

Dearly Beloved,

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

November 16, Sunday 2025, Revelation to Zachariah, Yaldo Season

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Genesis 17:15-22, Numbers 8:1-20, 1 Kings 8:13-20, Isaiah 41:8-16
- NT: 2 Peter 1:1-15, Romans 4:13-25, Holy Gospel St Luke 1:1-25

Holy Gospel: St Luke 1:1-25

Luke's salutation to Theophilus

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, ² just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely^[a] for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent The-oph'ilus, ⁴ that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechari'ah,^[b] of the division of Abi'jah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸ Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And Zechari'ah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechari'ah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; ¹⁵ for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷ and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Eli'jah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

¹⁸ And Zechari'ah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹ And the people were waiting for Zechari'ah, and they wondered at his delay in the temple. ²² And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. ²³ And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴ After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, ²⁵ "Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."

Reflections:

For the people of God, the temple was everything to them. They never had a life without the temple facing eastward since its completion and dedication by King Solomon in 957 BCE. As long as the temple was standing there intact, the people could go and offer sacrifices for all occasions in their life. There were sacrifices for thanksgiving, for absolution of sins, for healing, for solving problems, for addressing various issues including foreign invasions. Invaders destroyed the temple a few times: Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it in 587/586 BCE, rebuilt it modestly in 515 BCE; Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated it in 167 BCE, and the Maccabean revolt recaptured it, cleansed and rededicated soon. Herod started rebuilding the temple in 20 BCE to complete and rededicate it after 46 years. This Herodian Temple stood during Jesus' time. It was destroyed in 70 CE. Whenever the temple was destroyed, the people were concerned about its rebuilding. They were able to do it each time except for the last destruction. To date, the temple is not rebuilt. It is expected to take place at the coming of the Messiah. The people hit their heads on the Western Walls – which remained after the destruction, and they lament for the rebuilding of the city and the Temple. Throughout the Bible, the relationship between God and worship stood as the decisive factor of life. Whenever the people of God moved to a new place on their journey from bondage to liberation, they took with them - the tabernacle, the mobile temple. With it they entered the promised land and settled there. This tabernacle was later built as the Temple. Everything in the tabernacle was placed reverently in the temple: the Arc of the Covenant, Tablets of Ten Commandments, the urn of Mannah, Aaron's budded rod, cherubim of glory.

We are on the move always. Wherever we go, we carry our faith and the temple. Whoever constructs the temple needs to know that it is God's Temple where the Shekinah stands as the revelation of the Glory of God. It is where the mercy seat is found. It is where we see the Lord appear, as revealed in the Book of Revelation, it is the heaven on earth with unceasing praises of angels and eternal sacrifice of the Lord offered by human hands. Everything in our life needs to be connected to the temple. ***Whenever we enter the temple, our prayer should be; 'O my Lord God, in reverence I enter your house to offer myself to you as a thanks offering, and to participate in your heavenly banquet. Kindly forgive me, kindly accept me and bless me.' The prayer offered by a deacon would be, 'I will go to the Altar of the Lord and to the presence of God who rejuvenates me.' The hymn prior to public celebration has these lines: 'By Thy light we see light...' To this light we enter. Through this light we see everything.*** To this Altar we are connected. It is where we present ourselves day by day. The Altar is the witness to everything that happens in our life. Like the disciples went out to preach and returned to Christ to detail Him about everything that they said, did and experienced, we come back to the altar every Sunday (at least) to tell Him what we said, did, and experienced. It is where we feel accountable. When we go for 'kaimuthu' at dispersal, we kiss the hands or cross that touched the Body and Blood of Christ and also present ourselves in front of the open sanctuary, bowing down in front of the Altar to say, ***"Lord, My Savior and my Redeemer, for whom You have shed your blood and suffered death, here I am, only by Your Grace. You are my All. Without You I have nothing, I am nothing, I can do nothing. I don't know when I will come back to you again. Please be with me as I go my way. Be with me always as you remained with the disciples. I am your disciple and child."***

As Zachariah got the revelation, we also receive revelations from the Sanctuary. The prayers and incense offered are for us and by us. What we receive would be the glorious presence of the Lord. The altar speaks to us more than we know. The psalmist says, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' Likewise, whenever we stand in front of the Altar, we say daringly and with faith and

conviction: 'I shall have no fear, I shall not go depressed, I shall never give up in life, I shall do everything with my Lord, I shall not perish. I shall never go astray, I shall never doubt, I shall never feel disconnected.' ***The Altar would be our personal shelter and refuge.*** No evil shall come near to our tents. Our children will be protected by being connected to the Holy of Holies and to the Holy Shekinah. Glory, Glory, Glory be to Him!

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- **November 12**, Very Rev Philipose Ramban of Kayamkulam, titled 'Vedaratnam' means the 'Jewel of the Holy Scripture', 209th anniversary, entombed at Kannamkodu Cathedral, Adoor
- **November 13**, St John Chrysostom
- **November 14**, St Philip the Apostle

From our previous update:

Diocese of Canada- Sunday School Day celebrated

The Canada Diocese Sunday School has set apart the second Sunday in the liturgical year, Hudos Eetho, Sunday of dedication of the church, for observing as Sunday School Day every year. They connect the dedication day with Sunday School for children to rededicate to Christ, Holy Gospel and to the Kingdom of God.

Accordingly SGOCT Sunday School has celebrated the SS Day last Sunday. After the Holy Liturgy, children were brought to the front for a dedication prayer followed by a talk by Noah Anand Joseph about the Sunday School. During the common session, a talk was done by Beena Mathew representing the faculty. We appreciate and thank the Diocesan Sunday School for announcing the Dedication Sunday as Canada Sunday School Day. May the Holy Spirit guide and empower the teachers, students and parents.

MMVS Canada First Annual Conference and Bible Quiz was held SGOCT

By God's Grace the first annual conference of MMVS Canada was held on Saturday Nov 08 at SGOCT. The Bible Class by HG Dr Geevarghese Mar Coorilos Metropolitan of Mumbai Diocese was well received and highly appreciated by everyone. There were members from various units in Canada joined either in person or online. The Quiz was exciting and edifying. We had 14 teams participated. MMVS Diocesan Choir delighted the gathering with beautiful singing of theme song and devotional hymns.

We thank most respected Coorilos Thirumeni, respected Clergies, parish MC members, volunteers, MMVS diocesan and unit leaders and office bearers, all members and friends for their participation, sharing of divine wisdom, leadership and support.

Quiz Winners:

First Place- St Thomas Orthodox Church, Toronto, **Second Place-** St Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church, Norval

Third Place- St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto

Hearty Congrats to the winners! Highly appreciate all teams!

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. **November 15, Saturday, KCEF Ecumenical Carol:** The Canadian Marthoma Church, 159 Sandiford Drive Stouffville @ 04:00 pm onwards. An evening of worship, music and fellowship.
2. **November 16, Sunday:** Parish Annual General Body Meeting, after refreshment

Christmas House Caroling & Church Carol

Evening

A. A. **Sunday, Nov 30-** St George's Prayer:

Brampton Area

B. Sunday, Dec 07- St Paul's Prayer: Scarborough, Durham, New Market, Markham Area

C. Sunday, Dec 14- St Mary's Prayer: Mississauga, Hamilton, Stony creek Area

Saturday, Dec 20- Carol Evening at Church starting with evening prayer at 06:00 pm followed by Carol singing, skits and presentations by organisations.

a. Urava Volume 7

URAVA Volume 7, based on the theme 'the Council of Nicaea', was released on October 25, 2025. Updated version with cover design chosen from the contest, additional articles, pictures from the Council of Nicaea event and drawings submitted for contest shall be made available soon.

Two contests for the journal with the title: "Nicaea 325 AD":

1. Cover Page Icon Contest – open to all parish members ages 18+
2. Inner Page Drawing Contest – open to children

- b. Attention Please: Parking:** Please be considerate while parking our vehicles, only park at designated space. Leave reserved lots for the intended and please 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:

Prayer Meetings: The general body decided and agreed to have the meeting started in New Year 2026

Saturday, January 3, 2026: Prayer meeting at the residence of Sen and Loozy Mathew

Saturday, January 10, 2026: Prayer meeting at the residence of Manu and Elizabeth Abraham

Saturday, January 17, 2026: Prayer meeting at the residence of Alex George and Sosamma Alex.

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:

November 16, Sunday – in-person meetings

- Parish AGBM after refreshments
- Practice of Choir for upcoming events

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

Nov 23, Sunday: Annunciation to Theotokos, Yaldo Season

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Deuteronomy 26:16-27:10, Judges 13: 2-14, Zachariah 2:10-13, 4:1-17, 8:3, Isaiah 63:15-64:5
- NT: 1 John 3:2-17, Hebrews 6:13-20, 7:1-10, Holy Gospel St Luke 1:26-38

Yours in Christ

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