



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Dearly Beloved,

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

**February 28, 'Msariyo', Sunday of the Paralytic, Day of the Sick**

**Epistle Readings: Acts 5:12-16, 19:8-12, Romans 5:1-11, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

**Gospel Reading, St Mark 2:1-12 RSV**

2 And when he returned to Caper'na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'?" 10 But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic— 11 "I say to you, arise, take up your pallet and go home." 12 And he arose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

### Reflections:

Jesus has much charisma among the people and so pulled many large crowds. Wherever He went, multitudes followed. He had a compassionate heart which prompted Him to help the needy without worrying about the consequences. He was becoming more popular and that invited enmity from the leaders and rulers. While seeing the big crowd always following Him, one would think, they will make His Kingdom and they will be on guard of Him. What happened was the opposite. When He was taken, they all ran away including the disciples. Crowds don't make nations, it is the brotherhood/sisterhood, friendship, fellowship and comradeship that can lead to any dream come true. To chase someone's vision, one should know the mind behind it. It is not the gathering for timely fillings, but the close association they keep with their leader enable them to fulfil the plans. It is not a crowd but a community that can take follow up even after years. Jesus healed a paralysed man who was helped by his friends. Are we a community or just a crowd?

### Feasts

#### February 23

**(i) St Polycarp of Smyrna.** He was the bishop of Smyrna, the church to which the Book of Revelation gives some advice (Revelation 1:11,2:8) "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life". The life of Polycarp was an example of the above command and promise. Polycarp had to suffer for his faith. He was put to fire, but it didn't burn him. He was then stabbed to death. His writings are golden letters of Christian witness. It was believed that he was the disciple of John who appointed him as the bishop of Smyrna. When he was asked to denounce Christ, his reply



was “86 years have I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?” This martyr raises a challenge to our faith. How would we respond?

**(ii) St Dionysius Vattasseril, 87th anniversary, entombed at Old Seminary**

**Chapel Kottayam.** He was a real rock for the church under the threat of colonial invasion. He was the one who gave form to the Church Constitution 1934 which has been considered as the Magna Carta of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church. During his time two positions merged into one—the Catholicose and the Malankara Metropolitan which united the physical and spiritual administration of the church. He was strong in conviction, absolutely dedicated to faith in Christ and a man of prayer. The church honoured him with canonising and calling him “Sabhabhasuran”, which means, the one who enlightened the church. He never compromised or yielded to invasive powers for any personal profits. He served only one Master, Christ. May his memory be a fortress for us.

**(iii) HG Dr Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan, 13th anniversary, entombed at Devalokam Aramana Chapel, Kottayam.** He was one of the most popular bishops of the Malankara Orthodox Church. He was well admired for his ready wit, sound theology and excellent oration. His leadership had helped in expanding Indian Orthodox presence in the United States, Europe and Canada. He was our Metropolitan who made many visits to Canada to shepherd his flock. May his memory be a blessing for us.

**February 24, St Matthew the Evangelist.** He was the direct disciple of Christ counted among the Twelve. He is the author of the Gospel according to Matthew who emphasised the Davidic lineage of Jesus through the presentation of genealogy. The Gospel reveals that Matthew was well versed in the Old Testament scripture. He has quoted many OT verses to substantiate the notion that Jesus was the anticipated Messiah. Matthew’s Gospel presents Jesus as Immanuel ‘God with us’ and hence it ends with Christ’s affirmation that “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 1:22, 28:20)

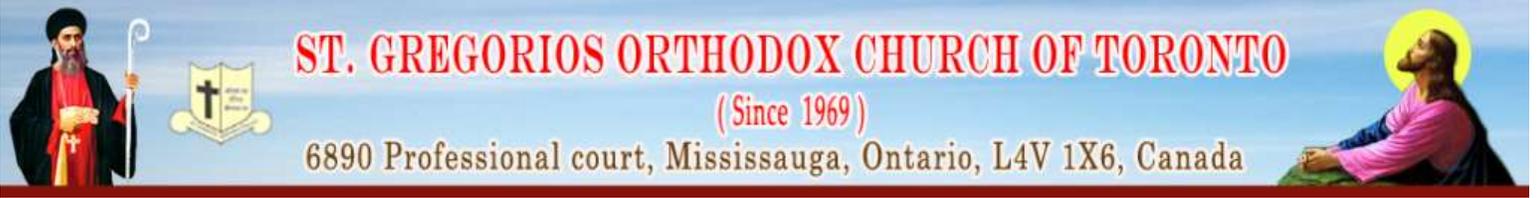
## Virtual Meetings

Friday, February 26, NEAD MMVS Retreat, 12:00 – 01:00 pm

Saturday, February 27, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

## Great Lent – Evening Prayer, Lenten Devotional Talk Series

- a) We are glad about conducting the Lenten Evening prayer at church. We have commendable participation from our members. We highly appreciate the way our Altar Servers, Choir members, Technical Support team and Devotional speakers assist, support and complement our community’s spiritual journey.
- b) The **Lenten Devotional Talk Series** is acquiring momentum and every talk offers a lifting up to our souls and spirits. We do Sincerely thank Robin Philipose, Manu Abraham, Mridula Liju, Lian Gijo, Jemy Jose and Rishona Koshy for their spiritually enlightening talks. We pray that this initiative will bring more fellowship and spiritual bliss to our community. For future speakers, we request to follow the guidelines. Should you wish to attend the evening prayer at church, please contact the Vicar or the parish office. Please remember that the talks will be live-streamed.
- c) On Saturdays, except during the Holy Week, our evening prayer will continue as usual through Webex.
- d) As we are observing our fast, the money saved from the food expenses shall be collected and used for charity. We request our members to take this opportunity to help the needy and change their lives in whatever way we can. We will have a charity fundraiser towards the end of the Great Lent and the proceeds will be donated to a local charity.



e) Details of Great Lent / Passion Week services will be announced later.

### **Support our Parish**

It is important that all our members start to support our parish further, by making a monthly payment of \$100. We request our beloved members to set up a direct debit with the bank to parish account. We also require a good credit score for our bank account. We had collected about 60,000/- from offertory in 2019 whereas we could collect only below \$25,000/- in 2020. This is a very significant difference so how could we have possibly covered this without a new income provision? I request you to think about this seriously and respond at the earliest should you have any concerns.

### **‘Share Your Blessings’- A charity initiative of Gregorian Forum**

Gregorian Seniors Forum is initiating a charity drive ‘Share Your Blessings’. God has blessed us abundantly. The Bible constantly teaches us to share what we have with those who are less fortunate than us. Also, sharing gives us an elevated sense of responsibility towards our society. Share what you have to show how much you care and remember when you care for others the Almighty Lords cares for you more. The fund collected shall be donated towards Mental Health Wellness in the Peel Region. Our share can be transferred to treasurer@sgoctoronto.org.

*“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”;*  
*Hebrews. 13:16*

### **Articles required for the church**

Most of the articles required for the church have arrived. We are waiting for the last item on the list to be delivered. Items received and the list of donors will be announced soon. We sincerely thank 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 ones and have started adding them to our list. Please continue to let us know and we would like to keep this list going forward for remembrance prayers on the respective Sundays just like we do for Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries.

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

We will be using the English Taksa of St Dionysius Jacob Bar Sleetbi, the Bishop of Amidi (AD 1171). This is one of the well-edited liturgical texts, Brief and beautiful.

### **Link for Live Streaming**

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

### **COVID-19 Guidelines**

The government has announced a Provincial state of emergency effective from 14th January. Community and Worship centres can only go ahead with a maximum of 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 Department of Health have received the vaccine, which gives us great relief. Let us continue praying for the world and that God shall protect each one of his children in his mighty hands.



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

Yours in Christ,

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