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Diocese of North America and Europe

The Mar Thoma

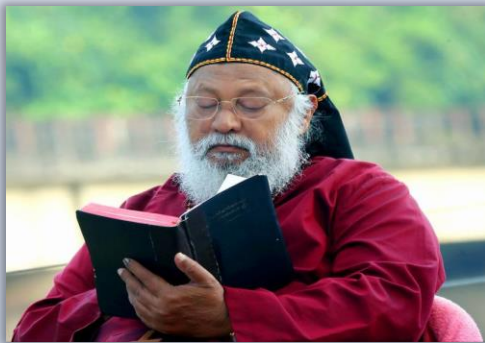
Besorah

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIOCESAN EPISCOPA

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is saddening that our Senior Suffragan Metropolitan, Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus was called to eternity by the Heavenly Father soon after Christmas Day 2015. I boarded the next available flight to India when I heard that Zacharias Thirumeni was hospitalized and critically ill. So many of the members of our Church, friends and dear ones constantly prayed for his immediate recovery, but Thirumeni's physical condition turned from bad to worse and he breathed his last on Sunday, December 27th, afternoon. By the time I landed in Trivandrum on Monday, his body was taken to S.C.S. Church, Thiruvalla, for the public viewing. What we heard was the cry of so many people who loved Thirumeni and who stayed strong in their walk with God asking, "Is God listening to our prayer?" Yes, He is. We need to learn this from Jesus who prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane intensely and passionately, when He felt that His Heavenly Father had forsaken him, yet He trusted that God was listening. We must therefore relinquish our rights and let God do what is best and in accordance with His divine purpose. Our Zacharias Thirumeni came to us as a gift from God. God owns him, and he has been called to our Father's heavenly abode.



One of the remarkable things I observed on that Monday and Tuesday was the presence and attitude of our senior-most bishop the Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan who is 98 years old. He was near the body of Zacharias Thirumeni, expressing his feelings and relating to the sorrow of the immediate family and the countless number of people who came to view the departed Zacharias Thirumeni for the last time. It is our practice that we take the body in a procession called 'Nagarikanikkal' (seeing the city for the last time) to the temporary Madbaha (altar) for the funeral service. It was touching to witness Chrysostom Thirumeni following the procession in his wheelchair, attending the entire funeral service and kissing Zacharias Thirumeni passionately as he bid farewell to him. *"Love never fails.... these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of all these is love" (1 Cor. 13: 8, 13).*

Our Church is going through a time of bereavement. As a diocese, we miss Zacharias Thirumeni. We are indebted to him. He was our first resident diocesan bishop. Our greatest comfort is to know that God is in control. Zacharias Thirumeni has finished his race, fought the good fight and kept the faith. He has gone ahead of us to receive the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:6-8). He has left a legacy and a mark in history. Let us cherish the good ideals; run the race with perseverance, keep the faith and live with strong hope, all for God's glory. *"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (Eph. 3:20, 21).*

Mar Theodosius+

Thanksgiving Service

Episcopal consecration is a landmark in the history of the church and a significant event in the life of an Episcopa. Our Diocesan Episcopa, Geeverghese Mar Theodosius Thirumeni, was consecrated as a Bishop of the Mar Thoma Church on December 9th, 1989 along with Geevarghese Mar Athansius (now Suffragan Metropolitan) and Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa. On Wednesday, December 9th, 2015 a thanksgiving service was conducted at Sinai Mar Thoma Center Chapel, NY. Theodosius Thirumeni celebrated Holy Qurbana with aches and members from neighboring parishes in the northeast and southeast regions.



Neighborhood Mission in Northeast Region



The Northeast regional youth fellowship initiated a mission activity called 'Do Something' partnering with the New York Rescue Mission. New York City has almost 80,000 homeless people and that is the highest of any city in the entire United States. On Sunday January 3rd, 2016 our Diocesan Episcopa joined the mission activity, spending time with the people and the youth volunteers. He also served food to all the homeless people. This participation of the Diocesan Episcopa was an encouragement for

the youths who are voluntarily engaging in this mission. This is a mission activity organized by the youth, funded by the youth and done by the youth. The members of the youth fellowship are thus able to share the love of God to the people who live in the city without their own homes.

Annual Clergy Conference



The annual clergy conference of the Mar Thoma Church was held from November 24th to 27th, 2015 at the Christian Education Center, Charalkunnu, Kerala. The theme selected for the year was "Priesthood – A Process of Becoming an Image of Christ. It was a refreshing experience for all. Our Diocesan Episcopa attended the conference and gave the devotional talk on the final day. The Rt. Rev. Gregorios Mar Stephanos served as the President, Rev. Jiji Mathews as the Convener, and Rev. David Daniel as the Treasurer for the year 2015.

Ecumenical Christmas Celebration

The Indian Christian Ecumenical Community of Houston (ICECH), a fellowship of 18 Malayalee Episcopal churches, organized their 34th Christmas celebration at the Orthodox Church auditorium on Dec. 25th at 5:00 pm. Mar Theodosius Thirumeni was the chief guest. He gave the Christmas message and spent some time to watch various programs presented by the different churches.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 14-21
Maramon Convention
- March 4
World Day of Prayer
- March 6
Diocesan Sunday
- March 31 – April 1
Diocesan Clergy Conference Philadelphia, PA
- April 1-2
Diocesan Assembly

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