

**In the blessed name of the Tri-une God, Self-existent,
Beginningless and Endless, Perfect in Being, (Glory be to Him)**

**Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose II Catholicos of the East and
Malankara Metropolitan enthroned on the Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas**



No. 170/2018

Blessings to our beloved Vicars of the churches, Priests of the locality, *Kaisthanees* and faithful of all the Parishes!

Our dearly beloved in the Lord,

We write this with unspeakable agony. As St. Paul reminds us “*I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart*”(Romans 9:2) Some recent unfortunate incidents in our Church and the society make us very unhappy. Questions are raised against our Christian witness. In all these troubles we put our trust on our Lord who keeps us as the apple of the eye. We have been led in this path by our Holy fathers who put their trust in the Lord. Their prayers, tears, pastoral service and vigil are strong fortress for us. But the allegations raised against some of our priests really pain us. The priests who are alleged to have committed some abominable crime have been removed from their priestly duties till the enquiry is completed. If their crime is proved beyond doubt, we or the Holy Church will not shield them. Strong punitive action shall be initiated against them. However, we have the responsibility to see that the innocent are not punished. Those who have lodged complaint against our priests are advised to approach the civil authorities and we have given them an assurance that the church will not protect the guilty. Therefore, we too desire that an objective, just and unbiased probe has to be done in the case. All should pray for it and patiently wait for the outcome.

Our beloved, the allegations raised against our priests are undoubtedly very serious. For this very reason, it is natural that the issue is discussed Christian and public circles. However, many people doubt that taking advantage of this vulnerable situation, a planned publicity is hatched to deny the holy sacraments, to tarnish priesthood as whole, calumniate the Holy Church and thereby reap selfish gains. We urge that the faithful of the Church should be vigilant against such insidious moves. With unshakable unity we should strive for the edification of the Church identifying the planned attacks against the Church. The sacraments like holy Confession should not be diluted. The holy Sacraments of the Church handed down to us by our holy fathers have to be followed and kept in fact.

Beloved of the Lord,

We would like to admonish you with great seriousness. Priesthood is a great gift given by the grace of God. The lion's share of our priests do their service in a meticulous way. The sins alleged on a minuscule minority, however, bring untold disgrace to the Church. This is a time when the satanic forces work vigorously. As St. Peter reminds us *"be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"*. Therefore, we need to be alert and of sober mind. All our priestly orders should do their service in holiness and follow the model of Jesus Christ who abhors sin and love the sinner. The respected bishops, priests and the faithful have the responsibility to uphold their Christian witness in the Church and society. We advise the priestly orders, the inmates of monasteries and convents and the faithful to prayerfully strive for rendering their Christian witness in a meaningful way.

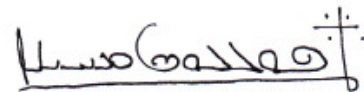
We should not agonize and disappoint the lion's share of the priests who do their service with diligence and utmost dedication and criticize the holy traditions handed over to us by the holy fathers on a sudden spurt of emotion. The Church understands your agonies, anxieties and concerns in its fullest sense. We pray to Almighty to fill peace in our hearts. The shepherds of God's people and the flock under their protection should recognize the indications of the time and live a life of exemplary discipline and self control. At the same time, we are frightened and alarmed to see the misuse of social media and modern means of communication. Our priests should resolve to lead a prayer life and teach our people to follow the faith and practices of the Church. In the same way, all our faithful shall do the family prayers, observe the Lents and fasts in full austerity. All shall pray for the well being and prosperity of the Church and for enabling our bishops, priests and deacons to lead a life of holiness.

Further our beloved,

Again we remind you with the ringing words of St. Paul, *"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourself. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction faithful in prayer"*. The pains and the disgrace we suffer now are only temporary. The merciful Lord shall deliver us from all these soon.

May the Grace and Blessings of God Almighty abide with you forever. And may the prayers of the Mother of our God the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Thomas the Apostle of India, our Holy Fathers Yeldo Mar Baselios, Mar Gregorios, Mar Dionysius and all the Holy Saints be a stronghold for us. Amen.

Our Father who art in Heaven.....



Baselios Marthoma Paulose II

From Catholicate Aramana
Devalokam, Kottayam, Kerala, India
On July 05, 2018.