

THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

The Mar Thoma Church

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BLESSINGS TO THE VICAR AND MEMBERS OF THE MAR THOMA PARISHES AND CONGREGATIONS IN EUROPE

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

One of the issues affecting everyone in Europe now is the refugee crisis emerging from the violence in Iraq and Syria. We have all seen heart-breaking images of the lifeless and abandoned body of young Aylan Kurdi lying alone on a beach in Turkey; this immediately draws our attention to the huge human tragedy of hundreds of thousands of people leaving their homelands and migrating to Europe for safety. Thousands of people continue to risk all, even their lives, to seek the safety for their children that we are thankfully free to live and enjoy on a daily basis.

We must now realise that the solution to this crisis is greater than for individual churches, religions, communities, or even states to address alone, and so a more universal, integrated and collaborative approach to make the best of limited human and material resources, must be sought. As a Church with its historical links with Syrian Christians and our people living now in the Middle East we should be mindful of our responsibilities. The Scripture is timeless in giving direction, and when the Lord God instructs His people to care for the widow, orphan, traveller and stranger (Deuteronomy 10:18 and Mathew 25: 35- 45) that was not meant exclusively for His immediate audience alone, but to the whole of humanity over time.

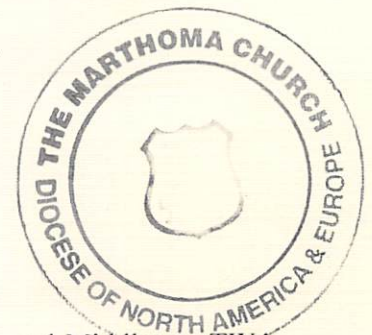
These challenging events remind us of the brokenness of our humanity, but as Christians we also recognise the ability of God to heal that brokenness. For that reason, we pray confidently for solutions in Syria and Iraq of those fleeing, the European countries that may extend whatever hospitality they can. I suggest dedicating one of the Sundays as a refugee Sunday and making a special collection and donating the money to a well-recognised charity through the COMPE*. I authorise the COMPE executive to do whatever is needed within the next four weeks to make it possible.

I want everyone to cooperate and contribute generously towards this. Please do not forget that we too have been immigrants and faced difficulties of all sort at one time. May God make you sensitive to their needs and help you to internalise their pain.

May God strengthen all of you to work with the spirit of thanksgiving and unity.

Your's in Christ Service

Geevarghese Mar Theodosius
Diocesan Episcopa



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