

**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 Mathews III Catholicos of the East and
Malankara Metropolitan enthroned on the Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas**



No. 23/2022

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

Beloved in the Lord,

The holy and salvific Great Lent is fast approaching. The holy lent is a pilgrimage, that is directed towards the harbor of salvation. The desire and eagerness to embrace the joy of the feast of resurrection of our Lord should be our driving force during the lent. The community of faithful are the pilgrims who are journeying toward heaven. An appropriate preparation is imperative for any pilgrimage. Discipline, strong determination and willingness to endure suffering are essential for making a journey. One has to devise a proper plan before setting out for the journey. The Church as the bride who awaits the resurrection of the bridegroom, the intense devotion and love of the Church during the season of the lent should be expressed through reading of the Holy Scripture, prayer, worship and fasting.

Our world is going through a challenging time in the context of the ongoing pandemic and associated problems. In this unparalleled situation, all our human abilities and support systems are turning out to be ineffective. We have to strongly believe that our God, who listened and answered the prayers of Jonah from the depth of the ocean, of Daniel from the lion's den and of the three young men from the furnace, shall also be pleased with our prayers of repentance and lent, and shall comfort us in all our affliction and shall lead us to the harbour of salvation.

This Lenten season, let us strive to equip ourselves with the undefeatable spiritual weapon of Lent and make a pilgrimage through the way of the cross of our Lord. We need to have the determination in order 'to be transformed by the renewing of our mind', as St. Paul reminds us in Rom. 12:2. It is not the external observance of the laws, but rather the internal obedience that leads us to this cleansing. Let us transform this particular period into a time for re-establishing our relationship with God and to reinvigorate our mutual relationship with one another. We have the responsibility to actively seek and find the poor and help them, instead of passively waiting for the poor to approach us; just as it is the farmer who goes to the fields in order to sow the seeds and not vice-versa. The greatest manifestation of the lent is to care for orphans and widows in their distress: and St. James, the apostle, enlightens us that it is the mark of pure and undefiled religion before God (James 1:27). Let us properly make use of this Lenten season so as to actualise prophet Isaiah's vision of true fasting, which is to share our bread with the hungry, bringing the homeless into our house and to cover the naked (Is. 58:7).

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 of all the Holy Saints be a stronghold for us. Amen.

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Our Father who art in Heaven.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Baselios Marthoma Mathews III', written in a cursive style.

Baselios Marthoma Mathews III

From Catholicate Aramana

Devalokam, Kottayam, Kerala, India, On February 02, 2022