

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 4/2013

Praise be to the Most Holy Trinity

Dear Reverend Fathers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

Liturgically we have entered the season of Advent and we are preparing ourselves spiritually to celebrate the great Feast of *Yaldo*. Needless to say that this is a very important period in our spiritual life and growth. Among the many messages that the great mystery of Incarnation brings home to us, one is specially relevant in the times in which we live, namely, God's self-gift for the sake of love. Unfortunately, in the contemporary culture, there is an excessive emphasis on the importance of self-fulfillment. One is almost obsessed with one's own fulfillment and in this obsession all other persons and realities, be they even one's own family members, become irrelevant. This is a sophisticated form of egoism. It is in such a culture that we celebrate God's self-emptying, God's assuming human nature, out of His love for us. And this is Christmas. May these Advent days enable us to increasingly share in this spirit of self-emptying and transcend our ego to reach out to our brothers and sisters in true spirit of Christian love. This alone will make our Christmas celebration meaningful and truly Christian in spirit.

Following the prophetic call of Pope Emeritus His Holiness Benedict XVI, we have been living a special year of faith, trying to experience its deeper meaning and to live and witness to it relevantly. The year of faith activities of the Exarchate consisted, among others, of special study classes on the year of faith themes, retreats, and an Exarchate level bible quiz competition in order to encourage our faithful to have better familiarity with the Word of God. I thank all our priests and faithful who generously cooperated with these activities and we express our deepest appreciation for the team that organized these activities. We hope and pray that this year-long celebration would make our faith commitment and witness deeper and more relevant.

The Malankara Catholic Church in America is on a path of steady ecclesial growth. Since the establishment of the Exarchate we have attained greater consolidation and deeper coherence as an ecclesial entity. Standing within the limitations that any growing immigrant ecclesial community faces in this continent, we are trying our best to live and witness to all the ecclesial rights and responsibilities as an Exarchate. In this connection, I am happy to inform you that we have been able to register our Exarchate legally in the US as a 'Not-for-profit Incorporation' with all the rights and possibilities that any Catholic Diocese has in this country. Consequently, in the last meeting of the Exarchate Pastoral Council the resolution was passed to dissolve the existing Incorporation, namely, the 'Malankara Catholic Mission of North America' and to transfer all its assets to the new Exarchate Incorporation.

As we all know, one of the essential requirements that the establishment of the Exarchate entailed was the procurement of a chancery and a cathedral church. In my last letter to you, I mentioned about the understanding that we have with His Excellency the Most Rev. William Murphy, Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Center that we purchase the St. Vincent de Paul church and rectory in Elmont, New York with sufficient parking space (around 2½ acres of land). Consequently we shifted the chancery of the Exarchate and my residence to Elmont already in June, thanks to the generosity of Bishop Murphy. So also, as a major milestone in our

ecclesial growth, we officially established the Cathedral Parish of the Exarchate with the name St. Vincent de Paul Malankara Catholic Cathedral Parish, Elmont and started using the St. Vincent de Paul church on Sunday mornings and on other week days regularly for our worship and other gatherings. We were privileged to have the gracious presence of His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the Head and Father of our Church and of His Excellency the Most Rev. Robert Brennen, the Auxiliary Bishop of Rockville Center on this auspicious occasion.

Now we have before us the challenging task of raising the fund required to realize this project. Though the details of the agreement are yet to be drawn, it is understood that we may require about \$ 2.2 million to do the purchase and to make the necessary modifications in the church and in the chancery. From the sale of the existing two houses belonging to us, we hope to get around \$ 935,000. I take this opportunity to thank those of you who have contributed for these houses. Now we have to raise the remaining amount. We can presume that the Cathedral Parish will contribute a significant share for the purchase and the upkeep of such a beautiful campus. However, the Cathedral being part of our Common heritage, every Malankarite has special bond to it. Besides the need, on an ecclesial note, every family deserves to have some share in the founding stage of their Cathedral. With our common effort, purchasing and customizing the facilities according to particular requirements should not be a big burden. Therefore, I earnestly appeal to the generosity and good will of all our faithful to support this project to the best of your ability. I wish to make a personal appeal to all our families soon.

The Department of Sacred Liturgy in the Exarchate brought out the English translation of two more official prayer books of the Malankara Catholic Church, namely the short version of the Divine Office and the Sunday Prayers for the seasons of *Qyamtho* and *Sleebo*. All our parishes and families are encouraged to procure copies of the same and start regular use of them. We are grateful to the Department of the Sacred Liturgy for the creative initiatives.

After the establishment of the Exarchate, the Special Canons (Statutes) of the Exarchate were promulgated on the basis of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the Particular Canons of the Malankara Catholic Church and on the basis of the specific ecclesial context of the Exarchate. These Statutes were promulgated provisionally, on an experimental basis for two years. Now at the end of this period of experiment, we wish to finalize them with modifications or amendments, if any. I will be very grateful to all our priests, religious and faithful if you could kindly provide me your feedback on the Statutes by January 31, 2014. In this context, I wish to inform you that the duration of the present Pastoral Council is extended till December 2014.

Thanking all of you for your unreserved support and exemplary faith commitment and wishing all of you a blessed Christmas and God's continued blessings in the new year,
Yours lovingly in our Lord,

+ Thomas Mar Eusebius

November 28, 2013
Exarchate Chancery,
1500 De Paul Street, Elmont, NY 11003

This circular is to be read in all our churches on Sunday, December 1, 2013