



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - MAY 22, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

Sunday 24 May

Holy Gospel - St John 17:13-26 – Sunday follows the Feast of Ascension

13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. 20 “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 “Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Reflections:

Chapter 17 of John’s Gospel is the High Priestly Prayer of Christ. It begins with Christ looking up and addressing God, as ‘Father’. This is the most touching prayer of the Son before leaving this world. Here we also see the integral relation between the Father and Son. He says (vs 10) “All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine.” It is such a strong conviction every faithful should have. Here, He also refers to our nature and existence in the world while saying: (vs 16) “They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” It is awful to realise this view of us by the Lord that we are not of this world though we live and do everything here. He goes further in saying: (vs 18) “As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” This is the most challenging part of it for us. We have been sent into this world exactly like Christ was sent by the Father. This means, the purpose of our birth and life here on earth is the same as that of the Son. With this light, only we could understand our life situation, its goal, events, meetings, gatherings, haves and have-nots. Whatever we plan for our life, this should be our measuring rod. His ultimate wish (vs 21) “all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.” is for unity which is essential to our existence as Christians and as humans because we bear His Image and Likeness which we cannot skip or reject. This shall be an inevitable responsibility of us to make sure that we would be together, united in the Holy Trinity in



any situation. Failing of this would cause damage to God's plan and profile in the world which would be disastrous and decisive to us and to the rest of His creation. If we look at this Covid 19 Pandemic, we could sense some failure from the human side regarding keeping of our responsibilities towards the Triune God. Hence, an honest repentance and a change of our way of doing things would be the need of the hour which might save the whole world.

Days of Waiting – 'Kaathiruppu' Dinangal

Who is the Holy Spirit? Why should we wait for the experiencing of the Holy Spirit?

The Nicene Creed, which has been formed with the best of theological expertise, says: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ proceeds from the Father. The Holy Spirit is Living, Life Giving, Worshipped and Glorified together with the Father and Son and spoken through the prophets and Apostles. The Sedro of the Feast of Pentecost reads: The Holy Spirit is God who perfects all ministries, Giver of Priesthood, Performer of Baptism, Consecrator of Sacraments and Absolver of sins. The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier, the Light and the light Giver, also the Spirit of 'Sonship', Truth, Understanding, Piety, Consolation and of Royalty. Spirit loves humankind, fulfils prophesies, fortifies martyrs and adorns temples. Spirit is Omnipotent who can pervade anything, anywhere and guard everything.

The Holy Spirit is the Co-Creator who brooded over waters and still brooding over each and every creation. The Holy Spirit has given strength to leaders who went ahead of their time and their respective communities and guided them to holistic progress. Jesus Christ has promised to send the Comforter and Servant to the world. He had breathed on His disciples which was His Spirit. Through Sacraments, He has been breathing over us since then. We, His faithful, have been fortunate to receive this Spirit on every Sunday, on every Feasts, Sacraments and Prayer. What we have done with this Spirit is a question. God had breathed His Spirit into the nostrils when humans were created. In that sense, every human has received and will receive the Holy Spirit on being born. After the first receiving of Spirit on birth, renewal and further kindling of Spirit happens in every sacramental act. On the coming Feast of Pentecost, we are not expecting a new Spirit but a refreshing and renewal of the already received. It would need proper waiting and longing from our side. The Holy Spirit would act on whoever honestly desire for it. At this time of fear and anxiety, we all would need a Spiritual Renewal. Let us dedicate ourselves these days for the reawakening and indwelling of God's Comforter. He would never fail us.

Feasts:

20 May – Feast of Four Evangelist jointly observed by the Church: 1) St Mathew (Formerly a tax collector), 2) St Mark (follower of Peter, not a direct disciple of Christ, first Gospel documentation done by him), 3) St Luke (A doctor turned to disciple, not among the twelve, author of Gospel and Book of Acts addressed to Theophilus) and 4) St John (assumed as the youngest among the Twelve, presents himself as the one whom Jesus loved).

Traditionally, they have been represented by four symbols: Matthew, a divine human; Mark, a winged lion; Luke, a winged ox; and John, a rising eagle. These symbols are taken first from the Prophet Ezekiel (1:1-21): "In the 30th year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was among



the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens opened, and I saw divine visions. ... As I looked, a storm wind came from the North, a huge cloud with flashing fire, from the midst of which something gleamed like electrum. Within it, there were figures resembling four living creatures that looked like this: their form was human, but each had four faces and four wings, and their legs went straight down; the soles of their feet were round. They sparkled with a gleam like burnished bronze. Their faces were like this: each of the four had a face of a man, but on the right side was the face of a lion, and on the left side the face of an ox, and finally each had the face of an eagle”

In the Book of Revelation (4:6-8), we find a similar description: “Surrounding this throne were 24 other thrones upon which were seated 24 elders; they were clothed in white garments and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightening and peals of thunder... At the very centre, around the throne itself, stood four living creatures covered with eyes front and back. The first creature resembled a lion; the second, an ox; the third had the face of a man; while the fourth looked like an eagle in flight. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and eyes all over, inside and out. Day and night, without pause, they sing: ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, He who was, and who is, and who is to come!’”

These four figures point to the way the faithful should live and look unto salvation; as humans, we should use reason, as lions we should be strong in faith and conviction, as oxen, we should be sacrificial in everything and as eagle we should soar high in thoughts and deeds and keep looking up to see the Eternal Sun. Let their feast be a new inspiration for us!

20 May - All Fathers of the three Ecumenical Synods of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus.

21 May - Feast of St Helen, the Queen, who found the Cross of Christ

19 May - Punnathra Mar Dionysius, 195th Anniversary, entombed at Kottayam Cheriya Palli.

Scheduled Meetings of spiritual organisations:

Saturday 23 May 07:00 – 08:30 pm - SGOCT Prayer Meeting

Wednesday 27 May 07:00 – 08:00 pm - SGOCT Gregorian Seniors Forum: My request to all beloved and respected Senior Members, please join the first virtual meeting of our forum. At this time of restrictions, this would allow us a platform to meet, pray together and to strengthen each other. Let us sing praises, read from the Word of God and feel His everlasting love for us. Please join.

SGOCT Sunday School’s Video Song:

The World Quarantine period has enabled us to look for alternatives and also helped us in finding our own ways to express our creativity. Our Sunday School students have made a video song duly guided and supervised by Teachers. We have kept the social distancing rules while making this video. I am really excited to see the excellent outcome of our effort. It is indeed a quality product brought forth by our kids. The video has been posted on our Parish Website. Let us hope there would be more of creative produces coming up. I would like to request all our members, please think and explore our talents and possibilities to bring out good fruits for the nourishing of a wider society. All



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organisations are advised to share their thoughts and try their best to contribute their collective talents for the delight of the world around.

Hearty Congrats and sincere thanks to all Sunday School Teachers, Students, Parents and Technical Support Team for their excellent team work. We are really a blessed Parish! Hope these children would lead our future church to glorious progress!

Here is the link to the video <http://sgoctoronto.org/sunday-school/>

Holding you in prayer

Yours in Christ
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