

Dearly Beloved,

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

January 11, 2026, 1st Sunday after Epiphany, Yaldo Season

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Genesis 25:19-34, 2 Kings 3:13, 20-25, 5:9-15, Isaiah 49:7-13
- NT: Acts 2:37-47, Ephesians 1:3-14, Holy Gospel St Matthew 4:12-22

Holy Gospel: St Matthew 4:12-22

¹²Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; ¹³and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Caper'na-um by the sea, in the territory of Zeb'ulun and Naph'tali, ¹⁴that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵“The land of Zeb'ulun and the land of Naph'tali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zeb'edee and John his brother, in the boat with Zeb'edee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Reflections:

John came to prepare the way for Jesus. With his departure, Jesus continued the preaching of John. References of their close interaction are few. But through their close continual unseen abiding, they lived out the Father's mission of drawing people closer to God.

Only with a sense of awe, anyone could approach God or anything connected to Him. All scriptures in the world speak of Him with highest reverence, respect and fear sometimes making Him incomprehensible to human understanding. Prophets tried to make the world aware of the mystery of God. They conveyed messages they received from Him about what to be done in situations of plague, war, captivity, exile, evil influences, injustice, violations of rights and laws, immorality, forgetting mission, decline of values etc. Angels appeared to people to alert them about divine plans. Forces of nature also served as saving or revelatory acts of the Creator- Noah's flood, fuming mountains, pillar of fire and cloud, storm and stilling of the sea, hail stones, thunder and lightning, heavy showers and drought. *The psalmist says, 'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands'* (Ps 19:1). Everything in the universe reflects His creative power and His beauty. If all things convey about God and His presence, how much more it could be done by humans who have intelligence and a sense of perception?! All ancient scriptures speak about how humans are and of the sense of awareness they must have while recognizing God and His authority over everything.

The Creator came to His creation through the mysterious act of incarnation. God sent His only

begotten Son to identify with His makes. He united with humans through conception in the womb of Mary. He was carried and delivered by her. He was nursed and nurtured by human hands. He grew up as a normal child. It took thirty years for him to begin His public ministry. There is almost nothing about his private ministry in the canonical writings though legends are many about his early life. The church has mostly considered what prophets and apostles said and wrote about him. It could be because the focus was more on the fulness of time for Him to be revealed as the Messiah and not presenting Him as a miracle child or youth.

Here the gospel narrative is about Jesus beginning His ministry. It begins with the arrest of His forerunner and baptizer John who was His cousin, who was like his elder brother. The king was against John. He could also be against his successor or the one about whom John revealed as the lamb of God. Jesus felt it unsafe to be out in public or living in vicinity. He withdrew to Galilee, to Capernaum from Nazareth, almost two hours by public transport, three hours by cycle, 10 hours by foot. Was he too scared?

Jesus had once told His disciples while sending them to preach to be innocent as doves and wise as serpents. He knew that innocence may not protect a person, but it was about having a clean soul. To avoid getting cheated or trapped they had to be serpent-like – wise and cautious in endangering situations. They needed to swiftly move away from strange footsteps. He never meant about using venom or acting harmfully.

John's arrest led to Jesus's withdrawal from public. Jesus probably chose to be away from any immediate threat or to spend more time in prayer and to return later. Whether He was insecure or not, the gospel says, the people of Galilee have seen a light walking toward them. So great was His radiance and so pleasant was His disposition. He did everything for us to follow His example.

What would we do in situations of fear, threat, severe challenges, and lack of clarity? We have only one example. Be patient and enduring. Act wisely. Do not panic. Be radiant and pleasant by being aware and convinced that we have a God who knows everything and He is miraculous. Nothing is impossible for Him. He is compassionate. We have a mission to accomplish, and He will guide and guard us. *As the psalmist says, no evil shall befall you, no scourge shall come near your tent' (Ps 91:10).* It is about both our dwelling and we ourselves as the tent ('Our bodies are like tents that we live in here on earth' 2 Cor 5:1), because we are sealed by the saving blood of the lamb of God. Let us be cheerful and rejoicing in all life situations and minister the Lord to proclaim his love and salvation to the whole world!

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- January 06, Feast of Epiphany
- January 07, Beheading of St John the Baptist
- January 08, Martyrdom of St Stephen

Brampton Area Prayer went well, thanks.

Brampton Area prayer meeting at Sen Mathew & Loozy's Res went well. Thanks to Sen & Loozy for hosting and thanks to our members in the area for their participation.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. Nineveh Lent: Jan 26-Monday to Jan 28-Wednesday: Holy Liturgy on Wed 28th with Evening Prayer at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Qurbana
2. Great Lent: Feb 16- April 04
3. 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.
- **Children at Parking Space:** Please attend to children as it has been noticed that at times they play and run around within the parking lots, which may cause accidents and incidents. Please take care.

AREA PRAYER MEETINGS: Please bring your Holy Bible and song books for the prayers on:

- Saturday, Jan 10, Mississauga Area, Manu P. Abraham & Geetha's Residence , from 04:00 to 06:00 pm.
- Saturday, Jan 17, Scarborough Area, Sonny Thomas & Julie's Residence, from 04:00 to 06:00 pm.

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:

January 11, Sunday – in-person monthly meetings after refreshment

- MMVS
- OCYM

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 Osthathios this Sunday.

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

Next Week

January 18, Sunday: 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, Yaldo Season

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Leviticus 22:26-33, Proverbs 8:22-9:9, Micah 4:13-5:8, Isaiah 51:1-8
- NT: 1 Peter 3:7-15, Hebrews 1:1-2:4, Holy Gospel St John 1:42-51

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Email ID: fr.thomasjohn@gmail.com

Mobile: (416) 570 5610