

Dearly Beloved,

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

May 17, 2026, Sunday after Ascension, prior to 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

Holy Gospel: St John 13:31-36

³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; ³²if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once. ³³Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ ³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

³⁶Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward.”

Reflections:

This Sunday precedes the Sunday of the Feast of Pentecost. Before ascension, Christ guided the disciples to Mount Olives and there He disappeared into the clouds. Upon His leaving He asked the disciples to wait to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, after which they were to go unto the ends of the world to preach the Gospel.

In the gospel text Christ tells the disciples that He was about to be glorified. He had never said it before while carrying out His ministry. He did not allow anyone to glorify him although His mission of salvation and miracles is what the people hungered for. Christ experienced humanity in its reality-suffering, fatigue, anger, sorrow and relationships, while remaining without sin. **He was humiliated and hated by leaders but the poor and the needy adored Him.** People of power rejected him, the powerless and meek accepted Him. **Christ treated everyone equally.** He healed the widow’s child just as He healed the centurion’s son.

Sinners wanted Christ but the self-righteous disowned Him. Although He faced hostility and enmity, He cared for the needy. When the rulers preached politics, He preached purpose with love. The world looked for material gains and ephemeral belongings; Christ taught everyone to gather imperishable graces. Leaders found themselves safe in their power, but Christ asked His followers to be poor in spirit to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven and to keep their hearts pure so that they would be able to discern and see the Lord God. What the world could not gain through power and authority, the meek received it through their weakness and fallibility.

Now the time had come for Christ to leave the world and to ascend to His Father. He revealed to the disciples that He would be in His glory which He did not bring to the world for the event of incarnation, the salvific act of becoming human. He wanted them to understand who they would be serving and what they should expect in the future. He knew that when they would be deployed in various places for His ministry, they would face challenges, suffer humiliation, be treated unjustly, and could get weakened in different ways. And Christ wanted them to bear in mind that He too had

gone through such experiences. It was not for any material gains, but for establishing the Kingdom of God in the world.

Christ told His disciples that His kingdom is not of the world. They had to be aware that the world might not treat them even though they would put in their best efforts. They had to stay away from any temptations of power and glory. Christ wanted them to know that life was not to end in this world and there would be a life in the next. Through His sufferings and death, the apostles saw the physical struggles that they could expect. His resurrection served as proof to them, reinforcing their hope in the world to come. If their Lord who suffered cross and death was going to be glorified, they would also be.

St Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:14: when the veil of old life remains, we may not be able to see the glory of God.' ***Discipleship was given as a corrective to Adamic disobedience.*** What the sinned Adam was unable to see and access, the disciples would see and access. The whole creation would be in groaning for human liberation as through sin they were brought under bondage. The strong will for freedom from sin could be the only way to break free from its chains.

The Holy Spirit brings freedom. To receive the Spirit, the disciples had to wait in the Holy City until Pentecost. The days of waiting after the Ascension are meant for believers to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and to live and work for the Kingdom. Let us pray, ***“Come Holy Spirit, renew us, renew Thy whole creation!”***

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- **May 15**, Feast of Theotokos for Crops
- **May 15**, St Issaac
- **May 16**, HG Yuhanon Mar Severios Metropolitan, 36th anniversary, entombed at Sion Seminary, Koratty
- **May 14-24**, Days of Waiting prior to Pentecost
- **May 12, International Nurses Day**
We congratulate all nurses who are angels of God in the world to comfort, to heal, to resurrect. It is an apostolic service in a secular uniform. The day is observed on the birthday of Florence Nightingale, “Lady with a Lamp”. We have many of our members working in health care. They serve day and night, sacrificing their comfort and try their best to keep smiling while dealing with challenging needs. May God empower them through Holy Spirit and bring healing through their service.

Sunday School Food Fest: Bites & Blessings

This Sunday we have our Sunday School making delicious food for us. Please support the event. Please be aware that there will not be any other usual refreshments served. They have opened a pre- order. Please access the link and place order.

Food & Clothe Donation Drive

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 will be 'Guardians of the Apostolic Flame- Priestly Witnessing in a Changing World'. About a thousand clergies from 32 dioceses across the world will be participating 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 02-04, 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 at 12:00 pm. HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos Metropolitan inaugurated the launch of registrations. We keep the family conference in our daily prayers. Our families are encouraged to please assure full time participation in the event. For any enquiries, kindly reach out to Diocesan Council Members Manu Abraham and Vivin Thomas Vettiyil.

This Sunday FYC 2026 organizers will be visiting us for registration campaign. Please support the event.

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.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. **May 14-May 24:** Days of Waiting
2. **May 16 Saturday:** Diocesan MMVS Bible Quiz at 12:00 pm -02:00 pm. SGOCT parish team will join online from our church.
3. **May 24, Sunday:** The Feast of Pentecost

Attention Please:

- **Parking:** Please be considerate while parking our vehicles, only park at designated space. Leave reserved lots for the intended and kindly park within lines and markings leaving enough space for others to open their 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, 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 to record the number of communicants. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion are requested to wave their hand once at the machine upon entering the church.

Please note that the machine will be deactivated after the recitation of the Nicene Creed.

Absolution will be administered during the morning prayer.

WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

- **May 17, Sunday – in-person meetings**
- **Sunday School Food Fest**
- **OCYM 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 Taksa of St Peter this Sunday.

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

Next Week

May 17, Seventh Sunday (50th day) after Easter

Feast of Pentecost

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Exodus 19:1-11, Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29, Joshua 18:1-7, Proverbs, 4:18-5:2, 2 Kings 2:13-17, Daniel 5:7-19, Ezekiel 11:17-20, Isaiah 42:6-16
- NT: Acts 2:1-11, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Holy Gospel St John 16:5-
- Yours in Christ
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