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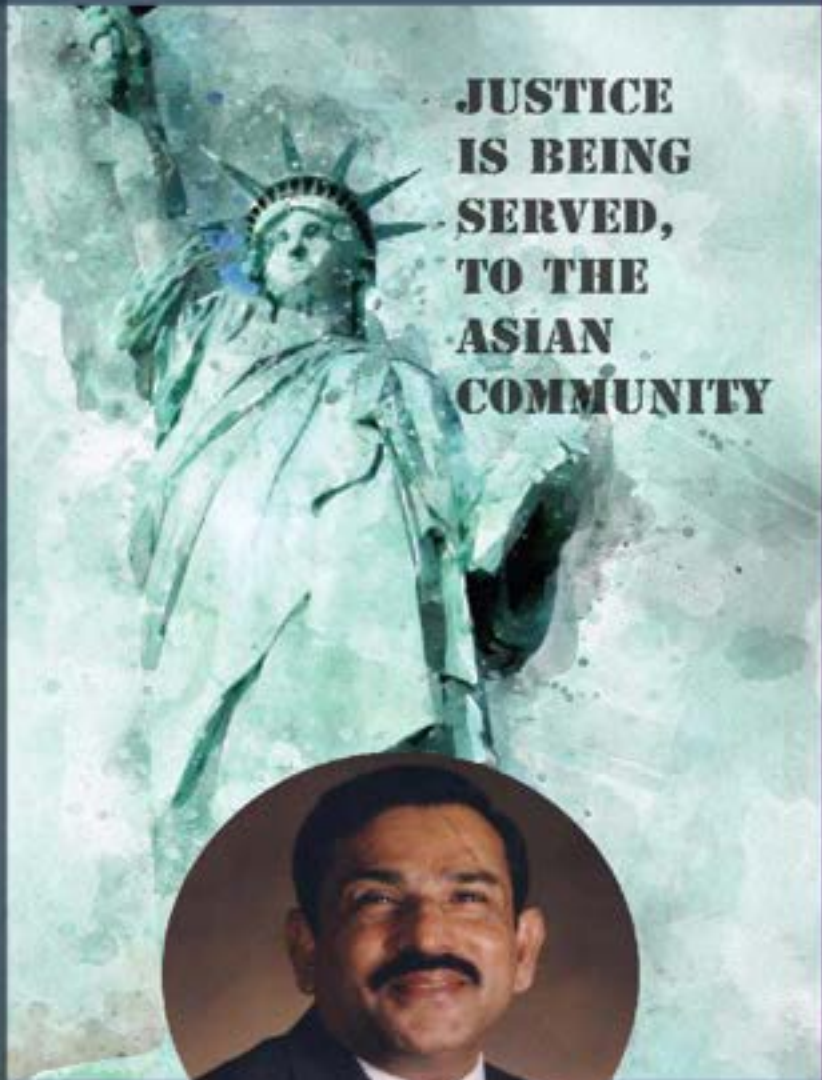
Ruby Jubilee Edition

PRACTICE OF NON VIOLENCE

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022

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USCIS Processing
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R-1 Visa for Priests

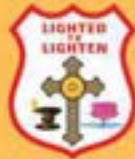


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MAR THOMA MESSENGER

A publication of the Diocese of North America & Europe



ANNIVERSARY
OF MESSENGER PUBLICATION



MERRY
CHRISTMAS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR



October - 2022



**MALANKARA
MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH**

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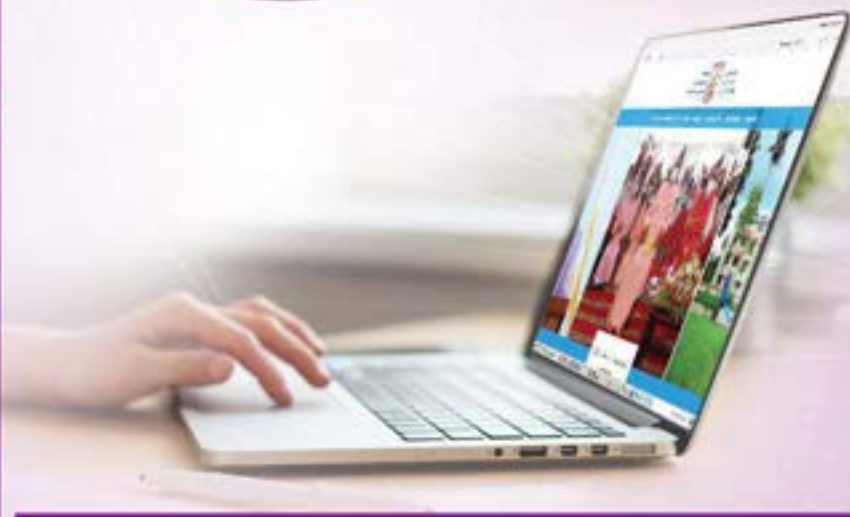
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40
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY
OF MESSENGER PUBLICATION

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MESSAGE FROM THE METROPOLITAN



*D*eary beloved in the Lord,

Greetings of love to all in the name of Jesus Christ.

I humbly offer praise and glory to God Almighty whose abundant grace has enabled me to complete 50 years in the priesthood ministry. I praise God remembering all who helped to shape me for this ministry by assuredly convincing me of my call and mission as a priest and bishop. I remember with gratitude the prayerful support from esteemed bishops and priests. The constant love, care, and prayerful support of the children of God continue to give me immense strength to this day. In a special meeting arranged in Bengaluru (Bangalore) on June 24, 2022, greetings and best wishes were bestowed by the Church. Thanksgiving services were conducted in parishes on June 26th. Let me convey my thanks to all. We need God's grace to move on. Again, I request all the children of the Church for your prayerful support in the days to come.

During the month of June, schools reopened after summer vacation in India. In other countries, schools open a few months later. Congratulations to all students who go to school in the new academic year. Education is an ongoing process. We do not want to churn out human machines that merely accumulate high marks and grades in examinations. Instead, we want education to provide excellent experiences to ignite goodness in people.

Today the world is undergoing drastic changes in nature due to global warming. We are experiencing extreme heat, heavy rains and floods, superstorms, and other natural calamities more frequently. Heavy losses have occurred in agricultural areas. Those who investigate the reasons for climate change, have found answers in human activities. Man's irresponsible approach to nature has brought disaster. We celebrated World Environment Day on June 5th. We should not forget our responsibility to take care of nature which is God's gift to people.

The 2022 batch of students who completed seminary education, are being prepared for this great ministry. Already around 28 priests have entered the services of the Church this year within the month of June. Priesthood is the most beautiful symbol of discipleship. Some persons enter this ministry with vested interests. I want to remind everyone that only those who are prepared to take up the challenge to follow the One who called, should come forward for this ministry. Parents should prepare their children who aspire to join the ministry by providing them a home life and atmosphere that is conducive to nurturing spiritual growth. Aspiring priests should also take the initiative to shape and equip themselves for their spiritual calling. The believing community expects us to live in transparency,

humility, and purity. It is true that St. Paul's observation in 1 Corinthians 4: 10 will empower them to glow in pastoral work; "We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored!" Best wishes to all of you who are entering into the pastoral ministry this year. Pray that your service would provide comfort to many.

We are moving through a period of several types of crises. Our lifestyles and stances are reflections of our faith. Thereby they should be helpful to communicate our witnessing. In post-Covid times, it is not desirable to be extravagant when you celebrate parish jubilees and centenaries. You must limit expenses on festivities and must prioritize activities and development programs that benefit the common person and ultimately glorify God. I urge all of you to be thrifty when you have marriages, baptisms, funerals, and other such functions.

Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valliya Metropolitan First Memorial Lecture was conducted at Pattoor St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) on May 1, 2022. Mr. Rajan Gurukkal delivered the keynote address. His Grace Major Archbishop Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis Catholicose offered the felicitation. The meeting aimed at introducing the future generation to Mar Chrysostom's philosophic world, his spheres of action, social fields, and his mission and vision in their reality. I convey my thanks to Pattoor St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church that set the stage for the meeting.

I happened to participate in the closing session of the 250th anniversary celebrations of the Malabar Independent Syrian Church (Thozhiyoor Church). This Church did not surrender to the pressures of foreign forces and has preserved its identity for all these centuries. The Mar Thoma Church has a strong and meaningful historical relationship with the Thozhiyoor Church. It was the Thozhiyoor Metropolitans who came to Kottayam and consecrated Metropolitan Titus I at a time when the Malankara Mar Thoma Church had no existing bishop. Both churches continue to maintain the strong bond of friendship and remain sister Churches even today. I wish the best to the Malabar Independent Syrian Church in its faith journey well into the future.

I participated in the convocation ceremony of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary at Mulanthuruthi and delivered the convocation address. May the good relationship between both churches continue for times to come.

It is a matter of immense joy to know that Rev. Dr. Jerry Pillay was elected as the eighth General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC). He is a member of

the Uniting Presbyterian Church of South Africa. He is at present the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria (UP). The Ecumenical Movement has created history by electing a person of Indian ancestry. The Mar Thoma Church conveys its best wishes, support and prayers to Dr. Jerry Pillay who will take charge as the General Secretary of WCC on January 1, 2023.

The 110th session of the Mar Thoma Students Conference was held under the auspices of the Kottayam Center at the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, and the Mar Thoma Seminary Higher Secondary School from 29th to 31st May 2022. The main subject of study was, "Faith Assets in Changing Times." More than 300 students from various parts of India participated in the conference. All the leaders of the conference including Rev. Dr. John G. Mathews, and Rev. Nebu K. Varghese who led the Bible studies, and the conference committee members deserve our appreciation.

I visited our faith community in the northeastern part of India from 20th to 23rd June. Holy Communion services were conducted at the Guwahati Mar Thoma Church, and Kohima Christian Church. While the number of our members is decreasing in this region, it is essential that we make optimum use of our assets and properties there by letting them out to other ministries serving in that area.

Rev. Dr. Baiju Markose was a teacher at our Dharma Jyothi Vidya Peeth Seminary, Faridabad. He sent a letter through the Seminary principal stating that he is resigning from the pastoral ministry of the Mar Thoma Church. So, Rev. Baiju Markose is hereby relieved from all his responsibilities as a priest of the Mar Thoma Church. Priests are expected to uphold their loyalty to God Almighty, according to whose call they have become priests. The clergy should lead lives that transcend their personal desires and interests. I exhort those who make commitments to serve the church and community with utmost sincerity, a sacrificial mentality, and always remaining within the constitutional and legal framework of the Church.

We celebrated Independence Day on August 15th. Seventy-five years have passed since we obtained freedom from colonial rule. Now we are the biggest democracy in the world. Let us remember all our freedom fighters. The Christian community also made contributions to the freedom struggle. Today, modern India witnesses many abuses that were prevalent during the colonial rule. Everywhere we find demagoguery rather than democracy. Defection of Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies has become a fashion nowadays. Horse trading in politics

is now a day-to-day affair, though anti-defection laws exist. We must think seriously of our responsibility as Christians in fighting such evils in our country.

Mrs. Droupadi Murmu has been elected the 15th President of India. She is the first President from a tribal community. Mrs. Murmu is a gem of a woman who has proved her mettle in the sociopolitical scenario. After being elected President of the nation, she declared in her maiden speech that she intends to empower women and the poor in the country. She believes that her highest achievement would be the victory of everyone who overcomes poverty in India. The Indian Presidency is symbolic. It symbolizes democracy. We wish our country's new President every success.

We know that there was a crisis in the administration in Sri Lanka recently. People showed unfettered wrath and not without reason. They protested in the streets in the face of starvation, unemployment, lack of availability of essential commodities and inability to fulfill basic needs. The president went into exile. The prime minister was under siege. The Parliament became non-functional. At this critical point, the Metropolitan of the Church of Ceylon, aware of their Christian calling, in a statement requested the administrators, the army, and the common people to exercise self-restraint. They also reminded the administration not to curtail citizens' rights under the pretext of enforcing the state of emergency. The Sri Lankan Church shows us the true mission of the Church when a nation's existence itself is in jeopardy, and the relationship between the ruling and the ruled deteriorates.

The US Supreme Court recently canceled the constitutional right to abortion. The life of a human being is sacred. Experts have different opinions about the time of the formation of personality in a human embryo. But the most important thing is God's will, which is life's perfection and wholeness. Life before birth and life after birth are equally important. We should also be concerned about the changes that can occur among the marginalized people who struggle hard for obtaining health care.

The tragic and cruel assassination of Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan, was a great shock for world peace. He maintained a good relationship with India and the USA. He always stood for world peace.

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the second president of UAE, passed away. He was able to guide UAE to progress through tough decisions and exhortations for change. He led them through a new path of tolerance. He was generous and kind to the diaspora, people of other religions, and women. Let us share in the sorrow of that country. We express our heartfelt condolences.

We take this opportunity to convey the best wishes of the Mar Thoma Church to the new president of UAE, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The 15th Lambeth Conference was held in Canterbury from 27 July to 8 August. Held every ten years, this is the most important event of the Anglican Communion. The theme of the conference was "God's Church walking, listening, and witnessing together for God's World."

The half-yearly Clergy Conference was held on 15 July through Zoom. This is a forerunner of the annual conference. The theme for this year's conference is, "The World is gasping for Breath – Challenges for Pastoral Ministry." An introduction to the forward of the theme and some initial discussions on the topic took place during the half-yearly conference.

The Malankara Catholic Church consecrated two new Metropolitans, and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church seven Metropolitans. The Jacobite Syrian Church has decided to appoint two more Metropolitans. Congratulations to these Churches, and their Church leaderships. All the best wishes of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church to the newly consecrated Metropolitans. We pray for God's grace to strengthen them in their new positions.

His grace Zacharias Mar Polycarpus, the former Metropolitan of the Malabar Diocese of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, passed away. We commiserate with the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church.

Rev. Chacko P. Jacob Pattamukkil, Rev. Abraham Chacko, Rev. N. V. Korulla, and Rev. M. V. Thomas, who served the Church gloriously, were called to their eternal abode. Let us praise God for their great and noble service. They served the Church along with their families in the most blessed manner. Pray to God for the solace and comfort of the bereaved members of their families. I convey the heartfelt condolences of the Church.

The Church entered the period of Pentecost during the month of June. We read and meditated on different missions. We celebrated the Feast of Pentecost on Sunday, June 5. The Holy Spirit is God's promise and the evergreen presence of the true God. The Holy Spirit is the atman that guides to all truths. The Holy Spirit, in emerging circumstances, makes clear the importance and meaning of the Word and messages of Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit leads believers to more godly experiences when they live their lives in moral purity. We observed "Trinity Sunday" and "Environment Sunday" on June 12th. Today, environment has become a spiritual topic. 'Holy Trinity' is the basis of the history of Divine Redemption. When God, the Father, with the

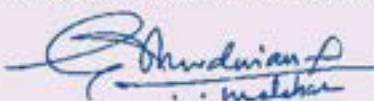
Son, created the universe, the Holy Spirit radiated in it. St. Paul states that creation is in bondage to decay and waits for the glorious freedom of the children of God. May Trinity Sunday help us stand up for the wholeness of creation. 'Discipleship – Calling for Christ Experience,' was our topic of meditation on June 12th. The Lord called the disciples to him, to send them out to preach and to drive out demons. By being with the Lord, individuals experience comprehensive transformation. On June 26th, we meditated on the theme, 'People of God – Ministry and Model.' We must be careful about our day-to-day lifestyle for not to have the Word of God get corrupted. The confidence and faith that the omnipotent God is always with us must be the foundation of our life. The Church has the calling to baptize all and to nurture them to discipleship. This is possible only when we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

The meditations and the Bible portions for July indicate certain empowerments that should occur in Church life. Sunday, July 3rd was 'Mar Thoma Apostle Day'. The subject of thought was 'Apostle Thomas – Faithful unto Death.' The Church is apostolic and holy. The children of Malankara should inherit the words, deeds, and lifestyle of Apostle Thomas, who proclaimed the faith that was made pure by his constant praise of God. Only by dying with Christ are we able to live with Christ. We derive the richness of life through suffering. When we forsake flattery, blunders, impurity, untruth, and avarice forever, and adhere to peace, salvation, goodness, and purity, we become true inheritors of our faith and tradition. Our role model of faith is the Apostle who was ready to die along with Christ. We observed July 10th as 'Priest Sunday.' The subject of our meditation was 'Priests: Ambassadors of Christ.' Priests represent Christ. Christ is the door. Only through the door that is Christ can one enter pastoral care. Nobody wants to see ministers as symbols of cultural decay. Leaders of the laity and priests must be aware that we are called to witness. The Church must pray diligently for the clergy to engage in the sacramental rituals and the proclamation of the Word, steadfastly adhering to holiness and truth. The Church meditated on the sacrament of healing, that is, 'Anointing the Sick,' on July 17th. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, gave much importance to healing ministry. He gave his disciples the power to heal the sick. Prayers made in faith brings healing. The prayer of a group together and the prayer of the leaders of the Church are symbols of reconciliation and mutual forgiveness. On July 24th, we reflected on the topic, 'The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.' Family is a holy institution and the strong underpinning of society. The partnership and mutuality of man and woman are not merely of the flesh. Families with mutually reciprocated understanding and responsibility, provide ennobling dimensions to humanity. Real Christian families remain strong throughout life. Holy matrimony reminds us of a very

grand family culture based on the love of Jesus Christ. The meditation for July 31st was 'Theological Education for Confirmation of Faith.' Fear of God and experiencing God are not mere subjects for study. They should go hand in hand with life experiences. Our Church has the tradition of Reformation which we obtained through open Bible. Those with theological training must serve the believers to strengthen them in faith. Trained people should be deeply committed. They should also grow in Christ experience. Let us submit ourselves into God's hands.

The topics of meditation for August were related to the basic values of the Church and our responsibilities to the nation. We observed August 7th as Mission Sunday. We meditated on the topic, "I am not Ashamed of the Gospel." The Church has the broad vision of the evangelization of India. We should share the gospel with personal conviction. We reflected on 'Christian Presence in Nation Building' on August 14th. This subject of thought is meaningful at a time when we celebrate our nation's independence. The criterion of life's fruitfulness lies in giving to others who are in need. Let us be citizens who side with goodness and strive for the betterment of a society that enjoys the freedom envisaged by Jesus. The Church celebrated 'Reformation Sunday' on August 21st. The Reformed Church has the commitment to hold firmly on to gospel values and spread them extensively. We must remember what Jesus said about the eligibility to enter the kingdom of heaven: "If your righteousness does not surpass that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." We must equip the Church with a life-providing source of spiritual force, through reformative processes. We meditated on 'Holy Communion – Healing of the Body and the Soul' on August 28th. Real healing is the reciprocal joyful existence of body, soul, and spirit. We are promised the redemption of the flesh and the healing of the soul. The basis for this is faith in Christ Jesus. Holy Communion is the anticipatory enjoyment of the authentic experience in heaven. It gives us the food that provides sufficiency unto eternal life. The ultimate challenge of the Holy Communion is our willingness to be broken and poured. Let us completely submit ourselves into the hands of the Lord for this.

The grace of our Lord and Savior be with you all!

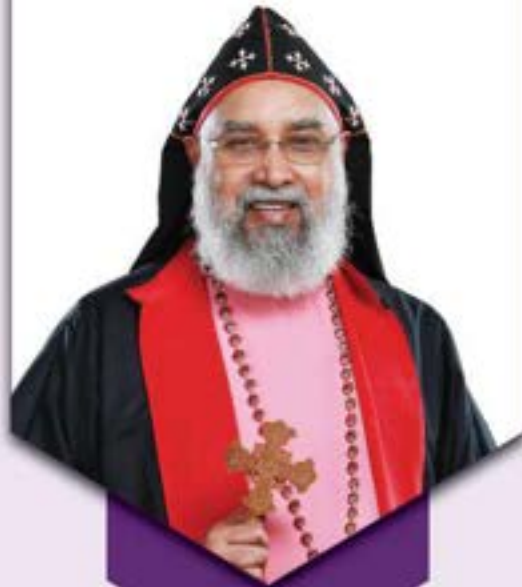


Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan

(Translated by Prof. Elias Abraham, Baltimore Mar Thoma Church, from the June, July, August 2022 issues of Sabha Tharaka)



MESSAGE FROM DIOCESAN EPISCOPA



*D*eary beloved in Christ,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

The Mar Thoma Messenger, the voice of the Diocese of North America and Europe, has become an instrument for reaching out to the members of the Church for the last forty years. With grateful hearts we present this issue of the Messenger, recollecting the past and re-focusing its vision for the future. We appreciate all who have worked tirelessly for the publication of this quarterly magazine, addressing relevant themes, and providing information about Diocesan activities.

The theme for this special issue of the Messenger is 'Practice of Non-violence,' which is appropriate in the current world scenario, where the crisis of war and human aggression has led to a lot of misery and suffering. Peaceful coexistence is the divine plan for humanity, though the aberrations that cause divisions in human society are extremely harmful. The war and killings, hatred and conflicts, thwart peace on earth and is often life threatening. We must affirm that overcoming violence is a Christian responsibility, since the message of love and peace is cardinal to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The words of Jesus, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" (John.14:27), give the mandate to every Christian to participate in the peacemaking work of God. Those who are blessed with inner peace bear the responsibility of becoming peacemakers and become agents of reconciliation to those who live in conflict. It is to be realized that the unshakable inspiration for the faith community with regard to overcoming violence and obtaining reconciliation and peace, is to be derived from a collective personal relationship with the omnipresent Lord, who is 'the same yesterday and today and forever.' That is why the church always prays for the 'peace from above' and for the 'peace of the whole world.'

Early church father Basil the great observes, "I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ." How to win worldly political power and the collective mind as well as emotional leanings of humanity through love and non-violence, is shown to the world by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. who adhered to the way of Jesus Christ. In our present context, humanity faces fear and insecure feelings due to gun violence and communal tensions that destroy the social fabric of society. It is essential to develop a culture of peace and harmony rather than live with a culture of violence and hatred. Blessed are the peace makers, for they are called the children of God. Let our life be used to promote lifesaving actions through the practice of non-

violence for a healthy humanity. While addressing the occurrence of ongoing violent protests in many places, the World Council of Churches (WCC) stated, "Violence will never be ended by more violence. We call on those now expressing their anger in violent protest to end the violence, but to strengthen peaceful demands for accountability and reform until justice is done."

As the Diocese, we are in the process of organizing various programs in the coming months for the benefit of all members. The Sevika Sanghom conference and Young Family Fellowship retreat are being conducted in October and December. Diocesan clergy conference will be held in Dallas, Texas in October. We are happy that our Metropolitan will grace the conferences in October with his participation. The proposed retreats on mental health care at the regional and Diocesan levels will be helpful to overcome the challenges that many face, especially as a post-Covid crisis. At the

last WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, during the first week of September, thousands of faithful members from various church traditions gathered together and proclaimed that we are called to be witnesses in the world by taking to heart "Christ's love that moves the world to reconciliation and unity." Our Church was well represented, and I personally thank God for the divine guidance to be part of this great movement for more than a decade and a half as a Central Committee member. Let us use our time, talents, and God-given skills and opportunities for the expansion of God's kingdom and for serving humanity in Christ mindedness.

With prayerful regards,



Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos
Diocesan Episcopa

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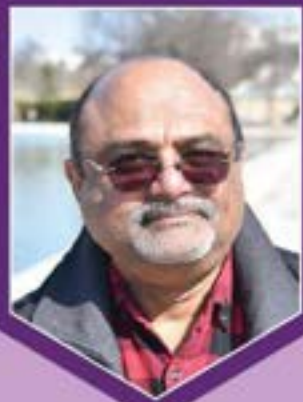
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Dr. T. (Dr. Mathew T. Thomas)
Chief Editor



E DITORIAL

I am honored to be a part of this 40th anniversary special edition of the Mar Thoma Messenger. It is a publication that gives great honor, pride, and uniqueness to the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America and Europe (DNAE). The current Messenger Management Committee and Editorial Board gratefully acknowledge all those who initiated the idea of this publication 40 years ago, and the leadership that has sustained the Messenger over these years by encouraging subscriptions and soliciting or contributing submissions of thought-provoking articles, bible-based crossword puzzles, and news items. Our goal is to encourage each family in our church community to subscribe to the Messenger. We realize that we have a long way to go before reaching that goal. In addition, the increase in electronic communication and growth of digital media pose challenges for the sustainability of print media. Nevertheless, we wish and pray that the Messenger will celebrate its 50th and 100th anniversaries and remain the pride of the Diocese. The Messenger should also remain a forum for communication of thoughts and ideas that promote and sustain the growth of our diocese.

The October issue of the Messenger has always served as the Diaspora issue. Strong communities cherish their heritage and share it with their current and future generations. The exodus from bondage in Egypt is a narrative that is still fresh in the minds of the Jewish community because of the passion with which that remembrance is transmitted from generation to generation. Likewise, the pioneers in our community should dedicate time to educate younger generations

about the Mar Thoma community's history and journey from the time of St. Thomas to our establishment as the Malankara Syrian Church along the Malabar coast, and our subsequent migration to different parts of the world including the United States of America, Canada, and Europe. The growth of DNAE has been remarkable, but we have a lot more to accomplish. We have been blessed with phenomenal leadership and we pray that God will continue to grant us wisdom and lead us to do more for the building up of God's Kingdom.

Our image of God's Kingdom is a place of utmost serenity and peace. In the July 2022 issue we discussed our roles and responsibilities for establishing Climate Justice and Environmental Stewardship. It is a goal that is practically farfetched. However, without everyone's significant and serious commitment, the global community will suffer grave consequences wrought by climate change and environmental upheavals. In this October issue we are focusing on the 'Practice of Non-violence.' It is another issue of utmost importance that impacts each one of us in different ways. Is God's Kingdom a place of absolute non-violence? Understanding what violence entails may enhance our practice of non-violence.

Violence is generally perceived as acts of active aggression through behaviors involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. However, we know that violence can be much broader. Violence includes the denial of basic rights for all living beings. Violence includes the violation of laws that society has created for its peaceful coexistence. So, the extent to which anyone practices non-violence is a matter for introspection, which could be governed by

their statutory laws, self-awareness, and self-control.

The articles in this issue focus on violence and the practice of non-violence in relationship to children, women, world politics, the church and social settings. Despite extensive awareness of violence and its consequences, many engage in violence to varying degrees, and turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to many forms of violence occurring in and around us.

Genesis 6:11 notes, "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence." The same statement can be used to describe our current times. Matthew 11:12 notes, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it." History documents religious fervor, extremisms, and expansionisms that have been riddled with bloody violence. Cries for justice and the end of violence get no response just as described in Job 19:7. We pray just like the Psalmist in 7:9, "Bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure..." The question that follows is – are we righteous? Violence is often wrought by the spoken and written word. Are we righteous in our thoughts, words, and actions?

Violence has the potential to beget violence. Hence, peace can perhaps be achieved by inaction and non-responsiveness in the face of violence – the practice of non-violence. It could be the ideal that each one of us should strive to achieve. It is an ideal that can be achieved if we could only let go of our ego!

October 2022 marks the 30th year of Episcopacy of our Diocesan Episcopa, Philoxenos Thirumeni. We thank God for the blessings he has bestowed on Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos, along with our Suffragan Metropolitan Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas, and Rt.

Rev. Thomas Mar Timotheos, who were consecrated for the Episcopal ministry of the Mar Thoma Church on October 2, 1993. We congratulate the three Thirumenis and pray that God will continue to strengthen them as they serve Christ and His church.

The Messenger also extends a warm welcome to Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan as he visits the Diocese of North America and Europe for the first time after his installation as the XXII Mar Thoma on November 14, 2020. We wish Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma all God's blessings, and pray of him, as he ministers to the faithful in Christ and the global Mar Thoma Church.

I wish to thank everyone who works behind the scenes to bring out each issue of the Messenger. I thank Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos for his leadership in all matters pertaining to our diocese. I applaud the hard work that our current Diocesan Secretary, Rev. George Abraham, and all the past Diocesan Secretaries, contribute to publish each issue. The dedication of the individuals serving on the Messenger Managing Committee and Editorial Board is remarkable. Of course, a big thank you everyone else who supports this publication either through your subscription or contribution of articles. Without all of you, it would be impossible to sustain the publication of the Messenger. Above all, I thank God for the grace, guidance, and opportunity to serve the Messenger in this capacity.

Please continue to uphold the Messenger in your prayers. Please continue to pray for and support the growth of our Diocese.

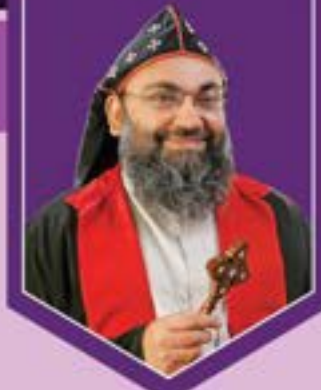
With prayerful regards,

Dr .T. (Dr. Mathew T. Thomas)
Chief Editor



DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE
WISHES OUR BELOVED BISHOPS

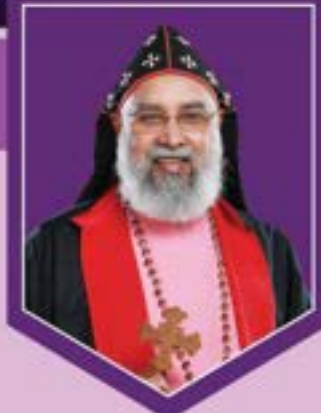
A Happy & Blessed Birthday



Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos **Suffragan Metropolitan**

Parents : **Mr. Itty Many Ittyachenkunju & Mrs. Saramma**
Kunnamkulam Cheeranveettil

Date of Birth : 25 November 1951
Deacon : 29 April 1978
Kassissa : 16 May 1978
Ramban : 04 November 1989
Episcopa : 09 December 1989
Suffragan Metropolitan : 18 August 2021



Rt. Rev. Dr Isaac Mar Philoxenos **Episcopa**

Parents : **Mr. A.M. Issac & Mrs. Mariamma**
Attupurathu, Cherukole, Mavelikkara

Date of Birth : 05 December 1951
Deacon : 29 May 1976
Kassissa : 09 July 1976
Ramban : 31 October 1993
Episcopa : 02 October 1993



Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Timotheos **Episcopa**

Parents : **Rev. K.N. George & Mrs. Rachel George**
Kaleekkal Thekkethil Love Dale, Mulakuzha

Date of Birth : 13 December 1950
Deacon : 28 May 1983
Kassissa : 10 June 1983
Ramban : 31 October 1993
Episcopa : 02 October 1993

FELICITATION



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*W*ith immense joy, I congratulate the Mar Thoma Messenger team of the Diocese of North America and Europe, as the publication reaches its 40th year. I take this opportunity to commemorate the vision of our late Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan in His vision of starting this Magazine in the early 1980s. Occasions like this are a wonderful reminder that great things can happen with the cooperative team work of members with varying responsibilities and aptitude. It is my hope that everyone affiliated with the Magazine takes time to reflect and take pride in all of the incredible accomplishments of the past 40 years. Thank you to the past and present committee members, sponsors, authors, and all other individuals and groups for your hard work to make the publication a robust link of vital communication and Christian partnership. As our Church is growing in an ever-changing and demanding global social set up, such publications hold vital roles in communication and empowering our members in their spiritual journey. We must be able to utilize such publications in our on-going efforts to extend our Christian fellowship and education, with authoritative opinions and Biblical truths. I am confident that the magazine will continue to flourish and will reach more and more homes, extending its values to include true Christian teachings and actions, based on the needs and aspirations of the community we exist.

I strongly believe that each individual in our Church community has a unique and important role in their own place and time in joining the efforts of extending the Gospel in its true form. Publications such as the Mar Thoma Messenger have the higher responsibility in the coordination of these efforts to make us an unstoppable force with positive impacts beyond our immediate surroundings. We are driven by the Biblical social justice and the need to make our communities inclusive for everyone and the well being of all. As we continue to struggle with the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic and other dreadful illnesses, there has never been a greater need for changes that can provide better comfort for the needy. Let our Church publications continue to bear the responsibility of becoming the message bearers and sponsors of such changes and social actions.

With Prayerful Regards,

Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan

September 12, 2022

FELICITATION

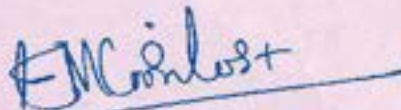
*D*early beloved in Christ,

I am happy to learn that Mar Thoma Messenger, a publication of the Diocese of North America and Europe is completing 40 years. This publication is the official voice of the Diocese, wherein contemporary articles, theological insights and the news of the Diocese is circulated systematically throughout the Diocese. The publication had a humble beginning, but today it has changed its appearance and content in its form and style.

Print media as we all know is a powerful means of communication. It connects the people and conveys the messages with authenticity. This is a means to reach out to the people of the Diocese and also outside. People are well informed of the activities of the Diocese, which also helps them to get involved in the mission and ministry of the Diocese. Today the Diocese of North America and Europe has diversified its ministry and it will get momentum only through people's participation. Wish and pray that Mar Thoma Messenger will continue as a beacon of light in the days to come. I congratulate the Diocesan Bishop and the editorial board for the relentless services in publishing this publication promptly.

May God bless you all!

With Prayerful Regards,



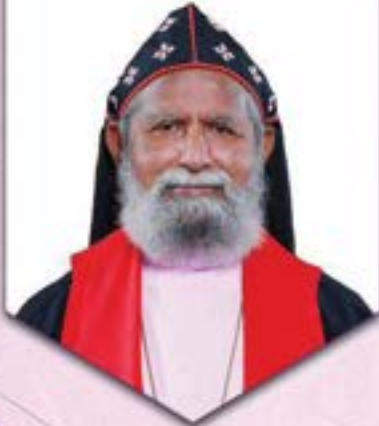
Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Suffragan Metropolitan

September 09, 2022



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FELICITATION



*G*reeting to all members of the Diocese of North America and Europe,

I am so happy to know that 'Messenger', the official publication and voice of the Diocese of North America and Europe is celebrating Ruby Jubilee of its publication. Over these years the Messenger magazine established its own space as a reputed publication contains the Christian literature, work and ministry of the Diocese of North America Europe. Along with all parishes and members of the Diocese, I too thank our Lord for existence and contribution of this publication for the last 40 years.

Literature plays a vital role in every aspect of our life. Christian Literature has a specific space in the public sphere. Christian literature connects readers with our Christian heritage, culture and demonstrates the truth and meaning of the Bible and its worldview. As a Diaspora Publication the Messenger has a very specific role in the life of the Diaspora Christian communities especially the marthomites in Europe and North America. We need to celebrate of identity and faith through this publication. It is important to explore the possibility of utilizing messenger as a tool to teach our generations about our history, faith and practices of the malankara marthoma Syrian church. Our Lord was merciful to our generations in this journey of Faith in this foreign land. As the Messenger celebrated the memory of these 40 years, let us remember the faithfulness of our lord in this journey and humble before our Lord. May the ministry of our Lord continue to bloom and reach out to many through the publication of the Messenger.

Yours in Christ's Service

Dr. Joseph Mar Barnabas Suffragan Metropolitan

September 29, 2022

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The Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:14

**THE ACHENS AND MEMBERS OF THE
DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE OF THE MAR THOMA CHURCH WISH OUR DEAR**



**JOSEPH MAR BARNABAS
SUFFRAGAN METROPOLITAN**

**THOMAS MAR TIMOTHEOS
EPISCOPA**

**DR. ISAAC MAR PHILOXENOS
EPISCOPA**

God's Choicest Blessing on entering
30 years of Episcopacy
ON OCTOBER 02, 2022
The Ministry of Christ in you.

Thank You for making a difference in ways that wonderfully put Christ on Display.

'You are a Blessing'

*with Prayers and Best Wishes for Your Ministry
in the New Year and Years to come.*

FELICITATION



*T*he Mar Thoma Messenger has always played a vital role in the consolidation and emergent growth of the Mar Thoma community in the western hemisphere for the past 40 years. It is a medium of the North America & Europe Diocese for mutual sharing, effective communication, meditative reflections and reciprocative interactions. Each issue dealt with a theme relevant to the church and society. From a humble beginning, this publication has scaled new heights broadened its horizons. As this magazine celebrates its 40th year of publication, we pray for God's blessings upon its continued ministry.

Most of the articles in the Mar Thoma Messenger are not simply to be read, but to be studied. Community learning is always good for community living. We are happy that more and more people are subscribing to the Messenger. The interest shown by individual parishes to motivate the members to subscribe to it and the work of the coordinators in distributing the issues in the local area are greatly appreciated.

We thankfully remember all those who worked hard to make this magazine a classic publication. This is also the time to remember and recognize the past leaders, both ordained and laity, who worked tirelessly in the publication of the magazine. On behalf of the Diocese, I wish the Mar Thoma Messenger success for its ongoing journey. May the Lord help and support us to continue the publication as a strong voice of our Diocese. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us as we move on with the activities of the Diocese.

Yours in Christ's Ministry,

Rev. George Abraham
Diocesan Secretary

Mr. George P. Babu, Diocesan Treasurer

FELICITATION



I am delighted to see that the Messenger publication has completed forty years in circulation in the Diocese of North America & Europe. The Mar Thoma Messenger Publication facilitates wholesome communication for members of the Mar Thoma community across the United States, Canada and Europe. I appreciate all the individuals who served in the managing committee and the editorial board over years who maintained a professional standard for the publication's content, lay out, design and the quality printing. Again, I acknowledge those who contributed articles and advertisements to the Messenger as well as the promoters who worked diligently to increase subscribers over the last four decades. My prayer is that this publication reaches every household in the years to come.

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MARRIAGE AND COMMUNICATION: A PATH FORWARD

Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas, Redeemer MTC, New Jersey.



Our Mar Thoma Messenger issue this quarter is on the theme, "Practice of Nonviolence". This is an appropriate and profound theme in the present context due to socio-political and spiritual conflicts that are present both globally and locally. However, acts of "violence" may also be perpetuated within the social unit of marriage and family. For this discussion, the term, conflict, will be more readily used in the context of marriage. In Genesis 2, the institution of the marriage relationship established a paradigm for communion and communication amidst stark differences. The honest interplay of two unique persons inevitably leads to some conflict. In this regard, conflict is not viewed as a "stumbling stone" but, a "steppingstone" towards marital satisfaction and the furtherance of love in the relationship.

Marriage offers an intimate connection that extends the bounds of relationship to incorporate another within the personal life and space of oneself. The dynamics of the marriage relationship thus yields itself to conflict and depth of interpersonal communication. In this context, marital satisfaction is to be understood as a variable that is both directly and indirectly impacted by instances of conflict. In fact, a significant number of couples report experiencing marital distress due to unmanaged conflict which may affect the stability of the relationship. Marital satisfaction generally means the overall contentment, happiness, stability and holistic wellness one has in the marriage. There are various elements that contribute to

marital satisfaction across all types of marital relationships and cultures. One area of reflection is the relevance of communication.

Conflict Management: Towards Repair and Relationship Building

In the study of marital relationships, the inevitability of conflict seems to resonate across all cultural environments. It is an aspect of relationship and may be considered significant towards the maturity of the relationship. Conflict, in and of itself, has often been viewed as a destructive force in a relationship. In fact, prior relationship experiences of unresolved conflicts may give way to beliefs that conflict is irresolvable, unmanageable and indicative of relationship failure (Feiring et al., 2018). However, conflict repair and management may present an opportunity for the enhancement of the marital relationship. Underlying the notion of conflict repair, is that each specific instance of conflict represents a deeper personal matter or pain. Thus, repair addresses the person more than the presenting issue of conflict. Conflict management, is then the attempt to diminish the negative affect and reestablish positive dialogue. The research indicates that the positive construal of dialogue even in the midst of a marital conflict can lead to more effective repair (Gottman & Tabares, 2018). Consequently, positive

affect and dialogue may lead to greater emotional cohesiveness, empathy and increased friendship. The creative space that is opened during a conflict interaction may allow for vulnerable and open dialogue that can encourage maturity in the marriage relationship. There is evidence to support that conflict repair which focuses on emotional connectedness has an increased impact on the overall stability and quality of the relationship. As such, mutual acceptance of responsibility, shifting conversational narrative, humor and empathetic expression are all ways to further the positive emotional bond (Gottman et al., 2015). In so doing, conflict repair may enrich marital satisfaction.

Understanding Communication as Friendship Building

One of the essential components of all human interaction and relationship is the aspect of communication. Communication is the dynamic exchange of concepts and experiences that intersect with the identities of individuals and groups. It is critical to understand patterns of communication and its relative impact on marital satisfaction and relationship. As such, it is important to consider the utilities of psychoeducational intervention, as well as, nonsexual behavioral communication, intimate partner communication and observable communication in the study of marital satisfaction.

Marital-focused psychoeducational interventions are relatively common initiatives that may address specific topics in order to enhance relational skills and behaviors. Such programs have long been considered to be an effective means of increasing marital stability and relationship quality. Although, many psychoeducational interventions focus on educating specific skills, a change in negative behavior patterns has not consistently resulted in a greater marital satisfaction (Ripley & Worthington, 2002). However, it has been suggested that marital satisfaction is intrinsically related to the notions of friendship and conflict management. In fact, a couple that exhibits adeptness in both building friendship, as well as, effectively managing conflict

express significant improvement in relationship quality and marital satisfaction. This concept also resonates with the attestation of union as declared by Adam, "this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (Gen.2:23). It succinctly expresses a commitment to see his wife as he sees himself, not as a stranger or as the other. The depth of meaning in these words express an intimacy that goes beyond relational duty. This is a fundamental marker in the experience of genuine friendship. According to research, it is interesting to note that the presence of both aspects, friendship and conflict management are necessary for wives in the experience of marital satisfaction while, for husbands encouraging the friendship is sufficient for more marital satisfaction (Babcock et al., 2013). As such, the converse is true in that a breakdown in friendship and ineffective conflict repair leads to the disintegration of relationship quality. Furthermore, research has indicated that in comparison to forgiveness and reconciliation, the education of effective management of problems has resulted in more positive communication and the overall health of the couple (Worthington et al., 2015). That is to say, that while forgiveness and reconciliation are integral components of the relationship, novel and dynamic skills must be learned and practiced to further the growth of the marriage. Such psychoeducational interventions introduce new patterns of communication that enhance connectedness and limit relationally inappropriate behavior. This, in turn, allows the couple a pathway towards greater marital satisfaction. In fact, marital satisfaction may be nurtured even in difficult relationship circumstances. The correlation between the learning of effective communication skills complemented with enhanced friendship and conflict management supports the development of marital satisfaction (Bradley et al., 2011).

Additionally, it is important to note other aspects of communication as it relates to the experience of marital satisfaction. Nonsexual behavioral communication includes the interpersonal interactions that correspond to the functioning of the marital relationship. There is no consistent evidence to indicate that positive communication patterns indefinitely yield enhanced

Mr. T. A. Mathew, Trinity MTC, Houston

FELICITATION



I praise the Lord Almighty for His utmost providences in the publication of the Mar Thoma Messenger at the completion of 40 years of its publication. As the Diocese is publishing the Ruby Jubilee Edition, I consider it as a great honor and privilege for me to serve as the Messenger Promoter since 1993 and a member of the Messenger Managing Committee since 2000. From its humble beginnings in 1982, Mar Thoma Messenger has grown to be a superb publication and a well-accepted Christian Magazine of the Mar Thoma Church. At this juncture, I remember with much gratitude, the former Diocesan Bishops, Diocesan Secretaries, Diocesan Treasurers, Diocesan Council Members, Promoters, Editorial and Managing Committee Members of Messenger for their support, leadership and valuable services rendered over the last 40 years. Special thanks to beloved Philoxenos Thirumeni, Rev. George Abraham (Diocesan Secretary), Dr. Mathew T. Thomas (Chief Editor), Dr. Cherian Samuel (Associate Editor), for their leadership, vision, and support. My sincere thanks to all the Advertisers for their continued support and cooperation to make this publication financially viable. I wish the Messenger all the best and pray that it will reach all Marthomite homes in our Diocese, so that it will be a communication link and also a blessing to its readers.

relationship quality. In fact, there is research to suggest the contrary (Ripley & Worthington, 2002). That is, marital satisfaction or the presumed quality of the relationship is experientially qualified by more than an ordered set of relational rubrics. This is not to suggest that positive communication skills are unnecessary in achieving marital satisfaction rather, that the issue is more complex. There is a correlation between the perception of nonsexual behavior patterns and the corresponding impact on marital satisfaction. That is, the unique interpretations surrounding the physical and verbal/nonverbal expressions are linked to the mental and emotional well-being of the individual and marital couple. In instances of hierarchal dominance, wives experienced depressive symptoms while similarly for husbands it was in the diminishment of the filial bond (Lizdek et al., 2016). Likewise, negative nonsexual behavior patterns may cascade and decrease marital satisfaction. Thus, it is important to meaningfully address specific patterns of behavior and its associated meaning towards furthering marital satisfaction. In a related matter, the definition of effective conflict management, friendship and the marital relationship may not be constant (Rosen-Grandon et al., 2004). Thus, if these relational components are fluid then the parameters of marital satisfaction may vary over the course of the relationship. This is important to consider as evolving behavior patterns may both direct and be impacted by the notion of marital satisfaction. As such, the concept of meaning and associated symbols within marital communication is relevant. The differences in gender and shared values may also provide insight in effecting connectedness and friendship.

Another area of consideration is intimate partner communication and its relationship to marital satisfaction. The research makes a distinction between the physical component of sexual communication and the verbal aspect of sexual communication. That is, the verbal communication of sexual content had greater significance in strengthening marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction and increased stability in the relationship than the physical act of sexual intercourse (Jones et al., 2018). This reinforces the notion that intimate partner communication has the potential to enhance friendship and support the overall quality of the marital relationship. Intimate partner communication also refers to positive physical attributions that further the emotional and mental health of the individual and couple.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the aspect of observable communication towards the development of marital satisfaction. This refers to the notion that communication is a continuous process involving observation and interpretation. That is, observational understanding serves as a primer towards marital satisfaction. It has been noted that even in the absence of disclosure the marital couple has accurately identified the personality, as well as, symbolic meaning and values held by the other (Shapiro & Swensen, 1969).

Thus, perceived notions of friendship, empathy and experience may affect marital satisfaction.

In our society and faith community, patterns of avoidance, ineffective communication and lack of spousal friendship greatly contribute towards the destabilization of family and marriage systems. Distress within the home which has drastic effects on children such as contributing to depression, withdrawal, poor social competence and health problems. Additionally, such distress may increase the risk of psychopathology, extreme cases of behavior in sociocultural and spiritual contexts and physical illness. Thus, it is important to grow the marriage in the midst of conflictual and contentious situations, not whilst avoiding it altogether. Furthermore, the unlearning of maladaptive behavior patterns and the learning of constructive skills towards enhancing friendship and positive communication approaches is essential in furthering the quality of the relationship. As a church, we are the *ekklesia*, "a called out community" blessed and entrusted with the responsibility to blessing to all. Let us begin by taking bold steps of repair, reconciliation and renewal within our homes.

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INVITING ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT ISSUE...

We invite articles for the January-February-March 2023 Issue related to the theme
"Kingdom Values in a changing world".

The Messenger publishes articles that express the diversity of our community to stimulate healthy discussions while remaining faithfully rooted in the values of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church. The Managing and Editorial Board committees remain committed to producing a high-quality publication.

If you wish to submit an article that was published elsewhere, you will be solely responsible for obtaining permission to reprint and provide the details of the original publication.

Kindly let us know by December 10, 2022, via an email to marthomadiocese@gmail.com, if you intend to submit an article for the January 2023 Messenger.

Your article should

- focus on a topic that treats the theme from a Christian perspective
 - be about 1500 to 2000 words in English/ Malayalam
 - accurately identify the sources of referenced material
- be typed in MS Word format, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point font.

Please submit your article by December 10, 2022.

The editors reserve the right to edit the article, making appropriate deletions and/or additions that they consider best reflect the author's intent. The Editors will contact and collaborate with the author for substantial edits, if required.

Please include a digital photograph of the author(s). Digital photographs are recommended, with the image in GIF/ JPEG format at a minimum of 300 dpi. The inclusion of images in other formats will depend on the image quality and the printer's ability to process them.

The Editorial Board does not guarantee the publication of your submission. Please be aware that an acceptance for publication does not mean that the Mar Thoma Messenger and the Mar Thoma Church endorse the contents or views expressed in the articles. The views expressed in your article are considered to be solely your individual opinion. The Messenger will not be responsible or liable for the contents or views expressed therein.

With prayerful regards

Diocesan/Bishop's Secretary

Manager, The Mar Thoma Messenger
 Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church
 Sinai Mar Thoma Center, 2320 Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566.
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DOES RELIGION CAUSE VIOLENCE?

Lal Varghese, Esq., MTC Dallas FB



Rabbi Sacks, a well-known theologian, wrote on religion: "... we are in a position to understand why religion helped us survive in the past – and why we will need it in the future. It strengthens and speeds up the slow track. It reconfigures our neural pathways, turning altruism into instinct, through the rituals we perform, the texts we read and the prayers we pray. It remains the most powerful community builder the world has known. Religion binds individuals into groups through habits of altruism, creating relationships of trust strong enough to defeat destructive emotions. Far from refuting religion, the Neo-Darwinists have helped us understand why it matters."¹

If religion tends to help individuals and society to defeat destructive emotions through the community it builds up, then why would religion cause violence in this world? If you look at the history of any unrest, civil wars, and wars that happened in the history of nations and civilizations, it looks like religion either directly or indirectly caused or inspired such things in the past. It continues to play a major role even today. Does any religion advocate violence? Of course not! All religions speak of love and peace between people, sharing and caring for each other and helping others. Some religions teach that if you love others, keep peace with others, share and care for our neighbors, you will be rewarded in your next life. Some religions teach that you will be

eligible for eternal life with God if you love your neighbor as yourself, which is the essence of the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Charles Kimball's book, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (2002), begins with the following claim: "It is somewhat trite, but nevertheless sadly true, to say that more wars have been waged, more people killed, and these days more evil perpetrated in the name of religion than by any other institutional force in human history." Does religion cause all the violence both in the past and present or do some people use religion as a scapegoat to perpetuate their greedy ambitions? Preeminent historian Martin Marty, in his book, *Public Religion, Politics, Religion, and the Common Good*, argues that religion has a particular tendency to be divisive and therefore violent. If religious people believe that religion causes no violence, and they do not indulge in violence or stand for violence, then who is responsible? I would argue that every country, society, individual or group uses religion as a cover-up for their actions and to gain support for their policies and programs. When people using religion to endorse their claim to power combines with the divisive nature of forming governments, religions end up being accused of creating violence. No religion in this world advocates

¹ Sacks, Rabbi. "The moral Animal." First published in The New York Times on 24th December 2012. <https://www.rabbisacks.org/archive/article-the-moral-animal-the-new-york-times/>



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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH
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violence or teaches its followers to kill another person to attain eternal life or 'moksha.' Wilfred Cantwell Smith showed in his landmark book, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1962), "'Religion' as a discrete category of human activity separable from 'culture', 'politics,' and other areas of life is an invention of the modern West. It is impossible to separate religion from economic and political motives, but religious motives are innocent of violence."

Fear may be a reason individuals and groups stir up violence. If individuals and groups perceive other individuals and groups as threats, they may be tempted to resort to violence. In order to gain validity, these individuals and groups may seek the support of religion.

Freedom is the basic characteristic of civilized societies. When individuals enjoy freedom, good families are built up, which will form good societies, which in turn build up successful governments. When individuals and societies are subjected to burdensome restrictions, which limit their freedom and their choice of life situations, dissatisfaction develops and they tend to take the help of religion to express their dissatisfaction. This is another way religion is being used as a forum for stirring up violence. Religions also use politics to gain support and strength. Christianity is an example of such a religion; it received the help of the Roman Emperor Constantine to gain strength as a world religion. Religious fundamentalists use this extremism for their personal gain and achievement. The "religious wars" of the 16th and 17th centuries were fought on politics; for example, Catholic France supported the German Protestants to weaken the Catholic German emperor. The main conflict in Northern Ireland is a conflict between Protestant and Catholic Christians.

The division between the two factions seems to be greater than the divide within each faction. The conflict is widely seen as synonymous with terrorism, but it is important to see that although violence is only a part of the conflict, it is very significant as both a cause and an effect of divisiveness.

The dangers of fanaticism came to a head on September 11 and began a whole new wave of alarmed warnings. It changed the view of western countries about Islam. According to John Dickson, a founder of the Centre for Public Christianity and a Senior Research Fellow of the Department of Ancient History, Macquarie University, "the slogan: 'religion-leads-to-violence' finds plausibility today not through logic or the facts but through simple repetition. The 'religion-leads-to-violence' mantra has become a truism in our culture only because fascinating people, popular books and high-production documentaries say it over and over."

The common understanding is that religion causes more problems than it solves and religion keeps people apart more than it brings people together. To a certain extent it is true that since all religions live within their own boundaries, they view others as enemies. This is true of different denominations within Christianity and of various sects in Islam. They always fight each other as if what they believe is true and the faith of others is wrong and threatens their existence. According to atheists, religious violence has probably existed for as long as religion. History has done nothing to calm the passions, hatred, and brutality expressed in the name of religion; if anything, the progress of science and technology has enabled religious extremists to hate and kill even more effectively. Almost everyone would like to end violence, but few understand its causes. Even

Mr. Abraham Mattackal, Los Angeles MTC

FELICITATION



It was with immense joy and happiness that I came to know about the publication of the October 2022 issue of the Mar Thoma Messenger as its 40th Anniversary issue. Although Mar Thoma Messenger was published from 1982 as a 4- or 6-page cyclostyled paper stapled together, Mar Thoma Messenger in its present form was published from October 1990 on quarterly basis when our Most Rev. Philipose Mar Chrysostom was the non-resident Bishop.

Being the first Chief Editor of the Messenger in its present form, I had to publish it from Long Beach, CA, for over three years, and thereafter from the Diocesan Office in Merrick, New York. Working as its Chief Editor for almost 10 years, was an enriching experience of my life.

Since most of our first-generation early settlers now are in their 80's and 90's, most of the contents of the Mar Thoma Messenger now should conform to the needs and desires of our second and third generation Marthomites. Readership will then be improved to a greater extent and Messenger will be a beacon of hope to our future generations. May the Almighty Lord help and guide each and everyone connected with the publication of the Mar Thoma Messenger for years to come!



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worse, some religious believers are in denial about the causes and connections between violence and their religious practices.

Religion itself does not cause violence, but it has been used by religious fundamentalists and politicians to gain authority and power. Thus, the vehicle used is labeled as being the cause of violence in the world. All religions must proclaim to the world that they do not support violence and those committing violence in the name of the religion must be identified and restrained. But most religions are not able to do that since they are fighting within themselves or fighting each other in the name of religion. As long as religions fight each other, religious fundamentalists and politicians will probably continue to use religion as a vehicle to achieve their objectives.

Faith and fear have always been intertwined in the Christian imagination, and our continued failure to reckon with it can only lead to continued violence. William

H. Lamar IV, Pastor, Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina, says in his sermon titled, 'Let us go to the other side': "The preached word, no matter the circumstance, should always be a sacred moment of encounter with the divine."

Author's Note: This article was previously published in my book, **Continuing the Faith Journey**, containing select articles by me on various Biblical themes. I have been mainly practicing in U. S. Immigration laws for more than 30 years in Dallas. I am a member of the Legal Affairs Committee (LAC) of the Diocese of North America and Europe. I was the co-editor of "Church Journeying with Christ," a silver jubilee publication of the Diocese of North America and Europe and "An Ecumenical Journey Towards Transformation," a Festschrift volume on the Episcopal silver jubilee of Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa.

Dr. Eapen Daniel (Chief Editor 2002 – 2014)

FELICITATION



As a former long-term Chief Editor, it is with immense pleasure I congratulate the Mar Thoma Messenger proprietary at its 40th year of circulation. Since its inception, Messenger has passed through various stages of growing pains and flourished into its current extravagantly colored format, by the diligence and help of many of our Bishops, Clergy, Editorial Board and Diocesan committee members. I thank God for his enormous providences and those who have worked hard in numerous ways, and hope and pray that the magazine will continue to grow in its readership and acceptance with enhanced vigor and vitality.

Dr. Cherian Samuel, Associate Editor, Messenger

FELICITATION



As the Mar Thoma Messenger celebrates its 40th Anniversary, we praise God for His grace and mercy, and congratulate the contributors, editorial committees, and managing committees of the Messenger for their service and dedication. As the official publication of the North America and Europe Mar Thoma Diocese, the Messenger has been a reliable source of information on Diocesan activities as well as a valuable resource for the Diaspora in their faith journey. Like the children of Israel experiencing the presence and the provision of the Lord Almighty during their 40-year journey to the Promised Land, the Mar Thoma Messenger has tasted the goodness of the Lord from the very beginning. May His favor remain with the Messenger, going forward. For His glory. And our good.

Blessings Prayers



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NONVIOLENCE IN THE COSMOS: A MATTER OF JUSTICE

Rev. Dr. K. Jameson Pallikunnil,

Associate Director, JMM Study Centre, Thiruvananthapuram.



Violence can be sensed all around us. Beginning with the ancient story of Cain and Abel, it has passed down to their descendants for aeons. It is a universal phenomenon, apparent from our very beginnings. Every aspect of human existence is under the threat of direct or indirect forms of violence. It is obvious that we are under fear of its bondage, and our lives are enclosed in its shadow. Violence can be defined in various ways because it has different dimensions: cultural, biological, political, economic, social, gender-based, ecological, etc. It appears in diverse forms and in various degrees, and all types of it lead to anarchy in society, which denies others' the right to exist and live in peace and equality. It is a reality that all forms of violence create a vacuum in the normal life of the cosmos and to its inhabitants. In short, it annihilates basic freedom and destroys the normalcy of all forms of life.

Apart from human beings, nature and other inhabitants of Mother Earth are under its threat. Robert McAfee

Brown points out that "whatever violates another, in the sense of disregarding or abusing or denying that other, whether physical harm is involved or not, can be understood as an act of violence." The basic definition of violence would then become "violation of personhood." Innumerable current events show us this barbaric act, such as wars, massacres, terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, ethnic problems, social-cultural genocide, and atrocities on women, minorities, and other marginalized and vulnerable communities. In addition, religious fundamentalism, cultural nationalism, and exclusive ideologies pose a grave threat to peace and non-violence. Institutional forms of violence such as poverty, racism, and sexism also continue as an interminable blight. In most societies, the dominant groups use their authority or power to assert dominance, enforce subjugation and to exploit the marginalised or powerless. A person's competence and existence

in life are completely negated, and they are controlled and neglected. In such a situation, violence becomes a monolog, which treats the other person as an object to be manipulated and exploited. In summary, violence is that which dehumanises a person.

Justice and Eco Violence

It is crystal clear that the Earth is being exploited in various ways and may soon "die" (become inhospitable to humans). Degradation of land, water and air, the devastating consequences of chemical and nuclear pollution, war, deforestation and extinction of species, holes in the ozone layer, the impending floods due to global warming, population explosion, etc., threaten the Earth and her inhabitants. Only humans degrade the environment, pollute the earth, explode nuclear devices, destroy forests, dominate, and exploit the poor, kill their brothers and sisters, and make this planet unliveable for themselves and all other organisms. Here, the complexity of life increases and that destroys harmony between creatures. We are responsible for this condition, and we ourselves are the victims, especially the minorities and the discriminated.

Violence is often connected with issues pertaining to justice. If the struggle for justice becomes a sole concern, ironically, we may be unable to renounce violence, because it sometimes proves successful in achieving short-term goals.

It is a grave reality that we are dominating and ruling over the Earth. Unjust treatment of the planet by humans is one of the principal causes of the ecological crisis. In this crisis, K. C. Abraham, one of the theologians expounded that ecological issues should be seen as a matter of justice. For him, liberation for the whole creation from its bondage of injustice and violence is most important. Eco justice symbolises the conviction that issues of justice and ecology are of crucial importance and that human survival depends upon both. It provides us a way of looking at economic issues through the lens of environmental health and looking at environmental issues through the lens of economic justice. Eco justice emphasises that economic and

ecological issues are two sides of the same coin, which is the sustainable well-being of all creation. It promotes the protection of a healthy environment and justice for all people. Hence, eco justice means justice to all of God's creation. Jürgen Moltmann says, "We shall not be able to achieve social justice without justice for the natural environment, we shall not be able to achieve justice for nature without social justice." So here, justice means the end of all kinds of violence. The liberation of creation and the glorious freedom of God's children are the ultimate goal for the entirety of creation. In the New Testament, especially in Romans, Paul explains that the work of the spirit – freedom – extends to the total renewal of creation. Christ's work for redemption has taken place in the whole universe (Rom 8: 19-23). There is a similarity between the interpretation of liberation as a historical process in the Exodus, and the liberation process of creation in Romans. The former is linked to the cry of the oppressed (Ex.3: 7), the latter is promised in response to the groans within us, and in creation (Rom.8: 22). God has heard the cry of the poor and is taking their side. In the same manner, renewal of the earth comes in response to the cry of the poor and those of the silent nature.

The Church's Calling: Nonviolence

The Church has a special vocation for nonviolence. This vocation is grounded in the teachings of Jesus, the ethos of the kingdom, and the power of resurrection. Jesus taught nonviolence through his life, death, and resurrection, and revealed the qualities and essence of a harmonious life. A Christian understanding of caring must be discerned in the way of Jesus of Nazareth. His striking feature is that he did not look after his own interest, but always the interest of others. If we look at his life, we can perceive that he was always vigilant against the evils surrounding him. However, the evil forces of society killed him, and chaotic powers tried to overtake his virtue, but the vigilant interaction of God through the resurrection destroys them. As a Christian, our responsibility is to make sure that evil does not conquer goodness. As a missionary community, the Church is called to uphold the value of nonviolence not

Dr. Jesudas M. Athyal, Former Editorial Board Member

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The growth of the Diocese of North America and Europe during the last forty years has simply been spectacular. We have grown from infancy to be an established church in the United States, thus moving closer to the vision of Chrysostom Valliya Metropolitan that "the Mar Thoma Church in America should become the American Mar Thoma Church." Our Church is also growing rapidly in Europe. The Diocese of North America and Europe is generally considered by the other immigrant churches as a model of how to take deep roots in the diaspora. As the Diocese is poised on the brink of the next phase of its development, we should keep in mind the fact that our lay members, particularly women, contributed tremendously to the growth of the Diocese, and of most of the parishes there. Trusting in God, we have come thus far. This trust will open new vistas before us as we respond to God's calling to be a faith community in North America and Europe.

in order to preserve its purity, but to express its fidelity to God. Non-violence is not a matter of legalism, but of discipleship. It is the way God has chosen to overthrow evil in the world, the praxis of God's system. Christians are to be non-violent because it reflects the very nature of God (Mt. 5:45, Lk. 6:35). It is not a fringe concern; it is the essence of the Gospel. Therefore, Jesus's nonviolent followers should not be called pacifists, but simply Christians.

In the Old Testament, the God who delivered an enslaved people in the Exodus is now seen as the deliverer of all humanity from oppression. The "value of relationality" is uniquely expressed in the Old Testament. Raymond Panicker proposes that the "Cosmo theandric vision" of reality stands for holistic and integral insight into the nature of all that is there. It has no centre. According to him, the three realities - God, human and nature are not the same; they co-exist and are not separable. The three interrelate and may be hierarchically constituted or coordinated. Everything that exists participates in this "Trinitarian" network. The principle of "being in relation to" is a significant principle for the theology of the environment. Hence, as responsible beings we should be receptive and resemble the qualities and characters of the Triune God for the fullness of life and holistic harmony. We can no longer see ourselves as rulers over nature, rather as guardians, caretakers, parents, trustees, lovers, co-creators, and friends of

creation. When we preserve, keep and care, we are with God in creation.

Conclusion

It must be understood that a major part of Jesus' ministry was to re-establish proper relationships by teaching us to eliminate all types of violence, such as inequalities, injustice, oppression, and greed, which are the root causes of human problems and environmental crises. So let us look at His life and learn from Him for a better world. Some of the prophets of nonviolence such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Dom Helder Camara, and Adolf Perez Esquivel inspire millions to uphold values of nonviolence and counter the forces of evil and culture of death and violence. They demonstrated the path of active nonviolence through their meaningful interactions within society. In order to foster nonviolence, one has to renounce the spirit of vengeance and embrace the power of love. Nothing is more subversive and transforming than love. Nonviolence depends on nurturing a culture of solidarity, dialogue, and participation. It is in the absence of these practices that a society turns violent. The thorn of violence will reduce if we stop oppressing others. We are created not for violence, not for oppression and exploitation, but for the preservation of the whole of creation and the establishment of the reign of God on this earth. This is the message of the Bible - a novel radiance to our Cosmos.

Dr. Nancy George Malialac,
Editor, Mar Thoma Messenger, St Mathew's MTC, Toronto

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"All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God"

The Mar Thoma Messenger has diligently strived to knit us together, bringing messages from our Metropolitans and bishops, addressing issues of doctrine and Christian living, serving as an instrument for articulating opinions and perspectives, while weaving a common thread of community bringing news of activities and life across the Diocese of North America and Europe and the world. Over the years, we have honed our craft to improve and print a magazine comparable with the best.

All praise to the Almighty for granting me the opportunity and privilege to serve on the Editorial Board since the October 2005 issue, when I was first brought in by Mrs. Susan Johnson and Dr. Eapen Daniel. Ithralthalam Jehovah njangale naduthi - may He continue to guide us and help us be the light that lightens!

Prayers and best wishes always.

Dr. Joshy Jacob, Atlanta, Editorial Board Member

FELICITATION



The primary objective of any organizational magazine is to inform its readers as to the happenings within the organization. The Mar Thoma Messenger, which serves as the principal quarterly magazine of the Mar Thoma Diocese of North America and Europe goes above and beyond this mandate. It covers the events that span across the diocese and it also carries articles that are relevant and informative to its readership. The articles include both spiritual as well as contemporary issues like COVID-19 and its implications as well financial management, future of the diocese and so forth. As we celebrate this momentous occasion I thank the Lord for the Mar Thoma Messenger.



*Congratulations
&
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for the 40th anniversary of Messenger



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PRACTICE OF NON VIOLENCE



Jojoy Sam Jacob, Houston Trinity Mar Thoma Church

When we hear the term nonviolence, two names come to mind immediately, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., both inspired by Jesus Christ. Their practice of nonviolence in turbulent societies led to freedom and long-term social change. In fact, the struggle to practice nonviolence has continued. However, most religious, political, and social protests today seem to compromise justice and nonviolence. Pioneers of nonviolence movements believed that practice of nonviolence is an individual choice, which in turn could become collective wisdom. However, the Indian immigrant community does not seem to consider nonviolence as an individual strength, given the success collective nonviolent actions of Gandhiji,

that led to India's independence. Similarly, first generation Indians regard Martin Luther King Jr. as a leader of the civil rights movement in the US. However, it is important to note that Gandhi himself regarded nonviolence as not a political approach, but as a realization of spiritual strength within. This article is about the individual aspects of practicing nonviolence. Let us begin by examining the terms violence and nonviolence.

Violence is any physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, behavior, attitude, policy, or condition that dominates,

Dr. Thomas K. Jose, The Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island.

FELICITATION



I am very delighted and honored to write few words of felicitation to our diocesan quarterly publication-The Mar Thoma Messenger, as it has entered its fortieth year of circulation. All throughout its growth since its inception the leadership and guidance of our diocesan Bishops were very phenomenal. The editorial board and the managing committee has been very keen in publishing theme-based issues that covered multi-disciplinary fields of biblical, socio-economic and social-sciences, historical, leadership and contemporary topics of interest to the common readers of the diocese. We have at present a sizable number of life subscribers which need to be increased. Every Marthomite family should have a copy of this magazine and keep abreast of all the activities that happen across our diocese. I wish the editorial board and the managing committee all the best and congratulate them in bringing out this special edition.

dehumanizes, diminishes, disrespects, or destroys us, or our fellow beings. Nonviolence, on the other hand, is a prototype of the fullness of life. It is a force for transformation, justice, and well-being. It is a powerful method for challenging and overcoming violence without using violence; for transforming and resolving conflict creatively.

Nonviolence is also the personal practice of not causing harm to others under any condition. It may come from the belief that hurting people, animals and/or the environment is unnecessary to achieve a positive outcome. Practical aspects of nonviolence in action should come from individual conviction of being at peace with oneself. When our self (personality) is at peace, nonviolence becomes a spiritual action. In other words, the first step to nonviolence is within ourselves. Psychologists may call it the id, ego, superego balance. Spiritually, it is the fullness of life.

Practicing nonviolence begins by learning how to be less violent and more compassionate with ourselves. We learn by building the courage to speak and act with respect, honor, and reverence for our own being. In conflicting situations, personal accountability allows us to take responsibility for how we contribute to the conflict. Can we take responsibility for how we contribute to a conflict and make a different choice that can lead to a peaceful resolution? As Christians, the most important principle of nonviolence comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where he teaches the disciples not to return violence for violence but love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:38-48). This does not happen without a change happening within us. It is an attitude towards those who hurt us physically or emotionally. For Martin Luther King, nonviolence is "True pacifism," or "nonviolent resistance," a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love" (**Stride**

Toward Freedom King, Stride, 80). King believed that "the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom" (King, *Stride*, 79; *Papers* 5:422). Martin Luther King considered Gandhi as the first person to transform Christian love into a powerful force for social change.

My life (life is what we practice not what we proclaim) is my message, says Gandhi. Write down what you want to stand for in your life. Note at least one way you can show, through action, that you stand for your beliefs. Take this action today. Prayer from the heart can achieve what nothing else in the world can, said Gandhi. Begin and end the day with a prayer for peace. Let peace begin with us by choosing not to engage in any form of gossip today and contribute to harmony. Gandhi wrote, nonviolence assumes that human nature unfailingly responds to the advances of love.

Another way to practice nonviolence is by seeing beyond outer differences in opinions, appearances, or goals. We must strive to find the meeting point of underlying unity that exists in diversity. When we work together, we are stronger than when we work alone. Today, find one significant way that you can cooperate more effectively with the people in your family or workplace, school, and community.

Now the puzzle. Instead of leaving the readers with the impression that the author has practiced all the above nonviolent tactics, I think it is better to conclude this article with a struggle that the reader can resolve to attain harmony. People around the world are using active nonviolent approaches in grassroot movements to build democratic societies, to champion human rights, to challenge racism and gender neutrality, to struggle for economic justice, and to safeguard the planet.

Mr. Gigi Tom, New York, Former Managing Committee Member

FELICITATION



I would like to start off by congratulating the Mar Thoma Messenger and its team on 40 wonderful years. The Messenger has a deep impact on the lives of countless people, as many use it for helping themselves grow spiritually and as theological study material. The Messenger allows people from across the world stay connected and up to date on the Diocese. It takes an incredibly special and hard-working group of people to make this possible and I want to thank all the current and previous managing and editorial board for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. I would also like to give my special appreciation for allowing me to be part of the managing committee for the past couple of terms. It has been an extremely blessed opportunity and I encourage the team to continue the excellent work they are doing for many more years to come.



COUNTER CULTURAL APPROACH TOWARDS THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN

Ms. Lexine Varughis, Diocesan Council Member
Chicago Mar Thoma Church



What does it mean to be feminist? If you immediately thought “for women to be equal to men” you aren’t sharing a feminist ideal, you are sharing a Christian ideal. Long before feminism, God created women to be equal to man, the world has distorted that Christian ideal to emphasize the power struggle of women and men in this world

However, we live in such a time where there is more violence towards women than ever before. According to the *Invisible Girl Project*, more women and girls have been discriminated against and/or killed in the past century in India than any other modern day genocide. We have all probably heard of the term “genocide”, but have we heard of “gendercide”? Gendercide is the “systematic killing of members of a specific gender”. Specifically, female gendercide is prevalent in India today. This comes in different forms - whether through infant killings, abortions, or trafficking:

- ▶ **Infant Killings (Infanticide)** - The murder of a baby girl in India occurs more often than we think. According to *Unicef*, India is the only large country in the world where more girl babies die than boy babies. This practice is widely used that about 75% of girl infants are likely to die when compared to boys.

▶ **Abortions**

- Although India has laws in place to protect unborn children, the lack of education and enforcement of these laws causes about 700,000 girls to be aborted every year in India.

- ▶ **Trafficking** - Women are trafficked into being domestic workers or child brides, as there is such a huge gender gap between men and women due to the gendercide.

The violence, shame, and defeat women are put through in India and much across the world is the opposite of how we as Christians should treat women. The Christian perspective towards women should hold value over worldly perspectives, because Jesus held a very counter cultural view towards women. Jesus defied cultural norms, had women disciples, spoke identity into women who felt unworthy, and much more. Jesus treated women how they ought to be treated through his words and actions.

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once

Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, "Who touched me?" "But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." - Mark 5: 28- 34

I'm sure we're all familiar with this story of the bleeding woman, after twelve years of suffering she is waiting to touch the fringe of Jesus's cloak, so that she may be healed. Not only does Jesus heal her, but he calls her daughter. He speaks identity over her, she was shown the love of our father. Jesus values women and relates to their suffering.

At a time like this we are to be reminded of the many violent and non violent hardships women and girls

face in society today. It is so important to understand that women are important. Culture may say we aren't worthy. But Jesus says we are...

- We're fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).
- We're created in God's image (Genesis 1:27).
- We're loved (1 Thessalonians 1:4).
- We're chosen, holy, and blameless in God's sight (Ephesians 1:4).
- We're daughters of God and co-heirs with Jesus (John 1:12)

Let us continue to uphold the countless women across the world who are victims of violence and let us pray that we are able to uphold Christian values and overcome the values of the world in our own practices.

And remember to Him we are all worthy, and through Him we are saved.

Mr. Lal Varghese, Attorney at Law, Dallas,
and Former Editorial Board Member

FELICITATION



I had the privilege to serve as a member of the 'Mar Thoma Messenger' Managing Committee from 2002-2004 and also as Associate Editor and as a member of the Editorial Board from 2005-2013. God sent His messengers and finally Lord came himself to the materialistic world to increase awareness of Himself and to re-connect the fallen souls with their origin of eternity. God wants us to have heavenly wisdom to discern the right and wrong and to live a life worthy by glorifying the name of the Lord. The word 'Messenger' reminds that we are all messengers of the Lord in this world. May the Lord help the 'Messenger' to spread the gospel to all people by treading the less traveled roads and by visiting the less frequented Samaritan wells. Let me congratulate all the Managing Committee and Editorial Board members and all those who worked behind the scenes from its humble beginning for the past 40 years in bringing out an excellent publication.

Mr. Alex Alexander, Former Managing Committee Member

FELICITATION



I am Happy to know that Mar Thoma Messenger is publishing a special edition in October 2022 to commemorate its 40th anniversary. Messenger has done a commendable job in disseminating religious and spiritual values through bible studies and articles of faith, along with updating relevant news and information about the diocese. This has been possible only because of the demanding work put in by the team. I hope that this publication would be successful in reaching each and every Marthomite home in North America.

I have been fortunate to be associated with the publishing of Messenger as a committee member representing the Diocesan council during the years 2017 to 2021. His mighty hand has led us this far and I pray for His continued Guidance and Blessings. On this occasion I would like to congratulate the team for completing 40 successful years and may the Messenger reach great heights and be a blessing in the years to come.

Sincere wishes,



GOD DRESSED LILIES OF THE FIELD USING NANOTECHNOLOGY



Dr. Jayan Thomas,

Professor of Nanotechnology, Materials, and Optics, University of Central Florida

Among my favorite bible verses, Mathew 6: 28 and 29 stand out, "And why do you worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are." I remember these verses from my childhood whenever I see the beautiful flowers in the field. Though the meaning of these verses is that there is no point in worrying about many things, the question that came to my mind was why the Bible talks explicitly about flowers of the field. There is no question they are incredibly beautiful, but why are they so beautiful? As I advanced my career as a nanotechnology scientist, I realized that this is also a scientific problem. Scientists believed for a long time that the color of the flowers was just due to the pigments present in their petals, until modern nanotechnology equipment like scanning electron microscopes (SEM) emerged. With the help of these equipment, scientists learned that the beautiful colors are also due to the extremely small nanopatterns

(striations) on these flowers that are invisible to the naked eye (Fig.1).¹

You will realize why these flowers are so "beautifully dressed" if you understand a little bit about nanotechnology. In simple terms, nanotechnology deals with materials and patterns in the order of one billionth of a meter, i.e., if you split a hair along its length 80,000 times, one section is about a nanometer (nm) thick. When you look at the petals of a lily flower under a scanning electron microscope, you see nanopatterns. When sunlight shines on these nanopatterns, light scatters, similar to the beautiful colors you see from some glass crystals (gratings) or the rainbow in the sky. The emitting colors depend on the size, spacing and shape of these nanopatterns and the angle at which light incident on them. This is why you see different colors and sometimes angle-dependent color effects. In flowers, these nanostructures are in addition to the color pigments present. These structures are a true engineering marvel from their creator!

1 E. Moyroud et al., Disorder in convergent floral nanostructures enhances signaling to bees, Nature 550, 469 (2017)

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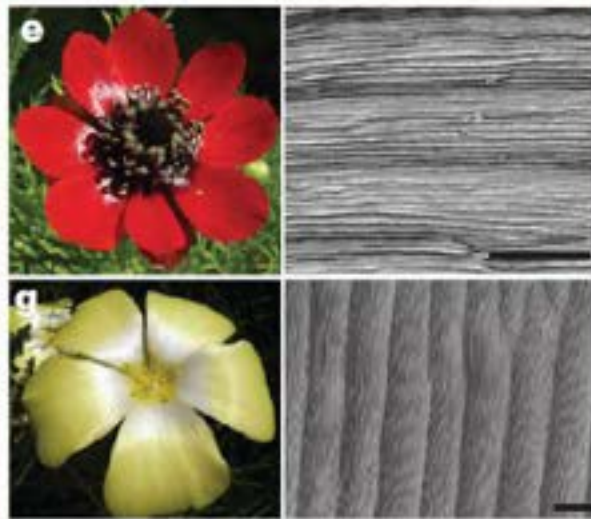


Figure 1 Right panel shows SEM images of flowers on the left panel. Black bar at the bottom right corner on SEM image shows a length of 20 micrometers. Reprinted with permission. Copyright: Springer Nature1

You will appreciate the value of these nanostructures if you know how hard it is to develop even a square centimeter area of these structures manually. Not only is it expensive, but it is also extremely time-consuming to make. The variations in the size of these nanopatterns in flowers are hard to replicate in the laboratory. This means God made them precisely to provide them with the beauty He envisioned. By knowing the effort and time required to make structures similar to one of the petals of these flowers, I now completely understand the meaning of the verse, "yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are."

God created humans on the last day of creation and man is considered the pinnacle of his creation. If we reflect on ourselves, we are much more complex than the lilies of the field. All creation is very dear to its creator. If God clothed the lilies of the field that bloom today and wither tomorrow with such precision, you can imagine how carefully he crafted us. The message is noticeably clear – each of us is so precious to God that there is no reason to worry about tomorrow.

Mr. Bobby K. Jacob, Managing Committee Member

FELICITATION



Thanking the Lord Almighty for the 40th Anniversary of the Mar Thoma Messenger. The Messenger has been a vital resource for the Marthomites in North America & Europe. Having the subscriptions available to homes and churches for our parishioners to reflect and contribute to the Messengers growth.

As a 2nd generation Marthomite who continues to be involved in the church, I have immense pride in celebrating the 40th Anniversary. I have grown up reading the Messenger and even had an article written about me by the Late James Cherian in 1991. As an Assembly member, I was given the opportunity to serve in the Managing Committee of the Messenger these last few years. Celebrating this milestone would not be possible if it were not for the countless support from the previous Editorial Boards, parish members and the advertisers. I hope the next generation of Marthomites will continue the legacy and traditions.

Mr. George Sam, Immanuel MTC, Virginia, and Former Editorial Board Member

FELICITATION



It is an honor and privilege to serve a previous term in the editorial board of Messenger and to have been invited to write a felicitation on 40th anniversary of this official publication of the Diocese. As the name suggests, it has been acting as a messenger for the diaspora community for past several decades carrying Bible Studies and articles related to the faith and practices of the Church and contemporary trends in society. Let us remember all those who have contributed to the growth of the diocese and this publication from its humble beginnings to where it stands, those who led with a vision like how Israelites were led to the promised land under the leadership of Moses. During this occasion, I wish and pray that it continues to serve its mission carrying the gospel and message of hope to the world that is slowly being recovered from the effects of a global pandemic.

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TIMELESS ETERNAL LOVE

AN INSPIRATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION



George C. George (Jeoju)
St. Mathew's MTC, Toronto

The timeless eternal love of Christ is revealed in our lives in different ways and when we meditate on it, it will inspire us to participate in the community to bring peace, love, and hope.

We get a perspective of timelessness from the parable of labourers in the vineyard as recorded in Matthew 20: 1-16. Jesus said that "the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard." The landowner called many workers to work in his vineyard at different times of the day; in the evening, he gave all of them equal wages irrespective of the time they worked. Jesus concludes this parable saying that the last will be first and the first will be last (also in Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30).

Our concept of time is a part of our existence, and we often link our accumulation of work, wealth, and life events and God to it. We know that chronological time is a measure of the light of the sun. God created the heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1) but we have surrendered much of our thinking to the concept of time governed by the sun and the moon. According to the gospel of John, in the beginning, Christ was the light (John 1:3-5). In the parable mentioned above, though the labourers worked for different durations of time, they all got the same wage, suggesting that in the kingdom of heaven,

the human concept of time is irrelevant. We experience moments of timelessness when we immerse ourselves in the beauty of the moonlight or watch the waves of the sea or hear a bird song. Such eternal moments of timelessness connect us to the divine and we feel the love of God and the depth of the love of Christ on the cross. God's eternal love helps us to transcend the concept of time and feel the omnipresence of God. Ezekiel's vision of the wheel in the sky (Ezekiel 10: 9-10) gives us the perspective of the omnipresence of God or in other words, the perspective that God is the light that transcends time. In the new Jerusalem, in Revelation 21: 23, the holy city of faith has no need for the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light and its lamp is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22: 13). When God makes everything new (Revelation 21: 5, 6), time is reset and we have the promise that our sins are forgiven in Christ, and it is a new beginning. This fulfills the prophetic promise in Isaiah 1:18: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." It is the timeless eternal love of Christ that helps us to love God and love one another.

Such a deep experience of timeless eternal love evokes empathy in us to walk with the pain of those who experience poverty, homelessness, and domestic violence. Empathy is not simply pity. "In empathy, observers imagine the experience of another 'as if' the experience were their own, whereas sympathy suggests that the observer is absorbed or immersed in feeling all the experiences of the other, sometimes resulting in a feeling of pity for the person"¹. The causes of these social issues are many, related to political brokenness and there is no simple solution. Economic recession, unbearable stress at work, and breakdown of social systems may lead to situations of job loss, loss of homes, family breakdown, and mental illness. Some people fall into the trap of addiction. We are living in a post-modern world and post modernity², which is characterized by disoriented, aimless, and lonely living that creates stress. Family support to deal with stressful situations in life can help victims of domestic violence. Women are mostly victims of domestic violence and listening to their voices is an important part of counseling.³ Often women are generalized and viewed through stereotypes created by media, television, and movies. Women have within them the resources and knowledge to create a new life; helping them bring out their true voices will help them out of situations of domestic violence. There are many things we can do to help people in crisis. Listening to their stories is an important empathic action. Helping people looking for work find jobs, campaigning support for affordable housing, and supporting a food bank are some other examples of empathic responses.

Students in a school in Afghanistan formed a singing group called "Sounds of Afghanistan" after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. They exhibited hope and courage and resisted attempts by the Taliban to ban women's education. The students were later given refuge in Canada for a new life.

In 2020, Marcus Rashford, the young superstar of 'Manchester United' in the United Kingdom, campaigned for continuing free meals for needy children in schools in UK during the summer. He succeeded in winning over public opinion and influencing the government's

decision to meet the challenge of addressing child poverty in schools.

Ray Suarez is a successful journalist who lost his job recently and found it difficult to get a suitable job. He saw the reality of poverty in America. He now runs a podcast titled 'Going for Broke' to bring the stories of those in crisis. He points out that more action from the government is needed to help the poor. The support for those in need is to be motivated by love and it can open the minds of people and help us move away from a dead-end as a community.

The first verse of a song written by the Very Rev. K. S. Mathew titled "Through the Corridors of Time" is as follows:

"Through the corridors of time
 A voice resounds 'Ecce Homo' (Behold the man)
 As we seek to be human, it's a chime
 Behold the Son of Man"

Time is a part of our thinking. But when we look back, we can see the presence of Christ in our life – parents who loved us dearly, siblings who took care of us, friends who gave us important counsel, doctors who made critical diagnoses, and numerous such persons. The presence of Christ in our life prepares us for a new reality transcending our time constrained thinking.

As a community, we often face chaos. But if we look deeply, it reveals the source of the chaos. Collective narrative practice⁴ is a method for addressing the source of the chaos through art, stories, songs, and prayers bringing people together. Such acts of love will bring peace to the community and heal the enemy's madness as mentioned in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, 'Love.' An example of narrative practice is the work of George Butler, an illustrator, who went to Ukraine to sketch the scenes of conflict there. Such works will convey the message of togetherness and open avenues for solutions out of love.

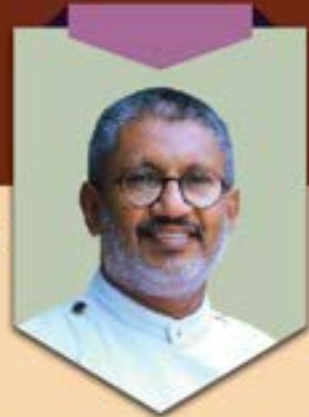
When we meditate on the timeless eternal love of Christ, we will be able to engage in social actions to bring peace, love, and hope to the world. May the presence of Christ be with us all.

1 Selles, Johanna M., and Margaret A. Farley. *Empathic Communities: Educating for Justice*. Wipf & Stock, Eugene, Oregon, 2011.
 2 Middleton, J. Richard, and Brian J. Walsh. *Truth Is Stranger than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. InterVarsity, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1995.
 3 Neuger, Christie Cozad. *Counseling Women- A narrative pastoral approach*. Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, 2001
 4 Denborough, David. *Collective Narrative Practice*. Dulwich Centre Publications, Adelaide, 2008



അക്രമരഹിത്യം പരിശീലിക്കുക

റവ. തോമസ് കോശി പനച്ചമുട്ടിൽ



ക്രമം എന്നതിന്റെ വിപരീത പദമാണ് അക്രമം എന്നത്. അതായത് ക്രമം തെറ്റിയത് എല്ലാം അക്രമം എന്നാണ് അർത്ഥം. ഈ പ്രപഞ്ചത്തിനും അതിലുള്ള സകല ചരാചരങ്ങൾക്കും ഒരു താളവും ക്രമവും ഉണ്ട്. ഇതിന്റെ താളവും ക്രമവും തെറ്റുമ്പോൾ എല്ലാം വികൃതമാകും. എല്ലാ വികൃതമാക്കപ്പെടലിനും പിന്നിലും അക്രമം അഥവാ ക്രമം തെറ്റൽ ഉണ്ട്. ഇന്ന് സമസ്ത മേഖലകളിലും അക്രമവും വികൃതമാക്കപ്പെടലും സംഭവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുകയാണ്. മനുഷ്യമനസ്സിന്റെ ക്രമം തെറ്റിയതിനാൽ രാഷ്ട്രീയ, സാമൂഹിക, സാമ്പത്തിക, ആധ്യാത്മിക, പാരിസ്ഥിതിക മേഖലകളിലാകമാനം അക്രമങ്ങളും അനർത്ഥങ്ങളും അസമാധാനവും സർവ്വസാധാരണമാണ്. എല്ലാ സംവിധാനങ്ങളും ക്രമം തെറ്റിയവരുടെ കരങ്ങളാൽ നിയന്ത്രിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതാണ് ഇതിന് കാരണം.

ഹിംസയുടെ അഴിഞ്ഞാട്ടകഥകൾകൊണ്ട് വാർത്താമായമങ്ങൾ നിറഞ്ഞു കവിയുകയാണ്. അക്രമം ഒരു ദൈനംദിന സംഭവമായി മാറിയിരിക്കുന്നു. എവിടെയും ഏവരിലും ഹിംസയുടെ ഭാവമാണ് കാണാൻ കഴിയുക. ഹിംസ എന്ന സംസ്കൃത പദത്തിന്റെ അർത്ഥം നശിപ്പിക്കുക, മുറിവേല്പിക്കുക എന്നാണ്. ഇതിന്റെ വിപരീതപദമാണ് നശിപ്പിക്കാതിരിക്കുക, മുറിവേല്പിക്കാതിരിക്കുക എന്ന അർത്ഥം വരുന്ന അഹിംസ എന്ന വാക്ക്. അഹിംസക്ക് അക്രമരഹിത്യം എന്നൊരു അർത്ഥം കൂടിയുണ്ട്. അഹിംസ എന്ന പദം കൊണ്ട് അർത്ഥമാക്കുന്നത് 'ചിന്ത കൊണ്ടോ വാക്കു

കൊണ്ടോ പ്രവൃത്തികൊണ്ടോ ഒന്നിനേയും വേദനിപ്പിക്കാതിരിക്കുക, നശിപ്പിക്കാതിരിക്കുക' എന്നാണ്.

മത സംഘടനങ്ങൾ, ഭീകരവാദ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ, രാഷ്ട്രീയ കലാപങ്ങൾ, ദേശരാഷ്ട്രങ്ങൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള യുദ്ധങ്ങൾ, ആദ്യ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ ലഹളകൾ, വംശീയ സംഘട്ടനങ്ങൾ, സ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് നേരെയുള്ള അക്രമങ്ങൾ ഇങ്ങനെ ഹിംസാത്മകമായ സംഭവങ്ങളുടെ പട്ടിക നീളുകയാണ്. ഇതിനു പുറമെ പ്രകൃതിയുടെ മേലുള്ള കടന്നു കയറ്റവും അക്രമത്തിന്റെ പട്ടികയിൽ പെടുന്നതാണ്. എന്തൊരു ജീവനെയും ഹനിക്കുന്ന എല്ലാത്തരം പ്രവൃത്തികളും ഹിംസയാണ്. ഹിംസയോടെ നിഷേധാത്മകമായ നിലപാടു സ്വീകരിക്കാനും, സമസ്ത ജീവജാലങ്ങളോടും ദയാദാവിം കാണിക്കുവാനും നമുക്ക് കഴിയണം. എല്ലാ വസ്തുക്കളോടും ജീവികളോടും തുല്യമായ ബഹുമാനവും അവയെ ഒന്നിനെയും നശിപ്പിക്കുകയില്ലെന്നുള്ള തീരുമാനവും നമ്മിൽ ഉണ്ടാകണം. പ്രവൃത്തിയിലും, ചിന്തയിലും, വാക്കിലും അഹിംസ പാലിക്കണം. എല്ലാ ജീവികളും പാലിക്കേണ്ട ഒരു ഗുണമായി അഹിംസയെ നാം കാണണം.

എല്ലാ അക്രമങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രദവകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിൽ നിൽക്കുന്നവർക്ക് ചില ഗുണലക്ഷ്യങ്ങളുണ്ട് ഇത് അധികാര, സാമ്പത്തിക വിഷയങ്ങൾ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ച് ഉള്ളതാണ്. ഉദാഹരണത്തിന് അമേരിക്കയിൽ ഏബ്രഹാം ലിങ്കൺ അടിച്ചെടു

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(1974 - 2022)

"Thus far the Lord has helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12)

വടം നിരോധിച്ചപ്പോൾ അവിടുത്തെ പ്രഭുക്കന്മാർ ആഭ്യന്തര യുദ്ധത്തിന് ഒരുങ്ങിയതിനു കാരണം തങ്ങൾക്ക് തോട്ട വേലക്ക് അടിമകളെ കിട്ടാതാകും എന്നതായിരുന്നു. ഇന്ത്യയിൽ മിക്ക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ ഇവിടുത്തെ വരേണ്യ വർഗ്ഗം എതിർക്കുന്നതിന്റെ കാരണം പ്രാന്തവൽക്കരിക്കപ്പെട്ട ജന വിഭാഗം വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം നേടിയാൽ തങ്ങൾക്ക് പാടങ്ങളിൽ അടിമപ്പണി ചെയ്യുവാൻ ആളെക്കിട്ടാതാകും എന്നതാണ്. അതിനാൽ മതപരിവർത്തനത്തിന്റെ പേരിൽ കലാപങ്ങൾ സ്വഷ്ടിച്ച് സംഘർഷം നിലനിർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. സാമ്രാജ്യത്വ വൻശക്തികൾ അവരുടെ സാമ്പത്തിക ഉന്നമനത്തിനും ആഗോള ആധിപത്യം നിലനിർത്തുന്നതിനും ആയുധകച്ച വടം വിപുലപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനും യുദ്ധങ്ങൾ സ്വഷ്ടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടേയിരിക്കുന്നു. ലോകത്തെ ആകമാനം ഇസ്ലാമിക വൽക്കരിക്കുക എന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടെ നീങ്ങുന്ന ദീകര സംഘങ്ങളുടെ പ്രവർത്തന ഫലമായി സംഭവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന അനർത്ഥങ്ങൾ എത്ര ദയാനകമാണ്. ഹിംസയുടെ തുടക്കം ഏഷ്യയും സ്വാർത്ഥതയോടുകൂടിയ ചിന്തകളിലൂടെയും വാക്കുകളിലൂടെയും പ്രവർത്തികളിലൂടെയുമാണ്. നിസ്വാർത്ഥ മനസ്സിന്റെ ഉടമകളായ വ്യക്തിത്വങ്ങളാൽ നമ്മുടെ രാഷ്ട്രീയ, സാമൂഹിക, സാംസ്കാരിക, രാഷ്ട്രീയ, ആധ്യാത്മിക നേതൃത്വ രംഗങ്ങൾ സമ്പന്നമായകിലേ ഇനി ലോകം അഹിംസയുടെയും സമാധാനത്തിന്റെയും അവസ്ഥയിൽ എത്തുകയൊള്ളൂ.

ലോകം കണ്ടതിൽവെച്ചുവെറും ഉന്നതമായ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഉടമയാണ് ഗാന്ധിജി. സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെയും സഹനത്തിന്റെയും സഹാനുഭൂതിയുടെയും ആൽമുപമായ ആ മഹാത്മാവ് സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തിലേക്ക് ഇന്ത്യയെ നയിച്ചത് അക്രമരഹിതവുമായ അഹിംസയും വെളിച്ചം പകർന്ന വഴിയായിരുന്നു. എന്റെ ജീവിതമാണ് എന്റെ സന്ദേശം എന്ന് പ്രഖ്യാപിച്ച ഈ മഹാപ്രതിഭയുടെ ജന്മദിനമായ ഒക്ടോബർ 2 ഇന്ന് രാജ്യാന്തര അഹിംസാദിനമായിട്ടാണ് ആചരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നത്. "ഈ ദുർമുഖത്ത് ഇതുപോലൊരു മനുഷ്യൻ രക്തമാംസാദികളോടെ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്നുവെന്ന് വിശ്വസിക്കാൻ വരും തലമുറ തയ്യാറായില്ലെന്നു വരാം". എന്നാണ് ഗാന്ധിജിയെക്കുറിച്ച് ആൽബർട്ട് ഐൻസ്റ്റീൻ അഭിപ്രായപ്പെട്ടത്. കലാപങ്ങളും കലഹങ്ങളും ലോകത്തെയാകെ ഞെരുക്കിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ സമാധാനത്തിന്റെയും സ്നേഹത്തിന്റെയും സഹകരണത്തിന്റെയും പങ്കുവയ്ക്കലിന്റെയും സന്ദേശമാണ് ഗാന്ധിജി നൽകുന്നത്. 'ദീരുത്വത്തിന്റെ മുടുപ്പടമല്ല, ധീരന്റെ സമുന്നതമായ ധർമ്മമാണ് അഹിംസ. ആയുധ പരിശീലനത്തിനാവശ്യമായതിനേക്കാൾ കൂടുതൽ ധീരത അഹിംസാ പരിശീലനത്തിനാവശ്യമാണ്. ആയുധ പ്രയോഗത്തിൽ നിന്ന് അഹിംസയിലേക്കുള്ള പരിവർത്തനം സാധ്യമാണ്. ചിലപ്പോഴൊക്കെ അത് നിഷ്പ്രയാസവുമായിരിക്കും.

അതായത് പ്രതികാരം ചെയ്യണമെന്ന് ഒരാളുടെ ആഗ്രഹത്തിന്മേലുള്ള ബോധപൂർവമായ നിയന്ത്രണമാണ് അഹിംസ എന്നു പറയാം. ഗാന്ധിജിയുടെ പുതുമായ യങ് ഇന്ത്യയിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചതാണ് ഈ നിർവചനങ്ങൾ.

നാട്ടിലിപ്പോൾ നടക്കുന്ന സമരങ്ങളിൽ ഒരിനമാണല്ലോ സത്യഗ്രഹ സമരം. പലപ്പോഴും പ്രകോപനപരമായ മുദ്രാവാക്യ

ങ്ങളും പ്രസംഗങ്ങളുമായി സത്യഗ്രഹം കൊഴുക്കാറുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ ഗാന്ധിജി വിഭാവനം ചെയ്ത സത്യഗ്രഹവുമായി ഈ സമരങ്ങളെ ഒന്നു തട്ടിച്ചു നോക്കാം. ഗാന്ധിജി പറയുന്നു 'സത്യഗ്രഹം കൊണ്ട് ഞാൻ അർത്ഥമാക്കുന്നത് സത്യത്തെ മുറുകെ പിടിക്കുക എന്നതാണ്. തിന്മയും തിന്മ ചെയ്യുന്ന ആളും തമ്മിൽ വ്യത്യാസമുണ്ടെന്ന കാര്യം സത്യഗ്രഹി മറക്കാൻ പാടില്ല. തിന്മ ചെയ്യുന്നവർക്കെതിരെ വിദ്വേഷമോ പകയോ വച്ച് പുലർത്തരുത്. ഏഷ്യയും തിന്മയെ നന്മകൊണ്ടും കോപത്തെ സ്നേഹം കൊണ്ടും അസത്യത്തെ സത്യം കൊണ്ടും കീഴ്പ്പെടുത്താനാണ് ശ്രമിക്കുക. അതു കൊണ്ട് സത്യഗ്രഹസമരത്തിലിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരാൾ കോപം, വിദ്വേഷം തുടങ്ങിയ മാനുഷിക ദുർബല്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന് താൻ തന്നെ പൂർണ്ണമായും വിമുക്തനാണെന്നും തന്റെ സത്യഗ്രഹം കൊണ്ട് ഇല്ലാതാക്കാണൊരുങ്ങുന്ന തിന്മകൾ തന്നെ പിടികൂടിയിട്ടില്ലെന്നും ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. ഇതിനായി സത്യഗ്രഹി ശ്രദ്ധാപൂർവ്വം ആത്മപരിശോധന നടത്തുകയും ചെയ്യണം. സമരത്തെ എത്ര ഉന്നതമായ ദാവത്തിലാണ് ഗാന്ധിജി വ്യാഖ്യാനിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്.

ഇന്നത്തെ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അസ്വസ്ഥതകൾ പല സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിലൂടെയാണ് രൂപപ്പെടുന്നത്. തത്ത്വബോധമില്ലാത്ത രാഷ്ട്രീയം പ്രവർത്തനം, സമ്പത്തിനോടുള്ള ആർത്തി, ജോലി ചെയ്യാതെ വളഞ്ഞവഴിയിലൂടെ നേടുന്ന സമ്പത്ത്, സ്വഭാവ ശുദ്ധി പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യാത്ത വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, ആർഭാവവും മത്സര സംസ്കാരവും, മാനുഷിക മുഖമില്ലാത്ത ശാസ്ത്രം, ത്യാഗ ചിന്തയില്ലാത്ത ആത്മീയത, പ്രകടനങ്ങളാകുന്ന ആരാധന, സ്ഥാനമാനങ്ങളോടുള്ള ആർത്തി തുടങ്ങിയ പലവിധ കാരണങ്ങളാണ് നമ്മുടെ സമൂഹത്തിലെ പ്രധാന പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കെല്ലാം കാരണമാകുന്നത്. ഇവ മുഖം ഉടലെടുക്കുന്ന പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെല്ലാം അവസാനം അക്രമത്തിലും ഹിംസയിലും എത്തിച്ചേരും. സമൂഹത്തിലെ സൗഹാർദ്ദാന്തരീക്ഷം ഉറപ്പുവരുത്തുന്നതിന് ഭരണകർത്താക്കൾ നിതാന്ത ജാഗ്രത കാട്ടുകയും പുരോഗമന നടപടികൾ സ്വീകരിക്കുകയും വേണം.

യേശു കർത്താവിന്റെ ദൈവരാജ്യ പ്രഘോഷണത്തിൽ നിറഞ്ഞു നിന്ന സന്ദേശമായിരുന്നു സമാധാനം എന്നത്. സമാധാനം എന്ന പദത്തിന് വേദപുസ്തകാടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ യുദ്ധവിരാമം, സന്ധി, കലഹമരണം തുടങ്ങിയ അർത്ഥങ്ങളാണുള്ളത്. ദൈവവും മനുഷ്യനും, മനുഷ്യനും പ്രകൃതിയും, മനുഷ്യർ തമ്മിലുമുള്ള ബന്ധം പുനഃസ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോൾ എല്ലാ മേഖലകളിലും അക്രമം അവസാനിക്കുകയും സമാധാനം നിലനിൽക്കുകയും ചെയ്യും. 'സമാധാനമുണ്ടാക്കുന്നവർ ദാത്യവാന്മാർ; അവർ ദൈവത്തിന്റെ പുത്രന്മാർ എന്ന് വിളിക്കപ്പെടും' എന്നാണ് കർത്താവ് അരുളിച്ചെയ്തത്. നാം ക്രിസ്തുവിലാകുമ്പോൾ സ്നേഹത്താൽ നിറയപ്പെടും. അപ്പോൾ നാം ചിന്ത കൊണ്ടോ വാക്കുകൊണ്ടോ പ്രവൃത്തി കൊണ്ടോ ഒന്നിനേയും വേദനിപ്പിക്കുകയോ നശിപ്പിക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യില്ല. സമാധാനത്തിന്റെ മക്കളായി മാറും. ആഗോള യുദ്ധങ്ങളും ഗാർഹിക അക്രമങ്ങളും രാഷ്ട്രീയ, വർഗ്ഗീയ അക്രമങ്ങളും പ്രകൃതിയുടെ മേലുള്ള അതിക്രമങ്ങളും അരങ്ങുതകർക്കുമ്പോൾ ക്രിസ്തു ശൈലിയിൽ സമാധാനത്തിന്റെ വക്താക്കളായി നിൽക്കുവാൻ നമുക്ക് കഴിയണം. അക്രമരഹിതത്വത്തിന്റെ പരിശീലകരും പചാരകരുമായി നാം മാറണം. ജീവിതത്തെ ക്രിസ്തുവിൽ ക്രമപ്പെടുത്തുക. അക്രമരഹിതത്വത്തിന്റെ പ്രഘോഷകരാകുക.

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OBITUARY



Mrs. Mariamma Varghese (Lilly, 75 years), member of Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston, was called to eternity on 11th September 2022. She was born in Ormalloor, Pathanamthitta, to Late Mr. A. V. Thomas and Mrs. Thankamma Thomas. Funeral service was held on 17th September 2022 at Trinity MTC, Houston. She is survived by her husband Mr. Koshy Varghese and children Mr. Libu Varghese, Dr. Lesly Varghese & Dr. Seema Varghese and Rev. Larry Varghese & Roshin Abraham and grandchildren Anjali, Asha, Riya, Shalini, Chloe and Eli. She is also survived by sister Mrs. Annamma Philip and brother Mr. Thomas Varghese.



MATRIMONIAL

"Marthoma parents settled in India invite marriage proposal for their daughter, 28 years old, Canadian Citizen and stands at 5' 4" tall, working for a leading financial institution in Canada. She is a God fearing girl and ambitious with high moral values, Seeking compatible match from parents of God fearing and family oriented boys who are permanent residents/citizens (29-32 yrs), Interested parents and prospective grooms may kindly respond with a recent photograph and personal profile to matrimonials202223@gmail.com"

Parents are inviting proposals for their daughter 26 Years old, 5'6". She has Masters in Occupational therapy and currently working as Occupational therapist. She is family oriented, God fearing and has high moral values. We are seeking a God fearing, clean habits, family oriented boy with high moral values from Christian denominations (Marthoma) with professionally qualified (post graduate degree), medical field, IT or Engineering filed working in USA/Canada. Interested parties, may please contact:

(224) 392-8930 or kurien8868@gmail.com

Proposals invited for Marthomite girl, 32 years, 5' 1" , fair, born and brought up in Bahrain, MS in systems engineering, working as software engineer in Dallas on H1B visa. She is God fearing, jovial, sings well plays keyboard and likes to travel. Phone no. 303 478 3652 Email thomsam100@gmail.com.

Marthoma parents settled in Pennsylvania inviting marriage proposals for their Son, 30 years old at 5' 8" tall. He grew up in Pennsylvania with Christian values. He has a Master's Degree in Health Administration from DREXELL University, PA and currently working as health administrator for an insurance Co in PA. Looking for a qualified Mar Thoma God fearing partner with similar background in USA. Please Kindly contact, 215-519-7330 E Mail: Abrahammathew08@comcast.net

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Winners List for July 2022 Bible Crossword Puzzle

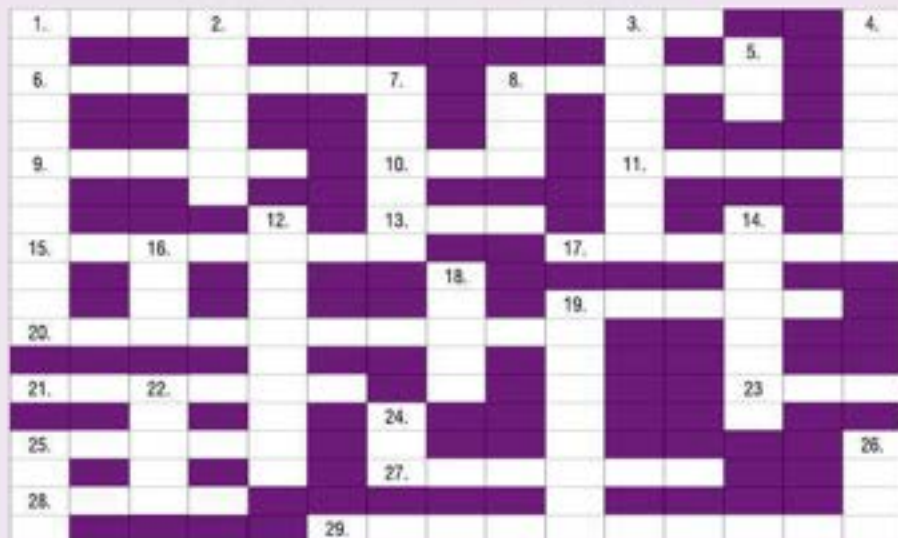
1	Manju Mathews	Ascension MTC, PA	36	Soosy Thomas	Philadelphia MTC, PA
2	Dr. Susan Alex	Atlanta MTC, JK, TN	37	Susan Mathews	Philadelphia MTC, PA
3	Laly Elias	Baltimore MTC, MD	38	Tharamel Alexander	Philadelphia MTC, PA
4	Abraham Varghese	Carmel MTC, Boston	39	Santha Varghese	Phoenix MTC, AZ
5	Ethan Abraham (Gr. 3)	Carmel MTC, Boston	40	Hannah Daniel	Salem MTC, NY
6	Gianna Sage Aguiar (Gr. 4)	Carmel MTC, Boston	41	Saramma Koshy	Salem MTC, NY
7	Landen Philip Aguiar (Gr. 7)	Carmel MTC, Boston	42	Sharly Thomas	Salem MTC, NY
8	Lincoln A. Aguiar (Gr. 2)	Carmel MTC, Boston	43	Mariam K John	Sehion MTC, Dallas
9	Mercy Simon	Carmel MTC, Boston	44	Saramma Varkay	Sehion MTC, Dallas
10	Paul J Isaac	Carmel MTC, Boston	45	Dr. Prathik Manuel Philip	St. Luke MTC, Florida
11	Mary Varghese Cavil	Detroit MTC, MI	46	Liba Thomas Philip	St. Lukes MTC, Florida
12	Usha Sara Thomas	Detroit MTC, MI	47	Saramma Alexander	St. Mathews, Canada
13	Mariam John	Epiphany MTC, NY	48	Annamma I Varghese	St. Peter's MTC, NJ
14	Mariam John	Epiphany MTC, NY	49	Sally George	St. Peter's MTC, NJ
15	Mathew T Mathew	Epiphany MTC, NY	50	Sosamma Varghese	St. Peter's MTC, NJ
16	Saramma Chacko	Epiphany MTC, NY	51	Alice Thomas	St. James MTC NY
17	George Binoy	Immanuel MTC, Houston	52	Chacko Varghese (Viju)	St. John's MTC MI
18	Mercy Binoy	Immanuel MTC, Houston	53	Philip Mathew	St. John's MTC MI
19	Sara Philip	Immanuel MTC, Houston	54	Checha John	Staten Island MTC, NY
20	Neethi Prasad (Kochamma)	Jerusalem MTC, CT	55	Elsy Philip	Staten Island MTC, NY
21	Achamma Jacob	Long Island MTC, NY	56	Mary Varghese (555)	Staten Island MTC, NY
22	Saramma Varghese	Long Island MTC, NY	57	Omana Rajee	Staten Island MTC, NY
23	Sosamma Abraham	Long Island MTC, NY	58	Saramma Rajan	Staten Island MTC, NY
24	Joanna Zachariah (Gr. 12)	MTC Oklahoma	59	Lilly M Varghese	Trinity MTC Houston
25	T.C. Zachariah	MTC Oklahoma	60	Nikhil Mathew (Gr 9)	Trinity MTC Houston
26	Alina Thomas (Gr 8)	MTC, Carrollton, TX	61	Shawn Varghese	Trinity MTC Houston
27	Asha Thomas	MTC, Carrollton, TX	62	Thomas Varghese	Trinity MTC Houston
28	Mini Abraham	MTC, Carrollton, TX	63	Vishal Mathew (Gr 7)	Trinity MTC Houston
29	Nibu K Thomas	MTC, Carrollton, TX	64	Achamma Chacko	Trinity MTC, Houston
30	Asha George	MTCong, Nashville TN	65	Gracy P Vattakunnel	Trinity MTC, Houston
31	Annamma Abraham	Philadelphia MTC, PA	66	Jessy Baboo	Trinity MTC, Houston
32	Chinnamma V Thomas	Philadelphia MTC, PA	67	Kunjamma Thomas	Trinity MTC, Houston
33	K.C. Jacob	Philadelphia MTC, PA	68	Luke Mathew (Gr 7)	Trinity MTC, Houston
34	Kunjamma Jacob	Philadelphia MTC, PA	69	Saramma Sreeba	Trinity MTC, Houston
35	Maneejo Koshy	Philadelphia MTC, PA	70	T. A. Mathew	Trinity MTC, Houston

Answers for July 2022 Bible Crossword Puzzle: Jeremiah 33-42

1.A	P	P	2.O	I	N	T	E	D				3.U		4.U	
C			P						5.I			N		N	
6.C	O	M	P	A	7.S	S	I	O	N			F		S	
O			O		C				K		8.S	A	V	E	
9.R	A	G	S		R					10.H		V		A	
D			E		O			11.W	I	N	E	O		R	
A		12.R			L		O			A		R		C	
N		E			13.L	O	R	D		L		A		H	
C		S						D				B		A	
14.E	S	T	15.A	B	L	I	S	H	E	16.D		L		B	
				W						I		E		L	
17.A	T	18.T	E	N	T	I	O	N		S				E	
		H								A					
		19.P	R	O	V	I	20.S	I	O	N	S	21.R		22.F	
23.F		O				I				T		U		I	
R		N		24.S	I	N				25.E	X	I	L	E	
26.E	Y	E	S			27.N	E	V	E	R		N		L	
E						E								D	
28.D	E	C	R	E	E	D			E	N	D	U	R	E	S

BIBLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Bible Crossword Puzzle as in NIV: Jeremiah 43-52



Across:

- So they entered Egypt in _____ to the Lord and went as far as Tahpanhes.
- "Egypt will hiss like a fleeing _____ as the enemy advances in force."
- "Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets to a rich pastureland, I will _____ Edom from its land in an instant."
- "They provoked me to _____ by burning incense and by worshiping other gods."
- "Flee from Babylon! It is time for the Lord's vengeance; he will _____ her what she deserves."
- Molech will go into _____, together with his priests and officials.
- You who live by many waters and are rich in treasures, your _____ has come, the time for you to be cut off.
- This is what the Lord says: "I am going to hand Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt over to his _____ who seek his life."
- The Lord will carry out his purpose, his _____ against the people of Babylon.
- "They will chop down her forest (Egypt)," declares the Lord, "_____ though it be."
- I will _____ you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished."
- "My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them _____."
- Moab will be broken; her little ones will _____ out.
- The nations will hear of your _____, your cries will fill the earth.
- Those who _____ the sword and return to the land of Judah from Egypt will be very few.
- Do not _____ heart or be afraid when rumors are heard in the land.
- "Have you forgotten the _____ committed by your fathers and by the kings and queens of Judah?"

Down:

- Hamath and Arpad are _____ troubled like the restless sea.
- I set a trap for you, O Babylon because you _____ the Lord.
- "Who is like me and who can _____ me?" says the Lord.
- "I know her _____ but it is futile," declares the Lord, "and her boasts (Moab) accomplish nothing."
- Johanan and all the army officers _____ away all the remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah.
- "There in the temple of the sun in Egypt he will demolish the sacred pillars and will burn down the _____ of the gods of Egypt."
- While the Jews are watching, take some large stones with you and bury them in _____ in the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes.
- "The Lord has _____ us; come, let us tell in Zion what the Lord our God has done."
- It was because of the Lord's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his _____.
- "Before your _____ I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have done in Zion," declares the Lord.
- In those days, at that time," declares the Lord, "search will be made for Israel's _____ but there will be none."
- "I will send foreigners to Babylon to winnow her and to _____ her land."
- "In those days, at that time," declares the Lord, "the people of Israel and Judah together will go in _____ to seek the Lord their God."
- "When you finish reading this scroll, _____ a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates."
- "Put _____ on Moab, for she will be laid waste."
- When he (The Lord Almighty) thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the _____ of the earth.

Deadline for Answers : November 25, 2022

Please send by email only Email Id: varampath23@msn.com

Phone via Whatsapp/Message : 978-930-1578(C)

Details to Include: Name, Church, State, Grade if children

Prepared by : Philp Manuel & Laila Anie Philip, Carmel M.T.C., Boston MA

NEWS & EVENTS

Native American Mission VBS Camp in Oklahoma

Rev. Christopher Phil Daniel

Program Manager – Diocese and Mission Board & Native American Mission Convener

Our Native American Mission VBS Camp in Oklahoma was held from June 6th – 8th, 2022 at Camp Israel Folsom of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Bethel, Oklahoma near Broken Bow. Approximately 25 children from the Choctaw community participated. A team of fifteen volunteers from Dallas and New York organized the VBS and provided leadership.

Tania Bijili (MTC Dallas, FB) served as the VBS Director and was supported by Elisa Andrews (MTC Dallas, FB), Jessica Abraham (Sehion MTC Dallas), Jiffy Philip (Sehion MTC Dallas), Juliann Idichandy (MTC Dallas, FB), Kristen Idichandy (MTC Dallas, FB), Jibin Mathew (MTC Dallas, FB), Aaron John (MTC Dallas, FB), Selwin Stanly (MTC Dallas, FB), Kezia Cherian (St. Paul's MTC Dallas), Elijah Thomas (St. Paul's MTC Dallas), Jacob Idichandy (MTC Dallas, FB), George Mathew

(MTC Dallas, FB), Neethi Prasad (New York), and Rev. Christopher Daniel (New York).

The theme for VBS was "Mystery Island: Tracking Down the One True God." Each day's session began with prayer and praise & worship followed by devotional messages given by Chris Achen and Neethi Kochamma. The children took part in class sessions led by the volunteers based on the following subthemes: God is Great, God is Ruler, God is Immanuel, and God is Trustworthy. Time was also set apart for crafts and outdoor and indoor recreation each day. Everyone was also able to enjoy a sunny afternoon swimming at the lake at Beavers Bend in Broken Bow on June 7th. A Talent Night was organized on the evening of June 6th, and as a part of cultural sharing, traditional Choctaw dances were taught to the group while our volunteers performed an Indian dance and sang a medley of Malayalam and English Christian songs.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the partnership of the Choctaw Presbytery and the Mar Thoma Church, and a short felicitation program was arranged on June 7th. In addition to the participants and volunteers, the clergy, their families, and a few well wishers from Dallas



VOLUNTEERS ARRIVING IN HOCHATOWN, OK



TRADITIONAL CHOCTAW DANCE



VBS SINGING SESSION

and Oklahoma attended this program. Rev. Christopher Daniel welcomed the gathering and spoke about the mission. A moment of silence was observed in honor of late Patrick Maruthummothil, who was taken to eternity in 2013 while participating in the mission VBS camp in Oklahoma. His contributions and his active involvement in the mission will never be forgotten. To mark the blessed occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Diocese's Native American Mission in Oklahoma, a plaque was presented by Mrs. Gwen Burris on behalf of the Choctaw Presbytery. The plaque was received by the clergy of Dallas and Oklahoma parishes of the Mar Thoma Church along with Mr. George Mathew



CLERGY RECEIVING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY PLAQUE

who has been a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Oklahoma Native American Mission. Rev. Thomas Mathew P. (Vicar of MTC Dallas, Carrollton) offered a word a prayer to conclude the anniversary program.

The 2022 Native American Mission VBS Camp came to an end in the afternoon on June 8th with an inspirational praise & worship session. Pastor Nathan Scott addressed the children and offered prayer. Both the volunteers and the participants parted with tearful eyes but were hopeful that we will all be able to meet again next year, God-willingly, for a week-long VBS camp. The dedicated and committed efforts of all the volunteers are greatly appreciated.



GROUP PICTURE OF VBS PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Native American Mission VBS Camp in Alabama

Serving the Choctaw Indians: 20th Anniversary of the Alabama VBS Mission

Divya Jacob and Shon Mathew

The history of the Native American people within the United States is a painful one. For the Alabama MOWA

band of Choctaw Indians, they had a long journey to even be acknowledged by their state, let alone the federal government as an actual tribe. Much of their history was destroyed by racially charged attacks and many of their people had died due to harsh circumstances. Substance abuse and lack of education is a continual struggle for the younger generations. The Mar Thoma Church has seen this mission come to fruition and become a bridge and stepping-stone for the gospel amongst the children of a persecuted and hurt people



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Divya Jacob



Shon Mathew

With humble beginnings in 2003, the tireless efforts of Mrs. Nirmala Abraham and Mr. O. C. Abraham, and the dedication of its numerous volunteers, we have served this community for 20 years. This year's Alabama VBS mission was held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, from June 16th to June 18th. Rev. Saju Samuel, Vicar of Atlanta Mar Thoma Church, along with a team of 30+ volunteers, from New York, Philadelphia, and Atlanta came together with a purpose – to make a difference and bring the community closer to Jesus. Volunteers included this year's coordinators Divya Jacob and Shon Mathew who under the leadership of Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, Mr. O. C. Abraham, and Dr. Suresh Mathews participated in the 3-day event. It was attended by the children and youth of the community. The theme of this year's VBS was "Spark Studios", and was based on Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do." There were nearly 40 kids, of all ages, who attended this year's VBS.

The children learned about the care, hope, love and joy of Jesus through biblical stories such as God being the marvelous creator, Jesus the King that God promised to save us and Holy Spirit the helper who gives us the power to follow God's plan. Special events included:

- Pow wow, which is a sacred social gathering held by many Native American communities. A modern Pow wow is a specific type of event for Native Americans to meet, dance, sing, socialize and honor their culture. The Pow wow was led by Morgan Byrd, who introduced us to the regalia that is specific to the MOWA Choctaw Native Americans and led an informative session describing their culture and heritage.
- The kids were also encouraged and energized by an instructional Dance session led by the Atlanta Mar Thoma Church. A Nutrition Education session was held for the community members, which was

organized and led by 3 Dietetic interns, with guidance from Dr. Suresh Mathews.

- 20th Anniversary Celebration – By God's grace, this year we celebrated 20 years of Mar Thoma Church conducting Native American missions in Alabama. A reception was hosted for 10 Choctaw youth, who were recipients of the Mar Thoma Mission Board scholarship. Speakers for the 20th Anniversary celebration included: Rev. Barbara Brewi, pastor of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, MOWA Choctaw Tribal Chief, Lebaron Byrd, Bro. George Weaver, community leader - Mrs. June Weaver, Native American Mission Coordinator, Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, and Diocesan Treasurer, Mr. George Babu. Mr. O. C. Abraham and Mrs. Nirmala Abraham were honored with a plaque, by the Tribal Chief and June Weaver, for their 20 years of dedication and service to the VBS.

The goal within VBS was to model the love and humility of Jesus Christ to children in every way possible. Whether it was through skits to help the kids visualize the stories more, connecting sports and their love for it to their walk with Jesus, singing songs of worship with them,



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or genuinely being open about the lives we lead, seeds of the gospel were sown. Strangers became friends and friends became family, as the hearts of gratitude amongst every child and parent became evident. The week provided fun, worship, and outlets to hear about the difficulties they have faced as individuals growing up as a Native American community in Alabama. We also assisted in conducting a fundraiser for charity, girls vs. boys competition, which was accompanied by a "kiss the goat" event for the team with less funds raised. While it was a laugh for everyone involved, this event raised a total of \$315 which was funded mostly by the kids themselves.

A primary goal of the mission was to see the youth become leaders within their own church and run the VBS themselves. Even amongst the younger kids, their eyes lit up with excitement as they exclaimed their desire to become volunteers and serve in the future. Some of the Native American children, who have grown up with the many Mar Thoma mission teams that attended earlier, now look forward to going to college. One student graduated with a BS degree in Nursing and has started working as a nurse, and another student will graduate in December this year with a degree in marketing, among others. The Mar Thoma Church is continuing to seek more ways to help Native American students pursue higher education. As the church has sought to provide this VBS as an alternative to temptations that often pervades the community, we are giving back in both tangible and intangible ways to the Choctaw community. Their love and embrace are hard to let go and remain with you well after you have departed.

The Mar Thoma Volunteers' experience cannot be overlooked. We are all built to live a Christ-centered life, and mission is a chance to put that into practice in its truest form. As such, the experience of dedicating months of planning and 3 days of actual VBS time

in service of Jesus is a privilege. To wake up with a crystal-clear sense of purpose and to go to bed in the same way is uniquely fulfilling, and it is a feeling that volunteers can take with them and apply in their daily lives. Each morning there were devotional messages given by a volunteer to prepare for the VBS day ahead. Each evening there were speakers that touched on several topics including pursuing God even in life's darkest moments and using our God-given talents with a purpose.

Additionally, to be welcomed into a community so different from ours, was an eye-opening experience. While this mission has been a longstanding contribution to Mt. Vernon, the impact of our presence in 2022 could often be seen almost instantaneously. The connections made in this community as well as the bonds developed among the Mar Thoma volunteers are sure to be strong and long lasting. Many of the members of our church have heard about the Native American Mission for years and have thought about attending. But "life" has gotten in the way of making plans to do so. The next Alabama VBS mission will be held June 12-16, 2023. We urge anyone interested to consider and make this a priority. It is truly a blessing for all those involved. While the impact we make as a church in the Mt. Vernon community is profound, what's even more so is the impact the mission had upon the very volunteers of this mission. We come to serve, but in the end the mission serves us as well. Rather than letting "Lighted to Lighten" be just the motto of The Mar Thoma Church, let's pray we take on opportunities like this mission trip to live out this motto fruitfully and abundantly.

Matthew 28: 19 – 20 *"Therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always to the very end of the age."*

Native American Mission VBS Camp in Navajoland

July 20–23, 2022 (Farmington, New Mexico)

The People:

To the world they are known as 'Navajos', a name given by Spanish colonizers. But the Navajos refer to themselves as Diné meaning 'The People'. They are a quiet and reflective people, proud of their land, language and culture with deep seated hurt and pain stemming from memories of their recent history. In 1863 with the goal of westernizing and Christianizing the Navajos, they



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**Babu (Varkey Abraham) & Susy
and Family**

were forcibly evicted from their native land and made to walk hundreds of miles east on 'The Long Walk of the Navajo' to Fort Sumner. Several thousands died, were abducted or killed during this period that lasted nearly five years. Eventually, in 1868 a treaty was signed and they returned to their native land. Another source of painful memories was the boarding schools that the Navajo children were forced to attend.

The vital role played by the Navajo Code Talkers in securing victory for the US in the Pacific during WWII evokes a great sense of pride in the Navajos. The Marine Corp initially recruited 29 Navajo youth who created code words in the Navajo language which was then used for top secret military communication in the Pacific. The significance of the Navajo contribution is summarized in the words of Maj. Howard Connor, "were it not for the Navajos, the marines would never have taken Iwo Jima".

The Land:

The Navajo call their land Dinétah - land of 'The People'. Theirs is the largest (27,000 sq miles) and most populous (300,000) among the reservations in the USA. The land is unique in beauty and grandeur with high mesas, deep canyons and outcroppings of rock formations. Monument Valley Tribal Park, one of the most photographed places in the world, is located in the Navajo reservation.

The Mission:

Mr. O. C. Abraham and Mrs. Nirmala Abraham worked tirelessly coordinating the efforts with the Episcopal Church of Navajoland, planning the two day VBS and ensuring that no detail was overlooked. The theme, curriculum, craft activities, game sessions were thought out and coordinated by Kezia Cherian. The theme was 'Welcome Home'. Lessons were based on passages from Luke and Ezra - the parable of the prodigal son and the rebuilding of Jerusalem temple after the



Babylonian captivity. Twenty children, from Pre-K to 8th grade attended. They were divided into three groups. The day began with breakfast. O. C. Uncle coordinated the food department. Joby Achen, Arun Achen, Sharon, Neha, Chrissen, Snophia, and Elijah led the singing and general sessions. This was followed by lesson time, craft activities, lunch, games and the day ended with another general session where Joby Achen showcased his 'magic powers' while presenting the gospel. Shaji Ramapuram, the resident journalist, penned an article in the Manorama Global Malayli online edition, explaining the mission. Elijah was the youngest volunteer in our group - quiet and unobtrusive, always ready and willing to help wherever help was needed. The Navajo tribe is a matrilineal community; the grandmothers play a vital role in the upbringing of grandchildren and in the transmission of their history and culture to the younger generation. A class for the grandmothers was organized and led by a local church leader. T-Shirt painting was a unique and fun activity. Everyone who attended received a blank white T-Shirt and was encouraged to creatively express their uniqueness using fabric paints.

Rev. Cornelia Eaton, canon to the ordinary (Episcopal Bishop), was a Navajo shepherdess prior to becoming a priest. We had the privilege of visiting her parish, her sheep camp, and also took part in a sunset prayer ceremony at her ranch that incorporated Navajo traditions that included the use of the 'Navajo basket' and the scattering of corn flour as each of us expressed our gratitude to God. She also introduced us to the Navajo 'Beauty way' prayer. Rev. Michael Sells and Rev. Jack Chase, two local parish priests, were our other contacts who worked closely with us assisting us throughout our stay.

A cultural exchange night was organized on the last day. It was an opportunity to highlight and understand various aspects of Navajo and Indian life. The art of



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making traditional Navajo Fry Bread was demonstrated to us. Several Navajo and Indian dishes were prepared and enjoyed by everyone. The Navajos sang a song in their language and invited us to join them in one of their traditional dances. Nirmala Aunty, Sharon Kochamma, Chrissen, and Snophia, planned a program that showcased the diversity of Indian society; Joby Achen, Arun Achen, and Shaji sang a lovely Malayalam song; O. C. Uncle presented a video on St. Thomas and Christianity in India. At the end, as an expression of their gratitude to us, a Navajo hat was presented to O. C. Uncle.

God's sovereignty, providence, and faithfulness were revealed to us in many ways. In the words of Sharon

Kochamma, "We had a most blessed time at Farmington, with a wonderful group of 12 ... We sang together, prayed and ate together, cooked, played, laughed and swapped stories; strangers we were, but the bond of Christ strengthened us and we worked together as one body of Christ on this mission trip, indulging in new experiences, so special and unique that it cannot be described in words. It has to be experienced to really comprehend that true feeling of being among a special group of people, the Navajo Nation, who accepted us into their community and their traditions as one of their own, making us promise that we would come back!"

- The Navajo VBS Mission Team 2022

Native American Mission VBS Camp in Dulac, Louisiana

August 11–13, 2022

Dulac: Une Communauté Délaissée

Introduction

The Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church has developed a life changing opportunity through the Native American Mission. This is a chance for many of our members to reach out and share the love of Christ with Native Americans.

An Unforeseen Journey to Louisiana

As part of this outreach, our group took part in a pioneering mission to Houma, Louisiana and conducted the first ever Bible camp among the people of the United Houma Nation. The members of our group traveled from Philadelphia, Baltimore and Houston, and after enduring multiple flight delays into New Orleans and a 1 hour onward road trip, we finally arrived in Houma.

Historical Perspective

The term "Houma" is a Choctaw word meaning "red". When the French explorers came to the Southern part of Louisiana in 1682, they found the Houma Native Americans living in villages along the Mississippi River. The Houma Natives and the French became great allies and trade partners. In the early 18th century, growing conflict between the English and the French forced many Native Americans to ally themselves with either



one empire or the other and the Houma people stayed loyal to the French.

In 1803, after the purchase of the Louisiana territory from the French, the United States signed a treaty, with a promise to recognize and uphold all existing treaties and articles regarding Native Americans. Sadly, this treaty was not honored. History is witness to the persecution and trauma endured by the Native Americans. Till date, the federal government does not recognize the Houma people as an official tribe, making them ineligible for any government and financial assistance.

Life in Dulac

Dulac is a 20 minute drive south of Houma. The word "du lac" translates to "by the lake" in French, and Dulac is situated between many lakes, canals, and bayous. Though English is widely spoken, most of the older Houma speak a dialect of French. Historically, the Houma children were not allowed to attend public schools until the state of Louisiana forced the school system to racially integrate in the late 1960s, disenfranchising an entire generation. The locals take up traditional professions such as shrimping, wood working, basket weaving, and fishing. This meant that most of the people who took up jobs like shrimping at a young age did not have the qualifications for any other positions in the workforce.

Hurricane Ida in August of 2021 wrecked widespread damage along the gulf shores, specifically destroying Dulac. Most of the community lost their homes, vehicles, and possessions. The local elementary school is shut down due to damages from Hurricane Ida compelling the children to attend classes in overcrowded trailers. One year later, families still live in trailers provided by FEMA. This along with loss of land from encroaching water is pushing families to move out of Dulac.

Rev. Kirby Verret serves as the pastor of Clanton Chapel United Methodist. Clanton Chapel sustained severe damages after Hurricane Ida and needs considerable restoration to be utilized as a place of worship. When touring the remains of the church, Rev. Kirby showed us their Native handcrafted vestments, all of which had specific symbolic relevance to the Houma, such as sweet grass woven edging and a design of grapes made out of Spanish moss.

The First Ever Bible Camp in Dulac

By the grace of God, our mission trip to Louisiana marked the start of summer Bible Camp for Houma children by the Mar Thoma Church. Spearheaded by Mr. O. C. Abraham and Mrs. Nirmala Abraham, we went in with no expectations, but a hint of optimism in our minds. Once we ascertained the damages sustained by the Dulac Community Center (our intended venue), we opted for the next best alternative, a moderately damaged but restored preschool across from the



community center. This modest space became home to our Bible Camp 2022.

Our theme was "Make Waves - What You Do Today Can Change the World Around You". Ten children registered for the Bible Camp, aged 4 to 13 years old. The children enthusiastically learned action songs, attentively listened to the Bible stories, and engaged in lesson discussions and crafts. Each child received a Bible, courtesy of the youth fellowship of the Phoenix Mar Thoma Church. At the end of our experience, we were exhausted, but had a deep sense of fulfillment. We knew that God's work had been done through us, and that is an incredible feeling.

Rev. Kirby's response sums it up for us:

"Thank you for a great event and great fellowship! We truly appreciate and enjoyed the Bible Camp. Our children felt the Love you shared with them and with all they have gone through in the last 3 years, this Bible Camp truly lifted up their spirits. The fact that you all traveled far to come to Dulac truly touched their hearts and made them realize how special they are before you and God.

Blessings upon all of you!

Kirby Verret, Pastor

Clanton Chapel

Dulac, Louisiana"



Despite successive challenges from hurricanes and the pandemic, as well as not being federally recognized, the Houma people find support among their tight-knit community and we were fortunate to experience this. These few days reminded us of not only what it means to be blessed, but also of how much we are at a loss by indulging ourselves in the things and ideals of the world. Though they do not ask, there are many ways we can help the Houma and better their prospects in life. We hope that our experience inspires you to learn more about une communauté délaissée, the neglected community of the Houmas in Dulac, Louisiana and partake in the activities of the Native American Mission. Let's pray with all our heart:

Heavenly Father,

Teach us what it means to be blessed. Use us for your kingdom purpose. Equip and send us to share with the Lord's people who are in need. Soften our hearts and renew our minds to love altruistically with actions and in truth. Amen.

TEAM

- Philadelphia: Mr. O. C. Abraham & Mrs. Nirmala Abraham
- Baltimore: Rev. Shiju Thomas, Drs. Reshma & Bivin Phillips, Abha & Rivkah Phillips
- Houston: Mr. Demis Thomas



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FORUM

A Project of The Mar Thoma Church of North America and Europe Diocese North-East Region RAC



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READ and BE BLESSED

Patron: Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa

Co-Ordinator: Rev. Johnson P. Abraham, The Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island

Convenor: Dr. Thomas K. Jose, The Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island

Facilitators Team: Rev. Jess George (Youth Chaplain), Philip Muzzel (Carmel Mar Thoma Church, Boston), Dr. John K. Thomas (Taber Mar Thoma Church), Sherly Thomas (St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Yonkers), Abraham Mammen (Epiphany Mar Thoma Church), Suzha Shama (St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church, Yonkers), Dr. Elizabeth Jacob (The Mar Thoma Church, Staten Island)

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SALEM MAR THOMA CHURCH EASTERN LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK EPISCOPAL VISIT REPORT



Salem Mar Thoma Church Eastern Long Island, New York was blessed with the presence of our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa on Sunday July 17, 2022. During the visit, Thirumeni celebrated the First Holy Communion service and was the Chief Guest of the 18th Parish Day Celebration.

First Holy Communion service was a divine experience for all, and 13 young children from the parish received the Holy Communion for the first time. Thirumeni congratulated the children and appreciated the parents and the parish for bringing them up in God's ways. While delivering the sermon, Thirumeni encouraged everyone to become Disciples of Christ and partake in the healing ministry in a new Covid world where many people are suffering and need encouragement and companionship.

Parish day program was conducted after the Holy Communion Service. Mar Philoxenos Thirumeni, during the Parish Day message, emphasized the importance

of growing together as community that relies in God. Furthermore, Thirumeni reminded all to hold faith in the God who makes the impossible things possible, and live a peaceful life with spirituality. New Graduates received plaques from Thirumeni as part of the Graduate Appreciation ceremony held during the program. Thirumeni also presented a gift and plaque to Mr. Shijo Thomas for his dedicated service and technical support for conducting the worship services remotely from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Salem Mar Thoma Church is extremely grateful to Mar Philoxenos Thirumeni for visiting the parish on the Parish Day Celebration and First Communion Service. We pray that the Lord help Thirumeni to lead and guide the North America and Europe Diocese in the years to come.

Libu Koshy
Secretary

EPISCOPAL VISIT TO BOSTON CARMEL MAR THOMA CHURCH



WARMEST WISHES TO ALL THE MAR THOMA FAMILIES



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DIOCESAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE 43RD SESSION



The 43rd session of the Diocesan Youth Fellowship Conference was held from July 29-31, 2022 at the Bryn Athn, College, Philadelphia hosted by the Mar Thoma Church of Philadelphia. The inaugural session of this conference was held on 29th July at 6.30 pm and was inaugurated by the Diocesan Bishop His Grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa. The Diocesan



Secretary Rev. George Abraham, DYF Vice President Rev. Thomas K Mathew, DYFC secretary Mr. Jeevan Varghese shared a Felicitation message during the inauguration. The theme for the Conference was "Slip not" based on Psalm 37:24. The Main talks were led by Rev. Larry Varghese who did three sessions and the Bible study was led by Mr. Tom Philip - Lay Chaplain. A

track on "Mental Health" was led by Mrs. Betsy Chacko, Staten Island MTC. We also had liturgical worships led by the Southwest, Midwest and Northeast Regional youth fellowships. The Small group session, Praise & and worship, Q&A - Town Hall session, Games and Talent night and Dedication sessions were also well participated. The final day Holy Communion was led by Rev. Thomas K. Mathew and the sermon was delivered by Rev. Jaisen A. Thomas.

The DYF council is grateful to the host parish - Mar Thoma church of Philadelphia, its Vicar - Rev. Biju P Simon and the conference team for their hard work and sincere efforts in making the conference a blessing for all.

Rev. Thomas K. Mathew
DYF - Vice President
Diocese of North America and Europe

MTVEA NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE DIOCESAN CONFERENCE 2022



The MTVEA Diocesan conference 2022 was held on August 18-21, 2022 at Bongiorno Conference center, Carlisle, PA, led by the South East Region MTVEA. About 280 participants from 33 parishes participated in this conference.

The theme of the conference was 'Peace Builders in the Kingdom of God'. Our beloved Diocesan Episcopa Thirumeni The Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa delivered the main message on each day of the conference, based on this main theme. Other incredible speakers who led several sessions for the conference include Rev. Dr. Eapen Varghese (Houston Immanuel MTC), Rev. Manu Varghese, (Seattle MTC) and Dr. Vino Daniel (Philadelphia MTC).

The organizing committee for the event included the conference convener Mr. Varghese K. Joseph (Philadelphia MTC), the conference treasurer Mr. George Varghese (New Jersey MTC) and the conference President, Rev George Varghese, Vicar of St. Thomas



MTC of Delaware Valley. In addition to this, there were thirteen different subcommittees led by our Achens in the South East Region, that ensured the successful completion of this conference.

We thank God Almighty for strengthening us with amazing grace in this pandemic to organize such an awesome event. We are grateful to our Beloved Diocesan Episcopa Thirumeni The Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa for guiding us with timely advice and leading this conference as its Patron. We are immensely thankful to all the Achens in South East region, MTVEA Diocesan council, conference committee, and MTVEA South East Region committee for their wholehearted support, and contribution in making this conference a blessed experience for everyone. Thank you all.

Rev. George Varghese & Mr. Varghese K. Joseph



MAR THOMA MEET- 2022



Mar Thoma Meet was the annual get-together of all the parishes and congregations of Mar Thoma Church: UK & Europe Zone. Mar Thoma Meet-2022 was held on 01st October 2022 at The Coton Centre, Tarnworth in UK. The theme of the conference was "Hope in the Midst of Perplexities". The Diocesan Episcopa Rt Rev Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Thirumeni has given all the leadership to the conference and inaugurated the conference. Revd. Canon Prof: Mark Chapman (Professor of the

History of Modern Theology, University of Oxford) led the major session of the conference. 750 members as representatives from all parishes and congregations attended the meeting and there was a separate session for the Sunday School children. The singing session was conducted by the Zonal Choir consisting of members from different parishes. All the organizations have presented different programs which add more colour to the programme.



Toronto St Matthew's Mar Thoma Church First communion service and couples who have completed 50 years in family life (Golden Couples)

UPCOMING EVENTS

**2023
DIOCESAN
LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE**

**JANUARY 5-8
SEHION MTC
DALLAS, TX**

**THE DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE 2023**

The Diocesan Leadership Conference 2023 will be hosted by Sehion Mar Thoma Church in Plano, Texas from January 5th-8th, 2023, and the theme will be "Reaching Up, Reaching Out" based on Matthew 25:40:

"And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

The conference is open to all youth members ages 21-35 and will be in-person. Please encourage your youth members to attend! The deadline to apply is November 15th, 2022. Please contact your YF Secretary or Vicar for the registration form link.

Rev. Thomas K. Mathew
DYF - Vice President

**REKINDLE: RESTORING
HOPE TO OUR WORLD**
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WELLNESS RETREAT

LEADERS

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REGISTRATION:
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REV. SAJU SAMUEL 770-342-8071	HOST COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN 770-342-8071	REV. CHRIS THOMAS 516-637-7862
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	DIOCESAN PROGRAM MANAGER 706-255-7765	

REGISTRATION: <https://bit.ly/3v8v8v8>
EMAIL: ymfmc@nae.com

DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE

**DIOCESAN YOUNG FAMILIES FELLOWSHIP
FAMILY WELLNESS RETREAT**

The Young Families Fellowship of the Diocese is arranging a Family Wellness Retreat to be held on December 29th-30th, 2022. The theme for the retreat will be: "Rekindle: Restoring Hope to Our World" and will take place at the Carmel Mar Thoma Center in Atlanta, Georgia (6015 Old Stone Mountain Road, Stone Mountain, GA 30087). The registration fee for the retreat will be \$50.00 per person. Programs for children are also being arranged. Hotel rooms have been blocked in the nearby area and can be availed for discounted rates. For more information regarding local arrangements and hotel accommodations, please contact Rev. Sajju Samuel C. (770-342-8071), Mr. Shyno Thomas (706-255-7765), or Mr. Chris Thomas (516-637-7862).

Mr. Jaffey Chacko Parish Secretary – St Thomas MTC, Bristol-UK
Zonal Council Member & Internal Auditor (UK & Europe Zone)

FELICITATION



Warmest greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It gives me immense pleasure to know that Mar Thoma Messenger, the official publication of the Diocese of North America and Europe, is completing 40 years. At the outset let me thank God and praise the efforts of our Diocesan Bishop and the members of the Editorial Board. It was indeed a wonderful opportunity during my term as a council member to be exclusively involved in the development and promotion of the Messenger. As a voice of the Diocese, the theme-based contributions from Clergy to Laity of all age groups has been commendable and been a blessing to many. The quarterly news updates from our Bishop, various Parish visits, lively photos of activities over the years keeps the readers from all ages updated. It is our prayer that the Messenger will continue to be a blessing and grow with a vision for His Glory.

INDIA MISSION TRIP – 2023

The Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church has decided to organize the India Mission trip from July 11, 2023 to July 20, 2023 (excluding travel).

The mission fields to visit are Devanahalli Mission/Hoskotte Mission near Bangalore in Karnataka, India and Navjeevan Centre, Mumbai.

Participants will be responsible for purchasing their airfare. For the youth participants, the Diocese, upon completion of the trip and submission of the receipts, will reimburse one third of the airfare. The transportation, food and accommodation in India will be arranged and cost per person will be approximately \$400.

This will be a good opportunity for the youths to better understand the mission work of the Church and to learn how to be involved in such mission initiatives.

Registration form and the guidelines for the mission trip are available. Youths who are interested in participating are requested to give your names to Diocesan Council Member Dr. Aleyamma Mathew (Convener) at +1 909-964-7829 HYPERLINK "mailto:drelymathew@gmail.com" drelymathew@gmail.com or to India Mission Sub Committee members Dr. Mariamma Abraham at +1 215-917-2920 HYPERLINK "mailto:dr.mabraham.abraham@gmail.com" dr.mabraham.abraham@gmail.com and Mr. Jibin Mathew HYPERLINK "mailto:jibinamathew@yahoo.com" jibinamathew@yahoo.com +1 682-552-6853

The last date of registration will be April 15th, 2023 and the total number of participants will be ten on first come basis.

Mr. Joji Abraham, Ireland

FELICITATION



With immense pleasure I would like to extend my best wishes on the 40th anniversary celebration of the Mar Thoma Messenger. I take this opportunity to felicitate each and every one who has worked in the publication of Messenger in our Diocese which has helped to connect the Marthomites for the last few decades to our younger generations that has and is rapidly spreading across North America and Europe.

I take this opportunity to congratulate each and every one who has helped us in various ways and means by providing guidance, articles for publications, messages and also helping in organizing the editorial section. I take this opportunity to thank both present and the past members of the managing committee, editorial board members who have exhibited their talents to elevate the Messenger to today's standards through everyone's dedicated time and talents from time to time.

Prof. Philip Thomas, Former Diocesan Treasurer

FELICITATION



Hearty congratulations and best wishes on the completion of 40 years for the Mar Thoma Messenger. Today, it stands popular in all parts of the United States, Canada, and Europe. The efforts taken to bring innovative content including thought provoking articles and in-depth analysis of the contemporary issues is appreciable. I express my compliments to the diocesan Bishops, diocesan secretaries, the editors, and the resolute committee for their stupendous effort in bringing out this publication for the last forty years. May God bless all the contributors and readers. God bless our church and may we continue to glorify His name through the Mar Thoma Messenger.

WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

In Malachi 3:10, God tells us how we can receive the blessings of heaven. He teaches us about the importance of tithes, the 10% we give God from the earnings that He has given us. Offerings are above the tithe, and there is tithe of time and talents as well to His glory by the Holy Spirit.

TIME AND TALENTS

I challenge all of us to use, not only our financial blessings for the Mar Thoma Church and its edification, but also our youth talents and stewardship of our adults. God has blessed us with health and leadership abilities, and we have many ways we can share that with our world during these uncertain times. I have learned that we should have a generous spirit to God, because He is faithful.

BLESSINGS

We are blessed to worship Jesus freely in the United States. We are truly blessed with our Indian culture and traditions. We have wonderful friendships, families and church community. God has given us these things so that we can be a blessing to others, Lighted to Lighten. Through charity work and organizations, we can help the lost, homeless and the suffering, widows and orphans. And by doing these things, we can create a harvest of thirty, sixty or a hundredfold, Mark 4:20.



Binu Jacob, MD, FACC, FHRS

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**World Day of
 PRAYER 2022**
 (CONTINUED FROM
 THE JULY 2022 ISSUE)



Reports compiled and
 consolidated by
Mrs. Neethi Prasad
 (Vice-Chair, WDP USA Board)



North Carolina Mar Thoma Church

WDP was celebrated at North Carolina MTC on Friday, March 4th via Zoom. Rev. Skariah Varghese, Interim Vicar of NCMTCC, led the special order of worship. A total of 18 members were in attendance. Annie Kochamma delivered an encouraging message.

– **Mrs. Viji Mathew** (Sevika Sanghom Secretary)



**Ecumenical Council of
 Kerala Churches in Chicago – Illinois**

WDP was observed on March 12th by the Ecumenical Council of Kerala Churches in Chicago and coordinated by the Women's Forum. The meeting was held at St.

Gregorios Orthodox Church, Elmhurst. The assistant Metropolitan of the Malankara Orthodox Church, Southwest region, His Grace Dr. Zacharias Mar Aprem was the chief guest and gave the message for the day. Representatives from 15 member churches participated.



Detroit Mar Thoma Church – Michigan

WDP was celebrated on March 20th. The service was led by Rev. Varghese Thomas, Rev. P. Chacko, and assisted by ten women of the church. The message was given by Mrs. Sarasu David on the faith of the Canaanite women taken from Mathew 15:21-28.

– **Mrs. Reena Philip** (Sevika Sanghom Secretary)

Kansas Mar Thoma Church



Kansas MTC celebrated WDP on April 3rd. WDP special order of worship was led by Sevika Sanghom members. Mrs. Mereen Grace George delivered the message. About 70 people participated.

– **Rev. Thomas Mathew** (Vicar)

Kerala Ecumenical Christian Fellowship (KECF) – Dallas, Texas

KECF (Dallas) observed WDP on Saturday, March 5th, and was hosted by CSI Congregation of Dallas. Rev. Jijo Abraham (Vicar of CSI Church and Vice President of KECF) gave the presidential address. The Ecumenical



Choir led the singing session, and Mrs. Delfy Thomas was the coordinator. Women from different churches led the worship service. The main speaker was Mrs. Haislie Sonia Jijo Abraham. A total of 21 churches participated in this meeting.

– **Mrs. Jolly Babu** (Diocesan Council Member)

Oklahoma Mar Thoma Church (Ecumenical)

WDP was held via Zoom and streamed on YouTube on March 6th. This event was hosted by Oklahoma MTC under the leadership of Rev. John Kunjappy and Achens



from ecumenical churches: Holy Family Syro Malabar Church, St. George Jacobite Church, and St. Thomas Orthodox Church. Around 60 members participated in meaningful worship service. The message was given by Mrs. Irine Abraham MTS, LMSW from the St. George Jacobite Church.

– **Mrs. Sara Joseph** (Sevika Sanghom Secretary)



Immanuel Mar Thoma Church – Houston, TX

Houston Immanuel MTC Sevika Sanghom celebrated WDP on Saturday, March 12th. The meeting started with praise and worship followed by the special order of worship. Dr. Sherin Mariam Sonu was the guest speaker. Rev. Dr. Eappen Varghese, Vicar, gave the presidential address. About 60 women attended the meeting, and lunch was provided.

– **Mrs. Mereena Mathew**
(Sevika Sanghom Secretary)



Trinity Mar Thoma Church – Houston, TX

Trinity MTC Sevika Sanghom celebrated WDP on Saturday, March 12th. The meeting was open to all, and around 33 people attended the service. Rev. Roshen V. Mathews preached from the word of God. Mrs. Jooley Mathew Zachariah, coordinated the meeting, and the Sevika Sanghom Choir led the songs. Sevika Sanghom members led the worship service in various capacities. A fellowship lunch was also served.

– **Rev. Roshen V. Mathews** (Vicar)

**Horeb Mar Thoma Church
Los Angeles, California**

Horeb MTC of Los Angeles observed WDP on Sunday, March 13th. Sevika Sanghom members gave leadership for the special worship, which began with an informative



video presentation on the British Isles as well as the WDP theme song. Mrs. Sharon Mariam Mathew Kochamma delivered an insightful message. Special offertory was collected to be distributed to projects helping needy women and children in the British Isles and around the world.

– **Rev. Arun Samuel Varghese** (Vicar)



**Phoenix Mar Thoma Church and
Colorado Horeb Mar Thoma Church**

Phoenix MTC and Colorado Horeb MTC Sevika Sanghom organized a combined WDP meeting via Zoom on March 12th. Rev. Geevarghese Kochummen, Vicar of



A TAX REDUCTION STRATEGY FOR SENIORS



(A DEDUCTION FOR NON – ITEMIZING TAXPAYERS)

(Prof. Philip Thomas, MBA, CPA, CGMA)

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION (QCD) - A STRATEGY TO REDUCE AGI AND FEDERAL INCOME TAXES

- ➔ In 2022, an individual 72 years old or over can donate directly from their retirement accounts to charities up to \$100,000. This will help especially individuals who do not use itemized deduction on their federal tax return as standard deduction is greater than itemized deductions. Direct distribution from IRA account to an organization eligible to receive tax deductible contribution will be excluded from the adjusted gross income of the taxpayer which means taxpayer is availing a full deduction for such transfers from retirement accounts whether itemizing or not. In effect, for those who do not itemize, this deduction will be in addition to standard deduction. The \$100,000 is an annual limit. Therefore, a donor can do it **every year**. For taxpayers filing joint return limit of \$100,000 apply to each spouse. This strategy makes more productive as many taxpayers may not have to itemize.

REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION (RMD), FEDERAL INCOME TAXES AND QCD

- ➔ Individuals are required to withdraw a minimum amount from their retirement accounts for the year they turn 72 years old and onward. RMD amount will be some percentage (depends on many factors) of the total balance in each retirement account. RMD results in increase in taxable income and the tax liability of many taxpayers.

RMD may result in increase in taxable portion of taxpayer's social security benefits which will result in higher taxable income and higher tax bill. For some taxpayers, RMD may cause modified adjusted gross income to rise over \$91,000 for single filers and \$182,000 for married filers resulting in higher monthly premium for Medicare B coverage.
- ➔ **One strategy to reduce RMD is charitable contribution directly from retirement account to favorite charity as mentioned above (QCD). (DONATE YOUR RMD TO YOUR FAVORITE CHARITY).**
- ➔ Another strategy to be considered by some individuals to reduce the RMD amount is buying Qualified Longevity Annuity Contract (**QLAC**). You may invest up to \$145,000 from your retirement account in QLAC. QLAC is a special version of deferred annuity contract. Money transferred to a QLAC is ignored when figuring RMD, which reduces the size of RMD resulting in lower taxes. Remember, you are deferring the taxes to a future year. When one starts payouts from QLAC later that will be included in income. A QLAC can **protect your savings from market fluctuations**.

Caveat: These are only general guidelines. Please consult your professional financial/tax advisor before making any financial decisions.

(Prof. Philip Thomas is retired professor of accounting and a tax practitioner for over 41 years in the United States. He is a member of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Texas Society of CPAs and Dallas Chapter of CPAs. He is also a Chartered Global Management Accountant.)



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - 2022

Sevika Sangam - St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church, Toronto

both parishes, presided over the meeting. Mrs. Preena Mathew Kochamma, Mar Thoma College of Special Education, Kasargod, Kerala, was the guest speaker. Around 53 people attended the meeting.

– **Mrs. Glory Philip** (Sevika Sanghom Secretary, Colorado Horeb MTC) & Mrs. Minimol Mathai (Sevika Sanghom Secretary, Phoenix MTC)

Mar Thoma Church of San Francisco, Mar Thoma Church of Silicon Valley, and Mar Thoma Congregation, Sacramento

WDP was hosted jointly by the Sevika Sanghoms of the MTC of San Francisco, MTC of Silicon Valley, and the Mar Thoma Congregation, Sacramento, through Zoom on Saturday, March 12th. The main message was delivered by Ms. Pushpa Samuel, Diocesan Lay Chaplain serving in California. Families from the various churches participated in the program, which included

the special worship order, prayers, messages, songs, and presentations.

– **Rev. Dennis Abraham** (Vicar)

St. Mathew's Mar Thoma Church Toronto, Canada

The Sevika Sanghom of the St. Mathew's MTC, Toronto, held WDP service on March 13th immediately after the Holy Communion service. Approximately 150 people attended the service. A recording of the skit based on the theme was shown during the service. The ladies came dressed in the colors of the Union Jack, representing the British Isles. It was an enjoyable occasion, being one of the first events of our church where we were able to interact together after almost two years. Praise God for reminding us that He has a plan for each of us.

– **Ms. Sosamma Vadakethu** (Sevika Sanghom Secretary)

Mr. Rinu Varughese, Diocesan Council Member, and Managing Committee Member

FELICITATION



I am joyful that The Diocese of North America and Europe's official publication, Mar Thoma Messenger is celebrating its 40th anniversary. From its humble beginnings, it has been a great honor and privilege to see how the Mar Thoma Messenger has brought together such a large faith community but at the same time, sharing the Word of God and news of our Mar Thoma Church.

I take this opportunity to thank our Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos and remember all the past and present members of the Mar Thoma Editorial Board, Managing Committee and Promoters for their hard work and dedication in the publication and promotion of The Mar Thoma Messenger since its inception. May God bless the vision of The Mar Thoma Messenger and ensure it may continue to be fulfilled in the years and decades to come.

Mr. Samuel K. Samuel, Managing Committee Member,
St. Thomas MTC, Yonkers, NY

FELICITATION



I share my joy with the Mar Thoma diaspora community in North America and Europe on this historic occasion when Mar Thoma Messenger, the one and only printed publication issued by the Diocese of North America and Europe on a quarterly basis, commemorates the 40th anniversary of its publication.

The Mar Thoma Messenger plays a vital role in the spiritual and literary life of the Mar Thoma community. It acts as a means of communication to reach out our dispersed brothers and sisters. It is very satisfying to see that the number of parishioners who subscribe to life membership is continuously increasing. I appreciate the dedicated people who work diligently to deliver a magnificent booklet at our door every three months for the past four decades. I am honored to be a part of management committee to serve our community who have a thirst for reading.

Mr. Zachariah Mathew (Sunu) MTC Dallas FB,
Former Managing Committee Member

FELICITATION



Congratulation to all who have worked dedicatedly for the last 40 years for the Mar Thoma Messenger. It is a great accomplishment to have the Messenger made available for our faithful church members all these years. Well-deserved appreciation to all that have put your time and effort to publish the messenger in a timely manner.

Mr. Philip Manuel & Mrs. Laila Anie Philip, Carmel MTC, Boston

FELICITATION



Thank God and congratulations on the 40th year commemoration of the Mar Thoma Messenger, a magazine which should be in every Marthomite home. This magazine with its articles, messages and Diocesan news has been instrumental in bonding the Mar Thoma community together. We have had the privilege to contribute the Bible Crossword puzzle for many years which has been a source of inspiring both young and old to delve deep into the study of the Bible. May God continue to bless all those who have laboured to make the Messenger the success it is today.

Prof. Elias Abraham, Baltimore MTC, and Editorial Board Member

FELICITATION



As a white cloud with blue ones around, steadily moves in the daylight sky, 'The Mar Thoma Messenger', proudly continues its victory march at the 40th year, when it celebrates the Ruby Jubilee of its commencement. Let us be thankful to all the former great persons who thoughtfully and meaningfully promulgated this publication which has become the pride and honor of the Mar Thoma Church. It excels in content and caliber. 'The Messenger' as its name truly conveys has been a symbol of meaningful thoughts and spiritual ideas exposed in gold standard. I praise God for the great leadership being provided by Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa, and the selfless involvement of the present teams in making 'The Messenger' a success story. May God bless this publication to spread the Word in every Mar Thoma family of the Diocese of North America and Europe.

Rev. Aju Abraham, Former Diocesan Secretary

FELICITATION



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I am happy to note that Mar Thoma Messenger, the official magazine of the Diocese of North America and Europe publishing a special edition on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. I appreciate the effort to publish a special edition and thank God for the wonders of his love and mark the highlights of our spiritual journey as a faith community.

The journey towards this milestone is no small feat; it is a testament of God's faithfulness and grace that has sustained this community of faith. This anniversary celebration exhorts us to remember with gratitude the commitment of the people who worked hard to publish Mar Thoma Messenger on time. At this auspicious occasion, I join with you by wishing you God's divine grace and constant guidance and abundant blessings in your future living as well

In His Ministry

Rev. Binoy J. Thomas, Former Diocesan Secretary

FELICITATION



Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

I am glad that the Mar Thoma Messenger is publishing a special edition in October 2022 to commemorate its 40th anniversary and I congratulate the editorial board for this achievement and wish you all the best. It was an honour for me to serve in Messenger managing committee and editorial board during my tenure in the Diocese of North America and Europe, and I am thankful for the opportunity to write this felicitation for this special issue. It is indeed a time to praise and thank God for all His mercies and guidance for the publication. It is time for the Messenger to write a new chapter in the historical journey as a publication to educate the Mar Thoma diaspora. I wish the Ruby celebration of the Mar Thoma Messenger and the publication of the Special edition all success.

Rev. Christopher Phil Daniel, Current Editorial Board Member

FELICITATION



Praise God that the Diocese joyfully commemorates the Ruby Jubilee of the Mar Thoma Messenger. The Messenger has truly evolved into a prestigious publication that encourages creative expression of ideas and constructive engagement with the current issues the world is facing. In addition, the Messenger also has provided avenues to remain connected to the mission and witness of the church. May the ministry of the Messenger continue to bear fruits in the minds, hearts, and actions of its readers.

Rev. Denny Philip, Former Diocesan Secretary

FELICITATION



Glad to see that Mar Thoma Messenger is completing four decades in its journey of connecting the Diocese and the Mar Thoma community in North America and Europe. While providing a platform for discussion of theological, missiological and ministerial themes and issues related to the cultural and social milieu of the diaspora, it records and communicates the activities of the Diocese. I thank God for the opportunity to be a part of its publication during our term in the Sinai (2016-18). I remember the Guidance and support of Philoxenos Thirumeni, Professional capacity of Dr. T., the editor, keen observation of Philip Varghese achen, the program manager, Physical labor of Sajichan, fellowship of the Sinai family, all combined in sportsman spirit, being instrumental in the production and distribution of every issue. Wish and pray that the Messenger will continue to inspire many to be part of the ministry of the Diocese.

Rev. K. E. Geevarghese, Former Diocesan Secretary

FELICITATION



I am very much happy to learn that the Mar Thoma Messenger, the official publication of the North America and Europe Diocese, has successfully completed 4 decades of its publication. This Magazine has always played a vital role in the consolidation and emergent growth of the Mar Thoma Community in the Western hemisphere. The life of the Diocese is shown beautifully through the pages of the Messenger. Numerous mission action pictures, various articles of different focus, the news and views of parishes and people published through the Messenger are very educative and enriching. From a humble beginning, this publication has scaled new heights and broadened its horizons. On the occasion of the Ruby Jubilee of the Mar Thoma Messenger, I remember those who worked hard to make this magazine a classic publication for the NAE Diocese. They deserve special appreciation for their diligence in the timely publication of this content-rich magazine. May the Lord Almighty help and support the present Editorial Board and Writers to continue the publication as a strong voice of North America and Europe Diocese. I appreciate the entire team for their persistence and perseverance to publish the Messenger regularly and wish the Messenger all the best and God's blessings

Rev. Manoj Idiculla, Former Diocesan Secretary

FELICITATION



I have immense pleasure in conveying my best wishes for the special edition of the Mar Thoma Messenger on its 40th year of publication. I was privileged to be a part of the publication during my tenure as Diocesan Secretary.

It has been so encouraging to see the Mar Thoma Messenger grow over the years. I thank God for using this publication to let the members know about the programs and missional activities of the diocese. I hope and pray that the messages, articles, testimonies, and bible studies published in the Mar Thoma Messenger will be a source of inspiration and edification to its readers and will encourage them to have an impact on others.

I express my compliments to all the editorial board and managing committee members who have contributed their best for the publication of the Mar Thoma Messenger throughout these 40 years. I appreciate the office bearers of the diocese, the editor, and the dedicated committee for their valuable efforts in bringing out this special issue.

Mrs. Susan Johnson, St. Mathew's MTC, Toronto

FELICITATION



I am incredibly pleased to know that the Mar Thoma Messenger is celebrating its Ruby Jubilee in October to commemorate its 40th year of publication. On this happy occasion, I wish to congratulate the leadership of our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa and the magazine's Editorial Board and Managing Committee for their arduous work and commitment to transform the profile of the magazine to its current stature. I also appreciate the diligence of all former Diocesan Bishops and everyone who has volunteered their time and talents over the years for the uninterrupted publication of this magazine. I thank God for the opportunity to serve as a Managing committee member, promoting the magazine in Canada and UK, from 2005 to 2014. I hope and pray that every family in this Diocese will subscribe to this great periodical and support the mission and ministry of our Diocese.

Mr. John Titus, Sabha Council Member

FELICITATION



I am glad to see Mar Thoma Messenger publishing a special edition to commemorate the 40th year. As an early and old-time member of Mar Thoma church in North America, I have seen many changes in the Messenger publication over the years. Today Messenger is bringing the news and other timely articles to all subscribers and members of our church. I strongly encourage everyone to become life members.

My best wishes.

Mr. Thampy Kurian, Carmel MTC, Boston

FELICITATION



Greetings to all my Mar Thoma family members.

As a life member of the Mar Thoma Messenger publication, I am incredibly happy to join you all in congratulating the commemoration of its 40th anniversary. I am deeply grateful to our Bishops, Council members, Assembly members, and Editors who diligently made this publication available on time to our Mar Thoma community. Special thanks to all the contributors of the various aspects of its contents for making this publication valuable to the readers.

"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain"- Psalm 127:1. May the Almighty continue to build on this publication and bless everyone involved in bringing this church media, a source of spiritual food and timely messages to our Diocesan members. A special thanks to our beloved Thirumeni, Diocesan Episcopa Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos for his leadership, and to Dr. Mathew T. Thomas, current chief editor for his tireless efforts.

To God be the glory

Mr. Thomas Daniel, Epiphany MTC, New York

FELICITATION



I am delighted to know that the Mar Thoma Messenger is publishing a special edition as part of its 40th anniversary. When I think of how we began in this foreign land with Mar Thoma worship services in Upper Manhattan in the seventies, I must appreciate the leadership and their vision which aided in the fast growth of our Church in North America. Messenger, which means 'angel' in Greek, is a blessing for the Marthomites and others as it conveys pertinent information. Apart from reflecting upon spiritual and evangelical growth, the Messenger helps to connect its readers to the various mission activities and social and charitable services conducted by the Diocese. Let us continue to support the Messenger as a sign to show the rightful path to the next generation in their homeland. I wish all success and blessings to the Mar Thoma Messenger.

Mr. Thomas Oommen (Saji), Diocesan Office

FELICITATION



The Publication of the Mar Thoma Messenger is aimed at giving encouragement to our people in parish life, to equip them for the Church's mission, to provide a forum for mutual exchange idea and bring the parishes in North America closer. I wish to Congratulate all those who worked for the publication of the MAR THOMA MESSENGER. I am confident that members of the Mar Thoma Church have welcomed the production of such a Magazine. May God continue use all of us for His glory. Congratulations and best wishes!

Mr. Varkey Abraham, Long Island MTC, New York

FELICITATION



Congratulations! Messenger magazine has played a vital role in the growth of the Diocese of North America and Europe. I am extremely glad that I became a part of supporting the magazine. I would also like to take a moment in congratulating all the Bishops, Clergies, and officials who worked extremely hard to make this magazine a success for the Diocese. Once again thank you and God bless us all!

Mr. Sunny Abraham, Sabha Council Member

FELICITATION



As a member of the Sabha Council, from Diocese of North America and Europe I am very happy to bring Ruby Jubilee greetings to the Diocesan publication of Mar Thoma Messenger, which is the mouthpiece of the Diocese of North America and Europe. I appreciate all the creative efforts of the pioneer workers and all others who made each issue colorful and informative for the faithful. Let the Messenger bring the values and legacy of our Mar Thoma Church to our diaspora homes and new generations with clarity and devotion to grow in our Biblical faith.

Mrs. Checha John, Sabha Council Member

FELICITATION



Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

I am thrilled to hear that our messenger reached 40 years of successful circulation and is now commemorating its Ruby Jubilee. Special appreciation and heartfelt congratulations to the Editorial Board, Managing Committee, Diocesan Council Members, Regional Promoters, and Local Promoters from each Parish in the past to present under the leadership of our Patron Episcopa.

In this vital work, you all labored diligently on behalf of our entire community. You accomplished this ambitious dream with tremendous devotion and excellence. There are endless words of heartfelt gratitude for you, and our community is forever grateful to you all. I am taking this opportunity to congratulate each of you for your transformative and enduring work across four decades for this enormous success. As we look towards an extraordinary future for our Mar Thoma Community, the Messenger has played a pivotal role in advancing our diaspora and our mission in North America and Europe.

May God bless us all.

Mr. Roy C. Thomas, St. John's MTC, New York

FELICITATION



I am extremely delighted to know that a special edition of the Mar Thoma Messenger is going to be published soon to commemorate the 40th year (Rubi Jubilee) of its publication. The house magazine of the North America – Europe Diocese of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church has been a publication that functioned as a tool to build up strong relationship among the diaspora for over four decades. It contained not only pieces of information about events and programmes in the Diocese, but also inspiring messages relevant to the times. Its readership is wide and exhaustive and the efforts behind it are praiseworthy. The dedication and commitment of the team behind it from time to time has certainly paid dividends for over forty years. The guidance, leadership, encouragement, and support from the Diocesan Council in general and the Diocesan Episcopa in particular were real stimulants to all persons behind the endeavor. It is my earnest wish that there should not be a single home in the Diocese without a copy of the Mar Thoma Messenger. I offer my prayers and wish the attempt all success.

Mr. Shaju Sam, Long Island MTC, New York

FELICITATION



I extend my heartiest congratulations to all those, past and present, who have served various roles to manage and publish the Mar Thoma Messenger for the last 40 years. Looking forward to getting more great publications from the team.

Best regards,

Mr. Sabu T. Cherian & Mrs. Susan Cherian, Austin MTC

FELICITATION



With immense pleasure and privilege, I congratulate the previous and present Mar Thoma Messenger committee members and Diocesan office bearers for helping this great publication to reach its 40th year. As we celebrate this great milestone, I am sure that this magazine has enabled our Diocese in its tremendous growth, acting as a vital link between the Diocese and its members. Wishing this great Christian publication, the best, and hoping to see its further growth as a robust magazine with increased readership.

Mr. Tinu Jacob, Mar Thoma Church of Greater Washington

FELICITATION



Congratulations to The Mar Thoma Messenger for celebrating its 40th anniversary! This publication has been a vital voice for the Mar Thoma Church because it is an indication of the Messenger staffs' perseverance and commitment in providing church members with news, information of significance, inspiration, and spiritual guidance for four decades. It is a remarkable achievement, and I congratulate all who have been involved in its production over the years. As it continues to play a vital role in the church's life of informing all the Malayali Community members, I wish Mar Thoma Messenger much success in the years to come. Throughout the endeavors and endless efforts of both the publishing staff and the staff involved in disseminating the religious message, I am wishing them to have access to all the required resources for this important work of service to society.

Mr. Shiju Abraham, Shiju Financial

FELICITATION



Congratulations to the "The Marthoma Messenger Magazine" for celebrating 40th anniversary. Let our Lord continue to bless all of them behind it and all the well-wishers.

Mr. Chacko Mathew (Sunny)
Diocesan Treasurer / Messenger Managing Committee 2008-2014

FELICITATION



As we are celebrating the Ruby Jubilee Year of the Mar Thoma Messenger "may the Almighty continue to bless the mission, vision, and the ministry of the Mar Thoma Messenger. As the official voice of the American diocese let us pray that we inspire the world by meeting the needs of people with content that promotes biblical principles and honors Jesus Christ

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