

By the Grace of God and by the approval of Holy See, Thomas Mar Eusebius, Bishop of the Apostolic Exarchate of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in USA extends cordial greetings to all the priests, religious and faithful of the Exarchate.

Prot. No. EPL 1/2014

Praise be to the Most Holy Trinity.

Dear Reverend Fathers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

Since the past six weeks we have been on a holy journey, a very special pilgrimage, namely, the pilgrimage of the Great Lent. Forty days of intense prayer, fasting and sacrifice have been spent with fervor, faith and love which will have a transforming effect in our own lives and in the lives of those around us. Let us thank the Lord for the gift of the Great Lent. But these forty days have been a preparation to celebrate the extremely important redemptive acts of our Savior. Consequently, we are entering into the most crucial week of the year in the life of a believer, namely, the Holy Week. In this week, we recall, reenact and celebrate what our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished in His earthly life in order to grant us His salvation. The Malankara liturgy of the Holy Week is deep in its theological content and rich in its symbolic expression, so much so, it provides us a very enriching and experiential reliving of the salvific acts of the Lord. Let us try to participate in these beautiful liturgical celebrations with full devotion, faith and love.

The celebration of the Palm Sunday marks our entry into the Holy Week. Our Lord's 'triumphant' entry into Jerusalem on a 'donkey' was symbolic of the contrast that He wished to bring about between the values of the Kingdom and those of the world. The Lord wants to teach us that in a world that prides itself in authority, influence, wealth and show of might, what really matters is humility, forgiveness and our dependence on God. On Maundy Thursday we recall the Last Supper of our Lord, which signifies the establishment of the Holy Eucharist. But the true meaning of the Eucharist is symbolically brought forth by the Lord in His act of washing the feet of his disciples. The Eucharist characterizes the life of a Christian and it consists in the readiness to break one's body and shed one's blood constantly for others for the sake of love. And the practical expression of sacrificing one's life this way is loving service carried out in true humility. On Good Friday our liturgical celebrations powerfully reenact the passion and death of our Lord. Through the prayers and rituals of the day, we are reminded that Cross is our way to sanctity and salvation. All those who are prepared to love and to live the values of the Gospel, must embrace the Cross joyfully. And such Cross turns out to be salvific.

The culmination of all these salvific events is the Resurrection of our Lord. Defeating all the possible defeats that a human life is subjected to, our Lord rises up in glory. That is the guarantee for the ultimate vindication of the life of a Christian. In every Holy Qurbano, after the words of consecration, we proclaim: "We commemorate your death, we confess your resurrection and we look forward to your second coming". Yes, His death characterizes our way of life, His resurrection is the core of our faith and His second coming, namely, our share in His resurrection, is the hope of our life. This is the total meaning of the life of a Christian and this is what we celebrate in the Paschal Mystery. I wish all of you a very meaningful Holy Week celebration and a joyful share in the peace and hope that the great Feast of Qyamtho presents us.

Our Lenten pilgrimage has been characterized by special acts of prayer, penance and charity. With regard to our Lenten acts of charity, the Universal Church wishes that we direct our attention to a very specific area, namely to our Christian brothers and sisters who are subject to various forms of suffering and persecution in the very land where the salvific acts of our Lord transpired - the Holy Land. Consequently, the offering that we make in our parishes during the Good Friday service is to be used exclusively for supporting our brothers and sisters in Holy Land.

In the recently convened meeting of the Pastoral Council of the Exarchate, it was decided to renew the mode of submitting the family contribution to the Exarchate from our parishes. The Exarchate Finance Officer shall contact the Pastors and the parish representatives regarding the same and I solicit the whole-hearted cooperation of all of you in this matter. Wishing God's abundant blessings on each of you, your families and our communities and invoking the powerful intercession of Mother Mary and all the Saints,
Yours lovingly in our Lord,

+ Thomas Mar Eusebius

April 10, 2014
Exarchate Chancery,
1500 De Paul Street, Elmont, NY 11003

This circular is to be read in all our churches preferably on Palm Sunday or on Maundy Thursday, 2014