



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - JUNE 19, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

Sunday 21st June 2020, Third Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading- St John 6:35-46 RSV

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; 39 and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46 Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father.

Reflections:

Imagine where people live in hunger, thirst and depravity. Somebody comes and tells them "I can feed you." Jesus has said this. We know how a food bank feeds people in scarcity. When he was giving out the Beatitudes in 'Sermon on the Mount', the people were mostly the ones living in poverty. He was that kind to call them 'blessed' and to ask them to be content with what they had. In doing so, God shall provide for their basic needs. This is why we call it the 'Kingdom Message' as it was taking care of the marginalised and socially isolated. It was not anything like an election campaign that politicians deliver to manipulate the public. He was honest in addressing the unaddressed and was ready to feed them. He has proved it through miraculous feeding of multitudes.

On a later stage, we could see him telling them to work for the imperishable food. Christ's plan starts with providing for the basic needs and then uplifting them through educating, motivating and spiritually nourishing. He envisioned a world with divinely illumined people. Enlightened or awakened citizens who are aware of their ground of being as God. It is the rock he mentioned, not just faith. He assured that God will always be there unmoved as a rock. We need to grow in Spirit and to become like Christ. Christ is the source of all nourishments. He says those who come to him shall never go hungry or thirsty as they all will be receiving their filling. He has reminded Satan that humans don't live by bread alone. Who was this Satan? Was it the tempting community who always cried for material filling? We know that physical filling will never be sufficient for us. We need proper filling of our minds and souls too. Bread makers can only fill our stomach. To fill the



emptiness of life, we need something more and immaterial. Humans have been trying to fill the unfilled with logic, science, secular thoughts and with various pleasures. However, the world has only seen an increased dissatisfaction everywhere. Humans would need sustainable thoughts, and not ephemeral. Souls unattended remain the depressing element of human personality. Look at the lives of celebrities, CEOs and world leaders. Who and how many are truly blissful and joyful? So, there are unfilled gaps which become decisive of human destiny. Christ is the filling, He is the bread that will keep us from dying out of despair, emptiness and of the feeling of meaninglessness. He is our ever resurrecting positive thought for the whole life span. May we be nourished and filled by him every day.

Church is opening on Sunday 21st June, please send RSVP

By God's abundant grace, adhering to the government guidelines, our church will be opening to members to attend the service on Sundays. An RSVP form has already been sent to our members. Guidelines also have been sent out. Please check your email and respond. We need to make provision for members to attend service based on the RSVP and it will be on a first come first serve basis. Confirmation Email shall be sent to the chosen members today. Please go through the details and come prepared. Live-streaming of Liturgy will be continued till we get full access.

Fathers' Day, 21st June

God had commanded, "For you to have long life on earth, obey your Father and Mother." (Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 5:16, Leviticus 19:3, Mathew 15:4, Ephesians 6:2). We have both days to celebrate, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. This Sunday it would be the Fathers' turn. They are the replica of God the Father in whom we see creativity, sustainability and security converge to remain for their children. Fathers are our first heroes and they remain so forever. I remember my childhood days, when my father got back home after school as a teacher. It was late in the evening, his bag always smelled like apples, bread and magazines. We enjoyed eating and reading from what he brought. He had to take leave from school to work in the UAE for many years alone while we were in India. He had to sacrifice his family time for working hard for our sake. Every family will have a lot to recollect on their fathers and mothers. Here is a time for us to express our deepest gratitude to them for what they are in our life. When you see flowers on the altar and on the prayer table this Sunday, please feel that it's our collective gesture of gratitude towards them. At home, please give them a close hug, look at their eyes and say 'Thanks, we love you'! Also assure that we will be there for them. They are the 'Bestest' !

Reading Day, 19th June:

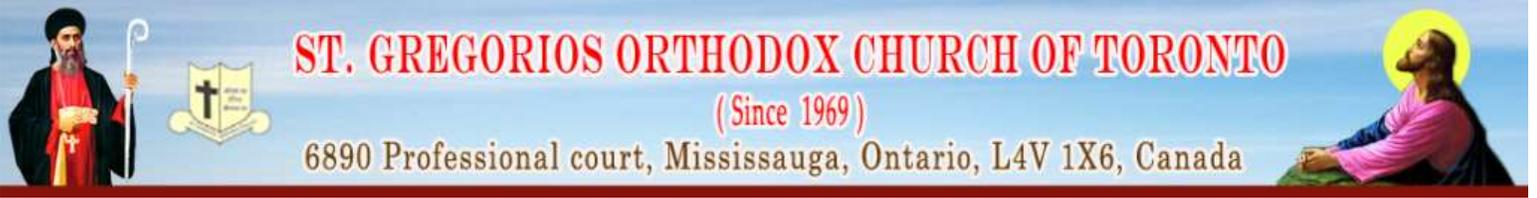
India celebrates 25th National Reading Day on June 19th on the annual day of parting of P N Panicker, the leader of library Movement in Kerala. In connection with Reading Day, I would like to suggest a few books:

By Indian authors:

1) Wings of Fire by APJ Abdul Kalam 2) Discovery of India by Jawaharlal Nehru 3) Story of My Experiments with Truth by Mahatma Gandhi 4) The Argumentative Indian by Amartya Sen

A few non-Indian books:

1) The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho 2) Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach 3) The Prophet



by Khahlil Jibran

Books by Bishop Paulose Mar Gregorios: a. Cosmic Man, b. Human God

Books by Timothy Ware: a. The Orthodox Way, b. The Orthodox Church

Peace Garden:

It is good to see the increasing participation of our members in setting up the Peace Garden on the north side of the stone cross. I am very glad to see any of our members come to church, water the plants and plant new ones. We need shrubs and more flowering plants within the premises to make it beautiful! May I request our members, whoever interested and willing to donate plants and materials, please contact the parish office. We know what effort is behind all the existing gardens in the world including the Garden in front of Taj Mahal in India! It will be too much for comparison, but still we can dream of a real Paradise of which in the middle we could see our beautiful church stand in dignity and glory! Let us make it possible.

Racism:

We are aware of the rage and protests all over the world as the aftermath of a few incidents occurred recently which questions and violates basic human rights. If we ask what stance the church has on this, it is nothing but a reassurance of church policy of equality. God has made everything and He is the author of every creation. And God had seen everything good. Among His creation, there have been people of all kinds of race, sexual orientations, and beliefs. As languages developed, God has kept on communicating with various communities in their own language. God has never abandoned any person for physical, psychological or spiritual reasons. No discrimination, acts of intolerance, situations of violation of justice and rights cannot be approved or agreed by the church. The Church is and ever will be against all kinds of violence and exploitation. The prayer taught by our Lord says it clearly; we can only pray, 'Our Father' - Father of all of us, inclusive, equally accessible to all and it is a prayer meant for every person irrespective of their age, colour, gender, culture, language, faith, practice, ethnicity and nationality. As a faith community in Canada, we declare solidarity and integrity with the whole human race and specifically with the victims of any kind of violation.

Parish Directory Update Form:

A Parish Directory Update Form has been sent to our members via Email. We have many families yet to have their updates in the Directory. All members are requested to send it back even if there is nothing to update. We have also included the space for adding the home parish of spouses. Also we need to collect Email contacts of all members in the family for an effective and efficient communication. Please remember to post family photos too. A few members are not included in the current Birthday and Wedding Anniversary list. We have started sending greeting cards and it has been found that some names are missing. Please cooperate in updating the details at the earliest. A new Parish Directory shall be published soon for our convenience.

MMVS Diocesan Retreat:

On Saturday 20th June at 09:30 am, the NE American Diocese MMVS Retreat shall begin. We have members from our parish unit registered for it. Please try to join a bit earlier than the specified time.



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



There will be more than 900 members participating virtually. Please avoid last minute rush and access the link before the time given. The theme would be: Faith moves Mountains (St Mathew 17:20).

SGOCT Choir Video Release:

Our parish will be releasing a song video made by the SGOCT Choir on this Sunday after the Liturgy. It is a matter of overwhelming joy for all of us seeing the effort taken by our choir members, about fifty of them, under lockdown ! This will be the beginning of many more ventures in future. Our parish is blessed with resourceful members and a wide variety of talents. If we make collective efforts, we would be able to do many wonderful works for the benefit of a wider world. It is our call too. I would like to thank all the singers, organisers and technical supporters for their hard work. Let us praise God for giving us a beautiful fellowship in Christ. May I urge all the organisations to think and plan new projects which could promote unity and mutual bonding for the Glory of God.

Virtual Meetings Scheduled for this weekend:

Friday 19th June (Today), 07:30 - 08:30 pm – SGOCT Divyabodhanam

Saturday 20th June, 09:30 am - 12:30 pm – MMVS NE American Diocese Retreat

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

Sunday Holy Liturgy shall be live-streamed. Please access the link for virtual joining:

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

Liturgical text for this Sunday: Please be aware that we will be using the Liturgy of St John the Apostle this Sunday. Please be keen to it.

Holding you in prayer

Yours in Christ

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