The ministries of our Diocese have evolved from having bible studies and one day meetings to conferences requiring overnight stays. Some ministries, such as MGOCSM have found it difficult to host a retreat for our college students during the winter breaks, because of the unavailability of college campuses and retreat centers.

Since the enthronement of His Grace Zachariah Mar Nicholovos, as Metropolitan of the Northeast American Diocese, town hall styled meetings were conducted by His Grace during his Episcopal Visits to the parishes. It was during these meetings that the vision for a Retreat Center—to enable and encourage the growth of our many different ministries was first shared and discussed.

**The Lord Plants the Seed — The Faithful Act**

In June 2013, the Diocesan Assembly met in Baltimore, Maryland, and identified the need for a Retreat Center. The Assembly entrusted the Diocesan Council with the task of finding a suitable location for such a center.

After 3 years of searching, and countless visits to multiple locations in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, the Diocesan Council found an ideal property in the beautiful Fatima Renewal Center. The Fatima Renewal Center, formerly the Saint Pius X Roman Catholic Seminary, has hosted over 145 retreats per year for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania.

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**History of the Northeast American Diocese**

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, otherwise known as the Indian Orthodox Church, traces its apostolic roots to Saint Thomas, the Disciple of Jesus Christ. Saint Thomas preached the Gospel in the southeast Asian subcontinent of India, specifically in a State presently known as Kerala. It is there that Saint Thomas established seven Churches and one chapel.

This Church grew from hundreds of converts to a present day of 3.5 million faithful. More than 3,000 families of these humble faithful live in the Northeast American Diocese, in over 50 parishes in the northeast USA & Canada.

By the Grace of God, more than 85% of our parishes have secured a Church building of their own to worship and grow in the faith. However over the past decades, many of our faithful have gone beyond just meeting on Sunday, and participated many ministries such as MGOCIM, GROW, Acolyte Training, Marth Mariam Samajam.
A Beautiful Tree — Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center Blossoms

In May 2016, the Diocesan Assembly met in Suffern, New York and approved the purchase of the Fatima Renewal Center. Subsequently, our Diocesan Metropolitan, informed and sought the blessing of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan, who joyfully offered his blessing, and enthusiastic support for this ministry.

Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center is nestled away in Dalton, Pennsylvania, which is just minutes outside of downtown Scranton. It is enthroned on more than 300 sprawling acres, and includes a lake, beautiful trees and rolling hills ideal for outdoor meditation.

The retreat center, includes a chapel, library, conference rooms, classrooms and offices. There are two dormitory wings to accommodate over 180 guests, and a gymnasium that will comfortably seat 800 people.

With the continued prayerful support of our faithful, Holy Transfiguration can be a great spiritual powerhouse for our Diocese, and the Church as a whole.

“SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE”
- Genesis 28:16
How can you support the ministry of Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center?

We first must recognize that this is not a project, but rather a ministry, which belongs to God. This vision of having such a center was inspired by the daily activities happening within our Diocese. After much prayerful thought and setting out what we are in need of — God revealed this beautiful center. You can support this ministry by praying whole heartedly for it, through which God will move you to offer your valuable time, and your gracious financial support.

Why should you give to the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center?

We read repeatedly in Holy Scripture that we are called to give back our wealth, and time back to God, and yet it is very hard for us to do so. We hesitate to give because it can be very frightening. We depend on our money for security and the thought of giving up a portion of our means of security is not easy. We must remember that our only true source of security is not money — it is God.

All that we have was not taken up on our own accord, rather it was given to us by God. We are called to be good stewards and offer back to Him, the good gifts He has blessed us with in thanksgiving. God has called upon us, and given us the responsibility to support His Bride, the Church, and Her ministries. We are called to ensure that our Church and its ministries are sustained for generations to come.

When we give back to Him “gifts from His own gifts”, with a generous heart, we will be transformed by our offering, and in turn He will do great work with it and bless us through it.

Giving Opportunities — Become a Friend of Holy Transfiguration!

Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center is an investment for the present, and future of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in North America. We must continue to invest and seek opportunities to build up, and strengthen our witness in this continent. Every family in our Diocese should actively be part of the building up of this center, through unceasing prayer, and generous giving. After all, this is your center—a place of prayer, and spiritual refuge for you and your family!

There are multiple financial giving opportunities for this ministry, namely through prayerful one-time donations, monthly donations, or loans.

The purchase cost of the Holy Transfiguration Retreat center is $3.25 million dollars with the cost of renovation, $2.75 million for a total cost of $6 million dollars.

It is our earnest hope that each family in our diocese will prayerfully commit a one time offering of at least $2000 to this ministry. There are also monthly pledges and we are also willing to accept loans* that we will provide interest up to 2% per year. In addition there will be several opportunities to commemorate your loved ones in the retreat center such as conference rooms ($50,000), sleeping rooms ($25,000) and commemorative pictures of your loved ones ($10,000).

To make a generous tax deductible donation, please make your check payable to the Northeast American Diocese. Kindly write Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in the memo line of your check, and mail it to our Diocesan Chancery:

2158 Route 106
Muttontown, NY 11791

I prayerfully support this ministry with a one time offering of: $2,000  $5,000  $7,000
I prayerfully support this ministry in memory of ________________ $10,000  $25,000  $50,000
I prayerfully support this ministry with a monthly donation of: $100  $250  $500
I prayerfully support this ministry with a loan* (2%) for $________. *minimum amount to qualify for interest on loan is $5,000

The Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center has been a great vision of the Northeast American Diocese. The main goal was to build a home for the successful youth programs, such as Hadootho, as well as a place where the faithful of the Diocese could retreat and reconnect with God and each other.

The transformation of this dream to reality is the result of the generosity, kindness and love of many people. Our donors and partners have given from their hearts and we invite you to be part of this sacred work for our people.

WHY GIVE TO HOLY TRANSGFIGURATION?

Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center is a home for the clergy and faithful of our Diocese and all guests providing them the opportunity to grow closer to God and each other. More than ever before, we are in need of a space where all people, young and old, can take refuge, engage with creation, experience God’s presence, and grow in fellowship with one another away from pressures and daily distractions of the world.

We invite you to become a partner in this ministry with us by offering a gift to the center. Please join us in making this dream a reality and help to sustain the Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center.

Purification  Illumination  Deification
Blessings to our Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, and faithful of the Northeast American Diocese!

Dearly beloved,

Our Church in North America has grown tremendously since her canonical establishment in this hemisphere. We have grown into two Dioceses, of which our Diocese is the most densely populated. Our Church here has raised more than thirty young men from this country to serve in the ordained ministry, and that number continues to grow. A strong majority of our parishes are well established, and have beautiful places of worship. We have more priests becoming full time Vicars, who can totally commit to the spiritual needs of our faithful, as they are properly being supported by the parishes.

These signs of stability and growth indicate the spiritual needs of our faithful have also increased. Our challenges in this country are many and much different from those in Kerala, India. We are trying our best to address those challenges. It is in this context that our Diocese Assembly unanimously approved the purchase of the Fatima Renewal Center located in Dalton, Pennsylvania. This center will be a great source for our continued training, and witnessing. It is with the prayerful cooperation and financial support of our clergy and faithful, we envision this to be a retreat home for every family in our Diocese. For this reason we wish every family in our Diocese donate a minimum of $2,000 to the future Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center. Just as we supported numerous initiatives of the Church in India, let us support this initiative of our Diocese – for our families and our children growing in this country.

During the recent Apostolic Visit of His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, our Catholicos was able to visit and learn more about the plans for our future Diocesan Retreat Center. His Holiness was so convinced of the need of such a place for the Church in North America, he offered an initial donation to this ministry. His Holiness donated this substantial amount anticipating that every family in our Diocese will follow his example. We invite every family to be part of this ministry, by offering your prayerful cooperation and generous financial support. Please look through the brochure, and visit the various media pages as indicated in the brochure as well. God Willing, through our corporate prayers and efforts, we will raise sufficient funds by December 2016, to ensure we can close on this property by January 2017. Let us answer God’s call to act!

Yours in our Lord,

Zachariah Nicholovos, Metropolitan