



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - DECEMBER 10, 2021

Dearly beloved,

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

Sunday, December 12, Revelation to Joseph

Epistle Readings: 1 Peter 2:11-17, Galatians 1:11-24

Holy Evangelion: St Matthew 1:18-25

^{1,18} Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; ¹⁹ and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; ²¹ she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emman’u-el” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Reflections:

The coming of the Lord to humanity was not easy. It was a time when there was political unrest, social injustice, religious clashes and severe economic problems. People were unhappy and insecure. There was significant economic inequality that was too far to bridge. The nation was under foreign rule and was suffering from the results of colonisation. Leaders were enjoying all privileges and rights whereas the ordinary citizens were taxed huge. Religious centres enjoyed all the richness while the civil society suffered scarcity of supplies. People were desperately looking for a saviour while the local saviours failed their expectations. Into this turmoil, came the Saviour with untidy clothes and without shelter. Christmas is the story of improbabilities. However God comes through all the impossibilities. Let us welcome Him to our midst, especially when there is growing concern over the new variant. God is with us indeed!

Feasts:

December 06, St Nicholas, Bishop of Myre (Santa Claus)

St Nicholas of Myra was a fourth century Greek bishop who is believed to have attended the Council of Nicaea though no evidence in records available. His habit of discrete help gave way to the most cherished Christmas legend Santa Claus. Many miracles are attributed to him. Not only Christmas but all seasons would welcome someone who carries a bag of various helps and with readiness to seek the needy.

December 08, HH Baselios Augen I, 45th anniversary, entombed at Devalokam Aramana Chapel

His Holiness was the fourth Catholicos of the Malankara Orthodox Church. He was a scholar in Syriac language and was able to translate from Syriac to Malayalam ‘Penkitha Namaskaram’, Liturgy of Ordination of priests, Liturgy of Consecration of Temple, various prumiyons and Lenten Prayers.

December 09, HG Mathews Mar Barnabas Metropolitan, 8th anniversary, entombed at Valayanchirangara

HG Mathews Mar Barnabas was a former metropolitan of Idukky and then served 18 years leading the



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US/Canada diaspora. He was the first metropolitan of the newly formed North-East American Diocese. HG was a dedicated monk and the simplest of humans in both attire and lifestyle. He always preferred to visit the sick and help the needy. He was able to inspire the young generation in the US and Canada through his spiritual presence and interactions. He was a man of humility at its best. He has authored many books of high readability.

December 10, Martyrs St Bahnam, his sister Marth Sarah and other martyrs

Mar Bahnam was the son of King Senharib and the prince of Asoor within the empire of Julian. Bahnam, his sister Sarah and 40 companions accepted Christ which invited threats from both his father and from the emperor. They were baptised by Mar Mathai, a monk, who healed Sarah from her long-suffering illness. The fury of the king killed all of them except Mar Mathai who eventually healed the king from his mental illness. King accepted Christ and provided all help for Mar Mathai to build a church and monastery which opened doors for the spread of the Holy Gospel in a hostile country.

December 10, Mar Philoxenos of Mabbug

Mar Philoxenos was a 5th century monk who was martyred for his Christological stand against the Chalcedonian school. His writings are a great treasure for the church with its theological content, spiritual guidance for a successful Christian life in a challenging world and the literary beauty of his prayers.

Salute to India's first CDS General Bipin Rawat and other armed forces personnel

St Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto salutes and pays tribute to India's first CDS General Bipin Rawat, Madhulika Rawat, Brig Lidder and 10 other armed forces personnel who were killed in the Mi-17V5 helicopter crash near Tamil Nadu's Coonoor on Wednesday (December 8). The officials who lost their lives in the military chopper crash included seven Indian Army officers and jawans and four Indian Air Force officers. A well acclaimed Warrant Officer Pradeep from Puthoor, Trissur, Kerala was among the team who is mourned by the State of Kerala over the passing away of one of the brave hearts who had committed to national security.

Gen Rawat was in highly strategic counter-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir and commanded a brigade along India's borders with China and strengthened further Indian forces through his precision positioning.

It should inspire us while seeing their civilian life prior to joining forces. They all had committed to social service and contributed to their local society when they were in school, college and after. They were committed and dutiful citizens who looked beyond their local habitat to serve towards a greater cause and were ready to sacrifice their comforts and likes. It has been acknowledged and appreciated that Pradeep had sought permission to join the rescue operation in 2018 during the historic flood in Kerala and his assistance was of great help. Their passing shocks us, and also inspires us to dedicate our lives to a greater cause.

There will be a tributary one minute silence observed prior to the prayer for the departed on Sunday. Please join to salute these great citizens of India.

Christmas Carol and Area Prayer Groups

Sincere thanks to families and members of St Mary's Prayer Group for joining the carol last Sunday. Thanks to the family for providing refreshment.

Please find the prayer group for coming Sunday for which the carolling will be dedicated.

Sunday, Dec 12- St George Prayer Group

Saturday, Dec 18- Christmas Celebration jointly by Organizations – SS, MMVS, Gregorian Senior Forum, OCYM, MGOCSM, Acolytes, Parish Choir. Please look for the date and time and please



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arrange to be at church in-person to perform, or to watch and to support. We need all families to take part. It will be a parish program involving all our members.

Communicants Counting Machine, Wave your hand 'ONCE' please

All Sunday participants are requested to register their names at the entrance and as we enter the church interior. Please wave your hand once between the sensor poles of the counting machine if you are to take Holy Communion. Please do not wave if you are not taking Holy Communion. Thanks to everyone for your cooperation.

Choir & Acolytes joint practice- Saturdays 05:00-07:00 pm

This is a reminder to all our choir members and Acolytes to attend the weekly choir practice currently conducted virtually on Saturdays 05:00 – 07:00 pm. We would wish our choir members and acolytes who will be taking turns on the upcoming Sunday or feast days to join the practice session for better coordination and harmonious chanting. The link shall be sent before the meeting.

Meetings ahead, In-Person & Virtual

December 11, Saturday, SGOCT Choir & Acolytes weekly practice – 05:00 – 07:00 pm In-person & virtual

December 11, Saturday, Evening Prayer at Church, 07:00 – 07:45 pm

December 12, Sunday, Area Carol – St George Prayer Group, after the Holy Liturgy

December 12, Sunday, OCYM Monthly Meeting, after Area Carol & Refreshment

December 12, Sunday, SGOCT MMVS Monthly Meeting, 06:00- 07:30 pm

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

This Sunday, we will be using the Taksa of Mar Mathai Royo

Link to Sunday Holy Liturgy

Please see below the Link for Live Streaming

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

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

Yours in Christ,

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