

Dearly Beloved,

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

August 03, 2025, 08th Sunday after the Feast of Pentecost

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Exodus 3:9-15, Job 23:1-7, Jeremiah 7:21-25, Isaiah 52:1-8

NT: 1 Peter 2:6-10, Hebrews 4:14-5:5, Holy Gospel St Mark 4:1-20

Holy Evangelion, St Mark 4:1-20

4 Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. **2** And he taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: **3** “Listen! A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. **5** Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; **6** and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. **7** Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. **8** And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” **9** And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Purpose of the Parables

10 And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. **11** And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; **12** so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven.” **13** And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? **14** The sower sows the word. **15** And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word which is sown in them. **16** And these in like manner are the ones sown upon rocky ground, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; **17** and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.^[a] **18** And others are the ones sown among thorns; they are those who hear the word, **19** but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. **20** But those that were sown upon the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Reflections:

Cloud seeding is a science driven practice used in Middle East countries to avail rain or snow during seasons of drought. Usually, the process initiated by science experts to influence the clouds up there from the earth below results in good showers. Cloud seeding was first introduced in the US in 1940.

Human seeding also yields results. God the Father did a seeding from heaven in a virgin's womb that resulted in unceasing showers of blessing through the result, Christ. We celebrate the feast of Mother Mary for seeds in acknowledging this mystery of a human receiving the seed of God. This could be the epitome of examples given by the Lord in the parable of the Sower and the seeds for the perfect soil that produced 100-fold yield. Until then, due to sin and fall, human race suffered from a barrenness about divine fruitfulness. It was like Babel with efforts to build something huge but with no results because the essence was missing. It was akin to the disciples struggling the whole night without getting a single catch of fish.

Into this gloom and laden world came Christ - the answer to all prayers and wishes of humanity through ages for good fruits. He was the answer to the barrenness of Sarai, through the visit of the Holy Trinity to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. He was the answer to the hunger cries of the people in the Sinai wilderness as Manna. Later the Lord referred to this while teaching the disciples about imperishable food that came from heaven. By knowing this and referring to Himself as the solution to all the drought in life, He said, "Without me, you can do nothing." He also reminded and reassured, "when you eat my body and drink my blood and you abide in me and I abide in you, and my word remain in you, you will bear many fruits." In the *Prumion* of the Holy Liturgy, Christ personifies the divine sprout that mysteriously came from Mary the dry land, representing the whole of humanity. He is the salt added to the deadly spring by prophet Elisha which was in the city seemingly good but it did not allow any crops to grow (2 Kings 2). He is the log of wood offered by Moses into the bitter water of Marah that transformed it into sweet and life-giving (Ex 15). He is the answer to all of life's bitterness.

Jesus is the seed of God made available for the whole creation to receive Him as the matured soil to rule out all fears of futility. The seed is perfect; the Sower is also perfect. What is then required is only the right soil. To become the right soil, one would need to be humble, focused on God, receptive, devoid of preoccupations, faithful and open. Mary received the seed wholeheartedly through hearing the word of God uttered by an angel, messenger. The Word diffused into her being and set her aside for her whole life to grow, nurture and deliver the blessed fruitful plant. She found it as her mission and purpose of

her life in the world. He did only good to her and she to him vice versa.

Good looks, high profiles, worldly richness, power, influence, position, fame, luxuries, none of these assure a life fruitful and joyous. When everything but Christ is present, a tone of emptiness and meaninglessness laces every experience. The current world suffers from the inability to bring forth good fruits. It looks for options and tries every way to address it except Christ. The world seldom uses the term divine or spiritual thinking as it could be the most absurd idea. This was the thought of the world into which the Lord came. Hence it is written, God is looking to see if there is any wise person seeking God. We, as His children, His blessed seeds, can only receive Him and be fruitful. May the Holy Spirit make us all the mature perfect soil to receive Him and be fruitful.

As His beloved children and responsible disciples, we are expected to receive Christ the Seed as mature well manured grounds so that He may grow in us properly and perfectly as we sow Him everywhere through our thoughts, words and deeds. What we sow, we shall reap. Let our sowing be good as God and we reap the best fruits from everything we do.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- July 31, Feast of Mar Gregorios Bar Hebraeus, 739th anniversary
- August 01, Martyrs Marth Simoni, her 7 children, their teacher Eliazer
- August 01, HG Paulose Mar Pachomios Metropolitan, 13th anniversary, entombed at Bethany Asram, Perunad, Ranny
- August 06, Feast of Transfiguration, Holy Liturgy on Tuesday Aug 05, starting with evening prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Qurbana
- **Clergy Remembrance:** Very Rev M S Zachariah Ramban (Aug 01), Rev Fr Kurian Kathanar Vattakkunel, beloved father of HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews 1st (Aug 01), Rev Fr Varghese Tharakan (July 29th).

Clergy Demise:

We express our deepest condolences on the passing away of Rev Fr Thomas Varghese Kavunkal, a senior priest and the former secretary of the Diocese of Kottayam on Thursday July 31st in India. Funeral service timing shall be updated soon. We thank the Lord for Achen's life and ministry and pray for his soul.

Condolences: Mr. George Poothicote (Kochumon), 58 years, beloved younger brother of

HG Zachariah Mar Nicholovos Metropolitan has fallen asleep in the Lord on Thursday July 31st in India. Thirumeni is in India currently. The funeral service shall be conducted at St John's Orthodox Valiya Pally, Mepral on Monday August 04th at 03:00 pm. A public viewing has been scheduled to be on Sunday August 03rd between 02:30 pm and 04:30 pm at the Clubhouse of Chakolas Habitat, Thevara. We keep the departed soul and the family in prayer. May the Lord comfort the soul and give strength to Thirumeni and family members during this difficult time.

FROM OUR LAST UPDATE:

- **Pray for peace in the Middle East** – We keep praying for peace in the Middle East and wherever it is threatened. When there is no peace, everybody would live in fear and suspicion.
- **St Joseph's Elders Forum** - The gathering on Thursday July 31st was well attended at the SGOCT Parish Hall. All our respected SJEF members are requested to participate in future gatherings. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 2025

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 1700th year of the Nicene Creed:** 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

MGOCSM Canada- Kanesh 2025; Aug 15-18

MGOCSM 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 03, Sunday –

Choir monthly meetings 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 Holy Fathers this Sunday.

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

Next Week

Aug 10, 09th Sunday after the Feast of Pentecost

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Exodus 15:23-27, Job 42:9-17, Psalms 112:1-10

NT: Acts 28:23-30, Romans 10:5-21, Holy Gospel St Matthew 18:1-14

Yours in Christ

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