

**MAR THOMA CHURCH
DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE
ANNUAL REPORT 2009**

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MAR THOMA CHURCH
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ANNUAL REPORT 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

In the year 2009, we witnessed many remarkable events. Senator Barak Hussein Obama's inauguration as the 44th President of the United States was a monumental milestone in the history of the United States of America and offered many Americans a hope for change. The Nobel Peace Prize given to President Obama was also symbolic of the hope that his leadership offers to the entire world to end unjust wars and fight terrorism. The world's economy, witnessed a steep decline. Unemployment in the USA rose to about 10 percent. Personal home foreclosures rose to very high levels. Indo-US relations were better than ever before. President and Mrs. Obama hosted their first state dinner in honor of the visiting Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. The India based movie "Slum Dog Millionaire" bagged several Oscars in 2009, thereby giving many Indian artists worldwide recognition and giving Indian Americans a reason to be proud.

In the midst of all the remarkable events, the Mar Thoma Church steadfastly continued its mission to spread the Word of God and to share Jesus' message of Love and Hope. Jesus Christ has remained as the center of the Church's life. He continues to guide His people with His abundant grace. We thank God for His blessings as we, the Diocese of North America of the Mar Thoma Church, successfully journeyed along in 2009.

On behalf of the Diocesan Council, I hereby present the Annual Report for the Year 2009.

2. ADMINISTRATION

a) DIOCESAN BISHOP

On January 1, 2009, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius took charge of the Diocese of North America and Europe. The Diocesan Council members and the representatives from nearby parishes gave His Lordship a warm welcome when he arrived at JFK Airport, and Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa received Mar Theodosius Episcopa at the Sinai Mar Thoma Center in New York. Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos left the Diocese on January 6, 2009 to take charge of the Kottayam- Kochi Diocese after ably serving our Diocese for seven years. The Diocesan Council held a reception and felicitation meeting on February 7, 2009 to welcome Theodosius Thirumeni. Thirumeni's leadership style and zeal for mission continues to lead the Diocese to new heights. Immediately after taking charge Theodosius Thirumeni confronted a new challenge posed by the U.S. State Department in that there would be a considerable delay of 12 to 18 months for securing the Visas for Achenas that were to take charge of various parishes and congregations in the U.S. by May 1, 2009. Thirumeni actively and prayerfully addressed the concern with responsible authorities in the US Congress, Department of State, and the Indian Embassy in Washington DC, thereby facilitating the arrival of all 18 new achenas transferred to the U.S. by May 2009.

The year 2009 also marked two important milestones in Thirumeni's life. His 60th Birthday was on February 19, 2009 and his 20th anniversary of consecration as a Bishop was on December 9, 2009. To commemorate these milestones, the Diocesan Council released the second edition of a Festschrift Volume titled, "In Search of Christian Identity in Global Community", in honor of Theodosius Thirumeni and created an endowment fund for the education of needy theological students. Theodosius Thirumeni's vision of expanding the ecumenical relationship of the Mar Thoma Church with other churches in the North American continent reached new dimensions with the acceptance of our church into the Canadian Council of Churches. Thirumeni continues to serve as a member of the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Thirumeni was also keen to convene the Diocese and Region wise clergy fellowships, youth chaplain's conference, Parish office bearers meetings, and several dialogue sessions with the youth and young families in our Diocese to assess their needs and plan future programs. These activities show Theodosius Thirumeni's concern and his future vision about our church in this culturally diverse nation. During the report year, Theodosius Thirumeni visited 60 out of 61 parishes and 15 out of 21 congregations within the Diocese.

b) THE 2009 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

The 2009 Diocesan Assembly meeting of the Diocese of North America and Europe was held on April 18, 2009 at the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church of Delaware Valley, 130 Grubb Road, Malvern, Pennsylvania 19355. The Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius presided over the Assembly. Rev. Varghese Mathew, Rev. Mathew Skariah, Mr. Jorge Wilson, and Ms. Betty Vattakunnel led the worship. Rev. M. P. Yohannan gave the devotional talk based on St. Mark 10:51. Rev. Biju S. Cherian, Diocesan Secretary, welcomed Thirumeni and the Assembly members. Rev. Mathew Skariah and Mr. Ashley George were appointed as Recording Secretaries. The Diocesan Secretary declared quorum and the President announced that the Assembly is in order.

Thirumeni in his maiden Presidential address in the Assembly emphasized the relevant ecclesiology in a fast changing world. His Lordship emphasized that the need of the hour is to recognize that we are all part of one body (ecclesia) and exhorted the members of the Assembly to have a Christ centered fellowship with a mission of incarnation in the neighboring community. Thirumeni emphasized that there is a need now to re-invent the church, re-read the scriptures and liturgy and re-vision the mission and ministry of the church in the contemporary world that is fast changing.

Eighty-four (84) out of one hundred and forty-three (143) assembly members attended the assembly meeting.

Rev. Biju S. Cherian, the Diocesan Secretary, presented the Annual Report and the Audited Statement of Accounts for the year 2008 and Mr. Chacko Mathew, the Diocesan Treasurer presented the Budget for the year 2009. After discussions and deliberations, the following decisions were taken:

1. The Assembly approved the Annual Report 2008 and accounts for the year 2008.

2. Resolved to approve the budget for the Year 2009 as presented, inclusive of the decision to purchase a car for the Diocesan Secretary with a down payment of \$5,000.
3. Resolved to authorize the Diocesan Council to find a willing parish to host the 2011 Family Conference or to make alternate arrangements and inform the Diocesan Assembly in the coming year.
4. Resolved to appoint Cherian, O'Sullivan, Tatapudy LLP to be the external auditors for the year 2009.
5. Resolved to authorize the Diocesan Council to meet the expenses of the first five months of the year 2010, without exceeding 5/12 of the total expenses of the year 2009.

Thirumeni thanked all the participants for their suggestions. Thirumeni informed the Assembly Members about the transfer of Rev. Biju S. Cherian, the Diocesan Secretary, as of May 1, 2009, and thanked Achen for his valuable and dedicated service to the Diocese. The Assembly also thanked all outgoing achen who served in the Diocese. The Diocesan Treasurer also thanked Thirumeni, all participants, Vicar and members of the hosting parish. The minutes were read and passed. The meeting concluded with prayer and benediction by Thirumeni.

c) DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The Diocesan Council, under the leadership of Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, continued to take and implement timely decisions for the betterment of the Diocese. The Diocesan Council members gave input to all decision making processes and actively participated in all events of the Diocese. The Diocesan Council arranged a befitting reception to our new Diocesan Episcopa at Philadelphia on February 7, 2009. The Diocesan Council also visited the Mexico Mission on October 25, 2009, and joined with the families residing in Colonia Mar Thoma for an evening worship. The Council members also visited different parishes and informed parish members of the different activities of the Diocese.

Diocesan Secretary: Rev. Biju S Cherian (Until April 30, 2009)
Rev. Vinoy Daniel (From May 1, 2009 onwards)

Diocesan Treasurer: Mr. Chacko Mathew

Diocesan Council Members:

- | | | |
|-----|----------|--------------------------|
| 1) | Center 1 | Mr. Varghese P. Varghese |
| 2) | Center 1 | Rev. P. J. Varghese |
| 3) | Center 1 | Mr. Abraham C. Thadathel |
| 4) | Center 2 | Mr. Gigi Tom |
| 5) | Center 3 | Mr. Ashley George |
| 6) | Center 4 | Dr. Mathew T. Thomas |
| 7) | Center 5 | Mr. Eipe C. Varghese |
| 8) | Center 6 | Mrs. Annamma Mathew |
| 9) | Center 6 | Mrs. Aswathi Mathew |
| 10) | Center 6 | Mrs. Elizabeth John |

11)	Center 7	Ms. Betty Vattakunnel
12)	Center 8	Mr. Mathew Koshy
13)	Center 9	Mr. Samuel T. Thomas
14)	Center 10	Dr. George Mathew

During the report year, the Council met five times and the following decisions were made:

1. Requested Thirumeni to appoint the new Diocesan Secretary for the vacancy arising out of the transfer of the Diocesan Secretary, Rev. Biju S. Cherian.
2. Reviewed and approved a new health insurance plan of Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield, effective March 1, 2009, for the clergies and their families.
3. Decided to conduct a reception program for the Diocesan Bishop on February 7, 2009 at 4:00 PM at Ascension MTC, Philadelphia.
4. Decided to conduct Assembly meeting at St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Delaware Valley, on April 18, 2009.
5. Decided to republish a book **In Search of Christian Identity** originally published by the Chennai – Bangalore Diocese to commemorate Theodosius Thirumeni’s 60th Birthday and 20th year of consecration as Episcopa, with the permission of CSS and the said Diocese.
6. Decided to create Mar Theodosius Theological Education Fund.
7. Decided to conduct Diocesan Convention in eight (8) regions of the Diocese, and authorized office bearers to make necessary arrangements. Decided to invite Very Rev. Abraham Samuel as the convention speaker.
8. Decided to conduct Youth Chaplain Workshop and open forum in different regions.
9. Authorized the Literature Society to publish and distribute the Festschrift volume, **“In Search of Christian Identity in Global Community”**.
10. Decided to sell each copy of the Festschrift volume for \$20
11. Decided to deliver a PowerPoint slide presentation at the Family Conference 2009, highlighting the activities of the Diocese.
12. Decided to release a DVD on Holy Communion and distribute it for \$5 each.
13. Decided to pay the yearly membership fee of £1000 to Churches Together in England (CTE), and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and made arrangements to raise the fund locally.
14. Accepted the request from the Edmonton MTC, Canada to host the 2011 Family Conference

15. Decided that \$40 instead of \$65 will be the registration fee for a one-day session of the Diocesan Assembly.
16. Decided to reduce the price of Maramon Convention Songs CD from \$10 to \$5.
17. Decided to set up a Diocesan stall at the Maramon Convention every year.
18. Approved the budget for the 2010 Family Conference.
19. In response to the request of the MTEA, decided to give not more than \$1,000 as travel expenses to Maramon Convention speakers from the USA.
20. Decided to collect a mandatory amount of \$50 per family for the Diocesan Fund, Episcopal Travel, and Nithya Chilavu.
21. Decided to sell/trade the old car of the Diocesan Secretary and to purchase a new one.
22. Decided to set up the norms for Best Parish Award.
23. Decided to collect a minimum of \$30 per family for the Diocesan Sunday Collection.
24. Decided to collect on September 27, 2009, the Suvisesha Nidhi of \$12 per annum from each earning member.
25. Decided to convene youth dialogue and young family meetings in different regions.
26. Decided to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Theodosius Thirumeni's Episcopal Consecration on December 9, 2009.
27. Decided to hold an Ecumenical Fellowship Dinner on January 1, 2010.
28. Decided to endorse the formation of "The Council of Mar Thoma Parishes in Europe" (COMPE).

d) DIOCESAN SECRETARY

Rev. Biju S. Cherian served as the Diocesan and Bishop's Secretary until April 30, 2009. We thank Rev. Biju S. Cherian and his family for the invaluable services rendered as the Diocesan and Bishop's Secretary since April 2008. Well-wishers from nearby parishes came by to bid farewell to Achen and family.

Rev. Vinoy Daniel took charge as the Diocesan Secretary in May 1, 2009. The Diocesan Council members from the Northeast Region and members of the nearby parishes received the Diocesan Secretary and family at the Aramana. The Diocesan Secretary serves in various committees within the Diocese. Rev. Vinoy Daniel continues to provide able leadership for our Diocese with attention to all matters that have to be addressed at the Diocesan level. Achen also visited many parishes and gave leadership in various conferences.

e) DIOCESAN TREASURER

Mr. Chacko Mathew continues to serve the Diocese as the Diocesan Treasurer. His dedication and commitment is commendable. He serves in various subcommittees. His efficiency in managing the accounts and his sincerity is note-worthy. During the report year, he attended the NCCC-USA meeting. He also visited many parishes, and visited the Mexico Mission field several times.

f) AUDITORS

Mr. Varghese P. Varghese and Mr. Gigi Tom have been serving as the internal auditors since 2008. We appreciate their commitment and diligence in reviewing the 2009 accounts and auditing it on a quarterly basis.

Cherian, O' Sullivan, Tatapudy, LLP continued to serve as the external auditor for 2009. We appreciate their professional services.

g) PARISHES AND CONGREGATIONS

Currently, we have 61 Parishes and 21 congregations. The participation and contribution of all parishes and congregations towards the growth of the Diocese is commendable. We have 7,291 families in the Diocese.

Best Parish Award:

The following parishes were recognized and awarded the Best Parish Award during the report year: The Mar Thoma Church of Dallas, Farmers Branch; Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston; St. James Mar Thoma Church, NY; St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church, NY; and St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Indianapolis.

h) CLERGY

There are 65 clergy (including retired clergy) serving the Diocese.

The following sixteen (16) clergy were transferred to India during the reporting year: Rev. Thomas C. Jacob, Rev. C. K. Koshy, Rev. James Thomas, Rev. Skariah John, Rev. Sam Abraham, Rev. Abraham P. Varkey, Rev. Thomas John A., Rev. Mathew Skariah, Rev. Shaji M. Thomas, Rev. Joby Varghese, Rev. Binu John, Rev. Mathew K. Jackson, Rev. Johnson C. Jacob, Rev. K. George, Rev. Varghese Mathew K., and Rev. Biju S. Cherian. We thank God Almighty for the selfless services rendered by these clergy to the Diocese. The Diocese recognized and honored their ministry by giving each of them a plaque during the Assembly meeting.

During the reporting year, the following eighteen (19) clergy joined the Diocese:

Rev. Regi John, Rev. K. J. Mathew, Rev. Binu Varghese, Rev. A.P.Noble, Rev. George Varghese, Rev. Shibi Abraham, Rev. Thomas Mathew, Rev. Jai Varghese, Rev. M. M. John, Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese, Rev. Abraham Mathew, Rev. Varghese Mathai, Rev. Jose Abraham T., Rev. Jacob Varghese, Rev. Benchamen George, Rev. Mathew Varghese, Rev. Varghese Mathew P., Rev. Alex Peter and Rev. Minoy N. Kuruvilla.

i) YOUTH CHAPLAINS

We have five Youth Chaplains working in the Diocese. They are: Rev. Biju P. Simon for the Northeast Region, Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese (Rev. Mathew Skariah till April 30 and Rev. Roy A. Thomas from May to October) for the Southeast Region, Rev. Jaisen Thomas for the Southwest Region A, Rev. Shibi Abraham (Rev. Skariah John till April 30) for the Southwest Region B, and Rev. Alex Peter (Rev. Varghese Mathew until September) for the Midwest Region. The Youth Chaplains are involved in Campus ministry, Bible studies, and counseling sessions for the youths. They visit the parishes of their region on a regular basis. The Youth Chaplains held a Workshop to discuss and plan their future activities on July 7 and 8, 2009.

j) SABHA COUNCIL MEMBERS

Rev. T. S. Philip, Dr. P. John Lincoln, and Mrs. Kusumam Titus serve as the Sabha Council members for the period 2008 - 2011.

k) OFFICE ASSISTANT

Mr. Thomas Oommen continues as the Office Assistant. We acknowledge with thanks his services in promptly, and systematically, maintaining the accounts of the Diocese.

3. ACTIVITIES: DIOCESAN AND REGIONAL

a) FAREWELL TO COORILLOS THIRUMENI

On January 3, 2009, the Diocesan Council arranged a formal dinner in honor of Coorilos Thirumeni. Current and former Diocesan Council and Sabha Council members, current Diocesan Assembly members, and current Diocesan Subcommittee and Sabha Mandalam members attended the dinner. A Diocesan farewell for Coorilos Thirumeni was also held on January 4, 2009 in NY. We thank God for the exemplary leadership of Coorilos Thirumeni who guided the Diocese like a good Shepherd to attain new heights in its life of worship and witness.

b) RECEPTION TO THEODOSIUS THIRUMENI

Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius took charge as the Diocesan Episcopa on January 1, 2009. On Saturday, February 7, 2009, members from the Diocese of North America & Europe assembled at the Ascension Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia, to participate in a Diocesan Reception Program organized by the Diocesan Council for the new Diocesan Bishop. The program opened with a congregational song "The Church's One Foundation" followed by a worship service organized by Rev. Mathew Skariah, Youth Chaplain Southeast A Region. The Diocesan Secretary, Rev. Biju S. Cherian, welcomed Theodosius Thirumeni, Dr. James F. Kay, the Chief Guest, and all the other guests and participants to the program. A brief photo slideshow that highlighted Theodosius Thirumeni's life and ministry was presented. During the reception program, choirs from the Philadelphia, Bethel, Ascension, and St. Thomas Delaware Valley Mar Thoma Churches rendered melodious songs. Felicitations were given on behalf of all the

Diocesan organizations by Rev. K. George for the Clergy, Ms. Betty Vattakunnel for Diocesan Council, Ms. Rena John for the Youth Fellowship, Mr. Varghese K. Joseph for the Edavaka Mission, Mrs. Checha John for the Sevika Sanghom, Mr. Santhosh Abraham for the Yuvajana Sakhyam, and Mrs. Aswathi Mathew for the Sunday School. Mr. Abraham C. Thadathel, Diocesan Council member, gave a birthday felicitation to Theodosius Thirumeni. Rev. P. J. Varghese and Mr. Varghese P. Varghese, Diocesan Council Members, and Mr. Chacko Mathew, Diocesan Treasurer, presented Theodosius Thirumeni a birthday gift on behalf of the Diocese. The Chief Guest, Dr. James F. Kay, Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics at Princeton Theological Seminary, delivered the keynote address. Following the message and felicitations, Theodosius Thirumeni gave his response to the warm welcome he received from the Diocese of North America & Europe. Mr. Chacko Mathew, Diocesan Treasurer, rendered the vote of thanks, and the meeting ended with a prayer by Rev. M. C. Skaria, Vicar of the Ascension Mar Thoma Church, and benediction by Theodosius Thirumeni. Immediately following the reception program, the Sunday school children and youth fellowship members presented Theodosius Thirumeni with a birthday cake. Achens from different regions also attended the meeting.

c) **FAREWELL TO REV. BIJU S. CHERIAN**

The Diocesan Council gave a Farewell Dinner to Rev Biju S. Cherman, the Diocesan Secretary on April 17, 2009, and thanked him for his valuable services to the Diocese.

d) **FAMILY CONFERENCE 2009**

The Immanuel Mar Thoma Church of Houston hosted the XXVII Mar Thoma Family Conference of the Diocese of North America and Europe at the Westchase Marriott Hotel in Houston from July 2 to 5, 2009. The theme of the conference was **“From the Cross, Through the Church, To the World”**. An array of eminent leaders and speakers deliberated on this thought-provoking theme of contemporary significance. The main leaders of the conference were Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos Episcopa, Bishop of the Delhi-Mumbai Diocese, The Very Rev. Dr. Douglas Travis, Dean and President of the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, Rev. Abraham Scaria P., Counselor and Lecturer at the TMA Institute of Counseling at Kottayam. Enthusiastic participation of 230 families from all across the Diocese made this conference a truly blessed and spiritually satisfying experience for everyone.

The final day of the conference culminated with a Holy Qurbana Service led by Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos on Sunday July 5, 2009. The service was followed by the closing ceremony, which included the passing of the torch to the Mar Thoma Church Dallas Farmers Branch, who will be hosting the 2010 Family Conference. Special thanks to Rev. T. S. Philip, Rev. Shibi Abraham, Mr. P. M. Jacob (Conference Secretary), Office Bearers and Committee Members and also the members of the Immanuel Mar Thoma Church of Houston whose joint effort in planning and organizing the Conference made it a blessing to all who attended. Attachment 1 provides a detailed report of the 2009 Family Conference.

e) CLERGY CONFERENCES

On April 16 and 17, 2009, the Bethel Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia hosted the Diocesan Clergy Conference, which was led by Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and Achens. From July 5 to 7, 2009, the Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Houston hosted the Diocesan Clergy Family Conference. The theme for this conference was “Community in Mission”. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos Episcopa, and Achens offered their leadership for this clergy family conference.

In addition, there were Regional Clergy Conferences in which Biblical expositions, and topical presentations and discussions included: “Concerns and challenges of parish ministry in the North American context”; “Scope and challenges of youth ministry with discussion”; “Preparing students from the Diocese for leadership and ordained ministry”; and “Mission concerns”.

f) SABHA THARAKA

Mr. C. V. Samuel of the Detroit MTC represents our Diocese in the Managing Committee of the Sabha Tharaka. He, along with a team of dedicated people, works tirelessly in promoting the official magazine of the Church in our Diocese.

g) CHURCH DEDICATION

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius conducted the church dedication of Sehion Mar Thoma Church, Dallas, on January 17, 2009. The church released a souvenir during the inauguration ceremony.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius also dedicated the newly constructed Altar and Sanctuary of the St. Stephens Mar Thoma Church, New Jersey, March 28, 2009.

We congratulate the Vicar and members of the respective churches for their hard work and accomplishments.

h) PARSONAGE DEDICATION

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius dedicated the newly purchased Parsonage of the Mar Thoma Church of Carrollton, Dallas, on November 28, 2009.

His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius dedicated newly purchased Parsonage of St. Andrews Mar Thoma Church, New York on December 13, 2009.

We congratulate the Vicar and members of the respective churches for their hard work and accomplishments.

i) DIOCESAN CONVENTION

The Diocesan Convention Meetings for 2009 were conducted in the following centers and regions, and the following Achen served as conveners.

- Sept. 17-20 Toronto Rev. Alex P. John
- Sept. 24-27 Edmonton Rev. Regi John
- Oct. 1-4 Midwest Region Rev. Sabu Thomas
- Oct. 8-11 San Francisco Rev. K. A. Abraham
- Oct. 15-18 Dallas Rev. Johnson George
- Oct. 22-25 Houston Rev. T. S. Philip
- Oct. 29-Nov. 1 Southeast Region Rev. Abraham Cherian &
Rev. Philip George
- Nov. 5-8 Northeast Region Rev. P. J. Varghese

Very Rev. Abraham Samuel was the convention speaker. Achen through his inspiring message and life experiences challenged the participants of the Convention. The Convention meeting was a blessing to all who attended. The meetings were well organized and well attended. A regional level joint Holy Qurbana was conducted on the Sundays, the last day of convention. We thank Abraham Samuel Achen and Valsa Kochamma, and all the conveners at the regional level for all their contributions to the Diocesan Convention.

4. ORGANIZATIONS OF THE DIOCESE

During the report year, our organizations functioned effectively to further the mission of the church. I thank all the officers, committee members, and volunteers of each respective organization for the exceptional services that they offer for the betterment of our Diocese. A detailed report of each organization is included as attachments to this report, but a summary follows:

a. SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Diocesan Sunday School is divided into two zones and six regions, and its activities and programs are conducted both in the Zones and Regions. Programs include retreats, teachers' workshops, and regional competitions. The Diocesan Sunday School works under the Sunday School Samajam, but is governed by the Sunday School Council, which also serves as the Examination Board. We have 54 Sunday Schools with over 4000 students and 650 Teachers spread across USA, Canada and Europe. The Sunday School Diocesan Council has 11 members, and the Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa served as the President, Rev. Philip George served as the Vice-President, and Mr. Cherian Alexander served as the secretary. In 2009, 1361 students participated in the Diocesan examination and 419 students received certificates for excelling in the examinations. In July 2009, the Sunday school published the church history book, '**The Mar Thoma Church - Foundation and Vision**'. In October 2009, the Sunday S-school also published the 11th and 12th Grade curriculum. The Diocesan Sunday School report is appended as Attachment 2.

b. YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

With the blessings of our beloved Diocesan Thirumeni Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and the leadership and guidance of our Youth Chaplains, the Youth Fellowship of our Diocese continues to equip the youths to grow in Jesus Christ through the foundations of Witness, Worship, Study, and Service. There are five Youth Chaplains working in the Diocese: Rev. Biju P. Simon for the Northeast Region, Rev. Dr. Philip Varghese (Rev. Mathew Skariah till April 30 and Rev. Roy A. Thomas from May to October) for the Southeast Region, Rev. Jaisen Thomas for the Southwest Region A, Rev. Shibi Abraham (Rev. Skariah John till April 30) for the Southwest Region B. and Rev. Alex Peter (Rev. Varghese Mathew until September) for the Midwest Region. The Youth Chaplains are involved in Campus ministry, Bible studies, and counselling sessions for the youths. They visit the parishes of their region on a regular basis.

During the report year, the Diocesan Youth Fellowship organized and/or participated in the following programs:

- The XII Diocesan Leadership Conference was conducted from Thursday, January 8 to Sunday, January 11, 2009, and was hosted by the Mar Thoma Church, Philadelphia. Our Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius presided over the conference. Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse served as the keynote speaker.
- The XXX National Mar Thoma Youth Conference was held in Seattle, WA, during the last weekend of July. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos, and Mr. Tenny Thomas, served as the main conference leaders. Rev. Binu Varghese, Vicar of the Mar Thoma Church of Seattle, and former Vicar Rev. Roy Thomas provided the direction for the conference.
- A “summer barbecue” in May 2009, in conjunction with the visit of The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan
- Native American Mission work in Oklahoma, New Orleans, and Alabama
- Medical, educational and other related services for the people in the Mexico Mission field at Matamoros.
- “Great Days of Service” in October for prayer and community outreach.
- Youth dialogue sessions with Mar Theodosius Thirumeni in New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago and Houston

We express our sincere thanks to Theodosius Thirumeni, all our Youth Chaplains, Secretary Mr. Adarsh Abraham, and the committee members of the Youth Fellowship for their strenuous efforts in making the activities of the Youth fellowship a blessed one. The Diocesan Youth Fellowship report is appended as Attachment 3.

The official website of the Diocesan Youth Fellowship is www.mtcyouth.org.

c. YUVAJANA SAKHYAM

The Yuvajana Sakhyam of the Diocese is functioning on two Zonal, and six Regional levels, and has thirty-three (33) ‘Sakhas’ in this Diocese. The programs of this year included:

- XI National Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam Conference held from October 9 to 11, 2009, at the Holiday Inn, Ronkonkoma, New York. The Long Island Mar Thoma Yuvajana

Sakhyam hosted this conference. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa presided over the conference and Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse was the main speaker on the theme, “Christian attitude towards Religious Fundamentalism”. Rev. T. S. Philip and Rev. Vinoy Daniel also served as conference leaders.

- A Kalamela on October 9, 2009, at the Holiday Inn, Ronkonkoma, New York
- A Yuvajana Sakhyam Week and Yuvajana Sakhyam Sunday program was held from October 11 to 18, 2009, which included devotion, prayer and a special worship service on Sunday
- Continued offering financial support to the Karnataka Mission field in India
- Continued publication of the Yuvadhara – the official publication of the Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam
- Continued development of Ragadhara – official musical wing of the Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam

We express our sincere thanks to Theodosius Thirumeni, Vice-President Rev. T. S. Philip, Secretary Mr. Santhosh Abraham, and the committee members of the Yuvajana Sakhyam for all their efforts in conducting the activities of the Yuvajana Sakhyam. The Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam report is appended as Attachment 4.

d. MAR THOMA VOLUNTARY EVANGELISTS ASSOCIATION

The Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists association of the Diocese of North America and Europe enjoyed another fruitful year with endless mercies and grace of the Almighty and under the leadership of our beloved Thirumeni, Rt. Rev Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius.

This year, the Diocesan Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists Association provided financial assistance to various mission projects in India. In addition, the association conducted zonal and regional meetings and held its sixth National Conference from July 31 to August 2, 2009, at the National Christian Conference Center, Valley Forge, PA. The Diocesan Voluntary Evangelistic Association report is appended as Attachment 5.

We extend our thanks to Theodosius Thirumeni, Vice Presidents Rev. Vinoy Daniel (until April 30, 2009) and Rev. Samuel Santhosham (from May 1, 2009), Secretary Mr. Varghese K. Joseph, and all the committee members who worked hard in mobilizing funds for the mission fields and also letting the programs of the MTVEA to be organized in a blessed way.

e. SEVIKA SANGHOM

The Diocesan Sevika Sanghom had another eventful year as it could function effectively in the Diocesan, Zonal and Regional levels. Every year the first weekend of March is observed as the World Day of Prayer. This year also the Sevika Sanghom observed March 6 as the World Day of Prayer. Prayer meetings were organized in regional and parish levels. The Theme of this day was “*In Christ there are many members, yet one Body.*” The women and children of Papua New Guinea wrote this year’s worship and the prayers were for that Country. Offertory collected on that day was sent directly from each prayer group to the WDPUSA Committee.

Sunday, September 13th, was observed as Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom day in all Parishes and Congregations under this Diocese. Special worship services, received from Thiruvalla, were made available to all Parishes and Congregations that day. The Sevika Sanghom members actively took leadership roles in Worship Services and Sanghom members delivered Sermons on that day.

The 10th Diocesan Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom National Conference was held from October 1-4, 2009, at the Holiday Inn, Suffern, New York. The St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, New York hosted the conference. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius presided over the Conference. The Theme of the Conference was “*Womanhood: A Divine call to Live, Give and Save.*” Rev. Philip George and Mrs. Suma George Cherian were the main speakers. One hundred and ninety-four (194) registered participants attended this Conference. The Diocesan Sevika Sanghom report is appended as Attachment 6.

We thank our Diocesan Episcopa and Vice President Rev. Daniel Varghese (until April 2009) and Rev. Santhosh Thomas (since May 2009), Secretary Mrs. Checha John, and all the office bearers and committee members for the selfless love and service rendered to the Sevika Sanghom activities.

5. ASSOCIATIONS OF THE DIOCESE

ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS AND DENTIST OF MAR THOMA CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA (APDM)

Association of Physicians and Dentists of Mar Thoma Church of North America (APDM) met for Prayer and Bible Study every month during the year 2009, except July and December. The prayer meetings were held at the residence of members. Dr. John Abraham and Dr. Alex Thomas conducted Bible studies. On Good Friday, an overnight fasting prayer was conducted at the residence of Dr. Alex Thomas. APDM members met with Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius at the Aramana to welcome Thirumeni to the Association.

The annual conference of APDM was conducted from July 10th -12th at the Double Tree Hotel and Executive Meeting Center, Somerset, New Jersey. The theme for the conference was “Then Jesus said to his disciples if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”, Mathew 16: 24. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius and Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos were the main speakers. Rev. Vinoy Daniel, the Diocesan Secretary conducted the Holy Communion Service on Sunday.

APDM Christmas Celebration was held at St. Peters Mar Thoma Church on December 5, 2009. Rev. Vinoy Daniel and Rev. K.V. Thomas gave messages. APDM choir under the leadership and training of Dr. John Abraham made the occasion a blessed one. The Association supported Santhigiri medical mission by funding the medical clinic. APDM has been supporting this medical clinic since 1998. APDM also provided financial support to the Vattavada clinic. APDM provided financial support to meet the medical needs of a patient through Theodosius Thirumeni’s fund. This year, APDM supported the medical mission tour conducted by Dr. John Abraham especially Shalom mission and Andhra medical mission.

We thank all the office bearers and members of the APDM for their selfless love and services. The APDM report is appended as Attachment 7.

6. COMMITTEES OF THE DIOCESE

During the report year, the committees for the Legal Affairs and Vaideeka Selection conducted meetings as needed and rendered exceptional services for the growth of the Diocese. I specially thank all the committee conveners and members for their dedication time and talent for the smooth operation of all the committees.

a. LEGAL AFFAIRS

The Legal Affairs Committee constituted under section 65A of the Sabha Constitution is a body that gives legal advice to the Diocesan Episcopa, including application for remarriage.

b. VAIDEEKA SELECTION

During the report year, the committee has selected one candidate for theological studies. At present, five students from this Diocese are studying at the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam.

7. SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE DIOCESE

During the report year, the subcommittees for the Mar Thoma Messenger, Mission Board, Lay Institute (LEAD program), Publication Board, Literature Society, Diocesan Website, Ecumenical Relations, Finance Advisory Board, Archives Committee, Media and Public Relations, Planning Board, and Mar Thoma Valedictorian Award conducted meetings as needed and rendered exceptional services for the growth of the Diocese. I specially thank all the subcommittee conveners and members for their dedication time and talent for the smooth operation of all the subcommittees.

a. LITERATURE SOCIETY

The society, since its inception in 1991 by our Valiya Metropolitan The Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom, has grown steadily. Mar Thoma Literature Society has been instrumental in distributing the VBS materials to our Sunday schools, Publications both of the Mar Thoma Church and of the diocese, books from CSSM, Devotionals, Taksas, Hymn books, and also books from the local publishers like CBD, Zondervan and also cassettes, CDs, videos, etc. The society held sales events at the annual Family Conference, national conferences of different organization, and at other regional conferences and conventions. Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, our diocesan Bishop, served as the president of the society. Thirumeni's leadership, guidance and suggestions have helped the society to attain new heights. Dr. Thomas K. Jose and Mr. C. V. Simonkutty served as the Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. A report of the society is included Attachment 8.

b. THE MAR THOMA MESSENGER

The Mar Thoma Messenger, the official publication of the Diocese, was published on a quarterly basis. Mr. Eapen Daniel and Mr. James Philip continued as the Chief Editor and Manager, respectively. The sincere effort of the managing committee and the editorial committee along with all promoters and well-wishers helped in the increase in circulation of this publication. We appreciate their sincere efforts. A report of the Messenger sub-committee is included as Attachment 9.

c. LAY-PERSON EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (LEAD Program)

The Lay Institute Program had developed over the past years with the opportunity to educate the laypersons of the Diocese of North America and Europe. With the guidance and support of our Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, the Lay Institute Program has progressed. The L.E.A.D. Program has been a great opportunity for all members of the church to learn and grow as a leader within the Mar Thoma Church. This program aims to equip members of the church with the knowledge and tools to be a great leader and disciple of Christ. In completing the L.E.A.D. program, the participants would

- Develop their personal study of the Word and personal prayer life (spiritual formation).
- Expand their Biblical and Ecclesiological knowledge and understanding in order to provide effective leadership within their own churches.
- Grow in their respect for and knowledge of the history and doctrinal beliefs of the Mar Thoma Church.
- Develop leadership skills to help assist in the edification of the Mar Thoma Church.

The L.E.A.D. Program has completed Phase 1 and has begun Phase 2 starting in Fall 2009. The Phase 1 completed with 105 registered participants. The following are a list of the courses for Phase 2: Prophetic Literature: Vision and Mission, Pauline Epistles, Introduction to Christian Theology, Understanding our Neighbors: Diversity within the Christian Denominations, Missions, and Polity of the Mar Thoma Church. We would like to recognize and thank the 2009-2010 LEAD Program Syllabus Committee, which include Rev. Biju P. Simon, Rev. Jaisen Thomas, Rev. Roy P. Thomas, Rev. Santhosh Thomas, Rev. Mathew Varghese, Rev. Vinoy Daniel, and Ms. Betty Vattakunnel (the LEAD Program convener). A report of the society is included as Attachment 10.

d. PLANNING BOARD

In 2009, the Planning Board met via telephone conferences to deliberate on and develop short-term and long-term plans that would further strengthen the faith, mission, activities, and growth of the Diocese. The Planning Board's activities and accomplishments in 2009 include:

- Initiating and Posting periodic Bishop's Messages to the Diocese addressing several pertinent topics for the church.
- Initiated a Resource Mapping Initiative to identify human resources in various parishes throughout the diocese to carry forward future activities that are planned at a Diocesan level. To-date, we have identified the resources of over 900 individuals from over 27

parishes. The resource mapping is an ongoing activity and we are in the process of assembling an electronic database to facilitate easier access to the resources and to prepare reports when necessary.

- Initiated dialogue-sessions between the Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, and the youth of the New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Chicago areas, and the young families in the Philadelphia area, to promote a better understanding of the issues and concerns that the church needs to address
- Conducted a workshop on Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (FBNP) programs to learn of the federal funding opportunities to carryout neighborhood mission projects, and to understand the requirements and benefits of participating in FBNP programs

As reflected above, the year 2009 was a busy year for the Planning Board. The vision and insight of our Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, has been instrumental in motivating the Planning Board. Thanks to all the members of the Planning Board for their hard work under the leadership of its convener Dr. Mathew T. Thomas. A report of the Planning Board is included Attachment 11.

e. MISSION BOARD

In 2009, the Diocesan Mission Board was able to conduct various mission programs and activities to spread the Good News. In this report year, the Mission Board received leadership from our new Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius. With Theodosius Thirumeni's guidance and direction, the Mission Board was able to plan and conduct many mission programs and activities in Mexico Mission, Native American Mission, India Mission, and the neighbourhood missions of Campus Ministry, Prison Ministry, Medical Mission, and Mission Awareness to Parish. A team of dedicated and committed individuals, who work under the leadership of Mr. Ashley George the Mission Board Convener, carries out the work of the Mission Board. A complete report of the Mission Board is included Attachment 11.

f. PUBLICATION BOARD

The Publication Board was established in order to bring out study materials that would be helpful for the members of this Diocese to have an in-depth study on the doctrines, faith and practices of the church and also on Biblical and Theological Themes. Arrangements are being made for the publication of study booklets, on sacraments and related topics that will help the members of the Diocese to have a deeper understanding of the particular topics that are addressed in the booklets. A special thanks to Mr. Chacko Mathew, Diocesan Treasurer who also serves as the Publication Board convener.

g. DIOCESAN WEBSITE

Our Diocesan website includes Diocesan News, and is linked to our Sabha Website and many websites of the parishes within the Diocese. www.marthomanae.org has links to Diocesan circulars, programs, Lectionary etc. We thank the Website Manager Mr. Thomas Cherian of St. James Mar Thoma Church, New York for all his assistance in this regard.

h. FINANCE ADVISORY BOARD

The Finance Advisory Board guides us in all matters pertaining to long term and short term financial commitments by the Diocese. Our thanks to all members of the Board especially its convener Mr. Kuruvilla Cherian

i. ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Our journey of faith involves looking back into the past and thanking God for the great way in which He led us and moving forward in life by charting future course of action. The Archives committee is responsible for collecting materials that are landmarks in the history of the Diocese and the churches within the Diocese. We have created a poster-board dedicated to each church within this Diocese. Thanks to the members of the committee for their hard work under the leadership of its convener Rev. Mathew Varghese.

j. MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The main objective of the subcommittee is to make the events held on regional and diocesan level known to all through the media. Thanks to the all the members of the committee especially Mr. Gigi Tom, convener, for promoting all the activities held during this year and also giving good coverage and report of the events.

k. MAR THOMA VALEDICTORIAN AWARD

The Diocese honored the students who were selected by their respective schools to be Valedictorians of the graduating classes of 2009. This year Valedictorians were; Jisha R. Thomas of the Long Island Mar Thoma Church, Paul George of St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church (NY), Sara A. Varghese of the South Florida Mar Thoma Church, Edwin David of the Detroit Mar Thoma Church, and Jeena Jacob of the Dallas Mar Thoma Church, Farmers Branch. All the students were honored by the presentation of the Mar Thoma Valedictorian Award by our Diocesan Episcopa during the 2009 Family Conference. We thank Mrs. Aswathi Mathew, Convener and the Valedictorian sub-committee for coordinating this event.

8. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

a) NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST, USA

The Mar Thoma Church is an active member of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) in the USA. Diocesan Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius, Diocesan Secretary, Rev. Vinoy Daniel, Diocesan Treasurer, Mr. Chacko Mathew, Ecumenical Relations Subcommittee Member, Dr. T. M. Thomas, and Diocesan Council Member, Mr. Ashley George, represented the Mar Thoma Church at the General Assembly of NCCC at Minneapolis, Minnesota from November 8-13, 2009. This year we were given a slot to display the activities of our Diocese in which we could present the Native American Mission project. The Assembly congratulated Theodosius Thirumeni on His Grace's 20th anniversary of Episcopacy.

b) CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Diocese is an active member of the Churches Together in England (CTE), and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). Parishes in the UK are supporting this cause.

c) CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

The Church applied for membership in Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). The assembly of CCC unanimously accepted our application and granted membership in CCC. Special thanks to Rev. Manoj Zachariah who represented the Diocese in the Assembly.

The Diocese has taken lead roles in organizing Ecumenical Federations on regional levels in different states within the U.S., U.K., and Canada. Our special thanks to Rev. Manoj Zachariah who serves as the convener of the Ecumenical Relations subcommittee.

9. DIOCESAN SUNDAY

The first Sunday of March is observed as the Diocesan Sunday and accordingly, March 5th 2009 was celebrated as the Diocesan Sunday. The theme was “*Christ and the Marginalized*”. A special order of worship was prepared to be used in all parishes on Sunday before the Holy Qurbana Service. Pulpit exchange for the clergy was arranged in most of the parishes to promote an awareness of the diversified activities, mission projects, and programs of the Diocese. We express our sincere thanks to all the vicars, Diocesan Council members, Assembly members, the Trustees, and all the parishioners for all their support and co-operation in the development of the Diocese. Funds were raised by the way of offertory and special collection.

10. MARAMON CONVENTION

A booth was set up at the convention site and it was a window for the people of the church to know and learn more about the overall activities of the Diocese. We express our sincere thanks to all who helped us in setting up the booth. The Diocese has a web site, www.mtconvention.com, exclusively for the Maramon convention, where the messages and songs were relayed every day. This year many people visited this website during Maramon Convention. We express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Thomas Cherian and Mr. Jinnu John for their contribution in developing and maintaining the web site. This year also Maramon CDs/cassettes were created and shipped to all our parishes prior to the convention. Our Diocesan Episcopa was one of the main speakers at the Convention. In connection with the celebration of his 60th birthday, a cake was cut on February 19, 2009 at Maramon in the presence of Achens and representatives from our Diocese.

11. GUESTS/ VISITORS

The Diocese was blessed with the visit and presence of our Thirumenis, Achens and people from various walks of life. Our Metropolitan, The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma visited our Diocesan Center in the month of May. The Diocesan Center, with the help of the Northeast Region Council members and the Youth Fellowship members arranged a BBQ party in honor of

our Metropolitan. The Metropolitan also conducted a Holy Qurbana service in the Long Island Mar Thoma Church.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus, Suffragan Metropolitan, and Rt. Rev. Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa administered Holy Qurbana and other sacraments. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Paulos spent one month in our Diocese and led various National Conferences of the Diocese. Thirumeni also visited many parishes, led Holy Qurbana services, and inspired people with challenging messages.

Very Rev. Abraham Samuel along with Kochamma visited the Diocese and gave leadership for the Diocesan Convention. Some of the Achens who visited the Diocese were The Very Rev. A.C. Kurian, Rev. Abraham Scariah, Rev.Saju C. Pappachan, and Rev. Mathew K. Punnoose.

Many other distinguished guests also visited our Diocese and Diocesan Center.

12. FINANCE

During the report year, \$2,672,863.66 was generated as revenue and \$2,131,168.27 as expenditure with an income over expenditure of \$541,695.39. We remember with gratitude all who contributed to the functioning of the Diocese in the midst of this economic crisis and recession.

13. CONCLUSION

This report captures in a nutshell the activities of the Diocese and its organizations. Let us ascribe all thanks and praise to our Lord who has equipped our Diocese with able leadership and dedicated members in all organizations. Our special thanks to our Diocesan Bishop, to all Achens, Council Members, Diocesan Assembly members, sub-committee members, all members of the Parishes and Congregations in the Diocese, for their participation, mutual encouragement, mutual concern, and prayerful support. As the Diocese of North America and Europe continues its journey of faith by the grace of God let us realize that we are called to be authentic persons in God's world holding on to the intrinsic values of life such as fellowship, accountability, and availability for God's work and moving out with a new vision and a clear yet flexible action plan that takes us 'beyond blind optimism to well-founded hope'.

“He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”
(Phil. 1:6).

Let us not forget that the best is yet to come.

For and on behalf of the Diocesan Council



Rev. Vinoy Daniel
Diocesan Secretary