



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - DECEMBER 11, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

Sunday, December 13, Joseph's Vision

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

Gospel Reading, St Mathew 1:18-25 RSV

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 Emmanuel" (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

St Paul tells about the credibility and significance of the Gospel: 'Am I now seeking the favour of people, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not human's gospel. For I did not receive it from human, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.' (Galatians 1:10-11). Because it has been given by the Lord, it has to be believed and followed. It has also been clearly advised that one should not dedicate his or her life to please people but to please God. This Sunday's scriptural reading is about Joseph's vision. He was a man of justice, and by virtue of it, he was thrown into the dilemma of whether to please people or God after learning about the conception of his spouse Mary before they come into contact. It could be assumed that Mary had already told him about her virginal conception and her receiving of the Angel's message of Divine Birth. Joseph, being a believer, might not have taken it a lie. While agreeing to God's plan and will, the society's possible response worried him. He couldn't sleep. It was their accepted practice to denounce a person who was found fault with moral living. Joseph had no option. But he couldn't make up his mind.

It will be a point of worry for a believer in God, whether to obey God or to impress people around. Here, what Joseph did has set an example or guideline to all the believers in any circumstance. Living the Gospel will not be by pleasing everyone but only by obeying God. The question is, to whom should we belong and be accountable to? It is our free will that we should decide. Any decision we make can either kill or bring up the Christ within us. Joseph stood with God, and Mary could find a trustworthy husband in him. The result, Immanuel was born to this world which we now celebrate as Christmas!!! Their joint decision made the redemption available to the whole world. Our decisions



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and choices can always have this blessed possibility. May He come, Immanuel, through us!
Hallelujah!

Feasts

December 08, HH Baselios Augen I, 45th anniversary, entombed at Devalokam Catholicate Aramana Chapel Kottayam. He was the 4th Catholicose & the 17th Malankara Metropolitan. He was a great Syriac scholar who translated many prumiyons and prayers to Malayalam. He was instrumental in bringing back the holy relics of St Thomas the Apostle to India which has been kept at Devalokam.

December 09, HG Mathews Mar Barnabas Metropolitan, 8th anniversary, entombed at Valayamchirangara St Peter's and St Paul's Orthodox Church. He was a holy man in every respect. Possibly he could be the most influential person who had left a deep impression in the hearts of American Malankara youth and kids. Because of his presence, many youngsters in the American Diocese enthusiastically got into the ministry and they are currently serving the Lord as both clergy and laity. He was a proven retreat father, good orator, writer, devout monk and a true leader.

December 10, St Bahnam the Martyr, his sister St Sara and co-martyrs. Behnam and his sister Sara hailed from the royal family. They had chosen to serve Christ. Along with them, a company of forty who were soldiers in the king's army always escorted Behnam and Sara, the royal heirs who also got converted to the Christian faith. The destiny of Christian adherents in those times came upon them too and all were got killed for their faith. Mar Behnam Orthodox Church Vadayaparambu, Mulanthuruthy has this saint's holy relics kept.

December 10, Mar Philexinos of Mabbug. His name is remembered in the fifth diptych. He was an ascetic, sound theologian, writer, and died a martyr under the persecution of emperor Justinian in 523. Pampakuda namaskarakramam has his beautiful prayer, which has been loved and used by the faithful of the church through the centuries.

Christmas Lent

Let us continue prayers and fasting of the Lent season. May the Holy Spirit empower us.

Christmas Area Carol Service & Celebration

The third and the last area carol for this year will be conducted this Sunday. It will be dedicated to St George's Area. We request the area members to remain online to ensure their participation virtually. Donations are welcome and highly appreciated.

Christmas celebration will be conducted on Saturday, December 19th. We will be starting with the evening prayer at 6:00 pm. We request all our organizations to finish their virtual presentations and send them to the coordinator at the earliest.

Virtual Meetings

Friday December 11, NE American Diocese MMVS Retreat, 12:00- 01:00 pm

Friday December 11, OCYM meeting, 07:30 - 09:00 pm

Saturday December 12, MMVS Canada Region Annual Conference, 09:15 am - 01:00 pm

Saturday December 12, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00- 08:30 pm

Sunday December 13, SGOCT MMVS, 06:00 - 07:30 pm

Friday December 18, Sunday School Liturgical Session for Seniors, 06:00 - 07:00 pm



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MMVS Canada Region Virtual Annual Conference: Saturday, December 12, 2020

The North East American Diocese Canada region MMVS is conducting a Virtual Annual Regional Conference and Bible Study through Google Meet on Saturday, December 12th 2020 starting at 09:15am to finish by 12:30pm. Please make sure our participation.

Parish Directory

The Parish Directory is in the process of distribution. We are trying to send through members who could drop them at houses within their reach.

Plaque of Contributors

We are in the process of installing the plaque. Sincere thanks to all our beloved members for their positive response towards this project.

Articles required for the church

We do hope that the articles would be made available for use before Christmas. Sincere thanks to all the contributors.

Names of the beloved departed members, a gentle reminder

We request our members to send the names and dates of the parting of their beloved family members. We would like to keep the list of the departed for remembrance on respective Sundays as we do for Birthdays and Wedding Anniversary Days. Please respond.

Election of new office bearers

We request all the spiritual organizations to elect new office bearers and send their list to the parish office. Please include the election of office-bearers in the next meeting agenda and do the needful.

Support HTRC

Holy Trinity Transfiguration Retreat Centre is a prestigious meeting place of the Diocese of North East America. It requires our support, especially at this time of pandemic. Our holy father Bava Thirumeni has asked all the members of the Malankara Orthodox church to support this spiritual renewal centre. Please find the link to offer our support.

Join us, #GivingTuesday, December 1, 2020, in donating to Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center, a ministry of the Northeast American Diocese. 10% of the funds raised will go to support the seminarians studying for the #NEDiocese. Give now: <https://bit.ly/Give2HTRC>
#Give2HTRC #SupportOurSeminarians #SupportThisMinistry

Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Al-Nehmeh passes away

The Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Al-Nehmeh, the Archbishop of Homes, Hama, Tartous and Environs has passed away in Damascus, Syria on Monday December 07 2020. Let us pray for the Syriac Orthodox Church and express our deepest condolence on the parting of this holy father.

Clergy Demise

Fr K K Varghese, 87 years, a priest in the Diocese of Kollam, has passed away yesterday. He was serving as the Manager of Kundara Seminary. He had served various parishes in the diocese of



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Kollam. The funeral has been conducted on Friday December 11 at 02:00 pm at his home parish St George Orthodox Church Nedumpaikulam, Kundara.

Welcome New Born: Amelia & Cyrus

1) Kajan & Sheba (J 24) have been blessed with their first born, a baby girl, Amelia. God's wonderful gift!

2) Lejin & Anne (L 04) have been blessed with a baby boy, Cyrus. Caleb the elder is excited to have his younger with him!

Congrats to both parent couples and grandparents. May the Lord bless the new borns ! We, the beautiful people of St Gregorios do welcome Amelia and Cyrus into our beautiful community!

Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of Ksosthos. It is short, precise and beautiful.

Please find the Link for Live Streaming

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

COVID-19 Guidelines

We continue Holy Liturgy with limited participation of 10 members. We hope that the current restrictions would help in bringing down the spread of infection to zero. News about the vaccine starting to be administered by the end of December gives us more peace at heart. Let us keep on praying for the whole world. God shall protect us, His children everywhere.

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

Yours in Christ

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