

WEEKLY THOUGHTS - APRIL 22, 2022

Dearly beloved,

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

Sunday, April 24 - New Sunday (Blessed Witnessing of St Thomas)

Epistle Readings: 1 Peter 2:19-25, 1 Timothy 2:1-13

Holy Evangelion: St John 20:19-31

^{20,19} On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

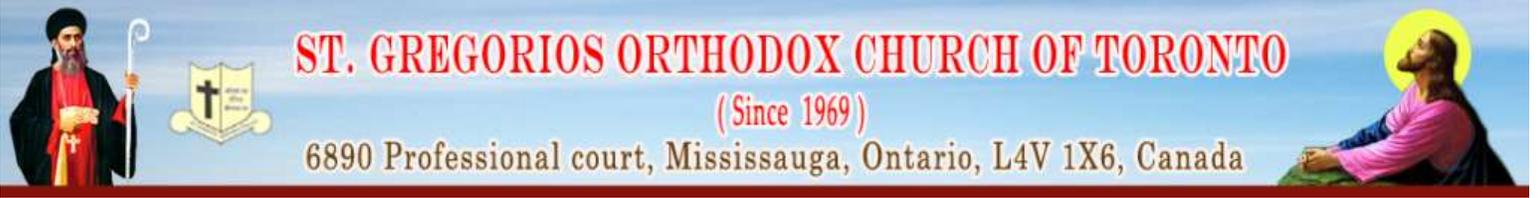
Reflections:

Faith is deepened by a touching experience. We can see such experiences throughout the Holy Scripture. For Moses, his experience was with the burning bush. In Jacob's case, he struggled for a night with an angel. For the bleeding woman, she was cured by touching Jesus' cloak. In Lazarus' experience, he had come back to life. With the apostles, they had the Holy Spirit coming upon them. Here, the Apostle Thomas who was among the twelve was given a special experience that eventually enabled him to travel a long way to India. There, he changed the future of the country and its people forever through his Christian presence. Mother Teresa is one example that can prove what is meant by saying, change comes through Christian presence. How do we define faith in both general and personal contexts? What makes us believers? Is it a belief that is passed down in upbringing? If we closely observe, we would be able to find these touching experiences given to us. A deep experience comes to us at times when we are shaken or lost. No regret is needed for any bad things in life. It could be the source of God's experience.

Let us join the Apostle to declare 'Our Lord and our God'!

Feasts:

April 21, Yuhanon Mar Ivanios Episcopa, 228th anniversary, entombed at Pazhaya Suriyanippally, Chengannur



April 22, Marthoma III, 334th anniversary, entombed at Kadampanad Cathedral Church

Great Lent & Holy Week

By the abundant graces of God, our parish community had a blessed Great Lent and Holy Week experience. This was the second year we had devotional talks conducted throughout Lent. It was an enlightening experience for all of us with new thoughts and insights shared by our members. We do highly appreciate and thank all the speakers including the children for their dedication and enthusiasm. It reveals the fact that when we dedicate our time and talents to God, it will multiply manifold and become beneficial to all. This time we had a few new participants too who did well as if they were experienced in preaching. Sincere thanks to all.

Our Parish choir has helped us a lot in elevating the liturgical offerings to highly pleasing and involving. We had choir members assist the whole Lenten evening prayers. It was really hard for them to come to church every evening after work. In the Holy Week and on Lenten Sundays, we had a good number of choir members joining to offer excellent support. We do sincerely thank each one of them for their relentless efforts.

For the liturgical administration, our Acolytes served a great role with their participation in regular evening prayers and Holy Week services. There was brilliant coordination among themselves for all services. They also helped in changing the sanctuary clothes and covers on Palm Sunday and Easter, cleaning after Palm Sunday, preparing the bitter water for Great Friday, flower arrangements, helping in serving communion spoons and water, and leading the prayers and sacramental arrangements. Sincere thanks to our Acolytes.

We do acknowledge and thank all families who served or contributed towards serving refreshments and food. God bless them.

Kids were excited by offering flowers on Palm Sunday. Please keep your spirit high always for the Lord.

All the spiritual organizations helped and volunteered wholeheartedly throughout the Lent. OCYM has coordinated the Lenten devotional talk and Great Friday Vigil which turned out to be a great blessing for all of us. Our members took turns assisting the Lenten noon prayers by saying responses. Sincere thanks to all organizations for their involvement.

The Management Committee did a great part in organizing everything required for our services, food serving, meetings, and all other necessary arrangements. We take on record with gratitude for their support and leadership.

This was the Lent we had after two years which has given access to members in person to participate. The faithful were desperately longing for a Lent experience at church after missing the last two occasions in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. The in-person accessibility to church this year allowed and drove a majority of the faithful in Toronto to the church which kept it packed for almost all services. The physical coming together and the energy it brought gave us a new leap regarding our faith life. It has also ruled out any fear of loss of faith as an aftermath of the pandemic which has taken away millions of lives. We highly appreciate our members for being keen on practicing faith in a far-away land from home. We do thank God for all that we have experienced during the Great Lent. We thank each participant for their dedication and zeal. God bless!

Parish General Body Meeting on Sunday May 01, 2022

Our parish General Body Meeting will be conducted in person at Church on Sunday May 01, 2022 after the Holy Liturgy. The primary list of eligible members has been posted on the parish notice board. The final list shall be posted on this Sunday. We request all the eligible members to ensure your prayerful participation.

Agenda:

Election of Malankara Syrian Christian Association Members



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Election of Diocesan Representatives

Catholicate Day and Diocesan Day Share: due and upcoming payments

Altar and Shrine Renovation: Updates

AOB approved by the Chair

Ordination of Acolytes

We may have members, adults or kids, willing to join the Altar Assistance Service. Whoever wishes to join the Acolytes, please feel free to reach out to the Vicar at (416) 570 5610. We will conduct the training sessions and fix a date for ordination.

Newcomers WhatsApp Groups initiated by OCYM

New members are added up in the group as we get connected. Mostly they will be looking for guidance regarding accommodation, info about job opportunities, ride to church, and other possible support. We are trying our best. Parish members can help us by updating us about their availability for giving rides, and sending info of contacts or advice from various fields of work which might be helpful for life in Canada.

SGOCT Parish Library and Book Club

We expect books or contributions from voluntary supporters.

‘Urava’- OCYM initiated Parish Journal is ready out for reading

‘Urava’, the Church journal initiated by SGOCT OCYM has been released. The first copy was handed over to Mr K T George, our senior member, on Easter Sunday after the Liturgy. The name was suggested by Anish Mathew and the Icon on the cover page was designed by Joann Liz Thomas. We do thank all the contestants for their participation. Other images submitted by Sunday School kids have been included in the journal. The articles are written by two guests and our members from various spiritual organizations. We do highly appreciate their literary contribution which makes this issue worth reading and occupying space in our home library. Our sincere thanks to sponsors and printing agencies for their support. We thank all our spiritual organizations and their leaders for their help and support in liaising among the members for availing the articles.

We had an editorial board working tirelessly which brought out this issue within the stipulated time and with brilliance. We do thank them for their dedicated service. Special mention of OCYM office bearers for all their help, administrative decisions, guidance and assistance.

This is only a humble start. Hope the theme ‘Hope, Resurrection and Victory’ dealt in the current issue and the upcoming themes will give way to more discussions and researches and will inspire our members in delving deep into reading and writing. This Sunday we will have copies for our members. Please read and feel free to share your thoughts. We would highly appreciate creative suggestions. Please bear with us for any flaws and we assure that we will do our best to make each issue better with themes and contents. We look forward to everyone’s support and contributions. A big thank you to everyone!

Spiritual Organizations and WhatsApp Groups

All the spiritual organizations of our parish have created WhatsApp groups for regular communications and updates. We request all our members to join corresponding groups. If you are not already in, please reach out to organizational secretaries.

Gregorian Seniors Forum, G George: (416) 738 7765



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MMVS, Beena Mathew: (647) 835 1521

OCYM, Suna Cherian: (647) 818 9376

Choir, Anand Joseph: (416) 276 5021

Acolytes, Cleemis Vaidhyan: (647) 308 2135, Anish Mathew: (647) 818 6125

MGOCSM, Emil Mathew: (647) 877 9272, Sandra Shaji: (647) 551 6563

Sunday School, Santhosh Varughese: Please note that Santosh's contact number has changed to (416) 937 8595. Please save the new contact.

MGOCSM Alumni

Our parish MGOCSM would like to reach all members who had any association with MGOCSM in India or elsewhere. Please inform whoever worked with MGOCSM. You can either send an email to mgocsm.sgoct@gmail.com copying to the vicar at fr.thomasjohn@gmail.com or send a message/call to (416) 570 5610.

Communicants Counting Machine, Wave your hand 'ONCE' please

All Sunday participants are requested to register their names at the entrance and as we enter the church interior. Please wave your hand once between the sensor poles of the counting machine if you are to take Holy Communion. Please do not wave if you are not taking Holy Communion. Thanks to everyone for your cooperation.

Meetings ahead, In-Person & Virtual

April 23, Saturday, Choir/Acolytes joint practice, 05:00 – 07:00 pm

April 23, Saturday, Evening Prayer, 07:00 – 08:00 pm

April 24, Sunday School In-Person at Church after the Holy Qurbana

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

This Sunday, we will be using the English Taksa of St Dionysius Bar Sleetbi.

Link to Sunday Holy Liturgy

Please see below the Link for Live Streaming

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

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

Yours in Christ,

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