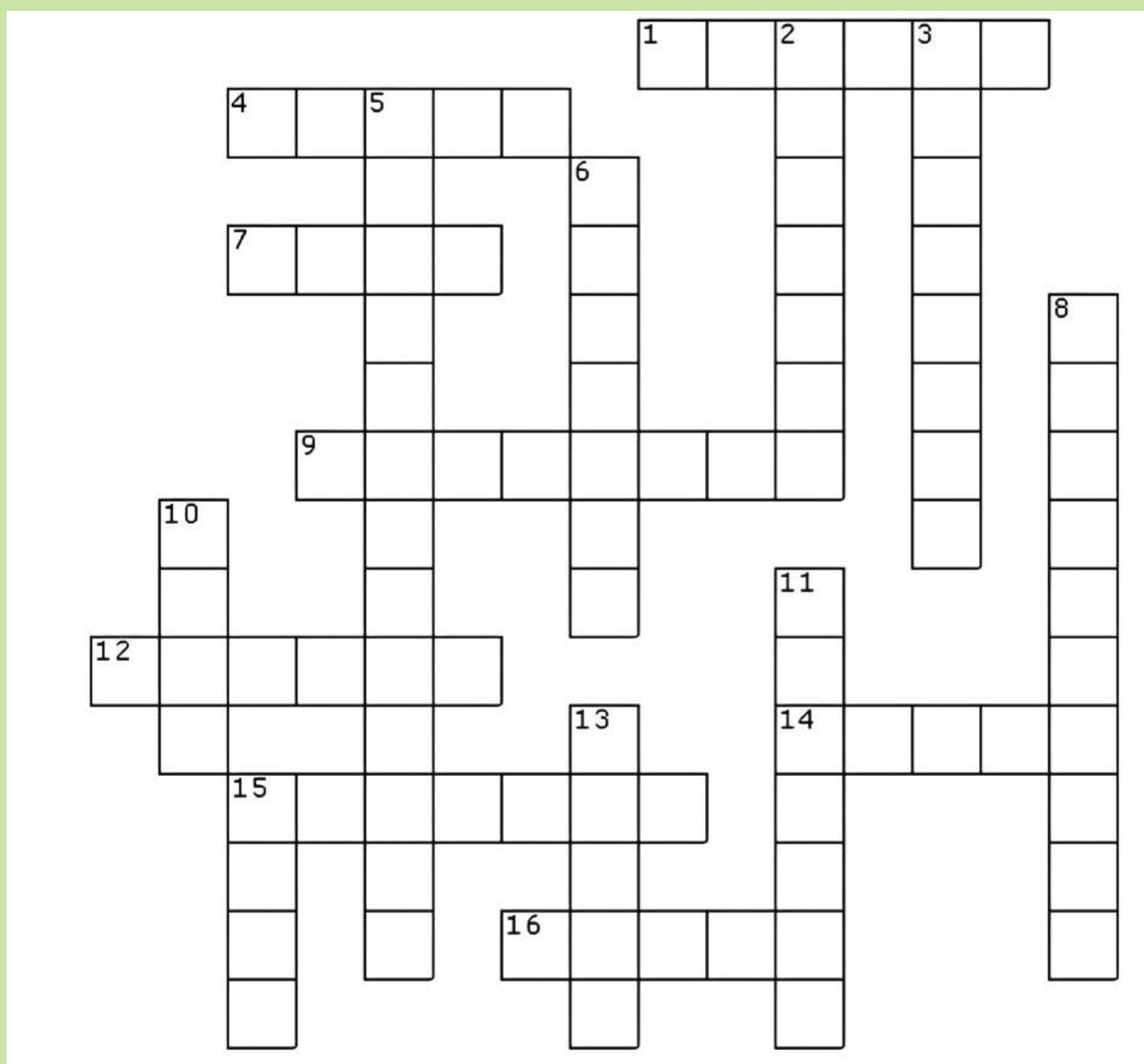


**HAZEL ELIZABETH GEORGE  
( INTERMEDIATE )**



**SANA V JACOB  
( SENIOR )**

**Try This !!! - CROSSWORD PUZZLE**



**ACROSS**

- 1 This Roman governor condemned Jesus
- 4 The disciple Peter's other name
- 7 She was Jesus' mother
- 9 He climbed a tree to see Jesus
- 12 This disciple was known as "Doubting \_\_\_"
- 14 This disciple walked on water with Jesus
- 15 This man was the first Christian stoned to death
- 16 This disciple betrayed Jesus

**DOWN**

- 2 Jesus brought this man back to life
- 3 He tempted Jesus (2 words)
- 5 She found Jesus' tomb empty (2 words)
- 6 This disciple was a tax collector
- 8 Jesus visited the house of these sisters (2 words)
- 10 He had a vision and wrote in down in the Book of Revelation
- 11 John the \_\_\_
- 13 Christ
- 15 This man became known as Paul after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus

(Courtesy: christianbiblereference.org)

( Answers on Page:8 )

**Christian faith in God**

When skies grow dark and doubt draws near,  
When silence speaks and none can hear,  
There is a light no storm can shake –  
A quiet trust we dare not fake.

It's not in signs or things we see,  
But deep within, where hearts break free.  
A gentle voice, a steady hand,  
That leads us when we cannot stand.

Faith is the flame that won't burn out,  
Though winds may howl and fear may shout.  
It walks through fire, stands through rain,  
And finds God's peace inside the pain.

Though questions rise and answers hide,  
Still God walks gently by our side.  
Not always loud, but always nearby –  
A strength to calm our deepest fear.

So, hold to faith when days are long,  
When nothing seems to right the wrong.  
For even in the hardest place,  
God's love will meet you face to face.

**- AMAN JACOB ANISH**



**A Prayer for Goodness**

May you feel good,  
Say what's true and kind,  
Do good deeds  
With heart and mind.

And may you always,  
Gracious Lord,  
Give us strength  
And wisdom's word.

To walk in light,  
To choose what's right—  
Guide our steps  
Both day and night.



**- HAZEL ELIZABETH GEORGE**

**Do You Know these 'BIBLE FIRSTS' ?**

1. What did God make on the first day of creation?
2. What is the first tree mentioned in the Bible?
3. Who built the first city?
4. Who is the first priest mentioned in the Bible?
5. Who was the humblest man on earth?
6. Who was the first king of Israel?
7. Who was the first person to see the risen Lord?
8. Who was the first martyr?
9. Where were the disciples first called Christians?
10. What is the first "fruit of the spirit" listed in Galatians?

( Answers on Page:6 )

**STORY**

**The old couple with kind hearts**

Once upon a time there lived an old man and his wife. But they did not have any children. One day while the old man was sitting in front of his house, he saw three visitors coming towards him. The couples used to treat others well.

Then the old man greeted and invited the three visitors to stay with them. He went to the visitors, washed their feet with water and told them to sit under the shade of a tree. Then he asked, "May I get you something to eat so that you can get refreshed." He went to his wife and asked to make some breads for the three visitors. He also asked his servant to prepare meat.

When the food was ready the couple served the food to guests. They enjoyed the food. The visitors were very happy. When they left the house joyfully, they blessed the couple, saying they would have a baby. The blessing came true. Thus they lived happily ever after.

Dear friends, do you know who that old man and the lady are? They were Abraham and Sarah. The three visitors were three angels.

*When we care for others, we receive blessings in return.*



- Juan T Daniel

**First commandment with a promise**

**“Honour your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—  
“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”  
(Ephesians 6:2-3 )**

**Answers (Bible Firsts)**

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Light (Genesis 1:1-4)                             | 6. Saul( 1 Samuel 11:12-15)       |
| 2. Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17) | 7. Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) |
| 3. Cain (Gen 4:17)                                   | 8. Stephen ( Acts 7:54-60)        |
| 4. Melchizedek (Gen 14:18)                           | 9. Antioch (Acts 11:26)           |
| 5. Moses (Numbers 12:3)                              | 10. Love(Gal 5:22-23)             |

**Church Fathers**

**St. Ignatius of Antioch**



St. Ignatius of Antioch was an early Christian bishop, theologian, martyr and one of the Apostolic Fathers of the Church.

The Apostolic Fathers were core Christian theologians among the Church Fathers who lived in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. They were the disciples of the Twelve Apostles.

St. Ignatius was a holy man who was deeply loved by the Christian faithful, he always made it his special care to defend right teaching and right practice among the early Christians.

St. Ignatius of Antioch born in Syria in the middle of the first century A.D. He was the third bishop of Antioch, and was said to be a student of the Apostle John.

Ignatius was also called Theophorus. The word Theophorus means ‘God Bearer’. A tradition arose that he was one of the children whom Jesus Christ took in his arms and blessed. (St. Matthew 18:1-5)

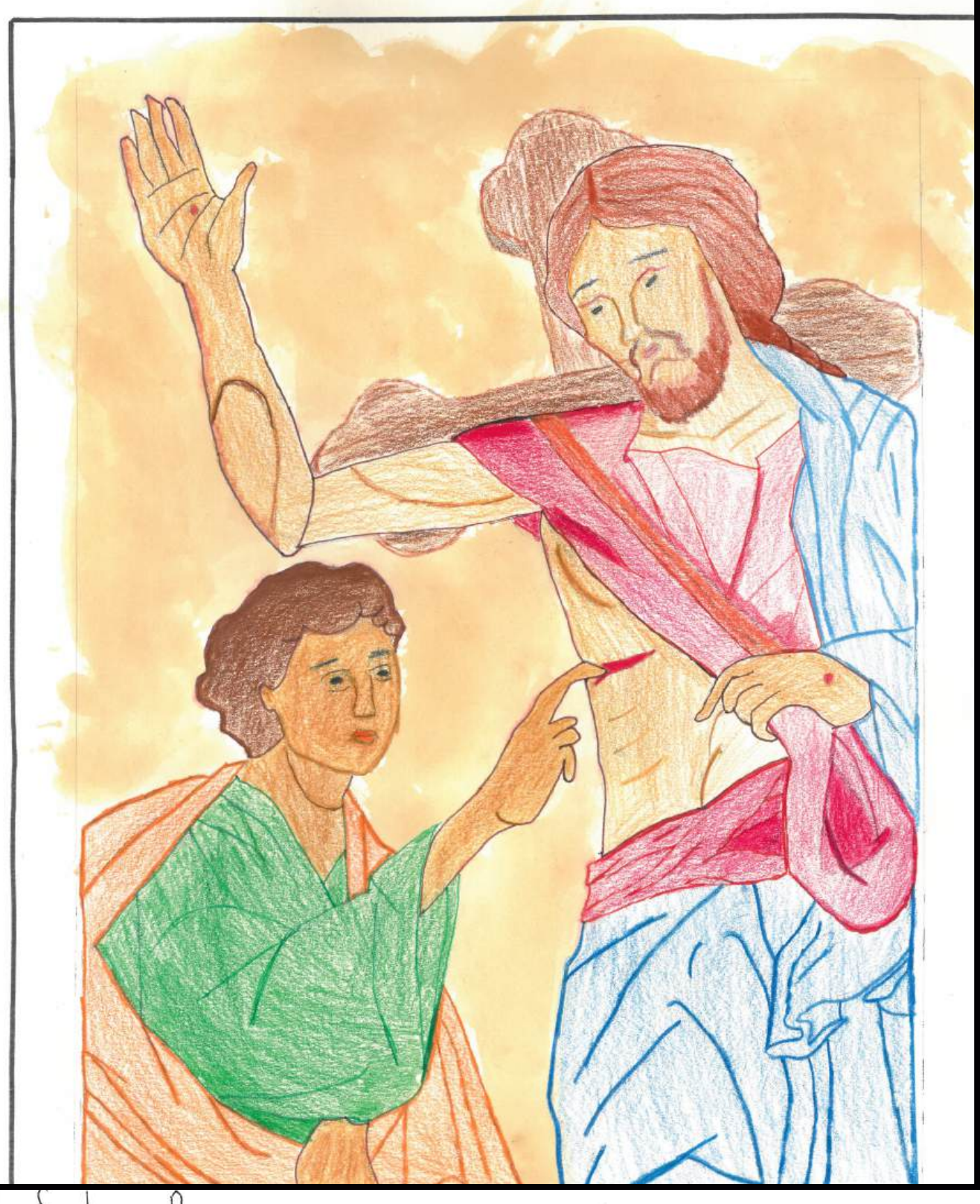
In 107, during the reign of the brutal Emperor Trajan, this holy Bishop was wrongfully sentenced to death because he refused to renounce the Christian faith. He was taken under guard to Rome where he was to be brutally devoured by wild beasts in a public spectacle. During his journey, his travel took him through Asia Minor and Greece. He made good use of the time by writing seven letters of encouragement, instruction and inspiration to the Christians in those communities. We still have these letters as a great treasure of the Church today.

St. Ignatius of Antioch bore witness to Christ publicly for the last time in Rome, where he was mauled to death by lions. “I am the wheat of the Lord,” he had declared, before facing them. “I must be ground by the teeth of these beasts to be made the pure bread of Christ.” His memory was honoured, soon after his death around the year 107.

**-Mereena J Vaidyan  
(Teacher Gr.4)**



Akhil Varghese

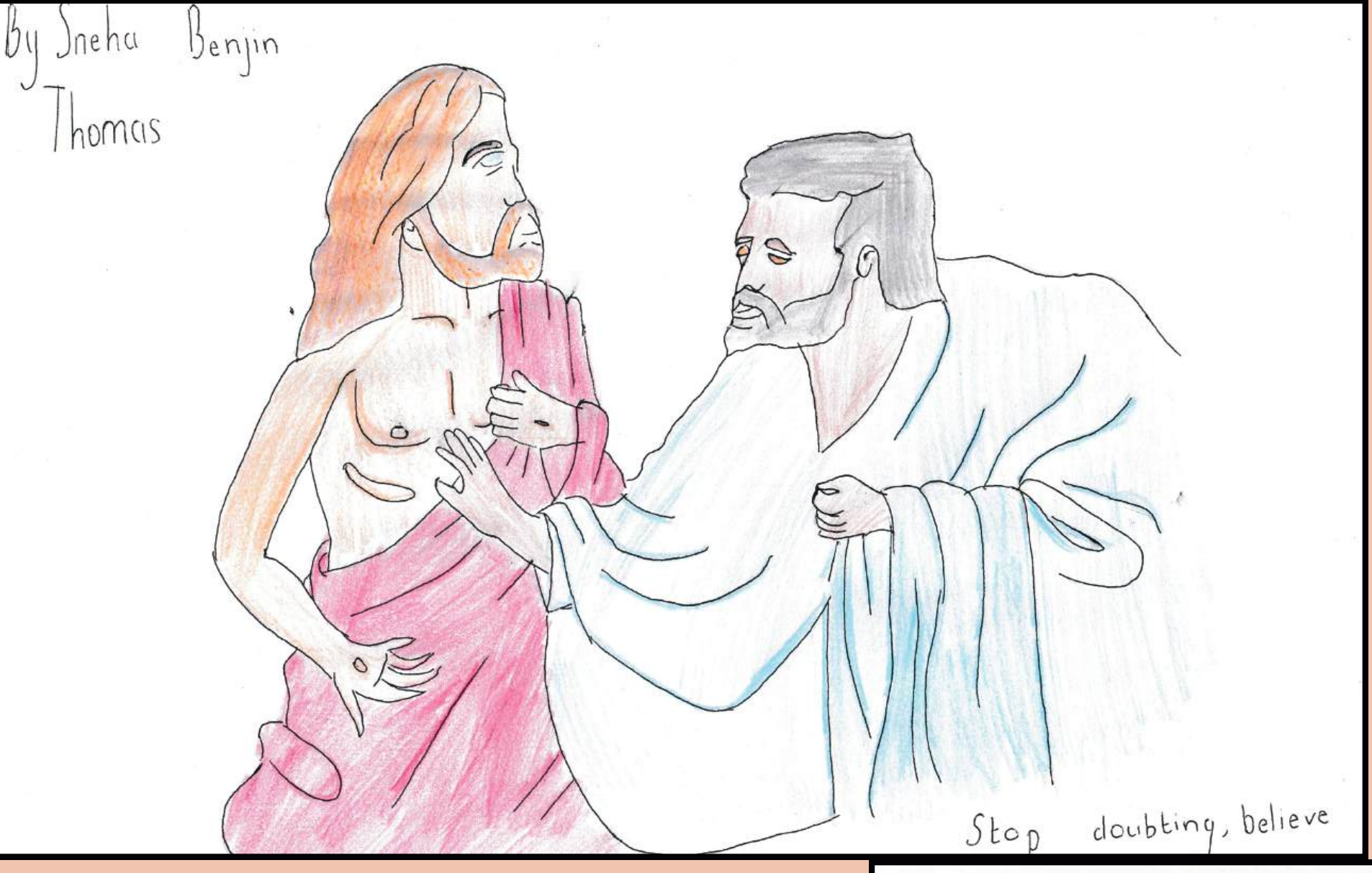


Top Entries From Drawing Competition (YOLUFE 2024)

Aprem Mammen Cherian



By Sneha Benjin Thomas



Drawing competition winners



Aprem Mammen Cherian (Sub-Junior)



Olivia Varghese (Junior)

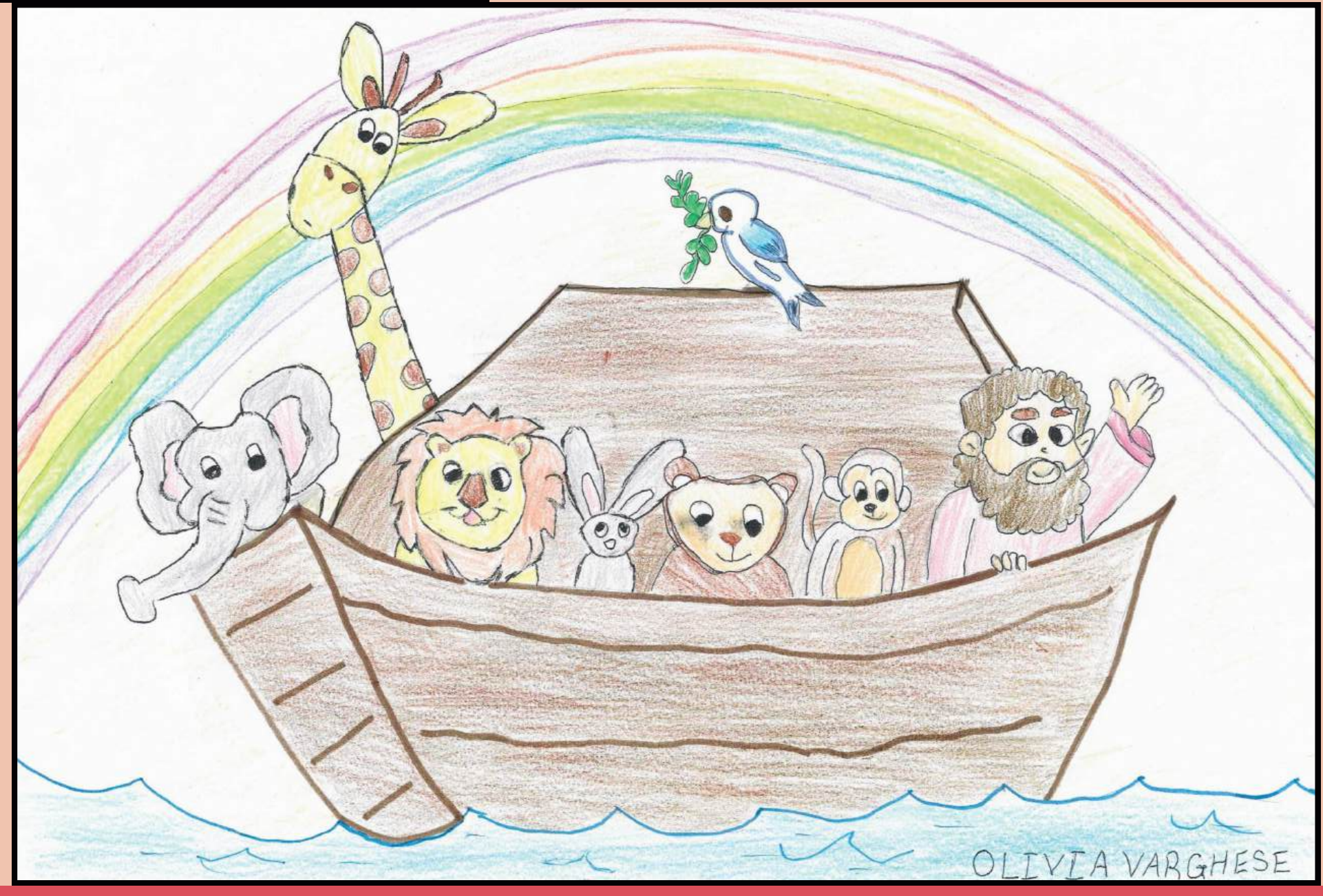
Drawing competition winners



Sneha Benjin Thomas (Intermediate)



Akhil M Varghese (Senior)







2025  
Sunday School  
OFFICIAL  
INAUGURATION  
Groblersdal  
26.January.2025



St.Thomas  
Sunday School  
WELCOME CEREMONY &  
SUBMISSION PRAYER  
Midrand, Johannesburg  
09.February.2025



GLOW 2024



**YOLUFE '25**

02 (Saturday) & 03 (Sunday) August 2025

Talent Contest 2025  
St. Thomas Orthodox Sunday School South Africa

*Talent Contest*

Solo, Group Song, Story telling, Elocution, Bible Memory Verse, Drawing & Quiz

Categories:  
Sub Junior (Ages 5 & below) | Junior (Ages 6-8) | Intermediate (Ages 9-11) | Senior (Ages 12 & above)

Showcase your talents!  
Join YOLUFE 2025

Registration closes on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2025

REGISTER NOW CLICK HERE

<https://forms.gle/ap7ya11WC74GGcxp6>

