



Happy
NEW YEAR

Diocese of North America and Europe

The Mar Thoma Besorah

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

Message from the Diocesan Episcopa

Dearly beloved in Christ,

'For three years now, I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any.....' (Luke 13:7).

Happy New Year! An eventful 2013 has gone by. We have stepped into the New Year. Rather, God has granted us another year to exist in His Vineyard. It is not by our merit, but by His grace.

The man in this parable selected his vineyard to plant a fig tree - Luke 13:6-9. He took care of the vineyard and fertilized it every year. Usually, a fig tree is planted on the way side, but this man decided to give this tree a unique and special place. He liked the tree very much and therefore he came frequently to see it and expected it to bear fruit at the right time. Though three years was more than sufficient for the tree to bear fruit, the man was disappointed in not seeing the expected result. So he ponders about cutting it down and saving the soil. The caretaker convinced the man to give it one more year, to dig around the tree, to manure it, and to allow the tree to grow and bear fruit. Thereby, we see that though the judgment for the tree is certain, grace is shown in extending its time.

Our Creator God is granting us another year to yield the expected fruits. Having completed the celebration of the silver Jubilee year, our diocese has entered into a new year of activity. God's expectation of the Diocese is His expectation from every parish, family, and member, as we are intrinsically interwoven to form the body of Christ. God has given our members a unique place in the Land. Think of the love and care God is giving to each one of us. We are accountable for all the blessings and privileges God has given. We are called to be mindful of God's expectation about us, and be good stewards in handling the time, talents, and our life.

The diocesan National Leadership Conference was held at the Mar Thoma Church, San Francisco. I am pleased that 130 delegates from 35 parishes attended the 4-day training program from January 2 to 5, 2014. The delegates were above age 21, and represent the new generation and cream of our community who are capable of deciding and acting on various church-related matters. The present and the future of the diocese rest on them. They are expected to yield fruit through their collective life, leadership, and action. As they look beyond the Diaspora they should envision what the life, work, and fruits of the church should be.

Mar Theodosius+, Diocesan Episcopa

Native American Mission Programs-VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

OKLAHOMA MISSION

Bible Camp / Vacation Bible School

Sunday, June 1 to Friday, June 6, 2014 Broken Bow, OK

ALABAMA MISSION

Vacation Bible School, Mount Vernon, Alabama.

Dates: Saturday, June 7 to Saturday, June 14, 2014

All volunteers are expected to pay their travel expenses.

Food and lodging will be covered by the diocese.

The Deadline for Registration is April 30, 2014.

For more details, contact:

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Nature of Mission: Directing and providing leadership for the Camp and Vacation Bible school for Native American children. This ministry involves, teaching Vacation Bible School and music, giving devotional messages, leadership training, assisting with arts & crafts, helping with participation in sports & games, operating audio/visual aids, and cooking. This is also an opportunity to engage in evangelism, visitation, witnessing to the community, sharing faith and love of Christ, and learning about Choctaw Native Americans and their struggles.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 9-16, 2014: Maramon Convention
- April 3-4, 2014: Annual Clergy Conference at the Philadelphia MTC
- April 4-5, 2014: Diocesan Assembly at the Philadelphia MTC

XVII Mar Thoma National Leadership Conference

The XVII Mar Thoma National Leadership Conference took place from January 2 to 5, 2014, and was hosted by the MTC of San Francisco Bay Area. It was a blessed experience for all who attended. The Diocesan Episcopa along with all of the Diocesan Youth Chaplains and older youth members provided leadership for the presentations involving the following learning tracks: Worship, Hermeneutics, Christian Ethics, Counseling, and Missions. On Saturday morning, the San Francisco MTC (through their outreach service project) arranged the opportunity for the conference participants to serve the local community that had a variety of service needs including, health & hygiene, providing food, handing out blankets, clothes, counseling, prayer, and fellowship. We are grateful to the MTC of San Francisco Bay Area, the vicar, Rev. T.K. Viji, the host families, volunteers, and all of the youth who put countless hours of work for planning and executing this very successful and life changing conference.



The Episcopal Consecration Jubilee Celebration



Monday, December 9, 2013, was a significant day in the life of the Mar Thoma Church as three of its Bishops (Mar Athanasius, Mar Theodosius and Mar Coorilos) entered the 25th year of Episcopacy. It was a special occasion for the members of the Church to praise and thank God for the life and leadership of these Bishops. The Diocese of North America and Europe also celebrated the event to mark the occasion. The Diocese organized a Holy Qurbana and thanksgiving service on Monday, December 9th at the Sinai Mar Thoma Chapel, Merrick.

Episcopal Visit to UK and the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury

The Diocesan Episcopa visited UK from December 13 to 16, 2013, to visit the newly formed All Saints MTC, Peterborough, and the St. John's MTC, Hounslow. After attending the Christmas Carol Services at Peterborough and Hounslow, Mar Theodosius visited the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He met with the Rev. Canon Dr. Leslie Nathaniel (Secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury on international ecumenical affairs), and Rev. Dr. Roger Paul (National ecumenical officer of the Church of England). Rev. Dr. Thomas Philips, Rev. Jose Punnamadam, Mr. Abraham Mathews and Dr. Zac Varghese accompanied Mar Theodosius Thirumeni for the meeting.



Mezzanine Floor Dedication service at St John's Mar Thoma Church, UK

The St. John's MTC, UK, was blessed to construct a Mezzanine floor in view of accommodating more members in the parish. His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius led the dedication service. The Vicar, Rev. Jose Punnamadam assisted the service. All the members of the parish participated during this blessed occasion. Thirumeni congratulated the Vicar, Rev. Jose Punnamadam and the convener Mr. P. M. Mathew for completing the project successfully.

Market Street Mission in Morristown, NJ

As part of its Neighborhood Mission the New Jersey MTC, Randolph, had been helping in soup kitchens, distributing coats for the coatless during winter time, and distributing toiletry items for the needy in the area. For the past three years the parish has been visiting the Market Street Mission in Morristown around Christmas time and also handing over a small financial donation for this mission, which is a private Christian institution engaged in the rehabilitation of drug addicts, alcoholics and homeless people. This is a model of service that MTC parishes in North America and Europe could emulate for reaching out to the needy in their neighborhood.

Christmas Carol service at St John's Mar Thoma Church, UK



The Carol Service was lead by the parish choir. The junior choir also performed a carol. In his presidential remarks, the Vicar, Rev. Jose Punnamadam felicitated Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni for completing 25 years since his consecration as a Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop gave the greetings and blessings to the congregation and Bishop Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet was the Chief Guest for the evening.

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