



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - JULY 30, 2021

Dearly beloved,

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

Sunday August 01st, Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Epistle Readings: Acts 28:23-30, Romans 10:5-21

Holy Gospel: St Matthew 18:1-14

18 .1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes! 8 And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. 10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Reflection:

Jesus always surprised his disciples with his teachings and unanticipated responses. Here, they were asking a big question about the Kingdom of Heaven, expecting a big answer. Jesus showed them the answer by bringing a child to front. Entry of a child to any scene could be highly dramatic with its unpredictability and curiosity. Christ told them that if they cannot turn to be like children, they will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. If someone cannot turn to be a child who is yet to learn lessons in life, he or she cannot experience heaven. If heaven stands for perfection, every progress one makes by learning new lessons would take him or her close to it and eventually lead into it. Heaven is openness to truth and humility to accept it. A child never fakes humility but behaves ignorant as it is. A child never looks down on anyone for what they lack, whether it is knowledge, wealth, social status, work profile or any belongings. Heaven is made through human presence and behaviour towards others. Attitudes and indifference one exhibit in public could ruin any occasion that is expected to be pleasant and welcoming. Heaven is the absence of ego and a non-tendency to dominate. Heaven is simple curiosity towards everything in life without having any boasting or claiming. Children are taken care of by their guardian angels. This means heaven takes them seriously. What we give to our children make our life a heaven and what we learn from them help us to create and recreate heaven in our midst. Kingdom of Heaven is the willingness to change thoughts, attitudes and prejudices in humility whereas stubbornness and close-ended thinking bring only chaos.

Feasts:



July 27, Mar Shemavon Desthuno (Stylite)

Mar Shemavon Desthuno was a fifth century Christian ascetic who had devoted his life for Christ and had spent his time in prayer. He is remembered in the fifth Diptych during every Eucharistic service. People searched after him for his miraculous power and for taking his blessings. He literally lived on the top of a pillar (Esthuneo means stone or stone dweller) of which the ruins are still in Syria. He initiated the stylite ascetic discipline by remaining on top of a pillar with no protection from weather conditions and no direct contact with the world around. It was a self induced disconnected life from the tempting world to focus only on one's soul and on the Lord of it, Christ.

July 31, Mar Gregorios Bar Hebraeus

Mar Gregorios Bar Hebraeus was the Maphrian (local primate) of the Syrian Orthodox Church in 13th century who is revered for his literary works. His commentary on the whole Bible 'Awsar Raze' – 'Storehouses of Secrets' and the encyclopaedic work 'Hewat Hekmetha', 'The Cream of Science' are the most sought after works. He had also written on history and other themes which reveal his versatility and literary skill.

August 01, Marth Shmuni, her 7 children and their teacher Eliazar

These martyrs in the pre Christian era lived during the reign of Emperor Antiochus Epiphanes IV who persecuted the Jewish people and condemned them to be killed for not yielding to denounce their faith and practices. Their life has been narrated in the 2nd book of Maccabees which is highly thrilling and challenging.

August 01, HG Paulose Mar Pachomios Metropolitan, 9th anniversary, entombed at Bethany Asram Chapel Perunad.

HG Paulose Mar Pachomios was the first metropolitan of the Diocese of Mavelikara. He was a well known retreat father and served as the President of MGOCSM. After him assuming the Diocesan office of Mavelikara, it grew quickly from infancy and soon got to have all the spiritual movements and parishes active and well organised.

Feast of Transfiguration- H Qurbana on Thursday August 05, at 06:30 pm

The feast of Transfiguration will be on August 06. We will have Holy Qurbana on Thursday August 05 with evening prayer starting at 06:30 pm.

30th Day Memorial Observance of beloved Bava Thirumeni organised by Canada Region – Monday August 09, 05:30 pm

Malankara Orthodox parishes in Canada region will be organising the 30th Day memorial observance of most beloved HH Baselios Marthoma Paulose II Bava Thirumeni on Monday August 09, 2021 with evening prayer starting at 05:30pm followed by Holy Qurbana and a virtual commemoration meeting. Holy Liturgy shall be conducted at St Thomas Orthodox Church which will be live-streamed along with the following memorial meeting. Dignitaries from other churches and governmental offices would be expected to participate. The detailed program and link to the meeting shall be sent soon. All our beloved members are requested to join the service and meeting virtually. Please keep the event in our daily prayers.

MMVS Diocesan Programs

Bible Quiz: Saturday, October 02

Annual Conference: Saturday, October 09

Bible Study: Every Thursday 8.30 - 9.30 pm. The study is based on the books Amos – Malachi led by Rev Fr VM Shibu (Vicar, St Gregorios Orthodox Church Bensalem)



Virtual Meetings ahead

Saturday, July 31 – SGOCT Prayer, 07:00 – 08:30 pm

Choir meetings will be on Wednesdays 08:00-09:00 pm.

No meetings of organisations scheduled for August except the MMVS virtual retreat on Saturday August 14, 2021, 09:30- 12:00 noon

15 Days Lent of Theotokos

Soonoyo Fast starts on August 01. Let us observe the fast and prayer during the Lent of Mother Mary with dedication. Intercession of St Mary is powerful and fruitful.

Soonoyo Retreat organised by SGOCT MMVS– Saturday August 14

Our parish MMVS has organised a retreat for all our members during Soonoyo lent on Saturday August 14, 09:30 am – 12:00 noon. Mrs Merlin T Mathew will be leading the retreat. Merlin Kochamma is a well-known speaker and a spiritual guide highly in demand. Let us keep the retreat in prayer. We wish that the retreat will be a great blessing and an occasion for our spiritual renewal. Please remember the date and join.

Please find the flyer with more details of the retreat here:

https://mcusercontent.com/4b0245a10b23c3826466d9a97/files/105fb4d5-5e2c-27e0-d5a3-4e8b239634bf/MMVS_Virtual_Retreat.pdf

OVBS 2021 –August 18-22

This year's OVBS will begin on August 18 with its valedictory function on Sunday August 22.

Details shall be sent soon. All our children are expected to join. We request all parents and teachers to assure the participation of all children.

Welcome David Alexander

Binny Alexander and Jeny Koshy (Dir Ref B 09) have been blessed with a baby boy David, their second child. Ethan the elder is excited to have a little one to play with. Hearty congrats to the blessed parents and grandparents! Welcome, newborn! Be a blessing to our community and to the world!

Liturgical Text for this Sunday

This Sunday, we will be using the Taksa of Mar Osthathios.

Please see below the Link for Live Streaming

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

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

Yours in Christ,

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