



# The Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

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

CK No. 21/2017

November 8, 2017

Blessings to the Vicars, Assistant Vicars, and faithful of all our parishes in the Northeast American Diocese.

Dearly beloved,

It has been a dream of ours to institute formal premarital counseling retreats in our Diocese to help prepare our young couples as they embark on sacred journey of Christian Marriage. We commend our Vicars and Assistant Vicars who strive to ensure young couples are receiving at least five premarital counseling sessions, prior to their marriage. Furthermore, our Achens have follow up sessions as well, which have only strengthened many marriages, and overall family life. We offer our sincere appreciation to these Achens who continue to minister to our faithful in an effective manner.

There is an unfortunate rise in marital discord, which has resulted in divorce and separation. This grieves us deeply. In order to prepare and strengthen our young couples, we are formally instituting Pre-Marital Counseling Seminars on three separate occasions at our Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center. This will ensure our couples are able to participate in one session prior to their marriage. These seminars will be held on Saturday, December 9, 2017, Saturday, January 13, 2018, and Saturday, April 7, 2018 from 9:30AM to 12:30PM. The registration fee of \$25 are to be made payable to the Northeast American Diocese. For more information, please contact our Diocesan Secretary, Reverend Father Sujit Thomas.

Any couple preparing for marriage are to participate in one of these sessions. Those who have been recently married, are also encouraged to participate in one of these sessions. Our Reverend Father Paul Cherian, will be facilitating all of these seminars. Achen has a Masters in Counseling, and has offered effective premarital counseling to many couples throughout our Diocese. We solicit your prayerful support in this new initiative. It is our prayer this ministry will only strengthen, and become an effective tool in preventing the erosion of the Christian family.

May the blessings and mercies of God Almighty be showered upon us.

Yours in our Lord,

Zachariah Nicholovos, Metropolitan