



BELIEVERS EASTERN CHURCH

Office of the Metropolitan, Synod Secretariat, St. Thomas Community,
Thiruvalla, Kerala, India.

SHEPHERD'S LETTER

April and May 2019

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We were born to die; but He (Jesus) was born to conquer death! Hallelujah! Christ has indeed been raised from the dead and that is what we celebrate as Easter!

The Bible says, as His Holy Church, we are called and commanded to live by the disciplines that are not of this world (Col 3:1–2). And from the very first century onwards, the Holy Church embraced the fact that our life and activity should be centred around His (God's) activity in and through us. The best practical way to do this is by living by and following the church calendar. The church calendar is organized around: a) Advent, Christmas and Epiphany—this season focuses on the first coming of Jesus and the events surrounding that; b) Lent, Holy Week and Easter ending with Pentecost—this season focuses on the Passion, Crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus; and c) ordinary time—the rest of the year following Pentecost where we focus on the various aspects of our faith, especially the mission of the church in the world.

In that, one of the most important weeks of the year is the Passion Week or Holy Week. This week includes, Hosanna or Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. It is mandatory that we as God's people give utmost priority to observing Passion Week. We should do all we can to help all our fellow believers to understand the significance of this week and be part of the services and prayers which are observed during Holy Week. I thank you for doing so.

While this Shepherd's Letter is going to thousands of our churches in many countries around the world, I want to specifically ask all our parishes to pray for the upcoming elections in the country of India. God commands us in Romans Chapter 13 to pray for our rulers. It is a practice of our church to regard as sin, any form of criticism or unkind talk about those who are appointed by God to rule over us. Rather, our prayer should be that God will appoint rulers over us, in all levels of government, who will bring peace and prosperity to the great nation of India. Please also do not forget that it is our God-given obligation to exercise our right to vote in these elections. Unfortunately, there are people who think that it is an unspiritual thing to vote. Let me clearly state that this is a serious misunderstanding and we as members of Believers Eastern Church should not fall into this kind of wrong thinking. Please go and vote.

Before I end this letter, may I remind you again of the clear, non-negotiable order or command our Lord Jesus gave us—to be His witnesses, both in doing kind things to people in need and also sharing the love of Christ. And repeatedly, we are reminded of the question God asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” (Isaiah 6:8). And we see this in action by the church at Antioch (Acts of Apostles 13:2–3) where the Holy Spirit sends out the Apostle Paul and St Barnabas to share the Good News. So I ask you to do all that is possible to find the maximum number of young brothers and sisters to serve the Holy Church. This must be the most urgent prayer request for us now; that each parish must believe God to send at least one brother and sister for training, so that we can teach and train them to care for the needy and hurting who do not know God’s love.

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20–21). ✠

Moran Mor Athanasius Yohan I Metropolitan

Note: Instructions for those who read it.

- *Before reading it to your congregation, read this letter several times yourself, so that you become familiar with the letter and its contents.*
- *While reading to your congregation, make sure you read it slowly and carefully, so that everyone who’s attending the church will be able to listen and understand.*