

ORIENTAL CHURCHES AN INTRODUCTION



Chinese Cross, dated 781
Xi'an

from: Moule Christians in China before the year 1550. p.26p

ORIENTAL CHURCHES AN INTRODUCTION

DR. XAVIER KOODAPUZHA



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ORIENTAL CHURCHES - AN INTRODUCTION
REV. DR. XAVIER KOODAPUZHA

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PREFACE

I am very happy to present this work to the public especially to my students of different theological Faculties, seminaries and training centres. The Oriental world still remains a mystery to many! It is true not only regarding the nations but also the Churches. The Catholic Church which is the communion of Churches consists of the Churches of Eastern and Western traditions. These Churches are deeply united, but each one is different from the others. Its catholicity is the unity in diversity.

Unfortunately because of the various vicissitudes of history unity was viewed as uniformity and there had been struggles to conform the Churches to the practices of the more powerful ones! Unity was identified with uniformity. Such an attitude which prevailed in the policy of certain Churches has caused immense harm to the unity and catholicity of the Church of God. For many the Catholic Church is identified with the Church of the western tradition.

Students of history are well aware of the structural evolution which has been taking place during the course of centuries. The early, medieval and modern ages have contributed their share in this process. But the Church of God cannot and should not be allowed to identify itself with the kingdoms of this world.

This book is a modest attempt to present the Eastern ecclesiastical world to the attention of the readers. It starts with a brief historical survey in which the evolution which has taken place in the Graeco-Roman world is brought into focus. It is followed by a brief commentary of the Decree on the Oriental Churches of Vatican II. It is indeed a great achievement that the Council has rediscovered the true nature of the Church as the communion of Churches and has given clear guidelines to preserve the rich heritage of the Eastern Churches and to foster the catholicity of the Church. The third chapter is a general survey of the Eastern Churches on the basis of their liturgical families. In the fourth and final chapter some theological reflections are made showing their relevance especially in the Indian context.

I am specially grateful to Prof. Dr. Matthew Vellanickal, the first President of the Paurastya Vidyapitham, who has been kind to enrich this book with a scholarly introduction. His contribution to the building up of Paurastya Vidyapitham as a centre of Eastern studies will be remembered by the future generations. He had to give leadership to the Faculty in a context when the Oriental heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church was not properly understood or appreciated by a considerable section of its leadership. I am indebted to Prof. Ronald G. Roberson for the latest statistical data of the Eastern Churches published in his book *The Eastern Christian Churches*, 5th edition, Rome, 1995. My sincere thanks to my co-workers and students for their cooperation and the Wigi Printers for its printing.

January 6, 1996

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INTRODUCTION

The present Holy Father John Paul II has been repeatedly reminding the Christian world on the urgency to "learn to breathe again with its two lungs, its Eastern one and its Western one". The Congregation for Catholic Education has given explicit directives to the seminaries and Theological Faculties to pay special attention to the heritage of the Eastern Churches which is an integral part of the Christian heritage. As we are drawing near to the dawn of the third millennium we have to accept the above mentioned directives of the Holy Father and the Congregation for Catholic Education as clarion calls not to narrow down our ecclesial vision and Christian heritage to the borders of the western world!

Because of the various vicissitudes of history the Western Church assumed a specific structure of its own and was identified with the Christendom which developed in the West. The separation between the East and West paved the way for both sides developing a kind of isolated ecclesiastical organizational and administrative set up. The structures developed in different directions without taking into account the universal Christian heritage enshrined in the venerable traditions of the Eastern and Western Churches. As a result of this isolated existence the catholicity of the Church was to a certain extent misunderstood and misrepresented. Hence, Vatican II, which was convened for renewal and reconciliation of the of Churches, taught:

Therefore, the sacred Synod urges all, but especially those who plan to devote themselves to the work of restoring the full communion that is desired between the Eastern Churches and the Catholic Church, to give due consideration to these special aspects of the origin and growth of the Churches of the East, and to the character of the relations which obtained between them and the Roman See before the separation, and form for themselves a correct evaluation of these facts (UR14).

Ignorance of the Eastern heritage is extremely harmful to the catholicity of the Church. The pastors have to be properly initiated into the entire heritage of the Church which includes the Eastern and Western sources. Hence the Congregation for Catholic Education gives the following direction to the Seminaries, Faculties and centres of formation:

In seminaries and theological faculties, courses should be made available to the students on the fundamental notions regarding the Eastern Churches, their theological ideas, their liturgical and spiritual traditions. In all seminaries, in accordance with *Optatam Totius* n.16, which first establishes that Biblical studies should have pride of place, there must be a full and proper knowledge of the Fathers of the Church, both East and West. The great theological heritage of the East should feature as a substantial part of all the tracts which it has particularly nourished and shaped, in order both to enrich the studies of the students of the Latin Rite and to promote a better appreciation of the Oriental Churches.

(Circular Letter of the Congregation for Catholic Education Concerning Studies of the Oriental Churches, dated January 6, 1987, n. 10)

The recent Apostolic Letter "*Orientalis Lumen*" of May 2, 1995, also invites the Catholic world to study the Eastern heritage and enrich the catholicity of the Church.

The mind of the Catholic Church is quite evident in the papal documents and the various directives given by the Holy See. It has to be brought to the attention of the whole Church. The documents remain dead until they are analyzed and popularized. In this context I do appreciate the services of the author of this book who has been taking pains to bring to the attention of his students and the public the importance and relevance of the heritage of the Eastern Churches. As one who was privileged to be in Rome before and during the Vatican Council II and closely associated with it, Fr.Xavier Koodapuzha has been popularizing

the teaching of Vatican II among his students in the different seminaries and Theological Faculties in and outside Kerala. His contribution in this field is unique and worthy of deep appreciation.

This book "*Oriental Churches An Introduction*", I hope, will be a very useful work which introduces the Eastern world to the readers. The author provides many useful data of the Eastern Churches and makes his assessment of the problems in their proper historical perspective. I am sure that students of history, ecumenism and ecclesiology will appreciate the great effort he has made in explaining the background of the Eastern Churches with the necessary historical data. I congratulate Prof. Dr. Xavier Koodapuzha for publishing a book of this sort which is quite timely and hope that it will be properly made use of by all those who desire to have an adequate understanding of the Eastern Churches in its proper catholic perspective.

January 6, 1996

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A study on the Eastern Churches should necessarily be preceded by a brief survey of the general historical evolution of the Church as a whole. The image of the Church of the second millennium is quite different from its image in the first millennium. Similarly its image in the first four centuries as a persecuted religion differs considerably from the one in which it appeared as the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Eastern Churches did not follow the same pattern of evolution as in the West. Similarly the Churches outside the Graeco-Roman world where they had never become the official religion developed in an entirely different milieu. The Eastern Churches which represent all these categories offer us the multidimensional aspects of the Christian world. This historical survey is of special importance during this post-Vatican II Conciliar period where an earnest and honest approach to the early Christian heritage is evident.

A general classification of the Churches into Eastern and Western will not do justice to the reality. In the West the notion of the Christendom developed under the religious and political leadership of the papacy. A kind of uniform pattern either spread or was even enforced in the West. But in the East the socio-politico-religious reality was quite different. The ecclesiastical organization developed in different centres. The forms of worship, theological traditions, administrative set up and disciplinary systems varied among the Churches. Even among the Eastern Churches those of the Syriac tradition which may be called the Syriac Orient with their close link with and roots in the biblical world in many respects emerged differently from the Churches which developed either in the Latin or Greek world. On the other hand the Church in India which had its origin and development in a different socio-cultural context outside the Latin and Greek world with close alliance with the Syriac Orient opens up another dimension of the early Christian heritage.

I. CONTEXT

As we are drawing near to the dawn of the third millennium our thoughts are centred on the emerging bright rays of hope of a new era which is about to commence. It is a period of deep reflection, assessment and proper planning. In this process the Church has a unique role to play as it exists to prepare the way for the reign of God on this universe. The experience from the history of the last two millennia, illumined by the light of the gospel, has rightly led the Vatican II to call the Church the New Israel. The Church has got much to learn and teach from its history before entering on the third millennium.

This introductory chapter in its first part is a brief analysis of the nature of the *diakonia* in the Church and focuses on its structural, canonical and theological evolution in the Graeco-Roman world. In its second part it presents the ecclesiastical set up of the Church of the Thomas Christians which developed in India, outside the Graeco-Roman world. The venerable traditions which existed in the Indian Church are helpful to understand and appreciate the legitimate diversity which existed in an entirely different socio-political-cultural milieu. The imposition of the Western system over the Eastern Christianity in India unveils the contrast between the two ecclesiastical worlds, Eastern and Western.

It is a fact of history that the success and failures of every society largely depend on the quality of its leadership. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has spent much of the time of his public ministry for training those whom he had chosen for giving leadership to his followers. He was imparting an effective training to them by pointing out the uniqueness of the Kingdom of God and their specific role in realizing it on earth. It was radically different from every kind of earthly kingdom. Lucien Legrand calls it a Divine Revolution and puts it as follows:

Jesus spelled it out in a more concrete manner by calling to question the basic standards of his contemporaries. In the Kingdom the lowly are exalted and the mighty brought down (Lk 1:5); the poor and the children are those who matter; the first are the last and the last first (Mk 10:31); the greatest becomes last and the servant of all (Mk 10:43-44); dignity is in serving and not in being served (Mk 10:45); anxiety

for self realization is death and gift of self is life (Mk 8:35); joy is in giving rather than in receiving (Acts 20:35); and all this is summarized and fulfilled in the Cross, the sign of the radical *teshubah* in which he who was in the form of God humbled himself, and died the death of a slave, turning death into life and shame into glory (Phil 2:6-9; Jn 17:5).¹

The recent National Consultation on Evangelization held under the auspices of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, (January 4-9, 1994) at Pune concludes as follows:

Bishops and priests should see their role as pastors and leaders. In this context, imperial titles such as "Excellency", "Eminence", "Grace", "Lord", etc. be dropped.²

Ecclesiologists and historians observe that during the course of centuries the idea of Christian authority has come under many unhealthy influences. The problem at present does not seem to be a question of denial of the authority which Jesus Christ wanted to be exercised in His Church.³

The following observation of Edmund Hill seems to be relevant in this context.

The present crisis takes none of these forms; authority is being neither claimed nor denied, but its nature and the manner of its exercise are being critically examined. It has perhaps

1. L. Legrand, "Jesus and the Gospel", in *Good News and Witness* TPI Bangalore 1973, p.22.
2. *Paths of Mission in India* Today, Resolution No. 47, Statement of the National Consultation on Mission 4-9 January, Pune, 1994, p.19.
3. Some of the recent literature on this subject: John M. Todd, (ed) *Problems of Authority*, London, 1964; John Dalrymple and others, *Authority in a Changing Church*, London, 1966; The following book indirectly deals with the problems of authority in the light of obedience: Karl Rahner and others, *Obedience and the Church*, London, 1968; Robert Markus and EJohn, *Papacy and Hierarchy*, London, 1969; Edmund Hill, "Authority in the Church" in the *Clergy Review* 1965, pp. 619-629 and "Development of Institutions", *ibid* pp. 674-685; Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, London, 1964; Hans Kung historically and critically analyses the nature meaning and function of authority in the Church in the following works: *The Structures of the Church*, London, 1965; *The Church*, London, 1967; Peter Hebelwaite, 'Towards a Church of Service' in *The Way*, Oct. 1966, pp.275-283; Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry* transl. by John Bowden SCM Press Ltd, London, 1984.

been too long taken for granted by Catholics that authority is a clear and distinct idea.⁴

Pope Paul VI reminded the bishops of Italy about the unhealthy situation and the attitude of the people towards the style of episcopal authority:

"What is to be the style of such (episcopal) authority?... It is clear, for example, that in a former day, especially when pastoral authority was associated with secular authority (the staff and sword in the same hand), the characteristics of a bishop were overlordship, external pomp, dignity, at times privilege, arbitrariness, and sumptuousness. In earlier times, these traits did not give scandal; the people liked to see in their bishop a figure of greatness, power, pomp, and majesty. Today it is not and cannot be so. Far from admiring, people are disagreeably surprised and scandalized if a bishop is excessively preoccupied with anachronistic marks of his office, and they remind him of the gospel... But let us thank God that we have put aside so many worldly externals".⁵

The lasting influence of the outdated and anachronistic elements borrowed from the Western medieval feudalism continues to disfigure the authentic leadership in the Church: J.N.M. Wijngaards observes:

"Church history confirms the influence of secular kingship ideas on ruling in the Church. Historians tell us that a bishop fully attired at Holy Mass in the traditional way reveals a presentation of princely splendour derived from the early middle ages. The bishop sits on a "throne". He wears a mitre and holds a ruler's staff. Over his head a "coat of arms" proclaims his right to dignity. He is addressed with "My Lord", "Your Grace" or "Your Excellency" graded titulature borrowed from feudalistic society. People genuflect and kiss his ring in imitation of ancient European homage to royalty. Through the Vatican Council and later injunctions from Rome, such display of secular majesty is now being discouraged. The fact remains that such in the exercise of episcopal power derives from secular sources".⁶

4. Edmund Hill, "Authority in the Church", in *Clergy Review*, London, 1966, pp. 619-628.

5. AAS 58, (1966), pp. 68-69.

6. J.N.Wijngaards, *Christ's idea of authority*, Hyderabad, 1975.

The assessments from the Eastern countries with their profound religious and cultural heritage also deserve our special attention. Mahatma Gandhi the Father of the modern India as a nation who had very close contact with the Churches and missionaries made the following observation:

I consider Western Christianity in its practical working a negation of Christ's Christianity.⁷

S. Radhakrishnan, a great scholar and philosopher and late President of India after making a detailed study of Christianity made the following observation:

There is nothing in common between the simple truths taught by Jesus and the Church militant with its hierarchic constitution and external tests of membership, but the change was inevitable when Christianity went to Rome and took on her the traditions of Caesar. When the Greek dialecticians and Roman lawyers succeeded the Jewish divines and the prophets, Christian theology became logical in form and based on law. This spirit was the Jew's but the letter or the dogma was the Greek's, and the policy and the organization were the Romans,.... Roman ideas and institutions influenced the ecclesiastical organization.⁸

M.D. David in his study on the nature of the Christianity in Asia makes the following observation:

"Three of the six major European powers that colonized Asia viz. Portugal, Spain, France were Catholic while the other three viz. Holland, Britain and America were Protestants. Portugal and Spain, the pioneers in geographical discoveries, were granted privileges of patronage (padroado) by the Holy See to evangelize and establish missions and to appoint the clergy and set up Christian congregations. The padroado rights ensured to them exclusive dominion over the Eastern territories; other nations being excluded from sharing their economic gain. Thus commerce and Christianity became inseparable part of Portuguese and Spanish colonial effort".

7. Cited from Young India, September 22, 1921, in A.I. Hingorani, *The Message of Jesus Christ*, pp.33-34; M.K. Kuriakose, Compiler, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, CLS Madras, 1982, p.323.

8. S.Radhakrishnan, *East and West in Religion*, p. 57, Cited from M.K. Kuriakose, op. cit. p. 357.

It was European brand of Christianity that came to Asia with the colonial powers. Christianity, though Asiatic in its origin, underwent transformation as it absorbed Graeco-Roman culture and made Europe its new home during the decline of the Roman Empire. It became completely Europeanized in its structure and contents and even took over some of the functions of the Roman Empire.⁹

Context of vatican II

The prophetic words of Pope John XXIII of happy memory who took the decisive step to convene an ecumenical Council for the renewal and reconciliation of the Churches are profoundly thought provoking. The Pope stated that the Council was convened "*to shake off the dust of the Empire that has gathered on the throne of St. Peter from the time of Constantine*".¹⁰ He firmly believed that the best means for the reconciliation of the Churches is genuine renewal. The date he chose to announce to the Christian world the good news of convening the Council was 25th January 1959, the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and the concluding day of the Church Unity Octave. What is that dust which has diminished the lustre of the Church and especially its leadership? During the reign of the Roman Emperor constantine the Church was granted freedom. The persecuted Church gradually became the official religion of the Empire. This privileged position paved the way for adopting the secular system of administration following the parallel civil pattern. At present a genuine renewal and reconciliation depend on our ability to rediscover the true nature of the Church and the authentic role of its leadership.

II. CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF DIAKONIA

The Christian concept of authority has no secular parallel. There are instances where the Apostles revealed their ambition for power and prestige. For them the Messiah was a glorious king who would liberate the Chosen people from a foreign yoke and establish a

9. M.D. David (ed). "The Nature of Western Colonialism- A Handicap to the Growth of Christianity in Asia" in *Western Colonialism in Asia and Chirstianity*, Himalaya Publishing House, Delhi, Bombay, Ngpur, 1988, p.1

10. Yves Congar, *The Power and Poverty in the Church*, transl by Jennifer Nicholson, London, 1965, p.127.

triumphant kingdom of their own. The request of the sons of Zebedee together with their mother provides a typical example of the aspiration of the people of the time for power and recognition in the new kingdom in the Davidic line. The evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke narrate this incident (Mt 20:20-28; Mk 10:35-45; Lk 22:24-27). To their request for privileged positions Our Lord gives the answer:

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:25-28).

It is clear that the ministry which Christ entrusted is not of the civil pattern. It has no secular parallel. Before Pilate, Christ asserted that His authority is not of a worldly kind. "My kingship is not of this world" (Jn 18:36). The pagan rulers governed their subjects exercising their power over them.

Christ put himself forward as the model. The self-effacing image manifested at Bethlehem reached its peak on the altar of Calvary. This is the model he prescribed to those who are appointed to lead his followers. The Evangelist's statement that he went about doing good reveals his disposition and attitude to others.

The manner in which the leaders should exercise their authority among the disciples is shown by the Divine Master Himself:

Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly I say to you a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them(Jn 13:12-17).

It is evident that the Church cannot and should not search for any secular parallel in the exercise of its authority. If it fails here it loses its right to be called specifically Christian.

In the first Letter of Peter, the author is well aware of the wild instinct buried deep in human beings to bring others under them. Such an instinct should never prevail in the community of the followers of Him who gave himself up for others. The reward is promised to those who follow the path of the crucified Lord. He advises the co-elders to be on their guard against the temptation for power, prestige, and privileges. He wrote:

Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but by being examples to the flock (1Pet 5:2-3).

The example set by the leaders speaks more eloquently and demands greater commitment to God and His People.

Servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God

St. Paul calls himself and his collaborators "stewards of the mysteries of God":

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy (1cor.4:1-2).

First of all the stewards are not masters. They have no ownership of authority. As they do not possess it they only administer it in the name of the master who has appointed them to be at his service ¹¹.

The conferment of stewardship does not guarantee that all the steward's actions will be acceptable to and approved by the master. The ministerial actions cannot claim absolute identification

11. Yves Congar, "The Historical Development of Authority" in *The Problems of Authority*, ed. by Jophn M. Todd, London, 1964 p.122. The author analyses the ministerial role of authority: "We possess nothing; there is only one *dominus* the Lord, who established the various offices, distributing his gifts to each one individually according to his will (I Cor 12, 4-7). Hence there cannot be any *dominatio*, any possession, any spirit of possessiveness. Hence the law of the Christian life is that we should consider ourselves as stewards of God; gifts which are for the good of all; "as every man has received grace ministering the same one to another; as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Pet 4:10; cfr. Gal, 5:13; Rom 15:14; I Cor 9:19-23; 2 Cor. 1:4:5:5, Col.3:16; 1 Thess. 3:16; Hebr. 3:13; 10:24-25).

with that of the master. It is the duty of the steward to take the maximum care that the Lordship of the master is always upheld. In the Church the ministers are "stewards of the mysteries of God." They do not possess any authority, but they are approved to administer as directed by the Divine Master. Their stewardship is from God. Hence God is the only owner of authority. The ministers are called to uphold the Divine Lordship and to be at its service.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy
Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded
you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age
(Mt 28:18-20).

Secondly, the steward should know that he is authorized to administer the affairs only according to the will of his master. He has no authorization to act against the will and interests of his lord. If he does so he abuses his stewardship and acts against his own stewardship. The will of the master is the standard setting the criteria of his stewardship. In the Church there is no other Lord other than Jesus Christ. There is only one *Kyrios*. The authenticity of the stewardship is in proportion to the fidelity to His will. The mission of the Church consists in accepting fully the exclusive Lordship of Jesus Christ and fulfilling his command. Paul writes to Titus about the qualities of a good steward (Titus 1:7-9). There is no authority in the Church which is not dependent on its Divine Master. As Christ's stewards they have to act faithfully by authenticating constantly their stewardship. No power on earth can grant dispensation from this divine command. The authenticity of all the ministries in the Church is measured by the standards set by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, the authority given by Christ is for the service of the People of God¹². Service is not for oneself. Stewards are appointed to serve the master and his people. When the steward fails to serve them he betrays his office, becomes unfaithful and disqualifies himself to continue in his office as a steward. In the Church the stewards are appointed to serve the People of God. The stewards of Christ are genuine to the extent they are at the service of God and of God's people. On the contrary if the stewards of Christ try to act for their own advantage exploiting the People of God

12. St. Augustine used to remind his flock: vobis sum episcopus, vobiscum christianus, Sermo, 340, I (P.L. 38, 1483) cfr. also sermo 56, II, 135, 7).

they lose their claim over them. Jesus Christ came to serve and not to be served and to give himself as a ransom for many. The stewards are appointed to continue the service. Hence in the Church the stewards are called ministers. The title '*servus servorum Dei*' is the most and best expressive qualification of the ministers in the Church. As stewards they are dispensers of the new economy of salvation and messengers of the word of God. They are appointed for others "*ex hominibus assumptus et pro hominibus constituitur*".

Fourthly, the authenticity of a steward depends on his loyalty and fidelity to the master. In the secular field the masters may be absent and normally leave the administration to stewards. The latter try to prove their fidelity to the master by doing the work as faithfully as they can in his absence. The master may come at any moment and blessed is the steward who is alert to his master's unexpected arrival. This alertness is the sign of the earnestness of the steward. But in contrast to this earthly stewardship, in the Church of Christ the master is never absent. In the Church the stewards can never escape from the notice of their Divine Master, Jesus Christ. It is He who acts in and through the stewards who are appointed as His ministers. This Divine Master is never on holidays. He is effectively present and continues to be ever operative and the efficient cause of the stewardship.

Thus the *diakonia* in the Church is really holy (*hiera*) in its origin, goal, conditions, and exercise. It does not at all go in harmony with any kind of secular pattern of authority. But in the history of the Church we come across a constant temptation to adopt the secular patterns of authority. But the Christian understanding of authority is radically different. The stewardship in the Church is unique and leaves no room for any secular parallel. Every attempt to conform to the secular pattern will be an explicit violation of the divine command that "It shall not be so among you"(Mt.20:26).

III. CHURCH: ITS EVOLUTION IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

As students of ecclesiology and history we have to analyse how far this authentic concept of authority has survived during the course of the centuries. In this paper we intend to make a very brief survey of its evolution.

1. STRUCTURAL EVOLUTION

The author of the Acts of the Apostles shows us how the Kingdom first preached to the Jews had become the good news also to others. The first community was under the leadership of the Apostles. They felt the need of devoting themselves fully to the preaching of the Gospel. Hence, at their request, the believers elected seven men of good repute whom the Apostles approved and accepted for the ministry "with the laying of their hands on them" (Acts 6:1-6). The pneumatic aspect was very evident in the ecclesial life. The early Christians were joyfully sharing their faith with others.

In their turn the Apostles went about preaching the gospel and founded local Churches. Their experience of the Christ-event was the heritage of the Churches which they founded. These Churches were concrete manifestations of the Christian faith expressed by the Apostles in their particular socio-cultural contexts. The universal Catholic Church consisted of the communion of these Churches.

In the beginning the Apostles were the visible heads of the Churches they founded. There were also the *Elders (presbyteroi)* to assist them. In the Jewish society the Council of Elders exercised office collectively. In the Judeo-Christian churches the elders played a unique collective role of leadership and gradually one among them emerged as the overseer (episkopos). The *Elders* and *Overseers* were appointed to their ministry (Acts 14:23) by the rite of laying of hands on them. They were the stewards of the mysteries of Christ. This structure and nature of the leadership gradually assumed new forms when the Church became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

a) The Church: the official Religion of the Roman Empire

In the fourth century the Church became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Yves Congar in his historical survey of this evolution makes the following observation:

The clergy were given important privileges, the bishops became *illustri*, and for all practical purposes ranked with the senators. They were invested with public authority within the framework of the Empire, even in the sphere of secular life of the cities... The bishop frequently called on the imperial authority for

support... Under these circumstances, we ought perhaps to expect that authority would change its character and that it would acquire a more secular, much more juridical meaning, based on the relation of superior to subordinate.¹³

The introduction of special dress for the clergy was another development in this line of separation from the laity.

b) The Introduction of Territorial Jurisdiction

This was an important event in the evolution of the government of the local Churches. The territorial administrative system of the Church was closely allied with the civil administration of the Roman Empire. The Roman Emperor Diocletian had divided the Empire into prefectures, dioceses and provinces. The diocese was an administrative district of the Empire. The sixth canon of the first Council of Nicaea speaks about the territorial division of the ancient Churches.¹⁴ The bishops of a particular province used to gather together and discuss their common problems in the Councils. The ecclesiastical head of the mother cities were called Metropolitan. With the granting of political favours and privileges the Pastoral office of bishops began to be seen juridically and at a later stage the term '*jurisdiction*' was borrowed from Roman law. A new distinction was gradually made between the "*Power of Order and Power of Jurisdiction*"! Similarly the introduction of the word '*hierarchy*' marks the beginning of a new attitude towards the ecclesiastical authority.¹⁵

c) The Patriarchal System of Government

This was the spontaneous development of the ecclesial relations of the early centuries. The Metropolitans of the important ecclesiastical centres became the heads of their own individual Churches. We have no intention to go into the concrete contexts which led to this hierarchical development. The Patriarchal centres were Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem. All these cities were of great political importance and administrative centres. By the fifth century the Persian Church also developed into a Catholicate.

13. Yves Congar, *Power and...*, pp. 46-47

14. Yves Congar, *Historical Development.....* op.cit. p.138

15. Robert Markus and E. John, *Papacy and Hierarchy*, London, 1969, pp. 9-16.

According to the ancient traditions of the Eastern Churches the Patriarch with the Permanent Synod of Bishops constituted the highest authority of a Church. Letters of Communion were exchanged mutually among these Patriarchs. The Eastern Churches freely elected their own Patriarchs and regulated their discipline, liturgy and ecclesial life. The Pope was the Bishop of Rome variously designated as Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Primate of Italy, Patriarch of the West and successor of St. Peter.

d) The Pope: King of the Papal States

From the middle of the eighth century to the second half of the nineteenth century (754-1870) the Pope was also the King of the Papal States in Central Italy. Historians point out four reasons for this development: the Lombard wars, the weakness of the Byzantine Emperors, religious disputes and the alliance between the Papacy and Franks. Through the donations of wealthy people the Papacy became the largest landholder in Italy. This territory was known as the *Patrimony of St. Peter*. The papal influence was on the increase for the defence of Italy from the invaders. In 754 Pope Stephen cast off the semblance of allegiance to the Emperor of Constantinople by signing a political treaty with the Franks. It was indeed a turning point in the history of the Papacy and the whole of Europe.¹⁶

e) Separation between the East and the West

Tensions had already developed in the relations between the ancient Patriarchal Churches and in the eleventh century the official separation between the Churches of Constantinople and Rome took place. It had its climax in mutual excommunications of 1054 which paved the way for unilateral development in the West as well as in the East. Rome began to create more Latin Patriarchates even in the East. The Crusaders aggravated the situation and widened the gap between the East and the West. As the warriors of the Cross of the Western Christendom they considered the Eastern Churches as their rivals and enemies. They were eager to establish a Latin Kingdom in the East! Historians invite our attention to this unfortunate event: "One of the tragedies of the crusades was the crusaders' ignorance of the existence and status of the many Eastern Christians formerly under Muslim rule. This people suffered more

16. Neil T.P. and R. Schmandt, *History of the Catholic Church*, Milwaukee, 1957, p. 134.

from their fellow Christians than they had from the infidels".¹⁷ The Eastern Churches which were in communion with the Roman Church gradually came under the Roman curia and as in the case of the Thomas Christians of India absolute conformity with the Roman Church was enforced by the Latin bishops of the padroado and Propaganda jurisdictions who ruled over them.

Gradually the Roman Curia developed into a great organization on a monarchical pattern. Its various offices began to deal with the problems of the other Churches. The fourth Lateran Council and the subsequent organizational developments of the Roman Church bear ample evidences to the all-embracing centralizing tendency of the Roman Church.¹⁸ The various Roman Congregations which came into existence during the subsequent period constituted the backbone of the emerging structure. For a more effective centralization papal agents were sent out from Rome as ambassadors or tax collectors or legates. There were three kinds of legates: *Legati nati* (attached to important cities), *Legati missi* (diplomatic representatives) and *legati a latere* (sent for very important missions). In addition there was periodic '*ad limina*' visits to Rome by all bishops to submit a comprehensive report and express their loyalty. The *pallium* was made obligatory for every archbishop which he should get from Rome! Beatification and canonization were also reserved to Rome. Confirmation of the relics and reservation of the absolution of certain grave sins were also among those which were reserved to the Roman curia. This growing tendency of a centralized system of government continued up to Vatican II. But mainly owing to the urgency in a world of democracy and the atmosphere of ecumenical openness which developed under the leadership of Pope John XXIII and his successors some changes are taking place. It is hoped that these may create an atmosphere for a more balanced relationship between the East and the West.

Vatican II admits the need of decentralization and the right of self-government of the Churches:

"History, tradition, and numerous ecclesiastical institutions manifest luminously how much the universal Church is indebted

17. Thomas P.Neil and Raymond H.Schmandt, op.cit. p.204.

18. Yves Congar analyses the problem of the ecumenicity of the Ecumenical Councils of the second millennium in a richly documented article "Church Structure and Councils" in *One in Christ* 1975, pp.224-266.

to the Eastern Churches. This Sacred Synod therefore, not only honours this ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage with merited esteem and rightful place, but also unhesitatingly looks upon it as the heritage of Christ's universal Church. For this reason, it solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, fully enjoy the right, and are duty bound to rule themselves" (OE 5; cfr. also UR16).

This brief historical survey is intended to have an idea of the development of Church authority during the course of centuries. The structural evolution of the Church is the outcome of these juridical attitudes and approaches.

2. CANONICAL EVOLUTION

As the purpose of law is to regulate the behaviour of a community for achieving its goal the Canon Law regulates the life of a Church. It may be compared to a shell which protects the kernel. The canonical structure of the Church is to protect the true nature of the Church given by the Divine Founder. At the same time, the life of every society is influenced by the circumstances in which it exists. The Church also has been undergoing this influence. But such an influence should never go against the very essential nature and goal of the Church.

In the history of the Canon Law we can observe a continuous borrowing from the milieu in which it existed. At the beginning in Judeo-Hellenic background we observe local Christian communities which used to assemble to celebrate the Divine Mysteries. They were united, and maintained communion with other communities by the exchange of letters. Their code of conduct was governed by the Old Testament which was the record of Promise and the New Testament, its fulfilment. (Cfr. Mt 17; Mt 16:18-19; Mt 28:18-20; Jn 21:15-17; Acts 15:23-29; Mt 18:15-18; Rom 13:28; 1 Cor 5-7; Gal 5:13-25; 6:2).

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers provide us the necessary evidences of the earliest Christian discipline. In the African Church Tertullian and Cyprian have used the disciplinary vocabulary like *regula*, *disciplina*, *ordo*, *plebs*, *jus*, *cathedra* etc. The liturgical assemblies celebrated their faith in an orderly way. The *Didache* (c.100 in Syria or Palestine), *Traditio Apostolica* of Hippolytus (c.218 Rome), *Didascalia Apostolorum* (c.250 or 300 in Syria or Palestine etc.

are examples of the earliest disciplinary tradition which developed in the Church. Disciplinary canons are also attributed to the councils held at various levels (Ancyra - 314; Neocaesarea 314-25; Gangra 341-42; Antioch 341-42; Nicea 325; Constantinople I - 381; Chalcedon - 451 etc). In the Eastern Roman Empire the *Synagoge Canonum* in 50 titles collected by John Scholastic III (c.570) is generally considered as the first Greek canonical collection.

Church: Under the Imperial Influence

When the Church gradually became the official religion the Emperors often legislated in ecclesiastical matters. (e.g., in the *Codex Theodosianus* of 438 books 3,9, and 16). Emperor Justinian (527-565) exercised a decisive influence on the development of Canon Law by his religious legislation in the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. He supervised the affairs of ecclesiastical administration even in their details! Caesaro-papism became the administrative style of the Empire. The *Justinian Code* deals with religious matters including the necessary qualifications for the ecclesiastical officials. He interfered even in doctrinal matters as in the case of the condemnation of the '*Three Chapters*'. The imperial laws gradually formed part of the systematic canonical collections and gave shape to a new type of collection known as the Nomocanon. Similarly the various collections of canons of the different churches took shape in the West. During the Carolingian monarchy we observe many such attempts with the support of the clergy and the imperial authority. In the testament of 811 of Charlemagne (768-814) there is the list of 21 metropolitans. In his *Capitularies* Charlemagne legislated on clerical discipline, liturgical practices, religious instruction and monastic discipline. He sent *royal inquisitors* to inspect the clergy and the laity on their religious learning and fidelity. About sixteen synods were assembled during his reign and he played an important role in them. It is said that his military campaigns were almost equally missionary campaigns as well.¹⁹

There was close alliance between the religion and the political power. The Church was a part of the imperial structure. In the theocratic vision of the Emperor Charlemagne he was responsible for the general welfare and discipline of the Church. Historians write as follows:

19. Neil T.P. and R.H. Schmadt, op.cit. p.150.

"Charlemagne baptized the Saxons at the point of the sword and blanketed Saxony with monasteries and bishoprics to hold them in check. Again and again the Saxons rebelled and their revolts always had the character of wars against Christianity since bishops and monks were among the first victims. Often it was the insistence of the missionaries that the Saxons submit to ecclesiastical exactions such as tithes that goaded them into rebellion. In 802 Charlemagne's *Capitulary* for the Saxons decreed death for any who postponed baptism, cremated bodies, continued pagan practices, injured clergymen, or damaged Church property".²⁰

The Caesaro-papist administrative set up of the Roman Empire allowed a decisive role to the Emperors in ecclesiastical matters. Questions regarding the unity and discipline in religious matters were equally matters of political concern for the Emperors. Even in the convening of the Ecumenical Councils the Emperors played an important role. During the first millennium all the Ecumenical Councils were convened by the Roman Emperors.²¹

We have referred to these Councils to show the intimate alliance between the Empire and its official religion. This privileged position of the Church within the Roman Empire carried with it the marks of the milieu in which it was taking shape. Meanwhile in the West with the emergence of the Papal States a new situation was fast developing. The Popes began to play a key role which led them to take up the leadership of the Christendom which was a politico-religious reality! The role of the papacy in the crusades and other matters of common concern made their position unchallengeable. The canonical structure was moulded within such a politico-religious reality.²²

20. Neill T.P. & R.H. Schmandt, op. cit. p.150

21. Nicea I: 325 Emperor Constantine (306-337)
Constantinople I: 381 Theodosius I (379-95)
Ephesus: 431 Theodosius II (408-450)
Chalcedon (451): Marcian (450-57)
Constantinople II: Justinian (527-565)
Constantinople II: 680 Constantine IV (668-685)
Constantinople IV: 869 Basil (867-886)

22. W.Ullman, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, London, 1955, pp.310-343; J.B. Saemüller, *Die Idee von der Kirche als Imperium Romanum in kanonischen Recht.*, in *Theol. 'Quartalsh'* 80 (1928) pp.50-80. E. Vacandard, *The Inquisition*, transl. by Bertrand L. Conway, (New York: 1926). Eric W.Kern, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* Oxford 1948. Philip Hughes, *A*

It is interesting to note that in the case of Ireland which remained isolated from the imperial influence during the early period, in penitential and sacramental matters they were able to maintain their own legislations and identity to a certain extent. Meanwhile in the West the efforts for centralization were in full swing with a vision of a unified Christendom. The background had already been set long ago with the *Pseudo-Isidorian* or *False, Decretals* (847-52) and other collections. During the eleventh century we come across another concerted move under the patronage of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) for a revival of the notion of the Christendom under the papacy. The consequences were the power struggles with the kings. The attempts of Anselm of Lucca for producing *Collections* and of Gratian to provide a synthesis of ecclesiastical laws like (*Concordia Discordantium*) were substantial contributions in this direction. The Popes Alexander III (1159-81) and Innocent III (1198-1216) were proceeding in the same line. Under the direction of Pope Gregory IX (1227-41) about two thousand papal and conciliar decrees were arranged into five general categories to which Pope Boniface VIII added the Sixth Book (*Liber sextus*). The same process continued under Pope John XXII (1316-1334); (*Constitutiones Clementinae*) and finally in 1500 John Chappuis edited the above works adding two new ones and gave shape to the *Corpus Juris Canonici* which provided the solid canonical basis till the 20th century.

Papacy became a source of attraction and more people made claims to the same office. From 1368 to 1417 we come across such a situation which ultimately led to three simultaneous occupants for the same papal throne²³. The various unhappy events of this period reveal the tragic consequences of a secularized vision of the ecclesiastical leadership!

History of the Church, Vol.III, London, 1935, pp.361-497; Man K. Horace, *Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages*. Vol.III-V, London, 1925; Daniel Ropes, *The Church in the Dark Ages*, Vol.III, 1962; Schaff Philip, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. IV. Michigan, 1967; Ullmann Walter, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, London, 1955.

23. POPES AND ANTIPOPPES DURING THE WESTERN SCHISM

Roman Line	Avignon Line	Pisan Line
Urban VI (1378-1389)	Clement VII (1378-94)	Alexander V (1409-1410)
Boniface IX (1389-1404)	Benedict XII (1394-17)	John XXIII (1410-1415)
Innocent VII (1405-1406)		
Gegory XII (1406-1415)		

The history of the papacy of the 10th century has got a sad lesson to teach. Power and pleasure seeking leadership betrayed the Kingdom preached by Jesus Christ. Ecclesiastical offices were considered as a licence for power. It was a period of spiritual decline. Unworthy persons occupied the most sublime offices of the Church. Historians give us the following picture of that period:

"Pope Leo V was imprisoned" by an anti-pope, Christopher, whom Pope Sergius III (904-11) sent to join Leo in prison; then "out of pity" he executed them both. Sergius had belonged to the anti-Formosian faction and irritated old wounds. Out of the melee arose the wealthy Papal official and senator Theophylact who, with his wife Theodora and two daughters, Theodora and Marozia, dominated Rome for two generations. Marozia captivated Sergius by her charms and cemented her family's power. To the House of Theophylact John X (914-28) owed his elevation. He was a vigorous man of action who personally led the army to victory against the Saracens and made his influence felt in both Germany and France. John XI (931-35, son of Marozia and Pope Sergius III, gave his mother free rein in affairs of the Roman government, but before long the pope's brother Abberic seized control. This prince gave Rome effective government for twenty years, but only at the price of personally designating five successive popes. Through the influence of Alberic's friend, St. Odo of Cluny, a concern for spiritual reform reappeared in Rome. Unfortunately the fifth pope whom Alberic designated on his own death bed was his son, John XII (955-64), with whom the papacy sank to the lowest level in its history. Not yet twenty years old, John gave himself up entirely to the pursuit of pleasure in its manifold forms."²⁴

The challenges posed by the Protestant Revolt led to a still more centralized disciplinary system. The publication of the commentaries on the ecclesiastical documents was forbidden without the Roman approval. The *Codex Juris Canonici* of 1917 followed the spirit of Vatican Council I. The Vatican II which is preeminently of a pastoral nature was inspired by the urgency of the renewal of the Church and reconciliation. The CIC of 1983 and CCEO of 1990 are the results of the new theological vision of Vatican II.

24. Thomas P. Neill & Raymond H. Schmandt, op. cit. pp.168-169.

We learn from history the extent to which the ecclesiastical leadership was influenced by secular forces which led to conflicts and compromises. For example in the history of the papacy we come across the *concordats* which are agreements between the Popes and the secular rulers.

"Their secular character, although sometimes called in question indicates that a concession on the part of the secular power was accompanied by a concession of the same nature on the part of the ecclesiastical authority. It is of little significance that these concessions are called privileges or agreements. In actual fact the Church accepted into its own laws, at least for specified regions, norms that could be contrary to the spirit of its own law, *normae exorbitantes* as they were then called, as a counterpart to the advantages, at least in fact, granted by secular power".²⁵

The concordats were agreements to the mutual advantage of the partners concerned. The consent of the sovereign for convening a council, the approval for the appointment of bishops and the enthronement of the prelates etc. formed part of the concessions. Such agreements led to the mutual acceptance of the same legal systems which in several cases led to the dilution of the uniqueness of the vision and goal of the Church. The Church began to be viewed as a perfect society with its structure parallel to the secular setup of the state. Feudalism crept into the ecclesiastical system. "As long as the bishop or abbot fulfilled his feudal obligations to his lord, the lay lord would not disturb his vassal. And the ecclesiastical fief might be disposed of like any other: in 990 Count William of Toulouse gave the bishopric of Beziers to his daughter as her dowry, and later bequeathed the bishopric of Agde to his wife".

In 921 Pope John X (914-28) scolded the archbishop of Cologne for ignoring the wishes of King Charles the Simple in an election for the archbishop's suffragan see of Liege: "We have not seized to wonder" the Pope wrote, "that you have dared to act against all reason and without the King's order; you should not have done that".²⁶

25. C.H. Lefebvre, "Canon law, Influence of the Roman Law", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.3, p.51.

26. T.P. Neil & R.H. Schmandt, op. cit. pp.164-165.

Regarding the canonical collections of the Eastern Catholic Churches in communion with Rome, no proper attempts for a common synthesis were made perhaps until the appointment of the canonical commission for the revision of the Law of the Eastern Catholic Churches. These Churches have got their own identity and individuality as they have emerged in entirely different surroundings. It is specifically true regarding those Churches which had their origin and development outside the Graeco-Roman world. The Churches within the Roman Empire both Eastern and Western shared many things in common as they enjoyed the privileged position of the official religion. On the contrary, outside the Graeco-Roman world, the Church of the Thomas Christians of India which has never enjoyed the privileges of an official religion could preserve their earliest Christian traditions without any kind of political interference. They followed an ecclesiastical system called "*Thomayude Margam*" (Law of Thomas) which is not a canonical but the sum total of their time-honoured ecclesiastical system. Their close hierarchical alliance with the neighbouring Church of Persia was never a hindrance to maintain their own internal autonomy.

3. THEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

The text books on ecclesiology of the pre-Vatican II period invariably carried the title "*ecclesia est monarchica*" i.e. The Church is monarchical. Such a concept of the Catholic Church is the result of a long historical process. When the Church became the official religion of the Roman Empire gradually the process also began to conform itself to the thought patterns and categories of the Empire. With the decline of the Western Roman Empire papacy became the most powerful dignity in the religious as well as the political scene. The notion of the Christendom confirmed and consolidated this unique position.

The use of the celebrated document known in the papal history as the '*Donation of Constantine*' granting Pope Sylvester (314-335) temporal sovereignty and imperial prerogatives over the Western Empire and Primacy within the Church was proved to be a forgery during the time of Renaissance.

The politico-religious leadership of the papacy projected a predominantly secular image. A forged document called the Donation of Constantine was produced in support of the position of Pope:

"A celebrated document in papal history from the second half of the 8th century is the '*Donation of Constantine*'. This charter, proved to be a forgery at time of the Renaissance but generally considered genuine until that time, purported to be a deed by Constantine the Great granting to Pope Sylvester I (314-335) temporal sovereignty over the entire Western Empire and Primacy within the Church. The forged Donation was drawn up by its anonymous author to lend an air of greater legality to the de facto sovereignty by the papacy in the course of the Lombard wars or to provide an added inducement to Pepin to rescue of the papacy and restore to it the independence that was rightfully its prerogative. Some medieval writers used the Donation of Constantine as a proof for arguments that all of Europe belonged under the political jurisdiction of papacy. The popes occasionally used it a long these lines but not until after 1054".²⁷

The process of ecclesiastical administrative centralization went on in full swing during the second millennium. Canonists searched for a solid foundation for it and the pastoral ministry began to be interpreted in monarchical terms. Consequently conflicts were not rare between the kings and the ecclesiastical authorities especially on the titles of clerical and religious immunity and collection of tithes. Yves Congar has made a thorough study of the background of the use of the title "*Vicar of Christ*" and its theological implications. The key role of papacy in coordinating the forces in the defense against the rapid spread of aggressive Islam added a new dimension as the protector and promoter of the Christian Europe. The mentality and attitude of the crusaders do reveal the militant spirit which motivated them to establish the Latin Kingdom in the Middle East and intolerance towards the Christians of the Eastern tradition. The quality of the Popes and the ecclesiastical officials was in many cases far away from the ideal.

"The exalted position of the office and the peculiarities of the Italian temperaments disgraced the Papacy more scandalously than other bishoprics, although there were a few statesmen and reformers among the occupants of the Holy See. Of the 44 popes between 867 and 1048, nine

27. Thomas P. Neil & Raymond H. Schmadt, op. cit. p.145).

28. Ibidem p.167

met with violent deaths; two by poison, four by murder or execution in prison, one by strangulation, and two under suspicious circumstances. It was a time of shame and disgrace for the Roman Pontiff'.²⁸

St. Bernard wrote to his former subordinate Eugenius III (pope from 1145 to 1153): "When the pope, clad in silk, covered with gold and jewels, rides out on his white horse, escorted by soldiers and servants, he looks more like Constantine's successor than St. Peter's".²⁹ St. Bernard likewise censured the pomp which surrounded bishops, covered with red-dyed ermine 'called gules'; they look like young brides on their wedding-day. And he upbraided the abbots who had just then obtained from the Holy See the right to wear mitre, ring and sandals, like the bishops.³⁰ It is quite evident that during this period the theological reflections were motivated to justify the emerging juridical structures.

The theory of "*Two Swords*" which began to be used in the ecclesiastical documents gave an official colour to the mentality which was fast developing in the background of the Christendom. The Papal Bull of Pope Boniface VIII dated November 18, 1302 is an explicit proof of this development.

"The gospel teaches us that there are two swords in the Church's power, the spiritual and temporal.... The latter is used on behalf of the Church, the former by the Church. The former belongs to the priest, the latter is used by kings and soldiers but according to the will and discretion of the priest... However it is proper that one sword be above the other, that the temporal authority be subject to the spiritual... We ought to admit that the spiritual power in dignity and nobility just as spiritual things surpass temporal things... For truly the spiritual power has the right to institute the temporal power and to judge if it is good... Therefore if the temporal power errs it will be judged by the spiritual, but if a lesser spiritual power errs it will be judged by a superior; and if the supreme power errs it can be judged by God alone, not by man. For the

29. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, De Consideratione, IV, III, Migne, Patrologia Latina, Vol.CXXXVII,c. 775.

30. Tr.de moribus et off. episc., 9,36 (182, 832 CD). Cf. P. Salmon, Etude, pp. 50 ff.Yves Congar, Power and...p.125.

Apostle says: "The spiritual man judges all things but he is judged by no man". This authority even though given to man and exercised by a man, is not human but rather divine. It was given by God to Peter and it was confirmed to him and to the successors of him whom the Lord confessed to be a rock, when He said to Peter "Whatsoever you shall bind etc". Whoever therefore resists this power ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God, unless like a Manichee he imagines that there are two principles-which we judge to be false and heretical since according to Moses, "God created heaven and earth in the beginning" not, "in the beginnings". *Wherefore we declare, state, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff*³¹.

Biblical texts began to be used to assert the supreme authority of the ecclesiastical leadership over the secular one. The expression "*Vicarius Christi*" was interpreted as the visible representative of the Divine Master. The legalistic interpretation led to far reaching consequences. The following biblical texts were applied in support of the supreme authority of the pope (Jer. 1:10; ICor. 2:15;6:3; IPet 2:9).

"Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up, and to pull down, and to waste and destroy, and to build and to plant" (Jer.1:10).

"But the spiritual man judgeth all things: and he himself is judged by no man. Know you not that we shall judge angels? How much more things of this world? (ICor.2:15 and 6:3).

"You are a kingly priesthood" I Pet.2:9.

In the Papal Bull "*Regnans in Excelsis*" of St. Pius V deposing Queen Elizabeth I of England these biblical texts are used in support of the papal authority over the Secular rulers. The Inquisition which was established by Pope Gregory IX (1227-41) in 1233 had demanded the execution of verdict by the secular rulers.

Unchecked authority of the ecclesiastical officials, especially of the Roman curia paved the way for very grave corruption. Pluralism,

31. H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 24-25th edition, Barcelona 1948, pp. 218-20; T.P. Neill & R.H. Schmandt, op. cit. pp. 253-54.

absenteeism and nepotism were quite common. Many officials could purchase their positions and it is said that one sixth of the revenue of Pope Leo X (1513-21) came from this source! Lack of proper theological education, superstitious practices and authoritarianism disfigured the true nature of the ministry in the Church. The offices became centres of power, prestige and privileges. The laity were kept away from the decision taking process. Ecclesiology was practically hierarchology and nobody could check those who are in authority. It led to corruption. Historians give a picture of the 15th century:

"But beneath the material beauty moral decay set in under the popes of the high renaissance. If some of them were monsters of iniquity they were a small minority. Jovial company, "enlightened" conversation, and splendid banquets do not necessarily denote decadence, yet there was sufficient corruption to have kept tongues wagging ever since. Innocent VIII (1484-1492) was the first pope publicly to recognize his illegitimate children. Sixtus IV (1471-84) involved himself in a plot to assassinate the Duke of Florence. Unblushing simony secured the tiara for Alexander VI (1492-1503); this Pope's numerous progeny were well known, especially his son Cesare who pocketed the funds collected for the Holy Year in 1500. Pastor the historian of the popes, said of Leo X (1513-21) that "an insatiable thirst for pleasures was his leading characteristic".

"Nepotism, the bestowal of office on members of one's family, without regard for merit, spread corruption through the entire curia. Many of the Cardinals were millionaires who squandered their wealth on luxury. Much of the pornographic literature of the Renaissance emanated from the pens of papal secretaries. A popular saying was more widely between the divine character of the Church and the human nature of its administrators".³² The sixteenth century marked the beginning of the European colonial expansion which carried with it the Western ecclesiastical system into the Afro-Asian world and the Americas. When the Portuguese reached India in the 16th century they tried to spread the same system among the St. Thomas Christians.

32. Neill & Schmandit, op.cit. p.289.

IV. THE CHURCH OF THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS OF INDIA OUTSIDE THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

We have made a brief survey of the evolution of the nature of the *diakonia* in the Church of the Greaco-Roman world which enjoyed a privileged position as the official religion of the Roman Empire. We have also seen that the structural, canonical and theological evolution of the Church was greatly influenced by the politico-religious milieu in which it existed.

But the history of the Church of the Thomas Christians of India which existed in the heart of Asia for the last two thousand years has succeeded to preserve her unique heritage and ecclesial identity. It has been the ancient tradition in India that St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Christ came to India in 52 A.D, established Christian communities in a few places and finally died a martyr at Mylapore near Madras. This tradition is shared by the non Christians as well. Certain places are pointed out as the centers of the apostle's activities. There are families which can trace their Christian faith tradition to the first century. The Indian tradition is shared also by the Fathers of the Church as Gregory Nazianzen, St Ephrem, St Ambrose, St Jerome, St Gregory of Tours, St Isidore of Seville and some others.³³ It is not the purpose of this paper to make a detailed study of the historicity of the apostolate of St Thomas. The Thomas Christian firmly believe that St Thomas is the founder of their Church and it is because of him they are called the Christians of St Thomas.

This Church developed a style of ecclesial life which was conditioned by the social, cultural, political and religious background of that period. Their liturgical and hierarchical relation with the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was based on their Thomistic, Linguistic, Cultural, territorial and commercial affinities. The neighbouring Church of Persia also shared the same St Thomas tradition. The presence of the Jewish colonies of traders of spices from the Middle East from tenth century B.C. and the use of Syriac as the commercial language brought these two Churches into closer relation. As it happened in the Greaco-Roman world the regional grouping of

33. Koodapuzha Xavier, *Bharathasabhacharitham*, ed.2, OIRSI Kottayam, 1989, pp. 117-168.

the Churches paved the way for the Thomas Christian as well for sharing the same liturgical tradition with their neighbouring Church of Persia.

1. THE ECCLESIAL SET-UP OF THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS

The ecclesial set up of the Thomas Christians was developed in their particular socio-politico-cultural milieu. It had three levels.

- a. At the local level: Palliyogam
- b. At the community level: Archdiaconate
- c. At the Hierarchical level: Metropolitan and Patriarch

These three levels of their ecclesiastical system manifested the ecclesial communion.

a) At the local Level: Palliyogam

The *Palliyogam* which is a unique ecclesial institution of the Thomas Christians of India with its adequate representation of the clergy and laity at the various levels of their ecclesial life, enabled them to maintain their faith in harmonious unity with a profound sense of common responsibility. But such an institution well rooted in venerable antiquity and which effectively expressed their ecclesial life for sixteen centuries came into constant conflict with the Latin jurisdictional structure imposed on them from 1599 up to 1896. In 1653 they made a public protest and a section of the Thomas Christians separated themselves from the Latin jurisdiction.

Etymologically the Church is the community of those who are called. Their gathering has an ecclesial significance. At the local level their communitarian dimension was kept alive and aloft by means of their *Palliyogam*. It played a very important role in their ecclesial life.

Palliyogam consists of the representatives of the families and the clergy of the '*edavaka*' (parish). This assembly seems to owe its origin to the traditional village assembly of the Dravidians known as *Manram* which was the responsible and authoritative body at the village level. The *Palliyogam* under the leadership of the local clergy used to discuss all matters of common interest and take decisions. All were bound to obey the decisions of this assembly

in matters connected with the life and activities of the parish. For example, the selection and approval of the candidates to priesthood, Christian life of the people, financial administration, punishment of public sinners, reconciliation in times of conflicts etc. were within the competence of the *palliyogam*. In matters of common concern and importance the *palliyogams* of different parishes of a region used to assemble as the case might require. This set-up of *Palliyogam* was an effective means to maintain ecclesial communion at the local level.

The ecclesiastical system of the St. Thomas Christians had its uniqueness especially in the active participation of the entire community in the ecclesial matters. The members of the assembly enjoyed perfect equality and it was an effective means for maintaining communion and solidarity in the community. The idea of the Church as a community or fellowship was kept alive through the *yogam*. Fr. Boniface OCD gives a report on the nature and traditional functioning of this *palliyogam* among the Thomas Christians in 1750.

"In every parish (Chaldeo-Malabar) there is an assembly which deals with the ecclesiastical affairs. It consists of the local clergy and laity. They discuss about and decide on matters such as finance, construction works, maintenance of the church, approval of the candidates to Sacred Orders, absolution from ecclesiastical censures etc.

"The bishop does neither confer Sacred Orders nor absolve from ecclesiastical censures without the official request of the community which submit the formal petition to the bishop after assembling in the Church and hearing the request of the candidate to Sacred Orders".

"In matters of major importance people of the neighbouring parishes are assembled. For very important cases all the parishes of the kingdom are invited while at times all the parishes of the whole diocese.

"Such a procedure is very important for the implementation of the decisions. For example, though some people have accepted the dogmatic teachings of the Synod of Diamper, they have not yet accepted its decrees concerning reform on the ground that they were not present for the synod"³⁴.

34. Archiv. of S. Congregazione de Propaganda Fide, Congregazione particolari Vol. 109 f. 90; Report of Fr. Boniface of Infant Jesus in 1750.

The local problems of the community were discussed in the Palliyogam. Matters of wider importance were discussed in the regional or General yogam which consisted of the representatives of all the respective parishes. In the General yogam the Archdeacon had a very decisive role. We come across such gatherings before important decisions in the Church. There were gatherings of this kind before and after the "Koonan Cross" oath. The general gatherings of Athirampuzha and Angamaly decided to send Fr. Cariattil and others to Rome. The necessary amount towards the expenses of their journey was raised by the Palliyogams of the parishes.

Fr. Paulinus of Bartholomeo who was a Carmelite missionary in India, calls it a 'republican' system of government. After studying the functioning of the ecclesial structure of the Thomas Christians he writes:

"These Christians constitute a kind of Christian civil republic. When the rights of a particular parish are threatened other parishes come together to defend it. The parish priest and elders judge and settle all cases".^{34a}

In 1778 the representatives of the Palliyogam of the Thomas Christians, deeply hurt by the lack of cooperation of the Latin bishops of the *Padroado* and Propaganda jurisdictions for achieving the reconciliation with their separated brethren, sent a delegation to Rome and Portugal. When Fr. Joseph Kariattil an Indian priest was appointed Archbishop their Latin rulers protested and reacted saying that they would not part with their jurisdiction over the Thomas Christians. The reaction of the leader of the Thomas Christians was as follows:

"It is true that by reason of your deceits and tricks some of the churches of Malabar obey you. Still, neither you nor your predecessors have built our churches. Nor has anyone sold to you either us or our churches. IF OUR CHURCH ASSEMBLY WANTS TO ACCEPT YOU, IT WILL; IF IT DOES NOT YOU CANNOT MAKE IT DO SO BY FORCE. This inability to make us accept you, should stop you from uttering any more proud words to anyone"³⁵.

34a. Paulino a San Bartholomeo, *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali* Rome, 1796, pp. 136-39; Xavier Koodapuzha, ed. *Oriental Churches: Theological Dimensions*, OIRSI, Kottayam, 1988, p.74-75.

35. Paremmakkal Thommakathanar, *The Varthamanappusthakam*, MS 1773-1786, transl.by Placid J. Podipara, Rome, 1971, pp. 266.

b) At the Community Level: 'Archdeacon of All India'

In the ecclesiastical system of the St Thomas Christians the position of the Archdeacon was of unique importance. He was the indigenous head of the Christian community known as *Jathikku karthavvian*, with the title *Archdeacon of All India*. As the head of the community there could be only one Archdeacon at a time while there was no limitation in the number of their bishops. The Seleucian Patriarch Timothy (780-826) addresses the Archdeacon as the Head of the Faithful in India.

The Archdeacon was the chief administrator of the community and the coordinator of the various local communities. Between 1576 and 1581 there were five papal Briefs addressed to the Archdeacon. The documents are dated December 21, 1576, Nov. 20, 1578, Jan. 3, 1579, March 4, 1580 and Jan. 20, 1581.³⁶ These important letters were sent to the Archdeacon while their Metropolitan Mar Abraham was present in Malabar. The Archdeacons were the unquestioned defenders of the Law of Thomas their legitimate ecclesial heritage.

This specific role of the indigenous ecclesiastical leader was very helpful for maintaining the unity and ecclesial communion of the St. Thomas Christians. Such a leadership was of unique importance not only in the ecclesiastical but also in the secular set up of India.

c) At the Hierarchical Level: Metropolitan of All India

The ecclesial communion with the other Churches was maintained through their hierarchical communion with the Seleucians. The Thomas Christians did not have the possibility to develop their own full-fledged hierarchical organization. Their special relation with the neighbouring Persian Church, which was also associated with the St Thomas tradition, must have led them to form part of a common ecclesiastical organization maintaining their own ecclesial identity. It seems that the bishops coming from Persia on request were not involved in the administration of the Church. They were spiritual men content with spiritual leadership i.e. liturgical celebrations, conferring of Holy Orders, hierarchical communion, teaching of

36. Koodapuzha Xavier, "Ecclesial Identity of the Thomas Christians" in *Oriental Churches Theological Dimensions*, p.72.

Holy Scripture and the Fathers etc. Such a spiritual leadership was in full harmony with the indigenous religious aspirations of the people.

These bishops were ascetics and a source of spiritual inspiration to their people. Their abstention from administration enabled them to dedicate themselves more fully for giving spiritual leadership. Such an ascetic life-style and enlightened spiritual leadership free from the claims of power, worldly comforts and convenience could command genuine respect and satisfy the spiritual cravings of the people. There does not seem to have been a continuous chain of Seleucian bishops coming to India. The Indian Church was practically autonomous.

Their Metropolitan was known by the title "*the Gate of All India*" (*Metropolita ù tharàà d'kollà hendo*) In the ninth century according to the treatise of the Law of Christians of Ibin Attib it seems that their Metropolitan was elected by the people in the presence of the suffragan bishops. He was expected to get the approbation of the patriarch. According to the Vatican Syriac codex 22, written in Cranganore, Kerala, in 1301, by a deacon called Zacharias, the Metropolitan of that period was Mar Jacob, *Bishop Metropolitan, Prelate and Ruler of the Holy See of the Apostle Thomas*, namely our Ruler of the entire Holy Church of the Christians of India. In 1567 the Chaldean Patriarch Abdiso uses the title 'Superior of all the Bishops and Metropolitans' for the Prelate Mar Abraham of the Thomas Christians. The openness of the Thomas Christians to the Persian Church and to the other Churches was the result of their awareness of the concept of the communion of Churches. They never claimed any kind of exclusive monopoly of the whole Christian faith nor of the Divine heritage. They believed in the Catholic Church which is for them the communion of the Churches which are the legitimate and equal sharers of the Divine heritage. In their canonical tradition they never maintained any kind of sectarian or schismatic attitude. They were not used to any centralized administrative structure of the monarchical pattern at the universal level. At the same time, the Petrine Primacy of Rome was an integral part of their ecclesial tradition.³⁷

37. P.J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, London, 1970, pp.113; X.Koodapuzha, *The Faith and Communion of the Indian Church of the Thomas Christians*, Kottayam, 1982, pp. 64-65.

2. LATIN RULE OVER THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS

It is a fact of history that the Thomas Christians of India were of the same faith and same communion till the middle of the seventeenth century. The Portuguese reached India in 1498 and their relation with the Thomas Christians was very cordial. But gradually they wanted to bring the Church of the Thomas Christians under them. When their Metropolitan died in 1597 the Portuguese made use of the occasion to convene a Synod in which it was decided that they should be governed by the bishops appointed by the king of Portugal. The Metropolitan title was suppressed and it was made a suffragan see of the newly erected Padroado archdiocese of Goa. A Latin bishop was appointed, and the *padroado* was extended over them. From 1599 up to 1896 they were ruled over first by the foreign Latin bishops of the *padroado* and from 1661 also of the Propaganda jurisdictions. It was a period of rebellion and disastrous divisions which unfortunately continue even today. The attempts for reconciliation did not succeed mainly because of the opposition from the part of the Padroado and Propaganda bishops!

The Portuguese represented a medieval monarchical system of the Church developed in the West. For them the Pope was the head of the Church and all the other Churches should conform to the Roman Church. The decisions of the "Synod" of Diamper held in 1599 under the auspices of Alexis de Menezes, the Portuguese archbishop of Goa, reveal the Western mentality of the time and the inability to understand and appreciate other ecclesial traditions. The Thomas Christians firmly believed that they were following an apostolic tradition introduced by St Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. According to the Indigenous terminology they followed "*Thomayude Margam*" (The Way of Thomas) which was the sum total of their apostolic patrimony. The following decree of the Synod of Diamper formulated by the Padroado archbishop of Goa reveals the sharp contrast between the two traditions.

Furthermore, that Catholic Church is one and the same all over the world, having for its pastor the chief Bishop of Rome successor in the chair of the blessed prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, to whom and by him to his successors, our Lord Jesus Christ delivered the full power of ruling and governing

38. Session II, Chapter XII, Cfr also Session II Decree VII, Hough James, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. II, London, 1845, pp.531, 537-538.

his whole Church; for whence it is, that the Roman Church is the head of the whole Church, and the father, master and doctor of all Christians; and the prelate of all in common, and of all priests, bishops, archbishops, primates and patriarchs, of whatsoever Church they are; as also the pastor of all emperors, kings, princes and lords: in a word, of all that are not under the obedience of the said Roman Bishop, the vicar of Christ upon earth, are out of a state of salvation, and shall be condemned to hell as heretics and schismatics for their disobedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order that he left in his Church.³⁸

The decrees of the Goan councils of 1575, 1585 and the synod of Diamper of 1599 were official attempts to conform the Church of St Thomas Christians to the Roman Church. Without having a clear picture of the colonial interests of the Portuguese archbishop of Goa, a good number of the representatives of the Thomas Christians took part in the synod of Diamper. But they were shocked and seriously provoked when the missionaries publicized in the West that the Thomas Christians were converted from Nestorian heresy and brought into Catholic communion in the synod of Diamper. Their indigeneous leader, the archdeacon, immediately protested to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus denouncing it as a sheer calumny. The Archdeacon reacted as follows:

"We were always very obedient to the Catholic Church and the prelates sent by her; and if we were so much to the prelates sent by the patriarch, we were very much more so to this one sent by the Pope at the request of his Majesty the King of Spain. He (Bishop Roz) was the first Latin prelate who came to this Church and was accepted without any resistance from our part; even before his nomination he was in close contact with us with great familiarity. The reason of dissension was the printing of a book at the order of Archbishop Dom Frey Alexis de Menezes which on information from our prelate, attributes heresy by serious calumnies unjustly attributed to this Church. Errors perhaps there might have been; but heresies, which have to be confirmed with pertinacity, no. And if this church were infected with heresy, the Fathers of the Society and other Catholic Religious would not have been admitted into it.³⁹

39. Koodapuzha X., Faith and Communion ... p.143.

The time has changed. India became an independent nation on August 15, 1947. Some of the Roman documents of the recent Popes have clear statements confirming their unbroken catholic communion of the Thomas Christians. In 1952 His Holiness Pius XII expressly stated as follows:

During centuries that India was cut off from the West and despite many trying vicissitudes, the Christian community formed by the Apostle (Saint Thomas) conserved intact the legacy he left them, and as soon as the sea-passage at the close of the 15th century offered a link with their fellow Christians of the West their union with them was spontaneous. This Apostolic lineage, beloved sons and daughters, is the proud privileges of many among you who glory in the name of Thomas Christians, and we are happy on this occasion to acknowledge and bear witness to it.⁴⁰

In 1980 on the occasion of the '*ad limina*' visit of the Syro-Malabar Bishops Pope John Paul II made the following statement:

This is a Church of very ancient Oriental Rite going back to the preaching of the Apostle Thomas according to an ancient tradition and in fact, the Malabar faithful are still designated by the title of Christians of St Thomas. It is to the glory of this Church that it has not ever been served from communion with the Church of Rome in a continuity that the enormous geographic distance has never been able to break.⁴¹

3. PALLIYOGAM AND CANON LAW

Now the CCEO is already in force from 1991 and the particular laws of the Thomas Christians have to be formulated within the canonical frame of the general laws. The Church officially teaches that the Oriental Churches have the right for self government according to their own venerable tradition:

"From the earliest times, moreover, the Eastern Churches followed their own disciplines sanctioned by the holy Fathers, by synods, even ecumenical Councils. Far from being an

40. AAS 1953 pp.96-97

41. Pope John Paul II on 8th September, 1980.

obstacle to the Church's unity, such diversity of customs and observances only adds to her comeliness, and contributes greatly to carrying out her mission, as already been recalled. To remove any shadow of doubt, then, this sacred Synod solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since these are better suited to the temperament of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls" (UR 16 Cfr also OE 5).

The CCEO which is the common law for all the Oriental Churches states:

Canon 190: The eparchial bishop represents the eparchy in all its juridic affairs.

"Canon 191-#1: The eparchial bishop governs the eparchy entrusted to him with legislative, executive and juridical power".

#2. "The eparchial bishop personally exercises legislative power; he exercises executive power either personally or through a proto-synellus or synellus; he exercises judicial power either personally or through a judicial vicar and judges".

According to the venerable tradition of the Thomas Christians the palliyogam had an effective role in the decision making process in the spiritual and administrative affairs of their Church including the selection and approval of the candidates to priesthood, penal sanctions to public sinners, financial administration of the parishes and of the community etc. There seems to be a clear conflict between the time-honoured tradition of the ancient Church of the Thomas Christians with the CCEO which is formulated drawing inspiration mainly from the canonical legislations developed in the Gaeco-Roman world. The existing statutes published by the indigenous bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church are almost the same which were introduced during the three centuries of Latin rule by the *Padroado* and *Propaganda* bishops. The historical background explains this strange situation which still exists in an Oriental Church.

One cannot ignore the obstacles which stand in the way of the recovery of the authentic ecclesial traditions of this Church.

It is a fact of history that the successes and failures of a community largely depend on the quality its leadership. Though after three centuries of struggle this Church did succeed to get indigenous bishops in 1896 the clerical formation was continued exclusively in the Latin rite. They were trained at Alwaye under the Carmelites (OCD) and at Kandy, Mangalore, Pune and Trichinopoly under the Jesuits and other Religious Orders of the Latin rite. This strange situation was partly changed with the establishment of the St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor in 1962 under the indigenous clergy. It has to be gratefully remembered that it was under the initiative of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches that this Oriental Seminary was erected. It grew rapidly and the autonomous Theological Faculty known as *Paurastya Vidyapitham* was erected on July 3, 1982.⁴² The Syro-Malabar Church was made a Major-Archiepiscopal Church on December 16, 1992. The struggle to recover its own indigenous identity and spiritual heritage of *exousia* and *diakonia* is of common concern and importance.

4. PROCESS OF LATINIZATION: EVENTS

In our brief historical survey we have seen how the Church in the West developed into a highly centralized structure. Until the Vatican II the text books of ecclesiology did bear the title "*Ecclesia est Monarchica*" (Church is Monarchical). In such a structure the other Churches were viewed not as equals but as parts which should be subordinated and conformed to the central monarchical structure. As the result of such a strange development those Churches which were in communion with the Church of Rome were forced to give up many of their time-honoured venerable heritage. The history of the Thomas Christians of India provides us examples of such an unfortunate development. The Church of the Thomas Christians came into contact with the Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century. From 1599 up to 1896 bishops of the Latin Church ruled over them. We give below briefly some of the major events of latinization which took place from the 16th century onwards:

a) 16th Century

1. Introduction of the Latin form of the sacrament of confession including the Latin formula of absolution (Ferroli D Jesuits in Malabar, Vol.I, Bangalore, 1939, p.153; Abbreviation:FDJM)

42. For details Koodapuzha, X. *Bharathasabhacharitam*, ed.2, 1989. p.545.

2. In contrast with the indigenous Malpanate system a seminary was started at Cranganore in 1541 by the Franciscans to impart clerical formation to the Thomas Christians fully according to the Latin tradition. (Podipara P.J. *The Thomas Christians*, Darton- Longman & Todd, London, 1970, p.125 (abbr.= PPTC)
3. The Lent begun on Ash Wednesday according to the Latin custom (Andrews Thazhathu, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Kottayam, 1987, p.114. Hereafter its abbreviation is: ATJS).
4. The Thomas Christians influenced by the Franciscans to use fish, egg, liquor etc. during Lent (Ibidem pp.114-115).
5. Introduction of the Latin liturgical vestments among the Thomas Christians (ATJS p.115)
6. Administration of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation according to the Latin practice (FDJM p.153)
7. Introduction of unleavened bread for Holy Qurbana (Thekkedathu J., *History of Christianity in India*, Vol.II, Bangalore, 1982, p.43, PPTC. p.130)
8. Anointing of the sick after the Latin pattern (ATJS, p.115)
9. The First synod of Angamaly in 1583 convened at the instigation of the Jesuits with the goal of latinizing the Thomas Christians (Placid J. Podipara. *The Canonical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Kottayam, 1986, p.59: Its abbreviation is PPCS
10. Goan synods of 1567, 1575, 1585 & 1592 conducted with the intention of conforming the Thomas Christians to the Latin customs. PPCS p. 70, ATJS pp.26-129). Mar Abraham, the bishop of the Thomas Christians was asked by Pope Gregory XIII to take part in the 3rd Goan Council of 1585.
11. The Goan Council of 1585. Ten canons for the Thomas Christians regarding the introduction of Latin practices in liturgy, sacraments, mutilation of liturgical texts and of the Liturgy of the Hours, rituals etc. Decisions against the Oriental traditions of optional celibacy and communion in two species. (The PPTC p.132, Koodapuzha X. *Bharathasabhacharithram*, OIRSI, Kottayam, 1989, p. 322 abbr. = XKBC

12. A seminary started at Vaipicota in 1587 by the Jesuits with the goal of conforming the Thomas Christians to the Latin customs PPTC p.131, Koodapuzha, *XKBC...* p.268)
13. The fidelity to the Law of Thomas accused as lack of fidelity to the Catholic Church (Hausher I...*De erroribus Nestorianorum...* by Francis Roz, OC, Vol.XI, No. 40, Rome, 1928.)
14. Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham asked to ordain the seminarians who were not given any clerical formation according to the Oriental tradition. (Koodapuzha, *XKBC...*p.259)
15. The Synod of Diamper convened by the Goan archbishop Alexis de Menezes with the aim of latinizing the Thomas Christians thoroughly (PPTC p.138-140)

The decrees of the synod of Diamper are divided into nine Acts (Accao) (Jonas Thaliath, The Synod of Diamper, Rome, 1958, pp.219-228) These decrees deal with the entire ecclesiastical system of the Thomas Christians. The nine sections are the following.

1. Introduction and regulations of the synod
2. Profession of Faith
3. Main doctrines of Christians Faith (All these decrees were formulated using medieval scholastic theology)
4. Baptism and Confirmation to be administered separately. Confirmation to be given by bishops.
5. Eucharist and Holy Mass (Oriental customs, practices and ceremonies were condemned and Latin practices enforced)
6. Penance and Anointing of the sick (Latin practices enforced)
7. Holy Orders and Matrimony (The Latin Minor Orders and Major Order, tonsure, obligatory celibacy etc. were enforced)
8. Reformation and Church Administration (Latin administrative system of the parish and diocese and other customs were introduced as such. Many local customs were suppressed) (Celebration of *Onam* was also forbidden!)
9. Reform of Customs (The patronage of the King of Portugal was extended and methods and means were adopted to popularize the decisions of the synod)

b) Period of Latin Rule: 1599-1896

It was a period of colonialism which was extended not only to the political field but also to the religious field. Except the bishop the entire clergy and the people were Orientals and Indians while the bishops were Europeans of the Latin rite. The bishops who were the legislators of this period wanted to conform the Thomas Christians to the customs and traditions of the Latin rite. It started with bishop Francis Roz S.J. who was the first Latin bishop to rule over them.

1. Bishop Roz was convinced of the invalidity of the Synod of Diamper and wanted to introduce a disciplinary system after the Latin pattern. With this end in view he convened a Synod at Angamaly in 1603 and 1606 and published a complete collection of canons known as the *Statutes of Bishop Roz* (Rozian Statute). It was on May 16 (Edavam) 1606 with the title "*Tukasa d 'Mar' Ita Tomayta d'Hendo*" (Ordinance for the Thomite flock of India)". It is divided into four books or parts. (PPCS pp.110-113; The statutes' Malayalam title is "*Namute Malankara Mar Thoma Slehate Edavakete Kalpanaka*".
 1. Book I: On matters of faith with six chapters
 2. Book II: On sacraments with 16 chapters; the latin sacramentary, disciplinary and liturgical system with their details is prescribed here.
 3. Book III: On the sacraments of Anointing of the sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. In addition it deals with the Holy chrism.
 4. Book IV: On clerical life and activities with 15 chapters.
2. Rules for the priests of the indigenous Congregation of St. Thomas the Apostle. It consists of 30 rules. This community was known as "The Recollects of Edappally" but it was suppressed. (PPTC p.150).
3. Decision of Bishop Britto in 1627 to suppress the indigenous Gurukula pattern of Malpanate system to introduce the seminary system according to the Western tradition. (AIJS p. 167)
4. Decision of archbishop Francis Garcia in 1645 to appoint Vicar General in the place of the Archdeacon. (AIJS p. 170, foot note 77: ARSI, Goa-mal, Vol.50, f.112)

5. The decision of the Angamaly Yogam dated August 20, 1773: The Apostolic Visitor Lawrence Justiniani OCD agrees to the representatives of 72 palliyogams to follow the principles of justice in the ecclesiastical administration (PPCS p. 88 foot note No.11: Report of Lawrence Justiniani, *Archives the Sacred Propaganda Congregation*, Rome, *Scritti referitti nel Congr.* 1774-75, Vol.34; *Analects* OCD, Romae, 1938, p.163).
6. The documents of the Propaganda Fide regarding the norms of the Seminary at Verapoly dated 22nd July 1774, and of 6th August 1774. (AIJS p.188 Foot Note 152)
7. The Angamaly *Padiyola* approved by the yogam at Angamaly in February 1787 (PPTC... pp.175-176)
8. The Constitution *Romani Pontifices* of Pope Pius IX of 6th January 1862 establishing a special section for the affairs of the Oriental Churches (AIJS p. 199 Foot Note No. 6)
9. Partial suppression of Padroado with the document '*Multa Praeclare*' of Gregory XVI dated April 24, 1838 and its restoration (AIJS p.201, Foot Note No.16)
10. Verapoly Conference of 1862 (12-22nd September) and decisions regarding faith, discipline, matrimonial impediments, administration etc. (AIJS p.211, Foot Note No. 59: Thrippunithura Church Archives Bishop's Letters, No.5).
11. Prohibition of books especially *Varthamanapusthakam* by the Propaganda Archbishop Bacinelli dated March 12, 1864 (AIJS p.211, Foot Note No.59: Thrippunithura Church Archives, Bishop's Letters, No.5)
12. Canonical erection of the Third Order of Discalced Carmelites (TOCD) at Mannanam on 8th December 1855) PPTC p.185); It was first called "Servants of the Immaculate Mother of Mount Carmel" and later "Tertiary Discalced Carmelite Order = TOCD; Now it is called "Carmelites of Mary Immaculate" = CMI)
13. Erection of the common Seminary under the Carmelites (OCD) at Puthenpally on 15th August 1866 and the suppression of the traditional system of the Malpanates (PPCS p.105)
14. The Statutes and Decrees of Verapoly by Archbishop Leonard Mellano and attempts for a complete latinization. It deals with the

following topics: 1. Faith, 2. Sacraments 3. Sacramental 4. Clerical discipline 5. On the laity 6. Administration of temporalities (Panathanam Martin, *The Canonical Reforms of Leonard Mellano*, (Doctoral Thesis-unpublished), Rome, 1976; Latin customs, practices, devotions, discipline, administration, sacramental, etc. are enforced by these statutes).

15. Erection of the Syro-Malabar Vicariates of Trichur and Kottayam by the document *Quod Jam Pridem* of Pope Leo XIII dated May 20, 1887 (Vithayathil Varkey, *The Origin and Progress of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy*, Kottayam, 1980, pp.112-113; XKBC... p.505)
16. Circular of Vicar Apostolic A. Medlycott on 15th October 1889 and norms regarding the ministry of priests (AIJS p.243)
17. The Diocesan Synod held at Changanacherry in 188 convoked (P.J. Sebastian, (ed) *Nālāgāmam of Father Palakunnel*, (Malayalam) Changanacherry, 1972, pp. 288-293; XKBC., *Bharatha...*, pp.508-510) by the Vicar Apostolic Charles Lavigne. Its decision against the ecumenical movement known as *Jathiakya Sangham* under the leadership of the Jacobites and Catholics. There were decisions regarding Fasts, Feasts, customs etc.

c) Under Indigenous Prelates : 1896-1992

The two Vicariates of Trichur and Kottayam were reorganized in 1896, the Vicariates of Changanacherry, Trichur and Ernakulam were erected and indigenous Oriental bishops were appointed. The people and the clergy fought for centuries to regain their own ecclesial heritage and finally they did succeed to get bishops of their own Church and entrusted the leadership to their own bishops.

1. The Book of Decrees published by Mar Mathew Mackil of Changanacherry. It is mainly a collection of the previous canons and decisions introduced by the Latin bishops. Its main sources are the following:
 1. The statutes of Leonard Mellano
 2. The regulations published by Bishop Charles Lavigne
 3. Pastoral letter of Bishop Lavigne regarding Vicars France. (AIJS pp. 251-254). Though Bishop Mathew Mackil was one of the three indigenous bishops he was trying to copy and enforce the Latin discipline and traditions).

2. The archdioceses and dioceses of the Syro-Malabar Church have published their own statutes. But these statutes have almost faithfully followed the same juridical system which was established during the Latin rule.

The indigenization of the Indian Oriental hierarchy did neither indigenize the ecclesiastical system nor take any effective step to restore their own authentic ecclesial traditions which were suppressed during the foreign rule. The Major Archiepiscopate was established on Dec.16,1992. The juridical structure proper to a Church is to protect and promote its own heritage and identity. No Church can claim an identity as its own with a borrowed one.

V. CONCLUSION

The Church is founded by the Son of God to build up harmonious unity after the model of the Trinitarian communion and the various ministries in the Church are for achieving it. No secular model or structure can either adequately express or achieve this unity.

This ministers of the Church are appointed as the stewards of the Mysteries of God, to uphold the Divine Lordship by serving the People of God according to the will of the master who has promised his abiding presence.

But during the course of the centuries owing to the various vicissitudes of history, the Church has undergone structural, canonical and theological evolution. In this process various secular factors mainly of the Graeco-Roman world have played a predominant and decisive role.

This unhealthy imperial influence has adversely affected the Churches within the Empire and outside, especially because of the attempts to impose the same pattern everywhere. The colonial expansion of Europe which was closely allied with religious interests, projected a secular and imperialistic image of Christianity in the Afro-Asian countries and it is being resented by those who are aware of their cultural and religious heritage.

The sad plight of the Church of Thomas Christians of India which was ruled over by the bishops of the Padroado and Propaganda

jurisdictions of the Latin Church for almost three centuries and their struggle for identity and the subsequent disastrous divisions which continue even today are the sad consequences of the degradation of *diakonia*.

The search for authenticity by following the method of returning to the authentic sources has paved the way for the Second Vatican Council. It has rediscovered the true nature of the Catholic Church as the communion of Churches with their own liturgical, spiritual, disciplinary and theological traditions. As the legitimate heirs of the venerable traditions the time is ripe for the individual Churches to have a concerted effort to overcome the divisions which keep them separated by recovering the authentic heritage of *diakonia*.

In the present context of the rapid and dynamic expansion of the ancient non-Christian religious traditions of the Afro-Asian world like Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam and the stagnation and conflicts which do exist within as well as among the Churches to fit into the present juridical frame of the Churches inherited from the Graeco-Roman world, offer a real challenge to open themselves to the projects of recovering what is lost and discovering new forms of *diakonia*. The *diakonia* in the Church of God cannot and should not be allowed to assume the structures of power, dignity and domination which contradict the demands and true nature of the Kingdom preached by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

DECREE ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

PAUL, BISHOP,

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD, TOGETHER WITH
THE FATHERS OF THE SACRED COUNCIL FOR
EVERLASTING MEMORY

TEXT OE 1 : ORIENTAL HERITAGE AND THE DIVINE TRADITION

The Catholic Church holds in high esteem the institutions of the Eastern Churches, their liturgical rites, ecclesiastical traditions, and Christian way of life. For, distinguished as they are by their venerable antiquity, they are bright with that tradition which was handed down from the apostles through the Fathers,¹ and which forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church.

This sacred and ecumenical Synod, therefore, in its concern for the Eastern Churches which bear living witness to this tradition, and in its desire that they may flourish and execute with new apostolic vigour the task entrusted to them, has determined to lay down a number of principles beyond those which relate to the universal Church. Other particulars are left to the care of the Eastern synods and of the Apostolic See.

(1) Leo XIII, Apost. Letters Orientalium Dignitas, Nov.30 1894, in Leonis XIII Acta, Vol. XIV, pp. 201-202.

1. Venerable heritage of the Eastern Churches

The Eastern Churches are legitimate heirs of the apostolic tradition. They have valid apostolic succession, hierarchical priesthood, sacraments and valid celebration of the Eucharist. The early Christian heritage is being preserved by means of their liturgical, patristic, spiritual, disciplinary, ascetic, administrative and theological traditions. All these contribute not only to their ecclesial identity and individuality but also to the venerable heritage and catholicity of the universal Church.

2. Apostolic Foundation

The apostles are the original witnesses of the Christ-event and the Churches founded by them have inherited the original faith experience and tradition from them. Their office is unique and fundamental. The Church can know and believe in Jesus Christ only through their witness. Fidelity to this apostolic foundation is the guarantee of the authenticity of the Church of the succeeding generations. This heritage is the touch-stone of orthodoxy. The Fathers of the Church have professed, defended and authoritatively interpreted the faith tradition of the Churches initiated by the apostles.

3. Disciplinary set up of the Oriental Catholic Churches

The Catholic Orientals follow the general laws of the Catholic Church in all matters concerning the Catholic faith and morals. But they are not bound by the disciplinary laws which are promulgated specifically for the Latin Church or other Churches within the Catholic Communion. There is the common law "*Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*" dated October 18, 1990 promulgated for all the Oriental Catholic Churches. It came into force in 1991. Every individual Church canonically called as "*sui juris*" has got its own particular laws by which their heritage, identity and individuality are safeguarded and fostered.

TEXT OE 2 : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

That Church, Holy and Catholic, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit through the same faith, the same sacraments, and the same government and who, combining into various groups held together by a hierarchy, form separate Churches or rites. Between these, there flourishes such and admirable brotherhood that this variety within the Church in no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it. For it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or rite retain its traditions whole and entire, while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place.²

(2) Reference is made to twenty documents of popes from Leo IX (1053) to Leo XIII (1894). S. Leo IX, Litt. *In terra pax*, an.1053: « Ut enim »; INNOCENTIUS III, Synodus Lateranensis IV, an 1215, cap. IV: « Licet Graecos »; Litt. *Inter quatuor*, 2 aug. 1206:

«Postulasti postmodum»; INNOCENTIUS IV, Ep. *Cum de cetero*, 27 aug. 1247; Ep. *Sub catholicae*, 6 mart. 1254, prooem.; NICOLAUS III, *Instructio Istud est memoriale*, 9 oct. 1278; LEO X, Litt. Ap. *Accepimus nuper*, 18 maii 1521; PAULUS III, Litt. Ap. *Dudum*, 23 dec. 1534; PIUS IV, Const. *Romanus Pontifex*, 16 febr. 1564, § 5; CLEMENS VIII, Const. *Magnus Dominus*, 23 dec. 1595, § 10; PAULUS V, Const. *Solet circumspecta*, 10 dec. 1615, § 3; BENEDICTUS XIV, Ep. Enc. *Demandatam*, 24 dec. 1743, § 3; Ep. Enc. *Allatae sunt*, 26 iun. 1755, §§ 3, 6-19, 32; PIUS VI, Litt. Enc. *Catholicae communionis*, 24 maii 1787; PIUS IX, Litt. *In suprema*, 6 ian. 1848, § 3; Litt. Ap. *Ecclesiam Christi*, 26 nov. 1853; Const. *Romani Pontificis*, 6 ian. 1862; LEO XIII, Litt. Ap. *Praeclara*, 20 iun. 1894, n. 7; Litt. Ap. *Orientalium dignitas*, 30 nov. 1894, prooem.; etc.

1. Elements of Unity

All the Catholics irrespective of the individual Churches to which they belong should profess the same faith, live by the same Christian principles, receive the same sacraments and accept the same hierarchical ministry. The profession of the same faith does not imply the acceptance of the same theological system and the reception of the same sacraments does not mean the same kind of liturgical celebration. The universal role of the Petrine ministry is to protect and promote this unity in diversity within the Catholic communion. Every individual Church has got the right and obligation to have its own particular laws, administrative system, liturgical celebration, hierarchical set up and theological traditions.

2. Elements of Diversity

The Catholic Church is the communion of the Churches which have their own liturgy, spirituality, discipline, theological traditions, administrative system and early Christian traditions. These are the expressions of their own individuality. Hence the catholicity of the Church can rightly be called "the unity in diversity". The Catholic unity is quite different from uniformity. The unity is internal and essential while uniformity is external and accidental. The Council teaches that this variety which exists within the Catholic Church in no way harms her unity but rather manifest it" (OE 2). Hence the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II teaches:

"By divine Providence it has come about that various Churches established in diverse place by the apostles and their successors in the course of time coalesced into several groups, organically united, which, preserving the unity of faith and the unique divine constitution of the Universal Church, enjoy their own discipline, their own liturgical usage, and their own theological and spiritual heritage (LG 23).

3. Preservation of the Heritage and its Growth

The venerable traditions of these individual Churches constitute the divine heritage of the Catholic Church. The sources of the Christian faith are not confined exclusively to any particular Church. All these Churches are the legitimate sharers of that common patrimony. There is continuity and progress in the life of every individual Church. The Churches can never be static. They should grow from within. But this growth should never be extraneous nor a deviation.

TEXT OE 3 : EQUALITY OF THE CHURCHES AND EVANGELIZATION

Such individual Churches, whether of the East or of the West, although they differ somewhat among themselves in what are called rites (that is, in liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline, and spiritual heritage) are, nevertheless, equally entrusted to the pastoral guidance of the Roman Pontiff, the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter in supreme governance over the Universal Church. They are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world (cf. Mk 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff.

1) Equality of Rights and Obligations

The primary obligation of the Church is to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to provide pastoral care to the believing community. As the Catholic Church is the communion of Churches this basic obligation is shared equally by all the Churches. Hence every individual Church has the right and obligation for evangelization and pastoral care. No individual Church can claim any kind of monopoly in this field. Hence the Council teaches that the "Churches are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world (Mk 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (OE 3).

2) The unjust Situation in India

The Vatican II has explicitly emphasized this equality in order to correct the unjust situation which prevailed in India from the

time of Western colonialism. The missionaries of the Latin Church claimed monopoly over the missions and the Church of the Thomas Christians was restricted to less than half a percent (0.47%) of the Indian territory i.e. between the two rivers Bharathapuzha in the North and Pampa in the South. All the major commentators of the document "*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*" of Vatican II have referred to the unjust situation which prevailed in India for a very long period.

Johannes M. Hoeck:

"The real reason why the right to preach the gospel, that is, the right to engage in missionary activity, is especially mentioned among the rights and obligations of all the individual Churches is to be traced to the situation in India, where the Malabar Church, which has a large surplus of priests, was until recently only permitted to convert people to the Latin rite".

(Johannes M. Hoeck, "Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches" in the commentary on the *Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I, edited by Herbert Vorgrimler, Burns & Oates/ Herder and Herder, London, 1969, p.315).

Victor J. Pospishil:

"However, the situation is different for the flourishing Catholics of the two Syrian rites in South India, in the state of Kerala. The Malankaraiaans and Malabarians, Christians of the West Syrian and of the East Syrian (Chaldean) rite respectively, whose claim to have been converted by the Apostle Thomas himself, although sounding improbable, cannot be easily rejected, were not permitted to extend their missionary activity to their pagan Indian brothers because the territory had been assigned to Latin rite missions, which rite after all reached back that part of the globe hardly a few hundred years. This was considered not only unjust but also shortsighted because the Malabarian Church is going through a period of awakening of priestly and religious vocations of unheard of proportions. In addition, being denizens of India so much longer than the Latin rite Church, the Syrian rites are not considered contaminated by the European background of so many Latin rite missions. Now it is permitted to them and to other Eastern rite Catholics to propagate freely the faith in their rite, of course under the direction of the Roman pontiff in whom all missionary endeavours of the Church are centred".

(Victor J. Pospishil, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, The Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches of the II Council of Vatican, New York, 1965, pp.13-14).

Paul Mailleux:

"By stressing the equal dignity of the different Catholic rites, the Council condemns clearly the theory that the Roman Rite enjoyed some kind of precedence over the others. In the past, the apostolate in the missions has been conducted exclusively in the Latin rite. This practice has been resented by some Easterners, mostly in India where the priests of the ancient Malabar rite were always obliged to adopt the Roman rite to undertake missionary apostolate".

(Paul Mailleux, "Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches" in *The Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Walter M. Abbott, Geoffrey Chapman, London-Dublin, 1966, p.375, foot-note no.7)

TEXT OE 4 : PASTORAL CARE AND FORMATION PROPER TO EACH CHURCH

Therefore, attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demands. The Ordinaries of the various individual Churches which have jurisdiction in the same territory should, by taking common counsel in regular meetings, strive to promote unity of action. Through common endeavour let them sustain common tasks, the better to further the good of religion and the more effectively to safeguard clerical discipline.³

All clerics and those aspiring to Sacred Orders should be well instructed in various rites and especially in the principles which are involved in interritual questions. As part of their catechetical education, the laity, too should be taught about these rites and their rules.

Finally, each and every Catholic, as also the baptized members of every non-Catholic Church or community who enters into the fullness of Catholic communion, should everywhere retain his proper rite, cherish it, and observe it to the best of his ability.⁴ This rule

does not deny the right whereby persons, communities, or areas may in special cases have recourse to the Apostolic See, which as the supreme judge of inter-Church relations, will directly or through other authorities meet the needs of the occasion in an ecumenical spirit and issue opportune directives, decrees, or rescripts.

- (3) Pius XII. *Motu proprio Cleri Sanctitati*, June 2, 1957, can.4.
- (4) Pius XII, *Motu proprio Cleri Sanctitati*, June 2, 1957, c.8. "Without permission of the Apostolic See", following the practice of the preceding centuries; likewise, in respect to baptized non-Catholics c. 11 states: "they may embrace the rite they prefer"; in the present text the observance of the rite is prescribed in a positive manner for all and everywhere on earth.

1. Parishes and Dioceses proper to each Church

Evangelization and pastoral care are the basic obligations of a Church. Those who are evangelized have to be pastorally nourished, assisted and guided. The Pastoral care has to be basically ecclesial and it should be in harmony with the pastoral set up in which the believers are spiritually born and brought up. Hence the Vatican II teaches that everywhere (*ubique terrarum*) the necessary pastoral set up proper to each Church should be provided.

2. Common pastoral Consultation

According to the mind of the pastoral vision of Vatican II there may be pastors of more than one Church in the same place. The Council does not in principle approve any kind of exclusive territorial claims by a Church. Every Church is universal and hence it cannot be confined to a restricted territory. In such a situation the pastoral collaboration should be made more effective by means of regular consultation of the pastors of the same region. It will build up pastoral solidarity and create an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and assistance.

3. The Indian Context

Many Catholic Orientals of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches have gone out of the restricted Oriental territory of Kerala especially to the various industrial centres of India and even abroad. Their liturgical life and pastoral set up differed considerably in the new surroundings. In such a strange situation many preferred to

hide their ecclesial identity and lived in a kind of anonymity without being noticed by the local pastors. Various secular and strange factors of the industrial cities provided opportunities to give up their traditional religious practices. Pastors of non Catholic Churches especially of radical Protestant sects are often quite active among these emigrants and find in them a fertile field for infiltration. In such a situation there were also cases of defections from the Catholic faith. The Catholic Church which has been quite alert to the spiritual care of the emigrants does not seem to have been quite alert to the Indian situation in providing proper pastoral care to these Oriental Catholic emigrants. Finally on September 8, 1978, fourteen years after the promulgation of the *Decree on the Oriental Churches*, Pope John Paul I appointed Archbishop Mar Antony Padiyara of Changanacherry as an Apostolic Visitor to study the situation of the Syro-Malabar Catholic emigrants outside Kerala and suggest practical ways and means to implement the No.4 of the decree of the Oriental Churches of Vatican II for the pastoral care of the Oriental Catholic emigrants. This author was the official secretary of the Apostolic Visitor. After the enquiry the report was submitted to the Holy Father John Paul II on January 5, 1980. The following events reveal the nature of the various implications of the issues involved therein which finally led to the erection of the diocese of Kalyan on April 30, 1988 for the Syro-Malabar Catholic emigrants.

Opposition

Objections were raised from the part of the Latin Hierarchy of India and it was suggested that bishops belonging to the three Churches present papers at the next CBCI Conference pointing out their points of view. Mar Joseph Powathil, Mar Cyril Malancharuvil and Archbishop Henry D'Souza represented the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin Churches respectively. The papers were presented and discussed during the CBCI sessions at Tiruchirapally in January 1982 which did not lead to any conclusion except the decision to continue the same.

It was decided to have a theological discussion on the issues involved. Thus a representative body of the bishops and theologians of the three Churches met at the Goregaon Seminary, Bombay, from 23rd to 26th August 1983. The representatives were the following. Syro Malabar Church: Mar Joseph Powathil, Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Mar Sebastian Mankuzhikary, Frs. Mathew Vellanickal and Xavier Koodapuzha.

Syro Malankara Church: Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios, Cyril Mar Malancharuvil and Fr. Berchmans OIC.

Latin Church: Archbishop Henry D'Souza, Bishop Patrick D'Souza, Archbishop Angelo Fernandes, Bishop Thumma and Frs. James Dupius SJ, Albert Fernando SJ and Félix Wilfred.

The theological discussions were centred on the ecclesiological issues and the implications of the Council documents. It was agreed that the equality of the rights and obligations of the Churches are to be accepted by all. But the Latin Bishops argued that India should be considered as an exception to that general principle as the Indian reality is different from elsewhere and that the coexistence of the Eastern and Western Churches in the same place would lead to confusion and division. But the Orientals pointed out that the Indian reality is deeply rooted in the diversity of races, cultures, religious traditions, customs etc.

November 1982: Meanwhile a Memorandum of 115 Pages with the title *"Latin Oriental Relation and the Mission of the Church in India"* on behalf of all the Latin Bishops of India, was submitted to Pope John Paul II requesting him not to implement the practical suggestions of the report of the Apostolic Visitor.

September 8, 1983: On the 8th of September 1983 a memorandum with the title *"Response to the Report of the Apostolic Visitor"* (44 pages) was submitted to Pope John Paul II signed by all the Latin Archbishops of India and four Chairmen of the CBCI Commissions. It is to be noted that this document was submitted to Holy Father by the Latin Hierarchy on behalf of the CBCI. The *"Response"* objected to the implementation of OE 4.

January 25, 1984 : A Reply of three Syro-Malabar bishops to the *"Response"* of the Latin Hierarchy (17 pages) was sent to Rome.

April 25, 1985: A Memorandum of all the Latin Archbishops and four bishops of the Latin Church was submitted to Pope John Paul II objecting to the implementation of OE 4.

October 1985: Speeches were made by the representatives of the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin hierarchies of India at the Bishops Synod in Rome for and against the implementation of the OE 4 in India.

February 1, 1986: On the very first day of his visit to India assurance was given by the Pope at Delhi regarding the proper implementation of OE 3 and 4 in India.

May 28, 1987: Letter of Pope John Paul II to all the bishops of India asking to them to educate the clergy, religious and laity to accept the Council documents and directives of the Holy See. (*Christian Orient* 1987, No.2, pp.95-98).

April 30, 1988: The diocese of Kalyan was erected for the Syro-Malabar immigrants residing in the Latin dioceses of Bombay, Poona and Nasik.

January 31, 1991: (No 270, 661-G.N.) Letter of His Grace Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of Vatican, to His Eminence Cardinal Simon Ignatius Pimenta, Archbishop of Bombay, reminding the Holy Father's previous "*appeal to all the bishops of India to do everything possible to educate and form your priests, religious and faithful to accept and cooperate in its (the letters) implementation*".

September 18, 1993: *Rescriptum* given to the Syro-Malabar faithful of the Eparchy of Kalyan to receive, if they so wish, the sacraments in the Latin rite retaining their membership in the Syro-Malabar Church.

4. Adequate Formation to the Clergy, Religious and Laity

The pastors have to be adequately qualified in inter-ecclesial matters. The ignorance about the other Churches and their venerable heritage will lead not only to the lack of mutual appreciation but also adversely affect the effective pastoral collaboration and would even cause conflicts which will be detrimental to the very catholicity of the Church! The Council feels the urgency to impart adequate formation to the laity and decides that inter-ecclesial questions should form part of the catechetical formation.

5. Continuation of the same ecclesial Tradition

The Catholic Church does not favour any kind of discontinuity in the pastoral life of the faithful. It is particularly emphasized in the case of those who enter into Catholic communion. They are asked to join that Church which is of the same liturgical family in the Catholic Church. It does not of course, deny the basic freedom to opt the membership of a Church which they earnestly and reasonably desire.

Baptized non-Catholics coming into full communion with the Catholic Church should retain and practise their own rite everywhere in the world and should observe it as much as humanly possible. Thus, they are to be enrolled in the Church *sui juris* of the same rite with due regard for the right approaching the Apostolic See in special cases of persons, communities or regions (CCEO 35).

TEXT OE 5 : ECCLESIAL HERITAGE AND SELF GOVERNMENT

History, tradition, and numerous ecclesiastical institutions manifest luminously how much the universal Church is indebted to the Eastern Churches⁵. This sacred Synod, therefore, not only honours this ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage with merited esteem and rightful praise, but also unhesitatingly looks upon it as the heritage of Christ's Universal Church. For this reason, it solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, fully enjoy the right, and are in duty bound, to rule themselves. Each should do so according to its proper and individual procedures, in as much as practices sanctioned by a noble antiquity harmonize better with the customs of the faithful and are seen as more likely to foster the good of souls.

(5) Cf. Leo XII, Ap. Letters *Orientalium Dignitas*, Nov.30, 1894; Ep.Ap. *Praeclara Gratulations*, June 20, 1894, and the documents referred to in footnote 2.

Self-government for safeguarding and fostering ecclesial Patrimony

The Eastern Churches are legitimate heirs of the early Christian heritage. It includes their form of worship, spiritual and ascetic practices, particular disciplinary system, theological traditions, administrative system, feasts, fasts etc. All these legitimate expressions form an integral part of the ecclesial life and the heritage of the Universal Church.

In order to preserve the particular heritage and individuality of a Church they need their own disciplinary and administrative system which may be compared to a shell which protects the kernel.

The particular hierarchy of a Church has the obligation to study, protect and promote this heritage of the Church over which they preside. The leadership is not above the Church, but within it. They are not the masters of their Churches but their faithful stewards.

The Eastern Churches have been playing a unique role in preserving and fostering the Christian heritage. The Roman Church is only one of the authentic traditions of the Catholic Church while the catholicity and universality consist in the communion of all the Churches. Hence the Vatican II teaches:

With regard to the authentic theological traditions of the Orientals, we must recognize that they are admirably rooted in holy Scripture, fostered and given expression in liturgical life, and nourished by the living tradition of the apostles and by the writings of the Fathers and spiritual authors of the East; they are directed toward a right ordering of life, indeed toward a full contemplation of Christian truth. While thanking God that many Eastern sons of the catholic Church, who are preserving this heritage and wish to express it more faithfully and completely in their lives, are already living in full communion with their brethren who follow the tradition of the West, *this sacred Synod declares that this entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in their various traditions, belongs to the full catholic and apostolic character of the Church (UR 17).*

TEXT OE 6 : FIDELITY TO THE AUTHENTIC LITURGICAL TRADITION

All Eastern rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their lawful liturgical rites and their established way of life, and that these should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development. Easterners themselves should honour all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. If they have improperly fallen away from them because of circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways.

Those who, by reason of their office or an apostolic assignment, are in frequent communication with the Eastern Churches or their

faithful should, in proportion to the gravity of their task, be carefully trained to know and respect the rites, discipline, doctrine, history, and characteristics of Easterners⁶ Religious societies and associations of the Latin rite working in Eastern countries or among Eastern faithful are earnestly counselled to multiply the success of their apostolic labours by founding houses or even provinces of Eastern rite, as far as this can be done.⁷

(6) Cf. Benedict XV, *Motu Proprio Orientis catholicis*, Oct. 15, 1917; Pius XI, *Encycl. Letters Rerum orientalium*, Sept. 8, 1928, etc.

(7) The practice of the Catholic Church since the times of Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII is an abundant evidence of this movement.

1. Liturgy: Faith Expression of a Church

Liturgy is the source and summit of Christian life (SC 10). It is the most sublime expression of the life of a Church. The liturgy is the celebration of the faith. The community of believers make the public profession of their faith and give collective expression of their faith-tradition by means of commonly accepted symbols, figures and signs. Hence the Church insists on the fidelity to be maintained to the liturgical tradition of every Church.

2. Organic Development of the Liturgy

As the liturgy is the celebration of the faith tradition of a Church it should follow the principles of continuity and progress. Hence the Vatican II teaches that the restoration and renewal of the liturgy should be in full harmony with its authentic tradition "*ad mentem sanae traditionis recognoscantur*" (SC4). The liturgy is open to the reality and grows through assimilation and growth which is an organic process. On the contrary artificial addition or aggregation is a violence form outside which hinders the organic process of growth. It does not become part of a living organism. The organic growth of the liturgy is possible only when it is well understood, fully lived and made an integral part of the life of the people. In this organic process there is continuity and progress while artificial addition leads to discontinuity and loss of identity and individuality.

3. Return to the authentic Sources

Because of the various vicissitudes of history some of the Churches have in course of time lost the integrity of their liturgical

tradition. For example, during the colonial period the Church of the Thomas Christians of India was ruled over by the missionaries who belonged to the European Latin tradition. They tried their best to conform the Thomas Christians to their traditions. The liturgical texts of the Thomas Christians were mutilated, discipline changed, theological traditions disowned, ascetic practices discontinued and administrative system radically changed. Even though the Syro-Malabar Church did succeed to get its own bishops in 1896 the clerical formation continued to be under the Latin missionaries. Catholicity was identified with the practices of the Roman Church! But now the tide has changed and the Holy See feels the responsibility to restore the authentic traditions of this Church which had been systematically and consistently destroyed by the *Padroado* and *Propaganda* rulers of the Roman Church. But this process faces resistance from the part of those who have already identified themselves with the alien traditions of the colonial rulers. The hybrid form which was artificially and violently imposed during the colonial period is now being owned and defended by some as their authentic ecclesial heritage. Those who do not know what is their own heritage are bound to borrow things from other sources in a servile manner, make false claim as their own and take pride in them! Hence the Vatican II wants the Churches to respect their own heritage, remain faithful to it and take pains to restore what is lost.

4. Adequate knowledge of the Eastern heritage

Those who are involved in the apostolic activities among the Eastern Churches should necessarily be enlightened in Oriental matters. They should know their liturgy, ascetical practices, discipline, history etc. Ignorance of the Eastern traditions has been causing great harm to the Church. During the colonial period the rulers were dictating the destinies of the people. But the Church as the People of God is not a private property of the rulers. God works in and inspires His people and hence the heritage of the People of God is the heritage of the Church.

5. Oriental Houses and Provinces

The religious Congregations of the Latin tradition working among the Orientals are advised to start houses and provinces which follow the Oriental tradition. This obligation becomes quite grave in those cases where they admit members belonging to the Oriental Churches. Those Orientals who join the Religious Congregations of the Latin

Church have the special obligation to protect and promote their Eastern traditions. It may be noted that according to the recent statistics the majority of the members of the Latin Religious Orders of India belongs to the Oriental Churches. The membership in a Religious Congregation of Latin origin does not demand the disruption from the liturgical and spiritual traditions of a Church in which they had been spiritually born and brought up.

TEXT OE 7: PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

The institution of the patriarchate has existed in the Church from the earliest times and was recognized by the first ecumenical Synods.⁸

By the name Eastern Patriarch is meant the bishop who has jurisdiction over all bishops (including Metropolitans), clergy, and people of his own territory or rite, in accordance with the norms of law and without prejudice to the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.⁹

Wherever an Ordinary of any rite is appointed outside the territorial bounds of its patriarchate, he remains attached to the hierarchy of the patriarchate of that rite, in accordance with the norm of law.

(8) Cf. Council I Nicea, c. 6; I Constantinople, cc. 2, 3; Chalcedon, cc. 28, 9; IV Constantinople, cc.17,21; IV Lateran, cc.5, 30; Florence, Decree for the Greeks; etc.

(9) Cf. Council I Nicea, c. 6; I Constantinople, c. 3; IV Constantinople, c. 17; Pius XII, *Motu proprio Cleri Sanctitati*, c.216, # 2, n.1.

1. The traditional system

The patriarchal system of government has been the tradition of the universal Church including the Roman Church. The Pope was known as the Patriarch of the Roman Church. His residence attached to the Lateran basilica was known as *Patriarchium* (Patriarchal residence). As a result of the process of centralization the patriarchal title of the Roman Church has almost disappeared while the Eastern Churches still follow the traditional patriarchal system of government.

2. The present Catholic Patriarchal titles are the following:

1. Rome: The Pope: Patriarch of the Roman Church
2. Constantinople: Byzantine rite (Melkite) Patriarch

3. Alexandria: The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria of the Copts
4. Antioch: Syrian Patriarch of Antioch
5. Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites
6. Armenian Church: Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenians who resides in Lebanon
7. Chaldean Patriarch: Patriarch of Babylonia of the Chaldeans who resides in Iraq

3. The present Catholic Major Archiepiscopal titles are the following:

1. Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church
2. Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Church

During the period of the crusades and colonialism honorary Patriarchal titles were granted to the Latin Bishops of Jerusalem, Venice, Lisbon, West Indies (Madrid), and East Indies (Goa). They have no Patriarchal authority. The Eastern Churches consider it a medieval abuse of an important office with a venerable tradition.

4. The present non-Catholic Patriarchal titles are the following:

BYZANTINE FAMILY:

1. Constantinople: The Byzantine rite "Ecumenical Patriarch" of the Byzantine Empire
2. The Byzantine rite Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria
3. The Byzantine Patriarch of Antioch
4. The Byzantine Patriarch of Jerusalem
5. The Bulgarian Patriarch
6. The Serbian Patriarch
7. The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
8. The Romanian Patriarch
9. The Katholikos-Patriarch of the Georgian Church

ALEXANDRIAN FAMILY:

10. Alexandria : 1. The Patriarch of the Coptic Church
11. Ethiopia : 2. The Patriarch of the Ethiopian Church

ANTIOCHIAN FAMILY:

12. Antioch: The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch (Jacobite)

ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST FAMILY:

13. Katholikos - Patriarch of the East, Illinois, USA
14. 2 Katholikos- patriarch of the East, Baghdad, Iraq

ARMENIAN FAMILY:

15. Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople under the nominal primacy of the Katholikos- Patriarch of Etchmiadzin
16. The Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem who is under the nominal primacy of the Katholikos - Patriarch of Etchmiadzin
17. The Katholikos - Patriarch with residence in Etchmiadzin
18. The Armenian Patriarch of Cilicia with residence in Syria under the nominal authority of the Katholikos-Patriarch Etchmiadzin

TEXT OE 8 : THEIR RANK AND PRECEDENCE

Though some of the patriarchates of the Eastern Churches are of later origin than others, all are equal in patriarchal dignity. Still the honorary and lawfully established order of precedence among them is to be preserved.¹⁰

- (10) By ecumenical councils: I Nicea, c. 6; I Constantinople, c. 3; IV Constantinople, c. 21; IV Lateran, c. 5; Florence, Decree for the Greeks, July 6, 1439 # 9. Cf. Pius XII, *Motu proprio Cleri Sanctitati*, June 2, 1957, c. 219, etc.

The original order of precedence among the apostolic sees was Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. When Constantinople became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire they claimed the second position on the basis of the political importance of the city. The canon 3 of the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) and canon 28 of the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) recognized this claim even against the disapproval of Rome! But gradually the order of precedence was commonly acknowledged as claimed by Constantinople. Jerusalem was also given the Patriarchal title in the Council of Chalcedon.

Can.59 #1: Patriarchs of Eastern Churches, even if some are of later times, are all equal by reason of Patriarchal dignity with due regard for the precedence of honour among them.

#2: The order of precedence among the ancient patriarchal sees of the Eastern Churches is that in the first place comes the see of Constantinople, after that Alexandria, then Antioch and Jerusalem.

#3: Among the other patriarchs of the Eastern Churches, precedence is ordered according to the antiquity of the patriarchal see.

#4: Among the other patriarchs of the Eastern Churches who are of the same title but who preside over different patriarchal Churches, he has precedence who was first promoted to the patriarchal dignity.

TEXT OE 9 : THE AUTHORITY OF THE PATRIARCHS

In keeping with the most ancient tradition of the Church, the Patriarchs of the Eastern Churches are to be accorded exceptional respect, since each presided over his patriarchate as father and head.

This sacred Synod, therefore, decrees that their rights and privileges should be re-established in accord with the ancient traditions of each Church and the decrees of the ecumenical Synods.¹¹

The rights and privileges in question are those which flourished when East and West were in union, though they should be somewhat adapted to modern conditions.

The patriarchs with their synods constitute the superior authority for all affairs of the patriarchate, including the right to establish new eparchies and to nominate bishops of their rite within the territorial bounds of the patriarchate, without prejudice to the inalienable right of the Roman pontiff to intervene in individual cases.

(11) Cf. Footnote 8 above.

1. Patriarch: the jurisdictional head of an Individual Church

The Patriarch is the *Pater et Caput* (Father and head) of his Church. The new code of canons for the Oriental Churches says:

According to the most ancient tradition of the Church, already recognized by the first ecumenical Councils, the patriarchal

institution has existed in the Church; for this reason a special honour is to be accorded to the patriarchs of the Eastern Churches, each of whom presided over his patriarchal Church as father and head (CCEO 55).

The fatherly position does not allow any kind of arbitrariness. The important decisions have to be taken collegially together with the Synod of Bishops. In addition to the General Laws of the Oriental Churches he has to see that each Church exercise its rights and fulfil the obligations abiding by the particular laws of his own Church. It is his duty to identify himself with the venerable heritage of his Church and to become its authentic representative in the Universal Church. The Petrine office in the Church has a special obligation to be at the service of each Church for safeguarding their venerable heritage. It is a service to confirm their brethren in the authentic faith traditions. The self-government of the Churches is not for self destruction. For example, in the context of the serious indiscipline in important matters the Pope, even after granting Major Archiepiscopal title to the Syro-Malabar Church, has reserved two important areas (Liturgy and appointment of bishops) to himself.

TEXT OE 10 : THE MAJOR ARCHBISHOPS

What has been said to Patriarchs applies as well, under the norm of law, to major archbishops, who preside over the whole of some individual Church or rite.¹²

- (12) Cf. Council of Ephesus, c.8; Clement VII, Decret *Romanum Pontificem*, Feb.23, 1596; Pius XII, Litt. Ap. In *universalis Ecclesiae*, Feb.22, 1807; Pius XII, Motu proprio *Cleri sanctitati*, June 2, 1957, cc. 324-339; Synod of Carthage (A.D. 419), c.17.

The Authority of a Major Archbishop

The chief hierarchy of a Church which is not under any patriarch and enjoys the jurisdiction over the Metropolitans and bishops of his individual Church is called a Major Archbishop. At present there are two major Archbishops in the Catholic Church: The Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Church (June 2, 1957) and Syro-Malabar Church (December 16.1992).

TEXT OE 11 : ERECTION OF THE NEW PATRIARCHATES

In as much as the patriarchal office is a traditional form of government in the Eastern Church, this Sacred and Ecumenical

*Council earnestly desires that were needed, new patriarchates should be erected. The establishment of such is reserved to an ecumenical Synod or to the Roman Pontiff.*¹³

(13) Eight conciliar and papal documents are cited, dating from A.D. 419 to 1957. Syn.Carthaginen., an. 419, can.17 et 57; Chalcedonensis, an. 451, can. 12; S. INNOCENTUS I, Litt. *Et onus et honor*, a.c. 415: « Nam quid sciscitaris »; S. NICOLAUS I, Litt. *Ad consulta vestra*, 13 nov. 866: « A quo autem »; INNOCENTIUS III, Litt. *Rex regum*, 25 febr. 1204; LEO XII, Const. Ap. *Petrus Apostolorum Princeps*, 15 aug. 1824; LEO XIII, Litt. Ap. *Christi Domini*, an. 1895; Pius XII, Motu proprio *Cleri sanctitati*, 2 iun. 1957, can. 159.

The traditional system of Government

The Patriarchal system of government is the traditional system of administration which developed in the Church. The Council which is inspired by the principle of returning to the authentic sources is in favour of establishing new patriarchates. It is reserved to the Pope or to the Ecumenical Councils.

TEXT OE 12 : SACRAMENTAL DISCIPLINE

This sacred Ecumenical Synod endorses and lauds the ancient discipline of the sacraments existing in the Eastern Churches, as also the practices connected with their celebration and administration, and ardently wishes that they be restored where circumstances warrant.

Common Traditions

The Churches of the Roman Catholic and Eastern traditions possess in common all the seven sacraments. But the prayers vary and are celebrated differently according to the discipline proper to each Church. The sacramental discipline of a Church is an integral part of the venerable heritage of an individual Church. Their particular discipline contributes considerably to its identity and individuality. Hence the Vatican II has decreed that this discipline proper to each Church should be safeguarded and restored if it is lost. The Portuguese bishops who ruled over the Thomas Christians did everything possible to destroy the Oriental traditions and substitute them with Latin. The Synod of Diamper convened by the Goan archbishop has passed many decrees to achieve the thorough latinization of the Thomas Christians. We give below the decree on baptism:

1. Decree 1: New Form of Baptism

Whereas in the examination of the forms of the administration of the sacraments of the Church in the diocese, made by the Most Rev. Metropolitan in his last visitation, he found that in diverse churches there were different forms used, and written in the baptisteries, some curates using the forms following "N. is baptized and perfected, in the name of the Father, Amen; the in the name of the Son, Amen; in the name of the Holy Ghost, Amen: "Others using the Greek form, saying", Baptizetur servus Christi, in nomine Patris, Amen: in nomine Filii, Amen; in nomine Spiritus Sancti, Amen. "The synod in virtue of obedience, and upon pain of excommunication to be ipso facto incurred, both command, that no person shall presume hereafter to use either these or any other forms, But that which is used in the Holy Roman Church," I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that all other forms be blotted out of their baptisteries and books and this be put in their place.

(The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper, 1599, Edamattam. 1994, pp.111-12)

2. Common Traditions of the Oriental Churches

The Eastern Churches in general have succeeded to preserve their traditional sacramental discipline. But those Eastern Churches which came under the Latin influence or Latin rule were forced to give up their own discipline and adopt the practices of the latter! The Syro-Malabar Church which came under the Latin rule of the *Padroado and Propaganda* jurisdictions for almost three centuries (1599-1896) is a typical example of this disciplinary alienation. The same kind of influence can also be observed where clerical formation is imparted to the Orientals studying in the Latin seminaries or religious institutes. The situation is not better even in the so called Oriental seminaries and Institutes where the Superiors are ignorant in and are even alien to their own Oriental heritage and authentic traditions.

The following are some of the common and early traditions of the Eastern Churches:

1. The sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) are celebrated together. By the initiation they are fully integrated into the ecclesial life for which these three sacraments are essential.

2. Prominence is given to the East and the sanctuary of their churches is generally located on that side. They have a deep sense of veneration of the Holy place to which they do not turn their back and celebrate the liturgical functions turning to the East. For the Orientals the sanctuary represents the heavenly Jerusalem specially blessed by the Divine presence. The People of God are on their march in pilgrimage to this holy place.
3. Because of the special holiness attached to the sanctuary it is separated from the rest of the church by a veil or iconostasis. It is opened for the liturgical functions according to the norms. According to the Indian Christian tradition even the roof of the sanctuary is built higher than the rest of the roof.
4. During the liturgical celebrations, the Easterners take the same standing posture as the celebrants except during the homily. The ministers and the people turn in the same direction and do not celebrate the liturgical functions facing each other. They believe that they are being guided by their pastors to the heavenly Jerusalem which is symbolized by the sanctuary. Double genuflection is generally considered as a penitential act.
5. From very early centuries, with rare exceptions the Easterners used to celebrate their liturgy in the vernacular.
6. They always use leavened bread for the Eucharistic celebration.
7. The clergy of the Eastern Churches follow the ancient discipline of *optional celibacy* which is officially sanctioned also by the recent *Code of canons* of the Oriental Churches.

Clerical celibacy chosen for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and suited to the priesthood is to be greatly esteemed everywhere, as supported by the tradition of the whole Church; likewise, the hallowed practice of married clerics in the primitive Church and in the tradition of the Eastern Churches throughout the ages is to be held in honour (CCEO 373).

8. From very early centuries the Easterners hold the temporal calendar based on the mysteries of Jesus Christ and do not allow the sanctoral cycle to take its place.
9. During the liturgical celebrations the Holy Communion is generally given in both species (i.e. body and blood of Jesus Christ).

10. Priests are the *ordinary ministers* of the sacrament of confirmation.
11. Permanent diaconate has been an integral part of the discipline of the Eastern Churches. As the official intermediary between the celebrant and the community the deacons have an unavoidable and important role to play during the liturgical celebrations. It cannot be substituted by the so called *Altar-boys*.

TEXT OE 13 : CONFIRMATION

With respect to the minister of holy chrism (confirmation), let that practice be fully restored which existed among Easterners in most ancient times. Priests, therefore, can validly confer this sacrament, provided they use chrism blessed by a Patriarch or bishop.¹⁴

(14) Nine documents relating to this question are mentioned. Cf. INNOCENTUS IV, Ep. *Sub catholicae*, 6 mart. 1254, § 3, n. 4; Syn. Lugdunensis II, an. 1274 (professio fidei Michaelis Palaeogi Gregorio X oblata); EUGENIUS IV, in Syn. Florentina, Const. *Exsultate Deo*, 22 nov. 1439, § 11; CLEMENS VIII, Instr. *Sanctissimus*, 31 aug. 1595; BENEDICTUS XIV, Const. *Etsi pastoralis*, 26 maii 1742 § II, n. 1, § III, n.1, etc.; Synodus Laodicena, an. 347/381, can. 48; Syn. Sisen, Armenorum, an. 1342; Synodus Libanen. Maronitarum, an. 1736, P.II, Cap. III, n.2, et aliae Synodi particulares.

This tradition was suppressed in the Syro-Malabar Church by the missionaries of the Padroado and Propaganda jurisdictions who ruled over them. According to the Latin tradition the bishop alone is the minister of Confirmation.

We have the following decree of the synod of Diamper on Confirmation:

Decree 1: For as much as hitherto there has been no use, nor so much as knowledge of the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation among the Christians of this bishopric, the heretical prelates that governed it, having neglected to feed the people in a great many cases with wholesome catholic food; therefore the synod doth declare, that all persons who are come to the use of reason, ought to receive this Holy sacrament, having the opportunity of receiving it at the hands of a bishop, and that all masters of families, and others having the charge of children, are in duty bound to command their children and slaves to receive the said sacrament, and that all who out of contumacy or contempt shall refuse to receive it, or

to order such as belong to them to go to it, are guilty of a mortal sin, and if they neglect it out of a conceit of its not being a sacrament, they are heretics and aliens from the true Catholic faith; where for the synod doth command, that in the visitation that is to be made speedily by the most illustrious metropolitan in the churches of this bishopric, all men and women that are above seven years old do come to be christened or confirmed, those only excepted who were confirmed by the said lord in his former visitation, or at some other, or on some other occasion, by some other bishop; this sacrament as well as that of baptism being never to be repeated, in so much, that all that receive it a second time wittingly, are guilty of a great piece of sacrilege, besides, that they receive no sacrament thereby: but in case any are doubtful whether they have ever been confirmed or not, or should not remember that they were ever, they shall declare so much to the said lord, or to the bishops that is to confirm them, that they may order the matter according to the merit of their doubts: but if any, which God forbid, should sacrilegiously and obstinately despise the said sacrament it being proved upon them, they, shall be declared excommunicate and until such time as they have done condign penance, and shall be punished at the pleasure of the prelate".

(The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper, 1599, Edamattom 1994, pp.122-23).

TEXT OE 14 : EASTERN AND WESTERN PRIESTS

In conjunction with baptism or otherwise, all Eastern Rite priests can confer this sacrament validly on all the faithful of any rite, including the Latin, licitly, however, only if the regulations of both common and particular law are observed.¹⁵ Priests of the Latin rite, to the extent of the faculties they enjoy for administering this sacrament, can confer it also on the faithful of Eastern Churches, without prejudice to rite. They do so licitly if the regulations of both common and particular law are observed.¹⁶

- (15) Five documents from Roman offices, issued between 1783 and 1948, are cited. Cf. S.C.S. OFFICII, Instr. (ad Ep. Scephusien.), an. 1783; S.C. DE PROP. FIDE (pro Coptis), 15 mart. 1790, n. XIII; Decr. 6 oct. 1863, C, a; S.C. PRO ECCL. ORIENT., 1 maii 1948; S.C.S. OFFICII, resp. 22 apr. 1896 cum litt. 19 maii 1896.

- (16) CIC, c. 782, # 4; S. Congregation for the Oriental Church, Decree "On the Sacrament of Confirmation, Administered also to Oriental Faithful by Priests of the Latin Rite, Who Enjoy This Indult for Faithful of their Own Rite", May 1, 1948.

TEXT OE 15 : SUNDAY AND HOLYDAY OBLIGATION

The Faithful are bound on Sunday and Feast days to attend the divine liturgy or, according to the regulations or custom of their own rite, the celebration of the Divine praises.¹⁷ That the faithful may be able to satisfy their obligation more easily, it is decreed that this obligation can be fulfilled from the Vespers of the vigil to the end of the Sunday or the feast day.¹⁸ The faithful are earnestly exhorted to receive holy Communion on these days, and indeed more frequently even daily.¹⁹

- (17) Cf. Syn. Laodicen., an. 347/381, can. 29; S. NICEPHORUS CP., cap. 14; Syn. Duinen. Armenorum, an. 719, can. 31; S. THEODORUS STUDITA, sermo 21; S. NICOLAUS I, Litt. *Ad consulta vestra*, 13 nov. 866: «In quorum Apostolorum»; «Nos cupitis»; «Quod interrogatis»; «Praeterea consultis»; «Si die Dominico»; et Synodi particulares.
- (18) Something new, at least where there is an obligation of hearing the Divine Liturgy; for the rest, it is consistent with the liturgical day among the Eastern Christians. Novum quid, saltem ubi viget obligatio audiendi S. Liturgiam; ceterum cohaeret diei liturgicae apud Orientales.
- (19) Cf. Canones Apostolorum, 8 et 9; Syn. Antiochena, an. 341, can. 2; TIMOTHEUS ALEXANDRINUS, interrogat. 3; INNOCENTIUS III, Const. *Quia divinae*, 4 jan. 1215; et plurimae Synodi particulares Ecclesiarum Orientalium recentiores.

According to the tradition of the Thomas Christians the day is counted from evening to evening. The day begins with the Vespers. The Synod of Diamper introduced the Latin discipline of Mortal sin to those who does not hear the Holy Mass on Sunday or Feast day. According to the CCEO the nature of the obligation to take part in the Liturgy is left to the particular law. The faithful are specially requested to receive the Holy Communion.

The Synod of Diamper has made the following decision on this matter:

Whereas the Christians of this Diocese have not hitherto heard mass as upon obligation, having never imagined that the

not hearing thereof upon some particular days was a mortal sin; for which reason some have without any scruple neglected going to hear it, and others have not said to hear it out; therefore the Synod doth declare, that it is the Precept of the universal Church, and that upon the penalty of a mortal sin, that all Christians, men and women, having no lawful impediment, do hear an entire mass upon every Sunday and holyday that is commanded to be kept, if they have the opportunity of a priest to say it to them.

(The Acts, and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper, 1599, Edamattom, 1994, p. 141).

TEXT OE 16 : CONFESSIONAL JURISDICTION

*Because of the everyday intermingling of the communicants of diverse Eastern Churches in the same Eastern region or territory, the faculty for hearing confession, duly and unrestrictedly granted by his proper bishop to a priest of any rite, is applicable to the entire territory of the grantor, also to the places and the faithful belonging to any other rite in the same territory, unless an Ordinary of the place explicitly decides otherwise with respect to the places pertaining to his rite.*²⁰

(20) Bouscaren, Canon Law Digest, II, 218. *Salva territorialitate iurisdictionis, canon providere intendit, in bonum animarum, pluralitati iurisdictionis in eodem territorio.*

This decision corrects a previous declaration of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on August 26, 1932 which had decreed that in case of multiple jurisdiction in the same territory the confessional faculty received from one Ordinary could not be exercised in another validly in a territory under another Ordinary. Such exclusivistic territorial concepts regarding the sacrament of penance led to many absurd consequences. V. Pospishil makes the following observation on this strange situation created in U.S.A. and Canada:

"Here an example: A Ukrainian rite priest visits his Latin rite confrere in his rectory across the street. The latter requests him to here his own confession. The Ukrainian Priest cannot do it in the rectory since it is a *locus exclusivae iurisdictionis*, but he could do so in the backyard or in the street." (op.cit.p.40)

TEXT OE 17 : PERMANENT DIACONATE

In order that the ancient discipline of the sacrament of Orders may flourish again in the Eastern Churches, this sacred Synod ardently desires that where it has fallen in to disuse the office of the permanent diaconate²¹ be restored. The legislative authority of each individual Church should decide about the subdiaconate and the Minor Orders, including their rights and obligations.²²

(21) Cf. Syn. Nicaena I, can 18; Syn. Neocaesariensis, an. 314/325, can. 12; Syn. Sardicensis, an. 343, can. 8; S. LEO M., Litt. *Omnium quidem*, 13 jan. 444; Syn. Chalcedonensis, can. 6; Syn. Constantinopolitana IV, can. 23, 26; etc.

(22) The subdiaconate is regarded by several Eastern Churches to be a Minor Order, but the Motu proprio of Pius XII *Cleri Sanctitatis* has attached to it the obligation of the Major Orders. The canon proposes a return to the ancient discipline of the individual Churches in respect to the obligations of the subdiaconate, derogating thus from the common law of *Cleri Sanctitatis*.

According to the liturgical tradition the deacon is the intermediary between the priests and the community. The liturgy cannot be celebrated in the absence of the deacon.

The Churches of the Roman Catholic and Eastern traditions possess in common all the seven sacraments. But the prayers vary and are celebrated differently according to the discipline proper to each Church. The sacramental discipline of a Church is an integral part of the venerable heritage of an individual Church. Their particular discipline contributes considerably to its identity and individuality. Hence the Vatican II has decreed that this discipline proper to each Church should be safeguarded.

TEXT OE 18 : A NEW MATRIMONIAL FORM

By way of preventing invalid marriages between Eastern Catholics and baptized Eastern non-Catholics, and in the interests of the permanence and sanctity of marriage and of domestic harmony, this sacred Synod decrees that the canonical "form" for the celebration of such marriages obliges only for lawfulness. For their validity, the presence of a sacred minister suffices, as long as the other requirements of law are honoured.²³

(23) Cf. Pius XII, Motu proprio *Crebrae allatae*, Feb. 22, 1949, c. 32, # 2, n. 5 (the power of patriarchs to dispense from the form); Pius XII, Motu proprio *Cleri*

Sanctitati, June 2, 1957, c. 267 (power of patriarchs to grant sanation **in radice**; S.C.H. Office and S.C. for the Eastern Church, gave in 1957 the faculty of dispensing from the form and of granting sanation because of defect of form (for a quinquennium): "outside of patriarchates, to the metropolitans and other local ordinaries.. who have no superior below the Holy See."

1. The consequences of *Crebrae Allatae*

According to canon 85 of the *Motu Proprio Crebrae Allatae* of Pope Pius XII (1948) the mixed marriages between the Catholic and non Catholic partners of the Eastern tradition will not be valid if it is not blessed by a Catholic minister. Hence there were many cases of invalid marriages. The law created a grave situation with unforeseen consequences. According to the practice of some regions the blessing of the marriage has to be conducted by the parish priest of the bridegroom. If the bridegroom is non Catholic, the Catholic bride had to follow that tradition. For the Catholic partner it was canonically an invalid marriages! Such marriages disturbed the peace and conscience of many couples of mixed marriages and their families!

The Vatican II took this unhappy situation into serious consideration and positively decided that all such mixed marriages between Catholics and non Catholics of the Eastern tradition will be valid if it is blessed by an ordained minister. Such a decision has saved the situation of a long-standing confusion and spiritual agony of many couples.

INDIAN CONTEXT

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MALANKARA SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ON INTER - CHURCH MARRIAGES

Because of the urgency of problems of a pastoral nature, the joint dialogue commission between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church (Autonomous Church under the authority of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch) has desired, from its first meeting in December, 1991, to examine the question of inter-Church marriages.

In the light of the Common Declaration signed in 1984 by His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Mar Ignatius Zakka I

I was, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (cf. IS 55 (1984/11-111), (pp.61f), the joint commission has arrived at an Agreement which has been definitively approved by the authorities of both Churches.

We publish it with the pastoral Guidelines drafted by some of the Catholic Bishops in agreement with the Syrian Orthodox members of the joint commission, which has been approved by the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference (KCBC).

The date of publication for both texts is January 25, 1994, the last day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE MALANKARA SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ON INTER-CHURCH MARRIAGES

This agreement between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church on inter Church marriages has been prepared taking into account the following elements of the Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Zakka I Iwas of Antioch, dated 23rd June 1984.

1. The common profession of faith between the Pope and the Patriarch on the mystery of the Incarnate Word.
2. The common affirmation of their faith in the mystery of the Church and the sacraments.
3. The possibility given by the declaration for a pastoral collaboration including the mutual admission of the faithful belonging to both Churches to the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick for a grave spiritual need.

Having considered the above mentioned events and declaration, the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church agreed on the following considerations and norms.

As our two Churches believe in and confess the mystery of the Church and its sacramental reality, we consider it our duty to specify the areas of agreement in cases of marriages between the members of our two Churches.

Man and women created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27) are called to become sharers of the eternal divine communion. The sacrament of marriage is an image of this divine communion. Marital intimacy and self-effacing sharing are reflections of the deepest inter-personal sharing within the Trinitarian communion. Hence this intimate marital communion is divinely confirmed by Christ with the seal of unity and of indissolubility, and ordered toward the good of the spouses and the generation and education of the offspring.

"He answered, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh? What therefore God has joined together, let no man put as under'" (Mt 19:4-6).

Marriage is a great sacrament of divine communion and St. Paul compares the mutual relationship of the husband and wife to the mystery of communion between Jesus Christ and his Church (cf. Eph 5:21-26; Tit 2:3f, I Pet 3:1f; Rev 18:7; 21:2). St. Paul calls it a great mystery: "This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:32). Hence we believe that 'the sacrament of marriage bearing the image of the eternal divine communion is also an image of the most intimate communion between the Risen Bridegroom with his Bride, the Church.

The Church is the primordial sacrament of the eternal divine communion and, through the celebration of her sacramental mysteries, she deepens her communion with the divine Spouse and enables her members to participate in the divine life.

Our two Churches accept the sacredness and indissolubility of the sacramental bond of marriage and consider the conjugal relationship as an expression of the above communion and a means to achieve self-effacing mutual love and freedom from selfishness which was the cause of the fall of humanity.

In this theological perspective, taking into account the question of the marriages between the members of our two Churches, we consider it a matter of our pastoral concern to provide the following directives.

Our two Churches desire to foster marriages within the same ecclesial communion and consider this the norm. However, we

have to accept the pastoral reality that inter-Church marriages do take place. When such occasions arise, both Churches should facilitate the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony in either Church, allowing the bride/bridegroom the right and freedom to retain her/his own ecclesial communion, by providing necessary information and documents. On the occasion of these celebrations, the couple as well as their family members belonging to these two Churches are allowed to participate in the Holy Eucharist in the Church where the sacrament of matrimony is celebrated. We consider it also the great responsibility of the parents to pay special attention to impart to the extent possible and in mutual accord proper ecclesial formation to their children in full harmony with the tradition of the ecclesial communion to which they have to belong.

January 25, 1994.

PASTORAL GUIDELINES ON MARRIAGES BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND OF THE MALANKARA SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

1. These guidelines are framed on the basis of the common declaration of His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas.
2. Commissions were appointed by both Churches to explore ways and means to foster the existing common affirmation of the faith and sacramental unity between the Churches.
3. Having considered the above mentioned declaration and the unity that exists between the two Churches in faith and sacraments, both Churches have agreed to accept, the reality of inter-Church marriages taking place between their members.
4. The two Churches desire to foster marriages within the same ecclesial communion and consider this as the norm. However, accepting the reality that inter-Church marriages do take place at times, the two Churches have decided to facilitate the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony in either Church allowing the bride/bridegroom the right and freedom to retain her/his own ecclesial communion, by providing necessary information and documents.

PREPARATION FOR INTER-CHURCH MARRIAGES

5. When the parties apply for an inter-Church marriage they should be told that the marriage within the same faith is better for the harmony of the family and the upbringing of the children.
6. If they insist on conducting the inter-Church marriage they should be instructed properly about the Agreement reached between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church on inter-Church marriages.
7. It should be stressed that, while each partner holds his/her ecclesial faith as supreme or paramount, he/she should respect the ecclesial faith of his/her partner.
8. A pre-marriage preparatory course and a pre-marital counselling session are highly recommended.
9. The bride/bridegroom shall produce her/his baptism certificate.
10. The priest must ensure that the bride/bridegroom is eligible for marriage.
11. The priest should ensure that bride/bridegroom has paid the church donations in connection with marriages according to the practice of the Churches.
12. The bride and bridegroom, after mutual consultation, may select the church in which the marriage is to be celebrated.
13. Written permission for inter-Church marriage from the respective bishops should be obtained by the bride/bridegroom.
14. Banns should be published in the respective churches which also announce that it is an inter-Church marriage.
15. Once the permission is obtained from the bishops, the respective parish priests are expected to issue the necessary documents for the conduct of marriage.
16. Marriage in the Lent or Advent seasons is only to be conducted with the permission of the Bishops.

CELEBRATION OF INTER-CHURCH MARRIAGES

17. The liturgical minister should be the parish priest of the church where the marriage is celebrated, or his delegate from the same ecclesial communion.
18. There is to be no joint celebration of marriage by the ministers of both Churches. The marriage is to be blessed either by the Catholic or by the Syrian Orthodox minister. However, there could be some kind of participation at the liturgical service by the other minister who could read a Scriptural passage or give a sermon.
19. On the occasion of these celebrations the couple, and any members of their families who belong to these Churches, are allowed to participate in the Holy Eucharist in the Church where the sacrament of matrimony is being celebrated.
20. Proper entries must be made in the Church registers, and marriage certificates should be issued for a record to be made in the register of the other Church.

PASTORAL CARE OF CATHOLIC - SYRIAN ORTHODOX INTER-CHURCH FAMILIES

21. The Catholic partner is to be reminded that he or she has to commit him/herself to imparting to their children proper Catholic formation, to the extent possible and in agreement with his/her partner (cf. Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, No.150-151). Such formation should be fully in harmony with the Catholic tradition to which he/she belongs.
22. The pastors of both partners are bound in conscience to provide continued pastoral care to the inter-Church families in such a way as to contribute to their sanctity, unity and harmony.
23. Each partner is to be advised to attend the liturgical celebrations of his/her respective Church, but the couple may be allowed to participate jointly in the Eucharistic celebration on special occasions when this joint participation is socially required.

24. Any declaration of the nullity of such marriages is only to be considered with the consent of the bishops concerned from both Churches.
25. The funeral service should as far as possible be conducted according to the rite of the dead person's Church, even though he/she may be buried in either of the cemeteries, especially if the other partner is already buried there in a family tomb.

January 25, 1994.

ECUMENICAL DIRECTORY PUBLISHED BY ROME ON MARCH 25, 1993, No. 150:

"When, for a just and reasonable cause, permission for a mixed marriage is requested, both parties are to be instructed on the essential ends and properties of marriage which are not to be excluded by either party. Furthermore, the Catholic party will be asked to affirm, in the form established by the particular law of the Eastern Catholic Churches or by the Episcopal Conference, that he or she is prepared to avoid the dangers of abandoning the faith and to promise sincerely to do all in his/her power to see that the children of the marriage be baptized and educated in the Catholic Church. The other partner is to be informed of these promises and responsibilities. At the same time, it should be recognized that the non-Catholic partner may feel a like obligation because of his/her own Christian commitment. It is to be noted that no formal written or oral promise is required of this partner in Canon Law.

Those who wish to enter into mixed marriage should, in the course of the contacts that are made in this connection be invited and encouraged to discuss the Catholic baptism and education of the children they will have, and where possible come to a decision on this question before the marriage.

In order to judge the existence or otherwise of a "just and reasonable cause" with regard to granting permission for this mixed marriage, the local Ordinary will take account, among other things, of an explicit refusal on the part of the non-Catholic party".

ECUMENICAL DIRECTORY, 1993, NO. 151:

"In carrying out this duty of transmitting the Catholic faith to the children, the Catholic parent will do so with respect for the religious freedom and conscience of the other parent and with due regard for the unity and permanence of the marriage and for the maintenance of the communion of the family. If, notwithstanding the Catholic's best efforts, the children are not baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church, the Catholic parent does not fall subject to the censure of Canon Law. At the same time, his/her obligation to share Catholic faith with the children does not cease. It continues to make its demands, which could be met, for example, by playing an active part in contributing to the Christian atmosphere of the home; doing all that is possible by word and example to enable the other members of the family to appreciate the specific values of the Catholic tradition; taking whatever steps are necessary to be well informed about his/her own faith so as to be able to explain and discuss it with them; praying with the family for the grace of Christian unity as the Lord wills it".

TEXT OE 19 : LITURGICAL DISCIPLINE

*Henceforth, it will be the exclusive right of an ecumenical Synod or the Apostolic See to establish, transfer, or suppress feast days common to all the Eastern Churches. To establish, transfer, or suppress feast days for any of the individual Churches is within the competence not only of the Apostolic See but also of a patriarchal or archiepiscopal synod, provided due consideration is given to the entire region and to other individual Churches.*²⁴

(24) Three documents reaching from 454 to 1775 are cited. Cf. S. LEO M., Litt. *Quod saepissime*, 15 apr. 454: «Petitionem autem»; S. NICEPHORUS CP., cap. 13; Syn. Sergii Patriarchae, 18 sept. 1596, can. 17; PIUS VI Litt. Ap. *Assueto paterne*, 8 apr. 1775; etc.

The discipline regarding the common Feast days of the Churches are reserved to the Holy See or the Ecumenical Councils. Generally all the Catholic Oriental Churches have the following feast days: Sundays, Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Assumption and SS. Peter and Paul. The Thomas Christians of India used to celebrate *Dukrana*,

the Feast of St Thomas, as a solemn holyday of obligation. Victor Pospishil makes the following observation:

As a general rule, whenever the Holy See issued decrees in regard to feast days, they will have legal force for the Eastern Catholic Churches only if it so said expressly. The feast of Christ the King, for instance, is not a liturgical holy day for the Eastern Churches, except if by particular law it was introduced by a certain Church. (Victor Pospishil, Op. cit.p.55).

TEXT OE 20 : EASTERN DATE

*Until such time as all Christians desirably concur on a fixed day for the celebration of Easter, and with a view meantime to promoting unity among the Christians of a given area or nation, it is left to the Patriarchs or supreme authorities of a place to reach a unanimous agreement, after ascertaining the views of all concerned, on a single Sunday for the observance of Easter.*²⁵

(25) Cf. II Council of Vatican, Const. *De Sacra Liturgia*, Dec.4, 1963.

The Easter is the most important feast of the Church as a whole, in view of a common celebration of this great feast the highest authorities of the Eastern Churches of a particular region are given the right by the Vatican II to reach an agreement regarding the common celebration of the Easter on the same date. It will be an expression of Christian solidarity especially in a context where they form only a tiny minority.

TEXT OE 21 : INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE ONE'S OWN TERRITORY

*With respect to rules concerning sacred seasons individual faithful dwelling outside the area or territory of their own rite may conform completely to the established custom of the place where they live. When members of a family belong to different rites, they are all permitted to observe sacred seasons according to the rules of any one of these rites.*²⁶

(26) Cf. Clement VIII, Instr. *Sanctissimus*, Aug.31, 1595, # 6: "*Si ipsi graeci*"; S.C.H. Office, June 7, 1637, ad 1et 3; March 13, 1727, ad I; S.C. Prop. Faith, Decree

Aug. 18, 1913, Art.33; Decree Aug. 14, 1914, Art.27; Decree March 27, 1916, Art.14; S.C. for Orient. Church, Decree March 1, 1929, Art. 36; Decree May 4, 1930, Art. 41.

It is for those Oriental Catholics who live outside the Oriental territory. It is not proper to celebrate the feasts and fasts of a Church contrary to the spirit of the majority of the Christian community.

TEXT OE 22 : DIVINE OFFICE

From ancient times the Divine Praises have been held in high esteem among all Eastern Churches. Eastern clerics and religious should celebrate these Praises as the Laws and customs to their own traditions require.²⁷ To the extent they can, the faithful too should follow the example of their forbears by assisting devoutly at the Divine Praises.

(27) Twelve legislative documents are cited, reaching from 347 to 1891. Cf. Syn. Laodicen., 347/381, can.18; Syn. Mar Issaci Chaldaeorum, an.410, can.15; S. NERSES GLAIEN. ARMENORUM, an. 1166; INNOCENTIUS IV, Ep. *Sub catholicae*, 6 mart. 1254, § 8; BENEDICTUS XIV, Const. *Etsi pastoralis*, 26 maii 1742, § 7, n. 5; Instr. *Eo quamvis tempore*, 4 maii 1745, §§ 42 ss.; et Synodi particulares recentiores: Armenorum (1911), Coptorum (1898), Maronitarum (1736), Rumenorum (1872), Ruthenorum (1891), Syrorum (1888).

The Liturgy of the Hours is the official prayer of the Church. Hence it is not reserved to the clergy and religious. The faithful are urged to participate in the Liturgy of the Hours. Generally in the Eastern Churches, contrary to the Latin tradition the liturgy of the Hours was celebrated in the vernacular. Until the Vatican II the Roman Church was preserving Latin as the language of the liturgy. Hence the laity could not take active part in the liturgy of the Hours. As a result many private devotions were introduced to satisfy their cravings for prayer. Such a practice influenced also the Oriental Catholic Churches which were under the influence of the Latin Church.

TEXT OE 23 : LITURGICAL LANGUAGE

It is the right of a Patriarch with his synod, or of the supreme authority of each Church with its council of Ordinaries, to regulate

*the use of languages in sacred liturgical functions and, after making a report to the Apostolic See, to approve translations of texts into the vernacular.*²⁸

(28) According to Eastern tradition

The liturgical books of each Church can be translated keeping absolute fidelity to the original text. The highest authority is the Patriarch with his synod. The freedom of translation is not at all for the creation of a new liturgical text! The liturgical texts of a Church cannot be considered exclusively the private property of that Church. It is a part of the universal heritage of the Catholic Church.

TEXT OE 24 : EASTERN CHURCHES AND ECUMENISM

*The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special role to play in promoting the unity of all Christians, particularly Easterners, according to the principles of this sacred Synod's Decree on Ecumenism: first of all by prayer, then by the example of their lives, by religious fidelity to ancient Eastern traditions, by greater mutual knowledge, by collaboration, and by a brotherly regard for objects and attitudes.*²⁹

(29) From the contents of the documents reestablishing union with the various Eastern Churches

The Catholic Eastern Churches have a special obligation to promote ecumenism. Fidelity to the ancient eastern traditions is an effective means to bridge the gap between the Catholics and non-Catholics of the Eastern Churches. But is an unfortunate situation that many Oriental Catholics because of their close association with and the influence of the Roman Catholic Church have given up some of their venerable traditions and adopted the traditions of the latter. Hence Rome realizes the supreme importance of ecumenical formation. The Ecumenical Directory of 1993 specifies the areas of ecumenical formation:

- a) Nature and perspectives (ED Nos 55-57)
- b) Formation of all the faithful (Nos 58-69)
- c) Formation of those engaged in pastoral work (ED Nos 70-86)
- d) Specialized formation (ED Nos 87-90)
- e) Permanent formation (ED No.91).

TEXT OE 25 : PROFESSION OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

If any separated Eastern Christian should, under the guidance of grace of the Holy Spirit, join himself to Catholic unity, no more should be required of him than what a simple profession of the Catholic faith demands. A valid priesthood is preserved among Eastern clerics. Hence, upon joining themselves to the unity of the Catholic Church, Eastern clerics are permitted to exercise the Orders they possess in accordance with the regulations established by the competent authority.³⁰ When the Eastern non-Catholics join the Catholic Church they have to make a profession of faith according to the Catholic faith. In case of the clerics and ordained ministers they can continue the same grade of the ministry in the Catholic Church.

- (30) General obligation in reference to the separate Eastern brethren and in respect to all orders of whatever degree, of divine as well as of ecclesiastical law.

TEXT OE 26 : PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP SACRAMENTAL PARTICIPATION

Divine Law forbids any common worship (*communicatio in sacris*) which would damage the unity of the Church, or involve formal acceptance of falsehood or the danger of deviation in the faith, of scandal, or of indifferentism³¹ At the same time, pastoral experience clearly shows that with respect to our Eastern brethren there should and can be taken into consideration various circumstances affecting individuals, where in the unity of the Church is not jeopardized nor are intolerable risks involved, but in which salvation itself and the spiritual profit of souls are urgently at issue.³²

Hence, in view of special circumstances of time, place, and personage, the Catholic Church has often adopted and now adopts a milder policy, offering to all the means of salvation and an example of charity among Christians through participation in the sacraments and in other sacred functions and objects. With these considerations in mind, and "lest because of the harshness" of our judgement we prove an obstacle to those seeking salvation", and in order to promote closer union with the Eastern Churches separated from us, this sacred Synod lays down the following policy:

- (31) This is also the teaching of the separated Churches.

(32) St. Basil the Great, Canonical Letter to Amphilochius, P.G. 32, 669 B.

The sacramental participation should not be made a means for ecumenism. It should be the expression of the full communion already achieved. But taking into account the concrete situation of different places the Catholic Church desires to foster pastoral charity and allows such participation under certain conditions.

TEXT OE 27 : SACRAMENTAL PARTICIPATION

In view of the principles recalled above, Eastern Christians who are separated in good faith from the Catholic Church, if they ask of their own accord and have the right dispositions, may be granted the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and the anointing of the sick. Furthermore, Catholics may ask for these same sacraments from those non-Catholic ministers whose Churches possess valid sacraments, as often as necessity or a genuine spiritual benefit recommends such a course of action, and when access to a Catholic priest is physically or morally impossible.³³

(33) The basis for this mitigation is to be regarded: 1) the validity of the sacraments; 2) good faith and disposition; 3) necessity of eternal salvation; 4) absence of a priest of their own; 5) dangers which are to be avoided and formal adherence to error is excluded.

The Catholic Church admits the Eastern non Catholics in good faith to the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick under the following conditions.

1. They are separated from the Catholic Church in good faith.
2. They request on their own accord.
3. They have the right disposition.
4. They have no ministers of their own.
5. There should not be any spiritual danger or any formal acceptance of error.

The same is allowed to Catholics also in the spirit of the same conditions given above. The Ecumenical Directory published from Rome in 1983 gives the following:

"Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage suggests, and provided that the danger of error or indifferentism

is avoided, it is lawful for any Catholic for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, to receive the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick from a minister of an Eastern Church" (ED 123).

TEXT OE 28 : EXTRA-SACRAMENTAL PARTICIPATION

Again, in view of these very same principles, Catholics may for a just cause join with their separated Eastern brethren in sacred functions, things, and places. ⁽³⁴⁾

(34) This refers to the so-called "Extra-sacramental participation in worship". The Council is granting the mitigation with the obligation to observe the pertinent regulations.

a) General Principles

The new Roman Directory states that the "Christians may be encouraged to share in spiritual activities and resources, i.e. to share in that spiritual heritage they have in common in a manner and to a degree appropriate to their present divided state" (No. 102). Prayer in common is recommended and they are encouraged to pray as an expression of their Christian solidarity and social concern. With the approval of the local Ordinary the "funeral rites of the Catholic Church may be granted to members of a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial community, unless it is evidently contrary to their will and provided that their own minister is unavailable, and that the provisions of Canon Law do not forbid it" (ED No. 120).

b) Sharing other Resources

With the permission of the local Ordinary the Catholic churches or other places may be lent to the ministers of separated brethren when they have no building of their own for this purpose. "In Catholic schools and institutions effort should be made to respect the faith and conscience of students or teachers who belong to other Churches or ecclesial communities (No. 141). Ministers of other communities may be made available to their members who are admitted in Catholic hospitals or homes for the aged (ED No. 142).

c) Ecumenical Co-operation

Ecumenical cooperation is encouraged in the study of the common Christian heritage, in social works, in ecumenical efforts, charitable

activities, and sharing of expertise for the common good (ED Nos 161-171). Ecumenical dialogue is the most effective means for fostering mutual understanding and the Ecumenical Directory gives practical norms for conducting it effectively and fruitfully (Cfr ED. Nos 172-182). similarly cooperation in Biblical works, liturgical studies and theological education, ecumenical studies etc. is also very much encouraged. (ED Nos 183-203).

d) Ecumenical Formation

The Ecumenical Directory gives specific directives for imparting an effective formation to the future pastors as well as to the laity. Various levels of ecumenical formation, pastoral cooperation and sharing with members and institutions of the other Churches are suggested by the same Directory. (ED Nos 59-78).

TEXT OE 29 : ROLE OF THE HIERARCHY

This more lenient policy with regard to common worship involving Catholics and their brethren of the separated Eastern Churches is entrusted to the care and execution of the local Ordinaries so that, by taking counsel among themselves and, if circumstances warrant, after consultation also with the Ordinaries of the separated Churches, they may govern relations between Christians by timely and effective rules and regulations.

The common principles and practical directives have to be effectively popularised by the pastors. The ecumenical vocation is a fundamental commitment of the Church and the pastors of the Catholic Church cannot be indifferent to it. The bishops are asked to implement these directives in due consultation with the pastors of the non Catholic Churches and communities.

TEXT OE 30 : CONCLUSION

This sacred Council feels great joy in the fruitful and zealous collaboration between the Eastern and the Western Catholic Churches, and at the same time declares that all these directives of law are laid down in view of the present situation, until such time as the Catholic Church and the separated Eastern Churches come together into complete unity.

Meanwhile, however, all Christians, Eastern as well as Western, are earnestly asked to pray to God fervently and insistently, indeed daily, that with the aid of the most holy Mother of God, all may become one. Let them pray also that the strength and the consolation of the Holy Spirit may descend copiously upon all those many Christians of whatsoever Church who endure suffering and deprivations for their unwavering loyalty to the name of Christ.

"Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour" (Rom 12:10).

Each and every one of the things set forth in this Decree has won the consent of the Fathers, we too, by the Apostolic authority conferred on us by Christ, join with the venerable Fathers in approving, decreeing, and establishing these things in the Holy Spirit, and we direct that what has thus been enacted in synod be published to God's glory.

Rome, at St.Peter's November 21,1964.

I Paul, Bishop of the Catholic Church.

There follow the signature of the Fathers.

Notice: The Supreme Pontiff has ordered that the legal force of the Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches be deferred for a period of two months. However, he authorizes the patriarchs to reduce or prolong the time for a just reason.

† PERICLE FELICI

Titular Archbishop of Samosata

Secretary General of the Second

Vatican Council

The decree concludes with an earnest request to take up the cause of ecumenism effectively and to promote the special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to remain united in the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER THREE

ORIENTAL CHURCHES

Here we are having a very brief survey on the Oriental Churches. It is divided into two parts. In the first part we give a general background of these Churches. In the second we deal with them individually on the basis of their liturgical families.

ORIENTAL CHURCHES IN GENERAL

The Churches came to be known as Oriental and Occidental on the basis of the place of their origin and growth. After the death of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I in 395 AD, the Roman Empire was divided into two, the Eastern Empire (Provinces of Illyricum and Oriens) and the Western Empire (Provinces of Gallia and Italia). Those Churches which belonged to the Western Roman Empire were called Western Churches and those of the Eastern Roman Empire, Oriental Churches. The intimate association of Christianity with the Roman Empire is the background for this appellation. At the beginning of the 4th century the persecuted Church became free and gradually it was recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Such a privileged position led to a close alliance between the Church and the Empire and consequently the chief civil administrative capitals became the ecclesiastical centres as well.

The Church of Rome founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul emerged most powerful over the other local Churches because of various factors. It began to be known also after its liturgical language, the Latin Church. This Roman liturgical traditions spread all over the West. In the East there were different liturgical traditions and centres of ecclesiastical organization. Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Seleucia-Ctesiphon developed into important ecclesiastical centres. Among these centres the Church of Persia with its head quarters at Seleucia-Ctesiphon was outside the Roman Empire. The Church in India with its tradition based on the preaching of the Apostle St. Thomas, was closely associated with the neighbouring Churches including those in the Persian Empire. In course of time all those Churches which did not follow the Latin

(Roman) liturgical tradition began to be known as Oriental Churches. Thus, though the Churches in Persia and India did not *de facto* belong to the Eastern Roman Empire, they also began to be known as Oriental Churches.

1. Liturgical Families and Regional Grouping of the Churches

The Churches are grouped mainly on the basis of their common liturgical tradition. The particular form of worship of a Church has a unique role in determining and specifying its identity. The Eucharistic sacrifice, sacraments feasts and fasts, administrative systems, hierarchical set-up, discipline, ecclesiastical calendar, vestments, traditions etc. are different aspects which contribute to the distinctiveness of the individual Churches.

In the early history of the Church we can observe a kind of regional grouping of the neighbouring Churches. They shared in common the same liturgical tradition and formed part of the same hierarchical set up.

In the West the Roman liturgical traditions did spread almost exclusively. Some of the local variations were restricted to a very limited area. The Ambrosian, Gallican and Mozarabic rites are some of those variations in the uniform Roman liturgical tradition. Ambrosian rite is limited to a few places in Milan, Gallican in the same manner in Lyons and Mozarabic in Spain.

There are six Liturgical families in the Christian tradition. They are Roman, Alexandrian, Antiochian, Armenian, East Syrian (Chaldean) and Byzantine. All these except the East Syrian had their origin and development within the Roman Empire.

The Roman liturgical tradition spread in the West. But the situation in the East was entirely different. There the Churches of the important centres like Constantinople (Byzantine), Antioch and Alexandria developed their own liturgical traditions which gradually spread into the neighbouring regions as well.

In the early Church the liturgical traditions were never viewed on nationalistic basis. The liturgical forms which developed in important centres of ecclesiastical learning were spontaneously accepted by the People of God of the neighbouring regions. Such a regional

grouping of the neighboring Churches was a spontaneous development during the early centuries. The liturgy formed the basis of their faith traditions which were publicly celebrated by means of certain common symbols and rituals. These faith expressions were generally known and accepted by the early Christian communities. This is the background of the theological principle, '*lex orandi, lex credendi*' (Law of Prayer, Law of Faith) of the early Christian tradition.

The Church of Rome spread into the Western world irrespective of the racial, cultural and national differences. For example, the Roman Church with its Latin liturgical tradition gradually spread into North Africa, England, Ireland, Scandinavian countries, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and later during the colonial period also into North and South Americas and Afro-Asian countries.

On the other hand the Byzantine liturgical family is the most numerous. It is centred on Byzantium or Constantinople which was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Greek Melkite, Ukrainian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak, Hungarian, Italo-Albanian, Krizevcian, Bulgarian, Greek, Russian, Bylo-Russian, Albanian Churches etc. belong to the Byzantine liturgical family.

The Alexandrian liturgical family has got two branches Coptic and Ethiopian. Coptic Church is in Egypt and as the name indicates the other is in Ethiopia. The East Syrian or Chaldean liturgy was followed in the Persian Empire, India and the neighbouring countries. It is known as the Church of the East as it existed in the East outside the Roman Empire. The Antiochian liturgical tradition was followed in Syria and Lebanon. It was introduced into India in the 17th century subsequent to the Koonan Cross Protest of 1653 against the Portuguese rule. The three branches of the Antiochian family are known as Syrian, Syro-Maronite and Syro-Malankara Churches. The Armenian liturgy is followed by the Armenians. It has no subdivision.

The East Syrian liturgical tradition which is the common heritage of the Churches of the St. Thomas tradition developed outside the Graeco-Roman world, was welcomed by the Christians in the East, i.e. of China, Mongolia, India and the various islands of the region. This regional grouping of the Churches was not at all objected on the basis of nationalism. The practical autonomy of the local Churches enabled them to develop their own indigenous identity. For example, though the Church of the Thomas Christians of India formed part of the regional grouping of the Church of the East,

they had their own unique administrative system which differed from that of the Persian Church. In the liturgical traditions also there were certain local differences. The Churches outside did not share the same ecclesiastical legislative and administrative systems which developed within the Roman World.

The history of the great religions of Asia teaches us that they were not confined to the nations of their origin. In the Christian tradition also we can observe various spiritual movements spreading across the national borders. The great monastic movements which developed in the East were warmly welcomed into the West. Similarly at a later period many Religious Orders which had their origin and development in the concrete context of the Western Europe, have in course of time did spread also into the Afro-Asian countries admitting adherents from all over. It is true that India was well known from very ancient times for its saints, sages and monasticism. But, this religious heritage did not stand in the way of welcoming the Religious Orders, Congregations and Societies from outside which still have their central administrative head quarters in Europe. Thus history teaches us that the faith traditions of the great religions, their forms of worship and spiritual heritage were never confined to any particular country. Many Religious Orders and Congregations which have their origin in the Afro-Asian world have drawn inspiration from the Religious movements in the West. The Spiritual values and related movements are by their very nature universal. The same phenomenon can be observed in the spreading of the liturgical traditions of the Churches.

In course of time, the Roman Catholic Church developed a highly centralized administrative system with a solid legal set up. During the early centuries of the Christian era, the Eastern and Western Churches lived in communion with their own legitimate diversity in liturgy, spirituality, discipline, administrative system etc. But during the subsequent centuries because of various vicissitudes of history there was an increasing alienation between these Churches.

Each Church began to develop its own system in isolation. The doctrinal disputes aggravated this alienation. But the various modern studies of the early historical sources of the Church especially with an ecumenical openness have prepared the way for a better mutual understanding. In this process, as legitimate heirs of the venerable heritage of the early Church, the Eastern Churches have a great role to play in rediscovering the true nature of the Catholic

Church as the communion of Churches. Hence Pope John Paul II has repeatedly spoken about the urgent need of the Church to breathe again with the two lungs, the Eastern and Western.

2. Doctrinal Controversies and Divisions

The Christological controversies regarding the two natures and one person of Christ led to the doctrinal definition of the Council of Ephesus in 431. Lack of precision in the application of Greek terms to Christology and traditional rivalry between the patriarchates have deepened the gap and lessened the possibility for a solution. The condemnation of Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople under the leadership of the Alexandrian Patriarch Cyril, led to a division between these two Churches and people. The expulsion of Nestorius from the Empire despite his orthodox explanation has won him sympathizers, especially in the East. Those who defended or sympathized with Nestorius began to be branded as Nestorians.

The compromise reached in 433 between Cyril of Alexandria and the Antiochians paved the way for further divisions and disputes. The Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria defended an archimandrite Eutyches who denied the distinctiveness of the human nature of Christ. His teaching was rejected and condemned in the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The definition of the Council of Chalcedon was rejected by a section of the Alexandrians and Antiochians. They are known as anti-Chalcedonians or Monophysites. At present they are called Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Another major division took place in 1054. The Papal representative Cardinal Humbert and the Patriarch Michael Caerularius of Constantinople excommunicated each other. It was the beginning of a long period of mutual alienation and estrangement between the Byzantine and Roman Churches. These Churches of the Byzantine family are generally known as Eastern Orthodox Churches.

THE DIFFERENT ORIENTAL CHURCHES

We have already seen the general background of these Churches. Now we have to see them individually. In this brief survey we have been forced to limit ourselves to the most salient features of these Churches. We have classified these Churches on the basis of their liturgical families which include those in communion with Rome and also those without.

THE CHURCHES IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNION

Roman

Antiochian : Syrian
Maronite
Syro-Malankara

Church of the East : Chaldean
Syro-Malabar

Armenian

Alexandrian : Coptic
Ethiopian

Byzantine : Greek Melkite Ukrainian
Rumanian Ruthenian
Slovak Hungarian
Italo-Albanian Krizevci (Yugoslavia)
Russian Greek
Bulgarian Byelorussian
Albanian

- I. The Church of the East liturgical Family
- II. The Alexandrian liturgical Family
- III. The Antiochian liturgical Family
- IV. The Armenian liturgical Family
- V. The Byzantine liturgical Family

I. THE CHURCH OF THE EAST LITURGICAL FAMILY

1. The Assyrian Church of the East

This Church has its origin in the ancient Persian Empire. The Churches of Edessa, Seleucia-Ctesiphon and Persia Proper formed part of this family. Apostle St. Thomas or his disciples Addai and Mari are believed to be the founders of these Churches. The Church in India which was also founded by St. Thomas kept a very close contact and hierarchical communion with the Persian Church.

After the Synod of Ephesus in 431 because of the domineering attitude of Cyril of Alexandria at the Council there were reactions

against the condemnation of Nestorius. In their liturgical tradition true Catholic faith was maintained. In their canonical collections there are explicit statements accepting the Roman Primacy and communion. The Christological teaching of Babai the Great (551-628) who was their great theologian admits the Catholic faith.

The political rivalry between the Persian and Roman Empires forced them to follow a kind of practical autonomy. This Church was well known for its missionary zeal and expansion. It extended as far as Tibet, India, China and Mongolia. In the 14th century there were about 20 Metropolitan provinces and 200 suffragan dioceses.

Since 1450 the Patriarchal office became hereditary, from uncle to nephew. In 1552 a section of the hierarchy and people chose a monk John Siud Sulaqa, as a rival candidate and sent him to Rome. Pope Julius III approved him as the Patriarch of the Chaldean Church. It was the beginning of two rival lines of Patriarchs with shifting communion with the Roman See. In 1968 there was a new division among them. Now discussions are going on for a reconciliation. Dialogue was going on between the Patriarch Mar Denkha IV and Rome on Christology. Finally a common Christological agreement was signed jointly by His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Patriarch Mar Denkha IV on November 11, 1994. In this agreement the traditional Christological positions of the Church of the East and of the Roman Catholics are mutually recognized to be the same in spite of the terminological differences.

LOCATION: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, USA, India, Australia, USSR, HEAD: Mar Denkha IV. Title Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. RESIDENCE: Morton Grove, Illinois, USA. Mar Addai Title: Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Bagdad, Iraq. MEMBERSHIP: 400,000.

2. The Assyrian Church of the East of Trichur

This Church is the result of a conflict which took place within the Syro-Malabar Church. From 1599 the Thomas Christians were ruled over by the bishops of the Latin rite. There were several attempts to get bishops of their own liturgical tradition. But the Latin bishops considered it a threat to their jurisdiction over them and objected. Finally as a result of the repeated requests from Malabar the Chaldean Patriarch sent a bishop, Mar Rokos in 1861. But he was forced to return. Again another bishop Mar Elias Mellus

reached in 1874. Though he too was ordered by the Latin bishops to leave India, with the strong support of a section of the Syro-Malabarians he continued there up to 1882 and finally the leadership was handed over to an Indian bishop called Mar Abdiso. He died in 1901. In 1908 a Persian bishop, Timotheos Mar Abimelek was welcomed and he organized a community at Trichur which is known as the Assyrian Church of the East. They gave up the latinized liturgical texts, and restored many of their early liturgical traditions. But in 1968 there was a division among them into Bishops party and patriarch's Party. Finally they succeeded to reach a reconciliation on Nov. 13, 1995 by deciding to form a single community.

LOCATION: Trichur, Kerala, HEAD: Metropolitan Mar Aprem, Title: Metropolitan of the Church of the East. RESIDENCE: Trichur, MEMBERSHIP 15,000.

3. The Chaldean Catholic Church

This Church belongs to the East Syrian liturgical family sharing the heritage of the Assyrian Church of the East. The approval and confirmation of the Patriarch Sulaqa in 1552 is generally considered as the event of the formal reunion of this Church with Rome. But as we have said above, their canonical collections explicitly admit the Petrine succession and unique role of the bishop of Rome in the universal Church. Though they are accused of Nestorianism, in the light of the Christological explanations of Babai the Great, their position is within the range of the legitimate diversity in Catholic theology.

The Chaldean Catholics suffered severely during the World War I. Four bishops, many priests and about 70,000 faithful were massacred. At present they have 10 dioceses in Iraq, 4 in Iran and 7 others in the Middle East and 1 in Detroit U.S.A.

LOCATION: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, France, USA HEAD: Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid, Title: Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, RESIDENCE: Baghdad, Iraq, MEMBERSHIP: 469,000

4. Syro-Malabar Church

The name *Syro-Malabar Church* is of recent origin. Their traditional name is *St. Thomas Christians* or *Mar Thoma Nazranis*.

They are as old as Christianity itself in India. The *Didascalia*, and the Fathers of the Church like St.Ephrem, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Isidore of Seville, Gregory of Tours have written about the preaching of the apostle St. Thomas in India. The Christian and non Christian traditions in India converge in this matter.

Because of various factors especially the neighbourly relations, common St.Thomas tradition, close commercial and cultural contacts etc. the Thomas Christians formed part of the vast Persian hierarchical alliance. But they could maintain a kind of practical autonomy which guaranteed their unique ecclesial identity. In the words of Placid J.Podipara, a great historian, "the Thomas Christians are Indian in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship."

The Portuguese colonizers reached India in 1498 and gradually they became the masters along the Western coast of India. From 1599 for nearly three centuries they ruled over the Thomas Christians. It was a period of protests, tensions and disastrous divisions. Finally in 1896 they got bishops of their own Church. But the latinization went on uncurbed mainly through the clerical and religious formation after the Western Latin pattern.

After the Vatican II there are efforts to regain and reestablish what is lost. But the neo-colonial mentality of identification with the alien foreign traditions is the main obstacle for this recovery. There is a Major Archbishop (16.12.1992) as the head of the Syro-Malabar Church.

LOCATION: India, especially Kerala State MEMBERSHIP: 3,300,000. HEAD: Major Archbishop Mar Antony Cardinal Padiyara. RESIDENCE: Ernakulam, MEMBERSHIP: 3,300,000

II. ALEXANDRIAN LITURGICAL FAMILY

By the Alexandrian Churches we mean the Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Coptic Catholic and Ethiopian Catholic Churches which belong to the same Alexandrian liturgical family.

1. Coptic Orthodox Church

According to ancient Alexandrian tradition St.Mark was martyred there in 63 A.D. Alexandria emerged as a well known centre for

theological learning and monastic tradition. Because of various factors especially the Byzantine domination, the definition of the Council of Chalcedon was rejected by the majority of Alexandrians. They began to be known as Coptic (Egypt) Church having their Patriarchal residence at the desert monastery of St. Macarius. In the 9th century Arabic replaced Coptic and Islamic rule was imposed.

The Coptic liturgy has developed from the original Greek rite of Alexandria with its characteristics of a monastic nature.

The Copts, though a minority in Egypt, form the largest Christian community in the Middle East. They have 12 monasteries, 600 monks, 6 convents and 300 nuns.

LOCATION: Egypt and diaspora in Europe, Africa, Australia, the Americas HEAD: Pope Shenouda III, Title Pope of Alexandria, Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, RESIDENCE: Cairo, Egypt, MEMBERSHIP : 3,900,000.

2. The Coptic Catholic Church

The Coptic Catholic Church is the result of the activities of the Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries among Copts. Capuchin missions started in 1630 and the Jesuits in 1675. Franciscan Friars effectively followed it up.

In 1741 a Coptic bishop Amba Athanasius came into Catholic communion and there was a Catholic community of about 2000 under him. In 1824 the Coptic Catholic Patriarchate was established. But it ceased to exist and was reestablished by Pope Leo XIII in 1895. Cyril Makarios who was made patriarch in 1899, joined the Orthodox Church and as a result from 1910 up to 1947 the see remained vacant.

The New Patriarch was appointed in 1947. There are six dioceses, 200 priests and about 153000 faithful. Unlike the Orthodox the Catholics do not have monasteries.

LOCATION: Egypt. HEAD: Patriarch Stephanos II Ghattas TITLE: Patriarch of Alexandria of the Copts. RESIDENCE: Cairo, Egypt. MEMBERSHIP: 190,000

3. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church

St. Frumentius (4th century) is considered to be the first great evangelizer of Ethiopia. Coptic missionaries followed up his work and with the conversion of the King in the 4th century the Church became the official religion of the Kingdom. In the 5th century a group of missionaries, probably from Syria known as "Nine Saints", reached Ethiopia. Their religious and cultural influence on Ethiopia is unique.

The Ethiopian liturgy belongs to the Alexandrian family. Monasticism is deep-rooted. From ancient times Ethiopia was getting Coptic bishops from Alexandria. In 1929 four Ethiopian bishops were appointed to assist the Coptic Metropolitan from Egypt. In 1951 an Ethiopian Metropolitan was chosen and in 1959 the Coptic patriarchate confirmed the independence of the Ethiopian Church by raising the rank of their Metropolitan to Patriarch. Until the Marxist revolution of 1974 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the official religion.

LOCATION: Ethiopia, small diaspora: HEAD: Patriarch Paulos
TITLE: Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. RESIDENCE:
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. MEMBERSHIP: 16,000,000.

4. The Eritrean Orthodox Church

Eritrea was the site of the ancient Christian kingdom of Aksum. As a result of the Islamic conquest they were forced to withdraw and a new kingdom was established. It continued until it fell under the Ottoman rule in the 16th century. It was an Italian colony from 1890 to 1941 after which it came under the British. In 1952 it was made a province of Ethiopia. After long struggle it became independent on May 14, 1993. The bishops of the country obtained the necessary approval from the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch Pope Shenouda III for its separation from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian Patriarchate also approved its autocephalous status. On 19 June 1994 Pope Shenouda ordained five new bishops for the Eritrean Church. The Coptic Orthodox Patriarch enjoys the Primacy of Honour among the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

LOCATION: Eritrea, HEAD: Archbishop Philipose, TITLE:
Archbishop of Eritrea, RESIDENCE: Asmara, Eritrea, MEMBERSHIP:
1,700,000.

5. The Ethiopian Catholic Church

As in the case of the Coptic Catholic Church the efforts for reunion with Rome was started by the Latin missionaries in the 16th century. The king Susenyos became Catholic and Catholicism was imposed as the official religion. A Portuguese Jesuit Affonso Mendez was appointed Patriarch of Ethiopia. The imposition of Catholicism, the new patriarchal appointment and the subsequent latinization provoked the people and there was a violent reaction. After the death of Susenyos in 1632 the union with Rome came to an end and a long period of 200 years elapsed without any contact with the Catholic missions. In 1839 Lazarists and Capuchins started working among them and from 1889 the Catholic missionaries began to enjoy freedom. During the period of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1937-1945) reunion efforts were intensified. In 1961 a Metropolitan See was established at Addis Ababa with two suffragan dioceses. In 1919 an Ethiopian Seminary was started in Rome.

LOCATION: Ethiopia, HEAD: Cardinal Paulos Tzadua, Title: Archbishop of Addis Ababa of the Ethiopians, RESIDENCE: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, MEMBERSHIP: 141,000

III. THE ANTIOCHIAN LITURGICAL FAMILY

Antiochian liturgical Family includes the Syrian Orthodox, Malankara Syrian Orthodox, Malankara Orthodox Syrian, Maronite and Syro Malankara Catholic Churches which are associated in the West Syrian or Antiochian liturgical tradition.

1. Syrian Orthodox Church

The Antiochian Church traces its origin to the apostolic preaching as evidenced in the Acts of the Apostles. Antioch became a renowned centre of theological reflections.

The Christological definition of the Council of Chalcedon resulted in a split in this Church in the 6th century. Under the leadership of Jacob Baradai (545-578) anti-Chalcedonian feeling spread rapidly and after him it began to be known as Jacobitism. During the Middle Ages there were prominent schools of theology, philosophy and other sciences in this Church. The Mongolian invasion under Timur (14th century) destroyed the churches and devastated

their territories. During and after the World War I there were massacres and persecutions in Eastern Turkey. Many migrated into Lebanon. Monastic heritage is deep rooted in the Antiochian tradition. Its important theological centre is St.Ephrem Syrian Orthodox Seminary. It was shifted from Mosul to Lebanon in 1960.

LOCATION: Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel, India, diaspora,
 HEAD: Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I, Title: Syrian Orthodox Patriarch
 of Antioch and all the East, RESIDENCE: Damascus, Syria,
 MEMBERSHIP: 250,000, plus 1,000,000 in India.

2 & 3 The Malankara Syrian Orthodox and The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Churches

The Malankara Syrian Orthodox and Malankara Orthodox Syrian Churches have a common history up to 1912.

During the period of Latin rule (1599-1896) over the Thomas Christians there was a public protest in 1653 against the Portuguese and the missionaries who were systematically destroying their venerable traditions through latinization. In 1665 a section of the people welcomed a Syrian Jacobite Prelate called Mar Gregorios from Antioch. This marks the beginning of their Antiochian connection.

In the 19th century there was an intense Anglican influence on the community. It led to litigation and division which reached its climax in 1876. In the Synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876, held under the auspices of the Patriarch of Antioch, those who favoured anglicanization were separated. They form the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. They have about 700,000 members.

At the Synod of Mulanthuruthy which was convened and conducted under the auspices of the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch they accepted the supreme authority of the Patriarch. But the claims of the Patriarchal authority over the temporal administration met with opposition. One section of the community accepted it while the others objected to it. As a result the community was divided into Patriarch's Party and the Bishops Party. The Bishops' Party succeeded to bring the retired Patriarch Abdul Mesih from Antioch who established a Catholicosate at Kottayam. Litigation started between the both parties which continues even now on the legitimacy of each one's position and the right over the Church property. The Bishop's Party is known as the Malankara Orthodox

Syrian Church while the Patriarch's Party as Malankara Syrian Orthodox church. In 1975 The Patriarch of Antioch established a Catholicosate for the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. The Catholicos resides at Moovattupuzha, Kerala.

There are efforts for reaching a reconciliation which is highly recommended by the recent verdict of the Supreme Court of India.

Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church: LOCATION: India HEAD: Mar Baselios Paulos II, Residence at Moovattupuzha, Kerala, 12 Bishops.

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church: LOCATION: India, small diaspora, HEAD: Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews II, RESIDENCE: Kottayam, Kerala, 19 Bishops. MEMBERSHIP: 1,500,000 (including the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church).

4. Thozhiyoor Church (Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyoor)

In 1772 a Syrian Jacobite bishop, Mar Gregorios, came to India and ordained a local monk as bishop, Koorilos. Because of political and religious rivalry and opposition he had to go the then British Malabar. There he established The Malabar Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyoor. They have close links with the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

LOCATION: Kunnamkulam, Kerala. HEAD: Mar Koorilos IX; MEMBERSHIP 5000.

5. Marthoma Syrian Church

The origin of the Marthoma Syrian Church is intimately connected with the Anglican influence among the Syrian Jacobites of Kerala. In a synod held in 1818 at Mavelikara it was decided to welcome the services of the Anglican missionaries. But in another synod held in 1836 they decided to put an end to the Anglican alliance. Such a decision was not pleasing to a section of the community under the leadership of Mar Abraham Malpan Palakunnathu who had identified themselves with the so called "renewal movement" initiated by the Anglican missionaries. Mathews Mar Athanasius, nephew of mar Abraham Malpan was its supporter. A division took place within the community and the Jacobite Patriarch Peter III of Antioch came to Malabar and assembled a synod at Mulanthuruthy

in 1876. The "Renewal Party" was disowned by the synod. Hence they organized themselves as a separate Church and took the name Mar Thoma Syrian Church. Thomas Mar Athanasius, gave initial leadership to them. They have given up some of the traditional faith traditions such as prayer for the dead, intercession of the saints, concept of sacrifice of the Holy Qurbana etc. These deviations cast shadow on the Oriental character of their Church. Their intercommunion with the Church of South India which consists of the Protestant Churches has widened the gap in their relation with those Thomas Christians who follow the Oriental traditions.

LOCATION: India, Malaysia, Singapore, U.K., HEAD: Metropolitan Alexander Mar Theophilos, RESIDENCE: Pulathin Aramana, Tiruvalla. Dioceses: 7; MEMBERSHIP: 700,000.

6. The Maronite Catholic Church

The Maronite Church belongs to the Antiochian family. It draws its name from St. Maron whose monastery was located midway between Aleppo and Antioch. The monks of this monastery accepted the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon. In the 8th century they moved to the mountains of Lebanon and developed their own hierarchical autonomy. In the 12th century they came into contact with the Latin missionaries. Their first Patriarch was Jeremias Al-Amshitti (1199-1230). His participation in the Lateran Council of 1215 marked the beginning of a long period of latinization. The Turks conquered Lebanon in the 16th century. In 1946 at the end of the World War II Lebanon was given independence. Civil War broke out in 1975 and a lasting solution is not yet reached.

The Maronite Patriarch resides at Bherke near Beirut. They have 9 dioceses in Lebanon, 6 in the Middle East, and one each in United States, Canada and Australia.

LOCATION: Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Egypt, Brazil, USA, Canada, Australia, HEAD: Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, Title: Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites RESIDENCE: Bkerke, Lebanon, MEMBERSHIP: 3,304,000

7. Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

Ever since the separation of a section of the Thomas Christians from the Catholic communion there were many efforts from both

sides for reconciliation. The division was mainly at the hierarchical level. The faith and traditions of the community continued unaffected. The restoration of the authentic traditions and Oriental hierarchy were the necessary conditions for the reconciliation. But, the Latin bishops and missionaries who were ruling over them were not prepared to give up their jurisdiction over the Thomas Christians. The various attempts for reconciliation under the leadership of Mar Dionysius I, Frs. Joseph Cariattil and Thomas Paremmakkal, Nidheery Mani etc. failed mainly because of the lack of cooperation of the foreign missionaries of the Padroado and Propaganda jurisdictions.

Finally in 1926 under the leadership of Mar Ivanios, a Jacobite Metropolitan, official discussions with Rome were started. Rome accepted their conditions and a favourable atmosphere was created for the reunion. The reunion took place on 20th September 1930. The Syro-Malankara hierarchy was established in 1932. Now they are hierarchically constituted into the Archdiocese of Trivandrum and dioceses Tiruvalla and Battery.

LOCATION: Kerala State, India, HEAD: Cyril Mar Baseliose
 Title: Metropolitan of Trivandrum of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Trivandrum and dioceses of Tiruvalla and Sultan Battery. Bishops 4. RESIDENCE: Trivandrum, Kerala State, India, MEMBERSHIP: 310,000

IV. THE ARMENIAN LITURGICAL FAMILY

1. The Armenian Apostolic Church

As a result of the preaching of St. Gregory the Illuminator (4th century) King Tiridates III was converted to Christianity and the Church became the official religion of Armenia in the 4th century. Etchmiadzin became the ecclesiastical centre of the Armenian Church. It is believed that a monk of this Church, Mesrob, gave shape to the Armenian alphabet.

The ancient Armenian kingdom was destroyed in the 11th century and subsequently a new kingdom was established by the exiles at Cilicia in South Central Asia Minor. This kingdom ceased to exist in the 14th century. At present the Armenians exist in the diaspora and former USSR. Their holy city Etchmiadzin was in the Soviet Union.

The Armenian liturgy is influenced by the Syriac, Jerusalem and Byzantine liturgical traditions. The commonly acknowledged spiritual head of the Armenian Church is the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin who has jurisdiction over the Armenians in the USSR and the diaspora including Iraq, India, Egypt, Ethiopia, Europe and the America. In addition they have the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople and the Catholicosate of Cilicia. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is centred at the St. James Monastery and takes care of the holy places of the city. The Patriarchate of Constantinople has jurisdiction in Turkey. In 1914 its membership was 1,35,000 and at present nearly 40,000! The Catholicosate of Cilicia with the see in Antelias, Lebanon, has jurisdiction in Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Iran and Greece. Its membership is about 800,000.

The Armenian Apostolic Church has four seminaries, at Etchmiadzin, Jerusalem, Cilicia and New York. The Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin has bishops throughout the diaspora.

LOCATION: Armenia, diaspora HEAD: Catholicos Karekin I; Title: Catholics Supreme Patriarch of all the Armenians; RESIDENCE: Etchmiadzin, Armenia; MEMBERSHIP: 6,000,000. Altogether they are about 7150000.

2. The Armenian Catholic Church

The contacts with the Latin crusaders paved the way for the reunion of the Armenian Church in Cilicia which lasted from 1198 to 1375. This union with Rome led to the adoption of many Latin practices into the Armenian Church.

In 1439 the Council of Florence published a decree of reunion with the Armenian Apostolic Church. In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV established the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate. But the Ottoman civil law created a crisis by demanding the Armenian Catholics to submit to the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch of Constantinople who was not in communion with Rome. In 1830 under the pressure of the French government the Armenian Catholic community was recognized by the Ottoman government. The Armenian Orthodox Church along with their Oriental Orthodox brethren suffered heavily at the end of the World War I.

LOCATION: Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Diaspora. HEAD: Patriarch Jean Pierre XVIII Kasparian TITLE: Patriarch of

Cilicia of the Armenians. RESIDENCE: Beirut, Lebanon: MEMBERSHIP: 249,000

V. THE BYZANTINE LITURGICAL FAMILY

The Churches of the Eastern Orthodox family belong to the Byzantine liturgical tradition. They accept the first seven Ecumenical Councils. The Churches of the Byzantine family form a communion with a rich variety. These Churches are divided into four categories:

1. Autocephalous Churches
2. Autonomous Churches
3. Canonical Churches under Constantinople
4. Churches of Irregular Status

The separation between Rome and Constantinople is the result of centuries old conflicts and estrangement. Rome was the capital of the Western Roman Empire and Constantinople of the Eastern. Political, religious, theological and disciplinary factors have paved the way for this mutual alienation. The Byzantine Church backed by the Emperors played a dominant role in the ecclesiastical life in the East especially in the field of evangelization. The 3rd Canon of the First Council of Constantinople (381) and the 28th canon of the Council of Chalcedon (451) asserted the pre-eminence of the Byzantine See after Rome, on the basis of its political importance as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Consequently it preceded the ancient Sees of Alexandria and Antioch. Though Rome did not accept this Byzantine claim it was commonly accepted by all the other Churches. The addition of '*Filioque*' to the Creed by the Latins, efforts for centralization in Rome, iconoclastic controversy, the new political leadership of Papacy with the formation of the Papal States etc. were added reasons for the conflict between Byzantium and Rome. This conflict reached its zenith in 1054 when the Papal legate Cardinal Humbert dared to excommunicate the Byzantine Patriarch. The crusaders aggravated the split by plundering the Byzantine churches.

1. THE AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCHES

These Churches which are in full sacramental and canonical communion are considered independent and autonomous in ecclesiastical matters. There are 15 Orthodox Churches, of this

category. Among them the four ancient Patriarchal Churches Constantinople Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem occupy a unique position. The others are the Churches of Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, Czechoslovakia and America. But Constantinople does not recognize the Church of Czechoslovakia, while Russia does.

(a) The Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople

As the Church of the capital with its prestigious Cathedral Hagia Sophia in Constantinople the imperial capital enjoyed a unique position in the East. The alienation from the West is the result of a series of unfortunate events from both sides. Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453. Because of the unfriendly relations between the Turks and Greeks many left for other countries.

LOCATION: Turkey, Greece, the Americas, Western Europe, Australia, HEAD: Patriarch Dimitrios I, Title: Archbishop of Constantinople/New Rome, Ecumenical Patriarch, RESIDENCE: Istanbul (Constantinople), Turkey. MEMBERSHIP: 3,500,000.

(b) The Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

Originally they followed Coptic liturgy. By the 12th century they adopted the Byzantine liturgy. During the Islamic persecution they suffered heavily. Only in 1846 their Patriarch could reside in Alexandria. Through immigration there is an increase in membership. It has spread also into some of the African countries.

LOCATION: Egypt, the rest of Africa. HEAD: Pope Parthenios III. Title: Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, RESIDENCE: Alexandria, Egypt. MEMBERSHIP: 250,000.

(c) The Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

The Council of Chalcedon was a turning point in their history too. Those who accepted chalcedon was a minority who were mostly Greeks or hellenized people. They came under the Arabs in 638 and under the Turks in 1085. During the Byzantine rule between 969 and 1085 the Syriac liturgy was replaced by the Byzantine which process became complete by the 12th century. The Patriarchate was transferred to Damascus in the 14th century. The area was under the Turks until World War I. Many are migrating into other countries.

LOCATION: Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, the Americas, Australia,
HEAD: Patriarch Ignatius IV, **Title:** Patriarch of Antioch and All The
 East, **RESIDENCE:** Damascus, Syria, **MEMBERSHIP:** 750,000.

d) The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is of unique importance in the Christian tradition. There were monasteries between Jerusalem and Dead Sea. At the Council of Chalcedon (451) it was decided to raise Jerusalem to the dignity of a Patriarchate. A section of 60 dioceses were detached from Antioch and a new Patriarchate was formed. But the Persian (614) and Arab (637) invasions were disastrous to this patriarchate. In 1099 Jerusalem was taken by the Latins. In 1187 the Seljuk Turks occupied Jerusalem and the Ottoman Turks in 1516. The Byzantine liturgy is celebrated in Greek in monasteries and in Arabic in the parishes.

LOCATION: Israel and Jordan, **HEAD:** Patriarch Diodoros I,
Title: The Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, **RESIDENCE:**
 Jerusalem, **MEMBERSHIP:** 260,000.

OTHER ORTHODOX AUTOCEPHALOUS CHURCHES

We have already seen the four ancient Patriarchate among the Orthodox autocephalous Churches. There are other eleven Orthodox autocephalous Churches which became independent at a relatively later period. The Orthodox Churches of Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, Czechoslovakia and America belong to this category.

a) The Russian Orthodox Church

According to tradition the Byzantine form of Christianity was introduced into Kiev in the 10th century. It developed its own art, architecture and ecclesial identity. There was a division in the 17th century. It was due to a reaction to the liturgical reform. The Patriarchate was officially established in 1598 by the Byzantine Patriarch. The Bolshevik revolution (1917) was a turning point. In 1990 thanks to the reforms introduced by President Mikhail Gorbachev there is considerable improvement in religious freedom.

LOCATION: Russia and other Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, diaspora **HEAD:** Vacant. **Title:** Patriarch of

Moscow, All Russia, RESIDENCE: Moscow, USSR, MEMBERSHIP: 60,000,000

b) The Serbian Orthodox Church

Christianity was introduced into Serbia (ancient Dalmatia) only in the 7th century. During the reign of King Steven Dushan the Serbian Patriarchate was established at Pec in 1346. It was later recognized by Constantinople. The Turkish conquest in 1389 and the subsequent suppression of the Patriarchate in 1459 and its restoration in 1557 are turning points in its history. In 1918 the multinational state of Yugoslavia was formed which paved the way for the amalgamation of various Orthodox jurisdictions and formation of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

LOCATION: Yugoslavia, Western Europe, North America, Australia, HEAD: Patriarch Pavle I, Title: Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci, Patriarch of the Serbians. RESIDENCE: Belgrade, Yugoslavia. MEMBERSHIP: 8,000,000.

c) The Orthodox Church of Romania

Romania is in the ancient Dacia and belongs to the Latin culture. Latin and Byzantine missionaries worked in this area. By the 14th century its Orthodox identity became obvious. The two principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were united in 1859 and Romania became independent in 1878. Constantinople recognized its autocephalous status in 1885. It was raised to a Patriarchate in 1925. Because of the previous cooperation between the communist regime and the Church leadership the overthrow of communism and its political system has created confusion and reaction in the Romanian Church.

LOCATION: Romania, diaspora in Western Europe and North America, HEAD: Patriarch Teoctist I, Title: Archbishop of Bucharest, Metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia, Patriarch of the Rumanian Orthodox Church. RESIDENCE: Bucharest, Romania, MEMBERSHIP: 19,000,000.

d) The Orthodox Church of Bulgaria

Though there was early Christian presence in and around Sardica the baptism of King Boris I in 865 marked the beginning of a systematic christianization of Bulgaria. In 927 the king of Bulgaria was recognized

as Emperor by Constantinople and the bishop of Preslav as the Patriarch. In 1018 the Byzantines suppressed the Patriarchate. But as the result of a compromise it was restored in 1235. But it was integrated into the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1393. Finally in 1870 it was reestablished as an autonomous Patriarchate.

LOCATION: Bulgaria, small diaspora in Europe and America, **HEAD:** Patriarch Maxim: **Title:** Metropolitan of Sofia, Patriarch of all Bulgaria, **RESIDENCE:** Sofia, Bulgaria, **MEMBERSHIP:** 8,000,000.

e) The Orthodox Church of Georgia

The missionary activity of St. Nino, a slave girl is largely responsible for the rapid spread of Christianity in Georgia. In 337 the kingdom of Iberia (East Georgia) accepted Christianity as its official religion and by 5th century it became completely Christian. In 467 it became a fully autonomous Church. The Church of Iberia was dependent on Antioch. From 11th to the 13th century was its golden age. But the Mongolian attacks under Genghis Khan (13th cent.) and Timur (15th cent.) had disastrous consequences in the Church. In 1801 it was annexed by Russians and its patriarchate was suppressed in 1811. This century the Georgian Church again became autonomous and in 1990 the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople recognized its Patriarchal title.

LOCATION: Georgian Republic (USSR) small diaspora, **HEAD:** Catholicos Ilia II, **Title:** Catholicos- Patriarch of All Georgia, **RESIDENCE:** Tbilisi, Georgia, USSR, **MEMBERSHIP:** 3,000,000.

f) The Orthodox Church of Cyprus

It originally formed part of the Antiochian Church. The Council of Ephesus (431) recognized its autonomy. From 7th to 10th century it came under the Arab attacks.

Cyprus has undergone various political vicissitudes and shifting of allegiances. The Byzantine Emperor Justinian II evacuated the people from the island and settled them in a new city called Nea Justiniana. In 1191 Cyprus was conquered by King Richard of England. Later (1192) it was handed over to the exiled French king, Guy de Lusignan. In 1571 Ottoman Turks took it over and banished the Latin hierarchy and recognized the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. In 1914 Britain annexed it and when it became independent in 1960 Archbishop Makarios III was elected President.

LOCATION: Cyprus, HEAD: Archbishop Chrysostomos, Title: Archbishop of Nea Justiniana and All Cyprus, RESIDENCE: Nicosia, MEMBERSHIP: 442,000.

g) The Orthodox Church of Greece

In 1832 the Orthodox Church of Greece came into existence as an autocephalous Church when Turkey granted freedom to the state of Greece. The liberation movement was led by the Orthodox hierarchy for which they had to pay a heavy price. In 1833 the Church of Greece was declared autocephalous and 1850 Constantinople recognized it. The famous Mount Athos belongs to this Church.

LOCATION: Greece, HEAD: Archbishop Seraphim, Title: Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, RESIDENCE: Athens, Greece, MEMBERSHIP: 9,025,000.

h) The Orthodox Church of Poland

The Orthodox Church of Poland became autocephalous when Constantinople recognized it in 924. It was considered a violation of the rights of the patriarchate of Moscow. In 1948 following the communist take over of Poland the recognition of Constantinople was declared null and Soviet Union made their own recognition.

LOCATION: Poland, HEAD: Metropolitan Basil, Title: Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland, RESIDENCE: Warsaw, Poland, MEMBERSHIP: 570,000

i) The Orthodox Church of Albania

Albania became an independent nation soon after the Balkan Wars (1912-13). In 1922 an Orthodox Congress held at Berat unilaterally declared the autocephalous status of the Albanian Orthodox Church. The recognition of Constantinople was rejected by the government which was followed by a schism. But it was regularized in 1937. With the Communist take over in 1945 all the religious institutions including churches were closed. Hence this Church was forced to exist in underground. But the political changes in the Soviet union did have the effect also on Albania regarding the religious freedom.

LOCATION: Albania underground, diaspora, HEAD: Archbishop Anastasios, the last primate, MEMBERSHIP: Estimated at 160,000 in 1961.

j) The Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia

It was a Catholic country. But a nationalist movement after the World War I under the leadership of a Catholic priest Matej Pavlík led them into the Orthodox fold. A Serbian Orthodox bishop ordained him bishop. In 1950 Byzantine rite Catholics of Slovakia also joined them. The Patriarchate of Moscow granted autocephalous status in 1951. But it was rejected by Constantinople.

LOCATION: Czechoslovakia, HEAD: Metropolitan Dorteos, Title: Archbishop of Prague, Metropolitan of All Czechoslovakia, RESIDENCE: Prague, Czechoslovakia, MEMBERSHIP: 150,000.

k) The Orthodox Church in America

Orthodox Church entered North America through Alaska which was sold to the United States in 1868. A significant number of Eastern Catholics joined them because of the opposition of the Latin hierarchy of America to the married clergy. In 1907 the Moscow Patriarchate granted the title of Archbishop. The granting of autocephalous status in 1970 by Moscow was strongly opposed by Constantinople. The Orthodox Church of America is at present multi-ethnic in character.

LOCATION: North America, HEAD: Metropolitan Theodosius, Title: Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, RESIDENCE: New York, MEMBERSHIP 1,000,000.

2. THE AUTONOMOUS ORTHODOX CHURCHES

The Churches of this category are independent Churches except for the confirmation of their head by another Orthodox Church. They are the following:

1. The Orthodox Church of Mount Sinai

The Mount Sinai is of great historical importance. There existed ancient monastic communities. The area was conquered in 7th century by the Moslem Arabs. In 681 the see of Pharan which belonged to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was transferred to Catherine's monastery in Mount Sinai with the title Abbot Archbishop. He is

to be ordained by the Patriarch of Jerusalem who is commemorated in the liturgy. Their monastery is world famous for its collections of ancient manuscripts and icons. It has got dependent monasteries and churches in other countries.

LOCATION: Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, HEAD: Abbot of St. Catherine's monastery, Pharan, and Raitho; RESIDENCE: Cairo, Egypt; MEMBERSHIP: 900.

b) Orthodox Church of Finland

Though the earliest community was Byzantine at a later period Swedish missionaries of the Latin tradition also evangelized. In the 17th century the Lutheran faith spread and the Orthodox were persecuted. In 1809 Finland was conquered by the Czars and it became part of the Russian Empire. In the 19th century the Orthodox Karelians asserted their national identity and translated the liturgical texts and ecclesiastical sources into Finish. After becoming independent from Russia in 1917 in the following year they declared their ecclesiastical independence from Moscow. In 1923 it came under the protection of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. When an archbishop is appointed his election has to be confirmed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

LOCATION: Finland, HEAD: Archbishop John, Title: Archbishop of Karelia and All Finland, RESIDENCE: Kuopio, Finland, MEMBERSHIP: 57,000

c) The Orthodox Church of Japan:

Its origin is in the second half of the 19th century with the arrival of a young Russian priest-monk missionary, Nicolaus Kassathin. He did succeed to baptize about 20,000 Japanese into the Orthodox Church tradition. Their liturgical texts are in the Japanese language. They have about 100 worshipping communities. The election of the head of the Japanese Orthodox Church should be confirmed by the Patriarch of Moscow.

LOCATION: Japan, HEAD: Metropolitan Theodotius, Title: Archbishop of Tokyo and Metropolitan of All Japan. RESIDENCE: Tokyo, Japan, MEMBERSHIP: 30,000.

d) The Orthodox Church of China

The first Orthodox Christian community descends from those Russian Cossacks who were brought to China by the Chinese Emperor

as his body guards. The mission started only in the 19th century. After 1917 there were many Orthodox emigrants from Russia. Though there were about 300,000 faithful, 200 priests, 150 parishes and two monasteries after the Chinese revolution it had only a nominal survival with about 20,000 faithful, 30 priests and two bishops in Shanghai and Peking. In 1957 the Chinese Orthodox Church was granted autonomous status by Moscow. The details of the actual situation of the Church is not available!

3. THE CANONICAL CHURCHES UNDER CONSTANTINOPLE

The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople has extended canonical protection to these Churches. As a sign of their legitimacy and communion Constantinople provides Holy Chrism and the names of their bishops.

The Churches of this category are the following:

1. The American Carpatho-Russian orthodox Greek Catholic Church
2. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America and Canada
3. The Russian orthodox Archdiocese of Western Europe
4. The Albanian Orthodox diocese of America
5. The Byelorussian Council of Orthodox Churches in North America.

a) **The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church**

It consists of those immigrants who originally belonged to the Ruthenian Catholic Church. As a result of the Roman decree "*Cum Data Fuerit*" of 1929 the newly ordained and newly arrived Catholic priest immigrants to U.S.A. had to follow the law of obligatory celibacy. The attitude of the Latin Catholic bishops and the Vatican policy led them to the Orthodox fold. They felt the Roman policy counter to the agreement at the time of the reunion. Under the leadership of Fr. Orestes Chornock they appealed to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Fr. Chornock was ordained bishop in 1938 at Constantinople and the new diocese was kept under the spiritual supervision of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and south America and under the protection of Constantinople.

LOCATION: The United States, **HEAD:** Bishop Nicholas of Amispos, **RESIDENCE:** 312 Garfield Street, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, **MEMBERSHIP:** 100,000.

b) The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America and Canada.

This Church was canonically recognized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1937. The request was made by a group of Orthodox Ukrainians under the leadership of Fr. Bogdan Spilka who was ordained the first bishop. This Church uses the traditional Slavonic in the liturgy instead of Ukrainian.

LOCATION: The United States and Canada. **HEAD:** Bishop Vsevolod of Scopelos, **RESIDENCE:** Bronx, New York. **MEMBERSHIP** 35,000

c) The Russian Orthodox Archdiocese in Western Europe

In 1920 a group of Russian orthodox bishops who were in exile after the Revolution of 1917, assembled Constantinople to form a temporary autonomous Church. The pro-Communist Russian Patriarch Tikhon condemned such a move and in 1921 appointed Metropolitan Evlogius for the emigrants in Western Europe. In 1927 Metropolitan Evlogius was suspended which resulted in a division among the emigrants. In 1931 under the leadership of Metropolitan Evlogius an appeal was made to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the latter extended canonical protection over them.

LOCATION: Western Europe, **HEAD:** Archbishop Sergius Konovalov, **Title:** Russian Orthodox Archbishop of Western Europe. **RESIDENCE:** Paris France, **MEMBERSHIP:** About 100,000.

d) The Albanian orthodox Diocese of America

As a result of the suppression of the Orthodox Church Albania by the Communist regime in 1967 the Albanians in the diaspora decided to organize themselves with a hierarchy of their own. Though the majority preferred to join the Orthodox Church of America a minority continued to keep their own identity directly under the Patriarchate of Constantinople forming the Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America.

LOCATION: The United States, **HEAD:** Rev. Ilia Katre, Vicar General. **RESIDENCE:** 270 Cabot Street, Newton, Massachusetts, **MEMBERSHIP:** 5100.

**e) The Byelorussian Council of Orthodox Churches in
North America**

It is a small community consisting of four Byelorussian parishes in U.S.A. and one in Canada with an Administrator of their own under the Ecumenical patriarchate. He is responsible to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.

LOCATION: The U.S.A. and Canada, HEAD: Very Rev. Sviatoslaw Kous, Administrator, RESIDENCE: P.O. Box 26. South River, New Jersey, USA.

**4. THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES WHICH
ARE NOT CANONICALLY RECOGNIZED
BY THE ORTHODOX CHURCH:**

There are six of them:

1. The old Believers (Russia)
2. The Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia
3. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church
4. The Byelorussian Autocephalous Orthodox Church
5. The Macedonian Orthodox Church
6. The Old Calendar Greek Orthodox Church

a) The Church of the old Believers

The " Old Believers" are those who objected to the liturgical restoration introduced by the Russian Church in the 17th century. They were anathematized in 1667 and continued to be persecuted under the Czars. They are split into twelve groups. In 1905 religious tolerance is extended to them.

LOCATION: Russia, diaspora, MEMBERSHIP: 2,500,000(?)

b) The Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia

This church consists of those who fled from Russia at the time of Bolshevik revolution in 1917. In 1920, 20 Russian Orthodox Bishops assembled at Constantinople and decided to establish temporarily an autonomous Church for the Russian emigrants. They denied the ecclesial nature and validity of the patriarchate of Moscow. The Synod of Bishops was established under the

presidency of Anthony Khrapovitsky, the exiled Metropolitan of Kiev with the head quarters at Karlovci in Yugoslavia. The monarchist views are still held by them. They have many monastic communities among which the most important one is the Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York.

LOCATION: Worldwide, HEAD: Metropolitan Vitaly, Title: Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, RESIDENCE: New York, U.S.A.. MEMBERSHIP: 150,000.

c) The Ukrainian Orthodox Churches

The Ukrainian Orthodox Churches came into being as a result of a popular movement for national identity and strong lay participation in church administration. They wanted to assert their ecclesial identity on a national basis which they felt almost threatened under the leadership of Moscow. In 1920 they established themselves as an autocephalous Church without the approval of the other Churches. Their first bishop was ordained with the imposition of hands of priests and laity. Such a step was not at all in harmony with the Orthodox tradition. Some bishops were later ordained by Orthodox bishops.

There are three separate jurisdictions in U.S.A, Canada and Western Europe which are in full communion with each other. In U.S.A. there are 100 parishes, in Canada 288 and a good number in Western Europe. They have separate jurisdictions in U.S.A., Canada and Western Europe. The membership is about 255000.

LOCATION: U.S.A., Canada, Western Europe, HEAD: Metropolitan Mstyslav. Title: Metropolitan of the Ukrainian orthodox Church, RESIDENCE: South Bound Brook, New Jersey, U.S.A. MEMBERSHIP: 255,000.

d) The Byelorussian Autocephalous Orthodox Church

The attempt to establish a Byelorussian Autocephalous Orthodox Church began in the period following the Bolshevik Revolution. It started in 1922. In 1942 under Nazi occupation a group of Byelorussian bishops declared their Church as autocephalous. This attempt too failed when it again came under the Russians. In 1949 those bishops who emigrated to the West declared their Church autocephalous. But it was not recognized by the other Orthodox Churches. After 1970 there was a split among them. They have

now about twenty parishes shared between two bishops, one in Toronto, Canada and the other in New York.

LOCATION: Diaspora, MEMBERSHIP: 100,000

e) The Macedonian Orthodox Church

The formation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church was favoured by the communist regime of Yugoslavia for the sake of promoting a separate national identity. In October 1958 in a national council of 220 priests and laity held in Ohrid they declared the autonomy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and elected three new bishops. Though the Serbian Holy Synod accepted it in June 1959 and ordained the three bishops-elect in 1967, rejected their request for the autocephalous status. But disregarding this rejection, on July 19, 1967 the Holy Synod of the Church of Macedonia declared its autocephaly. The Metropolitan was given the title " Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia". The Serbian Orthodox Church called it a schism and no other Orthodox Church has recognized the claim of the Macedonian Church. In 1967 they had 334 priests, 400 parishes, and 86 monasteries.

LOCATION: Macedonia Republic (Yugoslavia), diaspora in North America and Australia, HEAD: Archbishop Mihayil, Title: Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia. RESIDENCE: Skopje, Yugoslavia, MEMBERSHIP: about 1,200,000.

f) The Old Calendar Greek Orthodox Church

The Old Calendar Greek Orthodox Church is associated with the partial introduction (1924) of the Gregorian calendar in the place of the old Julian calendar. In 1924 it was introduced in Greece by the Holy Synod. In 1935 the three bishops who opposed it were deposed and punished. But it resulted in a schism. The attempts for reconciliation has not so far succeeded.

LOCATION: Greece and diaspora, MEMBERSHIP: about 200,000

5. THE BYZANTINE CHURCHES OF THE CATHOLIC COMMUNION

There are nine Churches of the Byzantine tradition which are in the Catholic communion. Till the middle (1054) of the 11th

century the whole Byzantine Church was in communion with the Petrine See of Rome. But as we have seen, because of various vicissitudes of history there was alienation on both sides. But during the course of centuries there were attempts to restore mutual communion. These attempts have met with only partial success. These Churches in communion with Rome are the results of these attempts.

a) The Melkite Catholic Church

This Church owes its origin to the three ancient patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Because of their fidelity to the Christological definition of Chalcedon which was supported and favoured by the Byzantine Emperors, they began to be called Melkites (Malka = King: People of the king).

A division within the Patriarchate of Antioch in 1724 paved the way for their catholic communion. Three bishops chose Cyril VI, a rival candidate as Patriarch. He was approved by Pope Benedict XIII. Though at the beginning the Turkish authorities objected to it in 1848 they gave legal recognition. In the 19th century the Melkite Church was considered to be the champion of the cause of popular resentment against Turkish domination. The loyalty to the authentic Eastern tradition and the resistance to latinization were evident in the policy of the Melkite hierarchy in the 1st and 2nd Vatican Councils.

LOCATION: Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the Americas, Europe, Australia, HEAD: Patriarch Maximos V Hakkim, Title: Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and all the East of Jerusalem and of Alexandria. RESIDENCE: Damascus, Syria, MEMBERSHIP: 1,099,000

b) Ukrainian Catholic Church

They are of the Byzantine tradition. In a synod held at Brest in 1595-6 a formal reunion of the metropolitan province of Kiev with Rome was achieved. By 18th century 70% of the Christians of Western Ukrain were Byzantine Catholics. In 1839 Czar Nicholas I almost entirely suppressed this union. But the Church in Galicia flourished undisturbed until World War II when it was made part of Soviet Union. The Catholic Church in USSR was suppressed and made part of the Orthodox Church. In 1990 a spirit of reconciliation between Moscow and Vatican has begun. There is an extensive diaspora for the Ukrainian Catholics.

LOCATION: Soviet Union, United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Western Europe, HEAD: Cardinal Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky, Title: Major Archbishop of Lvov of the Ukrainians, RESIDENCE: Lviv, Ukraine, MEMBERSHIP: 5,093,000.

c) The Ruthenian Catholic Church

Their motherland is Carpatho-Ukraine, now on either Czechoslovak-Soviet border. In the 17th and 18th centuries there were reunions from the Orthodox Church. It led to some jurisdictional conflicts with the Latin bishops who continued to claim authority over them! At the end of the World War II most of this area was annexed to the Soviet Union. Persecutions followed and finally in 1949 the Catholics were integrated into the Russian Orthodox Church.

Because of the hardships with the Latin hierarchy and later with the Communist regime nearly half of them migrated into other countries and many joined the Orthodox Church. In many areas Ruthenian Catholics are not distinguished from the Ukrainians.

LOCATION: Ukraine, United States, HEAD: Bishop Ivan Semedi, RESIDENCE: Uzhorod, Ukraine, MEMBERSHIP: 493,000

d) Romanian Catholic Church

In the 16th century there were Hungarians, Germans and Romanians in this territory following Calvinism, Protestantism and Orthodox faith respectively. As a result of the intolerant policy of the Austrian Emperor Leopold I who denied civil rights to non Catholics many were forced to become Catholics! In 1698 the Orthodox metropolitan Athanasie of Transylvania officially reunited with Rome. But many returned to Orthodoxy. In 1853 Pius IX erected a Metropolitan province for them.

In 1940 there were 5 dioceses. On December 1, 1948 the Communist government dissolved the Greek Catholic Church and gave its properties to the Orthodox Church. Recent Romanian revolution of 1989 and subsequent events have won freedom for the Catholic Church and the Romanian Catholic hierarchy is reestablished with 5 dioceses.

LOCATION: Romania, USA, Canada, HEAD: Archbishop Lucian Muresan Todea, Title: Archbishop of Fagaras and Alba Julia, RESIDENCE: Blaj, Romania, MEMBERSHIP: 2,012,000

e) The Greek Catholic Church

The freedom granted to Catholics by Sultan Mohammed II of Turkey in 1829 paved the way for missionary activities. From 1856 priests began to work among the Orthodox faithful. In 1895 French Assumptionist Fathers started a seminary and two parishes. Pope Pius X erected a diocese in 1911. The erection of the Greek Catholic hierarchy is a point of tension between the Orthodox Church and Rome. The Catholics have made their presence felt mainly through humanitarian services.

LOCATION: Greece, Turkey, HEAD: Bishop Anarghyros Printesis, Title: apostolic Exarch for Greek Catholics of the Byzantine rite, RESIDENCE: Athens, Greece, MEMBERSHIP: 2,350.

f) Byzantine Catholics of Yugoslavia

In 1611 the Byzantine rite Catholics in Yugoslavia were given a bishop but under the Latin Bishop of Zagub. It was a period of tension. Hence on 17th June 1777 Pius VI gave them their own diocesan bishop with his see at Krizevci. It extended to embrace all the Byzantine Catholics of Yugoslavia. It includes five distinct groups: Croatians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Macedonians and Romanians.

LOCATION: Yugoslavia, HEAD: Bishop Slavomir Miklovs, Title: Bishop of Krizevci RESIDENCE: Zagreb, Yugoslavia, MEMBERSHIP 49,000.

g) Bulgarian Catholic Church

The Bulgarian Byzantine Catholic Church came into existence with the approval by Rome of an Orthodox delegation from Bulgaria under the leadership of Archimandrite Joseph Sokolsky. Pope Pius IX made him bishop in 1861. But he was kidnaped and kept in a monastery as a prisoner. The aspiration of the Bulgarians to have their own national ecclesiastical identity was satisfied by the Russian government and hence many returned to orthodoxy.

LOCATION: Bulgaria, HEAD: Bishop Christo Proykov, Title: Apostolic Exarch for Catholics of the Byzantine Slav rite in Bulgaria, RESIDENCE: Sofia, Bulgaria, MEMBERSHIP: 20,000

h) Slovak Catholic Church

The history of this Church is intimately associated with that of the Ruthenians. In 1937 the diocese of Prisov was brought directly under the Holy See. After the World War II Eastern Slovakia was annexed to the Soviet Union. In 1950 the Communist rule they were brought under the Orthodox Patriarchate and their bishop died in prison in 1960. In 1968 under Alexander Dubchek they were allowed to return to former Eastern rite parishes and 205 out of 292 parishes opted communion with Rome.

LOCATION: Czechoslovakia, Canada, HEAD: Bishop Jan Hirka, Title: Bishop of Presov of Catholics of the Byzantine Rite, RESIDENCE Presov, Czechoslovakia, MEMBERSHIP: 238,000

i) The Hungarian Catholic Church

The Eastern rite Catholics of Hungary have diverse background. Finally all of them began to adopt the Hungarian language for liturgy and thus developed a national identity. In 1912 Pope Pius X erected a diocese (Hajdudorag) for them. All liturgical books were published in Hungarian. From 1968 their jurisdiction is extended to all Byzantine rite Catholics in Hungary. Their present head is Bishop Szilard.

LOCATION: Hungary, HEAD: Bishop Szilard Keresztes, Title: Bishop of Hajdudorag Apostolic Administrator of Miskole, RESIDENCE: Nyiregyhaza, Hungary, MEMBERSHIP: 279,000

CONCLUSION

We were having a bird's eye view of the reality of the Churches of the East. A similar reality exists also in the West.

The Churches remain united and divided at varying levels! The ability to maintain unity without sacrificing or risking the legitimate diversity is the sure path to the bright future of Christian unity and catholicity. It is a rough road to travel because there are ditches unrepaired for centuries. There are sharp and dangerous curves which obstruct the visibility and cause fear.

The Churches in the West followed their own path and they too have met with the same obstacles and crises both inside and outside. Forces of centralization and decentralization, conformism and diversity, control and freedom are in continuous struggle causing tensions and divisions.

The history of the Churches of both the East and West is mature enough to teach us the lesson that the future of the Church will largely depend on our ability to maintain unity in diversity. It is a reconciled diversity. The World Council of Churches and the Vatican II are positive and progressive steps in this line.

CHAPTER IV

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

The Oriental Churches cannot conceive an ecclesiastical system of a monarchical pattern. The Catholic Church is the communion of Churches united in the same faith and celebration of the same Divine Mysteries. The hierarchy of the Church is at the service of this communion. The most Holy Trinity is the only foundation of the Church of God. The believers are baptized into this life of Trinitarian communion. Jesus Christ prayed for its realization "...that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 20:21). Jesus Christ preached this Kingdom where God reigns. He taught his disciples to pray for the realization of this Kingdom: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10).

The Church is established and exists solely for the realization of this Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus Christ. But during the course of centuries the Church of Christ followed the same path of the Israel. It was influenced by various secular systems which are shaped by men to safeguard their position and interests. As a result the Church deteriorated into a kind of society and ecclesiology into hierarchology.

The divine providence promised by the Lord of history continues to be operative in His Church. Under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, historical researches, theological reflections and renewal movements gained momentum. The scene was thus set for renewal and reconciliation. Pope John XXIII of happy memory invited the Christian world and the people of good will to think together. The Pope guided by the Spirit of God and supported by the fruits of scholarly studies and with the courage of conviction decided to convene an Ecumenical Council to "shake of the dust of the Empire that has gathered" in the Church during the centuries. Thirty years have elapsed after the Vatican II. The Council has already set the scene to recover what is lost and envisage the future accepting the challenges of the time.

In this context the Churches have a great responsibility to shake of the dust and restore what is authentic and genuine. The Churches which have not become part of the secular systems are in a better position to assess the past and to accept what is genuine. Therefore the Eastern Church in India which has never become an official religion has a unique role to play in this process of restoration, renewal and reconciliation of the Churches. Clarification of the ecclesiological concepts and clear understanding of the structural evolution of the Churches are essential for making any effective step forward. Some of the reflections follow.

I. THE CHURCHES OR RITES

The Catholic Church is the communion of Churches which are united in the same faith, same sacraments and same hierarchy and different in the liturgical, spiritual, theological and disciplinary traditions. The liturgy celebrates the faith tradition of each Church while theology is its interpretation, spirituality its particular way of life and discipline the norms to be followed by the members of the Church individually and collectively for the building up of the community. This particular heritage cannot and should not be reduced to a rite. A rite is something of an external and superficial nature. The Oriental Churches are entirely unfamiliar with the application of the term rite to a Church which does not connote the above mentioned essential ecclesial aspects of an individual Church. Hence in the East the Churches are never viewed as rites.

But the historical vicissitudes of the Western ecclesiastical world created a situation to apply the term rite (*ritus*) to the other Churches. From the early centuries the Church of Rome had been spreading mainly in the West and set an almost uniform pattern through a long process of centralization. The Roman liturgy, discipline, spirituality, administrative system, theological formulations etc. became the sole pattern to be followed in the West. The conformity with the Roman Church was considered as an ideal all over the West and every kind of local variations was viewed only as something peripheral, superficial and external. In this particular context the Westerners could view the different ecclesiastical practices and traditions of the other Churches only as mere ritual differences! For them the possibility for diversity in the Catholic Church is only in the externals which does not necessarily imply the richer and deeper dimensions

of ecclesial life.² In this perspective the use of the term rite for the Churches did not sound strange to them. The names like Ambrosian rite, Gallican rite and Mozarabic rite etc. became quite common in the West while the term Church or Churches were used in the East.

Rite is the external form in which a ceremony is carried out which consists of customary words, symbols, ceremonies, gestures etc. It is a habitual mode of action. A ritualist is a person who strictly performs these external rituals. The Eastern Churches never use the term rite for Churches. But the Roman Church at a relatively later period began to use that term for Churches.

On the other hand, for the Orientals the Catholic Church is the communion of the different Churches in which the divine heritage of the Christian faith is enshrined. The neighbouring Churches used to maintain their communion by means of hierarchical link.¹ They pray for the harmony and concord of the Churches.

"For the peace, harmony and stability of the whole world and of all the Churches we beseech you".

"I give you thanks, my Father,....the reconciliation of the whole world and the peace and tranquility of all the Churches". (Syro-Malabar Holy Qurbana)

"For the peace of the whole world, for the prosperity of the holy Churches of God and for the union of all of us let us pray to the Lord" (Byzantine Eucharistic liturgy and Morning and Vespers services).

·II. RITE ACCORDING TO CANON LAW

Canonists of the Roman tradition have made various attempts to define the term Rite. It has undergone an evolution. We give below some of the definitions:

- 1) For example, from ancient times all the bishops in Ethiopia were Copts from Egypt appointed by the Coptic Patriarchate. In 1929 four natives were elected to assist the Egyptian Metropolitan. It was only in 1951 an Ethiopian Metropolitan was chosen by the Ethiopian clergy and laity. It was confirmed by the Coptic Patriarchate in 1959 raising the rank of its head to Patriarch.
- 2) Cyril Mar Baselios, *The Holy Catholic Church as the Communion of Churches*, Emakulam, 1992, p.3

"A rite is the ecclesiastical order (*complexus*) by which not only the liturgical matters but also the whole discipline of the part of a Church is governed". (E. Herman SJ).

The same author at a later stage redefined the Rite as follows:

" A Rite is a group of faithful who are governed by laws and customs of their own, based on ancient traditions, not only in regard to liturgical matters, but also in respect to the canonical order, and which group is acknowledged by the Holy See as autonomous and distinct from others"³

We have the following definition of Acacius Coussa:

"The sum total (*complexus*) of the liturgical laws and proper disciplinary norms of a particular Church".

In canonical legislations and even in the Conciliar documents of Vatican II the term 'Rite' did not have the same meaning everywhere.

For example: Cleri Sanctitati 216 # 1.1; Postquam 303 # 1.1.etc.

Vatican II: SC 3,4,24,36, 38, 87, 101, 123.

OE 2,3,4,6,7,10,11,16.

New Latin code: 1923, 1248 # 1,1109,923,1127 # 1,111, 112 The above-mentioned variations in the notion of Rite reveals the need to define it.

As we have seen already the application of the word rite to the Church is of Western origin. This term does not fit into the Eastern ecclesiological vocabulary. For the Westerners the Eastern Churches form part of the one Church under the Pope with some local differences in the external rituals. Consequently those Eastern Churches which maintained communion with the Roman Church began to be viewed not on the basis of their ecclesial reality and identity but in terms of their rituals and organizational structures! The external rituals cut off from their ecclesial content or reality are merely superficial and negligible. They are like empty shells devoid of their kernel. In such a distorted sense there began the

3). E.Herman SJ, De Conceptu "Ritus", The Jurist, II, (1942) p.340.

use of the expression that the belonging to the Catholic Church is all that matters and not to the rites! Even in these rituals there were various attempts to reduce the differences and to conform them to the practices of the Roman Church. Some of the Eastern Catholic Churches, which came under the Latin rule or formation tried to conform themselves to the Roman Church as a sign of their communion and catholicity. As the result of such a policy of servile imitation from the part of some of the Eastern Catholics and of imposition from the part of the missionaries of the Latin Church, some Churches deteriorated into a kind of hybrid form of existence. The consequences have been far reaching. The standard of the catholicity of the Church began to be measured on the basis of the identification with the practices of the Roman Church. The attachment and fidelity to the distinctive elements of one's own Church began to be branded as narrow-mindedness. The Eastern Churches with such a diluted, adulterated and distorted identity became degraded and deformed. A Church with such an identity projects a distorted image of catholicity and is shy of its own identity. This is the actual situation of those Eastern Catholic Churches which have lost their venerable patrimony and have not succeeded in restoring it. Some of those would go to the extent of identifying their individuality with that of the borrowed or imposed image of the Latin Church. It is quite evident in the case of the Syro-Malabar Church which was during the colonial period under the rule of the Latin bishops from 1599 up to 1896. During this time it has lost most of its identity and uniqueness in liturgy, spirituality, discipline and theology. Its separate identity, is mostly confined to the juridical structure. Such a tragic situation of some of the Eastern Catholic Churches was studied by the Vatican II in the light of which the following direction was given by the Council:

"All Eastern rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their lawful liturgical rites and their established way of life and these should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development. Easterners themselves should honour all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. If they have improperly fallen away from them because of the circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways. (OE 6).

The alienation of the Eastern Catholic Churches from their authentic Eastern traditions is a real obstacle to ecumenism. The

clerical formation imparted to the Oriental seminarians and religious in the Latin seminaries is largely responsible for this alienation and loss of ecclesial identity. They are being formed after the Latin pattern. They are unaware of the rich Eastern heritage and try to imitate the Latin practices and consider them as the ideal.

RITE ACCORDING TO CCEO

The new code of canons (*Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*) published on October 18, 1990 for the Catholic Oriental Churches has a separate title "Churches *sui juris* and Rites" (Canons 27-41). 1. Enrollment in a Church *sui juris* (CCEO:29-38) 2. Preservation of Rites (CCEO: 39-41).

The new code uses the expression "Churches *sui juris*" for the Individual Churches. Under the title "Churches *sui juris* and Rites" we have the following definition for *ecclesia sui juris*. An individual Church was formerly called also Rite.

Canon 27: A group of faithful united by a hierarchy according to the norm of law which the supreme authority of the Church explicitly or tacitly recognizes as *sui juris*, is called in this code a Church *sui juris*"

The CCEO gives the following definition for a rite:

"A rite is the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, distinct by the culture and circumstances of history of the people, by which its own manner of living of the faith is manifested in each Church *sui juris*" (Can.28).

According to this new definition a rite is the patrimony of a Church *sui juris*. This patrimony has liturgical, spiritual, theological and disciplinary dimensions with distinct expressions of living the faith.

The new Oriental code gives a normative value to the ecclesial patrimony developed in the important ecclesiastical centres of the early Church which are known as Antiochian, Alexandrian, Constantinopolitan, Chaldean and Armenian. As we have already seen, these centres played a unique and distinctive role in the regional grouping of the Churches. The liturgical families known after these

centres were accepted by all the local churches of the region though most of them have developed their own disciplinary and administrative systems.

III. CATHOLIC ORIENTAL CHURCHES IN INDIA

The St. Thomas Christians of India who are at present about seven million are a divided community. Till the 16th century they were one community having the same Catholic faith and communion.^{3a} But during the period of the Latin rule (1599-1896) they were divided into different Churches.

It is the ancient and living tradition of the Church in India that St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, came to India in A.D. 52, established Christian communities in a few places and finally died a martyr at Mylapore near Madras where his tomb is held in great veneration. This tradition is shared by non-Christians as well. Certain places are associated with the Apostle's activities. The Patristic testimonies are also in favour of the St. Thomas tradition of India. St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ephrem, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Gregory of Tours, St. Isidore of Seville and others have written about this Indian tradition.⁴ It is not our intention to make a detailed analysis of the historicity of the apostolate of St. Thomas. The Thomas Christians firmly believe that St. Thomas is the founder of their Church and it is because of him they are called the Christians of St. Thomas. They hold fast to their St. Thomas heritage which they called "Thomayude Margam" (law of Thomas).

They developed an ecclesial life style which is briefly defined by an eminent historian P.J. Podipara as "*Indian in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship*". As, the regional grouping developed in the other parts of the Christian world, such as Roman, Antiochian, Alexandrian, Byzantine etc. the Church of the Thomas Christians also formed part of the regional hierarchical alliance with the East Syrian Church, with its head quarters at Seleucia Ctesiphon in Persia.

3 a) Xavier Koodapuzha, Faith and Communion of the Indian Church of the Thomas Christians, OIRSI, Kottayam, 1982.

4) For the texts of the testimonies of the Fathers please, see Koodapuzha Xavier, *Bharathasabhacharithram*, ed.2, Kottayam, 1990, pp.69-74.

It was a great missionary Church which grew into about 200 dioceses by the 13th century, extending up to Mongolia and China.⁵

Ecclesiastical System

We have already discussed the nature of their ecclesiastical system. The ecclesiastical system of the Thomas Christians was not of a centralized nature. For them the Church was the people of God and the local Churches presided over by their own representative assembly manifested their basic ecclesiology.⁶ The various parishes with their assemblies coordinated by the indigenous leader, the Archdeacon, under the hierarchical head, their metropolitan, was their basic ecclesial structure. It could maintain their communion and unity till the Latin rule which began in 1599.⁷

Latin Rule and its Consequences

Taking into account the critical situation resulting from the politico-religious reality of Europe Popes began to grant special favours to Spain and Portugal⁸ giving them possession over the colonies till the end of time! The sharp contrast between the conquering mentality of the West and the peaceful coexistence of the East reflected in their mutual relations. The arrival of the Portuguese and their subsequent relations with the Christians of St. Thomas provide us ample evidences of this contrast which naturally led to serious conflicts and divisions which continue even today!

Nature of the Conflict

The Portuguese represented a monarchical Church which they wanted to propagate under the protection of their own king. With the support of a powerful naval fleet they found it easy to establish themselves in India both politically and ecclesiastically. The mass

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- 5) William G-Young, Handbook of Source materials for Students of Church History, (CLS Madras, 1977) pp. 22-23. The author gives the list of 18 Metropolitan Provinces in their order of precedence.
 - 6) Archive of the Congregation of Prop, Fide Rome, Scritti riferiti, nel congr. general, vol.233, f.III.
 - 7) J.Kollaparampil, The Archdeacon of India, Kottayam, 1972; P.J. Podipara, The Thomas Christians, London, 1970 p.95.
 - 8) Papal bull *Inter Cetera* of May 4, 1493 and *Tordesillas* of June 1494.

baptisms at the Fishery coast, Goa and other places provide proofs of this policy. This new Christian community depended on the Portuguese politically, economically and even socially.

The Portuguese reached India in 1498. From the time of the erection of the Latin diocese of Goa (1534) and Cochin (1557) there were attempts to bring the Thomas Christians under their jurisdiction. The imprisonment of their bishops and imposition of the Latin liturgical and disciplinary practices were the means adopted by the Portuguese. The Goan Provincial Councils of 1575 and 1585 passed decrees binding the Thomas Christians mainly in view of conforming them to the *Padroado* system. Finally at the death of their Metropolitan Mar Abraham in 1597, the archbishop of Goa convened a synod at Diamper in 1599 and there it was decided that the Thomas Christians should be ruled over by the Latin bishops appointed by the King of Portugal under the Portuguese royal *Padroado*. Their ancient Metropolitan See was suppressed and made a suffragan of the new archdiocese of Goa, Fr. Roz SJ was appointed to rule over them and the Patronage of the King of Portugal was extended! What a humiliation to an ancient Church of apostolic origin!

It was the beginning of nearly three centuries (1599-1896) of Latin Rule over them. The bishops who did not know the liturgy, discipline, spirituality, theology, administrative system and traditions nor even the language of the people, ruled over them for centuries. A Church which was one was disastrously divided during this alien rule! All the major divisions among the Thomas Christians took place during this period.⁹ The tension reached its climax in 1653. There was an open protest on Friday 3rd of January 1653 under their indigenous head Archdeacon Thomas. It took place at Mattancherry near Cochin against the Latin bishop Francis Garcia who disregarded the legitimate grievances of the people and was systematically and consistently suppressing their venerable ecclesial patrimony.

Appeal to Rome and Roman intervention

The leaders of the Thomas Christians appealed to Rome and an enquiry was conducted by two commissaries of the Carmelite Order. The result of the enquiry was the Roman decision to send

9) See Koodapuzha Xavier, *Bharathasabhacharithram*, ed.2, Kottayam, 1990, pp.325-387.

bishops of the Carmelite Order (OCD) under the jurisdiction of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*. Thus the Thomas Christians were divided into three groups, a major section under the Carmelite bishops of Propaganda Jurisdiction sent by Rome, a minority under the Portuguese Padroado archbishop of Cranganore and a third group under the Archdeacon Thomas (Mar Thomas I) who in 1665 accepted Mar Gregorios a Syrian Jacobite Bishop from Antioch.

Attempts for getting Bishops of their own liturgical Tradition

Though the Thomas Christians were hierarchically divided the people under them wanted to protect and promote their venerable patrimony and restore the unity. Several attempts were made in vain for getting bishops of their own liturgical tradition who would restore their unity and respect their heritage and identity. In 1778 a delegation was jointly sent by both sections of the Thomas Christians under the leadership of two priests Joseph Cariattil and Thomas Paremakkal. They went to the head-quarters of the Padroado (Lisbon) and Propaganda (Rome) authorities. But it did not bear fruit. Joseph Cariattil who was made archbishop of Cranganore breathed his last at Goa on his way back from Lisbon! The subsequent attempts too under the indigenous leaders failed mainly due to the lack of cooperation from the part of their bishops. Again during the second half of the 19th century there was another ecumenical wave which too failed due to the same reasons. The movement to get indigenous bishops gained momentum and finally native bishops were given in 1896. But the indigenous hierarchy followed the same track established by their Latin predecessors. In 1930 a section of the Jacobites reunited and they form the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.¹⁰

Oriental Indian Bishops under the Western System

Though the Catholic Thomas Christians have got indigenous bishops in 1896 the entire ecclesiastical system continued to be Western. Their liturgical texts and celebrations which were consistently conformed to the Latin liturgical traditions continued as such. Clerical and religious formation followed the same Latin pattern. In the seminaries the Orientals and Latins were given the same formation by the Superiors.¹¹ In short, the Catholic Thomas Christians, mainly

10) For the details see, Malancharuvil C., *The Syro-Malankara Church*, Alwaye, 1973.

11) Congar in the light of his experience criticizes the superficial approach of the Latins towards the Eastern traditions and their rituals by adopting biritualism:

the Syro-Malabar Church, continued to be a latinized Oriental Church. In liturgy, spirituality, theology, discipline, administrative system, devotions etc. they did not differ from Latin tradition.¹² The exclusively Western form of clerical and religious formation created an atmosphere of appreciation of the Latin traditions and lack of respect and attachment to their own Eastern patrimony.

Present unjust Situation

During the Latin rule the Orientals did not have their own administrative set up. In 1886 the Portuguese *Padroado* jurisdiction over the Thomas Christians was suppressed and they came exclusively under the Propaganda Fide jurisdiction. When the Indian Latin hierarchy was established in 1886 India was divided into Latin ecclesiastical jurisdictional units. The Catholic Thomas Christians were given jurisdiction only within the restricted area between the two rivers *Pampa* in the South and *Bharathapuzha* in the North. Even within this restricted territory parallel Latin dioceses were erected!

From 1953 the territorial restrictions on the Catholic Orientals are being partly lifted and mission centres outside Kerala are being gradually entrusted to them. At present there are 21 Syro-Malabar dioceses in India, 12 in Kerala and 9 outside. On December 16, 1992 the Syro-Malabar Church is raised to a Major Episcopal Church. But its *Particular Laws* are yet to be formulated in the light of their time-honoured venerable traditions! But the centuries old alienation from their own authentic tradition and unjustifiable restrictions continue to be obstacles to the Orientals in the field of evangelization and pastoral care.

"Latin and Western priests thought that they could "go over to the Eastern Rite" simply by growing a beard and celebrating in Greek and Slavonic; better sometimes, with "indult", the Byzantine rite could be borrowed for a particular day or occasion. But the rite is more than just a collection of rubrics. The Orthodox were quite right to criticize such a practice. Sometimes they did so with such aggression, suspecting the Catholics of a sinister Machiavellism: Rome simply wanted to draw them into its net, without believing the validity of the rite or recognizing the profundity of what it represented. We would recognize that facts and some texts could have justified this suspicion" (Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, London, 1984, p.83).

- 12) On 6th of January 1987 the Congregation for Catholic Education published a circular addressed to the Cardinals, Bishops, Rectors of Seminaries, Presidents and Deans of Theological Faculties insisting upon the need to promote Eastern studies and emphasizing their importance.

The following data reveal the strange situation resulting from the unjustifiable restrictions imposed on the Catholic Oriental Churches of India up to 1953.

Total area of India	31 25 944	sq	km
Total area of Kerala	38 855	"	"
Restricted area of the Syro-Malabar Church	14 613	"	"
Compared to the total area of India		0.47%	
The Missionaries of India from the Syro-Malabar Church		67%	

IV. VATICAN II AND THE REDISCOVERY OF THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

The Second Vatican Council does not canonize the past. On the contrary it tries to return to the authentic sources and the prophetic words of Pope John XXIII declaring that the goal of the Council was "*to shake off the dust of the Empire that has gathered on the throne of St. Peter from the time of Constantine*"¹³ provided a corrective and directive principle and a dynamic force in the process of rediscovery. By following it the Council has rediscovered the true nature of the Catholic Church as the communion of Churches. This rediscovery was the result of the dynamic process of returning to the genuine sources of the Universal Church.

The following are some of the statements of Vatican II on the nature of the Catholic Church as the communion of Churches:

Churches: the legitimate Heirs of the Apostolic Heritage:

" Churches are bright with that tradition which was handed down from the apostles through the Fathers and which forms part

13) Puthiakunnel T., *Keralathile Seminarikal*, Ernakulam, 1968, pp.3-7.

of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the Universal Church" (OE 1).

"With regard to the authentic theological traditions of the Orientals, we must recognize that they are admirably rooted in holy Scripture, fostered and given expression in liturgical life, and nourished by the living tradition of the apostles and by the writings of the Fathers and spiritual authors of the East.... this Synod declares that this entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in their various traditions, belongs to the full catholic and apostolic character of the Church" (UR 17).

Individual Churches in Communion

"That Church Holy and Catholic which is the Mystical Body of Christ combining into various groups held together by a hierarchy form separate Churches or rites" (OE 2)

Equality of the rights and Obligations:

Evangelization:

"They are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff"(OE 3).

Pastoral Care:

"Therefore, attention should everywhere on earth (*ubique terrarum*) be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, parishes and special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demands" (OE 4).

Self Government:

"To remove any shadow of doubt, then this sacred Synod solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while keeping the unity of the whole Church have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since they are better suited to the temperament of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls" (OE 16).

"For this reason, it solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, fully enjoy the right and are in duty bound, to rule themselves" (OE 5).

Distinctiveness:

The Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* specifies the distinctive elements proper to each Church.

"By divine providence it has come about that various Churches established in diverse places by the apostles and their successors have in course of time coalesced into several groups, organically united, which preserving the unity of faith and the unique divine constitution of the universal Church, enjoy their own liturgical usage, and their own theological and spiritual heritage" (LG 23).

In these and other Conciliar documents the Catholic Church is presented as the communion of individual Churches. These Churches are rooted in the earliest apostolic traditions, which are preserved and fostered by the Fathers (OE I). Hence their heritage belongs to the full Catholic and apostolic heritage of the Church (UR 17) and "it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or rite retain its traditions whole and entire, while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place" (OE 2). As the legitimate heirs of the divine tradition these Churches have a unique and inalienable role to play in the life of the universal Catholic Church.

It should be a matter of our special attention and concern that the Vatican II has taken into special attention the unjust missionary and pastoral situation in the Church in India from the time of Western colonialism and corrected it in the numbers 3 & 4 of the Decree on the Oriental Churches by clearly asserting the principle of the equality of the rights and obligations of the Churches for evangelization and pastoral care. The commentators of the documents of Vatican II have not failed to bring it to the attention of the Christian world. Johannes Hoeck¹⁴ Victor J. Pospishil¹⁵ and Paul Mailleux¹⁶.

14) Herbert Vorgrimler, Commentary on the documents of Vatican II, Vol. I, London, 1967, p. 315.

15) Victor Pospishil, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* - The Decree on The Eastern Catholic Churches of Vatican II, New York, pp. 13-14.

16) Walter M. Abbot ed., The Documents of Vatican II, London, 1966, p. 375, footnote No. 7.

RESISTANCE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS OF VATICAN II

The Vatican II has asserted the principle of the equality of the Churches and their rights and obligation for evangelization and pastoral care. The awareness of the principle of equality of the Churches and their rights and obligations created an atmosphere where the need to correct an unjust situation existing in India became urgent. The statistical studies made in connection with the '*Church in India Seminar*' which we have already cited above give us the necessary data of the pre-Vatican II period.

The document *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* was officially approved by the Council on November 21, 1964 and came into force after two months. It asserted the equality of the rights and obligations of the Oriental Churches for evangelization (OE 3) pastoral care (OE 4) and self government (OE 5). Among the Oriental Churches the Syro-Malabar Church occupies a unique position in its missionary potentiality. But the attempts to implement these teachings of the Council were met with staunch resistance from the part of those who wanted to continue the unjust restrictions of the period of Western colonialism. They had divided the whole of India into Latin dioceses and provinces. Even within the restricted area of the Oriental Churches parallel Latin dioceses had been erected. This colonial set up of All-India jurisdictional monopoly was disturbed by the Council documents of Vatican II acknowledging the equality of the rights and obligations of the Churches. It is worthy of observing in this context that the establishment of the parallel Latin dioceses within the Oriental dioceses were not at all objected by the Orientals.

Appointment of the Apostolic Visitor

Finally an Apostolic Visitor was appointed by Rome on 8th September 1978. Archbishop Mar Antony Padiyara was the Apostolic Visitor and this author, the official secretary. This author had to do the pioneering work for collecting the necessary data and scrutinizing them. Most of the centres outside Kerala were visited by us and for an on the spot study of the situation. We are grateful to all those who cooperated with us and provided us with the necessary data. The report of the Apostolic Visitor was submitted to Pope John Paul II on 5th of January 1980.¹⁷

17) The text of the speeches made at the CBCI sessions held at Trichinopoly from 9-16 January 1982 are published in *Christian Orient*, 1982 No.1 pp.5-70 followed by a theological evaluation of the relevant points by Koodapuzha X. & Vellanickal M. ibidem pp.60-70.

Many events followed the submission of the report to Rome. We have referred to them in the second chapter in the commentary of OE 3 and OE 4. The representatives of the Catholic Oriental Churches and the Latin Church in India Card A. Padiyara¹⁸, Abp. J. Powathil¹⁹, Abp. B. Mar Gregorios²⁰ Abp. Henry D'Souza²¹ brought the problems to the attention of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 1985.

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- 18) Archbishop Mar Antony Padiyara of Ernakulam and Mar Joseph Powathil of Changanacherry jointly submitted a paper to the Fathers of the Bishops Synod under the title: "The Pastoral and Missionary Problems of the Oriental Churches in India". See the text in *Christian Orient*, 1986, pp.26-31.

In the Speech of Archbishop Antony Padiyara he stated:

"We find it our duty to bring it to the attention of the Holy See the strange situation which our Oriental catholic Churches are facing today in India, because of the unjust territorial restrictions imposed on them from the time of Western colonialism. Despite the explicit statement of Vatican II even now they are unable to extend their pastoral care to the sons and daughters of their churches... We know that justice delayed is equal to justice denied. This is the tragic situation which exists in India" (CO 1986, p. 35-36).

- 19) Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil pointed out ecclesiological and ecumenical problems risen from the denial of the equality of the churches in India. He said:

"On of the major obstacle for ecumenism is the attitude of some of the Latin hierarchs towards the Orientals in the Catholic communion. A few of their recent assertions are disturbing to the separated brethren. They call India for instance, a Latin territory. They stand for uniformity for jurisdiction and hinder the Orientals from fulfilling their pastoral and missionary obligations. For a genuine ecumenism much remains to be done" for the full text of the speech see *Christian Orient*, 1986, pp.37-40.

- 20) Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios, the Malankara Catholic Metropolitan of Trivandrum, referring to the speech of the Latin representative Archbishop, Henry D'Souza made the following observation at the Bishops Synod in Rome in October 1985:

"Archbishop Henry said" One City Bishop". I am archbishop in Trivandrum. Five years after our See was established a new Latin Bishop was appointed in the same city. No question was asked, no objection was made. The Archbishop said: "One territory, one jurisdiction" He quoted ancient Councils. Surely it was after these Councils that Latin jurisdiction was introduced into India. Now Latin jurisdiction has been extended all over the world. May I ask: "If all are equal, how can some be more equal?" The full text of the speech of Archbishop Benedict mar Gregorios is published in *Christian Orient*, 1986, (pp.43-44).

- 21) As the representative of the Latin hierarchy of India Archbishop Henry D'Souza presented the following arguments:

V. THEOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

1. The Individual Churches legitimate Heirs and living Witnesses of the authentic Tradition

The ecclesial heritage enshrined in these Churches has to be esteemed, preserved and fostered. These ecclesial traditions belong to the whole Church. The following observation of Cyril Mar Baselios is relevant: "The Oriental Churches deprived of their ecclesial identity and role as Churches of their own right, were reduced to the level of rare patrimonial specimens to be preserved and protected under the patronage of the Latin church".^{21a} The apostolic proclamation of the gospel of Christ was understood, appreciated, interpreted, lived and shared in different places by the people belonging to the different socio-cultural and religious milieu.

"However, the heritage handed down by the apostles was received in different forms and ways, so that from the very beginnings of the Church it has had a varied development in various places, thanks to a similar variety of natural gifts and conditions of life" (UR 14). Hence diversity became evident from the very beginning.

This variety in no way stands against the basic unity of faith. They reveal the multidimensional aspects of the same truth revealed by God. "Between these (Churches), there flourishes such an admirable brotherhood that this variety within the Church in no way harms

"The Rite question must take cognizance of the Indian reality".

"The Syrian individual Churches are in fact an ethnic reality; they belong to Kerala".

"We are told that 70% of our missionaries belong to the ecclesial heritage with its characteristic apostolic experience. I have met so many missionaries of the South of this ecclesial tradition, but I have never noticed in them any special apostolic experience from what I have myself".

"The Mar Thomites, the Jacobites etc. are not doing missionary work. In fact the tradition of the Oriental Churches is not missionary". (Christian Orient, Vol.III, (1982) pp. 36-49).

21a) Cyril Mar Baselios op.cit.p.3

her unity, but manifests it" (OE 2). Hence the Churches which faithfully safeguard, live and share this heritage are called to play their unique role in preserving and fostering the divine heritage of the Catholic Church.

Consequently the mind of the Catholic Church is unhesitatingly expressed as follows:

"For it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual church or rite retain its traditions whole and entire while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place" (OE 2).

The fullness of Christian tradition is achieved only when the different traditions of the apostolic Churches are brought into full communion. The diversity of the traditions manifests the richness of the Christian heritage. Hence the Churches have the obligation to remain faithful to their authentic traditions. If they give them up the Catholic Church becomes impoverished. The ecclesial traditions cannot be preserved if they are not properly understood, appreciated and faithfully lived and shared. A living community alone can give an adequate expression to an authentic form of catholicity. Hence the Vatican II wants the members of the different Churches to remain faithful to their own traditions and follow them with the greatest fidelity:

"All members of the Eastern church should know and be firmly convinced that they can and should always preserve their own legitimate liturgical rites and established way of life... They themselves should honour all these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an ever greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. If they have improperly fallen away from them because of the circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways" (OE 6).

2. The Fundamental rights of a Church: Evangelization and Pastoral Care

Evangelization and pastoral care are the most fundamental rights of a Church. The Church is essentially missionary (AG 2) and pastoral. It should be the primary concern and obligation to evangelize and to provide the necessary pastoral assistance to the People of God. Evangelization and pastoral care are the two essential

dimensions of the same mission of the Church. Those who are evangelized have to be pastorally assisted. As the Catholic Church is the communion of the Churches having equal rights and obligations for evangelization and pastoral care they have to share equally with the other Churches within the same communion. This principle is explicitated by Vatican II.

"They (Churches) are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligation, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world (cfr. Mk. 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (OE 3).

It is through the exercise of these basic rights and obligations the Churches fulfil their unique mission and grow in their individuality. Through the process of evangelization the Churches grow in their spiritual communion and respond to the following divine command:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age" (Mt 28:19-20).

The Churches within the catholic communion build up their catholicity and unity by fulfilling their basic obligation and exercising the rights. These rights and obligations are unavoidable and inalienable. The catholicity and communion demand that every Church not only be conscious of its own rights and obligations but also does everything to make it possible for the other Churches to fulfil their rights and obligations. Its violation is a sin against unity and catholicity of the Church of Christ.

3. Territoriality in the Church

As we have already observed in our historical survey the strict territorial jurisdictional set up of the Church is a particular development when it became the official state religion of the Roman Empire. The Catholic Church and its communion are not the products of a territorial administration of subordination and coordination. The Church is the People of God and their communion constitutes the universal Catholic Church. The secular political systems are being built up by means of the coordination of the various administrative units based on the territorial divisions. It is not at all proper to

give such a secular administrative image to the Church of God absolutizing it all over the world.

The individuality and patrimony of the Churches cannot be territorially confined. If the territorial principle is universally applied the first occupant of a vast territory becomes its monopolizer. This secular and political principle is sociologically and historically questionable in a fast growing and changing world where the people are not strictly territorially confined. To impose territorial restrictions to the spiritual and ecclesial traditions is an unfair application of a secular system to the Church of God.

It is a fact of history that the so called principle "*One Territory, One Jurisdiction*" is not yet historically followed as a universal principle. If so, the *Padroado* and *Propaganda* jurisdictions of the Latin rite would not have been introduced into India where the Church of the Thomas Christians existed from the very early centuries. On the other hand the Orientals were territorially confined to less than half a percent of the total Indian territory and almost parallel Latin jurisdictions were set up even within the Oriental diocese. Thus it is evident that the principle "one Territory, One jurisdiction" was not followed even by the Roman Church!

4. Fidelity and Openness

Openness to the other ecclesial traditions is a genuine sign of catholicity. The fidelity to one's own tradition does not mean the denial of or adverse attitude to the valid traditions of the other Churches. It is through mutual esteem and openness the Church becomes really catholic.

At the same time the openness to other Churches and respect to their traditions do not mean a blind and servile imitation and acceptance of their practices. Church becomes genuine and catholic in proportion to its fidelity to its own authentic sources and openness to the others. If the Churches do not remain faithful to their own ecclesial heritage they will be diluting their own identity. A diluted identity loses its distinctiveness. Those Churches which fall prey to the blind imitation of other Churches have very little to contribute to the catholicity and fullness of the Christian heritage.

5. Fidelity to a particular ecclesial tradition

The fidelity to a particular apostolic tradition should not be compared with the situation of the Corinthian Church where people

caused factions by claiming to belong to Paul or Apollos or Cephas or Christ (I Cor 2:17). In the Corinthian Church divisions and factions were caused because of the personal attachment of the members of the same Church to individual preachers. It is likely that Cephas himself had visited the Corinthian community as well as Paul and Apollos. It is not a question of different Churches going back to different apostolic traditions but of different missionaries who have preached in the same Church. Later in I Cor. 3: If Apollos is presented as the one who watered that which Paul had planted. Some put even Christ over against the missionaries who preached Christ, reducing thus Christ into an object of cult equal to the other missionaries. Hence it was the personality cult that was at the root of the dissension in the Corinthian Church and not the claim of different apostolic heritage or tradition.

Moreover, the official teaching of the Catholic Church strongly supports the preservation and organic growth of the different ecclesial traditions which are rooted in their respective original apostolic patrimony. The Decree of Vatican II on Ecumenism says:

"The heritage handed down by the apostles was received in different forms and ways, so that from the very beginnings of the Church it has had a varied developments in various places" (UR 14).

"All should realize that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve, and foster the exceedingly rich and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches, in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition" (UR 15).

These legitimate differences reveal the multi-dimensional aspects of the divinely revealed truth, which are treasured in the sacred traditions of the different individual Churches. Mutual help to grow in their individuality will contribute to a greater unity among the individual Churches and enrichment of the Catholic Church itself. All these show that there can be no comparison at all between the Corinthian factions in the Church and the problems involved in the inter-ecclesial relations.

6. Kenosis in the inter-ecclesial Relations

There are people who say that the missionaries of the Oriental Churches give up their ecclesial heritage with the spirit of *Kenosis*.

What is *Kenosis* ? *Kenosis* is emptying of oneself after the model of Jesus Christ who offered himself on the cross to His Father for the salvation of mankind. In his Epistle to the Philippians, Chapter 2, Paul presents the model of the *Kenosis* of Jesus Christ and invites the believers to imitate this model and "not to do anything from selfishness or conceit, but in humility to count others better than yourself. Let each of you look not to his interests, but also to the interest of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).

This is valid for every missionary, to whichever Church he actually belongs. To demand *Kenosis* from the part of others for one's own advantage either individually or collectively goes against the very Christian principle of *Kenosis*. Can the giving up of one's own faith tradition be called *Kenosis* ? It goes explicitly against the mind of the Catholic Church, which demands preservation of one's own ecclesial traditions. In other words the Indian missionaries of the Oriental Churches are asked to practice *Kenosis* by going against the explicit command of the Church while Christ practised *Kenosis* by becoming obedient to God's will unto death (Phil 2:6).

To demand *Kenosis* from missionaries of the Oriental Churches by way of giving up their ecclesial heritage is to demand *Kenosis* from those Churches, to which they belong, by abandoning their legitimate rights and obligations for preaching the word of God and for providing pastoral care to their faithful. For a Church, to deprive itself of its pastoral and missionary rights, obligations and responsibilities goes against God's will and the very good of the Church. It cannot, therefore, be called *Kenosis*. And when this is demanded by the people of another Church for the sake of their own convenience, it looks all the more against the spirit of *Kenosis*.

7. Church and Jurisdiction

What is the purpose of jurisdiction of a particular Church? The Church is not a territory but a people, a people who are united in faith with the specific features of its expression in liturgy, spirituality and discipline. As a community it needs a leadership or an authority structure that is homogenous to the nature of that community. The most sublime expression of the Church as faith community is its liturgy. Hence the liturgical head of the Church should constitute also the juridical head of the Church. Jurisdiction is not sought for its own sake. It is meant to help the Church to keep up its authentic

existence as a community of faith and worship. Hence jurisdiction is in view of protecting the spiritual and liturgical traditions of a Church and to maintain its distinct discipline which are authentic expressions of the faith of that Church. Only an authentic existence of such individual Churches having the distinctive spiritual, liturgical and disciplinary set up can realize the Catholic Communion. Jurisdiction, therefore, is a *sine qua non* for the authentic existence and growth of the particular individual Churches and hence of the Catholic Church itself.

The mind of the Catholic Church is very clear on this point. In the Decree of Vatican II on Eastern Churches we read: Therefore, attention should everywhere (*ubique terrarum*) be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the people so demands (OE 4).

Pope Paul VI in the Apostolic Constitution '*Regiminis Ecclesiae*' says that the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches should "look after the not yet organized *nuclei* of the faithful of Oriental rites in the vary Latin territories and as far as possible take care of their spiritual needs by the erection of a special hierarchy, if the number of the people requires it". All the above considerations show that '*Rite*' in the full sense of the term as an individual Church implies jurisdiction.

8. Missionaries of a particular Church

Whether individuals manifest or not, it is a recognized fact that an individual Church has its specific faith-experience. For example, even if some members of a Religious Congregation do not adequately manifest the spirit of that Congregation nobody will deny thereby the specific charism of that Religious Congregation.

Perhaps, we need a clarification as to what is faith experience or Christ-experience. Faith is not something abstract but a concrete experiential reality constituted by its various elements in the life of the Church. Christ lives today concretely in the Church and therefore one's Christ experience is essentially an ecclesial experience. As a member of the Church one cannot claim to have a Christ-experience independent of any particular individual Church, which concretizes one form or another the apostolic Christ-Experience.

One is initiated into the life of faith or into the Christ-experience concretely by the baptismal incorporation into sacramental life of a particular individual Church. And he grows into this Christ-experience within the framework of that particular ecclesial tradition, which is constituted of its liturgical, spiritual and disciplinary traditions.

Hence the concept of faith or Christ-experience or the gospel as abstracted from the lived experience in the Church is simply a notion. Proclamation of the Gospel is not a question of communicating a notion or idea, but is a question of sharing a concretely lived experience in the Church. That is why Pope Paul VI in his encyclical '*Evangelii Nuntiandi*' insists on the fact that evangelization is an '*ecclesial act*'. Of course, a few individuals may be taken away from one's original ecclesial tradition, and be brought up in another ecclesial tradition. In this case that particular individual may not show all the specific marks of his original ecclesial experience. And I believe that this is the case with many of the Oriental missionaries, now working in the Latin dioceses. Naturally these missionaries cannot be expected to show marks of their original and specific ecclesial experience, after having undergone such a transplantation and growth.

This does not deny the existence of a specific Christ-experience of their mother Church to which they originally belonged. For example, it is only an artificial situation created by the existing juridical disposition of the Church in India, starting from the colonial period of the sixteenth century, restricting the Oriental Church of India to a very limited territory for a long time. Since the Church of the Thomas Christians could not exercise her legitimate missionary rights and obligations proportionate to her missionary potential, she was forced to allow her children to adopt the Latin rite in order to evangelize. This is an awkward situation unparalleled in the history of the Church curtailing the legitimate growth of the Catholic Oriental Church of India in proportion to its missionary potential, prospects and resources.

The same can be said about the emigrants living at present outside the actual territories of the Syro-Malabar jurisdiction. The lack of adequate pastoral care and catechetical instruction in the sense of full ecclesial membership and growth, has caused their present situation of not being able to appreciate anymore their particular ecclesial inheritance. Their long '*diaspora*' existence away from their original ecclesial traditions has created this undesirable situation. Some of them have become indifferent and even alien to their mother

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Church! They cannot be considered as the authentic representatives of their mother Church!

Now, what is specific to the faith-experience of the Syro-Malabar Church cannot be stated in one word or one paragraph. It is a matter that requires a serious study and research into the patristic, liturgical, spiritual and disciplinary traditions inherited by the community. Diminution of this specific experience in individuals living away from their Mother Church is not a proof against its existence, nor is it an excuse for not creating conditions conducive to restore the possibilities for the genuine growth in the ecclesial traditions of all the children of the Catholic Oriental Churches scattered in the different parts of the country.

9. Is the right for evangelization an ethnic problem?

Some persons have tried to argue that the Oriental Churches in India are 'ethnic groups'. This statement ignores the history of the origin, development and present role of the Oriental Churches in India. The Oriental Catholics who constitute the most indigenous Church of India are *Indian in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship*. They were known all through the centuries as St. Thomas Christians after the name of one of the twelve apostles, St Thomas, who preached the gospel and founded their Church. The words of Pope Pius XII:

"Nineteen hundred years have passed since the Apostle came to India and in word and deed and utter self-sacrifice bore witness to Christ in your land. Mighty was the power of God working in him. During the centuries that India was cut off from the West and despite many trying vicissitudes, the Christian communities formed by the Apostle conserved intact the legacy he left them, and as soon as the sea passage at the close of the 15th century offered a link with their fellow Christians of the West, their union with them was spontaneous".

"This apostolic lineage, beloved sons and daughters, is the proud privilege of many among you who glory in the name of Thomas Christians, and we are happy on this occasion to acknowledge and to bear witness to it. It is our hope that their vigorous activity, fruitful in so many good works, and their apostolic spirit to which Catholic India is indebted for so many ministers of Christ's Kingdom and consecrated virgins, may continue to characterize you and advance the growth of religious life".

(Pope's Broadcast at the end of the Centenary Celebrations at Ernakulam on 31.12.1952; AAS, 1953, pp. 96-97).

Pope John Paul II pointed out the great ecclesial role which is being played by the Catholic Orientals in India:

"This is a Church of very ancient Oriental Rite going back to the preaching of the Apostle Thomas according to an old tradition and in fact the Malabar faithful are still designated by the title of "Christians of St Thomas".

"It is to the glory of this Church that it has ever been severed from communion with the Church of Rome, in continuity, that the enormous geographic distance has never been able to break."

"It is to the glory of this Church to have always had a wonderful flowering of priestly and religious vocations, male and female with a missionary impetus enjoyed by the other Churches in India and the world".

"It is to the glory of this particular Church dynamically sprung from the ground inhabits, implanted by now two millennia in the context of the immense land to have given life to spiritual, cultural and charitable initiatives as to make itself respected in the eyes of its co-nationals, albeit of different religion".

(*Angelus Message* of Pope John Paul II on September 8, 1980)

Hence it is clear the Church of the Thomas Christians has been playing an important role in evangelization which is deeply appreciated also by the Popes. In this context it may be useful to point out for the sake of historical and sociological precision that in 1911 Pope Pius X established the diocese of Kottayam for the *Southist community* which is an endogamous ethnic group. This ethnic character cannot be applied to the Syro-Malabar Church as a whole.

The most indigenous and flourishing Church of India which sustains the Indian Church by supplying the vast majority of its missionary personnel cannot be branded as an 'ethnic reality'. Historians have pointed the ethnic problems of the Christians of the costal areas where a kind of ethnic character prevails among the Christians from the time of colonialism which they tried to

preserve. (Cfr. George Mark Moraes, Christianity in India, Bombay 1964, p.155)

10. Does multiple Jurisdiction cause Conflict?

The Church wants that the pastoral care should be congenial to the genius and spiritual heritage of each Church. In the formation of a Church the emphasis is not on territory but on a particular spiritual tradition. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction is to protect and promote the different spiritual traditions which exists within the Catholic Church.

People belonging to the different Churches within the Catholic communion are not limited to definite territories. In stead we see them living intermingled in the different parts of the world. The mind of the Catholic Church is expressed in No. 4 of *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*.

"Attention should everywhere (*Ubique terrarum*) be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose parishes, and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demands"

The Council foresees the possibility and usefulness of the different ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the same place for the good of the Church:

"The Ordinaries of the various individual Churches which have jurisdiction in the same territory should by taking common counsel in regular meetings try to promote unity in action... All clerics and those aspiring to sacred Orders should be well instructed in various Rites and especially in the principle which are involved in interritual questions. As part of their catechetical instruction, the laity, too, should be taught about these rites and their rules" (OE 4).

In India the Latin jurisdiction was introduced in the sixteenth century. From 1599 the Orientals who had All India jurisdiction were jurisdictionally restricted to a very limited area. Following the principle of 'one territory one jurisdiction' these Orientals were ruled over by the Latin bishops. These three centuries (1599-1896) of

Latin rule is the tragic period of disastrous divisions within the Oriental Church of India. Finally Pope Leo XIII realizing the gravity of the evil consequences decided to separate the Catholic Orientals from the Latin jurisdiction. This division was not on the basis of territory but rite.

"Itaque motu proprio, atque ex certa scientia et matura deliberatione Nostris, praesentium vi mandamus, ut peracta rituali separatione Catholicorum Syrorum Malabarensium a Latinis, duo pro illis constituentur Vicariatus Apostolici" (Leonis XII Pontificis Maximimi Acta, 1888, Vol. VII, p.107).

Pope Leo XIII of happy memory separated the Oriental Catholics from the Latin jurisdiction to save this Church from a very disastrous situation. This ritual separation marks the beginning of a period of remarkable growth of this Oriental Catholic Church. We have to learn from the past experience. Pope Leo XIII took the decision in the light of "*clear knowledge and mature deliberation*"! The Catholic Orientals living outside their limited territory in the politically independent India are denied pastoral care according to their own ecclesial traditions or rite. This denial of the fundamental right is on the basis of the outdated colonial principle of one territory (diocese), one king (bishop!).

In other parts of the world Oriental Catholic emigrants have their own hierarchy to look after them. But though India is politically free the religious colonialism still continues under the neo-colonial umbrella of 'one territory, one jurisdiction'! The Holy See has taken note of this strange situation and appointed an *Apostolic Visitor* to study the actual situation and to propose practical suggestions to remedy this anomalous situation. The Apostolic Visitor presented the report and submitted suggestions in the light of the official teaching and traditions of the Church. The integrity of and monopoly over a particular territory should give way to the growth of God's Kingdom and His Church!

11. Administrative structures should be subordinate to the Church

There are some who point out that the multiple jurisdiction will upset the existing territorial divisions! Hence according to them the type of present jurisdictional divisions should remain undisturbed. If the Oriental Catholics living outside Kerala are given their own parishes and dioceses it will upset the present ecclesiastical (Latin)

order. Hence they conclude that the Church structures (of the Oriental Churches) must be subordinate to the (Latin) Church.

We do agree with them that the administrative structures of the Church should be subordinate to the nature and mission of the Church. In this context we should recall to our mind what is the essential nature of the Catholic Church.

It is hailed a great achievement of Vatican II that it has rediscovered the true nature of the Church as the communion of individual Churches. These Churches draw their specificity and identity from the apostles who authoritatively founded them. In other words the true source of the identity of an individual Church is not a geographical or territorial principle but an apostolic principle which shaped its original ecclesial life-style and existence. The ecclesial traditions of these Churches constitute the universal heritage of the Catholic Church. Hence it is the duty of every Catholic not only to preserve and foster his own ecclesial identity and follow its traditions but also to create a favourable atmosphere for the preservation and promotion of the other Churches which are also under the same rights and obligations. This is the genuine "Catholic Openness".

This fidelity to one's own ecclesial traditions has also an ecumenical dimension. Hence Vatican II teaches:

"Everyone should realize that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve and foster this rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of the Christian tradition and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Churches" (UR 15).

According to the present Indian situation an Eastern non Catholic living outside Kerala will necessarily come under the Latin bishop if he enters into catholic communion! The cost of catholic communion is the giving up of Eastern tradition!

Hence it is quite logical that the administrative structures should be subordinate to the nature of the Catholic Church. If the Church is viewed merely on territorial or national basis it will indeed be a very distorted picture of the Church of Christ. As secular history teaches us territorial borders of countries may change according

to the political vicissitudes. But the ecclesial identity transcends such situation and touches a much deeper reality which is basically spiritual tradition founded by the apostles. Hence the administrative or juridical system of the Church should not blindly follow the territorial principle of the civil society. "My kingdom is not of this world". Instead it should follow the ecclesial principle of spiritual traditions which is unity in diversity.

In India the present ecclesiastical administrative divisions are basically the product of the colonial period. During the colonial period the Indian territory was divided into extensive Latin dioceses most of which have only a very nominal Christian presence. But there may be people who still think in terms of their territory than in terms of Christian presence. If the Oriental Catholics have to undertake missionary activities in their own mother country they have to give up their own ecclesial heritage in which they were spiritually born and brought up. Similarly if the sons and daughters of this Oriental Church happen to be outside the narrow Oriental territory they have to part with their ecclesial heritage! This kind of colonial monopoly does not seem to be good to the Catholic Church in India.

If the different Churches are to be divided on the basis of territory it will remind us of the outdated claim of certain Religious Orders which argued that for the sake of unity more than one Religious Order should not be allowed in one mission territory. Examples of this are not rare even in India where the Popes had to intervene to save the Church from similar "Religious monopoly".

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Church in India represents the Eastern and Western traditions. The Eastern tradition starts from the earliest period and the Western mainly from the 16th century.
2. In the evolutionary process of the early Churches we can observe a tridimensional influence of the Latin West, Greek East and the Syriac Orient outside the Graeco-Roman world. The Latin West and Greek East developed within the Roman Empire. The Syriac Orient was not confined to the Roman Empire. Hence it was free to a certain extent from those characteristic which the Church has inherited as the official religion of the Empire.

3. From the fourth century the Church became the official State religion within the Roman Empire. In this new politico-religious situation the legal and organizational structures of the Latin West and the philosophical and cultural insights of the Greek East jointly contributed to the building up of the Church in the Roman Empire in its official set-up.
4. The effects of this Graeco-Roman alliance remains distinct in the structural, doctrinal, legal and administrative areas of the Church of the first millennium. The second millennium parts with this alliance at the hierarchical and other levels which resulted in the mutual alienation. The various religious controversies deepened the gap.
5. It is in this background the Roman Church developed its centralized administrative system after the monarchical pattern. The unique position of the Christendom brought with it greater religious and political involvement which was decisive in the later Medieval ages.
6. The Portuguese who arrived in India in the 16th century projected the image of a monarchical Church under the patronage of their king who obtained political privileges from the Pope.
7. The Church of the Thomas Christians had its development in an entirely different Asian milieu. Their ecclesiastical system in several areas represented the earliest Christian tradition with great emphasis on the local community. The *palliyogam* after the pattern of the Dravidian village assembly called *Manram*, the common coordinating role of the Archdeacon and the spiritual and ascetic role of the bishops as the liturgical head are characteristics of the St. Thomas Christian tradition.
8. The attempts to conform the Church of the Thomas Christians to the Church of the Latin West met with strong opposition. The imposition of Latin rule from 1599 up to 1896 led to continuous tensions, revolts and divisions. The public protest of 1653 known as the Koonan Cross Oath and the subsequent hierarchical alliance of a section with the Antiochian Church paved the way for further divisions.
9. The unjust territorial restrictions reduced to less than half a percent of the Indian territory, imposition of the Western disciplinary and

administrative systems, latinization of their liturgical and spiritual traditions, erection of almost parallel Latin jurisdictions within the restricted territory of the Orientals are the results of the Latin rule and the cause of tensions.

10. The overemphasis on the principle of territorial jurisdiction (one territory, one jurisdiction) which was not followed in introducing the Latin jurisdiction within the Oriental dioceses smacks inconsistency and projects the image of a bishop of the Roman Empire exercising his exclusive jurisdiction from his office in a city.
11. The Indian and Asian image of a bishop is not that of a ruler of a territory but of a spiritual and ascetic *guru* who knows the Sacred scripture, teaching of the Fathers and presides over the liturgical celebrations and prayer gatherings and above all capable of inspiring the people of God with his spiritual insights and a life of detachment from money and honours. The emphasis on territory and administrative centralization are borrowed from the secular systems developed elsewhere.
12. The Church exists for *exousia* and self effacing service. The spread of the Kingdom of God is not to be understood in terms of territory. It should realize in the hearts of humanity divinely called to become them People of God. The spirit of service, cooperation, collaboration and above all mutual love and primary concern for God's reign alone can achieve the goal of the Church. It is a unity in diversity in which the eternal harmony of the three persons of the Divine Trinity should always reign supreme.

APPENDIX I

CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

CIRCULAR LETTER CONCERNING STUDIES OF THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES

Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Reverend Rectors of Seminaries,
Reverend Presidents and Deans of Ecclesiastical Faculties,

Considering the growth of theological and pastoral contacts with the Oriental Churches in the years following Vatican Council II, and especially in the pontificate of the Holy Father, John Paul II, the Congregation for Catholic Education desires to address some reflections on the matter to those responsible for priestly formation in the form of this Circular Letter Concerning Studies of the Oriental Churches.

1. On a number of occasions and in varying circumstances, Pope John Paul II has spoken of the necessity of mutual understanding and love between Catholics of the Latin tradition and Christians, Catholics and Orthodox, belonging to the various communities of the Christian East. In commenting upon the lack of understanding which often exists and upon the ignorance of the spiritual traditions and values which form part of the heritage of so many Christians of Eastern Europe, the Near East, Africa and India, the Pope has underlined the importance of these traditions for the life and well-being of the whole Church with the striking affirmation that "*the Church must learn to breathe again with its two lungs, its Eastern one and its Western one*" (Discourse to Members of the Roman Curia, 28 June 1985, "L'Osservatore Romano". English language ed., 15 July 1985, p.3).

These statements of the Holy Father are a commentary on a situation in the life of the Church which require a serious and deep reflection by pastors and by those responsible for the intellectual and spiritual formation of the younger generations of the Church. The need for this reflection becomes even more urgent if one considers

the many developments touching the relationships between Eastern and Western Christians which have taken place during this century. As an aid to this reflection, this *Congregation for Catholic Education* offers the following observations and guidelines.

2. There were massive migrations of peoples to the American continents from Eastern Europe and the Near East in the early part of this century. These were further reinforced by new migrations following the Second World War. Most recently, the sorrowful events in the Near East have meant the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of Christians, among others, and their migration from their ancestral homelands. The result of all this is that millions of Christians from every Eastern tradition can be found in Western Europe, Canada, the United States in many countries of Latin America and Australia. There are some new Eastern Churches. They are no longer people who are distant cousins. They are the brothers and sisters who now live beside Catholics of the Western tradition throughout the world.

This fact leads to new problems of a pastoral nature, involving Christian education and spiritual formation, religious life in the family, marriages between Catholics of various rites and between Catholics and Orthodox, pastoral care of isolated groups etc.

How much is known of the liturgical and spiritual life of the ancient Christian traditions of these new neighbours? Are serious efforts being made to acquire and spread this knowledge and to draw suitable conclusions of a pastoral nature? In some areas, at least has the presence of these new communities led to renewed misunderstanding and further alienation?

3. The present century has seen a remarkable growth in publishing the theological, liturgical and ascetic writings of the Fathers and spiritual leaders of the Christian East. Their works are appearing in many languages, in both academic and popularized forms. Many Christians seek to practice the "prayer of the heart" taught by Eastern spiritual authors. Religious communities in seeking the renewal of their own community life, are searching into the writers of East and West for inspiration.

The question may be asked, however, as to how far these treasures from a common tradition are becoming properly understood and assimilated by Catholics. Are they sometimes treated in a superficial way as transitory movements of the moment? Are serious efforts being made to study them in depth so that they may be

legitimate aids to growth in prayer and in individual and communal life?

4. The years during and after Vatican Council II have been full of intense activity for renewal and reform in the Catholic Church. The Council itself, in a special decree (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*), stressed the importance of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the development which should continue to take place in their communities, and the legitimate role they have to play in the life of the universal Church. In its decree on ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, chapter 3 A) the Council developed its understanding of the many Christian treasures from a common tradition which Catholics still share with Orthodox despite the fact that, at present, there is not full ecclesial communion between them. It pointed out how much a knowledge and appreciation of this is necessary if effective work is to be done towards re-establishing full communion in faith, the celebration of the sacraments and in community life.

5. In the development of its own decisions, and in the encouragement it gave to Catholic theologians and teachers, the Council also showed how greatly it appreciated the fact; that a sincere and profound study of the Tradition of the Church of Christ cannot ignore the particular traditions of the various Christian Churches, including those of the East. By returning to the essential sources of the faith, the theologian who belongs to a particular Church not only enriches himself through this experience of the "others"; but also, through this method returns to his own roots.

In the first centuries of the Christian era, though there was a great variety in forms of expression and in language, there still existed a marvelous spiritual communion so that the principal concepts of the faith were formulated in the languages of different peoples in a way which could serve as an example to the whole of Christianity. Studies in this wide historical context, the teachings of the faith are better understood because they are seen as rising out of a truly living environment.

6. Another question stressed by the Vatican Council II (e.g. *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Ad Gentes*) was that of knowing how to plant the message of the Gospel in the native soil of the genuine traditions of various peoples. This need for inculturation was underlined by the recent Extraordinary Synod of Bishops (Final Report, D.4). The Eastern Churches have a long tradition in this matter of teaching Christian peoples, from the very moment of

their baptism, "to praise God in their own language" (Life of St. Constantine, Cyril, XVI, 1 sq). In many countries of the East, this inculturation sometimes reached the point of a transformation, of an identification of one's cultural life with the manner of Christian living. The study of this process can serve as an example and guide for those involved in a similar process today. It can indicate those ways which the experience of centuries shows to be profitable and which distinguish them from superficial adaptations which may only harm the process and perhaps even deform the faith itself.

This comparative study can be useful in other areas of theological and pastoral reflection, such as liturgical renewal and adaptation, canonical discipline (especially that touching upon the relationship between various communities), as well as Church history (particularly where it touches upon what unites Christians, what brought about their divisions and what may still be maintaining them).

7. Reflection upon these facts and observations leads to the spontaneous question: what concrete steps can be taken to react to these developments in such a positive way that 1) tensions between Latin and Eastern Catholics can be reduced and eventually eliminated, with the latter playing an increasing role in the life of the entire Church 2) the movement towards full ecclesial communion between Catholics and Orthodox can be encouraged and developed further with Catholic students being well acquainted with the Roman Catholic Orthodox dialogue 3) the entire Church, in its efforts towards renewal and adaptation to the needs of the present, can profit from the experiences of the past and from the pluriformity of Christian traditions which are part of its history and heritage?

8. A complete response to this question would require action by a number of Departments of the Holy See as well as by the proper organisms of the various particular Catholic Churches. For what concerns its own area of competence and responsibility, the congregation for Catholic Education offers these guidelines.

9. The Pontifical Oriental Institute established in Rome almost seventy years ago, is a centre of research and academic learning open not only to Eastern Christians but equally to those of the Latin tradition. It offers introductory and advanced programmes in theology, liturgy, spirituality and history and has a special faculty of Eastern canon law. The need for scholars adequately trained in these areas is greater now than ever before because of the

developments described above. This Congregation, therefore, urges bishops and religious superiors to encourage clergy and lay people who are particularly qualified to undertake higher studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, to support them in these studies and, once trained, to use them effectively in diocesan and religious institutions. Seminaries, institutes for the formation of deacons or directors of religious education, teacher training institutes are examples of the types of institutions whose work would be rendered more effective if they could call upon the regular assistance of persons whose serious academic training qualifies them as experts in the field of Eastern Christian studies.

10. In seminaries and theological faculties, courses should be made available to the students on the fundamental notions regarding the Eastern Churches, their theological ideas, their liturgical and spiritual traditions. In all seminaries, in accordance with *Optatam Totius* n. 16, which first establishes that Biblical studies should have pride of place, there must be a full and proper knowledge of the Fathers of the Church, both East and West. The great theological heritage of the East should feature as a substantial part of all the tracts which it has particularly nourished and shaped, in order both to enrich the studies of the students of the Latin Rite and to promote a better appreciation of the Oriental Churches. Their theological and spiritual wealth is especially evident in the doctrines of the Divine Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, Grace, the relation between "nature" and "supernature"; their approach to the "Filioque", the eucharistic nature of the Church, and the "Mystery" celebrated in the liturgy. These courses should be taught by those who are genuinely qualified and should be adapted to the situation of the place. They should prepare the students for intellectual dialogue and for the concrete pastoral problems which can arise when different religious communities live together, e.g. pastoral care in interritual and mixed marriages. Where possible, this formation should include direct contact with Eastern Christian communities and their liturgical life. The students should recognize and come to understand the liturgical and cultural diversity among the Eastern Catholic Churches.

11. In faculties of Canon Law, adequate attention should be given to discipline governing Eastern Catholics and to the principal elements of current Orthodox discipline. An understanding of these is needed not only for those destined to be teachers in this field but also for those who will work as consultants or officials in diocesan offices, centers of pastoral guidance, etc.

12. In Catholic colleges and universities, attention should be given to including some treatment of Eastern Christianity in the general curriculum of studies. Where there is a significant number of Eastern Christians among the teachers and students, particular care should be given not only to their pastoral needs but also to making possible a sufficient academic formation in their religious and cultural traditions. Where circumstances warrant it, special institutes or faculties could be established to provide academic formation in these areas.

13. Particular care should be taken so that in the various institutions mentioned above, the libraries be supplied adequately with books, periodicals and other materials necessary for this work.

14. In carrying out these guidelines this Congregation recommends that as the local situation may suggest co-operation between Catholic and Orthodox authorities and scholars be encouraged in accordance with the directives of the Ecumenical Directory, Part II, chap.IV.

15. It is clear that despite progress in this area, there is still need among Catholics of the Latin tradition for a great deal of knowledge of the peoples, traditions and Churches of the Christian East. This was already recognized decades ago by Pope Benedict XV and Pope Pius XI when they understood the pioneering work of founding and strengthening the *Pontifical Oriental Institute* and repeatedly urged Catholics to develop their knowledge and understanding of these questions. Their concern was repeated by later Roman Pontiffs and in common declarations such as the one between Paul VI and the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch, Shenouda III (1973). This Congregation for Catholic Education, in offering these reflections and guidelines, wishes to respond constructively to these frequently repeated concerns.

We hope that these guidelines will receive a warm reception by professors and their students; and will prove to be fruitful; and we wish Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, Reverend Rectors, Presidents and Deans every blessing in God, assure you of our prayers, and remain.

Your devotedly in Our Lord.

6 January 1987

WILLIAM card. BAUM
Prefect.

APPENDIX II

LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS, POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE BISHOPS OF INDIA

To my Venerable Brothers, The Bishops of India

As you are aware, for sometime a study has been going on with regard to the inter-ritual questions which have arisen in India in recent years. On the occasion of my visit to your country, the happy memory of which still remains deeply engraved in my mind and heart, I spoke to all of you assembled in New Delhi about this matter and assured you of the Holy See's desire to be of assistance to you in this regard. I mentioned that the final stage of this study would be carried out as soon as possible and that I myself would do everything possible to ensure a just and fair settlement of the issues, one that would take into account all the pastoral exigencies of unity and truth (cfr. Address to the Bishops of India, 1 February 1986, Nos.5 and 7).

To this end I appointed a Pontifical Commission under the Presidency of the Cardinal Secretary of State, composed of the Cardinal Prefects of the two Roman Congregations directly concerned in the matter, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in India, Archbishops representing the three Rites in India, and others. This commission met more than once in order to exchange, in an atmosphere of frank and fraternal dialogue, various viewpoints concerning issues which have been brought forward both in the inter-ritual meetings that had taken place in India and in correspondence sent to the Holy See. These meetings were characterized by a desire on the part of all to arrive at a just and fair pastoral response to the various issues in question, but such as also to take into account the various elements and dimensions historical, theological and canonical which are inseparable from any truly pastoral policy that respects the manifold ways in which God's plan becomes realized through history. In this study, the wealth of the Conciliar teaching was given an eminent place, particularly those documents which bear directly on the issues that were discussed, namely the Decree *Christus Dominus* on the pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, and the Decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* on the Catholic Eastern Churches.

2. Since very ancient times a considerable community of Christians, known as the "St. Thomas Christians", has existed in southern India. Indeed, there is a very strong tradition that St. Thomas the Apostle himself visited and laboured in India, both in the extreme South and in what is known today as the Madras Mylapore area. There is even a tomb in Mylapore which is venerated as his resting place. Later on, at various times, the Church in India was strengthened by other groups of Christians from the Middle East who became assimilated into the Church already there.

The coming of Latin missionaries can be traced back to at least the thirteenth century. With their arrival in the present area of Calicut, the missionary activity of the Church began to extend. The centre of this activity was first located at Cochin, and then at Goa, and from there it spread throughout the region, and into areas which today are themselves independent neighbouring countries. In this process of evangelization there has always existed a generous collaboration on the part of priests, religious and laity baptized in the Syro-Malabar Rite, and in recent years also on the part of the Syro-Malabar Church itself in certain areas of the North. This collaboration should not be forgotten, for it points to a willingness, on the part of all concerned, to accept the age-old adage: "*salus animarum suprema lex*".

3. Since the celebration of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Eastern Churches have manifested an ever greater desire to undertake, wherever possible, the pastoral care of the Eastern Rite faithful in accordance with their ecclesial traditions and heritage. In India this desire has intensified in recent years in the face of the ever-increasing phenomenon of the migration of Eastern Rite Catholics to areas covered by Latin Rite diocese in the northern part of the country, such that at times they form a considerable number of the faithful of these ecclesiastical territories, as for example in the area of Bombay-Pune.

The Second Vatican Council, in speaking of the pastoral duties of Bishops, declared that where there are faithful of a different Rite, the diocesan Bishop should provide for their spiritual needs, either through the priests or parishes of that Rite, or through an Episcopal Vicar endowed with the necessary faculties. Moreover, wherever it would be fitting, the latter could also have Episcopal rank (cf. *Christus Dominus*, 23,3). The same document went on to say that if, on account of some special circumstances, none of

these alternatives was practicable, a special hierarchy could be established for each different Rite, should the Apostolic See judge this to be opportune (*ibid*).

This last provision - to be employed where circumstances should so warrant was enlarged upon in the Conciliar document on the Catholic Eastern Churches. There we read: "Attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demands.... All Eastern Rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their lawful liturgical rites and their established ways of life" (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 4 & 6)

4. This need to be faithful to the traditions and heritage of one's own Rite can in no way be considered as interfering with the task of the Church to "gather into one all the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn.11:52), or with the mission of the Church to bring about the communion of all persons with the Redeemer. For as the same Decree rightly remarks:

"That Church, Holy and Catholic, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit through the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government and who, combining into various groups held together by a hierarchy, form, separate Churches or Rites. Between these, there flourishes such an admirable brotherhood that this variety within the Church in no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it" (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 2).

5. In fidelity then to the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and in view of the present circumstances prevailing in the Indian context, after having closely examined all the documentation which has been presented to the Holy See, as well as the results of the meetings of the Pontifical Commission appointed at my direction to study the inter-ritual problems existing in India, by virtue of my Office as Supreme Pastor of the universal Church I wish to state the following:

- a) The Bishops of each of the three Rites have the rite to establish their own Episcopal bodies in accordance with their own ecclesiastical legislation. The National Conference of all the Catholic Bishops of India is to continue for questions of common concern and of a national and supra-ritual character, e.g. Doctrine and

Morals, Organizations of a national and supra-ritual character, questions involving the Catholic Church and the Government, etc. These areas are to be determined in the National Conference's new Statutes, to be approved by the Holy See (cf. *Christus Dominus*, 38; Code of Canon Law, Canons 449 ff.).

- b) As the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches points out, all the Churches under the pastoral governance of the Roman Pontiff have the same rights and obligations, including what concerns the preaching of the Gospel, always under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 3). It will be the task of the Catholic Bishops of India, if necessary through a special Commission of the National Conference referred to above, to organize and coordinate the missionary activity in the country in such a way as to promote an evangelization that will be truly effective and yet avoid all danger of confusion and any spirit of rivalry.
- c) Regarding the pastoral care of the faithful of the Eastern Rites who are living in Latin Rite dioceses, in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Conciliar Decrees *Christus Dominus*, 23,3, and *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 4, the Latin Ordinaries of such dioceses are to provide as soon as possible for an adequate pastoral care of the faithful of these Eastern Rites, *through* the ministry of the priests, or through parishes of the Rite, where this would be indicated, or through an Episcopal Vicar endowed with the necessary faculties, where circumstances would so indicate (cf. *Christus Dominus*, 23, 3; Code of Canon Law, Canons 383, # 2; 476; 518). This latter may even have Episcopal rank should this be determined as fitting (*Christus Dominus*, 23,3). Where circumstances would so indicate, the Apostolic See will establish a proper hierarchy for such faithful. This will be done through the two Roman Congregations responsible for the affairs of the Eastern and Latin Rites, and after consultation with the Latin Bishops involved. Given the number of the Catholics of Syro-Malabar Rite in the Bombay-Pune region of India, the situation presently existing there can be considered mature enough for the establishment now of an Eparchy of the Syro-Malabar Rite. Hence I am authorizing the Congregation for the Eastern Churches to proceed accordingly.

6. My dear Brothers in the Episcopate, let us continue to reflect on the marvelous mystery of the Universal Church and all the Churches or Rites which make up her variety in unity. May the centre of all your pastoral solicitude be the Church's unity and communion.

For in this we recognize the greatest of blessings, the desire of the heart of Jesus, the expression fidelity to the Lord, the sign of credibility of his Church and of the very mission of Christ.

As you know, the Second Vatican Council emphasized the Church's vocation to be a sign of the unity of mankind, so often divided by ethnic, political, cultural and linguistic rivalries, and thus oppressed by all sorts of tensions. This vocation brings with it the need for reconciliation where unity has been impaired or damaged. Hence there is the need for the closest possible communion and collaboration between the different Rites in your beloved country.

In stating the above after much prayer and reflection, I have every confidence that it will be given the full support of all the Bishops of the country, and that you will do everything possible to educate and form your priests, religious and faithful to accept and cooperate fully in its implementation.

In conclusion I once again commend you and your ministry to the loving care of Mary the Mother of the Church, and I pray that she will sustain you all in joy until the day of Christ Jesus.

From the Vatican, 28 May 1987

Sd/-

Joannes Paulus II

APPENDIX III

COMMON CHRISTOLOGICAL DECLARATION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

His Holiness John Paul II, Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Catholic Church, and His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholico Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, give thanks to God who has prompted them to this new brotherly meeting.

Both of them consider this meeting as a basic step on the way towards the full communion to be restored between their Churches. They can indeed, from now on, proclaim together before the world their common faith in the mystery of the Incarnation.

As heirs and guardians of the faith received from the Apostles as formulated by our common Fathers in the Nicene Creed, we confess one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father from all eternity who, in the fullness of time, came down from heaven and became man for our salvation. The Word of God, second Person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit in assuming from the holy Virgin Mary a body animated by a rational soul, with which he was indissolubly united from the moment of his conception.

Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity, consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us in all things but sin. His divinity and his humanity are united in one person, without confusion or change, without division or separation. In him has been preserved the difference of the natures of divinity and humanity, with all their properties, faculties and operations. But far from constituting "one and another", the divinity and humanity are united in the person of the same and unique Son of God and Lord Jesus Christ, who is the object of a single adoration.

Christ therefore is not an "ordinary man" whom God adopted in order to reside in him and inspire him, as in the righteous ones and the prophets. But the same God Word, begotten of his Father

before all worlds without beginning according to his divinity, was born of a mother without a father in the last times according to his humanity. The humanity to which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself. That is the reason why the Assyrian Church of the East is praying the Virgin Mary as "the Mother of Christ our God and Saviour". In the light of this same faith the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as "the Mother of God" and also as "the Mother of Christ". We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety.

This is the unique faith that we profess in the mystery of Christ. The controversies of the past led to anathemas, bearing on persons and on formulas. The Lord's Spirit permits us to understand better today that the divisions brought about in this way were due in large part to misunderstandings.

Whatever our christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to witness together to this faith in the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world believe in the Gospel of salvation.

The mystery of the Incarnation which we profess in common is not an abstract and isolated truth. It refers to the Son of God sent to salvation, which has its origin in the mystery of communion of the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit -, is brought to its fulfilment through the sharing in this communion, by grace, within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, which is the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit.

Believers become members of this Body through the sacrament of Baptism, through which, by water and the working of the Holy Spirit, they are born again as new creatures. They are confirmed by the seal of the Holy Spirit who bestows the sacrament of Anointing. Their communion with God and among themselves is brought to full realization by the celebration of the unique offering of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This communion is restored for the sinful members of the Church when they are reconciled with God and with one another through the sacrament of Forgiveness.

The sacrament of Ordination to the ministerial priesthood in the apostolic succession assures the authenticity of the faith, the sacraments and the communion in each local church.

Living by this faith and these sacraments, it follows as a consequence that the particular Catholic Churches and the particular Assyrian Churches can recognize each other as sister Churches. To be full and entire, communion presupposes the unanimity concerning the content of the faith, the sacraments and the constitution of the Church. Since this unanimity for which we aim has not yet been attained, we cannot unfortunately celebrate together the Eucharist which is the sign of the ecclesial communion already fully restored.

Nevertheless, the deep spiritual communion in the faith and the mutual trust already existing between our Churches entitle us from now on to consider witnessing together to the Gospel message and co-operating in particular pastoral situations, including especially the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests. In thanking God for having made us rediscover what already unites us in the faith and the sacraments, we pledge ourselves to do everything possible to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our Churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord's call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly. To overcome these obstacles, we now establish a Mixed Committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.

Given at Saint Peter's, on 11 November 1994.

Signature : K. Mar Dinkha

: John Paul II (Pope)

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