



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - MARCH 19, 2021

Dearly Beloved,

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

March 21, Samiyo, Sunday of the Blind & Catholicate Day

Epistle Readings: 1 Peter 4:12-19, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 or Ephesians 5:1-14

Gospel Reading, St John 9:1-41 RSV

9.1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” 6 As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, 7 saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Silo’am” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, “Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some said, “It is he”; others said, “No, but he is like him.” He said, “I am the man.” 10 They said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” 11 He answered, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Silo’am and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight.” 12 They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” 16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was a division among them. 17 So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, 19 and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” 20 His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.”

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” 25 He answered, “Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” 26 They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” 27 He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?” 28 And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” 30 The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” 34 They answered him,



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“You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of man?” 36 He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” 37 Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” 38 He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

Reflections:

Jesus said, he is the light of the world; after saying this, he healed a blind man. On receiving his sight, he started searching for the true light, from whom he received his sight. He found Jesus and worshipped Him. The Son of Man came to this world to open the eyes of people who lost their sight in pursuit of worldly pleasures. There were religious leaders who were supposed to see the works of God among His creation and to guide people towards their right destiny. But they failed in accepting the Messiah and His works. Here the blind man started praising God which infuriated the leaders. They couldn't allow a new leadership replacing the old. Jesus did the most compassionate act. But they found it as a threat to their existence. If personal interests supersede the common good, the world might come to its end. We need to be really careful about this as we all take some lead in various areas of life. Our attitude and approach can destroy the salvation which God plans for the world.

Feasts

March 17, Paulose Mar Severios Metropolitan, 59th anniversary, entombed at Kunnamkulam Arthat Puthenpally. It has been said that he had stammering in the early years and later turned to be a good leader and teacher. He laid the foundation of Koratty Sion Seminary which became a school to many of the later leaders. He served the Diocese of Cochin. He suffered cardiac arrest while leading the Feast of Sreeba Mar Osthathios (Look below for more info on his life) at Arthat and went to repose.

March 19, Sreeba Mar Osthathios Metropolitan, 91st anniversary, entombed at Kunnamkulam Arthat Puthenpally. He was born in Amid, South East Turkey. He survived an epidemic which took away the lives of his brothers and sisters. He was sent to India by the Patriarch Mar Yacoub of Antioch. He stayed at Kottayam Puthenpally and Pazhaya Seminary and served the Malankara Church. He learned to speak Malayalam. He enjoyed the care and affection of Parumala Thirumeni, arranged for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and accompanied the saint. He was ordained to bishopric along with Vattasseril Mar Dionysius by the Patriarch Abded Aloho II. Sreeba Mar Osthathios was a saintly man who won the hearts of the flock, wrote many books later translated to Malayalam and served the church for decades. He fortified the church against the whirlwind of reformation and Protestantism led by the Anglican reformers.

Virtual Meetings

Monday – Friday, 12:00 – 12:45pm, SGOCT Noon Prayer through WebEx

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

Saturday, March 20, NEAD Canada Region MGOCSM 09:00- 12:00, Zoom

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



Great Lent – Evening Prayer, Lenten Devotional Talk Series

1. We are glad about conducting the Lenten Evening prayer at church. We have a commendable participation from our members. We highly appreciate the way our Altar Servers, Choir members, Technical Support team and Devotional speakers assist, support and complement our community's spiritual journey.
2. The Lenten Devotional Talk Series is going really well and every talk lifts up our souls. We do sincerely thank Susan Benjamin, Santhosh Varughese, Marina Abraham, Theodore Vaidhyan, Amy Anand & Sony Pappachen 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.
3. On Saturdays, except during the Holy Week, our evening prayer will continue as usual through Webex.
4. 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 lives in whatever way we can. We will have a charity fund-raising towards the end of the Great Lent and the proceeds will be donated to a local charity.
5. Noon Prayer through WebEx, Monday – Friday 12:00 -12:30pm. The WebEx link for noon prayer has been sent to our members. Whoever finds it convenient and useful, please join. There is no pressure.
6. Details of Great Lent / Passion Week services will be announced later.

NEAD Canada Region Lenten Retreat- Saturday March 13, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

To our overwhelming joy, the retreat was a grand success with the participation of 200 and more families. The meeting was well organised and excellently conducted by the technical support team. The message by Fr Abraham Thomas was a real eye opener and spiritually rejuvenating. This was the first venture of its kind regionally in organising a meeting for all the members of the Malankara Orthodox Church who live in Canada under the jurisdiction of North East American Diocese. There will be more programs for newcomers, international students and for scattered members which are in the process of planning. We do sincerely thank our Thirumeni for sending his blessings. We thank all the parishes and congregations for their cooperation. We express our sincere thanks to all those who have nourished the gathering with scriptural readings, singing and offices of prayer. We do acknowledge and highly appreciate the technical support team for their relentless work which made the gathering a wonderful experience. Special thanks to Sam Achen and Mathew Thomas Achen for their hard work. We do thank Thomas George Achen and Blesson Achen for their strong leadership.

SGOCT Parish Lenten Retreat- Saturday March 27, 10:00 am– 12:30 pm

Our parish Lenten Retreat will be on Saturday March 27 starting at 10:00am. Fr Thomas Raju from Mavelikara Diocese will be delivering the message. This retreat will be meant for all our members, not limited to any particular age group. Please keep the meeting in prayer. Please assure everyone's participation. The retreat shall be live-streamed.



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Upcoming Holy Liturgies

Wednesday March 24, Holy Liturgy- Feast of Annunciation, 07:00 pm

Thursday March 25, Holy Liturgy- 40th Friday, 07:00 pm

Saturday March 27, Holy Liturgy- Lazarus Saturday, 07:00 am

Support our Parish

Please support our parish by contributing financially. Please remember to pay the Catholicate Day share along with monthly subscription. We used to collect Holy Week donation too. Any contribution will be highly appreciated.

‘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.

"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

We have received all the items. The Sanctuary and Altar are in a new look, more elegant and beautiful. The list of donors shall be announced soon. Please see the attachment with pictures of newly bought articles. We sincerely thank all the contributors.

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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 as 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.



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Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of St John Chrysostom. It is theologically sound and highly appealing with its literary beauty.

Please see below the Link for Live Streaming

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

COVID-19 Guidelines

Let us maintain the safety measures and look for a hassle-free future soon with the finishing of vaccination program.

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

Yours in Christ,

Thomas John Achen

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