



BELIEVERS EASTERN CHURCH

Office of the Metropolitan, Synod Secretariat, Thiruvalla, Kerala, India.

SHEPHERD'S LETTER

June/July 2019

✠Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, Barekmor and greetings to you in the name of the triune God!

I am so proud and happy that you are part of our church—Believers Eastern Church, and I count it a privilege to be your spiritual father, in Christ. Along with St. Paul, let me say, “Wherever I go I hear you being talked about! For your faith in God is becoming known around the world. How I thank God through Jesus Christ for this good report, and for each one of you. God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to the one I serve with all my might, telling others the Good News about his Son.”(Romans 1:8–9 TLB)

Celebration of Pentecost Sunday

In our journey through the Christian calendar year, we have celebrated the joy of Easter, the ascension of Jesus into heaven, and most recently, Pentecost Sunday.

The celebration of Pentecost is a time for us to remember the Holy Spirit, God’s gift to us, and how the Spirit came down on the apostles (as found in Acts Chapter 2) and how the church was ‘birthed’ that day.

As St Silouan the Anthonite says, “Filled with love, the holy Apostles went into the world, preaching salvation to mankind and fearing nothing, for the Spirit of God was their strength. When St. Andrew was threatened with death upon the cross if he did not stay (stop) his preaching he answered: ‘If I feared the cross (death) I should not be preaching the cross.’” In this manner all the other apostles, and

after them the martyrs and holy men who wrestled against evil, went forward with joy to meet pain and suffering.”

We are called to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, as followers of the apostles who become witnesses unto His name, no matter the cost.

Giving

Let me take this opportunity to remind my dear brothers and sisters that it is the responsibility of the local church/parish to take care of the needs of your priests and the needs of your local church.

Please don't confuse giving tithe and offering with giving to the poor. Tithe is giving one-tenth of what God has given us to your local church and parish. Tithes and offerings must be brought to the worship service and put it in the offering plate or bag and the responsible people like the secretary and treasurer together count the money and deposit it in the name of the church in the bank. This is the way tithes and offerings must be given.

And why do we do this? Because this is the way God has ordained to take care of the various needs of the parish and the needs of the priests. In the book of Malachi Chapter 3 Verses 6–12, God says, those who have not given the tithes and offerings have robbed God. And God challenges the people to bring it in to the church of God and see how God will bless his people.

In Acts Chapter 20 verse 35, we read that Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Giving our tithes and offerings to our local church or parish is something that is expected of us and commanded of us by God himself. Even the poor saints in Macedonia gave “out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty...they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability” (2 Corinthians 8:2–3). I would like to encourage you to be faithful in the area of giving. God's promise is there with us: “Give and it shall be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (St Luke 6:38).

Prayer

I thank you my dear brothers and sisters for praying for the elections at the national and state levels in the great nation of India. As we have a newly elected government at the centre and in many states, it is our God-given duty to continuously pray for the leaders of our nation and state. The Bible says that there is no authority except that which God has established (Romans 13:1). Therefore, we must continue to pray for our Prime Minister, his cabinet of ministers and all rulers of the states in India which have also elected new governments. We should pray for their safety and health, and that our newly elected leaders can govern our nation and our states with wisdom so that our nation and state will prosper under their rule.

I would also like to request your prayers for the upcoming Episcopal Synod of our church which will take place during the last week of June. This is a gathering of all our episcopas, vicar generals, diocesan leaders, selected clergy and leaders of the different ministries of our church. Significant time will be spent in praying, planning and discussing on various matters related to our church. Many significant decisions regarding the growth and development of our church will be taken during this week-long gathering. Please do uphold this meeting in your prayers.

Finally my brothers and sisters, as I end, let me join again with St Paul and say, "For I am convinced that nothing can separate us from His love...our fears for today, our worries for tomorrow, or where we are...nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when He died for us!" (paraphrased Romans 8:38–39)

May God's abundant grace be with you all!

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.✠

✠Moran Mor Athanasius Yohan I Metropolitan