



WEEKLY THOUGHTS - JULY 31, 2020

Dearly Beloved,

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

Sunday 02 August, 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading St Luke 14:7-11 RSV

7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8 “When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give place to this man,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Reflections:

Jesus was well oriented in etiquettes and manners. He had come for a great mission. He didn't wish his disciples to be looked down by others for their ill-manners. He wanted them to be properly welcomed and accepted, if not they would miss opportunities to communicate with people. Jesus was adaptable to situations both to the elite and poor. Wherever he was, he kept quality and standard in talking and interacting.

It goes into whatever one wears, wherever one lives, and what profile one has. One word or a behaviour can ruin everything in a fraction of a minute. Even wars had taken place because of the way people were treated. When we go to church, usually we wear formal clothes. The reason could be because the church is a place where the best of manners and etiquettes expected. Through his teaching the disciples on how to behave in public, He also had taken it as an opportunity to tell them the need of keeping humility in life. History has many examples of kingships of high esteem brought down to ashes without even traces of their existence. Humans, whether believers or non-believers, need to be humble with fellow beings. God is there watching us, He is up there High Exalted and Magnified. How could humans forget it and live in an esteem of the self? COVID-19 has taught the world, nothing matters. Let us be humble at heart and always live in remembrance of God the Creator.

Feasts:

27th July, Feast of Mar Shemavon Desthuno (Simeon the Stylite), lived in Syria, c 390-459, died at the age of 69. ‘Stylite’ in Greek or ‘Esthuneo’ in Syriac means the one who dwells on a pillar.

All religions may have a variety of practices for spiritual development within themselves. Asceticism or monasticism was a powerful tradition that brought many changes in the social life setting. Within



ST. GREGORIOS ORTHODOX CHURCH OF TORONTO

(Since 1969)

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



the ascetic tradition there were a variety of patterns prevalent. Simon got attracted to Christian spirituality influenced primarily by Beatitudes (St Mathew 5:1-12). He could sense the futility of extravagant living and chose for himself a life of condemning worldly pleasures and entertainments.

He started with shutting himself in a closure in search of God and spent a whole Lent season without drinking or eating anything. He came out with a charisma that convinced society about the active presence of God in him. People started reaching out to him for prayer and assistance. For him, increasing popularity was another form of extravagance and he left public appearance and moved to seclusion. People went after him again. He had to adopt a new way. He found a rock pillar and stayed on it. Eventually he had to find higher posts and towards the end he spent time on a pillar about 15 meters high. The top was about one square meter wide which was more than enough for living! Through practice he could avoid feeling giddy or dizzy on that height. He practiced praying in various postures. Youngsters would climb up to supply food, occasionally he would take food kept beneath using a pulley. Using a ladder, seekers could climb up to see him from a distance and listen to him. He would talk to people who assemble under the pillar. He had disciples to whom he used to give spiritual instructions. He was also in practice writing letters on Holy Living. He preached about compassion. He was taken to his heavenly abode while he was on the pillar. By simply remaining alone on a pillar, he could teach the world about living simple using minimum facilities and minimum space. Those who had everything in their life sought after him for advice. If we look at the current management trainers who earn millions through their orientation programs, here we have the best example of someone who was at his best and still refrained from earning anything for the service he offered to society. He lived as an example of peaceful living possible in the world of greed and austerity. He also has set an example for the fact that, if someone has real content, he or she could live beneficial for the whole world. World will come after them for taking guidance and help. Good shall never go unnoticed.

31st July, Feast of Mar Gregorios Bar Hebraeus, 734th anniversary, he was the Maphrian (Bishop) of Persia, c 1226-1286, died at the age of 60.

He was a versatile writer and orator. He was well versed in his contemporary science, philosophy, history, theology, poetry and language. He is well recognised for his lucid writings on various themes. He had brought forward Commentary on the Bible, History of the World, 'Hudaya Canon' (collection of Canon Law arranged thematically), and also to our surprise a collection of humorous stories too!

Please find excerpts from Hudaya Canon: 1:1 If anybody despises an innocent bishop and organizes a congregation and sets up another altar (Madbaha), he shall be admonished three times and if he does not repent, he shall be condemned. 1:3 In every church there shall be a house where the poor who come there can refresh themselves. 1:6 When we anoint Tablito (the wooden tablet on which the Holy Elements are placed during Holy Liturgy), we write on it the name of the one who consecrated it with date saying: 'Holy Trinity has consecrated it by the hands of (N) in the year such and such'. (The tablets kept in the Sanctuary have inscriptions on it. Altar servers can take an opportunity to see what exactly it is! 2:4 A female catechumen, even if she is pregnant, could be baptised. When the child is born, s/he shall be baptised, for the child is not a participant in mother's baptism. On the Great Saturday (Gospel Saturday of Holy Week), the baptismal font shall remain open for the whole day, after the morning services. All shall go to it and honour the mother of life, before its spiritual day,



with psalms and hymns. 4:3 All believers who enter and hears the scriptures, but do not remain for receiving the mysteries, shall be excommunicated (How we find it today?!!)

01st August, Marth Smooni & her 7 Children, Mar Eleazar, their teacher, lived around 120 BC

Second book of Maccabees Chapter 7 narrates the thrilling and unbelievable story of a mother and her seven sons who stood for their uncompromising faith in God. Shortly before the revolt of Judas Maccabeus (2 Maccabees 7), Antiochus IV Epiphanes arrested a mother and her seven sons, and tried to force them to eat pork. When they refused, he tortured and killed the sons one by one. The narrator mentions that the mother "was the most remarkable of all, and deserves to be remembered with special honour. She watched her seven sons die in the space of a single day, yet she bore it bravely because she put her trust in the Lord." Each of the sons makes a speech as he dies, and the last one says that his brothers are "dead under God's covenant of everlasting life". After her sons, she also died. The woman with seven sons is identified as Marth Shmooni who is remembered with high regard for her religious steadfastness, teaching her sons to keep to their faith, even if it meant execution. Martyrdom of Eleazar is narrated 2 Mac 6:18-31.

01st August, HG Paulose Mar Pachomios Metropolitan of Mavelikara Diocese, 8th anniversary, entombed at Bethany Asram Chapel, Perunad Ranny. He was the first Metropolitan of the Diocese of Mavelikara. He initiated infrastructural developments of the diocese in its infancy. He was well known for his devotional retreats and his pleasing way of interacting with people. He hails from a noble family in Kottayam. He was a former President of MGOCSM. The Psycho Social Rehab Centre named 'Paulose Mar Pachomios Shalem Bhavan' managed by the Diocese of Mavelikara remains a true monument for his life of witness.

Lent of St Mary

Fifteen days Lent called 'Soonoyo Fast' begins tomorrow. This is in connection with the parting of Mother Mary. Please observe the fast with prayer and spiritual discipline. Let the intercession of Theotokos help us grow in divine virtues. Those who wish to include names for intercession are requested to send names to the Vicar's Email: fr.thomasjohn@gmail.com

Feast of Transfiguration Holy Liturgy on August 5th at 6:00 PM

Feast of Transfiguration will be on August 06th. There will be Holy Liturgy celebrated on Wednesday 05th August evening at 06:00pm. Please join either at church or virtually.

Parish Directory

Parish Directory shall be printed soon with updated details of our beloved members. Please remember to send a family photo if not already sent yet.

Peace Garden

Stage 1 is complete with planting. It would require our voluntary assistance in keeping and watering. Sincere thanks to all contributors and voluntary helpers.



Financial statement, January – June 2020

Financial statements for the first half of the financial year have been sent out to our members. Any suggestions or comments are welcome.

Virtual Meetings

Saturday 01 August, Sunday School Liturgical Session on Holy Qurbana, 10:30am for Juniors

Saturday 01 August, Sunday school Liturgical session on Holy Qurbana, 11:00am for Seniors

Saturday 01 August, SGOCT Prayer Meeting, 07:00-08:30pm

Sunday 02 August, Altar Servers Meeting, 06:00pm

Eid Mubarak !

‘Eid-al-Adha’ in Arabic, ‘Eid Qurban’ in Persian and ‘Bakra Eid’ in Urdu means ‘Feast of Sacrifice’ which is the festival that commemorates the sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham narrated in Genesis chapter 22. Though the son’s life was spared with God providing a lamb instead, Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his one and only son (the only begotten) has been considered a real sacrifice. This has been viewed as the best example for absolute obedience to God’s will. This is also viewed as a sign of God’s salvation act of sacrificing His only Begotten Son later. May we all join the rest of the world to greet our Muslim Brothers and Sisters on this great festival of sacrifice! We are one family!

Holding you all in prayer

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Fr Thomas P John

fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com

+1 (416) 570 5610