



MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

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No: 102/2025

Blessings to the respected Vicars, Priests of the locality, Cor-Episcopoi, Ramban, Deacons, Kaisthanees, and beloved faithful in the Diocese of South-West America.

Dearly Beloved,

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we joyfully proclaim the canonical establishment of St. Gregory Orthodox Monastery and Retreat Center, located at 20991 Old Town Road, Tehachapi, California, within the Western Region of the Diocese of South-West America.

Under the heavenly patronage of St. Gregory the Theologian, this sacred monastery is envisioned to be a dwelling of prayer, ascetic discipline, and spiritual formation, offering stillness, healing, and deeper communion with God. Inspired by the life and sublime theology of St. Gregory the Theologian, this monastery shall stand as a witness to the Divine Presence.

As St. Gregory himself writes: *“It is necessary to be still to converse clearly with God. One must withdraw from the tumult and confusion of life to draw near to the Divine.”* Following this sacred vision, St. Gregory Orthodox Monastery shall be firmly rooted in the liturgical life of the Church—offering the daily cycle of prayers, the Holy Qurbana, sacred labor, and a life of holy simplicity. Additionally, the monastery will serve as a spiritual refuge for the faithful, offering retreats, guidance, and opportunities for spiritual renewal to both clergy and laity.

With paternal joy, we appoint Rev. Fr. Samuel Varghese as the Abbot of St. Gregory Orthodox Monastery. Born and nurtured in the Church in America, Fr. Samuel has embraced the call to a life of celibacy and monastic service. We shall pray diligently for his labor in the vineyard of our Lord, to form future brothers in monastic discipline and ministering to the spiritual needs of the faithful. We humbly exhort all our parishes, clergy, and faithful to uphold this sacred beginning with your prayers, love, and generous support. Visit this holy place with reverence, and drink of the spiritual grace that flows therein.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with us forever and ever.

Urshlem Aramana, Beasley
The Feast Day of the Cross,
September 14, 2025

Metropolitan Dr. Thomas Mar Ivanios