



MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA

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Blessings to our beloved Cor-Episcopoi, Vicars, Priests of the locality, members of the managing committee and faithful of all our parishes in the Diocese of South-West America!

Dearly beloved,

Greetings to you all in the name of the Holy Triune God! By the grace of Almighty God and by the prayers of St. Mary, the mother of God and all other Saints, our diocesan annual clergy meeting and diocesan assembly held on June 22 and 23rd at our Diocesan Centre, Beasley, Houston has concluded successfully with remarkable modesty and decorum. We take this opportunity to express our sincere love and gratitude as well as satisfaction to all our beloved priests and members of the diocesan assembly for their disciplined attendance. The annual clergy meeting was also well attended. Discussions were held on to build the fellowship among diocesan priests and the spiritual growth of each parish for a meaningful witness in our society in the form of Church "as a tent of God in the midst of the society".

The Diocesan Secretary and members of the Diocesan council deserve special appreciation for the efforts taken for the dignified completion of the Assembly meeting. We want to applaud the diligent efforts taken by the diocesan council and the diocesan auditor to re-establish our diocesan 501(c) (3) status. Also we acknowledge the timely support and service rendered by our Cathedral Church and other parishes in Houston area to make the meeting a hospitable one at different levels.

The proceedings of the diocesan assembly went on, as per the announced agenda, with high propriety. Passionate lively discussions took place on the various ministries and activities of the diocese and the plenty of opportunities we collectively have, to improve and grow in terms of the vision and mission of our diocese and the church at large.

We are extremely happy to inform you all, the various proposals and decisions of the diocesan assembly for the continued growth of the diocese and the wellbeing of the people of God:

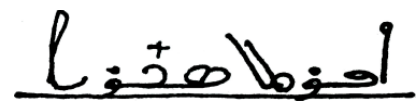
1. The Annual report and the Annual accounts for the year 2017 presented by the Diocesan Secretary, was unanimously passed after having detailed deliberations. The budget for the year 2018, which is passed by the diocesan council, was presented in the assembly.
2. The Diocesan Council unveiled a well thought out revised master plan for the diocesan centre development. The assembly authorised the diocesan council to proceed with the feasibility study of the Master plan, which will include retirement residential facility and a community centre in Phase I, followed by a Chapel, Cemetery and other potential projects in successive phase, by a reputed architectural/Engineering firm and the findings shall be presented to the Diocesan Assembly in a meeting that will be convened specially for that purpose.

3. The Assembly approved the Diocesan council's proposal for a thorough study of the Pastoral ministry, standardised salary system, a viable retirement pension, a fair transfer system and other welfare schemes for the diocesan priests. The assembly also requested the Assistant Metropolitan to nominate one person from the members of the assembly to work alongside the diocesan council on this project.
4. It is resolved that, as part of the many fund generating programs, the diocesan council shall organise a series of Holy Land Trips. Rev. Fr Binny Kuruvilla and Mr. Roy Thomas, council members will coordinate the program with the help of a reputable travel agency. Diocesan Secretary Rev. Fr. Philip Abraham will take lead in the formation of 'diocesan foundation' with the help of our parish members, to further advance the financial roadmap of the diocese.
5. It is decided to constitute an endowment fund in the name "Dr. Thomas Mar Makarios Metropolitan Award" for the sacred memory of Late lamented Metropolitan Mar Makarios Thirumeni. This award will be instituted towards the diocesan Sunday school students.
6. It is proposed that the Assistant Metropolitan will review the diocesan Sunday school curriculum and needed changes, if any, will be incorporated.
7. The assembly appreciated the hard work of the Liturgical Resource Development team in publishing the Holy Qurbana book. The team will be expanded to include a wider spectrum of leaders and efforts will be taken to improvise the book in its next edition with the feedback from the priests and members.
8. The assembly approved the proposal that the number of questions an assembly member can raise in the Diocesan assembly shall be limited to three. If more than three questions were received from a member, the first three shall be considered as valid. This decision was taken to facilitate more participation from the members and efficient time management.
9. It is decided that from 2019 financial year onwards each parish should allot the targeted amount for Catholicate Day and Diocesan day contributions in their parish budget. In order to create a financial flow and stability for the various activities of the diocese, it is further resolved that parish members who fail to contribute towards the diocesan day collection will be considered as defaulters.
10. It is resolved that the next Annual Diocesan Assembly will be convened at Florida Region in 2019.

Beloved ones,

Let us thank God for the fruitful discussions and decisions of the Diocesan Assembly and we exhort you all to abide with the decisions of the assembly without any hesitation.

May the love of God the Father, Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all



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On July 10, 2018