



# The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

2158 ROUTE 106 • MUTTONTOWN • NEW YORK 11791

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

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

Dearly beloved,

It is “cliché” to talk about the themes of peace, love, and joy during this Holy Season. In the context of the American culture, it is probably the three themes emphasized during the months of November and December, and then forgotten the rest of the year.

We speak in a triumphant and emphatic manner when it comes to these themes in every divine office of the Church. Today however, we have either accepted a shallow understanding of them, or altogether have rejected them. The only theme we have consistently been living in is *fear* – the fear of terrorism, the fear of religion, the fear of mass shootings, the fear of refugees. This “culture of fear” has significantly grown and trapped us.

The Feast of Nativity is the celebration of the birth of Christ born to a family who was homeless and seeking refuge in Bethlehem. The Lord preferentially opted to be identified with the poor in His birth. The early parts of His life were spent as a refugee fleeing from the threatening political rulers of that time. Today, the world is being challenged by the presence of millions of refugees who are victims of the political “super powers”. We are reminded that the Lord is not in shopping malls or mansions but among the refugees and the homeless.

This feast is a reminder for us to advocate against the social and political structures that create refugees, and human suffering. This can be done if we actively accept peace, love, and joy – which are all in found in Jesus Christ – the new born King!

May this glorious Feast be an occasion for us to recommit ourselves to the Lord and become instruments of peace and healing in this broken world. May Christ the King, and Redeemer of our souls, sustain you and your loved ones on this Holy Day and throughout the New Year!

Yours in our Lord,

Zachariah Nicholovos, Metropolitan