

FROM THE APOSTOLIC SEE OF MALANKARA METROPOLITAN

DR. JOSEPH MAR THOMA

Circular No.223

Blessings to all the Vicars, Resident Clergy, Trustees and Members of all the Parishes under our authority

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Let it be reminded that it is mandatory that all the Circulars sent to the parishes be read out during the announcements for the knowledge of the believers. This circular is being sent in the context of the recent happenings all around.

The entire humanity is terrified by the impact of innumerable man-made and natural catastrophes happening world over. Human conscience is tormented by the daily inflow of the news of the events provided through the media outlets. Earthquakes, genocidal tendencies, violence, communal threats that tend to harm the very soul of secularism- all these attempt to darken our social milieu. The genocides happening in West Asia repudiates the honour and liberty of human life and defiles the very essence of humanity. During the Ottoman conquest against the Armenian Church a century ago, more than 1.5 million Christians were mercilessly massacred. During the centenary of the martyrdom, the Church has all those martyrs as saints. Let us uphold the families of the Christian martyrs in West Asia in our prayers and praise God for their steadfast faith. We need to pray continually that the redemption of humanity may be realised everywhere through love of God and love of the other, which indeed is the true intent of spirituality. Let us intercede for spiritual gifts that would transform our minds that would behold divine visage in the face of the other and not a hostile face.

The recent catastrophic earthquakes that have struck the land of Nepal, other neighboring countries, and many states in North India have unleashed incalculable terror and misery. During the cataclysmic cloudburst two years back in Uttarakhand near the Himalayas, our church took up a housing program for those who were rendered homeless. The construction of the 20 houses being provided by our church is in its final phase. We hope to dedicate the houses and hand them over to the villagers by the end of July. A total of 1 crore have been spent on the entire project, the cost of a single house being 5 lakh. It is a matter to praise God for all those church members, parishes and institutions who have participated in this endeavor.

At this moment, the church is called to share in the responsibility of the larger society and state in extending its care and support to those who are reeling under the misery of the disastrous natural calamities and earthquakes in Nepal and other states of India. Even as we live secure in our homes, our own brothers and sisters have been pushed into the depths of agony, having lost all their belongings as they live in harrowing conditions, with the heavens displaying frightening shades of terror, and the ground beneath them shaking up in violent turbulence. For them, life has become even worse than a life with only the sky above and earth below. Along with praying for the solace and the rehabilitation of the life and habitat of these our brethren, our hands need to be extended to wipe their tears. Palms folded in prayer and open palms to care should become the symbols of the genuine love of the true believer. As a church, we intend to undertake housing project in the disaster-affected areas in cooperation with the government. Each of our parish should take special care in setting apart a Sunday offertory for this cause and remit the amount in the Sabha Office before the 30th of June. The institutions of the church could also participate in this endeavor. It would be ideal if individuals, institutions and parishes could join in this effort by contributing an amount 5 lakh rupees, which is the cost of building one house. In such a case, we would be able to construct many more houses.

Once again believers, we should pray especially for the comfort of those who are shattered by these unforeseen calamities. The Lord Almighty- the God of history, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the One who loves us in spite of our iniquities- let us submit ourselves and these our brothers and sisters experiencing unfathomable anguish before the Lord that we all may be kept in perfect peace.

Grace be with you all.

Dated 22nd April 2015 from the Poolatheen, Tiruvalla.

Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan