



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - NOVEMBER 27, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

Sunday, November 29, Meeting of Elizabeth and Mary (Women's Day)

Epistle Readings: 1 Peter 3:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:9-15, 3:11-13

Gospel Reading, St Luke 1:39-56 RSV

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." 46 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, 52 he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever." 56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

Reflections

The Church has spared this Sunday to observe it as Women's Day.

Two women in a patriarchal society have come to meet each other. One had the greatest prophet in her womb and the other had the Messiah. When they meet, it also becomes the meeting of a prophet and the Saviour.

A meeting can only become relevant with its content. In this case it is about God and His plan. The women are only carriers. When Mary and Elizabeth speak, the Spirit moves between. Mary's words of greeting made the fruit of the womb of Elizabeth leap forward.

Every human conversation will have an effect within. In other words, what is within a person decides the nature and destiny of a conversation. We attend, convene, organize and host many meetings. This can be guidance to all our meetings, interpersonal, intrapersonal, inter-faith, inter-cultural, international or of any kind. This can be a model to all our conversations either private or public, familial or official. The words we speak should have its soul or it should come from the soul. Humans look for success and tend to engage in diplomatic or manipulative verbal exercises which fail to get into hearts and bring them to move from within. Cell phone companies and network providers would tell us to talk unlimited. We talk unlimited but we do not feel that we have really spoken. We do not share our honest thoughts, what could be the reason? Is it because the Spirit is not guiding us and our



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



words? Mary and Elizabeth shared their joy without any reservations. Let us hope and pray that the Spirit of God who worked in the lives of saints enable us to practise this honest and heartfelt conversations.

Feasts

November 24, Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II, 204th anniversary, entombed at Pazhaya Seminary Chapel Kottayam. He is the founder of the Pazhaya Seminary which was the first formal educational institution in Kerala. He was titled 'Sabhajyothis' which means the flame or light of the church. He was also the tenth Malankara Metropolitan.

November 24, HG Dr Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan of Delhi, 24th anniversary, entombed at Pazhaya Seminary Chapel Kottayam. There are many highly scholarly books on theology, health, culture, history and religion into his credit. Cosmic Man, Human God, Human Presence, Joy of Freedom, Enlightenment East and West, Holistic Healing are a few among the globally appreciated many works. In addition to this, hundreds of articles and write ups, many lectures and interviews local and global, hundreds of visits to countries, universities, parliaments, literary/cultural/science seminars and international conferences lie in line as proof of his high demand and universal audience. He started his career as a trade union leader and postal employee. He went to Ethiopia and taught there where he was called by His Excellency Emperor Haile Selassie to serve his office. There he was offered a more glorious career by the emperor, but he realized his call to serve God was through serving his church. He went for theological academic programs in various universities and came back to India to serve the church in various capacities as priest, bishop, seminary professor, principal, envoy, delegate he also served the World Council of Churches as one of its presidents and executive member in various departments. In the twentieth century, the Malankara church's name entered many global forums through him. Mahatma Gandhi University has the dignified chair for studies on the works of PMG. It is high time for the church to bring our all his literary works and his many talks and make them accessible for the rest of the world. Every parish can open a study forum on the teachings of PMG. It will be beneficial to our young generation as he was addressing the modern or post-modern secular society on spirituality, science, politics, philosophy and culture.

November 28, Mar Jacob Baradaeus. He lived during the sixth century and was the bishop of Edessa. After the Synod of Chalcedon in 451, there was a huge division in the church as pro and anti Chalcedonian. Being one of the leaders of the Syrian non-Chalcedonian position, he and the church had to suffer oppression and persecution. They were called Jacobites by their counterpart. His name is remembered in the 5th diptych (thoobdaen) as; "We also remember our venerable and holy father Saint Jacob Burdono, the upholder of the orthodox faith."

November 28, Mar Dionysius Bar Sleebi (Salibi). He lived during the 12th century and was a bishop of the Syriac Orthodox Church. He is acclaimed for his prolific writing in the Old and New Testament scriptures. One of the Taksas (Kramam) we use was written by him is called the Text of Mar Dionysius (Divannaasiosinte kramam).

November 29, Mar Jacob of Serugh. He lived in the post Chalcedon era, during the sixth century and was the bishop of Serug. His writings are written very extensively and beautifully. His poetic skills brought him the name 'Flute of the Spirit'. His writings are held high for its theological depth and content.



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



SGOCT Parish Virtual Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, November 22, 2020

By God's Grace, we had the Virtual Town Hall Meeting of the SGOCT Parish the last Sunday. There were about 65 families that participated. We started at 03:00pm and finished by 05:00pm. It was a joyful gathering. We appreciate all our members and thank you sincerely for taking part in it. Thanks to those who have sent questions and suggestions, which we value a lot. We had convened this meeting experimentally; this will give more clarity when we convene the next if the lockdown gets prolonged. Let us keep our church affairs in our prayers and offer all the possible support we can give during this difficult time. We appeal all our members to switch to online regular monthly paying of subscription and donations. We are facing scarcity of fund for monthly survival. We love this beautiful temple of God. It is time for us to bring our love into action.

Christmas Area Carol Service & Celebration

Our Parish will be organizing a carol service at church on three consecutive Sundays starting on November 29th. Each Sunday will be for a specific area. We will be following the past practice of dedicating carol singing to area members. The carol singing will be done at Church after the Holy Liturgy. As we are aware, we cannot accommodate members due to lockdown. We request the area members to ensure of their participation virtually. Donations are welcome and highly appreciated. Christmas celebration will be conducted on December 19th. We will be starting with evening prayer at 6:00 pm. Sunday School and other spiritual organizations could either sing or do presentations while maintaining COVID-19 protocols. I do believe that all organizations have started practicing for their presentations. We cannot make it on the stage; hence we will do it virtually. Most probably this could be the first and last 'Covidian' Christmas! Let us not miss it. We have reasons to praise and thank the Lord for His dwelling with us! Hallelujah!!!

Virtual Meetings

- Friday November 27, NE American Diocese MMVS Retreat, 12:00- 01:00 pm
- Friday November 27, Divyabodhanam, 07:00 - 09:00 pm
- Saturday November 28, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00- 08:30 pm
- Friday December 04, Sunday School Liturgical Session for Seniors, 06:00 - 07:00 pm
- Friday December 04, MMVS Canada Region Prayer Meeting, 08:15 - 09:30 pm

MMVS Canada Region Virtual Annual Conference: Saturday December 12, 2020

The North East American Diocese Canada region MMVS is conducting a Virtual Annual Regional Conference and Bible Study through Google Meet on Saturday, December 12, 2020 starting at 09:15am to finish by 12:30pm. Please find time for this meeting and straightaway block your diary.

Parish Directory

The Parish Directory has started finding its way to our members. We do hope that it will be delivered to all our members ASAP.

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 the \$5000 contributions. It may be feasible for those who have already contributed below \$5000 to 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



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



those who have not contributed yet, there is still time to contribute and have your names inscribed on the plaque. November 30, 2020 is the deadline to finish the payment. It would be a great support to our parish especially during this prolonged pandemic period. Each dollar will be carefully spent for the best of purposes. Please make use of this opportunity to declare our love, dedication, and solidarity towards our Parish.

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 at (647) 887 4010.

Articles required for the church

We are in process of buying articles that are required in the Church. Because of the Covid restrictions, there could be delays in getting things delivered. We hope that the articles shall be ready for us to use soon. I am glad about the inquiries made by a few of our members after sending the request to buy church articles. We have purchased a Baptismal Font, Crystal Containers, Candle Wick Holder, and Taksa Stand. We have also placed orders for Chalice and Paten, Arulikka etc. Those who wish to donate, please call or text the vicar on (416) 570 5610.

Black Friday

It was introduced to boost business and economy. Retailers tried to avoid red marking by auditors showing deficit and marked profits with black ink. Police had to call this day black because of the non manageable crowding on streets, mess and violence. Another Black Friday is here which is not having the blackness of crowding due to restrictions. If this was intended to boost economy, what could we do to support? Avoiding too much of luxury and mismanagement can definitely help. Supporting those who are less fortunate and underprivileged can make this observation more philanthropic and humanitarian.

Maradona, we lament over you...

Deigo Armando Maradona, the legendary soccer player has passed away. He has mesmerized and enthused the world with his magical movements. The phrase 'Hand of God' is heard distinctively in sports; thanks to him. He loved India and its people. Through him, we loved football even more! Through him we started loving Argentina and its people. Gracias Deigo....

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of Mar Dionysius Sleebi. It is his commemoration day. Please look for the following prayer from his Taksa: 'We praise and worship You O Lord, for Your great love of humanity. Strengthen us all, sustain us and help us to stand...' See the relevance of this beautiful prayer apt for the time.

Please find the Link for Live Streaming

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

COVID-19 Guidelines

There are no special guidelines other than the suggestion made by the local authorities 'to be home'. Let this to pass. Shop not more than once a week. Let us keep guarded by the Armor of God and the shielding of faith and prayer. We are not allowed to accommodate more than 10 participants which in effect would be a no participation. Let us be patient for a few more days.



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



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

Yours in Christ
Thomas John Achen
Fr Thomas P John
fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com
Mobile: (416) 570 5610