



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - MAY 01, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

Third Sunday of Easter – 03 May 2020 – Mark 2:13-22

¹³ He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them. ¹⁴ And as he passed on, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

¹⁵ And as he sat at the table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹⁷ And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

¹⁸ Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” ¹⁹ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰ The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. ²¹ No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. ²² And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins.”

Reflections:

Reading the gospel of St Mark would be like watching the highlights of a match of international cricket or any other sports. Imagine how thrilling it would be! Mark doesn’t allow much space for long discourses or philosophical arguments as we could see in John or Luke. Mark’s Christ is a healer who is busily engaged in various uplifting services among the socially marginalised and economically poor.

Here Jesus is calling Levi to join His ministry. What was His criterion in calling the disciples? We have no idea. None of them were extraordinary. They all had their limitations, weaknesses, and failures. They had nothing to claim or boast on. What they did was only this: they did respond to the Lord’s call to follow Him. The rest was managed by their Guru. In a faith life, this responsiveness marks the success point.

“Follow Me” is the call sent out to all. Those who respond become disciples. Following requires complete release from other commitments. We know the case of someone called by Christ failed because he said he would need to check with his family (Luke 9:61, 62). No previous commitments to anything helps in joining His ministry. History has found many fights for freedom. Many communities have achieved it. However, what is freedom if we cannot make ourselves available for good? “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains”, said by Jean Jacques Rousseau. Do we agree?



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

6890 Professional court, Mississauga, Ontario, L4V 1X6, Canada



At this time of Covid outbreak, the words of Jesus could be our hope and strength. It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick (Mk 2:17). If everybody is sick, He would be there for each one. Let us rely on His unfailing words of promise. He would take care of all of us.

Feasts:

01, May- Apostle St James, son of Zebedee. He was the brother of John and was fortunate to be among the three confidants (Peter, John, James) of Christ who witnessed the Transfiguration of the Lord on the summit. He was also a Direct disciple of Christ for whom his mother appealed to Jesus the right to sit on His side. Jesus asked whether they would be able to drink from the same cup which He was about to. It was impossible for an ordinary human. But James had also drunk from the same cup and died a martyr. The first Taksa (the order of Holy Liturgy) has been attributed to him. St James's Liturgy has been made into a mandate to be used for (a) All the festivals of the Church, Maranaya Perunnals (b) On the ordination of the deacons and priests and on the consecration of bishops and patriarchs. (c) On the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, for the first time, by a newly ordained priest. (d) The first celebration at any church on its consecration. (e) Any celebrant on their first visit for the Holy Eucharist, at any church.

29th April- Mar Sabor & Mar Aproth

Mar Sapir and Mar Prot, two Syrian missionaries who, with a migrant group, landed at the port of Kollam in Kerala in 823 AD. The mission is said to have received permission from the then king of Kerala to build a church in Kollam. Kollam Syrian copper plates, a 9th century royal grant from Kerala, mentions that a certain Mar Sapir built a church at Kollam with the blessing of the then king of Kerala. It is likely that Mar Sapir had a companion named Mar Prot. A stone cross, one of the five Persian Crosses, with Sassanid Pahlavi inscription recovered also mentions certain "Afras the Syrian". It has also been assumed that the Kollam Town was built by Persian immigrants for expanding the trade link through developing the Kollam Port.

Mar Sabor, also called Mar Abo, has been entombed at Marth Mariyam Church, Thevalakkara. It is also believed that he had ordained the legendary 'Kadamattathu Kathanar'. The 'Vaidhyam' tradition of Thevalakkara had been handed down from Mar Abo who was a good healer too. Many churches are believed to be founded by them: Kadeesa Church Kayamkulam, Tharissa Church Kollam, Akaparambu Church Angamaly, Kadamattam Church, Udayamperoor Church ...etc. The exact location of the burial place of Prot (Aphrat / Aproth) is unknown.

27th April- Mar Gregorios Abdul Jaleel, 339th anniversary, entombed at North Parur Church. He was a bishop of Syriac Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, visited India in 1664 on a mission and is remembered mostly for his reconciliation presence among two factions in Malankara.

3rd May- His Holiness Baselios Paulose I, 107th anniversary, entombed at Pampakuda Cheriya Palli

Let their life be an inspiration for us. May their intercession be a stronghold to us at this time of worries and trouble.



Virtual Meetings of Organisations

We are glad to see the participation of our members in various virtual meetings of organisations of the parish. I hope there would be more members joining and complementing through their active presence. Please look for meeting notifications and keep ourselves prepared.

MMVS Canada Regional Meeting : Friday 01 May at 08:15 - 09:30 pm

Parish OCYM : Saturday 02 May at 04:00 – 06:00 pm

Parish Prayer Meeting : Saturday 02 May at 07:00 – 08:30 pm

Parish Choir : Sunday 03 May at 06:30 – 08:00 pm

Holy Liturgy in English this Sunday

Because of the Perunnal of St George, we postponed the English service to this Sunday. Actually I was thinking of using St James Liturgy this week on his feast day. However, we don't have the English version of St James made available and hence next Sunday we would use St James text. Please look for it and be attentive to the prayers in that text. Every Sunday we would be using various liturgical texts. Every text has its own emphases and prayer wordings. It would be interesting to listen to it carefully and notice the distinct features of each. From this week onwards, the text shall be announced in the weekend mail. So this Sunday the English text would be of St John Chrysostom.

Please use the link for live-streaming:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1_yCG9AWStA

St George Perunnal Charity towards Food Bank

We do acknowledge and sincerely thank our members who have contributed towards the charity fundraising in connection with the Feast of St George to be handed over to the Food Bank. We need to close the fund by this weekend to give it to the intended project. May we request our members who couldn't make it yet, please make it now before it gets too late, if possible.

May Day

Ancient Spring Day Festival observed on May 1st had given way to celebrate International Workers Day or Labourers Day to recognise the achievements of workers. This day has been celebrated by the majority of nations in the world. Let us spare a few minutes to think about the workers in the whole world. The buildings where we dwell and work, the roads we travel, drainages, bridges, stadiums, airports, railway facilities, food we eat, everything made by them taking only a minimal pay. They are the struggling class at the bottom. They work in open space, farms and under all weather conditions. They get the least security in life. The amount of manual work they do, the hours they work, being the least benefitted, they would require attention. How could we compare the income they and the rest of employees in the world incur?! We survive by their hardships. May we think about them and shall we never complain about what we get as earnings. May we pray for them and declare solidarity to all attempts from any side to uplift their life and its quality.



Hope we are familiar with the Pyramid drawn by Abraham Maslow for pointing to the Hierarchy of Needs. It has Physiological needs spreading at the bottom which goes up with other layers - Safety, Love/Belonging, Esteem and on the top Self Actualisation. Considering the Physiological aspect as the base, workers and farmers should have support from the rest of categories. They should also meet the apex layer of self actualisation.

“Man is a hierarchy of needs, with the biological needs at the base of the hierarchy and the spiritual needs at the top.”, said by Abraham Maslow. Being members of the Church, while looking at what Maslow has drawn keeping the physiological aspects at the bottom and spiritual aspects at the apex of the pyramid of needs, we have the responsibility to assure the society that we would do our best to address the problems of socio-economic inequality and injustice. Christ has called us as ‘workers’ and not as masters to work with Him in the vineyard. Having our faith in Christ pronounced through Holy Baptism, we all had already identified ourselves with the labourers.

May we stand together to greet all the workers in the world and thank them sincerely for what they have been doing and sacrificing for the rest!

Salute to Canada Prime Minister for the Firearm Ban

Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has banned the keeping and using of Military assault weaponry by civilians from today onwards. With this decree, the gun makers cannot make firearms targeting the civil society consumers. Trudeau has affirmed that weapons are meant for just one single purpose, to kill the maximum number of people in the minimum amount of time. He said that Canada has no situation requiring this. May we Salute the PM and the Government for issuing this decree which rules out the possibility of any more gunfire killing in the land. Let us believe, it is definitely God’s intervention!

Prayer Request:

Please pray for Suneesh who has been admitted after having difficulty in breathing. He had suffered a heart attack the next day and had to be moved to ECMO as his lungs failed functioning. Slowly, he began to respond to medicines and was thought positive by doctors. Unfortunately, a clot was found in his lung and they had to administer surgery. His condition advanced further with non stop bleeding which they were trying to drain. Yesterday, doctors updated that his bleeding has ceased and there is a possibility of recovery. He lives in London UK, married to a girl of the London Parish two years ago, and has a child of one year old. There are people and groups praying for him. May I request our members to keep this a priority for praying.

Keeping you all in prayer

Yours in Christ
Thomas John Achen
fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com
+1 (416) 570 5610