



May - June 2022

Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar

# इपुविशेश पत्रिका

A PUBLICATION OF MUMBAI DIOCESEAN MISSION

## *Letter from the Diocesan Bishop*

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

I am glad that the Mumbai Diocesan Mission is restarting the publication of the 'Suvishesha Patrika' after a gap of some years. I am sure it will help the faith community to get a better understanding of the blessed ministry being carried out in our Mission Fields. The Mumbai Diocese is known as the Missionary Diocese of the Mar Thoma Church. When we combine it with the great vision of our forefathers that every Marthomite is an evangelist, we know that each one of us has a role to play in God's mission.



Emil Brunner in his book 'The Word and the World' says, "The Church exists by mission just as fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church." Mission is not just an activity of the Church but it is a vital element of our being as people of God. Years ago, when our parents and grandparents migrated from their homes to new places God answered their prayers and made their hard work fruitful. Today, we who are blessed immensely to call all the different places which form the Mumbai Diocese 'Home', have a God given responsibility towards the people of these lands.

It must be our mission to share the love of Jesus Christ and to help them in leading wholistic lives.

I praise God for the commitment of our Missionary Aghens, Mission Coordinators and Evangelists who work in challenging circumstances in the rural areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat. As stewards let us join hands with them by sharing our God-given time, talents and resources for the kingdom of God.

I extend my best wishes to the editorial board of the Suvishesha Patrika for the new venture.

May God bless us in Mission.

With Prayers

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Suffragan Metropolitan



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of the conference

## Letter from the Diocesan Missionary/ Diocesan Secretary



Dearly Beloved in Christ,  
Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

After a brief gap, we are resuming the 'Suvishesha Pathrika' again to carry the news, developments and testimonies in the mission fields. I am happy to inform that our

mission activities are well coordinated and our Missionary Achens, Mission Coordinators and Evangelists are discharging their responsibilities faithfully and powerfully. This is giving a momentum in all our evangelistic endeavours.

We, as a team, visited Vidarbha-Gadchiroli and Chandrapur-Amravati region from June 25-28, 2022. Apart from Mr. V. P. Simon (Diocesan Treasurer), we had representation from Thane Mar Thoma Church and St. Stephens Mar Thoma Church, Marol. Rev. Nitin John Chacko (Diocesan Mission Coordinator) and Rev. Robin Raj (Vicar - St. Stephens Mar Thoma Church, Marol) were also part of the team. It was a rewarding and enriching experience. We could see the spiritual enthusiasm and vigour of our believers in various mission fields. The Missionaries are striving to do their best in reaching out to so many additional villages in and around our mission fields. Rev. Christy V. Varughese and Rev. Jobin John are providing very good leadership in coordinating and extending the mission activities. I thank God for their commitment and hospitality.

We could visit the land at Katli in Gadchiroli. The Diocese has purchased 2.77 acres of land and this land has to be developed at the earliest as the centre of all our mission projects in that region. The Diocese is grateful to Thane Mar Thoma Church and St. Stephens Mar Thoma Church, Marol for sponsoring the chapel and mission house respectively. We need sponsors for building the boys' and girls' hostel in

that campus. A school, clinic and other community related projects can be conceived and developed in that land at a later stage. I hope and pray that this centre will be a beacon of light for the community at large.

We are planning to purchase a house and a property at Khardi for the Missionary Achen of Thane region. Once the Diocesan Assembly approves the decision of the Diocesan Council, we would be able to proceed in that direction.

We organized a family empowering program for our Evangelists and their families at Mar Chrysostom Ashram, Kamshet from 3-5 June, 2022. It was well attended and well organized. I appreciate the efforts of the Missionary Achens and Mission Coordinators in organizing such programs to empower and equip our evangelists, so that they will work and minister more effectively in the fields they are placed in.

I would like to thank all the sponsoring parishes for the contributions to our mission programs. There are also few individuals who are helping us out in our financial needs. We need to bring more volunteers and friends for the 'Friends of Mission' movement so that our mission programs will be a concerted effort by our people.

I hope and pray that this publication will bring in awareness to our people about our mission programs in different places. Please continue to uphold our Missionary Achens, Coordinators and Evangelists who are there in our mission fields and are facing lots of adverse situations. May God Bless You all!

Rev. Dr. John Joseph  
Diocesan Missionary/Diocesan Secretary  
02<sup>nd</sup> July, 2022

## Editor's Note

### Evangelists' Family Conference: In-person again!

Glad that we are resuming our *Suvishesha Patrika*. This issue is an Evangelists Family Conference special edition.

The 9th Evangelists' Family Conference of the Mumbai Diocesan Mission was held at the Mar Chrysostom Ashram, Kamshet from June 3-5, 2022 with prayerful guidance from Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Suffragan Metropolitan, Diocesan Bishop and the presence of Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Diocesan Secretary/Missionary.

This annual conference provides evangelists and their families an opportunity to come together to be nourished by a focused study of God's Word and family centric sessions at the Mar Chrysostom Ashram and Mar Thoma Camp Centre, Kamshet, in a setting that's relaxing and surrounded by acres of natural beauty.

While sessions for the adults were conducted in the course of the three days, VBS was simultaneously held for the children of the evangelists. Ensuring every member of the family was catered to.

The theme chosen for this year was देवाचे तेज (God's Radiance) – Hebrews 1:3. The main talks for the couples were led by Mr. Peter Luis (BYM) and the family sessions were coled by the husband-wife duo of Mrs. & Mr. Vijay Bansode. Interactive VBS sessions for the children were led by a team

of young friends from different parishes of our diocese. Children from age 4 to 15 were divided into different groups. 'God's radiance' was chosen as the theme for the VBS too. Messages were conveyed and children engaged through various means including singing, devotions, classes, craft, games and innovative outdoor activities. Volunteers shared how much they were touched by the warmth and enthusiasm of the children and by the whole experience.

This year 12 Bible trainees who completed the Evangelist Training Course at the Mar Chrysostom Centre for Mission & Development Studies were commissioned during the Evangelist Family Conference on June 3, 2022 to serve as Evangelists in the Mumbai Diocesan Mission. Rev. Dr. John Joseph, Rev. K. C. Chacko and all the missionary Achens provided leadership to the commissioning service.

From start to end, the conference was a blessing for the 32 Evangelists, their spouses and 34 children and all those who attended it.

- Rev. Allan T. Samuel





**House Dedication**

The Marathi Mar Thoma Congregations in Thane are slowly growing as sacramental communities. Many of the families are keen to understand and witness the traditions and symbols used in the Mar Thoma Church. For the first time two of the families from the Nandgaon congregation came forward and expressed their desire to have a dedication service for their newly constructed houses. The service was a blessing for the family and also served as a channel for

teaching.

**Christian faith and practices class**

The outbreak of Covid severely affected weekly worship services and other gatherings in all the fields. With as many as 45 seekers in the Thane region ready to declare their trust in the Lord Jesus in the presence of fellow believers, pre-Covid, classes to educate them on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and the practices of the church were organised at the earliest opportunity.

It was conducted at two places:

11th June 2022 - Mar Thoma Congregation, Nandgaon (Led by Evg. Janrao Idpachi, Mission Coordinator, Palghar Region)

12th June 2022 - St. Thomas Mar Thoma Congregation, Bhoiyachapada (Led by Rev. Allan T. Samuel, Regional Missionary)

**Vidarbha: Chandrapur-Amravati Region****Medical camp**

A medical camp was organized by Sathee Mahila kendra and Kothara Grampanchayat at Kothara village of Mar Thoma congregation Parathwada on 30th March, 2022. Doctors specialized in Gynecology, Pediatrics, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Orthopedic lead the camp. One hundred and twenty villagers including believers of congregation were benefited by the programme. Mar Thoma Church, Chembur supported the Medical camp. Youths Mar Thoma Church Chembur and Congregation were the volunteers of the camp.

**Tailoring class**

Three months tailoring class under Sathee Mahila kendra was inaugurated by Rev. Dr. John George on 29th March 2022 at the house of evangelist of Mar Thoma congregation, Parathwada. Five students of the congregation joined the class. Thanks to the support rendered from vicar and members of Mar Thoma Church, Chembur.

**Bible Trainee**

Mr. Dipak Sukhdeo Dhurve has completed one year bible training at Mar Chrysostom centre for mission and development studies Kamshet.

**VBS**

VBS was organized at every mission stations of Vidarbha region CD-AMT during summer vacation, Evangelists from different mission lead the sessions. 150 students of different Sunday school attended the sessions.

**Gujarat Region****New mission field addition: Murdad and Sherpada**

Evangelists Yeshwantbhai Mahla and Motirambhai Chauhan are ministering in two new mission fields in Valsad region.

The ministry in Murdad presently caters to 12 believers who are formal members of the faith community and over 38 believing families. Sherpada has 8 believers who formally joined the local fellowship and over 17 believing families in attendance. Regular Sunday worship, fasting prayer, believers' retreats, outreach programs and other spiritual activities are conducted to strengthen the community and disciple them in the Christian faith.

**Palghar Region****Tailoring classes**

Mrs. Sulochana, wife of Evg. Janrao Idpachi, Jawahar, is conducting tailoring classes for villagers in Jawahar. Five candidates were trained last year. This year 10 candidates have enrolled so far. Three new sewing machines were given to the learners with the support of the Santacruz parish.

**Vidarbha Mission - Gadchiroli Region****A new start:**

Praise God for fifty-three persons from the fields of Bhejgaon and Bothli who put their faith in the Lord Jesus were added to the faith community in the presence of fellow believers at a service held in the worship place of the Bhejgaon Mar Thoma congregation on January 1, 2022.

**House Dedication:**

The new homes of Mangala Tai and Jalindra Shamrao Lengure, Yesgaon, were dedicated on May 1 and May 22, 2022 respectively. The faith of the believers is commendable. Evangelist Devanand Kulmethe spoke from Luke 19:1-10 on the occasion. About 40 persons participated in the dedication service.

**Pune-Raigad Region****Health camp at Khalapur**

St. John's Mar Thoma Church, Mira Road in collaboration with Switch India, Mumbai conducted a General Health Check-up Camp at Savroli Village (Khalapur Mission) on 9th April, 2022. The camp was helpful for more than 60 people.

Praise be to God for the volunteers, Vicar Rev. K. C. Santosh, members of St. John's MTC, Mira Road and all the physicians for their support and efforts.



## Vidarbha Mission - Gadchiroli Region

"My name is Yogita Botkarwar. I am fifty years old. I am a member of Mar Thoma Mission, Bothli. For many years I was troubled by stomach pain. A few months back it was found to be a stomach tumour. A surgery to remove the tumour was suggested. But I had no money and was afraid of death. The believers at Bothli prayed and encouraged me. Eventually, I handed everything over to the Lord and went to the government hospital at Brahmapuri. A tumour weighing 3kg was removed from my stomach. By God's grace everything went well and I didn't have to pay any money there. I thank God for everything. By His grace I am now resting at home and was also able to participate in the Lord's Supper on Hosanna Sunday. I request you to continue praying for me. Thank you."

- Yogita Botkarwar, Bothli

## Palghar Region

Mr. Shankar Mahale and his wife Mrs.

Vimal come from a sweeper background. Last year, God changed his life from within. Shankar has been sharing the gospel among non-believers ever since. His commitment to serving the Lord manifests itself in different ways.

He has brought five families to the church. He contributed a big amount towards the Christmas program despite being new to the faith and being a person of moderate means.

# Up Close & Personal

## Memories and learnings - my first evangelist camp 2022

Over the years, I have been to many conferences, camps and retreats, however, the evangelist camp was different and the most enriching experience till date.

It was two and a half days of power packed non-stop activities starting at 7 am and ending late at night with energy levels intact. I felt young again. I caught a glimpse of the conviction of the evangelists and their faith in Jesus Christ. Their mission and vision to win souls for the Lord amazed me. Though not born into the same faith community, they were clear about whom they now served. It was in complete sync with the theme for the study of the senior class – Saul's conversion on the way to Damascus – Acts 9:1-19.

As a first-time teacher at the camp, I would like to share my takeaway, learnings and first-hand experience:

We were three teachers for the Senior class with just four students in the age group of 14-15 years (owing to some last minute drop outs). Though a bit anxious to start with, by God's grace, we were able to make the main theme and study engaging over three days, and connect with them individually.

Activities that were planned really helped them to get involved and served as an ice-breaker and made the sessions more relevant to them.

Common singing sessions were held for all age groups. All who led the singing sessions made it very lively and ensured complete participation not just from all the children, but volunteers and teachers too.

There was clockwork precision and harmony among the teachers in conducting the classes and maintaining discipline throughout these sessions. I experienced fellowship in the true sense.

In our conversations during common sessions and meal times, I was able to understand a bit about their mission fields. My professional challenges seemed nothing compared to what they faced almost every day.

The evangelists and their families came across as very simple people, warm and affectionate, ready to learn more; interacting with enthusiasm. Their company touched me a lot.

The Talent Night on the 4th of June was one of the camp's highlights. I experienced for the first time a Qa-

wwali being sung in worship of the Lord.

The preparation, and attire chosen for each act of the talent night was done with great sincerity. I could clearly see how they used their abilities for glorifying their Lord Almighty.

One of the skits that really touched me during the talent night was a real-life story of a petty thief whose life transformed after hearing the Gospel from our evangelists.

I always shy away from dancing, but I could not hold back at the end of our session on the last day. I jumped into the ring and, shedding all my inhibitions, danced joyfully.

I carried back home three observations from the camp: everyone was treated equal with no hierarchies; energy levels and enthusiasm were different from what was seen in other camps; and a deep sense of God's presence and guidance and the Master's leading was felt each day of the camp.

God willing, I would love to be a part of the next Evangelist Family camp in 2023.

Aji Joseph  
Volunteer,  
Evangelist Family Camp 2022

Please send your donations through cheque or demand draft in favour of 'Mumbai Diocese' to:

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