



EPARCHY OF MISSISSAUGA

For the Glory of God

PASTORAL LETTER

May 25, 2022

Prot. No. 90/2022

1950 Jubilee of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle

Dear Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters, and beloved faithful in Jesus Christ,

The Great Jubilee celebration of the 1950th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle falls on 3rd July 2022. According to the powerful and living tradition of the last more than 2000 years, St. Thomas the Apostle landed at Cranganore, Kerala, India in 52 A.D., started preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ and suffered martyrdom in Mylapore for the sake of faith on 3rd July 72 A.D. where his tomb is venerated ever since.

Beginning of a New Era

The personality of St. Thomas, with his own characteristic traits, emerges in the Gospel of St John (Jn 11,16; 14,5; 20,24-29). As Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe explains, "St. Thomas was an impulsive type of man, zealous in reaching out to others, not afraid to ask questions and seek clarifications when required, who battled with his own doubts surrounding the extraordinary events of Christ's death and resurrection. He is the one who, touching Jesus' wounds after the resurrection, had all his doubts disappear and his faith moved to a new level. He simply believed, exclaiming from the depths of his heart: "my Lord and my God". There started a renewed orientation in his life: Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, thus overcoming suffering and death and offering new hope for all humanity. A new era had begun."

Thomas understood his own mission, as in the words of Jesus, “go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good news to all creation”, that is, to proclaim the message and reality of God’s unconditional love to all peoples, regardless of creed or colour, nationality, or race. Each of the Apostles set out on the mission assigned them by the Lord: “You will be my witnesses, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1,8).

According to tradition, St Thomas worked for 20 years in India, spreading the Good News, establishing different communities. The St Thomas Christians faithfully preserved the Gospel message throughout the centuries, fully integrating the faith into the local culture. With their East Syrian Liturgical tradition, ensured that the message of the Gospel was kept alive, and that the memory of the Apostle Thomas would live on to inspire successive generations.

How refreshing it is to recall millions of Catholics in India, America, Canada, Europe, Gulf countries and elsewhere today refer to themselves with gratitude and joy as St Thomas Christians. Cardinal Ignatius Moussa Daoud on 7 December 2002 rightly declared: “Such deep-felt association would hardly be thinkable, unless St Thomas, his person, and his preaching, had been openly, and gratefully accepted by his hearers and their descendants not as something imposed, but as something welcomed. St Thomas was someone with whom the people of India had fallen in love and who, on the other hand, had fallen in love with them.”

We are the Fruits of His Preaching

It is an unforgettable fact that we, the members of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy of Mississauga, are the fruits of his missionary preaching. In the Decree of elevation of the Eparchy the Holy Father Pope Francis exhorts: “ We therefore, at this time, turn our attention to the beloved Catholic faithful of the Syro-

Malabar Rite residing in Canada and , wishing to promote their spiritual well-being and to provide for their growth....We hereby raise the Apostolic Exarchate in Canada to the rank of an Eparchy....Entrusting it to the heavenly patronage of St. Thomas the Apostle.” Therefore, this Jubilee should persuade us to follow the footsteps of St Thomas the Apostle, our heavenly patron. Let him be our motivation in all our missionary endeavours.

In this perspective it is our duty to celebrate this great Jubilee properly so that we witness to faith in Christ in our present situation in Canada. Therefore, I encourage everybody to celebrate this Great Jubilee of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle in our Eparchy on 3rd July 2022 most appropriately.

The intercession of St. Thomas the Apostle, and the protection of Holy Spirit help us to active witness to our Lord and our God.

Yours in Christ,

Mar Jose Kalluvelil

Bishop, Eparchy of Mississauga

NB. Please read this Pastoral Letter on June 12, 2022 in all our Parishes, Missions and Mass Centers