



**Malankara  
Mar Thoma Syrian Church**



# MAR THOMA MESSENGER

A Publication of the Diocese of North America

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**April - 2025**



**MALANKARA  
MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH**

MESSAGE FROM

● **THE METROPOLITAN**

*B*eloved in the Lord,

Greetings to all in the name of Jesus Christ.

By the boundless grace of God, we were graciously ushered into a New Year. ***Let us offer our heartfelt praise for His sustaining mercy that was upon us throughout the year, 2024.*** Each New Year heralds hope and renewal. As Enoch walked in communion with God, let us likewise walk with Him in the year, 2025. Let us surrender ourselves to find solace in His hands. ***Wishing everyone a blessed and prosperous New Year.***

The 130<sup>th</sup> session of the Maramon Convention was held from February 9 to 16 at the Maramon sands. This year's convention was graced by the presence of distinguished speakers, including: Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillai, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches; Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo of Columbia Theological Seminary; Dr. Rajkumar Ramachandran from New Delhi; our revered bishops and eminent leaders from various Christian denominations. ***The Maramon Convention stands as a profound testament to the spiritual awakening fostered by the Gospel- preaching community which had its birth through fervent prayers held in the room at the Kadavil Malika.*** Indeed, the history of this convention is inextricably linked to the spiritual evolution and missionary journey of the Mar Thoma Church. Notably, ***the convention has long served as a sacred space for repentance and renewal in preparation for the solemn observance of the Great Lent.***

The Mar Thoma Church has long embraced dialogue and discourse among Christian denominations, firmly recognizing that ecumenism is vital for the unity and growth of the global Christian family. Guided by the principle of fostering the expansion of God's Kingdom through love, the Church actively engages in meaningful conversations with other ecclesiastical traditions. ***The Mar Thoma Church serves as a unique bridge between the Eastern and Western Christian traditions.***

***The second session of the Ecumenical Dialogue Meeting between the Catholic Church and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church was convened at the Spirituality Center, Manganam.*** The gathering was presided over by

Archbishop Flavio Pace, secretary of the Ecumenical Dicastery of the Vatican and Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Barnabas Suffragan Metropolitan. A nine-member delegation consisting of Bishops, Clergy, and lay persons represented the Mar Thoma Church in the Dialogue. Papers were presented by Archbishop Flavio Pace, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Ivanios Episcopa, Rev. Shiby Varughese, and Rev. Dr. Hyacinth Destivelle. The meeting encompassed theological discussions on a range of topics including visions of Synodality, Mission, and Holy Baptism. Discussions will be continued next year too.

***Christians across the globe commemorated the Unity Octave from January 18 to 25.*** It called forth believers worldwide to unite in prayer for the cause of Christian unity. Throughout this dedicated week, united prayer gatherings were held in various locations, emphasizing the collective pursuit of harmony among Christian communities. The central theme of this year's Week of Prayer was drawn from Jesus' poignant question to Martha in Bethany: "Do you believe this?" (John 11:26). In the contemporary context, it is essential to reflect on the relevance of this question in our personal lives.

***The year AD 2025 holds profound significance in the history of the Christian Church. It marks the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, convened in AD 325 in the present-day Turkey.*** This historic council, attended by the early Church Fathers, played a pivotal role in shaping Christian Doctrine by affirming the dual nature of Jesus Christ- both divine and human- through the formulation of the Nicene Creed, a foundational declaration of faith. As part of the



global commemoration of this momentous milestone, celebrations and theological reflections will take place in various part of the world throughout 2025.

***I had the privilege of participating in the Nicaea 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, an event jointly organized by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), and the Federation of Asian Catholic Bishops' Conference (FABC).*** I also participated in the Triennial Congress of Asian Theologians. These gatherings provided an opportunity to engage in a profound examination of the contemporary relevance of the Nicene Creed, which was formalized at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in AD 325. As part of the global observance, the World Council of Churches (WCC), under the guidance of the Commission on Faith and Order, will convene a meeting in Alexandria, Egypt, in October 2025, celebrating the 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nicene Creed. The theme of the gathering will be, "Where Now for Visible Unity". A one-day Seminar was conducted by our Church at the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary in Kottayam on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 in this connection. ***The Nicene Creed serves as a continual invitation to reaffirm our faith in the Triune God. May God help each of us to grow in faith day by day.***

Mr. Donald Trump assumed office as the 47<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America in January 2025. Congratulations. ***In the aftermath of his inauguration, President Trump has undertaken several policy measures that distinguish his administration by rigid nationalism and conservatism, while simultaneously redefining the nation's geopolitical and***

**domestic stance.** His decision to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Agreement has sparked extensive discourse, as has the announcement regarding the potential repeal of legal protections for transgender individuals. At the formal conclusion of the Presidential inauguration, Episcopal Bishop Rt. Rev. Marian Edgar delivered an impassioned exhortation, urging the newly sworn-in President to extend compassion toward immigrants, sexual minorities, those who live in fear, and other marginalized communities. These emerging policy shifts have been perceived by many as a retreat from the pressing sociopolitical and humanitarian challenges of the era. The true ramifications of this decisions remain to be seen, and the global community watches with cautious anticipation as the administration's trajectory unfolds.

The United States witnessed one of the most catastrophic environmental disasters in its history, as California underwent an unprecedented wildfire crisis. Fueled by the escalating effects of climate change, vast swathes of the state were being engulfed in flames, one after another. Over 180,000 residents were evacuated. The estimated financial toll of the disaster is more than \$50 Billion. ***This crisis is not an isolated event but a dire symptom of a changing climate. This is an alarming consequence of global warming.*** At this moment of unprecedented suffering and loss, let us hold California and its people in our thoughts and prayers, hoping for resilience, relief, and renewal in the face of the sad calamity.

***On the occasion of the Ruby Jubilee of the Nilakkal Ecumenical***