



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - FEBRUARY 21, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

### Great Lent

The word 'Great' points to the importance of Lent, which is Great in its significance, meaning, observance and impact. Nowadays we use the term 'Great' even for things meagre. Because of the cliché, it shouldn't lower its meaning. In Syriac the word equalling is 'Raabo'. While seeing the Risen Lord, Mary calls Jesus 'Rabbooni' which means 'My Master'. In Sanskrit it is 'Guru' points to something which cannot be 'Laghu' or silly. Guru or Rabbi is the one who guides and trains in mastering something. If we look at this Lent, calling it 'Great', it is clear that it can guide us in mastering something. What could be left there for us to master on?

Human race has developed hundreds and thousands of skills and technologies for survival and for winning over situations. We can control many things, even we manage natural disasters and calamities allowing only less damage and loss. When it comes to mastering of mind, self or ego, we go numb! We know what we are talking about. All things we manage to control and if we fail to control and tame the 'self', nothing of technological advancements help. A King or a President or a Prime Minister, who finds it difficult to control emotions and self-thoughts, might press the war button. History has witnessed such decisive situations which later had taken heavy tolls on lives and settings.

Here are a few verses from the Bible tells about the need of self-control: (Prov 25:28) Like a city whose walls are broken down is a human who lacks self-control. (1 Cor 9:27) I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Cor 10:13) God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. When you are tempted, He will also provide a way that you can endure it. (2 Thim 1:7) For the Spirit of God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (Philip 4:13) I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. (Rom12:1-2) Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good and perfect will. (Galatians 5:22) The fruit of Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (St Luke 10:42) Choose what is good.

Prayer and fasting, abstinence and kneeling down are meant for taking control over wills and wishes. Spiritual disciplining would enable us to feel the presence of God closer and keep us keen on doing good with more focus. We are potential enough to achieve great things. Lack of focus and absence of self-control divert or scatter our attention to many things. We fail to carry out our duties and responsibilities. We fail in life.



Great Lent begins with the Miracle of Wine at Cana. This is what we must look for while entering the Lent. We would need to be transformed like water turned into wine. Water is neither bad nor useless in itself. There would be situations where only wine can do. Water may not be of use there. Likewise there could be situations which demand more from us. For becoming good for use, we would need to change, grow and be transformed. We might fear, it wouldn't be possible for us. Christ says: "impossible for human, possible for God."(Luke 18:27)

Let us enter the Great Lent with a resolute mind and absolute dependence on God's Grace. He would lead us. As Jesus assured, He would be with us till the end.

### **Lent Arrangements**

To begin with, we have a few arrangements for the Lent. Other arrangements shall be updated in due course.

### **Shubkono (Service of Reconciliation):**

Shubkono Service shall be conducted along with Holy Qurbana on Sunday 23 February. May I request our beloved members, please come prepared for it.

### **Lenten House Prayer:**

There would be Lenten House Prayers organised by OCYM hosted by our members. This year's first Lenten Prayer will be held at the residence of Mr. Biju Mathew & Mrs. Susan Mathew. Address: 25 Horizon St, Brampton, ON. Contact: (647) 986 5122.

Date & Time: Sunday 23 February 2020, 05:00pm.

Full list of prayer meetings with address will be updated & published on the church notice board on Sunday. Kindly request everyone to attend the prayer and be blessed!

### **Friday Retreat:**

There would be prayer, meditation and chanting of hymns held at Church on Lenten Fridays morning starting at 10:00am finishing with noon prayer and 40 Kneeling Down (Kumpidal) at 12:00. First retreat would be on Friday 28 February 2020. Whoever find it convenient, please join. For those who wish to attend noon prayer, they can come straight from work taking lunch break and join the 40 kneeling down at 12:00 midday.

### **Holy Confession:**

Please don't wait till Holy week for administering Holy Confession. Whoever wish to do it, please feel free to fix a time convenient with the Vicar calling (416) 570 5610.

### **Feasts of Vattasseril Thirumeni, Osthathios Thirumeni and Makarios Thirumeni**

This week we celebrate the feasts of three Holy Fathers:

- 1) 86<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Metropolitan entombed at Pazhaya Seminary Kottayam, called 'Sabhabhasuran' who pioneered the making of Church Constitution and laid his life for the freedom and establishment of Catholicate. Church has canonised him a Saint years after canonising Mar Gregorios of Parumala (Parumala Thirumeni).
- 2) 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of HG Geevarghese Mar Osthathios Metropolitan of Niranom, entombed at St Paul's Mission Centre Chapel Mavelikara, former President of Church Mission Board and initiator of various mission projects. He is also the author of many books on Theology, Love and Mission.
- 3) 12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of HG Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan entombed at Devalokam Aramana Chapel, who was our Bishop prior to Barnabas Thirumeni. There will be incense prayer in memory of them on Sunday. May their prayers and intercession be a shelter for us.

### **MGOCSM Pre-Lenten Retreat**

MGOCSM Toronto will be hosting the first 2020 event, the Pre-Lenten retreat, this Saturday 22 February 2020 at St. Gregorios Orthodox Church of Toronto, 6890 Professional Court. The theme of this year's retreat is "Fasting and Forgiveness". Rev Fr Dr Bijesh Philip will be the guest speaker. Holy Qurbana would begin at 08:30am followed by Retreat at 10:00am. Please register online following this link: <https://bit.ly/2RN14cO> online registration is \$10 and registration at the door will be \$15. Please see the poster attached for more details. All youth over the age of 13 are requested to attend; lunch will be provided.

### **Divyabodhanam Class**

Next Divyabodhanam Class would be conducted this Saturday 22 February 2020 at 5:00pm at church. We will continue with Book 1: In the Fullness of Time. Kindly attend the class and find it highly beneficial for us.

### **Gregorian Seniors Forum**

Next meeting and get-together of Gregorian Seniors Forum would be held on Saturday 29 February 2020 at 01:00pm at Church Basement. There will be self-introduction, exchange of life experiences and discussion on a more meaningful presence in the community.

### **Sunday School Talent Competition**

Solo singing competition at unit level was conducted last Sunday. We had a good participation of students. They all sang excellently well. Now we look forward to the next level. May it be reminded that those students who have been chosen for next session would continue practicing for the best of performance on stage. Congrats to all the participants! Highly appreciate all the parents and teachers. Sincere thanks to the judges.



# ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



## Email

Weekly updates have been sent out from Parish Office. We have only a few members in the mailing list. We are updating the list to include the contacts of all our members. May I request you to kindly prepare the list of Email contacts of family members and sent it to

Parish Office [sgoctoronto@sgoctoronto.org](mailto:sgoctoronto@sgoctoronto.org)

See you on Sunday

Keeping you all in prayer

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

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