

ECCLESIAL IDENTITY OF THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS

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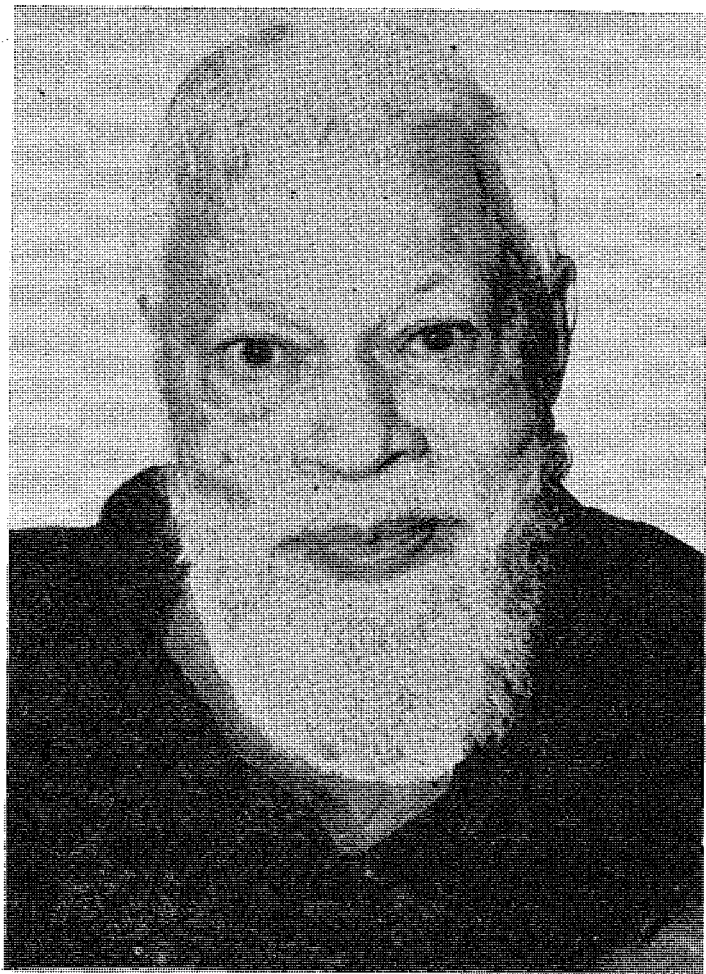
Thomas Vellilamthadam, Joseph Koikakudy,
Xavier Koodapuzha and Mathew Vellanickal

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ECCLESIAL IDENTITY OF THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS

Papers of A Symposium on 'The Identity of the Catholic
Orientals of India' held at Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham,
Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies,
Vadavathoor, Kottayam, on April 2-5, 1984.

Edited by

Thomas Vellilamthadam, Joseph Koikakudy,
Xavier Koodapuzha and Mathew Vellanickal



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PREFACE

This book presents the papers and the statement of the Symposium on "The Identity of the Catholic Orientals of India", held at Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham (Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies), Vadavathoor, Kottayam, on April 2-5, 1984. The main theme of the Symposium was the Ecclesial Identity of the Thomas Christians of India. The Thomas Christians of India have contributed, and are contributing, much to the growth of the Church in India. They feel co-responsible for the diffusion of the message of Christ in India. The papers reflect some of the aspects of a Church which has an apostolic origin.

We are thankful to all those who have entrusted us to conduct the Symposium and to edit the papers.

Paurstya Vidyāpīṭham
Kottayam, August 15, 1985.

Editors

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INTRODUCTION

Almost twenty years have elapsed after the successful completion of Vatican Council II. It is indeed the most important event in the history of the Church in modern times. It has undoubtedly paved the way for a better understanding and appreciation of the nature and mission of the Church. The rediscovery of the true nature of the Church as a communion of Churches is generally considered as its major achievement. The success of a Council does not consist in formulating and promulgating a few documents. It could be a good intellectual exercise. But the real success depends on the effective implementation of the conciliar decisions.

The episcopal synod is being planned in Rome to make a real assessment of the post-conciliar developments in the Church and the implementation of the teachings of the Council. The Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham is fully conscious of its responsibility in this matter. A symposium was organized under its auspices to study the Indian situation. It became clear that in the field of effective implementation the Vatican II has failed in many aspects in the Indian context.

Students of Church history know quite well that the Church of the Apostles and martyrs and the subsequent centuries of the first millennium was well familiar with the true nature of the Church as a communion of Churches. Vatican II has rediscovered it and officially acknowledged that the Catholic Church consists of Churches which are united in faith, sacraments, and hierarchy and this variety within the Church no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it (OE 2). In the

light of the unjust situation in India, the Council specifically stated that all the individual Churches have equal right and obligation to preach the gospel all over the world (OE 3) and to provide pastoral care to their own faithful wherever they are (OE 4). But the Oriental Catholics of India are even today denied this equality guaranteed by Vatican II.

The process of centralization in the Church as we have it today is a phenomenon of the second millennium. The alienation between the East and West gradually led the West to develop an ecclesiastical system of administration taking into account the various vicissitudes of Europe where the concept of Christendom was quite alive. Gradually the Roman Church grew into a system of the monarchical pattern. This system was fortified with canonical legislations. The monarchical structure is incompatible with the concept of the communion of Churches. The monarchical mould produces a monolithic pattern. The Eastern Churches with their own liturgy, discipline, spirituality, theology, traditions etc. cannot fit into this structure. Meanwhile Vatican II has guaranteed 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). But the gap between the official decisions and their implementation is the root of the trouble.

The Eastern Christianity in India which is as old as Christianity itself is facing a real crisis of identity. During the period of western colonialism the Syro-Malabar Church was ruled over by Latin bishops from 1599-1896. Even after getting bishops of the same rite the clerical formation continued under the Latin missionaries. Finally the St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary Vadavathoor was established in 1962 in order to impart

a formation in full harmony with Eastern traditions. The Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham was erected here as an autonomous Theological Faculty. The establishment of this Seminary and the Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham is indeed a landmark in the history of Eastern Christianity in India. Religious and seminary formation based on an authentic ecclesial heritage alone can hopefully look to the future. The attempts to restore the genuine liturgical heritage under the guidance of the Petrine See of Rome is indeed another ray of hope to this Church.

But there are various obstacles which stand in the way of discovering the genuine identity of the St. Thomas Christians. The alienation from the authentic traditions which continued for centuries has formed a mentality and leadership which is to a great extent unable to understand and appreciate the venerable heritage of their own Church. The excessive affinity with the theology, pious practices, discipline and administrative system of the Latin Church and the European culture has diluted the eastern identity of this Church. A bondage which lasted for centuries needs a long period for a genuine recovery !

This work could be a theological basis for further research. We believe that this study of the heritage of a Church of apostolic origin will be of equal interest for other Churches because in the different Churches "there shines forth the tradition which was handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers which forms part of the divinely and undivided heritage of the universal Church" (OE 1).

Xavier Koodapuzha

1. ECCLESIAL FORMATION

Mar Joseph Powathil

1. Formation in the Church should *aim at integrating the individual in the life of the Church*, which is the Mystical Body of Christ. For, in that body the life of Christ is poured into the believers, who, through the Sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified (Summa Theol. 1. 3, p. 62 a5, ad 1). As Lumen Gentium puts it “She it was whom Christ loved and delivered himself up for her that he might sanctify her” (Eph. 5/26), whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable covenant, and whom he unceasingly “nourishes and cherishes” (Eph. 5/29) (L. 9. 6). It is within the Church that we seek our salvation. “Basing itself upon Sacred Scripture and tradition, it (this Synod) teaches that the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation” (L. 9. 14).

‘Optatam Totius’ speaking about the training of Seminarians has this to say: “Seminarians should be thoroughly penetrated by the mystery of the Church, especially as it has been presented with new clarity by this Synod..... Let then take care to share largeheartedly in the whole life of the Church according to the spirit of St. Augustine’s saying. “A man possesses the Holy Spirit to the measure of his love for Christ’s Church” (O. T. 9). What is said of the Seminarians is also true of every Christian in some measure.

2. The Church, however, is increasingly being pushed to the background in the current efforts at formation in all sectors. One hears very much about 'growing in Christ', 'commitment to the Word of God' and 'having real prayer experience'. But very little emphasis is being given to the fact that "one cannot have Christ without the Church" (Evang. Nuntiandi), that "no one can have God for Father who does not have Church for mother" (St. Cyprian) or that "in the measure that a man loves the Church of Christ he possesses the Holy Spirit" (St. Augustine).

Nay more. Efforts are being made to distinguish between a Charismatic Church and an institutional Church and to pour scorn over the latter. The ministerial role in the Church is downgraded against a prophetic Church-which would often mean that you need always look only on negative side of things. For many this approach has become a convenient safety value. And meanwhile many Seminarians and lay leaders come out without that wider and traditional perspective necessary for the patient and laborious work of building up the Church.

Against these currents a steady attempt should be made to bring the younger generation to the authentic Christian tradition of loving the visible Church with all its human failures. Priests and lay leaders have to be genuine spokesmen of the Church. They have to be like the "man of the Church" pointed by Cardinal de Lubac in that excellent chapter called "Ecclesia Mater" in *The Splendour of the Church*. I believe with de Dubac that "every true Catholic will have a feeling of tender piety towards her. He will love to call her Mother the title that sprang from the hearts of her first children as the texts of Christian antiquity bear witness on so

many occasions" (*The Splendour of the Church*, Glen Rock, NJ.: 1963, P. 161).

3. We could also say that *all formation within the Church is essentially 'spiritual formation'*. Without going to all the disputed questions regarding spirituality, one could say with Gabriel Braso that "Spirituality is the particular way of conceiving and of realising the ideal of the Christian life" (*Liturgy and Spirituality* Collegeville: 1960, P. 3). The ideal is union with God through Jesus Christ and this is achieved by living the life of the Church. As Braso says, "Every authentic spirituality will have to be *ecclesiastical and sacramental*" (*ibid.* p. 8).

For this spirituality, the Church has worked out a pedagogical method which is linked to her priesthood and her maternal action. Priesthood is concerned with the spiritual education of Christians and the maternal mission of the Church wants to see them changed into perfect men "to the mature measure of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4/13). The Church has the threefold function of *reproducing and actualising in time the mystery of Christ*, of communicating the knowledge of that mystery to men *and of inserting vitally into that mystery the life of every Christian*. Hence the characteristic note of the Church's spiritual activity is "its tendency to unify the whole spiritual activity of the individual, conforming it to and incorporating it in the cultural action of the Church herself" (Braso, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

The Church does this work of spiritual formation of her children mainly when she gathers them to offer public worship. Therefore the Church's spirituality is called liturgical spirituality. *It unites the private activity of the individual with liturgical action*. Here the sacra-

mental renewal of the mystery of Jesus Christ is to lead to the spiritual understanding of the mystery, which is then translated into the works of the Christian life.

4. Liturgy is the primary and indispensable font and source of spirituality in the Church. ".....liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, at the same time it is the foundation from which all her power flows". (S. C. 10). So it is natural that different spiritualities around different liturgies flourish in the Church.

Liturgy also expresses the faith of the Church. In fact it is the solemn proclamation of her faith and a manifestation of her inner life. *And theology is "the articulation of ecclesial faith,* and (it) explains that faith in its fulness which is inexhaustible because divine" (Balthasar). Therefore with differing liturgies we may expect different theologies also. This in fact has been the case in the history of the Church.

Ecclesiastical discipline is intimately connected with the spiritual tradition of each Church and the theology that sustains this pattern of life. Ecclesiastical discipline intends primarily to protect and nourish the spiritual life and activity of the faithful and to coordinate them in the unity of the Church. Hence differences in liturgical traditions often indicate also differences in ecclesiastical discipline.

It is this spirituality of the Individual Church that we are to foster. "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*....." (O. E. 6). This established way of life

for the Christian is above all his pattern of spiritual life. Of course, in our context one may wonder whether the Syro-Malabar Church has any special spirituality of its own! This has also been the challenge thrown by some of the critics of multi jurisdiction in India.

5. Priests and Seminarians belong to the Church by a twofold title and they must be called "ecclesiastics" in the true sense of the word. As de Lubac says in *The Splendour of the Church*, (p. 146) "In the original sense of the term, the "ecclesiastic"—the *Vir ecclesiasticus*—is a churchman without any obligatory distinction into laymen or cleric. He is a man in the Church; better, a man of the Church....". Origen said, "For myself I desire to be truly ecclesiastic" and he thought there was no other way of being a Christian in the full sense.

More than to layman the title must apply to priests and Seminarians who have been in a way called twice by the Lord. It is not through a canonical title that we become "ecclesiastics". As Braso puts it, "to be truly ecclesiastic in the full sense of the word, one must be united spiritually to the Church through the acceptance and assimilation of her spirituality" (*op cit.* p. 24). The author goes on to say that so much the more must this be said of the "*ecclesiastics who form part of the hierarchy* and who by reason of their state and their ministry are called upon to the spread of the life and the spirit of the Church" (*ibid*).

6. We have it on the authority of the Vatican Council that the "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 from separate Churches or Rites*" (O. E. 2). What the Council here makes clear is the fact that the Catholic Church is the communion of these groupings of faithful called Rites or Churches. But these groupings are unlike other groupings. They, in a legitimate sense, are autonomous like the Western Church itself. That is the point made by the Decree on Ecumenism. "The 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.....*" (U.R. 16) The decree on the Eastern Churches also makes it clear saying that "it (The Council) 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 according to their own special disciplines" (O. E. 5).

These Churches have a right to govern themselves *because they have a spiritual heritage distinct from that of the Western Church*. This has been made abundantly clear in the decrees on the Eastern Church and on Ecumenism. In the former decree the Council states that solemn declaration on the right and duty of the Easterners to govern themselves is on account of the ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage which they have (O. E. 5). The latter refers to the rich diversity of customs and observances which only adds to the beauty of the Church and contributes equally to her mission. It is in this background that the solemn declaration on autonomy is made (UR 16).

The Council has also indicated the areas in which the individual Churches have their distinctiveness. It is stated that these Churches differ, among themselves in "liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and spiritual tradition" (O. E. 3). They differ also in theological expression of doctrine (UR 17) "In the revealed truth East and West have used different methods and approaches in understanding and confessing divine things" (UR 17).

At the root of these differences in the distinctiveness of the "tradition that has come from the Apostles through the Fathers" (OE 1). The Council also says that the distinctive traditions are part of the 'divinely revealed undivided heritage of the Universal Church' (E. 1) The Decree on Ecumenism too goes in the same direction when it says "With regard to the authentic theological traditions of the Orientals, we must recognise that they are admirably rooted in Holy Scripture, are fostered and given expression in liturgical life, are nourished by the living tradition of the apostles and by the works of the Fathers and spiritual writers of the East" (UR 17). This is almost like saying that these differences are to be traced to the different apostolic and patristic traditions.

The basis of the *differences between Individual Churches should be traced to the differences in their spiritual heritage and apostolic and ecclesial traditions. Cultural factors may have accentuated some of these differences but they are not be considered primary.* When the Council says that "they (Individual Churches or Rites) have the same rights and obligations, even with regard to the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world" (OE 3), it is not referring to Churches different merely on cultural grounds. Only spiritual traditions and faith versions can transcend cultural

and national boundaries. *The basis, therefore, of the individuated existence of the Syro Malabrians in the ecclesial sphere is to be sought in their distinctive spiritual heritage and faith traditions.*

The essential point has to be grasped when we speak of the identity of this Church. *Our identity is based on our distinctive spiritual heritage and faith tradition—and not on cultural factors.* It is as a distinctive spiritual and faith tradition that we have to witness to the universality of the Catholic Church unto the bounds of the earth. If that is so, formation in this Church should be specified by these characteristics. Our priests and laymen should be able to fulfil their mission in their own distinctive way.

7. St. Thomas Christians had a strong sense of their own identity till perhaps the end of the eighteenth century. Whatever has been left of this sense of identity in the Syro Malabar Church is in our own days, slowly disappearing except when it takes on the colour of communalism, occasionally fighting on a question of jurisdiction. Many even of our priests and sisters have come to think of Rites as something sectarian and do not understand the true nature of the Communion of Churches. Many outside Kerala speak of the individual churches as only a sources of rivalries. Their historical memory of distinctiveness is fading out. They do not find it difficult to lose their identity and to forget their heritage. Our Seminarians and Priests going abroad become pale imitators of Western fashions. Perhaps people of the Malankara and Latin Churches maintain a better sense of their own identity in Kerala and outside.

Many modern developments have accelerated this loss of identity. Common theological training without

reference to one's own proper heritage has been going on since the establishment of our hierarchy. Post Vatican efforts at renewal has been organised without taking into account ecclesial differences in the Church. Seminars and courses have to a large extent tended to extinguish the idea of individual churches and their specific heritage. The Syro-Malabar Church has not made its own efforts at self analysis and renewal in any concerted manner. The charismatic movement has been the latest force in wiping out ecclesial differences.

8. At the root of the trouble, however, is a faulty catechesis. Proper catechesis should be based on one's own liturgy—leading one to that liturgy and drawing inspiration from the same. True ecclesial spirituality is nurtured only by such catechesis. Unfortunately this is not the case in the Syro-Malabar Church. Our catechesis is based on other sources and is not an effective instrument in forming an organic ecclesial community. Our text books pay scant attention to specific characteristics of our Church or the nuances of her spiritual and theological heritage. Teachers are not in any way trained to give a catechesis proper to our Church. Nor are the families at present equipped to give the basic formation in this matter—the required knowledge is lacking and practical devotions are mostly taken from the West without much reference to our traditions.

Catechesis through the liturgy is also defective. Many priests perform their own liturgy adding, subtracting, changing and therefore fail to present visible a unified schema as desired by the whole church. Homilies often fail to contribute to a proper ecclesial formation of the faithful. How many, for example, would explain the various liturgical seasons and lead into the spirit of the

season? Prayers outside the liturgy often follow the Latin pattern—eg. at retreats, prayer sessions, blessings.

It is interesting to cite Louis Bouyer who in *Liturgical Piety* (Ch.18) speaks of the devotions like Way of the Cross carried in forgetfulness of the resurrection, devotion to Child Jesus, new worship in the Bl. Sacrament of a presence which visualized more and more as an ordinary human kind of presence, separated from the Qurbana, and says “it is when people are no longer in touch with the authentic spirit of the liturgy, that such devotions are developed; but once these are in possession, a return to liturgy is almost impossible” (*Liturgical Piety*, Notre Dame: 1964, p. 248).

“When the development of certain extra-liturgical devotions arises from the fact that the liturgy is dying and arises from the very causes which are the death of the liturgy, we cannot hope to return to a living liturgy while we concentrate on these devotions and even add to them”. (*ibid.* p. 249).

Not that these devotions are to be condemned. As Bouyer points out “we cannot suppress any part of the past, either of the Church or of any individual Christian, just because we are not content with it” (Ch. 18). Bouyer’s own prescription is this: “What we should rather do is to apply the very wise and tactful programme of ‘Mediator Dei’, that is never try artificially to suppress any practice which has in its favour the example of great saints and the unmistakable fruit of spiritual vitality. Instead, we should try, gently and yet firmly, to bring such practices back to the norm of the authentic liturgy, to permeate them with its spirit, and finally to develop into an auxiliary of the liturgy what

originated as a substitute for it" (ibid). We have a further norm from the Council: "If they (Orientals) have improperly fallen away from them (their rites and established way of life) because of circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways (OE. 6). Changes should be by way of an appropriate and organic development.

9. Formation of catechists is of crucial importance. Most of the training that is now imparted is given by people trained according to Western patterns in place like the NBCLC. In the multi-ritual context of these centres they try to focus attention only on what is common—the greatest common factor, perhaps. Some at least of these who direct these centres have been people who would opt for only one Rite in India. The over-all effect of seminars and courses in these centres has been an ignorance among our people of what is specific to us if not an outright condemnation of Ritual differences. A close scrutiny of our training efforts will easily reveal the truth of this observation.

10. Religious Sisters play a very important role in the formation of the rising generation. It is true most of the nuns belong to Congregation of an indigenous origin and have some sense of the Syro-Malabar Community. But this attachment to our particular Church is fast disappearing. Their own formation gives little emphasis to the peculiarities of our church and its traditions. Most of them would not now know the *raison d'être* of the existence of our individual church. Fashioned by retreats, courses, prayer sessions that over-look ecclesial differences and peculiarities, they themselves in catechising others would not transmit the sense of values needed for the continuance of this Church as an Individual

Church. Besides the growth of the Kerala branches of foreign congregations also is another important factor. They too cannot be very helpful in a genuine ecclesial catechesis.

11. The result of our present catechesis could be tested by conducting a survey among those who have passed out of our sunday schools. How many of them would justify the existence of the Syro-Malabar Church as an Individual Church, would be able to tell us about the specific characteristics of this Church? How can a community exist without an awareness of these aspects?

12. More alarming, perhaps is the way our seminarians are being formed, especially the major Seminarians. We are not now speaking about their doctrinal and moral formation. What formation do they get in order to hand over the patrimony of the Syro-Malabar Church to future generations? What relation is there between their Liturgy and their Spirituality? If many of them tend to be satisfied with Liberation Theology, Transaction Analysis and Charismatic experience, we are heading towards a crash.

13. We are busy pleading for an extension of our Jurisdiction to the whole of India. How does it serve the Church of Christ, if the Syro-Malabar Church cannot present its own version of Christ experience which it got through the Apostle Thomas? If we do not have our distinct features as an individual church, we have no right to ask for a restoration of jurisdiction or to claim the right to look after the emigrants.

If we are serious in our request to the Holy Father, we have to set our house in order and attend to the proper formation of our people.

14. The proper formation required in the circumstances does not happen by itself. We the pastors have to adopt policies designed to bring this about. Following are some of the suggestions for the different sectors.

1. For bishops and Major Superiors:

- (a) Updating courses in Oriental Theology and Liturgy at least occasionally.
- (b) Reviewing the progress made at least annually
- (c) A distinctive episcopal attire, etc?

2. Common Concerns

- (a) our own centre for courses in liturgy
- (b) microfilming and photocopying of documents in Rome and these to be kept in a common centre.
- (c) A sense of the community's history is to be aroused.

3. Priests

- (a) Updating in liturgy, ecclesiology
- (b) booklets/leaflets to help priests teach people about liturgical seasons etc.
- (c) Liturgy-based meditation books, retreats for priests.
- (d) proper formation in the administration of Sacraments. This to be reviewed at Priests' Conferences etc.

4. Seminarians

Academic

- (a) Learning of Syriac to be insisted
- (b) Church history to be stressed

- (c) Liturgy to be the core of the studies in the Minor Seminary
- (d) A general initiation into the life and practices of the Church should be given to those who go to Latin Seminaries.
- (e) Courses during holidays to help ecclesial formation
- (f) Formation House at Alwaye.

Liturgical Life

- (a) celebrating the liturgy solemnly on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.
- (b) Insistence on Divine Office
- (c) Train them through Liturgy-based meditations
- (d) Simple tunes in liturgical music to be taught even from the Minor Seminary
- (e) Seminarians should get familiarised to our symbols and signs
- (f) Spiritual practices like abstinence on Wednesdays and Fridays to be introduced during formation.

5. Religious Sisters

- (a) Liturgy and Church history to be stressed in their formation houses.
- (b) Courses on proper ecclesiology to be compulsory
- (c) Special attention to the formation of 'animators'
- (d) Liturgy based meditation books and retreats
- (e) Updating courses for all to be organised
- (f) Their Divine Office to be brought into tune with the general one.

6. Laity

- (a) Liturgy based family prayer book
- (b) Reception of Sapra or Ramsa in the Church and even at home.
- (c) Liturgy and Church History to be stressed in catechesis.
- (d) A popular devotional commentary on the liturgy for people.
- (e) Popularise our Symbols through pictures etc.
- (f) Special instruction at the beginning of each liturgical Season
- (g) Proper revision and popularisation of the liturgical calendar (Wall calendar with lit. seasons, etc.)
- (h) Attention to our ecclesiology and liturgy in the formation of lay leaders.
- (i) Insist on our traditional terms (Like 'Easow') and style of life.
- (j) More books and leaflets showing connection between life, liturgy, ascetical practices.

2. BIBLICO - THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ECCLESIAL IDENTITY

M. Vellanickal

One of the remarkable achievements of Vat. II is the rediscovery of the nature of the Catholic Church as a Communion of Churches (cf LG 13, 23). The post-conciliar ecclesiological studies have made great contribution towards a better understanding of the true nature of the church.

Though the concept of the Universal Church as Communion of Churches is officially accepted, it remains yet to be reflected and clarified as regards many aspects of the life of the Church. This is all the more important in the Indian context where there are three churches belonging to the Catholic Communion, namely Latin Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches.

Historical Background

The ancient church of India, which was known as the church of the Thomas Christians is as old as christianity itself in the Indian soil. It did succeed in maintaining its identity and unity till the 17th century resisting all through the all absorbing nature of hinduism. While many local churches disappeared in the west,

this church of the Thomas Christians did survive in this remote region of Asia. It developed a way of ecclesial life which is usually described as Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship. But the arrival of the portuguese in the 16th century and the subsequent hierarchical set up caused disturbance in the authentic growth of the Church of the Thomas Christians. Divisions came in and the one Church started growing in different directions depending on the historical vicissitudes. Thus we have today different non-catholic churches, and the three individual churches in the catholic communion.

Clarification of terms

Before presenting the theology of the Individual Churches, it is necessary to clarify the terms of reference.

Local, Particular and Individual Churches

At present there exists some confusion as regards the use of the terms 'local', 'particular' and 'individual' referring to the church, even among the theologians: This is perhaps due to the indistinct usage of these terms in the decrees of the Vatican Council. In fact, lack of clarity in this matter gives rise to a lot of confusion in theological discussions at present about the church.

'Local Church' is a generic term which can be applied to any realization of the church at a given place (locus) such as in a house, town, region, state or a nation. Thus we can speak of the Kerala church or the Indian church etc. The term 'Local Church' can thus

be applied to both 'Particular Churches' and 'Individual Churches'.

'Individual Church' results from the verification of the apostolic christ-experience in a people, taking a specific form of life, worship, liturgy, spirituality and ecclesiastical discipline which is integrated into their particular linguistic, radical, cultural and sociological conditions. It is also called 'Rite'. The Vat. II Decree on Eastern Churches makes it very clear. "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'... 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" (Vat. II, OE, para 2).

'Particular church' is the eparchial unit of the 'Individual Church' or 'Rite' (part of a whole) under the leadership of a hierarch of its own who is in communion with the hierarchy of the 'Individual Church'. A 'Particular Church' is also called a Diocese'. This is indicated in the Vat. II Decree on the Church: Bishops govern the 'Particular Churches' entrusted to them as the vicars and ambassadors of Christ" (cf. Vat. II, LG, para 27). Here the Decree speaks of the power of the bishops to govern the 'dioceses' entrusted to them.

The Universal Church:

A Communion of Individual Churches

A quick glance at the church in the New Testament will show that it is a communion of different individual churches. It is not a highly centralized organization of the monarchical pattern but a fellowship of different churches taking root in different places and peoples.

A survey of the use of the term 'Ekklesia', the Greek word for the Church in the New Testament, will help us to get this vision of the church. Out of the total 114 occurrences of the word, the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles account for 85.

Acts of the Apostles

The term 'ekklesia' is used, first of all, about the church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 5:11; 8:1). In Acts 9:31 the word in the singular is used not merely for the Jerusalem community, but for that of all Judea, Galilee and Samaria as a whole (there is also a textual variant which uses the word in the plural). When referring to the church in different places it is used in the plural (ekklesiai) in 15:41 and 16:5. Elsewhere the singular is predominant whether used for the community in Jerusalem (11:22; 12:15), the one at Syrian Antioch (13;1; 11:26; 14; 27; 15:3), or that of Caesarea (18:22) or Ephesus (20:27, 28).

From these usages in Acts, we see that the Christian community in different places, is simply called 'ekklesia' with no question of precedence or correlation. The local connection as such does not seem to be the

decisive point. It is also to be noted that the singular and plural are used promiscuously. Therefore it is not one Church that divides up into many churches nor does the sum total of the churches produce the church. The one church is present in the places mentioned. Another important point is that the same word is used for the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem and the Gentile Christian community in Antioch.

Pauline Epistles

In the Epistles of Paul we find the same usage as in the Acts of the Apostles. Christians, Jewish and Gentile, do not differ in this matter. Individual Churches stand along side one another. The plural and the singular are used interchangeably. In Gal. 1:13 Paul tells us that he persecuted the church. But then in 1:22 he describes this as the 'Churches of Judea' (cf. also 1 Cor. 10:32 and 11:16).

The Church of God

We never find ornamental epithets for the church. The only attribute, if it may be called that, is the genitive 'tou Theou' meaning 'of God'. Even when it is not explicitly mentioned, it is to be understood as such, because that is what helps us to appreciate the full significance of the Church. It is added both to the singular (1 Cor 1:2; 10:32; 15:9) and to the plural (1 Cor 11:16; 1 Thess 2:14). This shows, first of all, that the usual distinction that we make between the Universal church as the Church of God and the local churches simply as local communities belonging to the church of God is not supported by the New Testament. The one who is at

work in, and with, the Church, local or universal, is always God. 1 Cor 12:28 says: "God has appointed in the church, first, apostles, second, prophets, and third, teachers... The Church(es) of God always stands in contrast to other forms of society. What is decisive is not that some assemble, or something assembles, but who or what assembles. The explicit or implicit addition 'of God' tells us who assembles to make them. To the Church belong all those who are God's own (cf. Acts 20:28). This is not a quantitative term, but a qualitative one. For the assembly of God's people, it is not the size that matters. It is in being or it exists when God gathers His own. And in fact it exists inasmuch as God gathered and gathers His own.

The Individual Church: the Church of God

Each individual Church is not the whole church, but none the less fully represents it: this means two things. Firstly, the individual church is not a 'section' or a 'province' of the whole church. It is in no way to be seen as a sub-division of the real 'church', which as the wider unit must therefore be regarded as senior in rank and more important. It is an unfortunate fact that the word 'Church' is habitually used to describe the whole church. This is one consequence of an abstract concept of the Church, as though the church were not wholly present in every individual church, endowed with the entire promise of the gospel and an entire faith, having present in it an undivided Christ and enriched by the undivided Holy Spirit. No, the individual church does not merely belong to the church. The individual church is the Church. The whole Church can only be understood in terms of the individual churches. Strictly

speaking, the universal church has no concrete existence outside the individual churches. Secondly, the whole church is not a collection or association of the individual churches. The New Testament data show that the term 'church' is used to describe the various individual communities and that both singular and plural forms are variously used. Even though the relationship between the individual churches and the whole church is not laid down, either theologically or juridically, in the New Testament, it is certain that the individual churches are united by more than some external union, by more than an organization which is superior to the individual churches. The church is not a limited company or organization of individual churches. The church is not made by adding together the individual churches, nor can it be broken down into them. Rather, the church of God exists in each individual church, however small or insignificant and the individual church is a full and perfect manifestation of the church of God.

Church: the Body of Christ

Explicit statements concerning the 'ecclesia' are found in the Epistles of St. Paul to the Colossians and the Ephesians. In Col. 1:24 the 'ecclesia' is the 'soma Christou', the body of Christ. In col. 1:18 Christ is the 'kephale' the head of this body. Similar statements are found in Eph 1:22 and 5:23. It is worth noting that in Eph 3:21 and 5:32 'Christ' and the 'Church' are mentioned in juxtaposition.

The reference seems to be to co-ordination and subordination. The figurative language is not strictly logical. Christ is the Church herself (the body). Yet

Christ is also above the Church as her head. Obviously the statements are closely interwoven. If according to Rom 12:4f and 1 cor 12:12f, Christians as (members of) the body stand in relation to one another, it is in Christ that this relation exists. It is no mere human fellowship. One can never grasp the nature or meaning of the assembly of God in Christ in terms of a sociologically defined concept of society. The decisive point is the fellowship with Christ. He is the head, of whose body the Church is.

In this figure we can see the illustration of the description that the Universal Church is the communion between the individual churches. Christ is immanent in each individual church, and therefore, each individual church is the body of Christ. Saul who persecuted the church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria, persecuted Christ (cf. Acts 9:1-6). However the body of Christ is not exhausted by one or another individual church. As Christ is also the head transcending the body, the church also transcends the individual Churches. Whereas the individual Church is wholly the Church, it is not the whole church. The mystery of the church is both immanent and transcends it. Therefore an individual church that turns in upon herself, would defeat the very purpose of her existence. She realizes the mystery of the church in so far as she remains open to the transcendent church by being in communion with other individual churches.

The nature of an Individual Church

Once we have established the fact that the Universal Church is the communion of individual Churches, we can proceed further and ask about the essentials of the individual church. What is an individual church? Are they

decisive elements that go to the making of an individual church? If so, what are those elements? Can there be variety in these elements?

The decisive elements of an Individual Church

Luke, the theologian of the Church, gives the outline of his theology at the very outset of his second book, the Acts of the Apostles: "So when they had come together they asked him, Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them. It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8). Here we have a description of the time of the Church, which is a time between the time of Christ and the End. The purpose of that time is to have the witness of Christ carried to the ends of the world by the community of the disciples led by the 'apostles', and the power behind their witness will be the Spirit. In this description of the time of the church we have a clear indication that the church is a community of disciples bearing witness to the Risen Lord and his Gospel. Therefore it is the process of evangelization that is the *raison d'être* of the church. "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14).

Preaching, making disciples and witnessing

The words of the missionary commissioning in the Synoptic Gospels, namely Mk 16:14-16; Mt 28:18-20 and Lk 24:47-49, which reflect the life of the Early Church

show how the process of evangelization is decisive for the existence of the Church. The three texts reflect the process of evangelization which gradually become identified with the process of the formation of the individual churches.

Among the three synoptic texts Mk 16:14-16 seems to manifest an older stage of composition. Even if it is from later Markan addition, and may be somewhat assimilated to Markan ways of expression as regards details, it is on the whole an independent and comparatively ancient witness. The commission is given to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. The word 'kerussein' means 'proclamation' and occurs rather frequently in Mk (14 times). Evangelization in the early church is expressed mostly by the use of this term which refers to preaching the Gospel. The fact that it does not occur at all in the writings of John, that the words 'marturein' and 'marturia', are preferred by John (marturia occur in the Johannine Writings 77 times but in Mt. once, in Mk. three times, in Lk twice, in Acts twelve times and in Paul ten times) shows that there is a shift of emphasis in evangelization. By the time of John, those who, through preaching, had come to believe in the Gospel had established themselves as a community of believers, namely, the church. After this evangelization had to be realized also through the life witness of the church.

Perhaps traces of this shift can be seen in Mt 28:18-20, where we have the word 'mathetheuein' instead 'kerussein'. 'Mathetheuein' refers to 'discipleship'. To be a 'disciple' is, for Mt. to be attached to the person of Christ, in whom the life of Triune God is made present, and to

lead a life fulfilling the will of the father in heaven (Mt. 12:48-50). Through baptism one introduced into this life and fellowship of the Father, Son and Spirit, and all those who are thus initiated form the community that is the church. The words in v. 20, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you", show that the reference is to a new way of life into which the believers are initiated through baptism. This results in the proclamation of the Gospel in the life style of the church, which consequently gives rise to the idea of 'witnessing' which is the concrete form that evangelization takes in Lk and Jn. "You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24:48).

If the process of evangelization results in the formation and growth of the church the elements at work in evangelization also decisive for the nature of the church.

The Church and apostolic Christ-experience

In all the gospels the missionary commissioning is connected with the living encounter of the Apostles with the Risen Christ and their experience of Him. The Church is to be traced back to the ministry of the unique witness of the Apostles as its origin (cf. 1 Jn 1:1-4). Therefore it has to be in permanent harmony with their decisive testimony. It is in this context that we have to understand Paul's preoccupation to link his encounter with, and experience of, the Risen Lord with that of the twelve. Therefore every individual church, to be authentic, has to be faithful to this apostolic testimony. The apostolic succession belongs to the whole church and has manifested itself in manifolded ways throughout the centuries and in all countries in the continuous process of baptizing and being baptized, through faith, and obedience to the

apostolic testimony, through the community of worship and in the eucharist and in the fellowship and unity of the churches of the whole world. This inter-relationship through the apostolic succession is of a spiritual as well as a historical character. It is not only a succession of persons, but a succession of faith and its profession. It is primarily a question of awakening again and again the faith that was first awakened through the original testimony of the Apostles, and making this faith known in the Church.

The Church and service of the word

The apostolic character is conferred on the Church, precisely because God's word is alive in her through apostolic message. Therefore another decisive element of the Individual Church is the sharing of the Christ-experience through the proclamation of the word made revelent to the concrete situations in the lives, religious needs, aspirations and struggles of the people. As soon as they were filled by the Holy Spirit, the apostles began to speak (Acts 2:4). Their main role is to continue to be at the service of the Word (Acts 6:2-4). It was those who received the word who were baptized and formed the first church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41). Every member of Church preached the word when the opportunity arose (Acts 4:34; 8:4).

The service of the word is carried out in different ways. It is the Word of teaching (Acts 2:42) (Catechesis) the word which is carried in the heart and mediated upon as illustrated in the case of Mary (Lk 2:15-50) (Spirituality). It is the word resounding in joy and praise in the prayer of the church (Acts 2:44; 8:5-8; 13:48 16:34).

(Liturgy). It is also the word of the Scripture (Bible) coming to new life and plenitude in the Christ-event and the spirit filled activity of the church (Acts 2:15-21; 4:25-28; 8:32-35 etc). (Discipline - Life Style).

In whatever form the Word reaches her, the church lives by the word and finds her identity in ministering to it. It is practically identical with the church. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told that "The word grew" or "increased" or 'was strengthened' in places where actually it is a reference to the growth or "increase" of the Church (Acts 6:7; 11:24; 13:49; 19:20). This identification of the word with the church can be compared with the identification of the Logos with Christ in Jn. I. Whatever the Logos meant and stood for was present in Christ: "The Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). In the same way the deepest identity of of the Church is to be found in the word and its power. The church is always at the service of the word and is carried forward herself by the power of the word.

The Word: written and Oral

It is the whole people of God that preserves the Word or the Gospel. The church as a whole, as a body, celebrates and lives the Word or the Truth revealed in Jesus Christ and received from the Apostles therefore comes to us through the two sources written and oral: Bible and Tradition. Even the written source, the Bible has to be received in the living community of faith in the Church. Hence the Word of God is enshrined in a pre-eminent manner in the living faith traditions of the Church.

Even St Paul who is par excellence the Apostle set apart for the ministry of the word depends entirely on the kerygma (1 Cor 15:2-7), Liturgy (1 Cor 11:23-25; 16:22; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15; Gal 1:5) hymns (phil 2:6-11, Col 1:15-20), confessional formulas (1 Cor 12:3) and theological terminology (1 Thes 4:1-11; 1 Cor 6:9:10) of the early church. At times Paul speaks of 'handing down' what he has received (1 Cor 11:2,23; 15:1,3). He appeals to the customs of the Churches (1 Cor 11:16) and recommends fidelity to tradition (1 Cor 11:2). All the above data indicate that the word or the gospel that Paul preached was simply the proclamation of his life in the church. The word does not exist in the abstract but concretely in the liturgical, spiritual and disciplinary faith expressions of the church. Therefore our proclamation of the word to be authentic, should be in harmony with those ecclesial faith expressions.

Liturgy: the most important faith expression

The liturgy is no doubt the most important way in which the Church expresses her faith. Here the church lives at full stretch and in its purest form. The church celebrates its mysteries and expresses its faith through this celebration. This is the reason why the different Individual churches are mainly characterized by their liturgies. Hence we can understand the identification between the 'Rites' and 'Individual Churches'. So the 'Rite' is not to be limited to the liturgy of the church. Though the liturgy becomes culminating expression of faith, there are other expressions of faith such as the kerygma, catechesis, spirituality, discipline etc. which all together constitute the 'Individual Church'.

Divine or Apostolic Tradition and Individual Ecclesial Traditions

The word of God or the Divine Tradition in the Catholic Church is enshrined in the Individual Ecclesial Traditions. The Second Vatican Council early teaches this. "The Catholic Church values highly the institutions of the Eastern churches, their liturgical rite, ecclesiastical traditions and their ordering of Christian life. For in, those churches, which are distinguished by their venerable antiquity, there is clearly evident the tradition which has come from the Apostles through the Fathers" (OE.1). That is why the Eastern churches are very keenly aware of their apostolic foundations. This explains why they regard themselves as the churches of the Fathers, for the Fathers are but continuing the Apostles, in as much as the post-apostolic times are in unbroken continuity with the apostolic times. The central importance given to the Fathers is due to the fact that they were exceptional witnesses to the whole apostolic faith.

The Church is apostolic, because she keeps on the Apostolic Tradition, the christian message which was first oral, hence "Tradition" before being written down. By keeping that 'Rule of life' within a broader ecclesiastical tradition, the church believes that she continues the ministry, the doctrine, the mission of the Apostles. It does not mean that the Apostolic Tradition should identify truth and customs, but rather that it ensures the constant assistance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Truth abides in the church and makes the Apostolic Tradition an ever rejuvenating deposit.

Now as we said above speaking of the church, there is no Apostolic Tradition in the abstract but as contained in the existing Individual ecclesial traditions. Hence a christian can authentically proclaim the Word only within a concrete ecclesial tradition. That is why Pope Paul VI insists on the fact that Evangelization an ecclesial act. Hence it is only legitimate and reasonable that each christian lives and proclaims the Word within his individual ecclesial tradition. Thus the Christ-experience or the Apostolic Tradition preserved in the Church becomes normative for living and proclaiming one's faith.

Apostolic Succession of Authority

In order to keep up the apostolic succession of mission, Church possesses also the apostolic succession of authority. The very words of Jesus in Mt 28:18-20 are indicative of this: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been give to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" To keep up the apostolic heritage of faith the church needs the apostolic custodians of faith. It is in this perspective that we can speak of an authority structure in the Church. The sucession of faith of the people implies also the succession of persons who give leadership to the community of faith. A people who are united in faith with the specific features of its expression in liturgy, spirituality and discipline demands a leadership or an authority structure that is homogeneous to the nature of that people.

Apostolicity and Jurisdiction

Here we come to the question of jurisdiction in the Church. The question of jurisdiction or authority structure in the church can be tackled only within the

framework of the faith expressions of that individual church, since the authority in the church is given by God in view of its ministry of the word enshrined in its faith traditions. Since the most sublime expression of the church as a community of faith is its liturgy, 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 help the Church to keep up its authentic existence as a community of apostolic faith and its authentic expressions in the liturgical spiritual and disciplinary life. Jurisdiction, congenial to the ecclesial tradition, therefore, is an indispensable factor for an authentic existence of any individual church in the catholic communion.

Apostolicity and Complementarity

No Church may regard itself or let itself be regarded as simply a part. Even if it is a very small church or lives on the fringe the world, it must not surrender anything of the dignity, freedom and independence which it has received through Christ and which has to perfect and maintain in community with him. But at the same time it must not behave as if it were an isolated entity existing for itself alone. It must be open to all other churches, so that every church may be able to recognise, understand and appreciate every other the presence of the one and only church of God. In that way every Church shares responsibility for every other church.

The foundation of this communion or complementarity characteristic of the church of God lies in the mission of Christ entrusted us through his apostles. The complementary structure fundamental the church is based

on the relationship between Jesus and his Apostles. This relationship reflects in the complementary structure between the bishops of one Individual church, their presbyterium faithful, on the one hand, and between the different individual churches on the other. This complementary structure does not call the community into question but rather makes it possible. Thus Apostolicity implies also Catholicity.

Identity, Change and Norm

If the Apostolic faith is the basis of the identity of the Church, and this faith is enshrined in the individual ecclesial traditions then we confront the question as regards the identity of the church and its normative character, because the individual ecclesial traditions have undergone modifications in the course of history. The changes are inevitable because the mission of the Apostles develops in the church beyond what the apostles themselves did, and is directed to a fulfilment which the church and all mankind are still travelling towards. However, it would be necessary to verify the extent to which the idea of mission justifies the actual changes which have taken place in the course of history, and whether the changes were part of an organic growth. Whatever changes it has undergone, there should be the element of apostolic faith that should remain normative for its life and proclamation.

The spirit: The Animator of the Church

Here comes the decisively important role of the Spirit. Jesus Christ who was present among the Twelve is now present in the Church through his Spirit. His spirit is the spirit of truth that leads into all Truth

(Jn 16:13) He gives life to the traditions of the Individual Church which the believers constitute, and in the communion between the Individual Churches. The Spirit of Jesus Christ becomes the principle of unity and variety giving the church a unity which can absorb differences without obliterating them and a universality that is always concrete. The Spirit gives also the continuity between the 'Old' and 'New' in the evolutionary process of growth in the Church. Thus Jesus Christ becomes the guarantee of the Church's identity, and therefore also of the normative character of its faith traditions.

It is the spirit that is the power behind evangelization. Jn 20:21-22, the sending of the disciples was accompanied by the giving of the Spirit. In Lk 24:49, Jesus asks the disciples to stay in the city until they are clothed with power from on high.

The early church's conviction of the eschatological outpouring of the spirit, and of the operation of the Holy Spirit in her is so evident from various points of view that this bond with God's Spirit is an essential feature of the individual Church. It is the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost that marks the inauguration of the time of the Church (Acts 2:1-47). He is the main stay of the church and her Animator. The Christian receives the Spirit and bears the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22 f). The Spirit sent down on the early church, and dwelling in the faithful (Rom 8:9-11), is the Spirit of the Risen Lord who, as life-giving strength (1 Cor 15:45), enters into the faithful and continues in them the work of, redemption (Rom 8:11). The Church is filled with the eschatological spirit of God (1 Cor 3:16 f), with a worship

of Spirit and Truth (Jn 4:23) and with spiritual sacrificial service (1 Pet 2:5). The Living Christ is her foundation and corner-stone and works in her through the Holy Spirit as the principle of her life and her building up (Eph 2:20-22). Through the Holy Spirit the Lord directs his earthly community, sends the pastors to preach and effects her building up and growth (Acts 9:31; 20:28; Eph 4:11-16).

The witness of the Spirit undergirds the Apostolic witness (Acts 5:32). To reject this Apostolic witness is to reject the Spirit (Acts 7:51). The Spirit sends Paul and Barnabas on their mission (Acts 13:4) and guides their apostolic movements and orientations (Acts 16:6-7), as well as those of Philip (Acts 8:29-40). The leadership of Peter particularly mediated the promptings of the spirit, the whole life of the church, her growth, her joys, her prophetic endowments, reflect the dynamism of the Spirit.

Spirit versus institution

The Spirit means creativity, prophetic predicability and newness of life, while the community means order, tradition, usage and law. The Old Testament knew already a tension between the kingship and priesthood of the community, on the one hand, and the prophetic work of the spirit on the other. The first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians warns the Church of a similar tension: "Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophecy but use discernment; take what is good and keep clear of any kind of evil" (5:19). The Spirit works through the Church and is given for the Church. Therefore the church should be fully open to the spirit in order to be the Church of God. The Spirit and the institution should interpenetrate and complement each other.

Community of fellowship

The Christ-experience shared through the Apostolic testimony results necessarily in a life of fellowship which is again one of the essential features of the individual Church. "That which...was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen...the word of life...we testify to it and proclaim to you...so that you may have fellowship with us and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:1-3). The Church of Jerusalem as presented in the Acts of the Apostles is a community of fellowship (Acts 2:42). *Koinonia* (fellowship) becomes a favourite term to describe the living bond existing in the church, expressed in a life of service and love. Thus the church becomes the sacrament of unity by which the whole world will oneday obtain its unity in Christ, which is now really and visibly present in the church.

This fellowship should bind not only persons in one individual church, but also individual churches among themselves. Whereas the individual church is wholly the church, it is not the whole church. She would defeat the purpose of her existence, if she turned in upon herself. As in the case of the church, she has the principle of identity and difference, the spirit recognises the spirit in other churches and even outside the churches and continually urges each individual church to preserve communion with the others and to give itself in service and love to all men.

Diversification of the Individual Churches

The sharing of Apostolic Christ-experience through the proclamation of the Word, with the power of the

Spirit, is also the basis of all individual churches. It can take on, however, different expressions, resulting from the subject of that experience, on the one hand, and from the encounter with the world on the other. The sharing of the Christ-experience should be relevant to concrete life situations. This has been the vocation of the Church ever since its beginning at Pentecost, when every nation heard the same good news and gave thanks in its own language. The very image of the Church is different in the different books of the New Testament, which is certainly conditioned by the individual churches, where the respective traditions were formed. For example, if in Mk., the church takes the form of a discipleship, in Mt. it takes the form of the new people of God and a community of brethren. If in Lk. and Acts we find an apostolic church, in Jn. the Church takes the form of a fellowship. If, in the Pauline Epistles, we have a church which is more charismatic without much of a hierarchical emphasis, in the Pastoral Epistles we find a church which is highly institutional. This Biblical pluralism of the image of the church shows that the particular Christian experience of her in a certain place has to take on a particular form of life, worship, spirituality, discipline and hierarchical set up, integrated into the socio-cultural milieu of the people.

Apostolic Christ-experience and the individuality of the Churches

A mere territorial difference is not at all decisive of an individual church. It is the human rather than the territorial element that has priority, though the territorial organization of a church does have a meaning for an individual church. All the church have to trace their

origin to the apostolic experience of the Risen Lord. The experience of the Risen Lord, presented by the different NT writers, reflects the Christ-experience of the respective individual churches whom they represent. The Christ experience represented by each NT writing has an individuality of its own which in its turn shows that the church which is represented by it has its individuality which distinguishes it from the others.

As the development of the individual church is linked with its origin, the original apostolic experience is decisive for its individuality and growth. The apostolic Christ-experience or the word does not exist in the abstract but concretely in the particular liturgical, spiritual, disciplinary and socio cultural expressions of faith. If the original apostolic Christ-experience remains a constituent of every individual church through its cultural transmutation through the centuries, the growth of an individual church, to be authentic, should be in harmony with those expressions of faith, through which the Apostolic Christ-experience is handed down to the Church.

The Spirit: the principle of unity and difference

The Pentecost experience foreshadows the real nature of the growing church in which the spirit becomes the principle of unity and difference. There we find "men from every nation under heaven" who gave thanks for the good news which each of them heard in his own language (Acts 2:5-12). It was the Spirit's call to men to take all languages and cultures into His unity without destroying their individuality and differences. It is the same call that is realized in the history of the church,

giving birth to so many individual churches. This means that the spirit gives the church a unity which can absorb differences without obliterating them and a universality that is always concrete. The Spirit, as we saw is the essential animator of the church. It is when the relation of the church to the Spirit is forgotten, that unity is replaced by uniformity. Hence an authentic growth of the church is an organic growth in harmony with the particular expressions of faith inherited by each individual church, and made relevant to the concrete situations and religious needs and aspirations of that particular people.

The heritage of Christ's Universal Church

The individual churches, with their particular expressions of faith, constitute the heritage of Christ's Universal Church. Vat. II in its Decree on the Eastern Churches, speaks of them as the heritage of the universal church. The sacred synod exhorts the members of the eastern churches to "preserve their lawful liturgical rites and their established way of life" and adds that "these should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development" (para 6). Those who do not respect the particular expressions of faith contributing to the individuality of a church in their search for change and adaptation, will find themselves among those who destroy the heritage of Christ's Universal Church.

Variety within the church is not an unavoidable evil. God himself is not an inflexible monotone unit, but the living Trinity. Further, He did not create one creature but a wonderful variety of created beings who

are held together in Christ (Col. 1: 16f). The multitude of creatures fallen away from the union with God has been again joined together within the same Christ (Eph 1:10). In the Church there is one spirit, but many gifts, one word of God, but many languages; one body, but many members, one people of God, but many nations one faith, but many theologies, one worship in spirit and truth, but many liturgies, one law of love, but many disciplines, one life in the Spirit but many spiritualities. Variety in the church is a gift of God. Since the Middle Ages the variety and the pluralism in the Church were understood too superficially as variety of virtues, of the sacraments, of the grades of hierarchy etc. But the ancient church gave these words a deeper meaning in terms of the variety of the individual churches or rites, peoples and languages etc.

Eastern Individual Churches

The Catholic Church, whose very name indicated the catholicity that should characterize her, will be true to her name only in so far as she would take into account this pluralistic heritage of Christ's universal church. For this, the Eastern churches should be regarded as independent and equal member churches of the one church, acting with relative autonomy, with a different theology, liturgy, spirituality etc. They should not be treated only as forms or 'rites' of a different kind and archaic museum pieces. The approach of toleration or concession on the part of the Roman Latin Church towards the Eastern churches gives the impression that Orientals are regarded in the Church as second-rate catholics. Despite the fact that the Roman Church has made efforts to maintain the Oriental rites,

some of its representatives are diligently working to deprive the Eastern churches of their own inheritance in different ways. This is a great sin against the catholicity of the Church. The Latin West is in need of a conversion to catholic and to the universality of the heritage of Christ, by recognizing the Eastern churches as autonomous churches of equal rank respecting and supporting their legitimate right for growth and evangelization.

Individual Churches of India

After this theological exposition of the individual churches in general, a few concrete remarks are worth making about the Church in India. The Christ-experience as expressed in the Church of India is handed to us, through the three individual churches: Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro Malankara. A genuine concern for the growth of the church in India should impel all these individual churches to appreciate each other and to help each other to present their particular apostolic heritages handed down to them in different ways.

This fact is to be taken into account in the process of adaptation and so-called Indianization. The process of Indianization which has a tendency to impose a uniform pattern of cultural and liturgical expression of Christian faith on the whole of India is blind to the fact of the ecclesial and cultural pluralism of India which is the rich heritage of Christ's universal church. Efforts at adaptation should safe-guard the rich ecclesial heritage of the churches in India on the one hand, and take into account the cultural differences of the people on the other. It should imply a healthy synthesis of the traditional past and the existential present of India.

The Bishop and the Individual Church

A diocese is only an administrative unit of an individual church, and hence solidarity should exist between the bishop who is at the head of a diocese and the hierarchy of the individual church to which he belongs. Apostolic succession is not only a succession of persons, but a succession of Christian faith. It is primarily a question of awakening again and again, the faith that first sprang from the original testimony of the apostles, and of making this faith known in this church and relevant to the concrete situations of time and place. It is the hierarchy that should give leadership properly in so far as this solidarity exists between him and the hierarchy of this individual church and he remains united with the faith of the church as expressed in its ecclesial heritages. In this way the bishop remains the sign of the apostolic succession in the church.

Individual churches of India and Evangelization

As we saw above the process of evangelization is identical with the process of formation and growth of individual churches. Therefore, genuine evangelization is possible only in the context of the realization of authentic individual churches. For fulfilling the task of evangelization in India, an authentic growth of all the three individual churches of India is indispensable. Therefore optimum conditions should be maintained for their proper and organic growth. Since the growth of the individual church depends on its evangelizational activity, full freedom should be given to the three individual churches to go and preach the gospel any time and anywhere in India and abroad depending on their personnel and resources.

Conclusion

By way conclusion the following points are reiterated. The universal church is the communion of the individual churches and, strictly speaking, has no concrete existence outside them. The individual church is not simply a part or administrative unit of the universal church. The mystery of the church of Christ is fully immanent in each individual church. It is also transcendent since one individual church does not exhaust the whole mystery of the church but is open to, and in fellowship with, this mystery present in other individual churches.

The process of the formation and growth of individual churches is the same as that of evangelization. Hence the Christ-experience which the Apostles proclaimed through the word, in the power of the spirit, remains the decisive element in the individual church. But this Christ-experience takes different expressions in its encounter with the world. While the spirit remains the unifying principle, it is also creative of different expressions of the Christ experience in terms of the life, theology, liturgy and discipline which differentiate one individual church from another. These elements constitute the individuality of the churches. Any genuine growth of the church should be an organic one, namely, in harmony with the individuality of the church.

The apostolic succession and leadership should be conceived in terms of the leadership or hierarchy of the individual church rather than those of personal privilege or diocesan leadership. This apostolic leadership is meant to help the church to grow in Christ-experience in accordance with the apostolic heritage of faith handed over

to it with its specificity and individuality, rather than to build up and run institutions with maximum efficiency thus fostering Christian life on a diocesan level, without any solidarity with the individual church.

It is an obligation of the church of India, which is heir to the heritage of the three individual churches, to foster the growth of all the three churches with mutual appreciation and respect by creating optimum conditions for their full-fledged evangelizational activity which is the heart-beat of the life of the Church.

3. THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS OF INDIA

Xavier Koodapuzha

The Oriental Catholics of India seem to be facing a kind of crisis of identity. A person or a community which is not deeply conscious of its own identity will remain confused and dissipated and consequently unable to play its unique role in the church and in the world at large. Such a strange situation has taken place which has led to an ecclesial crisis in the Indian context. The Vatican II has rediscovered the true nature of the catholic Church as communion of individual Churches. This ecclesial vision demands an adequate awareness of the true nature of the Church and fidelity to the heritage of each individual church. Hence the Church teaches :

“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).

“...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).

“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, and which forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church” (OE 1).

Hence it is our duty to rediscover the venerable traditions of our Church which is as old as Christianity itself in the Indian soil. Such a discovery and consciousness will qualify us to contribute our unique share to the true notion of catholicity and to play our role relevantly within the catholic communion.

The ecclesiology of the Thomas Christians of India still remains an area unexplored by ecclesiologists. It can be understood only in its historical background. The complex situation of India provided the background for the development of a distinctive style of ecclesial life. The spirituality, discipline, worship, and organizational structures of the St. Thomas Christians were intimately related to this background. They were of the same faith and rite till the sixteenth century. Now they are a divided Church. Consequently their ecclesial traditions have undergone certain changes. But despite the divisions, they still preserve some of their venerable ecclesial traditions of earlier times.

First of all we make a brief survey of the historical background in which the Church of the Thomas Christians had its origin and growth and developed its identity. Then we proceed to the nature and structure of the leadership and of the community. It is followed by a brief analysis of the indigenous character of their

ecclesiastical system. In the light of this analysis we try to find out how this ecclesial identity was adversely affected during the trying vicissitudes of history of the last few centuries which finally led to the present ecclesiological crisis. Hence the topic is divided as follows:

- I. Historical Background
- II. Hierarchical Development
- III. Palliyogam
- IV. Indigenous Identity of the 'Low of Thomas'
- V. Thomas Christians under the Latin Bishops
- VI. The Present Ecclesiological Crisis of the
Thomas Christians

PART I: Historical Background

It is the ancient tradition of the Church in India that St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Christ came to India in 52 AD, 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 centres of the Apostle's activities.¹ There are families which can trace their Christian tradition to the Apostle. This tradition is shared also by the Fathers of the Church such as Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, Gregory of Tours, Isidore of Seville and many others.² It is not the purpose of this article to make a detailed analysis of the historicity of the apostolate of St. Thomas.³ 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.

Their Church developed a style of ecclesial life which was conditioned by the socio-cultural, political and religious context of that period. Meanwhile its liturgical and hierarchical relations with the church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon are based on their Thomistic, linguistic, cultural and commercial affinities.

The identity of an individual Church of apostolic origin is the result of the interaction between the *terminus a quo* of the apostolic proclamation and the *terminus ad quem* of the life-situation of the community of the believers. These two factors are the constituent elements of the individuality or identity of a Church. The Apostles have proclaimed the Christ-event which they have experienced or personalized. This personalization process of the Christ-event has its own uniqueness. The philosophical principle "*Omne agens agit sibi simile*" is quite valid in this context. Everybody acts according to his own nature. In the same way the receiving community of the gospel also has its own uniqueness. The philosophical principle '*Quid quid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur*' is equally applicable here. Everybody receives according to his own nature. Hence the interaction between the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* constitute a certain kind of uniqueness which we call the identity or individuality of a Church.

According to historical evidences there were Jewish colonies along the Malabar coast. These Jews were intermediaries in the trade of spices between the Malabar coast and the countries of Middle East and Europe. This Jewish presence also most have paved the way for the coming of St. Thomas. The Apostles were preaching the Gospel first of all to the Jews. One would naturally

expect the same method also from the part of St. Thomas when he preached here in India. According to tradition St. Thomas founded churches in seven places. All these places were of commercial importance where the presence of the Jews was quite conspicuous. Their great attachment to the Aramaic language and some of the traditions of Jewish origin are pointed out as examples of this affinity. The ceremonial preparation, distribution and eating of the Paschal meal (specially prepared bread and drink) under the leadership of the head of each family is an Old Testament tradition of the early Christians in the Indian context. The celebration of the Paschal meal was the most solemn celebration of the Jews at the family level.

The existence of the church of the Thomas Christians outside the Graeco-Roman world prepared the background to develop her own ecclesial style which is generally called the 'Law of Thomas'. But they believed in the communion of churches under the Pope who is the successor of Peter. Hence the missionaries who came into contact with them in the 16th century have made the following observations:

"These Christians commonly believe in all the articles of the Nicene Creed and the equality of the divine persons and the two natures and one person in Christ. The archbishop and archdeacon believe the same thing. Regarding the Pope, they hold that he is the vicar of Christ, our Redeemer, on earth. They consider their Patriarch as subject to the Pope, from whom his powers are derived" (J. Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, vol.2, Bangalore: 1982, pp. 30-31).

We have the following statement from the arch-deacon George of Christ in the 16th century in his letter to Pope Gregory XIII:

“Regarding matters spiritual, as Your Reverence will hear from my archbishop, we are all obedient to the Catholic Roman Church and to the Supreme Pontiff, Gregory XIII. In this obedience we wish to live and die” (*ibid*, p. 31).

a) *Thomistic affinity*

The Indian Church of the Thomas Christians is one of four churches which are connected with the Apostle. The Christ-experience of St. Thomas was their common apostolic heritage. They venerate St. Thomas as their common Father. The Church of Edessa believes that St. Thomas founded it through his disciple Addai. As a sign of this attachment to the Apostle Thomas they took a major portion of his relics from India to their land. On the other hand, the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (the capital of the Persian Empire and the head-quarters of the Chaldean Church) is connected with St. Thomas through Mari, Addai's disciple who was believed to have preached here. The Church of Persia proper (Iran) also claimed St. Thomas for its Apostle. Concerning the Thomas Christians of India, they firmly hold on to the belief in their direct evangelization by St. Thomas. His tomb at Mylapore is an added reason for their attachment to the Apostle.

This common Thomistic heritage of these four neighbouring Churches brought them into closer relations. The Apostle Thomas was their common Father and for this reason there was solidarity and mutual esteem among

them. Their common apostolic identity paved the way for more intimate fellowship. Among these Churches the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon emerged as the organizational centre, mainly owing to the political importance of this place as the capital of the Persian Empire. The Seleucian Prelate began to be known as the *Catholicos*, or *Patriarch*.

Such was also the common trend within the Roman Empire. Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria, which were the centres of the civil administration of the Roman Empire, emerged as the ecclesiastical centres with Patriarchal sees. The term *Metropolitans* meant the Prelate of the Mother city. The Metropolitan gradually assumed the title of *Patriarch* with other *Metropolitans* under them.

b) *The linguistic affinity*

Aramaic was the language used by Jesus and the Apostles. It was the ordinary language of Palestine. In the *Lion Handbook to the Bible* we read:

“The Aramaic language is closely related to Hebrew. Used for diplomacy as early as Sennacherib’s time (750-681 BC) it became the official language of the Persian Empire after about 550 BC. The Book of Daniel contains passages in Aramaic. In the New Testament Times Aramaic, rather than Hebrew, was the ordinary language of Palestine. It is still spoken today by the villagers of Malloula in Syria”⁴.

The Aramaic of Malloula has been much corrupted by the Turkish and Arabic languages. As the Aramaic language was the medium of Divine Revelation and evangeli-

zation the Christians had a predilection for it. This language which later come to be known as Syriac (after Syrus who ruled over Mesopotamia), began to be written in two scripts and pronounced in two ways, East Syriac and West Syriac. The East Syriac (Chaldean) retains the old pronunciation, which is that of Christ's time, as can be proved from such expressions as Talitha qumi, raqa, Eli Eli lama sabaqthani, haqel dama, Aba, Maran atha etc. which are seen in the Bible in the original forms. "Christ's language was the form of Syriac which the Jews had learnt in the land of captivity and had brought to Palestine. It became so Jewish that it was called Hebrew and the Jews employed its letters for writing the real Hebrew. Some call it Caldaic (Chaldean or Chaldee) and even Syro-Chaldaic, Syro-(Syriac) being a common epithet used for someother forms of Aramaic also"⁵. In the Pocket Oxford Dictionary (1952) "Chaldee" is defined as biblical Syriac or Aramaic".

It was also the common language of commerce⁶. The Liturgical expert Joseph Abdreas Jungman explains how Greek, Latin and Syriac, were the most important languages of the early centuries:

"During the early days of Christianity the three languages used in the inscription on the cross, Hebrew (Syriac), Greek and Latin, were of primary importance. With these one could make himself understood in any part of the world of the time⁷.

The adoption of another language for the liturgy was not a strange practice in the early church. Until the fourth century the liturgical language of Rome was

Greek. A similar attitude was possible in the Indian context, with the adoption of Syriac as the liturgical language.

This respect for the language of revelation is quite natural as is observable in other religious traditions. The respect which the Hindus show towards Sanskrit, their Vedic language, and the love and attachment the Moslems have for Arabic are clear examples of this religious attitude. In such a situation of the early centuries it was quite natural for the Thomas Christians of India to adopt a liturgy which used the Aramaic language. An added incentive must have been the fact that the other three churches, with the same Thomistic heritage, had accepted it for their official form of worship⁸.

c) *The commercio-cultural affinity*

There were vigorous commercial relations among these countries in which the Church was founded by St. Thomas or his disciples. These paved the way for cultural relations. Dr. H. C. E. Zacharias says:

“The commercial relations between Chaldea and Malabar go back at least to the VIII century B. C. It is evident from the teak beams etc. found in the ruins of Chaldean Ur ..This intercourse continued down the century; for the ‘Periplus’ (written circa AD 90) reports that at the mouth of the Euphrates was the harbour of Apologus, where sandal wood, teak and ebony were imported from Barygaza (Broach) See Rawlinson’s *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, Cambridge, 1916. p. 133⁹.

As we have seen the language of the Jews was Aramaic and they were in the forefront in commercial relations with India¹⁰. There were Jewish colonies in the Indian coastal regions. Aramaic was the commercial language throughout the East.

d) *The sumerio-dravidian affinity*

The sumerians are not semites Ur was the capital of the sumerians. Dr. Werner Keller says:

“Ur emerged from the shady past as the capital city of the Sumerians, one of the oldest civilizations in Mesopotamia. As we know the Sumerians are not Semites like the Hebrews”¹¹.

Historians and archaeologists do argue in favour of a close affinity between the Sumerian and Dravidian cultures. The common bodily features and linguistic heritage indicate that the Thomas Christians are mainly of Dravidian stock. The famous Indus valley civilization is regarded as Dravidian. The excavations made at Mohanjadaro, Harappa and Chambu have revealed elements of a common heritage of Darvidians and Sumerians. The Biblical archaeologist William Foxwell makes the following observation:

“In 1921 the existence of a highly developed civilization in the early Indus valley was discovered; subsequent excavation at Harappa, Mohanjadaro and Chambu, done by Sir John Marshall and Ernest Mackay has accumulated a mass of detail and has clarified a chronological picture showing that the Indus culture culminated during the second half of the third millennium B. C. and disappeared well before the end of

the same millennium. Strictly speaking this early civilization of India was no less dependent on the West than was the later Aryan culture since there is close parallelism, and there are many specific points of identity, between it and the contemporary culture of Mesopotamia and Susiana ¹².

The teak beams etc. which are found in the ruins of Chaldean Ur indicate the relation with Malabar. Ur means town or village or place or residence Ur has the same meaning in the Dravidian language of Tamil and also in Malayalam. There are many place names in Malabar and elsewhere with the suffix ur. The villages and the territories (temple states) under the government of the Hindu temples were called 'Uralma' and its leaders were called 'Uralmakar'¹³.

This historical background explains how the Thomas Christians of India maintained an intimate communion with the Chaldean (East Syrian) Church. Their relations were based on the Thomistic, linguistic, commercial and cultural affinity that existed among these four Churches. The East Syrian Liturgy was not regarded as something alien but, on the contrary, as, to a large extent, the common expression of their Thomistic, linguistic and cultural heritage.

The profound consciousness of their ecclesial identity and liturgical heritage is expressed in a letter sent by their lay leaders to His Holiness Pope Gregory XIII in 1578:

"O supreme Pastor of all Christians, we, your sinful and unworthy sons of India, wish to

inform you that we have been *Christians from the time St. Thomas the Apostle*, a disciple of Our Lord. Thus we have become sharers of the Baptism, sacraments and the Body of Our Lord. Our worship (liturgy) is in the *Syriac language which was handed down to us by our Father St. Thomas. Our forefathers and we ourselves are well instructed in this language*'.¹⁴

PART : II Hierarchical Development

The organizational developments in the Churches were always conditioned by socio-cultural and political factors. The hierarchical organization within the Roman Empire followed a specific pattern as Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire¹⁵. But Christianity outside the Roman Empire had to face a quite different socio-political situation. Seleucia-Ctesiphon was the capital of the Persian Empire and it included Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Persia proper (Iran). The political importance of Seleucia-Ctesiphon paved the way for its ecclesiastical emergence and centralization. Though the bishops of Persia proper objected to such a claim¹⁶, they too gradually accepted the Seleucian leadership.

By 424 The Seleucian Metropolitan asserted his full independence of the 'Western Fathers' (cf Edessa and Antioch)¹⁷. Here we see an instance of how the Persian Church, though founded by St. Thomas himself, accepted the leadership of the Seleucian see which was founded only by a disciple of St. Thomas. Such was the case within the Roman Empire also. The imperial provincial capitals such as Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople, emerged as the principal patriarchal centres.

The Thomas Christians of India do not seem to have had the facilities to develop their own independent ecclesiastical organization¹⁸. The socio-cultural relations with the Persian Church which was also founded by the same Apostle prompted them to form part of the ecclesiastical organization of the Seleucian Church, maintaining their own ecclesial identity and individuality.

By 8th century the bishop of the Thomas Christians had the Metropolitan title¹⁹. During the time of the Chaldean Patriarch Timothy I (780/89-823) there are evidences of elections of the Metropolitan made by the people of India in the presence of the suffragan bishops. They were expected to get the confirmation or approbation of their election from the Chaldean Patriarch. It is an indication that there were many bishops here to elect their Metropolitan²⁰. The Metropolitan was known by the title of "the Gate of All India". The Indian Church was practically autonomous²¹. This was the situation until the Synod of Diamper in 1599.

a) *The Metropolitan of All India*

There are evidences of the existence of a Metropolitan dignitary among the Thomas Christians from the eighth century²². His official title was METROPOLITAN AND GATE OF ALL INDIA (metropolita o-thar'a d-kollah hendo)²³. It was used also in short forms of "Gate of India", "Head of India" etc "Gate" among the Orientals signifies "sublime authority". In the ninth century, according to the treatise of "The Law of the Christians" of Ibn-Attib, the Metropolitan of India was elected by the people in the presence of the suffragan bishops. They were expected to get the Patriarch's approbation before referring the matter to the local king.

According to the Vatican Syriac Codex XXII written in Cranganore, Kerala, in 1301 by a deacon called Zacharias, the Metropolitan of the time was "Mar Jacob, Bishop Metropolitan, Prelate and Ruler of the Holy See of the Apostle St. Thomas, namely our Ruler and (the Ruler) of the entire Holy Church of the Christians of India"²⁴. We have further testimony of the seventeenth century from a Jesuit priest Campori: "According to information gathered from several books and well-known facts, the bishop of the Serra (Malabar) was always an Archbishop, and is the oldest in India. Its Archbishops and Prelates were always called Archbishop Metropolitan of All-India and of its confines"²⁵. Bishop Francis Roz s. j. the first Latin bishop to govern the Thomas Christians, speaks about the extension of the word "Hendo". Relying on the authority of an author who lived centuries before, he says that Hendo, which signifies the same as India, "extends from the river Indus to Cape Comorin"²⁶. In 1567 the Chaldean Patriarch Abdiso used the title "Superior of all the bishops and metropolitans" for the Metropolitan Mar Abraham of the Thomas Christians²⁷.

b) *Archdeacon*

The church administration of the Thomas Christians too did bear characteristics very close to the New Testament background. Their administration was of a decentralized type drawing inspiration from Acts 6:1-6. Here we find an excellent example of priority given by the Apostles.

Etymologically, the term archdeacon means 'chief minister'. For the first time this title is seen in the book *De Schismate Donatistarum* written about 366 by

St. Optatus²⁸. The title of archdeacon gradually began to be used for the chief assistant of the bishop in the administration of the diocese²⁹. Among the Thomas Christians this office enjoyed a unique position, and its incumbent 'The Archdeacon of All India'.

The historical sources are too scanty for an adequate picture of the development of this office in India. The earliest document in which it can be traced is a letter of the Chaldean Patriarch Timothy (780-826) addressed to the Archdeacon of India. The Patriarch addresses the Archdeacon as "the Head of the Faithful in India"³⁰. This letter speaks about the norms to be followed in the ordination of priests, bishops, metropolitans and patriarchs. W. Germann relates the origin of the archdiaconate to the time of Thomas of Cana.³¹

A palm-leaf document, written at Kothamangalam, says that in the year 1509 Archdeacon Ittikuriah effected a compromise between two parties allowing each a church with a 'palliyogam'. The Archdeacon is called the head of the community ("Jathikku Karthavvian")³². In this period, though there were five bishop in Malabar, the Archdeacon played the key role in the administration of the church. From the reports of the Jesuits we get much information about the nature of the authority of the Archdeacon. Francis Dionysio S. J writes to the Jesuit General, on Jan. 2, 1578 'There is, in this Christianity, a priest, a native of this country belonging to the Malabar caste, approved for his virtues and habits and Learned and experienced in ecclesiastical matters. He knows the S. Scripture and understands and speaks Chaldean. He is esteemed very much by these Christians, and before the gentile kings and lords he holds influence and

recognition. He is the archdeacon of Angamaly and helps the archbishop, serving him as his provisor. We went to visit the Archbishop and the Archdeacon of Angamaly who have the care of the christianity of the Serra.... the Archbishop and the Archdeacon who holds great authority and credit in this Christianity" (we have this report in a letter of Manuel Texeira to the Jesuit General written on (10. 1. 1580)³⁴. The Archdeacon was conscious of his position and responsibility. In a report of Fr. Valignani s. j. we have the following: "The Archdeacon then affirmed that the whole Christian community of Malabar rested on his shoulders both in spiritual and in temporal matters"³⁵. The Archdeacon was responsible for the sustenance of the Archbishop and he used to fix the amount which each church should contribute. Funds were raised for the uplift of the poor. "After the religious ceremonies the archbishop or the archdeacon used to be seated in chair and the faithful approached him with their donations. The collection was used to arrange marriage for the orphans, redeem captives, to lend money to the poor without interest, to construct or repair churches etc."³⁶. We get this information from a letter of Fr. Peter Luis to Mercurian on 23. 12. 1580³⁷.

With the increase of their political power the Portuguese tried to latinize the Thomas Christians. In 1585 a Goan Council decided to introduce the Latin liturgy with Syriac translations among the Thomas Christians. We come across many papal briefs addressed to the Archdeacon. For the years 1576-1581 there are five papal briefs of Pope Gregory XIII addressed to the archdeacon regarding matters of ecclesiastical importance. The

documents are dated Dec. 21, 1576³⁸. Nov. 20, 1578³⁹ Jan. 3, 1579⁴⁰. March 1580⁴¹ and Jan. 20, 1581⁴². These letters were sent to the Archdeacon while the Metropolitan Mar Abraham was here in Malabar. This reveals the unique position of the Archdeacon in the government of the Church. The latinizing policy of the Portuguese Jesuits was resisted by the Archdeacon. The Archdeacons defended the 'Law of Thomas', their legitimate ecclesial heritage, which included liturgy discipline, spirituality and traditions. Mar Abraham died in February 1597. According to tradition the administration was the hands of the Archdeacon. The Goan Archbishop wanted to make of this opportunity to interfere in the affairs of the Thomas Christians. He requested the Archdeacon to make a public profession of faith according to the Latin formula. The superior of the Dominicans of Cochin reports that the Archdeacon was quite learned a orthodox in his faith. But for the Portuguese Jesuits the Latin practices were the norms of orthodoxy. In a report of Dec. 24, 1598 sent by Fr. Roz. s. j. to the Jesuits General it is stated that the Thomas Christians feared that the Jesuits were involved in a conspiracy to abolish their liturgy and traditions and to introduce the Latin ones⁴³. The Archdeacons were trying to keep the individuality of the ancient church of the Thomas Christians. The Archdeacon was their legitimate authority though there were also bishops sent from Chaldea. He was the unifying and coordinating factor of the Church.

A document of the 17th century recorded by the Italian Carmelite priest Giuseppe Sebastiani OCD, who was the Apostolic Commissary points out the unique position of the Archdeacon among the Thomas Christians:

“La prima dignita dopo l'arciepiscopale nella Serra (Malabar) e quella di Archidiacono quale per anti quo privilegio e per successione in una medesima casa ha grandissima prerogazione all'uso della Chiesa Greca oltra che L'archidiacono e come principe e capo della Cristianita di S. Tome per aver loro altra dignita sacra o profana della propria nazione”.

(Archives of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, Rome, Scritti riferitti nel Congr. General, Vol. 233, f.III).

The Metropolitan was mainly concerned with the liturgical worship while the Archdeacon was responsible for the effective leadership of the Church as the Jathikku Karthavvian.

PART : III Palliyogam

In the ecclesial life of the Thomas Christians palliyogam played a very important role. A yogam consists of the representatives of the families and the clergy of a parish. This assembly is presided over by the parish priest. The yogam discusses the problems connected with the life and activities of the parish, such as the approval of the candidates to priesthood, spiritual welfare of the parish, the financial administration, punishment for public sinners, reconciliation in times of conflict, etc. The candidates for priesthood have to get the *desakkuri*, the official approval, of the parish community.

The palliyogam is something unique among the Thomas Christians of India. This assembly seems to owe

its origin to the ancient village assembly which was prevalent among the Dravidians. The Dravidans of the Sanghakalam (1-5 centuries AD) ⁴⁴ used to gather together to discuss matters of common interest and take decisions on them. The leaders of the families were members of the Manram. This assembly was an authoritative body at the village level. The families were obliged to abide by the decisions of this assembly. In the same way the palliyogam also consists of the leaders of the families. This yogam was responsible for the welfare of the local Christian community.

The members of the assembly enjoyed perfect equality and it was an effective means of maintaining communion and solidarity in the community. The idea of the church as a community of the fellowship was kept alive through the *yogam*. This kind of the community structure of the St. Thomas Christians seems to have had twofold sources. The presence of the Jewish converts must have had its own influence through its organizational pattern of the synagogues. The synagogues came in to being as a result of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and of the dispersion of the Jews outside - Palestine. Synagogue was organized to maintain the unity of the Jews. It was a lay organization and its own government was committed to the elders of the community. It had certain judicial and punitive powers (Mt 23, 34; Mk 13, 9; Lk 21,12;12,11; AA 9,2;22,19; 26,11). Fr Boniface OCD gives a report of the nature and functioning of this Palliyogam among the Thomas Christians 1750.

“In tutte le chiese Caldee li Cristiani trattano degl'affari ecclesiastici nelle aggiunte, le quali si

compongono del clero e popolo, tanto che non solo nelle spese da farsi a pio delle chiese, o sia per le ristaurazioni, e fabbriche, ma anche promuovere agl Ordini sacri et assolvere dalle censure si fa del consiglio del clero e popolo, et il vescovo non promuove i soggetti agli ordini, ne assolve dalle censure incorse senza che il postulante porti la supplica del popolo, il quale aggiunto in chiesa, udite le preghiere del supplicante porge la detta supplica al Prelato”.

“Nelle cosa di maggior rilievo ammettono e convocano per tali aggiunte le popoli delle chiese vicine per consigliarsi con esse a quando l'affare e importantissimo, chiamano anche tutte le chiese di quel Regno, et alcune volte tutte la diocesi ... e questo tanto e giudicato importante per l'esecuzione, di modo che per non essere arrivati a tempo alcuni Cristiani alla sinodo di Diamper, fino a oggi di quantumque abbino accettato li decreti della detta sinodo in quanto spetta al Dogma, ma non l'anno percio accettati per quello riguarda il mero costume, o per servirmi del termine sinodate, Disciplina e fino ad oggi non li osservano in molte cose”.

(Archive of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Congregazioni partiocolari, Vol. 109, f.90, Report of Fr. Boniface of Infant Jesus OCD, in 1750).

The local problems of the community were discussed in the parish yogam. Matters of wider importance were discussed in the General Yogam which consisted of rep-

representatives of all the parishes. In the General Yogam the Archdeacon had a very decisive role. We come across such gatherings before important events of the Church. There were gatherings of this kind before and after the "Koonan Cross" oath. The general gathering decided to send Fr. Cariatti and others to Rome. The necessary money was raised by the General Yogam. Fr Paulinus of Bartholomeo, who was a Carmelite missionary in India calls it a republican system of government⁴⁶. After studying the functioning of the ecclesial structure of the Thomas Christians he writes: "Tutti questi Cristiani compongono una specie di Repubblica Christiana civile, e quando è offesa una parrocchia, le altre 'unite per defenderla. Il Parroco e gli anziani giudicano e decidono tutte le cose'"⁴⁷.

The palliyogam among the Jacobite Thomas Christians

The palliyogam is preserved also by the non-Catholic Thomas Christians with some modifications. These Christians (Jacobites) separated, themselves in 1653 from the jurisdiction of the Latin bishops in order to preserve their legitimate traditions. But they had to remain without a bishop of their own for some time. Finally in 1665 a Jacobite Bishop from Antioch reached Malabar and a group of Thomas Christians accepted him. This was the beginning of the Antiochian Jacobite tradition in India.

This community, which gradually began to be known as the Jacobites, preserved some of their ecclesial traditions though, on the whole, they gave up their own liturgy and adopted the West Syrian one. Because of this they are called *Puthenkuttukar* (the New party). Among them also palliyogam plays a very decisive role.

All the young men who have reached the age of twenty one are, ipso facto, eligible to be in the yogam. Every parish and diocese and the Malankara Church as a whole, has yogams on various levels. This parish yogam should be convened at least twice a year. Decisions are taken according to the majority opinion. There is a managing committee in every parish. A trustee (kaikkaran) is elected by the parish yogam. His term of office is one year. Diocesan yogam follow the same pattern at a higher level. Every parish is represented in the diocesan yogam by its parish priest and two elected laymen. The diocesan assembly has a managing committee consisting of four laymen and two priests. They are elected by the general diocesan yogam from all its members. The diocesan yogam and the managing committee look after temporal matters and others of ecclesial priest⁴⁸. In keeping with the ancient traditions of the Thomas Christians there is a General yogam of all the dioceses of the Malankara Church. It is called the Malankara Syrian Christian Association.

This Association consists of Bishops, priests and laymen. Every parish of the Malankara Church sends its parish priest and two elected laymen. It consists of 3000 members. The Malankara Metropolitan is the president and the bishops are the vice-presidents of this association. It has a managing committee which consists of eight priests and sixteen laymen elected by the association from its members. The Malankara Association has a decisive role in the election and appointment of the bishops. But it needs the approval of the Episcopal Synod. The Catholicos is the President of the Episcopal Synod. The Malankara Syrian Christian Association is an evolved

form of the palliyogam and the general yogam which existed among the Thomas Christians.

PART IV: Indigenous character of the "LAW OF THOMAS"

The Church has to express her service in the idioms, symbols and thought patterns of the culture in which she has to be incarnated. Ecclesiologists would say that the Church of St Thomas Christians was "Indian in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship".

The spiritual role of the hierarchy and the ministers of the Church was quite in harmony with the cultural and religious traditions of India. The 'Guru-Sishya' relation reveals the core of Indian culture. The authority of the 'guru' is not of a juridical nature but of a spiritual realm. A brief analysis of this aspect is very useful at present when people speak much on indigenization.

The 'guru' is the "man who is able to initiate others into knowledge by experience of the mystery of God which he himself has experienced (B. Bhatt, "Authority in the Guru-Sishya Relationship, *Jeevadhara*, 1976, p. 361). In the light of this analysis of the Hindu Scriptures on this subject, Dr. B. Bhatt points out the qualities of a 'guru' in the Indian tradition: '1. The one who dispels darkness, revealer of light 2. the one who destroys the sins of disciple 3. the one who makes the discipline like himself. 4. the one who destroys the life of ignorance and grants the life of knowledge 5. the one who has vision 6. the one through whom grace is imparted. 7. the one who grants joy and peace to the disciple.'

(*Ibid.* p. 362.)

A true Guru is a man who possesses and practices all the virtues. R. C. Mazumdar in his scholarly analysis of "History and culture of the Indian People" makes the following observation: "The relation between the teacher and disciple was in no sense mercenary but spiritual and sacred, there was no one-sided discipline: both had to observe it" (*Ibid.* p. 367). In the Indian society guru has an essential and indispensable role to play. The concept of authority taught by Christ goes quite harmony with the guru sishya relation of the society.

Unfortunately the Church in India from the 16th century inherited foreign tradition of religious authority with a juridical emphasis. The association with the Portuguese marked the beginning of this new tradition which was found in conflict with the 'Law of Thomas'. In a community where the spiritual authority is given priority, juridical claims of submission, rights and privileges will appear ridiculous. The authority is based on the Spirit and the intensity of the religious and spiritual experience. The renunciation of worldly attachment is the sign of a spiritual leader. One can be a spiritual guide or leader only in proportion to his spiritual depth and openness to the Spirit. He should be able to speak like St Paul. "I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2, 20) and with St John the Baptist "He must increase and I must decrease". The religious authority becomes credible by the integrity of one's life and conduct. Pomp and dominion are alien to the idea of an authentic guru. The Christians in the indian set up do not want to see their ecclesiastical leaders as administrators but want to see them as real spiritual men who can lead them to God.

The bishop who is a successor of the apostles has to prove that he is transmitting the spiritual heritage of the church through his word and witness. Thus the bishop is a vehicle of the "mighty current of spirituality". Hence Abhishiktananda makes the following observation on the Indian situation: "The Spirit leads her from within. He calls to her memory the words of Christ, and makes her realize their truth in an ever new way. Through his shining presence he enables her to deal with all problems put to her on all planes by the new circumstances of time" (B. Bhatt, *art. cit.* p. 377).

The particular hierarchical tradition and set up of the St Thomas Christians have to be appreciated in this indian context. For them bishops and clergy were not rulers but spiritual men or guru. They were men of deep spiritual experience who were well versed in S. Scripture, teachings of the Fathers and S. Liturgy. They were believed to be the faithful transmitters of the entire ecclesial heritage from generation to generation. The presence of the chaldean Prelates helped them to maintain ecclesial communion with the other churches while their own indigenous set up was responsible for the administration of the church. Those who do not know this historical background of the Indian church would call the chaldean hierarchical presence as a 'foreign rule'! In fact, the emphasis on the community and the active participation of their laity in the ecclesiastical administration link us with the earliest traditions of the Church.

PART V : Thomas Christians under the Latin Bishops

The sixteenth century was a golden age of western colonization. There was a close alliance between the Latin missionaries and the colonials. The Portuguese were

pioneer settlers in India. They started a Latin diocese in Goa (1534) and another at Cochin (1558) in the hope of bringing the Thomas Christians under their jurisdiction. In a Goan Synod of 1585 it was decided to introduce the Latin liturgy and practices among the Thomas Christians. In the 'Synod of Diamper' of 1599 the Portuguese Archbishop, Dom Alexis Menezes of Goa, succeeded in appointing a Latin bishop to govern the Thomas Christians⁴⁹. The Portuguese padroado was extended over them. An anomalous situation arose in which the bishop and the rest of the clergy and people were of two different ecclesial traditions.

From 1599 up to 1896 these Christians of Oriental rite were under the Latin bishops who were appointed either by the Portuguese padroado or the Roman congregation of Propaganda Fide. During these centuries of Latin rule the Catholic Thomas Christians were in a predicament. Their time-honoured traditions were neither understood nor appreciated by their bishops who followed a different liturgy and discipline, i.e. liturgy and practices of the Latin Church. Legitimate resistance was branded heresy and schism. Such a policy resulted in a series of conflicts within the Church. The Thomas Christians under their indigenous leader, the archdeacon, resisted this latinization. But the consequences were disastrous. The Thomas Christians who were of the same faith and communion upto 1653 became divided into syro malabarians, Jacobites, Marthomites, Nestorians and other sects. All these divisions took place during the three centuries of Latin rule! The first division took place in 1653 with the Coonan Cross Oath. The representatives of the Thomas Christians, under the leadership of their

Archdeacon Thomas took an oath publicly that they would not obey the Portuguese bishops and the Jesuit fathers.⁵⁰.

PART VI : The present ecclesiological crisis of the Thomas Christians

From 1896 the Catholic Thomas Christians have been governed by bishops of their own rite. It was hoped that the indigenous bishops would restore the identity of their church which was disfigured during foreign domination. They have been following mainly the Canon Law and customs of the Latin Church. There has been no transformation of their ecclesial identity. The reason is obvious. Though the bishops and clergy were Orientals the centres of clerical formation continued to be under the Latin missionaries. Oriental liturgy, Indian Church History, Oriental spirituality, traditions etc., were never adequately taught in these training centres. The result was that the bishops, priests and religious and through their influence the laity, continued to be almost ignorant of their own venerable heritage and out of their element in it. This strange situation continues even today wherever seminarians are trained in similar institutions. This remains a grave ecclesiological and ecumenical problem of Eastern Christianity in India. The direction given by Vatican II remains yet to be implemented here. Vatican II says:

“All should realize that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritages of the Eastern Churches, in order

faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians"⁵¹.

Similarly, the Decree on the Oriental Churches has not yet been properly executed in the Indian Context. This conflict between the official teaching of the church, and the inability of ecclesiastical leaders to implement it, is indeed a crisis. The root cause seems to be the inadequacy of the centres of clerical and religious formation, and the lack of theological enlightenment in the leadership.

The guide lines of Vatican II continue to be ignored in most of the Indian seminaries and training centres where Thomas Christians are undergoing clerical formation. In such seminaries theological formation is given without ecclesial experience of their Mother Church. The concept of the Catholic Church as a communion of individual churches has not yet become a reality in the Indian context.

Conclusion

The Church needs her full heritage. She becomes impoverished if the individual churches being uprooted from their heritage give up what is their own and simply imitate the practices of another individual church. Servile imitation destroys one's own identity and authenticity. The apostolic heritage is not the monopoly of a single individual church. The communion of the various individual Churches of apostolic origin constitutes the Catholic heritage of the universal church. It is in this ecclesiological perspective that the heritage of the Thomas

Christians has to be understood and appreciated. The Church of the Thomas Christians of India which is as old as Christianity itself, has to interpret her authentic tradition in order to enrich the universal church which is a communion of Churches.

Foot Notes

1. Koodapuzha X. (ed) *Church History* (Malayalam), Kottayam: 1974, pp.103-113.
2. The testimonies of the Fathers are given by Fr.A.C, Perumalil, *The Apostles in India*, Patna: 1971, pp. 49-81.
3. The local traditions and the documentary evidences are given by C.V. Cherian, *A History of Christinity in Kerala*, Kottayam: 1973, pp.1-53.
4. *The Lion Handbook to the Bible*, Reprint of 1916, Herts, England: p. 87.
5. Placid J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the Thomas Christians* Vadavathoor: 1979, p. 7.
6. Dr. H.C E. Zacharias, *The Church of St Thomas and Bartholomew in Malabar*, 'Pax' Spring, 1926, Cladey, p. 12.
7. Jungmann J.A. "Liturgv" in *Encyclpoaedeia of Theology*, London; 1975, p. 855.
8. A letter written from Malabar to Pope Gregory XIII contains the following statement: "Our prayers are in Syriac or the Chaldean language which was handed over to us by Our Lord St Thomas, and we and our predecessors have been taught this language". Giamil S. *Genuinae relations inter sedem Apostolicam et Assyriorum Orientalium seu Chaldaeorum ecclesiam*, Rome, 1902, Document XXII.
9. H.C.E. Zacharias *op. cit.* p. 19.

10. Marshall, *Guide to Taxilla*, Delhi; 1936, pp. 78-79 and XXXIII (a); Burnet, "Aramaic Inscriptions from Taxilla", *Journal of Asiatic History*, 1915, pp. 340, 342; Couley, "First Aramaic Inscriptions from Taxilla", *ibid*, p. 342-347.
11. Werner Keller, *The Bible History*, transl. by William Neil, London; 1914, pp. 43-44.
12. William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Garden City. New York; 1957, p. 30.
13. The Dravidian culture in India is pre-Aryan. There is a strange tendency now, especially among a group of Indian Christians, to identify Indian culture with Aryan culture. The Thomas Christians of Malabar are fundamentally of Dravidian stock. Their language, Malayalam, is Dravidian.
14. Koodapuzha, Xavier, "The Structural Evolution in the Church" *Jeevadhara* 1971, pp. 315-32.
15. Podipara P. J. *The Thomas Christians*, London, 1970, p. 38.
16. Cfr. Francis Dvornik, *National Churches and the Church Universal*, Westminster; 1943, p. 12.
17. G.T. McKenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, Trivandrum 1904 p. 4 McKenzie quotes the report of Peter du Jarrie S. J. according to whom, from the time of the apostle St Thomas, there was a Metropolitan see in India.
18. *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Textus 167, pp. 119, 118, versio 168, pp. 121, 120.
19. C.S.C.O Text 167, p. 119, translation 168 p. 121; cfr. P.J. Podipara. *The Thomas Christians*, p. 66.
20. Podipara P.J. *The Hierarchy of the Syro: Malabar Church* Alleppey: 1976, pp. 32-33.
21. *Ibid* p. 31, cfr. S Giamil, *op. cit.* pp. 582-4.
22. Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo, OCD, *India Orientalis Christiana*, Rome: 1794, p. 88.

23. It is a Lectionary written in East Syriac.
24. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa 65, f. 4. The Portuguese called Malabar Serra.
25. *Ibid.* f. 43.
26. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Gall.95 I 197. The Decree is in original Chaldean.
27. PL XI, col.916.
28. Kollaparampil J., *The Archdeacon of All-India*, Kottayam; 1972 p.24.
29. Ibn-At-Tayib, Fiqh an-Nasrania, *Das Recht der Christenheit*, Part II, Louvain; 1957, p. 121.
30. Germann W., *Die Kirche der Thomas Christen*, Gutersloh, 1877, p 94; cfr. J. Kollaparambil, *op. cit.* p 90.
31. This MS document is in the possession of the Pothanickatt family, Kothamangalam.
32. Jesuit Archives Rome, Goa-Mal. Vol.12, fol. 1447 v 448.
33. *Ibid.* Goa-Mal. Vol.13, fol.13v.
34. *Ibid.* Goa-Mal. Vol 14, fol.9.
35. *Ibid.* Goa-Mal. Vol.13, fol.39v.
36. Kollaparampil J. *op.cit.* p.90.
37. Jesuit Archives' Rome Goa-Mal, vol. 31, fol 407v.
38. Beltrami Giuseppe, *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell 'unione Rome'* 1933, p. 270.
39. *ibid* p. 195.
40. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa-Mal. vol.12, ff.447-8.
41. Vatican Archives, Secr. Brev. Vol.51. f.57.
42. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa-Mal. Vol.14.f.357.
43. For the Dravidian culture of the Sanghakalam see A. Sreedharamenon's *The History of Kerala*, Kottayam: 1969 pp. 91-119.
44. Archives prop. Fide, Rome, Congreg. part 30, f 449; cfr. Podipara P.J. *The Hierarchy* p.106.
45. Paremmakkal Thomakathanar, *Varthamanapusthakam*, ed. 2, p. 380.

46. Paulino da Bartholomeo, *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali* Roma: 1796 pp. 136-39.
 47. For the structure of the palliyogam and the Malankara association see A.P. Urumpackal *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar*, Rome: 1977 pp. 102-106.
 48. For the details of this synod which is considered invalid see Jonas Thaliath *The Syond of Diamper*, Rome: 1958¹
 49. Cfr. Koodapuzha Xavier (ed) *Church History*, Kottayam: 1974 pp. 599-635.
 50. Vatican II, Ecumenism art. 15.
 51. cfr. Herbert Vorgrimler (ed) *Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I, London, 1967, p.315; Victor J. Pospishil, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum, The Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches of the II Council of Vat.* New York, 1965 pp. 13-14.
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4. RELIGIOUS FORMATION AND ECCLESIAL IDENTITY

J. S. Thekumkal, C. M. I.

Introduction

In presenting this paper on Religious Formation and Ecclesial Identity, it must be made clear that this is not an exhaustive study on the subject. What is aimed at is to make a few observations and to highlight some of the issues involved in the ecclesial formation of religious. In other words the focus of this paper will be on the ecclesial dimension of religious life and religious formation.

I. Religious Life in the Ecclesial setting

Religious life, as Vat. Council teaches us "is a gift of God which the Church has received from her Lord and which by His grace she always safeguards (LG no. 43). In a word, religious life is a heritage, a reality that has been lived in the Church for centuries by a multitude of men and women. Religious life is a *schola Dominici servitii*, according to the fine formula of St. Benedict (Rule Pr. 45). All the other dimensions of religious life as the Second Vat. Council stresses, are arranged in view of this service.

Religious life, the council teaches, does not take place in the church on the level of institutional structures (it is not a hierarchical grade, nor is it added as a third element between pastor, and lay people), but in the line of charisms, and more exactly in the dynamism of that holiness which is the primary vocation of the church. The first reason for which a Christian becomes a religious is not to assume a post, a responsibility or a task in the Church, but to sanctify himself. This is his service for the Church.

The religious, through the profession of the evangelical counsels consecrates himself or herself totally to God. This total consecration brings with it, as a consequence, complete availability. The Church has always experienced in the course of her history that she could rely on religious for the most delicate and dangerous missions.

Religious are then at the heart of the Church, they are not a class apart but at the service of the Church, fully involved in her prophetic mission. Speaking to religious sisters at Kinshasa, in 1980 the Holy Father made this point very clear:

Solidly rooted in the prior requirements of your complete gift, authenticated by the Church, your life can not but be consumed in the service of the Church for which Christ gave Himself up. The mission of the Church is in the first place prophetic. She proclaims Christ to all nations and transmits to them his message of salvation. This involves your personal and community way of life in the first place (cf. *Evangeli Nuntiandi*) The present day world is

awaiting everywhere, perhaps vaguely, consecrated lives which tell in acts more than words, of Christ and the Gospel The prophetic church also relies on you, here as in other continents, to take part eagerly in her immense catechetical work”.

Religious in the Apostolate of the church

Religious are thus called upon to collaborate with the hierarchy, to collaborate in the apostolate of the church. To quote the Holy Father.

There is no doubt that men and women religious constitute great riches and considerable power for the universal Church and for the particular churches, owing, in the first place to the immense spiritual good they have done and continue to do, taking inspiration from the specific purposes of their institutes, but also owing to the various works and instruments at their disposal for the good of souls. This power and these riches can and must become living and vital elements in the diocesan apostolate as a whole, at all levels.

As is known the Second Vat. Council, dealing with religious life, tackled on several occasions the problem of the integration and collaboration of men religious — and therefore also women religious in the same way — in the life of the individual dioceses. The Council speaks exactly of the necessary....unity and harmony in the carrying out of apostolic work (LG no. 45); it defines religious priests as “prudent cooperators with the episcopal order” (Decree *Christus Dominus* no. 34), and states that

“the other members too, of religious institutes, both men and women, also belong in a special sense to the diocesan family and render valuable help to the sacred hierarchy, and in the view of the growing needs of the apostolate they can and should constantly increase the aid they give (*ibid*). This pastoral cooperation must, of course, take place in respect of the character and the constitutions of each religious institute.

The presence of religious in the Church is not something superfluous which can be done without, but a vital necessity. Some points will make this presence become more and more efficacious.

- first, priest-religious should prove capable of fitting in, in a loyal and disinterested way, with diocesan priests, whose tasks they are called to share, not by way of exception but on an habitual basis.

- second, lay religious should learn more and more to integrate their activity in an over all project, which is that of the whole Church, both at the local level and national level;

- third, in the spirit of the document *Mutuae Relationes*, religious superiors should seek, accept, and cultivate a frank and filial dialogue with the pastors placed by the spirit of God to govern His Church. In this sense it can not be stressed too much how important are the relations between National Conferences of Bishops, whose task it is to work out and establish pastoral plans for the country, and conferences of religious, which assumes the task of promoting religious life, taking care that it should remain faithful to its deepest roots and to the charism that characterises it. The CBCI-CRI joint consultations and KCBC-KCMS get-togethers assume their significance.

II. Ecclesial Formation of the Religious

I have been trying to locate religious life in the ecclesial context. It is clear that religious institutes are to serve the local church. The post-conciliar norms of the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* for the application of the Council's teaching give a series of principles and operational criteria inherent in the relation between bishops and religious (ES No. 22-40; especially nos 23.1; 25, 26; 29; 38). More recently, the document *Mutuae Relationes*, jointly issued by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes and the Sacred Congregation for bishops was intended to specify the spirit and criteria that should regulate relations between bishops and religious. The document acknowledges the role of particular churches without, however, losing sight of the universal dimension.

These considerations bring us to a theme current at this time. Today, thanks to Vat. Council II, the theology of the local church is very much to the forefront. Religious institutes feel identified with the local church and its human, social and pastoral problems. All of this is positive. Living the mystery of the church, the local church will highlight certain aspect of revealed truths which have greater relevance for it, and are understood better in the context of the people in which it exists. It is a whole process of adaptation, of inculturation, "expressions of variety within the same unity and the fullness of that incarnation which enriches the entire Mystical Body. In this whole process, "religious, even if they belong to an institute of pontifical right, should feel themselves truly a part of the diocesan family and

accept the duty of necessary adaptation" (Mutual Relations, no. 18 b).

To sum up, religious life is 'sentire cum ecclesia'—and religious formation should be a training to that effect. There is no authentic religious life which is not attuned to the ecclesial experience of the local church. Hence it follows that formation of our religious should aim at such formative activity to enhance the elements of ecclesial identity of a particular church; it should take note of the particular ecclesial sensitivity and participate in the effort we are making to become fully aware of the rich heritage of our church, with its own liturgy, hierarchical discipline, spirituality and theology. Religious formation to be true, should be in fidelity to the identity of a particular church and only then it will become in fact what it ought to be.

Religious formation – Indian Situation

Vatican Decree on Priestly Formation (OT 9) has a very significant statement which is very true of religious formation as well.

Seminarians should be thoroughly penetrated by the mystery of the Church, especially as it has been presented with new clarity by this holy Synod... let them learn to share large heartedly in the whole life of the church according to the spirit of St. Augustine's saying: "A man possesses the Holy Spirit to the measure of his love for Christ's Church".

The point is that religious formation has to be ecclesially oriented and updated. The Vatican Document *Perfectae caritatis* and subsequent documents have given clear

guidelines of appropriate renewal of religious life. This, no doubt has to extend also to the sphere of religious formation, especially to its ecclesial aspects. These documents give us valid criteria of renewal, two among them seem to me to be basic ones.

- The first is that religious life (and concretely every religious community) is not truly renewed if the purpose of the renewal is in practice the pursuit of what is easiest and most convenient, but only if the purpose is the pursuit of what is most authentic and most consistent with the aim of religious life itself. If that is so, religious formation itself should become authentic by recapturing the ecclesial dimension of our individual church.
- Second criterion is that religious life is renewed in order to become ever more a path of holiness in the church. Accordingly, religious formation will become authentic only if it is rooted in the spiritual traditions of our church.

It is a sad reality that ecclesial formation of religious in our church is far from satisfactory. This is an area practically neglected in the formative scheme of most religious institutes with the result that we are facing an identity crisis. Bishop Mar Joseph Powathil was very correct to point out that "our sense of identity is slowly disappearing... Many even of our priests and sisters think of Rites as something sectarian and do not understand the true nature of the communion of churches. Many outside Kerala speak of the individual church as only a source of rivalries. Their historic memory of

distinctiveness is fading out. They do not find it difficult to lose their identity and to forget their heritage”.

This is all the more true of our sisters who have entered Latin congregations or are working in Latin dioceses. It is a pity that they are losing their ecclesial identity and becoming uprooted and alienated to their own church and its traditions. This has been very clear to me when I attended the CRI National Conference 1983 at Patna. The Second Vatican Council has given us a rich theology of individual churches. The Holy synod unequivocally teaches that the Catholic Church is a communion of various groups or individual churches characterised by their own liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and spiritual heritage. (Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, no.1) The sacred Council holds the individual churches especially the Oriental Churches in high esteem (*ibid*) and directs that attention be given to the preservation and growth of each individual church (*ibid*). Unfortunately, some of our religious are alarmingly ignorant of the theology of individual churches and a few are even prejudiced. There are some who think that the Catholic Church is the Latin church and our churches are mere appendage to it! Some would even go to the extent of manifesting their ignorance by suggesting that any reference to the Oriental Churches as individual churches is tantamount to heresy! What is most appalling is the hostile attitude of some of the religious who are Orientals and who happened to join Latin congregations and who have to act and live a life forgetting that they are sons and daughters of an Apostolic church. Well, it is a question of their existence. They are quite content with their present state of affairs and do not want to be disturbed.

The Latin bishops who are eager to get the services of our sisters are not prepared to accept their Syro-Malabar identity. What is more harmful is the indoctrination process taking place in the congregations and religious houses of sisters in the Latin dioceses. Well, I will not elaborate on this point.

We ourselves are to blame for this pathetic plight in which we find ourselves. Our young men and women are not given proper ecclesial training and once they join religious institutes alien to our ecclesial tradition, it is no wonder that they will turn out to be Latinised Oriental freaks! If ever we are to redeem the situation, we should in the first place concentrate on an ecclesial catechesis of our youngsters. Here is the relevance of what Prof. C. A. Ouseph was telling us, namely the need of taking our ecclesial sense to the grass root level. Steps should also be taken, as Mar Joseph Powathil was telling us to see that a general introduction into the life and practices of the church should be given to those who enter Latin seminaries and religious institutes.

Problems of formation

Religious communities are experiencing a series of problems in their formative activity. These are the result of:

1. the accelerating pace of change in society at all levels, the pace of daily living that results, and the predominant climate of superficiality, make it difficult to discern the signs of the times and priorities in the scale of values.
2. the crisis of identity that has shaken the catholic world in these recent years: the phenomenon

of secularization and horizontalism; the appearance of a multiplicity of cultures and life-styles, some confusion in the field of theology, the weakening of a “sensus ecclesiae” and the influence of contrasting currents within the church itself.

Here reference may be made to the conflicting trends in the Syro-Malabar rite especially in matters related to the liturgy, all of which have created an unhappy situation in our church. This has its adverse influence on our formation personnel in seminaries and other formation houses. In certain cases it is known that professors in formation houses hold and propagate contradictory positions on liturgy and other vital areas of the traditions and heritage of the church. We are a house divided against itself.

Though our formation personnel are carefully chosen often they are not competent enough to impart a proper ecclesial training. Therefore, there is the need for formation for these educators, a specific formation which is steeped in the salient features of the particular church and which enables the young religious to absorb the heritage of the individual church for the service of which they are being trained.

Plan of formation

Religious formation is a graded one, proceeding stage by stage. Starting with aspirancy, followed by postulancy novitiate, juniorate, regency, the religious formation is an ongoing process. It is important that ecclesial formation is also organised in stages to suit the stages of religious formation.

I would suggest that a formation programme with clear ecclesial thrust, suited to conscientise our younger generation of religious be drawn out by some body like the KCMS. This should be a programme which highlights the identity of the church and which ensures correct understanding of the elements of this identity, also a programme that is open to the modalities of their application.

Means of Ecclesial formation

Given the primary importance of ecclesial formation the means used for it must be explicitly studied and presented.

A list of them would include:

- proper study and a deeper understanding of the history of our church, its liturgy, symbolism etc.
- general initiation to be given to aspirants, postulants and novices regarding the elements of ecclesial identity of the church.
- ways and means to be found to enrich liturgical life
- Divine office and other liturgical prayers – a rediscovery
- Study of Aramaic language and the writings of Oriental Fathers like St. Ephrem and others.

Guidelines for a more fruitful Ecclesial formation

Religious formation should embrace all aspects of life – spiritual, doctrinal or theological, biblical, psychological, moral, ascetical and professional. Given the present

situation, I would suggest that ecclesial formation ranks first. A deepening of the *sensus ecclesiae* by becoming aware of the heritage and history and tradition of our church, is important. Every religious institute has the duty of promoting formation with a view to preserve the ecclesial identity. This is a value that is part of our life, and has a bearing on our commitment to the church.

Briefly, religious formation today for us, has to be a formation to live the life in a particular ecclesial context, formation in courage to live with pride on our ecclesial roots.

5. MISSIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS

Mar Abraham Mattam

The subject proposed for our study at this Session, is the Church of St. Thomas Christians of India and her Missionary Consciousness and Missionary Activities, with respect to the Past, Present and the Future. This is of vital importance. The question could be raised whether the Thomas Christians were missionary minded judging from their past history, and whether they are at present conscious of their missionary obligations and rights as an Individual Church. Firstly we shall have a look into the history of the Church in India. Then we shall consider the present situation in our country, in the light of the directives of Vatican Council II, and finally draw some conclusions with a perspective for the future.

A Peep into History

Often we form our judgements seeing only the present or recent happenings, forgetting the remote past. Due to this shortsightedness we come to wrong conclusions. Not seldom, we hear the accusation that the Thomas Christians of Malabar or India did not try to spread the faith in the country, that they kept the Gospel message they received "under a bushel", and that because of their negligence India still remains 98% non-Christian

even after 19 centuries. Is this accusation well founded, justified? Contrary to the widely accepted opinion and oft-repeated allegation, a thorough study of history will lead us to the conclusion that the St. Thomas Christians carried the faith to the different parts of the country, and further, they sent missionaries to the neighbouring and distant lands, like Socotra, Java and China.

Because of some commonly held misconceptions about the missionary history of the Church in general, it may be good to mention briefly, a few facts to enable us to have a correct vision of the whole background. In the entire history of Christendom it was the East Syrian Church, sometimes called Nestorian, that did the greatest and most extensive missionary work till the 12th or 13th century. The nations of Eastern Europe were mostly evangelised by the Byzantines. The Latin Church confined its missionary activity practically to the countries of Western Europe. On the other hand, the East Syrian Church lit the flame of faith mainly through their monks, from Mesopotamia and Persia to the farthest lands, to Turkey, China, Mongolia, and Japan. The faithful of this Church were more numerous during the 12th and 13th centuries, roughly 80 million compared to the members of the Latin and Byzantine Churches which taken together were only about 40 million.

The famous stone monument of Hsianfu, in China, written in Syriac and Chinese, and erected in 781 A. D., which was discovered in the year 1625 bears witness to the wonderful story of Christianity in China from the year 635 to the date of its erection.¹ The Latins came to the forefront in the mission field only after the 13th century, with the formation of the Religious Congregations such as the Dominicans, Cappuchins, Augustinians, Jesuits etc.

Now coming to the story of the Thomas Christians, the church in India was an All India Church, it was not a Syro-Malabar or Malabar Church, confined to the Kerala Coast. till the 16th century, though Malabar was always a strong hold of the Christians. Long before the coming of the Portugese, there were Christian settlements all along the West Coast, from Sind to Cape Comerin, and along the Coromandel Coast upto Mylapore and beyond. History has recorded the existence of Christian communities in Sind, Kalyan, Thana. Surat in Gujarat, in Goa, Vijaynagar, Malabar, Mylapore and probably in Patna and Orissa and other places. So it is wrong to speak of this Church only in terms of Malabar.

Cosmas Indicopleustes, an Alexandrian merchant, who visited India about 535 A. D. gives valuable information about the state of Christianity in India and other countries he travelled. He says there was at that time one Bishop in Kalliana and another in Socotra: "And in the place called Kalliana there is a bishop appointed from Persia, as well as in the island of Dioscoris (Socotra). Kalliana is identified with Kalyan near Bombay. Speaking about the existence of churches and Christian communities and monasteries He adds: "and the rest of Indians", which is very significant.

Commenting on the testimony of Cosmas Fr. Hosten, S. J. in his book *Antiquities from San Thome and Mylapore* (page 402) writes: "There appears to have existed in pre-Portuguese India an almost unbroken line of Christian settlements from Sind down to Cape Comorin and Mylapore... We should think there were Christians in each of the places of trade mentioned by Cosmas between Sind and the Fishery Coast: Sindhu, Orrhotha, Kalliana,

Sibor, and the five marts of Male or the Pepper country: Parti, Mangaruth, Salopatana, Nalopatana, Pudopatana; also away from Sioldiba (Ceylon), at Marollo and Kaber (Kaveripattanam)".

Nicolo dè Conti an Italian merchant visited Mylapore around the year 1430 A. D. He says that there were then 1000 Christians living in the city and that Christians were found all over India, though he calls them Nestorian, heretics as the Jews were scattered in Italy or Europe: "Here the body of Saint Thomas lies honourably buried in a large and beautiful church; it is venerated by heretics, who are called Nestorians, and inhabit this city to the number of a thousand. These Nestorians are scattered over all India, as the Jews among us". (Cf. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, London; 1905, p. 95)

Jordan of Severac, a Dominican, arrived in Thana near Bombay, with four Franciscans in 1321 A. D. But soon after their arrival the Franciscans were martyred. They were buried at Supera not far from Thana, in an ancient Church that belonged to the Thomas Christians. Jordan was later made the first Latin Bishop of India with his See at Quilon. But he too suffered martyrdom before he could reach Quilon.²

I may briefly refer to a report that appeared in the Examiner of Bombay long ago, in November, 1915. It gives the reproduction of a Paper presented by Baron Textor who was formerly Governor of Karikal, at the International Congress of Orientalists held in Rome in the year 1899. His paper dealt with some mural inscriptions on a famous temple at Udaipur, now in the Diocese of Sagar. He says that it was an ancient Christian Church and the writings, according to his trans-

lation, described the dedication of the church after it was rebuilt by king Sangai Vardhaha in 1060 A.D. Due to the great concourse of people two services or Masses had to be celebrated on that day and the number of communicants were more than 4000 at each service.

The Metropolitan of India, according to the testimony of Gouvea, the Portugese historian, used to send suffragan Bishops to Socotra and China. He makes this affirmation based on the evidence of documents he found in Malabar³.

Le Quien, an eminent historian, says that after the death of Mar Proud and Mar Sabro in Malabar around the year 880, the Patriarch of Babylon sent to India, probably in the 10th century, Mar John the Metropolitan, together with two suffragans, Mar Dua and Mar Thoma. Mar Dua was made the Bishop of Socotra and the other, Mar Thoma, Bishop of Masina or China. Mar John had his See at Cranganore.⁴

Since there were Christians spread in various parts of India, the question arises who were instrumental for the spread of the Christian religion in this places. We should think that Indian missionaries themselves from the early centuries went around preaching the message of Christ.

Missionaries in China

If the metropolitan of India was sending suffragans to China and Socotra it was natural that along with them he sent from here also priests and missionaries to help them in their pastoral and missionary works. We have some indications to this effect. A few examples may be given.

Rev. Francois Poire SJ in his book *La Triple Couronne de la Vierge*, printed in Paris in 1643 AD, says that Indian missionaries went to preach in China from the 7th century, as it was known from authentic records in Mylapore. To quote. "And the Bishop of Japan affirms having found in the Records of Mylapore that, more than a thousand years before, Preachers had been sent from thence to China to announce the Christian faith".⁵

Le Quien again speaks of an Indian missionary, Ysu by name, who was honoured by the Emperor of China with gifts and a title of rank around AD 780.⁶

The Venetian traveller Marco Polo spent a few years in China and visited India towards the end of the 13th century. He saw Christians and their priests in China. Col. Yule comments on this, and agreeing with his view, Fr. Hosten SJ writes: "Some of the Syrian Priests in china came, no doubt, from Malabar via Mylapore."⁷

Caste and Conversion

One allegation against the Thomas Christians of Malabar is that they were practising caste system and kept the lower castes away from Christian fold. Fr. Paremakal replies to this allegation in *Varthamanapusthakam*. From what he says we are to understand that the Thomas Christians received into their community people of low and high origin, poor and rich, but all were considered alike as the children of the same father. He further alleges that it was the Latian missionaries who easily converted the low caste people and kept them as separate communities in the Church: He writes: "what shall we say of converts.... it is a fact that before you and your forefathers come to Malabar there were in Malabar those who

announced the faith.... We have therefore, to take into account the difference between the converts of those olden days and those of modern time. In olden days the people belonging to the honourable, to the prominent and also to the poor families, houses and races of Malabar generally used to accept the holy faith with no aversion or dislike for it. Those who accepted it, as children of the same father, procured everything needed for soul and body and for the whole community, in the spirit of Christian charity and unity without any quarrel or misunderstanding.”⁸

The Christians in Malabar, no doubt, enjoyed some privileges of high caste people. But we are not sure about the social conditions of their fellow religionists in other parts of the country.

I suppose these are sufficient proofs to show that the Thomas Christians were engaged in the past in the missionary activities within and outside India.

Results of Latin Missions

Since the percentage and small number of Christians in India, is sometimes attributed to the lack of missionary zeal of the Thomas Christians, this question could be examined from the achievements of the Latins in this field.

The see of Goa was erected and the whole of India brought under Latin jurisdiction in 1553 AD. Following the Synod of Diamper in 1599 the Oriental Christians were restricted to a small corner of Kerala and they were ruled by Latin Prelates. The Thomas Christians were not allowed to go out of this small patch of land

and preach for the last 400 years. The whole mission work was done by the Latins or in the Latin Rite. Now what is the result after 4 centuries? Who is to blame if the Christians in India still form only less than 2%? Will they accept the blame?

The Vicariate Apostolic of the Great Moghul was established in the North in 1784. Afterwards in 1820 the Vicariate Apostolic of Agra was erected. Aallhabad was formed about 100 years ago, in 1886. The prefecture Apostolic of Rajaputana, the present diocess of Ajmer, was created in 1891. In the last 100 or 200 years how many have been converted? I think they have not succeeded in converting at least 1000 educated and high caste people in each of these Missions during this long period. Why, what is the reason?

Of course, several thousands of harijans were converted in some of these Missions. But, most of them have abandoned Christianity and gone back to Hinduism. Now all agree that it was a folly to have received them into the Christian fold without proper motivation and proper instruction.

The tribal areas of Chotanagpur and some regions in the North East, where there are considerable number of Christians, is an exception. But these are only of the past few decades, of the present century.

So we cannot accuse anybody if there are no numerous conversions and India's population still remains mostly of non-Christians. We have to accept that conversion is a gift of God, the work of the Holy Spirit. We must say with St. Paul: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (1 Cor. 3:6)

Vatican II, on Individual Churches and Missionary Apostolate

Now let us examine what Vatican Council II says about the Individual Churches and their role in the missionary apostolate of the Church. It has a direct application in our case and so it requires our special study. Art. 3 of the Decree on Catholic Eastern Churches states as follows: "They (ie. these Individual Churches whether of the East or of the West) 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 of the Gospel to the whole world (cf. Mk. 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff."

Well known commentators agree that the Council made this statement about the rights and the obligations of the Individual Churches, precisely because of the situation prevailing in India. I shall quote just two authors. Herbert Vorgrimler's commentary on the above art. 3 says: 'The real reason why the right to preach the Gospel, that is, the right to engage in missionary activity, is specially mentioned among the rights and obligation of all 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.'⁹

Walter M Abbot SJ, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, gives the following foot note to the same article 3: "By stressing the equal dignity of the different Catholic Rites, the Council condemns clearly the theory of those who, mostly in the 18th century, taught 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."¹⁰

It is necessary to elaborate a little the meaning of Rite or Church and of evangelisation. One hears sometimes, statements such as, "What is important is to evangelise, and not to bother about rite." "You should be concerned about preaching the message of Christ, and not to spread any Rite." These statements manifest a lack of understanding of the full significance of Church. This idea is inculcated in the minds of Sisters and seminarians and priests and people in many quarters.

The message of Christ is not an abstract teaching, a set of dogmas. But together with his teaching he established a Church and made it the channel to obtain the fruits of Redemption that He brought. Through baptism you have to become a member of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ and be nourished by the Sacraments.

Similarly evangelisation is not imparting some abstract truths or message. Evangelisation is a process by which you give other people an opportunity to become members of the Church and thus to enable them to share in the riches and blessings of Christ's salvific mystery.

What is the nature of the Church? The Vatican Council II clearly teaches that the Church of Christ on

earth, is a communion of Churches called, Individual Churches or Rites. In the words of the Council, the Church is made of the faithful, "Who combining into various groups... form separate Churches or Rites." (OE no. 2) So Rite or Church in this sense is not some external ceremonies, it is much more radical and significant, it is the message of the Gospel concretised and presented in a form to be lived. That is what we understand by Individual Churches or Rites. It is Christianity in concrete, that is to say, the teaching of Christ handed down through the generations by authentic tradition, and involves Christian worship or liturgy, spirituality and ecclesial discipline. The Church of Christ consists in these individual churches. There is no Universal Church as such, without the Churches in a Communion.

In India, for example, there are three Individual churches, the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara and the Latin Church which is really only a part of an Individual Church. If you want to be a Catholic, in India you must belong to one of these Churches. Sometimes we hear people boasting, "I am a Catholic, I am not a Syro-Malabarian or Malankarite or Latin." He or she that makes this boast is then a member of a fictitious Church. It only shows an anti-Rite mentality due to the ignorance of the nature of the Church.

An Ecclesial Act

We shall consider further the nature of the work of evangelisation. Christ "founded the Church as the sacrament of salvation" (Decree on the Missions, no. 5). "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature." (Decree on the Missions, no. 2) "Evangelising is in fact the

grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise." (Evangelii Nuntianti, no. 14)

The individual missionary preaches in the name of the Church, not in his or her own name. It is an ecclesial act. "Evangelisation is for no one an individual and isolated act; it is one that is deeply ecclesial" (EN no. 60) Evangelisation work in India will lead believing people, either to the Syro-Malabar or Malankara or Latin Church. You are to work in and with the Mother Church, in normal situations.

You may ask for yourself this question, is there among the oriental Thomas Christians a consciousness of their missionary obligations and rights? Are they aware that they should plan and work together as a separate or Individual Church, that their efforts should not be isolated from the Mother Church of Malabar? Clearly this consciousness is very much lacking. It is high time that we all, Bishops, Priests, Sisters and faithful belonging to the Church of St. Thomas, become more aware of our right and obligations to evangelise unitedly as a Church, keeping our identity according to the directives of the Vatican Council.

A comparison with the Religious Congregations will make the point in question clearer. The religious communities are generally aware of their identity. They claim their separate charism and try to discover it from the sources, All the Religious Congregations, the CMI, Vincentians, Carmelites, Clarists, SABS, SSI etc, want to keep their identity even while working in the Missions They want to keep their own religious habits, their own

prayers; they do not want to have a common House, a common Novitiate in the Missions or in Kerala. It is well and good. They have each to contribute something to the variety of richness in the Church. But the heritage of an Apostolic Church, the charism, the spiritual traditions of an individual Church, is much more rich, is much more important for the whole Church. But unfortunately, we find that sometimes members of these congregations have no difficulty to disown their Mother Church, though not their own Religious Orders or Congregations. It only shows the need to educate all concerned regarding these basic truths and realities.

I must add a word about another saying or allegation. It is said "You are not to bring the Syro-Malabar Rite and impose your Rite and culture in the Missions of the North., To reply to this briefly, this again manifests an ignorance of the significance of a Rite and in particular of what is now called Syro-Malabar Rite. As we have seen, Rite is Christianity in concrete, it consists of Christian teaching, of contributions made by Saints and Fathers of the Church for centuries. It is a treasure a heritage. It was in use as an All Indian and Pan Asian Rite. It is wrong to see it merely as a human culture. When we practise the Syro-Malabar or Chaldeo-Indian Rite in the Missions we are only sharing our riches, our patrimony with the new believers. To refuse to share our spiritual patrimony would be uncharitable. But we need not interfere with their social customs or culture. We must allow and encourage the new communities of believers to develop their own new Christian way of life, adapted to them.

Actual Situation in India

The right to engage in missionary apostolate, solemnly declared by the Vatican Council is denied to the Church of Thomas Christians in India and they are thus forbidden from fulfilling their obligations. The whole country has been apportioned among the Latin dioceses. There are vast areas, especially in the North, where the Church has not been planted. There are several districts without any Christian community, without a single mission station or Priest. Still they say all these belong to the Latin Church. The Orientals are forbidden from planting the Church in these regions.

In recent years a few Missions of the Syro-Malabar Church have been opened. Still the area where we are permitted to work, covers only less than one per cent of the whole of Indian territory.

At the same time, the Latin Church does not have the required personnel to evangelise this vast country. So they recruit young boys and girls from the Oriental Churches and make use of their services in the mission field. We are thus supplying about 70 percent of the missionary personnel in India. According to a rough estimate there are about 2000 priests, 8000 Sisters and 700 Brothers of the Syro-Malabar Rite now working in the Latin Missions. And we are not allowed to preach even in places where the Church is non-existent. This is clearly a very unjust situation, it is a denial of the basic rights of our Church to preach, which the Vatican Council affirms we have.

Some Conclusions

From the acceptance of the fundamental truth and basic reality of the diversity of Individual Churches and their equal rights and obligations even with regard to evangelisation, some conclusions are inevitable, though not palatable. It is not always pleasant to speak out the truth, sometimes it might be troublesome, and may not seem prudent to tell the whole truth. But there must be some fool to tell the truth, what it is. As Mr. Pasternak says: "In every generation there must be some fool who will speak the Truth as it is". We are ready, and we should be, I wish to emphasise, to co-operate with other Churches for the common good of the whole Church, in various fields. If we are blessed with numerous vocations we should be prepared to assist the Latins in need, in India and elsewhere, sending priests and Sisters even to distant lands like South America or Africa. But missionary apostolate in our own country is a different matter. I shall enumerate a few conclusions:

- 1) The Syro-Malabar Hierarchy and the Religious Congregations of our Church both of men and women should have a Body to discuss and chalk out the policy for missionary activities in India, to extend and coordinate the work in the mission field, at the same time enlisting the cooperation of the laity.

Generally speaking it is not a sound policy for individual Congregations to open Convents here and there in India without any common strategy and coordination.

- 2) Large-scale recruiting of vocations from among the boys and girls of the Oriental Churches for mission work in the Latin dioceses is a disservice to our Church. It drains away our vitality and hinders the growth as

an Individual Church. So this policy does not deserve encouragement.

3) The Religious Congregations of our Church are to realise that they are part of the Mother Church and work unitely for the evangelisation of India. At present, there are some mission territories entrusted to the care of the Syro-Malabar Church. They should give priority to work in these Missions. We can be sure that the way will be opened up to extend our work to more areas.

4) This may sometimes require greater sacrifice. Some of the Latin dioceses may be able to offer better housing facilities, ready made-hospitals, school buildings and better material benefits. But that should not be the deciding factor as it sometimes happens.

5) The Vatican Council Decree on the Eastern Churches lays down in article 6: "Religious Societies and associations of 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 it can be done." So Latin Congregations who come to recruit or open Houses in Kerala for the purpose of recruitment need be told of this provision in the Council Decree. which is the correct policy to be followed in the matter of promoting vocations to the priestly and religious life.

6) Our people are to be educated properly in ecclesiological and missiological matters. The teaching of the Church, and the Council Documents should be explained to them.

Even priests and Sisters, especially in the North are given a wrong orientation, perhaps in order to make them more pliable and forget their identity. We have to make it clear that this is not narrow-mindedness, not lack of generosity, or lack of an appreciation of the common good of the Church, as it is often-times presented.

7) We could even look far ahead and be prepared for greater ventures, which may appear utopian. In the beginning I mentioned how centuries ago, there was in China a thriving East Syrian Church, with its own Metropolitan. May be, in the near or distant future, this land might welcome the Syro-Malabar Church for missionary work, if we make an earnest attempt. I may tell you, in this connection, I had some correspondence with the Sacred Oriental Congregation and they are ready to support us in any such move. We should give a serious thought as regards the feasibility of such a venture.

I have already taken much of your time. Let me conclude. I wish to thank the organizers for giving me this opportunity to speak. Thank you all for your patient hearing.

Foot Notes

- 1) Mrs C.E. Couling, *The Luminous Religion*, London: 1924.
- 2) Fr. Hosten SJ, *Antiquities from San Thome' and Mylapore*, Calcutta; 1936, p. 402.
- 3) Antonio de Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo Menezes*, Coimbra; 1606, p. 2.
- 4) Le Quien, *Oriens Christianus*, Paris: 1740, Vol. ii, pp: 1275 ff.

- 5) Francis Poire, SJ, *La Triple Couronne de la Vierge*, 2nd Edit. Paris, 1949 (1st edit. 1630), vol. i, 384.
 - 6) Le Quien, *op. cit.* vol. II, p. 1271
 - 7) Fr. Hosten *op. cit.* p. 449
 - 8) Thomman Paremakal, *Varthamanapusthakam*, Ernakulam: 1977, p. 306; 327.
 - 9) Herbert Vorgrimler, *Documents of Vat. II*, London 1967, Vol. I, P. 315.
 - 10) Walter M Abbott, SJ, *The Documents of Vatican II*, London: 1967, p. 374.
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6. LATIN DOMINATION ITS SOCIOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLO- GICAL EFFECTS

Thomas Vellilamthadam

There is violence in the church, as there is violence at home, in the school, in the society. What might be called religious violence is ugly. Its peculiar horror and ugliness stems from its violations of the trust and love upon which human and church relations depend. Wars and murders can be easily tackled but domination of a Church by another church is not easily identified. For centuries Latins have raided Orientals' wardrobes for their own clothing, appropriating everything from territory to personnel.¹

Let us look straight at this problem. If we want to change the established violence of the Latin church in India, this cannot be achieved through prayer alone. We have to identify all the obstacles to peace, justice and reconciliation and tackle them simultaneously.

All those people who, over the past centuries, have tackled the problem of the oppressed Oriental Churches have trodden a well-worn route. These oppressed churches start by recognizing the sorry fact that they are ill-treated and now they examine the ways in which

they are ill-treated, trying to prevent the same things happening again in the history of christianity. To combat the trends of established violence in the catholic church, we have to determine the nature and direction of the steps that need to be taken. The more we know about this unchristian problem, the easier it will be to detect its effects and identify its many victims.

It is not easy to accept that the Latin Church does not commit acts of violence against the sister churches to the point where their liturgical development, pastoral duties and sometimes even their christian faith are jeopardized. This seems to be quite contrary to what we regard as man's innate religious trust, and contrary even to the elementary human laws of love towards fellow men.

It is still harder to a church to recognize that such acts of religious and pastoral violence take place even at the last quarter of the 20th century. An unwritten law of silence has long surrounded, and still surrounds, the problem of domination of the Latin Church over the Oriental churches in India. Even today the attitude of 'not interfering' and hence of doing nothing when Oriental Churches are oppressed and cruelly mistreated within the universal church is widespread. Cruelties perpetrated against the Oriental churches form part of the history of christianity. The situation seems to be improving if we look at it on the time-scale of a millennium. If we set aside our feelings of shame and study the facts objectively, it soon becomes clear that it is always the Orientals who suffer most.

There is more than mere religious violence in the Latin domination. The current wave of latin violence which seems to be obstinately persisting in India con-

stitutes only a link, and in all probability not the last one, in the long chain of religious violence which have been rocking mankind periodically. The current tide of religious violence cannot be dismissed as an exception in the otherwise peaceful religion. So we need to have a perspective which can explain the phenomenon so that any step to contain or prevent future violence becomes a viable prospect.

To begin with, let us recognize that the religious actors in the present Indian context are religious collectivities: Latins and Orientals. Latin exclusivism and arrogance is partly a product of European colonialism. Latin expansionism and domination tends to claim that the Latin church is the true church, thereby denying the distinct identity of the orientals. The orientals in India who are the ancient Christian community resist this claim most vociferously. They have not merely pastoral strength but also sociological strength given their religious, cultural and historical significance. But the Latins have a territorial and material strength, acquired through political and colonial expansion since 16th century.

A

The territorial domination of the Latins in India has become leading socio-religious evil in the Catholic Church in India. One has to understand the reasons for it. These reasons are not merely local or regional, isolated or separated. They involve virtually the whole development and expansion of Western Christianity over a period which has clear beginnings in the 16th century. Sociologists can try to isolate some of these reasons: Roman legal systems, colonialism, inadequate knowledge

of non-Christian religions, centralisation of Roman Curia, inadequate knowledge of the Eastern spiritual traditions.

Latin church has got immense material security, political power and organisational strength. So some of the Latin Prelates in India — the troika² — began to identify politics and religion, political domination and spiritual domination. They began to identify catholicism with latin catholicism, causing spiritual emptiness and break down of Christianity.

The Latin church in India is now obsessed with a territorial control. This-worldly obsession of the troika has become a world scandal. To possess a territory means to possess land. In primitive times, when the main profession was agriculture, man needed land. Land-ownership was then linked to power and status. 'Latifundia' was a source of economic power in ancient Rome³. The Church has become identified with a territory and therefore identified with the hierarchy of unequal wealth and power. The Latin domination is a part of a larger whole, measured vaguely in terms of land. Until recent times, the main criterion of power and authority in family and State was land-ownership. But modernization and monetization have made important changes in the attitude towards land and land-ownership.

The greed for the territorial aggrandisement is only a continuation of the animal instinct in man. It is achieved through mere muscle power. Latins in India have the crude muscle power as well as economic power to consolidate the previously acquired territory. Animals occupy a specified territory. Their survival depends to a certain extent on the possession of the territory. For example, lions are territorial predators⁴. An adult male

lion establishes his own dominion over 'home range' and marks out limits of his territory by establishing 'scent posts'⁵. In order to proclaim exclusive right to a piece of property the male lions produce blood-curdling roars. A pair of cranes often issues a unison call as a territorial warning⁶.

It is sad to note that in man animal instincts continue to dominate. Yes, man is still a brute Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says: "In spite of our great advance in sciences and technology, we are not far removed from the brute. Animals squabble occasionally and fight ferociously at the mating season but they do not periodically destroy each other"⁷.

So far, the concrete facts of the territorial domination were hidden. In the middle ages and during missionary conquests, savage physical torture was used in the Latin church⁸. In the modern times, rude psychological torture is systematically used against the Oriental Churches in India⁹.

Territorial domination or topographical domination is situated in a sub-human level of phylogenetic development, for the rational human beings are capable going beyond the topos, space. In fact, territorial domination is the remnant of a 'jungle' domination - rule of jungle, beast-like domination. It is the sphere of dandāniti, cult of power. Chandogya Upanishad says: "Power is superior to knowledge. One powerful man can defeat a hundred men of knowledge. If a man is powerful he triumphs. By power the world stands firm"¹⁰.

Acquising both artha and kama the Latins aspire to gain dharma. But they conveniently forget that the worldly powers and pleasures do not necessarily lead to

the attainment of a spiritual order. They remain the guardians or agents of all material wealth, hoping that the material goods would be transformed into religious goods and values. They are materially the masters in the Indian church, while the Orientals remain materially and spiritually dependent and sub-ordinate slaves.

In this peculiar situation, religion is absorbed into a territory, dharma into artha and kama. In other words, through territorial domination, the Latins identify both the secular law and power with the sacred law and power. Ethics and religion are eclipsed in this process. There is no place for ethical behaviour in a Latin universe of thinking and acting. There are no human values and human rights. Social doctrine of the Church based on human dignity and equality cannot be practised in the Indian Church!! Holders of vast territory are ipso facto holders of temporal power. Temporal power is indispensable for those who equate God's kingdom with earthly kingdom. Those who have no security over other world cling to this-worldly power. Formerly kings were the rulers of vast lands and territory. They conquered everything. But now the troikas are eager to follow the example of worldly rulers. The myth, 'The Story of King Aama',¹¹ describes the story of the conversion of king Aama to a heretical sect and his refusal to protect the grants given to the Brahmins, because they 1) were indulging in the mastery over the land, 2) were full of greed, 3) were slaves to sensuous pleasures and 4) were practising violence. The myth shows how ownership of land and hence of villages and towns is conducive to the other three vices: greed, sensual pleasure and violence.

The territorial domination should be abolished in Indian Catholicism, because

1) it impedes the general christian life and evangelical precepts;

2) the territorial possessions of the Latins "impede the general prosperity because they are extensive, unused or poorly used, or because they bring hardship to the peoples or are detrimental to the interests of the country"¹². Moreover, "private property does not constitute for any one an absolute and unconditional right. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need..."¹³ and "if there should arise a conflict between acquired private rights and primary community exigencies, it is the responsibility of public authorities to look for a solution..."¹⁴.

3) territorial domination is detrimental to the Christian fellowship¹⁵.

4) territorial domination is a structural sin which perpetuates the atrocities of a sinful society¹⁶.

5) territorial domination is misappropriation of the earth. It is quite strange that divine mission in India is being limited territorially. Oriental churches in India were chained and not allowed to go beyond the river Bharatapuzha in the north of Kerala¹⁷. How can the kingdom of God be territorially limited by the Latin power in the Catholic church? In 1854, the White Chief in Washington, USA, made an offer for a large area of Red Indian land and promised a 'reservation' for the native Red Indians in America. Then the native chief's reply would echo deep human feeling against territorial oppression: "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? , , , If we do not own the freshness of the air

and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories ... Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony and man—all belong to the same family. So, when the Great chief... wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us... For this land is sacred to us. This shining water moving in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father. The rivers are our brothers they quench our thirst... Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth"¹⁸.

The Orientals are entitled to their full share in the recollections of the land of their forefathers and its fruits through decent and honest work in the field of evangelization. A Christian must learn to transcend the territorial limits. Archbishop Helder Camara writes in his diary on 25th March 1951:

“to cling to the earth,
to anchor yourself to the ground

by all the roots you have,
 is more than your mere right,
 it is your life,
 your instinct,
 your reason for existing.
 Man, however
 -- forgive me --
 is something rather more
 than a mere tree."¹⁹

A Christian must see that "buildings, no matter how magnificent exteriors and how sumptuous their decorated interiors, are not, and never shall be, the church. This is as true of the churches of Jerusalem as of the local churches anywhere else in the world. It is living communities which form the People of God, the Church"²⁰.

Territory has neither immediate nor eschatological value. It has, it should be admitted, a political value. For brown sahibs and troika groups, religion is politics or rather they prefer to act as political than religious leaders or pastors. As long as the Latin domination over the Orientals in India prevails, there is no question of a 'christian community' in India. For the Orientals, the problem is religious and pastoral; for the Latins, the problem is political. The future of the Indian church cannot be chained by the Latin territorial restrictions. Now the vast 'Latin areas' can be used only for Wild-Life Preservation! Living Christian communities are not found in these wild jungle areas which are kept unused and poorly managed and inadequately administered pastorally. It is a well known fact that the Oriental Churches are suffering from all kinds of territorial restrictions which are crippling the growth of their churches. Troikas want

to continue to impose further restrictions in the name of 'particular Indian context'²¹.

B

One of the main tasks of today is to inform us all – laymen and clergy – about the ethical aspects of religious utterances and life. Now one feels the need for frequent deliberation on topics such as medical trials of drugs or other chemicals, use of human embryos and surrogate mothers. We are forced to look into the ethics of human utterances and behaviour as well as the theological research in general. Let us have time to reflect, time to discuss and time to appraise the moral issues.

The subject of unethical behaviour in religious leaders is an unpleasant matter. Most of the things happening in the third world is not very pleasant. But the unethical behaviour of domination of the troika group is the most unpleasant thing one can imagine. Religion is not a question of relating to God alone but it all the more is a question of relating to man. It is a fact that the gap between the first world and the third world is increasing in the field of life-style as well as in the field of implementation of human rights. In the developing world, there is a tolerance towards unjust social religious situation. What is recognized as universally valid and right cannot be applied to India, according to the troika groups. They simply exploit the lack of awareness from the part of the Indians.

Doctors, lawyers and teachers have their norms. Hippocrates oath is well known to the world since the ancient times. In 1892 about 450 journalists gathered in Agra and uttered what was later called the

Agra Declaration. In it they declared: "We shall endeavour to report and interpret the news with scrupulous honesty and shall not suppress essential facts... We shall not let ourselves be exploited by others, nor shall we exploit our status for personal ends. Personal matters shall not be allowed to influence professional conduct"²². But the troika groups easily deviate from the elementary human behavior. The troika group has become a group of pundits, a corps d'elite. Their normal occupation is manipulation of official texts²³ and preparation of memoranda. These pundits are extremely vigilant to keep the Latin colonial structure of the Indian Catholicism. They are the defenders of the bygone colonial religion of the mediterranean region. In 1876 a cable sent to the Pope from Alleppey was falsely translated into Italian²⁴. Quite recently while the dialogue between the Latins and the Orientals were going on, the Latin bishops gave a memorandum to the Holy Father in December 1982. And quietly another one was submitted in September 1983, as an 'internal' (?) document of the CBCI!! There is a lot of instances where there are manipulations, lack of basic honesty and ill-will, thus systematically disregarding the principles of Vatican II and the teachings of the Popes. Many a times, the troika jeopardized the functioning of the CBCI by avoiding the proper representation of the three individual churches among the office bearers of the CBCI and in the CBCI Secretariate. Under this peculiar unchristian atmosphere in the present-day catholicism in India, the futility of dialogue has become very clear.

A beautiful narration with fictitious additions is an art. It is something beautiful. But pure lying is not only ugly but unethical and unbecoming for a prelate²⁵. In

India there are cases of fake doctors who without a medical degree work for years, fake lawyers, fake teachers. There are 'experts' in forgery, theft and false swearing. But the case of pure lying from an archbishop is something unheard: "There are three sorts of people my soul hates, whose existence I consider an outrage: a poor man swollen with pride, a rich man who is a liar and an adulterous old man who has no sense"²⁶. The great Tamil Poet Ilamko Adikal in his epic Cilapatikaram speaks clearly:

"Seek God and serve those who are near him
Do not tell lies"²⁷

Also the great Oriya poet Radhanath Ray (1848-1904) condemns openly the liars, back-biters, dacoits and princes.²⁸

Arthur Koestler (1905-83) shows in his novels *The Gladiators*, *Darkness at Noon* and *Arrival and Departure* the fate of the helpless individuals caught up in the conflict between collective necessity and individual morality. He shows how the love of mankind in abstract can engender contempt for man in the flesh. *The Gladiators* tells the story of the abortive revolt of the Roman slaves led by Spartacus. The Roman slaves achieve a series of victories and are on the brink of capturing the capital. But final success eludes them and a barbaric hedonism and inner corruption bring about their downfall. This story seems to show the impossibility of combining power with righteousness.

It seems that the power which came to the troika through religion resembles the power of those have it in political sphere. Thus the troika can be regarded both as the counterpart of a secular ruling order and

the Vestigial remnant of the colonial regime. One can note with surprise how easy it is for any average member of the troika to become an oppressor. It is easy to acquire and keep the power obtained through manipulation and did not require any help from an army or officials to maintain this power, because the religious realm enjoyed unlimited power without real pastoral responsibility. Besides, the power once obtained was never lost or abandoned. Any one who is familiar with the unlimited power over territory and extravaganza by which day to day affairs are handled, will understand the worldly grandeur and the power of domination. Thus the Latin church offers a real attraction to power. In its apparent unworldliness the power maintains a connection between religion and power.

Furthermore, the troika groups enjoy freedom from all pastoral constraints. Once they attained power to dominate the sister churches, they would not even think about their humble origin. With their arrogance and deceit they impress even the political leaders who practice occasional arrogance.

History has testified the existence of state terror and its brutalities in the world. It seems that the ethical ideals are a luxury which the troika cannot afford, their business being to seek only advantage and containment of the Orientals. We are living in a peculiar world where religion has become politics.

Early christianity has attempted to merge religious and ethical ideals. The present set-up in the Latin catholicism shows a trend which is mere politics, both religion and ethics set aside. It is time to show that the world still needs ethical principles. That is as true in

religion as it is true in politics. Without ethico religious principles, a sense of human life is lost. Human relations and dialogue meetings are reduced to making pious exhortations and exercises in futility.

Catholicism in India would undoubtedly suffer from such tricks and manoeuvres. The future of Indian catholicism in this perspective will not be very bright. Where ethical principles are neglected, nothing better can be expected—only savage fighting and immoral domination of man by man.

Tolerance can be a great virtue. When what is tolerated is inhuman and unchristian domination of man by man tolerance itself can become an evil. One can of course make light of all this with the excuse that domination is as old as humanity and is a global phenomenon. It is true that domination occurs in the secular field too. Can an authentic christianity afford to let loose the tiger of domination? Can the christian leaders tolerate the rule of jungle of a few kuppayakars, toppas, parankis²⁹ or brown sahibs.³⁰ Yatha Raja Tatha Praja, so goes a Sanskrit saying. To tolerate the Latin domination as inevitable in the Indian church at the end of the 20th century is to give a certain legitimacy to it. Orientals in India know that the established reality can change. They are determined to see that it must change.

Pope John Paul II affirms that “this century has so far been a century of calamities for man, of great devastations, not only material ones but also moral ones, indeed perhaps above all moral ones. Admittedly it is not easy to compare one age or one century with another under this aspect, since that depends also on changing

historical standards. Nevertheless without applying these comparisons, one still cannot fail to see that this century has so far been one in which people have provided many injustices and sufferings for themselves"³¹. Moreover, he affirms that "after all, peace comes down to respect for man's inviolable rights – opus justitiae pax – while war springs from the violation of these rights and brings with it still graver violations of them. If human rights are violated in times of peace, this is particularly painful and from the point of view of progress it represents an incomprehensible manifestation of activity directed against man which can in no way be reconciled with any programme"³². Again he observes that "human rights are being violated in various ways... We see before us concentration camps, violence, torture, terrorism, and discrimination in many forms... Human life is, even in time of peace, condemned to various sufferings and along with these sufferings, there is a development of various forms of domination, totalitarianism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, which are a threat also to the harmonious living together"³³.

Therefore the main concern should be clearly with the wider issue of human rights in the Catholic Church in India. In *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII states that "in our day ... it is required, first of all, that there be written in the concise and limpid phraseology, a charter of fundamental human rights"³⁴. Now the freedom to propagate gospel in India is being restricted by the Latin Church. "Every being has the right to honour God according to the dictates of an upright conscience and therefore the right to worship God privately and publically".³⁵

Orientals should be ready to oppose the annoying habits of destroying the Gospel values by the troika

group, for every violation of human rights in the church is an invitation for yet another. There are enough people in the Oriental churches, alive today who have seen the horrors of the latin domination.

The tendency of domination in man has been having the upper hand and the Latin Church in India has become impervious to right and wrong, immunised to the pains and sorrows of the victimised Oriental Churches. Domination is a global phenomenon. We know that there is no absolute increase in domination: only more human beings are coming forward these days to speak about this. It is this point that makes this symposium such an important event for the Oriental Churches. Because of our theological thinking has shown that we have not been content to glory in the past but have wanted to renew these glories in the present and to produce a really living christian community in the future.

Orientalists do not expect that the oppressors would change their attitude overnight. But they are convinced that a dominating and oppressing catholicism is superfluous to the modern India and modern Indian culture. It has no future. It is only an unnecessary addition to a country where there are many world religions. The offence against the Orientals is not that the pain is inflicted upon them but the fact that their rights are not recognized. The Orientals are subject to the most cruel pastoral coercion unknown and unheard in the whole world. When others wondered how permanent the history of solidarity was, Lech Walesa would tell them: "Our only real guarantee is ourselves" ³⁶.

The Latin Church may continue to subjugate Orientals through the possession of vast territory and huge

canon law but let it be known that this inhuman domination is not an eternal one. The Latins have the *raison d'état*, but the Orientals have the *raison d'être*.

The Orientals are like pilgrims captured and abused by unscrupulous highway gangs, dacoits and they, now released, belong to neither the Oriental Churches nor to the Latin Church! The Orientals have suffered so long under every conceivable religious, political and psychological disadvantages that they no longer believe in their own power to redeem themselves from the unchristian latin domination.

Foot Notes

1. Orientals in India were enjoying the whole of India Their chief bishop's title was "The Metropolitan and the Gate of all India" (cf. Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo OCD, *India Oriental is Christiana*, Rome: 1794, p. 88; P. J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Alleppey: 1976, p. 32 ff. P. J. Podipara, "Introduction" to T. Paremmakkal, *The Varthamanappustakam*, Rome: 1971, p. 3; X. Koodapuzha "The Indian Church of the Thomas Christians", *Christian Orient*, 1,1 (1980), p. 28; G. Chediath and T. Vellilamthadam, "One Territory, One Bishop. One Jurisdiction. Solution to the problem?", *Ibid.* 4,1 (1983), pp. 12-30; also A. Vallavanthara *India in 1500 AD. The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, Kottayam: 1984, see also the remarkable study of V. F. Vineeth, *Justice and Reconciliation. The Sad but Living Story of a Church in Fetters*, Bangalore: 1983.

2. For this term, see T. Vellilamthadam and J. Naduvilezham, "Unethical Toleration", *Christian Orient*, 4,4, (1983), p. 172 n 2.
3. T. Vellilamthadam, 'Jerusalem or Rome', *Jeevadhara* 58 (1980), p. 314.
4. In the 19th century, there existed the metaphor of the lion and the mice to describe the domination of the Latin Church over the Orientals in India. Bishop Pareparampil who was the bishop of Ernakulam from 1896 to 1919 makes us know the prevalent attitude. Latin Church, especially "Verapoly is a lion". Orientals "are only mice". It is futile to fight against a lion: "Can you fight against crush the mice". Cf. A. Pareparampil, *An account of the very important period of the History of the Catholic Syrian Christians of Malabar*, Puthenpally: 1920, p 79.
5. cf. *Science in USSR*, 4 (1983), pp. 84-95; T. Vellilamthadam, *The Spectre of Being*, Kottayam: 1982, pp. 41 and 34.
6. cf. *National Geographic*, Oct. 1983, p. 555.
7. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Culture*, New Delhi: 1968, p. 78.
8. The episode of the killing of a Malabar priest shows the cruelty of the Latin 'conquerors' cf. T. Paremmakkal, *op. cit.* p. 40. The Instruction of the Propaganda Congregation to the Vicar Apostolic of Malabar and to his missionaries in 1774 commanded that "they should abstain from practising such cruelties" (*Ibid.* p. 41). But between dove and vulture, does the aboriginal hunter, whose way is to kill, differentiate?, as poet Kumaran

Asan in his "Fallen Flower" says. cf. P. K. Narayana Pillai (ed), *Thus Spake the Poetic Trio*, Trivandrum: 1979, p. 41.

During the period of the missionary conquest, there were regular inquisitions in Goa: "A Goa funzionava regolarmente l 'inquisizione" cf. G. Beltrami, *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell 'unione*. Rome: 1933, p. 39. Thus the Thomas Christians had to suffer a lot from the Portuguese terror. So Pope Gregory XIII, in a letter dated 29th Nov. 1578, tells Mar Abraham, Abp of Angamaly, to go to Goa without fear of oppression, injury or 'molestation by the Portuguese, C.J. George, *The Orthodoxy of the St. Thomas Christians*, Kottayam: 1904, p. v.

9. During the 19th century, false reports and inadequate translations were frequent: "The Syrian priests did not know the mother tongue of their European superiors. They had therefore to employ an interpreter, a Latin priest who did not sometimes faithfully translate what was told him" (A. Pareparampil, *op cit.* p. 75. In the year 1876 a cable sent to the Pope from Alleppey was falsely translated into Italian, cf, T. Vellilamthadam *African Payal* Kottayam: 1984, p.14.

Quite recently while the dialogue between the Latins and the Orientals were going on, the Latin Bishops in India sent a memorandum to the Pope in December 1982. And quietly another one was submitted in Sept. 1983, as an 'internal' (?) document of the CBCI !!

There is a lot of instances where there are manipulations, lack of basic honesty and ill-will, thus

systematically disregarding the principles of Vatican II and the teachings of Popes. Many a times, some of the Latin hierarchs jeopardized the functioning of the CBCI by avoiding the proper representation of the three Individual Churches among the office bearers of the CBCI and in the CBCI. Secretariate. Under this peculiar unchristian atmosphere in the present-day catholicism in India, the futility of dialogue has become very clear.

10. Quoted in R. Lannoy, *The speaking Tree*, New York: 1975, p. 320
11. cf. Veena. Das, *Structures and Cognition. Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*, New Delhi: 1982, p. 52 ff.
12. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, n. 24
13. *Ibid* no. 23
14. *Ibid*. Latin Bishops in India have to comply with the New Latin Canon Law (1983). Canon 372 says: "If...it is thought to be helpful, there may be established in a given territory particular churches distinguished by the rite of the faithful or by some other similar quality". Thus with *The Code of Canon Law*, Latins in India can no longer call India "a Latin territory".
15. William Logan who was the collector of Malabar at the end of 19th century has noted that the idea of the right of territory was foreign to Malayalees and that no permission was needed to hunt in any territory. Cf. his *Malabar Manual*, Trivandrum: 1981 (first published 1887). p. 204; cf. T. Vellilamthadam, *Maya Safari*, Kottayam: 1984 O. 6.
16. T. Vellilamthadam, *Man and Social Problems*, Kottayam: 1984, p. 34 At the 10th General Congregation of the 1983 synod of bishops in Rome,

Abp. Henry D'Souza, of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, pointed out the existence of 'structural' sin and 'structural' injustices and told the bishops that the Indian bishops were working for equality of people by working against discrimination and subordination cf. *L'Osservatore Romano* (Eng. edition) Oct. 31, 1983, p. 4. But it is a plain fact that Abp. Henry D'Souza is the chief protagonist of the perpetuation of the unchristian Latin domination over the Oriental Church in India. By his 'Doublespeak' and 'Doublethink', the orwellian vision of an inhuman world has been fulfilled in the Latin church in India. By his out-dated pre-Vatican theology, structural injustices continue to exist in the Indian church and reconciliation becomes a futile effort. Let it be clear that unless and until the Latin church in India abandons its territorial domination, there is no hope for reconciliation in the Catholic Church.

17. Cf. X. Koodapuzha, *art. cit* p. 50. J. Vellian, "A Church on Fire" *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, XXVII, 4 (1971), p. 286
18. Quoted in Indian Express, July 29, 1983. Territorial idea entered into jurisdiction as a result of feudalism. cf. E. Pacelli (afterwards Pope Pius XII), *La Personalita e Territorialita delle leggi specialmente nel Diritto Canonico*, Rome: 1912, p. 6, quoted by Placid J. Podipara, "The Spiritual care of the Syro Malabarians in India outside their present ecclesiastical territory" (unpublished document)
19. H. Camara, *A Thousand Reasons for Living*, London: 1981, p. 21
20. J.F. Long, "Editorial", *Diakonia* 17, 3 (1982), p. 190.

21. Cf. Latin-Oriental Relations and the mission of the Church in India, document submitted by a group of the Latin bishops of India to Pope John Paul II in 1982
22. Cf. *Indian Express*, Oct. 11. 1982
23. Cf. *Christian Orient* 4, 1 (1983), p. 47. It is known that the documents of the dialogue meeting in Bombay in Aug. 1983 were manipulated.
24. For the original text and its false translation, see P. J. Podipara, *The Hierarchy* ... p. 177-78
25. For the false ideas given by Abp Henry d'Souza, cf. *Christian Orient* 3, 1-2 (1982), pp. 36-49; these ideas were refuted by Fr. Robert CST. cf. *Ibid*, 4, 1 (1983), p. 31-33
26. *Ecclesiasticus* 25:3-4; also 27:1-5, 22
27. Quoted in K. K. K. N. Kurup, *Aspects of Kerala History and Culture*, Trivandrum: 1977, p. 7
28. Cf. G. Mohanty, *Radhanath Ray*, New Delhi: 1978, p. 41
29. For these terms, see T. Paremmakkal, *op. cit.* p. 66-8
30. cf. T. Vellilamthadam, *From the Burning Sands*, Kottayam: 1982, p. 16
31. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 17
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Pacem in Terris*, no. 75.
35. *Ibid.* no. 14; also *Rerum Novarum*, no. 32; *Mater et Magistra*, no. 248-53; *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 17; also T. Vellilamthadam, *Man and Social Problems* ... p. 35-45; also nos 37 and 38 of *the Church and Human Rights* (the paper of the Pont. Commission Justice and Peace. on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948-73).
36. Cf. N. Asherson, *The Polish August*, Harmondsworth, England: 1981, p. 24

7. AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT ECCLESIAL SITUATION IN INDIA

Geevarghese Panicker

"In order to evangelize, the churches need to be authentic in their very existence. This puts before us the reality of the local and individual churches of South Asia as the concrete realization of the mystery of the Church of Christ in our region.... The existence in India of three individual churches, the Latin, the Syro-Malabar and the Syro-Malankara, is a manifestation of the richness of the mystery of the church. Fostering communion among them through mutual acceptance and acknowledgement is felt by us as an essential requirement for fulfilling our common evangelizing mission.... The essential missionary character of the church leads us to reflect on the peculiar condition in which the individual churches find themselves in India. We are painfully aware of a situation in which the Oriental Churches feel unable to exercise their evangelizing activity as churches in proportion to their missionary potential. We would hope that the authorities of the three individual churches of India will face the problem in full sincerity and mutual openness and devise adequate solutions, having for their paramount concern the common evangelizing task of the three churches".

This passage is taken from the letter of the participants of Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA II) organized by the mission office of F. A. B. C. at Trivandrum, India, in Nov. 20-30, 1980 to the Bishops of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India (para 3, 5, 10).

I shall take this passage as an epigraph which gives me the leading ideas or themes for a brief analysis of the present ecclesial situation in India. The leading ideas are: 1) The existence of three Individual churches in India is a manifestation of the richness of the mystery of the church. 2) These churches need to be authentic in their very existence. 3) The peculiar conditions in which these individual churches find themselves in India. 4) Necessity of facing the problem and of devising adequate solution.

1. The existence of the churches is a manifestation of the mystery of the Church

The existence of three individual churches in India is a manifestation of the richness of the mystery of the church. In India there are three Catholic Individual Churches or Rites; the Syro-Malabar Church, from the Apostolic times, the Latin Church, from the 16th century, and the Syro-Malankara Church from 1932.

The universal church is a communion of churches. The prefatory note of Explanation on chapter three of the dogmatic constitution on the Church by Vatican II says that "Communion is one idea which was held in high honour by the ancient church as it is even today especially in the East". In Western ecclesiology, however, the term has only recently (i. e. since Vatican II) come

into use, with its rich contents and perspectives. The doctrine of the Church underlying the decrees on Ecumenism and on the Catholic Eastern Churches can be described as *communio* ecclesiology. “*Communio* as conceived in the ancient church is both juridically and ontically the fundamental structure of the church for all time and therefore in our day as well” (Cardinal Ratzinger). In the decrees of the Second Vatican Council we find the following ideas repeatedly mentioned:

(1) The visible unity of the church allows, desires and even requires pluralism (variety, particularity and diversity). Unity is not uniformity. “Variety within the church in no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it” (OE 2/374). (2) Catholicity, apostolicity, and the mission of the church promote pluralism (LG 23e-f/46, UR 4g/349; 16/359-60; 17b/360).

(3) The pluralism is manifested in the diversity of rites (liturgical pluralism), in the various forms of spiritual life and of disciplines (disciplinary pluralism), and in the theological formulation of revealed truth (theological pluralism) (UR 4g/349; 15e/359; 17b/360; OE 2/374; 6a/376; SC 4/138; 37/151; OE 5/376; UR 17a/360).

“This Sacred Synod declares that this entire heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in their various traditions, belong to the full and apostolic character of the church” (UR 17b/360).

(4) when properly understood, such pluralism or variety is not harmful to the unity of the Church, but is at its service; far from injuring unity, it manifests it; it brings out in a clearer way the catholicity of the church; it is part of the church’s full catholicity and apostolicity; it is necessary if the church is to fulfil its

mission; it helps in the investigation and presentation of the divine mysteries; far from being an obstacle to church unity, pluralism increases its beauty. The existence of the three individual churches in India is a manifestation of the richness of the unity of the church. It is a "Unity of communion" (LG. 15) or "fellowship in unity" (UR 2). The one and only Catholic Church in India comes into being "in and from the individual churches" (LG 23). The ideal church of Christ does not exist in the abstract; nor is it to be identified with any particular or individual church to the exclusion of other individual churches. Each individual or particular church anywhere and so also in India is, in and for itself a communion in which the ideal of the church as the Lord intended and established takes concrete form; in the particular or individual church "the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic church of Christ is truly present and operative" (CD:11 LG 26, 28). The great catholic communion in India should be seen as the harmonious consort of the communion of the three individual churches, ie. in it the requirement of a "unity of communion" should be realized. The necessary but difficult harmony, internal and external, between these three individual communions will be the result more of the special action of the Holy spirit than of legislation based on the sociological structure of the church or of a "big-brother" attitude of any of these three individual churches. To find ourselves one in diversity and fidelity can only be the work of the spirit of love. Thus in the context of the early history of the church and the communio ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, ecclesially the three individual churches are the communion which make up the catholic church in India. To think otherwise

is to shift from an ecclesiology of patristic style and spirit to an ecclesiology of juridical type, as the Latin church has done in practice from the middle ages. Then an ecclesiology of christian anthropology and existence will have to give place to an ecclesiology of Supreme Power and Right. Such an approach is not theological but sociological or rather such an approach subordinates theological truth to sociological factors. Theological approach should be to see how theological factors can transform and elevate sociological factors which are contrary to the pneumatological unity of the church which harmonizes the variety in culture and customs. It is only then that diversity of customs and observances can be seen not as obstacles to the church's unity but as factors adding to her comeliness and contributing greatly to carrying out her mission (Cf. UR 16/309-60). But sad to say the Latin church of India sees the oriental churches of India as ethnic groups, too preoccupied with the preservation of their "rites" as if this preoccupation should not be their duty. The Latin Church does not accept the oriental churches of India as manifestations of the mystery of the Church. They forget, even after the II Vatican Council that the One Catholic Church possesses too much breadth to be confined to one expression. It must not be forgotten that it is only in the symbiosis of various expressions which now exists (as the 3 individual churches) and which may happen to exist in future that the church in India as anywhere else will discover the power and fullness of its Catholicity and not in the integration and absorption of the Orientals into the life of the parishes and dioceses of the Latin Church. The three individual churches in India will have to realize that they are a manifestation of the

richness of the mystery of the Church. Every member of each of these churches will have to become convinced that by realizing and living the authentic identity of his church he contributes to building up of the Holy Catholic church. And so the churches need to be authentic in their very existence. This leads to our second point.

2. The churches need to be authentic in their very existence:

Authentic existence is one of the two dimensions of identity the other being *congenial growth*. Authentic existence refers to a correspondance or conformity to the original image of the church and harmony between the Church's own nature and legitimate heritage. The church as any living organism, becomes stunted, mutilated and deformed when it does not grow with its true nature or being. The original image of the church is expressed by the model 'communio'. In fact this is the fundamental structure of the Church, and so was not meant for the ancient church only. As Cardinal Ratzinger has said "Communio as conceived of in the ancient church is both juridically and ontically the fundamental structure of the church for all time and therefore in our day as well" and I may add "in all places including our motherland India whatever be the complex situation existing in India. The Second Vatican Council has recognized this as can be seen from the decree on Eastern Church (Cf O. E. 2/374).

The Council has recognized that the principle of diversity in unity has "not always been honoured" by the Western Church. (Cfr. U. R. 16/359).

The Council points out to the necessity of the restoration of the communion of churches as it existed in the ancient church (Cf. UR 14/c & d P. 357-358).

A regard for the distinctive nature of each of the three individual churches of India and how they have come into being through historical causes and the fostering of salvation of souls must determine any concrete church order and discipline.

(i) *Is the attitude of the Latin Church of India authentic?*

In India the Latin church, strangely enough, proposes the kenosis of the oriental churches, ie. the orientals should not do anything "to understand, venerate, preserve, and foster their exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage, and should dissolve themselves, converge into or integrate into the Latin Church which arrogates to itself all power as the "monarch" of all India. This style of working is not at all authentic. Because it attributes to itself superiority over the other churches and refuse to recognize that the three "individual churches are of equal dignity" and that "no one of the churches is superior to the others by reason of rite". The latin church does not seem to want the two oriental churches of India "to enjoy the same rights" and to have "the same obligations". Even after the explicit declarations of the II Vatican Council about the necessity of restoring the communio ecclesiology in practice, some of the latin hierarchs are holding on to an ecclesiology of supreme power and domination, consequence of which is the prevailing anomalous and abnormal situation in India. The following modes of operation by some of the latin hierarchs seem to be prevailing at present: and they are

a) The "Latin Church" in India as a matter of policy is not willing to recognize the relevance of both the theological principles of communio ecclesiology of

Vatican II and the canonical provisions (Can. 372/2: Can. 450/1, Can. 518) of the new Latin Code to the Indian situation.

b) The Latin church of India, declaring itself to be the monarch of all it surveys, seems to have assumed exclusive jurisdiction for the whole of India and for all its peoples, and to have declared the whole of the Indian subcontinent as its territory for Evangelization and to have arrogated to itself the authority to allow or not to allow any other church to fulfill its natural tasks and obligations as a church on its own native soil.

c) Some of the Latin Hierarchs seem to be unwilling to have the attitude of evangelical poverty to renounce the power structure which they have built up often through the personnel of priests and religious recruited for the most part from the Malabar Church. They refuse to admit the right of the Oriental Churches of India to do evangelization work as Oriental Churches and to cater to the pastoral needs of the members of these churches scattered all over India. The personnel recruited from the Malabar Church to build up the power-structure of the Latin Church are de-orientalized and forced to accept the Roman rite as if the Orientals as orientals are disqualified to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact all commentators on article three of the decree on Eastern Catholic Churches agree that this article was formulated by the Council as a corrective to the anomalous situation prevailing in India where the "ancient church of Malabar rite" is obliged to adopt "the Roman rite to undertake the missionary apostolate", and to "condemn clearly the theory of those who taught that the Roman rite enjoyed some kind of precedence over the others" (W. M. Abbot, *The document of Vatican II*, p. 374). "The real reason why

the right to preach the Gospel, the right to engage in missionary activity, is especially mentioned in art 3 of OE 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 ... are only permitted to convert people to the latin rite" (Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the documents of Vatican II*, Vol. I, p. 515).

It is the above mentioned three modes of operation and the attitudes implied therein which make the Indian situation abnormal and anomalous. The dynamics of imperialistic colonial mode of operation and the mechanism of manipulation to prolong this situation can only result in an attitude of counter-witness to the "unity of communion" and "fellowship in unity". It is here the phenomenon of the much talked about 'kenosis' will apply, viz. the kenosis of the oppressive unchristian and stifling manipulation of the Orientals to build up exclusively the jurisdiction of the latin church in the sub-continent of India where only microscopic minority of Catholics (half among them being orientals) exist. This exclusivism has to be changed in the light of authentic theological principles based on the communio ecclesiology of Vatican II, the relevant text of which "do not call for interpretation but for reading, meditation and application (Kloppenburger).

The subordination of "Communio" to jurisdiction goes against the Sacramental constitution of the church. To repeat again the statement of Cardinal Ratzinger, "Communio as conceived of in the ancient church is both juridically and ontically the fundamental structure of the Church". The source of jurisdiction is to be sought in communio. It is the communio or the eucharistic ecclesiology which constitutes the basis of true and authentic

canonical tradition. The primacy of jurisdiction over *communio* is the result of a kind of "Sociological" ecclesiology, namely of conceiving the church as an immense organization or perfect society with a powerful centre upon which all communities or churches converge and upon which they all depend for their life or survival. In such a perspective juridical power is often contrasted with sacramental power opening a baneful gulf between sacrament and law, necessarily leading to splitting up power and the church herself between a sacramental domain and a purely juridical one. The jurisdictional aspect supplants the sacramental aspect. The neglect of the sacramental-mystery aspect of the Church by the latin hierarchs of India constitutes a tragedy the results of which mark all domains of ecclesiastical thought, including the domain of inter-church relationship. The relation between churches ceases to be explained in terms of the mystery of the Church or *communio ecclesiology*. In such a context the source and root of jurisdiction in the church are not sought in the sacramentality of the church nor is jurisdiction based on the communion of the churches. The Latin Church in India seems to have succumbed to this jurisdictional universalistic ecclesiology which as the Russian Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemman has pointed out is "a permanent temptation because in the last analysis it is a natural one, being the product of 'naturalization' of Christianity, its adaptation to the life 'after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ'. The primacy of jurisdiction over *communio* as manifested in some of the recent official pronouncements of the CBCI is the result of its adaptation "after the rudiments of the world" and is expressed in juridical terms of territory and power, instead of persons and

communion. Officially the Latin Church elsewhere in the world has accepted the *communio ecclesiology* restored by the Second Vatican Council. But the Latin Church in India refuses to accept this for India, which means, that for India *communio* as conceived of in the ancient church is not both juridically and ontically the fundamental structure of the church. It is not necessary to say that this approach of the Latin Church in India is not authentic ecclesologically and is not in conformity with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

(ii) *Is the Syro-Malabar Church authentic in its existence, attitude and approach?*

Regretfully one will have to answer for the most part it is not authentic. The post Deamper Syro-Malabar Church is not authentically oriental. The Portuguese missionaries had taken all the necessary measures to make the Syro-Malabar Church progressively Latin. They have succeeded and the members of this church, including the hierarchy are for the most part become latinized in their mentality and outlook. Their *forma mentis* is Latin, and have what is called "uniatizing outlook". By 'uniatism' is understood the use of the external forms of a rite by a person or group who remains intimately and decisively animated by the spirit of another. The Syro-Malabarians for the most part have become animated by a Latin mentality, though continuing to call themselves Orientals. Even the external forms of the rite, its symbols and gestures are not oriental. The liturgical, canonical and the theological outlook of the Syro-Malabar people is not authentically oriental, but Latin. A good number of its priests and religious seem to feel more at home with the Latin liturgy than their own. Unknowingly and unconsciously their *forma mentis* has become latin. What is

going on now in liturgical matters is acting according to the inclination which follows this mentality. They have in the course of centuries improperly fallen away from their lawful liturgical rites and their established way of life because of the historical circumstances. Although the II Vatican Council and the Holy See want them to take pains to return to their ancestral ways and prepare for an appropriate and organic development, they are unable and even unwilling to do so. The strength and dynamism which can come from the riches and vigor of their spiritual and liturgical traditions do not exist at present. They have for the most part lost sight of their liturgical and spiritual heritage which have been supplanted by the latin liturgical customs and "popular devotions". The Syro-Malabar church as it exists at present is not an authentic oriental church, but a second-rate supplementary Latin-church. At present the church has reached an impasse and confusion in things regarding its own traditions and in the task of restoring them.

Training of the clergy in the Latin Seminaries, the half-hearted attitude of the Prelates towards the restoration of the authentic tradition and liturgy and the confusion created by the whimsical way of restoring liturgy as opposed to the return to the ancestral tradition required by Vatican II, the introduction of Indian Mass, Mini mass, variety of Rituals and Divine Offices, latinization in gestures, vestments and even in liturgical text have all eroded the vigor of the authentic liturgy. The Syro-Malabar Church has almost ceased to be a liturgical assembly, it has become a devotional group where anything goes, projecting an attitude what does it matter what rite you belong? Bi-ritualism has become very prevalent among Syro-Malabar Priests. The numerous seminarians, religious, priests and bishops who have

become latin missionaries, have become more latinized than the latins and most of them oppose the growth of the Syro-Malabar church. The vocations to the religious orders (Latin) and to the various latin dioceses of India only help the aggrandizement of the latin church at the expenses of the Syro-Malabar church. Most of the laymen know nothing of their rite; their ecclesiastical discipline and spirituality are latin; their practice of faith consists in exercising latin devotions, assisting at Mass(latin) (or Syro-Malabar) on Sundays and receiving the sacraments they find no difficulty to feel at home or rather they seem to feel more at home in the latin liturgical celebrations. The consequence is an ongoing latinisation, de-orientalisation. The long latin rule and the latin mentality of their ecclesiastics have made the Syro-Malabar laity as a whole take little or no interest in their rite. The loss of the tradition that had made this church what it was, and the inroad of ideas entirely unecclisial and foreign to the authentic tradition of this church account for the present confusion and malaise existing in the Syro-Malabar Church. The necessity of the growth and expansion of a church should come from the demands of an organic development of its own traditional heritage. In other words the growth should be congenial. This at present the Malabar church is unable to do. Their desire to grow, expand and extend to the other parts of India, in this context, will appear to be merely a matter of jurisdiction, dissociated from the demands originating from the heritage of spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology proper to an individual church. In this context the alternatives are either to become fully latin instead of remaining a hybrid church or to return to their ancestral tradition from which they have improperly fallen away. The first alternative seems to be easier than the

second, and a lot of talk about inculturation and "One Rite for India" can only be considered as a devious expression of this desire. The second is a very difficult task and demands a lot of initiation and training. Only this can enable the Syro-Malabar Church to regain its lost vigor to grow as an individual church instead of remaining as ecclesiastically emasculated and liturgically anemic church. It is only by undertaking such a difficult task can the Syro-Malabar church show that it possesses a heritage of its own which justifies its particularism in matters of liturgy, spirituality, canon law and even theology. Merely to want this church to be distinct from the Latin Church without any real and substantial differences in liturgy, discipline and spiritual heritage is to fall into a jurisdictional approach based on a sociological ecclesiology as opposed to a sacramental or communion ecclesiology.

(iii) *Authenticity of the Malankara Catholic Church*

The Malankara Catholic Church which came into existence as a "uniate church" in 1932. The liturgical and canonical rites of the Malankara Orthodox (or Jacobite) church has been introduced into the communion of the Latin church which has undertaken to respect these rites in return for allegiance to its theological typology. There is a dissociation between liturgical rite and discipline on the one hand, and theological, doctrinal, confessional typology on the other. There exists a tendency to dissociation between the rite on the one hand, and ecclesiology on the other which is the basic mistake of uniaticism. The result is that the hierarchical and ecclesiastical government and theological formation are modeled on those of the Latin church.

The clergy who have been trained in the latin seminaries and to some extent the second and third generation of laity born and brought up in the Malankara Catholic Church have begun to acquire a latin formamentis. In this respect the authenticity of the Malankara Catholic Church has become a little dim. A union of separated churches like the Orthodox or Jacobite Church of India can only be thought of as a union of different "type of church" (or individual churches) which within the unity sought by Christ, would preserve their own distinctive nature and their "canonical" autonomy. It should be noted that in a union with the oriental orthodox or Jacobite church of India, which exercises jurisdiction all over India and abroad, the boundaries between this church and the minority Malankara Catholic Church would disappear. The present Malankara Catholic Church, being a transitional phenomenon, would be absorbed into the larger Malankara church formed by the reunion of the oriental orthodox church of India. The present administrative and nonsynodal structure of the Malankara Catholic church is not in conformity with the authentic tradition of the Malankara Orthodox Church (or the Oriental orthodox church of India). Even in liturgical matters there is some kind of latinisation occasionally creeping in, and the Malankara Catholic Church seems to be following the way of the Syro-Malabar Church in decline and decadence.

The Malankara Liturgy (basically the West Syrian liturgy of Antioch) is first of all an Oriental form of Christianity, which though it owes something to the Greek world through its centre in Antioch, remains rooted in the semitic world of the middle East. It belongs to the same world as the Bible itself. It is as though it

sprang from the same language as was used in Palestine and expressing itself not in the metaphysical terms of Greek theology, but in the rich symbolic language of the Bible. The liturgy consists largely of long prayers of great beauty and solemnity and of songs and chants set to solemn music and composed for the most part in the golden age of the liturgy between the fourth and tenth centuries. Biblical imagery, biblical echoes and parallelisms, paraphrase of the biblical passages woven into the text abound in the prayers of the liturgy and thus the original flavour of revelation as expressed in the bible is preserved intact. The gestures and symbolic actions in the liturgy are fundamentally oriental and an Indian for the most part will find them suited to his ethos and expressive of his genuine religious sentiments. This Malankara (Syrian) Christianity shows atleast the possibility of an oriental form of Christianity, distinct from all its occidental forms. This is not enough perhaps in the context of the complex culture of India. Certainly this liturgy can take in certain religious and cultural features of India more than any existing liturgy can do, by a process of organic evolution and not by prefabrication as has been done in the so-called ready-made "Indian Liturgies." The liturgical scholars of the church of the South India during the formation of that church found this liturgy to be the best and most suited to be adapted for the use of that church. They found this liturgy as foreign as the Bible is foreign. "In the twentieth century there are still theorists, like Drews, who look upon it (the West Syrian liturgy of St. James) as the most ancient and pure form of the eucharist, and try to show the hypothetical evolutionary process by which the Roman liturgy itself must have originated from it. One of the greatest Anglican liturgists of the

last century Bishop Walter Howard Frere, in his book *The Anaphora*, more subtly and much more prudently maintained that this was the ideal liturgy, conceived and developed on a plan which is substantially primitive, even if its working form represents an undeniably advanced evolution. The continuity of its development and the logical unity of the trinitarian structure in which it is inscribed seem to him to be guarantees of the quasi-apostolic antiquity of this Eucharistic Schema, whatever we might say about the variations in detail of the formulas with which it may be clothed" (Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist*, p. 245). There is not much of adaptation to be done in the liturgy if one remembers that "in the first expression of faith there is something permanent, which will ever make of us spiritual semites" (Louis Bouyer).

There is also in this liturgy a wonderful sacramental sense; the sense that through the Incarnation the divine power has penetrated the whole creation and man begins to participate in the new life of the resurrection. This liturgy is "the most prolific of all liturgies and has a large family of daughter liturgies" (Adrian Fortesque), and therefore can form a basis for the organic evolution of other Indian liturgies. Adrian Fortesque a great scholar in liturgy and church history has this to say about the liturgy of the Jacobites (which is the same as the liturgy of the Malankara Catholic Church).

"This liturgy is one of the most beautiful in Christendom,. Strange that an insignificant little sect should possess so splendid a liturgical tradition" (*The lesser Eastern Churches*, p. 310).

And it is a sad fact that a Church with so splendid a liturgical tradition is not allowed to grow and develop in India.

3. The peculiar conditions in which these individual churches find themselves in India

The latin church represents one possible incarnation of the gospel, and that a western one. Any attempt to bring all peoples into the "Latin Church" is culturally and ecclesiologically incorrect. Even an attempt to converge all existing rites to one rite or a single Indian rite or to what is some times called an "Integrated Indian Rite" is unscientific and is not an expression resulting from the "Catholic" nature of the Church. The existence of three Individual churches and the tremendous variety and diversity in unity of the Indian situation will have to be taken into consideration.

In this context one should be ready for the possibility of more rites than the three now existing in India, instead of attempting for the convergence and kenosis of the Oriental Rites into a future liturgy evolved out of the existing Latin liturgy in the context of the so-called Inculturation. The oppressive unchristian and stifling manipulation of the Orientals to build up exclusively the jurisdiction of the latin church in the Sub-continent of India Smacks of the imperialistic colonial mode of operation. What is required is an openness to the possible organic evolution and growth of the existing churches in future in the light of their past history and present realities.

The Syro-Malabar church if it wants to develop as an individual church, and does not want to remain merely as a sociological and prestigious group which eventually may deteriorate into an ethnic group, should return to their ancestral ways from which they have improperly fallen away because of circumstances of

time or personage. The members of this church, more so the clergy and the hierarchy 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 of traditions. The present pattern of training of the religious, clergy, and the attitude towards liturgy and the recruiting of missionaries for the latin church are not in any way helpful to return to the authentic nature of the Syro-Malabar church and its development. If it goes at this rate the Syro-Malabar Church would converge into and be absorbed into the latin church, and consequently would become a sociological group of the latin church in the mode of the groups exemplified in the Alleppey and Cochin dioceses.

The Malankara Catholic Church in uniting or remaining united with Rome, has introduced its own liturgical tradition (with occasional latinization)-into the catholic church, but it has not brought a living spiritual and theological tradition. Why not?

Like all eastern churches united with Rome the Malankara Church received from the latin seminary spiritual and intellectual training for the clergy and religious. It received priests, teachers, manuals, catechism and devotions all in the Latin tradition. Without being aware of the process, the members of the church are being integrated slowly into the latin tradition. Historically the one Catholic Church had two traditions, the eastern and western. The radical obliteration of the eastern tradition is a serious loss for her. In the Catholic Church as it exists today there is only one living

tradition, the latin tradition, which seeks its sources in two patristic traditions, the latin and the Eastern. The Eastern (or the Greek – Syrian) tradition has to be restored as living tradition to realize and develop the full unity of the church as unity in communion. The Malankara Catholic Church has to be aware of this and take steps to develop this living tradition, and not be allowed to be cribbed, crabbed and caged by the faulty jurisdictional ecclesiology of the latin church of India.

The Malankara Catholic Church is a “uniate Church”. Within a catholicity that is largely Latin, the Malankara Catholic Church has to remain Oriental and within an Oriental Christianity that is “Orthodox” the Malankara Catholic Church has to remain Catholic. As “Uniates” the Malankara Catholic Church has a tremendous mission to “open Catholic ears to the just claims of the Orthodox, their fears and their hopes”, to act as representatives of that part of the still dissident church that they came from and into which they will again be absorbed after its reunion with Rome. To accomplish this, as “uniates” the Malankara Catholic Church “should remain in living continuity with the Orthodox tradition, in other words it should become again substantially identical with the Orthodox (as far as possible). If the Oriental Catholics do not preserve the Oriental tradition in its purity they are no longer capable of representing the Orthodox”. And it should be kept in mind that “in this field there is no room for mediocrity or worse” (Cf. M. Geday, “uniatism and Union”, *Le Lien* 19 (1964), No. 4, pp. 1–40).

H. Alvizatos, the well known Greek Orthodox canonist, expressed in 1958 his hopes that the uniates will

make comprehensible to the western church certain realities which it does not understand and thus become a "benediction for the suppression of divisions and the re-establishment of unity in the Church of Christ" (Cf. Theologia 29 (1958) p. 484).

It is not a desire for singularity or privilege nor merely an attachment to ancient traditions which prompt the Malankara Catholic Church to grow and develop in and according to its tradition and heritage. This church owes it to Christ to maintain this twofold and equal loyalty to Catholicism and to the East and it owes it also to those who believing in Christ's name, seek by tolerance and prayer to get to know one another better. The Malankara Catholic Church is Indian but not Hindu, Eastern but not dissident, Catholic but not Latin. This marks the Malankara Catholics different from their fellow Malankara Orthodox Christians and also signifies the difference from the other two sister churches in India.

4. Necessity of facing the problem and of devising adequate solutions

The problem here is not a question of guaranteeing privileges condescendingly granted to the Oriental Churches or of tolerating them as uncomfortable exceptions. This latter attitude is based on an inveterate urge for uniformity and a consciousness of superiority on the part of Latins" and a throwback from the colonialist and imperialist mentality of domination that centuries ago took hold of the nations of Western Europe leaving its mark on the Church which missionaries from these nations established. The solution consists in taking

effective steps to foster communion among the three individual churches through mutual acceptance and acknowledgment as individual churches with equal dignity, and having the same right and the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole of India.

In the course of the centuries the promises of Pope especially since Leo XIII to respect and foster the rites of the Eastern churches were more honoured in the breach than in the observance due to the resistance of the Roman Curia. The recognition in the decree on Ecumenism that the principle present in tradition "has not always been honoured is in accord with historical facts. It is about this that Pobedostsev, a Russian, sarcastically remarked: "Le Pape passe, la curie romaine reste" (The Pope passes, the Roman Curie remains). But after the solemn declaration of the Vatican Council the "Curia" seems to have relented. It is regrettable that this attitude still persists in India. Vatican II passed, curia changed, but the attitude towards the Oriental Churches of India remains. Some Bishops seem to remain with the same inveterate urge for uniformity (and convergence) and consciousness of superiority forgetting or ignoring the evident truth viz: "to demand a unification of jurisdiction would be to block every path of the ecumenical movement, to shut oneself off in a fatal isolation, and to form a real obstacle to unity for the whole church" (Congar, Küng and O'Halloran, *Council speeches of Vatican II* p. 196).

The Latin Hierarchs of India are willing to admit the *Communio Ecclesiology*. But some of them say that it is not applicable to the "Indian context" or the

"Indian Situation". If "Communio as conceived of in the ancient church is both juridically and ontically the fundamental structure of the church for all time and therefore in our day as well" (Ratzinger) why is it then not applicable to the Indian context and situation? It is not applicable to the Indian situation because when it comes to a question of application even now some of the Latin Hierarchs are holding on to an ecclesiology of juridical type; in the practical field an ecclesiology of supreme power and domination, consequence of which is the prevailing anomalous and abnormal situation in India. This prevailing situation or context has to be changed in the light of authentic theological principles based on the communio ecclesiology of Vatican II, the relevant texts of which "do not call for interpretation, but for reading mediation and application" (Kloppenburger).

If the words of praise with which the particular churches of the East are mentioned, and the protestation in Art 14 (of the decree on Ecumenism) of the high regard in which the heritage and tradition of the Eastern churches are held are not to be compliments which commit no one, then not only must these assurance be given serious attention in concrete terms but steps should be taken to foster the development of these individual churches. Vatican Council II does not consider the Oriental churches an obstacle to the Church's unity and therefore to be rejected by way "kenosis". On the contrary the Council says:

"From the earliest times, more over, the Eastern Churches followed their own disciplines, sanctioned by the Holy Fathers, by Synods, even ecumenical Councils. Far from being an 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 has already been recalled. To remove any shadow of doubt this Sacred Synod solemnly declares (this kind of solemn declaration is rarely used in the decrees of the Second Vatican Council) 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 16/359-60; cf. also UR 17b/360).

"This variety (of rites and particular churches) within the church in no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it" (OE 2/374).

"This Sacred Synod 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" (OE 5/376; Cf. UR 15e /359).

"A regard for the distinctive nature of one part of Christianity" (Like the two Oriental Churches of India), "which has come into being through historical causes" and "the fostering of salvation of souls must determine any concrete church order and discipline" (Vorgimmler,

Commentary on the documents of Vatican II, Vol.II, pp. 136-137). The Council asks everyone to foster the heritage of the Eastern Churches and not to reject them, nor to ask them to empty themselves (Kenosis) of their heritages". "All should realize that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve, and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches, in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians" (UR 15 e/ 359).

The primary reason here given is theologically important: "in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition". Those who advocate 'kenosis' on the part of the Oriental Church are asking them not to foster their rich liturgical and spiritual heritage and also not to bother to preserve faithfully the fullness of Christian tradition. Where is the so-called kenosis leading to?

Who needs "kenosis", if that is the word to be used for an attitude of self-denial and spiritual poverty, is clear from the following words of Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro:

"We have to deal with Churches that are sources on which the West has constantly drawn in the past and whose true patrimony must be respected in its integrity if our wish for a dialogue is to be taken seriously. This requires on the part of the Catholic Church (which is predominantly Latin), an attitude of self denial, of spiritual poverty which disposes her to rediscover and assimilate the treasures

of others if she wishes to be truly Catholic. And if this is true for the Church's attitude towards contemporary cultures, it is even more evident that this attitude of evangelical poverty must show itself first in a readiness to consider Christian traditions which have become unfortunately somewhat alien to her or which the Latin world has never fully understood. This is a matter which involves the true Catholicity of the Church and the possibility of finding once more the unity we lost" (Address given at the Collegio Greco on 11 November 1964).

The words of Karl Rahner are also relevant to this point:

"For the Catholic who is a real Catholic – theologically not merely in a sociological sense – one element of his catholic faith is the living conviction that if at some time or other there is to be a single Christian Church in our present era, it will be in a theological sense Catholic. But of course it will be the Catholic Church of the future, which will certainly show a legitimate historical continuity with the present one, but is all the same not just the Church in the specific form in which it now presents itself to historical and empirical observation. This Church will very clearly be the communion of the Churches which in the light of their own historical origin and presuppositions will bring and incorporate into this one Church all that God has given them in the way of positive Christian faith".

Rahner goes on to say that the other Churches should be made to feel that they have a part "in shaping and unifying the Church without having to feel that they are merely returning to an existing unity". The other Churches should be enabled to "See themselves as churches forming a unity of churches which is the sole-hope of the future" (Cf. *Theol. Invest.* XVII, pp 195-196).

The Eastern Churches (separated from or in union with Rome) of India, as those elsewhere in the world, remain in the Church as witnesses reminding the whole church of a primitive Apostolic structure (It is a sad fact that the structure, especially the administration of the Malabar Church and Malankara Church has been considerably latinized !).

The Catholic Church has her roots in the East as they were founded by the Twelve Apostles and on the Apostles.

"And if the Church is founded on the Apostles' this fact is of no small importance to the Church: *Ecclesia ex Apostolis*, the Church was founded on Peter and the college of Apostles. The role of Peter has never rendered that of the Apostles useless, for the latter come from Christ and not from Peter. What should be said is: *Ecclesia ex Ecclesiis apostolicis*.

Their permanence, their presence in the Catholic Church, in which more than in all the dissident Churches, all rites are represented, is a reminder to the whole Church that the Church as desired by Christ, is still at the present time, founded on the Twelve, and that she can be the Church of Christ only on condition of being faithful to

her origins. The apostles were not the foundation of the Church only at the beginning. In a mysterious way they still are. And this they are by those visible signs of their works represented by the churches connected with them" (Bernard Lambert, *Eccumenism*, p. 443).

The permanence and the presence of the Malabar Church and Malankara Church, both tracing back to the same apostolic origin from St. Thomas are a reminder to the whole Church that the Church as desired by Christ is still at the present time founded on the apostles and their faithfulness to their apostolic origins and traditions is a manifestation of the faithfulness of the Church of Christ to her origins from the Apostles.

The Catholic Church values the Oriental Churches; she insists that they be represented as widely as possible within Catholicity: she is anxious that she should so far as possible be present in each rite and language. She does so not to check the dissident churches nor to enter into competition with them. She does so because she has need of them to be Catholic and she cannot be Catholic without being the Church of the apostolic Churches. Merely by their presence they prevent the church from slipping into some other formula than that of apostolicity. Church in India has need of the two Oriental Churches to be Catholic and she cannot be Catholic without being the Church of the apostolic Churches of India. It is not only by fatherly love, not only apostolic concern or by missionary zeal, that the Popes have always cherished the Oriental Churches. It was still more so from the necessity of Catholicity: the Church could not allow herself to be anything less than wholly the Body of Christ. The

apostolic Church of Rome could not feel herself Catholic without fellowship with the other apostolic Churches. These Churches need Rome: Rome too needs them. The Latin Church of India cannot feel herself Catholic without fellowship with the two apostolic Churches, viz. the Malabar Church and the Malankara Church. These Churches need the Latin Church of India; Latin Church too needs them. The Malankara Church and Malabar Church should be recognized as Churches and not merely as ground for recruiting missionaries and religious for the Latin Church by uprooting them from the communion of their Churches and inducting them into the Latin Church. This is a very artificial, abnormal and unecclisial situation which implies that the Oriental Churches are not qualified to be missionaries of their Churches! The Catholic Church will be in a better position to attract people to her Catholicity only when without rejecting any of her acquirements of the past, her essential supranationality shines out in all splendour. There is a deep sense bound up with the very mystery of the Church according to which all Christians in union with the See of Peter both of the Eastern and Western Churches all over the world including India belong to the "City of which all are citizens" with equal rights and obligations.

Conclusion

As of old the true cause of dissension in the inter-ritual or inter ecclesial relationship lies in a different manner of conceiving the government of the Church, or in the notion of the Church. Nearly six centuries ago the great Palamite Nilus Cabasilas in his treatise *De Causis dissensionum in Ecclesia* suggested that the true source of schism and dissension lies in a different manner of

conceiving the government of the Church (P. G. 149, 683-700). Nearly five centuries later Father Palmieri at the end of his two volumes of *Theologia Orthodoxa* made the following judgement 'radix sschismatis in notione Ecclesiae latet ...' and added: "It is this notion which must be clarified as fully as possible, leaving aside the other divergences which have grown up around it like the shoots of a tree, and which serve more as a delight for the learned than to clarify the efforts of those who are seeking to build peace between the Churches".

Vatican Council II has succeeded to a large extent in clarifying the notion of the Church. The texts of this Council are incisive and clear; they call not for interpretation, but for reading, meditation and application. Above all we should always remember the necessary but difficult harmony internal and external between these Churches will be more of the special action of the Holy Spirit than of legislation and jurisdictional manipulations based on the sociological structure of the Church.

Finally let me conclude with the following words of Archbishop John J. Mowatt:

"All the Roman Pontiffs, from Leo XIII to Paul VI, have spoken out in defence of the rights of the Eastern Churches and have spoken out against latinization. Even the documents of Vatican II ask for a "return to the authentic ways" if in the past they have been abandoned. Are all these words and documents mere meaningless formulas, or are they serious in contents? Eastern hierarchs, even if of Western style education are bound in conscience to see that the rites and rights of their Churches are protected

and safeguarded, and should they fail, then they have betrayed their God entrusted mission to see that the Universal Church, God's gift to man, is a "Harbour of Unity", "House of Salvation" in which all, in the fulness of their variety, are true and equal brothers. Those, be they Eastern or Western, who seek to latinize, ritually or structurally, do not bring reconciliation but destruction; they do not unite, but only absorb; they do not serve, but dominate. All these, be they priests or bishops, do not work as apostles of union, but as sowers and agents of discord, and as such are a real and painful obstacle to the unity of Christianity."

8. LITURGY AND THEOLOGY IN EASTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Varghese Pathikulangara cmi

1. Today the Church appears to be in a crisis – a double crisis of Liturgy and Theology: Liturgy has to be the “focus”, the “holy of holies”, the main “occupation” of any Church – but, in fact, not! – the growing tendency of nominalism, minimalism and superficiality – the neglect of the norm *lex orandi lex credendi* – liturgy has little role in shaping and guiding the ecclesiastical consciousness i. e. the particular style of Christian life – liturgy is no more the *icon* and *image* of the new life which every Christian has participated – in fact, the liturgy is degraded to a position similar to any profane or social celebration – this is the first phase of today’s crisis!

The lack of commonly accepted and acknowledged *criteria* or terms of reference – the danger of unhealthy pluralism, mis-interpreted nationalism and lack of an ecclesial vision – theologians not understanding each other and very often becoming prey to philosophical categories – a theology alienated from the Church and a Church alienated from theology – this is the second phase of today’s crisis!

2. Liturgy is the *epiphany* of church's faith – the transfiguring experience of the Mystery in the Church – the *locus classicus* or the source of all theological synthesis – liturgy makes the Church what she is and is the fulfilment of her very nature, of her cosmical and eschatological calling – liturgy for an Oriental is not merely a matter of few externals and prayers or the sharing of few ideas; it is the sublime expression of the living traditions of his Church; it sums up his whole Christian life and inspires it – tradition, traditionalism and historicism – liturgy as the epiphany of heaven on earth – too much of rationalism and abstraction kill the liturgical spirit – the modern renewals are, in fact processes of secularization – the ultimate term of reference for Christianity is not this world but the kingdom of God – liturgy is the passage of the Church from this world into heaven – liturgy is the most perfect expression of the Church.

3. The alienation between *lex orandi* (liturgy) and *lex credendi* (theology) during the post-patristic “Western captivity” of Eastern Traditions – the *pseudomorphosis* of Eastern theological mind – the identification of theology with *loci theologici* and its alienation from the living experience of the Church – the ecclesiological and eschatological emphasis of patristic theology – the concept of liturgical theology – theology is a search for words and concepts adequate to and expressive of the living experience, i. e. the liturgy, of the Church – the credibility of theology consists in its ability to point to the experience and reality of the Church than in its rational consistency – theology is always an invitation “to taste and see”.

4. The theological importance of Oriental liturgies – theological sensitivity – inter-action between liturgy and theology in the first seven centuries – the negative theology – the theology of *Mysterium tremendum* – liturgy and christology – liturgy and Pneumatology – liturgy and Ecclesiology – liturgy and Supernatural Anthropology – liturgy and Mariology – liturgy and Eschatology.

5. The Chaldeo-Indian or Syro-Malabar Church is not an exception to the general rule. This individual Church, together with the other Churches of St. Thomas Tradition, has marvellously and magnificently arranged all her liturgical celebrations. The creation, especially of man his fall, the many and various ways of God's attempt to communicate to the fallen man, the Nativity, Epiphany public life, suffering, death, Resurrection, Ascension, the economy of the Spirit and of the Church, Jesus' presence in the Church, priesthood in the Church, the sacramental economy, the theosis or divinization of man, the eschatology – all such themes of salvation history have an adequate and pertinent place in the various liturgical celebrations of this Church.

9. LITURGICAL SPIRITUALITY

Jacob Vellian

Twenty five years have passed since the Syro-Malabar Church under the direction of the Holy See, has entered into the serious and strenuous task of restoring and introducing the texts of liturgy, beginning with the Pontifical (1957) and Qurbana (1958 to 1960) the Divine Office and the Sacraments.

The Syro-Malabar hierarchy introducing the restored text of the Qurbana, a year and a half before the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, stated that the restoration was "for the glory of God, for the prosperity of the Church, for the help of the faithful and for giving a new vitality to Christ life and for realizing the ideals and expectations of the Holy Church as well as for a deeper sacramental life of the people. (Pastoral letter June 18, 1962).

Twenty years have passed since the second Vatican Council solemnly promulgated the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy on December 4, 1963, to "impart an ever increasing vigour to the Christian life of the faithful (CSL art 4). It is to be noted that "it is through liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist", the work of our redemption (our sanctification) is accomplished (art. 2). In fact, "Liturgy is the primary and

indispensable source from which the faithful have to derive Christian spirit" (CSL 14).

Our time, a generation after the introduction of the Restored liturgical texts and the promulgation of Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy is challenged anew to reaffirm God's close and intimate contact with each human life, to stress the importance of liturgical prayer as the principal means by which God interacts with His people, and sanctifies them. The liturgy is a principal means by which God acts upon the Church to make it holy. That sanctification of the Church results in the creation of a community capable of continuing the saving work of Jesus Christ in the world. And the sharing in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ lies in the heart of the sanctification of the Church.

The worship that is rendered to God does not consist simply in the externals (prayers, gestures, intentions) of liturgical rites, but rather includes the very lives of those who celebrate the liturgy—lives which should manifest what the liturgy expresses, which reveals the love and life of Christ to others, which calls them to share in the life of the Trinity, which should manifest the relationship between faith and life.

Mystic and Communal character

Socrates, once, with great eloquence described the ideal way human beings should live, in an ideal society as perfectly as possible. His disciple, Glaucon, denied the existence of such a city of God anywhere on earth. Then Socrates replied: whether such a city exists in heaven or ever will exist on earth, the wise men will live up to the manner of that city having nothing to do with any

other and in so looking upon it, will set his own house in order." (cited by G. A. Maloney *Prayers of the Heart*, Notre Dame. 1983, p. 8).

This city of God. in biblical terms, can be called the "Kingdom of God" which according to Jesus, is the in-breaking of the heavenly Father's tender love, and is the love relationship between God and the individuals. Jesus still preaches to us this Kingdom, which is being accomplished among us and within us, and for this Jesus asks us to be alert, vigilant, and awaken.

Liturgical Spirituality

The inbreaking of the Father's love concretely manifested in and through Jesus is in its continued manifestation in the Church, and especially in the liturgical celebrations.

Jesus came to this human existence, in order to set human race free, and he still is present healing us, and that mainly, through the liturgical celebrations.

The Spirit that is at work enables the faithful to take part in the effect of the redemption in Jesus Christ and this is done especially, through active and fruitful participation in the liturgical rites.

The Church as such has its spirituality which is not a spirituality, and not even the best among all; but simply, the spirituality of the Church i. e. liturgical spirituality (G. M. Braso, *Liturgy and Spirituality*, Collegeville: 1960 p. 11).

Community centred: The sanctification based on unity which the church expresses so insistently in her liturgy was not a mere idealism. Actually this unity shaped the

whole spiritual life of Christian antiquity and produced excellent fruits.

The assembly: Liturgical assembly is not a crowd; but it is the Church made visible *here and now*. One becomes conscious of and experiences the membership in the Church by being present at the liturgical assembly. Hence the fathers warned: Don't deprive the Church of your presence; Don't minimise the Church with your absence. (St. J. Chrisostom).

Catechumens were welcomed by the community, encouraged by it, taught by its example and they were a cause of joy to it at their entry into the Church.

Baptismal spirituality

In the case of preparing the adults to Baptism, the church witnessed to and experienced a baptismal spirituality which was: moralistic (embracing a new way of life), mystical (baptism as a re-entry into paradise: ephraim), celebrational (rejoicing and sharing in the victory of Christ), relational (stands with God; a pledge from God), social (incorporation into Christian community). This spirituality involved a radical conversion and a total commitment to Jesus Christ, resulted from immersing into the paschal mystery of the Lord.

Martyrs spirituality

Dying and rising formed part of their life. Dying to themselves they were born at the baptismal font. A change of life style and a conversion of mind taught them to die for Jesus Christ. Hence in the midst of crucial pain and martyrdom they could sing halleluiah and Amen. The martyrs rejoiced at martyrdom knowing

that they were sharing in the paschal mystery. The veneration of martyrs and their relics were meant not only to honour the martyr, but also to train the believers in that context (narration of the martyrdom of Polycarp).

Desert spirituality

The Syrian liturgical spirituality, since 4th century, was influenced deeply by the spirituality of the desert fathers, who “intoxicated with God” and impelled by the same Holy Spirit that drove Jesus into the desert, sought solitude in the deserts of Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia “to pray incessantly” (1 Thes. 5:17).

A. Mystic and contemplative aspect

Knowing their dignity as children of God and temple of the Holy Spirit (1 cor 3:16; 1 cor 6:19) they thought it was necessary to flee to solitude in view of reaching a state of integration, called *apatheia*, which is a passionless passion. They worked hard to reach a state of integration of all their body, soul and spirit relationship which they called *hesychia*, meaning rest or tranquility. The degree of their sharing in the life of Christ was measured by the love, peace and joy they habitually experienced, conquering man's natural tendency to be selfish.

B. Divine Presence experienced (നോയമ്പ്, ഉപവാസം, ജാഗരണം, പ്രാർത്ഥന)

This Eastern type of spirituality which grew out of the life of the desert fathers, taught to live consciously in the loving presence of the indwelling Trinity, so as to pray always”. (In later centuries (13th-14th) the use

of *Jesus Prayer* was seen as a simplified form of this spiritual outlook).

The hesychastic spirituality, reminding one of being called to pray always, works out a spirituality of an ever increasing awareness of the indwelling presence of the Holy Trinity.

C. Spirituality of the heart

Eastern Christianity speaks of the heart in prayer to refer to the whole person – emotions, body, imaginations, intellect and will in meeting God. Such a spirituality has as its aim a total integration of the human person as he or she meets God in prayers, and learns completely to surrender to his loving presence. This has been called hesychism. It is a total surrendering of the self like “behold the hand-maid of the Lord”.

The prayer of the heart is a way of life that is built upon a rigorous asceticism of constant control of the thoughts by vigilant attention to the presence of the indwelling God, by fasting, by cultivation of *Penthos*, which is an abiding sense of sorrow for sin. It is to put one’s mind into his “heart.”

It is the story of a Christian who silenced his heart in order to listen to God’s word speaking within.

Pseudo Macarius holds that grace, through *Penthos* an abiding sorrow for sins, developed by the continual thoughts of death and judgment, leads the Christian to ever-increasing levels of conscious awareness of oneness with Jesus.

The desert fathers did not run away from the world in cowardliness or in spiritual egoism, but as fighters.

They were eschatological prophets, building large communities, a way of life with God that most closely would resemble the life to come in the *eschaton* (Palladius, Lausaic history).

The martyr's spirituality, the baptismal spirituality and the desert spirituality, all found their source and strength in Jesus crucified and risen. The sacrifice of the altar reminded them that pain and suffering were real. Fasting, penance, incessant prayers and vigil were part of christian living: *sahra, sauma, slotha*.

A few important features

A. Experiencing the divine presence: With a mystic outlook, the liturgy through the mouth of the deacon directs right before the beginning of the Anaphora: Cast your eyes down and lift up your minds to heaven. Nobody should speak. Be silent and pray reverentially. The idea is that the worshipper is already in the presence of God; He is already in heaven; "This is nothing but the house of God" (Gn 28:17) and hence the worshippers adore and give thanks to God "with the thousands upon thousands of celestial beings and ten thousands of angels" who adore Him.

The abiding presence of Jesus is assured in Raza, with the words of the Lord, "Behold I will be with you until the end of the days".

The awe inspiring presence of God, and the attitude of the worshipper fully conscious of this divine presence are well described in the prayer before the anthem of the rails in Raza.

"Before the glorious throne of Thy greatness, O my Lord, and the seat high and exalted of Thine excellency

and the awful 'Bem' of the power of Thy love and the propitiatory altar which Thy will hath established and the place where Thine honour dwelleth, we that are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture, with thousands of cherubim who praise Thee and ten thousands of searphim and arch-angels who sing to Thee 'Holy', kneel, worship, give thanks and glorify Thee at all times".

The sanctuary vail is a symbol of revelation of God. The Epiphania of God is reminded of in the course of the celebration. The worshipper is already there in heaven, in the presence. His eyes cast down, and thought heaven-wards, suggest that he has to forget himself and the people around. He is entering into a communion with the Lord. This experiencing of God is for every one, and not just for the privileged ones.

B. Penthos (continuous sorrow for sin):

The worshipper in the presence of the awesome God, exclaim "Woe to me, I am a sinner" and he implores God's mercy through Ps. 51. "Have mercy on me God, according to the mercy". There are repeated requests for the forgiveness of sins. The prayers of incensations and of the *formal entry* contain the same idea. Why so much repetition? It is only through the continued sorrow for sins that a person is able to meet God in the purity of his heart. A sign of an ongoing conversion.

C. Purity of Heart:

This is a condition to be in the presence of God (Isaac of Ninive). At the solemn approach to the sanctuary, the priest says: "our hearts being sprinkled and cleansed from an evil conscience may be made worthy

to enter into the exalted and most holy place, and to stand in purity, sanctity and holiness before thy altar" and the deacon ordering silence, says: "He who prays, let him pray with his heart". The prayer introduce the Lord's prayer before communion has this: "Make us worthy, O Lord our God, constantly and without blame, to stand before thee with a pure heart...."

D. Total surrender:

The prostrations at the *accessus ad altare* is indicative of a total surrender in the face of one's own unworthiness and of the majesty of God.

"Have mercy on us" *Maran Esrahm* Alein is the response to the first karo-zutha in the Qurbana, which is a response, which refer to the majesty of God and to the loneliness of man. God's mercy covers everything and it suffices for the mortal man. "Kyrie Eleison" (Jesus prayer).

E. Eschatological character

The Qurbana is full of allusions to the eschatological coming of the Lord and privileged status of the elect (cfr. J. M. Pathrapankal, "Christian Living and Heavenly Liturgy in the Syro Malabar Rite", *The Malabar Church* J. Vellian (ed) Rome 1970 55-72). Qurbana is the time when all are invited to experience the mystery of their Christian call in its existential and eschatological dimensions" (p. 70). It is the eschatological aspect that nourishes the faith, encourages hope and instills into the heart the charity that unites them all to pray "come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). And one of the initial prayers of Qurbana, awaits for the coming of the Lord in these

words: "when the sweet odour of the delight of Thy love our Lord and our God, breathes upon us, and our soul are illumined by the knowledge of Thy truth, may we be made worthy to face the revelation of Thy beloved from heaven, and there to confess Thee and glorify Thee without ceasing in Thy adorned Church, filled with all aids and blessings".

F Reconciliation: Kiss of peace

There can be no hatred or enmity in a member of the liturgical assembly. He is bound to seek reconciliation with any one who has something against him (Mt 5:24). Any division in a liturgical assembly was pictured as "dividing Christ" (1 Cor 1:13); (Ps 68:30). The custom of *Kasthuri* excludes public sinners from taking part in the Qurbana. The Kiss of peace is indicative of reconciliation. Litany before the communion reminds us:

"Purifying our souls from anger and enmity". And one of the prayers at the beginning of the anaphora has this: "Lord free our consciences from every evil, from envy, deceit and wickedness.... The P'seetha version of the Lord's prayer states: Forgive us.... as we have (already) forgiven...." (yom kippur spirit).

See the meaning of Ps. 15.

Oneness of the Eucharistic bread was to be symbolic of the unity of the community (1 cor 10:17).

Liturgical spirituality is the spirituality of the Church. It is highly communitarian with a strong sense of the assembly. Hence it demands reconciliation with the brethern and it leads to a life of service.

G. The caring community

One of the obligations the liturgical celebrations of Qurbana leaves on the Eucharistic assembly is to see to the "daily bread" of the poor. The breadness of the Eucharistic bread should remind us of a hungry world (1 cor 11:21, 1 cor 16:1-4).

There has to be mutual support in a Christian community as the result of "one heart and one mind" it possesses (Acts 2:43-47, 4:32-35) *Nercha*.

During the liturgy one stands in the presence of God; and encounters Him in the depth of his heart. At the same time the community dimension of Qurbana demands that we respond to the needy.

It is a spirituality that is balanced between contemplative life and charitable works. You have to give *slamma* "in the love of Jesus Christ" and we have to enter into the presence of God as though we were in heaven: "This is nothing but the house of God".

The Missionary Dimension:

In the 4th Gehanta, the thought and desire of a community that stood before the Lord and experienced his goodness is given: "Let all the inhabitants of the world know that you alone are true God (3 Kg 8:),... that you have sent your only begotten son..."

An awakening needed

Dom Guaranger states the reason for the decadence of liturgical spirituality in the West:

"Instead of being the rule of faith for the people, the liturgy turned itself into an instrument at the service of popular passions and popular devotions."

- This is true of the Malabar Church as well.
To work for a liturgical spirituality:
- We need a balance between liturgy and popular piety, the latter often gains predominance over the former: Novenas, monthly devotions etc.
- The pre-occupation to shorten the rituals does not help.
- The cosmic adoration, and a full-fledged prayer service seen in *sapra* to be recognized.
- The remote preparation to the celebration of Qurbana to be taken seriously (kiss of peace).
- An appreciation towards symbols is a must, incense, prostrations, kneeling, singing etc., liturgy as a sum total of symbols (not mediation or devotion).
- The mystic aspect of liturgy to be stressed (facing the congregation!). Try to go deeper into the meaning of the Qurbana.
- A meaningful celebration of the sacraments, stressing that sacraments are not things but actions of people - Jesus Christ and his Church.
- Try to live the liturgical year:
(not to mix liturgical rites of Good Friday with way of the cross; period of Annunciation could be a time devoted to Mary; give special emphasis to the observance of Lent).
- Use more singing in the Liturgy.
Allowing more time to sink into the mysteries.
- Beware of the fact that individualism, pragmatism and superficiality are harmful to liturgical spirituality.
- Let there be a generosity in celebration :
Don't be happy with the minimum
- Equality and fraternity to be less learned at the Eucharistic table of the Lord.
- Make liturgical celebration the focal point "to which all the activities of the church should tend."

10. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYRO-MALABAR QURBANA

Thomas Mannooramparampil

The History of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana

Although there is no documental evidence as to the existence of an early liturgy in Malabar, even in a flexible form, we can conclude that some form of liturgy, possibly inherited from St Thomas, existed there. There is a tradition that St Thomas ordained two bishops, one for the Malabar coast and the other for the Coromandal coast. *The Doctrine of the Apostles*, written around 250 A. D. in Edessa, says that all of India and surrounding regions received the priesthood from St Thomas. Describing the early Christianity in India, A Mingana mentions that the northwestern, western and southwestern parts of India were strewn with bishoprics before 225 A. D. Although we are unable to verify the truth of this tradition or discover any details about the successors of the first bishops, it is difficult to accept that the Apostle left the Church without any successors or priesthood. Yet we do not know whether the Malabarians gave shape to a developed form of the liturgy as did the Romans, the Persians, the Antiocheans and others. History gives witness to the existence of no other liturgy in Malabar except that

of the East Syrian. And it was definitely the only liturgy used there before the seventeenth century. We are here, therefore, concerned with its age and its subsequent evolution.

I. The Antiquity of the Qurbana

I. Internal Evidence

Since no documental evidence exists, the sole means of ascertaining the age of AM is to examine the intrinsic evidence of the text.

Observing the special characteristics of AM, many have concluded that it is the most ancient Eucharistic liturgy to which we have access today. According to Neale, it is one of the earliest, and perhaps the very earliest, of the many formularies of the christian faith. Although not composed by Addai and Mari, it is the development of their unwritten tradition regarding the Christian sacrifice. Renaudot upholds its maximum simplicity as the convincing proof of its great antiquity. G. Dix holds that the late second century or early third century does not seem too early a date for its origin, if one calculates the age of the anaphora from its intrinsic evidence. For him, the anaphora of Hippolytus and AM can date back substantially, in their present form, to shortly after 200 A.D. But, according to Dix, AM is obviously more archaic in form and feeling than that of Hippolytus, which is thoroughly Hellenistic. An exhaustive comparative study has led L. Bouyer also to the 'same conclusion'. It (Liturgy of Hippolytus) actually manifests its relatively late origin. Addai and Mari is an archaic formula of indispensable authenticity." Because of its Semitic origin, its simplicity, brevity and the absence of a skilful theology, B. Botte

thinks that it originated in the third century. From the passages collected from the writings of St Ephrem, which seemed to him to contain the reminiscences of the liturgy of Addai and Mari, Probst concludes that the entire liturgy was known to St. Ephrem. Although it is not known exactly whether he was commenting on AM, he was certainly referring to the rite of the East Syrian Church which is comparable to its present rite.

The intrinsic evidence elucidated by the studies of the various eminent liturgists are corroborated by the memorable tradition among the East Syrians to which the Arabic Nomocanon of Abdulfaraj Ibn At Tayyib (+1048) gave expression: "The Quddasa of the Apostles was composed by Addai and Mari." The very title of the anaphora as cited by Renaudot reads: "Liturgia Beatorum Apostolorum composita a S. Addeo et Mari Orientalium Doctoribus."

Liturgiologists generally admit that the anaphora of Addai and Mari originated at least in the second century. It is noteworthy that the original form of the anaphora of Addai and Mari and the Didache have the same structure and theme, and therefore, one cannot exclude the possibility that as Didache, the anaphora was also written in the first century. If so, it is possible that it was used here from that period onwards.

Various documentary evidences regarding the presence of the East Syrian bishops in Malabar from the fourth century onwards constitute an indirect proof for the use of the liturgy from that period onwards. Because of the lack of evidence for the presence of the East Syrian bishops here before that period one cannot argue that the hierarchical relation began, and the liturgy was

introduced only in the fourth century. Even before the establishment of the hierarchical relation with the Mesopotamian church, this liturgy could be made available here as soon as it took definite shape there because there existed communication means because of the constant commercial relations between the two regions.

This liturgy was, until quite recently never taken to be foreign. It is indeed the common heritage of all the churches of St. Thomas. It is natural to think that the same liturgy which was used in other East Syrian churches existed here too, perhaps in an undeveloped form, because the rudiments of this liturgy were given in all these regions by St. Thomas himself. Therefore the Malabar Church in accepting the Chaldean liturgy was not receiving a new liturgy but the same liturgy, which they had been using here in a more developed form. The awareness that these churches owed faith to the same Apostle might have inspired them to organize themselves as one church under a common head in the person of the East Syrian Patriarch. This liturgy which originated from St. Thomas, and was used by all these churches became the official liturgy but the one which we were using from the very origin of the church here.

Place of its origin

Edessa which was the centre of Semitic thought and East Syrian tradition is held to be the birth-place of the anaphora of Addai and Mari. The people spoke syriac and were least affected by Hellenization. As Fortescue affirms, the first converts were the members of the Jewish community in Edessa, It was a Jewish church. Since it was situated on the main caravan route between the Armenian mountains and the great desert to the south

there was ample facility to maintain close contact with Palestine and especially with Jerusalem that was the religious and cultural centre of the Jews.

Theories of later origin

Although A. Raes holds the fifth century origin of the anaphora, he fails to put forward arguments in support of his conclusion.

Another important theory is that of B. Jonas who holds that three anaphoras are the different versions of the original anaphora of Nestorius. But he is supported neither by documentary or traditional evidence nor by other liturgiologists. One of his weaknesses is to interpret documentary evidence against the explicit sense. In short, the attempt to prove the later origin of AM is not strong enough to challenge the well-founded tradition regarding the very early origin of AM.

The Evolution of the structure of the Qurbana

The actual text of the anaphora of Addai and Mari is the result of a long process of evolution in which the original structure of the anaphora was subjected, at different times, to additions and modifications. There has been an attempt to examine the antiquity of the prayers of later origin and thus to trace back to its possible earlier stratum with the help of available manuscripts and the ancient commentaries. Since the commentaries do not fully represent the liturgical texts, they are of little value in identifying the prayers of the present Qurbana. However, it is beyond dispute that their prayers closely resemble those of the present text both in content and wording. Since the available documents

do not permit us to go beyond the time of Narsai, we can only hypothesize as to the still earlier antiquity of the prayers and the rites of the first g'hantha and the post-anaphora which are supposed to be later in origin than the prayers of the anaphora. The investigation of the early structure and the theology of the anaphora proper shows that even these commentators offer little help. They simply mention the epiclesis immediately after the description of the solemn entrance to the altar and sanctus. Since the whole Eucharistic prayer was said by the celebrant inaudibly, owing probably to arcane discipline, the commentators might have thought it unnecessary to explain these prayers to the people. Therefore, we must here depend on various hypotheses proposed by various scholars concerning the original form of the anaphora. Special attention will be given to the problem of the absence of the IN² in the earlier texts of the anaphora and the theological relations between the IN and the epiclesis. Though each theory is based on some hypothesis, it is of great benefit in revealing some aspect of the enigma of the anaphora and therefore, is worthy of examination. But it must be admitted that each conclusion drawn from such hypotheses, however plausible it is in itself, is doomed to remain always as hypothesis due to the lack of written documents supporting the speculations.

We give below the structure of the nonrestored and the restored Taksas:

<i>Nonrestored Taksa</i>	<i>Restored Taksa</i>
1. II G'hantha (praise and thanks-giving)	1. II G'hantha
2. Sanctus	2. Sanctus
3. III G'hantha (thanksgiving for favours)	3. G'hantha
4. Doxology I	10. The words of institution
5. Kussapa of intercession (Petitions for the church)	7. Anamnesis
6. IV G'hantha	9. Doxology II
7. a. Commemorations of Fathers and ourselves.	5. Kussapa of intercession
b. Petitions for peace and tranquility	
c. petition for the whole church	6. IV G'hantha
7. Anamnesis	8. Epiclesis
8. Epiclesis	4. Doxology I
9. Doxology II	
10. The words of Institution	

Sanctus

It is interesting to observe that Cyrus of Edessa, a disciple of Mar Abba and a famous professor of the theological school of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, gives, in his "The Cause of the Pasch," a eucharistic prayer uninterrupted by "sanctus". This leads to the conclusion that Cyrus knew anaphoras without the "sanctus" which, therefore, were not introduced into the Chaldean rite until the middle of the sixth century. Macomber holds that its insertion probably antedates the Chaldean synod

of the catholicos Isaac of 410. It may go back to the sixth or the seventh century, that is, to the liturgical reform of Mar Abha who is said to have introduced into the Chaldean Church the anaphoras of Theodore and of Nestorius which contained the "sanctus" in their original form. Perhaps, too, it goes, back to the time of Iso yabh III (647-650/1 to 657/58) who is supposed to have revised the anaphora of Addai and Mari.

For Dix, the phrase "came and cometh" in the benediction of Addai and Mari is found also in the Syriac, St. James, and this relation gives a clue as to whence this passage was borrowed. According to Ligier, it is the oldest element to be inserted into the anaphora in the East and owes its origin to the Jewish Qeduscha. If Ligier's statement that the "sanctus" of St. James anaphora evokes that of the yotzer is associated with the view of Pitt that the "sanctus" was the original Antiochean doxology, then the "sanctus" springs indirectly from the Jewish Qeduscha. In short, the liturgists almost unanimously hold that para. 2 (sanctus) is an early addition to the anaphora.

Intercession

As for the prayer of intercession, it has two parts: kussapa of intercession and the fourth g'hantha. It is evident that the former part being a kussapa is of later insertion.

Fourth G'hantha

Liturgiologists in general believe that the fourth g'hantha in its reconstructed form belongs to the original structure of the anaphora. He has reconstructed thus: make a good and acceptable memory of all the right

and just fathers who were pleasing before you, in commemoration of thy body and blood which we offer to you on thy holy altar as he has taught us: prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, doctors..."

Epiclesis

It is unanimously admitted that epiclesis belongs to the earliest stratum. Even those who excised it from its traditional position between the anamnesis and the doxology did not deny the antiquity of the epiclesis.

Anamnesis

As to its location in the anaphoras, it adheres to the IN as in the restored Qurbana and in the liturgy of Theodore. However as in the following table indicates, it is separated from the IN in all the available versions of the East Syrian and the Malabar versions of AM as well as in Nestorius.

<i>AM</i>	<i>Theodore</i>	<i>Nestorius</i>
(Institution)	Institution	Institution
Doxology	Doxology	Doxology
.....	Anamnesis	
"In your hearts"	"In your hearts"	"In your hearts"
Kussapa	Kussapa	Kussapa
Intercession	Thanksgiving	Anamnesis
Anamnesis	Intercession	Intercession
Epiclesis	Epiclesis	

Since the position of the anamnesis in the restored Qurbana is a peculiarity in comparison with all the other available versions it is well to examine the sequence of ideas in the nonrestored Qurbana in order to see whether this transposition is justifiable. The anamnesis reads

thus: "And we also, O Lord, Thy weak, frail and miserable servants, who are gathered together in Thy name..."

"We" here includes priest and the assembly as it means in the third g'hantha where the same usage occurs "and we also Thy weak, frail and miserable servants." "We" has the same meaning also in the fourth g'hantha. Thus the whole usage, "and we also", seems to refer immediately to the command of Christ, "as you taught us", and to the oblation of Christ, "in commemoration of Thy body and blood".

Taken in this context 'And we also' has then a double meaning according to L. Ligier. And we from our part remember Thy command and "we again" offer this oblation in commemoration of Thy body and blood.

The preceding G'hantha ("You, O Lord"), which deals with the remembrance which God makes, is related here to the anamnesis which "we" make. Thus two commemorations—that which God is requested to make and that which we make—are in agreement. This sequence of ideas is clearer if a study is made of Sarrar in which "You O Lord", is immediately followed by "we remember". "who are gathered together in Thy name" can be referred to the preceding one "as you taught us" which alludes to the command of Christ to make His anamnesis (1 Co. II, 24; Lk 12, 19) or to the promise of Christ, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, I shall be there with them" (Mt 18, 20). Further, one can notice the proximity of the anamnesis to the epiclesis. How can it be explained? In Mt 18, 21 Christ desires that the disciples should gather together to invoke His name. It is possible to conclude from the Christological character of the preceding prayer that the epiclesis is addressed to the Son that His Spirit may be

made present, "Let Your Holy Spirit come". If I Cor: 11: 24 and Mt 18, 20 are joined together, that is, the command to make His memorial and the precept to gather together to invoke His name, the Chaldean liturgy here celebrates His Memorial together with the invocation of Him. Thus, the celebration of His memorial is closely connected with the invocation of Christ's name and the desire for His spiritual and sacramental presence. In this context epiclesis can mean the invocation of Christ or a petition for His coming through the spirit who effected His incarnation and resurrection.

From what has been said thus far, it is obvious that the position of anamnesis between the fourth g'hantha and the epiclesis can be theologically explained. If a similar prayer at the beginning of the epiclesis of the anaphora of Nestorius is observed and the coherence ideas between the prayers in the apostles is admitted, of the position of "And we also" between the fourth g'hantha and the epiclesis cannot be considered as a misplacing. Fr. Raes even qualifies it as a preparation for the epiclesis. Although it is quite logical that anamnesis immediately follows the IN and is in conformity with the structure of most anaphoras, this sequence need not be taken as a rule in the East Syrian liturgy. Even if the intercession and the fourth g'hantha are of later origin, they are so composed that there is a strict coherence of ideas. Besides, there is no single example in any version of AM in which anamnesis immediately follows that IN except in the restored Qurbana. The Homily of Narsai, which is the oldest known commentary on the East Syrian Liturgy, follows the order: third g'hantha with doxology, account of the Last Supper, Kussapa of intercession, anamnesis and epiclesis with doxology.

In the restored Qurbana the IN and the anamnesis follow thus: "And when you are gathered together in My name, do what I have done in memory of Me." "And we also. O Lord, " How to explain "and we also"? This may mean "you asked your disciples to do this. And now we also accomplish it". It seems that the connection between them is so artificial that an interpretation is necessary to understand the sequence of ideas because "and we also" was originally meant to join the anamnesis with the preceding g'hantha and not with the Institution words. Therefore, Taksa 68 has changed it into: "O my Lord, these weak, frail, and miserable servants who are gathered....". Even in the anaphora of Nestorius the beginning of the epiclesis, which resembles the beginning of anamnesis in AM, is "we therefore O Lord". These beginnings of the anaphora of Nestorius and of the anaphora of Theodore are preferable to this obscure phrase", and we also".

Restore the original structure

There is no proof that the present structure is the original one, because even Narsai, who is the oldest commentator, follows the traditional order: third g'hantha, doxology, account of the Last Supper, intercession, anamnesis, epiclesis and doxology. It is not doing justice to the Qurbana to make it suit our presupposition through the restructuring of it without even taking into account its independent development and the sequence of ideas between its different parts. The change of structure signifies also the change of liturgical theology. We have also endeavoured to demonstrate that the traditional structure is well explicable with due sequence of ideas.

Nobody has succeeded in disproving the theory of Engberding that the "and we also" (anamnesis) was

originally the prayer of intercession and that it was never meant to be anamnesis.

It seems to be impossible to prove that the words of institution belonged to the original structure of the anaphora. It is believed that the anaphora was modelled on the paschal form of the Birkat Ha Mazon. The themes and the order of the prayers in AM correspond exactly to the three pericopes of the Birkat Ha Mazon: praise of God the creator, thanksgiving and supplication-memorial. The second and third pericopes of the Birkat Ha Mazon can take embolisms. On the day of Pasch the third pericope is enriched by the verse of the cup of Elia. It seems to be the origin of Epiclesis. IN could be added to the second or third pericope as embolism.

Three stages of development

There are three stages in the evolution of AM. First, according to the consecratory nature of the Jewish berakoth, the whole prayer was considered consecratory in the first centuries.

Second, the consecration is completed at the epiclesis which is indispensably preceded by the prayer "and we also" having an allusive reference to the Last Supper which is equivalent to the IN in other anaphoras. The controversial question about the relationship between the Narrative and the epiclesis hardly concerns the East Syrians. It is possible that the AM never had the IN and that in this tradition the change of the elements was attributed to the Holy Spirit's intervention. In later authors IN and epiclesis are juxtaposed suggesting a double consecration. The prevailing tendency of later Nestorian writers is to see in the epiclesis the com-

pletion of the Eucharistic mystery. The East Syrians ascribe the consecration to the work of the Holy Spirit who descends on the offering at the invocation of the priest, whose role in the eucharist is that of a divinely appointed mediator.

Third, catholic theologians in general, under the influence of the scholastic theology and of the teaching of the Roman Church, hold that the mysterious change happens with the recitation of IN. The epiclesis is considered as a prayer to the Holy Spirit applying the fruits of the Eucharist to the faithful in the Holy Communion. In order to explain this difference, Schillebeeckx's theory that the church can determine the matter and form of the sacrament without changing the substance of the sacrament is a very plausible hypothesis to explain the change of views regarding the moment of consecration.

1. AM = Anaphora of Addai and Mari
2. IN = Institution Narrative

11. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SYRO-MALABAR QURBANA

Thomas Mannooramparampil

Different forms

The subject for our discussion is the structure of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana. The very title needs clarification because, according to the restored rite, there are different forms of celebrating it: the most solemn form or Raza, the solemn form, the simple form besides the pontifical Qurbana and the concelebration.

1. The most solemn form or Raza which has no equivalent in the Latin rite has the complete structure of the East Syrian Qurbana. An Archdeacon, two deacons, two other clerics, a thurifer and a trained choir are needed to assist the celebrant in it. All the ministers except the Archdeacon can be substituted by the trained laymen (Ordo 30-37).

2. The order of the Pontifical Qurbana is the same as that of Raza except that, besides the Archdeacon another priest may also assist the bishop by singing hymns and certain orations and even by reading the Gospel. The bishop uses the crown, pastoral staff and the hand-cross (Ordo 38-39).

3. The solemn form which can be compared to the solemn hymn Mass of the Latin rite is usually celebrated

on Sundays and feast days. It needs two deacons, a thurifer, other ministers according to the need and circumstances, and a trained choir as in Raza (Ordo 8-24).

4. The simple form is celebrated by one priest, at least with the help of one minister. The use of incense is optional and certain prayers which are in other forms may be omitted or abbreviated according to the directions given in the Ordo p. 25-29.

Simple form cannot be regarded as the basic text as the 1983 Roman document says: "the universal, age-old Eastern practice has always been that the approved official text of the liturgy be based on the solemn form." In the case of the Syro-Malabar liturgy, the official basic text should be Raza which can be shortened to suit the less simple and simple forms of celebration without doing violence to the genius, theology and spirituality of the original form. Therefore, we try to analyze here the structure of Raza.

Two sections

The Syro-Malabar Qurbana just like any other Eucharistic service has two main sections, namely, the liturgy of the Catechumens and that of the faithful.

1. The first part from *pugdanakon* till the dismissal service is called the liturgy of the Catechumens since it was intended to instruct and prepare those who wanted to receive baptism. It is regarded as the didactic part of the Qurbana, since the baptized faithful are also present at the assembly to hear the word of God and to receive religious instruction.

The second part beginning from the rite of prostration in Raza till the huttama or final blessing is called

the liturgy of the faithful since the liturgical law permits only the baptized to be admitted to it.

Another important thing to note is that the different elements of the Qurbana are so arranged as to commemorate and represent symbolically all the important salvific events of Christ's life.

In this paper, I have no intention of entering into the intricacies and problems regarding the structure.

I. The first part is the enarxis which is conducted as a preparation for the entrance of the clergy to the bema. Its aim is to create a good disposition in the congregation to hear the word of God.

1. The present Qurbana begins with the sign of the cross and a Trinitarian formula. But 1983 document says: "There should not be a sign of the cross. It is a latinization. The fact that the Chaldeans, Syro-Malabarians and the Nestorians begin it with the sign of the cross would indicate an ancient practice received from tradition. But it is a relatively late innovation in these rites. All the manuscripts and sources except the Chaldean and Malabar ones of the Roman-type, that is, those that follow the Roman editions of 1767 and 1774 keep complete silence on it. The first indication of its introduction is Paris 90 (1689 A. D.), one of the so-called Chaldean MSS of really Malabarese origin. The sign of the cross first appeared in the 1774 Taksa Ordo Celebrationis and the restored Qurbana of 1957, 1960 and 1962 prescribe the signing from right to left. This was the custom not only among the Orientals but also among the latins till the time of Pope Pius V. The Latins changed it and influenced many Orientals to imitate them. Even the latins introduced the Trinitarian formula only in the 15th century as an introduction to the Mass.

2. The presentation of the theme and intentions at the beginning of the Qurbana is against the spirit and tradition of our liturgy. There is only one theme in the Qurbana: Jesus Christ dead and risen for our salvation. It is to him we turn our hearts at the beginning when we say: "Glory to God in the highest". The proper place to express our private intentions is the diptychs which is the prayer for the living and the dead.

3. The restored Qurbana of 1957 and 1960 begins with *Puqdanakon* (your commandment) which is an official formula requesting the permission of the community to begin the Qurbana, and its response of the community *Puqodane da' Misha* (the commandment of Christ). The Roman documents insist to retain it specifying that it is to be chanted.

It is found also in the Chaldean documents like Paris 90 (1689 A. D.), Vat. Syr. 290 (1757 A. D.) Leidan Or. 1215 (1720 A. D.) and in the East Syrian daily office edited by Maclean in p. 16, 20, 108 and 172. They indicate that, although it is not given now in the present Chaldean and Nestorian Taksas, it was once in use there.

4. This beginning with "glory to God in the highest" (Lk 2:14) is theologically very sound because it reminds us that the aim of the Qurbana is the glorification of God and the seeking of peace in mankind. This hymn sung by the angelic choir at the birth of Christ draws our attention to the events connected with the Nativity of Christ. By singing it, the community enjoys the foretaste of the heavenly liturgy in which the angels sing perpetually the divine praise. By repeating it thrice glory is rendered to the divine persons who are involved in the incarnation and nativity.

5. *Our Father* with the Qanona borrowed from sanctus was introduced by Patr. Timothy I (+ 829). Man who has become the son of God through the divine incarnation has now become worthy to call God 'Father'. It is a direct human response to the invitation extended to man to glorify God.

6. *Marmitha*, which is a set of three psalms was recited while the congregation was waiting for the main celebrant to come. It depicts the O. T. background of the incarnation with the emphasis on the special phase of the mystery celebrated on that day.

7. *Aqgapta* which means addition, sequence or supplement, is an entrance versicle. It is more ancient than *Marmitha*, signalling the entrance of the main celebrant to the sanctuary in order to begin the celebration.

8. Anthem of the sanctuary (onitha d' Qanke) was probably sung while the celebrant entered the sanctuary. The first part of it recalls the mystery celebrated during the liturgical season and the second part is about the cross probably because the cross was venerated during the chant. The hymns in the Qurbana are in the antiphonal form. Since this traditional form is neglected in 1981 text, 1983 text has made it obligatory.

9. The celebrant then blesses the incense. Incensing is a rite of purification which sanctifies the community and the place of worship. It seeks the divine benevolence through the pardon of sins.

10. When the procession to the bema begins, the veil of the sanctuary is drawn aside and the choir bigens the lakumara which symbolizes the manifestation

of our Lord at Jordan. The priest who proceeds to bema indicates the beginning of His public life. G. Qatraya sees in it the confession of the Apostles by which, in the person of all, Simon said: "You are Christ, the son of God." It is a resurrection hymn, which introduces the community to the essential theme of the celebration. The procession to bema is very rich in symbolism. The going out of the cross means the going out of Jesus to wilderness to fight with Satan. The raising up of the cross on the bema is the mystery of the frequent going up of Jesus to Jerusalem accompanied by his disciples.

Enarxis which ends with the lakumara hymn is a preparation for the liturgy of the word. It introduces the congregation to the divine dispensation and to the presence of God the redeemer. It invites us to have the disposition of thanksgiving for Christ's salvation and hope of future bliss. The cross on the bema symbolizes the presence of Christ among the people; the two candles symbolize the two Testaments; the incense symbolizes Christ's sweetness. The congregation is now ready to hear the word of God.

II. Liturgy of the Word

In the liturgy of the Word the redemptive mysteries which are reenacted in the Qurbana are now proclaimed to the community. It is Christ who speaks to us through the Holy Gospel. This section symbolizes the public life of Christ.

1. *Trisagion*. It is proper to begin the liturgy of the Word with an angelic hymn. Isoyahb I regards it as the definition of God. "Immortal" shows what God is not while "holy" and "mighty" indicate what God is. If we relate it with the invitation, "praise the living God", it

invokes God who is immortal, holy and mighty. Qatraya says that it represents the hymn of angels who accompanied our Lord during His earthly life. The literary origin of Trisagion is the vision of Isaiah 6:3. As Isaiah understood his unworthiness and sinfulness in the vision, man becomes aware of his sinfulness and God's holiness when he chants this hymn. It also expresses the readiness of the liturgical assembly to listen to the revealed word of God.

2. The O. T. readings from the books of law and the prophets are called Qeryane. They represent the first phase of the divine dispensation. Qatraya says that they signify the arguments which our Lord put forward from Moses and the prophets to confirm His teaching.

3. *Surraya* which is sung after the Qeryane is a responsorial psalm. It is an expression of our response to the Word of God that has been proclaimed. George of Arbel claims that it reminds the prophecy of Daniel regarding the N. T. Qatraya sees it as the symbol of the hymn sung by the people as a response to the preaching of John the Baptist concerning the pardon of sins and the nearness of the kingdom of God.

4. *Slotha*: an introductory prayer before the engartha, in which God is requested to grand help in order to understand and assimilate the word of God. The first prayer shows that we are hearing the teaching of our Lord. The second which deals with the dispensation may suit the O. T.

5. *Turgama* that follows is an explanation of the engartha (epistle) and exhorts the faithful to listen to it fruitfully. The anonymous author says that the epistle

represents the period between the birth of John the Baptist and his appearance at Jordan.

6. *Sliha*: epistle

7. *Zummara*: which is chanted after the engartha consists of four to eight versicles from a psalm that is appropriate to the day or season. It is rather a preparation for the Gospel than a reaction to the epistle. George of Arbel says that it symbolizes the preaching of John the Baptist. For Qatraya, it reminds us of the hymn sung by the children and the disciples on palm Sunday.

8. Prayer before the evangelion: The priest blesses the incense with the respective prayer. When he reaches the door of the sanctuary he says a prayer to Christ, the light. When he comes out of the sanctuary he requests the Holy Trinity to enlighten us and grant us to be obedient to the word. He comes in procession to the Bema.

9. The old Malabar Taksa indicates the chanting of one onitha during the procession of the Gospel. It seems to be a hymn which was merely added to zummara. The procession to the bema symbolizes the appearance of Christ at Jordan. Going to bema symbolizes the Christ's going to Jerusalem to accomplish His redemptive design.

10. *Turgama*: before the Gospel explains the essence of the Gospel passage.

11. *The reading of the Gospel* (evangelion) is the mystery of the reply of our Lord to the scribes and pharisees and of the words which our Lord said to the Jews before He suffered. According to George of Arbel, it symbolizes the redemptive plan accomplished in

Christ, and his teaching after His baptism. The incensing during the Gospel reading symbolizes the constant response of the people to the call of God, proclaimed in the Gospel.

After the evangelion the cross and the Gospel are put back in their respective places. As 1983 document says, the place of honour for the Gospel is the altar and nowhere else in the Christian East. Again, it is the gospel lectionary not the Bible, which is read and to which reverence is given as the image of Christ among us in the liturgy of the Word. Unfortunately, we do not have yet the Gospel lectionary.

12. *Onitha d'evangelion*: When the congregation returns to the church from Bethslota, it is sung.

13 *Homily*: is an integral part of the Sunday liturgy. It was the bishop himself who delivered it, and he began it with the liturgical salutation, "peace to all" which is now usually omitted.

14. What comes next is the *karo-zutha* which is the response of the community to the word of God. As regards its position, it should correspond to the ancient prayer for the catechumens and penitents, found in the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions. The first part is composed of 13 short intentions. The second part is the angel of peace litany common to several Eastern rites. In the Chaldean solemn Qurbana it is preceded by another set of intentions for the various categories of people to each of which people reply. "Amen". 1983 document says that the *karo-zutha* may not be replaced by other formulae. But other petitions for special occasions, formulated in the *karo-zutha* style may be added to the fixed petitions which express the

general intentions of the whole Church. These are to be submitted to the priest before the liturgy. Spontaneous petitions for the congregation are to be avoided. Spontaneous prayers are not admitted in the Qurbana (cfr. p. 6). Karozutha is concluded with a slotha asking God to grant us His grace and to remit our sins.

15. *Prayer of the imposition of hands*: a special blessing imparted to the catechumens before their dismissal. Now it is an invocation on the faithful.

16. *Dismissal*: The unbaptized, unsigned and those who for some reasons cannot communicate in the Eucharist are sent out of the Church before the anaphora begins. A special blessing is imparted to them before their dismissal. Now it is an invocation on the faithful.

There is a tendency to omit this dismissal service even from the Taksa. Therefore, the 1983 document prescribes: The dismissal of the catechumens, because of the theological significance ought to be retained, with a rubric specifying its use if there are catechumens present at the liturgy. when there are no catechumens present, or if it is not advisable to use a formula of dismissal, an alternative formula, in positive key, could be used to mark the liturgical moment”.

III. The preanaphora

It is a preparatory ceremony of the Eucharistic rite proper which has two parts. The first is material preparation comprising of the preparation of gifts, transfer, deposition and covering of gifts. It is done by the deacon or the concelebrants. The second part is the spiritual preparation which comprises washing of the hands, access to the sanctuary, creed, deacon's proclamation, access to the altar, request for prayer, G'hantha I, kiss of peace,

diptychs, karo-zutha, uncovering of the gifts and incensation of gifts.

If there is only one priest the preparation of gifts can be done before the liturgy begins, or during the anthem of the mysteries. After washing his hands the celebrant enters the sanctuary, performs the preparation, transfer and the deposition of gifts.

OR

1. The celebrant enters the sanctuary at Karozutha II to prepare the gifts.

2. return for the prayers that conclude the intercession.

3. enter the sanctuary entrance for the transfer of gifts.

4. return to the sanctuary entrance to perform the rite of entrance into the sanctuary.

When there are other deacons or priests, the preparation and transfer are performed without the intervention of the main celebrant who will enter the sanctuary at the entrance to the sanctuary.

- a) Preparation of gifts during the Karozutha II by deacons.
- b) Main celebrant says the concluding prayer of the karo-zutha.
- c) He washes his hands.
- d) The choir sings the onitha d'Raze.
- e) The deacons or priests perform the transfer of gifts.

1. In Raza, the pre-anaphora begins with the rite of prostration. Thus the priest attributes the who

mystery of sanctifying the people's offerings to the work of the holy spirit.

2. The pre-anaphora generally begins with the anthem of the mysteries. It is a variable hymn, sung during the transfer of gifts. The theme is the Eucharist; sometimes also the liturgical festivity. In 1968 text it comes within the preanaphora, as is shown below:

1962	1968
preparation	creed
transfer	entrance
creed	preparation, onitha D'Raze
entrance	transfer
anaphora	anaphora

3. Entrance to the sanctuary is the fundamental and concluding part of the preanaphora in the eastern rites. But 1968 text has it before the preparation of gifts.

4. It is a very ancient custom to recite the creed before the beginning of the anaphora. The creed is misplaced in 1968 text.

5. The Nicene-constantinopolitan creed is the only one which was ever used in our church and in all non-latinized Oriental churches. Now it has been practically omitted after the introduction of the Apostle's creed which began to be used in the Latin Church only in the 12th century.

6. Bread and wine are to be prepared on Bethgazas and never, under any circumstance on the altar. If there are no Bethgazas, they are to be provided soon.

7. There is no offertory procession of the faithful. In the whole history of the Eastern churches, the gifts

are always transferred to the altar by deacons or other presbyters, but never by the laity. 1983 document holds that this tradition is to be maintained without change.

8. The first part of the anthem of the mysteries (onitha d,Raze) is variable and the second part is inva-riable. They are sung continuously without interruption.

9. Washing of hands before the transfer of gifts is a symbol of purification.

10. The transfer and deposition of gifts symbolize Christ's death. Narsai says: "At this hour let us see Jesus who is being led to death on our account. On the paten and in the cup He goes forth with the deacons to suffer. A symbol of His death these deacons bear upon their hands; and when they have set it on the altar and covered it they typify His burial".

IV The anaphora

The restored Qurbana of 1957 contains three anaphoras. The anaphora of Theodore is used from the period of annunciation till the palm sunday. The anaphora of the Apostles from Easter till Subbara (annunciation). The anaphora of Nestorius is used only five times: in Epiphany, the feast of St. John the Baptist, the feast of Greek doctors, Wednesday of Rogations, and Holy Thursday. The anaphora of Theodore and Nestorius are yet to be introduced into use. The anaphora of Addai and Mari is divided into four sections or G'hantha cycles and each cycle comprises a kussapa, a G'hantha and a qanona. Kussapa is a devotional prayer of the celebrant, G'hantha is a prayer of inclination recited in a low voice. Qanona is a doxological ecphonesis to the G'hantha.

First G'hantha cycle

1. *Kussapa* I appears just before the title of the anaphora. In 1968 text it has become the prayer for the entrance to the sanctuary. It is a supplication of the celebrant arising out of the awareness of his own sins which is a necessary condition to render praise and thanks.

2. *G'hantha* I is a personal prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the celebrant himself.

3. *Qanona* is an invitation to praise.

4. *The exchange of peace*, which is performed in accordance with the command of Christ in Mt 5:23 is a very ancient custom because it is found in the fourth century Apostolic Constitutions. Sacrifice requires the disposition of love, unity and reconciliation.

5. *Diptychs*, which is read during the exchange of peace, is the list of the names of the living and the dead, signifying that they are profited by the oblation.

6. *The admonition of the deacon* creates a suitable attitude for the anaphora: prayer, standing fairly, in silence and fear etc.

7. *The unveiling of the mysteries* symbolizes the removal of stone from the tomb of Christ.

8. The incensing is a symbol of purification and adoration. It symbolizes the perfume with which the Body of our Saviour was emblamed.

Second G'hantha cycle

1. *The pauline Salutation* throws light on the Trinitarian significance of the eucharistic prayer and points to the derived fruit of it: the grace of our Lord,

the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (cfr. 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor 16:20-23).

2. *Dialogue prayer*. In the early church, immediately after the agape the faithful were invited to take part in the eucharist. This invitation evolved itself to be the dialogue prayer. The divine plan of salvation, the priest as the mediator, the proper function of the Holy Spirit etc. are its principal themes.

3. *Kussapa II*. A penitential prayer to remind the community of its fallen state and the need for redemption.

4. *G'hantha II*. Remembering the creative action of the Father the community gives thanks and praise.

5. *Qanona - sanctus*. It expresses the angelic hymn according to the vision of Isaiah and is the natural outcome of the awareness of God's holiness and of the great things which He has accomplished for men.

Third G'hantha cycle

1. *Kussapa III*. The first part is an embolism of sanctus and applies it to the Holy Trinity, to the celebrant and to the participants. The second part results from the awareness of one's sinfulness. In response to the request of the celebrant, the community prays for him in the third part.

2. *G'hantha III*. emphasizes the redemptive work of Christ and enumerates the salvific fruits: you have raised our lowliness, lifted us up after our fall, given us life when we were dead, forgiven our offences etc.

3. *The words of Institution*, symbolizes the death of Christ as the very opening words indicate: "We commemorate O Lord, the passion of your son". The reason why there was no elevation at this time is that bread

and wine symbolize the death of Christ. Elevation symbolizes the resurrection.

4. *Anamnesis* shows that in obedience to the command of Christ this sacrifice is offered. It is not only a memorial but also a celebration: "We commemorate and celebrate this mystery".

Fourth G'hantha cycle

1. *The announcement of the deacon* reminds the community of the awful nature of the sacrifice and the need for prayer. It is followed by a *Qulasa*.

2. *Kussapa IV* (the great intercession) is a very ancient element in the anaphora as it is found in the Apostolic Constitutions. Following the advice of St Paul to pray for all (Ep. 6:15) the celebrant prays for all.

3. *G'hantha IV* remembers all those who, being associated with the holy altar, led a life of holiness. Sanctification is the work of the spirit. It leads to the epiclesis.

4. *Epiclesis* symbolizes the resurrection of Christ.

V. Postanaphora

1. *The Rite of reconciliation*. One of the important effects of the redemptive act of Christ is the reconciliation. That is why the rite of reconciliation follows the anaphora which reenacts the redemptive mystery of Christ

- a. The first penitential rite symbolizes the reconciliation between God and men.
 - i. Prayer to Christ, the king of peace.
 - ii. Psalms 51 and 123 constitute a request for personal purification and express the compunction of heart.

- iii. Incensing: It is a rite of reconciliation with some Malabar additions.
It symbolizes purification and propitiation.
- b. *Manual acts*
 - i. *Elevation*: The holy Eucharist is presented to the community before the fraction.
 - ii. *Fraction and consignation*. Fraction was considered even in the early centuries, as the symbol of the passion of Christ. 'Body broken for sins and blood shed for sins' are a common expression in the liturgy. For Theodore, fraction and consignation are the remembrance of the death of our Lord. This may be the reason why the rite of fraction is inserted within the rite of reconciliation.
- c. *The second penitential rite* symbolizes the reconciliation of men among themselves.
 - i. *Proclamation of the deacon*: a call to repentance.
 - ii. *Litanical prayer*: It symbolizes the reconciliation with one another. During the karo-zutha the priest recites, "blessed art thou...." because Christ has saved us from the power of darkness and led us to the kingdom of Christ and prays Him to let us communicate with purity and profit.
- iii. *Communion*. The Host is broken into several parts for its distribution in communion.
- iv. "Let us pray, peace with us" has a special sense of absolution.
- v. *Prayer of absolution*: as the conclusion of the rite of reconciliation.

2) *Rite of communion.*

1. *Our Father.* Having become the sons of God through the rite of reconciliation the worshippers have now made worthy to call God Father. It is the prayer of the Children of God. Timothy II sees it in the sense of preparation for communion.

2. *Peace.* The greeting of peace symbolizes the appearance of our Lord to the women and disciples.

3. *Holy to the holies.* The aim of the qurbana is the pardon of sins and union with God. The father who has pardoned our sins through the redemptive act of Christ, calls us to be in union with him. The first step for it is reconciliation. Once you have achieved it the next thing is the participation in the paschal meal. All those who have become holy through baptism (Ep. 2:46; Col 1:3-4; Ep. 1:13; Phil 3:12-14) can participate in it.

4. *D'hil-at:* (terrible canon). On major feast days of our Lord, namely, Nativity, Epiphany, Transfiguration, Holy Saturday, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost and the Finding of the cross, the celebrant comes down to bema and sings hymn together with the community, recalling the salvific event celebrated on that day.

5. *The acclamation of the deacon:* "Praise the living God" is a signal to begin the unnaya d-bem.

6. *Unnaya d-bem:* It is a refrain chanted from the bema during the communion of the celebrant and other priests.

7. *Bate:* an invitation to communion which varies according to sundays and feast days.

8. *Communion* of the celebrant and the clergy in the sanctuary.

9. Communion of the rest of the community: first priest, then clerics, men and women.

10. Purification of the sacred vessels and the accompanying prayers.

3) *Rite of thanksgiving*

a. To express thanks, the community sings the hymn of thanksgiving which is followed by the acclamation of the deacon and two sacerdotal prayers of thanksgiving.

2. *Our Father* as in the beginning

3. Huttama (final prayer of blessing): It is the concluding prayer of the Qurbana. It varies according to the spirit of the day or occasion.

4. *Farewell to the altar*. It explains the significance of the altar. It has been borrowed from the Maronite liturgy.

Ordinary and Propria

The prayers of the Qurbana can be divided into ordinary and variable prayers. The ordinary is the invariable part of the Qurbana.

1. There are several variable prayers which can make the divine service relevant to the particular spirit of the time. Supplementum prescribes the following prayers proper to each particular day in the sanctoral and temporal cycles: Marmitha, aqqapta, unnaya, onitha d'Qanke, two readings from the O. T., Surraya, Turgama before the engartha, engartha, zummara, turgama before the Gospel, Gospel, onitha d'evangelion, onitha d'Raze, terrible canon, onitha d'bem, onitha d'bate and karo-zutha.

2. There are other variable prayers which change according as they are weekdays, commemoration of the dead, feast day:

- prayer before marmitha
- prayer after the incensing
- prayer of the onitha d'Qanke
- prayer before the epistle
- introduction to our Father
- Tesbohta
- Sacerdotal thanksgiving
- Huttama

3. Kussapa was originally the private prayer of the celebrant and therefore could be composed so as to suit to the spirit of the day or to the particular occasion.

The composition of new prayers in the place of the given prayers and other variables will suit well to reflect the spirit of the day or of the particular occasion;

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12. LITURGICAL IDENTITY OF THE MALANKARA CHURCH

Louis Moolaveetil, O. I. C.

In the Decree on Ecumenism (Nos. 15 - 17) Vatican II gives the important factors that determine the identity of an individual Church. They are Sacred Liturgy, Spirituality, Theology and Discipline. Liturgy is the most important among them as other factors are related and dependent upon it. This study is centred on Liturgy: "Liturgical Identity of the Malankara Church".

In Greek the word Liturgy signifies any public cult. Thus in the Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians (Phil 2 : 17), liturgy stands for any oblation or offering given to God. In this sense, liturgy includes all the rites of the Church or all public cult performed in the name of the Church. That is why Pope Pius XII defines it thus "The sacred liturgy, therefore, constitutes the public worship, which our Redeemer, the head of the Church, offers the Heavenly Father and which the community of faithful Christians offers to its founder and through him to the eternal Father; and which, to put every thing briefly, constitutes the entire public worship of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, the head and also its members (AAS: Vol XXXIX, P. 528-529). It is in this sense that the word liturgy is used here, as it comprehends and constitutes all the public worship, ecclesiastical offices of the Malankara Church.

Malankara Church enjoys a liturgy that belongs to the Antiochian family. Jerusalem, Antioch and Edessa were the important centres of ancient Christianity in the East. Of these, though Jerusalem lost all its importance with the conquest of the city by the Romans in A. D. 70, soon it regained its importance because of its great dignity as the city of the Lord and of the Apostles. By the time of Cyril (387) certainly there was a flourishing church in Jerusalem. The liturgy originated in the city of Antioch gradually spread to Jerusalem where it was translated from Greek to Aramaic. The city of Edessa, a centre of Syriac language and culture, also played an important role in the formation of an Antiochian liturgy.

Although from the beginning we notice differences in the liturgical rites, we cannot speak of different rites as we mean today until the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century. It was during this period of peace in the church that we see the ecclesiastical organisations take shape and begin to appear as a recognised social reality. The different rites that appeared in their diversity in the 4th century continued to evolve up to the 13th century until we have them as they are today. The important liturgical families are Antiochian, Alexandrian, Byzantine, Armenian and Chaldean. More than 20 individual churches are grouped under these families.

Identity of the Malankara Church in its Liturgy

In the formation of particular liturgy two factors play the dominant role. They are 1) Apostolic Christ's experience 2) The socio-cultural influence of the people among whom the liturgy is developed.

Malankara liturgy, which is basically Antiochian, was formed on the Christ-experience of the Apostles James, Peter, Paul and John. It is practised in Malankara by the people, who are the Christ-experience of the Apostle Thomas, with variations and adaptations suitable to the Indian context. Hence the liturgy is called Syro-Malankara liturgy, as the Antiochian liturgy developed in Constantinople is called Byzantine. Thus the individuality or identity of the Malankara Liturgy is more consolidated on the facts that it enjoys the Christ-experience of many Apostles and is practised in Malankara in accordance with the faith experience and life situation of the Malankarites.

The individuality does not lose its perfection for the simple reason that it belongs to a liturgical family or it is shared by other individual churches. For example, the Coptic liturgy belongs to the Alexandrian family, but the liturgical identity of the Coptic church is never questioned; likewise the Malankara liturgy or any other particular liturgy that comes under one or the other families cannot be questioned. It is just like men sharing the same humanity, but each one being unique.

Malankara liturgy enjoys its identity or individuality, for (1) it was originated on Apostolic Christ-experience. In fact, it enjoys plurality in Apostolic Christ-experience. Its late introduction (17th century) in no way affects its identity; it is also the case of the Syrian Catholics of Middle East, whose liturgical identity is always acknowledged.

2) It is unique in its genius and temperament. The kernel of Malankara liturgy, as of all Christian Liturgies, is derived from the prescriptions of Our Lord and Apostles. There is also a lot of Jewish influence. Apart

from all these, Malankara Liturgy is unique which is evident in itself: it has its own patrimony, its own heritage. It has its own calendar with its feasts and fasts, its own saints and shrines foster particular devotion to Mary and special saints in its own ways in the Malankara background ...

3) It is a liturgy adapted to the life situation of the people; social and cultural influences are notable; 'Talikettu', 'Mantrakodi', 'Customary services for the departed', 'Adimavaikal', etc. Use of indigenous languages in the liturgy makes the participants feel at home, which certainly helps for their spiritual growth; use of 'Muthukuda', 'Drums', 'Pantham' (indigenous lamp), 'Fire Works', etc. in the liturgical procession is peculiar to the Malankara Liturgy. Priest's blessing with imposition of hands, Kissing the ground with forehead, salutation by profound bow with joining hands are Malankara liturgical acts. All these and such similar ones, not only contribute to the formation of a specific liturgy, but also animate the internal disposition its participants. One can perceive this better only through personal life and experience in the liturgy itself.

Rome Acknowledges the Liturgical Identity of the Malankara Church

This is evident from the various declarations of the Holy See:- In his first memorandum to Rome seeking reunion with the Catholic Church, Mar Ivanios wanted to make it clear that Malankara Church desires a unity "Preserving their ancient rites and rituals" (AAT, 1926/A/10). Mar Ivanios never intended a Catholic reunion losing the liturgical traditions and thereby the liturgical identity of his church. Rome's reaction was

positive. For, in the reply (to the first memorandum) the Holy See explains the Roman Policy: "In readmitting separated Christians to unity, the Roman Pontiffs with vigilant care have ever followed the policy of approving or permitting the retention of their rites" (AAT/1928/A/11).

This point is once again clarified in the reply of the Holy See sent through the Delegate Apostolic (on Aug. 5 1929), 'As regards rites:- the principle, on which the Holy See deals with the adherants of a historic rite, sanctions the retention of that rite on their return to Catholic unity. This principle will be applied to returning Jacobites "(AAT/1929/A/8). This assurance was a pre-requisite for Mar Ivanios and his group. By this assurance, Holy See made it clear that the individuality of the Malankara church in its liturgy will be acknowledged, if the reunion takes place. Again in the final declaration permitting the reunion, the Holy See kept its assurance in regard to the rites. For, the declaration states - "Assuring that the pure syrian rite of Antioch will be maintained "(AAT/1930/A/18). That is to say, through this declaration Rome affirms that the Syrian Rite of Antioch as practised in India or the liturgical traditions of the Syro-Malankarites, whose rite is of Syro-Antiochian origin will be strictly maintained. This is nothing else than the positive recognition of liturgical identity of the Malankara Church. This attitude of the Holy See is obvious when it says that Malankarites will not be confounded with the Syro-Malabarians, whose rite is of Syro-Chaldean origin" (AAT/1930/A/18). Hence the distinction 'Syro-Malankara Rite' and Syro-Malabar Rite'.

STATEMENT OF THE SEMINAR ON
 "THE IDENTITY OF THE
 CATHOLIC ORIENTALS OF INDIA"
 HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES
 OF THE PONTIFICAL ORIENTAL
 INSTITUTE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES OR
 PAURASTYA VIDYAPITHAM,
 VADAVATHOOR, KOTTAYAM (April 2-5, 1984)

1. Preamble

We the participants of the seminar which was meant for an indepth study to discover the Identity of the Catholic Orientals of India, Bishops, Priests, Religious, Seminarians and the Laity from different eparchies, seminaries, religious congregations and secular Institutes of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Church after three days of prayerful reflection and serious deliberation give expression to our findings, aspirations and recommendations. Ours was an effort to discover and appreciate our ecclesial identity and draw practical conclusions so as to help the members of our Churches to live an authentic ecclesial life.

2. Catholic Church: a Communion of Churches

The Church is a Communion of Individual Churches or Rites "which preserving the unity of faith and the unique divine constitution of the Universal Church, enjoy their own discipline, liturgical usage and theological and spiritual heritage" (LG 23). The Universal Church has no concrete existence apart from the Individual Churches. One belongs to the Catholic Church by necessarily belonging to an Individual Church. An individual Church

results from the verification of the apostolic Christ-experience in the life of a people, taking a specific form of life, worship, liturgy, spirituality and ecclesiastical discipline. In each individual Church, the mystery of the Church is immanent, and it is the communion of these individual Churches that we call 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" (OE 2). Therefore we belong to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, by becoming genuine members of our Individual Churches.

3. Church is essentially Missionary

It is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ which results in the formation of the Church (Mk 16:15-16 = Mt 28:18-20). The Gospel of Christ or the Word is embodied in the Church and the Church's mission is to proclaim this Word. The Church being in a state of Mission, "Evangelizing is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14).

4. Divine Word enshrined in the Ecclesial Traditions

The Divine Word or the Divine Tradition is enshrined in the Ecclesial Traditions, namely in the Liturgy, Theology, Spirituality and Discipline of the Individual Churches. "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, and which forms part of the divinely revealed

and undivided heritage of the Universal Church" (OE 1). Bible is not to be considered as exclusive but inclusive of the faith traditions of the Church. 'Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is committed to the Church' (D V 10). The Church can therefore fulfil her mission only if she remains authentic and faithful to its faith traditions. The Word or the Gospel to be proclaimed is the Word embodied in the life of the Church. Hence we realize that we are in duty bound to preserve, understand, appreciate and live the faith traditions of our own individual Churches. "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" (OE. 6).

5. The Thomas Christians of India

The Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches which trace back their origin to St Thomas the Apostle are Individual Churches having the same rights and obligations as the Latin Church to their identity to the full and to share their Christ-experience with their non-Christian brothers in India and abroad.

6. Present situation

We are painfully aware of the fact that at present there is a crisis for the Orientals of India in living their ecclesial identity in its fulness. This is especially true about the the Syro-Malabar Church.

This crisis is felt, first of all, in the areas of the pastoral care of our emigrants and evangelization of India. The rights and obligations that are inherent in our Church in this matter, as clearly stated in the official

documents of the Holy See are not recognized by our Latin Brethren in India.

7. Pastoral Care and Jurisdiction

Pastoral care of our faithful outside Kerala naturally demands jurisdiction. Authority in the Church is given by God in view of the ministry of the Word enshrined in the faith traditions of the Church. Since the most sublime expression of the Church as a community of faith is its liturgy, the liturgical head of the Church should also be the juridical head. This is the mind of the Church as expressed by Vat. II when it says: "For this reason it solemnly declares that the Churches of the East as much as those of the West, fully enjoy the rights and are in duty bound to rule themselves" (OE 5).

We feel deeply hurt by the total disregard from the part of the Latin hierarchs of a legitimate provision guaranteed by Vat. II.

8. Freedom for Evangelization

The individuality of a Church grows in as much as it deepens its Christ-experience and shares it with others, which is the very process of evangelization. The genuine growth of an Individual Church and evangelization go together. The present situation in which the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches are denied the freedom of evangelization outside Kerala certainly hinders the genuine growth of these Churches. Therefore we feel it urgent that these Churches be allowed freedom to evangelize in all the responsive areas of our country.

9. The Crisis : a challenge

The rights for pastoral care of emigrants and evangelization are denied to us under the pretext that we

do not have any specific identity at all. Though it is true that on account of the Latin domination we have lost our identity to a certain extent, it is no justification to say that we are not entitled to enjoy the freedom for pastoral care and evangelization. However, we feel that it is a *challenge* for us to make a concerted effort to discover and restore our ecclesial identity by means of an objective study of our liturgical and spiritual heritage, and a concrete plan of action in the field of ecclesial formation.

10. Ecclesial Formation

Ecclesial formation, aimed at integrating the individual into the life of the Church should be given to the various categories of the Community such as Priests, Religious, Seminarians and the Laity at the different stages of formation.

11. Catechetical Formation

We feel that the root cause of the situation is an inadequate catechetical formation. Catechesis as formation of faith should be based on one's own liturgy – leading one to that liturgy and drawing inspiration from the same, because liturgy is the most sublime expression of the faith of the Church. We recommend, therefore, that provision may be made for the proper liturgical formation of Catechism teachers, and revision of catechism texts accordingly.

12. Spiritual Formation

Every authentic Christian spirituality has to be ecclesial and sacramental. There is no authentic Christian life which is not attuned to the faith-experience of one's Individual Church. Since "liturgy is the summit toward

which the activity of the Church is directed and is at the same time the foundation from which all her power flows" (S C 10), our spirituality should be essentially a liturgical spirituality. At present, specially the spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church is very much influenced by elements foreign to her liturgical tradition. Our spirituality has been considerably reduced to devotional practices which were introduced in the time of Latin influence. Therefore it is imperative to initiate our community into our spiritual heritage by making adequate provisions helpful for an authentic spiritual formation.

13. Theological Formation

We have to develop a Theology of our own suited to an ecclesial formation of our community, the source of which is our liturgical and spiritual patrimony, in order that proper theological formation may be given to the community. This will also solve the problem of dichotomy between theology and liturgy that exists today.

14. Conclusion

In conclusion we feel that all the above findings and aspirations call for a more earnest attempt from the part of all the members of our Churches to live their ecclesial identity as well as a greater mobilization of all the resources at our disposal. We look forward to the full growth of the hierarchies of our Churches in order to give effective leadership to the communities in discovering and living their ecclesial identity. While resolving on our part to live up to our apostolic heritage we request the patronage and protection of all in authority and the cooperation of all concerned, and above all we invoke the blessings of God almighty, the alpha and omega of our ecclesial existence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the situations of the Oriental Churches obtaining in our country, we make the following recommendations:—

1. The Oriental Churches in India should make their members deeply aware of the individuality of these Churches in order that they may live fully their ecclesial life and fulfil adequately their mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

To create this awareness:—

- a) The community at all levels should be instructed in its apostolic heritage, liturgical traditions, ecclesiastical discipline and historical evolution. Special course should be organized for priests, religious, seminarians and laity in these subjects, special importance being given to liturgical formation.
- b) The three Pontifical Institutes: Dharmaram, Alwaye and Kottayam which give formation to most of our priests (both diocesan and religious) and are Institutions of higher research should foster research into the spiritual, liturgical and cultural heritage of the Oriental Churches in general and those of India in particular. We are conscious of the special obligation of the “Paurastya Vidyapitham” to promote these studies.

2. As we look at our Mother country we see vast areas where the salvific message of the Gospel has not yet reached. Even in several regions which offer at present excellent prospects for evangelization, the work is retarded owing to lack of personnel. Hence we request the Holy See to lift the territorial barriers imposed on the Oriental Churches in India and to create

an atmosphere wherein the Oriental Churches of India, could utilize their resources more efficiently and fruitfully for evangelization.

3. The Latin Religious Congregations of men and women which have a considerable number of members from the Oriental Churches should form Oriental provinces for the Oriental Rite so that the identity of their Rite can be preserved both in the formation and ministry and they keep their work of evangelization remaining faithful to the identity and heritage of the parent Churches. Where the number of religious in a congregation is inadequate to form a province, those members of the Oriental Churches may be given the right to follow their own Rite (OE 4).

4. As tens of thousands of our people living in various cities and industrial areas in other parts of India are cut off from their parent communities and deprived of facilities to foster their spiritual heritage and to evolve themselves into a living community fruitful in vocations and capable of evangelization, we request that the Oriental Hierarchies be given freedom to appoint pastors of their own Church through eparchies erected for the purpose.

5. For the full growth into maturity of Oriental communities and for the efficient coordination of pastoral and missionary activities, we the participants of the Seminar give expression to the long felt desire to have the Patriarchal system of government with permanent Synod.

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THE CATHOLIC ORIENTALS OF INDIA

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