

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

Alexios Mar Eusebius

Metropolitan

DSWA/C/03/2011



February 21, 2011

Blessings to our Chor-Episcopoi, Priests, Deacons, and all the faithful of our Diocese.

Dearly Beloved,

We are soon to set our journey towards Golgotha and begin the Great Lent of 2011. It is one of the most important seasons of our liturgical year. When we look at the Lenten prayers and services, the central theme is repentance and forgiveness. It is only when we truly repent before God and reconcile with our fellow brothers and sisters that we are able to experience the peace and joy of the resurrected Christ.

Today, in our family, parish, and social life, we are witnessing the power of the evil controlling individuals. The fear of God is slowly fading from man. There are indeed unfortunate things happening in the world around us, but we are forgetting the grace and mercy of God and competing with fellow human beings; thus, we also participate in nurturing evil in the world.

Fasting and abstinence are two great weapons against the evil one. Through fasting, Christ defeated Satan. In our spiritual battle, fasting and abstinence protect us but also train our body and mind for spiritual battle. It helps us dispel immodesty, control lust, and offer our bodies as holy temples of God. This practice should be joined with repentance, humility of heart, charity towards all men, and continuous prayers.

The Great Lent is also the appropriate time to conduct a comprehensive audit of our lives. We ourselves must prepare an audit report after evaluating our spiritual lives. We must pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to create an awareness of our sins so that we might experience true repentance during this Lent. We urge all our faithful to receive the Sacrament of Confession and partake of the Holy Qurbana on Pesaha, so that we may be made worthy to participate in the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

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As it has already been communicated, we will be visiting the different areas of our Diocese to conduct Lenten retreats and prayers throughout the Great Lent. This is arranged and intended to experience the Great Lent as one family. Let us take a step towards real reconciliation at the beginning of this lent, and may all the faithful come together and experience the love and mercy of the crucified and risen Lord.

May the Holy Spirit guide you through this Great Lent, and may the mercy of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who redeemed us by His life-giving Death and glorious Resurrection, be with us all forever.

Your Shepherd in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alexios Eusebius" with a small cross above the 's' in "Eusebius". The signature is underlined.

Alexios Eusebius Metropolitan