

Dearly Beloved,

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

November 02, 2025, Koodosh Eetho Sunday, Yaldo Season, Beginning of The New Liturgical Year, Dukrono of Parumala Thirumeni

Scriptural Readings:

- **OT: Exodus 33:5-11, 1 Kings 6:1-8, Jeremiah 31:10-14, 31:22-26, Ezekiel 9:11, 10:1, 5:18-22, 1 Maccabees 4:36-51**
- **NT: Acts 7:44-53, Hebrews 9:1-14, Holy Gospel St Matthew 16:13-20**

Holy Gospel: St Matthew 16:13-20

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarean Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli’jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter,^[a] and on this rock^[b] I will build my church, and the powers of death^[c] shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Reflections:

Knowledge and experience make one to trust or distrust someone or something. Opinions and perspectives can influence decision making. Here Jesus was asking the disciples about how He was viewed and understood by the people. After seeing His works and hearing his preachings, people sensed that He was unlike anyone they had ever known. He was extraordinary. They thought that it was the spirit of Elijah or John that was active in Jesus. So, He wanted to know what His own disciples had understood about Him.

Peter’s response stood out from that of others. He said that Jesus was the Christ, the Anointed, just as the Holy Scripture had envisioned about the Messiah. He understood Jesus as the Son of God. Here the declaration about Jesus was a resonation of OT prophecies and of the witnessing of John the Baptist. With this conviction Peter later declared to Jesus that regardless of whoever disowned Him, he would never leave His master’s side. It turned out later that Peter would reject the same Christ at a fireplace after Jesus was caught by the authorities. Christ was God who understood human

limits and frailties. He gave Peter a chance to reconcile and to reaffirm his faith in Him at a post resurrection appearance on the shore.

Faith is the foundation on which we stand regarding any relationship or acquaintance. If faith is drained, our footing changes. Because of the wavering nature of human mind, assuring and reassuring of faith from time to time is often necessary. A lack of faith in what we do can impact the outcome of our efforts.

This year we commemorate the 1700th year of the Council of Nicaea that convened in AD 325. The Council's primary aim was to formulate a response to a simple question - 'who was Jesus?' The NT writings were well established and made available at that time narrating about the person and works of Christ. Gospel affirmations and Pauline witnessing were known to them as well. But they did not see Jesus in person. Direct and personal experience matter in such convictions.

Philosophical or cultural views of a person's life and praxis can be good, but it may not be apt. Because Christian faith had spread through various political, cultural and religious settings, they all were trying to view Jesus through their cultural eyes.

Watching a movie on the life of Jesus and watching Him in person are two different ways of understanding Him. *Faith is extremely personal*. It should come from a space of experiencing first-hand and then grow into a further deeply personal experience.

When the Council of Nicaea convened, leaders of the same faith had various views and differing opinions about Christ. They relied on the Holy Scripture, prophecies, Gospel narrations, witnessing of primary sources like Apostles and Apostolic Fathers to address their conflicting understanding and theories. The Holy Spirit guided them to sense the essence of the Holy Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit which we later see in the Creed that was formulated through the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus. As a church, this affirmation should be the basis of all our thoughts, words and actions. Without believing the Apostolic conviction, one would never be able to live the life that the early Christianity practiced. Church cannot afford nominal Christians who can destroy it with their lack of faith. Church is in the world, as chosen by the Lord to preach and to establish His kingdom and not of the world. We live in a secular world, but church cannot be secular in its life and practice. Members with compromised faith can be more harmful than heresies. A church where members lack true conviction and faith is not put into action, will never experience the miraculous presence of God.

On the day of sanctification of the church, we need to evaluate our faith in the light of the Holy Scriptures, apostolic affirmations and the Creed and to reconfirm our faith in Christ. Without true faith, we would fail in the world, in front of everyone and by that we would be failing Christ. God has sent us to the world to witness Him and His Kingdom. With our true conviction and practice, church would be the light in the

world. It is our calling. It is our mission. It is our life. May the Holy Spirit guide and transform us.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- October 29, Rev Fr M G Paul, served at St Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara, entombed at St Paul's Asram Puthuppady.
- November 01, All Saints Day
- November 02, Feast of St Gregorios of Parumala, 123rd anniversary

Parumala Thirumeni: Born on June 15, 1848, Korooyo (Reader Deacon) at the age 10, Shamshono (Full Deacon), Priest and Cor-Episcopa at the age of 17 (In 1865), Ramban at the age of 24, Bishop at the age 29 (hence called 'Kochuthirumeni'), departed on Nov 02, 1902, aged 54, declared a saint on Nov 02, 1947.

- November 02, HG Paulose Mar Athanasius Metropolitan of Kadavil, 118th anniversary, entombed at Thrikkunnath Seminary, Aluva
- November 09, Canada Diocese, Sunday School Day

Canada Diocesan Sunday School has decided to celebrate Sunday school day on *Hudosh 'Idto* day (Dedication of the Church) which falls on November 9th in 2025. The entire SS team has been instructed to observe and celebrate this day in the most appropriate manner, highlighting the importance and relevance of SS in the current life setting. All our parents, teachers and students are expected to support this day of observance through participation and prayers to organize this day in the most fitting manner.

Welcome Newborn:

1. Jefin Jacob Varghese and Rachel Mary Philip (J 40) have been blessed with a baby girl, Heather Ann Jacob, born on Oct 22nd, 2025.
2. Pavin Skariah and Vanessa James (P 13) have been blessed with a baby boy, Aiyaan Pavin Skariah, born on Oct 27th, 2025.

We praise and thank God for the wonderful gifts given to us. Hearty congrats to both parents and grandparents! God bless the newborns.

From our previous update:

1. Celebration of the 1700th year of the Council of Nicaea:

We had a memorable day of coming together from various parishes in the Central Region on Saturday Oct 25. It was a truly illumining experience with the well prepared elocutions (12 participants), excellent singing of choirs, edifying and elevating talks by two distinguished guest speakers, Rev. Fr. Pishoy Wasfy, Coptic Orthodox Priest, and Rev. Dn. Royce Mathew from the Northeast American Diocese, brilliantly presented drama by OCYM which literally took us to that moment of history, release of Icon drawn by Fr. Bobby Varghese on the theme, release of Urava Journal V 7, distribution of prizes and mementos. Respected clergies from central region parishes joined and supported the event. Many of our members took time to join at various times which always kept the church space well occupied. We thank the parish management committee, all our members, volunteers, organisational leaders, OCYM-Choir leaders and members, technical support team, benevolent sponsors, participants in the elocution, choirs from parishes, resource persons, trainers, food providers, Urava journal article writers, drawing participants, all respected clergies, especially Bobby Achen for the Icon, most respected H.H. Bava Thirumeni and Metropolitans for their blessings and messages, and to God Almighty for all the Graces that made the event a huge blessing.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

- 1. November 01&02: Perunnal of our Patron Saint Mar Gregorios of Parumala**
 - **Saturday, Nov 01: Evening prayer at 06:00 pm followed by hymns by the parish choir, devotional talk by Rev. Fr. P. P. Jacob (Madras Diocese), procession, benediction and 'nerchavilampu'.**
 - **Sunday, Nov 02: Morning prayer at 08:30 am followed by Holy Tri-mass, intercessory prayer, Nerchavilampu.**
- 2. November 01, 'Keralappiravi', meaning the 'birth of Kerala' — the day commemorates the unification of Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar in 1956, giving rise to what we now call God's Own Country!**
- 3. November 08, Saturday: MMVS Canada First Annual Conference & Quiz Competition @ St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto, Time: 09:00 am – 04:30 pm**
- 4. November 11, Remembrance Day : Poppies Are Now Available**

Like last year, poppies are available for everyone to take and proudly wear — a simple yet meaningful way to show our appreciation and gratitude to those who served our country and sacrificed to protect us.

Your generous contributions to the Poppy Fund will go a long way in supporting veterans and their dependents. The fund helps provide essential services such as medical equipment, hospital research, drop-in centers, meals-on-wheels, transportation, and emergency assistance.

Let us wear the poppy with pride and thankfulness as we remember and honor those who served.

5. November 16, Sunday: Parish Annual General Body Meeting, after refreshment

6. 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 for reading 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

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:

November 02, Sunday – in-person meetings

- ‘Perunnal of Parumala Thirumeni’-
- Parish Choir monthly meeting after Nerchavilampu

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 09, Hudosa Eetho Sunday (Dedication of Church), Yaloda Season

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Exodus 31:18-32:6, 1 Kings 6:1-8, Jeremiah 31:10-14, 31:22-26, Ezekiel 9:11, 10:1-5, 18-22, 1 Maccabees 4:52-59
- NT: Acts 7:44-53, Hebrews 9:1-14, Holy Gospel St John 10:22-42

Yours in Christ

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