

By the Grace of God and by the approval of Holy See and of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Thomas Mar Eusebius, Bishop of the St. Mary, Queen of Peace Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in the USA and Canada extends cordial greetings to all the priests, religious and faithful of the Eparchy.

Prot. No. EPL 1/2017

Praise be to the Most Holy Trinity.

Dear Reverend Fathers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

Ever since our Church in North America attained a canonical status, namely in 2010 as an Exarchate, we have been striving to grow more coherently as an ecclesial family and to deepen our spiritual roots. Along with the attempts to enhance our collective spiritual life, we were also required to fulfill the essential infrastructural requirements to function effectively as a Church. Consequently, one of our first priorities in this respect was to have a Cathedral of our own. In God's marvelous providence, with the wholehearted support of our Faithful and by the generosity of the Catholic Diocese of Rockville Center, especially of His Excellency Bishop William Murphy, we were able to procure a Cathedral for our Eparchy in Elmont, New York, and the legal formalities of the same were completed in July 2016. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all our Faithful, in a very special way the members of our Cathedral parish, the Reverend Sisters and Fathers and all those who supported this project through their valuable prayers and generous contributions.

The Cathedral that we came to possess is a beautiful church, with a spacious parking lot and with the most ideal location. This church was constructed according to the Latin Catholic tradition. But as we know, a Malankara Catholic church has to reflect at least the basic aspects of the Syro-Malankara Catholic tradition, spirituality and the architectural style, especially when it is the Cathedral church of an Eparchy. Consequently, it was decided to undertake a remodeling of the sanctuary of the church on a very modest budget. I am happy to inform you that the renovation work is now nearing its completion. We have scheduled the rededication of the renovated sanctuary at 3.00 pm. on Saturday, March 25, 2017, on the great Feast of Annunciation. His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholicos of our Church has kindly agreed to preside over the ceremony. Many of our friend Cardinals and bishops in and around New York and also from India will bless us with their presence during the ceremony. I extend a very personal invitation to all our Faithful, Reverend Sisters and Fathers to participate in this importance celebration of our Church. For us it is a time to thank the Lord for His marvelous gifts and to celebrate our family fellowship as a Church. **The program on March 25 is as follows:**

**1.30 pm. - Celebration of the Holy Qurbono** (in the church basement; for those who have no other chance of fulfilling the holy day obligation that day)

**3.00 pm. - Rededication of the Cathedral Sanctuary**

**4.00 pm. – Reception at the school auditorium**

On March 26, at 10.00 am. solemn celebration of the Holy Qurbono will be held on the newly consecrated altar with His Beatitude the Major Archbishop and other bishops and priests presiding. Those of you for whom it is convenient to participate in this Holy Qurbono are also cordially invited to the same.

Soon we start an important season of our liturgical, spiritual life, namely, the season of the Great Lent. Of all the seasons of our liturgical year, this is perhaps the most consequential as far as our personal and ecclesial faith life is concerned. This is primarily a time for renewal in our faith life, mainly through a genuine experience of conversion. This conversion consists in turning away from our habituated sinful tendencies and acts and in returning to God's forgiving love that surpasses all our shortcomings and failures. As per our tradition, this is to be achieved mainly by adopting a very specific life style – a Lenten life style – that is focused on intense prayer, serious acts of renunciation such as fasting and abstinence and genuine acts of charity. During these fifty days, let us make a very earnest effort to spend more time in quality prayer, to consciously embrace sacrifices in life and to love our brothers and sisters more seriously and to be of help to those who are in need of us. I wish all of you a very blessed Lenten experience so that we may all be able to celebrate the great Feast of Easter as truly renewed persons.

I wish to conclude by expressing my sincere gratitude to all of you for your consistent support and prayers for the promotion of all the good things that our individual parishes and our Eparchy as a whole are undertaking. May God continue to bless all of you, your families and your parish communities and may St. Mary, Queen of Peace, the Patroness of our Eparchy be our support in our spiritual journey.

**Yours lovingly in our Lord,**

*+ Eusebius*

**+ Thomas Mar Eusebius**

**February 15, 2017**

**Eparchial Chancery, 1500 De Paul Street, Elmont, NY 11003**

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*This circular is to be read in all our churches on Sunday, February 19, 2017*