



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - FEBRUARY 19, 2021

Dearly Beloved,

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

### February 21, Garbo - Sunday of the Leper

**Epistle Readings: Acts 5:12-16, 19:8-12, 9:22-31, Romans 3:27-31, 4:1-5**

**Gospel Reading, St. Luke 5:12-16, 4:40-41 RSV**

#### St. Luke 5:12-16

12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." 13 And he stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And he charged him to tell no one; but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to the people." 15 But so much the more the report went abroad concerning him; and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.

#### St. Luke 4:40-41

40 Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. 41 And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

### Reflections:

Jesus was a healer. He healed every soul through His words. The world calls him 'Lord' because he was compassionate to everyone irrespective of his or her profile or appearance. Here a leper received his healing. In that society, a leper was an outcaste who could enjoy no rights or privileges whose appearance was so fearful and disgusting because he was covered with leprosy. So, what was unique about Jesus? He was unique because He never looked for the peripheral things. He had the inward eye that He always kept open to see through the life of people. Because of this, he could see the pure soul in the leper and show compassion towards him. The world today tends to see more of the external attributes in people whereas God sees the inner essence in us.

As humans we are all guilty of counting on the external aspects of life. Marriage, friendship, partnership, fellowship, brother/sister hood are all initiated by our peripheral views. That is the beginning of our failures. For a spiritual society like ours, it is the soul of things that matters most and it is beyond the material perception. If we start to strongly believe that, it makes us better humans who can touch or even hug a leper who is fully infected, deformed and ugly. During this great lent, let the Holy Spirit help us to look deeper into peoples' lives and situations rather than be stranded by the external appearances.

### Feasts

**February 16, HG Dr Geverghese Mar Osthatheos Metropolitan, 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary, entombed at St Paul's Asram Chapel, Mavelikara** - He will be remembered for his leadership in various charity projects, zeal for preaching the Gospel, ability of memorising the most of the Bible, the teaching of Holy Scripture, efficiency in connecting with all strata of life and his popularity as a leader of people. Church honoured him with the title, 'Sabharathnam' 'Jewel of the Church'. A few of the many



projects he was passionately involved were Yaachaaram Balagram, Attappady Mission, Kalahandi Mission and St Paul's Mission Training Centre. He always insisted to help the needy and to spare 'Tithe' for helping charity projects in a secular world.

**February 20, St Ephrem the Syrian (Mar Aprem)** - He is one of the most notable hymnographers of ancient Christianity. He was also a prominent Christian theologian and writer. His hymns, without which, we cannot imagine our liturgy today. Karthaave Kripa cheyyaname..., Aadratha thonname Naatha..., Than nompaaal viduthal thannoraathmajane..., Enta kadangalasesham Nin..., Njungal than Karthaave Nee...etc. are few among the four hundred hymns to his credit. Other prominent hymnographers are Mar Jacob (Eesaa Naatha varika thunappaan..., Mseehaa Naadhaa sishtanmaar than..., Melppattakkaar pattakkaarodu..., Maathru vishudhaa smrithi sambandham...) and Mar Balai (Nompaaal veezhchayil ninnenne rakshicha..., Maathaa Kaadeeshenmaar than praarthanayaal..., Jananee parishudhaa..., Paapam cheythoro- daadrathayullone...). Their hymns are all enriched with theology, philosophy and teachings of the church.

**Mar Theodoros (St Theodoret of Antioch)** - He was a fourth century saint and martyr. In those days, whoever confess faith in Christ had to suffer oppression and persecution from the pagan rulers. Still, the sufferings they had to face never stopped their public proclamation of Christ. It was not just speaking out of one's faith but combating against social evils and profane practices that prevailed in the society. Theodoret had to die for his love and devotion to Christ, which proves his honesty and praiseworthiness.

## Virtual Meetings

Friday, February 19, NEAD MMVS Retreat, 12:00 – 01:00 pm

Saturday, February 20, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

## Great Lent – Evening Prayer, Lenten Devotional Talk Series

1. Shubkono service: The service of Reconciliation was conducted at church along with the evening prayer on Sunday Feb 14, starting at 07:00 pm. How wonderful is the power and influential beauty of Orthodox ancient liturgical prayer!
2. We have started **Lenten evening prayer at church** since Sunday, which will continue until Easter. It is really wonderful to see the volunteering and assistance of Acolytes, Choir members and Parish members. For ensuring continuous participation, a Google sign-up sheet has been created for our members. We request the signees to assure their participation on the specific dates.
3. We have also started the **Lenten Devotional Talk Series** every evening delivered at church by our parish members. It is indeed a matter of great joy seeing the response from our members and the way everyone has taken it up with great interest. Sincere thanks to Mariamma Alex (Molly), John Mathews, Joju Thomas, G George and Santy Binu for their spiritually enlightening talks. We pray that this initiative will bring in more fellowship and spiritual bliss to our community. For the future speakers, we request to follow the guidelines. Should you wish to attend the evening prayer at church, please contact the Vicar or the parish office. Please remember that the talks will be live-streamed.
4. On Saturdays, except during the Holy Week, our evening prayer will continue as usual through Webex.
5. As we are observing our fast, the money saved from the food expenses shall be collected and used for charity. We request our members to take this opportunity to help the needy and change their



# ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

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lives in whatever way you can. We will have a charity fund-raising towards the end of the Great Lent and the proceeds would be donated to a local charity.

6. Details of Great Lent / Passion Week services will be announced later.

## Support our Parish

It is important that all our members start to support our parish further, by making a monthly payment of \$100. We request our beloved members to set up a direct debit with the bank to parish account. We also require a good credit score for our bank account. We had collected about 60,000/- from offertory in 2019 whereas we could collect only below \$25,000/- in 2020. This is a very significant difference and how could we cover it without a new income provision? I request you to think about this seriously and respond at the earliest should you have any concerns.

## 'Share Your Blessings'- A charity initiative of Gregorian Forum

Gregorian Seniors Forum is initiating a charity drive 'Share Your Blessings'. God has blessed us abundantly. The Bible constantly teaches us to share what we have with those who are less fortunate than us. Also, sharing gives us an elevated sense of responsibility towards our society. Share what you have to show how much you care and remember when you care for others the Almighty Lord cares for you more. The fund collected shall be donated towards Mental Health Wellness in Peel Region. Our share can be transferred to [treasurer@sgoctoronto.org](mailto:treasurer@sgoctoronto.org).

*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."  
Hebrews 13:16*

## Articles required for the church

Most of the articles required for the church have arrived. We are waiting for the last item on the list to be delivered. Items received and list of donors will be announced soon. My sincere thank you to all the contributors.

## Names of the beloved departed members, a gentle reminder

We have started receiving emails from members with details of their beloved departed ones and have started adding them to our list. Please continue to let us know and we would like to keep this list going forward for remembrance prayers on the respective Sundays just like we do for Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries.

## Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of St James this Sunday. The way this text glorifies the Almighty God is highly poetic and of great literary quality.

## Please find the Link for Live Streaming

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1\\_yCG9AWStA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1_yCG9AWStA)

## COVID-19 Guidelines

The government has announced a Provincial state of emergency effective from 14th January. Community and Worship centers can only go ahead with a maximum of 10-member participation. We hope that the current restrictions would help in bringing down the spread of infection to zero. Many of our members who are working with the Department of Health have received the vaccine, which gives us great relief. Let us continue praying for the world and that God shall protect each one



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of his children in his mighty hands.

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

Yours in Christ,

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