



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - MARCH 27, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

### **Sixth Sunday of Great Lent - Healing the Blind (St John 9:1-41) - Catholicate Day**

Blindness can be curable. Here in the text, Jesus heals a man who was born blind. Their meeting happened on the way. This act of healing was done after His disciples enquiring on the role of sin behind a human disability. The general notion was, for any human defect, it could be because of sin committed by the victim or the parents. They might had also thought likewise because Jesus, while healing the paralysed man, forgiven his sins. Here Jesus rules out the possibility of sin and brings in the reason as God's glory to be manifested. There could be situations which reject conventional ideas got deep rooted in a culture or school of thought. We now realise, many 'take it for granted' notions have been questioned and abolished by the current Pandemic.

What Jesus has done for his healing? He spit on the ground, made it into mud and pasted it on his eyes. This reveals the mightiness and power of the Lord who could transform any situation using anything. It also points to the possibility that lies within humans. The real medicine has got contained in us. We would need only to bring it out! Nature also keeps wonderful healing elements in it. Most of the illnesses started to hit human lives after we had begun distancing from it. We moved away from soil, woods and direct experiencing of nature which has made us an endangered species. Now we cannot stand even a single sneeze!

What the Lord and humans have to do with mud? It is the realisation about our origin. God created human with mud and called him Adam. 'Adama' in Hebrew means red soil. Towards the end of funeral service, soil would be spread over the body with the ceremonial statement 'you are soil, you would turn to soil'.

Jesus the Son, who is one among the Holy Trinity, Co-Creator, has recreated the eye balls and rectified the distorted part. The same Lord is alive and powerful enough to rectify any distortion affecting the human race.

God is ready to act. But He wants human cooperation through acts of faith. This is more significant nowadays. Jesus asked the blind to go to the pool of Siloam and to take a wash. The Lord has done His part. What already has been initiated should be completed by human. Think if the blind had not gone to wash, would the healing had taken place? When hard situations arise, humans tend to ask, if there is God why such things occur? Here is the answer. What God had made, done, initiated, rest of things would be human responsibility. The Creator God had given His children a perfect world with both perfecting and distorting possibilities through their life and actions. Whom should we blame for the current situation of fear and anxiety? God has given us the privilege to be part of His creating and sustaining work. We are that dignified and have been entrusted with a great mission. Rather than crying for rights, better we try our best to carry out our duties as His beloved children and dutiful citizens of His Kingdom. Simply wash, He would heal!!!



External blindness can be curable. If it is internal, it would be more difficult to cure. The attitude of Synagogue leaders reveals how pathetically they had lost their right vision. Internal blocking of vision would need harder healing measures. It is because that would be possible only from within and the treatment will have to be taken by the self. This is a reminder to all those who are hypocritical and thinking they have the best of vision but actually what they do bring harm to everyone.

## **Catholicate Day**

In the aftermath of COVID 19 outbreak, and under the shadow of sadness over missing Holy Liturgical experience, Church has celebrated Catholicate Day. It's time for us to cooperate with the Government and its various departments for the integrated attempts to eradicate the virus. Let us hope that God would intervene miraculously and act everything for the best. The whole world is praying. There is something good about the pandemic, everybody is getting united.

Church had to pass through various miseries and sufferings throughout the ages. Faith in God had never failed the faithful. Indian Church is as ancient as the Church of Jerusalem or Antioch. St Thomas the Apostle travelled to India with the light of Gospel. Let us proudly say 'we are the first century Church'! We call it Catholic (Universal) and Apostolic. Church is autocephalous and self governing. The Catholicate got established in 1912 as the symbol of Apostolic origin, authority and heritage as well as nationality and independence. Our church had to suffer bondage, suppression, external intervention and intrusion. Having lead by strong leadership throughout and keeping all faithful united as a single community, our ancestors had taken all efforts to make it a free and indigenous church. The Malankara Orthodox presence has now reached almost all parts of the world and the church has become universal regarding its omnipresence.

Let us uphold the Church (comprised of all churches) in general and the Malankara Orthodox Church in particular. Let us pray for His Holiness Catholicose Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, all the Bishops, Dioceses, various projects of social relevance and for all the faithful. Our church has produced a universal saint, Mar Gregorios of Parumala. We also have Yaldo Mar Baselios and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius added up as the canonised saints. Our church is potential enough to mould and bring forth many more in that respect.

## **Pray for Thirumeni**

I do believe, our members are aware that our Diocesan Metropolitan H G Dr Zachariah Mar Nicholovos has been detected positive with COVID 19. Thirumeni has shown only slight symptoms and is under self isolation. May we all uphold beloved Thirumeni in our prayer. May the Merciful Lord give him quick healing and empower him to resume his Shepherding.

## **Live-streaming of Lenten Prayer**

We have set up a live-streaming for evening prayer starting today at 07:30pm. For this evening you could use the following link; the prayer in Malayalam and its English transliteration are attached to this email.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7rWZXuKyLbSVLDbEzaax1g>



From tomorrow onwards we might be using another link. It shall be notified.

We wish to continue streaming of prayers on upcoming days and throughout the Holy Week.

## Support our Parish

Responding to request for financial support from the Parish Office, a few of our members have made contributions. May we express sincere gratitude to those who have already contributed. We would need everyone's support. May I request our members to respond wholeheartedly at this time of need. Please contribute \$100 towards Great Lent/Holy Week and another \$100 towards Sunday offertory. You can e-transfer to: [treasurer@sgoctoronto.org](mailto:treasurer@sgoctoronto.org)

## Sunday School

1. To facilitate the continuation of Sunday School, teachers will begin virtual classes from this weekend onwards. They will be reaching out to the students/parents to make the required arrangements.

2. North East Diocesan has shared the topics for the Elocution competition.

The topics are:

### **GROUP 4 (Grades 5 & 6):**

Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you (James 4:10).

### **GROUP 5 (Grades 7 & 8):**

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11).

### **GROUP 6 (Grades 9 & 10):**

How does the Tradition of the Church preserve the Orthodox Faith?

### **GROUP 7 (Grades 11 & 12):**

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

Students registered for the competition can start preparing based on the guidelines.

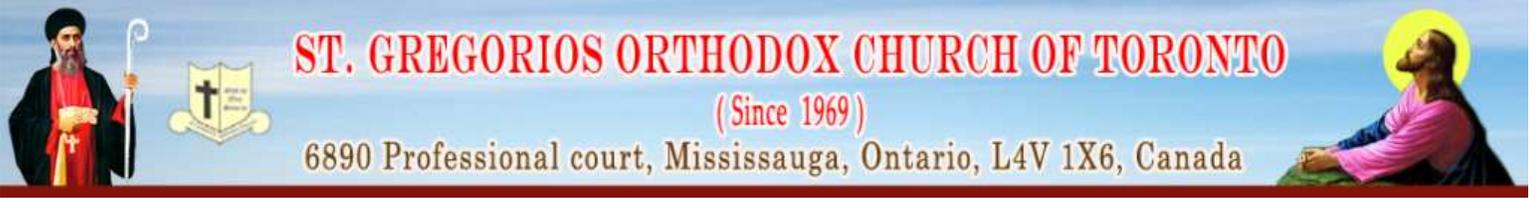
## MMVS Teleprayer

Canada Region MMVS is conducting a prayer through conference call, when the whole world is going through a very tough time with the current plague. Let us fast and pray together. The Lord will hear our prayers as heard the prayer of Ninevites.

The teleprayer shall be conducted on every Friday evening starting at 8:50 pm to 10:00 pm. The link could be accessed through dialling: [\(416\) 288-5000](tel:4162885000), wait for announcement and then dial Code: [4982505](tel:4982505)# make sure hash (pound) button pressed.

General Etiquette to follow:

Please announce your name and name of parish you are joining from.



Please mute your phones to ensure no disturbance.

### **Blood Donation**

With COVID 19 all around the world, Canadian Blood bank is experiencing extreme shortage of blood. If this is something our church members are able and willing to do, please request them to do it as early as possible at their convenience. Please call **1 888 2 DONATE** (1-888-236-6283).

During this difficult time of uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, we understand the need for Canadians to practice social distancing. As a result, blood donation centres in several Canadian cities are experiencing a spike in appointment cancellations, which is adding pressure to Canada's blood supply.

Canada's Chief Public Health Officer issued a statement saying Canada still needs people to give blood amidst social distancing. Please check out link below:

<https://ipolitics.ca/2020/03/17/countrys-top-doc-says-canada-still-needs-people-to-give-blood-amidst-social-distancing/>

### **Request for Face Mask**

It has come to attention that Frontline Healthcare workers need more support and prayer. As the number of COVID 19 cases increase day by day, hospital admission would also increase. Health care workers would need proper PPEs more in number. If any of your work places are able to donate PPEs to hospitals please urge them to do so. Health workers are going through a lot of stress these days and they are working round the clock. Anybody has masks unused, not necessary to keep and willing to hand over, please notify replying to church mail. It would be highly appreciable.

Wishing you all spiritually illumined days ahead. Please take absolute care of yourself. Please look for anyone who would need support. While following the timely guidance of authorities, please try to minimise social media info. If we allow too much, it could affect our life badly. Please be careful about how we manage our days and hold strong on to faith in God. He would take care of all. Hope the whole world would be healed quickly.

Yours in Christ  
Thomas John Achen  
fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com  
+1 (416) 570 5610