

# THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

## The Mar Thoma Church

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### ***BLESSINGS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE.***

**Dearly Beloved in Christ,**

As you may know, April is National Autism Awareness Month, and the aim during this month is to raise awareness regarding autism and Asperger's syndrome. Autism is a complex brain disorder that often inhibits a person's ability to communicate, to respond to surroundings, and to form relationships with others. As autism exists on a wide-ranging spectrum, it manifests itself in different ways in each individual and affects families in a variety of ways.

As members of the church, we need to be aware of the various challenges that many people are facing. We should be educated about autism and other associated disorders to be able to respond to such needs in loving and meaningful ways. Thus, it is our responsibility to provide necessary support to families who have children with autism and to enable them to feel welcomed and included in the life and ministry of the church. Parishes are encouraged to provide awareness regarding autism and to identify those affected by autism and other related challenges. Special prayer fellowships for such families can be arranged in order to provide spiritual nurturing and opportunities for sharing common experiences.

Let us ensure that our churches are indeed places where all people are included and are incorporated into the worship life and the witness of the church. May God enable all our churches to be caring communities that provide support to those with diverse needs.

**Yours in His Ministry,**

**Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos**  
**Diocesan Episcopa**

