



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - JUNE 26, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

**Sunday 28 June, Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Gospel Reading: St Luke 10:1-16**

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. 2 And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; 9 heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' 12 I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town. 13 "Woe to you, Chora'zin! woe to you, Beth-sa'ida! for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15 And you, Caper'na-um, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. 16 "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

### **Reflections:**

The Gospel, in essence, is God's unconditional love reaching out to His creation through Christ. It continues through manifestations of Christ, to say through His disciples throughout generations. The Gospel is the story of one single human who has taken it as his duty, and calls to assure salvation to every human. Hence he couldn't limit His mission concluding with His physical leaving. He was keen on expanding His team from twelve to seventy two. Eventually, hundreds and thousands joined later. See how many are there today? He has his plan carried out by the chosen many, and He trusts that every disciple would live and work for it without fail.

He has chosen them and sent them in pairs. That grouping was intentional. If sent alone they would tend to seek assistance or help from people which might allow provisions to compromise. Jesus was so caring and wanted them to be mutually encouraging and strengthening on their way. Yahweh had chosen two, Moses and Aaron to lead the people to Canaan. So this was a continuation of a new human exodus to liberation. We are here in this era to continue the saga. All the commandments by the Lord are applicable to us too. Today, if we look at the possibilities and prospects of Gospel Ministry, we would also realise: "Harvest is plentiful and workers are few." Are we doing our part in an honest manner? We tend to blame leadership for decline in the Church. What about our own duties



and responsibilities? In what way we tell the world that the Kingdom is at hand? We have only one life, one chance to live. This means only one opportunity to accomplish the mission entrusted on us. We are here to preach the Love of God and to heal everyone within our reach. Let us be inspired by the lives of the Apostles and Preachers.

## **Feast of the Apostles (Feast of Peter & Paul on 29th and of all Apostles on 30th June)**

They have followed the ministry of Christ with absolute devotion and submission. Jesus was sure that they would follow in his footsteps, sacrificing their wishes and wills. It doesn't mean they were just doing the ministry only for Christ's sake. Rather, they were glad and enthusiastic about working for the Messiah's rule. Along with the rest of Israelites, they have been anticipating it through centuries. They were well aware about the prophecies and they all wanted the Kingdom to be established. It was their prayer and wish. Possibly they might have found themselves feeling worth in getting involved in the 'age-old' mission of God. It could be like the enthusiasm of soldiers in a war front leading the country to victory.

Enthusiasm is a combination of two Greek words. It is broken down into 'en' which means 'in,' and 'thusia' means sacrifice. It is the feeling and emotion of a person who has been chosen to be offered a sacrifice to their deities. In a theocentric world, everything is considered for God and whoever gets a chance to serve the purpose of God would find themselves great. It will be their life goal and purpose to live and die for God. In other words, each person will be looking for their turn to get armed for their fight and win. If they need to die, they will take it as their greatest blessing. It is so thrilling, ecstatic, mystic, charismatic, pushing and spiritually high-taking for the chosen person. Once somebody has gotten into it, the psyche would change tremendously fitting to the new moulding the situation demands. Think about the military band starting to play for the march to battle, the emotional charging and the euphoria soldiers begin to feel. When St Paul asks Timothy -being a soldier- 'Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.' (Timothy 2:3), he was already in that 'taken role' and was inviting his spiritual son to join his elevated emotion.

All the disciples except John had to suffer killing in all its cruelty. John was spared but had to go to Patmos Island in exile, never coming back. It was not lesser than a hardship compared to that of facing torture and killing. Or being sent out to isolation for the rest of life could be more prolonged suffering than getting killed off in no time. Having the COVID lockdown life of many months, we realise an extent of life in isolation.

These disciples had the freedom to choose to live their worldly life with all its pleasures and privileges. But they preferred to enter the battle of justice and love. They proved their authority in preaching the Kingdom through their choice of life of serving the Lord. Not only their knowledge and understanding of Holy Scripture but also their determination to live that life made them dependable to people. They never argued for their own sake but for the sake of Christ. They never used their authority for personal gains, but for earning the hearts of people. Nothing mattered to them other than Christ. They were led by the Spirit and never by their own interests. It was easy for them to attract multitudes and to establish themselves. We see this in St Paul's writing. There was already a move to stop pairing and to grow and establish as two groups of Paul and Apollos. It's a coincidence that the name Apollos itself means a negation of many. Apollo is a Greek god, there could be a reason for that name in a polytheistic society.



# ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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1 Corinthians 3:5-23 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere men? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work.14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a “fool” so that he may become wise.19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; 20 and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.” 21 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

Imagine if the twelve Apostles make our Parish or we make the parish of theirs. What are the things we would be promoting and what are things we would be demoting? Apostles challenge us through their choices and life lived. Can we be daring enough to follow their trail? Can we have a true apostolic church that keeps only the interests of Christ as we claim in the Nicene Creed? We are here now in their position. It is our turn to live it now and here. May their intercession keep us motivated and strong in Spirit.

Holy Liturgy on Monday 29th June, at 06:00 pm

On the Feast Day of Apostles, there will be Holy Liturgy on Monday 29th June starting with evening prayer at 06:00 pm followed by Holy Qurbana. Those who wish to have their names for intercession, please send names at the earliest and please remember to mention, for intercession on the feast day.

## **Church is Open**

Church is open for members to attend. May I request, whoever willing to join, please send RSVP for the parish office to prepare the list and to send confirmation to the anticipated members. Whoever joins, please come prepared to keep social distancing. I ask the rest of the members, please keep our parish service in prayer.

## **Peace Garden**

We are in the process of designing the Peace Garden. May I request our members to support this project with their manual assistance, donating towards buying shrubs and plants, watering and sharing their ideas to make the best out of them. All gardens will look simple and easy, but the planning and efforts will be herculean if we take it seriously and keep it sustainable.



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## Directory Updating Required

Please respond with sending of updates for the Parish Directory. If we do not have anything to update, even then send a response. Otherwise it will be difficult to figure out whether our members have seen it and can we keep their existing data as such.

MMVS of NE American Diocese sending thanks to all participants of the Virtual Conference. Please find the thanks note from Minu Koshy from the regional office:

“What a great turnout from the Canada region! A record number of 160 people joined, making this the second-highest in North American Diocese and the first of its kind in the Canada region. As you have heard, many appreciations from the organizers and Thirumeni were given out for our region’s great participation. This includes the songs, bible reading, and impressive regional reporting. All of this was only possible after numerous meetings, back and forth communication, late-night calls, and song practices within our limitations. In the end, it resulted in a successful event. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person who participated from their parishes and the respective office bearers- for your time, commitment & relentless efforts and support during the entire event. I would like to especially appreciate all Parish Vicars who wholeheartedly supported and guided this event from the planning phase till now. Your prayerful presence during the event was a great blessing.”

## Virtual meetings scheduled for this weekend

Friday 26th, SGOCT Choir, at 07:00 pm

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

## Liturgical Text for this Sunday

This is the fourth Sunday and we will be celebrating Holy Liturgy in English. The Taksa will be of St James the Apostle. St James liturgy is looked as more prominent and ecclesially of higher stature. It is used for Feasts, first service at church, first offering by any ordained clergy and first service any clergy offering on their first visit to any church. It has beautiful prayers and highly lifting references on the worship in the Heavenly Court. It has a wonderful narration of the praises done by Angels. Please be keen on the prayers.

Sunday Holy Liturgy shall be live-streamed. Please access the link for virtual joining:

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

Keeping you all in prayer

Yours in Christ

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