

Dearly Beloved,

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

March 22, 2026, 'Samiyo' – Healing of the Blind (Great Lent Season), 'Sabhadinam'

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Deuteronomy 25:13-26:5, Judges 6:11-24, Job 42:1-8, 1 Kings 3:5-15, Ezekiel 13:1-16, Jeremiah 51:10-19
- NT: 1 Peter 4:12-19, Romans 14:10-23, Holy Gospel St John 9:1-41

Holy Gospel: St John 9:1-41

9 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. ²And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Silo’am” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, “Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some said, “It is he”; others said, “No, but he is like him.” He said, “I am the man.” ¹⁰They said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Silo’am and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ¹⁵The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was a division among them. ¹⁷So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.” ²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?” ²⁸And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God

listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of man?”^[a] ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

Reflections:

On the 36th day of the Great Lent, the church observes the Catholice Day. On this day we read from the Holy Gospel of the instance where Jesus gives sight to a man who was born blind. ***Church is the community of believers who are meant to see the Lord in their day-to-day living.*** They appreciate and are grateful for everything that the Lord does in their life and in the lives of others. This was the promise that Jesus gave Nathanael that he would see heaven open, angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (Jn 1:51). This vision has never ceased in the church.

When we go to the temple, we see heaven open and angels surrounding the Lamb of God who presents Himself on the Holy Altar with the heavenly hosts praising Him with chants of Holy, Holy, Holy. Incense is offered to His glory to serve as a cloud so that the believers may have a glimpse of the Glory of God as Moses had seen Him from behind a rock. It also symbolizes the prayers of saints. His Body and Blood are elevated and brought to us to receive Him as the disciples received Him. Everything in the Sacraments is about seeing the Lord and experiencing Him. We receive His touch. We taste Him. We smell Him. We embrace Him. We serve Him. We get empowered and enlightened as the two disciples experienced Him on their way to Emmaus (Lk 24:30-32). It is so exciting to see how they worded it- “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scripture to us?”. At the table when He was serving them the bread, their eyes were opened when He gave thanks and they recognized Him...

We often complain about distractions, our inability to focus, and we are concerned about a decline or lack of faith that keeps us from seeing Christ clearly. Here we read of the healing of the blind. Christ performed this miracle in front of the multitude; He had nothing to hide as His focus was on the sufferer and on His Father’s glory that had to be revealed through the healing. The receiver of the sight also witnessed it clearly. But the others could not accept what they saw before their eyes. They reasoned out with everyone including the blind man’s parents to know how this healing had come about. Christ then remarked, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, we see, your guilt remains” (Jn 9:41).

Our choices and priorities may act as barriers to us receiving Christ’s love. It is not His absence or the pressure of the world; it is through our choice whether we see Him or not. So, our prayer to the Lord must be ‘to keep our inner eyes open that we may see Him always witness all the mighty work that He does in our life’. We should never miss Him.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- **March 18:** HG Paulose Mar Severios Metropolitan, 64th anniversary, entombed at Arthat Puthenpally, Kunnamkulam
- **March 19:** HG Sreeba Mar Osthathios Metropolitan, 96th anniversary, entombed at Arthat Puthenpally, Kunnamkulam
- **March 21:** HG Geevarghese Mar Julius Metropolitan, Konatt, 141st anniversary, entombed at Pampakuda Valiyapally
- **March 22:** Sabhadinam- Catholicate Day

Patriarch Ilia III of Georgia is mourned

Patriarch Ilia III of Georgia passed away at the age 93 on March 17, 2026. HH had served the church for 48 years as the Catholicose-Patriarch. Under his spiritual leadership the church grew from 15 to 33 dioceses. Over 50 monasteries were established, and nearly 1000 clergy were ordained. Christianity is the state religion in Georgia and 89% of people are Orthodox Christians. We thank God for sending such a great shepherd. We pray for his soul and for the church. May they be able to elect a new Patriarch who could lead the church further into spiritual prosperity.

Pray for Peace in the Middle East and Gulf.

We continue praying for re-establishing of peace and concord in the war affected lands and regions. Our prayers during these days of Lenten fasting may work miracles through Holy Spirit. May the governments and leaders join hands to reconcile and save the world from further injuries.

Eid-2026

The holy month of Ramadan concluded on March 19 and Muslims all over the world celebrated Eid. May the spirit of unity and sharing bring us closer so that together we shall overcome these tough times. God is 'Rahman', merciful and compassionate. May His mercy and compassion be reflected across the globe through everyone's words and deeds. May He be always merciful to all of us.

OVBS 2026 - Mar 18 Wednesday -22 Sunday, Theme: Walk in Purity

OVBS' closing session will be seen on Sunday, March 22. It is truly a blessed occasion to see all our children enjoying their meeting, singing, lessons, group activities, craft, delicious food and snacks along with prayer and kneeling. We have dedicated teachers and volunteers to serve and look after them. Parents are taking the pain to bring groups of children to church and back home. A few of them remain at church to offer assistance and others take the effort to drive twice these days. While looking at the benefits that the event can bring to our children, every effort we are taking now is worth. We pray that our children get closer to God and know His love more deeply as they commit to become true followers and disciples of the Lord. Please keep the OVBS in our daily prayers and offer all support required.

Diocese of Canada General Assembly on March 22 Sunday @ 04:00 pm

The Diocesan Assembly would be held virtually on Sunday March 22, 2026, at 04:00 pm. All the vicars and the Diocesan Assembly delegates from all parishes must participate. Please keep the meeting in prayer.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar:

1. **Great Lent:** Feb 16- April 04

2. **Daily Lenten Noon Prayer:** 12:00 noon -12:30pm online
3. **Daily Lenten Evening Prayer:** 06:30 pm followed by Devotional Talk
4. **March 22:** Catholicate Day
5. **March 25:** Feast of Annunciation to St Mary, Holy Liturgy on March 24 Tuesday - Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Qurbana
6. **March 27:** 40th Friday- Holy Liturgy on Mar 26, Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Liturgy
7. **March 27:** Consecration of Holy Mooron at Devalokam Aramana Chapel, Kottayam
8. **March 28:** Lazarus Saturday, Morning Prayer at 09:00 am followed by Holy Qurbana. Lent Retreat after refreshments. Dispersal after noon prayer at 12:30.
9. **March 29:** Palm Sunday
10. **April 02:** Passover, Holy Liturgy on April 01 Wed, Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Liturgy
11. **April 03:** Great Friday, Morning Prayer at 09:00 am
12. **April 04:** Gospel Saturday, Morning Prayer at 09:00 am followed by Holy Liturgy
13. **April 05:** Easter Sunday

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 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:

March 22, Sunday – in-person meetings

- **Catholicate Day celebration prior to dispersal**
- **OVBS Valedictory meeting after refreshments**

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

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the English Taksa of St John Chrysostom this Sunday.
May the Gracious Lord keep us from all evil and heal the entire world.

Next Week

March 29: Seventh Sunday of the Great Lent, 'Hosannah'

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Genesis 49:8-15, Leviticus 23:33-39, Job 26:1-14, 2Samuel 6:1-7, Judges 9:7-15, Proverbs 16:13-25, 1:20-30, Joel 3:16-21, 1 Kings 8:1-6, Micah 4:1-5, Zephaniah 3:9-20, Jeremiah 30:18-22, Hosea 8:14-9:7, Daniel 3:7-11, Isaiah 52:7-12
- NT: 1 John 2:7-17, Romans 11:13-24, Holy Gospel St John 12:12-19
- For Procession St Luke 19:28-40, Blessing of the Palms St Mark 11:1-18

Yours in Christ

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