



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - MAY 15, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

Sunday 17 May – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him; but the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.” To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” But he said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Reflections:

Religion of Christ is of love, reconciliation and compassion. There is no space for hatred and enmity. There is no absolutism possible in practicing of faith. Christ was open to various cultures and faith. He never said, people of other faith would go to hell. He wanted honesty and true faith. He looked for humility and humanity. Here, though the Samaritans did accept Jesus, now they turn their back against him because he was going to their rivals, the Jews. They closed their village entrance to him. Now what did the disciples do? They wished God’s fire to descend and consume them! So who was worse? Definitely the disciples did.

The Disciples, who had the gift of prayer, when they faced with disagreement from others, did tend to plead for the worst. How could it be called prayer when it looks for bad things to happen to others? A curse can never be a prayer, but an evil. What did Jesus do? He moved to another place, a wise and kind an approach. We tend to make people act by enforcing. In no situation, it helps. Obedience under threat has no element of honesty in it. Parents should be aware of this when they bring up their children. Governments should take into consideration of this fact; otherwise the state would produce rebels and terrorists. Laws are to be inculcated through proper educating, not through threatening. The world would need to have more compassionate approach to everything.

Christ hasn’t come to create a kingdom of foxes with their cunningness, He visualised a better world of humans who have hearts and souls. We don’t need to practice prayer, if we cannot think and act for the well being of our cohabitants. Church is not made of self centred beasts but of sacrificial lives.



Whoever cannot put Christ and His Kingdom as priority, there is no point in being addressed 'Faithful'. Christ Jesus came to this world to make this a better one through His faithful. But His people shamed and failed Him with their arrogance, pride, selfishness, rudeness and unforgiving character. Now we are going to celebrate His ascension. What does it mean? Christian life is that of qualitative ascent into the likeness and perfection of the Lord. Either we see it as spiritual or physical, Christian life requires a qualitative growth in every respect. Rest would be a 'cloud' behind which God only would be able to judge whether we had an acceptable or refuse life lived.

Feasts:

15 Friday May: Feast of St Mary for the Crops. She has represented the barren earth which was once fertile and fruitful, later turned to be futile and unresponsive due to human sins and wickedness. Church celebrates this day for increase in crops and harvest. Let us pray for the whole farm lands in the world. Especially at this time, we realise, what farming mean to us. Everybody fears, there might be shortage of food supply in future. If the earth doesn't give its produce, the whole world might go hungry. Let us seek Her intercession for any futility we mourn on.

16 Saturday May: HG Yuhanon Mar Severios Metropolitan, 30th anniversary, entombed at Koratty Zion Seminary Chapel. He was highly reputed and skilled scholar of Syriac Language. Thirumeni has written down a rubrics (Susroosha samvidhaana sahayi) for Church Sacraments and worship. May his intercession be a shelter for us.

Nurses Day

The most popular symbol of Nurse is that of Florence Nightingale, Lady with a Lamp. It is beautiful a picture and a concept. But in actual, it is hard for someone to hold a lamp and be there at dark hours with a readiness to clean the wounds of soldiers. Soldiers would be tough by their training. They might get deep wounds from the war front. Even being strong and brave, when they cry in agony, it would be the hardest situation for anyone to stand. When we think of Nurses and their service, this is apt. It is nice to see them in their uniform with their countenance in full bloom with beautiful smile. They would call us Uncle, Auntee, Appachaa, Ammachee, Mone, Mole, Chettaa, Chechee...etc while cleaning our wounds, taking our vital signs, giving us injections, making us swallow bitter medicines, talking to us positively even while looking at the most severe diagnostic findings. Mostly the term 'Nurse' be understood as female. Personally, I had no knowledge about male nurses in my childhood or in early ages. Male nursing had started to boom in a later stage, possibly in the nineties.

They remain with us, whether male or female, when we're taken to ICU or to ventilator. They are the ones who stay with us when we happen to be on surgical tables. The last face most humans see could be of them. They may not be our daughters or sons. But we feel they are. Hence we call them Angels. They carry a heavenly glow while looking at us, knowing that we are about to pass. They have taken us in their hands when majority of us were born. Even before our mothers saw us, they have seen us! They have witnessed both best and the worst of human life situations. They have seen us crying and screaming, scolding and swearing, blaming and thanking, praying and cursing. They have seen the realities of love and hatred, care and rejection, closeness and passivity. They have seen the real us many a times. What they earned in life could be this, the lessons of real life. They keep their tears for those who come under their care, and bring it to church and shed it there. They do more intercession



than the saints! They sacrifice their sleep, family time, outing, entertainments for the sick and weak.

If we ask, none of them would say they had an easy life in the beginning. The life they had during nursing education, the period of voluntary service as part of their academics, their initial jobs... everywhere they had to undergo severe and miserable situations. Even now, many of nurses are underpaid but highly laboured. They had to suffer occasional suppression, abuse and exploitations. Here we find their true dedication. Even after having all these hardships, they have never given up this most valuable service.

From an Ecclesial perspective, in many countries, many churches have been made possible by their money and presence. If we consider the economy of our State of Kerala, their sweat and tears made into money and has been supporting the economy since many long years. When and who was the first nurse travelled abroad? There and then began a new culture emerging in Kerala and among the Malayalee community. They have taken their homes on their shoulders and made it possible for many families to survive and to have their familial ceremonies done well.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has developed a theme for this year- 'Nurses: A Voice to Lead — Nursing the World to Health' to showcase how nurses are central to addressing a wide range of health challenges. ICN says the theme will help raise the profile of the profession and attract a new generation into the nursing family. At this time of Covid threat, the whole world has witnessed them fighting in frontline as real warriors. Salute to them. On Sunday, we shall do a special prayer for them to honour their special day.

Expatriates from the Middle East returning to India

Expatriates have started returning to India, they would be thousands getting back, mostly without having much savings. They would find it difficult to re-establish after many years of exile living. If they have some saving, the political and social culture might not be of favour to them in investing for business. Unless new job opportunities get opened up, they would need to spend days without going for work. The only possible way out could be, they getting into a common platform to familiarise each other, spot their skills and talents, make groups or teams to start up projects relevant and sustainable by investing small earnings. When they do it together, it would be feasible, affordable and safe. Let us hope that Government would stand by their side and assure all support for their dignified resettling. Let us keep them in our daily prayers.

Rabindranath Tagore, 159th Birth Anniversary on 07th May

"Because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West." was the statement of Swedish Academy on offering the Nobel Prize to him. Tagore was the first Indian and first non European to bring home the Nobel. He was a poet, story teller, playwright, musician, Ayurvedic researcher, and overall a great human. He lived in the time of Gandhiji, Nehru and Sri Narayana Guru. He visited Kerala in 1922 and met Sri Narayana Guru at Sivagiri Asram. The Santiniketan School he had founded with an Asram within the premises was unique and distinct. Gitanjali, the poem offering stands out among his other many works. Here a few lines from Gitanjali which is still and would keep on talking to us:



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action;
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*

Salute to Him for illumining the world with his lucid writing and brave, prophetic thoughts!

Feast of Ascension: Holy Liturgy of the Feast of Ascension shall be conducted on Tuesday 20 May, evening prayer starting at 06:00 pm followed by the Liturgy. Please join virtually.

Feast of Pentecost: Feast of Pentecost would be on Sunday 31st May. 10 days in between Ascension and Pentecost would be of 'Waiting' (Kaathiruppu) for Holy Spirit. Please be well aware of the coming days and let us make it a time for intense prayer, fasting and invoking of Holy Spirit. Renewal of God's Spirit within every human would be a hard shield against any infection and threat.

Liturgy text for this Sunday: Liturgy of 'Abraham Nahasirthono' would be the text we use for this Sunday. Please listen carefully to the prayers. Beautiful it would be with more emphases to human weakness and fragility that seeks Divine Mercy.

Please follow this link for the church services.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcvQw1vZ1_yCG9AWStA

Organisations meeting schedule:

Meetings of Organisations have been scheduled this weekend:

SGOCT MGOCSM – Friday 15 May, 06:00 pm

MMVS Canada Region – Friday 15 May, 08:15 – 09:30 pm

SGOCT Prayer Meeting – Saturday 16 May, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

SGOCT MMVS – Sunday 17 May, 06:00 pm

SGOCT Sunday School Teachers' Meeting – Monday 18 May, 04:00 pm

Holding you all in prayer

Yours in Christ
Thomas John Achen

Fr Thomas P John
fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com
+1 (416) 570 5610