



MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

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Blessings to our dearly beloved Cor-Episcopoi, Vicars, Priests of the locality, Deacons, and all the faithful of the Diocese of South-West America, especially our dear Children and Teachers!

Dearly Beloved,

We hope that our beloved children had a very good summer vacation and getting ready for the new academic year. As we approach the start of a new academic school year, we are reminded of the book of Proverbs 3:7-8 which reads *"Do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones."* When we seek the wisdom of God first and do not rely on our own understanding, our actions should reflect our love for God and desire to be united with Him. The more we love God and the closer we draw near to Him, the more we can be empowered to resist evil. My dear children, we remind you to commit yourself unto Jesus Christ, who is the source of all knowledge and understanding, and strive to imitate Him in all aspects of your life. As St. Peter exhorts *"be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). The world becomes more and more anti-spiritual; and virtues and values of a true Christian life are treated as foolishness. The greatest virtue of a true Christian life is a continuous struggle to transform all that are unchristian in our life into more Christ like as *"our heavenly Father is perfect"* (St. Mathew 5:48).

We take this opportunity to also remind all parents of the need to model the classroom and the life of the church within your own household. Seek to establish a daily discipline of family prayer and reading of the Bible. Our children are living in a time where they are challenged to neglect the teachings of Christ and His Holy Church, and it is the responsibility of parents to commit themselves to prioritize and make time to instruct children in basic spiritual disciplines and practices at home so they retain it through their life. As we also approach the start of a new Sunday school year, we pray that parishes will take the extra effort to focus on the formation of our children and model life in Christ that is deeply rooted in worship, learning, and fellowship.

We take this opportunity to extend our love and prayers to all our beloved children and to all who have been entrusted the ministry of teaching at the start of this new academic year. May God Almighty continue to bless and sanctify each one of you and may you dedicate yourselves to follow God, who is the source of all wisdom and understanding.

Metr. Dr. Zacharias Mar Aprem

Sreyas Aramana
Adoor, Pathanamthitta, Kerala
On August 10, 2019

