

**DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE
OF
THE MAR THOMA CHURCH**

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

CLERGY VICE PRESIDENT: Rev. Biju P. Simon
516-437-0425

SECRETARY: Mr. Adarsh Abraham
516-603-2482

TREASURER: Mr. Boney Mathew
206-724-5577

ASSEMBLY MEMBER: Mr. Jorge Wilson
214-679-5815

AUDITOR: Mr. Jason George

YOUTH CHAPLAINS

Rev. Shibi Abraham
Rev. Jaisen Thomas
Rev. Biju P. Simon
Rev. Varghese Mathew – thru Sept 2009
Rev. Roy A. Thomas – thru Sept 2009
Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese – October 2009 –
Rev. Alex Peter – December 2009 –

DIOCESAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP – LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE – JANUARY 2009

By God's grace, the XII Diocesan Leadership Conference convened in Philadelphia from January 8-11, 2009. It was hosted by The Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia under the guidance of the vicar and conference president Rev. Philip George. The new Diocesan Bishop of North America & Europe, His Grace Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa presided over the conference. We were blessed with Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse presence as the keynote speaker. The venue for the first three days was provided by a sister parish in Philadelphia, Ascension Mar Thoma Church. Our gratitude goes out to those who helped out behind the scenes.

As a youth fellowship, we were very grateful to have Theodosius Thirumeni's first diocesan event be this conference. This year 110 delegates participated in the conference from all over the United States. The conference offered various programs centered on the theme "Ekklesia: Called to Be the Body" based on Ephesians 3:10-11: *"God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord."*(NLT)

The delegates came in hopes to bring something back to their respective Youth Fellowships as well as to provide insight into the direction of our diocesan youth fellowship. The 110 servant-leaders had exposure to praise and worship sessions as well as small group discussions based on the main talks by Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse. Dr. Alphonse challenged us to realize that *who we are is not as important as whose we are*. He also stressed that a good leader is someone who produces something for the common good and as Jesus points out throughout the Gospels, it is not about us, but rather about those we serve.

Everyone also received two in-depth bible studies provided by Rev. Manoj Zacharia. Manoj achen stressed the fact that the call of the church is to engage in service to all people thru a ministry of collaboration; and the collaboration cannot take place without corporate participation. In Acts 2 we see the division between the Hellenists (Greeks) and the Jews in the early church; the Greeks were not being taken care of properly because of their race. Achen also noted that the pattern of an effective church must be to move away from idolizing traditions as well as understand the local context in which they have been placed by empowering others to work in their own ethnic background.

This year there were five track sessions available. Each delegate was given the choice of one from the following: Liturgy, Accountability/Mentoring, Missions, Perseverance through Suffering, & Church History and Reformation. The *Liturgy* track, led by Rev. Mathew Skariah & Mr. Charles Abraham (St. John's MTC, NY) helped in appreciating the wonder and power of Christian liturgy as is experienced by our church through the use of the St. James Liturgy. The *Mentoring* track, led by Rev. Jaisen Thomas, Mr. John Varghese & Ms. Amy Thomas, helped focus in on building relationships that would glorify God in our local parishes. The *Missions* track, led by Rev. Varghese Mathew & Mr. Jorge Wilson explored why we are called to be a mission-oriented church and how as youth we could help one another serve the people among whom God has placed us. The *Perseverance through suffering* track, led by Rev. Skariah John, Mr. Jerry Jacob & Mr. Binu Abraham delved deeper into the role of suffering in a Christian's life. Finally the *Church History & Reformation* track, led by Rev. Biju P. Simon & Mr. Roby Mathew helped trace the history and emerging challenges of the diaspora Mar Thoma community in North America. For Rev. Skariah John & Rev. Mathew Skariah, this conference would be their last youth event on a national level.

The conference proved to be a great blessing and a time of unifying fellowship for the 110 delegates. It concluded on Sunday, January 11, 2009 with the closing ceremony where the

responsibility for next year was handed over to the Youth Fellowship members of the Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Carrollton. All Glory goes to our Father in heaven for making it all possible, accomplishing abundantly far more than all we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).



DIOCESAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP – NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE – JULY 2009

By God's Grace, the **XXX National Mar Thoma Youth Conference** took place in Seattle, WA during the last weekend of July. Commencing on July 23rd, delegates were blessed by the hard work of the hosting youth family of Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle under the leadership of Rev. Binu Varghese & former Vicar, Rev. Roy Thomas. This year's conference theme was "Bring the Reign" inspired by Paul's exhortation to the Romans for them to "*...reign in life through ... Jesus Christ.*"

This National Youth Conference was also our Theodosius Thirumeni's first since becoming Diocesan Episcopa. We were blessed to have Abraham Mar Paulos Thirumeni as well at the conference. Paulos Thirumeni served as one of the main speakers for the conference; he delivered messages geared toward helping the youth become better stewards of this world. Both Bishops are excellent orators and interact extremely well with the youth of this Diocese. They both participated in a town hall meeting in which questions from delegates were answered. Our new Diocesan Secretary, Rev. Vinoy Daniel was also present and helped in leading one of the Bible Studies.

One of the main speakers for the conference was Mr. Tenny Thomas. Raised in the Indian Orthodox Church, Tenny has a heart for mission work among the youth of this generation. He is very passionate about unity in the church and his main talks involved a lot of interaction and insight into God's word.

This year we were blessed to have some new youth chaplains attend as well. Newcomers Rev. Shibi Abraham (Southwest B Region) & Rev. Roy Thomas (Southeast A) were

attending for the first time as youth chaplains. Rev. Regi Zachariah (Vicar, Horeb MTC) graciously accepted the invitation to assist in leading the tracks alongside veteran chaplains Rev. Biju P. Simon (NorthEast) & Rev. Jaisen Thomas (Southwest A). The chaplains each led in one of the track sessions geared toward helping the delegates grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Ms. Elizabeth Thampy of the Northwest Region assisted in leading the 'Perseverance' track session. The remaining four tracks included 'Campus Life,' 'Witness,' 'Human Sexuality,' and 'Faith & Pop Culture.'

The University of Puget Sound provided lodging for all the delegates and was an ideal location to assist the hosting parish with all their needs. The youth fellowship of Seattle MTC did an outstanding job of making everyone feel welcome and at home. They also were able to incorporate various mission activities into the program of the 4-day conference; including writing letters to those in need, collecting funds for mission work abroad as well as helping with administration of a bone marrow drive.

Prayer and unity in Christ played a vital role in the success of this conference. We cannot thank our Father in Heaven enough for being so faithful to us in this generation for the generations to come.



SUMMER BARBECUE – May 2009

In conjunction with the visit of the Metropolitan of the Church, The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, the youth fellowship members of the New York, New Jersey area, with the help of Long Island Mar Thoma Church Youth Fellowship arranged a barbecue program at Sinai Mar Thoma Center, Merrick Avenue, NY.



NATIVE AMERICAN MISSION – YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Youth fellowship members from around the Diocese continue to participate in the various activities of the Native American Mission fields in Oklahoma, New Orleans and Alabama. The mission activities are going on year-round.



MEXICO MISSION – YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Youth members are actively planning to buildup a hostel in the mission field given to them by God. They are also participating in the various medical, educational, and other related services to the people of Matamoras.



GREAT DAYS OF SERVICE

The month of October has been set aside for the youth fellowships to observe for prayer and community outreach mission. A special liturgy has been circulated to all the parishes of the Diocese under the guidance of the Youth Chaplains.

YOUTH DIALOGUE

Region-wise youth fellowship members are finding time to have a separate dialogue session with the Diocesan Episcopa to interact and to express concerns and anxieties of the youth regarding the mission and ministry of the church. God willing, dialogue sessions will be completed for the following areas: NY, Dallas, LA, Philadelphia, Chicago, Houston.



NY



DALLAS

UPCOMING EVENTS:

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2010 AT DALLAS, CARROLLTON

<http://www.2010leadership.com/>

Prepared by
Adarsh Abraham
DYF Council Secretary