

Dearly Beloved,

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

August 17, 2025, First Sunday after the Feast of Assumption

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Exodus 14:21-29, 1 Samuel 8:4-10, Isaiah 43:1-5

NT: 1 John 2:22-29, Ephesians 6:10-17, Holy Gospel St Mark 10:35-45

Holy Evangelion, St Mark 10:35-45

35 And James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Reflections:

The sons of Zebedee were bold and took freedom to ask their teacher to do for them whatever they would ask Him to. And the Teacher who reads all minds asked them what He could do for them. He listened to their desire to sit on His right and left in the days of power and glory. Jesus did not turn them away but took them to levels of thinking other than what they had imagined. The fall in Eden was due to greed, ambition and self-centeredness where Satanic desires replaced God and His Will. God's creation was an expanse of wide variety in which all had equal opportunities and rights. God commanded humans to till and keep it as created, in good form and shape with equality maintained and justice assured.

They however sought their own gain and neglected His command by reaching for the forbidden fruit which belonged to the Owner. They disturbed the web of life, broke a rhythm and destroyed the ecosystem. Imbalance and death resulted.

Jesus came to rectify humans' folly and to resurrect the fallen. A mission carried out through centuries saved the whole creation from further distortion. His teaching to the people and disciples were to address that humans' presence in this world was a corrective to the narrative so far. Love had to replace law. Healing would replace hurt.

Jesus did not take any material benefit from His ministry other than minimal things for His survival. While on fast, when tempted by Satan, He reminded the world not to be sinful about using spiritual gifts and talents or any divine ability to meet human needs – no matter how desperate the situation. Jesus opted to go hungry without changing stones to bread through prayer. When He spent days with the multitude and saw them hungry, He did not turn stones to bread with His power, but He asked them to give God whatever they had. That giving was blessed with a prayer of gratitude and it multiplied in His hands.

Christ wanted His disciples to rise above situations – to flee from selfishness and ignorance and run toward selflessness and inclining more toward God's heart. For the Lord, power and glory were of sacrifice and suffering whereas the disciples conceived it as an earthly possibility of achieving worldly wealth and reign. As soon as they demanded Jesus to grant their wish, a divide was formed amidst them: Zebedee's two sons on one side and the remaining ten on the other side making way for a Babel tower to be formed through unhappiness and a sense of inequality. All along, Jesus had taught them to be the voice of the voiceless; to place themselves last in the list for any want.

Counting the self above others is a cause for division and indifference. Our power struggles on earth for anything even the Kingdom of Heaven cannot guarantee us a place there. Satan had fallen due to this fight and claim for a higher place and position. It is assumed that any claim of such would make the person heavy and haughty, which is not the nature of God's spirit. This heaviness could lead to our fall.

Spirituality is about being free of the weight of pride and self claims. This is the principle of flying: to attain less weight and more height. A balloon won't lift if it is filled with soil. Too much weighing hinders the free spirit's path to resurrection which is a complete freeing from all burdens and bindings. Christ wants us to be regenerated as newborns, resurrected

from the deadly sins of selfish ambitions and to live in the world as free souls who praise God continually. Only then we would be able to witness the Kingdom where there is no ruler or more privileged, but where all are equals. All would serve each other. Nobody would claim to be better or perfect than others. Then we would be able to do miracles. There we shall find success. Christ's way to liberate ourselves will enable us to free ourselves from Satan's clutch. This passage in the week India's 79th Independence Day celebrations should propel us to grow closer to Christ and His promise. He wants us to be successful and wonderful just as He was.

#### FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

August 12, Commemoration of St Azazayel the Martyr

August 13, Commemoration of Prophet Micah

August 15, Feast of Assumption

August 15, India Independence Day

August 15, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Abded Meshiha II, entombed at Kurkuma Dayara, Turkey. He consecrated the first Catholicose in the Malankara Church in 1912; church became fully indigenous and autocephalous with the institution of Catholicate.

August 16, Mar Ivanios Hidayatullah Episcopa, 332nd anniversary, entombed at Mulanthuruthy Cathedral

#### Condolence:

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Aleykutty Chacko, aged 95, beloved mother of Anni Varughese and Moni John. She is lovingly remembered by her daughters and their families, including sons-in-law George Varughese (Jomon) (Directory G 08 ) and John T Mathew (Sajan), grandchildren: Jeevan, Rina, Tintu, Dinu, Jobin, Elizabeth (Directory J 23), Teffi and Leejo; as well as her cherished great-grandchildren Caleb, Liora, Abidelle, Jayce, Isabelle and Vienne.

Funeral details shall be updated soon.

We keep the grieving family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. May the Lord comfort the departed soul and give strength to the family members.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

HH Baselios Marthoma Paulose II Memorial Food Drive is currently open with an extension till Sunday Aug 17, organised by SGOCT MMVS. Please bring nonperishable food items - canned or packed, assuring at least three months before date of expiry.

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. Probably in the Fall season. Date, time and other details shall be announced soon.

August 15-18: Kanesh Retreat 2025 @ Anchor Retreat Centre

August 16, Saturday: Feast of Theotokos: Evening Prayer @ 06:30 pm followed by Devotional Hymns by Parish Choir, Devotional Talk, Holy Procession, Benediction & Nerchavilampu.

August 17, Sunday, Feast of St Mary, Holy Qurbana, Intercessory Prayer, Nerchavilampu.

August 23, Saturday: Parish Picnic

September 01-08, Ettunompu

September 07, Sunday: Onasadya

September 07, Sunday: Feast of Theotokos, Holy Qurbana, Intercessory Prayer, Nerchavilampu.

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

October 12, Sunday: Parish Nite 2025

October 19, Sunday: Harvest Festival – 2025

MGOCSM Canada- Kanesh 2025; Aug 15-18

MGOCSM Canada Kanesh Retreat 2025 is happening at Anchor Retreat Centre from August 15-18. We are glad that a good number of our youngsters are participating in the camp this year. Please keep the event in prayer and offer all support possible.

**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:

August 17, Sunday –

OCYM monthly meeting after refreshment

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 Mar Osthathios this Sunday.

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

Next Week

Aug 24, Second Sunday after the Feast of Assumption

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Genesis 6:3-12, Ecclesiastes 7:1-3, Psalm 12:1-9

NT: 2 Peter 3:8-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, Holy Gospel St Luke 11:9-20

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

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