

## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - DECEMBER 25, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

### **Sunday, December 27, Fleeing to Egypt**

**Epistle Readings: Acts 16:6-10, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13**

**Gospel Reading, St Matthew 2:9-15, 19:23**

9 When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; 11 and going into the house they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." 19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 20 "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archela'us reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. 23 And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

### **Reflections**

All precious things in life require utmost careful handling and guarding. Similar to Mary and Joseph, every couple, every family, every individual may have a Christ or a saving tool to protect and care for. At times we are required to make difficult decisions that would otherwise be seen as abnormal, for example fleeing away from harming situations. It is important to look at what we must safeguard in our lives. Parents must adjust themselves for the right upbringing of their children. In a career oriented society, children may find themselves feeling neglected in their homes, or might themselves be wedged between clashing partners. These children could lose their potential to be the best version of themselves. The same idea is applicable for one's faith and value for life. Carelessness can make life lose its values, turning it futile. The ignorance of the value of something causes the lack of it in our lives. For example, Christ's treasure in us is what we must guard. As our life has a purpose and we cannot afford to miss it.

### **Feasts**

**December 26, Feast of Glorification of Theotokos (Epistle Readings: Acts 7:30-43, Romans 1:1-10, Holy Evangelion: St Luke 8:16-21)**

It is a celebratory day, congratulating Mother Mary on the delivery of her child. In the broader sense, to appreciate her for this great accomplishment in life. Through her hard labour she was glorified as the 'Mother of the Saviour!'. The pain one faces in life for a good cause would never go

unrecognized by God. She has taken this challenge of conceiving and delivering this Baby who wanted a space and a channel to come to this world. Similar to the arrangement of our Liturgical calendar by the church! Gives us an opportunity to organise a liturgical calendar for us –personally– too!

**December 26, HG Yacob Mar Polycarpus Metropolitan, 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary, entombed at Sion Seminary Chapel Koratty**

He was fondly called by everyone as ‘Kochiyil Aachen’, a highly successful teacher. He was a good orator and a good administrator. May his prayer be a blessing for us.

**December 27, Holy Innocents - Massacre of Infants, Epistle Readings: Acts 7:11-29, Romans 15:1-7, Holy Evangelion: St Matthew 2:7-18)**

“Why do innocents suffer?” has been a question since the beginning of human life. The answer is, for any good there is a cost. For example, when the world received the Messiah, it had the knowledge of its price. They had seen the many children that had to pay. That sense of value makes the world more responsible towards the call of the Messiah. The massacred infants lost their life in the mortal world. Though they were elevated to Heaven’s court where they enjoyed the tender care of their compassionate Father who created them in their mothers’ wombs. We, the saved children of God, must recognize the cost that has been paid for our opportunity to be alive; and genuinely plan to pay back God by living with Christ.

**New Year Service**

The New Year's service will take place on Thursday 31st December with evening prayer starting at 6:00 p.m. followed by hymns, devotional talk, intercession and Holy Qurbana.

**Christmas Celebration**

We had a wonderful Christmas celebration on Saturday evening accompanied by extraordinary presentations by many organisations, and virtual participation of the majority of our families. This virtual coming together has given us a good picture of our talents- many unused- and a sense of pride about our resources. We do thank and congratulate all the performers, organisers, technical supporters, leaders, script writers, all the Sunday School kids, Seniors, Youth, MGOCM, MMVS, Choir, Managing Committee and the excellent host Anjali! Though we had some initial connection issues, we were able to surpass it. Thanks to Lejin Chacko, Binu Abraham and Varghese Daniel for their joint effort. When Covid-19 is over, I hope we will be able to fully utilise the many skills and talents of all our competent members.

**Virtual Meetings**

Saturday December 26, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

Sunday December 27, SGOCT Choir, MGOCM Meeting, 07:30- 09:00 pm

**Plaque of Contributors**

The plaque of contributors to the church development funds has been installed in the church basement hall. It was unveiled after the Christmas Service on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Sincere thanks to all our beloved members for their positive response towards this project.

**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 request our members to send the names and dates of the parting of their beloved family members. We would like to keep the list of the departed for remembrance on respective Sundays as we do for birthdays and wedding anniversary days. Please respond.

### **Election of New Office Bearers**

We request all the spiritual organizations to elect new office bearers and send their list to the parish office. Please include the election of office-bearers in the next meeting agenda and do the needful.

### **Support HTRC**

Holy Transfiguration Retreat Centre is a prestigious meeting place of the Diocese of North East America. It requires our support, especially at this time of pandemic. Our holy father Baba Thirumeni has asked all the members of the Malankara Orthodox church to support this spiritual renewal centre. Please find the link to offer our support.

Join us, #GivingTuesday, December 1, 2020, in donating to Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center, a ministry of the Northeast American Diocese. 10% of the funds raised will go to support the seminarians studying for the #NEDiocese. Give now: <https://bit.ly/Give2HTRC>

#Give2HTRC #SupportOurSeminarians #SupportThisMinistry

### **Sugathakumari Mourned**

Padmasree Sugathakumari has passed away in Kerala. She was an exquisite poet, credits to hundreds of well-written poems, and honoured many awards. Was honoured the Ezhuthachan Award, national literary prizes, Aasaan Prize, Vayalar Award, Vallathol Award, the National Priyadarshini Vriksha Mitra Award for her environmental activities, and in 2006 the most prestigious Padmashree Award along with delighting her literary admirers with her works, she was also involved in social reforming projects. Additionally, she was the first president of the Kerala State Women Commission. As she founded 'Abhaya' and 'Athani', two highly appreciated sheltering projects for orphans, women, young girls, mentally challenged, and elders. She was always seen serving the society through her orations, public appearances, and activities. Despite the pressure of others to assume office, she never wavered towards power and influence. Sugathakumari utilised her poetry to raise awareness on social injustice, abuse of women and children, environmental issues and exploitation of nature. Her hard fight for Silent Valley made the government and judiciary stand against spoiling this beautiful nature reserve. She was a good friend of our church and a regular guest of honour in many of our church meetings.

### **Liturgical Text for this Sunday**

We will be using the English Taksa of St James. It is the most prominent liturgical text of the church. Its prayers have the elevating power. Let us feel it.

### **Please find the Link for Live Streaming**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1\\_yCG9AWStA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDT7tcyQw1yZ1_yCG9AWStA)

### **COVID-19 Guidelines**

We continue Holy Liturgy with limited participation of 10 members. We hope that the current restrictions would help in bringing down the spread of infection. News about the vaccine starting to be administered by the end of December gives us more peace at heart and hope. Let us keep on



praying for the whole world. God shall protect us, his children everywhere.  
May the Gracious Lord keep us from harm and heal the whole world.

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen  
Fr Thomas P John  
[fr.thomasjohn@gmail.com](mailto:fr.thomasjohn@gmail.com)  
+1 (416) 570 5610