



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - JANUARY 22, 2021

Dearly Beloved,

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

January 24, Third Sunday after Epiphany

Epistle Readings: Acts 17:16-34, 1 Corinthians 3:16-23, 4:1-5

Gospel Reading, St John 3:1-12 RSV

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicode'mus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicode'mus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' 8 The wind[e] blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicode'mus said to him, "How can this be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Reflections

There is a built-in search engine in humans that searches always for higher wisdom. Nicodemus had this longing though he was a learned man, a teacher, and a community leader. Those ordinary people who utilized their searching tools for acquiring wisdom became great leaders like Sri Buddha, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, St Francis of Assisi, Ramana Maharshi, Prophet Muhammed, St Teresa of Avilai, Sister Macrina, and many more... Humans start learning since childhood which could continue till the last breath. There are a few who tend to search further for wisdom beyond their secular learning. Many end up with their knowledge in science and technology and allow themselves to keep the vacuum within. Our school and post-school education can equip us with a lot of knowledge in various areas. There are times we realise, without divine wisdom, all other knowledge can fail. If we look at the world, what else could be the reason for it turns into a mess? We have all kinds of sciences, technologies, facilities, and resources. However, the modern world has witnessed more failures and traumatic incidents. Human greed has not been addressed yet. Poverty continues to grip millions. We have education but unemployment remains unsolved. We secure ourselves but wars and fights haven't ceased. We call for international summits to deal with ecological crises, but they continue challenging even the very existence of life. Don't we sense the need for divine wisdom? Nicodemus was learned but he couldn't grasp the spiritual aspect of life. When Jesus said, he requires rebirth, he couldn't understand that he was referring to the spiritual awakening. Eventually, he became a true follower of the Lord.



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Feasts

January 18, Mar Abba Smooyel, Mar Abba Simon, Mar Abba Anthonios. They were the pillars of the early church who lived exemplary monastic life and inspired society through their spiritual presence.

January 21, HG Philipose Mar Eusebius, 12th anniversary, entombed at Mar Basil Aramana Pathanamthitta. He was called the 'prophet of social commitment' (Samoohya Prathibaddhathayude Pravaachakan). He was a strong leader, dedicated shepherd, motivational orator, a good friend of all churches, and a nice guide to youngsters and children. He was one of the presidents of MGOCSM who was instrumental in further establishing the organisation. He loved sports, especially football. May his memory be eternal.

January 22, Mar Thoma VIII, 205th anniversary, entombed at Puthencavu Cathedral.

January 23, Mar Abba Augen. He was a fourth-century monk who introduced monastic life to Syrian Christianity. Monastic ideals had its great role in the further spreading of Christian spirituality. We could see this if we look at the life of Parumala Thirumeni through whose monastic devout life, how much influenced the society. Monasticism can break the denominational and ideological barriers and spread the spiritual charisma of the community to the wider world.

Virtual Meetings

Friday, January 22, NEAD MMVS Retreat, 12:00 – 01:00 pm

Saturday, January 23, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

Sunday, January 24, MGOCSM, 07:30 – 09:00 pm

Friday, January 29, Divyabodhanam, 07:00 – 09:00 pm

New President and Vice President for the US

Joseph R Biden, Jr has sworn in as the 46th President of the United States of America. Kamala Devi Harris has assumed her office as the 49th Vice President. She is the first woman and the first person of African, American and South Asian descent to hold the office. It is indeed a moment of joy and new hope to the whole world. They are proven leaders and efficient administrators. They have a lot of challenges to deal with. We do pray that God send His wisdom and Spirit upon them and their actions transform the world for its best. Congrats and best Wishes!

Gregorian Seniors Forum – Well Done the Covid Info Seminar!

The Covid Info Seminar organised by SGOCT Gregorian Seniors Forum was appreciably conducted and well attended. The presentation by Dr. Silvy Mathew was superb and highly informative. We hold great regard for her readiness to answer the questions and clearing our many doubts. We will look for more opportunities where we can make use of the talents and skills of our young members who are serving various departments and fields in Canada and elsewhere. Sincere thanks to Dr. Silvy for her wonderful presentation. We do thank our members who had sent their questions which made the meeting more fruitful. Sincere thanks to Seniors Forum for this initiative. We do thank all our beloved members for their valuable participation.

Support our Parish

It is high time for all our members to support our parish by making monthly paying of \$100 (\$50 towards subscription + \$50 towards offertory). I kindly request beloved members to set up a direct debit with the bank to parish account. We require a good credit score for our bank account too. We had collected about \$60,000/- from offertory in 2019 whereas we could collect only below \$25,000/-



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in 2020. See the difference. How could we cover it without any other income provision? Please think about it seriously and respond at the earliest.

New Coordinators for Area Prayer Groups

We had discussed the election of new coordinators for area prayer groups. It has been decided that the existing coordinators shall continue until we get to meet at houses. Sen Mathew (St George), Sherly (Raji) George (St Mary's), and George M George (St Paul's) will continue their good efforts for the benefit of us all.

Nineveh Fast

The Three Days Lent (Nineveh Lent, 'Moonnu Nomp'u') will be observed on January 25- 28. Evening prayer live-streamed on Monday, January 25 at 07:00 pm. The Lenten retreat will be conducted through WebEx on Tuesday, January 26th starting with evening prayer at 07:00 pm. The message will be delivered by Fr Abraham Thomas, Professor of New Testament at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. He is also a well-known speaker and a dedicated scholar who can switch to both English and Malayalam. Please make sure that our children and youth will also be there. Holy Qurbana will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 27th starting with evening prayer at 06:00 pm. Please be keen on observing this Lent.

MGOCSM launches Custom Made Masks

MGOCSM has released custom made face masks last Sunday. It will be distributed soon. Thanks to all our members who have placed orders to support this fundraiser.

Articles required for the church

Most of the articles required for the church have arrived. Items and donors shall be announced soon. Sincere thanks 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. We have also started adding them to the list. Please respond. We would like to keep the list for remembrance on respective Sundays as we do for Birthdays and Wedding Anniversary Days.

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of Holy Fathers (M'kanastho). It contains short prayers, easy to follow, beautiful.

Please find the Link for Live Streaming

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

COVID-19 Guidelines

The government has announced a Provincial state of emergency effective from 14th Jan. Community and Worship centers can go ahead with 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 Dept of Health have received the vaccine which gives us some relief. Let us keep on praying for the whole world. God shall protect all his children everywhere.



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

Yours in Christ

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