

**Parish Bulletin. September 10, 2023, Volume 19, Issue 24**  
**SACRED HEART KNANAYA CATHOLIC FORANE CHURCH**

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**FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM FR. ABRAHAM MUTHOLATH**

**“RESTORE EVERYTHING IN CHRIST”**

My Dear Knanaya sisters and brothers,

As I conclude my service in Chicago on September 14, 2023, I would like to share my memories of the past 20 years and seven months of my service in Chicago. In December 1987, when I was preparing to come from India to Los Angeles for studies in Communication Arts, Bishop Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry asked me to stay somewhere outside the juridical boundary of the Archdiocese of Chicago and offer a monthly Holy Qurbana for the Knanaya Catholics in Chicago. The reason was that Fr. Cyriac Manthuruthil could not come to Chicago after Fr. Jacob Chollampel went to India. Because of the endogamy issue raised by a few individuals, the Archdiocese of Chicago was reluctant to welcome a priest from the Diocese of Kottayam until it was resolved. In that political chaos, some well-wishers warned me of the danger involved in taking up such a task. Considering my difficult situation, Mar Kunnacherry allowed me to study in Los Angeles.

**SERVICE IN CHICAGO**

Chicago KCS invited me to offer Christmas Qurbana in 1987. During that time, I realized the difficult situation of priestly service in Chicago. I returned to Kottayam in 1992 after securing a master's degree in Communication Arts with specialization in TV production from Loyola Marymount University in LA. Because of my visa issue, I came back for five years in 2000 with permission from Mar Kunnacherry to take US citizenship. After the establishment of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago in 2001, Mar Jacob Angadiath surprised me by appointing me as one of the vicar generals of the diocese on October 3, 2001, with the consent of Mar Kunnacherry. One humble request I made to Mar Jacob Angadiath was



my preference to stay away from Chicago because of the political chaos there at that time. However, Mar Angadiath asked me to move to Chicago in February 2003. Hence, I came to Chicago on February 11, 2003, after completing my Clinical Pastoral Education (Hospital Chaplaincy) course from UCLA Medical Center.

I joined Our Lady of Resurrection Medical Center in Chicago (now Community First Medical Center) as a full-time chaplain on February 24, 2003, and will continue until September 12, 2023, which will be my last day of hospital ministry. Since Fr. Philip

**CLICK THE LINK IN PDF VERSION TO VIEW THE VIDEO OF THE FOLLOWING**  
[YouTube Video of the Homily on Luke 18:35-43 by Fr. Abraham Mutholath on September 3, 2023.](#)

Thodukayil was the director of the Knanaya Catholic Mission of Chicago, I had free time for studies. So, I joined DePaul University in Chicago for MPA (Master of Public Administration). When Fr. Thodukayil left for Kerala, Mar Angadiath appointed me as the mission director of Chicago with effect from July 1, 2004. That became a turning point in my life.

After the establishment of the Sacred Heart Knanaya Catholic Church in Maywood, Bishop Angadiath appointed me as the pastor of the parish on September 24, 2006. When St. Mary's Knanaya Catholic Church was consecrated on July 18, 2010, Mar Angadiath appointed me as the pastor of that parish as well. After continuing as the pastor of both parishes, Mar Angadiath relieved me from the pastoral responsibility of Sacred Heart Church on December 31, 2011, and appointed Fr. Saji Pinarkayil as its pastor from January 1, 2012. On October 18, 2014, Mar Angadiath relieved me from the responsibility of St. Mary's Chicago and appointed me again as the pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Chicago. Mar Angadiath elevated the parish on March 22, 2015, as a forane and appointed me as forane vicar. My long stay in Chicago helped me to continue working at the hospital to support my social service and missionary projects.

### HOSPITAL MINISTRY

I joined the chaplaincy course and worked as a part-time chaplain in a hospital before I was appointed as the Vicar General and director of Knanaya Mission. However, I continued the hospital ministry even after I had to take up other pastoral responsibilities. People used to ask me why I was serving as a full-time chaplain in the hospital while also holding the charge of Vicar General and the pastoral ministry of the Knanaya Catholics in Chicago. Here are my answers:

1. I am a hardworking person by nature and because of my family's training. I enjoy engaging myself in serving the people in any way possible.
2. My hospital ministry helped me improve and keep up my language proficiency in US English and to understand the American culture, which is needed to communicate with our children and youth.
3. I could help patients, their families, staff, and the American people in the neighborhood to meet their pastoral and emotional needs. I could spiritually

support people who had kept away from God and the church by offering them sacraments and clearing their spiritual concerns. That has been a satisfactory service for me, and I enjoyed doing that.

4. My hospital ministry did not hinder my service as the vicar general or parish priest. In fact, I was more relieved of tension from the community while I was at the hospital with sick people, their families, and friendly staff.

I could make use of the income from the hospital for the six churches I sponsored in the diocese of Miao and social service projects with the cooperation of Kottayam Social Service Society and Malabar Social Service Society of the Archdiocese of Kottayam. Through the Agape Movement, I could financially support some churches we bought in the Knanaya Region in the US.

### **"I HAVE COME TO BRING NOT PEACE BUT THE SWORD" (Mt. 10:34)**

Jesus was born as a Jew and circumcised on the eighth day. He came not to maintain the status quo of the Jews, but to renew it according to the mission he received from his Father. For that, he had to face severe opposition from the conservative leaders of the time. He warned his disciples that they would also face the same if they want to be his genuine disciples. During his last supper discourse, Jesus said to his apostles, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid' (Jn 14:27). In order to gain that eternal peace and reward in heaven, the representatives of Jesus are called to boldly take up the cross, face opposition, and endure suffering for humanity. When I tried to be a true disciple of Jesus by fulfilling the Spirit-inspired mission of Jesus in Chicago, I also faced opposition during my pastoral ministry in Chicago.

When I started inspiring people to build churches in Chicago and all over the major settlements of Knanaya Catholics in North America, the initial outcome was division in the community and families. Many people, including priests, disagreed with me, saying that I was dividing the community or that I was following the wrong style of 'divide and rule' policy of the British colonists in India. However, I remembered what Jesus said as the outcome of establishing the church. 'Do you think that I have

come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law' (Lk 12:51-53). This literally happened in Chicago and other areas of the United States. However, the result, as we know today, is communal unity and peace centered on the Knanaya parishes in the United States.

### **“RESTORE EVERYTHING IN CHRIST”**

The motto of St. Pope Pius X was ‘Instaurare Omnia in Christo,’ which means ‘to restore all things in Christ.’ As Jesus restored the Jews and the world, every pastor and all Christian leaders are supposed to restore everything and everyone in Christ. I have tried this in my pastoral ministry as the vicar at Veliyanad and Pachira parishes. When I tried that, God provided outstanding result in those parishes during my ministry. When Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry appointed me as the editor of Apna Des biweekly and manager of Catholic Mission Press and Jyothi Book House, I revived those institutions and made them popular and profitable.

I believe that my mission is not to maintain the status quo but to revive establishments by wiping away the dust and making them shine and productive. A similar situation happened when Mar Kunnacherry entrusted me with Chaithanya Pastoral Centre and Kottayam Social Service Society. There also, I faced opposition from some and wholehearted support from others. The result was a significant change in the lives of many downhearted people in society. The Bible verse that inspired me in social service was the quote from Isaiah that Jesus used for himself: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19; Is 61:1-2; 58:6). I have faced opposition from the conservatives and experienced outstanding results when I changed the charity and welfare approach to developmental and Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) method that I introduced in the Kottayam Social Service Society. That inspired me to dedicate my life to work

maximum, earn income, and offer them for social service and missionary endeavors. That gives me self-satisfaction in my life and improvement in the lives of many differently abled children and their families.

### **CHALLENGES IN RESTORING CHICAGO KNANAITES IN CHRIST**

When I assumed the role of director of the Chicago Knanaya Catholic Mission on July 1, 2003, I wanted to restore the Knanaya Catholics of Chicago in Christ. If I did not do it, I would be negligent in my vocation as a vicar (representative) of Christ. In my view, the status of the Knanaya Catholic Missions in Chicago and elsewhere in the United States during that period was pathetic, though others disagreed with me. The Knanaya Catholics in different cities went to neighboring Latin churches and thus they got scattered. Our children and youth were mingling with non-Knanaya and American people without much close contact with their Knanaya peers. Our people did not feel ownership in any church; they were just passive visitors.

The priests were not leaders, but subject to the dominance of lay associations. Because we had to depend on the Latin churches or community centers for liturgical services, the priests could do only minimum service. They were facing disrespect and undue criticism. Endogamy was a major factor in declaring non-cooperation with the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Diocese of Chicago. There was total confusion and chaos.

We had only Sunday evening Qurbana in Malayalam at IHM church and a Thursday evening Qurbana at KCS Community Center at Elston Ave. Fr. Philip Thodukayil started an additional Sunday morning mass at 10:00 A.M. at KCS Community Center followed by Religious Education Classes at the center from January 14, 2001. However, the attendance was poor.

I prayed to God to help me design a restoration plan for the community that was in spiritual blindness led by the blind. Jesus said, ‘If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a pit’ (Mt 15:14). My thought of the possible downfall of the community in the US worried me. The only solution in front of me was establishing Knanaya Catholic Churches in the US even against the will of everyone in the community. My study at DePaul University in



Chicago on public administration helped me scientifically analyze the crisis in the community and design action plans. I took that as one of my assignments, and my professor gave me an A+ for the paper I presented on Knanaya Community issues in the US and their solutions.

### **NON-COOPERATION WITH THE DIOCESE**

Before the establishment of the Syro-Malabar Diocese of Chicago in 2001, the Knanaya Catholic missions in the United States were established by local Latin dioceses that would not tolerate endogamy as criteria for mission membership. So, the missions were under the patronage and domination of local Knanaya Catholic Associations. The associations wanted the missions as their subsidiaries and subject to their control. They considered Holy Qurbana as a means to bring people together for association activities after the liturgical services. Some associations were not willing to start missions that became easier after the establishment of the Syro-Malabar diocese, thinking that the priest in charge would be a hindrance to association governance.

Another hurdle for the development of the Knanaya Catholic Missions in the United States was the instruction that Mar Jacob Angadiath received from the Oriental Congregation in 2001 stating that endogamy should not play a role in defining the membership of the Knanaya Catholic missions and parishes in the eparchy. So, Mar Angadiath took a firm stand on that. KCCNA and the priests serving in the missions took a non-cooperative approach against the diocese. As vicar general, I became helpless.

Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, the then Auxiliary Bishop of Kottayam, helped resolve the issue with Mar Angadiath in consultation with the then KCCNA leaders and Knanaya priests in the US. As a result, Mar Jacob Angadiath officially recognized the Knanaya Catholic Mission of Chicago, along with nine other Knanaya Catholic Missions in the USA, as a mission of the St. Thomas Diocese of Chicago on October 29, 2003.

### **MY DESIGN TO BREAK THE BARRIERS**

The following were the steps I took for the pastoral development of the Knanaya Catholics in the US, especially in Chicago:

**A.** I used to attend KCCNA national council meetings

and make PowerPoint presentations on the current issues of the Knanaya Community and the necessity of pastoral development. I used to clarify all doubts raised. However, when the KCCNA leadership changed, they stopped inviting me to the national council.

**B.** I contacted local Knanaya association presidents, where there were no missions, and asked them to allow me to make a PowerPoint presentation on Knanaya issues in their meeting. After a long PowerPoint presentation and Q&A session, I got written consent from the people to start missions there and submitted them to Mar Angadiath. Thus, new missions were started.

**C.** I focused on the pastoral development of the Chicago Knanaya Mission with the intention of establishing a Knanaya parish with our own church. The following were my action plans for it:

I held a meeting of the people at Chicago KCS chapel on Thursday, July 1, 2004, when I officially took charge as the mission director. I sought their suggestions for improvement of the mission and selected a mission executive with Mathachan Chemmachel, John Elackatt, Johny Thekkeparambil, Kurian Nellamattam, and Anil Edukkuthara as “trustees” and George Thottappuram as secretary and PRO of the mission. The next day I got a strong objection against my move from the then KCS executive. I disagreed with them and told them I would go ahead with my pastoral plan. The tension began with the association from then on.

Due to a lack of enough people’s participation, the monthly Qurbana at St. Isidore’s Church in Bloomingdale was stopped on August 7, 2004, and the monthly Holy Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Darien was stopped on August 21, 2004.

To make myself active in the mission, I regretfully discontinued my half-finished MPA course at DePaul University.

My tactic was to make the Knanaya Mission active to a maximum level so people should feel the need of having our own church. The mission celebrated a Solemn Feast for the first time in honor of Pope St. Pius X on August 8, 2004, with Mar Mathew Moolakkatt as the main celebrant. This was followed by several other feasts twice or once a year. There was opposition for this from some people for the first

feast. So, I sought the presence of Chicago police during the procession to avoid any mishap.

The mission started Holy Mass from September 4, 2004, at St. Peter's Church in North Lake every Saturday at 5:00 P.M.

The mission started Religious Education School at North Lake on September 11 and at IHM School on September 12, 2004. We got a high number of students and staff for the catechism classes. That helped to improve the attendance of Holy Qurbana.

The mission started marriage preparation courses and baptism preparation classes from December 2004 that gave me an opportunity to teach the youth on the difference between the Latin and Syro-Malabar Rite and the need to uphold our rite.

At my humble request, Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, then auxiliary bishop of Kottayam, requested the Knanaya Catholics in Chicago to establish our own church during his homily at IHM Church on May 22, 2005. A search committee was formed on October 2, 2005, to find a suitable building for our church. There were objections to this move.

I made the mission active with further pastoral programs like Theology Course for adults, ministries for all ages, religious education festivals, publication of Sunday Bulletin, and youth retreats.

At my insistence, Mar Jacob Angadiath established a separate region for Knanaya Catholics in the diocese on April 28, 2006. Mar Angadiath officially declared the establishment of Knanaya Catholic Region at OLV Church Chicago and appointed me as Region Director on April 30, 2006. That helped to coordinate the national level activities of the Knanaya Catholics in the US.

After several inquiries, we decided to buy St. James Catholic Church in Maywood from the Archdiocese of Chicago for \$975,000. However, some mission members raised security issues in the City of Maywood, and it got great momentum and severe protest. Some people collected signatures of around 400 families and submitted a petition to Mar Jacob Angadiath against the purchase of that church. Though the bishop and I were willing to give up, another group came with a strong request to purchase the same church. So, Mar Angadiath asked them to collect the signatures of over 400 other families to

support their request.

Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, Archbishop Emeritus Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, and Rev. Fr. Thomas Kottoor had arrived from Kerala for the blessing and inauguration of the church that was scheduled to take place on July 15, 2006. Instead, a concelebrated Mass was offered on the same date at Addison School Hall by Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, and Bishop Mar Jacob Angadiath.

As part of the proposed parish inauguration, a banquet in honor of the dignitaries was arranged on July 16, 2006, at Crown Jewel Banquet Hall in Des Plaines. During that banquet, those in favor of purchasing the church submitted a petition of more than 400 families in favor of buying the church. Based on that, Mar Jacob Angadiath announced his decision to purchase St. James Church in Maywood for the Knanaya Catholic Mission.

The Archdiocese of Chicago handed over the church with effect on September 1, 2006. Since the bishops had gone to Kerala for synod, the parish council members and I inaugurated the possession of the church on Sunday, September 3, 2006, after 10:00 A.M. Qurbana by lighting a candle. The deed for the purchase of St. James Church property from the Archdiocese of Chicago took place on September 22, 2006. On September 24, 2006, Mar Jacob Angadiath blessed the new interior architectural work of the church and declared the Knanaya Catholic Mission as Sacred Heart Knanaya Catholic Parish.

Since half of the parishioners had objected to the purchase of the church in Maywood, the Qurbana at Our Lady of Victory Church in Chicago was continued as an extension of the parish on Sunday evenings. On December 25, 2006, I issued a circular announcing the formation of St. Mary's Unit for those Knanaya Catholics who attend OLV church for their pastoral needs with effect from January 1, 2007.

Religious Education classes, pious associations, and ministries for various ages were held for St. Mary's Unit as well. Thus, St. Mary's Unit functioned as a quasi-parish under the Sacred Heart Parish. Efforts were made to reduce the division in the community by organizing common programs for Sacred Heart and St. Mary's participants, including common Religious Education Festivals, youth retreats,

seminars, pilgrimages, and feast celebrations.

The parishioners preferred a commonplace for burial in a cemetery. They applied for that to the Archbishop of Chicago with the recommendation of Mar Jacob Angadiath. The parish got a separate section at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Hillside with the possibility of over 1600 graves. St. Mary's parish in Chicago also did the same under my leadership. That inspired other parishioners in the region to gain their own cemeteries.

Fundraising programs were held for the purchase of property for St. Mary's Unit of the parish. The General Body, held at OLV church on August 16, 2009, decided to buy a synagogue available in Morton Grove for St. Mary's Unit. There were objections to this as well. So, I had to seek Chicago off-duty police to be present for the pothuyogam for safety. We bought the Synagogue on January 14, 2010. Mar Jacob Angadiath consecrated St. Mary's Church in Morton Grove on July 18, 2010 and elevated it as a parish. Mar Mathew Moolakkatt was the main celebrant of the First Mass offered in this Church. Mar Joseph Pandarasseril gave the homily.

I had helped to start Visitation and St. Joseph's convents in Los Angeles. Similarly, I supported the Visitation Congregation to start another convent in Chicago. The Visitation convent building near St. Mary's Church was blessed on July 18, 2010 by the three bishops after the consecration of the St. Mary's Church in Morton Grove.

The tenth anniversary of the Sacred Heart Forane Parish was celebrated on a large scale from September 9 to 11, 2016 with the participation of Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alancherry, Archbishop Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, Mar Jacob Angadiath, Mar Joy Alappatt, and Bishop Most Rev. Dr. Michael Mulhall (Canada).

### **MY SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Jesus said, "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:10b -11). This is the spiritual life that we receive through the church and her sacraments. I took this mission of Jesus in Chicago and other cities in the United States. The parishioners of the Chicago Knanaya Catholic parishes sincerely cooperated with me to establish Knanaya Catholic parishes all over the

United States. They encouraged the fellow Knanaites the advantages of having Knanaya Catholic parishes and exemplified that through the parishes in Chicago. They even financially supported others to establish Knanaya Catholic churches amid oppositions.

Jesus told his disciples, "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). This sacrificial servant leadership has been my principle in my priestly ministry. As a human, I have my weaknesses and failures. Whatever we could gain, I gratefully give credit to God, who made me as his instrument. He picks the weak and makes them productive for His mission. The second credit goes to all my supporters in Chicago and elsewhere. I am grateful to Mar Mathew Moolakkatt, Mar Jacob Angadiath, Mar Joseph Pandarasseril, and Mar Joy Alappatt for their timely encouragement, support, and their trust in me.

Though many opposed me, and I opposed them in my pastoral ministry, they were not personal but because of the ideological differences. I am a sincere lover of the Knanaya Community and I appreciate the services offered by the Knanaya Catholic associations in the US. I am doing my best with the support of our people to maintain the rich heritage of our community, including its endogamous practice. However, I want to restore the community in Christ by establishing the prominence of Jesus and the goal of eternal life through the church. I have no enmity with anyone. I have forgiven those who have offended me. And I had publicly expressed my apology for the hardships I had given to those who stood against the goal of establishing Knanaya Catholic churches.

As representative of Jesus, I served my most and best time in Chicago especially at SHKC Church, which will never again happen in my life anywhere. I tried my best to preserve the Knanaya traditions and Catholic faith in our parishes. While leaving from Chicago where I invested my whole heart at the service of my loving brothers and sisters which church entrusted me, I can say referring to St. Paul, "I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure (from Chicago) is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:6-7) and yours too Thank you all. Please pray for the success of my ministry in Houston. Adios!



**READINGS & READERS**

**September 10, SECOND SUNDAY OF ELIJAH**

READINGS	9:45 A.M. COMMON
Deut 7:7-11	Lincy Kaniyalil
2 Thess 2:14-3:3	Christina Mutholam

**September 17, FIRST SUNDAY OF ELIJAH**

READINGS	9:45 A.M. MALAYALAM
Deut 8:11-20	Surej Kolady
Phil 2:1-11	Thresiamma Puthiyedathu

READINGS	11:00 AM ENGLISH QURBANA
Deut 8:11-20	Rahm Thannichuvattil
Phil 2:1-11	Alphonsa Pullorkunnel

**CHURCH SCHEDULE**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023**

*St. Theresa of Calcutta*

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 2023**

Qurbana, Novena, and Benediction at 7:00 PM.  
The Nativity of Our Lady

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2023**

Qurbana and novena of Our Lady at 10:00 AM.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023**

**(Second Sunday of Elijah)**

9:00 A.M. Adoration  
9:45 A.M. Common Qurbana  
Catechism after Holy Mass  
Farewell Meeting of Vicar Fr. Abraham Mutholath

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

Qurbana and novena of St. Antony at 7:00 P.M.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2023**

The Exaltation of the cross

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2023**

*Msgr. Thomas Mulavanal takes charge as vicar.*

Qurbana, Novena, and Benediction at 7:00 PM.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2023**

Qurbana and novena of Our Lady at 10:00 AM.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2023**

**(Frist Sunday of Cross)**

9:00 A.M. Adoration  
9:45 A.M. Malayalam Qurbana and Catechism.  
11:00 A.M. English Qurbana.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**

Qurbana and novena of St. Antony at 7:00 P.M.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

St. Mathew the Apostle

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023**

Qurbana, Novena, and Benediction at 7:00 PM.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023**

Qurbana and novena of Our Lady at 10:00 AM.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023**

**(Second Sunday of Cross)**

9:00 A.M. Adoration  
9:45 A.M. Malayalam Qurbana and Catechism.  
11:00 A.M. English Qurbana.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2023**

Qurbana and novena of St. Antony at 7:00 P.M.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023**

Qurbana, Novena, and Benediction at 7:00 PM.

**CHURCH OFFERINGS**

**September 3**

Sunday Qurbana Offering	927.00
Novena offering	15.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>942.00</b>

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

**WEDDING BANN**

Lukose s/o John and Mercy Karamyalil from Sacred Heart Knanaya Catholic Forane Parish, Chicago with Ann D/o Joseph and Suja Illikattil from St. Mary's Knanaya Catholic Forance Parish, Houston to be held on January 7, 2024.

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