



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - OCTOBER 23, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

October 25th, 6th Sunday after the Feast of the Cross

Gospel Reading, St Luke 18:18-27 RSV

18 And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 19 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone” 20 You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’” 21 And he said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” 22 And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 23 But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. 24 Jesus looking at him said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” 26 Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” 27 But he said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

Reflections

The ruler called Jesus “Good Teacher”, however the intentions behind this ruler changed the way “good” is interpreted. Depending on the intentions, calling someone good at the opening of a conversation can be diplomatic, even manipulative. The ruler sought guidance for immortality, and to find this he attempted to flatter Jesus with his words. In this situation, this flattery stems from dishonesty. It is important for us to understand if we are speaking to impress or if we genuinely want to communicate our thoughts. Jesus never encourages hypocrisy or diplomacy.

While being addressed as ‘good teacher’, Jesus wisely directed the speaker to a catechetical school session! Jesus brought to the ruler’s attention the need of acknowledging God’s presence even in a casual conversation. When we open a conversation, it requires giving due space and recognition to God. It was the practice of their religion to acknowledge God’s glory and sovereignty.

Here the rich ruler - of the same religion as Jesus - was taught the Ten Commandments. As seen through the words of Jesus: “*You know* the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour your father and mother.’”, we can see that Jesus was giving guidance to someone who already knew the commandments. Through the evident diplomacy of the ruler, we can see he was showing how good he was at observing his religious faith, as he was not reluctant in saying: “All these I have kept since I was a boy.” Through his words, it can be observed that he was a man of self vindicating habit.

True religion is not just observing the traditional outward practices. According to St James, true religion is: ‘to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.’ (St James 1:27). Jesus had to open his inner eyes to see what practice God wants humans to follow in life, for them to be truly faithful. Here the rich man had to go disappointed at the way his words were taken by Jesus. He was advised to sell his wealth and give it to the poor. He had



the presumption that he would be publicly appreciated and praised by the Lord for his religiosity. He wanted to gain public attention which was a trait of the Pharisees which Jesus always called hypocrisy. Possibly this could be one of the fewest occasions somebody got disappointed after meeting Jesus. At the end of the day we have to ask ourselves are we religious or spiritual? Do we live devout or diplomatic? What richness keeps us from following Jesus? As he has assured, living honest and spiritual can't be impossible for those who really submit to God.

Feasts

October 22, Mar Baselios Shakralla, 256th anniversary, entombed at Marthoman Church Kandanad. From Aleppo in Syria, he came to Malankara and served the community at the time of unrest and turbulence. He is the right example of disciple of Christ who left everything for the sake of the Lord and sacrificed his life for a flock in afar. He has taught us that any person who dedicates life for the Kingdom of God can serve anyone in any place with absolute submission. Let us think why we are here...

October 23, St James the Apostle, the son of Alphaeus. There were two James among the apostles. One was James, the brother of John (sons of Zebedee) and the other was James the son of Alphaeus (St Luke 6:14-16), cousin of Jesus, and the first bishop of Jerusalem. According to Eusebius, the author of Ecclesiastical History, the manner of James' death was that he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, and was beaten to death with a club. Eusebius also quotes from Hegesippus, who lived immediately after the apostles believed to give the most accurate account:

“James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles. He has been called the Just by all from the time of our Saviour to the present day; for there were many that bore the name of James. He was holy from his mother's womb; and he drank no wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat flesh. No razor came upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not use the bath. He alone was permitted to enter into the holy place; for he wore not woollen but linen garments. And he was in the habit of entering alone into the temple, and was frequently found upon his knees begging forgiveness for the people, so that his knees became hard like those of a camel, in consequence of his constantly bending them in his worship of God, and asking forgiveness for the people. Because of his exceeding great justice, he was called the Just.

In the Book of Acts of the Apostles, after a dispute occurred regarding circumcision of gentile converts, a council was convened and Peter explained how miraculously God worked among the gentiles. The judgement was made by James (Acts 15:13-23) on this which was followed by issuing of an ecclesiastical letter to the faithful in Antioch.

October 24, HG Zachariah Mar Theophilos, 3rd anniversary, entombed at Christushiyasram Thadakom Coimbatore. He was called 'blood-brother' by the world known poetess Sugathakumari. It was because he had given blood to a Muslim woman who was sheltered at 'Abhaya', Thiruvananthapuram and was critical. His blood saved her life. He was spending his life to reach out to the needy through various charity projects. ZMART (Zachariah Mar Theophilos) Foundation in Kerala is now following up his dreams and visions through offering various helps to the needy. He was treated at MVR Cancer Centre Kozhikode where they have dedicated the oncology ward in memory of him.

He served the church as full-time General Secretary of MGOCSM from 1999 onward and held the post of Warden, Student Centre, Trivandrum and Kottayam, Visiting Faculty of St Basil Bible



School, Sasthamcotta, Governing Board Member of Thadakam and Manganam Ashrams. He was looking after the Diocese of Malabar till his parting. May his memory be eternal.

Parumala Perunnal

The feast of Parumala Thirumeni will be celebrated by our parish on Saturday October 31 and Sunday November 01. There will be evening prayer, singing of hymns by the Choir, devotional talk, Raza and Benediction on Saturday evening, and Perunnal Liturgy, Intercession and Benediction on Sunday. Please assure our availability for the Perunnal observance. We will use RSVP for Perunnal Sunday participation. Please look for detailed mail sent from the parish office soon.

Virtual Meetings

Friday, October 23, NE American Diocese MMVS Retreat, 12:00-01:00 pm
Friday, October 23, SGOCT Divyabodhanam, 07:00 pm
Saturday, October 24, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00-08:30 pm
Sunday, October 25, SGOCT MGOCSM, 07:30 pm
Thursday, October 29, SGOCT Gregorian Seniors Forum, 07:00 pm
Friday, October 30, SGOCT Sunday School Liturgical Session for Seniors, 06:00 pm
Saturday, October 31, Perunnal Evening, 06:30 pm, Evening Prayer, SGOCT Choir, Devotional Talk, Raza, Benediction
Sunday, November 01, Perunnal Liturgy, 09:00 am, Morning Prayer, Holy Qurbana, Sermon, Intercession & Benediction

Parish Directory

The main work on the new Parish Directory is almost finished. For those who willing to support this project, please make use of the complementary option. Please find the Tariff: Full page \$300, half-page \$200 for non-commercial, and \$400 for full page for commercial. Please make use of this opportunity and support our parish.

Thanksgiving

I do hope that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day at home. May it be reminded that you could, if not yet, contribute towards 'Thanksgiving' and support our parish at this time of need and constraints. Our Lord has given us a beautiful life here on earth. Let it be for His glory and the benefit of the needy.

Plaque of Contributors

As we have planned earlier, the names of those who have contributed towards the Church Renovation Project shall be exhibited on plaques in the church basement area. We have different categories based on the total amount given, starting with a \$5000 contribution. It might be feasible for those who have already made a contribution below \$5,000/- and if they could pay the rest and get into the list. Those who wish to upgrade could make the rest of the payment corresponding to the category they wish to be in. For those who haven't contributed yet, there is still time to contribute and have their names inscribed on the plaque. November 30, 2020 will be the deadline for finishing the payment. It will be a great support to our parish especially during this prolonged Pandemic period. Each dollar will be carefully used for the best of purposes. Please make use of this opportunity to declare our love, dedication, and solidarity towards our Parish.



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



The list of eligible members whose names will be inscribed on the plaque has been posted on the parish notice board in the basement. For any clarification, please check and contact the Treasurer on (647) 887 4010.

Articles required for the church

I am really glad about enquiries made by a few of our members after sending the request for buying church articles. We have purchased Baptismal Font, Crystal Containers, Candle Wick Holder and Taksa Stand. We are searching for buying options for Silver Paten and Chalice (Church doesn't encourage using plated grail and paten for health reasons), Candle Stands, Wooden Box for keeping the crystal jars, Reliqueries - 'Arulikka' with space for keeping icons or relics which we carry during Perunnal Processions, Candle table with offertory box, etc. There will be options available. Prices can vary depending on our selection. Those who wish to donate, please call to choose which way you could contribute. Please text or call on (416) 570 5610.

Clergy Demise

Rev Fr P G Gevarghese: We express sincere condolence over the passing away of Rev Fr P G Gevarghese Parappallil, 83 yrs, a senior member of the clergies of the Malankara Orthodox church. He has served twenty parishes in the Diocese of Thumpamon. The Funeral service has been conducted on Friday at St George Orthodox Church, Thumpamon Eram. May his soul find rest in the heavenly court.

Condolence

Mr K P Thomas: We express heartfelt condolence on the passing away of Mr K P Thomas, 82 yrs, beloved father of Rev Fr Paul P Thomas. The funeral service has been conducted on Wednesday at Mar Gregorios Orthodox Church, Njaliyakuzhy, Vakathanam, Kottayam. Our parish member Philip John (P 05) is his brother's son. May the Lord comfort the departed soul and strengthen the family members.

Mr Seby Joseph: We sincerely express our profound sadness on the passing away of Seby Joseph, 36 yrs, resident of Niagara Falls. He is from Thirur Kayyangady. He has been taken away at such a young age which is really shocking. We pray for the departed soul and hope that his dear and near ones find strength through the ever-loving presence of the Lord especially at this difficult time.

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the English Taksa of St James this Sunday. It is the lead text of liturgical versions and highly elevating. Please enjoy the beauty !

Please find the Link for Live Streaming

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

Covid-19 Guidelines

As the cases are rising at a high pace worldwide, we too need to take precautions. We have been practicing social distancing and other protocol in the church, it would be our responsibility to take all safety measures possible to rule out any further spread. Please keep the Covid away.

Holding you in prayer



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



May the Gracious Lord keep us safe and heal the whole World

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Fr Thomas P John

fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com

Mob: [\(416\) 570 5610](tel:(416)5705610)