



Alexios Mar Eusebius
Metropolitan

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH

DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA



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November 24, 2011

DSWA/C/11/2011

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

Dearly Beloved,

The upcoming lent from December 1-25 is a time for us to abstain from the luxuries of life and restrict our food intake in preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christmas is indeed a time to celebrate, but it is also a time for renewal and rededication. Our Lord became flesh and willingly died for the sake of our salvation. It is necessary to keep the spirit of this feast and refocus the attention to the central point of our celebration. In preparation for our Savior's birth, let us control our diet by abstaining from meat, fish, and dairy products, along with other worldly luxuries and seek to maintain self-discipline.

My beloved, we are aware that some of our faithful have misunderstood the Christmas season to be a time for celebration through the consumption of alcohol. In the past, we know that individuals have consumed alcohol during Christmas carol rounding in homes and also on Christmas day on the church premises. By doing so, you are spoiling the purpose of this celebration and leaving a bad impression in the lives of the younger generation. The purpose of caroling and the Christmas service is to join with the angels and convey the message of peace and joy that comes through the birth of Christ. In a sense, we carry the Divine Word with us, and at the same time we mock it by satisfying our own desires. God surely condemns this type of behavior, especially from a Christian Church community. Our gatherings and events should always reflect an environment where we can welcome Christ. We hope and pray that you will understand the spirit of this letter and that all our faithful will practice abstinence from alcohol consumption not only during this lent but also from our life itself.

By the kalpana of His Holiness the Catholicos, it was declared that the months of October through December as the months to bring awareness to "**Christian Parenting**" which should focus on educating parents on their responsibilities for true parenthood. During this Christmas season, the holy family of Nazareth should be a model for us. Though Joseph and Mary suffered a lot of tribulations in their life, they were able to give proper care to their child. We have to remind ourselves that each and every child born is truly a gift and blessing from God.



As the Psalmist says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD. The fruit of the womb is a reward.” (Psalm 127:3). Nurturing a child is a sacred responsibility, and parents must depend on the Lord and seek the Lord’s path in bringing them up. They are accountable to God for their stewardship of parenthood.

The beginning of this Nativity season is the time to pledge before God to give away to all the evil behavior of our lives. All parents should desire to be a model to the young generation as they learn many of the lessons of life from us. Let us take a vow before God to give up all unethical life style, especially the consumption of alcohol that is leading to drunkenness. In the same way, children should bring joy to their parents by leading a meaningful Christian life and seek to create a divine family environment in the home.

We take this opportunity to extend our prayers and blessings for this lent and hope that everyone will have a blessed feast of the Nativity. Along with the angelic hosts, let us cry aloud and proclaim: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward all men!’

Your Shepherd in Christ,

Alexios Mar Eusebius,
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