

Dearly Beloved,

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

October 19, 2025, Fifth Sunday after the Feast of the Cross, Season of the Cross

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Leviticus 2:1-3, Job 6:1-10, 2 Samuel 3:17-21, Isaiah 40:27-31

NT: Acts 22:22-29, 1 Timothy 6:13-21, Holy Gospel St Matthew 23:1-12

Holy Gospel:

23 Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; ³so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear,^[a] and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and salutations in the marketplaces, and being called rabbi by men. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. ¹¹He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; ¹²whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Reflections:

If we ask, “Who is the most accessible human who has ever lived in the world?” the answer would be - Christ Jesus. He was the lightest presence. There was no gauging of his power, might, profile, knowledge, wisdom or divinity felt by anyone. Everybody thought He was like them and for them. The democratic way he dealt with everyone had no parallel. Everybody liked Him, because He loved everyone. His words were full of compassion and empathy. If someone was asked to write a referral about Him, it would have been the longest and sweetest. All the gospel narratives are the most beautiful and poetic referrals written on Him, without Him asking for it.

How beautifully Jesus connected with people from all strata of life! No-one felt that He belonged to another category or group. Despite descending from heaven, His wisdom was not withheld but flowed profusely and was easily understood by ordinary people. They all found a place in his heart. He allowed them to claim Him as their friend, companion, guru or brother. One would wonder how He managed everything including his health and sleep. Even at night, people would go to Him. That freedom of access they all felt with Him. He was the most powerful but never invaded anyone’s privacy or space. He was the most knowledgeable, knowing everyone inside out, yet He spoke out of much love to everyone. No one was shunned. Everyone was included in His mission. He was highly courteous to send His disciples to ask for a place to dine, even

at the peak of His popularity and fame. He was so humble that He could understand everyone's life situations. He never put heavy burdens on them. As He said, His yoke was so light and soft. He never complicated things with laws and norms. His norm was love, love only. His empathy brought healing to everyone. Sometimes, even without asking, He cured them. He walked with the people. He spoke in their language. He always met people in their hardships and brought consolation to their heavy hearts. He dined with everyone and shared His bread which turned to be miracles. He was God and man in one. He was the Altar and offering. His voice of love brought back the dead to life. His words invoked the divine in everyone. He was the Heaven on earth. With Jesus, all could feel eternity and immortality. People did not suspect when He offered the bread of eternity. Although fully divine, He did everything that people did; went to the temple, attended synagogue worship, paid taxes, ate and drank, walked and worked, paid visits to houses, attended ceremonies, interacted with individuals and groups. He spoke with leaders, people of power, and conversed with people from other faith. He interacted with men and women, the young and the elderly, the healthy and the weak-without any barrier or border.

Prophecies revealed much about Jesus. Generations had awaited His coming. It was as they had said or more emphatic than the creation of everything, as Christ was coming to recreate or regenerate. A star appeared in the sky at His birth leading wise men from the East who travelled much to see him. Angels announced His birth. Shepherds went to revere the miraculous child. Prophet Simon and prophetess Hannah recognised Him in awe. The needy cried to Him for help. Angels ministered to him after a series of tests in the wilderness like attendants offer water and ice to marathon runners. Demons shrieked and screamed in His presence obeying His command to flee away. The seas stilled, waves eased, lilies bloomed, bread multiplied, wine increased, Satan fell, Holy Spirit showered, dead raised and sick healed. His might and power came to be known everywhere. He could not be contained in a carpenter's home anymore. People wanted to make him King. He was God. A bleeding woman could touch him. Children were drawn to His bosom to be blessed. He looked after the weak. The poor could walk with him. It was His humility, and self-effacing love that bridged the Old and New Testaments.

Jesus is the only example for the whole world needs to look to, to imitate and to follow. As He said, we humble ourselves and obey His command. There is no need to reason ourselves by comparing us with people of authority and power. We follow Him and reflect Christ in everything. It is the discipleship to which we all have been called. Glory be to Him!

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- **October 14, St Athanasius of Alexandria**
- **October 15, St Osiyo the Ascetic**
- **October 18, St Luke the Evangelist**

Condolence: We express our deepest condolences to Mary Varghese and family on the unexpected passing away of her beloved husband George Thekkekara Varghese (G 07), aged 64 years, on Sunday Oct 12, 2025, at 06:10 am. There was a prayer gathering held at our church on Tuesday, Oct 14 in the evening. The viewing was on Friday, Oct 17 at 04:00 pm – 08:00 pm at Brampton Funeral Home & Cemetery. The funeral service will be conducted at our church on Saturday, Oct 18 from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm.

George is survived by his wife Mary Varghese, son Rajiv, daughter in law Tanya and daughter Asha. At this time of deep grief, we pray for the departed soul and for the family members. May the Lord comfort his soul and strengthen the family members. From our previous updates:

- **Diocese of Canada: First General Assembly was held on Saturday, Oct 11. The first diocesan council has been formed. Rev Fr Dr Thomas George has been elected as the first Diocesan Secretary. Two representatives from our parish, Manu P Abraham and Vivin Thomas Vettiylil have been elected to the Diocesan Council. Hearty Congrats to them!**
- **Parish Nite: Parish Nite 2025 was memorable, fun and energy filled, and highly entertaining. We were able to keep the time. All presentations were excellent and beautiful. This year there were more participants and teams. Dances were colourful and electrifying. Skits and songs were delighting. Snacks and food were truly delicious. We thank all the organisations for their dedication. Special thanks to all trainers, script writers and volunteers. Sincere thanks to the parish management committee for their leadership. Thanks to MMVS for excellent coordination. We look forward to the next in 2026 with more excitement.**

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

- 1. October 18, Mar Gregorios Memorial Quiz Competition organised by St George OCYM, Kitchener**
- 2. October 19, Sunday: Harvest Festival – 2025**
- 3. October 25, Saturday: Celebrating 1700th year of the Council of Nicaea: Our parish will be organising an event including elocution competition connected to the theme and choir presentations involving the Malankara Orthodox Church**

parishes in Toronto Region. *Venue: SGOCT Parish, Date: October 25, 2025, Saturday, Time: 02:00 pm-07:00 pm.*

4. October 26, Perunnal Kodiyettu (Hoisting of Perunnal Flag) after the Holy Liturgy.
5. 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..., procession, benediction and 'nerchavilampu'. Sunday Nov 02, Morning prayer at 08:30 am followed by Holy Liturgy, intercessory prayer, Nerchavilampu.
6. November 08, MMVS Canada First Annual Conference & Quiz Competition @ St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto, Time: 09:00 am – 04:30 pm
7. November 16, Sunday: Parish Annual General Body Meeting, after refreshment
8. Urava Volume 7
As we prepare for URAVA Volume 7, we are dedicating this special edition to this milestone. The theme is based on the Council of Nicaea, and the release is planned for October 25, 2025.
As part of the preparations, OCYM has initiated 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

Submission details:

- Last date: October 15, 2025
- Send drawings to: ocymtoronto@yahoo.com
- Email subject line:
 - o URAVA Volume 7 Journal – Cover Page Icon Contest – [Name of participant]
 - o URAVA Volume 7 Journal – Inner Page Contest – [Name of participant]

Article Sub-Themes (by organization):

1. What Christ said about Himself? / ക്രിസ്തു തന്നെ കുറിച്ച് നൽകിയ ദൈവശാസ്ത്രപരമായ വെളിപ്പെടുത്തലുകൾ ഏതൊക്കെ (SS Juniors)
2. What the people of other faiths said about Jesus? / ഇതര മതവിശ്വാസികൾ ക്രിസ്തുവിനെക്കുറിച്ച് പറഞ്ഞത് എന്തൊക്കെ (SS Seniors)
- 3./ What the 4 Gospels say about the Son of God / ദൈവപുത്രനെക്കുറിച്ച് നാല്

സുവിശേഷങ്ങൾ എന്താണ് പറയുന്നത് (MGOCSM)

4. Pauline View of Christ / ക്രിസ്തുവിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പൗലോസിന്റെ വീക്ഷണം (MMVS)

5. Anti-Nicene Teachers about Christ / ക്രിസ്തുവിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പൂർവ്വ നിഖ്യാ പിതാക്കന്മാരുടെ പഠിപ്പിക്കലുകൾ (Acolytes)

6. Issues that led to the Council of Nicaea / നിഖ്യാ കൗൺസിലിലേക്ക് നയിച്ച വാദങ്ങൾ (OCYM)

7. Affirmations of the Council of Nicaea / നിഖ്യാ സുന്നഹദോസിന്റെ നിശ്ചയങ്ങൾ (Choir)

8. Pronouncing Faith in the Current World / നിഖ്യാ സുന്നഹദോസിന്റെ നിശ്ചയങ്ങൾക്ക് സമകാലികലോകത്തുള്ള സാംഗത്യവും പ്രായോഗികതയും (SJEF)

Articles submission:

- Last date: October 15, 2025
- Send to: ocymtoronto@yahoo.com
- Email subject line: URAVA Vol 7 article – [Organization name]

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:

October 19, Sunday –

- Parish Thanksgiving Auction Day after the Holy Qurbana

Snacks shall be served in the beginning and Main Course towards the end of auction.

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 Dionysius Barsleebi this Sunday.

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

Next Week

Oct 26, Sixth Sunday after the Feast of the Cross

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Genesis 42:29-36, Joshua 10:28-36, Zachariah 6:1-8, Isaiah 43:16-25

NT: Acts 28:23-30, 1 Corinthians 5:6-13, Holy Gospel St Luke 18:18-27

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Email ID: fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com

Mobile: (416) 570 5610

<https://www.sgotoronto.org>