

**Dearly Beloved,**

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

**August 10, 2025,** First Sunday after the Feast of Transfiguration

**Scriptural Readings:**

OT: Deuteronomy 25:13-16, 1 Samuel 2:31-36, Ezekiel 7:1-4

NT: James 4:7-5:6, Philippians 4:8-20, Holy Gospel- St Matthew 21:28-32

**Holy Evangelion, St Matthew 21:28-32**

<sup>28</sup> “What do you think? A man had two sons; and he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup> And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he repented and went. <sup>30</sup> And he went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.

**Reflections:**

Who doesn’t like stories? In a way, stories make our life, especially through childhood. Storytelling is an art. All of us can share wonderful stories if we put our heart and soul into them. As a story is rolled out, the listener’s mind sketches an image or landscape to enliven the characters and the situation. Stories attract everyone, no matter what age. Several stories are told through movies, plays, literature, poems and arts. One can either like or dislike stories depending on the content and the way of presentation. Those with an interest to know more or those seeking more joy or solace or who maybe keen to spend time with ones they love would actively engage in listening to a story.

How are stories usually shared? From parents to children, among peer groups, movie makers tell stories of novelty, great orators include stories to catch the attention of hearers, and sometimes, a painting or sketch can also convey a lot. Stories evoke emotions just as music does. Bedtime stories are not just tales, but they become the most comfortable beds. Some would say, there is no question or purpose in stories if they are make-beliefs and require acceptance without doubt. However, in querying more as we listen to any sharing we will find a purpose to it.

Jesus knew what the people were looking for. They needed refreshing and hope. He wanted

them to stay curious and active. His question at the start, “What do you think?”, evoked the crowd. It made their hearing more focused, vigilant and more responsible. Children and grownups listened intently.

A query can always alert mind. Whether we like to be questioned or find it hard to raise questions, without them, life would be less inventive and curious. Asking what, when, where, why, who, whom... would lead to inventions, findings, solutions and knowledge. We appreciate the current academic setting that equips pupils/seekers to ask for reasons and purposes. Great philosophers and gurus were keen to enable their disciples to be inquisitive and develop a mind of reasoning.

Questions can sometimes put us in the role of judging or critiquing. When children sit in the role of a judge during their play they switch to high spirits. Look at the judgements made by ordinary people who assume the judicial seat. They may have their ways, limits, flaws, preoccupations, but when they judge, they do it with a mindset that may not yield to such human flaws. Hence Jesus said, do what those who are seated on the seat of Moses say, not to follow their actions. It is the power and precision of judgement role.

By posing a question prior to the parable of two sons, the greatest Guru was asking his hearers to judge what would be right with the will of God in situations human life be put in. It was not just making a judgement but to stand with it and to practice the same in their life. Jesus wanted the people to know that doing the will of the Father was most necessary regardless of how they responded to His call. Jesus promised the disciples thrones of judgement as their reward for their mission. Why? Because they had to use good judgement in everything they would see, think, talk, hear, guide and act. They had to holistically understand each situation. They had to assure righteousness and be just in everything that involved them.

Jesus commanded to seek His Kingdom and righteousness first and everything would be added to us. He was not referring to self justice, but to the Kingdom of God. They had to live the Kingdom values purposefully and intentionally, free from bias, justice or correctness of personal choice. The parable of the two sons and His question of ‘what you think’ should serve as a norm for us to feel, be aware and to live as responsible citizens of the Kingdom of God. We are placed in various life situations to carry out responsibilities as unfailing servants/ambassadors of God. After hearing the parables, they chose the son who did his father’s will as right. What judgement it could be when the most perfect Son was giving them two examples, in which both the sons pained their father whereas this storyteller, the Only Begotten Son never. While we live, we do with a self judgement, taking the example

from neither of the two, but only from the 'Son' who was obedient unto the death on the cross and resurrected in glory. May the Spirit of the Lord guide us and empower us.

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

- August 06, Feast of Transfiguration
- August 06, HG Alexios Mar Theodosius Mertropolitan, '*Malankarayude Dharmayogi*' 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, entombed at Bethany Asram, Perunad, Ranny
- August 07, Feast of St Demetrios of Thessaloniki
- Clergy Remembrance: Rev Fr Yaunan (Anchal Achen), titled as 'Yativaryan' (August 07).

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

1. **HH Baselios Marthoma Paulose II Memorial Food Drive** is currently open with a view to close on Sunday Aug 10, organised by SGOCT MMVS. Please bring nonperishable food items - canned or packed, assuring at least three months before date of expiry.
2. **Celebrating 1700<sup>th</sup> year of the Council of Nicaea:** Our parish will be organizing 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.
3. **August 1-15, Soonoyo Fast. Intercession of Mother Mary is powerful. May we observe this Lent in pure spirit.**
4. **August 14, Thursday:** Conclusion of St Mary's Lent: Evening Prayer- 06:30 pm, followed by Holy Qurbana and Intercessory Prayer
5. **August 15-18:** Kanesh Retreat 2025 @ Anchor Retreat Centre
6. **August 16, Saturday:** Feast of Theotokos: Evening Prayer @ 06:30 pm followed by Devotional Hymns by Parish Choir, Devotional Talk, Holy Procession, Benediction & Nerchavilampu.
7. **August 17, Sunday,** Feast of St Mary, Holy Qurbana, Intercessory Prayer, Nerchavilampu.
8. **August 23, Saturday:** Parish Picnic

9. **September 01-08**, Ettunompu

10. **September 07**, Sunday: Onasadhya

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

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

13. **October 12, Sunday**: Parish Nite 2025

14. **October 19, Sunday**: Harvest Festival – 2025

**MGOCSCM Canada- Kanesh 2025; Aug 15-18**

MGOCSCM Canada will be organizing Kanesh Retreat 2025 at Anchor Retreat Centre from August 15-18. Please assure maximum participation from our young members. 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 10, Sunday –**

MMVS 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 St John Chrysostom this Sunday.

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

**Next Week**

Aug 17, Second Sunday after the Feast of Transfiguration

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Exodus 23:20-27, Joshua 1:16-18, Hosea 11:1-5

NT: 1 Peter 5:1-9, 1 Corinthians 10:8-13, Holy Gospel St Mark 12:38-44

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Email ID: [fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com](mailto:fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com)

Mobile: (416) 570 5610

<https://www.sgocutoronto.org>