



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - NOVEMBER 06, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

November 08, Hoodos Eetho Sunday (Dedication of the Church)

Epistle Readings: Acts 7:44-53 (Or) Revelation 3:14-22, Hebrews 9:1-14

Gospel Reading, St John 10:22-38 RSV

22 It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; 23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered round him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me,[a] is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." 31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" 33 The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." 34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; 38 but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

Reflections

In the Bible, the event took place in Jerusalem, during the winter. It was the week of Hanukkah, the festival of lights and dedication. It traces back to around 175 BCE, where Judas Maccabeus revolted against Emperor Antiochus Epiphanes IV. He did this to recapture the Holy City. They washed and cleansed the temple which was defiled by Epiphanes. They observed it for eight days with the lighting of lamps. Since then it has remained as a practice every year to commemorate the event by lighting the Menorah. The Menorah is a festival lamp with nine wicks, where one wick is lit each night. The book of Maccabees narrates this historical event.

On the festival day, Jesus was walking in the temple where he had to encounter the religious leaders, who questioned his relevance. Being the good shepherd, he counted them among his flock, but they didn't agree to it. He explained to them how he was expecting them to listen to his voice and be guided by his words as one shepherd and one flock. They couldn't believe in him when he said he and his Father are one being. They claimed it was blasphemy to put himself as a human to be equal with Yahweh the Creator. They couldn't see it as his absolute devotion towards God, and that humans are his children. For him, it was the perfect union with God in Spirit. It was ironic that the Eternal Light was there in their midst, during the festival of light. Even at a time like this, they could not see the truth. If they couldn't accept him as the Messiah, at least they could have appreciated his good



deeds. It was because they failed in accepting and obeying the Holy Scriptural prophecies about the Messiah. Those who were expecting the Messiah couldn't welcome him when he was physically there.

Church celebrates the Sanctification Day (Koodosh Eetho) followed by the Day of Dedication. What has been cleansed is now dedicated to God. It is done through listening to His call and obeying him as 'the sheep that follow the shepherd'. It requires the realization that through Christ we are one in God. This is the collective self-realization to be one single family of God! Following his voice will then become more feasible.

Feasts

November 02, St Gevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala, 118th anniversary, entombed at St Peter's & St Paul's Church, Parumala. We have already celebrated it.

November 02, Kadavil Paulose Mar Athanasius Metropolitan, 113rd anniversary, entombed at Thrikkunnathu Seminary Alwaye. He initiated the construction of Thrikkunnathu Seminary Alwaye with the vision to give English and Syriac language training to the clergy and laity.

November 5, Stephanose Mar Theodocius Metropolitan, 13th anniversary, entombed at St Thomas Asram Bhilai. He was called 'Bhilai Baba' as a respectful recognition of his dedicated service in North India. He was a visionary who could see the prospect of mission among the North Indian remote villages. Through his initiation, the church could establish the village mission which focused on providing support towards basic needs.

November 06, Vayaliparampil Gevarghese Mar Gregorios Metropolitan, 54th anniversary, entombed at Thrikkunnathu Seminary Alwaye. He stood for peace and reconciliation.

November 08, HH Baselios Marthoma Mathews I, 24th anniversary, entombed at Catholicate Aramana Chapel Devalokam. He was a real scholar, disciplined leader, excellent administrator, and highly spiritual. Thirumeni helped in translations of Syriac hymns to Malayalam which was versified into beautiful hymns by C P Chandi Sir.

Parumala Perunnal

The feast of Parumala Thirumeni has been celebrated by our parish while maintaining COVID-19 protocols. It is a real blessing that the memory of a saint is maintained in a country which is far from where he lived 118 years ago! As the faithful members, we exist here as the living monument to his holy life. It is amazing to see that we have lived here as witnesses to God's salvation for the past fifty years! Despite our failures, the intercession of Parumala Thirumeni helped us grow in spirit and protected us. We thank all our members for their prayerful participation in the Perunnal services. This includes the evening prayer, convention Raza and Sunday Liturgy. We do thank our parish choir for their beautiful singing of devotional hymns. We greatly appreciate our members for their donations and for serving food. We thank our beloved MC members for excellently coordinating the programs. We also thank beloved Mathew Thomas Achen for blessing us with a meaningful message. Let us hope, in the next year, we will be blessed to come together to offer our dedication towards our patron saint freed completely from the presence of COVID-19.

SGOCT Parish Virtual Town Hall meeting on Sunday, November 22, 2020

As we are aware, this year is coming to a close. We fear that under the COVID-19 restriction, we might not be able to convene the General Body Meeting based on the eligibility list. It will be quite unlikely to maintain the constitutional parameters without Holy Confession. We will not be able to



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come to church to participate physically too. We are planning to convene a virtual Town Hall meeting for all our members to come together for an update on parish activities. We would make a provision to share our thoughts and ideas on moving forward under the prolonged pandemic season. The virtual Town Hall meeting will be held on Sunday, November 22 starting at 3:00pm. We wish that all our members join to see and greet each other and to share fellowship in Christ. This meeting will be on Webex. The link will be sent closer to the meeting day. Please keep the meeting in prayer.

Christmas Carol Service & Celebration

Our Parish will be organizing Area Carol Service at church on three consecutive Sundays starting on November 29th. Each Sunday will be for a different area. We will be following the past practice of carol singing dedicating to area members. The singing will be done at church after the Holy Liturgy. Families from the specific area can come to church and participate in Holy Qurbana and remain there for the carol service after. We may serve snacks if the respective area members can coordinate. Area coordinators shall be contacting their area members to arrange the service. We can suggest carol songs. Donations are welcome and highly appreciable.

- November 29, Sunday - St. Paul's area prayer group
- December 6, Sunday - St. Mary's area prayer group
- December 13, Sunday - St. George's area prayer group

Christmas celebration shall be conducted on Saturday December 19th in the evening starting with evening prayer at 6:00 pm. Sunday School and other spiritual organizations should either sing or do presentations while maintaining COVID-19 protocols. All organizations are requested to come with their thoughts and ideas on how to take part. When the Lord was born, shepherds were offering him praises, magi offering gold, myrrh, and frankincense, Angels flew down and joined them. In the current situation, we gather to offer Him praises either physically or virtually. Angels can join in as they are spiritual beings! Let us invoke them to be pleased to join us!

Virtual Meetings

- Friday, November 06, NE American Diocese MMVS Retreat, 12:00-01:00pm
- Friday, November 06, SGOCT Sunday School Liturgical Session for Seniors, 06:00-07:00 pm
- Friday, November 06, MMVS Canada Region Prayer Meeting, 08:30-10:00 pm
- Saturday, November 07, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00-08:30 pm
- Sunday, November 08, SGOCT MMVS Meeting, 06:00-07:30 pm

Parish Directory

The new Parish Directory has been released on the Perunnal Day, handed over to Mr. John Varghese, our senior member. It will be distributed soon. Our members can volunteer in taking them from Church and deliver to members who are living close-by. We thank the team behind the directory work and also thank those who supported us financially. Thank you all for cooperating by sending the update form and photos.

Thanksgiving

Our sincere thanks are due to our members for contributing to Thanksgiving Day. As we have been following in the past years, half of the collection will be disbursed for a local charity and the other half will be used for church maintenance.



Plaque of Contributors

As we have planned earlier, the names of those who have contributed towards the Church Expansion/Renovation Project shall be exhibited on plaques in the church basement area. We have different categories based on the total amount given, starting with \$5000 contribution. It may be feasible for those who have already contributed below \$5,000 to pay the rest and get into the list. Those who wish to upgrade could make the rest of the payment corresponding to the category they wish to be in. For those who haven't contributed yet, there is still time to contribute and have their names inscribed on the plaque. November 30, 2020, will be the deadline for finishing the payment. It will be a great support to our parish especially during this prolonged pandemic period. Each dollar will be carefully used for the best of purposes. Please make use of this opportunity to declare our love, dedication, and solidarity towards our Parish.

The list of eligible members whose names will be inscribed on the plaque has been posted on the parish notice board in the basement. For any clarification, please check and contact the Treasurer at (647) 887 4010.

Articles required for the church

I am really glad about the inquiries made by a few of our members after sending the request for buying church articles. We have purchased a Baptismal Font, Crystal Containers, Candle Wick Holder, and Taksa Stand. We are searching for options for Silver Paten and Chalice (the Church doesn't encourage using plated grail and paten for health reasons), Candle Stands, Wooden Box for keeping the crystal jars, Reliquaries -'Arulikka' with space for keeping icons or relics which we carry during Perunnal Processions, Candle table with offertory box, etc. There will be options available. Prices can vary depending on our selection. Those who wish to donate, please call or text (416) 570 5610 to choose which way you could contribute.

Clergy Demise

Rev. Fr. Thomas Panicker Cheppallil, 56 years old, a priest in the Diocese of Kollam, has passed away. The funeral service was conducted at St Thomas Orthodox Church Kundara on Friday, November 6th. He was unwell and under treatment, tested positive for COVID as well. His family members are quarantined. It is a hard time for them, not only due to their heavy loss but also because of the current COVID restriction. Please pray for Achen's soul. Please keep Achen's family (Elsamma Kochamma, children Angel & Aban) in our daily prayer. May they feel the ever-loving, ever-comforting presence of the Lord and be strengthened.

Remembrance Day – November 11

Remembrance Day is marked in Canada every year on the 11th of November. It is a day of national commemoration for the more than 118,000 Canadians who have died in military service. Please find two beautiful poems:

1) Remember those who died. Those we loved, the ones who cried.
As I sit here in my room,
I picture the banging and the boom. I try to pull myself together as I lie:
They gave their lives to keep us free. to save the innocent like you and me.
I am thankful for no war, As we wear our poppies in remorse:
Let's work together to keep this country ours



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And on each Remembrance Day to wear a flower
So put on a smile and don't sigh, Stay together and keep your head held high,
If we stand together, no one will break our power.

2) Every poppy for a life that was given,
Mothers said goodbye to their sons,
Everyone joined together to save our country,
Memorials stand today so we don't forget,
Brave, innocent men who gave their lives,
Each and every one of them,
Remembered.

Let us keep the war heroes who had laid their lives. Let us also remember all the soldiers who are currently in service of securing the lands and peoples from harm. We see the absolute sacrifice in what they do. May we thank their families who have sent them for their service.

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of Mar Dionysius Bar Sleebi, a well-edited version with brief but beautiful prayers.

Please find the Link for Live Streaming

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

COVID-19 Guidelines

As the cases are rising at a high pace worldwide, we need to take precautions. We have been practicing social distancing and other protocols in the Church, it is our responsibility to take all safety measures possible to rule out any further spread. Please do your part in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

May the Gracious Lord keep us safe and heal the whole World.

Yours in Christ
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