



**ST. MARY QUEEN OF PEACE
SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC EPARCHY
IN THE USA & CANADA**

1500 Depaul Street • Elmont, NY 11003

Office of the Bishop

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Christmas Pastoral Letter 2021

Dear Rt. Rev. Corepiscopoi, Rev. Fathers, Rev. Sisters and Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are at the threshold of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. On this joyous occasion, along with the multitude of angels, let us sincerely wish and pray: “Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favors” (Luke 2:14).

The whole world still undergoes extreme pains and anxieties due the Covid 19 pandemic and its variables. The entire Humanity and the nature are under the shadow of fear of this invisible virus. Across the world, all people - the children, the young and the old, are affected by this global tragedy. However, we thank God for His marvelous Providence which enable us to celebrate this salvific event with deep sentiments of gratitude, faith, and hope. In this unprecedented time of uncertainty and confusion, as we celebrate Christmas, the words of the angel to the shepherd at the birth of Jesus: “Do not be afraid” (Luke 2:10) shall resonate in our minds and hearts as the most strengthening divine voice in our journey of life.

The subsequent words of the angel are salvific and supremely significant: “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). This historic proclamation points to the very core of Christmas. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This Christmas invites us to experience and share the Love and Life of God which our Lord Jesus Christ brought forth and manifested in His Incarnation.

We acclaim this truth in our “Eldo” Liturgical celebrations. During the procession of the Feast, we sing and pray: “This day resembles you, Christ our God...” The spiritual significances contained in this hymn are so

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revealing: 'The whole humanity has been waiting for this great event; This feast brings us new dawn and light after the long nights of life. This feast brings gladness to the whole creation after the gloom of the winter season of life; The powerful kings and their times pass away; their feasts and memories disappear, but this King's authority extends through all ages. All the days are blessed by this day and all feasts are made glorious by this great feast. For this feast manifests God's love, glory, mercy and the dawn of salvation promised by God.'

On Christmas night as we commemorate all the great events and significant personalities involved and related to this feast, let try to open our hearts to Christ the Messiah to be possessed and empowered by him. May the power of Christmas enable us to overcome all fears and darkness in life. May Christ the Savior liberate us from all bondages and lead us to the Joy of God. May the Holy Family bless all our families. May the Grace and spirit of Christmas indwell and permeate every dimension of your life throughout the new year 2022.

I wish you all a grace filled Christmas and blessed New Year!
In Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,

Most Rev. Dr. Philipos Mar Stephanos

Date: December 17, 2021

NB: Please share this message with our Parish Community

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