

Dearly Beloved,

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

September 14, 2025, Feast of the Cross, Season of the Cross begins

Scriptural Readings:

**OT: Genesis 48:13-20, Numbers 21:4-9, Joshua 10:12-15, 1 Samuel 17:37-53,
Daniel 7:21-28, Isaiah 65:1-7**

NT: Acts 13:26-39, Galatians 2:17-3:14, Holy Gospel St Luke 21:5-28

Holy Evangelion, St Luke 21:5-28

⁵ And as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, ⁶ “As for these things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” ⁷ And they asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign when this is about to take place?” ⁸ And he said, “Take heed that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. ⁹ And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified; for this must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”

¹⁰ Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹ there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. ¹³ This will be a time for you to bear testimony. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they will put to death; ¹⁷ you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives.

²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; ²² for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written. ²³ Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; ²⁴ they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵ “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ men fainting with fear

and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Reflections:

With the Feast of the Cross here, the church is now entering the season of the Cross. For every season change, there is a corresponding change in the surrounding. A change in the environment is internalized by people thus causing a change in the way we dress, eat, travel, make plans, etc. The season of the Cross beckons us to have a corresponding change within, as we internalize the Cross, the journey it took to get there, and the change that its presence caused for humankind.

We are surrounded by many crosses – seen and unseen. Today’s passage refers to the cross of Christ. In the season of the Cross, the church focuses more unto the end of time and beginning of a new age. In this scriptural text, when Jesus spoke of the temple structure’s destruction, the leaders thought he was talking against the temple. They felt provoked and threatened as the temple was the symbol of their prestige and pride. He also spoke of the vanishing of many things existing including the Sun, the moon and stars. His prediction about the destruction of the Holy City was beyond their endurance. It was after all - a city fortified by David and secured by the Holy Temple. They never thought it would ever be destroyed although they had witnessed many invasions by foreign kings. Towards the end of the talk, Jesus told them about the coming of the Son of Man, the Messiah.

What did the destruction of structures have to do with the coming of the Messiah? We are dependent on what we see and what we know. It is easy to fathom the reality of structures, people, faith, relationships and so on as we think they are inevitable for our survival. However, Christ wants us to fathom Him. Life with Him is eternal. He wants us to leave aside the temporal and perishable. To know that His story is real and in Him is life. To put our gaze on Him and to rely on His providence. We might ask ourselves, ‘what are we working toward or what are we working to protect and keep?’ The answer is: our efforts are negligible unless invested with Jesus, the Son of Man - the Way, the Truth and the Life.

In a world of selfishness and greed, the Son of Man cannot be acknowledged or accepted. Hence, He was killed by his own people. Jesus resurrected to invite everyone to a newness of life. For this, He asked us to be reborn with a new sense of life. Without a life in Him, there is no meaning in our effort. Our journey to achieve wealth, power, success is often laced with hard work, relationships, art and many factors. Amidst suffering, persecution, rejection, refusal and betrayal we won’t be able to sense the Kingdom of Heaven. As a corrective to many acts of removal of life

from the world, we would need to breathe the life of Christ into everything: our faith, practice, daily activities, relationships and work. We need to keep and guard values and qualities rather than focus on material possessions.

As Christ said, one should work for the imperishable food. It would require a clear shift. We invest more in things which are lifeless. Son of Man is Life in Abundance and Life Eternal. A shift from lifeless material belongings to Him, the source of light, is what he was telling them. When we bring that life into things, nothing would perish. Anytime the Messiah can be with us. The world will be joyfully looking for Him always. Maranatha!!!

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- September 09, Feast of Yuyakim and Hannah, parents of St Mary
- September 14, Feast of the Cross

From our previous updates:

Onasadya: Sincere thanks!

With the participation and contributions of our members and families, we had a wonderful 'Onasadya' on Sunday, Sept 07. It was so endearing to see everyone in traditional Kerala attire with all colors, beauty and variety.

Food and seating arrangements were convenient for everyone to enjoy the meal without any confusion and rush. We highly appreciate our members for their patience and understanding. Those waiting in queues found time to connect, take pics and move around thus turning the whole premise into an Onam village. Food was cooked fresh in our homes, and it all tasted the best. Everything was delicious and in a good wide variety. Our volunteers were a skilled team; they served perfectly without any interruption. The serving plate was also very handy and convenient. Everybody commented that this was one of the most delicious Onasadya we have ever had. The weather too was perfect, and the air was festal.

We thank all our members, especially MC members, MMVS for coordinating, organizations for their facilitation, families for bringing food, all volunteers for cooking, buying, preparing and serving and a special note of thanks to those who stayed until the end for a brilliant cleanup on the premise.

It was our fellowship and togetherness that made this beautiful Onasadya possible.

We look forward to upcoming events with more hope and best expectations.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. September 14, Sunday: Feast of the Cross. Morning prayer at 08.30 AM followed by Holy Qurbana and liturgy of the Cross.

2. **October 10, Friday: Diocese of Canada Clergy & Baskyomo Meeting, Venue: St Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church (Norval Parish), Date: October 10 Friday 2025, Time: 10:00 am**
3. **October 11, Saturday: The Diocese of Canada, The First Diocesan General Assembly, Venue: St Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church (Norval Parish), Date: October 11 Saturday 2025, Time: 10:00 am**
4. **October 12, Sunday: Parish Nite 2025**
5. **October 19, Sunday: Harvest Festival – 2025**
6. **Celebrating 1700th year of the Council of Nicaea: Our parish will be organising an event including elocution competition connected to the theme and choir presentations involving the Malankara Orthodox Church parishes in Toronto Region. Venue: SGOCT Parish, Date: October 25 Saturday, 2025, Time: 02:00 pm onwards**

AREA PRAYER MEETINGS:

Details of upcoming meetings shall be announced later.

FOR OUR ATTENTION & TO NOTE:

Children, please 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:

September 14, Sunday –

- **Parish Half Yearly GBM after refreshment**
- **Organizations: Practice and training for Parish Nite 2025 after GBM**

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

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of St Isaac this Sunday.

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

Next Week

Sep 21, First Sunday after the Feast of the Cross

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Genesis 42:1-8, Hosea 5:1-5, Daniel 4:4-9, Isaiah 57:14-20

NT: Acts 3:22-36, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, Holy Gospel St Mark 13:30-37

Yours in Christ

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