



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

September 13, 05th Sunday after Dormition of Holy Mother Mary

Gospel Reading: St Luke 11:33-41 RSV

33 “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. 35 Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.” 37 While he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him; so he went in and sat at the table. 38 The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. 39 And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. 40 You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.

Reflections

God is depicted as a ‘single open eye’ in the ancient tradition. The eye is surrounded by rays of light, enclosed by a triangle. It is the ‘all seeing-ever open’ eye with three points of the triangle that represents the Holy Trinity. Ancient Egyptian religion had this as the eye of Horus, the sky god. It is assumed that a 1525 painting of The Last Supper had the first appearance of this eye, followed by depictions in various church paintings. The wooden box kept on the Altar in many churches for keeping the Holy Elements has the carving of this single eye. As in the ‘Liliyo’ (Night) prayer: Awaken us, Lord, from our sleep in the sloth of sin that we may praise Your watchfulness, ***You who watch and do not sleep***, give life to our death in the sleep of death and corruption, that we may adore Your compassion, You who live and do not die; grant us in the glorious company of the angels who praise You in Heaven, to praise You and bless You in holiness... (Urakkamillaatha unarvullavanaaya karthaave....), He is the ever awake!

We live in a world where many eyes are kept open to peep into the private lives of other people. Cyber crimes, scandals, fabricated stories, online abuses and sensational sting journalism are intruding into the privacy of both the individual and society. What distinguishes God’s ever open eye from the rest is its evil-free nature. His eye is ever good which never allows anything bad. After the creation, God has found everything good (Genesis 1:25, 31). The same good world is found or made bad by evil eyes with evil inclinations and intentions.

God has given us eyes to see good in everything. Seculars call it positive thinking or positive viewing. Eyes are to see the Divine light everywhere as prophet Elisha had seen it (2Kings 6:16-18). Elisha could see the whole hills covered by fiery horses and chariots and when he prayed, his servant also had his eyes opened to see the same. When he prayed, enemies were struck with blindness.



Humans are either illumined or darkened through what is seen or perceived. There could be people who darken the world further through their seeing of it with evil intentions. The disciples have been called by the Lord to further illumine the world through the right usage of eyes and thoughts. A human's physical movements and actions are guided by what is seen. Good seeing lead to good actions which keep the person in glow. Jesus who said, "I am the Light" (John 8:12) also said 'you are the light of the world" (Mathew 5:14-16). May we all shine before others and let the world see our good deeds and glorify God the Father. It is our call.

Feasts

September 08, birth of the Mother of God, church has celebrated it through observing eight days lent and Holy Liturgy.

September 09, commemoration of Joachim and Hannah, parents of St Mary. No reference is available in the Holy Bible. It narrates only the essentials of her vocation and role in the incarnation and the salvific work of Christ. Apocryphal literature has details of Mary's life. Traditionally the church has been honouring Joachim and Hannah through observing their feast day. It is believed that they were old and had no children and God had given Mary as a gift to the world.

September 14, Feast of the Cross, Holy Liturgy on Sunday evening

There will be Holy Liturgy on Sunday September 13th on the Feast of the Cross with evening prayer starting at 06:30 pm followed by Holy Qurbana.

Most Rev K I Philip Ramban 'Malankara Sabha Missionary Jyothis' has passed away on Sunday September 07th.

He was the backbone of the mission projects of the Malankara Orthodox Church. He stood with HG Osthathios Metropolitan to initiate, establish and develop all the major projects including Kalahandi, Yachaaram Balagram, Puthuppady Ashram, Mandavar Santhigram...etc. His leadership and intervention in Odisha and Gujarat after the worst hit cyclones paved way to more mission ministry in the northern states of India. Gujarat and Odisha governments honoured him for his compassionate works. He made himself available for the needy and poor. He was so keen in housing projects for the homeless. He earned no money or possessions for himself. He lived a poor life but died rich by receiving appreciation and reverence of millions of hearts for the ministry of the Lord. His vision, mission and ministry would need more research and attention for future guidance of the church in reaching out to God's children. His funeral service has been conducted at St Pauls Ashram Puthuppady on Thursday September 10th. May his memory be eternal.

MMVS Virtual Retreat: Friday September 11 (12:00pm – 1:00pm)

Northeast American Diocese MMVS is inviting you to attend the virtual retreat (Friday fasting prayer) from September 11th, 2020 on every Friday from 12:00pm to 1:00 pm. All parishioners are encouraged to attend the prayer and the short message.

Main Speaker on Sept 11: Rev. Fr. Thomas P John, Vicar, St. Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto, Canada



Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86066042555>
Meeting ID: 860 6604 2555

Dial by your location: +1 438 809 7799 Canada
Meeting ID: 860 6604 2555
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbvmezZkJ>

Sunday School Opening for the New Academic Year 2020 on Sunday September 13

Please find the schedule for September to December 2020:

1. Sunday School Reopening - We will officially reopen on September 13 at 4:00 PM through Webex (the invite will be sent closer to the date).
2. Class times - Each grade teacher will set the day and time for the class time and send the meeting invite to the parents/students.
3. Common time - Once a month we will conduct common time on Sunday afternoon at 4:00 PM; The dates are as follows: October 18th, November 22nd & December 20th
4. Text books and Work books - Each grade teacher will scan the text book/work book and e-mail it to you. Please print as required for your child/children. Information on classes and common time beginning in January 2021 will be provided in December. Thanks to those who have returned the textbooks. We are still waiting for many to return the textbooks. Please arrange to return the textbooks.

SGOCT Sunday School looks for volunteers

Our Parish Sunday Schools welcomes our members who are interested in volunteering for Sunday School academic programs. Please contact Elizabeth Vaidhyan on (647) 984 3258. We especially encourage all the graduates from our Sunday School to volunteer.

Fund raising for an international student in Canada

SGOCT MMVS had requested for donation for surgery of an international student in Canada from Kerala. She was diagnosed with congestive heart failure with only 20% of functioning now. She is in a transitional care centre. She has no OHIP coverage. The target amount was \$100,000. Toronto Malayalee Samajam had initiated the fund raising. After MMVS requesting support, our parish could collect \$1,500/- in two days. The collection has been transferred to the recipient through **GoFundMe**. Please pray for her surgery. Sincere thanks to our beloved members for acting so fast. We really appreciate Toronto Malayalee Samajam for taking up this timely charity. Special appreciation to SGOCT MMVS for their fruitful initiative.

OCYM Charity Fund Raising

SGOCT OCYM is organising the Annual charity drive for the year 2020. Hope we are all aware that this has been an ongoing practice for the past few years. We request each and every member of our parish to support this initiative generously.



Gregorian Seniors Forum Get-Together

The Gregorian Seniors Forum get-together will be on Thursday, September 17th at 05:00 PM at the Peace Garden, near St. Mary's Shrine. Please bring chairs and foldable tables. We will follow the Covid protocol.

SGOCT Choir welcomes new voices

SGOCT Choir welcomes more singers, male and female, including previous members and high school students to be part of the church choir. We look for members who would dedicate their time for participating training sessions and church services including Sunday liturgy. Please contact Anand Joseph on (416) 276 5021.

Hearty Congrats to Rev Fr Alexander Kurian!

May we congratulate Rev Fr Alexander Kurian, priest of the Malankara Orthodox Church, on his new assignment, Senior Executive (highest rank of civil service) of the US administration. He is serving the Deputy Associate Administrator of the Office of US Government Wide Policy. His many works include Targeting Opportunity Zones and Other Distressed Communities for Federal Site Locations to promote economy and efficiency in the planning, acquisition, utilisation, and management of Federal space facilities; besides Protecting American Monuments, Memorials and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence. Achen had visited our church for an OCYM conference and conducted service.

Virtual Meetings

Friday 11, NE American Diocese MMVS Virtual Retreat 12:00-01:00pm conducted by SGOCT
Saturday 12, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00-08:30pm
Sunday 13, Sunday School Reopening Session, 04:00-06:00pm
Friday 18, Sunday School Liturgical Session for seniors, 06:00pm
Saturday 19, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00-08:30pm
Sunday 20, SGOCT Acolytes Meeting, 06:00pm

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We used the Liturgy of Mathai Royo on last Sunday and Liturgy of 12 Apostles on the feast day of Mother Mary. This Sunday we will be using the Taksa of Mkanastha 'Fathers of the Church'. It is short, precise and beautiful. Please attend to the prayers.

Please find the link of live-streaming the Holy Liturgy:

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

RSVP for participating in the Holy Liturgy has been stopped.

We have stopped the RSVP for confirming participation in the Holy Qurbana from this weekend onwards. Since the first use of RSVP, we have never received communicants exceeding the limit of



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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Covid protocol. Our members can come straight without sending RSVP. Our members are advised to fill in the data sheet kept in front at the left entrance. We need the name of only one family member and mention the number of attendees from that family. Mask will be mandatory inside the church. Holy Communion shall be dispensed in the end. There will not be the conventional practice of kiss of peace, but only mutual bowing down, Communion shall be given with separate spoon for each communicant, no blessing with cross at the time of dispersal, no laying of hand for absolution and no touch on any elements or articles. We cannot encourage gatherings or serving of food or drinks after the service. Let us fervently pray for a proper vaccine to be made available soon.

It would be helpful if you could complete the self-declaration form before coming to church (https://mcusercontent.com/4b0245a10b23c3826466d9a97/files/9548548e-2661-4d54-95e7-1266834331b1/Self_Declaration_Form.02.pdf).

Holding you in prayer

Yours in Christ

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