

**DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE**  
A write up for Diocesan Sunday - March 7, 2021

**Diocesan Episcopa**

Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos.

**Diocesan Council**

The Diocesan Council (with 18 members) takes leading role in implementing the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly.

**Parishes and Congregations:** 67 Parishes & 9 congregations in 7 Regions.

**Clergy:** 73 Clergy (retired 9; on Study 1)

**Youth Chaplains:** There are three Youth Chaplains in the Diocese.

**MAR THOMA MISSION BOARD**

The Mission programs of the Diocese are coordinated through the Mar Thoma Mission Board which is now a registered legal entity with 501(C)3 status. The Mission Board provides opportunity for the parishes to engage in Mission. The Mission Board has five projects.

**1. Light to Life**

Light to Life is a venture to support education and development of less privileged children. The project initiated by Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos in 2017 has acquired its momentum and is now supporting over 3400 children.

Holding up the motto of the Mar Thoma Church, 'Lighted to Lighten', the mission intends to shed light in the lives of children equipping them to transform their own communities and the world at large.

The project is designed to support education, provide nutritious food and sufficient clothing, create congenial environment for emotional, social and spiritual growth to these less privileged children.

Each project will have a project center where children will attend afterschool and holiday classes. The centers will be providing them a meal a day. The social workers will be visiting the houses interacting with the parents and provide proper interventions to create a fair environment for the children to focus on studies.

This support system will help the children grow and achieve their full potential and thereby break the vicious cycle of poverty, which will ultimately change the socio-economic situation of their community.

Implementation: The mission board is implementing this project in partnership with Church-related agencies reaching different states of India.

A child can be sponsored by donating \$20 a month (\$240 a year). Rev. Manoj Idiculla serves as the convener.

## **2. Mexico Mission:**

Mexico Mission is the work among the fisher people relocated as a Mar Thoma Community in Matamoros, a city in the northeastern Mexican state of Tamaulipas. The Mission was **established** in 2003 for the overall development and transformation of the fishermen community. The mission **focuses** on the areas of infrastructure & housing, education, food assistance, spiritual development, medical assistance, and economic development. **Holy Communion** using Mar Thoma liturgy in Spanish is conducted at the Colonia Mar Thoma chapel. Clergy from the region volunteer to lead the service.

**Manna:** The program focusses on the regular distribution of food and hygienic essentials to the families in need within Colonia Mar Thoma.

**Education:** For lower level, elementary education, a school is run at the Colonia Mar Thoma compound in conjunction with the local government. Tuition expenses, for students attending higher level elementary, middle school, and high school, are covered by the Mission.

**Mexico Mission VBS:** Due to Corona no VBS last year

**Outcome:** Through the education program, a number of Colonia Mar Thoma children completed their college education in the fields of Medicine, engineering, nursing, and IT. These individuals are securing jobs in the local communities and offer their voluntary service to the community there.

**Need:** Continued efforts are in progress such as appointing a full-time missionary with working knowledge in Spanish, improving transportation, proposal to building a new school, enhancing ongoing programs, building a hostel, etc.

The **project coordinator** Mr. P. T. Abraham visits the field regularly and interacts with the families. Rev. Abraham Varghese serves as the Missionary and Lynn Ann Keerikattu as the Convener.

## **2. Native American Mission**

Native American Mission now focusses on Native American communities in Oklahoma, Alabama and Navajo land providing them with spiritual resources and opportunities to nurture their faith.

The aim of the mission is to foster spiritual and holistic growth of the Native American communities and to provide our youths and families opportunity for direct involvement in mission.

Volunteers from various parts of the diocese respond to the great commission and engage in the Mission. This provides an opportunity for the youths and families to show God's love in action through direct involvement in the mission and be Christian witness.

Expansion: The Native American Mission subcommittee explored the possibility of opening up a new site in the Arizona / New Mexico area and by God's grace we could start our mission program in the Navajo land.

Everyone can participate in the mission by being a volunteer or donating scholarship for the children in the Mission field.

### **3. Neighborhood Mission**

Neighborhood mission coordinates the outreach activities focused on the parish neighborhoods. The mission encourages and coordinates the parishes of the diocese to work in collaboration with local churches, agencies and institutions to effectively respond to the local needs and witness Christ in the local Neighborhoods. The mission keep track of and publicizes the ministry the parishes do in their neighborhoods.

**Urban Mission Trip:** The Neighborhood Mission annually coordinates Urban Mission trip to foster the Mar Thoma Church's missional presence and impact at the local parish level, highlighting the need to view the local community as a vital mission field. Participants to this mission trip come from different parishes of the Diocese. Rev. Larry Varghese serves as the Convener.

### **Scholarships & Outreach Program**

As the diocese we could render guidance and support in getting the faith community connected through virtual worship service and other necessary information. The diocese also got involved in the mission during this pandemic by supporting the Navajo Mission for the Native Americans, and supporting 3400 Children through the Light to Life program in India.

We were able to support India during the Pandemic. The Diocesan Youth Fellowship and the Diocesan Yuvajana Sakhyam in accordance with the guidance from the state and local officials had organized initiatives through which they could reach out to the people who were in need in center and parish level.

Food provision kits were provided so that none of our 'Light to Life' children will be hungry during these days. The Diocese also partnered with the mission program of the Episcopal Church in Navajo Land and contributed to the purchase of cleaning supplies. We could also provide 100 water pumps to the Native Americans in Navajo Land so that they can afford to have clean drinking water. The Mission Board also provided education scholarship to 13 college students in Navajo, Alabama, and Oklahoma.

### **Mar Thoma Messenger:**

Mar Thoma Messenger is an official publication of the Diocese of North America and Europe and is published on a quarterly basis. This publication includes news items and covers various church-related programs pertaining to the local, regional, and diocesan levels. It enables the Mar Thoma community to read, reflect and discuss various articles and news items. Mar Thoma

Messenger includes messages from the Metropolitan, the Diocesan Episcopa, other bishops, Bible studies, theme-based articles, contemporary Christian articles, parish reports, organizational activities, Bible crossword puzzles, etc. Subscription \$35 for three years.

### **Organizations of The Diocese**

All the organizations of our Church function effectively within the Diocese to further the mission of the church. a). Sunday School; b). Youth Fellowship; c). Yuvajana Sakhyam; d). Young Family Fellowship; e). Voluntary Evangelists Association (MTVEA); f). Sevika Sangham; g). Choir h). Senior Fellowship

### **Carmel Mar Thoma Center, Atlanta**

The Carmel Mar Thoma Center, Atlanta is a God given property for the furtherance of God's Mission, a dream fulfilled by the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church. This facility will add to the mission advancement of the Diocese and will be an expansion of church's commitment to the wellbeing of the wider community. This center will focus on family enrichment programs, retreats, conference and a mission satellite center benefitting the Mar Thoma Community as well as the local community.

### **Diocesan Sunday**

Diocesan Sunday is a time to thank God for the manifold blessings He has showered upon our Diocese in its growth and development. This is also a time to pray for our Diocese, leaders, clergy and laity. Clergy pulpit exchange is arranged in most of the parishes to promote an awareness of the various activities, mission projects and programs of the Diocese. A special order of worship is sent to all parishes.

### ***"Mar Thoma Institute on Mission and Culture" – 'A project in honor of Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos' 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday'***

As a part of the 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos, the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Church, decided to start a study program at Carmel Mar Thoma Center titled:

### ***"Mar Thoma Institute on Mission and Culture" – 'A project in honor of Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos' 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday',***

An institute emphasizing various mission initiatives in the context of North America and understanding the cultural diversities for promoting harmonious living. This program will be in collaboration with nearby Seminaries and Universities for benefiting the wider community including international students.

**Rev. Aju Abraham**  
Diocesan Secretary

**Mr. George Babu P**  
Diocesan Treasure