



## WEEKLY THOUGHTS - DECEMBER 31, 2021

Dearly beloved,

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

**Sunday, January 02, Second Sunday after Yaldo Perunnal**

**Epistle Readings: 1 John 3:21-24, Hebrews 11:23-31**

**Holy Evangelion, St Luke 2:40-52**

40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; 43 and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; 47 and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." 49 And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.

### **Reflections:**

The childhood of Christ the Saviour has been presented briefly and beautifully that he was strong, wise and pleasing to God. What makes a leader or a hero is this – a blessed childhood. This is the guideline for all parents who dream of their children becoming great. This is applicable to adults too. We should realise how necessary it is for us to be strong, wise and spiritual to live successfully.

It seems that Jesus has to be found, lost and found in life. Writings of saints of the church reveal how they had experienced this missing and finding on a daily basis. It shows how they cared for the Lord. Every day or most often we tell people 'nice meeting you' and 'miss you'. Spiritual life is no exception. Sometimes it can be a 'hide and seek'. At times we feel that God is with us, at times we also feel that He is not with us. We pray and cry, seek and find. He is Immanuel. He 'is' with us! We may feel lost, but He will never abandon or leave us.

### **Feasts:**

**January 01, Feast of St Basil the Great, St Gregory, All Holy Fathers & Teachers of Faith**

They are the Cappadocian Fathers, St Basil, St Gregory of Nyssa and St Gregory of Nazianzus. Gregory of Nazianzus was the lifelong friend of Basil. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa were brothers. They had three more siblings Peter, Naucratus and Macrina. It rarely happens that all siblings become towering and legendary personalities. They all lived for Christ. They spent their life to teach and explain the mystery of incarnation and of Holy Trinity. Basil started an inclusive monastic society where both celibates and married people were welcomed to share community life. Macrina started a monastic community for women. Church has been built on the edifice of sound theology and practical spirituality. These acclaimed teachers made it so after the Apostles. Let us celebrate their memory!



## **Epiphany (Danaha Perunnal) - January 06**

Epiphany is the revelation from above. When Jesus was baptised, Holy Trinity revealed over the baptismal water of River Jordan while John the Baptist was witnessing it (Mt 3:13-17). Humans can know God through revelations, only up to what God reveals.

There will be a Holy Liturgy conducted on Tuesday January 05 starting with evening prayer at 06:00 pm.

## **Welcome 2022!**

Imagine someone who was born on January 1st, 0001 CE and physically alive today! How will that person be looking at the New Year day? Though the person has seen 2021 New Year days, would it be a negligible day? Every day, every morning, every dawn brings the possibility of a new start though it will be a continuation of the previous day.

This time, it doesn't look that pleasant with the fourth wave of Covid and its variants. As believers, we cannot view it with despair. For everything that happens, we see God's will and knowledge. If God is not making it happen, He can transform everything for good. It is our prayer too. The two year-long pandemic (universal infection) has taught us the high value of life, the need for proper health care and keeping the environment free of pollution. The lockdown has made us think how we could spend the available options for the best. Disconnection has given way to alternative connections. Let us be positive (not Covid!) about life. Let us be more creative than ever before as we find every minute precious and irreplaceable. Let us be in prayer for the whole universe and intercede for all the astral, celestial and terrestrial beings. As the image of God, let us spread the love and light of that Perfect Actual! May we welcome the New Year with hope and determination. God be with us!

## **Miss Universe**

Harnaaz Sandhu has won Miss Universe 2021, beating 79 other contestants from 80 countries. The contest is the third largest beauty pageant in history and this is the first Indian to win it. She credits her mother Dr Sandhu for inspiring her who took her to health camps, educating women about menstrual hygiene.

When the judges asked her about what advice she would offer to young women on how to deal with the pressures that they face today, her answer was: "The biggest pressure the youth is facing today is to believe in themselves. To know you are unique and that is what makes you beautiful, stop comparing yourself with others and talk about more important things that are happening worldwide. Come out, speak for yourself because you are the leader of your life." This answer won her the title!

## **Nobel Peace Prizes**

Two journalists, Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov received the Nobel Peace Prize. Ressa, 58, the chief executive and co-founder of the online news platform Rappler, praised for exposing abuses of power and growing authoritarianism. Muratov, 59, the editor-in-chief of Novaya Gazeta was described as one of the most prominent defenders of freedom of speech in Russia today and runs the most independent newspaper in Russia today, with a fundamentally critical attitude towards power. "Both Ressa and Muratov are viewed as soldiers who use written word as their weapon, where truth is their goal and every exposure of misuse of power is a victory". They have been ridiculed, harassed, threatened and suffered violence as a result of their work. In a misguided world, they both find the primary need of the battle for truth. Through their journalistic work, they have been trying to transform hate and violence to peace and harmony.



# ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

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In a corrupt world, speaking the truth and voicing for justice will be considered treason. How many people have been tortured, detained and killed for this? If it is connected to faith or church, we call them saints or martyrs. In a secular world, they are adored as heroes.

## **Communicants Counting Machine, Wave your hand 'ONCE' please**

All Sunday participants are requested to register their names at the entrance and as we enter the church interior. Please wave your hand once between the sensor poles of the counting machine if you are to take Holy Communion. Please do not wave if you are not taking Holy Communion. Thanks to everyone for your cooperation.

## **Choir & Acolytes joint practice- Saturdays 05:00-07:00 pm**

There will not be choir and acolytes practice this Saturday. Enjoy New Year Day!

## **Meetings ahead, In-Person & Virtual**

January 01, Saturday, Evening Prayer at Church, 06:00 - 07:00 pm.

January 02, Sunday, SGOCT Choir monthly meeting after the Holy Liturgy.

## **Liturgical Text for this Sunday**

This Sunday, we will be using the Taksa of St Isaac.

## **Link to Sunday Holy Liturgy**

Please see below the Link for Live Streaming

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