

# Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

*(Catholicate of the East)*

## *Diocese of South-West America*

3703 Chesterdale Dr. · Missouri City, TX · 77459 · Ph: 281.403.0670 · Fax: 281.459.0814

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**Alexios Mar Eusebius**

**Metropolitan**



D SWA/C/013/2010

July 22, 2010

Blessings to all our beloved Priests, Deacons, Parish Managing Committee members, and all the faithful of the Diocese of South-West America.

Dearly Beloved,

As you all know, August 1-15 is a time when we observe the canonical lent in commemoration of the Feast of Dormition (Assumption) of the Holy Theotokos, the Ever-Virgin Mary, and the Mother of God.

The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He entrusted His mother to His beloved disciple John. Later in the book of Acts, we read that the St. Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost. In the Tradition of the Holy Church, at the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see Mary. St. Thomas the Apostle who was in India at the time, also was taken up to witness this event.

This great Feast of the Church celebrates a fundamental teaching of our faith—the Resurrection of the body. In the case of St. Mary, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. As we remember those who have departed in the true faith before us and have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come. We also affirm through this Feast as we journey toward our heavenly abode that the Mother of God intercedes for us. Through Christ she has become the mother of all of the children of God, embracing us with divine love.

Nowadays, September 1-8 is seen as the important lent for St. Mary. This is not a canonical lent as it celebrates the birth of St. Mary. The only birthday we celebrate as a feast is Christmas, the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We desire to educate our faithful in realizing the important distinction between these two events.

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The Holy Episcopal Synod has decided to observe August 15<sup>th</sup> as Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam Day. On this day, a special collection will be taken among the members of the Martha Mariam Samajam to support the charity efforts of our Diocese and the Martha Mariam Samajam activities. We continue to appreciate the enthusiastic efforts of the Martha Mariam Samajam to fulfill the role of service and care as modeled by the life of St. Mary.

We hope and pray that all the faithful will observe this canonical lent. By putting into practice the spiritual discipline of abstinence, we hope our faithful will gain the opportunity for spiritual renewal.

May the Triune God bless you and grant you a peaceful and prosperous life.

Your Shepherd in Christ,



Alexios Mar Eusebius  
Metropolitan