



The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

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**By the Grace of God,
Zachariah Mar Nicholovos,
Diocesan Metropolitan**

CK No. 5/2021

May 8, 2021

Blessings to our Very Reverend Chor Episcopoi, Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, and faithful of the Northeast American Diocese!

Dearly beloved,

This Thursday, the Church celebrates the glorious Feast of the Ascension of our Lord. This Feast invites us to lift up our minds and hearts to the very exalted place where He is enthroned. It also marks the beginning of the *Days of Awaiting* where the Church prayerfully prepares ourselves to be renewed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. When we look at Holy Scripture, we know after the Ascension of the Lord, the disciples entered into a time of deep prayer and discernment. This was not only to prepare for the descent of the Holy Spirit, but to pray that a *worthy and humble* candidate will be selected to be numbered with the eleven other apostles (Acts 1:26).

The Holy Church finds herself in a similar moment from salvation history. In a time where the world is brought to its knees by a ravaging pandemic, the Church – be it a Metropolitan or a layperson – must bend our minds, hearts and knees in prayer for the future of our Holy Church.

Dearly beloved, we exhort all of you, to use these ten days for prayer for the church. Let us pray that the Lord will raise up a *worthy and humble* successor to His Holiness the Catholicos of the East, with the same qualities Saint Paul exhorted to Saint Titus: “*For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict*” (Titus 1:7-9).

Let us continue to uphold beloved Catholicos, His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, in our prayers. Let us fervently pray that our Lord will send down His Holy Spirit upon us to guide our hearts and minds with the gift of discernment, so the Church will elect a worthy successor to His Holiness the Catholicos of the East.

Yours in our Lord,



Zachariah Nicholovos, Metropolitan