

Dearly Beloved,

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

October 26, 2025, Sixth Sunday after the Feast of the Cross, Season 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

Holy Gospel:

¹⁸ And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” ²¹ And he said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” ²² And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²³ But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. ²⁴ Jesus looking at him said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ But he said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

Reflections:

Had the young man pre-empted the response that Jesus gave Him, he probably would not have gone to meet Jesus after all. He had got it all right, all his life. All the boxes were ticked. Now his question was only about how to attain eternal life. Jesus’ response shook him as he did not know from where to begin all over again. Jesus’ advise to sell all that he had, left the young man sad. He walked away and wondered if the Master was not aware of what He was asking? Or did he not expect this kind of an answer?

Why was the young man searching for eternal life? After seeing his conversation with Jesus, we can infer that because he was rich, it was possible for the young man to buy anything for his pleasures and joy which he thought he could enjoy all through his life. The longer he lived, the more he could enjoy. So, he just wanted to remain in the world forever with all the joys of earthly life. Maybe there was sickness, suffering and death happening around in his life, in the life of his familiar ones and thus he probably wanted to know how to overcome all this to live eternally.

A few NT references about eternal life:

“Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28). And do

not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

Is eternal life only a concept or a true reality possible in life? Since it was promised by Christ the Son of God, it could not be an impossibility. When Jesus was commenting about the rich man saying, how hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God, He was telling it clearly. It is possible; however, it can be either impossible or hard for certain people like the rich man who cannot easily give up everything. Here 'Eternity' and the 'Kingdom of God' are either synonymous or closely connected. It does not mean that eternity never allows physical death. Jesus Himself died but He lives eternally. St Paul speaks of eternity that can be experienced while we are physically alive or dead. According to St Paul, eternity is life with Jesus the Eternity. All the saints and martyrs died and they are in eternity. Adam ate the fruit, and he was physically alive, but God says, he was dead. Lazarus died and Jesus said he was sleeping. When God called Adam after sinning, he could not come to God. When Jesus called Lazarus, though he was dead, he was able to come out into the Lord's presence. Here death means: the inability to be in God's presence, the inability to respond to God's call. We can now see the reason for the rich man to return home sad. To be in God's presence means that one would need to be in pure self, not dependent on worldly richness, belongings and pleasures.

Zachaeus was rich. What he lacked was the experience of eternity. Once he encountered Jesus, when Jesus visited his house, he found eternity in his home. He wanted to remain in that. It was not at all hard for him to leave all his possessions and material belongings to assure to be with Jesus the Eternity. He was joyful to part with what did not belong to him. He was ready to give up more so that he could feel rich in less. He did not feel sad. What the rich man could not do, Zachaeus was able to do. Eternity does not mean that life will be devoid of sickness, challenges, hardships, scarcities, constraints or death. Whatever comes in life, if we find a life in Christ in all its senses, we will enjoy and experience eternity; we will be in the Kingdom of God. It also means to look for the quality of eternity in everything we think, say, do and experience. The perfect example is none other than Christ. He came to the world, as Word Incarnate, to assure eternity to every follower. We have been called to this; our richness is the presence of God and His love. Where we live or die, there will be our eternity.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- **October 22, Feast of St James the Apostle, son of Alphaeus**
- **October 22, HH Mar Baselios Shakrallah, 261st anniversary, entombed at Kandanad Cathedral**
- **October 24, HG Dr Zachariah Mar Theophilos Metropolitan, 8th anniversary, entombed at Thadagam Asram, Coimbatore.**

From our previous updates:

- 1. OCYM @ SGOCT wins the first place in the Mar Gregorios Memorial Quiz organised by St George OCYM, Kitchener. Hearty congrats to the team Ivin Rachel Koshy, Jaya Soney & Santy Binu!**
- 2. Aiden Anish from SGOCT SS and Sagar Abraham from St Thomas OC SS have won silver medals in the Sunday School Centralized evaluation. Hearty congrats to them!**
- 3. Our team Nanma Susan Siju, Joshua Baiju John & Alaina Jeebo Mathews from SGOCT SS have won Second place in the Diocesan level Quiz. Hearty congrats to them!**
- 4. Thanksgiving Auction: Behind every success of events organised at our church, there will be the role of each member of our parish. The Thanksgiving auction was a grand success with the support of all our organisations, MC members, leaders, and all the members. Sincere thanks to all who have brought auction items, participated in the auction, bought things, cheered up everyone, all the volunteers and members. May the Lord reward everyone from His gracious treasure house of blessings.**

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: *Please note in your calendar:*

- 1. 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.***

We are blessed with two guest speakers, Rev. Fr. Pishoy Wasfy, Coptic Orthodox Priest, and Rev. Dn. Royce Mathew from the Northeast American Diocese. They will enlighten us through their wisdom in Holy Spirit. The event will have elocution competition, singing of various parish choirs, release of an Icon drawn by Fr Bobby Varghese on the theme, release of Urava Journal Volume 7, skit, video presentation,

distribution of prizes and mementos. Respected clergies from central region parishes will be joining. All our members are expected to join the event and offer all possible support. Please be there.

2. October 26, Perunnal Kodiyettu (Hoisting of Perunnal Flag) after the Holy Liturgy.
3. 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.
4. November 08, MMVS Canada First Annual Conference & Quiz Competition @ St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto, Time: 09:00 am – 04:30 pm
5. November 16, Sunday: Parish Annual General Body Meeting, after refreshment

AREA PRAYER MEETINGS: Starting January 2026

Details of 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 26, Sunday – in-person meetings

- ‘Perunnal Kodiyettu’ (Flag Hoisting) after the Holy Liturgy
- MGOCSM monthly meeting after refreshments
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- MMVS meeting after refreshment
- Annual Conference – Google form is shared. Please sign-up
- Blood Donation – on-going event

LIVE streaming has been reactivated: All services’ Live Streaming is now available.

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the English Taksa of Holy Fathers this Sunday.

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

Next Week

Nov 02, Koodosh Eetho Sunday (Sanctification of Church), Yaldo Season

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

Yours in Christ

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