

Dearly Beloved,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

May 10, 2026, Fifth Sunday after Easter

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Deuteronomy 16:1-8, Joshua 8:30-33, Proverbs 9:1-11, Joel 3:16-21, Isaiah 26:1-8
- NT: 1 Peter 3:17-22, Hebrews 11:32-40, Holy Gospel St Luke 9:51-62

Holy Gospel: St Luke 9:51-62

51 When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. **52** And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him; **53** but the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. **54** And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" **55** But he turned and rebuked them. **56** And they went on to another village.

57 As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." **58** And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." **59** To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." **60** But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." **61** Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." **62** Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Reflections:

The descending of the Son of Man through his birth amongst creation took place by heaven's grand plan in a manner so subtle and quietly in an obscure town of the world – far removed from lofty settings and noisy celebrations. No birth of this sort had taken place until then and no birth since then has been able to emulate it. Because it was a divine plan finding its place in the cosmos of the earth. There was a wholesomeness about the plain setting. For God, our plainness gave way for His plans. A star declared Christ's arrival. Angels shouted praise as they sang boldly in unison. Wise men travelled from far to adore him. Shepherds stood in awe while witnessing the greatest mystery unfolding. They all knelt, humbled by His humility and they worshipped him.

When our fragility gives way for His faith and when our dilemma gives way for His direction, His purpose works within us.

Christ's birth set the world's clock on a pace to get ready for establishing the Kingdom of God. He began his ministry by preaching, "The Kingdom is at hand". The people wondered about His unique ways as they had not seen anything like this until His time. His reading from the Scriptures, His preaching, His miracle works, His care without boundaries and His guidance to every soul to salvation through parables and by walking amongst them. All of this was unthought of and unseen until His coming.

Christ called the twelve to be part of his ministry. He and the twelve started transforming the lives of people. From a movement of twelve, it grew to multitudes that always followed him. As His days on

earth were about to end, the crowds multiplied. His triumphant entry to the Temple marked a huge milestone as a huge mass movement was formed – one that the city had never seen before. It was almost three years since He had begun His public ministry. After the temple cleansing, tensions with the religious authorities escalated sharply. Christ was arrested and was taken to interrogation. He was put to death and was buried by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea who were accompanied by His close associates including women. Everybody thought it was the end. However, the world was yet to see more wonders through His resurrection and appearance. Christ was seen here in more glory, with greater assurance.

The time had come for Christ to leave. His departure from earth was to be as unique and as purposeful just as His arrival was. The feast of Ascension, which is a few days away from today, marked the completion of Christ's earthly mission and His readiness thus to return to the Father. Here in the gospel text, Jesus quotes three examples of wrong discipleship. The three people had three different reasons to follow Christ. One was attracted by the exciting aspect of His mission. Another seemed ready to follow Him after fulfilling the obligations of his religious customs. The third seemed pressed to bid farewell to all at home as if to seek their blessings or in case he would not return to them anytime soon. What the three men did not realize was that they were talking to someone who had left all the glories of heaven to come down to live a life of uncertainty on earth, certain of only one thing – fulfilling His Father's mission. With discipleship, there came a cost. It demanded unwavering focus.

While we prepare for the feast of Ascension, let us reflect on the life and mission of Jesus. Throughout His ministry Christ's mind was set on Jerusalem and the sufferings that awaited Him there. He sacrificed Himself to save people from eternal suffering. He emptied Himself so that we would be elevated. When the disciples saw how the Samaritans rejected them and their Master, they were ready to burn the village. They knew that their Master could do this if He was willing to. Yet while they were aware of His miraculous power, they failed to comprehend His Grace and compassion, for everyone alike. They forgot that He came to save and not to destroy.

Human tendencies and emotions should be guided by the ethos and values of God's Kingdom. The Holy Spirit should work within the human spirit. Worldly thoughts and trivial chases are to be replaced or sublimated by heaven's vision. The Gospel will transform the world through a transformation of the mind. This was Christ's mission. He continues to call us to join His mission. Let us remain close to Him, listen to His call, and help bring healing to the world.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES FOR THE WEEK:

- **May 08**, St John the Evangelist
- **May 08**, Marthoma V, 261st anniversary, entombed at Niranom Valiyapally
- **May 10**, Apostle St Simon the Zealot
- **April 23, 24, May 05, 06**, Feast of St George observed in various parishes. Our parish will be celebrating the feast on Sat, May 09 & Sun, May 10.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. **May 09-Sat, Sun: May 10: The Feast of George**

Saturday- 06:30 pm: Evening Prayer followed by Devotional Talk, Raza, Benediction and Nerchavilampu.

Sunday- 09:00 am: Morning Prayer. 10:00 am: Holy Qurbana including Intercession of St. George, Benediction and Nerchavilampu

2. **May 10, Sunday:** Mother's Day
3. **May 14, Thursday:** Feast of Ascension-celebrated as: Holy Qurbana on May 13, Wednesday: 06:30 pm- Evening Prayer, 07:30 pm-Holy Qurbana

To prepare for the Feast we can refer to:

OT Readings: Deuteronomy 16:1-8, 1Samuel 9:15-10:1, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Daniel the Younger 3:49-90, Ezekiel 10:18-22, Isaiah 48:20-49:4

NT Readings: Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 4:1-16, 1 Timothy 3:16, Holy Gospel St Mark 16:14-20

1. **May 14-24:** Days of Waiting
2. **May 17 Sunday - Sunday School Food Fest, Bites and Blessings**
3. **May 24, Sunday: The Feast of Pentecost**

Food & Clothing Donation Drive: May 01-31

This year our church will join hands with the Coptic Orthodox Church to reach out to the needy. We request all our members to support this initiative by donating gently used clothes in good condition along with nonperishable food items.

The drive will be kept open throughout the month of May. We may be able to visit our brethren in Toronto on the first Saturday of June. All are welcome to join us when we will distribute the donated items. Details shall be announced soon. Please keep the drive in prayer.

Global Clergy Conference at Parumala: May 19-21

The Global Clergy Conference of the Malankara Orthodox Church will be held at Parumala from May 19-21. HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews III will inaugurate the meeting. The theme is '**Guardians of the Apostolic Flame- Priestly Witnessing in a Changing World**'. About a thousand clergy from 32 dioceses across the world will participate in the conference. We keep the meeting in our prayers.

1st Diocesan Family & Youth Conference of Canada: Thursday, July 02-Saturday, July 04

The first Diocesan Family & Youth Conference of Canada will be held at Georgian College, Barrie from July 02-to-04, 2026. Registration is open; its link has been sent to our members.

HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos Metropolitan, Rev Fr Dr Timothy (Tenny) Thomas and Rev Fr Dr Abraham (Abey) George will be the main resource persons. The 'Ticket Sale Kickoff Ceremony' was held at St Thomas OC Toronto, Etobicoke on Sunday, April 26. HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos Metropolitan inaugurated the launch of registrations.

We keep the family conference in our daily prayers. All families are encouraged to fully participate in the event. For any enquiries, kindly reach out to Diocesan Council Members Manu Abraham and Vivin Thomas Vettiyil.

Pray for Peace in the Middle East and Gulf

We continue praying for re-establishing peace and concord in the war affected lands and regions. Our prayers may work miracles through the Holy Spirit. May the governments and leaders join hands to reconcile and to bring an end to the war.

For our kind attention:

Parking: Please be considerate while parking our vehicles. Park only at designated spaces. Leave the reserved lots as is. Please Park within lane markings leaving enough space for others to open their car doors without scratching or hitting nearby parked vehicles.

AREA PRAYER MEETINGS: Upcoming Prayer meeting schedules shall be updated soon.

FOR OUR ATTENTION & TO NOTE:

Children are kindly requested to occupy front benches during our Liturgical Services

Kindly avoid crowding at the back of the church. A few concerns.

- Due to safety concerns and for assuring an undistracted worship space, we request all our members to proceed to the front rows except those that are reserved for children when we enter the temple. It would be a bit difficult for our volunteers to suggest moving to the front during the service as it would cause distraction and noise. We need to avoid crowding at the entrance and stair areas as this has raised safety concerns.
- Please be considerate to our senior members to help them find seats or while they try to access the washroom. A slip or a hit should be avoided in any circumstance.
- Please be watchful at the shoe rack area which is also the entrance to both washrooms.
- We request our parents to attend our children not to pull the alarm lever at the back wall.

Hand Waving Machine & Common Absolution Prayer for all communicants

The hand waving machine has been installed at the church entrance for taking count of the communicants. Whoever wishes to take Holy Communion, upon entering the temple, please wave your hand once at the machine. Please be aware that after the Nicene Creed, the machine shall be disabled. Absolution shall be done during the morning prayer.

WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

- **May 10, Sunday – in-person meetings**
- Sunday School
- MMVS monthly meeting

LIVE streaming has been reactivated: All services' Live Streaming is now available.

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksas of St Peter this Sunday.

May the Gracious Lord keep us from all evil and heal the entire world.

Next Week

May 17, Sixth Sunday after Easter, Sunday between Ascension and Pentecost

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Joshua 1:5-9, 1 Kings 17:17-22, 2 Kings 23:21-25, Isaiah 44:23-28
- NT: Acts 26:19-25, Philippians 2:1-11, Holy Gospel St John 13:31-36

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Email ID: fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com

Mobile: (416) 570 5610