

Dearly Beloved,

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

September 28, 2025, Second Sunday after the Feast of the Cross, Season of the Cross

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Genesis 42:9-17, 1 Kings 3:5-9, Wisdom of Solomon 6:1-9, Isaiah 48:12-16

NT: Acts 5:33-42, 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3, Holy Gospel St Matthew 16:5-12

⁵When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees." ⁷And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." ⁸But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? ⁹Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹How is it that you fail to perceive that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees." ¹²Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sad'ducees.

Reflections:

Out of the fullness of the heart - thoughts, words and actions flow. What is then heard or perceived is what we are most connected to. Jesus cared for His disciples greatly. He wanted them to follow His path and stay keen on His mission even after His time on earth. So, He warned them about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. As they had forgotten to take bread with them on the way, they thought that Jesus' teachings referenced to the missing bread in their bags. At times misunderstanding or misconceiving happens either out of ignorance or out of selective listening. This can impact any life setting, family, academic, research, community or political as it would only give wrong interpretations or incorrect perceptions.

Teaching was a major part of Jesus' ministry. He enjoyed conversing with people. Although the disciples walked closely with Him for only three years it had felt like a lifetime because with Him they experienced a new life – a life they had not known of, until they responded to His call. Jesus spoke on all kinds of topics ranging from temple discourses or observances to disputes between brothers, of how our Father in heaven cared for the lilies of the soil, of rebirth through baptism, and about sin, sickness, divorce, lost sheep, lost coins and of the beatitudes. There was nothing that He did not speak about. Jesus took them to places to see life around and to understand the true hardship of people. He acted for the needy with compassion, faced hostility and still revealed His love to everyone. He got into discussions with the scribes and scholars more as He reached out to everyone including people of power and position like Nicodemus and the centurion. He spoke to them of challenging situations like stormy waters, added to their faith through miracles and signs. Altogether,

Jesus lived as the perfect example for us to emulate in all life situations.

The preoccupations, prejudices and selective listening of the people caused Jesus some gloom and disappointment. He scolded them for not taking the element of faith from His words and deeds because He wanted them to understand the mind of God the Father. The Holy Scripture was the window for them to see the mind of God and to act accordingly.

Jesus wanted them to see things beyond the human ways that they were used to. He rebuked Peter for this and said that he was not trying to look through the mind of God, but through human preferences. All that they had heard and seen from Jesus, was best understood by them after the events of Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit gave the disciples true wisdom to see things from a divine angle. Then onward, the church started growing through their ministry. Everything that Jesus had said and everything they had read from the Scripture made more meaning and sense now. With that conviction, whatever they said and did became real and fruitful. While there was a time when they were rebuked by Jesus for their lack of faith, after the Pentecost, the same disciples began performing miracles. Their words became true, and their actions transformed lives and situations. They were also into the teaching ministry with deep faith and conviction. What they had spoken and written became as important as what the Lord had said and done. They grew to become Christs in the world. This identification with the Lord, becoming imitators of Him, the process of Theosis (Becoming God-like) was the anticipated culmination of what is written in the book of Genesis. God made man and woman in His Image and Likeness. Whoever grows into that image and likeness would become like God with His nature dwelling in them and with their heart seeking after the heart of God. This was proved by the Apostles, Martyrs, Saints and Teachers of Faith. From them this has been happening with others, and we have seen this in sages like Parumala Thirumeni and Pampady Thirumeni. From them, some distance away, we are standing here in the current world to become like Christ, the perfect image and likeness we already have through our birth. We all need to grow by listening to His words and by following His life example. May the Holy Spirit empower us to go through the process of Deification.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- September 23, HG Antonio Francesco Xavier Alvarez Mar Julius Metropolitan, 102nd anniversary, entombed at St Mary's Church Panjim, Goa
- September 24, St Dimeth of Persia
- September 25, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Peter III of Antioch, 131st anniversary
- September 28, HG Dr Philipose Mar Theophilus Metropolitan, 28th anniversary, entombed at Thrikkunnathu Seminary, Aluva

From our previous updates:

September 20, Saturday: KCEF Toronto, Rev Dr P K Mathew Memorial 9th Annual Bible Quiz Competition was held at our church. Congratulations to all the participants and the winning team.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. **October 10, Friday:** Diocese of Canada Clergy & Baskyomo Meeting, Venue: St Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church (Norval Parish), Time: 10:00 am
2. **October 11, Saturday:** The Diocese of Canada, The First Diocesan General Assembly, Venue: St Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church (Norval Parish), Time: 10:00 am
3. **October 12, Sunday:** Parish Nite 2025
4. **October 18,** Mar Gregorios Memorial Quiz Competition organised by St George OCYM, Kitchener
5. October 19, Sunday: Harvest Festival – 2025
6. **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 Saturday, 2025, Time: 02:00 pm onwards**
7. **November 08, MMVS** Canada First Annual Conference & Quiz Competition @ St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto, Time: 09:00 am – 04:30 pm

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:

September 28, Sunday –

- MGOCSM Monthly Meeting after refreshment
- Organizations: Practice and training for Parish Nite.

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

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksas of St Isaac this Sunday.

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

Next Week

Oct 05, Third Sunday after the Feast of the Cross

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Genesis 42:18-21, Proverbs 1:2-9, Jeremiah 31:7-9, Isaiah 54:1-4

NT: Acts 7:2-5, Romans 8:9-17, Holy Gospel St Luke 16:1-13

Yours in Christ

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