

THE INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
(The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of the East)
DIOCESE OF AHMEDABAD

St. Thomas Orthodox Theological Seminary
Kalmeshwar P. O.
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India - 441 501



St. Thomas Bishop's House
St. Mary's School Campus
Naroda, Ahmedabad - GJ
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Kalpana. No: 89

By His Grace
Dr. Geevarghese Yulios Metropolitan

Peace and blessings be upon our beloved Vicars of parishes, Priests of the locality, Trustees, and Members of all parishes of the Diocese of Ahmadabad!

Birth of a child is always an occasion of happiness. We have always overwhelming joy to watch a newborn. It is the innocence and sinless nature of a newborn that makes us joyous. Now Christmas recalls the occasion of the birth of our Lord, the second person of the Holy Trinity, who became a child! This God-child is fully identical with any other human child (Hebrews 4:15), but remained holy and knew no sin (II Cor 5:21). St. Peter describes this child as 'a lamb without blemish or defect' (I Pet 1:19). And the same child would exhort us to remain sinless throughout our lives. This is from where Christmas draws its depth and profundity. Nativity of our Lord is the season that calls us to remain holy and sinless. And the reward of being sinless is the Kingdom of Heaven, the eternal happiness with the angels, saints and all glorified departed.

We all are inherently happy to give gifts and presents to newborn children. The Holy Bible proclaims that Magi from the far-east have undertaken a very much adventurous travel to present precious gifts to the new born baby Jesus. What will be the gifts that we would give to baby Jesus this year? Let us give ourselves to the Lord as gifts by being sinless during this Christmas and thereafter. Just as Psalmist says, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise' (Psalm 51:17). Let us give to the baby Jesus a broken and contrite heart that hastens towards holiness as our sincere gift during this Christmas season. St. Paul portrays the Church as without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:27) and let us make ourselves worthy to be the spotless gift to the baby Jesus!

Dearly beloved! As we all know, it is St. Thomas, the apostle of our Lord, who begotten us in faith in Christ. Along with the Nativity Fast, the Holy tradition of the Church observes three days, December 18-21, with special devotion and prayers to remember this great founder Father of Christianity in India, while it is on December 18 that the Apostle got wounded and on 21st he left for his heavenly abode. We urge you all to observe these three days and celebrate the Feast of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas with Holy Qurbana on 21st. May the prayers of St. Thomas, our Father in Christ, be a stronghold for us during this Nativity season.

Yours Shepherd in Christ,

By His Grace, Dr. Geevarghese Yulios
Metropolitan of the Diocese of Ahmedabad

07 December 2011