



The Mar Thoma *Besorah*

The *Besorah* is an Official Publication of the Diocese of North America and Europe.



MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

Dearly beloved in Christ,

I was privileged to visit the St. John's Mar Thoma Parish, London, in February. What impressed me during this Episcopal visit was the manner in which the parish is trying to integrate into the life of the neighboring community. I commend the Vicar and the parishioners for their interest in making their presence meaningful in their surroundings.

One of the things that the St. John's parishioners planned to do was an evening neighborhood fellowship. I was surprised to see that an invitation card was sent to the families in the neighborhood, inviting them to come for a 'Taste of Kerala'. This enabled the parishioners not only to prepare some delicious food and share it with the guests, but also to communicate to them through various means about our culture, identity, and faith. This also enabled them to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the guests and to identify matters of mutual interest, and find out about projects for joint action for the welfare of the entire community. This activity gives credence that the Church is the 'Salt' of the earth.

The second thing that captured my attention was that a youth member volunteered to go before the Indian Consulate in solidarity to the young Indian girl who suffered the rape in Delhi and subsequently died in a hospital in Singapore. Some young members of the parish joined in this effort to raise their voice against all atrocities against women, and also educated the parish on why they joined the candle-light vigil in support of preventing such sexual crimes and cruel physical assaults in the future. I was reminded of a similar candle light vigil in Philadelphia when the Youth Chaplain of our Church and a youth group expressed solidarity with the bereaved members of twenty children and six staff members who were shot down in Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. These activities give credence that the Church is the 'Light' of the world.

Another matter that impressed me was the response of the St John's members, mostly the newer generation youth members, to the dwindling ministry of the Olive Branch Walk-in Centre. This is a centre for 'homeless' people. About thirty members of the parish now take turns every Saturday to run the centre where the homeless stop by for collecting washed clothes and warm food. They are now constructing additional facilities for the homeless to wash themselves and feel fresh when they visit the Centre. This activity opens up scope for interaction, counseling and advocacy, and this Center becomes a 'tower of hope' for the hopeless, and a home for the homeless.

Here is a pattern of neighborhood ministry to follow or assimilate. Can our churches be spiritual centers where the spirit of transformation will permeate into the larger society? Let the communion experience with the risen Lord enable the parishioners to go out into the public square where the church happens through real human experiences. This is Church journeying with Christ.

-Mar Theodosius+, Diocesan Episcopa

BISHOPS VISITING OUR DIOCESE IN MARCH

Our Metropolitan Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma and Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas Thirumeni will be visiting parishes in UK and Ireland. Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos Thirumeni will be visiting parishes in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. Mar Paulos will be the chief guest of the Diocesan Silver Jubilee celebration of South East region in Philadelphia.

EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Study on Church History and Lay Leadership Training at St. Andrews MTC, New York | March 9, 2013 |
| 2. Seminar on Identity, Vision and Mission of the Church at Trinity MTC, Edmonton | March 16, 2013 |
| 3. Diocesan Silver Jubilee Celebration in South East Region at Ascension MTC, Philadelphia | March 30, 2013 |
| 4. Diocesan Clergy Conference 2013, in Chicago | April 11-12, 2013 |
| 5. Diocesan Silver Jubilee Celebration in Mid West Region at Chicago MTC, Chicago | April 12, 2013 |
| 6. Diocesan Assembly Meeting 2013, in Chicago | April 12-13, 2013 |

DIOCESAN SILVER JUBILEE IN SOUTHEAST REGION

The Diocesan Silver Jubilee celebrations in South East Region of the Diocese will be held at the Ascension Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia on Saturday, March 30, 2013. The Jubilee celebration on that day will start with a Holy Qurbana service in the morning. The Jubilee Meeting will be held immediately after the Holy Qurbana Service. The Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius will preside the meeting. The Bishop of the Delhi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos, will be the chief guest. A video presentation showing the growth of the parishes in the region for the last 25 years will be presented on this occasion. A calendar showing the regional project **Family Enrichment Program** will be released. There will be separate study sessions for parents, youths and children. All are invited for the program.

INDIA MISSION TRIPS

Mumbai Mission Tour, June 1 to 15, 2013

This team will visit the mission centers in the Mumbai Diocese. Contact Mrs. Laila Annie Philip, Boston (varampath23@msn.com), 978- 663-3203.

Karnataka - Andhra Mission Tour, August 8 to 20, 2013

This team will visit the mission centers in the states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Contact Mr. George Thomas, NJ (georgie4christ@gmail.com), 201-214-6000.

Kerala/ Pollachi (Tamil Nadu) Mission Trip, July 15 to 26, 2013

This team will visit mission centers in the South Travancore area in Kerala which will include visits to HIV - AIDS rehabilitation center and de-addiction centers and also the Pollachi mission field in Tamil Nadu.

Delhi-Satna-Sihora-Jabalpur Mission Trip, July 10 to 24, 2013

This team will visit the mission centers in: New Delhi Diocesan Center, Faridabad Dharmajyothi theological college, Agra, Satna, Khajuraho, Sihora, Jabalpur and Mumbai. Contact Dr. Varghese Manaloor (Edmonton). ushavar@hotmail.com, 780-672-8566.

Delhi-Sattal-TibetanBorder-Faridabad-Ambala Mission Trip June 28 to July 13, 2013

The team will visit the mission centers and programs in the following places: New Delhi Diocesan Center, Sattal Ashram, Munshiari, Tejuam, Tibetan Border, Katgotham, Faridabad Dharmajyothi Theological College, Ambala and Jaipur. Contact Dr. Mathew T Thomas, Washington DC. drtn@verizon.net, 301-526-8723

For more details about the five groups, contact the Diocesan Office (marthomadiocese@gmail.com).

A TASTE OF KERALA

As part of an initiative to know our neighbours and stakeholders, the St. John's MTC, UK organised a get together on Sunday, February 24, 2013. The Vicar Rev. Eapen Abraham spoke about our roots and our faith and introduced a video, which took the audience on a visual journey of the Church's origins from St. Thomas' arrival in India to the Mar Thoma Church's global position as part of the WCC. The video also showed the various mission and charitable activities of our church. This was followed by a power point presentation by the co-convenor Mr. Isaac George about the Mar Thoma Church in UK. The local councillor, Mr. Jagdish Sharma spoke highly about Kerala, its people and was very appreciative of the activities of the St. Johns MTC. He promised to extend all support to St. Johns MTC from the local council. While everyone enjoyed the Kerala food, the event also provided a forum for people to share ideas for building fellowship and working together for the benefit of the local community.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR ACHENS JOINING THE DIOCESE IN 2013



An Orientation program was organized for all the achens joining the Diocese of North America and Europe in the year 2013 at the TMAMOR Center, Manganam, Kottayam, from February 18 to 19, 2013. The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, Metropolitan, inaugurated the program. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius chaired the meeting and gave a talk on "Nurturing the Marthomites in the Global Context: Challenges of the Priest." Rt. Rev. Dr. Mathews Mar Makarios Episcopa, the Diocesan Bishop of Kottayam-Kochi Diocese, also spoke on the occasion.

REGIONAL CLERGY CONFERENCE-



UK and Europe Clergy Meeting was held at Dovedale Retreat Centre in Birmingham on March 1 & 2, 2013. The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius was present throughout the meetings. The Conference was started with an opening worship. Rev Sam John welcomed the gathering. A paper was presented by Rev. Sajeev Thomas on the Mission and Ministry Challenges in UK. The clergy also had an occasion to share their parish concerns and to seek guidance on such matters. The COMPE matters were also discussed. There was a farewell meeting for the outgoing Clergy and their family members. It was a time of study, fellowship, prayer and meditation. Rev. Sam John was the convener and Rev. Sabu C. Mathew served as the co-coordinator.



Sinai Mar Thoma Center
2320 Merrick Avenue
Merrick, New York 11566
www.marthomanae.org

Contact Information:
Phone # 516 377 3311
Fax # 516 377 3322

Email: marthomadiocese@gmail.com

Editors of the Besorah:
Rev. K.E. Geevarghese
Dr. Mathew T. Thomas
Ms. Betty Vattakunnel