



The Mar Thoma *Besorah*

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

MESSAGE FROM THE DIOCESAN EPISCOPO

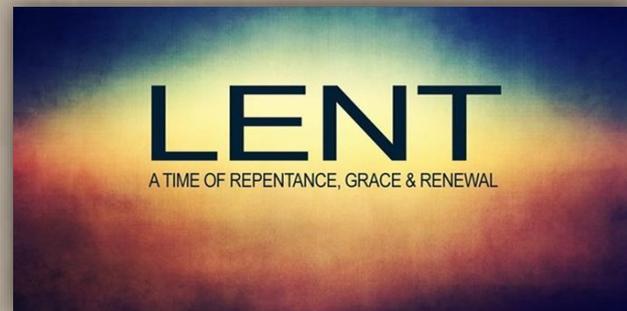
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the verse cited above, St. Paul is speaking about his life in Christ. As Saul, he had the authority to persecute Christians. With his Jewish background, St. Paul found it very difficult to tolerate the growth of Christians and wanted to put a stop to it (promoting border patrolling). It was with this intention that he was going to Damascus, while Jesus confronted and touched him. “Who are you?” is the pertinent question raised by Saul when he fell down. The resurrected and living Lord, revealed to him that it is Jesus whom he was persecuting (Acts 9:5). This confrontation transformed Saul to become an Apostle of Jesus and to put a complete stop to his murderous threats. His newfound faith in Jesus molded him to be people-friendly (promoting border crossing) and to plant churches (faith communities) in different nations.

The newness in life, St. Paul narrates is the ‘new creation.’ He explains further by saying that the ‘old has gone.’ It is like powdering the old life to dust, a process of disintegration or death, and creating a new being. He explains this as ‘life in Christ.’ He understood the meaning of reconciliation, an act of Jesus, by which the new being is reconciled to God and reconciled to each other. Hence he says that the wall of separation is taken away (Eph. 2:14). There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal.3:28). Writing to the members of the Church in Corinth he says: “Do not cause any one to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the Church of God--even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 10:33). Let us practice this discipline as we begin the great Lent (50 days) on February 7th.

What does it mean to be a Christian in our land today? We live in a settler society. This is true of Europe and North America, now with a number of refugees settling in each place. The migrant population, knowingly or unknowingly, is pluralistic and distinguished by class, race, skills, geography, culture, religion, politics and the like. The challenge for the Christian is to take away the wall of separation, carry out the ministry of reconciliation, and to see all as one in Christ Jesus. Is it possible? St. Paul says that in Christ, there is only ‘yes’ (2 Cor. 1:19-20).



We are well into the New Year. Can we resolve to write a new chapter in our spiritual growth as Children of God in our land? Hitherto we have been seeking our religious identity. But the time has come for us to realize that our identities are shifting. Instead of being “border patrollers,” can we realize that the love of God is compelling us, even through our children, to be “border crossers”? Our spiritual exercises like Bible study, prayer, meditation, etc., with the mission of evangelism is calling us to be open, available, and transformed to be ‘grace-filled people.’ Let us respect the differences, in God’s love, and cultivate and create what is beautiful to God’s eyes.

I wish you all a renewal of Life in Christ through the days of ‘Great Lent’. God bless you all!

Mar Theodosius+

Spanish Liturgy Release

The North America and Europe Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church started a mission activity at Matamoros, Mexico as an outreach program in 2007. As a result, a Mar Thoma Community named *Colonia Mar Thoma* was created by bringing together 45 poor and marginalized families. As the worship became regular, it was deemed necessary that the people get the worship order in Spanish. Thus, the Spanish liturgy was formulated and the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma approved it with his blessings on December 21st, 2015 (St. Thomas Day). This marks as a historical milestone for the Mar Thoma Church as it continues to grow in the western hemisphere.

2016 Ecumenical Fellowship Dinner

The Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church organized an Ecumenical Fellowship Dinner with the help of the Austin Mar Thoma Church in Texas on Sunday, January 17th, 2016. There were about 200 participants including bishops, clergy and lay members of various church denominations. This Ecumenical gathering, the 7th of its kind, was more appropriate and meaningful as it was held during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The meeting was enriched by songs from the choir members of Austin MTC and also the dance and skit by the Sunday School and Youth Fellowship.



Condolence Meetings



The Diocese of North America and Europe organized two condolence meetings in memory of our first resident Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan in Dallas and New York on January 10th, 2016 and January 12th, 2016 respectively. The Diocesan Bishop, Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius presided and led the memorial service. A special liturgy was used to praise and thank God for the blessed leadership and ministry of Zacharias Thirumeni, our “good shepherd.” The growth of the diocese since 1993, such as incorporating the diocese to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in USA (NCCC - USA), is due to the vision, planning and dedication of Zacharias Thirumeni as the first resident bishop. Both meetings were well attended. Everyone remembered the leadership, love, and care of Zacharias Thirumeni and thanked God Almighty.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 7
Beginning of Great Lent
- February 12-13
Sabha Prathinidhi
Mandalam
- February 14-21
Maramon Convention
- March 4
World Day of Prayer
- March 6
Diocesan Sunday
- March 31 – April 1
Diocesan Clergy Conference
Philadelphia, PA
- April 1-2
Diocesan Assembly
Philadelphia, PA

Leadership Conference 2016



The 2016 Diocesan Leadership Conference hosted by St. Paul's MTC, Dallas took place on January 7th, 2016 - January 10th, 2016. The theme of the conference was *Feed My Sheep*, based on John 21:17. A total of 130 delegates participated from various parishes. Christos MTC, Philadelphia has agreed to host the 2017 DLC and Long Island MTC has agreed to host the 2018 DLC. Both parishes have submitted letters accepting the responsibility. The conference was a great blessing for those who attended.



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