



St. Mary, Queen of Peace Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in the USA and Canada

Dr. Philipos Mar Stephanos Thottathil
Bishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy of the USA and Canada

Circular 7/2020

**Dear Reverend Corepiscopoi, Fathers, Religious Sisters, and sisters and brothers in Christ,
Cordial greetings to you!**

- 1. We have been experiencing the marvelous Providence of God, during the darkest and most anxious days, due to the fatal virus COVID 19 pandemic. We shall continue to pray for the recovery of the afflicted and healing of the whole world. The invisible virus and the pandemic have taught us many lessons. Humankind encountered a radical powerlessness and helplessness. The whole world experienced such fragility and disorientation. However, we realized the worth and value of placing our full trust and hope in the power and promise of God. According to Pope Francis, the pandemic has shattered the illusions that people can be self-sufficient and individualism as the guiding principle of society. This pandemic reminded us just how much people need each other. We are called to glorify God and live in social solidarity and harmony. Let us continue placing our trust and pray: “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalms 18:2 RSV).**

I appreciate all the health-care workers of our community who have been rendering heroic service to the sick and the needy during this period of crisis. Our priests and leaders of the parishes and communities deserve special appreciation for their amazing pastoral, spiritual and social ministries in these unprecedented situations. It was a great spiritual joy that I could join in most of the parish communities in their ‘zoomed’ prayer services.

The opening up of the churches for public services shall be done according to the norms and prescriptions of the local and state authorities.

- 2. Along with the tragedy of the pandemic, recently, the USA and several countries have been experiencing civil protests and social unrest based on the allegations of racism and discrimination. It is time for us to work and pray for building up a just society based on the teachings of Jesus and the subsequent social teachings of the church. Pope Francis, the Episcopal Conferences of USA and Canada have responded to these issues which could be pursued comprehensively with maturity and wisdom.**

I wish to share a few statements, and a pastoral letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

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[Statement of U.S. Bishop Chairmen in Wake of Death of George Floyd and National Protests](#)

[Statement of U.S. Bishops' President on George Floyd and the Protests in American Cities](#)

[Open Wide Our Hearts - Pastoral Letter Against Racism](#)

[Combatting Racism](#)

3. Please ensure to conduct the final examinations of Catechism in our Eparchy on 28th June according to the guidelines of the Director.
4. Hearty Congratulations to Rev. Fr. Michael Edathil and Fr. Jerry Mathew who have successfully completed their postgraduate- Licentiate Degrees in Pastoral Theology - Fr. Michael, in Family Studies, and Fr. Jerry in Youth Ministry. I hope their higher studies would be a great blessing to our Eparchy.
5. Due to the present non-conducive situations, we are not able to have a joint celebration of the Memorial Day of Servant of God, Mar Ivanios, in the Cathedral. Kindly arrange a memorial service in our parishes and mission centers.
6. As I have communicated earlier, in view of establishing a Pastoral Centre for our Eparchy, we are in the process of purchasing the School Buildings next to the Cathedral in New York. This would be possible by the esteemed prayers and valuable financial support of each family in our Eparchy. I prayerfully request your kind cooperation and support in this regard. Details will be communicated as and when we reach a formal agreement with the Diocese of Rockville Centre who is the present seller of the property.

Invoking God's choicest blessings to all of You,

In Jesus Christ,

+ Philipos Mar Stephanos

Dated June 27, 2020.

NB: This circular is to be read out in parishes where services are being held and is to be communicated to all the Faithful of the Eparchy via electronic mail.

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