



Alexios Mar Eusebius  
Metropolitan

# MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

## DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA



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Blessings to our Cor-Episcopi, Priests, Deacons, Parish Managing Committee and all the faithful of our Diocese!

Dearly Beloved,

We have entered into the most significant season of the liturgical year, the period of the Great Lent. We have begun this journey with the Service of Reconciliation, also known as Shubkono, which serves as reminder for us of the need to reconcile with our brethren before our participation in the fast.

The modern world that we live in has provided us with a level of comfort combined with technological innovations that have considerably changed our priorities and outlook on life. Although we may not realize it, we live in a world where we are constantly battling with the evil one, and there is a need for us to examine and equip ourselves in a way that will lead us to overcome and gain victory in Christ. Throughout the Scriptures, we see many Biblical leaders who used fasting combined with intensified prayer as a weapon against the enemy. Jesus Christ also fasted for 40 days just like Moses and Elijah. We also have to give importance to this discipline and implement it in our daily life. It is through this we gain strength.

The Lenten period is the opportune time for self-reflection, repentance, and changes in our life that will direct us on the path towards holiness. We need to return to the basic spiritual disciplines of prayer, reading of the Scriptures, fasting, food restrictions, abstinence, silence and meditation, and we hope the 50 day journey will lead us to discipline our body, soul, and mind and make us worthy of the Kingdom. Additionally, the need for charity, alms giving, and helping the poor should be made a priority during the Lenten period.

This year, Good Friday falls on March 25th which is also celebrated as the Feast of the Annunciation. The Holy Church upholds the Feast of the Annunciation as a Feast of our Lord, and it is to be observed as such. His Holiness the Catholicos through the Kalpana (No. 13/2016) has instructed parishes how to observe the feast since it falls within Holy Week and on Good Friday. For our parishes in North America, the Holy Qurbana can be celebrated on Thursday evening, March 24th and should be preceded with the Evening Prayers from the Penkeesa Namaskaram or Sleebea Namaskaram. During the evening prayers and liturgy, there will be no kneeling. Following the celebration of the liturgy, the prayers for Good Friday can be continued with the Night Vigil prayers and kneeling through Holy Saturday.

We extend our prayers and blessings for the Lenten journey, and may it lead us to a real transformation that is marked by a true confession and cleansing from our Lord.

Your Shepherd in Christ,

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