

## Dearly Beloved,

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

**March 08, 2026, 'Knanaito' – Healing of the Canaanite Woman's daughter (Great Lent Season)**

### Scriptural Readings:

- OT: 1 Samuel 7:10-17, Haggai 1:7-11, Isaiah 56:2-5
- NT: Acts 20:22-32, Romans 7:14-25, Holy Gospel St Matthew 15:21-31

Holy Gospel: St Matthew 15:21-31

<sup>21</sup> And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." <sup>23</sup> But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." <sup>24</sup> He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup> But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." <sup>26</sup> And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup> She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

<sup>29</sup> And Jesus went on from there and passed along the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain, and sat down there. <sup>30</sup> And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, <sup>31</sup> so that the throng wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

### Reflections:

In the book of Samuel, it is written that Samuel and the people were in a land occupied and dominated by another people, and they were attacked and threatened by them (1 Samuel 7:10-17). Because they were weak and powerless, it was not possible for them to live there. They knew that Samuel was a man of prayer. When they approached Samuel with their plea to help, to pray for them unceasingly, he lighted a lamp and offered it as a sacrifice to God and prayed. When the enemies came to attack them, God acted through thunder and the attackers got scattered. They had peaceful living there under the guidance of Prophet Samuel. ***He ruled them not with an army or with physical power, but with his submission to God.*** The people made an altar there and called it 'Ebenezer', which means 'thus far the Lord has helped us.' The altar was made as a thanksgiving and a remembrance for the land they were able to live in, which was once not theirs. God is the creator and author of everything. Every piece of land we own, buy, rent, live in - all of it belongs to the Lord and He has given it to us. Nothing is ours; we are not really owners but are meant to safeguard it as we receive it as a gift from God, regardless of how much we paid for it. Why do we build Altars? Why do we have temples? Is it for us to claim and boast that we have made a great temple for God? Is it to say that we achieved something? Is it to boast that we made it possible through our wealth and power?

Out of our gratitude to God for His provision and out of respect to all that He is for us, we build altars. Jesus commanded the disciples to offer the Eucharist in His remembrance. We do it every time remembering his salvific work, the act of Him becoming us (Incarnation), living in this world with us wherein He bore our pains and sufferings while healing us through His miraculous acts as

He talked with us and gave us the Word. He did it all for our sake - carried the cross, hung on nails, died for us and was buried and resurrected. Every time we go to the temple, we go to the Holy Altar. Thus, every time we do not go to the temple, we miss the Holy Altar where we are to offer every prayer with sincere gratitude. This is expected of us. We should be thankful and use the free access given by the Lord to call Him 'Abba Father'. As His children, we proclaim our joy of experiencing Him with us. We declare to the world that our Lord has an Altar where we live.

When we fail, who will correct us? In this context we see the relevance of the Canaanite woman. When Jesus' own people failed to recognize Him as the Lord and Messiah, this woman from another faith and tradition came to Him asking for her need, to heal her daughter. Initially Jesus acted on behalf of the hostile community that wanted to drive her away as a non-deserving person, yet her **insistence** paved the way to her daughter's healing. The people were able to see how faith must be used and processed through relentless pleas and a deep faith in His magnificence. They had a faith tradition, but faith was not so active and alive in them.

Here the mother of the demon possessed girl wins to get the Divine Grace though she was not a practicing member. Here we obtain referrals from our church members with a phrase, 'practicing member', what would it mean? Our membership or subscription does not enable us to receive blessings, but it is our uncompromising faith as expressed by the woman of another faith even when she was discouraged, that God sees. When situations discourage us from practicing our faith, what would we do? The Lord set the Canaanite woman as an example for all to follow. We need to cry aloud and pray unceasingly. Put our whole trust in Him. Even when we get publicly humiliated or declined, we need to run to Him by calling out to Him. The Canaanite woman never built an altar to Christ. *However, with her revealing such great and strong faith, she was setting up an altar in her heart in front of all the people standing there to see. She won; she showed us how to win.*

May our faith be strong that we may be able to use it for our rescue and healing. Let our faith be a living Altar that speaks on our behalf and brings answers to all our prayers. We become true witnesses in the world. We are to always run to the Temple and to the Holy Altar to offer our gratitude. As she said, even the crumbs from His table can make our life full.

#### **FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:**

- March 09, Commemoration of 40 Martyrs of Sebasta
- March 09, HG Geevarghese Mar Coorilos Ambattu, 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary, entombed at Angamaly Cheriapally
- March 11, Mid-Lent, Holy Liturgy and Installation of Cross, Mar 10 Tuesday, evening prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Liturgy
- March 11, Commemoration of King Abgar of Uraha

#### **Condolence:**

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Mrs. Saramma Mathew (Leelamma), aged 85, beloved grandmother of Vivek Rony George and Varghese Rony George (Directory Ref: V12) and the wife of the late Mr. K. M. Varghese, of Kottayil House, Veeyapuram, Haripad. She passed away on Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Mrs. Saramma Mathew and her late husband were both dedicated educators who served as

teachers and later retired as Head Teachers from St. Thomas High School, Theveri, Kadapra. Their lives were marked by commitment to education and service to the community. She is lovingly remembered by her daughters Reena and Teena, sons-in-law Saji and Rony, and grandsons Ashish, Amit, Vivek, and Vinit.

The funeral service will be held on Friday, March 13, 2026, with prayers at the residence @ 2:00 PM, followed by the funeral service at 3:00 PM at St. George Orthodox Church, Erathodu, Veeyapuram. Teena is currently in India. Rony, Vivek, and Vinit will be traveling on Monday, and we request your prayers for their safe journey, especially considering the present situation in the Middle East.

Let us keep the departed soul in our prayers. May the Lord grant eternal rest to her soul and strength, comfort, and peace to the grieving family.

### **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. HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews III has asked us to pray at all churches on Sunday Mar 08 during the Holy Liturgy. 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.

### **MMVS Canada Central Region - Lenten Retreat on Saturday February 28 at SGOCT – 10:00 am - 01:00 pm**

The Lenten Retreat held at SGOCT on Saturday, Feb 28 was a great blessing with the participation, illumining messages, prayer, scriptural readings, food and the fellowship that all of us shared and enjoyed. We thank Rev Fr Mathew Thomas, Vice President, MMVS Canada, all reverend priests, MMVS members from various parish units, all the leaders, volunteers and the parish MC for their support.

### **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 08 Sunday, Day Light Saving Time Change
5. Mid Lent: Mar 11, Wednesday- Holy Liturgy on Mar 10 Tuesday, Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Liturgy and installation of the Cross
6. March 25, Feast of Annunciation to St Mary, Holy Liturgy on March 24 Tuesday - Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Qurbana
7. March 27, 40<sup>th</sup> Friday- Holy Liturgy on Mar 26, Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Liturgy
8. March 27, Consecration of Holy Mooron at Devalokam Aramana Chapel, Kottayam

9. March 28, Lazarus Saturday

10. March 29, Palm Sunday

11. April 02, Passover, Holy Liturgy on April 01, Wed, Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Liturgy

12. April 03, Great Friday, Morning Prayer at 08:30 am

13. April 04, Gospel Saturday, Morning Prayer at 09:00 am followed by Holy Liturgy

14. Easter: April 05, 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 08, Sunday – in-person monthly meetings after refreshment

- Sunday School
- MMVS monthly 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 Taksa of Mar Julius this Sunday.

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

**Next Week**

March 15, Fifth Sunday of the Great Lent, 'Kpiptho', Healing of the Crippled Woman.

**Scriptural Readings:**

- OT: Jeremiah 51:1-9, Sirach 51:17-30, Isaiah 49:25-50:5
- NT: 1 Peter 3:8-16, Romans 12:1-15, Holy Gospel St Luke 13:10-17

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

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