

THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

The Mar Thoma Church

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius
Diocesan Bishop

The Rev. Biju S. Cherian
Bishop's/Diocesan Secretary

Mr. Chacko Mathew
Diocesan Treasurer



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DC/198/09

March 05, 2009

BLESSINGS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

In the divine providence of God and by the decision of our Episcopal Synod, I have joined this Diocese to carry out the Episcopal ministry since Jan 2009. A warm welcome was given to me at the Sinai Mar Thoma Center, NY on January 5 on my arrival. A formal welcome on behalf of the Diocese was arranged by the Diocesan Council at Philadelphia on February 07, 2009. I am grateful to the services of the resident Bishops The Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus Suffragan Metropolitan and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos who labored hard in forming this Diocese and nurturing it all through these years. All the more I thank God for His affirming and strengthening presence with me and in this Diocese. As I participate in the mission and ministry of the Diocese through the various parishes, organizations and Mission Centers, I need the prayers, love and fellowship of all the members of the Church for a smooth functioning in the years to come.

We are in a Global world with its opportunities and challenges. In a fast changing world we are called to hold on to the eternal values of the kingdom. The impact of the economic recession now is affecting the lives of so many people including some in our Diocese. As we face the storms of life let us feel assured that the Lord of the Church is in control of the situation. Let us put our hands in the hand of the Lord as we move forward in our faith journey with greater hope and faith. We are called to be wise and remain good stewards over the life and talents God has given to us knowing for certain that our joy is in the joy of God the Master. At the same time, let us learn the lesson of giving up our greed and commit ourselves to show care and compassion to the needy and the less privileged.

We have entered into the new financial year. I am receiving the Annual Report and Accounts of the parishes for 2008 and Budget for 2009. The Diocesan Assembly is also meeting shortly to look into the Diocesan Annual Report and Accounts and the Budget

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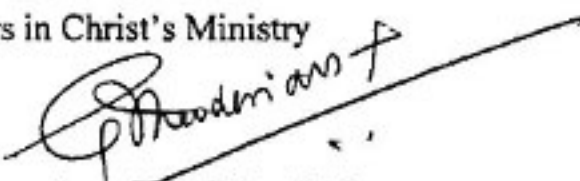
for the New Year. The parishes can work smoothly only when the members contribute according to the various needs. And the Diocese can function only when parishes contribute according to the promises made or directions given. Let us be faithful stewards in the management of the God-given resources. Let us prayerfully plan for the days ahead.

One of the greatest concerns of the church and our diocese these days is the processing of visa to our achenes selected to serve the Diocese from May 2009. There are 21 achenes who are submitting their applications. The visa formalities in USA and UK have changed since November 2008. The Canadian government is also taking a longer time. The immigration office in USA has notified that they may require about 14 months processing the applications. Since we have already started submitting the applications, we cannot submit two applications for the same post by asking the existing achenes for visa extension. Considering the present circumstances, the honorable Episcopal Synod has decided to ask the achenes on transfer to join the new parishes from May 1, 2009. I am trying to represent our case and asking the concerned departments to understand our crisis and process the papers to tide over the difficulties. At the same time I want all of you to remember this need of our Diocese in your prayers and seek God's guidance. The God who opened a way through the Dead Sea for the chosen Israel is still controlling history. The Lord of Elijah is still alive. He will make a way where there seems to be no way. Let us trust in Him.

Finally dearly beloved let us rely on the grace of God who is always with us in our journey of faith. Let us be assured of God's promise to Joshua: *"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous..."* (Joshua 1:5,6).

May the Grace of God be with you all

Yours in Christ's Ministry


Geevarghese Mar Theodosius
Diocesan Episcopa

