



# The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

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

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Blessings to the Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, and faithful of the Northeast American Diocese.

Dearly beloved,

At the very beginning of our Lenten journey, Christendom has been hit with the devastating news of the beheading of twenty one innocent Coptic Orthodox Christians. Their only "wrong" as seen in the eyes of their persecutors, was that these innocent men were 'people of the cross'.

On behalf of the clergy and faithful of our Diocese, we have sent a letter of condolence, and have expressed our solidarity to our brother in Christ, His Grace Bishop David of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York and New England.

As fellow Christians, we mourn not only for the death of these innocent men; but also for the silence of the world when it comes to the increasing persecution of Christians.

We direct our clergy, and faithful to remember these young Orthodox Christian martyrs, and all those who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ, during this Sunday's Holy Qurbana, and in our continued prayers. Let us especially pray that the Lord will touch the hearts of these militant extremists who seek to persecute innocent people. May they hear the voice of the Lord, Who beckons them to love, and respect their fellow man.

We reiterate the words of our brother, His Grace Bishop David, in a recent statement on the martyrdom of these innocent men: "we follow in the example of these martyrs, who are now removed from the violence of this world and reunited with their Heavenly Father. Just as they remained true to their faith in the face of such barbarity, and invoked the name of our Lord Jesus even until their last breaths, we also cling to our beloved Father during this time of mourning, in the knowledge that, through His love and grace, we are empowered to overcome any evil."

May the prayers of these martyrs preserve us, and may their example strengthen our own Christian faith.

Yours in our Lord,

Zachariah Nicholovos, Metropolitan