ECUMENISM EASTERN PERSPECTIVES

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THE PROCEEDINGS OF

THE INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM

ECUMENISM: EASTERN PERSPECTIVES

Editors: Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt
Dr. Thomas Mannoramparampil
Dr. Joseph Naduvilezham
Dr. George Kombara

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ECUMENISM: EASTERN PERSPECTIVES

Editors: Joseph Kallarangatt
Thomas Mannooramparampil
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FOREWORD

We feel proud of giving birth to this issue of Church Unity in this ecumenical century. In the year 2002 Paurastya Vidyapitham (Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, Kottayam, India) is completing her 20th year as an autonomous Theological Faculty. To commemorate it we have organized an International Theological Symposium on *Ecumenism*: Eastern Perspectives on 28th, 29th and 30th January 2002. We have selected this topic taking into consideration the specific aim and goal of this Theological Faculty. There were almost 600 participants of various categories in this symposium. The keynote address of the symposium was delivered by His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, who is the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and the Chancellor of the Paurastya Vidyapitham. The presidential address was given by His Excellency Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, the bishop of the diocese of Kottayam and the Vice-Chancellor of the PVP. Eight main papers were presented by uniquely qualified and outstanding scholars both from India and abroad. All of them bring out the perspectives of the Christian East in the Ecumenical activities. On the one hand all these papers differ in their perspectives and on the other the basic issue is the same- the unity and oneness of the Church of Christ. These essays are meant as a contribution to dialogue. The more we listen to each other the closer we come to the Lord who is the Peace of all. The excellence of the ecumenical dialogue consists in bringing out the continuity of the undivided Church. This book comes to light out of the theological and ecumenical experience of the ecclesiastical leaders and scholars of the Church of Christ. These scholarly papers are an eye-opener to the historical roots of Christianity and to the wealth of Eastern Christian theological richness as well.

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WELCOME SPEECH

Prof. Dr. Thomas Srampickal

Your Eminence Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and Chancellor of the Paurastya Vidyapitham, Your Excellency Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Chairman of the Synodal Commission and Vice-Chancellor, Your Grace Mar Joseph Powathil, Member of the Synodal Commission, Rev. Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt, President of the Paurastya Vidyapitham, Rev.Dr.Joseph Naduvilezham, Rev.Dr.Thomas Mannooram-parampil, Specially invited Respected Guests and Other Participants of the Symposium.

I really feel privileged to be entrusted with the task of welcoming You all to this Symposium. Before actually coming to that, I hope You would permit me to speak a few words and contextualise ourselves.

A dominant feature of the contemporary society is Pluralism, a particular sort of pluralism, we may call it Paradoxical Pluralism. Every significant constituent of human life and society is affected by plurality and pluriformity: faith, religion, church, race, caste, culture, political ideology, etc. All these appear in various forms, with major and minor differences and nuances.

You might say that it is nothing new; pluralism has been always there. Quite true! Our own country is a good example. Look at our vast country: her cultural diversity, religious pluralism, ethnic variety and social complexity, and we have survived for centuries despite the variety and plurality. How? Because it has been a tolerant, mutually

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accepting pluralism. But that now seems to have been a situation of yesterday.

Today the face of pluralism is changing. The notable characteristic of the present pluralism is the force with which each group or sect asserts itself, the wild claims they make and the violent methods they employ to attain their objectives. Nobody needs to tell us that today pluralism has become militant, fundamentalist and terrorising, though it is against the very nature of pluralism, because militancy, fundamentalism and terror will gradually wipe out pluralism itself. That is why I qualified it as 'paradoxical pluralism' in the beginning.

But it is almost a universal phenomenon, not confined to any particular country or region. September 11 (2001) in New York, January 13 (this year) in New Delhi, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Jerusalem, Palestine, etc., are all too fresh to fall into oblivion. We have been rather proudly saying for some time that the world is a global village. But unfortunately we now realize that this village is infested with criminals and threatened with hi-tech terrorism and the highest casualty is peace.

In his World Peace Day message for this year, the Holy Father said: "You shall not kill in God's name!". Those who have gone through the booklet containing the message also must have noted the caption "You shall not kill in God's name". Killing in God's name we know is contradictory; and having to tell the world 'not to kill in God's name' points to a very sad and tragic state of affairs. But the Pope felt the need to say it and has said it.

What should be done? What is the solution? There does not seem to be any ready-made solution. Mutual tolerance, understanding and acceptance might pave the way for it. **We may only propose truths, truth may not be imposed and never by violent means**, says the Pope. **Yes, if all (religions) only proposed truths and followed it up with life and action and then let the truth impose itself by its**

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own transparency and life-force, then there would be more peace and unity. I think this is a witness we Christians owe to today's world.

I believe I have not painted a very sombre picture for this happy occasion. However, when we enter into serious discussions about ecumenism and church unity these days let us also keep in mind the wider world situation in which the church lives and acts.

Hans Kung once said: "No peace between nations without peace between the religions". Quite true, I believe. If religions, supposed to be store-houses of peace and amity, fight among themselves, how can humanity have peace? I think we can also complement Hans Kung's statement: No peace between the religions without peace within Christianity! Does then the unity and peace of all religions and nations finally depend on Christian unity?

True, nobody can guarantee that. But can anybody simply deny that? **The ardent desire and prayer of the Lord I hope would not be in vain.** I feel this gives us enough food for thought -for silent reflection and prayer - during the Symposium days.

Let me now come to my explicit duty. Symposium etymologically means 'drinking together'; a drinking party. The ancient Greeks used to have intellectual discussions at such parties and thus Symposium came to mean also academic discussion/sharing, though in present -day symposia there is more of the latter than the former. Our Symposium is going to be mainly a theological banquet. The Vidyapitham and the Seminary have tried our best to arrange it well; but its success depends on the cooperation and participation of so many people.

We need suitable persons to grace and bless it; able persons to serve delicious dishes and many others to enjoy them. I mean, as you know, our chief guests, resource persons, invited participants as well as the staff and students of the PVP and the Seminary. We are very happy that all of you are here this morning.

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It is quite fitting that H.E. the Major Archbishop, the Head of the Syro-Malabar Church, inaugurates this important academic event of the year, at the dawn of the third millennium. That His Eminence reached here in time, despite his busy schedule of programmes, is a clear manifestation of his love for us and interest in this Symposium. In the name of the whole gathering, I extend a cordial welcome to His Eminence Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil.

Bishop Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry is a person who is reputed for his ecumenical interest and activities. He is presently also the Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for the Seminary and the Vice-Chancellor of the Paurastya Vidyapitham. It is very appropriate that he presides over this meeting. On behalf of the whole gathering, let me extend a hearty welcome to His Excellency.

Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil is another person whose dedication to ecumenism and ecumenical activities is well known. He is also a member of the present Episcopal Commission for the Seminary and Vidyapitham. It is very nice that he is here now to inspire us with his words of benediction. On behalf of all present here, I accord a warm welcome to His Grace the Archbishop.

As you can see, three important officials of the Faculty are here on the stage: Rev. Joseph Kallarangatt the president, Rev. Dr. Joseph Naduvilezham the Vice president, Rev. Dr. Thomas Mannooramparampil the Registrar. A homely welcome to all the three Rev. Fathers.

I should like to extend a special welcome to you, the audience. There are among you some of the resource persons who have already arrived, invited guests including professors from other faculties, and professors and student-body of this faculty. A hearty welcome to one and all of you.

May I conclude wishing you all a happy stay and fruitful exchanges for the coming three days, Thank You.

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THE DYNAMICS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Prof. Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt

Your Eminence Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithyathil
Your Grace Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil
Your Excellency Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry
Very Rev. Fr. Rector Thomas Srampickal, distinguished guests, Rev.fathers, sisters, brothers and friends.

Opening the theological dialogue between the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox at Patmos, the metropolitan Melito of Chalcedon said: "We have come to Patmos the place of apostolic theology par excellence, in the first place to listen and not to speak, to rediscover the theology of the apostles and the fathers of the undivided Church and in so doing again to submit everything to the Word of God and the witness of Jesus". To my way of thinking we have a similar situation here today. We have gathered here in this theological center of this apostolic Church primarily to listen to each other. That is the principal way to submit ourselves once again to the word of God.

Let me begin with certain introductory remarks on Paurastya Vidyapitham (PVP). PVP is an ecclesiastical Institute of higher level empowered to grant its own academic degrees of B.Ph, B.Th, M.Th, and D.Th. It has grown out of the academic department of the St.Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam. In 1973 the academic department of the seminary was affiliated to the Faculty of Oriental Sciences at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome. This affiliation was effected in view of giving the seminarians an academic formation in tune with their oriental ecclesial heritage. The steady academic growth of the seminary during

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the years 1973-1982 resulted in the erection of its academic department as an autonomous Faculty on 3rd July, 1982, with the name Paurastya Vidyapitham or Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies. The Institute was formally inaugurated by Giani Zail Singh, the then President of India, on 26 October, 1983. PVP is entering her 20th year as an autonomous theological Faculty. This Symposium is principally a commemoration of that historical event.

There are different types and kinds of ecumenical movement. There are also different approaches like western approach, eastern approach etc. But this does not mean that there are different ecumenisms. The ecumenical movement exists first and foremost in order to renew the life of the Churches. Ecumenism in its many forms cannot but be one as one ecumenical movement because its origin, function and purpose is the objective reality of the Church's oneness. The Churches must share, shape and reshape their own ecumenism together, searching to perfect it by growing in mutual respect and understanding. One does not become ecumenical only through one's own background and through one's principles alone. It is perhaps the nature of the gift of God that one depends upon the help of other traditions in order to become ecumenical and one grows in ecumenicity only together.[1] The theme of this Symposium is ecumenism: eastern perspectives. It is true that ecumenism is one of the topics that has been intensely researched, debated and reflected upon especially in the post Vatican II period. The catholic church's view on ecumenism forms the stuff of the decree on Ecumenism and that signaled the official entry of the catholic church into ecumenism and the initiation of the movement's globalization. The first encyclical of the subject ever since Vat II is Ut Unum Sint of Pope John Paul II. The choice of the theme ecumenism: eastern perspectives for this

1 Nikos A, Nissiotis, "Types and Problems of Ecumenical Dialogue" ER 18 (1966) 54.

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Symposium is highly appropriate because it is in agreement with the main-line thrust and goal of this Institute. The main orientation of this Symposium is to elucidate the eastern approaches and orientations in the ecumenical dialogues. It would help us to inculcate in us a better sense of ecclesial solidarity as well as the belongingness to each other. This Symposium is a fitting start to articulate once again the theological identity of the PVP. An eastern ecumenical approach is one of the organizing genii of this theological faculty. This Symposium on ecumenism is the result of the communion ecclesiology which is the dominant concern of PVP's theological tradition. This Institute is committed to give a theological formation in the ecclesiological and ecumenical line in the eastern perspective with particular attention on the teachings of Second Vatican Council. "The Eastern Catholic Churches have a special duty of fostering unity among all eastern Churches, first of all through prayers, by the example of life, by the religious fidelity to the ancient traditions of the Eastern Churches by better knowledge of each other, and by collaboration and brotherly respect in practice and spirit" (OE 24, also used in CCEO 903). The challenge before each one of us is to promote growth all across the ecumenical landscape of a 'spirituality of communion' about which Pope John Paul II has spoken (Novo millennio ineunte, nos 43-45).

Divisions in the church are ruptures and wounds that are not healed to date in the Body of Christ. They are scandals and countersigns in the one Church of Christ. Division in the Church is a fundamental perversion of the Gospel message. All these ruptures contradict the will of Christ and do a disservice to the very gospel the churches proclaim.[2] Divided Christianity is a paradox, a contradiction in terms. It is a defective state of ecclesial existence. Because of these

2 Walter Cardinal Kasper, Keynote Address: Theological and Spiritual Basis of the Churches, (FAMC papers no. 99, 2001) 17.

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divisions the Church is a wounded Body and a weeping Mother. In every age, division remained the greatest scandal and the greatest weakness of the Church of Christ. "Church is not an idea but a body. In every age, division remanined the greatest scandal of the incarnation, over which so many of Jesus' contemporaries came to grief, is continued in the infuriating aspect of the Church". [3] Division delights only the devil. The well known ecclesiologist and ecumenist Prof. Tillard says: It is precisely in the Lumen Gentium's saying *subsists* in which makes it feasible for us to give full weight to this split and broken existence of the Church.... The drama of division is situated within the one Church of God. We should not think of this division as an expulsion of some groups from the one Church or the fragmentation of the one Church into many pieces. There is only one Church, but it is no longer fully united within itself.[4] Therefore the search for Christian unity is essential to being authentic Christian, for credible common witness, and also for authentic worship of one God. Through dialogue all the partners including the Catholics may come to recognize that they have committed sins against unity and all may progress toward greater fidelity. Ecumenism signifies the concern to reunite the divided Christian family. It attempts to establish closer ties between the Churches. This Symposium may help us to chalk out to what extent ecclesial unity is achieved and which are the prognostic perspectives.

Ecumenical dialogue is in a way the attempt to go back to the undivided Christianity, the earliest forms of the ecclesial relations. Ecumenical approach is an integral part of Christian formation and a permanent priority of the

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3 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Church Ecumenism and Politics (London: 1988),6.

4 J. Tillard, "The Church of God is a Communion: the Ecclesiological Perspectives of Vatican II", OC (1981), 128.

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Church. Ecumenism is an on-going priority of the Church since the visible unity of the Christians is emphatically the will of Christ. That they may all be one-It is a petition which our Lord offered up on behalf of his disciples. Unity was the most cherished of Jesus' aspirations. It is the most leading petition in our Lord's prayer. Therefore ecumenism is not a mere optional or marginal subject. It is at the very heart of the mission of the Church. It is a blessing that the Holy Spirit has aroused in our century a vibrant ecumenical movement. At present to be Christian means to be ecumenical. The Church of the future will be an ecumenical church. "The Church grows from the inside outwards, not the other way round. What it means above all is the most inward community Christ; it takes shape in the life of prayer, in the life of the sacraments, in the fundamental attitudes of faith, hope and love".[5]

Paurastya Vidyapitham and St.Thomas Apostolic seminary have done commendable service in promoting ecumenical studies and in investigating traditions of the various Christian churches with special reference to the actual situation in India. Ever since the beginning of this seminary till recently, Prof. Xavier Koodapuzha was the person in charge of the ecumenical dialogue. What separates us as believers in Christ is much less than what unites us. The potential of the common elements must be based as the matrix for closer unity, to identify limitations and distortions of the Christian message in particular ecclesial traditions etc.

Our Institute should become a melting pot. The task of the ecumenical movement is to recognize the 'communio' that already exists and to foster its growth toward full communion in truth and charity. We must be able to explore the potential of the common elements that the different

5 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism and Politics, (London: 1988) 5.

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churches preserve as the basis for closer unity. All may progress towards greater fidelity and unity. From the beginning of Christianity, Christians have had an acute sense of belonging to a reality larger than their local community of believers. There was a strong ecclesial and ecclesiological sense of being an organic element of the one Church of Christ. "The Church is not some piece of machinery, is not just an institution, is not even one of the usual sociological entities. It is a person. It is a woman. It is a mother".[6]

It may be better to speak of the Church's self-understanding in the ecumenical perspectives. Not surprisingly the Catholics at first appealed to the spiritual ecumenism, that is praying for Church unity without attempts to iron out dogmatic and doctrinal issues. Vatican II has made a notable observation in the context of approving prayer for Church unity: "This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement and merits the name spiritual ecumenism" (UR 8). In recent years there has been a growing realization of the need for both an ecumenical spirituality and for spirituality in ecumenism.[7] An ecumenical spirituality will in turn help participants to also grow in the Spirit within their own religious affiliation. There should be a catholic rediscovery and reception of orthodoxy and an orthodox rediscovery and reception of catholicity. It instructs us for a re-reading of the old reality. It is thoroughly evangelical to confess that ecclesia semper reformanda. All must search for the intima natura ecclesiae - the intimate nature of the Church.

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6 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism and Politics,20.

7 A. J.van der Bent, "The Concern for Spirituality: An Analytical and Bibliographical Survey of the Discussion within the WCC Constituency" ER 38 (1986) 101-2.

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Cardinal Ratzinger says: An absolute unity of the Christians within history is something I do not venture to hope for. We see now fragmentation continues to occur, at the very same time that efforts toward unity are taking place. Not only that, there is a constant formation of new groups, among which there are also syncretic groups with significant pagan, non christian elements. Even the rupture with in the Church are widening, both in the churches of reformation and orthodoxy. In the Catholic Church herself there are in fact, very deep ruptures, so much so that one sometimes really has the feeling that two churches are living side by side in one Church. On the one hand there is a rapproachment of divided Christianity. On the other hand further ruptures are coming into being.[8]

PVP is the centre of research in eastern theological disciplines. It is the theological arm of the Syro-Malabar Church. In the words of Cardinal Simon Lourdusamy, the former Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches in Rome, PVP is Edessa Reborn (his address on 13th August 1987). PVP has rightly been described by the Cardinal at the very heart of the Syro-Malabar Church. As the great theological school of Edessa once made its decisive contribution to the theology and life of the Church, being rooted in the Syrian Ecclesial traditions, the PVP, being the theological Faculty of the Syro-Malabar Church, is called upon to be the center of research in eastern Theological Studies so as to make its contribution to the theology and life of the Church (from a speech of Prof. M. Vellanickal the first president of PVP). The studies and research conducted at this Institute have enabled thousands of priests, religious and laity of the Syro-Malabar Church to become conscious of the theological wealth of their liturgical canonical and spiritual traditions. This Faculty has to take an active and

8 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Salt of the Earth, 242.

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authoritative role in shaping and directing the Church in the years to come. We firmly believe that PVP has a theological vocation which is characterized by its Eastern, Indian and ecumenical aspects. As Eastern and Indian Christians we cannot easily tie our faith and theology simply to the ingrown Greco-Roman absolutist claims from the middle ages and later times. It is our legitimate duty to develop the Syriac perspectives in the very theologizing process.

Kottayam is a town of ecumenical importance having a considerable number of different Christian churches and many of whom originally belong to the family of St Thomas Christians. Being a theological faculty of the Syro-Malabar Church, a branch of the St Thomas Christians in catholic communion, PVP has a pioneering role to play in promoting ecumenism in a special way. Being a center of study and research of the eastern ecclesial patrimony, this Institute can help the different Oriental Churches of India to find their common heritage and thus to come closer to one another. Different Christian denominations and people of different religions are living here side by side. Hence the existence of PVP at Kottayam has not only an ecumenical dimension but also a dialogue dimension towards the non-Christians too. It is the duty of the PVP to uphold the real meaning of human solidarity by encouraging and promoting ecumenical symposia, inter-religious dialogues, discussions on Indian cultural heritage etc. We must love the Church even in the midst of difficulties; we can awaken hope for a new springtime in the Church in the midst of wintry frost. There should be a serious looking backward, toward the original standard and there should be a sensible looking forward, towards the demands of a new future. Cardinal Doefner says: we want a Church that is a sign of the unity of human beings with God and of human beings with one another.

In this theological symposium we have nine expositions. This symposium lasts for three days. The first talk is on

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macro- ecumenism. All the other papers are on ecumenism proper. They all converge on the same theme that is the unity of the one Church of Christ. We look at the same theme from different angles. Perspectives may be different but the ultimate aim is the same. We can see how the issues of Orientality, orthodoxy and catholicity come together and enrich each other.

While we expressed our desire for conducting a theological symposium to our Vice Chancellor Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry it is he who guided us to this area of theology in which he himself is a veteran. We remember with gratitude in a very special way the interest which archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil has taken in organizing this theological sitting in an international way. The Syro-Malabar Church's ecumenical role will be exposed by Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil who is undoubtedly the most suitable person because of his theological shrewdness, ecclesiological profundity and ecumenical vision.

With these words of introduction, hoping that this theological symposium be instrumental to make a paradigm shift in the field of ecumenical activities, by dismantling the purely western and neoscholastic absolutist categories from ecumenical theology may I invite our Major Archbishop His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil who is the Chancellor and the competent authority of the PVP to deliver the key note address of the Day and to inaugurate this International theological symposium by lighting the bhadradeepam.

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INAUGURAL AND KEYNOE ADDRESS

Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, C.Ss.R.

Your Excellency Bishop Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Very Rev. Fr. Rector, Very Rev. Fr. President, respected Professors, invited guests, students of Vidyapitham and my dear seminarians,

I consider it a great privilege to have been invited to inaugurate the International Theological Symposium on *ECUMENISM: EASTERN PERSPECTIVES* here at *Paurastya Vidyapitham* and to deliver the keynote address. As the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church and as the Chancellor of this Institute, I take this occasion to thank each one of you, especially the esteemed professors, from different European countries and the bishops of different Churches who will present papers during the seminar. I congratulate the organizers of this seminar. I hope and wish that this might foster better ecumenical understanding not only among the participants of this seminar but also among the different Churches in Kerala and India as well as abroad.

We have been praying especially during these days of the Church Unity Octave for the unity of the Church. It is fitting that a symposium of this sort coincides with it. Tomorrow is the ninth anniversary of the declaration of the Syro-Malabar Church as a Major Archiepiscopal *sui iuris* Church. This symposium gives us an occasion to look into the position and stature of the Oriental Churches like the Syro-Malabar Church and see whether they are any inspiring models for the non-Catholic Churches to restore full communion with the Catholic Church.

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Second Vatican Council marked the decisive moment in the ecumenical policies of the Catholic Church. Thanks to the efforts of the Council the relationship between the Catholic Church and the various non-Catholic Churches has greatly improved. The pre-Vatican acrimony has yielded to politeness, bitterness to respect and partisan spirit to mutual understanding. The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* forms the basis of the Catholic Church's self-understanding and consequently of her relationship with other Christians. The Decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintergratio* outlined the general principles and attitudes to be adopted by the Catholics in ecumenical dialogues.

Broadly it can be said that the period between the Council of Florence, the last union Council, and the Second Vatican Council is marked by the predominance of the Western idea that the Catholic Church (meaning the Roman or the Latin Church) is the Church of Christ and that those who were outside this communion was no Church at all. So the Second Vatican Council said: "This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church" (LG 8). (Unfortunately *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* No.2 still says that "the Holy Catholic Church *is* the Mystical Body of Christ..."). It was held that their hierarchy was illegitimate and hence has no jurisdiction. As far as the Orthodox Eastern Churches are concerned the Council declared: "From the earliest times the Churches of the East followed their own disciplines, sanctioned by the holy Fathers, by Synods, and even Ecumenical Councils.... To remove all shadow of doubt, then, this holy Synod solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since these are better suited to the character of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls" (UR 16). The same was repeated by Pope John Paul II: *The*

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¡Decree with utmost clarity underlines that the autonomy which the Eastern Churches enjoy in respect to discipline does not flow from some privileges granted by the Roman Church but from the law itself with which these Churches were endowed since apostolic times.[1] Further the Catholic position was that the non-Catholics went away from the Catholic communion by their own fault and that they should come back to the "true fold". The Second Vatican Council corrected this position and said that "men of both sides were to blame" (UR 3) for the division. The non-Catholics "therefore have the right to be called Christians". "They have been by no means deprived to significance and importance in the mystery of salvation" (UR 3).

The Council goes on to say what will be or should be the attitude of the Catholic Church in an eventual restoration of full communion: "In order to restore communion and unity or preserve them, one must "impose no burden beyond what is indispensable (Acts 15:28)" (UR 18). Whether Eastern or Western this is the guiding principle of ecumenism for the Churches within the Catholic communion.

Certainly words should be followed by actions. I think that it is high time to make an investigation into the actual practice of these principles in ecumenical dialogues. Perhaps the best yardsticks for those who are waiting outside for the opportune moment to gain entry into full communion to measure the implementation of these principles will be the Eastern Churches that are already within the Catholic communion. The non-Catholic Eastern Churches will not be attracted to full communion with the Catholic Church if they see that the Catholic Eastern Churches do not enjoy sufficient autonomy and freedom.

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1 Pope John Paul II, "*Euntes in Mundum*" January 25, 1988. *AAS.* 80 (1988)950.

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The topic of our symposium is *Ecumenism: Eastern Perspectives.* Eastern perspectives mean the perspectives of the Eastern Churches, both Catholic and non Catholic. About the Catholic perspectives of ecumenism I have already quoted from the magisterium. They are applicable to the Catholic Easterners as well. Obviously the organizers take it for granted that there are non-Eastern perspectives of ecumenism. One can easily qualify this non-Eastern perspective as Western perspective. The Western perspective is of the western Church, mainly the Catholic Western Church.

Whether all the Eastern Churches have the same perspective with regard to ecumenism is an important question because they have such varied backgrounds and history and living cultural situations. Therefore the very Eastern perspectives are bound to differ from Church to Church. So it would be far from reality if one encapsulates the perspectives of all Eastern Churches into one single unit. Since the Catholic Eastern Churches have to accept the teaching of the Supreme Authority of the Catholic Church, namely the Ecumenical Council and the Roman Pontiff in this matter there can be considerable difference between the Catholic Eastern perspectives and non-Catholic Eastern perspectives. I am sure that you will hear about the non-Catholic Eastern perspectives from other speakers during this symposium.

It is the unity of all Christians that ecumenism is all about. In concrete it is about the unity of the different Churches. So the ecumenical perspectives of each Church is closely related to its ecclesiological position. This ecclesiological position in turn depends very much on the historical circumstances through which each Church passed and the cultural milieu, in which a Church finds or found itself.

The Western Catholic Church often emphasizes the universality of the Church while the Eastern Churches in

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general emphasize the particularity. The Western Church would like to view the Church of Christ as one single society with the Bishop of Rome as its absolute head with "proper, ordinary and immediate jurisdiction". The religious, political and social backgrounds of the Western Church led it to such a position. Besides, the Roman juridism also had its influence in the Western ecclesiological notion. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the eighth century it was the bishop of Rome who assumed both the political and the religious powers in the West. That situation made sure also of the eclipse of all the variations in the Western Church and the coming of all Western Churches under the Roman sway. In a certain sense the entire Roman imperial system also was transplanted into the Church. The virtual absence of any of the Eastern Churches in the Catholic communion made faster and easier the identification of the Western Church with the Catholic Church spread over the entire world like a vast empire or Christian Republic. Together with this the influence of the Roman legal framework made impossible any mediate jurisdiction for the Bishop of Rome who replaced the emperor as absolute ruler of the Christian Republic. In this Church differences are not normal but only exceptions and out of necessity they may be at best tolerated. Uniformity is considered as ideal.

That is why even when the aspect of communion is insisted in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* the talk is about a communion among the particular or local Churches which are the dioceses and not about a communion of various *sui iuris* Churches which will ultimately form the Catholic communion. Even though there are references to the existence of the various Churches in the Catholic communion the Council never elaborated on those themes. One need not be under the false impression that the Easterners could greatly influence *Lumen Gentium*. So the Western ecumenical perspective is still colored by this ecclesiological notion of one uniform society.

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Having said this it is easier to identify the Eastern perspectives of ecumenism. As I said before there can be considerable difference in the position of one Church from that of another depending on the issue dealt with. However, there is a general perspective with regard to ecclesiological notion. The perspectives of the Eastern Churches as in the case of the Westerners depend on their ecclesiological notion, which in turn was formed under circumstances other than those of the Western Church. As far as the Churches in the Eastern Roman Empire are concerned they never had the experience of their counterparts in the Western Empire. In the East the empire lasted until the middle of the 15th century. In spite of the fact that the emperor played a very important role in the affairs of the Church, the Churches grew differently under different patriarchs or other heads. They considered themselves equal to one another. There was no attempt to bring in uniformity among them. Besides, there was no common well-developed legal system either. Each Church grew almost independently. The Church of St. Thomas Christians lived in an atmosphere totally different from that of the other Eastern Churches. We never experienced any doctrinal controversies and subsequent divisions. We never had any political patronage or undue political interference in Church affairs. Division occurred in our Church at least in the beginning for the sake of safeguarding the legitimate autonomy of our Church. In short in the East autonomy and variety is insisted very much as ecclesiological reality and is seen as the ideal form of ecclesiological existence.

Divisions occurred because of the actions that followed these ecclesiological notions. Often for the people of today many of the reasons for the divisions in the Church are very insignificant. These reasons were connected with at times doctrine, but at times autonomy or simple customs. Each Eastern Church had its own experience of division. So a standardization of reasons is not possible. In the case of the St. Thomas Christian Church the cause of the division was

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the efforts of outsiders to take away the legitimate autonomy and to replace the liturgical and other customs with those of the Western Church. In the case of the East Syrians it was mainly political but coated in a doctrinal one.

The question of autonomy and freedom of the Churches in the Catholic Communion is very much related to the question of the universal jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. This remains a big stumbling block on the way to full communion. In this regard Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said: "*Rome must not require more of a primacy of doctrine from the East than what was formulated and experienced in the first millennium. In Phanar, on 25 July 1976, when Patriarch Athenagoras addressed the visiting Pope as Peter's successor, the first in honour among us and the presider over charity, this great Church leader was expressing the essential content of the declarations on the primacy in the first millennium.* ***And Rome cannot ask for more.*** *To impose the acceptance of Vatican I on a reluctant East would be tantamount to postponing Christian reunion* ***sine die***".[2] Cardinal Ratzinger was simply reiterating what the Second Vatican Council said. That is why Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* invites "Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject" (96).

Certainly the present practice of the universal primacy calls for introspection on the part of the Catholic Church. It would not be totally untrue if I say that the experience of the Catholic Eastern Churches has not always been in accordance with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. As the head of any other Eastern Church I too feel that a solemn teaching of an ecumenical Council should not be held up in canonical shackles. It is my strong conviction

2 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Les Principles de la Theologie Catholique*, PARIS, 1985, p.220.

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that a proper respect for the principles of subsidiarity and communion would improve the ecumenical atmosphere in the Church very much and will be an incentive to view the ecumenical efforts of the Catholic Church in a positive light.

The Second Vatican Council in its Decree on Ecumenism says: "While preserving unity in essentials, let everyone in the Church, according to the office entrusted to him, preserve a proper freedom in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in the variety of liturgical rites, and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth. In all things let charity prevail. If they are true to this course of action, they will be giving ever richer expression to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the Church" (UR 4).

The ecumenical directory of 1993 stresses the aspect of communion, which by its very nature is universal. It situates the unity of the Church within God's plan to bring the whole of creation into unity with Himself in the Trinitarian communion. Hence the Church as the New People of God, realizing in itself the mystery of unity in diversity and sent into the world for its salvation is a communion in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is definitely a major paradigm shift in the understanding of the goal of the ecumenical movement.

The word ecumenism, although today primarily means the relationship between Christian Churches, it originally stands for the unity of the whole universe. The unity of the Churches is at the service of the unity of humankind of which we are servants, like Jesus Christ. Genuine ecumenical spirituality is the Christian response in India to communalism. Ecumenical spirituality, which is a spirituality of communion, should also be a spirituality of service to the poor in our society.

Quoting OE 24, *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches says,* 'The Eastern Catholic Churches have a special duty of fostering unity among all Eastern Churches, first of all

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through prayers, by the example of life, by the religious fidelity to the ancient traditions of the Eastern Churches, by better knowledge of each other, and by collaboration and brotherly respect in practice and spirit".[3]

Autonomy or self-determination is the most essential condition for genuine creativity and growth. Only when this condition is fulfilled in a mature manner in a Church can it seek its own identity and grow in genuine communion with other Churches. In India there are still restrictions for the Oriental Churches regarding jurisdiction, pastoral care and possibility for evangelization. Oriental Catholics have territorial restrictions imposed on them and in most cases are canonically prohibited to go beyond the territories assigned to them. On the other hand the non-Catholic Orientals have parishes and bishops wherever they want in India and abroad. This discrimination towards the Oriental Catholics in India is not a helpful attitude for a fruitful ecumenism.

In this regard let me recall my words in the Tenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in October 2001: "The difficulties Eastern Catholics experience become especially acute when it comes to helping them pastorally, such as by setting up an Eastern-rite parish in a Latin Diocese. In spite of the repeated exhortation, from Vatican II's *Christus Dominus* on the pastoral office of Bishops, to John Paul II's *Ecclesia in Asia,* the much-needed swing in mentality has still to come".

"As Major Archbishop of the second largest Catholic Eastern Church, and one of the most vital, I must confess before the Holy Father and my brother Bishops my inability in the present situation to provide adequate pastoral care for the faithful of our Church outside of our Church, outside

3 CCEO 903.

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of my relatively small proper territory and to find missionary fields for the numerous missionary vocations with which God has blessed our Church".[4]

I think that India is a test case for the future of Oriental Churches within the Catholic communion. We should be able to show that nobody will be a loser but all will be winners in the Catholic Communion while continuing with their rich heritage of plurality.

It is sometimes argued that every Oriental Church should have the same perspective. Oriental does not mean that every one should, let us say, be of the Byzantine type. There are 21 oriental Catholic Churches. They each display unity in variety within the Catholic communion. It is meaningless to argue that they all, being oriental, should have uniform perspective. Here we should have a clear vision regarding what is being Oriental, which is equally applicable to all oriental Churches. Ritual tradition of a Church depends upon its origin and historical circumstances of its development.

Let me give an example. Icons are of great importance in the Byzantine tradition, Icons are beautiful and inspiring. But, if it is insisted that Syro-Malabar Church in order to be really oriental should use icons, it is imposing a particular tradition of an Oriental Church on others.

It is true that Oriental Churches should preserve their authentic ecclesial tradition. Otherwise it will be an obstacle to ecumenism. But what is tradition? Pope John Paul II wrote in his Apostolic Letter *Orientale Lumen: Tradition is the heritage of Christ's Church. This is a living memory of the Risen One met and witnessed to by the Apostles who passed on his living memory to their successors in an uninterrupted line, guaranteed by the apostolic succession through the laying*

4 *L'Osservatore Romano,* 17 October 2001, p.5.

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of hands, down to the Bishops of today. This is articulated in the historical and cultural patrimony of each Church, shaped by the witness of the martyrs, fathers and saints, as well as by the living faith of all Christians down the centuries to our own day. It is not an unchanging repetition of formulas, but a heritage, which preserves its original, living kerygmatic core. When the uses and customs belonging to each Church are considered as absolutely unchangeable, there is a sure risk of Tradition losing that feature of a living reality which grows and develops, and which the Spirit guarantees precisely because it has something to say to the people of every age. As Scripture is increasingly understood by those who read it, every other element of the Church's living heritage is increasingly understood by believers and is enriched by new contributions, in fidelity and in continuity... Tradition is never pure nostalgia for things or forms of the past, nor regret for lost privileges, but the living memory of the Bride, kept eternally youthful by the Love that dwells within her (No.8). Ecumenism does not mean just going back to a common tradition. Ecumenism is not nostalgia for the past. It means recognizing communion of unity respecting the variety of traditions. One should not standardize the tradition of the Oriental Churches for the sake of ecumenism. Ecumenical communion means openness to Holy Spirit and to one another in charity and unity. This communion in the Holy Spirit can exist even where there are differences of traditions.

An ecclesial tradition is not merely liturgical but also "theological, spiritual and disciplinary heritage, differentiated by the culture and circumstances of the history of the peoples" (CCEO 28). St. Thomas Christian tradition is not simply and purely an ecclesial tradition of the Chaldean or Antiochene Church. It is a complex whole of social, cultural, political, religious and spiritual traditions closely intertwined with the heritage of India during the last twenty centuries. It has elements organically absorbed from other ritual traditions, whether Eastern or Western, with which it was

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associated historically for centuries. Even in the name of ecumenism, a total going back to the old position is not advisable or possible for the Churches. The Church at present is like a tree that was broken in wind and bad weather and then sprouted again and grew up with new branches. Practically it is impossible to bring it back to its former situation.

I think that it will help ecumenism in India if deeper studies are made regarding the contribution of the ancient culture of India in the very shaping of the ecclesial traditions of the different St. Thomas Christian Churches. Hence I consider that ecumenism in the Indian context should take into serious consideration also inter religious dialogue.

The core of St. Thomas Christian tradition is the apostolic work of St. Thomas the Apostle. Like other early Christian traditions, St. Thomas Christian tradition gradually assumed its own local identity, Christians of St. Thomas tradition will have to explore all the possibilities of this common heritage for a creative synthesis of the Gospel tradition and witness to Christ in India. It is an ecumenical challenge to us. I consider that the ecumenical seminar held under the auspices of the Liturgical Research Centre of the Syro-Malabar Church, at Mount St. Thomas on November 10, 2001, with the participation of the seven Churches of St. Thomas Christian tradition on the *Cultural Heritage of St. Thomas Christians and the Efforts to Preserve* it is a right step in this direction.

Even though "the Eastern Catholic Churches have a special duty of fostering unity among all Eastern Churches", in the current practice they are not given any role. For example, in the joint commission for dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox and Malankara Orthodox Syrian Churches there is no official role either for the Syro-Malabar or the Syro-Malankara Church. It is true that there are Syro-Malabar and Syro-

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Malankara bishops in these Commissions. But they were nominated without any reference to the hierarchy or synod of the Syro-Malabar Church or the hierarchy or council of hierarchs of the Syro-Malankara Church. Similarly these bishop-members are not required to report back to the Major Archbishop or the Synod. The Synod is not officially asked to give its opinion before any joint declaration is made. If this is the actual situation, how can these Churches play any special role in the ecumenical dialogue?

If we look at history, we can see that the reasons for divisions in the Church, especially in India, were not dogmatic or doctrinal in nature. In the Indian Church divisions occurred when there were attempts from the part of the bishops under Padroado and Propaganda to destroy the autonomy of the St.Thomas Christians and to suppress their customs and traditions. Hence, in order to heal the division, these reasons must be properly addressed. That dogmatic positions did not mean very much for the division is clear from the fact that from an allegedly Nestorian position one group went over to another tradition of allegedly Monophysite position. So a real solution towards unity among the St. Thomas Christians is not to be sought primarily at theological and dogmatic levels. What is needed is the removal of the cause of the original division and the prejudices that arose due to it.

Let me mention the names of the two heroes of ecumenism among the St. Thomas Christians, Mar Joseph Kariattil and Fr. Thomas Paremmakkal. Before any sort of official ecumenical initiatives were there in the present form, as pioneers they undertook an adventurous mission because of their genuine love for the Church. Think of the hardships and opposition they had to face in their ecumenical endeavour for the re-union of Mar Thoma VI, the leader of Puthenkoottu! It will be interesting to investigate the cause of the failure of their mission. Who or what was the cause of the failure of their mission? Was it because St. Thomas Christians did not want the unity? Was it because Mar Thoma VI was not willing and ready for it? Unless and until the real

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causes are found and removed, ecumenical dialogue will not be successful.

Ecumenical dialogue should be more from the heart than from the intellect. Even when admitting the importance of theology and canon law as understood in the West, I consider that a less juridical approach of the Easterners is more helpful in this field.

Let me recall the words of the Second Vatican Council: "Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but they differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ himself were divided. Certainly, such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages that most holy cause, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature" (UR 1).

Finally let me conclude this inaugural address with the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II on the future of ecumenism. "The ecumenical journey is certainly still difficult, and will perhaps be long, but we are encouraged by the hope that comes from being led by the presence of the Risen One and the inexhaustible power of His Spirit, always capable of new surprises".[5]

With these words, dear friends, I declare the seminar formally inaugurated. I wish the seminar every success. God bless you!

Vadavathoor,
Mon. 28th Jan. 2002

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5 Novo Millennio Ineunte, 12.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry

I am very happy to speak at this inaugural session of this symposium. When Fr. Joseph Kallarangatt spoke to me about this symposium, I myself suggested Ecumenism as its topic.

From long years of my reflections, studies and experience as a member of various national and international Commissions on Ecumenism and Dialogue, I can now see a bright future for ecumenism. So in this talk I show how the prospect of having new sui iuris Churches in the Catholic Communion, which can exist and function along with others in given common territories, bespeaks an auspicious future for ecumenism. The constitutive principles of the essential structures of the Catholic Church are so liberal that any Church or ecclesial community can find itself comfortable and free in the Catholic ecclesial communion, preserving one, own essential identity and rightful autonomy with due dependence in the hierarchical communion.

The Church has essential structures on different levels of ecclesial communion. On the universal level the faithful incorporated into Christ through baptism constitutes the People of God (the Church). It subsists in the Catholic Church. The baptized are united to the Catholic Church through profession of faith, sacraments and hierarchical communion (cc. 7,8).

On the basic level of communion, a community of faithful adhering to a bishop as its pastor is a particular

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Church (eparchy). In that basic level indeed the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church exists and is operative (c. 177), of course not in its full extension, but in its minimum comprehension namely keeping the essential constitutive elements of the Church-the faith, sacraments and hierarchical communion.

On the intermediary levels of ecclesial communion, communities of faithful joined together by their own hierarchies are recognized as churches sui iuris by the supreme authority of the Church. The main constitutive factors in the formation of a sui iuris Church are three, namely a community of faithful, a hierarchy binding the faithful together, and the recognition by the supreme authority of the Church as sui iuris Church. The first two are internal and material, and the third external and formal. As the status of sui iuris is granted by ecclesial recognition, sui iuris Church is not considered to be of divine origin but of ecclesiastical origin, although through divine providence (LG 23).

Rite is not a constitutive element of sui iuris Church, although in the manner of living the Christian faith a sui iuris Church will manifest a ritual heritage formed through culture and historical circumstances of its faithful. Hence the faithful of one and the same rite may be formed into different sui iuris Churches or conversely also the faithful observing different rites may form one Church sui iuris.

All the sui iuris Churches in the Catholic communion have equal rights, dignity and obligation. However, they may differ among themselves according to the grade of the autonomy or self-rule they enjoy in the Catholic Communion or according to the limits placed on their autonomy by the supreme authority of the Church. On that basis sui iuris Churches are distinguished as patriarchal, major archiepiscopal, metropolitan sui iuris, or others of lesser autonomy.

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There are now twenty-two such sui iuris Churches in the Catholic Communion. The possibilities for more new sui iuris Churches also are kept open according to the Council documents (OE. 3,11 etc.) and canonical norms (c.57). Such new sui iuris Churches may be recognized, when ecclesial Communities not in communion make a communion with the Catholic Church, as it happened with regard to the Syro-Malankara Church. There is even the possibility of the supreme authority of the Church recognizing the regional diversities in a church sui iuris as sufficient for being recognized as different sui iuris Churches. So can there be a Patriarchal Church of Africa, or of South America, etc., all following the Latin'rite (Paper presented at the Roman Symposium by Prof. Astrid Kaptijn).

There can even be several intermediary levels in an ecclesial communion. Suppose the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, conceding spiritual authority to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, establishes a hierarchical communion with the Petrine see of Rome; the resulting sui iuris Church will have a two-tire communion in the intermediary level, namely centered on the Malankara Catholicos and on the Patriarch of Antioch.

The ration d'etre of any sui iuris Church is the particularity of its community of faithful. Such particularity may have its origin from the culture, historical circumstances, ritual heritage, ethnicity, etc. of the peoples.

Unity and diversity, but not uniformity are essential principles that govern the ecclesial communion on all its levels. Unity in the essential constitutive elements of the church, diversity by respecting the particularities of people's heritages. Legitimate diversity where exists or is demanded for the good of the people is to be fostered. Uniformity on the other hand may not be imposed where it is not needed. Ethnical or regional diversities of ritual heritage in matters liturgical, spiritual and disciplinary may also be preserved.

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Exclusive territory is not a constitutive principle of the sui iuris Church or of the particular Church. Therefore, different sui iuris Churches, or different particular Churches of the same sui iuris Church, can co-exist in a given common territory. Churches in Kerala, in Western Asia and Eastern Europe are examples.

Faithful having the same ritual heritage can belong to different sui iuris Churches on the basis of ethnical difference, for example the Ukranians and Ruthenians.

So also faithful having the same ritual heritage and belonging to the same sui iuris Church can have, on the basis of ethnical difference, different particular Churches existing in a common territory. For example, the eparchy of Kottayam co-existing with the other eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church within its territorium proprium - or the Latin dioceses of Cochin and Alleppey having own parishes in the common territory.

A particular Church of any sui iuris Church can have parish units exclusively for the faithful of a different ritual heritage. For example the Latin Archdiocese of Bangalore having also Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara parishes. Similarly the Syro-Malabar eparchy of Kottayam has also Syro-Malankara parishes.

There is also a case of communities of different ritual heritages in a given territory being recognized as a sui iuris Church consisting of only one particular Church (eparchy); namely the eparchy of Krizevci is a sui iuris Church for the Serbs, Ruthenians, Ukranians, Slavic Macedonians and Romanians in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

What do all these facts say? In the matter of ecclesial structures the Holy Mother Church is very liberal, generous and benevolent, ready to make accommodations for legitimate particularities of any ecclesial community. She is willing to

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strengthen the identity of such communities with rightful autonomy in the hierarchical communion recognizing them as sui iuris Churches. Any Church or ecclesial community can find it easy to maintain ones own identity within such eccelsial structures of the Catholic Church, if it chooses to establish a hierarchical communion.

The Holy Mother Church is liberal, but we know, not all her children are so liberal. Some are rather restrictive and tight-fisted in granting legitimity to particularities, which make a community capable of being recognized as a sui iuris Church, or of being instituted as a particular Church. Being jealous of ones own power and position, some local authorities or even officials of the dicasteries of the Holy See, do not let the liberality of the Church flow unhindered.

In reality, all doors and windows are openable, but on the pretext of a false security, some keep them closed and locked. Let us call on the Spirit to open their minds, that they finally let the doors and windows be opened. Fresh air and light will then come in, ecumenism will flourish and the Church unity will then be a reality!

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VOTE OF THANKS

Prof. Dr. Thomas Mannooramparampil

Your Eminence Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, Your Excellency Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, Your Grace Mar Joseph Powathil, Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt, Dr. Thomas Srampickal, Dr. Joseph Naduvilezham eminent guests and dear brothers and sisters.

Today will remain very memorable in the history of PVP. When it is going to complete the 20th year of its erection, it is privileged, by God's grace, to conduct an international symposium on ecumenism which is a very relevant and widely discussed theme in the ecclesiastical circle.

Ecumenism is not one of the several activities of the catholic church, but is its main concern. His Holiness Pope John Paul II considers it as one of the priorities of his Pontificate. Churches have become more and more aware of the sins of separation and division. The Catholic Church invites all the catholics to repentance and renewal of life. Churches have gone a long way together, through dialogue of love and theological consensus in their ecumenical pilgrimage. We saw the falling of Pseudo doctrinal walls between the various churches. Thus the theological stumbling block of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) was removed. The Epithets 'Monophysite' and 'Nestorian' are no longer valid today. The documents on authority with the Anglicans and on justification with the Lutherans brought the catholics closer to the Anglicans and Lutherans. Ecumenism is moving in a positive direction. There are temporary setbacks and discouragements. Yet the churches

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take courage from the Lord. The reunification of the people of God is God's work. What we need is a patient waiting. The centuries of alienation and the resulting prejudice cannot be removed in a short span of time.

Ecumenism is often thought of as a compromise between various denominations, rather than as living one's own faith sincerely and with openness to the Holy Spirit who will lead us along the right direction to know and realize the church of Christ. For this, it is necessary to know one's own church and the teachings of other churches. Study is required for this and it must be pursued with the sense of realism and good will. Symposium of this nature in which various views are presented by competent scholars will be of great help to realize this end. We are reminded of the directive of the decree on ecumenism No.10: "Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially of a historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond more exactly with the facts. It is most important that the future shepherds and priests should have mastered a theology that has been carefully warded in this way and not polemically, especially with regard to those aspects which concern the relation of separated brethren with the catholic church.

This symposium is to be seen not only as an attempt to further the ecumenical involvement but also as the part of the duty of PVP to impart correct perspective to those who serve the church.

My humble duty is to thank those who have helped to make this international symposium a reality and specially those who are taking part in this inaugural session.

Our attention first turns to His Eminence Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the Major Archbishop of the Syro Malabar church and the Chancellor of the PVP. As the head of this institution, its welfare and progress depend much on

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His Eminence. We are fortunate to have him with us today. We are very happy that His Eminence inaugurated this international symposium and delivered the Keynote address. Let us hope that his profound visions and ideas will be materialized. May I, in the name of those who are gathered here express our heartfelt thanks to your Eminence.

2 As we know, Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry is the vice Chancellor of the PVP and a member of the episcopal commission for ecumenism. His rich experience in the field of ecumenisum has been well reflected in his presidential address. Your Excellency, we thank you very much for having presided over this session and enlightened us in the field of ecumenism.

3 Mar Joseph Powathil who has to present his paper tomorrow is with us here. His Grace is the chairman of the episcopal commission for ecumenism and takes part in many ecumenical meetings and consultations, especially pro oriente consultation in Vienna. His Grace is also the member of the synodal commission for the seminary and PVP. May I thank him for his valuable presence here and also for the guidance he has given for conducting it successfully.

4 We are blessed with the valuable presence Mar Ephrem from the Church of the East and Ramban Melamparapil. We extend our sincere thanks to them.

5 Pro. Dr. Georges de Schriyries from the catholic university of Louvain who is presenting his paper today is with us . I thank him in a special way.

6 Next, our thanks go to Rev. Dr. Thomas Srampickal, the Rector of the St.Thomas Ap. Seminary. Although PVP is a separate entity, this symposium would be impossible without the active involvement and co-operation of the seminary. The Rector himself has welcomed the participant.

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May I thank you, Dr.Thomas Srampickal, for all the helps and especially for having welcomed the chief guests and others to this symposium.

7 Fr. Joseph Kallarangatt is the president of the faculty. It is his efficient leadership and interest that made this symposium possible. He has exposed the dynamics of it very clearly. May I thank him sincerely in the name of the whole house.

8 A Symposium committee consisting of Dr. Joseph Naduvilezham, Dr. Thomas Mannooramparampil and Dr. George Kombara was entrusted with the task of the necessary preparation for the symposium. Some subcommittees are also working, As you see this hall and stage have been arranged and decorated in a magnificent way by the seminarians under the guidances of Dr.George Kombara and Fr. Mathew peedikayil. I thank them all and especially the bursars of the PVP and the seminary, namely Dr. Wilson Ukken and Fr. Xavier Maramattam.

Finally, I thank all eminent guests and the inmates of this house who are actively taking part in this symposium. Let our Lord Jesus Christ crown this symposium with success.

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ECUMENICAL ROLE OF THE SYRO MALABAR CHURCH

Mar Joseph Powathil

At the dawn of this new millennium, the entire Church is ever more conscious of her ecumenical nature and commitment. The Church is by its very nature ecumenical and therefore, every activity of the Church has an ecumenical aspect. Hence, in his encyclical letter on ecumenism, *Ut unum sint*, Pope John Paul II observes, "it is absolutely clear that ecumenism, the movement promoting Christian unity, is not just some sort of 'appendix', which is added to the Church's traditional activity. Rather ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does."[1] The Syro Malabar Church, as an Oriental Catholic Church of the East Syrian liturgical family, has therefore, a serious responsibility to be ecumenical in what she is and what she does, that is, in her being and doing. It necessitates a personal and collective renewal of ecclesial life in the Syro Malabar church.

1.1 Ecclesiology of Communion

In any ecumenical dialogue the notion of communion is crucial. The Eastern and Oriental Churches always centred their thoughts around this idea. The Second Vatican Council recovered for Catholics this approach which found expression in several of its documents.[2] It was the extraordinary Synod

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1 *Ut unum sint*, 20.

2 The trinitarian approach to ecclesiology was the basis of a new ecclesiological vision which would accompany almost all Roman

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of 1985 that pushed the theology of communion to the centre stage for Catholics. Hence we would touch upon one aspect of communion in the Church.

Though there is terminological discrepancy in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, it is clear from the study of *Lumen Gentium, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* that the intermediate communions, like the Patriarchal Churches and their juridical equivalents, are accepted in the Constitution of the Church.[3] Therefore, we can trace three levels of communion in the Church: the eparchial communions, the intermediate communions and the Universal communion.

The particular Churches, which are part of the one Church of Christ, have a special relationship of mutual interiority with the whole, that is with the universal Church. This is due to the fact that in every Particular Church 'the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active.'[4] Therefore, the Universal Church cannot be conceived of as the sum of the particular Churches or as the federation of particular Churches. It is not the result of

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Catholic participation in ecumenical, multilateral or bilateral dialogues after the Vatican II. This opening made it possible for official Roman Catholic representatives fully to join their colleagues, especially the Orthodox sister Churches, in dialogue expressing the same kind of ecclesiology. See N. NISSIOTIS, "Toward a new ecumenical era", *The Ecumenical Review* 3 (1985) 329.

3 L. Vischer, the WCC observer to the Second Vatican Council points out that 'the terminology was so general and vague that one would read almost anything into it. It easily leads, therefore, to misunderstanding and false hopes." See L. VISCHER, "Roman Catholic Ecumenism and the World Council of Churches", *The Ecumenical Review* 4 (1964) 378.

4 CD 11. See also *On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*. n. 9.

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the communion of the Churches, but, in its essential mystery, it is a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular Church.[5]

According to the Fathers of the Church, ontologically, the Church that is one and unique, precedes creation[6] and gives birth to the particular Churches as her daughters. She expresses herself in them: she is the Mother and not the offspring of the particular Churches.[7] Therefore:

From the Church, which in its origins and its first manifestation is universal, have arisen the different local Churches, as particular expressions of the one unique Church of Jesus Christ. Arising within and out of the universal Church, they have their ecclesiality in her and from her. Hence the formula of the Second Vatican Council, 'the Church in and formed out of the Churches' *Ecclesia in et ex Ecclesiis,* is inseparable from this other formula, 'The Churches in and formed out of the Church' *Ecclesiae in et ex Ecclesia.* Clearly the relationship between the universal Church and the particular Churches is a mystery and cannot be compared to that which exists between the whole and the parts in a purely human group or society.[8]

The Catholic doctrine concerning ecclesial communion follows logically from the nature of the Church as a complex reality, as both a spiritual community and a sacramental, hierarchical society. This has important implications for the nature of unity we are striving for.

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5 *On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion.* n. 9.

6 St. Clement of Rome, Epist.*II ad Cor.*, 4: 2: Funck, 1, 200; Shepherd of Hermas, Vis.2, 4: *PG* 2, 897-900.

7 Cf. *On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion.* n. 9.

8 *On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion.* n. 9. Also see LG 23; *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943) 211.

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1.2 The Eastern Orthodox Churches

The Eastern Orthodox Churches are called particular Churches in the documents of the Second Vatican Council because they remain united to the Catholic Church by means of very close bonds, such as the Apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, even though separated from the See of St. Peter.[9] Through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these Churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature, for in every valid celebration of the Eucharist the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church becomes truly present.[10] The recent document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, The Declaration, *'Dominus Jesus'* on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus and the Church states, "the Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church, since they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church.[11] In this context it is important to note that the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, in his Encylicical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*, desires

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9 UR 3; 22. There is distinction between the ontological notion of communion and the canonical or juridical notion of communion. Theologians, mostly stress the ontological notion of the communion. For example see P. DUPREY. "A Catholic Perspective on Ecclesial Communion" in G. R. EVAN (ed.), *Christian Authority*, Clarendon Press 1988, 16-17.

10 Cf. UR 5, 14 and 15.

11 *Dominus Jesus*. 17.

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to find a way of exercising the Primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation.[12] In the beginning of this millennium, through his Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte,* the Holy Father expressed his hope and prayer for the Eastern Churches for a full return to that exchange of gifts which enriched the Church of the first millennium. He expects that the memory of the time when the Church breathed with "both lungs" would spur Christians of the East and the West to walk together in unity of faith and with respect for legitimate diversity, accepting and sustaining each other as members of the one Body of Christ.[13]

1.3 Vatican II and the Promotion of Ecumenism

The Decree on Ecumenism that clarifies the doctrine on ecumenism expounds the principles of Catholic ecumenism and indicates ways for exercising it worthily and outlines the relations existing between the Catholic Church and the separated brethren, laying the basis for a new, sincere and cordial dialogue with them. It should lead to a personal and collective renewal in the Catholic Church especially in the Oriental Catholic Churches. "In ecumenical work Catholics must assuredly be concerned for their separated brethren, praying for them, keeping them informed about the Church, making the first approaches toward them. But their primary duty is to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be renewed and done in the Catholic household itself in order that its life may bear witness more clearly and faithfully to the teachings and institutions which have been handed down from Christ to the Apostles."[14] After thirty-five years, we should examine

12 *Ut Unum Sint.* 95.

13 *Novo Millennio Ineunte.* 48.

14 UR. 4.

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ourselves whether we have been committed to this cause both in our personal life and in the ecclesial life - in the Syro Malabar Church.

There are two attitudes toward the ecumenical movements in the Church. One is that of demonstrating an excess of enthusiasm and over- simplification, as if contacts with the separated brethren are easy and without danger, as if the immediate establishment of concord and collaboration would result from ceasing to attach importance to doctrinal and disciplinary matters. This attitude is wrong because it can bring about illusions and delusions, weakness and conformism not at all beneficial to the cause of true ecumenism, as Pope Paul VI points out one year after the conclusion of the Second Vatican council.[15] There is also in others an attitude of diffidence and scepticism. Some fear that ecumenism may entail criticism and revision of the truths of the faith, disregard for Christian traditions and teachings, and conformism to the religious concepts of others at the expense of one's own. Still others fear it is vain to hope for the effective reestablishment of one sole religious belief and a unique and true ecclesial communion. Too many things divide us from the separated brethren, they say. Too much time has passed since the breach - by now unbridgeable - and one should not expect the miracles which would be needed for true reconciliation.[16] This attitude is unacceptable since it is not in accordance with the will of Christ and the Council proclamation.

The right attitude according to Pope Paul VI is to follow the directives, which, in practice, the Church propose to us and prescribes for us with good norms. But this trust in the

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15 T. CRANNY (ed.), *Pope Paul VI and Christian unity*, NY 1966, 75.

16 T. CRANNY (ed.), *Pope Paul VI and Christian unity*, NY 1966, 75.

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guidance of the Church in ecumenical matters presupposes and demands love, i.e., love for Christ and his Church.[17]

1.4 Ecumenism and the Teachings of the Church

The search for Christian unity is one of the principal concerns of the Church since the Second Vatican Council. The *Ecumenical Directory* in 1967,[18] 1970[19] and in 1993[20], and numerous other documents have been published by the competent authority on this topic.[21] In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, Pope John Paul II observes "Ecumenical Dialogue is a challenge and a call to conversion for the whole Church, especially for the Church in Asia where people expect from Christians a clearer sign of unity. For all people to come together in the grace of God communion needs to be restored among those who in faith have accepted Jesus

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17 T. CRANNY (ed.), *Pope Paul VI and Christian unity*, 75-76.

18 *Ad totam Ecclesiam*, AAS 59 (1967) 574-592.

19 *Spiritus Domini*, AAS. (1970) 750-724.

20 Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, AAS 85 (1993) 1039-1119. For a brief overview of the Directory by the Under-Secretary of the Council see FORTINO, The Revised Ecumenical Directory: Process, Content, Supporting Principles", 138-142. Acording to him the CIC and CCEO could not deal with individual ecumenical questions in full details. Therefore Ecumenical Directory is to orientate, co ordinate and develop the ecumenical efforts. For a detailed study of the Directory see, G. SEMBENI, *Direttorio Ecumenico 1993: Sviluppo Dottrinale e Disciplinare*, Roma 1997.

21 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory* 93, foot note 3. *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those Engaged in Pastoral Work*, Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Vatican City 1998 and the Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint* are the two important documents after the publication of the Ecumenical Directory 93.

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Christ as Lord".[22] The promulgation of CIC[23] and CCEO[24] has created in ecumenical matters a disciplinary situation for the faithful of the Catholic Church. The CCEO, conscious of the special role of the Oriental Catholic Churches in promoting the unity of the Churches, deals with the topic of ecumenism under a special title. According to this, every Catholic Oriental Church has to be faithful to her Oriental traditions in order to be ecumenically effective and it must provide certain structures to keep promoting the unity of Christians, along with responsible persons and norms to guide ecumenical activities.

1.5 Christological Dialogue – *a short overview*

After the Second Vatican Council, the encounter with different Churches was organised by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. The Oriental Orthodox Churches said little about Christology in their earliest encounters with the Pope Paul VI. Rome was already convinced that the ancient disputes over the Christological terminology should no longer prevent the Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church from professing their faith in Christ together.[25]

Meanwhile, the Syrian Orthodox Church in union with her sister Oriental Orthodox Churches meeting in Addis Ababa in 1965, determined to press forward for a dialogue, which would help to overcome the misunderstandings of the

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22 *Ecclesia in Asia.* 30.

23 *Codex Iuris Canonici*, AAS 75 (1983) 1-301.

24 *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, AAS 82 (1990) 1033-1363.

25 Even before the Council, in 1951, Pope Pius XII stated in his encyclical *Sempiternus Rex*, that the Oriental Orthodox Christians "seem to depart from the right path chiefly in words." AAS 43 (1951) 636.

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past. Already theologians were working with a renewed effort to throw new light on the mystery of the one Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, Pope Paul VI, while addressing the Patriarch, Mar Ignatius Yacoub III, on 25 October 1971, stated "We, as pastors, can encourage the common efforts being made for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this mystery which, far from raising doubts about our two different ecclesiastical traditions, can reinforce them and show the basic harmony which exists between them".[26]

The common declaration, signed by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Ignatius Yacoub III, accepted the deep spiritual communion that already existed between the Churches. "The celebration of the sacraments of the Lord, the common profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man for man's salvation, the apostolic traditions which form part of the common heritage of both Churches, the great Fathers and Doctors, including Saint Cyril of Alexandria, who are their common masters in the faith".[27] The heads of the Churches admitted that the Christological controversies of the Council of Chalcedon were due to different theological expressions.[28] Moreover they particularly exhorted the scholars of their Churches and all the Christian communities "to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of

26 *Information Service* 16 (1972) 4.

27 The Common Declaration signed by the Pope and Patriarch in the presence of the Synod of Bishops. *Information Service* 16 (1972) 5.

28 They stated: "there is no difference in the faith they profess concerning the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and become really man, even if over the centuries difficulties have arisen out of the different theological expressions by which this faith was expressed." *Information Service* 16 (1972) 5.

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Christ with humility and fidelity to the Apostolic Traditions so that the fruits of their reflections may help the Church in her service to the world which the Incarnate Son of God has redeemed."[29]

The Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna took up the challenge of theological discussions and sponsored a historic series of discussions between theologians of the Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches.[30] The first "Non-Official Ecumenical Consultation between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches" took place in Vienna in September 1971.[31] It was a real search for truth and in the final *communiquè*, the theologians affirmed that a common basis had been found in the apostolic traditions and in the first three ecumenical councils. After rejecting both Eutychian and Nestorian Christologies, they expressed their common faith in Christ as follows:

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29 *Information Service* 16 (1972) 5.

30 Pro Oriente Foundation was established in 1964, during the final stages of Vatican II working under the auspices of the Arch diocese of Vienna. Cardinal Francis König, the then Archbishop of Vienna, is the founder and protector of this foundation. It set itself the task of promoting academic research, publications and all kinds of contacts that may contribute to a better knowledge of the East, especially with a view to serving the cause of a better understanding between Christians of the East and of the West.

31 When Patriarch Mar Ignatius Yacoub III visited Pope John Paul II on 14 May, 1980 the Patriarch mentioned the theological dialogue under the banner of the Pro Oriente. He said: "In the framework of the "Pro Oriente" meetings between the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches, theologians from both our Churches have searched into and sought to resolve questions which still cause some difference among us and prevent full canonical and Eucharistic Communion. Some of the distinguished bishops present today have taken an active part in these conversations." *Information Service* 44 (1980) 93.

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"We believe that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixtion, without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible.

We see that there are still differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of Christ because of our different ecclesiastical and theological traditions; we are convinced, however, that these differing formulations on both sides can be understood along the lines of the faith of Nicea and Ephesus"[32]

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32 Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue N. 1, Vienna, 1972, 182. Out of the four adverbs affirmed by the Council of Chalcedon, i.e., Jesus the Christ, Son, Lord, Only - begotten, is to be "recognised in two natures, without confusion (asynkhytos), without change (atreptos), without division (adiairetos), and without separation (akhoristos)" only three is affirmed here in the common declaration. The adverb without change is substituted with 'without commixtion'. In May 1973, Coptic Pope Shenouda III visited Pope Paul VI in Rome. The Profession of faith contained in the Common Declaration signed at the end of the meeting had clearly developed from the Pro Oriente formulation. They stated "We confess that our Lord and God and Saviour and King of us all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God with respect to His divinity, perfect man with respect to His humanity. In Him His divinity is united with His humanity in a real, perfect union without mingling, without commixtion, without confusion, without alteration, without division, with out separation. His divinity didnot separate from His humanity for an instant, not for the twinkling of an eye..... In Him are preserved all the properties of the divinity and all the properties

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Later, in September 1973, in the second meeting of Pro Oriente, christology again became the subject of theological discussions. In the final *communiquè*, the theologians added to what has stated in 1971 that the mystery of Christ is incomprehensible, and that all concepts about Christ are limited. Thus correct christological formulations can be wrongly understood, and behind an apparently wrong formulation, there can be a right understanding. This fact enabled them to affirm that "the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, rightly understood today, affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and Manhood in Christ despite the phrase "in two natures".[33]

Since 1973, Roman Pontiffs and heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches have affirmed repeatedly that they share the same faith in Christ, an assumption taken for granted in most of their statements. Therefore, during his visit to

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of the humanity, together in a real, perfect, indivisible, and in separable union." AAS 65 (1973) 300. In this common declaration besides the four Chalcedonian adverbs two others are added. They are "without mingling", and "without commixtion."

33 Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue n. 2, Vienna, 1974, 175-176. concerning the terminology, it stated "For those of us in the Western tradition, to hear of the one nature of Christ can be misleading, because it may be misunderstood as a denial of his humanity. For those of us in the Oriental Orthodox Churches to hear of two natures can be misleading because it can be misunderstood as affirming two persons in Christ. But both sides agree in rejecting Eutychianism and Nestorianism..... Our common effort to clarify the meaning of the Greek term hypostasis and physis in the trinitarian and Christological con texts made us realise how difficult it was to find a satisfactory definition of these terms that could do justice to both contexts in a consistent manner." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue N. 2, Vienna, 1974, 176.

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Rome in June 1983, Moran Mar Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I, the Catholicos of the Malankra Orthodox Syrian Church of India, quoted Cyril of Alexandrias "one divine-human nature" formula as being part of the common faith of the two Churches."[34] Later in June 1984, at the conclusion of the visit of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas to Rome, the Pope and the Patriarch stated in the common declaration that the past schism "in no way affect or touch the substance of their faith" since the divisions arose from terminological misunderstandings. They also stated:

In our turn we confess that He became incarnate for us, taking to him a real body with a rational soul. He shared our humanity in all things but sin. We confess that our Lord and our God, our Saviour and the King of all, Jesus Christ, is perfect God as to His divinity and perfect man as to His humanity. This union is real, perfect, without blending, or mingling, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without the least separation. He who is God eternal and invisible, became visible in the flesh and took the form of a servant. In Him are united, in a real, perfect indivisible and inseparable way, divinity and humanity, and in Him all their properties are present and active.[35]

These developments in the Christological agreements were visible in the agreements reached with different Oriental Orthodox Churches. However, they adopted a more concise formulation of the agreements, which was accessible to the

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34 *Information Service* 52 (1983) 74.

35 *Information Service* 55 (1984) 62. Here the four Chalcedonian adverbs, i.e., "recognised in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation" differently formulated. The additions as we find are "without blending."

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faithful.[36] This development in the official level was appreciated by the Pro Oriente consultations in 1988.[37]

A Christological agreement was reached at the first meeting of the new joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India, held at Kottayam in October 1989.[38] The statement was officially approved by the authorities of both the Churches and published on 3 June, 1990. It includes this text on the relationship between Christ's humanity and divinity and states:

Our Lord Jesus Christ is one, perfect in his humanity and perfect in his divinity, at once consubstantial with the

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36 Catholic and Coptic representatives meeting at Amba Bishoy monastery in February 1988 states ; "We believe that our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Incarnate -Logos, is perfect in His divinity and perfect in His humanity. He made His humanity One with His divinity without mixture, nor mingling, nor confusion. His divinity was not separated from His humanity even for a moment or twinkling of an eye. At the same time, we Anathematise the Doctrines of both Nestorius and Eutyches." *Information Service* 69 (1989) 8.

37 They, along with the past affirmations states that "the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God could not be exhaustively formulated in words, and that within the limits of condemned errors like Arianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism, a certain plurality of expression was permissible in relation to the inseparable and unconfused hypostatic unity of the human and the divine in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Blessed Virgin Mary, consubstantial with God the Father in His divinity and consubstantial with us in his humanity." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue n. 5, Vienna, 1989, 149.

38 For information about the first meeting see DAUCOURT. G, "First meeting for Dialogue with Syrian Orthodox Church of India" *L' Osservatore Romano*, English Weekly Edition, 27 November, 1982, 2.

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Father in his divinity, and consubstantial with us in his humanity. His humanity is one with his divinity-without change, without commingling, without division and without separation. In the person of the Eternal Logos Incarnate are united and active in a real and perfect way the divine and human natures, with all their properties, faculties and operations[39]

Hence, in Christological teachings the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Catholic Church are substantially the same, even while the different interpretations of the meaning of the Chalcedon definition remain.[40]

The ecumenical relation between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East has reached a definitive point when Pope John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV signed a Common Christological Declaration in Vatican on 11 November 1994. The Statement affirms that Catholics and

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39 *L' Osservatore Romano*, 3 June, 1990, 5.

40 Paulose Mar Gregorios, Co-Chairman of the Joint International Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church from the latter Church while discussing the Christological disputes states: "It is because our own tradition is authentic and true that we affirm the double consubstantiality and the united divine-human nature of Christ. We are happy that both those Orthodox Churches in communion with Constantinople and even our Roman Catholic friends accept this double consubstantiality. In this respect all of us adhere to the one authentic tradition, even when some of us do not accept the Council of Chalcedon. This means that for us Chalcedon is not an essential element of the authentic tradition, and as far as we are concerned, other churches can also reject Chalcedon and still be in authentic tradition." GREGORIOS, "Ecclesiological Issues Concerning the Relation of the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches" in P. FRIES and T. NERSOYAN (eds.), *Church in East and West*, Georgia 1987, 36.

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Assyrians are "united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God."[41] This agreement paved way for the broad pastoral cooperation between the two Churches, especially in the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests. The Pope and the Patriarch also established a mixed committee for theological dialogue and charged it with overcoming the obstacles that still prevent full communion. It began meeting annually since 1995.

1.6 Convergence and Divergence in Ecclesiology

There is definitive progress in the area of ecclesiology between the Churches, although certain differences still remain to be resolved. The Oriental Orthodox Churches have accepted only the first three ecumenical Councils.[42] Hence the nature of an ecumenical council has figured prominently in the theological discussions. Another area of dispute is the concept and exercise of primacy in the Church. Since the Oriental Orthodox churches have no experience of

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41 *L'Osservatore Romano,* 12 November 1994, 1.

42 The Assyrian Church of the East accepts only the first two councils, Nicea and Constantinople I. Participants of the Second Pro Oriente theological consultation in 1973 considered ecclesiological questions for the first time, and the third and the fourth meetings were devoted entirely to this subject. The *Communiquè* of the second consultation treated the question of ecumenical councils and the relationship between papacy and councils in a tentative way. The members agreed that the first three councils have a greater degree of fullness because of their wider acceptance by Christians. On the relationship between Pope and Council, they praised the notion of collegiality expressed in the documents of Vatican II as " a move in the right direction according to which the role of the bishop of Rome is seen within the Council and not above it." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit,* Supplementary Issue n. 2, Vienna, 1974, 176.

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primacy among their five independent Churches, the basic concept of primacy itself needs to be discussed.[43] Within their churches they have a different concept of primacy, distinct from that of the Catholic concept. [44] Infallibility is

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43 Not even a limited form of primacy exists similar to the role that the Patriarchate of Constantinople plays among the Orthodox Churches. In 1976, at the third Pro Oriente meeting, the *Communiquè* describes the areas of agreement on the nature of the Church and the notion of conciliarity. It states, "One and the same Church, for there cannot be more than one, is manifested both locally and universally as koinonia of truth and love, characterised by eucharistic communion and the cooperate unity of the episcopate. The unity of the Church, has its source and prototype in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, into which we have been baptised". Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue n. 3, Vienna, 1976, 223.

44 The Fourth Consultation of the Pro Oriente discussed the two problems which divide the Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches: the concept of primacy and the status of Eastern Catholic Churches. The Oriental Orthodox understanding of primacy as being "of historical and ecclesiological origin", while Catholics see it as part of "the divine plan for the Church." However, both sides acknowledge that primacy is connected with the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit within the Church. The Catholic teachings about the primacy of the Bishop of Rome "are to be understood in the context of their historical, sociological and political conditions and also in the light of the historical evolution of the whole teaching of the Roman Church, a process which is still continuing." According to them the "structure will be basically conciliar. No single Church in this communion will, by itself, be regarded as the source and origin of that communion; the source of the unity of the Church is the action of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is the same Spirit who operates in all sister Churches the same faith, hope and love, as well as ministry and sacraments. About considering one particular Church as the centre of the unity, there was no agreement, though the need of a special ministry for unity was recognised by all." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary n. 4, Vienna, 1978, 233.

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another disputed concept.[45] The principle of conciliarity was a solution put forward, and they recognised the need for a structure for coordination between the autocephalous Churches.[46] However, the Oriental Orthodox Churches have a different idea of communion, which differs, from that of the Catholic Church.[47]

In the common declaration of Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Ignatius Zakka Iwas, it was considered that the two Churches are so close that they could even envisage cooperation in pastoral care including some sacramental sharing. The agreement states: "It is not rare, in fact, for our faithful to find access to a priest of their own Church materially or morally impossible. Anxious to meet their needs and with their spiritual benefit in mind, we authorise them in such cases to ask for the sacraments of penance,

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45 Catholics and Oriental Orthodox Churches affirmed that the infallibility pertains to the Church as a whole. But they couldn't agree on the relative importance of different organs in the Church through which this inerrant teaching authority is to find expression. Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue Number 4, Vienna, 1978, 233.

46 The third Pro Oriente meeting, in its Communiquè states... "when ever found necessary and possible though there is no necessary to hold ecumenical councils at given intervals as a permanent structure of the Church. We recognise the need of structures of co-ordination between the autocephalous Churches for the settlement of disputes and for facing together the problems and tasks confronting our Churches in the modern world." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue N. 3, Vienna, 1976, 223-224.

47 The communion, according to the Communiquè, "will find diverse means of expression- the exchange of letters of peace among the Churches, the public liturgical remembering of the Churches and their primates by each other, the placing of responsibility for con-

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Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from lawful priests of either of our two sister Churches, when they need them."[48] It was a historic agreement in modern times where the Catholic Church and a Church separated from its communion have agreed to allow some forms of sacramental sharing.

The declaration envisages cooperation in the formation and education of the clergy. "It would be a logical corollary of collaboration in pastoral care to cooperate in priestly formation and theological education. Bishops are encouraged to promote sharing of facilities for theological education where they judge it to be available".[49] Both heads of the Churches wished "to widen the horizon of their brotherhood and affirm herewith the terms of the deep spiritual communion which already unites them and the prelates, clergy, and faithful of both their Churches, to consolidate these ties of Faith, Hope and Love, and to advance in finding a wholly common ecclesial life".[50]

The declaration added significant new elements to the developing ecclesiological consensus between the two Churches. It is an expression of Eucharistic ecclesiology that places the Eucharist at the centre of its understanding of the Church. It states:

Sacramental life finds in the holy Eucharist its fulfilment and its summit, in such a way that it is through the Eucharist that the Church most profoundly realises and reveals its nature..... The other Sacraments.... are ordered to that

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voking general synods in order to deal with common concerns of the Churches, and so on." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue Number 4, Vienna, 1978, 233.

48 *Information Service* 55 (1984) 63.

49 *Information Service* 55 (1984) 63.

50 *Information Service* 55 (1984) 62.

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celebration of the holy Eucharist which is the centre of sacramental life and the chief visible expression of ecclesial communion. This communion of Christians with each other and of local Churches united around their lawful Bishops is realised in the gathered community which confesses the same faith.[51]

Another important question concerning the relation between Catholics and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Until recently, Rome has presented its relationship with the Eastern Catholic Churches as a model for the relationship that should exist between the Catholic Church and any Eastern Church that might come into communion with it. Fortunately, in 1990 the Apostolic Constitution *Sacri Canones* hinted at the possibility of even a total revision of the Code of Canons of Eastern Churches in the event of full communion of the Eastern Churches with the Catholic Church.[52] However today, the fact remains that most of these Churches are the result of the Catholic missionary activities among the Orthodox faithful. They see in this activities a denial of the ecclesial reality of the Oriental Orthodox Churches by the Catholic Church and claim that some

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51 *Information Service* 55 (1984) 62.

52 "But what pertains to the universal ecumenical movement, stirred up by the Holy Spirit to perfect the unity of the whole Church of Christ, the new Code is no way the least obstacle but rather greatly advances it. ..... that is, that they be in force until abrogated or changed by the supreme authority of the Church for a just cause, of which causes full communion of all of the Eastern Churches with the Catholic Church is indeed the most serious, besides being especially in accord with the desire of Our Saviour Jesus Christ himself." *Sacri Canones*, AAS 82, 11 (1990) 1034.

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Eastern Catholics continue to proselytise even now among the Oriental Orthodox faithful.[53]

These concerns of the Oriental Orthodox Churches were evident in the common declaration of Pope Paul VI and Shenouda III in 1973. They rejected all forms of proselytism as incompatible with the relationship that should exist between the two Churches: "We reject all forms of proselytism, in the sense of acts by which person seek to disturb each others communities by recruiting new members from each other through methods, or because of attitudes of mind, which are opposed to the exigencies of Christian love or to what should characterise the relationships between Churches. Let it cease, where it may exist".[54] Further, the agreements and the declarations of the studies accepts and affirms the right of the Eastern Catholic Churches to exist. But, at the same time it gives assurances that Catholics are

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53 Cf. R. ROBERSON, " The Contemporary Relation Between the Catholic and Oriental Orthodox Churches" in *Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Interchurch Marriages and Other Pastoral Relationships*- United States Catholic Conference, Washington DC 1995, 98. While a misunderstanding mounted up about a Papal statement on the status of the Ukranian Catholic Church, Cardinal Willebrands, President of the then Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity wrote to Russian Metropolitan Juvenaly on 22 September, 1979, "There was no intention whatever of presenting the Union of Brest as the model for our relations with the Orthodox Churches today or as one for the contemplated future union." Text in T. STRANSKY and J. SHEERIN, *Doing in Truth and Charity*, Ramsey, 1982, 228.

54 AAS 65 (1973) 301. This statement was a response to Pope Shenouda's complaint that Coptic Catholics were proselytising among Coptic Orthodox in Egypt. The Coptic Catholic Patriarch was reminded of this statement in a letter from Pope Paul VI soon thereafter. See "Lettre du Pape Paul VI au Patriarche copte catholique", *Proche Orient Chrétien* 24 (1974) 351-354.

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not to proselytise among the Oriental Orthodox Churches.[55] However, many Oriental Orthodox Churches remain suspicious of the true intentions of their Eastern Catholic counterparts and continue to feel that these Churches are made up of their own faithful who have been unjustly taken away from them. Even today many Orthodox feel that "uniatism has certainly been traumatic for the East, it has been a wound in the body of Orthodoxy, similar to the trauma of 1204".[56] Yet it may be noted that God has used it as a means of bringing the West into a living contact with the Orthodoxy. Recent years have seen much progress in the study of Eastern Fathers, Eastern monasticism and spirituality and Eastern theology by scholars in the West.

1.7 The East Syriac Church

The Syro Malabar Church, having the East Syriac liturgical and spiritual heritage, belongs to the Syriac branch of the Christian tradition. The root of this tradition may be traced to the Christian Aramaic culture. The Syrian

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55 The Fourth Pro Oriente meeting of 1978 made the following statement: "The Oriental Catholic Churches will not even in the transitional period before full unity be regarded as a device for bringing Oriental Orthodox Churches inside the Roman communion. Their role will be more in terms of collaborating in the restoration of eucharistic communion among the sister Churches. The Oriental Orthodox Churches, according to the principles of Vatican II and subsequent statements of the See of Rome, cannot be fields of mission for other Churches. The sister Churches will work out local solutions, in accordance with differing local situations, implementing as far as possible the principle of a unified episcopate for each locality." Communiquè, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue n. 4,Vienna, 1978, 233-234.

56 O. CLEMENT, *Conversation s with the Ecumenical Patriarch*, 1997, 182.

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community in India is one which maintains also a Jewish cultural and theological heritage. Before Christianity spread in the Graeco Roman world and adopted its language and imagery Christianity had a first period in which its environment was Jewish and its language Aramaic. The Churches of the Syriac tradition are in direct link with the Jewish tradition. Their theology and liturgy were formed outside the Graeco-Roman milieu, that is in the Persian empire. Among the Oriental Churches the Syriac Churches have a pride of place since they are representatives of and to some degree direct heirs to the semitic world out of which Christianity itself sprang.[57] For all those who want to understand the unhellenized and uneuropianised theology, this Syriac wing is an opening.

The unity of the Church is a capital theme in the Syriac tradition: in the Syriac Fathers , liturgies etc. The Syriac tradition always calls the Church as the Bride of Christ the Bridegroom. This understanding never allows a division in the Church. St. Ephraem is the outstanding example of this. "That from all Churches there may be a single Church of truth and let her children be gathered righteous in her bosom that we may confess thy goodness"[58] There is an existential necessity and imperativeness for the Church of God to be in unity. Ecclesial division is a contradiction. According to East Syrian Fathers and writers the 'divided Church' is a 'Wounded Body or a Weeping Mother'. They always refer to the one undivided Church and make use of the expression 'the Church in the four quarters of the world'.[59]

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57 S. Brock, Syriac Perspectives on Late Antoquity, 13.

58 St. Ephraem, *Hymns on Faith.* 52.

59 For Example, Bedjan, Breviarum Juxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium Id Est Chaldaeorum Vol III, Rome, 1938. 392.

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2 Syro Malabar Church and Ecumenism

The Nineteenth Century was eventful in the history of Syro Malabar Church. A series of complaints against the Carmelite Missionaries from Europe[60] as well as a number of letters asking for bishops of their own Rite arrived in Rome and Lisbon with the expected hope that it could lead to the reconciliation of the separated St. Thomas Christians.[61] When these attempts were found futile, they turned to the Chaldean bishops.[62] This eventually led to two famous

60 Even in early 18th century there was a flow of complaints against the missionaries. The letter of Archdeacon Mathai on 22 August 1705 against the scandalous activities of the Carmelite missionaries is an example of it. Cf. APF, SOCG 562, f. 710v - 710r. A similar letter against the missionaries from Chalakudi is seen in APF, SOCG 562, f. 707v. In this letter, the priests criticise the negative attitude of the missionaries against the reconciliation move of the Archdeacon of the dissident group in the St. Thomas Christians. See also APF lettere 294, . 328v-329r.

61 On 17 January 1800, Seventyfive priests wrote to the Pope stating that they were sending letters seeking bishops in their own rite and there by the reconciliation of the dissident group. But they did not received any response. Therefore they wrote to the Ad ministrator of the Patriarchate of Babel (Chaldean), and he sent a bishop and two priests to them. The separated St. Thomas Christians were also happy and the Mar Thoma of them studied Chaldean traditions and liturgy from them. They were seeking permission of the Holy Father to go back to the Pre Diamper tradition. See APF, SOCG 907, f . 358v- 357v and 358 r. Cf. C. PAYNGOT, *Malabar Sabha Puthiya Velichathil* (Malabar Church in the light of newly discovered documents), Kottayam 1995, 102-108.

62 On 25 March 1838, a few priests from Cochin wrote to the Bishop of Bagdad in the Syriac language. They complained that the separated St. Thomas Christians accuse them of not of having bishops from their own community. APF SCIO 7, f. 108r. Cf. . C. PAYNGOT, *Malabar Sabha Puthiya Velichathil* (Malabar Church in the light of newly discovered documents), Kottayam 1995, 117.

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schisms in Malabar.[63] The Holy See prudently responded to them by means of two Apostolic visitations.[64] The Syro Malabar faithful that remained in the Catholic communion were ruled by the two regimes of Propaganda Fide and the Padroado during this period. The missionaries attempted to prevent the St. Thomas Christians from having any kind of contact with the dissident groups.[65] Unfortunately, the three hundred years of continuous Western rule had destroyed

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63 There were delegations from the St. Thomas Christians to the Chaldean Patriarch Mar Audo for sending Bishops to them. But, Rome was against this move. Inspite of his numerous efforts to get confirmation from Rome, the Patriarch did not receive a reply from authorising him to send a Chaldean bishop to Malabar. In 1861, therefore, the Patriarch ordained a Chaldean Thomas Rokkos and sent him to Malabar. But he was not given any jurisdiction there. A few parishes joined to him. It is known as the Rokkos Schism. Since he came to Malabar without the permission from Rome he was excommunicated and in March 1862, he left to Rome. Again in 1874, the same Chaldean Patriarch Joseph Audo VI, because of the repeated request of certain priests from Malabar, sent another bishop Mar Elias Mellus. Though it was against the prohibition of the Holy See, a good number of parishes joined him. This schism in Malabar is known as Mellus schism. This group eventually broke the communion with Rome and joined to the Catholicos of the Church of the East. See A. P. URUMPACKAL, *The Mellus Schism*, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) PIO,1980; PAYNGOT, *Malabar Church*, 129-132.

64 They were the Bishop Gabriel Leo Meurin and Bishop Ignatius Persequo. For the details of their visit see C. PAYNGOT, *Meurin Kanda Malabar Sabha* (Malayalam), Kottayam, 1996; C.PAYNGOT, *Kerala Sabha Pathonpatham Noottandil* (Ignatius Persicoyude Report) (Malayalam), Kottayam, 1997.

65 On 4 July 1764, Bishop Florence wrote a Pastoral letter to the faithful in which he instructed that the marriage celebrated by a priest from the dissident group is not valid. Collaborations with them such as giving offers to their churches, celebrating the death

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many of the Oriental characteristics of the St. Thomas Christians in the Catholic communion. It was important to note that even in these long periods of westernisation, the Syro Malabar Christians were fully conscious of their "East Syrian" identity. Whenever they were given the opportunity to speak out, they demanded the East Syrian ecclesial administration and liturgy. Furthermore, they were also conscious that by westernisation they became dangerously distant from their brother Christians who were in alliance with the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch.[66] They expected that they could be closer to their brothers in the Orthodox community by the restoration of the Rite.

The traditional juridical status of the Syro Malabar Church has been nearly restored. However, the liturgical restoration initiated by the Holy See and followed up with the continuous and consistent directives from the Holy See is yet to be fulfilled. Therefore the Syro Malabar Church appears to be a westernised Church with an Oriental Juridical status. It creates a serious confusion in the ecumenical realm because the Orthodox Churches are afraid that the communion with the Catholic Church means absorption into the Western ways. But in many sections of the Syro Malabar Church, the liturgical directives were well received and they have tried to restore many of the oriental characteristics of the Church. Both the Syro Malabar Church and the Orthodox Churches belong to the Syrian family and

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anniversary with them and giving the document for marriage to a priest of the dissident community are forbidden. See, APF SC IC 34, f. 76r.

66 In 1794, a group of 82 priests wrote to the Holy Father in Syriac and Latin for seeking the bishops from their own Rite. The reason they presented was, that would lead to eventual unity in the Church between the Catholics and Orthodox. "Hoc igitur beatissime Pater, a Sanctitate vestra postulamus beneficium, non quid abhorremus vel contemnamus Episcopos Latinos ex Ritus abominatione out

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they have an undivided history of 1600 years. The promotion of the many common traditions of the Churches along with the ecumenical organisations and formations will certainly make the Syro Malabar Church more ecumenical and may lead to some convergence with the Orthodox Churches in practice. Moreover, the sharing of her spiritual resources with these Churches, when it is necessary and according to the norms will encourage this reconciliation move.

3 The Urgent Task

Every Oriental Catholic Church has got an ecumenical role in the Universal Church. It is both a vocation and a responsibility. The Syro Malabar Church also has this vocation and responsibility in a special way in relation to the Orthodox Churches. The Syro Malabar Church has been always conscious of this role. Ever since the division among the St. Thomas Christians in 1653, there have been attempts for reconciliation between the Churches. St. Thomas Christians who remained in the Catholic communion were always encouraging these attempts with their own recommendations and delegations.[67] But due to the negative

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detestatione, aut voluntatem non habemus parendi quibuscumque Episcopis a Sancitate Vestra super nos constitutis vel constituendis, sed quia constituto praelata ejusdem Ritus, quo utitur ipse clerus nostrae Ecclesiae, pax et harmoni aque decens et debita, inter clerum eundemque praelatum conservetur omnino et fratres nostri schismatici, qui specialiter propter differentiam ritus nostrorum praelatorum renuentes cos, constituto sibi capite, separati sunt, ad fidem convertantur catholicam communionemque universalis Ecclesiae, quorum conversio perfacilis sperari possit, si constituatur Episcopus ritu Syro- Chaldeioco." APF SO IC 39, f. 3r.

67 To promote the reconciliation move of Mar Dionysius I, a recommendation letter of the Catholic community was sent to the Pope through the delegation of Fr. Kariattil and Fr. Paremmakkal. They went to Rome and Lisbon to pursue this noble cause. The money

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attitudes of the Latin missionaries, who were generally afraid of losing their authority in Malabar and sometimes the scrupulous attitudes of the Orthodox Church leadership, these attempts were futile.[68] In the second half of the 19th century, the ecumenical association (Jathiaikya Sangam) organised by Nideerikal Mani Kathanar and the leaders of the Orthodox Church provided a new vigour and strength in fostering Church Unity. But this notable attempt also failed especially due to the unfavourable attitude of the then bishop of Kottayam (Changanassery), Bishop Charles Lavigne. Later, the reunion movement under the leadership of Mar Ivanios and the subsequent flow of Christians from the Orthodox Church to Catholic communion changed the ecumenical climate in Kerala. For the Orthodox Community, this move by a few bishops, priests and a group of faithful was a kind of 'sheep stealing'.[69] Therefore, they were hesitant to have any ecumenical conversation and collaboration. On the part of the Catholics there was a feeling of self sufficiency which tied them to passivity. Even after Vatican II, this ecumenical frigidity continued among the Churches. A breakthrough to this passivity and suspicion seemed to take place in early 1980's with an ecumenical move for a Church in Nilackal where St. Thomas the Apostle, their Father in Faith had been believed to have founded a Christian community. There

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for their expenses was collected from the parishes. The parishes contributed even by selling their sacred vessels. It is a very good example for their sincere and serious concern for the reconciliation move. See PAREMMAKKAL, *Varthamanapusthakam*, 60.

68 Cf. KOLLAPARAMBIL, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar: For the One True Fold", 148-192.

69 Malancharuvil stated that "the non-Catholic sections of the Malankara Church look down up on it (the reunion) as a betrayal and desertion of their Mother Church perpetrated in favour of the Roman Church." MALANCHARUVIL, "The Reunion Movement: Its goal and significance", 186.

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after the friendly relation between the Churches has been in steady progress, with annual Christian bishops meetings and the ecumenical priests' gatherings.[70] The official Ecumenical dialogue began in 1989 with the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and in 1990 with the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. The Official dialogue commissions meet together annually.

The Syro Malabar Church has got certain important ecumenical obligations as an Oriental Catholic Church.

3.1 Fidelity to the Tradition

Fidelity to the ancient tradition is an important obligation of the Syro Malabar Church. The conciliar Decree on ecumenism affirms it stating: "Everyone should realise that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve and foster the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches in order to faithfully preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians".[71] As we know, the Orthodox Churches came into existence in Malabar due to severe and imposed westernisation on St. Thomas Christians both in the administrative system and in liturgical life. Even though these Orthodox Churches turned away from the East Syrian tradition to West Syrian traditions, the faithfulness to the Tradition remains as an important ecumenical obligation as CCEO Can. 903 binds us. For the Orthodox, fidelity to tradition is the essential mark of the Church. Reunion becomes difficult when deviations widen.

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70 The Ecumenical Priests Gathering is an offshoot of the Nilackal Ecumenical Trust, mainly of the priests from the Central and South Kerala.

71 UR 15.

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The East and West Syrians have many factors in common and these common factors were helpful for the Antiochean bishops to get the separated brethren of the St. Thomas Christians into their fold. Being faithful to the venerable traditions, especially those that are common to both the traditions, therefore, will certain ly bring the Syro Malabar Church and the Orthodox Churches closer together. It is ecumenically important since the division among the St. Thomas Christians took place due to the protest against the imposed westernisation of the Portuguese missionaries and for the preservation of their ancestral oriental traditions. Pope John Paul II has demanded a process of de-latinisation from the Oriental Catholic Churches quoting the Vatican II which "requiring also that 'they take pains to return to the ancestral traditions,' if in certain ones 'because of circumstances of times or personages they have improperly fallen away from them'(OE 6)".[72] This attitude of the Vatican II is a "symbol of the firm attitude held by the Apostolic See, that the Council so effectively expressed by asking the Eastern Churches in full communion with it to have the courage to rediscover the authentic traditions of their own identity, restoring the original purity where necessary"[73] In this essential de-latinisation, the Syro Malabar Church can maintain the good elements that were received from the west. She should be courageous enough and "take pains" to erase those elements that stand against the East Syrian ethos of the Syro Malabar Church in order to be faithful to the tradition. Obviously, it is an inevitable and delicate task that necessitates extreme prudence, exceptional patience and a deep understanding of the tradition of the Church, liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary.

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72 Apostolic Constitution *Sacri Canones*, AAS 82, 11 (1990) 1033.

73 JOHN PAULL II, "Homily during the Divine Liturgy in the Armenian rite (21 November 1987)", in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23-24 November 1987, 6.

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There is a dangerous tendency in the Syro Malabar Church to consider the imposed western ways in the Church as a part of the tradition of the Syro Malabar Church. This distorted idea of tradition is ecumenically very dangerous especially in India, where two Orthodox Churches are the explicit proof of the fight against the imposed western ways. The imposed western systems cannot be accepted as part of the tradition of the Syro Malabar Church for many reasons. First, the westernisation was imposed on St. Thomas Christians, without their consent, against their will, and without any authority, especially in the Synod of Diamper.[74] Secondly, the St. Thomas Christians were always fighting against this imposed westernisation for three centuries. The famous Coonan Cross Oath and the division among the St. Thomas Christians that eventually led to the formation of Orthodox Churches, and the enormous petitions to the Holy See and Lisbon prove it. Thirdly, this westernisation made the Syro Malabar Church a hybrid Church, neither oriental nor Latin, as many scholars point out.[75] Fourthly, it is against the expressed will of the Holy See by means of official documents and directives.[76] Moreover, when justifying westernisation, the Syro Malabar Church is alienating Herself from the Orthodox Churches who have fought for the genuine

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74 The Diamper Synod was unlawfully convoked. See J. THALIATH, *The Synod of Diamper*, Rome 1958.

75 The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, while replying to the letter of Mar Ivanios, who was preparing for reunion with the Catholic Church states that they keep the Antiochean liturgical Tradition (West Syrian liturgy) without any change, and they do not allow to change it as the 'Chaldean liturgy in Malabar'. See T. INCHACKALODI, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Trivandrum 1953, Part I, 278-279.

76 Since 1934, the Syro Malabar Church has continuous and consistent directives for the restoration of its oriental traditions.

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tradition of the Church and against westernisation and latinisation with all their sincerity. It is a pity that when those who are accused of westernising the Church accepts it as their failure and rectify their attitude towards the Oriental Churches we are failing to do so[77].

The hybrid state of Syro Malabar Church is an ecumenical scandal that makes the Orthodox Church think that the communion with the Catholic Church is some how absorption into Western ways. Hence, the courage for de-latinisation is an ecumenical challenge set before the Syro Malabar Church. It is also a test case for her ecumenical sincerity. This de-latinisation process has three aspects - restoration, preservation and the organic progress.

3.1.1 Restoration of the Oriental Traditions

The Syro Malabar Church, as an Oriental Catholic Church of the East Syrian family has the Divine vocation to be an Oriental Church in the Catholic communion. The three hundred years of severe westernisation has destroyed many of the oriental characters of the Church. Hence, restoration of its lost oriental character in Liturgy, theology, spirituality and ecclesial discipline must be the first step for its 'religious fidelity to the ancient tradition'(CCEO Can. 903). Conscious of this important task of the Oriental Catholic Churches, the Instruction for applying the liturgical prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches states: "the first requirement of every Eastern liturgical renewal, as is also the case for liturgical reform in the West, is that of rediscovering full fidelity to their own liturgical traditions, benefiting from their riches and eliminating that which has altered their authenticity. Such heedfulness is not

77 Cf.KOLVENBACH, "Society of Jesus in the Eastern Christian Apostolate", *Diakonia* 2/3 (1994) 77-97.

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subordinate to but precedes the so called updating".[78] This restoration is also an ecumenical obligation for the Syro Malabar Church that lives close to the Orthodox brethren in their every day life, and these oriental features are the patrimony which appears common in the East Syrian and West Syrian liturgy.

When we speak about restoration we are not precluding development. In fact genuine restoration is in view of organic growth. Organic growth is not possible in a hybrid situation. It is growth in identity that provides the true basis of authentic development. Adding good elements from here and there without a sense of the whole will always remain an artificial and extraneous effort. True communion of Churches demands Churches fully conscious of their identity and yet remain fully aware of the need for full communion with other *sui iuris* Churches and with the common head and father.

3.1.2 Centrality of Liturgy

A recovery of the authentic liturgical tradition would be the only effective means of making liturgy central to the daily lives of Syro Malabar Church. Liturgy is theology *in actu* and the Church *in actu*. At no other time is this saving action of Christ as alive as during the gatherings of the faithful in the Church for sacramental worship. Moreover, "the liturgical life remains more essentially in the centre of ecclesial concerns, expresses the faith and its content and at the same time guides the spiritual life of the believers. The whole life of the Church is... summarised in the liturgy."[79]

It is liturgy that is chiefly affected by westernisation in the Syro Malabar Church. For the Oriental Churches, liturgy

78 *Instruction*. n. 18.

79 *Instruction*. n. 15.

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is the heart of theology, spirituality, and ecclesial and cultural life. Hence, the westernisation in liturgy badly affected the whole life of the Church. Therefore, as the first step in preserving the oriental character of the Syro Malabar Church, the authentic liturgy must be restored.[80] For this purpose Syro Malabar Church has continuous and consistent directives and instructions from the Holy See since 1934. The lack of a sincere and serious study of these instructions and directives is the chief cause of the liturgical crisis. The study and application of these norms given by the Holy See only can make the Syro Malabar Church a genuine oriental Church.

When there is a question of the authenticity of a liturgical tradition in the Syro Malabar Church, the existing traditions of the Orthodox Churches should be the norm rather than the practices of western systems. For example, take the question of whether the celebration of the Qurbana (Holy Mass) is to be facing the altar or facing the people. In such questions, the norms that are followed in the Orthodox Churches, as well as those found in the common tradition should be promoted. This must be an important concern when the Syro Malabar Church is formulating the Particular Law, especially the liturgical laws.[81]

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80 The *Instruction* asserts: "It is precisely their liturgies, restored to greater authenticity and vitality by eliminating that which has altered them, that could be the best starting point for a growth of their specific identity, from which could be drawn words and ges tures capable of touching the hearts and illuminating the minds of their faithful in the present time. *Instruction.* n. 16.

81 The *Instruction* states of it "In every effort of liturgical renewal, therefore, the practice of the Orthodox brethren should be taken into account, knowing it, respecting it and distancing from it as little as possible so as not to increase the existing separation, but rather intensifying efforts in view of eventual adaptations, matur-ing and working together". *Instruction* n. 21.

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Another field where restoration of oriental character is necessary in the Syro Malabar Church is its theologically rich liturgical symbolisms that are common to the Christian East, but which were lost during the western rule. Prayer facing the East,[82] Liturgical celebration facing the altar, use of the incense in liturgy,[83] the use of Nicene Creed without filioque, the Church architecture, the interior design of the Church[84] especially the sanctuary veil [85] and using two dimensional pictures instead of statues are examples of this.

The Syro Malabar Church must promote the official prayers of the Church, especially the divine praises (Canonical Hours) rather than the western pieties like

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82 The *Instruction* states that this practice "threatened in numerous Eastern Catholic Churches by a new and recent Latin influence, is thus of profound value and should be safeguarded as truly coherent with the Eastern liturgical spirituality." *Instruction.* n. 107.

83 The *Instruction* asks for it stating that "the Eastern Catholic Churches jealously maintain and practice as much as possible the use of incense in the celebrations, even daily, because it belongs in a special way to their own tradition. Every custom to the contrary is to be modified." *Instruction.* n. 101.

84 With regard to this the *Instruction* states: " it is important that in restoring old churches or constructing new ones, those responsible should attentively study the symbology expressed in them, while taking into account and foreseeing the possibility of re-establishing the usage in conformity to their proper tradition". *Instruction* n. 105.

85 The *Instruction* speaks of it as "the sanctuary is separated from the nave by a veil, gate or iconastasis, because it is the most sacred place: it contains the altar on which the Divine Liturgy is celebrated and the Oblation is offered. Only those who are entrusted with the sacred ministry can enter the sanctuary to complete the sacred acts". *Instruction.* n. 104.

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Novenas, *Ladinge* and the exaggerated cult of the Eucharist.[86] Pious spiritual exercises could be promoted if they conform to the oriental ethos of the Church and her liturgical seasons. Therefore, the Way of the Cross may be promoted in the Lenten season and the period of Annunciation may be dedicated to the special devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary rather than the month of May. This must be accomplished with a deep study of the liturgical tradition of the Syro Malabar Church with due discernment in the light of the ecumenical background. She should have the courage and sincerity to eliminate the pious devotions that do not tally with the Oriental character of the Church. The Instruction for applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches asks for "eliminating that which has altered their authenticity" as the first requirement of every Eastern liturgical renewal.[87]

3.1.3 Spirituality

The spiritual tradition in the Syro Malabar Church is similar to that of the Orthodox Churches. The Liturgical spirituality centred on the Eucharistic celebration is the heart of both the Churches. Priority for the official liturgical prayers of the Church is to be promoted in the Syro Malabar Church and the deviation from this tradition is to be discouraged.

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86 With regard to the Divine Praises the *Instruction* states; "Divine Praises transmit to us as inheritance the very rich and inalienable patrimony of spiritual life. They correspond to the specific features of each of the Eastern Churches, in which they are still deeply rooted. Like the Sacred Scripture, they need to be scrutinised and meditated to reveal the precious pearls they contain. The Divine Praises are, therefore, a privileged place for a study of the Christian spirituality which begins with the prayer of the Church." *Instruction.* n. 97.

87 *Instruction.* n. 18.

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Fasting, abstinence[88] and pilgrimage are part of the spiritual ethos of the Syro Malabar Church and the common treasures of the St. Thomas Christians. Western pious devotions, if they are contrary to Oriental spirituality should be erased prudently.[89] As the *Instruction* points out "it is not good that the particular devotions, which contribute to the spiritual life of the faithful, turn out to be extraneous to the heritage of each Church: if, therefore, they develop independently from this patrimony, they could give rise to "parallel" forms of spirituality."[90] While admitting new methods of spiritual life, due emphasis should be given to the spiritual traditions of the Syro Malabar Church that are in common with those of the Orthodox Churches.[91] It is necessary, as the *Instruction* states that "the authorities of the Churches *sui iuris* are to concretely promote an authentic mystagogical formation of the faithful and, in the first place, of the ministers, toward a spirituality that flows from their own liturgical traditions. Enriched by a better formation, the faithful will gradually

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88 According to *Instruction*, "an eventual restoration, at least partial, of the ancient norms for fasting in the Eastern Catholic Churches is valued opportune, taking into account the meaning of both the traditional practice, which doesn't always exactly coincide with the Latin sensibility, and of the need to correspond with the different conditions of life in the world today." *Instruction*. n. 63.

89 *Instruction* states that "since these devotions are by now much diffused in the Eastern Catholic Churches and, in fact, feed and comfort their faithful, it would be seriously imprudent and a sign of pastoral insensitivity to believe that they must simply eradicated." *Instruction*. n. 38.

90 *Instruction*. n. 38.

91 SC. 13 instructs that "Popular devotions of the Christian people..... should be so drawn up that they harmonise with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them."

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become more capable of living and rediscovering the riches of their own liturgy"[92] The revival of Eastern monasticism in our Church also will be a contributing factor to Christian unity. The title of Theodore Nikolaous book "Between the Eastern and Western Churches: Monasticism a Bridge" is memorable.[93] Some feeble attempts are being made in our Church for the revival of monastcism – but a lot more could be done.

3.1.4 Theology

One of the stumbling blocks in ecumenical dialogue is the largely westernised theological thinking pattern, which exists in the Syro Malabar Church. The problem is rather deep, and it has affected the entire Church. This is due to the influence of the theological centres where the priests have received their theological formation. The effective means the western missionaries used to westernise the Syro Malabar Church was primarily the western seminary formation. The so-called Inter Ritual seminaries are good yet it may do more harm to the oriental Churches by generating among the candidates from these Churches a kind of indifferentism to their own oriental ways. The Syro Malabar Church started her own seminary at Vadavathoor only at the end of 1960's and at Alwaye in 1997. In these theological centres, besides teaching Oriental theology, every subject should also be taught from the oriental perspective, i.e., the oriental character should not be merely an appendix to theology but every aspect of theology must spring from the oriental identity.

Since the Syro Malabar Church and the Malankara Orthodox Churches commonly share many elements in

92 *Instruction.* n. 38.

93 See *St. Vladmir's Theological Quarterly,* Vol. 37.

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theology, common theological research centres may be promoted. Such Syrian theological centres could be helpful in building up relations between the Churches through historical and theological research. For the same purpose, theological magazines, seminars and lectures could be organised in these centres, and they will be helpful for the reception of the ecumenical developments by the public.

3.1.5 Discipline

The Apostolic Constitution *Sacri Canones* states that CCEO "be in force until abrogated or changed by the supreme authority of the Church for a just cause, of which causes full communion of all the Eastern Churches with the Catholic Church is indeed the most serious, besides being especially in accord with the desire of our Saviour Jesus Christ himself." Here the mind of the supreme law giver is clear that the Oriental Catholic Churches are not the final model in a future situation of full communion.

Since the Syro Malabar Church is an oriental Catholic Church, any new norms and the particular law of the Church must be formulated only after taking into consideration the norms existing in the Orthodox Churches and perhaps in consultation with them. This sort of initiatives will create a more amicable atmosphere and promote mutual respect and understanding. In the particular situation of the Syro Malabar Church, the administrative systems in the parishes and the Church as a whole have been westernised since 1600, while on the other hand the Orthodox Churches preserved most of its traditional administrative systems. The principle of subsidiarity, the common characteristic of the Christian East, has to be in general preserved in the administrative systems in parishes, eparchies and the Major Archiepiscopal administration.

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3.1.6 Organic Progress

CCEO accepts changes in the Rite only if they help an organic progress. "The organic growth is a state of development in which an entity remains the same throughout, in spite of the changes that occur. It is because the developments are in line with the fundamental characteristics of that thing and are allowed for in the very concept of that thing."[94] The progress of the liturgical tradition is to be well scrutinised as the *Instruction* points out: "the Church guards against every undue and inopportune precipitation, requiring that any eventual modification be not only well prepared, but also inspired and conforming to the genuine traditions."[95] Any change, therefore, in the rite of the Syro Malabar Church must be fully faithful to its unbroken oriental heritage.

The *Instruction* gives a clear idea of the procedure that has to be followed for the organic progress. It states:

The Organic progress, in every Church *sui iuris*, implies taking into account first of all the roots from which the heritage of these Churches was initially developed, mainly in Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Armenia, and in the ancient empire of Persia; and secondly, the manner in which such traditions were transmitted, adapting to the

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94 J. PALACKAL, *The Identity of the Syro Malabar Church*, Rome 1998, 13. He states: " when it is said that something is growing, it presupposes "something" which remains the same and unaffected in its "sameness" by the growth "it" undergoes. That is, there is something that lies at the bottom, making that thing to assert its unity, consistency and stability, which is not changed while undergoing developments and which makes it the same thing at all times."

95 *Instruction*. n. 11.

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various circumstances and places but maintained in a coherent, organic continuity.[96]

The Syro Malabar Church as a westernised Church should gradually regain its identity before it makes any serious changes. Genuine assimilation of new elements is only possible when an organism has the basic fidelity to what it is, and it is particularly important in the case of the Syro Malabar Church.[97] Without being faithful to its oriental character, the changes would only bring chaos, confusion and crisis in the Church. Changes in the Rite are acceptable only when they lead to organic growth, i.e., when it develops from the oriental character of the Syro Malabar Church. As the Constitution on the Liturgy pointed out "there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new form adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing (SC 23). Great prudence and vigilance is to be exercised in tampering with the celebration of faith in the liturgy, especially in times when the sense of the sacred and the sense of the identity of the Church are generally lacking.

According to CCEO Can. 40 §1, when changes are made two things should be taken into consideration: mutual good will and the unity of Christians. The unity of Christians is to be a paramount consideration in making liturgical changes. Therefore, while making changes in the Rite, Syro

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96 *Instruction*. n. 12.

97 According to the *Instruction*; "The first requirement of every Eastern liturgical renewal, as is also the case for liturgical reform in the West, is that of rediscovering full fidelity to their own liturgical traditions, benefiting from their riches and eliminating that which has altered their authenticity. Such heedfulness is not subordinate to but precedes so-called updating." *Instruction*. n. 18.

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Malabar Church has to take into consideration the customs and traditions also of the Orthodox Churches in India. This type of understanding between the Churches will certainly create an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding, especially when the birth of the Orthodox Churches in India is due to the unjust and intolerable changes in the tradition of the undivided St. Thomas Christians.

In concluding this section I would quote what the Catholic Greek Melkite Archbishop Isidore of Pelusium told the Theological Faculty of Oxford University on 24 November 1995, "If in the past our Melkite Greek Catholic Church has suffered pain because of ignorance, misunderstandings and historical deformation, now, we must emphasise the elements of our identity in order to perform our duty and our task in the unity of the Church of Christ Our Lord"[98]

3.2 Promoting Common Traditions

The St. Thomas Christians, as an undivided community, had a long history of sixteen centuries to her credit. Naturally, even after the separation, both the Churches maintain certain explicit common traditions. The promotion of these traditions will certainly create a more amicable atmosphere in the ecumenical sphere and there by present a more unified witness before the largely non-Christian community in India.

3.3 Ecumenical Organisation

It is the responsibility of the Synod of the Syro Malabar Church and of the eparchial bishops to establish norms according to which the ecumenical commissions or persons could carry out the activities ascribed to them as well as to

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98 ISIDORE, "The Ecumenical Role of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church", *Eastern Churches Journal* 3 (1994), 39.

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oversee the implementation of the ecumenical norms. As the *Ecumenical Directory 93* states "care should be taken that those to whom these ecumenical responsibilities are to be assigned have a proper knowledge of the Catholic principles of ecumenism and are seriously prepared for the task."[99]

3.4 Common Witness

CCEO asks for the collaboration and brotherly respect in practice and spirit with regard to the non-Catholic Churches.[100] Collaboration with the Orthodox Churches at many levels of life is already existing today and it is encouraged in Kerala, where these Churches are coexisting. The Nilackal Ecumenical Church and the Dialogue Centre, the Inter Church Council for Education, the Inter Church Temperance Movement etc are important joint ventures. Moreover, the Ecumenical Prayer Fellowships in different parts of Kerala, the Ecumenical Christmas and Easter Celebrations and the Ecumenical Bible Conventions are the manifestations of existing bond between the Churches. The common witness of the Churches against the social evils, like alcoholism, and corruption are also remarkable.

3.5. Ecumenical Formation

Since the Christians live intermingled in many parts of Kerala, ecumenical formation is very decisive for the Syro Malabar Church. Members of the Church must have the necessary knowledge of their own Church and her principles of ecumenism besides the knowledge of the sister Orthodox Churches and the ecumenical developments at the local and international levels and their implications. Such knowledge

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99 *Ecumenical Directory 93.* n. 40.

100 Cf. CCEO can. 903.

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must lead to respect for the Orthodox traditions. Lack of ecumenical information and formation as we experience it now in the Church may lead to confusion, indifferentism or immoderate zeal.[101] The Directory points out some of the principal means of this formation: hearing and studying the Word of God, preaching, catechesis, liturgy and the spiritual life.[102] This formation should take place in the family, in parishes, in the schools etc.

3.5.1 In the Seminaries

The Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms in Ecumenism has given important guidelines in this regard. The Pontifical Council for Christian Unity has later on published a Study Document with the encouragement of the Holy Father stressing ecumenical formation in Seminaries and Institutes. Speaking at the Pleanary Meeting that approved the text, the Holy Father instructed "I hope that the practical directives you have mentioned will allow the ecumenical dimension to become an integral part of teaching the different disciplines, by using the interdisciplinary method and through the interdenominational cooperation, provided for by the Ecumenical Directory"[103]

The Ecumenical Commission for the Syro Malabar Church conducted a study seminar on the document for the benefit of the staff of our Seminaries. But one wonders what has been done to follow up. We have to be serious in this regard if we want to promote the Christian unity and to find our proper place in the Catholic Communion.

Priests must have sufficient knowledge of the nature of ecumenical relations the Church has with the Orthodox churches with which they are often in contact. They have to

101 Cf. CCEO can. 905.

102 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory 93.* n. 59-64.

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be taught the history, theological leanings, liturgical speciality and discipline of these Churches. They must also know the growth in ecumenical relations, the mutual agreements and their implications. Furthermore, the different aspects of ecumenical relations have to be part of the curriculum in the seminaries. Different subjects in the theological spectrum must be dealt with in their ecumenical dimension. Moreover the candidates for priesthood should have sufficient knowledge of the norms for the *communicatio in sacris*. For the same purpose, publishing an *Ecumenical Directory*, dealing all these aspects, is a serious concern of the Synodal Commission for Ecumenism.

The Directory indicates that there should be introductory courses specifically in Ecumenism fairly early so that the students could be sensitised, right from the beginning of their theological studies, to the ecumenical dimension of their theological studies.[104] But besides, it introduces a new requirement that reflection and planning should be undertaken in each discipline to ensure that an ecumenical dimension permeates every subject taught in the seminaries and institutes of theological formation.[105]

The theological formation in the seminaries has to take into consideration the theological language of the Orthodox Churches. Since all these Churches belong to the vast Syrian family of the Church, it is necessary to cultivate in the theological approach an empathy with the Orthodox Syrian Churches. It is also necessary to know the theological languages of the Orthodox Churches with whom the Syro Malabar Church live side by side and always in dialogue.

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103 *The Ecumenical Formation of those engaged in Pastoral Work*. 8, 1, 99.

104 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory 93*. n. 79-81.

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The study of the Syrian Fathers, common to the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, also needs to be a chief concern in seminary studies.

Specific courses on the Orthodox Churches should be the part of the teachings of theology in view. For this purpose, the professors from the Orthodox theological institutes can be invited to give talks. When dealing with the Orthodox Churches and discussing the existing communion between the Churches, the points of differences also have to be taught to the future priests. It is helpful to avoid the danger of immoderate zeal. A specific course on ecumenism has to be in the curriculum. It is recognised as a main subject in the Statutes of the Paurastya Vidya Pitam at Vadavathoor.[106] Practical experience in ecumenical relations, especially the attitude of respecting the religious sensitivities of the Orthodox people has to be given in the seminaries.

3.5.2 In Religious Congregations

The religious congregations can promote the unity of Christians through their special prayer for unity, i.e., through the spiritual ecumenism. As the *Ecumenical Directory* suggests, it is necessary to have a delegate or commission at the central level, charged with promoting and assisting their ecumenical engagements.[107] They have to promote the ecumenical formation of all the members of the Congregations. In the particular situation of Kerala, they can organise meetings with the Orthodox Christians for liturgical prayer, for recollection and spiritual exercises.[108]

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105 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory 93*. n. 72-80, 83, 84.

106 Cf. *Synodal News* 3 (1994) 145.

107 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory 93*. n. 51.

108 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory 93*. n. 50c.

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Exchange of spiritual and intellectual resources and experiences in religious life with the Orthodox religious communities can be enriching both for the Catholic religious and the Church as a whole.

3.6 Prayer in Common

The prayers and common non-sacramental liturgical worship are the explicit expressions of the existing communion between the Churches. The Catholic Church has the near full communion with the Orthodox Churches. Therefore, the common non- sacramental liturgical celebrations and other prayers should be promoted as public proclamation of the existing bond of communion. In doing so, the directives and the norms of the Church, must be observed.

The common prayer groups known as ecumenical prayer groups are functioning in different parts of Kerala, where both the Catholics and Orthodox pray together. It is the responsibility of the Syro Malabar Church to give sufficient formation for those who engage in such prayers so that they may not go into indifferentism or immoderate zeal. Knowledge of their own traditions and theological leanings, with ecumenical emphasis has to be imparted to them. The *Unity Octave* prayers, as we could see in the decisions of one of the Joint Commissions meeting of Orthodox Catholic Dialogue, should be popularised in these prayer groups and in the parishes. For this purpose, the prayers can be formulated in the Kerala context of the Orthodox Catholic relations. The interest in and desire for praying for the unity of the Churches has to be cultivated among the youth, the religious sisters and priests of the Syro Malabar Church.

3.7 Sharing in Sacramental life

This sharing is to be promoted within the limits of the norms of the Church as a visible sign of the existing

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communion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches and with those who are gravely in need of sacramental grace. Moreover, the developments in the ecumenical dialogue also have to be taken into consideration.[109] The Malankara Orthodox Churches have rather strict norms regarding the sharing in the sacramental life. Therefore, due respect to their norms regarding sacramental sharing is necessary. Sufficient consultation with the Orthodox authorities is necessary when formulating the particular law for the sharing of the sacraments. Moreover, the distinction between the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church and the agreements with them has to be taken in to consideration. As we know, we have agreements in sharing the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick only with the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church.

The Catholic Church has an agreement concerning mixed marriage with the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. With the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, though the dialogue is in progress it has not yet led in to an agreement. The studies show that after the agreement with the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Churches, the number of mixed marriages steadily increased. Another interesting factor is that practically the wife follows the Church of the husband after the marriage without much difference to whether she is Catholic or Orthodox.[110] This points to the strong sociological factors of the Patriarchal system, prevailing in Kerala. This sociological factor has to be seriously considered while drawing out the agreements between the Churches.

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109 Cf. CCEO Can. 671.

110 Cf. V. MANACKALETT, *The Impact of the Agreement Between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church on Inter Church Marriages* (Unpublished Dissertation for the Degree of Master of Canon Law), Bangalore 1998, 80.

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Furthermore, for the Syro Malabar Church the pastoral care for these families is an important task which necessitates much prudence, deep knowledge and patience from the priests.

Though this agreement promotes further unity between the Churches, lack of knowledge and partial knowledge of the agreements may lead to indifferentism or immoderate zeal. Hence, it is necessary to give sufficient knowledge about the agreements to the priests and those who are entrusted with the pastoral care of the faithful.

3.8 Sharing Resources for Spiritual Life and Activity

Urbanisation -the migration of Christian communities to the cities form the villages - necessitates sharing of the churches, prayer halls and cemeteries. The norms have to be followed when the question of these sharing arises. The consent of the local bishop is necessary for this sharing of the resources of spiritual life and activity. Moreover, Catholic schools and institutions should make every effort to respect the faith and conscience of students and teachers who belong to the Orthodox Churches.[111] In accordance with the approved statutes, there has to be every possibility for Orthodox Churches for giving spiritual and sacramental ministration to their own faithful that attend such institutions. Hospitals, homes for the aged and similar institutions also can provide such facilities.

Conclusion

The Syro Malabar Church could be a bridge builder – or it could remain as a block or a problem on the road to Christian unity. When the Syro Malabar Church sincerely

111 Cf. *Ecumenical Directory 93.* n. 141.

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fulfils her vocation as a truly Oriental Church in the Catholic communion and her ecumenical obligations at all levels - in organisation, formation and cooperation - gradually there will be created an ecumenical convergence among the St.Thomas Christians, both Catholic and Orthodox. Furthermore, the prayer for unity from the hearts of St. Thomas Christians with the intercessions of their forefathers who sincerely worked for reconciliation and who kept the unity intact for sixteen long centuries may reach the Triune God, who alone can create the ultimate and true ecclesial unity. It is a daunting task. Will this Church rise equal to the occasion?

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MACRO-ECUMENISM: THE DIALOGUE OF LIFE AMONG CHRISTIANS AND BELIEVERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS [1]

Prof. Dr. Georges De Schrijver S.J.

Macro-ecumenism is a somewhat broader concept than the classical notion of ecumenism which focuses on a continuous dialogue among the Christian Churches. If ecumenism presupposes a willingness to delve into one's common Christian heritage, macro-ecumenism broadens up this perspective in that it sensitizes believers of various religions to reflect on what they have in common when worshipping the one God – creator and redeemer – from the backdrop of their own religious traditions. In both cases, the focus on the commonalities calls for mutual understanding, and, if possible, for some forms of cooperation without leveling down their existing particularities. In this paper, I will not tackle the legitimate question whether, and to what extent, a particular Christian Church, say the Syro-Malabar Church or the Syro-Malankara Church, has the right and duty to safeguard their own customs and rites against imperialistic tendencies in the womb of Catholicity. As I see it, a serious commitment to one's rights and duties is just simply part of the ecumenical dialogue, especially if one takes dialogue to mean a conversation between equal partners.

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1 Slighlly reworked version of an article already published in MST Review (Manila) 4, n°2 (2000) 114-135 (Mission. End or New Beginning? The Asian Controversy).

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The reason, however, why I am not delving into this matter is my fear that an exclusive focus on ecumenical questions may divert one's attention from macro-ecumenism, that is, from a dialogue with non-Christian religions. Indeed, a restrictive dialogue among Christians alone may end up in discussions about institutional forms and privileges on both sides, so much so that this preoccupation may make one lose sight of what in the meantime has been emerging: a factual cooperation among members of various world religions to combat poverty and malnutrition in the world, in the name of the God who saves. It is worth noting, by the way, that almost two decades ago, the World Council of the Churches proposed a comparable pragmatic strategy to bring about a rapprochement between Christian churches by starting a common reflection on the churches' contribution to the promotion of 'justice, peace, and integrity of the earth' at a world scale.

In what follows, I will give a sketch of what – in my eyes – has paved the way, within the Roman Catholic Church, for engaging in a 'dialogue of life' with members of other religions. As will become clear below, such a 'dialogue of life' primarily deals with questions of material survival and the defense of human dignity in the midst of miserable conditions. As such, it is closely related to a 'praxis of liberation' from various kinds of bondage. The 'dialogue of life' is one of the major consequences of the Second Vatican Council's 'openness to the world' which tells us that "Christians who neglect their temporal duties are neglecting their duties to the neighbor and even to God, and are endangering their eternal salvation" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43). No wonder, thus, that the program of Latin American Liberation theology can be regarded as an important precursor of what in the Asian context came to be called a 'dialogue of life'. One major difference, however, remains: whereas the Latin American Liberation theologians decided to cooperate with well-intentioned atheists (of Marxist or neo-Marxist orientation),

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the Asian Christians decidedly opted to start a cooperation in these matters with members of non-Christian religions.

In trying to establish the link between Latin American Liberation Theology and the 'dialogue of life' in Asia, I will inevitably have to touch upon some specific ecclesial concerns. One such basic concern is whether a commitment to social justice and peace actually expresses the whole content of the Church's mission in the world today. In Latin America, this issue has led to a tension between liberationists and those who wager on a retrieval of Christian culture in order to launch a new evangelization in the continent. Similarly, in the Asian context the question will be raised whether interreligious dialogue – and the 'dialogue of life' on which it is built – can actually replace the straightforward proclamation of Christ. It is to this latter question that I will pay due attention, by studying two major documents: John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) which in the era of globalization stresses the need of affirming one's Christian identity, and the instruction *Dialogue and Proclamation* (1991) which was issued jointly by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples. While this instruction, too, gives primacy to the proclamation of the faith, it also encourages various forms of dialogue with other religions, ranging from academic studies, to sharing in macro-ecumenical prayer sessions, to a real practice of 'justice and peace' in cooperation with believers of other religions.

It is quite well known that the topics of evangelization and interreligious dialogue were placed on the agenda of the Asian Synod, and were also vividly discussed in the preparatory consultations and deliberations to this synod. Here again, we encounter a whole spectrum of opinions. A large group of theologians and faithful feel that they have something to learn from the practices of members of other religions. Aloysius Pieris summarizes this tendency by saying

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that the church must allow herself "to be baptized in the Jordan of Asian religions and on the Calvary of Asian poverty".[2] For them, the whole stress is on 'presenting Jesus Christ with love and compassion for the poor'. In his own evaluation of the Asian Synod, John Paul II will not deny this aspect of compassion, but wants also to link it with the rich spirituality that has always been alive in the Church. *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999) assigns the work of interreligious dialogue to those mature Christians who fully live from the mystery of Christ and who from there will know to appreciate the spiritual dimension of other religions. The Pope is, in a sense, afraid that the 'activists' who want to engage in a dialogue of life with other religions do so because of a lack of trust in their own identity. For him, a firm rootedness in one's own identity is the basis for every exchange with other religions. Having given this preliminary overview, I now turn to the examination in detail.

1. The option for the poor as a recontextualization of the church's mission: The Latin American case

We can take it for granted that Vatican II inaugurated an openness towards the world. This means in the first instance that, in the already christianized countries, a search was started for making the faith relevant in society: Christian faith had to address burning issues in society such as the question of justice and the promotion of human dignity. In Latin America this led to a commitment of the episcopate to the material necessities of the people.

In the Medellin Conference (1968), an attempt was made to apply Vatican II's "openness towards the world" to the Latin American situation. The bishops made a straightforward option for the poor, whom they called the special

2 A. Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988),50.

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addressees of Christ's evangelizing mission. They had come to see that the church's primary task, in fidelity to the gospel, consists in announcing "the good news to the poor." So the church leaders decided to use their moral authority as well as their financial and human resources to assist the poor in organizing themselves in base communities, cooperatives and pressure groups that stand up for their rights.

A careful reading of the Medellin documents shows the influence of Paulo Freire's liberating "pedagogy of the oppressed" which wagers on activating those people who over the years have internalized their social condition of dependence and submission. The poor sectors, it is said, should be inspired to make themselves the authors of their own history (Med, 2.16); they must be given access to a "liberative education which converts the student into the subject of his own development."[3] Such an education is the "instrument for liberating the masses from all servitude, and for causing them to ascend 'from less human to more human conditions'" (Med, 4.8).

The bishops also denounced the prevailing socio-economic structures as "institutionalized violence" and "sinful structures" (Med, 2.1), harsh words that had the effect of "sending shock waves through the continent, and beyond, to Europe and North-America."[4]

Medellin was the mouthpiece of liberation theology in Latin America, and there can be no doubt that at that moment the emancipation of the poor sectors was seen as the primary task of evangelization. The insight had grown

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3 Elsewhere it is said that the poor should become the "authors of development" (Med, 4.10).

4 P. Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in *Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary*, eds. J. Eagleson and P. Scharper (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), 12.

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that faith in the God of Jesus Christ implied much more than church attendance and works of charity. To understand the requirements of the Kingdom from within, one had to work for transforming a conflict-ridden society into an order where everybody can live a life of human dignity.

The enthusiasm for liberation theology swept throughout the Latin American subcontinent for decades. Yet the movement also attracted the suspicion of intra-ecclesially oriented bishops and theologians who feared that the regained social relevance of the Christian faith might rise at the expense of the mystical and doctrinal aspect of the faith, and of the unity of the church. Already in the Puebla Conference (1979) warnings were issued against the politicization of the faith (ushering in a class division among the faithful) and against the use of Marxist categories in doing social analysis. In this conference, the bishops still endorsed the option for the poor, but under the serious proviso that the strategy be changed. Instead of wagering on the demonstration of leftist people's power eager to secure agrarian and social reforms, the whole emphasis is placed now on the liberating potential of catholic culture.

Their reasoning reads as follows. If one wants to christianize the public domain of society, one ought first to christianize the culture. In the case of Latin America, this means that one has to go back to the old catholic substratum that, in spite of modernization, is still alive mostly among the rural and urban poor with their popular religiosity. The Puebla "Final Document" exalts the deep-seated religiosity of the common people (those Latinos who are not yet westernized), and even pays homage to the tribal natives who live their Catholicism in syncretism with pre-Columbian forms of piety such as the veneration of Mother Earth (pachamama) and of protective spirits (apu's).

In short, the pastoral planning for evangelization focuses now on the revitalization of popular piety. The people's

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religiosity - expressed in pilgrimages, religious feasts, and visits to sanctuaries - "is not just an object of evangelization. In so far as it is a concrete embodiment of the Word of God, it itself is an active way in which the people continually evangelize themselves" ("Final Document," 450).

This evangelization of the people by the people is deemed important because it brings to light the deep values of the Latin American soul: respect for human dignity and spontaneous commitment to mutual solidarity in the form of self-help groups and sustained family structures.[5] What has been sketched here is a real program of inculturation of the faith - recovering the old 'pagan' religious habits and purifying them so that they can become expressions of the genuine Christian habits of the heart - inculturation of the faith thus combined with christianization of the culture.[6]

2. Mission and evangelization under John Paul II

Our short analysis of the Medellin and Puebla Conferences gives us a picture of what apparently is at stake in the Latin American church. What we see is that, under

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5 "Motivated by their religiosity, the people create or utilize space for the practice of brotherhood in the more intimate areas of their lives together: e.g., the neighborhood, the village, their labor unions, and their recreational activities. Rather than giving way to de spair, they confidently and shrewdly wait for the right opportunities to move forward towards the liberation they so ardently desire." See "Final Document," 452, in *Puebla and Beyond.*

6 "If the Church does not reinterpret the religion of the Latin American people, the resultant vacuum will be occupied by sects, secularized political forms of messianism, consumerism and its consequences of nausea and indifference, or pagan pansexualism. Once again the Church is faced with stark alternatives: what it does not assume in Christ is not redeemed, and it becomes a new idol replete with all the old malicious cunning." See "Final Document," 469.

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pressure from some 'vaticanists', a shift in emphasis took place from a liberationist to a culturalist perspective. This shift in emphasis reflects an option that ultimately the pope made in deciding upon the strategies of evangelization. This pope will certainly be remembered in history as a key figure for the role he played in geopolitics. Yet that role he did play - and this is a public secret - as a Polish prelate. In that role, he had twin-accomplishments: combating communism in the East Bloc (think of the support he gave to the Polish labor union Solidarity) and discouraging Marxist-inspired liberation theology in Latin America (and accordingly everywhere else in the world).

This pope has contributed to the fall of communism and the end of the cold war period. Seen in retrospect, thus, it no longer comes as a surprise that, with the pope's blessing, Cardinal Ratzinger discredited liberation theology in 1984.[7] The same is true for Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, who prepared the Puebla Conference and spent much energy - in connivance with Vatican circles - in substituting the model of "socio-economic liberation" with that of "evangelization of culture".[8]

We must also look at the reverse of the coin. What is the future that the church faces after the collapse of communism? Is it really the case that, after the defeat of atheistic materialism, Christianity is going to be better off in the former communist countries? Or, to focus on Poland, is there a chance that the Polish church will grow in perseverance and zeal in its post-communist phase? Or will the Catholics there, on the contrary, be fatally lured into

7 See *Libertatis Nuntius* (1984); see also *Centesimus Annus* (1991) where the pope rejoices over the fall of the East Bloc as an atheistic regime.

8 M. Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," in *Puebla and Beyond*, 40.

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adopting a consumerist mentality in the style of secularized western Europe, where belief in the personal God of the bible is scoring rather low?[9] At any rate, what one can easily observe is that, in Latin America and also elsewhere, the church hierarchy is calling upon the faithful to firmly resist secularism and materialistic consumerism, and to be faithful to their religion of old.

In fact the church today has to wager a battle for survival. Her worst enemy, as it becomes slowly evident, is one of her own offspring, namely, economism, which is an extreme form of western calculative thinking, or science turned into ruthless profit-thinking. The name this enemy takes on today is economic globalization, a new 'deity' that divides the world into haves and have-nots, into winners who can afford consumption and losers who are condemned to exclusion.

It is not the place here to treat in detail the complex phenomenon of globalization. And it is complex indeed because, besides the rather negative aspects I have evoked, there are also positive, promising elements in it.[10] Yet one thing can be surely affirmed: globalization geographically compresses the world into one global village, thus putting strains of requisite structural adjustments on all local entities, wherever they are located. This way globalization creates new tensions (alongside new opportunities). It also ushers in a mentality of relativity in the following forms:

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9 In Europe there seems to be a growth in religious cosmic awareness, though this trend cannot be generalized.

10 See e.g. R. Bliese, "Globalization," in *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives*, eds. K. Müller et al (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997), 172-78. For a more cautious approach to the phenomenon, see M. Amaladoss (ed), *Globalization and Its Victims, as Seen by Its Victims* (Delhi, 1999).

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western secularism (with no clear God-idea except that of mammon), postmodern versatility, and exposure of Christianity to the disconcerting truth-claims of the other world religions (some of them tending to fundamentalism).[11]

It is in this context that I would like to place John Paul II's encyclical Redemptoris Missio (1990), written 15 years after Paul VI's Evangelii Nuntiandi and 25 years after Ad Gentes. In this encyclical, elements of globalization already come to the fore, although not in a systematic way, as we will see below. The encyclical's main concern is the revitalization of missionary zeal, which has waned compared to that of the pre-Vatican II period. Indeed, with the decline in vocations in Europe and the United States, the number of 'classical' missionaries has drastically dropped.

The remaining western missionaries had started, after the independence of so many countries in Africa and Asia, to entrust responsibilities to indigenous clergy and indigenous religious. Thus, today most of the missionary congregations still present in the Third World have recruited indigenous members. In fact, John Paul II's Redemptoris Missio (RM) is wagering on them: the "young churches" should take over the torch from the western missionaries and become proselytizers in their own areas.

John Paul II distances himself from Paul VI, who in Evangelii Nuntiandi understood mission as evangelization (using both terms interchangeably) and gave the notion such a broad content that almost every activity of committed Christians could be called evangelization such as pastoral work, education, solidarity with the poor, and neighborhood activities. John Paul II, on the contrary, wants the church to proclaim the message, elicit conversions, and baptize non-

11 See Akbar Ahmed-Hastings Donnan, *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

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Christians in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Confronted with the fact that various parts of the world have become interrelated, and that the nations are growing together to form one world community, the pope laments that it is apparent that non-Christians will continue to outnumber the Christians into the third millennium. Two quotes may illustrate this. "The number of those who do not know Christ and do not belong to the Church is constantly on the increase. Indeed, since the end of the [Vatican II] Council it has almost doubled" (RM, 3). Furthermore,

The growth in the number of the new churches in recent times should not deceive us. Within the territories entrusted to these churches - particularly in Asia, but also in Africa, Latin America, and Oceania - there remain vast regions still to be evangelized. In many nations entire peoples and cultural areas of great importance have not yet been reached by the proclamation of the Gospel and the presence of a local church. (RM, 37)

For John Paul II, it is time thus to stress again the urgency of deploying a missionary zeal towards the gentiles. In this light a clarification of terms is given. Evangelization in the strong sense simply means mission (conversion to Catholicism). This, of course, must go hand in hand with a deepening of the believers' faith (through pastoral care), and also with a re-evangelization of the baptized who have lost their faith or have become post-Christians in a civilization that for the rest is marked by gospel values.

The last two categories must be reached by the "new evangelization".[12] Joined to this, however, a special effort

12 See RM, 33. The text of the encyclical can be found in *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation*, ed. W. Burrows (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 5-55.

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should be made, at the threshold of the third millennium, to propagate the faith among non-Christians. As far as this is concerned, the pope speaks in visionary terms. It is no longer a question, he says, of converting individuals: we should reach whole groups, not just those living at the margins of a civilization, but those who constitute the heart of it and live in the big cities.[13]

The mission of Catholics consists in making their presence felt among, and to convert, the inhabitants of the new "megapolises" in Asia and other continents - where immigrants from various quarters gather to build a "new culture" and where decisions are made about global economics and international politics. In this context the pope remarks that, through the means of communication, the world is becoming "a global village" in which the big cities form the "modern equivalents of the Areopagus" (RM, 37). The Catholics should use their influence and witness to attract in this milieu non-Christians who are eager to assimilate Christian values, and receive them into the church through baptism. Missionary work must be conducted on various fronts: among the socially destitute and among those who, in the new urban settings, hunger for spiritual values to give meaning to their lives. The pope says:

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13 In RM, 37, one reads: "In the modern age, missionary activity has been carried out especially in isolated regions which are far from centers of civilization and which are hard to penetrate because of difficulties of communication, language or climate. Today the image of mission *ad gentes* is perhaps changing: efforts should be concentrated on the big cities, where new customs and styles of living arise together with new forms of culture and communication, which then influence the wider population." This text seems to indicate that the mass conversion of rural tribes (e.g. Dalits, Lievens mission in Ranchi, India) ought to be superseded by something else.

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Not only in cultures with strong religious elements, but also in secularized societies, the spiritual dimension of life is being sought after as an antidote to dehumanization. This phenomenon - the so-called "religious revival" - is not without ambiguity, but it also presents an opportunity. The Church has an immense spiritual patrimony to offer mankind, a heritage in Christ, who called himself "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). (RM, 38).

The pope's vision seems to anticipate what Samuel Huntington describes as God's revenge. After the implosion of communism and the collapse of ideologies, the new World Order will thrive on the forces of religion. Alluding to the same megapolises as the pope did, Huntington writes: "Participants in the religious resurgence come from all walks of life but overwhelmingly from two constituencies, both urban, and both mobile. (i) Recent migrants to the cities generally need emotional, social, and material support and guidance, which religious groups provide more than any other source. Religion, for them, as Régis Debray put it, is not 'the opium of the people, but the vitamin of the weak.'" (ii) The other principal constituency is the new middle class who seek to strengthen their identity through religion, and this is true especially among the youth.[14]

Where Huntington points to revivals of religions in general, the pope wants the catholic faith to become influential. In this respect he warns against certain aberrations, which on close inspection also relate to globalization. Rejected is the relativistic opinion that "one religion is as good as another" (RM, 36) and also an exaggerated regnocentrism that holds that to establish God's kingdom of justice and peace is more important than establishing the church. Here the pope makes it clear that

14 See S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 101.

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"this is not the Kingdom of God as we know it from Revelation. The Kingdom cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church...The Kingdom is made manifest in the very person of Christ (whom the Church proclaims) " (RM, 18).

Finally, a serious warning is issued against some Asian theologians who, on the basis of a Logos-Christology, tend to acknowledge multiple incarnations of the Logos - in the founders and saints of other religions. "To introduce any sort of separation between the Word and Jesus Christ is contrary to the Christian faith...Jesus is the incarnate Word - a single and indivisible person" (RM, 6). It is for the proclamation of this Christ that missionary vocations should be fostered - vocations for life, spending all their energies in the propagation of the catholic faith.

3. The Instruction Dialogue and Proclamation (DP)

Redemptoris Missio also touches upon the topic of interreligous dialogue. However, since this topic has been treated more extensively in the instruction Dialogue and Proclamation (May 1991) issued jointly by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples,[15] I limit myself to a review of this document.

Four forms of dialogue are listed:[16] (1) the dialogue of life, where people of different religions share their life

15 These congregations issued the document on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*. While they were working on it, they did not know that the pope was preparing *Redemptoris Missio*. Regularly they had to submit their text to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which adjusted passages of their text to avoid possible contradictions with the papal encyclical.

16 These four types already figure in the document *Dialogue and Mission* (1984), 28-35.

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concerns, (2) the dialogue of action in which these partners "collaborate for the integral development and liberation of the people," (3) the dialogue of theological exchange where "specialists deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages," and (4) the dialogue of religious experience where persons from different traditions share their experiences of God reached through prayer and meditation (DP, 42).[17]

It is said that, although each of the four approaches has something particular, they are in fact interrelated. This statement can be read as intimating that theological reflection (the dialogue of theological exchange) should not be separated from prayer and meditation. Anyhow, it is stated that dialogue is not confined to specialists. Every Christian in whatever walk of life has the capacity for engaging in a dialogue of life and a dialogue of action. And after a while, these activities will spontaneously be crowned by a sharing of religious experiences with members of other religions. The model for the latter is the pope's prayer session with leaders of other religions at the Assisi meeting (27 October 1986).

The aim and purpose of interreligious dialogue conducted this way is to remove the ingrained prejudices religions have against each other. So it is no wonder that other religions too - such as Hinduism and Islam – are encouraged to know each other better in order to arrive at a peaceful co-existence.[18] Indirectly, such a curbing of

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17 The text of DP can be found in *Redemption and Dialogue*, 94-118.

18 "The Church encourages and fosters interreligious dialogue not only between herself and other religious traditions, but even among these religious traditions themselves" (DP, 80). "Other religions have also been led through dialogue to renewal and greater openness" (DP, 54).

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prejudices will also be beneficial to Catholics, especially where they constitute a minority, as is the case in large parts of Asia. Openness and renewal are expected to flow from sharing religious experiences and insights. And where this openness and renewal take place, the presence of the Spirit becomes palpable. Dialogue and Proclamation place a heavy accent on the working of the Spirit[19] even outside the confines of the visible church. Many commentators welcome this emphasis because they feel that the encounter at the level of spirituality is being honored that way.

In the estimation of Jacques Dupuis, the document goes a step further than Vatican II, which was still classical in its view that members of other religions can be saved when they honestly follow the voice of their conscience. Now, however, it is also stated that some rituals of non-Christian religions can be helpful in fostering piety and a sincere moral life. The Spirit is, so to speak, also at work in the organized religions outside the Christian churches.[20]

Dupuis calls attention to the following statement: "Concretely, it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their conscience that the members of other religions respond positively to God's invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their savior" (DP, 29). From this he concludes that these persons are saved by Christ not "in

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19 In 1979, *Redemptor Hominis* (RH) spoke already of the non-Christians' "firm belief" as being "an effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the confines of the Mystical Body" (RH, 6); quoted in DP, 26.

20 "The mystery of salvation reaches out to them, in a way known to God, through the invisible action of the Spirit of Christ" (DP, 29).

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spite of, or beside, their own tradition, but in the sincere practice of it, and, in some mysterious way, through it."[21]

Having said this, Dupuis goes on giving the nuances that are added to this bold statement. Not every thing is good in the other religions' rituals and practices, and therefore a continuous discernment of spirits has to take place. The non-Christian religions ought to be purified from elements that are perhaps sinful.[22] Some elements in their traditions may be incompatible with the Christian message and even with authentic human aspirations, as they find expression in a variety of cultures.[23]

The presence of sin in other religious traditions shows the need for proclaiming the Christian message in all its purity. Yet in spite of these reservations, Christians should allow themselves to be challenged by what is good in other religions - when they see the seriousness with which non-Christians, from the background of their religion, strive for holiness and moral perfection. This should become an occasion for Christians to go to the roots of their own faith. "Through dialogue, (Christians) may be moved to give up ingrained prejudices, to revise preconceived ideas, and even sometimes to allow the understanding of their faith to be purified" (DP, 49).

In its final version the document is apparently a compromise text. It cheers the good effects that can flow

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21 J. Dupuis, "A Theological Commentary: Dialogue and Proclamation," in *Redemption and Dialogue*, 152.

22 "For sin has been at work in the world, and so religious traditions, notwithstanding their positive values, reflect the limitations of the human spirit, sometimes inclined to choose evil" (DP, 31).

23 "Religious practices have sometimes had an alienating effect upon cultures" (DP, 45).

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from contacts with people of other religions, while continuing to maintain that the fullness of grace is to be found only within the catholic compound. The following is a passage in which the compromise character comes to the fore: "This (will to engage in dialogue) does not mean that in entering into dialogue the partners should lay aside their respective religious convictions. The opposite is true: the sincerity of interreligious dialogue requires that each enter into it with the integrity of his or her own faith." But then a qualification is added that ushers in the superiority of Christian faith:

At the same time, while remaining firm in their belief that in Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man (cf. 1 Tim 2:4-6), the fullness of revelation has been given to them, Christians must remember that God has also manifested himself in some way to the followers of other religious traditions. Consequently, it is with receptive minds that they approach the convictions and values of others. (DP, 48)[24]

An earlier sentence tells us that true encounter presupposes that the dialogue partners--Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians among others--go to their own roots. Then the paragraph above makes it clear that Christians are in full possession of the truth through the revelation of Christ. So they must regard the other religions as geared to receiving this fullness as a necessary complement to their enterprise. The receptiveness towards other religions is nothing else but a patient waiting for the moment when they embrace the fullness of the faith. This passage (DP, 48) is an example of how an ingenious rectification is used to meet the pope's requirement, for Redemptoris Missio

24 Those church leaders who are not enthusiastic with interreligious dialogue will seize this unevenness as an opportunity to discourage interreligious dialogue, which is an encounter in which the religions are encouraged to go to their roots.

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inculcates upon the faithful that "dialogue does not dispense from proclamation" (RM, 55).

The document Dialogue and Proclamation is aware of this intransigence, and tries to create some openness. It states:

Interreligious dialogue and proclamation, though not on the same level, are both authentic elements of the Church's evangelizing mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are intimately related, but not interchangeable. (DP, 77)

This is a pragmatic statement. The two activities are distinct, but one church community and even one person can, in practice, engage in both.

The question, however, remains: which activity has priority over the other? In order to answer this question, one must specify the notion 'priority.' Indeed, there can be priority in the temporal order that is not necessarily priority in the essential order. As to the temporal sequence, with what does one start? The document leaves it open to the particular circumstances.

In some cases proclamation will come first. In other cases it will be better to start with dialogue. But especially then, one ought not to forget that the ultimate goal of the dialogue is proclamation, which gets priority on the level of the essence of Christian identity.[25] Or as Dupuis comments: "If (in the document) dialogue is treated first, this is not because it has any priority over proclamation. It is simply

25 "They must nevertheless always bear in mind that dialogue, as already been said, does not constitute the whole mission of the Church, that it cannot simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation insofar as the dynamic process of the Church's evangelizing mission reaches in it its climax and its fullness" (DP, 82).

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due to the fact that dialogue is the primary concern of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue which initiated the preparation of the document."[26]

4. The Asian Case

To explore the further developments of how dialogue relates to proclamation and vice versa, I now turn to the reception of these ideas in the Asian context. I will make use of the "Working Paper" (WP) offered for discussion in the "Special Assembly for Asia" held in Rome from April 19 till May 14, 1998.

The WP gives a picture of the characteristic situation of the Asian countries and of the ecclesiastical realities in particular, and notes that, at the dawn of the third millennium, two-thirds of the world's population live in Asia, "that is, 3.36 billion people, of whom only 94.8 million are Catholics."[27] It continues to evaluate the catholic mission history in Asia in which, with the exception of the Philippines and Kerala (India), Catholics and even Christians constitute a tiny minority in the continent. The WP then ventures into proposing a blueprint for the church's actual mission of love and service in the Asian continent.

Instead of giving an outline of the whole of the WP, I shall highlight some basic insights that are spread over the various sections of the document. I try to evaluate them, taking into consideration that the text seeks to harmonize the so often conflicting responses that had been sent after the preliminary consultation.[28] Here is a report of a cluster of responses:

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26 Dupuis, 155.

27 A. Bastes, "Asian Formation for Consecrated Life," *Origins* 27/46 (May 7, 1998): 776.

28 To prepare a meeting like this, *lineamenta* (guidelines for consultation) had been dispatched; the responses (*relationes*) to

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Many responses insist that the church's program of new evangelization in Asia could receive assistance by engaging in a "threefold dialogue," that is, a dialogue with the poor, a dialogue with other religions of Asia, and a dialogue with Asian cultures. This threefold dialogue would provide the concrete manner for announcing the person and message of Jesus through acts of love and service. Such a dialogue would also inspire and provide a method for the church's mission. (WP, 37)[29]

This point of view is not given any further comment, but it is for various reasons fascinating. It, first of all, brings closer together the elements of dialogue and mission/ evangelization. Second, through this rapprochement, it focuses on important concerns such as the believers' immersion in the life-world of the poor as well as in Asian religions and cultures. In reading this text, I cannot help but think of Aloysius Pieris' assertion that the church must allow herself "to be baptized in the Jordan of Asian religion and on the Calvary of Asian poverty".[30]

As far as the plight of the poor is concerned, the need is stressed "to present Jesus Christ with love and compassion for the poor." The more the church communities will identify themselves with the society's poor, and those suffering from injustice, the more will they bear witness to their faith.

"The image of Jesus as brother, who shares his life with the suffering, will appeal to the Asian people more than any other" (WP, 29). This exposure to poverty appears to have a double purpose: to alleviate the plight of the oppressed

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the *lineamenta* then formed the basis for the "Working Paper" (*instrumentum laboris*).

29 The text of the WP can be found in *Origins* 27/38 (March 12, 1998): 634-52.

30 A.Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988),50.

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(reference is made to child-laborers, prostituted women, the defenseless and illiterate), and to sensitize Christians to the ways in which Asian religions face up to suffering. The "dialogue of life" also appears to have this double purpose: to encourage believers from various religions to work together so as to find solutions for concrete material problems and, by doing so, to enable the persons involved to get to know each other better from the background of their respective religious motives.

The "dialogue with the poor" opens up the perspective for a dialogue with Asian religions and cultures. This circularity has its own momentum. As for the "dialogue of life," which also includes an interreligious collaboration to combat dire poverty, this is to concrete milieu in which believers of various religions come to appreciate what they have in common, as well as what they can really learn from each other. Indeed, Christians engaged in such a dialogue of life are given the opportunity to acquaint themselves with a variety of cultural and cultic equivalents of their own practices. These equivalents present in other religions enable Christians to get a deeper understanding of their own basic faith convictions, which they then are able to communicate better to others. This cross-fertilization comes to the fore in the following text:

As a variety of responses mention - Christians in Asia can profit from considering elements shared with the followers of other religions and cultures of Asia, e.g., the centrality of the will of God with Islam; with Hindus, the practice of meditation, contemplation, renunciation of one's will and the spirit of non-violence; with Buddhists, detachment and compassion; with Confucianism, filial piety and humanitarianism; with Taoists, simplicity and humility; and with traditional religions, reverence and respect for nature. (WP, 33)

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These are common elements that may be conducive for Christians to deepen their own faith. In recognizing these elements, Christians in Asia in turn will begin to realize that they have much to offer to followers of other religions. Here a whole range of values are listed that traditionally belong to a Christian life of service and love: reconciliation and peace, obedience to God's will, attention to the sacred dignity of every human person, love of neighbor, and human promotion in many forms. All these culminate in "the value of suffering and service which is central to the mystery of Jesus Christ" (WP, 33).

The preceding enumeration of religious values and human concerns makes it clear that interreligious communication takes place on the level of experienced life realities. This is explicitly mentioned in the document: "Because the emphasis in Asia has always been on religious experience rather than on dogma, many maintain that Christ is better communicated not on the purely theoretical or verbal level in an orderly presentation of doctrines but through shared experience" (WP, 47). Furthermore, "in dialogue the spontaneous question to the other is not, What do you believe? but, what has been your spiritual experience? Some responses relate that such interaction is perhaps the only kind of proclamation possible in some parts of Asia." (WP, 47)

The last quote presents one of the opinions that were discussed at the Synod for Asia. It also constitutes one of the stumbling blocks that will continue to provoke discussion in the future. Indeed, the exchange of spiritual experiences which, for some, is probably the only form of proclamation that is viable in some parts of Asia,[31] will certainly be received

31 M. Amaladoss, too, seems to be of this opinion. "Dialogue is not between two religious systems. It is a conversation and sharing between two persons and communities. There is mutual respect for each other, but also mutual honesty with regard to each

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well by followers of other religions, and even induce them to espouse feelings of emotional identification with Christianity. But will it also lead to conversions and new baptisms? Apparently not, or most likely not.

The WP knows about this situation, when it says: "Even those who believe in Christ as God do not see the necessity to embrace the Christian religion, much less the Church, despite the fact that the Church and her institutions do much for society in general" (WP, 30). For this attitude a lot of reasons can be given. Some, it is said, do not find it tempting to join a church that even in its local appearance has retained a western garb.[32] Still others feel that they will be stigmatized by their Muslim or Hindu community once they opt for baptism.[33] And in the Hindu setting, with its belief in multiple incarnations, many find it difficult to proclaim Jesus Christ as the sole savior,[34] fearing that such a proclamation may be explained as fanaticism and disrespect for the 'non-saved.'

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one's identity. One cannot really speak to the other at the religious level without witnessing to one's own deep convictions, spiritual experiences, and moral options based on values. I do not know what more proclamation can do." See M. Amaladoss, "The Challenge of Mission Today," in *Trends in Mission: Towards the Third Mil lennium*, eds. W. Jenkinson and H. O'Sullivan (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 375.

32 See in this respect the interventions of Cardinal Paul Shan Kuohsi (Taiwan) and Archbishop Leo Ikenaga (Japan) in *Origins* 27/45 (April 30, 1998): 752, 754.

33 See Valerian D'Souza, "The Pastoral Challenge of Unbaptized Believers," *Origins* 27/46 (May 7, 1998): 778-80.

34 See in this respect the warning issued in WP, 27: "On this topic many responses mention that Christ is not simply one of many' savior' figures among the many Asian religions and philosophies, but the 'one and only' savior."

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Similar objections can be heard from native priests and religious who belong to missionary congregations. Some say that, in the post-colonial period of evangelization, it is better to content oneself with engaging in a "dialogue of life" with the Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists one is living with. It is enough that, through such a dialogue, these non-Christians become better Hindus, Muslims, or Buddhists. Besides this, no further step is needed. Why should one, indeed, require them to crown their authentic belief in God with the confession that Jesus Christ is the only mediator? Then to force them into subscribing to this dogmatic statement may divert their attention from what - in the given circumstances - appears to be much more essential: the encounter with God in the heartbeat of spirituality.

When these priests and religious tend to espouse the above 'relativistic option,' they do so not because they have become indifferent to their Christian inheritance. For them, Christ is still their savior and nobody else. They, however, have become tolerant and patient with respect to the new (non-baptized) 'converts' because they have come to understand to what extent these converts to a deeper religiosity are impregnated with the fibers and tissues of a religious civilization, whose particular genius cannot be simply brushed aside. For them, respect for cultural difference prevails over the proclamation of the unicity of Christ - and of a church that in her heart is still too western.

In certain circles, a kind of eschatological patience is apparently gaining ground. They leave it up to the one God, Creator and Redeemer, how He/She is going to lure the followers of other religions to an ultimate discovery of the true God. In other words, they trust God to make sure that these followers - through a deepening of their own particular religiosity and thanks to enriching contacts with witnessing Christians – will be initiated into the 'arcane mysteries' of the God of Jesus Christ. They believe that God, as the true

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eschatological power, knows much better than any Christian institution engaged in mission how to attract the non-Christian believers to the core-values of Christian life.[35]

In the meantime, however, the roman congregations do not share the selfsame patience. They want their statistics of baptized Christians to get on the increase. Within their eschatological perspective, they wager on the growing numbers of those who through their Christian witness are going to induce the non-Christian believers to mature in their experience of the arcane mysteries of God - of the God whom we Christians call the God of Jesus Christ. This difference in perspective confronts us with the heart of the matter of the Asian controversy, a controversy that is far from being settled today.

5. Ecclesia in Asia

On 6 November 1999, John Paul II released in New Delhi his Apostolic Exhostation Ecclesia in Asia (EA). The particular angle from which I will look at this document is whether or not it goes beyond this dilemma: either a patient waiting for the ways in which the Spirit is going to attract non-Christian believers to the core values of Christianity, or a decisive option for missionary zeal, based on the conviction that, without Christian witness, no new converts will ever be joining the catholic flock.

After diligent reading of the document, I opine that the dilemma is overcome only at the level of a speculative theological reflection that, in its practical applications, displays the characteristics of John Paul II's way of theologizing. There are two aspects I would like to treat separately.

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35 See D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 505-6, 519.

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First, the dilemma is resolved at a speculative level only. As is well known, the strength (but also the weakness) of this type of thinking is its systematization. Although it acknowledges some of the objections raised against the standard type of evangelization, it neutralizes them by placing them in a comprehensive perspective. For example, EA recognizes the importance of a theology of the Holy Spirit because such a theology takes into account the Asian aspiration for a lived spirituality over against a notional dogmatic approach. It therefore devotes many pages to the role of God's Spirit in the act of creation, and to the Spirit's working in the life of Christ and that of the post-paschal communities (communities of disciples to whom the resurrected Christ imparts his Spirit).

Ecclesia in Asia stresses also that, in order to evoke this power of the Spirit, narrative theologies[36] (narrating the Spirit-filled deeds of Christ's life) and a liturgy-oriented life-style[37] (the Spirit lifting up our hearts in thanksgiving and prayer) are the most appropriate means for making Christianity known in Asia. They are the most efficient ways as well for making Christians realize to what extent the Holy Spirit is also operative in and through the rituals and moral standards of other religions.

At the same time, the document raises the phenomenon of the varied workings of the Spirit – inside and outside Christianity - to a speculative level that, in its own way, retrieves the question of how the many relate to the one.

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36 "In general, narrative methods akin to Asian cultural forms are to be preferred" (EA, 20).

37 "The liturgy is the source and summit of all Christian life and mission. It is a decisive means of evangelization, especially in Asia, where the followers of different religions are so drawn to worship, religious festivals, and popular devotions" (EA, 22).

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From the outset, it is made clear that the only acceptable type of many-ness is that which is truly connected with the one-ness of the deity. This intimate connection comes to the fore in the Holy Trinity, that is, in the genuine exchange of love between the divine persons.[38]

This connection becomes also visible in the Christian community and its variety of charismas, which are all meant to build up the one body of Christ (EA, 17). Yet, the document continues, it would be erroneous to think that just any type of community life can be equated with the distinctively Christian community life, for only in the latter are multiplicity and interactive communion of the many firmly grounded in the one God and the way God chooses to be revealed.

What is tacitly presupposed in EA is the trinitarian articulation as developed from the background of Hellenistic civilization. In this articulation[39] the one God gives birth to his only-begotten Son, and this only Son (especially with his incarnation) is the model of all creaturely relationship to the deity[40] (whereby the role of the Spirit consists in vivifying

38 "We cannot however isolate or separate one Person from the others, since each is revealed only within the communion of life and action of the Trinity. The saving action of Jesus has its origin in the communion of the Godhead, and opens the way for all who believe in him to enter into intimate communion with the Trinity and with one another in the Trinity." (EA, 12)

39 EA, 20 intimates that the articulation from this background belongs to the essentials of the faith: "Even the Ecumenical Councils of the Church which formulated doctrines binding on the Church had to use the linguistic, philosophical and cultural resources available to them. Thus these resources become a shared possession of the whole Church, capable of expressing her Christological doctrine in an appropriate and universal way."

40 "In Jesus we marvel at the inexhaustible capacity of the human heart to love God and man, even when this entails great suffering" (EA, 13).

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the love between Father and Son and in making it burgeon outside the confines of the deity). In line with this, the document underlines that the Son alone can become incarnate in the world: "We believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the one Saviour because he alone – the Son – accomplished the Father's universal plan of salvation" (EA, 14).

The possibility of multiple incarnations of the Logos is ruled out from the outset, and it is precisely this 'heresy' that Asian thinking is inclined to: "Some of the followers of the great religions of Asia have no problem in accepting Jesus as a manifestation of the Divine or the Absolute, or as an 'enlightened one'. But it is difficult for them to see Him as the only manifestation of the Divine."[41] Having rejected this view, and in line with this repudiation, the document makes it clear that the role of the Spirit must be seen also in close connection with Jesus as the only manifestation of the divine. The Holy Spirit communicated in fullness to the world can only be the Spirit that the Son of God imparted to his church, so that this church and she alone, under the guidance of the successors of Peter,[42] the representative of Christ on earth, is in full possession of the gift of salvation. "The Holy Spirit's universal presence can never be separated from his activity within the Body of Christ" (EA, 16).

From all this it follows, first, that the happy occurrence of saintly persons outside the church must be regarded as a preparation for them to enter into full membership in the

41 EA, 20, quoting from the "Special Assembly for Asia" of the Synod of Bishops, *relatio ante disceptationem*; see *L'Osservatore Romano* (22 April 1998): 5.

42 "It is in fact within the perspective of ecclesial communion that the universal authority of the Successor of Peter shines forth more clearly" (EA, 25).

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church (and via this mediation) into an intimate communion with the Holy Trinity. Second, the church has the obligation not to become locked up in herself but to testify to the whole world that she is primarily here to share her intimate treasure with the whole of humanity. "The Church and every individual Christian within her, may not keep hidden or monopolize this newness and richness which has been received from God's bounty in order to be communicated to all mankind."[43]

Explicit proclamation of Christ as the sole Savior of the world thus becomes a necessity and sacred duty. If there is a patient waiting on the part of the church until the Spirit will have lured the "anonymous Christians" into the persuasion that their true home is within the fold of the church, then this waiting itself feeds on insights gained from the Christian understanding of the intimate relationship between the one and the many, as expressed in the trinitarian-christological dogmas of Nicea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon. This particular understanding impels the church to alternate and balance her patient waiting with the impatience of missionary zeal. The church must regard herself as placed under a judgment; she will have to account for what she finally is doing with the talents entrusted to her. Have these talents been bearing fruit a hundredfold? Or has the talented church become weak and forgetful of her mission?

Besides this classical speculative solution, EA bears the marks of John Paul II's personal way of theologizing which I would characterize as drawing practical applications from Christian dogmas. One of these applications is, as already mentioned, the conviction that the Christians must not keep to themselves the treasure they received, but on the contrary must communicate it to all humankind for whom it is meant.

43 EA, 10, with citation from *Redemptoris Missio*, 11.

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The pope lives by strong convictions. The thread running through his writings is that Jesus Christ, the fullness of life, reveals to human beings the true meaning of their existence: "The incarnate Son of God not only revealed completely the Father and his plan of salvation, he also 'fully reveals man to himself.'"[44] Applied to everyday life, this means that wherever there is hatred, war, division, and disrespect of human dignity,[45] we meet human realities that fly in the face of what true humanity should be. These are realities in which the riches of Christ, the light of the world, have been eradicated.

Ignorance of Christ leads to disregard of the human person or to an underestimation of his/her possibilities. As explained in Redemptor Hominis, "the redemption of the world is, at its deepest root, (the emergence of) the fullness of justice in a human heart, the heart of the first-born Son – in order that it may become justice in the hearts of many human beings".[46] This fullness of justice comes to bear on the ways in which human beings relate to each other, for "the mission of Jesus not only restored communion between God and humanity, it also established a new communion between human beings alienated from one another because of sin" (EA, 13).

John Paul II wants to maximize the requirements of Christian existence, knowing that grace is not cheap (to use D. Bonhöffer's expression). Two examples may illustrate this. The document sets great store by the practice of Christian virtues. When these are absent, it is said, greed and enmity will make their inroads in the realities of the world. Hence it

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44 EA, 13, with citation from *Redemptor Hominis*, 10.

45 Chapter VI of EA (33-41) gives a lengthy description of infringements of human rights.

46 EA, 13, quoting from *Redemptor Hominis*, 9.

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is quite logical that the pope affirms that burning issues such as underdevelopment and environmental degradation must be regarded as ethical problems and not just as difficulties one will come to terms with through appropriate techniques.[47]

The other example is the consecrated life of men and women whose "silent example of poverty and abnegation, of purity and sincerity, of self-sacrifice in obedience" is capable of speaking to all people of good will. Consecrated life is not only a privileged means of effective evangelization; it can also lead to a "fruitful dialogue with surrounding cultures and religions" (EA, 44). The rationale behind this reference is clear. It aims to show that the catholic heritage of monastic life and its rich tradition of asceticism and mysticism can compare favorably with the deeply rooted religious values in Asian culture "such as love of silence and contemplation, simplicity, harmony, detachment, non-violence, the spirit of hard work, discipline, frugal living, the thirst for learning and philosophical inquiry" (EA, 6, 23).

Maximization of Christian existence is the final answer the pope gives to the challenge of interreligious dialogue. He somewhat fears that proponents of inculturation and dialogue might not be standing firm in their faith, and therefore recommends that only mature Christians who live their faith to the fullest should engage in dialogue, whereas others must abstain.[48] That is the reason also for the

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47 "After all, human development is never a merely technical or economic question; it is fundamentally *a human and moral question*" (EA, 32). "The protection of the environment is not only a *technical* question; it is also and above all an *ethical* issue" (EA, 41).

48 "Only those with a mature and convinced Christian faith are qualified to engage in genuine interreligious dialogue" (EA, 31).

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emphasis placed on prayer as the fertile breeding ground for any apostolate,[49] as well as on communion with church leaders and finally with the bishop of Rome. In line with this, the dialogue of life is specified now as "dialogue of life and heart" (EA, 31), whereas the former binomial "dialogue and proclamation" is replaced with "communion and dialogue for mission" (EA, 24).

6. Concluding Remarks

I have suggested that Ecclesia in Asia has resolved the dilemma between patient waiting and impatient proclamation only at the level of a speculative theological reflection, complemented with John Paul II's personal way of drawing practical applications from Christian dogmas. It has become clear by now that these practical applications directly relate to prayer and contemplation, as they are practiced in line with the Christian ascetical and mystical tradition.

If one must speak of an achievement of EA, then it is certainly this one: the firm conviction of belonging to a well-established tradition of prayer. This unambiguous accent is more than welcome in the discussion. In my opinion, however, it is an accent that must not be isolated from basic insights that emerged in the continent-wide discussions before the promulgation of the document. One of these insights is the willingness to learn from the practices of other traditions in view of deepening and invigorating one's own approach to prayer, for without contact with the unexpected – in this case the cultural expressions of other religious traditions - there is always the danger of contenting oneself with a sterile repetition of the same.

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49 "I repeat how important it is to revitalize prayer and contemplation in the process of dialogue" (EA, 31).

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A certain fusion of horizons with other, non-Christian traditions may result in the discovery of oft-forgotten mystical schools in Christianity – schools that themselves draw their deepest inspiration from contact with strange sources such as the Cloud of Unknowing or the dark night of John of the Cross. If one must concede to the pope that only mature believers are qualified to engage in interreligious dialogue, then it should also be added that contacts with other faiths could enlarge the horizons of Christians and thus help them become mature believers.

Whether one likes it or not, we are living today in a world in which pluralism need no longer be seen as a threat but as a chance for renewal. The new Catholicity that is going to break through is one that abandons isolationism (in whatever form this may occur) and welcomes the input of the "stranger" whom one comes to respect and appreciate for what he/she is and for what he/she has to offer as a contribution to the ways in which we live out our common humanity. Just as monoculturalism is passé, a monologue of religious self-affirmations is also part of what has been. In a world of pluralism, mature believers do not shun the dialogue, but rather reach out for it. If religions are not for fostering a growing brotherhood and sisterhood on earth, what will they be for?

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THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST AND CATHOLIC ECUMENICAL EFFORTS

Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. Winkler

Only contemporary ecumenical dialogues have brought the oriental Churches back into western awareness. Often they are just seen as a "Nestorian" or "Monophysite" episode in the history of early Christianity within the Roman Empire. In western Systematic Theology and Church History, these Churches are often "straw men" knocked down early in a chapter on Christology. As a result of the controversies of the fifth and sixth century, these Christians were marginalised. Latin and Greek theologians regarded them as heretical, and they receded from awareness in the "western" Latin and Greek Churches. As a consequence, the study of Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, and Ethiopian patristic literature has only been done at Departments for Philology, Semitic or Oriental Studies and not at Schools of Theology.

My aim in this paper is to give insight into these theological encounters with the Assyrian Church of the East with special focus on the relations with the Roman Catholic Church.[1] However, first there should be a brief introduction as background information.

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1 For further information cf. my "The Current Theological Dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East", in: R. Lavenant, Symposium Syriacum VII. Rome 1998 (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256) 158-173, and "Between Progress and Setback: The Ecumenical Dialogue of the Assyrian Church of the East", in: Syriac Dialogue 4. Fourth non-official consultation on dialogue within the Syriac tradition. Ed. Pro Oriente. Vienna 2001, 138-151.

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1. Church of the East and Terminology

In Late Antiquity Christendom in the Persian Empire had been called "(Apostolic) Church of the East", because it spread in the East and outside the borders of the Roman Empire. Already in the 7th century, while the Arabs conquered the Middle East, East Syriac missionaries reached the court of the Emperor of China, and in the European Middle Ages the Church of the East was geographically far larger than the Roman Catholic Church. This can be easily shown by a remarkable Syriac document, published in English translation in 1928 by E.A Wallis Budge (1857-1934).[2] The narrative that goes back to the 14th century, originally written in Persian, recounts the travels of two Chinese Mongolian Christian monks in the 13th century. Bar Sauma from today's Beijing and Markos from Kawshang set out for Jeursalem to pray at the tomb of the Lord. Most probably they were emissaries of the Mongolian king Kublai Khan, sent to the West to negotiate an alliance with the Christian kings of Europe against the Arab Muslims in the Middle East. The two humble monks travelled along the Silk Road through China and Central Asia and reached Kurdistan and today's Iraq, where the See of their Patriarch was. They were unable to proceed farther west because fighting blocked all road. So Bar Sauma and Markos stayed with the Patriarch and never reached Jerusalem. Markos, the younger monk, found himself consecrated a Metropolitan of China and got the Name Yahballaha. When the Patriarch died in 1281, Yahballaha was elected Patriarch of the Church of the East, becoming spiritual head of faithful in Mesopotamia, Syria, Persia, Armenia, India, Central Asia and China. The elder monk, Bar Sauma, became Visitor-General for congregations in the East, and ambassador of the Persian Mongolian II Khan to the emperor of Byzantium, Andronicus II, the king

2 Cf. The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China. Trans. E.A. Wallis Budge. London 1928.

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of France, Philip IV, the king of England. Edward I, and Pope Nicholas IV. Bar Sauma celebrated the East Syriac Liturgy in one of the papal Churches and finally shared the Eucharist with the Pope.

The story of the pilgrimage of the two monks shows the impressive expansion of the so-called "Nestorian" Church. However, during the Invasion of Tamerlane (Timur Lenkh) in the 14th century this Church was almost erased. Only a small community survived in the mountains of Kurdistan and was further weakened by internal struggles and a union with Rome. At the beginning of the 20th century they counted about 150,000 members. But during World War I the "Assyrians" - as they were called by Anglican missionaries - lost again a third of their population through massacres and deportations at the hands of Kurds and Turks of the Ottoman Empire, because of suspected collaboration with the British. In 1933, after the British mandate in Iraq, the Iraqi government expelled the Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun, who - after stops in Geneva and London - went into exile to San Francisco (California). The people have been scattered all over the world.

The current Patriarch, Mar Dinkha IV, has his see in Morton Grove near Chicago (Illinois). He is the head of a Church with about 400,000 faithful. The Church currently has three Metropolitans in Baghdad/Iraq, Beirut/Lebanon, and Thrissur/South India, and eight Bishops in the US, Canada, Australia, Europe, Iran, and Syria. In India the church of the East has about 30.000 faithful under the guidance of Metropolitan Mar Aprem.

Up to now the Church of the East has been called the "Nestorian Church". Encyclopaedia information is generally under this entry. From a theological point of view this term must be rejected today, because "Nestorian" has been used to insult them. Somewhat better is the expression pre-

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Ephesian Church, because they accept only the first two imperial synods (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381) as ecumenical. But the Church of the East expanded outside the bounds of the Roman Empire. Therefore the term East Syrian or Syro Oriental Church is more appropriate than a name which refers to the reception of Councils of the Roman Empire. Better yet, is to call them what they call themselves: "Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East" or just "Church of the East".

II. The Pro Oriente Consultation on Dialogue within syriac Tradition

The official Roman Catholic meetings and dialogues with the Oriental Churches have been supported on a non-official level by the foundation PRO ORIENTE in Vienna (Austria). There a lot of theological work in the background has been done.

PRO ORIENTE's work, because it is "unofficial", makes it possible for Orthodox and Oriental theologians to confer frankly with their Roman Catholic colleagues. This prepared, contributed substantially to official agreements with the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Since 1993, relations with the Assyrian Church of the East have been taken up in the context of the so-called "Syriac Dialogue".

This Syriac Dialogue is unprecedented. For the first time theologians of all the Syriac churches have come together: the Assyrian Church of the East and the Ancient Church of the East, the Oriental Orthodox Churches (Syrian Orthodox Church, Malankara Orthodox Church), and the Oriental Catholic Churches (Chaldean, Syrian, Maronite, Syro Malabar, and Syro Malankara Catholic Churches). So far five Syriac Consultations have taken place.[3] The first three

3 Cf. Syriac Dialogue. Non-official consultations on dialogue within the Syriac tradition. 5 vols.Ed.Pro Oriente. Vienna 1994ff.

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(Vienna 1994, Vienna 1996, Chicago 1997) dealt in particular with the historical and theological problems concerning the accusation of Nestorianism against the Assyrian Church. This means that Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the Council of Ephesus and the condemnation of the so-called "Three Chapters" in the context of the Council of Constantinople (553) stood at the centre of interest. The fourth and the fifth Consultation (Vienna 2000 and 2002) dealt with the Sacraments (raze) in the various Syriac Churches and traditions.

Let me just give a glimpse of some of the results:

a. First it has to be pointed out in the ecumenical discussion, though it sounds very simple: The Church of the East came not into being because of the condemnation of Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus (431) or a schism from the Roman Imperial Church. It can be proven that the origin of the Church of the East dates from the end of the first century, or, at latest, the beginning of the second century in the Persian Empire. Bishops of this Church were neither present at the Council of Ephesus (431) nor at the Council of Chalcedon (451). The Church has its history outside the bounds of the Roman Empire.

b. At the time when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, the Persian kings regarded the Christians as a potential endangering of their interests and suspected their loyalty. During the persecutions of the 4th century many Christians had to seek refuge in the Roman Empire. The Persian Christians got caught between the politics of the ancient superpowers Persia and Rome: they needed to distance themselves from the state religion of

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> the Roman Empire to avoid suspicions to be collaborators of the enemy. So this could be one reason that the East Syrian church decided for a diphysite Christology in the antiochine tradition. We may say - and I can confirm this with my own research of the last years - based on an analysis of east Syrian synods and theologians it is easily possible to show that the Church of the East handed down an explicit antiochine orthodox Christology. In the center is not Nestorius but the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It is of some note that the name 'Nestorius' does not appear in the records of the East Syrian Synods before the 7th century. We have to recognize that the theology of the Church of the East is more "Theodorian" than "Nestorian".

The second Syriac dialogue in Vienna 1996 points out, that there is a necessity to make an absolute distinction between the doctrinal position of the Assyrian Church of the East and the position, recognized to be heretical which holds, that there are two Sons in the one Incarnate Christ, a position which is traditionally described by the Chalcedonians and Oriental Orthodox as "Nestorianism".

In the whole course of this working process the third Syriac Consultation in Chicago (1997) agreed in its final communique that in the light of the new research Theodore of Mopsuestia and the anathema imposed on him and his works 125 years after his death at the Council of Constantinople (553) need a re-evaluation. Similarly in regard to Nestorius the third Syriac Dialogue concludes that a distinction should be made between his faith and pastoral concerns on the one hand and the heresy called "Nestorianism" on the other. The ecumenically important point in that statement is that representatives of those Syriac Churches that are in the theological tradition of Cyril of

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Alexandria and of Severus of Antioch have also contributed and agreed to this evaluation of Theodore and Nestorius.

Currently the Pro Oriente Syriac Dialogue began a series of studies on the sacraments (syr.raze) of the Church. The 4th consultation on Sacramental Theology and the Sacrament of Initiation took place in Vienna 2000. The 5th consultation focused on rites which are identified and listed differently as *raze* by the individual Syriac Churches, namely Marriage, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Leaven (Malka) and the Sign of the Cross. The participants from the different Churches with a common Syriac heritage had the chance to learn about the specific characteristics of each other and to have a theological exchange in the calm atmosphere of a non-official level meeting.

III. Relationship with the Roman Catholic Church

The story of this contemporary ecumenical relations begins in 1978. Patriarch Mar Dinkha took part in the mass at the inauguration of Pope John Paul II as one of the representatives and delegate of the various Christian denominations. In November 1984, during an official visit of Mar Dinkha IV to John Paul II at the Vatican both heads of Churches initiated a process of theological dialogue.[4] The Patriarch also participated in the 1986 day of prayer for peace at Assisi (Italy) to which the pope invited world religions, leaders. In the next ten years, 1984 to 1994, five non-official

4 Cf. "New Impetus to Mutual Relations": L'Osservatore Romano (weekly edition in English), November 16, 1994, p 4; The Messenger. The Offcial Publication of the Holy Apostolic and Assyrian Church of the East II (March 1995) 20-22; "Common Christological Declaration": L'Osservatore Romano (op.cit.) pp I and 4, cf. Information Service (Council for Promoting Christian Unity) 88 (1995/1) 1-6; cf. also: Growth in Agreement II. Ed. J. Gros et al. Geneva 2000. 711f with a "Historic Introduction" by R. Roberson. Documents also: http://www.cried.org/cath.html.

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meetings took place, culminating in a Common Christological Declaration.

a. The Common Christological Declaration (1994)

The most important theological preparatory work and the draft of the text were done by the patristic and Syriac scholar André de Halleux (†1994),[5] who died before the signing and thus did not see the fruition of his marvelous work. In October 1992 the draft was completed and submitted then to the respective church authorities for approval.

The Common Christological Declaration is a landmark in ecumenism. It confirms that both Churches are "united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God". It takes into consideration previous Christological agreements between the Roman Catholic Church and the so-called "miaphysite"[6] Churches: The Christological Agreements with the Coptic Orthodox Church (1973), the Syrian Orthodox Church (1984) and the Malankara Orthodox Church (1990). The text is theologically very balanced, and grounded in the Formula of Union (433), the agreement between John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria.[7]

Further the Christological Declaration settles also the quarrels about the "Theotokos"-title: "In the light of the same faith the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as the

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5 Cf. "Vers la déclaration commune catholique-assyrienne": Courrier Œcuménique du Moyen-Orient 23 (1994-III) 12f.

6 The expression is explained in: D.W. Winkler, "Miaphysitism. A new Term for Use in the History of Dogma and in Ecumenical Theology": The Harp 10 (1997) N 3,33-40. See also D.W. Winkler, "Monophysitism": Late Antiquity. A guide to the postclassical world. Ed. G. Bowersock et al. Cambridge/Ms 1999, 586-588.

7 For a theological analysis see Winkler, "The Current Theological Dialogue" 168-173.

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Mother of God and also as the Mother of Christ. We both recognise the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and piety".

b. Fifth Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Mar Dinkha IV(1994)

Before the official signing, the Christological Declaration was debated in the Assyrian Church By the Fifth Synod of the Patriarchate of Mar Dinkha, July 18-29, 1994, in Sydney (Australia). The Holy Synod decreed unanimously in favour of signing the agreement, as this declaration "protects and preserves the faith, liturgy, order, leadership of each Church individually".[8]

Furthermore, this Synod established a new department, the "Commission on Inter-church Relations and Educational Development", with Bishop Mar Bawai Soro as director. This department has responsibility to develop theological literature and educational material as well as to prepare and co-ordinate inter-church relations, theological dialogues and ecumenical consultations. By this the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East created an appropriate body for bilateral and multilateral ecumenical relations.

c. The official theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church (1994-2000)

With the signing of the Common Christological Declaration, an official "Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue of the Roman Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East" was established. From 1995 to 2001 seven meetings of the Joint Committee took place. Currently the co-chairmen are Metropolitan Mar Aprem of Thrissur and Cardinal Walter Kasper. On the agenda now is sacramental theology.

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8 Cf. Decrees of the Fifth Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, 18-29 July 1994, Syndey Australia, in: The Messenger 11 (1995) 24-31.

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In the first meeting (November 22-24, 1995), in Rome was noted that positive reception of the Common Christological Declaration put the dialogue on a firm footing to overcome obstacles on the way towards unity. Additionally General Sacrament Theology and the Eucharist were examined.

At the second meeting (October 10-12, 1996), in Adma (Lebanon), the discussion on the sacraments was continued and consideration of marriage and the anointing of the sick began. Though these two do not appear on the official list of "sacraments" (raze) of the Church of the East, consensus was reached in regard to the content, biblical basis and liturgical celebration of both traditions.

Held in Rome October 23-27, 1997, the third session dealt with the Assyrian raze (sacraments) of the Holy Leaven (malka) and the Sign of the Cross. This discussion was continued during the fourth meeting (November 6-9, 1998), in London with concentration on the common aspects of sacramental life. At the fifth meeting (October 12-14, 1999), in Venice a draft on sacramental life and the pastoral implications of a Common Declaration on the Sacraments were discussed. Arezzo (Italy) was the site of the sixth meeting (October 12-14, 2000). Here the Joint Committee concluded these studies. The final draft of a "Common Statement on Sacramental Life" has been submitted to the competent church authorities. The dialogue expects to proceed with Ecclesiology and certain theological questions concerning the first Ecumenical Councils.

In the context of this official dialogue a remarkable ecumenical step has been done in 2001, that concerns the Eucharist. To analyze this, we first have to have a look to the relations between the Assyrian and the Chaldean Churches.

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d. Relations with the Chaldean Catholic Church

The Common Christological Declaration of 1994 also mentions practical and pastoral implications for the faithful of the Assyrian Church and the Catholic Church, especially in regions where both live together closely. This especially laid the basis for bilateral relations of two branches of the east Syriac tradition - the Assyrian Church and her catholic counterpart, the Chaldean Church, that is in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church since the 16th century.

In 1996 the Chaldean Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid, whose see is in Baghdad, visited the USA, and together with the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, consecrated a new Chaldean Church in Southfield/Detroit (Michigan). This first official meeting of an Assyrian and a Chaldean Patriarch, on the 26th of November initiated a new common process of dialogue.[9] Both patriarchs propose that the common patristic, liturgical and theological heritage and the same origin and culture which link one church to the other should be studied and acknowledged. In May and June 1997 the proposals of the Patriarchs were accepted by the respective Synods. In the same year the two Patriarchs met again on the occasion of the blessing of a new Assyrian parish in

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9 Cf. Joint Patriarchal Statement between H.H. Mar Raphael I Bidawid and H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, in: Syriac Dialogue 2. Second non-official consultation on dialogue within the Syriac tradition. Ed. PRO ORIENTE Vienna 1996, 201 f.

10 Cf. Joint Communiqué I of he Joint Commission for Unity. Made available by H.G. Mar Bawai Soro. The following members of the Commission have been nominated. Assyrian: Mar Gewargis Sliwa (Iraq), Poulose Mar Poulose (India †1998), Mar Aprim Khamis (USA), Mar Bawai Soro (USA), Mar Emmanuel (Canada), Mar Narsai de Baz (Lebanon) and Mar Meelis Zaia (Australia); Chaldean: Mar Gewargis Garmo (Iraq), Mar Ibrahim Ibrahim (USA), Msgr. Zuhair Toma (Australia), Fr. Sarhad Jammo (USA), Mar Emmanuel Delly.

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Roselle (Illinois). The "Joint Commission for Unity" of the two Sister churches came together in their Constituent Assembly (August 13-14) in the Assyrian Patriarchate in Chicago under the co-chairmanship of both patriarchs.[10] A working program of the Commission was presented and a "Joint Synodical Decree"[11], already accepted by the respective Synods, was implemented and signed by the two Patriarchs. All questions that concern the theology will be left to the official Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue. As both sister Churches are regarded to have the same apostolic succession and sacramentality, clergy and lay people are called to work together in brotherly fashion.

e. Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist

In the context of these relationships and on the background of the official dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity issued in October 2001 a document entitled "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East".[12] This document has been elaborated in agreement with the "Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith" and the "Congregation for the Oriental Churches".

Due to the sometimes dramatic and widespread diaspora, numerous Chaldean and Assyrian faithful are confronted with a situation of pastoral necessity with regard to the administration of sacraments. Chaldean and Assyrian

11 Cf. Joint Synodical Decree, in: Syriac Dialogue 3. Third non-official consultation on dialogue within the Syriac tradition. Ed. PRO ORIENTE. Vienna 1998, 185-188.\

12 Cf. Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, in: Christian Orient 22 (2001) 152-154; Theological explanation by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity in: ibid. 155-161.

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faithful are permitted to participate and to receive Communion in the respective Church in the case of pastoral necessity. Assyrian and Chaldean ministers celebrate the Holy Eucharist according to their liturgical prescriptions and customs of their own tradition.

Such a pastoral cooperation also exists between the Syrian Orthodox and the Catholic Church. In 1984 Pope John Paul II and H.H. Mar Ignatius Zakka Iwas authorized their faithful, in the case they do not have access to a priest of their own Church because of the dispersion throughout the world, to ask for the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick from a lawful priest of either of the two sister Churches.

The remarkable decision of the present guidelines between the two East Syriac Churches is the liturgical theological background. The principal problem for the Catholic Church was, that the Anaphora which is used in the Church of the East during the longest part of the liturgical year, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, has no Institution Narrative. As the Catholic church considers the words of the Eucharistic Institution a constitutive and therefore indispensable part of the Anaphora the question was if this is a valid Eucharistic Prayer from the catholic point of view. Careful studies were undertaken, from a historical, liturgical and theological perspective, with the result that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari can be considered valid. The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith confirmed this decision on January 17th, 2001 and H. H. Pope John Paul II has approved this decision.

Theologically the decision is very important: It is shown that not a specific formula or wording or moment by that Christ becomes present in the eucharistic gifts but by the whole celebration which commemorates the Mystery of the passion and resurrection of our Lord (Mysterium Paschale).

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Concluding Remarks

The dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church seems to be very successful. It culminated so far in a Common Christological Declaration (1994) and in "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East" (2001).

The consequences of the ecumenical dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church are not easy to predict. There may be here an exemplary case of church unity between two traditional, so-called Apostolic Churches. A unity of Churches could appear.

- which does not demand the same theological terminology, but has in substance the same faith,
- which does not need ritual uniformity, but has the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the respective Churches, and
- which does not need ecclesiastical subordination, but is a communion of Sister-Churches.

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ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVES ON EASTERN CATHOLIC ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Thomas Mar Thimotheos

1. Introduction

Attempts for Christian reunion is as old as the divisions in the Church. In the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon 451, emperors of Constantinople tried unity, although the efforts did not bear good results. Prior to and after the great division between the Roman Catholic Church and the Byzantine Church in 1054 A.D., various attempts were made for unification. The Crusades gave a new dimension to the already existing divisions. The Roman Catholic Church installed parallel Patriarchs to some of the Eastern Sees and thereby many Eastern Catholic Churches emerged parallel to the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. The nuances of history of the formation of these Churches are so complex that within the scope of this paper it is difficult to make an adequate reflection of the matter. The so called Union Councils like the Lyons (1274) and Florence (1438-39) tried for unity. Later history shows that the efforts were counter productive. With the epoch of the Counter-Reformation, a new stage was set. The Councils of Trent and Diamper are integrally related to the issue. In the Syrian Church in India, the Synod of Diamper made a tremendous impact and even today the Syro-Malabar Church is directly and the rest of the Malabar (Malankara) Christians are indirectly affected by it. Catholic unification efforts were partially successful whenever the Eastern Churches were

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caught up in the internal feuds. Sometimes one of the warring groups or a section of a group joined the Roman Catholic Church as it happened in 1930's ie; formation of the Syro-Malankara rite. In this paper, I want to make a quick glance of the Catholic unification efforts on the Eastern Churches from the early times to the recent and would like to make a response as an Easterner, especially as a Syrian Orthodox Christian. In the outset I want to apologize that the presentation is not a systematic handling, but rather a free reflection of the whole historic situation. In the concluding section I have tried to make a few suggestions as a constructive part for all concerned to approach the whole issue impartially, critically and theologically.

2 Eastern and Western in Christendom

Towards the end of the 3rd century Emperor Diocletian (284-305) divided the Roman Empire into four parts. Eventually it became two, the Western and the Eastern. The Eastern Churches are those that flourished in the Eastern part of the empire and the Church that developed in the West was known as the Western Church. Outside the Roman empire too certain Churches came up. The Churches in Persia and India which trace their origin to St. Thomas the Apostle are examples.[1] In the eastern part of the empire various Church traditions like the Syrian Coptic, Byzantine, Armenian emerged. Later the Slavic Churches and the Russian Church emerged from the Byzantine Church. During the fifth and the sixth centuries, the whole nations of Egypt, Ethiopia, Armenia and large segments of the Syrian population abandoned communion with the Orthodox 'Great Church', which they called scornfully as the Melkite or 'imperial' Church. "The latter was thereby deprived of

1 Koodapuzha Xavier, *Sabhavijnaniyam*, Paurastya Vidyapitham, Kottayam, 1986,P.46.

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communion with various venerable non-Greek traditions of Christianity, those of the Semites and Copts and found itself reduced, practically speaking, to the Greek and Latin parts of the Empire".[2]

3 Crusades and after

Even though the events of the early eleventh century which culminated in the excommunication between Rome and Constantinople in 1054, that didn't put an end to the contacts between the two Sees, The other eastern Patriarchs of the Byzantine tradition remained in communion with the Latins for sometime and at Constantinople itself, the Latin Churches and monasteries remained open.[3] The final rupture took place as a result of the Crusades. The disastrous part played by the great expeditions worsened the relations between the two Churches. To the credit of the Crusaders, it must be said that when they first arrived East, lands traditionally Christian but now occupied by Muslims, the Crusaders began by acknowledging the canonical rights of the local bishops. Keeping the ancient canon laws they entered into sacramental communion with them. In the context of the Crusades, full separation did not happen during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Latin princes and the clergy of Outremer gradually put an end to this state of affairs by replacing the Oriental clergy with Latin clergy. The infamous Fourth Crusade gave final blow to the last vestiges of Church unity still remaining.

In 1204 the Venetian fleet carrying the Crusaders to the Holy Land purposely veered of its course towards Constantinople, and the great city guarded by God was

2 Meyendorff, John, *The Orthodox Church*, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1981, P.40.

3 G. Every, *The Byzantine Patriarchate*, London, 1947, PP 153-69

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captured and sacked in one of the most disgraceful events in history. The precious relics and Byzantine treasures were carried off. The Venetian Patriarch, Thomas Morosini was installed on the throne of Photius with the approval of Pope Innocent III. To the already existing doctrinal differences separating the Greeks and Latins there was now added a new note, national hatred which prevented all future attempts of reunion.[4]

The scenes of horror that unfolded in the city after the victorious entry of the Latins have never been forgotten by the Byzantines. "It was only after the conquest of Constantinople that the Byzantines fully understood the development that had taken place in the idea of the Roman Primacy. The simple nomination of the Patriarch by the Pope, the designation of the bishops without any consultation of the Synods and without confirmation by the emperor were for them experiences never dreamed of".[5] When communication between Rome and Byzantium was substantially interrupted, the Easterners were not aware of the profound changes that were taking place in the West under the influence of the reform movements which had begun in Lorraine and Burgandy. The conception of the Roman Primacy which had been accepted in Byzantium, although never defined in clear and sharp fashion, was not enough for the Crusaders. In their zeal to raise the prestige of papacy, they went much further. They claimed not only direct immediate jurisdiction over all the bishops and over all the faithful. but also, in their ignorance of the liturgical and ecclesiastical differences which existed in the Churches in the East, complete conformity to Roman usages in the East and in the West.[6] We see this

4 Meyendorff, John, op.cit. PP. 56-57.

5 Dvornik Francis, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy,* Fordhan University Press, New York, 1966.P. 155.

6 Ibid, P.166.

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policy very systematically implemented on the Syrian Church in India after the Synod of Diamper later.

The separation between Byzantium and Rome along linguistic and political frontiers was a tragic event in the history of the Church. Christendom became divided on to two halves. From the beginning of the eleventh century there was no longer any *communio* in Sacris between Byzantium and Rome. The *Filioque* controversy with other political and ecclesial factors contributed a lot for the separation.

> While the Eastern Church claimed - and still claims today - to be the only true Church of Christ, it saw its cultural and its geographical field of vision restricted: historically, it became identified with the Byzantine world. The Church of the West, as viewed by the Orthodox Church, lost the doctrinal and ecclesiological balance of primitive Christianity and this lack of balance was ultimately responsible for provoking the reaction of the sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation.[7]

4. a) The Union Councils - Lyons and Florence

After the sack of Constantinople in 1204, attempts were made to win back the city from the Latins. Michael VIII was successful in this and he re-established the Byzantine empire (1259-1282) was successful in many ways. He carried on discussions with the Pope regarding reunion. Political motives were uppermost during the negotiations. He wanted to safeguard the city from a second assault and retake by the Latins. The second motive was to enlist support of the West to prevent a Turkish attack, which was looming large on Constantinople and the city was more or less a beleaguered one. But before the popes would do anything effective in the

7 Mayendorff, John, op.cit. P.39.

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way of military help, they insisted that there must first be reunion in ecclesiastical matters. Occasionally, the Byzantine emperors would resort to force in order to break down the resistance of the Byzantine Church and impose a policy of reunion against the latter's will. "Thus after taking part in the Council of Lyons (1274) through representatives and accepting the union personally, Michael VIII installed on the patriarchal throne a person sharing his own views, John Bekkos, but the reunion did not survive the emperor even by one day. Regarded as an apostate, he was even refused christian burial".[8]

Speaking of the breakdown of the agreement reached at the Council of Lyons, Abbe Paul Couturier justly said:

> The newly-found reunion had appeared so solid, strong and lasting. So many able diplomats and learned theologians, so many holy men had helped to make it.... St. Thomas Aquinas, struggling to reach the Council and dying on the road; St. Bonaventure, dying during its deliberations; St. Philip Benizi, St. Albert the Great, Peter of Tarentaise, and at their head the Pope himself, Gregory X. But one thing was missing and left an unmeasurable gap-Christendom itself was not there. It is the exclusive and indisputable province of legitimate authority to discuss, to define, to come to a conclusion and to promulgate it. But if the voice of authority is not to be lost in an unheeding wilderness, the people at large must be prepared by the Holy Spirit so that they may desire what is defined, concluded and proclaimed under the inspiration of that same Holy Spirit.

8 Ibid, P.57

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> Then only is authority's decision rooted and made fruitful in the hearts of the faithful.[9]

While remaining stubbornly opposed to any politically oriented reunion, the Byzantine Church was not opposed to the idea of a negotiated peace, in keeping with the ancient canons and ecclesiastical custom. In order to bring this about, the Church insisted that it was necessary to hold an ecumenical council. They thought that such a Council would result in the triumph of Orthodoxy. For a long time popes refused to entertain the idea of holding a Council in which both sides would be represented as equals. But the idea finally triumphed, during the first part of the fifteenth century, when the Great Schism of the West had shaken papacy to its very foundations. The popes were afraid that the Greeks might reach an agreement with the schismatic council of Basel and decided to authorize at last a real reunion council.[10]

b) Florence Council (1438-39)

The fact that the Council met itself was a moral victory for the East. An important Greek delegation headed by the emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople arrived in Italy and began theological discussions with the Western theologians and Prelates. The course of these discussions showed how difficult it would be to reach an agreement on basic issues, for minds were not prepared to revise their thinking on certain points. The problem of the *Filioque*, for example, was complicated by the fact that the Roman Church held that it had already defined this matter dogmatically and was unwilling to go back on its previous decision. Regarding the problem of the Roman Primacy, we can only

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9 quoted by Attwater Donald, in *The Christian Churches of the East*, Vol.II.,Goffrey Chapman, London, 1961, P.233.

10 Meyendroff, John, op.cit, P.58

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say that it was hardly more than touched upon in Florence. After weeks and even months of wrangling, the Greeks finally had to face the unpalatable alternative of either yielding to the Roman point of view or breaking off the talks and attempting to cope with the Turkish threat alone. Moral and financial pressure finally conspired to force them to accept the first alternative. The majority at length yielded and signed the Act of Reunion. Only the metropolitan of Ephesus, Mark Eugenicos, refused to follow suit. Another outstanding theologian, Scholarios, the future Patriarch, left Florence before the end of the discussions.[11] In the city of Florence celebrations lasted two weeks for the achieved unity.

As soon as the Greek delegates returned, they repudiated their signatures, when confronted by the general disapproval of the people. The Metropolitan Isidore of Kiev reaching Moscow tried to proclaim the reunion there. He was imprisoned and later managed to escape to Rome. It was only when the Russian ecclesiastical authorities were informed that Constantinople did not reject the union immediately, they took the first step towards Russian independence from the mother Church of Constantinople. There was no immediate intention among the Moscovites to set up an independent Church against Constantinople but the overthrow of the Constantinople as the political and spiritual leader of all Orthodox countries made it politically and psychologically impossible for the Russian Church to continue' as anything but autocephalous. Thus lack of communications made de *facto* the Church of Russia independent and autocephalus.[12] The Byzantine emperor John VIII and his successor, Constantine XI, remained

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11 Ibid, PP.58-59.

12 Maloney George A., *A History of Orthodox Theology Since 1453*, Nordland Publishing Co.. Benmont, Massachusetts, 1976, P.29.

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faithful to the union, but they did not dare proclaim it officially in Hagia Sophia until 1452. The following year in 1453 the Ottoman Turkish ruler Mohammed II entered New Rome as a conqueror and the Byzantine Empire had ceased to exist. The first task of the new Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios, was to repudiate the Union of Florence officially.

According to several Greek theologians the profound reasons for the schism between East and West (Constantinople and Rome) are of doctrinal and theological nature, the most important issues being those concerning the Holy Spirit and the nature of the Church. From the thirteenth century on, all discussions between popes and emperors regarding reunion took place in an atmosphere dominated by political rather than religious considerations, the Byzantine Church itself remaining largely outside the picture. There was a misconception that it was sufficient to win over the emperor to gain the allegiance of the whole Church. It was with this in mind that the Popes encouraged the personal conversion of the Emperor John V in 1369. The emperors from the eleventh century onwards favored reunion because of the undoubted political advantage to be derived from it. And they tried to bring reunion about at all costs even by use of brute force.

5 Few Eastern Perspectives of Unity and Catholicity

Here I would like to mention Nikolai Afanasev (d.1966) who developed his "Eucharistic" ecclesiology as against the universal ecclesiology. He points that a universal ecclesiology is found in the writings of St. Cyprian and consequently in the practice of Roman Catholicism stress as the authority and power of bishops and the importance of the councils leading to papal infallibility. Eucharistic ecclesiology begins with the local Church found in all its fullness in the Eucharistic celebration by the bishop who presides over the Church in love. The local Eucharistic assembly is not a part

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of the Body of Christ, it is the fullness of the body. All churches are fundamentally equal and preeminence is gained not by exercise of power or authority of one church over others but by merit through service in love of others.[13] George Florovsky, another great Russian Diaspora theologian and intellectual speaks about the living reality of a non-Roman Christianity. In the traditional Catholic understanding of 'Rite' especially of the oriental rites much harm was done. Perhaps after Council of Florence 'rite' became an abstract reality, a thing in itself, it became a separate entity and one begins to speak of the Oriental rite.[14] Eastern Churches make little or no distinction between rite and faith. Florovsky criticizes every attempt at reuniting the Eastern Churches by giving to a Catholicism imbued with Latin Spirit, the mere aspect of Oriental rite. He says:

> There is a fatal mistake here: rite either remains merely 'ritual', incapable of bringing about reunion, the rite itself changing, becoming transformed or even degenerating into rubricism, dissipating and losing meaning; or else it is accepted in its hieratic reality, in which event, the bounds of Western or Roman consciousness must inevitably be broken. In the one case as in the other, reunion is not accomplished. In fact, Rome does not possess any of the 'Oriental rite'. What is involved is not 'rite' but the living reality of a non-Roman Christianity.[15]

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13 Ibid, P.79.

14 Congar Yves, *After Nine Hundred Years*, Fordham University Press, New York, 1959, P.37.

15 quoted from the article "Problematic Aspects of Christian Reunnion" in Florovski's *Ways of Russian Theology* by Congar Yves, ibid, P.37.

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In general it could be said that the Eastern Churches and the leaders are reproaching Uniatism for making the rite a means of obtaining the reunion. They argue that in the long run that would be pure and simple submission. Moreover this approach does not respect the Eastern or the Oriental Church intrinsically characterized by the rite.

Also here I would like to bring in some Eastern concepts of Unity and Catholicity. The most influential Russian lay theologian Khomiakov (1804-1860) believed in a return to the unity in love that formed the bond of community in the early Church. He criticized the attempts of unity founded on external authority, having no liberty. Combination of liberty and unity are essential in a true ecclesiology he argued. According to him, Church unity is achieved through the intrinsic element, immutable and firm which resides in concord of spirit and not in any apparent extrinsic bond. This catholicity or universality he calls by the term attributed thereafter to his form of ecclesiology, *'Sobornost'*. The Church is truly Catholic because *'Sobornost*, a mystical charism of the Holy Spirit, conserves the unity and faith in the Church, not by extrinsic authority but by and through the intimate life of the Church shared by all the members.[16] After the revolution when Russian intellectuals and theologians in Diaspora developed the ideas that they had earlier inherited from Khomiako, there was much fascination.

> The doctrine of Khomiako on *'Sobornost'* mingled with an emphasis on St.John's mysticism gave their writings a great popularity among Roman Catholic and Protestant and Anglican circles where the sword of Peter hung too heavily already after Vatican Council.[17]

16 Maloney George A., op. cit. P. 59.

17 Ibid, P.75-76.

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6. a) Counter- Reformation

It could be assumed that in Europe the inner spiritual renewal of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century Christian life produced both Protestantism and the Catholic Reformation. "Despite the religious impulses of the Catholic Reformation, its success, like that of the Protestant Reformation, depended on the support of the secular rulers".[18] The Council of Trent (1545-1562) brought in several reforms, and these required support of European princes. Royal enforcements, religious wars and the support of the Habsburg emperors enabled victory in many areas in Europe. Roman Catholic Church became a world-wide religion through the conquest and conversion of the New World. The policy and programmes were carried to the new found world and newly arrived countries. India too became under the religo-cultural impact of Counter-Reformation and Tridentine policies. The Council of Diamper which met in 1599 enacted laws based on Trent for the Syrian Church in India.

b) Diamper and the Syro-Malabar Church

Since the history and the impact of the Council of Diamper on the Syrian Community in Travancore and Cochin is a matter known to all of us, I do not want to elaborate. The systematic Latinisation that followed was one of the reasons, I would say, divided the community. The identity question of the Syro-Malabar Church is a matter which many historians and theologians have dealt with in the past. The reading and re-reading of history from many angles are being done today. As a Syrian Orthodox Christian, I can say with all modesty that the Jacobite community did preserve many

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18 Counter-Reformation/Catholic Reformation in *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (General Editor. Richard P. Mcbrien), Harper & Collins, New York. P.373.

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of the Pre-Portughese, Syrian traditions. The Syro-Malabar Church with its great potentiality, vitality and vigour need to be freed from all past restrictions in order to carry on the evangalisation task in this country. Since I would come to this area in the concluding part, I do not want to elaborate here. The division within the Malankara Church as Jacobites and Orthodox is a matter of concern to all Churches in Kerala. Let me not forget the positive results that have taken place through the Roman Catholic and the Syrian Orthodox Dialogue Commission. Common witness to all Churches is an imperative in the present Indian context. Here theological articulations on the question of unity is essential. The purpose of unity of the Church is God's will as expressed in our Lord's prayer. 'that they all may be one...that the world may know live that thou didst send me'. The unity of the Church for which Christ prayed is a unity in Him and in the Father through the Holy Spirit, and is therefore fundamentally a reality of the spiritual realm. In the divided Christendom there is no ministry which fully corresponds with the purpose of God and the ministry can recover fullness only by the union of all parts of the one Body. Yet history teaches us that domination of one over the other is a possibility. How to proceed to the ideal goal through the precarious path is that we all need to pursue truthfully.

7. a) The Byzantine Catholic Churches - a bird's eye view

Sections of the nine Churches of the Byzantine tradition are in communion with the Catholic Church. Till 1054 A.D. the whole Byzantine Church was in communion with Rome. The alienation between Rome and Constantinople resulted in the separation of the once one Church into two. The attempts to restore union from the Roman Catholic side produced only partial success. The Melkite Catholic Church which owes its origin from the three ancient Patriarchates

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(Alexandra, Antioch and Jerusalem). A section within the Patriarchate of Antioch in 1724 joined the Catholic Communion. Three bishops from the Melkite Antiochean Orthodox Church revolting within the Church, chose Cyril VI as rival candidate to be Patriarch. He was approved by Pope Benedict XIII. The Turkish authorities did not recognize the revolt and later in 1848 they were given legal recognition. At various stages splits occurred or were engineered with other two. Alexandrian and Jerusalem Patriarchates and thereby the present Melkite Catholic Church came into existence. The Ukrainian Catholic Church was formed from the Byzantine tradition. In 1595-96 the Synod at Brest declared formal union of the metropolitan province of Kiev with Rome. By 18th century 70% of the Christians of Western Ukraine were Byzantine Catholics. Czar Nicholas I suppressed the union in 1839. But until World War II the Church in Galicia flourished and it became a part of Soviet Union. During the Communist regime the Church was made part of the Orthodox Church and the ensuing coercive policies applied on this Church was a tragic phase in its history. The Ruthenian Catholic Church had its origin from the Carpatho-Ukraine area, now in Czechoslovak-Soviet border. There were attempts to forge union with sections of the prevalent Orthodox Church there in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Latin bishops in that are a claimed jurisdiction over those who joined Catholic fold and the resultant conflict continued till World War II, when most of those areas were annexed to the USSR. Finally in 1949 the Catholics were integrated into the Russian Orthodox Church. There was a large Diaspora from this Church to Western countries and most of them joined the Orthodox fold.

As a result of the intolerant policy of the Austrian Emperor Leopald I who denied civil rights to non-Catholics many joined Catholic fold especially from the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Metropolitan Athanaise of

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Transylvania officially reunited with Rome. Then ensued a counter move towards the Orthodox Church. Pope Pius IX erected a Metropolitan Province for those joined Catholicism in 1853. The Communist government dissolved the Greek Catholic Church in 1948 and gave its properties to the Orthodox Church. The revolution in 1989 and the ensuing events gave freedom for the uniat Catholic Church and the hierarchy is established.

From 1829 onwards missionary activities were permitted to the Catholic missionaries in Greece. The work of these missions resulted in the formation of a Diocese in 1911 by Pope Pius X. The establishment of a Catholic hierarchy in the Greek mainland is a matter of tension between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The Byzantine rite Catholics in Yugoslavia were given a bishop under the Latin Bishop in 1611. Tensions ensued between the two. In 1777 Pope Pius VI gave a diocesan bishop with his see of Krizevci. Croatians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Macedonians and Romanians are included in this. When Pope Pius IX made Archmandrite Joseph Sokolsky a bishop in 1861 a section of the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria joined Roman Catholicism. When the Russian government gave the Orthodox people in that area their national ecclesiastical identity many returned to orthodoxy. But the Catholic uniat Church exists with 20,000 members.

The history of the Slovak Catholic Church is intimately related to the Ruthenians. The Diocese of Prisov was brought directly under the Holy See in 1937. After the World War II Eastern Slovakia was annexed to the Soviet Republic. The communist regime brought them under the Orthodox Patriarchate in 1950 and their bishop died in prison in 1960. Under Alexander Dubchek they were given freedom to go to their Eastern Catholic fold and most of the parishes opted for the same.

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The Hungarian Catholic Church has different ethnic groups. When they finally decided to adopt the Hungarian language for the liturgy, there ensued a formation of national identity. Pope Pius X erected a Diocese for them in 1912. All liturgical books were published in Hungarian. The Church has a membership nearing three hundred thousand.[19]

The disintegration of the Soviet block has resulted in the reappearance of several old wounds in Eastern Europe. The dispute pertaining to the large Ukrainian Catholic Church is one. The suppressed Church during the Communist regime was given freedom and tension did start with the Orthodox Church. In Russia the Parliament (Suma) passed a Religious bill restricting activity of other Christian denominations except the Russian Orthodox Church. There is an ongoing tension between the Moscow Patriarchate and Rome on this and other issues like the visit of His Holiness the Pope to former Soviet block countries especially to Russia.

b) Uniatism in the Oriental Orthodox Churches

Uniatism in several oriental orthodox churches was started rather late. The Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries during the seventeenth century through their efforts won many from the Coptic church and thereby a Coptic Catholic Church was established. The Franciscan friars carried on the efforts effectively. A Coptic bishop Amba Athanasius with two thousand people joined the Catholic communion. The Coptic Catholic Patriarchate was established in 1824 and then it was discontinued for a while and in 1895 Pope Leo XIII reestablished it. In 1899 Cyril Makarios was made the Catholic Patriarch and he joined the Coptic Orthodox Church, thereby from 1910 up to 1947 the Patriarchate again remained vacant. In the Coptic Catholic Church there are

19 Koodapuzha Xavier, *Oriental Churches. An Introduction.*, Oriental Institute, Vadavathoor, Kottayam, 1996, PP. 132-34.

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six Dioceses, 200 priests and more than hundred and fifty thousand believers. The Coptic Catholic Church has no monastic movement.[20]

In the Ethiopian Church too the Latin missionaries started unity efforts in the 16th century. Catholicism was imposed as official religion when King Susenyos became Catholic. Affonso Mendez, a Portughese Jesuit was appointed Patriarch of Ethiopia. These events and subsequent latinization provoked the people, and there erupted violent reaction. Death of Susenyos in 1632 brought an end to the union with Rome. Thereafter for 200 years there was no contact with the Catholic missions. In 1839 there began new mission agencies working in Ethiopia and from 1889 onwards Catholic missionaries got full freedom to work. When the Italian forces occupied Ethiopia from 1937-1945, reunion efforts were intensified. In 1961, the Metropolitan See was established at Addis Ababa with two Suffragan dioceses.[21]

From 1198 to 1375 union of the Armenian Church in Cilicia with Rome was preserved by the Crusaders. Latin practices were easily adopted by the Armenians. During the Council of Florence a decree of reunion with the Armenian Apostolic Church was published. In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV established the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate. The Ottoman civil law insisted that the Armenian Catholics should submit themselves to the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch of Constantinople who was not in communion with Rome. Under the French pressure, the Armenian Catholic community was recognized by the Ottoman government. During the World War I both Armenian Apostolic Church and Armenian Catholic Church suffered massively.[22]

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20 Ibid, P. 112.

21 Ibid, P. 114.

22 Ibid, P. 119

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On 20 Sept. 1930 Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany and his Suffragan Mar Theophilos together with the representatives of their followers were received into the Catholic Church after having made their profession of faith. These bishops were received in their episcopal dignity and jurisdiction. As the Bethany Metropolitan of the Orthodox Syrian Church Mar Ivanios had jurisdiction in all the seven Dioceses of the Catholicate. The same jurisdictional status without any territorial limits was maintained even after joining Roman Catholicism.[23] Both the bishops and the community followed them were required to depend on the Holy See and not on the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, although a suggestion in that line was originally mooted from some quarters. Clerical celibacy was insisted only for the future candidates. Married priests from both factions of the Malankara Church were admitted to the newly formed Syro-Malankara Church. Although Mar Ivanios preferred the name Orthodox Catholic Church, the Syro-Malankara was finally arrived at.

Conclusion

Though Vatican II has found solutions to many problems of the Eastern Catholic Churches, in the policy implementation stage several Churches are confronted with problems. Departing from the earlier stand these Churches are now called 'particular churches'. Other terms like *ecclesia sui juris* and the concept of 'sister churches' are used to emphasize the self-standing of these Churches. The Orthodox Churches need to understand that these Catholic Churches of the Eastern tradition is a reality now. Some Churches from both sides fail to build bridges. Subjective reading of history appears to be the only guiding principle to some.

Cyril Malancharuvil, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, Pontifical stitute. Alwaye. 1973, PP. 131-32.

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This is an unfortunate situation. All in each place and the understanding of the unity of 'all Christians in all places' are needed. "The same spirit who is bringing us together in the Church does, in fact make us more aware of the needs of the world and of our solidarity with a creation which is "groaning in travail" (Romans 8:22 RSV). We can not be isolated from the shocks and turmoils of our time....[24]

In several actual existential situations the Oriental and Eastern Catholics feel closer to the Orthodox. This is especially true in the Diaspora situation. In many places Eastern Catholics are compelled to follow Latin practices. The difficult conditions into which many are placed and the identity crisis they have, they get only an impoverished shepherding. Fr. Hambye says, "such Eastern Catholic Churches latinised as they are easily provide vocations to dying and half-dying Latin congregations".[25]

It is also important to see the self-consciousness of the Eastern Catholics and the assessment and the reaction of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox to the Uniat Christians. Let me cite an example. "Eastern Catholics are in a special category within this Church for they have their own rites and disciplines. They are Arab but not Moslem, Eastern but not schismatic, Catholics but not Latin.[26] Then on the other hand how the Orthodox (Eastern) treat these Catholics

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24 Link Hans-Georg, ed. *Apostolic Faith Today,* A Hand Book for Study W.C.C, Geneva, P.116.

25 Hambye E.R., "Problems and Prospects of Ecumenism in the Eastern Catholic Churches" in Koodapuzha Xavier, (ed) *Oriental Churches Theological Dimensions*, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, Vadavathoor, Kottayam, 1988, P. 246.

26 Edelby, Neophytos, Archbishop, "Our Vocation as Eastern Christians" in *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, Herder KG, Freiburg, West Germany, 1963, P.25.

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especially in the Greek milieu, is worth mentioning..."the Greek Church which, while ready to enter into discussions with representatives of the Latin Church, and while treating them with every mark of admiration and respect, pretends either to ignore the existence of Greek Catholics or to treat them as detestable propagandists in the pay of the foreigner, wolves in sheep's clothing, exploiting the ignorance and poverty of common people in order to steal a few innocent sheep from the Orthodox fold. To a lesser degree this is also the attitude of the Anglicans towards English Catholics, Orthodox Arabs towards Melkites and Armenians and Copts towards the Catholic Churches of the same race and rite as themselves, existing side by side with them. So much is this the case that some have not hesitated to affirm that it would in the end be simpler for those in the East who want to return to Catholic unity to forget their heritage as a group and enter the fold of the Western Catholicism.[27] The Orthodox, Eastern Catholics as well as the entire Roman Catholicism need to look at these issues sympathetically and must develop positive attitudes multilaterally.

27 Ibid, P.34-35.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF PRO ORIENTE TO THE DIALOGUE WITH THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Prof. Dr. Peter Hofrichter

The Beginnings

Fifty years ago, Catholics and Oriental Orthodox[1] blamed each other to be heretics. We downgraded our Orthodox brothers as monophysites, they called us Catholic Nestorians. The very starting point of all good relations and of the dialogue among the Oriental Orthodox Churches themselves and between them and the Roman Catholic Church was in the Sixties of the past century. It is owed to two holy popes who renewed the spirit and changed the faces of their Churches: namely the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John XXIII, und the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Cyrill VI. The harvest of their work was brought in only by their successors.

In 1962 Pope John XXIII inaugurated a new Council of the Catholic Church which was intended to open the windows of Catholicism not only to the requirements of modern time but also to the non-Catholic Christianity. He invited observers of all Apostolic Churches to this Council. Pope Cyrill VI

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1 Oriental Orthodox,Churches are besides the Indian Malankara Orthodox also the Syrian Orthodox, the Armenian Apostolics, the Coptic Orthodox, the Ethiopian Orthodox, and since recently the Eritrean Orthodox.

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initiated an almost incredible spiritual renewal of his Church. He was an ascetic hermit, a wonder worker and he enjoyed the friendship of the Egyptian President Nasser and the Ethiopian Emperor Heile Selassie. All Oriental Orthodox Churches willingly accepted the invitation to come as observers to the 2nd Vatican Council. Representatives of the Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches were present from the beginning.

One of the most influential personalities of the 2nd Vatican Council was the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Franz Koenig who is actually 96 years old and is the last participant of the council still alive. During the 3rd session of the Council on November 4, 1964 he created in Vienna the foundation PRO ORIENTE for the non-official dialogue between theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Orthodox Churches. The reason for this was that bishops and theologians - especially of the communist countries - had big difficulties to travel to Western European countries belonging to the NATO, among them also Italy. But Austria being a neutral State between East and West was open to them for meetings and conferences. A lot was done. But in spite of hopeful beginnings - we remember the encounters of Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople in Jerusalem, Rome and Istanbul and the lifting of the anathematas of 1054 - unfortunately the relations with the Eastern Orthodox Churches proved to be very difficult - not at least because of the rivalry between Constantinople and Moscow.

Meanwhile the relations between the Catholic Church and the most important member of the Oriental Orthodox family were strengthened by an event of extraordinary importance. In 1968 the Coptic Orthodox Church celebrated the anniversary of the martyrdom of St Mark and of the

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christianization of Egypt. On this occasion the relics of St Mark that had been brought 1000 years ago to Venice were given back in a great celebration to the Coptic Orthodox Church. During the consecration of the St Mark Cathedral in Cairo a Papal delegation headed by Cardinal Léo Étienne Duval of Algir handed the relics over to Pope Cyrill VI. This celebration opened a new era in the relations of the two Churches.

During the following year a promising person of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Vienna - now Archbishop - Mesrob K. Krikorian - published in Vienna a periodical report about the non-official dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox and the Eastern Orthodox Churches that had started in 1964 in Aarhus / Sweden, in which he had taken part. Inspired by this positive experience the theological head of PRO ORIENTE, Monsignore Otto Mauer, made the proposal to start a similar non-official dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church in Vienna.

The time was ripe. Everybody agreed to that idea and the first meeting took place in 1971. Pope Cyril VI sent his most learned Bishop, Amba Shenuda, at that time Dean of the theological Seminary in Cairo and one year later the new Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church. From the Indian Orthodox Church came Paul Varghese, Director of the Old Seminary, former Vice General Secretary of Word Council of Churches and later Metropolitan Mar Gregorius of New Delhi. The Ethiopian Church was represented by the Indian Orthodox Theologian and specialist of the Council of Chalcedon, V.C. Samuel. The Syrian Orthodox Patriarch had nominated Metropolitan Mar Severius Zakka Iwas, who was at that time Bishop of Baghdad and should later become the next Patriarch. But unfortunately he became sick and could not come. From the side of the Catholic Church the best specialist of the Christological controversies in Christian antiquity, The German Jesuit Professor Alois Grillmeier, who

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in his late days become Cardinal, took part in this first meeting in Vienna. The Pope had sent the Jesuit father John F. Long from the Vatican Secretary for Christian Unity.[2]

First Period 1971-1978

The first period of the PRO ORIENTE dialogue started with this meeting form September 7-12, 1971 in Vienna with the title "Non-official" ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and of the Roman Catholic Church". The quality of "non official" was in accordance with the intentions of PRO ORIENTE to give to theologians the opportunity to take part in the negotiations not as official representatives of their Churches but as private persons who are free to exchange their personal opinions. The issue of this first consultation was the Council of Chalcedon and the problem of its christology. The decisive break-through was achieved already in this first meeting. The christological divergence that led one and a half thousand years ago to the first big split of the Church, was in principle overcome. The idea was not to use the loaded traditional terminology: nature, hypostasis, person, but to express the common concept in simple every day language. Bishop Shenuda brought into discussion a Christological formula which is used in the Coptic liturgy and which avoids the terminology of ancient dogmatics. This formula was finally accepted in the final communique of the meeting. It has made its way into history as the "Vienna Christological Formula". Its wording is as follows: "We believe that our God and Saviour, Jesus Christus, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an

2 The proceedings of this First Consultation were printed in English language as Supplementary Issue Nr 1 of the Viennese periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" in 1972.

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eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixtion, without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard this mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible".[3]

An immediate result of the first Vienna Consultation were the visits to Rome of the heads of the two churches most involved in the ancient theological controversy. The Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Mar Ignatius Yacoub III came on October 27, 1971. Then the patriarch and Pope Paul VI delivered a common declaration in which it is said: "Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Mar Ignatius Yacoub III are in agreement that there is not difference in the faith they profess concerning the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and become really man, even if over the centuries difficulties have arisen out of the different theological expressions by which this faith was expressed". In the next year the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch, Pope Cyril VI, died and bishop Amba Shenuda became his successor. One year later, in 1973, the 1600 year anniversary of the death of St Athanasius was celebrated and the new Coptic Pope came to Rome to receive the relics of his famous ancient predecessor. In the common declaration of Paul VI and Shenuda III the Vienna Christological formula that Shenuda himself had proposed two years ago was the most important part.[4]

In principle the split of the Church dating back to the Council of Chalcedon one and a half thousand years ago had thereby been overcome, although an official agreement was achieved only 15 years later. Paul VI and Shenuda III established also a common commission for studies in the fields of ecclesial tradition, patristics, liturgy, theology, history

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3 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 1, Vienna. 1991, 46.

4 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 1, Vienna. 1991, 109.

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and practical problems, which met eight times between 1974 and 1993.

Nevertheless, the unofficial work of PRO ORIENTE also continued. In 1973, 1976 and 1978 with the distance of two or three years three further consultations followed in Vienna.[5] They dealt each with various subjects like christology, councils, primacy, etc. A fourth consultation could only take place after a break of ten years because of the political situation within the Coptic Orthodox Church.

First Break 1978-1988

When the Egyptian president Anwar as Sadat was assassinated by radical muslims, Pope Shenuda was exiled from Cairo to Wadi Natrun and all activities of his Church stopped. Therefore the fifth Consultation in Vienna could take place only in 1988. It should be the last one of its kind.[6] At this point it was decided to close this series of meetings. A standing committee was founded as a small body consisting of one representative of each Church involved which should govern the future dialogue. It was decided to continue with study seminars each treating only one subject or question of special importance.

In 1988, after this break in negotiations lasting 10 years, also the age-old christological divergence was officially concluded. An "Agreed Statement on Christology between the Coptic Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church" was signed of February 12, 1988 in the St Bishoi monastery in Egypt. The signature was given by Pope Shenouda III and

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5 The proceedings were published in English language as Supplementary Issues No. 2,3 and 4 of the periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" in 1974, 1976 and 1979. Recently all Consultations were published each together with other relevant materials also in German Language as volumes of the series PRO ORIENTE.

6 Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No 5, Vienna 1988.

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all Coptic bishops and the Delegation of the Vatican. On Pentecost, May 30, 1988 the agreement was confirmed by Pope John Paul II. The formula approved by both sides reads as follows: "We believe that our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Incarnate - Logos is perfect in His Humanity. He made His Humanity One with His Divinity without Mixture, nor Mingling, nor Confusion. His Divinity was not separated from His Humanity even for a moment of twinkling of an eye. At the same time, we anathematize the Doctrines of both Nestorius and Eutyches".[7] The christological question was thereby in fact concluded.

The other Oriental Orthodox Churches accepted the agreement of the Coptic Church and the Catholics. From then onward almost all Oriental Orthodox Churches appeased the christological controversy with the Catholic Church also officially. In 1984 the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Zakka Iwas signed an agreement in Rome. In October 1989 the Joint International Commission for the Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church of India "issued a" Doctrinal Agreement on Christology".[8] A "Common Declaration" was issued also by the Armenian Catholicos Karekin I and Pope John Paul II. Only the Ethiopian Church has not yet reacted. And the Catholicos of Cilicia in Antelias, Aram I, recently tried to downgrade the agreements already achieved.

Second Period 1988-1998

In 1988 the PRO ORIENTE Standing Committee with the Oriental Orthodox Churches had decided to continue no longer with consultations but with study seminars on special

7 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 1, Vienna 1991, 120.

8 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 1, Vienna 1991, 123, Dockument 90.

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questions. Four such study seminars took place: the first one in June 1991: "On Primacy",[9] the second one in June 1992 on "Councils and Conciliarity",[10] the third one in July 1994 on "Ecclesiology and Unity of the Church",[11] and the fourth one in July 1996 on "Authority and Jurisdiction".[12] A fifth study Seminar was scheduled, but has not yet been realized.

All these themes concern questions touching the constitution of the Church. The study seminars showed excellent results. A break-through was achieved in none of the matters treated. But the different points of view were precisely worked out and discussed. Although all Churches had developed primacy as an element of their structure, the Orientals rejected the development in the Western Church during the second millennium. Concerning the Ecumenical Councils the Orientals could accept only the first three as binding for them. In the third study seminar about ecclesiology the problem of uniatism was profoundly discussed. But also here the Catholic principle that communion or koinonia of Churches required full unity with the Pope showed very soon to be the borderline of a possible agreement. The subject of the fourth Study seminar "Authority and Jurisdiction" took especially into consideration the relation of spiritual leadership and canon law. All papers and discussions of the study seminars were published in booklets which are still available.

The most embarrassing stumbling block proved always and again to be the Catholic doctrine of the primacy of jurisdiction claimed by the Roman Popes. Already before John

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9 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 4, Vienna 1993,

10 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 5, Vienna 1993,

11 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 7, Vienna 1995,

12 The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No. 9, Vienna 1998,

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Paul II's Encyclical letter "Ut omnes unum sint", published in May 1995, by which he encouraged theologians to discuss the role of the Pope, the different points of view of Catholics and Oriental Orthodox had been expressed very clearly in our study seminars. In the meantime the results of all investigations on that subject - among them also of the consultations and study seminars of PRO ORIENTE - have been gathered by the Johann Adam Möhler Institute in Paderborn / Germany. A research project has been published recently in the quaterly for ecumenical theology with the title "Catholica".[13] These results are not different from those of the PRO ORIENTE study seminars. All non-Catholic Churches reject the claim of jurisdictional primacy of the Pope.

It is now rather the task of the authorities to recognize and accept the results already on the table and to think about the consequences. Since there is little hope for a progress by new arguments it was decided in the "Standing Committee" to concentrate in future more on the practical aspects of how to overcome the division of our churches.

A second initiative of the PRO ORIENTE dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches were the "regional symposia" in order to spread the results already achieved among the clergy and people engaged in education and adults formation within the countries concerned. Till now five such regional symposia took place: one in Wadi Natrun in Egypt in 1991,[14] the second one in Kottayam Kerala/India in Fall 1993,[15] now

13 Der Dienst des Bischofs von Rom an der Einheit der Christen. Reaktionen auf die Einladung des Papstes zum Dialog über die Form der Primatsausübung nach UT UNUM SINT von 1995. Forschungsbericht, in: Catholica, Vierteljahresschrift fuer oekumenische Theologie 55/4 (2001) 269-308.

14 Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No.3, Vienna 1993.

15 Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No.6, Vienna 1995.

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eight and a half years ago, which was a really great event with at least 500 participants of all Churches of Kerala that many of you will still remember, the third one in Kaslik/ Lebanon in 1995[16] and the fourth one in Kröffelbach/ Germany in 1997.[17] Unfortunately PRO ORIENTE did not succeed to realize further regional symposia. We had the intention to organize meetings also in Armenia, in Iraq and Ethiopia. The most advanced project was that in Armenia. Hopefully it can be realized in the near future. Last November the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin paied an official visit to Austria and invited the foundation PRO ORIENTE to have a regional symposium in Armenia in 2002.

Thirdly PRO ORIENTE was eager to promote the friendship with Oriental Orthodox Churches by bringing students of these churches to Austrian theological faculties and to give them the opportunity not only of graduation but also of becoming acquainted with European Catholicism and of fostering manifold personal and ecclesial relations.

The PRO ORIENTE Regional Seminar held in 1997 in Kröffelbach in Germany answered to a request of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The idea was that not only the faithful of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in their homelands should be informed of the agreements already achieved between Catholics and Orientals but also the Catholics in Europe. There was a fear, that if the Orthodox faithful came to know that the Catholics were no more heretics and vice versa that would weaken the Orthodox Churches. The Seminar was held in a Coptic Church near Frankfurt and was a great success. The main paper was read by the presient of the German bishops conference, Bishop - meanwhile Cardinal - Karl Lehmann. On the other side the representative of the

16 Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No.8, Vienna 1998.

17 Vienna Dialogue, Band No.10, Vienna 1999.

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Coptic Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Amba Bishoi, declared there that his Church was not content with the dialogue of PRO ORIENTE with the Churches of Syriac tradition, especially with the Assyrians. But the Assyrians had already an official christological agreement with the Catholic Church, signed by their Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dhinka IV and Pope John Paul II on 11th of November 1994. The Copts insisted to continue treating the Assyrian Church as Nestorian heretics. But for us this matter was finished. This regional seminar should remain for long time the last dialogue meeting of PRO ORIENTE with the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Second Break 1998-2002 (?)

Unfortunately almost all activities of PRO ORIENTE in the field of dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches were interrupted in the consequence of an imprudent political decision of the Austrain parliament. In 1997 a new religious law was passed which was directed against the new religious sects.[18] The state was set in the position to control new religious movements without being forced to officially recognize them. The Catholic Church and a few other established Churches and religious groups like Protestants, Byzantine Orthodox, Jews and Muslims were very satisfied. But nobody payed attention to the weak criteria for the procedure of future official recognitions. These criteria were a relatively big number of faithful only and moreover a time of registration of at least ten years. Unfortunately nobody was thinking of the small communities of the Oriental Churches in Austria. One could have introduced also a

18 Bundesgesetz über die Rechtspersoenlichkeit von Religioesen Bekenntnisgemeinschaften, Bundesgesetzblatt 1 1998/19.Laws and commentaries: H. Kalb / R. Potz/ B. Schinkele, Religionsgemeinschaftenrecht. Anerkennung und Eintragung, =Stand I. Juni 1998, Wien 1998.

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historical criterion in favour of Churches and religions existing in their homeland already for hundreds of years. But this was not done. Luckily, the small communities of the Armenian Apostolic Church and of the Syrian Orthodox Church had been recognized already before that new law, the Armenians already by the time of the Austrian Hungarian Monarchy, but not so the Coptic Church. Not to be recognized means that the community has to pay normal taxes, that the religious instruction of the children is not paied by the state and that the faithful in their official documents are qualified as being without religious confession.

Obviously, some high ranking Austrian politicians were not aware of the new legal situation, for on the occasion of a visit of Pope Shenuda III in Vienna in May 1988 they promised him the official recognition of his Church within a short time. But in fact and contrary to that promise, the Copts found themselves together with different sects like Jehovas Witnesses or Seven Day Adventists among those who were registered as applicants for recognition after at least ten years, and moreover, among the most hopeless ones because their number would never be sufficient. No wonder that Pope Shenuda felt himself cheated by the Austrian Authorities and that he reacted extremely offended.

Although Austria is a small Country and without importance on the stage of world history the unhappy Austrian religion law became the reason for a disastrous backslash in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and not only the Copts but the whole Oriental Orthodox family. Austria was seen as an example representing how the Coptic Church was treated in Catholic Countries. Pope Shenuda suspended all relations to PRO ORIENTE and the Austrian Catholic Church. He founded a Standing Committee of the Heads of Oriental Churches within the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). The Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Zakka Iwas and the Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I obliged

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themselves to act in ecumenical matters only in agreement with Pope Shenuda. This meant that also the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Catholicate of Antelias refused to continue the further cooperation in the Standing Committee of PRO ORIENTE.[19] The consequence was that the fifth study seminar to be held 1999 in Marat Sednaya in Syria and already planned in detail had to be postponed. No further Regional Symposium could be organized. At the same time also the official relations between the Catholic Church and Oriental Orthodox Church cooled down in spite of visits of Pope John Paul II to Lebanon, Egypt and Armenia. Even the Christological agreement already achieved was now again doubted by Catholicos Aram I. The official dialogue was postponed by the Middle East Patriarchs and continued only in India. Here the last meeting with Cardinal Kasper took place in September 2001.

Outlook to a third Period

But meanwhile there is some hope. The Coptic Church has established a Bishop and a monastery in Vienna. The Coptic Cathedral in Vienna is ready for consecration, and Pope Shenuda is waiting to come to Vienna on this occasion. He is also willing to celebrate there the 30 years, jubilee of his proposal of the Vienna Formula. Meanwhile the Austrian ministry of education is preparing a new law dedicated especially to the Oriental Churches. When I visited Pope Shenuda in January 2002 in Cairo he promised that in the

19 Already at the first of these meetings on May 4th-9th in Antelias/ Lebanon the relation of the Churches concerned to PRO ORIENTE was questioned. Subsequent meetings took place on November 24, 2000 and on March 15-17, 2001. All official negotiations with the Catholic Church were interrupted and postponed. The relation to the Anglican Church and the Patriarchate of Moscow was given priority.

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moment his Church will be officially recognized in Austria, the PRO ORIENTE dialogue should immediately resume where it had stopped. In the meantime the relations of the Catholicate of Etchmiadzin to the Austrian Catholic Church and especially to PRO ORIENTE have developed excellently. And there are no difficulties with the Syrian Orthodox and the Indian Orthodox Church. Ethiopia and Eritrea were never involved in these quarrels.

A regional symposium in Armenia should take place already this Fall. A warm invitation was spoken out several times by His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II during his visit in Vienna and Salzburg in November 2001. We are already preparing the printing an Armenian translation of our first booklet containing all documents of the agreements already achieved. This booklet has already been translated into Ethiopian and should be printed within one year, so that a regional symposium will become possible.

I hope also that the fifth Study Seminar will take place in 2003. Its title will be "Communio and Anathemata". It is clear that communion between different churches will be impossible as long as we continue to mutually anathenmatize, condemn and downgrade our great saints and theological pioneers of the past. They all worked and strove to find and express in different ways the truth of the Christian faith which is indeed inconceivable and which we will never be able to fully understand in an adequate manner. My opinion is that we have to respect them regardless of which tradition they belong. A saint of one tradition need not be venerated in another one, but to condemn him is not only a sin against Christian love but is even senseless after we have recognized our different traditions to be intentionally Orthodox.

A second issue to be treated in the fifth study seminar will be the non-theological obstacles to unity. I think that

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this matter will have to be treated in more than one study seminar. I am afraid that the non-theological obstacles to unity are stronger than the theological diversities and that the theological differences have widely been used and misused to keep apart the faithful of the different Churches. But which are then the real reasons of distrust and for staying separated? They might be a different formation, a different identity, different customs, difference in financial support, fear of becoming determined or swallowed by others. I think that discussing these more vital reasons for staying alone and keeping distant from others even by doctrinal means have to be taken extremely seriously and have to change our concepts of Christian unity, which are probably too naïve and simple.

Personal Perspectives

In farther future I think we shall have also to discuss the issue of Eucharistic communion without unity of hierarchy and organisation. Eucharist is the sacrament of unity in Jesus himself. But in fact it has become the sacrament of separation. Churches don't allow their members to receive holy communion in other Churches and rebuke those who are not their own members. Eucharist has become the most important means to keep the flocks apart. This is a scandal and a sin against the holy Spirit who is the Spirit of our one Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course, everybody is aware of the difficulties of liberalizing Eucharist and intercommunion. Different Churches have different disciplines of Eucharist concerning age, confession, fasting and frequency. And if the faithful are free to receive Eucharist also in other Churches, we may be afraid of loosing our sheep and, may be, also our material existence. And would not the faithful be able to differentiate between the sacrament in Churches of apostolic succession and communities, which don't have it? Will be others not be

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more attractive? Don't they have more resource? Will our faithful stay with their traditional community?

Sheep stealing is a problem also among different Catholic Churches like Latin and Greek Catholics in Poland or even between different parishes of the same Church. But normally people do stay in their places and traditions and keep the balance of to and fro between Churches and parishes. And if we mutually recognize our faith to be Orthodox, sheep stealing should become senseless and remain within recognize our faith to be Orthodox, sheep stealing should become senseless and remain within narrow borders. The unity average Christians are interested in is not the unity of hierarchy, nor the unity of Church administration and not even the unity of doctrine but the unity in prayer, church life and sacraments, the freedom to marry a Christian wife or husband of another Christian tradition and the freedom to stay in one's own Church or to join a sister Church without being denounced and banished as a betrayer.

We have entered the age of globalization; we are pulling down national borders, at least in Europe, and concerning commerce and economy almost everywhere. Therefore, it is also time to pull down the borders between Christian Churches, and this without giving up one's identity, and without being afraid of concurrence. It is like among states abolishing their tolls. States in the past were always afraid of ruining their economies by free access of goods from abroad. But the contrary was the case. In general, free trade and concurrence were the starting point for development and wealth. Mutatis mutandis, translated into the theological context, pulling down the sacramental borders between the Churches, in the first line of those of apostolic origin, could result in a new and global blossoming of Christianity and could finally provide the Churches the credibility they urgently need.

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I also think that there is no need for the Roman Popes to further bestow on the acknowledgment of their jurisdictional primacy and infallibility. It is not my task here to show the way out of the unhappy capture by the First Vatican Council. But these ways do exist. If the councils of the second millennium were not really ecumenical Councils but General Synods of the West, the quality of their decisions may be questioned. But primacy of spiritual authority of the Pope in Rome is already a fact which is accepted by almost all Christians and even by non-Christians as was shown by the Meeting of the Religions on 24th of January 2002 in Assisi. About 200 religious leaders came together at the simple invitation of the Pope. And when the Pope summons a Council like Vatican II not only the Catholic bishops will come, but also observers of all other churches. This spiritual primacy has a good biblical foundation and is already an obvious fact. Many Orthodox bishops of different churches have made their theological studies in Rome, even the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Last week Bishop Mar Bawai Soro from the Church of the East defended in Rome his doctoral thesis. All over the Christian world we find priest seminaries, an institution which was introduced by the Council of Trent and impetrated by the Popes. Even decisions for the Second Vatican Council were followed not only by the Catholic Church but also by non-Catholics. The reform of the Western liturgy was more ore less followed also by the Anglicans and by the Old Catholics. Thanks to its quality of a state, the Vatican can speak, even in international organisations in the name and in the spirit of Christianity, for instance, against death penalty, for religious freedom or for economic justice.

This kind of primacy and leadership of the Bishop of Rome by good example and by spiritual power is already excellently working. Mistakes are always possible. This service of Peter is welcomed and accepted by all Christians

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and also by our Oriental Orthodox brothers. One could seriously discuss whether this is not already more than the influence of the Popes in the first 500 years or in the first millennium on Eastern Christianity. And according to Cardinal Ratzinger, president of the Vatican Faith Congregation, more is not required for unity.[20]

More important than all theoretical considerations will always be personal friendship, exchange of teachers and students, of pastors and faithful. A side effect of all our meetings, standing committees, consultations, study seminars and regional symposia is bringing people together, providing opportunity for an exchange of opinions and information. Two Indian Orthodox doctors of Catholic theology who have studied in Austria, both of them my students, may be a special contribution of PRO ORIENTE to mutual better understanding of the Churches in Kerala. During their studies they have found plenty of friends who are Catholic priests and monks in Austria. With some of them they will remain friends for life time. Another contribution to mutual understanding is done by the students, professors and delegations of PRO ORIENTE who have been visiting diferent Oriental Orthodox countires and Churches. In 1998, 1999 and 2001 I visited Egypt with my students, with a mixed group of theology students and PRO ORIENTE delegates and with simply interested people. In February 2001 I came the second time with a group of theology students to Kerala. In October 2001 we travelled to Armenia

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20 "Rome does not have to demand more of a doctrine of primacy than was formulated and lived in the first millennium" (J. Ratzinger, On Primacy as exercised in the First Millennium, in: The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet No 4, 85=Extract translated from German out of his paper: Prognosen fuer die Zukunfit des Oekumenismus, in: PRO ORIENTE 4, Oekumene, Konzil, Unfehlbarkeit, Innsbruck 1979, 211).

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visiting the theological faculty, priest seminaries and representatives of the church. Similar journeys in the framework of PRO ORIENTE are organized by Professor Philipp Harnoncourt in Graz, He is also a member of the board of the foundation. On the highest level there are the mutual visits of bishops and patriarchs. Cardinal Schönborn travelled with a delegation of PRO ORIENTE to Iran in February 2001 and paid visits not only to the Muslim authorities but to the Oriental Christian Churches there. The last visit of this kind was that of the Armenian Catholicos Patriarch Karekin II of Etchmiadzin to Vienna and Salzburg with meetings, prayers and conferences initiated and organized by the foundation. The Catholicos was the guest of Cardinal Schönborn in Vienna and of Archbishop Eder in Salzburg. Another activity of the foundation are expositions. In 2000 an exposition of Ethiopian art was organized in the cathedral museum in Salzburg. In April 2002 an exposition of Armenian art will start in the diocesan museum in Vienna.

Present Status of the Foundation

Finally, I would like to inform about the recent developments in the structure of PRO ORIENTE. Mr Alfred Stirnemann who was present at our Regional symposium in Kottayam in 1993 passed away unexpectedly two years ago, on January 28, 2000. He had built up PRO ORIENTE from the beginning, many years serving as Secretary and Secretary General and finally as President of the foundation. Till the end of the period of his office vice-president Dr. Johann Marte continued his work. On November 28, 2001 the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, created a presidency consisting of three persons. Dr. Marte who had meanwhile retired as Director General of the Austrian National Library was nominated "Acting President" and is now responsible for the activities. At his side were appointed two presidents who will represent PRO ORIENTE in the public

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and fund traising. These co-Presidents are Baroness Maria Anna Mayr-Melnhof, a member of the former imperial family, who was till now presiding the Salzburg section of Pro Oriente, and the Austrian Commissioner in the European Union, responsible there for agriculture and Fran Fischler, coming from the Catholic students movement. The Cardinal himself is taking an increasing personal interest in the foundation that he had inherited from his predescessors. He expects PRO ORIENTE to play an important spiritual role in the process of the enlargement of the European Union towards the Orthodox East.

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THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH: ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ECUMENISM

Thomas Mar Koorilos

Introduction

With the great schism of the 11th Century the Catholic Church was rather a theological reality than a visible entity, since practically only the Latin Church was member of it. Against the Reformists' view of reducing Church to a mere spiritual reality people like Robert Bellarmine (1542- 1621) argued that Church is visible and it is joined by the same faith, same sacraments and same governance under the Roman Pontiff.[1] For many years such a view has reigned in the Catholic circle. As a result the phenomenon of non-Catholics was not found worthy of even mention. Catholic Church denied any legitimacy to such communities and even Churches, though some of them possessed apostolic succession and the sacraments. However, as the movement of reunion of Oriental Churches with the See of Rome began (16th and 17th centuries) the truth of catholicity became to a great extent a tangible ecclesial reality. Well it is to be admitted that the ecclesiological perspectives of these times were not ideal. In the face of the secularised and anti-clerical and anti-church attitude that developed in Western Europe against the historical background of the French Enlightenment

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1 ROBERT BELLARMINE, De Controversiis, II, lib. 3, De Ecclesia Militante, Cap. 2, Naples 1857, 2:75.

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movement and under the threat of the political unification of the Italian nation *(Risorgimento)* the then Pope Pius IX resorted to strict centralization of administration to save papacy and the Catholic Church. This eventually led to the reduction of the Eastern Catholic Churches appendage of the Latin Church denying proper ecclesial identity to them.[2]

No ecumenical thinking or approach was possible at that time. But under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit new vision and insights have begun to engulf the ecclesiological perspectives of the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council has brought out this new vision and redefined the Church as Communion of Churches and reiterated the bond that exists between all the baptized.[3]

To assess the role of the Malankara Catholic Church in ecumenism we need to understand the reality of the One Church and the nature, dispositions and goal of ecumenism.

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2 Cfr. V.J. POSPISHIL, *Eastern Catholic Church Law* (Rvsd. & augmtd.Ed) New York 1996, 659.

3 The Ap. Cost. On the Church *Lumen Gentium* and the decrees on ecumenism *Unitas Redintegratio*, and on the Eastern Catholic Churches *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* and other documents of the Holy See and pronouncements of the recent popes reiterates the new ecclesial concept of the Catholic Church. Of course, going through the responses appeared in the media, the author believes that the Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Dominus Iesus* has surprised and hurt the feelings of some in the non-catholic section and as Cardinal Kasper says it does differ from the open and inviting language of the Second Vatican Council (Keynote Address - Theological and Spiritual Bases for Churches' involvement in Councils of Churches. FABC Papers No.99 (2001) 15-32, p. 21. One cannot also overlook the impressive milestone of *Orientalium Dignitas* of Pope Leo XIII in this arduous journey towards Church unity.

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Church

There are many definitions given to Church down the centuries. Church as the continuation of the mystery of Christ effected through the Holy Spirit is very prominent in the Malankara Tradition. Church is understood as a gift from God. By baptism the members are incorporated into the body of Christ and the unity of the Church is in the inner life of the Triune God. The members are also called to witness to this unity of the Triune God. Holy Trinity is an ever-living invitation to be inclusive in all aspects of our life and relationship since we are created one in Christ, we ought to be one - internally and externally. "Ours is not the task of creating the unity of the Church in Christ, but the church must give expression to it in its actual life and mission. This is the great task confronting the Church on earth".[4] Incorporation into the Body of Christ impels us to be visibly one in the fellowship of the Word, Sacraments and Priesthood.

In his priestly prayer Jesus indicates his divine will for the unity of his disciples and roots the foundation and source of this unity in the Trinitarian model. *Father I Pray not only for these, but for those who through their words will believe in me. May they all be one! Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me* (Jn 17,20-21). Jesus prays to his heavenly Father for unity of those who believe in him. We are given to understand that unity is indeed the Father's gift to his people. It can never be considered result of our work or our mutual give and take process of mere diplomatic compromises. Christian unity has to be realized as per the divine plan and that alone will last. However, the disciples

4 MAR BASELIOS, "The Malankara Catholic Church: Its Ecumenical Role," *in Malankara Catholic Theology: Vision and Contributions of Cyril Mar Baselios*, (Ed. Issac Thottunkal) Rome (1996) 135-153, 141.

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have to accept this gift as a challenge and an obligation. Unity-activity must be considered as our response to the fresh urgings of the Spirit of Christ. It shall remain a task for all those who take to heart the prayer of Jesus until unity is achieved.

In this context it may be useful to state that the unity sought is an organic and visible unity. The New Delhi statement of WCC in 1961 says: 'We believe that the unity which is both God's will and His gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one Apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people. It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work".[5]

Communion of Churches - Ecumenism and Dispositions

Though we have affirmed unity of the Church we find ourselves divided and separated so much so that of all religions we appear to the conscientious observer to be the most divided religious group. We bear witness often to our disunity and inimical conflicts and suspicions than to the unity envisaged by the Lord. We are already in a deeply and painfully divided, fractious and conflict-ridden world. "In the divided and conflict-ridden world in which we live, the wider and enlivened fellowship of Christians across confessional,

5 WCC, *The New Delhi Report*, London 1962, 116.

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geographic, cultural and other boundaries offers a message of hope".[6] The common foundation of baptism entails us to struggle for full visible unity of the baptized in Christ. We cannot remain complacent to or undisturbed by the glaring situation of division among us. The separation and schisms are scandalous and are sins against the will of Jesus Christ. All are called to feel the pain of our division and to have a genuine desire for repentance and that should lead to concrete steps in healing the wounds of division. We need to witness to that unity that already exists among us and make more visible this unity in more concrete and specific ways so that the prayer of Jesus might be realized.

So also Jesus prays for unity of Christians in the context of his mission to the world - *the world may believe that you have sent me.* The Church is never for itself, it exists for the World. By virtue of baptism every Christian is a missionary. Our common baptism entails us to give a unified witness to the world so that the Lord's plan of gathering the nations in His name and reconciling them may be materialized (Jer 23,3; 31,10). "Only by our common witnesses can we be credible to the world. The search for unity and our mission to evangelise belong inseparably together".[7] The greatest hindrance to evangelization is the division and disunity among the Christians. "Only Churches burning with zeal for effective mission....can engage in meaningful and aim oriented ecumenical dialogue".[8]

This *yearning for a common witness* urges us for a radical conversion, a conversion of heart and a purification

6 F.V. CARINO, "Giving Shape to a new Ecumenical Vision in Asia: Some Introductory Reflections," in *FABC Papers* No.99 (2001) 6-11,9.

7 KASPER, *Op.cit.* 16.

8 K. VALUPARAMPIL, "Ecumenism, Reunion, Mission and the Malankara Church," in *Christian Orient* 22/4 (2001) 183-190, 184.

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of memories. The Decree on Ecumenism underscores this aspect when it states *there can be no ecumenism worthy of its name without a change of heart* (UR 7). Cardinal Kasper says that this conversion is a radical turning to God and a readiness to act in accordance with his will and equally to the neighbour. He says it is not just a moral attitude but also a fundamental transformation in our way of thinking and acting which he calls *novitas mentis*. "This implies a new vision, a new perspective and understanding, but it also underlines self-denial and rejection of every kind of triumphalism that does not see one's own deficiencies and failings".[9] Of course this conversion should take place not only in the personal level but also in the community. It is a conversion that opens our eyes to see the positive aspects in other Christian traditions (UUS 15). As Christians we need to realize that "other Churches are not our enemies, to be excluded, condemned, struggled against, overcome, defeated. Rather, they are our brothers and sisters with whom we share the deepest bond possible on earth, a communion rooted in the powerful presence of our Master and Saviour Jesus Christ. Through ecumenism, we learn that we can live with other Christians, work with them, worship and praise God together with them, forgive them and seek their forgiveness, teach them and learn from them all this to God's greater glory".[10]

It is in this context that the decree on Ecumenism speaks of *spiritual ecumenism or the centrality of prayer* for promotion of Christian unity. "This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the

9 KASPER, *Op.cit.* 18.

10 THOMAS MICHEL, "The Spirit's Gift to the Churches: New Ecumenical Visions and Associations," in *FABC Papers* No. 99 (2000) 11-15,12.

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whole ecumenical movement, and can rightly be called 'spiritual ecumenism" [UR 8]. This is because the divisions among Christians are not simply in theological matter, but more profoundly in the breach of the spiritual bonds of communion. Indeed the non-theological factors often stand in the forefront and they are in fact the hindering factors for full communion among the churches. The Holy Father reiterates the place of prayer in Christian unity. "When Christians pray together, the goal of unity seems closer. The long history of Christians, marked by many divisions seems to converge once more, because it tends towards that Source of its unity, which is Jesus Christ.....In the fellowship of prayer Christ is truly present; he prays 'in us, with us, and for us'. It is he who leads our prayer in the Spirit-Consoler, whom he promised and then bestowed on his Church in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, when he established her original unity" [UUS 22]. The Ecumenical Week of Prayer organized by the Faith and Order Commission of WCC and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of Vatican deserves special mention.

Ever since the promulgation of the decree on Ecumenism [UR] and a special Secretariat for promoting Christian Unity[11] a new attitude has been created in the relationship between Catholic Church and other non-Catholic Churches. The Council helped the Catholic Church abandon all exclusive identification of the Catholic Church with the Church of Christ. This paved the way for recognizing ecclesiality [12] of Churches and ecclesial communities outside

11 This secretariat was established in 1960 and its Ecumenical Directory of 1967 was an important event in the history of Ecumenism.

12 Even the members of the WCC have not solved the issue of ecclesiology within their own circle; The *Toronto Statement* part IV no. 4 states that *membership does not imply that each church must regard the other member churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word* [See Ecumenical Review 3 (1950) 51].

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the Catholic communion. The Council stated that the Church of Christ *subsists in* the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him (LG 8). This term *subsists in* was used at a time when the phrase *est* of Pius XII to describe the complete identification of the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ was in use.[13] This paved the way for identifying many *elements of sanctification and of truth* outside the visible structure of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church could state that the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using these Churches as means of salvation.[14] She acknowledged that these elements as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ possess an inner dynamism towards Catholic Unity.

One of the fundamental principles of ecumenism is that even when unity among Churches has become a reality, legitimate diversity will remain a fact. The ecumenical goal is not to bring about a uniform church, but a fellowship or communion of Churches that maintain their respective diversities and identities. Unity in Christ, in sacraments and in faith does not mean uniform expressions of faith or uniform celebration of the mysteries. Unity understood as communion is a unity in diversity. Legitimate diversity of churches should be always maintained and fostered. Unfortunately this aspect of communion has not been properly understood. "If the Church is founded on the apostles, this fact is of no small importance to the Church:

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13 The explanation given by the commission states that the term *subsists* in is used instead of *est* as an expression more in harmony with what is said elsewhere about ecclesial elements. *Acta Synodalia Vat.II.* Vol. 111/1,177.

14 In *Ut Unum Sint* Pope John Paul II stated that there was no ecclesiological vacuum outside the catholic Church; but that there can be found gifts of the Spirit, signs of holiness and even martyrdom for Christ's name (UUS 12-13).

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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 comes from Christ and not from Peter. What should be said is: Eccelsia ex Ecclesiis Apostolicis. Their performance, 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 origin. **The apostles were not the foundation of the church 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".[15]

In this context a reference to the concept of "Uniatism" used to denote the Reunited Oriental Catholic Churches by the non-Catholic counterparts and even by the Latin theologians looks necessary. The existence of these Oriental Churches in Catholic Communion is generally seen as a uniate existence. Such a view is tantamout to denying the ecclesiality and equality of these churches. Archbishop Mar Baselios cautions against this situation: "their ecclesial reality and equality in the Catholic Communion becomes less perceptible to many to the detriment of losing their ecclesial consciousness unless correct ecclesiological perspectives are consciously maintained through effective and timely formation. The danger could be aggravated by the situation in which the prominence of the Western Latin Church looms large in every sphere of ecclesiastical life, especially because of its power and presence through global extension and expansion. The situation would be worse still, if the Catholic Oriental Churches are, in fact, diminished in their stature in terms of their individuality or specific spiritual vitality,

15 **B. LAMBERT**, Ecumenism, 443.

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lacking in the infrastructures that are needed to protect and promote them".[16]

This means that to bring about the unity willed by the divine Master all have to cooperate and the responsibility of the Church of Rome is very significant. The Church of Rome cannot in reality be catholic though it might claim if it does not truly recognize the apostolic individuality of these oriental churches. "The Catholic Church values the Oriental Churches.....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. The 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".[17] Thus the Church of Rome needs these Churches and these Churches need Rome to be catholic and one. Very often a Church's identity is shamefully reduced to the manner in which the Holy Qurbono and other services is celebrated. Even learned people ask why we need different Rites at all? After all it is only a question of celebrating the Mass, isn't it? These all show how defective is the ecclesiological outlook at grass root level.

The Syro-Malankara Church

The Church in Kerala traces its origin with the coming of St.Thomas the Apostle in A.D. 52. These Christians were called Marthoma Christians. Unfortunately not much is known about the early history; however, most historians hold that they were in communion with the Church of Rome,

16 **MAR BASELIOS,** *Ecclesial perspectives emerging from the New Code of Canon Law for the Oriental Catholic Churches*, Kottayam 1991, 13.

17 G. PANICKAR, "Syro-Malankara Church: A Brief History," in *Journal of St. Thomas Christians* XI/2 (2000) 4-22,15.

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especially through the Persian Church. They were also undivided until the advent of the Portuguese.[18] The archbishop of Goa claimed jurisdiction over the Syrians in Kerala and in the Synod of Udayamperur decrees were issued to conform the Syrian liturgy to the Latin practices. In 1653 there occurred a revolt called Coonan Cross Oath as an attempt to safeguard the internal autonomy of the Syrian Church. For proper apostolic succession the separated Syrians (hereafter Puthenkoottukar) approached the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and eventually this led to the reception of West Syrian liturgy among this faction of the Thomas Christians.

Ever since the separation there were also attempts for reunion. But due to various reasons none got fulfilled. The Puthenkoottukar found themselves in very precarious situations. On the one hand with the successful colonization of England and Holland various Protestant missions and preachers made successful inroads on this group so much so that they (Puthenkoottukar) even feared of losing their heritage and on the other hand the Jacobite Patriarchs demanded more power and jurisdiction in the Kerala Church. These made them long for immediate reunion with the Catholic Church. In 1704 Mar Thoma IV sent a petition to Rome seeking Rome's approval of the Antiochean Rite and of his right to govern his flock; but there was no positive response from Rome. His successor Mar Thoma V also requested reunion but failed. The next attempt was in 1778 under Mar Thoma VI and he appealed through Rev. Fr.

18 A detailed historical explanation is not possible in this short study. See Some of the widely accepted books: P. PODIPARA, The Thomas Christians, London 1970; Our Rite, Mannanam,1944; C.MALANCHARUVIL, Syro-Malankara Church. Aluva 1973;G.T. MECKENZIE, Christianity in Travancore, in Travancore State Manual (ed. by V. Nagam Aiya). Trivandrum 1906: BERNARD of St.Thomas, Marthoma Christhianikal, vols 3, Kottayam 1992,etc.

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Joseph Kariattil who worked relentlessly for the reunion of the Puthenkoottukar. He obtained a positive response from Rome and was authorized to receive the Jacobites into Catholic communion. (Rome made him also a bishop). But Bishop Kariattil on his return to Kerala died under mysterious circumstances and thus a nearly realized reunion didn't reach fulfilment. Even Mar Thoma VI (called Dionysius I) made an act of communion with the Catholic Church in 1790, but since he did not get an official mandate to govern his people went back to his people. Mar Dionysius VI also made an attempt for reunion but did not materialize. Thus one sees a long list of effort for reunion from the part of the Puthenkoottukar, but all failed. During these times there were many individual reunions especially with the establishment of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy.

Due to the resistance of Geevarghese Mar Vattaseril, the Metropolitan of the Puthenkoottukar over the demands of the then Patriarch Abdulla over his prerogative rights on the Church and its properties in Malankara, and the consequent excommunication of the Metropolitan by the Patriarch, a split again occurred among the Puthenkoottukar in 1910. The faction with the patriarch came to be known as Bavakashi and the other Metrankashi. Ever since that time the atmosphere of the Malankara Church was one of constant litigation and legal feud. It was in this situation that Fr. P.T. Geevarghese, the first Syrian priest to have a Master's Degree from Madras University, and who was instrumental to bring about the establishment of the Catholicate of Tigris in Malankara and also for the revocation of the excommunication of the Metropolitan, began to inspire young men and women to dedicate themselves for the spiritual renewal of the Malankara Church (this eventually led to the formation of the Bethany Ashram for both men and women religious).

As the litigations began to come to a climax, the Synod of Bishops held in Parumala authorized Mar Ivanios, the

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Bethany Metropolitan to do the necessary correspondence to inquire about the possibility of reunion with the See of Rome, which the former prelates though sought could not achieve. In 1926 Mar Ivanios wrote to the Congregation for the Oriental Church on reunion on two conditions, namely, right to retain the Antiochean Rite and the recognition of the sacred orders of the Catholicos section. Rome though was concerned was unhurried. The Catholicos section won the lawsuit in the meantime and that changed the course of events. The proposed reunion was felt unnecessary; but Mar Ivanios was convinced over the need for reunion for the spiritual well being of the Church and to fulfil the dream of his predecessors for universal communion. Thus in 1930 on September 20th Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos made their profession of faith before the delegate of the Roman Pontiff and were reunited with the Catholic Church. The Holy See conveyed its decision to receive Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos into the Catholic Church with the pure Syro-Antiochean Rite preserved and both the prelates maintained in their respective office and jurisdiction dependent immediately on the Holy See. The Syro-Malankara Hierarchy formally came into being through the Apostolic Constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi* on June 11,1932.

Under the new ecclesiastical set up, began with the promulgation of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the Malankara Catholic Church is a Metropolitan Church sui iuris with an Archbishop as its Metropolitan and three eparchies suffragan to the archeparchy of Trivandrum and an Apostolic Visitor for North America and Europe.

"The Malankara Catholic Church has over the last fifty years blossomed into a vigorous and disciplined Church in the Universal Church. They, like the other ancient Christian communities in this part of the world, are a powerful witness to the inviolability of marriage and the sanctity of the family. Common family prayers in the morning and the evening,

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according to the liturgical cycle, have been a cherished tradition of the Malankara Christians. Fasting and abstinence as well as liturgical worship of Sundays and Feast days have also been prominent features of the Malankara Catholic life. The liturgy has always been the centre of worship and life of this people and the source of their sustenance".[19] There are seven bishops, about 400,000 faithful, 1500 religious sisters, and 700 priests in the Malankara Catholic Church.

Ecumenical Contribution

To understand the significance of the Reunion Movement and the relevance of the Malankara Catholic Church ecclesiological insight is a must. Mar Ivanios had a very clear vision about the meaning of the expression, *Catholic, Apostolic, One and Holy* used in the Niceo-Constantinopolitan creed to qualify the Church. Church is fundamentally a local reality and the communion of other local Churches *(sui iuris)* makes the Church catholic, apostolic, one and holy. Mar Ivanios was convinced that the apostolicity of St. Thomas enjoyed by the Malankara Church was providence and it had to be fostered. But it was however not an isolated experience either, it is an inherent urge to be in communion with the other apostolic churches concretely expressed through the communion with the See of Peter, the sign and guarantee of Unity. The New Testament, the Liturgical texts and prayers, the writings of the Fathers of this Church all proclaim this undeniable fact. In the Nomocanon (popularly known as Hoodaya Canon) Maphrian Gregorios Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286) states "as there are four corners to the world so shall there be four patriarchs. The head among shall be the patriarch of Rome..." (Ch. VII, par.1)[20]

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19 G. PANICKAR, "Syro-Malankara Church: A Brief History," 13.

20 In his explanation of canon 8 of Nicea I, Bar Hebraeus says "as each patriarch has legitimate authority over those under his

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This means that each particular Church needs the other Churches to express its catholicity and unity. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Malankara Catholic Church to Ecumenism is its prestigious position, i.e., to enrich the Catholic Communion with the apostolic patrimony of St.Thomas - definitely at a theological level and practically perhaps only as a sign, (the Catholic communion would have been that much impoverished and less Catholic had the Malankara Church did not embrace Catholic Communion) and to deepen the ecclesial life and holiness of the greater Malankara Church with the communion of other apostolic Churches rallied around the successor of Peter, the Rish Patriarch. Through the presence of the Malankara Catholic Church in the Catholic Communion the catholicity of the Malankara Church is established at least in theory. The Reunion of the Malankara Church was not an amalgamation or merger with the Latin, Roman Church. Though by extension the Roman Church is 'universal', and thus has many special features, theologically it is an individual autonomous Church like the Malankara Church, equal in dignity and apostolicity. There is no question of changing from one individual to another. However, as we have seen earlier, communion among these individual churches is a must and it must concretely nourish the ecclesial body spiritually and morally. Being strongly convinced confident that the Malankara Church was not going to lose any of its authentic ecclesial elements as an ancient apostolic Church Mar Ivanios initiated the process of Reunion. On the other hand such a reunion was only a Christian response to the prayer of the Lord, and was the fulfilment of the many unsuccessful attempts of reunion initiated by the earlier

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authority so also the patriarch of Rome has authority over other patriarchs. It is in the same way as blessed Peter had over the whole Church. Cfr. G. PANICKAR, "Pradhama Sthanathil Pathrosinte Yadartha Pingami Roma Marpapayo?," in *Aikyadeepam* XXIII/9 (1997) 36-40.

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prelates of the Malankara Church to enter into communion with the Catholic Church. This ancient and apostolic Malankara Church grew in an atmosphere of Catholic Communion but lost it in the course of history. Mar Ivanios led the Malankara Church to communion without sacrificing any of its venerable patrimonies and ecclesial heritage.

Church by its very nature is missionary. Indeed the missionary enterprise of the Malankara Church has been so powerful and successful ever since its Reunion. Indeed the efforts for reunion were for effective mission work and it has borne ample fruit. The situation in India is to be thoroughly thought about during this discussion on ecumenism. Are the oriental Churches free from the obligation to preach the gospel to the whole world? The Malankara Church has no freedom to preach the Good News to the Indians outside the confines of Kerala. Just as other Churches the Malankara Church has the obligation to confront the various cultures and proclaim the Gospel to truly exhibit its missionary and catholic spirit. Well it looks like pleading for one's right; but the funny question is to whom is it pleading - another apostolic church? In this case no Oriental Catholic Churches can convince their Orthodox counter parts that communion with the See of Peter would not result in renouncing their Orthodox character, right to evangelise all over the world and apostolic dignity and equality.

Well the Malankara Catholic Church has the status now of an autonomous Metropolitan Church; yet its present existence is under an ecclesial tension. On the one hand it is not able to project itself as a truly individual church, sufficiently autonomous enough to organize its own ecclesial life as their non-Catholic counterparts do. It painfully realizes that its great yearning for catholicity though realized at least theologically by its communion to the see of Peter cost her much, namely, of losing in some measure her true autonomy. This is not because of ill will but a very defective ecclesiology. In all the ecumenical efforts of the pioneers of the Malankara

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Church, the striking feature is the ecclesial vision about ecumenism. What is discussed is not mere formula or agreeable approaches, but deep down ecclesiological view. That is to say, the communion ecclesiology propounded by the Second Vatican Council which by God's providence was reigning the minds of the Malankara Bishops and faithful about 50 years before the Council. What the Malankara Church is interested in is the encounter of two apostolic Churches, truly equal in dignity and mission.

On the other hand, though one in matters of faith and discipline, the Orthodox and the Jacobites are deeply divided. The atmosphere of the Church has been one of litigation and rivalry. Many faithful have expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration in these on going litigations. As a result the vitality of this ancient and apostolic Church is lost. The Antiochean relationship of this Church is only from 1655 and until then it was in communion with the see of Peter. Hence it is not really understood why these Churches are not showing the same interest for linking themselves to the Patriarch of Rome, the symbol of Unity established by the Lord. Thus "for the Orthodox they are an ecclesiastical anomaly, while for the Roman Church they are the object of a generous and gracious patronage".[21]

Perhaps in this context it may be useful to note that there exists a noticeable difference in the popular understanding of ecumenism, that is to say, the understanding among common people widely influenced by the view propagated by the media and the deeper ecclesial view of ecumenism, willed by God and destined for His greater glory, noticeable in a significant way in the documents of the Vatican II. Of course the former is useful, especially to start with; but it should always lead to a profound communion

21 Y. CONGAR, "1054-1954, Eglise at Les eglises: Neuf siecles de de doulourerse separation entre L'Orient at L'Occident," in *Irenikon* I (1926) 42.

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encompassing all the spheres of Church life. Only those who are convinced that division among Christians is a sin can effectively dedicate themselves to the cause of Church unity, and they alone can appreciate the relevance of the Oriental Catholic Churches until full communion of the various Churches is achieved. However these communion attempts regrettably are not appreciated sufficiently as a glorious stage of achievement of the goal of ecumenism and this sad situation is one of the ecumenical problems that confronts us.[22]

Conclusion

The goal of ecumenism is the promotion of the unity of the Churches through mutual dialogue, encounter, reconciliation and acceptance. It is not a complacent co-existence of different Churches in a state of division, nor is it a unification or absorption of individual Churches under any manner. The Malankara Catholic Church, while safeguarding her individuality in terms of its liturgy, discipline, patrimony and heritage, has clearly witnessed to the fact that the authenticity of a Church is when it is rooted in communion with the Apostolic See of Peter in Rome. The Malankara Catholic Church has shown to its non-Catholic counterparts that communion with the See of the Supreme Pastor is divinely willed and such a communion will only strengthen their ecclesial life. However, this discussion has amply shown that a real conversion of heart is imperative on the part of all the Churches to materialize the prayer of Jesus - *that all may be one.* The unity that is intended is never a vague or emotional one, but has its foundation in the Triune God. The affirmation of diversity, however, should not be for condoning the fact of division. To view division as legitimate diversity is sinful.

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22 MAR BASELIOS, "The Malankara Catholic Church: Its Ecumenical Role," 145.

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A CRITIQUE OF ECUMENISM IN THE LIGHT OF EASTERN THEOLOGY

"Ipsa distinctione unietur!"

Prof. Dr. Edward Farrugia

Let us imagine for a moment that Church union has been reached on all sides to the satisfaction of everybody concerned. It is legitimate to cherish such dreams, especially as they seem not too far from Christ's own horizon. Would there still be room for an ecumenical theology? On the very premises of ecumenical theology it does not appear very likely. For if ecumenists are right, ecumenical theology is clearly born to die; if they are wrong, and union will never materialize, then ecumenical theology is still-born.

In this study we want to probe into the limits of ecumenical theology with respect to its own future, while leaving toying with futurism aside. The future we are dealing with is the one which is already visible in our present, based on the analysis of our current predicament, open though it is to hope. What then, if ecumenism were to succeed, what kind of theology would take its place? If it is bound to fail, what kind of theology should replace it? On both counts, what do the conclusions say on the possibility of ecumenical theology influencing normal theology now, pretty much the way eschatology influences, and drastically, the rest of theology.

In other words, what kind of theology should be practiced as it takes into account the existence of other theologies: what form should *Auseinandersetzung in der Theologie* take if there was no reason whatsoever to be

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polemical? If you like, if the Church found herself to be in that ideal state where there were no divisions and was functioning healthily?

The paper is divided into four parts. After (1) preliminaries in which we try to clarify some terms-notably: ecumenical theology, ecumenical theology-so as to avoid talking at cross-purposes, we shall (2) investigate one of the premises of theology in general and Eastern theology in particular, namely its symbolical character, (3) so as to gauge its dogmatic weight, and fathom its possibility to be extended to other areas of theology, and (4) make some sort of critical evaluation of its use for ecumenical theology.

1. Definition and growth: in search of a question

Any investigation must need start by covering its steps-define-if it wants to be able to retrace them back to starting-point without getting lost somewhere on the way. To define has been condemned as overweaning pride, as St Ephrem (+373) did, considering it as potentially poaching on divine domain. Understood as growing aware of one's limits defining means at the same time the attempt to accept oneself so as to overcome them. In this sense, definition means the agony and the glory, for, whereas a concept may seem to cage man in, an image seems to give him wings. One symbol particularly apt to express this double movement is *symbol* itself: referring to two parts which were initially one but have been broken, the verb from symbol indicates their being thrown together haphazardly[1].Symbol thus whets the curiosity by prodding it on to go in search of the corresponding part.

1 Several meanings of symbol are listed in G. W.H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1995, P. 1282, as well as in H. G. Lydell and and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon. With a Revised Supplement*, Oxford 1996, 1676-1677. If we take the masculine form, its meanings range from a hazardous "throwing together"

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1.1 Beyond the peak image

Indeed, when concepts are exasperated, perhaps only images can help us over the cliffs. Traditional theories of loci theologici[2] fail us here, for neither have considered including either polemics or ecumenism. This is true of Melchior Cano (+1560) no less than of B. Lonergan (+1984), whose methodology has been described by Karl Rahner (+1984) as a contemporary rendition of those famous *loci.*[3] It is thus left up to us-to our *imagination*-to handle this tricky but unavoidable dilemma. Is this really surprising? It has been all along the position of the Christian East that to try to reflect on God while bracketing off the imagination is to indulge in rationalism. Divine realities are a challenge for man taken as a whole, not simply a part of him, and to pretend to do justice to them simply by reason is to follow the dangerous path of abstraction in the search of what is not only alive but the ground of all reality. In this sense, one could write a whole history of the images used to fill in this dangerous void, threatening to suck up the inadvertent observer threading roughshod on sacred premises.

One such occasion presented itself by the need to tell the difference between friend and foe in theological argument, the image most frequently used for this being Goliath defeated

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and "chance" to "meeting by chance". In the case of the neuter form, can signify tally, or two halves or corresponding pieces of a sherb, of which a piece is taken by one of the two strangers, or contracting parties, so as to establish later one's identity, a fragment known in Latin as *tessera.* Among the mean- sings of the word is to contribute.

2 K. Lehmann, "Dogmen-Geschichte als Topologie des Glaubens," W. Löser u. a. (Hg.), *Dogmen-Geschichte und katholische Theologie,* Würzburg 1985, 513-528.

3 K. Rahner, "Kritische Bemerkungen to B.J.F.Lonergans: 'Functional Specialties in Theology'",Gregorianum 51 (1970) 537-540, here 539.

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by his own weapons.[4] Considered at its best, polemics thus meant gaining on one's side one's own opponent, by beating him at his own game. For this reason, this approach is known as *argumentum ad hominem*,[5] because it takes as its point of departure the partner wherever he or she happens to be. Naturally, in itself, this marked definitive progress, because one sought to use arguments by adopting the adversary's own premises to draw from them completely different conclusions than those initially reached by him. A variant of this is found in what Georges Florovsky (+1979) has branded as "pseudomorphism",[6] whereby the Orthodox argued with Protestants against Catholics and with Catholics against Protestants. And, if the din of battle suggests turning away from polemics, one may be tempted to reduce a complex discussion to a catchy phrase which does not, deep-down, solve the issue, but only shifts the attention from the battlefield to the playground; a regress, rather than a

4 See, for example, the work by Theophile Rutka, SJ, *Goliath proprio gladio devictus, id est: Joannicius Galatowski, Archimandrita jelecensis, contra processionem Spiritus S. et a Filio et Ecclesiam romanam scribens a P. Theophilo Rutka refutatus*, Lublin 1689; for futher details see: C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothéque de la Compagnie de Jèsus*, VII, Bruxelles 1896, 336.

5 "*Ad hominem (Argument).*Se dit d'un argument qui ne vaut que contre l'adversaire que l'on combat, soit que cet argument se fonde sur une erreur, une inconsequnce ou une concession de l'adversaire, soit qu'il use tel ou tel detail particulier à l' individualité ou à la doctrine de celui-ci"; A. Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, Paris 1962, p. 26.

6 See and compare D. Wendebourg, "Pseudomorphosis'-ein theologisches Urteil als Axion der kirchen-und theologiegeschichtlichen Forschung", *The Christian East. Its Institutions & its Thought*, Roma 1996, 556-589, and Fr. J. Thomson, "Peter Mogila's Ecclesiastical Reforms and the Ukrainian Contribution to Russian Culture. A Critique of Georges Florovsky's Theory of 'the Pseudomorphosis of Orthodoxy", Slavica Gandensia 20 (1993) 67-119.

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progress. The German exegete Rudolph Pesch has accused many recent debates on justification of doing just that,[7] whereby the ever-shifting playfield can find, in terms of debate, adequate expression in the roundtable. But if words can go round and round, bouncing back and forth from one corner to the other of the conference hall, the summit image, whereby agreement at the top brings union in its train like a cataract, fails to explain why people are often caught unawares by what others descide above their heads.

1.2 Establishing the parameters of an endless discussion

Although ecumenism has become a way of life, characterizing one's whole approach to theological problems,[8] the need is generally felt, to define one's parameters, so as to come down-to-earth; ideas, like airplanes, may soar to their hearts' capacity, but must return to base, in regular intervals, so as to recharge their batteries and their fonts. The most difficult word in our equation, is not, to establish what ecumenical means, not even what ecumenical theology means, although it would help, to have some indicators. The crux lies in our conception of theology itself, if we want to tackle the problem head-on.

Ecumenism was initially not as all-inclusive, as it may sound nowadays, for it was based on the distinction between Greek and barbarian, or, closer to etymology, on that between the inhabited world, identified without any further fuss with the sphere of influence of the Byzantine Empire, and the rest of the world.[9] The use of terms such as ecumenical

7 R. Pesch, *Gerechtfertigt aus Glauben*, Freiburg i Br. 1982, 28.

8 J. Gros, E. McManus and A. Riggs, *Introduction to Ecumenism*, New York 1998, 105-109.

9 A. Tuilier, "Le sens de l'adjectif 'oecumènique' dans la tradition patristique et dans la tradition Byzantine, " Nouvelle revue theologique 86 (1964) 260-271.

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council, and ecumenical patriarch, is a case in point. But words shift their meaning, and, eventually, the term came to imply, a claim to universality which it has nowadays.

It is from such a late-comer that ecumenical theology derives its vigour, whereby hopes are raised that a situation which once was and now is no longer, may be re-establised.[10] Yet expectations quickly fulfilled, amount to no more than hopes, likely to be dashed just as quick. The question thus arises whether ecumenism concerns primarily method or substance. Since part of the ethos of dialogue is that, partners do not water down their own faith just to meet half-way their partners, but rather try to re-gain the original belief of their mother Church while freeing it from later encrustations, one may easily understand why ecumenical theology operates, more on the basis of conversion, consequently of method, then of trying to whittle down a dogma, which by definition is inviolable.

And here is the challenge. Eastern theology could certainly not settle down, for a purely methodological approach as was at one point fashionable, in the general theological discussion, following Vatican II. It would be inconceivable to attain agreement between the Churches,

10 In his *Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons Thus Far*, Cambridge 1996, 23f, G.R. Evans rightly points out that, in spite of the fact that at present there are as many ecumenical theologies as the varying frameworks in which it operates, there are com mon elements arising out of its ecumenical character. (a) Ecu menical theology is usually done collaboratively by representatives of Churches which have no authority over one another, something unprecedented in the history of theology, since previously, e.g. at Florence, members tried hard to ensure first of all authoritative ness within their own tradition. (b) It is absolutely imperative to respect the ecclesial being of other communities, avoiding any attempts to absorb. (c) In its method ecumenical theology allows no room for the hostility of polemics.

11 "Real symbol" refers to a symbol to whose self-realization belongs

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on the basis of bracketing off dogmatic content. Precisely to this dogmatic content we must now turn.

We need not search far. If the use of image be considered part of method, part and participle of Eastern theology, we may try to look for the corresponding dogmatic part of this approach. In what follows, we hope to show that, that dogmatic correspondent may be safely called *"real symbol"*

Hence our plan.

In the next-second-part we shall try to establish real symbol by giving it contours , basically limiting ourselves to the theological, that is to say, the dogmatical dimension. Since real symbol is a term meant to describe the theology of the Fathers its range must be delimited to cover the specifically Eastern character. As a further task there emerges the need to show how real symbol, in its specifically Eastern character, may be employed to understand the whole of the Eastern patrimony as listed by canon 28. 1 of CCEO: *dogmatic, liturgical, spiritual and canonical.*

In a third part, our study probes into the spiritual, liturgical and canonical import of real symbol; in a fourth part, the meaning of all this for ecumenical theology.

2. Real symbol in dogmatic perspective

Real symbol is a designation, used by some theologians in modern times, so as to designate the core of patristic argumentation. To call it philosophical in import, is to miss the point that philosophy and theology formed a differentiated whole for the Fathers, which they occasionally formally distinguished, but never completely separated. An autonomous use of reason in complete independence of the data of revelation was unknown to the Fathers, even if on occasion they distinguished, between data accessible to the naked eye and the difference the light of faith would make in grasping the same truths in all its depths. And yet, it had

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most definitively philosophical implications; pretending that it is like Adam ducking his head in front of Eve and the rest of creation instead of calling her and the rest of them by name.

2.1 Retrieval of real symbol in general

In our times, real symbol[11] came to receive more and more attention when experts in comparative religion started drawing conclusions as to parallels between Christian truths and practice, and non-Christian religions. The reductive character of these conclusions led to a strong reaction on the part of believing practitioners to have a second look at the data. It was in this context that Franz Dölger (1879-1940), a Catholic priest expert on ancient Church, religious and cultural history, spoke of the role of real symbol in Christianity, in contradistinction to superficial parallels, for example, between the virginal birth and love-stories of the gods, which proved so detrimental by their very superficiality.

One of Franz Dölger's more gifted students was Hugo Rahner,[12] who was quick to make of his master's discovery a programme to retrieve Christian truth in its symbolical import. His works, such as *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung*,[13] *Symbole der Kirche: Die Ekklesiologie der Väter*[14]

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the reality it expresses, and thus necessarily expresses; K-H. Menke, "Real symbol", Lthk 3^3 1999, 867-868.

12 On Hugo Rahner and his use of symbol see J. *Holdt, Hugo Rahner: Seingeschichts-und symboltheologisches Denken*, Paderborn 1997,esp. 79-83. Dölger's opting for real symbol in his comparative religion was a reaction against the superficial comparisons students of comparative religion often drew, e. g. between the insertion of the cross on the waters and phallic symbols. With its anchoring in the real religious symbol is thus introduced in the surer path way of metaphysics.

13 Basel ^{4}1984.

14 Salzburg 1964.

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and *Eine Theologie der Verkündigung*,[15] show that, for him, real symbol served not only as a way of interpreting history but also theology. Decisive is the fact that real symbol points to correspondences between symbol and ontology.

In 1964, on the occasion of his brother's sixtieth birthday, Hugo descrived Karl Rahner's theology as being summarized in the one word *Symbol*.[16] Thereby he zeroes in on his brother's seminal study, "Zur Theologie des Symbols".[17] This remarkable study attempts to show the universal range of Realsymbol in dogmatic theology. Taking his tack from devotion to the Sacred Heart, which at the time of writing (1959) played a central role in Catholic Church life.[18] K. Rahner tries to show its centrality, over and above the fluctuating forms, by ferreting out the heart as the symbol

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15 Darmstadt ^{3}1970.

16 In "Eucharisticon Fraternitatis," J.B. Metz u.a. (Hg.), *Gott in Welt* II, Freiburg i. Br. 1964, 895, 897, Hugo Rahner mentions his teacher Franz Dolger and an advice of his which both brothers
followed, and afterwards adds that common to both was the endeavour to give a theological interpretation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, to which Hugo made a contribution as history, whereas Karl as speculative theology in an essay called "Zur theologie des Symbols". Hugo considered this to be the quintessence of Karl's basic approach to theology.

17 K. Rahner, *Schriften* zur Theologie V, Freiburg i. Br. 1967, 275-312.

18 See, on this point, B. P. Vyseslavcev, "Il culto cattolico del Sacro cuore", in: T. Spidlik (a cura di), *La spiritualita russa*, Roma 1981, pp, 158-159: "Esiste forse una inconciliable contraddizione fra queste *due concezioni del cuore: spiritualmente-simbolico e realmente-corporeo?* I teologi cattolici affermano che contraddizione non c'e: il simbolismo e la mistica non escludono il cuore corporeo. Il cuore corporeo si venera come emblema dell' amore. L'organo del cuore è simbolo dell'amore, un ***simbolo reale.***. Si afferma che due elementi, spirituale e corpreo, sono uniti nel culto del Sacro Cuore, cosi come sono uniti nell'uomo il corpo e l'anima; insieme

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of Christ's love.[19] In order to do this, he points out to the ontology of real symbol in general. Every being must need necessarily express itself in order to find itself and its own essence. Precisely for this reason every being is necessarily plural, without however understanding this as a negative quality.[20] Indeed, the highest example of this positive pluralism is the Christian Trinity, which mysteriously retains its simplicity in spite of the difference of persons.[21] K. Rahner goes on to add that real symbol belongs to the essential constitution of the self-realization of a being.[22]

On this ontological basis K.Rahner moves on to show the central which real symbol occupies in theology; his appeal to theology of the Trinity has already served as background to the ontology of real symbol.[23] At any rate, Christology serves as the central chapter in this theology of the real symbol,[24] for: "whoever sees me, sees the Father" (Jo 14, 9). Incarnational theology is symbol theology, because the Logos is the best interpreter of the Father and the humanity of the Logos is the best interpreter of the Logos.[25] Insofar as the Church continues this mission of the Logos, the Church is to be understood as the symbolic function of the Logos in the world.[26] With regards to the cultic image K. Rahner refers to

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pero il corpo è sottomesso all' anima e l' anima domina. Perciò domina anche il significato spirituale e simbolico del cuore".

19 K.Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie* V,276.

20 *Ibid.* 280.

21 *Ibid.* 280.

22 *Ibid.* 290.

23 *Ibid.* 291.

24 *Ibid.* 293.

25 *Ibid.* 294.

26 K. Rahner, Schriften zur Theologie V, 297.

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Byzantine theology, which saw the justification of the icon through the difference between the Father and the incarnate Logos.[27] Even eschatology, an area where one may imagine that symbol would be superseded, in effect depends on the mediation of the glorified of the Logos.[28] In brief, real symbol is like the red thread of dogama,[29] for, the structure of Christianity itself is real-symbolical, since reality and the way it appears to us in the flesh are for ever united in a manner that is not confused but not separated.[30]

Rahner's suggestion has not passed unnoticed or uncriticised. His recourse to *Ursakrament*, or primordial sacrament, to describe the Church in relationship to the other sacraments, a view later popularized by O. Semmelroth.[31] drew high brows, since established usage assigned this to Christ, allotting the Church the role of fundamental sacrament or *Grundsakrament*, and not the other way round, as Rahner did.[32] However, Rahner helped handsomely in

27 *Ibid.* 301.

28 *Ibid.*302.

29 *Ibid.* 307.

30 *Ibid.* 311.

31 O. Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament*, Frankfurt a. M. 1956.

32 According to P. Walter, "Ursakrament," L ThK 10,[3]2001, 481-482, K. Rahner, starting with 1946, reversed the trend of calling Christ *Ursakrament* and the Church *Grundsakrament*, which at frist meant rather a regress. In "Die Gliedschaft in der Kirche nach der Lehre Enzyklika Pius" XII. 'Mystici Corporis Christi", *Schriften zur Theologie* II, Einsiedeln 1968, 80, however, Rahner speaks of the Church as being "*gewissermaßen* das Ursakrament" "*in a certain sense* the primordial sacrament". The article was written in 1947. And in his 1959 article "Zur Theologie des Symbols", *Schriften zur Theologie* V, 298, he explains that the Church is "Ur"-sakrament with regards to the other sacraments, not to Christ.

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promoting this use in general, thereby abetting the use of "real symbol" in theology.[33]

2.2 The re-discovery of real symbol in the East

Real symbol is a code-name for Eastern theology as a Weltanschauung, and one good place where to start probing into the matter is Syriac Christianity.[34] Arising from a breakaway Jewish community in Adiabene,[35] Syriac Christianity retained its symbolic links to Judaeo-Christianity, as Murray rightly points out, except that on one very important point it deepens them along the lines of Christian anthropology of the image.[36] In the words of a

33 K.-H. Menke, "Realsymbol", LThK 8, ³1999, 867-868.

34 In his *Paradise and Paradigm: Key Symbols in Persian Christianity and the Bah Faith*, New York, Albany USA 1999, Christopher Buck uses symbol as the chief category to interpret Syriac Christianity. Religion is defined as a system of symbols (12), symbols as encoded metaphors (13). "A symbol is an enigma. It is like an oracle; it needs to be deciphered. A symbol is not susceptible of interpretative closure, or "truth exhaustion", partly because it fits recombinant possibilities in connection with other symbols" (14). When he talks of symbols as possessing a kind of "dream logic" (480) one is reminded of P. Florensky's *Iconostasis*, tr. D. Sheehan & O. Andrejev, Crestwood, New York 1996, 33-44, which sees in dreams the hinge between the spiritual and the material. On p. 43 Florensky says: "A dream, then. Is a sign of a movement between two realms-and also a symbol: of what? From the heavenly view, the dream sym bolizes earth; from the earthly perspective, it symbolizes heaven. A dream therefore occurs when-simultaneously but with differing orders of clarity-both shores of existence are given to consciousness". See also H. Bergson, "Le reve," *L'énergie spirituelle*, Oeuvres, Paris 1970, 878-897.

35 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, Cambridge 1975, 8.

36 In an essay, "The Theology of the Image", *In the Image and Likeness of God*, ed. J. H. Erickson and Th.E. Bird. Crestwood, New York 1974, 125-139, V. Lossky has elaborated the difference between the Jewish and the Christian anthropology on this point.

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Byzantine theologian, V. Lossky, who draws upon the closely related problem of the theology of the image:

> The precise facts appealed to by theologians who are opposed to the patristic doctrine of the image must be admitted by all who, as they face the texts of the Old Testament, are unwilling to close their eyes to the history of the Biblical canon. Thus they will recognize that the Hebrew expressions *selem and demut*, governed by the propositions *be* and *ke*, in Genesis 1:26(which give: "in our image and likeness") have not the positive and direct force of the translation of the Septuagint.In the context of the sacerdotal narrative of Genesis, the creation of man "in the image" of God confers on human beings a dominion over the animals analogous to that which God enjoys over the whole of creation. If, as it is sometimes supposed, this text is aimed against the Egyptian cult of theriomorphic gods, the expression "in the image" would have a mainly negative meaninig: animals have nothing of the divine, for only man is made "in the image" of God. But it has also been noticed that the expression "after our likeness" ought to limit still further the positive force of "in our image", perhaps to avoid at the same time the Iranian myth of the "heavenly man": man is *only in the image*-he has only a certain distant analogy with the Lord through the place which he occupies among earthly creatures.[37]

All this put together would not yield the theology of the image known to Eastern theology, but only a doctrine of the image of God in negative terms; that is to say, Israel's God

37 V. Lossky, "The Theology of the Image", p. 128.

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has nothing in common with other deities and can have no image in human or animal form to be worshipped, which corresponds to the Old Testament prohibition of any plastic representation of God (Dt 4:15-16; Dt 4:12). In the purely Hebraic text of the Old Testament, there is nothing to warrant the theology of the image of the Christian East.[38] Naturally, this changes with the New Testament passages which speak of Christ as "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4:4). Since the justification of the real symbol ultimately harks back to the theology of the image in Eastern theology, the transition from the Hebrew to the Greek mentality should be noticed, without ignoring the fact, however, that there is a thoroughly Semitic theology of the image, consonant with Greek theology, and that is the Syriac.

The sacramental idea of this Christianity becomes especially poignant with *raza*,[39] a word which, like paradise, is ultimately of Persian origin, but has come to express Syriac thought to perfection. The term means mystery in the singular and sacraments in the plural. In an image particularly dear to Ephrem, that of the grape and the eucharistic bread, though neither is used as a symbol of the Church, Christ is thereby presented as "Ursakrament," or "primordial sacrament".[40] Again, in speaking of entering through Christ's side into paradise, Ephrem would seem to anticipate St Augustine (+430), who is at the beginning of the Sacred Heart Tradition in the West.[41]

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38 V. Lossky, "The Theology of the Image", p. 129..

39 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 21; see there also, W. de Vries' summary.

40 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 121.

41 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 125-126. See also: E. Montanari, "Il simbolismo del cuore nella venerazione cristiana d'Oriente e d'Occidente", Storia e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni 66 (2000) n.s. XXIV, 2, 363-420.

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In images such as the vineyard, the Church's vital union with Christ is further highlighted through Christ's role as Ursakrament.[42] The consecrated virgin's ideal of "spiritual marriage" with Christ brings out once more the intrinsic link of lover and beloved, the spiritual dimension of real symbol.[43] That is to say, *ihidaya*, or consecrated person, brings out mystically the parallel union of the Only-begotten to God the Father and that of the *ihidaya* to Christ.[44] The reason for such a deep use of symbol in Syriac Christology is that the very Church, conceived of as eschatologically oriented entity rather than in terms of realized eschatology, is a living symbol thriving on future expectation and realization.[45]

All too sensitive to its Judaeo-Christian roots, Syriac Christianity was not willing to compromise on the thoroughly eschatological message of the parables.[46] In spite of this pronounced eschatological message, a point of actuality was not missing; the Church should emulate the model of the animals in the ark, who in spite of the narrow space kept perfectly in peace with each other.[47] And yet, the ecclesial dimension falls short of the ideal, for even the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant follow an individualistic piety, whose accent lies in their being personally married to Christ in consecrated virginity.[48] A point, nonetheless, which may

42 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 130; 203, where the Church is described as Grundsakrament, fundamental sacrament.

43 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 157.

44 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 203; G. Nedungatt, "The Covenants of the Early Syriac-Speaking Church", OCP 39 (1973) 191-215.

45 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 239.

46 *Ibid.* 239.

47 *Ibid.* 253.

48 *Ibid.* 274.

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have a universal significance; for, as Newman says, "the heart of every Christian ought to represent in miniature the Catholic Church.[49] In another sense, this individualistic approach enjoys an eminently unitive or integrative sense-*ex pluribus unum*–in line with 2 Clem 12,1: "The Lord being asked by someone when his Kingdom would come, said: When the two become one, and the outside like the inside, and the male with the female, neither male nor female!".[50] Aphrahat goes so far as to say that the female sex is bound to disappear, presumably by absorption into unity in the resurrection.[51]

Conclusion: As we can see from this rather sketchy example real symbol runs deep in Syriac Christianity's dogmatic appraisal of reality; and we may add, Syriac Christianity is here taken as an example for the rest. It runs deep in Greek theology as well. In both cases, the best example is the sacrament, which yields what it promises. The best example of sacrament is, of course, Jesus Christ, the primordial sacrament, the Mediator between God his Father and men his adopted brethren; whereas the fundamental sacrament is the Church itself, from which all other sacraments spring.[52] Real symbol, while it is materially

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49 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 276.

50 Quoted from Lightfoot, Aposotic Fathers, 1, 2, 237-238, in R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 304.

51 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 304.

52 No wonder that, Charles Journet, in his reply to O. Cullmann's seminal work on the primacy, *Petrus: Apostel, Jünger, Märtyrer*, Basel 1952, makes a distinction between an ontological conception of christianity, typical of Catholicism, and a mnemonical conception, typical of Protestantism; Ch. Journet, *Primauté de Pierre dans la perspective protestante et dans la perspective catholique*, Paris 1953, 23-29 and 23-34 respectively. Journet's principle in inte preting the sacraments and the Church is valid, as far as it goes, but in view of the search of ecumenical convergences and the

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coterminous with image in Eastern theology, has formally a greater range, because it helps bring out the implications of the realistic-theistic epistemology implied by Christianity.

3. Extending real symbol to the other areas of theology

Following the hint given by CCEO can. 28.1 [53] we may try to see if it is likely that real symbol could serve as an interpretation not only of the dogmatic heritage, but also of its spiritual, canonical and liturgical dimensions. As far as the dogmatic heritage is concerned, the thesis has been propounded by some very prominent theologians, covering both East and West, and indeed, correctly understood, it reflects the main stream dogmatic strand of Catholic and Orthodox thought, as opposite against more nominalistic approaches. The worldview of real symbol, however, has hardly ever been extended to include systematically the other aspects of the Eastern heritage as well, partly because usually we do not think that metaphysics has much to say in spirituality, canon law and liturgy. Precisely this lack helps explain why the West (and not only the West!) is characterized by such chronical dystrophies such as a disdain for law as legalism, banning spirituality to the monastery ("Get thee to a nunnery!", as Hamlet tells at Ophelia [54]), and the confusion of arbitrary chaos with liturgical spontaneity in the aftermath

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effort to recuperate the original conception of Church and sac raments, one would have to nuance the factual judgment on particular groups of Protestants, especially after the Lima Document (BEM) and other dialogues.

53 "Can. 28. 1:Ritus est patrimonium liturgicum, theologicum, spirituale et disciplinare cultura ac rerum adiunctis historiae populorum distinctum, quod modo fieri vivendae uniuscuiusque Ecclesiae sui iuris proprio exprimitur".

54 W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 1, 1. 124.

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of Vatican II reforms. Indeed, these very lacks are like symptoms of an underlying malaise: in the shift from a classical to a pluralistic culture, as B. Lonergan[55] puts it, some essential losses were registered in the mind and heart of the age. Instead of searching the continuum between old and new, the Gospel's formula for the scholar of the Kingdom (Mt 13,52), the replacement of the old by the new was simply assumed to be that continuum. The loss of metaphysics, or at least its impaired status, threatens to make conscience bleed white. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the extension of real symbol to the other all-inclusive aspects of the Eastern heritage provides exactly such a test. Yet at every point the issue boils down to this: whether in that one area the theology of the image in its concrete realization as real symbol is applicable and, if so, in which way it could contribute to unity.

3.1 Real symbol in spiritual perspective

At first blush, real symbol seems foreign to the field of spirituality. Real symbol is a metaphysical concept, whereas spirituality dispenses largely with concepts and, besides, to transfer concepts from one field to another is fraught with difficulties. And yet, since piety without dogma degenerates into pietism and dogma without piety into ideology, the need for a cultural-religious mediation in real symbol becomes manifest. At once comes to mind what H. Bergson (1859-1941) says in his *Introduction à la Métaphysique*: Metaphysics is that science which claims to do away with symbols.[56] By this he means that thought usually moves us away from the abstract concepts to the concrete reality behind them, thereby showing the ultimate bankruptcy of any image, not,

55 B. Lonergan, *Theologie in Pluralismus heutiger Kultur*, Freiburg I Br. 1974.

56 H. Bergson, "Introduction a la Metaphysique," *Oeuvres*, Paris 1970, 1396.

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however, of their cumulative effect, which by complementarity and incompatibility help us reach the point *from within* when we may grasp a thing as insiders; by intuition, if you like.[57] The parallel to a typical Oriental position on prayer in its advanced stages is clear: it, too, dispenses with icons.[58] In both cases, the philosophical and spiritual, there is an appeal to inner integration which lets fall our crutches once we have reached the top.[59]

It comes therefore as no surprise that vision on which the just man lives entails the unity of dogma and spirituality. The obvious temptation would be to think that this amounts to saying that a good theologian would have to be a devout man and, conversely, a devout man would be keenly interested in theology. This is a true but shallow way of viewing things. Rather, by the very constitution of things, dogma and spirituality belong to an original but not as yet differentiated unity, which allows us to develop each of the two aspects as an interpretation of the whole. If spirituality is lived dogma, dogma must be reflected spirituality. This unity is not to be thought of as an exception, but follows

57 H. Bergson, "Introduction a la Metaphysique," *Oeuvres*, Paris 1970, 1399.

58 O. Clement, in his "Funcion iconica del monacato oriental," Vida religiosa 66 (1989) 182, sees Ignatian prayer in contradiction with Oriental prayer, because this, when interiorized, abandons images, whereas Ignatius seems to remain bound to them. What Ignatius actually does is put together, sense by sense, faculty by faculty, the person in its integrity, so as to offer it as one "burnt offering" to God; in obedience, for instance, that one pin-point in which intelligent man can grasp God by submitting his will, or better: can let himself by grasped and taken up by God as Abel's and Abraham's sacrifice.

59 H. Bergson, "Introduction a la Metaphysique", *Oeuvres*, Paris 1970, 1432. Bergson specifies that by this he does not mean a generalisation of experience, but the wholeness of experience now grasped as in a pin-point.

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from the integrative approach of the East to all areas of knowledge and endeavour. This holistic access is not unknown to the West, and Hans Urs von Balthasar has developed a way in which the transcendentals of truth and being find their integration in beauty.[60] A truth which does not reflect the splendour of beauty is *ipso facto* less true; or, as we say, it is shallow. As the East is usually characterized by the primacy of spirituality as integrative of all its constituent elements, it is worthwhile to pose the question as to whether this integration can afford the intrinsic link between exterior and interior in other areas. Besides, the question remains open as to whether this integrative moment may be described in terms of real symbol.

Can we say that dogma is reflected spirituality whereas spirituality is lived dogma? Spirituality is capable of dividing, too; one need only think of how many monks are unwilling to come to terms with any compromise in ecumenism. There is nothing so intolerant-so "sectarian"-so divisive-as love. Martyrdom is a case in point. Love and hate are two extremities that meet. Even linguistically, we may here climb mirrors and legitimately ask: What does love hate and what does hate love? Paul's hymn on love (Cor 13) is an extended comment on this. Indeed, just as Plato said that the best way to learn hate is to love artlessly, so the quickest way to get polemical is do ecumenism without method. Since, for Scholastics, even the devil, *qua ens*, is good, there is a particular twist to the paradox that love hates-and hate loves. What does love hate-and, conversely-what does hate love? Or is there no honour among thieves?

1. Hausherr has expressed a number of reservations of what might be taken all too facilely to mean that if there are moot issues, considered by one part to be heretical, there

60 H.U.v. Basilthasar, *Epilog*, Einsiedeln-Trier 1987, 37; idem, *Herrlichkeit: eine theologische Asthetik*, Einsiedeln 1961, 110-120.

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must be a corresponding aspect of spirituality to abet it.[61] The principle, therefore, must avoid these impasses.[62] To use the general principle of the two-way convertibility of spirituality and theology as a tool of showing the incompatibility between "heresy" (Filioque, Immaculate Conception) and spirituality is to debase it into an organ of polemics it was not meant to be. Rightly interpreted, the union of dogma and spirituality reflects the integrative character of Eastern thinking at its depths. "If you are a theologian you pray-and if you pray you are a theologian!"[63]

If we primarily speak of the unity of spirituality and dogma, it is certainly not to exclude all the rest, but rather, because dogma and spirituality retain a particular form of unity namely, one that "preserves" the difference. When differences, instead of being negated, are accepted with a view to being resolved in God's good time, a kind of Christian "*Aufhebung*"[64] such a "preservation" of difference can in turn

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61 This formula comes from Cardinal Saliège of Toulouse. In a masterly article, "Dogme et spiritualite orientale", *Etudes de spiritualite orientale*, Rome 1969, 145, 176-179, I. Hausherr criticized those who expand the first part of the formula into "spirituality is an application of theology to life" and thereby read into it conflicts of theological schools and heretics.

62 For example, Hausherr, "Dogme et spiritualite orientale", *Etudes de spiritualite orientale*, Rome 1969, 154-161, shows that St Isaac the Syrian (seventh century) was a "Nestorian", that is to say, he belonged to the Assyrian Church of the East, and yet Nestorians and Monophysites, Catholics and Orthodox, all zealously quote him.

63 I. Hausherr, *Les lecons d'un contemplatif: Le traite de l'Oraison d'un contemplatif*, Paris 1960, "chapters" 60; see also "chapters" 55-57; pp. 85-86 and 80-82. As the author well points out, Evagrius is no philosopher or dialectician; and yet, there is no higher locus of insight into divine matters as precisely the purified intellect!

64 The term comes from Hegel, but it can be harnessed into the dialectic of the Spirit to render Christian service if by this is meant

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help, at level of community, to mediate pluralism into a differentiated whole, thus assuring the passage from the undifferentiated unity at the start to a differentiated one-in-many which is the fruit of maturity and guidance in God's Spirit.

An example of lack of differentiation in theology is the Messalian interpretation of baptism. Messalianism, from the Syriac word for prayer, is a heretical movement condemned at the council of Ephesus (431). Noticing that a person remained prone to temptation even after baptism, they degraded this to a mere baptism by water, whereby the Holy Spirit and the devil lived together in the soul even after baptism. So as to drive away the devil from the soul they advocated instead a "prayer of fire," that is to say, incessant prayer (see Lc 18:1; I Thes 5:17; Rm 12:12). In end-effect, the Messalians confused two levels, for they did not distinguish between the *psychological*, on which we feel temptations without necessarily succumbing to them, and the *ontological*, or our factual performance in falling or resisting temptation.[65] Being subject to temptation does not make us bad, anymore than feeling enthusiasm makes us good; rather, we need to distinguish between the various "spirits" or inspirations that move us. We need a discernment of spirits which, however, unlike the Messalians, does not debunk the sacrament of baptism, but develops our judiciousness in concrete cases on the basis of baptism. One of the Fathers present at the Council of Chalcedon (451), St Diadochus of Photike (mid-fifth century), developed the idea of a spiritual sense precisely around this sacrament.

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that, in the various phases of discernment of the Spirit, reflecting the various steps of human maturation, problems which can not be solved are retained for a more propitious moment.

65 I. Hausherr, "L'erreur fondamentale et la logique du Messalianisme", *Spiritualite Orientale*, Rome 1969, 64-96.

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If spirituality is the integrative moment par excellence, one has to ask oneself whether the principle can at all function unless dogma is also united, via spirituality, to canon and liturgy. The way St Diadochus centered his spirituality around baptism would lead us to think that such an integration is possible in the liturgical field. Note, however, that to arrive to God one has to pay attention to the senses, even to the senses understood in a special way as the "feeling for God"; in this way, the need to elaborate the correspondence between the data of the senses and the data of the Spirit becomes imperative; that is to say, the need to elaborate a theology of the real symbol, concrete, and showing precisely through its concreteness an intrinsic spiritual link between God and material reality.

3.2 Real symbol in liturgical perspective

The liturgy provides us with another double-edged sword. One may be thoroughly inclined to nod in approval at the notion that liturgy is the melting-pot of the various trends of the community and of the various strands of tradition, consequently of this unity. Liturgy thus seems a particularly easy ground on which to promote unity. We all have heard of *lex orandi, lex credendi.* This principle, formulated *expressis verbis* for the first time by St Prosper of Aquitaine (+after 455) and then appropriated so well by the East as if it had originated there, yielded such dividends in its adopted home that it has boomeranged back in blessing and bounty.[66] As a double-way street the principle raises hopes of being an excellent place of encounter. At the same time, the liturgy has to be known to easily become a battle-ground. The unity of the Orthodox Church in seventeenth-century Russia went to pieces over what seems to the outside to be a quibble over two or there Hallelujahs, or two or three fingers with which to make the sign of the cross.

66 P. Vassiliades, *Lex orandi.* Thessaloniki 1994, 4-5.

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To dispel the ambiguity we have to resort to the "epistemology" of the liturgy within a genuine Eastern vision. It is the liturgy which, through its graphically profound use of symbols and doxology, best relays what theology and spirituality is all about.[67] The apophatic theology of Denys the Pseudo-Areopagite (fourth-fifth century) and of Gregory Palamas (+1359), the theological syntheses of Maximus the Confessor (+662) and of John Damascene (+c. 749), draw heavily on the liturgy and spirituality,[68] their main sources of inspiration. To begin with the more visible aspect of symbol, the iconic programme of a Byzantine church, at least in its self-understanding, stands in an essential relationship to the mysteries celebrated and does not simply amount to a purely accidental protrayal.[69] The order signified in the iconostasis, though variable, is not arbitrary, depicting, indeed, as it does, a hierarchical notion which is an object-lesson in order in the life of the Church. Indeed, the church building as a whole, comprising heaven and earth under one roof, may be said to pose the question of doxology: what is the relationship between a structure which in intent is all-comprehensive, whether a building or theology, to its contents?

In his *Doxology*, G. Wainwright defines worship as going beyond the merely ritual and betraying instead "regular patterns of behaviour invested with symbolic significance

67 A.Kallis, "Theologie als Doxologie. Der Stellenwert der Liturgie in der orthodoxen Kirche und Theologie", *Liturgie-ein vergessenes Thema der Theologie*, Freiburg i. Br. 1986, 42.

68 A.Kallis, "Theologie als Doxologie. Der Stellenwert der Liturgie in der orthodoxen Kirche und Theologie", *Liturgie-ein vergessenes Thema der Theologie*, Freiburg i. Br. 1986, 44.

69 See A. Kartsonis, "The Responding Icon" and H. Maguire, "The Cycle of Images in the Church", L. Safran (ed.), *Heaven on Earth: Art and Church in Byzantium*, University Park, Pennsylvania 1998, 58-80, 121-151.

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and efficacy",[70] so that worship becomes a locus for the reception and transmission of the vision which is believed, formulated and reflected on.[71] As for the language of worship, this raises not only the issue of how far Christian worship can be all expressed in human words, but also how far are the words of the creed tied to a language which by now sounds like a foreign language. With Bultmann's bid at "demythologization" in mind Wainwright distinguishes between an extrinsic relationship of language to thought, as with kernel and shell, and an intrinsic one, as with the peels of an onion. Or, at a higher level, while the language of poetry is integral to the poem, poems can nonetheless be translated into another language.[72] With this in mind, the role of real symbol is transferred to language.

Doxology, a veritable blessing in disguise, can thus function as a systematic-unifying principle. Indeed, doxology *ought* to function as the principle of synthesis in theology, because praise has to be pertinent without becoming prolix, indicates the way to thankful existence which sheds light on man's path, unleashes a creativity of relations and ideas while providing them with reliable infrastructures, and shows most clearly that time set apart for prayer is really only a part for the whole. In this sense, existence loses its dreariness without forfeiting its challenge and death becomes the culminating moment of that sacrifice of praise which, because undeserved-sin being as "unworthy" of man as merit God's "gratuitous" gift-can purify without consuming us.

And G. Wainwright wrote his *Doxology to* show the translatability in principle of ecclesiastical thought patterns and dogma into praise categories, as the way the homousion

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70 G. Wainwright, *Doxology*, New York 1980, 8.

71 G. Wainwright, *Doxology*, New York 1980, 9.

72 *Ibid.* 193, 195.

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of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son is paraphrased in the so-called creed of Nicaea-Constantinople goes to show: "with the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified..." Yet by espousing the real symbol, in spite of his remarkable treatment of the theology of the image[73] through what he says on the image of God, his remarkable *essay* needs further specification by elements of Eastern theology, such as the theology of the icon.

On a more professionally liturgical terrain, H.J.Schultz wrote his book on *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression*,[74] in order to elaborate the symbolical structure of the liturgy. This he does not only by surveying the various phases of the history of Byzantine liturgy, but also by evaluating the functional structures of its celebration. With the victory over iconoclasm the interpretation of the liturgy as enacting Christ's mysteries becomes standard. Schultz distinguishes between arbitrary symbolical interpretations, typical of times of decadence, and symbolical interpretations with a solid programmatic framework and staging functional-ontological correspondences. Starting with St Germanus (around 730), who interprets the Minor Entrance in terms of cosmic liturgy and the Major Entrance

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73 G. Wainwright, *Doxology*, New York 1980, 15-44.

74 Translated from the German: *Die Byzantinische Liturgie*, Trier 1980, by Pueblo Publishing Co., New York 1986. In his Preface, xiv, Schulz writes: "In the eastern liturgies the liturgical development as such is inseparable from the method of symbolic interpretation. Thus, such characteristic parts of the Byzantine liturgy as the prothesis, the two entrances, the addition of hot water (Zeon) to the Precious Blood after the commingling of the species, and many other practices as well, can be understood in their historically developed form only in the light of their symbolic interpretation, in which the very essence of the eucharistic celebration finds expression. The expressive power of these rites, moreover, must be evaluated in terms of the theology of icons".

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with the accompanying Cherubikon hymn in terms of the salvific mysteries, the interpretation in terms of Christ's mysteries reaches its climax in the golden times of liturgical commentaries, of which Nicholas Cabasilas (+after 1363) and St Symeon of Thessaloniki (+1429) mark the highpoint.

At a deeper level, worship confronts us with the problem of remaining silent rather than speaking at all; in other words, the problem of apophaticism. Of God we know that he is, not what he is, nor is he a partner in prayer as a human partner in dialogue. This seems in the first place to make any theology of the image, and in its concrete application to the various mediations in the various fields of theology, real symbol, impossible, as we have seen; however, in effect, it qualifies our positive theology: even after revelation, when God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, what we know is not to be placed on the same level as human knowledge, but remains a mystery.[75]

This theme has been struck again and again by the Fathers of the Church, one of the most potent syntheses being that of St Maximus the Confessor (+662). No wonder that it has been described in terms of liturgy: *Cosmic Liturgy* is indeed one of the best introductions written to summarize this farflung and daring thought, at the centre of which is the Chalcedonian Christ.[76] St. Maximus had to fight a battle for Church survival at a time when the last ditch-effort attempts to salvage the unity of the Byzantine empire on the

75 See J. Hochstaffl, *Negative Theologie: Ein Versuch zur Vermittulung des patristischen Begriffs*, München 1976 , 85, 116 and 124. "Der hierarchologische Begriff apophatiscwher drangt Theologie dazu, sichselbst zu überhöhen und in Mystik aufzuheben. Es scheint nicht von ungefahr, dass besonders östliche Theologen schliesslich alle Theologie nur als eine Vorstufe zur Mystik anzusehen vermochten" (150).

76 On this point Ch. André Bernard, *Teologia simbolica*, tr. G.M.Muzj, Roma 1984, 428-429.

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two lips of the Mediterranean drew such cry of despair as monotheletism, two natures in Christ their hands tied together into puppet-type inactivity of the one *energeia.* The Fathers gathered in Constantinople III (680-681) could easily assert the Chalcedonian dogma of two natures in the one person of Christ, each retaining its autonomy while attaining a harmony of both, without confusion but without division. In effect, this union of two wills, which work harmoniously together not by glossing over difficulties is a model for all Church union and for all thinking out of how to deal with minorities and with difficulties. But the harmony of different wills is not reached by shortening the reality of difference, as monotheletism and monoenergism imagined, but rather by accepting it in all its implications, as having been accepted and hallowed by Jesus Christ, In terms of Church worship, this meant the victory over iconoclasm; in terms of grace, the assurance of deification in the flesh through the meditation of the incarnate Logos; in terms of theology, the "melody of the theology".

Patriarch St Nicephorus, one of the Orthodox writers of the second phase of iconoclasm, says of icons: "They are expressive of the silence of God, exhibiting in themselves the ineffability of a mystery that transcends being. Without ceasing and without silence, they praise the goodness of God, in that venerable and thrice-illumined melody of theology .[77]

By the "melody of theology" Nicephorus means liturgical doctrine itself, that is to say, the whole of Christian doctrine as amenable to a harmonious synthesis and inductive to worship, and not merely a justification of the place of icons in Christian liturgy and doctrine in the wake of the victory over iconoclasm.[78]

77 Nicephorus, *Imag.* 70(PG 100, 773).

78 J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine II.The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*, p.133, where the quote is also reproduced.

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3.2 Real symbol in canonical perspective

It is in the area of canon law that this harmony seems to break down, at least in the sense that harmony apparently gives way to stipulation and that it thus becomes impossible to apply real symbol here. There seems to be nothing as distant from a thorough-going integrative view of reality as a whole from a Christian viewpoint as law. But can we really settle down for the view that law is an imposition, that is, extrinsic with relation to the goal? At stake, here, is rather a false idea of law. A. Schmemann (+1893) has rightly protested:

> Orthodox tradition is unanimous in its affirmation of the Church as an organic unity. This organism is the Body of Christ and the definition is not merely symbolic, but expresses the very nature of the Church. It means that the visible organizational structure of the Church is the manifestation and realization of the Body of Christ, or in other terms, that this structure is rooted in the Church as the Body of Christ. But one must stress immediately that if the doctrine of the Church-Body of Christ is both scriptural and traditional, it has never been elaborated and interpreted theologically. For reasons which cannot be discussed here..., this doctrine disappeared rather early from canonical (i.e., ecclesiological) thinking both in the West and the East, and its neglect by canonists constitutes, no doubt, a tragedy the results of which mark all domains of ecclesiastical life and thought. In the early Church, the canonical tradition was an integral part of ecclesiology-of the living *experience* of the Church. But little by little it became an autonomous sphere in which the visible ecclesiastical structures, the functions of

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> power and authority, and the relations between Churches, ceased to be explained in terms of the Church-Body of Christ. Loosing its ties with ecclesiology, the canonical tradition became canon law.[79]

It is law in its unity with ecclesiology which has been lost and needs to be recuperated, precisely that law that seemed so useless in order to be able to "manipulate" the Church assembly by imparting orders "from without" and imposing order. But Church order, as Schmemann again points out, has essentially got to do with the order during worship; liturgical *ordo* and disciplinary *canon* are all of a piece. That is why it is the sacraments which constitute the Church, or, to speak preeminently, it is the eucharist which makes the Church.[80] For him, we have to watch out against the misconception that rubrics are merely stipulative and devoid of ultimate symbolism. Although the East as such does not have a rubricistic mentality, but everything has to do with mystery, rubrics stand in line with that symbolic interpretation of the liturgy which makes it integral part of the liturgical happening. Naturally, one must thereby resist the temptation to over-interpret and to read into casual instructions grandieloquent texts of salvation history, a symptom typical of decadent periods in the history of liturgical comment, such as the Mid-Byzantine synthesis.[81] To avert this, we are called together to reflect on the intrinsic unity of rite and ritual as the fusion of interiority and exteriority mediated through real symbols.

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79 A. Schmemann, "The Idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology," J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, Crestwood, NY 1992, 149.

80 A. Schmemann, "The Idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology," J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, Crestwood, NY 1992, 152-153.

81 R.F. Taft, *Storia sintetica del rito bizantino*, Città del Vaticano 1999, 82-84.

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As an example of something that is normative which at the same time ought to be internalized the rule of faith would serve. Rule of faith is that indicator which points out where the criterion of truth and the true religion are.[82] Thus, when we indicate to a perplexed Catholic the magisterium as a guide we are not simply letting him under the yoke of immaturity, in the sense of I. Kant's "*selbstverschuldeter Unmündigkeit*".[83] On the contrary! The magisterium as the authentic interpretation of law harks back to the kerygma of the Apostles, Christ's message as it flowed from the lips of the very first witnesses. To further specify that the magisterium ultimately can do no better than interpret Scipture and tradition-though there can be other elements accounting for legitimate diversity [84]–as the two integrative moments of the one deposit of faith argues in terms of what has been handed over for the magisterium to interpret. But, for instance, which books of Scripture belong to Scripture is not found in Scripture, but flows from the authoritative interpretation of

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82 Ireneo di Lione, *Epideixis: antico catechismo degli adulti*, a cura di E. Peretto, Roma 1981, 66-68; H.Ohme, *Kanon Ekklesiastikos*, Berlin 1988, 61-70. In St Irenaeus' own use one should distinguish between concrete forms, such as Scripture and Tradition, and the regula fidei as a formal criterion of truth that indicates these, but ultimately harks back to the apostolic kerygma.

83 See I. Kant's famous essay on "Aufklärung". This "not having come of age due to one's own fault" is understood by Kant as the malaise of which enlightenment is the cure.

84 See also Y.Congar, *La Tradition et les traditions*, Paris 1960, 44-46. On p. 45 he says: "La règle de la foi, c'est-à-dire la doctrine apostolique et chrètienne, n'est pas toute la tradition. Elle en est la partie principale, mais d'autres choses sont également 'transmises': des éléments de discipline ou de règles de comportement, des coutumes, surtout cultuelles ou liturgiques, des exemples ou facons de faire. Ce sont là des domaines dans lesquels il peut y avoir des differences entre les apôtres, et donc entre les Eglises, sans que soit affecté ce que S. Cyprien appelle le 'jus communionis".

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the whole process of handing over the deposit. The canon of scripture was not formed by an arbitrary decision, but reflects the factual use in the liturgy of texts which eventually entered the canon, with only such exceptions as go to prove the rule.[85] Here interior attitude and exterior norm meet and fuse.

The example of the rule of faith, as well as the connected ideas of Scripture and tradition as normative, are useful only up to a point, for they indicate as such the norm of norms, a norm which serves as standard for other norms and thus suffering from a too much of formality. A better example which enters into the particulars of the case is found in the development of penance, in itself both a subject virtue as well as an objective structure. An interesting example is St Cyprian (+258), who has been accused of having a juridical approach to ecclesiology, that is, of approaching the mystery of Church through extrinsic structures. Instead of taking the mystery of the eucharist as Christ's body, as St Ignatius of Antioch does (+c. 110), to interpret the body of Christ in time which is the Church (*eucharistic ecclesiology*),[86] he takes the structures of the Roman Empire and projects them into the Church spread over the whole world (*universal ecclesiology*).[87] In its extrinsicism, disrupting interior from exterior, this universal ecclesiology boils down to the primacy of one bishop over all other bishops, as opposed to the *priority* of Christian witness from one local Church to others which the euchcaristic ecclesiology holds up as the right form of

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85 F. Stuhlhofer, *Der Gebrauch der Bibel von Jesus bis Euseb, Eine statistische Untersuchung zur Kanongeschichte*, Wippertal 1988, 24,77.

86 N.Afanas'ev, "The church which presides in love," J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, Crestwood, New York 1992, 108-110.

87 N.Afanas'ev, "The church which presides in love," J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, Crestwood, New York 1992, 93-97.

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interior governance of the Church.[88] Now, Afanas'ev's distinction into two ecclesiologies has borne fruit methodologically, insofar as it sent theologians back to school to reflect on their presuppositions .[89] But as a description of St Ignatius' and St Cyprian's positions it leaves much to be desired. It was hardly possible to think otherwise, around the end of the first century, than in terms of the faithful gathering around their bishop, what with the paucity of numbers and with the still growing visibility of one major centre, something which by the time St Cyprian wrote had been completely reversed. Even then, Ignatius has a keen sense of other sister Churches and of a special Church, different from these, in Rome; whereas St Cyprian is one of our major testimonies on the eparchial bishop ("the bishop is in the Church, and the Church is in the bishop"), for there can be no power over the bishop and his Church.[90]

Far from introducing an extrinsicist approach, St Cyprian helped theology of penance make a giant step forward by insisting, of all things, that the minister, the bishop, is ultimately a judge in the process of reconciliation. While this might sound like a blatant reaffirmation of the primacy of law over spirit; in point of effect, Cyprian may be cited as he who, more than anybody else at that point, was concerned with stitching together the exterior and the interior

88 N.Afanas'ev, "The church which presides in love," J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, Crestwood, New York 1992, 141-142.

89 E.G. Farrugia, "The Eucharist Makes the Church': An Orthodox Proposal and Its Impact," *Tradition in Transition: The Vitality of the Christian East*, P.Vazheeparampil and J. Palackal (ed s), Rome 1996, 174-204.

90 A. Schmemann, "The idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology", J. Meyendoriff (ed..), *The Primacy of Peter*, Crestwood, New York 1992, 147-148.

91 K. Rahner, "Die Busslehre Cyprians von Karthago, " *Schriften zur Theologie* XI, Freiburg i. Br.1973, 295-302. This section is entitled

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dimension of the whole proceeding.[91] As K. Rahner has put it, he has come closest to anticipate what St Augustine will later explain as: *pax cum ecclesia dimittit peccata! The res et sacramentum* of the sacrament of penance – the good aspired and the symbol whetting our curiosity as well as our appetite in order to prod us to attain it- is peace with the Church, and not an arbitrary decree on the part of God pronouncing a sinner to be no longer such but enjoying now full benefit of communion with God.[92]

Our current incapacity to overcome a narrowing down of law to legalism, instead of viewing it as inlearnt participation in a plan of intelligence, which several strands of Eastern tradition call "wisdom" and Western tradition prudence, is at the root of current first-world discomfiture with reform and aggiornamento. The discomfiture itself, coupled with the need to bring up-to-date, points beyond the immediate agenda of change and reform to the long-range insertion of the cultural and philosophical implications of the image of God in man, implications which are treated under the name of real symbol.

4. What has this all to do with Eastern and with ecumenical theology?

By now, our initial question has come around full swing. The two broken parts of symbol are no longer "thrown at one another", but they are "thrown together" – corresponding to the two meanings of symbol: contribution and creed-in such a way as to show the intrinsic link that always existed between them.

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significantly: "Unity of satisfaction and pax in its efficacy to eradicate sin". See also H.Vorgrimler, *Buße und Krankensalbung*,Freiburg i.Br. 1978, 55-58. 993

92 K. Rahner, "Die Busslehre Cyprians von Karthago", *Schriften zur Theologie* XI. Freiburg i. Br. 1973, 90-92, 212.

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In terms of worship, God's contribution and man's tribute correspond. God's "contribution" to man is the content of man's collective "tribute" to God. It is God who inspires man to adore and abets that act, for God crowns us for his own graces. At the centre of God's contribution is Jesus Christ, true image of the Father, in whom two natures and two wills operate harmoniously not by imposition of external law or by glossing over difficulties, but by the relation of God's blueprint in both. In the image of the image which is man, however, harmony is not infrequently lacking. The good word for this correspondence is image, which in its concrete cultural-philosophical implications may be rendered as "real symbol".

Part of the tragedy of theology is that, in view of this torn unity, theology is still lost in seeking union with divisive means. By ignoring real symbol, one may think of theology itself as pre-existing in blocks that have to be welded together, rather than as an organism which occasionally labours with foreign bodies within it threatening its disrupture.

If we want to stop pursuing theology with divisive means, we have to face up to the difficulties full score. Following the polemics in the wake of Trent the Tübingen theologian Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) came up with the idea of presenting confessional differences simply by presenting the creed of the particular confessions and letting the differences speak up for themselves.[93] This paved the way from *Kontroverstheologie* to what is known as *Konfessionskunde,* which in turn gave way to current trends in ecumenical

93 J.A. Möhler, *Symbolik oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihren* J.R. Geiselmann, "Zur Einführung", J.R. Geiselmann (Hg.). *Johann, Adam Möhler, Symbolik, oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten,* Köln 1958, 44-47. For Geiselmann, Möhler's *Symbolik* is at the service of his idea of Church union.

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theology. Yet the all-out way of embracing the other has had the sobering effect that union was even then not reached. We need something more than simply irenic discussion. The premises of Konfessionskunde are as valid as ever, but they have to move from a sort of passive description for the sake of the observer to a more active invitation. As Max Frisch was to say, truth is not a wet towel to be thrown at the head of the partner, but must be held out like an open jacket for the partner to put on. We have to move from difference to differentiation. We have to go beyond Möhler's "theology of symbolic *difference*" to a "theology of symbolic *differentiation*", and not just difference.

Theologians, meditating on the dogmatic data established by Chalcedon (431) and Constantinople II (553), asked the question not only about the unity of the two natures in Christ, but also about the *unification* of the two natures in Christ. The answer the West gave, *ipsa assumptione creatur*, was ultimately borrowed from Alexandrian Christology, whose speciality was unity and its centredness on the Logos. Likewise, unity in a world after restored union would have to retain this in act, like being, and thus reflect and mediate on what it means that unification is a process, and not simply a result.

The time is coming when the best ecumenical theology is one with no pretensions to be one, but one which seeks unity by non-disruptive means. Unlike we think, ecumenical theology is not there to foster unity, but to discover disunity, ferret it out in time so as to heal it. We may here think of Christ, expression of God's venture into the world. But, as we know, the nearer he drew the closer he became to both God and man. *Ipsa distinctione creatur!*

We may venture the following equation:

The limits of Eastern theology is the *aniconic*, since Eastern theology is icon-bound, based on the image of God *(real symbol).*

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The limits of ecumenical theology is the *antiiconic*, because the two parts of the symbol are thereby. lost (*nominalism*).

The limits of real symbol are the *supraiconic*, because in God's ultimate synthesis everything is superceded, including the icon *(apophaticism)*.

Yet these limits are meant to be transcended, not hollowed. Schism means iconic treatment and healing of the imagination; the rest will follow suite right away. Real symbol indicates the philosophical, cultural and literary mediation leading to transcendence.

Of course, the case envisaged above-of union with no schism-is not only unrealistic, but not even "desirable". Just as in an economy of full employment prices soar, so, too, in a Church with no divisions and nobody to convert problems become the order of the day. St Paul has indeed warned: Divisions must exist, i.e.they are ultimately unavoidable. All the more must we think of all eventualities.

If theology moved from the patristic florilegium to the scholastic dispute, to polemical theology, to symbolical theology, to ecumenical theology, it must now move to the theology of symbolical differentiation, whereby the very difference is supposed to create the bridge, just as in Christ the differences are not abolished but given a new rationale in a new whole.

Conclusion: In asserting that there are two natures in one person, Chalcedon established a hermeneutic of distinguishing without separating, uniting without confusion. A good word for it is *differentiation*, whereby the difference is not denied or ignored, but integrated within a wider context, enabling it to establish new relations to old foes. If the answer to human suffering-the answer to Job-the answer to problems and difficulties-is to differentiate, so it is with

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problems of an intellectual order. Intellectual problems are academic issues only for those who deal with them from a distance to life; for them, the answer to problems is to abstract. Yet for those who take their problems seriously, for those who have problems with a future, the answer to suffering is to differentiate. So, too, in theology we have to differentiate. Being a theology, ecumenical theology has to differentiate.

Which means, in other terms: a more differentiated theology is needed: the theology of symbolic difference! But what kind of symbol? What kind of real symbol? The potential germs of schism are only then *aufgehoben*, if difference is mediated without leading to that kind of academic suffering known as dichotomy, inability, to reach synthesis, inability for blood to *coagulate*. On the contrary, as Maximus the Confessor said, Christ unites all these factors; uniting them without destroying them.

We may venture to go beyond him and say: *ipsa distinctione unietur!* Unity in the Church would rest on safe shoulders if we conceived of it as an on-going act of faith in the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ, one person in two natures. The *underpinning* in thought, to this on-going act, is real-symbol. In that case, instead of seeking unity with divisive means we would promote diversity (difference) with unifying methods (differentiation).

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ECUMENICAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH AND THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

His Grace Mar Aprem

The Church of the East in India based in Trichur, Kerala is the Indian branch of the universal Church of the East under the administration of the Catholicos Patriarch Khanania Mar Dinkha IV, now residing in Chicago, USA. We believe that we are the faithful remnant of the pre-Portuguese Christianity in India. The Syro- Malabar Church also claims the same identity, but admits that their Church has been latinized in some aspects after the arrival of the Portuguese in India in 1498 AD and definitely after the Synod of Diamper in 1599 AD.

Archbishop Joseph Powathil, reading his paper in the opening day of this seminar concluded his remarks stating, 'The Syro-Malabar Church could be a bridge-builder or it could remain as a block or as a problem on the road to Christian unity". He further expressed his hope that "gradually there will be erected an ecumenical conveyance among the St. Thomas Christians, both Catholic and Orthodox".

The Church of the East in India is a small Church of about thirty thousand members with 28 parishes , 38 priests, 31 deacons and 2 sub deacons and one nun. It has just one Metropolitan now, after the auxiliary bishop Dr. Poulose Mar Poulose died on 24 March 1998 and the Patriarchal Delegate Mar Timotheus (Choondal) passed away on 6 August 2001. In strength it is less than 1% of the strength of the Syro-

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Malabar Church. But they use the Addai and Mari Liturgy in its original form. Although small in size the members of the Chaldean Syrian Church do not aspire for any merger with the Syro Malabar Church. At the same time, ecumenical collaboration will be welcome.

In the paper of Archbishop Powathil quoted below we read

"Urbanisation – the migration of Christian communities to the cities from the villages – necessitates sharing of the Churches, prayer halls and cemetery. The norms have to be followed when the question of these sharing arises. The consent of the local bishop is necessary for these sharing of the resources of spiritual life and activity".

I must add here that local priests should be educated about this necessity as well as the possibility of sharing.

The Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV attended the installation of the Pope John Paul II in October 1978. The Patriarch again visited Vatican by the invitation of the Pope in 1984. Four discussions were held in the following ten years. Finally Common Christological Declaration was signed in Vatican.

Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV concluded their Common Christological Declaration, signed on 11 November 1994 with the following practical and positive note.[1]

> Living by this faith and these sacraments, it follows as a consequence that the particular Catholic churches and the particular Assyrian churches can recognize each other as sister Churches. To be full and entire, communion presupposes the unanimity concerning the

1 Full text of the Common Christological Declaration is given as Appendix 2 in the Ph.D. dissertation submitted by the present writer to M.G.University, Kottayam. .

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content of the faith, the sacraments and the constitution of the Church. Since this unanimity for which we aim has not yet been attained, we cannot unfortunately celebrate together the Eucharist, which is the sign of the ecclesial communion already fully restored.

Nevertheless, the deep spiritual communion in the faith and the mutual trust already existing between our Churches entitle us from now on to consider witnessing together to the Gospel message and co-operating in particular pastoral situations, including especially the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests.

In thanking God for having made us rediscover what already unites us in the faith and the sacraments, we pledge ourselves to do every thing possible to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our two Churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord's call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly. To overcome these obstacles, we now establish a Mixed Committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic and the Assyrian Church of the East.

As a result of the signing of the Common Christological Declaration a Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue was appointed by the two Churches. The MCTD has met in 1995, 96, 97, 98, 99, 2000 and 2001. In the meeting in Arezzo in 2000 the name of Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue (MCTD) was changed into Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue (JCTD). The latest meeting took place in Rome, Italy on 7-11 November 2001.

The latest development was the announcement from Vatican regarding the Holy Qurbana among the members of the Chaldean and Assyrian churches.

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Chaldean and Assyrian Churches Sign Pact on Eucharist

Access to Communion Approved in Special Cases

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 26, 2001 (Zenit.org). - The Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East have taken a decisive step toward East-West unity by offering access to the Eucharist to each other's faithful in special instances"

An agreement published Thursday by the Vatican Press Office states that, when "necessity requires, Assyrian faithful are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in a Chaldean celebration of the Holy Eucahrist".

The text was prepared by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

The guidelines permitting this change were signed July 20, but the Vatican has only now made them public, thus accepting the proposals of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV of the Assyrian Church of the East, and Patriarch Mar Raphaël Bidawid of the Chaldean Church. The Chaldean patriarch is attending the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

The guidelines constitute notable progress in ecumenical relations. However, as the document indicates, the measure "is not equal to full Eucharistic communion," although it spells real progress "toward that blessed day when it will be possible to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in peace".

This is a special decision from the pastoral point of view, as the faithful of these Churches often live in minority situations, and sometimes have great difficulty in gaining access to the Eucharist.

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The majority of these faithful live in Iraq, Iran and Turkey. Assyrian Christians number about 400,000. They are in Iraq, the Mideast, Northern Europe, the United States and Australia.

The Chaldean number 800,000 and they live primarily in Iraq.

Both communities suffer from great poverty. The Vatican note explains that for many it is difficult to have a "normal sacramental life," hence the importance of this decision

Both the Chaldean and Assyrian Churches have continued to share the same theological, liturgical and spiritual tradition

This announcement is applicable to the Assyrian Church and the Catholic Chaldean Church. Naturally a question arises in the minds of many doubting Thomases whether the privileges granted to the Chaldean Catholic Church is available to the Syro Malabar Church, as the Catholic Chaldean and the Syro-Malabar Church are both under the Pope.

Technically speaking the privilege granted to one oriental church will not be automatically applicable to the other Catholic Churches. If it is not a reality yet, it is high time to make fresh move in this direction.

The latest development is the official Dialogue held in Rome in November 2001. The Press release of this dialogue is given below. Personally, I was absent due to illness. But all nine other members were present. There is a possibility of some documents to be prepared and approved by both sides by next year. Ecumenical actions are not fast. It needs time for study and preparation by both sides.

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Press Release

The Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue (JCTD) between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East held its 7th annual meeting from 7-11 November 2001, at the **Domus Internationalis Paulus VI** in Rome.

The members of the JCTD first took notice, with particular gratitude, of the recently issued "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East" and the related article "Admission to the Eucharist in Situations of Pastoral Necessity. Provision between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East" (in: *L'Osservatore Romano, Venerdì 26 Ottobre* 2001, p. 7-8; Weekly Edition in English, 31 October 2001, p. 4).

Given the great distress of many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful, in their motherland and in the diaspora, impeding for many of them a normal sacramental life according to their own tradition, and in the ecumenical context of the bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, the request had been made to provide for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, in cases of pastoral necessity.

The principal issue for the Catholic Church in agreeing to this request, related to the question of the validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, when used in its short formula, i.e. without coherent or "ad litteram" recitation of the Institution Narrative.

After a long and careful study, from a historical, liturgical and doctrinal perspective, the Catholic

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Church authorities concluded that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari can be considered valid. Based on this recognition, the present guidelines subsequently were elaborated by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. They open the way for the competent authorities of both the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East to establish particular procedures and provide appropriate pastoral means to implement this Eucharistic provision, taking into account concrete circumstances and conditions.

Since the third phase of the JCTD program deals with questions related to the constitution of the Church, three papers were discussed regarding "Petrine Ministry": Petrine Ministry in the New Testament (Fr. Matthew Vellanickal); Can two Primacies be in Communion? The Identity of St. Peter and Place of the See of Rome, according to the Church of the East Liturgical and Patristic Tradition (H.G. Mar Bawai Soro); Petrine Ministry in the First Millennium (Dom Emmanuel Lane, o.s.b.).

Both the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East acknowledge the particular role given to Peter by Jesus Christ, a role which can be defined as a "ministry of unity". Both their liturgical traditions, moreover, give witness to that particular position and mission of Peter. Some conclusions of this discussion will now be brought together into a draft text, which eventually may become a comprehensive JCTD document on the Constitution of the Church.

In continuation of last year's discussion on Christology, two papers were presented by H.G. Mar Bawai Soro: «Nestorius of Constantinople; the relationship between

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the Church of the East and the context and content of his condemnation at Ephesus », and « Theodore of Mopsuestia and the relationship between him, his teachings and the Church of the East, with a special reference to the Three Chapters Controversy ».

As per the continuation of this matter, a methodological proposal was agreed upon, aiming at the elaboration of a JCTD document on « Understanding the Christological Patrimony of the Church of the East ». This document would be based on the already existing achievements, reached by theologians and academic colloquia, as well as on further historical and doctrinal research.

On Friday the 9th of November, priests of both the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, who study or live in Rome, joined the JCTD meeting. They all assisted in the celebration of Holy Qurbana, which was presided over by H.G. Bishop Bawai Soro. Afterwards they were invited for supper and met with JCTD's members.

On Saturday the 10th of November, the JCTD meeting had the honour of welcoming H.B. Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidawid, who happened to be in Rome. His Beatitude underscored the importance of the JCTD's activities, particularly in view of the further rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee is planned to be held in Rome, from the 5th to the 10th of November 2002. Two major themes will be on the agenda. First, regarding the constitution of the Church, three papers will be prepared on Petrine Ministry in the canonical sources of the Church, including the Code of Canon Law of the Latin Church, the Code of Canon Law of

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the Eastern Catholic Churches and the canonical tradition of the Church of the East. Besides, regarding Christology, a first outline of a possible future document on « Understanding the Christological Patrimony of the Church of the East » will be submitted for further deepening and completion.

The participants from the Catholic Church were: Bishop Marc Ouellet (co-chair), Archbishop Cyrille Selim Boustros, Bishop Antoine Audo, Reverend Father Sarhad Jammo, Reverend Father Matthew Vellanickal and Reverend Father Johan Bonny. The participants from the Assyrian Church of the East were Bishop Mar Bawai Soro (acting co-chair), Reverend Archdeacon Yonan Y. Yonan, Reverend Father George Toma and Reverend Father William Yakob. Metropolitan Mar Aprem was prevented from taking part in this meeting.

Rome
11 November 2001

Although the Vatican committee began functioning it was felt that there should be a direct dialogue between the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church. They share common cultural and linguistic ties. They have same liturgy and the same liturgical tongue. Fr. Prof. Sarhad Jammo and Bishop Bawai Soro who were members in the Vatican-Assyrian Dialogue committee held initial talks. In 1996 the Patriarchs met in Southfield, Michigan, USA on 29 November 1996.

The Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East held in Chicago in June 1997 gave approval to the proposal to have closer cooperation between the Assyrian Church and the Chaldean Church. On August 13 and 14, 1997 a committee selected by the Holy Synod of 1997 June and the Chaldean Patriarch and their Committee met in Chicago. In

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this important meeting in August 1997 in Chicago several prelates were present along with their Patriarchs.

The consecration of the Mart Mariam Church in Rosalle near Chicago in August 1997 was an ecumenical event. The Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, Mar Raphael Bidawid joined with Mar Dinkha IV, the Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East in celebrating Holy Qurbana in that Church. The faithful of both denominations came together in the Holy Altar. The faithful of both churches received communion. It gave joy to the people.

Ecumenism should be the concern of the people. What is required today in India is for the Syro-Malabar Church to formulate a policy similar to the Chaldean Catholic Church. As Vatican has spoken on the validity of the liturgy of Addai and Mari (even without the Words of Institution), either Vatican or the Syro Malabar Synod can issue a statement based on the pastoral needs.

In 1994 or so there was an ecumenical seminar in the BCLC; next to the Syro Malabar Archbishop's house in Trichur. There were some discussions to have a closer ecumenism. Some Syro Malabar priests raised some points regarding the validity the sacraments of the Church of the East in Trichur. Archbishop Joseph Powathil of Changanacherry was there and expressed a hope that there will some further discussions in this matter.

Since then the two statements namely the Vatican statement on the Chaldean and Assyrian and the Press release of the Vatican-Assyrian Dialogue Committee issued recently in October and November respectively. In the light of it is the ripe time to realize the hope and prayer expressed in the Common Christological declaration of November 11, 1994 "of full communion between our two churches".

Chaldean Catholic Church based in Baghdad, Iraq is only one fourth of the size of Syro Malabar Church. The

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Syro Malabar Church based in Kerala has more diocese and prelates than the Chaldean Catholic Church. In the Indian situation there are members of the Assyrian Church of the East (locally known as Chaldeans or *surayis*) living in areas such as Mumbai where there are Syro Malabar priests under the diocese of Kalyan. I believe that there is pastoral necessity as my priest from Trichur is visiting Mumbai only four or five times a year. In Delhi we have our honorary priest, but no place to celebrate. These are the situations, which come under pastoral necessity.

Vatican which issued guidelines or admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East in July 20, 2001, but released for public on 26 October 2001 after the synod of bishops in Rome, can issue a similar statement to the effect that the Assyrian Church can share Eucharist with the Syro Malabar Church in the same way as the Chaldean Catholic Church. All these Churches use the liturgy of Addai and Mari. In the Indian archdiocese Malayalam translation is often used

As a member or a Metropolitan of the Assyrian Church of the East, I can receive Qurbana, officially at the Chaldean Catholic Church, but not in the Syro Malabar Church. On my part, I have openly declared that our Church should give Qurbana to the nuns, priests and the faithful of the Syro Malabar Church.

In March 1998 when I went to a Pro-Oriente meeting in Beirut, Lebanon I was allowed to celebrate my Qurbana in a small chapel where the dead body of St. Sherbil, the only Lebanese (Maronite) saint, was buried. But at the time of Qurbana I was invited to celebrate in the main chapel where the whole community participated.

Three or four years ago the Roman Catholic bishops in America issu ed a statement that the members of the Assyrian

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Church are welcome to receive communion in any Roman Catholic Church in America. Following that practice or taking a clue from the American brethren the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) can issue a similar declaration in reference to the Assyrian Church members in India. In India where Christianity is such a tiny minority such ecumenical gestures are appropriate.

Personally I believe that His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, the major archbishop of the Syro Malabar Church can take the initiative to issue a statement from the Syro Malabar Church. Or, I feel Monsignor Mathew Vellanickal being a member of the official Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue between Vatican and Assyrian Church could raise this issue in appropriate places in Vatican. Or, perhaps archbishop Joseph Powathil, being a member of the non-official Pro Oriente Syriac Commission in Vienna, can unofficially, initiate steps leading to official full communion between these two churches

Or, as the Co-Chairman of the official Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Vatican, I can initiate steps, officially or unofficially to achieve this goal. Perhaps, that is what I have already done by reading this paper.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MARTHOMA CHURCH IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Most Rev. Dr. Philippose Mar Chrysostom

Respected Moderator, Your Excellencies and the Distinguished guests of this seminar.

My Church believes that every person is a creation of God and God has not made any mistake in creating him and man as he is, is valuable to God and is accepted by God and God recognizes and respects him.

I was at Vatican Council II as an observer. I could listen to many of the fathers speak. One of the Cardinals once said to me; Because of the clerics I am not able to say what I want to say. If I say what I want to say, immediately after, the clerics will come and say 'Bishop, you should not have said it like that, it is theologically not very sound'. If the Cardinal had that difficulty, what would be my position today. Speaking at a session sponsored by one of the very prominent theological Faculties of the south, especially in India, a man like me would shudder to speak before all these clerics.

But because of my position,I am used to speaking authoritatively on subjects, which I do not know very much. I am invited to speak in many places. Now, here I am assigned the subject: "The contribution of the Marthoma Church in Ecumenism". Now, the difficulty is that people know that I am an ordinary man, not used to all ecumenical

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and technical terms. Besides, at present I am a Metropolitan, so I don't obey anybody!

Now we have to define our works before we start conversation. There is a story told about Mrs. Roosvelt. When she went to the Middle East she asked somebody: "What is the real trouble, with Israel and the Palestinians?" And the man said, "Three ladies are causing all the troubles". She asked, 'in the Middle East ladies were creating trouble'? He said: 'Yes'. Who are those ladies? asked Mrs Roosvelt curiously. He said: "They are Misunderstanding, Misrepresentation and Misuse. If your understanding is misunderstanding, and if your representation is misrepresentation, then your use will be misuse.

Now I like to clarify what ecumenism means Secondly, what you mean by Mar Thoma Church. Our constitution says, Marthoma church is a part of the universal (catholic) church, which asserts that there is only one Church. The Church is the body of Christ. The Church is Church in as much as it is related to Christ the head. So the main thing, I would say, in ecumenism is that the Church is to be related to God. The Church is called in the Bible the people of God. Everybody belongs to the people of God. They have been created by God and God gives them life. God is concerned about all of them. But they become the people of God when they accept God as their God. You say God is the ultimate Reality. But, what is Reality? In this stand we know some say the only reality is Parambrahma and the other things are all maya, But some of the westerns have translated maya. as illusion. This itself shows the need for an ecumenical understanding. There are people who always try to think and understand in the categories they are used to. The category they are used to, either reality or non reality. But maya does not mean illusion. Maya means transcendence, not sanatana. One of the illustrations for maya is dream, which some of you may have.

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I had a dream. When I was a young boy I was coming from the school and on the road an elephant came against me. Think!, a student attending the third standard coming home, meets an elephant, got frightened, ran back. Suddenly a cobra appeared. Caught between an elephant and a cobra what will I do? I cried. My mother was in the next room-rushed to my bed and said; Son! What happened to you? By the time I woke up. How can I produce the elephant there, or the cobra? They were both real for me; that is why I cried. But the reality was only for a minute. That is maya. That is not sanatana. The only reality or the Ultimate Reality is God. All other things have either dependent or derived realities. They are unreal. They are not illusions. But it is in independence that they become real. And God is the creator of the whole universe. The whole universe is gathered together in God. They find their existence in God and they find their fulfilment in God.

The whole creation is necessary for man to be human. God has not done anything that is not necessary. God has created only man, you believe in the Bible. Woman is an amended plan of God and not the original plan of God. When God created man the woman hid herself in his ribs. He created and all the latent he made potent; that is the process of creation. Not that he created pre-finished creation and that is what I want to talk. The whole creation in a sense was in the creation. And He has commissioned man to pick out the implication of creation. The whole earth may be filled and man must grow in the fullness of humanity, that he has subsequently realized it in Jesus Christ. So the creation is necessary and in one way essential for man to be human.

I told you that man has only a dependent or derived reality. It is in being related to God. The authentic relation of man to God is called worship. It is in worship that you continue to be human. God breathed his breath into man's

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nostrils, then he became a human being. So the essence of divinity with essence of humanity or humanness is in divinity. It is the divine breath that makes you human. The relationship with God helps you to grow in the fullness of human style which you see in Jesus Christ.

The proper understanding is that Jesus revealed God. But my thesis is, Jesus revealed man. I was once in Pala St.Thomas College to speak to the students. And the bishop of Pala was on the stage. I asked the students: "Have you ever met a human being before you met me?" After my talk a post graduate student came to me and said, "I have not met an authentic human being even after listening to you". I said, "I have succeeded in presenting you what man is". We all are sub-human. You are familiar with the saying, 'To err is human'.

That is a human error. To err is sub-human, not human. It is the fallen man who has gone wrong. Jesus is the man. *And you know Pilate: If you analyse what Pilate said. Everywhere that he said, as it is kept in the Bible absolute truth, great knowledge.* But the poor man did not understand a word what he said. He is like me. I can say many things because I have read it (them) somewhere else. But I may not understand all that I have said. So I have a great heritage of belonging to Pilate's family. But what I am trying to say is that in Jesus you see what man is and that is why he should be the head of the Church. And therefore, the Church is a human organization, with the divine destination. It is man who is the creation of God. When I say human organization, I do not say created by man. Church is the gift of God. What I am trying to say is, there are some theological assumptions on which the Marthoma Church functions. Now, God is the God of the universe-so his concern is about the world. And the Church had been called into existence for the sake of the world. What God loves is the world. God created the world, God loved the world, God redeemed the world, God consummated the world.

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Now I would like to ask you a question, especially to the sisters who are meditating *on the Lord's contemplative existence, great understanding insights!* Can you tell me what God is doing in heaven? I do not know. But all that we know about God is what he is doing here on earth. He created the world. He redeemed the world. Where? In the world. He will come again to the world and he will transform it into new heaven and new earth. What he does in heaven only the theologians know, because they know what other people do not know. Now, my point therefore is the concern of the Church with the world.

What is the world? World is where you become authentic human being. The environment is quite necessary for man to grow human. So, ecumenism is concerned about the development of people, not about the soul, not about the Church. They are called accidents. The real concern of God is about the whole created order. To create the world as God designed it and God wanted it to develop, is the task of the ecumenists. Not they are bringing together the Churches. Now, I think mostly when the moment you say ecumenical (or) when you say the role of *Marthoma Church in the Ecumenical movement, is it in relationship? No, not even in the St.Thomas tradition.* St.Thomas is only one of the apostles. He must have been a brilliant one, that I know. But he is only one of the apostles. I say he was brilliant because he is the only man who believed in Jesus at first sight. Generally people say that Thomas is an unbelieving disciple. The first one to see the risen Jesus was Mary Magdalene. What did she say? "He was the gardner". I personally believe that was the most difficult moment Jesus faced on earth. Because he must have doubted if he rose up or the gardener. And he met the disciples and they said 'he was a ghost'. He met those people going to Emmaus. They said 'he was a fellow traveller'. Who believed? But Thomas, when he saw him said, "My Lord and my God". The only

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man who believed and who accepted Jesus and the risen Christ when he first saw him was Thomas.

I addressed a meeting of many Church people and I was asked to talk about Marthoma Church, and I said, we have traditions and we were Christians from 52 AD. Whether Thomas knows it or not. I know that this is true and therefore I said all these things. One of them got up and said "Bishop you said that your church has been in existence for so many years. But I wonder whether your Church is a vibrant and dynamic Church". I said, "why do you want it like that"? He said, "You have not been able to produce any heresy. If you really think about God, relate yourself to God, God is, who is very understandable to man of limitations. You should show or produce some merits". I said, "You are mistaken. One of the greatest heresies of the Church has been produced by Kerala Church. It has no Latin or Greek name. It becomes heresy only if you can give it a Latin or Greek name. Because we said God is the God of the Christians. I don't think that you can produce any heresy than this".

God is the God of the universe. How? The Marthoma Church sends students, to different seminaries: I have people who have graduated from this Faculty, from Dharmaram, from theological colleges in Bangalore, theological centre Serampore, Kolkota, Gurukul in Madras and from elsewhere in England, America, and Australia. We would like to show the richness of experience of many people, not trying to impose our own understanding as the ultimate understanding. We are saying, we have to learn from other traditions.

We are conducting the Maraman Convention, which happens in February every year. We try to get different speakers from different traditions. But I tell you all the time our bishops preside over the meeting. So that if we feel that man has really strayed from the right path, immediately we will tell the people, "Don't swallow that part of it". This is

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called guided relationship, with all sorts of thinking, with all traditions.

We have tried the Ashram movement too. I myself began my Christian ministry as a member of the *Ashram in Karwar, the south of Goa. You know, the local people, would always say the movement they hear that I am a Christian and you are a foreigner.* And from the experience, I told them, "If you want to know who an Indian is, you look at me". I don't go and do everything what the Brahmins were doing. Why should I do that ? A certain Sudarshan, has given me a clear answer from the Marthoma Church. But I am not concerned about that. But I asked his representatives, "Why do I need a clarification from Sudharshan?' He has come from some other country with his great grand father. My grand father believes that he came from kuravilangad. But I now believe that his grandfather came from Karuvallikavu. That is, Janu's great uncle and my grand father's uncle are the same person. That is why I belong to man. Be proud of your tradition. This tradition is what God has given you. Accept it as a gift of God, not to keep with yourself, but to share with all other people. Receiving from all you know, culture is to be dynamic. It should be related to all.

I read an article on genetics. It says the people who marry only within the same community, that community will deteriorate. Then the author went on to say that the standing example is the Parsi community. The next is the Syrian Christian community. *Because according to the science of Engineers* the caste worship is necessary for the caste & tribe to be strengthened.

We are now an Eastern flock, with old traditions . We value them very much. I told you, it is in worship the human continues and grows.

Study the word of God. When I talk to my young people, I tell them, Blessed are those who reject all that I say. What

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do you mean by rejection. You see, you will reject only if you think that this is not the right position. If it is not the right, then what is the right? You give up this for something better. If you know something better than this accept that, that is what you should do. That is how the Holy Spirit works in us. And therefore, you must search and then decide what you should accept. Man is man in community. You think of what makes man human.

There was a couple, as my neighbours, when I was a young boy. Their recreation was quarrel. Once the husband struck on the cheek of his wife, and she said, "Are you a man"? In the evening when I met that lady, I asked her "Did you marry him without asserting whether he is a man"? But what she said was absolutely true. *Was he human to his wife?* And therefore, this woman was saying that there are some values, norms, virtues which make man. It is in your relationship with your man, your neighbour, your opponent, that you become human. It is the community, by the creation of community that human values are preserved and sustained. That is what ecumenism is , that you create a community, not a group of people, where God's values are respected, are received and are lived. This has been the attempt of the Marthoma Church for the last many years. I don't say that we have succeeded, we are still on the way.

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VOTE OF THANKS

Prof. Dr. Joseph Naduvilezham

Your Holiness, Your Grace, V. Rev. Fr. Rector, Rev. Fr. President, honourable and distinguished participants and beloved students, The Jewish tradition has a saying: 'Whoever enjoys anything in this world without first saying a prayer or a blessing commits an untruthful act'. Mary and Joseph had trained Jesus in this tradition and taught him to thank and bless God before enjoying anything. That Jesus has done so is clear from the Gospels. Gratitude is the noblest sentiment of human heart. At this lovely concluding session of our Symposium I am entrusted with the noble task of expressing this sentiment of ours to all who have contributed to the success of this symposium. First of all I thank the Lord who has guided and helped us in every step towards this unique event.

His Holiness has always been very generous and considerate to us whenever we approached him with a request. It is due to his love and concern for this seminary and the PVP that he has found time on this very busy day to preside over this concluding session and to give us a beautiful and inspiring message. Your Holiness, in the name of the PVP and of the seminary I extend to you our deep felt gratitude. His Grace Mar Aprem has been present at all sessions. He moderated a session and has given us a very enlightening talk on his Church. Your Grace, I express our sincere gratitude to you for this generous gesture of love.

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We very gratefully remember all the eminent people who have participated in this symposium, especially His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, who inaugurated the symposium and His Excellency Mar Kuriakose Kunnachery who delivered and erudite presidential address. We thank all those who have taken real pain and presented the valuable pepers: His Grace Mar Joseph Powathil, H.E. Thomas Mar Koorilos, H.E. Thomas Mar Timotheos, His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Philippose Mar Chrysostom, Profs. Georges de Schrijver, Dietmar Winkler and Peter Hoffrichter. We appreciate very much the valuable presence of Prof. Hoffrichter and Prof.Winkler at this concluding session. We are very grateful to all those who have efficiently moderated the sessions: Dr. Mathew Vellanickal, Dr.Xavier Koodapuzha, Dr. Geevarghese Panickar, Dr. Geevarghese Chediath, Dr. Thomas Parayady, Dr. Jacob Vellian, Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil and Rev.Fr. Thomas Pampara. We sincerely thank all our respected invited guests who have blessed and enriched the sessions with their active presence and valuable contribution.

We thank in a special way V.Rev. Fr. Rector who practically hosted the symposium and was very considerate and cooperative in this important undertaking of the PVP. Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt, the President of the PVP did not only speak on the dynamics of the Symposium but was the dynamism behind it. He planned and executed every minute detail very efficiently, with insight and foresight, working hard more than any body else. A big 'Thank You' to our President! We are very thankful to Rev. Fr.Xavier Maramattam and Dr. Wilson Ukken the finance Officers of the Seminary and of the PVP who have gladly provided everything needed for the functioning of the symposium. I sincerely thank the Central committee members Dr.Thomas Mannoramparampil, and Dr. George Kombara and the entire staff of the PVP and of the Seminary for their wonderful cooperation.

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We thank the various student committees under the leadership of Rev. Frs. John Moolan, George Njarakunnel, Cherian Karukaparampil, Mathew Pedikayil and Sr. Carmel Geo and the Rev. Deacons S. Chamakala, P.Tharaniyil, J.Alencheril, T.Nallakkutt, J.Kizhukandayil and the Senate members A.Naduviledath and E.Chettiakunnel and the Beadles S.Kakkattikalayil and S.Kavalakkatt who responsibly attended to reception, accommodation, stage and food. A special 'thank you' for all those who have toiled much to make this stage a really artistic fascination, especially to the Histrionic department. I thank the brothers and the team of Kumari Minu Mathew who have put up the two days' cultural programmes.

We thank Dr. Antony Mannarkulam and the Proprietors of Pulimoottil Silk House, Kottayam who have sponsored the beautiful files that will ever remain a good souvenir of the symposium. We thank all our students including those in the PG section, our ministerial staff and sisters who did an unforgettable service during these three days. We are very grateful to the press especially to Deepika, who has given a good coverage of the symposium and to Bros M. Kilukken and J.Vadakken who have very promptly and correctly reported the events. Our special thanks are due to Rev. Fr. Mathew Manakat, Rev. Deacon Joseph Varakukalayil and Mr. O.M. Mathew who have given their assessment of the symposium.

I am sure that the talks and papers presented at this symposium will serve not only as matter for the souvenir to be published soon but will help a lot to create an ecumenical milieu in the seminary and an ecumenical convergence outside. They will definitely open new vistas of dialogue removing the existing blocks and go a long way to promote unity and communion among the various Churches, and to accomplish more meaningful action fulfilling our ecumenical

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obligations and bearing effective witness realizing the prayer of Jesus Christ; 'That they may be one', This symposium will ever remain a memorable event in the annlas of the PVP and of this seminary. Once again remembering with profound gratitude everybody who has with generousity and love contributed to bringing this symposium to such a golden finish, I conclude. Thank you!

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